

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Reading Y4

Read the legend of Icarus and Daedalus and then answer the comprehension questions below.

## The legend of Icarus and Daedalus

Many years ago, on the island of Crete, there lived a horrific monster called the Minotaur. It was half bull and half man. The people of Crete were terrified of the Minotaur as it loved to eat human flesh. They begged their king, Minos, to destroy it.

Instead, King Minos decided to imprison the Minotaur in an enormous maze of tunnels, known as a labyrinth. Being a wicked king, Minos planned to send his enemies into the labyrinth, where they would become lost and then cruelly eaten by the monster.

Minos asked Daedalus, a talented inventor, and his son, Icarus, to build the labyrinth. He told them, 'It must be so complicated that nobody will find their way out again. Never tell anyone about the labyrinth's layout, or you will die!'

Daedalus agreed, and he and Icarus set to work immediately. After many weeks, they finished the complicated maze. Next, Daedalus and Icarus used meat to encourage the Minotaur to travel deeper inside the labyrinth so it could not escape. King Minos was very pleased. However, being a cruel king, he decided to lock Daedalus and Icarus up in a tall prison tower to die. 'Now, nobody else will ever know the secret of the labyrinth!' he laughed.

'What shall we do now, Father?' asked Icarus in despair. There was no way to climb out of the tower and the sea raged below.

'We will use our brains to find a way to escape,' replied Daedalus.

Icarus bowed his head in dismay but then his hand was tickled by a single white feather that had drifted in through the window. 'How I wish I could fly, just like those birds outside!' he said longingly.

This gave Daedalus a brilliant idea. They would fly from the tower! As a skilled inventor, he set to work on his plan.



For many days, he and Icarus collected feathers from birds outside their window and fixed them together with wax from their candles. Daedalus created harnesses using leather from their belts and sandals. When they were finished, father and son admired their handiwork. The wings were beautiful!

Icarus, being an eager boy, was keen to try the wings straight away.

'You must be patient and learn how to fly first,' advised his father.

Over the next few weeks, Daedalus and Icarus watched the seabirds from their window. However, Icarus was not a natural listener and paid less attention than he should have done.

Finally, the day came when Daedalus felt they were ready to escape from the tower. As he fastened Icarus' wings, he warned his son, 'Remember, the wings are fixed together with wax. Do not fly too close to the Sun, or the wax will melt and your wings will break.'

Icarus was too excited to pay much attention. He launched himself from the window ledge and flew up with the wind, laughing with joy as he soared higher and higher. The wings worked!

Daedalus fastened on his wings and followed his son. He was worried that Icarus was flying too high. 'Icarus, do not fly too close to the Sun! Fly lower!' he warned. His words were not heard by the confident, excited boy. Icarus just flew higher and higher.

To Daedalus' horror, the wax in Icarus' wings began to melt. Feathers soon began to fall away, and Icarus started to lose height. Out of reach, Daedalus could only watch in anguish as Icarus fell towards the ocean beneath them.

The exhausted father searched the surface of the swirling sea for a sign of his son but to no avail. Icarus had gone.

Daedalus had no choice but to continue his escape alone and flew on towards the island of Sicily. To the end of his days, he never forgot his son. Daedalus even named the sea into which Icarus fell the Icarian Sea.

1. Find and copy the adjectives that the author uses to describe

- a) the Minotaur
- b) King Minos
- c) the inventor

2. Now think of three different adjectives that the author could have used with a similar meaning.

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3. What is a labyrinth?

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4. How were Daedalus and Icarus related?

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5. Describe how the wings were made.

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6. The author wrote '*Icarus was not a natural listener*'.  
What does this tell the reader about Icarus?

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7. What do you think is the message of this legend?

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