

Theseus

My journey to the island hasn't been an easy one. Everyone treads their own path here, but mine was forced on me by my honour and valour. I can't remember the first time I saw the show on TV, all of the reality shows have blended into one by now. They were always the same. An endless stream of hopefuls dumped in the jungle or the mountains or onto an island. Eventually, they'd turn on each other, and everybody would delight in the ratings.

Nobody ever thought about what happened to those people when they returned to civilisation. Nobody ever thought about what happened to those that didn't.

There was something different about Clans of Sand. The tasks were always a little bit more brutal, the emotions always rawer. Perhaps most telling was that none of the contestants was ever seen in the media again. I had to take a look.

It soon became public that my father, Aegeus, was a talent scout for Clans. The day I found that out, I knew I had my way in. He wouldn't talk to me about it, and I certainly couldn't get any information from the producer, Minos. In the end, there was only one option. I applied to be on the next series. I'm surprised I wasn't found out. After all, Theseus isn't a common name.

Fast forward to a month later and here I am, soaked to the skin and covered in mud. But I'm close. Close to finding out the secret. Every evening, when a contestant is voted off by the public, they are led into the jungle to "go home". A few nights ago, I followed them as they led poor old Pirithous deep into the canopy. I lost them at the mouth of a cave, but I vowed to head back later on.

Leaves wet with steamy condensation slapped against my face, and my feet ached with the scratches of a thousand brambles as I crept back towards the opening. I'd made sure the producers had left the cave before I returned, yet I noticed they came out alone. Somewhere in there, was Pirithous and the others.

Crude torches had been hammered into the walls of the narrow corridor; they burst into flames

at the touch of a match. The passage wound down under the forest: thick roots broke through the dry earth and snaked across the floor. Not too far into the cave, the way opened up and split in two directions. Following the left, I soon realised that it split again, and again, and again. It was a labyrinth. There was something down there, hidden away.

I considered calling for the others, but I didn't want to draw attention to myself. Suddenly, I heard a loud roar and saw a flash of bone and scale. Before I could react, an enormous beast was on top of me pinning me to the ground. I tried my hardest to unburden myself, but he was too strong. Out of nowhere, there was a metallic crash and a pop of light. I looked up in time to see the light in the monster's eyes fade and see Pirithous standing over it, a broken floodlight in his hand.

Hopefully, now that the secret of the island monster is out, there'll be no more victims for the beast of Clans of Sand.



VOCABULARY

1. What does the author mean by “treads their own path” in this context?
2. Which word tells us that the contestants returned to normal life?
3. Use a dictionary to find the definition of the word “valour”.
4. What do you think the word “crude” means?
5. What is the root word of “unburden”?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

Use a thesaurus to find three synonyms for “honour”.

E

Explain how you know that this is a **modern** myth.

R

Where were the hopeful candidates normally dumped?

P

What do you think will happen now that the monster has been discovered?

R

What is Theseus close to finding out?

Answers:

1. To go their own way and do their own thing
2. Civilisation
3. Great courage in the face of danger.
4. Basic or simple
5. Burden

V: Any relevant synonyms

E: Modern technology and ideas (reality TV)

R: Jungle, mountains or an island

P: Any suitable prediction

R: He's close to finding out the secret of the island