

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?

Powell

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.

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?

Goodman

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

mmMMMMMmm

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

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!

Hawkins

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

OLD SHADY

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. X

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