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Chapter Nine: *The Minotaur*



Vocabulary

cautioned

halted

dimly

desperately

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. How does Ariadne have to phrase the request to the thread in order to gain entry into the Labyrinth?
2. What becomes stronger and stronger as Ariadne and Theseus continued further through the maze?
3. What prevents Ariadne from going any further into the Labyrinth with Theseus?
4. Who or what does Theseus encounter inside the Labyrinth?
5. What does the Minotaur slap out of Theseus' hand?

What's Going On?: Reading Comprehension

1. How does Theseus treat Ariadne? How differently does he treat her now compared to how he treated her when he first met her?
2. Which statement made by Ariadne foreshadows the actions of the Magic Thread later in the chapter?
3. Why does Ariadne protest when the thread pulled her from the Labyrinth?
4. How is the Minotaur described?
5. If Theseus is killed by the Minotaur, what might happen to Ariadne? to the hostages?

In your own words...

If you were Theseus, how would you feel as you entered the Labyrinth? Have you ever felt nervous, fearful or anxious? When you feel this way, how do you feel physically? What do you do to remain calm when you are experiencing stress or fear?

Background and Additional Information

Ah! the bull-headed villain! And O, my good little people, you will perhaps see, one of these days, as I do now, that every human being who suffers any thing evil to get into his nature, or to remain there, is a kind of Minotaur, an enemy of his fellow-creatures, and separated from all good companionship, as this poor monster was.

-- Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Minotaur," from "Tanglewood Tales" (1853)

Multidisciplinary Connections

(Art/ English Language Arts)

Create a monster using various materials such as clay. Describe its features, characteristics and abilities. Write a descriptive paragraph about the monster.

(English Language Arts)

Research other mythological monsters and creatures. Write a report and present your findings.

Newspaper Activity

Look in the newspaper at the horoscopes. Based on this chapter, select the horoscopes you think are most fitting for Theseus, Ariadne and the Minotaur. Write a short essay explaining your choices. Create your own horoscope for one of the characters. Share aloud.

Skill Builder

Review the chapter and discuss the description of the Minotaur. Using the thesaurus and dictionary, list other adjectives to describe the monster.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

In Greek theater, the violence occurs off-stage. In epic poetry, it's front and center. I've chosen the former path for a number of reasons. One is that a blow-by-blow account of the battle would be gratuitously bloody and would take up too much space in a limited format. The other is that Ariadne's point of view is obscured by the darkness and by the thread's insistence on keeping her away from danger. The suspense of not knowing what's going on is more exciting -- especially when it leads to a cliffhanger that kids can figure out if they catch a very important tip in the final paragraphs!

Chapter 9: Answer Key

Facts and Details

1. "Please take us to the Minotaur."
2. Smell of the monster
3. The thread prevented her by pulling her backwards
4. The Minotaur
5. The sword

Reading Comprehension

1. He is impatient and abrupt with her. He is not as kind as he was when they first met.

2. She says, "[the thread] It never, ever leads me into danger."
3. She was afraid to leave Theseus alone with the Minotaur in the Labyrinth because she cares for Theseus.
4. The Minotaur is described as a great beast with flaring nostrils, muscled arms, hooves and a massive chest.
5. If Theseus is killed and Ariadne's betrayal is discovered, she might be sacrificed to the Minotaur along with the hostages.