DRACONIS ARGONAUTICA

by Lauren Neuburger

Creature: *The Colchian Dragon* | **Levels:** *5 - 8* | **CWs:** *Violence*

SYNOPSIS

Sailors claiming to be heroes attacked Colchia, the red half-dragon – enchanted her to sleep, and stole her Golden Fleece. She and her partner, Atalanta, don't care about the Argonauts' supposed heroism, but they do care about revenge.

ADVENTURE HOOK

This adventure is Tier 2 (suggested levels 5th-8th). There are several ways to introduce this module as a one-shot or a piece of an ongoing campaign; the simplest is a single cryptic request pinned to a bulletin board, which is the hook this adventure uses.

Additionally, the character Atalanta is an easy tie-in for players who prefer a more direct link to the story. She travels frequently, competes in all manner of martial games, and is regionally known for her athletic prowess. Similarly, characters may be familiar with the town Omiros or the Swig and Scale tavern. DMs also have the option of a town-crier shouting the arrival of the Argonauts at the docks, lauding their successful retrieval of the Golden Fleece.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This module can be inserted into any setting, though it does mention the classical Greek Pantheon. Any number of seaside locations in the Forgotten Realms, e.g. Waterdeep, Candlekeep, etc. can be used as a substitute for Omiros.

All character combat statistics can be found in *Appendix A: Stat Blocks*. All personality traits and physical descriptions can be found in *Appendix B: Character Traits*.

CHAPTER 1 – SCORNED AS MONSTERS

The characters find themselves wandering through the coastal town of Omiros, a medium-sized village with a rich fishing and sailing economy. The docks comprise the entire western half of the town, an area featuring a diverse population of travelers and adventurers. The characters spot a clumsily-scrawled sign posted on a bulletin board. Read or paraphrase the following:

> A large, half-torn poster covers the smaller requests posted on the bulletin board at the crossroads of Omiros. The text is jagged and indelicate.
>
> *"Seeking warriors unafraid of monsters or those scorned as such. Bounty negotiable, pending successful revenge. Meet Colchia the Red at the Swig and Scale after dark."*

THE SWIG AND SCALE

This shady tavern near the docks is known for its fire-brandy and uncommon clientele. The place is large and spacious, and kept relatively clean by its owner and bartender, Khugak the Goliath. The other patrons range from a wide variety of backgrounds, but nearly all would be considered "monstrous" by many humanoid races. A trio of yuan-ti warriors quietly play a card game over mulled wine, and a cheerful goblin server hoists two trays of beer over her head.

COLCHIA AND ATALANTA

In the corner sit two tall figures, huddled closely and keenly watching the door. At six-and-a-half feet tall, the red half-dragon Colchia cuts an imposing figure. She wears spiked leather armor and a heavy cloak despite the season, and wraps her long tail around her waist. Beside her sits Atalanta, a tall, muscular woman with ghostly pale skin, thick black hair, and bright green eyes. She glares suspiciously at anyone who approaches their table.

Colchia's Story

Over drinks, Colchia outlines what happened when her property was stolen. The Argonauts stormed her home when she was sleeping and Atalanta was away, outnumbering her in combat. She fought back until the sorcerer, Medea, placed her under a sleeping curse. When she woke, her Golden Fleece—an expensive and sentimental family heirloom—was nowhere to be found. Her quaint home had been ravaged and looted.

She knows she can't fight all the Argonauts alone, even with the help of her demi-god partner (who begs to differ) and wishes to enlist anyone sympathetic to her cause. She is also aware that the Argonauts, especially Jason and Medea, are revered as heroes by most of the town despite their thieving and bullying of those they consider "monsters." Unless the characters suggest otherwise, Colchia plans to attack that night when most of the Argonauts are drinking and rabble-rousing.

Atalanta mutters at every opportunity that the Argonauts should be slain and Colchia vehemently disagrees: they did not kill her, so she will not kill them.

Development

Once the plan is set, the characters follow Colchia and Atalanta to the docks. Other patrons of the Swig and Scale treat them warmly if they show a measure of respect to Colchia and the serving staff.

Chapter 2 — Boarding Party

The *Argo* itself is a massive, gaudy trireme warship two stories tall. The players can use nearby ships and storefronts as cover, but they're clearly visible the moment they walk up the entry ramp. Barrels and boxes can help cover sneakier players from view with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

Twins on the Deck

If any of the characters or NPCs have been instructed to stake out the *Argo* prior to the attack, they note the following on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check:

> The *Argo* floats, anchored at the docks, menacing and elegant. Above its two-story trireme deck, a deep red sail features Jason's insignia in black thread: a circular shield crossed with a downward-pointing short sword.
>
> No fewer than six Argonauts staggered away from the Omiros docks earlier, some with flasks in hand; the ancient shipwright and namesake of the *Argo*, Argus the Gnome, and a massive, scarred human barbarian, Theseus, among them. Currently, two nearly identical young men leisurely drink ale on the gangplank among the criss-crossed oars. They have ghostly pale skin and bright green eyes. They wear matching armor and weapons under brown cloaks: studded leather breastplates, two daggers, and powerful longbows.
>
> There is no sign of the leader of the Argonauts or their dangerous sorcerer.

If the characters act aggressively toward either of the two brothers, Castor or Pollux, they attack (Ref. *Appendix A*). If asked if she recognizes the brothers onboard the *Argo*, Colchia replies, "*They were there during the attack. But they're like babies: sheepish and guilty. I don't think they wanted to hurt me, despite Jason's orders. They may let us pass peacefully if we speak to them.*"

If Atalanta hears this comment, she adds, "*They may speak to my spear instead.*"

Highly perceptive or mythologically well-versed players might recall that Castor and Pollux are the twin sons of Zeus, who also happens to be Atalanta's father. She recognizes her kin immediately and refrains from commenting on their relation. If asked directly, she curtly replies in the affirmative they are her half-brothers, though she hasn't personally met them and doesn't care to do so.

With a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Castor and Pollux grant the characters entry to the *Argo*. Note that only one check is required: the brothers do everything together. They are sympathetic to the people who've stood up to Jason and most recently, Colchia, and are not particularly fond of being in his service. They dislike his dictatorial, selfish leadership style. Castor and Pollux don't help loot the ship or harm any other Argonauts but quietly leave their posts, ale in hand. They nod respectfully and remorsefully to Colchia as they go and, despite her prior statements, Atalanta grits her teeth and lets them pass.

THE ALARM BELL

Throughout this encounter, any member of the Argonauts can attempt to sound the alarm: a massive bronze bell hanging at the stern of the *Argo*, near the stairs below deck. If the characters harm any Argonaut on board, they run for the alarm bell to call back their allies from nearby bars, even if the movement provokes an attack of opportunity. If the characters harm either Castor or Pollux, his brother spends an action sounding the alarm.

If the alarm bell sounds, Jason and Medea arrive from below deck and the other Argonauts return from their drinking spree within two turns or at the DM's discretion. Jason is the only Argonaut too arrogant to bother calling for help after being injured.

Colchia does not lead the charge below decks to Medea and Jason and instead avoids the combat order of the players, preferring to stay at the docks as advanced warning in the event that reinforcements return to the ship. Atalanta barges ahead, immediately kicking in doors to pick a fight with the first person she can find. She can be persuaded to stop (DC 13) and stay with the party if they ask for her help.

DEVELOPMENT

Finding nothing of value above deck, the heroes likely follow Atalanta on her revenge-fueled rampage downstairs. Contrarily, the alarm bell may have been rung and the entirety of the battle will occur above deck. Either way, items of value are below deck and the rest of the ship has yet to be explored.

CHAPTER 3 – BELOW DECK

The only way to catch Jason and Medea unaware is to creep onboard the *Argo*, persuade Castor and Pollux to grant them entry, and sneak past Medea's high passive Perception into their room at the bow.

> Small candles line the narrow passage below the deck of the *Argo*, casting flickering shadows across the pine floorboards. The nine closed doors on either side of the hallway stand in contrast to the single opened door at the bow: the Captain's Quarters.

BY CANDLELIGHT

Below deck is a cramped but clean hallway lined by nine tiny rooms—one for each of the Argonauts. The only exceptions are the room Castor and Pollux share with a bunk bed and the Captain's Quarters, where Medea has taken up living with Jason.

> Even from the opposite side of the long hallway, the Golden Fleece can be seen draped across a large, extravagantly decorated bed. It glimmers in the candlelight: Jason's latest trophy in a large collection of stolen goods.

All rooms are unlocked, with the exception of Argus', which can be unlocked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Argus hides a number of expensive Gnomish items inside, outlined in the treasure section in the conclusion of the adventure. Maps, ship blueprints, and engineering tools cover his austere room.

MAGIC AND BLADE

Only one room remains between the heroes and the Golden Fleece: Jason's room.

Medea has rigged a tripwire across the entrance of the Captain's Quarters she shares with Jason. If triggered, a *wall of force* damage (3d8) blows straight down

the hallway at any character within 10 feet of the door. *Dispel magic* removes the effect of this magical trap, or characters can simply step over the wire (Perception DC 12). Otherwise, tampering with the tripwire will trigger it. If the trap explodes, Jason laughs uproariously despite the damage to his ship.

Upon entering the Captain's Quarters, Jason calls the characters thieves and cowards, not recognizing they're in Colchia's service. If they explain they only want the Fleece, he initiates combat (Ref. *Appendix A*), bellowing, "Then come take it!" When bloodied, Jason becomes increasingly unhinged, saying they'll be punished by the gods for attacking him as he is mankind's greatest hero.

Meanwhile, Medea makes a break for the alarm bell at the earliest opportunity. If cornered, she attempts to deceive the characters into believing she is Jason's hostage. If they believe her (Insight DC 15), she attacks the moment their backs are turned. If she rings the alarm, the characters have to fight their way out of the docks to escape.

DEVELOPMENT

Time to flee! The characters attacked the *Argo* and returned the Fleece. The Swig and Scale makes a safe rendezvous point.

CONCLUSION

The hard part is over… or is it? The final outcome of this adventure largely depends on whether or not the characters were willing to kill the Argonauts to retrieve the Fleece. If they spare them, the characters are branded as lesser criminals in Omiros but revered as heroes among the monstrous races. If they kill the Argonauts, their story will be spread even farther, largely negating any good deeds done in the past as far as public opinion is concerned.

If the characters were spotted by anyone during their attack on the Argo, then Wanted posters - a parting gift from Argus the Gnome - appear on local bulletin boards. They describe the characters and read, *"REWARD: 200 GOLD PIECES. ASSISTED RED DRAGON IN ASSAULTING AND ROBBING THE GOOD SHIP ARGO."* The bounty on the characters may be higher depending on death toll, damages, and stolen goods.

REWARDS

Following the safe return of the Golden Fleece, the characters have earned the alliance of Colchia and her friends and family at the Swig and Scale. Individual payment from Colchia is 25 pp each.

POSSIBLE TREASURE

- The *Argo* is worth 20,000 gp. The *Argo's* sail is 2,000 gp. The bronze alarm bell is 1,000 gp.
- Castor and Pollux's longbows, Left and Right, are both magical +1 weapons worth 300 gp each. Their four total daggers are not enchanted, and are worth 3 gp each. A small keg of Omiros black ale worth 5 gp sat between the oars where they were resting.
- Argus' navigator's tools and ocean maps are worth 100 gp together. His gnomish tinkerer's tools are worth 10 gp.
- Jason's +1 sword, Deathbolt, is enchanted to do an additional 1d6 lightning damage. It is worth 400 gp when combined with his +1 shield.
- Medea wears a *ring of water walking* (500 gp) and *Quaal's Magic Token – Fan*.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The Colchian Dragon deserved better. Now she'll have it.

Special thanks to Ashley Warren for her patience and trust in new authors, and Samantha Darcy for encouraging my participation in this incredible anthology. Tremendous thanks to Aaron Martin, Lindsay Wandall, and Andrea Lemons for always believing in my work. And finally, permanent thanks to my endlessly supportive girlfriend, Ashley Miller.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lauren Neuburger's first *D&D* module, "The Lambent Delirium," was written during Ashley Warren's first RPG Writer Workshop in 2018. She plans to keep writing adventures she would want to DM. Her Twitter handle is @LaurenNeuburger.

APPENDIX A: STAT BLOCKS

Colchia the Red

Medium, Lawful Good
Barbarian, Path of the Battlerager
Half-Red Dragon

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 82
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities Fire
Senses Darkvision
Languages Common, Draconic

Actions

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 6) slashing.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). Colchia exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Atalanta, Warrior Hero

Atalanta, Warrior Hero
Medium, Chaotic Neutral
Fighter, Battlemaster
Aasimar

Armor Class 17
Hit Points 67
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resitances Necrotic, radiant
Senses Darkvision
Languages Common, Celestial

Actions

Multiattack. Atalanta makes two spear attacks.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing.

Healing Hands. As an action, Atalanta can touch a creature and cause it to regain a number of hit points equal to her level (7). Once she uses this trait, she can't use it again until finishing a long rest.

Medea the Sorcerer

Medium, Neutral Evil
Sorcerer, Storm
Half-Elf

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 51
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Damage Resitances Lightning, thunder
Damage Immunities Fire
Senses Passive Perception 13, darkvision
Languages Common, Abyssal, Draconic, Primordial

Actions

Spellcasting. Medea is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Medea has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *Ray of Frost, Shocking Grasp, Mage Hand*
1st level (4 slots): *Sleep, Thunderwave, Magic Missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *Shatter, Blur, Misty Step*
3rd level (3 slots): *Lightning Bolt, Fly*
4th level (1 slot): *Ice Storm*

Jason, the Argonaut's Leader

Medium, Chaotic Evil
Fighter, Champion
Human

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 67
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Languages Common

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, Jason can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of one of his allies that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. Jason makes two short sword attacks.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing, plus 3 (1d6 lightning) damage.

Castor and Pollux, the Twins

Medium, True Neutral
Ranger, Hunter
Aasimar

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 53
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances Necrotic, Radiant
Senses Darkvision
Languages Common, Celestial

Actions

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing.

Healing Hands. As an action, Castor and Pollux can touch a creature and cause it to regain a number of hit points equal to their level (7). Once they use this trait, they can't use it again until finishing a long rest.

Theseus, Slayer of the Minotaur

Medium, Chaotic Evil
Barbarian, Path of the Berserker
Human

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 72
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Languages Common, Celestial

Actions

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 + 6) slashing.

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) slashing.

APPENDIX B: CHARACTER TRAITS

COLCHIA THE RED

Appearance

At six-and-a-half feet tall, Colchia cuts an imposing figure. She wears spiked leather armor and a heavy cloak despite the season, and tends to keep her eyes down when traveling in daylight, hoping to pass for a red Dragonborn. She keeps her tail wrapped around her waist.

Personality

While she is comfortable fighting, Colchia would rather avoid conflict and attention, particularly when either means making a worse name for those of her race. Her family of half-dragons simply wants to be left alone. She has a wretched temper, one that she works to control on a daily basis.

Colchia is well-spoken and patient, which may come as a surprise to the characters who have fought half-dragons in the past. She simply wants her property returned.

ATALANTA, WARRIOR HERO

Appearance

Atalanta is a tall, muscular woman with ghostly pale skin, thick black hair, and bright green eyes. She shares these traits with many other children of Zeus.

Personality

Far less forgiving than her partner Colchia, Atalanta is ready to exact bloody vengeance on the Argonauts. She is a generally aloof woman who has no interest in anything but fighting, winning competitions, and her girlfriend. Atalanta is the one most comfortable with point-blank murdering the Argonauts for stealing from Colchia.

MEDEA THE SORCERER

Appearance

Lithe and lovely, Medea isn't above using her elegant looks to get her way. She wears a dark blue robe, a sapphire ring, and an expensive, fan-shaped ornament in her hair.

Personality

The deceptive brains of the operation, Medea is using Jason to grow her wealth and power. She will remain loyal until it suits her to leave him.

JASON, THE ARGONAUT'S LEADER

Appearance

Conventionally handsome, Jason is large and powerfully built. His leather armor, circular shield, and blade are always on his person.

Personality

His arrogance is unparalleled. Entitled, aggressive, and oblivious, Jason has the makings of a perfect bully. He lives for attention and compliments, especially from the common folk.

CASTOR AND POLLUX, THE TWINS

Appearance

Tall and muscular, the fraternal twin brothers have ghostly pale skin, bright green eyes, and black hair.

Personalities

Castor and Pollux are the only Argonauts who feel a shred of guilt about the things they've done in Jason's service. The sons of Zeus grow to mistrust their leader more every day, and wish to be free to act on their own accord.

THESEUS, SLAYER OF THE MINOTAUR

Appearance

Theseus is a massive, hairy human covered in scars. His favorite scar is the sunburst on his stomach where the Minotaur gored him.

Personality

Theseus is an oft-drunk lush who only ever talks about toppling the Minotaur. His rage is blind and brutal.

ARGUS, THE SHIPWRIGHT

Appearance

Unkempt and ungraceful, Argus wears tattered clothes and a heavy backpack full of books and papers. His fingers are perpetually inkstained.

Personality

Argus is an ancient, grumpy old gnome. He is not a fighter, but acts as the Argonauts' navigator.