

## Jason and the Harpies

by E. Louise Smythe

The ship Argo sailed a long way. There were two strong men on the ship. They had wings and could fly.

One day the Argo came to a land where the blind king lived.

This poor king had a hard time. When he sat down to the table to eat, some ugly birds called Harpies, came too. The Harpies had skin like brass and nobody could hurt them. They had claws of iron, and scratched people when they tried to drive them away.

When the king's dinner was ready, the Harpies came and took it away. When Jason and his men came, the king told them all about it. Jason said they would help him.

They all sat down to the table. When the food was put on the table, the Harpies came flying in. Jason and his men took their swords.

They cut at the Harpies but could not hurt them.

Then the two men with wings flew up in the air. The Harpies were afraid and flew away. The men flew after them.

At last the Harpies grew very tired and fell into the sea and were drowned.

Then the men with wings came back.

Now the blind king could eat all he wanted.

It was now time for Jason and his friends to go away.

The king thanked them over and over again for helping him.

When they said good-bye, he told them how to get to the land where they would find the golden fleece. On the sea where Jason and his men had to sail, were two big rocks. These rocks moved on the water like icebergs.

They were as high as a big hill. They would come close to each other, then they would go far apart.

When fishes swam in the water the rocks would come together and kill the fishes.

If birds flew in the air, the rocks would come together and kill birds.

If a boat sailed on the water, the rocks would come together and break the boat into little pieces.

These rocks had been put in the sea, so no one could go to the land where the golden fleece was.

When the ship Argo came to the rocks, Jason sent a dove out.

The rocks came together when the dove was almost past.

Then they went far apart. Jason made his men row as hard as they could.

The rocks began to come together. "Row hard, my men," said Jason.

Just as they got past, the rocks hit, but Jason and his men were all right.

So they came to Colchis.

Source:

Smythe, E. Louise. "Jason and the Harpies." *A Primary Reader, Old-Time Stories, Fairy Tales, and Myths Retold by Children*. Electronic.