

The Myth of Icarus and Daedalus

A long time ago, in ancient Greece, there was an inventor named Daedalus, and his son Icarus.

Daedalus was the most skilled inventor of his time, but he was a very jealous man. He had a nephew, who was also an inventor. Daedalus worried that his nephew was a more skillful craftsman than him. In a rage of jealousy, Daedalus killed his nephew. As punishment, he was banished from Athens. He moved to a new home on the island of Crete with his son Icarus.

On his arrival, Daedalus was greeted by the King of Crete. The King's name was Minos. Minos knew that Daedalus was a talented inventor. He asked Daedalus to build him a maze beneath the palace. The maze would protect the people of Crete from a monstrous creature that was half human and half bull. The creature was called the Minotaur. Daedalus and his son worked all day and night. Eventually, they built a maze that was inescapable. It was so complicated that anyone who entered it would get lost forever. Minos released the Minotaur into the maze. He was pleased with Daedalus' hard work.

One day, a group of children sailed to the island. They left the following day, taking the King's daughter with them and leaving behind one dead Minotaur! King Minos was beside himself with grief. He couldn't understand how the children managed to enter the maze and escape alive. The King believed they must have had help from the man who designed the maze in the first place. Minos punished the innocent Daedalus by imprisoning him and his son Icarus in the tallest tower in Crete. They were to remain there for the rest of their lives.



The King seemed to have forgotten that Daedalus was the best inventor in Greece. Daedalus quickly thought of an escape plan for him and his son. He and Icarus would fly away from the prison, just like birds! Daedalus made two pairs of giant wings. He took feathers from the flocks of birds that flew to the tower, sticking them together using wax from candles. As he strapped the wings to his son Icarus, he gave a warning. He told him that flying too near the ocean would dampen the wings and make them too heavy to use. Likewise, flying too near the sun would melt the wax, causing the wings to fall apart.

Both men left the tower, the first humans ever to fly in the sky. Icarus was so excited that he ignored his father's warning. He flew higher and higher. As he ascended, the heat from the sun melted the wax of the wings. The wings started to fall apart and Icarus fell from the sky. Icarus landed in the sea and drowned. The Icarian Sea, where he fell, was named after him, as was the nearby island called Icaria.



Questions

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- 1 Where did Daedalus and his nephew live at the beginning of the story? (tick)

- ☐ Crete
- ☐ Icarus
- ☐ Icaria
- ☐ Athens

- 2 What is the relationship between Daedalus and Icarus? (tick)

- ☐ Daedalus is the son of Icarus.
- ☐ Daedalus is the uncle of Icarus.
- ☐ Daedalus is the father of Icarus.
- ☐ Daedalus is the nephew of Icarus

- 3 What was the name of the King of Crete?
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- 4 Where did Daedalus build the maze? (tick)

- ☐ in the palace garden
- ☐ in the Minotaur's cage
- ☐ beneath the palace
- ☐ on the mainland

- 5 Why did Minos want Daedalus to build the maze? (tick)

- ☐ to protect the people of Crete from the Minotaur
- ☐ to keep Daedalus and his son busy
- ☐ to attract people to the island
- ☐ to entertain the Minotaur

6 Which of these facts about Daedalus is true? (tick)

- ☐ Daedalus helped the children to kill the Minotaur.
- ☐ The king forgave Daedalus for killing the Minotaur.
- ☐ Daedalus told the children how to escape the maze.
- ☐ The king thought that Daedalus helped the children.

7 Where were Daedalus and Icarus imprisoned? (tick)

- ☐ in the maze
- ☐ in the tallest tower in Crete
- ☐ in the main prison
- ☐ on a remote island

8 Name the things that Daedalus used to make the wings.

9 Which fact is true about Icarus? (tick)

- ☐ He flew too close to the sun.
- ☐ He flew too close to the ocean.
- ☐ He followed his father.
- ☐ He listened carefully to his father's instructions.

10 Name the island that is named after Icarus.

Score:

Answers

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- 1 Where did Daedalus and his nephew live at the beginning of the story? ☒ Athens
- 2 What is the relationship between Daedalus and Icarus? ☒ Daedalus is the father of Icarus.
- 3 What was the name of the King of Crete? Minos
- 4 Where did Daedalus build the maze? ☒ beneath the palace
- 5 Why did Minos want Daedalus to build the maze? ☒ to protect the people of Crete from the Minotaur
- 6 Which of these facts about Daedalus is true? ☒ The king thought that Daedalus helped the children.
- 7 Where were Daedalus and Icarus imprisoned? ☒ in the tallest tower in Crete
- 8 Name one of the things that Daedalus used to make the wings. feathers and wax
- 9 Which fact is true about Icarus? ☒ He flew too close to the sun.
- 10 Name the island that is named after Icarus. Icaria