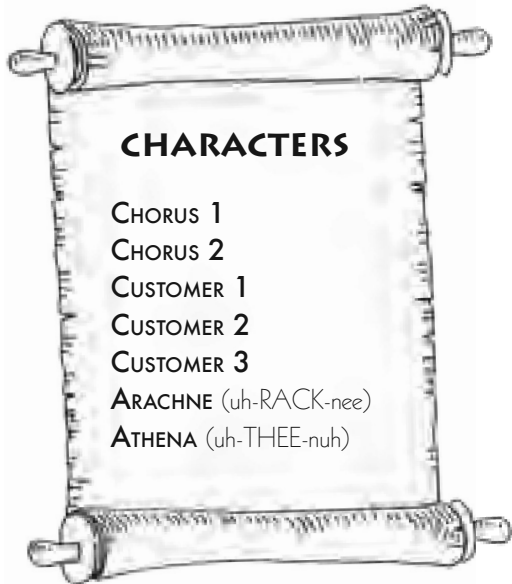


# ATHENA AND ARACHNE: HOW SPIDERS CAME TO BE



- 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

