



Chapter Six - by Kay Hively

Red Earth urged his pony to move faster. The sun was high and Red Earth's stomach begged for food. Soon there would be plenty to eat. His father was taking meat, berries and roots to some men traveling through the area. Red Earth had never seen such men as these. He heard they were almost white. These strangers had come up river in big boats. But when they came to the place where the water falls, they had to drag their boats over land.

At last, Red Earth and his father found the strangers. The white men had just pushed one of their boats over the top of a steep hill.

Slipping off his horse, Red Earth began taking food off the pack horse. "Here they come," his father said as the strangers approached.

Red Earth had never seen anyone eat like the boatmen. With long knives, they cut big pieces of meat. They didn't eat the vegetables, they only wanted meat.

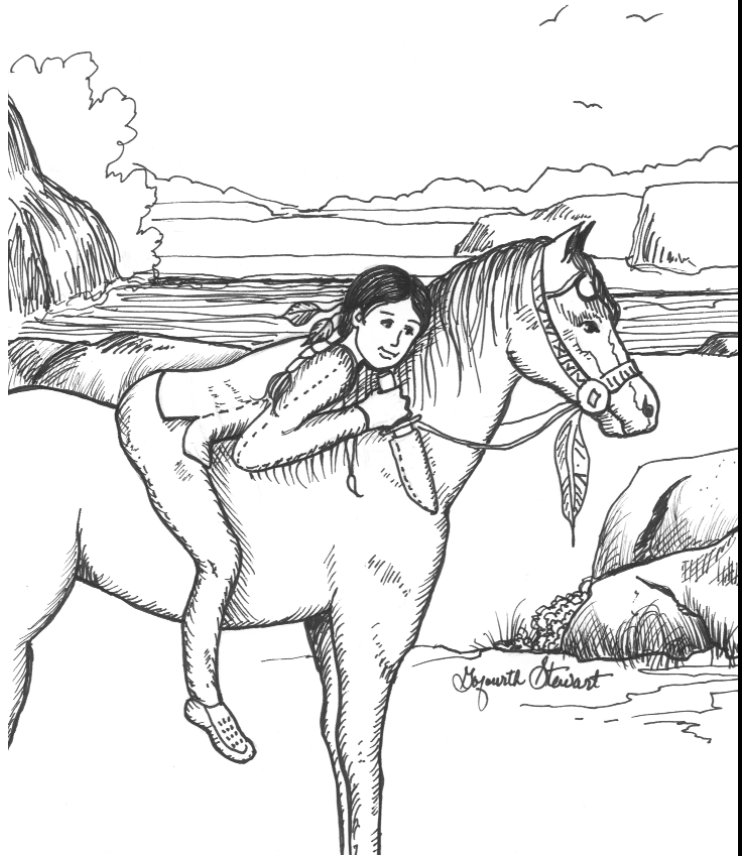
As the men ate, Red Earth noticed that one was not like the others. His arms and legs and even his back and face were black. The black man talked very much and made the other men laugh. Red Earth liked this man who smiled and laughed so much.

When the men finally had enough to eat, they lay down to rest before going back to work pushing their big boats. While the men rested, their leader, a man called Captain Meriwether Lewis, spread a blanket on the ground. On the blanket he put two knives, a bolt of cloth, some beads and two metal pots as a trade for the food.

Red Earth had always wanted a knife. All he had was a sharp stick. He would do almost anything for one. Kneeling beside the blanket, Red Earth touched one of the knives. He had never seen anything so beautiful. The smooth blade reflected the sun.

When the trade was completed, Red Earth's father gathered up his goods and put them on the pack horse. Then the boy and his father mounted their horses and started to ride away. But suddenly the black man grabbed the rope on Red Earth's pony. Red Earth was afraid the boat men were going to harm him and his father. But before Red Earth could do anything, the black man handed the boy a knife. It wasn't as shiny and bright as the ones his father had gotten, but it was strong and made of metal. It was the perfect knife for a 10-year-old boy.

Red Earth did not know how to say thank you. The only thing he had to give in return was a smile - so that is what he gave his new friend. The black man seemed pleased. He waved his hand and smiled back as Red Earth and his father rode away.



Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do -

- Using a map of the Lewis and Clark journey, find out which state has the great falls. Draw a map of that state, mark the capital, major rivers and mountains. Show where the great falls are. What town is near the site of the falls?
- Lewis and Clark gave Indians many gifts that were made of metal. Why do you think they did that? Learn how metal things were made at the time of Lewis and Clark.

Next Week: Chapter Seven - Two Friends

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.