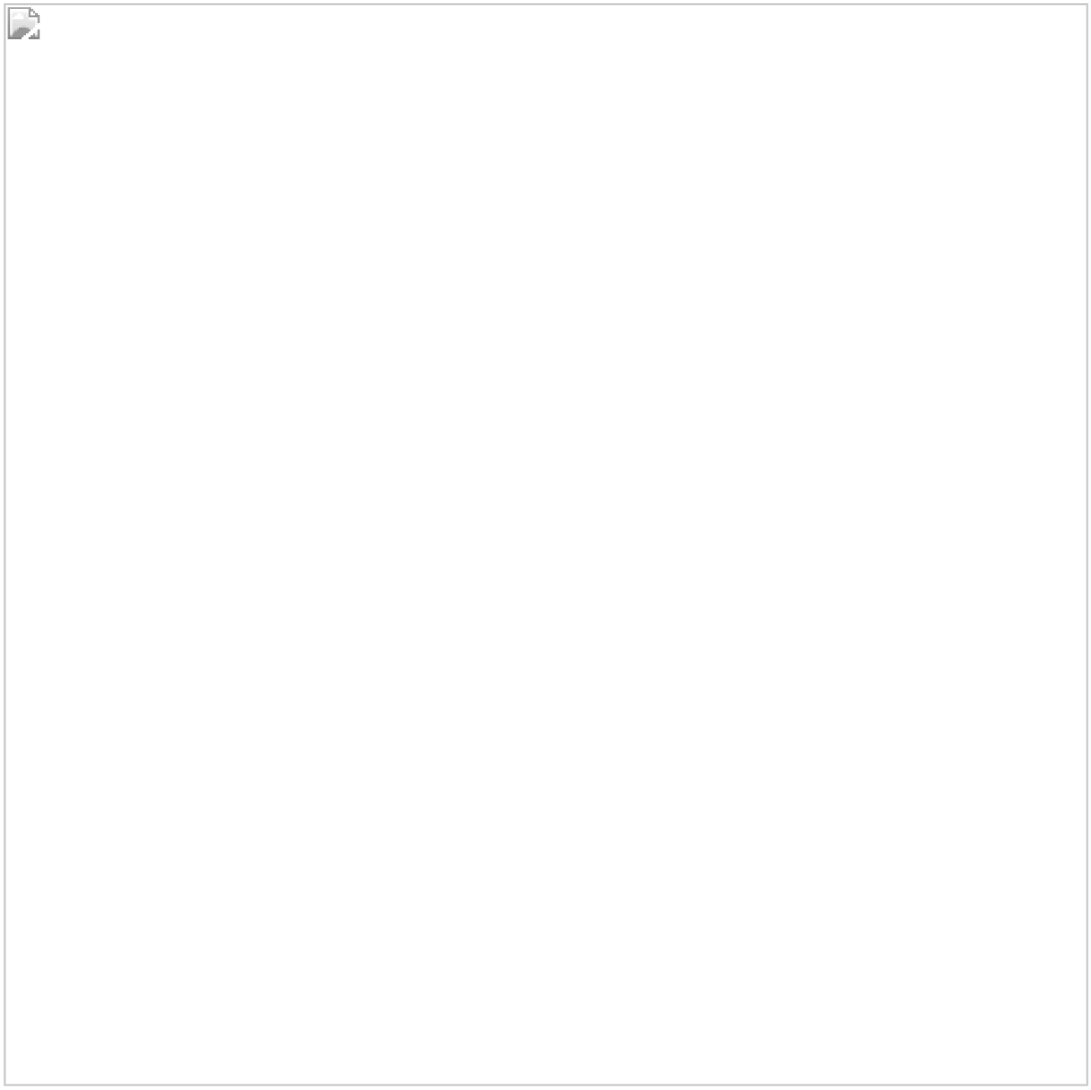
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Alenoushka and Her Brother

A Tale from Russia



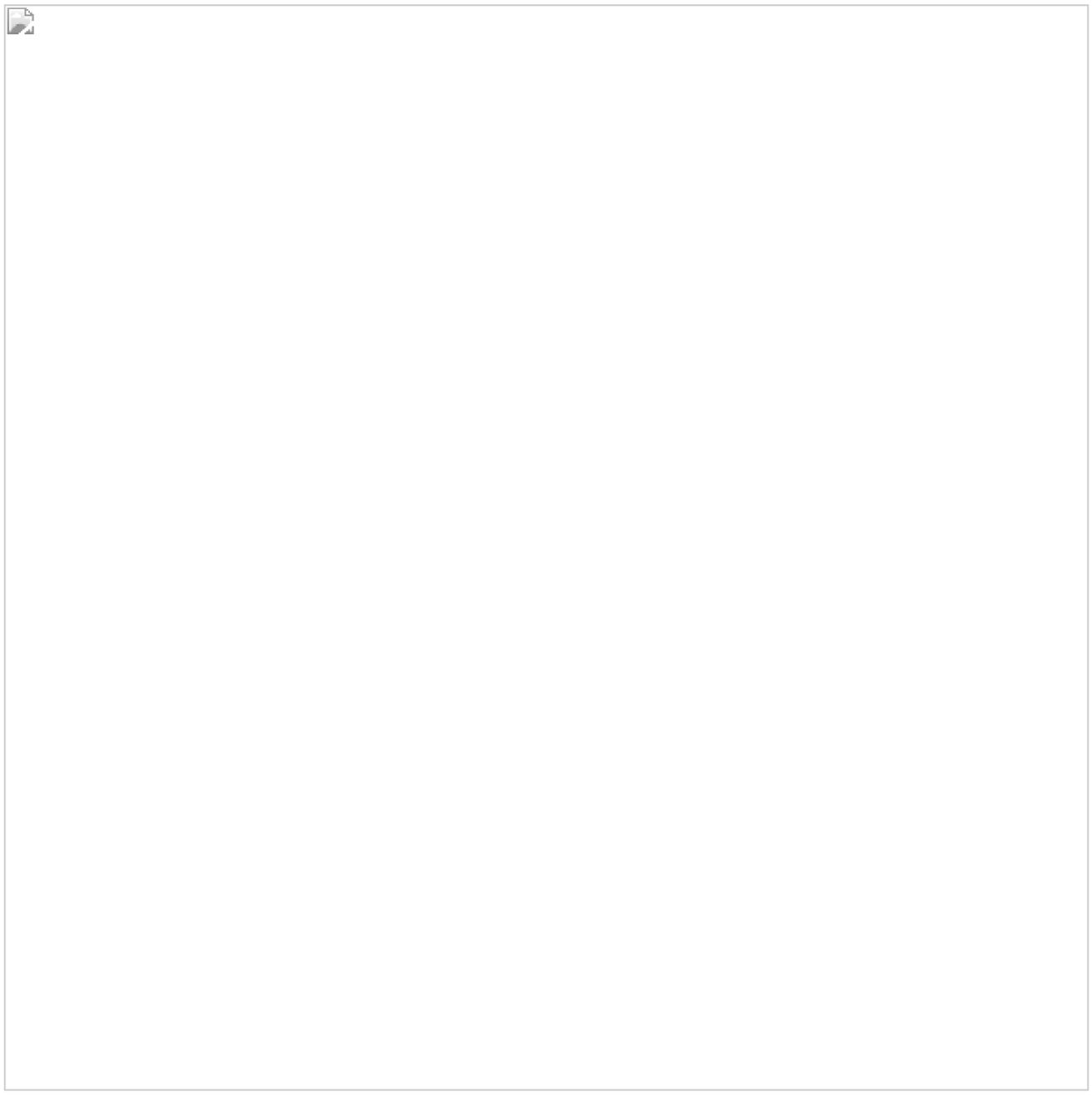
Once upon a time there were two orphan children, a little boy and a little girl. The boy was called Vanoushka and the girl was called Alenoushka. They set out together to walk through the whole of the great wide world.

TALK ABOUT IT

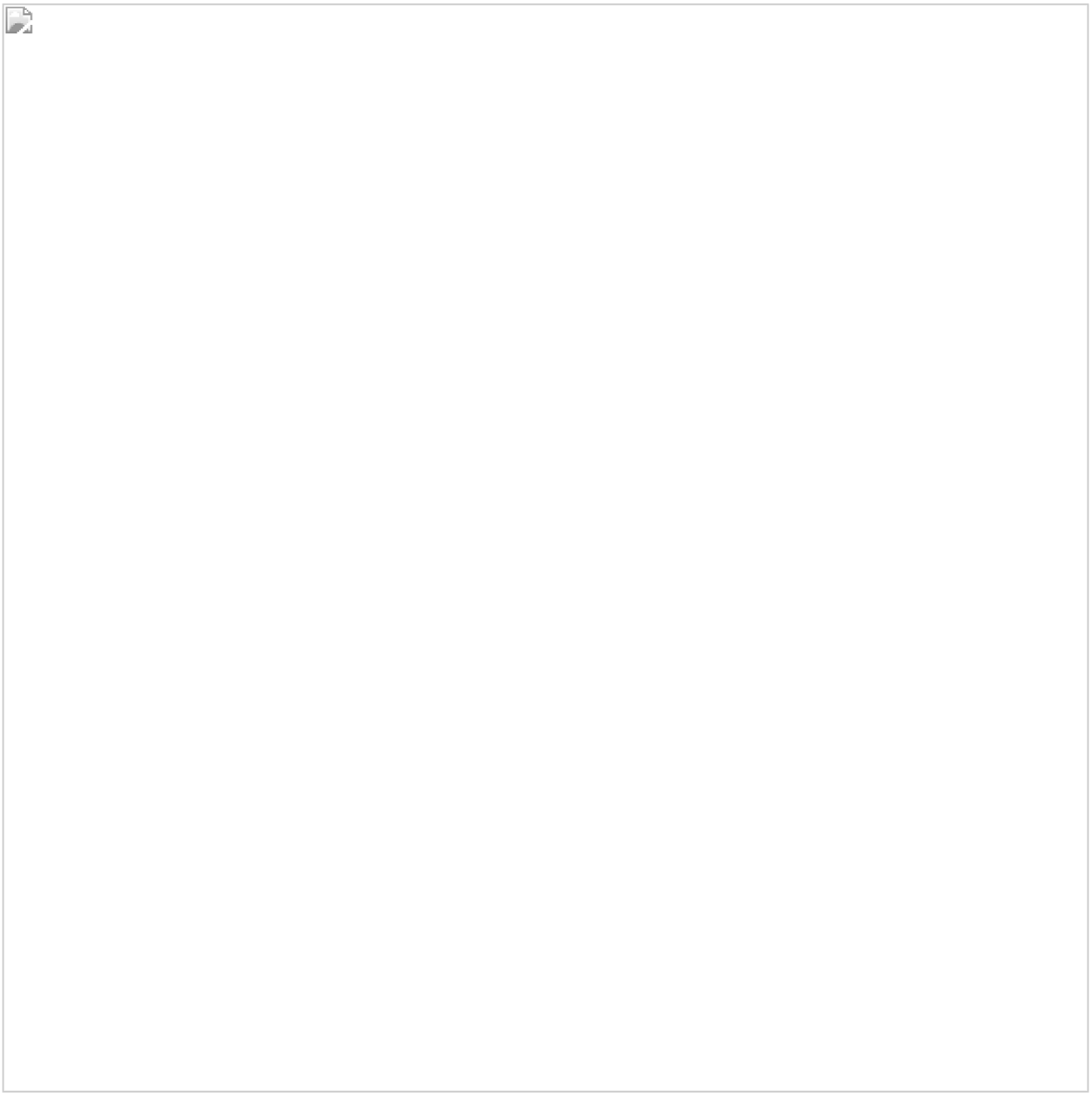
The two children had only each other. Who is someone you stay close to?

This book belongs to _____

Alenoushka and Her Brother · another picture



A Dry, Hot Day



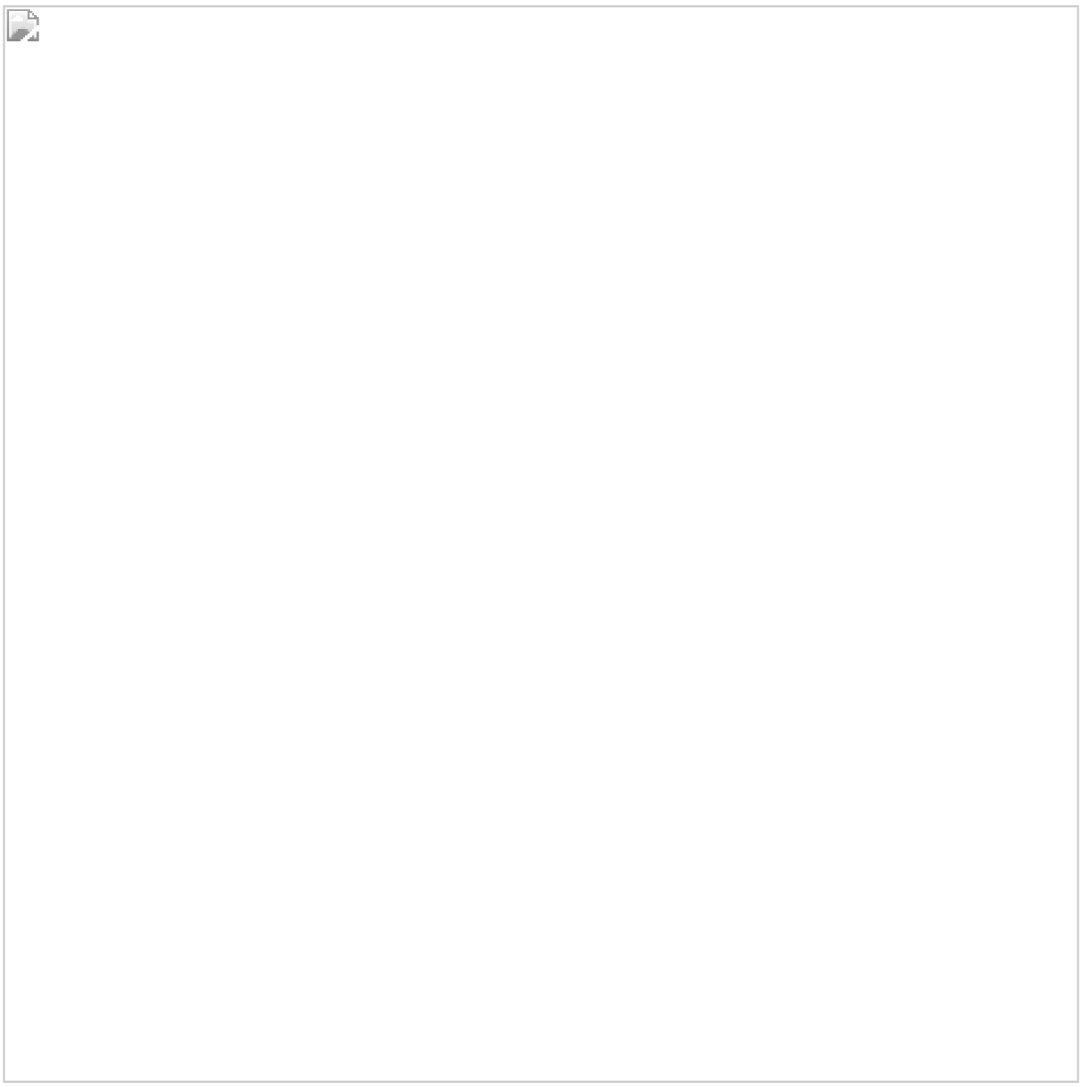
One day they walked over a broad plain with no trees and no bushes. The sun burned the grass, and the sand was so hot they could scarcely bear to set their little bare feet on it.

“Oh,” said Vanoushka, “my throat is so dry. I want a drink.”

“We must go on,” said Alenoushka, “till we come to a well. Then we will drink.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever been very thirsty? What did you want most?

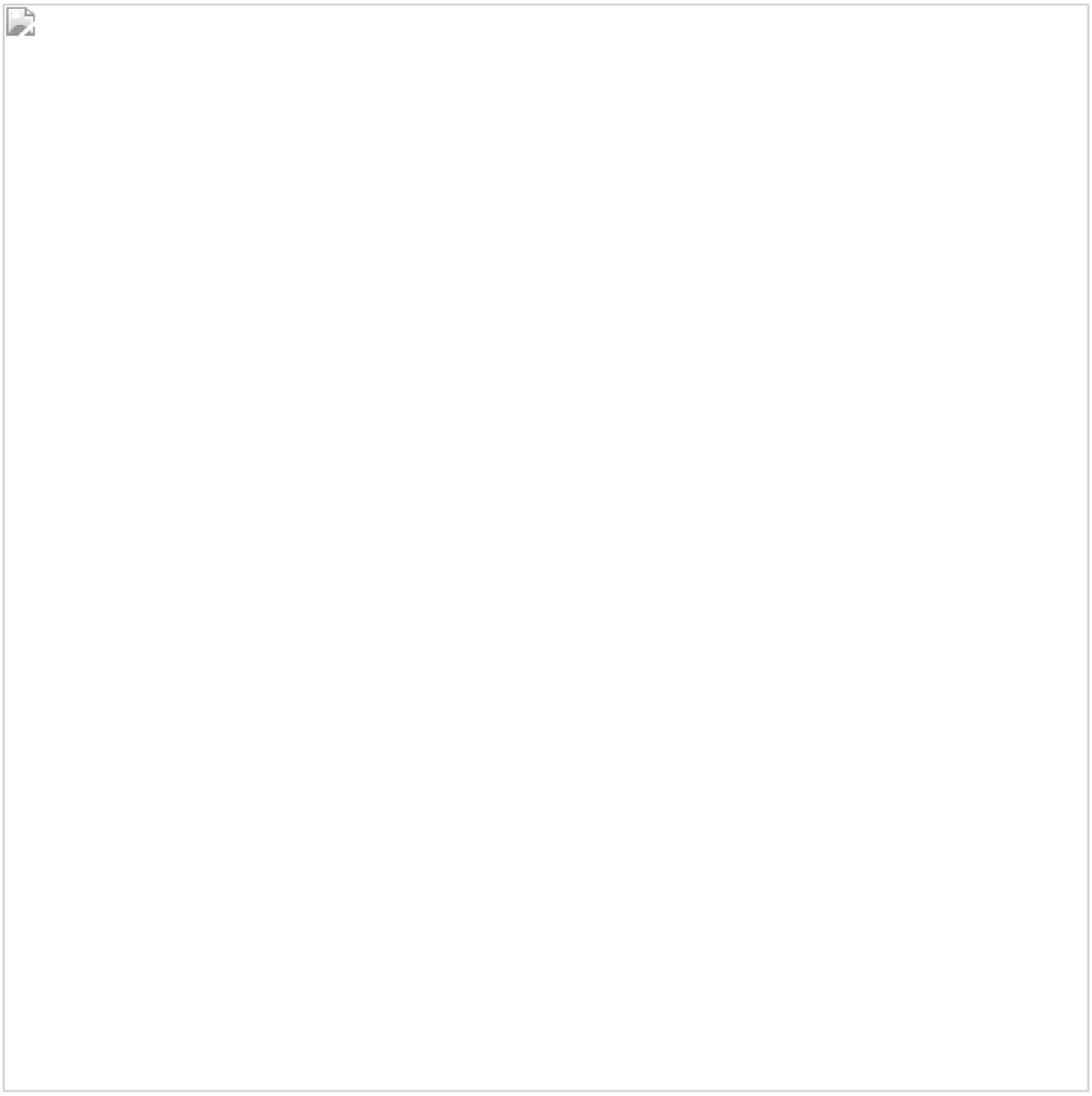


Think about it

1. What did Alenoushka say they must find?

- ○ A well
- ○ A river boat
- ○ A shady tree to climb

The Hoofmarks



Soon Vanoushka saw a horse's hoofmark with water in it, like a little well. “Sister, sister,” he said, “now we can have a drink; and oh, but I am thirsty!”

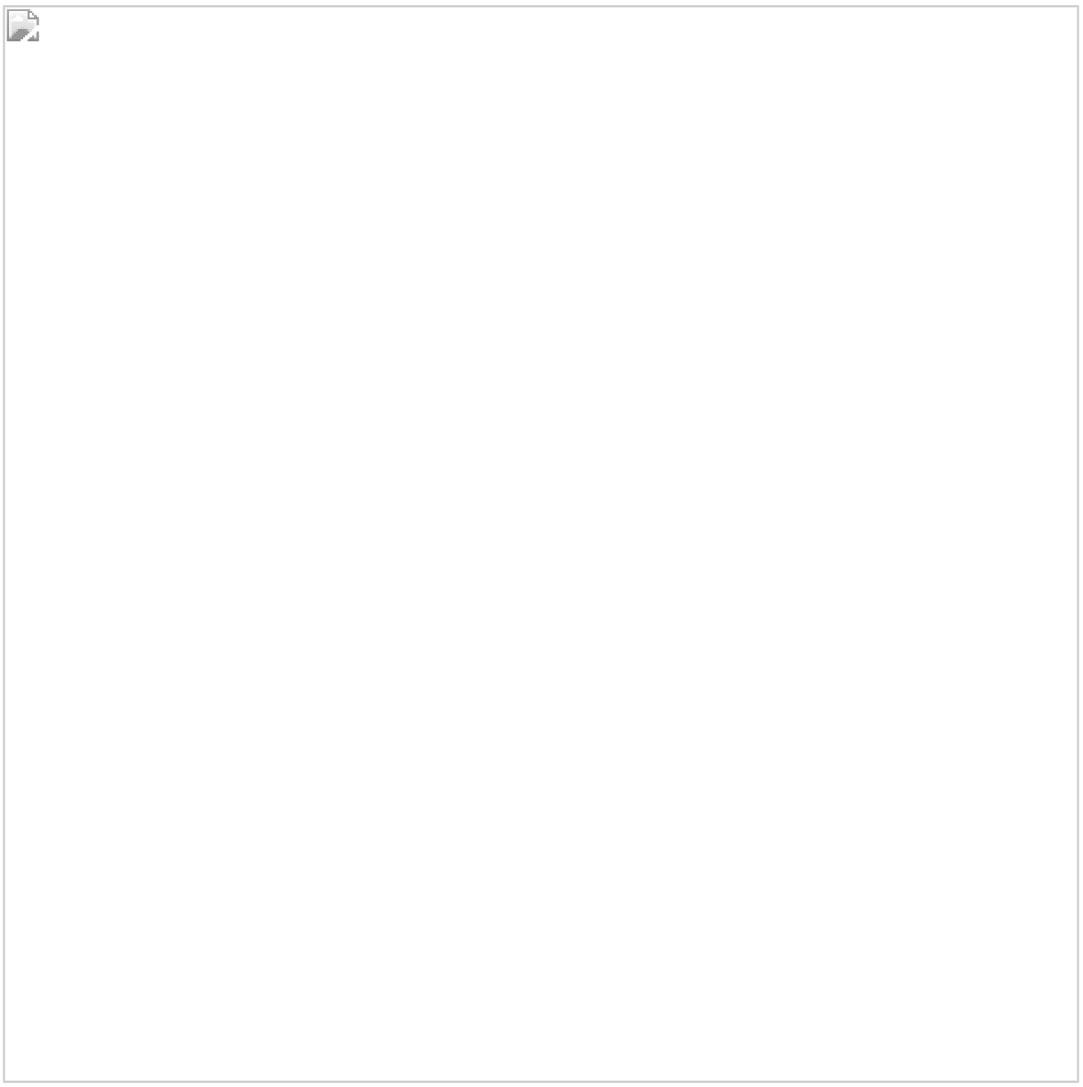
“Not yet, brother,” said Alenoushka. “If you drink from the hoofmark of a horse, you will turn into a little foal, and that would never do.”

He did as his sister told him. A little farther on there was the hoofmark of a cow, with water in it. But his sister said, “If you drink from the hoofmark of a cow, you will turn into a little calf.” So they walked on.

TALK ABOUT IT

Vanoushka was so thirsty, but he listened to his sister. Is it ever hard to listen? When?

The Hoofmarks · another picture

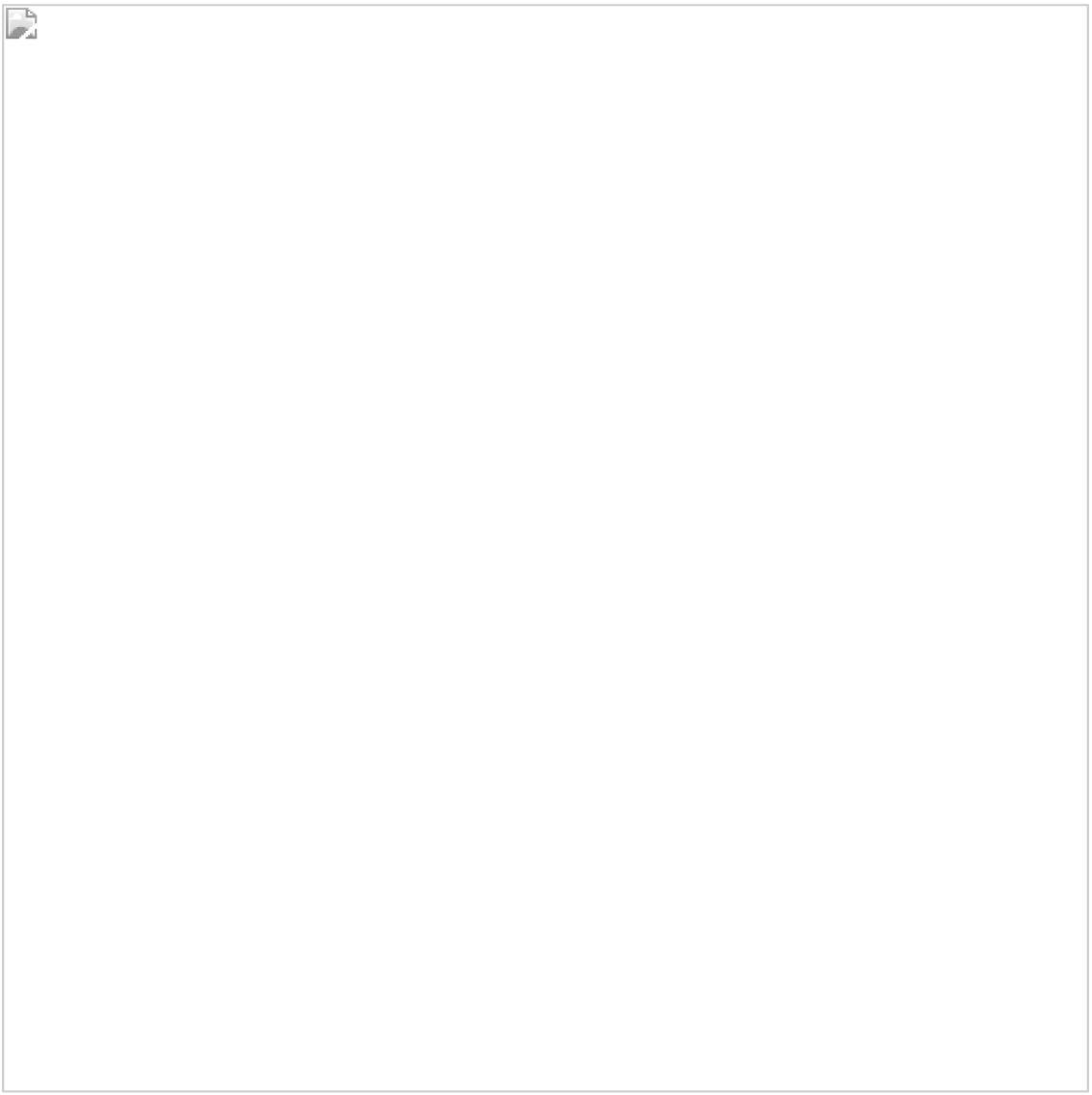


Think about it

1. What would Vanoushka turn into if he drank from a horse's hoofmark?

- ○ A little calf
- ○ A little lamb
- ○ A little foal

The Little Lamb



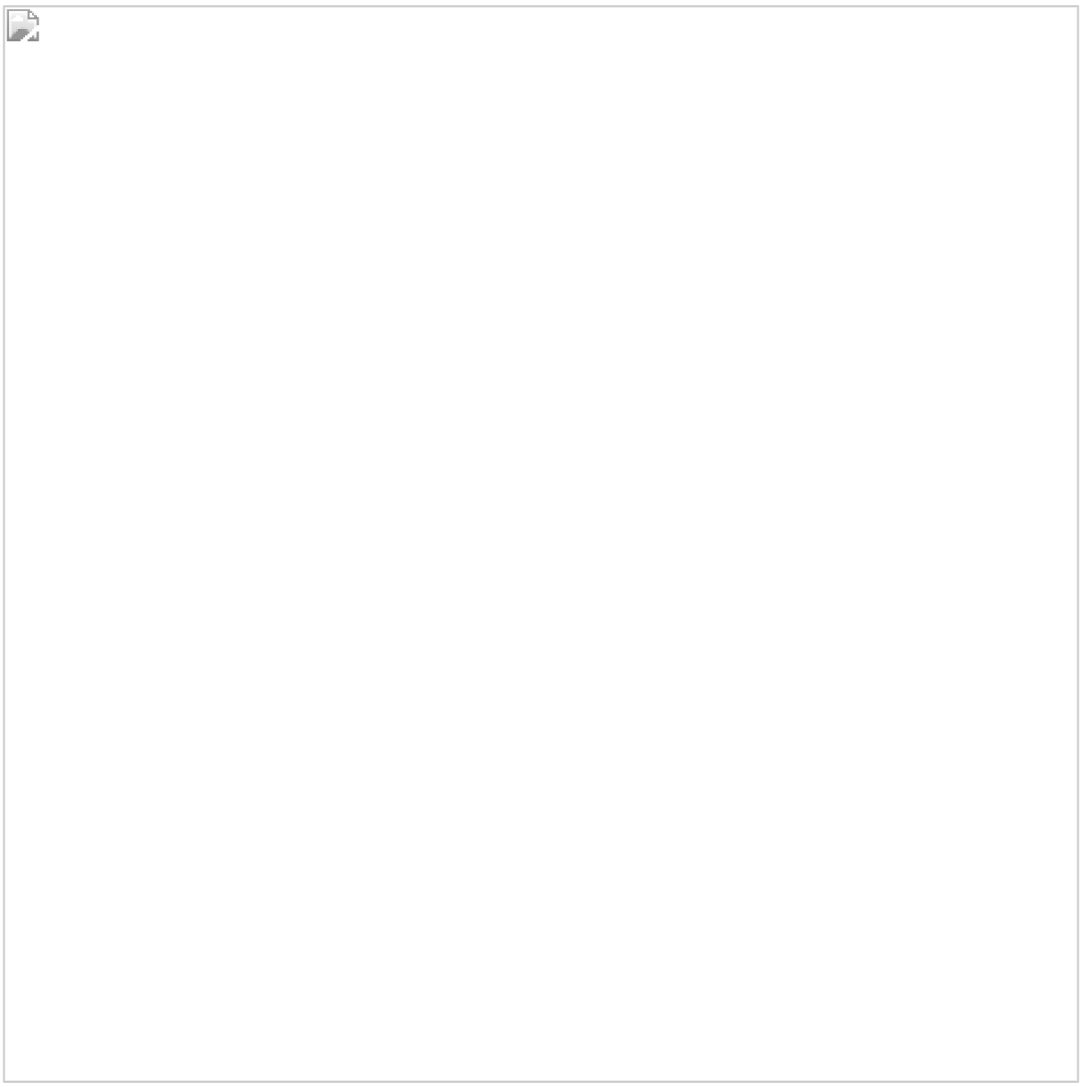
They walked on, and Vanoushka was nearly crying with thirst. Then he saw a tiny footprint divided in the middle, the footprint of a sheep, with one little drop of clear water in it.

He said nothing to his sister, nothing at all. He went down on his hands and knees and drank that water. And he had no sooner drunk it than he had turned into a little lamb.

Alenoushka looked round for her brother, but could not see him. There was only a little lamb, leaping round her and trying to lick her face. She guessed at once what had happened, and burst into tears.

TALK ABOUT IT

Vanoushka said nothing to his sister. Why do you think he kept quiet?

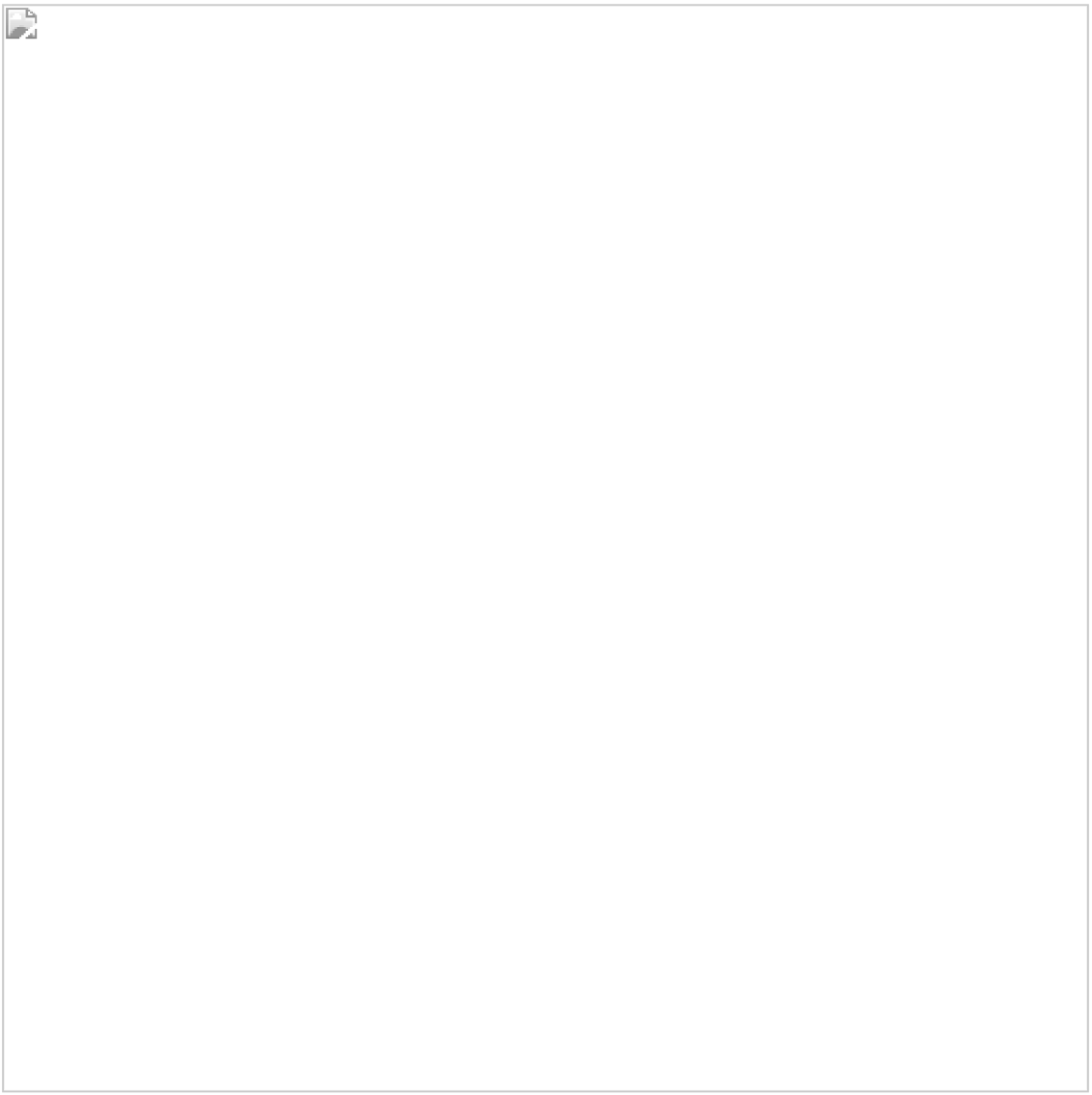


Think about it

1. What did Vanoushka turn into?

- ○ A little foal
- ○ A little lamb
- ○ A little goat

The Fine Gentleman



Alenoushka sat down under a hayrick and wept. The little lamb stood gravely before her, but soon he had to leap and frisk in the sun.

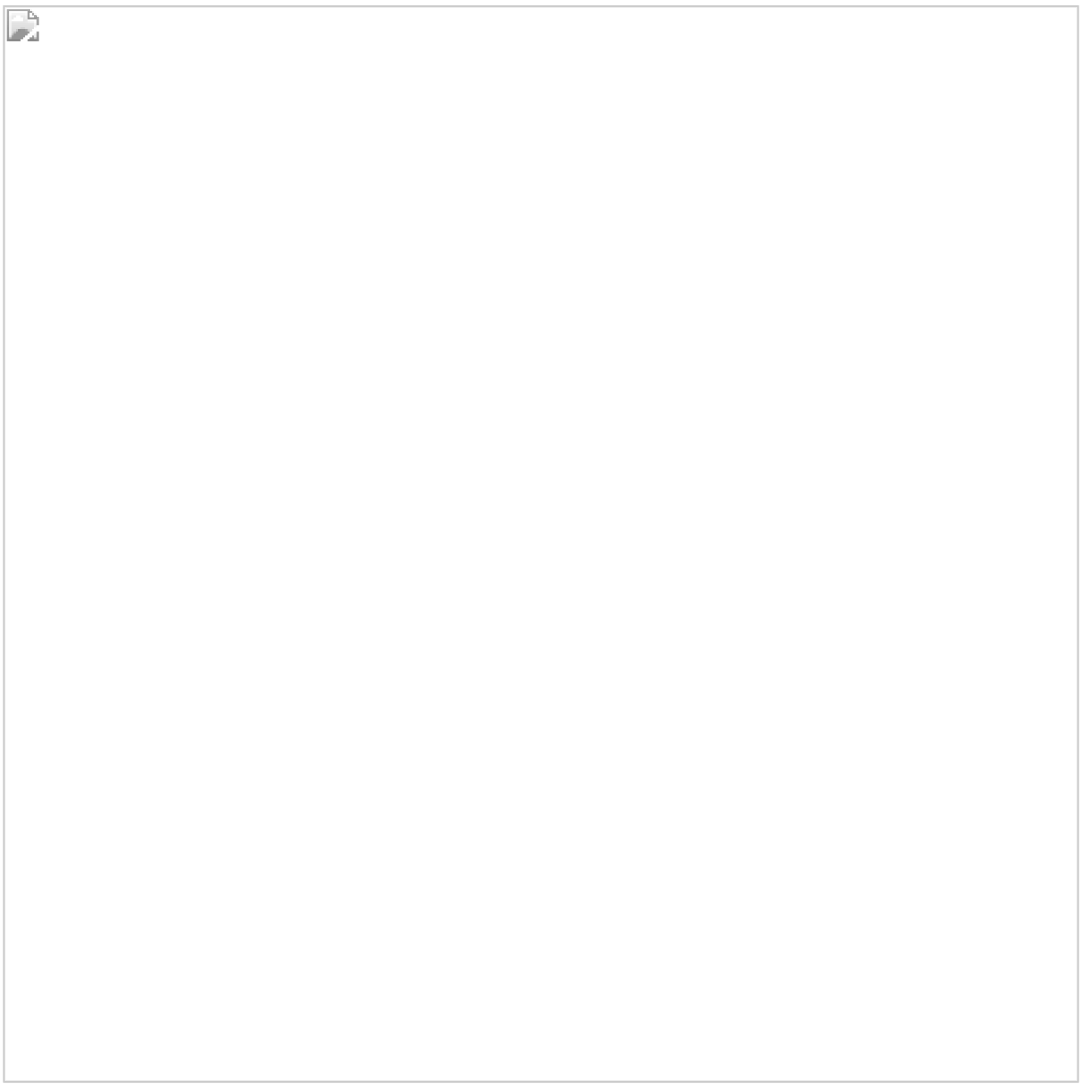
A fine gentleman came riding by on a big black horse and saw her crying, while a white lamb played before her. “Perhaps I may be able to help you,” he said.

“My name is Alenoushka, and this is my little brother Vanoushka, whom I love,” she said, and she told him the whole story.

“Come with me,” said the fine gentleman. “The lamb shall come too. Wherever you are there he shall be, and you shall never be parted from him.”

TALK ABOUT IT

He promised that the lamb could come too. Why do you think that mattered so much to her?

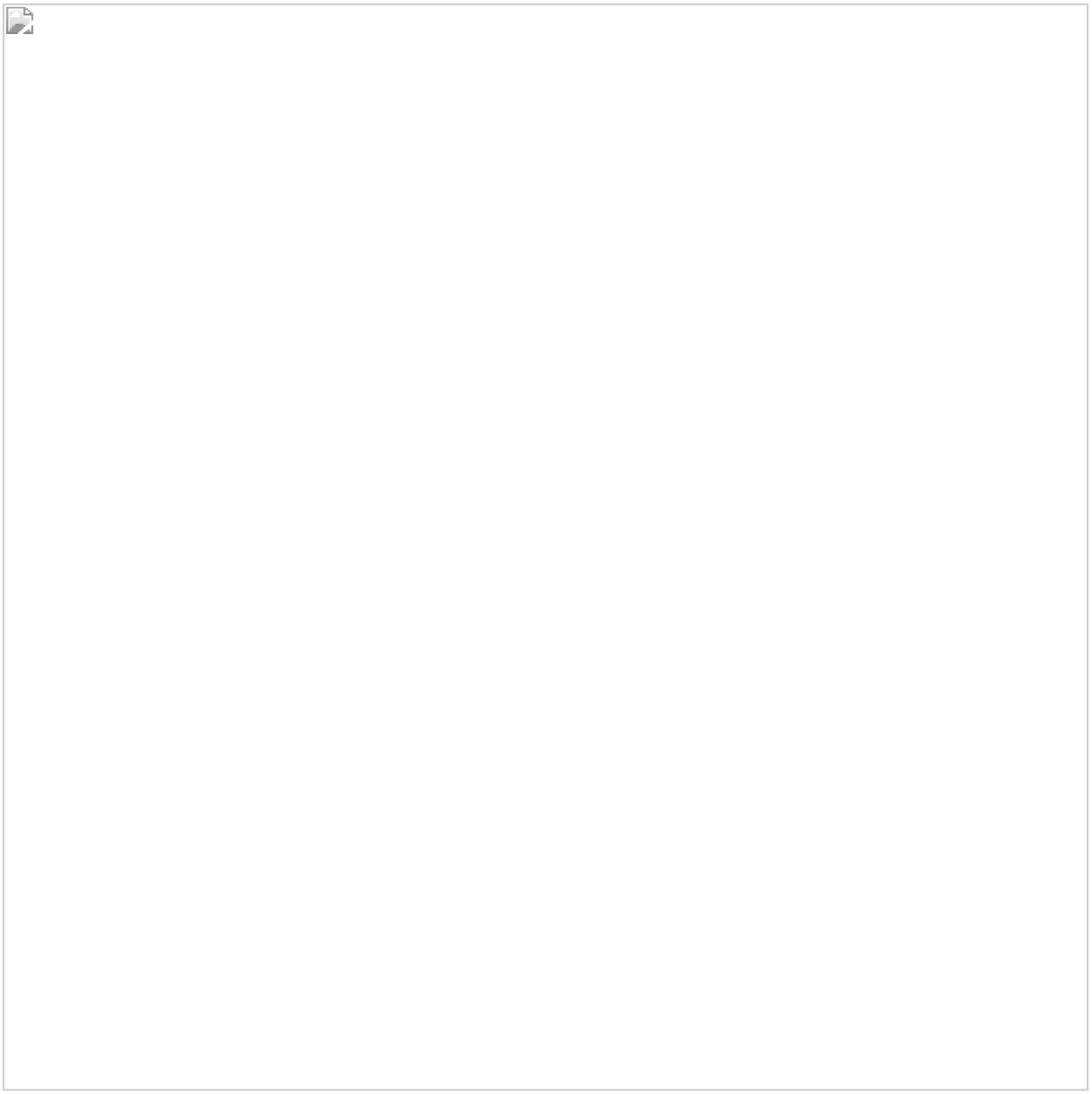


Think about it

1. What did the fine gentleman promise about the lamb?

- ○ That he could live in the barn
- ○ That the lamb would never be parted from her
- ○ That he would be sold

A Happy House



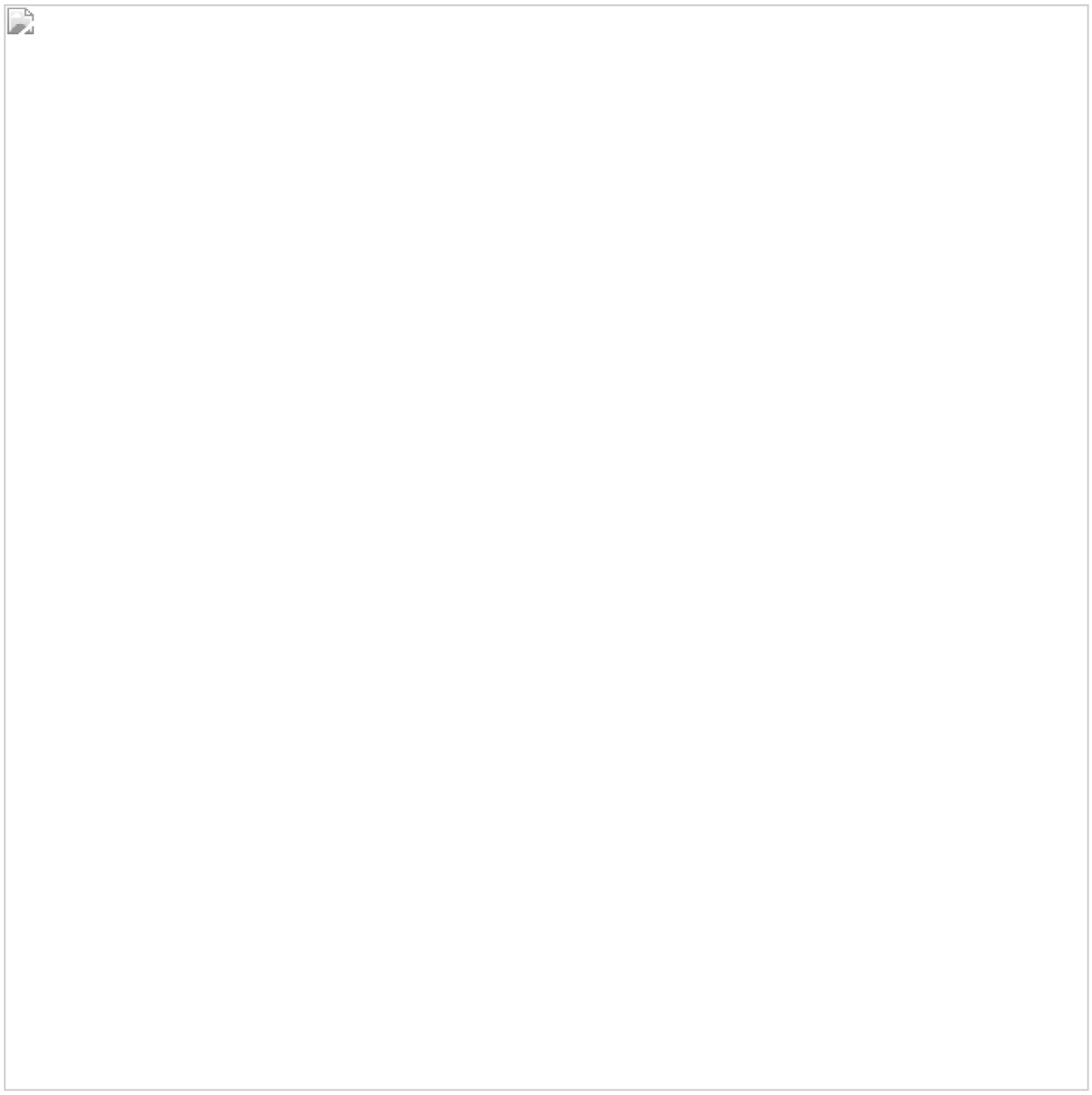
The fine gentleman lifted them up on the big black horse and galloped home across the plain to his big house near the river. He made a feast and married Alenoushka.

They lived so happily that good people rejoiced to see them, and bad ones were jealous. The little lamb lived in the house. He never grew any bigger, but always frisked and played, and followed Alenoushka wherever she went.

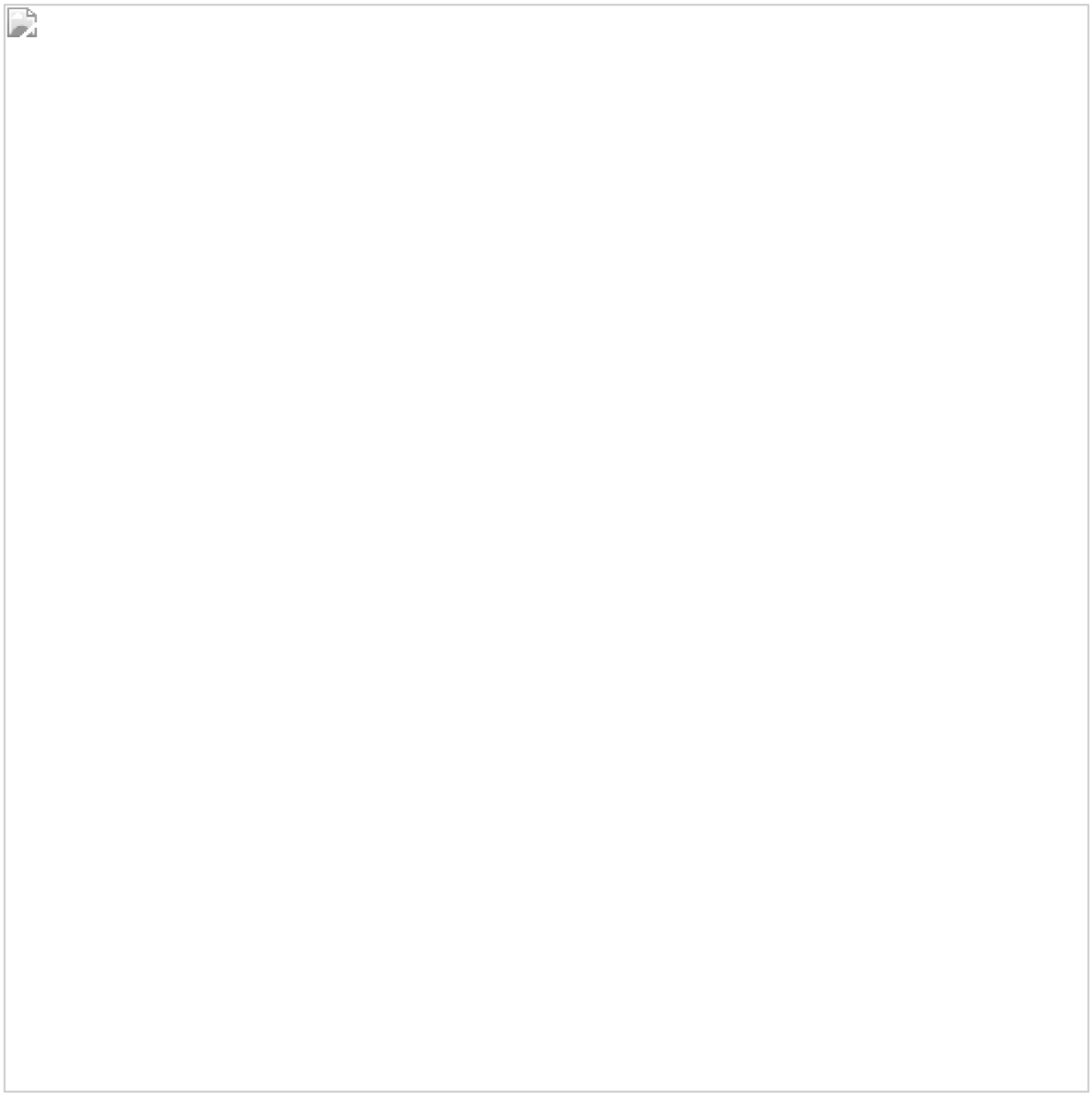
TALK ABOUT IT

The lamb never grew any bigger. What do you think life in that house was like?

A Happy House · another picture



The Old Witch



One day the fine gentleman rode far away to the town to buy a new bracelet for Alenoushka. While he was gone there came an old witch, ugly, with only one tooth in her head, and wicked.

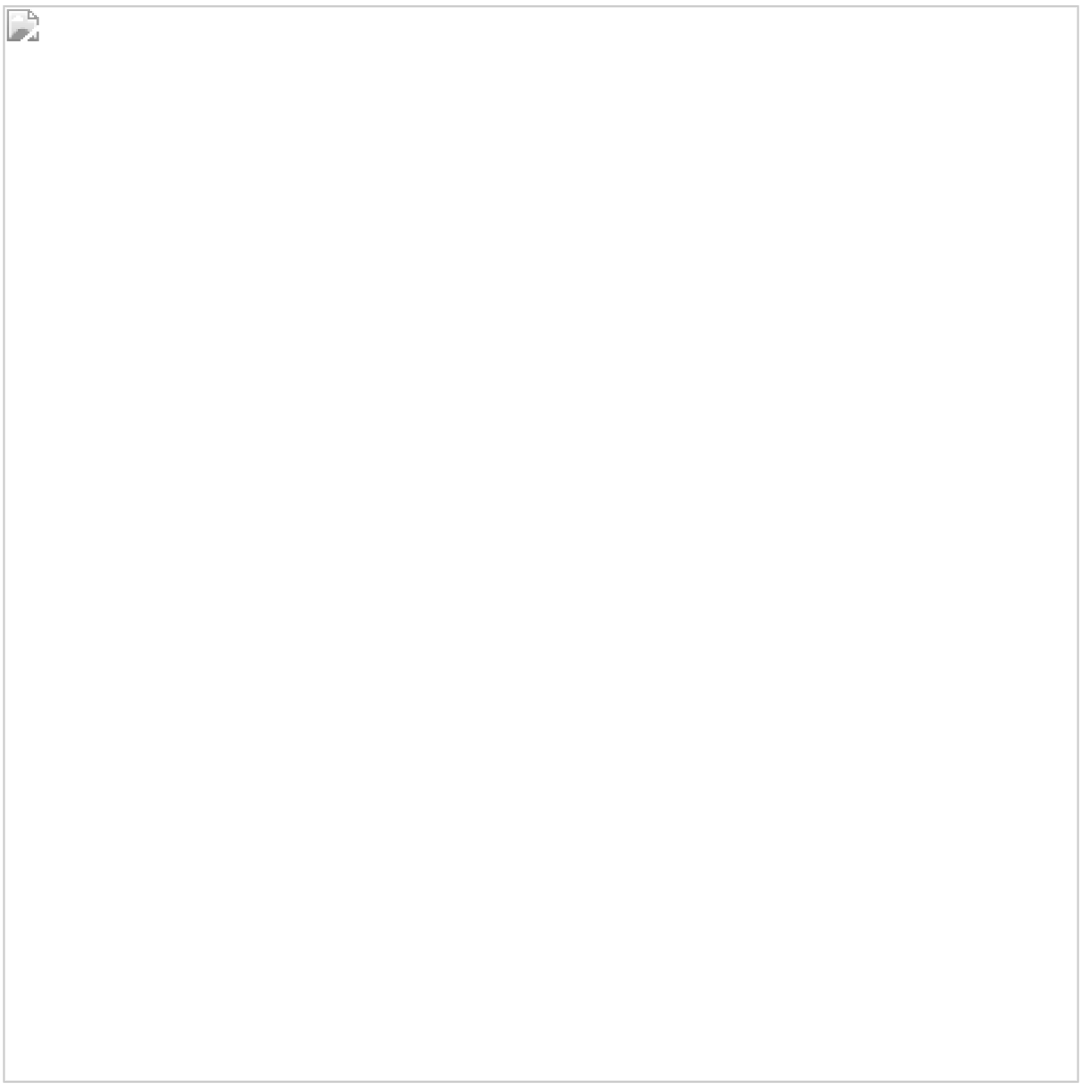
She begged from Alenoushka, and said she was hungry. Alenoushka asked her to share her dinner. But the witch put a spell in Alenoushka's wine, and Alenoushka fell ill. By evening she had grown pale, as pale as snow, and as thin as an old stick.

“Perhaps I shall be better to-morrow,” she told her husband.

TALK ABOUT IT

Alenoushka shared her dinner with a hungry stranger. What do you think of that?

The Old Witch · another picture

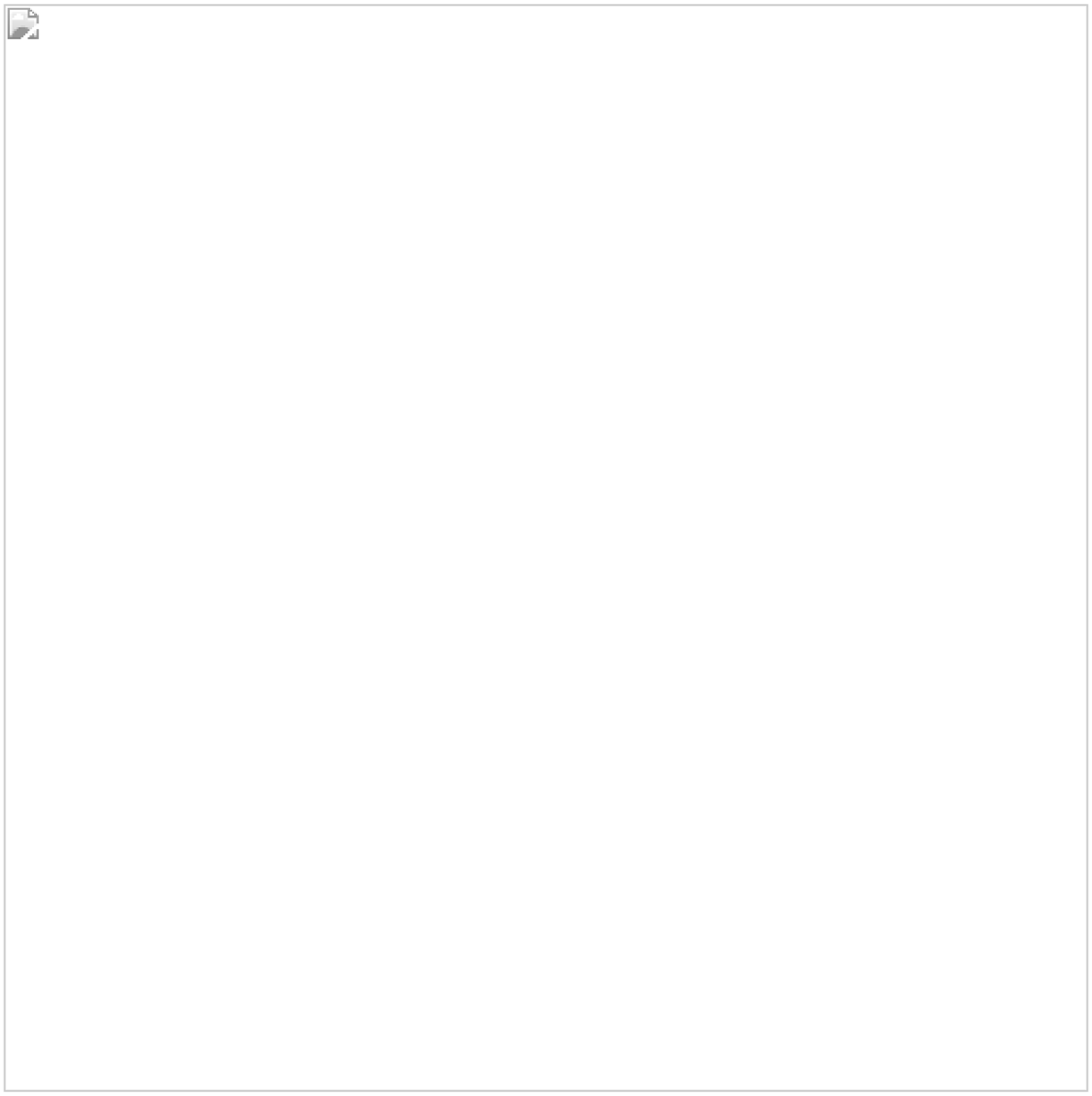


Think about it

1. How did the witch make Alenoushka ill?

- ○ She gave her a cold
- ○ She put a spell in the wine
- ○ She took her shawl

By the River



The next day the witch came again. “I know a way to make you as well as ever you were. You must go to the river and bathe this afternoon. Secretly you must go, for if any one knows whither you have gone my spell will not work.”

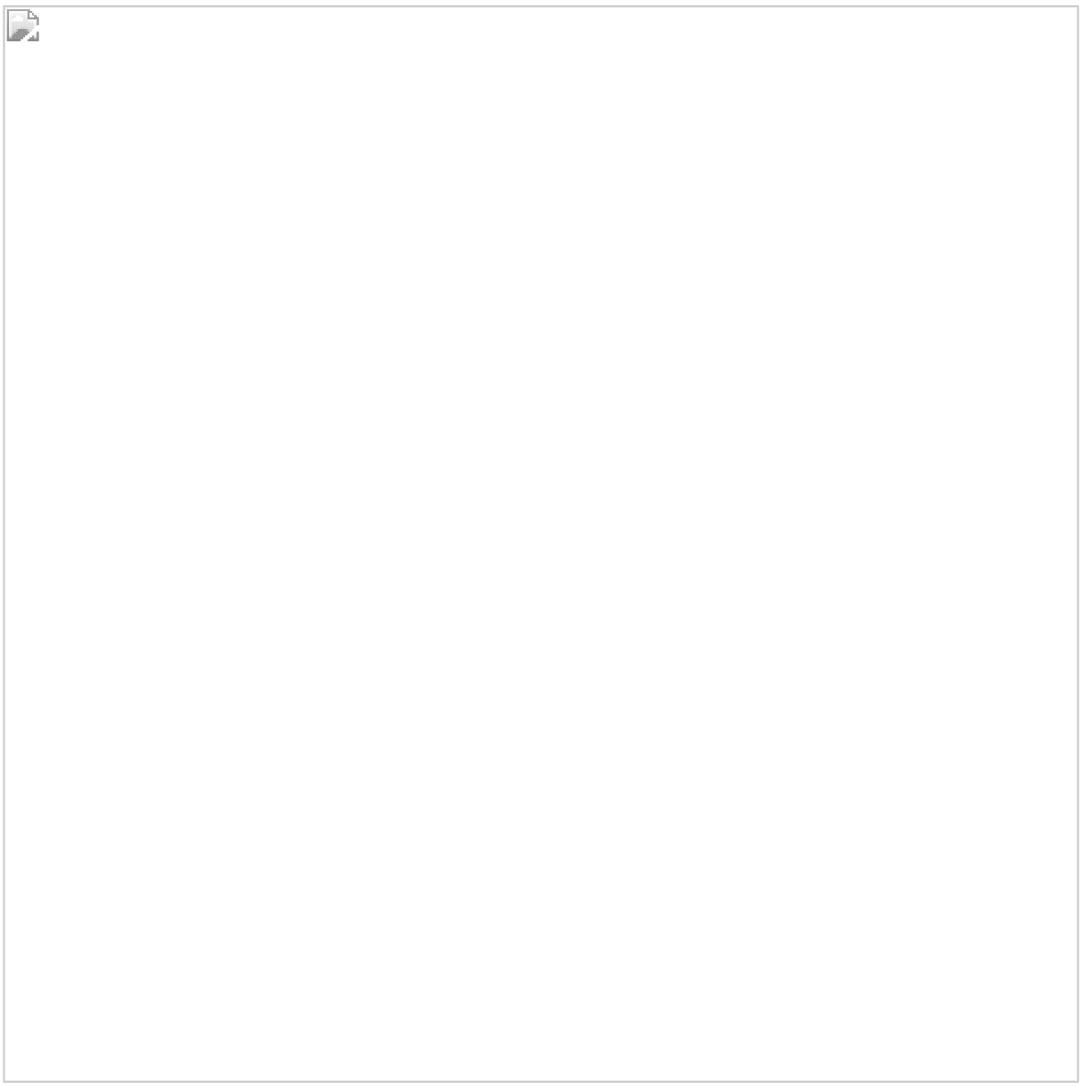
Alenoushka slipped out with a shawl about her head. Only the little lamb knew, and he followed her.

By the river the witch seized her and threw her into a deep place, with a heavy stone about her neck.

Then the witch put on Alenoushka's white dress and made herself look just like her. Only the little lamb had seen everything.

TALK ABOUT IT

Only the lamb knew what had happened. What do you think he wanted to do?

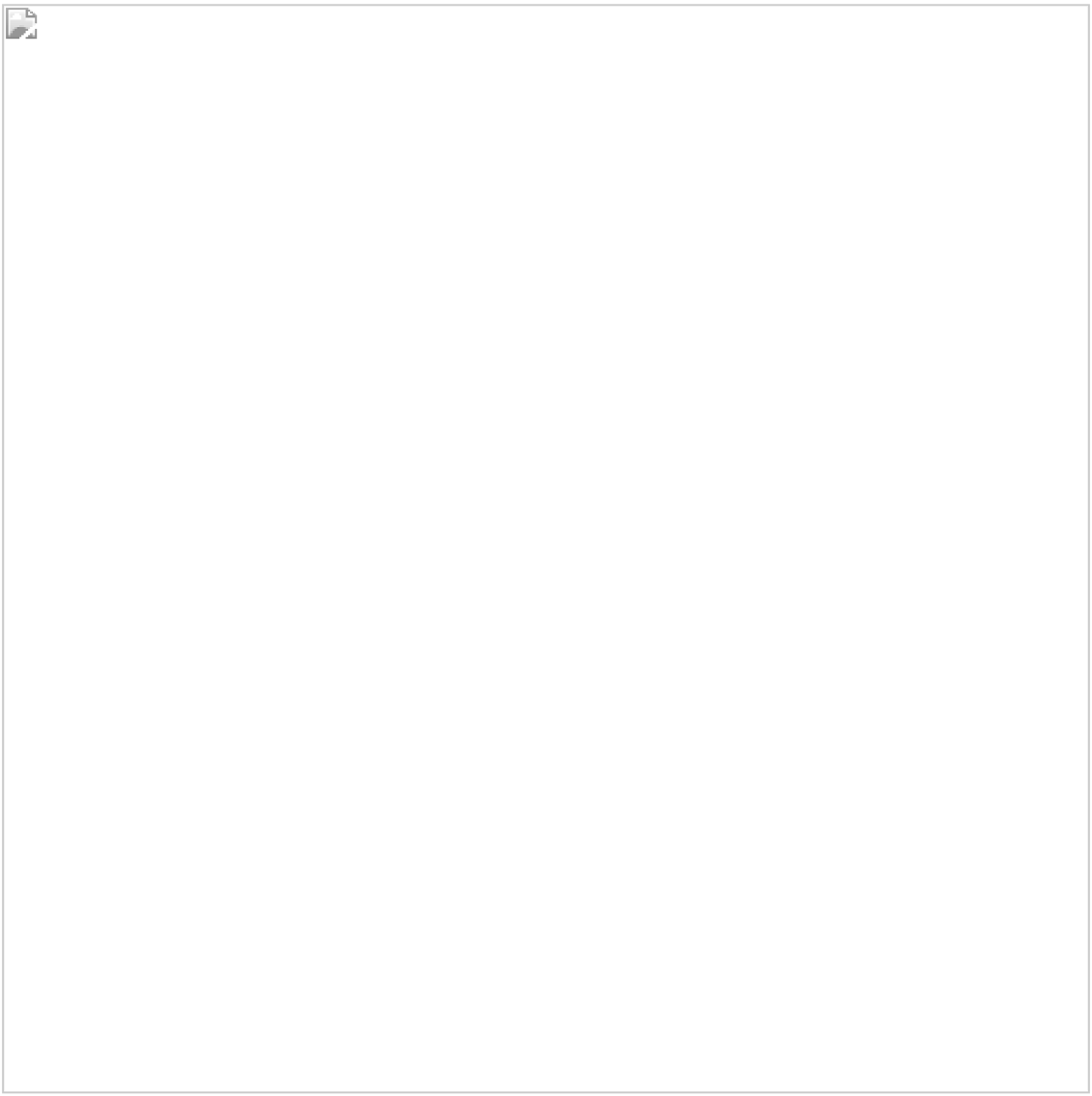


Think about it

1. Who saw everything that happened at the river?

- ○ The fine gentleman
- ○ The servant
- ○ The little lamb

The Witch in Alenoushka's Place



That evening the fine gentleman was glad to find Alenoushka well, with plump pink cheeks.

But the little lamb would not eat. Morning and evening he wandered by the river, crying “Baa, baa,” and the wind sighed in the long reeds.

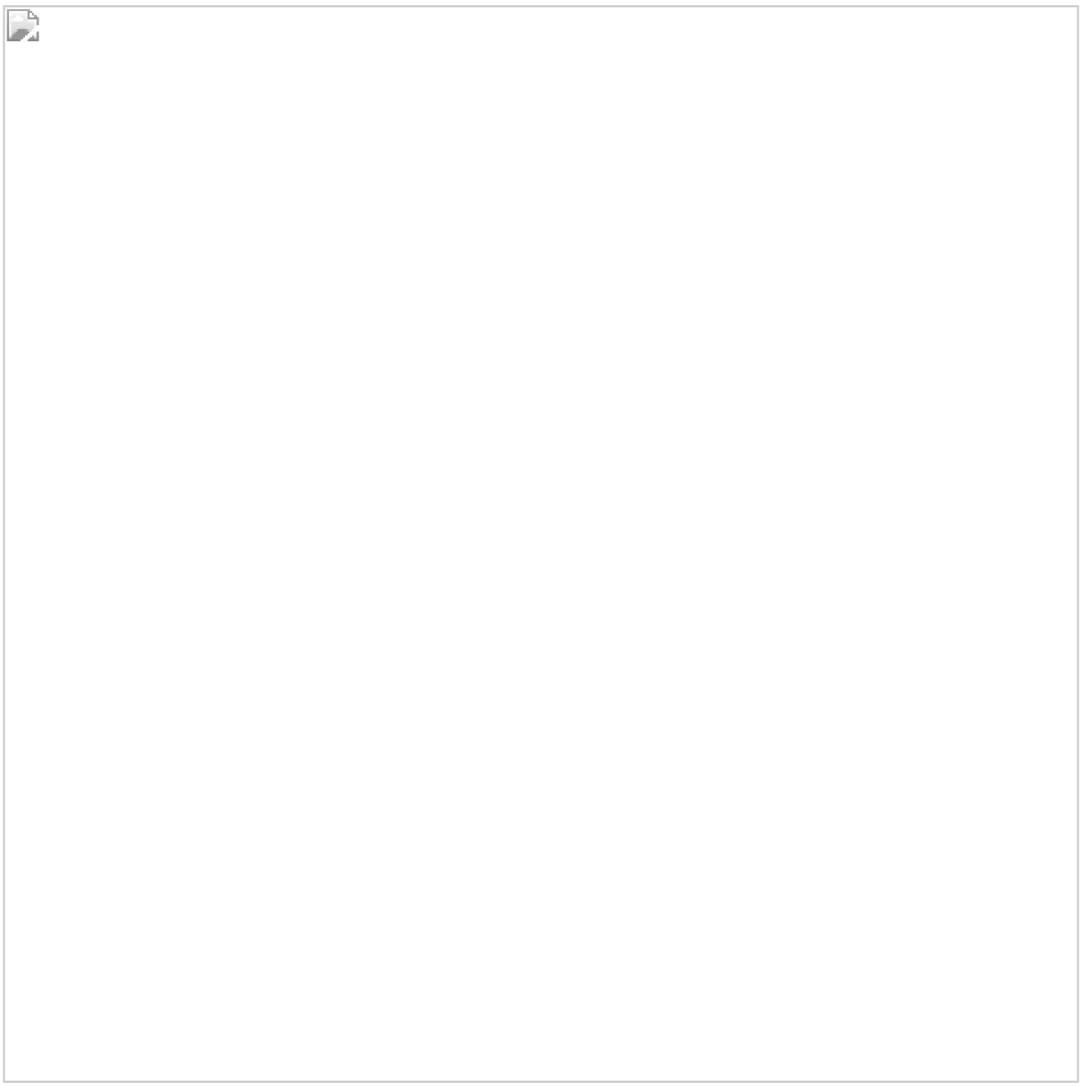
The witch began to hate him. “It is time for the lamb to be killed, and made into a tasty stew,” she told the fine gentleman, who thought she was Alenoushka.

“What,” said he, “you want to have the lamb killed? Why, you called it your brother when first I found you by the hayrick in the plain.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The fine gentleman was surprised that she wanted this. What do you think he began to wonder?

The Witch in Alenoushka's Place · another picture

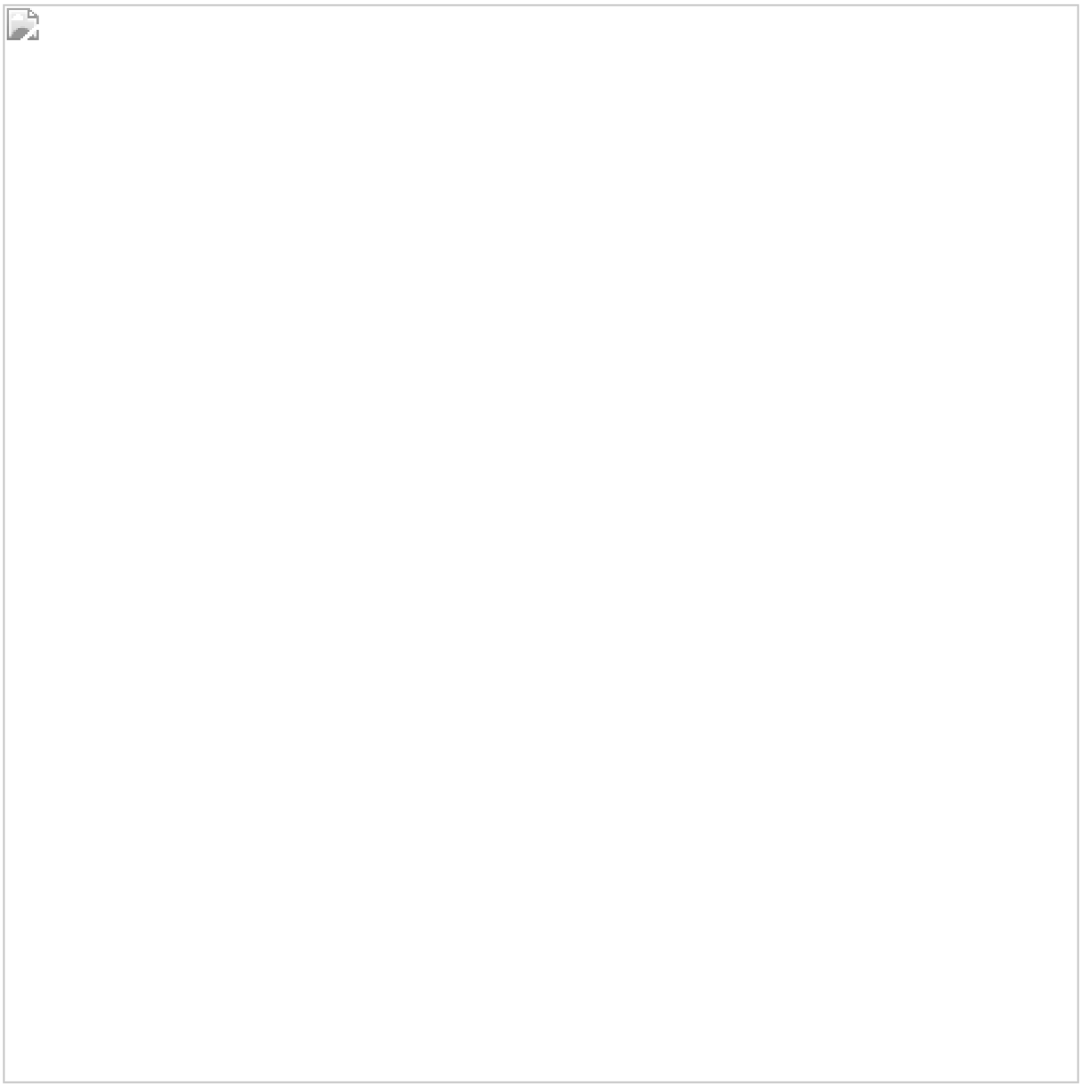


Think about it

1. What did the fine gentleman say the "wife" had called the lamb?

- ○ Her pet
- ○ Her brother
- ○ Her friend

The Song at the River



The lamb ran away from the servant sent to catch him. He ran to the river bank, where the wind sighed in the tall reeds, and sang a farewell song to his sister: “Alenoushka, little sister,” he sang.

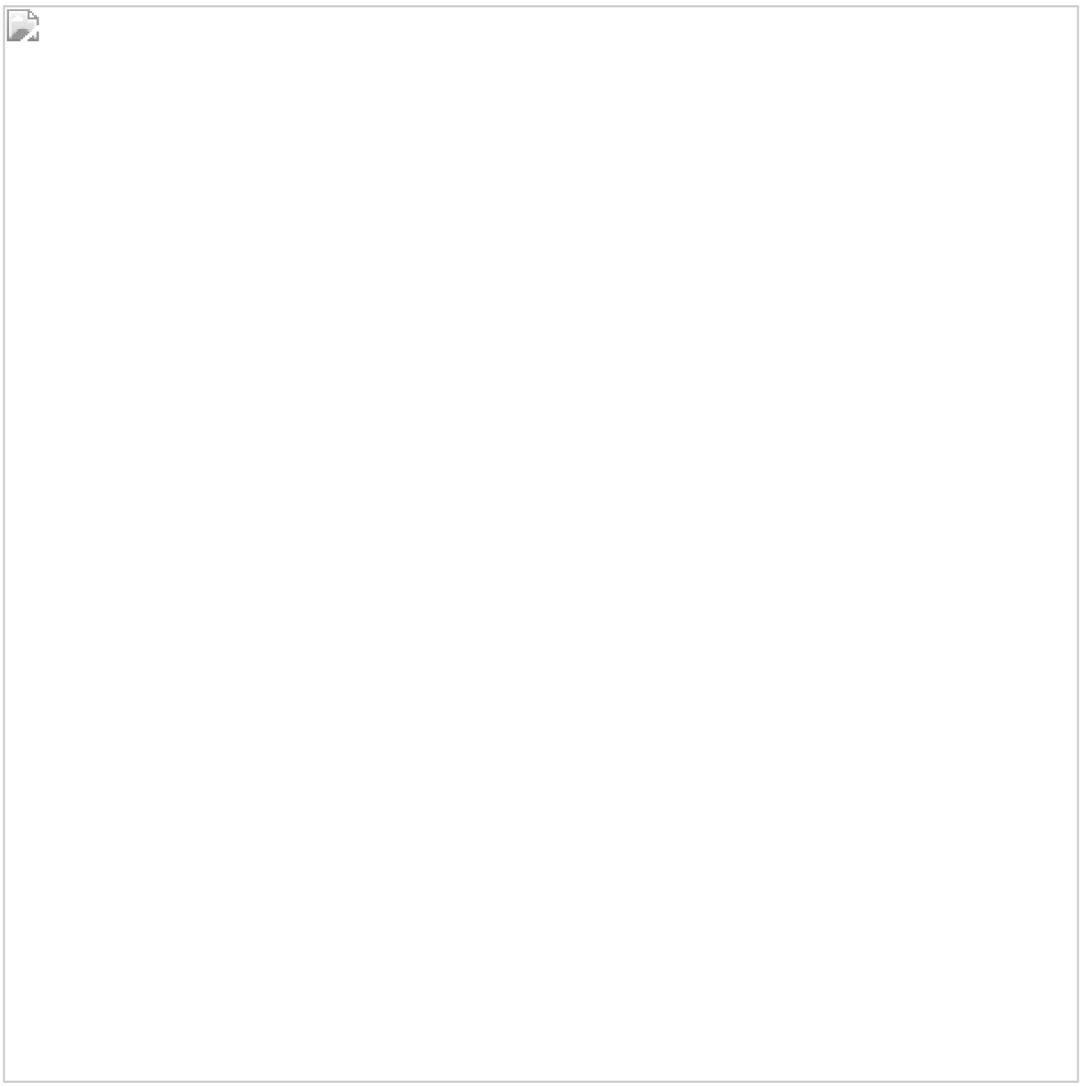
And from the bottom of the river Alenoushka answered him:

“O my brother Ivanoushka, A heavy stone is round my throat, Silken grass grows through my fingers, Yellow sand lies on my breast.”

The servant, who had followed him quietly, listened and marvelled. He crept away and told the fine gentleman, and they set out together to the river to watch the lamb and listen.

TALK ABOUT IT

A sweet voice answered from the river. If you had been the servant, what would you have done?

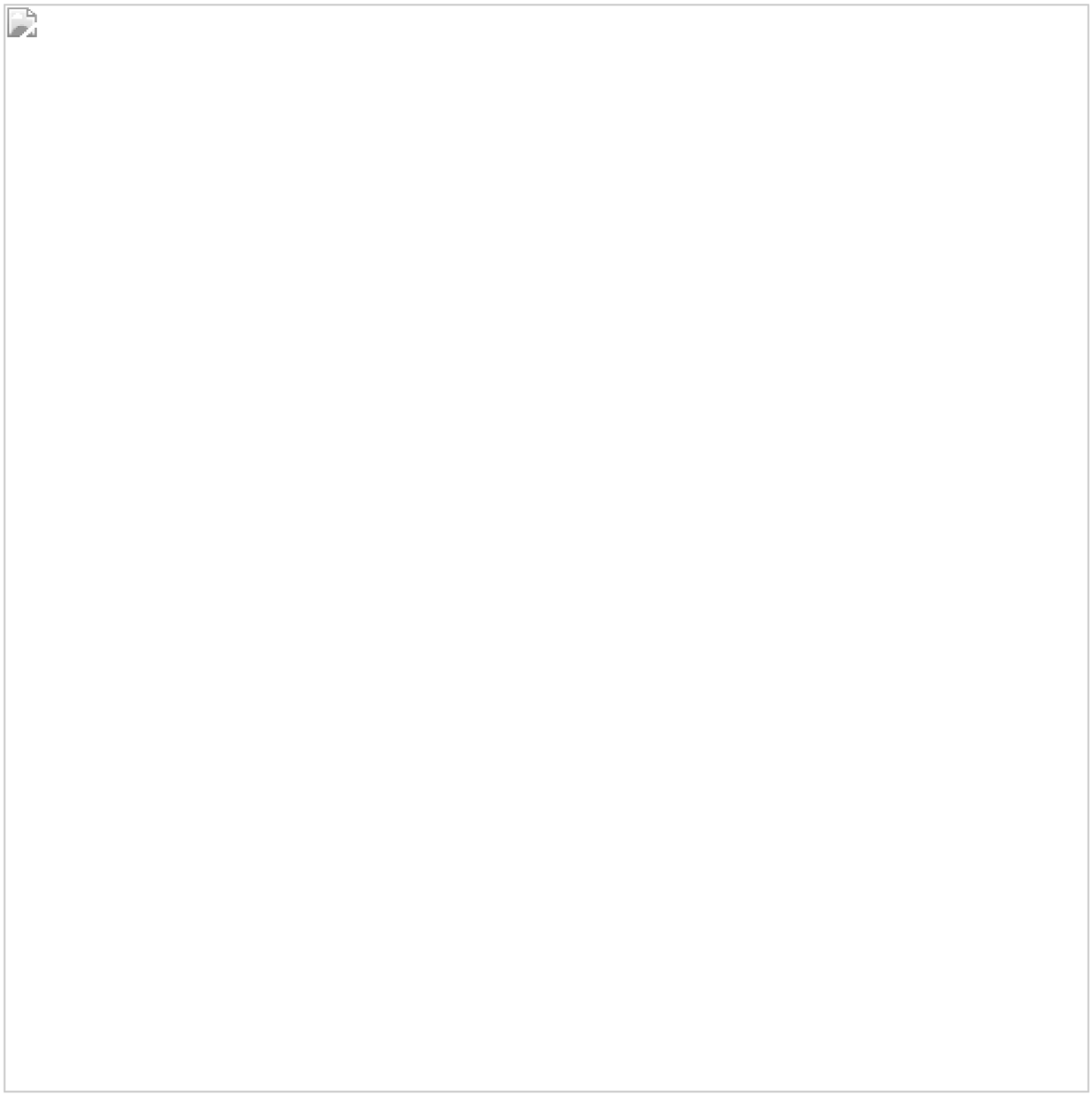


Think about it

1. Who heard the song first and told the fine gentleman?

- ○ The servant
- ○ The witch
- ○ A fisherman

The Silken Nets



At the river the little white lamb stood weeping so that his tears fell into the water. He sang again, and again the voice answered from the bottom of the river.

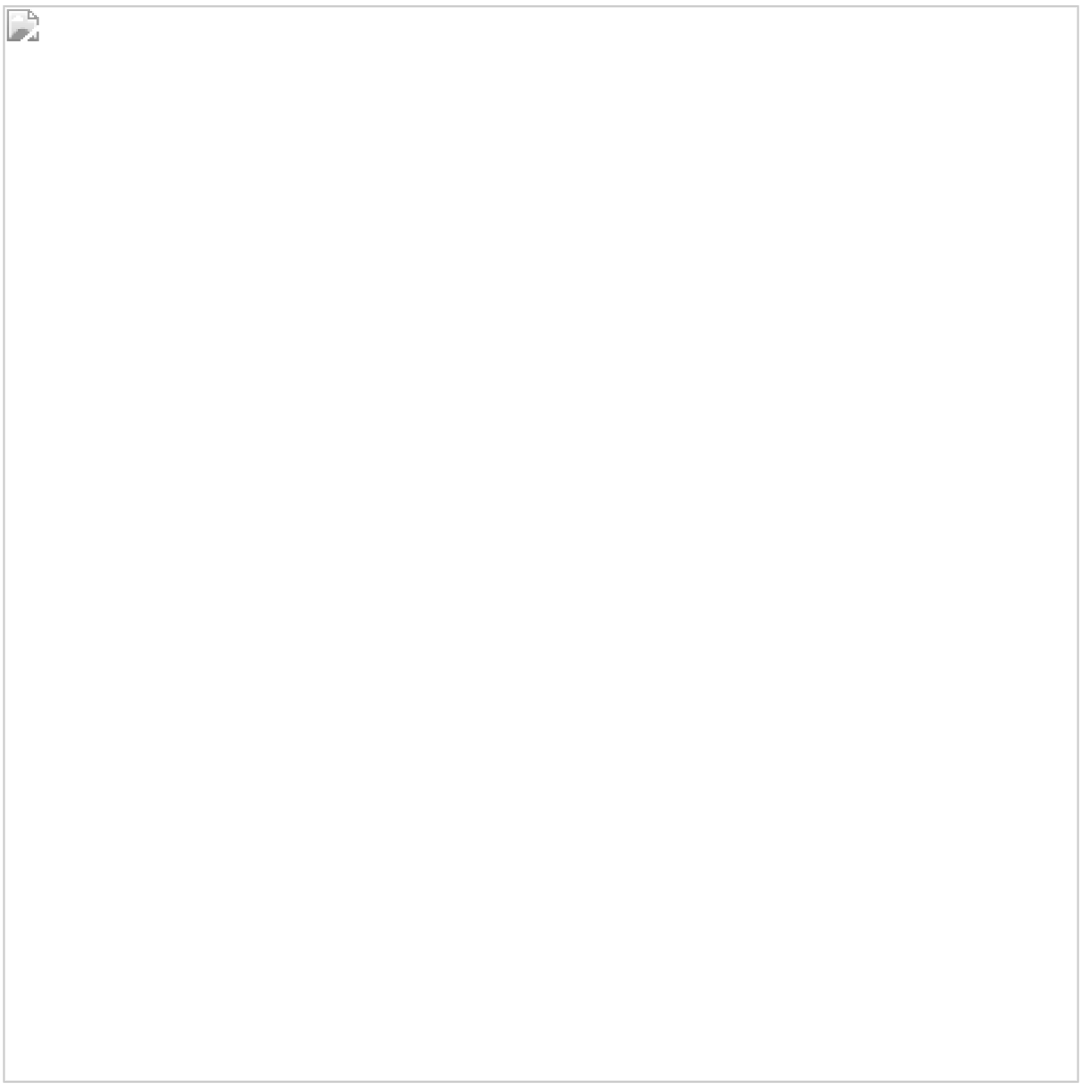
The fine gentleman was sure that it was the voice of his own dear wife. He sent for men and fishing nets and nets of silk.

The men dragged the river with fishing nets, and brought them to land empty. Then they tried the nets of fine silk, and as they drew them in, there was Alenoushka, “as if she were asleep.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The fine gentleman knew her voice. Whose voice would you know anywhere?

The Silken Nets · another picture

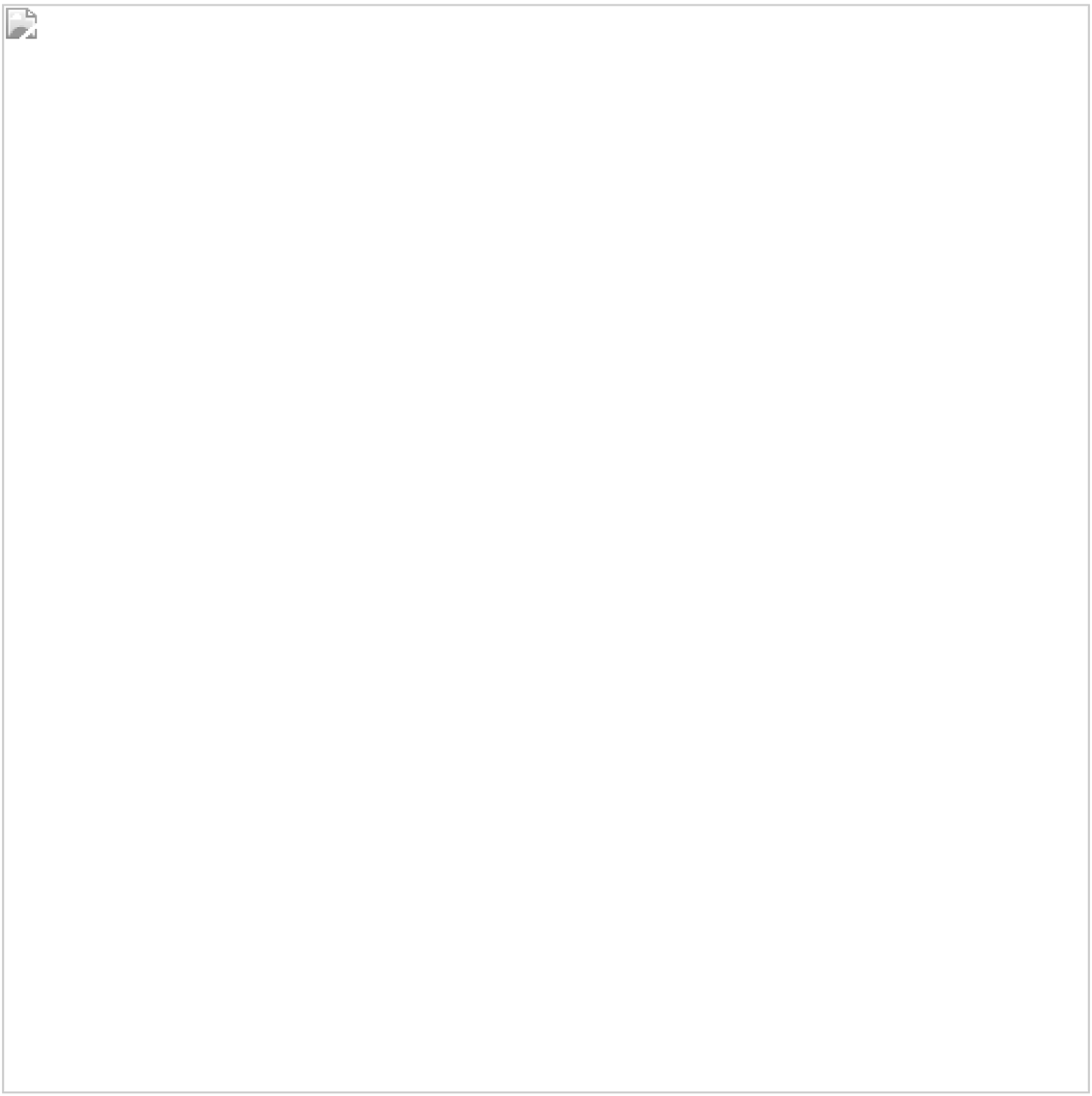


Think about it

1. What did the men catch when they tried nets of fine silk?

- ○ A big fish
- ○ Alenoushka
- ○ Nothing at all

Awake Again



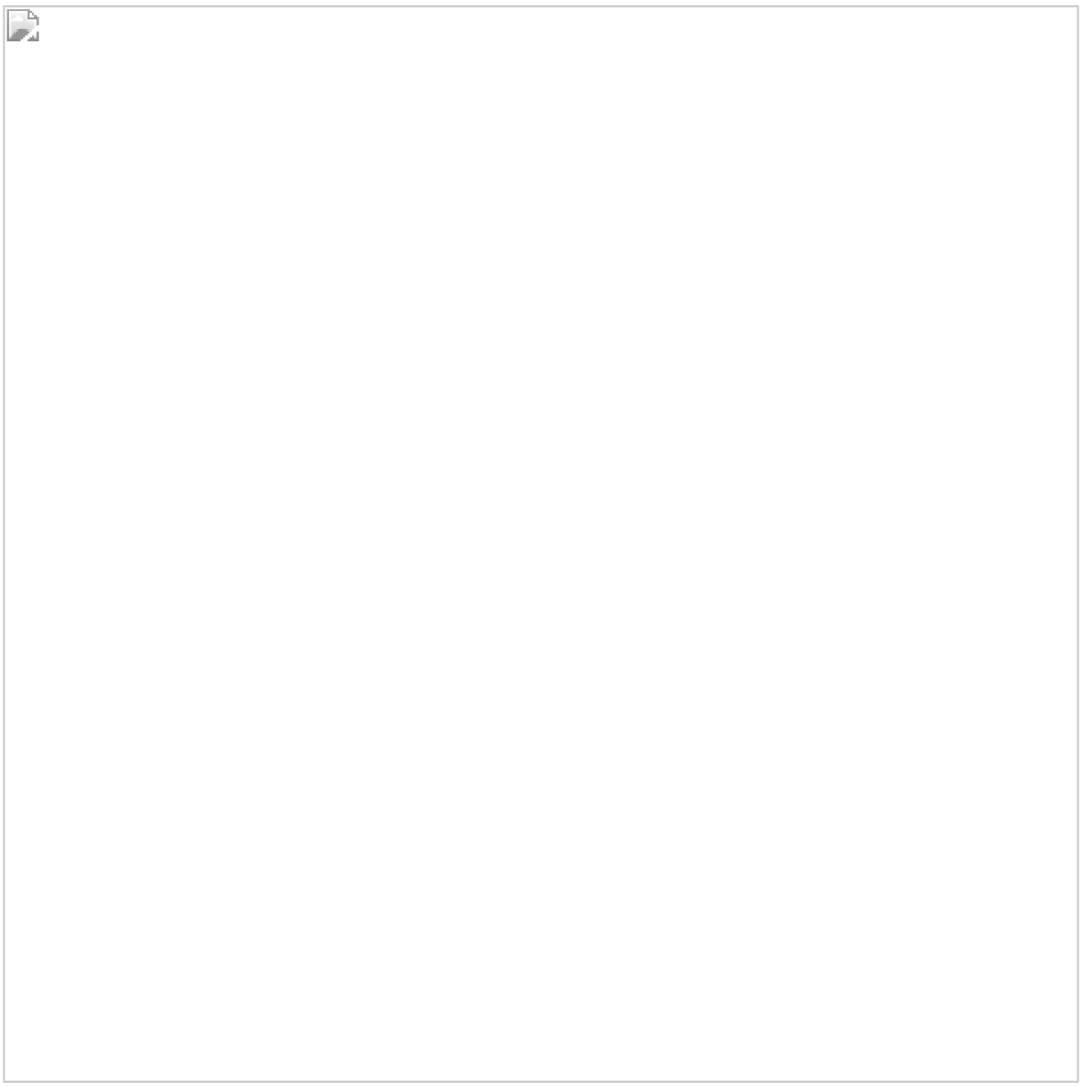
They untied the stone from her white neck, washed her in fresh water and dressed her in white clothes. She woke more beautiful than ever, sprang up, and threw her arms round the neck of the little white lamb.

In that moment he became her little brother Vanoushka again. Vanoushka laughed and shouted in the sunshine, and the fine gentleman wept tears of joy. They all praised God and kissed each other, and went home together.

As soon as they got home, the fine gentleman turned the old witch out of the house. She became an ugly old hag and went away to the deep woods, shrieking as she went.

TALK ABOUT IT

Everyone was glad at once. What would you do first if you were Vanoushka?

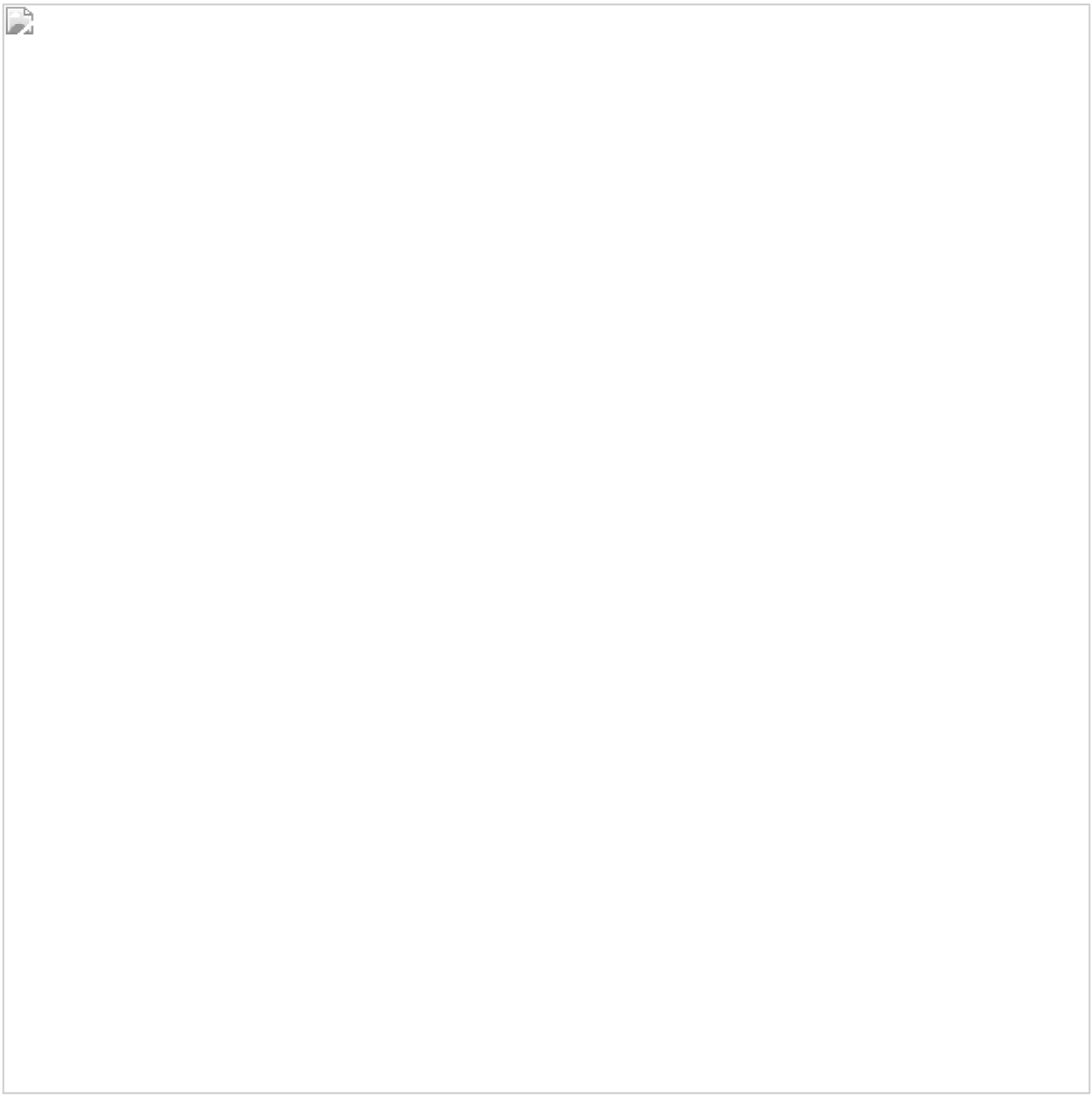


Think about it

1. What happened to the lamb when Alenoushka hugged him?

- ○ He ran off
- ○ He became her brother again
- ○ He fell asleep

Honey Every Day



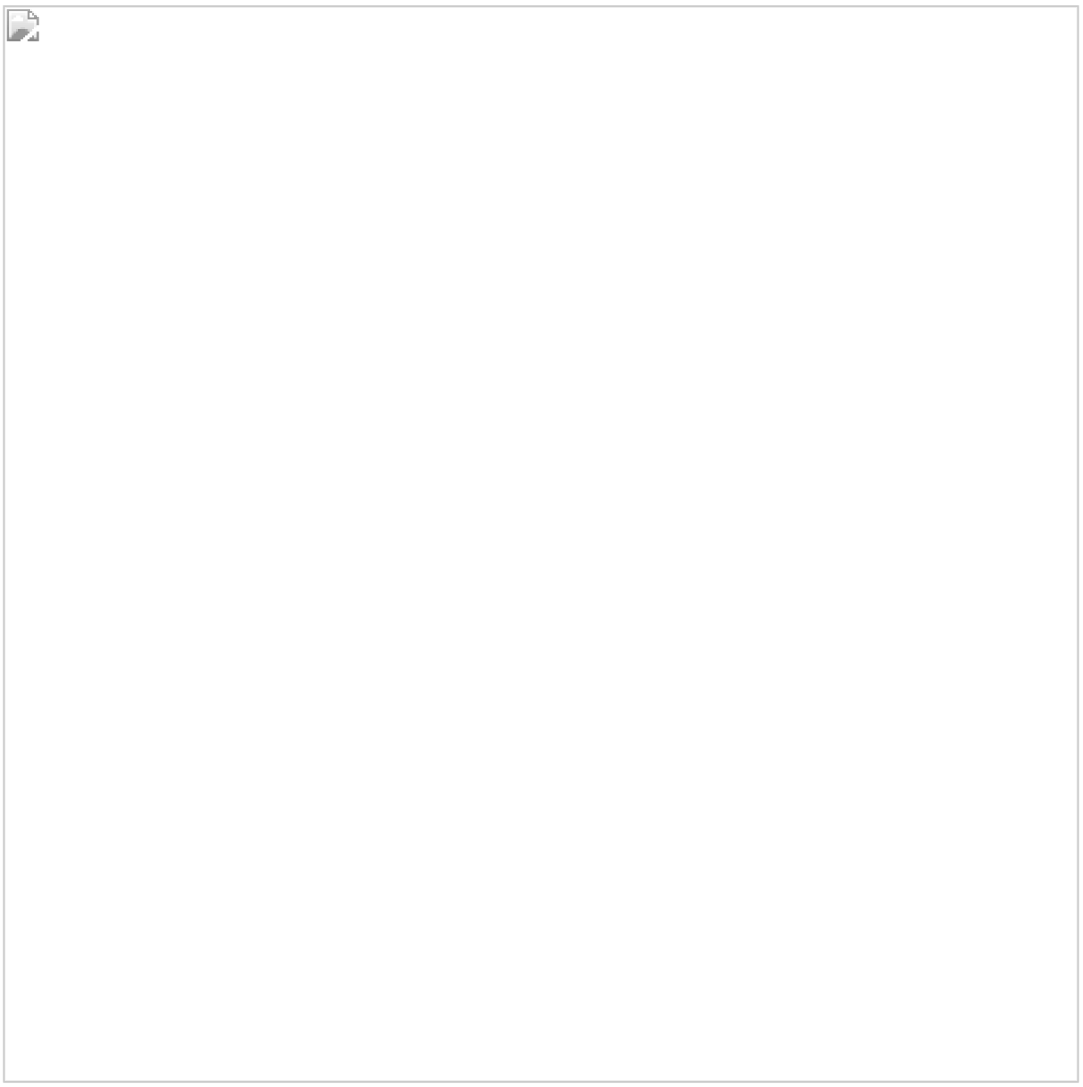
“And did she ever come back again?” someone asked old Peter. “No, she never came back again,” said old Peter. “Once was enough.”

Vanoushka grew up as handsome as Alenoushka was pretty. He became a great hunter, and he married the sister of the fine gentleman.

And they all lived happily together, and ate honey every day, with white bread and new milk.

TALK ABOUT IT

What is one thing you would want to eat or do every day if you could?



Think about it

1. What did Vanoushka become when he grew up?

- ○ A farmer
- ○ A great hunter
- ○ A king

2. Vanoushka drank when his sister said not to, and she still never left him. What do you think that says about her?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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