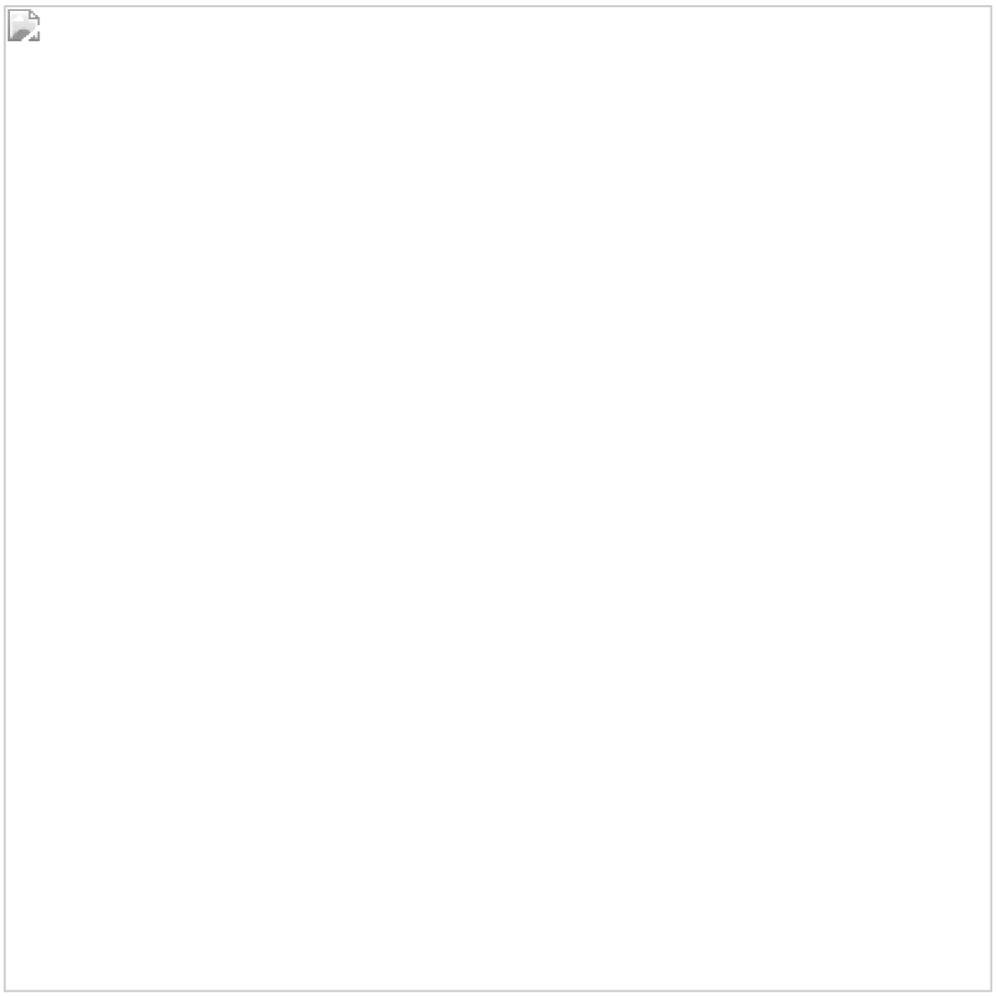
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Nicholas Nickleby

The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby



“There once lived, in a sequestered part of the county of Devonshire, one Mr. Godfrey Nickleby”, a worthy gentleman with two children, Ralph and Nicholas. Ralph went to London to make money, and he forgot his brother for many years.

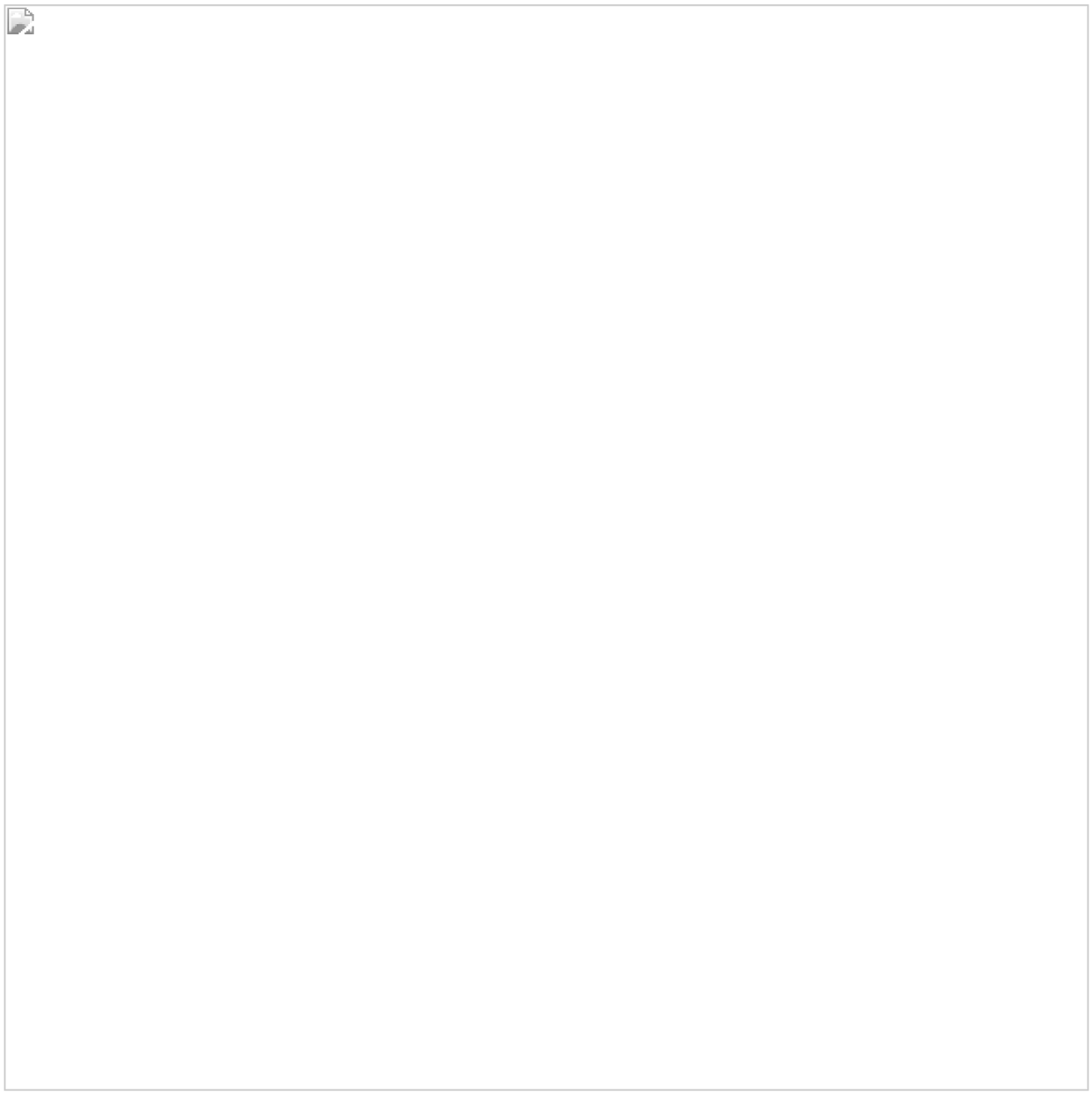
Nicholas lived quietly in the country, with a son and a daughter, also named Nicholas and Kate. When their money was lost, their father fell ill. He “solemnly commended them to One who never deserted the widow or her fatherless children.”

TALK ABOUT IT

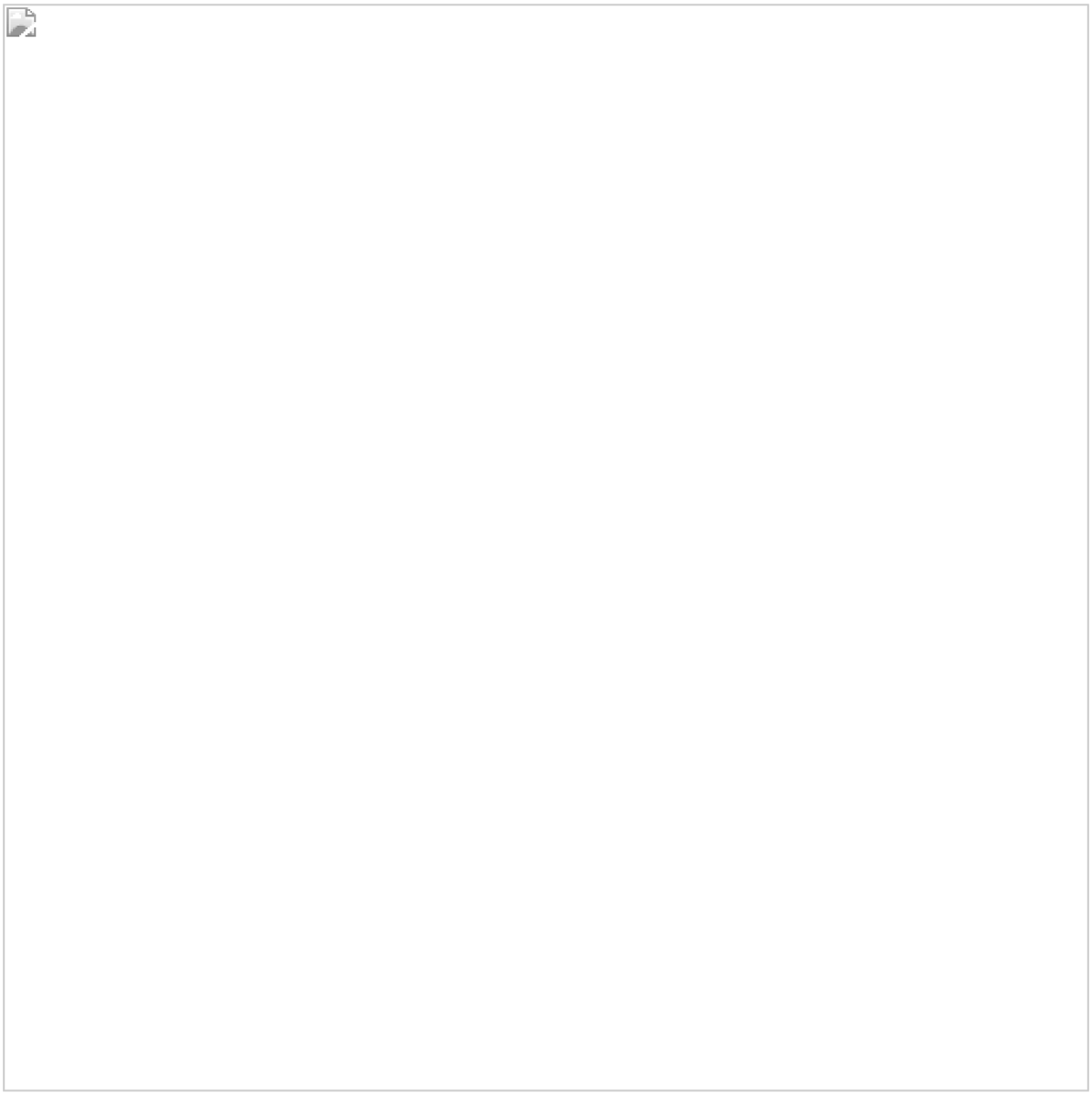
Nicholas and Kate were about to lose their father. Who do you think could help a family in a spot like theirs?

This book belongs to _____

Nicholas Nickleby · another picture



Uncle Ralph



Nicholas was nineteen and Kate was fourteen. After their father died, they and their mother turned to their uncle, Ralph Nickleby, in London. He was very rich.

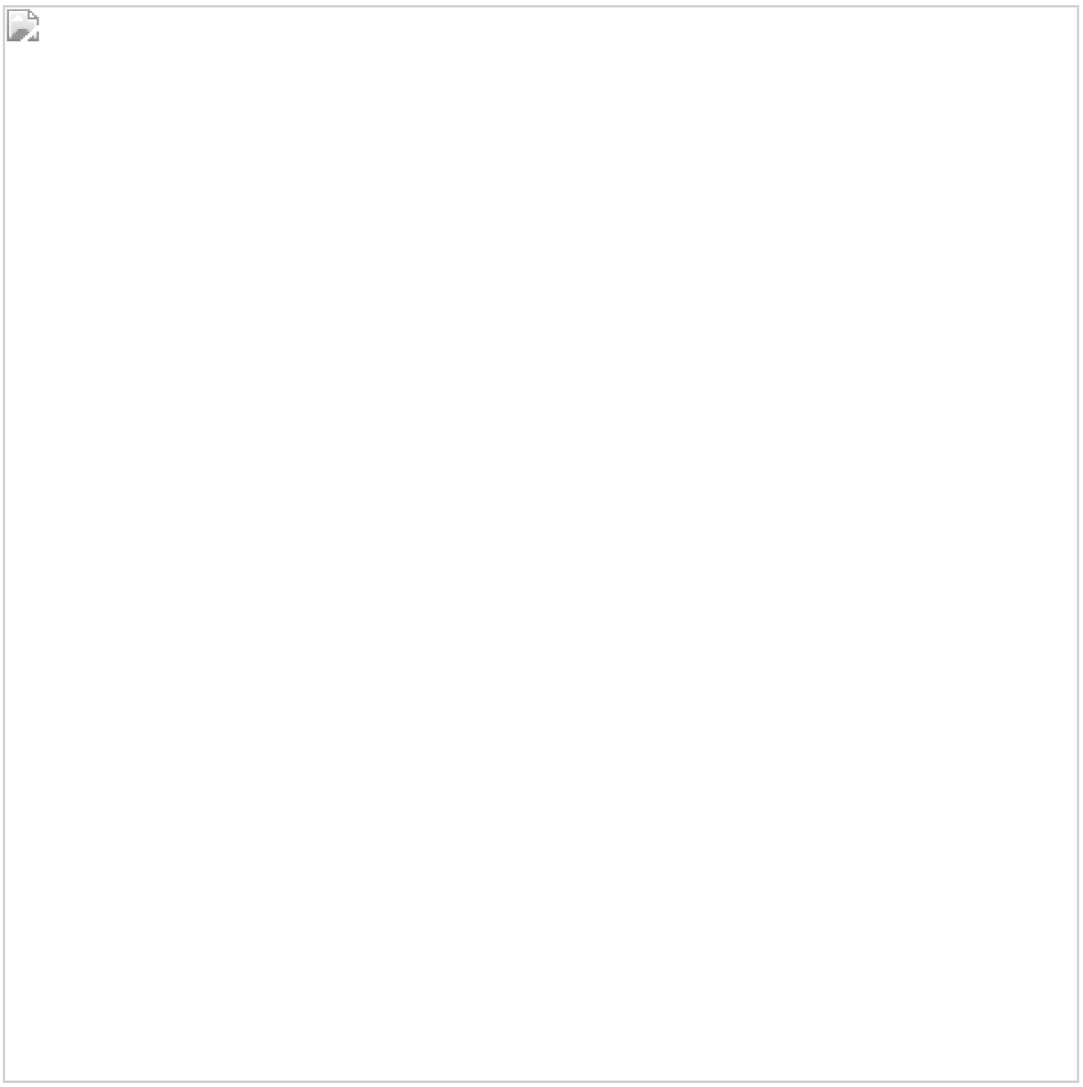
Ralph had decided, even as a boy, “that there was nothing like money.” He lent money to people and made them pay back more. He had never met his brother's family.

Still, the family packed up and went to London. Perhaps their uncle would help.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ralph thought nothing was better than money. What might a person miss if they only think about money?

Uncle Ralph · another picture

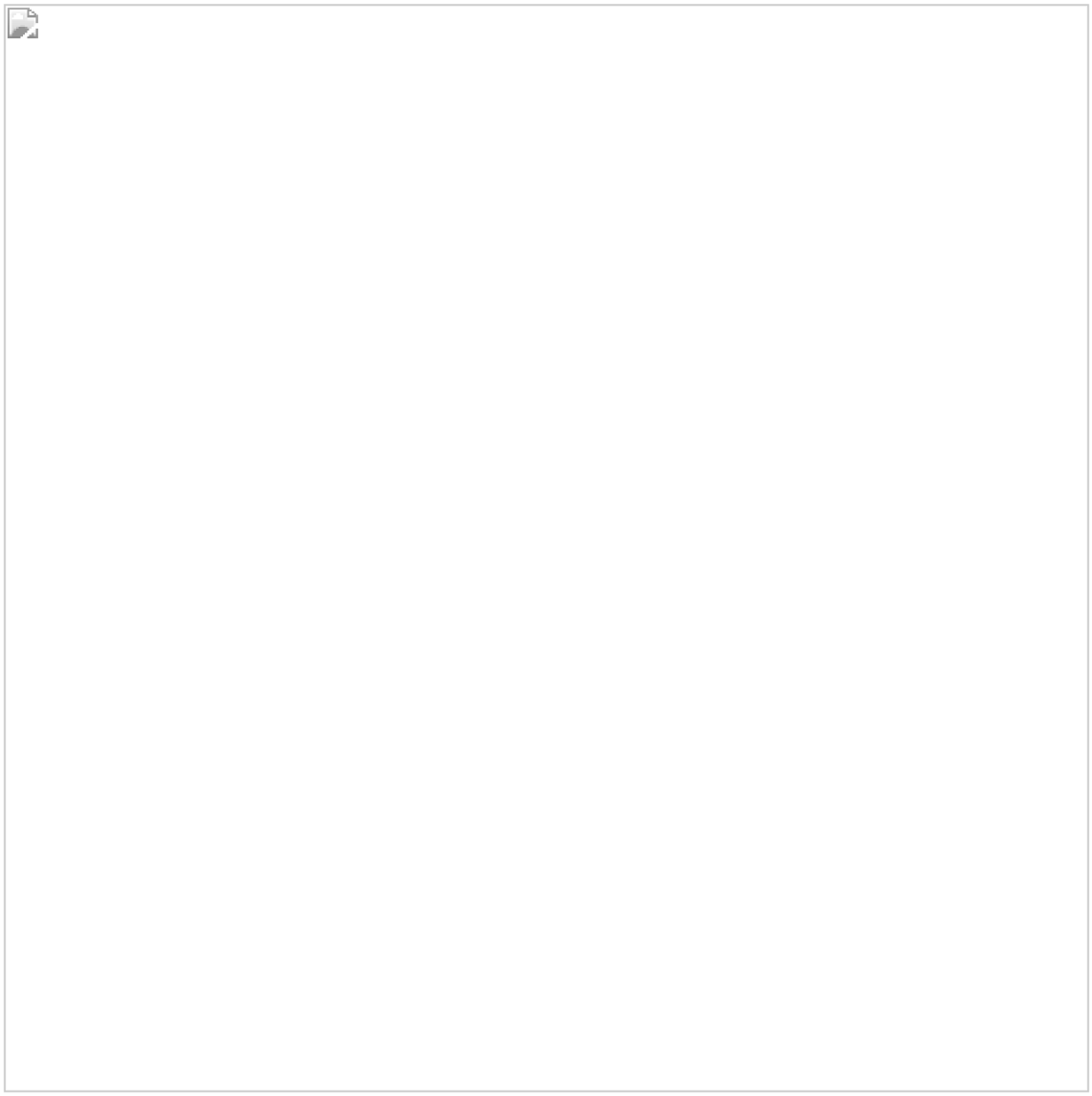


Think about it

1. Who did the Nicklebys go to London to find?

- ○ A rich uncle
- ○ A king
- ○ A teacher

A Job in Yorkshire



Ralph's clerk was a thin, ragged, shy man named Newman Noggs. He had once been better off, and he kept a kind heart hidden inside his old coat.

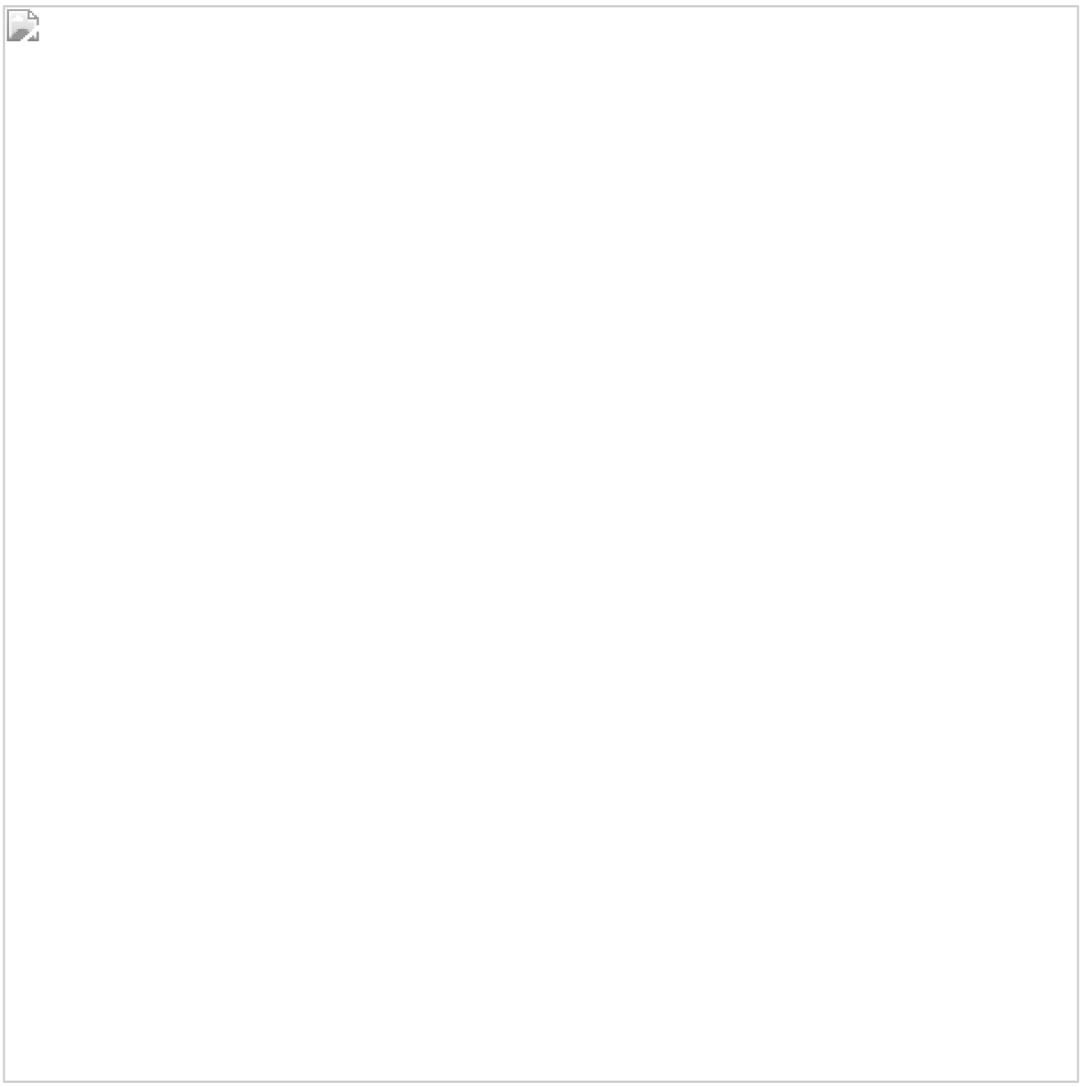
Ralph found work for the family, but not the kind that was good for them. First he read out an advertisement. A schoolmaster named Mr. Squeers wanted a helper at his school in Yorkshire, far to the north. Later, when Nicholas was gone, Ralph sent Kate to work for a dressmaker.

“Let him get that situation, and his fortune is made,” said Ralph. So Nicholas said goodbye to his mother and Kate, and set off to be a teacher.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nicholas had to leave the people he loved to find work. What would you want to tell them before you left?

A Job in Yorkshire · another picture

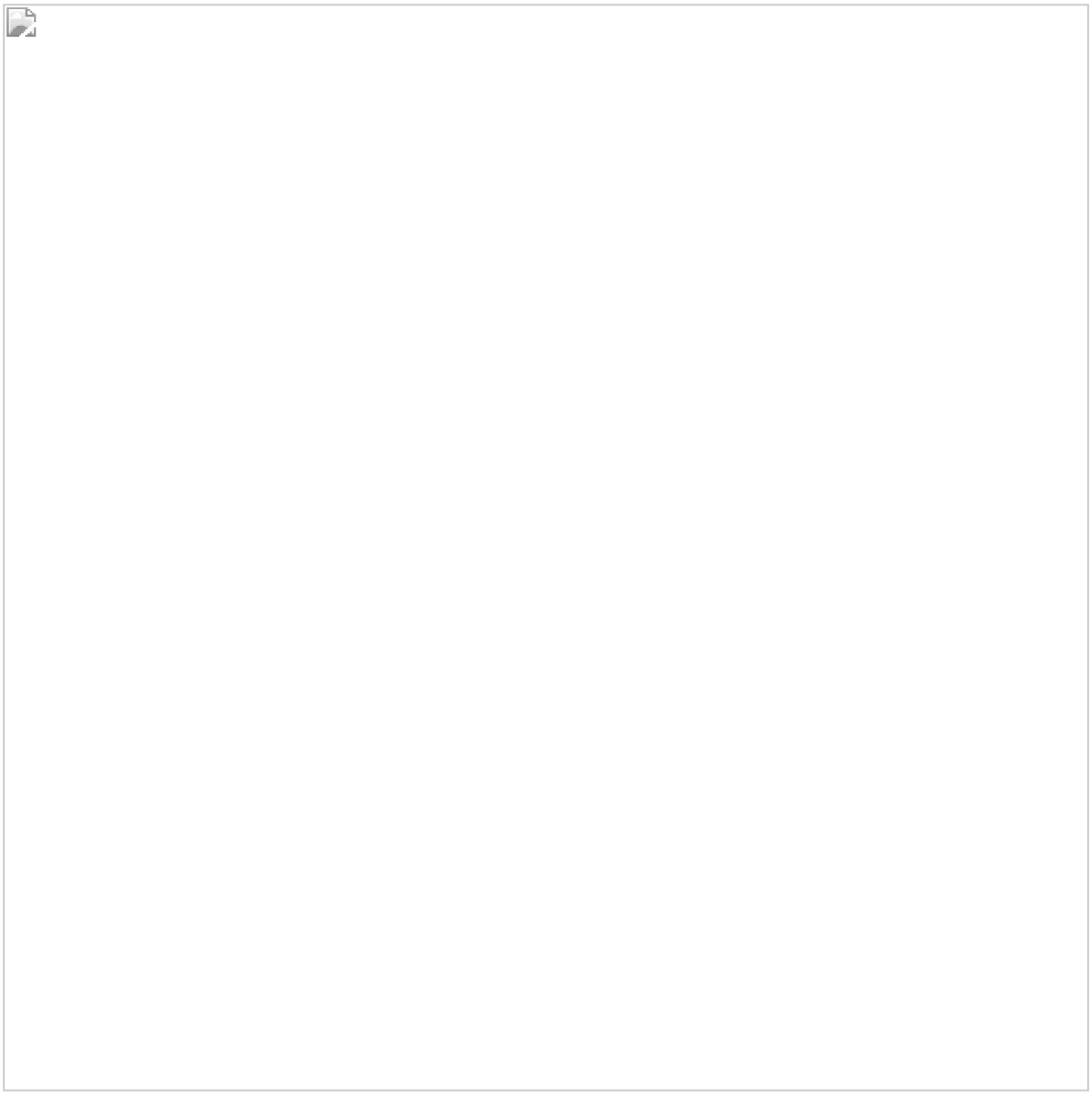


Think about it

1. Where was the school Nicholas was sent to?

- ○ In Yorkshire, far to the north
- ○ Next door
- ○ Across the sea

Dotheboys Hall



Mr. Squeers had one eye, a loud voice, and a hard hand. His school was called Dotheboys Hall. The boys there had been sent by families who did not want them, and they were thin, cold and hungry.

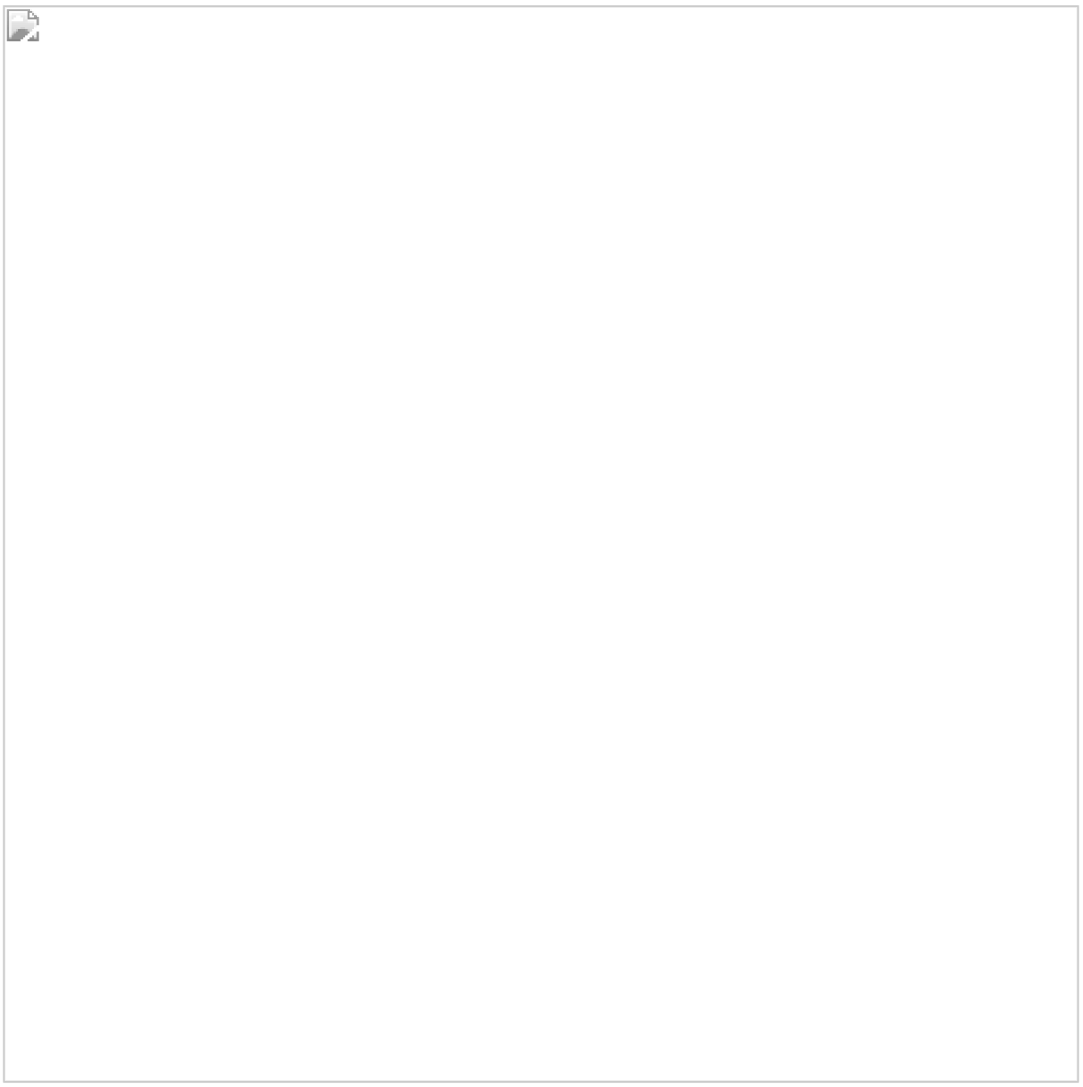
Every morning Mrs. Squeers gave each boy a spoonful of brimstone and treacle, a nasty medicine. It spoiled their appetites, so they would eat less breakfast.

On Nicholas's first morning, Mr. Squeers woke him. “Past seven, Nickleby,” he said. Nicholas began to see what kind of place he had come to.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you notice about a school where the boys are always hungry? What would you want to do if you saw it?

Dotheboys Hall · another picture

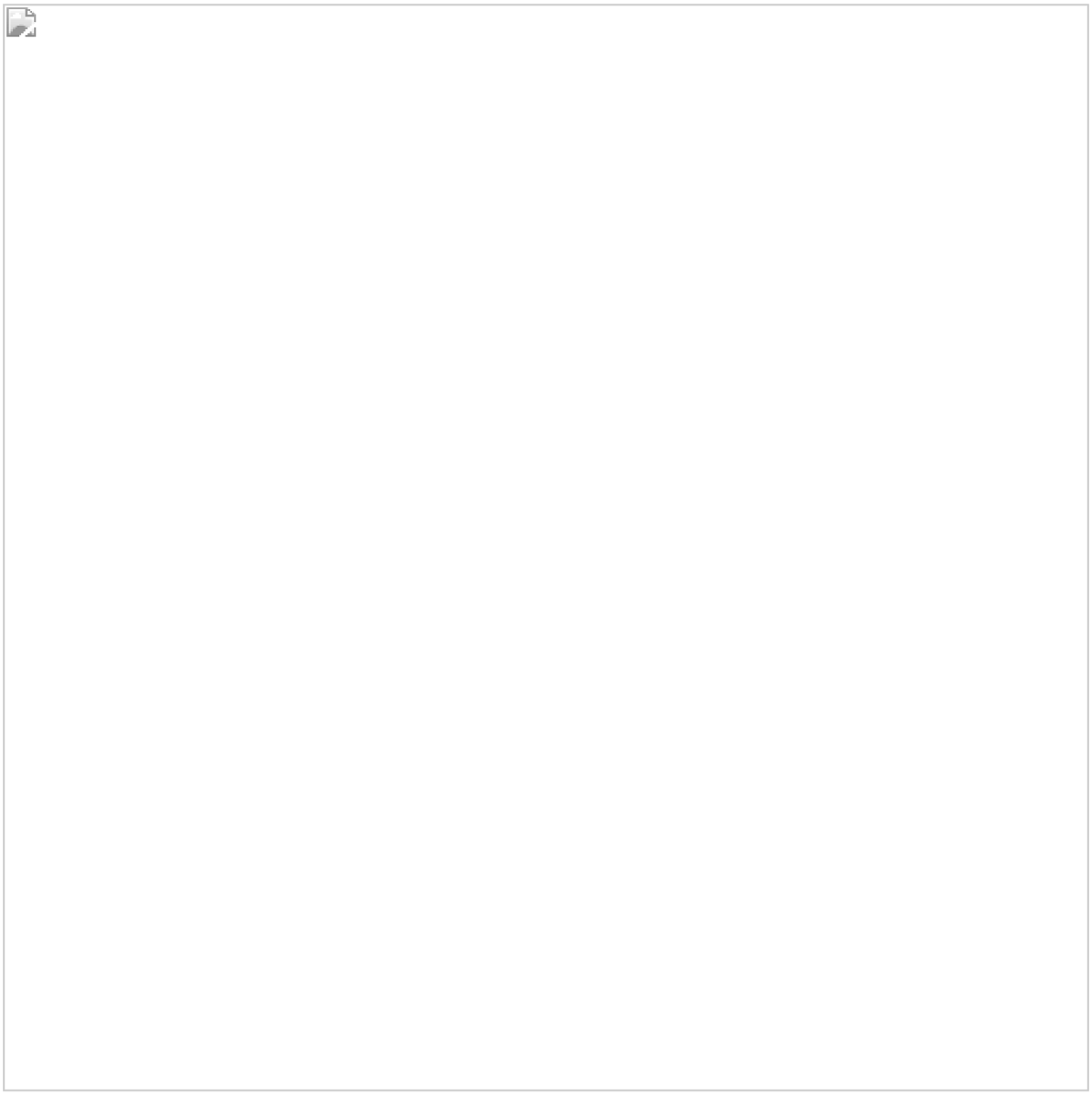


Think about it

1. What did Mrs. Squeers give the boys every morning?

- ○ Warm porridge
- ○ Brimstone and treacle
- ○ Chocolate

Smike



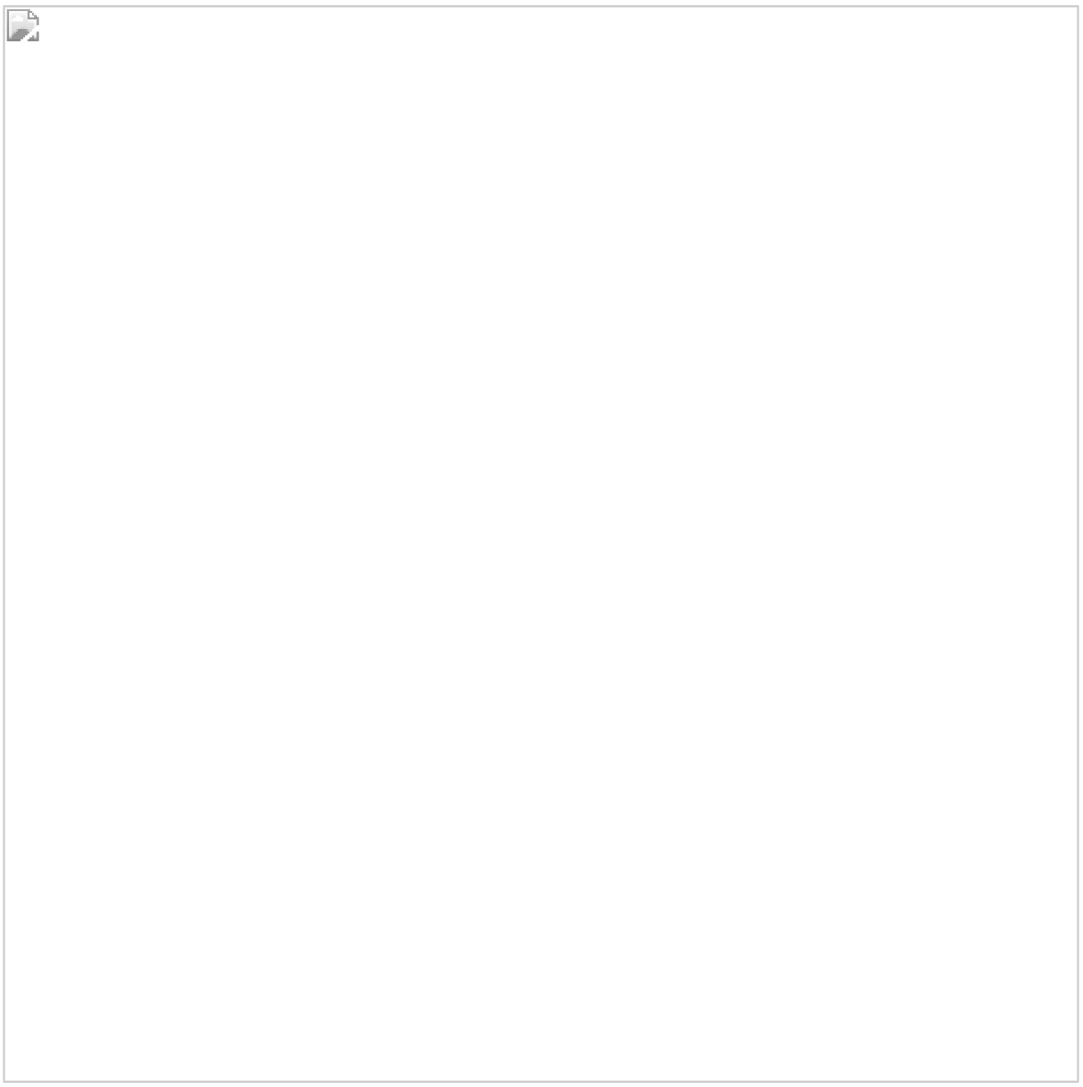
The saddest boy at the school was called Smike. He was older than the others, ragged and frightened, and he did all the dirty jobs. He had been there for many years.

One cold morning Nicholas saw Smike shivering by the fire. “You need not fear me,” he said kindly. “Are you cold?”

“I am not cold,” said Smike quickly. “I am used to it.” Nicholas said, “There is always hope.” He did not know what else to say.

TALK ABOUT IT

Smike said he was used to being cold. What do you think it was like for Smike when someone spoke kindly to him?

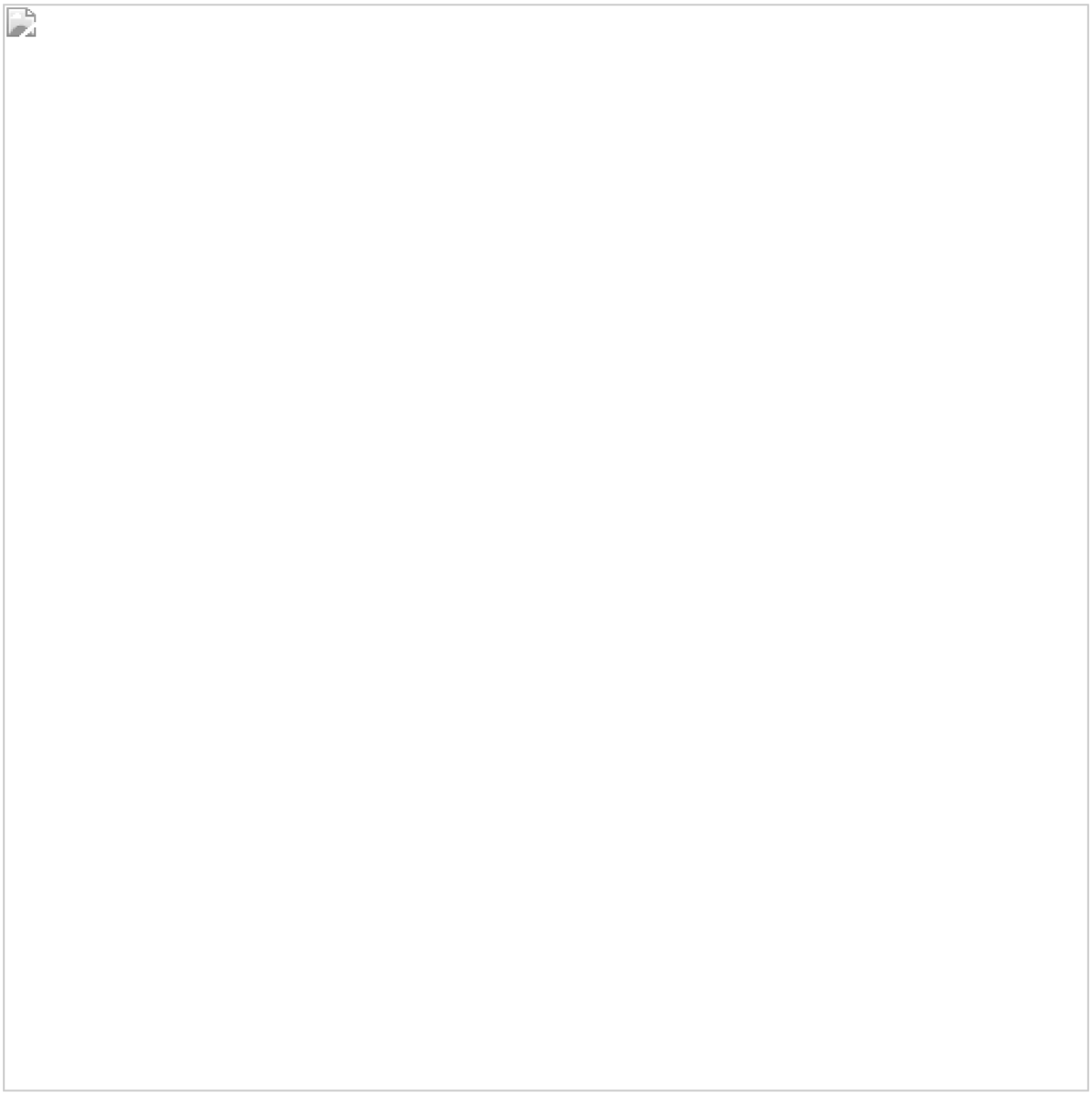


Think about it

1. What did Smike say when Nicholas asked if he was cold?

- ○ He said he was used to it
- ○ He asked for a blanket
- ○ He said yes, very cold

Stop!



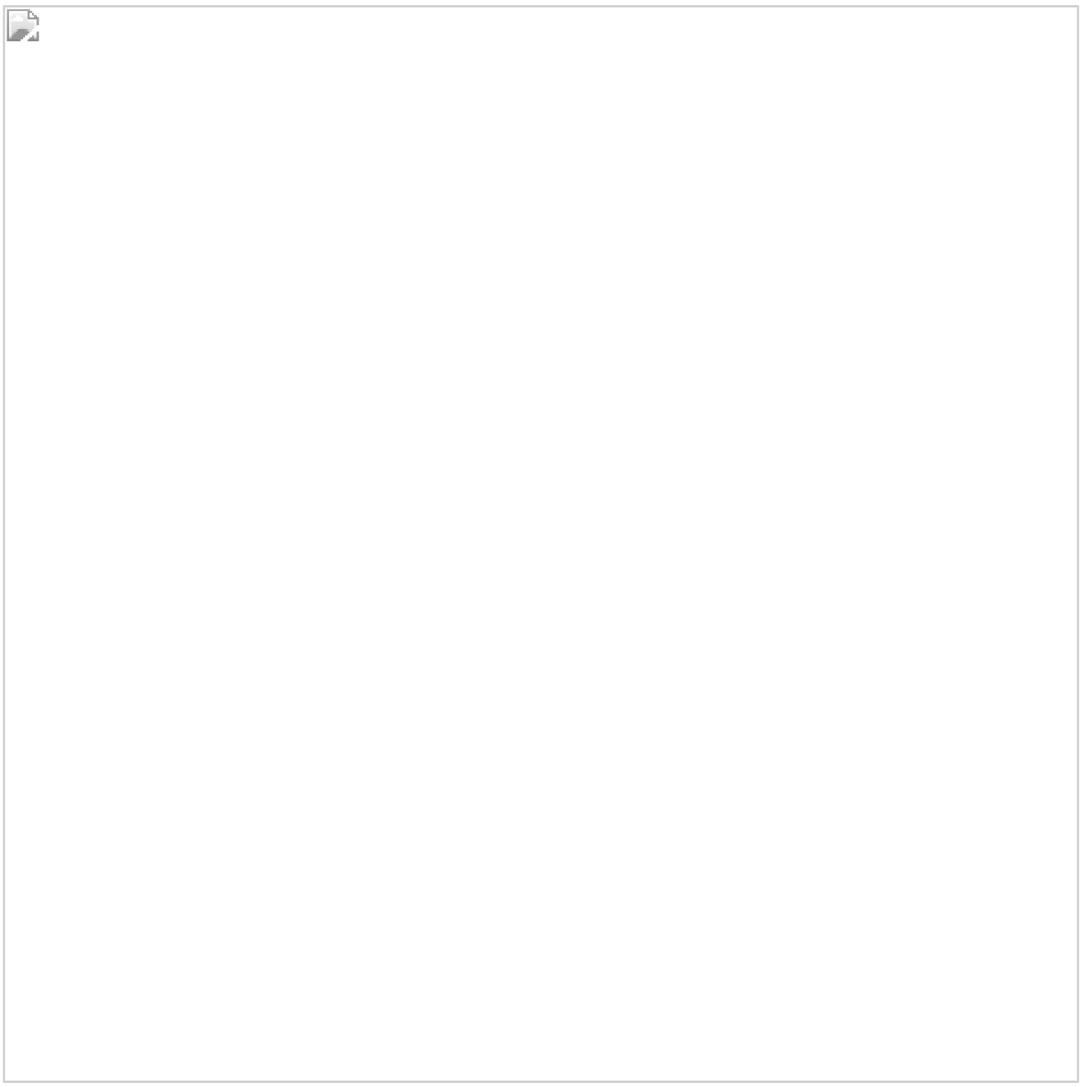
Smike ran away. The Squeers family caught him and brought him back. Mr. Squeers fetched a new cane and prepared to beat him in front of the whole school.

Nicholas could not stand by. He jumped up and shouted, “Stop!” He told Mr. Squeers that this must not go on. “I will prevent it.”

Mr. Squeers struck Nicholas first. Then Nicholas took the cane and gave Mr. Squeers a beating of his own. After that, he knew he could not stay.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nicholas stood up for Smike even though it cost him his job. What do you think made him do it?

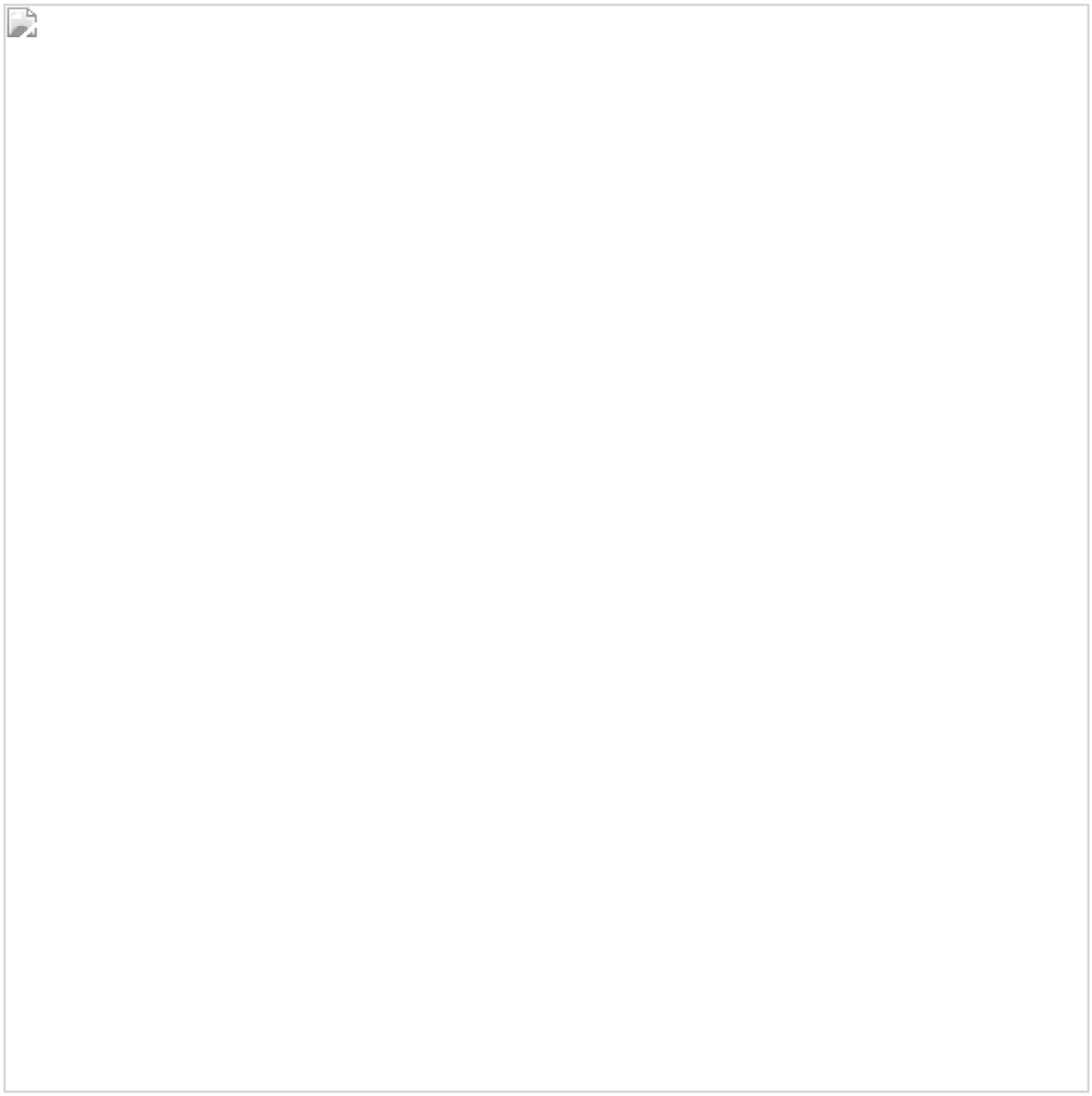


Think about it

1. What did Nicholas shout when Mr. Squeers lifted the cane?

- ○ Stop!
- ○ Run!
- ○ Hooray!

You Are My Home



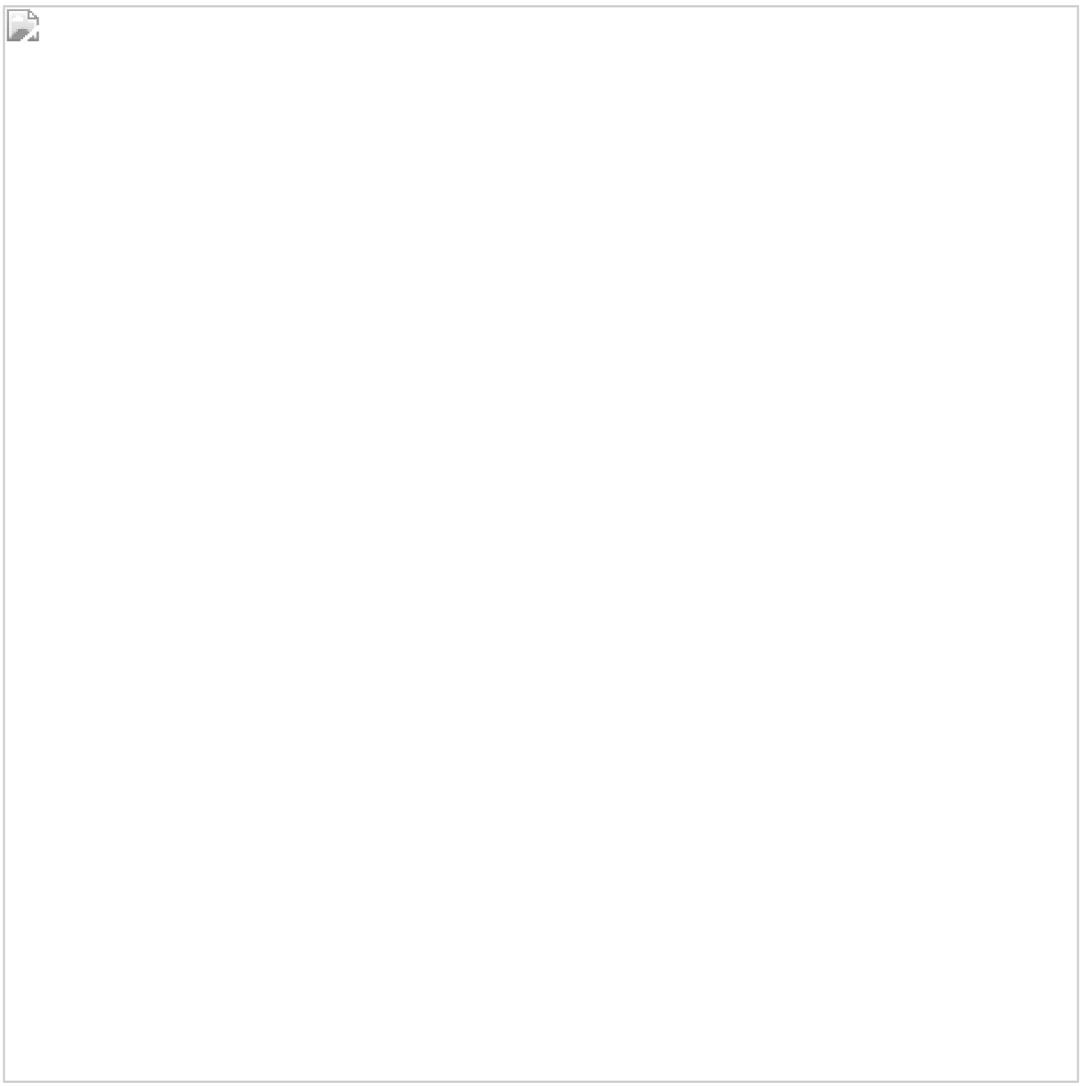
Nicholas left Dotheboys Hall with almost nothing in his pocket. A kind Yorkshireman named John Browdie lent him a little money and pressed his hand. “keep a good heart, and bless thee,” he said.

Nicholas walked along the road toward London. Then he heard footsteps. It was Smike, who had followed him and watched over him while he slept.

Smike knelt down in the road. “You are my home--my kind friend--take me with you, pray.” Nicholas lifted him up. He could not leave him behind, so the two of them went on together.

TALK ABOUT IT

Smike said Nicholas was his home. What do you think makes a person feel like home?

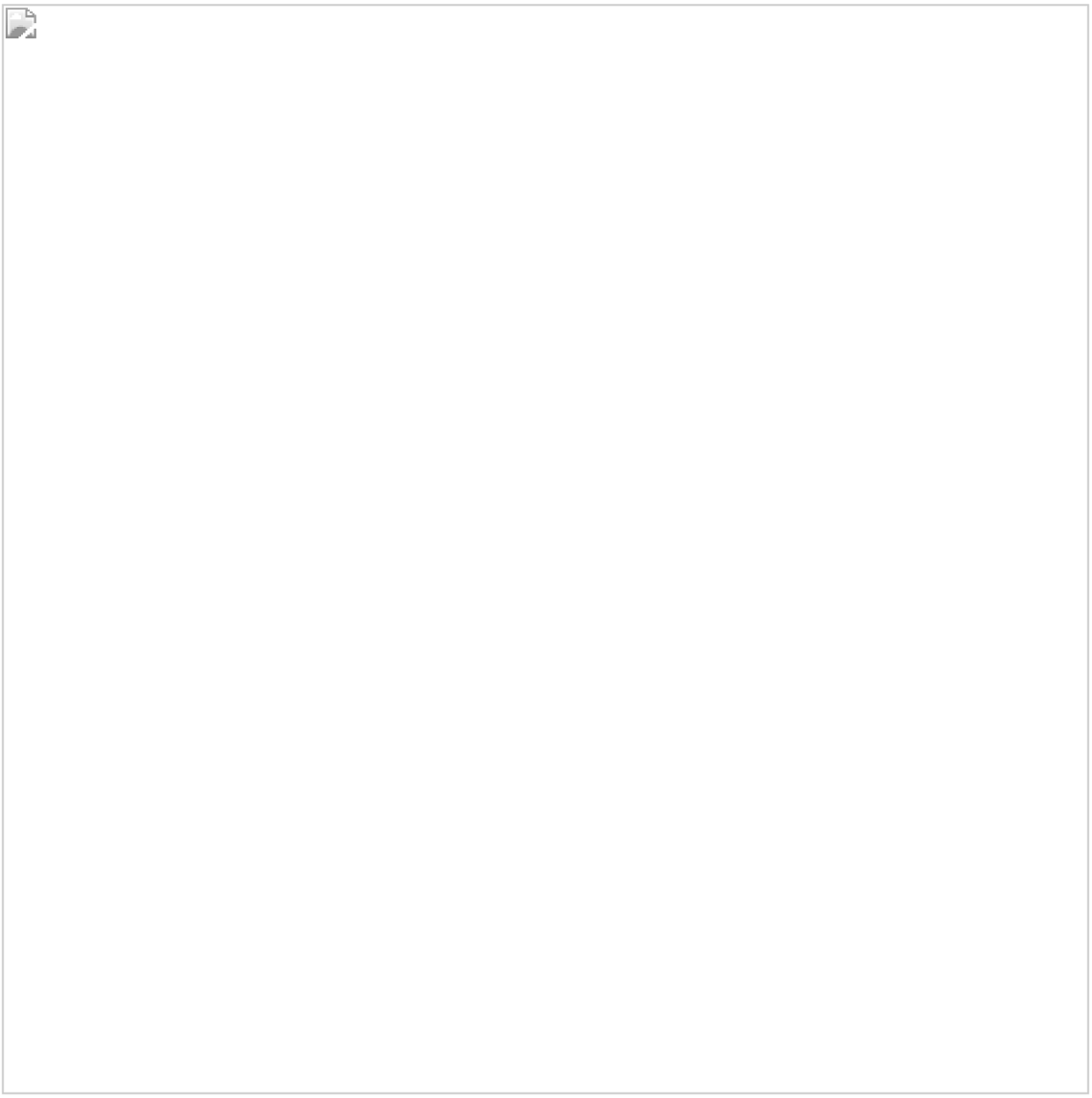


Think about it

1. Who followed Nicholas along the road?

- ○ Smike
- ○ Mr. Squeers
- ○ Uncle Ralph

Trouble for Kate



Meanwhile Kate had troubles. Ralph made her sit at a dinner with rich men, and one of them, a rude man named Sir Mulberry Hawk, would not leave her alone. Ralph wanted to please rich men, so he did not stop it.

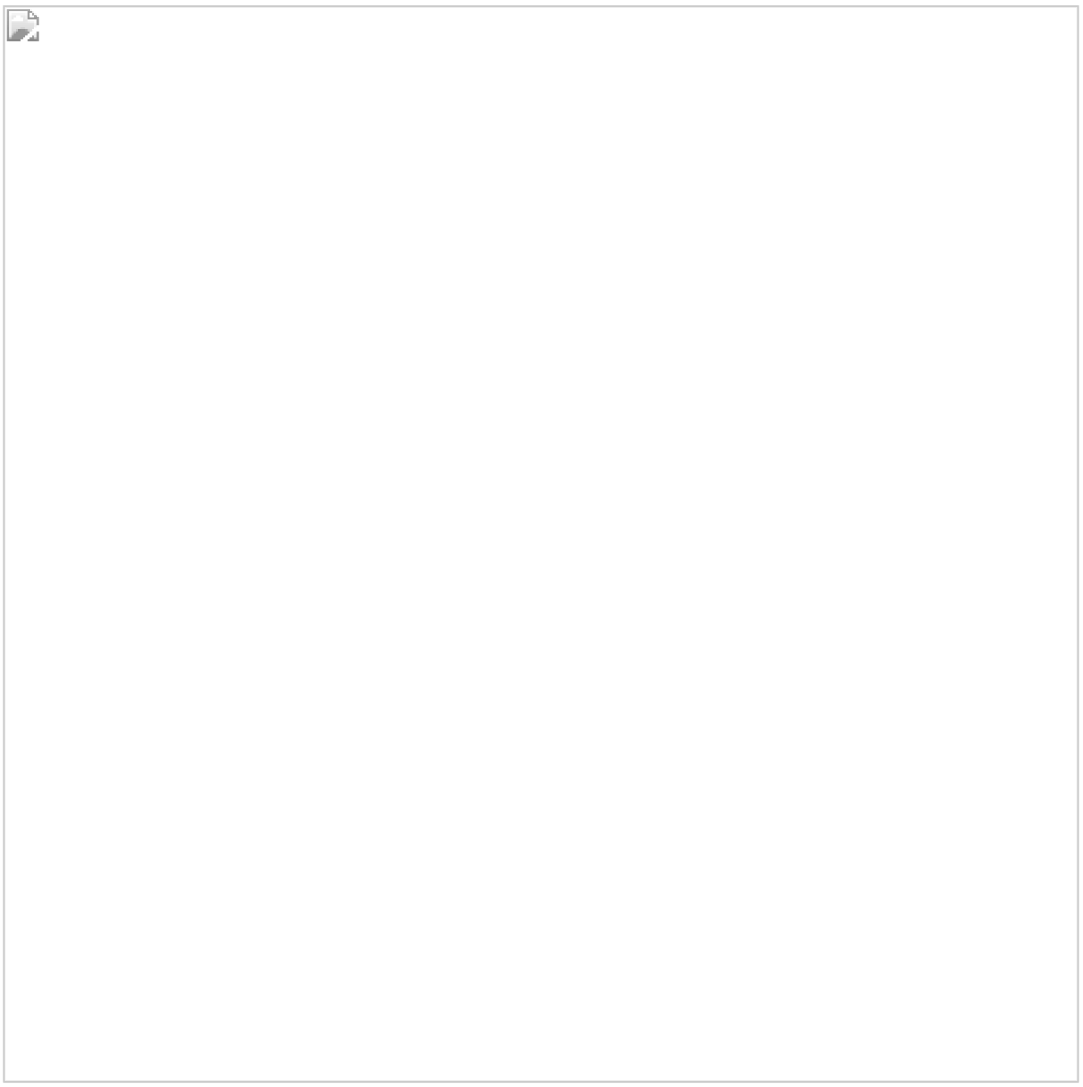
In London, Newman Noggs helped Nicholas and Smike in secret. Nicholas went to see Uncle Ralph, and he told him plainly what he thought of how Ralph had treated his family.

Nicholas had only a few shillings to his name. One cold morning he left London with Smike to seek his fortune.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ralph let someone treat Kate badly because it suited him. What should a family do for each other instead?

Trouble for Kate · another picture

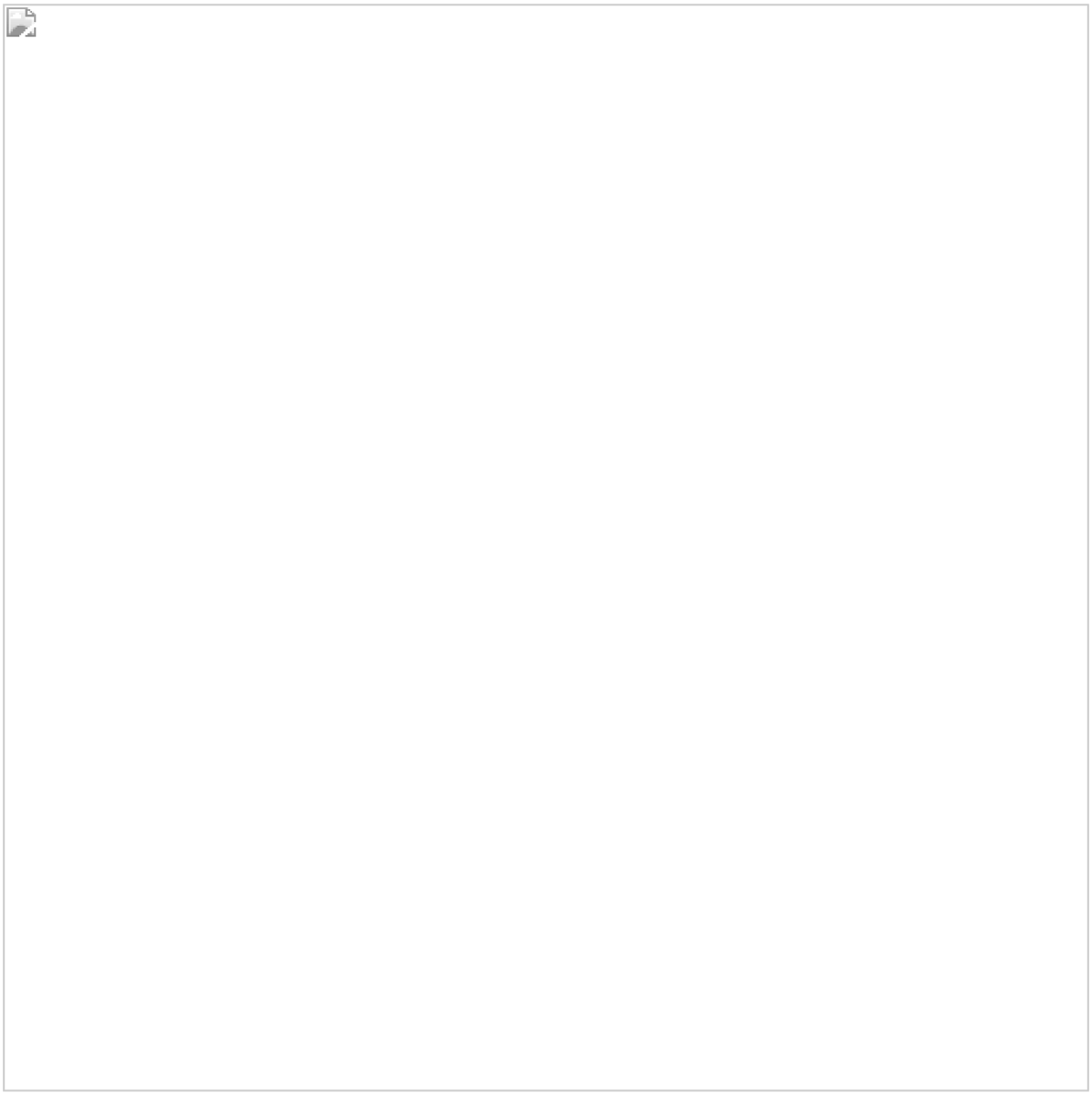


Think about it

1. Who helped Nicholas and Smike in secret?

- ○ Newman Noggs
- ○ Mr. Squeers
- ○ Sir Mulberry Hawk

The Theatre Company



On the road, Nicholas and Smike met Mr. Vincent Crummles, who ran a travelling theatre company. He had a big voice, a big family, and a flair for the dramatic. “I want a novelty,” he said, and he was ready to try anyone.

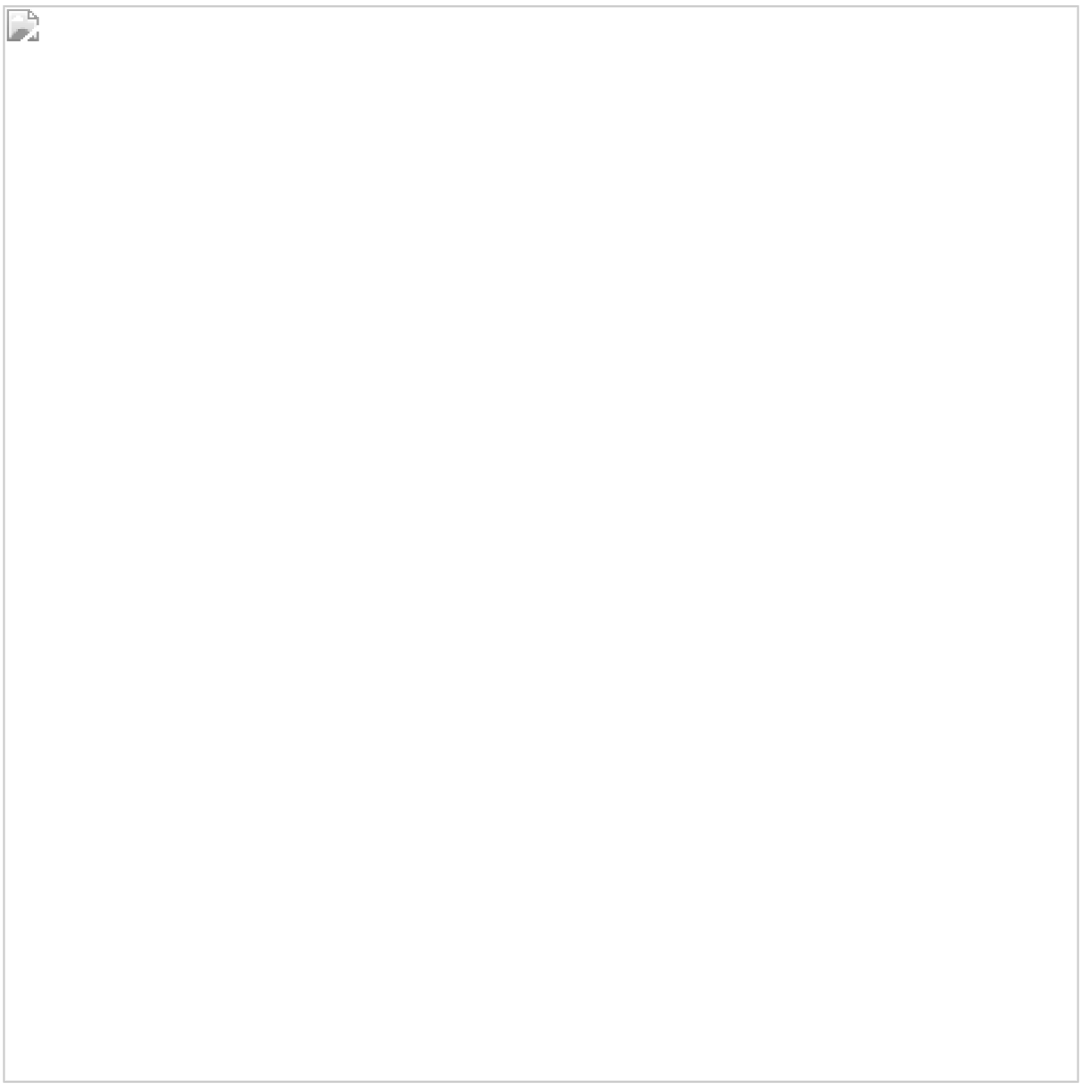
Nicholas wrote plays and acted in them, and Smike played small parts. Mr. Crummles looked at Smike's thin face and said, “what a capital countenance your friend has got!”

For a while Nicholas and Smike had work and friends in the company.

TALK ABOUT IT

Mr. Crummles and his family welcomed two strangers. What do you notice about how they made room for Nicholas and Smike?

The Theatre Company · another picture

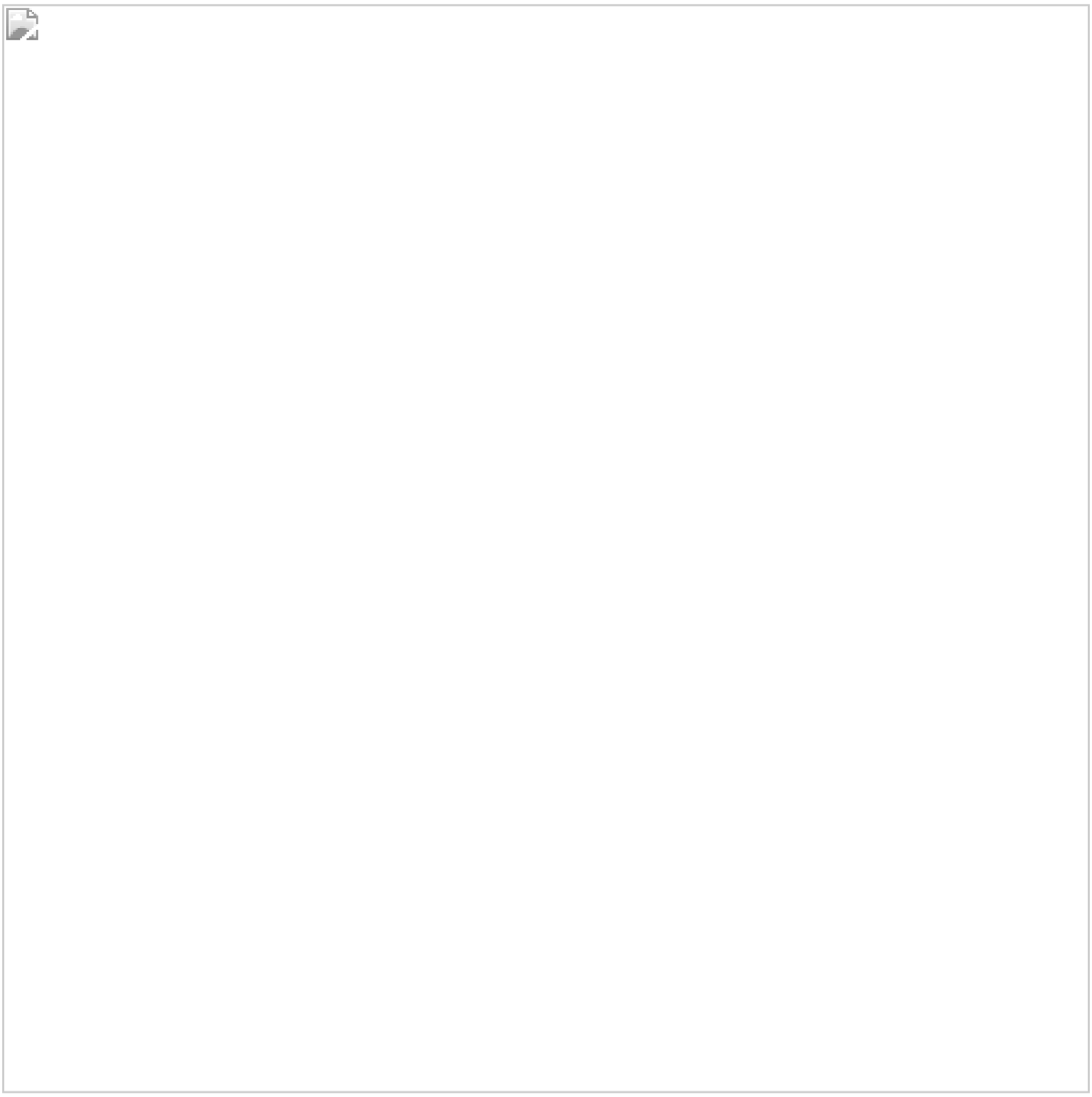


Think about it

1. What kind of company did Mr. Crummles run?

- ○ A travelling theatre
- ○ A school
- ○ A bakery

A Letter from Newman



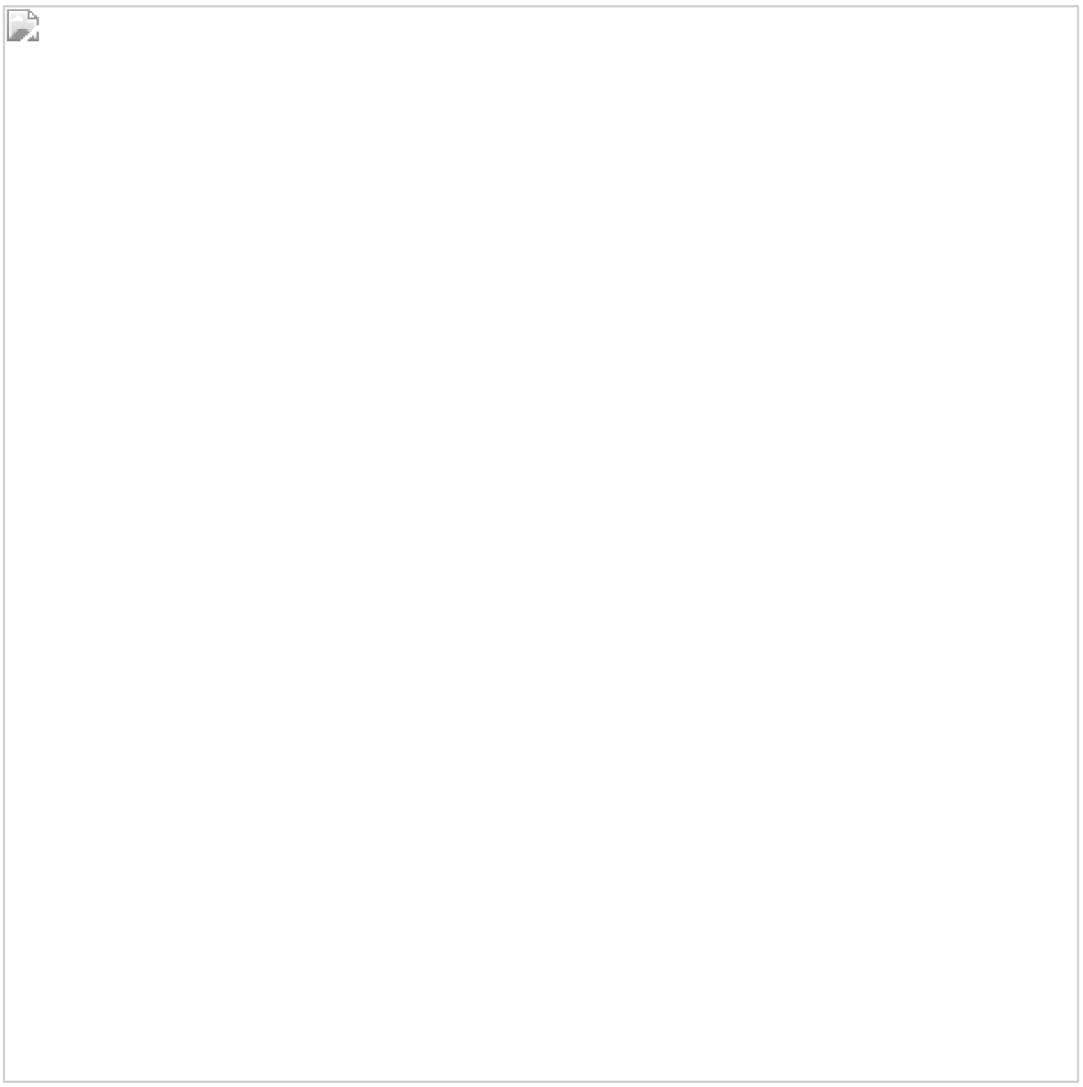
One morning a letter arrived from Newman Noggs. It was very inky, and it told Nicholas to come back to London at once.

Nicholas dashed out. Mr. Crummles hugged him in the street in the grandest stage style, crying, “Farewell, my noble, my lion-hearted boy!” Then Nicholas and Smike were on the coach for London.

Back in London, Nicholas tried to make Sir Mulberry Hawk answer for how he had treated Kate. Hawk refused, so Nicholas struck him with his whip. Then Nicholas wrote to Ralph that his mother, his sister and he would have nothing more to do with him.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nicholas rushed back the moment he heard Kate was in trouble. How do you know when someone you love needs you?

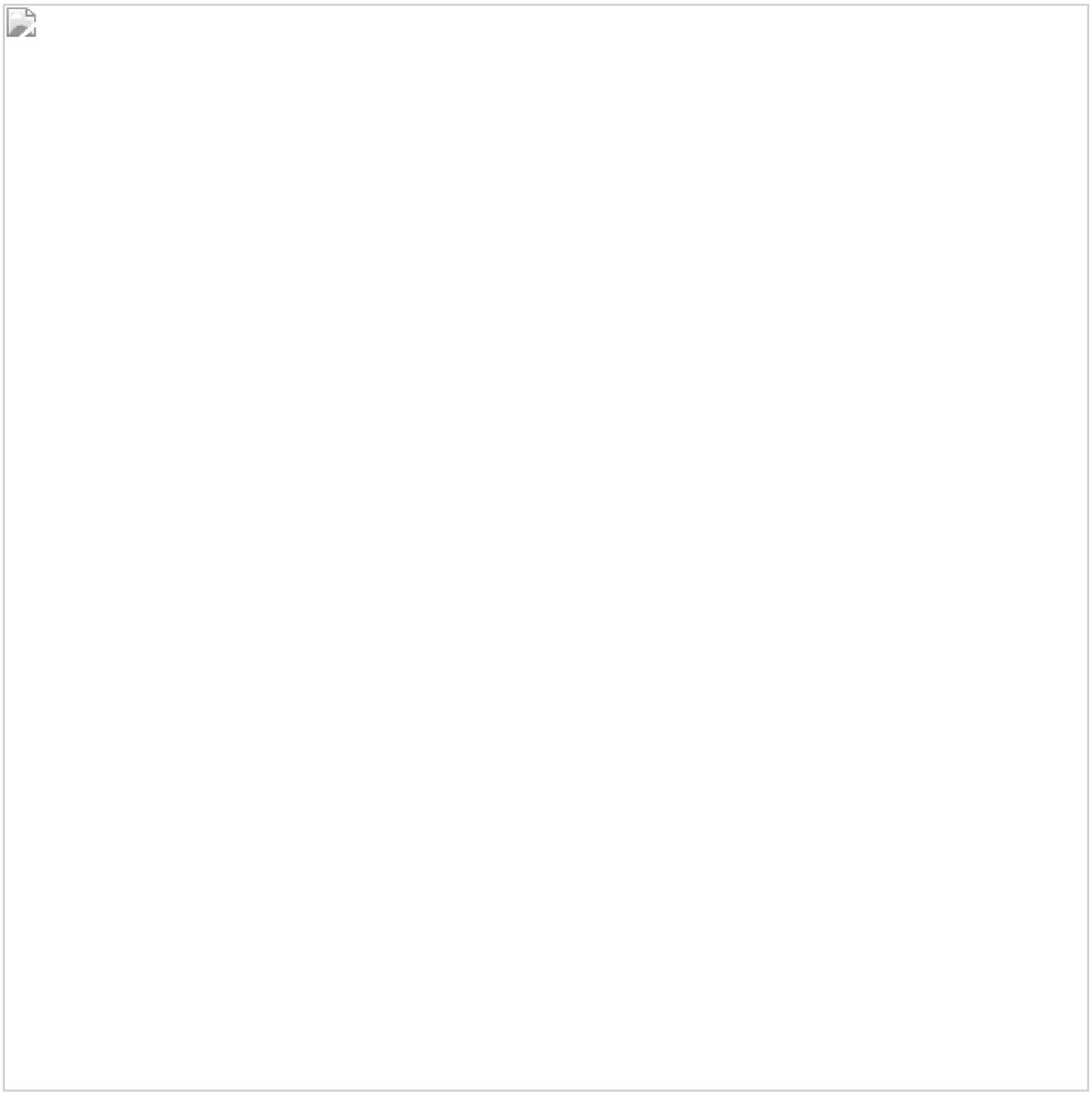


Think about it

1. Who wrote to bring Nicholas back to London?

- ○ Newman Noggs
- ○ Mr. Crummles
- ○ John Browdie

The Cheeryble Brothers



Nicholas still had no job. One day he met a kind old gentleman in the street, Mr. Charles Cheeryble. Nicholas told him London felt like a wilderness.

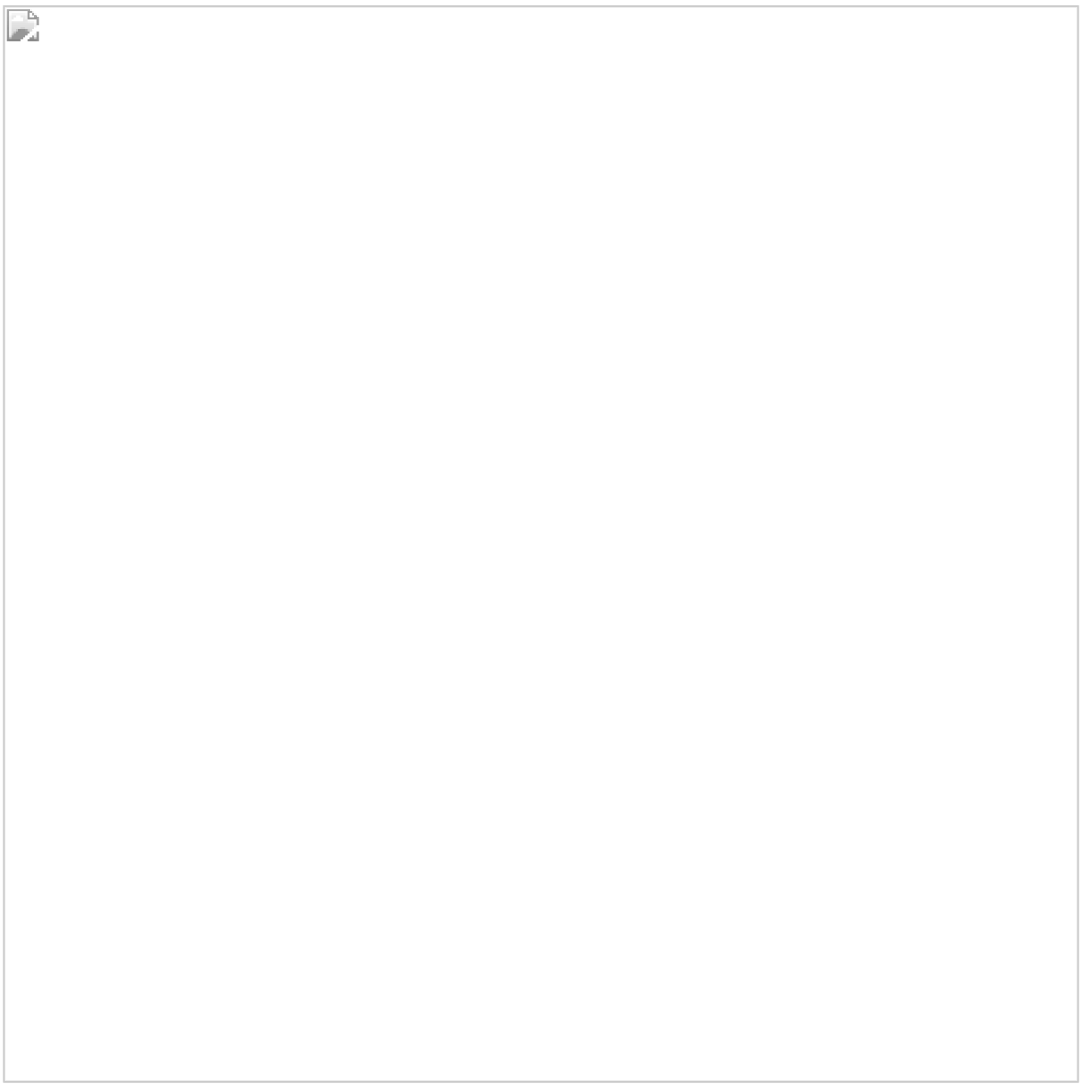
“Wilderness! Yes, it is, it is,” said the old man. “It was a wilderness to me once. I came here barefoot. I have never forgotten it. Thank God!”

Mr. Charles and his twin brother Ned ran a big, busy business, and they were the kindest merchants in London. They gave Nicholas a clerk's stool in their counting-house.

TALK ABOUT IT

Mr. Cheeryble remembered what it was like to be poor. How might that help a person be kind to others?

The Cheeryble Brothers · another picture

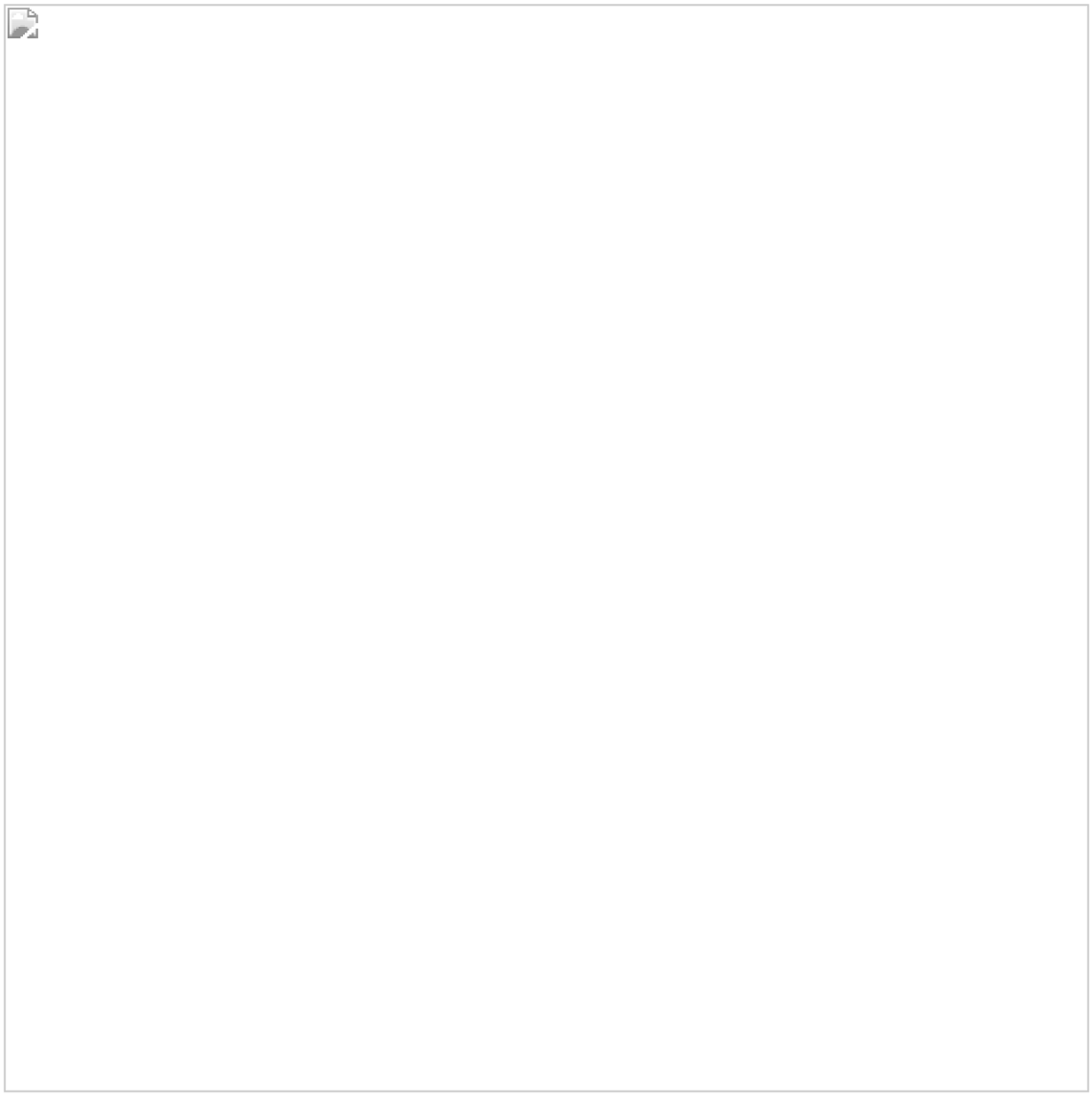


Think about it

1. What did Mr. Charles Cheeryble say about when he first came to London?

- ○ He came barefoot
- ○ He came in a carriage
- ○ He came with a lot of money

Tim Linkinwater and the Cottage



In the counting-house worked Tim Linkinwater, who had a pet blackbird named Dick. Tim had worked there for forty-four years, and he would not hear of leaving.

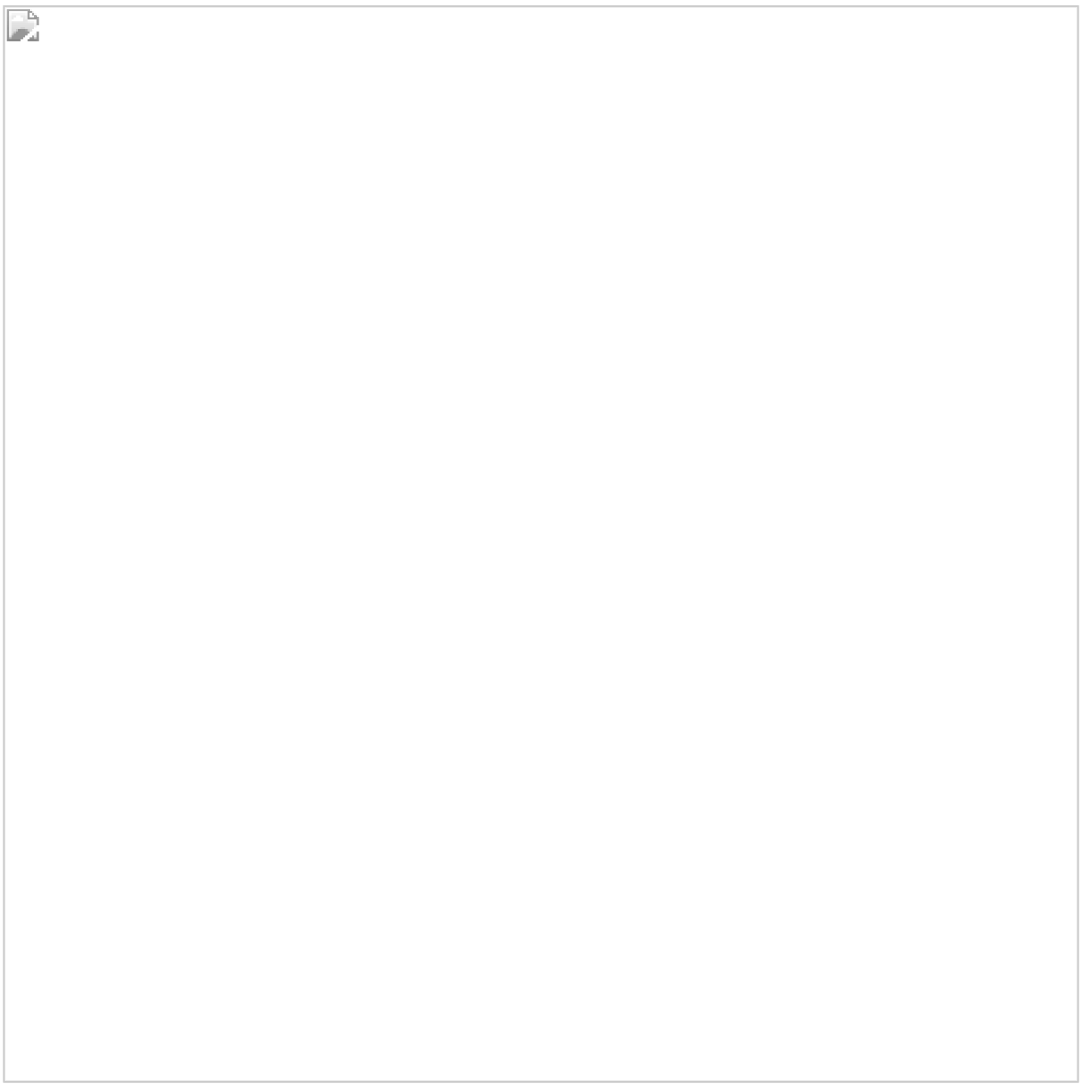
The brothers also had a small empty cottage at Bow, and they let it to Mrs. Nickleby, Kate and Nicholas for hardly any rent. Brother Ned wanted to ask for nothing at all. “We are rich, and should be ashamed to touch the rent.”

Their friend Miss La Creevy came to visit. “In short, the poor Nicklebys were social and happy; while the rich Nickleby was alone and miserable.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Ralph had lots of money and no one to share it with. The Nicklebys had very little and each other. What do you notice about the two?

Tim Linkinwater and the Cottage · another picture

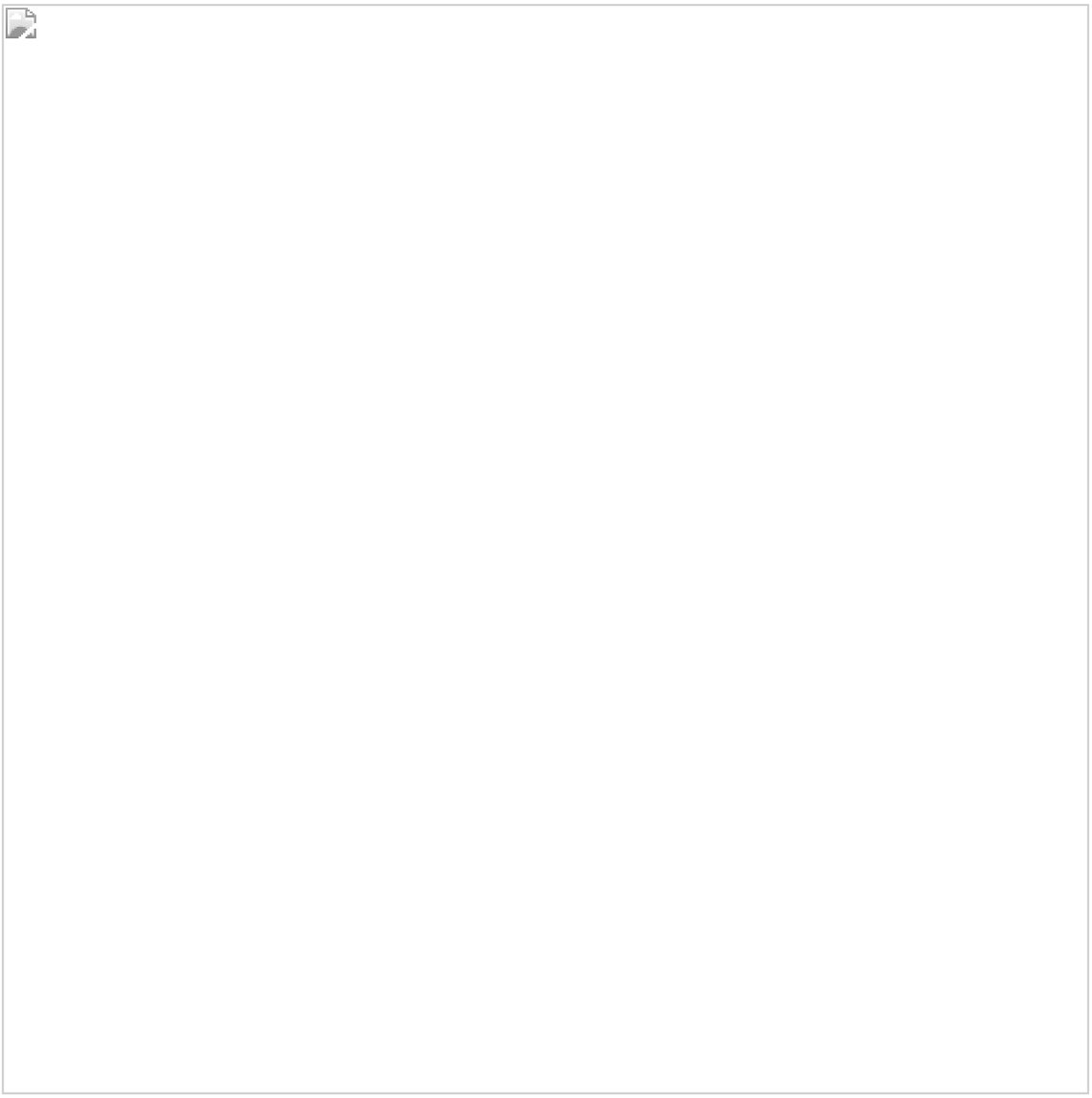


Think about it

1. What did the Cheeryble brothers do about the rent for the cottage?

- ○ Asked for much less than usual
- ○ Asked for a bag of gold
- ○ Forgot about the cottage

Madeline Bray



Nicholas met a gentle young woman named Madeline Bray. She worked hard painting to support her sick, cross father, who was deep in debt. Nicholas loved her.

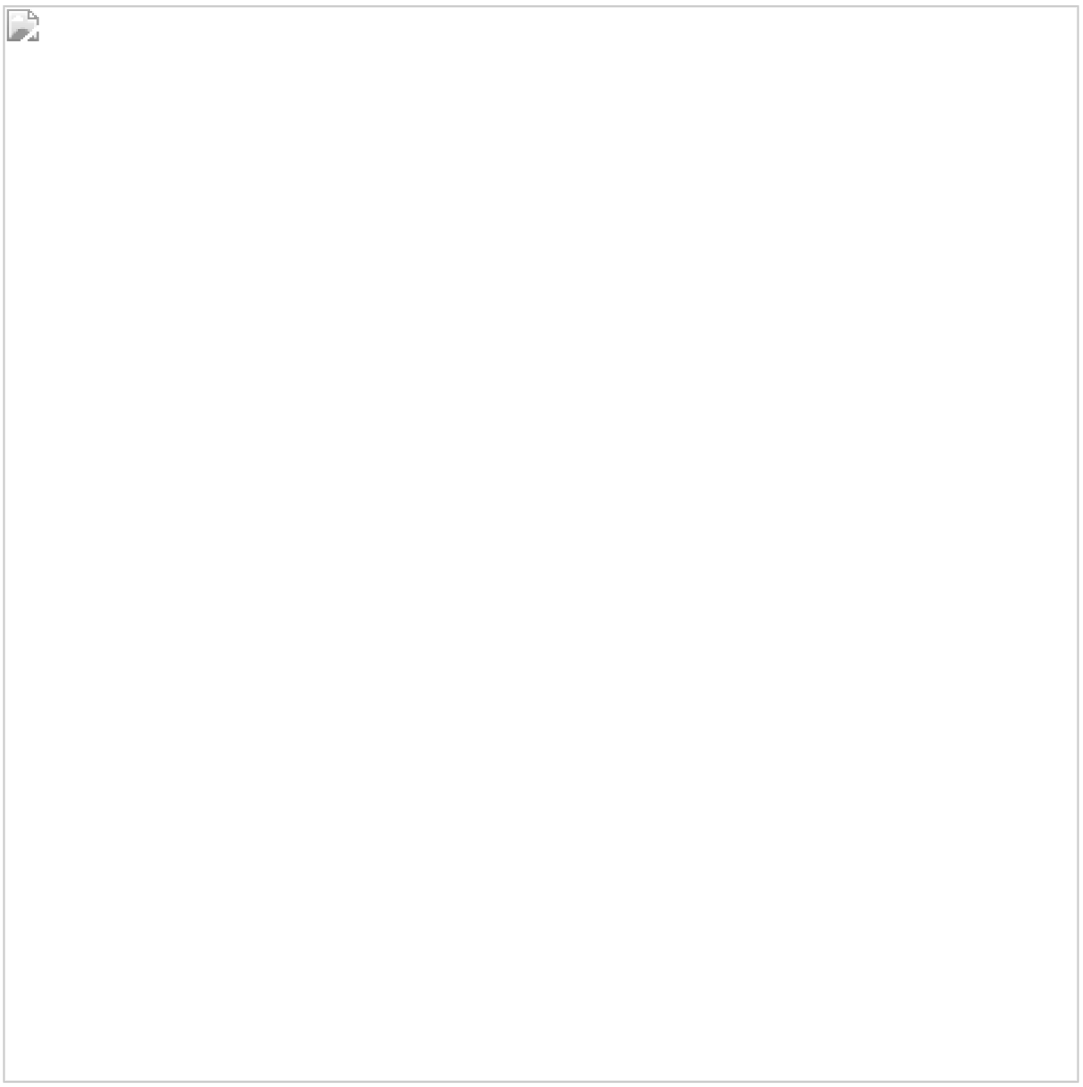
An old miser named Arthur Gride wanted to marry Madeline, and Ralph helped him because her father owed them both money. Madeline agreed, to save her father from debt.

Nicholas could not bear it. He and Kate went to the house on the morning of the wedding to offer Madeline a home with them.

TALK ABOUT IT

Madeline was ready to marry someone she did not love to help her father. What do you think about that kind of sacrifice?

Madeline Bray · another picture

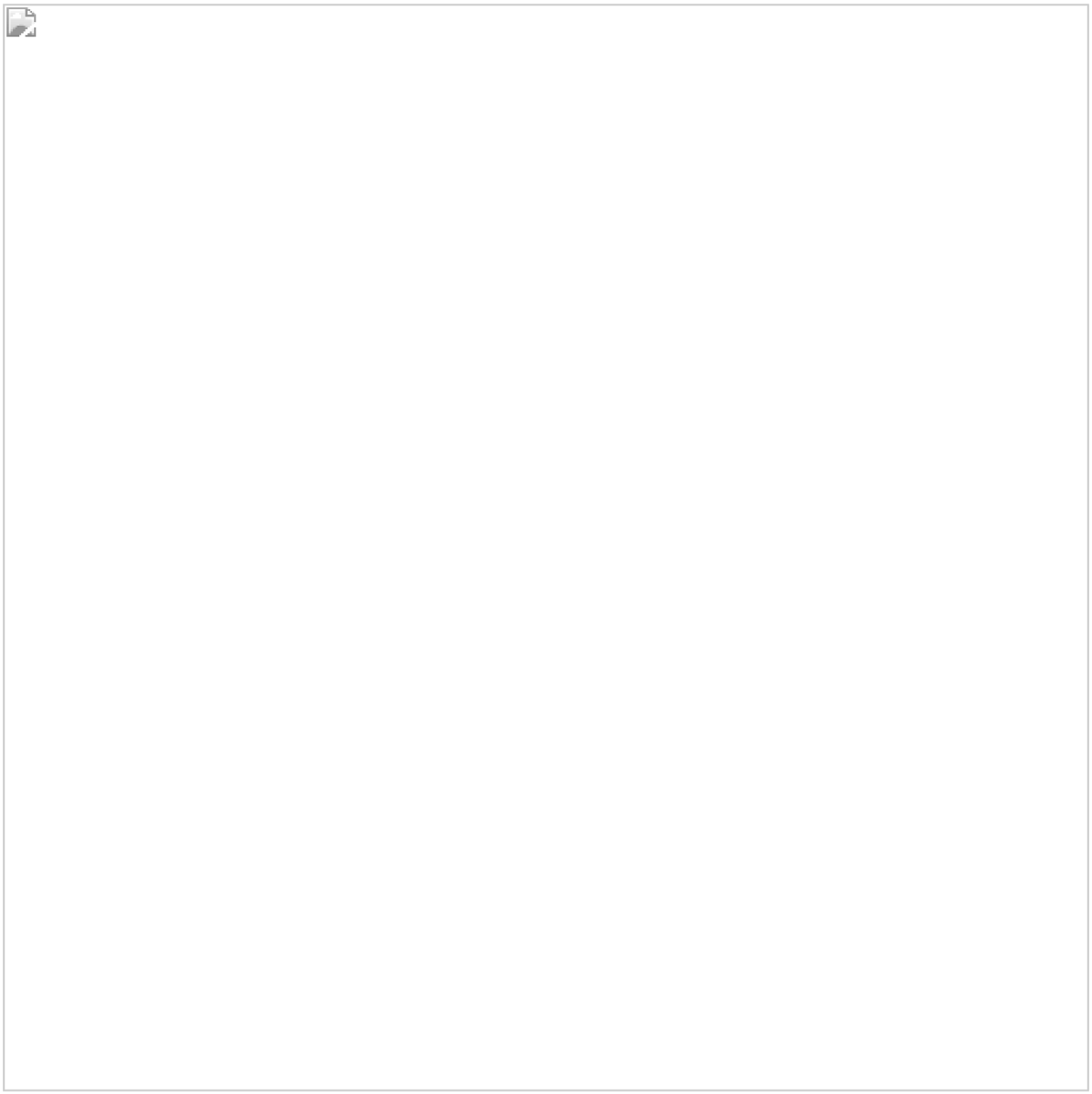


Think about it

1. Why did Madeline agree to marry Mr. Gride?

- ○ To help her father with his debts
- ○ Because she loved him
- ○ Because Nicholas asked her to

The Wedding That Did Not Happen



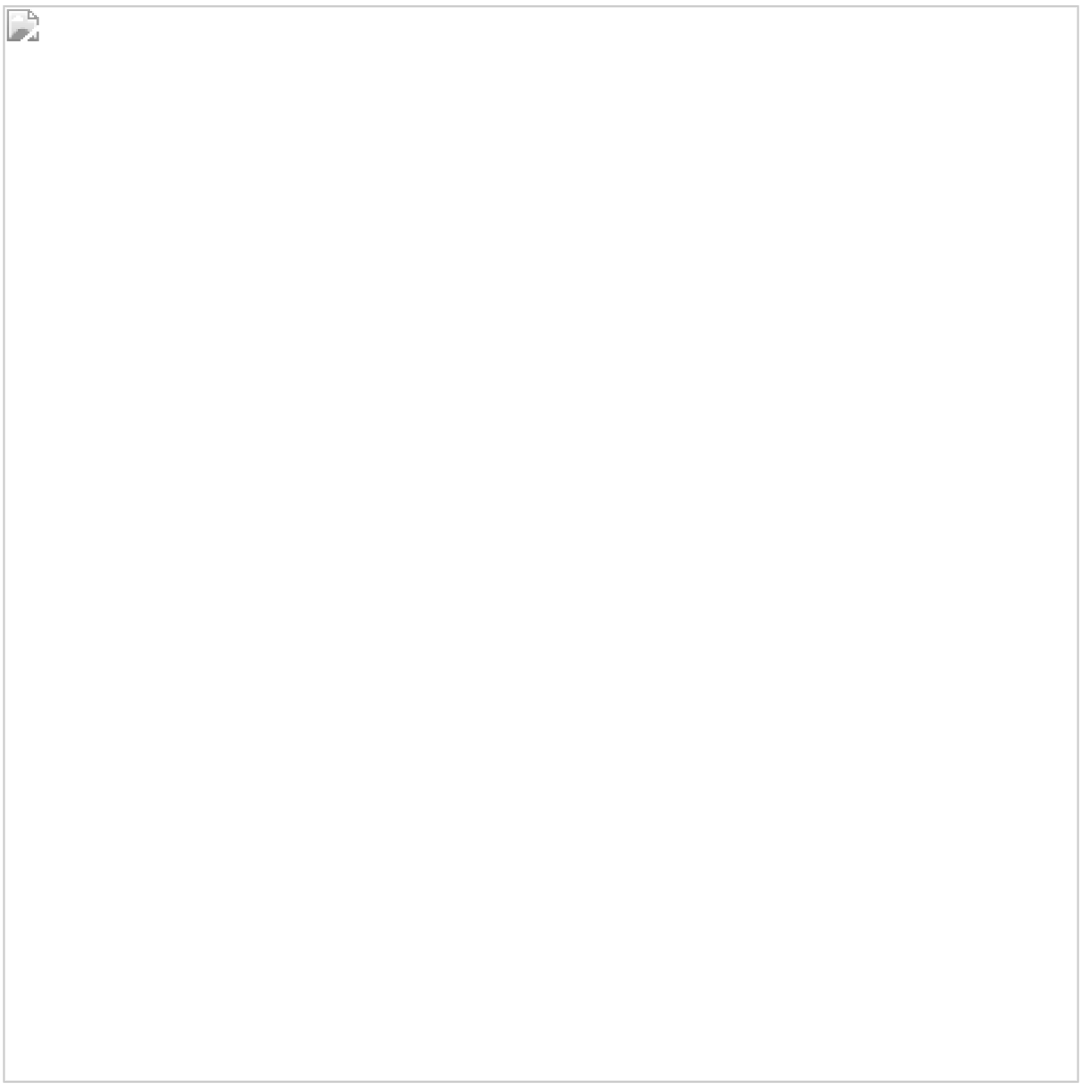
At the house, Ralph and Gride tried to turn Nicholas and Kate away, but Nicholas stood his ground. Then, upstairs, there was a heavy fall and a scream. Madeline's father had died suddenly.

Nicholas carried Madeline out of that sad room and Kate stayed by her side. Ralph tried to stop them, but he could not.

Madeline went home with Kate, safe. There would be no wedding, and Ralph's plan had fallen apart.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nicholas and Kate showed up when Madeline most needed a friend. What helps you most when you feel alone?

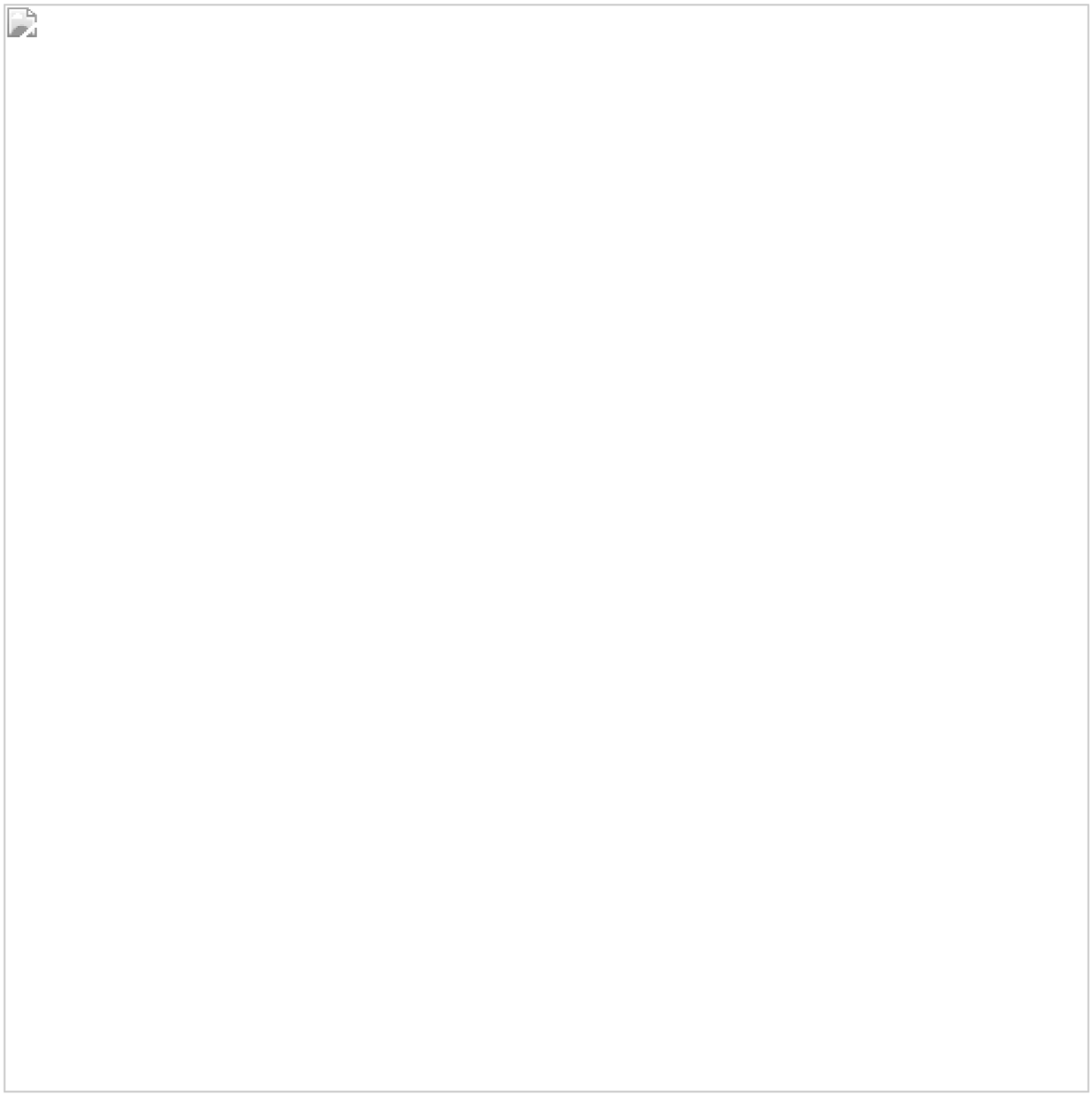


Think about it

1. Who took Madeline to a safe place?

- ○ Nicholas and Kate
- ○ Ralph and Mr. Gride
- ○ Mr. Squeers

Smike's Last Journey



Smike had been weak and ill for a long time. Nicholas took him to the countryside near his own childhood home, and stayed with him day and night.

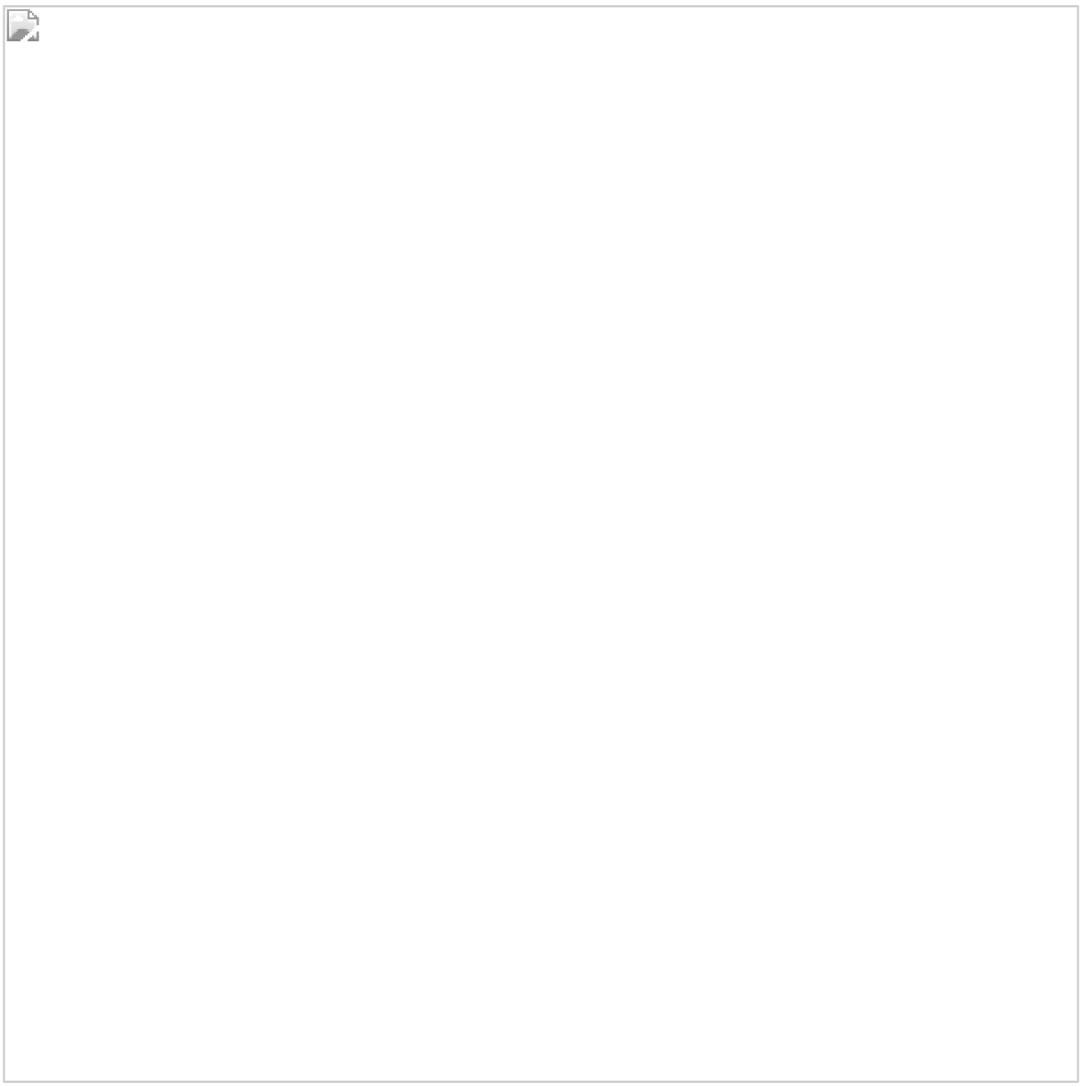
One evening Smike asked a favour. “Promise me that when I die, I shall be buried near--as near as they can make my grave--to the tree we saw today.” Nicholas promised.

Smike woke from a nap with a smile. “I have had such pleasant dreams,” he said. “Such pleasant, happy dreams!” He spoke of beautiful gardens full of people with light on their faces. Then Smike died, peacefully, with Nicholas beside him.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nicholas stayed by Smike's side to the very end. What do you think Smike took with him?

Smike's Last Journey · another picture

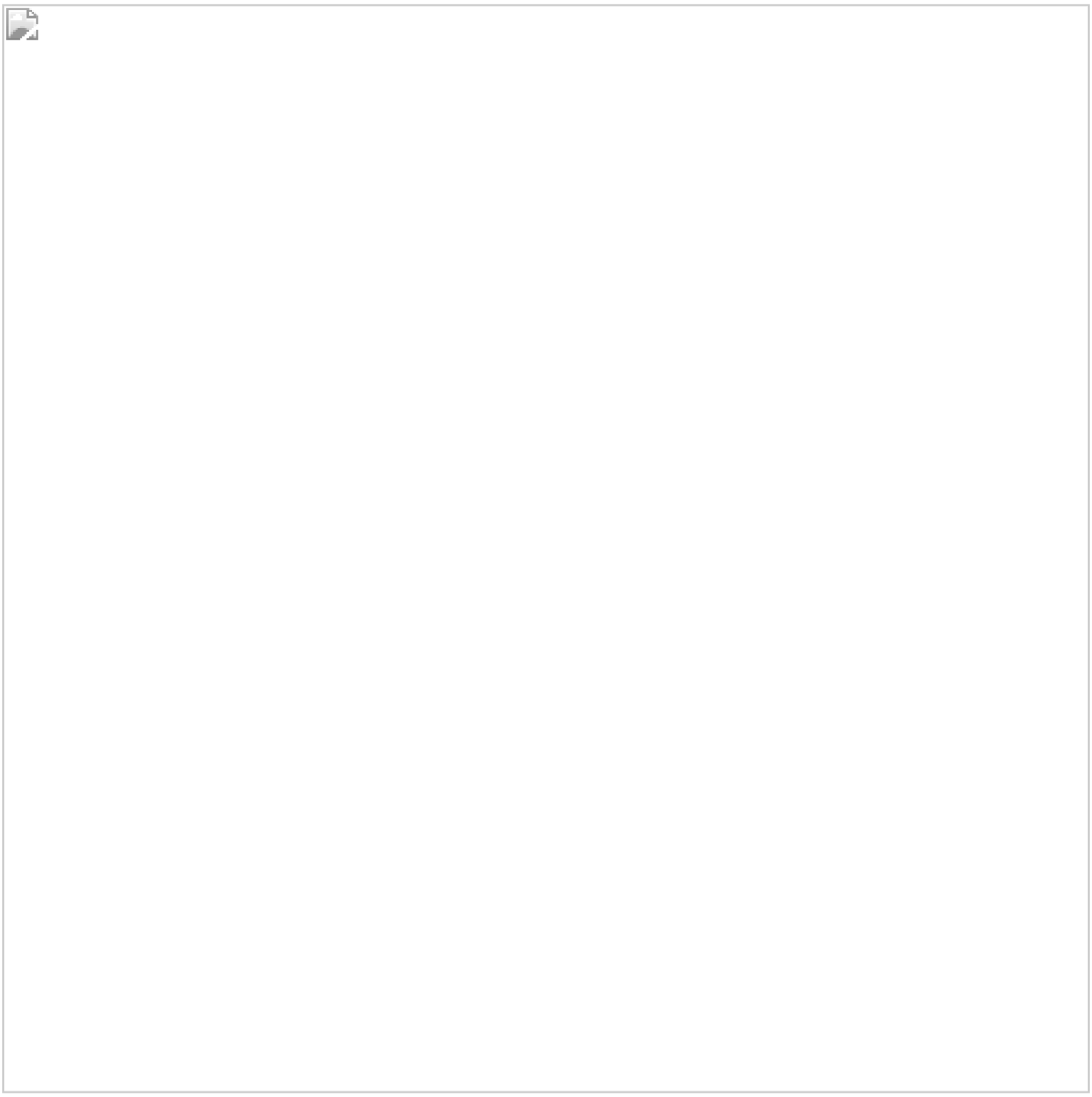


Think about it

1. Who was with Smike at the end?

- ○ Nicholas
- ○ Mr. Squeers
- ○ Ralph

Ralph Alone



Ralph's schemes began to fall apart. Newman Noggs spoke up at last, and so did an old man named Brooker, who had once done secret business with Ralph. The boy called Smike, Brooker said, had been Ralph's own son, hidden away long ago.

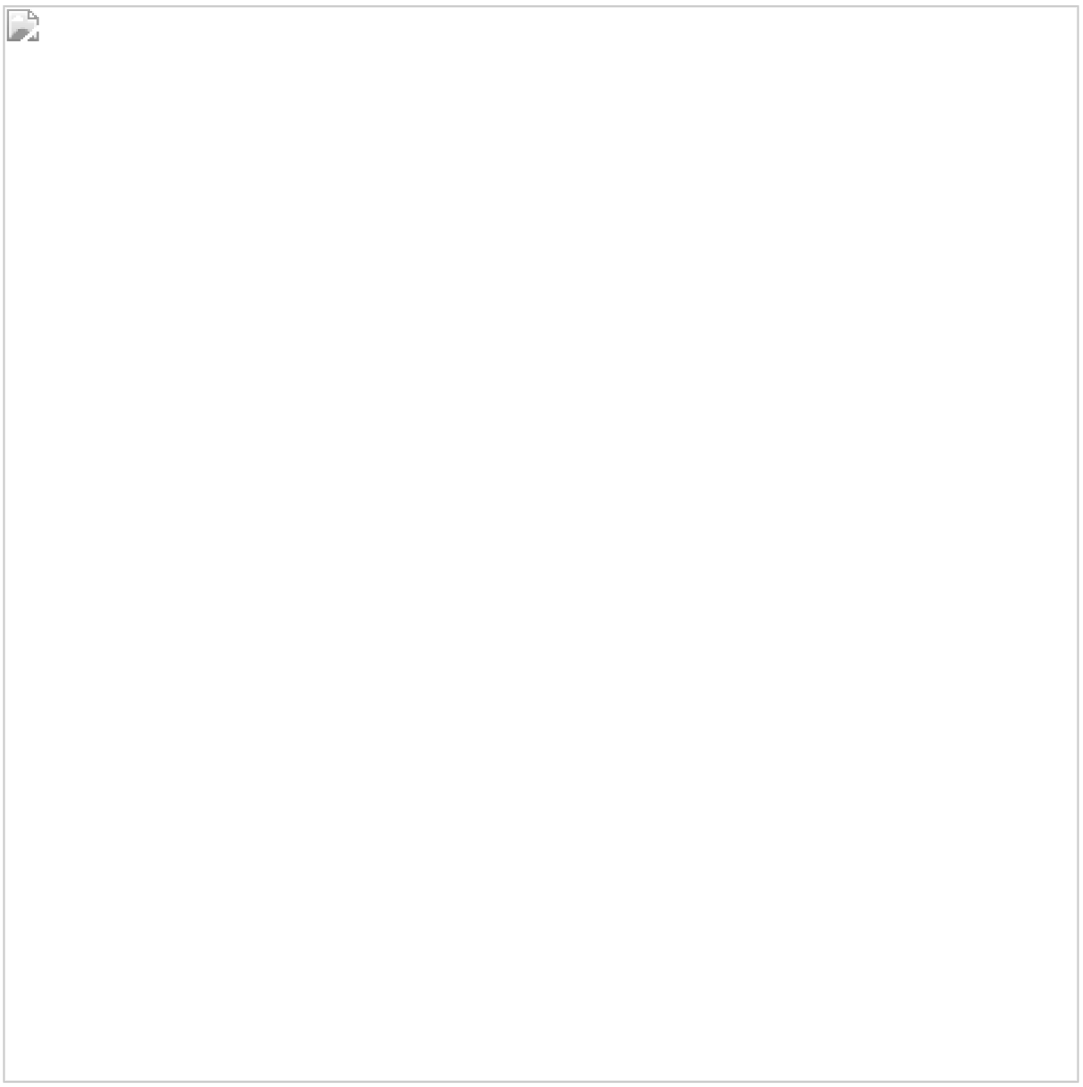
“His own child, his own child!” Ralph thought. He did not doubt it. He had never known his son, and now it was too late.

Ralph went home alone, to a dark, cold, silent house, and he died there, alone and unhappy. Mr. Squeers was punished too: he was sent far away across the sea for seven years.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ralph never knew Smike was his son until it was too late. What might have been different if he had cared about people?

Ralph Alone · another picture

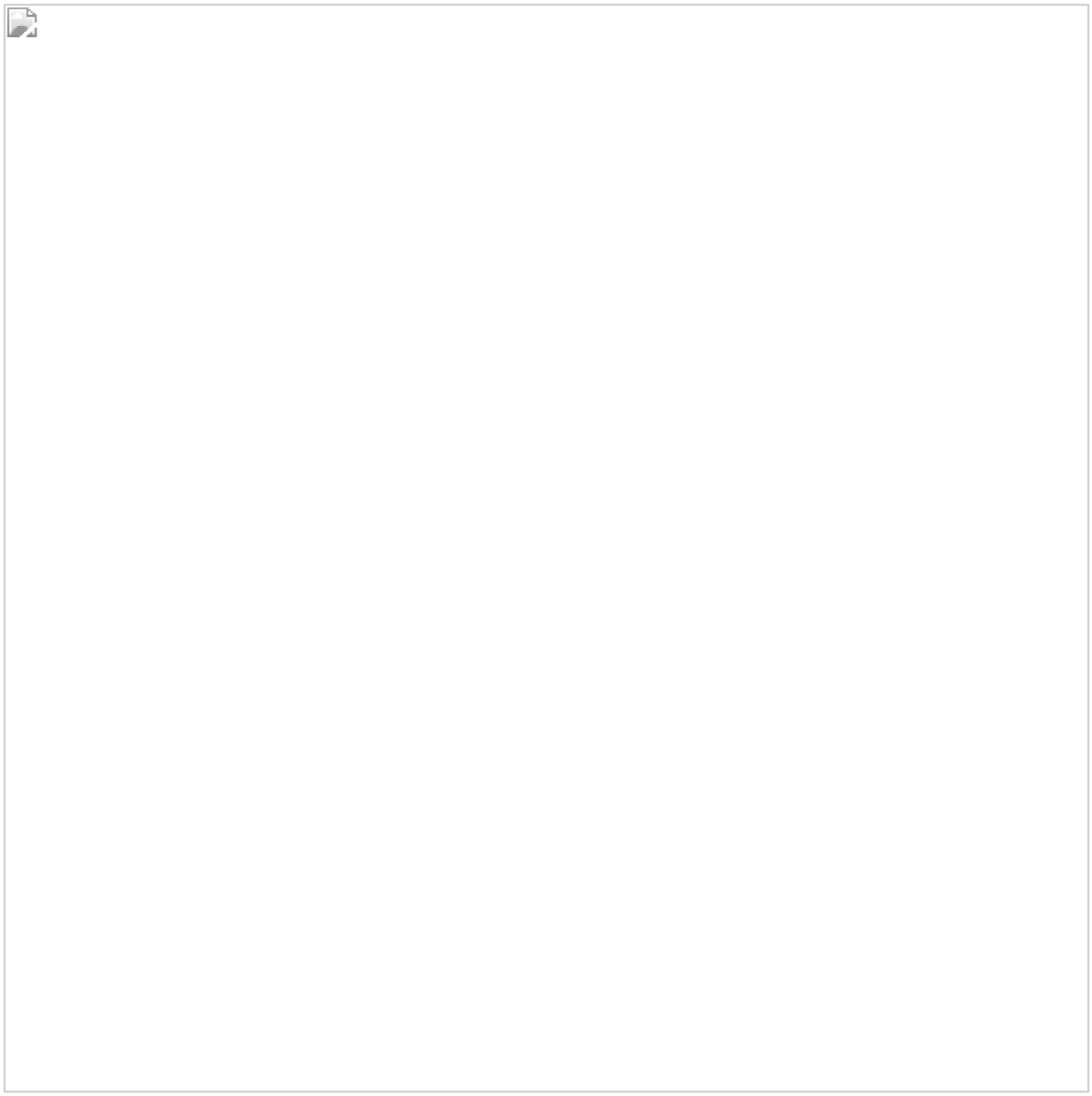


Think about it

1. Who was Smike, in the end?

- ○ Ralph's own son
- ○ Mr. Squeers's brother
- ○ Nicholas's cousin

Happy at Last



When her time of mourning had passed, Madeline married Nicholas. On the same day Kate married Frank Cheeryble, the brothers' nephew. Tim Linkinwater and Miss La Creevy were quietly married a few weeks later.

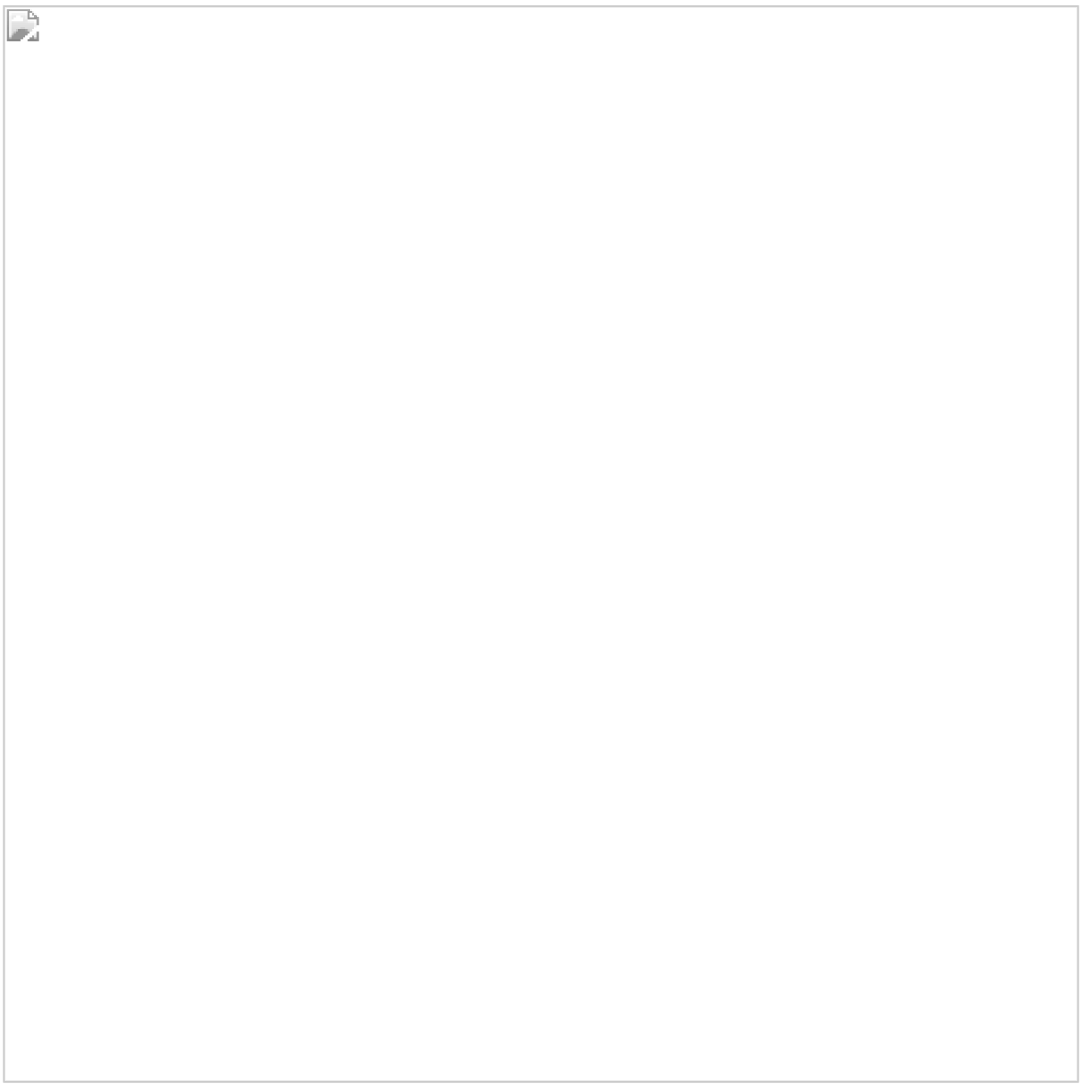
Nicholas and Frank worked in the Cheeryble business, and before many years it was called “Cheeryble and Nickleby.” The twin brothers retired. “Who needs to be told that THEY were happy?”

Ralph's money could have gone to Nicholas and Kate. They would not touch it. They said they could never hope to prosper with money gotten that way.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nicholas and Kate said no to Ralph's money. Why do you think they chose that?

Happy at Last · another picture

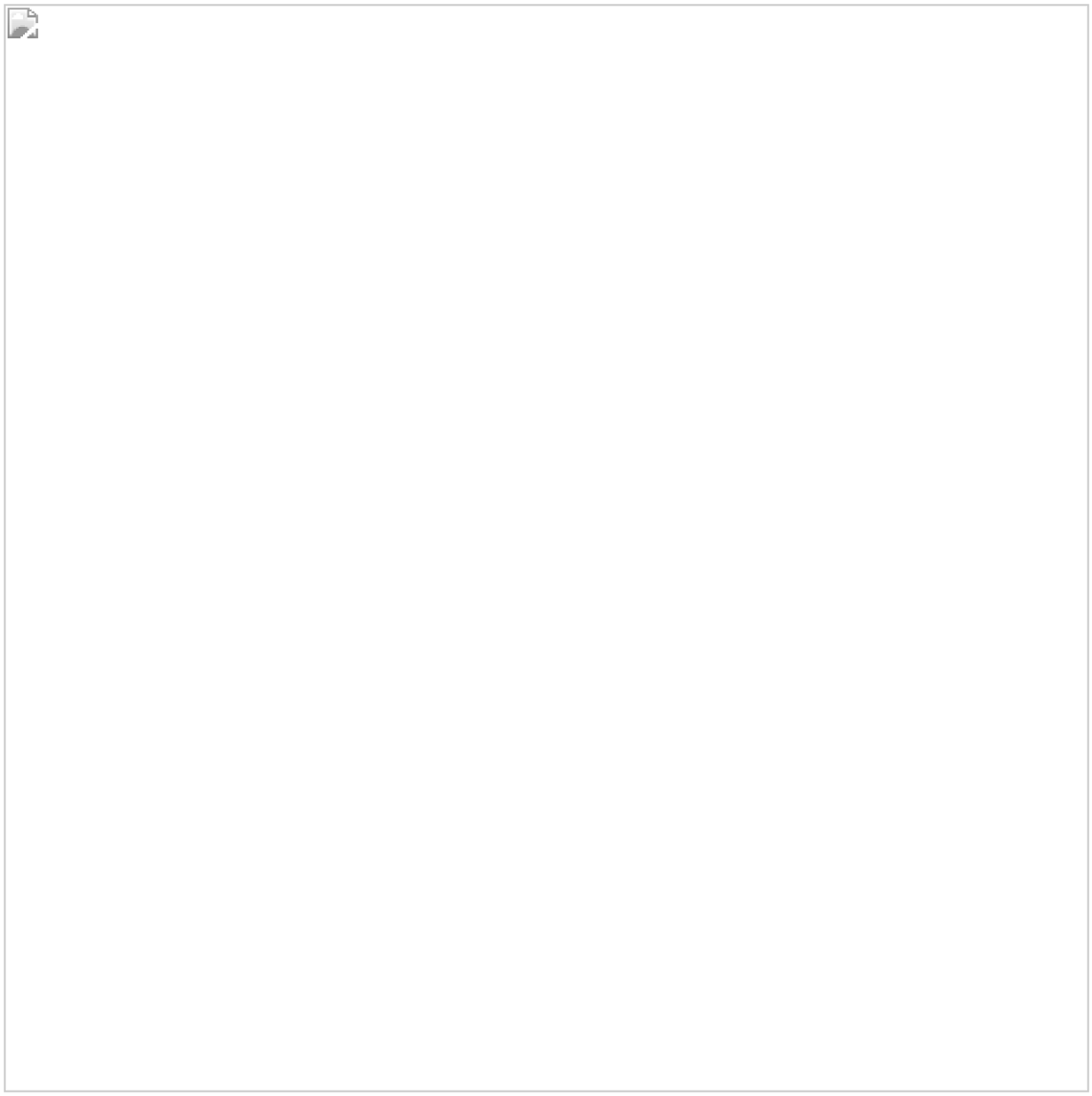


Think about it

1. What was the business called in the end?

- ○ Cheeryble and Nickleby
- ○ Squeers and Sons
- ○ Noggs and Company

The Grass Was Green



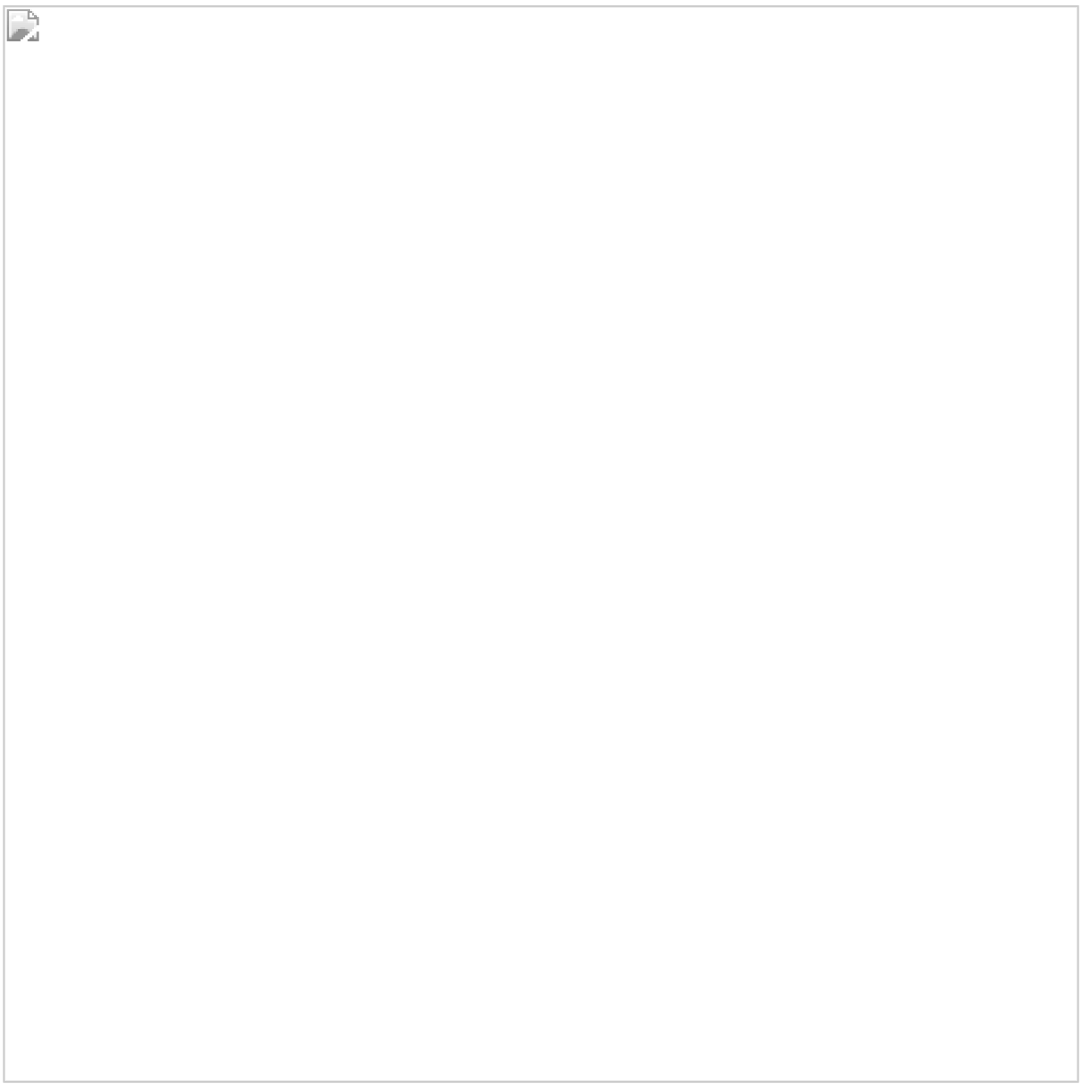
The first thing Nicholas did when he grew rich was to buy his father's old house. Children came to fill it, and no old tree was cut down and no old room torn out.

Kate lived nearby with children of her own. Mrs. Nickleby went between their two houses, telling everyone how to bring up children. And dear Newman Noggs lived in a little cottage close by. “The little people could do nothing without dear Newman Noggs.”

Smike was not forgotten. “The grass was green above the dead boy’s grave,” and the children brought fresh flowers for the stone all spring and summer.

TALK ABOUT IT

The children brought flowers for Smike every spring. Who is someone you remember with love?



Think about it

1. What did the children do at Smike's grave?

- ○ Brought fresh flowers
- ○ Left it alone
- ○ Played loud games

2. Nicholas took in a boy nobody else wanted. Who is someone you could welcome in?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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