AWESOME stories

PANEM - THE DISTRICT TRIBUTES

0. PANEM - THE DISTRICT TRIBUTES - Story Preface

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Tributes, in *The Hunger Games*, are like Tributes from ancient Athens. Seven girls and seven boys were sent to Crete, every year, to keep Crete's King Minos from enslaving or massacring the Athenians. This image depicts a scene from that story as Theseus and his fellow Tributes arrive in Crete. It is the left side of a painting on an early-Renaissance wedding chest, known as a *cassones*, which today is maintained at "Le Petite Palais" in "Avignon, France."

Before Athens was a formidable naval power, and the leading city-state of Greece, its citizens were at the mercy of King Minos. Ruler of the nearby island of Crete, Minos periodically demanded something valuable from Athens.

According to Greek mythology, seven Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls had to be pulled from their families and sent to Crete. Everyone knew those children would never return home.

They were called "Tributes."

Fourteen Tributes sailed to Crete, during the required years, where they were sent into a maze known as "The Labyrinth." A ferocious creature known as the Minotaur - half-bull/half-man - lived in that Labyrinth from which no human ever returned alive.

Only one person - a young woman named Ariadne - could even approach the beast. She was the daughter of King Minos.

Upset that people in his city gave-up their children to appease King Minos, Theseus - son of the Athenian King Aegeus - volunteered to be a Tribute. He sailed to Crete with thirteen other young Athenians. With Ariadne's help, he found a way to get out of the Labyrinth - and - to slay the Minotaur.

Returning to Athens, Theseus - who had married, then abandoned Ariadne - forgot to lower his black sail and replace it with a white one. (He had promised his father, King Aegeus, that a white sail would signify Theseus had killed the Minotaur; a black sail meant the Minotaur had killed the King's son.)

Seeing a black sail on his son's boat, King Aegeus was so distraught that he fell into the sea and died. Ever after, the name of that sea - the Aegean - has honored Aegeus' memory.

Like the Greek tale of old, government officials in The Capitol call Panem's soon-to-be-sacrificed children "Tributes." Instead of being consumed, one after the other, by a single beast - The Minotaur - Panem's Tributes are ordered to kill each other.

To make the whole spectacle more interesting for the audience - and more frightening for the Tributes - The Capitol's game makers conjure-up deadly situations. From ferocious creatures (not unlike the Minotaur) to fireballs (aimed directly at a Tribute's body), children from the 12 Districts become both hunters and hunted prey.

Government representatives never really mean the encouraging phrase they repeat over and over:

> *May the odds be ever in your favor.*

In fact, "the odds" are stacked-against the Tributes. Just when it looks like a Tribute is making progress, the Capitol's "game makers" are tempted to readjust "the odds."

That's what happens when a totalitarian government takes control of a person's life.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PANEM-THE-DISTRICT-TRIBUTES-Hunger-Games

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PANEM-THE-DISTRICT-TRIBUTES-Hunger-Games

Questions 2 Ponder

How Do Ancient Legends Impact Today's Literature?

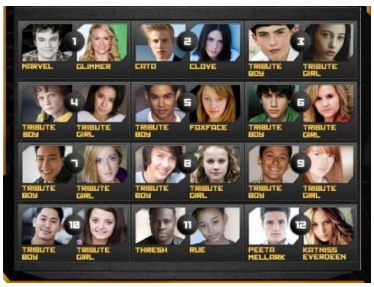
Greek mythology tells us about Tributes, the Minotaur and a volunteer Tribute named Theseus. All of this has interesting parallels to a 21st-century story called "The Hunger Games."

If we apply the Greek legend of Theseus and the Minotaur to "The Hunger Games," who is the Theseus character? Who (or what) is the Minotaur? Explain your answers.

Can you think of any situation in which a government would be justified in sponsoring an event like the Hunger Games?

Under what circumstances, if any, would such government actions be acceptable?

Media Stream



Hunger Games - Tributes of the 74th Games
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Katniss Everdeen - Shooting Her Bow and Arrow
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Hunger Games - Death of Rue
Still-shot from the film version of *The Hunger Games*, depicting Katniss with Rue following Rue's death from the spear of another Tribute. Copyright, Lions Gate Entertainment, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes.
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