

# ICARUS

*by*  
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## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

This Greek myth follows inventor and architect Daedalus, who commits a crime in Athens and is banished to Crete to serve King Minos. Determined to right the wrong of his crime, Daedalus becomes a father to Icarus, a daring and precocious boy whose eyes are on all the glories of the world around him – the sky, the sea, the stars – while Daedalus buries himself in his work, attempting to save the people of Crete from King Minos' shrewd plans, which include sacrificing humans to a ravenous minotaur. Complicating things further, Icarus falls in love with Ariadne, the daughter of Minos. After adventures involving sea god Poseidon, the Labyrinth, the slaying of the minotaur, and a broken heart, Daedalus and Icarus find themselves in a locked tower, surrounded by Minos' ships. Daedalus makes wings made of feathers, wax, and wood – their only hope for escape from the tower. With his eyes on the sky, Icarus soars and hollers with joy. Daedalus watches in horror as his son flies too close to the sun, which melts the wax in his wings. Icarus falls into the sea and perishes. A grieving Daedalus flies on to Athens, honoring his son by keeping his eyes on the beauty of the world around him. Approximately 45-50 minutes.

## **ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

Alexandria Area High School in Alexandria, Minnesota, featuring original music by Josie Nelson. *Icarus* won the 8AA North Subsection Minnesota State High School League Competition, the 8AA Section Minnesota State High School League Competition, a "Star" rating at the Minnesota State High School League One Act Play State Festival, and the Wells Fargo Award of Excellence (MSHSL), all in 2017.

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(7 m, 4 w, 3 - 10 flexible)*

**DAEDALUS:** An Athenian man. He ages from age 9 - 40s.

**ICARUS:** Daedalus' son. He ages from age 10 - 20.

**MINOS:** The king of Crete, 40s.

**PASIPHAE:** A sorceress and the queen of Crete, 40s.

**ARIADNE:** The daughter of Minos and Pasiphae; she ages from 9 to age 18.

**TALON:** Daedalus' nephew, 10 years old.

**MINOTAUR:** A half-man, half-bull.

**NAUCRATE:** Servant woman, 20s.

**POSEIDON:** God of the sea. A puppet controlled by multiple ensemble members.

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** A woman in her 30s.

**AEGEUS:** The king of Athens, 40s.

**THESEUS:** Aegeus' son, a warrior, 20s.

**STORYTELLER:** The narrator.

**EXTRAS:** Ensemble, villagers (including GIRL), guards, laborers, slaves, seafarers, royal court.

## **PLACE**

The city of Athens, the island of Crete, and the sea.

## **TIME**

A long time ago.

## **SETTING**

Flexible set pieces such as platforms, trunks, and pillars inhabit the stage.

### **FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT**

This play was conceived as story theatre. The playwright encourages using the ensemble to help tell the story through movement.

There are a number of places in the script where music underscoring may help support the action onstage. Suggestions are made for those particular moments.

The play is written without scene breaks, as the play is intended to flow from one moment to the next, often quickly, and sometimes changing location. These changes are called "moment changes" and are identified as such in the stage directions.

The Storyteller should be onstage from the moment the characters first enter until the end of the play.

## ICARUS

*(AT RISE: MUSIC underscore. ACTORS enter and take in a starry night sky. The last actor to enter is the STORYTELLER.)*

**STORYTELLER:** Once, there was the most beautiful—

**DAEDALUS:** City.

**THESEUS:** Girl.

**ARIADNE:** Boy.

**ICARUS:** Tree.

**AEGEUS:** Cloud.

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** Sea.

**MINOS:** Castle.

**TALON:** Puzzle.

**PASIPHAE:** Spell.

**NAUCRATE:** Chestnut-haired babe.

**ICARUS:** Sun. (Also meaning son.)

**DAEDALUS:** City!

**STORYTELLER:** It was Athens, the city of gods and men.  
And back in those days of gods and men, you could climb  
to the top of the Acropolis, seventeen stories above the  
earth.

*(The ENSEMBLE forms the Acropolis out of set pieces, or  
their bodies, or both.)*

**ICARUS:** If the golden rays of the sun poured down just  
right—

**STORYTELLER:** You could see—

**ICARUS:** *(Pointing.)* There! On the horizon!

*(The ACTORS move to see the horizon line.)*

**STORYTELLER:** The most finite line where vast sky meets  
the vast sea. And there...

**DAEDALUS:** Between sky and sea—

**STORYTELLER:** That is where—

**ICARUS:** My heart soared.

**DAEDALUS:** My heart stopped.

**STORYTELLER:** Where our story ends. And begins.

**ALL:** This is the story of Icarus.

**STORYTELLER:** In this story, there are—

**MINOS, AEGEUS:** Two kings.

**PASIPHAE:** One queen.

**NAUCRATE:** Three spells.

**THESEUS:** One god.

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** One beast.

**ICARUS:** And three boys.

**TALON, ICARUS:** Two die.

**DAEDALUS:** *(Pause.)* One lives.

*(Moment change. DAEDALUS puts on a costume piece to show he is young. DAEDALUS' MOTHER enters.)*

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** Daedalus, there you are! I've been looking all over for you!

**DAEDALUS:** Hello, Mother! I've been out here watching the sky.

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** Young boys like you shouldn't be out so late into the night, Daedalus.

**DAEDALUS:** I like night best.

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** What does a boy like you like about night?

**DAEDALUS:** The stars! Look at the stars, Mother!

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** *(Taking them in.)* They're bright tonight. Did you know the stars bring fortune from the gods?

**DAEDALUS:** Yes.

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** *(Touching HIS face.)* What kind of fortune will befall my quiet boy who knows the answers to questions even his mother cannot answer? My boy who tinkers with tools and gadgets all day in the courtyard? *(Pause.)* What is to be of my boy who is unlike other boys? *(SHE looks up.)* Let's ask the stars.

**DAEDALUS:** *(Looks down, counting.)* I see one hundred eighty-three.

**DAEDALUS' MOTHER:** *(Playing along.)* So, do I.

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