

# Heirs of Atlantis

By Michele Dutcher

How were we to know, at the beginning of new millennia, that two of our most intriguing mysteries would be solved at the same time? Those who revealed the answers called themselves the 'Heirs of Atlantis' and introduced themselves to Heads of State as first cousins to humans – and there were often humans in their entourages. These beings insisted that they had reappeared in the surface dweller's world to help humans in our efforts to clean up the Earth's oceans – which had been their home for the last 20,000 years: first as inhabitants of an island chain in the middle of the Atlantic, and then as an underwater empire in the same vicinity.

As an expert in mythologies both ancient and modern, my curiosity could not have been more stoked; I was delighted when a friend from 'across the pond' proposed an informal meeting to discuss the amazing events of the past year. "I have a surprise", he told me.

The five of us met in a hotel bar, which was our habit. When we were seated comfortably, Marshall rose to his feet, directing our attention to a tall stranger who approached us quickly through the dimness of the elaborate room. Marshall and the pale man clasped hands before the rest of us could come to our feet. "My friends, it is my pleasure to introduce to you one of the Heirs of Atlantis – Berigo of the 7th House."

The five of us were enthralled by our amazing visitor, some offering handshakes while others bowed slightly to acknowledge his presence.

"Please, please, let us sit," insisted the visitor in an accent reminiscent of ancient language groups surrounding the Mediterranean. "I heard of your small gathering through a friend and became eager to meet with such distinguished experts in ancient mysteries." His broad smile revealed the protruding canines, which were so much a part of the legend. "Please do not hesitate to ask me anything – this is why I am here tonight. Nothing would make me more happy than to talk with you about my home and the seven Houses of Atlan."

So we began to talk, the six of us, about an Atlantic-rim commercial power that suffered physical destruction. "Millions of us were killed when an asteroid hit our capital city."

"Incredible", I said.

"Sure, sure, sure. Having been born in the middle of the ocean, our nation had always seen to it that our cities were watertight and could survive tsunamis and hurricanes. After the disaster, it took the better part of a century for our inhabitants to dig out of the sediment that covered our watertight cities – which is why we prefer the darkness...there is very little light at the bottom of the ocean."

Only then did I see her in the darkness behind him. Her tiny hand was upon his shoulder now, and he brought it to his lips to kiss it in recognition. She whispered something into Berigo's ear

before looking at all of us. As clearly as Bergio was a vampire – this amazing creature was clearly a human.

“Allow me to introduce my symbiot – Merleah.”

She was the model from which all women should have been cut. Her thick auburn hair curled about her face before plunging down to her waist. Her eyes were as green as emeralds, her skin softly freckled, and her lips were as red as fresh blood. As she came around to the table, it became obvious that she was pregnant. Immediately the men began to grab chairs so she could be seated.

“You use the term ‘symbiot’,” said Marshall. “Could you explain what you mean?”

“Sure, sure, sure. When we made it to land in our vehicles, we found our metabolism had changed. We now took our nourishment in liquid form. We took humans back to Atlantis with us and these humans were bred to be our symbiots – those who supply our need for nourishment, as we supply their needs.”

We had all been trained by our academic disciplines to view societal deviation simply as a variant, but Lucinda was obviously outraged. “Isn’t what you are describing merely slavery in a disguised form?”

Bergio drew a breath as though to answer the attack, but Merleah answered instead. “I am Bergio’s symbiot by choice. Bergio protects me and supplies me with all the luxuries I could possibly imagine.” She looked around the table once quickly. She looked at me a second time, longer now. I felt myself falling into her jewel-like eyes, as if the rest of my colleagues and Bergio himself had disappeared.

“Griffin!” I heard Marshall whisper frantically, his voice piercing the mist. “Griffin! Bergio was talking to you!”

“I apologize.”

The creature chuckled softly. “She is amazing, isn’t she? Her ancestors were bred for their beauty.”

“My beauty encourages Bergio to feed deeply – so he remains healthy.”

The seven of us sat for hours. Each time Merleah spoke, I fell deeper in lust with her than I had ever imaged possible, so I was delighted when she sent a message through the desk clerk to meet her privately – so we could talk.

When I got to her room there was barely enough time to shut the door before she was in my arms and naked on the bed. My desires were so strong that I hardly realized her moans weren’t those of ecstasy, but of pain. I barely backed off the bed in time and said, “Your baby’s head is beginning to crown.”

“He must have smelled dinner,” she laughed.

Suddenly Bergio was in back of me, his hand on my shoulder. “How wonderful, you found us a midwife.” He pinched my spinal column and I fell to my knees – paralyzed. The baby had clawed his way out now – and it smiled, revealing its sharp, pointed teeth. The last thing I remember was the infant leaping from the bed to the floor, his claws ripping into my chest.

The End