Alessia Borriello, "Entry on: Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (Series, Part 3) by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/997. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

# Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (Series, Part 3)

*United States of America (2018)*

TAGS: Circe Hecate Medusa Pan Underworld






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

| General information | |
|---|---|
| *Title of the work* | Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (Series, Part 3) |
| *Studio/Production Company* | Archie Comics Publications, Warner Bros Television, distributed by Netflix Streaming Services |
| *Country of the First Edition* | United States of America |
| *Country/countries of popularity* | worldwide |
| *Original Language* | English |
| *First Edition Date* | 2018 |
| *First Edition Details* | *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Series, Part 3). Directed by Rob Seidenglanz (3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.8), Alex Pillai (3.2), Viet Nguyen (3.4), Roxanne Benjamin (3.5), Michael Goi (3.6), Craig William Macneill (3.7). Screenplay by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, music by Adam Taylor. USA: Warner Bros. Television Production, 2020, 463 min.<br>Season 1 (Part 1–2): October 26, 2018.<br>Season 2 (Part 3): January 24, 2020. |
| *Running time* | 4 seasons, 49–63 minutes per episode |
| *Official Website* | netflix.com (accessed: April 1, 2020) |
| *Genre* | Adaptations, Horror fiction, Paranormal fiction, Television series, Web television series* |
| *Target Audience* | Crossover (Adolescents) |
| *Author of the Entry* | Alessia Borriello, University of Bologna, alessia.borriello2@studio.unibo.it |



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.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Peer-reviewer of the Entry* | Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com<br>Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com |



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



Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, speaking at the 2017 WonderCon in Anheim, California. March 31st 2017, by Gage Skidmore, under the license CC BY-SA 3.0 (accessed: April 1, 2020).

**Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa , b. 1976**
**(Author, Screenwriter)**

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (1976, Washington D.C.) graduated from Yale School of Drama in New Haven, Connecticut in 2003. As he says himself on his Instagram profile, he is a writer of comics, TV series, movies plays and musicals.

He started as an author for Marvel Comics, for which he was recruited at his graduation. He is now Chief Creative Officer of Archie Comics. As author for Marvel Comics, he was contracted for submissions of such titles as: *Fantastic Four*; *Marvel Knights 4*; *Nightcrawler*; *The Sensational Spider-Man*; *Dead of Night*. He adapted for comics Stephen King's *The Stand*, and created the comic book *Afterlife with Archie*.

In his career in cinema, he adapted Stephen King's *Carrie* and wrote the script for the 2014 remake of *The Town That Dreaded Sundow*n.

Aguirre-Sacasa is the creator of TV series: *Riverdale* (2017–) and *Chilling Adventures of Sabrin*a (2018-), as well as a screenwriter for other shows targettiing young adults, for example: *Glee* (2009-2015), or *Supergirl* (2015). He was nominated for GLAAD Media Award for Golden Age and Say You Love Satan, and won a New York International Fringe Festival Excellence in Playwriting Award for Say You Love Satan. As we read in *The New York Times*: "He lives in Los Angeles with his husband and a dog named Ms. Molly."

Sources:

Profile at imdb.com (accessed: April 1, 2020).

Instagram(accessed: April 1, 2020).

Alexis Soloski, "He Makes Archie Deep and Sabrina Dark. Meet Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa", *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, published November 8, 2018 (accessed: April 1, 2020).



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.

Profile at Wikipedia (accessed: April 1, 2020).

Bio prepared by Alessia Borriello, University of Bologna, alessia.borriello2@studio.unibo.it and Anna Mik, University of Warsaw, anna.m.mik@gmail.com



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.

## Additional information

Casting

Kiernan Shipka as Sabrina Spellman,

Ross Lynch as Harvey Kinkle,

Lucy Davis as Hildegarde Antoinette "Hilda" Spellman,

Chance Perdomo as Ambrose Spellman,

Michelle Gomez as Mary Wardwell and Lilith / Madam Satan,

Jaz Sinclair as Rosalind "Roz" Walker,

Tati Gabrielle as Prudence Blackwood (née Night),

Adeline Rudolph as Agatha,

Richard Coyle as Father Faustus Blackwood,

Miranda Otto as Zelda Phiona Spellman,

Lachlan Watson as Theodore "Theo" Putnam,

Gavin Leatherwood as Nicholas "Nick" Scratch,

Luke Cook as Lucifer Morningstar / Satan.

Summary

*The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* is a supernatural horror show, a remake of Archie comic book series of the same title. Despite shared origins, this Netflix series has little in common with *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* (1996-2003), the previous U.S. television series based on the comic book character of half-witch Sabrina Spellman. The web television series consists as of March 2020 of two seasons each divided in two parts, with a total of four parts to be released between until the end of 2020.

The series has received a positive feedback from both audience and critics, resulting in Netflix's decision to renew the series. Critics focused their praise on Kiernan Shipka's performance as Sabrina, as well as on Aguirre-Sacasa's directing.



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.

Sabrina is a half-witch and half-mortal girl who has been living in Greendale with her witch "aunties" on her father's side, Zelda and Hilda Spellman, ever since her parents died when she was a newborn baby. Sabrina has to find her own way and identity juggling between the "path of night" (her life and course as a witch) and her "normal" daily teenage life. She has to live her life in both worlds, attending Baxter High School with mortals and the Academy of Unseen Arts with other warlocks and witches, members of the Church of Night. Sabrina thwarts evil forces she grows more and more aware of, but at the same time, she has to cope with difficult adolescence problems like: romantic relationships, friendships, relations with her family.

Part 3 abounds with classical motifs. They coincide with the arrival of a coven of pagans in Greendale.

The season 2 begins with a general recap of the final of Part 2: with the help of her friends, Harvey, Roz, and Theo, Sabrina is determined to rescue her boyfriend Nick from hell. Down there, Nick has become a jester at Madame Satan's court. In the finale of Part 2, in fact, Nick had been brought to hell after offering his body as a recipient (an "Acheron") to imprison Satan himself. By incarcerating Satan (who is revealed to be her father), Sabrina, her mortal friends and what remains of the Church of Night, have prevented Lucifer from bringing about Apocalypse. Once Lucifer was put out of the game, Lilith became Queen of Hell.

In Part 3, the cosmic balance has been compromised: Kings of Hell don't recognize Lilith's rule, because she is not of the house of Lucifer Morningstar. However, Sabrina is and she attempts the impossible and accepts to become Queen of Hell, with Lilith as regent, in order to rescue Nick from Hell and extract Lucifer from his body. But as soon as she ascends the throne, the Kings of Hell present their counter-pretender, Caliban, prince of Hell, born from the clay of Hell. The whole Part 3 will see Sabrina dueling with Caliban, by trying to be the first to recover the three "Unholy regalia". These are three powerful and ancient objects soaked in dark magic. They epitomize the evilest deeds made against Jesus Christ during his life, and are embodiment of sin. These objects are: King Herod's crown; Pontius Pilate's Bowl; Judas' silver coins.

In parallel, another big threat menaces the world of mortals and witches and the whole cosmos. Indeed, a suspicious wandering Carnival unexpectedly sets tents in Greendale. Roz, Sabrina's best



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.

friend who holds the gifts of cunning, foresees the danger related to their stay in Greendale. As predicted, the Carnival's crew will turn out to be a perilous coven of pagans, arrived in Greendale by a cosmic displacement and ready to bring back to life their pagan deity, The Great Mother, through a virgin's sacrifice (Harvey). The pagans aim at annihilating mankind and returning the planet to its primordial wilderness. The most powerful members of the pagan group are: the great god Pan, Medusa, Circe and a goblin, who will come very close to Theo. Sabrina's friends and all the witches of Greendale are to join forces to vanquish them. For the occasion, powerful hedge witches will be summoned by the coven of Greendale. Among them, Marie LaFleur, a voodoo priestess with unusual witchcraft skills.

In this part 3, Sabrina has to make a choice. She alone is in charge of managing her duties of Queen of Hell and her responsibilities over the Church of Night. Additionally, she must sort out her relation with her boyfriend (currently possessed by the Devil), with her friends and, last but not least, with her family, who needs her more than ever. What choice will she make?

## Analysis

Part 3 is permeated with classical mythology's figures, torn out of their context and brought all the way to Greendale's Carnival show. This displacement causes interesting variations to some of the most famous characters of ancient Greek mythology, nowadays part of the pop heritage delivered from antiquity. They are, *inter alia*: Pan, Medusa, Circe, and Hecate.

The god Pan, disguised as the chief of the Carnival's crew, is at once revealed to Roz, through her gift of cunning, in its ancient shape of a satyr. In fact, in Greek Mythology, Pan was a non-Olympian deity resembling a satyr, linked to nature and wilderness. He represented unrestrained sexuality. In the series, as soon as he plays his flute, he causes an irreversible mania of both mortals and witches, which will destroy the witches' coven from the inside.

The gorgon Medusa is disguised, in the Carnival's team, as a snake charmer. The connection with snakes hints at her true nature, which nonetheless is revealed to the protagonists only after she has turned her first victims into stone. In fact, she approaches three virgins in the town of Grindale who are needed for the final pagan ritual without showing her true and ancient nature. But, as soon as she takes on her



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.

true appearance, her glance resumes its most famous power of petrification. Her presence is always marked by a visible shadow cast by snakes, as well as by the sound of their hissing and slithering.

Circe, an ancient nymph and powerful enchantress, plays the part of a fortune teller at the Carnival. Her power of transforming people into animals will be well experienced both by the witches (like aunt Hilda turned into a spider) and by mortals (football players turned into pigs, with a direct reference to Odysseus' companions). But one of her transformations will turn against her.

Hecate, a contradictory figure of ancient Greek religion, is linked with witchcraft and necromancy and was depicted in a triple form, ruling over earth, sea, and sky. In *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, Part 3, she plays a crucial role for the coven of witches of Greendale, who have experienced an irreversible loss of their powers after overthrowing Lucifer. Appealing to Hecate could be their last opportunity to regain enough strength to vanquish the pagans.

The whole display of the Carnival hides certain dark omens delivered through patterns of classical mythology. For instance, in episode 2, Sabrina and Nick are about to enter the tunnel of love, one of the attractions of the Carnival. Yet it is not a love journey that awaits them: Herod, the Judaic king, is about to spoil their romantic moment, coming straight from hell. A diligent observer may have been forewarned: there are posters at the entrance to the tunnel referring to "Cupid and Psyche" and "Orpheus and Euridice". Even though they were famous romantic couples from ancient mythology, both Psyche and Euridice are well-known for their quests in the Underworld. It is indeed from Hell that King Herod is coming to claim from Sabrina his stolen crown, no matter her romantic ride with Nick.

To conclude, other cultural allusions abound, for instance, the most obvious: the representation of Hell resembles Dante's *Inferno* (e.g. the circles; Judas being held in the lowest circle), even though displaying showy and special variations; witchcraft spells are in archaic Latin (like in the rest of the series); the Great Mother of the pagans dates all the way back to ancient matriarchal societies. Moreover, a strongly marked feminism distinguishes the Neflix's remake of the Archie comics story. These feminist influences shape Hell itself departing from the traditional male authority of Lucifer into the matriarchy of Lilith, the first woman, and then of Sabrina, the more contemporary Queen of Hell. Feminist ideas are also embedded in the way today's



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.

| | |
|---|---|
| | dynamics are displayed: women play a central role, like in Sabrina's family run by the "aunties," and in the coven of witches taken over by Zelda Spellman in the end of Part 2. |
| Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts | Circe Hecate Medusa Pan Underworld |
| Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture | Coming of age Femininity Friendship Gender, female Identity Love Parents (and children) Sacrifice Sexuality Students Teachers |
| Further Reading | Alexis Soloski, "He Makes Archie Deep and Sabrina Dark. Meet Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa", *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, published November 8, 2018 (accessed: April 1, 2020). |



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.