

Fleeced!

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROCKY SUMMIT OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN - EARLY EVENING

In ancient Greece, ITSYS and ZYXIS, two novice augurs, lead a bull to an altar where PELIUS, brother to the King of Salonika, and two GUARDS, impatiently wait. The flames from oil lamps dance in the wind. It is a foreboding place.

Itsys, tall and lanky, draws a long ceremonial dagger from his billowing robe, futilely brushes back his long hair.

ITSYS

Zyxis, how much is Pelius paying us?

Zyxis, chubby, short and balding, stops, scratches his head, thinks, resumes walking.

ZYXIS

Five hundred.

ITSYS

That's what experienced soothsayers get. Didn't you tell him-

ZYXIS

(quietly)

Of course not, Itsys. A man of his stature would never deal with amateurs.

Itsys' hands shake. He drops the dagger, draws Pelius' angry stare. Zyxis struggles with the ornery bull, which refuses to cooperate and lie upon the altar.

Zyxis intoxicates the beast with wine from the filled animal skin he carries across his back. The drunken bull's eyes roll, his tongue hangs out, but he remains conscious.

PELIUS

Zeus may be patient with those who serve him. I am not! Proceed at once with this sacrifice that I may know my fate. And also, if you don't mind, so that I do not miss the cutting of the cake, at my dear, dear brother's birthday celebration.

ITSYS  
 (whispering, to Zyxis)  
 Do I cut the throat from left to  
 right, or right to left?

ZYXIS  
 It doesn't matter -- just do it,  
 before Pelius cuts mine and yours.

Itsys climbs upon the altar, sits astride the bull, hacks  
 at the animal's throat, spraying a copious amount of blood  
 on himself and Zyxis. The resilient bull refuses to die,  
 necessitating further butchery.

ZYXIS (CONT'D)  
 A strong-willed beast, Pelius,  
 worthy of sacrifice to Zeus.

PELIUS  
 Get on with it!

Itsys looks heavenward.

ITSYS  
 Zeus, king of the Olympian gods,  
 accept Pelius' sacrifice of blood  
 and sinew...  
 (lowers head, whispers  
 to Zyxis)  
 while saving ours,  
 (returns gaze to sky)  
 And reveal, through us, events to  
 come.

Itsys tosses the dagger to Zyxis, who makes a long incision  
 from throat to crotch, spilling entrails onto the base of  
 the altar.

Zyxis digs into the mess with both hands, raises them to  
 the sky, then lowers them, inspects. Pelius and his guards  
 step closer, keenly interested.

ZYXIS  
 Pelius, you are destined to become  
 the next king of Salonika.

PELIUS  
 Splendid!

ZYXIS  
 But...

Zyxis squeezes and knots the dripping intestines. Pelius  
 places his hand on the grip of the sword he wears at his  
 side.

PELIUS

Continue!

ZYXIS

A son, the son of King Diomedes, your brother, will avenge his father. Wait! What's this? At the end of the world hangs a golden fleece. It is a gift of the gods and possesses great power.

PELIUS

A son? My brother has no son I'm aware of. Assuming he does, how would I know him?

ITSYS

(still astride the  
carcass)

He'll be a one-sandaled man.

PELIUS

How do you know that?

Itsys reaches inside the animal's stomach, pulls out an old sandal, twirls it on his index finger, for all to see.

PELIUS (CONT'D)

One more question: The golden fleece you mentioned; as a wall hanging, will it complement the new chair and end table I recently acquired?

Itsys shrugs.

ITSYS

Sure.

PELIUS

Anything else to add, gentlemen?

ZYXIS

You're going to kill us now, aren't you?

Pelius gestures to his guards. They draw their swords.

PELIUS

You two really are good.

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE OF KING DIOMEDES - LATER THAT EVENING

An elaborate birthday celebration, with accompanying MUSICIANS, is in progress. KING DIOMEDES and his lovely, raven-haired wife, ZOEY, are present, along with many GUESTS, including Pelius and his two guards.

An extravagant, single-layer cake is wheeled before the seated king. Diomedes, grey-bearded, but robust, raises a cake knife.

DIOMEDES

How sorrowful, on such a merry occasion, to have to deface our baker's exquisite work of art.

Diomedes starts to make the cut, hesitates, raises the blade again. More well-chosen words come to mind.

ZOEY

Less philosophizing and more cutting, dear husband. Our guests are hungry for cake, not words!

Pelius draws closer. One of his guards positions himself at Diomedes' side.

PELIUS

Yes, brother, I can hardly wait for the first piece. For good luck, why not cut on the count of three? One, two-

On the count of two, Pelius' guard, MERITUS, unleashes and swings his sword, decapitating Diomedes. His severed head lands in the middle of the cake.

Zoey faints, the guests scream, swoon, retch. Pelius shakes his head in disgust.

PELIUS (CONT'D)

Did you hear me say "three," Meritus?

Meritus is dumbstruck. The second guard rolls his eyes in disbelief. Pelius scowls, embeds fists into hips.

PELIUS (CONT'D)

This just won't do. It simply will not do. I want you to reattach my brother's head and, this time, wait until the count of three!

MERITUS

The head? You want me to?  
Reattach with what?

Pelius strides to the gift table, picks up a knitted shawl, inspects it.

PELIUS

Ghastly pattern and choice of colors.

He tosses the garment to Meritus.

PELIUS (CONT'D)

Meritus, if you desire to remain in my service, you will need to think on your feet. Use this shawl.

Fumbling badly, Meritus reattaches the head, backwards. The second guard silently signals to him to turn it around, which he does. Pelius' foot taps the floor rapidly.

MERITUS

This should do, sire.

The head topples over, initiating a second repair. Pelius signals the stunned musicians.

PELIUS

Music please, something festive.

MUSICIAN

Festive?

PELIUS

Certainly, I've ascended the throne, and just in time.

Pelius gazes around the room.

PELIUS (CONT'D)

My brother's dreadful taste in decorating jeopardized the future of the kingdom.

Pelius picks up an ornate vase, gives it a look of disdain, smashes it to the ground.

The musicians take up their instruments, play discordantly, as Pelius signals Meritus to decapitate Diomedes a second time.

Zoey wakes up just in time to witness it.

PELIUS (CONT'D)  
One, two... three.

Meritus times his cut perfectly, elicits Pelius' approval.

PELIUS (CONT'D)  
There's hope for you yet, Meritus.

Zoey passes out again, but quickly revives. She lunges at Pelius, stops short of the point of his drawn dagger.

ZOEY  
Pelius, you wretched bastard!

PELIUS  
(to crowd)  
I know, I know, I've ruined a perfectly good birthday cake. It did look tasty. Perhaps we'll have one on my birthday. You're all invited.

ZOEY  
What shall become of me? What shall become of me?!

Zoey tugs at her hair, falls to Pelius' feet.

PELIUS  
I'd say you're in for a career change. You simply must write and tell me all about it, from wherever it is you end up. You have until dawn to get beyond the kingdom's walls, otherwise, your husband's fate awaits you.

Pelius turns to the panic-stricken crowd.

PELIUS (CONT'D)  
Go now, drive your chariots safely.

Pelius pauses, perks up when something forgotten comes to mind, motions for everyone to stop.

PELIUS (CONT'D)  
Pardon me, I've forgotten my manners. Thank you all for attending my brother's party. A memorable evening, wouldn't you all agree?

(MORE)

PELIUS (CONT'D)

And one last thing: if anyone in the kingdom ever fails to address me as King Pelius, I'll kill them. Good night.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE OF HERA, SALONIKA - LATER THAT EVENING

Distraught Zoey seeks the advice of HERA, queen of the Olympian gods. The temple, located on the kingdom's outskirts, is deserted at this late hour. Zoey hurries to the entrance, stops, looks about with the uneasy feeling of being followed.

INT. TEMPLE OF HERA

Zoey approaches the torch-lit, larger-than-life statue of Hera, kneels at its feet. The empty slab of marble next to her is used for the placement of offerings. A shadowy, indistinct form lurks in the corner, behind the statue.

ZOEY

Hera, queen of the gods, I beg you to give me guidance. My world has collapsed. My sorrow is boundless.

She pauses at the sound of chewing, o.s.

IN THE SHADOWS

The mysterious FIGURE devours the leg of a previous sacrifice.

BACK TO SCENE

HERA (O.S.)

Chicken would be nice.

ZOEY

Pardon? Who is there?

Hera steps into the light, licks greasy fingers.



HERA

It is I, Hera. I heard you.  
 Things are bad, I know, but if you  
 want my help, you must make a  
 sacrifice. It's protocol, you  
 see. I'm in the mood for chicken  
 -- go look outside.

Hera steps back into the dark. Zoey, confused, rises, goes back to the temple's entrance.

EXT. TEMPLE OF HERA

Zoey pokes her head outside the doorway.

ZOEY'S POV

A POULTRY VENDOR's horse-drawn cart passes. The door to a cage pops open, releases one chicken that wanders aimlessly on the dirt road.

BACK TO SCENE

Zoey guardedly approaches the bird, as the first hint of dawn appears. As she picks it up, a disheveled OLD MAN grabs hold simultaneously.

OLD MAN

Let go! I saw it first!

ZOEY

Nonsense! I did! I must have it  
 for a sacrifice to Hera! I don't  
 have time to argue!

OLD MAN

Neither do I! I need this to  
 survive. I've gone two days  
 without a meal!

Zoey dusts herself off with one hand, straightens her hair.

ZOEY

Don't you recognize your queen?  
 How dare you address me in such a  
 manner! Release the bird that I  
 may sacrifice it to Hera. My very  
 life is at stake!

Zoey tugs hard, gains sole control of the chicken, runs back to the temple. The old man shakes his fist.

OLD MAN

A curse upon you -- you and your  
unborn son! May he lack the  
common sense of that fowl.

Zoey freezes.

ZOEY

Unborn son?

INT. TEMPLE OF HERA

Hastily, clumsily, Zoey wrings the chicken's neck, throws it upon the marble offering slab. She resumes her prayer position, wipes feathers from her gown.

HERA (O.S.)

You call that a sacrifice?

ZOEY

It's the best I could do under the  
circumstances. Can we get on with  
this, please?

HERA (O.S.)

It isn't even cooked. Who eats  
raw chicken?

Zoey sobs.

HERA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Okay, okay, I'll help you. I have  
to get to the other side of the  
kingdom anyway. I've got another  
temple over there and I heard that  
someone is sacrificing a whole  
tuna -- and I love seafood!

Zoey stands, approaches the shadowed figure of Hera in the temple's corner.

ZOEY

First, I must know something.  
That old man outside, he said I  
was preg-

Hera burps.

HERA

Yep! And did you pick the wrong  
god to anger! That was my son,  
ARES, in disguise. Ares is one  
bad-tempered deity.

(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)

I avoid getting on his wrong side  
-- and I'm his mother.

ZOEY

How was I to know?

Hera steps into the light, meets Zoey eye-to-eye. The goddess is a full-figured blonde with an exceptional bust line.

HERA

You couldn't and, frankly, we gods  
like it that way. It gives us the  
edge and keeps mortals guessing.

Zoey steps back. Hera picks up the chicken, gingerly, with two fingers, grimaces, drops it.

HERA (CONT'D)

Listen, Zoey, be on your way.  
It's nearly time for Helios to  
schlep the sun across the sky.  
I'll see to it that you make it  
out of the kingdom safely. Head  
to the coast and find yourself an  
inconspicuous place to live. If  
you raise your son to be strong  
and decisive, despite what Ares  
said, he may one day regain the  
throne. I assure you, you'll get  
by and, uh, I'll be in touch.

Hera vanishes in a cloud of smoke.

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE OF THE GODS, MOUNT OLYMPUS - DAY

Hera munches on a rack of ribs, angrily walks through the palace, seeks out her philandering husband, ZEUS.

A plethora of other OLYMPIAN GODS and their ATTENDANTS are present, frolicking and eavesdropping upon one another.

Hera pauses at an immense, waist-high marble tub filled with red wine, garnished with floating bouquets of flowers. She tosses in the rib remnants, looks about for Zeus.

EROS, god of love and loyal attendant to Zeus, spots Hera, approaches and attempts to distract her. He kisses Hera on the cheek.

EROS

Divine Hera, how surprising to see you today. I had heard you were overseeing the desecration of the Temple of Ares on Knossos, but here you are, nonetheless.

Eros raises his voice to alert Zeus.

EROS (CONT'D)

Yes, yes! Here you are! Right here! Why not join me in the garden, Hera?! There are some delightful rumors concerning Vesta being bandied about there! Seems she changed a young prince from Thebes into a three-headed hound and now he's licking himself to death! Let's head over and get filled in.

SIDE OF MARBLE TUB

Eros surreptitiously taps the side of the tub with his foot.

BACK TO SCENE

Hera spots the act. She grabs a banana from a bowl of fruit being carried by, jams it into Eros' mouth. With a gentle blow, she sends him sailing out, over the balcony.

HERA

Consider yourself filled in, Eros.

Hera steps to the edge of the wine tub, seizes a bouquet, yanks it straight up. It's entangled with Zeus' ample hair. He sprays wine, gasps through his beard as he shoots up, arm-in-arm with two gorgeous NYMPHS. A Shetland pony, other assorted wildlife follow, slosh over the tub's side. A crowd of gods gather round.

ZEUS

How goes the desecration in Knossos, dear wife?

Hera fumes. Zeus senses defeat, claps his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. THRONE ROOM, MOUNT OLYMPUS - AN INSTANT LATER

With that single clap, Zeus and Hera are now comfortably seated, side by side, in the throne room. He is attired in his traditional robes.

An ATTENDANT hands him a bundle of thunderbolts.

HERA

Only two nymphs this time, my Lord Zeus?

ZEUS

Moderation in all things is my credo. You must know that by now, Hera.

Zeus casually selects a thunderbolt, mindlessly tosses it out the window.

EXT. A FIELD IN THE GREEK COUNTRYSIDE

A weary farmer pushes a plow through rocky soil. When the plow becomes stuck, the farmer attempts to dislodge it. To his amazement, he uncovers an immense gold nugget. He cleans it off, runs back to his hovel, shows his family. He presents it and is struck by Zeus' thunderbolt, killing him instantly. The nugget flies into the air, falls down a distant well.

BACK TO SCENE

HERA

I've taken an interest in the plight of a mortal. It's the Queen of Salonika. She's been very generous with her offerings, through the years, and now finds herself in desperate straights. I would like your permission before I proceed.

Zeus inspects another thunderbolt.

ZEUS

Do you wish to help her now, or in the future?

Zeus nonchalantly tosses the second thunderbolt out the window.

EXT. A CITY SQUARE, ROOF OF NEWLY BUILT TEMPLE - DAY

The final stone is being set into place. A CROWD cheerily awaits its final positioning. The HIGH PRIEST oversees. Upon completion, he raises his hands, begins a prayer to Hera.

HIGH PRIEST

Oh, He-

TEMPLE

Zeus' thunderbolt strikes the temple, completely destroys it, buries ONLOOKERS under fiery rubble.

BACK TO SCENE

HERA

In thirty mortal years, my husband  
-- merely a sip of wine here on  
Mount Olympus.

ZEUS

Very well, I have no objection.  
I'm sure your heart is in the  
right place.

Zeus picks up his gold wine goblet, takes a long swallow, slyly winks at a beautiful MAIDEN off to his side.

ZEUS (CONT'D)

You may help the queen and her  
progeny four times, Hera.

HERA

Why four?

Zeus hurls a third thunderbolt out the window.

ZEUS

Because I'm so compassionate  
towards humankind.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEASIDE DOCK - DAY

(THIRTY YEARS LATER)

Dark-haired Jason, grown son of Zoey, has the unenviable job of cleaning out the hold and sorting the day's catch of fish for THESMO, the owner of a filthy, little fishing boat in the port city of Stavros, a short distance from Salonika.

Jason sorts fish on the dock, with the help of a large, crude balance, with opposing metal bowls. The fish are placed in them before being dumped into wicker baskets. Flies and cats abound, drawn by the stench, which is exacerbated by the scorching, midday sun.

Jason, a young man with a wiry build, has the look of a daydreamer. Thesmo, observing from the boat, has the crusted-over appearance of something scraped off the hull of the scow.

Jason can't get the scales to balance. One fish makes it too heavy one way, a different fish imbalances the device the other way. And he does not care. Thesmo bites his nails as he watches his incompetent employee.

JASON  
(out loud, to himself)  
Blue, no, red. Green?

THESMO  
I asked you ten days ago what your favorite color is, Jason, and you still don't have an answer for old Thesmo. Do you even know when you're done taking a crap?

JASON  
Orange?

A particularly affectionate white cat distinguishes itself from the rest of the strays by rubbing itself against Jason's leg. He smiles and gives it a bait fish. The cat dashes off, pursued by the less fortunate felines.

Thesmo jumps down from the ship, onto the dock, runs to Jason.

THESMO  
For six months you're working for me -- if you can call it working, and you still can't sort the fish! If I wait for you to do it, they'll all be rotten before they get to market!

Thesmo knocks a large fish out of Jason's hands, picks up a cleaver.

JASON  
Purple is nice, too, Thesmo, at times, but not at others.

Thesmo points the cleaver at Jason.

THESMO

Try to learn one thing while working for me, okay? You see that nice big fish? He's like you. He doesn't fit in. If he goes on the balance, it goes way too far one way.

Thesmo demonstrates this.

THESMO (CONT'D)

And if he goes in the other bowl, that's no good, either.

He wipes his brow, demonstrates that, as well. Thesmo sets the fish on the ground and with one good hack, cuts it in two. He places each half in one of the balance pans, making them even.

THESMO (CONT'D)

You watched. Did you learn? Cutting in two -- it's a type of compromise that keeps the gods from having to intervene in every little thing.

Jason picks up a different cat as Thesmo dumps the fish parts into a basket.

JASON

I like that little dark patch on your belly.

Thesmo thinks Jason is speaking to him.

THESMO

That? I've had it since I was a child.

Thesmo takes the cat from Jason, notices its dark patch.

THESMO (CONT'D)

About working tomorrow, Jason.

JASON

Yes, Thesmo?

THESMO

Don't bother.

CUT TO:



EXT. A PATH THROUGH THE WOODS LEADING HOME - LATER

On his way home, Jason is accompanied by the white cat he befriended at the pier. It repeatedly darts across his path as he strolls.

JASON

Nice of you to join me. I could use a little company. If you followed, expecting another fish, I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed. I have no fish, no job, no future.

The cat runs off into the woods, ahead of Jason.

WOODS

The cat transforms into Hera, who wears a particularly revealing gown.

BACK TO SCENE

Hera steps back out onto the path. Jason sees her, his eyes widen.

HERA

Your highness.

Jason drops to his knees, looks about, expecting that the king is close at hand. Hera approaches, touches Jason's shoulder.

JASON'S POV

Hera's amazing bust line.

BACK TO SCENE

HERA

I was addressing you, Jason.  
Rise, you are the rightful king of Salonika.

Jason rises, his eyes fixated on Hera's breasts.

JASON

Pardon my confusion at those exceptional... words. Totally amazing... words. What exactly did you say again?

HERA

I addressed you as king, mortal.  
And if you can adjust your gaze  
for a few moments...

She places her index finger on Jason's chin, raises his head so they are eye to eye.

HERA (CONT'D)

Then I can explain to you how you  
may regain that which is  
rightfully yours.

JASON

What would that be?

HERA

The Salonikan throne.

JASON

Salonikan?

HERA

Yes, Salonikan, meaning from or of  
Salonika.

JASON

You mean Salonikite. That's the  
correct form; I'm quite sure.

He resumes staring at her form. She raises his chin again.

HERA

Listen, really try to listen.  
Your mother, Zoey, was queen and  
your late father, Diomedes, was  
king of Salonika. He was  
beheaded, twice, by his brother,  
Pelius. Your mother was exiled.  
All this happened before you were  
born. Hasn't she told you  
anything?

Jason thinks hard, tries to recall.

JASON

There are many men named Jason, in  
Greece.

HERA

You wouldn't doubt the word of a  
god, would you?

She flicks her wrist towards an isolated tree, sets it ablaze.

JASON

Not one that can do that. So, how do I get the throne back.

HERA

You will need to make a voyage first, to the land of Colchis. Have you heard of it?

JASON

No. Are its inhabitants the Colchisites, or the Colchins? Colchoids?

Hera wearily rubs her forehead.

HERA

Shut up, Jason. It is a distant land ruled by King Aetes. Hanging there is a golden fleece. It has extraordinary powers. You will need that fleece to overthrow Pelius and restore Salonika's prosperity.

Jason leans against a tree, looks away.

JASON

Oh, that's all? I'm still trying to decide on my favorite color.

HERA

Your mother made many sacrifices in my honor through the years, so I will assist you in your quest, in spite of having a stuffed grape leaf for a brain. I can provide a crew and a ship, but those won't be sufficient by themselves. You must make a commitment, Jason. You will need to be decisive.

JASON

They could be the Colchisians, right? In any event, I can't give you an answer on an empty stomach. Please allow me to go home first, eat, and give it some thought.

Jason resumes his walk home. Hera, exasperated, shakes her head, turns back into the white cat.

HERA/CAT

Such a simpleton, but he does have nice legs. Now, where did I leave that fish?

The cat runs into the forest.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON AND ZOEY'S HOME - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Jason pushes open the front door, startles Zoey.

Time has not been kind to her. Though the gods have physically protected her and her son for thirty years, the emotional strain has taken a severe toll on her appearance.

Zoey wears a ragged garment, bends over an iron pot suspended in the fireplace, stirs the evening meal.

ZOEY

That makes an even dozen, Jason. Quite an accomplishment.

JASON

A dozen what?

Zoey coughs, tosses the spoon into the pot.

ZOEY

A dozen fishing boats you've been fired from since the Festival of Demeter. You're back early, so, according to the pattern you've established, you must have been fired. Am I wrong?

Jason, dejected, sits on a rickety chair that collapses.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Good. Serves you right.

She returns to her cooking. Jason approaches, places his hand on her shoulder. She turns her gaze towards him, stands straight.

JASON

Mother, I know my past. Our past. It was revealed to me today by the goddess Hera.

ZOEY

Hera, was it? Describe her.

Jason places both his hands about six inches away from his chest, moves them out another six inches. Zoey nods, moves his hands out farther.

ZOEY (CONT'D)  
I've dreaded the arrival of this day. Told you everything, did she?

Jason guardedly sits on a bench by the table, wipes away crumbs with the back of his hand.

JASON  
It was wrong of you to keep this from me for so long. I had a right to know.

ZOEY  
I would have told you if I thought you were up to the task of getting the throne back.

She sits across from Jason.

ZOEY (CONT'D)  
Look at yourself, my son. You're thirty and you're not married. Why? Because you can't decide on a girl, and you can't decide if you want to be single or married. You have no career. Why? Because you can't decide on a profession or trade. You have no future, Jason, because you can't decide on anything in the present.

Zoey grasps his hands, he pulls them away, stands and goes to the window.

ZOEY (CONT'D)  
Tell me. I asked you last week if I should use chicken or lamb the next time I make the stew. You still haven't told me. And you wonder why I held back telling you you're the rightful heir to the throne? A king should at least know if he prefers chicken to lamb!

OUTSIDE JASON'S HOME

Jason slams the door behind him, storms off to clear his mind. He takes two steps, stops.

## JASON'S FOOT

His foot is up to the ankle in horseshit. He wriggles it out, leaves the sandal behind.

## BACK TO SCENE

He continues on his way.

## NEARBY

Older, grayer King Pelius, on horseback, hunts boar.

## PELIUS' POV

The cornered quarry lunges at the mount.

## BACK TO SCENE

The horse rears up, throws Pelius to the ground. He scrambles from the forest to the road, where he stumbles.

The pursuing boar gains ground, leaps at the fallen monarch. An inch from his throat, the beast squeals, felled by a fist-sized stone.

## JASON

Jason stands proudly; he has hit his target. He approaches Pelius, who stares at Jason's feet.

PELIUS  
A one-barefooted man.

Jason offers his hand.

JASON  
Pardon?

PELIUS  
How eerily close to what the soothsayers foretold. Do you know who I am?

JASON  
You don't know who you are? I don't either. All I know is, you're lucky to be alive.

Jason helps Pelius to his feet, dusts him off.

PELIUS

I must properly thank you for your heroism, young man. My fashionable camp lies a short distance from here. Join me and refresh yourself.

CUT TO:

EXT. PELIUS' CAMP - LATER

Pelios' camp is elaborate, active. There are numerous GUARDS, DANCERS and GUESTS. Pelios' cocky, mistrustful son, COCCUS, who is the same age as Jason, is also present.

For the past thirty years, no one has dared address King Pelios in any other manner, for the penalty is death.

Jason and Pelios enter the camp as best friends, arms draped over each others' shoulders. Coccus, jealous at this display of camaraderie, grabs hold of his father, pulls him aside.

COCCUS

Father, who is this man you've befriended?

Pelios speaks quietly into his son's ear.

PELIUS

Coccus, do exactly as I command. This may be Jason, my nemesis from the prophecy. Direct the archers to shoot and kill anyone that addresses me as King Pelios.

COCCUS

But-

PELIUS

Now! Or I'll make you wear the fuzzy, pink loin cloth.

Pelios rejoins Jason, guides him through the encampment. A smiling, fellow HUNTER approaches the duo.

HUNTER

Kin-

An arrow sails into the hunter's chest, kills him instantly. Placid Pelios keeps walking.

JASON

By the gods! What was that?!

Jason runs, catches up with Pelius. Together they sit on gaudy, upholstered chairs, beneath a peach-colored, flocked tarpaulin suspended on gilt, carved poles.

An ATTENDANT approaches with a tray of food.

ATTENDANT

Kin-

Two arrows strike from opposite directions, one in the head, the other in the rump. Pelius inspects his fingernails, admiringly rubs the fabric of his chair.

Jason screams.

PELIUS

Tell me about yourself, stranger.

JASON

Those men that were killed!

PELIUS

Bandits, I suspect; the woods are a dangerous place. Please, tell me your story.

Jason downs a goblet of wine in a single gulp.

JASON

I'm a poor, simple man who lives with his domineering mother, not far from here.

A MESSENGER advances towards Pelius, steps over the corpse of the attendant. He unravels a scroll, begins to read.

MESSENGER

All hail Kin-

Five arrows strike the messenger from all directions. He clings to life, starts over.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

All... All h-hail Kin-

Six more arrows finish him off.

PELIUS

Interesting, interesting. What is your mother's name?

Coccus and an elderly ADVISOR enter, stand behind Pelius.



JASON

Please tell no one, but my mother is Zoey, the former queen of Salonika.

PELIUS

Remarkable. I had no idea she was still alive. And your name?

JASON

My name is Jason. My mother says I am the true king of Salonika, but that I'm not ready for the job, just yet.

Pelius motions towards Jason's feet.

PELIUS

Where is your other sandal, your highness?

JASON

It's stuck in a pile of horseshit, about a mile back.

PELIUS

Jason, if you go to our supply tent, they will be happy to give you a stylish, new pair. Go there now. Consider it a gift.

Jason nods approval, leaves.

COCCUS

Father, we must kill him at once! I'll do it now, before he takes another breath.

ADVISOR

That may not be wise, K-

ADVISOR'S POV

An archer draws back his bow.

BACK TO SCENE

ADVISOR

That may not be wise, you. Jason may have the protection of the gods. How else could he and his mother have escaped detection for so long?

PELIUS

True. Silence, he returns.

Jason, still wearing one, original sandal, takes his seat.

JASON

There was one pair that fit perfectly and looked attractive. I don't know, I'll have to think it over.

PELIUS

Jason, if you desire to become K-

An arrow strikes the king's chair, misses his head by an inch. Pelius motions to his other archers.

ARCHERS

They take aim, release a flock of arrows that strike their errant associate.

BACK TO SCENE

PELIUS

If you desire to become the... ruler of Salonika, first bring back the golden fleece of Colchis. Do you know of it?

JASON

No.

PELIUS

They say it hangs from a tree in Colchis, a land very far east of Salonika. It is a gift of the gods and possesses unimaginable powers. Go there, take it and return. Then overthrow K-. Then overthrow you know who.

JASON

That would be stealing, wouldn't it?

PELIUS

Yes, it would. But under the circumstances-

JASON

It's still stealing. The end doesn't justify the means. Morally, the plan doesn't sit right with me. Maybe there's another way.

Pelius and Jason stand.

PELIUS

Perhaps there is. Come up with one while you are sailing there, Jason. I will be honored to supply an exquisitely decorated ship, with a brocade sail and a finely tailored crew.

JASON

You, too?

PELIUS

You can even take Coccus along. He simply adores exotic travel and adventure, don't you, Coccus?

Coccus smirks, nods, touches the handle of his sword.

PELIUS (CONT'D)

Think it over, Jason.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUINS OF A SMALL TEMPLE - LATER

The ruins overlook the harbor of Stavros. Thunderclouds roll in.

Jason, exhausted, sits on a moss-covered block of stone, daydreams.

JASON

Orange? Yellow? Orange-yellow?

ADVISOR (O.S.)

Jason?

The old, gray-bearded advisor appears, fusses with his robes. Jason daydreams.

ADVISOR

Jason!

JASON

Sorry, what do you want?

ADVISOR

You seem troubled. Have you considered asking the advice of the gods?

Jason shakes his head, picks up and throws a small stone at a fallen idol. It ricochets off, hits him in the head.

JASON

They only want sacrifices and our fear.

ADVISOR

Let me show you something that will change your mind, doubter.

The aged advisor takes a step back. In seconds, he magically transforms into a much younger, clean-shaven man.

Seen from the back, the advisor throws open his robe.

ADVISOR (CONT'D)

Behold, Jason! I am Herm-Aphrodite, the god, and/or goddess, of bisexuality.

Jason, mesmerized, points, laughs.

JASON

Whoa! So you are! One of each! Never a lonely weekend for you.

The advisor looks down at his parts.

ADVISOR

They keep me busy.

The advisor closes his robe.

ADVISOR (CONT'D)

Hera, herself, asked me to bring you to Mount Olympus. No mortal has ever entered its halls. Stand, Jason, with your back to me, and I will guide you there.

JASON

How about if I stand next to you?

ADVISOR

As you wish, initiate. Prepare yourself.

The advisor grows to an enormous height.

SMOKE

Envelops both of them.

MATCH CUT TO:

SMOKE

The cloud of smoke shrinks, reveals Jason standing in the palm of a giant hand.

INT. PALACE OF THE GODS, MOUNT OLYMPUS - DAY

Jason turns full circle, takes in the sights.

JASON'S POV

The palace is an ornate place, but more tacky than grand.

BACK TO SCENE

It is the hand of Zeus Jason stands in. Curious, the other gods gather to gawk at Mount Olympus' first mortal visitor.

ARES, the god of war, takes a particularly close look at Jason.

ARES

Not a very appetizing-looking mortal, Father Zeus. Certainly not very filling, either. As goddess of the harvest, what do you think, Demeter?

DEMETER, goddess of the harvest, approaches, inspects the visitor.

DEMETER

With some of my mountain honey, he would be more palatable.

Demeter produces a pearl decanter, pours honey over Jason. He curls up into a sticky ball.

ARES

Honey or no, sister, mortals make a disagreeable confection.

Zeus, disgusted, wipes Jason on the edge of a plate he then places on a banquet table. He waves to his ominous-looking

son, HEPHAESTUS, blacksmith of the gods, indicates he should work his way through the crowd.

Zeus sits back.

ZEUS

Hephaestus, my pensive son, use your blacksmithing skill to release your sister, ATHENA, in the traditional manner. I think we could all use a dose of her wisdom.

HEPHAESTUS

Certainly, Father, with pleasure.

ARES

Her and her 'logic' and 'rational thought.' Who needs her?

ZEUS

She is your sister, too, Ares. Show some respect.

Ares pounds the table.

ARES

Half the women in this room are my sister! I can barely keep track. The Olympian family tree lacks branches.

ZEUS

Enough! Now stand back.

Hephaestus unsheathes a broadsword. It glows red, as if drawn from hot coals. He strides towards his father, rears back, then lands a crashing blow to Zeus' skull, splitting it wide open.

ZEUS (CONT'D)

Thank you, son.

The gods observe it in a matter-of-fact way.

Vapor escapes from Zeus' wound, materializes at his side, into lithe Athena who, disinterested in the present situation, reads a book. Zeus' head heals.

ATHENA

Honestly, Father, I was having the most delightful time reading. Did you have to interrupt? You know how much I detest royal conflicts.

Jason cleans himself off, stands.

JASON

Do all of you do anything besides  
bicker?

Ares thinks.

ARES

Well, I destroyed the wheat crop  
in Thrace yesterday.

DEMETER

I spread a plague that decimated  
the sheep herds of Nixis.

ATHENA

Nixis!

Athena throws her book at Demeter, misses.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

You agrarian ass! Why Nixis?  
They sing my praise from every  
rooftop!

DEMETER

I did it because a festival in my  
honor was delayed one day.

Athena rolls up her sleeves, knits her brow.

ATHENA

Just for that I will unleash a  
rash of poisonous boils on the  
populace of your beloved island of  
Kratos! They'll all perish by  
dawn and then be devoured by  
hellish sea snakes. How do you  
like them figs?!

JASON

(to Zeus)

Can I go now?

The feuding continues, spreads, intensifies.

ZEUS

I'm about ready to leave, myself.  
Jason, I know you're considering a  
trip to Colchis to retrieve the  
fleece. I can supply you with a  
ship and a crew.

Jason stamps his foot.

JASON

Now you? That makes three!  
Doesn't anyone think I'm  
competent? I don't want your  
help, or anyone else's. I finally  
see that if I'm going to  
accomplish anything in this life,  
it will be the result of my own  
effort! I will announce a games  
to get a crew, and procure a ship,  
as well. My quest for the fleece  
begins tomorrow!

Zeus picks Jason up by the back of his toga, bring him even  
with his massive face.

Hera appears; her face is at Jason's back. He turns, is  
gladdened and relieved by her presence.

ZEUS

Your newfound initiative is  
admirable, Jason, but don't  
totally cut yourself off from my  
wife's assistance. You may find  
it useful.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHLETIC FIELD ALONG THE SHORE, STAVROS - DAY

Dozens of loin-clothed ATHLETES compete for the right to  
join Jason on his adventure. Many different types of  
events go on simultaneously.

Jason, accompanied by his friends, muscular POLYGLYCOS and  
ANAXIS, a robed holy man and healer, walk among the  
athletes, choosing winners, to serve as crewmen, as they  
proceed.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The following shows a series of field and aquatic events.

A) POLLUX, a broad-shouldered, heavyweight boxer pounds  
the daylights out of a much smaller, emaciated man, even  
after he falls to the ground. Jason raises Pollux's hand,  
presents a winner's ribbon.

JASON

Congratulations, Pollux. You  
shall join us.



Pollux throws away the ribbon, resumes beating his downed opponent.

B) A group of archers, including Coccus, let fly a salvo of arrows that strike and kill nearby MEN ON HORSEBACK, about to start a race.

POLYGLYCOS

We're sea bound anyway. The equestrian event was irrelevant, Jason.

ANAXIS

Coccus' arrow would have gone the farthest. It was still on the rise.

Jason hands Coccus a ribbon.

C) XANTHIPPIUS, a powerfully-built swimmer, emerges from the sea, onto the beach. His slower competitors, still in the water, are mauled by sharks.

Jason, dumbfounded, alternately looks at Xanthippus and the offshore carnage, as he hands him his award.

JASON

Here... here you go. What did you say your name... is?

XANTHIPPIUS

It's Xanthippus.

Polyglycos points at another event.

POLYGLYCOS

Look, Jason! The rowing competition has ended. I knew Oristes would win. He's the greatest rower in all of Greece!

D) ORISTES steps out of his one-man boat, triumphantly raises his hands above his head.

MAN THROWS DISCUS

The discus cuts off Oristes' hands at the wrist.

BACK TO SCENE

Polyglycos attempts to give a ribbon to handless Oristes. He picks up one of the amputated hands, winds the ribbon

around its fingers. When he realizes he can't hand it to Oristes, he jams it between his knees.

JASON

Who in the name of Zeus threw that?

A short, fierce-looking REDHEADED MAN boldly strides out from the crowd. He has a close-cropped beard and a jagged scar on his face. He spits in the sand.

ANAXIS

Seems we have a Spartan among us.

The crowd gasps, steps back. The red-headed man will now be referred to as the SPARTAN.

POLYGLYCOS

Jason, we've got to have him aboard. Give him a ribbon.

JASON

Why? Was cutting off Oristes' hands an event?

Polyglycos takes a ribbon from Jason, gives it to the Spartan. He looks at it, growls, sniffs it, eats it.

POLYGLYCOS

You've nearly got your crew, Jason.

Anaxis' attention is diverted.

ANAXIS' POV

Two strangers approach.

BACK TO SCENE

Pollux continues pummeling his opponent.

ANAXIS

In the name of the gods -- it's HERCULES!

POLYGLYCOS

And that sandal-licking, parasite-of-a-friend of his, HYLAS.

Jason is pleased and awed at the sight of the great Hercules.

JASON  
 (to Anaxis)  
 He's the greatest hero in the  
 entire world.

ANAXIS  
 I'm warning you, Jason. That  
 man's an olive with two pits.

JASON  
 Need I remind you of his Seven  
 Labors? The slaying of the Nemean  
 lion? And what about the defeat  
 of the Stymphalian birds? How can  
 you doubt a man who has  
 single-handedly conquered whole  
 armies?

ANAXIS  
 That was in the past. The only  
 thing he's single-handedly  
 conquered lately is a side of  
 beef.

#### JASON'S POV

Hercules, rheumy, achy and sadly fat, gingerly steps over a  
 knee-high stone wall. Hylas, an intelligent-looking,  
 chirpy little fellow, who idolizes the formerly great hero,  
 follows.

#### BACK TO SCENE

Hercules and Hylas approach Jason. All the athletes gather  
 round.

HERCULES  
 Whew! That was quite a walk!

JASON  
 Where did you come from, Hercules,  
 Egypt?

HERCULES  
 No, just the other side of that  
 wall. I want to join you on your  
 voyage.

Hylas drops a heavy bag filled with Hercules' personal  
 belongings.

HYLAS

You can't deny Hercules and me  
passage on this journey, Jason.  
It would be an insult to the gods!

Anaxis firmly taps Hylas on the shoulder.

ANAXIS

Don't tell Jason what he can't do,  
you little sea slug. Hercules is  
off his nut! He went mad and  
strangled his wife and two sons.  
You did, didn't you, you bearded  
turd!

Hercules, indifferent, shrugs.

HYLAS

That was Hera's doing. She  
temporarily drove him mad, to get  
even with Zeus for siring Hercules  
behind her back. He's fine now.  
He's better than fine. A few  
pounds heavier, perhaps, but he  
can still throttle any man that  
draws air.

HERCULES

I am fit, Jason; have no fear.  
Watch!

Hercules pokes the Spartan in the chest.

HERCULES (CONT'D)

Who's this redheaded son of a  
crab? I'll fight him for his  
spot!

Instantly, the Spartan hauls off and lands a roundhouse  
left to Hercules' jaw. He reels back, stumbles and falls  
head-over-heels, over his bag.

The shocked crowd roars with laughter. With Hylas' help,  
Hercules sits up, manipulates his jaw.

HERCULES (CONT'D)

I like him. Take us both, and  
Hylas, he gives wonderful, oily  
massages. It'll be great Greek  
fun!

Jason nods; they all share the camaraderie with another  
good laugh. Pollux continues beating his opponent.  
Polyglycos puts his arm around Jason.

POLYGLYCOS

Now that we have a crew and a ship, we're ready to sail!

JASON

What ship?

CUT TO:

EXT. DOCKS OF SALONIKA - DAY

Jason and Polyglycos search for ARGUS, a master ship builder. Piers hold several galleys at various stages of completion. A large, open shed contains carved figureheads.

Argus, short and burly, covered with wood shavings, steps out from the shed carrying a mallet and a chisel.

Polyglycos munches on a carrot.

ARGUS

What do you mutton heads want?

JASON

You must be Argus. I am Jason and this is my friend, Polyglycos. We need a ship, at once. That one will do nicely.

He points, Polyglycos nods in agreement.

SHIP

A completed, handsome vessel is tied to the pier.

BACK TO SCENE

ARGUS

(to Polyglycos)

Would you mind holding these?

He hands him the tools.

ARGUS (CONT'D)

You like that one, Jason? How about a closer look?

JASON

Certainly.

Jason takes a step, is pushed off the pier, into the water, by Argus.

JASON (CONT'D)

I mean to have that ship. We have the protection of Hera, queen of the gods!

POLYGLYCOS

He's not kidding, Argus.

ARGUS

I kick out a jackass with that same story, at least once a week.

Jason climbs back onto the pier, rejoins the other two men, looks upward.

JASON

Hera, if you're not too busy.

SKY

A ball of fire surges out of the blue sky, destroys one of Argus' half-finished vessels.

BACK TO SCENE

ARGUS

Your ship will be ready at dawn.

POLYGLYCOS

Care for a carrot, jackass.

JASON

I see the ship needs a figurehead. I'd like to see what you've been working on.

ARGUS

All right, step this way.

INT. FIGUREHEAD SHED

ARGUS

There's quite an assortment. This serpent will do nicely.

JASON

Reminds me of one of mother's boyfriends; let's keep looking.

Argus guides them through a maze of oversized, carved demons, dragons and warriors, all beautifully painted. Canvas covers something oddly shaped at the back of the shed. Jason is drawn to it. He reaches for the canvas.

JASON (CONT'D)  
What's this one of?

Argus raps Jason's hand.

ARGUS  
Never you mind!

POLYGLYCOS  
We've got four hands, to your two,  
Argus.

Polyglycos laughs, pulls away the canvas. Beneath it is a figurehead with the likeness of Hera. Like the goddess, it has disproportionately enormous breasts.

Jason is captivated by them.

JASON  
Hera. Argus, these are the ones I  
want. I mean, this is the one I  
want.

He smiles, pats the figurehead's face.

ARGUS  
It wasn't meant to be a  
figurehead, Jason. It was just  
something I carved for my own  
amusement.

POLYGLYCOS  
More like arousal.

JASON  
Well, I like your sense of humor.  
See to it it's on the front of the  
ship by morning.

ARGUS  
What will you name your vessel?

POLYGLYCOS  
That was a mistake. We may never  
leave port now.

Jason thinks, long and hard.

JASON  
Uh-h-h. Hm-m-m.

Argus brushes shavings from his garment, whistles, while he waits for an answer.

POLYGLYCOS

Jason, how about the Hera?

JASON

Yeah, sure, the Hera. I was just about to say that. Really.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARGUS' DOCK, SALONIKA - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

Jason and his CREW busily load the last of the supplies aboard their ship. The cargo includes large amphorae filled with wine or olives. One, in particular, is heavier than the rest.

As promised, the buxom figurehead has been attached to the ship's bow.

ARGUS

Jason! I'm ready to cut the line.

Jason stands at the forward end of the ship, turns aft, makes one final inspection of the ship and crew. Spirits run high. Proud Jason takes a deep breath, prepares to give his first command.

COCCUS

Jason, I think we should turn back!

JASON

We haven't left the dock yet, Coccus! You may cut the line, Argus.

With a double-bladed ax, Argus severs the stout rope.

Due to the enormous weight of the figurehead's chest, the bow of the ship nosedives into the water.

JASON (CONT'D)

We're tit-sizing! Everyone to the back of the boat!

The crew desperately hold onto their oars, then abandon them, scramble and climb over one another to reach the stern, along with Argus.

The ship re-balances.



## ARGUS

As I told you, Jason, it wasn't meant to be a figurehead. I'll trim the chest down and move it aft for you -- if I can come along.

Jason agrees to Argus' terms.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

On a blistering hot, cloudless day, the Hera is idle upon a flat-calm sea. No land is in sight. Her oars, like quills on a porcupine, poke out in every direction.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The following shots portray how poorly the voyage is going.

A) An exhausted crewman loses consciousness, falls face first into the crotch of the one next to him, who smiles, then passes out, too.

B) Another oarsman is handed a chunk of bread. He sets it down, grabs a drink of water. He observes, as the bread sprouts legs, walks away.

C) Still another oarsman stops to inspect blisters, which are the size of water balloons. He pops one, dousing and awakening the unconscious crewman next to him, who passes out again, upon seeing the liquid's source.

D) Anaxis mumbles, makes numerous, chicken sacrifices to propitiate the gods, rapidly, one right after the other. Blood and feathers fill the air.

BACK TO SCENE

## POLYGLYCOS

Jason, perhaps it would have been a good idea to bring some crewmen along, who have actually been out to sea before.

Green-tinged Polyglycos holds his belly, tries not to throw up. It's no use; he runs to the rail, hurls copiously over the side.

Argus approaches solitary Jason with a bowl of food.

ARGUS' POV

A tray of maggot-covered edibles.

BACK TO SCENE

ARGUS

Baklava? How about some olives?  
That's all that's left, Jason.  
Ooh, look, there's one that isn't  
moving very much. Better finish  
this off before the maggots do.

Jason grabs a handful of olives.

ARGUS (CONT'D)

I must say, you didn't plan very  
well.

Crewman #1 approaches.

CREWMAN #1

Jason, I hate to bother you, but  
it's been two days now and I don't  
think I can hold it any longer.

JASON

Hold what?

CREWMAN #1

It's sort of personal,  
embarrassing.

Jason loses patience.

JASON

Spit it out, man!

CREWMAN #1

I wish I could. Where's the head?  
I'm bursting!

Jason throws the olives overboard.

JASON

There is no 'head', fool. This is  
a galley, not the king's royal  
barge!

Crewman #1 hops from foot to foot.

CREWMAN #1

What am I supposed to do? I can't  
hold it in until we reach land!

Jason motions towards retching Polyglycos. The Spartan approaches, overhears.

JASON  
Join Polyglycos at the rail, piss  
over the side.

CREWMAN #1  
It's not that! I've got a case of  
Zeus' revenge!

SPARTAN

SPARTAN  
I have a solution -- a Spartan  
solution.

The Spartan grabs Crewman #1 by the seat of the pants and hair, runs to the rail, tosses him overboard.

SPARTAN (CONT'D)  
Problem solved.

BACK TO SCENE

Crewman #2 cautiously approaches Jason, along with Anaxis.

CREWMAN #2  
Sorry to interrupt, sir, but the  
crew asked me to come forward on  
their behalf and ask about a  
change of loin cloths. Some nasty  
rashes are setting in where Hades  
would not venture.

Jason closes his eyes, mentally escapes the mounting pressure of command.

JASON  
Orange, orange is nice color, so  
is aqua.

Anaxis falls to his knees, produces and raises a chicken and a knife, over his head, in his bony hands.

ANAXIS  
Oh, Desitinia, ye god of loin  
cloth rashes, and spirit of the  
irritating garment, we humble  
seamen beseech you!

## AMPHORA

An amphora, on deck, marked 'olives' suddenly rocks and spins. It draws everyone's attention.

ANAXIS (O.S.)

I did it! I actually contacted a spirit!

The amphora tips and crashes, spills out a few olives and Jason's mother, Zoey. Dazed, she composes herself, stumbles to her son's side.

## BACK TO SCENE

ZOEY

Stop with the crazy prayers and sacrifices already! The god of loin cloth rashes! I couldn't stand listening to this nonsense anymore! Idiot! Everyone's starving while you slaughter more chickens than Emperor Sanders!

JASON

Mother?!

ZOEY

Would someone please give me some water? These cheap olives. Could they be any saltier? Plech!

She spits.

JASON

I'm afraid there's only wine.

He hands her a bota; she drinks.

JASON (CONT'D)

This is no place for you. Why did you sneak aboard?

ZOEY

Did you think you could retrieve the fleece without my help? Have you ever done anything on your own?

Jason pokes his chest.

JASON

I'm in charge. Do you hear me?  
I'm in charge!

ZOEY

In charge? The last I remember,  
you were weighing fish -- and you  
got fired from that!

The crew gather closer. Zoey smiles at the sight of having  
an audience.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

What? He didn't tell you? Oh, I  
see. I'll bet there's plenty more  
my big, brave, bold son, the  
captain, didn't tell you.

Jason swallows hard, wipes his brow.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Did you know how shy he was around  
girls? When he was younger, if he  
so much as heard a song about a  
pretty girl, he'd have to run and  
change his loin cloth!

The men raucously laugh.

JASON

Stop it! Stop it at once, Mother!

ZOEY

And did you know he breast fed  
until he was twelve?

She playfully squeezes her long, floppy breasts outlined  
beneath her garment. The crew laughs harder, even the  
stoic Spartan.

Jason runs to the stern of ship, as Zoey continues  
entertaining. He seeks guidance from the carving of Hera.

JASON

Hera? Hera! Hear my plea. I  
must have your help. I fear the  
crew will revolt; Mother may lead  
them.

One of Hera's eyes opens. The other one, stuck half way,  
flutters.

HERA

Jason, I will help you, but  
remember, Zeus has limited the  
number of times I may assist.

JASON

How many-

HERA

Wait, fix the bad eye; It feels  
creepy. And, before I forget, is  
there anything to eat?

He fixes her eye.

JASON

Just baklava and green olives, but  
they're infested with maggots.

She sighs.

HERA

Honestly, you could have planned a  
little better.

JASON

Are you siding with Mother, too?  
Please, I need your help, not more  
insults.

HERA

All right, all right. One day's  
row from here is an island,  
Chthonioi. Have you heard of it?

JASON

I can't even pronounce it. Chth-  
Ch- Can you repeat the name?

HERA

Chthonioi. What kind of Greek are  
you?

JASON

Are the people there called  
Chthonioites?

HERA

Don't push your luck with a  
goddess with hunger pains. Shut  
up and listen. It's also known as  
the Island of the Forge.  
I assume you can pronounce that.  
Anyway, it's ruled by my son -- at  
least I think he's my son, it's  
hard to keep track of everyone on  
Mt. Olympus -- Hephaestus, but  
he's away -- well, back in rehab,  
actually, since you saw him. You  
can collect food and water there.  
Just food and water. Understand?

JASON

Yes, thank you, Hera. Just food and water.

HERA

Thank you? If you really want to thank me, pat me on the breast.

Jason, shy, scrapes the deck with the toe of his sandal.

JASON

I can't. I mean, the crew will see. Zeus will see.

HERA

Jason, let me worry about Zeus.

Jason complies, she giggles.

HERA (CONT'D)

Was it true you breast fed until you were twelve?

ZOEY AND THE CREW'S POV

They see Jason pat the figurehead on the breast.

ZOEY

Is that sick or what? My son makes love to wooden statues. I didn't even know about that!

BACK TO SCENE

Jason departs Hera, heads back, rejoins the crew and Mother.

Polyglycos grabs his stomach, runs to the railing with his hand over his mouth.

JASON

Sorry to end your fun, but you can all stop complaining. Food and water are only one day away, if you are willing to row.

Hercules gives Jason the finger, behind his back.

COCCUS

We should turn back, Jason!

HYLAS

Where? Where will we get food and water?

JASON

Ch- Chth- Ch... The Island of the Forge. We can have all the food and water we want -- but nothing else.

HYLAS

Who told you of it?

Jason smiles, raises one foot on a crate, looks out to sea.

JASON

My, my girlfriend.

He scratches his butt.

JASON (CONT'D)

Any spare loin cloths lying around?

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND OF THE FORGE - THE NEXT DAY

The Hera enters a cove through a narrow isthmus. The Island of the Forge is a rocky island covered by forests and grassy plains.

The ship is fifty feet from shore and closing, seeking a place to drop anchor.

ON DECK

Polyglycos remains horribly seasick, even in shallow, calm water.

ARGUS

I don't see a place to safely drop anchor.

JASON

Hercules, jump over the side. When we drop the anchor, catch it and set it somewhere safe.

Hercules, disinterested, remains seated, kneads his beard.

SPARTAN

Let fatty rest.



HYLAS

Hercules could catch two anchors,  
one in each hand, if he wanted to.

The Spartan pushes Hylas out of the way, jumps over the side, into knee-deep water.

WATER

He easily catches the rope-tied boulder, pumps it over his head twice, sets it down.

BACK TO SCENE

A ladder is set up as a ramp, connecting ship to shore.

ZOEY

Remember what my son said, all of  
you! Food and water -- nothing  
else!

The crewmen assemble, grumble. She pats Hercules on the rump as steps onto the ramp. Hylas, next to him, gives her a jealous stare.

Zoey grabs Xanthippus by the arm.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Xanthippus, it didn't look like  
you were paying attention. Food  
and water only!

XANTHIPPIUS

All right already! Sheesh! You  
were a lot more fun yesterday.

The crew files off, carrying empty baskets and water vessels.

Jason tends to Polyglycos, who continues vomiting over the ship's side.

POLYGLYCOS

(between retches)

Jason, thanks be to the gods and  
you, dear friend. I was sure I  
would die if I stayed on this ship  
one more hour.

JASON

It's kind of you to say that, but  
everyone's disembarked by now.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)  
 I need someone to stay aboard  
 while we collect provisions. I  
 wouldn't ask you to do this, if it  
 wasn't important.

He motions to Polyglycos' face.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 You've got something hanging off  
 your chin.

Polyglycos' eyes roll; he passes out.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 I'll take that as a yes, old  
 friend; thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOULDER-STREWN FIELDS - MINUTES LATER

Hercules and Hylas, off on their own, chase goats through a  
 field, leading to a craggy mountain passageway.

HERCULES  
 Must we keep chasing them, Hylas?

HYLAS  
 They'll be useful for the rest of  
 the voyage, if we get hungry.

HERCULES  
 Or thirsty.

HYLAS  
 Or horny.

Hercules pauses, raises a questioning eyebrow, shakes his  
 head, resumes running.

PASSAGEWAY

They emerge into a vast, breezy plain.

PLAIN

The plain is populated by bronze statues three hundred feet  
 high. They depict generations of Greek gods in various  
 poses. Some are fierce warriors, while others appear  
 solemn. All stand on building-sized pedestals with sealed  
 bronze doorways, affixed name plates above them.

BACK TO SCENE

Hylas and Hercules are awed.

HYLAS

These can only be the work of  
Hephaestus. Look, Hercules, look  
at Uranus!

Hercules stiffly bends forward a little, at the waist.

HERCULES

I'm afraid I'm not quite as limber  
as I used to be, Hylas. Most days  
I can't bend far enough forward to  
look at my feet.

Hylas points off to the distance.

STATUE

Immense statue of fearsome warrior god, Uranus.

BACK TO SCENE

HYLAS

No-no, the statue, Hercules. The  
door to the statue of Uranus --  
it's open!

Curious, the two run towards it.

CUT TO:

INT. BASE OF STATUE OF URANUS - SECONDS LATER

Hercules and Hylas slip in, through the narrow opening.  
The torch-lit interior of the base is a treasure chamber,  
the contents of which are on a scale suitable for giants.

HERCULES

Hylas, this must be the treasure  
chamber of the gods.

Hylas struggles to pick up a huge gemstone.

HYLAS

Nothing less.

Afraid, he puts it back in its chest. Hercules lifts a  
white sphere, two feet in diameter, over his head, inspects  
it.

HERCULES  
A bocce ball!

Hylas is amused.

HYLAS  
Hercules, it's a pearl. Put it  
back and let's go. Remember what  
Jason and Zoey said *ad nauseum*:  
food and water only.

HERCULES  
Don't be so hasty. You're smart;  
think this through, Hylas. Say  
someone else found some walnuts.  
They've got a hard shell. We'd  
need something like this to crack  
them open. Right?

The huge bronze door to the treasure chamber slams shut.  
An eerie, creaky sound is heard o.s. Hercules drops the  
pearl. They run to the door, push against it, to no avail.  
Hylas sobs.

HYLAS  
You've gone and done it, Hercules.  
Fool, you've sealed both our  
fates. Why did I ever team-up  
with a bloated has-been like you?

HERCULES  
Team up? Bloated has-been?  
Listen, you termite, I just might  
twist your nuts off for that, but  
first I'm going to open this door,  
so I can do it in a good light.

Hercules summons all his strength, takes a deep breath,  
puts his shoulder to the door. A sliver of light appears.

HYLAS  
I'm, I'm sorry, Hercules. You  
misunderstood me. I meant it in a  
nice way.

Hercules steps away from the door. It slams shut again.

HERCULES  
Nice way? How can 'bloated  
has-been' be meant in a- Oh,  
never mind. Once we're out of  
here, you're on your own.

Hercules pushes the door open just far enough for the two  
of them to squeeze through. Hercules goes first.

## OUTSIDE THE DOOR

Hercules exits. As Hylas emerges, the door closes, trapping him by his loin cloth. Hercules perplexed, looks about.

## HERCULES' POV - STATUE

HERCULES (O.S.)  
Who, or what, closed the door?

The statue of Uranus turns its head towards Hercules and Hylas, reveals the answer to his question by pointing to himself three times.

## BACK TO SCENE

HYLAS  
I hope you weren't serious about holding a grudge over my little joke, back in there. You know, from this angle, you look as though you've lost a few pounds. It's very becoming.

Hylas tugs on the loin cloth, but it remains stuck. Hercules distances himself from Hylas.

HYLAS (CONT'D)  
Don't leave me here, Hercules!  
You sorry sack of donkey shit!  
Help me out of this, fatty, or I'll... or I'll tell the crew about you and Zoey. Did I mention you're fat? You really are! In fact, your ass is so fat, Hercules, on maps it's shown as an additional continent!

## STATUE OF URANUS

Uranus becomes fully animated, steps down from his pedestal.

## BACK TO SCENE

Hercules bolts, leaves stunned Hylas behind. He runs a short distance, stops, turns around.

## HERCULES POV

Uranus pulverizes Hylas with the tip of his foot: once, twice, and a third time, the last with a twist. He scrapes his sandal clean, pursues Hercules.

CUT TO:

## EXT. THE HERA, ANCHORED AT SHORE - LATER

Crewmen stack provisions in preparation for loading aboard the Hera. Haggard, thankful Polyglycos, steps off the ramp, onto dry land. He kisses the sand, a great deal of which sticks to his face.

Winded, sweat-soaked Hercules runs up to him.

HERCULES  
Polyglycos! Uranus is loose!

POLYGLYCOS  
You're telling me?

Jason joins the two men.

JASON  
Hercules, where have you been?  
Where's Hylas?

HERCULES  
The last I saw Hylas, he was  
getting his loin cloth pressed.

Jason momentarily, quizzically, stares at Polyglycos' sand-impregnated face, then away and up.

## JASON'S POV

Uranus strides into view. He's dangerously close to the ship.

## BACK TO SCENE

JASON  
Everyone aboard! Drop everything!

The crew throw down the provisions, clamber aboard. Polyglycos takes one step, hesitates, holds his stomach.

POLYGLYCOS  
I, I just got off! Someone,  
please kill me.

ZOEY

(to Hercules)

You must have taken something!  
How did you forget so fast? Food  
and water only! Only two things  
to remember! My late husband was  
smarter -- without his head!

Hercules puts her over his shoulder, boards.

ABOARD THE HERA

The crew is at their oars.

ARGUS

(to Jason)

Our only hope is to make it out  
past the isthmus, where we came  
in.

JASON

(to crew)

Row! Row until your backs break  
and your hearts split! Row! Row!  
Row this boat!

Argus taps Jason on the shoulder, silently signals that  
Jason's forgotten something important. It dawns on Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)

The anchor! I forgot! Shit!  
Spartan, raise the anchor!

ARGUS

There's no time!

Jason throws the Spartan an ax. He throws it away, picks  
up the thick anchor line, bites through it.

THE HERA

The Hera slips back into the water, as Uranus steps onto  
the beach.

URANUS' POV

Uranus observes their course.

BACK TO SCENE

Frantic rowing aboard the Hera. The crew keep an eye on Uranus's movement.

JASON  
Hercules! Summon your strength!  
Row faster! Row harder!

When Jason turns his back, Hercules gives him the finger.

THE HERA/URANUS INTERCUTTING

As the Hera nears the isthmus, Uranus plants one foot on the near side, swings his other foot onto the far side. To escape to the sea, the Hera must pass directly under him.

JASON  
Turn and row the other way! He's  
cut us off!

ARGUS  
We'll never make it!

With the Hera directly below his crotch, Uranus looks to the left, then the right, and, lastly, down at the ship.

When he sticks his finger in his naval, the front of his bronze loin cloth flips down.

Jason stares up in disbelief.

JASON  
No!

A stream of fire emanates from Uranus' bronze penis, sets fire to the sail and rigging.

URANUS (O.S.)  
Talk about a burning sensation.

Crew members shriek, jump overboard. The stoic Spartan bares his teeth, remains at his oar.

The stream of fire reaches the stern, sets Hera's face ablaze. Aghast, Jason grabs a chicken, uses it to beat the flames. Feathers and cinders coat the figurehead.

Jason and the remaining crew abandon ship, leave the Spartan as the sole crewman.

Uranus picks up the ship by the prow, sees the Spartan, tries to shake him loose. The stubborn Spartan refuses to let go, spits defiantly.



Disgusted, Uranus drops the smoldering ship into the sea, dousing the fire. He strides back to shore, strikes a sunbathing pose.

The hull, men and debris litter the water.

CUT TO:

FLOATING FIGUREHEAD OF HERA

Jason swims to the figurehead, grabs hold by the breasts, pulls himself up. He plucks stuck-on feathers from her face.

JASON

Hera! Tell me about Uranus!

HERA

Is that all you Greeks think about?!

JASON

We cannot defeat the giant alone!  
I need your help!

HERA

My face catches on fire, you put it out with a chicken, and now you expect my guidance?

Sullen Jason looks away.

HERA (CONT'D)

Okay, a promise is a promise, but listen, you're going through assists faster than Zeus goes through temple virgins. To defeat the giant, you must-

Pollux swims by, grasps Hera's nose, accidentally flips her over, face down, into the water.

POLLUX

Jason, what is our plan?

JASON

You idiot! Help me turn this over.

They right the figurehead. Disgusted, Pollux swims off. Hera coughs, gags.

HERA

Understand?

JASON  
I missed it; Pollux flipped you  
over.

HERA  
I'm backing the wrong horse here.  
For the last time-

Coccus swims into view. Jason kicks away his outstretched  
hand.

COCCUS  
We should turn back, Jason!

Coccus swims away.

HERA  
Look to Uranus' heel.

JASON  
And? Then what? Don't tell me  
this is one of those 'the gods can  
vague' situations.

HERA  
I can say no more.

JASON  
And you wonder about the spread of  
atheism!

Jason swims off towards shore.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHORE - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Crew and debris wash up onto the beach. The Spartan surfs  
to shore on a charred board.

Two crewmen drag the figurehead of Hera through the sand.  
Half a fish sticks out of her mouth.

In the distance, persistent Uranus lumbers closer.

ARGUS  
My ship, ruined!

JASON  
We'll tend to the ship later. I  
need you all to distract Uranus.  
If I can get to his heel, we have  
a chance.

URANUS' POV

The crew throw rocks, wave their arms, to distract the giant. Jason sneaks around to his heel.

HEEL

The heel has two switches: on and off. Jason hesitates, nearly pushes the on switch, stops, then pushes the off switch. Uranus instantly stops.

BACK TO SCENE

The crew and Zoey tentatively meet Jason. Argus inspects the giant's heel.

ARGUS  
That was simple.

ZOEY  
If Jason did it, believe me, it had to be simple.

JASON  
Give me some credit. I just saved everyone's neck.

HERCULES  
Someone sounds cranky. Maybe it's time for a breastfeeding.

The crew laugh.

JASON  
Argus, I want you and the crew to have the ship repaired, provisioned and ready to sail by morning. Get started at once.

Jason turns, seizes Hercules' arm. Argus gives Jason the finger behind his back, then departs with the crew.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Hercules, you're a burden. You'll remain here until I return from Colchis.

HERCULES  
Banished? By the likes of a sand flea?

Hercules clutches Jason by the throat.

ZOEY (O.S.)  
Hercules?

HERCULES' POV

Zoey straightens her hair, adjusts her water-soaked garment, smiles.

BACK TO SCENE

Hercules relents, releases his grip on Jason's throat.

HERCULES  
Yes, Zoey?

ZOEY  
Jason never said you had to be here all alone, did you, Jason?

JASON  
Mother?

Zoey approaches Hercules, runs a fingertip along the curve of his shoulder.

ZOEY  
Jason, don't be so naive. You run along and look for your nice fleece. We'll be here when you get back.

JASON  
Then you finally have confidence in me?

ZOEY  
This voyage has been beneficial for you, son. I've seen changes in you, all for the good.

Zoey pinches Jason's cheek.

ZOEY (CONT'D)  
You're ready, my little boychik sweetie pie.

Hercules laughs, silently repeats her term of endearment for Jason. He playfully grabs Zoey around the waist. She giggles. They run hand-in-hand along the beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HERA, ANCHORED AT SHORE - MORNING

As the crew put the final touches on the repaired ship, Jason consults with Hera.

JASON  
We're nearly ready to set sail,  
Hera. What is our course.

The damaged figurehead is silent. Crewmen gather, watch Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I know I've overused your help.

He strokes her cheek, removes a stuck-on feather.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You look particularly beautiful in  
this morning sun. Aphrodite, the  
goddess of beauty, is a rotting  
barnacle compared to you.

Jason senses he's getting nowhere. He turns his back to the statue, folds his arms, leans against it.

ANAXIS  
Your well's run dry. Perhaps the  
gods will speak through me, Jason.

JASON  
I'm afraid we're out of  
sacrificial animals. I have a  
ship and a crew, but without a  
course, I might as well be back in  
Salonika.

ANAXIS  
There are other ways to tap the  
other side. Give me your loin  
cloth.

Before Jason can resist, Anaxis unknots and pulls off the undergarment. He stretches it out, holds it up to the sun, studies it.

Jason tries to cover up. Argus stops him, when he tries to get the cloth back.

ARGUS  
He's reading the skid marks, man!  
Don't stop him! It's our only  
hope!

Crewmen moan, grimace, back away from Anaxis.

JASON

Whatever happened to reading tea  
leaves, or cloud patterns?

Anaxis twists and turns the loin cloth in many ways. His  
pose abruptly freezes.

ANAXIS

(with a deep, serious  
voice)

Three days south, by southeast.  
In the land of Phrygia lives the  
blind oracle, Ellison. Ellison  
will guide you to Colchis and the  
fleece -- for a price.

JASON

Is that all? Is there anything  
else?

Anaxis comes out of his trance, tosses the loin cloth back  
to Jason.

ANAXIS

Try getting more fiber in your  
diet.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SHORE OF PHRYGIA - DAY

Jason leads his men up the rocky shore of this remote  
island. They pass dangerously close to a pit of boiling  
tar, approach a plateau.

COCCUS

We should turn back, Jason.

The Spartan slaps Coccus on the back of the head.

PLATEAU

On the plateau are the ruins of a sizable stone temple.

A YOUNG MAN with a mass of terribly mangled hair is seated  
on a large, fallen stone. He is having his hair cut by a  
much holder, squinting gentleman (ELLISON), sporting a  
perfectly coiffed, gray mane.

Before he makes the first cut, two hideous WINGED BEASTS,  
with massive pompadours, descend from the sky. The young  
man runs away. Jason and his men stop in their tracks.

## JASON'S POV

The beasts assault blind Ellison, furiously running their fingers through his hairdo. Satisfied with their disarrangement, they fly off.

## BACK TO SCENE

Jason and his men run to Ellison's aid. He stands, pushes away the helping hands, vainly attempts to restore his hairstyle.

ELLISON

Who's next? What'll it be? I can't do curls -- don't have the equipment. Short and neat never goes out of style. Don't be afraid of old Ellison, the blind barber of Phrygia.

JASON

Barber? We were told you're an oracle.

ELLISON

Sounds like someone's been reading skid marks. Not the sharpest tool in the soothsayer's pouch.

Jason gives Anaxis a dirty look. Anaxis raises his hood over his head. Wind gusts further mess Ellison's hair.

ELLISON (CONT'D)

I was an oracle. None better! And my hair? Not a strand out of place, ever. When Zeus learned I was abusing the gift of prophecy at the horse races, he blinded me, stranded me, and plagued me with the damned wind harpies you saw. Their sole purpose in life is to mess my beautiful hair. By the way, how does it look?

JASON

Just, uh, fine.

ELLISON

Marvelous. Now who'd like their hair cut first?

JASON  
 We haven't come for haircuts,  
 Ellison. We want to know the way  
 to Colchis.

ELLISON  
 Seekers of the golden fleece, ay?  
 I won't give that information up  
 cheaply.

POLYGLYCOS  
 What's your price?

ELLISON  
 Haircuts for everyone!

Jason stamps his foot.

JASON  
 Absolutely not!

ELLISON  
 All right, free me from my  
 tormentors.

COCCUS  
 Jason, we should-

The Spartan raises his hand to Coccus.

COCCUS (CONT'D)  
 -do what he asks.

JASON  
 An excellent suggestion, Coccus.  
 I have a plan.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE RUINS - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

Argus mixes ingredients together in a wooden bucket. Jason and several crew members guard Ellison, keep a watchful eye.

ARGUS  
 I can't vouch for the mixture,  
 Jason, working in this early  
 light. The texture seems about  
 right.



JASON  
 (to Ellison)  
 Quick! Comb this mixture into  
 your hair. There isn't much time.

Ellison runs his hands through the bucket of glop.

ELLISON  
 It feels like mortar.

POLYGLYCOS  
 Yes, it's cement. Hurry up! We  
 have to allow time for it to set.

ELLISON  
 But-

Polyglycos helps Ellison apply the cement, contour it into the shape of his hairdo. Jason seats Ellison at his usual barbering post.

Polyglycos seats Coccus next to Ellison, posing as a customer. Ellison fumbles for his tools, commences cutting, butchers Coccus' hair.

The harpies arrive, cautiously hover, then descend behind Ellison.

#### WIND HARPIES

One harpy gingerly pokes at Ellison's hair, without effect, as the other one watches. Its efforts intensify, unsuccessfully, causing frustration.

The second harpy pushes his cohort out of the way. His attempts at disarray fail, as well. Ellison is elated.

The first harpy shoves his way back behind Ellison, setting off a melee between the two beasts. Their ongoing wrestling moves them ever closer to the edge of the plateau and the tar pit. Jason's men, armed with poles, poke and prod the harpies, directing them to the pit, as well.

#### BOILING TAR PIT

At the pit's edge, the harpies stand upright, hold their ground. Using a pole, the Spartan cross-checks both of them into the pit, killing them.

JASON  
 Well done, Spartan.

SPARTAN  
Actually, I prefer my harpies  
medium rare.

Jason and the crew return to still-seated Ellison.

SEATED ELLISON

ELLISON  
Were you successful? I heard  
their screams.

JASON  
Your tormenting harpies are now  
the guests of Hades.

Ellison applauds, stands. The weight of the cemented hair  
causes him to reel from side to side, keel over.  
Polyglycos helps right his head.

JASON (CONT'D)  
We'll have to chip away the  
cement.

ELLISON  
Not on your life! Don't you see?  
It's permanently perfect! You  
leave it be. Now I will keep my  
end of the bargain. Travel  
northeast for three days, until  
you come to the Smashing Rocks.

JASON  
The Smashing Rocks? What are  
they?

Ellison rolls his eyes, he slaps his side.

ELLISON  
Smashing. Rocks.  
Self-explanatory, isn't it? How  
did you ever make it this far,  
Jason?

ARGUS  
(whispers)  
His mommy.

JASON  
I heard that, Argus.

ANAXIS

(whispers)

And a big-boobied, wooden  
figurehead.

JASON

I heard that, too! Yes, I admit  
it; I've had some help. Now tell  
me more about the Smashing Rocks.

ELLISON

You'll find out soon enough, on  
your own. The point is, you'll  
need the help of the gods to get  
through them. What god aids you?

JASON

We had help from Hera.

ELLISON

Ah, the queen of gluttony. She'll  
be of no help at the Smashing  
Rocks, that's Poseidon's turf.  
He'd be more useful.

Ellison rips a Poseidon amulet from around his neck, hands  
it to Jason.

ELLISON (CONT'D)

Takes this. With Poseidon's help  
you may live. Two days past the  
rocks, heading southeast, you will  
come to Colchis.

JASON

Couldn't we just travel a more  
southerly route to begin with and  
bypass the Smashing Rocks?

ELLISON

For cryin' out loud, what kind of  
Greek hero would do that? I'm  
starting to find you annoying,  
Jason. Goodbye and good luck --  
but, before you go, would anyone  
like a haircut?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HERA, ON THE OPEN OCEAN - DAY

In the distance, two massive rock formations can be seen,  
separated by a narrow chasm.

JASON  
What could those be?

A collective moan arises.

POLYGLYCOS, ANAXIS & ARGUS AND OTHERS  
The Smashing Rocks.

JASON  
Okay, okay. It's not like I've  
been here before. Argus, what do  
you recommend doing?

ANAXIS  
A sacrifice is clearly called for.

POLYGLYCOS  
What are you going to sacrifice,  
an olive? There's nothing left.

ANAXIS  
You might do.

Jason separates fuming Anaxis and Polyglycos.

ARGUS  
I say we row hard and bull our way  
through.

CROW'S NEST OF THE HERA

The LOOKOUT spots a ship, points.

LOOKOUT'S POV

A three-masted ship enters between the Smashing Rocks from  
the opposite direction.

LOOKOUT (O.S.)  
All look! Off the starboard bow!

DECK OF THE HERA

All hands look off the port bow, move to the starboard  
side, at Argus' angry, silent prompt.

ARGUS  
She doesn't seem to be in any  
danger. We have nothing to fear.  
I say we row on.

OTHER SHIP

Rumbling sounds o.s. are followed by rapid, repeated collisions of rocks. The ship, smashed, submerges.

BACK TO SCENE

POLYGLYCOS  
(addresses the crew)  
The floor is now open to  
additional suggestions.

ASSEMBLED CREWMEN

A familiar face peers out from the rear of the crowd:  
Hylas. He steps forward.

HYLAS  
Why not just row around the rocks?

Brows knit, eyebrows rise, as everyone focuses on him.  
Astonished Xanthippus cautiously approaches Hylas, gently pokes his arm.

XANTHIPPIUS  
You're, uh, okay, Hylas?

HYLAS  
Yes, fine, never better. Why do  
you ask?

XANTHIPPIUS  
Um, no particular reason.

JASON

JASON  
Argus is right! Back to your  
oars! We'll press on at full  
speed.

EXT. THE HERA, AT SEA

The ship's oars move swiftly through the churning water.

BACK TO SCENE

Jason tears off the amulet given to him by Ellison.

JASON  
 Curse the gods! Mortals serve as  
 nothing more than unscripted  
 entertainment to them!

He glares at the amulet, throws it into the ocean.

INT. PALACE OF THE GODS, MOUNT OLYMPUS - DAY

Zeus and other gods lustfully indulge in a bacchanal,  
 observe and mockingly laugh at suffering Jason, in a  
 magical reflecting pool.

ARES  
 That sums it up nicely, Jason!

BACK TO SCENE

The smashing rocks close in on the Hera.

Jason's nostrils flare, then Polyglycos' and Argus'.

POLYGLYCOS  
 My god, what a putrid stench!

Polyglycos runs to the rail, vomits. Argus holds his nose.

ARGUS  
 Jason, I thought we left your  
 mother with Hercules.

THE SEA

Out from the boiling sea comes a massive webbed hand,  
 belonging to a creature several hundred feet long. The  
 hand is draped with decayed seaweed, encrusted with  
 barnacles, rotting sea life.

The arm, shoulders and, finally, the head emerge. It is  
 POSEIDON, fetid king of the sea.

DECK OF THE HERA

ANAXIS  
 Poseidon! Ellison's amulet  
 worked!

## BACK TO SCENE

Waist-level out of the ocean, Poseidon extends his arm, holds back the Smashing Rocks. The Hera approaches his outstretched arm, moves beneath his reeking armpit. Seagulls get too close to his underarm, instantly fall, lifeless, to the water.

## DECK OF THE HERA

The crew abandons oars, cover their mouths and noses.

ARGUS  
 (holding his nose)  
 Jason, how will we pass if the men  
 don't row? The smell is  
 shattering!

Several crewmen pass out. The Spartan stands, fills his lungs to capacity, exhales, smiles. He approaches barely conscious Coccus.

COCCUS  
 I didn't say a word.

The Spartan holds Coccus' nose.

SPARTAN  
 Row.

ARGUS  
 The Spartan's found the answer!

JASON  
 (holding his nose)  
 Half you men row! The rest, hold  
 your nose with one hand and the  
 rower's nose with the other! Step  
 lively!

The men organize themselves, as ordered, resume rowing.

## THE SEA/DECK OF THE HERA INTERCUTTING

The ship continues, beneath Poseidon's arm, nearly reaches safety.

As they row, all hands turn, anxiously look aft. Poseidon loses, then quickly regains his grip on the rocks, gives the okay sign. The water next to Poseidon agitates. Up pops a gorgeous MERMAID of equal height. She winks. He dreamily smiles, lets go of the opposing cliff. Poseidon and the mermaid submerge.

The Smashing Rocks begin to close.

JASON  
That web-fingered bastard!  
Release noses! Everyone row!

The Hera gains speed, escapes as the rocks collide. The exhausted crew rests. Jason relaxes against the guard rail.

JASON'S POV

A body clings to debris from the wrecked vessel.

BACK TO SCENE

He jumps over the side to rescue the VICTIM, is joined by other crewmen.

THE SEA

The victim's sultry body shows through her soaked tunic. Jason and the crewmen grab hold of the makeshift raft.

The victim jerks to attention; her gleaming blue eyes sparkle with reflected sunlight. She kicks one crewman in the side of the head, skewers the hand of another with a dagger.

JASON  
No! We're here to help.

The victim continues to flail. She will now be referred to as MEDEA.

MEDEA  
I am Medea, sorceress and daughter  
of King Aetes of Colchis! I will  
turn your entrails into ravenous  
eels, if you sink this raft!

Jason points to the Hera.

JASON  
My ship-

CREWMAN  
Your ship?



JASON  
 Our ship, the Hera, is at your disposal. We'll -- did you say, Colchis? You're a Colchistian? How far is your homeland?

Medea gets a better look at Jason, raises an eyebrow. She wets her lips, adjusts her ample cleavage.

MEDEA  
 Less than a day. Your ship, it has private quarters, I assume. And private bathing facilities, too. Your seamstress and cook must be at my immediate call.

JASON  
 No, our ship is basically a floating piece of crap. And today is the seamstress' day off.

The crewmen snicker.

CREWMAN  
 I'll be happy to wash your back.

Medea stiffens her fingers, springs them towards the crewman's face. He transforms into an octopus she casually kicks into the sea.

MEDEA  
 Colchis lies east.

CUT TO:

EXT. DECK OF THE HERA, AT SEA - LATER

While Medea sleeps in a sequestered area, Jason and the crew discuss plans.

JASON  
 Now that our goal is at hand, we must consider our discussions with King Aetes.

POLLUX  
 The only 'discussing' I'll do is with my sword and fists.

The crew mumble in agreement.

JASON  
 We're not thieves.

XANTHIPPIUS

Of course we are. We're taking something that isn't ours. What else could we possibly be? Even if we aren't, we'll have to become thieves, Jason. Aetes will never agree to just give us the fleece.

JASON

We were sent by the gods. No mortal can refuse us.

ANAXIS

Wait, wait, wait! On the one hand, you're implying some sort of divine right to take what isn't ours. On the other, you say that peaceful negotiations are in order. Which is it?

JASON

(daydreaming)

Orange, orange is a nice color.

ARGUS

Don't confuse the man, Anaxis.

ANAXIS

It doesn't seem to take much.

Argus scratches his head, turns serious.

ARGUS

I'll agree that the divine right argument is suspect. After all, the gods themselves aren't models of morality.

XANTHIPPIUS

True. Uranus castrated his own father and tossed his severed genitals into the sea.

The crew grimaces, nods, affirms.

POLYGLYCOS

Zeus, himself, is married to his own sister.

POLLUX

Worse, he turned himself into a swan, then sired Hercules by her.

MEMBERS OF THE CREW

Ooh! Ecch.

One crewman imitates an amorous swan, approaches the Spartan, has second thoughts, stops.

ARGUS

Considering their immorality, how can the gods' decrees be accepted by mortals, without question?

ANAXIS

Which brings us back to peaceful negotiations.

POLYGLYCOS

Perhaps we could trade for the fleece. Or buy it. Maybe even lease it.

JASON

Lease the fleece, and take it back to Greece? I'll go ashore tomorrow, return Medea and meet Aetes. After I speak to him, alone, the right course of action may become clear.

COCCUS

Why not take me along, Jason? I have some experience dealing with royalty.

ARGUS

That's right. After all, you are the son of King Pelius.

Jason's knees buckle, his eyes roll back. Polyglycos helps him back to his feet, pats his pale cheeks.

JASON

Wait -- what? Coccus? Your father is my own father's murderer?

Coccus nods, casually picks something from between his teeth, flicks it.

XANTHIPPIUS

Surely you knew that, Jason.

Jason grabs Argus by his gray beard.

JASON

Argus, how long have you kept this secret from me?

ARGUS

Secret? It's no secret. It's common knowledge. I doubt if anyone on board, except you, didn't know.

Humiliated, Jason addresses the crew.

JASON

By a show of hands, who among you knew Coccus was Pelius' son?

Hesitantly, one, then two, then the entire crew raise their hands. A seagull, perched on an oar handle, raises one wing.

JASON (CONT'D)

(to Coccus)

And you wish to accompany me?  
Why, to stab me in the back?

Medea, awakened by the commotion, steps from behind a partition.

COCCUS

A splendid suggestion! But why wait until tomorrow?

Coccus picks up a small ax, throws it at Jason. It misses, hits and kills a crewman, who falls overboard.

Jason grabs a spear, hurls it. Coccus ducks. The spear pierces the chest of another ill-fated crewman, who also goes over the side.

Medea giggles.

Jason and Coccus pick up swords, battle. Their errant slashes wound additional crewmen. Jason sustains a wound to the forearm. Crewman #2 accidentally comes between the two men, is stabbed in the back by Coccus. Jason lunges, also mistakenly stabs Crewman #2, this time in the shoulder.

JASON

Would you get out of the way?

CREWMAN #2

Beg pardon, sir.

Coccus pushes Crewman #2 out of the way, throws his sword.

FIGUREHEAD OF HERA

The sword embeds between her eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

Medea applauds. Coccus senses defeat, dives into the ocean.

JASON  
Xanthippus!

Jason tosses a knife to Xanthippus, motions for him to go over the side, in pursuit of Coccus. Xanthippus quickly looks over the side, then back to Jason.

XANTHIPPIUS  
Looks rather cold and choppy. I'd rather not.

JASON  
He's getting away!

XANTHIPPIUS  
I'm not a knife fighter, you know. Swimming is my sport.

JASON  
Stop talking! Go after him!

XANTHIPPIUS  
And, frankly, I'm more of a near-shore swimmer, if you must know. I'm a bit squeamish of water that's over my head. This far out there could be jellyfish, or sea wasps.

Jason stamps his foot.

JASON  
Imbecile! Jump! That's an order!

XANTHIPPIUS  
Have you ever been stung by a sea wasp? I'll tell you, it's a whole new level of pain. You don't feel much, at first-

JASON  
Dimwit! Numskull! Are you or aren't you the greatest swimmer in all of Greece?!

Xanthippus, shamed, gives Jason the finger, dives over the side.

UNDERWATER

Xanthippus catches Coccus. The two men wrestle.

BACK TO SCENE - LATER

A body is dragged aboard, its identity initially unknown. Argus flips it over. It's Xanthippus.

JASON

Does anything ever go right on an  
epic voyage? Champion swimmer of  
Greece, my ass!

Jason pounds the corpse. Argus drags him off, but Jason breaks away, resumes the beating.

JASON (CONT'D)

An anvil swims better!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SHORE OF COLCHIS - MORNING

The shore of Colchis is a botanical paradise. Jason and Medea stand on a sandy, forked path whose edges abound with unusual, colorful plants.

MEDEA

I must take the northern path. It  
leads to my quarters. Follow the  
southern way. It will take you to  
the reception hall. There you  
will meet my father, King Aetes.

JASON

Your father will be pleased over  
your safe return.

MEDEA

Hardly. The loss of ship and crew  
will concern him foremost -- oh,  
you've injured your arm.

She touches the gash incurred from Coccus' blade. Medea pulls a flower from a nearby plant, squeezes its petals, applies the liquid to the wound.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

We call this the gray hyssop. Its essential oils have curative powers. They say it was planted here by the goddess, Artemis.

WOUND

The wound quickly heals.

BACK TO SCENE

Jason, pleased with the quick results, grows apprehensive when he begins to sweat profusely. His mouth becomes dry, pasty with congealed saliva. White boils appear on his body.

JASON

My eyes can't seem to focus.

Medea remains calm.

MEDEA

Side effects, Jason. I guess I should have asked you if you have any allergies. Try to remain calm.

She twists off the leaves of a second plant, pulls up the roots of a third.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Quickly, chew on the roots of the tuberous wildflower, while I apply the juice of the palmetto leaf. Your sensitivity to gray hyssop is acute and can be fatal.

Jason grabs the dirt-covered roots, stuffs them into his mouth.

JASON

Thank goodness the cure was close-by. I-

Jason's teeth chatter; he convulses. He becomes prodigiously flatulent.

JASON (CONT'D)

M-m-more s-s-side eff-effects?

Medea crosses her arms, pouts.

MEDEA

Hm, you are an unusual case,  
Jason.

She runs into the fields, gathers assorted plants, returns.  
Jason mumbles incoherently.

JASON

I can't feel my nose! The sky is  
boiling! Praise the turnips!

MEDEA

Put this under your tongue, while  
I squash these berries into your  
ear. Chew on these buds -- but  
only on the left side of your  
mouth!

Jason complies, gradually returns to normal, but is  
weakened from the experience. She touches the barely  
discernible arm wound, looks deeply into Jason's eyes.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Welcome to Colchis.

They part, walk their separate ways.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDEA'S QUARTERS - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Medea's room, though palatial, is a shambles. Clothes and  
personal items are strewn everywhere. Small animals wander  
about.

ASPARRAGUS, Medea's brother, is present. Thin and of  
average height, he wears a helmet and full battle armor  
suited for a taller, broader man.

He scrutinizes two hermit crabs, one in the palm of each  
hand, while Medea changes clothes.

MEDEA

He's unusual, brother. Certainly  
brave to have come this far, but  
can he be trusted? His eyes are  
riveting. I hope Father -- are  
you paying attention, Asparragus?

She throws a sandal at him.



ASPARRAGUS

(to his pet crabs)

Your shells are like little,  
coiled castles, my friends. You  
are both very lucky not to have to  
share them with a witchy sister,  
or a father who tries to groom you  
for a life you don't want.

Asparragus' helmet slides half way off his head. As he  
adjusts it, one of the hermit crabs falls behind his  
breastplate.

Medea hurries to get ready for the welcoming ceremony.

MEDEA

We must be on our way. I'm sure  
Father's patience hasn't grown in  
my absence.

CUT TO:

INT. KING'S GREETING HALL - DAY

King Aetes' raised throne sits in the middle of a lavish  
hall adorned with statues and frescoes. KING AETES,  
himself, is a small, weary man dressed in overly opulent  
garb. He and his kingdom have been spoiled by the powers  
of the fleece.

ATTENDANTS and DIGNITARIES are present to welcome Jason,  
rescuer of Medea. Asparragus and Medea flank their seated  
father on the platform.

Trumpets sound o.s.

ENTRANCE

Jason enters the greeting hall, approaches and stands  
before the throne.

BACK TO SCENE

KING AETES

(to Asparragus)

How go the preparations for your  
twenty-seventh-attempted invasion  
of Ankila?

Asparragus pulls the hermit crab from his armor, tickles  
its claws.

KING AETES (CONT'D)  
 Consulting your mentor, I see.  
 How wise. My son, the general --  
 a giant among crustaceans.

Jason kneels at the foot of the throne.

KING AETES (CONT'D)  
 (to Medea)  
 And you, my daughter. A ship,  
 crew and 100,000 pieces of silver  
 -- all lost, in your search for  
 makeup sponges!

Medea is unconcerned.

MEDEA  
 Replace them with the fleece. You  
 use it for everything except  
 blowing your nose. Oh, and while  
 you're at it, see if you can get  
 it to whip up a little respect for  
 your daughter's feelings.

Aetes sighs.

KING AETES  
 Arise, Jason.

Jason stands, smiles at unresponsive Medea.

KING AETES (CONT'D)  
 Custom requires me to 'thank' you  
 for the safe return of my  
 daughter. I shall host a banquet  
 tonight for you and your crew.  
 Honor us with your presence.

CUT TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL - EVENING

Jason, his crew and Aetes sit on pillows in the grand banquet hall, a large circular room with many arched doorways. Medea and Asparragus are also present.

SERVANTS pass among everyone with trays of food. Soft music plays o.s.

SERVANT  
 (to Jason)  
 Baklava? Olives?

Jason, nauseated, gulps, takes a deep breath, shakes his head.

KING AETES

What brings you to Colchis, Jason?

JASON

The sunshine, the beaches, the local wines.

Aetes grips Jason's shoulder, draws near.

KING AETES

Your ship, it's that of a warrior, not someone seeking a tan. And your crew -- they strike me as mercenaries, not wine lovers, at least not serious wine lovers.

The Spartan strides up to the king.

SPARTAN

We're here to steal your friggin' fleece!

Jason positions himself between the two men. Medea gasps, then smirks. Asparragus plays with his helmet's chin strap, rubs the heels of his sandals together.

JASON

That's not entirely accurate, your highness. Please ignore what he said. He's a Spartan, they have a tendency to speak, before not thinking at all.

KING AETES

I knew you were a thief, Jason, from the first whiff I got of you. The fleece is ours and will always be ours! Without it, our prosperity would end. Our people would starve! Our crops would wither! We'd have to legalize gambling! Asparragus, call the guards!

Asparragus, preoccupied with the chin strap, remains seated.

ASPARRAGUS

Guards.

Dozens of well-equipped SOLDIERS burst into the banquet room, round up Jason's men. The Spartan bites one on the nose.

JASON  
You see? I told you they're  
impulsive.

The crew is herded off to prison. Only Jason remains.

KING AETES  
I must admit, I did have some  
assistance, in seeing through your  
deception.

He claps his hands three times. Medea fixes her makeup. Jason glares at her.

BANQUET HALL ENTRANCE

Coccus enters, struts into the room, stands by King Aetes.

KING AETES  
Coccus, son of King Pelius of  
Salonika, we, the Colchinoids, are  
eternally grateful.

JASON  
Colchinoids. I had a feeling.

Coccus goes eye-to-eye with Jason. Soldiers hustle Jason away.

JASON (O.S.)  
Colchinoids?

CUT TO:

INT. THE CASTLE PRISON - LATER

The prison has thick, stone walls, is dimly illuminated by flickering torches.

INT. JASON'S CELL

Jason is isolated in one cell; the rest of the crew is in a second, nearby.

Jason paces, stops when he hears a key turning in the lock to the cell. Alarmed, he grabs a small log from the floor, stands behind the door.

Medea enters, but before Jason recognizes her, he clobbers her with the log. She collapses onto the dirt floor.

JASON

Medea? Shit! Why didn't you say something?

Jason fetches a bucket of water, splashes some on her face. She awakens, but is groggy.

MEDEA

Why strike me? I had nothing to do with the trap Father set for you.

JASON

Is that why you're here? To apologize? Knowing that won't make the noose around my neck feel any better tomorrow.

Medea kisses Jason.

MEDEA

Jason, I want you to steal the fleece.

JASON

Why? It makes your land wealthy and keeps you in makeup sponges.

MEDEA

Father has other plans for the fleece. He wants to use it as a weapon, a weapon of mass destruction. With it, he will try to conquer the world.

JASON

And you believe that validates theft? That the end justifies the means?

She turns away.

MEDEA

Yes, and there's one more thing: I love you.

Jason grabs her arm, turns her back towards himself.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Take me back to Salonika, make me your queen, and I'll love you passionately, burningly, even peculiarly -- if you like that sort of thing -- for the rest of your life.

JASON

Okay... can you elaborate a little on the 'peculiarly' part?

MEDEA

Later.

Jason and Medea exit the cell.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL CONTAINING THE REST OF THE CREW

Most of the crew is asleep. Argus, still awake, picks up a wooden bucket at the sound of the cell door opening.

Medea enters first, is struck in the head with the bucket, by Argus, collapses.

ARGUS

Medea?! Shit! Why didn't you say something? Oh, hello, Jason.

JASON

What's wrong with you, Argus? Didn't you see who it was?

ARGUS

I'm sorry. Foolish me, I guess I should have expected a sorceress painted like a harlot, to visit my cold, dark prison cell in the middle of the night.

Jason drags Medea to a bench, revives her.

MEDEA

This may not work out.

JASON

No, no. You'll see. We'll steal the fleece and be on our way in no time.

ARGUS

You've sure changed your tune.  
What happened to theft being  
immoral?

JASON

I'm seeing things differently.  
Medea's opened my eyes.

ANAXIS

Sounds more like she's opened your  
loin cloth.

The awakened crew laugh.

JASON

If we stay here, bickering until  
dawn, we'll all end up on the  
gallows!

POLYGLYCOS

Fine, what do you suggest?

Jason rubs his beard, thinks.

JASON

Well, we could go in groups of-

Medea rouses.

MEDEA

No! I've drugged the guards, but  
they won't remain asleep much  
longer. Send most of the crew  
back to the ship. If they follow  
the low wall outside the palace,  
it will lead them there. Argus,  
Polyglycos, the Spartan and Anaxis  
will accompany you and me to the  
fleece. From there, we'll  
rendezvous at the ship and depart.

Jason nods.

JASON

My plan, exactly. Almost exactly.

ARGUS

(quietly, to the crew)  
If anybody comes across Jason's  
balls, be sure to give 'em back.

CUT TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL - LATER

The banquet hall's attendees are passed out on the floor, after a long night of reveling.

Aetes stirs, as Asparragus wanders in, adjusting his armor.

ASPARRAGUS

There's something I need to tell you, Father, but I want you to promise you won't get upset, because it wasn't my fault.

KING AETES

Another delay in the Ankila invasion? By the time you get around to it, our army will be in assisted living.

Asparragus takes a hermit crab out of his helmet, strokes its shell.

KING AETES (CONT'D)

Ah, the therapy crab. This must be something truly dreadful. Speak.

Asparragus gulps.

ASPARRAGUS

I went to the prison a little while ago to look for some moss for my little friend here -- he loves the stuff. You know, most people think of hermit crabs as being emotionless, but they're really quite sensitive. They respond to-

Aetes grabs the crab out of Asparragus' hand, swallows it, shell and all.

KING AETES

-to being eaten? Is that what they respond to? I'll bet they do! And they probably don't like it one little bit! Now what in Hades did you see?!

Asparragus fights back tears.

ASPARRAGUS

They're gone! Every last one of them! The guards are drugged. Jason and his entire crew escaped!



Shocked Aetes gags, coughs up the crab. Asparragus catches it, mid-air, puts it back in his helmet, pets it. Aetes catches his breath, thinks.

KING AETES

Medea! Medea is behind this!

ASPARRAGUS

My sister?

KING AETES

No, Medea, the towel girl at the public baths! Of course it's your sister!

Perplexed Asparragus scratches his ear.

ASPARRAGUS

While we're on the subject of bad news, Coccus is missing, too.

Distraught Aetes tugs at, rips out, hair.

KING AETES

How could I? How could I have misplaced my trust in a spoiled, turncoat son of a far-off despot king?

ASPARRAGUS

What should happen now?

KING AETES

What should happen? I should have you beaten within an inch of your life, but I'll save that for when I'm in a better mood. Medea must be leading them to the fleece. We must head them off! Alert our forces and bring them here!

Asparragus reaches for the crab in the helmet. Aetes preemptively grabs his wrist.

KING AETES (CONT'D)

Son, if you have even the slightest sense of what's in your best self-interest, don't to it.

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE OF THE GODS, MOUNT OLYMPUS - DAY

Jason and his contingent, on their way to the fleece, can be seen in the magical reflecting pool.

The gods ignore it, continue partying.

Zeus, inebriated, wearing only a tiny, gold loin cloth, clumsily belly-flops into the pool.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEHIND THE PALACE ON COLCHIS - DAY

King Aetes, Asparragus and a dozen SOLDIERS prepare to pursue Jason.

Asparragus' helmet falls off, lands in a deep, muddy puddle. Aetes raises his sword.

KING AETES

We'll take the forest path.

ASPARRAGUS

Sure, but is there time for me to get a different helmet first?

Aetes glares at his son. He picks up the soiled, soaking helmet, places on his head, dousing himself. The soldiers stifle their amusement. The pursuit begins.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SECLUDED SHORE SURROUNDED BY CLIFFS - DAY

A gray sea barely ripples along a boulder-strewn beach. This is a solemn place, rarely visited. The only break in the rocks is the massive entrance to a cave.

A solitary, gnarled tree trunk stands fifty feet from the cave. From its twisted, longest branch hangs the skull and skin of a ram -- it is the golden fleece.

Jason, Medea, Anaxis, Polyglycos, the Spartan and Argus emerge from the adjacent forest. The sight of the fleece stops them in their tracks.

Medea pokes Jason.

MEDEA

It isn't going to fly to you. Go and get it!

Jason takes one step, halts at the sound of a moan, o.s., emanating from the cave.

ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE

Two, inch-thick, black antennae scrape the upper portion of the cave entrance, then slowly emerge. They extend twenty feet before any more is seen of the creature they belong to.

The head, possessing a pair of beady, black eyes, and then the remainder of the body of a seventy-five-ton lobster, crawls into daylight.

Pinned in the right claw of the beast is Coccus. He struggles to catch his breath, extricate himself.

BACK TO SCENE

Medea, uncaring, adjusts her hairdo.

JASON  
We should try to save him.

POLYGLYCOS  
Oh, naturally -- he's been so kind to us.

ARGUS  
Jason's got a point. Maybe we should, so we can kill him ourselves.

THE NEARBY WOODS

King Aetes leads his men. Asparragus loses a sandal.

ASPARRAGUS  
(to a soldier)  
Give me your sandal; I've lost one of mine.

The soldier ignores the command, keeps apace. Asparragus, frustrated, hops on one foot.

ASPARRAGUS (CONT'D)  
I'm the king's son, you know.

SOLDIER #1  
(with a strong English accent)  
(MORE)

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)  
Really? See if you can get 'im to  
admit it, mate.

BACK TO SCENE

Using his spear, Jason tries to free Coccus by prying open the lobster's claw. The other crewmen throw rocks at the animal, one of which strikes Coccus in the head.

POLYGLYCOS  
Sorry!

SPARTAN  
Nice shot, Poly-G!

The Spartan jabs Polyglycos in the ribs; they both smile.

CREW MEMBERS/LOBSTER INTERCUTTING

The lobster brushes Jason aside, raises Coccus to his mouth, devours him.

As Jason attempts to unravel the fleece, the lobster grabs him. He wedges his spear in between the crushing claws, keeps them from closing.

ANAXIS  
(to Medea)  
Use your magic! Our spears and  
swords are useless!

Medea adjusts the folds in her gown.

MEDEA  
Why don't you help him? Word has  
it you do a mean chicken  
sacrifice. Of course, if that  
fails, maybe you can read  
somebody's skid marks.

The lobster raises the claw holding Jason.

ARGUS  
(to Medea)  
There must be something you can  
do!

She purses her lips, puts her index finger to her chin, thinks.

MEDEA

You know, sometimes my mind goes blank in pressure situations -- one of Father's traits, I'm sorry to say. Ouch!

Medea taps the top of her head with her middle finger. She and Argus inspect it.

The lobster raises Jason to its eye.

MEDEA (CONT'D)

Strange, it has the aroma of-

Argus licks her finger.

ARGUS

Butter! It's hot, melted butter!  
Ow!

More drops land, this time on his bald head.

Jason is distracted from his predicament when droplets of steaming, hot, melted butter splatter on the lobster's shell.

The lobster looks up, rests its claw on the ground, allowing Jason to escape, rejoin his friends.

BACK TO SCENE

Jason and his group look skyward.

SKY

A deluge of hot, melted butter descends from the heavens.

BACK TO SCENE

The lobster, drenched and scalded, dies.

Hera walks out from behind the beast, holds a massive, dripping clump of lobster tail meat in her hand. Her mouth, overfull, labors to chew.

HERA

Now that's what I call a lobster dinner!

JASON

Hera? I thought I used up all my help.

She forces down the mouthful, takes another bite.

HERA

I knew you'd be needing one, last,  
big assist, somewhere down the  
road, so I ignored your last  
request. Bet you're glad I did.

ANAXIS

The gods are wise indeed.

HERA

Yeah, and let's face it, I could  
only resist a forty-ton lobster  
tail for so long.

Hera slaps Polyglycos' hand when he reaches for a piece.

HERA (CONT'D)

I suggest you grab the fleece and  
be on your way. Aetes and his men  
aren't far behind.

An arrow strikes the tree trunk. Jason reaches for the  
fleece, hesitates.

JASON

It's wrong. Stealing is immoral.

Medea jerks the fleece from the tree, causing a tear. She  
pushes it into Jason's hands.

MEDEA

With every heartbeat my father  
draws nearer! Get it into that  
stuffed artichoke you call a head  
that he prizes this fleece more  
than anything else, and that our  
fate is sealed at this point,  
whether we take it or not -- so  
take it!

Jason acquiesces. Hera chews, pauses.

HERA

Mortals.

A second arrow strikes the tree.

JASON

(to Medea)

What's the shortest route to the  
ship?

She points to a path that begins near the entrance to the cave.

MEDEA

There, that path runs to the height of the cliff. From the summit we must traverse a plateau that leads to the sea. It's the only way now.

Jason, his men and Medea run towards the described path.

HERA

Not even a goodbye. Just as well, eventually they would have gotten around to asking me to share.

She takes another bite, belches.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DEAD LOBSTER - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Aetes, Asparragus and the soldiers reach the site of the dead lobster. Distraught, Asparragus hops to the steaming carcass, runs his hand over the shell.

ASPARRAGUS

Phaethon? Dead? What kind of lunatic would butter a lobster?

Soldier #1 pokes at the remains with the butt of his spear. It makes a hollow sound.

SOLDIER #1

One with an unusual appetite. Blimey!

KING AETES

Blimey? Whatever, the lobster doesn't matter. The fleece is gone!

ASPARRAGUS

Doesn't matter? He was so sweet.

SOLDIER #1

Your lunatic thought it was pretty sweet too, guv. There ain't a single piece o' meat left.

Asparragus screams, looks towards the mountain path.

ASPARRAGUS

They must die for this! Horribly die! Strangled with their own intestines! Their eyes pressed to the backs of their skulls!

Aetes' approvingly nods at his son's new attitude.

KING AETES

Good, you're finally starting to sound like royalty. Fear not, son, Phaethon's death will be avenged. Bring me the teeth of the lobster! They will bring forth the Daughters of the Deep, from which there is no protection!

Asparragus addresses the soldiers.

ASPARRAGUS

You heard his highness. Bring Father the teeth of the lobster!

The soldiers are perplexed.

SOLDIER #1

Don't mean to be disrespectful of a direct order, guv, but-

ASPARRAGUS

What?!

SOLDIER #1

It's just that, well, it's a lobster. It doesn't have teeth, per se. That is, not like a lion or a lizard. It's a bloomin' crustacean.

KING AETES

Bloomin? I'm not familiar with that word. In fact, a great deal of what you say puzzles me. What part of Colchis are you from?

SOLDIER #1

On the fringe, you might say. Sort 'o west of here, mate, and a might north.

ASPARRAGUS

Father, we need to move on.



KING AETES

Very well, is there anything like  
teeth you can fetch?

The soldier inspects the head of the carcass.

SOLDIER #1

There's bumps.

KING AETES

Bumps. They'll have to do. Bring  
me the bumps of Phaethon, that I  
may -- I really don't like the  
sound of that. Just get on with  
what you're doing.

The soldiers chip off bumps, deposit them in a helmet,  
bring them to the king. Soldier #1 licks his fingers.

SOLDIER #1

'Ere ya go, guv. Fresh as  
Christmas puddin' from the copper!

KING AETES

Blimey.

The king, Asparragus and the soldiers continue their  
pursuit.

EXT. THE CLIFF PATH

Jason leads his flagging group up the last few yards of the  
path, where they reach the plateau.

JASON

Continue on, along this plateau  
and we'll reach the safety of the  
Hera.

AETES AND HIS MEN

KING AETES

Faster, faster men! Quick as a  
bunny!

SOLDIER #1

(to the soldier next to  
him)

Quick as a bunny? Why did 'e have  
to go and say that? Now I just  
feel silly.

BACK TO SCENE

ARGUS

Jason, please! Just a few seconds  
of rest.

JASON

There's no time to rest -- we must  
press on!

All gasp for air. Jason looks over his shoulder.

JASON (CONT'D)

Isn't anyone going to give me the  
finger?

No one does. Jason smiles.

JASON (CONT'D)

Mother would be so proud.

They continue on.

AETES AND HIS MEN

They ascend to the plateau. An archer stops, lets fly an  
arrow.

MEDEA

The arrow hits Medea squarely between the shoulder blades.  
She groans, falls to the ground. Everyone gathers around  
her.

ANAXIS

It looks bad, Jason.

He pulls the arrow out, on the third attempt.

JASON

Argus! The fleece -- give it to  
me! It has the power to restore  
life!

ANAXIS

Must we?

POLYGLYCOS

Aetes is getting rather close.

ARGUS

You'll get blood all over it and,  
believe me, those stains will  
never come out.

POLYGLYCOS

Couldn't you use the fleece on  
itself to get the stains out?  
Y'know, sort of wrap it up, in a  
ball.

SPARTAN

Then it's liable to wrinkle. It's  
already torn.

Jason snatches the fleece, places it over Medea. The  
fleece glows a radiant gold, makes an unexpected sheep's  
'baah' then returns to its original color.

Medea's eyes flutter. She promptly gets on her feet. The  
men are in awe.

MEDEA

What are you all staring at? I'm  
fine; let's go.

They run.

AETES AND HIS MEN

The same archer stops, lets fly another arrow.

BACK TO SCENE

Medea is hit in the exact same spot by the second arrow.  
She falls to the ground, lifeless. The men, displeased,  
stop, kick the dirt, spit, grumble.

ARGUS

Oh, bloody hell, not again!

POLYGLYCOS

Damn-good shot.

Jason shoves Polyglycos.

POLYGLYCOS (CONT'D)

Sorry, Jason, but you must admit.

Anaxis pulls out the arrow, inspects it.

ANAXIS

Maybe I should start a collection.

SPARTAN

The fleece! Use it. They say it  
has the power to restore life.

Everyone, in unison, stares at him.

ARGUS

That sounds rather familiar.

ANAXIS

They don't exactly breed them for  
brains in Sparta, do they?

JASON

Let's get this over with.

Jason takes the fleece, repeats the procedure. Medea  
returns to life, faces a row of dirty looks.

MEDEA

Like it's my fault.

They resume running. After a few steps, Medea stops.

JASON

What now?!

MEDEA

I think I'm getting my period.

Jason latches onto her arm; they move on. He looks over  
his shoulder.

JASON'S POV

Aetes' group is nearly upon them.

BACK TO SCENE

KING AETES (O.S.)

Jason! Stop where you are or my  
archers will cut you down.

JASON

Jason's group halts, turns to face their pursuers.

## JASON'S GROUP/KING AETES' GROUP INTERCUTTING

Aetes takes the helmet containing the bumps from Asparragus, runs his fingers through them. He looks to the sky.

KING AETES

Hecate, lord over all things sacred, summon the Daughters of the Deep, that they may rid Colchis of those who would plunder her.

ASPARRAGUS

Well said, Father. You have a host of atrocious faults, but poor extemporaneous speeches isn't one of them.

Aetes painfully smiles, grabs handfuls of lobster bumps, scatters them on the ground.

POLYGLYCOS

How can he expect lobster bumps to germinate? They can't, can they?

Jason and his group take a step back.

JASON

Medea, can they?

MEDEA

Oh, now you want my advice. A few hundred yards back you were all ready to leave me for dead. Why couldn't I have been born on Lesbos?

JASON

Medea!

She shrugs.

LOBSTER BUMPS

The bumps sit on the soil, idle.

BACK TO SCENE

Jason's men fidget, adjust equipment, check wristwatches.

King Aetes men fidget, adjust equipment, check smartphones.

SOLDIER #1  
Hey, mate, is that somethin'  
movin'?

ASPARRAGUS  
Where?

Soldier #1 points.

ASPARRAGUS (CONT'D)  
There? No, that's not it. That's  
some kind of beetle. Harmless.  
One summer I collected nearly a  
thousand of those. Kept them in  
an empty oil jar. Funny, I'll  
never forget this time Father  
wanted to anoint himself with oil  
after his morning bath. When he  
reached for the-

KING AETES  
Asparragus!

Jason, squatting, runs sand through his fingers.

ARGUS  
I don't know about any of you, but  
I'm exhausted.

He sits, cross-legged, plucks a long blade of grass, sticks  
it between his teeth, leans back.

ARGUS (CONT'D)  
If anything happens, wake me.

ANAXIS  
Look! Red!

Medea looks down at the front of her dress, is relieved to  
see it's stainless.

ANAXIS (CONT'D)  
No, there!

He points.

ARGUS  
It never fails.

Argus stands, dusts himself off.

## THE LOBSTER BUMPS

The soil breaks open at the site of the lobster bumps. A patch of red is visible at each one. The openings widen.

Lustrous heads of long, shimmering, red hair emerge. They belong to the Daughters of the Deep, exquisite women possessing lobster tails and bone-cutting claws.

## THE SPARTAN

The Spartan rubs his own red hair, grins. He's captivated by their beauty.

## POLYGLYCOS

Looks like someone's fallen in love.

Jason has to hold the Spartan back.

## JASON

Aetes wouldn't have summoned them if they were harmless.

The Spartan breaks Jason's grip, approaches the nearest DAUGHTER. She smiles seductively. He strokes her hair.

## SPARTAN

You're a cut above the rest.

## DAUGHTER OF THE DEEP

You're a cut below the chin.

She cuts his head off. Five Daughters, fully emerged, surge towards Jason's group.

## JASON'S GROUP

## ANAXIS

Did he have to use the word cut?

Jason and his men draw their swords.

## AETES AND HIS MEN

They cheer on the Daughters of the Deep.

## SERIES OF SHOTS

The following shots depict the battle between Jason's men and the Daughters of the Deep.

A) Polyglycos battles a Daughter. The blows from his sword are ineffective against her claw's hard shell. He blocks her thrusts.

B) Jason protects Medea, has the same difficulty as Polyglycos.

C) Anaxis is snipped, wounded.

D) Argus works his way behind a Daughter, jumps on her back. Her claws contort, but cannot reach him.

BACK TO SCENE

JASON

Medea! Have you no power over the Daughters of the Deep?

He dodges and slashes the claws.

MEDEA

They are immune to my spells.

JASON

At least try!

She looks at her fingernails, frowns, shines them on her garment.

MEDEA

Some other time.

JASON'S POV

Jason observes a Daughter's hair entangling her claw, when she brushes it aside.

BACK TO SCENE

JASON

(to his group)

Their hair! Use their own hair to bind their claws!

Jason clutches a thick handful of long, red hair, deftly winds around one claw. He successfully does it a second time around the other. The Daughter, frustrated at her immobility, falls to the ground, squirms.

Argus and Polyglycos do the same with their opponents. Anaxis, with the help of Polyglycos, is also successful.



Jason, Polyglycos and Anaxis subdue the last Daughter in the same way.

AETES AND HIS MEN

The king's grin collapses; his men are saddened.

ASPARRAGUS

(to Aetes)

May I finish my story now about  
the beetles and the oil jar?

A tear rolls down Aetes' cheek.

BACK TO SCENE

Medea picks up the fleece.

MEDEA

Now, Jason, let's leave while we  
still can!

JASON

I'm afraid it's too late.

JASON'S POV

Aetes' archers' bows are drawn; their arrows ready to fly.

BACK TO SCENE

Jason, dejected, lowers his head.

ARCHERS

Soldier #1 raises his sword.

SOLDIER #1

At your command, guv.

The king raises his hand, hesitates, lowers it.

KING AETES

Lower your bows.

ASPARRAGUS

Let them finish them off, Father.

KING AETES

They'd only hit Medea.

The archers nod in agreement, lower their bows.  
Crestfallen Aetes, accompanied by Asparragus, trudges to  
Jason's group.

JASON'S GROUP

Contrite Aetes gently places his hand on Jason's shoulder.

KING AETES

You and your men are too  
resourceful, Jason. There doesn't  
seem to be any way to prevent you  
from taking the fleece.

He longingly looks at it.

KING AETES (CONT'D)

It won't be easy getting along  
without it. The crops will die.  
Pestilence will sweep the land.  
Asparragus will have to find a  
job.

ASPARRAGUS

We can't let him take it!

Asparragus lunges for the fleece, takes hold, but Medea  
maintains her grip. Aetes bawls.

KING AETES

Two lousy kids -- two! I don't  
know which one will put me in an  
early grave first.

ARGUS, POLYGLYCOS, ANAXIS

Medea.

Asparragus and Medea engage in a tug-of-war for the fleece.

MEDEA

Clod! Dolt! You've enjoyed the  
benefits of the fleece your whole  
life and look what you've got to  
show for it! You're a bed-wetting  
simpleton, without a friend that  
doesn't have six legs!

Asparragus yanks harder, nearly gains sole possession.

ASPARRAGUS

At least I have some sense of  
decency, tramp!  
(MORE)

ASPARRAGUS (CONT'D)

You've benefited from the fleece as much as anyone, yet your greatest 'accomplishment' is having serviced half the king's garrison at sea, on that floating bordello of yours, under the pretense of searching for makeup sponges!

Jason grimaces, notices the growing tear in the fleece, suddenly gets an idea.

JASON

Thesmo! Thesmo was right!

Jason intervenes, snaps the fleece away from the battling siblings. Starting from the original tear, he rips the precious thing in two.

Everyone but Jason screams.

KING AETES

You idiot! What possessed you to do that?!

JASON

Compromise. The desire to compromise drove me to do it. When we compromise, it keeps the gods from having to get involved in every little thing. It allows people to get along and get on with their lives.

Jason presents half the fleece to Aetes.

JASON (CONT'D)

With your half of the fleece, your kingdom can still prosper. Your harvests will be reasonable. Illnesses will be mild, and you won't have to fully legalize gambling -- maybe just have a lottery.

He hands the other half to Medea.

JASON (CONT'D)

This half will be ours. Yes, ours. Medea, I will take you back with me to Salonika.

KING AETES

There is a god.

JASON  
 Aetes, Medea will be my queen.  
 You may consider our half of the  
 fleece to be her dowry.

Aetes beams, then recalls something.

KING AETES  
 But what of Asparragus? When  
 shall he find happiness?

POLYGLYCOS  
 I think he already has.

ASPARRAGUS

Asparragus tends to the Daughters of the Deep.  
 Appreciative of his attention, they stroke him with their  
 claws.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HERA, AT SEA - LATER

On deck, as the sun sets, Jason and Medea embrace.

MEDEA  
 Jason, I'm traveling to a strange  
 land to become your queen, and I  
 know so little about you.

Jason strokes her hair.

JASON  
 What would you like to know?

MEDEA  
 There's so much; I hardly know  
 where to begin.

JASON  
 Start with something simple.

MEDEA  
 All right, tell me, what's your  
 favorite color?

JASON'S POV

Medea's electric blue eyes glisten.

BACK TO SCENE

JASON

Blue, my favorite color is blue.

FADE OUT:

THE END

(CONT'D)

