

Theseus and the Minotaur

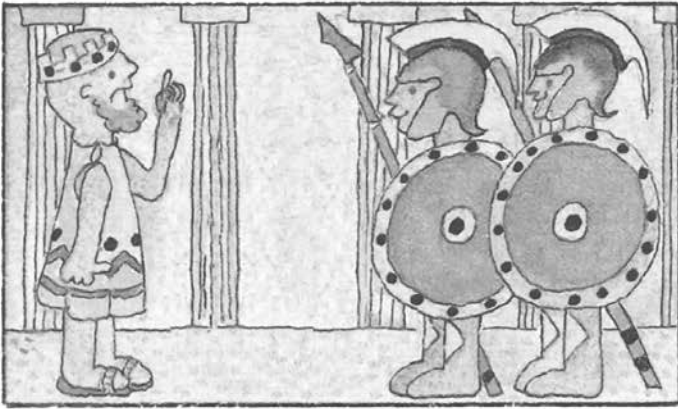


Chapter One

The Tribute

King Minos, who ruled over the Greek island of Crete, was the son of the great god Zeus, and a mighty ruler. King Minos hated the people of Athens because he believed that they had killed his son, Androgeus, after he had won all the prizes at the Athenian games. King Minos was heartbroken, for he had loved his son dearly.

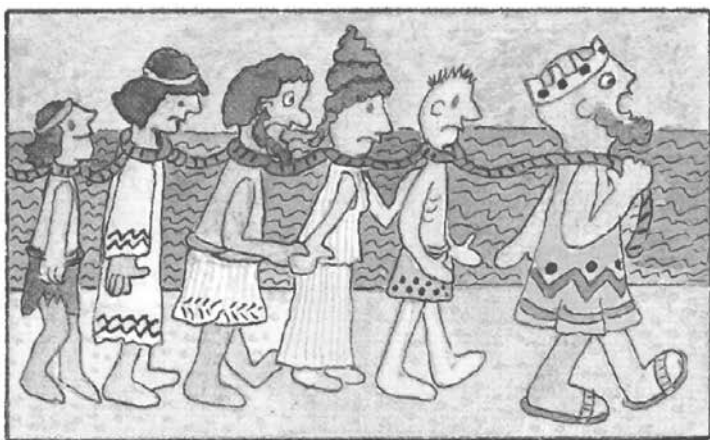




“I’d like to see them all dead!” King Minos roared and he gathered together a vast army to wage war against Athens.

The strength of this army, and the anger of King Minos, made King Aegeus of Athens fear for his people’s safety. So to save Athens from destruction, King Aegeus agreed to a terrible, terrible tribute.

Every year, at the spring equinox, the Athenians were to send seven youths and



seven maidens across the sea to Crete, where they would be sacrificed to the man-eating Minotaur.

The Minotaur was a vast and powerful beast: half-man and half-bull – a truly terrifying creature. The labyrinth it lived in had been designed by the inventor and craftsman Daedalus, and was a miraculous maze of twists and turns. Once inside the labyrinth there was no escape and all who



entered were destined to be devoured by the savage, blood-thirsty Minotaur. It was a terrible price to pay, even for the death of a king's son.

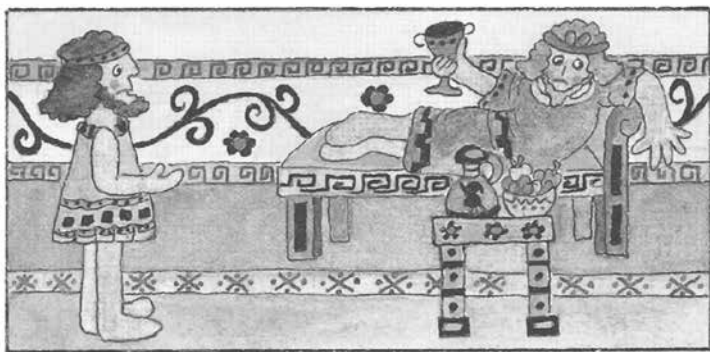
King Aegeus of Athens had already sent this cruel payment to King Minos twice – and now the time had come again. There was a great weeping and wailing throughout Athens as lots were drawn to see who must travel in the black-sailed ship to Crete.

“Bring them to the palace, so I can bid them farewell,” ordered the king. “It is a terrible death, but I gave my oath and must keep it.”

The following day, there was a knock on the palace door and in marched the soldiers with seven fine youths and seven beautiful maidens.

“Yes, you are all quite perfect,” declared the king with a sigh.

“Father!” King Aegeus’s son, Theseus, cried.





“How can you let these poor young people go? It is time we put an end to this cruelty. If you won’t do it, I will go to Crete in the place of one of these poor sacrifices and kill the Minotaur myself!”

“Fat chance,” wept the Minotaur’s intended victims. “It is well known that nobody escapes from the labyrinth alive.”

“They are quite right,” said Theseus’s horrified father. “You will never kill the