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Jason and the Gorgon's Blood

Lillian Heil

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Yolen, Jane and Harris, Robert J. *Jason and the Gorgon's Blood*. HarperCollins, 2004. ISBN 006029453. \$15.99. 246 pp.

Reviewer: Lillian H. Heil

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy Fiction; Folklore;

Subject: Adventure and Adventurers--Fiction; Jason (Greek Mythology)--Juvenile Fiction; Heroes--Fiction; Book--Reviews;

Yolen and Harris have provided an imaginative story about the young Greek hero, Jason. As the book begins, this scrawny orphan suffers from the taunts of his five, noble-born classmates and the trials of becoming a hero. As the final test of their training, Chiron, their centaur trainer, sends them on a quest to retrieve the deadly poisonous and the life giving Blood of the Gorgon. Before they set out, Chiron tells Jason his true identity, the rightful prince of Iolcus and the son of the usurped king. This information makes Jason's journey especially dangerous. As Prince, Jason is a threat his classmate and current Prince of Iolcus, Acastus.

Their journey continues and the five would-be heroes cross a wide chasm, battle deadly harpies and finally navigate the dangerous rapids taking them into the kingdom of Iolcus to collect the blood. Each of the boys has unique skills, bringing the characters to life in the mind of the reader. Jason and Acastus are the most dynamic characters, changing so that when their quest is finished, they see each other as friends rather than enemies. This is a fast paced, adventure story about the coming of age of two young warriors.