

# Theseus and the Minotaur

An Ancient Greek Myth

**K**ing Minos of Crete had a son who was killed in Athens after competing in the games there. When King Minos heard about this, he sent a fleet of ships to attack Athens. After he defeated the Athenians, Minos demanded that every year fourteen young Athenians were to be sent to Crete to feed the Minotaur.

The Minotaur was a terrifying monster, half-man and half-bull, who King Minos kept imprisoned in a giant maze called **The Labyrinth**.



MINOTAYP



THEΣEYΣ

**T**heseus was son of Aegeus, King of Athens. He decided to join the Athenians to be sent to feed the Minotaur, so that he could kill the beast.

Theseus' ship left with two sets of sails, one black and one white. On his the return voyage the white sails would signal that the Minotaur was dead and Theseus was safe, but if King saw the black sails he would know that Theseus was dead.

**W**hen Theseus arrived in Crete, Ariadne the daughter of King Minos saw him and fell in love with him. She wanted to help him succeed and gave him a ball of thread, telling him to tie one end to the entrance to the maze and unwind it as he went so that he would find his way out of the Labyrinth. She also gave him a sword to kill the Minotaur. In return Ariadne made him promise to take her back to Athens and marry her.

Theseus was taken to the dark Labyrinth and heard the terrible sounds of the Minotaur. But after a ferocious fight he managed to kill the Minotaur with Ariadne's sword. Then, using the ball of thread, he found his way out and together with Ariadne made his escape from Crete in his waiting ship.

**B**ut this story ended in tragedy. Theseus, filled with happiness at his success, left Ariadne behind on the island of Naxos. The furious Ariadne cursed Theseus and as a result he forgot to change his ship's sails to white. His father King Aegeus, watching for the return of the ship from a cliff top, saw that they were black. He was sure that his son was dead...and threw himself into the sea below.



APIAΔNE