Michael Stierstorfer, "Entry on: Atlantia by Allyson Braithwaite Condie", peer-reviewed by Markus Janka, Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/839. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Allyson Braithwaite Condie

Atlantia

United States of America (2014)

TAGS: Atlantis Sirens





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

General information	
Title of the work	Atlantia
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2014
First Edition Details	Ally Condie, *Atlantia*. New York: Dutton/Penguin Group, 2014, 320 pp.
ISBN	9780147510655
Genre	Fantasy fiction
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Michael Stierstorfer, University of Regensburg, Michael.stierstorfer@ur.de
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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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Allyson Braithwaite Condie , b. 1971
(Author)

Ally Condie, a devout Mormon and a *New York Times* best selling author, was born in Cedar City, Utah; she graduated from the College of Fine Arts in Vermont with a Master's Degree in Fine Arts, Writing for Children and Young Adults. Condie (allycondie.com) used to teach English at high schools in Utah and New York; she lives with her husband and four children in her home town of Cedar City, Utah. The author focuses on writing dystopian romance and urban fantasy. She is inspired by themes from her religion, such as free agency, choice, and accountability. Her books include: *Matched* 2010, *Leaving* in *Enthralled: Paranormal Diversions* 2011 (an anthology of short stories ed. by Kelley Armstrong & Melissa Marr), Crossed 2011, *Reached* 2012, *Atlantia* 2014, *Summerlost* 2016, *The Darkdeep* 2018 (with Brendan Reichs), *The Last Voyage of Poe Blythe* 2019. She is very popular internationally, her books were translated into 30 languages. She created a non-profit WriteOut Foundation which organizes writing camps in Cedar City, Utah, for teens in rural areas.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: September 9, 2019)

Profile at amazon.com (accessed: September 9, 2019)

Blog (accessed: September 9, 2019)

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Additional information

Translation

German: *Atlantia*, trans. Stefanie Schäfer, Frankfurt am Mein: Fischer FJB, 2015.

Summary

The teenage girl Rio Conwy lives in the underwater city of Atlantia because due to the environmental pollution the continents are hardly inhabitable. Nevertheless, every year teens are able to decide to enter the continental world to work there for Atlantia, so that they gain enough air to breathe, to drink and to eat. But those teens will soon die since the polluted environment brings damage to their health. Nevertheless Bay, Rio's beloved twin-sister, makes the decision to support Atlantia in that dangerous way and she decides to go to the continental world. After Bay is transported to that place, Rio wants to leave Atlantia too in order to see her sister. But she cannot leave Atlantia, because her clan would become too small. But Rio is not willing to accept this and searches for possibilities to leave Atlantia. During this period she meets her aunt Maire, who helps her to fight against the strict rules of Nevio, the ruler and first priest of Atlantia. Afterwards, it is revealed that Rio is a mythical Siren, who is able to use her powerful voice as a weapon. She joins together with other Sirens. Rio finds out that the world is in fact not so deadly polluted. Nevio fabricated that lie to keep the citizens of Atlantia under control and force them to work for him. The Sirens, by using their powerful voices defeat Nevio, who has transformed himself into several bats. After the fall of Nevio, the people of the underwater city are peacefully united with the citizens of the real world.

Analysis

In this novel, Atlantis serves as a setting for a dystopia. The name of Atlantia obviously refers to Plato's Atlantis, in dialogues *Timaios* and *Critias*. The ruler of this city is not Poseidon, like in the Platonic dialogues, but the priest Nevio, a demonic creature, a hybrid between vampire and the devil in the Christian sense of the embodiment of lies and death; he acts as a monstrous and cruel despot. In this modern version, Atlantis is not situated within a sanctuary dedicated to Poseidon and surrounded by several circles of water. Instead, it lies on the bottom of the sea. According to Plato, before Atlantis sunk, it was an island on the sea. This location on the bottom of the ocean allows a

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different perspective on the destruction and pollution of nature, from the point of view of a world suffering from overpopulation and air pollution. The readers may sympathise and better understand the need for protection of the natural environment. In this novel, the myth of Atlantis is mixed with the myth of the Sirens who are not used here to introduce sexual initiation like in other novels, such as the bestselling *Watersong*-series (Hocking, 2013–2014). The protagonist Rio, causing confusion and anxiety with her overwhelming voice transforms into a Siren to be able to defend herself against the despot Nevio. In contrast to the ancient myth told in Homer's *Odyssey*, the Sirens in this novel are not deadly enemies of the sailors, but messianic figures who save humanity from a demonic ruler. They unite to become stronger for the fight against evil. By overthrowing Nevio, the people of Atlantia will be able to live again in peace in the continental world, without being exploited. The myth is underpinned with Christian values. The myth of Atlantis serves to demonstrate that the world will become a dangerous place when the environment is destroyed. The text cautions the readers against polluting our world. The readers do not have to know the myth of Atlantis to understand this message. The author does not mention Plato. In the text, a power-hungry man, acting alone without the support of a family, like Nevio, is demonised. Strong-willed girls follow their own way of life and do not submit to the will of men – they are described as Sirens who serve here as archetypes.

In an interview during the promotion of her book, Ally Condie "describes its story, set in a dystopian future, as being about sisters and mystery and a crumbling underwater city and falling in love for the first time, though it's not about mermaids, just people who have escaped air pollution by building a city underwater." (source here, accessed: September 9, 2019)

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Atlantis Sirens
Other Motifs, Figures,	Coming of age Fairy tale references Heroism Individuality Justice Survival

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and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Further Reading

Müller, Volker, "Verjüngtes Atlantis: die Rezeption des platonischen Atlantis-Mythos in Kinder- und Jugendmedien der letzten 40 Jahre“, in Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer, eds., *Verjüngte Antike. Griechisch-römische Mythologie und Historie in zeitgenössischen Kinder- und Jugendmedien*, Heidelberg: Winter, 2017 (Studien zur europäischen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur, Bd. 5), 265–286.

Stierstorfer, Michael, *Antike Mythologie in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur der Gegenwart. Unsterbliche Götter- und Heldengeschichten?* [Ancient Mythology in Contemporary Children’s Literature. Immortal Stories of Gods and Heroes?], Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2017, 365 pp.

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