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ICARUS AND THE WAX WINGS

TRAPPED ON THE ISLAND

On the island of CRETE, a craftsman named Daedalus stood at a window and watched ships he was not allowed to board. King Minos had hired him to build the LABYRINTH, a MAZE of winding stone passages made to hold a monster called the Minotaur. Then Minos refused to let him go home. Minos owned the harbors. Minos owned the boats. But Daedalus looked up at the GULLS and saw one road off the island that no king could guard: the sky.

SPELL Spell: GULLS

GULLS

SPELL Spell: MAZE

MAZE

KNOWN What is the name of the island where King Minos kept Daedalus from sailing home?

CRETE

KNOWN What is the name of the winding stone maze Daedalus built to hold the Minotaur?

LABYRINTH

OPEN Daedalus was not allowed to go home. What would you miss most about your own home?

Open response - use practitioner judgment

MAKING THE WINGS

Daedalus gathered feathers, small ones and large. He laid them side by side in rows that grew longer, like the PIPES of a shepherd's FLUTE. He tied each row in the middle with THREAD. Then he sealed the bottom ends with WAX, soft and yellow, made by bees and easy to bend in warm hands. Two pairs of wings took shape, one for himself and one for his son. Before they lifted off, he gave a warning: fly the middle way. Low air carries sea spray that soaks feathers. High air brings sun that softens the wax.

SPELL Spell: FLUTE

FLUTE

SPELL Spell: PIPES

PIPES

KNOWN What soft yellow stuff, made by bees, did Daedalus use to seal the bottom ends of the feathers?

WAX

KNOWN What did Daedalus use to tie each row of feathers in the middle?

THREAD

OPEN Daedalus tied every row of feathers by hand. Which part of building the wings would you have wanted to do yourself?

Open response - use practitioner judgment

THE ROMAN VERSION

The version most people know is not Greek but Roman. A poet named OVID wrote it down in a long poem. Other TELLERS changed the details as the story traveled from place to place. In Ovid's telling, Daedalus flies on alone and comes down in Sicily. The science does not hold either. Air gets colder as you CLIMB, not hotter, so a real climb would stiffen the wax instead of melting it. The sun in this story is not weather. It is a limit the boy was told about and passed anyway.

SPELL Spell: CLIMB

CLIMB

SPELL Spell: TELLERS

TELLERS

KNOWN What is the name of the Roman poet who wrote this story down in a long poem?

OVID

OPEN Daedalus lands in Sicily alone. What do you imagine he did first?

Open response - use practitioner judgment

MATH Ovid's long poem is made of 15 books. If a reader finishes 3 books each week, how many weeks does it take to read them all?

5

A NAME THAT STAYED

You have been handed warnings like that one before: not too little, not too much. Icarus did not climb out of meanness. He climbed because flying felt wonderful and the CEILING seemed made up. The Greeks had a word for the pride that pushes past a warning, HUBRIS, and they kept this story partly to put a face on it. The water where he came down is still called the Icarian Sea, a CORNER of the Aegean, the sea between Greece and Turkey.

SPELL Spell: CEILING

CEILING

SPELL Spell: CORNER

CORNER

KNOWN The Greeks had a word for the kind of pride that pushes a person past a warning. What is that word?

HUBRIS

OPEN A whole corner of the sea still carries the name of Icarus. What would you want a sea named after?

Open response - use practitioner judgment