



Chapter Nine - by Kay Hively

Black Bird tied up his pony and ran down the trail. He was afraid the white men would be gone before he got to the river.

When he reached the high bluff, Black Bird saw many from his village. Everyone was excited about what would soon pass before their eyes. Black Bird sat where he could see far up the river. Below him was a part of the river that old men called "Dead Man's Canyon." No one ever survived on the river this time of year.

But it was said that some crazy white men were taking boats through the canyon today. Black Bird didn't think they would survive. Maybe he could help rescue any who did live.

"Here they come," someone shouted. Black Bird jumped to his feet. Five boats were coming into view. All the boats turned right into the biggest rapids on the water. The Indians on the bluff yelled and waved their arms. But the men in the boats did not look up at them. They were busy paddling and steering their boats.

Watching the five boats tossing about in the foamy water was the most exciting thing Black Bird had ever seen. But in only a few moments, the excitement was over. All boats were safe. Black Bird could hear the white men cheering as they floated away.

Racing back to find his pony, Black Bird was surprised to see four white men on horseback waiting for him. They said they were with the men in the boats. They said they needed horses for their hunters. One of them asked if Black Bird would sell his pony.

The boy said he would not sell his pony. But he said his father had many horses for sale.

The men followed Black Bird to his village. There, the men traded for three horses.

Black Bird went with his father and the white men to catch the horses that had been sold. His father told the white men that his tribe's spotted horses were the finest in the country. He also said that Black Bird had the most beautiful horse of them all.

After the white men put ropes on the horses they had bought, the man called Captain Lewis gave Black Bird's father many goods. Then he thanked Black Bird for helping him find such good horses. He asked the boy if he would like a gift. Black Bird had admired Captain Lewis' hat with its beautiful ribbons and feathers, but he did not ask for it. The captain, however, had seen him looking at the hat, so he took it off and placed it on Black Bird's head.

Black Bird pulled the hat down over his ears and broke out with a big smile. Now he had the best looking horse and the best looking hat in the entire tribe.



Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do -

- Most of the Lewis and Clark Expedition was spent on water. Make a map of the 11 states the expedition visited. Mark the Continental Divide on your map. What is the Continental Divide?
- From the clues in the story, what breed of horse did Black Bird ride? Black Bird was a member of an Indian tribe. From clues in the story, and from your research, can you figure out the name of his tribe?

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 Ten - The Great Fish