

Daedalus and Icarus (Part 2)

“You will need to take great care, Icarus. If you fly too near the surface of the sea the feathers will become waterlogged and fall off but don’t fly too high either, because the sun will melt the wax.”

“All right, all right,” said Icarus, who didn’t want to listen because he was so desperate to fly.

And with that, the two of them leapt into the air, flapped their wings and felt the power to fly. Up into the air they went, slowly at first but then more quickly as they grew more confident. The feeling of flying was amazing! Daedalus and Icarus soared and spiralled like the seabirds that Daedalus had observed so carefully. Icarus was especially good at flying and found that he could fly up quite high by flapping his wings quickly and strongly then he could simply glide back down, feeling the wind rushing through his hair.

Daedalus enjoyed watching his son flying so successfully using the wings that he had designed and created. He was impressed with his son’s skill in flying and he was pleased with himself for even thinking of such an incredible idea. Every now and then he called to Icarus, “Well done, my son!” “Don’t go too near the waves!” “Don’t fly too near the sun!” And Icarus would call back, “I’m fine, I’m flying! I’m flying!”

Icarus flew faster and faster. He tried flying virtually straight up then swooping down again and found that he was able to achieve incredible speeds. The exhilaration of swooping down was worth all the effort of flapping his wings hard to reach the heights from which he could make the dive.

“Come on, Icarus. We must head for safety now,” called Daedalus.

Icarus knew that the purpose of their flight was to escape from the island and to reach the mainland, but he decided that he would have one last swoop, one last amazing dive through the sky. “I’m coming, father. I’m just having one more go!” he called. He flapped his wings and rose higher up into the sky, then paused, ready to dive. But no, he could do better he thought ... so he rose another hundred metres ... then another hundred metres... He could hear his father’s voice calling from below,

“Don’t go too high. The sun will melt the wax.”

A feather fell from his right wing. Then one fell from his left wing. Then another ... and another. Soon, feathers were falling quickly from both wings. Icarus watched the breeze catching the feathers, spinning them round and taking them out of his reach. He looked at the wax on his wings and was horrified to see the wax melting and the feathers coming unstuck. He began to drop through the sky. He found himself spinning and tumbling as more feathers were dislodged from the wax.

Daedalus watched in despair as he saw Icarus falling faster and faster. “No!” he called, but it was too late. Icarus plummeted from the sky straight into the sea.

Daedalus flew down, as low as he dared, but he saw no trace of his son except for the frames of the two wings floating on the surface. He searched and searched until it began to grow dark and then he turned to fly on alone, his salty tears falling into the salt water below him.