

Jason and the Golden Fleece



Jason's father, a Greek king, has been killed by Pelias, Jason's evil brother. After Pelias takes over the kingdom, Jason is sent out of the country to live with Chiron, a wise centaur – half man and half horse. Chiron looks after Jason for many years and teaches him how to be strong, how to fight and how to be a leader.

When Jason was old enough, he returned to claim his throne, but his clever brother had thought of a plan to get rid of him. Pelias would not let Jason become king until he had found the Golden Fleece – a sheepskin made of pure gold. The Fleece was guarded by a huge snake and so was impossible to steal. To win his prize, Jason had to travel to Colchis, so he had a boat built by a man called Argos. The boat was called the Argo and when Jason collected together a group of fighters to go

with him on the quest, they were named Argonauts after their fine ship.

He and his crew had many heroic adventures on the way to Colchis. They were attacked by enormous six-armed monsters, they captured the harpies – cruel, winged monsters, escaped the furies of clashing rocks in the Greek seas, and were attacked by huge birds with bronze feathers. But all the time they were being protected by the Goddess Hera because Jason had helped her earlier in his life.

Eventually they arrived in Colchis, but the king there did not want to let go of the Golden Fleece. He pretended to be welcoming but he set Jason three tasks to show that he was fit to be the owner of the precious Fleece. Jason would not have succeeded in these if it had not been for the king's daughter, Medea,

who had fallen in love with him.

Jason's tasks were to attach two fierce bulls to a plough, to sow a field with seed and then gather in the crop that grew. Medea warned him that he was being tricked. The bulls her father would give him breathed fire, the seeds he had to sow were magical dragon's teeth and the crop that would grow would be an army of soldiers, who would kill him. But what could he do?

Medea gave him magic ointment. This would prevent him being burned by the bulls. He also carried a shiny shield so that the fire was reflected back at the bulls. The dragons' teeth would burn him so he wore gloves and he could fight the soldiers by himself because he was so strong.



TEXT

- Who looked after Jason when he was a child?
 - Why was he a strange choice?
 - What did he teach Jason?
- Explain why Jason's warriors were called the 'Argonauts'.
- Give three examples of adventures that the Argonauts had on their way to Colchis.
- What were the three tasks given to Jason?
 - Explain how he was tricked.
- Show how he solved his three problems.
 - Who helped him, and why?
- Here are five features of legends. Find examples from the passage to illustrate them.
 - story takes place in the olden days
 - story has monsters
 - story has strong heroes
 - there are battles or fights
 - good wins in the end

SENTENCE

- Which of these words would you use to describe
 - someone you liked and
 - someone you did not like? Say why.

graceful puny elegant dainty uncouth
handsome scrawny gloomy cheerful infantile
- What two adjectives are used to describe Jason's brother?
 - Describe how they make you feel about him.
 - If the author had wanted you to feel the opposite, what words might he have used?
- Find the evidence to prove that Jason is: brave, heroic, intelligent and strong.
- Use these four pieces of information to write a paragraph which describes Jason. How would you twist the information to make him sound not so heroic?

WORD

- Write out these sentences using the correct form and spelling of the words.
 - (There/their/they're) bikes were stolen yesterday.
 - "Never mind (who's/whose) bikes they (where/we're/were)," said the teacher, "I want to know if (there/they're/their insured)."
 - "(Its/it's) no good thinking of that now," said mum. "(There's/theirs) no excuse."
- Write your own sentences using these pronouns:
them mine hers its yours theirs whose me
- Write some rules for the class to explain when you use:
 - there, their or they're
 - where, were and we're
 - its and it's
 - whose and who's