Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Theseus and the Minotaur by Diane Buttress", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/917. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Diane Buttress

Theseus and the Minotaur

United Kingdom (2013)

TAGS: Minotaur Theseus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Theseus and the Minotaur
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2013
First Edition Details	Diane Buttress, *Theseus and the Minotaur.* Amazon Kindle, 2013, 15 pp.
ISBN	ASIN: B00BMDRVIS
Genre	Adaptations, Myths, Poetry
Target Audience	Children (5–10 (primary school age))
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Diane Buttress , b. 1975
(Author)

Diane Buttress is a British primary school teacher and a children author from Leicester. According to her Amazon biography, she trained to be a primary school teacher, specialising in music, at Homerton College, Cambridge. It is added that her aim is to teach children about various things (such as the British Saints' days) in an entertaining fashion. Buttress prefers writing in verse than in prose. She writes specifically for Kindle.

Source:

Profile at amazon.co.uk (accessed: November 26, 2019).

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University,
ayelet.peer@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Summary

This Kindle edition features a unique retelling of the Minotaur myth, since it is delivered in poetry.

The story is aimed to make the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur accessible to young readers. The story begins when Theseus, the prince of Athens, volunteers to sail to Crete and slay the Minotaur. There is no mention of Daedalus, Minos or even Ariadne. Theseus encounters the Minotaur, kills him and is celebrated as a hero.

Analysis

The introduction to the tale is meant to entice the young readers:

"If you think you're brave enough,

For this tale of blood and gore,

Then step into the labyrinth!

Let's meet the Minotaur…"

There is no real gore inside the actual story, but it helps create curiosity and suspense for the readers. This rendition is also very suitable to be read aloud, in class or at home. The short, rhythmical lines present the events in simple sentences which the children can understand.

Numerous books have delineated the duel between Theseus and the Minotaur, to name a few: Geraldine McCaughrean presented a critique biography of the mythological hero in her *Theseus* (2003); Saviour Pirotta offered a very remote story from the original myth, in *My Cousin the Minotaur* (2017), in which the Minotaur was a cursed human; Valentina Orlando followed the tale according to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with accompanying lavish illustrations by Celina Elmi in *Ovid for Fun* (2012).

Yet while all of these were retellings of the myth, none ventured to present the myth in rhymed verse.

Reading the story as a rhyming poem makes it a bit more lighthearted and may be more easily understood by young readers. It is an

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

interesting attempt. However, the story as it is presented completely omits any mention of Ariadne, without whose contribution, Theseus would not have left the labyrinth alive.

It appears as if the author aims at quite young readership and wishes to familiarize the readers with the adventures and excitement of the ancient myths. The story is written in clear and accessible language. For example, the author describes how Aegeus and Theseus lived in a palace:

"They lived in a mighty palace,

With gold and jewels and all that bling".

By the end of her book, the author makes an association between the poet of old and the continued reception of the myth:

"And poets will remember him,

Of his heroic deeds they'll sing!

And maybe…just maybe…

When 3000 years have gone

People will still tell his story.

The Minotaur legend lives on…"

With her own poem, the author links herself to the poets of old, who sang the praises of Theseus and other heroes. She continues following their example and the children who read or hear this tale are also therefore connected to a larger chain of reception which engulfs Greek Mythology. There is no "maybe" since we already have a modern version of the tale, thus it is affirmed that the legend of the Minotaur continues to fascinate audience after three millennia.

As noted, the author prefers to maintain Theseus vanquishing a monstrous being as the core of the story, without any darker implications such as the suicide of Aegeus and the tales of Daedalus and Ariadne. Therefore the young readers get what is hopefully an intriguing glimpse or taste of the ancient world and perhaps it would encourage them to seek the full story later.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Minotaur Theseus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Heroism Success and failure

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.