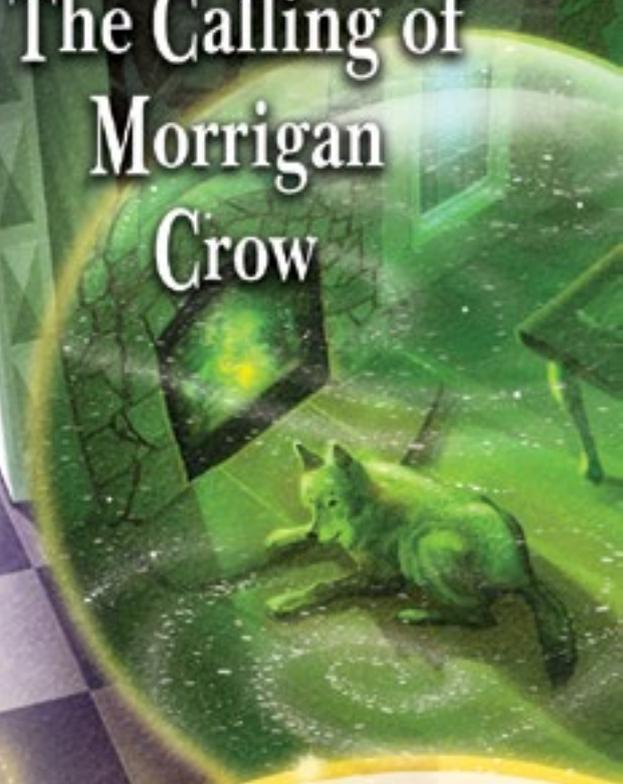


Jessica Townsend

WunderSmith

The Calling of
Morrigan
Crow



TEACHERS RESOURCES

WUNDERSMITH: THE CALLING OF MORRIGAN CROW BY JESSICA TOWNSEND

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Introduction	4
Before & After Reading the Novel	6
Themes & Curriculum Topics	6
SOSE	6
English Language & Literacy	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrative Person, Narrative Perspective & Tense• Symbolism• Literary Devices & Word Play• Humour• Structure• Setting• Characters	

- Genre
- Writing Tasks
- Visual Literacy

Further Quotes for Discussion 20

Further Activities 21

Conclusion 22

About the Author 22

Bibliography 23

About the Author of the Notes 23



INTRODUCTION

Book 2: *Wundersmith: The Calling of Morrigan Crow*

“‘Funny peculiar. He said that he and I have a shared enemy.’ She frowned, trying to recall Squall’s exact words. ‘He said I had to be given the freedom to become the Wundersmith he needs me to be. Because ... terrible things are coming. And he said that by teaching me to use my powers, he was shutting the window. But ... his long-term plans were more important. He said he needed me alive.’” (p 447)

‘You are sisters and brothers for life. Not because you took an oath, but because you proved it.’ (p 461)

Morrigan Crow has been inducted into Unit 919 of the Wondrous Society along with new members Archan, Anah, Cadence, Francis, Hawthorne, Lambeth, Mahir and Thaddea. But her new friends (apart from Hawthorne) aren’t entirely happy to have been grouped with a Wundersmith. Meanwhile, Wunder is gathering in Nevermoor.

Morrigan may have defeated her deadly curse, passed the dangerous trials and joined the mystical Wondrous Society, but her journey into Nevermoor and all its secrets has only just begun. And she is fast learning that not all magic is used for good.

Morrigan’s perilous adventures continue in what has been called ‘the most anticipated sequel of the year’ and which is a triumph of inventive and original storytelling.

Book 1: *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow*

Morrigan Crow had been a ‘cursed child’, the unloved daughter of state Chancellor Crow of Great Wolfacre, living in Jackalfax, in the Wintersea Republic. But all that changed on the eve of her eleventh birthday (which was predicted to be the day she would die) when she was invited by Jupiter North to join the ‘Wondrous Society’ and was spirited away to Nevermoor (the ‘free’ or fifth state no one talks about). There she befriended the eccentric staff of North’s Hotel Deucalion, who included the housekeeper, Fenestra, a ‘Magnificat’; Kedgerree Burns, a concierge; Frank, a dwarf vampire and party organiser; Martha, a maid; and Dame Chanda Kali, a ‘Grand High Soprano and Dame Commander of the Order of Woodland Whisperers’.

When Morrigan learned that she must discover a 'talent' or knack (like Jupiter, his nephew Jack, and her friend Hawthorne) in order to complete the trials needed to enter the Wondrous Society and to stay in Nevermoor, she briefly despaired. She also discovered that Mr Jones, who had also tried to sponsor her in the trials, was actually Ezra Squall, the Wundersmith. The thrilling escapade ended with Morrigan discovering that she too was a Wundersmith. All this took place against a backdrop of growing political unrest and a looming energy crisis.

This is an action-packed and riveting fantasy series. It is also about a search for love, friendship, family and identity. For, despite being based on a fantastical premise, Nevermoor and Wundersmith are fundamentally about what it is to be human and what it means to be part of a community.



BEFORE & AFTER READING THE NOVEL

1. Examine the cover of the novel. What does it suggest about the novel's themes?
2. After you have read the novel, examine the cover again: what does it suggest to you now?
3. After you have read the novel, read about Jessica Townsend in reviews and articles and use the notes below to examine the text more closely.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes relevant to curriculum topics (Studies of Society and Environment and English Language and Literacy) might be identified in this novel:

STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT (SOSE)

- **FAMILY, FRIENDSHIPS AND LOVE**

DISCUSSION POINT: “A family emblem. Those words tugged gently at Morrigan’s heart. She prized her golden W pin above all her other possessions (except, perhaps, her broly), but it was still just that ... a possession. An object that could easily be broken or lost. The imprint felt different; it was a part of her. And it proved that she was a part of something important, something bigger than just herself. A family.

Sisters and brothers, loyal for life.” (p 46)

Morrigan’s story is of a search for family. Her own family showed no affection for her. Jupiter and his staff at the Hotel Deucalion have become

a protective second family. And now becoming part of Wunsoc is equally special to her – to become part of a group of her peers. By the end of the novel has she found a third family?

DISCUSSION POINT: Read this passage: “She was tired of so desperately wanting the friendship and approval of her so-called brothers and sisters. (How that phrase made her cringe now. When she thought back to the person she was a year ago, that *idiot* who believed she’d have eight readymade siblings if only she could pass the trials... as *if* anything was ever that simple.)” (p 336) Discuss Morrigan’s feelings as they are reflected here and compare them to your students’ experiences of having tried to make friends with someone and failed.

DISCUSSION POINT: Both Hawthorne and Jack have proved very special friends to Morrigan as has her beloved patron Jupiter and all the peculiar people who inhabit his Hotel Deucalion. She is very aware of their affection, but like so many of us, it is those who deny her friendship who most preoccupy her thoughts.

- **POLITICS AND BUREAUCRACY**

DISCUSSION POINT: In this series, the novelist enjoys satirising bureaucracy, for example:

“‘Good. Now, let me tell you what *I* see when I look at Nevermoor,’ said Mildmay. He looked down at the tiny, teeming city with a rapture that lit his eyes from the inside. ‘I see a monster. A beautiful, terrible monster that feeds us all with stories and history and *life*, and demands to be fed in return. A monster that, over the Ages, has grown fat on the unwitting, the gullible, the vulnerable... has chewed them up and swallowed them down, never to be seen again.’” (p 146)

OR

“‘That’s the *Stealth*.’

‘The what?’ asked Morrigan.

‘The Wondrous Society Investigation Department,’ said Jack. ‘Secret police.’” (p 197)

OR

“Jupiter gratefully accepted the cup Morrigan handed to him. She curled up in the armchair opposite, hugging a cushion to her chest. ‘There’s nothing to charge them with, Mog. No evidence of any wrongdoing. No record of money changing hands. Black market trading is illegal, but there’s no evidence of any *actual* trading – not now that the

museum is destroyed. They're all claiming they thought it was a party.' Jupiter made an angry growling noise in the back of his throat. 'Scum.'" (p 442)

OR

"'Um, the Committee for the Classification of Wondrous Acts,' she said with a sigh. 'They were the people who decided if a Wundersmith had done something bad, like a Misstep or a Blunder, or something terrible, like a Fiasco or a Monstrosity, or the worst thing they could do, which was a Devastation. And Cascade Towers was a Fiasco bordering on a Monstrosity.'" (p 131)

DISCUSSION POINT: Discuss how bureaucracy is portrayed in this novel.

- **COMING OF AGE & RITE OF PASSAGE TRIALS AND TESTS**

DISCUSSION POINT: Morrigan's trials didn't end in Book 1, for in this sequel she faces personal challenges which involve both taking risks and learning when to exercise caution. What else does she learn about herself?

DISCUSSION POINT: Jupiter is Morrigan's fierce protector but part of that role is encouraging independence as well. In which particular scenes in the novel does he encourage her to be more forceful?

- **FORCES OF GOOD AND EVIL**

DISCUSSION POINT: "She could still see the frightened faces on the platform. Had Morrigan *enjoyed* that, she wondered. Had some small part of her *liked* the thought of striking fear in someone's heart... instead of being the one who was always afraid?" (p 395) Ezra Squall constantly taunts Morrigan with her capacity to be both good and evil. Is this battle with oneself one of the major themes in this novel?

DISCUSSION POINT: Read these two quotes: "'I was weak,' he continued. 'I admit it. I was bitter and jealous. Everyone knows I'm the weakest in my unit. The boring one. *Map boy*, that's what they always called me.' His face twisted into something ugly. 'I wanted to be important, so when the Wundersmith came to me, when he asked for my help – *me*, of all people! – I thought I'd found a way to get back at them. Squall's the most powerful man in the Wintersea Republic! He promised me a place in his empire, a seat at his right side – how could I turn that down?' He paused. 'At first all I had to do was pass on bits of information. I didn't know anyone was going to get hurt. You have to believe me.'" (pp 408–409)

“‘He was nice to me,’ she said finally. ‘Mildmay. He was funny, and his classes were fun, and he made me feel like I was good at something. And Professor Onstald... he hated me. He was horrible, all year long, and he made me feel like *I* was something horrible.’ She swallowed hard against the lump forming in her throat. ‘But Mildmay set up the Ghastly Market. He betrayed all of us. And Onstald saved my life.’” (p 443)

Evil is often simply weakness. Mildmay seems such a good man but proves to be a weak one. What do these two passages suggest about human nature?

- **INDIVIDUAL TALENTS**

DISCUSSION POINT: Each member of the Unit have extraordinary powers. How challenging is it to use such talents for good rather than evil?

DISCUSSION POINT: “‘At their best, Wundersmiths were self-indulgent eccentrics, abusing their positions of privilege by creating Wondrous vanity projects that inconvenienced many and benefited few. Like Decima Kokoro, who’d demanded public funds and resources to create a Wondrous skyscraper made entirely of water – an expensive and hazardous folly that resulted in several people drowning before it was shut down. Or Odbuoy Jemmity, who’d demolished an entire block of houses in a poverty-stricken borough to build an adventure park, which upon completion he named after himself and never allowed anyone inside.’” (p 112) Morrigan later learns that this description of these two Wundersmiths is false. How often are those who create unique things classified as madmen or eccentrics? Why are human beings so often suspicious of those with talent?

- **ENERGY CRISIS**

DISCUSSION POINT: Wunder is a metaphor for energy and power. What do these novels suggest about the importance of energy?

DISCUSSION POINT: “That the mysterious magical energy source they called Wunder – a source that powered the world in ways Morrigan couldn’t fathom – was gathering to her constantly, like moths gather to a flame, waiting patiently for her to come into her (still stubbornly non-existent) powers.” (p 48) Morrigan’s powers are by implication capable of saving or destroying the world. Is Wunder something which can be controlled?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Study the writing style employed in this narrative, and examine the following sub-topics:

- **NARRATIVE PERSON, NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE & TENSE**

DISCUSSION POINT: This is a third person subjective account of Morrigan's experiences. How might it have changed had it been written as a first person narrative?

- **SYMBOLISM**

DISCUSSION POINT: What examples of symbolism did you notice in this novel?

- **LITERARY DEVICES & WORD PLAY**

ACTIVITY: Find examples of the use of literary devices in this novel, using the table below to identify examples.

SIMILIE	
METAPHORS	
PERSONIFICATION	
WORD PLAY	
OTHER	

DISCUSSION POINT: Food is often lovingly described in this novel, eg. “All the long, rain-soaked journey home, she had dreamed of her favourite dishes from the Hotel Deucalion kitchen: steaming bowlfuls of chicken dumpling soup, gooey baked cheese and crusty bread still warm from the oven, spiced rice pudding with honey-fried pears, blueberry buttermilk pancakes stacked a foot high and smothered with syrup... and scones! What she wouldn’t give for a single, perfect Deucalion scone.” (pp 121-122)

Discuss the use of language and syntax in this and other passages.

DISCUSSION POINT: This novelist delights in puns and word play, eg. **“WELCOME TO THE NEVERMOOR BAZAAR** And underneath, an ambitious promise wrote and re-wrote itself in the air with smoke siphoned from the fiery letters: **You’ve Never Seen Anything More Bizarre**” (pp 248-249) What other examples of such word play did you discover in the novel?

• **HUMOUR**

ACTIVITY: Humour in this series is cunningly topical, for example: “Morrigan didn’t like the sound of the Goal-Setting and Achieving Club for Highly Ambitious Youth, which met on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, and all day Sunday. But she thought she could probably get on board with Introverts Utterly Anonymous, which promised no meetings or gatherings of any sort, ever.” (p 77)

Identify techniques by which humour is provoked. Add quotes to the following table:

SARCASM	<p>“‘Good. You’d be surprised how much it can help in a frightening situation if you just remember to keep breathing.’ Cadence turned to Morrigan and rolled her eyes. ‘Brilliant,’ she muttered. ‘I would have forgotten this basic involuntary bodily function if he hadn’t mentioned it. I’ll write that down.’ She made a stupid face and pretended to write it in the air with an imaginary pen.” (pp 204-205)</p>
IRONY	
EXAGGERATION	
BLACK HUMOUR	
OTHER	

• STRUCTURE

The structure of the story can be analysed in terms of key narrative features used to engage the reader's attention and to shape the work:

a) *Strong beginnings and endings to chapters* are one way of structuring a narrative, for example:

Beginning: "'Dragonriding ALL MORNING!' shouted Hawthorne the next day, throwing a fit in the air. 'YES!'" (Ch 6, p 95)

Ending: "'... then all nine of you will face expulsion from Wunsoc. For life.'" (Ch 2, p 42)

Which other opening or closing sentence was particularly gripping, in your opinion?

b) *Suspense* is the key to any narrative's structure. For example:

"Then, what felt like half a second later, she was awake.

She was awake, and not in her bed.

She was awake, and not in her bed, and not alone." (p 22)

OR

"This was the third disappearance she'd heard about that week. Cassiel, Paximus Luck, and now the Magnificub." (p 98)

OR

"*Calling. Dying. Freezing. Burning. Flying.*" (p 421) Such clues punctuate the action making it hair-raising in pace. There are many instances of such suspense in this novel. Discuss some of them.

c) *Using a 'framing story or idea'* makes a narrative more cohesive but sometimes can be used as a foil to trigger a major surprise or turning point in the action. Morrigan's cursedness lay at the heart of the first novel, but her unknown powers as a Wundersmith are at the heart of the second. Her doubts regarding her ability to be a 'good' Wundersmith when so many seem to have been 'bad' lies at its core. Discuss the use of a framing narrative in this novel.

• SETTING

DISCUSSION POINT: Description in setting can be evoked via a complex range of literary devices. For example, simile: "A shimmering establishment of white marble and gold, Morrigan thought it looked a bit like a cathedral

and a bit like a wedding cake.” (p 3) What other devices do you notice in such descriptions?

ACTIVITY: Choose a passage that vividly describes the locale. Discuss the passage with the class.

• CHARACTERS

Major Characters: Morrigan Crow, a Wundersmith, whose patron/sponsor is Jupiter North, the ‘Great and Honourable Captain Sir Jupiter Amantius North, Esquire.’ Who is ‘a Witness. He sees things.’ (Bk 1, p 21); and Morrigan’s fellow members of Unit 919:

- Archan Tate, a pickpocket.
- Anah Kahlo, a healer, whose patron is Sunata Mishra.
- Cadence Blackburn, a mesmerist, whose patron is Baz Charlton, a nasty sponsor of several candidates.
- Francis Fitzwilliam, a chef, whose patron is his aunt Hester.
- Hawthorne Swift, a dragonrider (and Morrigan’s best friend), whose patron is Nancy Dawson.
- Lambeth Amara, a short-range oracle.
- Mahir Ibrahim Mahir Ibrahim, a linguist whose patron is Miss Mulryan.
- Thaddea Macleod, a fighter.
- Mr Jones alias Ezra Squall and the evil Wundersmith; John Arjuna Korrapati (Jack), Jupiter’s nephew, who attends Graysmark School for Bright Young Men.

Minor Characters: Fenestra, a Magnificat and housekeeper at the Hotel Deucalion; Kedgereee Burns, concierge at the Hotel Deucalion; Frank, a dwarf vampire, at the Hotel Deucalion; Dame Chanda Kali, who lives at the Hotel Deucalion: ‘a Grand High Soprano and Dame Commander of the Order of Woodland Whisperers’; Martha, the housemaid at the Hotel Deucalion; Charlie McAlister, the chauffeur at the Hotel Deucalion; The Angel Israfil (who goes missing); Dulcinea Dearborn and Maris Murgatroyd, The Scholar Mistresses for the School of Mundane and Arcane Arts; Miss Marina Cheery, conductor for Unit 919; Paximus Luck, Plucky, the famous master illusionist slash stealth prankster slash vigilante street artist (who goes missing); Cassiel, a celestial being (who goes missing); Professor Hemingway Q. Onstald; Mr Henry Mildmay; Hester, Miss Dawson’s colleague; ‘the three esteemed members of the Wunsoc’s High Council of Elders – Elder Gregoria Quinn, a woman whose fragile appearance Morrigan knew to be extremely deceptive; Elder Helix Wong, a serious, grey-bearded man covered in tattoos; and Elder Alioth Saga, who was, in fact, a large talking bull’ (p 31); Dr Bramble, Professor Kempsey, and Professor Dresser; Bullies (The Charlton Five): Carl, Heloise and Alfie Swann (who goes missing); Will

Gaudy, a fighter, Unit 916; Magnificub, a baby Magnificat (which goes missing).

ACTIVITY: Draw up a character chart and find key quotes that give a clear picture of any of these characters, and isolate events that demonstrate their natures. Then write a brief character study of the person using the quotes and events to illustrate the points made in your summary.

QUESTION: Which character was most intriguing and why? Which character would you like to have heard more about?

• GENRE

This novel contains features of both the **fantasy and mystery genres**:

A. Fantasy as a genre has several recurring features [See Jane Mobley's 'Toward a Definition of Fantasy Fiction' in Bator, Robert, *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*, Chicago, ALA, 1983, pp. 249–260]. As in the notes on Nevermoor teachers might examine each of these features in relation to this novel, as below:

a) It relies on **creating convincing and entertaining detail in creating a 'secondary world'**. There are many examples of such detail in this and its prequel, for example, when Jack explains to Morrigan the system of Black Mail his friend invented:

“‘Speaking of blackmail,’ he said, reaching into a concealed inner coat pocket. ‘I’ve been meaning to give you these.’ He handed her a folded paper square. It was a dark silvery-black, as thin as a dried leaf, but soft and supple. ‘If you ever need me – a proper emergency, I mean, not just some nonsense – if you’re in trouble and you need help, write down an address, or a landmark, on the paper. Somewhere I can come and find you. Then say my full name – John Arjuna Korrapati – three times, and burn the paper. It’s bonded to me, so no matter where you are, it’ll show up in my hand.’”
(p 195)

OR

“Wunimals were sentient, self-aware, intelligent creatures capable of complexities such as language, invention and artistic expression, just like humans. Unnimals were not.” (p 104)

OR

“‘Swindleroads. Tricky Lanes. Shadowstreets. Ghostly Hours,’ he read from a list he’d written on the blackboard. ‘Who can tell me what these are?’”
(p 201)

OR

“Mildmay gave a deep, reluctant sigh and shoved his hands in his trouser pockets. ‘Well, I suppose the Ghastly Market itself *might* have been real enough many years ago. It was a black market – a secret, illegal trading place where you could buy almost anything you can think of – weapons, exotic unimal parts, human organs, outlawed sorcery ingredients...’
‘Even Wunimals, said Cadence.’” (p 220)

OR

“‘The Bonesmen?’ Morrigan asked. ‘What are they?’
‘The “Skeletal Legion”, they’re also called.’ He rolled his eyes. ‘Proper bogeyman stuff. *Supposedly* they used to emerge from dark, lonely places where carcasses were plentiful – graveyards, battlefields, you know – spontaneously assembling themselves from the jumbled leftovers of the dead.’” (p 221)

OR

The *Decoding Nevermoor* classes run by Mr Mildmay are bewitchingly full of details regarding the strange geography of the area.

OR

The Wretched Arts: *Nocturne, Weaving, Tempus, Veil*. (p 221)

OR

“‘According to Onstald’s book, the Wondrous Act Spectrum only has five classifications – Missteps, Blunders, Fiascos, Monstrosities and Devastations. It doesn’t say anything about Spectacles or Singularities. But they obviously exist, because... well, because we’re standing in one.’” (p 356)

OR

“‘What’s a Timekeeper?’
‘A very rare knack,’ said Mildmay. He was still gazing at the door Onstald had disappeared through, shaking his head, eyes wide. ‘There are different strands of Timekeeping, different ways to use and manipulate time – preservation, shrinking, looping, stretching. Seems like old Onstald is a *stretcher of time*. I can hardly believe it.’” (p 367)

OR

The peculiar capacity of Dulcinea Dearborn to become Maris Murgatroyd is another fantasy detail.

DISCUSSION POINT: Discuss these details with students and invite them to comment on those they found most enticing and why they like them. Then invite them to come up with their own fantasy details which could conceivably form part of the world created here.

b) **Essential Extravagance** or spectacle is another aspect of the fantasy genre. There are many scenes in this novel that are lavish in detail, for example:

“Their elder sister Helena couldn't come to the Bazaar. She was a fifth-year student at the Gorgonhowl College of Radical Meteorology, far away off the coast of the Sixth Pocket on a tiny island that sat in the eye of a perpetual cyclone. Helena only ever came home at Christmas and the summer holidays, because it was difficult and expensive to travel in and out of a cyclone.” (p247)

OR

Nevermoor Bazaar: ‘You’ve Never Seen Anything More Bizarre’ (Chapter 15)

OR

The Ghastly Market (Chapter 16)

OR

“Frank threw a pool party almost every weekend, complete with epic make-your-own sundae bars and water balloon wars. Jupiter had a waterslide installed, and brought in realistic inflatable polar bears that tossed people high in the air, caught them in their soft rubber arms and dunked them underwater, to endless screams of delight from Morrigan, Hawthorne and Jack.” (pp 283–284)

DISCUSSION POINT: What other details made this a convincing fantasy world for you?

c) **Poetic quality** is evinced in the language used in this novel, for example: “She *could* see it – a tiny, shimmering thread of golden-white light that Squall weaved in his hand. It swam between his fingers like an eel. She watched, mesmerised, as he lifted his hand and blew away the little strand like a puff of dandelion seeds. It scattered to the wind and disappeared.” (p 322)

OR

“Morrigan had expected it to be dark, damp and cave-like inside Cascade Towers, but instead she found a bright and pleasant space. Cool green light filtered through the sheets of water and cast rippling patterns across

the floor. The building was huge and empty. Silent. Like a cathedral made of sea glass.” (p 354)

OR

“When Morrigan tried to recall – days and weeks and years later – the sound of that single note, the *feeling* of it, she would remember being warmed by the sun in winter, and held by a mother she'd never known. She'd remember a joyful, bone-deep certainty that she had never hurt another living being. That nobody had ever truly hurt her, and nobody ever could. She'd remember the smell of earth after rain.” (p 439)

DISCUSSION POINT: What other scenes were described poetically in this book?

d) **Multidimensionality where time and space overlap**, for example:

DISCUSSION POINT: Professor Hemingway Q. Onstald is a Timekeeper who can stretch time. Where else does time and space overlap in this novel?

e) A **Spirit of carnival** enriches fantasy which is a ‘playful form kin in its structures to ritual and dance.’ (Mobley, in Bator, 1983, p 257) But note, too, that this carnival spirit can be dark or grotesque, as well as light, for example, “The Museum of Stolen Moments. Crafted by the Wundersmith Mathilde Lachance. Sponsored by the Honourable E.M. Fairchild. A gift to the people of Nevermoor. Winter of One, Age of Thieves.” (p 328)

DISCUSSION POINT: What scenes in this second novel were particularly evocative of the Carnavalesque?

f) **Mythic dimension** and the inclusion of archetypes, for example:

Hallowmas is an ancient ritual (also known as All Hallow's Day or All Saint's Day) which is celebrated in this novel.

‘In 844 Pope Gregory IV, in an attempt to supplant and replace the Pagan winter solstice festival of Samhain (Day of the Dead) moved the feast of All Saints Day to November 1st and extended the celebration to the entire Roman Catholic Church.’ [See: ‘Hallowmas/Halloween’ <<http://jacksonsnnyder.com/arc/New%20Century%203/Hallowmas.htm>>] [See also: ‘Allhallowtide’ *Wikipedia* <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allhallowtide>>]

DISCUSSION POINT: What other archetypes or myths were referred to in this novel?

B. There are also elements of the **Mystery Genre** in the clues, red herrings, disappearances, and other tropes of mystery included in this series. For example, false identities are also included in many mysteries. Mr Jones in Book 1 was Ezra Squall. Lambeth isn't who she is said to be: "She took a deep, steadying breath. 'My name isn't Lambeth Amara. It's... Princess Lamya Bethari Amati Ra. I'm a member of the Royal House of Ra, from the Silklands in Far East Sang.'" (p 465) Mr Mildmay is not the kind teacher he purports to be.

DISCUSSION POINT: What other features of the mystery genre did you discover in this novel?

• WRITING TASKS

ACTIVITY: Write an acrostic poem using the letters in 'Wundersmith'.

ACTIVITY: Read the signs which appear at the entrances to the tricky lanes. Come up with your own inventive signs like them.

ACTIVITY: "*Thaddea Millicent Macleod.*

You have a fight scheduled in tomorrow afternoon's Combat Club, against an unknown opponent.

You will throw the fight.

If you do not deliberately lose, we will reveal the secret of Unit 919.

Remember:

Tell no one.

Or we will tell everyone." (p 174)

Write a note issuing a demand, like this one.

ACTIVITY: Write a letter as if it was written by Morrigan to Jack at school, explaining her new classes.

• VISUAL LITERACY

ACTIVITY: Create a graphic novel interpretation of an incident in the novel. [See **Bibliography.**]

ACTIVITY: Design a new cover for this book.

ACTIVITY: Create a book trailer for this novel. [See **Bibliography.**]

FURTHER QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

1. "'Oh, I know you can,' said Miss Cheery. 'I saw your trial. But all that time you've been learning how to make a dragon understand you, have you ever tried to understand a dragon in return?'" (p 96)
2. "Morrigan frowned. She sometimes felt that her true knack had nothing to do with being a Wundersmith. That it was, in fact, her remarkable ability to assume the worst. To see the disastrous in the day-to-day. It came, of course, from a lifetime of believing she was cursed, and it seemed to be stitched into the very fabric of her being, even now. Telling her not to worry about bad things happening around her was like telling Hawthorne not to get excited about dragons, or Jupiter not to be ginger." (p 153)
3. "She and Jack had never discussed it, but Jupiter told her that it had taken him years and years of training as a Witness to be able to 'make sense of the madness', as he called it – to learn to understand the layers and threads, to sift out the important things and ignore the rest – and that Jack wasn't quite there yet. He'd said that for now, Jack's eye patch acted as a sort of filter, disrupting his vision so that he didn't have to see all those things, all the time. So that his strange talent wouldn't drive him to insanity.'" (p 193)
4. "'Don't be afraid, ladies and gentlemen, don't be afraid of the notoriously fierce Magnificat intelligence – oh no! Contrary to popular belief, they can be subjugated if you go about it the right way.'" (p 269)
5. "'Sometimes you just have to know which rules to obey, and which ones to break,' said Morrigan, remembering something Jupiter had once told her. 'When to follow the plan, and when to improvise.'" (p 308)
6. "This was what it had been waiting for. She'd thought it would be difficult to summon Wunder, but it was like... it *wanted* to be summoned. It gathered fast – a hundred tiny threads made of a million tiny specks of light, surrounding her head and body... swimming, skimming lightly over her. It was quick and curious. It felt *alive*." (pp 325–326)
7. "Wunder really was *waiting for her* – gathering to her constantly, waiting patiently for her to learn how to command it. Squall might be evil, and he might be her enemy, but even so... he had taught her something priceless,

something she'd never have learned without him. No one in Wunsoc had wanted her to learn – not the Elders, or the Scholar Mistresses, or Professor Onstald. They wanted to control not just her power, but Morrigan herself.” (p 338)

8. “It turned out there was something slightly contrary in her nature. They were so convinced of her guilt that she'd stopped feeling guilty at all, at least about failing the exam. Let them be angry at her, if that's what they wanted. Let them retreat from her. She could retreat even farther, even faster. She had a refuge now. She had something that belonged to her. A secret.” (p 338)

9. “‘I don't know what to tell you, Mog.’ Jupiter sighed. ‘Some people are brave bullies. Some people are friendly cowards.’” (p 443)

10. “‘Miss Crow has shown herself to be a force for good – a useful, interesting, good person, whom we are delighted to call one of our own. She may be a Wundersmith, but truly from today onwards, she is *our* Wundersmith.’” (p 462)

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

1. **Compare this novel to other young adult fantasy** series such as J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials series, Garth Nix's The Keys to the Kingdom series, or Isobelle Carmody's Obernewtyn Chronicles. [See **Bibliography**.] This series has already won several major awards and been widely acclaimed. Why do you think it has struck such a chord with readers?

2. **Design a poster** to advertise this book.

3. The **title of this book** refers to the enigmatic role of the Wundersmith. Ezra Squall has been an evil Wundersmith. Morrigan might be a great and very good one. What other title might the book have had?

4. **Debate any of the topics** covered in these notes, or suggested by the novel.

5. Imagine what might possibly happen to Morrigan and her friends and **write a synopsis for the next novel in this series**.

CONCLUSION

Wundersmith: The Calling of Morrigan Crow is the second novel in Jessica Townsend's exhilarating new series. We meet our heroine Morrigan again along with her patron, Jupiter North, her old friends, Jack and Hawthorne, and new friends, Cadence and the rest of Unit 919, and discover more about her capacity to 'call Wunder'. We discover more magical details of this inventive fantasy world and learn more about these complex characters. And we meet some new ones such as the delightful Miss Cherry and the ghastly Dearborn and Murgatroyd. This sequel will no doubt leave her readers anxiously anticipating the third book in this brilliant series.

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JESSICA TOWNSEND lives on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. She was a copywriter for eight years, and was once the editor of a children's wildlife magazine for Steve Irwin's Australia Zoo. *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow* was her first novel, which won many awards including Book of the Year at the 2018 Australian Industry Book Awards, and is followed by *Wundersmith: The Calling of Morrigan Crow* in 2018. The film rights have also been sold to Twentieth Century Fox.

See:

Corbett, Sue 'First Look: *Nevermoor* by Jessica Townsend' *Publishers Weekly* March 9, 2017 <<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/73004-first-look-jessica-townsend-s-nevermoor.html>>

Jefferson, Dee 'Nevermoor Wins Book of the Year at Australian Book Industry Awards' *ABC News* 4 May 2018
<<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-04/jessica-townsend-nevermoor-wins-australian-book-industry-awards/9726456>>

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Nix, Garth *The Keys to the Kingdom* Books 1–7 Scholastic
Pullman, Philip *His Dark Materials: Omnibus Gift Edition* Everyman
Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter* series Bloomsbury

Other Non-Fiction and Website Teaching Resources:

'Book Trailers' *Insideadog*

<<http://www.insideadog.com.au/teachers/book-trailers>>

'Book Trailers for Readers' by Michelle Harclerode

<<http://www.booktrailersforreaders>>

'Book Trailers – Resources: Ipswich District Teacher Librarian Network'

<<http://idtl.net.au/book-trailers.php>>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates *justified text* writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. Her publications include *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia 1946–2005* (co-edited with Craig Munro) (UQP, 2006). In 2011 she was recipient of the CBCA (Qld) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award, in 2012, of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award.