

'The Venus who Sprang from the Earth' video transcription

A bouzouki plays. The sun is shining. We see a Mediterranean island with olive and cypress trees and terraced houses. A woman carries an amphora on her head. A man unloads his donkey.

[Narrator]

In 1820, on the Greek island of Milos, or Milo, a peasant named Yorgos was busy building a wall. Stones were plentiful...as the countryside was dotted with ancient ruins.

Across from an olive tree, we see two columns of a Doric temple. The sea in the background is deep blue.

[Narrator]

These ruins attracted the occasional visitor...like Olivier Voutier, a young French naval officer with a passion for archeology.

We see Olivier Voutier sat on the steps of an ancient theatre, drawing the site. Yorgos passes by with his donkey. The village can be seen in the background, overlooking the sea.

[Narrator]

What Yorgos liked about old stones was that they were already cut...and were easy to unearth with a pick. He set to work.

Yorgos is at the site with the Doric columns. With his donkey looking on, he starts picking at the slabs on the ground.

[Narrator]

Suddenly, the ground gave way in front of him...

A cloud of dust fills the air.

[Narrator]

and in the hole in the earth...Yorgos saw...the head of a statue. He'd never seen such a lovely face!

His eyes spring wide open.

[Narrator]

Just then, Olivier Voutier arrived at the site.

Two men in uniform join him.

[Narrator]

The young naval officer was captivated too. With members of his crew, he helped Yorgos dig out the rest of the statue. Although it was broken in two and had lost its arms, it was clearly a masterpiece...perhaps an image of Venus, the goddess of beauty.

We get a closer look at the statue. The top of the body remains in the cavity; the lower half has been dug out. Olivier Voutier starts drawing it.

[Narrator]

Olivier Voutier was keen to buy it...and Yorgos agreed to sell. A deal was made.

They shake hands.

[Narrator]

A few days later, the statue was loaded onto a boat...

We see the statue on a boat leaving the island. Olivier Voutier is standing up, waving his sailor's hat. A crowd of villagers stands on the jetty. Giorgos waves back.

[Narrator]

then transferred aboard a schooner. It set sail for France.

The schooner—a ship with two masts—sails away, full steam ahead.

We see the *Venus de Milo* in the museum, surrounded by a great many admirers. King Louis XVIII arrives in a wheelchair, pushed by his valet.

[Narrator]

One year after leaving its island, the Venus de Milo entered the Louvre. It is said that the sick and elderly king Louis XVIII never tired of contemplating this representation of ideal beauty.