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Jenny Oldfield , Bee Willey

Wings of Icarus

United Kingdom (2007)

TAGS: Daedalus Icarus Minos Minotaur Pasiphae





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Wings of Icarus
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2007
First Edition Details	Jenny Oldfield, *Wings of Icarus*, "White Wolf" Series. A &C Black, London, 2007, 48 pp.
ISBN	9780713684193
Genre	Adaptations, Myths
Target Audience	Children (level 3 reading, 5–8 years)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

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Creators



Jenny Oldfield , b. 1949
(Author)

Jenny Oldfield is a best selling English author for children as well as adults from Yorkshire. She studied English at Birmingham University and spends her time writing novels.

Source:

Profile at fantasticfiction.com (accessed: February 3, 2020)

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com



Courtesy of Bee Willey.

Bee Willey (Illustrator)

Bee was born in London and spent most of her childhood in France. She attended the Bath Academy of Art. In her career since graduation she has worked as a freelance illustrator for numerous clients, creating illustrations for a wide range of books – including over twenty for children – and also posters, montage, magazines, campaigns and emojis. The "sidelights" for Willey at encyclopedia.com include the comment that "her stylistic art has been credited for its eccentric and energetic design". She was shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal in 2003 for *Bob Robber and Dancing Jane*. The many authors she has worked with include Shahrukh Husain, for whom she is the illustrator of *Egypt* (Evans 2004), *Rome* (Evans 2004), *Greece* (Evans 2004), *Indian Myths* (Evans 2005), *The Vikings* (Smart Apple Media 2005) and *African Myths* (Evans 2006).

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Sources:

Profile at the Walker Books Australia website (accessed: June 28, 2018).

Profile at the illustrationcupboard.com (accessed: October 5, 2017).

Profile at the www.wordsandpics.org (accessed: June 28, 2018).

Bee Willey's personal website (accessed: August 15, 2019).

Profile at encyclopedia.com (accessed: September 2, 2019)

Bio prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

This book narrates the story of Daedalus and Icarus. They were trapped on the island of Crete as king Minos' prisoners. They try to escape many times, until one day Daedalus devises wings for them to fly away from the island. Alas Icarus flies too close to the sun, his wings melt and he falls into the sea.

Analysis

Icarus' fatal flight which gave its name to the book as well as to its cover illustration is the climax of the story and presented in the end. Before reaching it, we get to know Icarus and Daedalus a little and the relationship between father and son. Icarus is described as a child who, while he loves the island, wishes to go beyond the sea and leave the prison to which he is confined.

The story hints to its sad ending from the beginning. We first encounter Icarus, standing on the beach and gazing at the sea. He then receives a sea shell from his father and listens to the sound of the waves. Icarus' love of the sea will later amplify the drama of his drowning in the sea he adored so much. Another ominous sign of Icarus' later fate is his nightmare of the Minotaur. While he is not devoured by it, this sign foresees his untimely death by another creation of his father.

A prelude to the drowning recurs in chapter two. Icarus swims in the sea and is moving further away from the shore and his frightened father, being swept by the current to the open sea. This time, Icarus hears (and adheres) to his father's warning and swims back to the shore. While his father reprimands him, Icarus flaunts his swimming skills: "he replied proudly, "I am young and strong" (p. 16). This is a sign of Icarus' conceit, due to his age, and his over confidence will cost him his life.

The last foreshadowing appears at the end of chapter four. Icarus tires from gathering the feathers all day, and in his sleep he dreams of the sun. This is the last sign before the next chapter which describes Icarus' fall. In the end, Icarus feels the warmth of the sun as he flies, his mind filled with thought of freedom. Yet it is only a fleeting joy, as soon the sun melted the wax on his wings and fell to the sea, to the horror of his father. Icarus is not described as deliberately ignoring

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his father, rather he is portrayed as too caught up in the excitement of the moment. As Daedalus reckoned before, Icarus was on the verge of growing up; he was still a boy who suffered from nightmares, but he was slowly becoming a young man. Yet he was not yet an adult and his recklessness which Daedalus feared got the better of him in the end.

While he loves the island, Icarus and his father yearn for freedom and think how to escape. They first try to build a boat. This addition to the myth is not usually narrated since most authors focus on the flight as the duo's only attempt to escape. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, only the flight is mentioned, and the same is true for most modern retellings; for example in Orlando's above book, Gerald McDermott's *Sun Flight* (1980) or Barrie Wade's *Icarus, the Boy Who Flew* (2008). Perhaps the author of this book wished to show that flying was Daedalus' last resort after exhausting all other means to escape, and that Daedalus did not carelessly endangered his child, but that he simply did not have any other means of escape.

This narration also creates a different background to Daedalus' imprisonment. He is described as creating the Minotaur and then trapping him in a maze and killing him. While the names of Pasiphae and Minos are mentioned, there is no hint at the Theseus and his important role in the myth. It appears that the author wished to focus solely on Daedalus and the part he played which brought him his imprisonment. Daedalus is not depicted here as a vain man who deserved punishment, unlike his presentation in Valentina Orlando's *Ovid For Fun* (2012) in which his sin against Acales is described. Quite the contrary, in this version he did his best to please the king and his wife yet in the end was maltreated by the king who blamed him for the unruly behaviour of the Minotaur.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Daedalus Icarus Minos Minotaur Pasiphae
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth	Adventure Coming of age Death Emotions Family

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Culture

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