



# Bull

*David Elliott*

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**Bull** David Elliott

SEE THE STORY OF THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR  
IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT

Minos thought he could  
Pull a fast one  
On me,  
Poseidon!  
God of the Sea!  
But I'm the last one  
On whom you  
Should try such a thing.  
The nerve of that guy.  
The balls. The audacity.  
I AM THE OCEAN!  
I got capacity!  
Depths! Darkness! Delphic power!  
So his sweet little plan  
Went big-time sour  
And his wife had a son  
Born with horns and a muzzle  
Who ended up  
In an underground puzzle.  
What is it with you mortals?  
You just can't seem to learn:  
If you play with fire, babies,  
You're gonna get burned.

Much like Lin-Manuel Miranda did in *Hamilton*, the New York Times best-selling author David Elliott turns a classic on its head in form and approach, updating the timeless story of Theseus and the Minotaur for a new generation. A rough, rowdy, and darkly comedic young adult retelling in verse, *Bull* will have readers reevaluating one of mythology's most infamous monsters.

## Bull Details

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Author : David Elliott

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# From Reader Review Bull for online ebook

## Taylor Knight says

**I received an advance readers copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review**

I wasn't sure what to expect from this book but I absolutely loved it. I loved the concept and Greek mythology and most of all, I loved Poseidon. I thought he was so hilarious and he reminded me of Deadpool with his sass and snark.

I haven't read a lot of books in verse so I can't confidently say this book is really well written but I personally thought it was great.

The humor in this book is more on the dark side so if you're not into that, you might not enjoy this book as much as I did.

Overall, I loved this book and read it in one sitting. I laughed a lot and I loved the modernization of Greek mythology.

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## The Bookish Austin says

This book is a retelling of the Greek Minotaur in the Labyrinth story - and i think it was executed so effectively. It's written in verse (with more modern language) that I think would draw in more contemporary readers.

Besides the retelling, I appreciated the discussion at the end regarding poetry form and why certain forms were used for specific characters. Quite telling and fascinating.

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## Tatiana says

I know nothing about poetry, but this novel in verse has some fun rhymes. It is an entertaining piece of writing, funny and at times explicit. But it is not very interesting as a myth retelling. There is almost nothing new in it besides its modern language.

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## Katherine says

*"But I wouldn't  
couldn't  
didn't  
they understand he  
was my first my bully  
boy my beautiful beautiful  
monster."*

Holy crap, where was this retelling when I was studying Greek mythology my freshman year of high school?

The plot is almost identical to the original myth, so there really isn't anything new to the sequence of events. However, what the author has done is fleshed out the characters with their own unique voices to try and interject some modern thinking into their actions. Cause lets fact it; teenagers don't often like studying about these really dead, immortal people because everything is so straight-forward. But David Elliott makes his retelling unapologetically bold and vulgar, conveying his opinions through his characters and their own unique rhyming style. From the first opening "Whaddup, bitches?" said by Poseidon, God of the Sea, you know you're not in for your mother's Minotaur myth.

And can I just say how gosh darn refreshing it was to actually have a verse novel **where everything freakin' rhymed?!!!!** While I like verse novels, I don't really consider them real works of poetry because they rarely, if ever, rhyme (call it elitist of me, if you will.) So I just about fell out of my chair when I discovered that this was a novel that was not only in verse, but actually followed some sort of rhyming structure. It's a miracle, I tell ya! And there's a nice explanation in the back that the author gives in explaining his thought process behind each rhyming scheme he picked for each character. He really went deep with the thought process behind it!

Poseidon was probably my favorite POV to read about because he was hella hilarious. Honestly, this book could have been written entirely from his POV and I would be happy. Asterion (The Minotaur), Ariadne (his half-sister), King Minos, Queen Pasiphae, Daedalus (the creator of the Labyrinth), and Theseus have their own POV as well. As the author said in his note in the back, the original myth didn't really give a lot of insight into the Minotaur's childhood and adolescence and how he was treated by his parents and siblings, so he imagined it for him. And I also like how he cleverly reworked the Theseus character into quite a lively, laddish, almost anti-hero like character. In the myth, we always see Theseus and the hero who saved his people from the big, scary Minotaur, but what if the real villain were Theseus himself?

I basically want to shove this book into every high school freshman's hands when it comes time for them to study Greek mythology. This book retells the famous myth in an entirely new way without sacrificing originality (and making it extremely fun in the process). The rhymes and slang used were cool without being forced, and the more completely, fleshed out characters of some of the most famous Greek players in their mythology will have the potential for young readers to see them in an entirely new light. If you like your stories bold and your characters vulgar, this is the retelling for you. It could have been a little longer, but the short amount of time I spent reading this was one of the most enjoyable hours I've had in a while.

And as Poseidon would say (though I'm cleaning it up a bit...)

**Ta-ta, lovelies!**

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### **Amber says**

A laugh out loud modernization of the myth of the minotaur. It's a nice quick read told through verse. Poseidon is literally the king of sass in this which just makes everything even better than it already is. *I received an ecopy of this book through Netgalley; however, my opinions are my own.*

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### **Katerina Kondrenko says**

That was unexpected. I mean, this is not an actual retelling, it's rather a telling only in a modern language and with an addition of new information about the Bull's childhood and motivations of other characters from the original myth.

Each of the heroes has a unique voice (and a form of verse!): Poseidon is a King of Sass, Asterion is a tortured soul, Minos is a moron, his wife is a delusional creep, and Ariadne is a typical YA heroine! I swear. She has a goal, but once a pretty boy comes to her life, she forgets everything and goes after him. What I'm trying to say is, all these special snow-flakes, Mary-Sues and TSTLs have always been there: in classics, in folklore, in serious literature too. We have to stop blame YA for suchlike heroins and tropes, 'cause they are eternal!)

All in all, I do recommend this book. It will certainly cheer your mood.

**\*\*\*Thanks to NetGalley and HMH Books for Young Readers for the ARC\*\*\***

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## **Cait • A Page with a View says**

**Release date: March 28, 2017**

So I missed the memo on the book description and opened this book all prepared for a Riordan-esque retelling of Theseus and the Minotaur... you know, like a story. And then I saw first line:

*POSEIDON*  
*Whaddup, bitches?*

After TOTALLY adjusting my expectations... this was fun. It's basically Hamilton meets Greek mythology. I'm still uncertain whether it was genius or a total wreck, but I'm still laughing so at least there's that. And it's a really short read! I'm not sure I could have handled hundreds of pages because it's mostly like one of those quirky things you reblog on Tumblr just so others can experience the weirdness too.

The verse isn't the most technically skilled writing ever, BUT that's also not really what it was going for in the first place.

*Man!*  
*That guy's such a dick!*  
*But also so much fun*  
*To hate.*

*Like all dicks, though,  
He'll soon deflate,  
And there's no little blue pill,  
No herbal tea  
That will restore his "potency."  
Well, one man's dysfunction  
Is a god's delight.*

So I don't even know what to do with this, but I'm 99% sure I was thoroughly entertained.

And at the end the author explains his reasons for making up some parts to add to the original myth and exploring areas "about which it remains silent."

Thank you to the publisher for sending me an ARC!

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### **Elise (TheBookishActress) says**

*POSEIDON  
Whaddup, bitches?*

3.5 stars. **This was awesome, basically.**

*Bull* is a dramatic retelling of the Theseus and Minotaur legend, with a hint of parody and a hint of interesting expansion on the myth. It's told partially from the point of view of the Minotaur himself.

My favorite thing about this is the difference in voices throughout! Asterion's voice is tortured yet uplifting. Poseidon's voice is more amusing and fun. Elliot writes in **multiple verse styles**, using one per character and varying styles to indicate state of mind. It's all very clever.

Honestly, **the only letdown was the length.** This book is way too short; I really wanted more out of it.

VERDICT: An engaging and fun short read, but with a little more length and nuance, it could've been even better.

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### **Beth says**

Very well executed story of the Minotaur, with the voices of Poseidon, Minos, Ariadne, Daedalus, the Minotaur, and his mom. Oh and a few from Theseus. Each character had their own form of poetry which worked well. Unfortunately it's not a good fit for me, as I tend to dislike verse poems and found the hip-hop

styles (especially of Poseidon) irritating (because I am old and cranky, not because they were poorly written).

But I'd comfortably offer it to anyone who was into Greek Mythology or Percy Jackson.

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## **L.P. Logan says**

Okay, okay, I frickin' LOVED this one!

It's not every day you find a myth written in prose that is not only dang entertaining, and funny, to read, but is also true to the historical context.

Seriously great read. I recommend it to anyone looking for a quick, delight giving read.

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## **Atlas says**

**What is it with you mortals?**

**You just can't seem to learn:**

**If you play with fire, babies,**

**You're gonna get burned**

\* \* \* \*

4 / 5

Bull was a wild ride. I am not an expert in the story of the Minotaur, so I went into this virtually blind and was rewarded with a hilarious, witty, and surprisingly sorrowful tale. Does Elliott do the original justice? I have no idea. What I do know is that I had fun.

*So this Minos*

*This "king"*

*This two-faced*

*Turd.*

*The guy's all ego.*

**BUT I'M ALL ID.**

Bull is guilty of the same crime that I bash Rick Riordan for: making a mockery of and not doing justice to divine figures. The difference here is that Elliot's characterisation is actually hilarious and not just cringey. I'm also reasonably sure it is satire, but to be honest I'm not really sure. Poseidon's first line, and indeed the first novel of the book, is "Whaddup, bitches?", which really sets the tone; Bull is not a delicate book, this is not a Mary Renault retelling but a humorous, often crass, and sassy version with a good dose of modern upholstery (language-wise, not setting). This is not to say that Bull is unsophisticated. There are lots of little homages to Homer, the poetry is reasonably fluid and has fairly decent rhyme, but I'm not a poetry critic.



*She calls her calf Asterion. Asterion. Asterion.  
That's my name - Asterion.  
I'm Ruler of the Stars*

Bull is split into different "books" each book is told by a variety of people: Poseidon, Daedalus, Pasiphae, Minos, Ariadne, and Theseus who each have their own unique voice. At the end of the book the author discusses the choice of form for each character, which was quite interesting to read about. For example, Daedalus has fairly standard quartets because he is a simple, straightforward engineer.

*Minos says I'm nothing more than Nothing.  
Can Nothing take a form and call it me?  
But Nothing is ever what it seems*

My favourite was by far and away Asterion - rather than amusing, Asterion's parts are sad and often beautiful. As the book progresses his verses become more and more broken to reflect his deteriorating mental state, and the pages become darker and darker as he becomes less man and more minotaur. Ariadne is also a hit with me: she's snarky, bitter, sassy, and her language is not tame, but she's also compassionate and kind. In terms of sheer humour though, Poseidon's narrative definitely takes the grand prize; the book alternates between Poseidon as the overall narrator, and everyone else, so he gets the most page time. His parts are peppered with grave comments and a wagonload of banter.

*Mother prefers to take refuge in madness  
I don't blame her, I confess:  
There's danger in sanity*

There is a lot of adult humour and adult language, such that I wouldn't recommend to under sixteens. There's also a fair amount of misogyny going on, which wasn't exactly my favourite thing ever, but understandable given the story. Other than that, my only real complaint is that it is a touch too long. Mostly, Bull is just a bit of a laugh, but particularly towards the end I get a lot more respect for the poetic decisions that Elliott made. The last dozen or so pages bleed emotion. The key to enjoying this is to be aware of what you are getting when you start; expecting a classic collection of poems is only going to ruin the pleasure you might have gotten out of Bull.

*My thanks to Netgalley, the author, and the publisher for an ARC of Bull*

**Read this review and more on my blog: <https://atlasrisingbooks.wordpress.co...>**

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## **Sesana says**

A sort of Hamilton flavored take on the myth of Theseus and the minotaur, told largely without Theseus at all. It's much more about the minotaur himself, Asterion. And this is going to be a tough one for a lot of people to get into, much less love. There's a lot to like in here, when the focus is on the "onstage" characters. Watching Pasiphae and, later, Asterion deteriorate is heart breaking. Ariadne's devotion to her brother and contempt for her father are nicely written. And Minos himself is an appropriately complex villain. But all that complexity goes right out the window with Poseidon himself. I could see what Elliott was going for, but I just couldn't connect with it. It just never quite felt right to me, which may well be a failure of imagination on my part.

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## **Ellie (faerieontheshelf) says**

A short, modern retelling of the Minotaur myth. It was pretty hilarious, I admit.

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## **Olivia-Savannah Roach says**

I won a copy of this book in the Instagram giveaway from HMH Kids. As soon as I saw the cover on Instagram, I knew I wanted this book. I might be one of those kind of readers, but I have to admit that it's just one beautiful cover. All the cover love. And when I heard it was about Greek mythology as well. After reading the Percy Jackson series, I have a love for all things Greek mythology. So I was incredibly happy when I won an ARC copy of the book.

I have to say, this is the fifth novel in verse I've ever read, and they continuously surprise me. I really like the room they give each author to play with the style, and how they can morph it to fit the novel. Elliott really takes advantage of the opportunity, using a different style for each character. When one of the characters go insane, the form of the poems change to show how spaced out her thoughts are. I won't say which character spends some of the book in a dark place, but then the pages are black, which just added to the atmosphere of the novel and the setting. It really suited the story.

I also liked the retelling aspect of things, and the fact that it did not alter the story. This novel stays true to the original myth, down to a fault. I have read alternated versions, so it was nice to get the true story (well, as true as a myth can be.)

I did feel like reading this one was a little bit awkward in the beginning. Mostly because the myth cannot begin without a woman sleeping with a bull to make the Minotaur. Which of course, is a pretty awkward event to bridge in a young adult novel. I feel like the author struggled a little bit with handling that so that he could get on with telling the story. I know he tried to keep the story clean as well, which is why the beginning felt a little off. But once the myth is set on its way, it improves.

At the same time though, I wondered why he had such an issue with bridging that beginning seeing as there is a lot of language in this novel. Not an overwhelming amount, but enough for parents not to want the younger young adults to be reading this one. So if it's mostly for the mature young adult readers anyway, there's not really such a need to hop and skip over the beginning as much as he did.

Other than that though, I really liked this story. I really liked getting to see everyone's character, and how we got to really view the story from everyone's perspective. Having all these unique characters and seeing how the plot wove together, with Poseidon narrating it all, showed how much detail there really is incorporated in this myth.

I really enjoyed reading this one. I flew through it in about an hour, and I think many other readers will really enjoy this one too!

## Emily May says

*It's interesting:  
As a god I almost always find,  
The more repressed the mortal,  
The dirtier the mind.*

4 1/2 stars. **I loved this!**

Bull is going to be a hard sell. To be honest, if you'd told me what it actually is before I requested it from netgalley, I never would have read it. And that would have been a real shame. It's a hilarious and creative retelling in verse of *Theseus and the Minotaur*. **Easily one of the best novels in verse I have ever read.**

Despite thinking I was about to open a dark and dramatic novel about the Greek hero - Theseus - and the monstrous Minotaur at the centre of a labyrinth, I quickly adjusted to this punchy, hilarious tale. And I say that as someone who would pick dark and dramatic over light and funny any day of the week. But I think most people would benefit from knowing what they are getting into.

So:

- This is a **novel in verse**.
- It is **comical**, in a twisted kind of way.
- Rather than change the original story, it's more of a "behind the scenes" retelling.
- There's a lot of swearing and sexual references.

I also love how the author considered the Minotaur's childhood years, and changed our view of many characters from the original myth without changing any of the story. It's narrated from various points of view, but the main one is Poseidon. God, he is such an asshole - though I find myself almost rubbing my hands together with glee as I say that. He's very much a love-to-hate character.

*So he wonders  
If I'd give the people  
An omen,  
A sign,  
Something impressive,  
He says, something divine.  
Anything to prove  
He's the man  
For the royal job.*

*So what the fuck, I think.  
I'm gonna help this slob.*

I don't know... maybe it's just my fucked up sense of humour, but **I had SO MUCH FUN reading this.**

