

Daedalus and Icarus (Part 1)

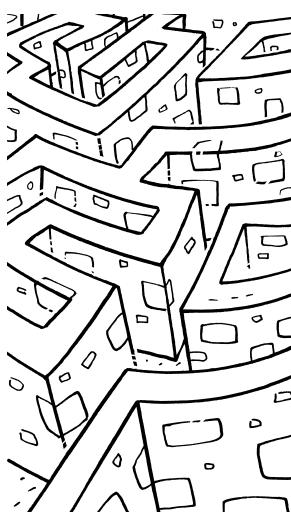
Many stories, known as myths, were popular in the time of the Ancient Greeks. Myths were partly based on true events and on real people but, over time, the stories became altered or exaggerated. The Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus is very well known.



Daedalus lived in the city of Athens and was descended from the first king of Athens. He was very skilful in designing buildings, in sculpture and in creating inventions but his career in Athens came to a sudden end when he committed a terrible crime. Daedalus had a nephew who worked for him as his apprentice but as the nephew became more skilled Daedalus grew jealous and was worried that the nephew was better than him. Daedalus threw his nephew to his death from a famous hill called the Acropolis.

For this awful murder Daedalus was sent away from Athens forever and he went to the island of Crete to work for King Minos. There he met a beautiful woman, Naucrata, and together they had a son who they named Icarus.

King Minos had a special job for Daedalus. He asked him to build a labyrinth prison, on a small island, for a dangerous monster called the Minotaur. Daedalus was a wonderful designer and he created an incredible labyrinth from which the Minotaur could not escape. People were thrown into the labyrinth to feed the Minotaur and they too were unable to find their way out. Daedalus, however, gave away the secret of the labyrinth to Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos. The king was very angry with Daedalus and threw both him and his son, Icarus, into the labyrinth.



Daedalus worked out a very clever way to escape from the labyrinth and the island. He had watched the sea birds flying overhead and he was convinced he could copy them. For months and months, he and Icarus collected as many feathers as they could. He built simple frames in the shape of wings and fastened the feathers to them with melted wax.

At last the wings were ready. Daedalus and Icarus were excited. Daedalus decided that his son would need some strong words of advice...