

## **Outcasts of River Falls**

By Jacqueline Guest

### **Teacher's Guide**

by Roberta Mitchell Coulter

Juvenile Fiction – Division II – Grades 4-6

**Curriculum Connections:**

English Language Arts

History

Science & Technology

Art

Drama

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## INTRODUCTION

### Plot Summary

To succeed in Toronto in the early 1900s, Kathryn's father had kept their Métis heritage a secret, even from his daughter. But when he dies, 14-year-old Kathryn must leave Our Lady of Mercy Academy for Young Ladies to live with her Aunt Belle in Alberta—in a shack in the Métis community of River Falls.

It is a home, but not a permanent one. Barred from owning land, the Métis must find a way to live in the road allowances, or ditches—the strips of government land between the public highway and the private properties of recognized citizens. The Métis have few rights and many threats, and Kathryn cannot even count on the police to protect her and her family.

Kathryn dreams of studying to become a lady lawyer, but she is **barred** from attending school in the neighboring town of Hopeful. There are lessons to be learned, though: from her aunt, the Métis community, and the world around her.

Excitement comes in the form of a mysterious stranger known as the Highwayman, a shadowy Robin Hood figure who rights wrongs against the Métis people in his own way. When he is framed for a crime he did not commit, and Aunt Belle becomes involved, Kathryn must use all her resources to prove their innocence—and challenge the deep-seated beliefs of an entire community.

*Outcasts of River Falls* is the sequel to the award-winning *Belle of Batoche*.

### Author's Note

This story really starts when Métis combatants were defeated by the Canadian government in a four-day battle in May of 1885 at Batoche, Saskatchewan. This just fight – the Métis were defending their rights, land and culture – is known as the North West Resistance and was led by Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. You can read more about it (and about Aunt Belle's youth) in my book, *Belle of Batoche*.

After this pivotal event in history, the Métis were considered traitors and renegades, and the era of the great dispersal began. Some, whose skin was light-coloured, passed as white, burying their ancestry in order to survive. Others, whose First Nations roots were obvious, went back to the trap lines of the north.

Here in Western Canada, prejudice against non-whites meant they couldn't live in towns and as they were not full blooded Indian, they were not allowed to live on reserves. They had no choice but to live on unused government land adjacent to the roadways and became known as the Road Allowance People. These stalwart souls strove to preserve their culture and very existence against harsh odds and slim chances, trying to survive while maintaining the positive Métis spirit of family

and community. They had had their fight and lost; so, they accepted this treatment, however unfair it was, until 1945, when conditions improved and the Métis were no longer on the fringes of society.

The Métis nation is a distinct ethnicity and has been in existence since the beginning of the fur trade, when white European trappers from England, Ireland, Scotland and France took First Nation's wives. The children of these unions were the first Métis in Canada.

The Métis do not live on reserves, although there are eight Settlements in Alberta –communities in which some families have chosen to make their homes. The Métis have their own language, called Michif, which consists of French nouns and Cree verbs; and, the Métis people had their own flag before Canada did – more than a hundred fifty years before. The Métis Infinity, or Circle of Eight, flag shows a white infinity sign against either a red or blue background. It too has its roots in the fur trade, as it was given to the Métis by Alexander MacDonnell, a North West Company agent.

Today, the Métis people are a thriving and vital part of Canadian society, contributing in all professions and walks of life, but you would be hard pressed to pick one out of a crowd. You may be sitting next to a Métis person right now!

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## **GETTING STARTED ACTIVITIES**

### **Vocabulary Builder Handout & Word Wall**

*Outcasts of River Falls* includes some challenging vocabulary and interesting Métis terms. As the students read, have them keep a track of words they don't know or find interesting on the attached handout. Working in interest-based groups (e.g., French/French words, Nautical Terms, Old-Fashioned Words, Irish/Gaelic Words, Big New Words, etc.), groups of students can select from their lists to either create several "Word Walls" in the classroom, or crossword puzzle/word search activities for other students using one of the online tools.

## HANDOUT

### Cool New Words

As you read, keep track of words you don't know. Try to figure out what they mean just by thinking about how they're used in the story, then check to see if you got it right by using the Internet or a dictionary.

Word	Page	What I think It Means	What It Really Means

Now choose 5 of your favorite new words from this sheet and use them (correctly!) in a new sentence.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## The Eaton's Catalogue

Aunt Belle is proud of Kathryn's bedroom furniture, "everything new from the Eaton's catalogue." Prairie settlers would have been lost without the Eaton's catalogue. In addition to hours of entertainment spent perusing its pages, it provided isolated rural dwellers everything from lace to complete houses.

The 1899 -1900 Eaton's catalogue is available online at <http://www.archive.org/details/eatons1899190000eatouoft>. Have students browse the catalogue to select items for one or more of the following lists. Students should note the cost of each item, and then determine the total cost.

Hint: There is an index at the back of the catalogue.

- Things that a wealthy prairie settler might need: large Canadian flag, washing machine, skates, wool underwear, horse medicine, lye soap, cleaver, roll-top desk, guitar, pocket watch, trunk, table lamp, sheet music for "My Estelle, Telephone Girl", Cadbury's chocolate, candy, camera, buggy harness, bike, toothpaste, cobbler's outfit, pocket knife, top hat, tea, apron/pinafore, old ladies' dress cap.
- A fancy travelling outfit for Kathryn, including a dress or suit, undergarments (drawers, chemise, "skirt" or petticoat, underskirt, corset), jacket or cape, kid gloves, hosiery, hat, shoes, a locket, curling tongs, a pot of rouge; a school outfit (black bombazine skirt and green blouse).
- Furniture for Kathryn's new bedroom (including a bedstead and mattress, side table, table lamp, and chiffonier) and the main room of Aunt Belle's house (including a settee, armchairs, a round table, carpet, china cabinet, fancy dishes, etc.).



## 1900 Eaton's Catalogue Order Form

Item	Page, item #	Description	Price	Total
tea	p. 191	Uncolored Japan green tea, 50 lb chest	50 lbs x 23¢	\$11.50
Total:				

## **The Making of a Mystery: Who Is the Mysterious Highwayman?”**

As soon as the mystery of the Highwayman’s identity is introduced, ask students to keep track of clues and questions as they read the book, on the attached page in their workbook. Clues might include answers to questions like: What does he look like? What does he do? Why? When does he act?

At some point, students may be ready to share their ideas about who he is. Discuss who they think he is, and what evidence they have to support their belief. Keep a list of possible “highwaymen” on the board.

When the true identity of the Highwayman is revealed, have the students go back over their list of clues, and circle (in red!) any clues that now seem like they were put in to mislead the reader—“red herrings,” as they’re known in the world of mystery writing.

As a class, discuss:

- Did anyone guess the true identity of the Highwayman before it was revealed in the book?
- Which clues were the most important in solving the mystery?
- Did they miss any important clues while reading the book?
- Which clues could be considered “red herrings”? Are red herrings “fair play” in a mystery? Should there be a limit on the number of red herrings?

## HANDOUT

### Who is the Highwayman?

There are several characters who *might* be the Highwayman, but which one is it? You may think you know from the start—or your opinion might change as you go!

Pay attention to clues about the identity of the Highwayman throughout the book. Clues might include answers to questions like: What does he look like? What kind of horse does he ride? What does he do? Why? When does he act?

Chapter, Page #	Clue	Possible Identity

When the true identity of the Highwayman is revealed, go back over your list of clues, and circle (in red!) any clues that now seem like they were put in to mislead you.

## HANDOUT

### What's a Mystery Without a Red Herring?

Part of what makes reading mysteries fun is figuring out which clues are helpful in putting all the pieces of the mystery together, and which are “red herrings.” A red herring is information that is meant to distract or mislead readers from solving the mystery too quickly.

For example, two characters might seem to be enemies, but really they are secret partners in crime. Another red herring is to introduce many characters with the *motive* and *ability* to do the crime. On the other hand, characters may seem innocent because the writer has created a red herring to make it seem that they *lack* motive or opportunity to commit the crime. For example, they may have an alibi that seems to prove they could not have been at the crime scene.

As you read through the book, make a list of characters as they are introduced. *Mystery readers assume every character is a suspect!* List clues/evidence/reasons why they are or are not the Highwayman.

Character	Clue/evidence that they are/are not the Highwayman	Page

Character	Clue/evidence that they are/are not the Highwayman	Page

# CHAPTER SYNOPSES

## Chapter 1: Secrets from the Grave

The death of Kathryn Tourond's father has left her an orphan, and his debts have forced her to leave her studies at Our Lady of Mercy Academy for Young Ladies in Toronto. She feels ashamed that she had to leave the private academy she has been attending, and she wonders what her former classmates must have thought. She arrives at the train station in Hopeful, Alberta in April 1901 to live with her Aunt Belle, who she believes is a wealthy western rancher. Blonde, blue-eyed Kathryn had never been told of her Métis heritage, so she is shocked when a Métis woman claiming to be her aunt arrives to pick her up at the station. Kathryn seems to look down on people of the less fortunate classes, and she certainly thinks that fair skin and hair is better.

## Chapter 2: White Knight Needed Apply Within

It is nightfall when the Red River cart carrying Kathryn and her aunt arrives at the Métis community of River Falls, which is nothing more than a collection of dilapidated cabins on the side of the road. Kathryn is shocked to find that there is no running water, that she will have to use an outhouse, and that she is expected to carry her own luggage and light the fire. As she explores her new home, Kathryn is filled with memories of her life at the Academy and her former teacher, Miss Imogene Hocking, whose friend, Clara Brett Martin, was the first female lawyer in the British Empire; Kathryn dreams of becoming the second. Her Aunt Belle, however, grounds her in the present, and the past: her father's life, and the roots of the Métis people in the French fur traders and their Indian wives.

## Chapter 3: Through the Looking Glass

After a delicious breakfast, Kathryn does the dishes and changes into work clothes. Claude Remy arrives with gift for Aunt Belle: a deer, which he butchers in the yard. Next, Pierre and Joseph arrive to build the walls for Kathryn's room. Finally, JP and Madame Ducharme—*Kokum*—arrive with a cake and much advice.

## Chapter 4: The Three Little Pigs Robin Hood and the Big Bad Wolf

Aunt Belle and Kathryn work together to plaster the walls of her new bedroom, then as Kathryn finishes the job alone, she overhears Pierre and Joseph discussing the Highwayman, the masked crusader for the Métis of River Falls. She also learns about the cheating and injustice the Métis have experienced at the hands of the white townspeople.

## Chapter 5: Robin Hood in Alberta and a True Black Knight

Kathryn and Belle arrive at Madame Ducharme's house to find all the furniture in the yard and a house full of people dancing to fiddle music. The men wear

brightly coloured woven sashes called *lii soncheur flesheys*. Aunt Belle is courted by Claude Remy, who wears an ornately flower-beaded coat with a distinctive smell. Kathryn learns of the romance between Kokum's son Gabriel and Aunt Belle, and of his death at the hands of Constable Blake, of the many injustices against the Métis, and more about the Highwayman.

### **Chapter 6: In Need of a Poisoned Apple**

After getting up early to apply a coat of clay to the walls of the bedroom, Belle and Kathryn take the swift buggy to deliver dresses Belle has made to the Sergeant's wife at the NWMP detachment office. Though she herself plans to return to school in Toronto in the fall, when Kathryn hears that Métis children are barred from the local educational academy, she is determined to change things, and stops at the Carter Academy to apply for admission. She aces the entrance exam, and begins to hope that she can continue to prepare for a career in law here, but when the headmistress meets Aunt Belle and realizes that Kathryn is Métis, her application is rejected.

### **Chapter 7: Magic and Masked Men**

The next day, Kathryn awakes early, determined to raise money to return to her studies in Toronto, and to discover the identity of the Highwayman before she leaves. Her fledgling plans are interrupted, however, when she finds Aunt Belle preparing to leave to deliver medicine—the newly discovered drug aspirin—for the feverish baby of a white family, perhaps saving her life. Kathryn suspects that the Highwayman is the source of the rare drug.

### **Chapter 8: A Lord, a Lady and Aladdin's Lamp**

Aunt Belle teaches Kathryn how to make thimble cookies, which Kathryn then delivers to the neighbours, part of her plan to uncover the identity of the Highwayman. She visits many people, ending up with JP, who tells her what she wants to know, in return for a meal and the opportunity to borrow Kathryn's books. Later that night, Kathryn reviews the facts she has gathered, then falls into a fitful sleep, until she is awoken in the middle of the night by a mysterious red light and sees her Aunt surreptitiously leaving the cabin.

### **Chapter 9: Red Riding Hood Finds the Holy Grail**

While she is picking berries, Kathryn's hair becomes entangled in a raspberry bush, and she is rescued by Mark, who had complimented the buggy when she was last in town. He invites her to share his lunch on the riverbank, where they spend a few pleasant hours. Despite his ideas that a woman's place is in the home, Kathryn dreams of marriage, though she does not plan to give up her career as a lawyer.

### **Chapter 10: Clues Answered and Questions Asked**

Claude Remy stops by to see Aunt Belle, who is not home. While he waits, Kathryn does everything she can think of to determine whether he fits the clues

she has gathered about the Highwayman. Eventually, he decides she is crazy and leaves. Later, Kathryn quizzes Aunt Belle about the strange light, but Aunt Belle insists she must have been dreaming.

### **Chapter 11: Pirate Treasure from a Bandit**

Kathryn, sent to deliver two fish to Kokum, decides Aunt Belle might have been signalling the Highwayman with the red lantern, and quizzes Kokum on how the Highwayman knows what is going on in River Falls. On her way home in the dark, she sees the Highwayman ride past, but when she tells Aunt Belle, she thinks nothing of it, although he must have ridden by the cabin. When Kathryn goes outside the next day, all the books she needs to continue her studies are on the doorstep, and Kathryn knows it is the Highwayman's doing. She realizes that he must have found the paper on which she listed the titles, but when she looks in the cabinet where Aunt Belle said she put it, the list is still there.

### **Chapter 12: Uncle Tom's Cabin in Canada**

Kathryn takes the reins on a trip into town with Belle to deliver dresses to Mrs. Prentiss, with near disastrous results. While Belle picks up a few provisions, Kathryn takes the dresses to the NWMP barracks, where she runs into Constable Cyrus Blake, who once again treats her rather disrespectfully. Next, as Kathryn and Belle walk down the boardwalk, a group of men rudely force them into the street. Finally, Kathryn reacts assertively when a woman pushes ahead of Aunt Belle in the mercantile, and the woman tells the owner that half-breeds should not be allowed in the store. Realizing that they can't win, Kathryn struggles for self-control and leaves the store.

### **Chapter 13: Truth, Lies and Liquorice**

Kathryn runs into Mark in the Apothecary, and is forced to either come clean about her Métis ancestry or eat a licorice stick. She picks the licorice, which makes her sick, so she has to flee. She starts toward the alley when she sees Aunt Belle entering it to get the horse and buggy, where Cyrus Blake lies in wait, but pauses when Mark comes out of the Apothecary—she fears that Mark will come to her assistance and doesn't want to explain why she is helping a Road Allowance woman. She witnesses the outrageous behaviour of Blake toward her aunt, but lacks the courage to act. Aunt Belle, backed up against the wall, ducks away and blows pepper at Blake's horse, which rears and bucks. Luckily, at that moment Sergeant Prentiss appears and sends Blake away. Kathryn is deeply ashamed of her failure to defend her aunt, but she realizes that she is simply tired of the constant grinding abuse she faces as a Métis, from the Carter Academy to her experiences in town that day, and she now understands why her father had to leave, and gains the utmost respect for the Highwayman, who fights without respite. She confesses to her aunt, who reassures her that she is not a coward.



## **Chapter 14: Outhouse Rendezvous**

Kathryn, once again awoken by the red lantern, bursts from her room to find Aunt Belle, but no red light. On closer examination, however, she notices a red scarf in her aunt's pocket, and her mind races to absorb the new information. First, she wonders if her aunt is the Highwayman, but she still believes Claude Remy to be the most likely suspect, with Belle actively signaling to him the community's needs with her lantern.

The next day, JP pretends to be a bear and begins rocking the outhouse while Kathryn is inside, and after a chase, both end up in the river. He has come to borrow the promised book, and Kathryn uses the opportunity to quiz him about whether a knife would be carried on the left or right, though she is disappointed in his answer, which calls her pet theory on the identity of the Highwayman into question. After he leaves, Kathryn worries about how to earn enough money to return to Toronto.

The next morning, JP returns with the news that the Highwayman is suspected of robbing a bank and killing one bank guard; the other guard, who is now leading a posse to catch the criminal, is none other than Constable Blake. JP insists that the Highwayman was framed and won't get a fair trial because he is Métis. Kathryn lets it slip that she thinks Aunt Belle is signalling the Highwayman, and JP warns her to keep quiet. While she reasons that the charge is unlikely, Kathryn is mesmerized by the reward offered: \$5,000. "The law is the law," she decides.

## **Chapter 15: Surprise First**

Kathryn's quandary over the Highwayman's guilt or innocence continues, and she weighs the evidence carefully. She reasons that if he is guilty, he should be punished, and if she helps catch the guilty party, she should be rewarded.

She is interrupted by Mark, but her delight is tempered when she finds out that he drinks whiskey, wants an automobile more than a Phaeton, and doesn't seem very sympathetic to her problems. After he kisses her, however, despite her misgivings, she decides to confide in him. She tells him that her aunt regularly communicates with the Highwayman and in fact is going to signal him that night, and that she is going to be there to see if the Highwayman has the special knife. Though Mark is not the brightest, he eventually catches on that Aunt Belle is Métis, and that means that Kathryn is too. When it comes to Mark, however, Kathryn is almost deliberately obtuse: she thinks he is commenting on her being an easterner, not reacting with horror that she is Métis. He leaves in a hurry, and Kathryn is too mesmerized by romance to realize the trouble she's caused.

## **Chapter 16: Night Light Fight**

Kathryn waits for hours to see the telltale red lantern glow. She begins to doubt whether her aunt will actually signal the Highwayman that night, but eventually Belle heads out, with Kathryn trailing behind. Kathryn hides and eventually falls

asleep while her aunt waits in a glade, awaking to see the Highwayman himself, still in possession of his ivory-hilted knife. They are interrupted by the approaching posse. Kathryn tries to warn them, breaking the lantern, which Aunt Belle swings at Constable Blake, who lunges his horse at her and knocks her to the ground. The Highwayman escapes, but Belle is accused of being an accomplice in the bank robbery. Blake drags Belle onto his horse, riding off to the detachment. Kathryn is left alone.

### **Chapter 17: Who Fights the Battle Now**

Kathryn, now sure of the Highwayman's innocence, tells Kokum of her aunt's situation, but Kokum seems resigned to the unfairness of Métis life and will do nothing. Kathryn is furious at Kokum, but JP is even more furious with her. He tells her that he saw her kissing Mark, that Mark is Constable Blake's nephew, and that he saw her there when the posse intercepted that Highwayman. When she hears that Mark is related to Blake, Kathryn realizes that everything that has happened is her fault. But she has a plan: she sets out to recruit every Métis family in the district to band together to save Aunt Belle. Unfortunately, after years of being downtrodden, no one believes they can make a difference anymore. Kathryn's only option to save Belle's life is to set a trap for Constable Blake, so she sets off to Hopeful to talk to Aunt Belle.

### **Chapter 18: Desperate Plan to Escape the Dungeon**

Kathryn confronts Mark in town, then presents her case in defence of Belle and the Highwayman to Sergeant Prentiss, but he remains unconvinced. She visits her aunt in the cells, telling her all the clues that "prove" Claude Remy is the Highwayman. Belle explains that he is not, but refuses to tell her who is. Kathryn urges her to tell her the truth so that she can make the Highwayman go to Sergeant Prentiss and explain that Belle is innocent, but Belle makes it clear that that would do no good: they would not believe him, and both would hang for a crime they didn't commit.

Kathryn then explains why she thinks Blake was responsible for the robbery and murder, but to prove it, she has to get a look at the knife Blake claims was left behind by the Highwayman. Before leaving the cells, though, she uses a hairpin to jam the lock to the back door.

Sneaking into Blake's office, she finds the key to the padlocked file cabinet, where she finds not the Highwayman's distinctive white-handled dagger, but Claude Remy's knife with the wolf carving. She realizes that the distinctive odor of Blake's office is the same as Claude Remy's beaded coat, leading her to suspect that he may be in cahoots with Blake. She remembers that when Blake was accosting Belle in the alley and she claimed the Remy was her protector, Blake said he was "not worried about that buck," which would only make sense if Claude were working for him. Putting the pieces together, Kathryn realizes that Claude might be an unwilling partner, for if Blake couldn't catch the Highwayman, he could easily prove the wolf knife was Claude Remy's and frame him for the

murder, thus ensuring his silence.

Kathryn leaves with an idea for how to make things right, starting with getting Claude Remy to show up the next day.

### **Chapter 19: Unmasked**

Kathryn goes to ask JP for his help, and having heard of her failed attempt to rally the community behind Belle, he has forgiven her. She explains everything she knows—and suspects—about crime, and the necessity of having Claude there for the “reveal,” and asks him to tell her the location of Remy’s secret cabin so that she can deliver a forged letter from the Highwayman. Although he doubts her plan will work, it is clear how much JP cares for Kathryn when he urges her to sleep while he delivers the letter.

Early the next morning, Kathryn fills her trunk with pieces of wood and addresses it to Sister Bernadette at the Our Lady of Mercy Academy for Young Ladies in Toronto, hooks up the buggy, takes the last of the money from her father’s estate, and heads to the train station. She tells the stationmaster that she is sending the trunk as a favour for Cyrus Blake, who is listed as the sender on the receipt. She then heads for Hopeful.

### **Chapter 20: Happily Ever After**

Kathryn arrives to find a lynch mob surrounding the jail—they are sure Belle is guilty and want her punished immediately, without trial. She heads down the alley to the back door of the jail, greets Aunt Belle, who tells her that Blake is at the front of the building, then makes her way to Constable Blake’s office, where she places the shipping receipt in the pocket of his field jacket. Then she slips out again through the back door, taking the hairpin with her.

The angry mob is now throwing rocks through the windows of the jail, and Sergeant Prentiss calls Blake to join him outside to handle the crowd. He does, but not before returning to his office to put on his jacket, his only claim to authority. Kathryn forces her way to the front of the crowd and insists Belle and the Highwayman are innocent, and that Cyrus Blake stole the money and framed the Highwayman. The crowd is becoming violent, but Prentiss is calm, reasonable... and skeptical, saying Constable Blake was Ed Meltzer’s friend; he would not kill him! He was there only to help! He notes that they have the knife belonging to the Highwayman as evidence. Blake retrieves the knife from his office, holding up the blood-stained blade in front of the crowd, but Kathryn insists it is not the Highwayman’s knife, and that Blake is, if not a murderer or an accomplice to murder, at least the mastermind of the theft. Still Prentiss does not believe her, and Kathryn is frantic—things are not going as she planned. The crowd demands she be arrested too.

Suddenly, silence falls as JP, Kokum, and a tall, dark and handsome stranger make their way toward the jail, followed by a crowd of Métis... and some of the

white citizens of Hopeful. The stranger is wearing the ivory-handled knife of the Highwayman on his belt for all to see, and Kokum introduces him to the crowd as her presumed-dead son, Gabriel Ducharme, aka the Highwayman. He explains his actions in support of the Métis, and that Constable Blake would try to kill him again if he knew he had survived Blake's first attempt to kill him with a shot in the back in Medicine Hat. Gabriel shows Sergeant Prentiss his rare ivory knife, and claims that he was with Belle on the night of the murder—getting married by Father Blanchet. Kathryn now exposes the real thief, telling the sergeant that Blake is shipping the money out of Hopeful on the noon train. When the receipt is found in his pocket, Claude Remy is furious that he has been cheated of his share of the money, and he tells everyone that it was Blake who stabbed the guard, then kept Claude's knife so that they could blame the Highwayman. Blake had blackmailed him into helping with the robbery by threatening to tell Belle that Claude had told him that Gabriel was in Medicine Hat, which was true: he wanted to get Gabriel out of the way so that he could have Belle.

Blake and Remy are both arrested. Sergeant Prentiss tells Gabriel he will need to pay for the goods he stole as the Highwayman. Kathryn realizes that she will have the \$5,000 reward, and tells JP that while she still plans to go to law school in the East, she will always return to her home in River Falls, and to JP.

## CHAPTER QUESTIONS

### Anticipation

1. Judging from title and the illustration on the front cover, what do you think the book is going to be about?
2. Read the back cover. When and where is the story set?
3. Write down one or two questions you have about the book:

### Chapter 1: Mystery Man

1. What is a Red River cart?
2. Why does Kathryn assume Aunt Belle is a member of the less fortunate classes?
3. *Look-it-up Question:* On page 3, Sister Bernadette says that Kathryn's father died of consumption. What kind of disease is consumption?
4. What would have happened to Kathryn if her aunt had not taken her in?
5. What did it cost for Kathryn to travel from Toronto to the West?  
*Look-it-up Question:* How much would it cost today to travel by train from Toronto to Calgary?
6. Does Kathryn seem a bit "snooty" to you?

### Chapter 2: White Knight Needed Apply Within

1. Why were the Métis known as the Road Allowance People?
2. Kathryn takes 12 books with her to the West. What 12 books would you take with you if you had to go to a place where there were none? You can include fiction, non-fiction, textbooks, graphic novels, etc. Share your list with the class.
3. Aunt Belle gives Kathryn two nicknames: first Katy, and then Katydid, which is an insect. What is your nickname? Why are you called that? Do you hate it as much as Kathryn?

### Chapter 3: Through the Looking Glass

1. When Kathryn says that Sir Giles rode away without her, what does she mean?

2. *Look-it-up Question:* When Kathryn refers to Tweedle Dee, Tweedle Dum, the Queen of Hearts, and the Mad Hatter, she is making an *allusion* to characters in another book. What book is she alluding to? Who is the author?

3. What is the Métis icebox?

4. What do you think Aunt Belle wants Kathryn to do with the bucket of mud and straw?

#### **Chapter 4: The Three Little Pigs Robin Hood and the Big Bad Wolf**

1. What does the Highwayman look like?

2. How do the white townspeople treat the Métis?

3. What will be the next steps in plastering the walls of the new bedroom?

4. What happened to Francis's hand?

5. What is odd about Constable Blake's appearance?

6. Why did Constable Blake join the North West Mounted Police?

#### **Chapter 5: Robin Hood in Alberta and a True Black Knight**

1. Why are all the men wearing *lil soncheur flesheys*, brightly coloured woven belts?

2. What language are the people speaking?

3. Why did Kathryn refuse to dance with the Prairie Puss in Boots?

4. Why did Belle refuse to dance with Claude?

5. What kinds of dances did the people do?

6. Why did Gabriel have to leave River Falls?

7. Who killed Gabriel, and where?

8. Why are the Métis not allowed to vote?

9. Why can the Métis be driven off their land?

10. What are some steps in preserving hides?

11. What are some of the acts of the Highwayman described in this chapter?
12. Why did Claude Remy's coat smell?

### **Chapter 6: In Need of a Poisoned Apple**

1. Why are the children of River Falls home schooled?
2. What does Kathryn think would be a better name for the town of Hopeful? Why?
3. What is the young man really admiring when he says, "Beautiful!"?
4. Why does the headmistress reject Kathryn's application for admission to the Carter Academy?

### **Chapter 7: Magic and Masked Men**

1. What kind of medicine does Aunt Belle deliver to save the feverish baby?
2. How does Kathryn believe Aunt Belle got the rare medicine?
3. What are the two wrongs that Aunt Belle says won't make a "right"?

### **Chapter 8: A Lord a Lady and Aladdin's Lamp**

1. Why does Kathryn make cookies for the neighbours?
2. What kind of game is *la petite patou*?
3. What does Kathryn offer JP in return for information about the Highwayman?
4. What colour is the light that awakens Kathryn?

### **Chapter 9: Red Riding Hood Finds the Holy Grail**

1. Who is the rider that Kathryn and Mark observe while eating their lunch?
2. What does Mark think women are good for?
3. Where does Mark plan to locate his hog operation?

## **Chapter 10: Clues Answered and Questions Asked**

1. List the four clues Kathryn checks on, and whether Claude Remy meets them.
2. What does Aunt Belle say when Kathryn asks her about the red lantern?

## **Chapter 11: Pirate Treasure from a Bandit**

1. If you were going to be sent somewhere without no school, which 10 books (textbooks and other) would you take to continue your learning on your own?
2. Who do you suspect is the Highwayman now?

## **Chapter 12: Uncle Tom's Cabin in Canada**

1. Who are the "new friends" Kathryn is referring to?
2. Since Kathryn doesn't look Métis, do you think the "gentlemen" who did not stand aside to let the ladies pass were racist or just rude?
3. Three upsetting things happen in town. Which, in your opinion, is the worst?

## **Chapter 13: Truth Lies and Liquorice**

1. Why is Kathryn so afraid of Mark finding out about Aunt Belle?
2. Do you think Kathryn should keep objecting to the "grinding abuse" she suffers as a Métis, or should she accept it, like Belle?
3. What did Aunt Belle throw at Blake's horse?

## **Chapter 14: Outhouse Rendezvous**

1. How might Kathryn have a hot bath when there is no running water in Aunt Belle's cabin?
2. Who does Kathryn think is the "telegraph operator"?
3. Who or what was rocking the outhouse?
4. How does Kathryn plan to make enough money to return to Toronto?
5. What crimes is the Highwayman suspected of committing now?
6. How does Kathryn convince herself that it is okay to turn in the Highwayman for the \$5,000 reward?



### **Chapter 15: Surprise First**

1. Why does Kathryn think she should get the reward money?
2. What is the Surprise First referred to in the title of this chapter?
3. Why does Kathryn decide to confide in Mark?
4. Kathryn is frustrated by Mark's slowness to catch on to her theories about the Highwayman, but she is slow to catch on too. What should she realize about Mark at this point?

### **Chapter 16: Night Light Fight**

1. Why does Kathryn lie to her aunt?
2. What evidence does Blake have that Aunt Belle is involved in the robbery?
3. Things look very bad for Kathryn and Belle. What do you think Kathryn should do now?

### **Chapter 17: Who Fights the Battle Now**

1. Why is Aunt Belle's life in danger?
2. What is Kathryn's plan to save Aunt Belle's life?
3. Should Kathryn have realized that Mark is not a good friend? What clues did she ignore?
4. Have you ever regretted trusting someone, maybe telling them a secret? What happened afterward?

### **Chapter 18: Desperate Plan to Escape the Dungeon**

1. Why does Belle refuse to tell Sergeant Prentiss the identity of the Highwayman?
2. What evidence does Kathryn have that Blake and Remy are working together?
3. Why do you think Kathryn jams the lock of the back door to the cells?

## **Chapter 19: Unmasked**

1. Why has JP forgiven Kathryn so easily?
2. Do you have any idea what Kathryn is planning? What might the letter she wrote Claude from the Highwayman say? Why might she have listed Cyrus Blake as the sender of a trunk filled only with wood?

## **Chapter 20: Happily Ever After**

1. Kathryn had to plant the false shipping receipt in Blake's jacket in order to prove him guilty. If the truth about the empty trunk ever came to light, she would be guilty of a crime. What crime could she be charged with?
2. If Father Blanchet had testified about the Gabrielle and Belle's wedding on the night of the robbery, would it have solved the problem?

## **EXTENSION PROJECTS**

### ***Art/English***

#### **Creative Writing: Finding Characters in History**

Distribute biographies of notable early Métis to students; thirty are available at [http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=2:biographies&Itemid=2&layout=default](http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=2:biographies&Itemid=2&layout=default), but there are many other prominent Métis in Canadian history students could research, including for example Belle Loughheed, or even sports figures like Bryan Trottier. Using the biography as a prompt, and the handouts as a guide have the students begin to write historical fiction of their own based on the life story of the historical figure.

Another option is to have the students create a play with the characters interacting in a traditional Métis setting such as depicted in *Outcasts of River Falls*.

#### **Create a Picture Book/Present a Scene**

Have each student draw a scene from each chapter of the book (or two scenes if you have over 20 students in the class and the chapter is a long one) and write a short descriptive caption for their drawing. Students should ensure that the setting, the characters' clothing, and the characters' physical features as described in the book are portrayed accurately. Put all the pictures together to create a class picture book, or post around the room.

Another option is to have students choose a scene from the book they find exciting and make a diorama, drawing, or cartoon of the scene and present it to the class.

#### **Design a Book Cover**

As the class nears the end of the book, have each student design a new cover for the book, including a different title, a new cover image, as well as text for the back cover that will intrigue readers of their age. Post these in the class.

### ***Language***

#### **Let's Learn Michif**

Introductory Michif language lessons are available online at [http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=20](http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=20). Have students label items around the classroom, and post labelled colour wheels, weather charts, number lines, etc.

## **History/Drama/Arts**

### **Wilderness Skills**

At various museums, science and environmental centers (such as Brightwater, near Saskatoon), students can learn wilderness “Survival Skills”—how to build a shelter, start a fire, make bannock.

### **Websites for Fun and Learning**

1. Virtual Museum of Canada, Games and Activities: “What Is It”  
<http://www.civilization.ca/cmce/exhibitions/cpm/catalog/cat5308e.shtml>
2. Virtual Museum of Canada, “Games and Activities: Mystery Objects”:  
<http://www.civilization.ca/cmce/exhibitions/cpm/catalog/cat5304e.shtml>
3. Before E-commerce: A History of Canadian Mail-order Catalogues:  
<http://www.civilization.ca/cmce/exhibitions/cpm/catalog/cat0000e.shtml>
4. For background information on the Métis:  
<http://www.Métismuseum.com/exhibits/resources/>
5. Jacqueline Guest’s website: <http://www.jacquelineguest.com>
6. For information on trains at the time:  
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/trains/kids/021007-1060-e.html>  
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/trains/kids/021007-4020-e.html>  
<http://www.trainweb.org/oldtimetrains/CPR/travel/history.htm>
7. A game on how a well-brought up Toronto girl would behave:  
<http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/keys/games/17>

### **Mathematics**

In 1900, the average pay was 13 cents an hour. A pound of butter cost 20 cents. Today, average pay is \$23.56 per hour, 181 times as much, 18,000%!  
(<http://www.cbc.ca/history/SECTIONSE1EP11CH4LE.html>). According to the relative consumer price index, \$42 for train fare in 1900 would be the same as us paying approximately \$1,100 today. Using the calculator at <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, have the students convert the prices of the goods they “ordered” from the Eaton’s catalogue. Discuss as a class whether the things they bought that seemed like such a good deal were really that cheap, given the average salary.

### **Métis Day**

Have students create traditional Métis cuisine and teach other students Métis arts and crafts at a school-wide “Métis Day” including.

For food, you might re-create Kathryn’s first breakfast on p. 25: *Li gallettee* (bannock), bacon, crepes du matin with strawberry jam and whipped cream, and *Li Siiroo di Pisaandlii* (dandelion/maple syrup). As well, recipes for traditional foods like boulettes, beignes and bannock can be found in “Métis Food and Diet,” by Patrick Young, Todd Paquin, Leah Dorion and Darren R. Prefontaine, at <http://www.Métismuseum.ca/resource.php/00746>.

Visit the Gabriel Dumont Institute's The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture at <http://www.Métismuseum.ca> to obtain images of Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont, John A. Macdonald, General Frederick Middleton, Riverlot and Township or Grid system diagrams and a Métis sash. An image of Métis scrip can be obtained at <http://www.sasksettlement.com>.

For Métis music, dance and celebration, including Métis fiddler John Arcand, visit <http://www.Métismuseum.ca/exhibits/celebration>.

For instructions to make a Métis sash, including examples of finger weaving and instructions on how to finger weave, visit <http://www.Métismuseum.ca> and search for "finger weaving."

For instructions on how to make a bracelet inspired by a Métis sash, see <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/settlement/kids/021013-1811-e.html>

To create a miniature Red River cart, visit:

[http://www.saskschools.ca/%7Eaboriginal\\_res/](http://www.saskschools.ca/%7Eaboriginal_res/)

For instructions on how to create a Métis flag, visit:

[http://www.saskschools.ca/%7Eaboriginal\\_res/](http://www.saskschools.ca/%7Eaboriginal_res/)

## History

1. Have students write a short report on an aspect of Métis history or culture, or
2. Have students research one of the historical figures featured at [http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=2:biographies&Itemid=2&layout=default](http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=2:biographies&Itemid=2&layout=default) and, in character, introduce themselves to their classmates, telling how they fit into Métis and western Canadian history.

## HANDOUT

### *Creative Writing*

#### **Now It's Your Turn**

You know a lot about your character—a real person who actually lived a long time ago. But you don't know everything about them—none of us do! To turn this person into a character in a story, you have to make up the new details about them and their life. Describe his or her day of adventure. Use some of what you have learned about the Métis in the book *Outcasts of River Falls*.

#### **Step 1: Create Your Character**

What does your character look like (hair/eyes/height/build)?

Describe your character's personality:

(quiet/shy/bold/smart/jokester/fearful/friendly/mature/etc.)

#### **Step 2: Focus on Plot—What Happens?**

You know the basic facts of your character's life. Now plan some interesting things that could happen to your character along the way:

Who does your character meet along the way? Real or imagined? Friend or foe? Friendly or dangerous? Powerful or not? Criminal or hero?

What kind of adventure does your character go on?

Does your character face any special challenges during the adventure?

Is there a mystery your character could get involved with?

What is the most exciting moment of your story going to be? Is your character in danger?

### **Step 3: Write Your Story**

Now write your story, using some of the interesting details and the plot ideas you have already thought of. When you are ready, share your story with a classmate for feedback.

## HANDOUT

### The Métis

- Marriages between First Nations women and fur traders ensured the trader a constant supply of furs, and ensured the woman's family a constant market for their furs.
- These marriages resulted in an entirely new group of people, the Métis, known as "children of the fur trade," "Michif," or *gens du libre*.
- The Métis were mixed-blood people of First Nations and French or British descent. The two groups had different religions, languages, dress and ways of making a living.
- Michif is a distinctly Métis language based on a mixture of Cree or Ojibway verbs and French nouns.
- On the prairies, Métis were known as Flower Beadwork People for their brightly adorned flower beadwork clothing.
- The Métis sash was used as a belt, towline or rope. Different styles and colours were used by various families in different places. The sash was another symbol of how the Métis blended First Nations and French Canadian cultures. Traditional sashes sometimes had beads and trinkets woven into them as decoration.

Today, the sash is used as a symbol of Métis pride, often given to honour a person's achievements in the Métis community with an award called the "Order of the Sash."

*Adapted from:* "Métis Roots in Saskatchewan," Native Studies Ten, Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, pp. 303-4, [http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/WDM\\_TchrGdthemes\\_EN\\_web/WDMTG\\_Métisroots\\_web.pdf](http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/WDM_TchrGdthemes_EN_web/WDMTG_Métisroots_web.pdf)



## HANDOUT

### Métis History

- The Métis adopted the “riverlot system” (long, narrow strips of land heading back from a river) from French Canadians in what is now Quebec. It allowed families to be close to each other, sharing access to the water.
- Louis Riel led the 1869 Resistance in Red River. Afterward, he went to New York, Québec and then Montana where he taught school until he was called again to assist the Métis during the 1885 Resistance at Batoche.
- Scrip was a government certificate that gave Métis people land or money. Unfortunately, it was often speculators or bankers – not the Métis – who were the real beneficiaries of the land grants.
- After 1879, Canada’s National Policy brought tens of thousands of white settlers to the prairies, many of whom were insensitive to the plight of the Métis. Racism caused many Métis to downplay or abandon their heritage.
- Many Métis who were pushed off their traditional land lived on road allowances, government land alongside rural roads. The Métis came to be known as the “Road Allowance People.”

*Adapted from:* “Métis Roots in Saskatchewan,” Native Studies Ten, Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, pp. 303-4,  
[http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/WDM\\_TchrGdthemes\\_EN\\_web/WDMTG\\_Métisroots\\_web.pdf](http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/WDM_TchrGdthemes_EN_web/WDMTG_Métisroots_web.pdf).



### **About the author:**

Jacqueline Guest's historical novels for young readers present Canada's vibrant past as an exciting read that appeals to families, young readers, and educators. Her award-winning books are unique in that many of the main characters come from different ethnic backgrounds including First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Her well-drawn characters are strong models for today's youth.

Nine of Jacqueline's books have been honoured with Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice Awards. *Belle of Batoche* was an Ontario Library Association Best Bet Selection and won the Edmonton Schools Best of the Best Award, and was nominated for the Red Cedar Young Readers' Choice and R. Ross Annett Awards. She has also received nominations for the Arthur Ellis Mystery Award and the Golden Eagle Award.

Jacqueline is a Métis writer who lives in a log cabin nestled in the pinewoods of the Rocky Mountain foothills of Alberta.

A strong advocate of reading, Jacqueline believes the key to the future is through better literacy today. Her Wild Ride Writing Workshops are popular in schools, where she provides keys to facing a language arts exam and passing! She also teaches writing how-tos and encourages children to follow their own literary dreams.

Jacqueline has participated in Mamawenig, the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Gathering, where she helped shape the direction of Native literacy in the province. She has performed pro-bono workshops at the Edmonton Young Offenders Centre and presented for the Cultural Diversity Institute and the Universities of Calgary and Victoria. Her work with literary, historical, teachers' and librarians' associations nationwide has taken her as far afield as Nunavut to spread the good word on literacy!

Jacqueline was the Writer in Residence for the Marigold Library System and is a member of Calgary Arts Partners in Education Society.

**There are many other books written by Jacqueline Guest including:**

Ghost Messages

Belle of Batoche

Secret Signs