

Storm at Batoche

Maxine Trottier, John Mantha

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Canadian Children's Book Centre, Our Choice selection

• They had been heading to Batoche when the storm struck. A few hours more and they might have made it. Then the wagon lurched to one side. James tumbled out. He shouted to his parents, but the wind stole his words away. His mother turned in her sleep as the wagon disappeared into the swirling whiteness.

During a fierce prairie storm, James falls out of his family's wagon and his calls for help are lost in the howl of the wind. After his parents vanish into the blizzard, a man on horseback appears and takes James to the safety and warmth of his small cabin. The man will only say that his name is Louis. While he prepares an evening meal of gallette, Louis promises to teach James how to make it in the morning. When he does, James declares his mother makes the same type of bread but she calls it "bannock," not "gallette," underscoring the differences and similarities between their cultures.

This imaginary encounter between Louis Riel and a young boy brings to light how insignificant the differences between people are and the tragic consequences of not remembering how much we all share. The historical context for the story is found in the Afterword. On the last page of the book there is an easy recipe for gallette/bannock.



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