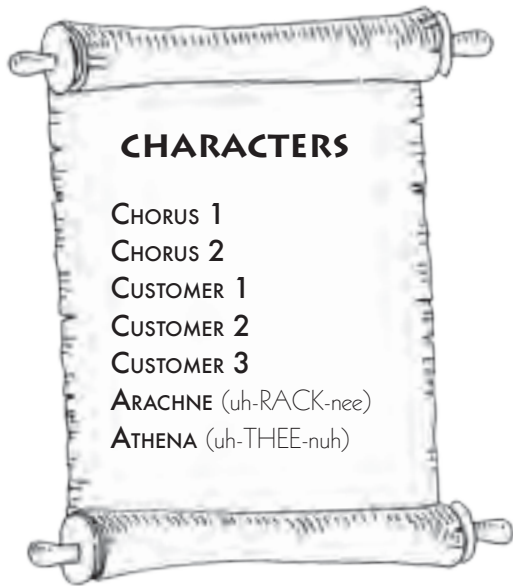


ATHENA AND ARACHNE: HOW SPIDERS CAME TO BE



- CHORUS 1:** Hear now the tale of Arachne.
- CHORUS 2:** The story of a mortal girl who challenged the gods.
- CHORUS 1:** Arachne was the best mortal weaver in all of Greece.
- CHORUS 2:** She was trained by the goddess Athena, who taught the fine arts to many people of Greece.
- CUSTOMER 1:** What a beautiful tapestry! I must buy it.
- ARACHNE:** Why, thank you very much.
- CUSTOMER 2:** Your work is exquisite! I, too, would like to purchase a tapestry.
- ARACHNE:** I appreciate your compliments.
- CUSTOMER 3:** This is the most beautiful weaving I have ever seen!

ARACHNE: Well, actually I must agree with you. I am the best weaver in the world.

CUSTOMER 1: And one with a very high opinion of herself!

ARACHNE: I can't help it. It's true.

CUSTOMER 2: The gods have been very good to you to give you such a gift.

ARACHNE: Gods, schmods! The talent is mine. I got this good all by myself.

CUSTOMER 3: Arachne! You should not say such things! Were you not trained by the goddess Athena?

ARACHNE: I suppose. But I'm sure I am a much better weaver even than Athena.

ATHENA: (*Disguised as an old woman*) Would you challenge the goddess Athena to a weaving contest?

CHORUS 1: Don't be foolish, Arachne. No one challenges the gods and wins!

CHORUS 2: Be very careful, Arachne!

ARACHNE: (*To the Choruses*) Oh, be quiet. (*To the woman*) I would challenge Athena. I'm sure she wouldn't stand a chance against me.

ATHENA: (*Revealing herself as Athena*) Then let's do it, you ungrateful girl. I accept your challenge of a weaving contest.

CHORUS 1: Arachne was very surprised to see Athena, but she didn't show it.

CHORUS 2: The crowd stared in awe, wondering what Arachne would do next.

ARACHNE: You're on!

(*Everyone gasps.*)

CHORUS 1: The two weavers began at their looms. Athena wove a bird.

CUSTOMER 1: This bird looks like it could fly right off this tapestry!

CHORUS 2: Arachne wove a flower.

CUSTOMER 2: I can practically smell this flower!

CHORUS 1: They wove and wove. Finally they were finished.

CHORUS 2: Athena wove a tapestry that showed the gods in all their glory.

CUSTOMER 3: Arachne, you have woven a tapestry that makes fun of the gods.

CHORUS 1: Arachne, you do not respect the gods!

CHORUS 2: Oh, what will become of you now?!

ATHENA: Arachne, I must admit, you are the better weaver.

ARACHNE: I told you so!

ATHENA: However, your lack of respect for the gods and your pride angers me. I cannot allow it to continue.

CHORUS 1: Athena, what will you do to Arachne?

CHORUS 2: Such a mortal must be punished.

ATHENA: I've got it! Since you love to weave so much, go ahead and continue weaving. But you will do it as a different creature.

CHORUS 1: Athena put a spell on Arachne. Soon Arachne's body shrunk and turned into a black orb. Her limbs turned into eight spindly legs.

(Everyone gasps.)

CHORUS 2: A strand of thread curled out of Arachne's mouth. Athena tied the thread to a tree. Arachne was left dangling from a branch.

ATHENA: Your tapestries will still be beautiful, Arachne. But people will hurry to sweep them away!

CHORUS 1: And so ends the tale of Arachne, the first spider.

CHORUS 2: Look for her weaving her beautiful webs and learn what too much pride can do.

ARACHNE: And maybe, just maybe, you won't sweep them away, okay?

THE END





Glossary

mortal: a human being

tapestry: a heavy piece of cloth with pictures or patterns woven into it

exquisite: very beautiful and delicate

purchase: buy

Gods, schmods!: slang for "Who cares?" or "Big deal!"

awe: a feeling of admiration and respect, mixed with a little bit of fear

looms: machines used for weaving

orb: sphere, globe, or circle

spindly: long, thin, and rather weak

