

Sahana Sarangi

English

2 October 2023

In *The House of Asterion*, the story ends with dialogue from Theseus expressing his disbelief after having slain the minotaur. Theseus and his partner, princess Ariadne, are known in Greek mythology for being the only beings to enter and return from the labyrinth alive, after having killed the minotaur in the center. In Borges' story, however, one could say the minotaur kills himself. In the text, Asterion reveals that 'every nine years, nine men come into the house so that I can free them from all evil' (Borges 277). Before describing how he kills them, he references how elated he is at their arrival. To Asterion, death is liberation from all wrongdoings, and is blessing the nine men by ending their lives. Borges' choice to use Asterion as the narrator allows for the opportunity to portray the minotaur as doing his duty with good intention and without the knowledge that murder is morally wrong. In the same sense, Asterion also suggests that he is waiting for someone to liberate him, after stating that one of the men he had killed had predicted someday his 'redeemer would come,' and says afterward 'there has been no pain for me in solitude, because I know that my redeemer lives' (Borges 277). This is the reason why when Theseus and Ariadne arrive at the center of maze, sword in hand, Asterion is already anticipating them. From Theseus and Ariadne's perspective, the minotaur appears a violent and blood-hungry monster deserving of death. Asterion instead believes Theseus is his redeemer and will gift him the privilege of freedom through death. Giving himself up, he allows Theseus to murder him, therefore killing himself.