Michael Stierstorfer, "Entry on: Arcadia Burns [Arkadien brennt] (Arcadia, 2 [Arkadien, 2]) by Kai Meyer", peer-reviewed by Markus Janka and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/816. Entry version as of September 14, 2026.

Kai Meyer

Arcadia Burns [Arkadien brennt] (Arcadia, 2 [Arkadien, 2])

Germany (2010)

TAGS: Aesop Arcadia Caduceus Hermes Lamia Lycaon Metamorphoses (Ovid's) Metamorphosis

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

General information	
Title of the work	Arcadia Burns [Arkadien brennt] (Arcadia, 2 [Arkadien, 2])
Country of the First Edition	Germany
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	German
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	Kai Meyer, *Arkadien brennt.* Hamburg: Carlsen 2010, 405 pp.
ISBN	9783551312105
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Fantasy fiction
Target Audience	Young adults
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This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators

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Kai Meyer , b. 1969
(Author)

Kai Meyer was born in 1969 and lives in Germany. After studying film and theatre at the University of Bochum, he worked as a journalist before devoting himself to writing novels full time. He has since published over fifty titles, including numerous bestsellers, and is recognised as one of Germany's most remarkable writers of fantasy. He focuses on fantasy topics like goddesses, angels, werewolves, Vampires and fairies. There are over 1.5 million copies of Kai Meyer books in print in his country alone. His works have been adapted as films, comics and radio plays, and have been translated into 30 languages.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: August 12, 2019)

Profile at amazon.de (accessed: August 12, 2019)

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Additional information

Translation	English: *Arcadia Burns*, trans. Anthea Bell, Harper Collins/Balzer + Bray, 2013.
Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	Prequels: Kai Meyer, Arkadien erwarts [Arcadia Awakens] (2009). Sequels: Kai Meyer, *Arkadien fällt* [Arcadia Falls] (2011).
Summary	When Rosa Alcantara and Alessandro Carnevare try to be intimate, they are transformed into mythical beasts, the moment they get too close to each other. The reason for this lies in the fact that they belong to different mafia clans, which have been adversaries for centuries. Therefore, their fate seems to be an eternal fight against each other. When they realize the problem, they stop trying to be intimate, Rosa moves to New York and after many years reconciles with her mother Gemma. Her mum escaped from Sicilia a long time ago fearing the mafia. Consequently, Rosa and Alessandro search for an ancient peace bringing statue, which would be able to unite the hostile clans of the Carnevares and Alcantaras; unfortunately, it seems that the statue sunk to the bottom of the sea. During this adventure, the fight against Lycaon, the dangerous werewolf of Arcadia, is renewed. He sends big dogs called "Hundingas" to attack Rosa and Alessandro. But the two teens manage to defeat Lycaon's henchmen. In the end Rosa is informed that she descends from the two mythical snakes, which fought against each other in Arcadia until the Olympian god Hermes saw them, brought peace to them and put them onto his caduceus, a wooden stick made of the olive-tree, as a symbol of peace.
Analysis	Also in this second volume of the trilogy, the fables of Aesop, the Lycaon myth and the myth of Hermes bringing peace to Arcadia from

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	the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* serve to evoke a story with fantasy elements. The mythical animals: Lamias, panthers and werewolves function in a mafia-like context. The motif of the freedom bringing statue obviously refers to the statue of Athena Parthenope, which was made of ivory and gold. In this volume, the search for statue is the reason, why the teenagers Alessandro and Rosa travel through Italy. The ancient Greeks believed that this statue, at the Parthenon temple on the Acropolis of Athens, has the power to bring peace and freedom to humanity. The transformation of Rosa into a snake represents a super-human power inherited and wielded by the (demi)goddess: Rosa's ancestors where part of Hermes' famous caduceus. The love story of Alessandro and Rosa resembles that of Pyramus and Thisbe (in the fourth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), or of Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's play. The story becomes more exciting, when the author reveals, how difficult it will be to find the statue. The hostility of their clans almost forces them to give up their love. The conflict drives the plot, preventing them to consummate their love. The narrative reveals a conservative perspective on a young couple who try to enjoy free sexuality. According to the ideology of that novel, such unsanctioned intimacy should be prevented. The motif of abstinence from physical love is not new; it is present in the international romantasy-bestseller *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005–2008) and also to the fantasy bestseller *Starcrossed* (Angelini, 2011–2013). The ideology in *Arcadia Burns* is based on the antiquated principle that men must always use violence to solve their problems. The "Hundingas", who follow and threaten Rosa and Alessandro are reminiscent of Cerberus, the huge watchdog, who guards the underworld and seeks for souls, who try to escape from this sad place.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aesop Arcadia Caduceus Hermes Lamia Lycaon Metamorphoses (Ovid's) Metamorphosis
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Coming of age Heroism Individuality Romance Transformation Violence

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Further Reading

Anselm, Sabine, “Zeitgemäße Helden!? Überlegungen zur Rezeption von (antiken) Heldenbildern in einem (post)modernen Literaturunterricht” in Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer, eds., *Verjüngte Antike. Griechisch-römische Mythologie und Historie in zeitgenössischen Kinder- und Jugendmedien*, (Studies on European children’s literature (SEKL), vol. 5, ed. by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, Anja Müller and Astrid Surmatz), Heidelberg: Winter, 2017, 117–134.

Stierstorfer, Michael, *Antike Mythologie in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur der Gegenwart. Unsterbliche Götter- und Heldengeschichten?* [Ancient Mythology in Current Children’s Literature. Immortal Stories of Gods and Heroes?], Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2017, 180 pp.

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