



Jason was a character in Greek mythology who went on a quest with some of the mightiest heroes of his time, and it became one of the most famous stories in mythology. Their mission was to retrieve a golden fleece from the King Aeetes of Colchis.

PART I – QUEST PRELUDE

THE BEGINNING

Jason wasn't always in association with a mighty group of heroes, but he was always the son of a king. His father was Aeson, king of Iolcos in Thessaly. As for Jason's mother, no one has an exact idea who she was. She could have been Alcimedea, who was the daughter of Clymene, or Tyro, the daughter of Salmoneus. Whomever Jason's mom was, she did not have much involvement in his life.

Although Aeson was Jason's father, he did not raise him. Jason was stillborn as a baby, so Aeson sent him to Chiron, a centaur in Greek mythology who later became the constellation Sagittarius. Chiron raised Jason until he was an adult, at which time Jason tried returning to Iolcus, where he was born. Jason was not welcome in Iolcus because of King Pelias, who usurped Aeson, Jason's father.

ORDERS FROM THE KING

The reason why Jason needed to find the Golden Fleece in the first place is because of the order given by Pelias. Pelias came up with the idea from Jason, who conversed with his

uncle on what he would do to keep someone away. Jason did not realize at the time that Pelias wanted to rid himself of Jason forever. Pelias had taken the throne in Iolcus from Jason's father, making Jason no longer the heir to the crown. So, since Pelias most likely felt threatened by Jason, he didn't want him anywhere near Iolcus.

Pelias sent him on an impossible mission, to fetch the Golden Fleece from the King Aetes of Colchis. Jason did not refuse the order forwarded by Pelias, but instead assembled a fleet of heroes and warriors to help him on his journey. This group was the Argonauts.

PART II – ASSEMBLING THE TEAM

THE BEST OF THE BEST

The Argonauts were made up of at least fifty heroes, or more, depending on what source you are examining. Some Greek historians think that there were around eighty-five members. A few of the known Argonauts were Jason, Heracles (Hercules), Castor, Polydeuces, Euphemus, Periclymenus, Orpheus, Erytus, Echion, Calais, Zetes, and Mopsus.

A WORTHY SHIP FOR A WORTHY CREW

The ship of the Argonauts was named, Argo. Argo would have to carry Jason and the entire group of Argonauts to Colchis, which was at the eastern end of the Black Sea, south of the Caucasus, in the western part of modern Georgia (the independent state in Transcaucasia, Russia, not the state in the United States of America).

PART III – THE QUEST

THE DEAL

Once Argo and its crew reached Colchis, they would have to get the Golden Fleece from Aetes, the King of Colchis. Aetes did not readily give up the Fleece since it was a gift to him. However, he did agree to hand the Golden Fleece over to Jason upon him completing a set of tasks. The first task was to plow a field using the Khalkotauroi, which was two fire-breathing bronze-hooved bulls; for the second task, Jason had to plant dragon's teeth in the field he had plowed, and then defeat the stone warriors that sprouted from them.

HELP FROM ABOVE

There was no way Jason could have completed these tasks alone, but he had the help of the goddess, Hera, and Medea, whom Hera placed a love spell on for Jason. During the first task, Medea created an ointment for Jason to wear that made him invincible to the fire that the Khalkotauroi breathed at him. The salve worked since Medea was a trained sorceress and high priestess of Hecate.

SIDE QUESTS

The Argonauts made a few stops on their way to retrieve the Golden Fleece in Colchis. They stopped at The Isle of Lemnos, The Gegeines, Salmydessus in Thrace, and The Symplegades. They faced many adventures at the places they stopped, and Jason started a new race of people on the Isle of Lemnos, called the Minyans.

QUEST'S END

The king still did not give Jason the fleece, and he planned to kill them before having a chance to find it. However, in her love, Medea leads Jason and the Argonauts to the Golden Fleece, which was hanging in a sacred oak tree.



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