

The Labyrinth

“I am lost. Yet I have the distinct feeling of having been led here by some unseen force. How else could it be that the two of us have arrived at precisely the same moment, at exactly the same place? I have turned each corner, walked to the end of each misleading corridor, retraced my steps a thousand times. Each change in the passages brought fresh surges of hope. Yet I was always disappointed. I was about to give up, but no, I persisted, at whatever the cost, stumbling here and there, putting one foot in front of the other, never knowing where the footsteps would lead me, spurned on only by some vague expectation that there must be something, a goal to be reached. And now I have arrived, only to find that you are here too—here at the very center! I insisted, you know. I had to come here on my own, to see everything with my own eyes. I didn’t want to waste my time with second-hand reports. I was duly warned, it is true, but I accept none of the responsibility, for I was led, you see—I was led!”

When he had finished speaking the man sat down on the ground, surrounded by the walls of the labyrinth, looking up at the stars overhead.

“So is this where you stop?” the minotaur replied. “It would make perfect sense if you did. Why shouldn’t you? You were lied to after all. There is nothing here. Nothing at all. There never has been. What was it you expected to find?”

“How can I know what I would find until I have found it?”

“But there is nothing to find. You came here of your own free will and there is no escape.”

“Then it’s true!” the man cried. “There’s no way out! Positively no way out?”

“I suppose you are right,” the minotaur said. “But, of course, if there is no way out, there is also no way in.”

The man sat there for a moment, weeping softly, his head buried in his hands. “Yet I am here,” he murmured over and over. “All the wasted effort—in pursuit of a grand illusion!”

The man looked up again at the stars. Suddenly, like an explosion, it came to him.

“But wait!” he cried. “Now I see. Yes, I understand. How could I be any place except where I already am!”

His mind was as clear as the stars.

“So this is what it means,” the man said, with a smile slowly twisting across his face. “But how could I have known? How could I ever have known?”

No answer came. The minotaur had disappeared. Perhaps it had never been there all along.

One star fell from the sky, then another. They all fell from the sky until there were no stars left.

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