

TRUST FALL

by

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A Twisted Version of a Classic Tale
with
Four Puppet Interludes

CHARACTERS

Daedalus, sculptor and inventor, living in Piraeus, near Athens
Icarus, son of Daedalus
Lydia, model for Daedalus
Takus, agent for Daedalus
King Minos of Crete
Ariadene, Daughter of King Minos
Phidias, Sculptor from Athens
Soldier
King Cocalos of Sicily
Cyrene, Daughter of King Cocalos

PUPPET INTERLUDES (Ensemble of Puppeteers)

1. The Nighttime Adventures of Chickens - as Imagined by Icarus
Performed in a manual cinema style – live animation with projected images made from acetate and paper.
2. Daedalus Conceives a Machine to Delight his Son
Performed in a mechanical automaton style
3. The Strange Dream of Takus (The Sorcery of Medea/The Death of Pelias)
Performed with marionettes.
4. Minos Continues His Mad Search for Daedalus
Performed with a modified Bunraku-style puppet.

These are jolly, fun-loving characters. Even in intense moments of conflict, there should be an underlying sense of humor, sass and mischievous exchange.

Casting for seven actors: One actor can play Phidias, Soldier and King Cocalos.
One actress can play Ariadene and Cyrene.

SCENE ONE
THE STUDIO OF DAEDALUS

(LYDIA, a scantily-clad model in her early thirties, holds a pose as DAEDALUS , in his late thirties, hammers away at his stone sculpture. A long moment passes).

- LYDIA (Slowly). Do you ever wonder what your female subjects might be thinking as you chip away...sculpting them in stone?
- DAEDALUS No!
- LYDIA Until you do, your creatures will just be cock teasers...fantasies for desperate, lonely men...nothing more.
- DAEDALUS Please, Lydia, let's not fight.
- LYDIA If you were ever to sculpt me as I really am, the outcome would be quite different.
- DAEDALUS Oh?
- LYDIA No pair of perfect, round, full breasts. But...drained, heavy. Nipples...dagger-sharp, to guard against lecherous men.
- DAEDALUS It sounds grotesque.
- LYDIA And a third eye carved above the heart – the one by which we really see.
- DAEDALUS Oh, dear, you are in a mood.
- LYDIA Well, that's how we'd appear. If you dare to look.
- DAEDALUS Despite your contempt, the public lauds my work. I remain the most respected sculptor in Greece.
- LYDIA Might you be forgetting Phidias?
- DAEDALUS The figures of Phidias may charm the eye, but they lack breath. Would you prefer to pose for him?

LYDIA Is he advertising for candidates?

DAEDALUS I suspect Phidias may find you a bit...too endowed...in the midsection...to model for him.

LYDIA Someday you'll wake up . . . with a chisel in your heart.

DAEDALUS I am attempting to sculpt a muse, Lydia. A sweet, compliant muse You are giving me Medusa.

LYDIA (Seeing something just outside the window). Oh, god, that boy of yours!

DAEDALUS Now what?!

LYDIA (Calling off). Icarus!

DAEDALUS Leave my poor son alone. When will you learn? Your efforts to reform him are pointless.

LYDIA Argue all you want. The boy *is* capable of reasoned behavior.

ICARUS (Enters). Hi, Lydia. What's wrong?

LYDIA You promised to water the garden.

ICARUS When?

LYDIA This morning! Just like yesterday morning. And the day before that.

ICARUS (Full of excuses and complaints). It's two-hundred-twenty-six-steps down to the river and back.

LYDIA So.

ICARUS It's eight-suns-hot!

LYDIA Okay.

ICARUS A full pail weighs thirty-two-stones.

LYDIA The six unhappy artichokes are severely wilted and the paddle is solid, seasoned oak!

ICARUS Papa won't hit me.

DAEDALUS Son, you like your artichokes, no?

ICARUS Yes. The chickens like them more.

DAEDALUS We don't want a bunch of sad chickens, do we?

ICARUS Oh, no, Papa!

DAEDALUS Then do as Lydia says. Attend to the vegetables.

LYDIA You know, you wouldn't have to haul all that water by hand, Icarus. There is another way....

DAEDALUS It won't work!

LYDIA If your Papa would give his consent....

ICARUS Not climb up and down the hill?

LYDIA Ask your father to have the ironsmith make a pipe that stretches from the river to the garden.

DAEDALUS The only way to divert water from the river into our garden is to build an aqueduct upstream!

LYDIA Inside the pipe, place a corkscrew.

ICARUS It sounds pretty.

LYDIA When we turn the screw, it lifts up water, until it spills out the end, into the garden.

ICARUS Who turns the screw? Not me!

LYDIA We'd have to work that out.

ICARUS Not me.

LYDIA It's either turn a screw-crank for a few minutes or tote water buckets for an hour. Which would you rather do?

ICARUS Neither. (Exits).

DAEDALUS It's a preposterous idea, Lydia. I don't know who's more daft. You or the boy.

LYDIA (Referring to DAEDALUS). How can anybody be so skilled and have such little imagination!

TAKUS Daedalus! Guess who! (Bursting into the shop).

DAEDALUS Takus, back so soon!

TAKUS What's up?

DAEDALUS Fair warning, I'm not in a handsome mood.

TAKUS (Looks at LYDIA, suspecting her of discord). Hello, Lydia.

LYDIA Yeah.

TAKUS Are you aggravating the old fart, Lydia?

LYDIA What are you looking at?

TAKUS Somebody's been dipping her finger in the honey pot!

DAEDALUS Where did your travels take you this time?

TAKUS My sojourns, I'll have you know, are your lifeblood, Daedalus.

DAEDALUS What's the news? Did you sell anything?

TAKUS Not outright.

DAEDALUS We might have to reconsider your salary, Takus.

- TAKUS A raise will be appreciated! I did snag a few commissions. Seven, to be precise. Not bad for a month's work, hiking the backside of Greece.
- DAEDALUS *Commissions* are not a reliable source of income. I prefer my clients purchase a statue outright, without the possibility of a refund.
- TAKUS (Sits). Zeus almighty, Daedalus, what's your boy building out there?
- DAEDALUS A fort for his chickens. The foxes keep running off with them.
- TAKUS It's an ugly looking thing.
- DAEDALUS I'd thank you to withhold your opinion, Takus.
- LYDIA The boy's feelings are easily hurt.
- DAEDALUS Seven?
- TAKUS (To LYDIA). That doesn't stop you from badgering him.
- DAEDALUS These...*commissions*...what's trending out there?
- TAKUS (Flipping through his stack of papers). Two Venuses. Two Aphrodite's. One Apollo. One Artemis. (Holds up a painting). And this.
- LYDIA (Grabs the painting. Looks. Grimaces). Ooooh!
- TAKUS A portrait of Princess Hermione. She'd like herself captured in stone. I suspect her parents would be grateful if you improved her features.
- DAEDALUS Thank you, Takus, for peddling my wares.
- TAKUS (Produces or pulls down map of Greece). First, I headed north to Thebes, where I spent two days with King Laius and Jocasta. They're all about parties. Loud music. Loud games. Loud dinners. Anything noisy...but a sadness lives in the palace.
- DAEDALUS Can you blame them? They're childless.

TAKUS From Thebes, I hired a horse and rode to Corinth to see King Polybus. I can't say enough good about him. He ordered four statues.

LYDIA Polybus. Now there's a man with foresight. His wife, Merope, is a sweetheart.

TAKUS That couple has a wine cellar that will blow you away. And their son, Oedipus. What a sweetheart. Despite that slight, annoying limp, he's destined for greatness.

LYDIA Takus, what's the chance you can find me some pipe?

DAEDALUS Tigers. I'm in a cage with tigers.

ICARUS (Enters, with a chicken under his arm). Uncle Takus!

TAKUS How's my boy?

ICARUS He's doing real good.

TAKUS That's an awfully pretty thing you're building out there.

ICARUS You think so? It's a chicken house.

TAKUS I could tell. One look and I said, "Surely that palace is meant to house some very special chickens."

ICARUS (Introducing the chicken). This is Phoebe. She's a bantam. Do you want to hold her? She likes when you tickle her throat.

TAKUS Phoebe's a mighty fine bird, but I'll leave the petting to you.

ICARUS I bet you can't guess how many eggs Phoebe laid.

TAKUS A good-looking hen like her . . . ?

ICARUS Two hundred sixty seven.

LYDIA He makes these numbers up. No hen has that many seeds in her.

ICARUS Two hundred sixty six.

- TAKUS (After an awkward pause). Next, I swung by Sparta. A courtesy call. I knew it would be futile to pitch your work to King Menelaus. The joint is overrun with statues, all replicas of his wife Helen - the perfect female! It's a travesty. Really. But, god, that woman is gorgeous!
- ICARUS Someday Pa is going to make a sculpture of Phoebe.
- TAKUS How such a beautiful woman as Helen gave birth to such a cow as Hermione is beyond me. I suspect a stable boy supplied the seed. Helen always had a roving eye. I'd keep that mare under lock and key, if I were her stallion.
- LYDIA Instead of cuffing Helen, why not shackle the men?
- DAEDALUS It's been like this all day.
- TAKUS All Helen could talk about was their houseguest Paris. That Trojan beefcake has certainly caught her attention.
- ICARUS Does Menelaus have chickens?
- LYDIA Oh, Icarus! There are so many more interesting things to put your mind to other than chickens.
- ICARUS Like what?
- LYDIA A girl, for one!
- DAEDALUS Now don't begrudge Icarus his birds.
- LYDIA If girls aren't to your pleasing, a fella then! Anything besides chickens!
- TAKUS Lydia, I picked this up for you on my travels.
- LYDIA (Holds up a lens). A round of glass.
- TAKUS It's popular among old crones who are losing their eyesight.
- LYDIA Given the men in my life, blindness would be a blessing.
- TAKUS Don't be saucy. You love us.

ICARUS She loves you, Takus. She loves Papa, too.

TAKUS And there's love in there for you, as well, Icarus. I left Sparta, onward to Mycenae, to solicit King Agamemnon. What a prick. The goon wouldn't even look at the catalogue. The man is strictly military. No regard for the arts.

DAEDALUS Wouldn't look at my folio?

TAKUS Absolutely refused.

LYDIA His wife give me the creeps.

TAKUS Clytemenestra? I find her charming.

LYDIA Men! They never see the truth of a character. Did you purchase only one glass disc, Takus?

TAKUS Greed, Lydia, is what undid Midas.

LYDIA (Holding up the lens). Because if you placed two together, inside a tube, I suspect distant objects would appear close.

DAEDALUS Oh, Lydia, what are you talking about? It's a simple piece of polished glass. It doesn't have magical powers.

ICARUS My chickens have magical powers.

LYDIA I know. Each egg is a miracle.

ICARUS Not that! Chickens can hear the stars.

TAKUS (With affection. Not snarky). Hey, chicken boy. Why did the chicken cross the road?

ICARUS My chickens don't cross the road.

TAKUS Never mind that. I'm trying to tell you a joke.

ICARUS They like it here.

TAKUS Just say "why."

ICARUS Why?

TAKUS To get to the other side.

ICARUS Oh.

TAKUS Isn't that funny?

ICARUS No.

TAKUS From Mycenae I hiked to Athens to consort with King Aegeus who, clearly, has fallen under the spell of Medea.

DAEDALUS *The Medea?*

TAKUS That one. Former wife of Jason.

DAEDALUS There was a killing spree worthy of the stage.

LYDIA Can you blame her? Jason was a jerk.

TAKUS May I never get on the wrong side of you, Lydia.

DAEDALUS Did Aegeus request a commission?

TAKUS Sadly, no.

DAEDALUS The man is my best customer!

TAKUS Don't take it too hard.

DAEDALUS Did he give a reason?

TAKUS I shouldn't worry about it.

DAEDALUS Out with it, man!

TAKUS It seems his taste in art has changed now that he's consorting with Medea.

DAEDALUS He's been pecked by the hen?

TAKUS How do I put this delicately? Medea thinks you have a little too much *man* in your blood - your idea of beauty is warped.

DAEDALUS What, pray tell, does that mean?

TAKUS Maybe Lydia can explain.

DAEDALUS Well done, Takus.

TAKUS Thank you. About that raise.

DAEDALUS Later, perhaps, Takus, over a glass of wine.

TAKUS As you know, the price of a good meal keeps going up.

DAEDALUS (Attempting to ward off the topic of a pay raise). As does stone.

TAKUS I'm not good to you with an empty belly.

ICARUS Lydia doesn't believe me. She doesn't believe my chickens hear the stars.

TAKUS Well, don't be quoting Lydia to your birds. I suspect they'd find it awful hurtful.

ICARUS There's a lot Lydia doesn't know about my pets. At night, when I'm in bed, sleeping, they show me what they're up to.

TAKUS Really?

ICARUS Would you like to know about their secret nighttime adventures? I can tell you.

TAKUS That would be nice.

ICARUS Sit down. Close your eyes. Listen. Watch.

PUPPET INTERLUDE 1. A shadow puppet screen is illuminated. ICARUS will share his dream with TAKUS, who thoroughly enjoys the escapade. LYDIA and DAEDALUS do not perceive the fantasy puppet scene. The manual cinema style incorporates 3 overheard projectors and a multitude of overlays, rod puppets and special effects.

PUPPETEERS (In unison) The Nighttime Adventures of Chickens – as Imagined by Icarus.

Sun sets. Moon rises. Theatre curtain parts on three chickens who dance in unison. Chicken 1 approaches rocket ship. Chicken 2 approaches collection of balloons. Chicken 3 approaches umbrella on hook swaying in the wind. Chicken gets in rocket ship. Chicken 2 pecks string to release collection of balloons. Chicken 3 frees umbrella from hook. Chicken 1 rides through space in rocket. Chicken 2 floats into space with balloons. Chicken 3 is carried into space by umbrella. Chicken 1 passes alien space ship. Chicken 2 passes stork with baby. Chicken 3 passes Santa Claus in his sleigh, with reindeer. Spinning constellation. Spirits float by. Chicken 1 meets Star 1. Chicken 2 meets Star 2. Chicken 3 meets Star 3. Star 1 gives Chicken 1 a basket of eggs. Star 2 gives Chicken 2 a basket of eggs. Star 3 gives Chicken 3 a basket of eggs. Chicken 1 gives egg to girl. Chicken 2 give old man an egg. Chicken 3 drops an egg by a knight. Girl places egg in pot and a plant grows from the pot. Egg being held by old man cracks open and butterfly flies out. Egg lands near knight and a monster appears. Knight and monster fight. Moon sets. Sun rises.

TAKUS Bless you, Icarus. Oh, that my dreams were as adventuresome as yours.

MINOS (Flings open the door. Steps inside. Strikes and holds a dramatic pose). Daedalus! At last I meet the infamous mason. I am Minos, King of Crete!

DAEDALUS *Artist*, King Minos. I am an artist.

MINOS Word of your craftsmanship is widespread. Even your critics call your work divine.

DAEDALUS Isn't that a little over the top?

MINOS Indeed, some patrons say your statues are so lifelike they've been chained down. To keep them from running away.

DAEDALUS Flattery, I've learned, is usually followed by want of a favor. Is it a discount you seek?

MINOS You insult me!

DAEDALUS I apologize.

MINOS Do you offer a discount?

DAEDALUS An artist. A politician. All things are negotiable.

MINOS I like your style, Daedalus.

DAEDALUS We understand one another, it appears.

MINOS But not for a moment will I trust you. Who is that boy out there and what is he doing?

DAEDALUS That's my son, Icarus. Building a refuge for his poultry.

MINOS He has an intensity that is quite . . . singular.

DAEDALUS We call it a gift.

MINOS He ignored me, I'll have you know. Completely overlooked me.

DAEDALUS I don't see how. Your tone is rather sizable.

MINOS I'm not accustomed to being ignored.

DAEDALUS I sense that. Forgive the boy. He has chickens on his mind.

MINOS Who's that?

DAEDALUS Lydia works for me, as a model and housekeeper. She may disagree.

LYDIA I'm not responsible for the mess. The shop is his domain.

MINOS (Addresses everyone, proudly). I have a bull. (Pause). The beast was a gift from Poseidon.

TAKUS What did you do, Minos, to merit such generosity?

MINOS The bull, Poseidon insisted, was to be sacrificed when it reached maturity.

- DAEDALUS That sounds like the gods. Bestowing a man with riches then demanding their return.
- MINOS Now, fully grown, the beast is truly exceptional. Well proportioned. A fierce countenance. Rippled muscles. Broad stance. Contoured chest. Magnificent in every way. If you were to see, I'm sure you'd agree.
- DAEDALUS I understand. Because the beast is marked for death, you would like a stone replica, to have as a remembrance.
- MINOS Yes, a statue. I did have that in mind.
- DAEDALUS I will sculpt a version so exact, so lifelike, its gaze will appear to follow you. Your stable hand will even offer food to the stone.
- MINOS I have no intention of slaughtering the animal. I killed another bull, a scrawny slacker, as a substitute. What can I say? I'm a sucker for the chiseled look. I've grown fond of the brute. It's fickle of me, I know.
- LYDIA We all have our eccentricities.
- DAEDALUS When would you like me to start?
- MINOS I'm not sure you're reading my mind, Daedalus.
- DAEDALUS Perhaps I don't fully comprehend the situation.
- MINOS Could we continue this discussion in private?
- DAEDALUS By all means. (He motions for TAKUS and LYDIA to leave. They exit).
- MINOS (Whispering). Apparently my decision to keep the bull enraged Poseidon, who placed a charm on my wife.
- DAEDALUS I can't say . . . I like the sound of this.
- MINOS A victim of Poseidon's sorcery, my wife has fallen in love with the bull. I've never seen anything quite like it. She absolutely adores the beast.

DAEDALUS I've heard worse. Really.

MINOS It's her desire that this sculpture not be an exact replica, but rather

DAEDALUS Go on

MINOS . . . that it be, instead, a heifer.

DAEDALUS Of course! A companion for the fella.

MINOS Playmate, my wife says.

DAEDALUS Naturally. I'll have it done in two weeks.

MINOS And hollow.

DAEDALUS Interesting.

MINOS With a cavity large enough to accommodate my spouse.

DAEDALUS Make that three weeks.

MINOS All crafted in such a way that, once inside, my wife is able to mate with the bull when it penetrates the heifer.

DAEDALUS That . . . is a new one.

MINOS All this is said in confidence, of course.

DAEDALUS It can be done easily enough. But, given the *idiosyncrasies* of the project, four. Four weeks.

MINOS Thank you, Deadalus dear. I predict we shall become lifelong friends. (Spent). Could I have a glass of wine?

TAKUS (Enters, excited and nervous). Boss, might I see you for a minute?

DAEDALUS Takus, King Minos and I are conducting business.

TAKUS Yes, yes, I know.

LYDIA (Enters. Fearful). You have another visitor, Daedalus.

DAEDALUS Until I'm free, why not suggest our guest take a walk through the warehouse?

TAKUS No!

LYDIA Not a good idea.

TAKUS The inventory contains several statues with imperfections. Not something to show a discerning eye.

DAEDALUS Who is this mystery caller, as you say, with a discerning eye?

TAKUS Your chief competitor.

LYDIA Darling of Athens.

TAKUS The envy of artists everywhere.

DAEDALUS Phidias!!

MINOS Phidias? The sculptor?

TAKUS The very one.

DAEDALUS What's he doing here?

MINOS What's he doing here?

DAEDALUS (To MINOS). You know him?

MINOS Everybody knows Phidias.

PHIDIAS (Enters). Hello! (He carries a covered cage).

MINOS I'm King Minos.

PHIDIAS From Crete. I know.

LYDIA You really are as handsome as they say.

- PHIDIAS Aren't you going to shake my hand, Daedalus?
- DAEDALUS (Shakes hands). Welcome to Piraeus.
- PHIDIAS A cool handshake for such a fiery man. You must let go of our past rivalry, Daedalus.
- DAEDALUS (To MINOS). Phidias and I applied for the same position: Director of Public Art in Athens. He was awarded the post.
- PHIDIAS Only because I bribed the commissioners. Let's be honest.
- MINOS Never underestimate the power of money! Take it from a man who signs contracts and issues promotions.
- PHIDIAS (To MINOS) Daedalus was the better sculptor. I was the better businessman.
- DAEDALUS I've heard nothing but praise for your efforts, Phidias. You are the talk of Athens.
- MINOS I wish someone showed a little effort in securing wine.
- DAEDALUS Takus, would you? (TAKUS exits).
- PHIDIAS Where's that boy of yours?
- DAEDALUS Somewhere in flight. Among the clouds with his birds.
- PHIDIAS I have a gift for him.
- DAEDALUS You want I should call him?
- PHIDIAS Please.
- DAEDALUS (Calling). Icarus, you're wanted.
- LYDIA Would you like some figs, grown right here, in our garden?
- ICARUS (Enters). I'm going now, to fetch water for the chickens. **AND THE GARDEN!**

- DAEDALUS This is Phidias, a sculptor, like your father.
- ICARUS I know.
- PHIDIAS I brought a present for you. (Indicates cage). Go on. Have a look.
- ICARUS (Removes cover). Oh, wow! A rook. They're amazing. A rook never picks up sticks from the ground. Did you know that? They build their nests by only breaking twigs off trees.
- PHIDIAS To me, it's a crow.
- ICARUS It's mine?
- PHIDIAS Yours.
- ICARUS Did you know their eyes turn to gold when they die?
- PHIDIAS In that case, I'd be wise to keep the bird for myself.
- ICARUS Oh.
- PHIDIAS Go on. I'm plucking your feathers.
- ICARUS Thank you.
- PHIDIAS A secret. Rooks have a passion for sunflower seeds. But I suppose you know that. (ICARUS exits. PHIDIAS fidgets and becomes serious). Lately, my work has been suffering. The statues lack spirit, unlike your figures, which seem to breathe life itself.
- DAEDALUS Your compliment is appreciated.
- PHIDIAS At first I attributed my slump to a general malaise. I surmised I was mourning the loss of my youth. But I took two lovers, exceedingly handsome, virile lads...who quickly proved age was not the problem.
- MINOS Is it true? Did you carve their names on the fingers of Zeus at Olympia.
- PHIDIAS Take a ladder and go see for yourself!

- LYDIA (To PHIDIAS). You have my admiration, Phidias, for being the first to decipher the golden ratio.
- PHIDIAS Let's hope history records it that way!
- DAEDALUS What are you saying?
- PHIDIAS The discovery was my assistant's! (Pause. Whispers). But you won't hear that from me.
- TAKUS (Returns with wine and vessels). I've represented Daedalus for eight years, and until now, I never realized the extent of his wine collection! (Pouring wine and reserving the largest vessel for himself).
- PHIDIAS In the end I concluded the fault lay with my models. Their poses were trite, their attitudes sardonic. They failed to inspire me.
- MINOS You could be describing my wife.
- PHIDIAS It was then that I thought of you, Daedalus.
- DAEDALUS I'm afraid I don't follow.
- PHIDIAS If the model is responsible for one's success . . . (Pause) . . . who does Daedalus employ? (They all look to LYDIA. PHIDIAS follows their lead. He holds the longest gaze, staring unblinkingly at LYDIA. Astonished). You are Daedalus' muse?
- LYDIA I'm quite fetching . . . in the nude.
- PHIDIAS Really!
- DADALUS I beg you not insult the lady.
- LYDIA My name is Lydia.
- PHIDIAS I wouldn't have guessed it.
- MINOS Nor I!
- LYDIA You expected someone nubile adolescent...without blemish.

- TAKUS Lydia has been Daedalus' model for years! (Offers toast). Gentlemen. Lydia. To Bacchus!
- LYDIA Tell me something, Phidias. Of your two lads, is one prettier than the other?
- PHIDIAS Yes. Oh, yes!
- LYDIA Who holds your interest most?
- PHIDIAS The rugged, coarser one.
- LYDIA Ah, well, see? It's not always the Adonis, is it?
- PHIDIAS Daedalus, I came, intending to hire your model, and that's what I shall do!
- DAEDALUS You're here to nab my Lydia?
- PHIDIAS I'll pay each of you handsomely. Do I have your consent?
- DAEDALUS (Cautious) My consent?
- PHIDIAS I was under the impression your model is a slave.
- DAEDALUS You are wrong. Lydia is a free woman! (LYDIA is quietly shocked and amazed at this announcement). If you wish to employ her, *she* must name the price.
- PHIDIAS This is highly . . . unconventional!
- TAKUS Lydia, before you sign a contract, might I suggest you consider my services? It's always advantageous to have an agent . . . to speak on your behalf.
- LYDIA Thank you, Takus. Your services are not needed. There's nothing to negotiate.
- PHIDIAS You haven't heard my offer.
- LYDIA I rather like it here and, well, the boy, Icarus, needs me.

- PHIDIAS It's Icarus who holds you back? Bring the moron with you. He'll be well cared for in Athens.
- DAEDALUS Good day, Phidias. It's time for you to leave.
- PHIDIAS What? Have I misspoke?
- DAEDALUS I've endured enough of your insults.
- PHIDIAS Don't patronize me, Daedalus. Let's be honest. The boy is a dunce. Everyone says so.
- MINOS My wife loves bulls. Icarus loves chickens. Is there anything peculiar about that?
- DAEDALUS I won't have anyone disparage my son!
- TAKUS (Trying to diffuse the situation). It's excellent wine, don't you think?
- PHIDIAS Even in my duplicity I am honest, Daedalus, which I suspect is more than can be said for you. (Exits).
- LYDIA Take your bird with you!
- MINOS That was prime theatre! Better than any show I've seen in Epidaurus.
- LYDIA Damn spoiled brat!
- MINOS (Reminding DAEDALUS of the deadline). Four weeks. In four weeks I suspect we'll have a little theatre of our own . . . in the meadow. (Exits).
- ICARUS (Enters). Father, that man stole the rook he gave me. He called my chickens stupid.
- DAEDALUS Your chickens, Icarus, are superlative creatures . . . with astonishing intelligence.
- ICARUS You're lying, Papa.
- DAEDALUS Come, let's go have a look at those fox traps. (He places his arm around ICARUS and leads him to the door. Stops. Turns. To TAKUS). Twenty eight percent. Not a fraction more! (Father and son exit).

TAKUS Frankly, I'm astonished. (Pause). Daedalus considers you a free woman.

LYDIA I'm as surprised as you.

TAKUS How does it feel?

LYDIA I don't know. I feel a bit enslaved . . . by gratitude.

TAKUS Without an obligation here, you could go anywhere.

LYDIA I suppose I could.

TAKUS I can name several sculptors who would employ you.

LYDIA That's sweet, Takus, but a lie.

TAKUS You heard Phidias offer you a job!

LYDIA You don't understand. (Short pause). Daedalus doesn't sculpt me the way I am. He sculpts me the way I was. Where else can that happen? Who else knows my history and remembers what I once was?

TAKUS It's not Icarus that keeps you here . . . or your duties.

LYDIA You might want to go easy with the wine.

TAKUS And that exaltation of the past . . . a charade!

LYDIA I don't know what you mean.

TAKUS Don't attribute your attachment to Icarus, or a sentiment for nostalgia, as reason to stay. It's something altogether different that keeps you here. Your heart, Lydia. Your heart says stay.

LYDIA What do you know of my affairs of the heart?

TAKUS (Pours wine). Come, come, join me. Drink up! You've just learned you're a free woman. I just got a raise. Why go easy?

SCENE TWO
THE STUDIO OF DAEDALUS

(LYDIA is painting a statue. DAEDALUS sits at his desk, hunched over, attempting to solve a problem. ICARUS is building a cage, but having trouble).

LYDIA Takus is back in town.

DAEDALUS Hush. I'm thinking.

PUPPET INTERLUDE 2: Daedalus Conceives a Machine to Delight His Son. A mechanical toy, capable of transforming objects. It has aspects of a Rube Goldberg machine and is operated by the puppeteers. Daedalus has a small model version of the machine. There is an exchange between what Daedalus does to his model and what the puppeteers do to the machine.

PUPPETEERS (In unison). Daedalus Conceives a Machine to Delight His Son.

1. Crane, with claws, using pulley system, raises two square blocks of stone, stacked on top of one another.
2. Stones are pushed to first station.
3. In profile, drill – auger style - bores hole in stones.
4. Stones are moved to next station.
5. Hole is bored through stones.
6. Scissors lift, with platform, rises.
7. Daedalus leaves his model and goes to the large-scale, working machine. Daedalus repositions stones, holes facing upwards.
8. Two columns with pediment is inserted into each hole in each stone.

ICARUS What are you working on, Papa?

DAEADLUS You wanted a statue of Phoebe, didn't you?

ICARUA Yes!

DAEDALUS And wouldn't it be nice to place Phoebe inside a temple?

9. At another part of the machine, two chickens peck at a block of marble. Chips fly.

10. The pecking chickens sculpt the figure of Phoebe.

11. Phoebe is transported to the temple and set between the columns, under the pediment.

DAEDALUS (Referring to his model). Soon you shall have your shrine to Phoebe. Just a few more kinks to work out. (Puts aside model and gets box of wooden blocks. He is attempting – unsuccessfully - to build a model arch)

LYDIA Takus is back in town.

DAEDALUS I heard.

LYDIA He's been gone unusually long this trip.

DAEDALUS I suspect he took a side trip. To revel in the debauchery and fruits of Dionysus.

ICARUS Dad, I need your help! The latch isn't working.

DAEDALUS You must figure it out yourself, Icarus.

ICARUS I'm not clever like you!

DAEDALUS Remember the lesson on perseverance.

ICARUS "Failure is a compass . . . that expresses north."

LYDIA That is such a stupid expression.

DAEDAUS Think of it this way: if you're looking for north, it may be found by locating south.

LYDIA Why put it so obliquely?

DAEDALUS I'll tell its author, Socrates, to rework his metaphors.

LYDIA I'm not one for poetry. Neither is Icarus.

DAEDALUS Let's have a calm, peaceful day, Lydia.

LYDIA Your father's trying to say there's more than one way to skin a fox, Icarus. Remember the cow he made for King Minos, to attract the bull?

ICARUS Yeah.

LYDIA (Puts down her brush and pours a glass of water, which she delivers to the desk of DAEDALUS). Why bother building a trap to snare your fox? Instead, take your statue of Phoebe, sit it on a post by the old hen house. When the fox comes by, shoot an arrow through it.

ICARUS But I want to make friends of the fox. Not kill it.

LYDIA Why? What would you do with a pet fox?

ICARUS Teach it to leave my birds alone.

LYDIA I don't think its possible to train a fox. I've tried. Still trying to solve the riddle of the arch? The structure won't stand on its own until you oppose the force with greater bulk.

TAKUS (Enters, a chick in hand). Daedalus, guess who.

DAEDALUS Welcome home, Takus.

TAKUS What's up?

DAEDALUS I trust you had a profitable trip.

TAKUS Times are changing, Daedalus. The market isn't what it used to be.

LYDIA What have we here?

TAKUS A gift for Icarus. I heard about the foxes ravaging the henhouse.

ICARUS I don't want it.

TAKUS (Places his arm around ICARUS). Lad, I know it's tough. Those chickens were family. But it would be wrong to let a fox have the last word. And so we begin again. A whole new brood.

ICARUS I don't want any chickens!

TAKUS Okay. I'll keep the chick. In a basket in the kitchen, and hope the cook doesn't find her.

ICARUS I'm going to raise doves. They're superior.

TAKUS That's a pretty big word. Who taught you that?

ICARUS Doves fly higher and faster than chickens.

TAKUS That may be. They both make a tasty dinner.

LYDIA Stop goading him, Takus!

TAKUS (To DAEDALUS). What are you working on today?

DAEDALUS How to construct an arch, capable of standing on its own.

TAKUS What's wrong with the post and lintel system?

LYDIA I suggested a method but he won't hear of it.

TAKUS Oh, he hears. These ideas must be pondered . . . in time, they'll be resurrected . . . as his own.

DAEDALUS I'm waiting for your report, Takus. How many sales did you acquire?

TAKUS It's not a prosperous time, Daedalus.

DAEDALUS Come, come. It can't be that bad.

TAKUS Everywhere, there's talk of war. People are tightening their belts.

DAEDALUS I was of the opinion warfare stimulates an economy.

TAKUS Not only is no one buying. Some clients are asking for a refund.

DAEDALUS Outrageous! Absolutely not!

TAKUS Outside, I have a cart with four of your finest pieces, returned from their owners. I'll need your hand to stow them in the warehouse.

DAEDALUS This is unacceptable!

TAKUS And two petitions to repossess five more.

DAEDALUS My policy is very clear!

TAKUS Nobody wants to hear policy.

DAEDALUS No refunds!

ICARUS Why did the chicken cross the road?

TAKUS Why?

ICARUS Because I carried it across. (Laughs heartily).

TAKUS That's not how a joke works.

ICARUS Oh. If it's okay, I'll keep the chicken after all.

TAKUS Do. She might come in handy, someday. (ICARUS exits with chicken).

DAEDALUS You can take your damn cart of statues, turn around, and take them right back where you got them. No refunds!

TAKUS Perhaps if you were to talk to them, Daedalus, they'd be more inclined to hold onto their investments.

DAEDALUS I'm not talking to anyone! You're my emissary. My paid emissary!

TAKUS So long as we're on the subject of money, Daedalus.

MINOS (Slips into the studio and poses just inside the door). Can everybody stop sniping about trivial matters . . . and talk about me?

DAEDALUS King Minos! How fortuitous. Lydia was just speaking of you!

MINOS I won't ask you to repeat your compliments, Lydia. I'll simply say, "Thanks, for recognizing how adorable I am." You put on weight.

DAEDALUS Your wife's in love again? This time, perhaps, with a stallion?

MINOS I have a jester, Daedalus. Not funny. Not funny. Stick to chiseling stones.

DAEDALUS I never heard. How did the heifer work?

MINOS The decoy functioned beautifully. The bull lost no time in satisfying itself and my wife.

DAEDALUS So long as everyone got what they wanted.

MINOS Unfortunately my wife got *more* than she wanted.

DAEDALUS No!

MINOS Yes! (Pause). She gave birth to a minotaur.

DAEDALUS Never heard of such a creature.

MINOS Half man. Half bull.

DAEDALUS Would you like a sculpture of it?

MINOS No!

TAKUS People would pay handsomely to see such a curiosity. I'd be happy to organize the exhibition.

MINOS The drumbeat of Takus. Money. Money. Money. I'd recognize it anywhere. (To DAEDALUS). You have children.

DAEDALUS Just the one. You've met him. Icarus. Gem of a boy. Has his mother's disposition, rest her soul.

MINOS I hope you acknowledge your good fortune. This minotaur is a terror.

DAEDALUS Patience, King Minos. Most likely it's temporary – a passing phase.

MINOS Passing or not, it's a troubling phase. The minotaur gored several neighborhood children. If I weren't king, I'm sure the parents would have lodged a complaint by now. I don't know how much longer I can hold out.

DAEDALUS Perhaps a stronger hand, King Minos.

MINOS I've tried locking him up. He escaped. My other – normal, fully-human - children were so frightened I sent them to Athens for safekeeping, much as I despise that city.

DAEDALUS I hope you're not going to quibble, Minos. You requested a cow. You got a cow. There are no refunds.

MINOS Damn you and your money, Daedalus. I'm not here for restitution. I'm here to ask you to build a labyrinth in which to keep the minotaur.

DAEDALUS That is a job for a mason, Minos, not an artist.

MINOS Technicalities! You artists are so temperamental!

DAEDALUS But I do love a challenge. A labyrinth? From which the minotaur cannot escape?

MINOS Precisely.

DAEDALUS That shouldn't be too difficult.

MINOS Then you'll do it?

TAKUS For all the trouble your wife has caused, perhaps you should build a labyrinth for her.

MINOS Ha. Ha.

DAEDALUS I'll design a structure. If it meets your approval, we'll hire a crew of masons to build the walls.

MINOS They won't get lost in their own prison, will they?

DAEDALUS My instructions will be impeccable.

MINOS We do have time breathing down our back.

DAEDALUS When the masons have finished, I'll come to Crete and personally seal off the corridors, completing the task.

MINOS You're a sweetheart, Daedalus. If you ever desire to relocate, you can set up shop in my palace anytime.

TAKUS To frame the entrance to the labyrinth, could I interest you in four lovely statues just completed by the master himself?

MINOS You refer to the medley of figures stashed in the cart out front?

TAKUS I do.

MINOS Recently completed, you say?

TAKUS The paint not dry but hours ago.

MINOS How curious! King Polybus has a matching set. Daedalus, on my previous visit you served me a superb glass of wine.

DAEDALUS I remember.

MINOS It was a remarkable. Deeply memorable.

DAEDALUS I'm glad to hear it.

MINOS Yes, delicious. Really, really, extraordinary.

DAEDALUS Thank you.

MINOS In a class by itself. (After a pause). I am hoping for another!

DAEDALUS Takus, you know where the wine is kept. (TAKUS exits).

MINOS (Sits). Daedalus, I'm curious. Why haven't you re-married?

DAEDALUS I'm doing just fine as a single man.

MINOS Can't you find an excuse that at least has a ring of truth? (To LYDIA). Lydia? Maybe you have the answer. Why doesn't the dotty bachelor join the ranks?

LYDIA His feet don't always touch the ground.

MINOS Tisk. Tisk.

LYDIA Walking down an aisle would be difficult.

DAEDALUS My marital state is not a target for discussion!

MINOS Say I'm wrong. But from where I sit, the boy could use a mother.

DAEDALUS Icarus is doing just fine! And he's hardly a boy!

MINOS Whatever.

ICARUS (Enters). Dad? Did you call?

DAEDALUS No!

MINOS Hello, Icarus.

ICARUS Hello, Minos

MINOS *King* Minos.

ICARUS What makes you a king?

MINOS I'm descended from the gods.

LYDIA King Minos is the son of Zeus.

ICARUS What does a king do?

MINOS I tell people what to do.

ICARUS What if they disobey?

MINOS That would be very foolish.

ICARUS Why?

MINOS To be spanked by Minos . . . hurts! Very much!

ICARUS Can I become a king?

MINOS Is your father a god?

ICARUS Yes!

DAEDALUS No, son. I'm a man. A very ordinary man.

MINOS And, oh, how it pains him.

ICARUS Your father is Zeus?

MINOS Yes.

ICARUS Where does Zeus live?

MINOS On Mount Olympus.

ICARUS Oh?

MINOS High up. Beyond the clouds.

ICARUS Dad? Where does mother live?

DAEDALUS In the land of the dead. Underground.

ICARUS I think mother's with Zeus. In the sky. And all day she watches birds fly.

TAKUS (Enters. Referring to the wine). Minos, you should visit more often.

ICARUS Takus, have you been to Mount Olympus?

TAKUS (Puzzled. Cautious). No.

ICARUS You should go! Don't you think Zeus would buy some of Papa's sculptures?

TAKUS I'll put it on my itinerary.

ICARUS When you visit, may I go with you?

SCENE THREE
THE STUDIO OF DAEDALUS

(TAKUS is sharpening a set of chisels with a file. He takes a moment to clean the dirt out from under one of his finger nails. ICARUS enters).

TAKUS Hello, boy.

ICARUS Evening, Uncle Takus.

TAKUS If you have a moment, I could use a hand.

ICARUS I'm awfully busy, Uncle Takus.

TAKUS Got it. You're a right, proper poultry supervisor now.

ICARUS You seem awfully grumpy this evening.

TAKUS Look what I've been reduced to! Sharpening tools in your Pa's shop. It's pathetic. I swear, if the economy doesn't improve I just might catch a ship to Cario.

ICARUS When's your next trip?

TAKUS In two weeks. (ICARUS begins sweeping the floor).

ICARUS Can I go with you?

TAKUS What is it with you? Forever yapping at my heels, thinking you might tag along?

ICARUS You always come back with stories. I don't have any stories, Takus.

TAKUS You have doves and chickens and finches.

ICARUS I love chickens, Takus, but stories live longer.

TAKUS If I were to take anybody, it'd be Lydia, not you, boy. Beside, who'd tend your birds?

ICARUS I'd build a machine to feed them.

TAKUS You build such a machine and I'll welcome your company. We'll sell one to every farmer we meet. (Observing ICARUS brush dust into a pan, then pouring the dust into a pot). Boy, what are you doing?

ICARUS Marble dust mixed with egg yokes makes a real pretty paste.

TAKUS Why would anyone add dust to his breakfast?

ICARUS It isn't for eating! It's to paint the chicken house.

TAKUS You and your silly ideas. I sure do recognize your father in you.

ICARUS What about mom? Am I at all like her?

TAKUS Oh, yes.

ICARUS It's getting harder and harder to remember her. Did Mama like chickens, too?

TAKUS I think she found chickens a little messy.

ICARUS She smelled like the orchard...in spring...when all the trees were in blossom.

TACKUS Now that you mention it...you're right.

ICARUS I'd give anything to see her again.

TAKUS Icarus, could you slip into the cellar and bring me a jug of wine? It's something your mother would gladly do, were she living.

ICARUS Sure, Uncle Takus. (Starts off. Stops. Turns). Why did the chicken cross the road?

TAKUS Why?

ICARUS I don't know. You'll have to ask the chicken. (Both laugh).

TAKUS Now that's a joke. (Exits as LYDIA enters with ARIADNE).

LYDIA (Calling). Daedalus! I found this girl wandering the streets, calling your name.

DAEDALUS (Enters from back door). What is it now?

ARIADNE Are you Daedalus!

DAEDALUS That would be me.

- ARIADNE (Dramatically). Zeus be praised! I'm Ariadne. Daughter to King Minos.
- DAEDALUS I sense the resemblance.
- ARIADNE Please. I need your help, otherwise I shall die!
- DAEDALUS Whoa. Slow down. Catch your breath. Where's your father?
- ARIADNE At home. Overseeing the sacrifice.
- DAEDALUS Sacrifice? Does he plan to have your mother slaughtered?
- ARIADNE Oh, Daedalus!
- DAEDALUS It's more common than you might imagine. How's your half-brother, the minotaur? Safely stowed in my labyrinth?
- ARIADNE The minotaur entered the maze . . . *but* . . . only after mother promised to give him a gift of several young men and women every year.
- DAEDALUS What does the beast wish to do with them? Create a family of minotaurs?
- ARIADNE No, Daedalus! Kill them! Eat them!
- DAEDALUS Oh? How am I to know? Men are carnivores. Cattle are herbivores. It could go either way.
- ARIADNE This isn't helping! Those selected to be sacrificed, who enter the labyrinth, are subjects of King Aegus.
- DAEDALUS It's all a little confusing.
- ARIADNE (Slowly). Well, try and follow me. When my father defeated King Aegus, a treaty was drawn up. The treaty states Aegus must obey father's wishes. Aegus signed the treaty.
- DAEDALUS Okay.

ARIADNE (Still slowly). So whenever father needs people to feed the minotaur, he asks Aegus to supply them.

DAEDALUS Kings have a way of legitimizing insanity, don't they?

ARIADNE One man who's been selected, Theseus, is stunningly gorgeous.

DAEDALUS It must be difficult being a princess.

ARIADNE I love Theseus, Daedalus, absolutely love him! But he's doomed!

DAEDALUS Such a theatrical family! Your history belongs on stage!

ARIADNE Help me. Only you know how to escape the labyrinth. Tell me the secret.

DAEDALUS Escape the labyrinth? Do you plan to enter the maze with Theseus?

ARIADNE If I have to, yes!

DAEDALUS You'll do no such thing! Your father would have my head.

ARIADNE I would rather die than face life without the man I love.

DAEDALUS Come. Come. Men are not worth this kind of fuss.

ARIADNE I'll kill myself! Really! I will!

LYDIA Daedalus is right. Men are not worth that kind of fuss.

DAEDALUS Here, here, pretty thing. Don't cry.

ARIADNE Promise you'll help!

DAEDALUS I could draw you a map, but I'm afraid that would do little good. Inside the labyrinth you would soon lose your bearing. Unless, of course, with the stars as your guide, you could identify north . . . (Looks at LYDIA). Or south

LYDIA Use a string.

- DAEDALUS I'm afraid I don't follow you.
- LYDIA Offer Theseus a ball of thread. Inside the maze, have him fasten the thread to the door. Then, unravel the ball as he goes. The thread will guide him back.
- DAEDALUS You think that would work?
- ARIADNE It's ingenious! Of course it will work! Thank you!
- LYDIA My name's Lydia.
- ARIADNE Thank you, Lydia. Whatever gave you such an idea?
- LYDIA Child, a woman my age has found herself in countless quandaries in life that requires quick, clever solutions. Good luck, sweet girl. Go rescue your love.

SCENE FOUR
THE STUDIO OF DAEDALUS

(TAKUS is seated at the desk, pouring over numbers. DAEDALUS is mending a pair of sandals. LYDIA is contemplating gravity and velocity by playing with several marbles, miniature troughs and wooden blocks).

- TAKUS (Pauses from his work). I had the strangest dream last night.
- PUPPETEERS (In unison) The strange Dream of Takus.
- TAKUS It featured King Pelias and his two daughters – the dead King Pelias resurrected in my dream. But the thing is, you see, King Pelias was also King Minos. They were shadows of one another. The daughters of both kings shared faces. Sometimes themselves. Sometimes twins. Sometimes quadruplets. It seemed to switch, back and forth. The one constant was Medea. Medea was there, Queen of the dream, masterminding the show.

PUPPET INTERLUDE 3: Marionette show begins.

MEDEA: You summoned me?

ALCESTIS: Our father, King Pelias is old.

PELOPIA: Soon he will die.

ALCESTIS: We love our father very much.

PELOPIA: It will be impossible to live without him.

MEDEA: Of course. A daughter's love for her father is unmatched.

PELOPIA: We know you possess magical charms, Medea.

ALCESTIS: Might it be possible for you to restore our father's youth?

MEDEA: I do have a charm. But I wouldn't wish any harm on your dear, dear father. Let's try it first on an old goat. My plan requires a pot of boiling oil, to which I'll add a few secret ingredients. (Calls out). Bring on the pot! Bring on the pot! (A pot appears). We will toss the old goat into the oil. If all goes as expected, a young kid will jump out. (Calls out). Old goat! (Old goat appears).

ALCESTIS: You are a dear, Medea.

PELOPIA: We will compensate you with gold and precious gems from mother's chest of jewels

MEDEA: Does the goat have a name?

ALCESTIS: Don't be silly.

PELOPIA: Why would anyone bother to name a goat?

MEDEA: The surface of the oil is shimmering. I believe we are ready.

ALCESTIS and PELOPIA: In you go, goat.

PELOPIA: This is exhilarating!

ALCESTIS: I'm not sure I approve of the smell. (There is a flash).

PELOPIA: Oh, look! (Lamb springs from the pot).

ALCESTIS: The old goat is now a newborn kid.

PELOPIA: Marvelous.

ALCESTIA: So enchanting.

PELOPIA: Papa. Papa. Come quick.

MEDEA: I'll add one more charm to the pot – to sweeten the outcome. (She retreats as PELIAS enters).

ALCESTIA: Throw your old cane away. You won't need it anymore.

PELIAS: Oh, dear girls. What have you dreamed up now?

ALCESTIA: We were given a charm. Which will restore your youth, Papa.

PELIAS: Don't be silly. A man cannot regain his youth!

PELOPIA: We saw it work. With our very own eyes. We placed an old goat into the pot and out jumped a spritly kid!

MEDEA: May the wicked old geezer be fried to a crisp.

ALCESTIA: It was most miraculous, Papa.

MEDEA: I will rejoice to see the monster face justice at last.

PELIAS: Where did you learn of this charm? Not Medea, I hope. She harbors great animosity toward me.

PELOPIA: Don't you trust us?

ALCESTIA: Do you not believe our words.

PELIAS: Medea blames me for the death of Jason's father.

PELOPIA: Please, Papa, do as we say. Imagine. No more aching joints. No brittle bones. No broken teeth.

PELIAS: What I wouldn't give to have all my teeth back!

ALCESTIA: And a full head of hair - black as a raven's eye.

PELIAS: That would be fine. To run my fingers through thick gleaming hair. In my youth, I was quite the looker.

PELOPIA AND ALCESTIA: So we've been told.

PELOPIA: Come along.

PELIAS: Should I remove my clothes?

ALCESTIA: No, jump in as you are.

PELIAS: Won't it hurt?

PELOPIA: The goat didn't utter a cry. Did you not see it frolicking about on your way here?

ALCESTIA: In just a moment, you, too, will be walking on clouds.

PELIAS: Okay, girls. You've always had my good interest at heart. Here goes. (He jumps in. Nothing. A long moment of anticipation. The daughters grab a shovel to scoop him out. They retrieve nothing but a skeleton).

ALCESTIA: Oh, horrors. Nothing but bones and broken teeth!

PELOPIA: Medea deceived us!

ALCESTIA: What's to be done? What's to be done?

PELOPIA: What will become of us now that father is no longer king?

MEDEA: (Enters). Oh, dear sisters, what did you do? Did you not follow directions? Did you alter my concoction?

ALCESTIA: We did exactly as told!

PELOPIA: What horror awaits us? Medea's husband, Jason, will now become king.

ALCESTIA: Our father will be replaced by his evil nephew. We will be driven from the palace. We are doomed!

Marionette show ends.

TAKUS What do you suppose my dream means, Daedalus?

LYDIA Don't ask him. The answer doesn't require logic. It requires intuition.

TAKUS All right then, what does it mean, woman?

LYDIA King Minos is fated to die a death similar to the death of King Pelias. The role of the daughters is less apparent. Let me ponder their place in your dream a bit more, Takus.

TAKUS (Back to his numbers). According to my figures, it's time to declare bankruptcy, Daedalus.

DAEDALUS I admit we're in a bit of a rough patch. The strain is even showing on the chickens.

LYDIA The Senate's got it wrong! They should *decrease* taxes. (Quickly). But still award subsidies to artists, of course!

DAEDALUS Perhaps I need to take a new approach. One that would appeal to a broader audience. I could carve brooches. Girls love that sort of thing.

- TAKUS Daedalus, can we drop the artistic tripe and think like businessman for a moment? If you use a different source for your stone, the savings will be substantial.
- DAEDALUS I know exactly who you have in mind! Giorgio!
- TAKUS The man is without fault!
- DAEDALUS I don't know about the man. His stones are sallow. The crystals are ill-formed and the veins are coarse.
- TAKUS These qualities become irrelevant under a coat of paint.
- DAEDALUS Not qualities! Flaws!
- TAKUS Giorgio's quarry is but half a day away. The cost of transporting stone would plummet.
- DAEDALUS You're rather like my son, aren't you? Cursed with a narrow vision.
- TAKUS You're wrong. About both of us. My sights are as high and wide as the sky. It's you who lack scope.
- DAEDALUS You've been consorting with Lydia.
- TAKUS All I'm saying, with a little adjustment in how things are run, we could all be rich. (Sneezes). Lydia, can't you do something about all these feathers?
- LYDIA You want I should manufacture pillows so you can sell them for a profit?
- TAKUS A pass of the broom now and then is all I'm asking! I swear, every time I turn around his collection of birds has grown.
- LYDIA You are not responsible for this in any way?
- DAEDALUS He's managed to teach a number of them tricks. Did you see?

TAKUS That's just dandy. I'll make a note on my to-do list: build a bird emporium so Icarus can entertain the public with his flock and support us in our old age.

DAEDALUS I particularly like the pair of finches. Who pluck the strings of his lyre.

TAKUS May I tell Giorgio we accept his proposal?

DAEDALUS Do I have a choice?

MINOS (Enters with a soldier). Daedalus!

DAEDALUS King Minos. Delighted! Shall I have Takus bring the usual?

MINOS I won't have any scornful talk, Daedalus. I am not a happy king.

DAEDALUS Sorry to hear that.

MINOS Shame, shame, shame! Where is that boy of yours?

DAEDALUS Outside, decorating eggs to celebrate the advent of spring.

MINOS Have him brought here. (TAKUS exits). You divulged the secret of the labyrinth! To whom, I want to know. No one is exonerated. Not even the boy!

DAEDALUS King Minos, I fear your passion for theatrics has warped your powers of reason.

MINOS Don't patronize me, you *mason*!

DAEDALUS King Minos, I do not bear such insults kindly.

MINOS How did Theseus acquire the answer!?

DAEDALUS Theseus? I never met him.

MINOS Oh, don't be snide! I didn't say you did!

DAEDALUS Did the minotaur escape?

MINOS No, no, no! It is my daughter, Ariadne, who escaped. She ran off with Theseus. That is, I mean to say, Theseus kidnapped her.

DAEDALUS So the minotaur is still confined.

MINOS The minotaur is dead!!! Killed by Theseus.

DAEDALUS Well, I should think you'd be delighted.

MINOS There was never an issue with the beast!

DAEDALUS (Smiling). The labyrinth functioned beautifully, then?

MINOS Do stop gloating.

DAEDALUS You are not relieved, King Minos, that you no longer have to supply the monster with the flesh of humans?

MINOS What did I care? The victims were foreigners, subjects of my foe.

DAEDALUS (Sarcastically). Immigrants. Oh, yes. Quite different.

MINOS It worked nicely. Until Theseus came along.

DAEDALUS I shouldn't worry none too much, King Minos. Your daughter may come to fancy her captor.

MINOS I've deduced she already does. Who told Ariadne? That's what I wish to know. Other than you, who knows the secret of the labyrinth?

DAEDALUS Any old fool could reason his way out.

MINOS The labyrinth held its secret for years. I'm convinced there was no easy escape.

DAEDALUS Perhaps Theseus is gifted. Or possesses royal blood. Like you.

MINOS Rebuke me! But you were involved; I've no doubt of that!

DAEDALUS The law requires proof, King Minos.

MINOS To hell with the law! I find you guilty of treason and hereby sentence you and your son to prison for an indeterminate amount of time.

DAEDALUS My son? Why Icarus?

MINOS On the assumption you've entrusted him with the secret, as well.

DAEDALUS Assumption? Treason? This is political blasphemy!

MINOS To think we had such a beautiful friendship.

DAEDALUS Where is it written a citizen can be arrested without proof?

MINOS It is the prerogative of kings to overlook the law. . . when the need arises.

LYDIA (Steps forward). I was responsible. Go on, Daedalus. Tell him. I provided the answer.

MINOS A woman?!

LYDIA I personally told Ariadne how one might escape the labyrinth.

MINOS Yes, and on my way here I saw goats grazing in the clouds.

LYDIA You deny the cleverness of women?

MINOS (To guard). Chain him!

LYDIA Take me!

DAEDALUS No, Lydia. The blame lies with me. I'm the one who should be punished.

ICARUS (Enters). Papa! What's going on?

MINOS The boy, too.

DAEDALUS Not my son. He's innocent.

ICARUS What did I tell you, Papa?

MINOS There! His words incriminate him! They're in collusion.

DAEDALUS King Minos, I have one simple question. Since the labyrinth is no longer needed, why does it matter that its secret is known?

MINOS I want to know what the boy meant!

DAEDALUS It was a private joke. Between father and son.

ICARUS (While being chained). Where are we going?

DAEDALUS To a chicken pen of sorts, I suspect. Quite south of here.

ICARUS Will we be gone a long time?

DAEDALUS That depends on the temperament of our guard.

ICARUS Takus, I shall return with stories. Wait and see.

LYDIA Would you like to take Perse with you?

MINOS No servants!

LYDIA Perse's a pigeon.

ICARUS A dove!

MINOS Filthy creatures! Their cooing spooks me.

TAKUS It would mean a great deal to the boy.

LYDIA Surely no bird will disrupt your affairs of state.

MINOS (Consenting to take the bird). If I discover so much as one dropping upon my luggage, the bird is roasted! (TAKUS exits).

ICARUS Thank you, King Minos. Do you know the dove is the symbol of Venus?

MINOS I despise Aphrodite.

ICARUS Aphrodite is the goddess of love.

MINOS Love! Please! It's over-rated.

ICARUS Do you like the crow? It is the bird of Apollo.

MINOS Crows are loathsome. Apollo . . . is tolerable.

ICARUS I was once given a crow. Briefly.

MINOS There's but one bird I could entertain as a friend.

ICARUS The peacock!

MINOS How did you guess?!

TAKUS (Enters with the pigeon and gives it to ICARUS). Stories, Icarus. Stories. And a sack of grain, to humor him.

LYDIA What shall we do with the shop?

DAEDALUS Lock it up, I say, and take a vacation.

TAKUS Giorgo is going to be crushed. I practically promised him the contract.

 (MINOS, DAEDALUS, ICARUS and SOLDIER exit).

TAKUS What did Icarus say to Daedalus. Do you have any idea?

LYDIA Not something I'd repeat to Minos. I'll tell you that!

TAKUS Sounds scandalous.

LYDIA From the time they first met, Icarus called King Minos a nasty chicken-chasing fox-king.

SCENE FIVE
THE BALCONY OF A PRISON TOWER

(DAEDALUS and ICARUS are standing by the ledge, observing the horizon).

ICARUS Do you think Perse made it back home?

DAEDALUS There's no doubt in my mind. Perse is perched on the hand of Lydia right now, eating oats.

ICARUS I sometimes worry about my birds.

DAEDALUS I'm sure they're well taken care of.

ICARUS Takus wouldn't sell them, would he?

DAEDALUS No. Before we left, I expressly forbid it.

ICARUS What did you write on the note we attached to Perse's foot?

DAEDALUS That's a secret.

ICARUS Okay.

DAEDALUS Something I should have said a long time ago.

ICARUS I wish I could write. I'm not a very good student, am I?

DAEDALUS We each learn in our own way, dear boy.

ICARUS Are we in a labyrinth?

DAEDALUS Yes, I suppose we are.

ICARUS Couldn't we fly home, if we had wings?

DAEDALUS What a pretty idea! I suppose it should be explored. Anything's possible.

ICARUS Really? You like the idea?

DAEDALUS Do you think we should try?

ICARUS I do!

DAEDALUS You are a delight to your father, boy.

- ICARUS If it happened, if we learned to fly, wouldn't that make a wonderful story?
- DAEDALUS It won't be easy. I'll have to manufacture a snare to capture the birds who alight here, so we can harvest their feathers.
- ICARUS We shall have to kill them?
- DAEDALUS I'm afraid so.
- ICARUS Maybe flying home isn't such a good idea, after all.
- DAEDALUS What do you suggest?
- ICARUS Can't we just gather the feathers they leave behind?
- DAEDLAUS Do you know how long that would take? To collect a bag of molted feathers?
- ICARUS I can wait.
- DAEDALUS Then, I'll wait with you. Meanwhile, We'll bore a hole between the stones and try to attract a few bees. With a little encouragement, they may build a hive in the rafters.
- ICARUS (Fearful). We're not so sure we like bees.
- DAEDALUS I'll need their wax. With wax and feathers I'll fashion two pair of wings for our escape.

SCENE SIX
PALACE OF KING COCALOS OF SICILY

(CYRENE, sixteen, the daughter of KING COCALOS, is fawning over DAEDALUS, who is carving a wooden figure).

- CYRENE What are you making today, Daedalus?
- DAEDALUS I thought, perhaps, a bear who claps his paws when you pull his tail.
- CYRENE Bears don't have tails!

- DAEDALUS This one does.
- CYRENE All your toys make me laugh, Daedalus, but you seem so sad.
- DAEDALUS I'll try to lift my spirits.
- CYRENE Father says you're the cleverest man in all of Greece. He's honored to have you as his secret guest.
- DAEDALUS It is difficult to hide out here...when all I want to do is return home.
- CYRENE You know that's impossible. If you were captured, King Minos would have you killed.
- COCALOS (Enters). Daedalus, I come to warn you. King Minos has appeared unexpectedly at the palace gates. He brings a small entourage and they seek a meal and lodging. Custom says I cannot turn him away. I suspect his intentions are not pure.
- DAEDALUS We predicted this.
- CYRENE King Minos! I must have a peek at the face of that notorious rogue. (Exits).
- DAEDALUS So . . . like a blood hound, Minos has sniffed me out.
- COCALOS I'll do my best to confine him to the main palace, but Minos has roving eyes.
- DAEDALUS If it ends here, Cocalos, let me take a moment to thank you for your hospitality.
- COCALOS It was . . . *is* . . . a delight having you. I'm sorry I don't have a more extensive shop, with tools to serve your imagination.
- CYRENE (Reappears). There's someone to see you, Daedalus.
- LYDIA (Enters). Hello, Deadalus.
- DAEDALUS Lydia!

- LYDIA It's good to see you.
- CYRENE I brought her through a back passage, without the knowledge of King Minos.
- DAEDALUS You're with King Minos?
- LYDIA I had hoped to see your son.
- DAEDALUS Lost.
- LYDIA I'm sorry.
- CYRENE Excuse me. (Exits).
- DAEDALUS You're looking well.
- LYDIA Tales of your escape are widespread. I expected to see you both.
- DAEDALUS Icarus died by my hands, I'm afraid.
- LYDIA There's no need to talk of it.
- DAEDALUS I wish to. (Pause). After many months of manufacturing a pair of wings, on a clear brilliant day, we climbed to the highest tower of our prison. "Fly as high as possible," I told him, "to catch a strong current that it might transport you swiftly to Sicily." We stood on the ledge and smiled at one another. I jumped. My son followed. High up he rose, joyful in his journey, thinking, I suppose, of his beloved pets back home. And then . . . (Long pause). The rays of sun began to melt the wax that held him in the sky. I saw him fall. Helpless. Without malice. Into the sea.
- LYDIA My dear dear man.
- DAEDALUS Icarus never learned to swim. Still, he insisted on the trip. Such was the depth of his trust in my work. In my words.
- LYDIA Why would he doubt you? He never had reason to.
- DAEDALUS Do you think he forgives me?

- LYDIA There is no need of forgiveness . . . because he never blamed you. I'm sure of it.
- DAEDALUS Thank you.
- LYDIA Icarus perished. You survived. How?
- DAEDALUS (Smiles). A victim of my profession, I'm afraid. I'd filled my pockets with pretty stones I'd collected in prison. Hobbled by their weight, I never reached the heights of my son.
- LYDIA Always the old scavenging bird.
- DAEDALUS As Icarus said, "Papa, you're a magpie!" (Kisses her). Did Perse, that old pigeon, ever return?
- LYDIA He did. With a very special note. (Kisses him. Pause). I'm afraid there's not much left of the homestead, Daedalus.
- DAEDALUS It may have lost its usefulness anyway, Lydia.
- LYDIA Everything was in order until King Minos showed up with his soldiers. That's how we learned of your escape. He ravaged the house, swearing he'd stop at nothing until he found you. He took me prisoner, convinced I'd lead him to you.
- DAEDALUS When Minos discovers you missing from his party, he'll come looking for you.
- LYDIA I can't stay long.
- DAEDALUS What happened to all those beloved birds?
- LYDIA When I heard Minos was on his way, I opened all the cages. It sounds peculiar, but it was a pretty sight, seeing all those birds take to the sky. The chickens didn't fly, of course. They just scuttled over to the bakery to feast on scraps. What is the expression? The fox was outfoxed. (Smiles). I was dreading having to tell Icarus I let his birds go free. Now I wouldn't mind at all.
- DAEDALUS (After a pause. Quietly). What of Takus?

- LYDIA When Takus discovered the enduring qualities of the paint concocted by your son -- egg yokes mixed with the dust of stone -- he began to market and sell the product to artists all over Greece. His dream is coming true. He's becoming rich.
- DAEDALUS But how did you decipher my location?
- LYDIA I didn't. The credit goes to Minos. He concocted a challenge to undo your cover: "Anyone who can pass a thread through the chambers of a shell will receive a bountiful reward!" It was King Cocalos, your guardian, who claimed the prize.
- COCALOS Yes! Instructed by Daedalus, I bored a hole in the end of the shell. I tied a thread to the leg of an ant, nudged the insect inside, and closed the hole. When the ant came out the other end it had navigated all the corridors, leaving behind the trail of thread.
- LYDIA From the outset, King Minos predicted only Daedalus could solve the riddle.
- COCALOS And he was right. Moments ago, when Minos gave me the reward, he said, "Cocalos, you are not clever enough to devise such a plan. Only Daedalus could have divined the solution."
- DAEDALUS It wasn't I who stumbled upon the answer.
- COCALOS What do you mean?
- DAEDALUS It was Lydia's idea. I was inspired by her solution to the riddle of the labyrinth. "Give Theseus a spool of thread to chart his escape." The credit goes to her.
- COCALOS Congratulations, Lydia. Meanwhile Minos remains convinced you're a refugee in my palace. What's to be done?

PUPPET INTERLUDE 4. This is performed in a modified style of Bunraku. A King Minos puppet – operated by three puppeteers - will march down a series of halls trying to locate DAEDALUS. The halls are represented by two narrow, moving tables (3 feet by 18 inches) that are repositioned throughout his search. Minos will interact with the puppeteers, getting

their approval or non-verbal input. Minos will be angered by some of the situations he encounters and blame those situations on the puppeteers. Underscored with music.

PUPPETEERS (In Unison). King Minos Continues his Mad Search for Daedalus.

Minos walks. Steps from one table to another, as they come together. Minos turns a corner. Walks. Stops. Looks right. Quick look left. Slow scan right.

PUPPETEER I know you're here, Daedalus. I can smell you.

Minos puppet comes to gap between two tables. He checks in with puppeteers. He jumps from one table to the next. Walks. Stops.

PUPPETEER Knock. Knock. I'm coming to get you, Daedalus!

Minos comes to another gap. Minos crosses the gap, as if on a tightrope. Walks. Appears to come to a dead end. Turns around. Table moves. Minos rides it, as if on a surfboard. Tables come together. Minos steps onto adjacent table and continues walking. Puppeteer slaps table. Minos jumps. He is angry. Minos kneels and places ear against tabletop. Minos looks under table. Minos rises. Walks. Comes to gap. Begins to step across the gap, but the table moves, widening the gap. Minos titters, recovers and steps back. Table motions for puppeteers to narrow gap. The gap is narrowed. Minos tests the situation. For a second time, the table moves, increasing the gap. Minos lays prone, between the two tables and pulls the "delinquent" table to him, closing the gap. Minos steps on table and as it moves, he Minos rides with it, as if on a carnival ride. Minos encounters another small gap. Steps across gap. Tables separate cause Minos to go into a full leg split. Minos uses the strength of his legs to bring the tables together. Walks. Stamps foot.

PUPPETEER Can you hear the clock ticking, Daedalus?

Cyrene appears and beckons to him. Minos winds up and takes a flying leap, landing in the arms of Cyrene. Cyrene lays Minos puppet on table and covers it with her shawl.

CYRENE Father. King Minos is dead.

COCALOS Surely you jest.

- CYRENE Daedalus, remember when you told me the story of Medea and King Pelias -- with puppets?
- DAEDALUS I do.
- CYRENE Medea convinced the daughters of King Pelias to have their father jump into a pot of boiling oil and pulled out a skeleton.
- COCALOS No!
- CYRENE It was a wonderful effect, Papa!
- COCALOS You didn't!
- CYRENE Well, it didn't happen exactly like that. But pretty close.
- COCALOS This is how you educate my daughter? With puppets and tales of violence?
- DAEDALUS An exceedingly practical lesson, I'd say.
- CYRENE At my sister's urging, I invited King Minos into my bedroom. We barred the door then showered him with hot oil from the rafters.
- COCALOS This will mean war. It's time for you to leave, Daedalus.
- DAEDALUS I understand.
- COCALOS Believe me, my decree comes with utmost regret.
- DAEDALUS There is no call for war. Attribute the death of King Minos to me. Publicly expel me and you can wash your hands of the whole affair.
- COCALOS I will see that you are given ample supplies for your journey. (Shakes the hand of DAEDALUS and exits).
- DAEDALUS (Locates a hidden object. Addresses LYDIA). It's time to leave this prison. And I would be most pleased to have you join me.
- LYDIA It's a carving of a little boy with wings.

DAEDALUS (Takes and holds up figure). Come, my dear, let's put on a pair of wings and jump.

THE END