

katherena vermette

Scott B. Henderson

Donovan Yaciuk

A Girl Called ECHO

A
YALSA Great
Graphic Novel
pick

OMNIBUS



Story by
KATHERENA VERMETTE

Illustrated by
SCOTT B. HENDERSON

Coloured by
DONOVAN YACIUK

A Girl Called **ECHO**

OMNIBUS

Foreword by Dr. Chantal Fiola | Critical Essay by Dr. Brenda Macdougall


HIGHWATER
PRESS



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Treaty 1 Territory and homeland of the Métis Nation

*For my dad.
–katherena vermette*

*Dedicated to Fran Kogan,
my first and most formidable mentor.
–Scott B. Henderson*

*Dedicated to my high school art teacher, Abbas Elias,
who made me believe that anything was possible.
–Donovan Yaciuk*



*We are the free people.
We built this place and we will
always be here. No matter what
they have done to us, we're still here.
We know we will survive.*

Foreword

REMEMBER LEARNING ALMOST NOTHING ABOUT MY PEOPLE, the Métis, when I was in school. What little was shared about us in history textbooks was written and taught by non-Indigenous people and did not have many good things to say about us. It wasn't until several years into university that I finally had a Métis professor and began learning about our stories told from our perspectives. The more I learned, the prouder I became of our matrilineal culture, bison governance system, unique languages (Michif and Bungee), commitment to independence against the HBC monopoly and foreign rule, perseverance through persecution, strength of our kinship relationships across our traditional homeland, and ongoing commitment to Métis sovereignty. After all, we are Otipemisiwak: the people who own themselves.

Now that I am a university professor, I am dedicated to refuting those outdated history books, correcting misinformation about us, and uplifting Métis voices. For these reasons, I did not hesitate to accept when my good friend Kate honoured me with an invitation to write a foreword for the *A Girl Called Echo Omnibus*. Through the eyes of Echo Desjardins, a contemplative thirteen-year-old Métis girl, we (re)learn about significant historical events that defined Métis nationhood and helped shape Canada.

In Winnipeg's North End, Echo navigates contemporary teenage life, including loneliness and friendship, family struggles and healing, while finding comfort listening to her mom's cool, old-school music. In Mr. Bee's history classroom, while daydreaming, and during nighttime dreams, she finds herself transported to crucial moments and places in Métis history: the Pemmican Wars, the Red River and Northwest Resistances, and the Road Allowance Era. Echo learns to harness the ability to travel through time and space at will using the medicine of her own blood memory, forging intergenerational friendships along the way that lead to self-discovery and personal connection.

Experiencing these turbulent events first-hand, Echo is distraught upon witnessing the unscrupulous behaviour of settlers, the army, and the Canadian government; their theft of Métis land; bloodshed; and the forced dispersal of Métis communities. Grappling with her emotions, she is frustrated not only by the injustices her people faced historically, but also because the Canadian government continues to fight against Métis rights in court—even though the government keeps losing.

Echo comes to appreciate Métis resistance and resilience in the face of such oppression; Métis have always fought to protect our land, rights, and ways of life. As her friend, Micah, points out: Indigenous people survived European contact and genocide, and are now living in a post-apocalyptic world, and that pretty much makes us unstoppable!

With this series, all readers will gain important knowledge and perspectives of Métis history and culture, while glimpsing the richness and complexities of our everyday lives. As a Two-Spirit Person, I am happy to see 2SLGBTQ+ representation in the gender-neutral prefix and pronouns used for the androgynous English teacher, Mx Francois; the homophobia-free zone and Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) posters in the school hallways; and the Pride flag hanging in Echo's bedroom. While not a dominant theme in the series, the importance of this everyday representation builds on the work our Two-Spirit Elders did to clear a path for us in contemporary society, and encourages queer Indigenous youth to live authentically.

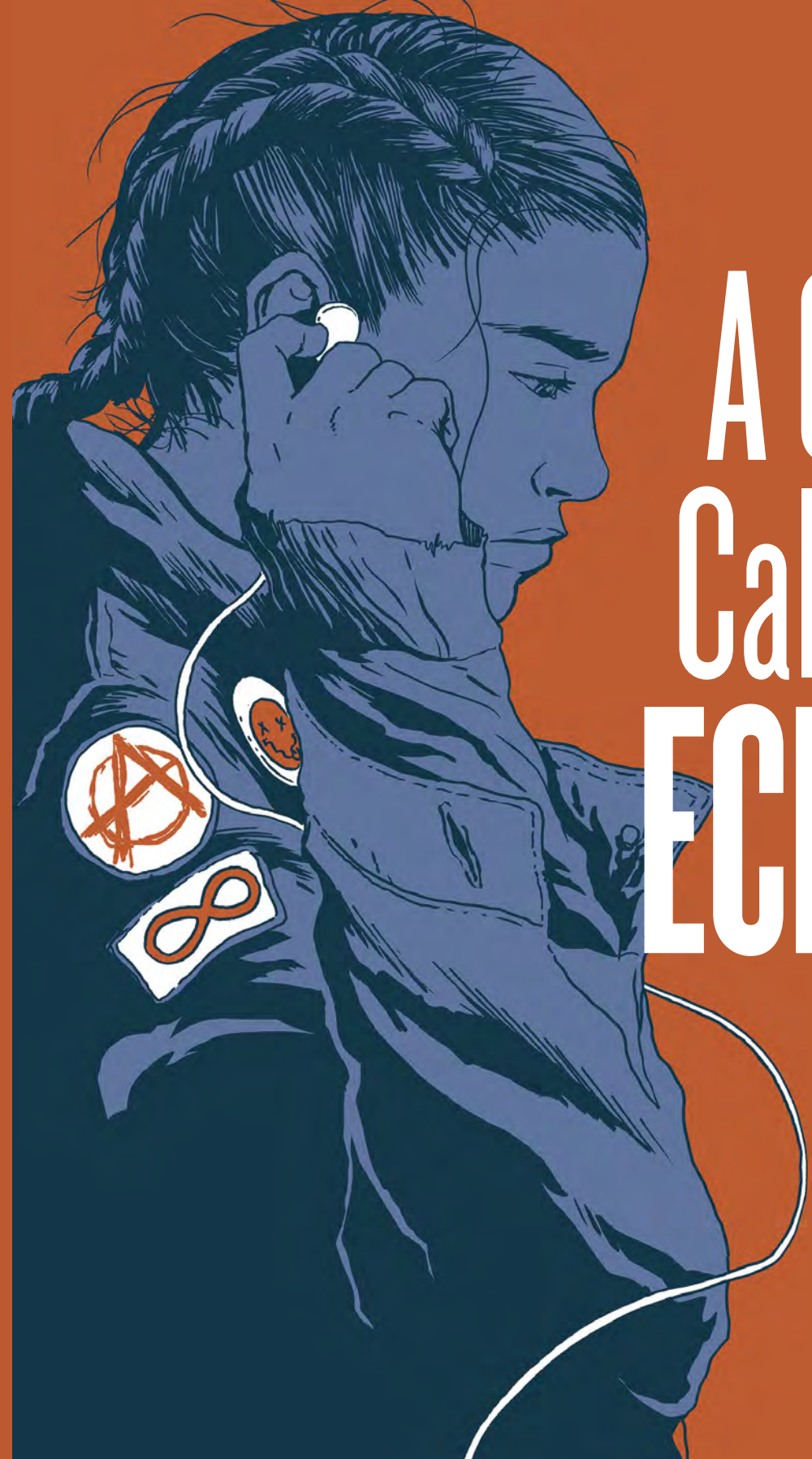
The *A Girl Called Echo* series unapologetically holds space for Métis, especially those who feel they don't know anything about being Métis. As Mr. Bee reminds Echo, "You're not any less Métis just because you don't know your own history." Equipped with new knowledge and confidence, Métis youth are building upon the efforts of our ancestors and will lead the way forward.

September 2022

Dr. Chantal Fiola

Distinguished Indigenous Scholar's Chair, Associate Professor and Acting Chair, Urban and Inner-City Studies, University of Winnipeg. Author of *Returning to Ceremony: Spirituality in Manitoba Métis Communities*.

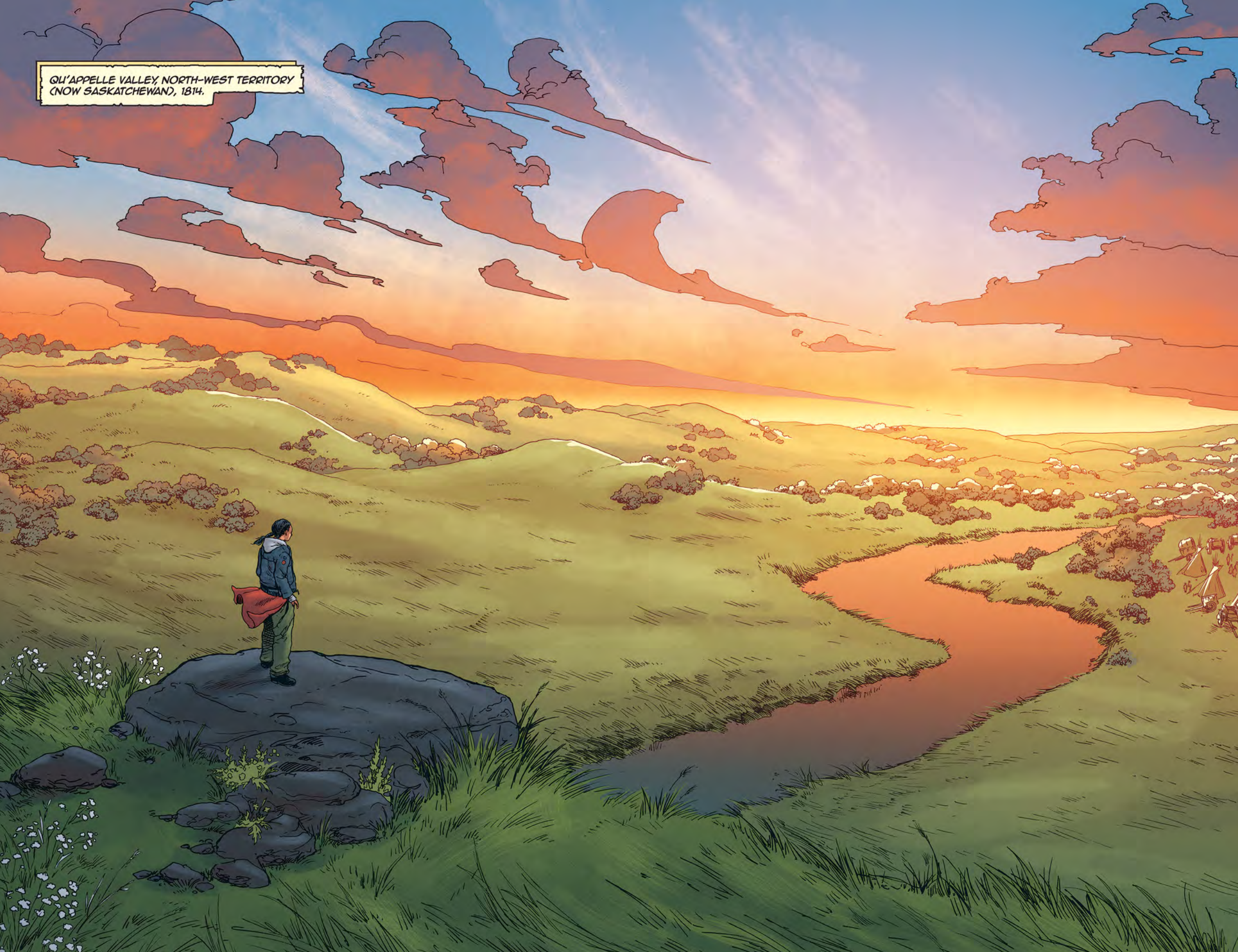
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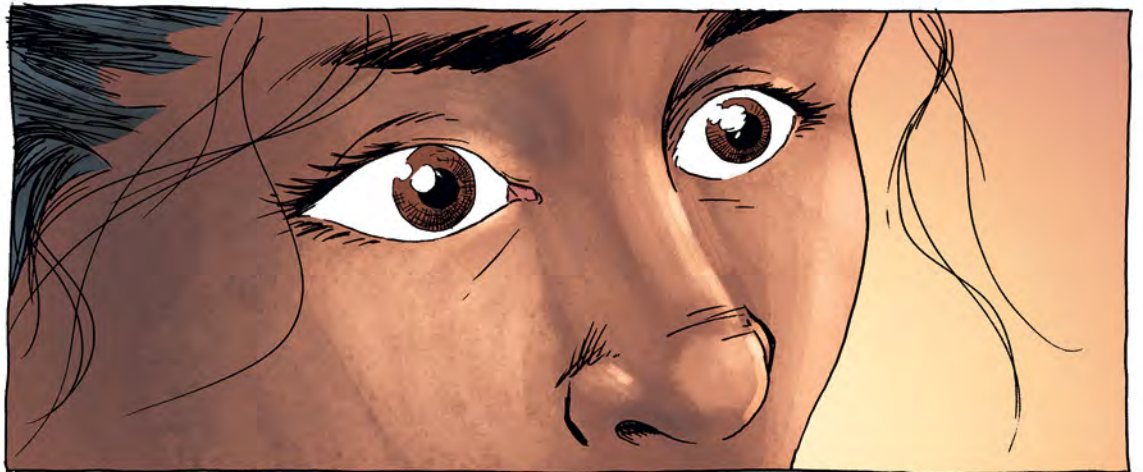
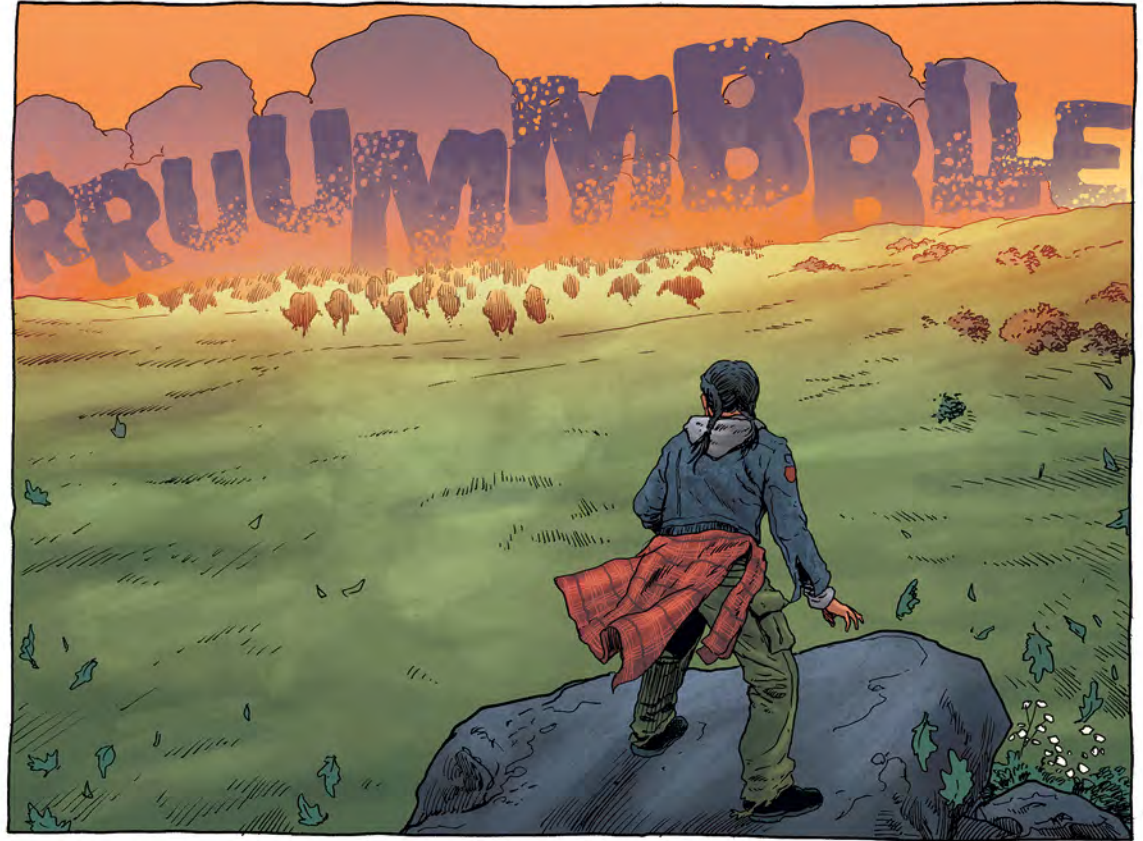
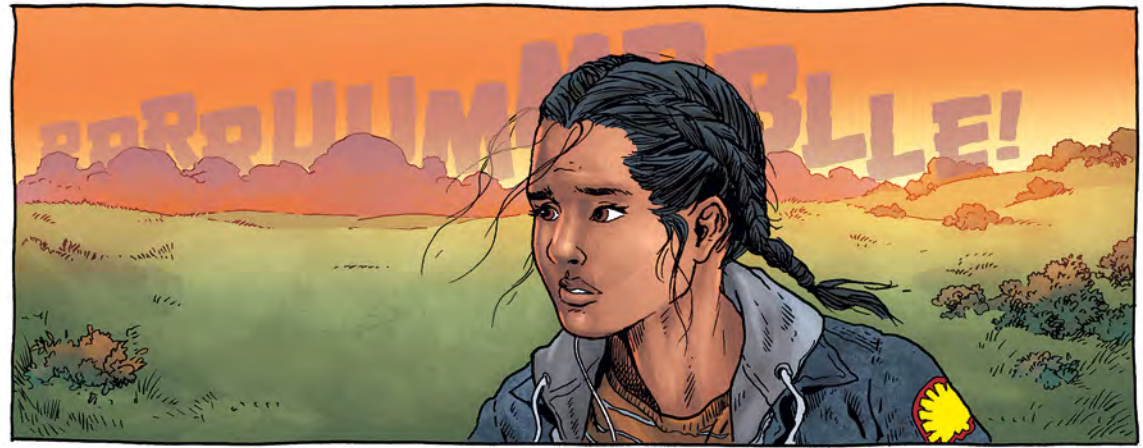
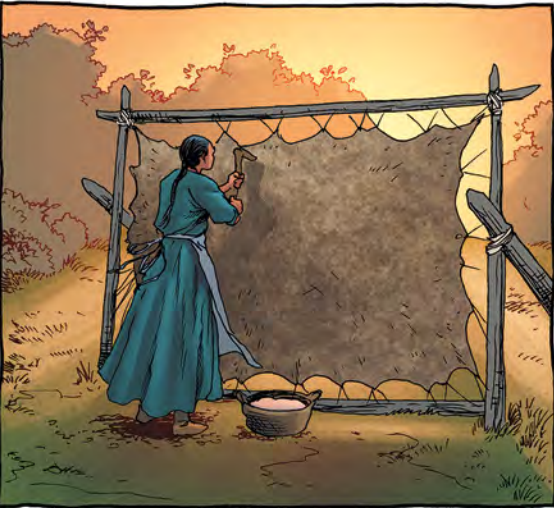
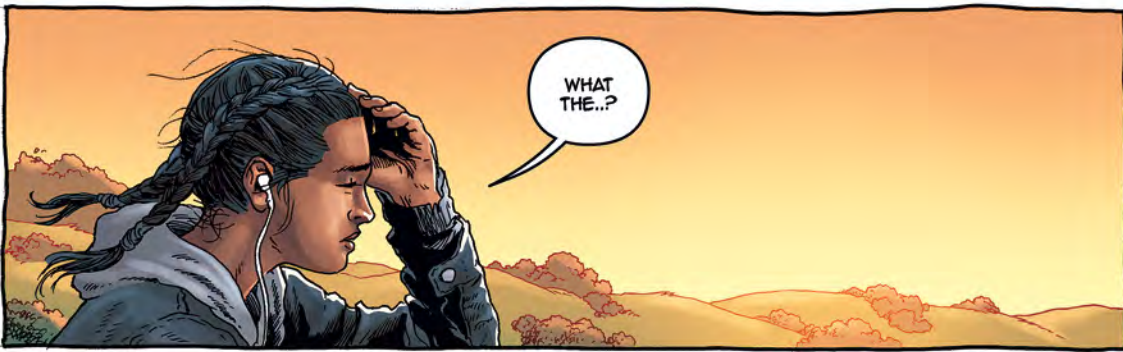


A Girl Called ECHO

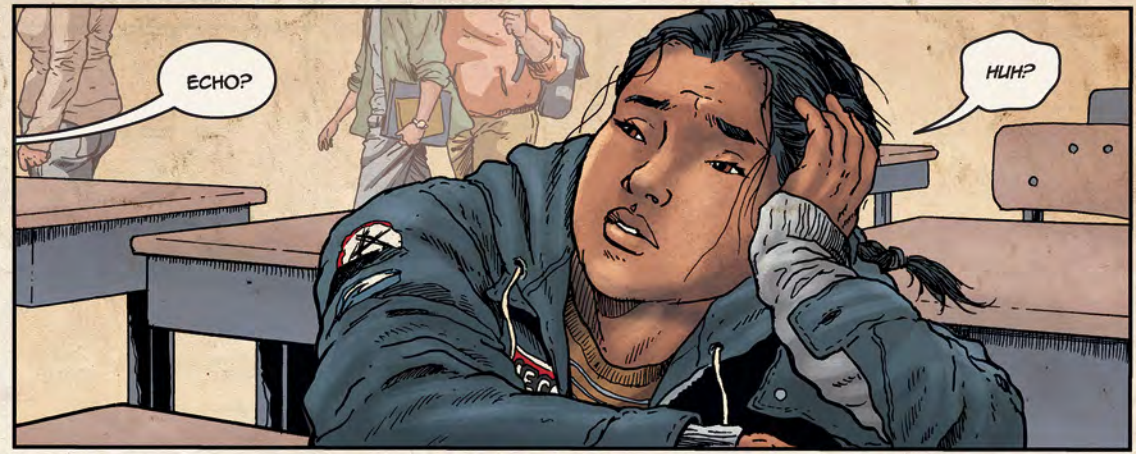
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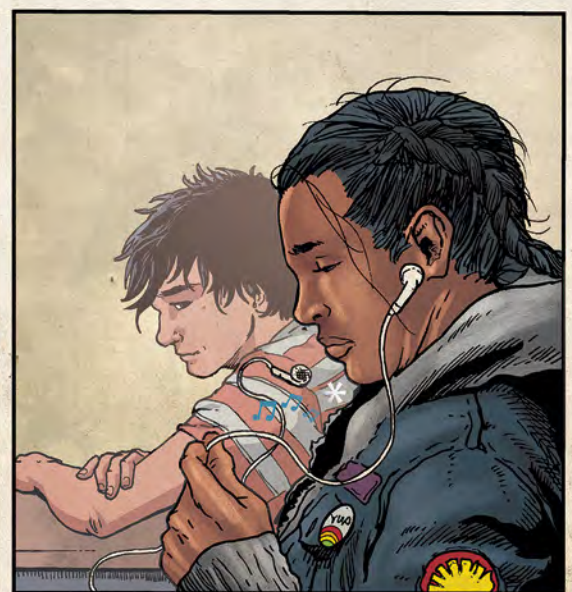
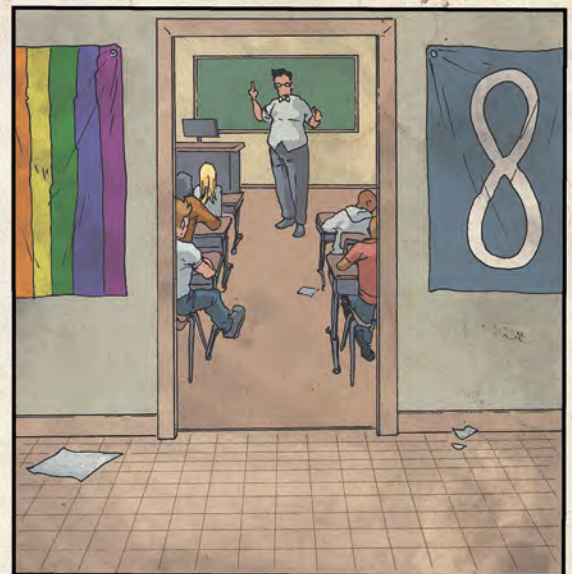
QU'APPELLE VALLEY, NORTH-WEST TERRITORY
(NOW SASKATCHEWAN), 1814.

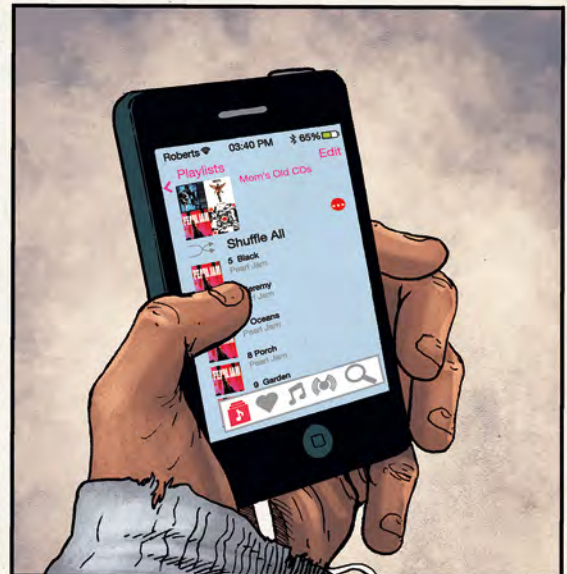
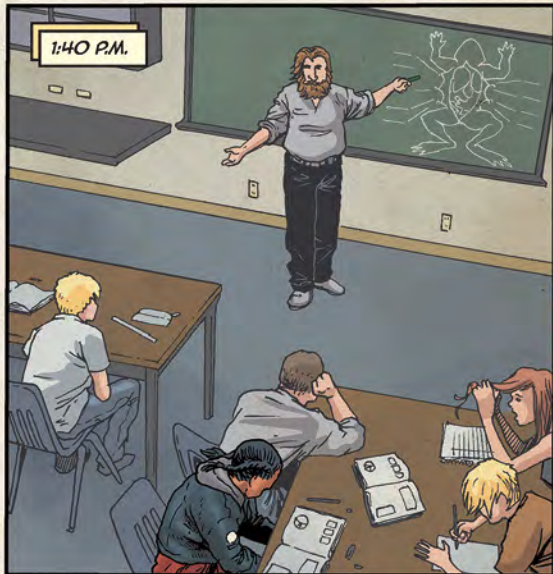


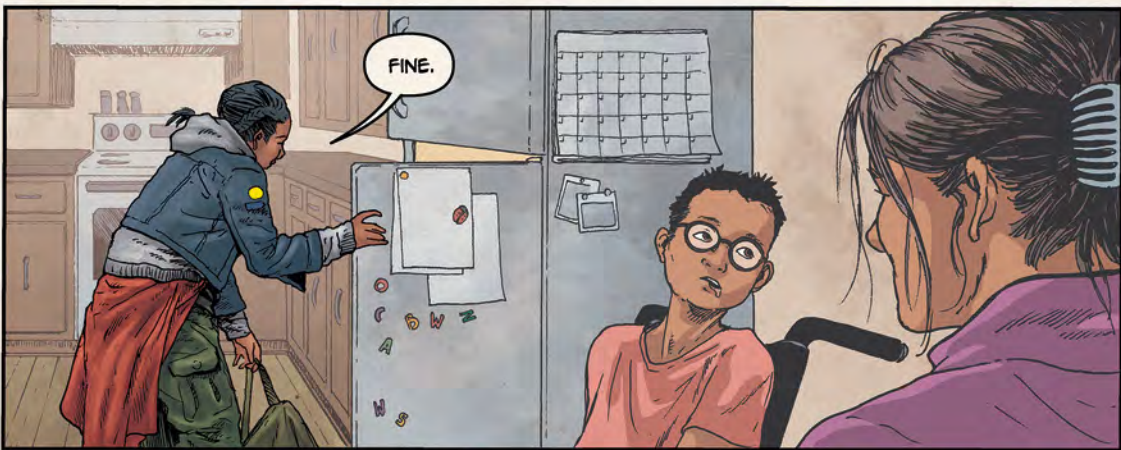


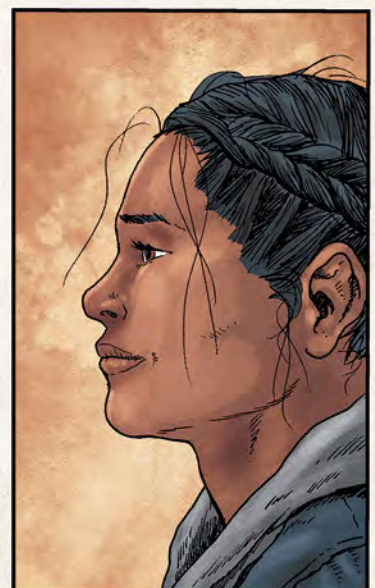
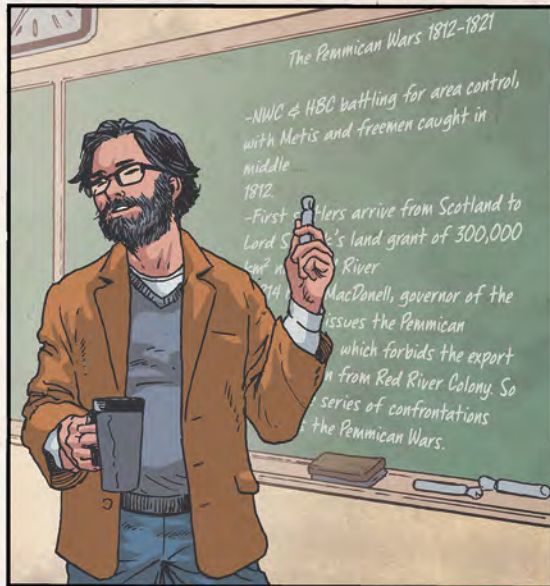
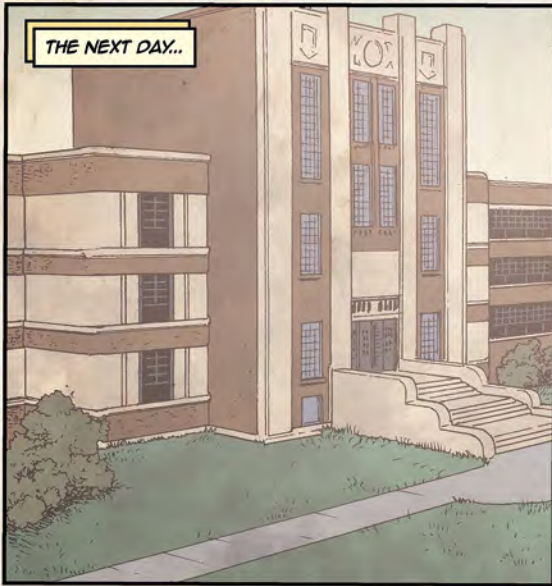


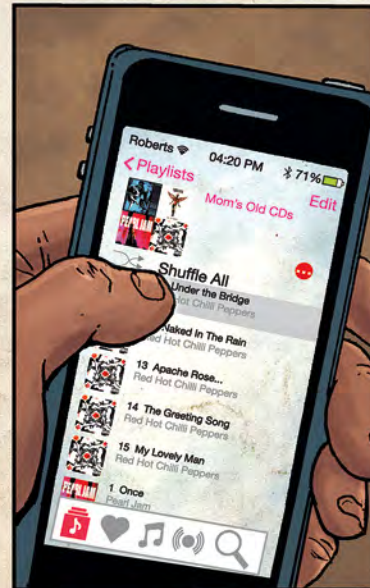
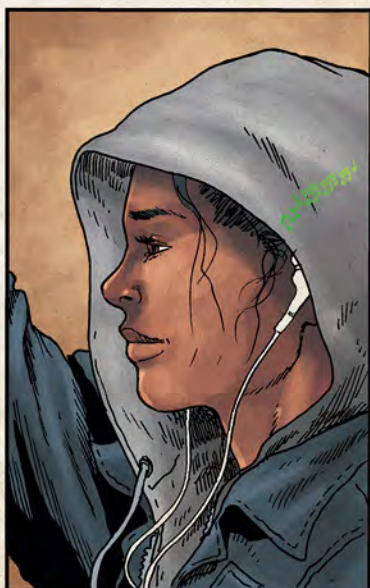
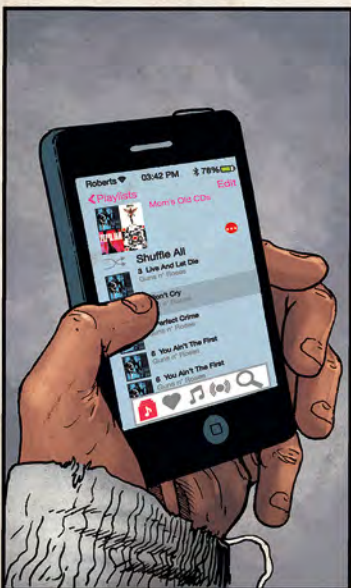
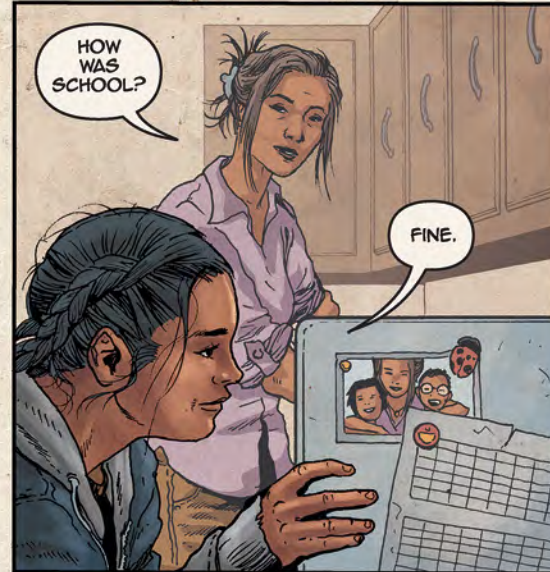
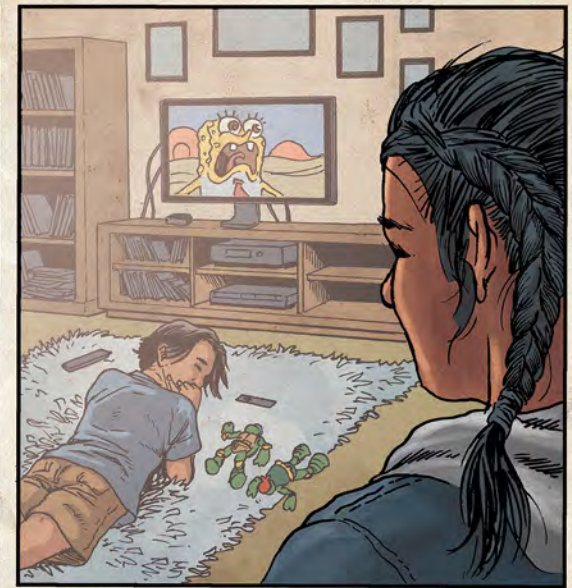












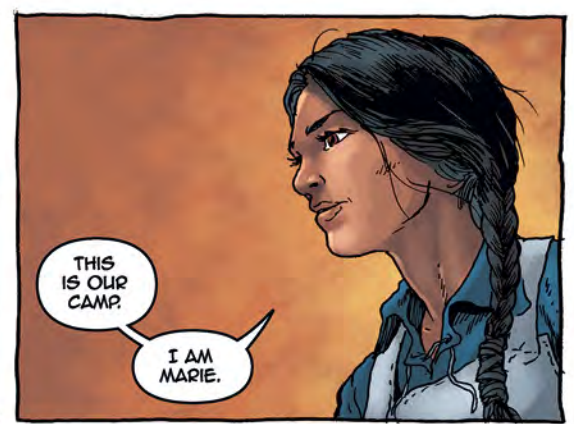




YOU LOOK LOST.

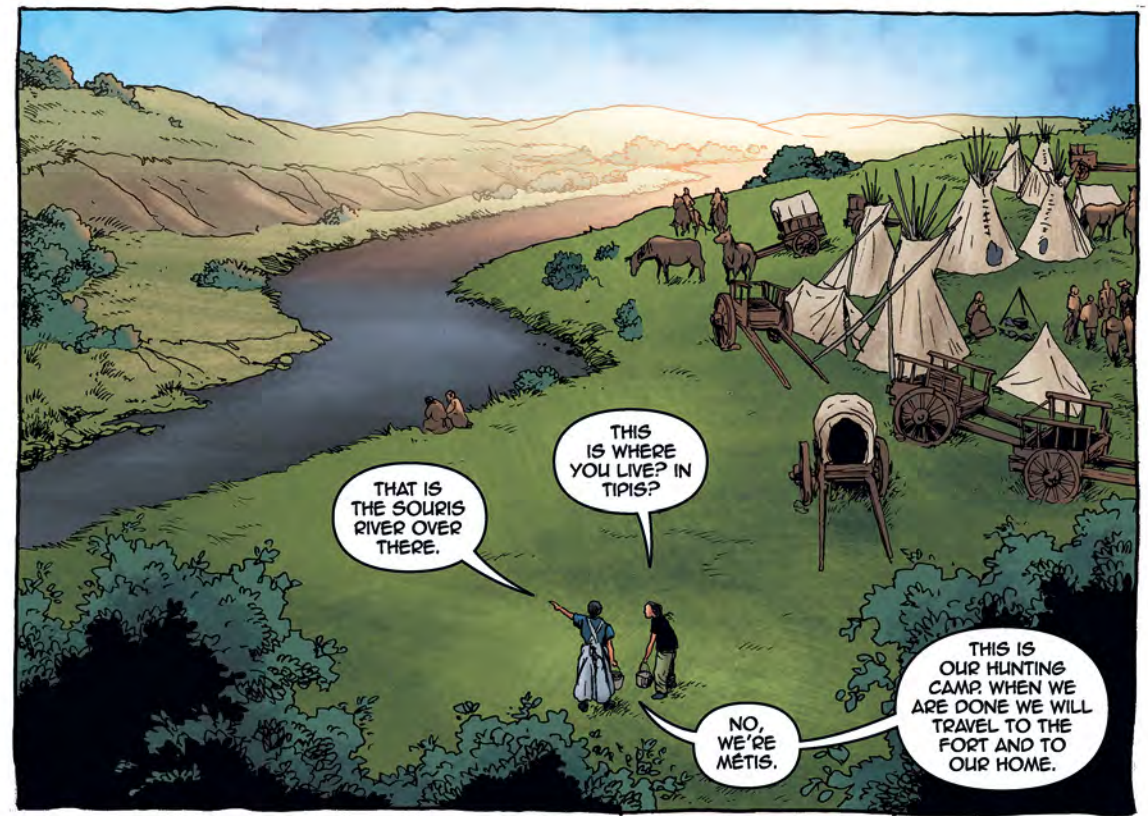


WHERE AM I?



THIS IS OUR CAMP.

I AM MARIE.



THAT IS THE SOURIS RIVER OVER THERE.

THIS IS WHERE YOU LIVE? IN TIPIS?

NO, WE'RE METIS.

THIS IS OUR HUNTING CAMP. WHEN WE ARE DONE WE WILL TRAVEL TO THE FORT AND TO OUR HOME.



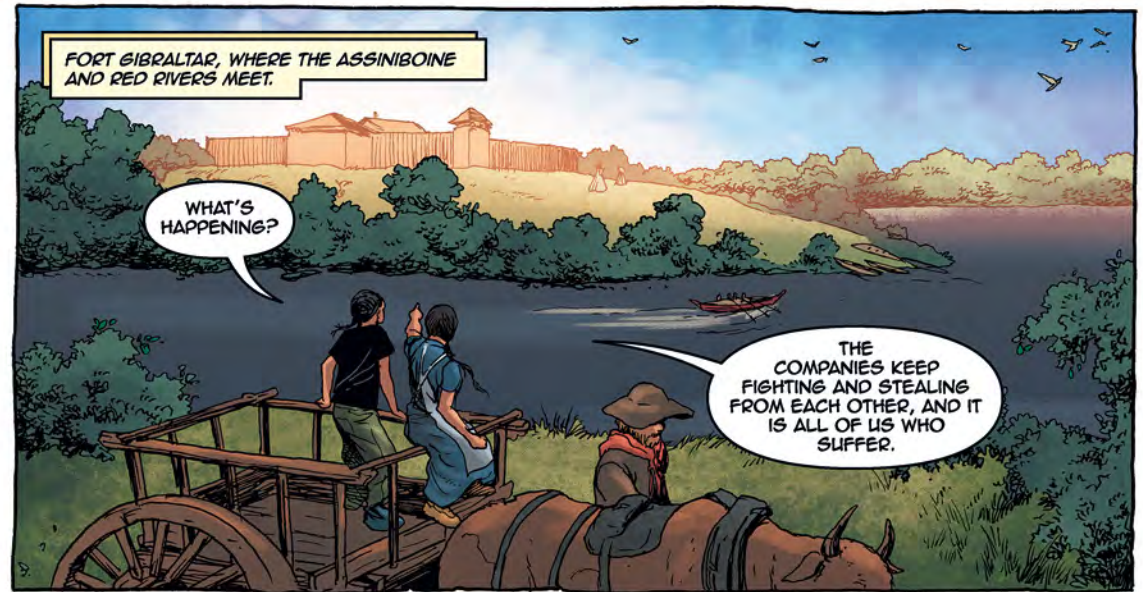
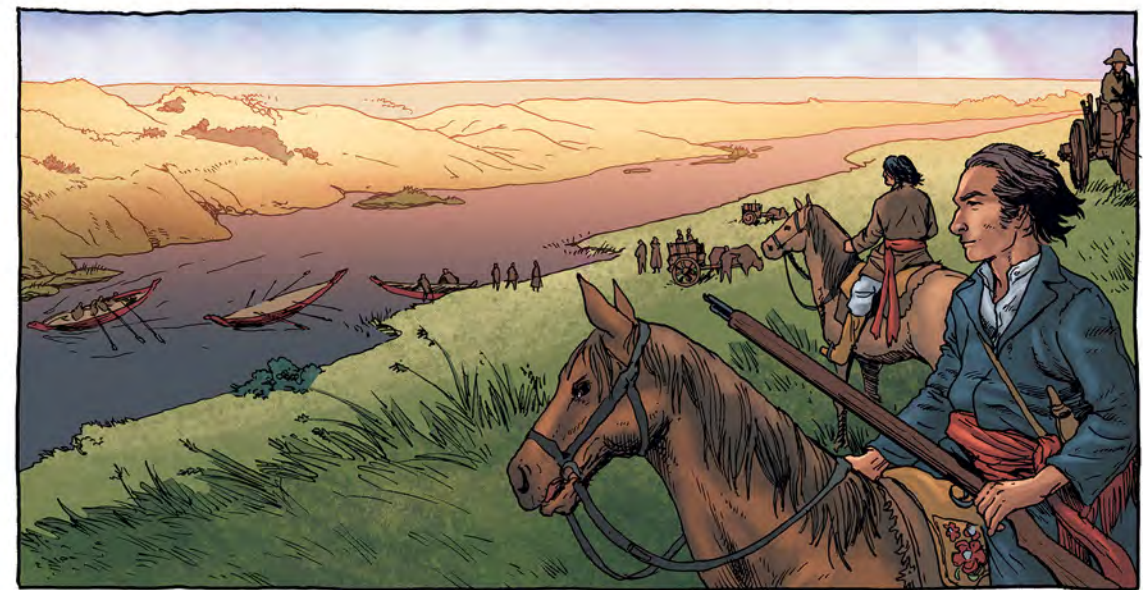
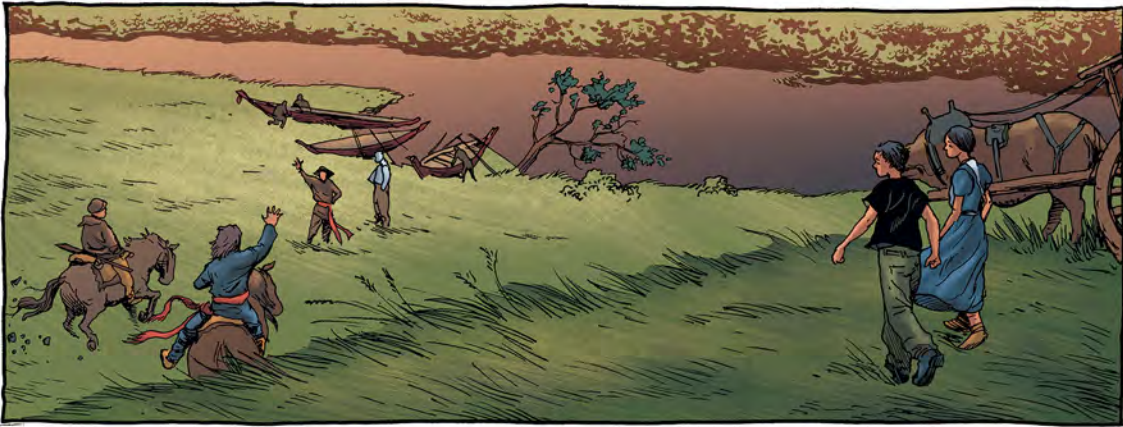
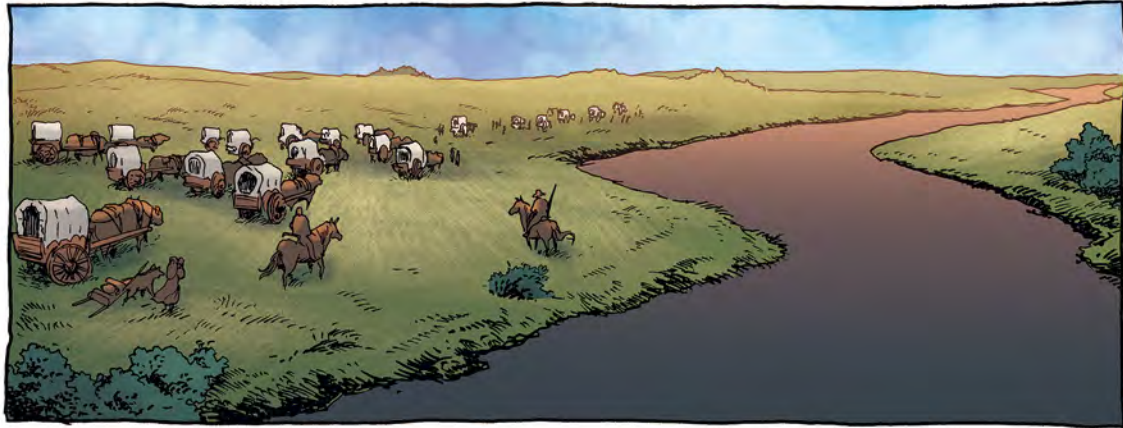
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

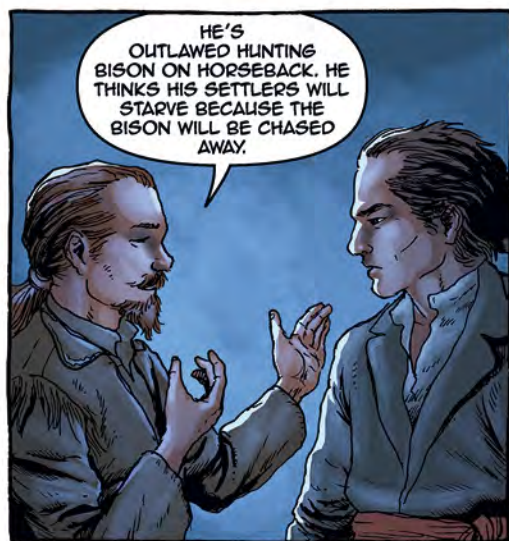
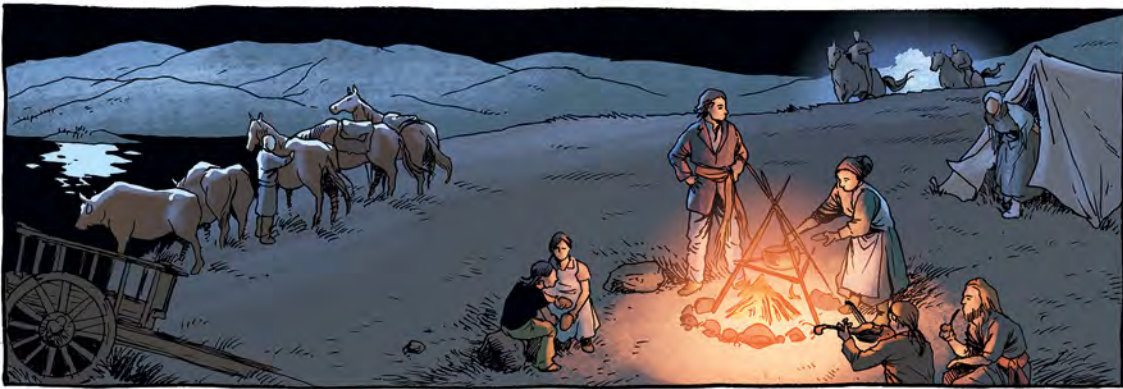
MAKING PEMMICAN.

WHAT'S PEMMICAN?

IT'S FOOD.

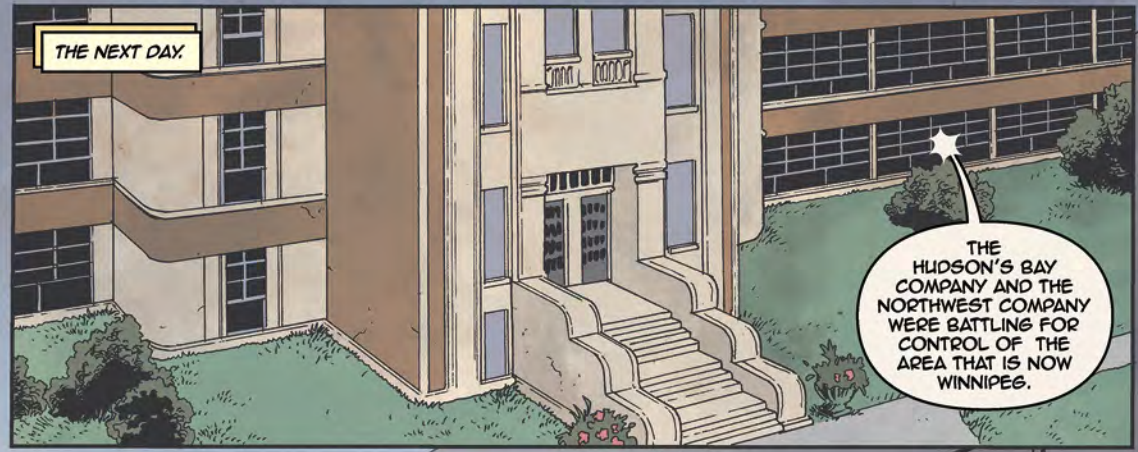






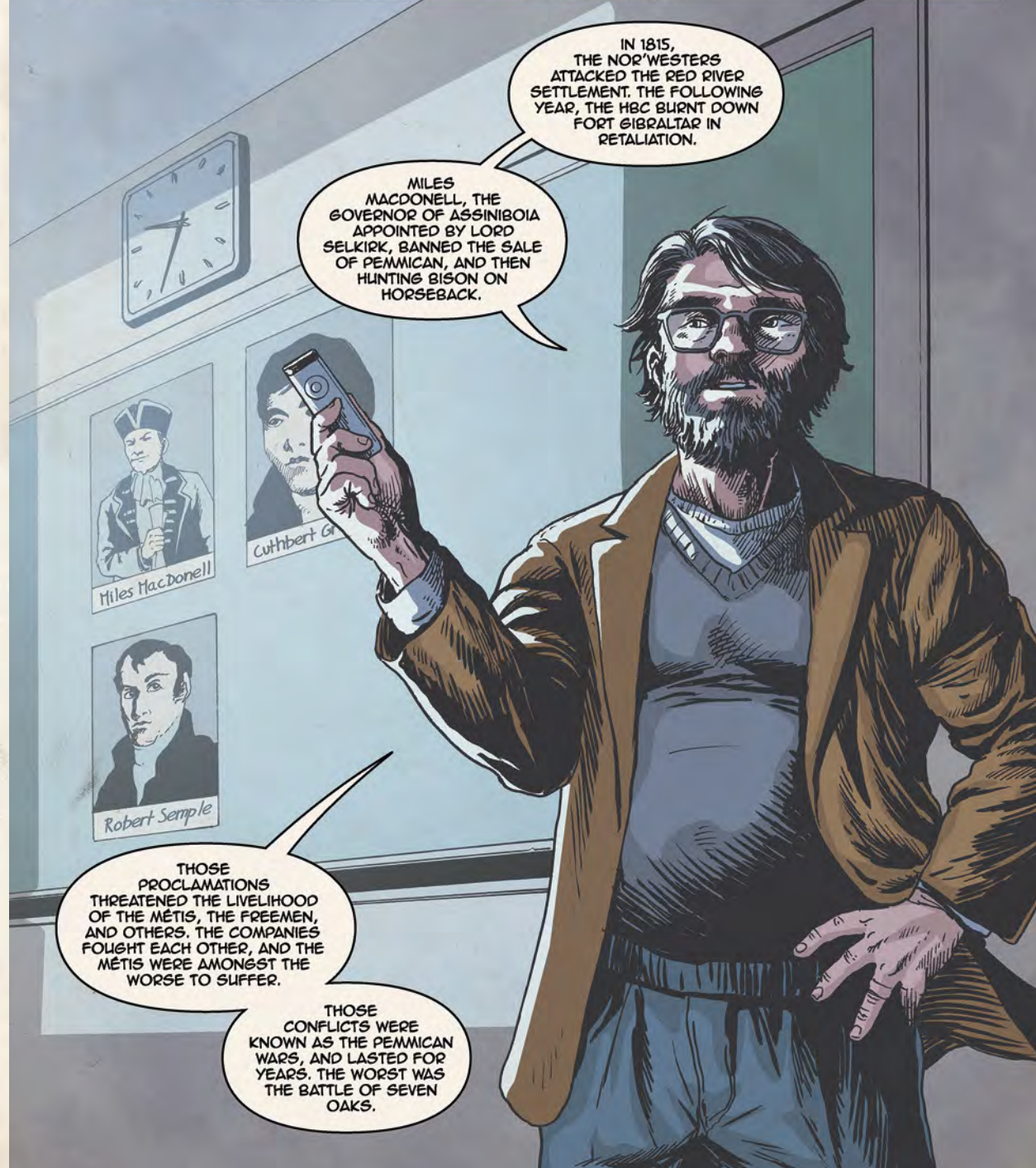


ECHO,
DINNER'S
READY.



THE NEXT DAY.

THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND THE NORTHWEST COMPANY WERE BATTLING FOR CONTROL OF THE AREA THAT IS NOW WINNIPEG.



IN 1815, THE NORTHWESTERS ATTACKED THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT. THE FOLLOWING YEAR, THE HBC BURNT DOWN FORT GIBRALTAR IN RETALIATION.

MILES MACDONELL, THE GOVERNOR OF ASSINIBOIA APPOINTED BY LORD SELKIRK, BANNED THE SALE OF PEMMICAN, AND THEN HUNTING BISON ON HORSEBACK.

Miles Macdonell

Cuthbert G...
Cuthbert G...
Cuthbert G...

Robert Semple

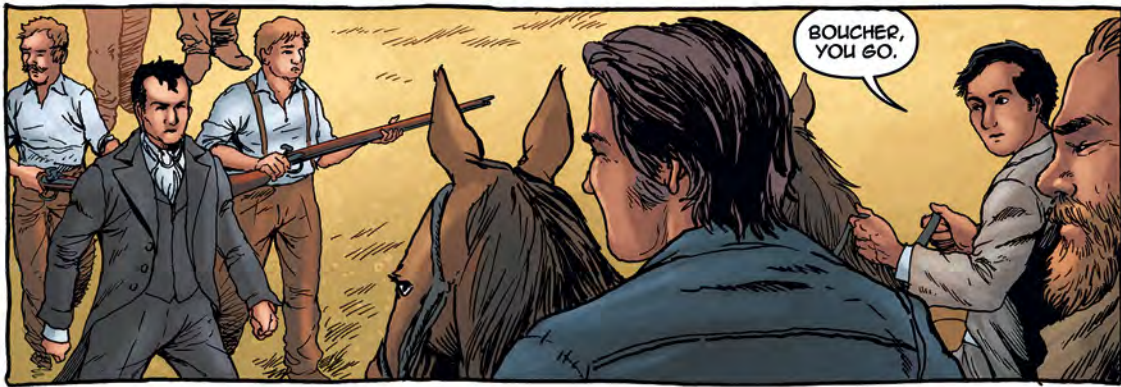
THOSE PROCLAMATIONS THREATENED THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE METIS, THE FREEMEN, AND OTHERS. THE COMPANIES FOUGHT EACH OTHER, AND THE METIS WERE AMONGST THE WORSE TO SUFFER.

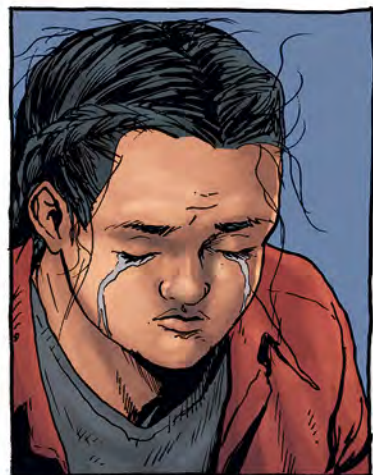
THOSE CONFLICTS WERE KNOWN AS THE PEMMICAN WARS, AND LASTED FOR YEARS. THE WORST WAS THE BATTLE OF SEVEN OAKS.



On June 19, 1816, Cuthbert Grant was going east with more than 60 men on horseback to trade pemmican with members of the Northwest Company. Governor Semple and 28 Hudson's Bay Company men stopped them at the place called the Grenouillère (Frog Plain) or Seven Oaks.









TO BE CONTINUED...

How to Make Pemmican

1 kg of thinly sliced or ground meat, such as game (moose, deer, caribou), bison, or beef
 750 g of dried berries, such as blueberries, saskatoons, or cranberries
 500 g of lard

1. Preheat oven to 180° F (80° C). Spread meat in a single layer on a baking sheet, and leave to dry for at least eight hours.
2. Grind the meat (traditionally, the dried meat would be ground between two rocks, but in this case, a food processor or blender could be used). Place in bowl.
3. Grind the berries. Add to bowl.
4. Melt the lard, then add to above ingredients and mix well. Let cool. Roll into balls or pack into a pan, then cut into squares.
5. Store in a container in a dry place.



La Chanson de la Grenouillère

Voulez-vous écouter chante
 Une chanson de vérité?
 Le dix-neuf de juin, la bande des Bois-Brûlés
 Sont arrivés comme des braves guerriers.
 En arrivant à la Grenouillère

Nous avons fait trois prisonniers;
 Trois prisonniers des Arkanays
 Qui sont ici pour piller notr' pays.

Would you like to hear me sing
 Of a true and recent thing?
 It was June nineteen, the band of Bois-Brûlés
 Arrived that day.
 Oh the brave warriors they!

We took three foreigners prisoners when
 We came to the place called Frog, Frog Plain.
 They were men who'd come from Orkney
 Who'd come, you see,
 To rob our country.

Pemmican Wars Timeline

BEFORE
1806

BEFORE 1806

The second half of the 18th century saw increasing European presence in British North America. Forts and trading posts were built along the major rivers across the west of the continent. The North West Company (NWC), founded in 1779 and headquartered in Montreal, became a fierce rival of the older Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), with both companies vying to control the fur trade.

1809

1809

The NWC builds Fort Gibraltar where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet, establishing their dominance of the fur trade in the region.

1811

MAY

29 The HBC grants 116,000 square miles of land in Ruperts Land to the Earl of Selkirk, Thomas Douglas, for an "agricultural settlement" (to become the Selkirk or Red River Settlement) in the District of Assiniboia, which encompassed southern Manitoba and parts of present-day Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

1812

LATE AUGUST

The first group of Selkirk Settlers arrives in Red River with the newly appointed governor, Miles Macdonell, a former officer in the Royal Canadian Volunteers and a friend of Selkirk's.

OCTOBER

Another group of Selkirk Settlers arrives at the settlement, too late to plant any crops. Members of Chief Peguis's band (Saulteaux) help the settlers survive their first winter and avoid starvation.

1814

JANUARY

8 Governor Macdonell issues the Pemmican Proclamation, forbidding the export of pemmican and other goods outside of Assiniboia for a year. Intended to guarantee enough provisions for the settlers, the proclamation threatens the survival of local Métis, Indigenous, and European freemen families, who make their living selling pemmican and other supplies to the NWC.

JUNE

An armed HBC force is sent to the NWC post at Rivière la Souris and breaks into the fort to seize supplies. Eventually the two companies reach an uneasy agreement.

JULY

Governor Macdonell forbids hunting bison on horseback because doing so chases them too far away for settlers to hunt on foot.

FALL

NWC partner Duncan Cameron accuses Governor Macdonell of infringing on the rights of the Métis and freemen by preventing them from hunting on horseback. Macdonell and Cameron continue to plot against each other, and Macdonell attempts to raise a militia from the settlers.

APRIL

17 A magistrate issues a warrant for Governor Macdonell's arrest. Macdonell surrenders two months later.

JUNE

11-27

The Red River Settlement is attacked by Métis, freemen, and NWC agents, with 40-odd settlers fleeing to Jack River, Norway House, and Pembina. The Métis prepare an address to the Government of Canada asserting their claims to the lands of Red River.

1815

AUGUST

19 The colonists return to the settlement under the protection of the HBC along with several of their agents and clerks.

NOVEMBER

Robert Semple, a merchant with no political experience, arrives at the Red River Settlement as the HBC's new territorial governor. With him come another 160 settlers.

1816

JUNE

10 On Governor Semple's orders, the NWC's Fort Gibraltar is dismantled and burned in retaliation for the attack on the Red River Settlement.

18 Around 60 Métis and freemen from Portage la Prairie are sent to escort pemmican to boats at Frog Plain/Grenouillère (called Seven Oaks by the settlers). Led by Cuthbert Grant, they are ordered to avoid Fort Douglas, the rebuilt HBC fort.

19 Men from Fort Douglas spot Grant's party crossing the plains. Governor Semple takes 28 men to meet them, sparking the Battle of Seven Oaks.

22 After the Battle of Seven Oaks, Grant and his party capture Fort Douglas, breaking up the settlement for a second time. The settlers leave for Lake Winnipeg.

AUGUST

13 Lord Selkirk and his HBC men capture the NWC's Fort William.

JANUARY

10 The NWC surrenders Fort Douglas without a fight to Selkirk's forces.

1817

Cuthbert Grant leaves for Montreal to face charges related to the Battle of Seven Oaks. He is later exonerated.

1818

1818

William Coltman completes his report on the Battle of Seven Oaks and the events leading up to it, placing the blame on both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company.

1820

1820

Thomas Douglas, the Earl of Selkirk, dies.

1821

1821

The NWC and HBC merge into one company.

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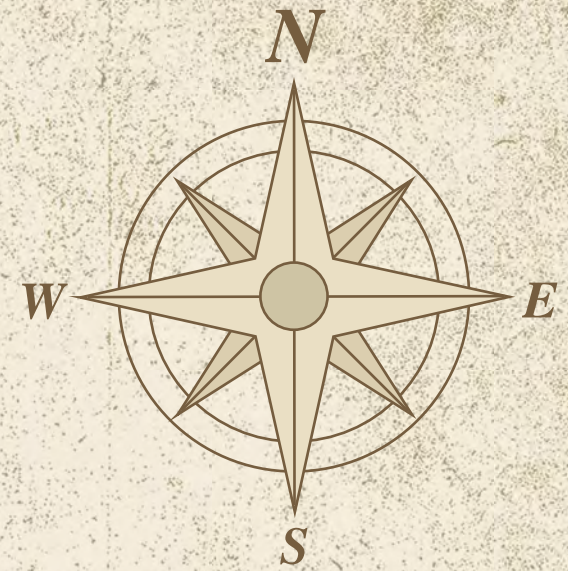
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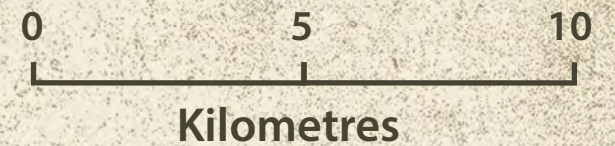
NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN *PEMMICAN WARS*



LEGEND

-  Forts
-  Battle Sites
-  Winnipeg (2023)
-  Perimeter Highway (2023)

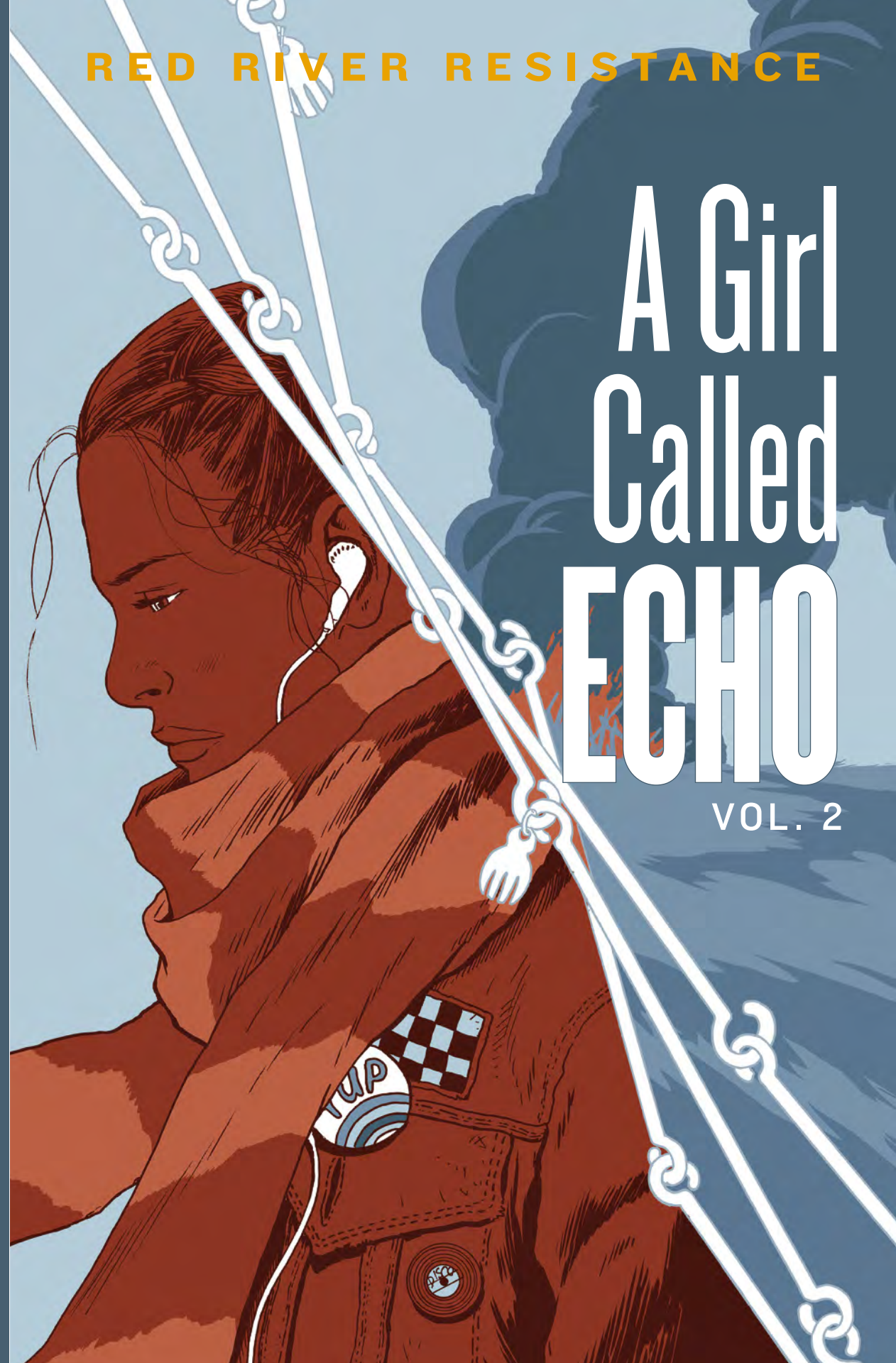
(Approximate locations)



RED RIVER RESISTANCE

A Girl Called ECHO

VOL. 2





KATHERENA VERMETTE (she/her/hers) is a Red River Métis (Michif) writer from Treaty 1 territory, the heart of the Métis Nation, Winnipeg, Manitoba. In 2013, her first book, *North End Love Songs* won the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry. Since then, her work has garnered awards and critical accolades across genres. Her novels *The Break* and *The Strangers* were both national bestsellers and won multiple literary awards. She is the author of numerous other bestselling titles, including the *A Girl Called Echo* series and the *Seven Teachings Stories* series.



SCOTT B. HENDERSON (he/him/his) is author/artist of the sci-fi/fantasy comic *The Chronicles of Era* and has illustrated select titles in the *Tales From Big Spirit* series, as well as the *A Girl Called Echo*, *The Reckoner Rises*, and *7 Generations* series. He is also the artist for AIYLA Honor Book *Fire Starters*, Eisner Award-nominee *A Blanket of Butterflies*, and select stories in *This Place: 150 Years Retold*. In 2016, he was the recipient of the C4 Central Canada Comic Con Storyteller Award. Find Scott on social media with @ouroboros09.



DONOVAN YACIUK (he/him/his) has been the colourist for books published by Marvel, DC, Dark Horse comics, and HighWater Press, including the *A Girl Called Echo* and *The Reckoner Rises* series, as well as select stories in *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, now-defunct Digital Chameleon colouring studio. He lives in Winnipeg, MB, Canada, with his wife and two daughters.

Experience Echo's entire time-travelling adventure in this omnibus edition of katherena vermette's best-selling series.

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In **ROAD ALLOWANCE ERA**, Echo returns to 1885. Louis Riel is standing trial, and the government has not fulfilled its promise of land for the Métis. Burnt out of their home in Ste. Madeleine, Echo's people make their way to Rooster Town, a shanty community on the southwest edges of Winnipeg. In this final instalment, Echo is reminded of the strength and perseverance of the Métis.

This special edition features an all-new foreword by Chantal Fiola (*Returning to Ceremony: Spirituality in Manitoba Métis Communities*), new historical maps and timelines, and an essay about Métis being and belonging by Brenda Macdougall (*Contours of a People: Métis Family, Mobility, and History*).

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