

ARACHNE THE SPINNER

Divide the group into five smaller groups and assign each group one of the words listed below. Read the story. After each of the words is read pause for the group to make the appropriate response.

ARACHNE	(pronounced a-RAK-nee?): "I'm the Best!"
ATHENA	"A goddess"
TAPESTRY	"Is it real?"
SHUTTLE	"Shoosh, shoosh"
EVERYONE	"Aaaah" (The entire audience does this)

Long ago, there was a weaver who had a great skill. Her name was ARACHNE. ARACHNE made Tapestries that were so lovely, people paid a fortune for them. EVERYONE came from miles around just to watch ARACHNE weave. Her fingers would make the SHUTTLE fly over the cloth. ARACHNE's friends said the gods had given her an amazing talent. ARACHNE replied, "There is nothing the gods can teach me about weaving. I can weave better than the gods and goddesses!" Her friend turned pale with fright. "You better not let the goddess ATHENA hear you say that!"

"I don't care who hears me. I'm the best there is!" replied ARACHNE. An old lady was sitting behind ARACHNE, examining the Tapestries. "So you think you weave better than the goddess ATHENA?" she asked.

"ATHENA wouldn't stand a chance against me," said ARACHNE.

All of the sudden the old lady's hair began to float like smoke and turned to golden light. Her robe turned white and she grew taller and taller. The old lady turned into the goddess ATHENA. "A contest between you and me!"

ARACHNE's friends bowed down to ATHENA, but ARACHNE just threaded another SHUTTLE and agreed to the contest. "Now we'll see who is the best weaver in the world," she said.

To and fro the shuttles went, fast as could be. ATHENA wove a picture of Mount Olympus and all the gods and goddesses. All the animals were in her TAPESTRY and EVERYONE wanted to touch them. They seemed so real. ARACHNE made fun of the gods in her tapestry. She made them look like ordinary people. But her butterfly looked as though it would fly away and the grain waved in the breeze. When ARACHNE wove a lion, EVERYONE shrieked and ran away in fright. Indeed, ARACHNE's TAPESTRY was lovelier than nature itself.

ATHENA laid down her SHUTTLE and looked at ARACHNE's TAPESTRY. "You are a better weaver, said ATHENA. "Your skill is unmatched. Even I don't have your magic." ARACHNE was very smug. "Didn't I tell you so?"

"But your pride is even greater than your skill," said ATHENA, "and your irreverence cannot be forgiven. No one makes fun of the gods." With that, ATHENA turned ARACHNE into a spider. "Now you will weave your Tapestries forever, said ATHENA. "But no matter how beautiful they are, people will shudder at them and destroy them!"