

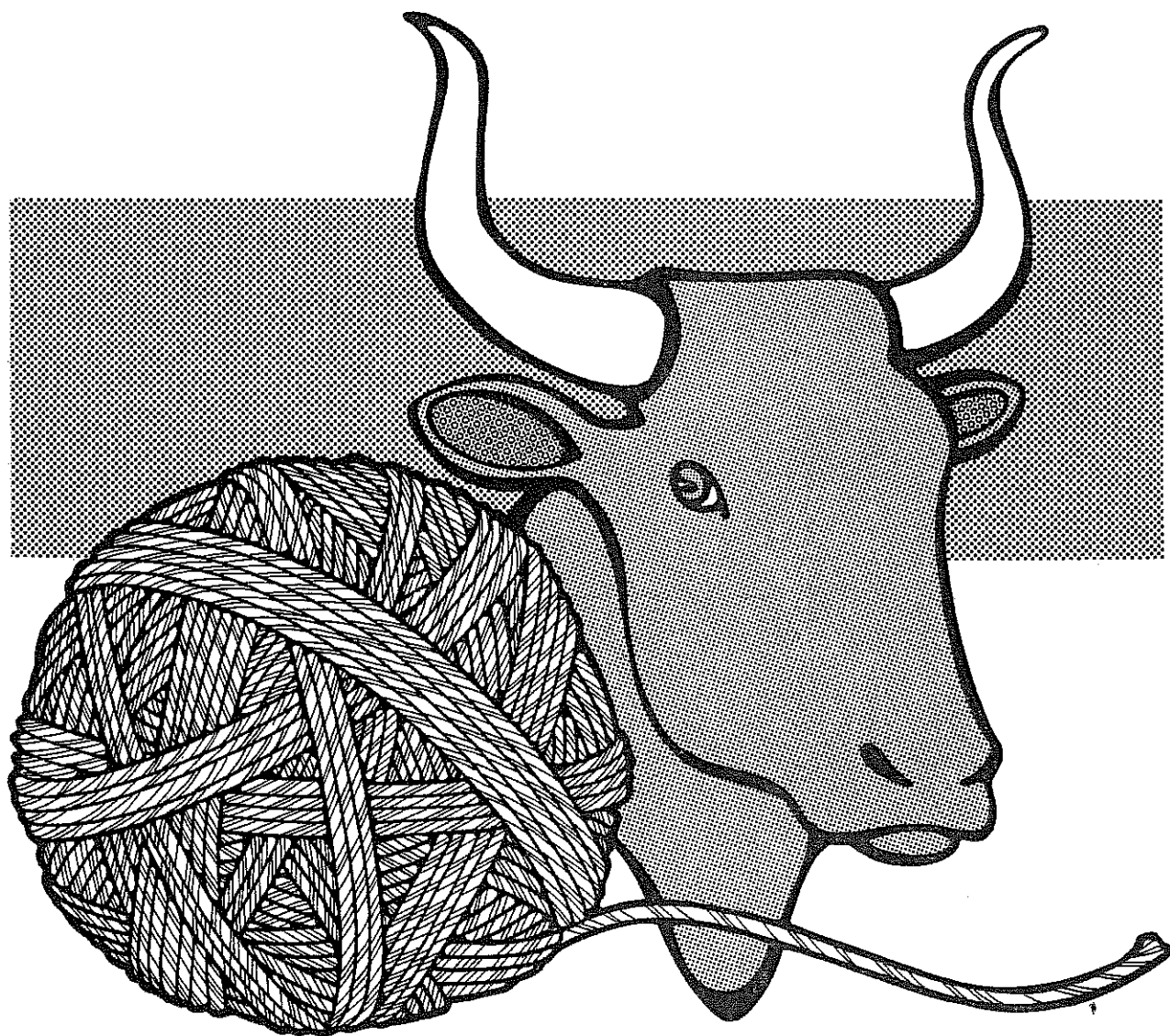
## Icarus and Daedalus

Daedalus was known throughout the Greek world for his ingenuity as an inventor. For the past few years, he had lived on the island of Crete, under the patronage of King Minos. This Minos was a cruel king. He kept a horrible beast called the Minotaur—a creature that was half man and half bull—on his island. To Daedalus, Minos entrusted the task of building a maze, or Labyrinth, to contain his fearsome pet. The maze Daedalus constructed was wonderfully intricate; and only the inventor, himself, knew how to escape from it.

Once a year, the barbaric king held a great celebration to honor the Minotaur. As a part of the festivities, seven Athenian youths and seven Athenian maidens were sacrificed to the beast. Because of the intricacy of Daedalus's maze, there was no escape for those

who were chosen. They were led to the Labyrinth, soon became lost in its passageways, and wandered until they eventually reached the center, where they were devoured by the Minotaur.

This custom continued for many years until Theseus was chosen as one of the victims. Minos's own daughter, Ariadne, happened to see this young man as he was being paraded by, and instantly fell in love with him. She persuaded Daedalus to show her a way in which Theseus might escape from the treacherous maze. When the appointed day came, Theseus, carrying a ball of twine provided by Daedalus, made his way to the center of the maze, slew the Minotaur, and followed the twine back out. Then Ariadne, Theseus, and the Athenian youths and maidens escaped, leaving behind a furious King Minos.



Sensing Daedalus's involvement in the escape, the angry Minos imprisoned the inventor and his young son, Icarus, in a tall tower on the edge of the sea. The drop-off was sheer, so escape was impossible.

The two lived together in the tower for several years until one day, while watching the seagulls swooping over the ocean, Daedalus had an idea. He set Icarus to work trapping gulls and plucking their feathers, while he built two wooden frames. When the frames were ready, Daedalus used hot wax to attach the feathers to them.

Father and son worked for weeks, until they had completed two perfect sets of wings. They would use them to escape from Crete, flying high above the heads of their captors.

When all was ready, Daedalus firmly cautioned his son. "Icarus," he said, "it is very important that you heed my words. Do not fly too high, for the sun will melt the wax that holds the feathers to the frame: do not fly too low, for the ocean spray will dampen the feathers and render the wings heavy and useless.

You must promise me faithfully that you will stay close and fly at the middle height." Icarus, who could scarcely contain his excitement, promised to obey his father's instructions; and they set out.

The wings Daedalus had so carefully constructed worked very well. The two soared through the air, elated with their freedom. Then Icarus, his head spinning with excitement, began to experiment. He whirled, dove, soared—moving quickly out of his father's reach. The helpless Daedalus could only watch anxiously as the happy boy cavorted.

Finally, with a cry of "Watch me, father. I can fly like the gods," Icarus soared upward. The hot sun, beating down on his wings, instantly melted the wax; and the feathers began to come loose and float in the air. With a scream, the boy plunged downward, falling headfirst into the sea, where he drowned. Grief stricken, Daedalus, made his way to the shore of Greece, where he mourned his son, gazing out over the waters known from that day to this as the Icarian Sea.

