

Julia Golding [Eve Edwards, Joss Stirling]

## The Mines of the Minotaur (The Companions Quartet, 3)

United Kingdom (2006)

TAGS: [Minotaur](#) [Pegasus](#)



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| General information                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Title of the work</i>               | The Mines of the Minotaur (The Companions Quartet, 3)                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Country of the First Edition</i>    | United Kingdom                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Country/countries of popularity</i> | Worldwide                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Original Language</i>               | English                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>First Edition Date</i>              | 2006                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>First Edition Details</i>           | Julia Golding, <i>The Companions Quartet. Book Three: The Mines of the Minotaur</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 269 pp.                                                                       |
| <i>ISBN</i>                            | 9780761457961                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Genre</i>                           | Bildungsromans (Coming-of-age fiction), Fantasy fiction, Novels, School story*, Teen fiction*                                                                                                              |
| <i>Target Audience</i>                 | Young adults (and Teens)                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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## Creators



Courtesy of the Author.

### **Julia Golding [Eve Edwards, Joss Stirling] , b. 1969 (Author)**

Born in Ilford, Essex, in the vicinity of an area of ancient woodland called Epping Forest, she studied English literature at the University of Cambridge. Later, after working as a diplomat for the British Foreign Office in Poland, she resumed her studies at Oxford obtaining a PhD in English literature. She then worked for the international charitable organization Oxfam, as a lobbyist on the impact of conflicts. She now lives in Oxford and writes full time: from 2006, the date of her first novel, she has written over thirty books, among them *The Companions Quartet* (2006-2007), a cycle of novels with numerous references to Greek mythology. In 2011, she published a sequel to the *Quartet*, entitled *Water Thief*, labelled as *Universal Companions 1*; as of June 10, 2017, it remains the only volume of the new series.

Golding writes also historical romance for adolescents under the pseudonym Eve Edwards and romance novels for teens as Joss Stirling.

#### Literary Awards:

- 2006 - Waterstone's Children's Book Prize, Nestle Children's Book Prize,
- 2007 - Waterstone's one of the "Twenty-five authors for the future",
- 2008 - An honor book medal of the Green Earth Book Award for *The Secret of the Sirens (The Companions Quartet 1)*,
- 2012 - Beehive Book Award, Young Adult Division, awarded by the Children's Literature Association of Utah,
- 2015 - Romantic Novel of the Year (*Struck* by Joss Stirling).

She was also nominated or shortlisted for a number of the same and other awards.

#### Sources:

Official [website](#) (accessed: May 29, 2018),

[Profile](#) at the literature.britishcouncil.org (accessed: July 3, 2018),

[Profile](#) at the www.goodreads.com (accessed: April 9, 2018).

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### Additional information

Translation Multiple translations.

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Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs

Prequel:

Golding, Julia, [\*The Companions Quartet. Book One: Secret of the Sirens\*](#), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Golding, Julia, [\*The Companions Quartet. Book Two: The Gorgon's Gaze\*](#), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Sequel:

Golding, Julia, [\*The Companions Quartet. Book Four: The Chimera's Curse\*](#), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Spin-off:

Golding, Julia, *Universal Companions. Book 1. Water-thief*. (E-book). (n. l.): Frost Wolf, 2011.

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Summary

Another assault on Connie Lionheart, the universal companion to all mythical creatures, by the evil shapeshifter, Kullervo, bent on destroying humanity. This time, he invades her mind from within using the mark he left in her brain during their bonding (see [\*The Gorgon's Gaze\*](#)). He takes control of her body when she is sleeping and her defenses are down, and makes her go to the beach and summon a storm and flood. Afterwards, she is vaguely aware of having done something but has no clear recollection of what happened.

When she hears about the flood in the neighbourhood, she begins to suspect her role in the event. It happens again, this time, when she is awake. Her friends attempt to stop her, but being under Kullervo's control, she almost kills them. Her enemy, Mr. Coddington, who has now become one of the trustees of the Society for the Protection of Mythological Creatures, expels her from the Society as a danger to all and forbids other members from having any contact with her. Her friends launch an appeal, but Connie herself is in despair because she

believes that Mr. Coddington may be right about her. In her depressed state, she wanders to some abandoned tunnels where she meets a Minotaur and a large group of sick mythological creatures hiding there, whom the Society abandoned to their fate, after having been damaged along with their environment by toxic and polluting human practices.

Connie bonds with the Minotaur, and he becomes her Sentinel, someone with a mission to look out for her and always support her. The Minotaur, with the help of her friends, is able to penetrate her mind, and after finding the mark of Kullervo there, they are able to explain how he made her call up the storm and almost kill her friends. Mr. Coddington, frantic to have her expelled permanently, calls up another storm and flood with the help of his companion, the weather giant, and blames it on Connie. All is revealed at the appeal when the other trustees, thanks to the Minotaur, are able to observe the mark of Kullervo. Mr. Coddington is relieved of his function as a trustee and apologizes to Connie for his deception. Connie begins the healing of the damaged creatures hiding in the tunnels. Another one of Kullervo's attempts to destroy humanity by using Connie's powers of universal companion has been thwarted with the collaborative effort of her friends, old and new.

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## Analysis

Each volume begins with a brief traditional definition of the title creature quoted from *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Golding's Minotaur Sentinel represents a species of mythological hybrid (man/bull) creatures; contrary to Greek mythology, he is not a son of Pasiphae and the bull of Poseidon. It is a general premise of the *Companions Quartet* that mythological creatures exist in the real world as real entities, they are clearly endangered and function within the boundaries of their mythological personas and origins but as species, not concrete characters entangled in myth in its specific variants. It is not suggested implicitly by the author, but we can reasonably deduce that in the book's worldview, mythological tales are etiological and by featuring the various creatures and describing their origins, they tacitly acknowledge their existence as species in nature. The Minotaur Sentinel, while also a hybrid between man and bull, like the human flesh-eating Cretan monster, belongs to a species with a noble mission: "We minotaurs guard the world's labyrinths, keeping the secrets of the underworld from the greedy eyes of



humans." (Golding, 2007, 99). The strong ecological message of the book is broadened here to include, among damages of which humans are guilty, also making the mythological creatures weak, sick, and desperate. They are not monsters of Greek mythology but sentient beings endangered by selfish and short-sighted humans.

Golding's Minotaur is a symbolic figure of the noble Other, of someone who is forced to hide out of shame for his failure. Connie gives him a mission and builds his trust in himself. He feels strong compassion for creatures sick and weak, deserted and forgotten by those who should have cared for them and helped them. As someone who lived through and well understands their plight, he considers helping others his duty. For contemporary teenagers such a symbol is close to their daily experience and represents all the moments in their lives they felt excluded, humiliated, misunderstood, and despised by their communities.

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Classical, Mythological,  
Traditional Motifs,  
Characters, and  
Concepts

[Minotaur Pegasus](#)

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Other Motifs, Figures,  
and Concepts Relevant  
for Children and Youth  
Culture

[Abandonment](#) [Environment](#) [Friendship](#) [Parents \(and children\)](#) [Values](#)

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Further Reading

Smith, Jules, *Critical Perspective*, available at [literature.britishcouncil.org](http://literature.britishcouncil.org), London: British Council, 2013 (accessed: August 26, 2020).

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Addenda

[Science Has The Best Stories](#) – Introduction from Julia Golding, "Best Selling Author" (accessed: September 17, 2020).



