

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a king named Minos. King Minos lived on a lovely island called Crete.

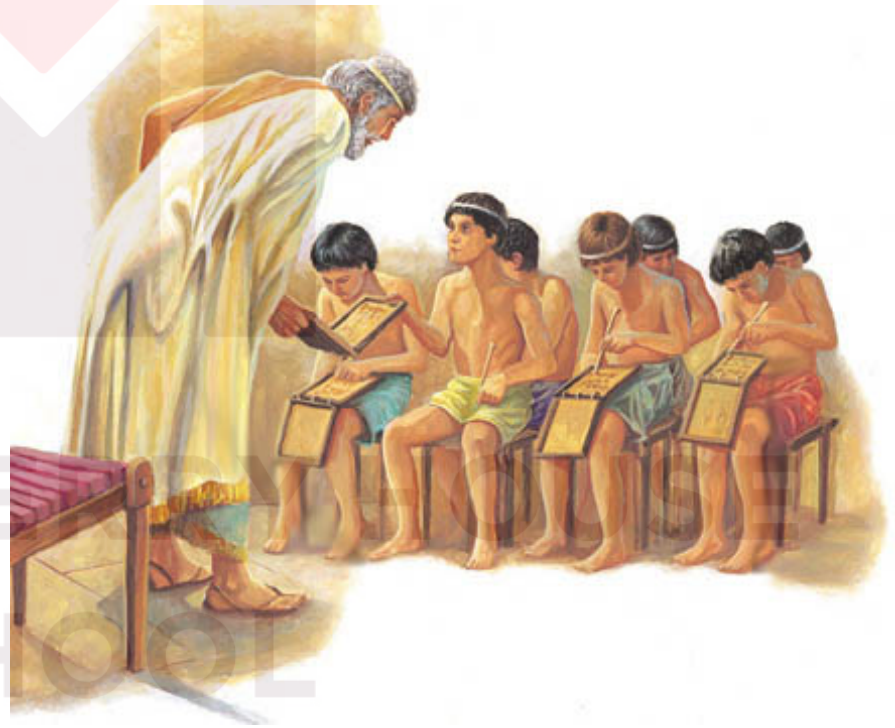


King Minos had a powerful navy, a beautiful daughter, and a really big palace.



Still, now and then, King Minos grew bored. Whenever King Minos was bored, he took his navy and attacked Athens, a town on the other side of the sea.

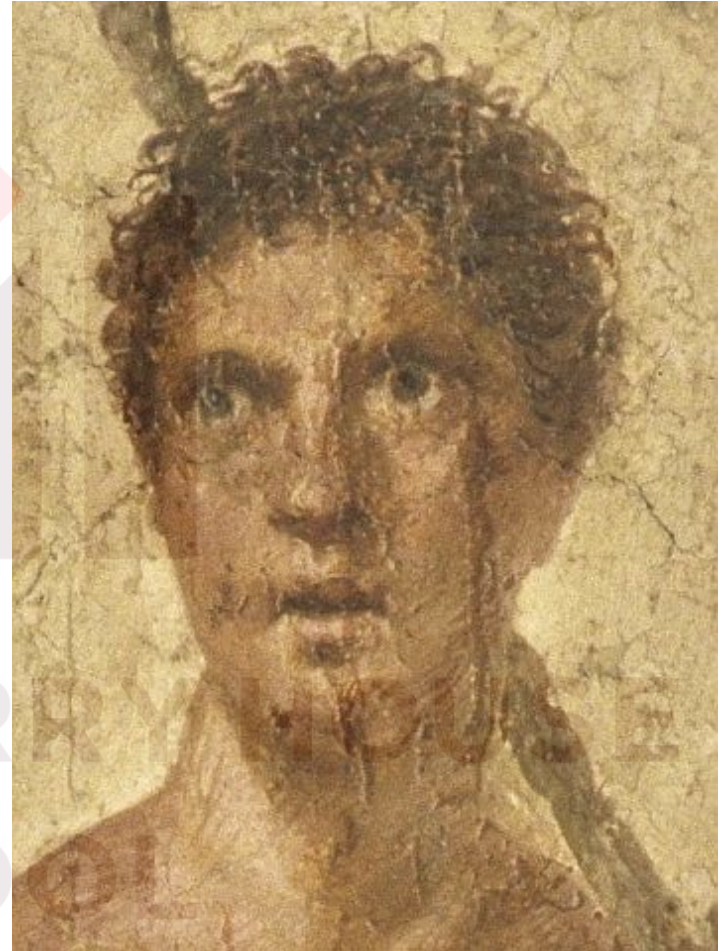
The people of Athens grew tired of King Minos. All the people of Athens agreed that something had to be done. Athens tried to make friends with King Minos, but nothing seemed to work. In desperation, the king of Athens offered King Minos a deal. If Minos would leave Athens alone, Athens would send seven Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls to Crete every nine years to be eaten by the Minotaur.



The Minotaur was a horrible monster that lived in the center of a huge maze on the island of Crete. King Minos loved that old monster. He did like to give his monster a treat to eat now and then. King Minos knew his people would prefer he fed his monster Athenian children as a treat rather than the children of Crete. So King Minos took the deal.



It was just about time for Athens to send seven boys and seven girls to Crete to be eaten by the Minotaur. Everyone in Athens was crying. Prince Theseus of Athens was very young. Still, he knew it was wrong to send small children to be eaten by a monster just to avoid a battle with King Minos. Prince Theseus told his father (the king) that he was going to Crete as the seventh son of Athens. He was going to kill the Minotaur and end this terror.



"The Minotaur is a terrible monster! What makes you think you can kill it?" cried his father.

"I'll find a way," Theseus replied gently. "The gods will help me."

His father begged him not to go. He was afraid his son would be eaten. But the prince was determined. Theseus took his place as the seventh Athenian boy. Along with six other Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls, Prince Theseus sailed towards Crete.



When the prince and the children arrived, King Minos and his daughter, the Princess Ariadne, came out to greet them. The king told them that they would not be eaten until the next day and to feel free to enjoy themselves in the palace in the meantime. The Princess Ariadne did not say anything. Her eyes narrowed thoughtfully.



BERRY HOUSE
SCHOOL

Late that night, she wrote Prince Theseus a note and slipped it under his bedroom door.

Dear Theseus (Ariadne wrote)

I am a beautiful princess as you probably noticed the minute you saw me. I am also a very bored princess. Without my help, the Minotaur will surely gobble you up. I know a trick or two that will save your life. If I help you kill the monster, you must promise to take me away from this tiny island so that others can admire my beauty. If interested in this deal, meet me by the gate to the Labyrinth in one hour.

*Yours very truly,
Princess Ariadne*

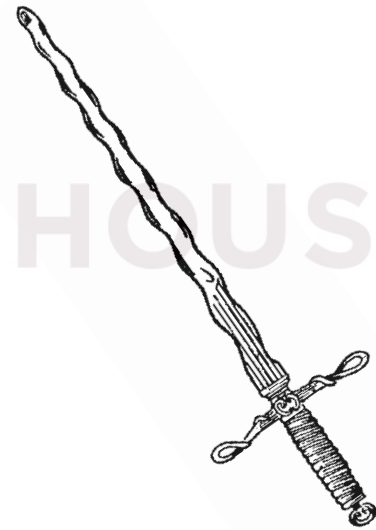


Prince Theseus slipped out of the palace and waited patiently by the gate. Princess Ariadne finally showed up. In her hands, she carried a sword and a ball of string.

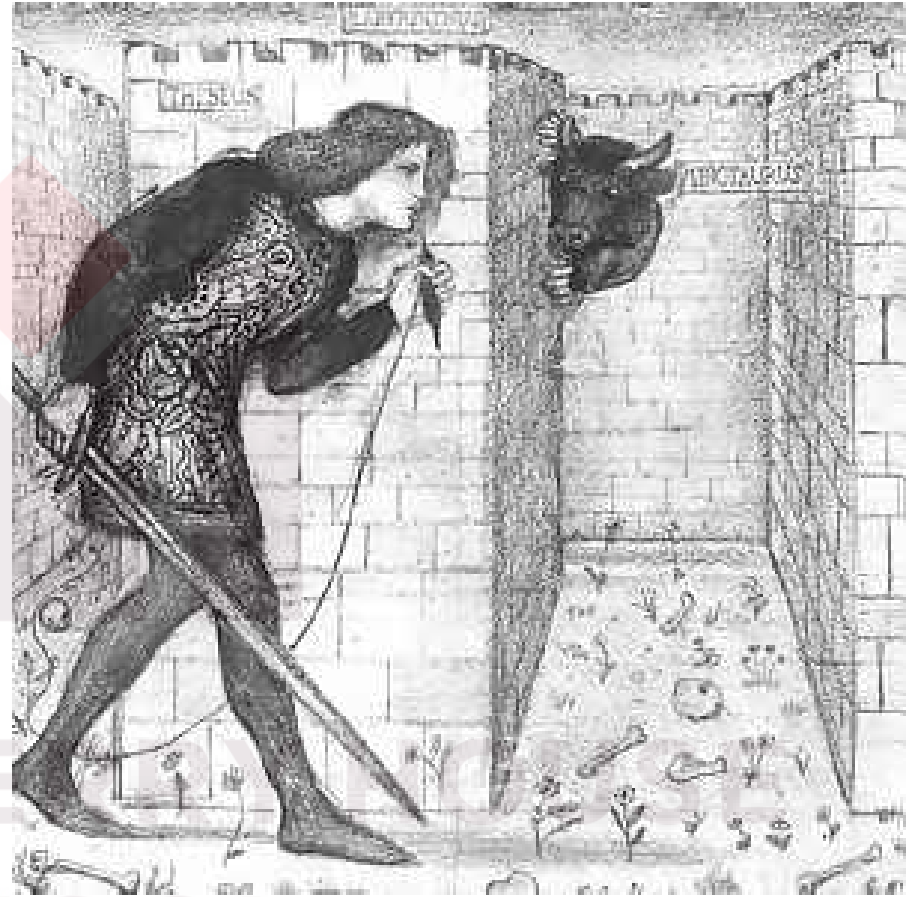
Ariadne gave the sword and the ball of string to Prince Theseus. "Hide these inside the entrance to the maze. Tomorrow, when you and children from Athens enter the Labyrinth, wait until the gate is closed, then tie the string to the door. Unroll it as you move through the maze. That way, you can find your way back again. The sword, well, you know what to do with the sword!" she laughed.

Theseus thanked the princess for her kindness.

"Don't forget now," she cautioned Theseus, "you must take me with you so that all the people can marvel at my beauty. A deal is a deal."

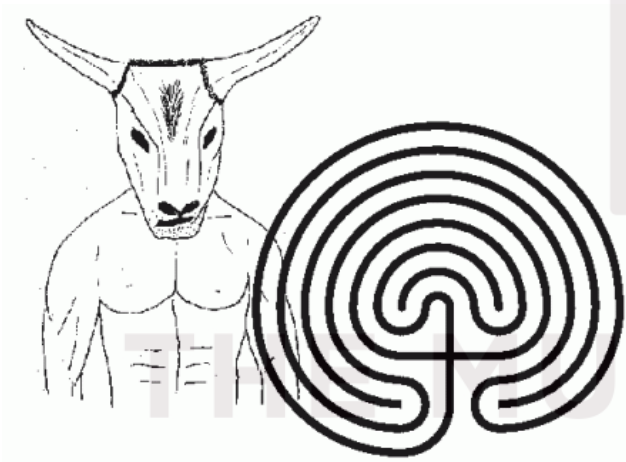


The next morning, all the Athenian children, including Prince Theseus, were shoved into the maze. The door was locked firmly behind them. Following Ariadne's directions, Theseus tied one end of the string to the door. He told the children to stay by the door. Their job was to make sure the string stayed tied so that Theseus could find his way back to save them. Theseus entered the maze alone.

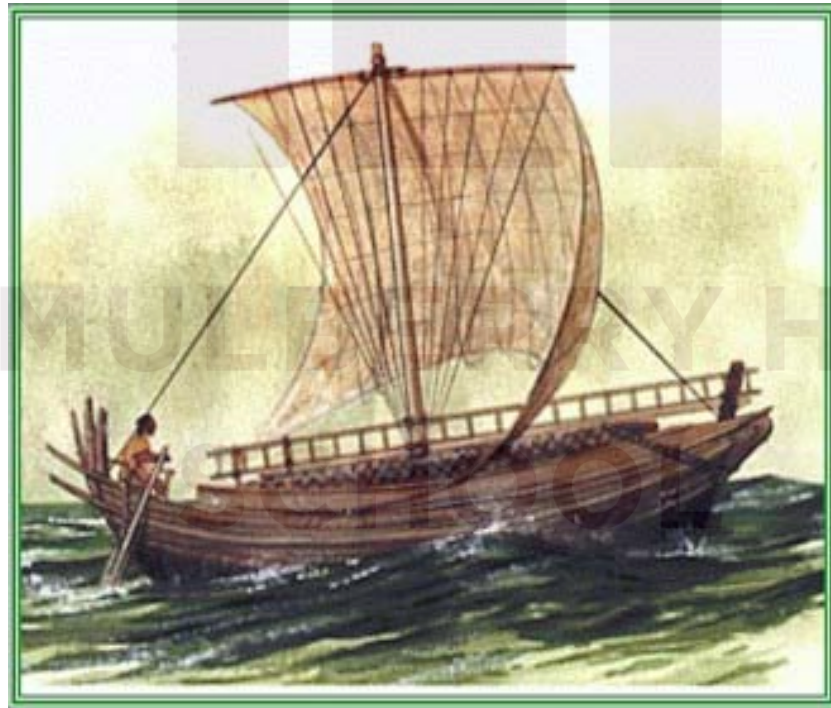


It took him a while, but he finally found his way to the center. Using the sword Ariadne had given him, Theseus killed the monstrous beast. He followed the string back and knocked on the door.

(Question : Do you think there is enough description on how the beast was killed? Could you do better?)



Princess Ariadne was waiting. She opened the door. Without anyone noticing, Prince Theseus and the children of Athens ran to their ship and sailed quietly away. Princess Ariadne sailed away with them.



THE MULLEN HOUSE

On the way home, they stopped for supplies on the tiny island of Naxos. Princess Ariadne fell asleep. Many people gathered to watch the sleeping princess. She was a lovely sight indeed. All the people agreed. Theseus sailed away with the children of Athens and left her there, sleeping.

After all, a deal is a deal.

