

Ariadne's Thread

The labyrinth was constructed by Daedalus, the most skilled craftsman in all of hellas. Daedalus made the labyrinth for King Minos of Crete. So cunningly was the Labyrinth constructed, and so bewildering were its strange passages, that once entered, no one ever succeeded in escaping. There was an even more frightening reason for why no one ever escaped from the Labyrinth. Within its depths, lived and roamed the Minotaur who was said to be a terrifying monster, half bull, half human, who was said to hunt down and kill anyone wandering in the passages of the Labyrinth.

At that time Athens was under the dominance of Crete. One of the many obligations imposed upon King Aegeus and the people of Athens was a tribute of fourteen youths given over to King Minos of Crete. Minos demanded this cruel tribute in order that he might place the young athenians, one by one, within the Labyrinth of the terrifying and fatal Minotaur. Theseus, son of Aegeus, was young and thirst for adventure. His father wished him to settle down, become a prince and study hard in order to inherit the crown. But he was a restless youth. He did not wish to follow in his father's footsteps. He was determined to fight his own fight and journey to into the unknown to find his inner wisdom-- his own true self.

Suddenly an opportunity appeared! Fourteen young Athenians were to be sent to Crete and sacrificed to the fearsome Minotaur. Theseus's spirit leapt at the chance to be part of a heroic mission. He could be the one to defeat the dreaded beast, save the lives of his companions, and free Athens from the domination of Crete. Determined to be the one to put an end to this annual Sacrifice of Athenian youths, Theseus surreptitiously joined the group of young people when they were being sent on their voyage to Crete for the annual tribute to King Minos.

Unfortunately, Theseus was not the best at planning ahead. Once on the ship to Crete, he realized that he didn;t know a thing about fighting Minotaurs or getting out of labyrinths. To make matters worse, the ship had no internet connection and very poor cell reception. But the voyage was underway. There was no turning back now. He was going to have to make the best of the situation.

Now, King Minos of Crete had a daughter, Ariadne. She had grown up hearing tales of the Minotaur in the Labyrinth that lay in the distance. Every year she watched the group of youth from that strange other land arrive and be sent into the labyrinth, never to be seen again. As a child she had asked her father why the nice children were being sent into the labyrinth with the mean Minotaur. What had they done wrong? Why was the Minotaur so mean? Her father had never, not once provided a satisfactory answer. She never felt right watching those children walk into the labyrinth.

Later, when she found out the truth about her father's cruel tribute she was angry and horrified. She began to devise a plan to slay the Minotaur to prevent harm from coming to any more children. Every night, late after everyone in the place was asleep, she worked on forging a sword. During the day she spun red thread, for she knew that the labyrinth was torturous and

complicated. Even if she could slay the Minotaur, she might never find her way out again. So day and night she worked with determination weaving and forging her anger at the injustice into tools to turn the tides.

The day that the Athenians were to arrive, Ariadne completed her task. She was ready to go in and take the beast down, before one more life was lost. She hid herself near the mouth of the labyrinth and waited for her moment. Theseus placed himself at the head of the group of young Athenians when they were made to appear before King Minos and his court. Theseus was to be the first sacrificial victim to enter the Labyrinth of the fatal Minotaur. Right at that very moment things took an unexpected turn. Ariadne, upon seeing Theseus for the first time, realized that this was not a task that she should do alone. Here was someone capable and willing to enter the labyrinth. If he conquered the minotaur he would bring honor to his people who had been so oppressed. Was this her adventure to take? Was this her fight to fight? Would she compromise the success of her mission in order to feed her own ego? She decided she would give her tools to this young man and her trust.

From her hiding place near the Labyrinth, Ariadne saw Theseus approach and, pulling him aside, presented him with the sword and spool of thread. Ariadne directed the prince to unwind the thread as he entered into the mazes of the Labyrinth saying that she would stay at the entrance holding the other end. Armed with these tools, theseus boldly entered and, after a long and complicated journey through the mazes, encountered the Minotaur, deep in the depths of the Labyrinth. Theseus vanquished the Minotaur with the sword of Ariadne.

But what did Theseus really encounter in the center of the Labyrinth? Was it really a monster? Was it simply a misunderstood being? Some say he killed the beast because it tried to eat him. Some say that he set the creature free. And some say, that he encountered the Minotaur in the center and saw the spark of passion and life, and with Ariadne's help he was able to stand strong and embrace the monster instead of fighting. I think there is a bit of Minotaur in all of us, don't you?

He then found his way back out of the complicated mazes by retracing the path of the thread. When Theseus regained the entrance to the Labyrinth it was dawn: the sun starting to peek over the horizon-- the full moon setting in the west. In the bright light of both the sun and the full moon, Theseus and Ariadne hugged tightly, dissolving the enmity that had divided their homes.