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THE LESSON OF ICARUS

retold by Marianne Lenihan
illustrated by Phyllis Pollema Cahill

Genre

Comprehension
Skills and Strategy

Myth

- Cause and Effect
- Plot
- Answer Questions

Scott Foresman Reading Street 3.4.1



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ISBN 0-328-13367-1

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Foresman

Editorial Offices: Glenview, Illinois • Parsippany, New Jersey • New York, New York
Sales Offices: Needham, Massachusetts • Duluth, Georgia • Glenview, Illinois
Coppell, Texas • Ontario, California • Mesa, Arizona



Daedalus was an inventor and a builder. He lived many years ago on the island of Crete.

King Minos asked Daedalus to build a prison for the Minotaur. The Minotaur was part man and part bull.



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Illustrations by Phyllis Pollema Cahill

ISBN: 0-328-13367-1

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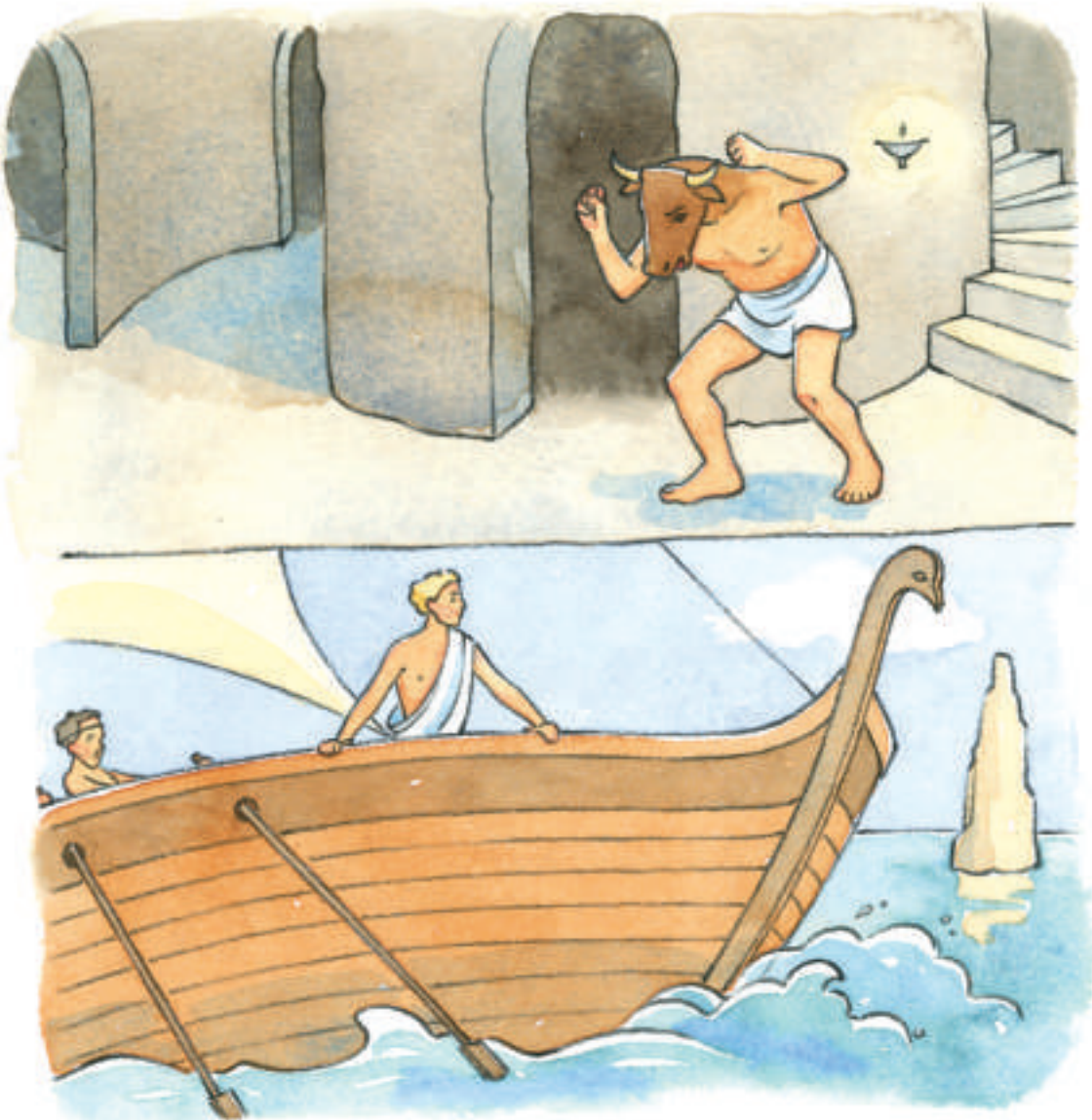
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Daedalus built a maze prison. The Minotaur was trapped in the maze!

Prince Theseus came to Crete soon after. He came to slay the Minotaur and marry the king's daughter. Theseus asked Daedalus for help.



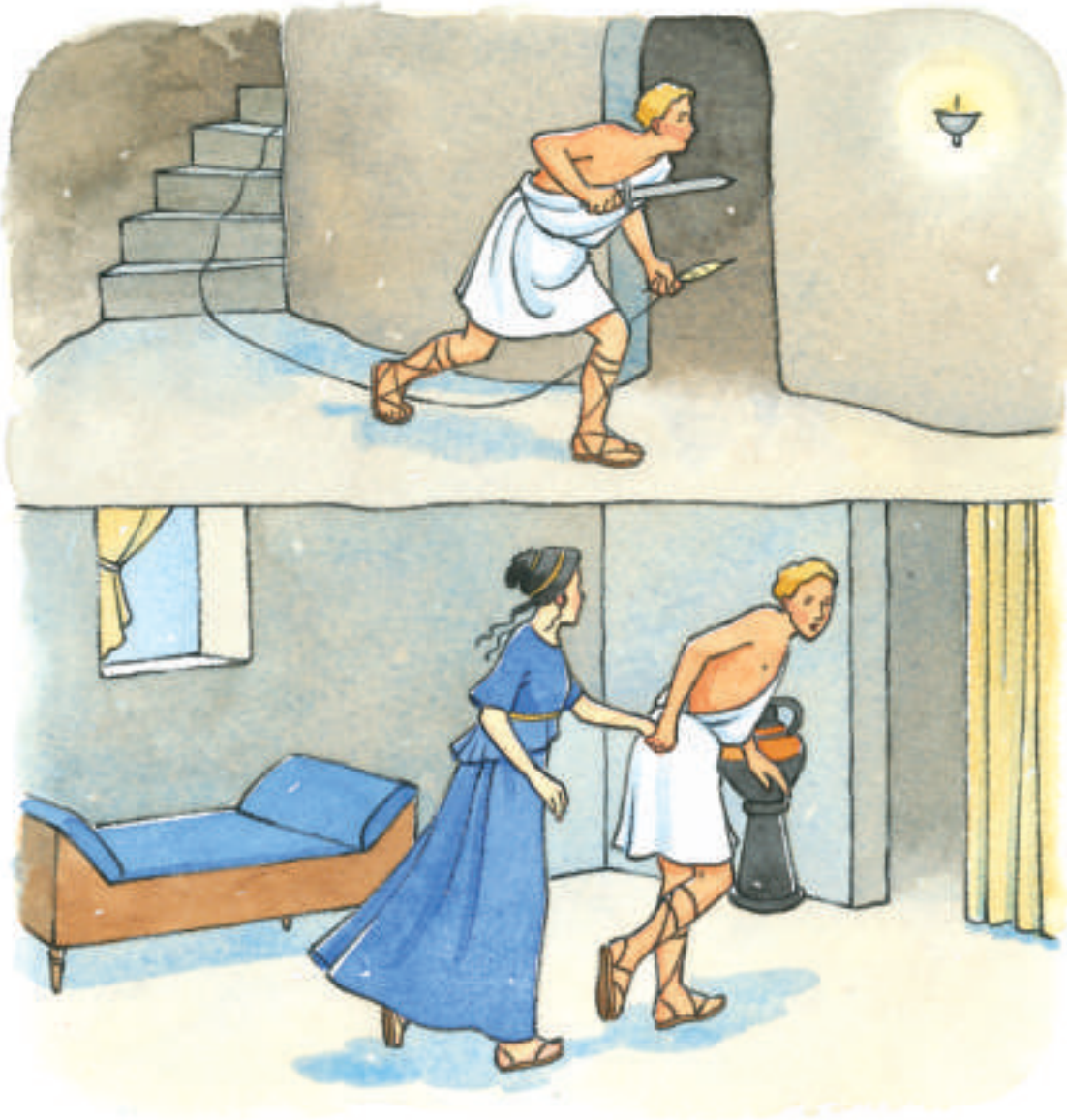
Daedalus told Theseus to tie one end of a long string to the prison door. He told him to hold the other end until he reached the Minotaur. Then he could follow the trail of string out of the maze.





Theseus killed the Minotaur. Then he asked the princess to marry him.

The princess and Theseus left Crete together. King Minos was angry when he learned that his daughter was gone!



Minos roared, "Daedalus must have helped Theseus! Soldiers, find Daedalus!"

The king's soldiers found Daedalus and his son, Icarus. They locked them both in prison.





"Father, there is no way to get out of this prison," Icarus complained.

Daedalus said, "We'll make wings from feathers and wax. We'll fly out of prison!"



The father and son struggled to make the wings. Finally, they were finished.

The day before the escape, Daedalus warned Icarus, "Do not fly close to the Sun. The wax in your wings will melt. Then you will crash!"





The next day, Daedalus and Icarus flew off the prison tower and into the sky.

"Flying is wonderful!" cried Icarus with a giggle. He was swooping up high and looping down low. But Icarus forgot to pay attention to his father's warning. Suddenly he was drifting too close to the glaring Sun.



The wax began to melt. His wings came apart. Icarus fell into the sea below and drowned!

Daedalus landed safely on the island of Sicily. But he was very sad. There, Daedalus built a monument to honor his son Icarus.



What Myths Tell Us

The story of Icarus is a myth. A myth is a tale that has been retold from one generation to another. Myths tell us how some people explained events in nature or tried to teach lessons.

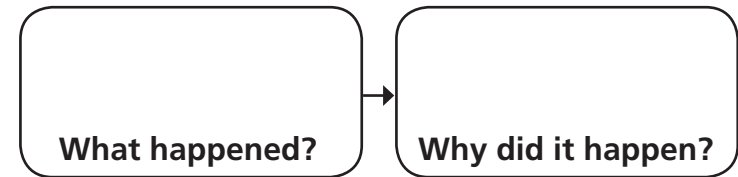
The story of Icarus is one of many famous myths from ancient Greece. Like all ancient Greek myths, it was meant to be told out loud. For many years after the myth was first told, people did not write it down. Because of that, we don't know who first told the myth.

What value or belief does the myth of Icarus express? Why do you think the myth was first told?



Reader Response

1. Near the end of the story Icarus's wings fell apart. Why did this happen? Use a graphic organizer like the one below to show what happened and why.



2. Why did Theseus come to Crete? Where did you find the answer to that question?
3. Which *-ing* words on page 10 help you visualize the flying? Make a list of other *-ing* words that might describe flying.
4. If you were Icarus, would you have remembered your father's warning? Why or why not?

