

Robin Bridges

Dreaming of Antigone

United States of America (2016)

TAGS: [Antigone](#) [Athens](#) [Creon](#) [Iris](#) [Ismene](#) [Sophocles](#)



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| General information | |
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| Title of the work | Dreaming of Antigone |
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| Country/countries of popularity | United States |
| Original Language | English |
| First Edition Date | 2016 |
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| Genre | Fiction, Romance fiction |
| Target Audience | Young adults (recommended for readers aged 14-18 on Kirkus Reviews) |
| Author of the Entry | Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mrivierlea@gmail.com |
| Peer-reviewer of the Entry | Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com |

Creators



Robin Bridges (Author)

As a child Robin Bridges loved to write poetry and make her own books. She enrolled in a theatre course at college, but transferred into English after rediscovering her passion for storytelling. After attempting to write serious, literary fiction for adult readers while also teaching middle grade students, she began writing for a juvenile audience. She also trained as a pediatric nurse, and continues to juggle writing with nursing. She lives with her family on the Gulf Coast in the United States.

Her first book, *The Gathering Storm*, was published in 2012. It is the first installment in *The Katerina Trilogy*, a historical fantasy series about a Russian necromancer set at the end of the nineteenth century. Her other YA novels, *Dreaming of Antigone* and *The Form of Things Unknown*, both published in 2016, are set in the modern day but draw on literary intertexts, including Sophocles and Shakespeare.

Sources:

Author's [website](#) (accessed: June 7, 2020);

publishingcrawl.com (accessed: June 7, 2020).

Bio prepared by Miriam Riverlea, University of New England,
mrivierlea@gmail.com

Additional information

Summary

Dreaming of Antigone is the story of sixteen year old Andria Williams, whose twin sister, Iris, died of a heroin overdose six months ago. Her father suicided when the girls were very young, and she lives with her mother and step-father Craig. Still deep in grief, Andria has withdrawn from her friends Natalie and Trista at school, but finds solace in stargazing in the middle of the night and reading poetry with dark, philosophical themes, including the work of American poets Robert Frost, and Emily Dickinson, and Sylvia Plath. She dresses like an emo, though occasionally wears items from Iris' more colourful wardrobe underneath her own black clothes.

Since she was a baby Andria has suffered from epilepsy, which has prevented her from participating in regular activities. She has a seizure dog, Sophie, whom she adores. Her mother is overprotective and nags her daughter about her diet, sleep, and whether or not she is taking her anti-seizure medication. From previous experience, Andria has learnt that her medication does not mix well with other drugs, and while her friends drink and smoke pot, she is a diet coke drinking teetotaler, particularly since her sister's tragic death. Because of her epilepsy, Andria hasn't been able to get her driver's license. The seizure she had just before Iris died prevented her from taking her driving test then, and the narrative of *Dreaming of Antigone* begins with her counting down the final fourteen days until she can again attempt to get her license after going six months without having a fit.

In a boring algebra class, she begins writing fragments from her favourite poems on the surface of her desk, and is thrilled when her graffiti is answered by another mysterious lover of poetry. After several exchanges, she realises that her correspondent is Alex Hammond, her sister's former boyfriend, who has just returned from a rehab centre to overcome his addiction to drugs and alcohol. Though she hates him for corrupting Iris, Andria is also attracted to handsome, brooding Alex, who plays drums in a rock band and works at the local café run by his lesbian moms. Andria and Alex end up earning extra credit together cataloguing poetry books in the school library, and their relationship grows stronger through unexpected encounters when Andria is stargazing and at parties, where they are the only two sober guests. But despite their chemistry, they are uncertain of each other's feelings, and both worry that getting together in the aftermath of Iris' death may be a bad idea.

To everyone's shock, Andria's stepfather Craig is charged with sexually abusing one of the girls on the soccer team that he coaches. Andria and her mother finally find Iris' diary, which reveals that Craig has been molesting her for several years. Neither of them had any idea, and must face the guilt and horror that Iris' addiction to drugs was fueled by her abuse. The stress causes Andria to have a seizure at school two days before her driving test, and when she goes to record the event in her seizure diary, she discovers a note from Iris, written the night she died, and revealing that she deliberately overdosed using Andria's epilepsy medication. In a flashback sequence, the novel revisits the night of Iris' death, and Andria confronts her own experience, including faking a seizure in an attempt to protect her sister, who died while the rest of the family was at the hospital. These terrible revelations are shared with the police, and Craig is charged. Andria's mother longs to start a new life somewhere else, but Andria feels supported by her girlfriends and by Alex, who begins to understand that Iris was terribly damaged and that her death was not his fault. He accompanies her on a long awaited trip to see a meteor shower in the local cemetery, where they also visit Iris' grave.

Analysis

In her Acknowledgements, Bridges states that "Andria's story has been brewing in the back of my mind ever since I read the play *Antigone* at college." The book's title highlights the importance of the story of Antigone and her sister Ismene within this contemporary romance. Twins Andria and Iris have the same initials, and both their names have classical origins. The novel's setting, in Athens, Georgia, underpins the allusions to the classical world. Initially Andria identifies with Antigone, the heroine of the play she has been studying in her World Literature class. "In my personal mythology, there is now Antigone, goddess of suicides and dysfunctional families. Okay, so I know she wasn't really a goddess, but she was pretty cool. And she had a father who died. And a dead sibling who she missed terribly." (p. 6)

But as she studies the play in more depth, and the dramatic revelations about her family gradually emerge, Andria begins to identify more closely with Ismene, the grieving, surviving sister. "There is no happy ending in this story. Ismene is left completely alone, knowing her sister died without forgiving her." (p. 31). Bridges notes that in some versions of the myth, Creon is not Antigone's uncle but her step-father, drawing a more direct parallel with the sexual predator Craig, though the



connection between the two men and their authority is not fully developed. But as Andria and Alex's relationship intensifies, the allusions to Sophocles' play are relegated to the background of the narrative. At the end of the book, Andria wonders if Alex is too good to be true, and jokes that perhaps her life has become more like a Disney fairy tale than a Greek tragedy (pp. 213–214).

The use of mythological names within the world of astronomy is highlighted throughout the story. Andria knows that Iris is the name of both an asteroid and a meteor, and one day hopes to give her own name to a celestial body. But there is a sense that many of these phenomena remain remote and inscrutable, and the significance of their mythic names are not explored in depth. In spite of owning a quality telescope, Andria knows she needs to wait until college before she can study these celestial bodies up close.

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

[Antigone](#) [Athens](#) [Creon](#) [Iris](#) [Ismene](#) [Sophocles](#)

Other Motifs, Figures,
and Concepts Relevant
for Children and Youth
Culture

[Adolescence](#) [Adversity](#) [Coming of age](#) [Communication](#) [Death](#)
[Depression](#) [Desires](#) [Disability](#) [Disobedience](#) [Emotions](#) [Family](#) [Fashion](#)
[Friendship](#) [Gaining understanding](#) [Girls](#) [Innocence](#) [Joy of reading](#) [Loss](#)
[Love](#) [Other literary figures, texts and writers](#) [Peers](#) [Reconciliation](#)
[Romance](#) [School](#) [Sexual abuse](#) [Siblings](#) [Step-parents](#) [Suicide](#) [Teachers](#)
[Teenagers](#) [Twins](#)

Further Reading

kirkusreviews.com (accessed: June 7, 2020).
