



WAB KINEW

**THE
EVERLASTING
ROAD**

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



THE EVERLASTING ROAD

Wab Kinew is the bestselling, award-winning author of the picture book *Go Show the World*, the memoir *The Reason You Walk*, and the young adult novel *Walking in Two Worlds*. An Honourary Witness for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and a follower of the Anishinaabe way of life, he is a former journalist, hip-hop artist, and television host who was named by Postmedia News as one of “9 Aboriginal movers and shakers you should know.” Kinew, who is a provincial politician in Manitoba, lives in Winnipeg with his family.

This guide was created by **April Waters**, a Red River Métis educator from Treaty One territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She is currently an administrator of Indigenous Education, with experience as a classroom teacher, an Indigenous Education teacher, and a school-based administrator. She provides instructional support and professional development for educators in bringing authentic Indigenous knowledge, culture, and history into their classrooms.

The boundaries between the virtual and the real world become dangerously blurred for a young Indigenous girl in the follow-up to the YA fantasy debut *Walking in Two Worlds* from bestselling Indigenous author Wab Kinew. Perfect for fans of *Ready Player One* and the *Otherworld* series.

Devastated by the loss of her older brother to cancer, Bugz returns to the place where she can always find solace and strength: the Floraverse. Over the past year, she has regained her position of power in that virtual world, and while the remaining Clan:LESS members still plot against her, she is easily able to overcome their attacks. Even better, she’s been secretly working on a bot that will be both an incredible weapon and a source of comfort: Waawaate.

With the Waawaate bot looking exactly like the brother she misses so much—even acting like him—Bugz feels ready to show him off to Feng, who has become a constant companion in the ‘Verse. She cannot wait to team up with both friend and bot to secure her dominance once and for all. But Feng has his own issues to deal with, especially when news that his parents are alive and want to contact him threatens to send his new life on the Rez into upheaval. As they work through their complicated feelings of grief and loss, Feng and Bugz find themselves becoming ever closer. But disturbances in the Floraverse cannot be ignored, especially when Bugz realizes that her Waawaate bot is growing in power beyond her control . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The book begins with the loss of Bugz's brother, Waawaate. In an attempt to deal with her grief, Bugz cuts her hair. What do we learn about cutting hair in Anishinaabe culture? How does her family react to this? What other traditional practices are shared around Waawaate's funeral ceremony?
2. Waawaate's funeral ceremony is led by an Afro-Indigenous Elder. What does Bugz observe about him? What does her mother share about him?
3. Bugz creates an AI version of Waawaate in the Floraverse. Why do you think she does this? What process does she go through? What features does she give him to make him like her brother?
4. On page 50, Bugz and Feng discuss the bronze moccasin statue in front of the council office building. What do these moccasins represent? What does Bugz teach Feng about her community's history?
5. Throughout the book, the author, Wab Kinew, has chapters that illustrate Waawaate's journey to the spirit world, the Happy Hunting Grounds. What does Waawaate encounter on his journey? What is it like for him? Why do you think his journey is a part of the story?
6. On page 75, Bugz tries to teach the AI Waawaate to treat the Clan:LESS members with respect. She tells him to "let them come back and fight another day" instead of destroying them completely. Why would she do this when Clan:LESS has disrespected her so much in the past? What do you think this says about her character?
7. Bugz takes Feng on the boat out on Sturgeon Lake, where she shows him rock paintings done by her community's ancestors. What do the paintings look like? What do they explain? What does Bugz leave at the site, and why does she leave it there?
8. Feng was inspired by the bronze moccasin statue to create something in the Floraverse for Bugz. What does he design and why? Who helps him to complete the picture? What does the picture make him think of?
9. Feng's aunt shares a video with him of his parents. What kinds of things are they saying in the video? How does Feng react to it? What do his aunt and uncle decide to do next?
10. On page 142, Bugz and Stormy are at school, but many of the other students are allowed to head home, "leaving the Rez kids to wander the disinfectant-smelling halls until the buses came to drive them home six hours later." Why do the Indigenous students have to stay at school? Where did these rules come from? How fair do you think this is?
11. The AI Waawaate begins to ignore Bugz's orders and goes after Clan:LESS members through their technology and social media accounts. How does this impact Bugz in the real world? What happens in the Floraverse?
12. Who is Sabikeshiinh? What role does the creature play in the story? How does Sabikeshiinh help Bugz?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. On page 13, Bugz observes that she has been to so many funerals already that she knows the funeral ceremony by heart. Unfortunately, many Indigenous communities deal with death often. Throughout the book, Kinew explains parts of the Anishinaabe beliefs and ceremonies around death, such as the Everlasting Road, the Path of Souls, and the Happy Hunting Grounds. How do these beliefs and practices compare with your own or other cultures?
2. Bugz uses advanced technology in the Floraverse to create an AI version of Waawaate, and we see problems with it immediately in the book. AI technology is advancing quickly in our world, but it can come with issues and challenges. Research the topic of AI and its ethical questions. Place students into “for” and “against” groups and hold a debate. Is our world better off with AI technology, or without it?
3. Dreamcatchers have become common around Turtle Island (North America), but few know where they come from or the teachings behind them. What do you learn about them in the book? Following proper protocols, invite an Elder or Knowledge Keeper with dreamcatcher teachings into your classroom to learn more. After learning more, how do you feel about dreamcatchers being used as commonly as they are, such as on t-shirts or mass produced in countries around the world? Are there other Indigenous items that are appropriated the same way? Share your learning with your school community.
4. At the end of the book, Bugz signs a peace treaty with Clan:LESS. She signs the document with her clan animal, a pelican. This was the way that many treaties were signed between Indigenous nations and settlers (research the Selkirk Treaty for an example). Why do you think the Chiefs signed with their clan animals? What do you know about treaties? If you don’t already know, learn about which Indigenous nations’ territory you live on. Which treaties were signed on this land? What were the two groups agreeing to? What is the significance of a treaty?
5. *The Everlasting Road* discusses residential schools in different parts of the story. In real life, the grounds of these sites are being searched for children who passed away, and Indigenous communities are grieving. In the book, Feng creates a monument to honor these children in the Floraverse, and there’s a monument in Bugz’s community as well. Do you know if there was a residential school in your area? Using traditional art supplies or a digital/graphic art program, design your own monument that would honor these children and their families. What would you include in your design? What colors would you use? Share your creations with your local community.



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