

### **Summary of Book 1**

King Pelias hears an oracle that states that he will be killed when a man with only one sandal comes forth. Soon after, a man named Jason wearing only one sandal comes to the banquet that Pelias has kept for the gods. Pelias sees Jason and sends him on a difficult voyage to retrieve the Golden Fleece with the intent to cause him to get lost and never return. Jason calls upon a group of heroes to accompany him on the voyage including Heracles aboard the ship named Argo. When the time came to choose the leader, Heracles was the one voted for but he said that Jason should be the leader as it is his voyage and he is the one who brought them together. Jason calls on the gods Apollo in prayer to ensure a safe voyage. Jason believes that some of the voyagers are unsure of him being the leader such as Idas Orpheus plays music from his lyre and sings, convincing the crew of Jason's authority. Then the ship calls on the crew to set forth on the voyage and they are watched by all of the gods and Pelias as they depart.

They reach Lemnos, the Sintian Isle, and all of the men have been slain by the women because the men had rejected and made the women captives. The only male that was left alive was the King and Hypsipyle's father, and he was sent away. When the Argo arrived, the women thought that the Thracianas had come and they were afraid. Aehtalides convinces the women that they are not a threat and they are welcomed because they want the crew to stay with them at Lemnos. Jason and Hypsipyle meet and she falls in love with Jason. Jason begins to live at the palace and the rest of the crew also stays in Lemnos enjoying the city except for Heracles. Heracles attempts to convince the rest of the crew to continue the voyage and task at hand and succeeds. The crew begins to get ready for departure and the women from Lemnos all come to wish them well, including Hypsipyle. Before Jason leaves, he tells Hypsipyle that if she bears a male child, he should be sent to Pelasgian Iolcus to live there and care for his parents.

While the ship goes through Hellespont, they run into an area that has the six-handed earthborn monsters and the more civilized Doliones people. The Doliones welcomed the crew with friendliness and hospitality, and the king gave them wine and sheep for the voyage. The earthborn waited on the other side of the mountain and attacked Heracles and some others. They defeated the monsters and left but the winds led them back to Doliones, however they did not realize it was the same island and the Doliones also mistakenly believed that the war-men of Macrians had come instead. The crew and Doliones ended up going to war against each other by accident and Jason killed the Doliones King. After realizing their mistakes they grieved and did not leave for voyage for 12 days. The seer Mopsus prophesied that in order for the Argo to overcome the adverse winds, they have to establish a cult for the Rhea among the Doliones people. After completing the prophecy and holding a banquet for Rhea, they left from the island.

They next reached the Cician land near the outfall of Cius and the Mysians people showed them their kind hospitality. Heracles leaves to get himself a new oar after the meal, and then Hylas gets abducted by a water nymph. Heracles and Polyphemus stay on the island to look for Hylas and the ship leaves with the three heroes still on the island. Glaucus, the interpreter of divine Nereus comes and assures the crew that it was destined for the three heroes to be left behind, and so the ship continued forth on the voyage.

King Pelias enjoying  
his banquet



Man with one sandal  
shows up to banquet



The quote reveals how Pelias learns from an oracle that he will be slain when prompted by a man that appears to him wearing one sandal.

*Such was the oracle that Pelias heard, that a hateful doom awaited him to be slain at the prompting of the man whom he should see coming forth from the people with but one sandal. And no long time after, in accordance with that true report, Jason crossed the stream of wintry Anaurus on foot, and saved one sandal from the mire, but the other he left in the depths held back by the flood. And straightway he came to Pelias to share the banquet which the king was offering to his father Poseidon and the rest of the gods, though he paid no honour to Pelasgian Hera.*

*Argonautica Book 1. Beginning on line 5*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*



The quote reveals how the Doliones people mistook the Argonauts for Pelasgian war-men and so they went to battle against each other.

*but contrary blasts caught them and held them back till they again approached the hospitable Doliones. And they stepped ashore that same night; and the rock is still called the Sacred Rock round which they threw the ship's hawsers in their haste. Nor did anyone note with care that it was the same island; nor in the night did the Doliones clearly perceive that the heroes were returning; but they deemed that Pelasgian war-men of the Macrians had landed. Therefore they donned their armour and raised their hands against them.*

*Argonautica Book 1. Beginning on line 1014*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*



The quote reveals that the Argonauts fall in love with the women on the Lemnos island, however, Heracles does not fall for their charms and attempts to convince the heroes to keep pursuing the voyage.

*Thereupon Aeson's son started to go to the royal home of Hypsipyle; and the rest went each his way as chance took them, all but Heracles; for he of his own will was left behind by the ship and a few chosen comrades with him. And straightway the city rejoiced with dances and banquets, being filled with the steam of sacrifice; and above all the immortals they propitiated with songs and sacrifices the illustrious son of Hera and Cypris herself. And the sailing was ever delayed from one day to another; and long would they have lingered there, had not Heracles, gathering together his comrades apart from the women, thus addressed them with reproachful words*

*Argonautica Book 1. Beginning on line 853*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912*

## **Summary of Book 2**

The ship lands and the arrogant king Amycus says that the bravest warrior from the ship has to defeat him in a boxing match. Polydeuces becomes enraged and he decides to go against the king in the match. Polydeuces defeats the King and the crew is attacked by the Bebrycians and they leave the next morning while still being threatened by the Bebrycians.

Soon they encounter Phineas, a man cursed by Zeus to be blind and have his food be taken away by Harpies. He hears the ship and he begs the men to help him by chasing by getting rid of the Harpies that attack him. In exchange for helping him, Phineas guides the heroes to Colchis and how to successfully avoid the Clashing Rocks on the way there. On the journey through the sea, Athena herself aided them through the harsh waters and Clashing Rocks. The heroes then see Apollo flying over them on the way to the Hyperboreans and then decide to build an altar dedicated to Apollo on the island they wandered.

After passing by the Acheron river, they land in the kingdom of the Mariandyni and they are welcomed by king Lycus. They are seen as heroes on this island as they were warring with the Bebrycians and Polydeuces were worshipped by the same capacity as a god. The King also sent his son to join them in their journey. Idmon wanders off and he is attacked and killed by a boar, and Tiphys becomes very sick and also dies. The heroes had lost all hope however, Hera encourages Ancaeus, a crew member, and they leave once again to continue their journey.

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The heroes then observed the barrow of Sthenelus, who was a friend of Hercules' and they poured libations for his ghost. They leave and then later land on the Assyrian shore where they are joined by three more warriors who were also Hercules' comrades. They leave once again and carefully go through the Thermodon river, which was in the main harbor of the Amazons. They then reach the island of Ares, and they fight off the birds that protect the island successfully. After defeating the birds, the heroes encounter the four sons of the Greek hero Phrixus and grandsons of the king of Colchis. At the temple of Ares they perform sacrifices and then they eat the feast they had prepared. After, Argus details how deadly Aeetes is and he will not be willing to give up the golden fleece very easily.

They leave the island and are once again on their quest, and along the way they arrive at the Caucasian mountains where they see an eagle ripping out Prometheus' liver. At night they reach the Colchian land and the stream of Phasis where they will encounter Aeetes.



The quote reveals how Phineas was forced to face punishment for his father by having his food taken by the Harpies and never having anything left to eat for himself. This is important because the Argonauts help end his suffering and in return, Phineas tells them how to complete their voyage successfully.

*Zeus sent upon him a lingering old age, and took from his eyes the pleasant light, and suffered him not to have joy of the dainties untold that the dwellers around ever brought to his house, when they came to enquire the will of heaven. But on a sudden, swooping through the clouds, the Harpies with their crooked beaks incessantly snatched the food away from his mouth and hands. And at times not a morsel of food was left, at others but a little, in order that he might live and be tormented.*

*Argonautica Book 2. Beginning on line 181*

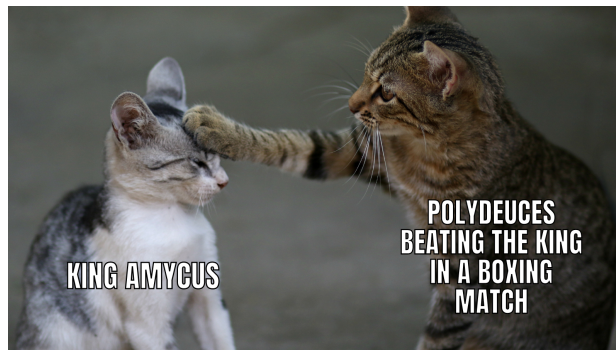
*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*



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The quote reveals that when King Amycus and Polydeuces face each other in the boxing match, Polydeuces defeats the king successfully.

*Next Amycus rising on tiptoe, like one who slays an ox, sprung to his full height and swung his heavy hand down upon his rival; but the hero swerved aside from the rush, turning his head, and just received the arm on his shoulder; and coming near and slipping his knee past the king's, with a rush he struck him above the ear, and broke the bones inside, and the king in agony fell upon his knees; and the Minyan heroes shouted for joy; and his life was poured forth all at once.*

*Argonautica Book 2. Beginning on line 80*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*



The quote reveals Hera encourages Ancaeus, a crew member, to keep on going on the journey when the heroes had lost hope due to Tiphys becomes very sick and dying.

*And in their sorrow they would have stayed from going further had not Hera kindled exceeding courage in Ancaeus, whom near the waters of Imbrassus Astypalaea bore to Poseidon; for especially was he skilled in steering and eagerly did he address Peleus: "Son of Aeacus, is it well for us to give up our toils and linger on in a strange land? Not so much for my prowess in war did Jason take me with him in quest of the fleece, far from Parthenia, as for my knowledge of ships. Wherefore, I pray, let there be no fear for the ship. And so there are here other men of skill, of whom none will*

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*harm our voyaging, whomsoever we set at the helm. But quickly tell forth all this and boldly urge them to call to mind their task."*

*Argonautica Book 2. Beginning on line 859*

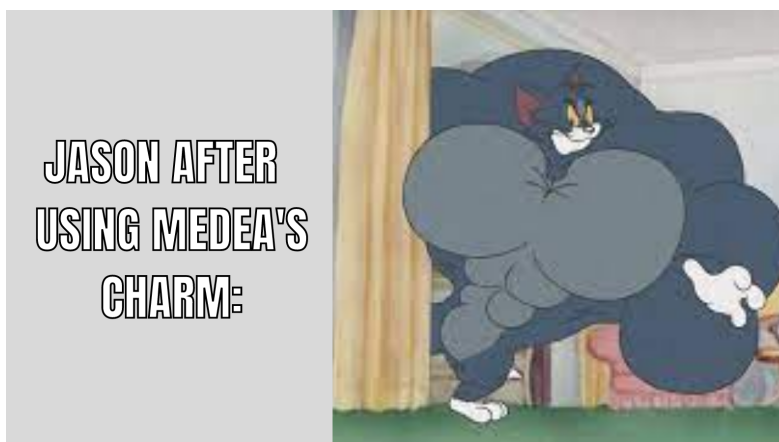
*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*

### Summary of Book 3

The heroes were waiting in the bushes while Athena and Hera were discussing their strategy to get the golden fleece. They decide to make Aeetes' daughter fall in love with Jason using Aphrodite's aid and then the daughter-Medea- can help the heroes get the fleece. Jason has a small meeting with the crew and states his plan; He will first take only a few of the people with him and attempt to get the golden fleece from the King using reason and friendship, and only if forced to will they fight the king in battle.

They go to the palace unseen from a mist created by Hera, and when they enter the palace, Eros hits Medea with an arrow in order to cause her to fall in love with Jason. The king sets a banquet for them and then asks why they have come to Colchis. Then Argus, the oldest son explains why Jason and the heroes have come but the King gets enraged as he believes that the heroes have come to take his power and royalty from him. After listening to Jason speak of the reasons for his need for the golden fleece, the King decides that Jason has to use fire-breathing oxen to plough the Plain of Ares, then sow the plain with serpent's teeth, and then cut down the crop of armed men that will spring up from the plain. Although Jason is weary of the task, he decides to attempt to do what the king asks.

Later that night, Chalcioppe and Medea devised a plan for Medea to give Jason a charm so that he can handle the bulls more easily. In the morning, Medea met Jason and both of them were stricken with love. Jason offers to marry her and have her praised akin to a goddess in return for her aid. Jason later performs the rituals instructed by Medea to use the charm and gain the strength and prowess he needs to perform the tasks successfully. On the day of the tasks, King Aeetes comes on his chariot to watch and the heroes accompany Jason on the other side of the plain. The bulls come out of the mist and attack Jason with their fire- breath but Jason is not fazed and fastens the plough to the two bulls. Jason uses the bulls to plough the land and then he sows the serpent's teeth. The earthborn men soon began springing up on the field and so Jason takes the quoit of Ares Enyalios and throws it among the men. The men began to fight among themselves and then they all died and Jason finished the contest that King Aeetes had set for him.



The quote reveals that Jason is able to feel much stronger and carry enough strength to complete the tasks that King Aeetes has given him that would have been nearly impossible without the charm that Medea has given him to gain the strength.

*And then he sprinkled his body, and terrible prowess entered into him, unspeakable, dauntless; and his hands on both sides thrilled vigorously as they swelled with strength. And as when a warlike steed eager for the fight neighs and beats the ground with his hoof, while rejoicing he lifts his neck on high with ears erect; in such wise did Aeson's son rejoice in the strength of his limbs. And often hither and thither did he leap high in air tossing in his hands his shield of bronze and ashen spear.*

*Argonautica Book 3. Beginning on line 1251  
Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*



The quote reveals the almost painful rush of emotions of love that Medea feels when she gets shot by Eros with his arrow and instantly falls in love with Jason.

*And with swift feet unmarked he [Eros] passed the threshold and keenly glanced around; and gliding close by Aeson's son he laid the arrow-notch on the cord in the centre, and drawing wide apart with both hands he shot at Medea; and speechless amazement seized her soul. But the god himself flashed back again from the high-roofed hall, laughing loud; and the bolt burnt deep down in the maiden's heart like a flame; and ever she kept darting bright glances straight up at Aeson's son, and within her breast her heart panted fast through anguish, all remembrance left her, and her soul melted with the sweet pain.*

*Argonautica Book 3. Beginning on line 277  
Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*



The quote reveals the astonishment that King Aeetes feels when he sees that Jason is able to actually attempt his impossible tasks. This causes him to become angered and begin to plan a deception against Jason.

*Taking it in his hands he threw it with a rush far away into their midst; and himself crouched unseen behind his shield, with full confidence. And the Colchians gave a loud cry, like the roar of the sea when it beats upon sharp crags; and speechless amazement seized Aeetes at the rush of the sturdy quoit.*

*Argonautica Book 3. Beginning on line 1355*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*

#### **Summary of Book 4**

Aeetes spent all night attempting to come up with a plan to deceive the heroes after Jason finished his tasks, but he did not know of the charm that Medea had given to Jason to help him through the tasks. Medea, stricken with fear of her father finding out of her deception, decided to flee with the sons of Phrixus instead. While leaving the palace, the doors opened by themselves for Medea and she headed to the river where the heroes were rejoicing for Jason. There Medea called out for the youngest son of Phrixus and she begged for them to save her from Aeetes, and she also says that she can put the serpent that guards the fleece to sleep so that they can steal it. Medea and Jason arrive at the sacred grove where Medea sings to the serpent to charm and relax him. Jason quickly stole the golden fleece and then both fled back to the ship and everyone attempted to depart as quickly as possible.

Aeetes finds out about Medea's actions and the Colchians quickly take up arms but the ship has already left the land. Aeetes calls upon Helios and Zeus to see the Argonauts' evil deeds and he proclaims that they should bring back Medea no matter what the costs are and the fleet of Colchian ships leave. With the aid of Hera, the Argo reaches the Pelasgian island and Medea performs a sacrifice to Hecate. Argus then reveals the plan for their route in order to get back to their home and they again leave. Some of the Colchians did not make it through the Cyanean rocks but the rest of the fleet led by Apsyrtus still carried on and eventually they surrounded the Argonauts. Here Apsyrtus relays that they have come to take Medea but she proclaims to Jason that she will not leave him. Medea tells Jason that she may be able to convince Apsyrtus to leave if she gives him some gifts if she can get him alone. Medea gives

Apsyrtus many gifts including the sacred robe of Hypsipyle and lies to him by saying that she was forced to leave with the Argonauts and they can steal the golden fleece back to return it to Aeetes. In the night, Jason finds Medea and Apsyrtus and then he slays Apsyrtus and cuts off his limbs, and then buries the corpse in the ground to avoid retribution from Erinyes. The rest of the heroes, on signal, killed the rest of the Colchians and they left the island as quickly as possible. When the Colchians learned about the murders, they wanted to pursue the heroes but Hera stopped them.

The heroes now believed they could return home without any obstacles and carried on their route to the land of the Hylleans. When Apsyrtus was killed, Zeus became furious and proclaimed that the heroes should atone for their actions before they return home. The heroes were unaware of this and they moved past many islands and wandered far out from their original route. In order to protect the heroes, Hera created storm-winds and led them to the rocky isle of Electra. At the isle, they heard a voice that told them of the wrath of Zeus and they were all struck with fear; the only way to get rid of the guilt was by finding Circe to purge it away. The Argo then reaches the stream of Eridanus, and then to the Sardinian Sea. From there Hera leaped from heaven and cried to the men from the Hercynian rock. They turned back around after listening to Hera's reasoning and they went on the path that was given for their return. The goddess pours a mist around them to reach the Stoechades islands safely. On these islands they established altars and sacred rites for Zeus. They passed through the sea and reached the harbor of Aea where Circe was, and they all followed her into the hall of Circe. Circe then cleansed them of their guilts from the murder. After completing this, she asked them why they had come to her land, mainly so that she could hear Medea's voice. Medea spoke of the whole journey and Circe pitied her.

Iris was told by Hera to watch when the heroes come back to their ship and then signal Hephaestus and Aeolus of Hera's purposes in order to allow the heroes to reach the Phaeacian isle of Alcinous. With the help of the sea nymphs, the Argo is able to pass through the sirens and the Wandering Rocks. They then reach the island of Drepane which is in Greece. When they reach the island, they run into another Colchian fleet. The King of Drepane meets with the heroes and states that he will mediate between them and the Colchians. However, he devises a plan to give Medea back to the Colchians unless she is able to prove that she is actually married to Jason. The king's wife overhears this and then warns Jason and Medea of the King's plans. Jason and Medea then decide to get married in secret in a sacred cave on the island. This marriage forces the Colchians to give up their pursuit of Medea and the Colchians decide to stay on the island of Drepane rather than return to Colchis.

The Argo leaves for the route but they are blown off course again and end up in a sandbank called the Syrtes. The heroes believe that they are stuck here and await their deaths but three nymphs that are the guardians of that area see them in the sandbanks and they already know of their whole journey. The nymphs then detail that they have to carry the argo across the deserts in Libya if they want to survive. They lifted the ship on their shoulders and after many days, they reached the waters of the Tritonian lake. They all quickly put the ship down and then parched their thirsts. There they learn from Aegle that Heracles was at the same spot just a day earlier and they are all surprised to hear of this. The crew separated and then began to search for Heracles. On the same day, both Cathmus and Mopsus died as Mopsus



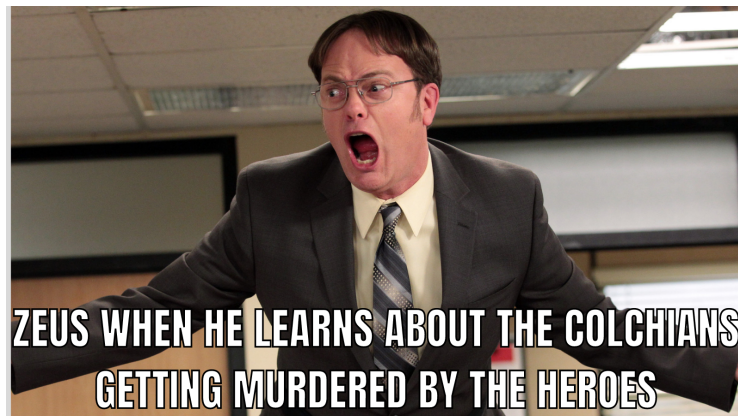
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was bit by a serpent and killed by its poison and Cathmus died from a wound. The heroes and Medea all performed the proper burial rites for the two fallen people and they attempted to leave the island. Triton comes and gives Euphemus a magical clod of the earth that will later become the island of Thera and he takes pity on the crew. Triton also tells them of a route that can take them from the lake to the sea.

They then run into Talos, who keeps them from fastening hawsers onto the shore and the men see him and back away from their ship in dismay and distress. Medea then speaks that she can subdue Talos and with songs and prayers she bewitches Talos. Talos then yields to Medea and he falls. Later in the night, the heroes built a shrine to Athena and then went aboard the Argo. While crossing the seas, Jason calls out to Phoebus in distress and calls on him to save them. They are led to the island of the Sporades and they stay there. On this island, they make an altar to Apollo and establish a cult for him here. They then call upon Phoebus once again and sacrifice as many things as possible. When Medea's handmaids see them pouring water for the libations on their brands, they laugh and the heroes taunt the handmaids back. They then go to the beach of Aegina and settle there; a race is created in honor of the journey and the story ends there.



The quote reveals the anger that Zeus feels when he learns that Jason and Medea murdered Apsyrtus and the rest of the heroes kill the Colchian crew. This causes Zeus to punish them and lead them off course to face additional toil for their sins.

*When Apsyrtus had fallen in mighty overthrow Zeus himself, king of gods, was seized with wrath at what they had done. And he ordained that by the counsels of Aeaeon Circe they should cleanse themselves from the terrible stain of blood and suffer countless woes before their return.*

*Argonautica Book 4. Beginning on line 557*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*





The quote reveals that Medea pretends to have been forced to go with the Argonauts on their ship and leave her home when she was actually deceiving Apsyrtus in order to help them escape from the Colchians.

*And when she had worked upon the heralds to induce her brother to come, as soon as she reached the temple of the goddess, according to the agreement, and the darkness of night surrounded them, that so she might devise with him a cunning plan for her to take the mighty fleece of gold and return to the home of Aëetes, for, she said, the sons of Phrixus had given her by force to the strangers to carry off; with such beguiling words she scattered to the air and the breezes her witching charms, which even from afar would have drawn down the savage beast from the steep mountain-height.*

*Argonautica Book 4. Beginning on line 428*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*



The quote reveals how the heroes had to carry the Argo on their shoulders and reach the Tritonian lake in order to stay alive and reach their destination.

*O mightiest far of the sons of kings, by your might and your valour over the desert sands of Libya raised high aloft on your shoulders the ship and all that ye brought therein, and bare her twelve days and nights alike. Yet who could tell the pain and grief which they endured in that toil? Surely they were of the blood of the immortals, such a task did they take on them, constrained by necessity. How forward and how far they bore her gladly to the waters of the Tritonian lake! How they strode in and set her down from their stalwart shoulders!*

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*Argonautica Book 4. Beginning on line 1381*

*Apollonius Rhodius. Argonautica. Translated by Seaton, R. C. Loeb Classical Library Volume 001. London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1912.*