

1 *Read the story **Arachne** and say what was the people's opinion of the skill of Arachne and of Athena, goddess of wisdom.*

Arachne

(from *Greek Mythology*)

In ancient times there lived in Greece a girl named Arachne. She was

Arachne [ə'rækni] — зд. женское
ИМЯ

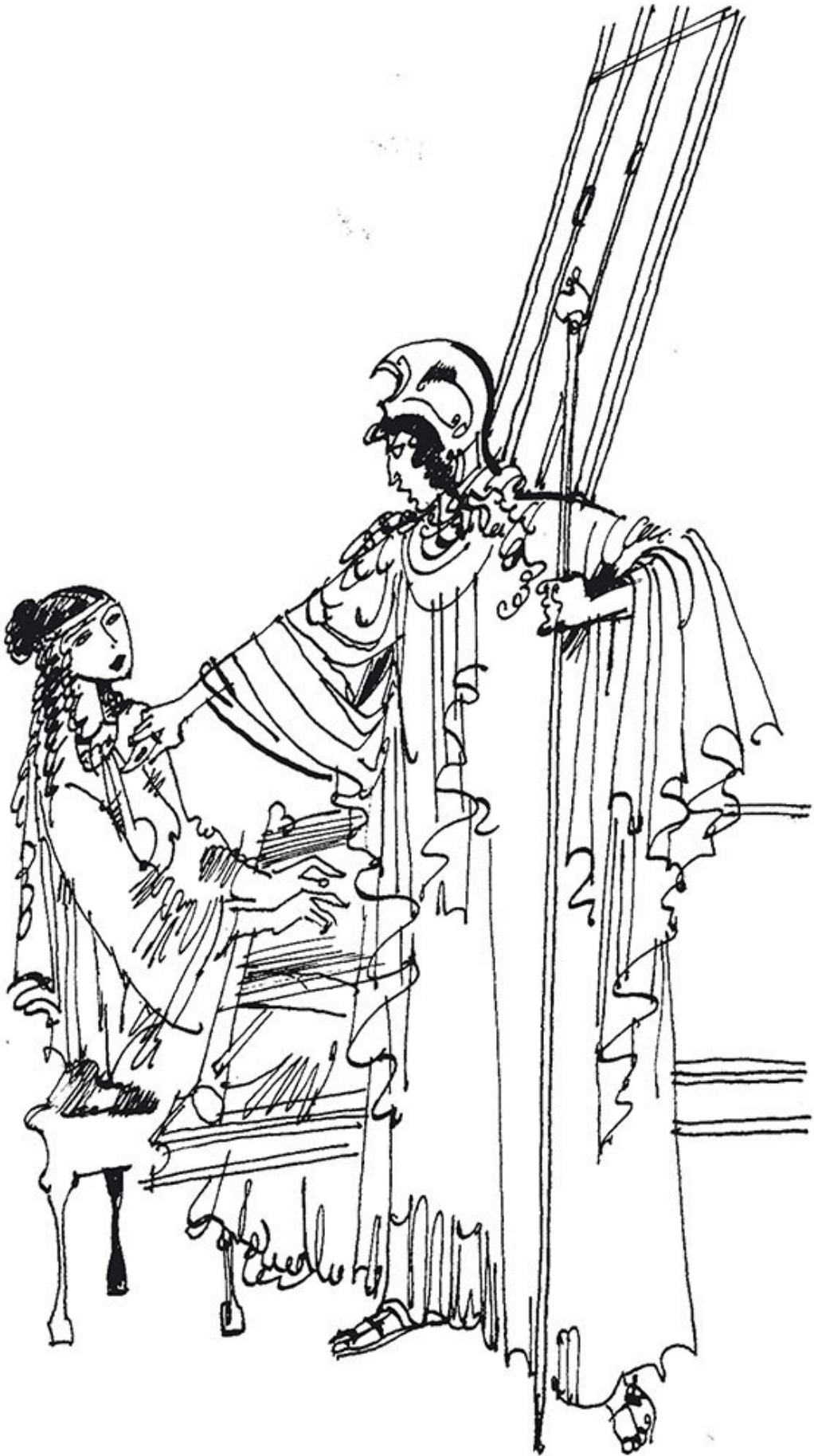
Athena [ə'θi:nə], **goddess of wisdom** — греч. миф. Афина, богиня мудрости

known through all the land because of her great skill at weaving¹. Nobody on earth, it was said, could weave so skilfully as she. There were some who said not even Athena, goddess of wisdom and the household arts, could weave so well. Among those who boasted was Arachne herself.

No, this girl was not modest about her skill. She was foolishly proud of it and even made fun of the work of girls less skilful than she was.

In time Arachne's fame and her boasting reached the ears of Athena, and the goddess who wanted the highest respect from the earth-people and gave help and gifts to those who showed how delighted they were with her work, decided to draw the girl into a contest.

¹ **to weave** [wi:v] (**wove, woven**) — ткать; **skill at weaving** — искусство ткать



which would cure her pride. So one day when Arachne was weaving, there suddenly appeared beside her an old woman. She looked for a moment at Arachne's loom¹ and then said,

"That's a pretty piece of weaving, my dear, and yet, when I was young, I'm sure I could do as well."

At this Arachne threw up her head and said, "Never did any person weave as I am weaving now, old woman."

"Those are foolish words", said the old woman, and a strange angry light came into her eyes. "It is foolish to take too great pride in what one can do, for surely there is always someone who can do the task even better."

"Not so," cried the angry girl. "There is no one who can weave better than I."

The old woman smiled and shook her head².

"I doubt that," she said. "Perhaps among the gods there is one who is better than you in the art."

Arachne stopped her weaving to look at the old woman. "And who is that?" she asked.

"The Goddess Athena," replied the old woman.

Arachne laughed. "Not even Athena can weave as well as I do."

When she heard the boastful words, the old woman's eyes again flashed angrily. "You are young and have spoken foolishly," she said. "Surely you did not mean what you said."

But Arachne again threw up her head. "I did mean what I said, and I shall prove it."

¹ loom [lu:m] — ткацкий станок

² to shake (shook, shaken) one's head — покачать головой

“Prove it then,” cried the old woman in a terrible voice.

The next moment Arachne’s face turned white. For the old woman had disappeared and in her place stood the shining Goddess Athena.

“I have heard your boastings for a long time,” she said, “and have watched your growing vanity¹. Now it had led you to defy² the very gods themselves. It is time you received a lesson. Let the contest begin.”

Arachne and the Goddess began to weave. News of the contest spread³ through the land, and soon a large crowd of people gathered to watch the weavers.

Athena wove upon her loom a bright picture which told the story of other foolish people who had thought themselves greater than the gods and whom the gods had punished for their pride. Arachne pictured on her loom stories which told of the foolish acts of the gods themselves, for it was well known among the people that the gods did not always behave wisely.

The colours on both looms were very bright and the weaving was so perfect that the figures on each loom seemed alive. Those who watched the contest were delighted to see such skill.

At last the work was finished and the two weavers stood back to see what each had done. When Athena saw Arachne’s work she was so angry with what the girl had pictured on her loom, that she struck it with her shuttle⁴ and it broke into two parts. Then she turned to Arachne and said, “You dared to defy the gods

¹ **vanity** ['vænitɪ] — тщеславие

² **to defy** [di'faɪ] — бросить вызов

³ **to spread** [sprɛd] (**spread, spread**) — распространяться

⁴ **to strike (struck, struck) with a shuttle** [ʃʌtl] — ударить челноком ткацкого станка

themselves. Let you and all who come after you remember the lesson you have learned today.”

She touched the girl with her shuttle and the frightened people saw that the girl's head and body were growing smaller, and smaller. Soon there was no girl there, but a spider sitting in the web¹ it had woven.

Today the scientific name for all spiders is arachne.

Do You Understand The Story?

2 *Answer the questions.*

- 1 What was Arachne known for?
- 2 Was she modest about her skill? How do you know?
- 3 Who once appeared beside Arachne when she was weaving?
- 4 What made Athena angry with Arachne?
- 5 Why did Athena want to punish Arachne?
- 6 What did the pictures show which the girl Arachne and Athena wove on their looms?
- 7 What were the colours on the looms like?
- 8 Could the watchers at the contest decide whose work was better? Why couldn't they?
- 9 How did Athena punish Arachne?

3 *Find the lines in the story which :*

- characterize Arachne;
- explain why Athena began to speak to Arachne in a terrible voice;
- describe what Arachne and Athena pictured on their looms;
- prove that Arachne was a very skilful weaver.

¹ spider ['spaidə]... in the web — паук ... в паутине

How Good Is Your English?

(see pp 76 – 77)



What Do You Think?

- 4 *Try and explain:*
- why Athena decided to draw the girl into a contest;
 - why Athena thought that a contest would teach Arachne a useful lesson;
 - why Athena punished Arachne.
- 5 *Try and describe the feelings of both, Arachne and Athena as they were weaving in the contest.*
- 6 *Do you think Athena punished the girl only for her pride and boastful words? Did Arachne deserve her punishment?*
- 7 *Say what, in your opinion, were Arachne's good qualities and what were some of her bad qualities.*
- 8 *Say which character you like better — Arachne or Athena. Why?*



How Good Is Your English?



9 Use the proper word from the box.

- 1 They had to do something to stop the fire which very quickly.
- 2 People have lived in this valley since times.
- 3 No they were disturbed by the noise.
- 4 All the girls are so pretty. It's impossible to say who will win in the beauty
- 5 What can him of his laziness, I wonder?
- 6 Most people find it difficult to understand abstract
- 7 The old of basket-making has almost disappeared now.

ancient
contest
skill
spread-
cure
art
doubt

10 Complete the phrases with appropriate nouns.

to weave a carpet

to receive

to punish for

to participate in

to admire

to boast about

to cure

11 Match the words which are opposite in meaning.

less	worse
wise	ugly
pretty	boastful
modest	more
finish	dull
ancient	start
better	foolish
bright	young

12 *Present Participle? Past Participle? Choose the correct form of the Participle (✓).*

- 1 News of the (coming, come) contest spread quickly.
- 2 The girl was surprised to see the (shining, shone) Goddess Athena near her loom.
- 3 The Goddess couldn't hear the girl's boastful words and watch her (growing, grown) vanity any longer.
- 4 The (frightening, frightened) people saw a spider in the place where the girl had woven.
- 5 The (delighting, delighted) crowd of people watched the contest of the weavers.

13 *Report the following statements and questions.*

- 1 "There is no one who can weave better than I," said Arachne.

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- 2 "You are young and have spoken foolishly," Athena said to Arachne.

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- 3 "I shall prove that I'm the best at weaving," said Arachne.

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- 4 "Do you mean what you said?" Athena asked.

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- 5 "How did you dare to defy the gods themselves?" Athena cried angrily.

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