



**Sample Pages from
Ariadne's Thread, The Adventures of Theseus
and the Minotaur**

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ARIADNE'S THREAD

THE ADVENTURES OF THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

A MYTH IN ONE ACT BY
Judith Walsh White



Ariadne's Thread, The Adventures of Theseus and the Minotaur
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Cast of Characters

5W 4M + 9 Either, Plus Chorus

Chorus: Twelve or more.

Nike: Chorus Leader.

Adidas: Chorus Leader.

Theseus: (m) Son of Poseidon and Aethra.

Aethra: (w) His mother.

Asterion: (m) The minotaur.

Perephetes: Guardian of the Underworld.

Sinnis: The Bandit.

The Crommyon Sow: Three members of the chorus.

Old Man Sciron

Procrustes: The Stretcher.

Beauty Rest: (w) A servant to Procrustes.

Aegeus: (m) King of Athens.

Ariadne: (w) King Minos's daughter,
Princess of Crete.

Phedre: Princess of Crete, Ariadne's little sister.

King Minos: (m) King of Crete.

Amphitrite: (w) Queen of the Sea, wife to Poseidon.

Sea Nymphs – Anemone, Abalone, Starfish: Companions to Amphitrite.

Setting

The play moves from Theseus's birthplace, Troizen, to the Underworld, Under the Sea, Athens, and Crete.

Casting Notes

The Chorus is very important! They can stay as chorus members throughout, or they can play all the small parts indicated in the script.

Original Cast

Traveling Players' Middle School Ensemble, Great Falls, VA, August 2013

CHORUS: Ensemble

NIKE: Talia Zitner

ADIDAS: Mira Brodsky

THESEUS: James Clardy

AETHRA: Emma Flye

PEREPHETES: Clarke Paty

SINNIS: Anna Nielsen

THE CROMMYON SOW: Julia Landry, Caitlin Mallen,
Sophia Zimmer

OLD MAN SCIRON: Sophia Zimmer

PROCRUSTES: Soven Bhagat

BEAUTY REST: Emma Flye

SPA DAY: Julia Landry

AEGEUS: Caitlin Mallen

ARIADNE: Evelina Kats

PHEBRE: Anna Nielsen

KING MINOS: Clarke Paty

AMPHITRITE: Katie Conner

ASTERION: Henry Hoagland

ANEMONE, ABALONE, STARFISH: Julia Landry, Caitlin Mallen,
Sophia Zimmer

Director: Judy White

Assistant Director: Ellie Robb, Patrick Smith

Original "Nightmare" Music: Patrick Smith

Fight Choreographer: Patrick Smith

Costume Designer: Joette Orndorff

Set and Properties Designer: Wallace Crehan

Ariadne's Thread was commissioned by Traveling Players Ensemble, Great Falls, VA. Jeanne Harrison, Producing Artistic Director.

A workshop version of the play was produced by the 45th Avenue Players, San Francisco, CA. The cast included William, Clara, and Nathan Liang, Zuzska and Hanka Czerw, Melissa French, and Benjamin and Talia White.

Song Note

A recording of the song at the end of the play can be found at theatrefolk.com/songs

Properties

Cudgel: Periphetes

Sword and Sandals: 'Boulder' actors bring on.

Sword: Theseus leaves sword upstage when he arrives in Athens. He can pick it up when he exits or give it to Nike, who can then give it back to him to give to Minos.

Motel sign: Preset.

Tape Measure: Procrustes

In Ariadne's pockets: LED candle, honey, ball of thread.

Bolt of Lightning: Chorus member carries this on in Minos scene.

Glitter or water for transformation (sea creatures).

Note: We found "Thunder Tubes" to be indispensable to our production. We used two. They make a great thunder sound, and we also discovered you could get a wonderful echo by speaking down into it. They are available from Amazon and other places. Wood blocks, slide whistles, small drums (or even an empty coffee can) all make fine sound effects. An orange juice can with beans in it makes a good shaker for the "rap."

Costumes

Simple Greek tunics, sandals. Or modern dress – T-shirts and tights or leggings.

Actors who play additional parts might add a beard (Sinnis) or a pig snout then return to the Chorus. Ariadne & Theseus stay in costume. Probably Asterion too, though we don't see him till the end.

Ariadne has pockets. She has honey (this was mimed in our production) the ball of thread/yarn, and a small LED candle.

Black scarf or handkerchief for "Mast." Actor wears this.

Black cloak or cape to transform Asterion. Actor brings this on.

Asterion should have most of his face free. A baseball hat with papier-mâché horns would work. And a tail. Most important: is the ability to move freely.

Amphitrite and sea creatures: Headpiece with net or silky chiffon, flowing fabric.

Pronunciation Guide

Nike: Nie'-kee

Adidas: A-dee'-dus

Theseus: Thee'-see-us

Aethra: Eye-eeth'-ra

Perephetes: Per-eh-feet'-eze

Sinis: Sin'-is

The Crommyon Sow: Krom'-yon'

Old Man Sciron: Sigh'-ron

Procrustes, the Stretcher: Pro-crust'-eze

Aegeus: A-gee'-us

Ariadne: Ary-ahd'-knee

Phedre: Phay'-drah

King Minos: Mean'-os or Mine'-os

Amphitrite: Am-fi-try'-it-eh

Asterion: As-teer'-i-on

Minotaur: Min'-o-taur (or Mine'-o-taur)

Anemone: Ah -nem' ah nee

Abalone: A-ba-lone'-eee

At rise: THESEUS DC. Behind and upstage of him is CHORUS, as 'Labyrinth.' CHORUS may speak together, or have solo lines.

CHORUS & THESEUS: The thread's on the spool,
 The spool's wound tight,
 You must feel it in the dark, cause there is no light,
 Hold the spool fast, hold the spool right,
 If it drops you're lost
 Cause it's black as night.
 If you drop it in the labyrinth,
 It will unwind in the labyrinth,
 And you're blind in the labyrinth,
 You can't find, in the labyrinth,
 Your way, in the labyrinth,
 And what's down feels like up,
 And you're dizzy with fear
 But you can't give up now,
 You're partway there —
 The path goes down,
 Goes round and round
 And round and round then
 Back again. (*half of the CHORUS*) Are you up?
 (*the other half*) Are you down?

From offstage, the sound of ASTERION screaming...

NIKE & ADIDAS: And the cry, almost human,
 Of a beast in pain!

THESEUS: Oh, no! I've dropped the skein,
 (*crawling on the ground*) Is it here?

CHORUS: (*overlapping with THESEUS*) Is it here?

THESEUS: It must be here, but I can't find it.

CHORUS: (*overlapping with THESEUS*) It must be here, but I can't find it.

CHORUS & THESEUS: Must stay calm, must be brave,
 Never mind that's its pitch black
 And there's no turning back—

ASTERION cries again.

What a cry — of rage! It must be afraid—
 Down here deep and all alone—

ASTERION: (*from off, with a great roar*) I am afraid! I am alone!

ALL but THESEUS exit as AETHRA enters.

THESEUS: And then, mother, I wake up. Each time, I have that nightmare – I wake up when I hear those words! What does it mean? Who is calling me?

AETHRA: Your dream is calling you, my son. You must pay attention. In time, you may understand its message.

THESEUS: In time?? But I want to know *now*.

AETHRA: Be a little patient. You're such a nice boy – brave, courteous, (*teasing him*) not too bad looking– and you're learning how to use your head.

THESEUS: (*teasing her*) You're just saying that because you are my mother.

AETHRA: Yes, and Mothers know things sons don't know. I know the stuff you're made of. Has the time come for you to know, too?

THESEUS: Know what? Mom, please stop talking in riddles. Just tell me. Please tell me. Tell me tell me tell me. (*gets idea*) I got it. Yes, that's it. You're going to tell me about my father. Right? My real father. Am I right? Is that it?

Three CHORUS enter as 'Boulder.' One carries a sword, one carries sandals. THESEUS and AETHRA have been walking during the conversation. They realize where they are.

THESEUS: We're at the clearing again – and that humongous boulder is still there, hasn't moved, not an inch. Well, I sure couldn't move it.

AETHRA: Try. This could be your lucky day.

THESEUS: I couldn't move it last summer. In the autumn, after the storms came, I still couldn't move it.

AETHRA: You've been lifting weights. That helps. Try again. It's important...

THESEUS: 'To my father,' I know. Hmmm, what's the best approach here? Mechanical? Scientific? Let me think. Physical strength hasn't worked... Why don't I just dig a little trench around it, like this? I need a little leverage. Then, what I need is a wedge right here. (*he mimes the wedge and log*) What about this log underneath it... (*jumps on the log*) – and 'voila!' It worked! (*CHORUS members exit, revealing sword and sandals*) A sword. Wow.

AETHRA: It belonged to your father.

THESEUS: And sandals. (*he puts them on*) They fit like they were made for me. (*this is an awesome thought*)

AETHRA: Your father has been watching out for you.

THESEUS: He can see me?? Where is he? Tell me I'm right: My father is a god.

AETHRA: You are *half* right. You are a half-blood. You belong to two worlds – the sea– and the earth. Your god-father is mighty Poseidon.

THESEUS: (*taking it in*) Poseidon, god of the sea. But – you said, 'half-blood.' What about my other father?

AETHRA: He's an earthly king – just and powerful, King Aegeus of Athens. He's the one who left the sword and sandals for you to find when the time was right.

THESEUS: Then I must go thank him.

AETHRA: It's a dangerous journey. You'd need an army.

THESEUS: I'll travel alone, and I'll leave today. Now.

AETHRA: So soon? A storm may be coming! There are pirates!

THESEUS: Should I travel by land?

AETHRA: Oh, no! The overland route is even worse – and it's full of thugs and thieves.

THESEUS: Mother, my mind is made up.
I'm going to Athens by land. The sooner, the better.
And I'll go alone, with just Father's sword.
If my cousin Heracles could do it, so can I.
Besides, it will give me time to get in shape.
Rock-climbing, hiking, carbo-loading – these are safe and healthy activities.
They will make me fit to be a hero in King Aegeus's eyes and in Poseidon's too.

AETHRA: The god Poseidon has many sons. I have only one. Please be careful.

THESEUS: (*embracing her*)
Don't worry, Mom, I promise I won't pick any fights.
I'll only do unto others what they would do to me. (*exits*)

AETHRA: (*as he leaves, calling to him*) Farewell. Use your head.
 Remember your manners. Drink lots of water.
 (*to the audience*) Have you ever watched your child
 walk away from you?
 Then you know what I am feeling.
 Only yesterday, he was a swaddled babe—*this* big.
 Then, cutting a tooth, then taking a step – and see him now.
 See the set of his shoulders?
 See how bold his stride?
 He's been sheltered, cared for only by those who love him.
 He doesn't know the cruel ways of the world.
 He doesn't know heartache, not yet.
 I have had enough for two.
 How I've lain awake,
 Lost in my own labyrinth of worries and fears.
 And yet I know, to find himself,
 He must lose himself.
 To become a man,
 He must test his strength, test his mind,
 Plumb the depths of his own soul.
 My heart will never rest until he returns to me.
 Until then, may the gods protect him.

*AETHRA exits. THESEUS enters and crosses C. NIKE
 moves SR, ADIDAS moves SL.*

THESEUS: Well, here I am. Alone. Away from home. Unafraid? Maybe
 not.

*Five members of the CHORUS help with this next
 section.*

NIKE & ADIDAS: As his mother had foretold,
 the land was treacherous,
 mountainous,
 (*CHORUS makes sharp angles with their bodies*)
 full of marshes
 (*CHORUS lies on the stage floor, their hands grabbing THESEUS's
 ankle*)
 and dark forests.

*CHORUS gets up from the floor. They stand tall and
 close together. THESEUS pushes through. CHORUS
 exits. PEREPHETES enters R.*

NIKE: And before long, Theseus came to the first entrance of the
 Underworld.

ADIDAS: He was met by a big, burly man with a heavy brass cudgel.
The man introduced himself as...

PEREPHETES: ...Perephetes. I guard the Underworld.
We don't take to trespassers.
What you want here, country boy?

THESEUS: Please, sir, I was just hoping to pass through on my way to Athens.

PEREPHETES: This cudgel says you won't take another step.

THESEUS: Nice cudgel.

PEREPHETES: Thanks. It works for me. I use it to beat up my enemies.
Or anybody who gets in my way.
Sometimes, I beat them up just for the fun of it!
I whack 'em with this here big old stick I stole from a giant,
And then, I grind them into the dirt, like this!
So, if I were you, boy, I'd run along back home to your mama.

THESEUS: I'm not your enemy, sir. I'm just a friendly country boy on his way to the big city.

PEREPHETES:
You're on my turf, dude. That don't make me feel so friendly.
Take another step and I'll give you a big Underworld hello.

THESEUS: Okay. Pleasure meeting you. (*turns as if to go, then pointing away from PEREPHETES*) Hey, look over there!!

PEREPHETES: What? (*He looks. THESEUS grabs the club, brandishes it, and chases PERIPHETES offstage.*) Arrrrrrggggg!

THESEUS: One thug down, how many to go?

CHORUS enters R AND L.

NIKE: Theseus's next adventure – too gory for our story?

ADIDAS: We've got impressionable children here.

CHORUS debates. Gives it a thumbs up. SINNIS enters and crosses DC.

NIKE: Sinnis, the Bandit...
Sinnis...

SINNIS: A mean, cruel bandit,
would tie his captive to a tree,

HALF CHORUS: (SR) Pine tree, to be exact,

HALF CHORUS: (SL) Two pine trees, to be exact,

ADIDAS & NIKE: Each arm and leg, to be exact.

SINNIS: (*Gleefully! He loves being mean!*) He'd bend those trees over til
they touched the ground,
then catapult his victim up into the air,
and watch the victim split in two.

CHORUS: (*watches L and R as an imaginary victim is split in two*) Ewww.
(*rhymes with 'two'*)

THESEUS: (*to audience*) Well, what could I do?
He had two pine trees ready, waiting for me,
But I wasn't ready to be a human slingshot.
So...
I turned the tables,
I may be young but I'm not a dope,
I tied ole Sinnis with his very own rope.
I wasn't happy that Sinnis flew,
But I only did
What he tried
To do
To me.

CHORUS: (*rhythmically moving in place, clapping or stamping feet*)
He turned the tables,
Turned, turned the tables,
Yes, turned the tables the other way.

NIKE: At a place called Crommyon,

ADIDAS: Theseus slew a sow.

CHORUS: How?

*Three CHORUS members portray the 'sow,' snorting
like a pig; one has pig nose.*

THE SPEAKING BRISTLY SOW:

The sow was a giant
With bristles and a snout,
She sat on her victims (*the COW sits on a CHORUS member*) and
Flattened them out
Then fried them for breakfast
Or ate them raw—

CHORUS & SOW: Awwwwww!

NIKE: Theseus teased her with his cudgel
And lured her down an alley.

THESEUS backs away from the SOW. The SOW follows. THESEUS raises his cudgel. The SOW runs squealing off.

ADIDAS: Then finished her off
In a grande finale,

CHORUS: Then he turned her into –
And – we aint' fakin'–

The SOW returns as strips of 'bacon' and rejoins the CHORUS.

ALL: Bacon!

(clapping in rhythm) He turned the tables on that Big Pig,
Yes, he turned the tables,
Turned turned the tables
Turned the tables the other way.

ALL CHORUS: He was refining his strategy:

THESEUS & CHORUS:

Watch your enemy close if you want to beat him,
Use his tricks as your own and you will defeat him!

OLD MAN SCION enters DL.

NIKE & ADIDAS: Now Old Man Scion lived on a cliff
By a winding path to the sea.
He said to Theseus,

OLD MAN SCION: You must wash my feet.
They sure are dirty, it would be a treat.
You're a kindly lad. Would you do the deed?

NIKE: And Theseus knelt down, on the edge of the cliff,

ADIDAS: And began to wash Old Man Scion's very dirty feet...

ALL: But *just in time*... Theseus heard a roar,

HALF CHORUS: (SR) A ferocious roar he'd not heard before –

HALF CHORUS: (SL) A hungry monster kind of roar –

OLD MAN SCION:

And he suddenly knew what Old Man Scion had in store
for him–

He was planning to feed him to that toothy creature in the surf below!
 His giant sea turtle, a dangerous pet.
 And Theseus said,

THESEUS: I'm not ready to be sea-food yet!

As SCION pushes, THESEUS steps out of the way.

CHORUS: Scion toppled,

SCION somersaults backwards upstage into the CHORUS. CHORUS divides to watch him get devoured, then covers him as he rejoins CHORUS.

Heels over head,
 Into the foaming surf below.
 And the terrible-headed turtle gobbled up his master
 With his fearsome jaws.
 Chew! Chew! Chew!!!
 Eeeewwwwww!

THESEUS: (DC) That could have been me!

CHORUS & THESEUS: He turned the tables on that dirty old man,
 Yes, he turned the tables,
 Turned, turned the tables,
 Turned the tables the other way.

NIKE: Every night, Theseus's dream returned.

THESEUS sleeps DC.

CHORUS: (*sotto voce*) The thread's on the spool,
 The spool's wound tight,
 You must feel it in the dark, cause there is no light,

ADIDAS: And sometimes, a different voice:

AMPHITRITE: (*enters UC, crosses down and around THESEUS, then exits*)
 My son, my son, you will be led
 To a starry one with horns on his head.
 My son, my son, follow the thread,
 Challenge your fear and swallow your dread.

CHORUS: And the ending, always the same...

ASTERION: (*from off*) *I am afraid. I am alone...*

CHORUS: And every time,
 Theseus woke up exhausted
 And wondering...

THESEUS: What does it mean? Who can it be?

ADIDAS & NIKE: So, by the time he came to Procrustes Inn, he was dead on his feet.

He looked forward to a nice hot supper and a good night's sleep.

*A CHORUS member produces a sign that reads
"Procrustes: Best Underworld Hospitality. Vacancy."*

CHORUS: One last adventure in the Underworld, the Underworld, the Underworld...

PROCRUSTES: *(a smooth and oily dude, in a jacket and tie, with a tape measure around his neck.)* Procrustes, the Stretcher, Your Genial Host. Welcome, weary traveller. Are you, perhaps, in need of hospitality?

THESEUS: I could use a little of that. Thanks.

PROCRUSTES: Please sir, my house is your house, my servants your servants, my riches, your riches, and *(ominously)* my bed, your bed. May I take your *(looking greedily at THESEUS's sword and cudgel)* luggage?

THESEUS: No, thanks. I'll keep it with me.

PROCRUSTES: As you wish. And now, food? Wine? A bed? A warm, soft, cozy, comfortable twin-size, queen-size, king-size, perhaps a water bed would suit you, sir?

THESEUS: Why do you say that?

PROCRUSTES: My little joke, forgive me, sir.
(to audience) Water-bed, water, Poseidon—get it??
(to THESEUS) I believe you're related to Poseidon???

THESEUS: *(to audience)* How did he know that?

PROCRUSTES: Now it's time for you to go nighty-night.

THESEUS: I'm tired. I've been sleeping in trees and on the ground. And I've been having these strange dreams.

PROCRUSTES: Yes, yes, yes, Procrustes understands. What you need is a feather comforter, a down pillow – you don't have allergies, do you?

THESEUS: Nope. Sounds good.

PROCRUSTES: You will never sleep a sleep as deep as you sleep in Procrustes' bed. I guarantee...you'll never have a bad dream again.

My able servant, Beauty Rest (*she enters*) will take care of you...I'll be right back with your wine. Beauty Rest, see to our guest.

BEAUTY REST: Yes, Master.

PROCRUSTES: (*an afterthought, over his shoulder*) What are you, about 5'4"? (*exits*)

THESEUS: That was weird. Why did he ask my height?

BEAUTY REST: He's measuring you! For his iron bed!

Oh, sir, I must warn you.

Even in this desolate place we have heard of you—

The great hero Theseus.

But you have come to an evil house.

My master is an evil man, a murderer.

He has only one bed. It is only one size.

If you drink his wine, you will fall asleep in his cruel bed—

And you will never wake up again, never, never, never—

For he will kill you in your sleep.

He lures weary travelers, steals their possessions,

And chains them to his iron bed.

If they are too long, he chops off their head,

If they are too short, he stretches them to fit.

He's coming. Save yourself!

THESEUS: (*to audience*) That. Is. A terrible. Story.

PROCRUSTES: (*entering*) Ready for beddy-bye?

THESEUS: You know, suddenly, I'm feeling wide awake. But *you* look tired.

PROCRUSTES: No, really, I had a nap—

THESEUS: Nice, cozy bed—

PROCRUSTES: Please, no!

THESEUS: Comfy blanket—

PROCRUSTES: No, no!

THESEUS: Good night, sleep tight, and don't let the bedbugs bite!

THESEUS secures PROCRUSTES with BEAUTY REST's help and a couple of ninja moves.

CHORUS: And Theseus, using his own trick against him, put Procrustes into his own awful iron bed.

The CHORUS conceals the action of carrying off PROCRUSTES.

PROCRUSTES & CHORUS: *Owwwwwww!*

CHORUS: He turned the tables,
Turned, turned the tables,
Turned the tables the other way...

ADIDAS: At last Theseus surfaced from the Underworld,
A stronger and wiser lad.

NIKE: He finally arrived at the gates of Athens—

THESEUS: *(consulting the CHORUS and the audience)*
The time has come to reveal myself to Dad.
What do you think?
Should I go right in and introduce myself?
Or should I take it slow,
and proceed by stealth?

CHORUS: He decided on the latter
And took some time to use his eyes and his ears first.
He learned that his father had taken a new wife —
Medea. A sorceress with a terrible temper
And a *hunger* for vengeance!

N.B. This is a little black humor. Medea cooked her children and fed them to Jason to punish him for his unfaithfulness.

THESEUS: I'd better steer clear of her—

THESEUS places his sword downstage.

CHORUS:
So, Theseus hid his sword under an olive tree and he
(a rhythmic 'rap') Put on a disguise when one night late
He arrived outside Aegeus's palace gate.

AEGEUS: Aegeus loved his son at very first sight
And saw through his disguise that his heart was right,
And the two shared stories and talked all night
Then Aegeus told him what was on *his* mind —
He was in a terrible bind.

Members of the CHORUS create the shape of a sailboat. One is the 'mast,' another uses a black scarf for a sail.

The next day, a boat would sail to Crete
 But the cargo wasn't wine or olives or wheat –
 It was Athenian girls and Athenian boys,
 The pride of the land, their parents' joys.
 You see, King Minos demanded a sacrifice
 To revenge his own son's sad demise
 At the hands, he thought, of Athenians.

NIKE: And the worst, Aegeus told, when he'd drunk some wine
 At the bottom of a pit lived a loathsome beast,

ADIDAS: Half-man, half-brute, entirely terrible
 On human flesh and blood the beast would feast.

CHORUS: Its cries of misery were unbearable
 When in the night it would scream to be fed!
 True, no one survived to tell the tale –
 But they'd heard the cries;
 They'd felt the ground shake,

ALL: (*frozen in scary MINOTAUR posture*)
 For the beast was part Bull – a child of Poseidon,
 The earth-shaker.
 (*break freeze*) That was the word, and the world would quake!
 That was the word, the word that spread
 And all who'd heard of him lived in dread
 Of the Minotaur. For that was his name!

NIKE: Oh! A terrible thing to trade more sons,

ADIDAS: And daughters too,

BOTH: For the death of one!

ALL: Theseus was aghast at this sacrifice
 That the youth of Athens had to pay such a price,
 So he said,

THESEUS: I'll go and stop it tomorrow.
 I'll stop all the bloodshed and end all the sorrow.
 For vengeance and killing there's never a season.
 I'll go to King Minos. I'll make him see reason.
 It's fair that I, a son of Athens, should take my turn
 As a tribute. Don't worry, Father, I shall return.

ALL: Next day, his boat set sail, Crete, the destination,
 And Theseus had a deep inclination
 He might find the secret to his tangled dream
 Threaded through Minos's vengeful scheme.

The CHORUS exits. ARIADNE enters.

NIKE: In Crete, Princess Ariadne, a priestess – and King Minos' daughter,

ADIDAS: Also had a troubling dream–

ARIADNE: (*confides in the audience*) The same dream over and over!
I'm holding the end of a spool of thread – the one Daedalus gave me –

And tangled up at the other end,
Is this boy I've never even seen.

What can it mean?

I have no clue.

How can I be an oracle if

I can't even fathom my own dream?

Fine Priestess I am!

When I breathe in the laurel smoke,

I don't see visions, I just throw up!

My spells at Aphrodite's altar fall flat,

The sacred snake curls up and goes to sleep,

My dances fail to charm –

I can't get a single prayer to rise.

I'm stuck.

It's the family bad luck!

My duty seems my doom – the tributes will be arriving soon and
Father's ordered me to

Send them to the Fearsome One below.

I have never felt so afraid – and so alone.

PHAEDRA: (*running in.*) Sister! You told me to tell you when I saw the boat with the black sails. I've been watching and I saw it. It is coming closer. It will be here soon. (*noticing her sadness*) What's wrong, Ariadne?

ARIADNE: Don't worry, little Phaedra. I am better now that you are here. Quick, now, do you remember our plan?

They whisper together and turn upstage. MINOS enters and crosses DC as CHORUS enters R and L.

NIKE: At the dock, King Minos appraised the young boys and girls,

ADIDAS: 14 tributes sent from Athens to appease his vengeance and to feed the Minotaur...

BOTH: Among them was Theseus.

MINOS: Search them for weapons!

THESEUS: (*pushes through CHORUS to MINOS*)

King Minos, I freely give you my sword – a gift from my father.
And with it, my word.

MINOS: What do I want with your word, Athenian upstart?

THESEUS: My word has value. I am Theseus, Son of Aegeus, Godson of Poseidon.

I have come to offer you a bargain.

I wish to end the servitude of my people to Cretan law.

I will rid you of the Minotaur with my bare hands and in return,
The sacrifice of innocents will end.

The CHORUS cheers.

MINOS: That's a fool's bargain! Why should I believe you? If you are a son of Poseidon, prove it by retrieving this ring from the sea!

THESEUS: First, prove you are a son of Zeus.

MINOS: Zeus, hear me! (*Lightning and thunder. CHORUS holds 'lightning bolt' aloft as a thunder tube sounds.*) There's your proof, Athenian.
Now find my gold ring! (*he mimes throwing the ring into the sea*)

THESEUS: God-father Poseidon, ready-or-not, here I come!

THESEUS mimes diving into the sea as NIKE and ADIDAS raise a preset transparent piece of fabric, painted with shells, starfish, sea creatures, mounted on a pole.

CHORUS becomes anemone, abalone, starfish, etc. They gesture 'welcome,' beg him to stay, hand him the ring from ocean floor, and bid him goodbye at the appropriate times.

CHORUS: Down Theseus dove to the deep, cold, deep
Where the under-sea maidens watch did keep.
They welcomed him gladly,
And pointed the way
To the ring he searched for – and begged him to stay,

ONE VOICE: Amphitrite, great mother-soul of the sea, rode in on her sea-horse,
With shells in her hair and an edict she brought from Poseidon himself.

AMPHITRITE: (*rides in on stick sea-horse*) "Deliver my child from the Labyrinth to me."

NIKE: Theseus didn't have time to ponder her meaning – but rose triumphant from the sea, with the ring in his command.

As THESEUS swims up, NIKE and ADIDAS lower the undersea-scape. THESEUS and MINOS shake hands.

ADIDAS: And Minos had no choice but to agree
To let him try his hand
Unarmed to fulfill his promise:
To rid Crete of the Minotaur!

MINOS and THESEUS shake hands to seal their agreement. MINOS exits.

PHEDRE: (*enters from L with a note*) Here's a towel to dry off. And also, a note from my sister, Ariadne. Oh! You're not even wet! How strange.

THESEUS: Thank you, little girl. (*reading*) "If you help me, I will help you. A friend." Tell your sister I will look for her.

ALL CHORUS: Intent on his promise,
Theseus entered the great golden palace of Knossos.
All around a grand courtyard he saw frescoes
And fountains,
And passage after passage that seemed to lead nowhere...

CHORUS faces the audience, and make arches with their arms. THESEUS weaves in and out.

THESEUS: A person could get lost in this place. Lucky I have a good sense of direction...

NIKE: Suddenly, he came to a wall of solid marble...a dead end.

The CHORUS becomes a wall by turning upstage and standing shoulder to shoulder.

ADIDAS: And heard a voice whispering his name –

ARIADNE: (*UL*) Theseus.

THESEUS: I'm here.

ARIADNE: (*crossing C*) Finally. I have been waiting for hours!

THESEUS: Are you the one who sent the note? Arachne?

ARIADNE: Arachne is the spider. I am *Ariadne*. But, yes, I sent the note.
We can't talk here.

My father – you know, the King?? – is very insecure.
He has spies everywhere.

THESEUS: (*looking around*) There's no place to go.

ARIADNE: Trust me.

ARIADNE places her hand on the wall. The actor in the center pivots. The others revolve around him. They exit. THESEUS and ARIADNE are inside the labyrinth.

THESEUS: It sure is dark.

ARIADNE: I have a candle. You know about the labyrinth. We're inside it. The great architect Daedalus designed it before he made those wings and flew away. Are you hungry?

THESEUS: Starving.

ARIADNE: I brought you some honey. People give me pots of honey because they worship me.

She gives him a jar of honey, which he eats, Pooh-like.

THESEUS: Why do they worship you?

ARIADNE: I have all these (*shrugging it off*) important sounding names.

THESEUS: Such as...?

ARIADNE: 'Goddess of the Labyrinth,' and
'Most Holy priestess.'
'Princess of Transformation and Rebirth.'

THESEUS: Impressive.

ARIADNE: My mother was once a priestess of Aphrodite,
But they had a major falling out.
My father double-crossed Poseidon.
And that's just part of the story.
It's our family's curse – bad blood.
So now, people treat me like a priestess, and make disgusting
Sacrifices to me,
And expect me to act like a priestess,
But I don't seem to have any special powers.
I don't even have any *ordinary* powers.

THESEUS: Hey wait, you said you could help me kill the Minotaur.

ARIADNE: No! No! That's not what you said. You said, and I quote, "I will get rid of the Minotaur."

THESEUS: That's just a technicality.

ARIADNE: Maybe so. But it's also the only reason I said I would help you.

THESEUS: Ariadne, this isn't gonna work for me. I made a bargain with your father. I gave my word. I have to be true to what I said.

ARIADNE: I know, I'm still working on that.

Why is life so hard?

Why can't it be simple as a jar of honey or a spool of thread?

(she pulls a piece of thread from her pocket and holds it up)

THESEUS: *(recognizing the thread)* That spool of thread!
I've seen it before! I've seen it *every night* in my dream.

ARIADNE: I have seen you – your face – in my dream.
(remembering the chant) *The thread's on the spool,*

THESEUS: *The spool's wound tight,*

ARIADNE: *You must feel it in the dark, cause there is no light...*

THESEUS: And the cry, almost human, of a beast in pain???

ARIADNE: Is my half brother, Asterion, called the Minotaur.
Bad blood, remember? Both my parents tried to trick the gods.
They made mother fall in love with a white bull sacred to *(scary and disgusting thought)* Poseidon. I know, right? Asterion was – well, part of their punishment. It's complicated.

THESEUS: Every night as I slept, I heard a voice calling me. Was it Asterion's voice I heard? *(he is lost in his thought and the implications of it)*

ARIADNE: He has the blood of Poseidon in him
The bull's form disguised the god –
But his mother –
Also my mother – is human.

THESEUS: He is like me – half mortal, half god.

ARIADNE: Yes, but no one has ever looked for the god in him.
He's *not* like you and me, he has the appetite of a beast for human flesh – but he's still my brother.
And that is why you must not kill him.

THESEUS: I made a bargain. I am sworn to stop the sacrifice of the tributes.

ARIADNE: We agree. That must never happen again. There is a reason you and I dreamed those dreams. There is a reason you found your way here. So, there must be another way—if we can find it. Will you help Asterion? Will you?

From off, AMPHITRITE, AETHRA, ASTERION speak, overlapping.

ASTERION: (voice) I am afraid. I am alone...

AETHRA: (voice) Pay attention to the dream...

AMPHITRITE: (voice) Deliver my child
From the Labyrinth to me.

THESEUS: I will help you, Ariadne. We'll go together.

ARIADNE: It will be dangerous. Asterion is full of rage and very, very frightened.

THESEUS: I'm not afraid.

ARIADNE: We should go now. It will be morning soon. They'll be looking for me.

THESEUS: I'll go first. We will follow Daedalus' magic thread. Here, you hold this end. It will lead us through the labyrinth.

THESEUS and ARIADNE feel their way down the labyrinth. CHORUS enters and forms the labyrinth walls. They change direction/levels to indicate THESEUS and ARIADNE's journey through the labyrinth.

ALL: The thread's on the spool,
The spool's wound tight,
You must feel it in the dark,
Cause there is no light,
Hold the spool fast,
Hold the spool right,
If it drops you're lost
Cause it's black as night.
If you drop it in the labyrinth,
It will unwind in the labyrinth,
And you're blind in the labyrinth,
You can't find, in the labyrinth,
Your way, in the labyrinth.

THESEUS: (searching) Oh, no! I've dropped the spool.
Is it here?

It must be here, but I can't find it.
Must stay calm, must keep my cool.
Ariadne. Are you still there?

ARIADNE: I'm right behind you. (*she lights a little light*)

THESEUS: Listen. I can hear him breathing –

ASTERION is concealed by CHORUS. As he erupts C, the CHORUS breaks into groups R and L. They are witnesses to his transformation. All CHORUS is present except AMPHITRITE, and THREE SEA CREATURES.

ASTERION: (*with a great roar, rising and flailing about*)

I will devour you!
I will kill everyone!
I will eat the whole bad world!!!

THESEUS and ASTERION have a fierce struggle. At last he pins ASTERION, holding him by the horns.

ARIADNE: Asterion, it's me, it's your sister, Ariadne. (*she tentatively moves toward him*) Do you remember? Long ago? We used to play together... you rolled an apple to me, and I rolled it back...?

ASTERION: I remember.

THESEUS is SR, ASTERION, C, AMPHITRITE, UL.

ARIADNE: Theseus and I won't hurt you.

THESEUS: How can I hurt you? You and I share the blood of Poseidon.

ASTERION: (*raging again*)

But that is all we share! You! You were the lucky one!
Even such a wretched beast as I know of the 'brave Theseus!'
The charmed son, the favored son, the son of a loving mother
And two loving fathers! While I am the child of shame –
Hidden away, imprisoned here, alone in the dark!
Didn't you hear me calling you?
How long have I called to you!
How long have you left me here!
And then, you wanted to kill me!

THESEUS: I know. I'm sorry. I didn't understand.

ASTERION: 'Sorry.' 'Didn't understand.' Is that all you have for me?
Those hollow sounds, that feeble apology?

THESEUS: Maybe if I had known then what I know now I could have–



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