

Today I will tell you the story of DAEDALUS (pronounced 'Died - uh - loos') and ICARUS (pronounced 'Ik - ur - oos'). Daedalus was a bit like ARCHIMEDES - he was an incredibly clever inventor who lived in Ancient Greece. Icarus was Daedalus' son. KING MINOS (pronounced 'Mine - os') of CRETE had a problem - his wife had given birth to a terrible creature, half man-half bull. The creature was called THE MINOTAUR (pronounced 'Mine - o - tour'). Minos asked Daedalus to help him to find some way of imprisoning the Minotaur. Locking him up was no good - he would just smash down the door. So instead, Daedalus created a MAZE that was so complicated that anyone entering it would not be able to get out. The Minotaur was lured into the maze, and was trapped there. Now - instead of rewarding Daedalus for helping him out, King Minos imprisoned Daedalus and Icarus in a tower, so that they couldn't tell anyone about how King Minos' wife had given birth to such a terrible creature.

But Daedalus was very clever and thought of a way he and Icarus could escape from the tower. He gathered together a load of feathers from birds that passed by the tower. And using wax from the candles that lit the tower at night, Daedalus stuck the feathers together to make four wings - two for him, and two for Icarus. They were going to fly away! The day came for them to make their escape and Daedalus put two wings on Icarus and two on himself. But as he did so, he warned Icarus, 'Remember, son, these wings are stuck together with wax - so don't fly too close to the sun. If you do, the wax will melt and the wings will fall apart.' Icarus promised not to fly too close to the sun, and he and Daedalus launched themselves from the top of the tower whether they had been imprisoned. Amazingly, Daedalus' plan worked and he and Icarus started flying to freedom! But Icarus got very excited to be able to fly, and he called out to his father, 'Look at me - look at what I can do!' And he flew higher and higher and higher, and the higher he flew the closer he got to the sun and the hotter his wings became. And just as Daedalus had warned, the wax in Icarus' wings started to melt and Icarus' wings fell apart. Icarus fell like a stone into the sea, never to be seen again: either he was killed by the fall or he drowned. Daedalus' eyes filled with tears, but he had to fly on, and flew to SICILY to start a new life there.

So that's the story of Daedalus and Icarus - and ever since, we've said of people like BOBBY FISCHER, or BRIAN WILSON, or ORSON WELLES, who did amazing things when they were young but then had a big fall, that they 'flew too close to the sun'.

