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The Adventures of Munford
MUNFORD MEETS LEWIS & CLARK

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Darrell and Barbara Johnson, for always encouraging me to follow my dreams.

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Thanks to Bob Drost for the wonderful illustrations of Munford. He is just as I imagined him!

Thanks to my very patient husband for putting up with me when I'm in writing mode, even though dinner is late and there are no clean socks in the house!

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“STOP! STOP!” I yelled loudly. He didn’t hear me. I had been sitting there, just keeping to myself... and then—BAM! The buffalo ran right out of the river. There I was on top of his head, in for quite a ride.

Had the old bull lost his mind? There was really no way to be sure, and there was really nowhere to go, so I just held on for the ride. He barreled along, two tons of meat at full speed. That was when I saw it.

The buffalo was headed straight for a big camp. Several people were sleeping on the ground. They didn’t know what was headed their way.

For a brief second, I took it all in: the smell of wet buffalo, the camp fires reflecting off the tents, the thunder of hooves pounding the earth, the feel of the

air rushing by us.

We were getting closer. I closed my eyes as tight as I could. I just couldn't watch. He came to a screeching halt, sliding for a few feet. What had caused the crazy old bull to stop?

A barking dog ran up to us. He looked small next to the bull. Still, all the barking seemed to work. The buffalo slowly backed away. This was my chance! I jumped onto the closest hat. "Go dog!" I cheered. The buffalo turned around. He sulked all the way back to the river.

I saw that there was a man underneath my hat. He called the dog back into camp. "Seaman! Seaman! Come here, boy!" Seaman as they called him, was a big, black Newfoundland with long, shaggy hair. He came panting up to his master. The man leaned down and rubbed Seaman behind the ears. "Good job, Seaman. Good job! You saved our lives, Buddy."

The other men at the camp all cheered for the dog. "That is one brave dog you've got there, Captain Lewis."

Seaman came and laid at the Captain's feet. "Bought him for twenty bucks."

“Not bad since he just saved our lives.”

“Not bad at all,” Lewis yawned. “Let’s get back to bed, men. We’ve got an early morning tomorrow.” He headed for his tent.

I found what I had been looking for. This was the camp of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. I had arrived at last. Captain Lewis took off his hat and settled into his blankets. I stayed on the hat and started to drift off to sleep...

Please forgive me. I shouldn’t go to sleep yet. I didn’t even tell you who I am. My name is Munford. I am a water molecule, two parts hydrogen, and one part oxygen. I am changing all the time.

Some days, I am a big, wet drop of rain. When it gets cold, I become a hard piece of sleet. I really like it when I am a fluffy piece of snow, but the worst is when it gets super cold. Then I turn to ice and get stuck. That is no fun at all!

When things start to heat up, I become a gas. This is called evaporation. Then I can go anywhere the air goes. I’ll even catch a ride in a cloud. What a way to travel!

I love adventure. I watched as the first pyramid

was built in Egypt. I went to the first Olympic games in Greece, 776 BC. I've sailed with Columbus, painted with DaVinci, and explored with Marco Polo. I keep my eyes open, looking for action.

Action is what led me to Lewis and Clark. I was in the U.S. capital, Washington D.C. Have you been there? It's a lovely city with lots of fun things to do. It was July 4, 1803. I was there to see my Grandpa Gilbert. He had a twinkle in his eye. "I have some news you might want to hear," he said.

"What's that?" I asked.

Grandpa smiled. He knew I was always up for some excitement. "It is top secret. Only a very few know about it."

"About what?" I asked.

"The secret."

"What secret?" I was starting to get upset!

"A group of men are going on an expedition." Expedition is a word that people use to describe a long trip, usually where a lot of exploring is going to be done.

"What kind of expedition, Grandpa?"

"A big one! The men will travel to the Pacific

Ocean, looking for the Northwest Passage.”

“What is that?”

“It is a river that is rumored to cross the mountains in the West. If it is found, we can cross the country by boat rather than land. It would save lots of time and money.”

I sat for a moment and thought. “So where exactly is the Northwest Passage?”

Grandpa leaned back in his chair and chuckled. “That’s the whole point. No one really knows if it is even real. That is why the President has ordered the trip.”

This all sounded pretty cool. I wanted to know more. “Who will be leading the men?”

“Captain Meriwether Lewis. His friend William Clark will help him.”

I had never heard the names before. “Do you think they will do a good job?”

Grandpa paused for a moment. I could tell he was thinking. “They are just the men for the job. It’s going to be a very important trip. Even more now because of the big report today.”

President Jefferson had just bought the



Louisiana Territory for fifteen million dollars. It started at the Mississippi River, ended at the Rocky Mountains, and covered over 800,000 square miles.

The United States doubled in size for only three cents an acre! It was a bargain by today's standards. Still, some thought it was a waste of their hard-earned money. "So, they will be checking out our new land?"

Grandpa nodded. "At least until they reach the Rockies. They will report about the land's resources. We will know if the President bought good land or bad land. They will make maps of what they see. If

they see any natives, they will tell them we now own the land.”

“Resources? Maps? Sounds kind of boring.”

Grandpa sat up straight in his chair. Uh-oh.

“Boring? Boring! These men will be going through strange lands where no American has ever been!

“They could run into wild animals, catch a deadly illness, get attacked by natives! What if they get lost? What if they run out of food?

“They will sleep on the ground and in tents with no house to keep them safe. They will leave their friends and families.

“This is about a lot more than resources and maps. These brave men will be risking their lives. Because of their bravery, others will be able to enjoy the new land. It will become a part of our great country.”

I was hooked. This was going to be the trip of a lifetime. Of course, that was two years ago, before that buffalo threw me right into the middle of the Lewis and Clark camp.