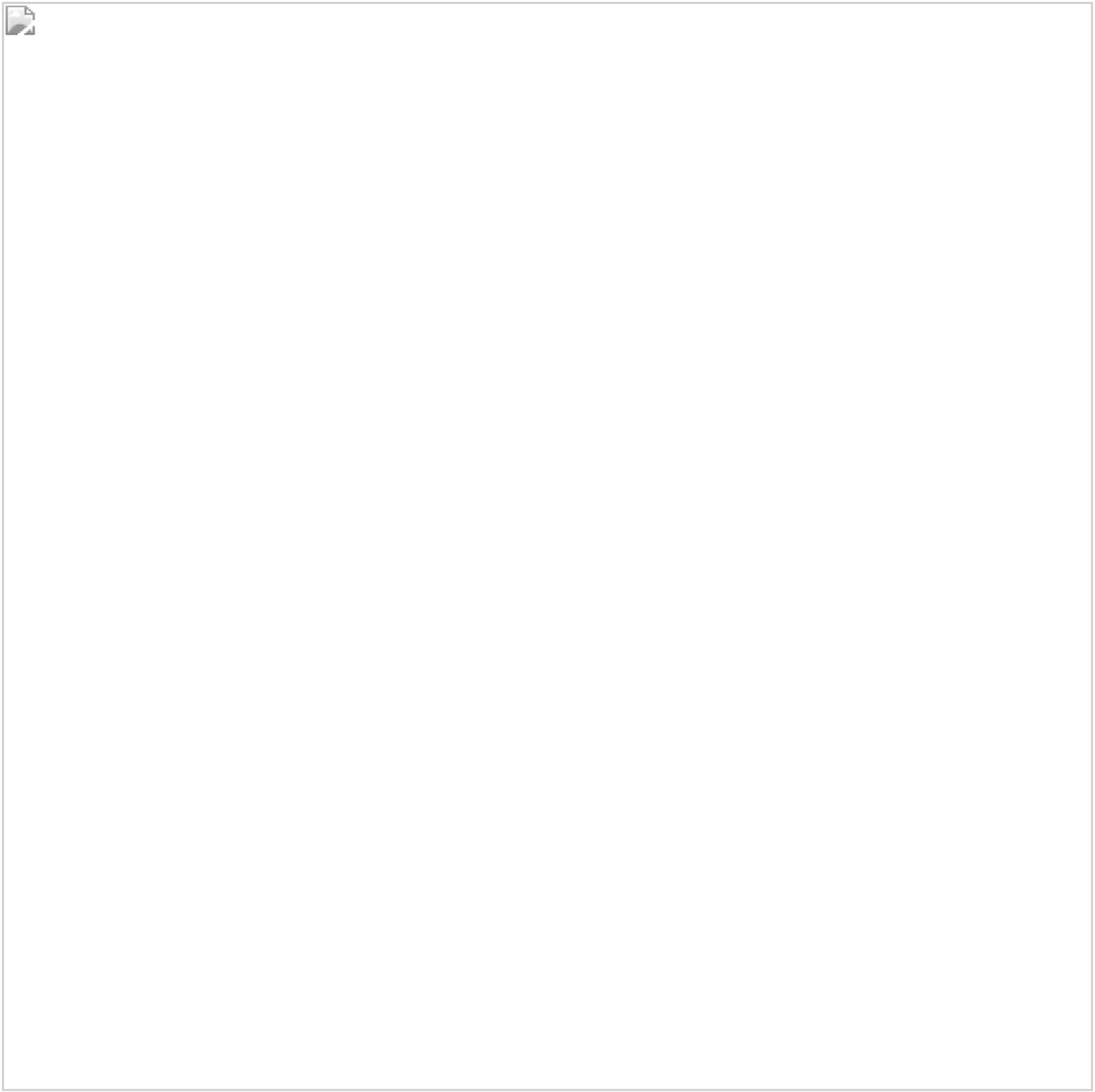
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Autumn and Spring

A Tale from Japan



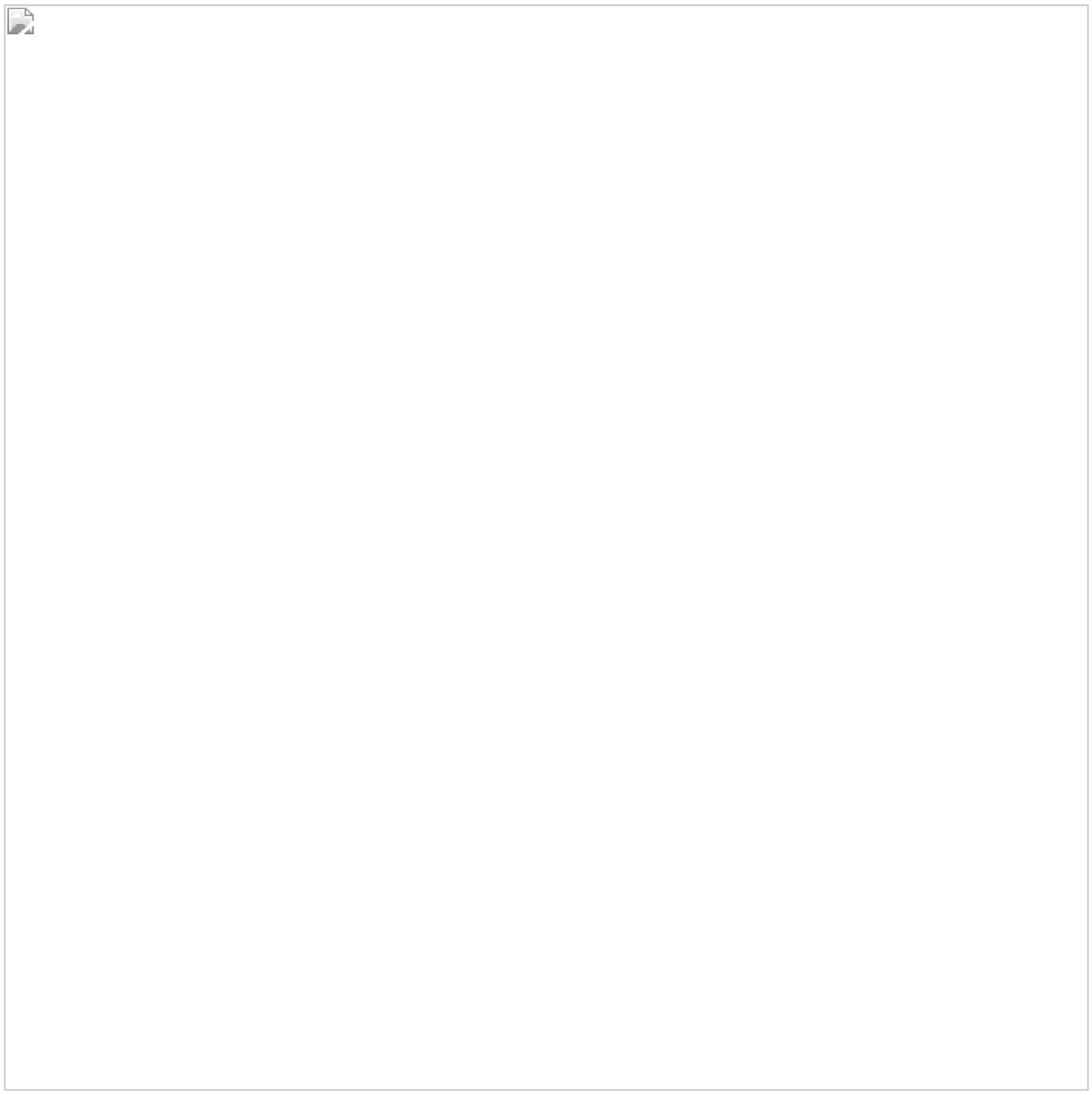
A girl lay fast asleep in a rice field. The sun was high, and she was tired.

TALK ABOUT IT

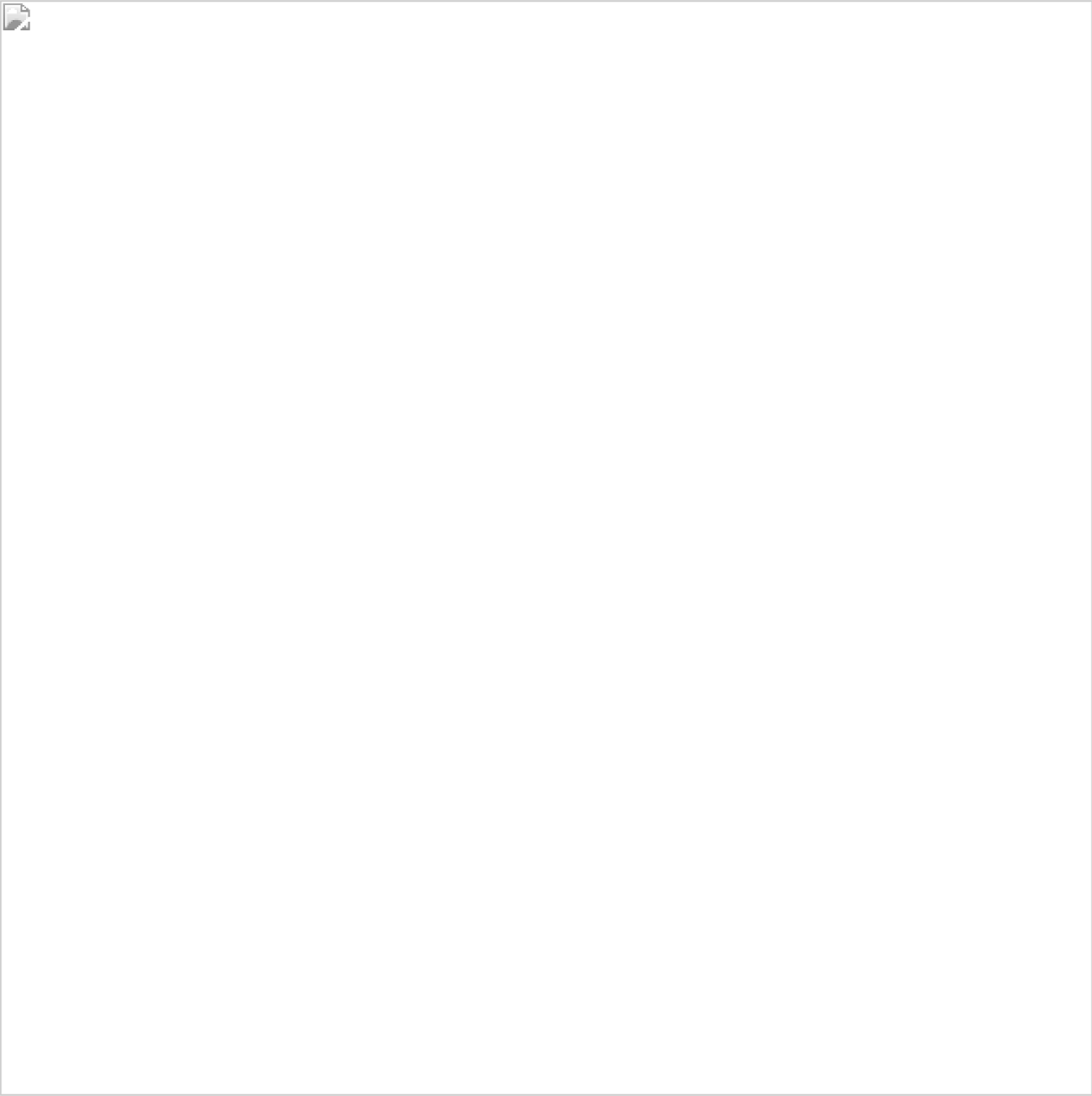
Where do you like to take a nap on a warm day? What do you hear or smell there?

This book belongs to _____

Autumn and Spring · another picture



The God Looks Down



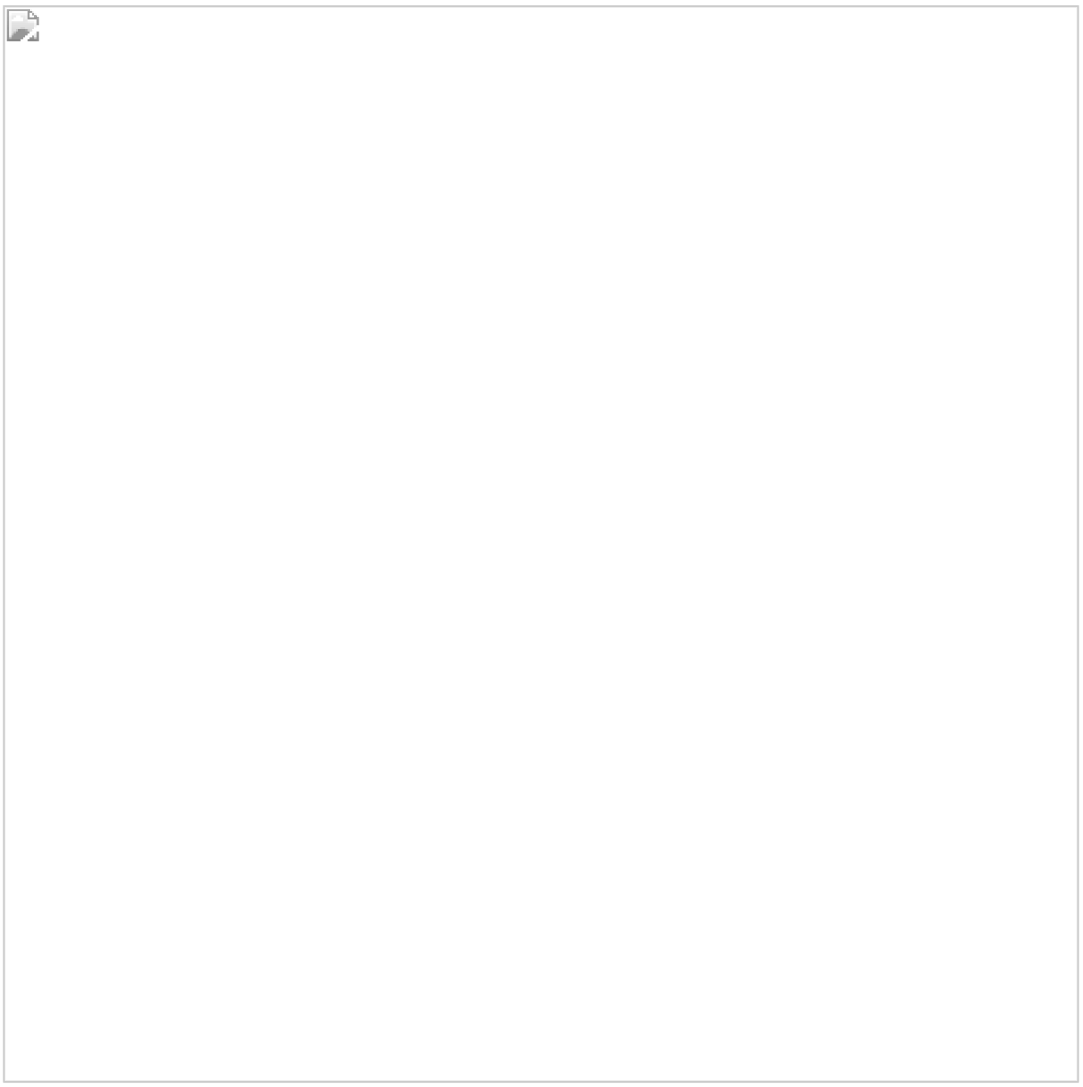
A god looked down from the sky and saw her. He knew that her beauty came from inside her, like the beauty of a happy dream. Even as she slept, she was smiling, as if she were talking with the wind or the flowers.

The god came down and asked her to be his bride. She was glad, and they were married. And out of their happiness came a wonderful red jewel.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think she was dreaming about?

The God Looks Down · another picture

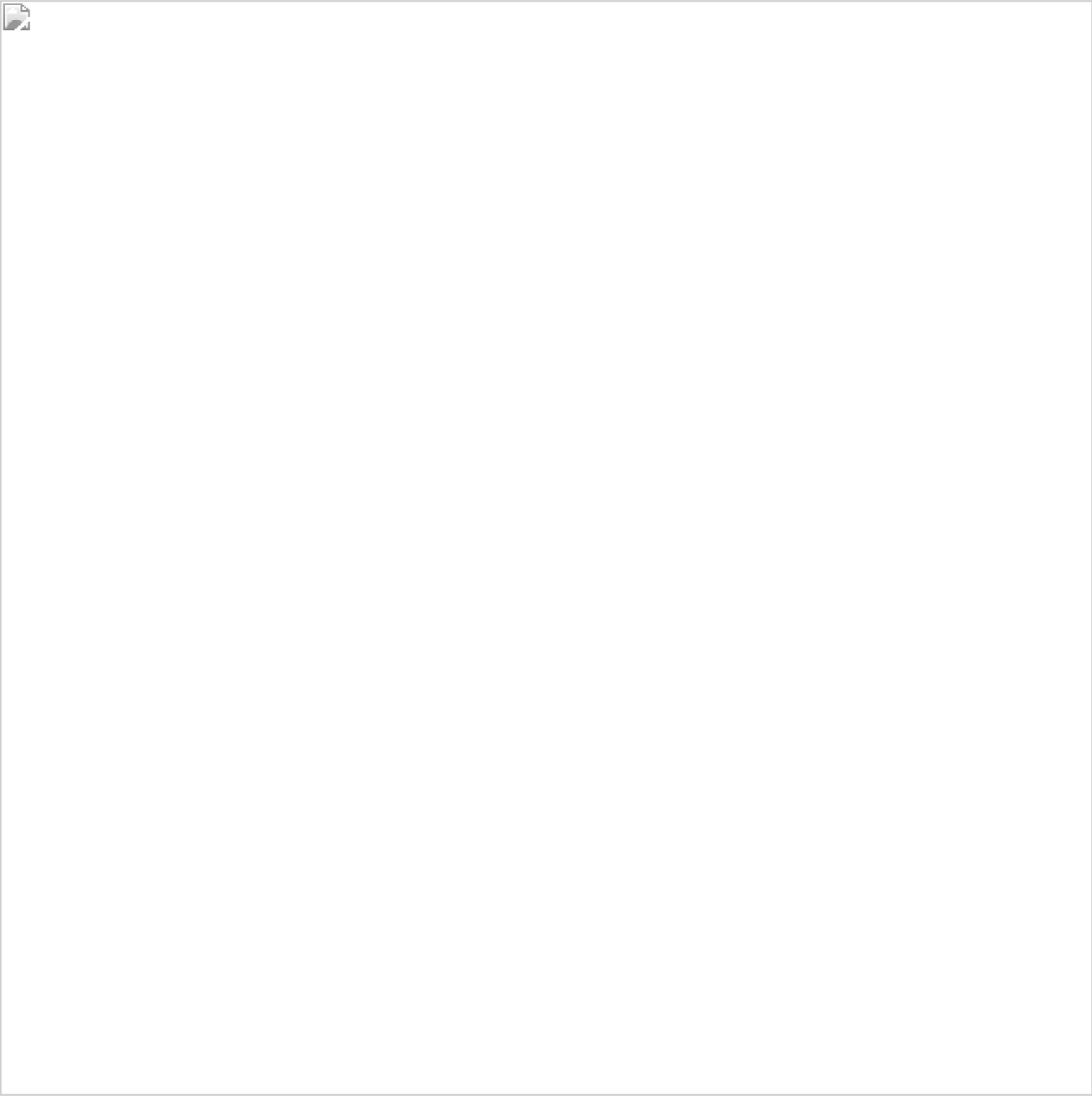


Think about it

1. What came out of the happiness of the god and the maiden?

- ○ A red jewel
- ○ A white horse
- ○ A rice boat

The Red Jewel

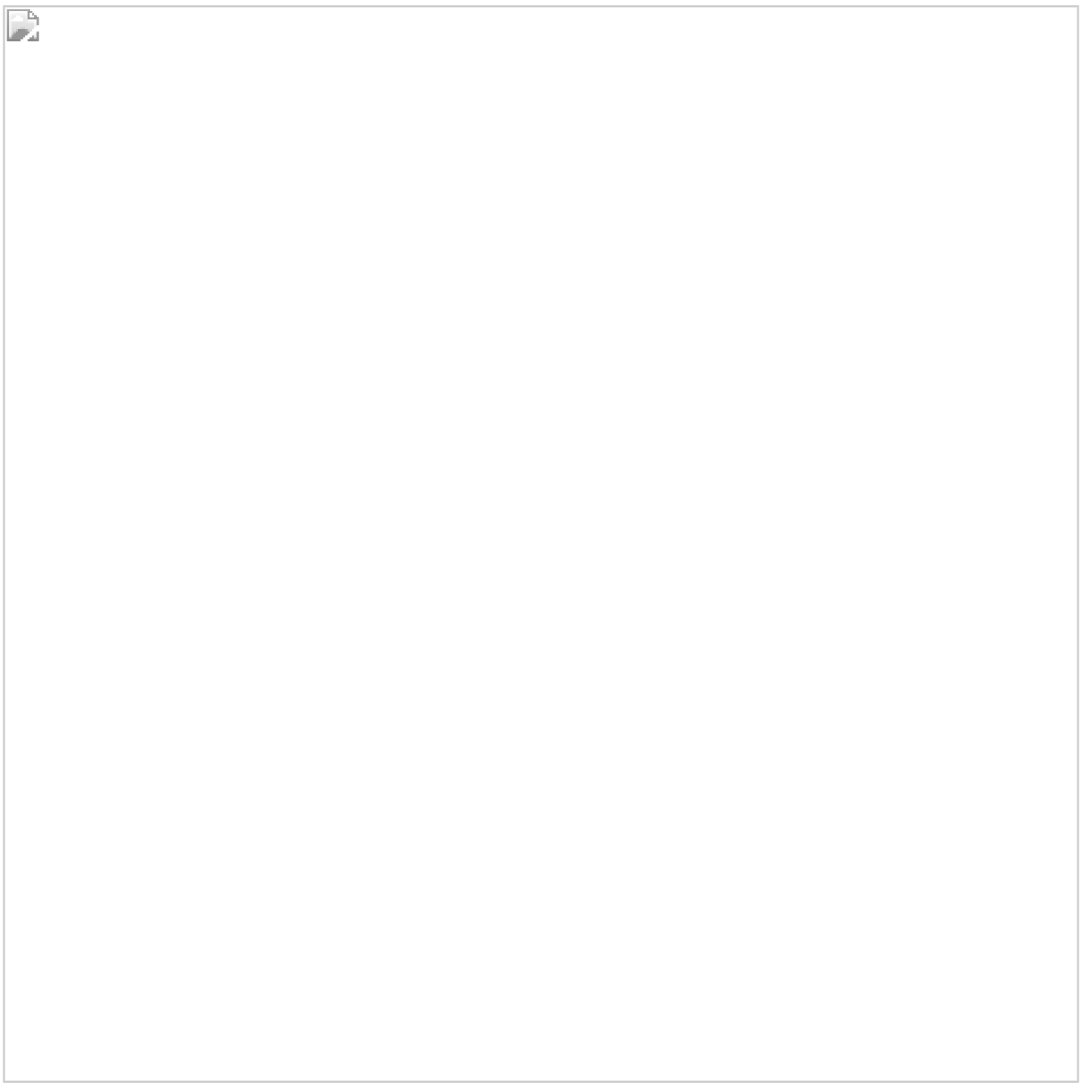


Long, long afterwards, a farmer found the red jewel. He saw that it was very rare, and he kept it with him all the time.

Sometimes, by the pale light of the moon, he looked into it and thought he could see eyes deep inside. Sometimes, in the quiet night, he woke and thought a clear, soft voice called him by name.

TALK ABOUT IT

If you found a jewel that seemed to watch you, what would you do?

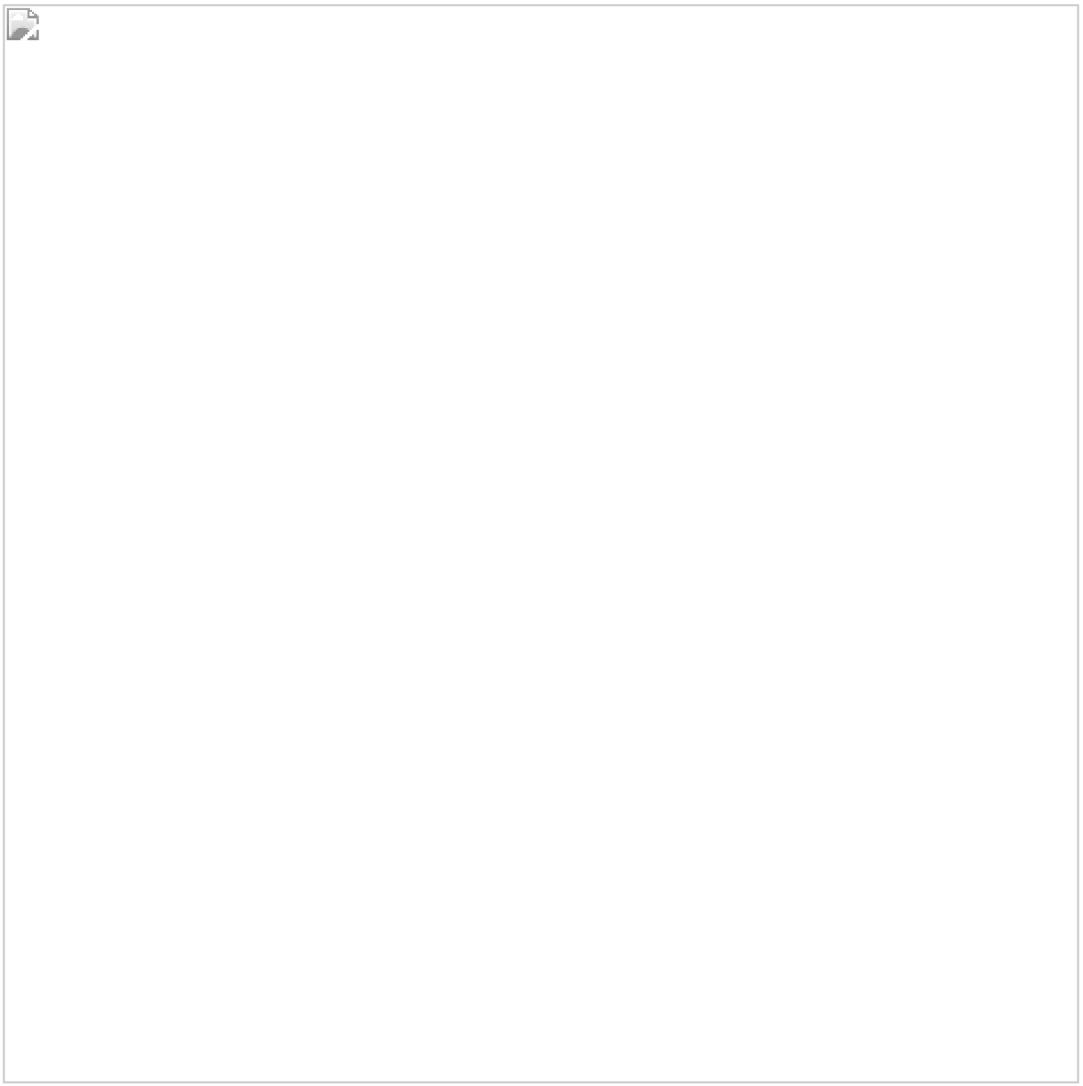


Think about it

1. What did the farmer think he saw inside the jewel?

- ○ A tiny tree
- ○ Eyes
- ○ Fish

The Cow on the Path



One hot day, the farmer loaded a cow with bowls of rice, millet dumplings and beans, to carry lunch out to the workers in the fields.

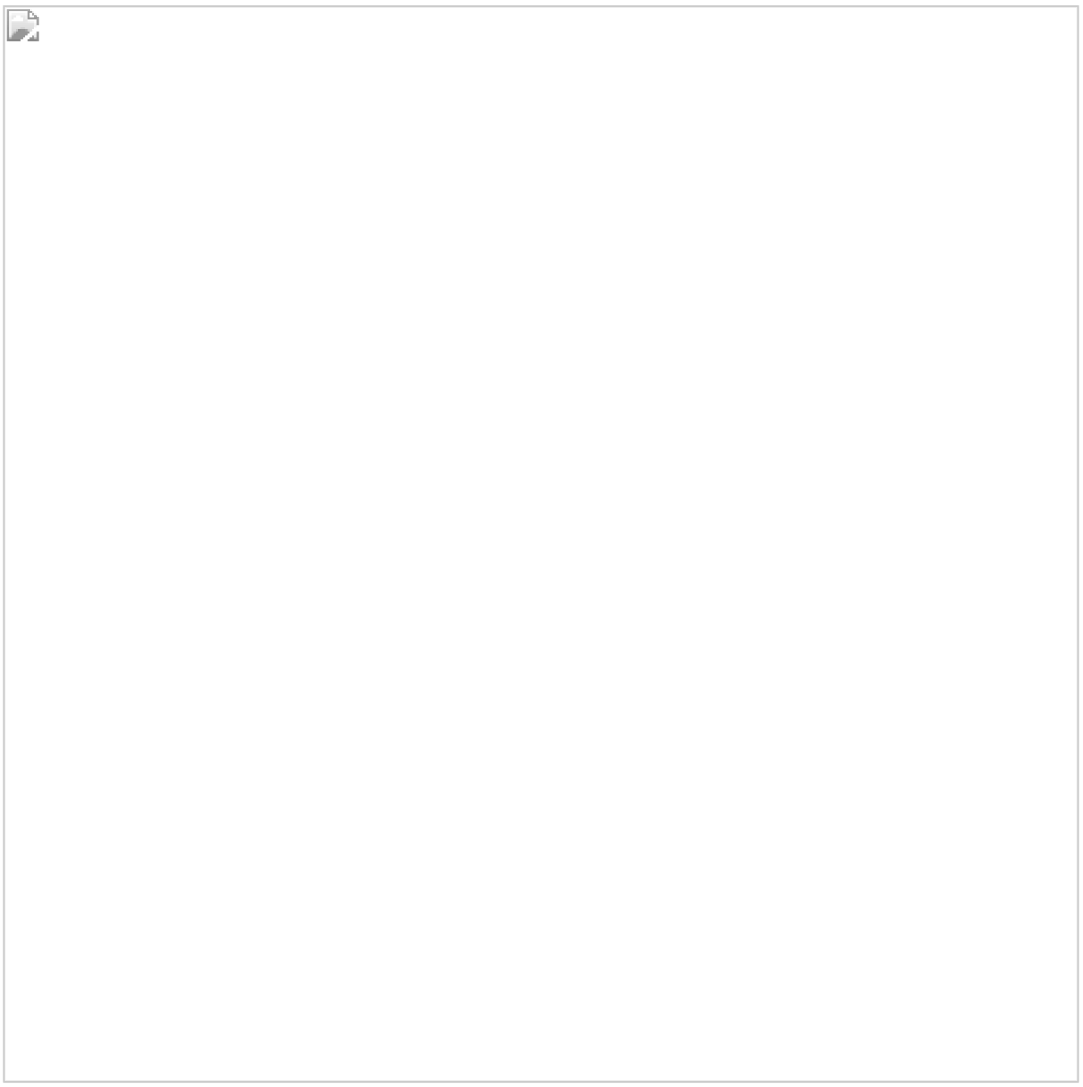
All at once Prince Ama-boko stood in the path. He was angry! He thought the farmer was taking the cow away to kill it.

The Prince would not listen. The more the farmer explained, the angrier he grew. At last, frightened, the farmer took the red jewel out of his pocket and held it out as a gift for peace.

The Prince marveled at how bright the jewel was, and let the farmer go on his way.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Prince would not listen to the farmer. What do you think the farmer could have done, or the Prince could have done, to make this go better?

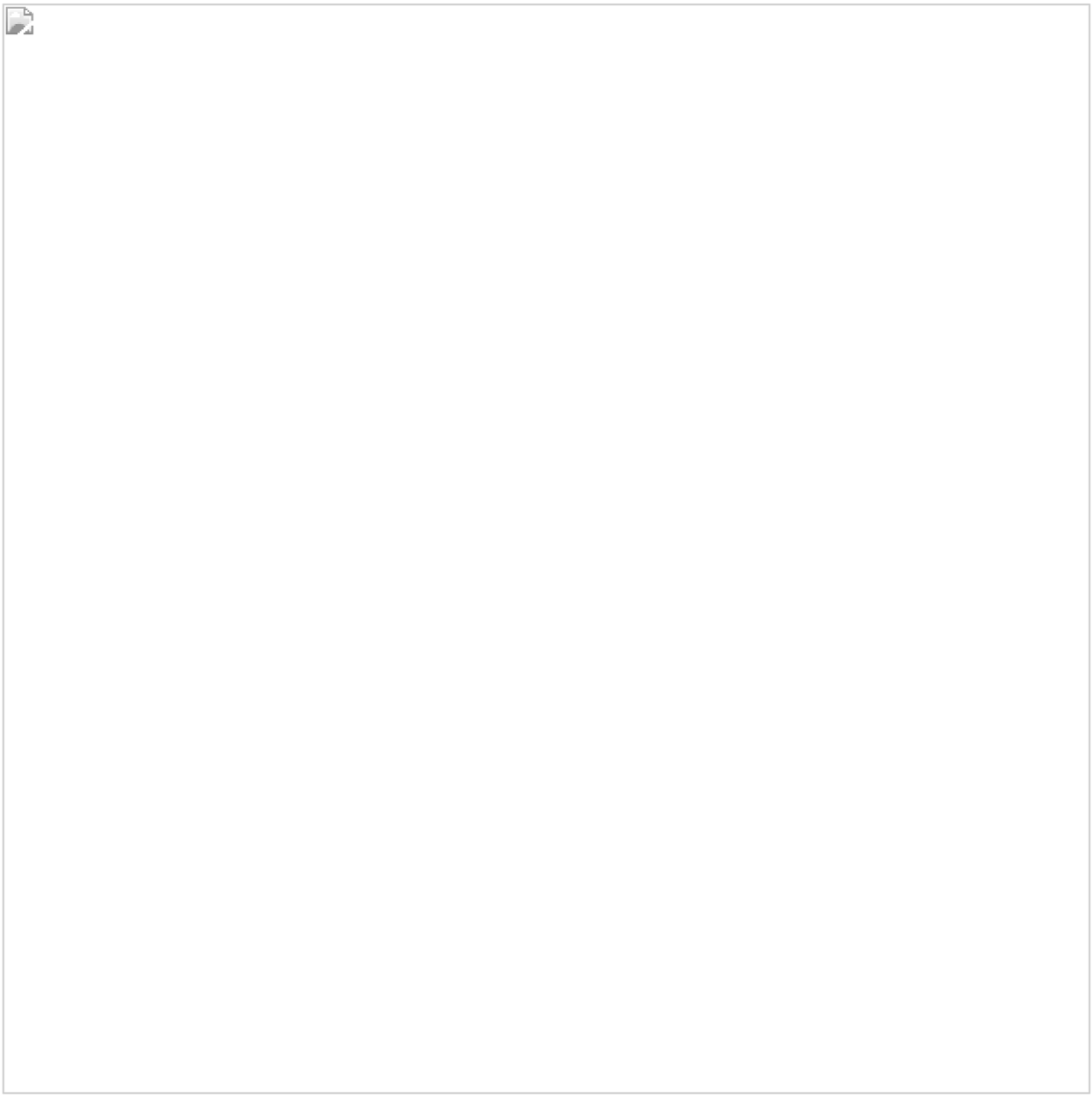


Think about it

1. What did the farmer give the Prince?

- ○ The cow
- ○ The red jewel
- ○ His lunch

The Goddess in the Jewel



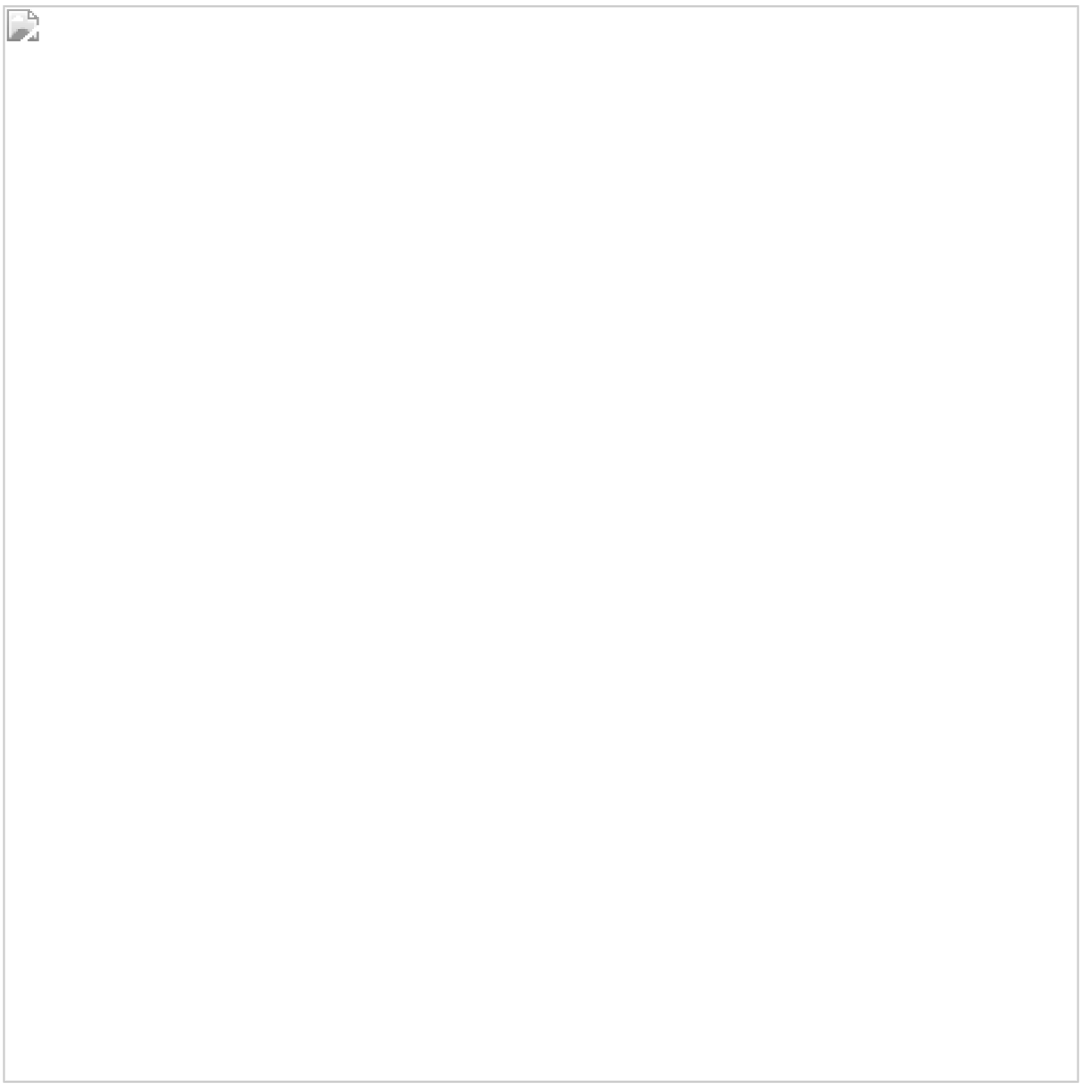
The Prince went home and took out the jewel. All at once it turned into a goddess, more beautiful than anyone he had seen!

He loved her at once, and before the moon had grown thin, they were married.

She took care of him in every way. She made delicate dishes, the kind that only the gods know how to cook, and a sweet drink from the juice of a thousand herbs, such as no person has ever tasted.

TALK ABOUT IT

What would you most like to be served at a feast made by a goddess?

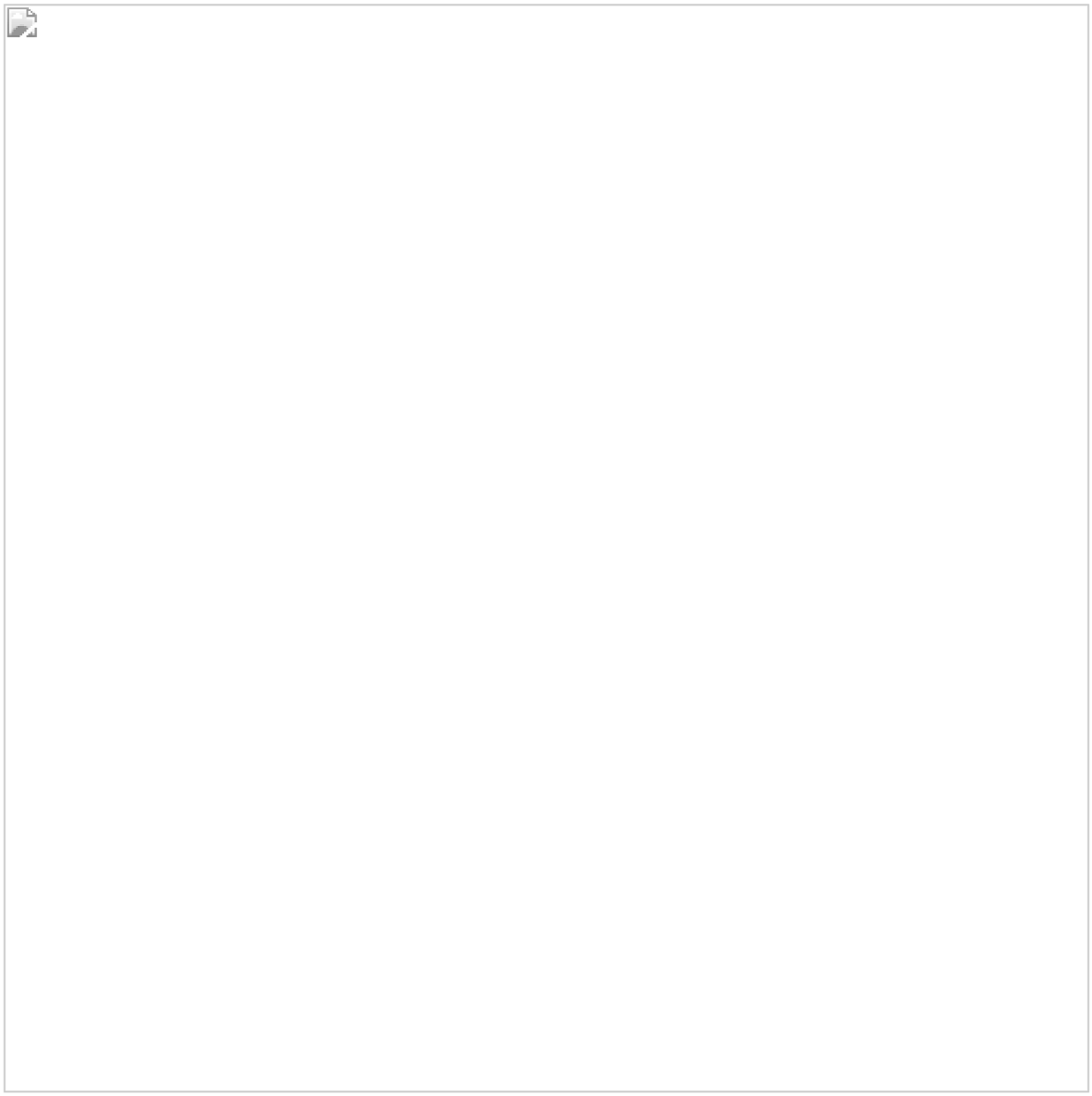


Think about it

1. What did the jewel turn into?

- ○ A goddess
- ○ A bird
- ○ A cow

The Proud Prince



But after a time, the Prince became proud and bossy. He began to treat his loving wife unkindly. He spoke to her as if she were not worth listening to.

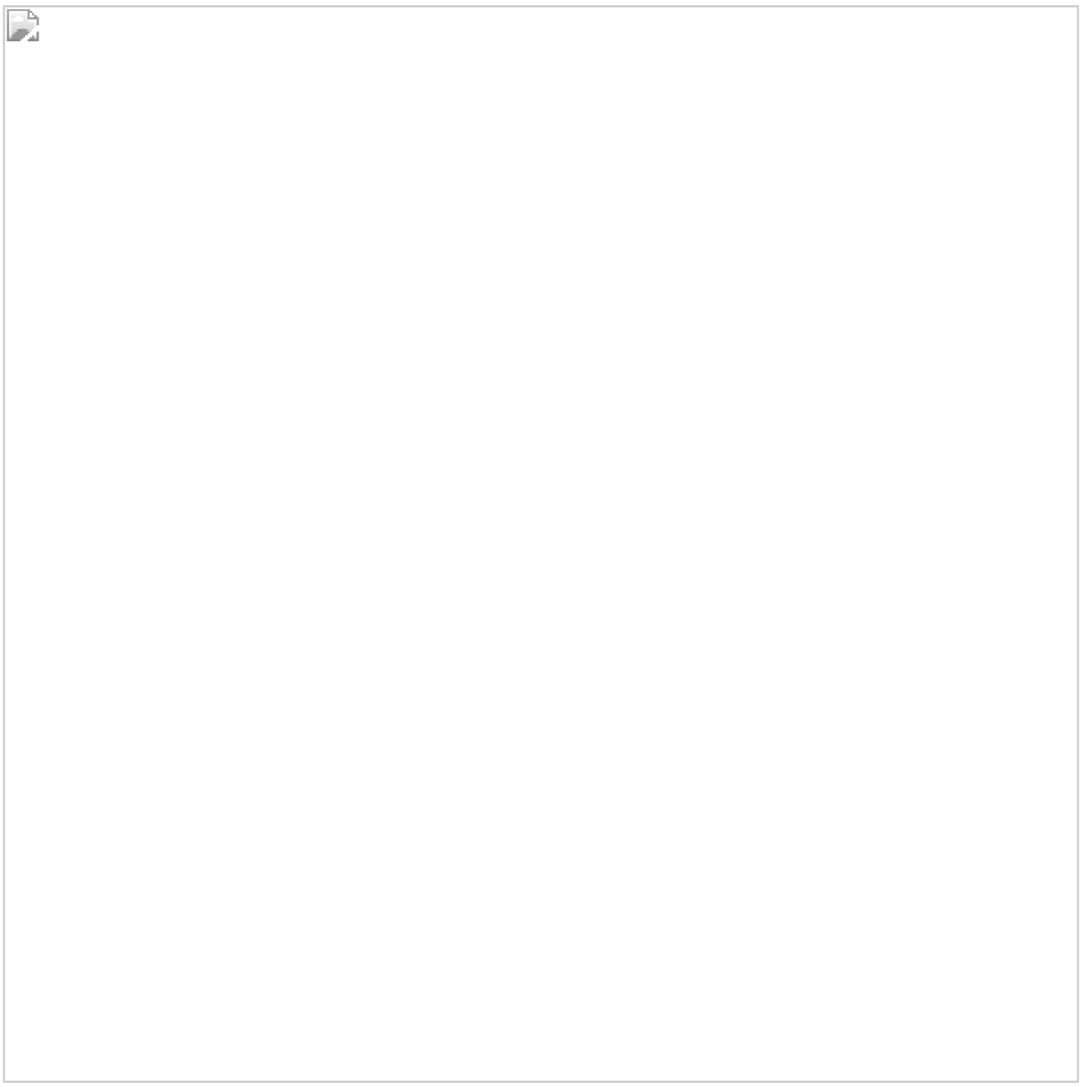
The goddess was sad. “You are not worthy of my love,” she told him. “I will leave you and go to my father.”

Ama-boko did not listen, for he did not think she meant it.

But she meant it. She slipped away from the palace and hurried across the sea to Naniwa. There she is still honored as Akaru-hime, the Goddess of Light.

TALK ABOUT IT

The goddess warned the Prince before she left. Why do you think he did not take her seriously?



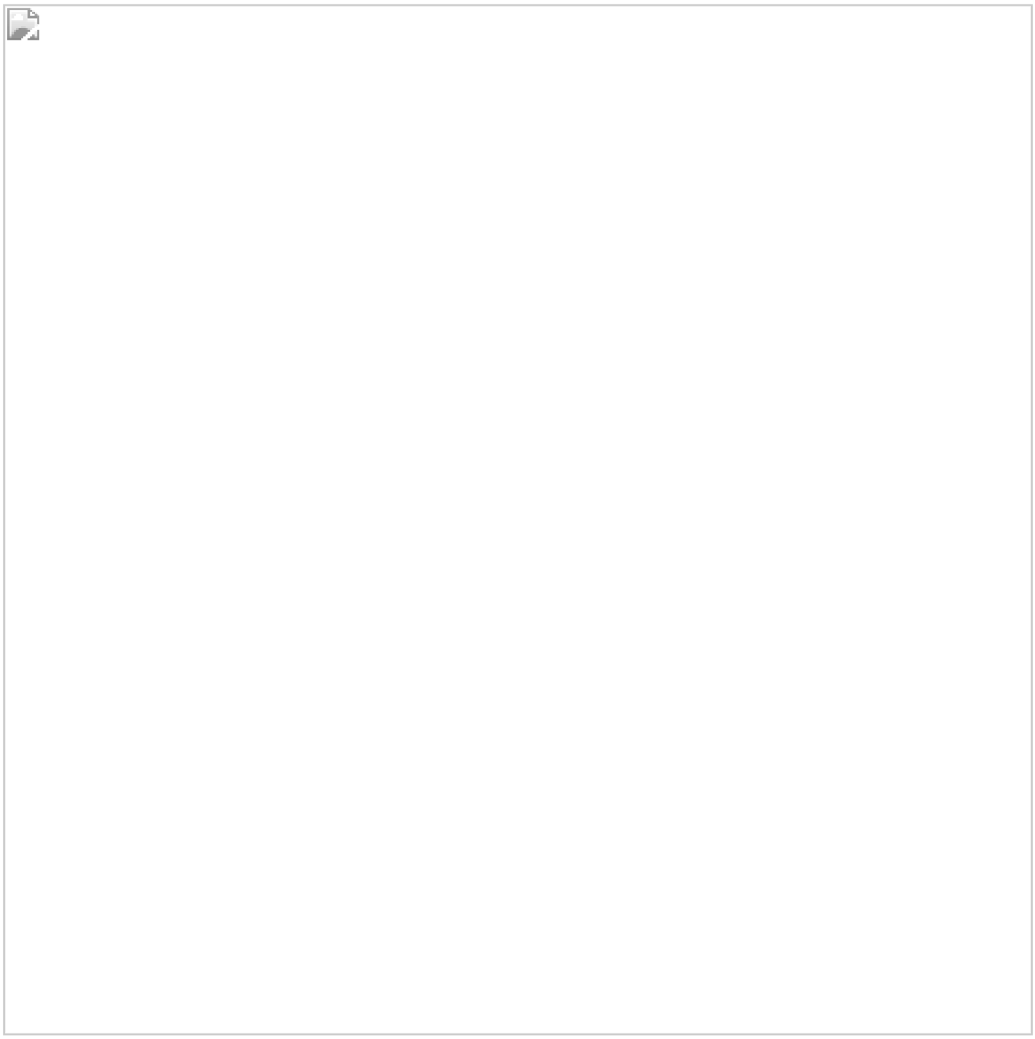
Think about it

1. What did the goddess do when the Prince was unkind?

- ○ She left him
- ○ She hid in the jewel
- ○ She was unkind back

2. How do you think it feels to be spoken to as if you do not matter? What helps when someone is treated that way?

The Prince Follows



When the Prince heard she was gone, he was angry, and he set out after her in his ship.

But when he came near Naniwa, the gods would not let his ship into the harbor. Then he knew he had lost his red jewel forever.

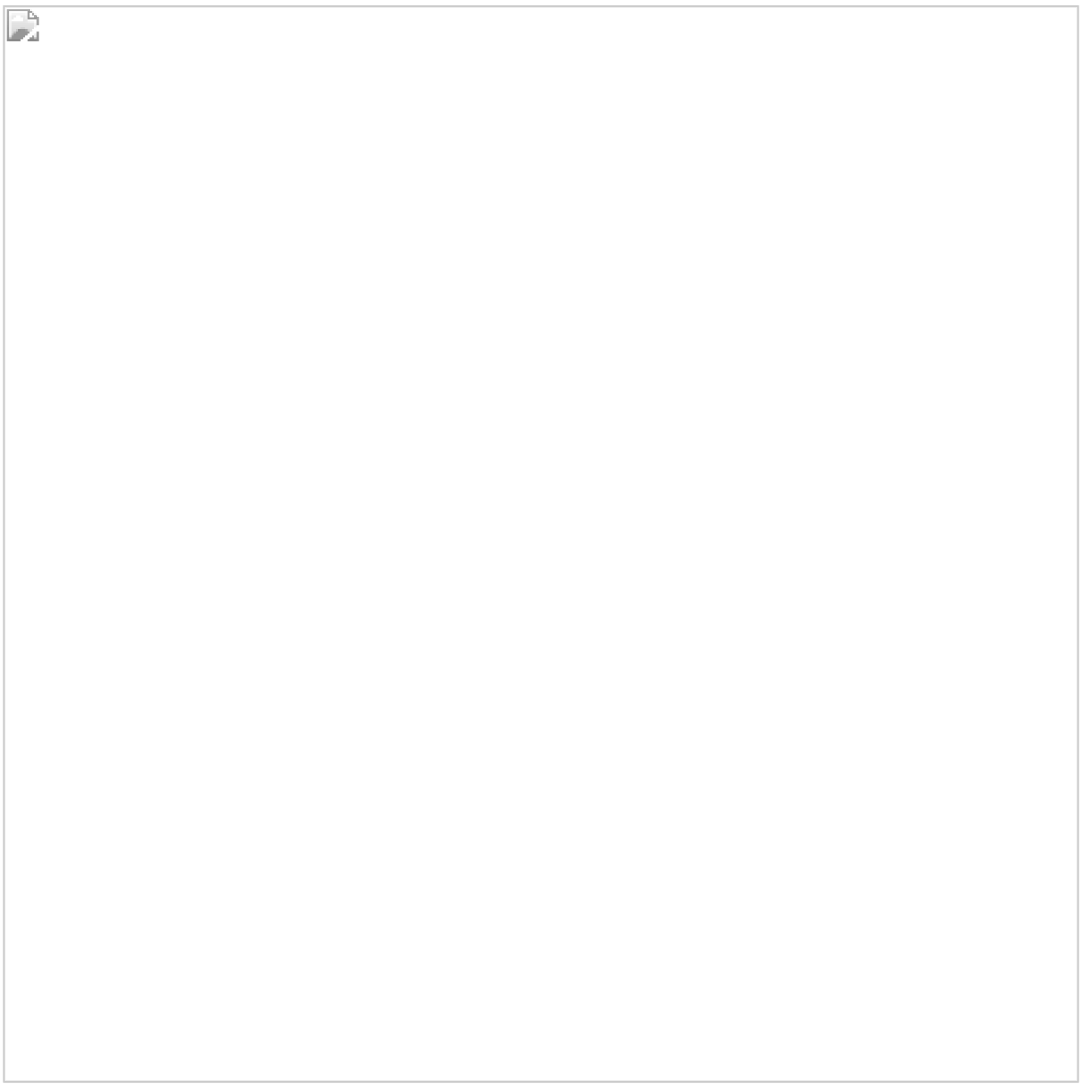
He steered his ship to the north coast of Japan and landed at Tajima. The people there made him welcome, because of all the treasures he had brought: strings of pearls, belts of precious stones, and a mirror that the wind and the waves obeyed.

Ama-boko stayed at Tajima, and his children and their children were a mighty family.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Prince had all those treasures, but he lost the one who had loved him. What do you think was worth more?

The Prince Follows · another picture

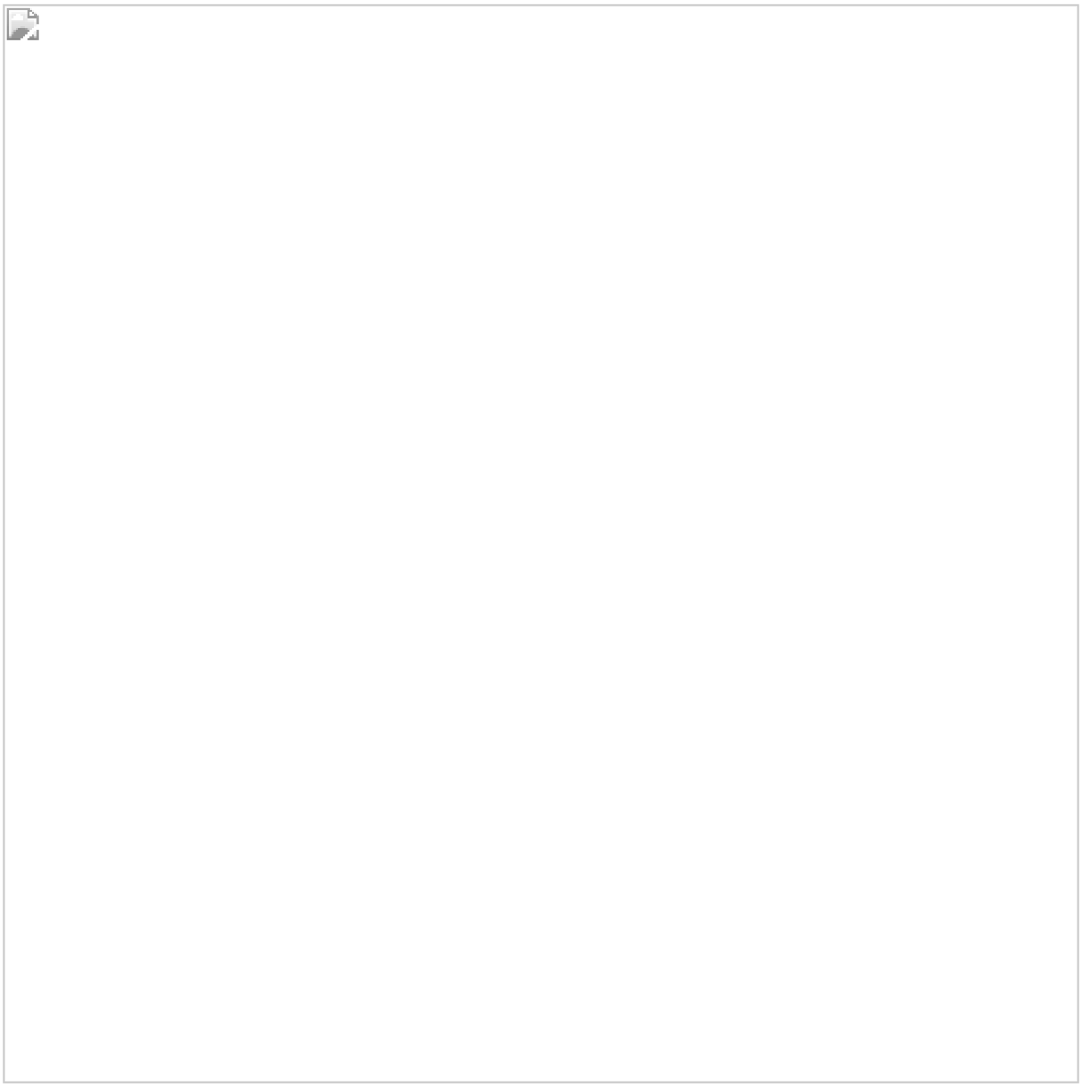


Think about it

1. Could the Prince's ship go into the harbor at Naniwa?

- ○ Yes, right away
- ○ No, the gods would not let it in
- ○ Only at night

The Princess and Two Brothers



Many years later, one of the Prince's grandchildren's grandchildren was a Princess so famous for her beauty that eighty young men came to ask her to marry them. One after another, they all went home sad, for she did not choose any of them.

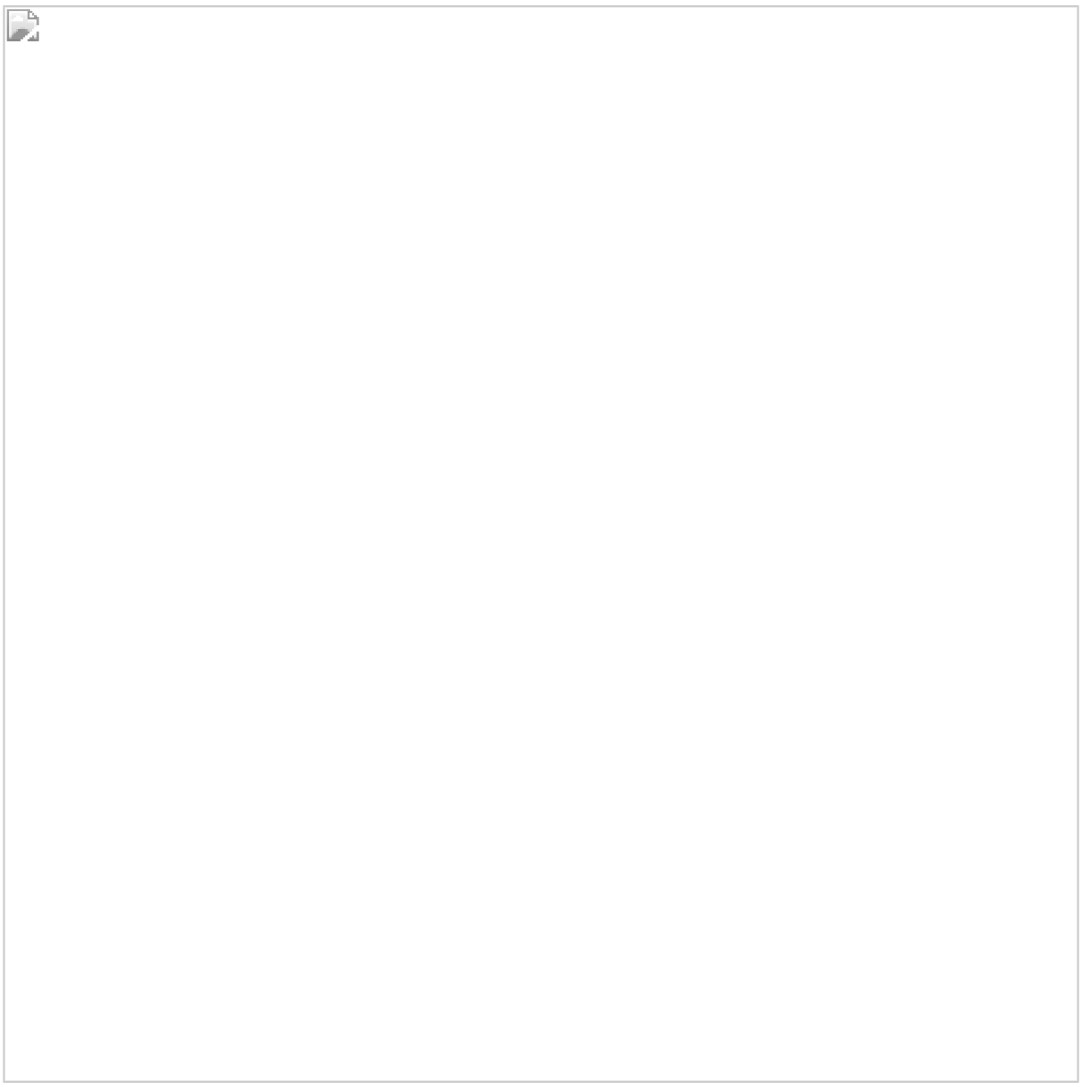
At last two brothers came. They were the young God of Autumn and the young God of Spring.

The older brother, the God of Autumn, asked first. The Princess said no.

He went to his younger brother. “The Princess does not love me,” he said, “neither will you be able to win her heart.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The older brother thought his brother would not win either. What do you think made him say that?

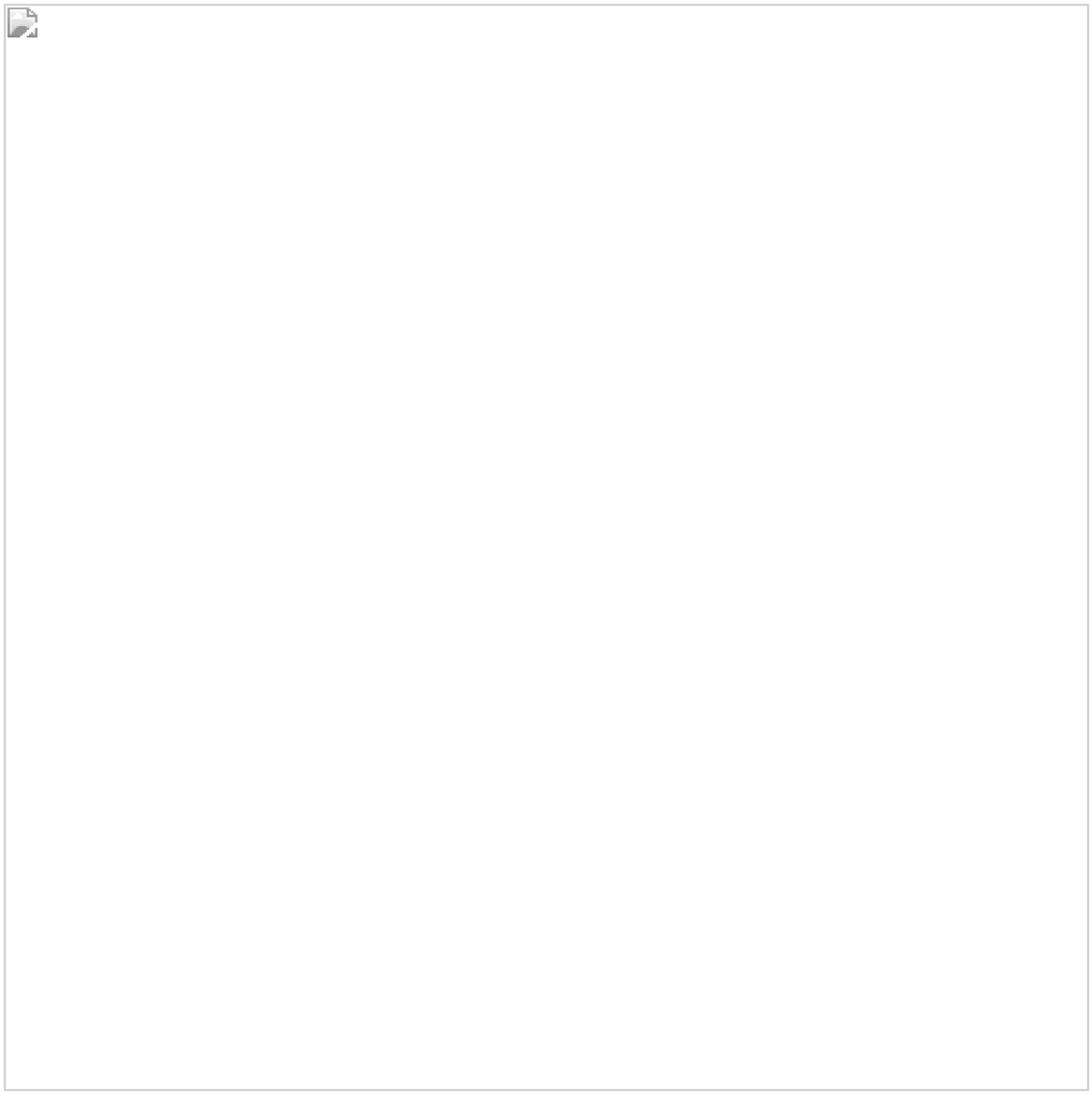


Think about it

1. Which brother asked the Princess first?

- ○ The God of Spring
- ○ The God of Autumn
- ○ Neither

A Robe of Flower Buds



The God of Spring was full of hope. If he did not win her, he would give his brother a cask of rice wine; if he did, his brother must give a cask to him.

He told his mother, and she promised to help.

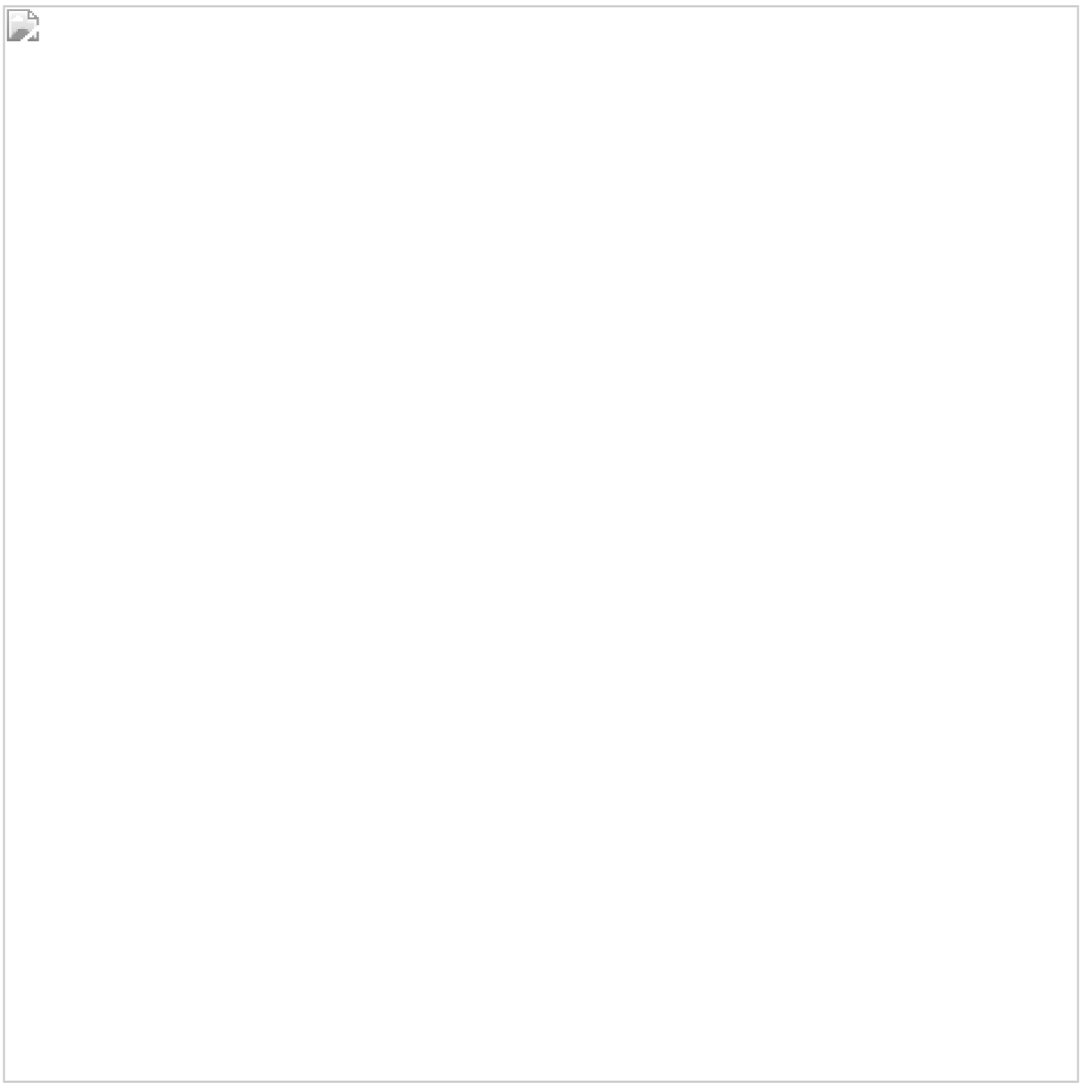
In just one night she wove him a robe and sandals from the unopened buds of lilac and white wistaria, and a bow and arrows too.

Dressed in this, the God of Spring went to the Princess. As he stepped before her, every bud opened, and a lovely scent filled the air! The Princess was overjoyed, and she gave him her hand.

TALK ABOUT IT

What would it be like to wear a robe of flowers that open when you walk by?

A Robe of Flower Buds · another picture

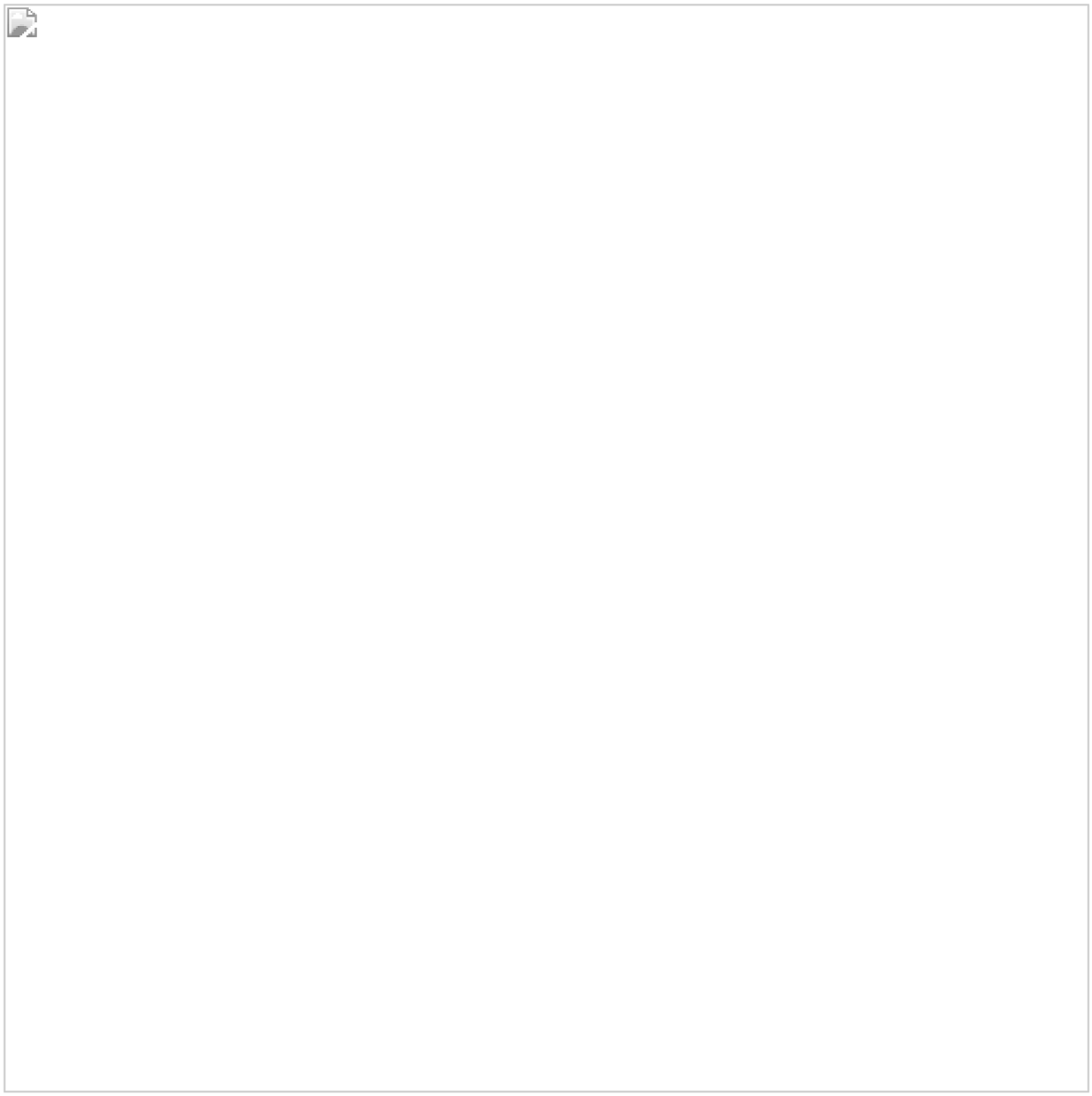


Think about it

1. What was the God of Spring's robe made of?

- ○ Silk and gold
- ○ Unopened flower buds
- ○ Rice straw

A Broken Promise



The God of Autumn was angry when he heard how his brother had won. He would not give the cask he had promised. He had broken his word.

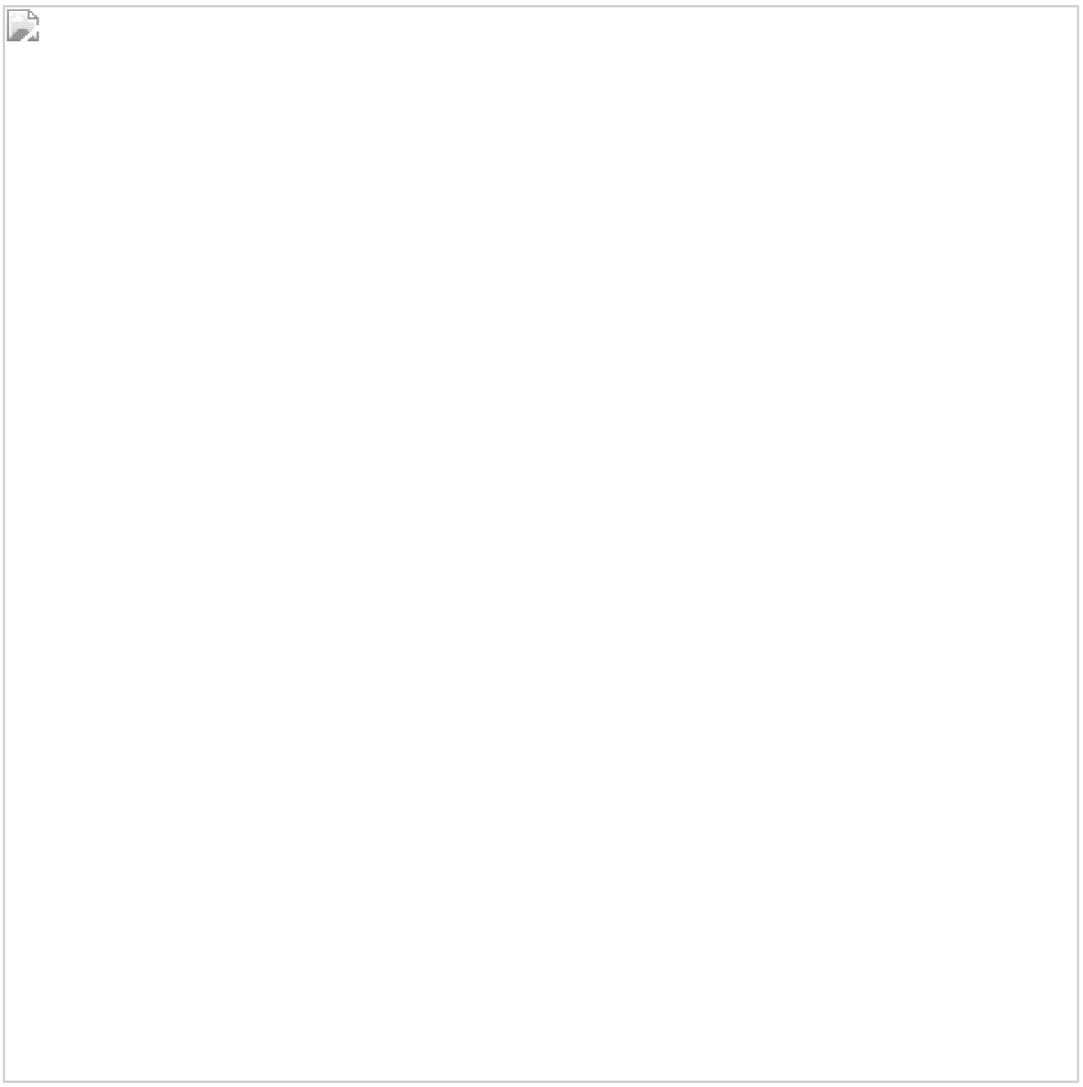
When their mother heard, she was grieved, and she spoke a hard saying over her first-born son: “As the leaves wither and fade, so must you.”

And so it came to be. The God of Spring stays young and sweet-smelling and full of laughter. The God of Autumn is old and withered and sad.

That is why, in the fall, the leaves turn and fade and drift down.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think the God of Autumn could have done when he saw he had lost the bet? What can a person do when they break a promise?



Think about it

1. Why was the mother upset with the God of Autumn?

- ○ He ran away
- ○ He broke his promise
- ○ He ate her food

2. How do you keep a promise when it is hard? Who helps you?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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