

Saviour Pirotta

My Cousin the Minotaur: A Greek Myth Retold

United Kingdom (2017)

TAGS: [Minotaur](#) [Theseus](#)



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General information	
Title of the work	My Cousin the Minotaur: A Greek Myth Retold
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
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First Edition Details	Saviour Pirotta, <i>My Cousin the Minotaur: A Greek Myth Retold</i> . Shropshire: Fiction Express, 2016, 64 pp.
ISBN	9781783226030 (for the printed 2017 ReadZone Books Limited edition)
Genre	Fiction, Mythological fiction
Target Audience	Children (young children, 6 and up)
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Creators



Photo courtesy of the Author.

Saviour Pirotta , b. 1958 (Author)

Saviour Pirotta is a Maltese-born children's author based in Britain. Before turning to writing he was a professional story-teller. He has a preference for retelling traditional myths and legends. Also he writes in English various kinds of books, both fiction and non-fiction, including educational books and story collections. His publications include *The Orchard Book of Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Orchard, 2001), the *Ancient Greek Mystery* series (Bloomsbury), and *My Cousin the Minotaur* (Fiction Express/ ReadZone Books, 2016). Among his awards are The Guardian's Children's Books of the Month, October 2018 for *The Unicorn Prince*; English Association Award, Best Non-Fiction Picture Book 1998 for *A Seed In Need* Winner; The Guardian, Best Children's Books 2016 for *Perseus and Medea* (QED Publishing).

Source:

Official [website](#) (accessed: June 1, 2022).

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Additional information

Summary

This book was originally an interactive e-book, written for Fiction Express website, which allows readers to determine the plot of a story.

The story follows princess Chloe who discovers that her cousin, Alexander from Axos, was cursed by the gods (as a punishment for his father's offence to them) and turned into a hideous Minotaur. In order to save him, Chloe must travel to Mount Olympus and gather the necessary ingredients for an antidote. In the end, she succeeds, together with a servant boy named Tiro. Together they manage to fight prince Theseus who is trying to kill the Minotaur, save Alexander and turn him back to his human form.

Analysis

This story does not follow the original myth of the Minotaur but instead uses some of the characters to create an entire new story, which is slightly reminiscent of *Beauty and the Beast*, in its theme of the maiden saving the beast. Theseus is not the hero of this tale, but its villain, a merciless prince who wishes to kill the Minotaur even though he is aware of his true identity.

In this book the gods are described as cruel and resentful. They harshly punish Alexander because his father gave them rotten fruits as sacrifice, thereby punishing the child for his father's actions. Tiro tells Chloe that this was the way of the gods, creating the impression that the ancient gods were petty and vicious, a portrayal that is not entirely at odds with their portrayal in the original myths, but which carries different, and more negative, connotations in the modern world from those in the ancient. Punishing the sons is an ancient biblical concept, yet the original Minotaur myth could relate to it. The Minotaur was born due to Poseidon's curse of Minos. The result of this curse was Pasiphaë's lust for the white bull.

Interestingly, the author chooses to pursue the humanity of the Minotaur as well as the curse he suffered, in keeping with contemporary similar approaches by adult and children's writers. In the myth, the Minotaur was the victim of Poseidon's revenge upon Minos. While he is usually depicted as a spiteful monster, he is in fact the true victim of the story. He did not choose his fate and his birth was conceived as a divine punishment on his father. The author of this book



thus tries in a way to amend the ancient injustice done to the Minotaur by turning him to his human form and also by allowing him to speak and warn his friends. The Minotaur has a voice and a mind, he did not succumb to bestiality yet, and his humanity can still be reached and rescued, if he is given fair opportunity.

Although the Minotaur is not the focus of the story, but rather his cousin Chloe, nevertheless the emphasis is on her love and devotion to him, her dangerous mission to save him, and also the love of his parents, in that the Minotaur's father tries to prevent Theseus from killing him. The Minotaur is not a lonely monster, but a beloved family member, for whom others are willing to fight and endanger themselves. He is not a beast that must be slaughtered, but a lost boy who need saving.

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

[Minotaur Theseus](#)

Other Motifs, Figures,
and Concepts Relevant
for Children and Youth
Culture

[Adventure Animals Magic](#)

Further Reading

Bridges, Emma and Djibril al-Ayad, eds., *Making Monsters: A Speculative and Classical Anthology*, London: Futurefire.net Publishing, 2018.

