

THE SHADOW
OF THE
MINOTAUR



Wendy Leighton-Porter

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The Shadow of Atlantis

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For Georgiana,
who I know will enjoy reading this story ... apart from the gory bits!

And for my dearest Simon,
as ever.



Prologue



An air of gloom hung over the royal palace as final preparations were made for the departure of the procession. King Aegeus regarded his son sadly. ‘Won’t you reconsider, Theseus?’ he said. ‘You don’t have to go, you know. There are plenty of others who could take your place.’

‘It’s my duty to Athens,’ replied the prince. ‘I intend to make sure this is the last time we send any of our people to such a hideous death.’ Theseus, a tall and handsome youth, who took his role as the son of King Aegeus very seriously, spoke with confidence and pride. ‘I’m going to kill that revolting creature and then come home safe and sound. I won’t fail, Father, so don’t be afraid.’

For many years now the people of Athens had witnessed the annual departure of the flower of their youth, sent to the island of Crete to be eaten by the Minotaur, a monster rumoured to be half-man, half-bull. This sacrifice of seven young Athenian men and seven young women was demanded by Minos, the king of Crete. In the past he had attacked Athens many times and his plundering armies had almost ruined the city, but now, in return for the yearly delivery of Athenians to feed the beast he kept in his labyrinth, he had promised to leave them in peace.

This year, however, Prince Theseus had decided enough was enough and put himself forward to be one of the sacrificial victims travelling to Crete. Once there, he planned to slay the Minotaur, before returning to Athens unharmed, together with his fellow travellers. Never again would his nation have to suffer the sorrow of sending its youngsters to a grisly fate.

A court official entered the royal chamber and, bowing low, addressed the king. ‘It’s time to leave, Your Majesty. The procession is ready and the crowds are waiting outside the palace.’

King Aegeus blinked back his tears and embraced his son. 'Promise me one thing. When your task is complete and you're on the way home, remember to change the black sails on the ship for white ones. I'll be scanning the horizon for those white sails every day to know that my son is coming back to me.'

'I promise, Father,' replied Theseus. 'I shall return in glory and all of Athens will rejoice. Just you wait and see.'

The royal party left the palace and joined the throng waiting outside. The procession made its way out of the city, down towards the harbour at Piraeus. A mournful wailing accompanied them as they travelled along the route, the families of the victims standing on tiptoe and craning their necks for one final glimpse of their loved ones as they filed past.

At the harbourside sailors helped the terrified youngsters to board the ship, its black sails a mark of the nation's grief. As each young person passed him Theseus spoke to them, laying a calming hand on their trembling shoulders. 'Don't be scared, we'll all be coming home soon. I'll make sure you see your families again.' Before boarding the ship himself he ran back towards the king and embraced him for the last time. 'I won't let you down, Father.'

Choked with emotion, Aegeus struggled to speak through his tears. 'The sails, Theseus, don't forget the sails.'

'I won't,' replied his son as he leapt eagerly aboard, excitement coursing through his entire body at the prospect of what lay ahead. In his mind's eye he already imagined his heroic return when he came back to Athens, carrying the head of the Minotaur.

The breeze filled its black sails and the ship slipped out of the harbour to the pitiful weeping of those left behind on the quayside. Thirteen young men and women gazed back with tear-stained faces, taking one last look at their families and their homeland. Only Theseus turned his head away from the port, staring eagerly out to sea as the thrill of the unknown beckoned to him.

Chapter 1



Jemima awoke with a start as Max stretched out his back feet and kicked her. She turned to look at him lying next to her, his head on the pillow. Having to put up with his snoring was bad enough, she reflected, without him booting her as well. Max slept like a person rather than a cat and, being exceptionally large, he did take up quite a lot of the bed.

Jemima smiled at his twitching paws and whiskers – he seemed to be dreaming about catching some imaginary prey, which made her laugh as he'd never managed to catch a single thing in his entire life. In fact he was pretty useless when it came to being a cat, in all honesty. In Max's own words though, and he was surprisingly a creature of many words, he didn't really consider himself to be a cat, more a furry person with four legs and a tail - and a rather handsome one at that.

Jemima reached out a hand, stroking the soft, creamy fur along his flank before smoothing back the whiskers on his mushroom-coloured face. A pair of sleepy turquoise eyes flicked open and gazed back at her.

'Good morning, Jemima,' he said with a yawn. 'Did you sleep well?'

'I might have done,' she replied. 'If I'd had a bit more of the bed.'

'You do exaggerate,' answered Max, a touch of huffiness in his voice.

Anyone else would perhaps have been rather alarmed to hear this conversation taking place between Jemima and her cat, but she herself had become quite used to the fact that Max could talk. Thanks to the bird-shaped charm which he wore on his collar, he was able to understand everything people said to him and, even more amazingly, he could speak too. Max maintained he'd always known what humans were saying, even before he'd been given the owl charm, but they were just too dim to

understand him in return.

‘Is it breakfast time yet, do you think?’ he asked hopefully, food never being very far from his thoughts.

‘I suppose so,’ answered Jemima. ‘Let’s go and see if Joe’s downstairs.’

Joe was Jemima’s brother and, since the mysterious disappearance of their parents several months before, the ten-year-old twins had lived with their Uncle Richard at his house in London. After the police failed to uncover what had become of James and Isabel Lancelot, everyone presumed they would never return. Joe and Jemima, however, now knew differently.

It had all happened a few days earlier when, together with their new friend Charlie Green who lived next door, the twins found themselves plunged headfirst into an incredible adventure. Whilst looking at an old book which had belonged to their father, they somehow ended up being transported back in time to the fabled land of Atlantis and, whilst there, Joe and Jemima learned their parents had also visited Atlantis not long before them.

The children had also discovered some golden bird-shaped charms in the carved wooden box which contained the mysterious book and were surprised to find, on arriving in Atlantis, that these little birds enabled the wearer to understand and be understood by anyone who spoke a different language. Max, too, now wore one of the golden owls on his collar and, once he was able to communicate with them, confessed to the twins that he’d actually witnessed their mum and dad’s disappearance. He’d seen them vanish inside a strange cloud which had materialised in the attic whilst they’d also been looking at the ancient book. Apparently James and Isabel Lancelot were now trapped somewhere in the past and it would be up to Joe and Jemima to find their parents and bring them home.

‘Hi, Joe,’ said Jemima as she wandered into the kitchen and found her brother sitting at the table, just finishing his breakfast. Mrs Garland, Uncle Richard’s kindly housekeeper, beamed at him as she tried to pile a heap of scrambled eggs on to his plate.

‘Can’t you manage a bit more, a growing lad like you?’ she said. ‘You too,

Jemima. Come and sit down. There's plenty left.'

'Thanks, Mrs Garland, in a minute,' replied Jemima. 'I need to feed Max first or he'll be in a bad mood for the rest of the day.' Max gave her one of his cross looks, but Jemima felt confident he wouldn't dare to answer her back. He knew all about the "not in front of the grown-ups" rule. She winked at him as she put his food down.

'So, is Charlie coming round today?' asked Jemima.

'Yeah, if that's okay, Mrs G?' said Joe with a grin, knowing she wouldn't mind at all. 'We promise not to get under your feet.'

'Of course,' she replied. 'Just as long as you don't make too much noise. I think your uncle's upstairs in his study. He's expecting some important phone calls this morning and doesn't want to be disturbed.'

'Don't worry,' said Jemima. 'I'll keep an eye on the boys so they don't get too rowdy.' She laughed as Joe attempted, and failed, to aim a kick in her direction under the table.

Naturally Joe and Jemima had felt over the moon to discover their parents might still be alive. Trying to adjust to a new life, thinking their mum and dad would never return, had been extremely difficult and painful. But now the twins were filled with excitement at the prospect of finding them, wherever that might be. Of course Joe and Jemima had already tried to explain all this to Uncle Richard, but he just put such fanciful claims down to an over-active imagination, in the same way he hadn't believed their story about travelling to Atlantis. Being a professor of archaeology they thought he might have shown more interest in their description of the ancient city and were rather miffed by his reaction.

So the children decided to keep everything to themselves and to carry on using their father's old book to visit the past, but they certainly wouldn't tell any grown-ups about it. Everyone knew how hopeless adults were when it came to believing anything out of the ordinary. With Max on their side - who'd turned out to be quite a sensible cat in a crisis - they saw no point in letting anyone else in on the secret. In fact Max had even rescued the children from a rather sticky situation in Atlantis and it was only thanks to him they all managed to get back home safe and sound, so they felt sure

they'd be able to rely on him if things got tricky. From now on Joe, Jemima, Charlie and Max were a team and couldn't wait to discover where their travels would take them to next.

Chapter 2



The twins and Charlie crept past Uncle Richard's study door and into the room where their parents' things were stored.

'We'd better make sure he doesn't hear us,' said Joe. 'The last thing we want is him coming in and seeing what we're up to. Go and lock the door, Charlie.'

'Oh hang on a minute,' exclaimed Jemima. 'We can't start without Max. Where's he got to?' She hurried back downstairs, calling to him softly. 'Come on, Max, where are you? We're waiting.'

A scratching noise came from inside the utility room and Jemima peered around the corner just as Max emerged from his litter tray, its door swinging closed on his tail as he hurried out. 'Can't I even go to the loo in peace?' he muttered. 'I thought I'd better go now as I don't know when I'll next get the chance. Do you remember what things were like in Atlantis? All a bit primitive for my liking. I do hope they have litter trays where we're going today.'

Hmm, thought Jemima, *I wouldn't be too sure about that*. She skipped back up the stairs with Max at her heels. On entering the room she closed the door behind them and Charlie turned the key in the lock. Joe had already lifted the carved wooden box down from the shelf and had taken out the ancient, leather-covered volume, entitled "*SHADOWS FROM THE PAST*", which lay on the floor awaiting their attention. Glancing down, Jemima noticed the whole book seemed to be quivering, almost as if it was breathing. However, the children knew the cover wouldn't open until they'd unlocked it with the special key.

Remembering what they did when they first examined the mysterious volume, Jemima took off her necklace, which had once belonged to her mother, and handed Joe the golden chain with its strangely-shaped charm. Feeling the way with his

fingertips Joe soon located the keyhole, cleverly concealed within the intricate pattern adorning the leather cover, and inserted the charm from Jemima's necklace. The children heard the key turn with a quiet click and, at once, the book seemed to expand as if taking a deep breath. A small sigh escaped from within its depths as Joe and Charlie lifted the heavy cover, surprised to find the pages turning automatically to the beginning of Chapter Two, bypassing the first chapter about Atlantis.

As before, the opening page was decorated with ornate script, illuminated in bright colours and gold leaf. The title, picked out in small jewelled stones, read:

RUMINATO

Just like in the previous chapter, beneath this sparkly word was a short poem. The children now understood this to be a riddle and, by solving it, knew they would discover the real title which would allow them to turn to the next page.

'Hmm, *Ruminato*,' mused Jemima. 'I wonder what that's to do with?'

When they'd first opened the book and had read the previous chapter about Atlantis, the children had discovered the small, jewelled stones which formed the title behaved in a rather unusual way. If you were careful you could slide them around on the page with your finger and rearrange the word to make it spell something completely different. The title itself was in fact an anagram and you needed to put the letters in the right order to find out the answer. The rhyme underneath also gave you a clue as to what the chapter would be about.

'I'm going to have a go at the anagram,' said Jemima and she began to push the letters around on the page. After a while she sat back and regarded the result: *IN OUR MAT*. 'Well, I don't think that can be right. Your turn, Joe.'

Joe started to slide the jewelled letters about, biting his lip as he concentrated. His contribution ended up as *I TOUR MAN* and the other two shook their heads. 'Okay, Charlie, over to you,' he said.

Charlie bent his head and stared at the stones, willing them to rearrange themselves in the correct order, but after a couple of minutes he'd only managed to produce *MOIRA NUT*.

‘Can I have a go?’ asked Max, as the others sat scratching their heads. ‘I didn’t get a chance to join in last time. You wouldn’t listen to me.’

‘Okay,’ said Jemima. ‘Just make sure your claws don’t scratch the page.’

Moving closer to the book, Max bent his head and studied the letters for a moment. Then, doing his best to be careful, he gently nudged the stones with his paw until they began to move. ‘Aha,’ exclaimed the large cat, when he’d shifted everything around several times.

‘Show us what you’ve got,’ urged Jemima.

Max lifted his paw, proudly displaying his handiwork: **MIAO TURN**. They all laughed. Max looked a little hurt, so Jemima murmured, ‘That’s jolly clever, Max, but I don’t think it’s the right answer.’ She gave him a hug, adding, ‘Good try, though.’

The children turned their attention to the short poem written below the anagram.

‘This should give us the clue we need,’ said Jemima, as she began to read aloud:

***‘Beneath the palace lie tunnels deep,
A maze is where the beast doth sleep.
Follow the thread to find its lair,
Go with Theseus, if you dare!’***

‘Hey,’ cried Charlie, when Jemima had finished reciting the rhyme. ‘Theseus, as in “*Theseus and the Minotaur*”, right?’

‘Yes,’ said Joe. ‘He had to find the Minotaur in the labyrinth, which is a sort of maze, I think.’

While he was speaking Jemima had started to rearrange the sparkly stones until they spelled **MINOTAUR** and as the final **R** slid into position the word suddenly lit up, twinkling brightly. ‘That’s the answer!’ she exclaimed. ‘But wasn’t the story of Theseus and the Minotaur just a myth? Where can the book possibly take us to?’

‘We thought Atlantis was only a myth, if you remember,’ said Joe. ‘And that

turned out to be real.'

Already the children could hear sounds of whispering voices and lapping waves and then the pages of the book started to turn all by themselves. They settled down to read the story of the Minotaur, as a sudden breeze seemed to come out of nowhere and blew through the room, ruffling their hair.

A few seconds later Max shouted, 'Hey!' and the children all turned round to see a large misty cloud forming behind them. This was precisely what had happened last time and they watched as colours and shapes began to appear, gradually becoming more visible through the haze. On the previous occasion the image had been of an ancient city, but this time they could make out a boat sailing across the sea - an odd sort of vessel, with lots of oars as well as a square-shaped sail. A large eye painted on its pointed prow gave the ship the appearance of a strange sea monster. The hazy image, although semi-transparent, slowly became three-dimensional and started to look remarkably real. Joe stood up and began to walk towards the intriguing vision.

'Hang on a minute,' said Jemima. 'Let's not rush in and do anything stupid.' She stared meaningfully at Joe as she spoke. 'I think we should think things through before we leave.' They were about to venture into the mysterious cloud and would find themselves transported back in time to wherever this place might be. 'We need to work out where we're going and what we'll do when we arrive, so why don't we establish a few ground rules before we set off into the unknown? We're not taking any unnecessary risks, okay?'

'Good idea,' said Charlie. 'We know the story, so let's think about why we're going and what we can do to help the people involved. Most of all we need to be careful. I don't fancy being arrested as a spy and put in prison like last time.'

Joe sat back down with some reluctance. He was eager to dive into the mist and start exploring. The previous adventure to Atlantis had been such brilliant fun - he couldn't wait to launch into the next one.

'Be patient, Joe,' said Max, with a knowing smile, as he patted Joe's hand with his large, grey paw. 'I know what you're like!'

This time the children felt ready for what lay ahead, or at least as ready as they

could be for a journey into the unknown. They read and re-read the story, carefully absorbing all the details and preparing themselves for what might await them.

‘I’m not sure where we’ll arrive exactly,’ said Joe. ‘But it seems as though we might end up somewhere in Crete. You’ve been there before haven’t you, Charlie?’

‘Um, yes,’ he replied. ‘I went on holiday with my mum and dad when I was eight, but I don’t expect it will look anything like it did then. Don’t forget we’ll be travelling back thousands of years.’

‘You never know,’ answered Joe. ‘You might spot something you recognise.’

‘Well, at least we don’t have to worry about anyone wondering where we are,’ said Jemima. ‘That was so weird after our trip to Atlantis, don’t you think? We were away for days, but time stood still here and nobody even noticed we’d gone. I thought we’d be in loads of trouble when we got back.’

‘So, are we ready then?’ asked Joe.

‘Oh, I mustn’t forget this,’ exclaimed Jemima, bending down to pick up the necklace which lay on the floor next to the book. The key hanging on the chain unlocked the book, but the children now understood it was also vital for bringing them back. That was why their parents were trapped somewhere in the past because, having left the key behind, they were unable to come home. Jemima fastened the chain securely round her neck. ‘All set, Max?’ she asked. ‘Are you sure you don’t need a last trip to the litter tray before we go?’

‘For goodness sake, Jemima,’ he grumbled. ‘Do you have to be so embarrassing? Anyone would think I had a weak bladder or something.’

She picked him up and kissed the top of his head. ‘Oh come on, crosspatch,’ she laughed as she stood in front of the hazy cloud with the two boys.

‘Here goes,’ said Joe and they all stepped forward into the image before them.

Chapter 3



As the swirling mist began to clear the children realised they were on board the boat they'd seen earlier. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the bright sun shone fiercely above them, its burning rays making the surface of the azure sea sparkle like diamonds. The boat's timbers creaked and groaned, and for a moment they remained motionless, unsure of what to do next and feeling a bit wobbly as the deck rocked beneath their feet.

'Oh, don't drop me will you, Jemima?' warbled Max in a tremulous voice. 'Look at all that water around us. You know I don't like getting wet.'

'Calm down, Max. That's the sea. Of course it's all round us if we're on a boat. Just stay away from the edge and you'll be perfectly safe.'

Unconvinced, he stared nervously across the waves, not liking the swimming sensation in his head as the boat rolled in the gentle swell. Suddenly they heard a shout.

'Oi, you lot! Where did you spring from?' Jemima nearly jumped out of her skin at the angry yell. With a face like thunder, one of the sailors strode towards them, calling to someone else over his shoulder as he did so. 'Hey, Theseus. Seems like we've got stowaways.' He stood in front of the new arrivals, looking them up and down. 'So where've you been hiding then? In the name of Zeus, what's *that* you've got with you?' he growled, pointing at Max. Jemima could almost hear her knees knocking together, whilst Max bristled with indignation in her arms.

'We're not stowaways,' said Joe bravely. 'We must have got on the wrong boat by mistake.'

'Yeah, right,' sneered the sailor. 'And I'm the King of Egypt. Oh well, more

fodder for the Minotaur. He'll think it's his lucky day when we deliver him three extra meals.'

'A-are w-we h-heading f-for C-Crete?' asked Charlie in a shaky voice.

'Where else would we be going, chickpea-brain?' replied the sailor. 'And you lot will be earning your passage, so don't think you're getting a free ride. You two boys can make a start on sorting out this pile of ropes. You, girlie, can pick up a broom and get on with sweeping the deck. Oh, and keep that animal from under people's feet – we can do without unnecessary hazards here. Any trouble and I'm chucking it over the side, understood?'

'I won't ...' an indignant Max started to splutter before Jemima clamped her fingers tightly over his muzzle.

'Did you say something?' asked the sailor, peering suspiciously at Jemima.

'No, no,' she answered quickly, keeping a firm hand on Max who was trying to squirm free from her grasp. 'I just coughed.' She cleared her throat a couple of times for good measure. The sailor glared at her before turning away to join his shipmates. As soon as he was out of earshot she released her hold on the wriggling cat. 'For goodness sake, Max, be careful or you'll get us all thrown overboard. You know the rules about not talking in front of grown-ups.'

Max shook himself angrily. 'Well, honestly,' he whispered. 'Who does he think he is, speaking to us like that? And as for threatening to throw me in the sea...'

'I'm sure it's all talk,' said Jemima reassuringly. 'Just be careful.'

'B-b-but you know I can't swim.' His lower lip trembled.

'He didn't mean it, Max. Now just shush will you ... and make sure you stay out of his way.'

The three children set to on the tasks they'd been assigned. Joe and Charlie began tidying up the pile of ropes into neat coils and Jemima started sweeping the deck, keeping a close eye on Max. He'd found a quiet area where he curled up and pretended to go to sleep. Inwardly, though, he was still seething and kept casting angry glances in the direction of the horrible sailor.

A couple of hours went by and the sun beat down relentlessly upon the

children's heads as they worked. Straightening her aching back, Jemima looked up from her sweeping and noticed Joe's face seemed to have turned a rather ghastly shade of green. 'Are you okay?' she called across to him.

'No, I'm going to be si...' he began, but didn't get the chance to finish. Instead he sprinted to the side of the boat and leaned over. Jemima and Charlie grimaced at the revolting sounds he made as he threw up. Eventually he came back across to where they were, his face deathly pale despite the heat of the sun. 'I think I must be coming down with a bug or something,' he groaned.

'I expect you've got sea-sickness,' said Jemima. 'Either that or sunstroke. Go and lie down next to Max for a bit.'

Joe did as Jemima suggested. He felt awful and hoped the voyage wasn't going to be a long one. Using Max as a pillow, he rested his throbbing head on the cat's soft, furry body and shut his eyelids for a while, desperately trying to ignore the rocking of the boat. All of a sudden he became aware of a shadow looming over him and he opened his eyes, holding up his hand to shield them from the glare of the sun.

'Get up, you lazy tyke.' The angry sailor nudged Joe with his foot. 'Come on, back to work. Who gave you permission to lounge around?' The man was about to give him a more substantial kick when he was interrupted by another voice.

'Stop it, Glaucus. You can see he's ill. First time at sea, huh?'

Joe glanced up at the tall, dark-haired, good-looking young man who had appeared before him. 'Yes,' he replied weakly. 'I don't think I'm cut out to be a sailor. Sorry.'

'Don't worry,' said the tall stranger. 'Seasickness can happen to anyone. Stay where you are for a while and I'll get someone to bring you over some bread and water. Try and eat something – you'll find that will help.' He strode off and a few minutes later a young lad, not much older than Joe himself, came across the boat towards him.

'Here, Theseus told me to bring you this,' he said. He held out a piece of bread and something resembling an animal skin. 'I know how rotten it feels. I was always sick the first few times I went out to sea, but I guess I'm used to it now – except when

it's really rough of course.' He tipped up the goatskin water carrier, taking a long drink before passing it to Joe. Joe copied the boy, swallowing a grateful gulp of the cool liquid.

'Thanks. What's your name?' he asked. 'I'm Joe.'

'Timon,' answered the lad. 'But everyone calls me Tim. I should get back to work before Glaucus catches me, but I'll come and see you again later. Hope you feel better soon.' He got up and trotted off to the other end of the boat.

Dusk was starting to fall and land was still nowhere in sight. Jemima and Charlie had been told to stop work for the day, so they made their way over to where Joe and Max were curled up together and sat down next to them.

'Are you still seasick?' asked Jemima.

'I'm a bit better thanks,' answered Joe.

'We've brought you something to eat,' said Charlie. 'A chunk of bread and some fish.'

'Ugh! I think I'll pass on the fish,' replied Joe, as his stomach started making ominous squelchy noises. 'I wouldn't mind some more bread though. A boy called Tim gave me a bit earlier and I managed to keep it down.'

'Here you are, Max,' said Jemima. 'I've got a piece of fish for you too. One of the sailors sneaked me a bit extra. Luckily they're not all horrid.' She also poured a little of the water from the goatskin into her cupped hand so Max could have a drink.

'You'll never guess what,' said Joe. 'I've actually met Theseus. He was really nice about me being ill and sent Tim over with some bread and water. I'm glad he's not like the horrible sailor we met first. I found out *his* name's Glaucus, by the way.'

'One of the crew told me we'll be arriving in Crete tomorrow afternoon,' said Charlie. 'We're not going to be particularly comfortable sleeping on this deck, but at least it's only for tonight. Let's try and keep a low profile and stay out of Glaucus's way.'

'Good idea,' agreed Jemima. 'By the way, Joe, if you need the loo, I've left a bucket behind that piece of material hanging over there. One of the sailors helped me rig the curtain up.' She pointed across to the opposite side of the boat. 'But don't

forget to empty the bucket into the sea when you've finished.'

'Oh,' replied Joe. 'I just peed over the side earlier.'

'Lucky you,' said a huffy voice. 'What about me? I can't use a bucket or pee over the side. How am I supposed to manage?'

'Oh dear,' answered Jemima. 'How thoughtless of them not to provide a litter tray on board!' She started to laugh, but seeing the furious look on Max's face she quickly stopped herself. 'Come with me, Max. I'll sort something out for you.' She picked him up and carried him over to the other side of the boat, disappearing behind the curtain with the cat under her arm.

Later that night, lying on the deck looking up at the stars twinkling overhead, they quietly discussed their plans.

'We should try and talk to Theseus again tomorrow,' said Joe. 'He seemed okay, so there's a chance he might listen to us.'

'All right,' replied Charlie. 'Let's hope we get the chance before we arrive in Crete. I expect things will get a bit hectic then.'

'But what are we going to do when we get there?' asked Jemima. 'We don't want to get herded off as an extra snack for the Minotaur like Glaucus suggested.'

'We'll sort the details out tomorrow,' said Joe with a yawn. All this sea air was making him a bit sleepy. The others, tired after their labours, lay down, trying to make themselves as comfortable as possible on the hard wooden planks. Max, as usual, was already fast asleep and snoring quietly as Jemima wrapped her arms around his big creamy-coloured body and hugged him close to her. She smiled into his soft fur. It was just like snuggling up to a gigantic teddy bear.

