

# Encounter: Lewis and Clark in Love

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## Lewis and Clark in Love

David Lee sank into his director's chair, pushed the ball-cap back on his head, and rubbed weary hands over his eyes. His darling project was a disaster! Sacagawea had demanded, and received, a fifteen minute break every two hours to breastfeed Pomp; York had refused to sing a spiritual written especially for the movie, citing historical inaccuracy, though David had argued that the absence of any reference in the journals did not mean it *hadn't* happened, and the young warriors who were supposed to be the friendly Yankton Sioux were muttering about "taking back the Black Hills." But nothing had prepared him for finding his two stars rolling around together in the underbrush.

"Lewis" and "Clark" were in love.

Clark had been giving Lewis tender looks for some time, and a couple of days ago he'd had started calling him "Meri." Lewis, always prone to melancholy, had abandoned the dog, his usual sleeping companion, to study maps late into the night with Clark. Charbonneau reported that Clark had drawn a map of the Missouri across Lewis's chest, with the mighty Continental Divide being the belly button, and Lewis's fine cock standing in for their first wondrous glimpse of the Pacific Ocean.

Then the actor who played the unfortunate Charles Floyd, the only member of the Corps of Discovery to die on the trip (ruptured appendix), gleefully reported that Lewis and Clark were butt-naked and screwing underneath an old-growth oak. David and Charbonneau ran to the scene.

“They are in love! You Americans, you are so timid, so weak. The French embrace love! Look at Lewis, do you see the beautiful map drawn on his skin? *Tres magnifique!*” He threw his arms out, and the smell from under his bearskin coat nearly knocked David to his knees. He did not mention to the exuberant Frenchman that his sixteen year old wife, (one of two wives), was on her breastfeeding break, and might require his company. They still had two long winters at camp to get through together.

It was Charles Floyd, deceased, coming up behind them, who mentioned the obvious. “Isn’t that poison oak?”

Lewis and Clark stood before him like guilty schoolboys before the Headmaster. They were slathered with Calamine Lotion and both a little drowsy from the Benadryl.

“You,” he said, pointing to Lewis, “are supposed to be a naturalist. How did you miss poison oak?” He didn’t wait for an answer. “And you,” he pointed at Clark, “are supposed to be the expedition’s mapmaker.” They both turned to look at Lewis, who stared down at his chest. “You don’t know dick about maps. Where’re the tributaries? You made the river look like a hot dog.” They hung their heads, and David closed his eyes, prayed for patience. “Just go,” he said, and watched them walking carefully away over the muddy river bank.

Of course that wasn’t the end of it. Lewis apologized to Clark for missing the poison oak. Clark forgave him with a kiss, which shortly turned French. Next thing the Corps knew, the pirogue they were sleeping in started rocking, waves sloshing over the bow. The small boat began shuddering and thrusting in the water, until with a great cry of release it flipped over, and the captains had to be pulled from the river with stout ropes.

Sacagawea threatened to call her agent, citing an environment inappropriate for a child. Charbonneau called her a frigid twit, and David began to fear that they would never get horses from the Shoshone, never, not after this.

David decided to send Lewis and a small group of men up north to try and find the headwaters to the Missouri. Lewis blushed, glancing at Clark from under his eyelashes, muttered something about swallowing a great mouthful of headwaters. York threw his paddle into the river, said he was going to kick some sorry ass if they didn't shut up.

The young Sioux warriors tried to raid the weapons cache, but Clark just ignored them, doodling in his journals and trying his hand at writing erotic haiku. David had a long talk with them, and they covered many of the injustices perpetrated on native tribes; he reminded them again that a ghost dance, while visually stunning, would not be historically accurate for this picture. He did promise to let them play the Blackfeet, with a further promise that they could kick Lewis's butt before he shot them dead.

The next morning, the Corps of Discovery found Clark gone. It was early afternoon before the headwaters party returned sans Lewis. Where were Lewis and Clark?

The Corps held an historic vote, the first time a woman, a Shoshone, and a slave were allowed to vote in America. The vote was 14 to 2 that they replace their captains with someone else, preferably heterosexuals. York brought forth DNA data suggesting that both he and Clark had fathered children among the native tribes. Sacagawea reminded them all about the ACLU. She suggested that the issue was not sexual orientation, but sexual harassment. She had a copy of the federal definition of sexual harassment, which she read out loud until one of the Sioux warriors counted coup against her upper arm, at which time the meeting dissolved into shouted insults. Finally Charbonneau and the Sioux broke out the whiskey, which had been kept under lock and key for medical emergencies. Even David Lee took a reviving slug.

When the relations among the members of the Corps of Discovery were once again friendly, David Lee set off in search of his stars. He found them sitting quietly

together under a tree. Lewis was drawing a small picture of a prairie dog in one of the journals. He had his foot pressed up against Clark's thigh, and Clark was holding his ankle, enjoying the warmth of his skin, and the sunshine. Clark smiled at Lewis. "You know, I think this is the happiest I've ever been."

Lewis nodded. "Me, too."

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