

## DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

A short story from Icarus' point of view.

As I slept on my bed, two calloused hands suddenly grabbed my shoulders and gripped them tightly, as razor- sharp fingernails pierced into my flesh. Squirring with agony, I strained and just about pried open my eyes as I was met by my father's determined gaze. I knew this look, and it could only mean one thing. He had a plan.

Stumbling onto my feet, an abrupt chill of fear and curiosity crept through my spine when he whispered, "Come on, we need to go." These words bore deeply into my mind, and echoed in my head as I traced father's footsteps to the balcony. Gusts of the coldest gale whipped and lashed at my face as I stepped out, trying to follow my father's unblinking gaze. There I saw it, a magical contraption of four supple saplings, covered in feathers of the brightest blue, crafted into a marvellous pair of wings. A warm sensation of pride filled my chest as my father described his flawless plan.

"Minos controls both the rugged land and the raging sea but he cannot control the untameable air, so you and I will fly to our freedom. Sweet son beware, if you fly too high, the scorching heat of the sun will melt the wax that binds feathers to bark; if you fly too low, the spitting waves will splash against your wings soaking them wet and the weight will drag you down into the deep ocean. Ride the gusts I ride !" My fathers ingenious plan made me so excited and the thought of sweet freedom got my senses tingling and my heart pounding madly. Snapping into reality, I filled with excitement and anticipation as I watched him tie the saplings onto my arm. I was ready for the adventure.

Bubbling with euphoria, I sprinted to the roof's edge, gripped my father's hand tight and just jumped... A rush of adrenaline flowed through my body, cold air hit my chest and I felt like a feather. As I flew like a free kite, the fresh, salty air of the sea wafted into my nose. The wind ran and played around me as I laughed with joy. The sky was beautiful, a blanket of black sprinkled with a million stars. It was pure magic and the best feeling I had ever experienced. My worries and fears melted away as I flew, beating my majestic wings, tearing through the inky night sky. The prison, which I dreamed and longed to escape, was gone, only a mere speck camouflaged in the mess of houses barely visible. We were free again, as free as the wild wind and the sea.

For a long time, we were both flying in the dark, then suddenly far away in the east, the warm, orangey-red ball of fire appeared, infusing comforting warmth into our cold bodies. We both knew that dawn was breaking and it would be our first day of freedom. It was a beautiful feeling. Looking down, I could see chirping flocks of colourful birds travelling across the sky and the villages below, covered in golden sunshine, were slowly rising from their slumbers. We flew across the endless land and seas, admiring the diamond blue ocean hue and the huge charcoal grey rocks sitting on the edge of the calming morning sea.

Slowly, afternoon came and the heat of the sun was intense. It was toasting me gently, I was warm inside and out and sweat trickled down my forehead ; however I couldn't care less as the gentle breeze cooled my skin, I was flying happily like a bird . Down below in the villages, crowds of curious men, women and children were all staring at us in awe. With sheer delight, I rose higher with no fear in the world, my happiness subduing my father's warning. The marvelled crowds gasped and cheered for us, making me smile. I paused, looking down over the people of the villages as if I were a God, free and invincible.

A blue feather sailed through the air. I looked up to see the bird which may have shed it, there wasn't one. Suddenly realisation hit me. A bolt of shock ran through my spine, as my mind paced uncontrollably. My skin burned with the heat of the sun but inside my heart turned icy cold. Now, the warnings that my father gave me loudly echoed in my head. Hundreds more feathers followed. Suddenly I felt the air under my wings disappear, I had lost control. Plummeting through the sky in a tailspin I flapped, kicked and yelled at the top of my voice, desperately hoping to somehow stabilize myself. 'FATHER! FATHER, HELP ME!', I screamed, staring at him desperately.

When he turned around, I saw my father's shell-shocked face and horror-struck eyes, he could hardly form a word and tears were running down his cheek. I knew it was too late, I was hurtling down like a rock at breakneck speed. In the fatal spin, through the corner of my eyes, I could see the ocean approaching fast. The water which once looked so calm now looked terrifying.

In the final moments of my life, I splayed and hit hard on the ocean surface, but it felt like landing on a rock. Pain seared through my body like a thousand swords stabbing me at once. My body had become limp and weak, with no energy to move even a finger. I prayed with all my might, trying to get my head above the raging sea. My horrified mind was desperately screaming at my body to swim, but it refused. Rapidly, I was getting devoured by the malevolent, unforgiving sea. Gasping for breath, I took one last look at my beloved father with tears in my eyes. Finally, I gave up and closed my eyes. Everything went black...

Roshini Natarajan, 7M1