



The Story of Arachne

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There was a young girl in Greece named Arachne. Her face was pale but fair, and her hair was long and dark. All she did every day was **spin thread** and **weave** beautiful **cloth**.

Oh, how **fine** and beautiful were her **creations**! The cloth which she made from **wool** and **silk** was so soft and bright that people came from all parts of the world to see it.

Glossary 词汇表

- **spin** - 纺织
- **thread** - 线
- **weave** - 编织
- **cloth** - 布
- **fine** - 精致
- **creations** - 创作
- **wool** - 羊毛
- **silk** - 丝绸



One afternoon, as she sat in the **shade** weaving and talking with **passersby**, someone asked her, "Who taught you to spin and weave so well?"

"No one taught me," Arachne replied. "I learned how to do it myself."

"But could it have been **Athena**, goddess of **wisdom** and **crafts**, who taught you?"

"Athena? **Bah!**" said Arachne. "How could she teach me? Can she weave cloth like this? I would like to see her try. I can probably teach her a thing or two."

📖 Glossary 词汇表

- **shade** - 阴影
- **passersby** - 路人
- **Athena** - 雅典娜, 希腊女神
- **wisdom** - 智慧
- **crafts** - 手工艺
- **Bah!** - 呸!



She looked up and saw in the **doorway** a tall woman wrapped in a **long cloak**. Her face was beautiful, but **stern**, and her **gray** eyes were so sharp and bright that Arachne could not meet her **gaze**.

"Arachne," said the woman, "I am Athena, the goddess of craft and wisdom, and I have heard your **boast**. Are you certain you still mean to say that you can spin and weave as well as I?"

Arachne's **cheeks grew pale**, but she said: "Yes. I can weave as well as you."

📖 Glossary 词汇表

- **doorway** - 门道
- **long cloak** - 长袍
- **stern** - 严厉
- **gray** - 灰色
- **gaze** - 凝视
- **boast** - 夸耀
- **cheeks** - 脸颊
- **grew pale** - 变得苍白



"Then let us do this," said Athena. "Three days from now we will both weave— you on your **loom**, and I on mine. We will ask all who wish to come and see us, and great **Zeus**, who sits in the clouds, shall be the **judge**. If your work is best, then I will weave no more so long as the world shall last; but if my work is best, then you shall never use **loom** or **spindle**. Do you agree to this?"

"I agree," said Arachne.

"Very well," said Athena. And she was gone.

Glossary 词汇表

- **loom** - 织布机
- **spindle** - 纺锤
- **Zeus** - 宙斯
- **judge** - 裁判



When the time came for the **contest**, hundreds came to see it, and great Zeus sat among the clouds **observing**.

Arachne began to weave with her finest silk. She wove a **marvelously** beautiful cloth, so thin and light that it would float in the air, and yet so strong that it could hold a lion in its **meshes**; and the threads so colorful, so beautifully arranged, that all who saw were filled with **delight**.

"No wonder the **maiden** boasted of her skill," said the people, and even Zeus nodded.

📖 Glossary 词汇表

- **contest** - 竞赛
- **observing** - 观察着
- **marvelously** - 奇妙地；不可思议地
- **meshes** - 网
- **delight** - 欣喜
- **maiden** - 少女

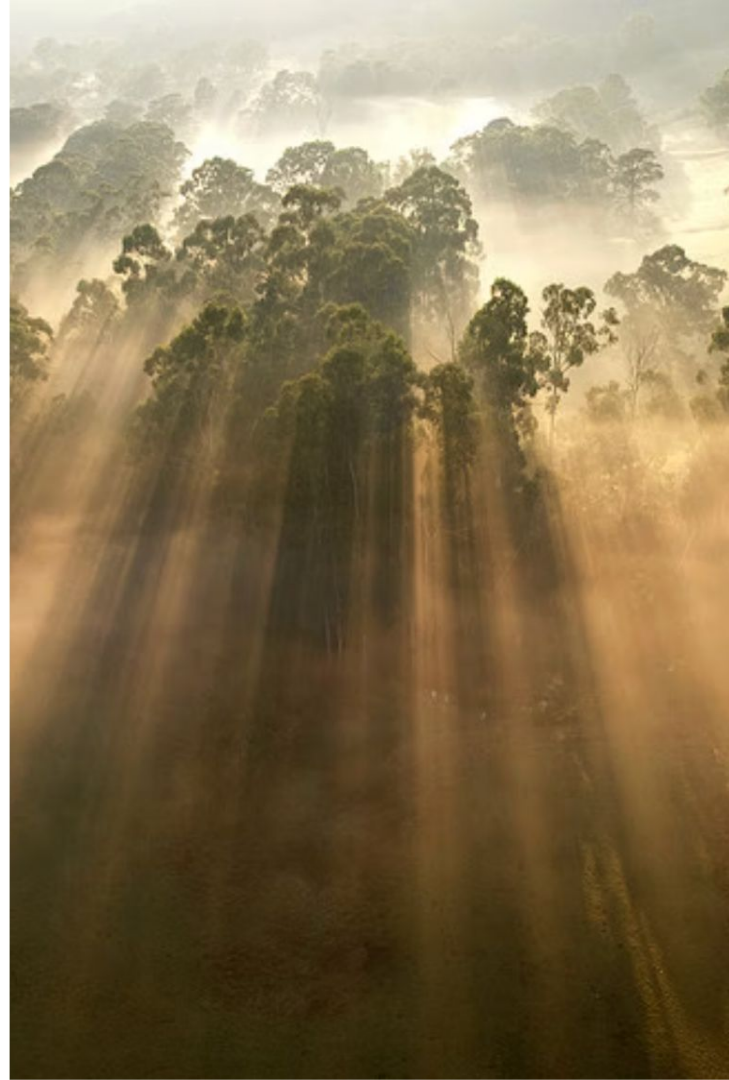


Then Athena began to weave. She took the **sunbeams** that **gilded** the mountain top, and the snowy **fleece** of the summer clouds, and the blue of the summer sky, and the bright green of the summer fields, and the purple of the autumn woods.

The web which she wove was full of **enchancing** pictures of flowers and trees, and of **castles** and **towers**, and of mountain peaks, and of men and beasts, and of the mighty **deities** who **dwell** in the clouds with Zeus. And those who looked upon it were so filled with wonder and delight, that they forgot all about the beautiful creation which Arachne had woven.

Glossary 词汇表

- **gilded** - 镀金
- **fleece** - 羊毛
- **enchancing** - 迷人的
- **castle** - 城堡
- **towers** - 塔楼
- **deities** - 神灵
- **dwell** - 居住





Arachne herself was **ashamed** and **afraid** when she saw it. She hid her face in her hands and **wept**.

"Oh, how can I live," she cried, "now that I must never again use loom or spindle?"

She kept on weeping.

Glossary 词汇表

- **ashamed** - 羞愧
- **afraid** - 害怕
- **wept** - 哭泣

When Athena saw that the poor maiden would never be happy unless she were allowed to weave, she **took pity** on her and said:

"I would **free** you from your **bargain** if I could, but no one can do that. You must **hold to your agreement** never to touch loom or spindle again. But since you will never be happy unless you can weave, I will give you a new **form** so that you can carry on your work with neither spindle nor loom."

Then she touched Arachne with her **spear**. The maiden was **transformed** at once into a **nimble** spider, which ran into the grass and began to **merrily** spin a beautiful **web**. **It is said** that all the spiders in the world are the children of Arachne.

Glossary 词汇表

- **took pity** - 同情
- **free** - 解脱
- **bargain** - 协议
- **hold to your agreement** - 遵守你的协议
- **form** - 造型
- **spear** - 矛
- **transformed** - 转换
- **nimble** - 敏捷的
- **merrily** - 欢快地
- **web** - 网
- **It is said** - 据说



Reading Comprehension Questions

1. **What do Arachne's words and actions reveal about her personality?**
2. **How does Athena's final act toward Arachne show both justice and mercy?**
3. **Why do you think Athena chose to challenge Arachne in a weaving contest instead of punishing her immediately for her boast?**
4. **What is the moral of the story?**
5. **Do you think Arachne deserved her punishment? Why or why not?**

