Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Monster Boy. Minotaur Maze (Monster Boy, 8) by Shoo Rayner ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/902. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Shoo Rayner

Monster Boy. Minotaur Maze (Monster Boy, 8)

United Kingdom (2010)

TAGS: Labyrinth Minotaur





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Monster Boy. Minotaur Maze (Monster Boy, 8)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	Shoo Rayner, *Monster Boy: Minotaur Maze*. London: Orchard Books, 2010, 48 pp.
ISBN	9781408302477
Genre	Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children (6–10)
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

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Creators



Shoo Rayner , b. 1956
(Author, Illustrator)

Shoo (Hugh) Rayner is an author, illustrator, and teacher of drawing. He was born in Kingston-upon-Thames, the child of a member of the British Army who moved around the world. He spent his childhood in Germany, Pakistan, Yemen, and the United Kingdom. He is a graduate of Anglia Ruskin University (formerly Cambridge College of Art and Technology). He lives in Gloucestershire, near the Forest of Dean.He has illustrated over 250 books, and has two successful Youtube sites teaching drawing (Shoo Rayner Drawing, and Draw Stuff Real Easy).

Rayner creates picture books and middle-grade fiction for children. He admits that after failing his English O level he developed a visual approach to writing and telling stories. He refers to himself as a "storyteller illustrator" (see here, accessed: December 4, 2019). His published output is prolific: he has published a large number of series of Early Readers for children, including the *Lydia* series, the *Victor* series, the *Little Horror*s series, the *Ginger Ninja* series, the *Monster Boy* series, and the *Olympia* series.

Rayner's work in these series involves simple, easy-to-read stories, aimed at readers "at the most important stage of reading development where they can be put off, or enthused for life." (*Something about the Author*, 169)

Sources:

Official website (accessed: December 4, 2019)

Official channel on You Tube (accessed: December 4, 2019)

DrawStuffRealEasy, channel on You Tube (accessed: December 4, 2019)

Profile at en.wikipedia.org (accessed: April 6, 2019)

'Hugh (Shoo) Rayner,' *Something About the Author,* Ed. Lisa Kumar.

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Vol. 151. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2004, p. 168-171.

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

Questionnaire

Response to author's questionnaire on Author's Vimeo channel (accessed: April 4, 2019).

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Additional information

Summary

Monster Boy: Minotaur Maze is the 8th in a series of chapter books for early readers, in which the protagonist, Connor, is the Ministry of Monster's number one secret agent, helping keep peace in the forest where they all live. Connor's mother is a gargoyle, and his father is a human. In *Minotaur Maze*, while Connor's parents talk with farmer Maisie whose produce shop lacks customers, Connor is called to his latest Monster Mission when Mino the Minotaur goes missing in the Tangled Wood. Connor and his flying dog Trixie head to the Tangled Wood to investigate, Connor flying in his special gyrocopter. They see that the Wood has formed a kind of maze, and Trixie spies a large creature heading into the nearby Fearwell Mine. Connor types its description into his MiPod, which produces a report: "Distinguishing Features: Minotaurs have the head of a bull and the body of a hairy ape-like man. Preferred Habitat: Dark caves and mazes. Essential Information: "Some Minotaurs are especially fond of eating children and young people. They are not very good at reading maps or solving puzzles." (p. 22). Tying a string to his gyrocoptor, Connor goes into the mine with Trixie. After their torch goes out, they bump into Mino the Minotaur. "Please don't eat me!" Connor begs the Minotaur, who reassures him that Minotaurs no longer eat people, having become vegetarians, and disliking the additives that humans are full of these days. Mino adds that he has got lost in his own maze, and asks for help to get out. The trio follow the string back to the light. On their return home, they discover a new role for Mino – helping farmer Maisie design a maze in her maize field. She pays him in organic vegetables. The story ends with Connor and his family racing to the centre of Mino's maze of Maize.

Analysis

Monster Boy: Minotaur Maze is a chapter book for early readers. Its large print, large simple illustrations, and gentle storytelling provide a simple introduction to well-known monsters in Classical and other mythologies. The setting, in a magical forest, where humans and monsters coexist, sets it in a long tradition of myth and folklore, where the forest functions as a liminal magical realm. Rayner defangs the monsters, giving them peaceful habits – making the Minotaur a vegetarian, for instance, who needs help. The Minotaur's story is not connected to its ancient Greek origins, and no explanation is given, beyond Connor's MiPod readout, which suggests that the story's main

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	aim is to entertain and to encourage young readers to extend their vocabulary and their frame of reference, incorporating the Minotaur myth into a mixed-up magical/mythological realm in which figures from different traditions coexist. Other books in the series with Classical monsters include *Gorgon Gaze* and *Siren Spell*; the remainder engage with monsters from other traditions (*Dino Destroyer, Mummy Menace, Dragon Danger, Werewolf Wall, Ogre Outrage*).
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Labyrinth Minotaur
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Environment Family Humour

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