

Theseus and the Minotaur

King Minos of Crete despised the people of Athens because they had killed his son. To prevent King Minos from invading them, every nine years the Athenians sent seven youths to be fed to the Minotaur (a half-man, half-bull) which lived in the maze on Crete. Theseus (son of the king of Athens) was angered by this cruelty. Bravely, he offered to join the next victims and try to kill the Minotaur. His father pleaded with him not to go with the others but Theseus insisted. He hoisted a black sail as a sign of respect for the victims although he promised to return with a white sail to show his success.

Powerful storms battered the little ship. When Theseus finally landed, he found King Minos waiting with his daughter Ariadne. Ariadne was incredibly kind and did not want Theseus to die. She gave Theseus a sword and a ball of magic thread to guide him out of the maze. The next day, the youths were thrown into the maze so they could be fed to the Minotaur. When he was locked inside, Theseus tied one end of the glimmering thread to the door and marched in search of the Minotaur. Snarls echoed. Crows boomed. His heart pounded. Sweat trickled down his forehead. As he came round the corner, he was suddenly face to face with the hideous monster. While Theseus struggled with the fierce beast, he could feel it was incredibly strong. Eventually, he drove his sword through its heart and it sank to the ground dead. Theseus turned and quickly followed the thread back to the entrance to escape. Before King Minos could punish them, they hurried to their boat.

In his haste, Theseus forgot to change his sail from black to white. Anxiously, the king of Athens sat watching for his son. "My son must be dead," the king cried when he saw a black sail. He fell to the ground with tears streaming from his eyes and died of sorrow. As the people of Athens celebrated, Theseus was told of the death of his father and wept. Heroic Theseus became King of Athens and lived to win many more victories.