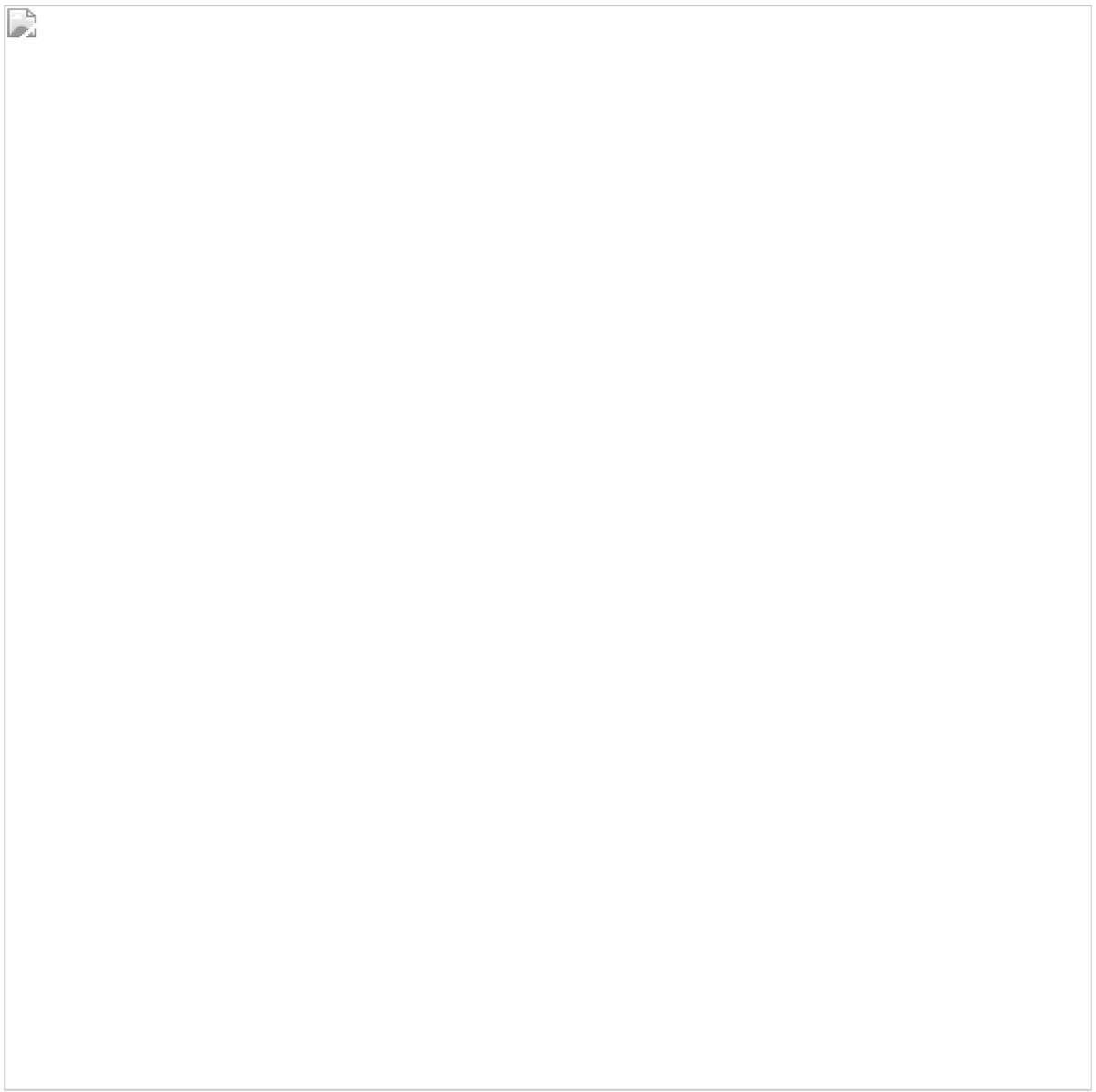
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Muchie Lal

A Tale from India



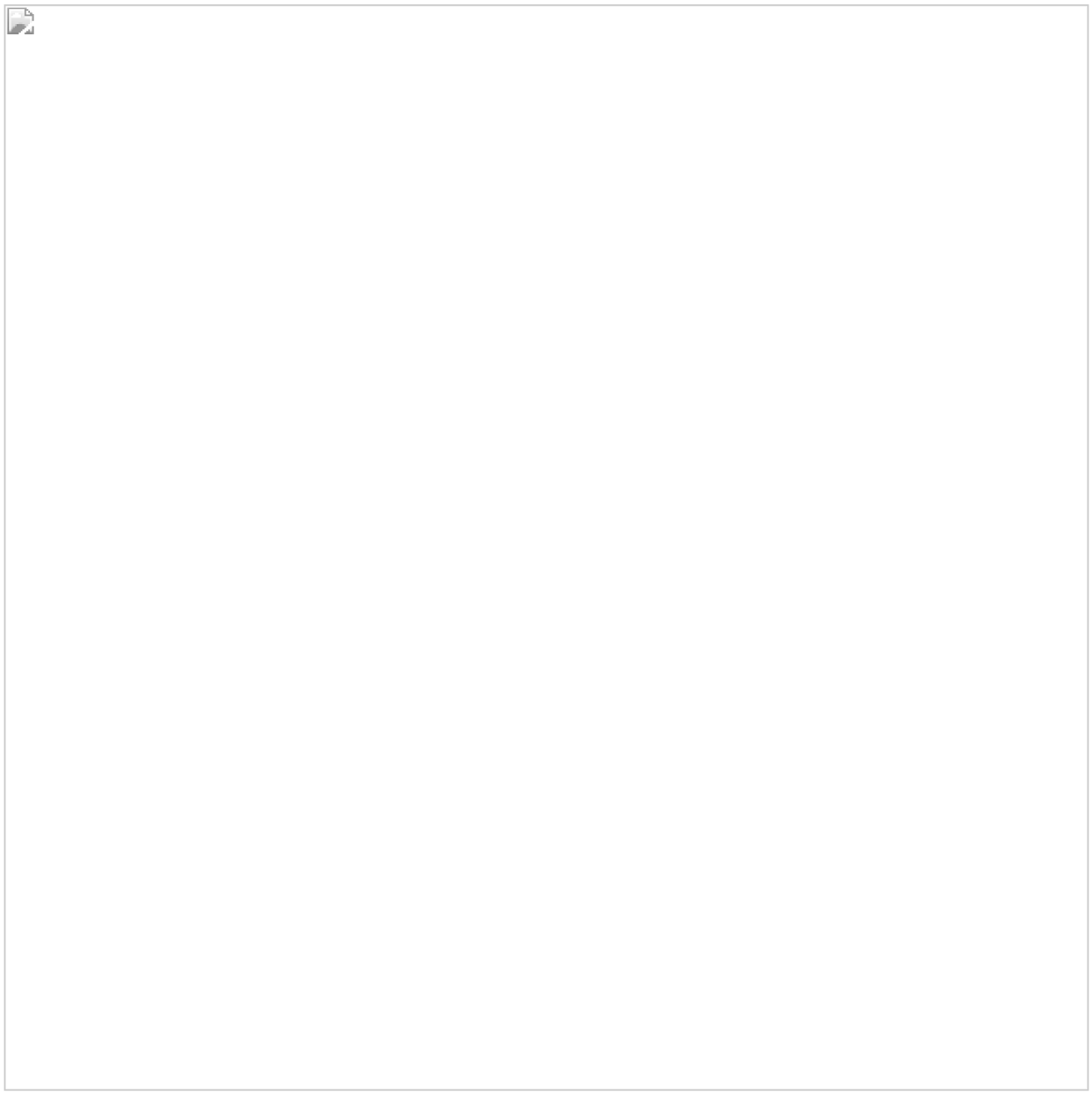
In a palace in India, a Rajah and a Ranee had everything they could wish for but one. They had no children, and they wished and prayed for a son.

TALK ABOUT IT

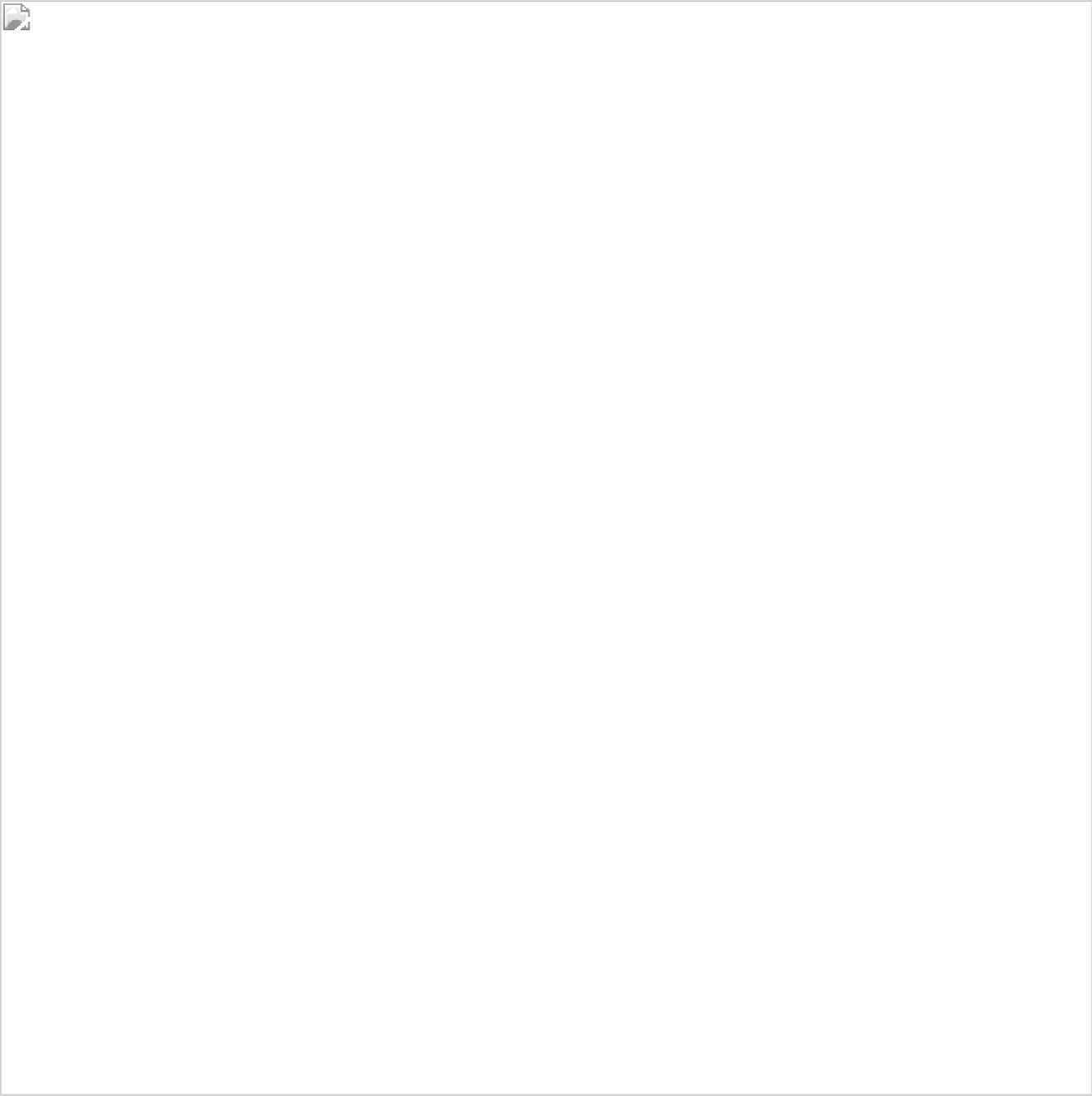
The Rajah and Ranee wished for a child more than anything. What is something you have wished for very much?

This book belongs to _____

Muchie Lal · another picture



The Little Fish

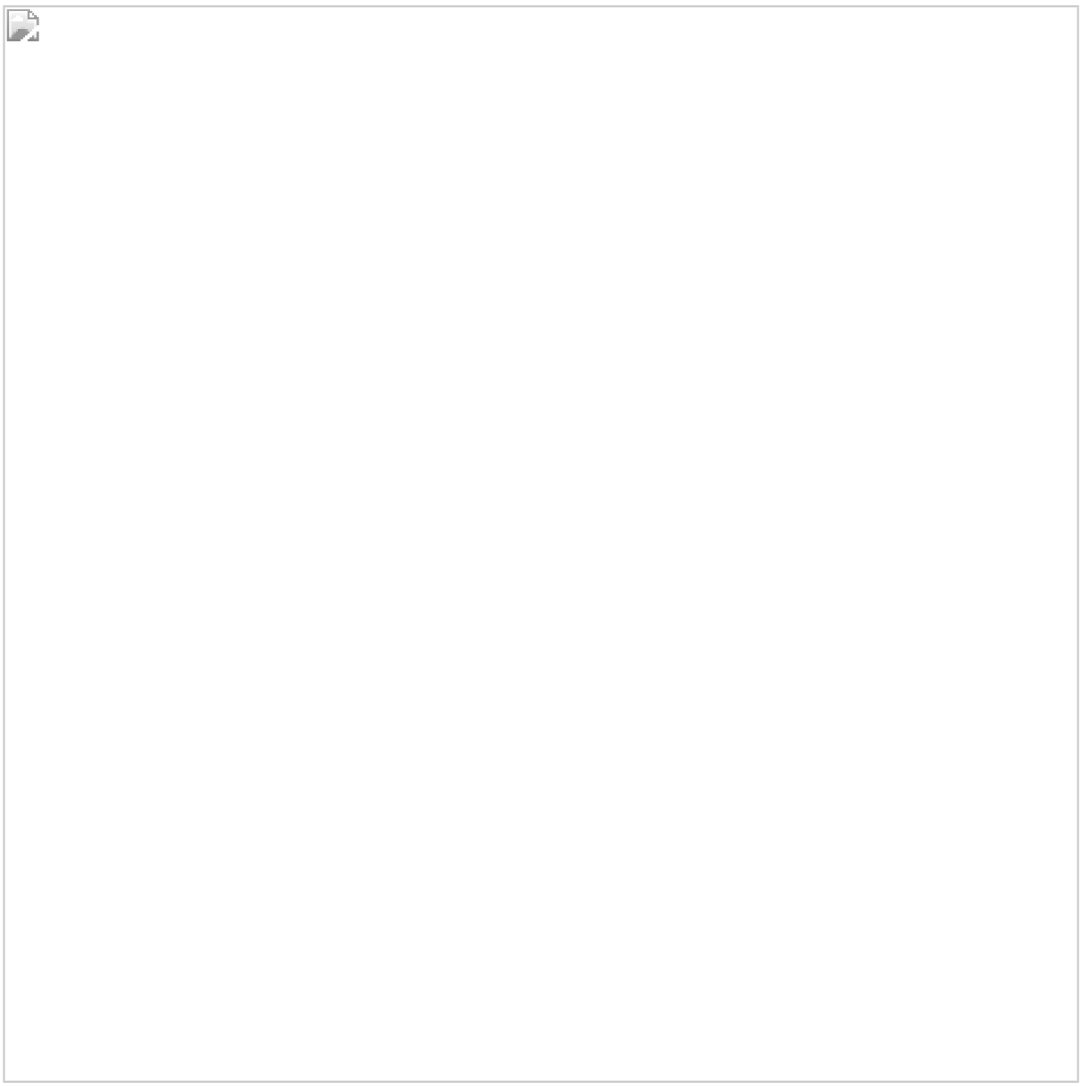


One day some fish were brought to the palace kitchen to be cooked. All were dead but one little fish. A maid-servant saw it and put it in a basin of water.

The Ranee thought the little fish was very pretty, and she kept it as a pet. She loved it as a son, and the people called it Muchie Rajah, the Fish Prince.

TALK ABOUT IT

The maid saved the little fish when no one told her to. Why do you think she did?

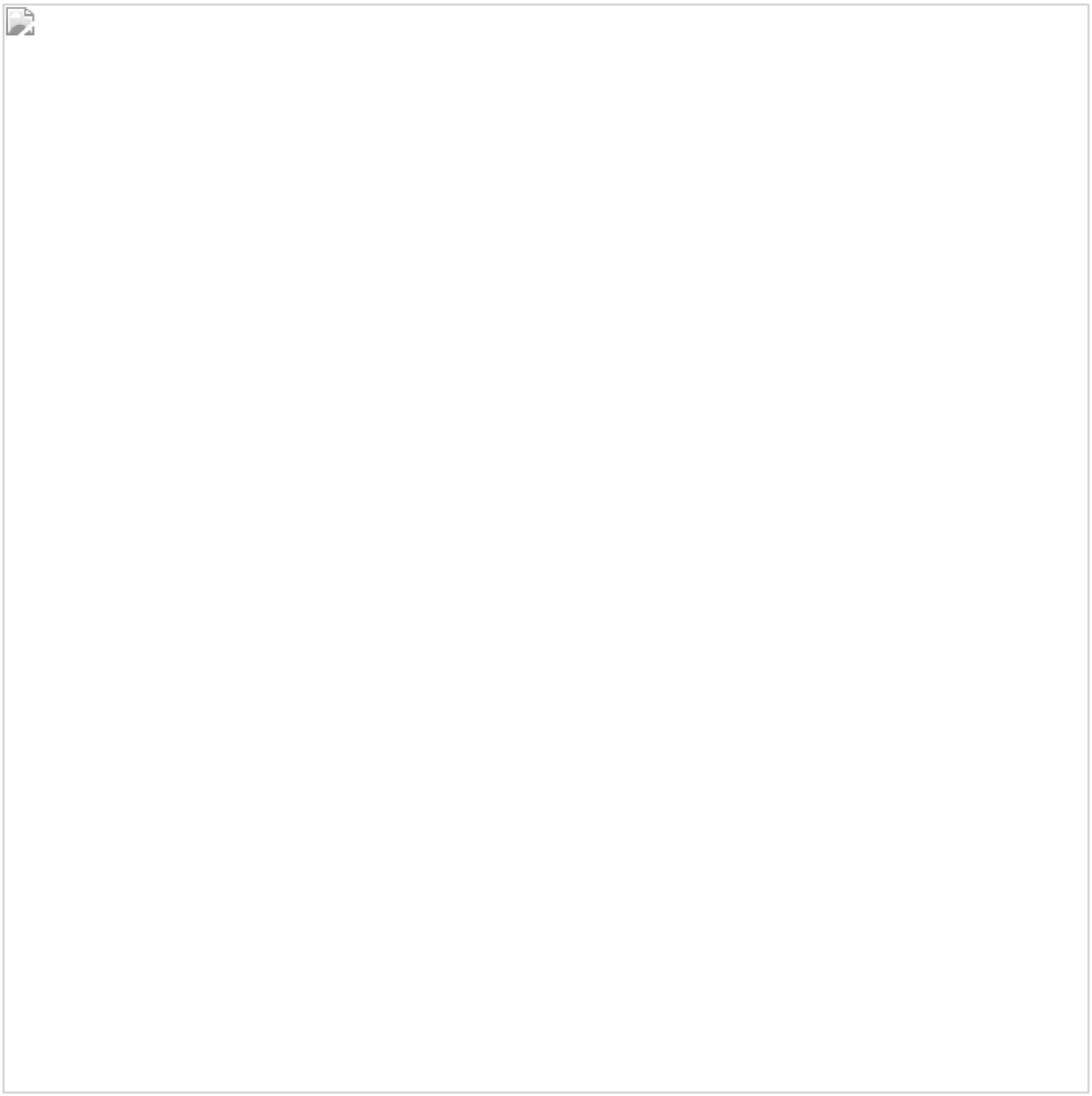


Think about it

1. What did the Ranee do with the little fish?

- ○ She cooked it for dinner
- ○ She kept it as a pet and loved it like a son
- ○ She sent it back to the river

A Fish Too Big for the Tub



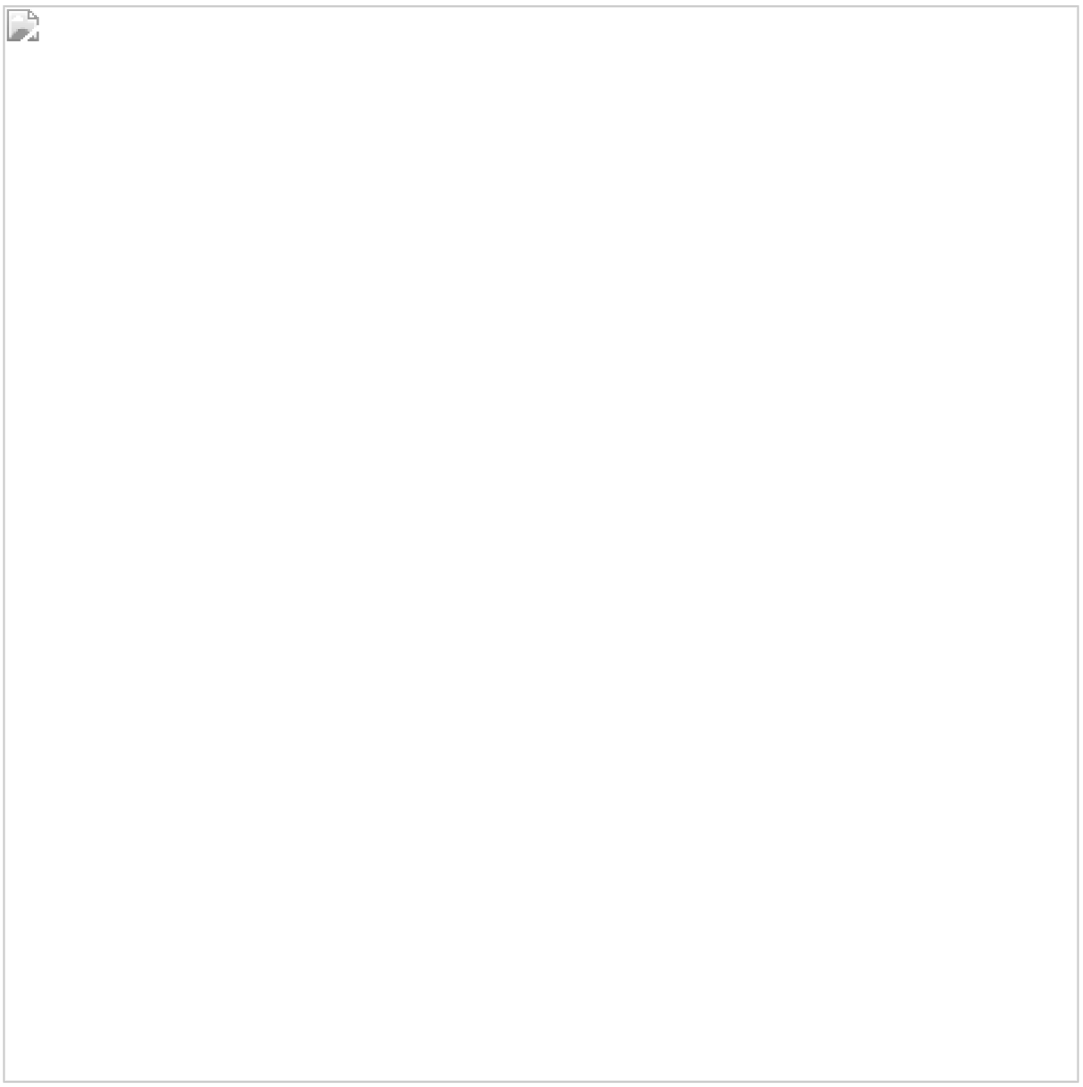
The fish grew and grew. First he needed a bigger basin, then a big tub, and then the Ranee had a whole tank made for him. Twice a day she fed him boiled rice.

But Muchie Rajah was not only a fish. He was really a young Rajah who had made the gods angry, and they had turned him into a fish.

One morning he called out, “Queen Mother, Queen Mother, I am so lonely here all by myself! Cannot you get me a wife?”

TALK ABOUT IT

Even with a palace tank and a Queen Mother, the Fish Prince was lonely. Why do you think that is?

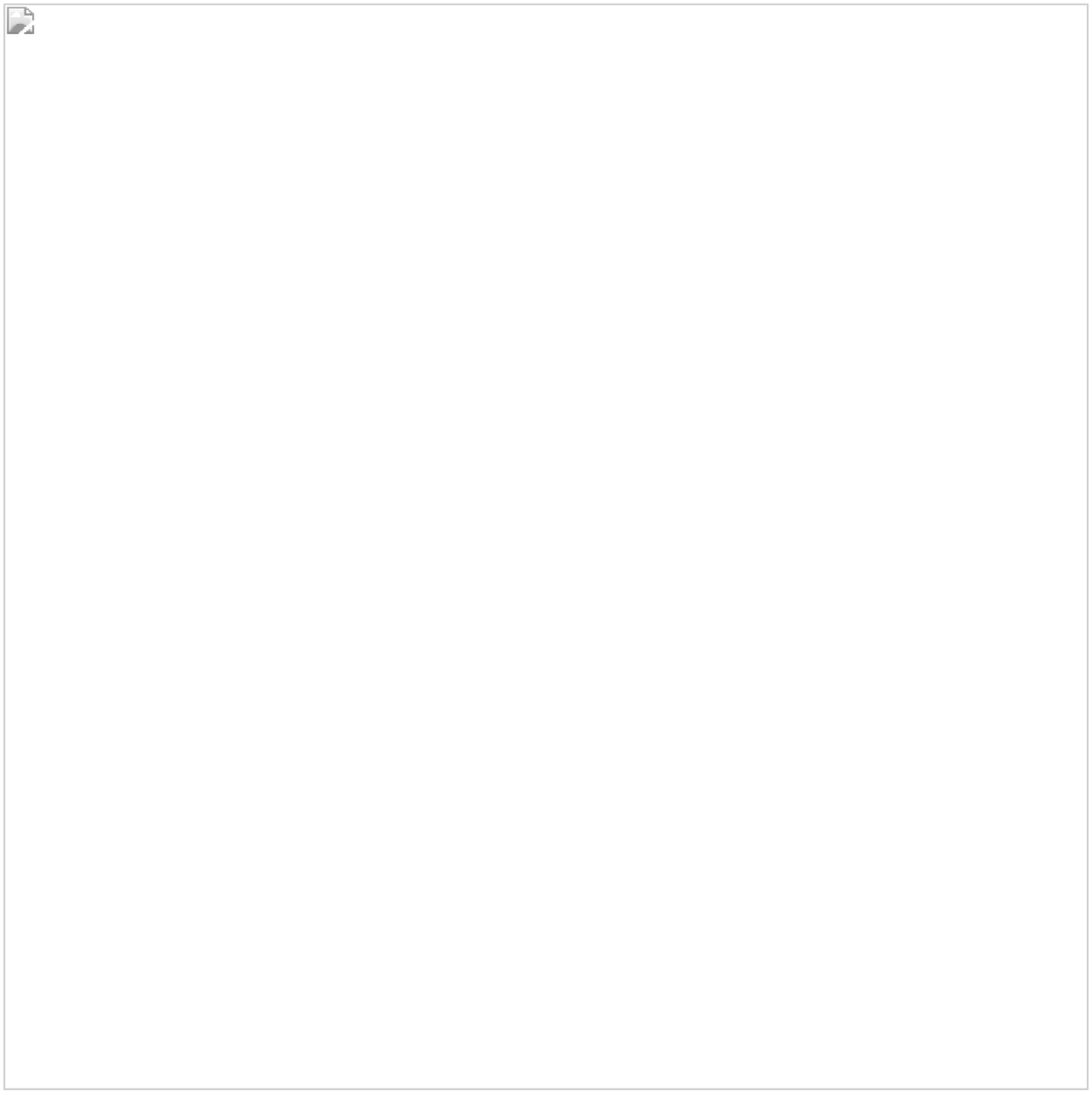


Think about it

1. What did Muchie Rajah ask the Ranee for?

- ○ A bigger tank
- ○ More rice
- ○ A wife

Nobody Would Say Yes



The Ranee promised to try, and she sent messengers to every family she knew.

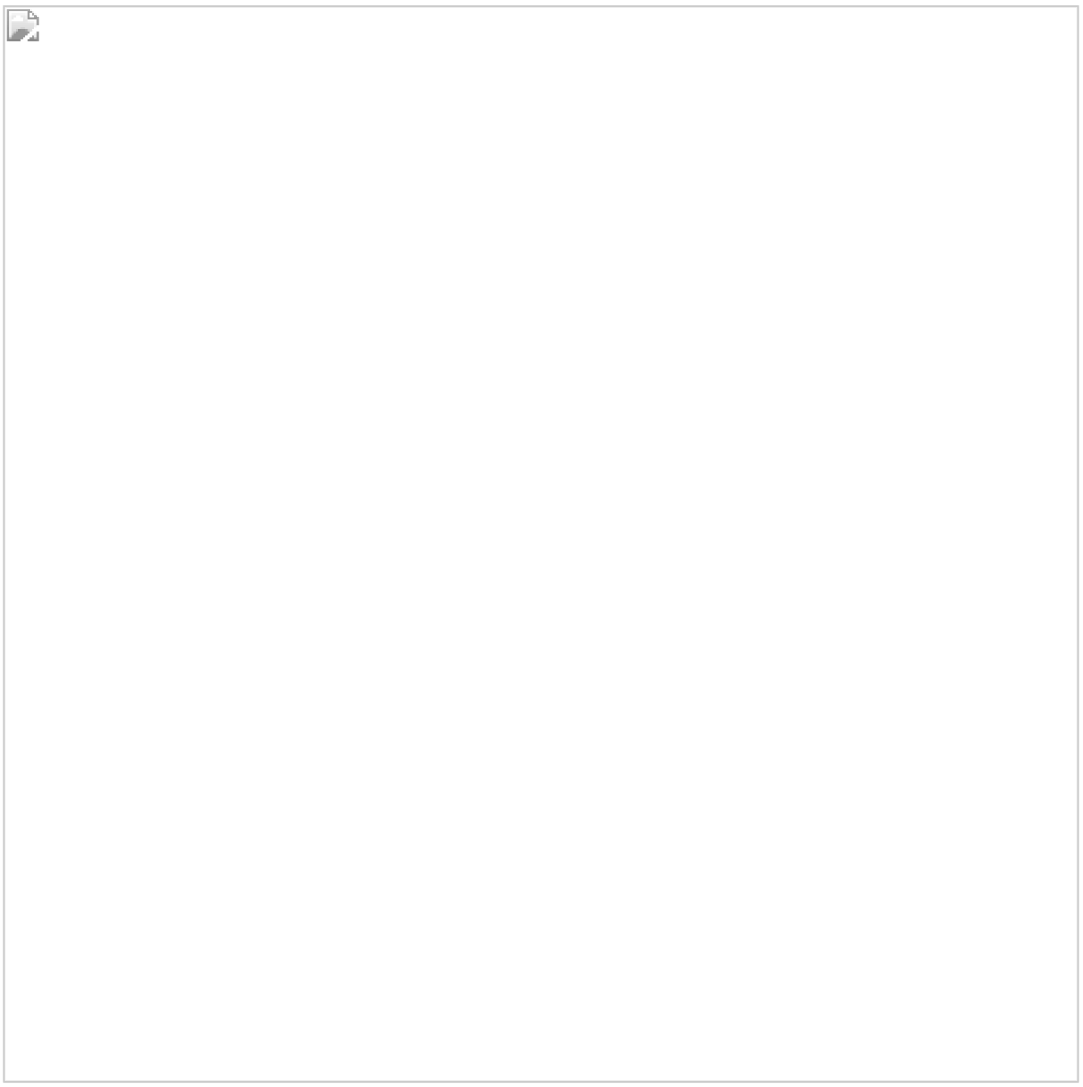
But nobody wanted to give a dear little daughter to a great fish. They were afraid he would eat her up.

So the Ranee sent the messengers out again, this time with a big bag of gold. Even then, for a long time, no one would say yes.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Ranee would do almost anything for her fish. What is something you would do for someone you love?

Nobody Would Say Yes · another picture

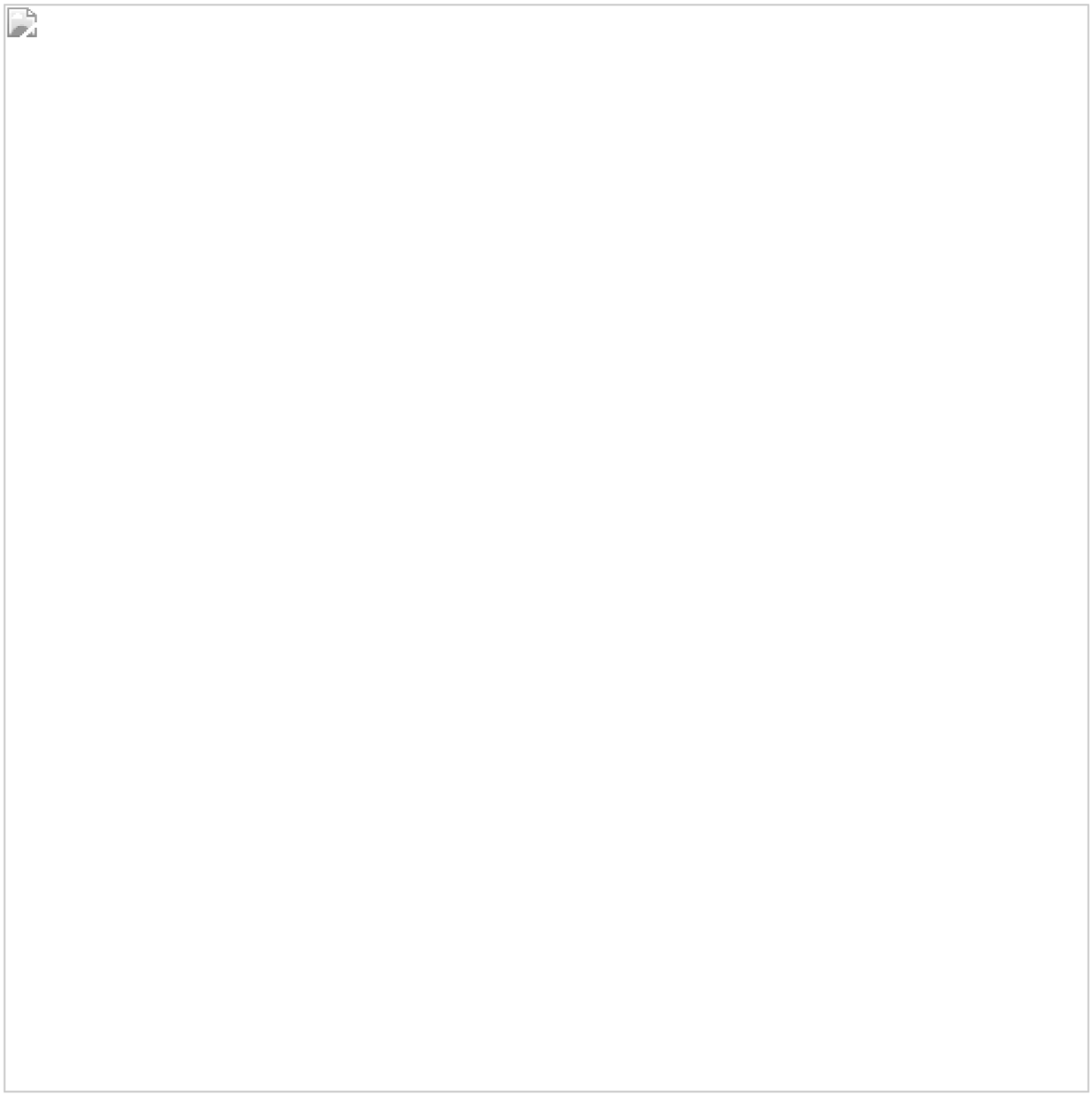


Think about it

1. Why would nobody let their daughter marry the Fish Prince?

- ○ They did not like the Ranee
- ○ They were afraid the big fish would eat her
- ○ They were too busy

The Girl by the River



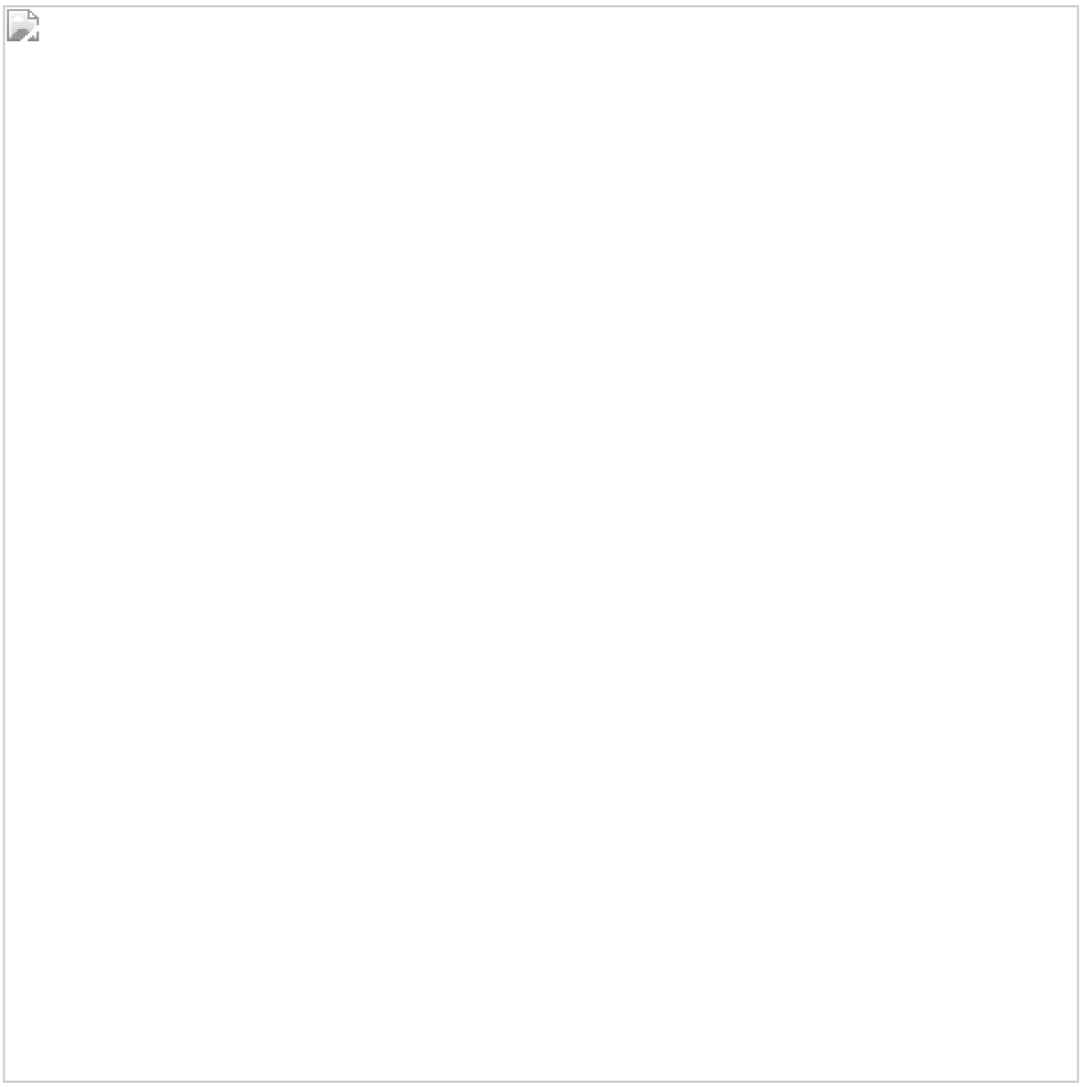
At last the messengers came to a village where a Fakeer lived, a poor holy man. He had a daughter of his own whose mother had died, and his new wife had a daughter too.

The new wife was not kind to the first daughter. She gave her the hardest work and the least food. While the Fakeer was away, she took the bag of gold and sent the girl off with the messengers.

The girl went down to the river to wash her saree, crying as she knelt there. Some of her tears fell into the hole of an old Seven-headed Cobra.

TALK ABOUT IT

The girl was frightened and all alone. Who do you think might help her?

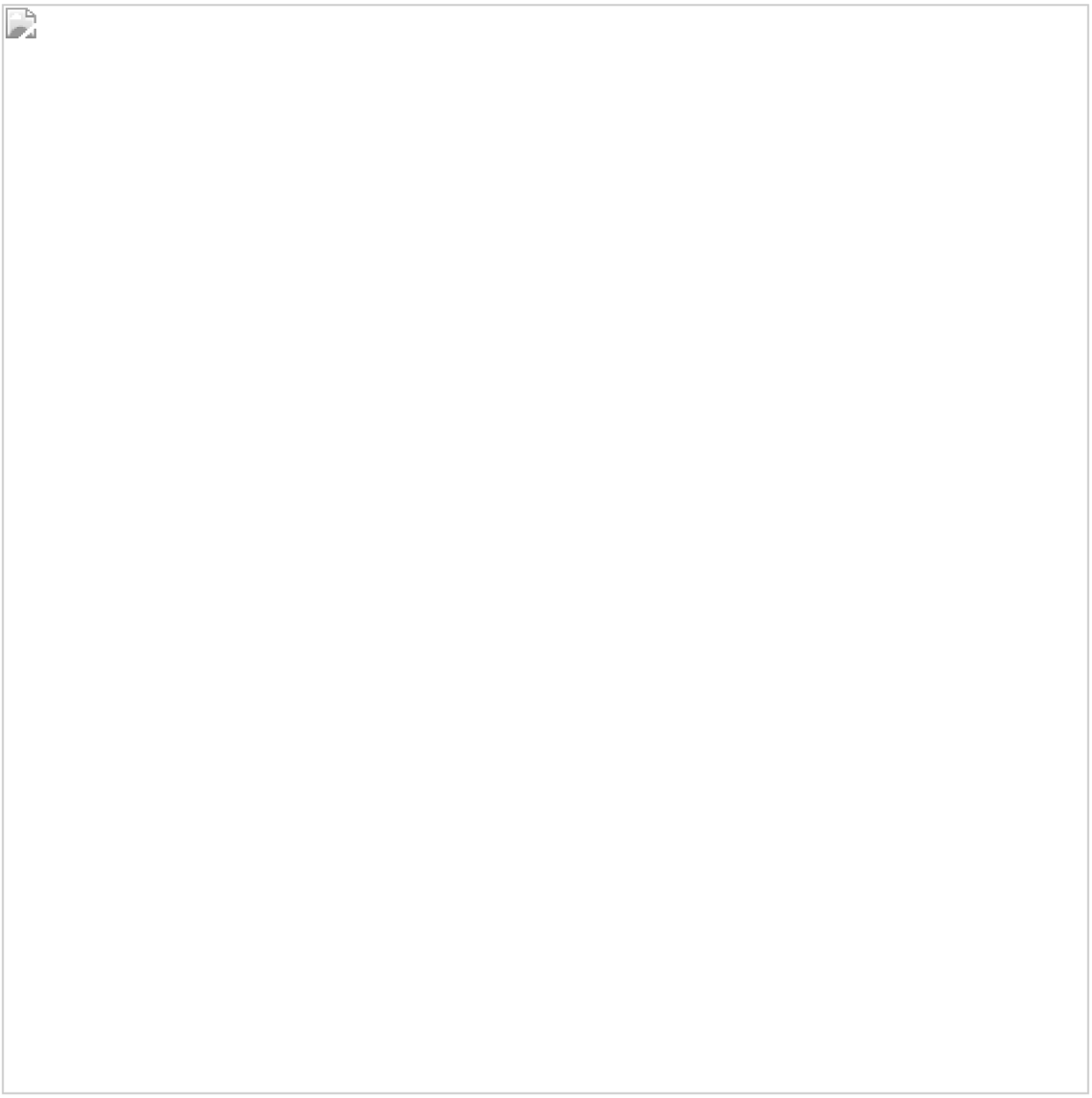


Think about it

1. What fell into the Cobra's hole?

- ○ A stone
- ○ Some of the girl's tears
- ○ Her saree

Three Little Stones



The Cobra was very wise. He put out his head and said, “Little girl, why do you cry?”

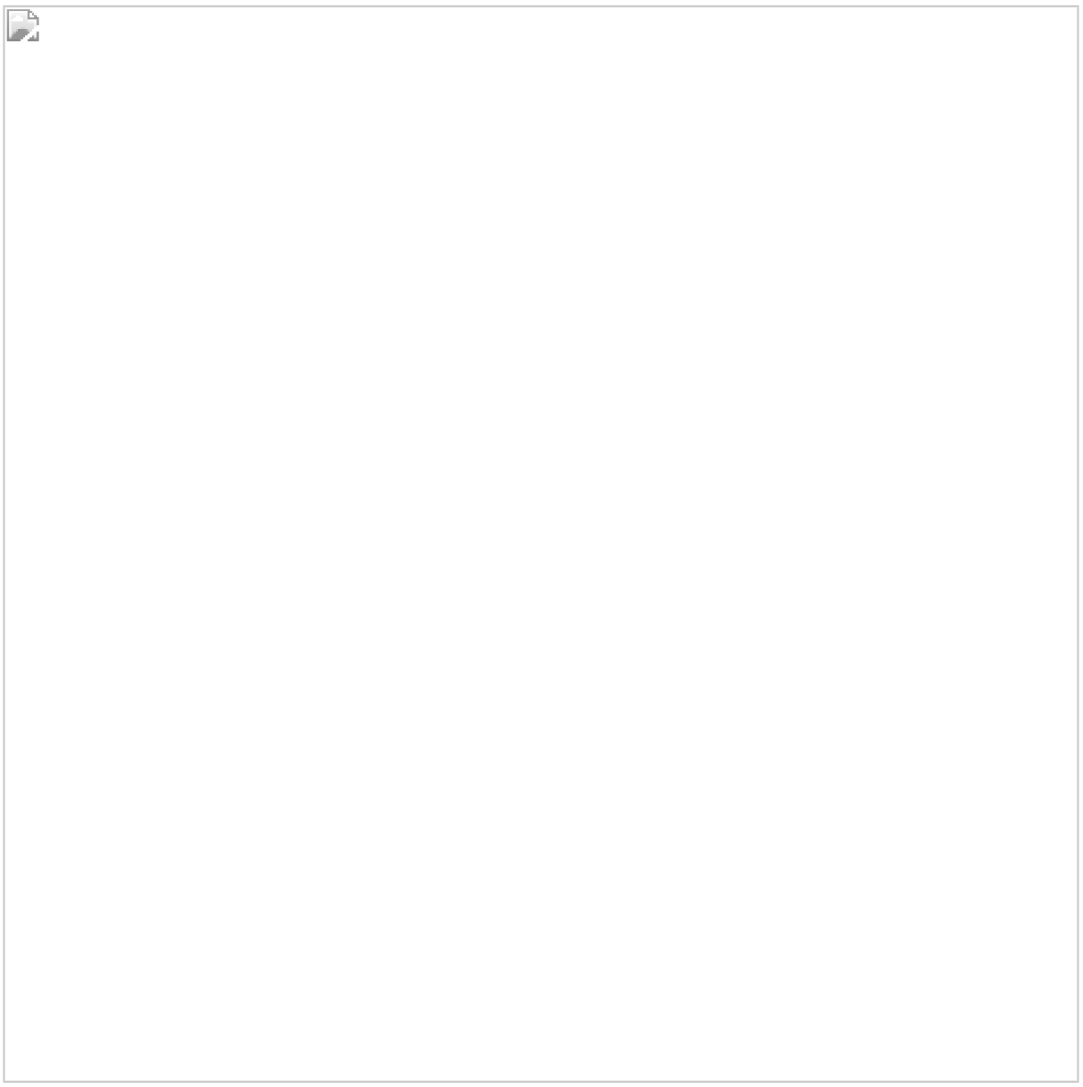
She told him everything. “Do not be afraid, my daughter,” said the Cobra. He gave her three little round pebbles and told her to tie them in the corner of her saree.

“The Muchie Rajah, whose wife you are to be, is not really a fish, but a Rajah who has been enchanted.” He told her what to do with the stones, and she promised to do just as he said.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Cobra stopped to ask a crying girl what was wrong. Who is someone you could stop and ask that way?

Three Little Stones · another picture

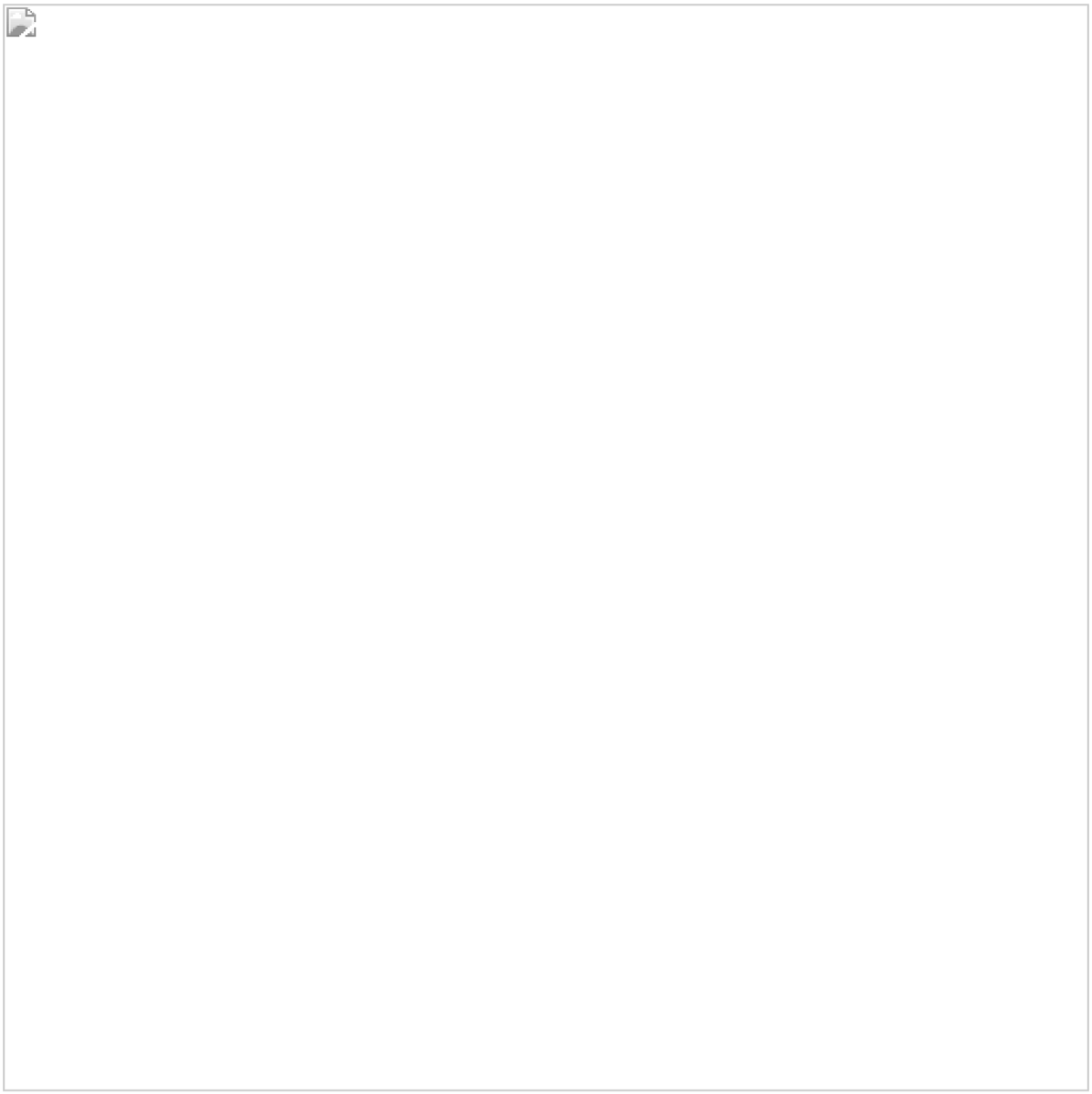


Think about it

1. What did the Cobra give the girl?

- ○ Three little round pebbles
- ○ A bag of gold
- ○ A silver bell

The Little Room by the Water



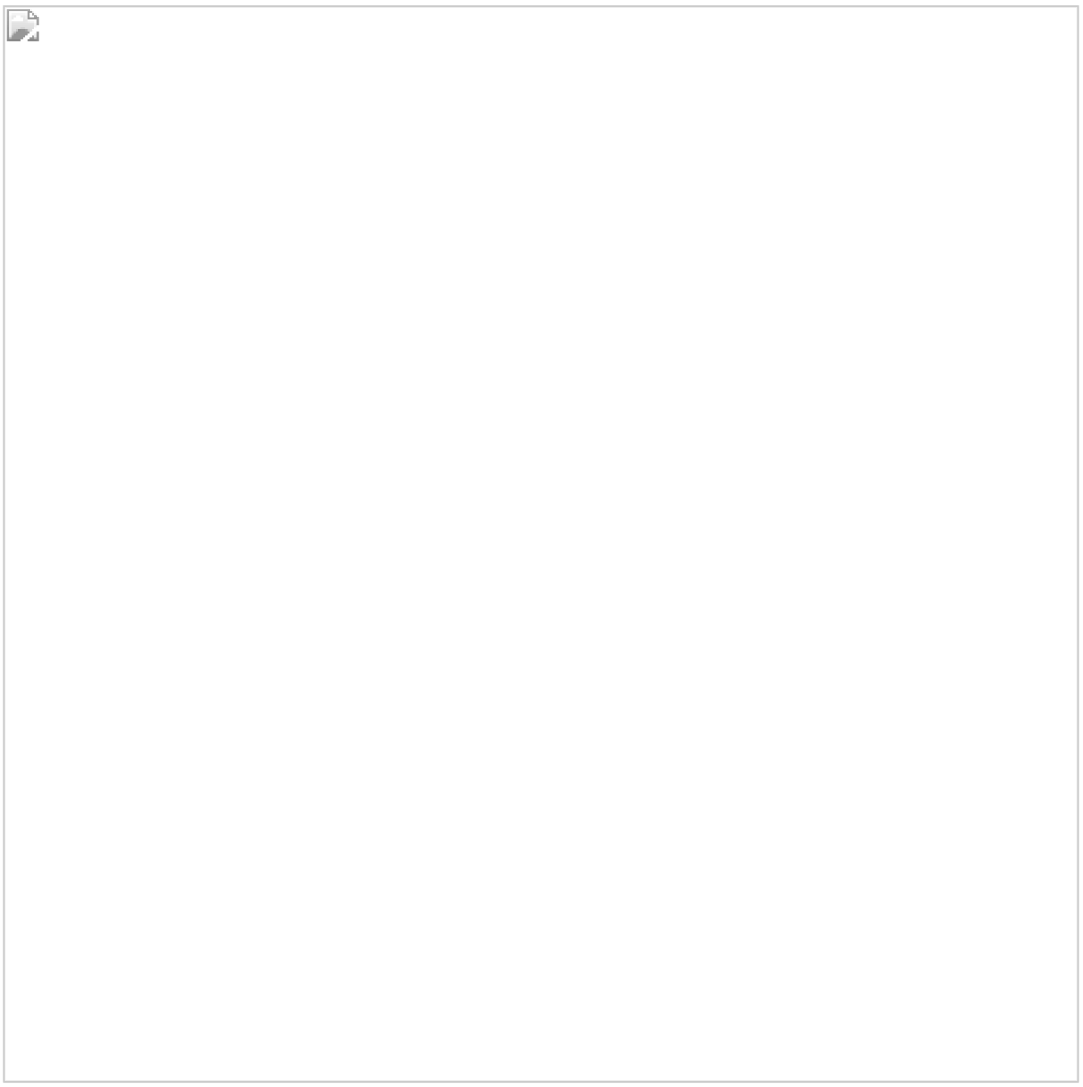
At the palace the Ranee spoke kindly to the girl and said, “This is a dear little girl.” The girl was let down the side of the tank in a basket to a pretty little room by the water.

She waited, wide awake. Soon she heard a rushing sound, and little waves came dashing up to the door, and then a great fish's head came up out of the water.

She threw the first stone, and the fish sank down. He came again, and she threw the second stone, and he sank again.

TALK ABOUT IT

The girl was scared, but she did what the Cobra said. What helps you to be brave when you are scared?

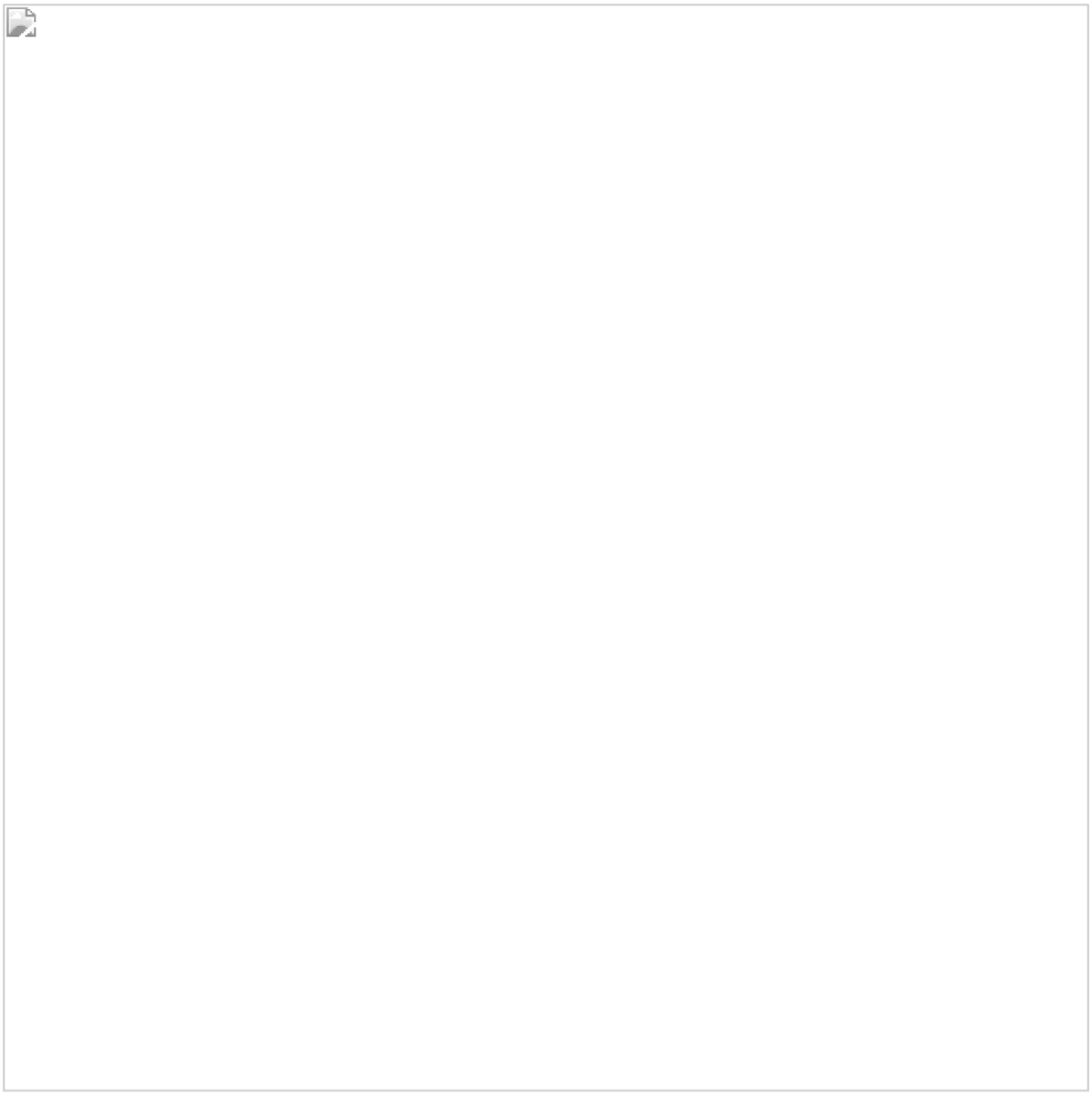


Think about it

1. What did the girl do when the great fish came?

- ○ She screamed and ran
- ○ She threw a stone, just as the Cobra said
- ○ She fell asleep

The Fish Becomes a Prince



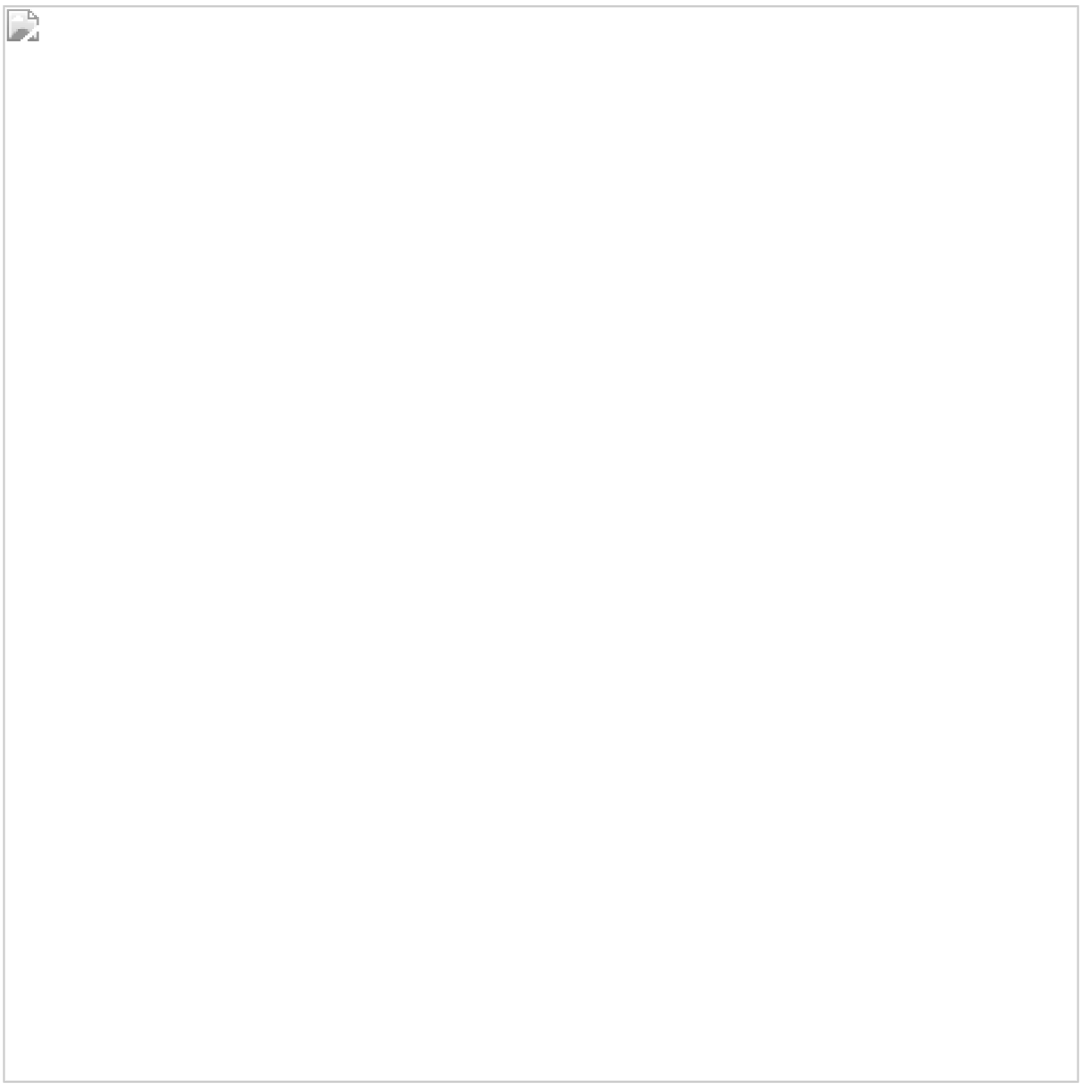
A third time the fish came, more fiercely than before. The girl threw the third stone with all her strength.

No sooner did it touch him than the spell was broken. There, instead of a fish, stood a handsome young Prince!

The girl was so startled that she began to cry. But the Prince said, “Pretty maiden, do not be frightened. You have rescued me.” He asked her to be the Muchie Ranee, his wife, and she said yes.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Prince said “do not be frightened” to the girl who had been so afraid. Why do you think that mattered?

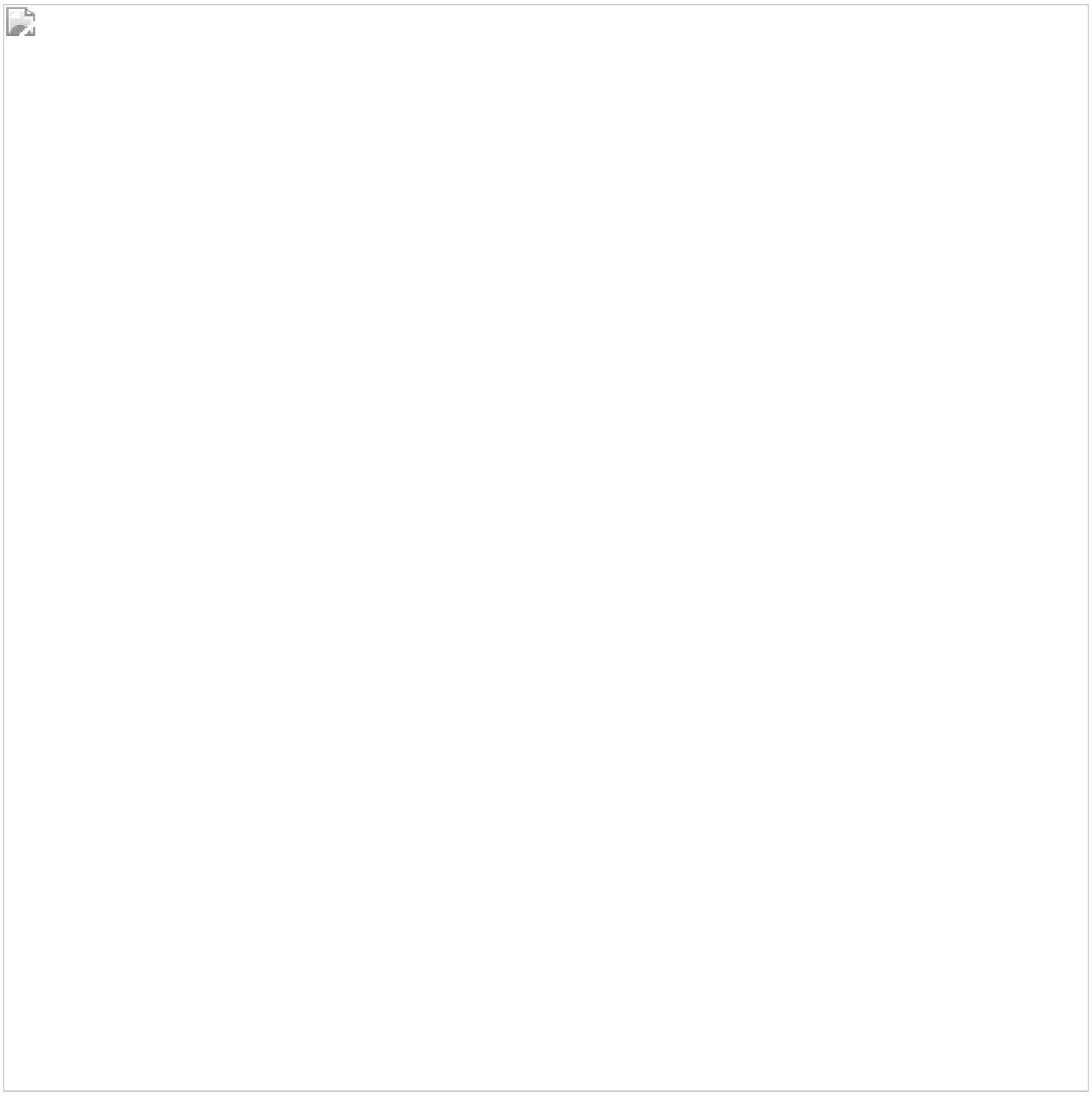


Think about it

1. What happened when the third stone touched the fish?

- ○ He swam away
- ○ The spell broke and he became a Prince
- ○ He sank for good

Joy at the Palace



Next morning, people came to the tank to see whether the fish had eaten his little wife. They looked over the wall, and there stood a handsome Prince beside her!

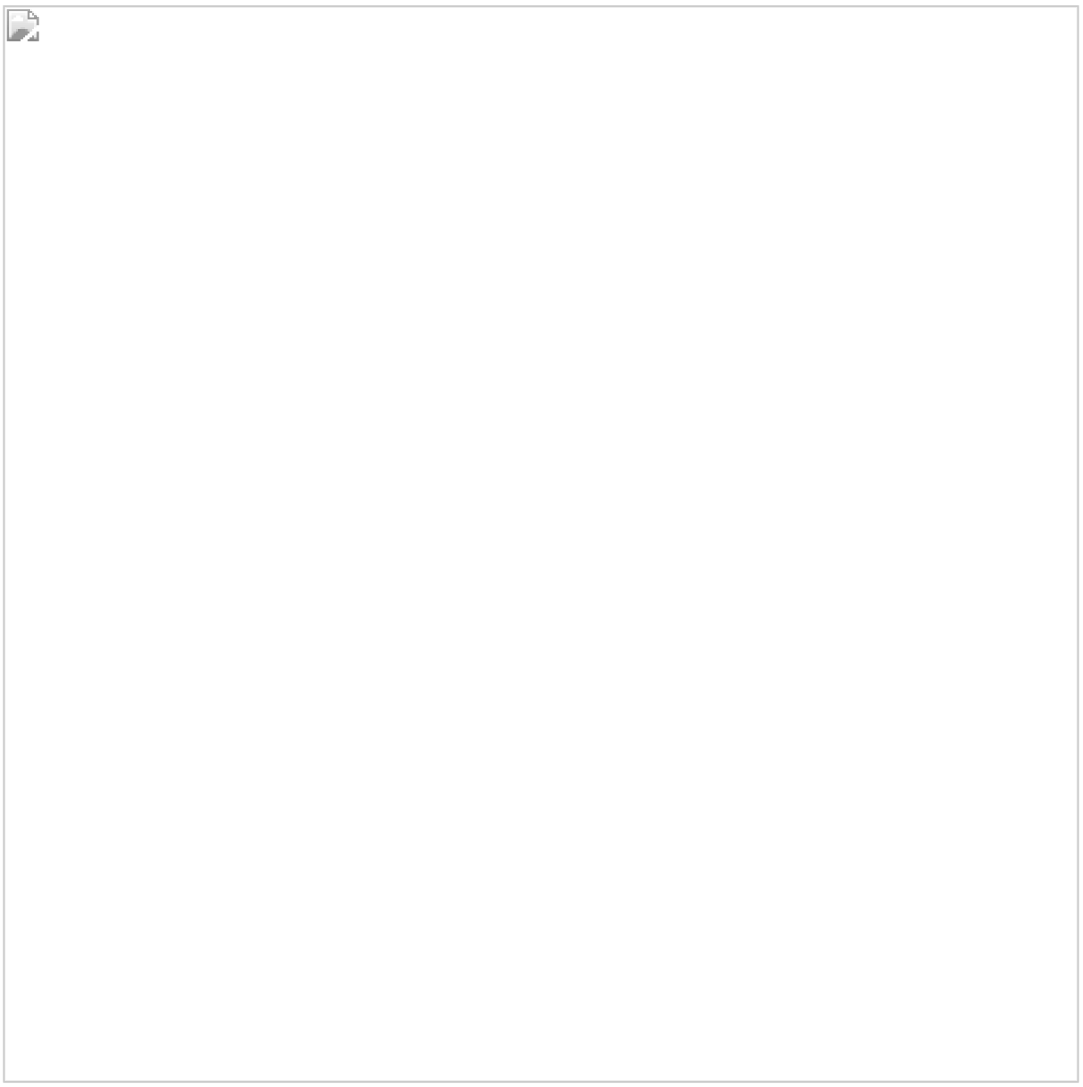
Down came the Rajah, and the Ranee, and everyone in the palace. “So I have indeed found a son at last!” said the Ranee.

The people were so happy that they covered the whole path from the tank to the palace with fine cloth. Then the Prince and the Fakeer's daughter were married.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Ranee found her son at last. How do you think the whole palace felt that morning?

Joy at the Palace · another picture

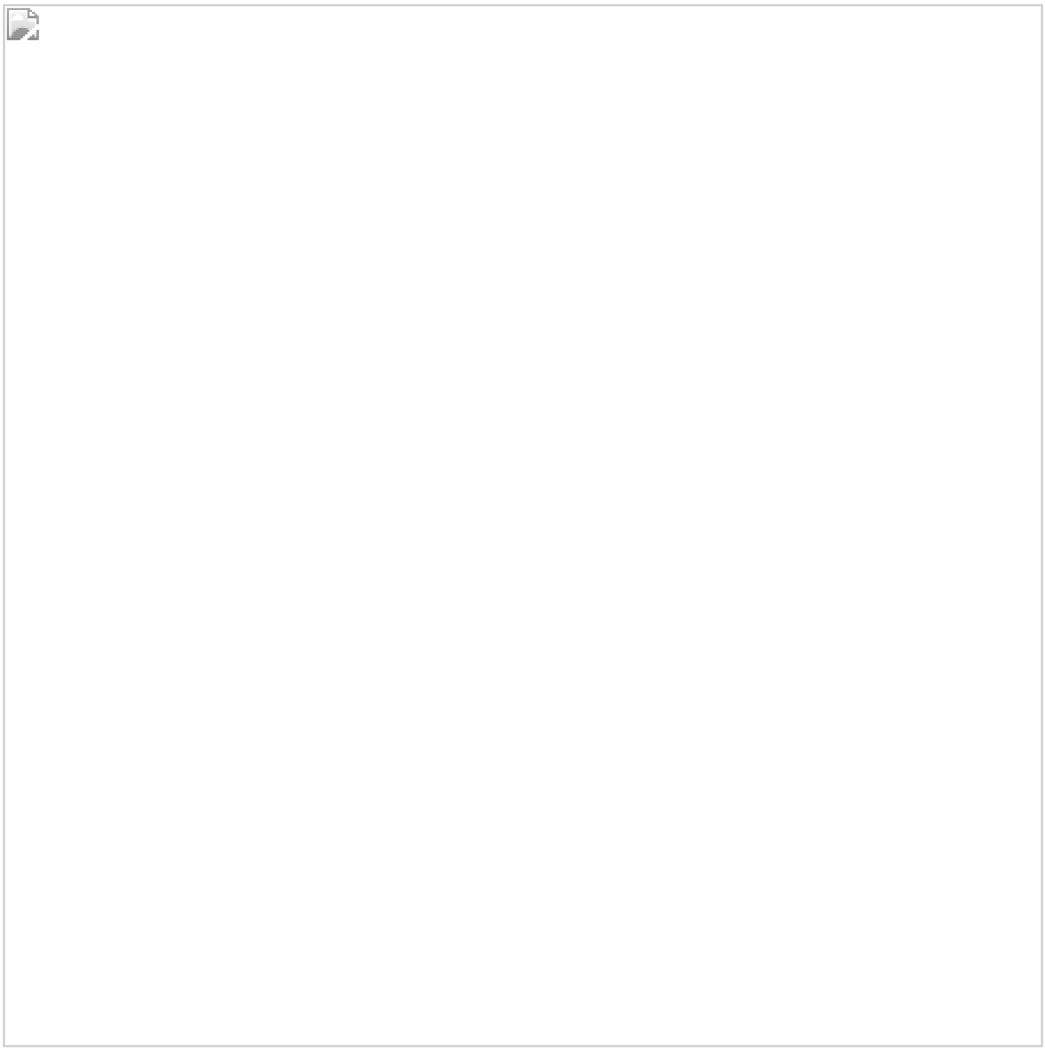


Think about it

1. What did the Ranee say when she saw the Prince?

- ○ “Who are you?”
- ○ “So I have indeed found a son at last!”
- ○ “Where is my fish?”

A Visit Home



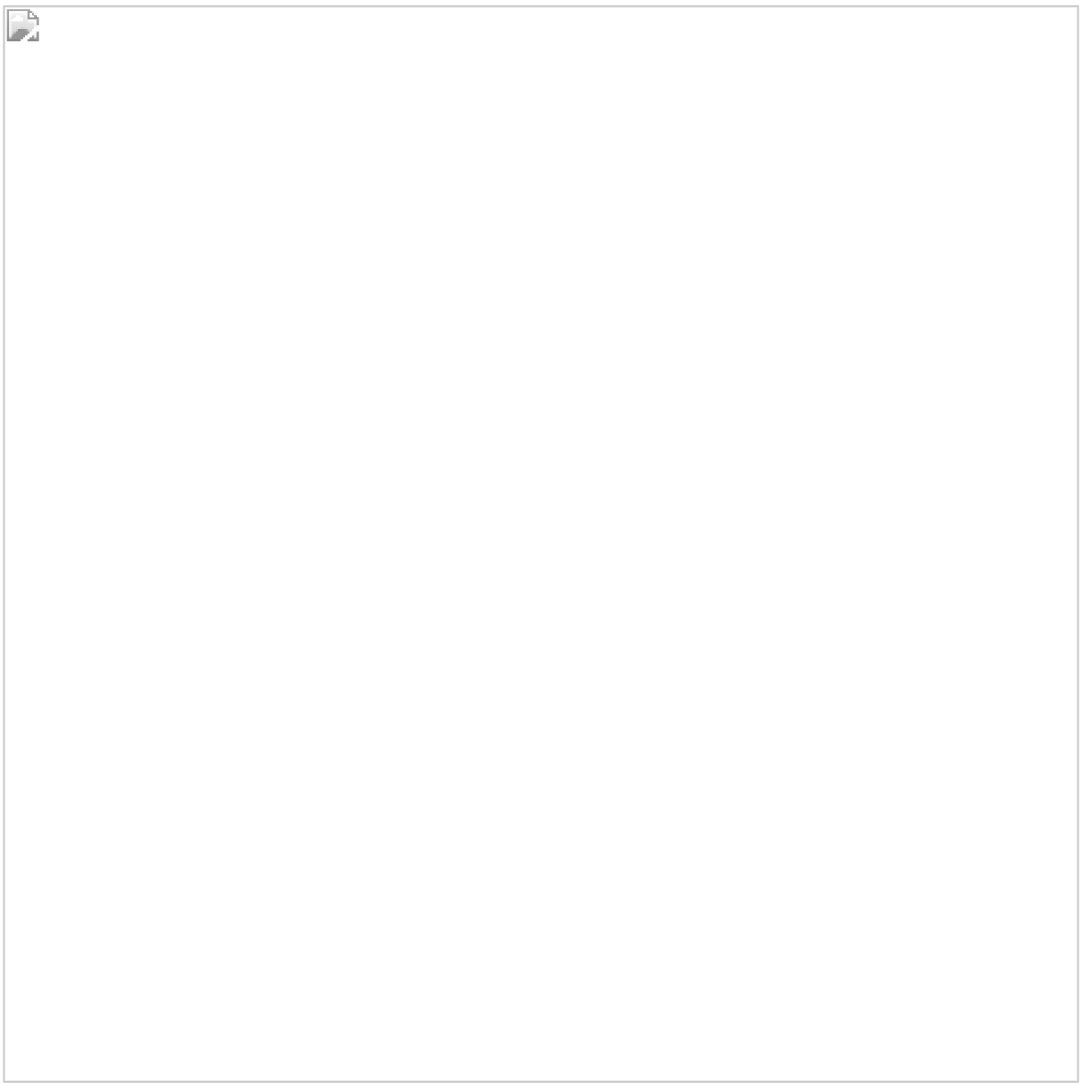
The new Ranee's stepmother came often to the palace and said how glad she was. The Ranee was so good that she quite forgave her for all her unkindness, and always welcomed her.

One day the Ranee said, “It is a weary while since I saw my father.” The Prince said she could go, but not for long. “There can be no happiness for me till you return.”

She went home to her father's village. But the stepmother had not changed her heart. She told her own daughter to push the Ranee into the river and take her place.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Ranee forgave her stepmother. An old book says, “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another” (Ephesians 4:32). Why might forgiving be hard? Why might it be good?

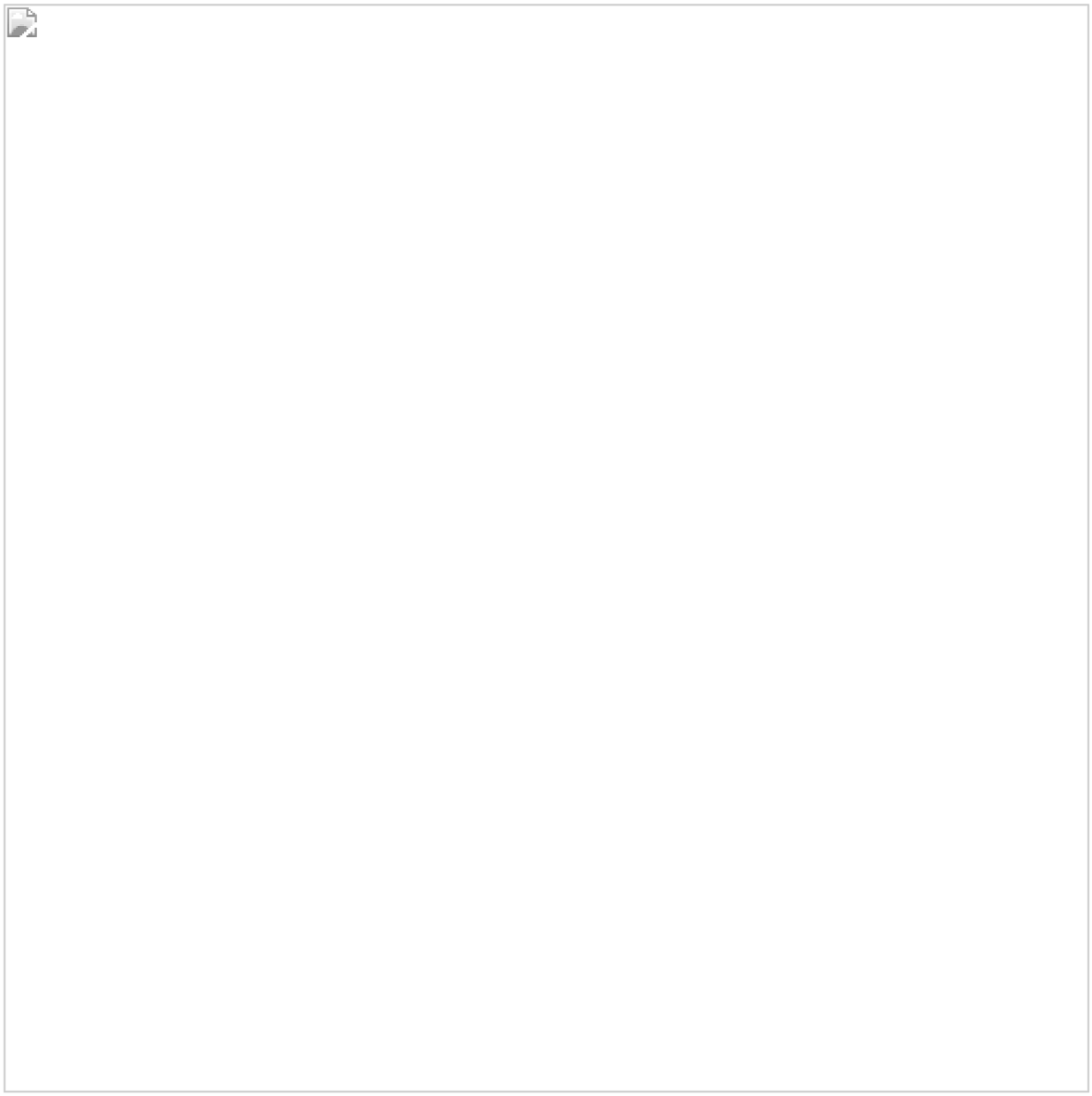


Think about it

1. How did the Ranee treat her stepmother at the palace?

- ○ She sent her away
- ○ She forgave her and welcomed her kindly
- ○ She would not speak to her

The Cobra Comes Again



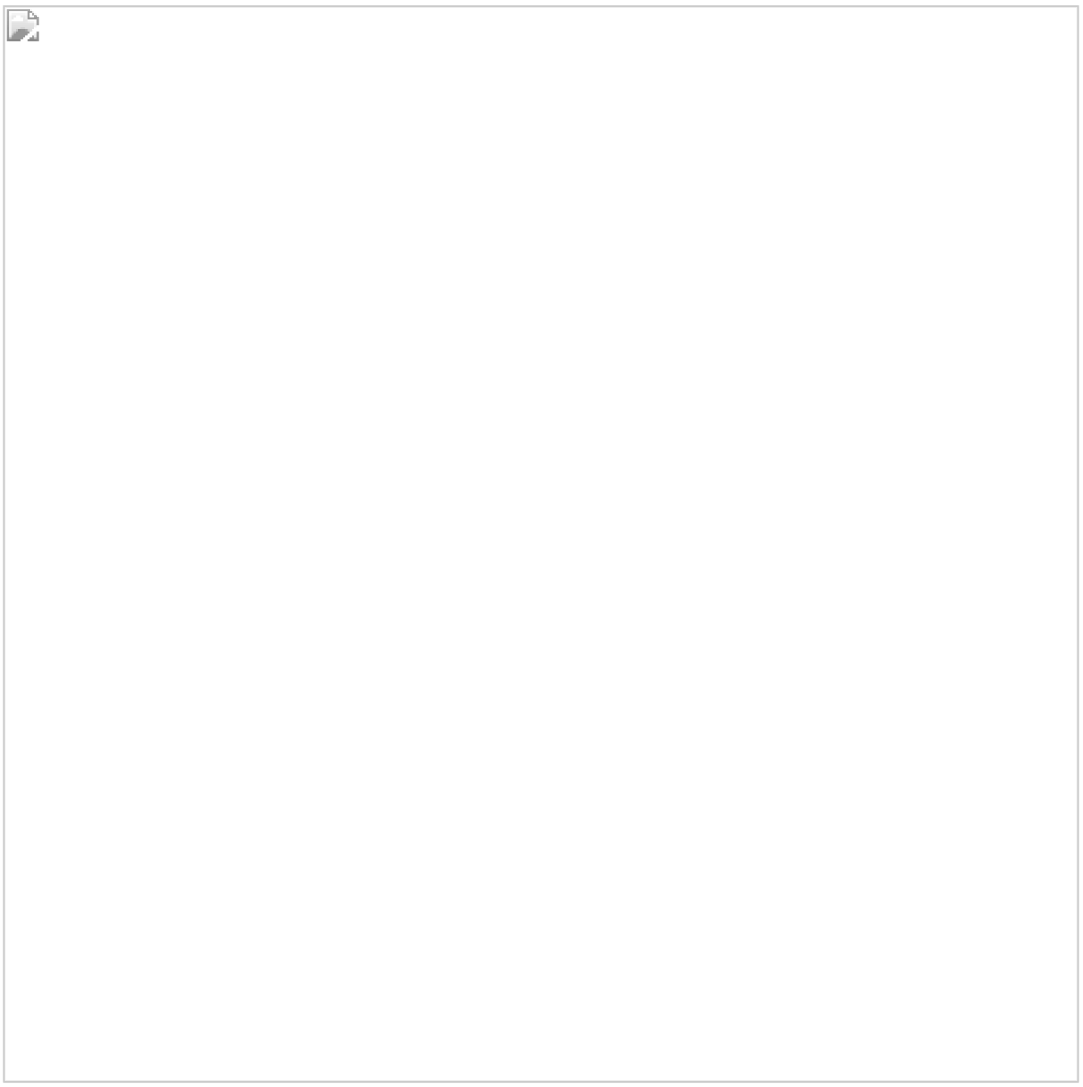
By the river, the stepsister asked to try on the Ranee's jewels. And while the Ranee was helping her, the stepsister pushed her into the water.

But just then her old friend the Seven-headed Cobra was swimming across the river! He carried the Ranee on his back to his hole, where he and his wife took care of her.

There, her little son was born, and she called him Muchie Lal. The Cobra's family loved the Ranee like one of their own, and the little cobras were Muchie Lal's playmates.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Cobra helped the girl twice. What do you think he was like?



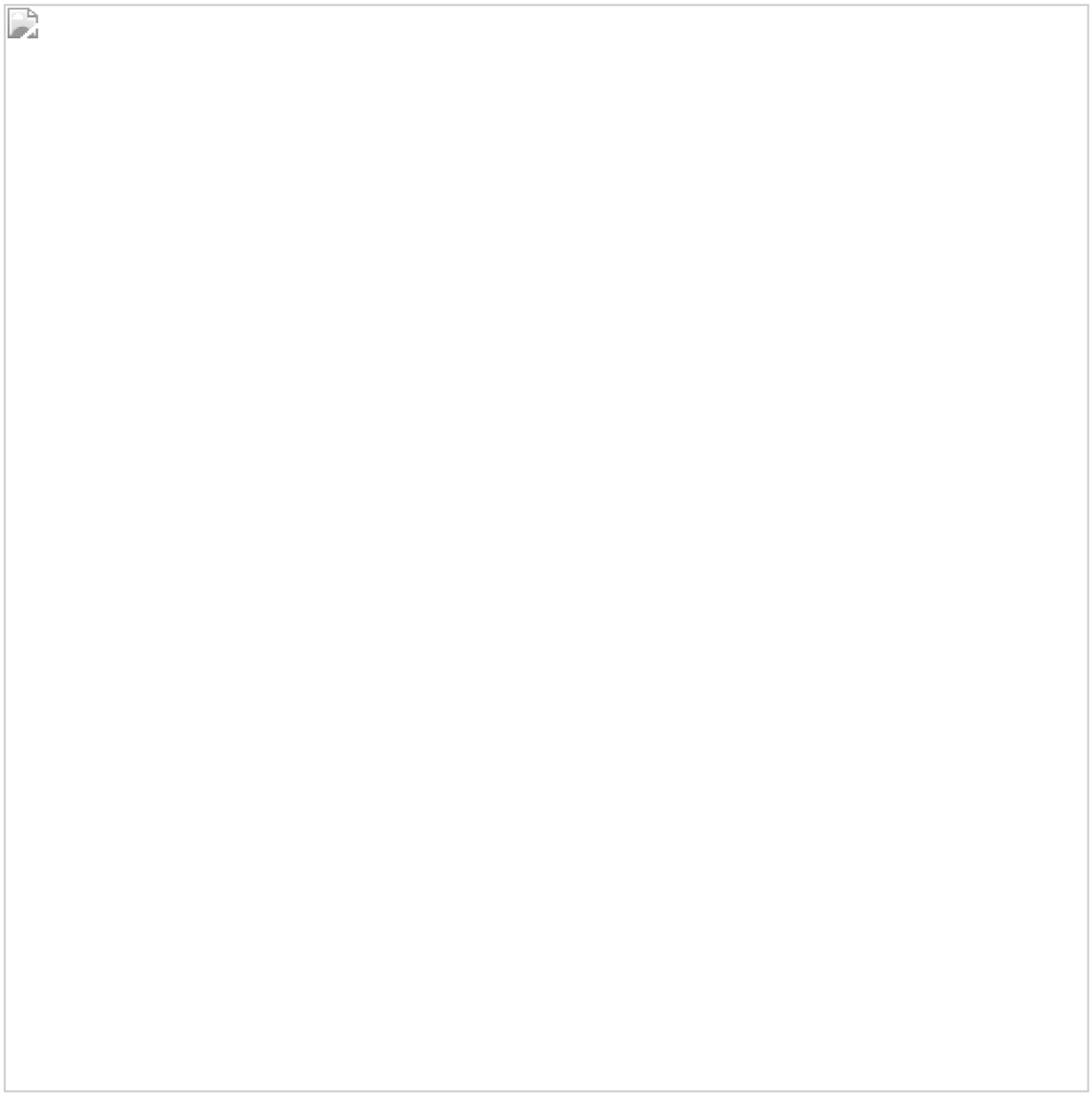
Think about it

1. Who saved the Ranee in the river?

- ○ A fisherman
- ○ The Seven-headed Cobra
- ○ Her father

2. Who do you think was missing the Ranee while she was away?

That Is Not My Wife



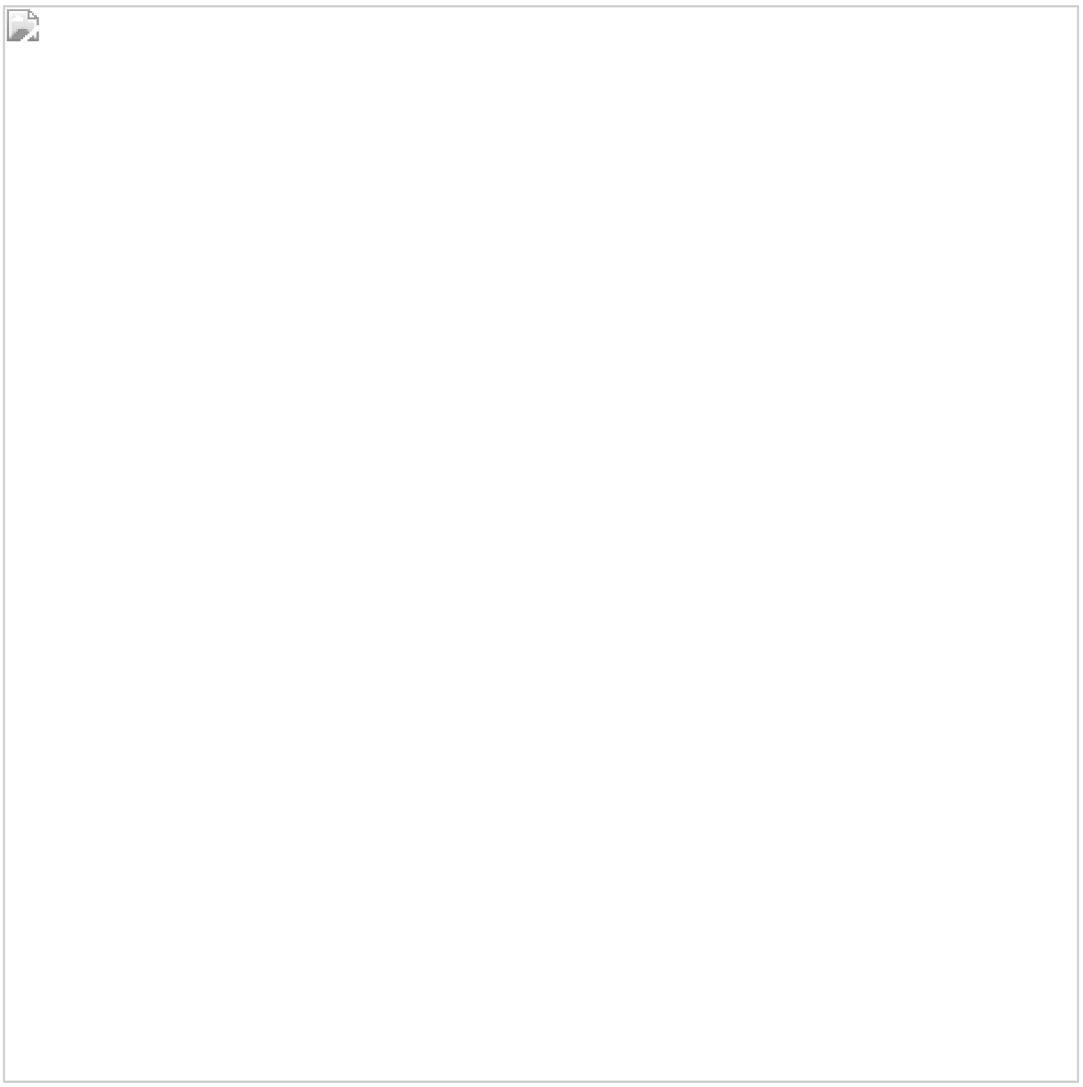
Meanwhile, the stepsister put on the Ranee's jewels, and the stepmother brought her to the palace. “See, I have brought your wife, my dear daughter, back safe and well.”

The Rajah looked at her and thought, “This does not look like my wife.” His wife had pretty loving ways and merry words, but this woman never opened her lips.

On the third day he took off the jewels and saw it was someone else. He sent her away, and then he set out to look for his own wife everywhere, crying, “She is gone! she is gone!”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Rajah noticed who was missing, even though the jewels looked right. How do you notice what makes someone special to you?

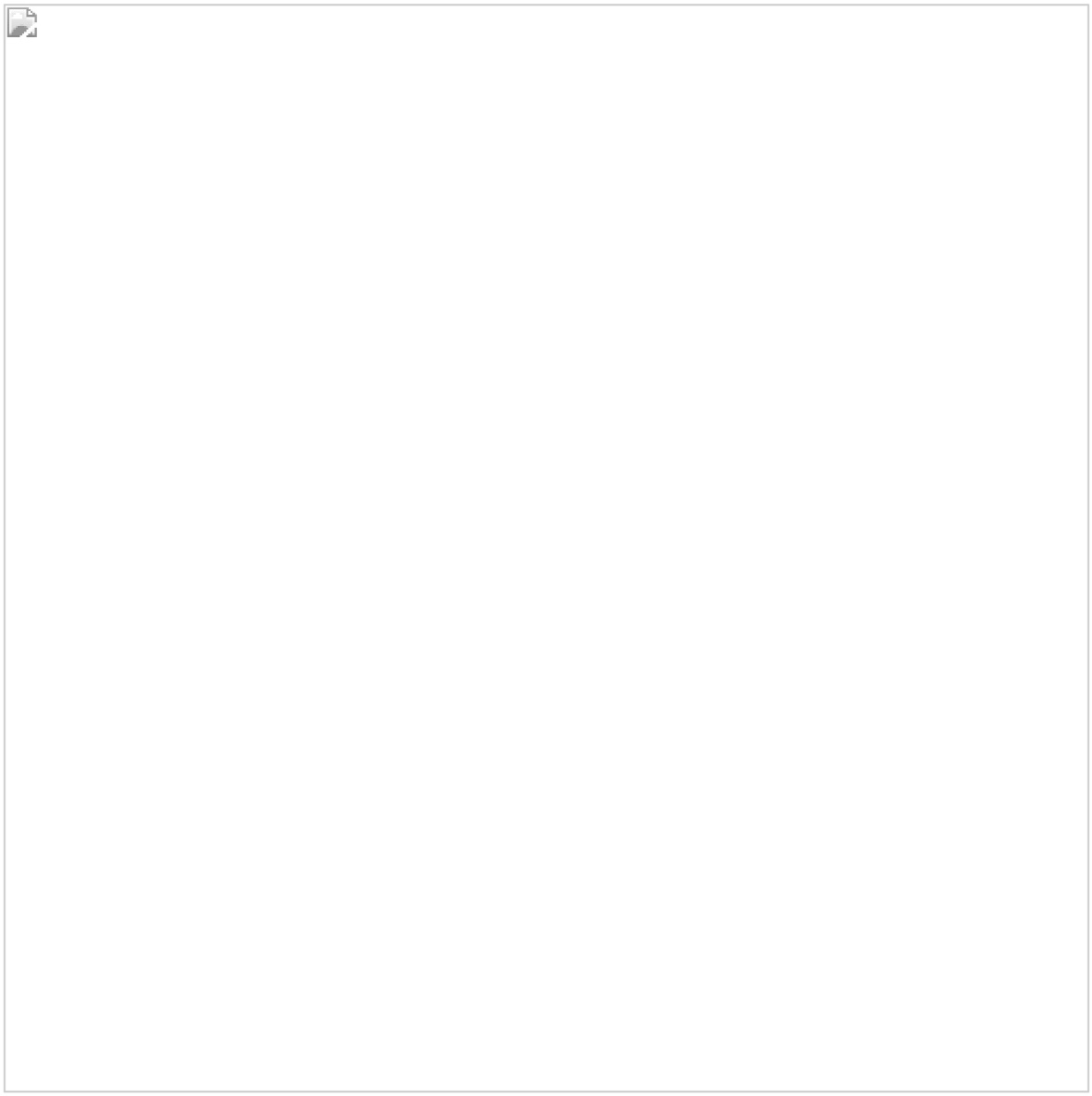


Think about it

1. How did the Rajah know it was not his wife?

- She was too tall
- She never spoke, and she was not bright and merry like his wife
- She forgot the jewels

The Bangle-Seller



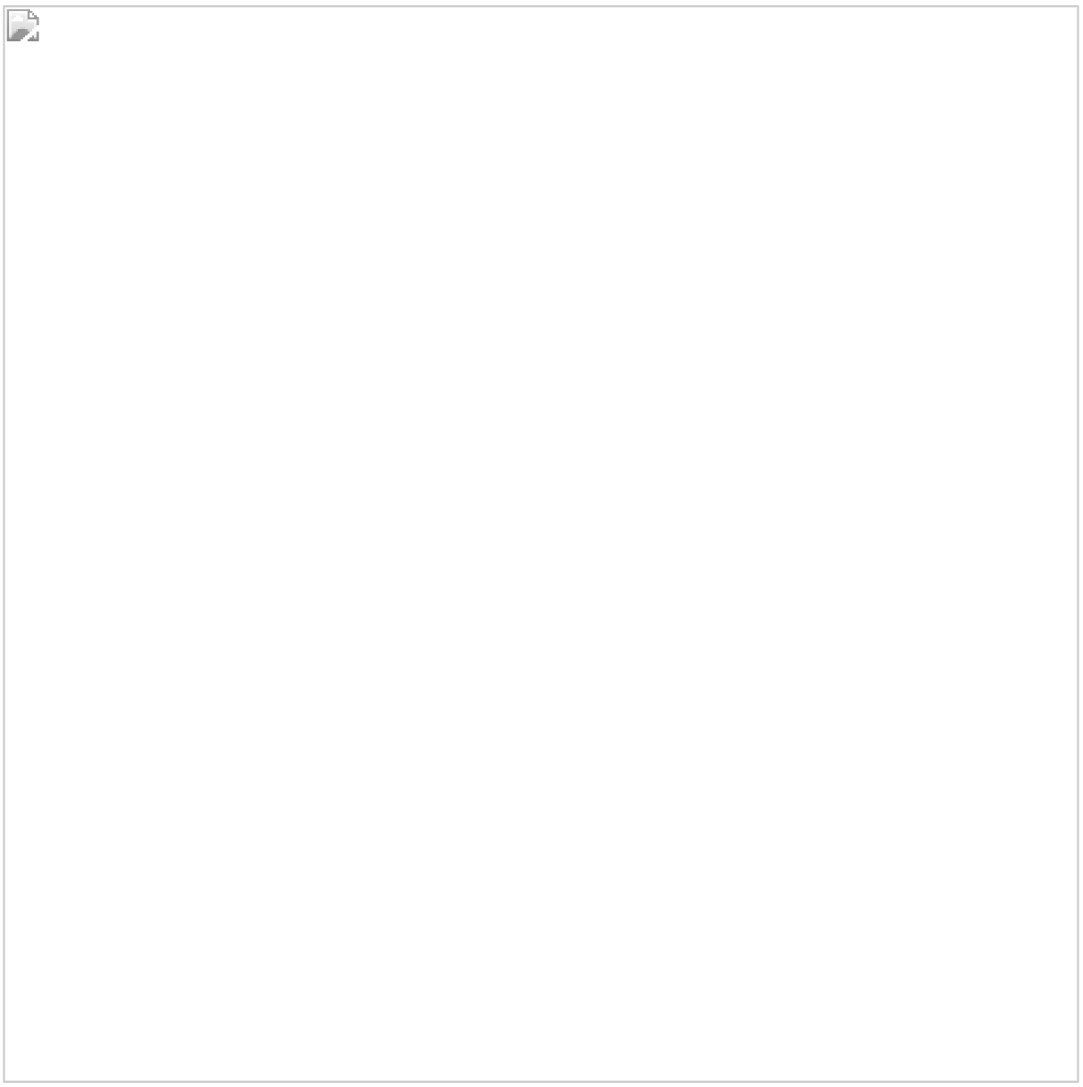
In the Cobra's hole, little Muchie Lal broke his bangles every day while he played, and every day his mother bought him new ones from the bangle-seller.

The Rajah wandered from place to place, and at last he met a bangle-seller. “I have just been selling bangles to some people who live in a Cobra's hole in the river-bank,” said the man. A woman and a child, he said, and “the lady always calls him her Muchie Lal.”

“Ah,” thought the Rajah, “this must be my wife.” He could hardly wait until morning.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Rajah never stopped looking. What does it tell you about him?

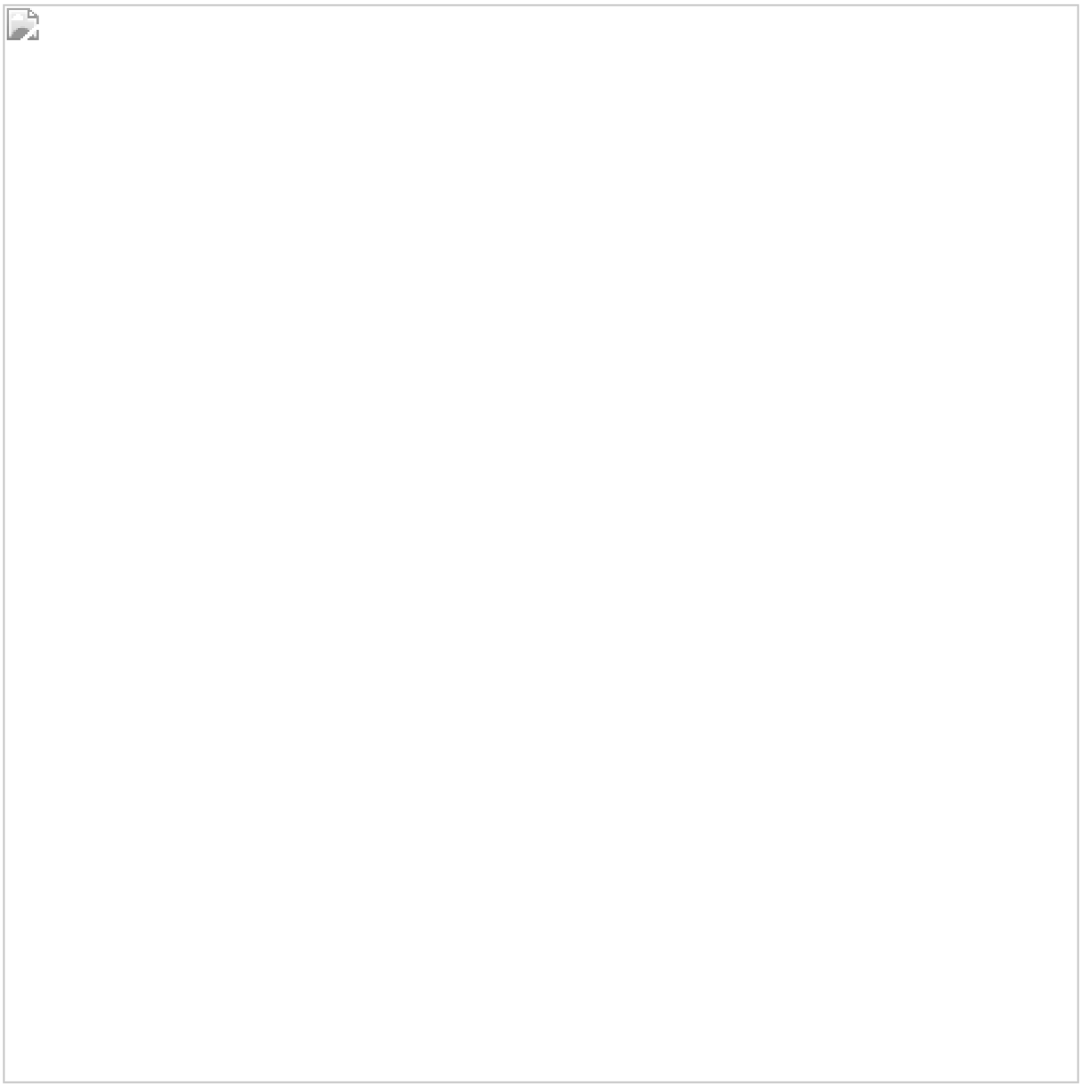


Think about it

1. Where did the bangle-seller say the woman and child lived?

- ○ In a palace
- ○ In a Cobra's hole by the river
- ○ In a big tent

Home Again



Next morning they came to the Cobra's hole. The Rajah knelt and said, “Oh, lady, show your beautiful face to me.”

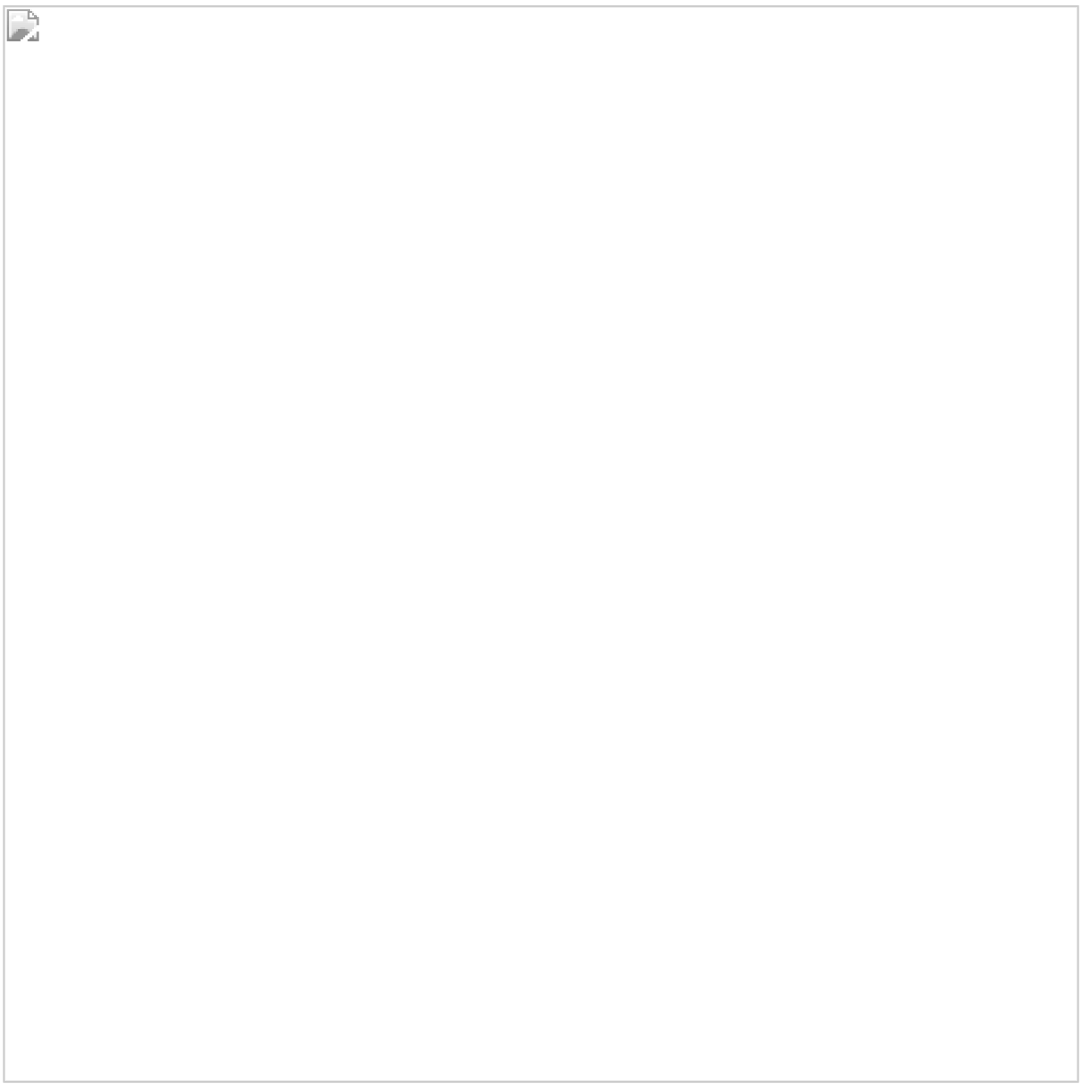
The Ranee ran out, crying, “Husband, husband! have you found me again?” She told him how the Cobra had saved her.

“Father Cobra, father Cobra, my husband has come to fetch me; will you let me go?” “Yes,” he said. The Cobra's wife said, “Farewell, dear lady, we are loath to lose you, for we have loved you as a daughter.”

The Cobra gave them the finest gifts in his treasure-house, and the Rajah, the Ranee and little Muchie Lal went home and lived very happily.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Ranee called the Cobra “father,” and the Cobra's family called her their daughter. What makes someone family?



Think about it

1. What did the Cobra say when the Ranee asked to go home?

- ○ “No, you must stay”
- ○ “Yes, you may go”
- ○ “Come back tomorrow”

2. Who in this story showed kindness? Who showed it more than once?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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