

Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Fire in the Sea by Myke Bartlett", peer-reviewed by Miriam Riverlea and Daniel A. Nkemeleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/38>. Entry version as of November 23, 2024.

Myke Bartlett

Fire in the Sea

Australia (2012)

TAGS: [Ancient Slavery](#) [Atlantis](#) [Immortality](#) [Minotaur](#)



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Fire in the Sea
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Country/countries of popularity	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2012
First Edition Details	Myke Bartlett, <i>Fire in the Sea</i> . Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2012, 320 pp.
ISBN	9781921922749
Awards	2011 - Text Prize for Young Adult and Children's Writing
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Fantasy fiction, Fiction, Novels
Target Audience	Young adults
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
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Creators



Myke Bartlett (Author)

Born in Perth, Myke Bartlett is a music journalist whose first novel, *Fire in the Sea*, won the Text publishing prize in 2011. He lives in Melbourne, with his wife, two daughters, and his Boston Terrier.

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England,
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Additional information

Translation Braille: *Fire in the Sea*, Melbourne: Vision Australia Information Library Services, 2013.

Summary *Fire in the Sea* is a fantasy-adventure novel for young adults, set in the Western Australian city of Perth. Sixteen year old Sadie, grieving after the death of her parents in a car accident, is at the beach with cousins, when she witnesses a man being attacked by strange creatures that have come out of the sea, and leave him for dead. Assisting him, she is rewarded by receiving an inheritance that includes a mysterious amulet. The amulet is the key to an ancient mystery, sought after by a priestess of Atlantis, called Lysandra, who has achieved a quasi-immortality and has brought Atlantis to the coast of Perth in quest of the amulet. If Lysandra gains possession of the amulet, she will achieve eternal life. If she does not, she and the denizens of Atlantis, kept artificially alive in some kind of limbo of torment, will disintegrate. Sadie and her friends, including Jake, who turns out to be an immortal, are pursued by Lysandra and her minion, a fearsome Minotaur that she has enslaved. In a final battle at Atlantis, Sadie liberates the Minotaur by severing his chains with a magic sword. As she dies, Lysandra and the people of Atlantis disintegrate, and the city sinks beneath the waves.

Analysis *Fire in the Sea* is intrusion fantasy, whereby the fantastic element (the story of Atlantis, the Minotaur, and the quest for immortality) intrudes into the everyday life of an ordinary protagonist. Here, the fantasy elements offer commentary on the emotions of the protagonist: Sadie is grappling with grief after the deaths of her parents. Immortality and death are polar opposites, enabling her to think about life and death, and what to do with her life (common concerns of young adults). The fantasy elements are lightly classical, and other classical figures are peppered through the book, providing context for readers who enjoy finding classical motifs. Of interest is the powerful depiction of the monstrous Minotaur, which is nevertheless a slave, and both human



and animal. Does Sadie liberate it because she sees humanity in its eyes? Or because she sees its animality?

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

[Ancient Slavery](#) [Atlantis](#) [Immortality](#) [Minotaur](#)

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

[Adolescence](#) [Adventure](#) [Character traits](#) [Coming of age](#) [Death](#) [Emotions](#)
[Freedom](#)

Further Reading

[Text Publishing Resource Kit: Fire in the Sea](#) (accessed: August 3, 2018).

Hale, Elizabeth, "[Feminist Medusas and Outback Minotaurs, why myth is big in children's books](#)", *The Conversation, Friday Essay*, 2016, available at theconversation.com (accessed: August 3, 2018).

