

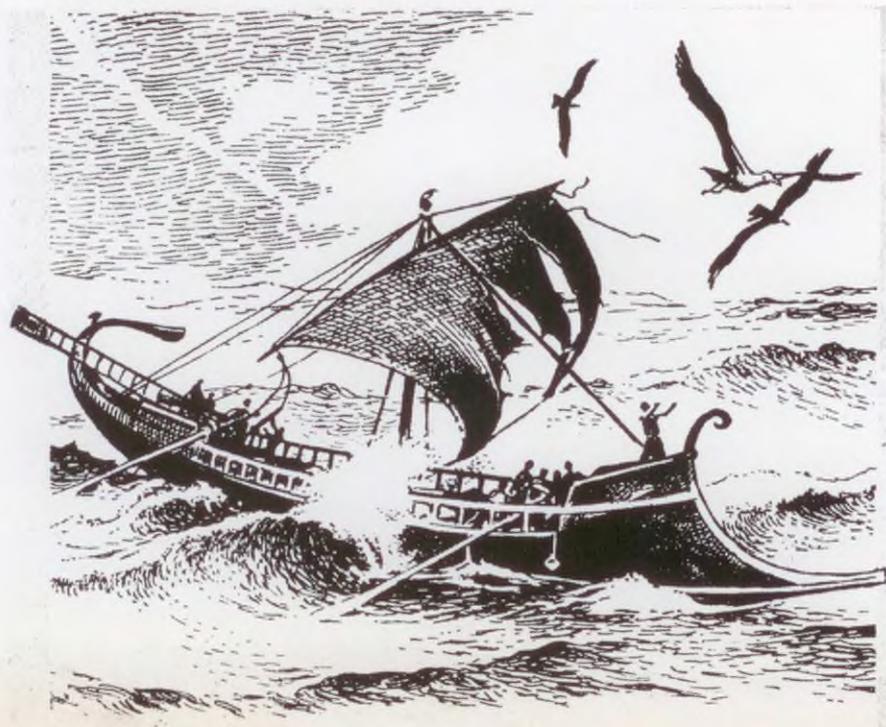
then their gaze followed the desperate bird as it flew into the widening chasm created as the rocks drew apart. Sensing movement, the rocks sprang forward again, casting a massive cloud of spray over the *Argo*.

Jason's crew could only hear the roar of the surf surging in and out of the caves under the cliffs, and feel the current whip the *Argo* round. Amidst the disorientating violence of noise and movement, however, they could see clearly that although the rocks had stripped the dove's tail feathers, the bird had made it through. The rocks drew apart once more: now was the time to strike. Tiphys called on the Argonauts to pull on their oars with everything they had.

The rowers took up Tiphys's challenge and pulled, knowing their lives depended on it. Their anxiety turned into terror, however, when the tide proved too strong to overcome and began to drag the *Argo* back into the killing zone. When a huge wave rose up before them, the crew instinctively ducked, believing their end had come, but Tiphys masterfully eased the battered ship over the crest, and the Argonauts sighed with relief as the wave rolled away behind them. Then Euphemus stood and urged the rowers to put in more effort. The Argonauts redoubled their efforts, bending the oars almost to their breaking point, desperately trying to force their way past the closing rocks. Another wave struck the ship, holding it in the maelstrom amidst a tempest of noise and violence. Just when all seemed lost, however, Athena rose up out of the water and held the rocks back with her left hand while, with her right, she pushed the *Argo* forward over the deadly waves.

The ship only just made it into the calm waters beyond the clashing rocks, her exhausted crew slumping over their oars. Athena returned to Olympus, her work done, leaving behind the rocks fused together forever, as foretold in an oracle. No sailor would ever again have to go through the ordeal of the Argonauts.

One man remained unhappy: Jason. After the ship had sailed into safer waters, Tiphys turned to his captain to remind him that Phineas's prophecies were coming true and that, with the divine aid of Athena, this quest would now go much more smoothly. Jason thought for a moment before baring his



Euphemus releases the dove to fly between the Clashing Rocks.  
(*Look and Learn*)

soul to Tiphys and the rest of the crew. He told them how he had made a mistake in accepting this mission, and that he was afraid, not only for himself but for every soul on board the ship. The Argonauts shouted encouragement in return, lifting Jason out of his despair until he asked for calm.

This time he told them that their courage had set an example for him, and that from this moment he would no longer live in fear of what lay ahead. With harmony restored and the dreadful clashing rocks behind them, the Argonauts again took up their oars and pulled. On through the day and night they rowed until they came to the deserted island of Thynias.

## Apollo and Lycus

It was a very weary crew indeed that pulled the *Argo* onto the beach at Thynias. Just as they did, however, a remarkable event occurred that galvanized them once more. Who saw him first was never made clear, but the Argonauts were completely taken aback by the sudden appearance of Apollo flying through the skies above them. The god was unmistakable, with his long golden hair and silver bow, and, as he passed, the ground rumbled and quaked, and the surf surged up the beach. Jason's crew bowed their heads, fearing to stare into the god's eyes, and remained that way until Apollo disappeared over the horizon.

Orpheus broke their awestruck silence, telling his comrades that they must call this island the Isle of Apollo and make a suitable offering in his honour. The Argonauts immediately made an altar from the shingle, found a goat for the sacrifice, and sang and danced in celebration. When a fresh west wind blew up on their third morning on the Isle of Apollo, the crew made their ship ready and sailed away.

The *Argo* sped along all that day and on into the night, when, abruptly, the wind failed, compelling the Argonauts to take up their oars once more. By dawn, though, they came in sight of the Acherusian headland, and the relieved sailors pulled up in its shelter. Watching the ship sail in was the local king, Lycus, along with an excited crowd of people. The news of the Argonauts' defeat of the hated Bebrycians had spread like wildfire, and Lycus ordered a feast prepared for the arriving heroes. He singled out Polydeuces for particular attention, but all of the Argonauts were mobbed and taken into the city to celebrate.

For their part, the Argonauts told of their adventures so far, the trials passed, and the sacrifices given in pursuit of the fabled Golden Fleece. Lycus listened intently before addressing Jason and his crew. The king began by grieving for the loss of Heracles, and acknowledging his debt to the Argonauts as a neighbour of the Bebrycians. To that end, he offered to build a temple that all could see, and he ordered his son Dascylus to join the crew and guide them to Colchis. The banquet lasted all night. At dawn, the Argonauts once more started to board their ship, full of hope and confidence as they prepared to set sail, but tragedy lurked nearby.

## Disaster Strikes

Idmon the soothsayer was as keen as anyone to get back on board the *Argo*. However as he rushed along the riverbank towards the ship, he did not see a huge white boar cooling itself in the mud. The boar, however, saw Idmon. The enraged animal rushed out of the reeds and crashed into the startled young prophet. One of its dagger-like tusks tore through bone and muscle, dropping Idmon to the muddy ground. The Argonauts ran to the sound of Idmon's screams and came upon the dreadful scene. Peleus drove the boar back with his spear, but the animal turned and charged again, only for Idas to impale it on his spear. The rest of the crew picked up Idmon and carried him back to the *Argo*, where he died in their arms. The Argonauts and King Lycus grieved for three days, then buried Idmon in a specially raised barrow.

Calamity struck again almost immediately, when Tiphys suddenly fell ill and died. The Argonauts buried their navigator beside the young seer, and made their way down to the shore, where they sat in desolate silence at this latest cruel turn of events. Most of the crew thought their quest was now at an end, and they rapidly lost hope at ever returning to Greece. The goddess Hera took note of the crew's despair, however, and breathed courage into Ancaeus. He stood and addressed his comrades, pointing out that he came on this voyage not as a warrior but as a seaman, and, besides, any of them could pilot the ship with the required skill.

The *Argo* by José Daniel  
Cabrera Peña.



Peleus stood up too to exhort the Argonauts, but Jason was less easily moved. He asked which of them was a skilled steersman, because he could not see one, and he feared they were stuck facing a wretched fate. Ancaeus would not listen to Jason's pessimism, and offered to take on the steering duties himself, to which the rest of the Argonauts, including Jason, agreed. They all rallied round and prepared to sail.

## The Birds of Ares

It was dawn on the twelfth day before the Argonauts finally left Lycus's kingdom. They took up their oars until clear of the river mouth, then shook out the sail, which caught the wind and spread. The *Argo* bucked and ploughed through the waves. As they passed the headland that contained the grave of Sthenelus – a former comrade of Heracles – they saw his ghost wearing a gleaming four-peaked helmet with a blood-red crest. The Argonauts sat in awe at the sight until Mopsus insisted that they land and honour Sthenelus. Jason ordered the ship to shore, where they quickly tied her up and set off for the gravesite. Once there, they offered libations and sacrificed sheep. Orpheus dedicated his lyre, giving his name to the headland, Lyra.

The wind blew strong again when the *Argo* resumed its voyage, carrying it across the sea like a bird in flight. They passed the stream of Parthenius, then Sesamus, Erythini, Crobialus, Cromna, and Cytorus. The *Argo* sailed on day and night along the Assyrian coast towards the land of the Amazons, a fearsome tribe of women warriors. Finally, when the seas became too rough and dangerous, Jason ordered the *Argo* into shore for shelter, even though the local tribes might prove hostile. The breeze soon rose again, however, and they set sail quickly to avoid any potential fight.

After another day of favourable winds, the *Argo* reached Chaldia, where the inhabitants, the Chalybes, eschewed farming for working the iron deposits that littered the land. The little ship then rounded the next headland, sailing past the land of the Tibareni, whose men took to their beds when their women gave birth. The Mossynoeci, who lived further along the coast, were even more bizarre; whatever was private in everyone else's culture was public in their world, and vice-versa, so that even sex was a public spectacle. Jason and the Argonauts were therefore happy to sail past the Mossynoeci too.

The Argonauts made good time until they reached the island of Ares. Here the breeze dropped just as night began to fall, stranding the *Argo* out to sea. The sailors reached for their oars, paying little attention to a single bird flying above them, though some watched as it shook its wings until a feather fell out. The feather dropped like a lead weight and pierced Oileus's shoulder, causing him to drop his oar. Eribotes pulled out the feather and tended to the wound, but just then another bird appeared and dived towards the ship. Clytius felled this new attacker with an arrow of his own.

Amphidamas shouted a warning that arrows would not help if a flock of such birds attacked, and that they needed a better plan if they were to get safely to the beach. He told the crew that even Heracles could not fight birds with arrows; rather, he used a bronze rattle to frighten them away. Amphidamas suggested something similar for the Argonauts. He told them to put on their war helmets and protect the ship with shields and spears, then row until the birds came. When they did, the Argonauts were to shout as loud as they could and bang on their shields. The sight and sound of the Argonauts, added Amphidamas, would scare the birds away.

The Argonauts followed Amphidamas's advice to the letter. They quickly donned their gleaming bronze helmets, the blood-red crests shaking in the breeze. Half of the crew began to row towards the beach while the rest locked their shields to form a roof over the *Argo*. When all was set, they began shouting at the top of their lungs. They saw no birds yet, but as the ship reached shore, the warriors banged on their shields and a dark cloud of birds rose, showering the *Argo* with feathers before retreating over the nearby mountains. The Argonauts, having avoided any further casualties, settled down on the beach for the night, but the advent of morning held a further surprise.

Shipwreck of the sons of  
Phrixus. (*Look and Learn*)



## The Sons of Phrixus

Far away from the island of Ares and the drama unfolding over the Argonauts, the four sons of Phrixus had earlier boarded a Colchian ship bound for Greece. That night, a storm struck from the north when they were passing the island, wrecking their ship and throwing the brothers into the sea. They clung to a beam until, drenched and shaking all over, they washed up on the island. The storm had died down by first light and soon the brothers found themselves walking towards a band of fearsome warriors coming down the beach to investigate.

The shipwrecked brothers pleaded with the strangers to provide some clothes and supplies. At that, Jason stepped forward from the group to offer them help, but he was curious as to how the men came to be there. One, Argos, introduced himself and his brothers – Cytissorus, Phrontis, and Melas – as the sons of Phrixus, who had fled with the fabled Golden Fleece to Colchis. Jason replied excitedly that the brothers were kin to him on his father's side, and welcomed them as friends. The other Argonauts could hardly believe their ears at this news, and rushed to get clothes and food for the men. The crew and the brothers then built an altar of pebbles to Ares, and sacrificed a sheep in his honour.

During their celebration feast, an ebullient Jason turned to the brothers, offering them a place on his crew. He also told them where he was heading, and asked them to act as guides. Far from the gratitude Jason expected, however, the brothers looked at him in horror. Surely, they asked, Jason did not expect the king of Colchis, Aeëtes, to willingly hand over the Golden Fleece? Argos pointed out to the Argonauts that they may be great warriors but Aeëtes ruled with an iron fist, and had many soldiers at his disposal. Moreover, the Fleece lay under the protection of a massive and ever-vigilant serpent.

The Argonauts visibly paled at the image Argos conjured of the trials that awaited them, but Peleus answered that the Argonauts were a match for anyone, and doubted that the Colchian tribes would interfere in their righteous quest. The Argonauts now nodded their heads in agreement with Peleus. The matter settled, and having finished their meal, they turned in for the night. A breeze greeted the dawn, and Jason's crew, along with the brothers, boarded the *Argo* and sailed away from the island of Ares, their destination: Colchis.

## Colchis

The *Argo* sailed on, aided by a stiff wind, past the island of Philyra and the lands of the Becheiri, Sapeires, and Byzeres. The Argonauts saw the Caucasus Mountains, and the enormous eagle that was assigned by the gods to repeatedly eat Prometheus's liver as punishment for his stealing the gift of fire. Not long after the eagle soared out of view, the disturbed sailors heard Prometheus's screams echo across the waves.

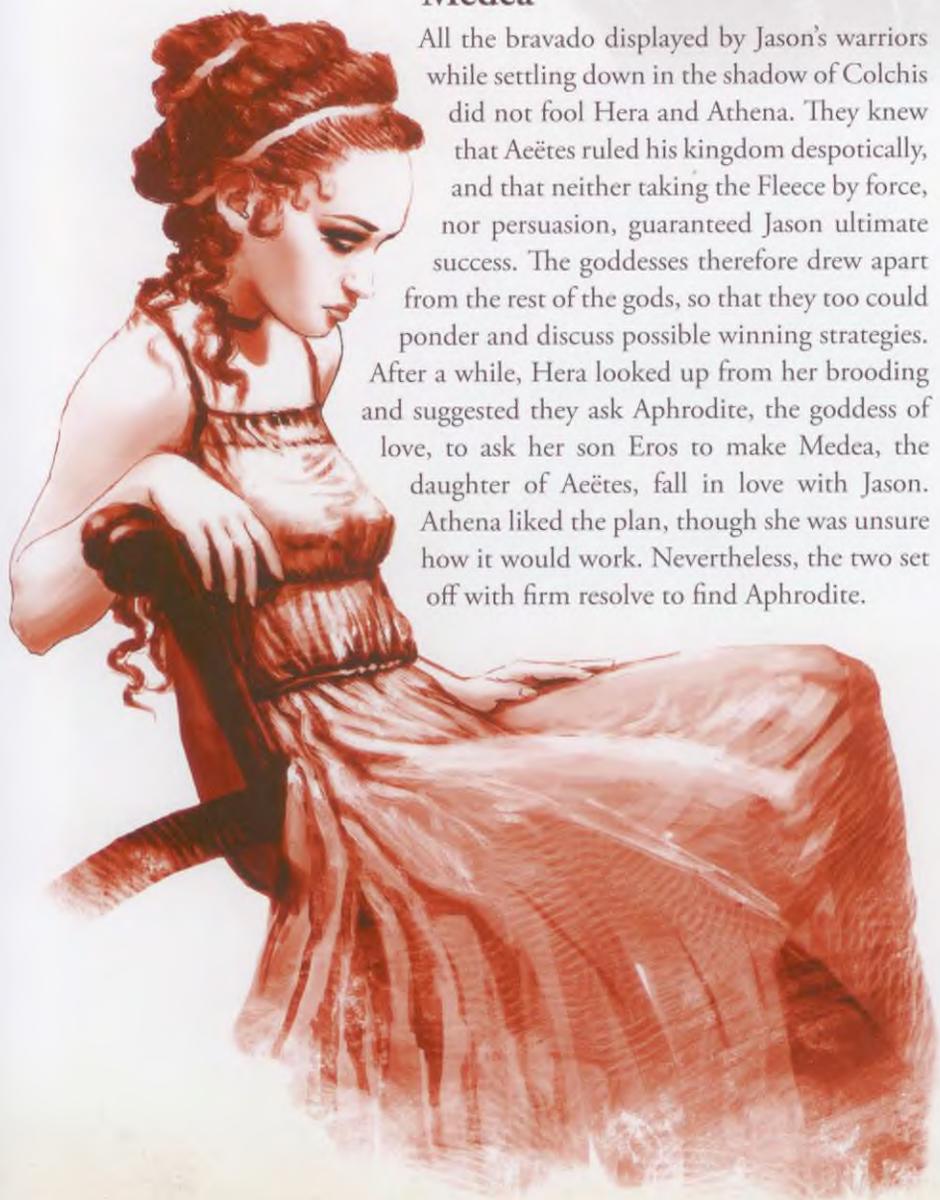
That night, the *Argo*, under the expert guidance of Argos, sailed into the estuary of the River Phasis. The Argonauts quickly stowed the sail and mast, and rowed into the fast-flowing mouth of the wide river. On their left they could see the mountains and the Colchian city of Aea, while, on their right, the Plain of Ares stretched away towards the sacred grove in which dwelt the serpent guarding the Fleece.

Jason poured out libations of honey and wine to the gods and the souls of dead heroes, asking them to look favourably on his intrusion into their domain. But it was Ancaeus who spoke to remind the crew that this was the time to decide on the best strategy for securing the Fleece. Argos therefore directed the *Argo* into a shady backwater where they could rest before undertaking the most vital and dangerous part of their mission.

# BOOK III: THE GOLDEN FLEECE

## Medea

All the bravado displayed by Jason's warriors while settling down in the shadow of Colchis did not fool Hera and Athena. They knew that Aeëtes ruled his kingdom despotically, and that neither taking the Fleece by force, nor persuasion, guaranteed Jason ultimate success. The goddesses therefore drew apart from the rest of the gods, so that they too could ponder and discuss possible winning strategies. After a while, Hera looked up from her brooding and suggested they ask Aphrodite, the goddess of love, to ask her son Eros to make Medea, the daughter of Aeëtes, fall in love with Jason. Athena liked the plan, though she was unsure how it would work. Nevertheless, the two set off with firm resolve to find Aphrodite.



Aphrodite was still making herself ready for the day, when Hera and Athena entered her chambers, and she was none too pleased to see them. She 'welcomed' the goddesses with sarcasm and reproach, because they were not frequent visitors. Hera persevered, however, telling Aphrodite that the final stage of the quest for the Golden Fleece was about to happen, and that she was afraid that Jason might fail without help. Hera added how Jason had earned her patronage through his good deeds, and that she would do whatever she could to honour him and punish King Pelias. Moved by such an appeal, Aphrodite opened her arms to Hera, offering whatever assistance was needed. Hera replied that she wanted Eros to fire his magic arrow into Medea's heart, causing her to fall in love with Jason, and thereby solicit her aid for him in the dangerous tasks he was about to face. Aphrodite was sceptical that her rebellious boy would help, but agreed to ask him. Hera and Athena, their mission successful, left Aphrodite to track down her son.

Eros was in the orchard of Zeus, playing dice with Ganymede, the innocent and beautiful boy whom Zeus had brought to live with the gods. Eros showed Ganymede little respect, however, so that when Aphrodite walked in on them playing, he was taking the last of some golden dice from the hapless child. Ganymede left sullenly, leaving a very happy Eros looking up into the concerned face of his mother. She chided him for his gloating, but promised him a golden ball if he would perform the task she had in mind. The greedy Eros begged for his gift immediately. Aphrodite stood firm, however, and kissed Eros into submission. He therefore willingly picked up his bow and quiver of arrows, and set off down through the heavens to carry out Aphrodite's wishes. Thus the goddesses had done their part to help recover the Golden Fleece, now it would be up to Jason and his crew of heroes to complete the task.

## Aeëtes

The Argonauts knew nothing, of course, about the schemes of the gods. As they sat in their ship, hidden amongst the foliage along the riverbank, they had their own problems to consider. Jason chose this moment, however, to finally stamp his authority on the expedition. He addressed his crew, putting forward the argument that, rather than employing force, he and the sons of Phrixus should go to meet with Aeëtes, and see if he would give up the Fleece through friendship and in recognition of Zeus's will.

The Argonauts agreed unanimously, so Jason and the brothers, along with Telamon and Augeas, set out for Aeëtes's palace. On the way, they passed countless willow trees bearing corpses bound with cords and wrapped in untanned ox-hides, because Colchians neither buried nor cremated their dead. As Hera watched the small group approach, she spread a thick mist through the city, so that they could reach the palace unhindered.

Jason and his party stared in wonder at the palace complex as they walked through the gates with the fog that had swirled around them now dissipating. Columns were revealed, standing in orderly lines along the walls, interspersed with vines and foliage in full bloom. Four fountains gushed nearby, one each of oil, milk, wine, and water, and all four crafted by Hephaestus, blacksmith to the gods. Buildings and chambers surrounded the inner court of the palace. Aeëtes and his queen, Eidyia, occupied the tallest building, while his son Apsyrtus lived in a similar tower nearby. Aeëtes's daughters, Chalciopé and Medea, also lived in separate towers close to their mother.

Medea's position as priestess of the goddess Hecate meant that she had spent that morning working in the temple. She was out looking for her sister, however, when she first caught sight of the strangers. Her cry of surprise brought Chalciopé and her handmaidens running. Chalciopé was overjoyed to see her sons and rushed to greet them. Aeëtes and Eidyia and the rest of the household soon arrived to investigate the commotion. None of them, however, saw another unexpected guest flitting through the last tendrils of Hera's mist.

The unseen visitor was Eros on his mission for Aphrodite. He hung back in a doorway where he could clearly see his target. Eros strung his bow, nocked an arrow, and – too rapidly for the human eye to see – darted up to Jason's side before letting his arrow fly and retreating, leaving behind only a soft echo of laughter. Eros's arrow struck Medea in the heart, rendering her speechless and burning with love for Jason. No one around her noticed the arrow's effect on Medea, because they were too busy preparing warm baths and a banquet to celebrate the return of the brothers.

The Golden Fleece by José Daniel Cabrera Peña.



When everyone was rested and refreshed, Aeëtes asked his grandsons why they had returned and who were their companions. The brothers exchanged nervous glances, fearing how Aeëtes would take their news. It was left to Argos, as the eldest brother, to reply to Aeëtes's questions. He told the king how their ship wrecked off the island of Ares, where they met Jason and his Argonauts on the beach. Jason took them in, he continued, providing clothes and food, for which they were grateful, and in return they agreed to accompany Jason to the city. Plunging on with his story, Argos narrated Jason's mission to retrieve the Golden Fleece, and how the gods had helped them to this point. He added that the crew were the sons and grandsons of the immortals.

Aeëtes listened intently, but with increasing anger, as Argos told his story. Then the king could contain his wrath no longer. He ordered the brothers out of his sight and out of Colchis for good. Aeëtes accused them of plotting not to steal the Fleece but his crown, and that if they had not eaten as guests he would have had their tongues hacked out and hands chopped off to prevent them telling more lies against the gods. A defiant Argos made to reply, but Jason stepped forward and hushed him. He turned to Aeëtes and tried to persuade the king that this mission was genuine.

Jason offered, by way of recompense, to have his crew fight as mercenaries at the king's will, if he so desired, in return for the Fleece. Aeëtes, having already decided on his course of action, all but ignored Jason's pleading. He said that Jason could have the Fleece, if he proved himself more courageous than the king. To do that, continued Aeëtes, Jason would have to complete two tasks that Aeëtes himself had already performed. The first was to yoke two fire-breathing bulls, and plough the Plain of Ares. If he managed that, Jason was to sow the teeth of a dragon, and, when they grew out of the ground and became armed soldiers, he was to kill them all. If Jason did all that in one day, Aeëtes concluded, he could take the Golden Fleece.

Jason stood in stunned silence at the magnitude of the challenge before him. He had little choice but to accept, of course, to which Aeëtes told him to go and make himself ready for the next day's trials.

## Lively Debate

Jason left with Augeias, Telamon, and Argos, leaving the other brothers behind with their mother. Medea watched them leave, filled with passion for Jason, and increasingly distraught over what might happen to him, before she too left to go to her chambers. Argos walked with Jason along the path leading to the ship. He asked Jason not to be offended by what he was about to say, but that he knew of his aunt Medea's skills as a sorceress, and that she could help with the tasks, but he feared she might not. Argos then offered to approach his mother to ask Medea for her assistance.

Far from being insulted, Jason urged Argos to speak to her, even though it was shameful to accept help from women for what should be a warrior's work. The rest of the Argonauts prevented Argos's immediate reply by surrounding Jason, when he arrived back at the ship. Jason told them of Aeëtes's rage and the tasks that he had agreed to undertake. The crew's clamorous greeting suddenly fell silent as the shock of Jason's words set in.

Peleus broke the silence. He knew that Jason would undertake the tasks, but if he had any doubts then Peleus would willingly replace Jason in the contest. Telamon also stepped in to say he would do it, as did Idas, and Castor and Polydeuces, and finally the youthful Meleager. Argos spoke to the volunteers, pointing out that it was better if they did not throw their lives away needlessly. He added that, with their permission, he would return to the palace and beg his mother to seek the assistance of Medea and her skills as a sorceress.

Suddenly, a dove fell from the sky into Jason's lap, pursued by a hawk that could not pull out of its dive – and which impaled itself on the stern ornament of the *Argo*. Mopsus, who divined prophecies from birds, leapt up to tell the men that this was surely a favourable sign from the gods, and that it was as Phineas foretold about the help a goddess would give them. The Argonauts nodded their approval, all except Idas, who was incensed that they should allow mere women to save them.

The crew looked to Jason, but he had already decided that Argos should leave immediately on his mission. He compromised, however, by saying that it was not right for them to hide the *Argo* in a backwater, and that they must move the ship out into the open. Argos left immediately while the Argonauts took up their oars to relocate the *Argo*.



## The Treacherous King

While Jason and his crew considered their options down by the river, Aeëtes addressed a hastily arranged assembly of Colchians, with treachery in mind. He promised that when the bulls ripped apart whoever was sent to attempt the challenges, he would burn the ship and the crew in it for their arrogance. The Argonauts, he continued, were nothing but pirates, and deserved to be treated as such. The brothers who had brought them here, he thundered, would be sent into exile. To that end, he would keep the ship under surveillance until the moment came to unleash his vengeance.

Argos, meanwhile, approached the palace with some trepidation to speak to Chalciopé, who was busy fretting over the possible fate of her four sons at the hands of their vengeful father.

Medea slept fitfully in her chamber, away from the swirl of events surrounding the palace. She dreamed that Jason had come for her, not for the Fleece, and that she would be asked to choose between her father and her future husband. In her dream, she chose the latter, to the anguish of Aeëtes, who cried out, waking Medea from her sleep. Although deeply troubled, she resolved to ask Chalciopé to help with the tests.

Medea put on her robe and crept out of her chamber, but she could not bring herself to enter Chalciopé's room. Three times she tried, before giving in and returning to throw herself down on her bed, torn between love and duty. A passing handmaiden saw Medea and rushed to Chalciopé to tell her of her sister's distress. Her intervention proved timely because the handmaiden found Chalciopé sitting with her sons, discussing how to win Medea over to their side in the impending showdown with Aeëtes.

Chalciopé rushed over to Medea's room and asked her what was wrong; was she sick or had she heard of some plan by Aeëtes against Chalciopé and her sons? Medea could not reveal her feelings for Jason, as that would be a shameful, and potentially fatal, confession. She replied, therefore, that she was worried about what Aeëtes might do to the brothers. Medea waited with bated breath for her sister to speak.

Fear gripped Chalciopé and she begged Medea to find some way to help them all, but she insisted that, whether or not she could help, Medea must keep their plans secret. Medea said she wanted to help but did not know how. Chalciopé then asked Medea to assist Jason in the contests and revealed that Argos had arrived to appeal for their help. Now that Chalciopé had furnished her with a viable excuse to help Jason, Medea pledged herself to her sister's cause, and promised to be at Hecate's temple at dawn with a charm that would work on the bulls.

When Chalciopé left, however, Medea's despair over agreeing to help her father's enemy flooded back. Night fell, but still Medea could not sleep for worrying. She possessed the skills and craft to protect Jason from the bulls, but she could not see how to do it without alerting the king, nor how she would

greet Jason, if she ever would. Aeëtes would have her executed if he suspected treachery, but that would be no release from her disgrace because her name would forever be synonymous with treason. Medea even contemplated suicide before her infatuation caused her ruin.

She fetched her box of potions, deciding which one would work best to end it all. The watching Hera had seen enough and planted horrifying thoughts of the underworld in Medea's mind, followed by more hopeful images of friends and everything life had to offer. Medea stopped crying at this revelation and put away her box, except for the potions she needed to help Jason. Fortified by her determination to save the man she now loved, Medea could not wait for the sun to rise.

Medea prepared herself to venture out just as the first rays of dawn touched the palace. She dressed in a beautiful robe with a silver veil over her golden hair, while her skin shone with sweet ointment. She carried a potion called the Charm of Prometheus in her belt, made from the sap of a particular flower that grew in the Caucasus, and which, once spread on a man, would protect him from fire. With all in readiness, Medea called for her twelve handmaidens to attend her and make her chariot ready for the journey to the temple. The handmaidens yoked the mules, then Medea mounted the chariot, with two maidens on each side. Medea, reins in one hand and whip in the other, sped along through the town.

When they arrived at the temple, Medea addressed her handmaidens. She told them of her mission that morning and how they would be rewarded if they kept her secret. When Jason arrived at the temple, though, they were to stand back and not interfere. In the meantime, they would sing to keep their spirits up and while away the time. The handmaidens readily agreed to Medea's plan.

Argos left his brothers keeping watch and returned to the ship. When they witnessed Medea leaving the city, the brothers ran down to the ship to inform Argos of her departure. Argos pulled Jason quickly to his side, to take him to the temple of Hecate. Mopsus went with them to offer his assistance with any oracles they might hear, either on their journey or when they got there. It was just as well he did because along the path stood a shrine next to a poplar tree, where a crow clapped its wings and began to speak in a language only Mopsus could interpret. The bird told Mopsus that Jason must go on alone to meet Medea, so he and Argos held back, telling Jason they would wait and not to worry because Hera watched over him. Jason walked on alone.

Singing could not calm Medea's nerves. Her eyes wandered to the path whenever she thought she heard footsteps. After frequent false alarms, Jason finally appeared, striding purposefully forward. Medea stood transfixed, blushing intensely and almost blinded by the sight of the hero marching towards her. Still she could not move when Jason arrived and faced her, despite the handmaidens stepping back to give them room.