



Ash Snake Press

The “Mermaid Tale of the Moment” Does Not Feature a Heroine Named Ariel

Dreams of Song Times pushes the boundaries of mermaid-trope fiction

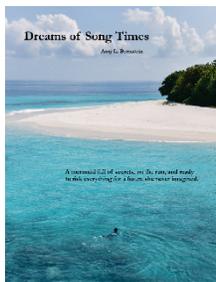
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May 8, 2023—Mermaids have been worshiped, feared, criminalized, and sexualized throughout human history around the world, in literature, song, poetry, and of course...the movies.

Thirty-four years ago, a major entertainment conglomerate released a musical cartoon about a mermaid discontented with her lot, who longs to become human and fall in love.

This month, that same company releases an updated live-action version of the story featuring a multi-racial cast and a revamped cultural sensibility.

Dreams of Song Times, a new novel from award-winning author and former journalist Amy L. Bernstein blows the doors off fictional-mermaid representation by enmeshing readers in a dark coming-of-age tale about a teen human-mermaid hybrid who is fetishized, hunted, and endangered.

This is a story about being brutally “othered” and finding the strength to champion other endangered and oppressed populations, ranging from the Akuntsu of Brazil to the Jawara of the Andaman Islands.

Dreams of Song Times talks back to the big-screen version of the story with a far grittier exploration of hatred and violence as responses to cultures and people who are perceived as “nonconforming” to dominant norms—alongside the consequences of hounding powerless populations to the brink of extinction for economic gain.

What Readers & Critics are Saying

The author takes a variety of hard-hitting topics – colonialism, racism, among others – and presents them in an impressively relatable way that helps young adult readers understand the impact of these “isms.”

10th Annual Writer’s Digest Self-Published E-Book Awards

Poignant, raw, original, and thoroughly absorbing... A layered LGBT fantasy that is far more than the sum of its parts.

The Prairies Book Review

What *Dreams of Song Times* does so well, is highlight the individual stories of marginalised people without preaching. It's unequivocal in its approach about the plight of Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQIA+ and Black Lives. It handles, delicately, the way that societal expectations can have repercussions on the lives of immigrants, even within their own communities.

Sally Altass, *The Witch Laws*

This is the mermaid tale of the moment... a page-turning, coming-of-age thriller with a paranormal edge.

Corinne LaBalme, *Summer People*

About the Author

Amy L. Bernstein writes stories that let readers feel while making them think. Her novels include *The Potrero Complex*, finalist for the 2020 Petrichor Prize; the award-winning *The Nighthawkers*; *Dreams of Song Times*; and *Fran, The Second Time Around*. She is an award-winning journalist, speechwriter, playwright, and certified nonfiction book coach. Amy also teaches workshops on various aspects of the craft of writing. She is a frequent guest on podcasts to discuss writing, publishing, and creativity. Amy's poetry has appeared in numerous literary journals and anthologies and she is a regular contributor on Medium. She lives and writes in Baltimore, Maryland, which often inspires her writing.

Dreams of Song Times

236 pp

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