



Chapter Three - by Kay Hively

Pretty Flower held her little brother's hand. She felt very grown up. Her mother had allowed her and Little Bird to go by themselves to watch the Americans. The two children sat on a little mound behind the tepee waiting to see what would happen next.

Ever since the strangers had come up the river, everyone in the village was curious about them. The strangers didn't do things like the people in the village did. On this day, the men were again doing strange things. Three of them stood beside a hole in the prairie dog village. Most of the others were hauling water from the river. Back and forth they went, carrying water from the river, pouring it into the hole, and then going back for more water.

Once, Pretty Flower remembered, some of the boys in the village made a game pouring a jar of water into one of the holes, but she had never seen grown men playing such a game.

All afternoon Pretty Flower and Little Bird watched the water carriers. The children nibbled on dried meat and fruits as they watched the men going in and out of the prairie dog village. Finally, as the sun was getting low, the strangers began yelling and running through the prairie dog town. Little Bird jumped to his feet, pointed to the men, and yelled, "Here they come!"

Then Pretty Flower realized that the men were chasing a prairie dog. Shouting and stumbling over the ground, the men staggered back and forth over the prairie dog village. Pretty Flower and her brother laughed out loud as they watched the men acting like unruly children.

The prairie dog was leading the men on a wild chase. Pretty Flower could hear the little animal barking. It was having fun. The silly men were stepping in prairie dog holes and running hard into each other. Sometimes they fell to the ground in laughter.

At last, one of the men made a great leap and captured the prairie dog. All the other men cheered. Pretty Flower enjoyed watching the men playing some silly white man's game.

The next morning, the two leaders of the Americans came to talk with the village chiefs. Someone said their names were Lewis and Clark. The two visitors carried a little wooden cage. Inside the cage was the prairie dog the men had captured the day before. Pretty Flower's father told her that the Americans were going to take it back to their great warrior chief who lived in a village called Washington.

When the Americans left the next day, Pretty Flower was sorry to see them go. She and Little Bird liked watching them every day. As the boats sailed away, Little Flower stood on the little mound behind her tepee and waved good-bye. Some of the men saw her and waved back.



Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do -

- Why do you think the men worked so hard to catch a prairie dog? A prairie dog is a rodent. Define a rodent. Make a list of six rodents and arrange the list in alphabetical order.
- Pretend the men were playing a game. Give the game a name. One of the best known American Indian games is lacrosse. Ask your physical education teacher to teach your class how to play lacrosse.

Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2003.

Next Week: Chapter Four - Red, white and blue