



The Shadow of the Minotaur

Wendy Leighton-Porter

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Ten-year-old twins Joe and Jemima Lancelot continue the search for their missing parents who are trapped somewhere in the past. Together with their friend, Charlie, and their unusual talking cat, Max, they are whisked back in time to ancient Crete and the palace of Knossos, where the fearsome Minotaur resides in its labyrinth, feeding on human flesh. Can they help Prince Theseus of Athens overcome the terrifying monster before it devours them all? And will the children survive the terrible storm which threatens to wreck their ship as they attempt to flee the island?

The Shadow of the Minotaur Details

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From Reader Review The Shadow of the Minotaur for online ebook

Iona Carroll says

Once again the intrepid three children and their marvellous talking cat, Max are time travelling. This time their destination is Ancient Crete. On the trail to find Mr and Mrs Lancelot, they find themselves on a ship with Prince Theseus and other young Athenians. All are destined to become sacrificial food for the legendary Minotaur. This ghastly creature, half man, half bull lives in a labyrinth of tunnels and it is the goal of Theseus to slay the beast before it can devour him and his young companions.

We meet friends the children made in Atlantis (the first Shadow from the Past book). This cleverly gives continuity to the series. As usual, the story moves along at a good pace and there are plenty of grizzly bits and cliff hangers to keep the young, and not so young, readers guessing. And once again, heroic Max comes to the rescue.

There is a map of Ancient Crete and a pronunciation guide of Greek names. Both helpful additions to the story and there's plenty of hints for more stories to come. I'm sure that the many fans of the Shadows from the Past series will be delighted. Wendy Leighton-Porter is a writer who can bring Ancient History alive and make it entertaining as well.

Cheryl Carpinello says

Enjoyed the first book-The Shadow of Atlantis-and was anxious to read more. I liked this story based on the Greek myth of Theseus and the minotaur of Crete. Always one of my favorites, Wendy's story adds a new spin on this adventure. Joe, Jemima, Charlie, and Max the cat continue the search for Joe and Jemima's parents and find themselves on a ship along with Theseus and other young Athenians on their way to Crete as sacrifices to the Minotaur. The kids find out that heroes don't always act heroic, and I think this is one of the main points of the story. Don't want to spoil this for others. Definitely would encourage young readers and those young-at-heart to read this and the other books in the Shadows of the Past series.

Barbara Ann says

This is the second book in a planned fifteen book series which takes three children and a Tonkinese cat on a series of time travel adventures. Twins Joe and Jemima live with their Uncle Richard since their parents mysteriously disappeared. In the first book of the series, the twins journey with their talking cat, Max and their friend Charlie back in time to Atlantis in search of their parents. Using the same magic bird golden charms, they continue on their search in book two to ancient Greece. The reader meets Prince Theseus, the son of King Aegeus about to be sent with seven women and six other men as tribute to King Minos. They must kill the half human and half bull Minotaur and escape the labyrinth deep in the bowls of the palace of Knossos or sacrifice themselves.

The children and Max find themselves on the Greek ship traveling to Knossos where they meet Theseus. They instruct him to use a ball of wool to guide him through the maze and assure him that he will succeed in his quest. He learns that the king's daughter Princess Ariadne will assist him. King Aegeus asks that Theseus change the black sails to white sails when he returns as a sign that he has been successful, but the outlook is

bleak as no one has ever returned alive from this mission. When the ship arrives in Crete, the children are shocked to meet Medon and his family, the very same family that helped them escape from Atlantis! They present Jemima with a disc of terracotta in Linear B script bearing the name of their baby, Jemima who has been named after her. Medon helps them find the palace of Knossos. Princess Ariadne bribes a guard and helps the Athenians. She hopes to escape her cruel father and travel back to Athens with Theseus. When the plans go awry, she places Max the talking cat in a basket and sends him back to Medon for help. Meanwhile our heroes and the Athenians are trapped in the labyrinth trying to kill the Minotaur and escape. They face numerous perils and a gruesome task for Theseus has pledged to bring back the head of the beast as a trophy.

The author adds some modern technology to the myth and develops the characters well in interesting fashion. The plot moves along at a quick pace alternating between scenes at the palace, the ship, and our three modern time travelers. I would have loved to have seen a few illustrations of the more dramatic scenes interwoven with the story. Tweens and young adults will love the mixture of ancient myth, spunky characters and modern technology woven together in the book. Readers who wish to continue the adventure series will find themselves back in time within the Trojan horse in the third book of this series.

Oliver Eade says

Another Shadow from the Past to delight and inform children. Whilst Theseus is being sent, along with other terrified young Greeks, by King Aegeus to face almost certain death at the hands of the Minotaur in ancient Crete, Jemima and John and their young neighbour, Charlie, assisted by the irrepressible talking Tonkinese cat, Max, take on another chapter of their leather-bound volume, *Shadows of the Past*. Wendy Leighton-Porter draws the reader, young and old, into the unfolding story with her masterly writing full of both excitement and humour (Max can be uproarious!). Children, after reading this, will feel inspired to find out more about the amazing story of Theseus and the Minotaur. A fabulous book!

Fiona Ingram says

The adventures of twins Jemima and Joe, their talking Tonkinese cat Max, and their best friend Charlie continue with another trip back into the past using the magic book they found in their uncle's attic. Their previous adventures began with a time travel trip to Atlantis in search of their parents, who have mysteriously disappeared. The book, *Shadows of the Past*, (which belonged to their missing parents) opens to the second chapter, and the poem (a clue) that begins the chapter indicates the adventure concerns the Minotaur and the Athenian prince Theseus. They unhesitatingly step into the past, and find themselves embroiled in an adventure that's a lot more dangerous than the previous one. Theseus is rather a selfish, absent-minded hero, and without the kids' and Max's good ideas, will he even manage to slay the Minotaur at all? With the help of Princess Ariadne (King Minos' daughter) and of course Max's vital intervention, they need to achieve their mission and make it back to the present day.

Having read *The Shadow of Atlantis*, I confess I couldn't wait to go on another time travel trip with this trio (or should that be quartet?). Author Wendy Leighton-Porter has an amazing knack of placing her heroes right smack into situations that are potentially big and scary (and this one is uber-scary) and then letting them work out the escape routes by using their brains. The kids are refreshingly honest. They don't let arrogant

Theseus steal all the glory. They are also very brave and inventive. They reaffirm the bonds of friendship and loyalty, and isn't that what kids should be learning in life lessons. It's not easy to do the right thing when situations are frightening and dangerous, but our young heroes, human and feline, persevere against all odds. The adventures will continue as the kids search for the twins' parents, but their renewed hope brings a new and positive slant to their escapades. This is a fantastic way of getting young readers interested in ancient myths and legends, and in realising that history is not dry as dust, but is vibrant and exciting. All the characters are believable and wonderfully drawn. Max, of course, quite steals the limelight!

Annaliese Matheron says

My Daughter loves the Shadow series, the first book The Shadow of Atlantis totally had her hooked and this second book didn't disappoint.

The books are great at exciting a knowledge for history and are wonderfully written with lots of endearing characters and action to keep young readers entertained.

The Shadow of the Minotaur is a great read and we can't wait for the next in the series

Jemima Pett says

The Shadow of the Minotaur is the second in Wendy Leighton-Porter's Shadows from the Past series. These books really appeal to me since they deal with a bit of history I did at school. I loved Greek Myths, and at present that's the era that Wendy Leighton-Porter is treating us to, with the adventures of Jemima and Joe, and their friend Charlie, and Max the cat.

The second in the series picks up from The Shadow of Atlantis and sends Jemima, Joe and Charlie (and Max) off to a ship travelling from Athens to Crete. It's just over a year since they visited Atlantis, and there is a delightful meeting, or should I say reunion, with the family they persuaded to flee from Atlantis before it was too late. The first half of the book is an interesting mix of holidaying and news gathering, with an underlying issue of the sacrifice to the Minotaur of the Athenian young people, who were on the ship they arrived on.

Suddenly it gets serious, and our heroes are at the entrance to the labyrinth where the Minotaur awaits his dinner, i.e. a human sacrifice or several. Theseus seems not quite the hero we read of in the myths. The story twists and turns much like the labyrinth and continues to do so right to the end.

I found this to be very much a book of two halves – one light and enjoyable, the other adventurous, exciting and sometimes unexpected. Maybe setting up the story works well with the more touristic approach, but I couldn't wait to get to the action. However, as one who holds the memory of those buildings and painted walls of the palace at Knossos from a very early history lesson, I found it deeply satisfying to be transported there by Ms Leighton-Porter's excellent and detailed descriptions.

It is a book rich with a magical departed culture, and an exciting encounter with a truly horrible monster. Fortunately our heroes (male, female and feline) live to adventure another day. Where next? I'm looking

forward to the Trojan Horse!
