

Practice Cold-Read Task

Read “*Old Greek Folk Stories Told Anew: Icarus and Daedalus*” by Josephine Preston Peabody. Then answer the questions.

“Icarus and Daedalus” from *Old Greek Stories Told Anew*

Josephine Preston Peabody

- 1 Among all those mortals who grew so wise that they learned the secrets of the gods, none was more cunning than Daedalus.

He once built, for King Minos of Crete, a wonderful Labyrinth of winding ways so cunningly tangled up and twisted around that, once inside, you could never find your way out again without a magic clue. But the king’s favor veered with the wind, and one day he had his master architect imprisoned in a tower. Daedalus managed to escape from his cell; but it seemed impossible to leave the island, since every ship that came or went was well guarded by order of the king.

At length, watching the sea-gulls in the air,—the only creatures that were sure of liberty,—he thought of a plan for himself and his young son Icarus, who was captive with him.

Little by little, he gathered a store of feathers great and small. He fastened these together with thread, moulded them in with wax, and so fashioned two great wings like those of a bird. When they were done, Daedalus fitted them to his own shoulders, and after one or two efforts, he found that by waving his arms he could winnow the air and cleave it, as a swimmer does the sea. He held himself aloft, wavered this way and that with the wind, and at last, like a great fledgling, he learned to fly

- 5 Without delay, he fell to work on a pair of wings for the boy Icarus, and taught him carefully how to use them, bidding him beware of rash adventures among the stars. “Remember,” said the father, “never to fly very low or very high, for the fogs about the earth would weigh you down, but the blaze of the sun will surely melt your feathers apart if you go too near.”

For Icarus, these cautions went in at one ear and out by the other. Who could remember to be careful when he was to fly for the first time? Are birds careful? Not they! And not an idea remained in the boy’s head but the one joy of escape.

The day came, and the fair wind that was to set them free. The father bird put on his wings, and, while the light urged them to be gone, he waited to see that all was well with Icarus, for the two could not fly hand in hand. Up they rose, the boy after his father. The hateful ground of Crete sank beneath them; and the country folk, who caught a glimpse of them when they were high above the tree-tops, took it for a vision of the gods,—Apollo, perhaps, with Cupid after him.

At first there was a terror in the joy. The wide vacancy of the air dazed them,—a glance downward made their brains reel. But when a great wind filled their wings, and Icarus felt himself sustained, like a halcyon-bird in the hollow of a wave, like a child uplifted by his mother, he forgot everything in the world but joy. He forgot Crete and the other islands that he had passed over: he saw but vaguely that winged thing in the distance before him that was his father Daedalus. He longed for one draught of flight to quench the thirst of his captivity: he stretched out his arms to the sky and made towards the highest heavens.

Alas for him! Warmer and warmer grew the air. Those arms, that had seemed to uphold him, relaxed. His wings wavered, drooped. He fluttered his young hands vainly,—he was falling,—and in that terror he remembered. The heat of the sun had melted the wax from his wings; the feathers were falling, one by one, like snowflakes; and there was none to help.

10 He fell like a leaf tossed down the wind, down, down, with one cry that overtook Daedalus far away. When he returned, and sought high and low for the poor boy, he saw nothing but the bird-like feathers afloat on the water, and he knew that Icarus was drowned.

The nearest island he named Icaria, in memory of the child; but he, in heavy grief, went to the temple of Apollo in Sicily, and there hung up his wings as an offering. Never again did he attempt to fly.

This text is in the public domain.

1. Read this sentence from paragraph 2 of the myth.

He once built, for King Minos of Crete, a wonderful Labyrinth of winding ways so cunningly tangled up and twisted around that, once inside, you could never find your way out again without a magic clue.

Part A

What is the meaning of the word Labyrinth?

- a. prison
- b. maze
- c. island
- d. a magical place

Part B

What phrase from paragraph 2 best helps in understanding the word Labyrinth?

- a. “winding ways so cunningly tangled up”
- b. “you could never find your way out again without a magic clue”
- c. “he had his master architect imprisoned in a tower”
- d. “but it seemed impossible to leave the island”

2. Read this excerpt from paragraph 2 of the myth.

But the king’s favor veered with the wind . . .

How does this figure of speech develop the character of King Minos of Crete?

- a. It shows that King Minos remained loyal to his favored subjects.
- b. It shows that King Minos never stayed in one place for long.
- c. It shows that King Minos was impulsive and inconstant.
- d. It shows that King Minos ruled consistently and objectively.

3. Read this excerpt from paragraph 8 of the myth.

. . . like a halcyon-bird in the hollow of a wave . . .

What is implied by this phrase?

- a. It implies that Icarus felt invincible while flying, as if nothing could harm him or crush his spirit.
- b. It suggests that Icarus was flying too low to the earth, and, therefore, too close to the water.
- c. It suggests that Icarus did not worry about the consequences of his action.
- d. It implies that Icarus felt trapped in the sky, just as a bird feels trapped in a wave.

4. Part A

How does the author structure the text to create tension?

- a. She provides steps of the process to heighten the suspense as the prisoners escape.
- b. She flashes back to Daedalus's work for King Minos to create anxiety over the quality of his work.
- c. She foreshadows Icarus's fate to enhance the suspense of whether he will heed his father's warning.
- d. She describes the intricacies of the feathered wings to augment the fear for Icarus as he ascends the heavens.

Part B

What evidence from the myth best supports the answer to Part A?

- a. “Without delay, he fell to work on a pair of wings for the boy Icarus . . .” (paragraph 5)
- b. “And not an idea remained in the boy’s head but the one joy of escape.” (paragraph 6)
- c. “The day came, and the fair wind that was to set them free.” (paragraph 7)
- d. “. . . the feathers were falling, one by one, like snowflakes . . .” (paragraph 9)

5. Part A

Read this sentence from paragraph 8 of the myth.

At first there was a terror in the joy.

What is implied by the phrase terror in the joy?

- a. Icarus was initially frightened that he would let his father down.
- b. Icarus was initially frightened by how high he and his father were flying.
- c. Icarus was initially excited to be fleeing “the hateful ground of Crete.”
- d. Icarus was initially excited to be flying like the gods and birds do.

Part B

What phrase from paragraph 8 best supports your answer to Part A?

- a. “brains reel”
- b. “halcyon-bird”
- c. “forgot Crete”

- d. "his father Daedalus"

6. Part A

How do Icarus's actions impact Daedalus?

- a. Daedalus loses his cunning nature.
- b. Daedalus lives the rest of his life in grief on Icaria, an island he named in memory of his son.
- c. Daedalus never flies again.
- d. Daedalus offers everything he has to the gods in grief because he feels Icarus's death is his fault.

Part B

What evidence from the myth best supports your answer to Part A?

- a. "... overtook Daedalus far away ..."
- b. "The nearest island he named Icaria, in memory of the child ..."
- c. "... but he, in heavy grief, went to the temple of Apollo in Sicily ..."
- d. "Never again did he attempt to fly."

7. Part A:

What is the theme of the myth?

- a. It is imperative to submit an offering to the gods after making a mistake.
- b. Those who are cunning have the tendency to become overly arrogant.

- c. Unchecked overconfidence in one's abilities can lead to downfall.
- d. Children often suffer for the sins of their parents.

Part B:

What sentence from the myth best supports your answer to Part A?

- a. "... he stretched out his arms to the sky and made towards the highest heavens."
- b. "... but he, in heavy grief, went to the temple of Apollo in Sicily, and there hung up his wings as an offering."
- c. "Remember," said the father, "never to fly very low or very high . . ."
- d. "Among all those mortals . . . none was more cunning than Daedalus."

8. Read the following quote from Proverbs 16:18.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

How does this quote relate to the character of Icarus? Write an extended response that analyzes how the character of Icarus is developed over the course of the text to shape and refine the theme. Cite evidence from the myth to support your response. Be sure to observe the conventions of standard English.

