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KING MIDAS

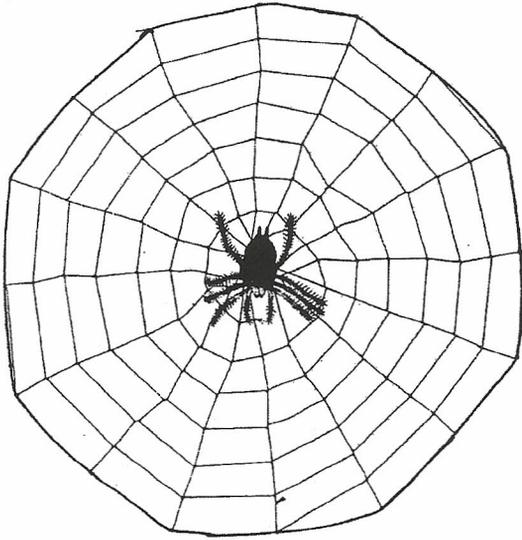
King Midas was a very kind man who ruled his kingdom fairly, but he was not one to think very deeply about what he said. One day, while walking in his garden, he saw an elderly satyr asleep in the flowers. Taking pity on the old fellow, King Midas let him go without punishment. When the god Dionysus heard about it, he rewarded King Midas by granting him one wish. The king thought for only a second, and then said "I wish for everything I touch to turn to gold." And so it was.

The beautiful flowers in his garden turned toward the sun for light, but when Midas approached and touched them, they stood rigid and gold. The king grew hungry and thin, for each time he tried to eat, he found that his meal had turned to gold. His lovely daughter, at his loving touch,

turned hard and fast to gold. His water, his bed, his clothes, his friends, and eventually the whole palace was gold.

King Midas saw that soon his whole kingdom would turn to gold unless he did something right away. He asked Dionysus to turn everything back to the way it had been and take back his golden touch. Because the king was ashamed and very sad, Dionysus took pity on him and granted his request. Instantly, King Midas was poorer than he had been, but richer, he felt, in the things that really count

ARACHNE AND ATHENA



Arachne was a Greek maiden who became famous throughout the countryside for her weaving. She lived with her father in an obscure village. He was a humble, quiet man who dyed wool for a living. Arachne was so skilled in her weaving that her work became known all over Greece. People would stand in awe and watch her weave. Soon they began to say, "Surely Athena must have taught her!"

Arachne was enormously proud of her work. After a while, she began to believe that not even a goddess could teach her anything. "By my own hard work and diligent effort I have gained this marvelous skill. If Athena were to come down and compete with me, she could not weave better than I," she told everyone.

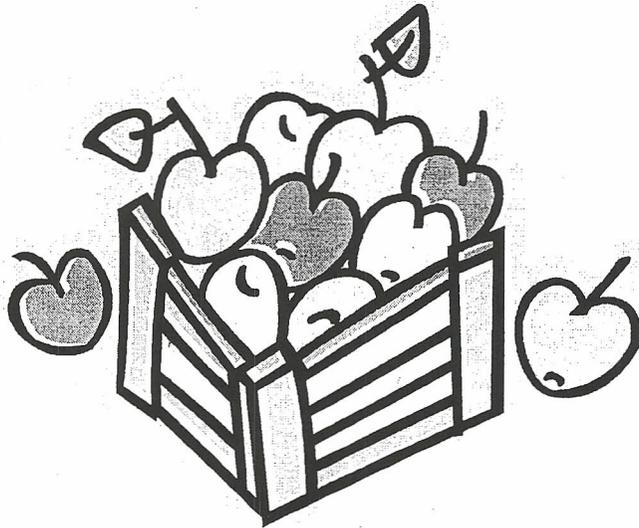
An old woman who was admiring her work said, "Foolish girl, you are not wise to claim to be equal with the gods!" "What right do you have to talk to me, old woman?" said Arachne. "If Athena does not approve of my words, let her challenge me to a contest."

All of a sudden the old woman changed into a young, beautiful woman. It was Athena. The challenge was reviewed and the contest began. Both tapestries were beautiful, but Athena worked faster. When they were finished, it was evident that Arachne's design was an insult to the gods. Athena requested an apology, but Arachne refused. Athena slapped her across the face. Arachne said, "I will not live with this insult." She tied a rope around her neck to hang herself.

The goddess touched the rope and said, "Live on girl." Then she changed Arachne into a spider. "From this day on, you and your descendants will forever spin webs." It is said that all spiders descend from Arachne.

ATALANTA AND HIPPOMENES

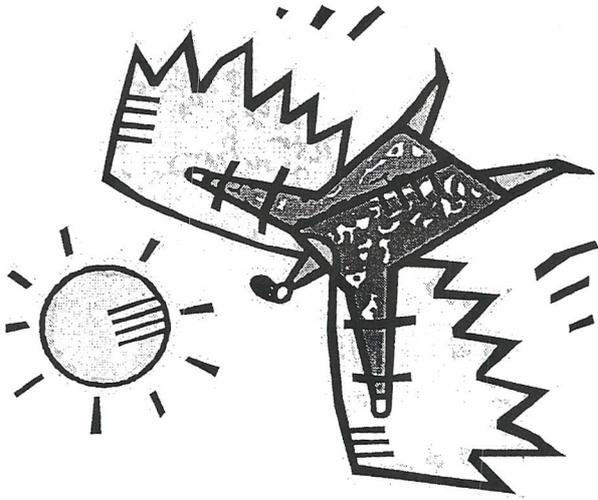
Atalanta, a beautiful and swift-running huntress, was famous for her beauty and courage. She enjoyed the freedom of hunting in the woods. Many men sought to marry her, but she refused them. Her father grew weary of her resistance and told her to make a choice among her suitors. As she respected her father, Atalanta did not want to disobey, but she thought she could outwit him. She proposed a race and said that she would marry the man who could outrun her; however, if he lost, he would be put to death. She hoped that this would discourage the suitors, but she was wrong; many came and many died.



Young Hippomenes came to the kingdom and he was impressed by Atalanta's beauty. Before he raced Atalanta he went to the temple of Aphrodite and prayed for help. The goddess of love and beauty had no sympathy for Atalanta because she worshiped Artemis, the cold moon goddess. Therefore, Aphrodite gave Hippomenes both counsel and several gifts.

The race began and for a while they ran side by side. The young girl was reluctant to pass him, but she knew she must. She thought that he was out of breath and she surged ahead, but stayed only slightly in front of him. He caught up with her and threw a golden apple in front of her. It was so magnificent that she had to have it. Hippomenes seemed to be tiring, so she stopped and picked up the apple. On they raced and he threw a second golden apple before her. Again, she decided to pick it up for he was a poor runner. She knew that she could outrun him and win. Soon the goal was in sight. He threw the third golden apple to the ground. When she stopped to pick it up, he ran for his life, and she realized that he was not exhausted. In a moment, she was two paces behind him, but he had been saving his strength. The winning tape was but a few yards away and with a final effort, Hippomenes touched the tape a second before Atalanta.

ICARUS AND DAEDALUS



King Minos of Crete was a fierce tyrant. Each year he received seven maidens and seven youths from Athens to offer as a sacrifice to his terrible animal monster called the Minotaur.

The horrible creature had the head of a bull and the body of a man. The home for this creature was a carefully designed maze. The architect for this special dwelling was Daedalus. The labyrinth was so elaborate that it was impossible for anyone to escape. Minos was delighted with the maze, but when the architect wanted to leave, the ruthless king kept him captive. More than anything, Daedalus wanted his freedom. No ship was available to Daedalus, so he planned another means of escape. In his workshop were many feathers of all sizes, shapes, and descriptions. Daedalus and his son, Icarus, took these feathers and with twine,

wax, glue, and wooden slats made two pairs of wings. Daedalus was determined that he and his son would fly to their freedom.

Before they took flight, he warned his son, "Don't fly too close to the sea or your wings will get wet and you will drown. Also, don't fly too high for the sun will melt the wax and you will fall to your death." After giving his son this advice, they jumped off the tower wall. By the time they were about halfway to freedom, Icarus had become very confident and he began to play tricks in the air. "Come down," cried his father in vain. He watched Icarus fly higher and higher in the sky. Soon all he could see was a dark speck, and then all of a sudden Icarus began to fall very quickly. Daedalus flew around and around the place where he had seen the boy splash into the sea, but all that was evident was white foam, and it too, soon disappeared. Daedalus was sad and wept when he landed on the shore of the island of Crete.

BAUCIS AND PHILEMON

Disguised as wayfarers, the two gods, Zeus and Hermes, knocked at many houses before finally an elderly woman with a cheerful voice opened the door of her humble hut to them. She introduced herself as Baucis and invited the strangers in to meet her husband, Philemon. It was obvious that the couple was happy in spite of their poverty. They offered their guests a hot drink and insisted that the wayfarers stay to eat with them. Baucis and Philemon served a supper of vinegar-like wine and a soup that was made of cabbage and a tiny piece of pork. It was all they had but they were willing to share it.

Finally, Zeus and Hermes decided that it was time to remove their disguises and tell who they were. "You have been hosts to gods," said Zeus, "and because of your kindness you will be rewarded." When the old couple looked out of their window, they saw that they were completely surrounded by water. Their neighbors were gone! Though the neighbors had not been kind to Baucis and Philemon, nonetheless, Baucis and Philemon were greatly saddened by their neighbors' fate. Then, suddenly their hut was transformed into a stately, pillared temple. "You may have one wish," said Zeus.

"Please, let neither of us have to live alone and grant that we will die together," requested Philemon. The kindly couple lived in the temple until they became very old. Then one day they began to sprout leaves, and their skin became covered with bark. Baucis grew into a linden tree, Philemon into an oak, but both grew from one trunk.

