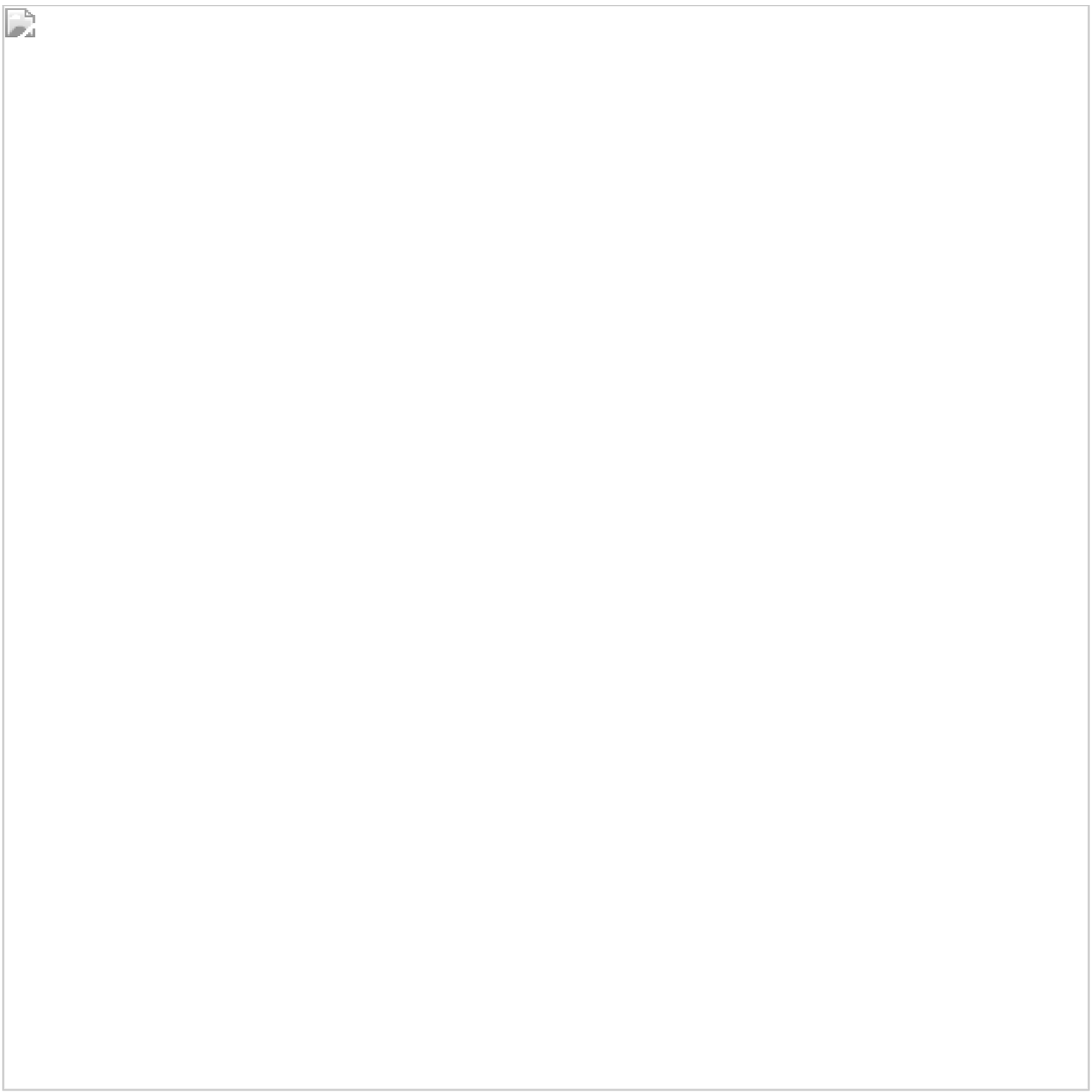
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Iktomi and the Ducks

A Tale of the Dakota People



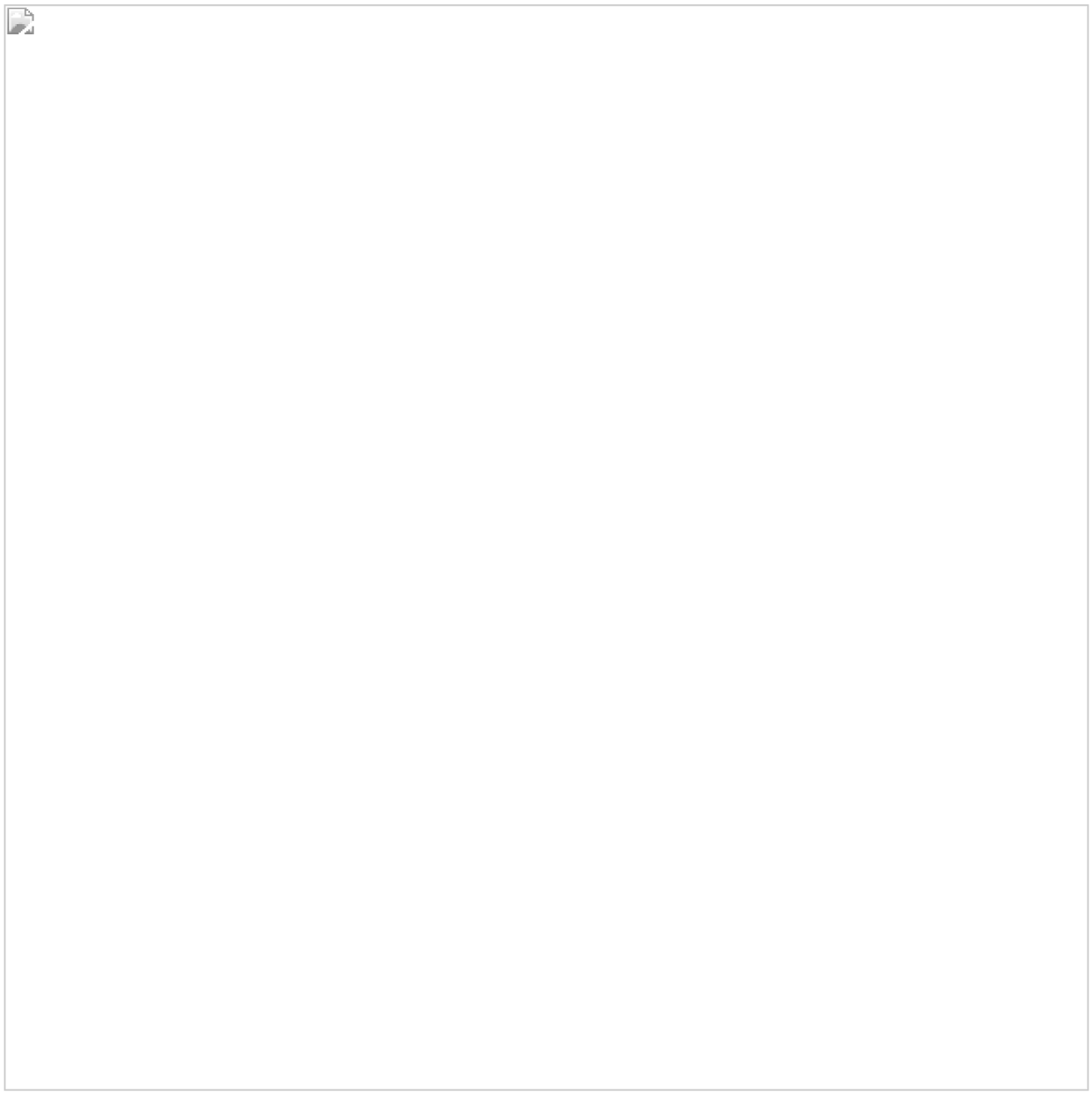
Iktomi is a spider fairy. He wears brown deerskin leggings with long soft fringes and tiny beaded moccasins on his feet. His long black hair is parted in the middle and wrapped with red bands.

TALK ABOUT IT

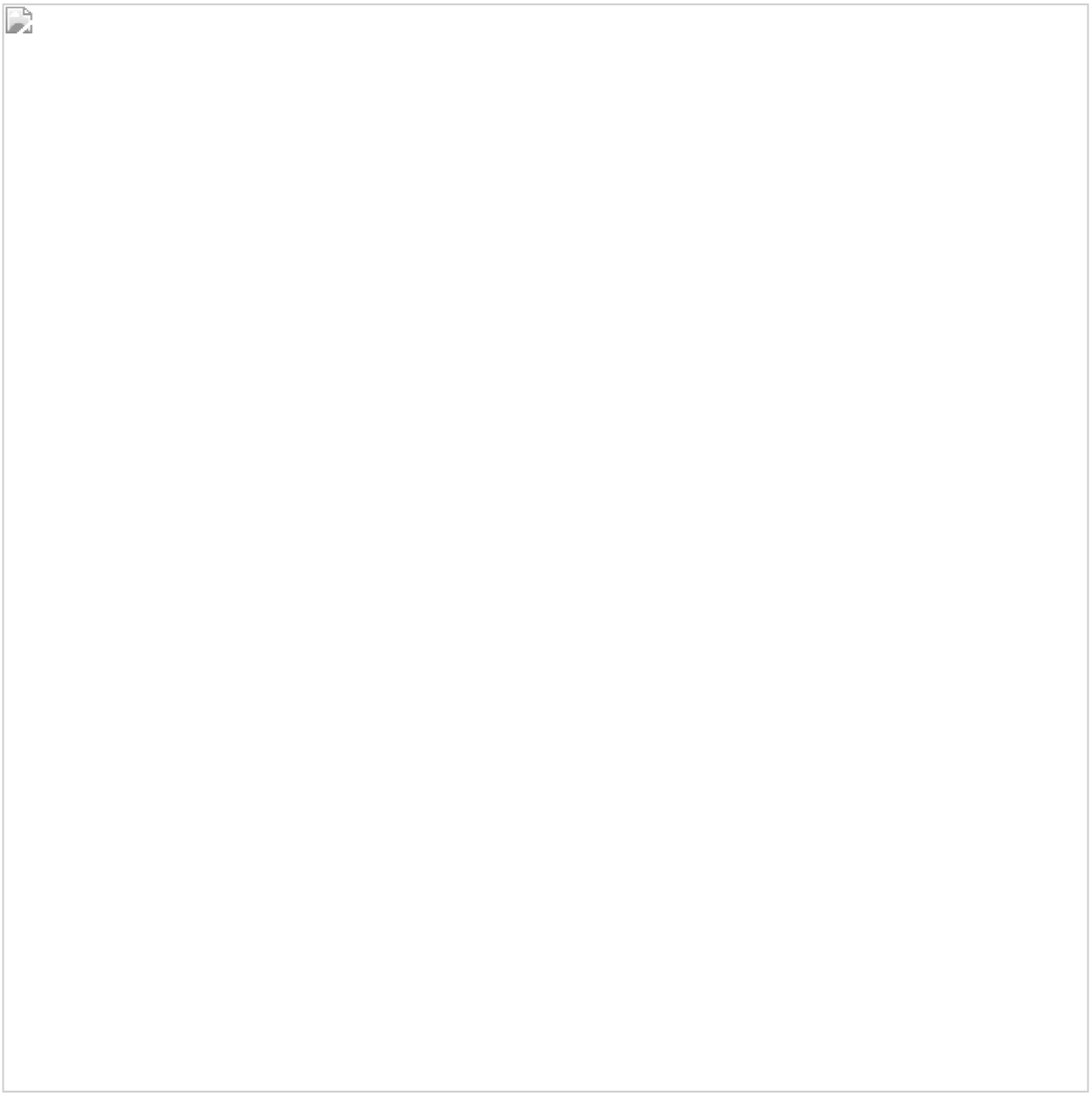
How would you draw Iktomi from this picture in words?

This book belongs to _____

Iktomi and the Ducks · another picture



Iktomi Is a Wily Fellow

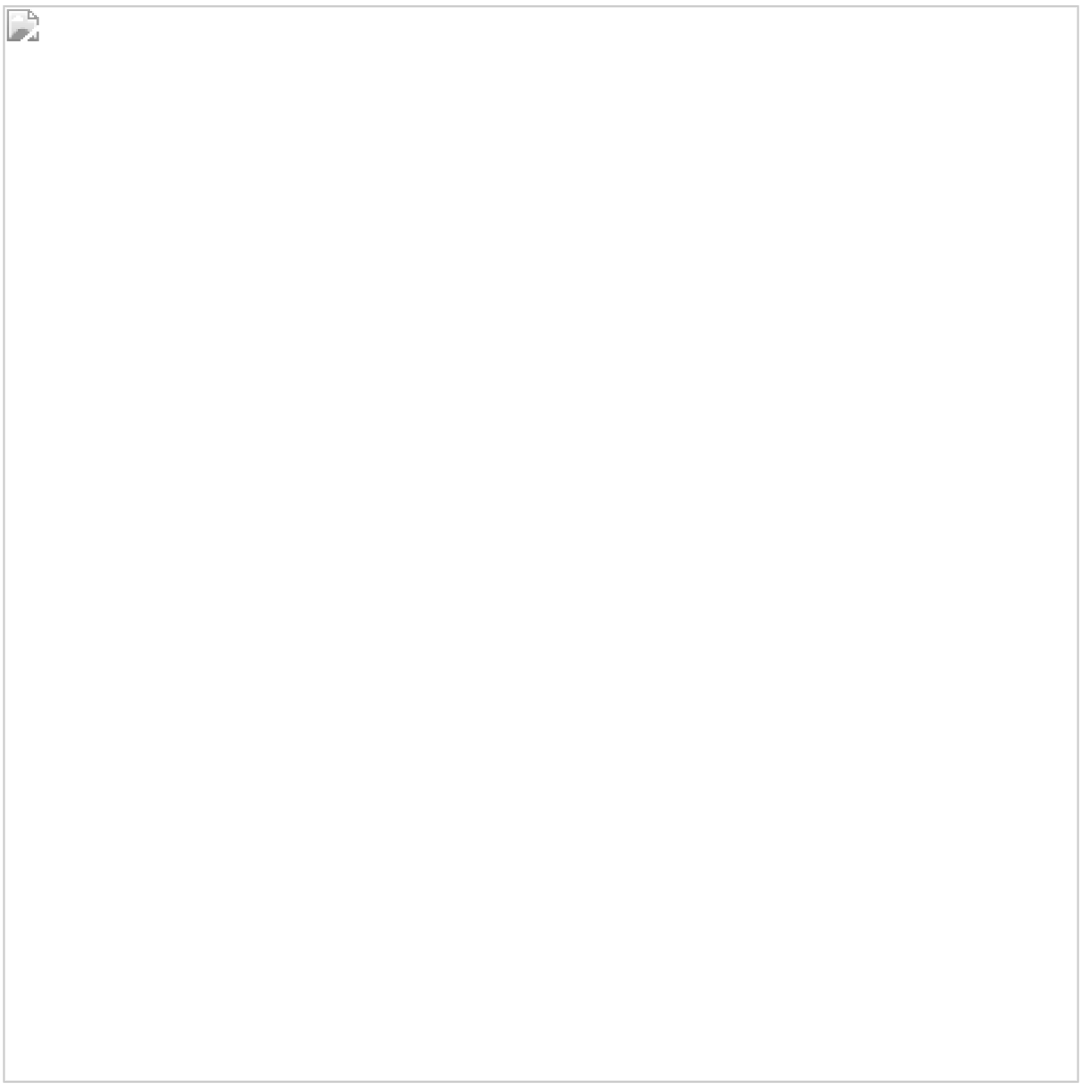


He paints his funny face with red and yellow, and draws big black rings around his eyes. He wears a deerskin jacket sewn with bright beads. Iktomi dresses like a real Dakota brave.

Iktomi is a wily fellow. His hands are always kept in mischief. He would rather spread a snare than earn the smallest thing with honest hunting.

TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi would rather play tricks than hunt honestly. What do you think of that?

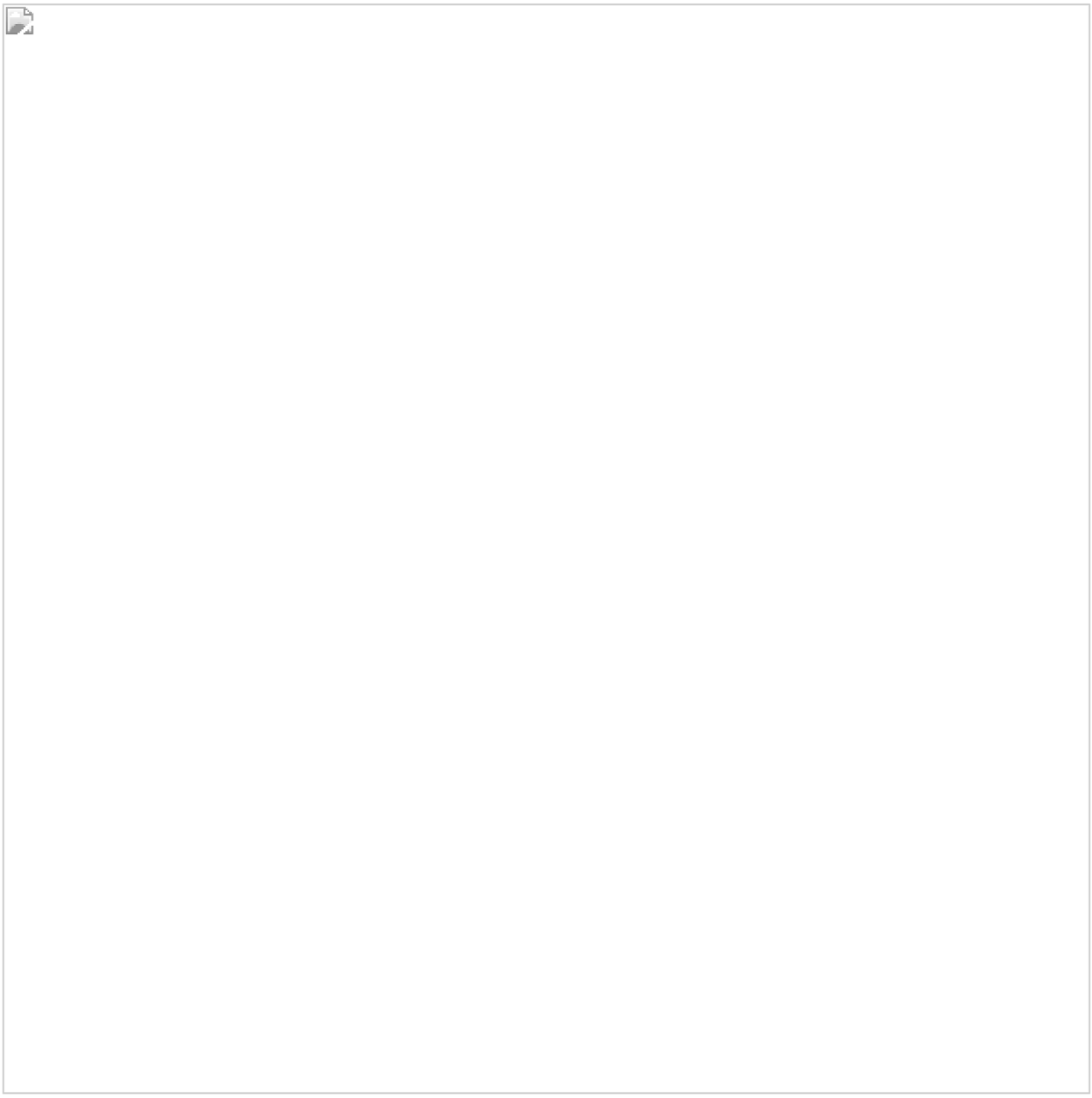


Think about it

1. What kind of fellow is Iktomi?

- ○ A wily fellow
- ○ A sleepy fellow
- ○ A shy fellow

Alone in His Wigwam



Iktomi cannot help being a little imp. And so long as he is a naughty fairy, he cannot find a single friend. No one helps him when he is in trouble. No one really loves him.

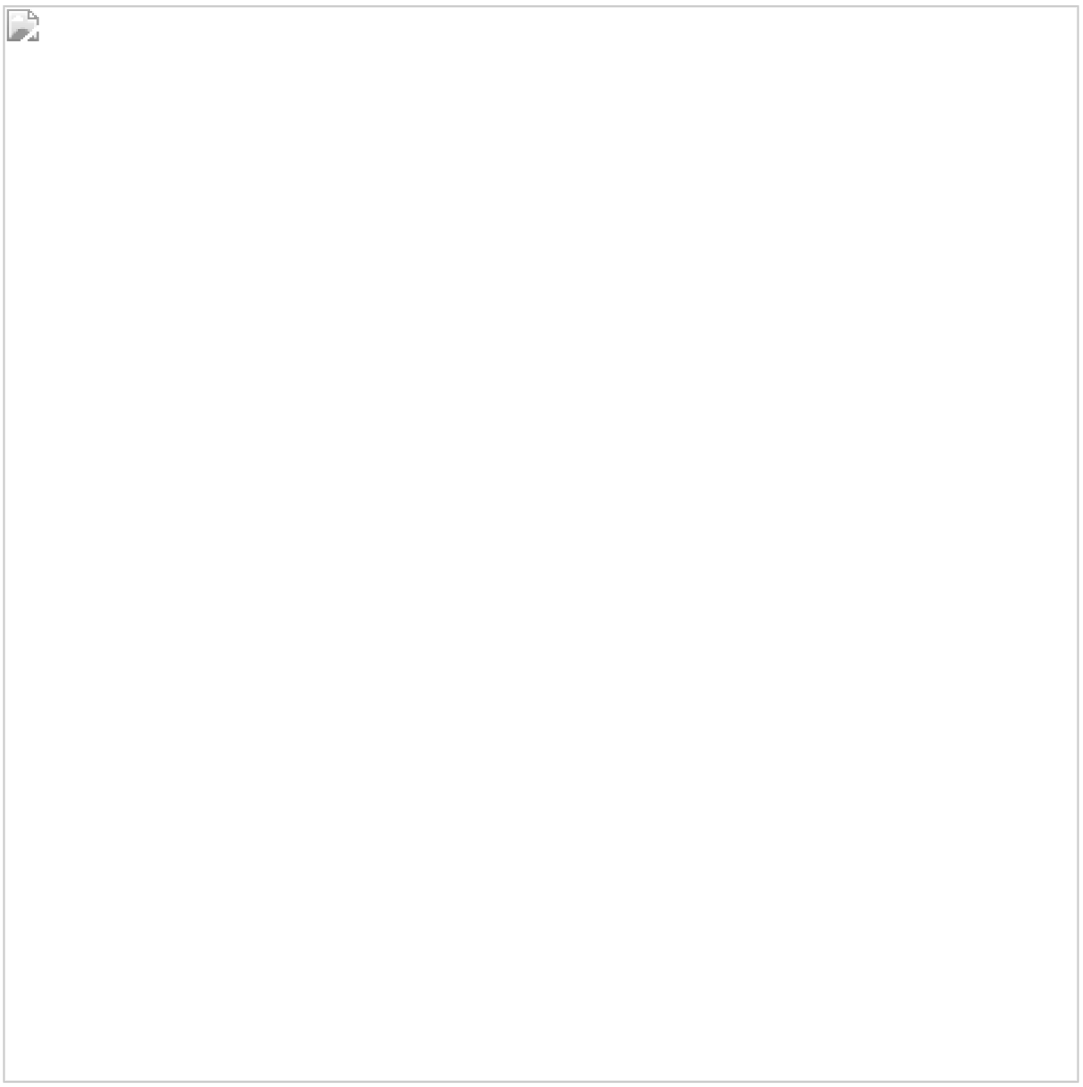
People come to admire his handsome jacket, but they soon go away tired of his vain words and heartless laughter.

So Iktomi lives alone in a cone-shaped wigwam on the plain.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think Iktomi has no friends? What would a good friend do for him?

Alone in His Wigwam · another picture

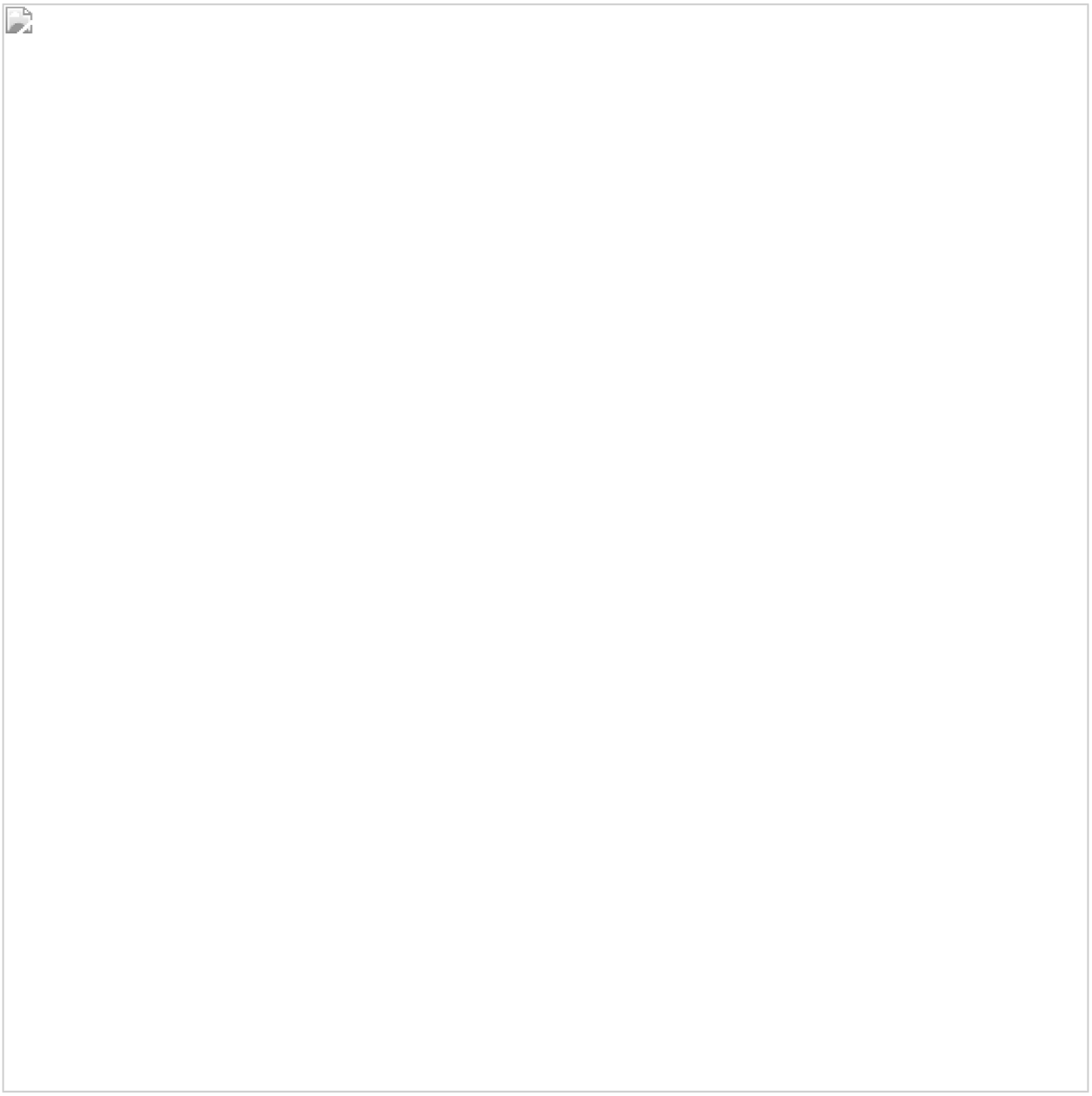


Think about it

1. Where does Iktomi live?

- ○ By a river
- ○ In a cone-shaped wigwam on the plain
- ○ In a tall tree

The Bundle of Grass



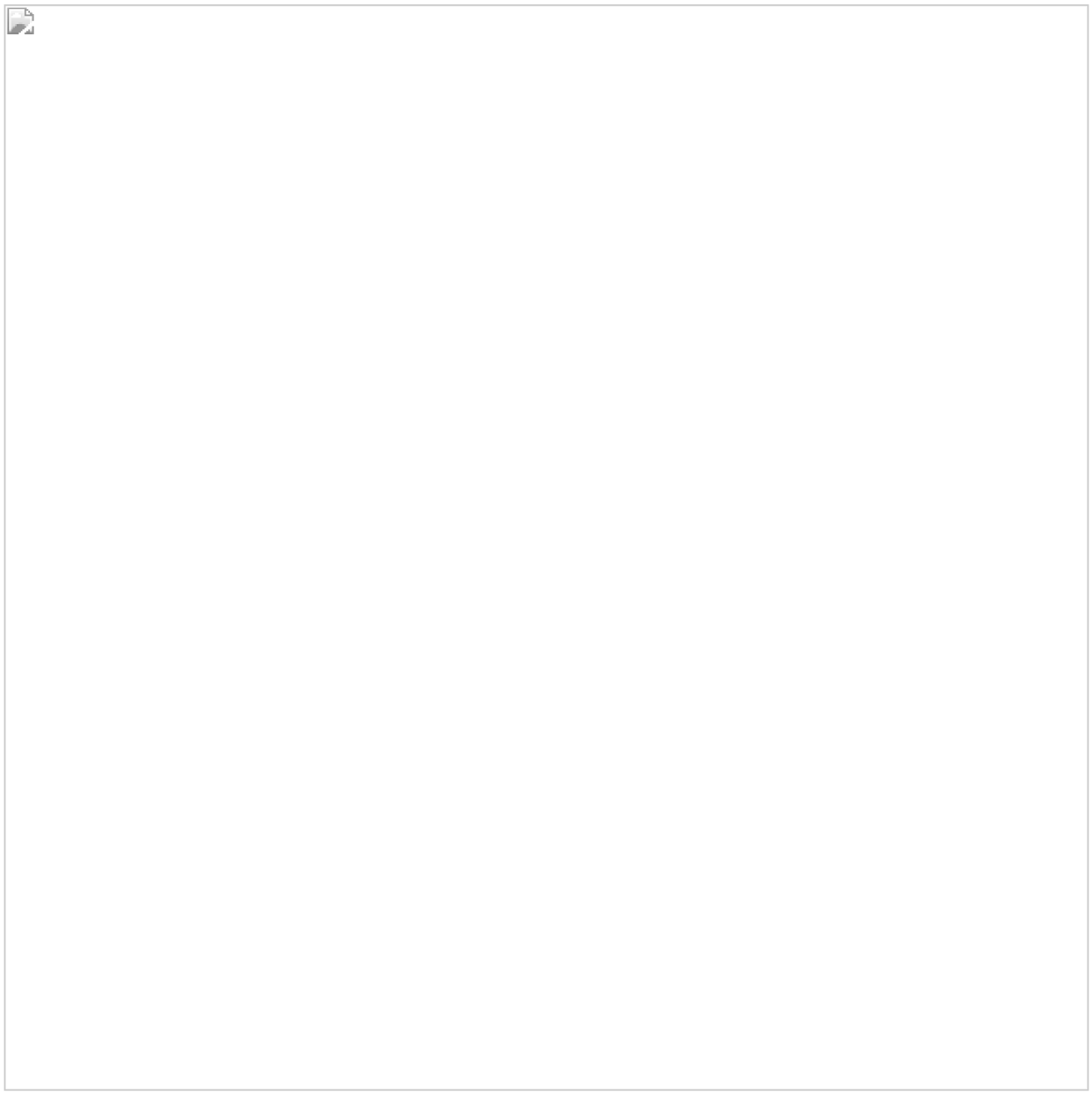
One day Iktomi sat hungry in his teepee. Suddenly he rushed out, dragging his blanket after him. He spread it on the ground, tore up tall dry grass and tossed it into the blanket.

He tied the four corners in a knot and threw the light bundle over his shoulder. Then, with a willow stick in his hand, he started off with a hop and a leap.

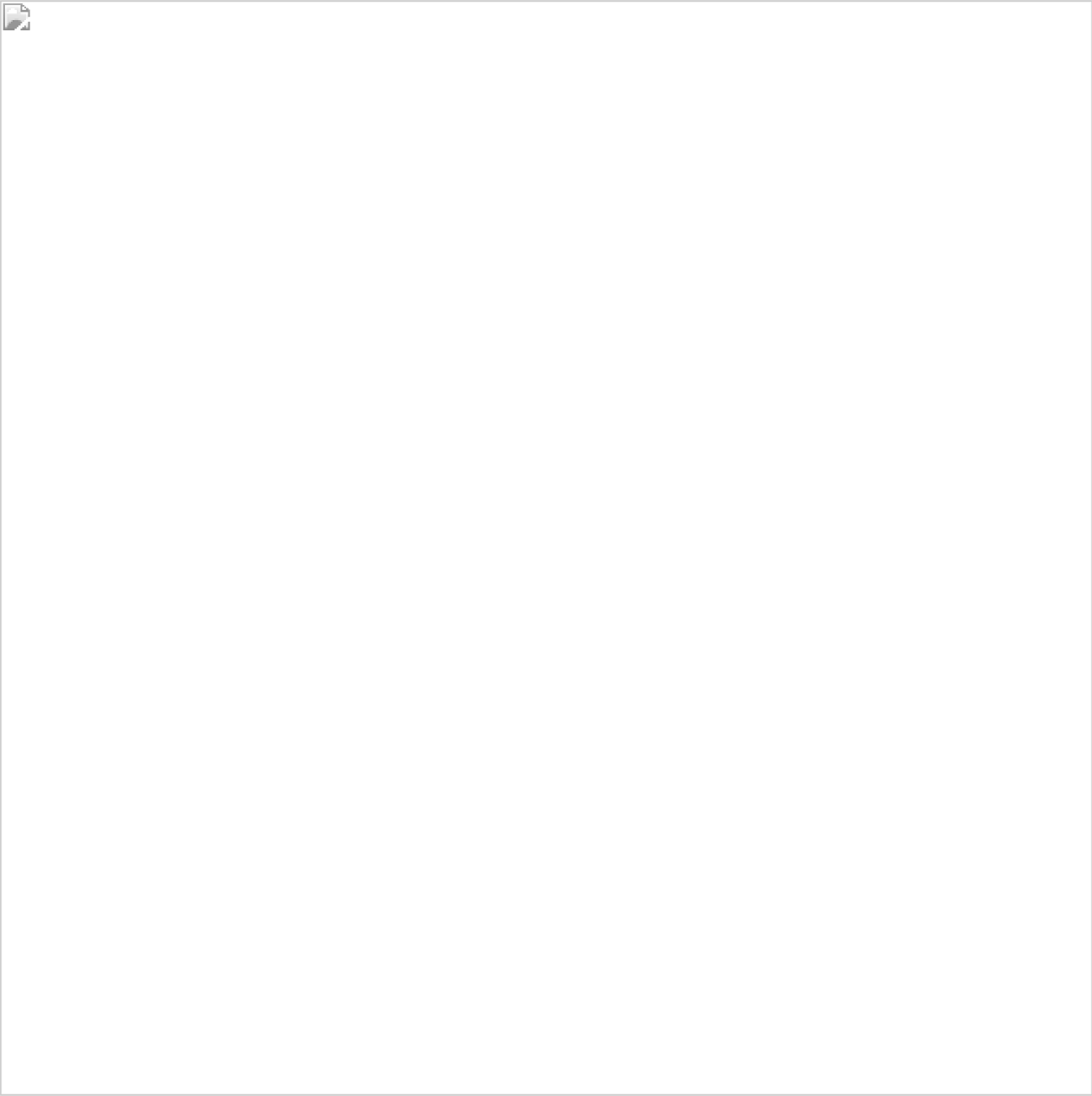
TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi was hungry and made a plan. What do you do when you are hungry?

The Bundle of Grass · another picture



The Hilltop

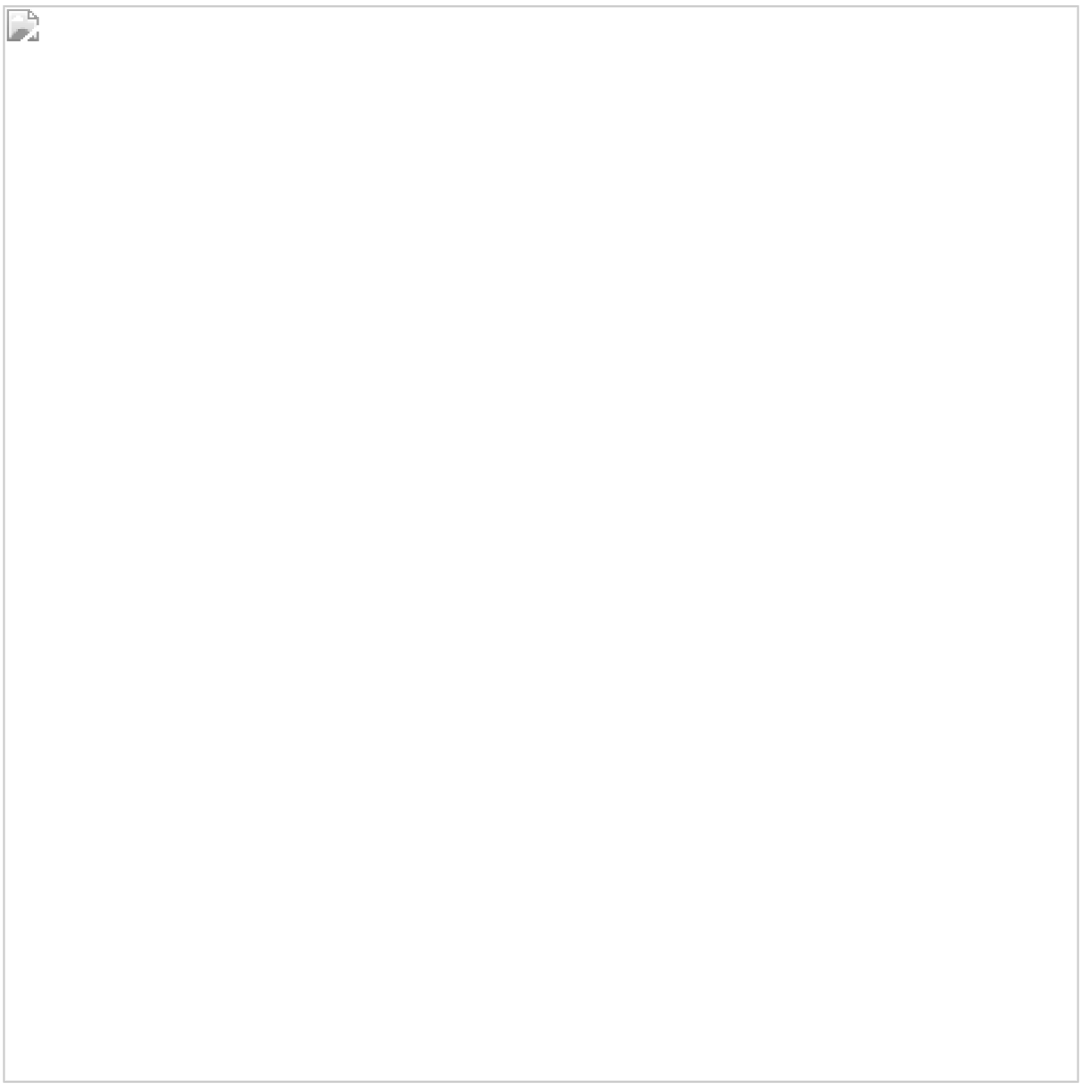


On the hilltop he stopped for breath. He peered far away toward the marshy river bottom, smacking his lips as if tasting tender meat.

“Ah-ha!” he grunted, pleased with what he saw.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Iktomi saw down by the river?

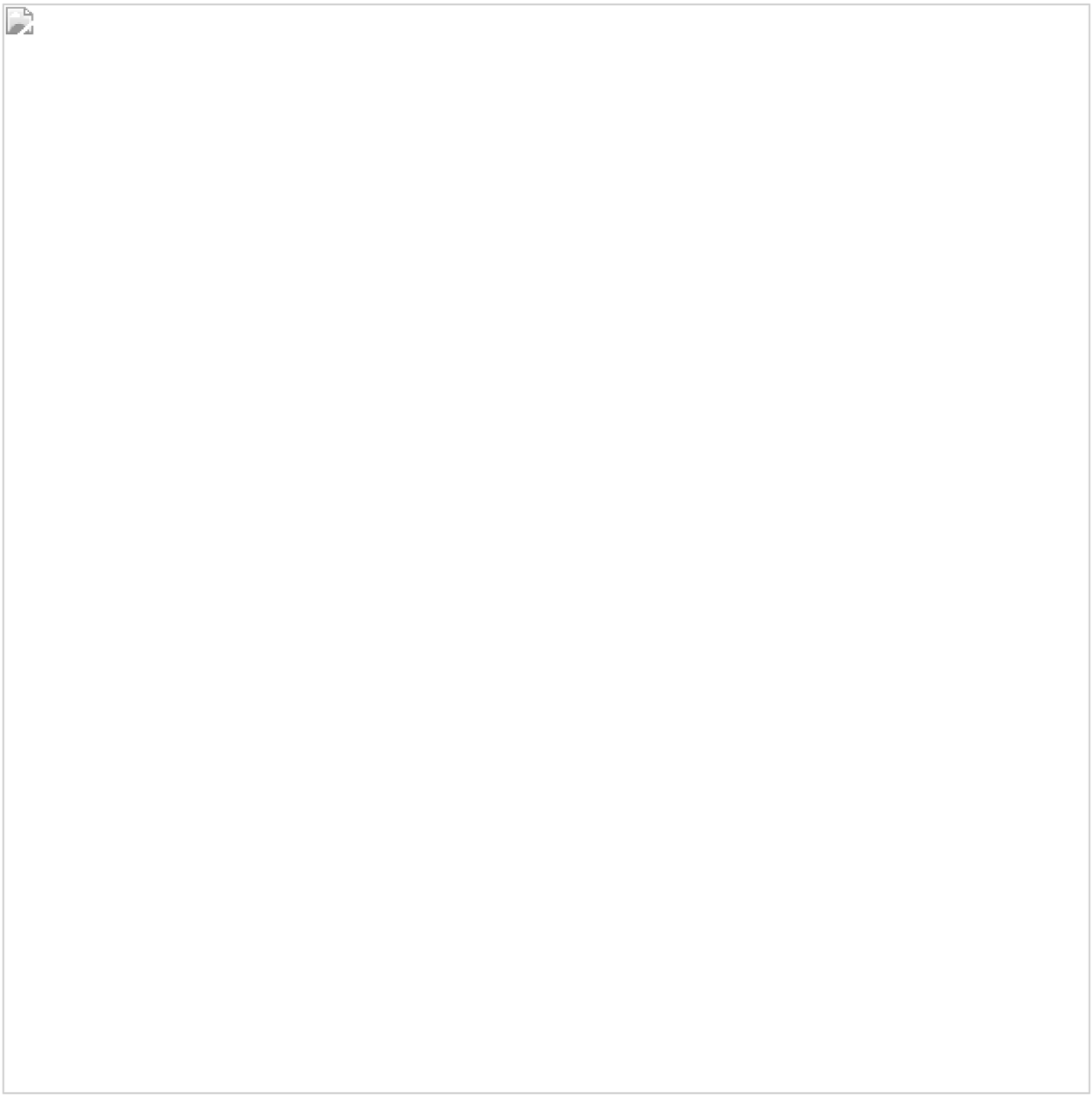


Think about it

1. What was inside Iktomi's blanket bundle?

- ○ Songs
- ○ Dry grass
- ○ Fish

The Dancing Ducks



A group of wild ducks were dancing and feasting in the marshes. With wings outspread, tip to tip, they moved up and down in a large circle. In the middle, around a small drum, sat the singers, nodding their heads.

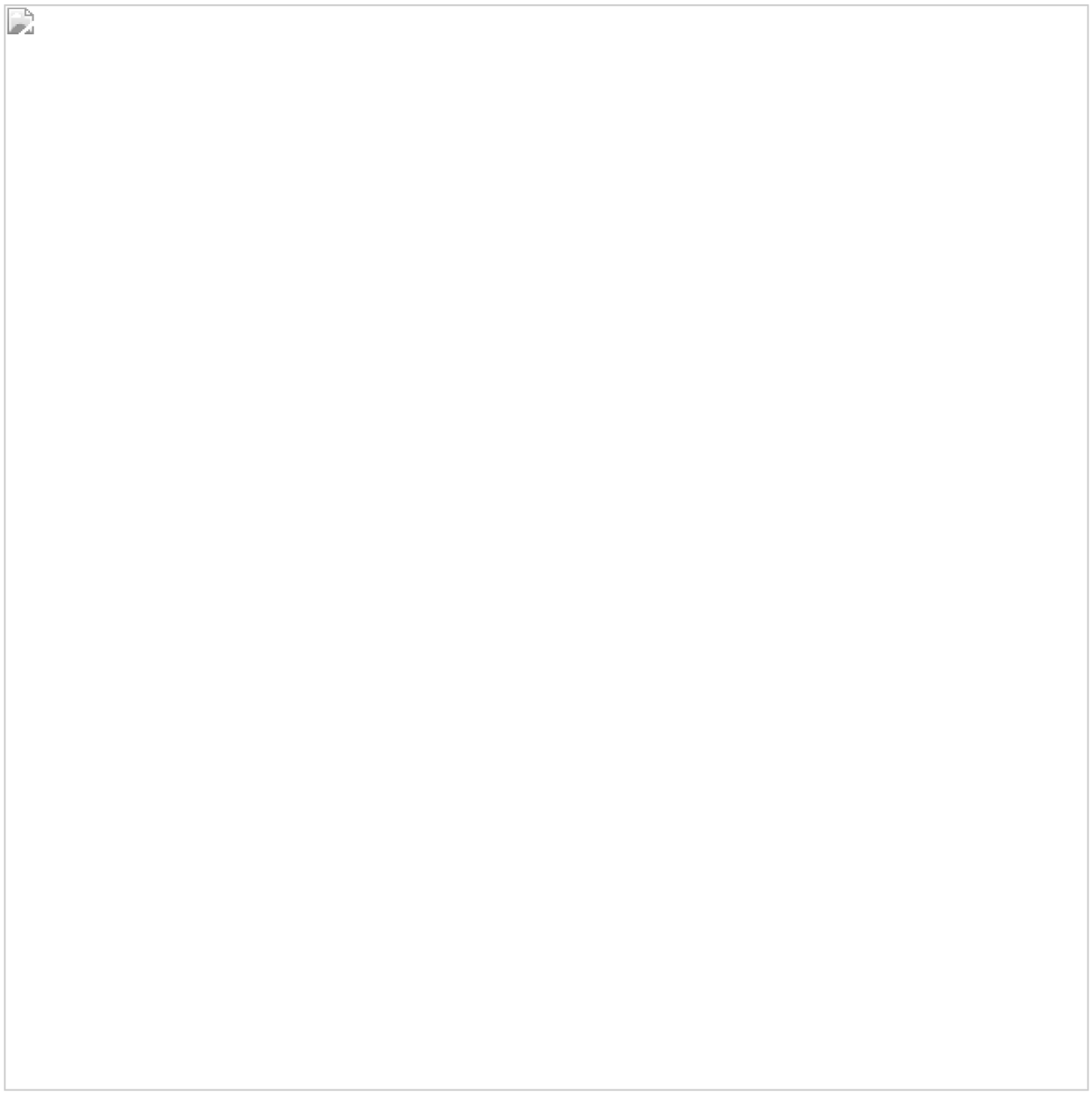
Along a winding path came Iktomi. He looked like a bent Dakota brave with a very large bundle on his back, propping himself up with a willow cane.

“Ho! who is there?” called a curious old duck.

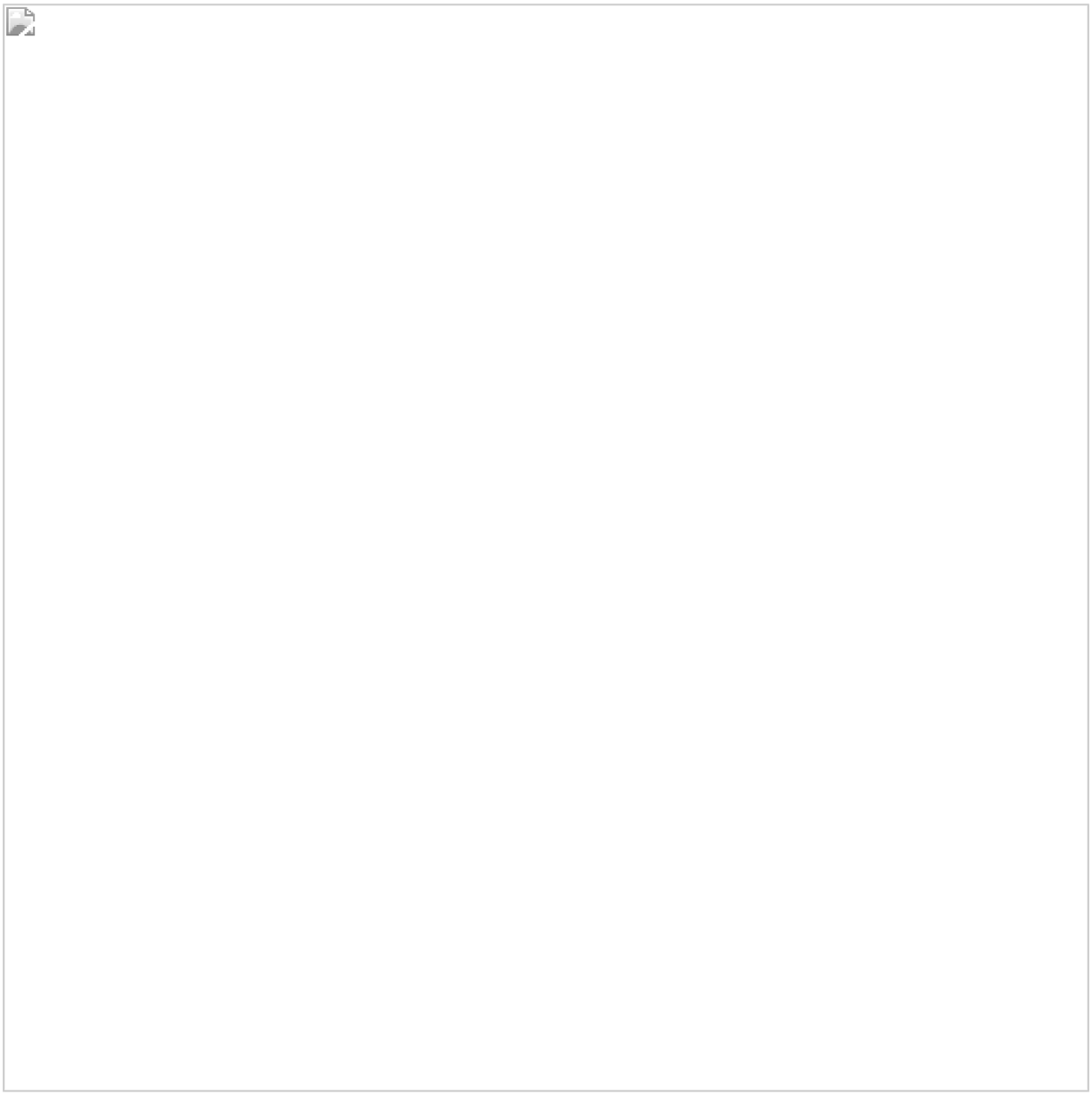
TALK ABOUT IT

The ducks were dancing and having a good time. What do you like to dance or sing about?

The Dancing Ducks · another picture



A Pack of Songs



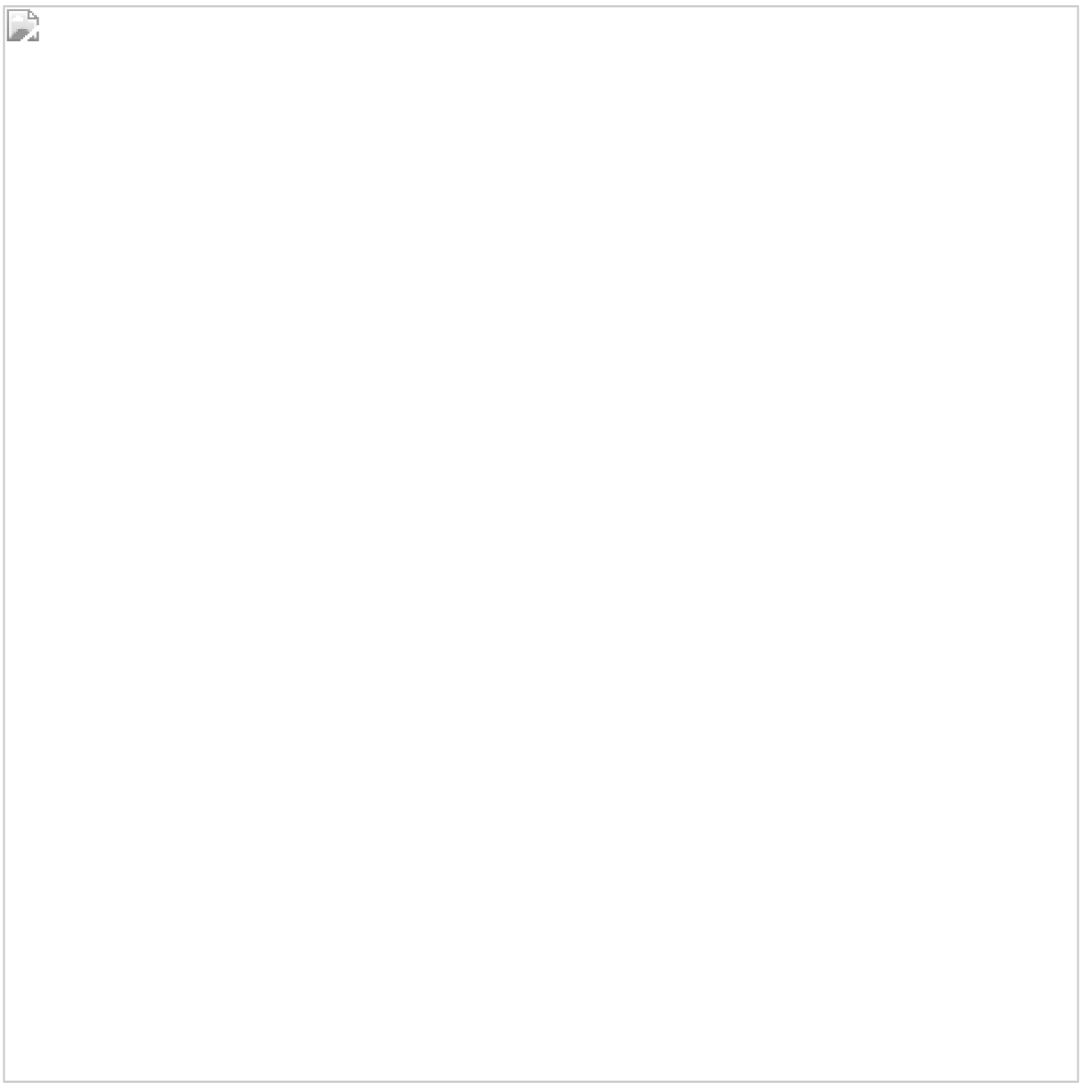
“Ho, Iktomi! Old fellow, pray tell us what you carry in your blanket. Do not hurry off! Stop! halt!” urged one of the singers. “Stop! stay! Show us what is in your blanket!” cried other voices.

Iktomi answered, “My friends, I must not spoil your dance.” This broke up the ring, and the ducks crowded around him. At last he said, “My friends, 't is only a pack of songs I carry in my blanket.”

“Oh, then let us hear your songs!” cried the curious ducks.

TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi did not tell the ducks the truth about his bundle. What do you think about that?

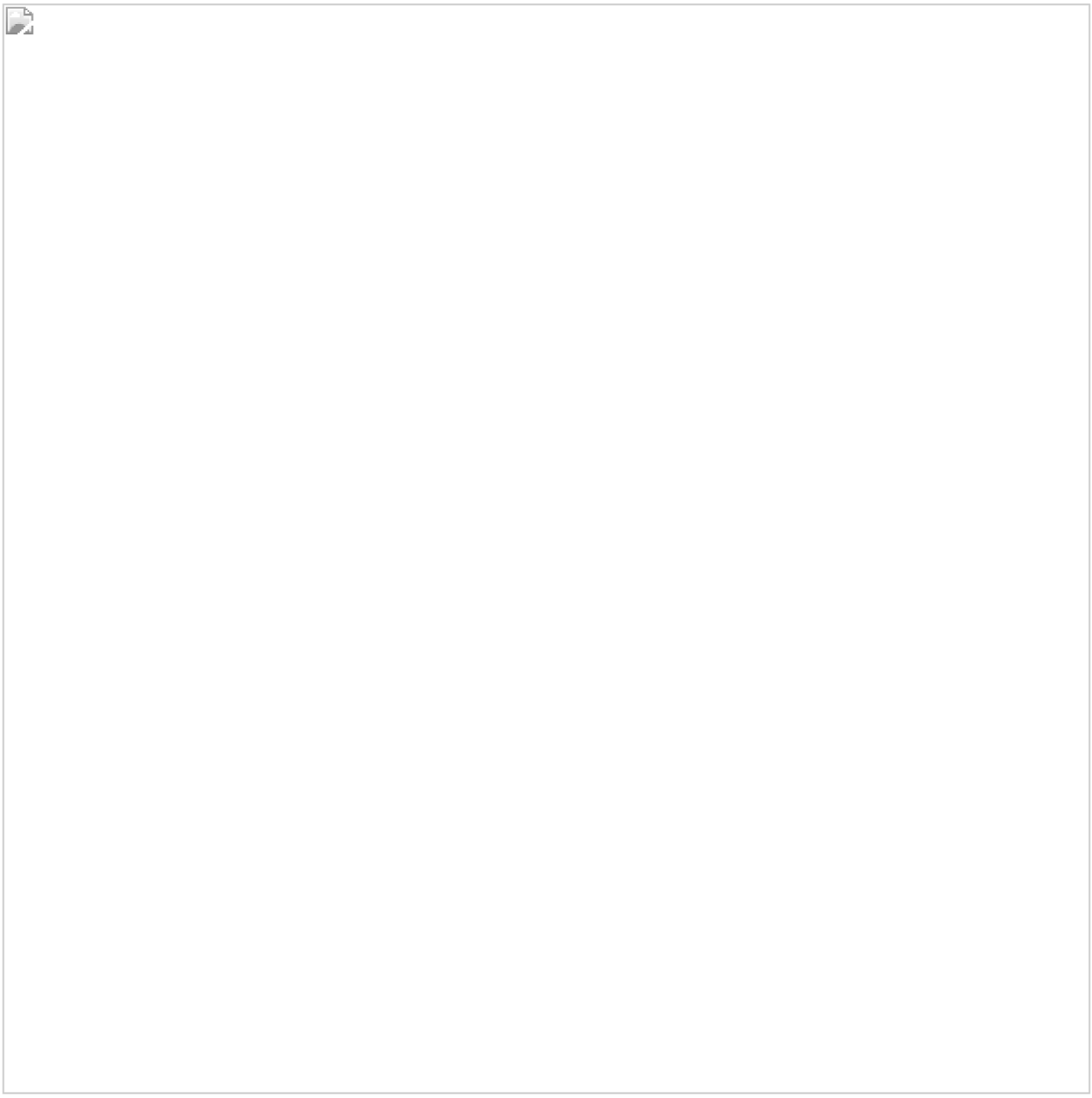


Think about it

1. What did Iktomi say was in his blanket?

- ○ Grass
- ○ A pack of songs
- ○ Food

The Round Straw House



Iktomi agreed to sing. “I will build first a round straw house, for I never sing my songs in the open air,” said he.

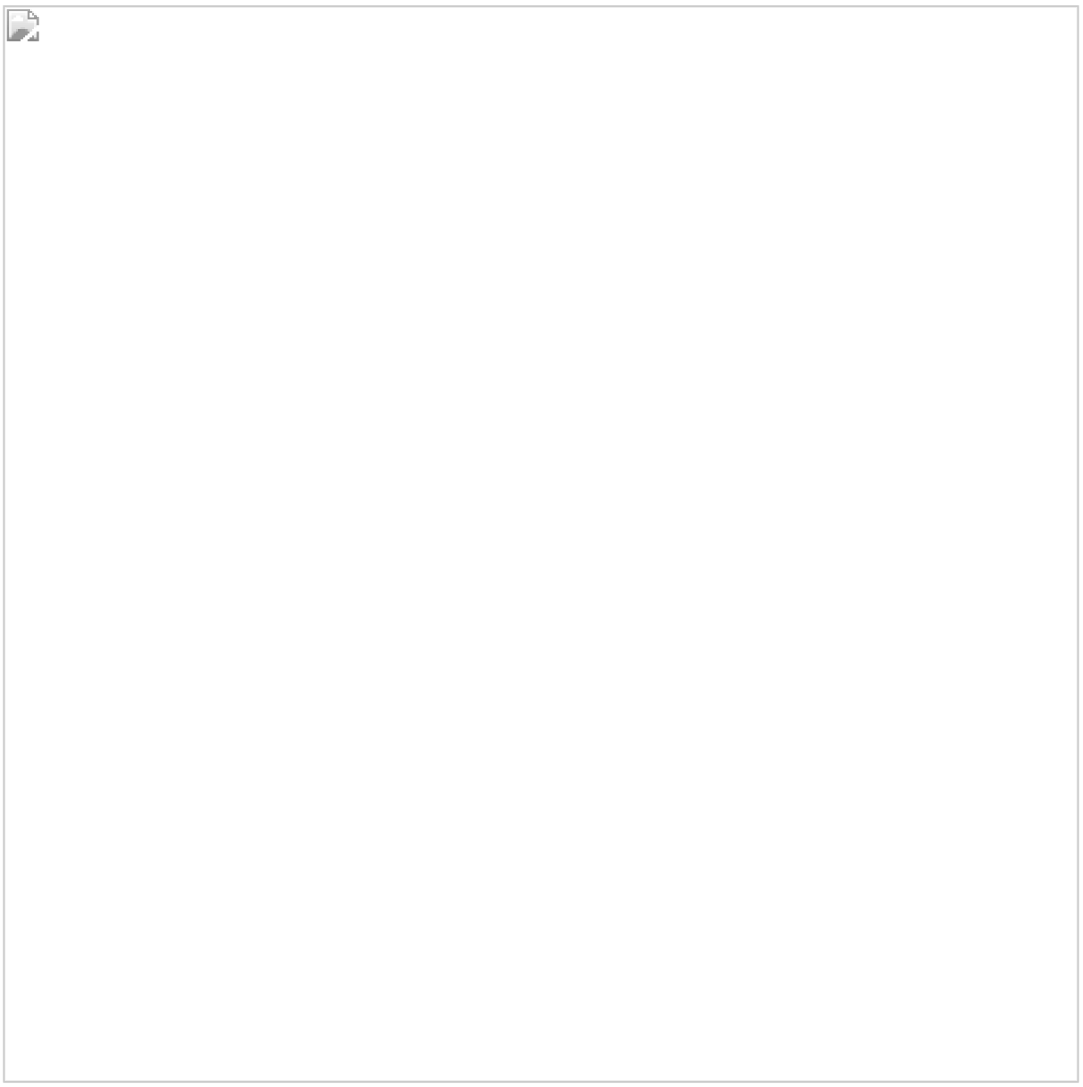
He bent green willow sticks into the ground and covered them thickly with reeds and grasses. One by one the fat ducks waddled in through a small opening, the only way in. Iktomi stood at the door, smiling.

Then he covered up the opening. It was dim inside the straw hut.

TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi covered the door. What do you think the ducks would want to do about that?

The Round Straw House · another picture

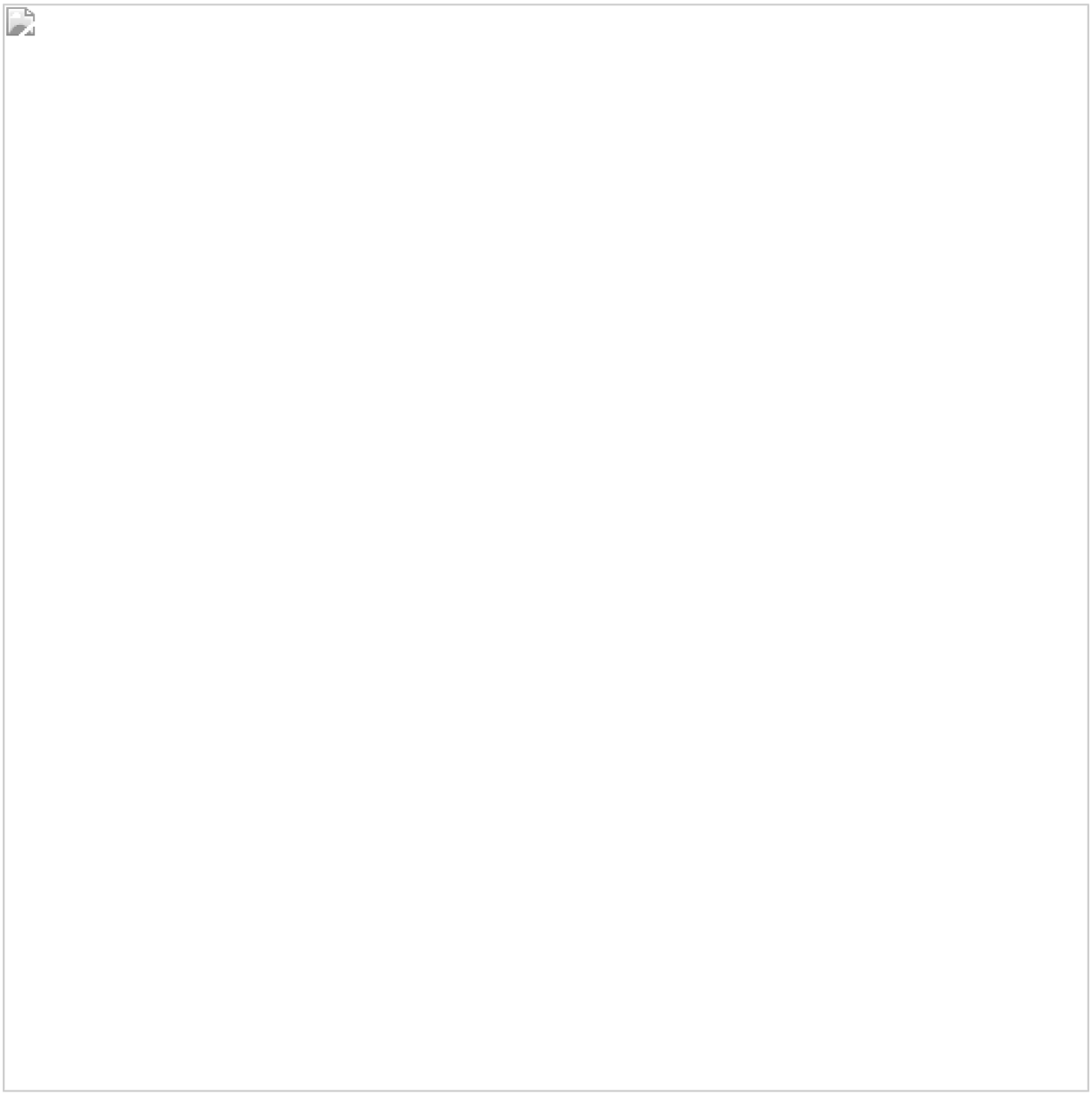


Think about it

1. Why did Iktomi say he needed a straw house?

- ○ It was raining
- ○ He never sang his songs in the open air
- ○ He was cold

With Eyes Closed



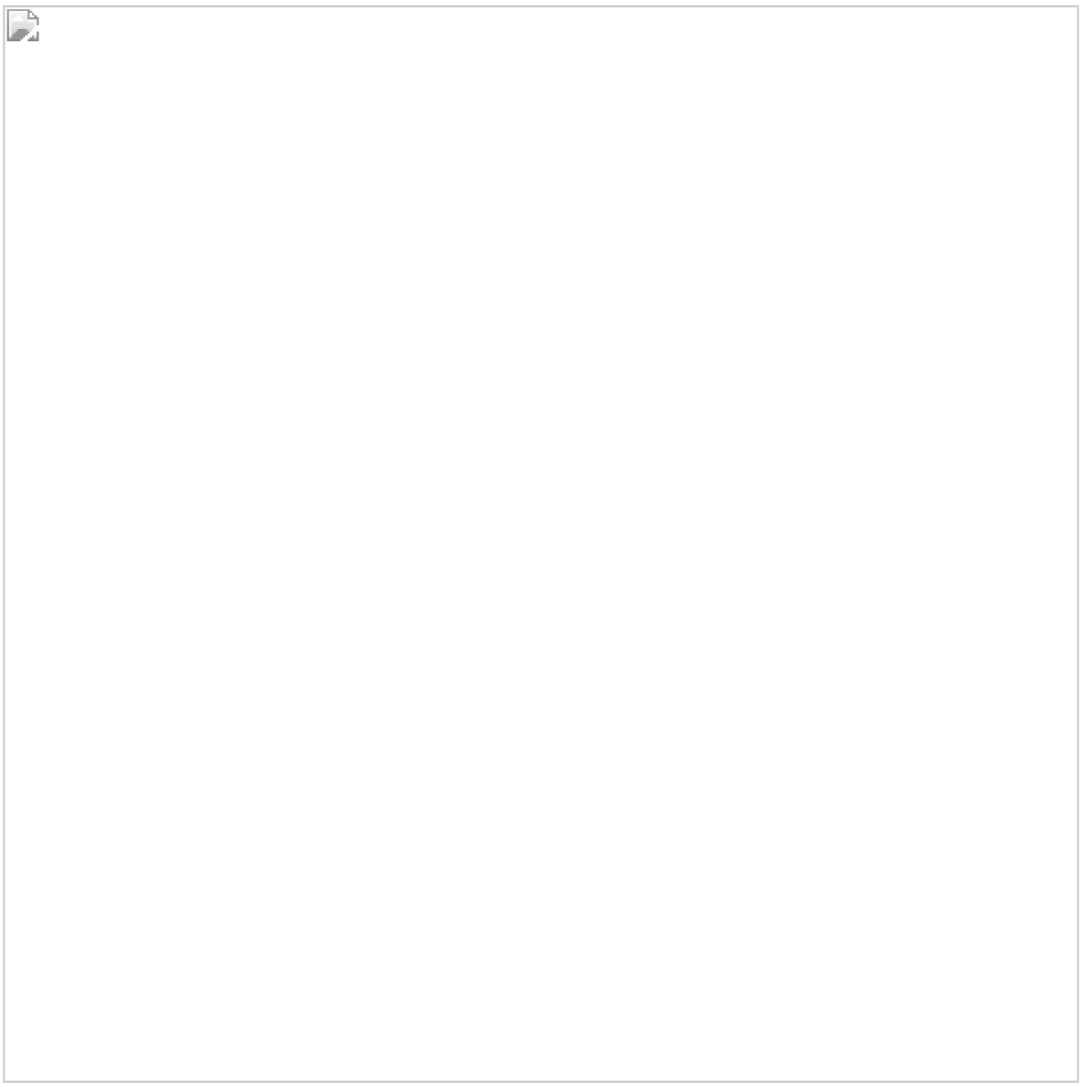
In a strange low voice Iktomi began his queer old tunes. Then he sang these words: “With eyes closed you must dance. He who dares to open his eyes, forever red eyes shall have.”

The ducks stood up. With their wings held close, they began to dance with their eyes closed, to the beat of Iktomi's song and drum.

No duck dared blink. Each one shut his eyes tight and danced even harder. It was a difficult dance for the curious folk.

TALK ABOUT IT

It is hard to dance with your eyes closed. Would you have peeked? Why?

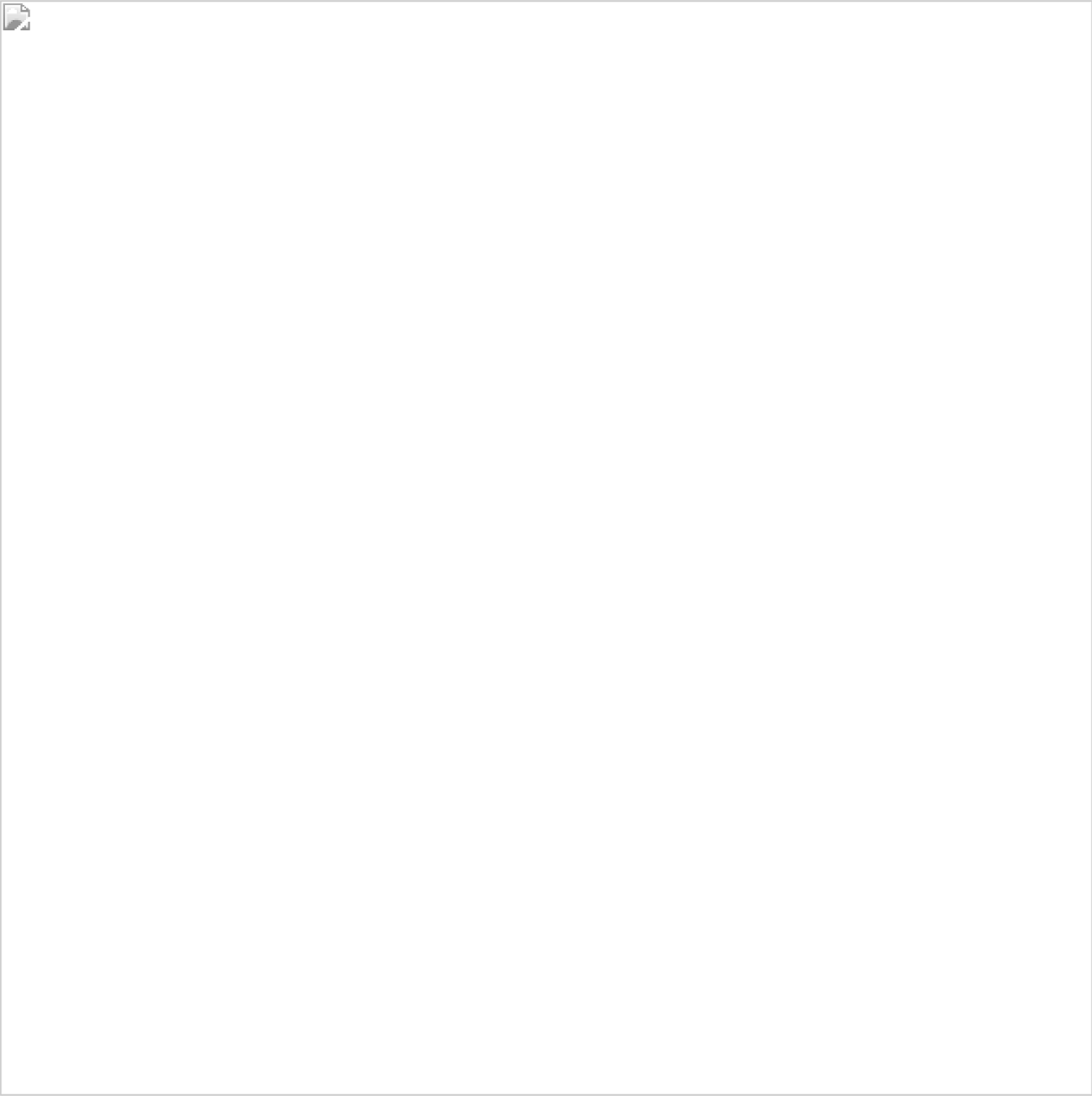


Think about it

1. What would happen to a duck who opened its eyes?

- ○ It would lose its feathers
- ○ It would have red eyes forever
- ○ It would fall asleep

Skiska Peeps



At last one dancer could keep his eyes shut no longer. It was Skiska, who peeped the tiniest bit at Iktomi in the center of the ring.

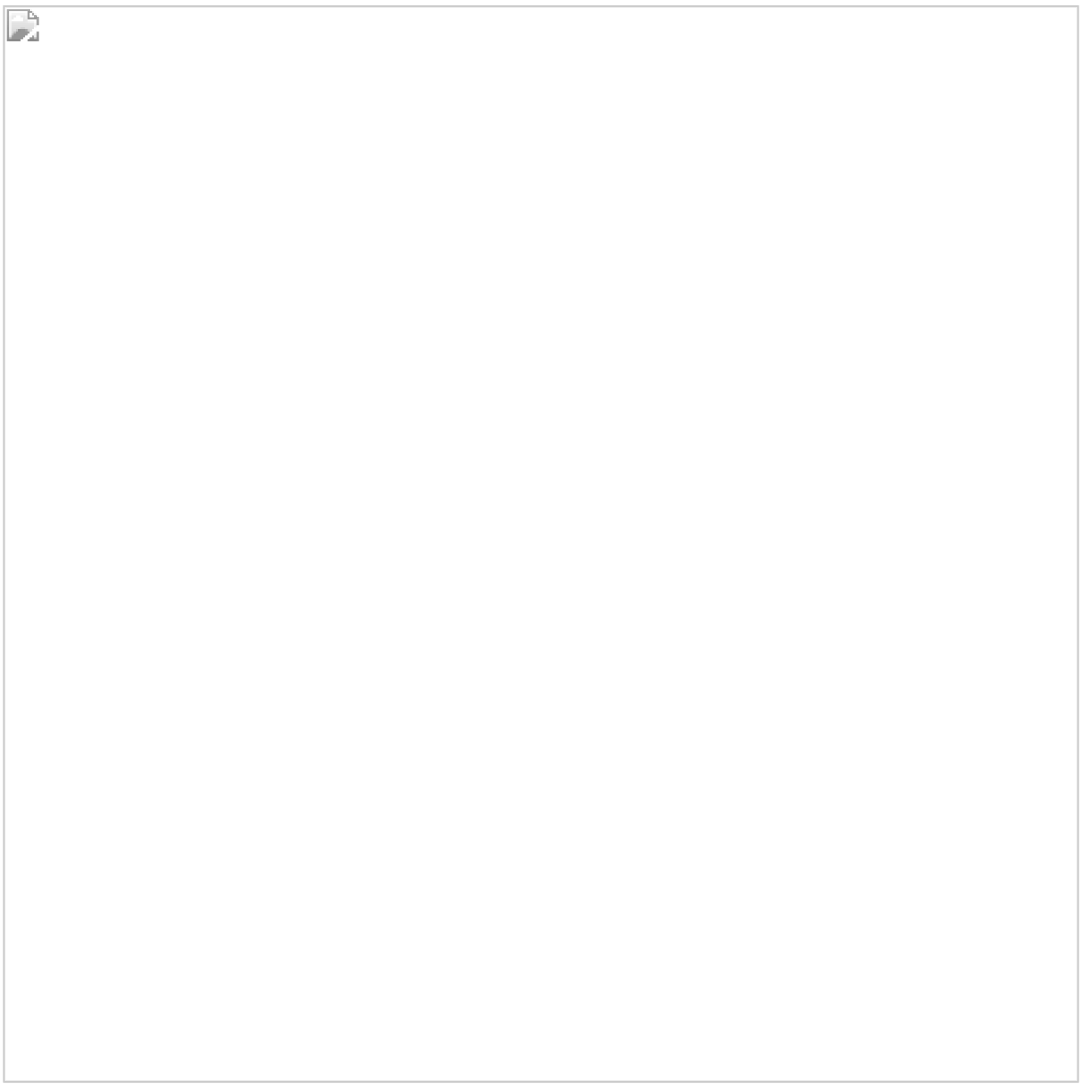
“Run! fly!” he cried in terror. The ducks opened their eyes. Beside Iktomi's bundle of songs, half of their crowd lay still, flat on their backs.

Out they flew through the opening Skiska had made as he rushed out.

TALK ABOUT IT

Skiska was the one who looked and warned the others. What do you think about that?

Skiska Peeps · another picture

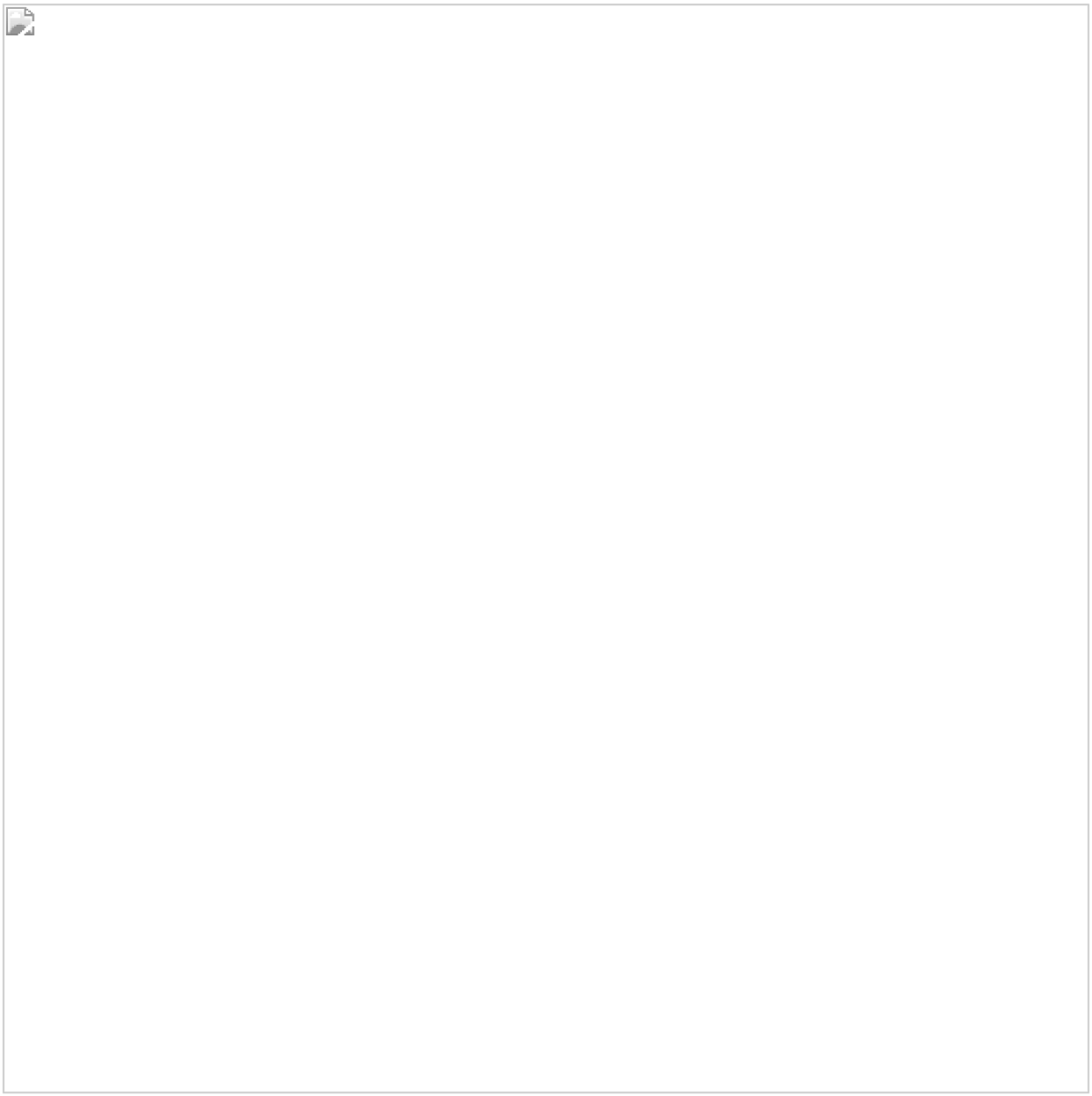


Think about it

1. Who was the duck who peeped?

- ○ Skiska
- ○ Koklovi
- ○ Iktomi

Red-Red Eyes



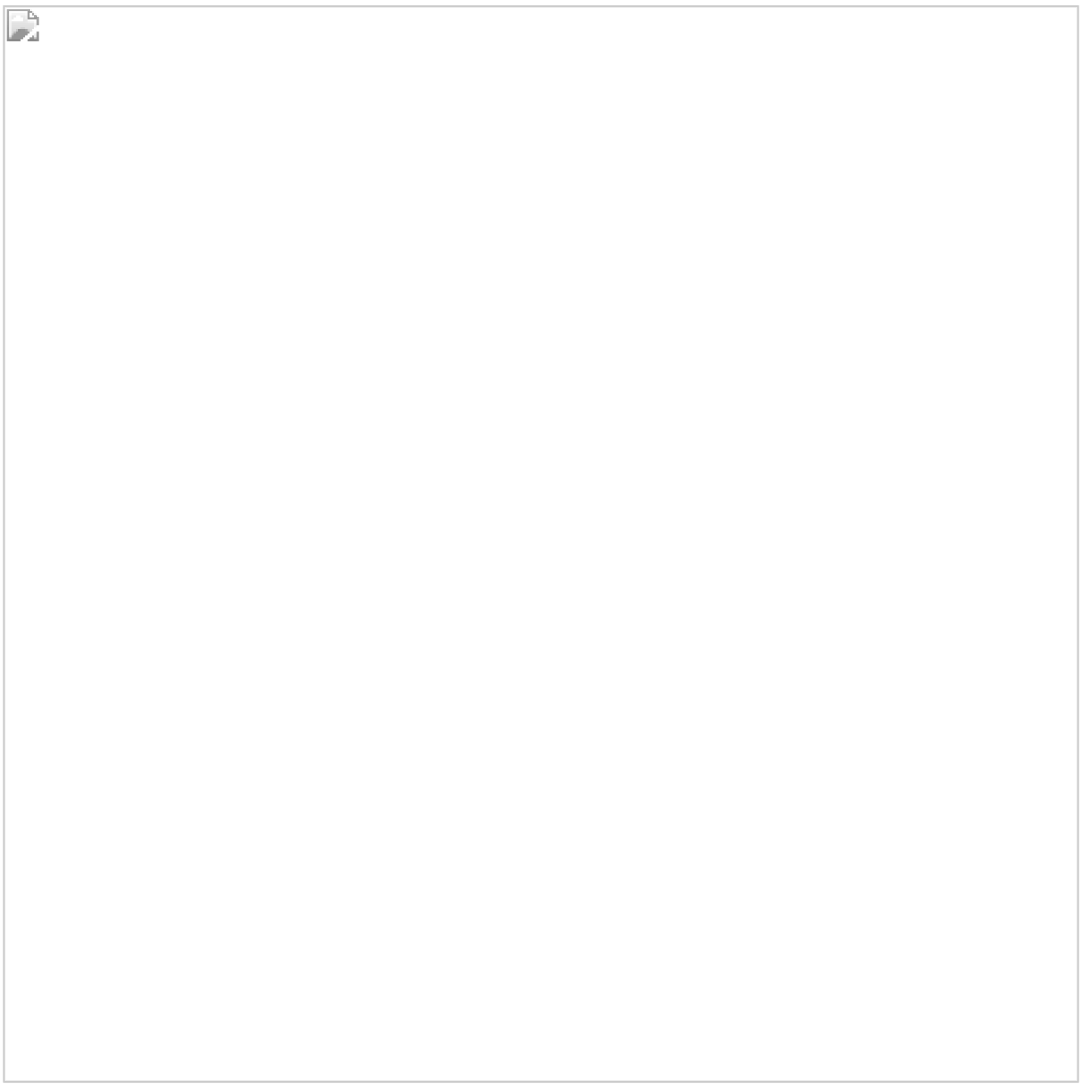
As the ducks soared high into the blue sky, they cried to one another, “Oh! your eyes are red-red!” “And yours are red-red!”

The warning words of the magic song had come true.

“Ah-ha!” laughed Iktomi, untying the four corners of his blanket. “I shall sit no more hungry within my dwelling.” He trudged home with nice fat ducks in his blanket, and left the little straw hut for the rains and winds to pull down.

TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi's plan worked for the ducks who stayed. What do you think was fair or unfair about it?

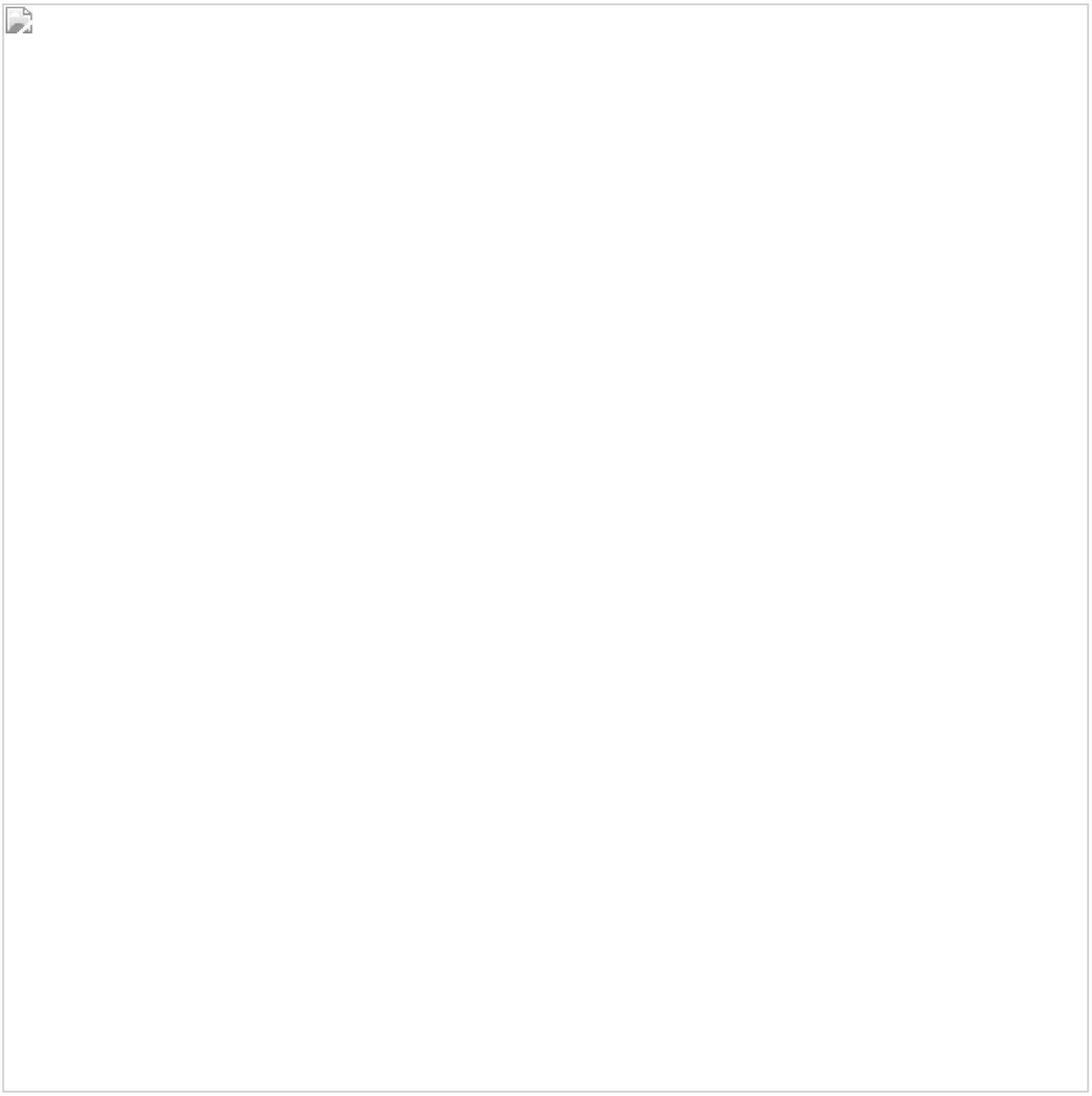


Think about it

1. What happened to the ducks' eyes?

- ○ They turned green
- ○ They turned red
- ○ Nothing changed

The Roasting Fire

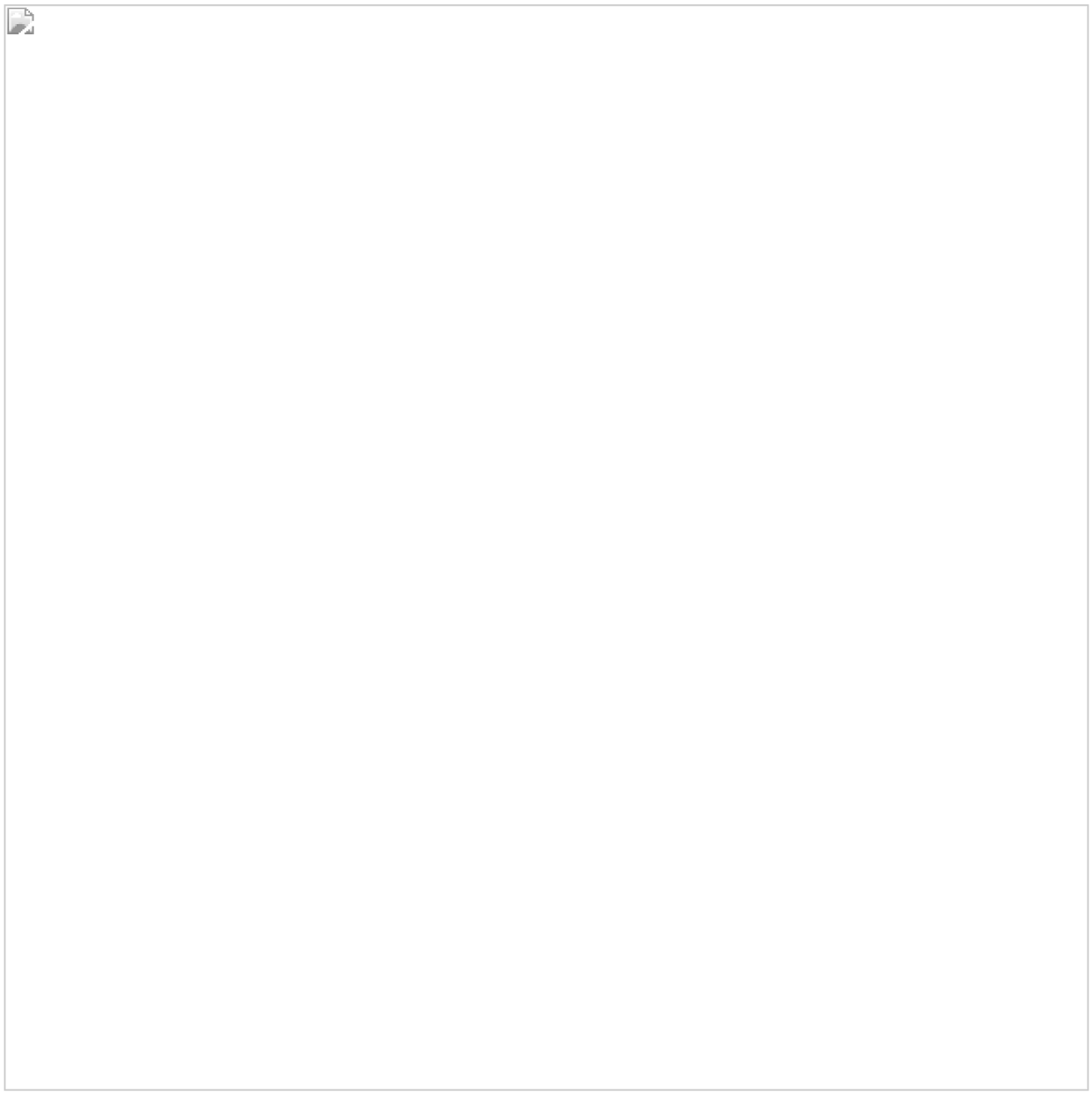


At his own teepee on the high plains, Iktomi built a large fire outdoors. He planted sharp sticks around the flames and set a duck on each one to roast. A few he buried under the ashes to bake.

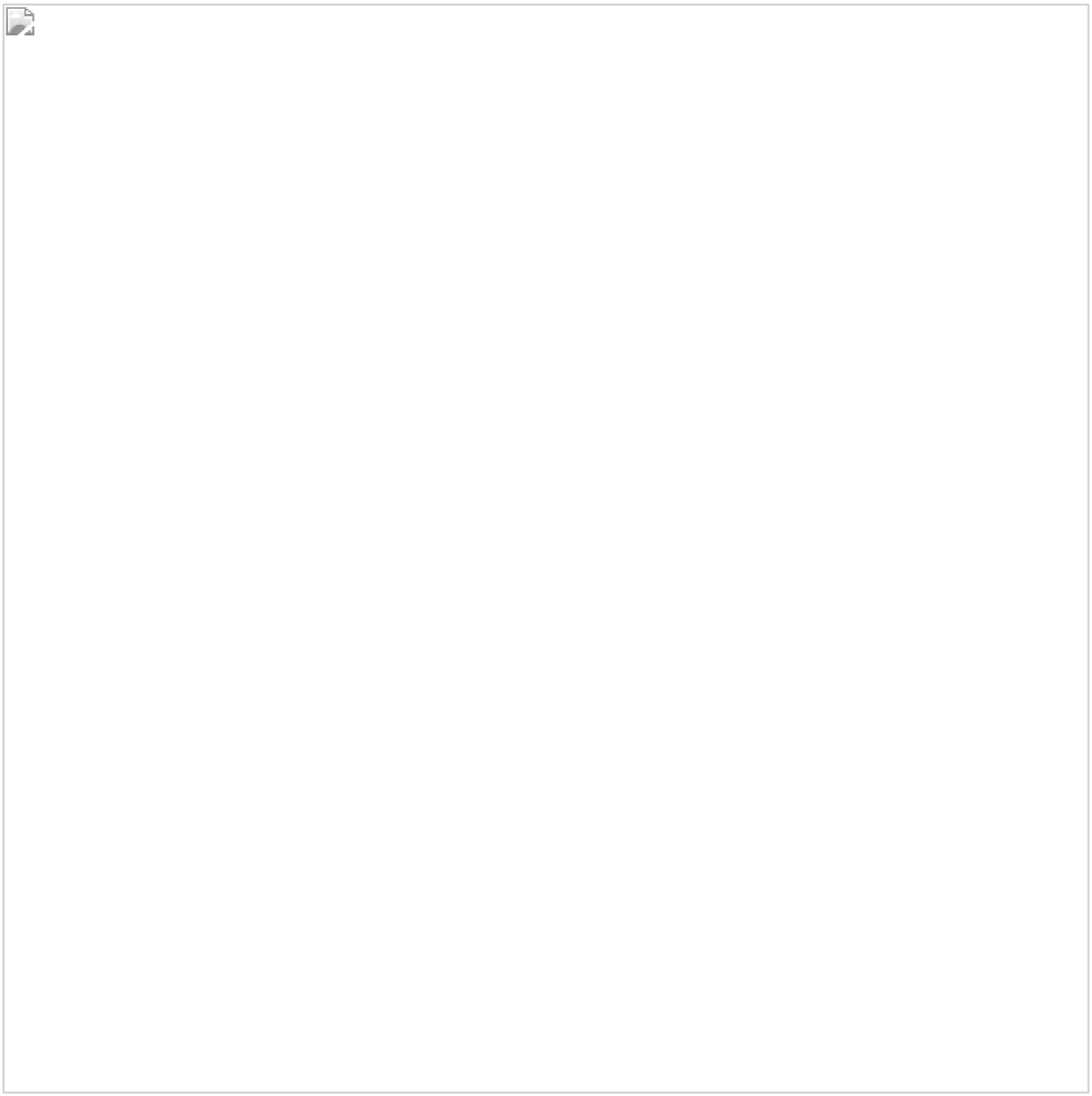
He brought huge seashells from his teepee for dishes, and placed one under each duck. He sat down with crossed shins, his eyes on the browning ducks.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Iktomi was feeling as he watched the fire?



The Squeaky Old Tree



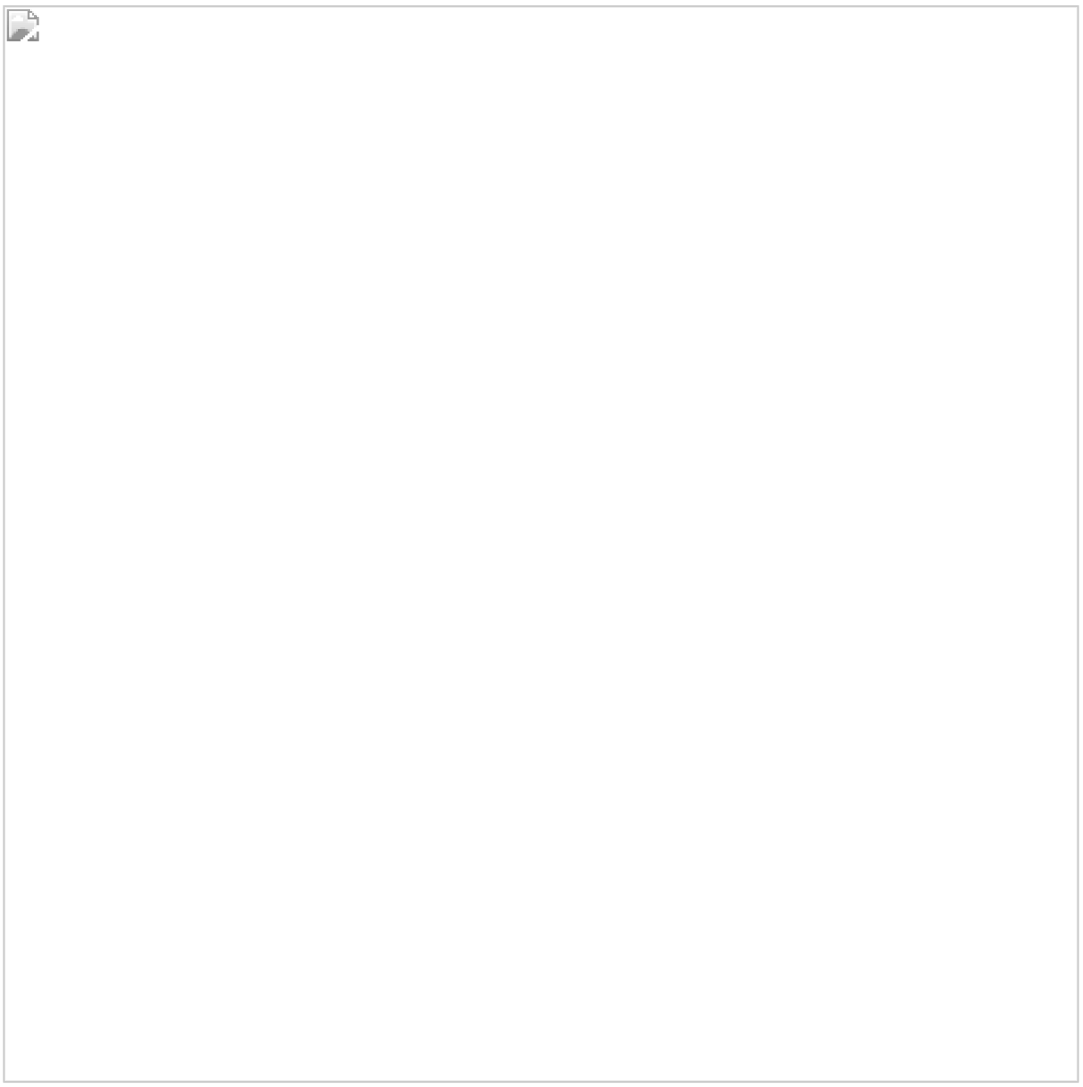
The wind that stirred the fire also played with a squeaky old tree beside the wigwam. The tree swayed and cried in an old man's voice, “Help! I'll break! I'll fall!”

Iktomi shrugged his great shoulders and did not once take his eyes from the ducks. But the tree kept calling for help. At last the sound made his ear ache.

He got up and looked around. The squeaking came from the tree.

TALK ABOUT IT

The tree called for help, and Iktomi did not want to listen. Have you ever ignored a call for help?

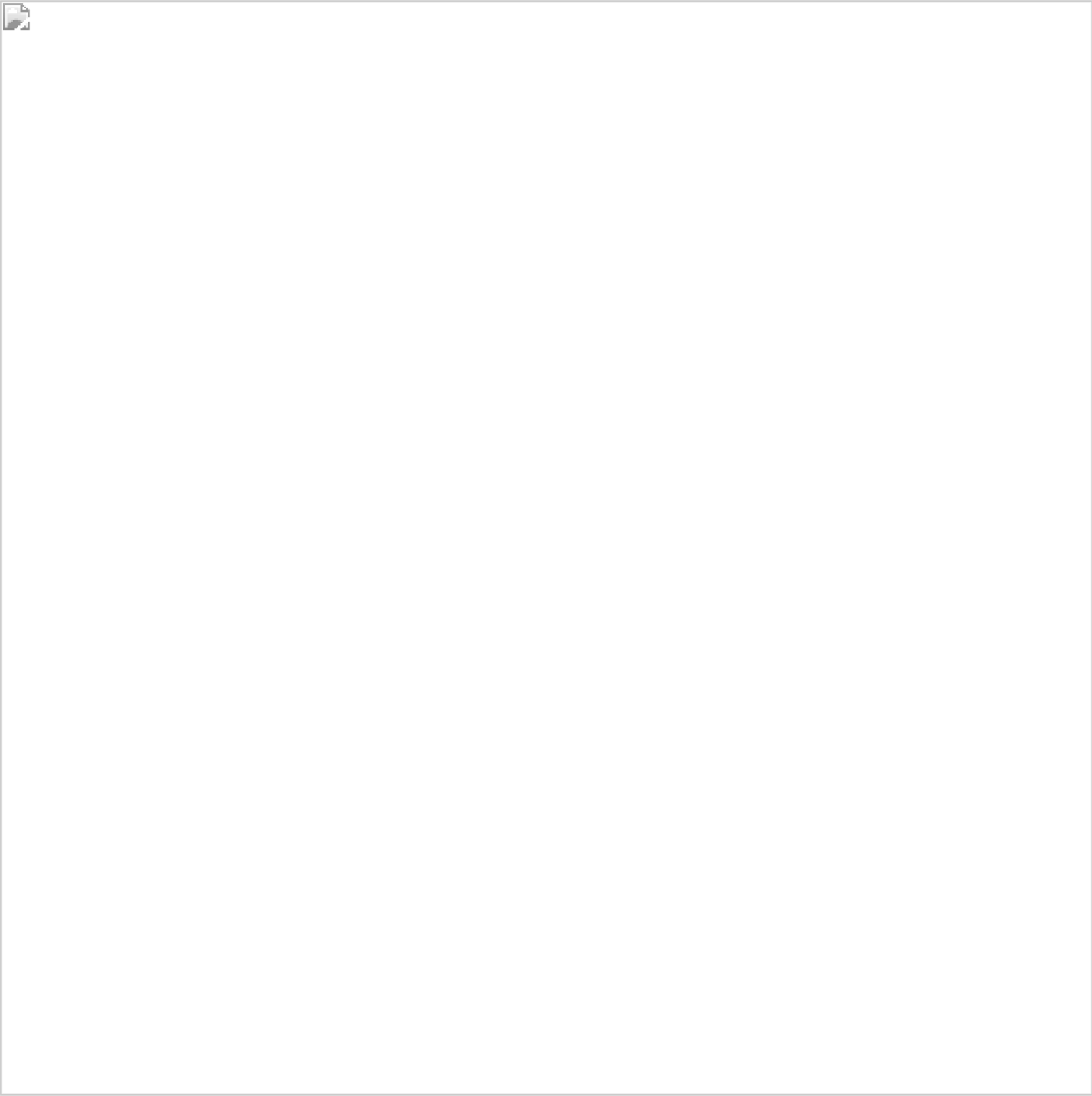


Think about it

1. What did the old tree cry out?

- ○ “Help! I'll break! I'll fall!”
- ○ Come and sit by me!
- ○ It is going to rain!

Caught in the Tree



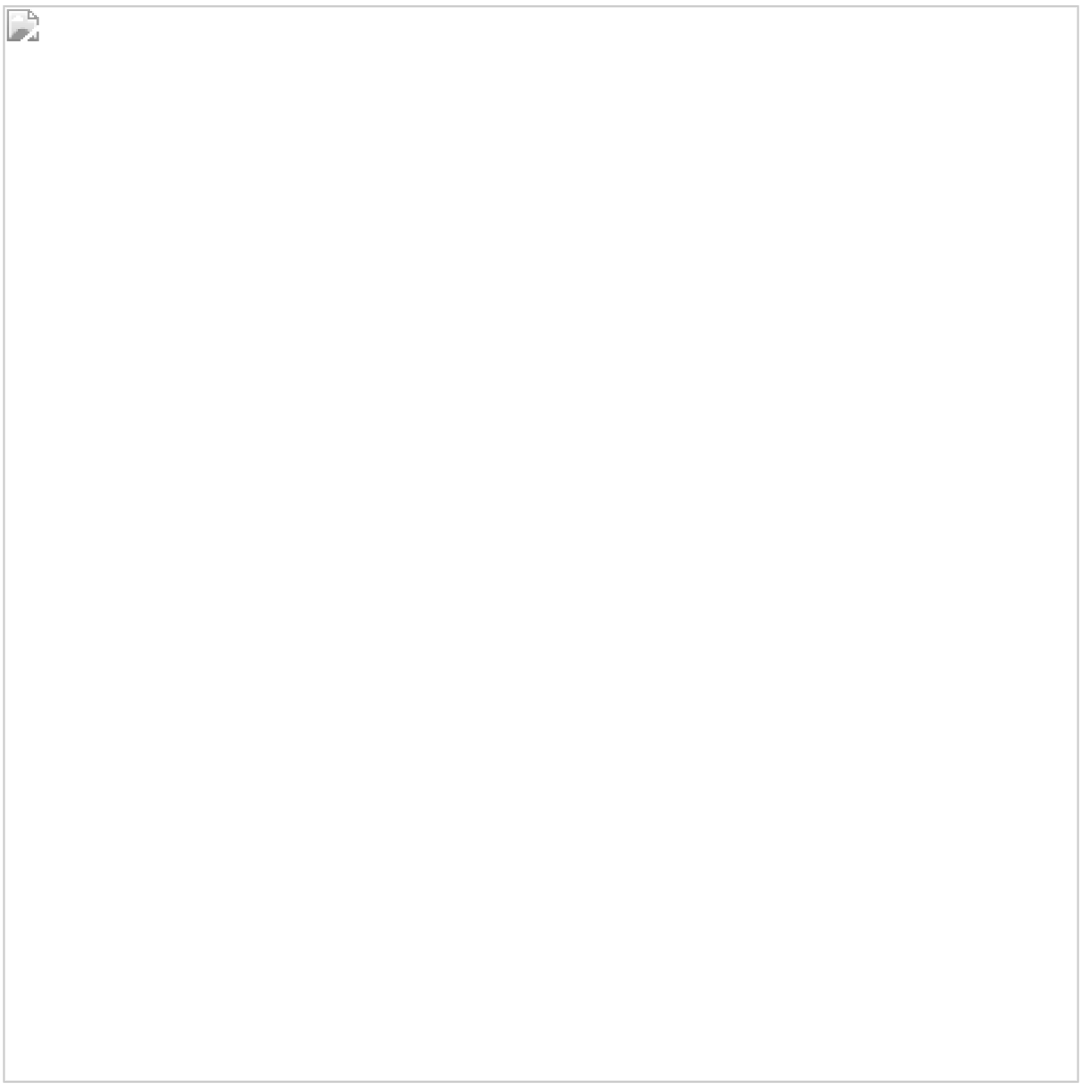
Iktomi began to climb the tree to find the sound. He put his foot right on a cracked limb without seeing it. Just then a gust of wind came and pressed the broken edges together. Iktomi's foot was caught fast in a strong wooden hand.

“Oh! my foot is crushed!” he howled. He pulled and puffed, but could not get free.

TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi got stuck because he would not help the tree. What do you think about that?

Caught in the Tree · another picture

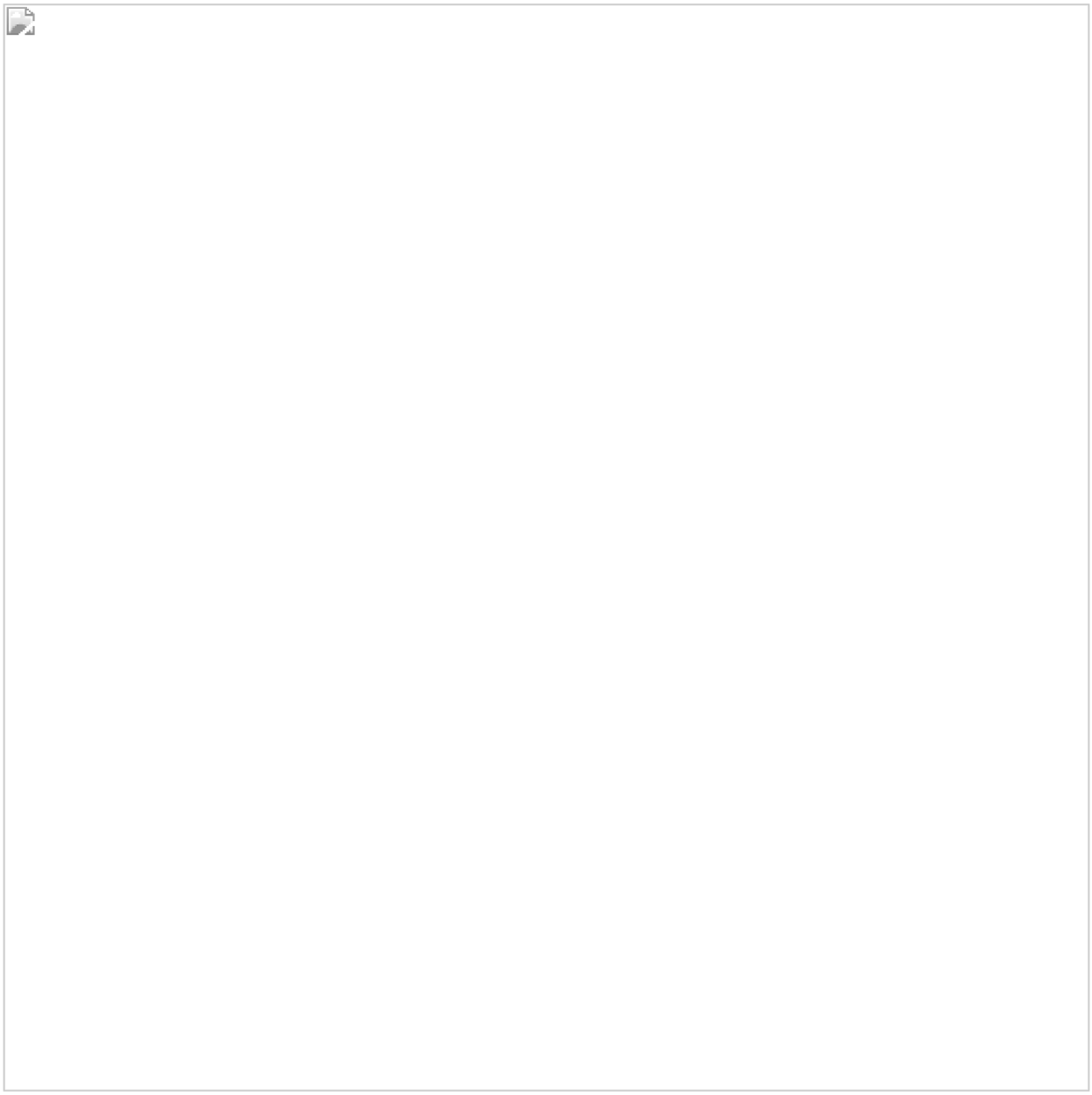


Think about it

1. What caught Iktomi's foot?

- ○ A rope
- ○ The cracked limb of the tree
- ○ A rabbit trap

The Gray Wolves

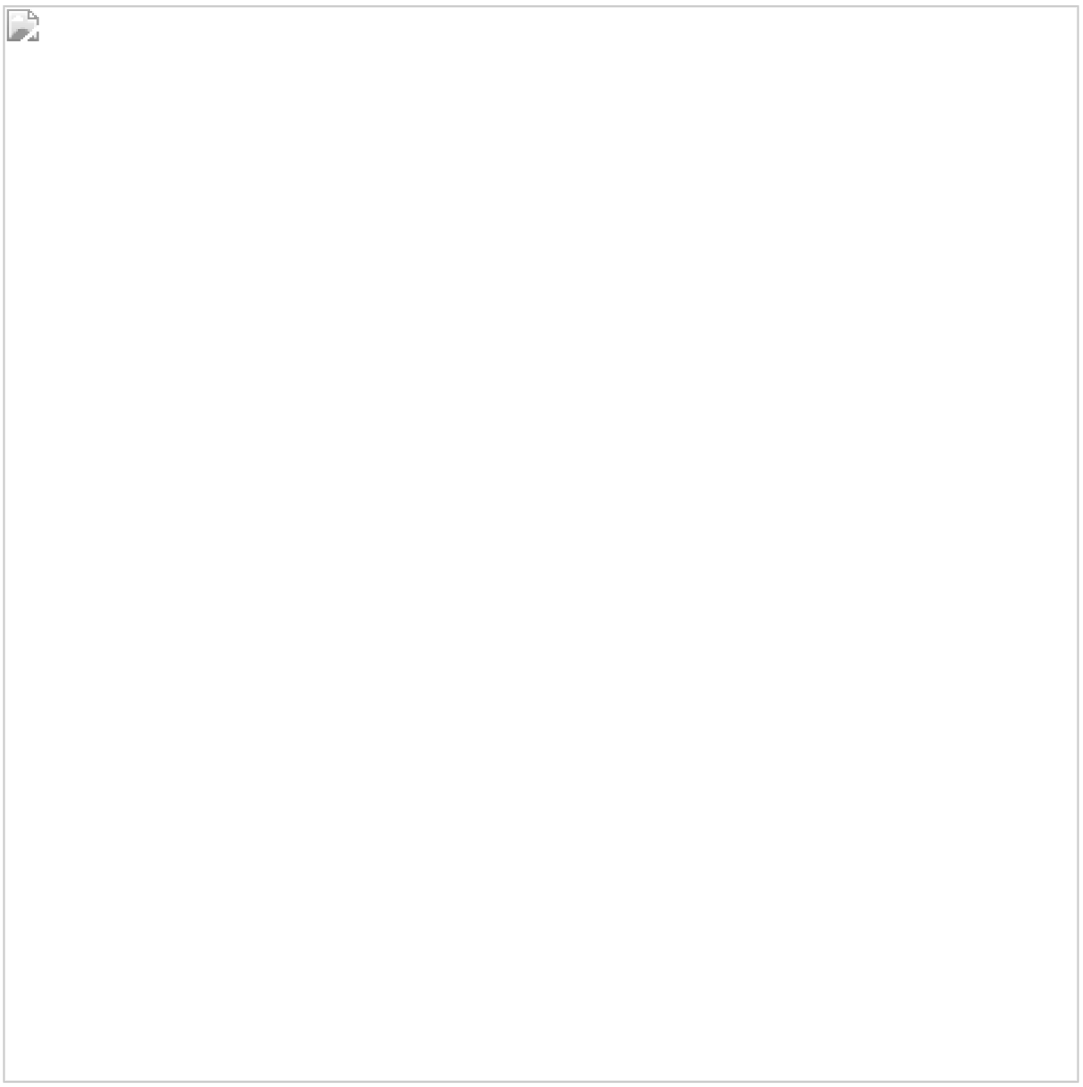


From the tree Iktomi saw a pack of gray wolves roaming over the plain. He waved and called in his loudest voice, “He! Gray wolves! Don't you come here!” He said he was caught fast and his duck feast was getting cold, and told them not to come and eat his meal.

The leader of the pack turned to the others. He said, “Let us hurry there for our share!” And away the wolves bounded toward Iktomi's lodge.

TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi told the wolves about his feast, and that is what brought them. Why do you think he did that?

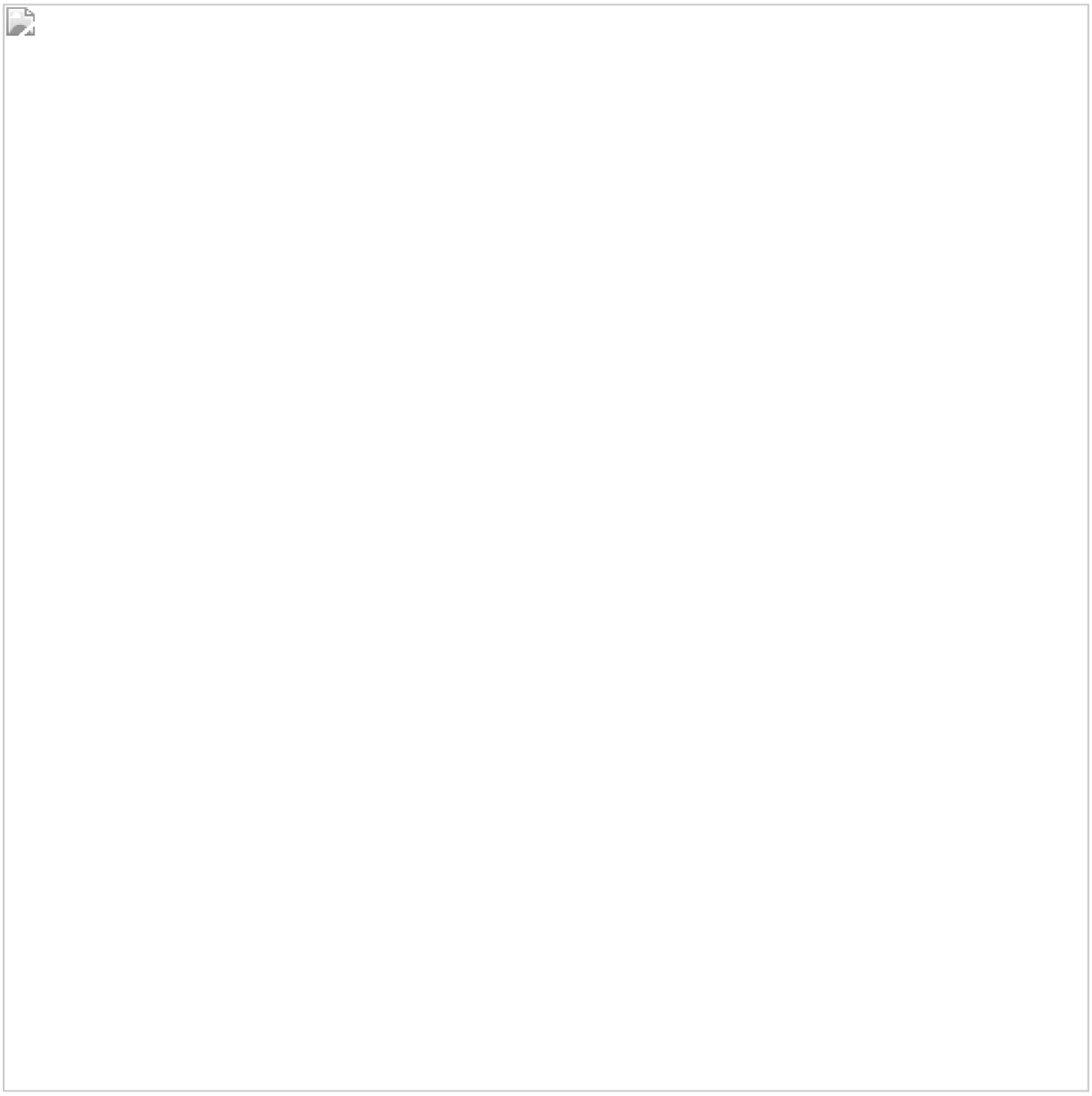


Think about it

1. What did Iktomi ask the wolves not to do?

- ○ Come and eat his meal
- ○ Climb the tree
- ○ Howl

Under the Ashes



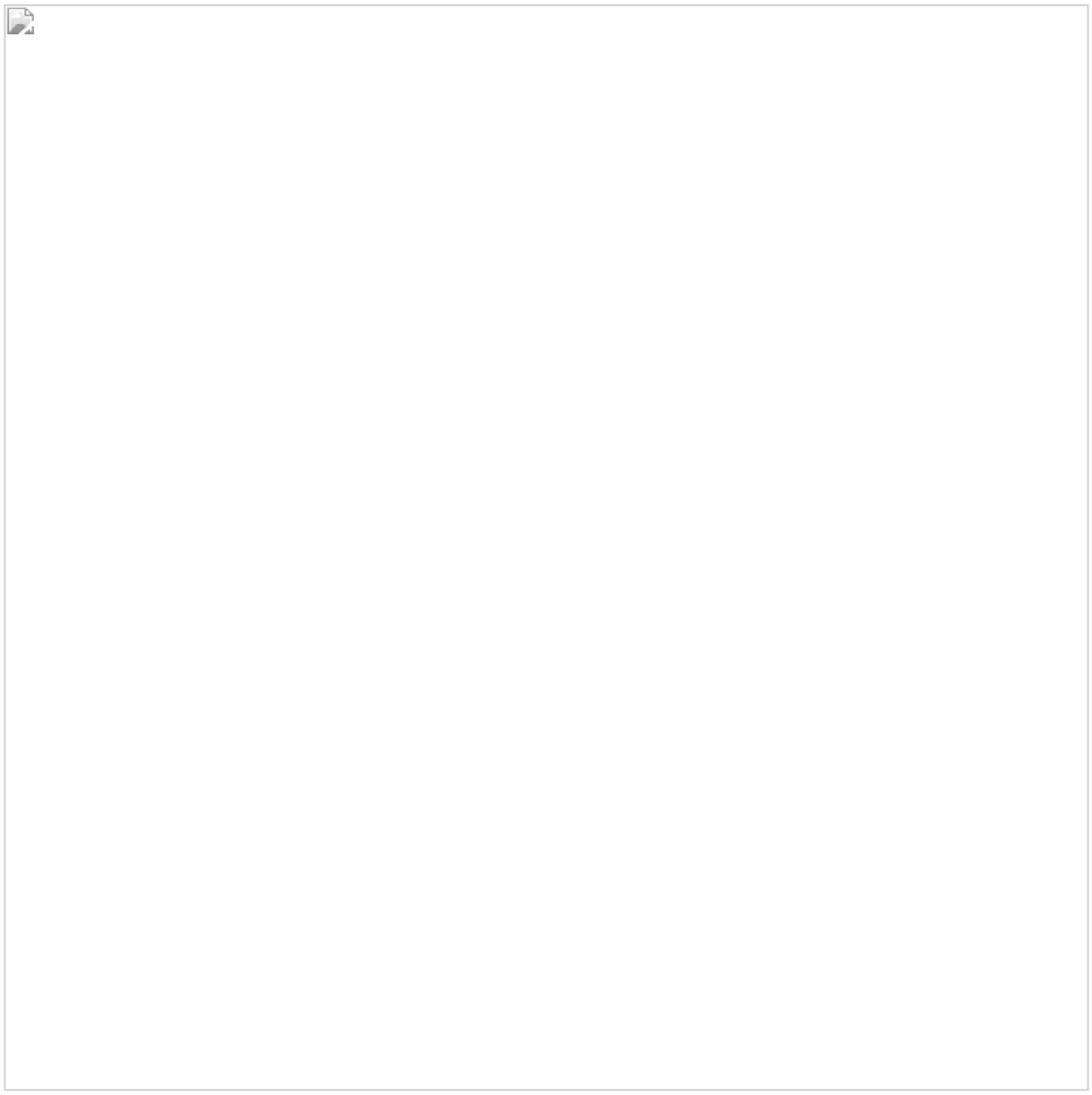
From the tree, Iktomi watched the hungry wolves eat up his browned ducks. His foot hurt more and more. “Hin-hin-hin!” he sobbed. Real tears made brown streaks across his red-painted cheeks.

As the wolves began to leave, Iktomi cried out like a pouting child, “At least you have left my baking under the ashes!”

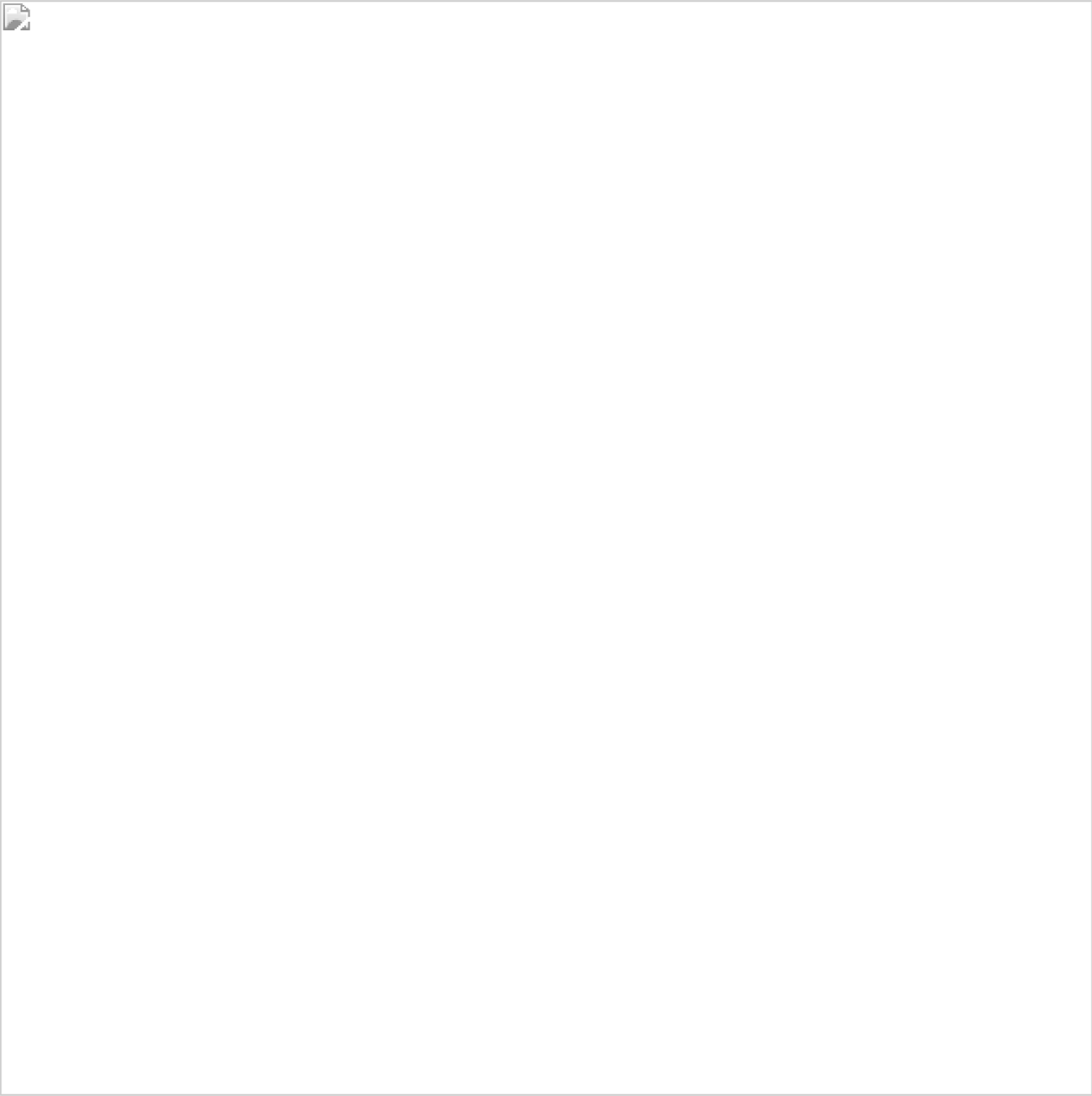
The wolves ran back and pawed the ducks out of the ashes in such haste that a cloud of gray ashes rose over them.

TALK ABOUT IT

Iktomi told the wolves where the rest of the ducks were. Why do you think he did?



No Duck Feast



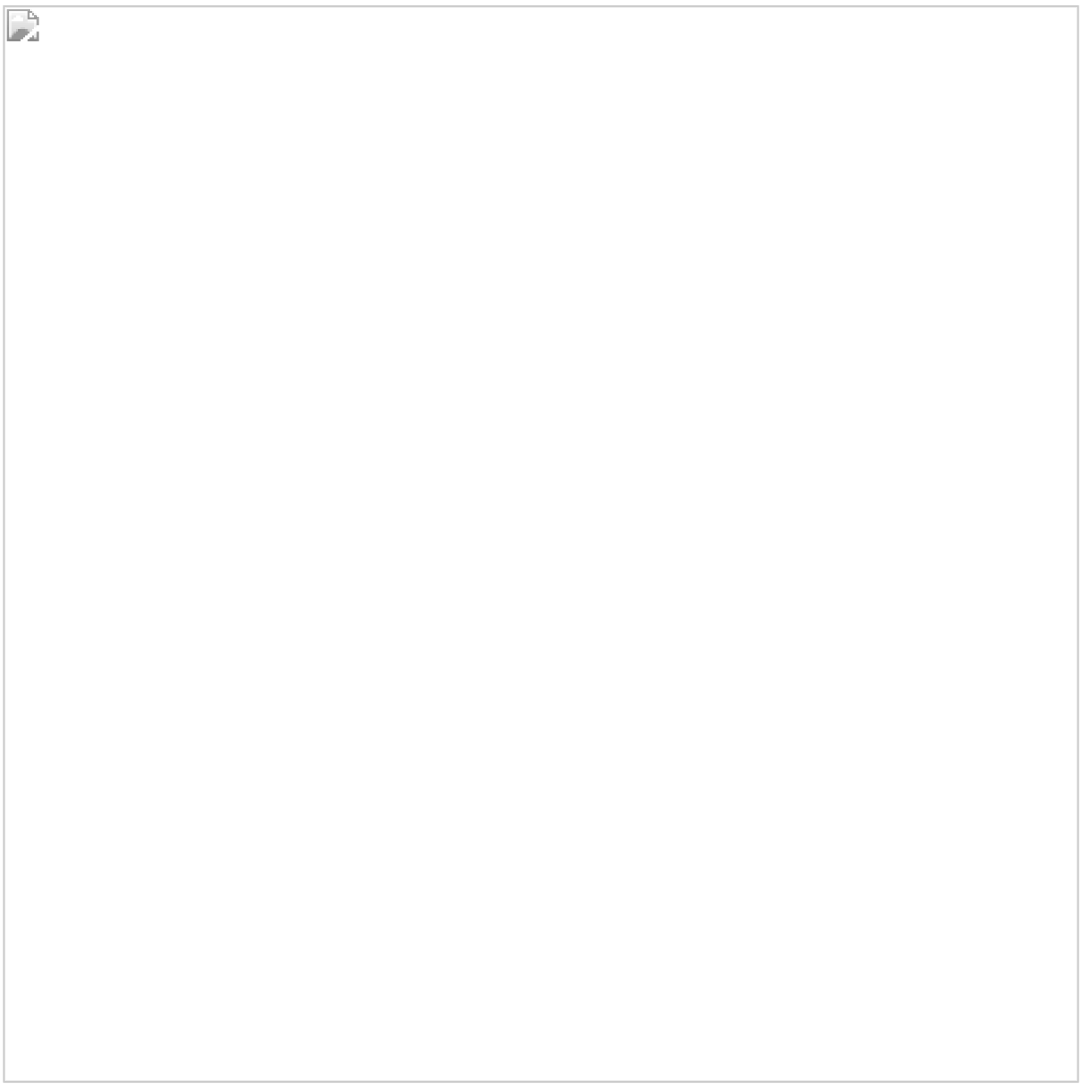
“Hin-hin-hin!” moaned Iktomi, when the wolves had scampered off.

All too late, the sturdy breeze returned and pulled apart the broken edges of the tree. Iktomi was set free. But alas! He had no duck feast.

TALK ABOUT IT

The story ends with Iktomi hungry again. What do you think of how it ended?

No Duck Feast · another picture



Think about it

1. How did Iktomi get free from the tree?

- ○ He cut it down
- ○ The breeze pulled the broken edges apart
- ○ The wolves helped

2. If Iktomi had shared the ducks, or helped the old tree, what do you think might have happened?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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