Michael Stierstorfer, "Entry on: Arcadia Falls [Arkadien fällt] (Arcadia, 3 [Arkadien, 3]) 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/817. Entry version as of September 14, 2026.

Kai Meyer

Arcadia Falls [Arkadien fällt] (Arcadia, 3 [Arkadien, 3])

Germany (2011)

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 Falls [Arkadien fällt] (Arcadia, 3 [Arkadien, 3])
Country of the First Edition	Germany
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	German
First Edition Date	2011
First Edition Details	Kai Meyer, *Arkadien fällt*. Hamburg: Carlsen, 2011, 405 pp.
ISBN	9783551582034
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Fantasy fiction
Target Audience	Young adults
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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 Falls*, trans. Anthea Bell, HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray, 2014.
Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	Prequels: Kai Meyer, Arkadien erwacht [Arcadia Awakens] (2009). Kai Meyer, *Arkadien brennt* [Arcadia Burns] (2010).
Summary	During their search in Sicily for a peace bringing ancient statue, Rosa Alcantara and Alessandro Carnevare are attacked by harpies, who look like big owls. Yet, it turns out soon that this mythical statue is missing. In their dreadful fight with the harpies, one ally of Rosa and Alessandro called Quattrini is killed. In due course, it is revealed that the harpies are killers for hire and belong to their own clan, the Malandras. The leaders of the clan are two dangerous sisters, Aliza and Saffira. The harpies attack Rosa and Alessandro several times, but they both manage to escape by striking back. After successfully coping with all these challenges, Rosa and Alessandro are kidnapped by a menacing Spiderwoman, Danai, who is keen to hand them over to Lycaon, the so-called "hungry man." Combining their forces they escape from Danai. From a conversation with Danai they learn that Rosa's missing Dad gave the order to rape her in the past because he had made a secret pact with a criminal organisation called "tabula." In the end, they are able to outwit Lycaon, who nearly came back to life. They give Lycaon's heart to the Olympians as an expiation for his hubris: Lycaon had tricked the gods in archaic times by serving them human flesh to eat, testing their omniscience. The offering satisfied the gods.
Analysis	Also in the third volume of the trilogy, the fables of Aesop, the Lycaon myth and the myth of Arcadia from the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* serve to evoke a story with fantasy elements. The harpies, Lamias, panthers, werewolves, and the Spiderwoman

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Arachne (Danai) are placed in a mafia-like context. This way the mafia of Sicily is shown as a demonic organisation. In addition to the monstrous characters known from the previous two volumes, a spider-women is introduced, who reminds the reader of Arachne, the artful weaver transformed into a spider by Athene/Minerva in the sixth book of *Metamorphoses*. No other elements of the myth of Arachne are present in the novel. Women, who are strong clan leaders, are presented as evil. A traditional view of gender roles may be detected here. The protagonists have also to struggle against the revolting harpies, who are inserted in this context as mafia killers and look like owls. In contrast to this representation, in Virgil's epic poem *Aeneid*, the harpies (e.g., Celaeno) are hybrid creatures half women, half birds. Constantly starving, they long for something to eat. They also soil and badly befoul travelling heroes. In this modern context, they are shown as evil murderers and they look reminiscent of the magical owls in the *Harry Potter* saga (Rowling, 1997–2007). In Greek mythology, the owl was a symbolic animal attribute of Athena, goddess of wisdom. All mythical creatures except Lycaon have little more in common with their ancient models than their names and superficial similarities. The love of Alessandro and Rosa is similar to that of Pyramus and Thisbe (in the fourth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) or Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's play, but there is a crucial difference, as it reaches a happy end in spite of their antagonistic families. In this final part, the conflict between the mafia clans is resolved. Consequently, both protagonists can enjoy a happy relationship. This version of the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe is an example of reception involving a "correction of the myth."

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	Adventure Coming of age Freedom Heroism Individuality Survival Transformation

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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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