

Language Arts

Genre

Myths are stories that help people make sense of the world. They may explain natural occurrences, such as the sunrise, with stories of gods or goddesses.



Literary Elements

A **Protagonist** is the main character in a story. In a myth, the protagonist is usually a god or goddess, or a heroic character.

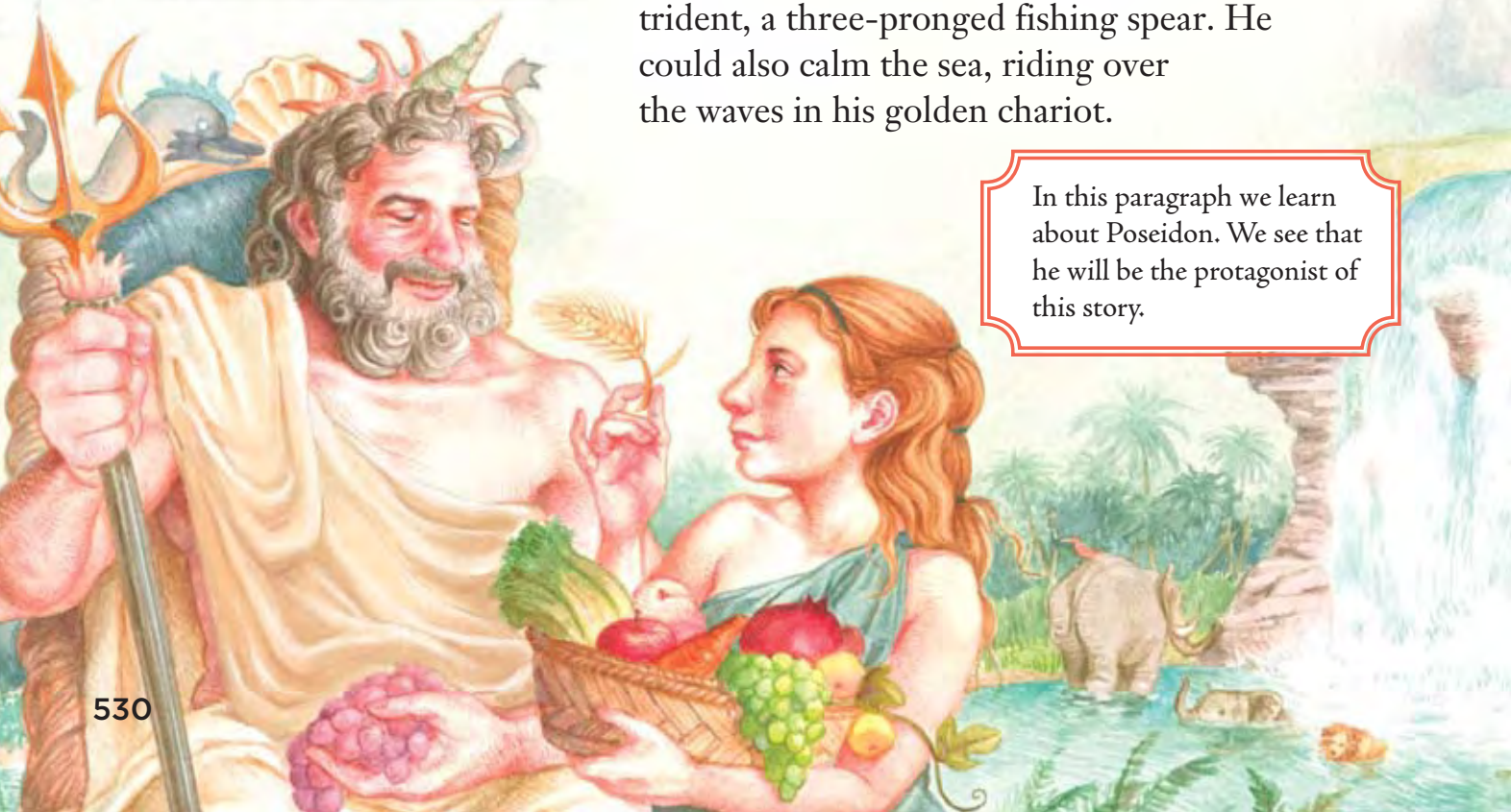
Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration to create emphasis or a sense of drama.

Poseidon *and* *the* Kingdom *of* Atlantis

retold by Gillian Reed

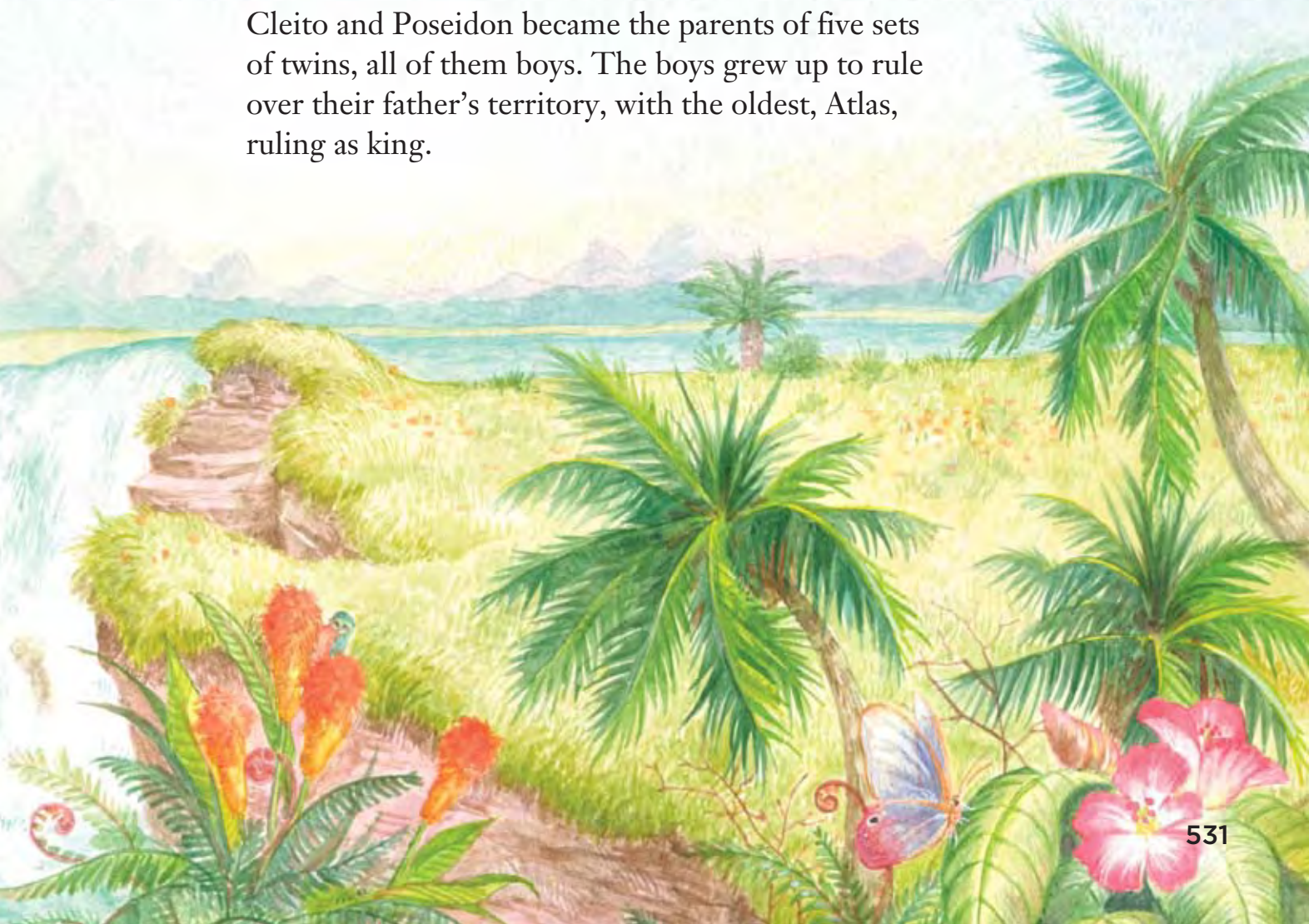
At the beginning of time, the immortal Greek gods of Mount Olympus divided the world among themselves. Zeus, the king of the gods, ruled over the sky and the thunderbolt. Poseidon, his brother, was the god of the sea, the lake, and the earthquake. Poseidon's power and bad temper earned him the name "Earth Shaker." He could stir up the oceans with his trident, a three-pronged fishing spear. He could also calm the sea, riding over the waves in his golden chariot.

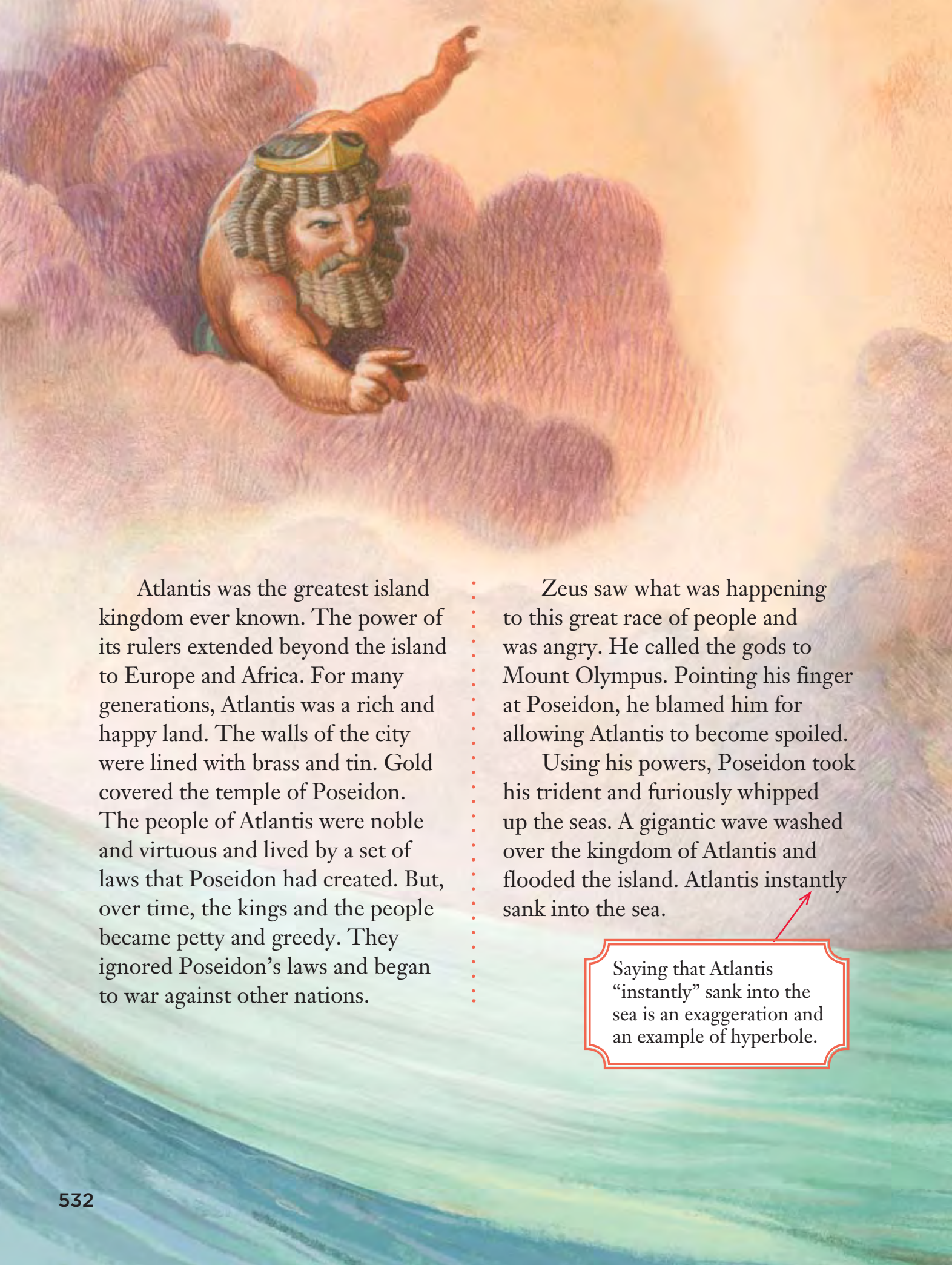
In this paragraph we learn about Poseidon. We see that he will be the protagonist of this story.



Along with the seas, Poseidon ruled over an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean called Atlantis. The people of the island grew wheat, fruit, and vegetables in its fertile soil. Gold and other metals lay beneath the soil. Herds of magnificent elephants and other animals lived in the forests. Poseidon created hot and cold springs, so the people always had fresh water to drink, and warm water in which to bathe.

On the island of Atlantis lived a beautiful woman named Cleito. Poseidon was so taken by Cleito's beauty that he married this mortal woman. He built a palace for Cleito on a graceful hill in the middle of the island. To protect Cleito, Poseidon surrounded the hill with circular belts of water and land. A canal from the ocean to the hill cut across these belts. Cleito and Poseidon became the parents of five sets of twins, all of them boys. The boys grew up to rule over their father's territory, with the oldest, Atlas, ruling as king.



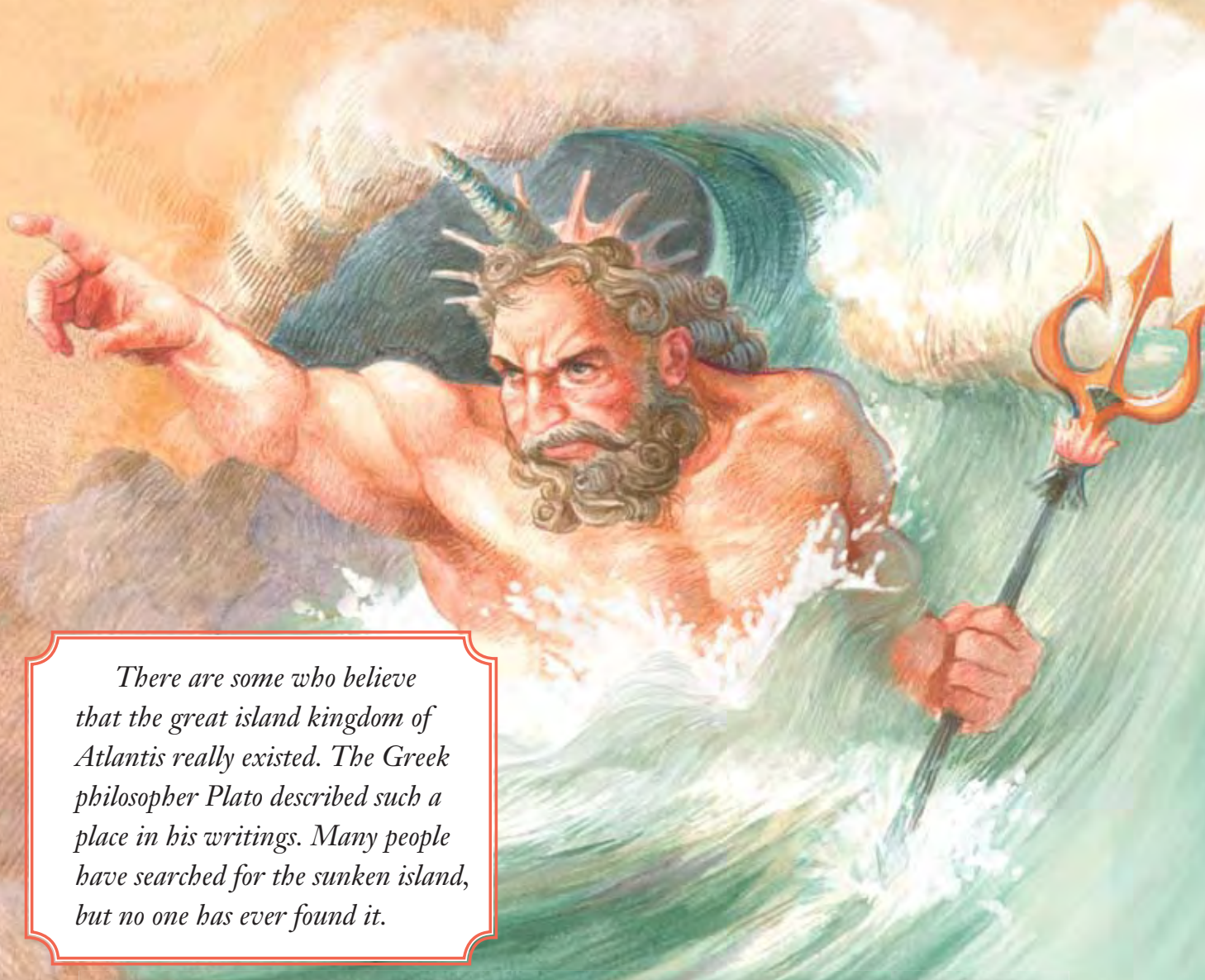


Atlantis was the greatest island kingdom ever known. The power of its rulers extended beyond the island to Europe and Africa. For many generations, Atlantis was a rich and happy land. The walls of the city were lined with brass and tin. Gold covered the temple of Poseidon. The people of Atlantis were noble and virtuous and lived by a set of laws that Poseidon had created. But, over time, the kings and the people became petty and greedy. They ignored Poseidon's laws and began to war against other nations.

Zeus saw what was happening to this great race of people and was angry. He called the gods to Mount Olympus. Pointing his finger at Poseidon, he blamed him for allowing Atlantis to become spoiled.

Using his powers, Poseidon took his trident and furiously whipped up the seas. A gigantic wave washed over the kingdom of Atlantis and flooded the island. Atlantis instantly sank into the sea.

Saying that Atlantis "instantly" sank into the sea is an exaggeration and an example of hyperbole.



There are some who believe that the great island kingdom of Atlantis really existed. The Greek philosopher Plato described such a place in his writings. Many people have searched for the sunken island, but no one has ever found it.

Connect and Compare



1. Pretend that you are writing your own version of this myth. Use hyperbole to describe Poseidon, Atlantis, or the island's destruction. **Hyperbole**
2. In this myth, the god Poseidon is blamed for sinking Atlantis. Can you think of a natural cause for such an event? **Analyze**
3. If Atlantis did exist, it might now be covered by coral reefs. Think about what you learned from *At Home in the Coral Reef*. In what kind of waters would Atlantis have to lie to be a home to coral reefs? **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Find out more about myths at www.macmillanmh.com

Write About a Community Project

Writer's Craft

Figurative Language

Writers improve their writing by changing or adding words. They may add **figurative language** to evoke mental images for readers.

"Sparkles like diamonds" creates a strong mental picture.

My last sentence describes a trash pile.

Keeping It Clean

by Kyle M.

Do you want a clean beach that sparkles like diamonds? If so, then here's what you can do. You can organize a community beach cleanup. You can advertise it with posters at school, in the library, and in supermarkets.

On cleanup day, gather at the beach. Then, everyone should put on gloves and pick up litter. Be careful not to touch broken glass. Look for plastic bags and bottles along the edge of the water. Put everything in big trash bags. Finally, have a clean-beach party. Just be sure to pick up your mountain of trash!

Your Turn

Write one or two paragraphs explaining how to join or start a community project.

Identify your topic and tell why it is important. Then explain the steps for getting it done. When you're done, read your work. Can you change or add words to improve your writing? Use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Did I experiment with **figurative language** to present a familiar topic in a fresh way?
- Organization:** Did I make my directions clear?
- Voice:** Did I share my feelings in a way that will get others interested in the topic?
- Word Choice:** Did my choice of precise words show that I know about my topic?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I try changing or adding words to make my sentences sound better?
- Conventions:** Did I use contractions and possessives correctly? Did I check my spelling?