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440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016
www.dramatists.com



MEN ON BOATS

BY JACLYN
BACKHAUS



★
DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

MEN ON BOATS
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MEN ON BOATS was produced in New York City in 2016 by Playwrights Horizons, Inc. (Tim Sanford, Artistic Director; Leslie Marcus, Managing Director) and Clubbed Thumb (Maria Striar, Producing Artistic Director; Sarah McLellan, Managing Director). It was directed by Will Davis, the scenic design was by Arnulfo Maldonado, the costume design was by Ásta Bennie Hostetter, the lighting design was by Solomon Weisbard, the sound design was by Jane Shaw, and the production stage manager was Erin Gloria Albrecht. The cast was as follows:

JOHN WESLEY POWELL	Kelly McAndrew
WILLIAM DUNN	Kristen Sieh
JOHN COLTON SUMNER	Donnetta Lavinia Grays
OLD SHADY	Elizabeth Kenny
BRADLEY	Layla Khoshnoudi
O.G. HOWLAND	Hannah Cabell
SENECA HOWLAND	Danaya Esperanza
FRANK GOODMAN	Birgit Huppuch
HALL	Danielle Davenport
HAWKINS	Jocelyn Bioh

MEN ON BOATS was initially developed and produced by Clubbed Thumb in 2015.

CHARACTERS

*Aboard the Emma Dean,
the boat named after Powell's wife*

John Wesley POWELL—one-armed leader of the expedition
William DUNN—hunter and trapper
John Colton SUMNER—former soldier, current explorer

*Aboard the Kitty Clyde's Sister,
the boat named after Kitty Clyde's sister*

OLD SHADY—Powell's older brother, Civil War vet
BRADLEY—lieutenant, manic with youth

*Aboard the No-Name,
the boat named after nothing*

O.G. Howland—printer and hunter
SENECA Howland—O.G.'s quiet little brother
Frank GOODMAN—British, so excited

*Aboard the Maid of the Canyon,
the party boat*

HALL—mapmaker, old soul
HAWKINS—the cook

THE OTHERS ON LAND

TSAUWIAT—a Ute chief (doubles with O.G. Howland)
THE BISHOP—Tsauwiat's wife (doubles with Seneca Howland)
MR. ASA—a desert settler (doubles with Goodman)

SETTING

On boats in 1869. Traversing the Green & Colorado Rivers from Wyoming to a Big Canyon on the government's first Sanctioned Expedition.

NOTE ON CASTING

The characters in MEN ON BOATS were historically cisgender white males. The cast should be made up entirely of people who are not. I'm talking about racially diverse actors who are female-identifying, trans-identifying, genderfluid, and/or non-gender-conforming.

It is my strong preference that Tsauwiat and The Bishop (so thusly O.G. and Seneca Howland) be played by Native cast members. If there are no Native actors in your production, the Howlands/Utes must at least be cast as non-white.

NOTES ON THE PLAY

—This play is based largely on John Wesley Powell's journals of his 1869 expedition, published as *The Exploration of the Colorado River and Its Canyons*.

—Rapids sections will be divvied by boat assignment (MAID, KITTY CLYDE, etc.) or orientation of the character in space on the river (WATER, ROCK, etc.), so that groups of actors are talking to each other based on where they are collectively rather than individually. This also comes into play with lines demarcated "ALL"—when a line inside a boat is given to ALL, it is only those in that boat, etc.

—The word ASHLEY sometimes means DANGER.

MEN ON BOATS

ACT ONE

Prologue. The Men on Boats take their places in their boats.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. We're on the river now, crew
There will be churning, there will be swells
Keep your bearings
Steady! On!
Oars up!
Oars out!

ALL BOATS

ALL. Oars up!
Oars out!
Annnnnnnnd

WE TRULY BEGIN!

1.1 The Boats on the Water

The Men on Boats, Rushing a Rapid.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Left! Keep Left! Rocks!
DUNN. Rocks Right! Keep Left!
SUMNER. Hug the wall, Dunn

Oars hard left
Rocks! Rocks!
POWELL. Passing rocks!
DUNN. Clear?
SUMNER. Clear. Forward. Swelling
DUNN. Swelling? I see swelling! Major rush!
ALL. Whoa!
POWELL. Steady. Steady, Dunn.
Sumner: Keep an eye on the swell
I'll warn the boats.

EMMA DEAN INTRO

My name is Major John Wesley Powell. I'm the leader of this expedition.
I'm aboard the *Emma Dean*—the boat named after my wife.
DUNN. My name is William Dunn.
I'm a hunter. A trapper. An innovator.
I am aboard the *Emma Dean*.
SUMNER. I'm John Colton Sumner.
Last winter I went snowshoeing in the Rocky Mountains
Obviously I survived.
I am aboard the *Emma Dean*.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. BOATS! ROCKS!

ALL BOATS

ALL. Rocks! Rocks!

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. No-Name! watch for rocks
And Swelling up ahead!

NO-NAME

O.G. Swell. Swell. Rocks?
SENECA. Almost through
O.G. And hold Hold keep left
GOODMAN. How are they doing back there—

SENECA. Eyes to the front Keep your eyes in front of you Don't worry about them.

O.G. Go around the swell! Round it.

SENECA. Rounding!

GOODMAN. Shouldn't we portage?

SENECA. Keep your eyes to the front We won't portage unless we can find a bank

GOODMAN. No bank I see no bank

SENECA. Row Row Keep rowing. Hard. HARD!

O.G. HARD! Keep rowing!

GOODMAN. I'm ROWING

O.G. Through!

NO-NAME INTRO

My name's Oramel Howland.
My friends call me O.G.

Laughs to himself.

Nah, I'm kiddin
I don't have any friends.
This is my little brother

SENECA. Seneca Howland.
People think we're twins but we're not.

O.G. and SENECA. We are aboard the *No-Name*

GOODMAN. My name is Frank Goodman.
I'm here and I'm quite thrilled to be here in the American West!
I am aboard the *No-Name*!

NO-NAME

Kitty Clyde's Sister!!
Watch the Swell!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Swelling! Swelling! Didja hear that?

OLD SHADY. Rocks. Swelling.

BRADLEY. Use our oars, right? Row hard, right?
I mean right like "right" not like turn right

Keep straight! Keep straight!
Should I call for a line?
OLD SHADY. No lines unless we need em
BRADLEY. Swelling swelling rushing fast!
Swelling! Swelling!
Should I call for line?
OLD SHADY. No.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER INTRO

BRADLEY. My name's George Young Bradley!
This is my first expedition!
I'm a little nervous but I'm also excited!
Did I forget anything?
Oh!
I am aboard the *Kitty Clyde's Sister*!
OLD SHADY. .
BRADLEY. Introduce yourself, Old Shady!
OLD SHADY. No.
BRADLEY. Old Shady is Major Powell's older brother.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

OLD SHADY. THROUGH! Kitty Clyde is Through!
BRADLEY. We're through! Oh no. Maid of the Canyon? Watch out!

The other boats have passed danger, and they are watching the Maid of the Canyon struggle now.

EMMA DEAN, KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER, AND
NO-NAME

ALL. Hug the wall. Hug the wall! HUG THE WALL

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. Here's the swell Here it comes
HALL. Stay to the side
HAWKINS. Hug the wall
HALL. Huggin the wall!

HAWKINS. We got this Hall! We got this! Left!
HALL. Don't get caught Don't get caught
HAWKINS. We won't get caught

MAID OF THE CANYON INTRO

Hi. I'm William Robert Hawkins.
I can make eggs all styles!
I am aboard the *Maid of the Canyon*.
HALL. I'm Andrew Hall and I don't have time for this shit!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. HALL We're getting caught We're getting caught
HALL. It's pulling, it's pulling
HAWKINS. Left! Left! We need help—
HALL. Line
BOTH. Line!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER (TO MAID)

BRADLEY. Line?
OLD SHADY. Need a line, Maid of the Canyon?

MAID OF THE CANYON (TO KITTY CLYDE)

HAWKINS. Line, Kitty Clyde's Sister
HALL. Hold your oar Hawkins
HAWKINS. Grab the line, Hall
Grab it when they pass it over

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER (TO MAID)

BRADLEY. Line, Maid! Line!
OLD SHADY. Passing line!

MAID OF THE CANYON (TO KITTY CLYDE)

HAWKINS. Line caught, Kitty Clyde!
HALL. We got it! Shady, Pull!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER (TO MAID)

ALL. Pull
Pull

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. Pull

HALL. Pull, almost there

HAWKINS. One more time! and

ALL. Line Pull Pull

HALL. Almost to the—Clear! We're out!

ALL. Clear

HAWKINS. There

NO-NAME

ALL. Clear?

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Clear! Thank you!

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Bank! All boats! Bank!

ALL. Bank

NO-NAME

ALL. Bank

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Bank

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Bank!

ALL BOATS

ALL. (Breathing.)

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. No-Name

NO-NAME

ALL. Here

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Maid of the Canyon

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Here

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Kitty Clyde's Sister

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Here

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Emma Dean

SUMNER. Here, but

DUNN. We lost a thing of bacon

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. Well sh—

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. A rapid expertly run!

1.2 The Emma Dean

John Wesley Powell is our leader—a one-armed crazyface with a fiery temper and an excitable soul. Powell hates suits and loves adventures. William Dunn is a hunter with long black hair. Dunn wears beaverskin always. Sumner is widely known to be the Bear Grylls of the 1860s. Sumner will just go snowshoeing through the Rocky Mountains in winter because "no one had done it yet."

Dunn and Powell sit on land next to the Emma Dean while Sumner ties it off. The rapids rush.

DUNN. So what should we name that mountain?

SUMNER. You have an idea?

DUNN. I have a few ideas!

POWELL. And I have a few ideas

DUNN. I just have a few ideas

POWELL. Sumner, do you have any ideas?

SUMNER. No

POWELL. So Sumner has no ideas and you have a few ideas and I have a few ideas.

DUNN. Should I do my ideas?

POWELL. Yeah let's hear your ideas

DUNN. Okay. Here they are!

—Dunn Mountain

—Mount Dunn

—Craggy Range

—Volcano of Dunn

POWELL. So you want to name it after yourself?

DUNN. No, there's Craggy Range, that has nothing to do with me.

POWELL. Volcano of Dunn, huh?

DUNN. Yeah I was thinking, you know? If I'm gonna name something after myself, I want it to pop.

POWELL. You know the Unwritten Rules.

DUNN. Well, yeah, but they're Unwritten, we only follow them half the time.

POWELL. Let's go through em. Just to make sure we're covering some of the bases

DUNN. The Unwritten Rules for Getting Something Named After You ARE:

1. You are the sole discoverer of the thing
2. You Accomplished Something directly in relation to the thing
3. No one objects and everyone agrees

POWELL. Can you prove those points?

DUNN. Yup! 1. I remarked on the strange colors and jagged edges of that mountain before either of you

SUMNER. Wait no, that was me.

POWELL. What did you say, Sumner?

SUMNER. I said "Would ya Look at That"

DUNN. But yeah Sumner you just said Look at That then I said "Hey Wow. I've never seen a mountain with such jagged edges cutting up the sky like that!"

POWELL. Great line.

SUMNER. What about Rule 3? I object.

DUNN. To what?

SUMNER. It's not Dunn's mountain, it should be my mountain. But I don't want it.

POWELL. Dunn, we're the only three who can see this mountain. It's pretty, sure, but it was hard to place from any other vantage point. Do you really want a legacy like that?

DUNN. Hmm.

SUMNER. Boat's tied.

POWELL. You'll have your mountain, Dunn.

SUMNER. Let's call the mountain Knife's Peak. 'Cause it looks like a knife

POWELL. Or...Knife's Point. I like that better.

DUNN. That's super literal though

POWELL. "I hereby name this mountain Knife's Point." There. Where's my journal?

SUMNER. There's your journal.

POWELL. Thank you, Sumner.

Powell writes. Quill. Awkward. One hand. Dunn watches this.

DUNN. I thought Flaming Gorge was our best name yet.

POWELL. That was good.

DUNN. I think we should all work as a team to find more poetry for these names.

POWELL. Yeah

DUNN. I'm going to work at that for the future. Sumner?

SUMNER. Sounds good.

DUNN. I just want to make sure we're doing the best we can.

Powell continues to write. Sumner unloads the necessary

equipment. Dunn looks at the scenery, probably for other things to attempt to name.

1.3 The Maid of the Canyon

Campfire, middle-morning. Hawkins is cooking sausages and Hall is working on a map.

HAWKINS. Hall, get up! Dunn ain't fishin today, so this may be all you get

HALL. Hawkins, wait, why isn't Dunn fishin?

HAWKINS. You wanted Dunn on your map team today, so Powell is fishin.

HALL. Powell's fishin?? We're gonna starve. Quick, give me two sausages.

HAWKINS. Everybody only gets one sausage. I'd have to rat you out. Sorry about that, but I'm not that sorry. Sausage UP.

HALL. Why can't you fish today, Hawkins?

HAWKINS. I have to do inventory. And lemme tell ya. At supper, some heads are gonna roll.

HALL. Wait why? Wait whose heads?

HAWKINS. The Howlands.

HALL. Wait what? Wait what about the Howlands?

HAWKINS. Okay so you know how Seneca starts in with a story EVERY night when we're all eating dinner, and then O.G. is always like "I gotta take a leak," right?

HALL. Yeah. Yeah like every night.

HAWKINS. O.G.'s not taking a leak. He's filching tobacco.

HALL. Wait what?? How do you know?

HAWKINS. I have my theories. He doesn't go where the rest of us go. I'm gonna bring it the FUCK up at dinner.

HALL. That SUCKS. The Howlands are like—

HAWKINS. Who was their mother? And why was she not a more discerning person?

HALL. How was she okay with raising total assholes?

HAWKINS. Missus Howland. "MEESSUS HOWLANT, OH-LA-LAAAA I AM MEESSUS HOWLANT"

HALL. I mean I get it though. Their dad died like right in front of them.

HAWKINS. Yeah

HALL. And they have to like, put up with Goodman, who is

HAWKINS. (*British.*) "I DO PROCLAIM." So British.

HALL. SO British.

HAWKINS. I feel like there is like one dud in every boat. Like Old Shady has to deal with Bradley who can't stop talking—

HALL. Who's the dud in our boat?

HAWKINS. Not me, I make sausage!

Hall looks offended.

Nah, no I was, I was kidding. You're cool. You make maps. You pack light. You're not like... weirdly defensive or anything. No seriously seriously. We won the lottery with our boat. Party boat!

BOTH. PARTY BOOOOAT

HALL. *Maid of the Canyon* for the win! Okay. I'm going for a bath in the river.

HAWKINS. There's a calm patch that way

HALL. Don't tell the map guy where the calm patches are.

HAWKINS. Awright awright awright

Handshake.

BOTH. Friendship!

1.4 The Kitty Clyde's Sister

Old Shady and Bradley secure everything inside the Kitty Clyde's Sister to prevent spillage before a day of rapids-running. Old Shady is the oldest crew member on the mission and does not like people. Bradley is 19 and genuinely loves people.

BRADLEY. So then my mother died so I went back to Wisconsin for a while and took some time to get my shit together you know? It was rough because I really really loved my mother? She was totally my rock? But I know God's got her smiling down on me during this trip and it was always her dream to see the West. She was Maryland born and raised and she made it all the way to WISCONSIN! Wait, where's your family from again?

OLD SHADY. Wisconsin

BRADLEY. Wait no shit! Where in Wisconsin??

OLD SHADY. Boone

BRADLEY. Oh my god that's probably only two hundred miles from where my Ma lived. The world is a small small place sometimes.

OLD SHADY. Make sure it's tied tight

BRADLEY. I am. I am, no worries

OLD SHADY. The boat'll tip. Supplies will fall out.

BRADLEY. No I know, I know

OLD SHADY. Four boats 100 yards downstream.

BRADLEY. I got faith. I got faith, Shady.

When did they start calling you Shady?

When, in the War?

OLD SHADY. .

BRADLEY. Yeah I know. I was in it. I had a real rough time. I mean, I was pretty young when I joined up so I actually didn't do any fighting so—

I guess I was just lucky with the timing.

OLD SHADY. .

BRADLEY. But I heard you were pretty instrumental in Grant's Army. You and Major Powell!

OLD SHADY. *(Inhales. Opens his mouth to say something. Decides against it. Closes his mouth. Exhales.)*

BRADLEY. Was it crazy when Major Powell lost an arm? Were you sad? Or worried? I would feel crazy if my brother lost an arm.

OLD SHADY. I think we're ready to lift.

BRADLEY. Oh okay

Powell runs over to Bradley and Old Shady, covered in satchels, giggly.

POWELL. I did the satchels!

I've got maize in one satchel, and coffee in another, and all of the extra pairs of pants in the other one. And my personal satchel of journal and quill and miscellaneous papers.

OLD SHADY. We've got your beans in this boat John Wesley.

POWELL. You better keep those safe or I'll decry you in my journal!

OLD SHADY. I know

BRADLEY. Old Shady and I were just talking about the war.

POWELL. Why would you ever do that?

BRADLEY. Well we just don't talk much on our boat so I was—

Powell cuts Bradley off swiftly with one hand.

POWELL. Bradley, do you know why our Ma started calling Old Shady "Old Shady"? Because when we were kids we used to pretend to be trees, and I would get bored easy but Shady would stand in the field all day. Right, Shady?

OLD SHADY. A tree in the breeze.

POWELL. Alright boats! In the water! We've got a big, bright, sunny day ahead of us!

1.5 The Rapids from Knife's Point

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Rock?

SUMNER. No! No rock!

DUNN. Clear! Clear! Watch the Side

POWELL. Row Left Left

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Narrow passage It juts out Make sure to Keep Left

OLD SHADY. No-Name! Watch the Left

NO-NAME

SENECA. Watching Left

O.G. No Rocks?

SENECA. No rocks!

GOODMAN. Affirmative there are

ALL. No rocks

GOODMAN. We are going Straight!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. A Straight Shoot No Rocks

HALL. Steep slope! Steep slope! Up ahead!

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Grab your oars! Hold Tight!

SUMNER. Tight!

DUNN. Tight!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. Steep Slope!

HALL. Here we go!

ALL. Steeeeeeeeeeeep annnnnnnnnnd

Now

They go over a crest, down a steep smooth slope.

ALL BOATS

ALL. Holy shit holy shit this is so fun oh my God

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

Whoa whoa whoa woo whoa!

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. Clearing up ahead!

ALL. Bank

NO-NAME

ALL. Bank

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Bank

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Bank

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. No-Name?

NO-NAME

ALL. Here

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Kitty Clyde's Sister?

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Here

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Emma Dean?

ALL. Here

POWELL. Maid of the Canyon?

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Here

ALL BOATS

ALL. Whoa

Contented sighs. Relief and excitement.

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. I love it when there's no rocks.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Wasn't that GREAT??! That was GREAT.

DUNN. Narrow. It's getting Narrow up ahead.

Line in

ALL BOATS

ALL. Tie off

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Get ready for portage

ALL BOATS

HALL. UGH

GOODMAN. Okay

*The crews de-boat at a patch of river too narrow to traverse.
Each team prepares to portage their boat, or carry it on land
along the side of the river.*

*Portaging a large boat involves its crew members lifting it in
tandem above their heads, as one would carry a large plank
of wood.*

It is hard work.

But then again.

So is rowing under hot sunlight.

POWELL. Assemble for portage!

READY!!! Alright! And! Boats up!

1.6 Carrying the No-Name

*Goodman is carrying the No-Name from the back, with
Seneca and O.G. Howland in the middle and lead, respec-
tively. Goodman is a red-faced British man. The Howlands
are tobacco-addled brothers. They have ciggies in their
mouths. They are pretty calm. Goodman is struggling a little.*

GOODMAN. I say, how CAN you smoke AND hoist the boat at
the same time?

SENECA. O.G. taught me how to roll a cigarette while riding a horse

O.G. Easy as guttin a fish.

SENECA. We did roll these before we left though

O.G. Wanted to keep things movin along.

GOODMAN. I haven't half a mind to smoke. It really funks up my
complexion

SENECA. I was gonna offer you one, but it sounds like you don't
want it.

GOODMAN. I say this boat IS heavy

O.G. Pretty light if you ask me

GOODMAN. But at least it shields us from the sun

O.G. Yeah sure

SENECA. It's shielding me, but O.G.'s getting it

O.G. A little sun never hurt nobody

GOODMAN. Well I DO burn easily, especially in these summer
months. It's all part of my heritage, you see. The Yorkshire-born
were never meant to be splayed out on some desert rock. We are
used to the doom and gloom, the hurdy gurdy, the sturm and
drang, you see. The howling gales and the lost winds.

O.G. *Wuthering Heights.*

GOODMAN. Oh the BRONTË sisters. That's right! You're in the
printing business! I was wondering how you knew about—

O.G. I heard the Brontës were crazy.

GOODMAN. Oh yes. They were crazy!

O.G. Yeah I heard that book is all about people who drive their neighbors crazy.

O.G. and Seneca make strange eyes at Goodman.

GOODMAN. I— (*Panting.*) Woo (*Panting.*) Ooh, I'm getting winded. Can we stop a bit?

SENECA. Let's stop a bit.

They stop for a bit, put the boat down. Grunts of "Heave!" and "Ho!" are heard from other groups.

You know how hard it is going to be to pick the boat back up again, right?

O.G. Yeah I know. Goodman's the one who wanted to stop. Didn't you, Goodman?

They both look at Goodman. The Howlands have threatening eyeballs.

GOODMAN. Just for a moment. Just to catch my breath. Oh! Oh say! Do you see on that rock? It looks like words

Goodman points to a nearby rock. They approach the nearby rock. They read:

O.G. "Ashley. One Eight"... I can't read the next one...three? or "Five"

GOODMAN. I think it's a three. 1835?

ALL. It could also be a five. 1855? 1835? ASHLEY.

FULL CAST. (*Considering this.*) ASHLEY.

1.7 Campfire

Dusk. The crew is getting ready for dinner, getting the fire ready and getting their knives out. Hawkins is off somewhere with Dunn.

POWELL. Ashley. Is a name I've heard before, from John Baker. Sumner knows Baker.

SUMNER. John Baker is a lunatic, but the tales he tells are often true

Usually

POWELL. The story of Ashley is true

SUMNER. The story of Ashley is true.

POWELL and SUMNER. Story goes that—

POWELL. Oh did you want to tell it?

SUMNER. No, no you tell it.

POWELL. Story goes that a man by the name of Ashley was one of a party heading down this river. Ashley's boat was felled by the rapids down below.

Ashley and maybe one other man survived, of a crew of five or six.

BRADLEY. Wait, I thought we were the first ones to go down these streams

HALL. Well, we're the first sanctioned by the government

SENECA. Plenty of Natives have run these rivers before us

O.G. And plenty of Americans too, but most of them were deserters on the lam.

Running away from the front lines of the War. So no one counts them.

BRADLEY. I just guess I assumed we were on the frontier. I've always wanted to be the first at something.

POWELL. Make no mistake, Bradley. We are on the Frontier.

But a government-sanctioned frontier is much different than uncharted land.

SUMNER. Believe me, kid. We have boats, we have somebody who makes us coffee. We have a map-maker. This is cushy frontiering.

GOODMAN. Quite comfortable. It's been quite! Comfortable for the most part, I must say.

POWELL. And it's also one of the last frontiers we'll face. So take it all in, crew. You won't be getting paid to run rivers much longer.

HALL. Hey! HAWKINS! There they are!

Hawkins emerges into the clearing with Dunn. They each carry RACKS of fish. Fish in bags and fish on poles.

HAWKINS. FRESH AND FLOPPY FISH

ALL. AWWWW YEEEEAAAAHHHHH

HAWKINS. Throw em on the fire! We eat like kings tonight. Dunn was a wizard.

DUNN. I came up with a method to catch fish in my burlap sack. Worked like a charm.

HAWKINS. Fish are so stupid

DUNN. I want make a note about the sack method. Has anyone seen my Duplicate Journal?

SENECA. O.G.'s got it

O.G. Interesting read.

GOODMAN. Let's get to the frying, shall we?

HALL. Shall we evah!

They all take a fish. They fry. Sumner does something swift and weird to a fish so it chars to perfection.

BRADLEY. Whoa, Sumner. Where'd you learn to fry a fish like that?

SUMNER. Friend of mine taught me. Met him up in the hills. We spent the summer tracking bears. Then in the winter, we would ice-fish.

SENECA. Sounds like a nightmare. I hate the cold.

SUMNER. Once we've passed through the Big Canyon, I'm moving up to the Yukon.

O.G. People die of frostbite all the time in the Yukon

SUMNER. Well that's how I wanna go.

SENECA. Once, when my brother and I were very young

We were out in front of our house playing in the snow

With a boy who lived one or two miles from us

When our mother rang the dinner bell

We asked if we could have our friend for dinner

But she said no, so

We ran back inside

And then four or five days later

They found our little neighbor friend on the side of the road

They say he froze to death while walking home

Silence. So weird.

O.G. I gotta take a leak.

Hawkins makes eyes to Hall like, "I'ma bring the tobacco the fuck up right now!"

SENECA. Okay. I'll finish your fish, O.G.

HAWKINS. Yeah, O.G. You TAKE that leak

O.G. What?

HAWKINS. Nothin

Hall laughs.

O.G. What?

HAWKINS. Nothing.

O.G. I gotta piss

HAWKINS. Yeah. You said.

O.G. So? So what are you talking at me for? Don't you ever have to piss?

HAWKINS. Just make sure it's behind a tree somewhere so we won't see the smoke

SENECA. You insinuating something about my brother?

HAWKINS. Oh, I'm insinuating alright. Your brother's been stealing tobacco.

SUMNER, DUNN, and BRADLEY. What?

O.G. That's a bold claim, my friend.

Seneca and O.G. make a move toward Hawkins.

HAWKINS. I do the inventory, my friend. That's all. I do the inventory.

HALL. Fish down! Fish down!

SENECA. Hawkins, you shouldn't get into my brother's business.

O.G. I gotta take a leak, friend

HAWKINS. You just dropped several of my fish, friend

O.G. I'll eat fish off the fuckin floor because I can take a little grit in my dinner.

HALL. Was that a threat? Are you threatening my BOATMATE?

SUMNER. Hall, calm down, this has nothing to do with you.

HALL. Party Boat sticks together!

POWELL. Will you all step three paces away from each other? That's an order.

Seneca and Hawkins step back from each other.

O.G., I advise you to go over behind that tree and smoke your cigarette

O.G. Hey

POWELL. And come back, and thank Hawkins and Dunn for the fish we eat tonight. Seneca, the bond you share with O.G. is very touching. But you have to learn to hold your temper. No dessert for you

Hawkins laughs because there is never dessert.

And Hawkins

HAWKINS. Yes sir

POWELL. If someone wants to filch tobacco on my watch, that should be on his conscience, not yours. I say that as a nonsmoker though so I understand it may be more frustrating for others. Raise your hand if you smoke.

*Seneca, O.G., Hawkins, Hall, and Old Shady raise their hands.
Bradley sort of half raises his hand.*

BRADLEY. I mean I smoke when I'm stressed but—

POWELL. Alright, so you guys should work out some sort of system with the tobacco, because I think it's stupid that I should be bothered with it.

SUMNER. Before we dig in tonight, to this feast, I would like to make a toast.

Dunn is pouring whiskey for people.

John Baker described Ashley as a good man.

I'm sure his crew were good men.

I'd like to raise my glass full of nothing—

DUNN. (*Whisper.*) I got the whiskey

SUMNER. (*Picking up on that.*) I'd like to raise my glass of future-whiskey

To Ashley and his crew.

Ashley was brave for attempting what he did.

And he was noble for leaving us a warning of what's to come.

To Ashley.

ALL. To Ashley.

A silence.

O.G. I gotta take a leak

O.G. leaves. They watch him go.

HAWKINS. Alright, let's dig in.

Tin plates passed around.

The sounds of forks on tin plates and fish-eating.

OLD SHADY. (*A little song.*)

Tin fish tin fish tin fish dinner

What a dish for a pack of sinners

Tin fish tin fish on my plate

What a dish at any rate

Tin fish tin fish from the river

It took my heart so I took its liver

Tin fish tin fish in my belly

Fish on tin gets my tin smelly

Tin fish tin fish tin fish time

Tin fish tin fish, fish sublime.

O.G. returns. A slow clap from somewhere. Old Shady grins to himself.

1.8 The Morning Summit

The next morning. Dunn and Powell atop a cliff nearby. The sun is near to rising.

DUNN. And then you see how it turns, there? Right beneath that cliff. It's a sharp one. And then from there you see the foam? White water for a mile. Hell, two miles.

POWELL. So we just have to make it down that slope and past that white water.

DUNN. And then we'll be in the clear. We could portage and avoid it entirely. It would take us twice as long to make it to calm water, but I think it's worth it—

POWELL. We'll make it with a few lines. We get one boat down

first, then we throw lines and the lines guide us into the clear. It's already getting late. If we want to make it to a feasible camping ground by nightfall we should just run it.

DUNN. I just want to make sure we make the right choice

POWELL. Aw, Dunn. We won't know if it's the right choice until we've made it!

Let's head down. But first. Would you look at that cliff?

Vermilion, look. The way the sun is hitting those walls as it rises.

DUNN. Rust

Orange groves

I'd never seen stones this color.

POWELL. We ARE in a unique position, Dunn. Our eyes, the eyes of hunters and explorers and land-rovers like us. Our eyes will be old some day, and new eyes will not see the things we see with such a sheen.

DUNN. Well, that's why we're the luckiest on earth. To see it first.

POWELL. It's strange to me. A few generations from now, it will seem normal. This whole country, built on the idea of newness. Eventually it all gets old.

DUNN. We're not even to the Big Canyon yet.

POWELL. Hell, we might all be dead before we get there. Here, let's name this cliff after you, in case we make it no further.

DUNN. What?? Really?

POWELL. Really. It fits all the Unwritten Rules.

DUNN. Rule 1: I am the sole discoverer of the thing. Did I do that?

POWELL. You used it to pinpoint the crest where the rapids start.

DUNN. Rule 2: I Accomplished something directly in relation to the thing.

POWELL. You mapped our journey forth. And Rule 3: No one objects and everyone agrees. I agree!

DUNN. Wow. Okay!

POWELL. Here we go. Okay!

"I hereby name that cliff Dunn's Cliff after William Dunn."

There you go.

DUNN. Hah!

Dunn takes a look out over his domain.

Wow

POWELL. How does it feel?

DUNN. Nice. Maybe I'll come back to live on it, once we're through the Big Canyon. I wonder if the government will sanction this land once our expedition is over.

POWELL. It all comes down to how dangerous it is to inhabit.

DUNN. Well the Natives have lived in these lands for centuries.

POWELL. Well, they've also probably named all this land already. And here we are naming it after ourselves.

1.9 Rapids from Dunn's Cliff

The Men are in the midst of running the rapids. It is getting the best of them. It is loud and they can hardly hear each other. The No-Name has yet to navigate a very precarious pass.

NO-NAME

O.G. Strong Strong And Heave!

SENECA. Ho!

O.G. Heave!

SENECA. Ho! Keep it moving—O.G? O.G. we're getting pulled

O.G. I feel it

GOODMAN. There's a patch of deer, bounding over—

O.G. GOODMAN watch the water, keep rowing

GOODMAN. Oh no—Foam, it's foaming. WHITE WATER!

O.G. Sharp Left

ALL. Left

GOODMAN. So this is how Ashley's men died

O.G. Shut up! Eyes ahead!
GOODMAN. Whirlpool
SENECA. It's too tight in the center
O.G. Don't Center
ALL. WHIRLPOOL

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Don't Center! ALL BOATS! I repeat: do not center!
Whirlpool!

NO-NAME

O.G. Don't go through the center, go around! Hug the wall!
SENECA. Keep left!
GOODMAN. I'm trying
O.G. Keep left!
SENECA. Keep Left!
GOODMAN. It's too strong! We're starting to
SENECA. Oars Left!
GOODMAN. We're Spinning!
ALL. Line! Line! Help!

ALL BOATS

ALL. No-Name!

NO-NAME

O.G. Oar Lost! Oar Lost!
GOODMAN. We can't hold!
SENECA. We're slipping in! LINE GODDAMNIT

ALL BOATS

ALL. No-Name!

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. No-Name! Here! Line!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. Line! Here comes! Grab this! Line!

NO-NAME

SENECA. Grab hold of something O.G!
O.G. I can't reach! We're spinning! Seneca!
ALL. (ahh!)

*The No-Name spins, hits a rock, and flips. O.G., Seneca, and
Goodman go overboard.*

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. No-Name Overboard

IN THE WATER

SENECA. Help—

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. O.G., Grab this

IN THE WATER

O.G. Hawkins!
GOODMAN. Help!
SENECA. Help—

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Somebody grab them!

EMMA DEAN

DUNN. Seneca grab this Line
SUMNER. Goodman—

IN THE WATER

GOODMAN. Sumner!

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Grab them!

IN THE WATER

SENECA. Dunn!

EMMA DEAN

DUNN. We should have portaged, Powell! Seneca!

Dunn grabs hold of Seneca and hoists Seneca into the Emma Dean.

IN THE WATER

SENECA. Boat—the boat—the boat—

Sumner finds Goodman in the water and extends a firm hand out.

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. Goodman! I got ya! Grab my hand

IN THE WATER

GOODMAN. hand my hand my hand

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. O.G! O.G! Hold tight!

Hawkins is nabbing O.G. out of the water.

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. I got Goodman

GOODMAN. I'm okay!

SENECA. O.G! O.G!

DUNN. Hawkins! Is O.G. in?

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. I'm—I'm my teeth are chattering

HAWKINS. O.G. is clear

You're clear. You're all clear

HALL. Clear Clear—We're clear

O.G. Where's Seneca

EMMA DEAN

SENECA. O.G! I'm good

OLD SHADY. There's a bank!

DUNN. Bank!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Bank!

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. BANK

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Howlands are here. Goodman is here. Kitty Clyde?

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Here

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Maid of the Canyon?

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Here

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Emma Dean

ALL. HERE

POWELL. No-Name. Capsized. This is disastrous.

The rapids rush. The crew catches their breath.

They strain their eyes to see, downstream, the wreckage of the boat called No-Name.

1.10 Dinner

On the bank, a campfire. Much more somber than the night prior. Things laid out to dry. Hawkins is trying to figure out what to cook.

HAWKINS. Apples. And Corn.

POWELL. Flour?

HAWKINS. Lots of flour

POWELL. Well that's good.

HAWKINS. We have some rabbit meat. Some sugar. These onions

POWELL. Good

HAWKINS. But we lost a lot of the smoked fish

POWELL. Oh

HAWKINS. We lost a lot of bacon.

POWELL. Oh

HAWKINS. And

DUNN. We lost the whiskey.

A groan from everyone.

POWELL. Well.

HAWKINS. I can get to cooking up this rabbit. We'll need to go on another hunt tomorrow.

DUNN. That's no problem, Hawkins. I'll be on the hunt. Tomorrow at dawn.

O.G. As will I

SUMNER. I'll join in.

DUNN. Seneca, join us?

SENECA. Sure.

DUNN. Hall can stay back.

HALL. I've got a lot of work to do.

DUNN. And Goodman, how's your leg?

GOODMAN. It's alright. Just a gash. Nothing extreme.

POWELL. Tomorrow I also propose going down to the wreckage of the *No-Name*.

O.G. Why?

POWELL. We lost many provisions. I want to see if there is anything worth salvaging.

DUNN. I doubt it

POWELL. Don't be so sure, Dunn. All of our barometers were in that boat.

HALL. And all of our sextants. Which I NEED

POWELL. Not to mention a bunch of other stuff

I think we need to go.

DUNN. When do you propose we do that?

Just so you're clear, we could get down there and realize everything is shattered and we've wasted a good two to three hours of daylight

BRADLEY. Come on, Dunn. We'll find something!

DUNN. Shut up, Bradley.

BRADLEY. I'll come with you, Powell. We can split up tomorrow and meet back at this bank by noon.

POWELL. Yeah, have fun hunting for more rabbits, Dunn.

DUNN. We should have never run those rapids. We should have portaged

HAWKINS. Oh Christ

POWELL. Dunn, you know as well as I do that there was hardly a bank along the river all to carry our boats.

DUNN. Why didn't we portage? Tell me, Powell.

POWELL. I didn't want to portage because it was impossible to portage that section of the river.

DUNN. I say we could have tried it. You hardly entertained a very viable option that could have saved us a boat. We have a long way to go yet—

POWELL. We could not have portaged that part of the river.

O.G. We found a bank eventually. We could have found other banks.

SENECA. Why didn't we try to portage again?

POWELL. Oh, you too now?

HAWKINS. Food's up

SENECA. We lost a bunch of shit in our boat. All I'm saying.

DUNN. You didn't want to portage because you're useless when we portage.

POWELL. And I'm not useless when we row, and when there's a man overboard, and when we have to grip walls? If I'm holding on to one thing, I can't hold on to anything else.

DUNN. So tell me, then, Powell, why you are the one in charge of the expedition when you can't execute your own orders?

POWELL. Well. Some of you are here for sport and some of you are here for skill and some of you are here because you get a kick out of

killing bears and some of you are here because it got your ass out of the army on a good note and some of you are here because you have nowhere else to go. You know why I'm here? I'm here because my friend, the fucking PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES, needed a better knowledge of the arid lands of this nation. I am here because I was given a job. And in case you didn't know, it's hard for gimps to get jobs around these parts, so I am going to do this job to the best of my ability. And it just so happens that I've run more rivers than any of you all put together—I did the fuckin Mississippi up and down when I was 17 years old and I've done more tributaries than you can name on BOTH of your sorry hands. If you want to go over what we could have done to save the No-Name, then be my guest. But, instead of that, I am going to focus on the marvelous forethought we put into divvying up most of our supplies between each boat. And I'm going to thank God that none of us perished today, and that none of us broke any crucial bones. All of that is a win, in my book. We won't make it to the end of this expedition if we focus on anything other than wins. So, if you don't want to go down to the wreckage tomorrow, then I'm sure I can rely on one of your fellow crew members to be a good sport. You got your fucking cliff, Dunn. Now how about a nice fucking rabbit dinner.

Hawkins plates up a fine plate and gives it to Powell. Powell passes it to Dunn.

Who's next?

Slow clap from Old Shady.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

2.1 The Next Day

Bradley and Powell climb a jagged cliff to get a better view of the river's course down below. Sumner and Dunn board the Maid of the Canyon and make their way toward the wreckage of the No-Name. A split scene—one on boat navigating a little rapid, one on canyon wall.

MAID OF THE CANYON

SUMNER. I was surprised you decided to come along.

DUNN. There's no good hunting around this part of the river. Too cliffy.

SUMNER. You really don't think we'll find anything?

DUNN. Maybe. A bunch of broken glass. Ope! Ope! Steady!

SUMNER. I don't like having this mood around. Stern. Stern. Steady. You and Powell, you guys should talk

DUNN. The last time we talked, I offered my opinion, he ignored it. And now we've gone and lost a boat.

SUMNER. We're gonna lose a boat now and again. We're on a river. Whoa—

DUNN. Bounce your oar. Balance. We're only still in Utah. We can't sustain—

SUMNER. Steady as she goes. Rocks all over

DUNN. we can't sustain this all the way to the Big Canyon. Not if we're all making it through. Powell just loves the sound of his own ideas.

SUMNER. You two are a match made.

DUNN. What? Oh hey watch the.

SUMNER. Watchin. Watchin. You both just think you're always right.

Most of the time one of you is. Sometimes both of you are
You're both smart people but hey whoa okay this crest is foamy

DUNN. It's gonna pool in a few yards. It's gonna pool. That's why
there's all this foam. If I was leading this expedition—

SUMNER. Nope, you're not leading this expedition. You're here to
row and hunt. I'm here to row, help navigate near-impossible situ-
ations, and survive this so I get to go to Yukon next year.

DUNN. Well yeah but

SUMNER. After that beef last night I'm starting to think there are
two sides. Why are there two sides?

DUNN. Whoa Hey Pooling Pooling

SUMNER. There she is!

DUNN. Hole up! Dock it, dock it. Tie off

SUMNER. Okay easy now easy watch that Easy Steady Hey now

BOTH. Heyyyyyyyy No-Name. Heyyyyy there.

DUNN. She's in pieces. I'll jump in and take a look.

SUMNER. Hey Dunn. There doesn't need to be two sides.

DUNN. Keep that oar near in case I need to grab it.

*Dunn jumps into the water and wades toward the wreckage.
Powell and Bradley scale the ridge to get a better glimpse.
Bradley's already scaled and Powell is bringing up the rear.
Well. He's stuck on the side of the ridge.
Remember that Powell only has one arm.*

POWELL. Can you see them?

BRADLEY. I think they made it to the No-Name sir!

Their boat is tied off the side

How—uh

How you doin

POWELL. ME? Oh

I'm fine

I'm fine

BRADLEY. Are you stuck sir?

POWELL. ME? Noo

no

I'm merely trying to navigate this steep enclave

If I shimmy to the right

I lose my ability to grab that knob to my upper left

If I shimmy to the left,

I lose the foothold on my right

BRADLEY. Do you need my help?

POWELL. No, no.

Just, keep watching the crew down on the river

See if they signal any signs of salvageable rations and the like

BRADLEY. They're—Dunn's disappeared—

Oh! Wait! There he is!

He was inside the No-Name

Dunn's standing now, in the water

Holding

Holding a box

Powell's grip is starting to waver.

POWELL. Uh-huh

BRADLEY. Sumner is waving toward us now!

He looks excited!

Do you think it's the sextants?!

POWELL. Uhh

BRADLEY. Sir?! Are you alright!

POWELL. No, no I'm not

I'm starting to lose my footing here

Bradley, Bradley

I will need your help

BRADLEY. Sir! Can you reach my hand!

POWELL. No, no I can't Bradley

If I stand on my tip-toes I can clutch the rocks better

But unfortunately it seems that

My toes are getting tired

And if my toes get tired I will fall backward

Down the ravine

About 60 to 80 feet

BRADLEY. Sir! I'll help you! I'll

Bradley looks around, helplessly, for things that could be of use. A branch? A vine?

Aha! His pants!

Bradley takes off his pants

I'm taking off my pants sir!

POWELL. Oh!

BRADLEY. I'm going to pass the end to you and you'll grab hold and I'll hoist you up!

POWELL. Yes, okay. Hurry

Bradley clutches one pant leg and passes the other down to Powell. Powell grabs hold.

I got it!

BRADLEY. I'm pullin! You got it? I'm pullin!

POWELL. Steady

BRADLEY. There's a rock I'll hoist with my leg

POWELL. Hold tight

BRADLEY. Holdin tight. Okay! Up! Up! Up!

POWELL. Almost there!

BRADLEY. ALMOST THERE You're over! Hey!

POWELL. HOOO!

Powell scrambles over the edge of the ridge. He pants and Bradley pants. They both clutch pants and the earth.

BRADLEY. Hey! Look! They're both waving!

As Powell regards Dunn and Sumner down there, they hold up their findings with triumph.

POWELL. (Peering.) Looks like...tin...flour tins

And a sack of...sack of something BACON MAYBE?

And a box—yes Bradley, you were right those were the sextants

Thank God

And barometers

Dunn hoists a barrel in the air. Perhaps the most triumphantly of all!

And...a barrel, full of...could it be?

BRADLEY. Is that?

The Full Company (except Goodman, who is somewhere fishing) emerges to sing!

ALL. WHISKEY!

Whiskey whiskey whiskey whiskey—whiskey whiskey whiskey

Found the whiskey, Drink the whiskey

Whiskey! Whiskey! Whiskey!

Drink the dram, Dram the drink

Whiskey whiskey whiskey

No-Name had the whiskey and Now we have the whiskey!

The whiskey band disperses, and all that is left is the image of Goodman on the side of the river, holding a rod. Goodman is alone, and So British.

GOODMAN. Oh Hallo! A little fish!

Oh hello fish!

A lovely day...

TO BE EATEN! HA!

Hello SCHOOL of fish

I am going to CATCH YOU IN THIS SACK!

HA HA!!!

LITTLE FISHIES

In my sack

Burlap is a lovely color on you, fishies

And soon you'll all live in my stomach

MMmmm

mmMMMMmm

I will eat you

If only I had a crisp Muscadet

And I was sunning myself in Marseille

The summers there, you know

They are absolutely divine

Everyone walks around in swimming trunks

And their skin is crispy with sunning

And they drink Muscadet with their oysters

And it's all very civilized

And there are finer things

That people wear, and celebrate

It's different there, than here
Isn't it, fishies?
People don't risk death
In Provence
Other than trying a strange bouillabaisse
My brother hates the French
But I love them
I think I would like to go back
I don't think my life should end
Without another walk on the beaches of Marseille
What do you think, Fishy?
Think, fishy. Think!
Into my sack you go.

2.2 Dinner

Goodman is very pleased with the fish haul. Hawkins cooks fish.

GOODMAN. I used the sack. Dunn's Sack Method!
It worked as good as ever
HALL. Goodman, you're a champ. Keep em comin, Hawkins.
HAWKINS. Hand me some whiskey, Sumner!
SUMNER. If Dunn'll ever finish
DUNN. "The perfect pour" okay I'm done
SUMNER. Thank Christ
*Sumner pours. Dunn gets up and sits with the Howlands.
Kind of an aside:*
O.G. You pour a mean cuppa whiskey, Dunn.
DUNN. Well, we're all soaked through, we deserve a little pick-me-up
O.G. We coulda used you out there on that hunt today, Dunn.
SENECA. We couldn't get a clear hit on anything. Good thing
Goodman used the sack

O.G. Or we'd all be starvin.
DUNN. We'll go on another hunt soon. Too cliffy around here.
(*Calling out.*) Hey, Hall? When do the cliffs level out?
HALL. They don't. It's this or higher 'til we get to the Big Canyon.
SENECA. Today Oramel and I built the fire and watched over the camp
And when we were gathering wood we found a few old pots and pans
And splintered siding that looked like the siding of an old boat.
O.G. We believe it is the remains of Ashley's crew
SENECA. Are you reading the omens? 'Cause we are. Loud and clear.
DUNN. I don't do omens, Howland brothers. I do forethought. I make plans.
Hey. Here they come.
Someone rustle up a plate for Powell!

Then Bradley and Powell come a-rustling through the brush!

DUNN. What took you guys so long?
POWELL. I almost fell to my death on the mountain ridge.
Very exciting stuff!
Bradley took off his pants and saved me.
HALL. Holy shit. Bradley! Hawkins plate Bradley the biggest fish from the sack.
HAWKINS. Oh you mean Frank? Frank's all yours, Bradley. Eat up!
BRADLEY. Alright!
POWELL. Yes, Bradley, eat Frank the fish!
I am glad for this joyous air that we all harbor tonight
And I hope we can return to occasions like this
In times of strife
In order to replenish our spirit's coffers when they run dry
HAWKINS. May we never run dry again.

They drink.

OLD SHADY. (*A little song.*)
Dry dry dry
Water runnin dry
Whiskey runnin dry

Dry eyes Dry
In the place where it's wet
It's where you can always bet
That you will soak through
And the soak will soak through you
Comin up dead
With a rock bashed in your head

POWELL. Thank you, Shady.
Hall, after dinner let's go over the maps
It's going to be a big day tomorrow
Keep in mind that we will all be three and four to a boat now
So we must keep our bearings and maintain our focus.
DUNN. Bearings! Focus! Anyone else have anything to contribute?
GOODMAN. Well, I—
Well...
No, never mind. I'm alright.
SENECA. Wanted to say something, British?
GOODMAN. No, no. It's nothing.
O.G. You're all red in the face
GOODMAN. It's probably the from the spirits
O.G. You believe in ghosts?
GOODMAN. No I meant the spirits, the whiskey, the liquor you know
O.G. Oh.
I believe in ghosts
DUNN. So, nothing you wanted to say then, Goodman?
GOODMAN. Well, I guess I will say—here's to an excellent run on
the river tomorrow!
ALL. HEAR HEAR!

*They drink.
Goodman regards them all, a little removed from it.*

2.3 On the Boats

With the loss of the No-Name, every boat is a little more crowded than before.

Goodman moves to the Emma Dean, O.G. Howland moves to the Maid of the Canyon, and Seneca Howland moves to the Kitty Clyde's Sister. The updated boat roster:

<u>Emma Dean</u>	<u>Maid of the Canyon</u>	<u>Kitty Clyde's Sister</u>
DUNN	O.G.	BRADLEY
GOODMAN	HAWKINS	OLD SHADY
SUMNER	HALL	SENECA
POWELL		

The Men on Boats, trying to pull the Emma Dean out of a whirlpool swell.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Rocks! Rocks! A maze of rocks!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER & MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Rocks!

EMMA DEAN

DUNN. Whoa, they're everywhere
SUMNER. Keep on em. Balance off the rocks with your oars
POWELL. Balance! Rocks! Tread lightly, my crew!
DUNN. Sumner you balance with your oar I'll balance with mine
Goodman? Look alive
GOODMAN. Sorry which side should I—
SUMNER. Just row.
DUNN. Not too fast!
SUMNER. Go slow through this pass. Slow
DUNN. Slow
GOODMAN. Slow!
DUNN. Rock, rock, rock,
SUMNER. Rock, rock, rock

POWELL. Steady as she goes!

DUNN. Rock, Rock—Shit! Oh, shit! Oar Lost!

POWELL. DUNN

DUNN. It just—ahhh

GOODMAN. Oar Lost?? Oar Lost??

SUMNER. Grab it!! Grab it!

DUNN. It's Gone! It's Gone! Goodman give me your oar

GOODMAN. What about rowing?

SUMNER. Navigating is more important

GOODMAN. It's too crowded!

SUMNER. Stop freaking out

POWELL. Rocks! ROCKS—MORE ROCKS

DUNN. Throw me a goddamn oar

POWELL. We're ABOUT TO HIT—

Emma Dean hits some rocks and gets wedged between. It's very jolting. The River continues to rush.

GOODMAN. shit.

DUNN. We're caught!

POWELL. EMMA DEAN IS CAUGHT BETWEEN ROCKS

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER & MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. EMMA DEAN!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. grab the wall!

HALL. Headin toward you, Emma Dean!

HAWKINS. We should pass em, in case

HALL. You think they're gonna turn over?

HAWKINS. The current is strong

HALL. Shit. Row! Row! Row!

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. We have to act fast or the current will overturn us

DUNN. LINE

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. PASSING LINE, EMMA DEAN!

EMMA DEAN

GOODMAN. We're stuck we're tipping

POWELL. Look alive! LINE

DUNN. LINE!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Grab the LINE

EMMA DEAN

GOODMAN. shit

POWELL. Balance! Balance! LINE!

DUNN. Got it!

ALL. And pull

GOODMAN. shit

SUMNER. We got this! Pull

GOODMAN. Shit, we're tipping

SUMNER. Line

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Passing Line.

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. Got it. PULL

DUNN. pull!

GOODMAN. The water is rushing us from the other side

POWELL. I can balance us out

SUMNER. Dammit, we're jammed in here! PULL

DUNN. pull! pull

MAID OF THE CANYON & KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. pull!

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Steady! Keep Pulling!

DUNN. I'm Pulling!

GOODMAN. SHIT WE'RE TIPPING MORE!

SUMNER. Whoa—whoa whoa this is not good

MAID OF THE CANYON & KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Emma Dean! PULL PULL—NO! EMMA DEAN OVERBOARD

The Emma Dean overturns. All spill into the water.

ALL BOATS

ALL. Look alive! Look Alive! LOOK ALIVE!

HAWKINS. WHERE ARE THEY

ALL. THERE THEY ARE

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. Here comes Dunn!

HALL. Grab him!

IN THE WATER

SUMNER. Help

GOODMAN. shit

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. Fuck! Fuck! The Flour! Emma Dean had the flour!

HALL. Dunn! Dunn! I got you!

Hall thrusts a hand out into the water. He pulls Dunn onto the boat.

DUNN. Hall! Thank you!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Guys! Guys!

OLD SHADY. JOHN WESLEY!

IN THE WATER

POWELL. SHADY! I'm—

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Hey guys!

SENECA. Wait, Sumner! There he is. SUMNER

OLD SHADY. JOHN WESLEY! JOHN WESLEY!

SENECA. Sumner! Sumner! C'mere buddy come on

Seneca grabs Sumner by the bicep and pulls him up.

SUMNER. The b-b-boat t-t-tipped too much.

SENECA. Shhhh you're okay.

SUMNER. Where's Powell??

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. Powell!

IN THE WATER

POWELL. Hawkins!

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. Hawkins stop thinking about the flour and Grab Powell

HAWKINS. Powell! Powell! I got your shirt!

Hawkins grabs Powell by the shirt and yanks him aboard.

POWELL. Hawkins

Cough.

where's Goodman

HAWKINS. I don't know I don't know. Sumner who's got Sumner

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. I'm okay I'm Seneca got me

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. I got Dunn

DUNN. Fuck I'm COLD

HAWKINS. Goddammit.

HALL. Calm down, we're out

POWELL. We have to find Goodman. Bank.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Bank

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. Kitty Clyde

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Here

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. Maid of the Canyon

ALL. Here

POWELL. Emma Dean?

HAWKINS. You guys the flour is gone. Emma Dean had all the flour.

HALL. Hawkins. I can see the *Emma Dean*. She's not far gone. She's still afloat. She's upside down.

HAWKINS. Oh my fucking God.

HALL. Say it after me. The Flour Will Be Fine

HAWKINS. The Flour Will Be Fine.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. I see Goodman!! He's on that rock!

SENECA. Rock! Head toward the Rock!

OLD SHADY. Goodman's okay!

SUMNER. Goodman! How you holding up!

ON A ROCK

GOODMAN. To be honest! Sumner! I've been better!

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. We're heading to you Goodman! Emma Dean, the boat named after my wife. We will have to assess the heartbreaking damage.

2.4 Goodman chooses to leave the mission.

Around the fire at dusk. Hall and Bradley are lining up the provisions they were able to rescue from the Emma Dean. The boat itself is onshore, upside down, drying out.

POWELL. Are you prepared to make that decision, Goodman?

GOODMAN. I am. Twice we have capsized, and twice I was onboard the lost ship

POWELL. But the *Emma Dean* isn't lost. She should be perfectly navigable once she's dried out and patched.

GOODMAN. Fearing for my life twice in one week doesn't bode well for the rest of my trip

DUNN. You're an adventure man, Goodman. Surely you must have known that excitement like this would be part of the thing!

GOODMAN. I am an adventure man by sport, not by livelihood. I adventure up until the risk outweighs the benefit

POWELL. Have we offended you in some way?

GOODMAN. Allow me to explain:

I was blessed with a fortune that allows me to travel widely
And on my will

And suddenly I find that this mission is no longer my will

You are all employed by the nation

To conduct this mission!

I was here for the splendour

The colours of the rocks

And I've seen quite enough of them.

DUNN. We did lose another sack of flour

POWELL. Dunn! Insensitive.

DUNN. Goodman's right. Our rations are diminished
By abandoning now he saves us like a month's worth of food

POWELL. Dunn! Goodman we would never suggest that you could eat a month's worth of food by yourself.

GOODMAN. And with one boat down

You saw what happened out there. One boat loaded up to four? It didn't make sense. We were all bumping into each other. We were uncoordinated.

I think my mind is made up here.

POWELL. Okay.

BRADLEY. (*Eavesdropping.*) So...how does he leave?

POWELL. Excuse me? Bradley? Eavesdropping?

BRADLEY. Where does he go? If he's to "abandon" the expedition

POWELL. Let's not say "abandon," let's say "excuse himself from"

GOODMAN. Yes. Yes I like that.

Let's say I have concluded that I will not go on with the party.

DUNN. Admirable

BRADLEY. So where do you go? Do you just walk up that way? Where do you go?

POWELL. Well. The Ute tribe has a township up there. We could visit them, and they could show Goodman toward some nearby Mormon settlement

GOODMAN. That sounds wonderful.

POWELL. Sumner! Sumner!

Will you take Goodman and I up to the Utes tomorrow?

SUMNER. (*He's far away like gathering brush?*) Uh...yeah

POWELL. (*To Goodman.*) Sumner speaks Ute.

Dunn, you'll stay here and watch over the camp?

DUNN. We have oars to make and flour to sift. We'll be plenty busy.

POWELL. Alright. Well, then Goodman.

Let's tuck in to our last supper together

On this journey, anyway

Hawkins? What's for dinner?

HAWKINS. Apples. Apples and corncakes.

He puts a modest pot of boiled apples in front of them, and a plate of small-ish biscuits.

They may be dangerously low on food.

Eat up. You especially, Goodman.

They begin to eat. Powell sits next to Dunn.

POWELL. I thought I did a pret-ty good job.

DUNN. Well, it was my idea to let him go

POWELL. Well I approved it after hearing out many facets of the story

DUNN. You gonna eat that corncake? 'Cause I might eat yours, if you don't want it.

POWELL. No, no. I'll eat it.

When I return to camp, after dropping Goodman off,

Would you like climb that hill and name stuff with me?

DUNN. No. I have too much to do.

POWELL. Okay. I'll bring Old Shady then. He loves the outdoors.

Old Shady, off in the distance, a tree in the breeze.

2.5 The Ute Reservation Atop the Hill

Sumner, Goodman, and Powell sit in the shade with the chief of the Utes, Tsauwiat, and his wife, The Bishop. The Utes' composure and wry awareness starkly contrasts the explorers' bumbling and stumbling. The Utes may not choose to express their opinion of the Men on Boats freely, but that opinion hangs in the air, potent. This, after all, is their turf.

POWELL. It's really nice up here.

THE BISHOP. Thanks

POWELL. And you guys speak English so w—

THE BISHOP. We learned a long time ago. When we started land negotiations with white people.

POWELL. Oh wow. Cool.

THE BISHOP. Yeah it was cool. They let us keep our birth lands, so we were pretty stoked.

TSAUWIAT. Yeah we were pretty stoked, yeah. "The Generosity," you know?

Tsauwiat and The Bishop just stare at Powell.

SUMNER. Chief Tsauwiat, where is the nearest Mormon settlement?

TSAUWIAT. Heh. Mormons.

THE BISHOP. Heh! Mormons. Heh!

TSAUWIAT. Mormons! Heh.

THE BISHOP. When someone in our tribe dies, we burn their houses down with all their belongings inside. Mormons started coming around telling us how weird that was. Do you think that's weird?

POWELL. No.

TSAUWIAT. What do you do with your dead?

POWELL. We put their bodies in caskets.

TSAUWIAT. Oh caskets. Oh yeah totally. In the ground? That's so chill.

Silence.

SUMNER. Well or you know sometimes in cold climates the body freezes and mummifies. I call it Nature's Casket.

Silence.

THE BISHOP. Yeah.

Mormons live like a day away, north

We can give this guy a horse. What do you say, Guy?

GOODMAN. I will be forever indebted.

THE BISHOP. Yeah sure yeah indebted. We'll give you a horse. No problem

TSAUWIAT. You guys need anything else?

POWELL. No I think that's—

TSAUWIAT. You're not hungry or anything like that?

THE BISHOP. Starving or anything like that?

SUMNER. Well, now that you mention it, you all have several crops in the area, yes?

THE BISHOP. Yeah, we grow a lot of veggies and things. Corns and things.

POWELL. Well, yes, Sumner, that is an excellent point. Our boats have capsized and we've lost a lot of provisions—

TSAUWIAT. Oooh. wow. That's unexpected, huh?

THE BISHOP. Yeah, how were you guys planning on dealing with that?

TSAUWIAT. You guys have a contingency? or...

The explorers shake their heads.

No? That's

THE BISHOP. We thought you were "Professional Boat People."

POWELL. We are sanctioned by the government to survey the lands—

THE BISHOP. Oh cool. The Government

TSAUWIAT. The Government. Wow. Pretty official.

And so the Government didn't give you guys a contingency plan or really any sort of safety net in the event of lost provisions, which, let's face it.

Probably pretty inevitable considering that water takes the boat men, water catch-em, water heap-em. Which, you know.

Something my grandpa used to say.

But yeah. I mean, we got crops and things.

THE BISHOP. Yeah we got some squash we could lend you.

Some pumpkins and stuff. Carrots. Personal crops.

That enough for you?

TSAUWIAT. Yeah melons, turnips, potatoes

You can take a bunch of that.

That enough for you?

THE BISHOP. We'll give you good stuff. But you know, if you're desperate,

we got another friend, Johnson

TSAUWIAT. White guy. Ute wife. White guy.

THE BISHOP. His farm is unharvested, he's a trader.

You could go and take whatever you like from his crops but

Lemme warn you though

It's uncultivated

It could be really rotten

TSAUWIAT. Really really rotten. That enough for you though?

THE BISHOP. Yeah. That enough for you?—

POWELL. We would love to survey Johnson's crops as well.

SUMNER. Thank you, Chief Tsauwiat. Thank you, The Bishop

THE BISHOP. Yeah, you're welcome.
 I'll get a sack ready for you of good stuff.
 Remember the stuff I give you is good
 The stuff you take from Johnson's, who knows
 POWELL. Goodman. Best of luck to you.
 GOODMAN. Thank you, Powell
 SUMNER. It's getting late. Time to head back.

Sumner walks off, no goodbye. Powell salutes Goodman one last time, follows out. Goodman watches them head toward The Bishop's crops.

GOODMAN. Well, then
 TSAUWIAT. Sounds like you made the right decision. To get out while you can.
 GOODMAN. Well I am, yes, I'm very—
 TSAUWIAT. My son is bringing your horse over. You can go meet him out back.

Tsauwiat leaves. Goodman thinks maybe he will remark on the pleasures of his trip, but in fact, he decides to just get moving.

2.6 The Mouth of the Little Colorado

The boat roster now that Goodman is gone:

<u>Emma Dean</u>	<u>Maid of the Canyon</u>	<u>Kitty Clyde's Sister</u>
DUNN	HAWKINS	OLD SHADY
SUMNER	HALL	SENECA
POWELL	O.G.	BRADLEY

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

OLD SHADY. I think the potatoes were bad
 BRADLEY. Are you okay?
 OLD SHADY. I'm okay. Ride along the wall
 BRADLEY. It's shifting
 SENECA. Shifting. Steady.

BRADLEY. Holy Cow! The walls are rising
 SENECA. Watch what's in front of you Bradley.

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. Emma Dean looks good all caulked up
 DUNN. A little rusty, but

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Ha! Caulked up!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. She Looks Good all caulked up!
 HAWKINS. Hey Powell, your wife, she's lookin good

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Shut up about my wife and look ahead, all of you
 It's about to get rough. Hug the wall

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

OLD SHADY. hug the wall
 SENECA. hug the wall
 OLD SHADY. Balance.
 SENECA. Bradley, keep center. Keep on the wall
 BRADLEY. Should I keep center or keep on the wall
 OLD SHADY. BOTH

EMMA DEAN

DUNN. Up ahead! Rapid!
 POWELL. It's coming on fast!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Yikes!
 SENECA. Rock bed!
 OLD SHADY. Oar Down! Oar Lost!
 SENECA. Bradley! Keep your oar to the side!
 BRADLEY. No I thought I was center!
 SENECA. Shady just lost his oar move to the side
 BRADLEY. Okay wait whoaooooah

Bradley begins to lose his balance

SENECA. Bradley? Steady. Bradley Wait. Bradley stop. Bradley stiffen up

OLD SHADY. Bradley!

BRADLEY. Whoaaaaoaoaoaoaoaoaoaaaa

Bradley falls overboard.

ALL. Bradley Overboard!

EMMA DEAN

ALL. Bradley Overboard!

SUMNER. Does anybody see Bradley!

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. I see Bradley, get some lines to Bradley! Bradley—

Bradley's head emerges from the water.

OFF THE SIDE OF KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. I'm overboa—

Bradley goes back under.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Kitty Clyde slow down

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SENECA. Too fast our boat is going too fast we can't slow down
Bradley is dragging

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. Seneca calm down.

Old Shady attempts to save Bradley.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

OLD SHADY. Bradley! Bradley! Hang on Bradley! I have rope. Rope?
Rope! I have rope! Shit! Sand. Sand in my eye. Ow, wait hold on a sec

SENECA. Bradley—seize the gunwale

OLD SHADY. Bradley! Can you hear me? Granite! It's granite!
Slick as ice—

Ashley! Ashley! just hold on! Hold on!

Bradley's head comes up!

OFF THE SIDE OF KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. ASHLEY!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

OLD SHADY. Here comes my arm!

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. It's all granite! The water's moving too fast!

DUNN. Powell! Hold on to this! I'm goin in!

POWELL. You can't go in you're steering

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. Shady's muscling it! He's strong-arming it!

Shady is reaching his arm into the water.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

OLD SHADY. Granite! Granite it's granite. Bradley!

Bradley here's my arm! Grab it!

EMMA DEAN

DUNN. It's starting to calm! Hold on Bradley!

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. Shady's got Bradley!

*Old Shady grabs Bradley by the arm and begins to hoist
Bradley into the boat.*

Shady's got Bradley by the hand! Come on, Shady!

Bradley is hoisted back aboard.

HALL. Bradley! Bradley! He's in!

Everybody cheers! And then they're back to navigating.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. (Cough.)

SENECA. Bradley! How ya doin?

BRADLEY. (Cough.)

SENECA. Bradley!

BRADLEY. I'm fine. I'm fine. I'm food—uh I'm fine

OLD SHADY. Sand in my mouth. I got sand in my mouth.

ALL BOATS

ALL. Hey Bradley! Lookin good Bradley! Bradley you look good

Pause. Bradley is panting and soaking wet.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Thanks.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. We have to keep going but there's a gulch ahead where we can catch our breath. Bank

ALL. Bank

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Bank

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Bank

The crew banks and looks at each other feverishly, they look at the ground with love and affection. They never knew how good they had it when they had their lives on solid ground. Hawkins looks up and notices where they are.

HALL. Whoa. Everybody stop. Look up!

HAWKINS. Hooooly shit. Holy shit. Holy shit. Everybody. Look up.

They look up.

ALL. Whoa.

DUNN. I think... I think we're here.

POWELL. The Big Canyon. This is it.

SUMNER. Holy shit.

A silence as they look up, higher and higher and higher. Terror and Awe.

ALL. What a chamber for a resting place is this:

BRADLEY. Hewn from solid rock

OLD SHADY. Heavens for a ceiling

POWELL. Cascade fountains within

SUMNER. A grove in the conservatory

DUNN. Clear lakelets for a refreshing bath

HALL. An outlook through the doorway

HAWKINS. On a raging river

O.G. and SENECA. With cliffs and mountains beyond.

They look up and up. They cannot see the sky. They have reached the big Big Big Canyon.

And who knows how much farther they've to go until they reach the other side?

End of Act Two

ACT THREE

3.1 The Big Canyon

Powell journals on a strange bench. Old Shady is holding a bouquet of grasses, ready to eat them.

POWELL. And now the scene is on a grand scale
Marble walls
Thousands of feet high
Many beautiful colors, polished and sheen
By the waves
Embossed with fantastic patterns
Fretted with strange devices

Old Shady begins to hum under Powell's journalings. A simple tune, hearty and low.

A succession of pools, clear and cool
Ride somehow along the bank of the river
Which runs red with red mud
Perhaps it is a constitution of the water.
We have now crossed onto the Colorado River
We are now in the Big Canyon. It is quite
Grand.
Who knows how much farther we've to go until we reach the other
side?
I do not. My crew does not.
It could be days, weeks, a month.
Until then, we ride! And occasionally, we rest.
Old Shady found a trail today,
Made long ago by some Natives probably
So we took it and found a little bench
And that is where I'm writing this.
The crew is down at camp repairing boats and sussing rations.

Powell stops writing.

Okay, I'm done. Should we head down now?

Shady nods.

3.2 Camp at Dusk

A campfire. It is very small, and Hall and Bradley are trying to keep it together for Hawkins, who holds a little pot over the limp flames.

The Howlands and Dunn are in a corner, poking a stick into the sand like people do when they're drawing their plans out on the ground.

Sumner is lying against a newly stripped and caulked Emma Dean.

HAWKINS. It's dying. It's dying. I need more wood

BRADLEY. We've looked everywhere

HALL. We've got these grasses
I'll go back to the river and see if I can get driftwood

Hall runs off.

SUMNER. You want to burn this boat?

HAWKINS. Ha. Ha.

SUMNER. Nope, don't burn it. We need this boat.

DUNN. What are you trying to make, Hawkins?

HAWKINS. Trying to boil water for coffee

SUMNER. Well, if the fire doesn't go
We can always just chew up the grounds

O.G. and SENECA. Gross.

SUMNER. Have you ever napped all day?

DUNN. Never in my life
I've had a hard rough life

SUMNER. I napped all day once

In a tree
In Montana
DUNN. Good for you.
SUMNER. Good for me. It was the best
I got a strange sunburn from the inbetween of the shadows in the
branches
It was the best.

And then, a little rattle.

BRADLEY. What was that?

HAWKINS. Shh

*A little rattle again. Hall comes running back holding wet
driftwood.*

HALL. This driftwood is wet, but I found a lot of it—

HAWKINS. SHHHHH

*A rattle. This time, the rattle is longerrrrr. Everybody whisper-
talks.*

Does anybody see it?

SENECA. No. No.

No.

Wait.

Yes.

*Seneca points toward Sumner. Indeed, there is a rattlesnake
about four feet away from his leg.*

DUNN. Sumner, don't move

O.G. No Actually, Sumner. Move

SUMNER. Oh, god, it's near me oh god

DUNN. Somebody grab one of the shotguns

BRADLEY. You're gonna shoot at it?

DUNN. I don't know how you kill one of those things

O.G. You take an axe or a shovel and you bash its head in

SENECA. But what if he's not fast enough

SUMNER. Okay okay I'm standing what do I do now

BRADLEY. Quick Someone throw him a shovel

HALL. We don't have any shovels

SENECA. What about an oar?

O.G. I just repaired all the oars, brother, I'm not about to go smashing
one again

SUMNER. What are we gonna do somebody do something help me

The rattlesnake raises its head.

Everybody screams a little bit.

Sumner looks terrified.

Hawkins leaps over the fire, runs toward the snake from behind.

And bashes it over the head with the coffee pot.

Coffee flies everywhere.

*Hawkins beats it and beats it and beats it until the snake is
completely totally dead.*

DUNN. Holy fucking shit

HALL. Goddammit, a man can't even lie on the ground anymore
With all the snakes

O.G. Even solid land is turning against us

SENECA. Too bad we can't sleep in the trees like Sumner

SUMNER. I hate snakes

HALL. Hawkins that was awesome

SUMNER. You saved my life man

HAWKINS. Any time.

Hall, put that driftwood out to dry.

I wonder if you can eat snakes

Hawkins pulls the snake up by its tail.

It twitches.

Everyone screams.

Hawkins drops it.

It twitches and then it's dead again.

Everyone is still screaming.

*Hawkins does a little runaround to shake off the heebie-
jeebies.*

The screaming dies down.

I hate snakes too

And then the sound of marching. Old Shady singing a tune.

OLD SHADY. (*Offstage, singing.*)

It was still water, low
Low and down
Low and brown
Deep deep red
Cut your head
In the water low!

POWELL. (*Offstage.*) Oh, look, Shady
The gang's all here
Hi gang!

Powell and Old Shady enter the camp.

Look what Old Shady killed!

*Old Shady holds up the bodies of two snakes.
Everybody screams.*

Whoa! Hey!
They're dead!

DUNN. We just had an episode with a snake

SUMNER. Almost got me, sir, but then Hawkins killed it

HAWKINS. And then I picked it up but then it twitched
And it was so gross

POWELL. It's fully dead now, right?

Snakes are very poisonous because of their fangs
But when they're dead

They actually make excellent meat!

Let's throw these little shits on the fire and have a feast!

OLD SHADY. How did you kill your snakes?

I knifed mine

HAWKINS. I hit it over the head with the coffee pot

OLD SHADY. I'll call you The Killer of Snakes

HAWKINS. This is the first time you and I have ever had any sort
of exchange

Old Shady nods, smiles. Pats Hawkins on the back.

OLD SHADY. The Killer of Snakes.

HALL. The fire's on!

DUNN. I'd like to call us all together please?

POWELL. Alright crew, let's gather.

The crew gathers around the tiny fire.

DUNN. Today, before repairing boats,

I ran the remaining flour through a mosquito sieve

To separate the good flour from the moldy flour.

We have about a quarter of what we thought we did.

POWELL. Yes, right, food is quite pertinent in regards to our survival—

DUNN. We are running out—

POWELL. So HAWKINS. Inventory. Update us. Take it away.

HAWKINS. Great. So our food count.

Dunn's right. We are low on flour.

Hall helped me dry the spoiled bacon

We reboiled much of it so it should be okay to eat

No promises

So, about ten tins of shit bacon left.

We dried up some of the apples so we could store them better

So, apple chips

About three sacks

And one half sack of regular apples.

No sugar

It's all melted into the water by now

Coffee. We have a lot of coffee

Although I just lost about a half pound of it killing that snake

But we have plenty of coffee. So, drink your coffee.

We have three snakes for snakemeat

But those will be gone after tonight.

And some sheep jerky from that big haul three nights ago

But O.G.—

O.G. I'm sorry

I ate a bunch of sheep jerky

In the middle of the night

Last night

I'm sorry.

DUNN. I would like to bring something else up.

POWELL. Okay. Dunn.

DUNN. O.G. and Seneca and I have made some estimates.
As to our coordinates, and the rations we currently hold:

SENECA. We have about a five percent chance of survival.

POWELL. You made some estimates. Can I see them?

DUNN. I drew them in the ground over here.

POWELL. Well that sounds presentable—

DUNN. Hall, can you tell me your estimates on how long it'll be
before we make our way out of the Canyon?

HALL. Based on my estimates, we could be on the river in the Big
Canyon here for another three to six weeks.

ALL. Three to six weeks?

POWELL. Those are estimates, of course. They are merely ESTIMATES!

DUNN. Well you wouldn't bring along a mapmaker whose estimates
are shaky, now would you Powell?

HALL. I don't do shaky estimates.

POWELL. Well we don't have answers. We are on this trip to find
the answers, Dunn. You are getting everybody worked up and
freaked out just because you can't handle it.

DUNN. I can handle a lot of things. I can handle heat. I can handle
shit bacon. I can handle rowing for days. I can handle the hard
truths of this expedition better than you, Powell, so when I SAY
WE HAVE A FIVE PERCENT CHANCE OF SURVIVAL—

POWELL. I SAY FIVE PERCENT IS STILL A CHANCE. Are we
not still alive?

DUNN. If we die, it's on your watch

OLD SHADY. Who's countin if we're all dead?

More quiet. Old Shady continues, which is unlike him.

I saved Bradley
Who saved my brother
Somebody saved you at one point
We save each other.
I'll see you at the end of this
And I'll shake your hand

Before that

I don't care except about what's on the spit
And who's overboard.

I'm gonna eat a snake tonight.

My little brother does a good good job

Where's my snake?

HAWKINS. Almost ready.

POWELL. Okay, guys. Okay.

We are about to hit the Great Unknown.

We are inside the Canyon, now.

It's a very, very Big Canyon.

And we don't really have an idea of how long it'll be until we're out

DUNN. We won't make it out.

*A slight breeze begins to pick up. Old Shady begins to hum.
The moonlight penetrates the darkness.*

POWELL. We've lost rations, that's true.

But that only means that our boats will be lighter

They will run rapids better, faster

With more agility

We will make it through the Big Canyon faster than we think we will

I'm not saying it will be easy

But maybe I am saying that.

*More explorers begin to hum. The crew packs things in boats,
to rhythm. A dance-packing of the supplies. Hawkins throws
the crew pieces of snake, and they eat snake, humming.
Dunn, Seneca, and O.G. do everything with an air of loathing.
They move the boats into place and take their places in the
boats.*

We have an unknown distance yet to run,

An unknown river to explore.

What falls there are, we know not;

What rocks beset the channel, we know not;

What walls rise over the river, we know not.

Ah, well!

We may conjecture many things.

Perhaps you'll die, Bradley

BRADLEY. Perhaps I'll die.
Perhaps you'll die, Shady
OLD SHADY. Perhaps I'll die.
Perhaps you'll die, Hawkins
HAWKINS. Yeah.
Perhaps you'll die, Howlands
O.G. and SENECA. Perhaps.
ALL. Perhaps we'll die.
Perhaps we'll die
Perhaps we'll

3.3 Blinding Daylight

The next day. The Men run the rapids in the Big Canyon.

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. Steady ho
HALL. Let's stop here for them. Bank!
HAWKINS. Do you see them?
O.G. They should get here any minute.
HALL. While we're waiting I'm gonna map a bit ahead.
O.G. See anything
HALL. Narrow, narrow
HAWKINS. Maid is banked! I repeat Maid is banked!
O.G. Here comes Kitty Clyde!
HAWKINS. You're through!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. We're through!

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. Emma Dean is through!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. Wait a minute! Everybody. Waterfall I repeat Waterfall up ahead!

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Waterfall? Let me get a look.

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. See it Powell? It just drops off.

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. There's... It just drops off. We can't portage, it's a cliff a half a mile down. No footholds

DUNN. We can't run a waterfall

POWELL. Yes we can

DUNN. You're gonna have us run a waterfall!?!

POWELL. We can't portage

We must run the rapids or abandon the river!

MAID OF THE CANYON

O.G. I can't—I can't do it I can't

HALL. It looks like the waterfall breaks into little eddies and pools
We can run it! It could be manageable! We can run it! Push off!

HAWKINS. Wait we're goin first?

O.G. I can't! I can't do it!

HALL. I've always wanted to run a waterfall O.G. we're doin it

O.G. Jesus Christ. JESUS CHRIST. SENECA

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SENECA. ORAMEL? ORAMEL!

OLD SHADY. No Seneca! Seneca! Stay calm!

BRADLEY. Oh my God

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Best of luck, Maid of the Canyon!

DUNN. Jesus Christ Powell Jesus Christ

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. Push off

Rock! Rock wave granite granite—slick water, it'll come fast

HAWKINS. Hall I didn't know you were fucking insane

HALL. I don't have time for this! We're gonna be fine!

O.G. Oh God Here we go We're going over

HALL. Keep your head up, eyes ahead

We're goin over HEAD UP, KEEP YOUR EYES AHEAD. OVER!

HAWKINS. Forward forward and here it comes

O.G. We're going over, hold on to something!

HALL. Here we go

HAWKINS. Here we go!

ALL. Ahhhhhhhhhhhh

They go over the waterfall. The Maid of the Canyon crash-lands, but all is safe. They leverage with their oars.

HAWKINS. Over over over We're Over

O.G. Watch out! breaking waves! Hold steady with your oar!
Oar! Hold

HALL. Oar! Hold!

ALL. We're over!

HAWKINS. We're over!

HALL. YES! OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD.

O.G. AHHHH

HAWKINS. HERE COMES EMMA DEAN

Emma Dean goes over the fall.

EMMA DEAN

ALL. aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

They land.

DUNN. Oar! Hold!

SUMNER. Hold it! HOLD, UGH

POWELL. We're over!

ALL. Emma Dean is over! KITTY CLYDE!

Kitty Clyde too.

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. AHHHHHHH

They land it. Everyone is terrified and shellshocked.

ALL BOATS

ALL. HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA. AHHHHHHHHH. WE'RE OVER.

UGH IT'S OVER

EMMA DEAN

SUMNER. I'm gonna be sick

DUNN. Go off the side, I'll steady the boat

SUMNER. Holy shit

Sumner vomits.

DUNN. Should we pause here and catch our breath?

POWELL. Oh, here we go, we're moving now. Sharp turn!

DUNN. Lock in. Steady, stay steady.

POWELL. Left Left Steady Right. Turn ahead! And turn.

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. Dead ahead! Waterfall!

O.G. No no no no

HAWKINS. O.G., stop it

EMMA DEAN

POWELL. Another waterfall. Dead ahead.

They all look out.

DUNN. Another waterfall dead ahead

SUMNER. Oh God

DUNN. We can't run it, Powell, look at Sumner

POWELL. We have to run it. We have no choice. Sumner?

SUMNER. I'm good. Push off!

ALL BOATS

ALL. HOLD TIGHT

3.4 Campfire, Dusk

*Everybody is delirious, tired, cold and hot at the same time.
Everybody is losing it.*

HALL. My maps got wet. I lost a map

SUMNER. Sun is up and so we go. Sun is down and we can't sleep

BRADLEY. Each pair of my pants is wet

All three pairs

Every day we lay them out

Every night we wring them out

SUMNER. I just want to sleep in trees

Sleep on rocks

Sleep in ferns

Sleep on decks

Hawkins lays out the night's food.

HAWKINS. Bacon bad. Throw out bacon. Goodbye bacon. Bye bye
bacon

No more bacon. Only coffee. Only flour. Only apples. Anybody want
an apple?

HALL. Uh...yes?????!!!

HAWKINS. Eat up, vultures. One for you

OLD SHADY. One for you

BRADLEY. Pass em around

O.G. I—I can't. I can't, I hate em. I can't do it! I hate apples! I hate
em! I'm so tired

SENECA. O.G. Now's not the time

O.G. It's never the time It's never the time

SENECA. Shiny apples. Pass em around.

DUNN. Shiny apples

SUMNER. Shiny shiinnnyyyyyyy

HALL. Yessssss

HAWKINS. Apple-y

They take bites. They spit them out

HALL. Mine's mealy

HAWKINS. Mine too

OLD SHADY. Mealy?

O.G. Mealy

SENECA. Shit

BRADLEY. Mine's pretty good

DUNN. *(Cries.)* Goddammit I just want to eat a fucking apple

HAWKINS. Everybody's is mealy?

BRADLEY. There's one good one.

HAWKINS. Let's pass it around. One bite, and pass it.

*Bradley, a little scared, takes a bite and passes the apple to
Seneca.*

Who takes a bite and passes it to O.G.

Who takes a bite and passes it to Dunn.

Who takes a bite and passes it to Sumner.

Who takes a bite and passes it to Old Shady.

Who takes a bite and passes it to Hall.

Who takes a bite and passes it to Hawkins.

Who takes a bite and stuffs the core into a cooking satchel.

*Each bite is just a reminder to each of them how hungry they
are.*

They chew in silence for awhile. They swallow.

SENECA. One time when we were little

Our parents tied our hands to the fencepost

At nightfall and said

O.G. If you can untie these knots and free yourselves

Then you'll survive anything

SENECA. Anything

O.G. and SENECA. Anything

DUNN. Wake up. Ride. No Dinner. Sleep. Wake up. Ride. No Dinner. Sleep.

Dunn walks up to Powell, who is journaling.

Powell, I need to speak with you.

POWELL. Sure, Dunn.

Let me just finish up this sentence.

"Thirty-five miles today. Hurrah."

Okay. Talk in private?

DUNN. No. Here

POWELL. Okay.

DUNN. You are going on tomorrow

POWELL. Yes.

DUNN. As we've done the last two weeks.

POWELL. Yes

DUNN. Another set of waterfalls

POWELL. Well, I would call them more "roadbumps" than waterfalls

O.G. and SENECA. They are waterfalls

POWELL. Yes, okay

DUNN. I will not be joining you

Nor will Seneca Howland

Nor will O.G. Howland.

HAWKINS. What?

SUMNER. What?

BRADLEY. Whoa.

DUNN. We think you will die.

We think you will all die.

POWELL. Let me make some calculations, as to where we are—

DUNN. We will not be joining you.

POWELL. But...we could be so close

DUNN. We have no way of knowing. We are nearly out of food.

OLD SHADY. WHAT ABOUT THE SQUASH
YOU REMEMBER I KNOW YOU REMEMBER

NEAR OUR CAMP WE FOUND SQUASH!
WE FOUND SQUASH SO WE MADE SQUASH!

POWELL. We could be so close

DUNN. O.G. knows of a Mormon settlement on the Rim of the Canyon

HALL. A settlement on the Rim could take days, a week to get to!
The river is the fastest way out, mark my words—

O.G. I can't take it here anymore I can't take it

DUNN. We will leave tomorrow at dawn

POWELL. At least have some breakfast before you go

Dunn considers, hungry.

DUNN. We will leave after breakfast.

POWELL. There's no way to sway your opinion?

DUNN. We will not be joining you.

POWELL. This will be a huge blow to all of us
We've all become like brothers

DUNN. I would not wish this journey on any man
Least of all my brother.

Thank you for your service, Major Powell.

POWELL. But I—

well I—

But—

We could be so close.

Powell looks up at the sky, which peeks from behind the walls.

3.5 Campfire the Next Morning...

Dunn and the Howlands pack their satchels. The rest of the crew watches in silence.

HAWKINS. Okay, I can't stand it anymore.

Finally, Hawkins gets up, rustles through his kit, and pulls out a heaping plate of biscuits.

Everybody gasps.

I made these for you guys.

DUNN. Biscuits?

BRADLEY. Biscuits?!?!?

HAWKINS. You guys should at least take these.

There wasn't much flour left.

But I don't know when you'll see flour again

DUNN. No, Hawkins. I couldn't take any more rations than I've already taken

HAWKINS. Please, take them, Dunn

SENECA. You guys need the strength to keep going here.

You guys keep the biscuits

Right O.G.?

O.G. I wouldn't mind a biscuit

HAWKINS. Take one, O.G.

Take one.

Please.

I made them for you.

O.G. and Seneca take the biscuits. They look in the tin and at their fellow crew members.

They offer the rest of the biscuits to them.

Everybody else runs toward the biscuits. They share. They ravenously eat.

They finish. The tin is empty. People are nibbling on crumbs.

DUNN. We should be going.

HALL. Don't go.

BRADLEY. Don't go. You'll die

DUNN. You have experienced that river.

You know it will kill you

It is madness to set out in this place

O.G. You'll never get safely through it

In a few miles' time you'll have no rations left—

DUNN. And then it will be too late to climb out.

Come with us. Any of you are welcome.

We could be out of the Canyon by nightfall.

POWELL. If anyone else feels as they do,

Feels as though they want to leave

They should do so.

They have my blessing.

DUNN. Would any of you like to come with us?

OLD SHADY. We can't. I'm sorry.

I can't go with you.

BRADLEY. Me, either. I'll stay.

HALL. I'll stay

HAWKINS. I'll stay

DUNN. Sumner?

SUMNER. I'll stay

DUNN. Well then. Alright. It's the three of us.

POWELL. You've kept up a duplicate of the records, Dunn?

With all the names and the accordances?

DUNN. I have, sir.

POWELL. Take one of the shotguns, and take care to shoot one off to signal to us that you've made it to safety

DUNN. We will. You do the same.

POWELL. I'm...sorry it came to this.

DUNN. Me too, Powell.

POWELL. Remember Dunn's Cliff?

DUNN. I got my cliff.

POWELL. You got your cliff.
Well, with our lot down to six, I suppose we will run only two boats from here.
Dunn, if you change your mind,
We will tie off the *Emma Dean* and leave her for you there.
DUNN. Thank you, Powell.

People shake each other's hands.

Alright. Let's go.

*Dunn and Seneca and O.G. Howland leave. The remaining six watch them go.
A silence.*

POWELL. Now that we're down the *Emma Dean*,
We will have to divvy up again. Sumner, why don't you join *Kitty Clyde's Sister* and I'll board the *Maid of the Canyon*.

BRADLEY. Sounds good, sir.

HALL. How does the rest of the run look, sir?

POWELL. We won't be able to tell until we round that corner down there.

SUMNER. Okay. Let's round it, then.

3.6 The Men on Boats

*Sumner, Bradley, and Old Shady aboard Kitty Clyde's Sister.
Powell, Hall, and Hawkins aboard the Maid of the Canyon.
The air is dangerous, and they are all afraid.*

MAID OF THE CANYON

HALL. We can't map very far ahead

POWELL. We have to take each turn as it comes!

Did you hear that *Kitty Clyde*? It's gonna be a bunch of sharp lefts and rights and you just have to go with the river!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. Lefts and rights! Got it!

BRADLEY. Got it!

OLD SHADY. Got it!

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. And keep an eye out for any crests or walls!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. We pushin off?

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. We're pushin off!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. Okay Powell, then, it was nice knowin ya

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. You too, Sumner. You're a true explorer

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. Gee thanks. Hawkins?! Thanks for the grub!

MAID OF THE CANYON

HAWKINS. No sweat off my back! Hey Hall! PARTY BOAT!

HALL. PARTY BOAT! Hey Bradley! You did great kid!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

BRADLEY. Yeah! I'm 19! YEAH!

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. Okay did everybody say bye to everybody yet?
Because I ain't sayin goodbye

I'm sayin see ya down there

Maid of the Canyon—go

ALL. Push off

HAWKINS. Watch your oars!

ALL. Go go go

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. Kitty Clyde, Go.

Push off

ALL. Push off. Go go go

LEFT

LEFT

RIGHT!

LEFT!

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. WALL!

RIGHT!

ROUND THE BEND!

WATCH THAT CREST!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Easy!

SUMNER. Move! MOVE!

ALL. ROW ROW ROW

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. Stop rowing! I REPEAT STOP ROWING

Current is too fast! We have to move with the current and not against it! The river will take us home!

HAWKINS. Hold on tight—EYES AHEAD

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. Keep her steady

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Here we go

POWELL. LEFT

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. Left! Left!

BRADLEY. Left

OLD SHADY. Hold tight!

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. Hold steady!

HALL. Here comes the crest!

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

SUMNER. Rounding bend! Rounding

ALL. Left

MAID OF THE CANYON

ALL. Left left round the bend and left

And then, all together:

ALL BOATS

ALL. Left Steady Steady Left Left Left Left Watch Out

WATCH OUT

WATCH THE WALL

WATCH THE

wall

wait

the wall

wait. the wall.

the wall. is.

BRADLEY. *gone*

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. Bank! Quickly! Bank!

ALL. Kitty Clyde! Cough! Kitty Clyde you there?

KITTY CLYDE'S SISTER

ALL. Yeah! Cough! Yeah! We're here!

SUMNER. Bank!

BRADLEY. Are we banking?

SUMNER. Yeah

BRADLEY. Did we make it?

SUMNER. Yeah

MAID OF THE CANYON

POWELL. My dear crew. We turned the corner. Look.

*The crew looks up ahead of them.
And they see, to their surprise, a valley.
The walls of the Canyon
Flatten out. In no time at all,
They have passed from a threshold of
looming cavernous walls,
oppressive tunneled light, and
disorienting geology
to a distilled, serene skylit scene.
The water hardly rushes here
now
out in the open.
They see, miles away
a spackling of mountains and hills.
They see simple desert brush onshore.
This flat expanse dawns upon them
beyond them
and they realize
The Big Canyon is behind them.
A moment of elated celebration. High fives. Hugs. A tear
perhaps. A guttural roar of conquest perhaps.*

Sumner. Fire the gun.
Let Dunn and the Howlands know that the danger is passed
That we have emerged to Safety.

SUMNER. Yes sir.

*Sumner loads the shotgun and points it in the air.
He shoots.
A loud blast echoes through the canyon behind them.
They wait
The river roars.*

POWELL. Fire it again

*Sumner loads the gun and fires it again
The echoes of the blast die out. Nothing in return. Powell
calls out.*

Dunn!

BRADLEY. Seneca!

SUMNER. Dunn!

HAWKINS. O.G! O.G!

HALL and HAWKINS. O.G.

OLD SHADY and BRADLEY. SENECA

POWELL and SUMNER. DUNN

The river roars.

They wait in silence for hours.

They pray and they look upward,

They cry and they curse, silently.

There is no sign of the three men gone.

*A strange man, Mr. Asa, walks up to them. He wears a nifty
wide-brimmed hat. Mr. Asa seems, strangely, somehow, an
Angel of Comfort. Perhaps a fever dream.*

MR. ASA. Are you the Powell folks?

POWELL. Yes. I am Major Powell.

MR. ASA. You guys are coming from the Big Canyon!

POWELL. Yeah

MR. ASA. You can call me Mr. Asa.

The Mormons told us to keep an eye out for your stuff
Like your wreckage.

The papers all said you didn't make it!

But hey. You're here!

You guys got any tobacco?

POWELL. We're all out.

MR. ASA. Okay.

You guys can come with me and eat some melons with me and my
wife

We live over there.

Just over there.

I'll call for a postman, so he can send a wire

The papers will want to know you survived after all!

What are your names?

BRADLEY. I am George Young Bradley and I was aboard the *Kitty
Clyde's Sister*.

HALL. I am Andrew Hall and I was aboard the *Maid of the Canyon*

SUMNER. I am John Colton Sumner and I was aboard the *Emma Dean*

OLD SHADY. I am Walter Henry Powell and I was aboard the *Kitty Clyde's Sister*.

HAWKINS. I am William Robert Hawkins and I was aboard the *Maid of the Canyon*.

BRADLEY. And there was William Dunn and O.G. Howland and Seneca Howland and they might be coming down any minute now.

MR. ASA. Well, we won't mention them until they've survived officially.

Wow! You made it! Maybe one day I'll find you on a map

HALL. I sure hope so!

MR. ASA. You gonna put em in your book, Major Powell?

POWELL. Oh, I've kept my journals well documented, I—

MR. ASA. Good on you. Alright, let's get you fed.

HAWKINS. So this is it?

MR. ASA. Sure is.

BRADLEY. But what will happen to us now?

MR. ASA. Well, you part ways, to start.

SUMNER. What about Dunn and the Howlands? What about the *Emma Dean*?

Mr. Asa becomes a little wistful.

He can see it all before him.

He attempts to comfort them for the things they don't yet know.

MR. ASA. I wouldn't wait up.

POWELL. But—

MR. ASA. Oh, don't you worry, Major Powell. Don't worry about them! You'll get your job at the State Department. You'll get the pomp, the circumstance, the accolades. Your exploits will be told far and wide.

Your story will outlast even those of your own crew. It won't matter that the bulk of them will end up poor, drifting the desert, dying in taverns, traversing less exciting things. Don't you worry about that.

Because men will name places after you! A forest, perhaps! Or a man-made lake!

You all look so glum! This is about you too, for now! This is your moment! You rode those boats. You made history.

Hey, tell you what. I'll tell my children I met you all here on this bank. Here's where I was, I'll say, when those Powell folks clambered out of the canyon.

Wow, they'll say. Wow.

And the whole crew tipped their brims to me, I'll say! Wow, they'll say!

And the whole crew came over, and we fed em back to health.

And we kept in touch with all of them, I'll say.

They invited me to Washington, I'll say.

They gave me a medal for rescuing the ones that made it out.

I was the reason they all survived, I'll say. It was all because of me.

Were they alive? they'll ask me.

They were alive, I'll say. You were alive. This was your story.

As Mr. Asa says these last few lines, he walks away, caught up in his own reverie.

The walls of the canyon behind them all tower and tower.

And their colors: Vermilion, umber, root, clay

Beat bloody reflection into a halcyon sky.

The crew looks up. They look ahead. Oars out.

End of Play