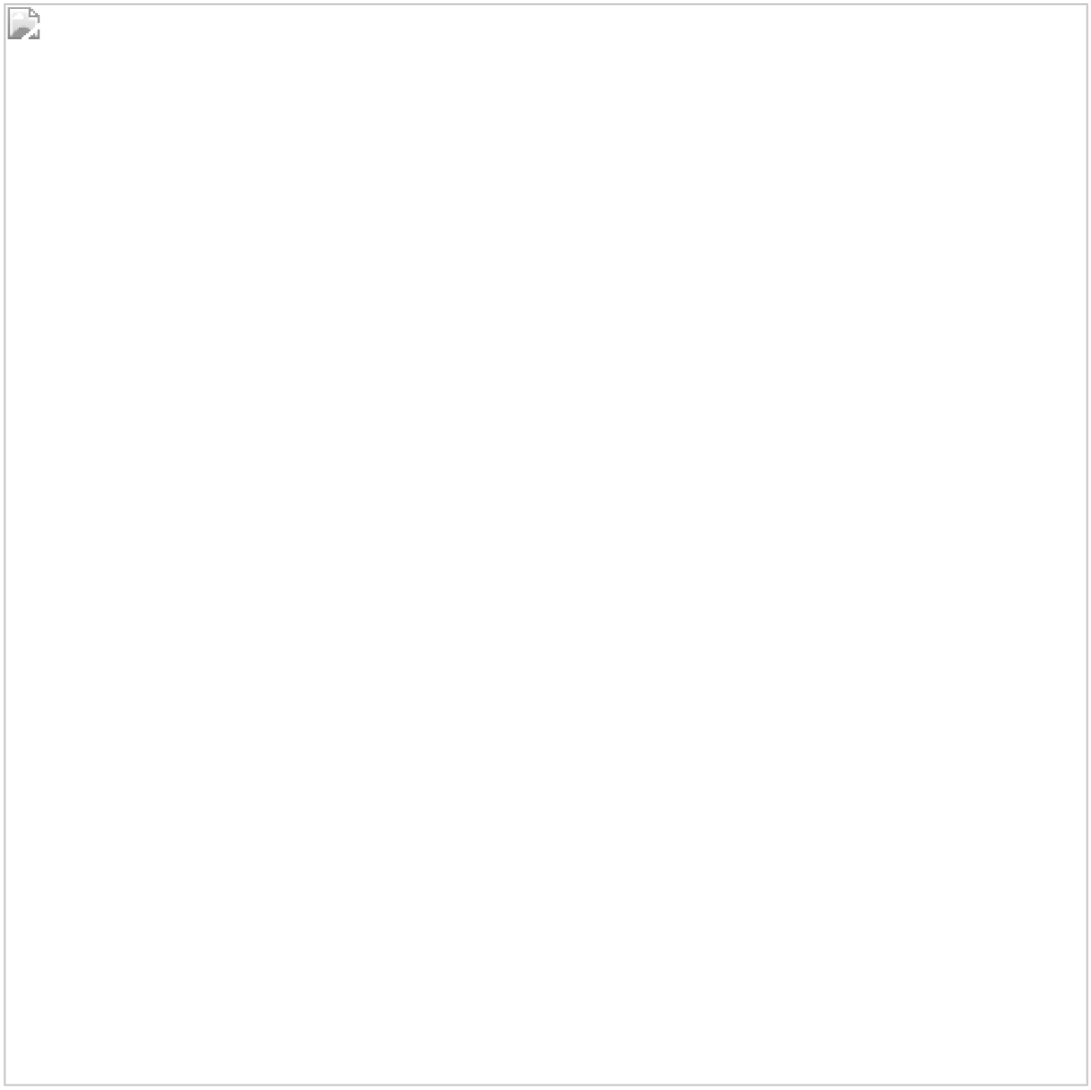
COLORING THE CLASSICS

How the Tortoise Got Its Shell

A Tale from West Africa



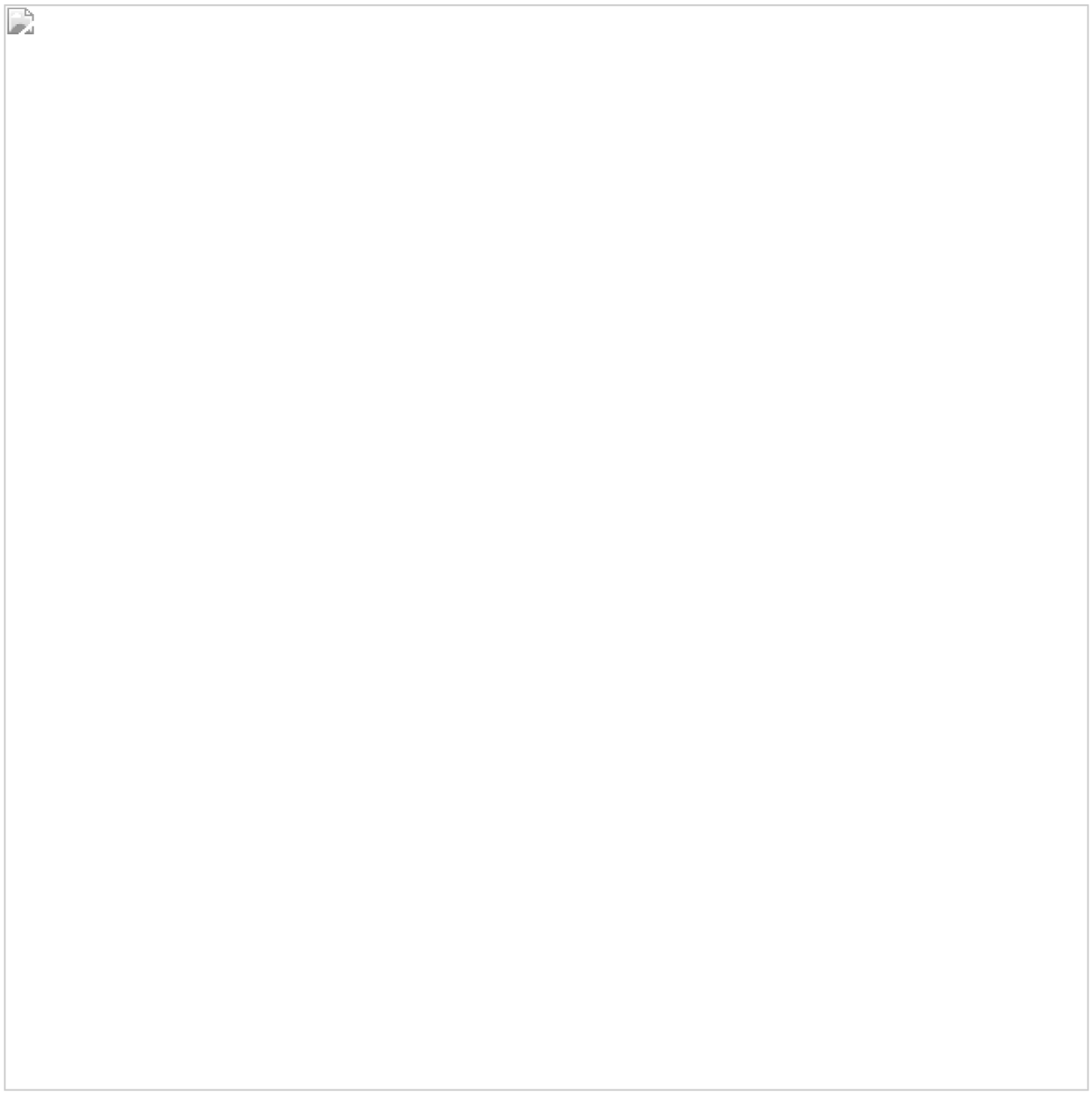
A few hundred years ago, the chief Mauri (God) decided to have a splendid yam festival. He sent his messengers to invite all his chiefs and people to the gathering, which was to take place on Fida (Friday).

TALK ABOUT IT

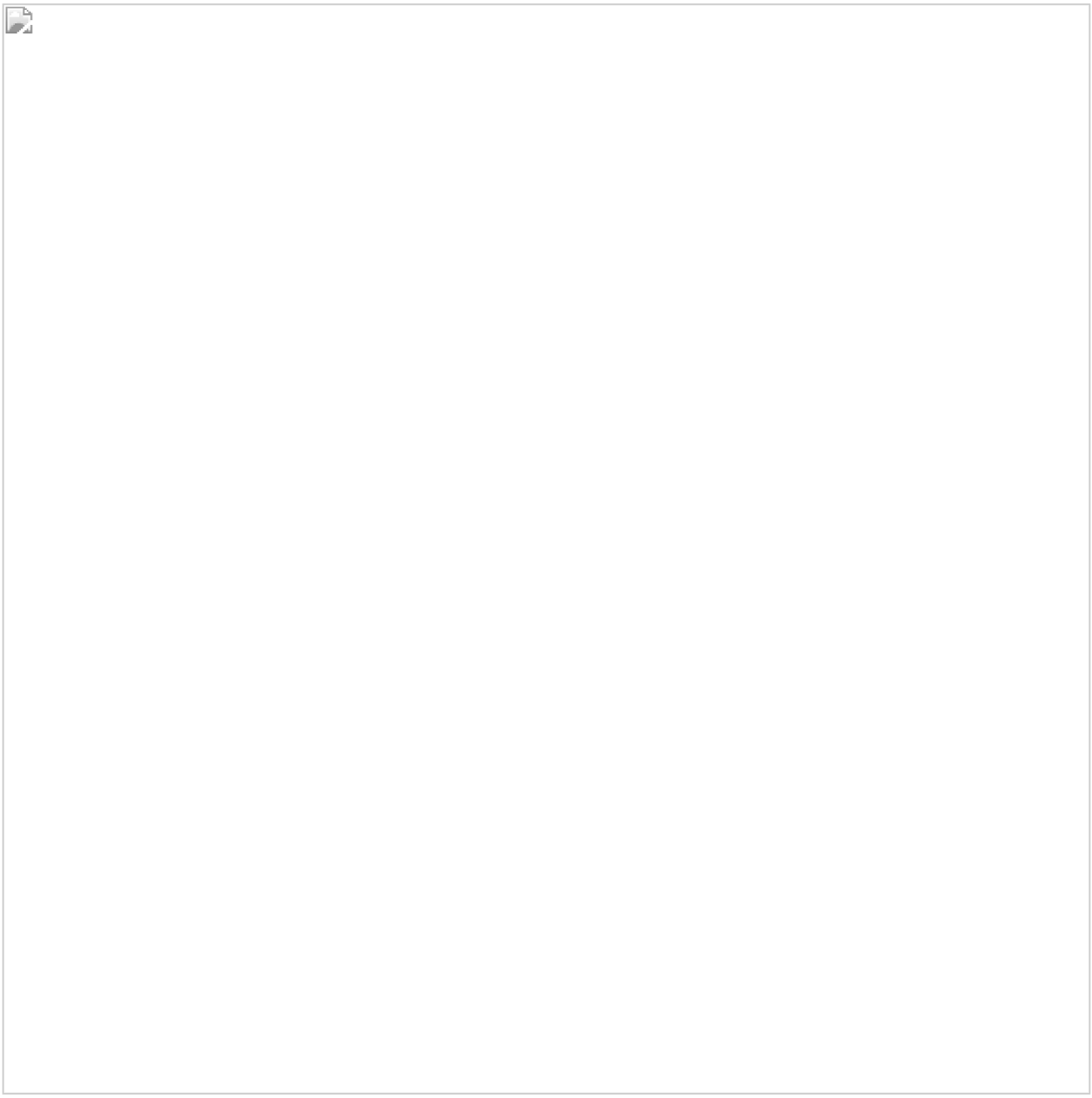
Mauri invited everyone to a great feast. What is a feast or party you remember?

This book belongs to _____

How the Tortoise Got Its Shell · another picture



Errands for the Feast



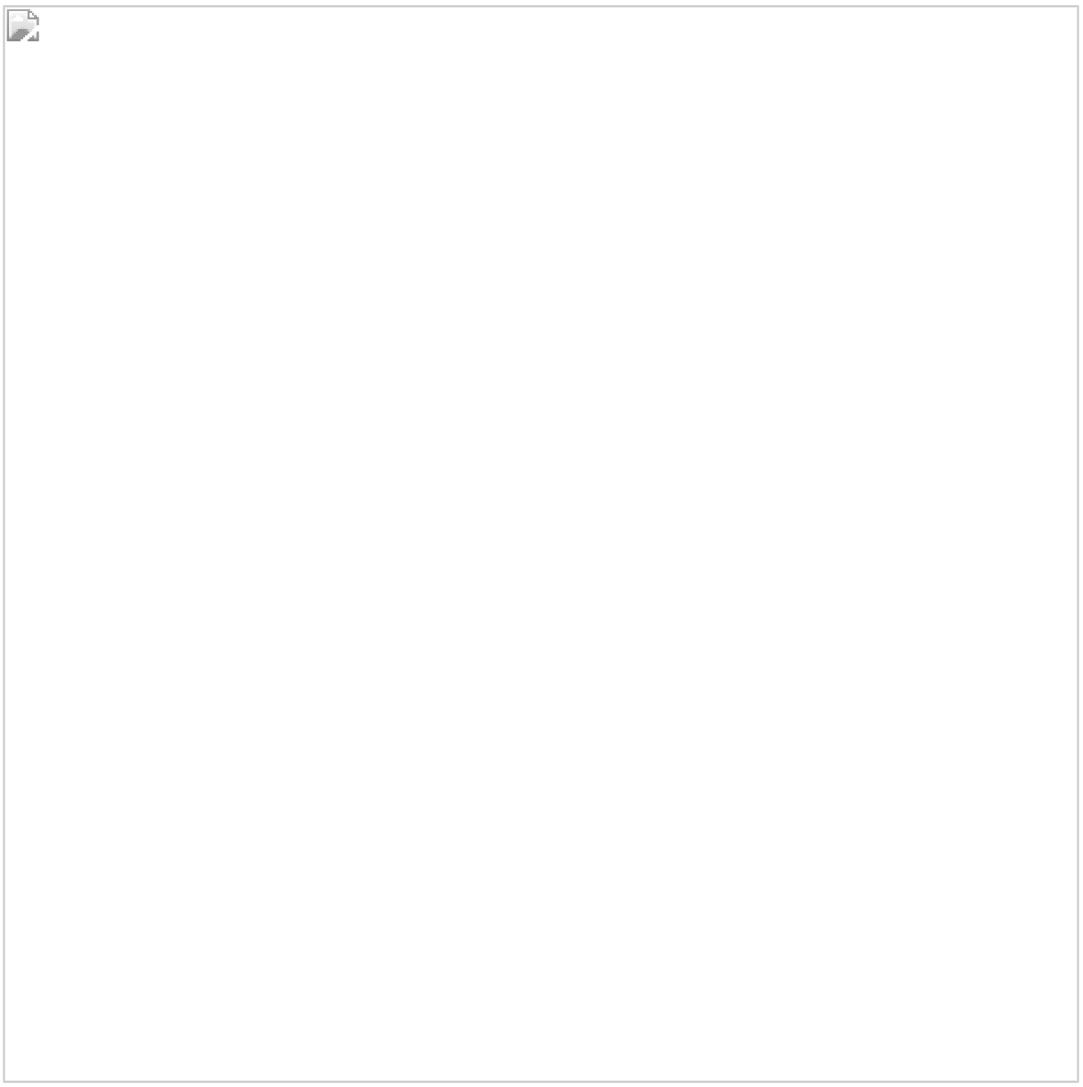
On the morning of that day, Mauri sent his servants to the nearby towns and villages to buy goats, sheep and cows for the great feast.

Mr Klo (the tortoise) was a tall and handsome fellow. He was sent to buy palm wine. He was told to go to the palm-fields of Koklovi (the chicken).

TALK ABOUT IT

Klo was given a job to do for the feast. What jobs do you do for your family?

Errands for the Feast · another picture

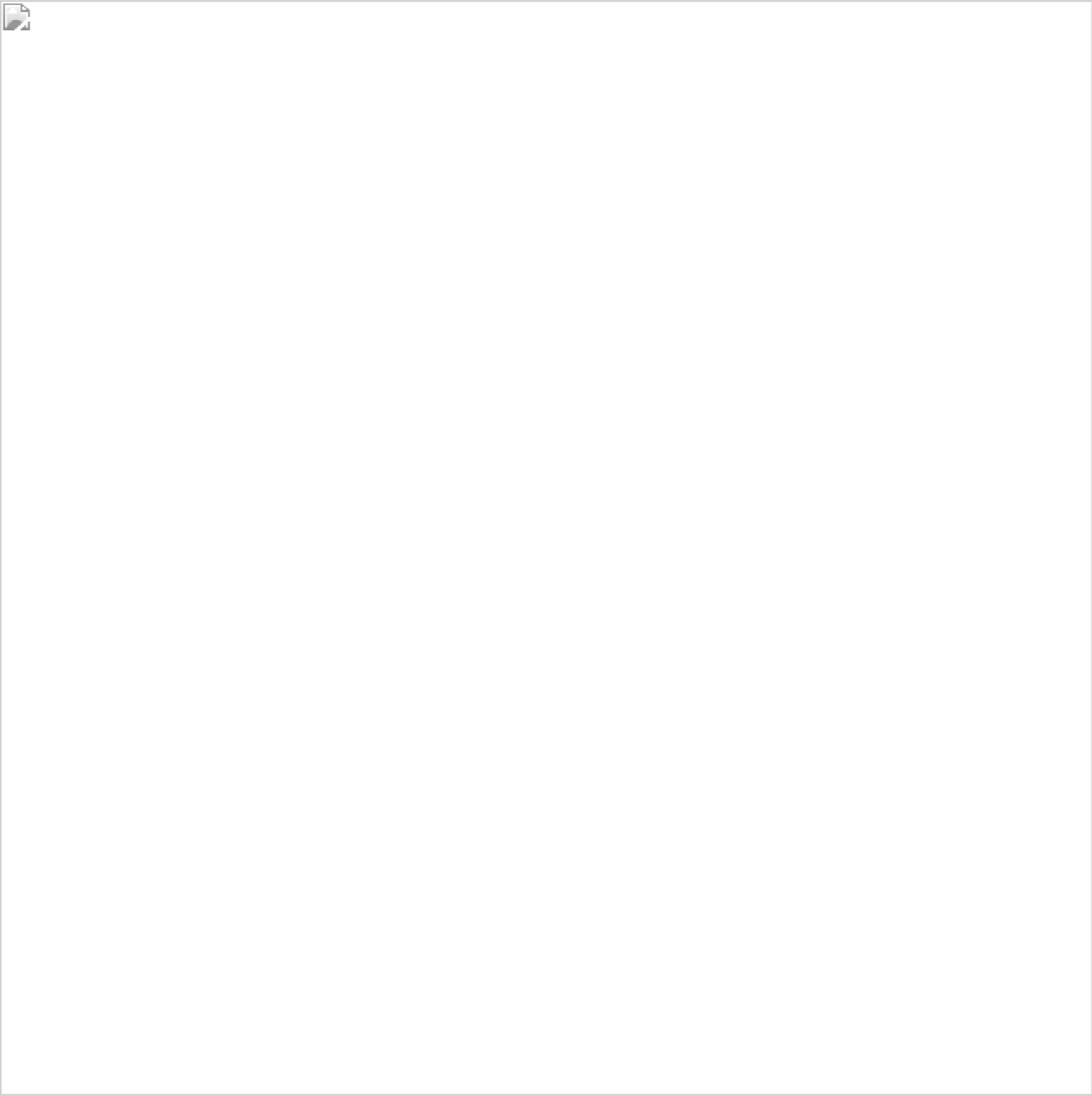


Think about it

1. What was Klo sent to buy?

- ○ Goats
- ○ Palm wine
- ○ Yams

A Powerful Traveller



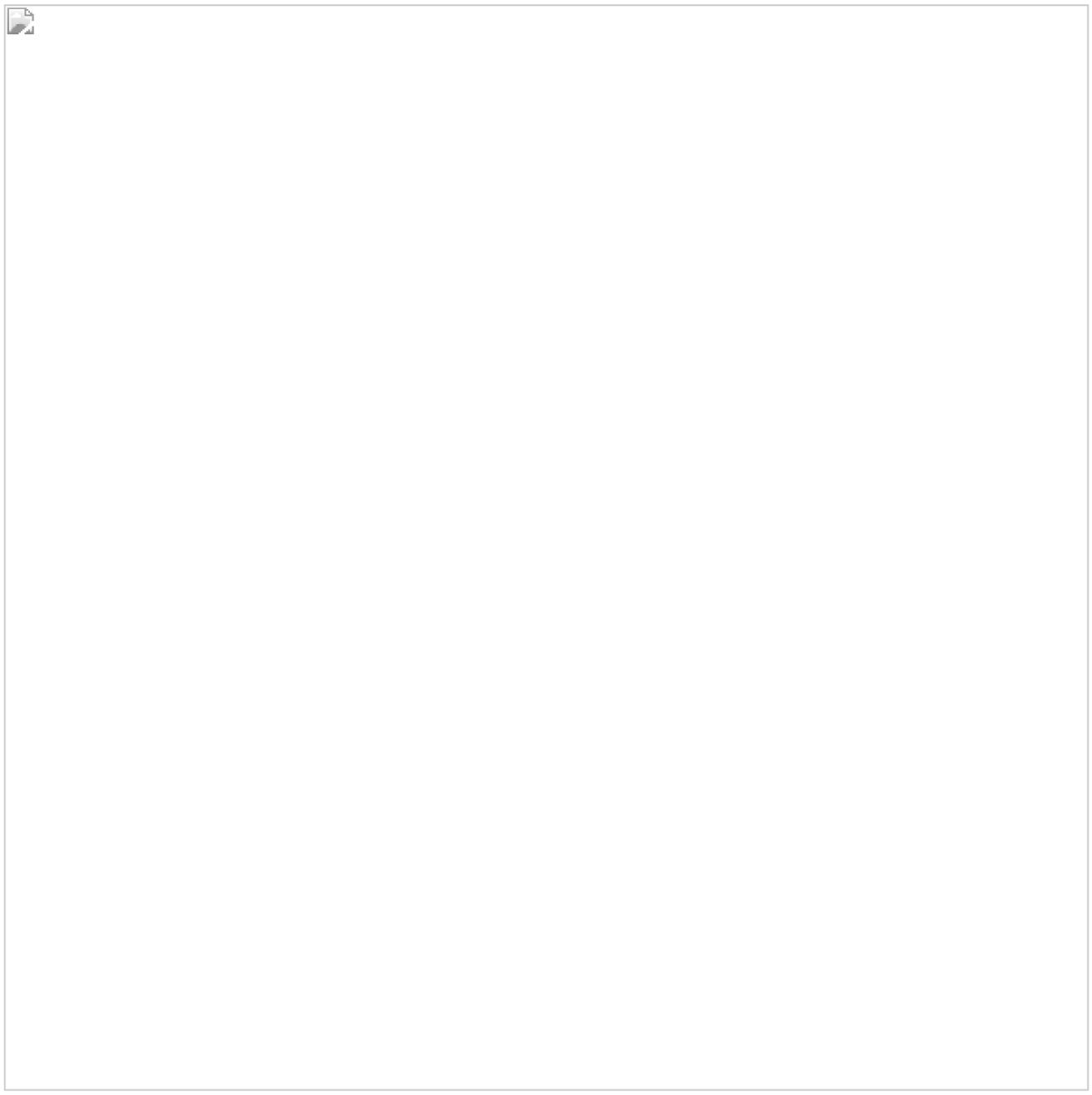
In those days, Klo was a very powerful traveller. He quickly reached his destination, although it was many miles from Mauri's palace.

When he arrived, Koklovi was eating his breakfast. They greeted each other politely, and Koklovi asked why Klo had come.

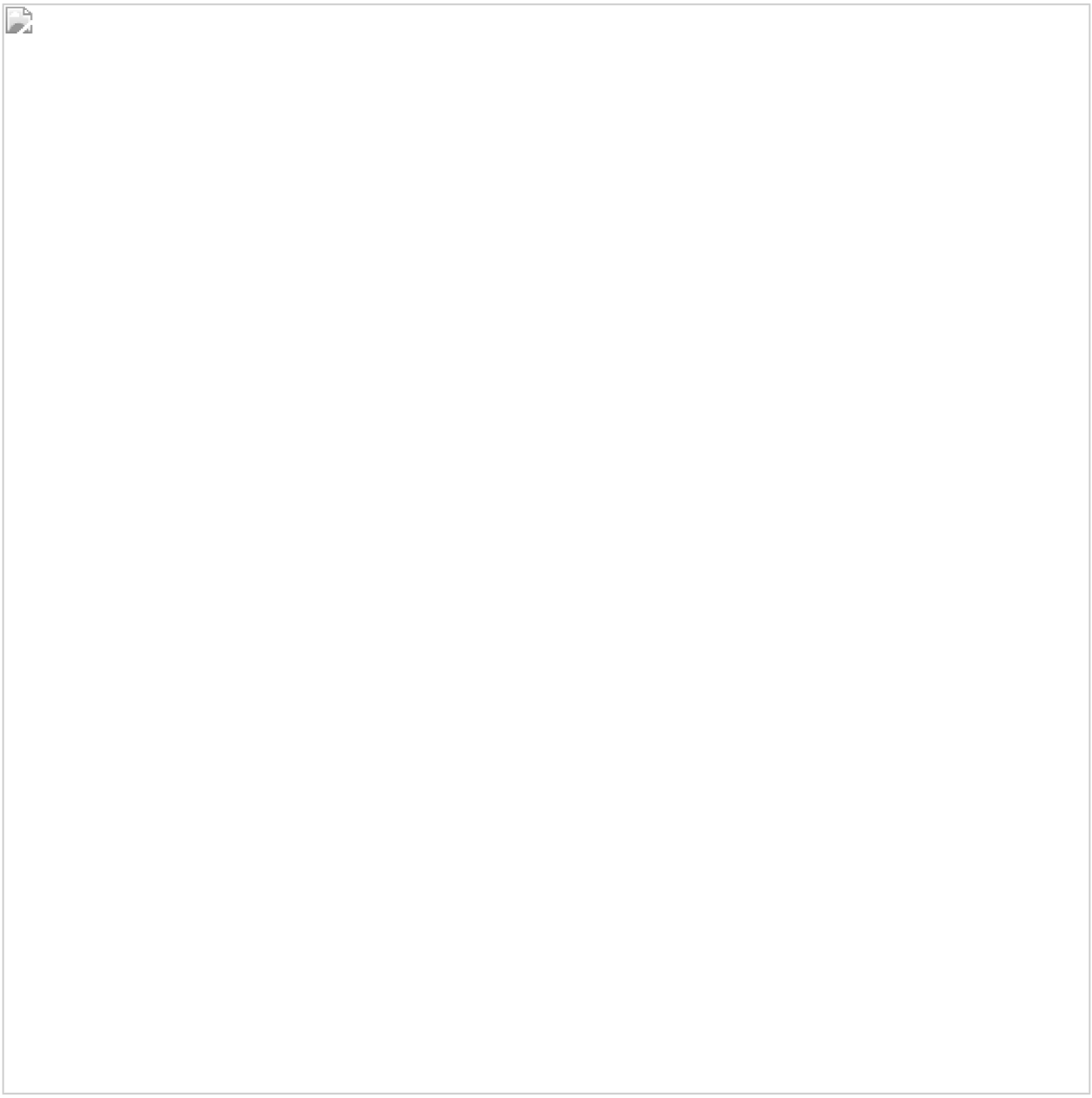
TALK ABOUT IT

In the story, Klo was not slow at all. What do you think will change?

A Powerful Traveller · another picture



Koklovi's Answer



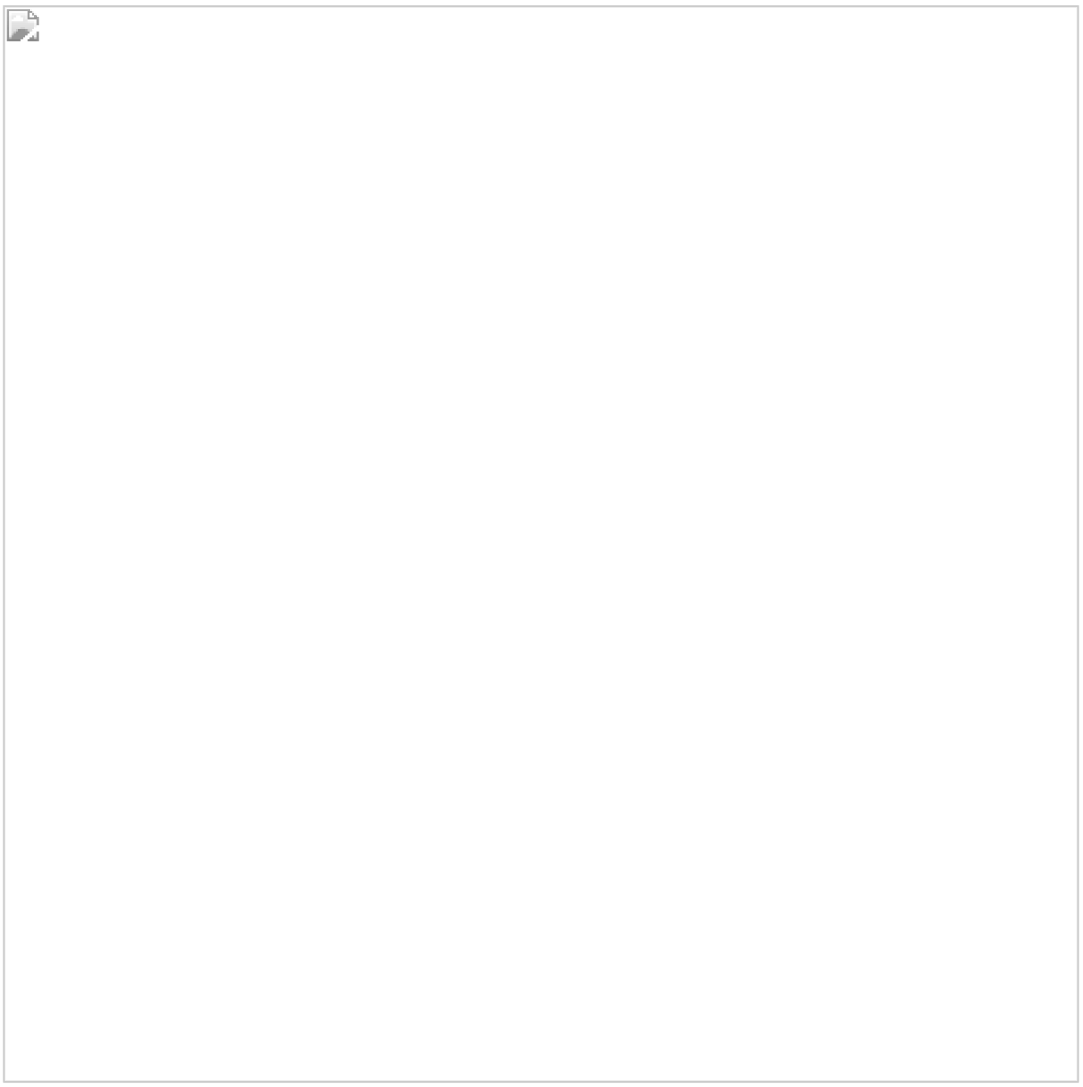
Klo said, “I was sent by His Majesty Mauri, the ruler of the world, to buy him palm wine.”

“Whether he's ruler of the world or not,” answered Koklovi, “no one can buy my wine with money. If you want it you must fight for it. If you win you can have it all and the palm-trees too.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Koklovi would not sell his wine, even to a great ruler. What do you think about that?

Koklovi's Answer · another picture

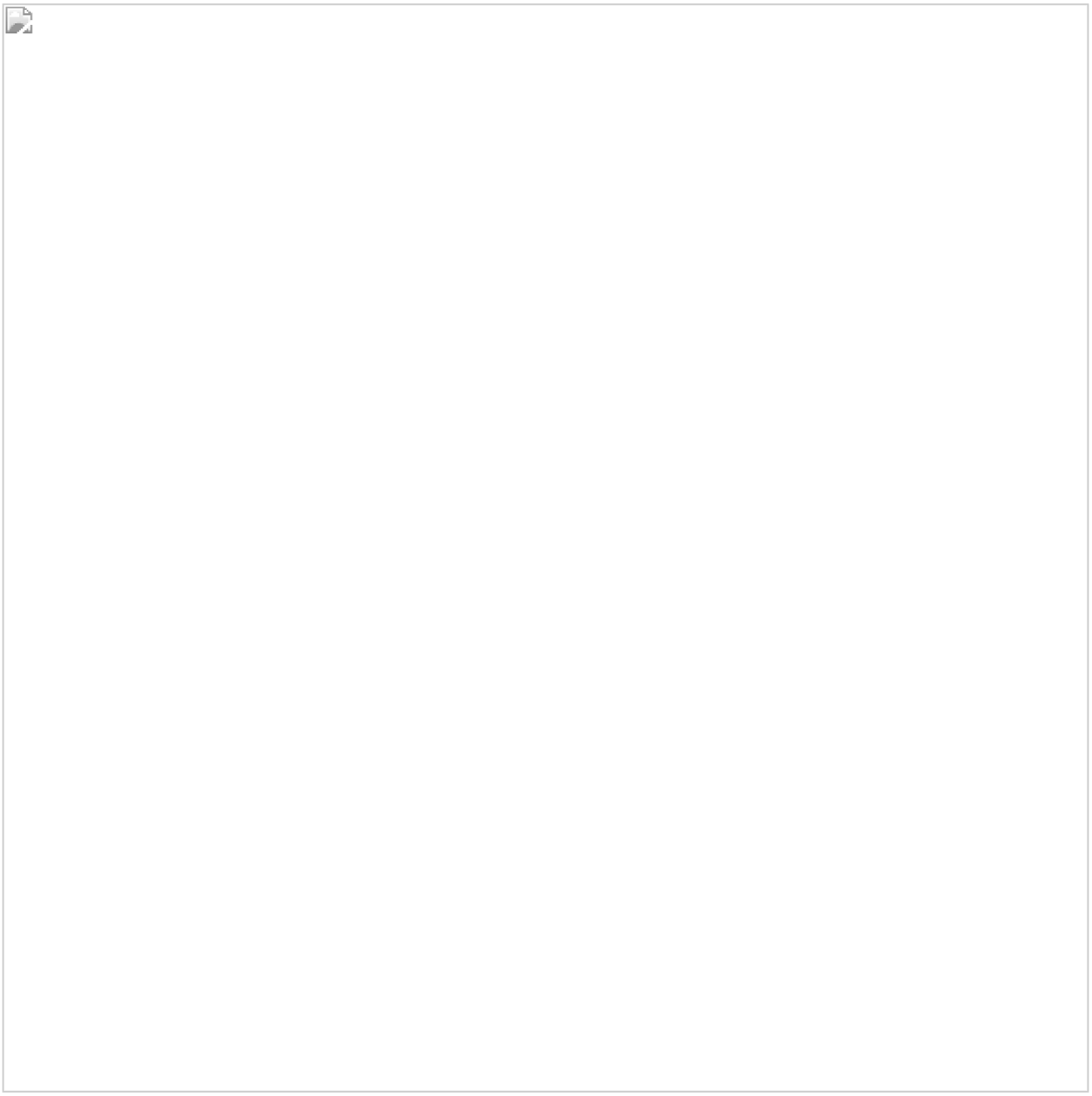


Think about it

1. How could Klo get the wine from Koklovi?

- By paying money
- By fighting for it
- By asking nicely

The Fight

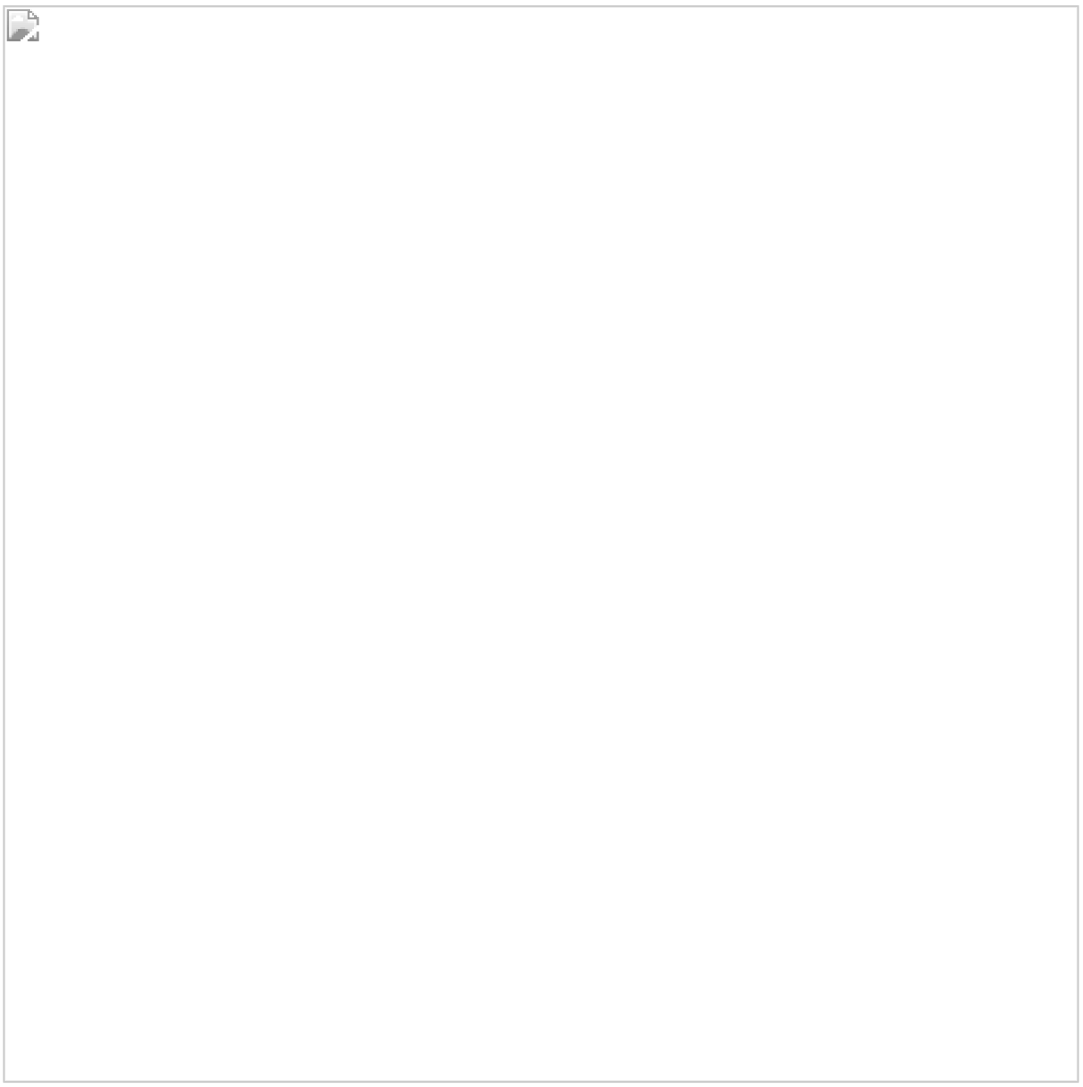


This answer delighted Klo, because he was a very strong fighter. Koklovi was strong too, so the fight went on for several hours.

At last Klo won. He tied Koklovi up securely before he left him.

TALK ABOUT IT

Klo and Koklovi were both strong. How do you think Koklovi felt afterwards?

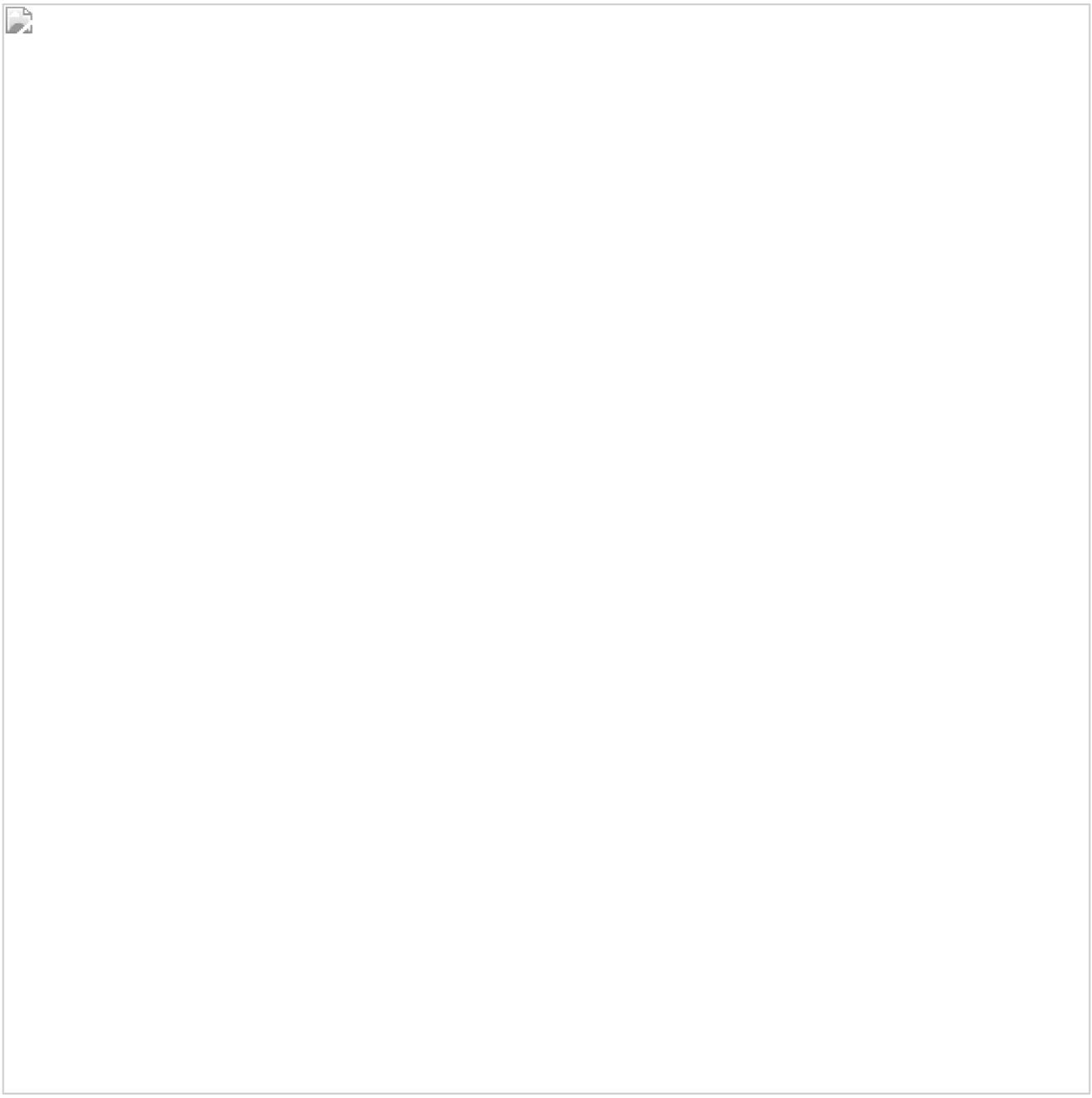


Think about it

1. How long did the fight last?

- ○ A few minutes
- ○ Several hours
- ○ Two months

More Wine Than the Pot



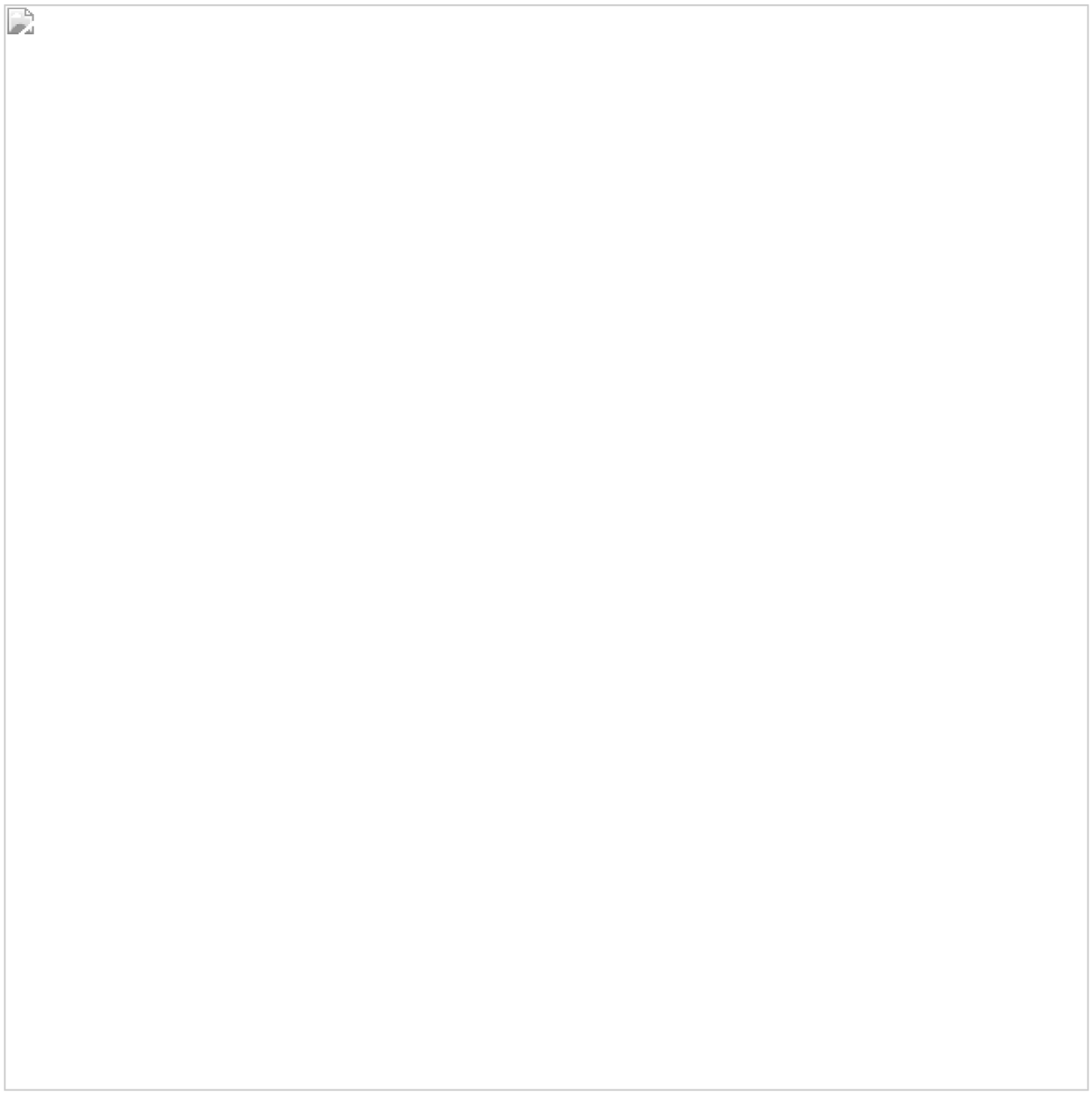
Klo took his great pot and filled it with wine. There was more wine than the pot would hold, and Klo foolishly drank all the rest.

Then he piled the palm-trees on his back and set out for the palace with the pot of wine.

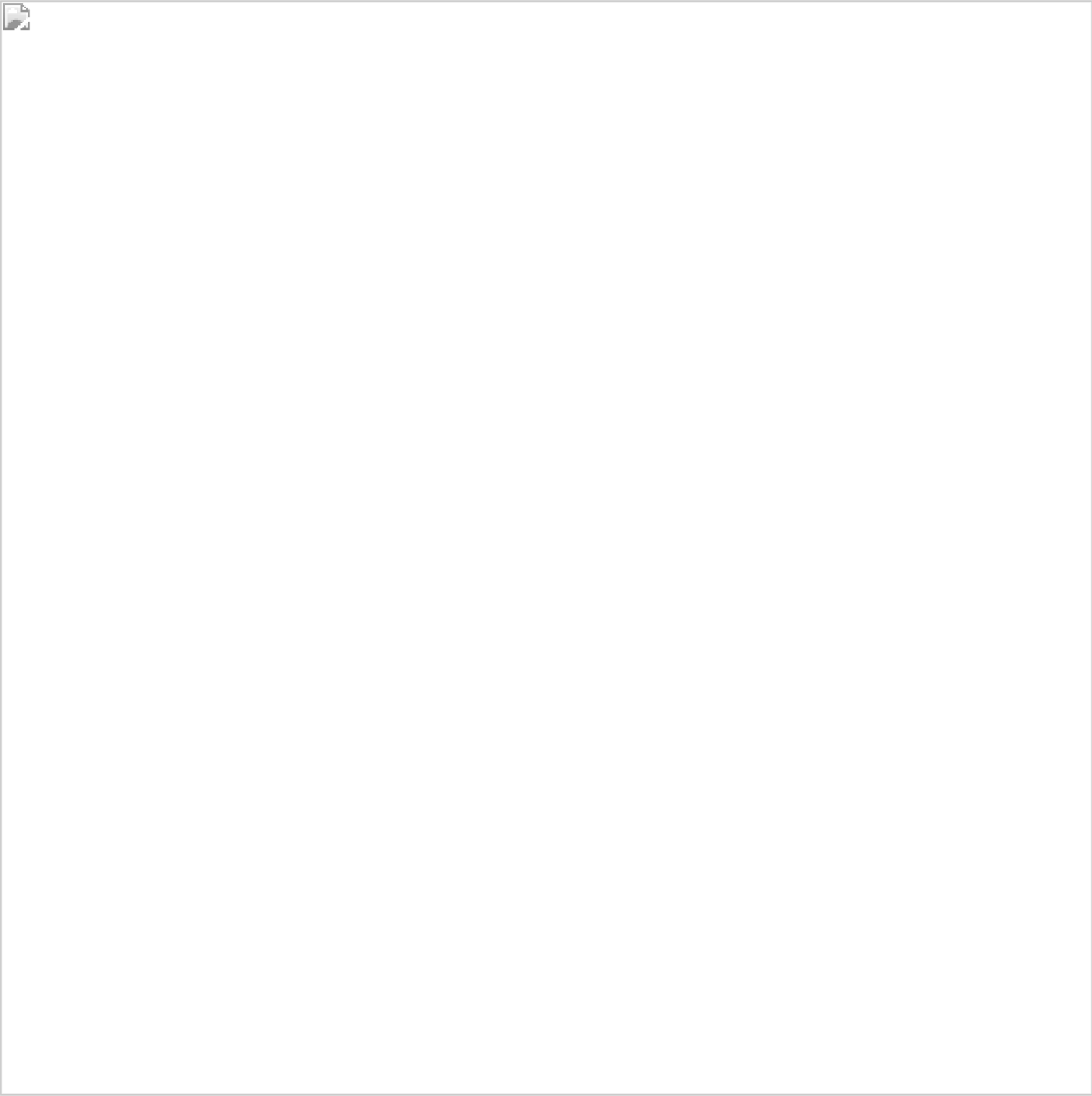
TALK ABOUT IT

Klo drank the rest of the wine. What do you think about what he did?

More Wine Than the Pot · another picture



Sleepy, Tired, and Rain



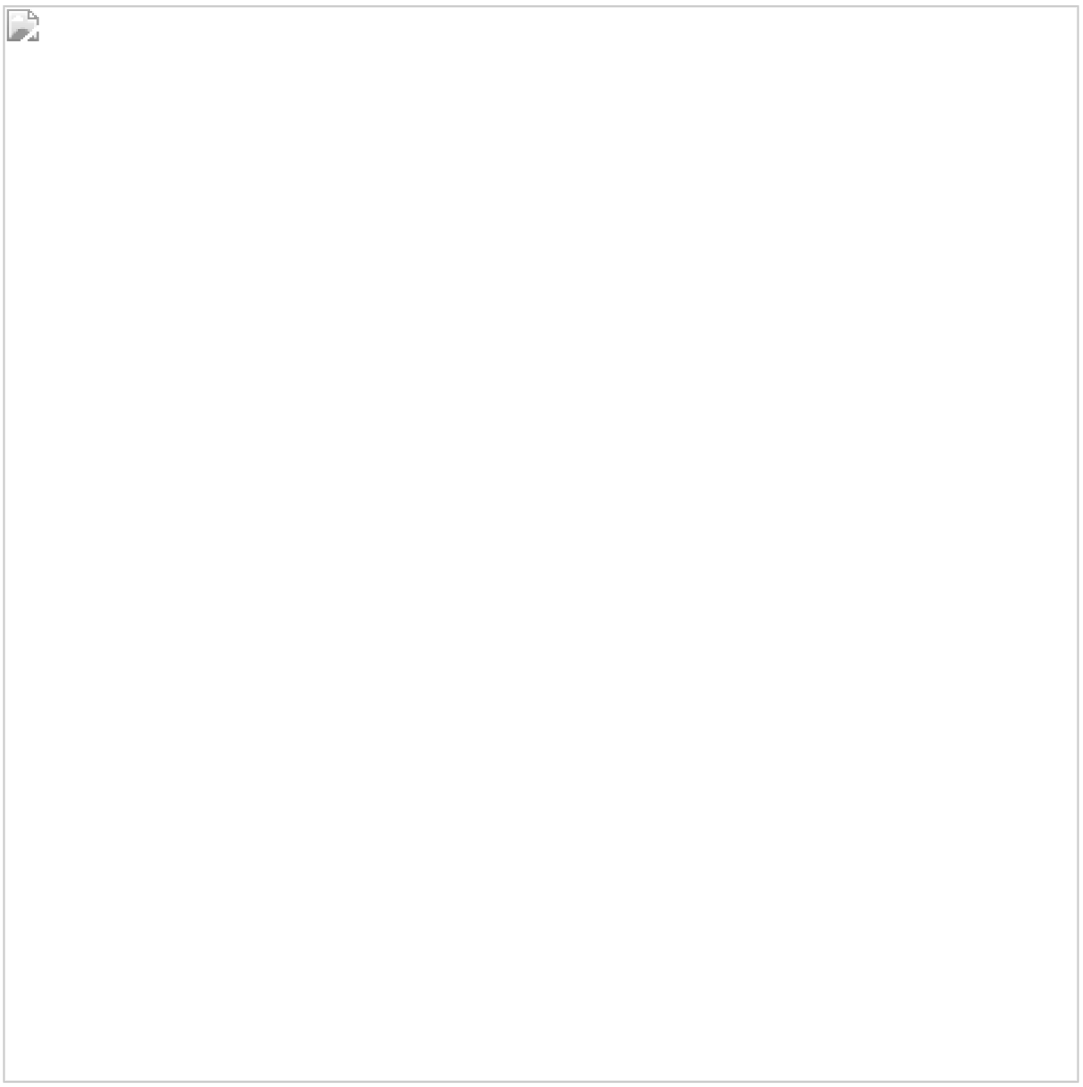
The wine he had drunk made Klo so sleepy and tired that he could not walk fast with his load.

On top of that, a terrible rain began to fall. It made the ground slippery and harder still to cross.

TALK ABOUT IT

Klo got slow and tired. When have you felt too tired to keep going?

Sleepy, Tired, and Rain · another picture

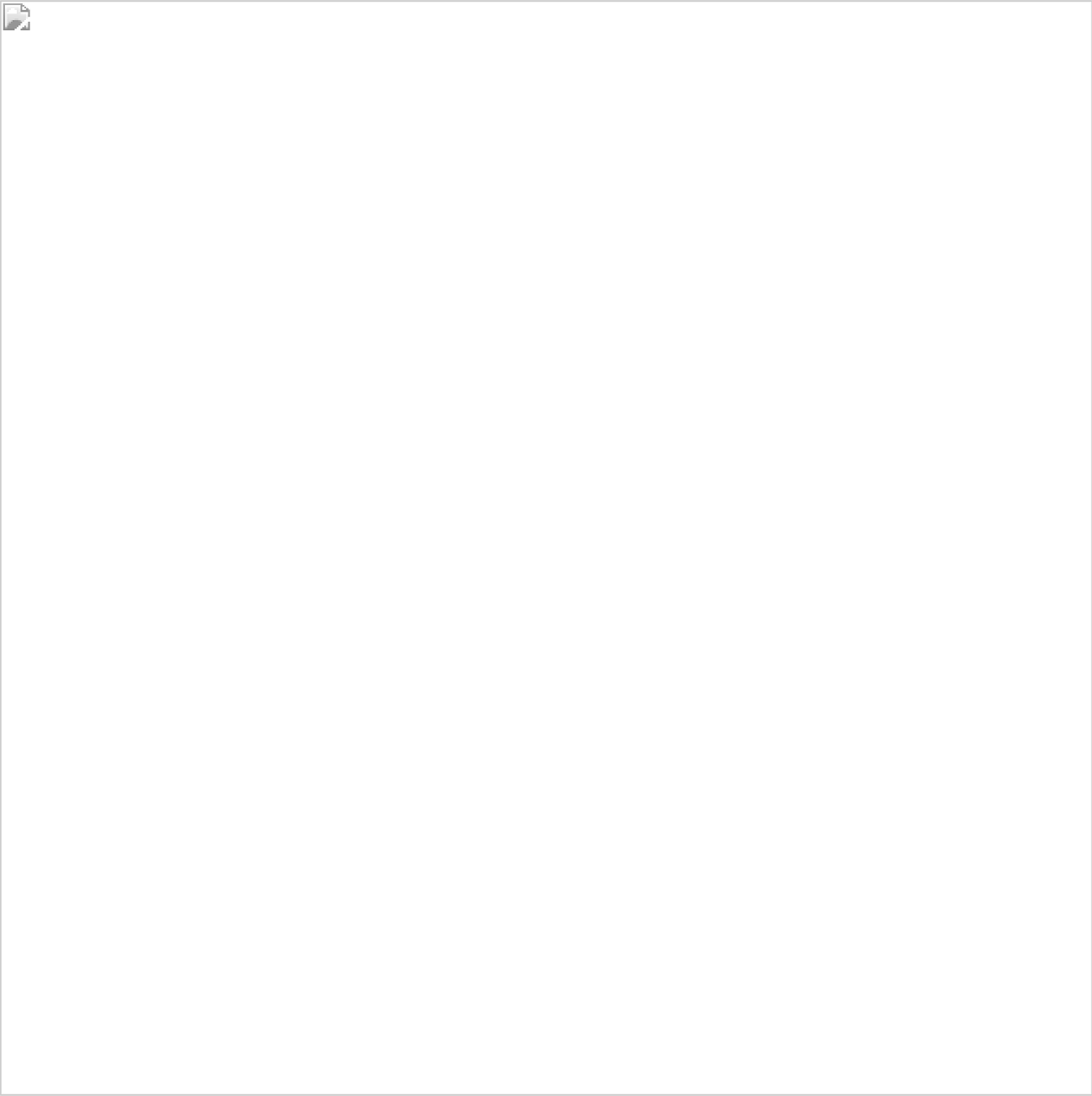


Think about it

1. What made Klo so sleepy and tired?

- ○ The wine he drank
- ○ A long nap
- ○ A heavy breakfast

The Locked Gate



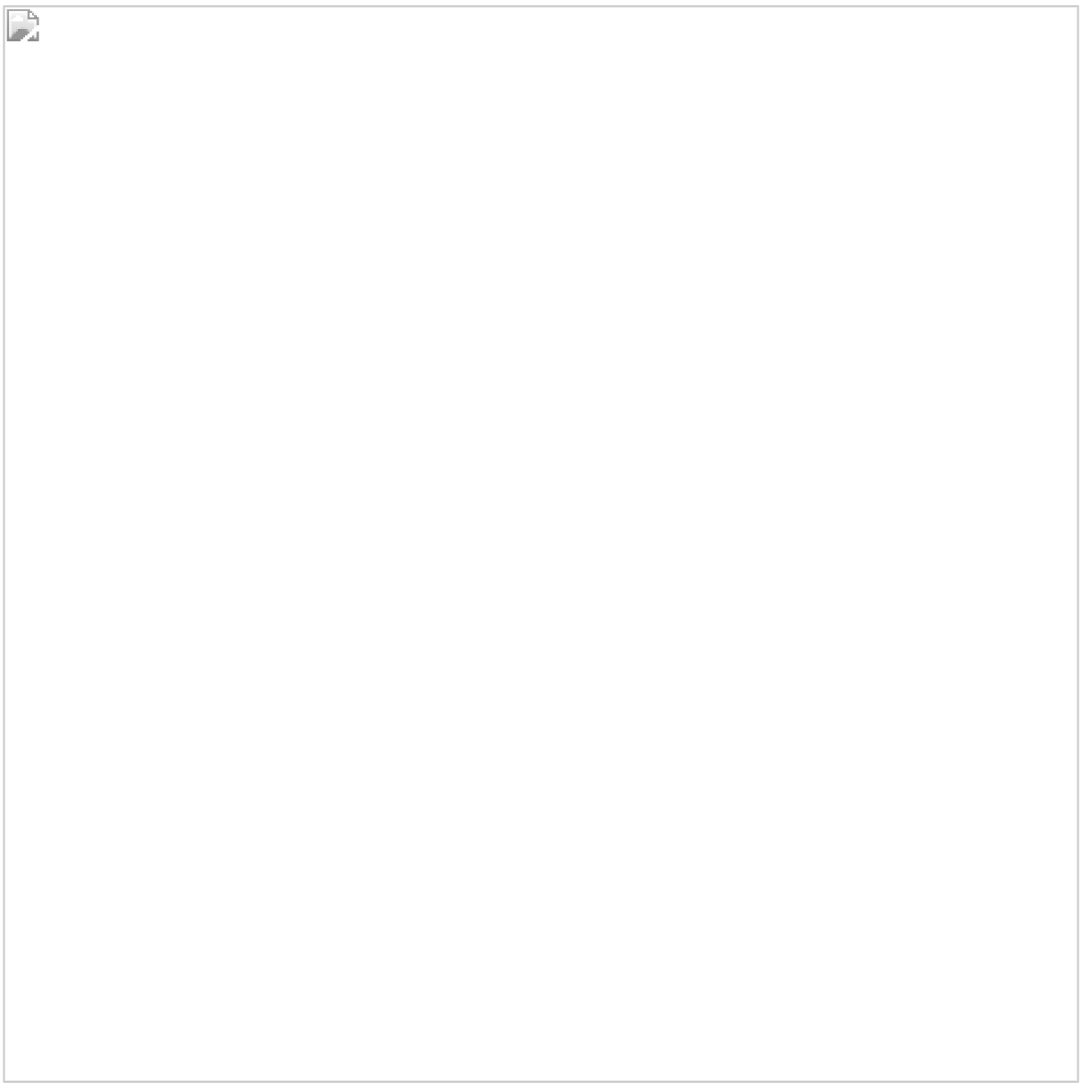
By the time Klo reached the palace, the gates were shut and locked. Mauri, seeing how late it was, had thought that everyone was inside.

Many people were packed into the great hall, singing and dancing. The noise was so great that no one heard Klo knocking at the gate. There he had to stay, with his great load of wine and palm-trees.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nobody heard Klo knock. Have you ever called for someone who did not hear you?

The Locked Gate · another picture

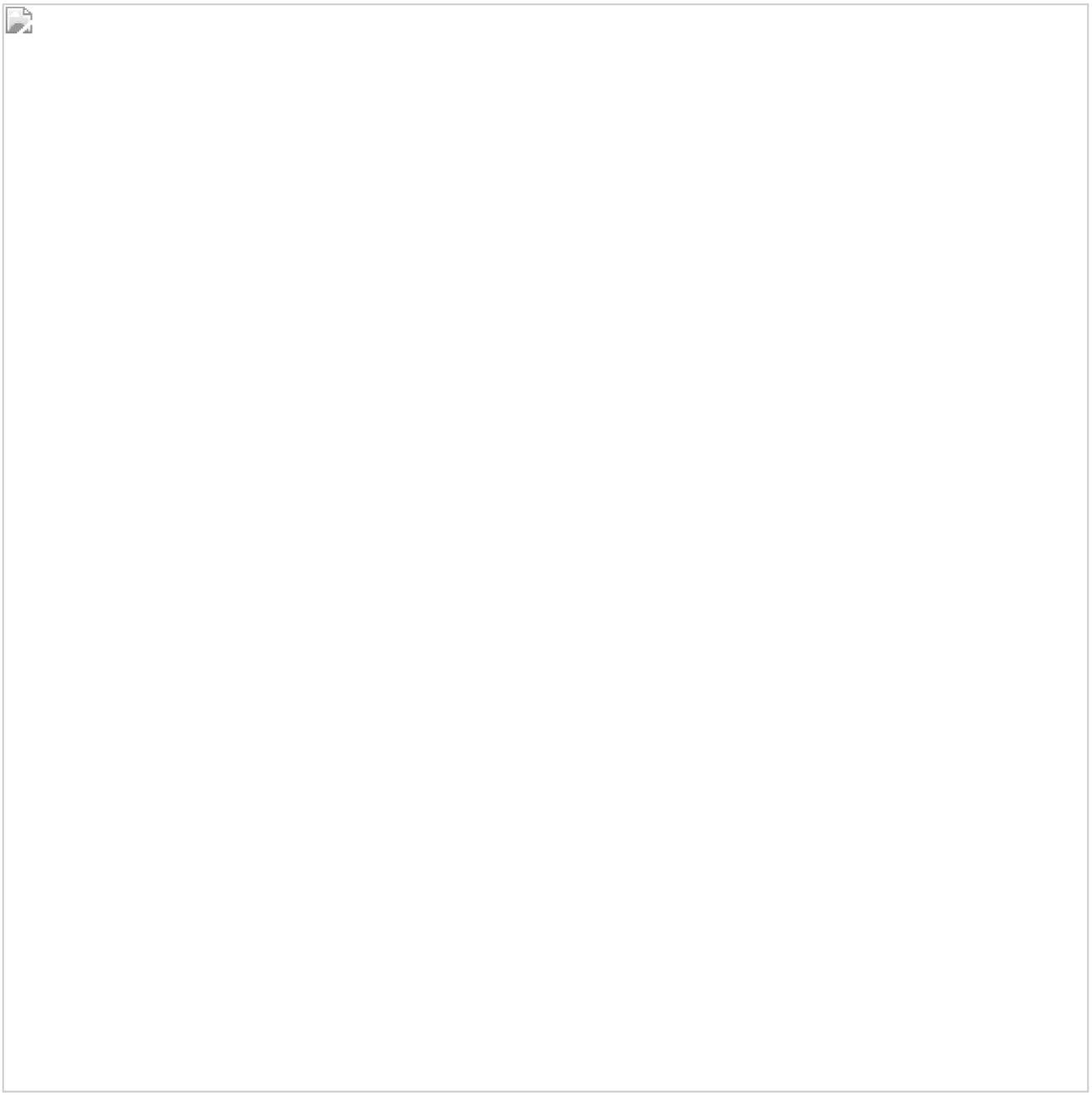


Think about it

1. Why did no one let Klo in?

- ○ They were asleep
- ○ The singing and dancing was too loud to hear him
- ○ They did not know him

Two Months of Rain

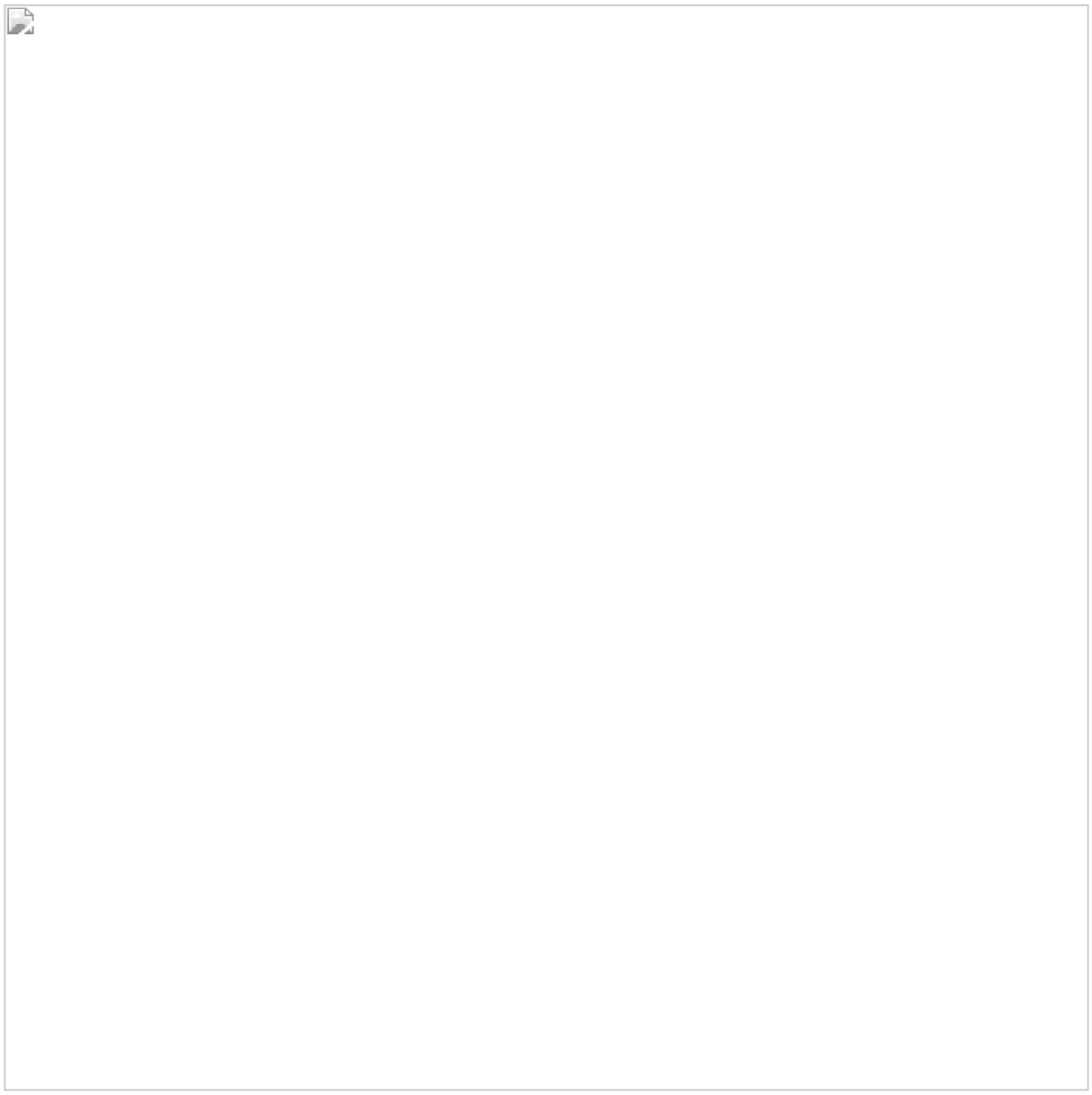


The rain went on for nearly two months. It was so terrible that the people all stayed inside the palace till it was over.

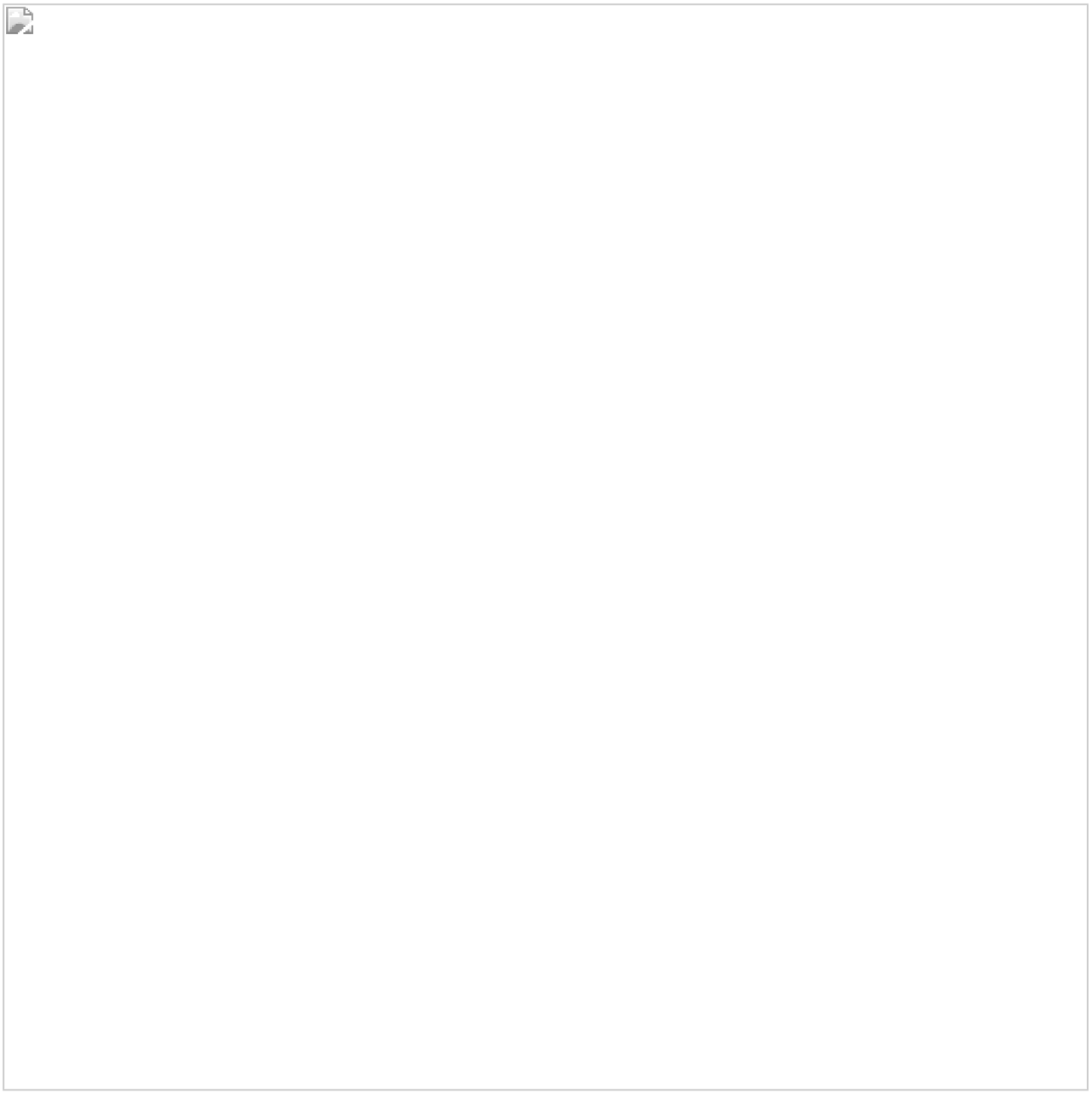
All that time Klo was stuck under his load, which he could not get off his back. When the weight was too much, he lay still before the gate with the pile of palm-trees on top of him.

TALK ABOUT IT

That is a very long time for rain. How long do you think two months is?



The Mound at the Gate



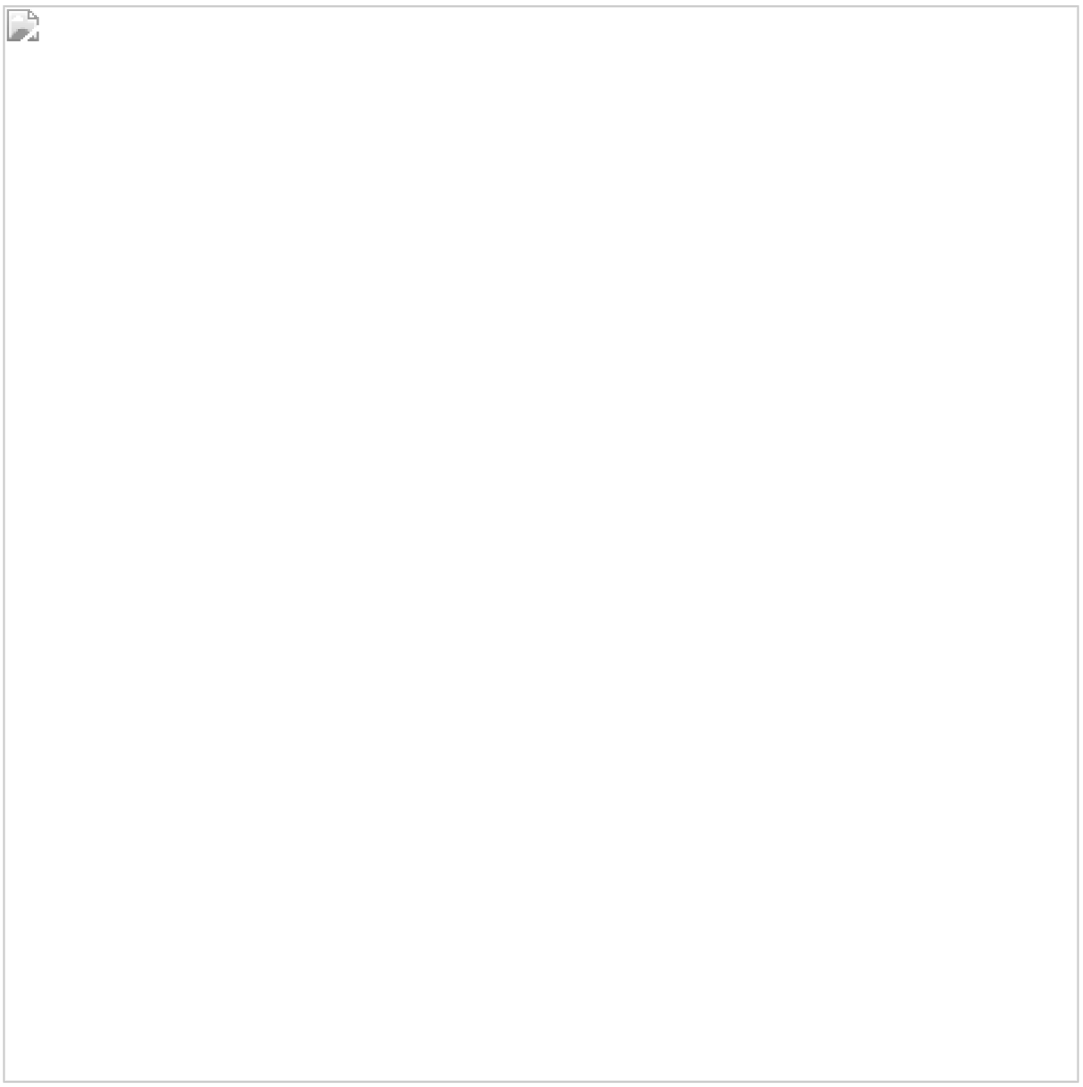
When the rain stopped and the gates were opened, the people were amazed. There was a great mound in front of the gate where there had been nothing before.

They fetched spades and began to shovel it away. At the bottom of the pile lay Klo. His earthenware pot and the dust had caked together and formed a hard cover on his back.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think the people were thinking as they dug?

The Mound at the Gate · another picture

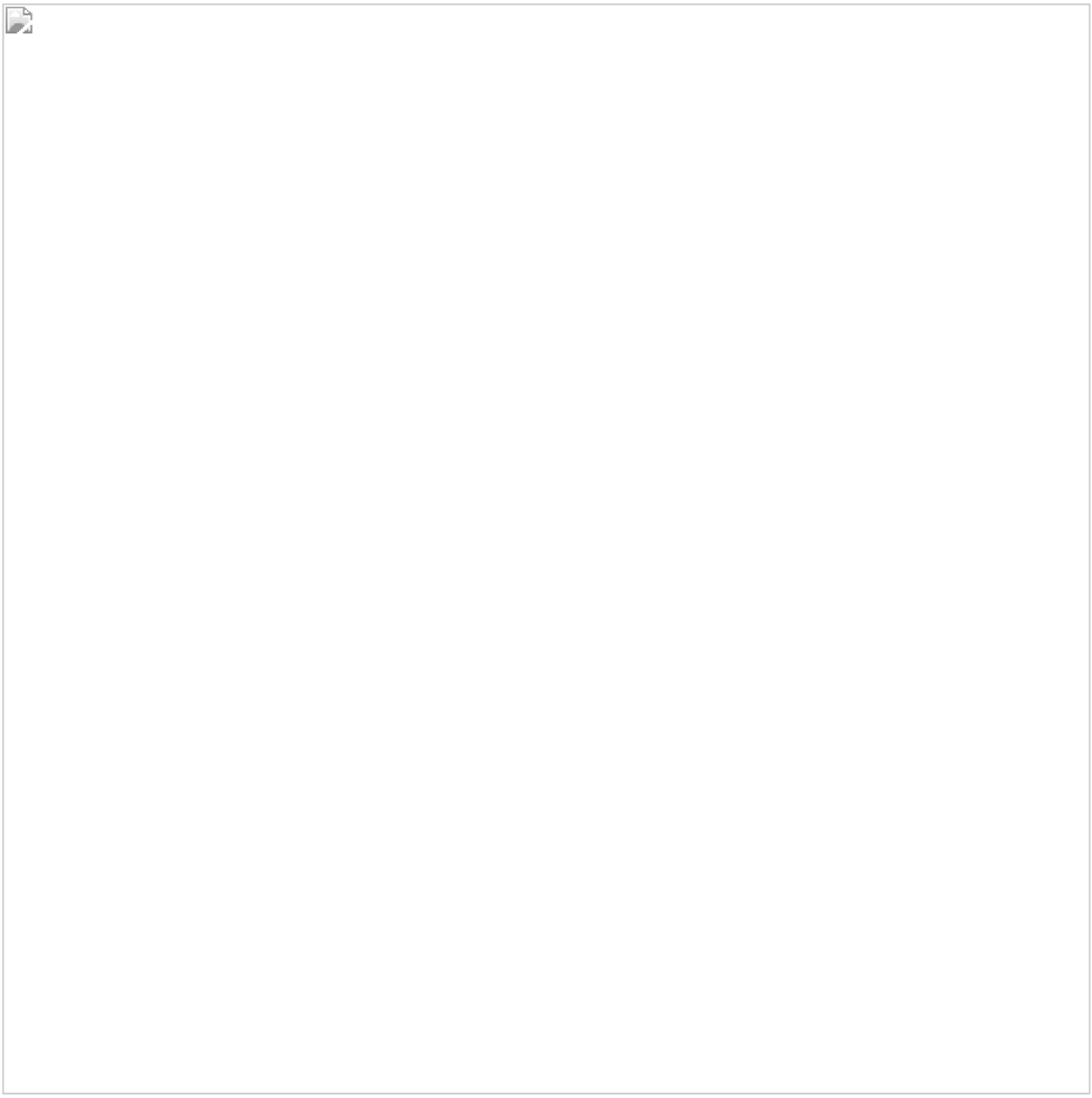


Think about it

1. What did the people use to dig away the mound?

- ○ Spades
- ○ Their hands
- ○ Sticks

A Creeping Creature



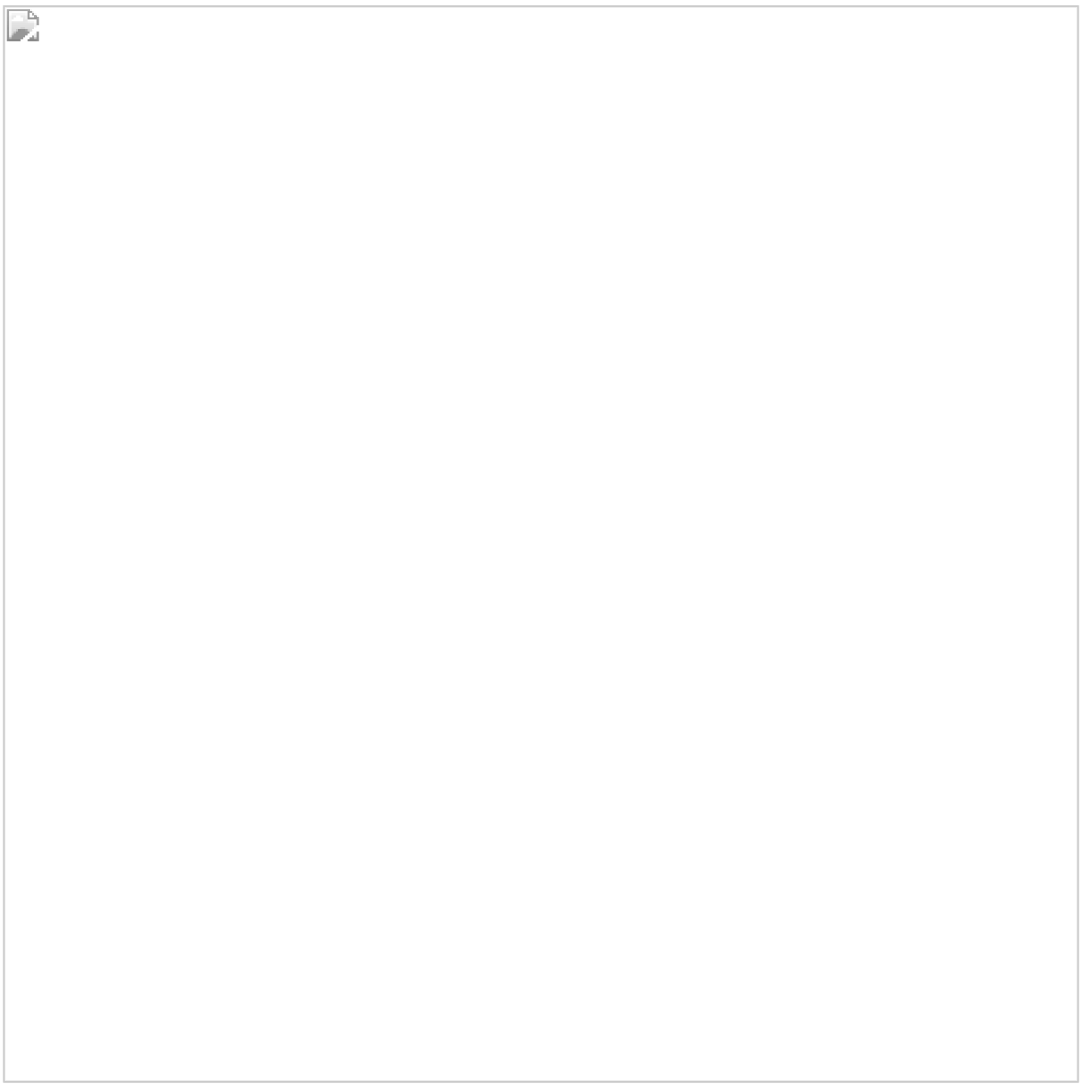
Klo was taken into the palace. With many wonderful medicines, he was brought back to life.

But from that day to this, he has never been able to stand upright. He is a creeping creature, with a great shell on his back.

TALK ABOUT IT

Klo never stood tall again. What do you think about how things turned out for him?

A Creeping Creature · another picture



Think about it

1. What did Klo's shell come from?

- ○ A gift from Mauri
- ○ His earthenware pot and the dust
- ○ A river stone

2. If you could tell Klo one thing on his way home with the wine, what would it be?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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