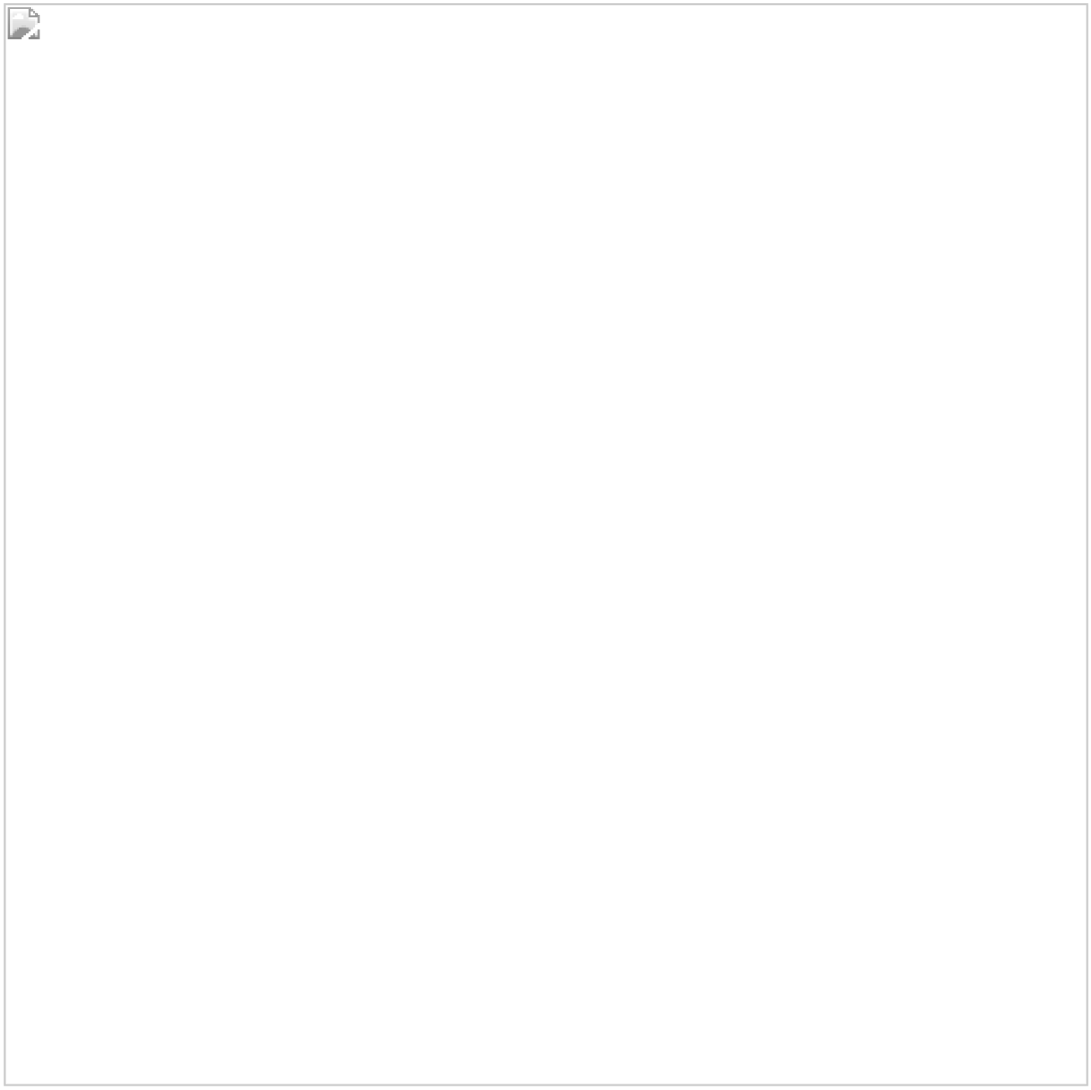
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Momotaro, the Son of a Peach

A Tale from Japan



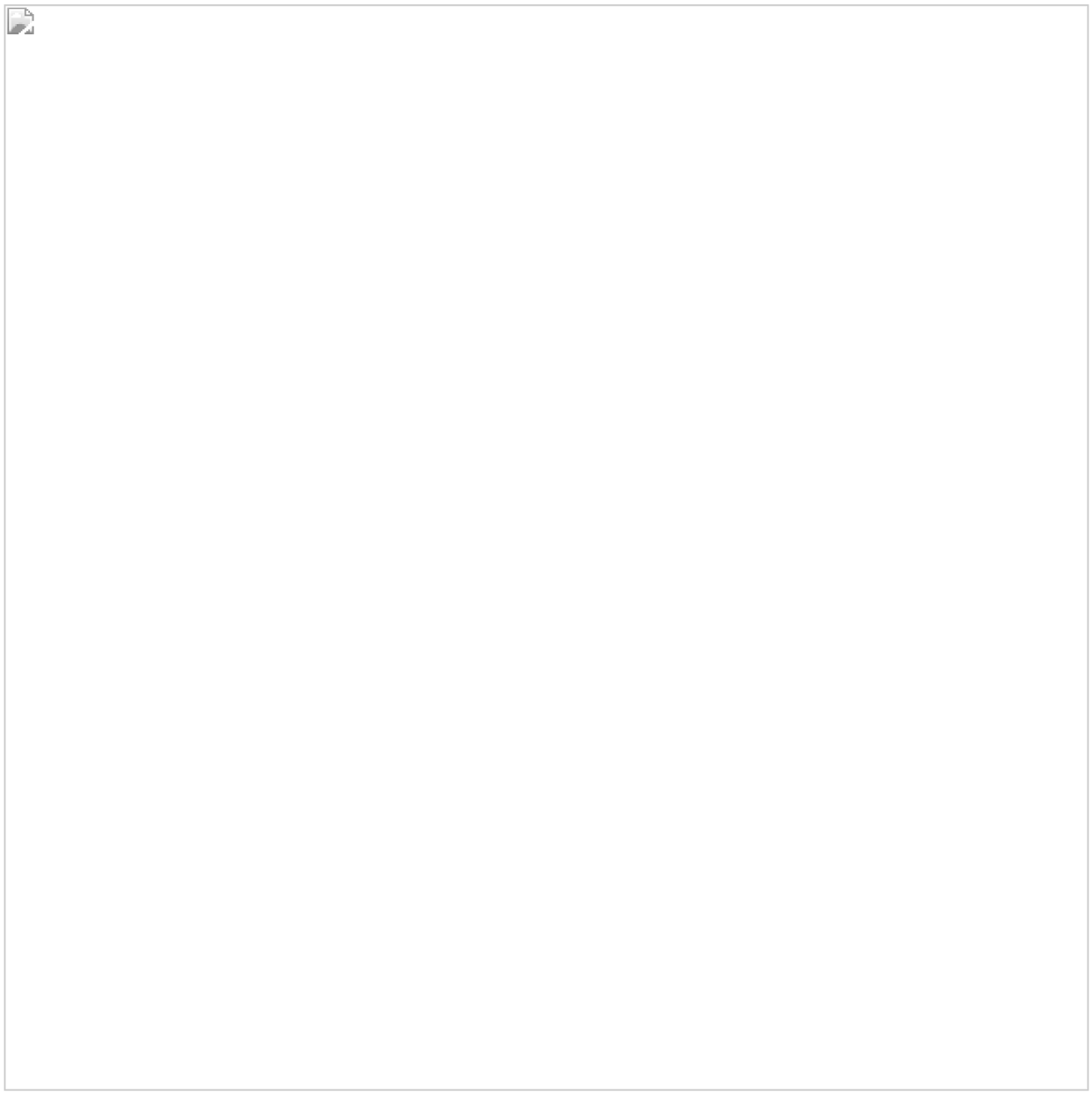
Long, long ago there lived an old man and an old woman. They were peasants, and had to work hard to earn their daily rice. The old man went to the hills to cut grass, and the old woman washed clothes at the river.

TALK ABOUT IT

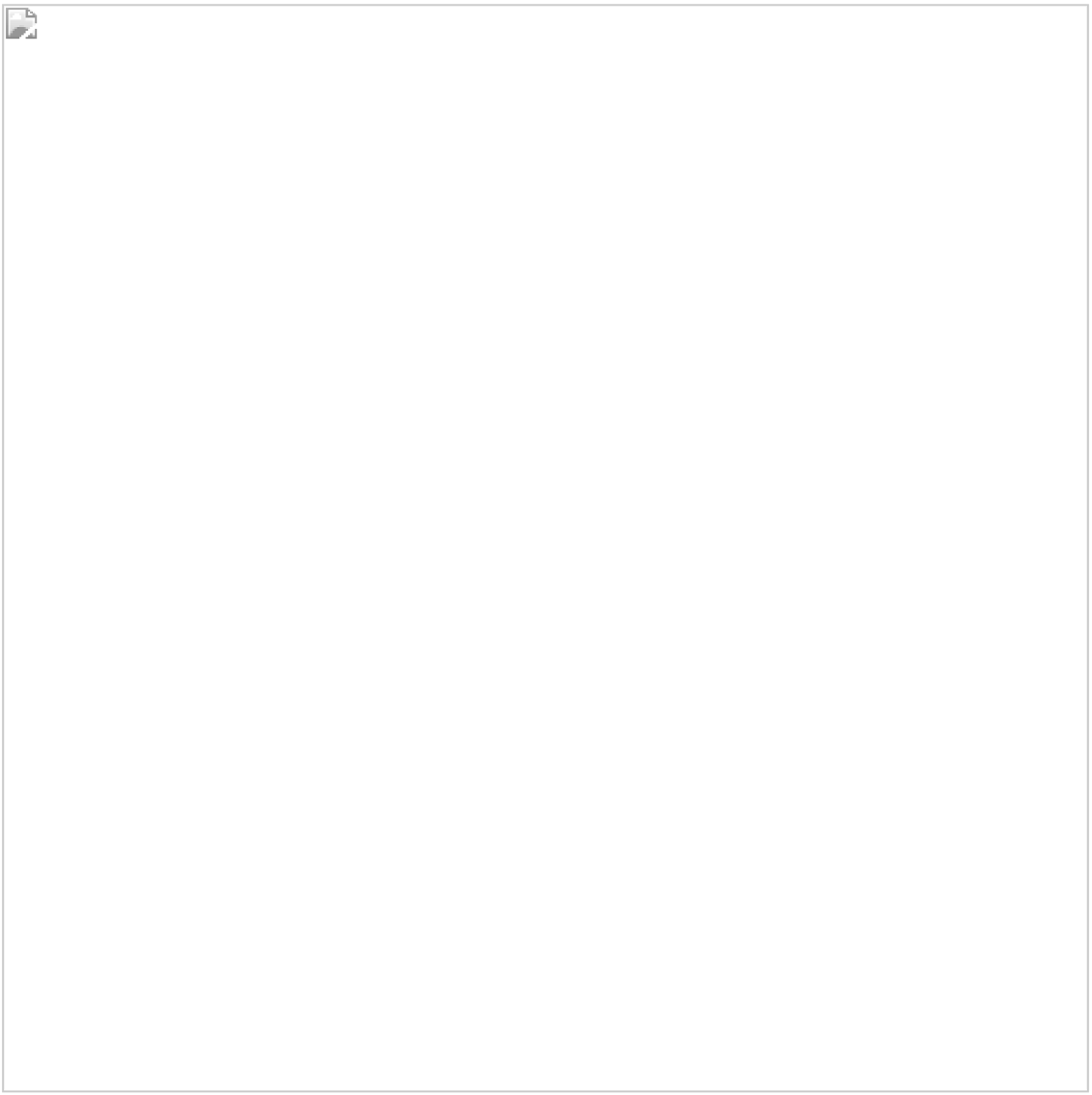
The old man and woman worked hard every day. What is something that you work hard at?

This book belongs to _____

Momotaro, the Son of a Peach · another picture



A Great Peach



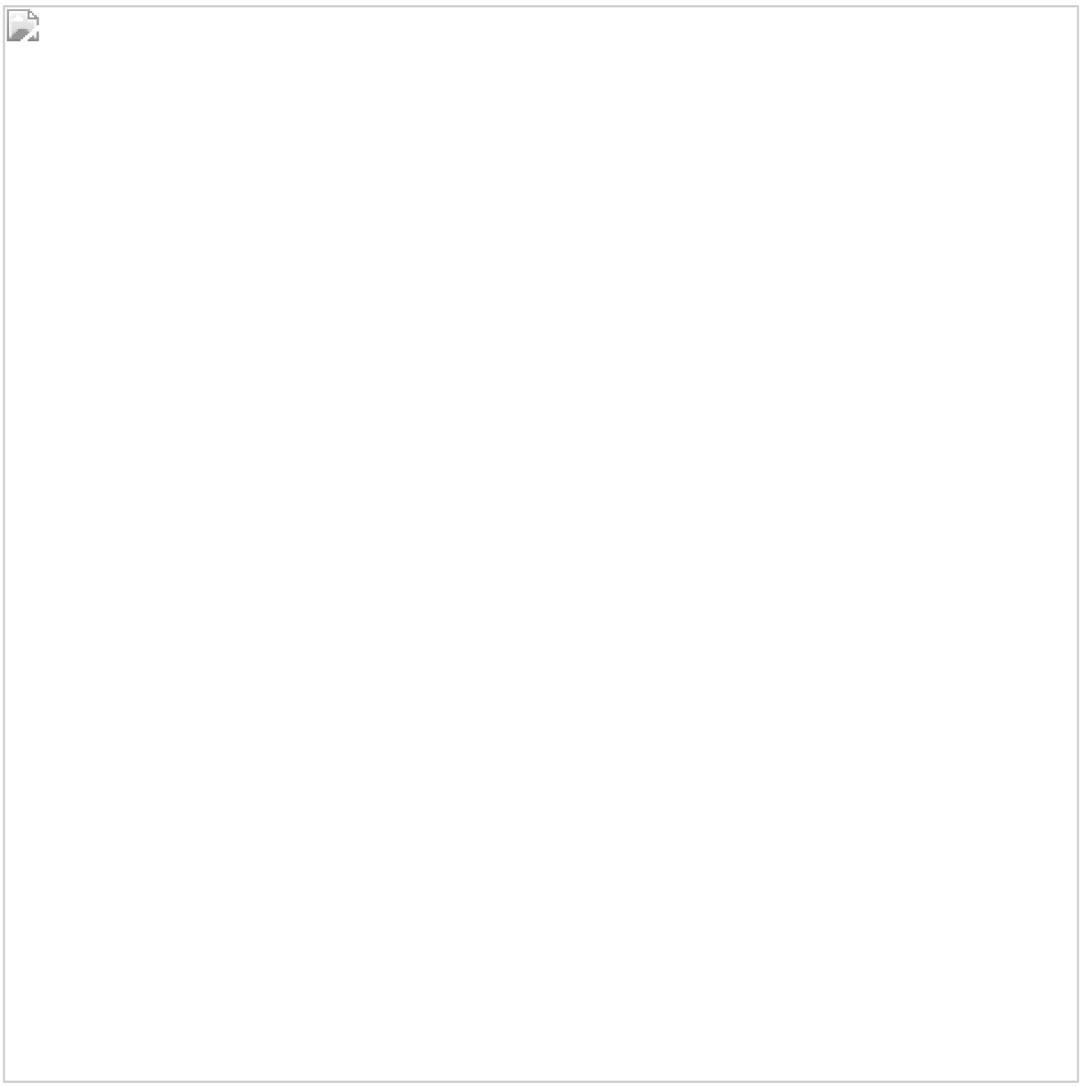
One day, as the old woman was washing clothes, a great peach came bumping down the stream. She was sixty, and in all her life she had never seen such a big peach.

“How delicious that peach must be!” she said. “I must certainly get it and take it home to my old man.” But it was out of her reach, and there was no stick to be found.

She clapped her hands and sang an old charm: “Distant water is bitter, The near water is sweet.” The peach came nearer and nearer, until it stopped in front of her. She took it up and hurried home.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever found something unexpected? What was it?

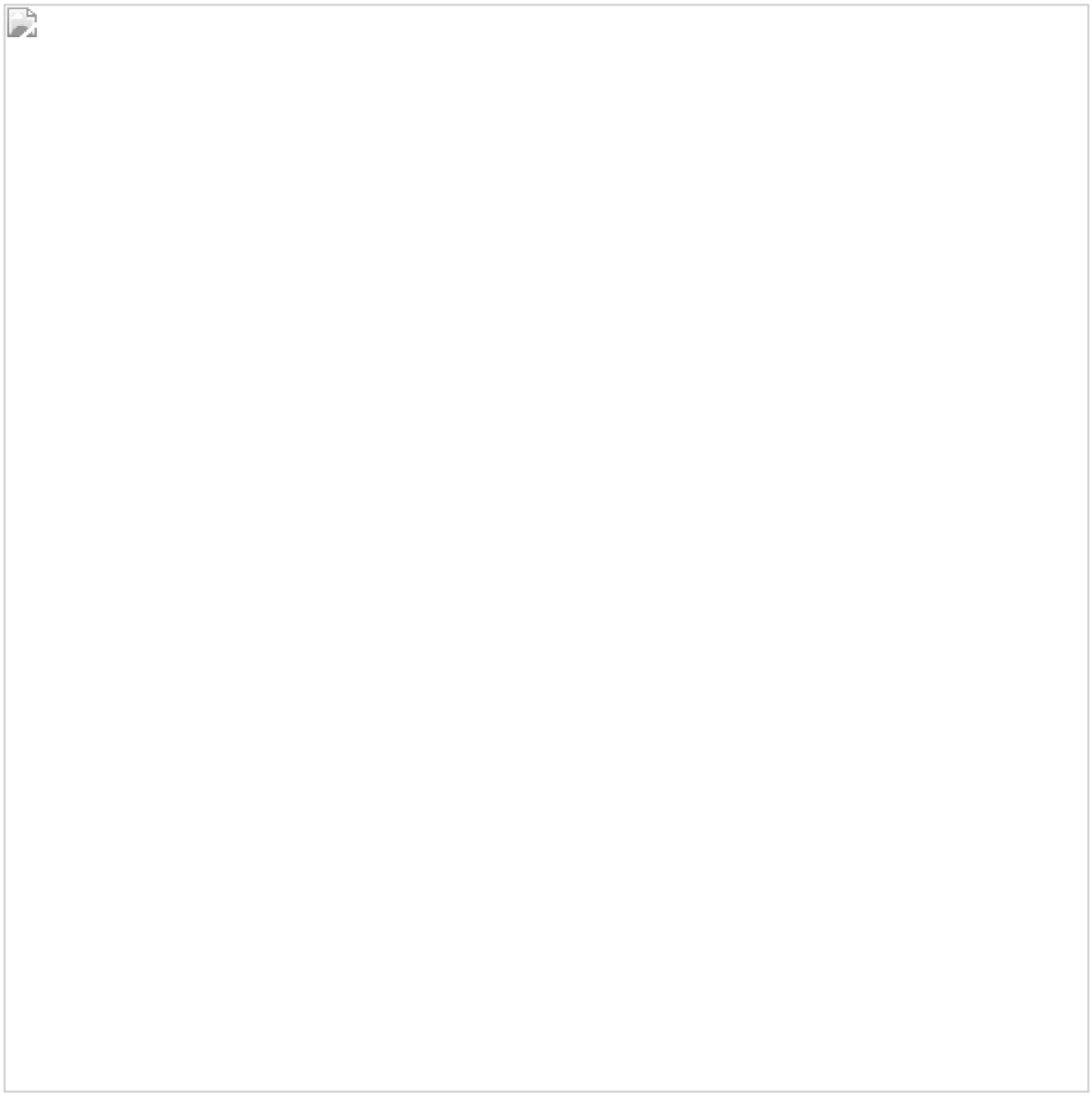


Think about it

1. How did the old woman get the peach to come close?

- ○ She jumped in
- ○ She sang a charm-verse
- ○ She threw a rope

The Child in the Peach



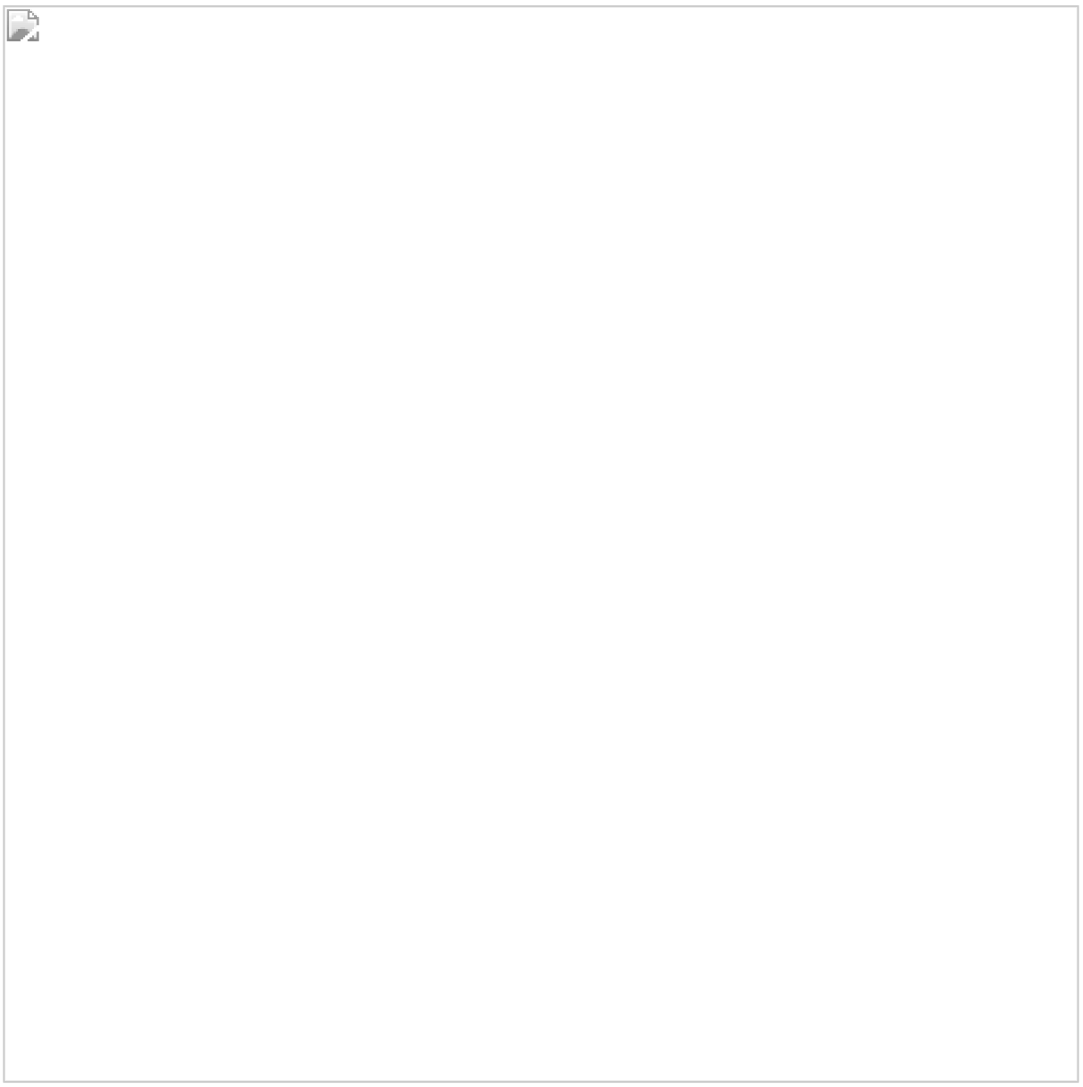
That evening she showed the old man the peach. “Just look at this! Did you ever see such a large peach in all your life?”

He brought out a kitchen knife. But just as he was about to cut it, the peach split in two. A clear voice said, “Wait a bit, old man!” and out stepped a beautiful little child.

The old man and his wife fell to the ground in surprise. “Don’t be afraid,” said the child. “I am no demon or fairy.” He had been sent to be the son of their old age. They named him Momotaro, or Son of a Peach.

TALK ABOUT IT

The old couple had wished for a child. What do you wish for most?

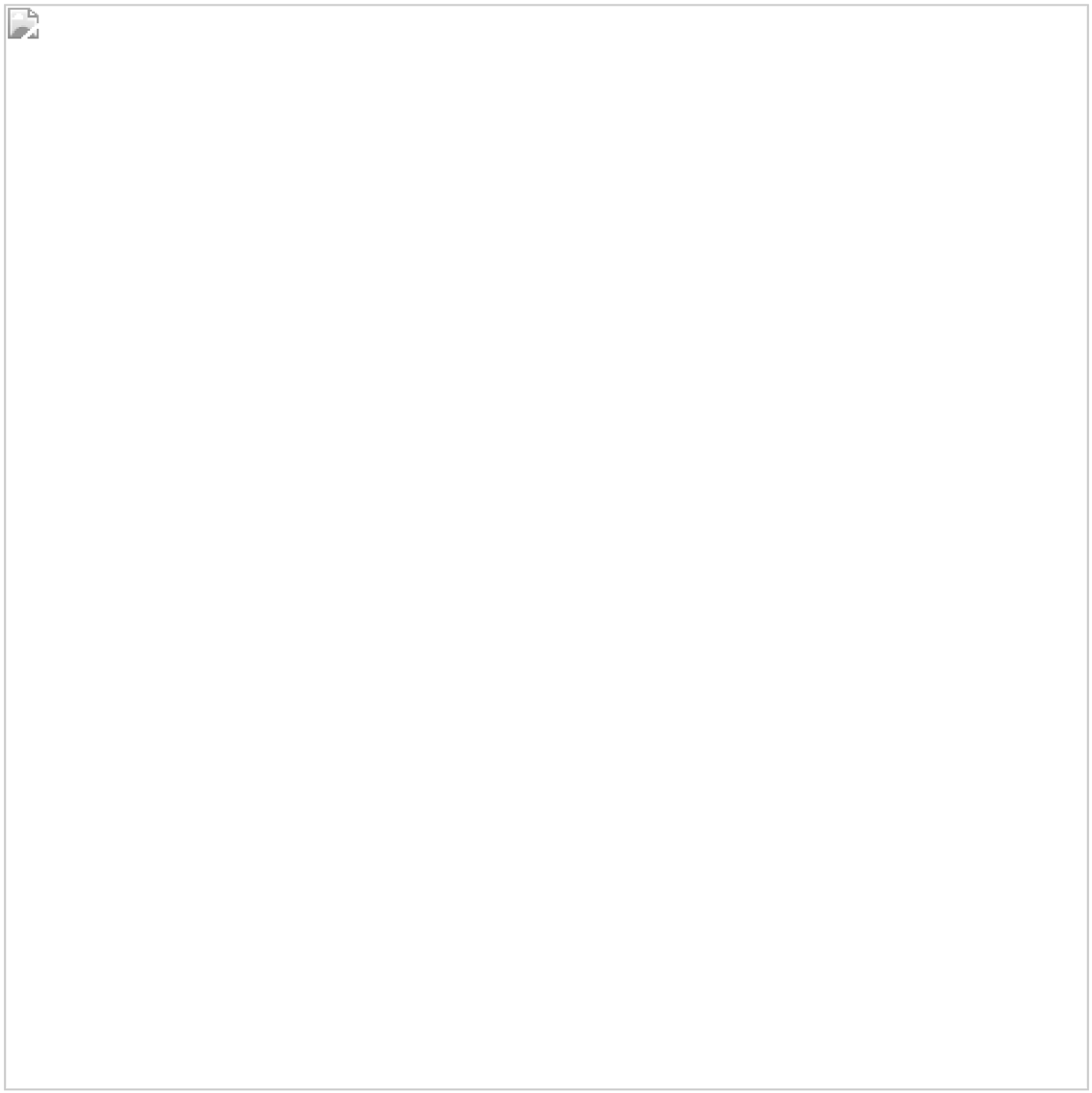


Think about it

1. Where did Momotaro come from?

- ○ The river
- ○ Inside a peach
- ○ The mountain

Momotaro Grows Up



The years passed, and Momotaro grew to be fifteen. He was taller and far stronger than any boy his age, with a heart full of courage, and very wise for his years.

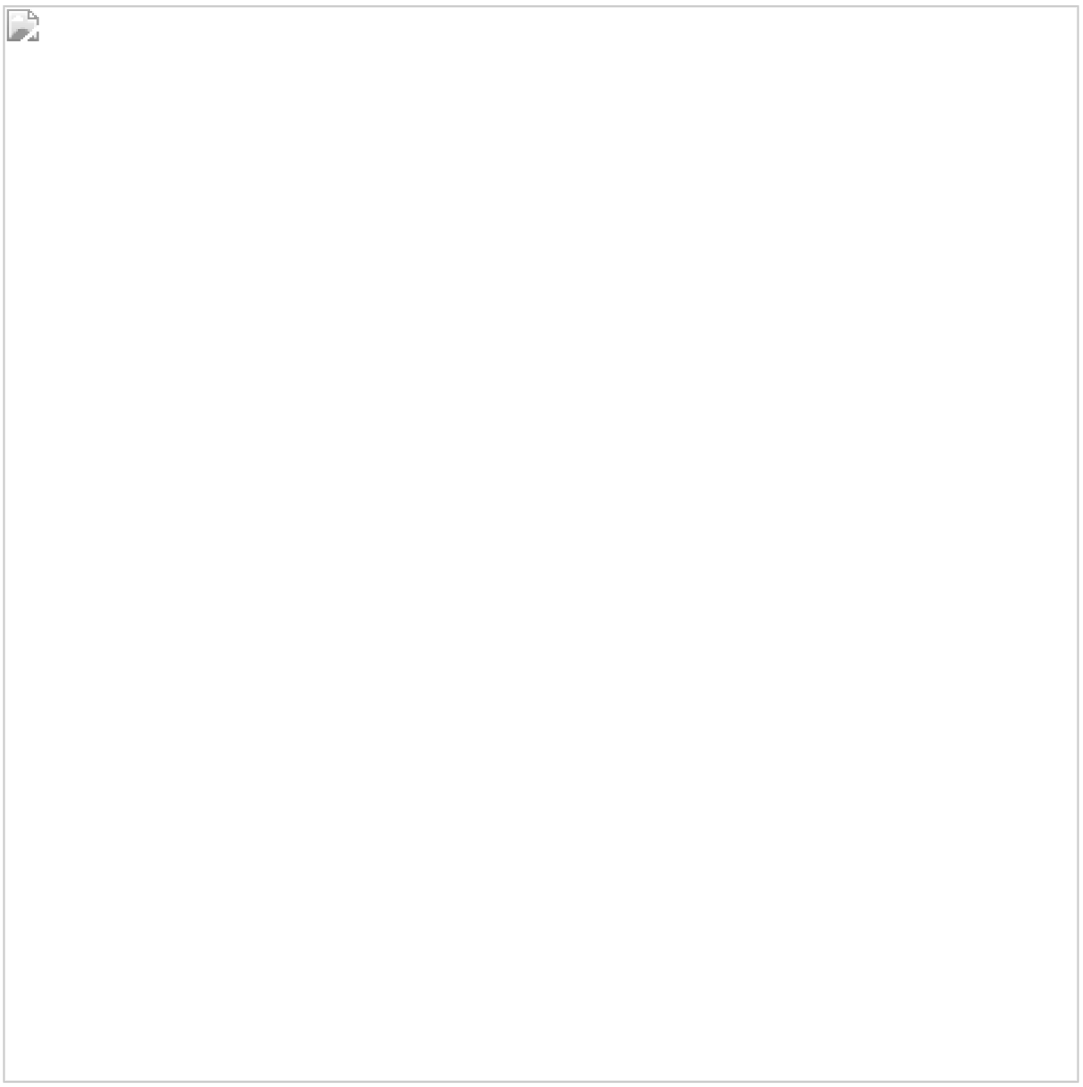
One day he thanked his foster-father. Their goodness to him, he said, was "higher than the mountain grasses" and deeper than the river.

Then he said, "Let me go away at once!" He told them of an island in the northeast, where a band of devils lived. They robbed the people of the land and carried off all they could find. Momotaro wanted to go and bring back the plunder.

TALK ABOUT IT

Momotaro wanted to help the people. Who would you like to help?

Momotaro Grows Up · another picture

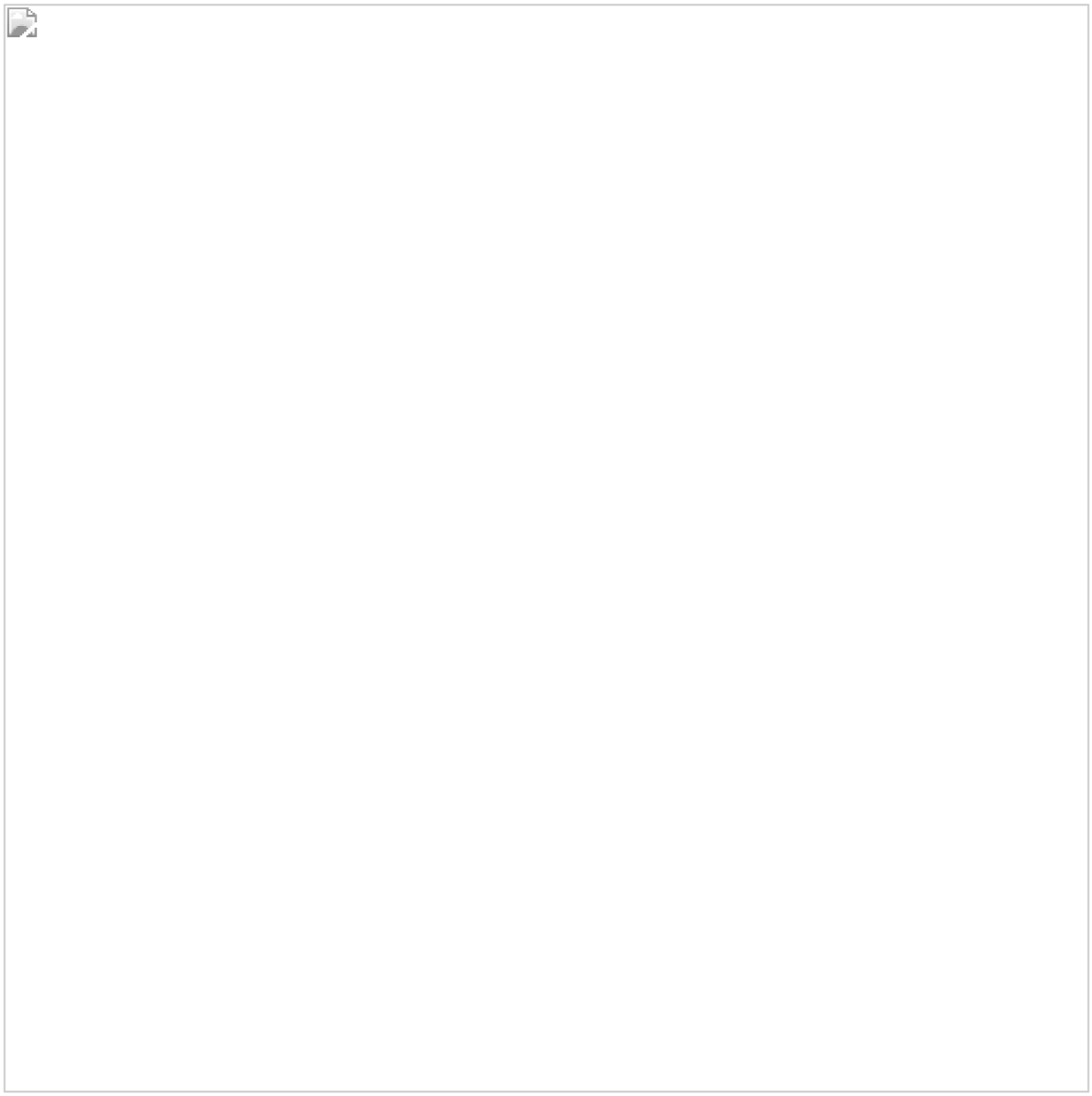


Think about it

1. Where did the devils live?

- ○ In the river
- ○ On an island in the northeast
- ○ In the old man's field

Saying Good-by



The old man was surprised. But he knew the boy was no common child, and he said, “Go to the island as soon as ever you like.”

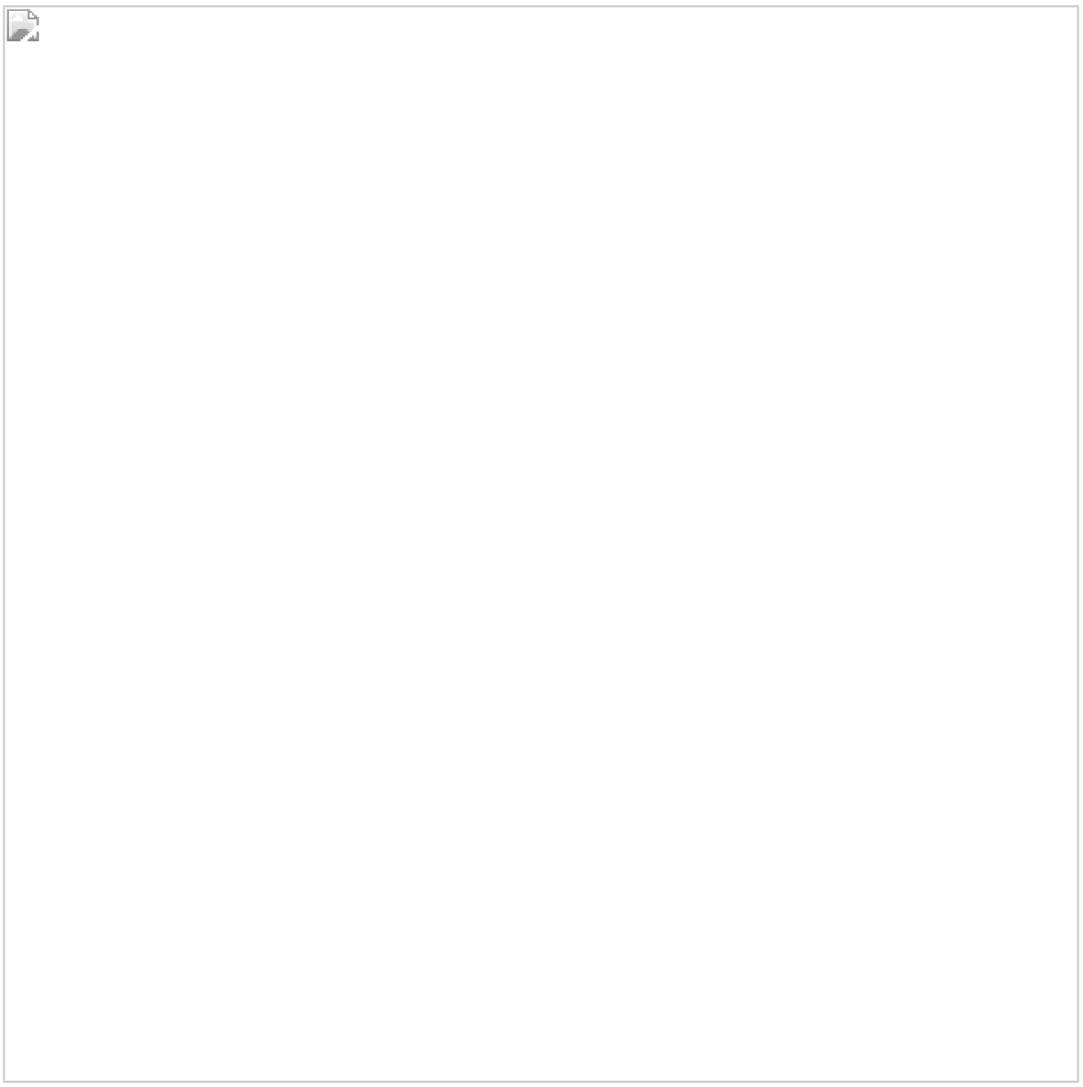
The old man and woman pounded rice in the kitchen mortar to make cakes for the journey. Parting is always sad. Their eyes filled with tears, and their voices trembled as they said, “Go with all care and speed. We expect you back victorious!”

Momotaro thought of how lonely they would be. But he said, “Good-by!” quite bravely.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think the old couple were feeling? What helps you when you say good-bye?

Saying Good-by · another picture

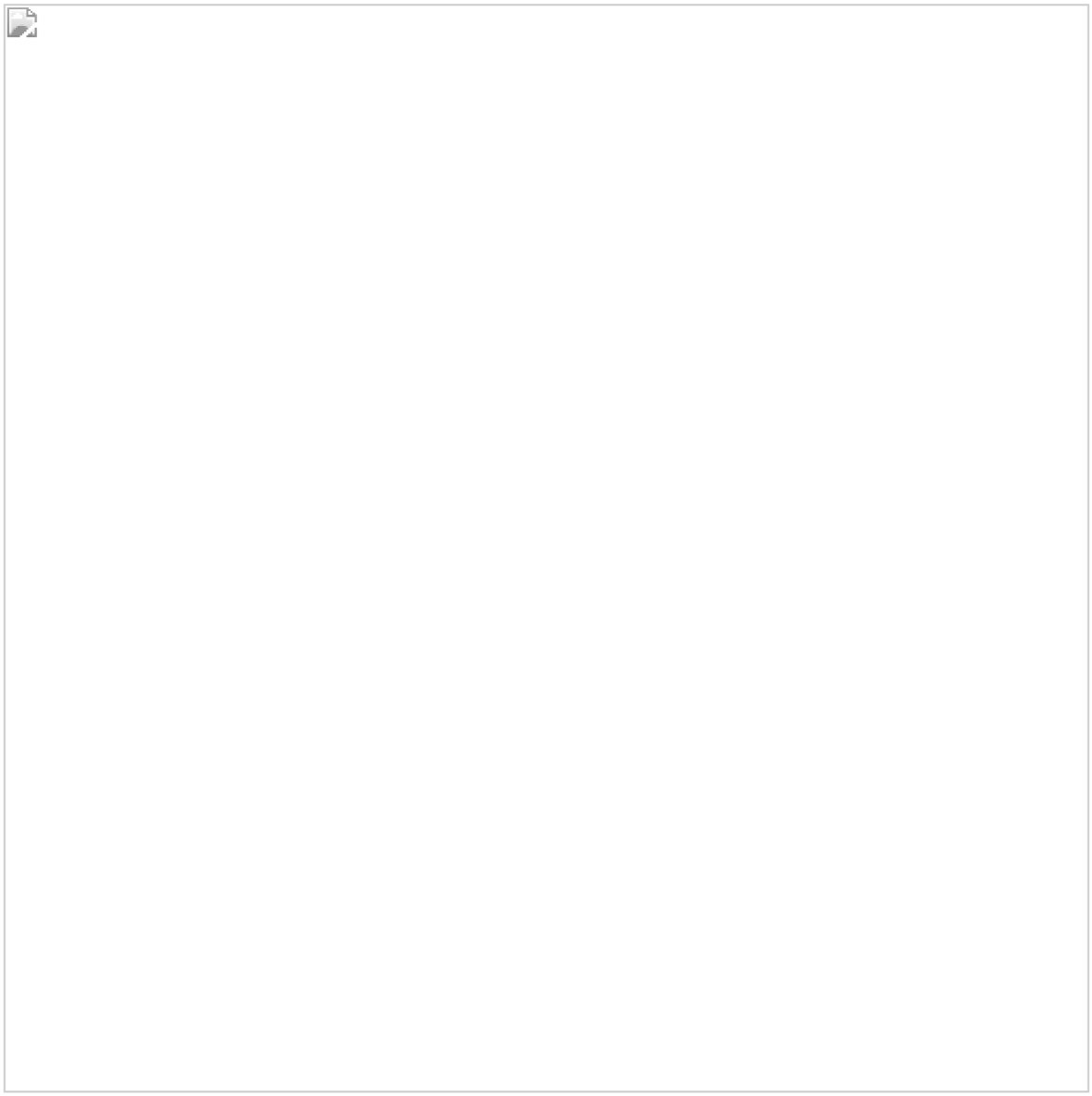


Think about it

1. What did the old couple make for Momotaro?

- ○ Rice-cakes
- ○ A sword
- ○ A boat

The Dog



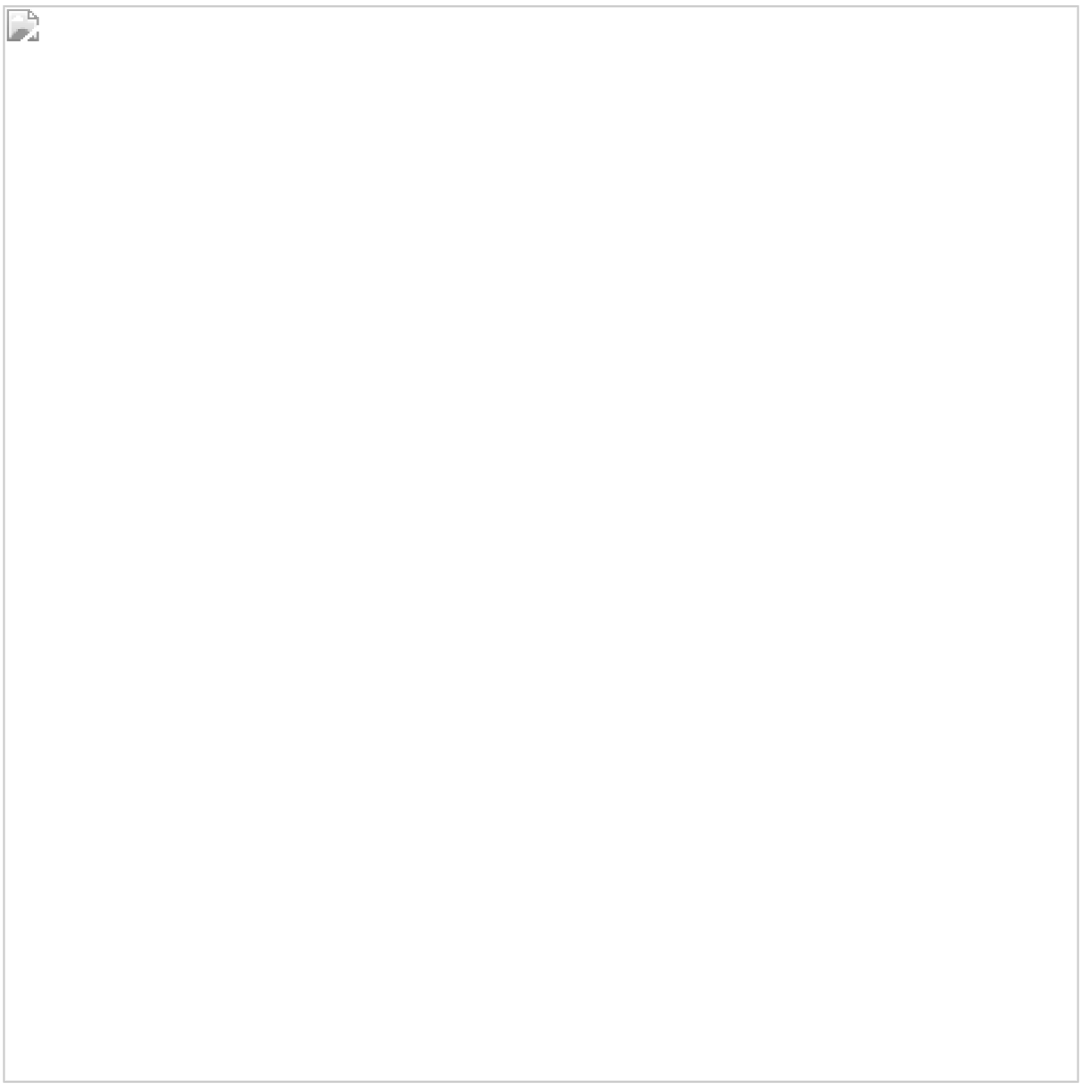
At midday Momotaro sat under a tree to eat a rice-cake. A dog almost as large as a colt came running out of the high grass. He showed his teeth and said it was rude to pass his field without asking. He wanted all of Momotaro's cakes.

But when Momotaro said who he was, and that he was on his way to the Island of Devils, the dog bowed so low that his forehead touched the ground, and asked to go along as a follower.

“I cannot spare you a whole one,” said Momotaro. “I will give you half of one.” The dog thanked him, and followed.

TALK ABOUT IT

The dog started out unfriendly and ended up a friend. Has that ever happened to you?

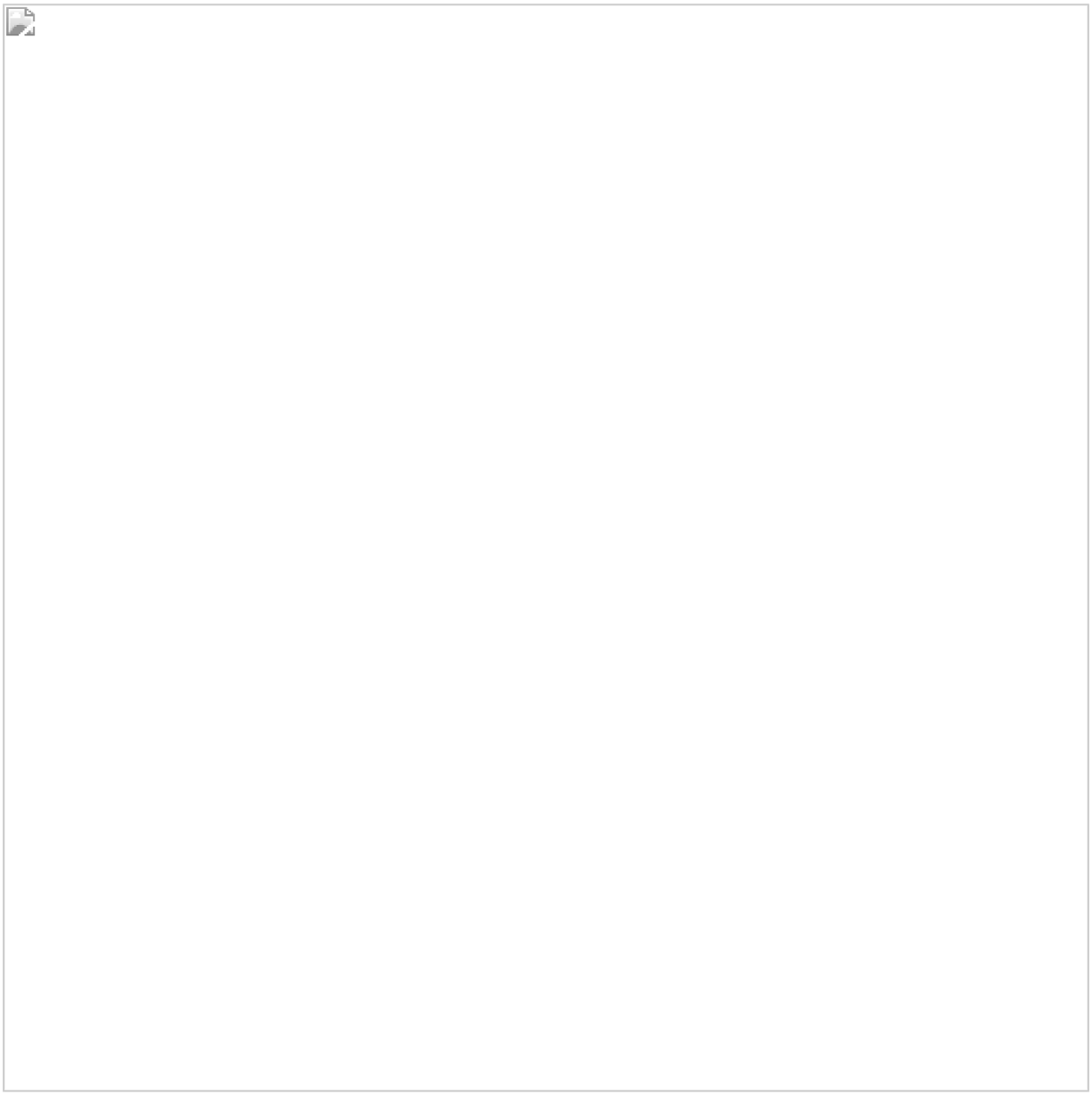


Think about it

1. How much of a cake did Momotaro give the dog?

- ○ A whole one
- ○ Half of one
- ○ None

The Monkey



On they went over hills and through valleys. A monkey came down from a tree and asked to go with them. The dog answered jealously, and the dog and the monkey began to quarrel and bite, for these two animals always hate each other.

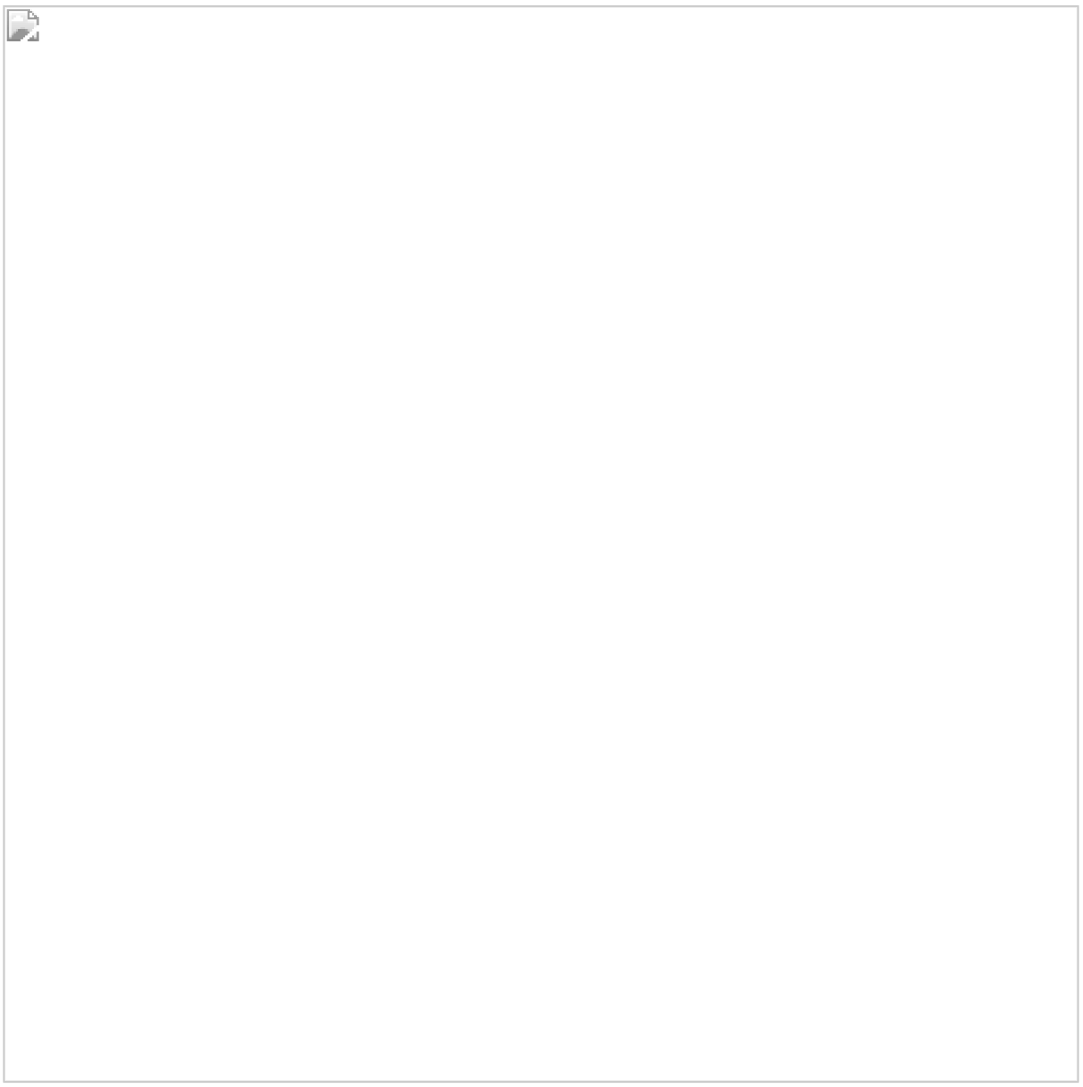
“Now, don’t quarrel!” said Momotaro, putting himself between them. He asked the monkey if he really wished to go and fight.

“Yes, sir,” said the monkey. “I admire your courage,” said Momotaro, and gave him a piece of a rice-cake. The monkey joined them.

TALK ABOUT IT

Do you ever have to stand between two people who are quarreling? What do you do?

The Monkey · another picture

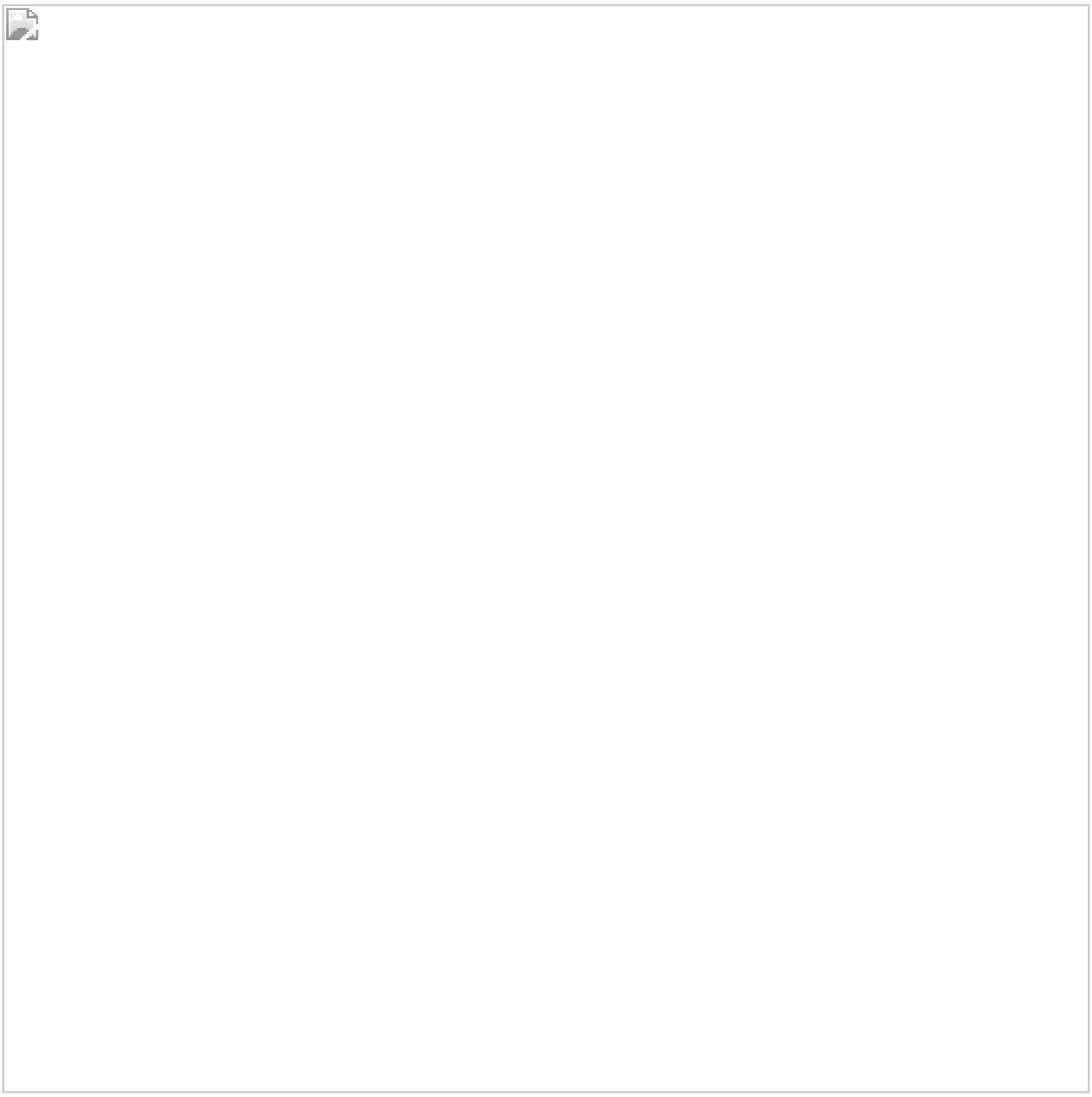


Think about it

1. Who joined Momotaro after the dog?

- ○ A monkey
- ○ A pheasant
- ○ A fox

The Pheasant



In a large field, a bird landed in front of them, the most beautiful Momotaro had ever seen, with five robes of feathers and a scarlet cap.

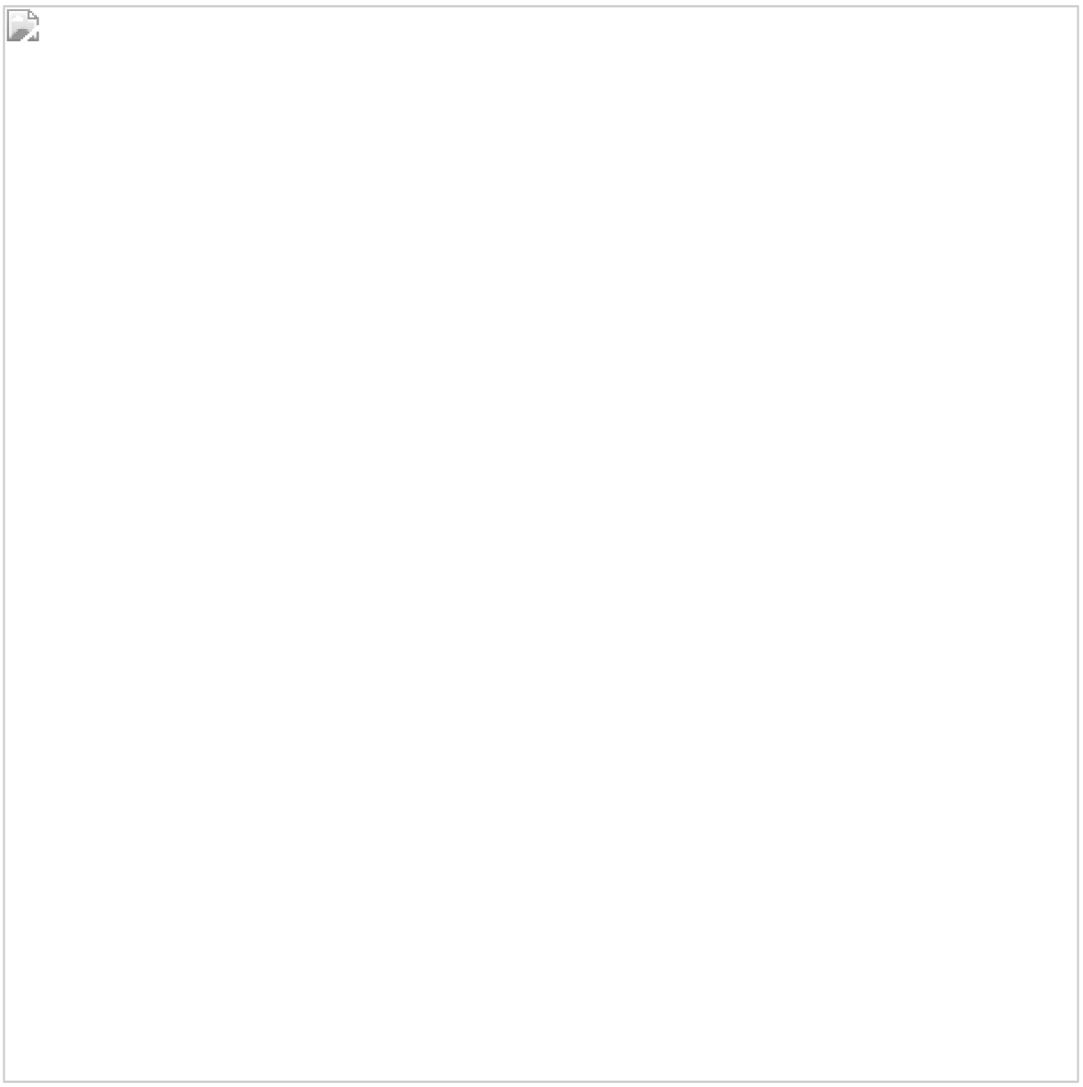
The dog ran at it, and the bird struck out its spurs. Momotaro held the dog back. “Surrender at once, and I will take you with me,” he said. The bird, a pheasant, surrendered and asked to follow.

Then Momotaro gave an order. “The first thing necessary in an army is harmony,” he said. They must be “friends with one mind,” and whoever began a quarrel would be sent away. All three promised, and soon they were good friends.

TALK ABOUT IT

Momotaro said they needed to be friends to do their work. What do you do better with friends than alone?

The Pheasant · another picture

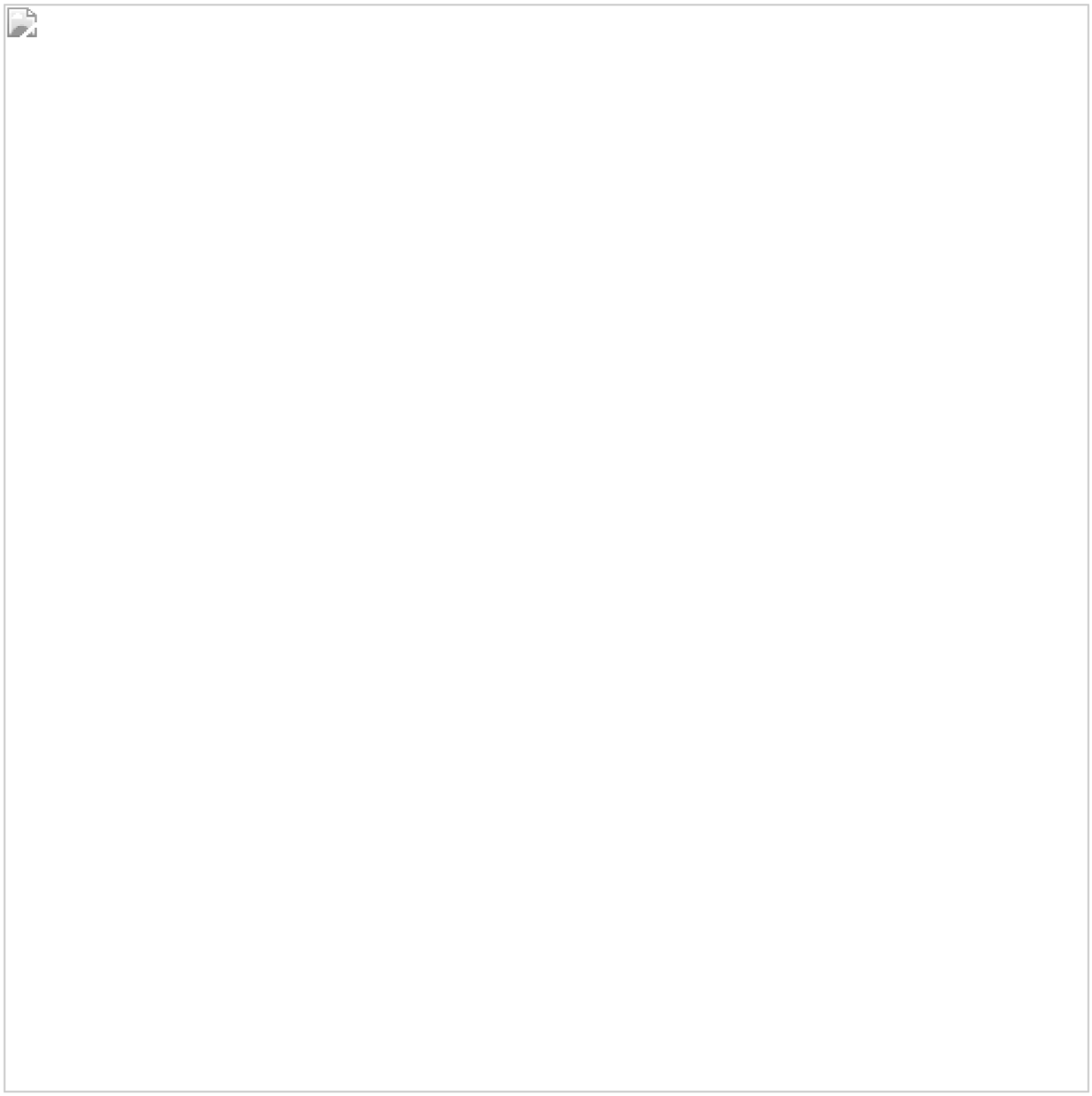


Think about it

1. What did Momotaro say was first needed in an army?

- ○ Swords
- ○ Harmony
- ○ Speed

The Sea



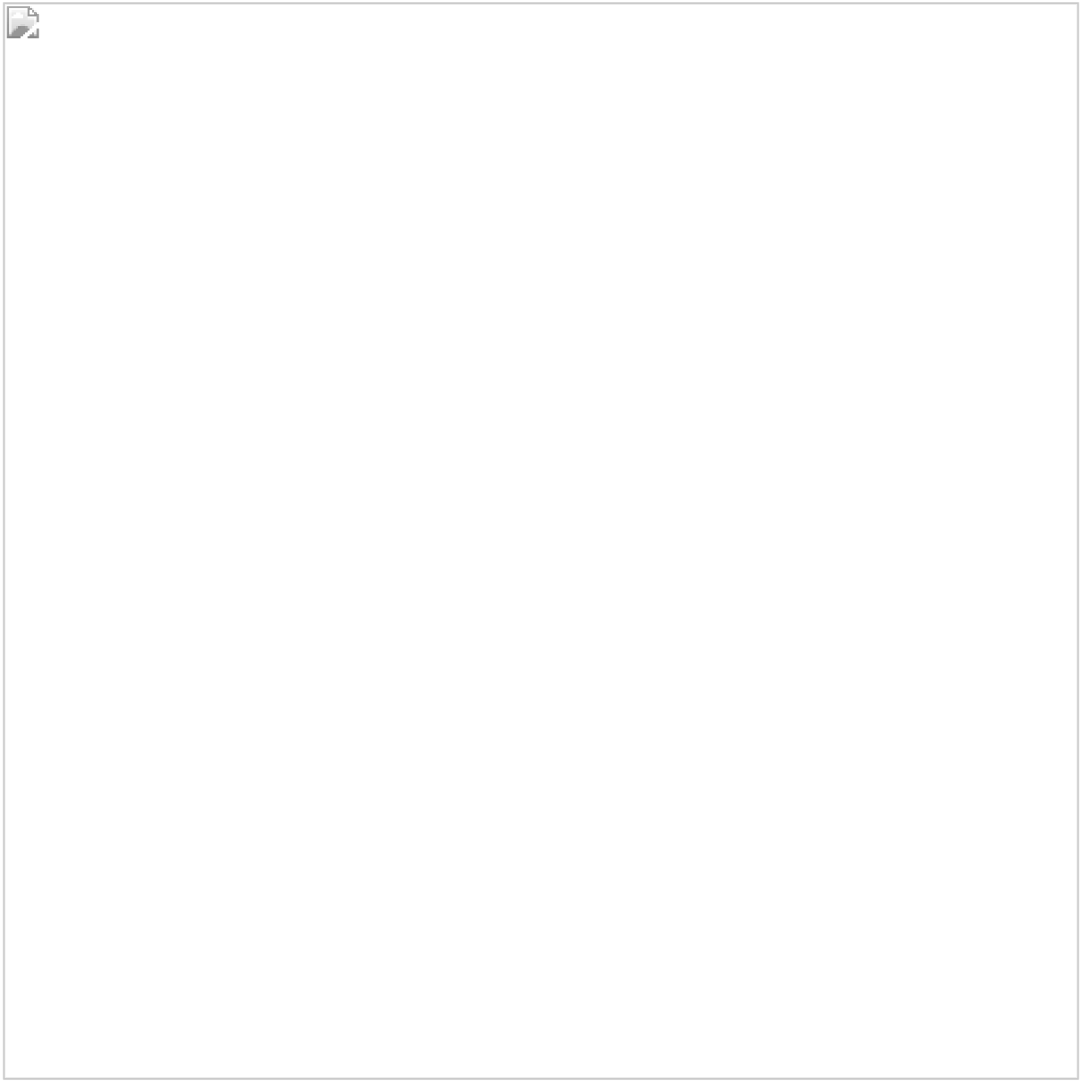
Day after day they hurried on, until they reached the shore of the North-Eastern Sea. There was no island in sight. The dog, the monkey and the pheasant had never seen the sea before, and they looked at each other in silence.

To try them, Momotaro spoke roughly. “Are you afraid of the sea?” he asked. He would go alone, he said. The three clung to his sleeve. “Please do take us with you,” said the pheasant.

So Momotaro said they could come. They got a small ship, and the wind and weather were fair. On the way they told each other stories and played games.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever been scared of something new, like the sea? What helped?

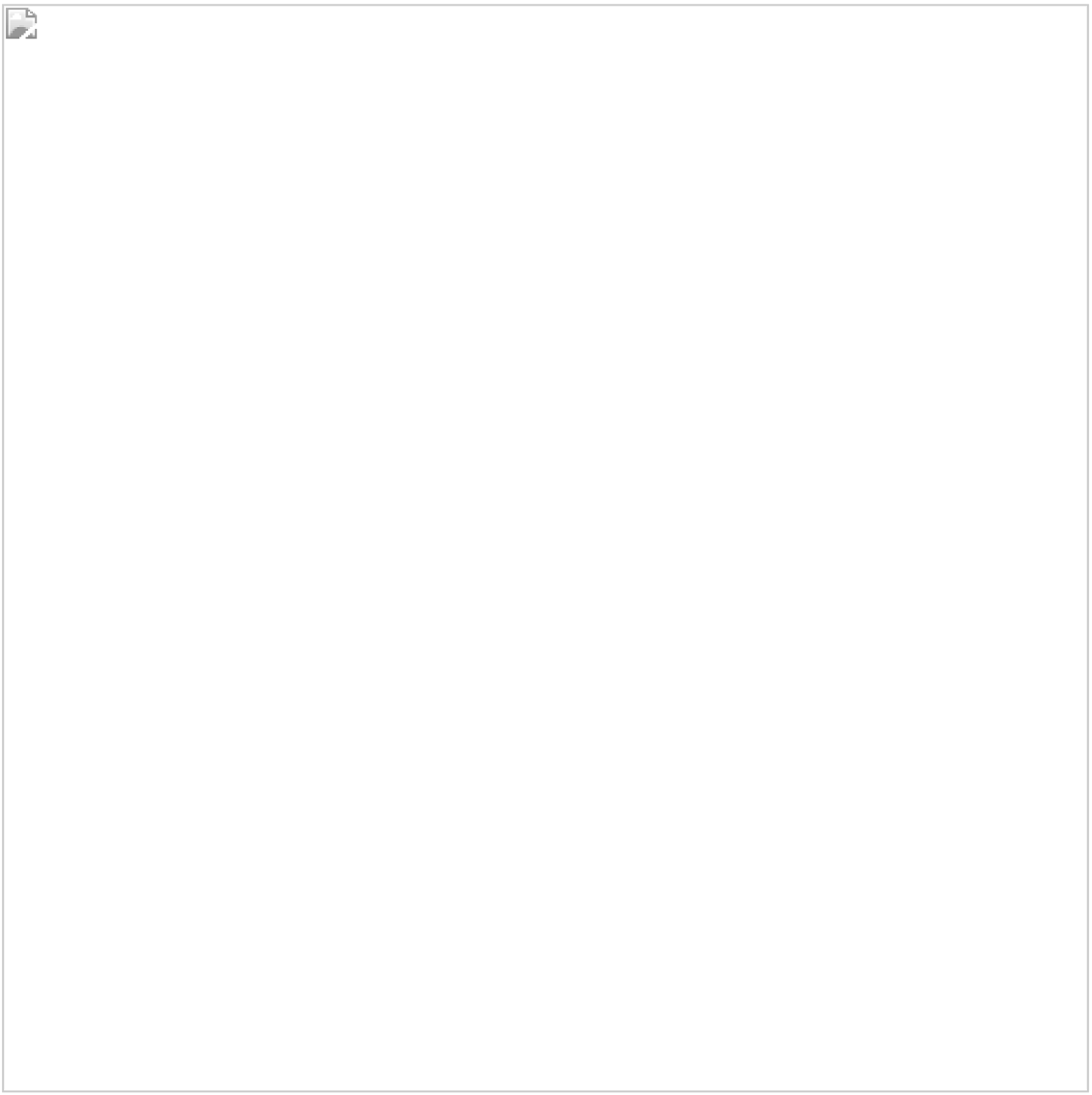


Think about it

1. Why did Momotaro speak roughly to his friends?

- ○ To try them
- ○ Because he was lost
- ○ He was tired of them

The Castle on the Cliff



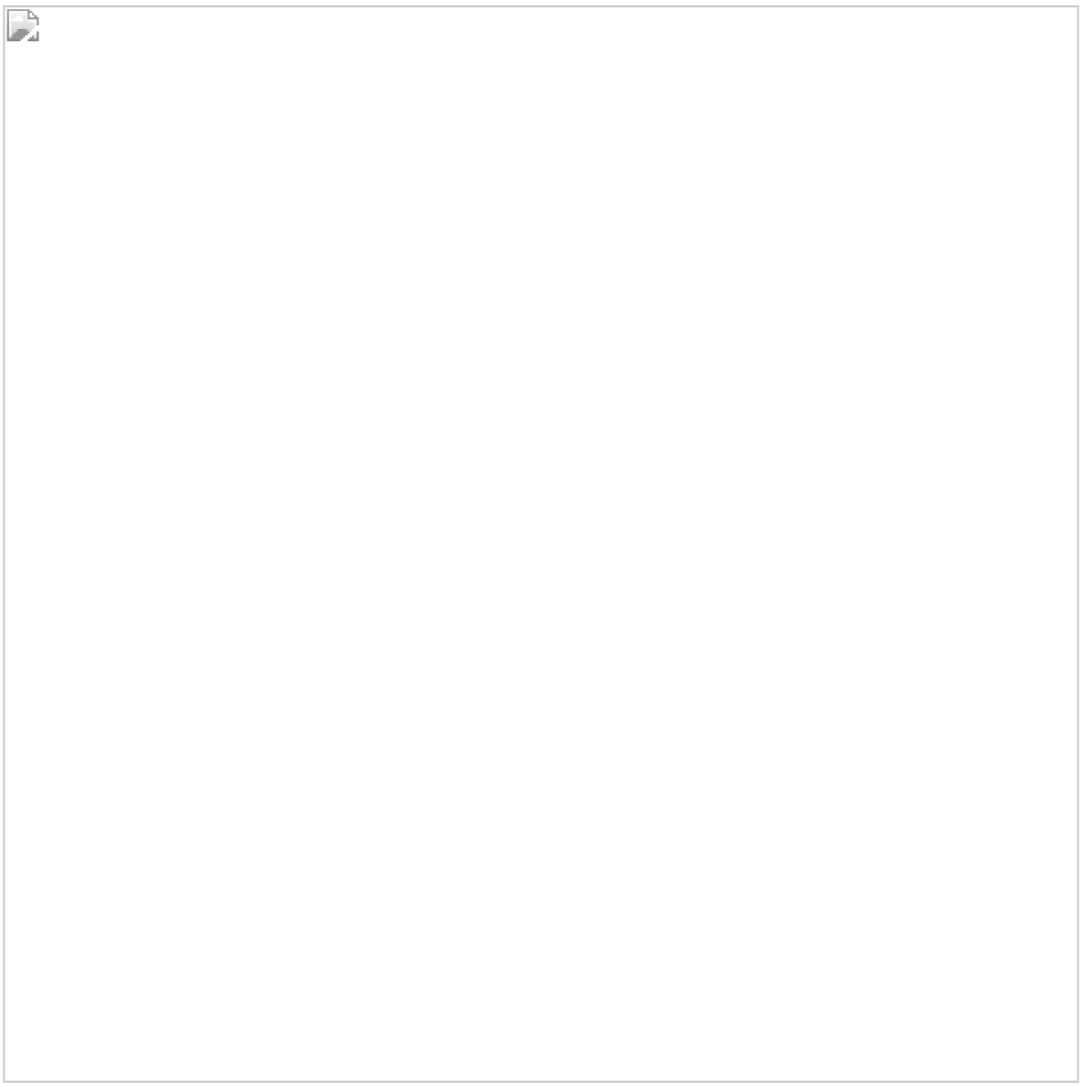
One bright day they saw land. On the top of a steep shore stood a large castle. Momotaro knew it was the devils' stronghold.

He called to the pheasant. "Fly at once to the castle and engage the demons to fight. We will follow you." The pheasant flew to the roof and called out that Momotaro had come, and that the devils must surrender.

The devils laughed at a single bird. Then they got angry, put on tiger-skin trousers, took iron bars and tried to knock the pheasant down. But the pheasant flew round and round them, so quickly that they wondered if it was one bird or many.

TALK ABOUT IT

The pheasant was small, but he was brave. When have you been brave while small?

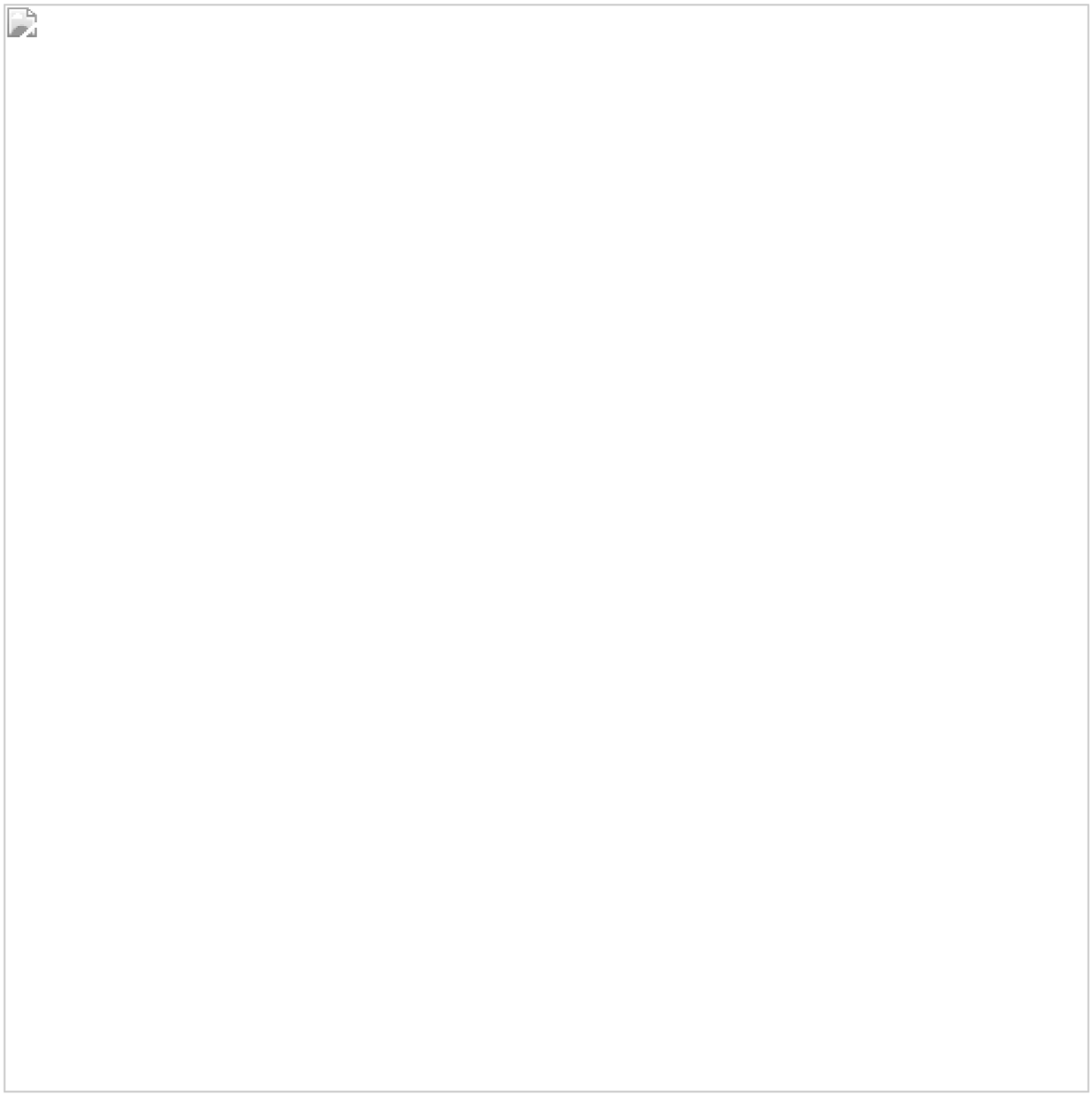


Think about it

1. Who went first to the castle?

- ○ The dog
- ○ The monkey
- ○ The pheasant

The Two Crying Ladies



Momotaro brought the ship to land. The castle on the cliff had high walls and iron gates. He walked up the path with the monkey and the dog.

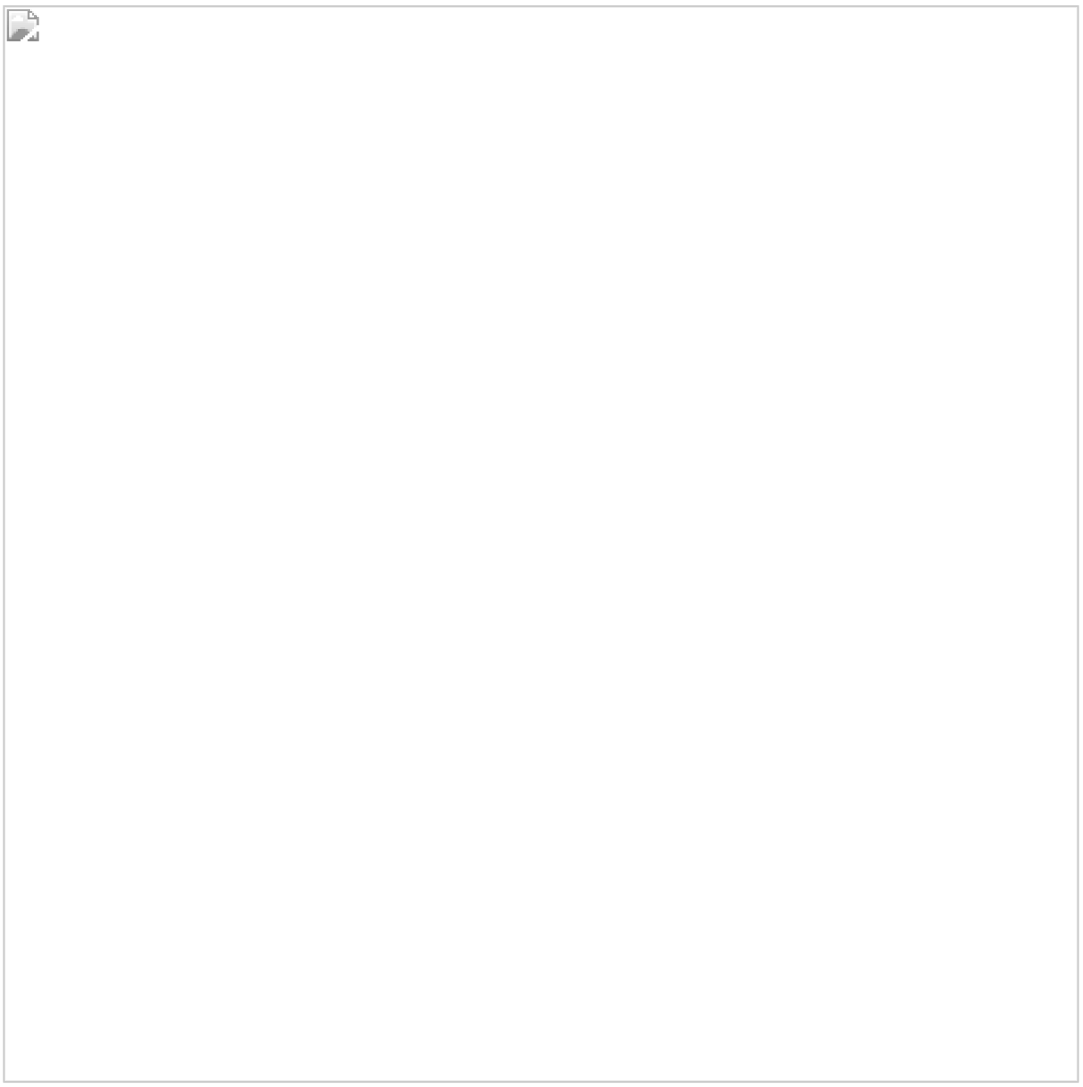
By a stream they met two ladies washing clothes, and the clothes were stained with blood. The ladies were crying. “Who are you, and why do you weep?” asked Momotaro.

They were daughters of lords, captives of the Demon King, “and there is no one to help us!” “I will rescue you,” said Momotaro. “Do not weep any more.” They showed him a little back door in the lowest part of the castle wall.

TALK ABOUT IT

Momotaro stopped to ask why they were crying. What do you do when someone is crying?

The Two Crying Ladies · another picture

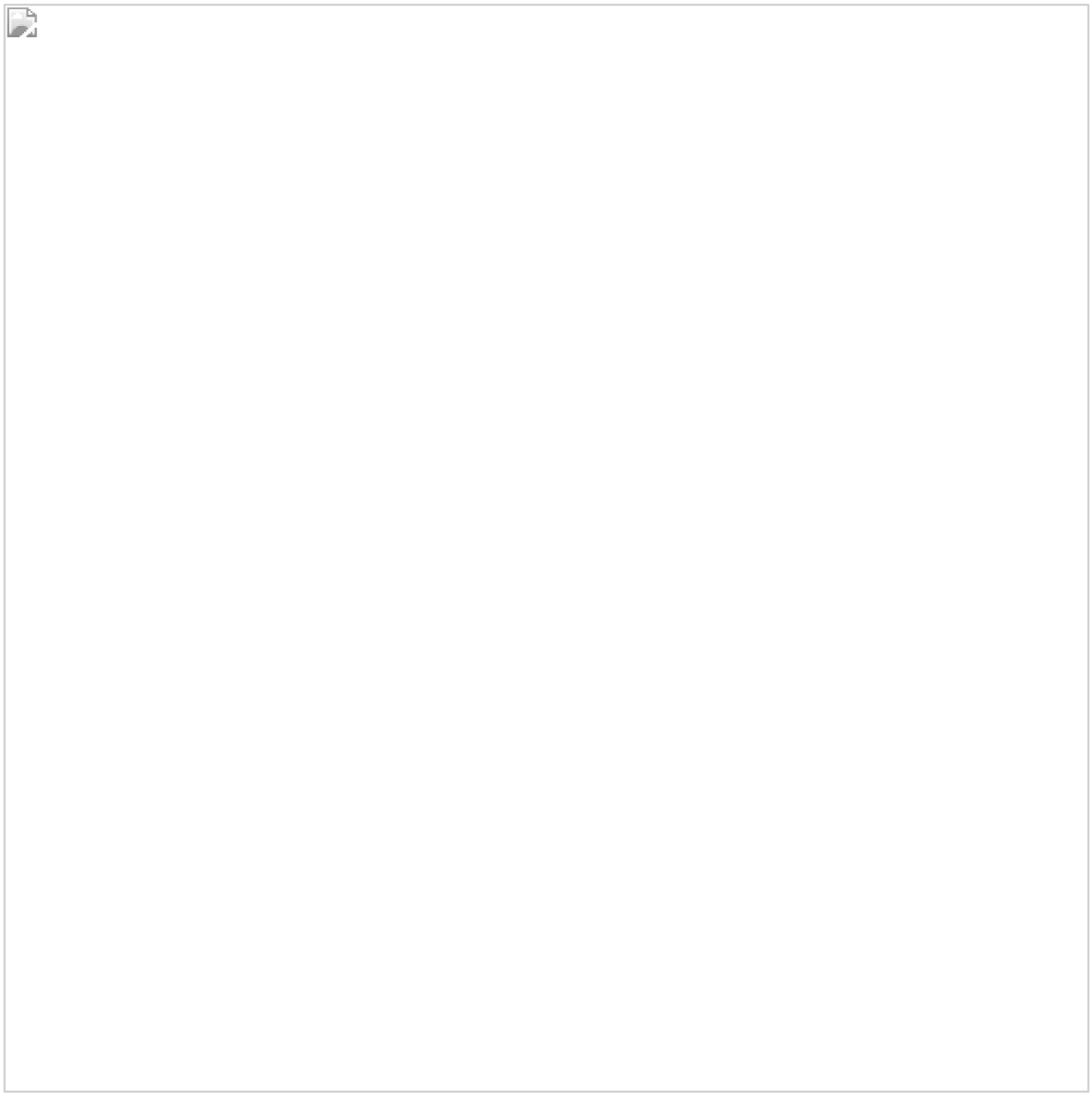


Think about it

1. How did Momotaro get into the castle?

- ○ Over the wall
- ○ Through the front gate
- ○ Through a little back door

The Battle



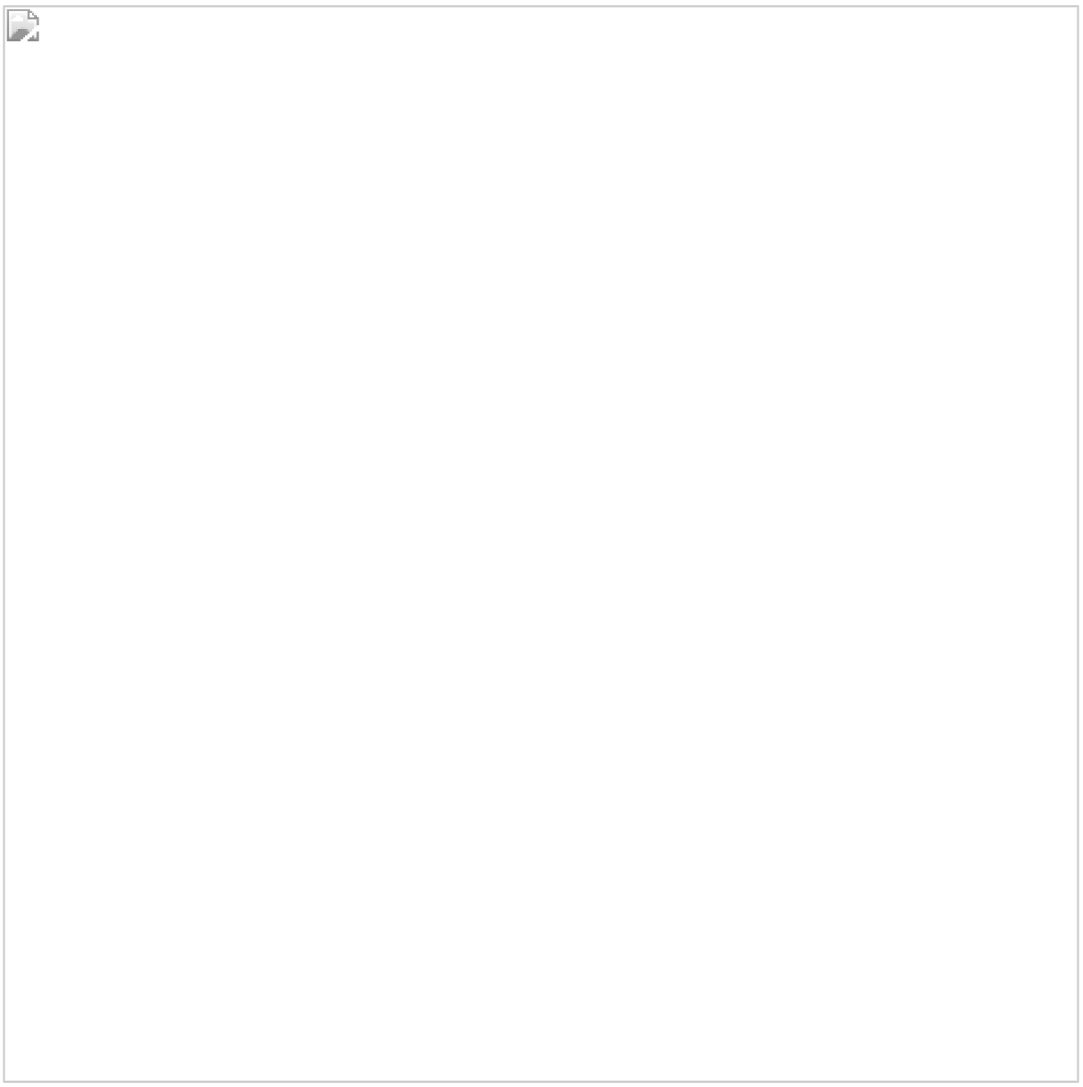
Momotaro, the dog and the monkey rushed in at the back. The pheasant, still fighting on the roof, saw them come.

The devils could not stand against them. They had thought they fought a single bird. Now four enemies fought like a hundred. In the end the devils were beaten, and only their chief was left.

The chief threw down his iron bar and knelt at Momotaro's feet. He broke off the horns on his head to show he gave up. "I am afraid of you," he said. "I will give you all the treasure hidden in this castle if you will spare my life!"

TALK ABOUT IT

The devils had hurt many people. Was it right to stop them? What do you think?

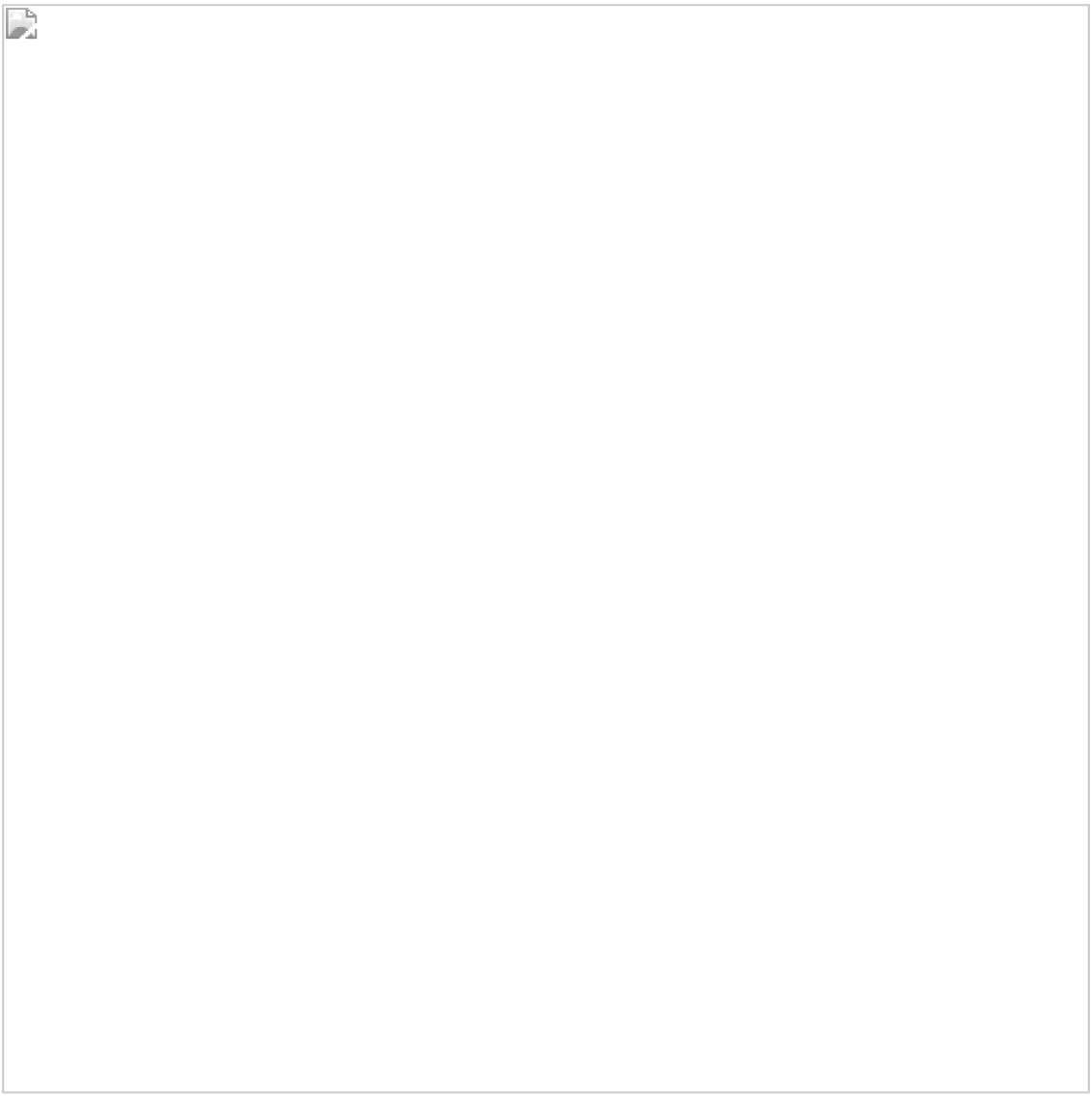


Think about it

1. What did the devil chief break off?

- ○ His iron bar
- ○ The horns on his head
- ○ A castle gate

Home in Triumph



“I cannot spare your wicked life, however much you beg,” answered Momotaro, for the chief had robbed and hurt people for years. He tied him up and gave him into the monkey’s charge.

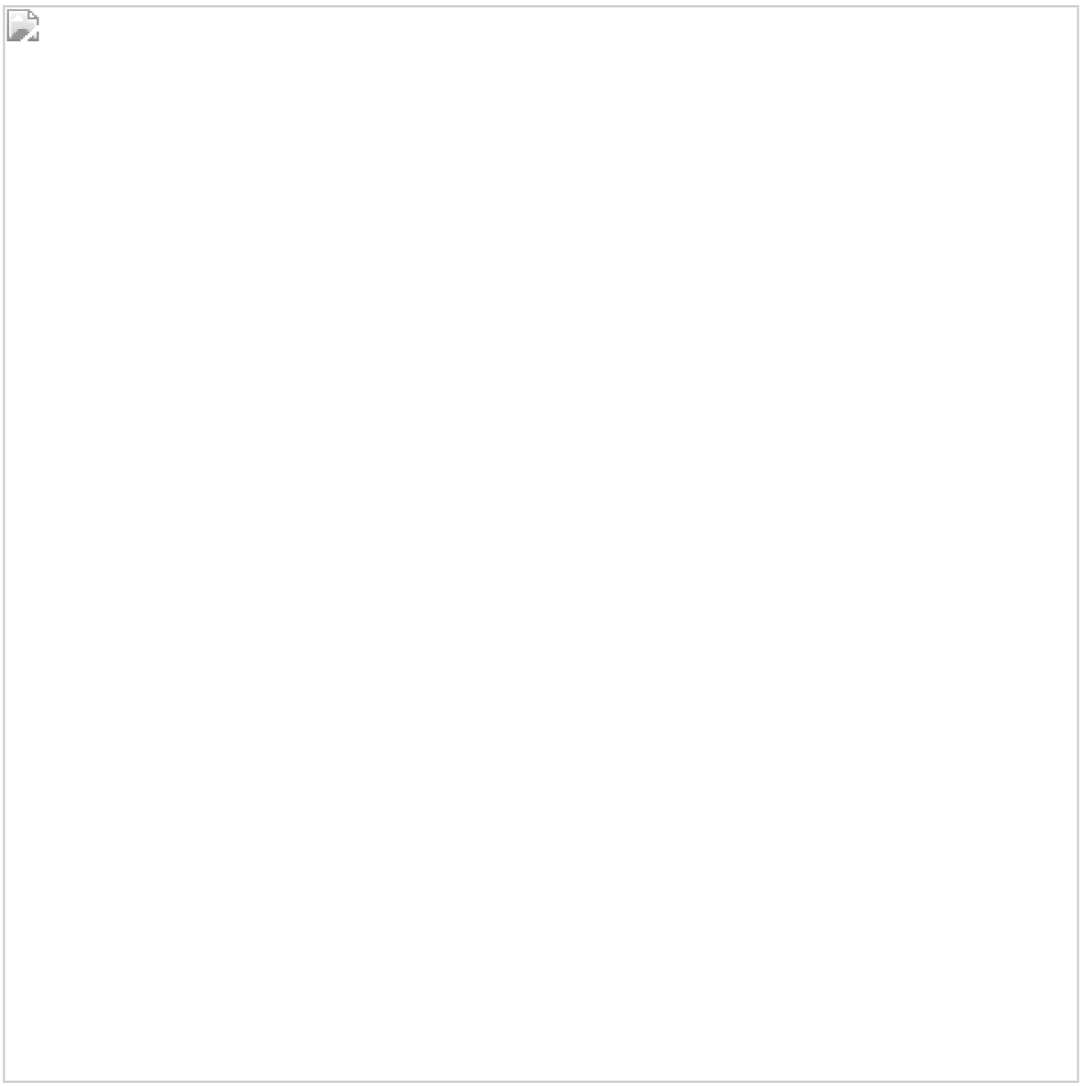
Then Momotaro went through the castle, set the prisoners free and gathered up the treasure. The two ladies and all the captives went safely home.

The dog and the pheasant carried the plunder, and Momotaro went home with the devil chief as a captive. The whole country made a hero of him. The old couple’s joy was greater than ever, and the treasure let them live in peace and plenty to the end of their days.

TALK ABOUT IT

Momotaro did not keep the treasure for himself. Where do you think it all went?

Home in Triumph · another picture



Think about it

1. Who went home with Momotaro?

- ○ The devil chief, as a captive
- ○ Nobody
- ○ The Demon King's tiger

2. Which of Momotaro's helpers would you want beside you? Why?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

Free to read, color, and print in the Book Library

Made with love by Love is a Habit