

The Retelling of Daedalus and Icarus

The Infliction of Ingenuity

Tangles of cotton wafted effortlessly across the sea of blue, lounging peacefully in my warmth. Bees buzzed idly, lazing in the light of the rays which I kindly bestowed upon the inhabitants of the Earth. A gentle breeze whispered and carried messages in tongues to the leaves upon the trees.

My curiosity was sparked by a man with a wizened face and thoughtful expression. His furrowed brow sat above deep-set eyes which led to an aquiline nose. The man thought aloud, muttering with a raspy voice, "What shall I get for Icarus' birthday?" His emerald eyes drifted upwards and came to rest upon a ruffle of brown feathers, hovering steadily in the sky. "Of course! I must start right away." He scampered off, surprisingly agile for a person his age.

The next time I arose, banishing the Moon from its position of power in the sky, I was surprised by the sight of the man - this time, with a child. "Icarus, my boy. Are you ready to receive your gift?"

Excitement sparkled in the son's eyes and he nodded earnestly. The man produced a strange object: a wooden frame covered in brown feathers with a string hanging behind it. Icarus frowned. "What is it, Father?" The man grinned, lopsided and revealing a set of crooked teeth, but nonetheless, a grin of delight and satisfaction. "Let me show you."

Soon, the *thing* was in the air, fighting against the wind, and yet, still restrained by the cord. Icarus howled with glee as he attempted to prevent the kite from being whipped away. His father stood back and marvelled at his invention, but was distracted by shouting from the street. The man's eyebrows leapt in surprise as a group of soldiers stormed up the stairs of his house and surrounded him and Icarus on the flat roof.

"Daedalus," a deep voice boomed. Four soldiers stepped aside, armour rattling, to reveal a tall man with a stocky frame; he had a bushy beard, which stretched down to his chest and the distinct mark of a two-headed axe was stitched into his cloak. Daedalus suppressed a gasp. Minos, the King of Crete himself!

Daedalus bowed and Minos began to speak, "Your fantastic inventions have been gossiped about, far and wide; the talk even reached my isolated island." Minos paused, ambition twinkling in his gaze before he continued: "Come with me, and we can create the most pulchritudinous palace the world has ever seen! It will be the topic of conversation for centuries upon centuries!" He glanced into the distance, as if imagining the palace sitting there in all its glory.

As his gaze returned to the man in front of him, pupils contracting, Daedalus was already nodding. Minos smiled, but something about it was menacing. Perhaps it was the way his eyes glinted with an evil passion. Or perhaps it was just a trick of my light.

When I peeked over the treetops once again, Daedalus was no longer on the flat roof with his son. I cast my watchful gaze over to the Island of Crete and witnessed Icarus, of course flying his kite, sitting on the balcony of a small palace. I peeked in through one of the large windows, illuminating the room with a beam of warm ochre yellow, to see Minos and Daedalus drawling over a blueprint; it showed an elephantine labyrinth which continued for miles, but the strangest thing was the fact it was underground.

They worked on the new palace, building it up brick by brick until, after years of work, it was finally complete. The building mirrored Minos' innovative dreams: swarmed with arrow-like towers which pointed accusingly at the sky. It sparkled and glinted under the light of my rays—most hypnotising. Minos was not joking when he said that it would be the most exquisite palace the world had ever seen.

Daedalus called Minos to a meeting and explained, "My work here is complete. I would like to return to my home in Athens."

"Return home?" Minos scoffed. "Why would you want to return home? Stay and I will give you anything you could ever want! Just imagine the things I could have you make!"

"Thank you for the offer, Minos but I would still like to return home."

Daedalus replied politely.

"Offer? That wasn't an offer. That was a command. You will stay here until you perish. Do you think I *want* you telling secrets to my enemies?"

Daedalus looked taken aback but he nodded sullenly.

"Good. Now, I was thinking..."

As I barged into the sky a few months later, just as the first bird started singing, I was greeted with the sight of two small figures, standing side by side on one of the towers. I looked closer to see none other than Daedalus and Icarus perched precariously on one of the tallest towers which overlooked the sea. Confusion invaded my thoughts as I saw two delicate saplings tied to each of their backs, with branches tethered to their arms. The timber was cocooned by a mixture of brown and white feathers, plastered in situ with wax. Daedalus enveloped Icarus in an affectionate hug before withdrawing. Icarus glanced at the horizon and back at Daedalus, gaze questioning. His father gave a tiny nod. Icarus took a deep breath. They jumped.

At first, nothing happened and they both plummeted.

"Spread your arms!" Daedalus screeched. They were quickly wrenched into the air and pulled along by the breeze. Relief spread across his expression as he yelled over the wind, "Be careful, Icarus! If you go too high up, the rays of the sun will melt the wax that binds your feathers. If you go too low, the ocean will eagerly draw you into its depths. Fly precisely where I fly!"

Icarus did not reply; instead he hooted as he was whisked higher and higher until he felt he was on top of the world.

A feather. A single, downy feather, drifting from left to right. Left, right. A sudden flurry of feathers mushroomed into a blizzard. Left, right, left, right. A shriek from far above. Left, right. Left, right. A gargantuan splash. And

then, a deafening silence, shattered only by the wails of anguish, from a grieving father.

-Evie Amira Morgan, Orwell Park School