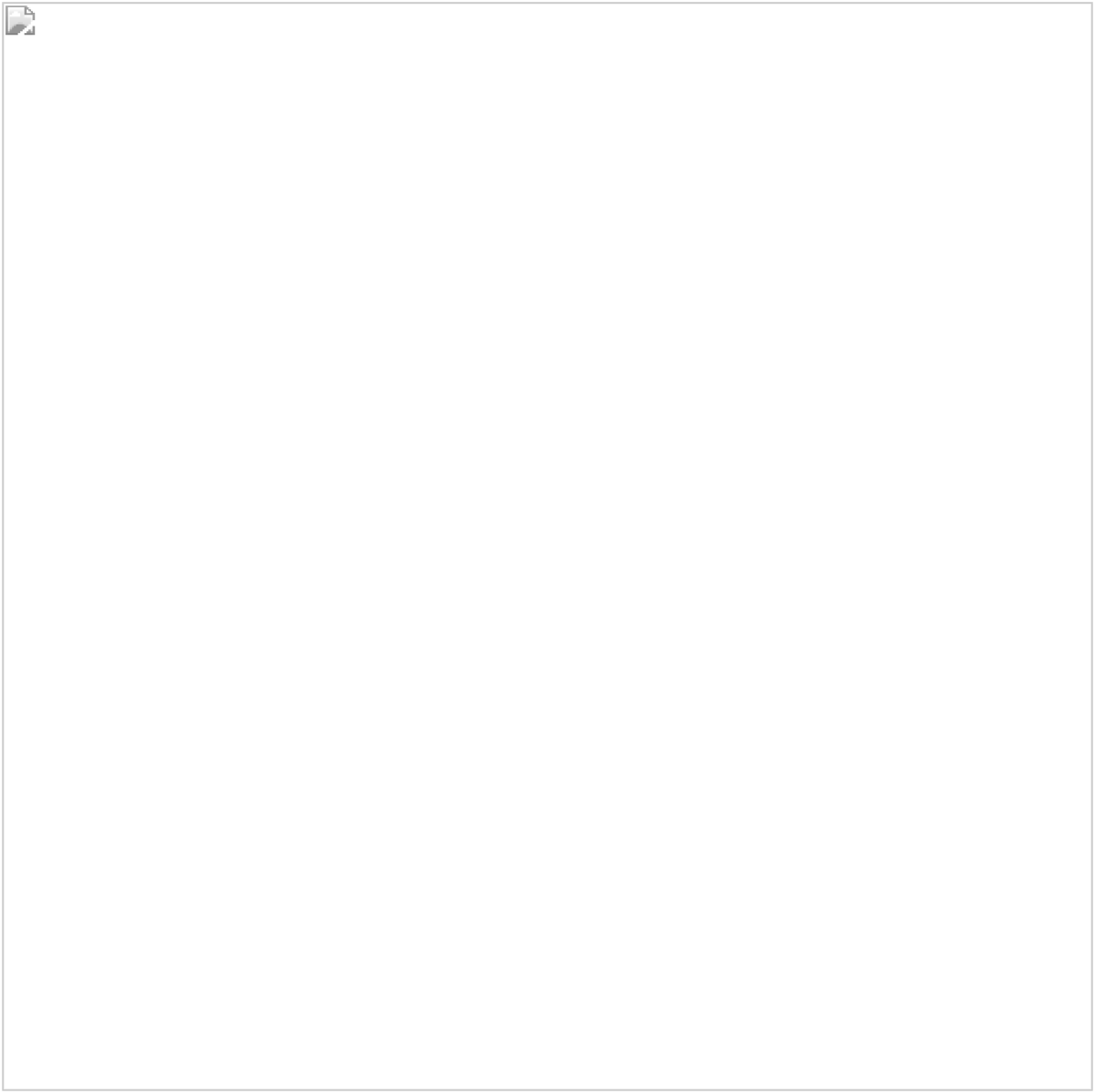
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Anansi and Nothing

A Tale from West Africa



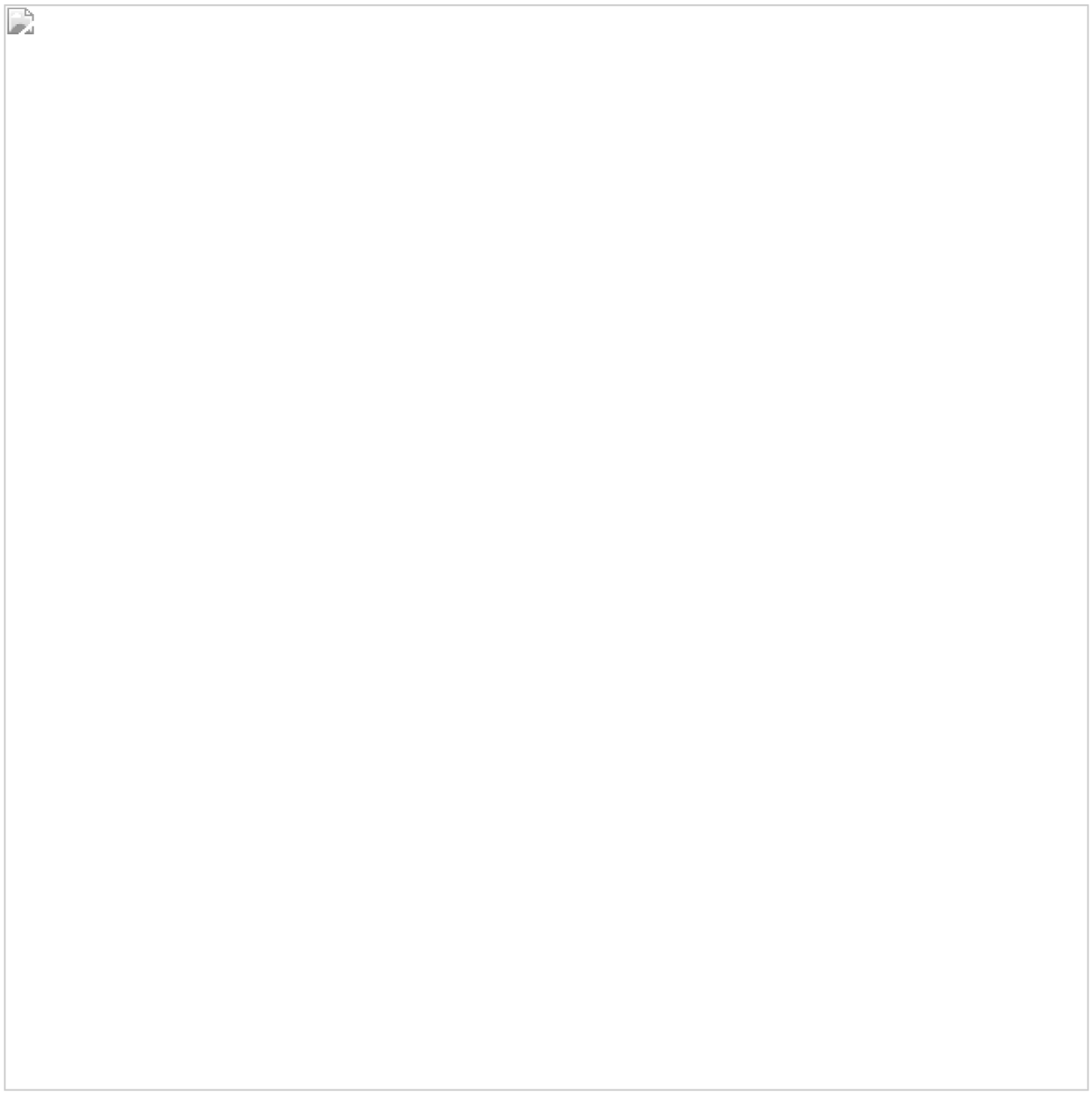
Near Anansi's miserable little hut there was a fine palace. A very rich man called Nothing lived in it.

TALK ABOUT IT

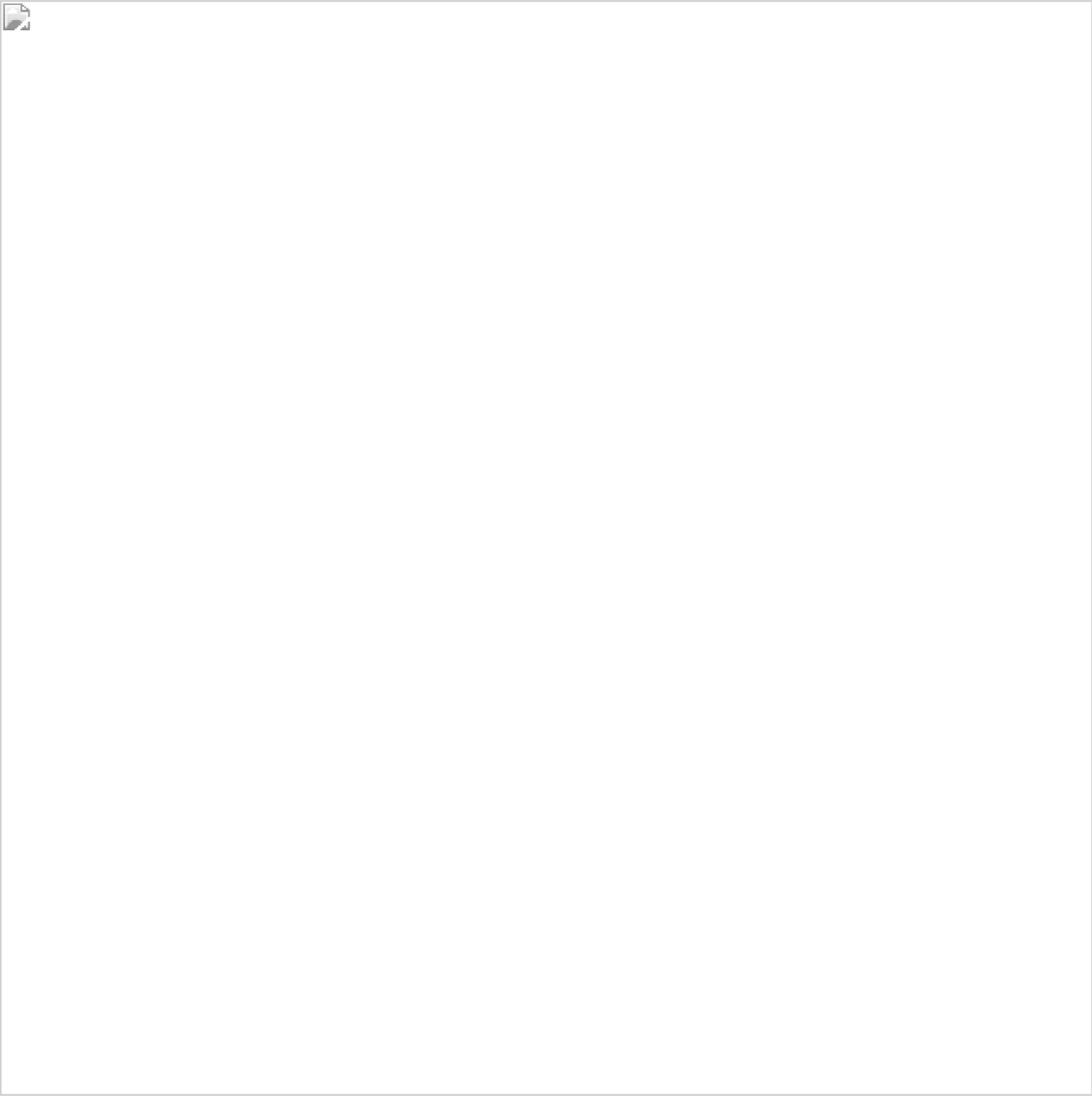
A man named Nothing lived in a palace. Why do you think a story would give him that name?

This book belongs to _____

Anansi and Nothing · another picture



A Journey Together

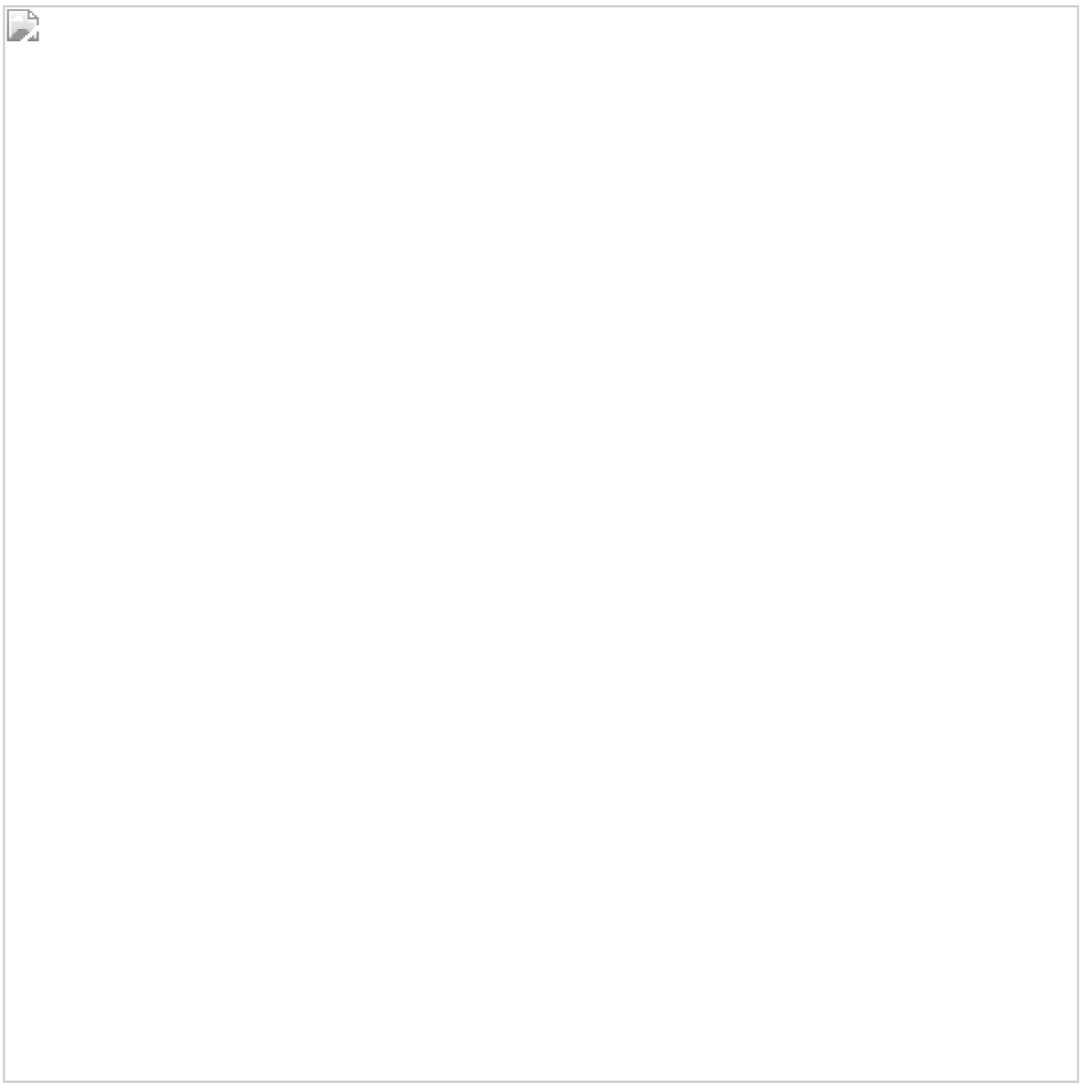


Nothing and Anansi proposed, one day, to go to the neighbouring town to get some wives. They set off together.

Nothing, being a rich man, wore a very fine velvet cloth. Anansi had a ragged cotton one.

TALK ABOUT IT

Two neighbours set out together. Who do you like to travel with?

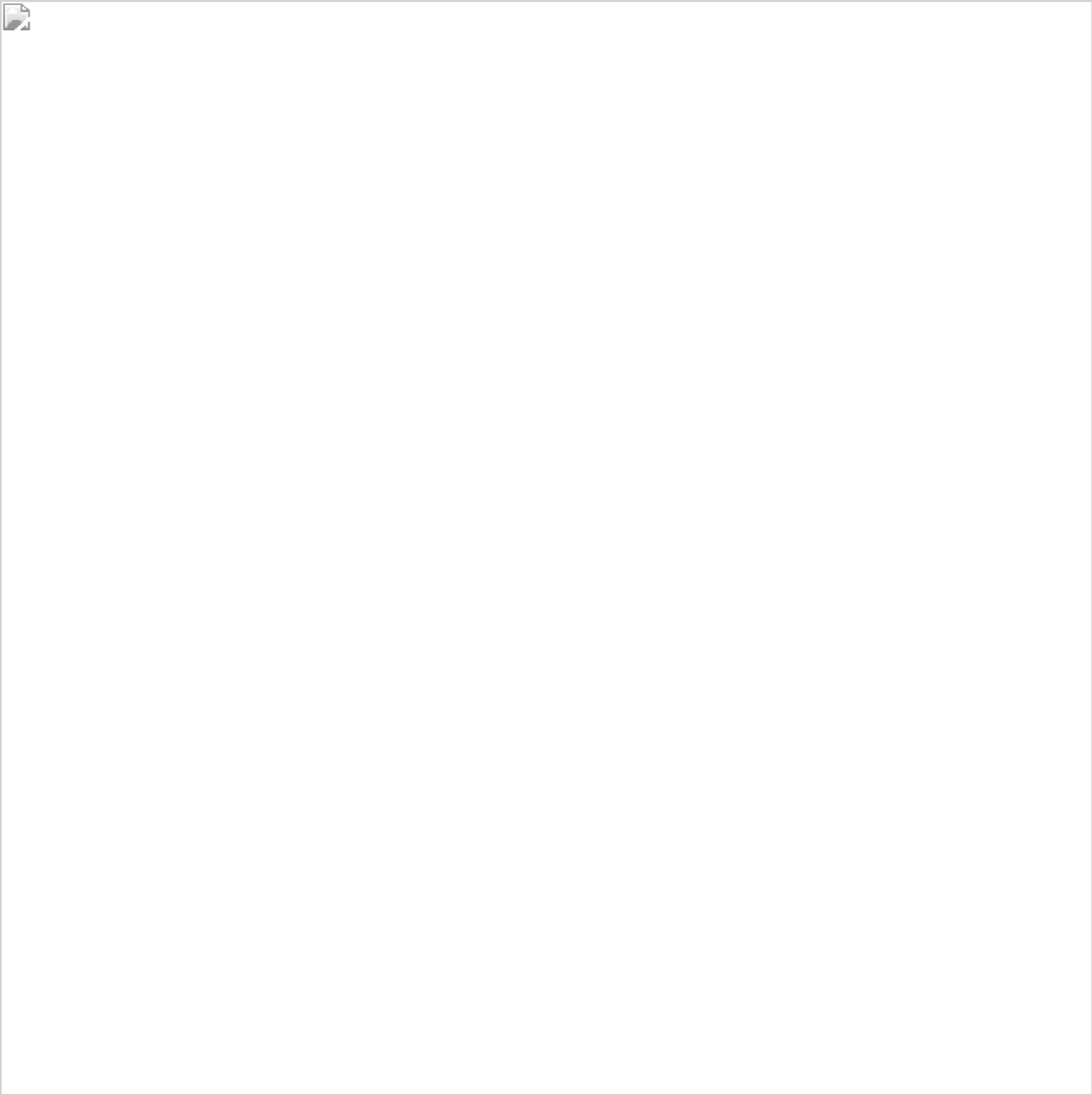


Think about it

1. Who wore the fine velvet cloth?

- ○ Anansi
- ○ Nothing
- ○ A servant

Changing Clothes



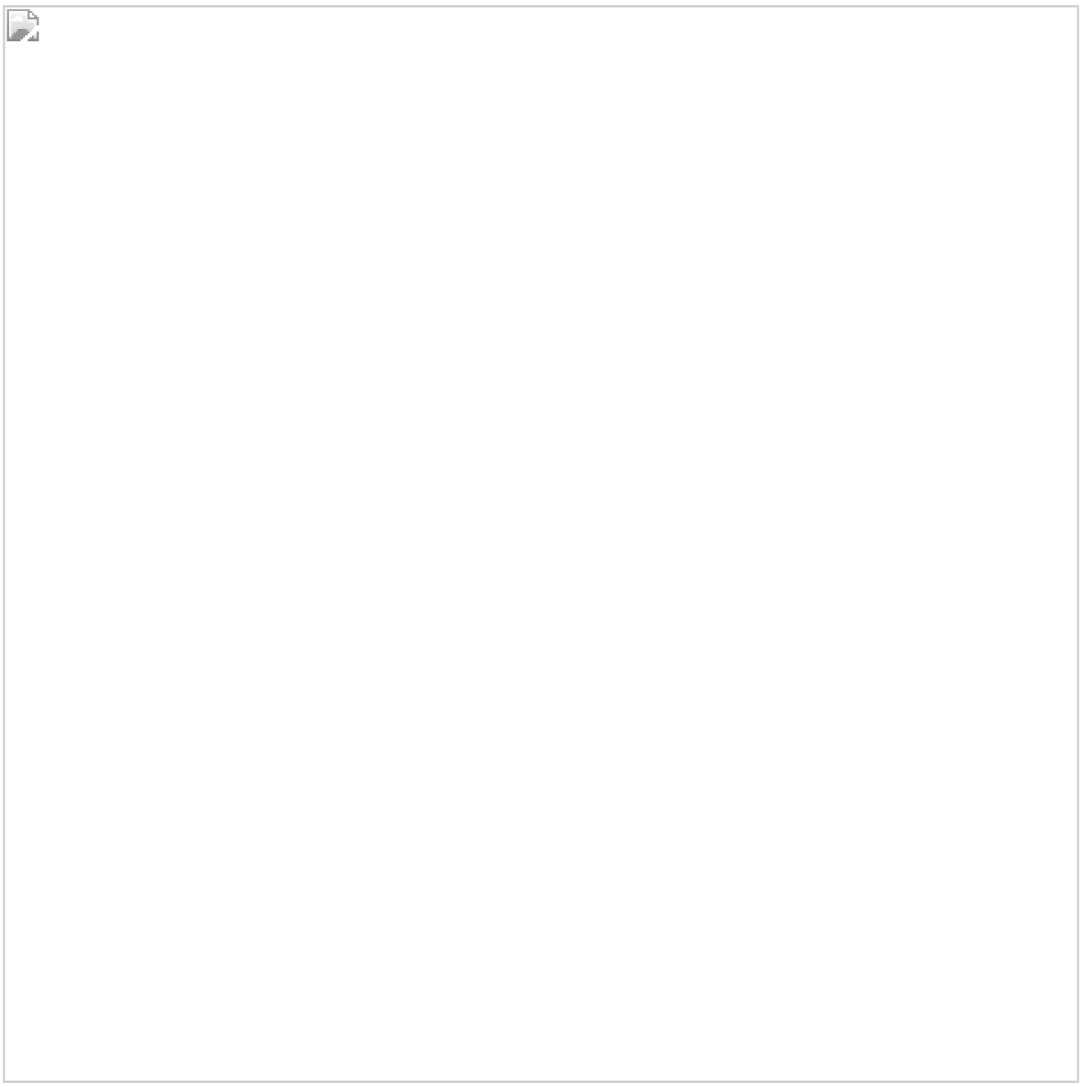
On the way Anansi persuaded Nothing to change clothes for a little while. He promised to give back the fine velvet before they reached the town.

But he put it off, first on one pretext, then on another, until they arrived.

TALK ABOUT IT

Anansi promised to give the cloth back. What do you think about someone who does not keep a promise?

Changing Clothes · another picture

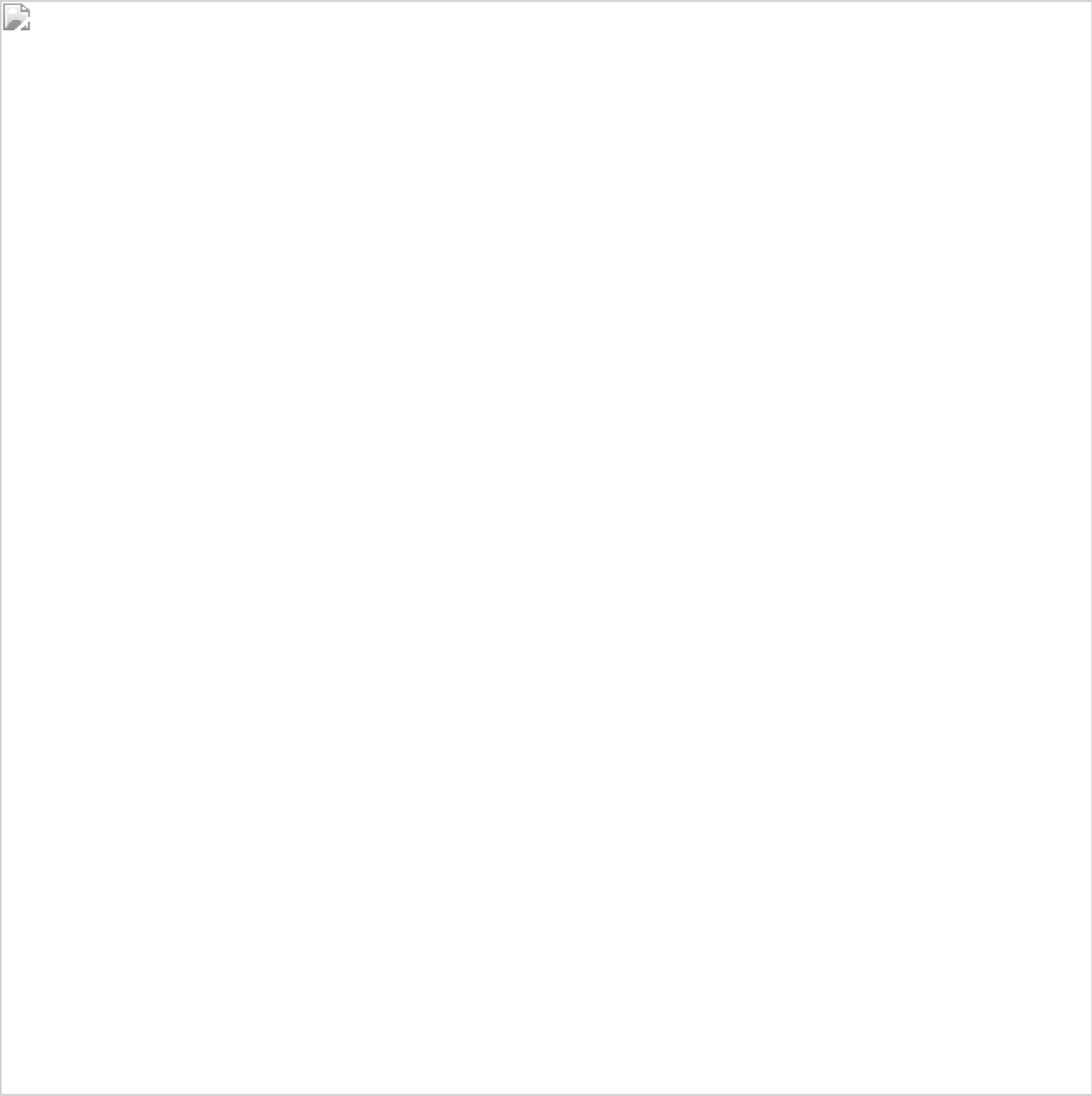


Think about it

1. What did Anansi promise Nothing?

- ○ A feast
- ○ To give back the velvet before the town
- ○ A new palace

In the Town



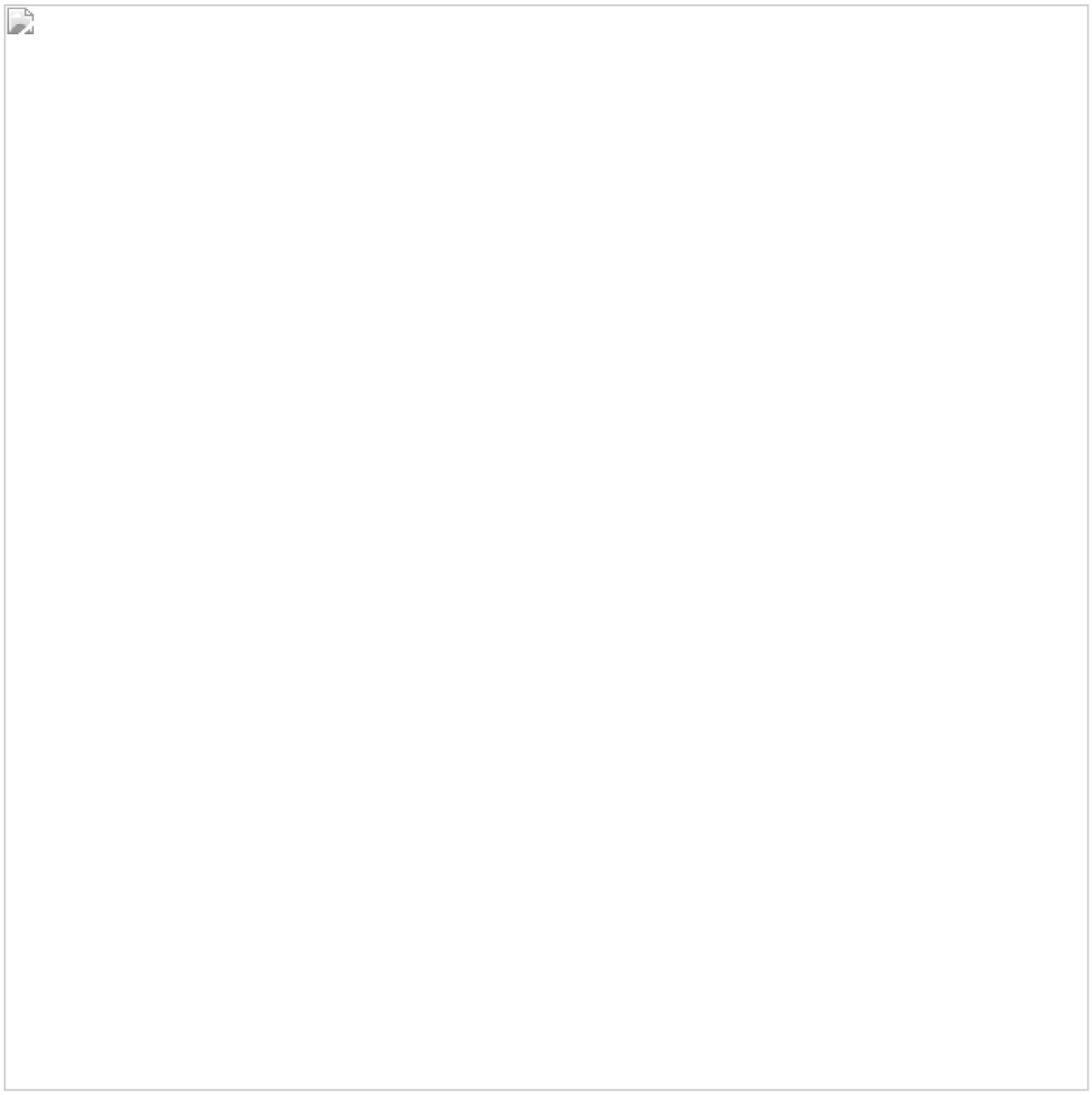
Anansi, dressed in such a fine cloth, found no difficulty in getting as many wives as he wished.

Poor Nothing, in his ragged cloth, was treated with great contempt. At first he could not get even one wife.

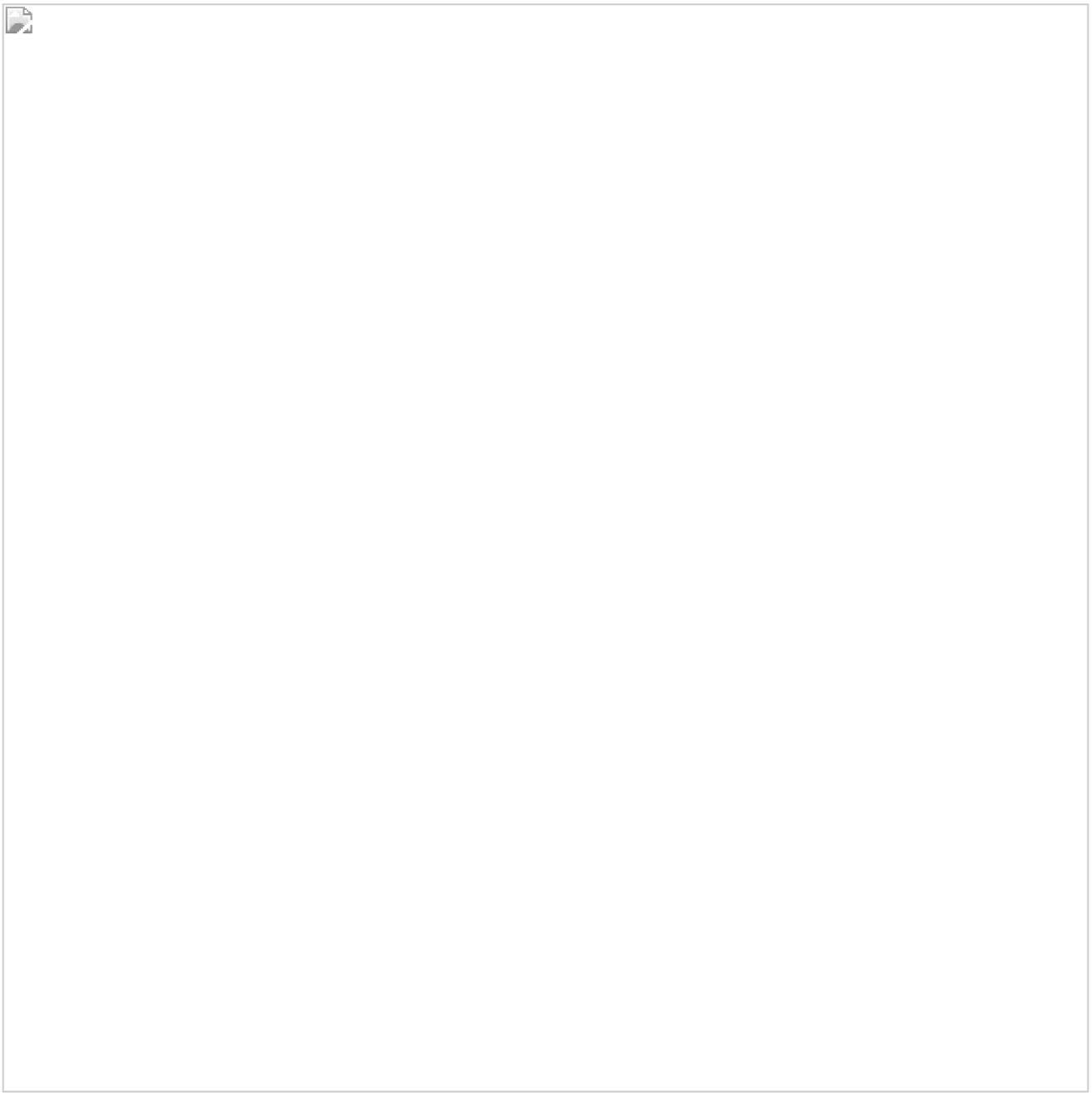
TALK ABOUT IT

People treated the two men differently because of their clothes. Have you ever seen that happen?

In the Town · another picture



A Woman Takes Pity



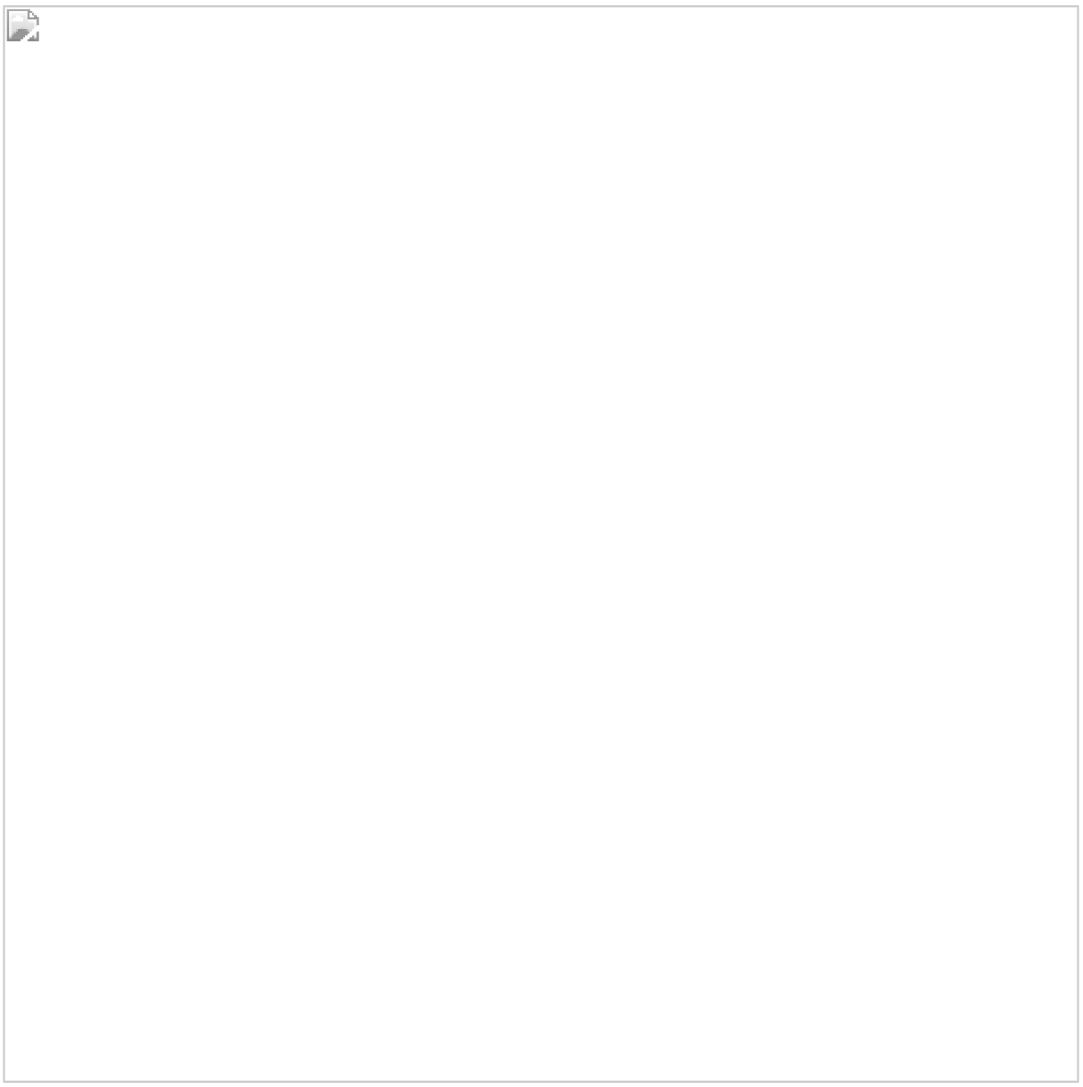
At last a woman took pity on Nothing and gave him her daughter.

Anansi's wives laughed at the poor girl very heartily for choosing such a beggar as Nothing appeared to be. She wisely took no notice of their scorn.

TALK ABOUT IT

She did not answer their laughing. What helps you when someone is unkind to you?

A Woman Takes Pity · another picture

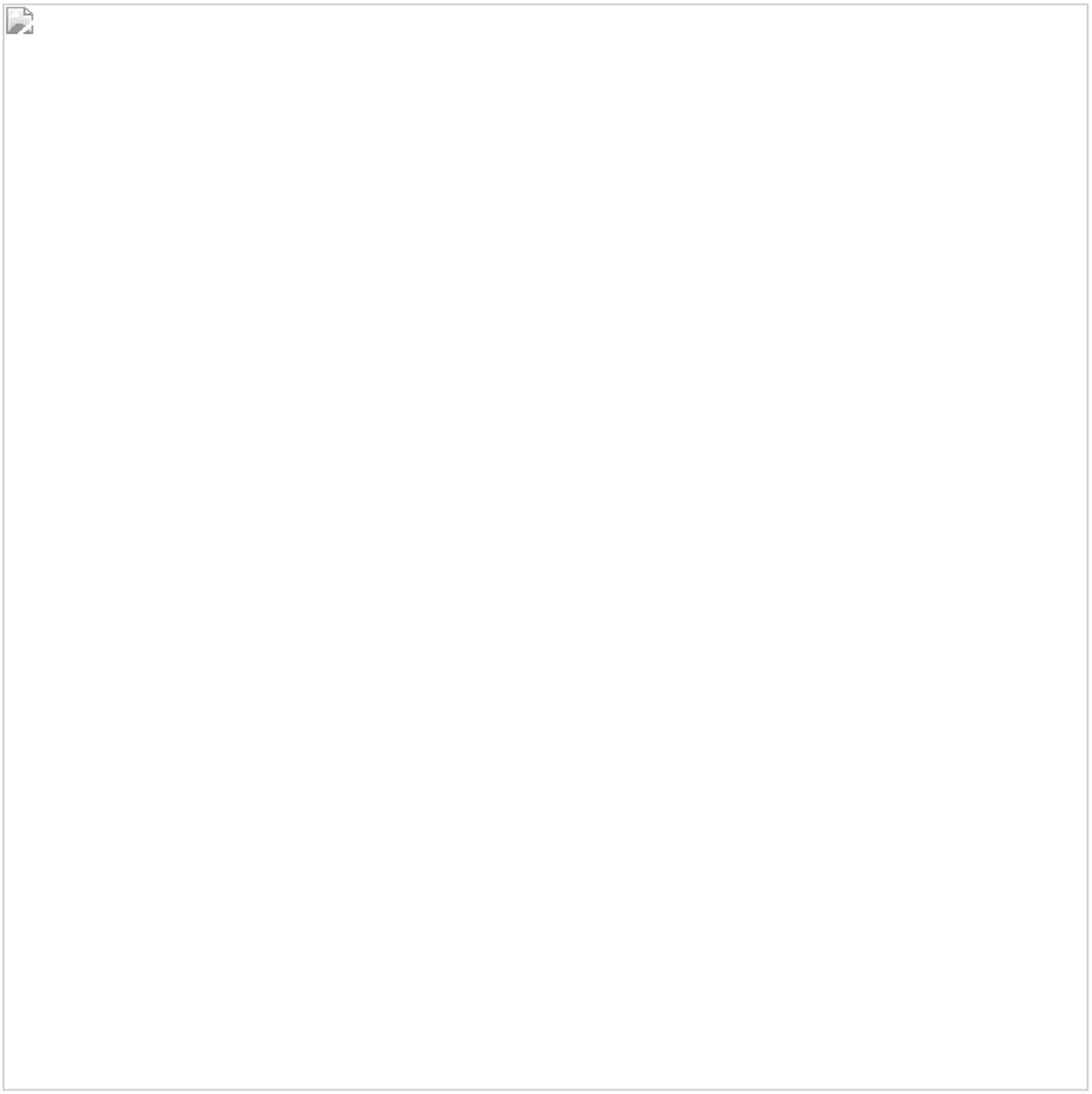


Think about it

1. How did Nothing's wife answer the laughing?

- ○ She laughed back
- ○ She took no notice
- ○ She went home

The Cross-Roads



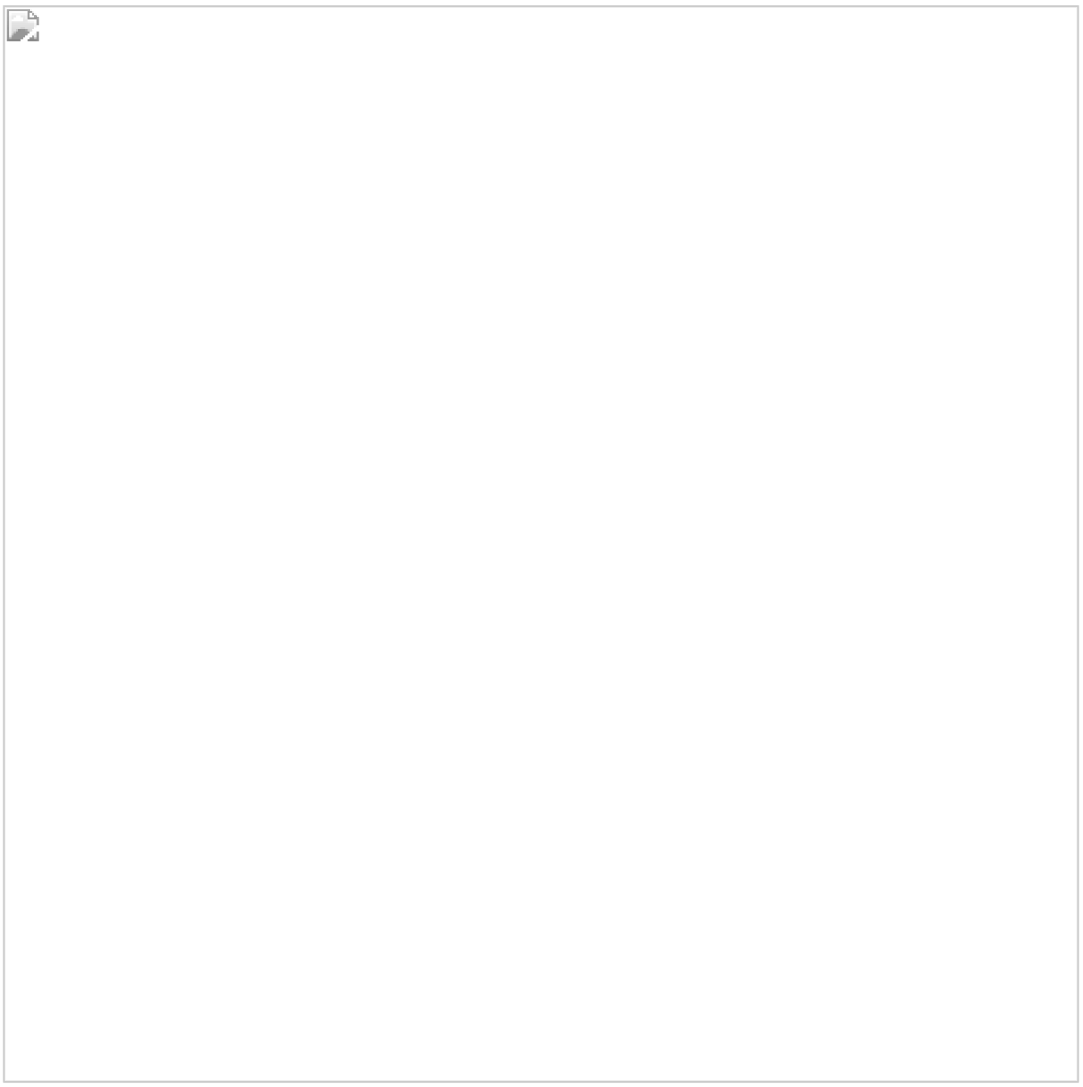
The party set off for home. When they reached the cross-roads leading to their houses, the women were astonished.

The road to Anansi's house was only half cleared. The road to Nothing's palace was wide and well made, and servants had strewn it with beautiful skins and carpets. Servants waited with fine clothes for Nothing and his wife. No one was waiting for Anansi.

TALK ABOUT IT

The women had judged the men by their clothes. What did they find out?

The Cross-Roads · another picture

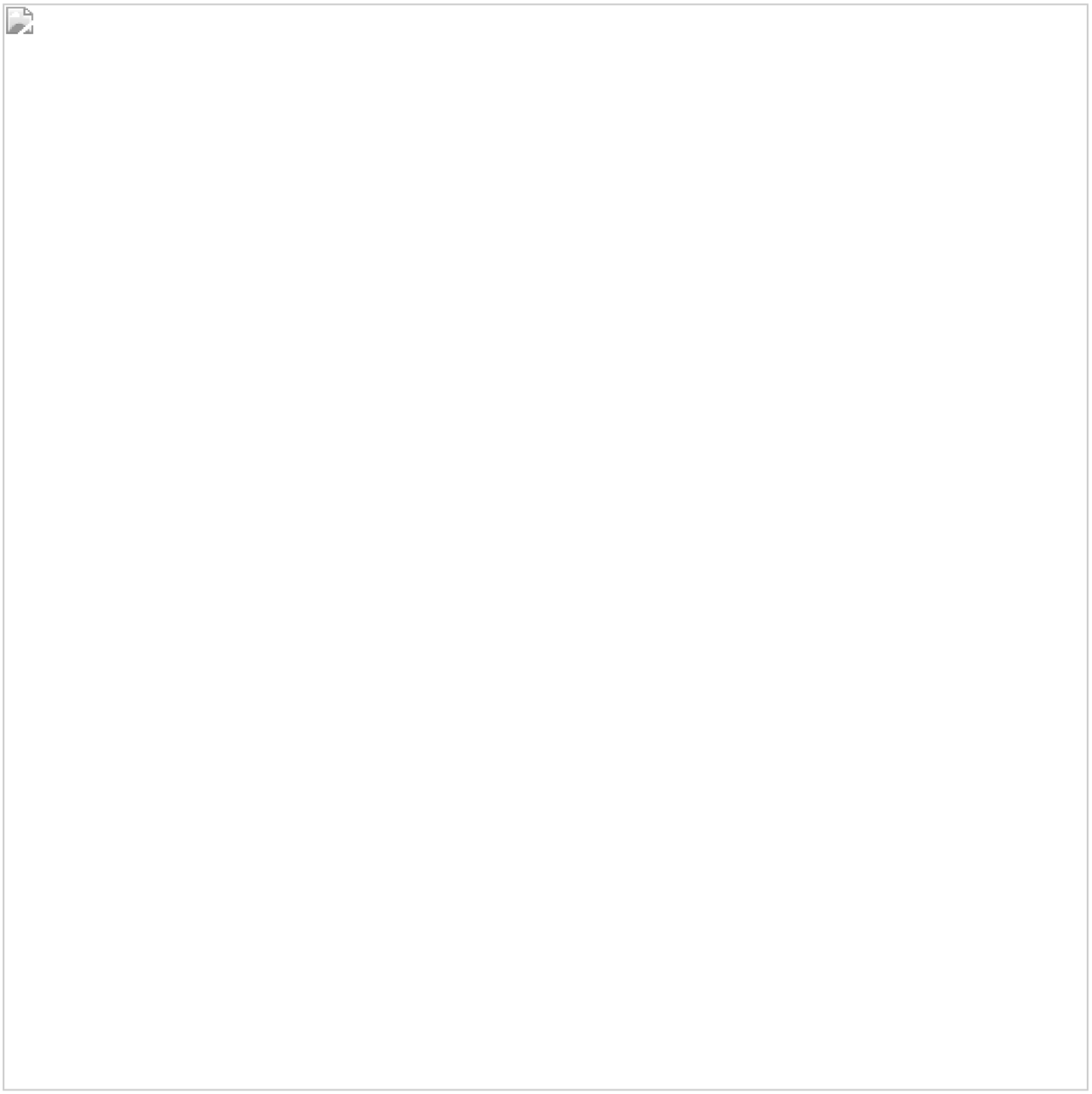


Think about it

1. Who was waiting at the cross-roads?

- ○ Nothing's servants
- ○ Anansi's friends
- ○ The king's soldiers

The Feast

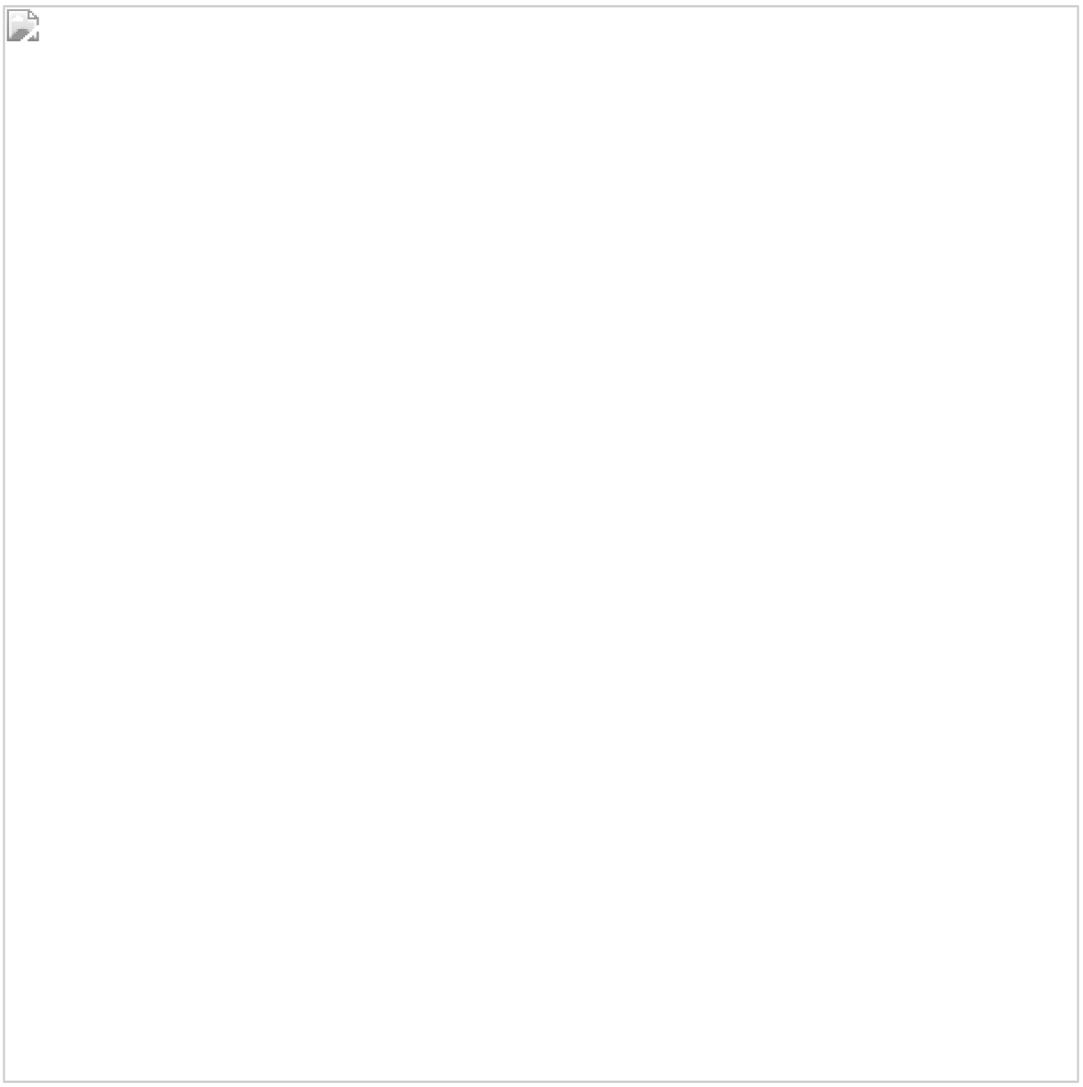


Nothing's wife was queen over the whole district and had everything her heart could desire. Anansi's wives could not even get proper food. They had to live on unripe bananas with peppers.

Nothing's wife heard of her friends' miserable state and invited them to a great feast in her palace. They were so pleased with all they saw that they agreed to stay there. They refused to come back to Anansi's hut.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nothing's wife invited the women who had laughed at her. What do you think of that?

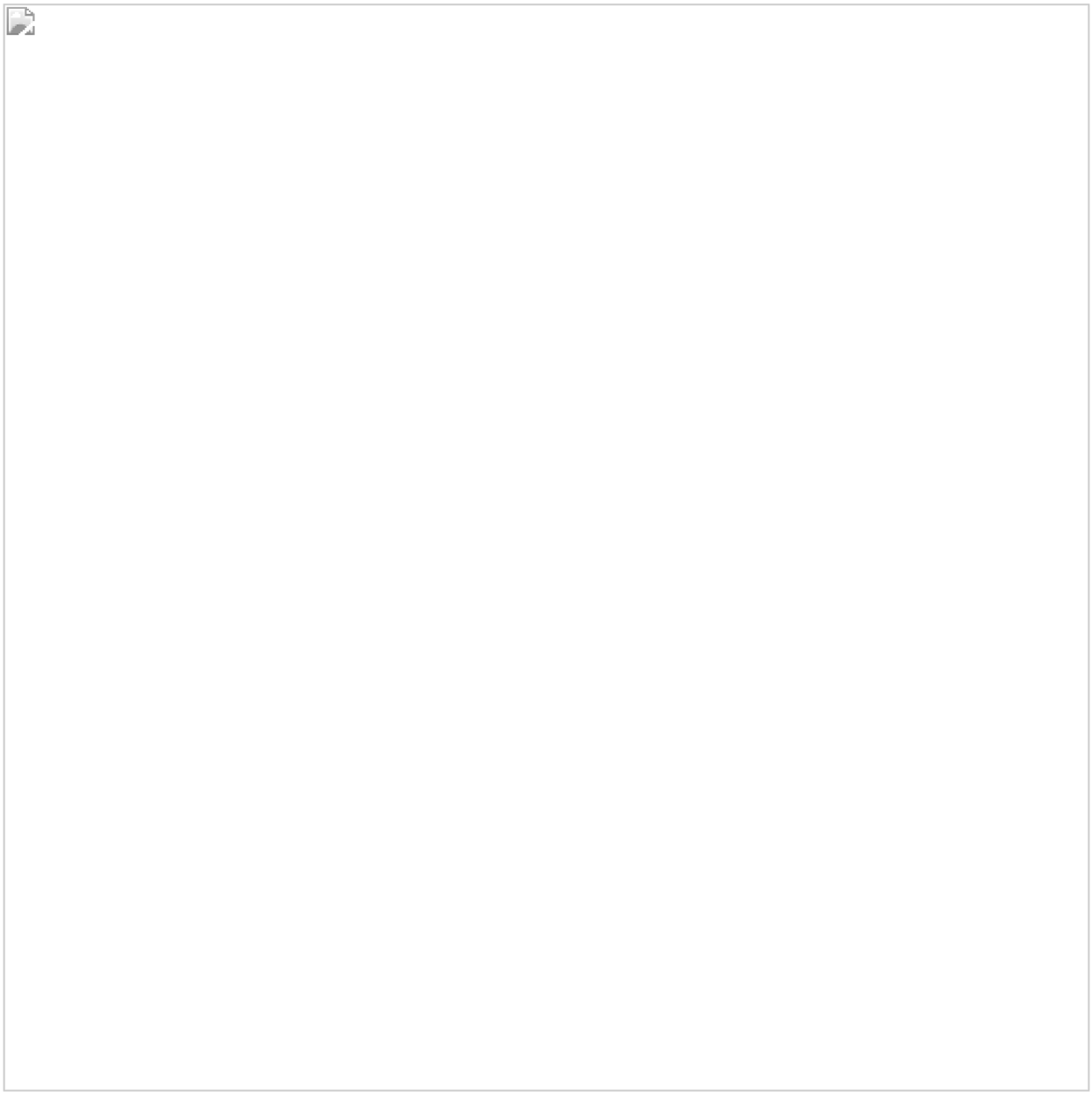


Think about it

1. Why did Anansi's wives stay at the palace?

- ○ They were pleased with all they saw
- ○ They were told to by a king
- ○ They were lost

Anansi's Anger



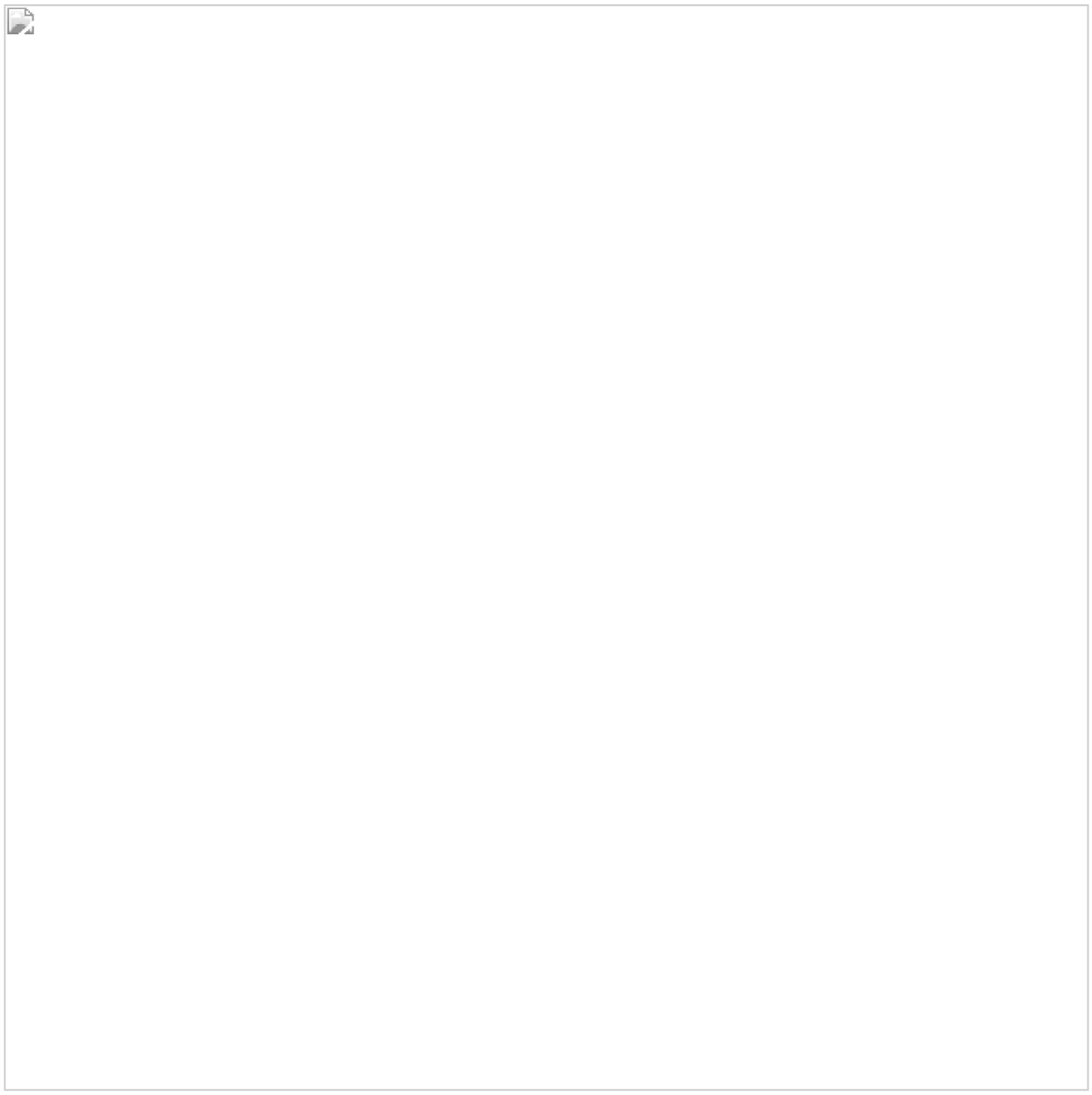
Anansi was very angry. He tried in many ways to kill Nothing, but without success.

At last he got some rat friends to dig a deep tunnel in front of Nothing's door. When the hole was finished, Anansi lined it with sharp things. Then he smeared the steps of the palace with okro to make them very slippery, and withdrew to a little distance.

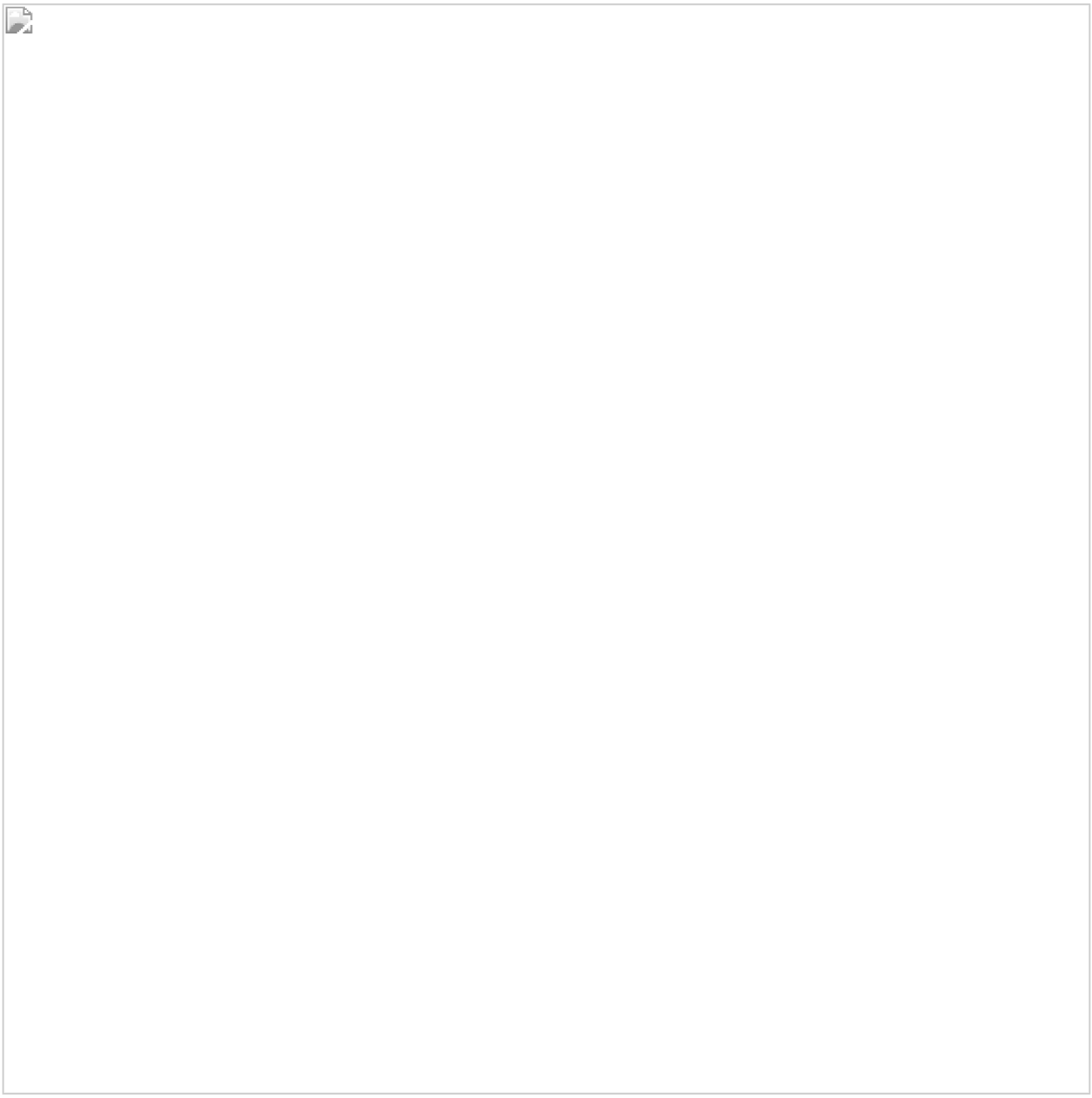
TALK ABOUT IT

Anansi got angry and planned something unkind. What do you do with your own angry feelings?

Anansi's Anger · another picture



Something to See



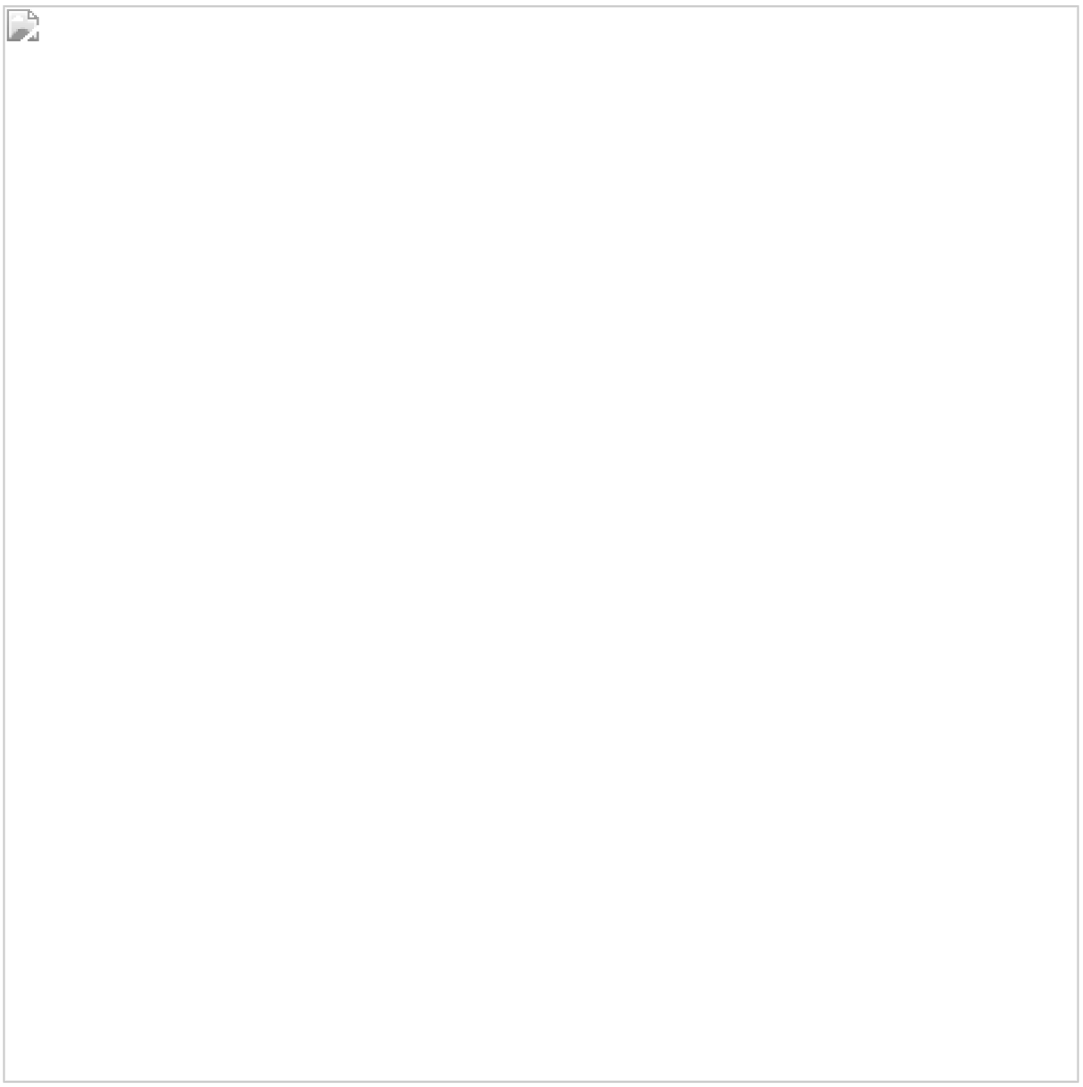
When he thought Nothing's household was safely in bed and asleep, Anansi called to Nothing to come out to the courtyard and see something.

Nothing's wife talked him out of going. Anansi tried again and again, and each time she told her husband not to listen. At last Nothing decided to go and see this thing.

TALK ABOUT IT

She told him not to go. Have you ever had a feeling that someone should not do something?

Something to See · another picture

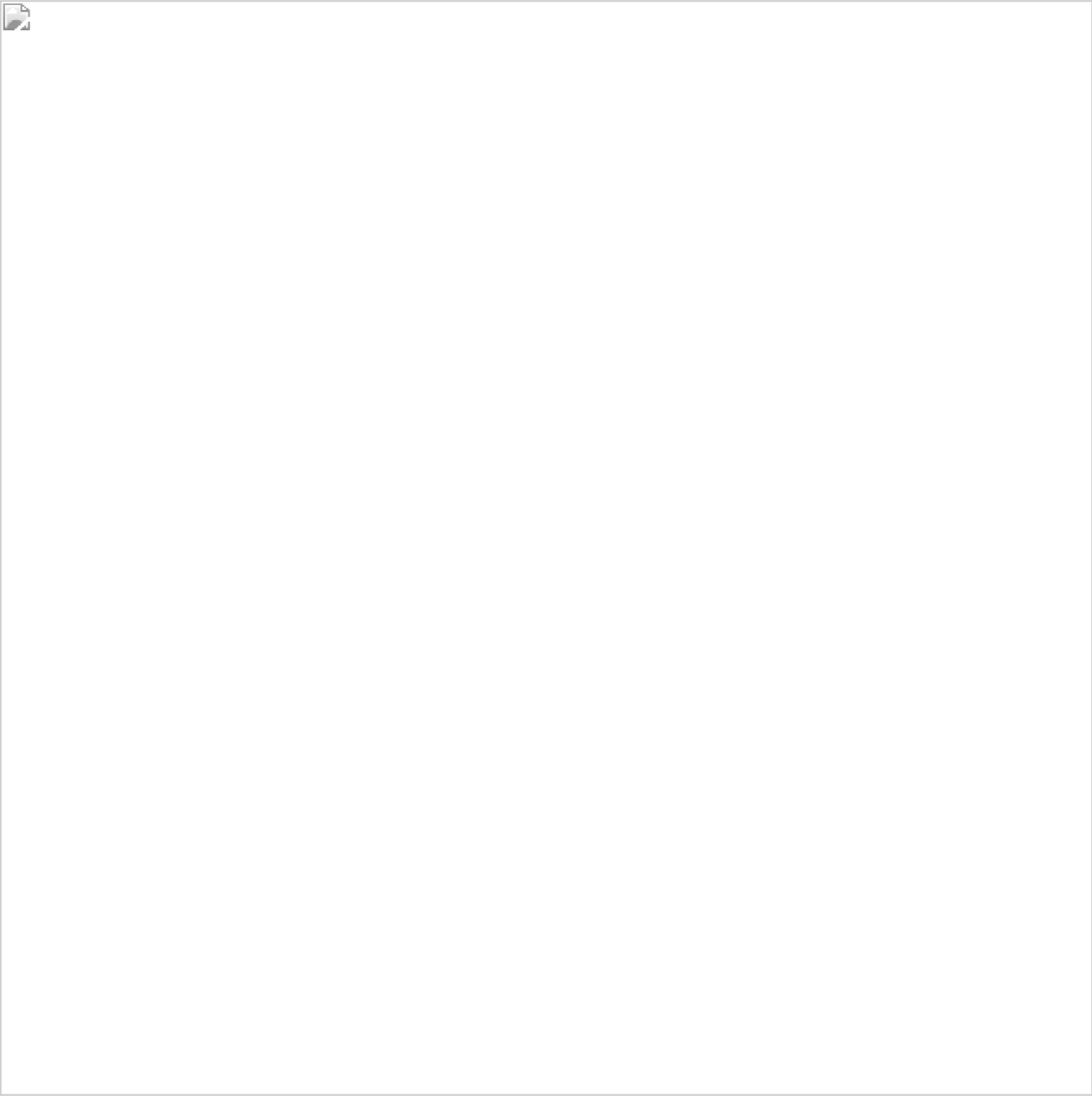


Think about it

1. Who told Nothing not to listen?

- ○ His servants
- ○ His wife
- ○ A rat

Nothing Falls



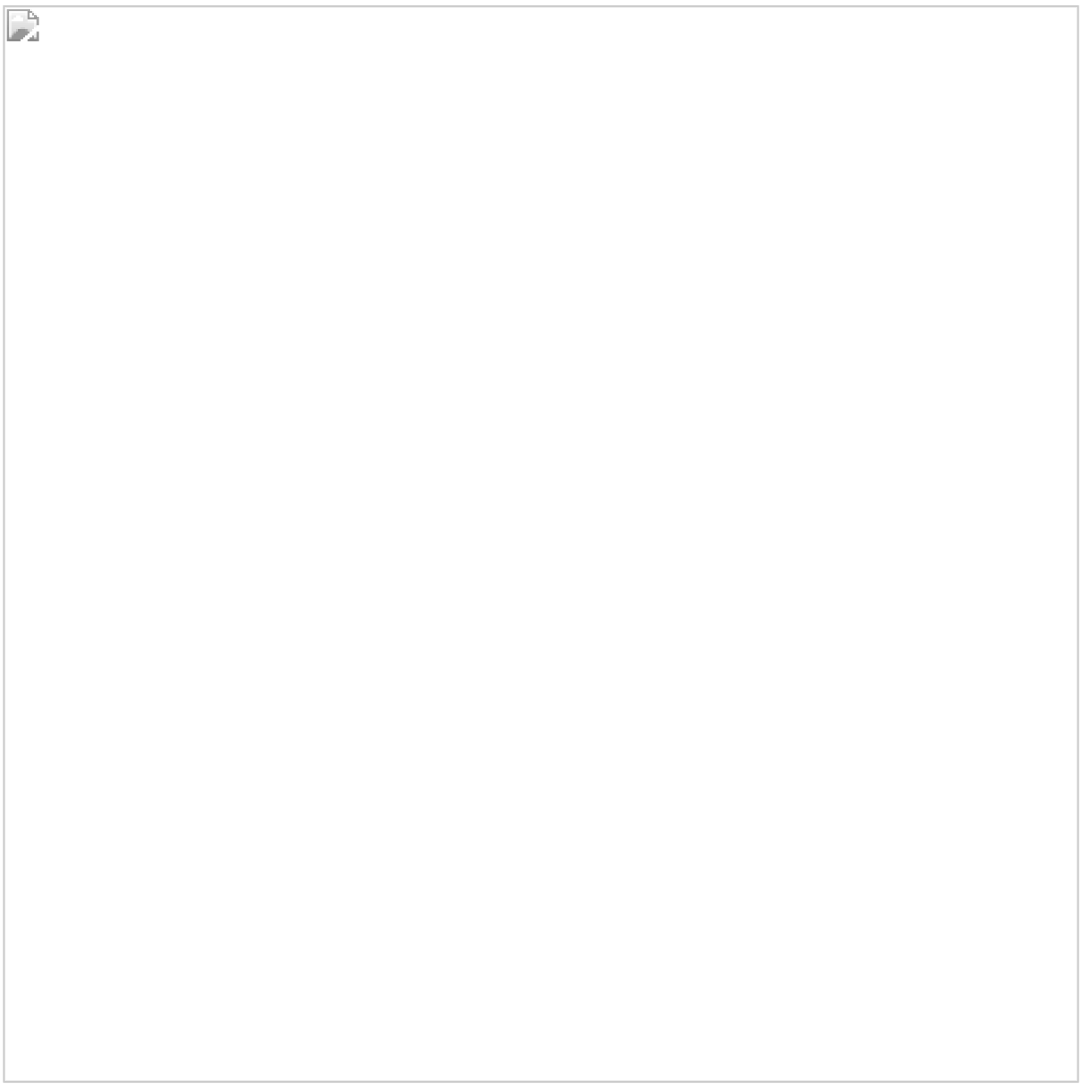
As Nothing placed his foot on the first step, of course he slipped, and down he fell into the hole. The noise alarmed the household. Lights were fetched and Nothing was found in the ditch.

He was so badly hurt that he soon died. His wife was terribly grieved at his untimely death.

TALK ABOUT IT

This is a sad part of the story. Was Anansi fair to Nothing? What do you think?

Nothing Falls · another picture



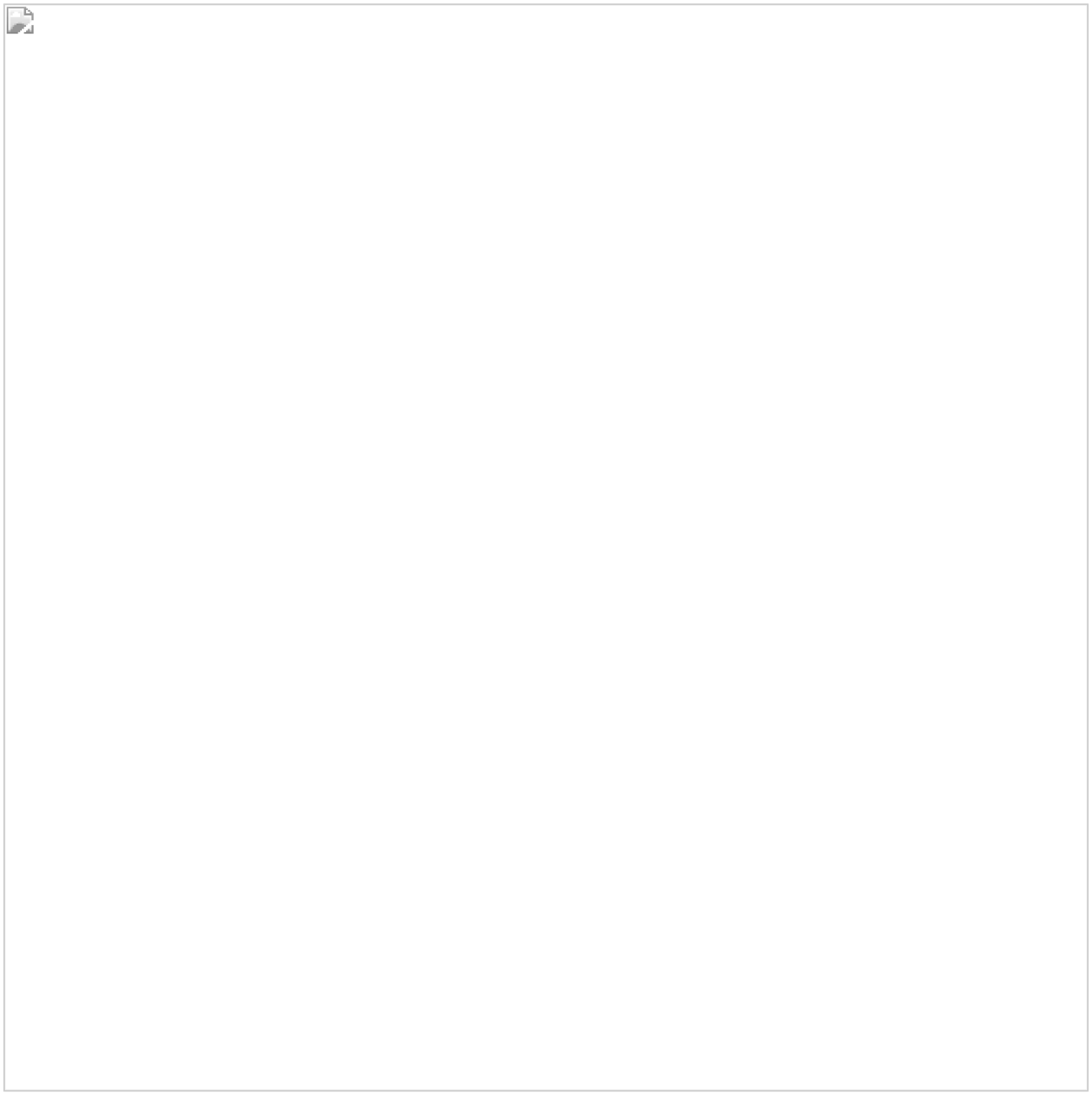
Think about it

1. Why did Nothing slip?

- ○ The steps were smeared with okro
- ○ He was not looking
- ○ It was raining

2. How do you think Nothing's wife felt? What would help her?

Crying for Nothing

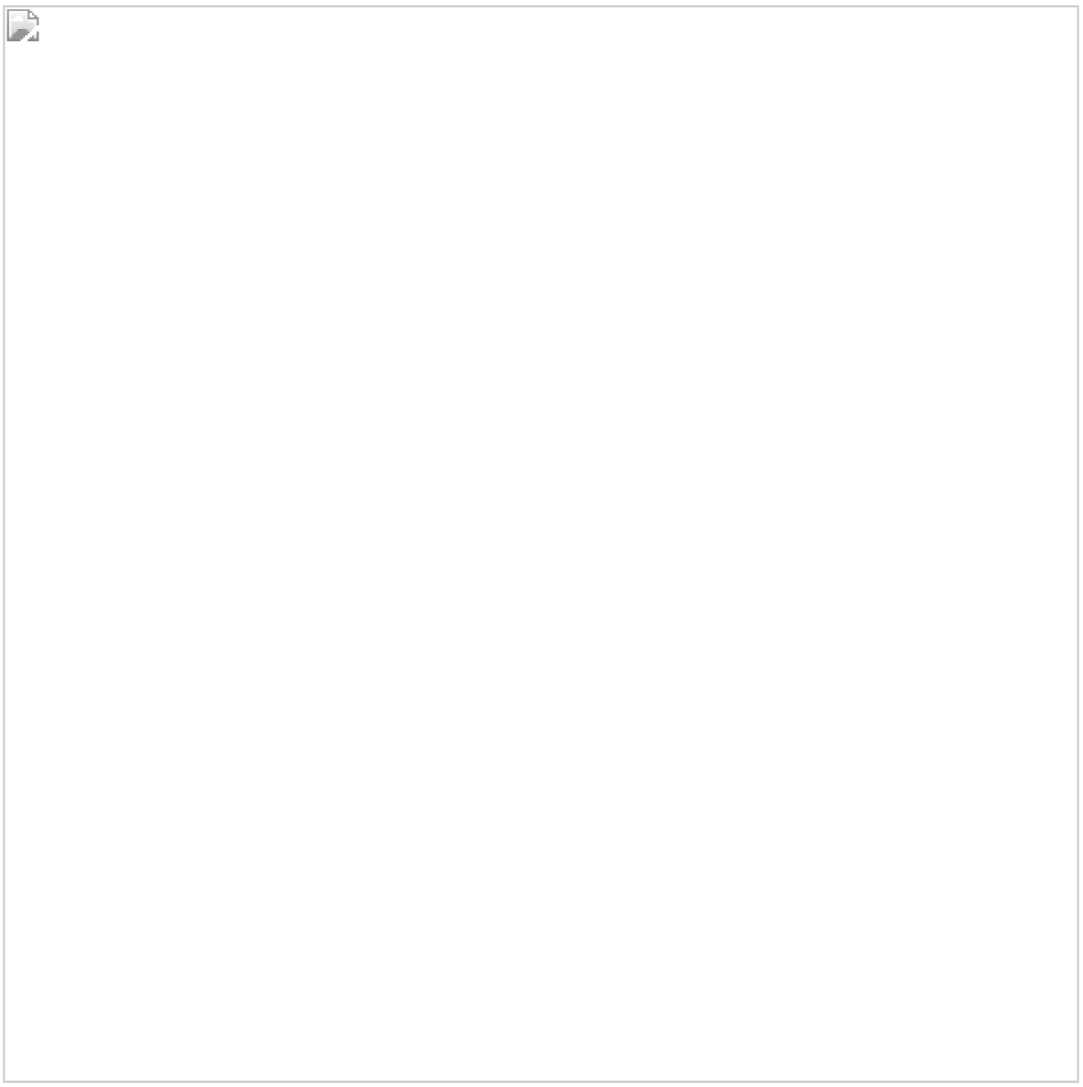


She boiled many yams, mashed them, and took a great dishful round the district. To every child she met she gave some, so that the child might help her to cry for her husband.

This is why, if you find a child crying and ask the cause, you will often be told he is “crying for nothing.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Nothing's wife shared yams with the children. Have you ever been comforted with food or company?



Think about it

1. What did Nothing's wife give the children?

- ○ Bananas
- ○ Boiled, mashed yams
- ○ Skins and carpets

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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