

ROAD ALLOWANCE ERA

A Girl Called ECHO

VOL. 4



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Katherena Vermette

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ROAD ALLOWANCE ERA

A Girl Called ECHO

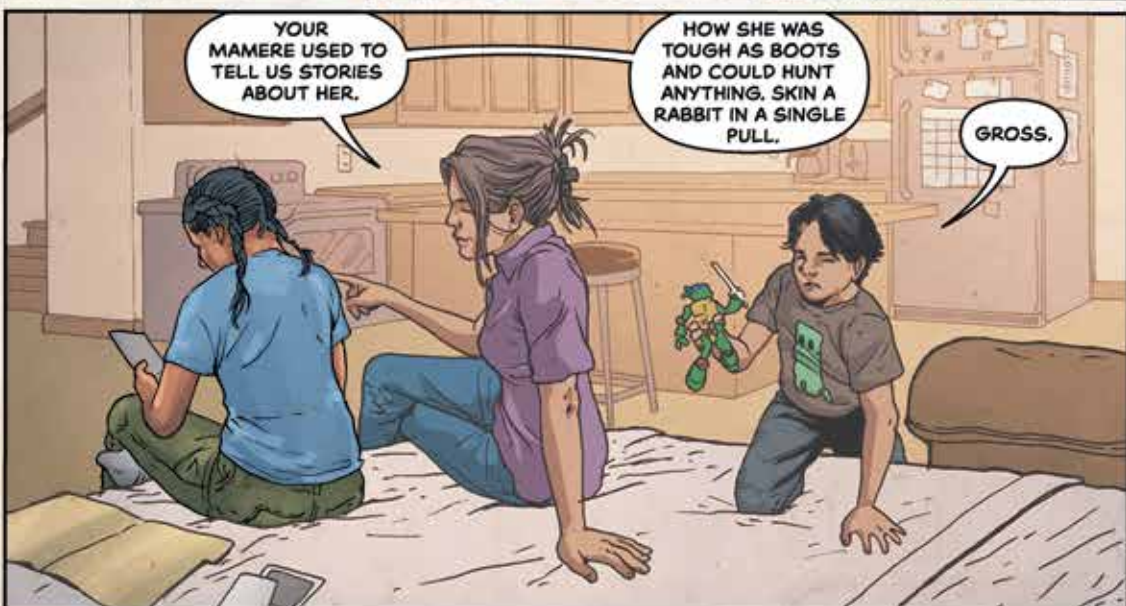
VOL. 4



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By Katherena Vermette
Illustrated by Scott B. Henderson
Coloured by Donovan Yaciuk


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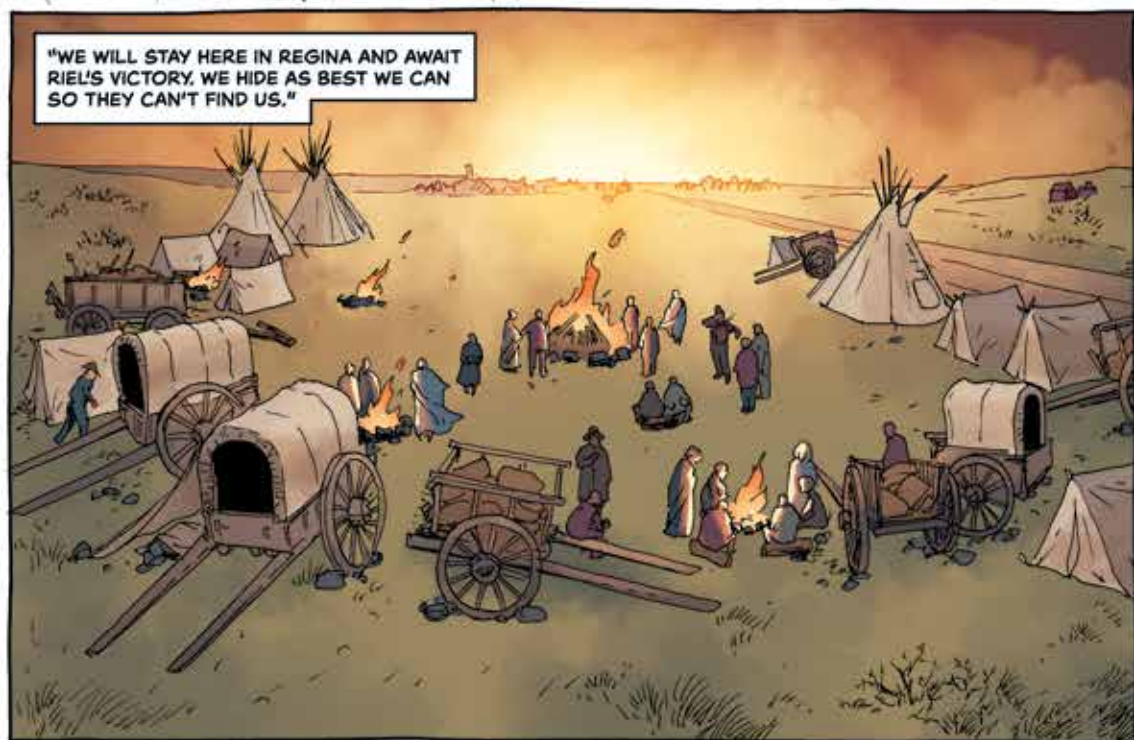




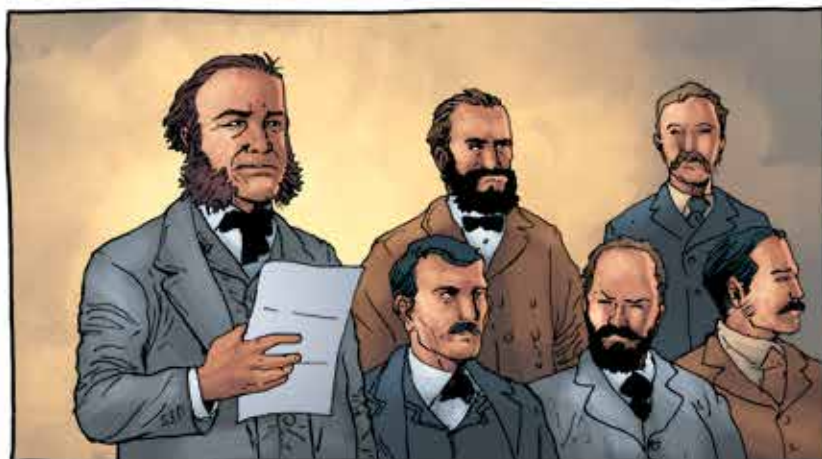
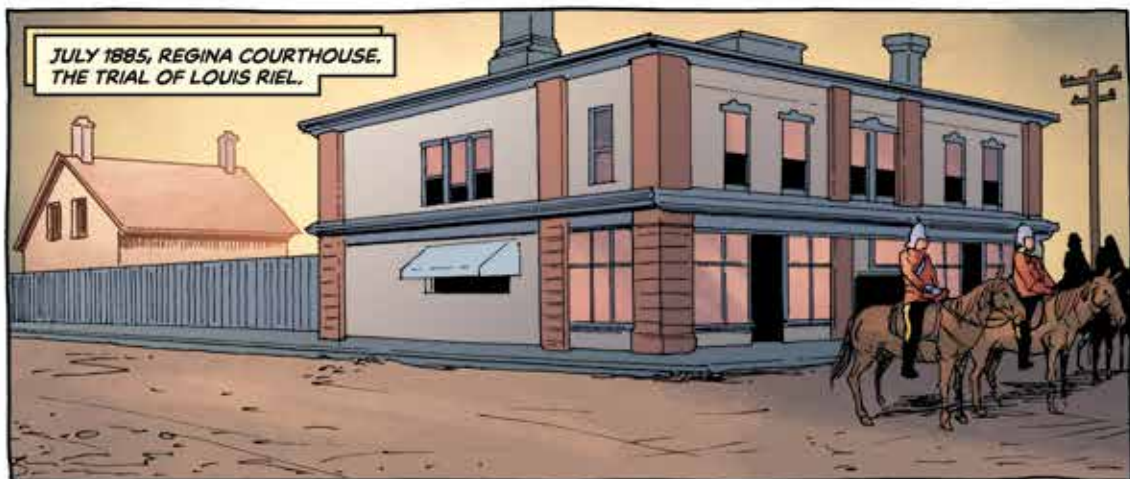


JULY 1885.









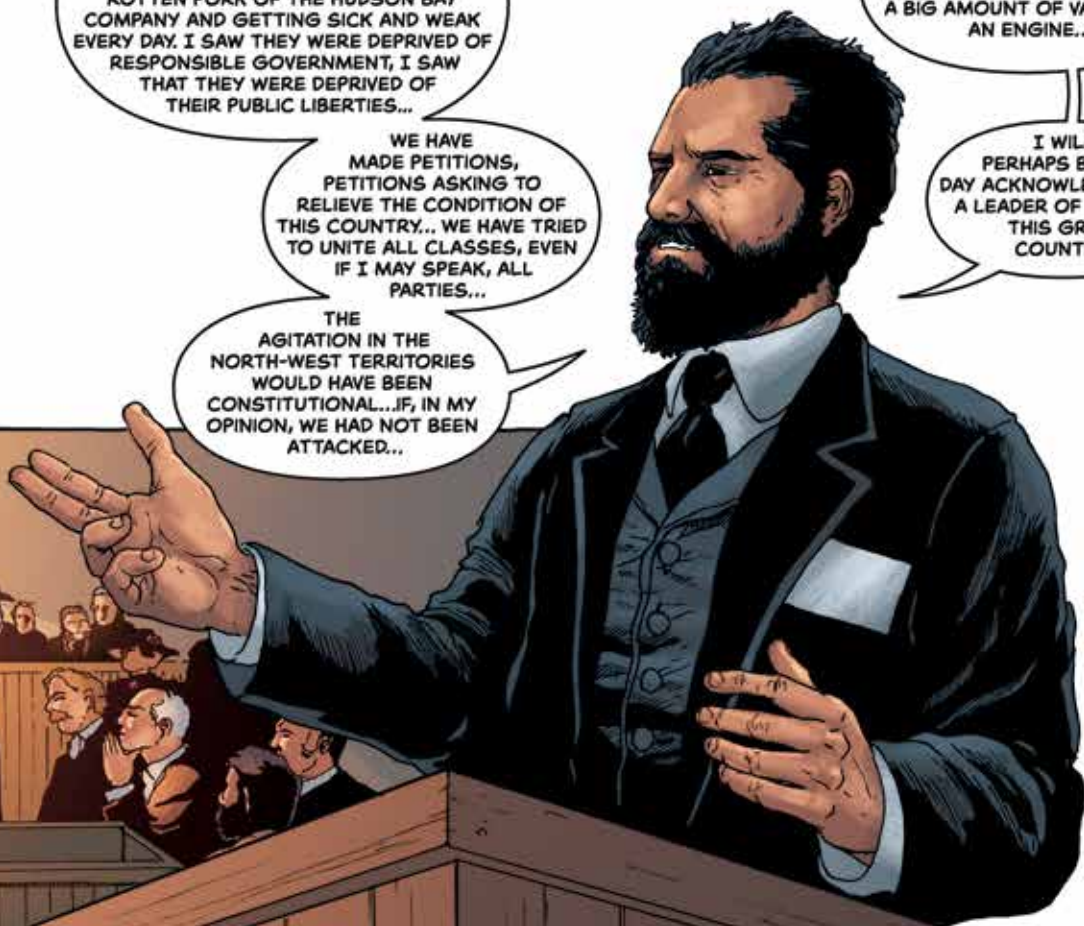
WHEN I CAME INTO THE NORTH WEST IN JULY, THE FIRST OF JULY 1884, I FOUND THE INDIANS SUFFERING. I FOUND THE HALF-BREEDS EATING THE ROTTEN PORK OF THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY AND GETTING SICK AND WEAK EVERY DAY. I SAW THEY WERE DEPRIVED OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT, I SAW THAT THEY WERE DEPRIVED OF THEIR PUBLIC LIBERTIES...

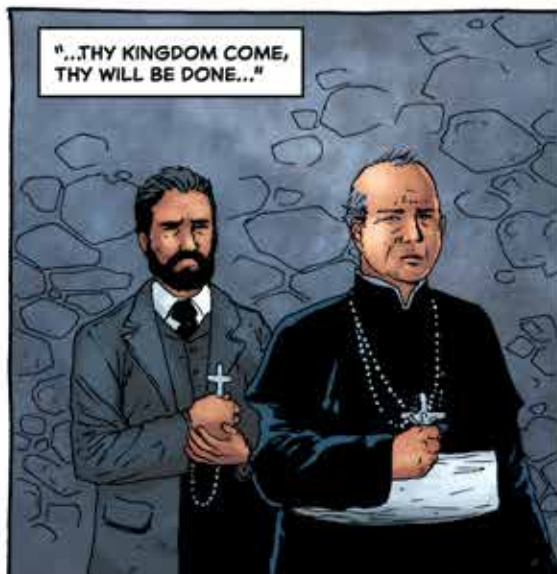
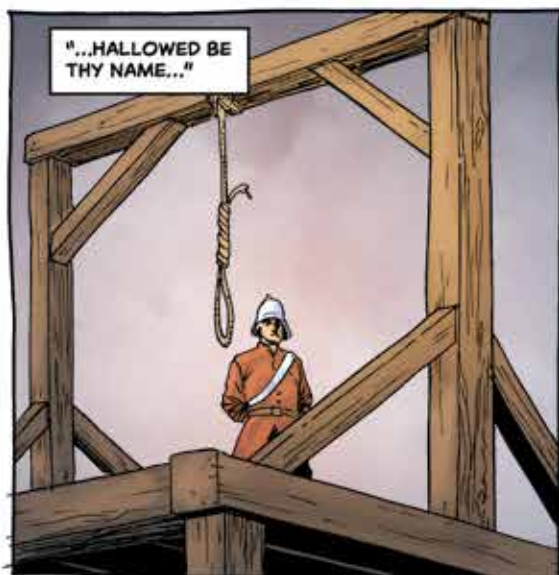
WE HAVE MADE PETITIONS, PETITIONS ASKING TO RELIEVE THE CONDITION OF THIS COUNTRY... WE HAVE TRIED TO UNITE ALL CLASSES, EVEN IF I MAY SPEAK, ALL PARTIES...

THE AGITATION IN THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSTITUTIONAL...IF, IN MY OPINION, WE HAD NOT BEEN ATTACKED...

I KNOW THAT THOUGH I HAVE NO OPEN ROAD FOR MY INFLUENCE, I HAVE BIG INFLUENCE, CONCENTRATED AS A BIG AMOUNT OF VAPOUR IN AN ENGINE...

I WILL PERHAPS BE ONE DAY ACKNOWLEDGED...AS A LEADER OF GOOD IN THIS GREAT COUNTRY...







"...GIVE US THIS DAY,
OUR DAILY BREAD..."



"...FORGIVE US OUR
TRESPASSES..."



"...AS WE FORGIVE THOSE
WHO HAVE TRESPASSED
AGAINST US..."



"...LEAD US NOT INTO
TEMPTATION..."



"...LEAD US NOT INTO
TEMPTATION..."



"...LEAD US NOT INTO
TEMPTATION."

TIMELINE OF THE ROAD ALLOWANCE ERA

1870

The Manitoba Act is passed, establishing the new province, and granting 1.4 million acres of land to the Métis, as well as title to the land already farmed (approximately 2.5 million acres in all).¹

1871

The Constitution Act gives the federal Parliament power to establish new provinces.² Following the two-year reign of terror conducted by the Canadian Expeditionary Forces against the Métis of Red River, many disperse to the West.

1872

April 14 – Dominion Lands Act is passed, providing land grants to individuals, colonization companies, and religious groups to promote settlement of the West. Claims to Métis lands and First Nations reserves, though separate from these lands, continue to be delayed.³

1874–1875

Legislative amendments require those applying for land to prove “undisturbed occupancy,” with the result that many Métis lose their land patents as well as the right of appeal.⁴

1875

After five years’ delay, the Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie appoints representatives to verify land grant claimants. They underestimate the number of Métis children (entitled to land at age 21) at almost 2000 less than the 1870 census.⁵

Between 1873 and 1884, various amendments are passed that work against the Métis, and in favour of new settlers and unscrupulous land speculators. This new legislation, combined with delays in claims and encroaching poverty, force more Métis to become dispossessed and to leave their traditional homelands.^{6,7}

1883

More than 70 percent of the Métis see the land they occupied in 1870 patented to others.⁸

1885

After making adjustments to the allotment, there are still 993 Métis children for whom there is no land. Instead, they each receive \$240 in scrip, redeemable for land.⁹

Following the Northwest Resistance, Louis Riel is executed. The Métis lose their most ardent advocate. Branded as rebels and traitors, and with their hopes for obtaining land dashed, the Métis start to settle on road allowances and railway land, often on the fringes of urban centres. Others purchase homesteads through the Dominion Lands Act.¹⁰

In the late 1880s, frustrated by delays in obtaining their land grants and unnerved by the soldiers of the Expeditionary Force, some Métis families obtain homestead lands. One homestead community is Ste. Madeleine, located on the Assiniboine River in Western Manitoba, near the Saskatchewan border.

1 Ens, Gerhard. “Métis Lands in Manitoba”. *Manitoba History*, Number 5, Spring 1983

2 ibid

3 Yarhi, Eli & T.D. Regehr. “Dominion Lands Act.” *Canadian Encyclopedia*. June 12, 2017; also Mailhot, below.

4 Mailhot, P.R. & D.N Sprague. “Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-1885.” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*. XVII, January 1, 1985

5 *Metis Land Use and Occupancy Study*. Birtle Transmission Project. Manitoba Métis Federation. Prepared by MNP LLP. December 2016

6 Shore, Fred. “The Metis: Losing the Land.” Pamphlet 9. Aboriginal Information Series, Aug. 2006

7 Milne, Brad. “The Historiography of Metis Land Dispersal 1870-1890.” *Manitoba History*, No. 30, Autumn 1995

8 Mailhot & Sprague.

9 *Metis Land Use Study*.

10 Shore, pamphlet 10

1901

Fifteen Métis families move to public land in the southwest corner of Winnipeg, joining six others. Originally from the St. Norbert municipality south of the city, they come seeking work. Their settlement becomes known as Rooster Town. It was also called Pakan Town (Cree for “hazelnut,” a nut that grew abundantly in the area).¹¹

1935

The Government of Canada, in response to severe drought from the Depression, enacts the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act to set up large community pastures for cattle grazing and conservation.

1937

The land on which Ste. Madeleine sits is claimed for community pasture. The inhabitants are informed they must vacate their land. Those who own their land but who were behind on their property taxes, as many were due to the Great Depression, are offered no compensation or alternative land.¹²

1938

The Government of Alberta passes the Métis Population Betterment Act, which creates 12 Métis colonies to address Métis inequities through farming, education, and other initiatives.¹³

1939

Ste. Madeleine is burned to the ground, its remaining citizens forced to relocate. Many move to the road allowance communities of Selby Town and The Corner, near Binscarth, Manitoba.¹⁴

1946

Rooster Town reaches its maximum size of 59 households, with more than 250 residents. However, within the next five years, pressure from the city’s social welfare department and encroaching development compels more and more residents to leave.

1959

The remaining Rooster Town residents are evicted, given compensation of \$75 per family. The homes are bulldozed and burned, and residents disperse to different city communities.^{15 16}

2003

After being charged by conservation officers for hunting without a licence, Steve and Roddy Powley challenge the ruling on the basis of Indigenous hunting rights. The Supreme Court of Canada rules in their favour, and lay out the criteria, known as the Powley Test, on who qualified for such rights.

2013

The Daniels case rules that the Métis are recognized under the section 91(24) of the Canadian Constitution and have a right to be consulted and negotiate with the government as Indigenous people.

11 Peters, Evelyn. “Rooster Town.” *Canadian Encyclopedia*. April 4, 2017.

12 Ibid (Métis Land Use and Occupancy Study); Barkwell, Lawrence. “20th Century Métis Displacement and Road Allowance Communities in Manitoba.” Louis Riel Institute. November 8, 2016.

13 *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Métis*. Royal Canadian Geographic Society, 2018

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid. (Peters, Rooster Town.)

16 Burley, David G. “Rooster Town: Winnipeg’s Lost Metis Suburb, 1900 to 1960.” *Urban History Review*, vol. 42, No.1, 2013.

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Treaty | Territory and homeland of the Métis Nation

Incredibly well-done...blending art, storytelling, and history together in a captivating way for readers young and old.

—NetGalley reviewer

The Manitoba Act's promise of land for the Métis has gone unfulfilled, and many Métis flee to the Northwest. As part of the fallout from the Northwest Resistance, their advocate and champion Louis Riel is executed. As new legislation corrodes Métis land rights, and unscrupulous land speculators and swindlers take advantage, many Métis begin to settle on road allowances and railway land, often on the fringes of urban centres.

For Echo, the plight of her family is apparent. Burnt out of their home in Ste. Madeleine when their land is cleared for pasture, they make their way to Rooster Town, squatting on the southwest edges of Winnipeg. In this final instalment of Echo's story, she is reminded of the strength and resilience of her people, forged through the loss and pain of the past, as she faces a triumphant future.

Road Allowance Era is the final instalment in the four-book graphic novel series, *A Girl Called Echo*.



Author **Katherena Vermette** is a Métis writer from Treaty 1 territory, the heart of the Métis nation, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Her first book, *North End Love Songs* (The Muses Company), won the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry, and her novel *The Break* (House of Anansi) won the 2017 Amazon.ca First Novel Award. She is also the author of HighWater Press's *The Seven Teachings Stories* (2015).
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Since 1998, colourist **Donovan Yaciuk** has done colouring work on books published by Marvel, DC, Dark Horse Comics, and HighWater Press, including *A Girl Called Echo* series and *This Place: 150 Years Retold*. Donovan holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) from the University of Manitoba and began his career as a part of the legendary Digital Chameleon colouring studio. He lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
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Road Allowance Era

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