Theseus and the Minotaur



King Minos was the king of Crete. He was angry and enjoyed attacking the city of Athens when they weren't expecting it. King Aegeus, who was the king of Athens, wanted to stop the attacks so he struck a deal with Minos. In return for peace, Aegeus would send over seven girls and seven boys to be offered to King Minos's terrifying beast – the Minotaur.

Theseus was fed up. Minos had been telling Athens what to do for nine years now and, tomorrow, 14 more children would be shipped off to meet the Minotaur. He went over the plan in his head and knocked on the door of his father's study.

Before Aegeus could even stand up to meet his son, Theseus had started talking. "This deal with Minos has gone on for too long. Families are terrified that their children will be picked next. We should be protecting our people – not feeding them to the Minotaur! Tomorrow, when the boat comes, I am going to take the place of one of the boys. Then, I will defeat the Minotaur and we can live in peace."



Aegeus was shocked. He knew that his son was strong and brave but the Minotaur was huge and fierce. In fact, it was so fierce that it had to be locked inside a complex maze. Aegeus begged Theseus to find another way but he had already made up his mind. Eventually, Aegeus had to agree.

"I will not be happy until I know that you are safe," he told Theseus. "The moment that I can see your ship, I want to know that you have won. If you have defeated the beast, replace your ship's black sails with white ones. Then, I will know that you are coming home safely." Theseus nodded and promised his father that his sails would be white.

Later that day, Theseus climbed into the ship alongside 13 shivering children. When the boat arrived in Crete, they were met by Minos and his daughter, Ariadne. As Minos led the children to the palace, Ariadne pulled Theseus to one side. She explained that she wanted to escape from her father and his unfair laws. As a result, she told Theseus that she would help him if he promised to take her away from Crete.

Agreeing to help, Theseus and Ariadne went to see Daedalus. He had invented the labyrinth that the Minotaur was being kept in. Wanting to be a hero, Daedalus agreed to help. Later that night, the three met at the entrance to the labyrinth.

Holding out a ball of string, Daedalus explained his plan. "This labyrinth has been designed to be so complicated that I can't even escape it. However, if you unravel this string behind you, you will be able to use it to find the entrance again. Ariadne and I will stay here to make sure that nobody else comes in. Good luck."

With that, the doors to the labyrinth closed and Theseus set off to find the Minotaur. Leaving the string behind him, he searched through the narrow passages until, at last, he was face to face with the beast. The Minotaur was stronger but Theseus was quicker and smarter. After a long battle, Theseus emerged victorious. The Minotaur had been defeated.

Theseus immediately made his way to the ship with Ariadne. He had done it! No more children would ever have to meet the Minotaur. Feeling tired but happy, Theseus hoisted the black sails of his ship and headed for home, forgetting all about the promise that he had made to his father.

