

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
READ • LISTEN • TELL



**“The Way of Thorn and Thunder: Kynship”
by Daniel Heath Justice**

Literature guide created by
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MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY DEBATE

Discuss as a class how the book handles the apparent tension between magic and technology, a tension commonly featured in fantasy. Are the two systems opposed in the book? How would you classify Kyn wyrwood armour and weaponry—as magic or technology? What about Ubbetuk Dragon airships? These seem like a technology, but are a product of Ubbetuk Wielding magic. Why might breaking down the distinction between magic and technology be important? What are the implications for stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as associated with nature (as magic is) and as pre-technological?

COUNCIL DEBATE

Recreate the council, asking everyone to take sides and make their cases as the different Folk nations:

- *Celestial Kyn* — in favour of leaving the Everland, ties to human religion
- *Greenwalker Kyn* — in favour of staying, can't forsake connection to the Eternity Tree
- *Tetawi* — in favour of staying, know human greed won't be sated
- *Ubbetuk* — in favour of leaving, fear that the Everland will inevitably be lost, but stand in solidarity with the other Folk
- *Ferals and Beast People* — in favour of staying, fighting, defending their homes
- *Wyrnach* — in favour of leaving, very few are left, and do not want to fight

Allow some time for students to review the book and appendices for what they can learn of the nation they've been assigned. At the end of the activity, regardless of the outcome, be sure to emphasize that while the spirit of the debate is to see multiple perspectives presented in the book, many of the situations that the novel describes were and are experienced by Indigenous peoples on this continent. The displacement and cultural genocide that the book describes represent real lived experiences. The consequences of some of the viewpoints they have been debating are not simply academic. The occupation and colonization of the lands on which we live, teach, and study continue.

For anyone who found themselves rooting for Tarsa and Tobhi, fearing for Quill and Daladir, and wanting the Folk to keep their homes in the Everland, these stories reflect ongoing struggles for decolonization. Encourage students to read more books by Indigenous authors. Remember that being able to understand multiple perspectives is one of the reasons to study literature. Stories take us out of ourselves, allow us to see other worlds, to look more closely at our own world and, in the words of Daniel Heath Justice, “to imagine otherwise.”