

# Jason and the Golden Fleece

Long ago, in the ancient Greek city of Iolcus, lived a wicked king called Pelias. Pelias had taken the throne by force from the previous king, Aeson, who he had locked in the dungeons. Pelias lived in constant fear of his throne being taken away from him.

Aeson's son Jason, the rightful king of Iolcus, was smuggled out of the city as a baby out of fear that Pelias would have him killed. He was sent to the wilderness and left in a cave which was the home of Chiron, a mighty centaur – half man, half horse. Chiron tutored Jason about hunting, plants and the arts. As Jason grew older, he became a formidable warrior and, when he had reached adulthood, set out to reclaim his rightful throne from Pelias.

When he reached Iolcus, Pelias was furious. He demanded that Jason proved himself as a capable king by finding the Golden Fleece, a mythical fleece from a winged ram. Jason agreed and set out on his ship, the Argo, with his crew of heroic Argonauts, including heroes such as Heracles, Castor, Pollux and the heroine Atalanta.

On their journey, Jason and the Argonauts reached the court of Phineus, king of Salmydessus in Thrace. There, they were able to kill some harpies that had been tormenting him and, as repayment, Phineus told Jason the whereabouts of the Golden Fleece – a far-off land called Colchis.

The journey to Colchis was fraught with dangers. The Argo had to navigate through huge rock cliffs that moved together to crush things that passed through them. Luckily, the ship made it through with minimal damage and arrived safely in Colchis.

The fleece itself was owned by King Aeetes of Colchis, who promised to give it to Jason if he completed three tasks. The king's daughter, the sorceress Medea, fell in love with

Jason and promised to help him complete these tasks. First, he needed to plough a field with fire-breathing oxen. Then, he planted the teeth of a dragon into a field, which sprouted into an army of warriors. Before the warriors attacked Jason, he tricked them by throwing a rock in their direction, causing them to attack each other instead. Finally, Jason had to overcome the dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece. He sprayed the dragon with a sleeping potion and then stole the fleece and made his escape.

After a long and perilous journey home, the Argo made it back safely to Iolcus and Jason presented the Golden Fleece to Pelias. Pelias refused to give up his throne so Medea used her magic to kill him. Due to Jason's involvement in this crime, he was not made king and instead went to live in the city of Corinth in the south of Greece.

