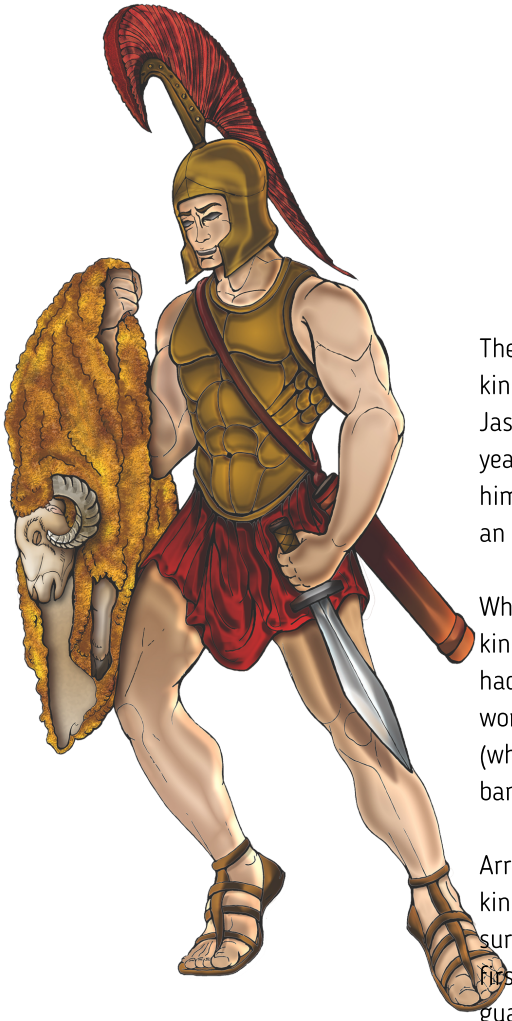


# JASON

## THE CAPTAIN



The hero Jason was deprived of his rightful place on the throne of Iolkos (a real kingdom near the city now known as Volos in Greece) by his uncle, King Pelias. Jason's father was forced to flee the city by Pelias and so entrusted the then 10-year-old Jason to the care of the noble centaur Chiron, who raised Jason and taught him to fight. In the meantime, Jason's uncle Pelias received a dread warning from an oracle who told him that he would lose his kingdom to a man with one shoe.

When Jason had become a man his desire to return to his city and take back his kingdom grew stronger, and so he set out for Iolkos and his destiny. On the way, he had to cross the river Anaurus. As he readied himself to wade across he saw an old woman who had been stranded due to the river's current. Jason lifted the woman (who was really Hera, Queen of the gods in disguise) and carried her to the opposite bank, losing a sandal in the process.

Arriving in Iolkos he presented himself to King Pelias and demanded the return of his kingdom. Pelias, who had observed that Jason was only wearing one shoe, hid his surprise and fear and told Jason that if he wanted to rule the kingdom then he must first retrieve the Golden Fleece. Pelias proposed this knowing that the Fleece was guarded by a fierce dragon which never slept and that the task would almost certainly end with Jason's death.

Excited about the adventure, Jason called on Argos; one of the cleverest ship builders of the time. Under the guidance of Athena, Argos built a magnificent 50 oared ship, called the Argo. Jason then approached his friends and asked them to crew the Argo. The various heroes counted as Argonauts include Heracles, Theseus, Orpheus, Castor and Pollux (The Dioskouri), Calais and Zetes (The Boreads), Telamon, Peleus, Atalanta, and Meleager.

Jason and the Argonauts had many adventures on the way to Colchis where the Golden Fleece hang on the tree guarded by the dragon. They encountered giants, hostile tribesmen and the harpies (half-woman half-bird creatures). At one point the brave Heroes had to steer the Argo through the deadly Symplegades, a pair of gigantic rocks which clashed together as ships sailed through. Luckily, they made it!! Upon their arrival in Colchis, the local king Aeetes agreed to give up the fleece if Jason could complete two tasks.

The first part of his task was to yoke and then plough a field with fire breathing oxen. Once this was completed, he was to sow dragon's teeth into the field. From these teeth warriors would grow, which Jason would have to defeat. Jason agreed to the task unaware that Aeetes knew no mortal could complete the task unaided. Jason, however, had the support of the goddess Aphrodite, who made Aeetes daughter Medea fall in love with him. Medea, herself a sorceress, helped Jason in his quest.

First, Medea created a special ointment for Jason to put on his body to protect him from the fire of the oxen. Next, she revealed to Jason the secret of killing the dragon teeth soldiers; Jason had to throw a rock into their midst, which would cause them to attack one another. After these two tasks were completed, Medea helped Jason retrieve the Golden Fleece. For she knew that Aeetes had never really intended to give the fleece to Jason, planning instead to kill him. Medea supplied Jason with a potion which would put the Dragon to sleep. Once the dragon was safely asleep Jason stole the fleece, gathered up Medea and the Argonauts, and fled on the Argo.