

King Minos was very sick. His condition was getting worse. He had three sons. He loved them all. He had to announce who would become king. Two of the princes stood waiting outside the king's room. Theseus was the oldest and strongest. He thought his father would make him king. Pelias, the second son, thought differently. He was an expert with weapons. He thought the king would choose him. "When I'm king," Theseus told Pelias, "I'll let you contribute to the defense of our country. You can lead the army." Pelias became angry. "Father knows I'm famous for my sword skills. He'll make me king." "You?" Theseus yelled. "He won't choose you!" "The kingdom is mine!" Pelias claimed. "Father will give it to me—or I'll use force to take it!" Theseus made a sudden move to take out his sword. Then Pelias did the same. "Beating me will be a challenge," Theseus said. "Fight me now. The winner gets the kingdom!" Pelias agreed. King Minos could hear his sons fighting. The youngest son, Jason, stood beside him. He sensed his father's sadness. The king laid his hand flat on Jason's arm. "Your brothers fight too much," the king told him. "I must protect my kingdom from all harm. They'll divide it between them. The people won't know what to do. There'll be war. I can't allow either of them to be king. Therefore, I'm making you king. Your kindness has always made you special. It's the difference between you and your brothers. You can bring peace. They can't." Then the king died. Theseus and Pelias heard that their youngest brother was king. They were surprised. They realized that their fighting was wrong. It had kept them from saying goodbye to their father. They agreed to have Jason as their king. He was the best choice