

Indigenous Speculative Fiction: A Thematic Bibliography

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Indigenous literature consistently defies expectations around genre, form, and content, interweaving alternate realities, times, places, and creatures into its narratives. Speculative fiction is a broad category that encompasses fantasy, science fiction, magic realism, and all the genres in between, and it can be difficult to fit any of these works into any one category. This list are works of speculative fiction by Indigenous authors and creators on Turtle Island (North America).

Because Indigenous literature often deals with difficult themes, including drug use, sexuality, and cycles of trauma and violence among others, this list is primarily geared towards high school students and new adults. There are many titles in Indigenous literature that are suitable for younger readers, but I wanted to play it safe with my intended audience because of the emotional and psychological weight of the content in these titles.



Image: <http://bit.ly/elatose>

Elatsoe

Novel by Darcy Little Badger (Lipan Apache)

Recommended audience: 14+

In a world where magic and legends are part of everyday life, seventeen-year-old Ellie, a Lipan Apache with a knack for interacting with the ghosts of animals, investigates the mysterious circumstances surrounding the murder of her cousin.

Representation: Asexual, Lipan Apache protagonist and side characters, side BIPOC characters

Potential triggers: character death, violence, animal death, racism



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The Ghost Collector

Chapter book by Allison Mills (Ililiw/Cree and settler)

Recommended audience: 10+

When a family member dies, sixth grade Shelly uses her grandmother's lessons about ghosts to collect the spirits of the dead, trying to reunite with the ghost she misses.

Representation: Cree main and side characters

Potential triggers: character death

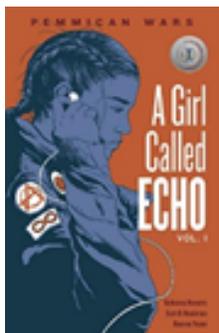


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A Girl Called Echo

Graphic novel series by Katherena Henderson, illustrated by Scott B. Henderson and Donocan Yaciuk.

Recommended audience: 12+

In this series of graphic novels, teenage Echo slips back in time to experience significant moments in Métis history.

Representation: Métis main character, nonbinary side character, disabled side characters, BIPOC side characters

Potential triggers: violence, genocide, racism

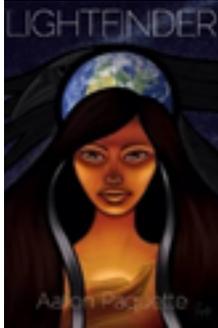


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Lightfinder

Novel by Aaron Paquette (Métis)

Recommended audience: 13+

When Cree teenager Aisling and her younger brother Eric discover that they have also been given magic from Cree legend, they start a quest to save the world from darkness.

Representation: Cree main characters

Potential triggers: fantasy violence

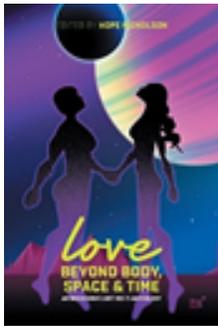


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Love Beyond Body, Space, and Time: An Indigenous LGBT Sci-Fi Anthology

Short story anthology edited by Hope Nicholson (settler)

Recommended audience: 15+

This is a collection of short stories and commentary by Indigenous authors and scholars (such as Richard van Camp (Dogrib Tłı̨chǫ, Dene Nation), and Grace Dillon (Anishinaabe), to name a few), that uses sci-fi and fantasy to carve out space for two-spirit, gender queer, and LGBTQ2SIA+ perspectives for Indigenous peoples and contexts.

Representation: LGBTQ2SIA+ characters and relationships, two spirit characters, genderqueer characters, Tłı̨chǫ Dene, Métis, Cree, Navajo, Lipan Apache,

Anishinaabe, Ojibway

Potential triggers: homophobia, transphobia, implied sexual content, violence, substance use



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The Marrow Thieves

Novel by Cherie Dimaline (Métis)

Recommended audience: 15+

Separated from his family, Frenchie finds a home with a group of other Indigenous children and two elders. Together they travel across a North America wrecked by climate change, running and hiding from the Recruiters, who take Indigenous people to a new system of residential schools to harvest their bone marrow. Using science fiction concepts, it deals directly with genocide, residential schools, and ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples in an imaginative futurism that imagines Indigenous communities broken and scattered.

Representation: Métis main character and side characters, Cree side character, Anishinaabe side characters, gay side character

Potential triggers: character death, violence, racism, physical abuse, physical and cultural genocide, residential schools

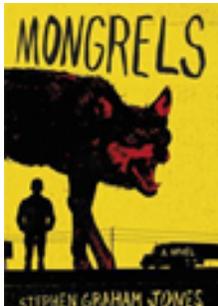


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Mongrels

Novel by Stephen Graham Jones (Blackfeet)

Recommended audience: 16+

A boy grows up hearing werewolf stories from his grandfather. When he discovers that the stories are true, he goes on the run with his aunt and uncle, waiting for the moment he too changes—or doesn't. A kind of supernatural *bildungsroman*, *Mongrels* balances real life, horror, and magic by focusing on a family of werewolves just trying to survive.

Representation: Blackfeet main and side characters

Potential triggers: horror, violence, gore, animal abuse/death, implied sexual violence, substance abuse



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Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection

Comic anthology edited by Hope Nicholson (settler)

Recommended audience: 12+

This is an anthology of comics and art by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and writers that includes several Indigenous futurist, sci-fi, and fantasy stories that centre Indigenous ways of knowing.

Representation: Indigenous characters

Potential triggers: character death, animal death, violence, gore, fantasy violence

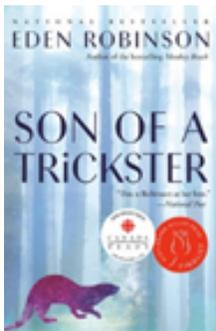


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Son of a Trickster (Trickster trilogy)

Novel by Eden Robinson (Haisla/Heiltsuk)

Recommended audience: 16+

Jared, a sixteen-year-old Haisla teenager, starts seeing things that shouldn't exist, like monsters, glowing lights, and talking animals; then he's approached by a mysterious stranger who claims to be his real father.

Representation: Haisla main character, Indigenous side characters

Potential triggers: sexual violence, violence, physical and emotional abuse, animal death, racism, self-harm, pregnancy, substance abuse



Image: <https://bit.ly/39GUzAG>

Strangers (The Reckoner series)

Novel by David A. Robertson (Cree)

Recommended audience: 13+

17-year-old Cole Harper returns home to Wounded Sky First Nation to solve a string of grisly murders, uncover the source of a sudden plague, and figure out how he has superpowers.

Representation: Cree main and side characters, gay side characters

Potential triggers: violence, character death, homophobia, racism



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Trail of Lightning (The Sixth World series)

Novel by Rebecca Roanhorse (Ohkay Owingeh)

Recommended audience: 15+

In this dystopic vision of a world flooded and destroyed, the traditional territory of the Diné, renamed Dinétah, survives as the last bastion of humanity and a plethora of legendary entities. In this cutthroat frontier style society, Maggie Hoskie, a talented and feared monster hunter, joins forces with healer Kai Arviso to track down the source of a new, terrifying species of monster.

Representation: Diné main character, Diné side characters, black side characters

Potential triggers: sexual innuendo, character death, child death, violence, gore, racism, substance abuse

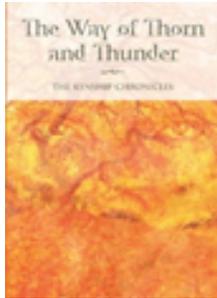


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The Way of Thorn and Thunder: The Kynship Chronicles

Novel trilogy by Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee)

Recommended audience: 15+

When the veil between the human world and the world of the Folk is destroyed, the Kyn fight to protect their home and culture from the humans who seek to 'civilize' the Everland.

Representation: Indigenous main characters, genderqueer and nonbinary characters, bisexual characters, trans characters

Potential triggers: implied sexual content and violence, violence, racism, gore

Looking for more Indigenous content? Check out these resources!

- *A Tribe Called Geek* <https://atribecalledgeek.com/>
- *Métis in Space* <http://www.metisinspace.com/>
- Raven Reads <https://ravenreads.org/>

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