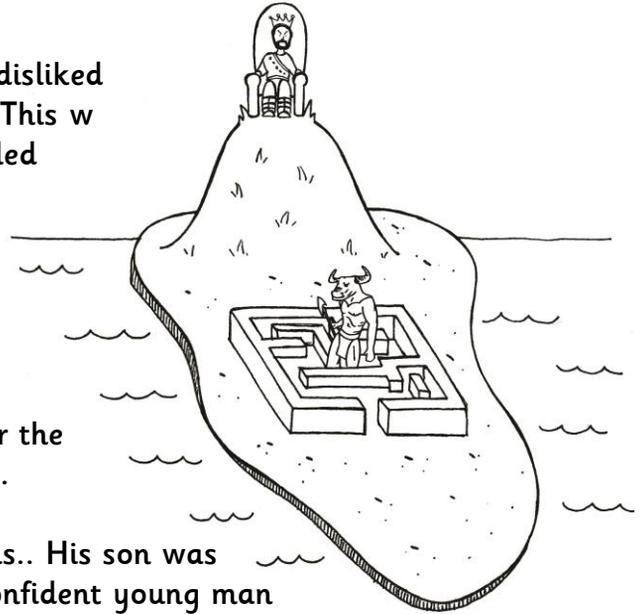


Theseus and the Minotaur

Many years ago, on the island of Crete was a terrifying monster who lived in a maze. He was called the Minotaur.

The island was ruled by a king called Minos. He disliked the people of Athens which was a city in Greece. This was because many years ago the Athenians had killed Minos' son. The prince had won lots of prizes at the Athenian Games. This made Minos furious. He ordered that every nine years, fourteen young Athenians would enter the maze and be killed by the Minotaur.



Another nine years had passed and it was time for the Athenians to send another fourteen boys and girls.

Now in Athens, they also had a king called Aegeus. His son was called Theseus. Theseus was a brave and confident young man who loved adventure. He really wanted to kill the Minotaur because he was angry with what King Minos was doing to the young Athenians.

“No son! I do not want you to go. You will be killed. Do not set foot on that boat to Crete!”

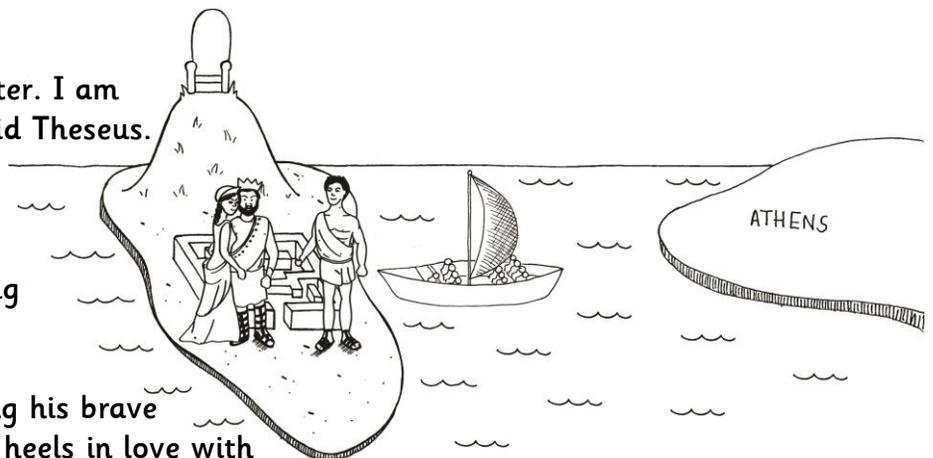
“But father, I know I can kill this monster,” Theseus said firmly. “Do not worry. I shall be victorious! When I return, I shall make sure the sail of the boat is white. This will show I have won and have returned home.”

So, the next day, Theseus set sail with thirteen other young Athenians. The journey was difficult.

Eventually they arrived in Crete where the crew were met by both King Minos as well as his beautiful daughter Ariadne.

“I have come to kill the monster. I am not frightened of it at all!” said Theseus.

“HOW DARE YOU SAY THIS AFTER WHAT YOUR PEOPLE DID TO MY SON!” roared King Minos.



On seeing Theseus and hearing his brave words, Ariadne fell head over heels in love with the young Athenian. She promised she would help him to kill the monster. In return for her help Theseus said he would marry her.

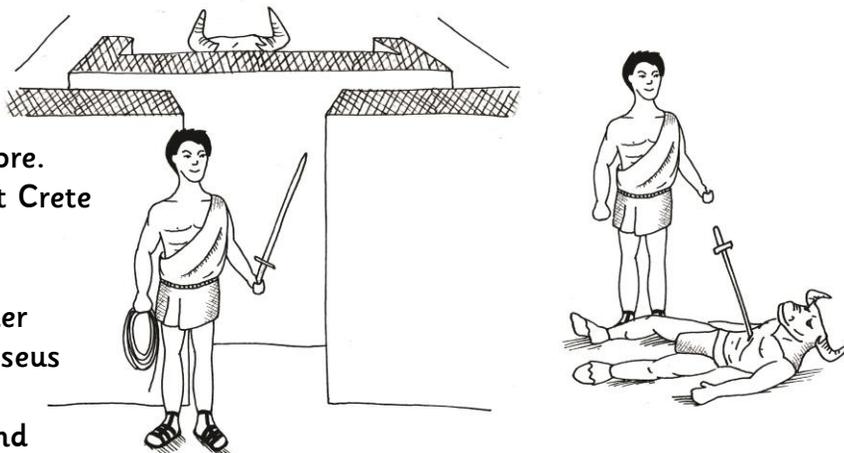
Ariadne gave Theseus a sword and a ball of golden thread. "Tie the thread to the maze's entrance. Unwind the string as you travel through the maze. Kill the Minotaur with this sword and then follow the thread to get back out!"

The very next day, Theseus, took the sword and thread and went to the maze. He entered it with the other young Athenians who were very frightened.

Theseus travelled through the dark, complicated maze. Eventually he came face to face with the terrifying monster. The monster was strong and frightening. He roared and charged at Theseus. It was a difficult battle but Theseus finally managed to kill the Minotaur!

Theseus ran quickly through the maze, using the thread to escape. With the other Athenians and Ariadne, he went to the island's shore. They all boarded their boat and left Crete for another island.

Ariadne was delighted to be with her love but this did not last long. Theseus thought he did not truly love her. He decided to leave her on the island and return home to Athens.



The final journey was full of excitement and happiness. The Athenians had defeated the Minotaur.

However, Theseus forgot one thing as the ship made its way towards Athens – to change the sail to white! As the ship came into view, King Aegeus saw the black sail. He thought his son had been killed by the Minotaur.

"Theseus! My son!" cried Aegeus. So upset was Aegeus, he threw himself off the rocks into the sea and to his death.

On landing, Theseus was told of the tragedy. He cried with grief, realising the huge mistake he had made.

And so, with sadness in his heart, Theseus became the next King of Athens.

Jenny Turner

Theseus and the Minotaur

1. What is the monster called and where does he live? (AF2)
2. Why does King Minos not like the people of Athens? (AF2)
3. Describe what you think Theseus is like from what you have read. (AF3)
4. Who do you think says, “No son! I do not want you to go. You will be killed. Do not set foot on that boat to Crete!”? (AF3)
5. What do you think the weather was like when Theseus and the other Athenians sailed to Crete? (AF3)
6. Why has the author put some words in capital letters? (AF5)
7. Ariadne falls “head over heels” in love with Theseus. What do you think this means? (AF4)
8. How is the monster described when Theseus finally meets him? (AF2)
9. Why is the final journey “full of excitement and happiness”? (AF3)
10. What huge mistake does Theseus make? How do you think he feels at the end of the story? (AF2/AF6)

Theseus and the Minotaur

1. What is the monster called and where does he live? (AF2) **The Minotaur. In a labyrinth – a very complicated maze, on the island of Crete.**
2. Why does King Minos not like the people of Athens? (AF2) **They had killed his son because the prince had won lots of prizes at the Athenian Games and they were jealous.**
3. Describe what you think Theseus is like from what you have read. (AF3) **He is a brave and confident young man who enjoys adventures. He is not scared of the Minotaur or King Minos and is determined to kill the monster.**
4. Who do you think says, “No son! I do not want you to go. You will be killed. Do not set foot on that boat to Crete!”? (AF3) **King Aegeus of Athens.**
5. What do you think the weather was like when Theseus and the other Athenians sailed to Crete? (AF3) **It was probably stormy as it says in the passage the journey was difficult.**
6. Why has the author put some words in capital letters? (AF5) **To make it clear that King Minos is shouting the words very loudly in anger.**
7. Ariadne falls “head over heels” in love with Theseus. What do you think this means? (AF4) **Very excited and completely in love with.**
8. How is the monster described when Theseus finally meets him? (AF2) **The monster is terrifying, fearsome and strong.**
9. Why is the final journey “full of excitement and happiness”? (AF3) **The Athenians are pleased to have escaped death and can’t wait to see their family and friends again.**
10. What huge mistake does Theseus make? How do you think he feels at the end of the story? (AF2/AF6) **He forgets to change the sail from black to white and so his father thinks he has been killed by the Minotaur and so jumps off the rocks because he is so upset. Theseus would have been deeply upset and felt guilty that he is the cause of his father’s death, despite his great victory in Crete.**