

James Brouwer , Wolfgang Bylsma , Tom Taylor

The Deep

Australia (2015)

TAGS: [Antaeus](#) [Atlantis](#) [Mermaids](#) [Minotaur](#) [Nereus](#) [Proteus](#) [Sirens](#) [Thetis](#)



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

General information	
<i>Title of the work</i>	The Deep
<i>Studio/Production Company</i>	Hydrologic Productions, a DHX Media Company, and The Deep (Australia) Productions Pty Ltd, an A. Stark Production Company.
<i>Country of the First Edition</i>	Australia
<i>Country/countries of popularity</i>	Australia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Greece
<i>Original Language</i>	English
<i>First Edition Date</i>	2015
<i>First Edition Details</i>	'Here Be Dragons,' <i>The Deep</i> . Directed by Trent Carlson.
<i>Running time</i>	2 seasons; season 1: 26 episodes; season 2: 13 episodes; each episode is 22 minutes long.
<i>Format</i>	DVD
<i>Date of the First DVD or VHS</i>	2015 (Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Distributed by Roadshow Entertainment.
<i>Official Website</i>	thedeepanimated.com (accessed: September 24, 2018)
<i>Available Onllne</i>	Trailer (accessed: September 24, 2018)
<i>Awards</i>	Both volumes of the original <i>The Deep</i> comic won the award for Best Illustrated Book/Graphic Novel at the Aurealis Awards. (2012 and 2013)
<i>Genre</i>	Animated films, Science fiction, Teen films, Television series

Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: The Deep by James Brouwer, Wolfgang Bylsma, Tom Taylor", peer-reviewed by Miriam Riverlea and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/506>. Entry version as of September 24, 2021.

<i>Target Audience</i>	Crossover (Children, young adults, family, crossover)
<i>Author of the Entry</i>	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
<i>Peer-reviewer of the Entry</i>	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com



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Creators



James Brouwer (Animator, Illustrator)

James Brouwer is a Brisbane-based illustrator and animator. He studied at Queensland College of Art (Bachelor of Animation), and has illustrated for DC Comics, Gestalt Comics, and provided concept design for The Disney Chanel, Sega, and Hasbro. He is currently the art director for *The Deep* animated series.

Official [website](#) (accessed: October 10, 2019)

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



Wolfgang Bylsma (Producer)

Wolfgang Bylsma is the director of Gestalt Publishing, an Australian independent graphic novel publishing house located in Perth, Western Australia. He founded the company in 2005, with Skye Ogden.

[Profile](#) at gestaltcomics.com (accessed: October 10, 2019)

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 Man* 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, 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



Additional information

Casting

Vincent Tong (1983-): Antaeus (Ant) Nekton

Ashleigh Ball (1983-): Fontaine Nekton

Michael Dobson (1966-): Will Nekton

Kathleen Barr (1967-): Keiko Nekton

Adaptations

The Deep is an adaptation and expansion of two graphic novels written by Tom Taylor and illustrated by James Brouwer *The Deep: Here Be Dragons*.

The Deep: The Vanishing Island The television series expands the invocation of mythology and mysterious exploration present in the original comic.

Summary

The Deep is an animated television series based on a comic book created by Tom Taylor and James Brouwer, and published by Gestalt Comics. It is an Australian/Canadian co-production, commissioned by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. In *The Deep*, the Nekton family (parents: Will and Kaiko; son Antaeus (Ant) and daughter Fontaine), are underwater explorers, who live on a submarine called the Arronax. In each episode, the Nektos unravel a different mystery, often showing that what seems to be myth or magic, is in fact explainable by scientific means. However, mythical elements feature in *The Deep*, in a long-arc narrative, whereby the Nektos are searching for the location of Lemuria, a lost civilisation with similarities to Atlantis. Over the course of the first series, it becomes apparent that the Nektos have a strong connection to Lemuria; in the final episode it is revealed that they are Lemurians. In their searches, they are assisted by Ant's loyal fish, Jeffrey, and by a group of mysterious Guardians, Nereus, Glaucus, and Tethys; and hindered by the piratical crew of the Dark Orca, including Captain Hammerhead, Fontaine's love interest, Smiling Finn, and Antaeus's rival, Mad Madeline. A former Guardian, named Proteus, is aiming to beat the Nektos to finding Atlantis.



Each episode is 22 minutes long, with a narrative focusing on solving a mystery or finding a treasure. *The Deep* is animated via CGI techniques, and has a soft but bright palette, suitable to a program about searching the oceans for treasures, life, and knowledge. The Nektons are voiced by Canadian actors, including Ashleigh Barr (Fontaine), known for her voice work in *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*. The characters are drawn as of unspecified race.

An underlying ecological and scientific ethos shows that *The Deep* aims to teach children about protecting the ecology of the sea, and to be wary of exploitative practices. Another antagonist, Devil Daniels, is a parody of famous television explorers (such as Steve Irwin or Bear Grylls). He is ruthless in using sea discoveries to make himself known. Key values such as family, teamwork, scientific knowledge, kindness, and intelligence, underscore the different adventures in *The Deep*, which involve exciting chase scenes, daring escapes, close encounters with unusual fish, and the occasional quasi-mythological creature (including Moby-Dick, an underwater Minotaur, underwater temples).

Analysis

The Deep interweaves a loose science-fiction approach to classical mythology with an interest in scientific knowledge and exploration. Classical names are used throughout the piece. Antaeus, the boy-hero of the piece is named after the son of Gaia and Poseidon. Nereus, sometimes known as the Old Man of the Sea, is one of the Guardians; another is named Tethys, after the Titan daughter of Uranus and Gaia; another is named Glaucus, after the Greek sea god. Proteus, a lapsed Guardian who believes Ant holds the key to the lost civilisation of Lemuria, is named after the sea-deity (the god of rivers and oceans, though he does not shape-shift). Lemuria is based on a nineteenth-century idea about the land-bridge theory of continent formation. In this series, it is intertwined with popular ideas related to myths of the lost civilisation of Atlantis, and the Nektons' quest to find it is framed as a quest for knowledge (led by Will Nekton, as an obsessive explorer and collector), in a similar manner to George Lucas' Indiana Jones movies, and other movies with an archaeological-exploring bent. Parallels to the stories of Jules Verne, Arthur Conan Doyle, and H. G. Wells can be found in *The Deep*.

Not every episode focuses on mythological elements, but an overarching theme of lost civilisations, shipwrecks, old tales and sea



lore sits alongside the show's focus on scientific exploration. As Tom Taylor the series creator explains, 'The episodes all work as standalones, but there is an arc. It's no secret our family is searching for lost Lemuria, and, as we get closer to our end goal, other forces are trying to stop them, or get there first.' (<http://www.thedeepanimated.com/gallery/article/>). In some episodes, mythological elements are debunked: in season 1 episode 20, 'The Song of the Siren,' Ant believes he has found a Siren; it turns out to be a rare whale with an unusual singing voice, and the story focuses on how they save it from destruction. In Season 2, episode 3, 'Mermaids,' Fontaine enjoys teasing Ant by pretending to be a mermaid, in a new underwater transportation device. It is Ant, the youngest Nekton, who is the truest believer in mysteries and the supernatural (though his father, Will, is driven by a desire to find Lemuria), and the comedy of the show often revolves around Ant's belief in mythical creatures. However, as the story continues, and the family gets closer to Lemuria, a stronger emphasis on lost civilisations and associated mythology is discernible. In Season 2, episode 9, the family enters a mysterious maze, and encounters not one, but several underwater Minotaurs (a cross between a bull and a seahorse), guarding a secret. In Season 2, Episode 7, the Nektors find a mysterious temple, hiding a secret tomb, guarded by poisonous stonefish which are attracted to the lights on the family's transportation devices.

The Deep uses a loose classical reception to establish Lemuria as a lost civilisation along the lines of Atlantis, and draws on classical mythology to underscore its mysterious and supernatural elements. Its use of science fiction, science, and social commentary (e.g. through the television explorer Devil Daniels), places the emphasis on exploration, but within that context is an interest in classical myth, presented gently for young audiences.

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

[Antaeus Atlantis Mermaids Minotaur Nereus Proteus Sirens Thetis](#)

Other Motifs, Figures,

[Adventure Family Future Science Siblings](#)



and Concepts Relevant
for Children and Youth
Culture

Further Reading

Andrew Gill, "*The Deep*—TV Series Review," *Weekend Notes*, 30/11/2015
<https://www.weekendnotes.com/the-deep-animated-tv-series-review/>;
accessed 20/12/2017
Western Animation/*The Deep*; *TV Tropes*.
<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/WesternAnimation/TheDeep>;
accessed 20/12/2017
Travis Johnson, "Tom Taylor: Exploring *The Deep*," *Film Ink*,
November 29, 2016;
<https://www.filmink.com.au/tom-taylor-exploring-the-deep/>; accessed
20/12/2017
[http://www.thedeepanimated.com/gallery/article/ *The Deep*](http://www.thedeepanimated.com/gallery/article/The_Deep)
promotional website; accessed 4/8/2018

Addenda

A line of *The Deep*-related toys is in production.

Animated science-fiction action-adventure television series for
children and young adults.

