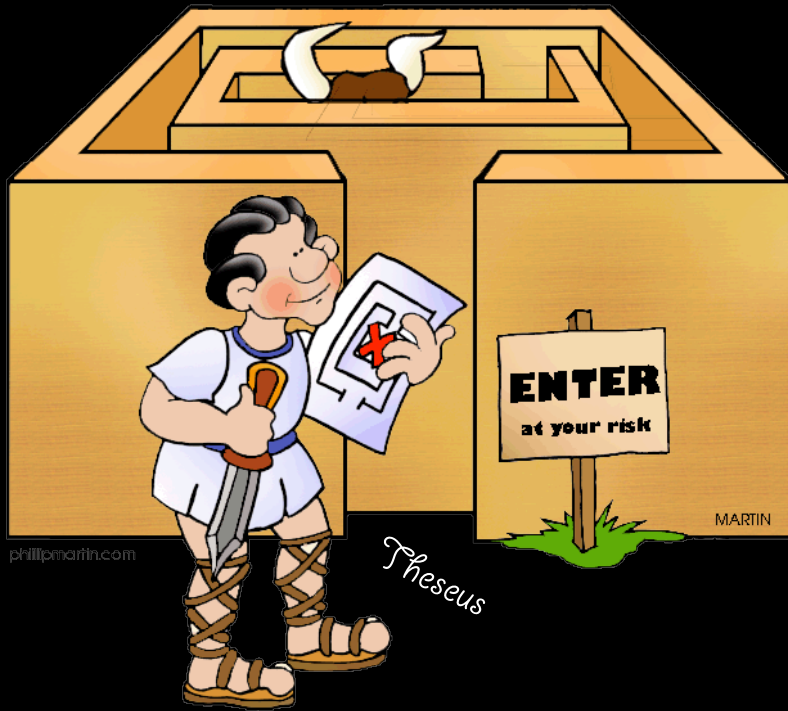


THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

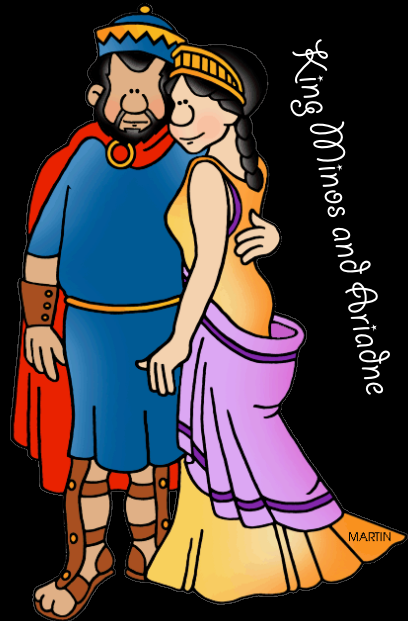


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Theseus



Minotaur



King Minos and Ariadne

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By Emma Larsson

Chapter 1

There was once a king called Minos who lived on the island of Crete in Greece with his beautiful daughter, Ariadne. Crete was a beautiful city where everyone would sing and dance all day. Minos was a powerful king who was very proud of his land. But King Minos had a dark side. When he got bored, he loved to see some suffering to amuse himself. His daughter, Ariadne, was very vain, and only thought of herself and how beautiful she was. Since she was so pretty, princes from all over Greece would come to propose to her. But none could win her heart.

Not too far away from Crete was Athens. Athens was once a happy city. Their king was named Aegeus. King Aegeus was good and wise and loved his people.

That is why it seemed so strange that every 5 years, King Aegeus would send 7 young men and 7 young women to Crete and none of them would ever come back! This was a deal between King Aegeus and King Minos, that said that if King Minos were to stop attacking Athens whenever he got bored, then Athens would send this group of young men and women every 5 years as a gift to King Minos.

But the horrible truth is that everyone knew that King Minos kept a Minotaur - a monstrous, gigantic half bull, half man 'thing'. The Minotaur only ate raw meat, and his favourite was that of the human kind!! So it was not hard to guess what would happen to these poor young men and women :(

The Minotaur lived in a great labyrinth in the middle of Crete. King Minos loved the Minotaur. He also loved how it was so vicious that it scared off any attacks from other cities. There were many stories of how the Minotaur came about. Some said that he came out of the forest on a cold winter's night and appeared

before King Minos and threatened to kill him unless he was properly looked after. Another rumour said that a normal man was once swallowed by a giant monster and later spat out, only to be transformed to have a bull's head. Others said that he was actually King Minos's brother. But the most believed story was that he was actually King Minos's illegitimate son.

King Aegeus had a son named Theseus. Theseus was a brave and strong young man. But what nobody knew at that time, was that Prince Theseus was special. He would do something that would change the lives of the people of Athens forever.

Chapter 2

It was a few years since the last young men and women had been sent. At the time of agreement between the two kings, Theseus had gone to visit his mother in Sphairia (an island in Greece) so he never knew what a horrifying agreement his father had made with King Minos, and King Aegeus had deliberately kept his son from the ugly truth.

One day when Theseus was asleep, he heard voices in his head telling him to be 'brave and strong'. The voices seemed to come from the soft wind blowing against him. Theseus was confused as to why he was hearing these voices.

Suddenly he woke up with a jolt. He heard loud wailing from a distance. It sounded like a lot of people were in pain. He ran to where the wailing came from, which was a beach, and he saw a bunch of people standing by a boat. They were people of all ages. Theseus asked the people what was wrong. The parents of the children told him that their children were going to Crete to be eaten by the Minotaur. One of the young children told him that they really didn't want to go be eaten by the Minotaur and begged Theseus to save them.

Theseus ran to the castle where his fat father was having three big plates of Turkish Delight. He was just about to take his fifth bite of the second plate until Theseus came running into the room, with his bare feet echoing in the castle as he ran.

Theseus asked his father why all those young people were going to be eaten by the Minotaur. King Aegeus explained to his son about what he had agreed on many years ago. He said he would rather only 7 young men and 7 young women get killed than King Minos attacking Athens where many more people would get killed. Theseus asked his father if he could kill the Minotaur instead. Aegeus told him not to. "It's practically asking for death!" he said.

But Theseus begged his father to let him go, because deep down, he knew he was destined for greatness. Now the voices he heard in his head earlier on made sense! And the wailing of the people from the boat still echoed in his ears.

"Let me fulfil my destiny, Father. I know the Gods are on my side. The Minotaur has got to be defeated to bring joy and laughter back to Athens. If I die killing the Minotaur, it'll be worth it," Theseus said.

With a heavy heart, King Aegeus agreed. He was surprised to see the strength and determination in his son. He gave a deep sigh, closed his eyes and shook his head.

Before Theseus got on the boat, his father said, "Your sail is now black. If you come back alive, change your sail to white, so that we can celebrate your homecoming. If not..." With that, his father walked away with his head hanging and his shoulders drooping.

Chapter 3

It was starting to get darker. Theseus could see Crete about a kilometre away. The famous giant labyrinth was beginning to take shape from the distance. Theseus could feel his heart starting to thump a bit faster and his body felt a bit colder. He could see King Minos and a beautiful girl standing beside him outside the castle, welcoming them with an evil grin on his face.

The boat came to a halt and everyone clamoured out with fear in their eyes.

“Welcome!” said King Minos. “This is my daughter, Ariadne, and she will be deciding in which order you will get to meet the great Minotaur. Don’t worry, each and every single one of you will get your turn!” With that, he turned around with a smirk and a flourish and walked back into the castle.

Soon, they were all bundled up in a corner waiting for their fate. Theseus sat there thinking of a plan. Suddenly, he felt a tap on his shoulder and there in front of him stood Ariadne, who pushed a letter into his hands. Without thinking, he opened it up and read it. It said:

Dear Theseus,

I would like to escape from this island and let others admire my beauty. I could tell that you were special the minute I laid eyes on you. And you’re the only one who can help me.

The Minotaur will be undefeatable without my help. Don’t say a word and come with me right now.

Ariadne

Seeing this, Theseus got up and followed Ariadne quietly. They soon reached the entrance to the labyrinth. Ariadne held up a long, glistening sword in one hand and in the other, she held a ball of string. She said, “Before you go into the labyrinth, tie this ball of string to the door handle. Then let it slip through your fingers while you’re on your way to find the Minotaur. It will help you find your way back. As for the sword... you know what to do with that.” She squeezed Theseus’s hand and kissed him lightly on the cheek for good luck. Theseus thanked her gratefully and hid the items in a dark corner near the door. Then Ariadne led him back to the others.

Chapter 4

The evening passed quickly, and before long, the clock tower in Crete struck midnight and the sound of shudders could be heard everywhere. Everyone knew midnight was supper time for the Minotaur. Suddenly, a guard showed up and pointed to Theseus and said, “You, come with me!”

Theseus stood up fearlessly and followed the guard to the labyrinth. The guard looked at him with almost pity in his eyes, pushed him towards the entrance and said, “Don’t worry, it’ll be over soon.” With that, he turned and fled. Theseus quickly recovered his sword and the ball of yarn and stepped into the labyrinth.

The door behind him swung shut. Theseus felt for the doorknob and tied the string to it. He walked slowly through the labyrinth, slipping the rope onto the ground in between his fingers. The labyrinth was humid and Theseus found himself sweating. The air smelt of blood and human flesh. For the first time, Theseus felt fear. It was so dark, he couldn’t see a thing. He stopped dead in his tracks every now and then when he stepped on any bones on the

ground. His body was covered in spider webs as he made his way along the narrow path and he even heard a mouse squeak along the way. Theseus was surprised that the Minotaur hadn't got to it yet!

All of a sudden Theseus heard a snore. He sneaked up towards the sound and tried to peer around, but of course, he couldn't see a thing. Then he reached out and felt a furry but smooth coat. A shiver ran down his spine. Then he felt something hard at the end of the furry coat. He knew it - it was one of the horns. And it must have been attached to the Minotaur!

The Minotaur seemed to be sleeping on his tummy. Theseus could not believe his luck and quickly grabbed the chance and grabbed onto his back. The Minotaur woke up with a jolt and sniffed, knowing that another scrumptious meal was on its way. He got up effortlessly and stretched around, with Theseus still clinging onto his back. He always did this in preparation for his midnight supper. He suddenly felt something on his back and was just about to shake it off when Theseus swiftly ran the sword across the Minotaur's throat. The Minotaur let out a shrill scream and fell to the ground in a heap. Theseus kicked the beast hard and heard nothing. He knew he'd done it. He had defeated the Minotaur!

Theseus felt for the ball of yarn and followed it all the way back to the entrance of the labyrinth. Nobody was there to greet him apart from Ariadne. She was happy to see him. She looked surprised, not because she was surprised that he made it out alive, but that he had come out so early. What had seemed like an hour of fright to Theseus, was just an anxious fifteen minutes of waiting for Ariadne.

Quickly and quietly, Theseus and Ariadne crept back to the boat and took the others with them. They sailed away peacefully, while Crete was still asleep.

Chapter 5

On the way back to Athens, Ariadne said to Theseus, “I knew you were the one from the moment I saw you. I think I’m in love with you, Theseus. Will you marry me?” Before Theseus could say anything, she added, “I would make a great princess for Athens. I am beautiful and everyone would admire me. And when my father passes on, everything in Crete would belong to me and our two nations can become one. Imagine how great that would be!”

Even though Ariadne’s offer was tempting and her beauty was known throughout the land, Theseus just did not find her attractive. He thought she was too pushy and forward and he did not like that in a woman. But Theseus was too soft hearted and did not know how to let Ariadne down, especially after what she had done for him. So he agreed to Ariadne’s idea.

Soon after, they passed a small island. Ariadne insisted that they should rest there and perhaps even collect some food as she was beginning to get hungry. She thought that Theseus was looking tired and hungry too, but he was just miserable that he didn’t know how to let Ariadne down. So they stopped off at the island.

There, Ariadne soon became tired and fell asleep under a tree. She looked absolutely gorgeous asleep. Theseus thought to himself, “She does look beautiful, more beautiful than I’ve ever seen her. I think I will leave her here so that others can come and admire her beauty too. I did promise her that I will take her away from Crete so that others can admire her beauty. After all, a deal is a deal.” And that was what Theseus did.

The gods saw what happened and was not pleased with Theseus. Ariadne had helped him so much and Theseus had ‘rewarded’ her by abandoning her on the island! They decided to punish Theseus by making him forget to change the sail to white.

So, when their boat was nearing Athens, King Aegeus, who had been waiting for his son to return all this while, saw the black sail. He thought that the boat had returned without his son. He was sure Theseus had been eaten by the Minotaur. He sadly walked to the edge of the highest cliff and jumped off.

From afar, Theseus saw everything. Only then did he remember that he had forgotten to change the sail. He quickly dived into the water and swam ashore to get to his father. But it was too late. The man that had once been a noble king was now just a body. A corpse. It was the end of King Aegeus.

Theseus knew that this was probably his punishment because of his cowardly and ungrateful act. He looked up to the skies and promised the gods that he would be a decent human being from then on, and that he would be a just king for Athens.



THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR



There was once an evil beast who lived in the labyrinth on the island of Crete who ate human flesh. His name was the Minotaur. Every 5 years Athens would send young people to be eaten by the Minotaur. Athens wanted to stop this from happening, so it was up to Theseus to save the day! But how would he kill the Minotaur?

