

CHAPTER ONE

“These rapids look fearsome, Captain Sam!” Charles pointed to the burbling stream that tumbled over brightly-colored pebbles and moss-covered rocks.

“It’s nothing we haven’t seen before, Captain Charles,” said his friend Sammy. “What do you think, Captain David? Can we make it through?”

“Yes, sir,” said David, snapping a smart salute. “I scouted it this morning and I believe I found a route we can use. We may make it to the headwaters after all.”

The three friends began to wade up the stream, stepping carefully from rock to rock. The bright



green moss could be very slippery. They knew that from the day before, when David had fallen in and gotten his jeans and sneakers so wet that they'd had to call off expeditioning for the day.

Expeditioning was the most fun they'd had in a long time. It had all started because of the unit they were doing at school. Charles Peterson and his two best friends were all in room 2B, Mr. Mason's second-grade class. Mr. Mason was the greatest teacher. He was funny and nice and he hardly ever yelled. Plus, he always had something exciting planned for them. This month they were studying explorers.

They had learned about Christopher Columbus, who everybody had already known about ever since preschool, but also about people like Amelia Earhart, an aviator who had flown around the world and then disappeared mysteriously, and



Ernest Shackleton, who had explored the icy world of Antarctica.

All the explorers they studied were amazing, but Charles, David, and Sammy agreed: The most awesome explorers of all time were Lewis and Clark. They had traveled across the American West, mapping a route from St. Louis, Missouri, to the Pacific Ocean and learning about the plants and animals and people who lived along the way. Their group, known as the Corps of Discovery, had boated up rivers and climbed over mountains. They had encountered grizzly bears and bison and had every kind of adventure you could imagine.

When Mr. Mason had divided up the class into teams to do reports on explorers, there had been no question about it: Charles and his friends had picked Lewis and Clark. They had started

in right away on their research, and they had already learned a lot.

The expeditioning game had started a week ago, on a sunny, crisp autumn Saturday. They had met at David's house to work on their report. Afterward, they had gone outside to play. "Look," Sammy had said, pointing to the stream that ran along the edge of David's backyard. "It's a mighty river. Should we try to find the headwaters?"

"Headwaters," they had already learned, meant the place where a river began: the smaller streams or springs that added up to a larger flow. The first part of Lewis and Clark's expedition had been to travel up the Missouri River until they found its beginnings.

"It'll be a perilous journey," said Charles, getting right into the game. "We'll need lots of supplies."

"I'm in," said David. "I've always wondered what happens if you go all the way up this stream."

