

## *Danae*

Danae had heard the rumours of an invasion. Whispers were exchanged between acquaintances at the market, whispers of giant fleets crossing the ocean to Athens.

And yet life resumed as normal. Danae was a maiden, arguably the least involved in what was happening. She would listen on the sidelines, however - she was determined to not let a single nugget of information escape her. She went to the market every day now - she rarely bought anything, instead gathering word of the. If her mother or brother knew, they were keeping it from her - she knew her father did, as part of the *Boule*, but he didn't ever bring it up.

Just over two months after the gossip began, Danae arrived to a huge fight at the market. From what she could gather from other spectators, groups had formed overnight to debate the legitimacy of the rumours. And somehow, it had devolved into a fight between the young men that happened to be nearby. Insults were hurled, as were punches. Danae had seen fights before, but none so intense - and instead of leaving, she stood frozen and goggle-eyed.

And yet the commotion got repetitive, and Danae looked up out of boredom. And what she saw was a swooping cloth, a swooping, flying cloth on a string. She didn't even notice the armoured men shoving their way through the crowd - she turned to look at the harnesser. A young boy, and- she didn't believe her eyes, but it was *Daedalus*. The man everyone knew of, the man whose intelligence everyone gossiped about.

The soldiers ran upstairs, to the rooftop, where the boy had been flying the cloth. The cloth hung limp as he and Daedalus argued rapidly and the soldiers broke down the door. Danae noticed their strange symbol, an axe with two heads. She'd never seen it before, but the same held true for a lot of things she'd witnessed that day.

They were surrounded now, Daedalus and the boy, and the sea of soldiers parted to reveal a man. An unfamiliar man - a foreign king? The way he carried himself, and his luxurious attire, pointed to him being a wealthy governor at the very least. As Danae looked at the crowd, she saw it was growing exponentially, fixed on the scene unfolding above them.

Danae barely heard the man, but she figured out what he was saying. "Your fame has reached my kingdom, and I know of your genius." Putting his hand on Daedalus' shoulder, he asked, "How would you like to build me a palace, one that reaches the sky, one that will go down in history as the most glorious thing ever erected?"

Daedalus went with the man, the boy looking up at the two. The spectators seemed shocked at this turn of events, but Danae was relieved that nothing extreme had happened. She didn't much care that Athens would be deprived of Daedalus' intellect from now on. They'd survive. And so she decided to buy her produce in peace.

## *Leonidas*

Leonidas was one of the slaves selected to work at the mansion Daedalus and his son would occupy, until the time came for them all to move into the legendary palace of Minos' dreams. He was Icarus' favourite attendant, out of the many slaves that came to serve this boy with his every want or need - the boy that might as well have been royal, how he was treated.

Most of the slaves harboured a secret hatred for him and the architect - not only did they have to work for them, day and night, they were expected to perform all their previous duties. It was no wonder that some of his companions were foaming at the mouth about Icarus and the famous architect. *If I could*, he'd heard one say, *I'd sabotage that entitled man's precious designs!* And while most were not so extreme, doubts carried of Daedalus' skill. Nobody could believe that this man was one of the great geniuses of their time.

Leonidas didn't interact with Daedalus much, but Icarus seemed like a soft-spoken, down-to-earth young man, and Daedalus clearly doted over him. Leonidas supposed that they would get along like a house on fire if not for the fact that he was already ridiculed for defending Icarus and his father. He'd be alienated by everyone if he were to mix with Icarus.

Leonidas had seen the blueprints for the palace, though. He had wanted to ask Icarus, but on the way through one of the mansion's many atriums, he saw some scattered sheets of paper on a table. He didn't dare take a long look at it, but from a single glance, he noticed some kind of maze below it. Leonidas didn't have a good feeling about it, but the king was a relatively kind master. He was inattentive, but a *doting* master? A creature of dreams.

He was one of the people who had the 'honour' to be present when Daedalus requested an audience with Minos, four months before the move to the now-complete new palace. Leonidas couldn't care less. But he knew he must stand outside the gate, and he did that, listening to the conversation. Icarus was not in the room, which Leonidas thought was strange - from what he'd seen, Icarus had helped with the palace - to which extent he didn't know, but he certainly had.

"Now that your request has been fulfilled, I would like to return home to Athens." opened Daedalus. Leonidas and the other people guarding the room all looked around, dumbfounded. It had crossed their minds that the man would leave, but they'd expected Minos to summon his army to murder him then. On the contrary, he seemed to take it as a legitimate appeal.

"I will triple your salary - you will live in more luxury than you can imagine, you and your son. I can tell you only want the best for him, and he will be treated as if he was as royal as a son of mine. Think of the things you could design! The monuments you could erect on this island."

"I thank you for such a generous offer. But I will always prefer my homeland."

"This is not an *offer*." Minos bellows. "You know too much about Crete to leave now. You will remain here, and that is final!" Every guard's eyes followed Daedalus as he left the room.

## Andreas

Andreas was a fresh fish supplier for Minos. The king often commended him for his work, and slaves were often sent to fetch the fish he caught. Perhaps the reason he was so popular with Minos was how close Andreas fished to the palace. He was within seeing distance of the thing, and he could even hear commotion, depending on where it was in the mansion.

He was just doing his job, waiting for someone to come, when he saw two people on the roof. Dropping everything - he had a gut feeling that this was serious - Andreas heard them. A man and a boy - *Daedalus* and his son. He knew that the architect was in Crete, but he had no idea why the hell he and his son were up on the roof before dawn. You could still see the stars, and anyone not skilled at working at night would need a candle to see anything.

Andreas saw Daedalus tie something to each of the boy's arms, before tying two slightly larger things to his own. They resembled a bird's wings, and it took Andreas a moment to understand what the man was trying to do. *He really is crazy.* Andreas had thought that the hearsay surrounding the man's sanity was pure speculation, but maybe it had roots in reality. Nobody with common sense would try to fly over Crete, especially at night. *What is he doing?*

What with the complete silence of the night, Andreas could, just barely, hear Daedalus. "Minos can control the land, perhaps even the sea, but there is nothing he can do when it comes to the skies. We shall fly to freedom - just follow me! But beware, if you fly too close to the sun, its heat will melt the wax keeping your wings together - if you fly too close to the water, the waves will wet your wings and they will get heavier, until you are dragged down into the ocean." Icarus nodded.

They jumped off the roof and launched themselves into the darkness. Flapping their arms as if they *were* birds, Andreas watched them sweep across the sky. He was certain this was some kind of dream - people couldn't fly, it was nonsensical! - but the waves splashing onto him only just assured him that it was all real. They rose, higher and higher, the boy twirling with unrestrained glee. Andreas saw that the sun was slowly rising, and other people came out of their homes - they'd done so with the intention of doing their jobs, but they were all drawn in by the spectacle. Andreas, knowing that none of them had the context he did, wondered what they would think of them - whether they were gods, or hallucinations.

Daedalus had been flying steadily, at an altitude that he'd recommended, but Icarus was giddy with excitement. And a feathered wing fell into Andreas' bucket, and then another. Icarus had noticed this only a moment before him, as he was now flailing, trying desperately to regain balance. But it was futile, and Daedalus, looking back at him, cried out in helplessness and grief.

Icarus had fallen into the ocean on the other side of the island, far away from where Andreas was. And Andreas heard his father swoop down to catch him, but it was too late. The boy had drowned.

Aadya, you are right - your writing is much more entertaining than the Latin stories in the textbook - well done! I think your choice of narrators is really original and effective.