

The Story of Icarus

King Minos looked out of the window and spotted the boat that his messenger had just mentioned. He had been told about a man who was on board. The man was a genius who could invent anything you asked for.

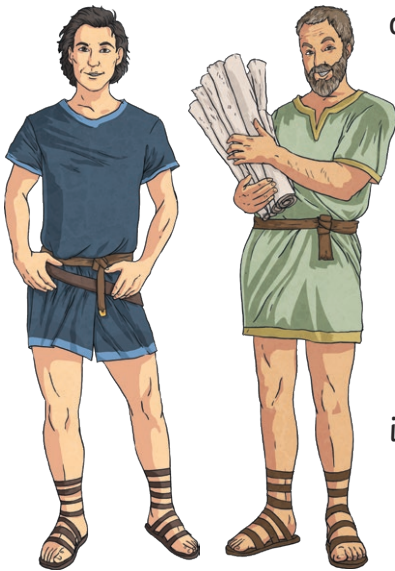


When Daedalus arrived on the island of Crete, he was taken to the palace and asked to become the King's master craftsman. "I need you to invent something for me," said the King. "I need a prison that can trap a Minotaur."

Immediately, Daedalus started work. Helped by his son, Icarus, they built a giant maze. When it was finished, the Minotaur was captured and locked away inside. The people of Crete celebrated and thought that Daedalus and Icarus were heroes.



Then, a man called Theseus asked Daedalus for help. He explained that he wanted to slay the Minotaur but that he would need Daedalus to guide him through the maze. Thinking that slaying the Minotaur would make him famous, Daedalus agreed to help. The two completed their mission and escaped the maze. Immediately, Theseus fled back to Athens. Daedalus was surprised by the hero leaving and began to worry that he had made a terrible mistake.



Meanwhile, King Minos was furious that Daedalus had broken into the maze so he locked Daedalus and Icarus inside. Daedalus was now trapped inside the maze that he had created. As he hadn't planned his route, it was impossible to find the entrance again.

One day, Daedalus saw some birds flying high in the sky. "That's it!" he shouted to Icarus, "Bring me every feather that you can find." When Icarus had collected enough feathers, Daedalus carefully stuck them to large wooden frames using wax. By the next day, Daedalus had made both himself and Icarus a huge pair of wings.

"Before we escape," warned Daedalus, "I need you to listen carefully. There are two rules that you must follow. The first is that you must not fly too close to the sea. If the feathers get wet, they will be too heavy to fly. The second is that you must not fly too close to the sun. If you do, the wax which holds the feathers together will melt. Do you understand?"

Icarus nodded and the two began to beat their wings. Higher and higher they rose. Daedalus looked at his son, who was flying like an eagle, and felt proud. They had escaped.

Icarus looked around and realised that he was closer to the gods than any human had ever been. Amazed by this thought, he forgot his father's warning and began to fly higher. He was now too close to the sun. The wax began to melt. With no feathers, Icarus began to spiral down towards the sea. Suddenly, he hit the surface with a crash and was never seen again.

