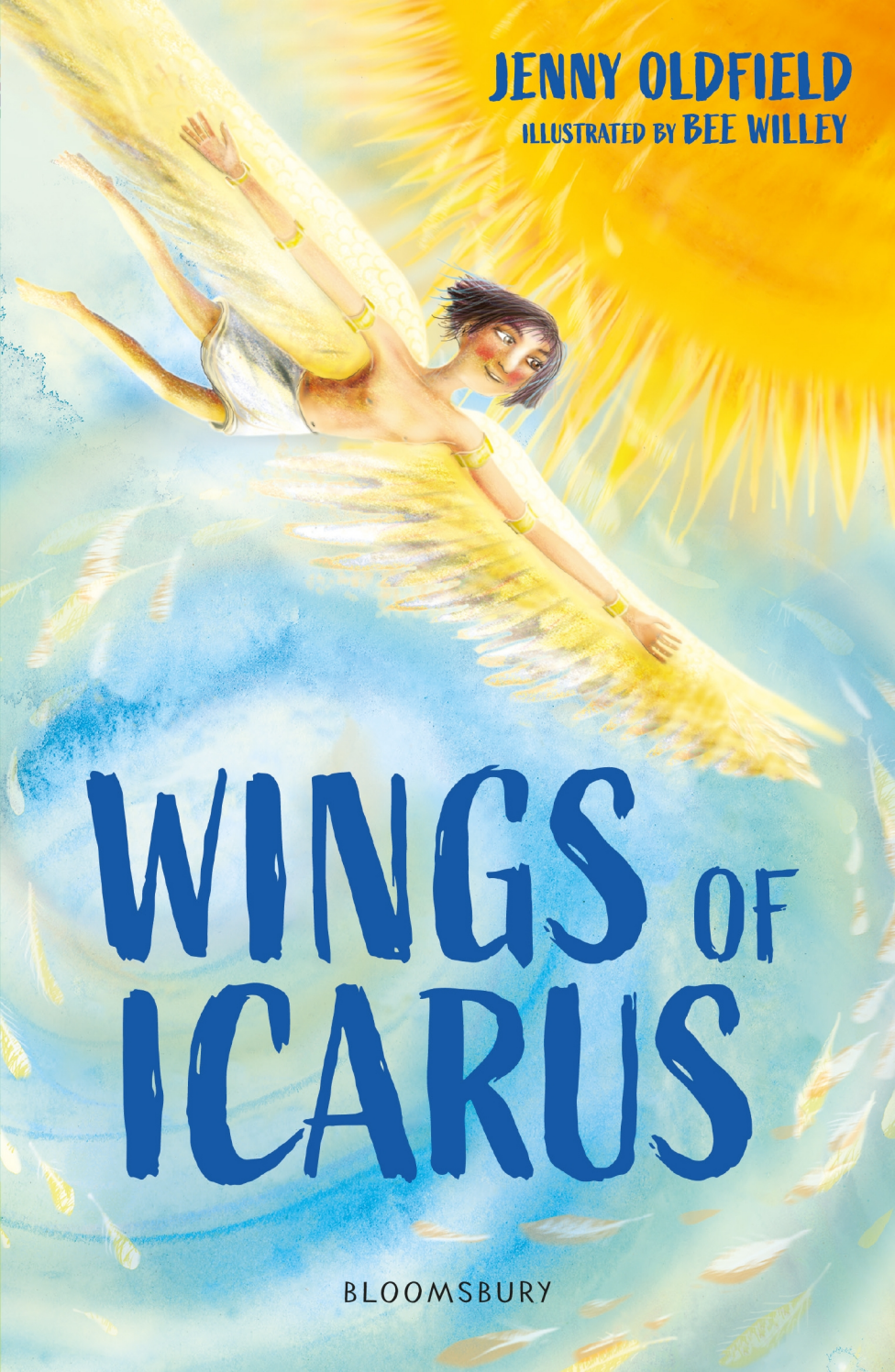

JENNY OLDFIELD
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WINGS OF ICARUS
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CHAPTER ONE

"Icarus, son, come here. I have something to show you," Daedalus called.

The boy stood on the shore and stared out at the sparkling Aegean Sea. "What lies beyond the water?" he wondered.



"Icarus!" his father called again.

At last, Icarus turned.

Daedalus held a large shell that he was eager to show him. "Come!" he cried.

Icarus ran to join his father.

"Look into this shell," Daedalus urged. "Feel how smooth it is."

The boy touched the inside of the shell with his fingertips. He loved the bright pink surface, smooth and shiny as polished marble.

"Now hold it to your ear," his father said. "What do you hear?"

Icarus listened. The shell sent forth a soft whoosh of sound, like distant waves breaking on the shore. "I hear the ocean," he replied.



Daedalus nodded. "This shell is a wonderful thing. It contains the song of the sea."

Icarus smiled. "Let us take it home so that I can always hear the waves, first thing in the morning and last thing at night."

Daedalus knew why his son said this. "And you can dream of the Aegean Sea and what lies beyond," he murmured with a sad smile. "You will picture an escape from this island, which is our prison."



Icarus carried the shell with him. "Yes, I will dream," he agreed. "And one day, perhaps, my dream will come true."

That night, Icarus lay with the shell beside him on his pillow. But he did not dream of the sea. Instead, a monster broke out from the boy's sleeping world and breathed over him. It had the body of a man but the fierce head of a bull.



"Father, it is the Minotaur!" Icarus cried out.



Daedalus gathered his white robes around him and came running with a flame to light the dark room. "There is nothing here," he said softly.

But Icarus shook with fear. "The monster was here. I saw his sharp horns. I felt his hot breath upon me!"

Daedalus sat with his son until the nightmare faded. His thoughts were dark because it was he who had created the bull-monster and brought him to life to amuse Pasiphae, the king's wife.



But the Minotaur, once alive, would not be tamed and King Minos had grown angry with Daedalus.

And now, though Daedalus had trapped the greedy monster in the centre of a great maze and bravely slain him, the king would not forgive its inventor.



"Daedalus, from henceforth you will live as a prisoner on the island of Crete!" he had declared. "I will exile you there, where you built the maze, forever!"

Forever! The word echoed around the walls of Icarus's room. The torch flame died and Daedalus sat in darkness. "It is my fault that my son is lonely," he thought. "He is banished with me and, though he loves me, he wishes to live in the world with other children."



Troubled, Daedalus sat until dawn, wondering in vain how he could give his son the gift of freedom.