

Theseus actually had many adventures before he arrived in Athens to claim his right to the throne. Read on to find out what some of them were.

Before the Minotaur

In Troezen, a city in the Peloponnesus approximately forty miles from Athens, Aethra and her son, Theseus, lived. At Aethra's insistence, Theseus received an education fit for a king, and he conditioned his body as well as his mind. Never, however, would Aethra discuss Theseus' father with him. She always told him he must wait until he was older.

One day, Aethra led Theseus to a meadow near their home. There they came upon a large boulder firmly planted in the ground. Aethra asked Theseus if he could move it. After exerting himself mightily, Theseus rolled the boulder over, and underneath he discovered a pair of sandals and a sword. Aethra explained to Theseus that his father, Aegeus, the king of Athens, had left them for him as tokens of recognition.

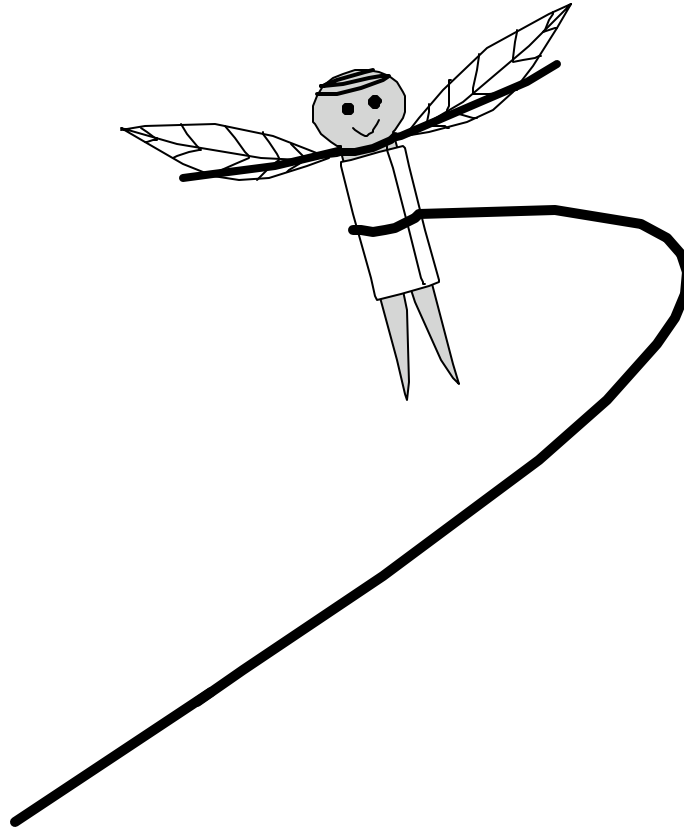
Theseus headed for Athens, taking the dangerous land route rather than sailing over the sea. He wanted to make sure that he had performed enough daring deeds to earn himself a reputation before arriving in his father's kingdom. Theseus was not disappointed in his desire for adventure.

His first challenge on the road to Athens was at Epidaurus against the Club-Bearer, Corynetes. This man terrorized the land, bashing travelers over the head and robbing them. When Theseus and Corynetes met, Theseus ducked out from under the blow of the club and then stabbed the robber with King Aegeus' sword. Theseus took the club as a souvenir of his victory.

Make an Icarus Puppet

Materials: Dollipins, White cloth, Yarn, Small feathers, Pipe cleaners, Glue, Markers

Procedure:



Step 1: Cut white cloth into 3" x 1 ½" rectangle to make a tunic for Icarus.

Step 2: Wrap cloth around the Dollipin and secure with glue.

Step 3: Twist pipe cleaner around Icarus' shoulders leaving ends sticking out to support feathers.

Step 4: Glue a feather onto each pipe cleaner end to make wings for Icarus.

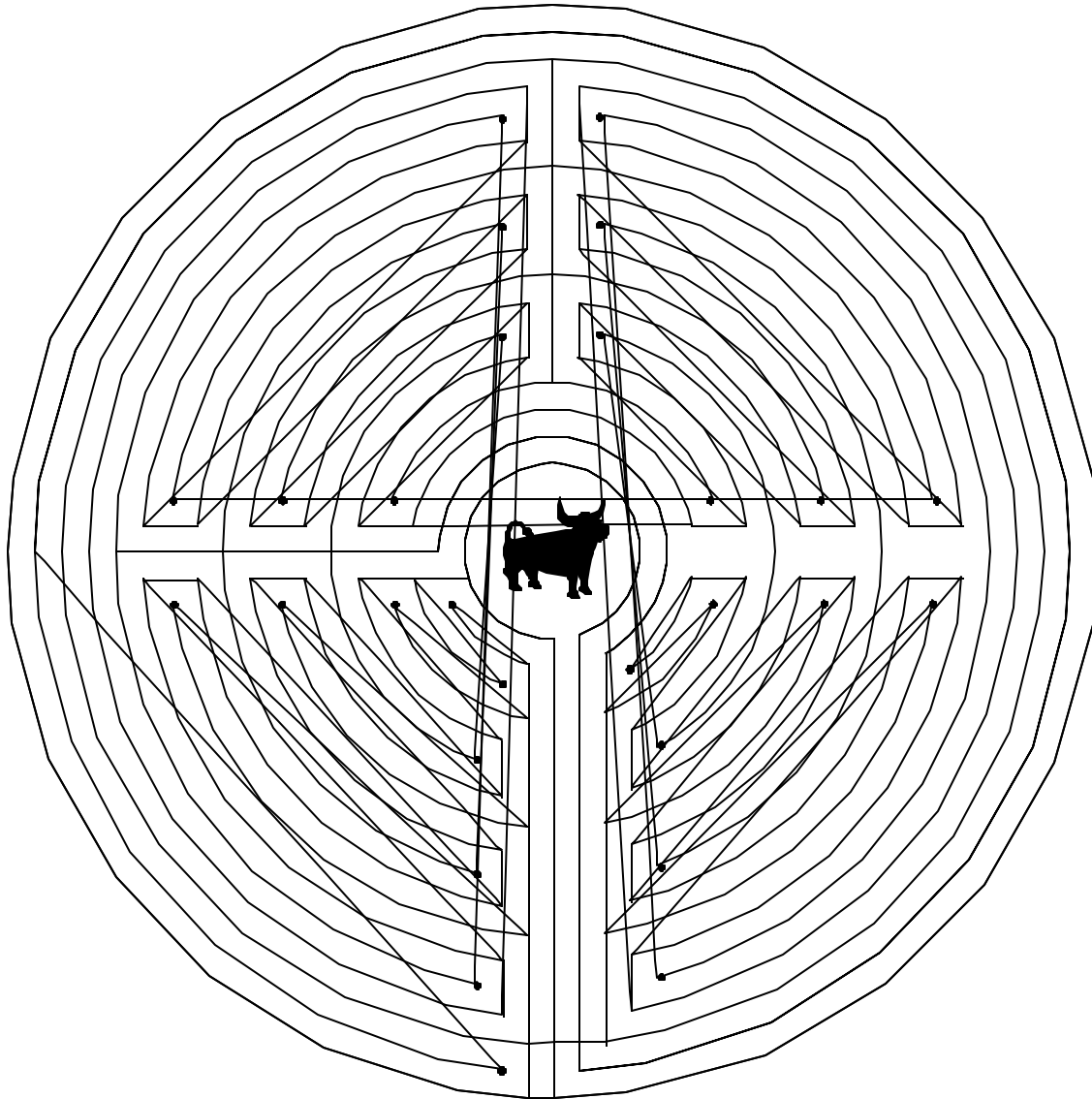
Step 5: Glue a piece of yarn on Icarus' head for hair.

Step 6: Draw a face for Icarus.

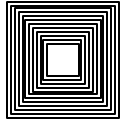
Step 7: Tie a piece of yarn around Icarus' waist so that you can make him fly.

Seventeenth-Century Labyrinth

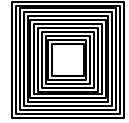
The Labyrinth has captured the minds of many throughout the centuries. Below is a recreation of how one seventeenth-century individual imagined it. See how quickly you can navigate this version of the labyrinth and find the Minotaur.



SOURCE: Farnoux, Alexandre. Knossos: Searching for the Legendary Palace of King Minos. New York : Harry N. Abrams, 1996.



A Confused Tale



In this story of Theseus, one word in each sentence is incorrect. Cross out the incorrect word and write the correct word above it.

Once upon a time there was a young man named Theseus, son of King Minos of Athens and Princess Aethra of Troezen. When Theseus was a young man, he lifted up a huge boulder and found a sword and money underneath it. His mother told him that these things had been left for him many years ago, and she said that he should head straight for Crete where he would be heir to the throne. Theseus did as his sister advised, and soon he met his father, the king. The king became very upset when Theseus announced that he wanted to kill the Hydra who had been eating fourteen Athenians every nine years. Theseus ignored his father's fears and immediately sailed away under red sails. He announced that he would come back with white sails after he had been successful in Lapith.

Theseus met King Aegeus and Queen Pasiphae who ruled the island. The people who lived on this island worshipped the elephant.

Good Advice

The whole story of Theseus and the Minotaur would not have happened if King Minos had sacrificed the white bull as Poseidon commanded.

After filling in the missing words (each blank equals one letter) in the following statements, place the highlighted letter in the appropriate blank at the bottom of the page. When you have finished, you will find some good advice for King Minos.

1. The Athenian who built the palace on Crete was _____.
2. The name of the King Minos' city was _____.
3. Daedalus was an _____ by birth.
4. Daedalus built a maze called the _____.
5. King Minos' wife was named _____.
6. The god who sent the white bull to Crete was _____.
7. The king of Athens, Theseus' father, was _____.
8. Theseus' mother was _____.
9. The mother of King Minos was _____.
10. The name of the island where Minos lives was _____.
11. The hero who captured the mad bull on Crete was _____.

People Important to Theseus

1. This man became my father-in-law.

He had the prettiest daughters you ever saw.

Who is he? _____

2. This woman became my mother-in-law.

She had the prettiest daughters you ever saw.

Who is she? _____

3. This man had a son whom he taught to fly,

But his son didn't listen and fell from the sky.

Who is he? _____

4. This man pried me off a bench.

He used his hands, not a wrench.

Who is he? _____

5. This man and this woman were parents to me,

A king and a princess – true royalty.

Who are they? _____ and _____