Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: M.I.D.A.S. by Mikiko Ponczeck, Tom Taylor", peer-reviewed by Miriam Riverlea and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/306. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Mikiko Ponczeck , Tom Taylor

M.I.D.A.S.

Australia (2015)

TAGS: Golden Touch Midas





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

General information	
Title of the work	M.I.D.A.S.
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	Tom Taylor, Mikiko Ponczeck, *M.I.D.A.S*. Perth, Australia: Gestalt Publishers, 2015, 27 pp.
Genre	Comics (Graphic works), Dystopian fiction, Graphic novels, Science fiction, Short stories
Target Audience	Crossover (especially Young adults)
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

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



Mikiko Ponczeck , b. 1984
(Illustrator)

Mikiko Ponczeck (1984), was born in Tokyo and has lived in several countries around the world. She is a German-Japanese Manga Artist, who sometimes works under the pseudonym "Zombiesmile." She worked as a colorist for Taylor's *Rombies* series for Gestalt comics, and has published a number of manga and comics, including *Grimms Manga Sonderband – Perfect Editio*n, *Mikiko's Mini Comics*, *Crash-Burn* (a boy's love story, which won the Audience prize for the prestigious German Max & Moritz prize for comics). She hosts *J-Mag*, an online live-stream video show about manga, anime, and pop culture, which runs on Germany's *MyVideo* portal. Her DeviantArt profile has over 3 million page views, and her style ranges from Japanese to other traditions.

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au



Tom Taylor , b. 1978
(Author)

Tom Taylor was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1978. He is an Australian writer of graphic novels, comics, and animated television work. His work largely fits into the superhero genre, and he has written for a number of graphic novel/comics franchises, including comics from the *Star Wars* series of films and associated stories; Marvel *X-Men* series, with comics relating to the *Wolverine* and *Iron Ma*n series; DC Comics' comic of the fighting video game *Injustice: Gods Among Us*; and the *Earth Two* series; and a duology of *Rombies* comics, about an Ancient Rome that is taken over by zombies ("Friends, Romans, Countrymen—lend me your brains") He is the creator of *The Deep*, an award-winning comic for young readers,

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.

about a family of aquanauts solving underwater mysteries around the world, which was adapted into a television series by an Australian-Canadian co-production. He lives in Melbourne.

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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

Summary

M.I.D.A.S. is a graphic short story about Andy, a man who has become radioactive after being struck by a bomb blast. He lives in a bio-hazard suit, designed to protect others from his radioactivity. Occasionally he assists a bomb-disposal squad called M.I.D.A.S. He is isolated from others, lonely, and dealing with an inner anger that may be a side-effect of his radioactivity. Everything he touches turns to BOOM. He is called by Captain Turk to defuse a suitcase bomb. Seeing it is organic, he takes his glove off, and sets off an explosion. He sees in the eyes of a witnessing child that he has become a monster and his depression increases. *They know. They can see what I am*. When he meets Maya Mooney, a beautiful doctor who spends time with him, and gives him a sticker of a puppy to cover the 'radioactive' sign on his chest, he falls in love. But love only makes him realise how isolated he is; seeing Maya touching another patient; his rage builds. 'And something builds inside me. Something burns. And I want to [images of Andy setting off an explosion that destroys a city block]. I want to explode. But I don't. I just go home. There's a frustrating unceasing echo. I can't escape it . . . because it's me. It's the sound of me reverberating back at me. A constant reminder I'm stuck in here.' (23–27)

Analysis

M.I.D.A.S. alludes to the myth of King Midas. Where the original Midas wished for the source of his isolation (turning all he touched into gold, including his daughter), Andy's isolation is the result of an unspecified explosion, perhaps a nuclear explosion. It has disintegrated his mother. Andy is kept alive by technology, but lives an isolated life in which the ability to touch is removed from him. This is the main point of comparison with the myth, and the key allusion is spelled out in the title of the story, and in the name Andy has been given by the military (represented by a gruff older man called Captain Turk). Though the reference is in part tangential, the spirit of the original myth is reflected in the emphasis on isolation. King Midas was ultimately isolated by his powers. Andy has been isolated by his radioactive powers. As Ben Kooyman notes in his review, *M.I.D.A.S.* has intertexts with contemporary superhero stories, which often muse on the loneliness of the superhero. In the condensed form of a short story, the thematic resonances come through strongly.

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.

Tom Taylor is well versed in superhero stories. He writes for DC Comics, has written comics versions of the *Mad Max* series of post-apocalyptic road movies, and wrote *The Deep*, an action-adventure comic (and animated series) about a family of aquanauts descended from a mythical race called the Lumerians. *M.I.D.A.S.* participates in a number of genres, including myths, superhero stories, and science-fiction or dystopian fiction. Mikiko Ponczeck's artwork emphasizes Andy/M.I.D.A.S.'s isolation. The bulk of his biohazard suit is reminiscent of the Incredible Hulk; the action takes place in lonely streets and empty rooms, and the colour palette is a greeny-grey, underscoring the story's sadness, suggesting a reflection on urban alienation. There is a possible link to adolescent themes of isolation through physical difference (i.e. obesity), and an uncertainty about the use or direction of one's powers, emotions, or physical urges.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Golden Touch Midas
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Character traits Emotions Isolation/loneliness Love Science
Further Reading	Ben Kooyman, "This comic goes boom: M.I.D.A.S. #1 Review," *Australian Comics Journal*, October 2, 2015 (accessed: July 27, 2018).

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.