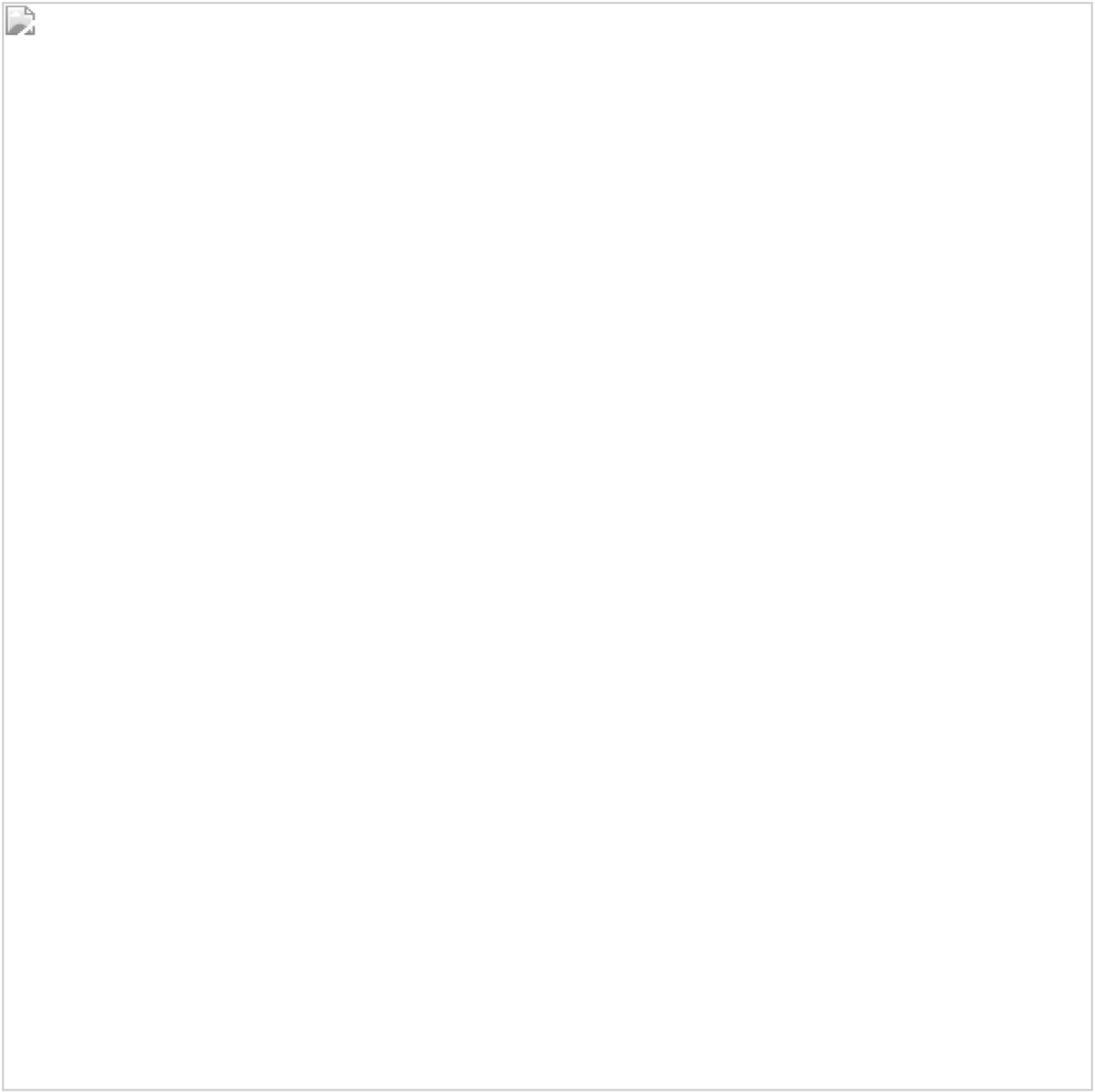
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Orpheus

A Myth of Greece and Rome



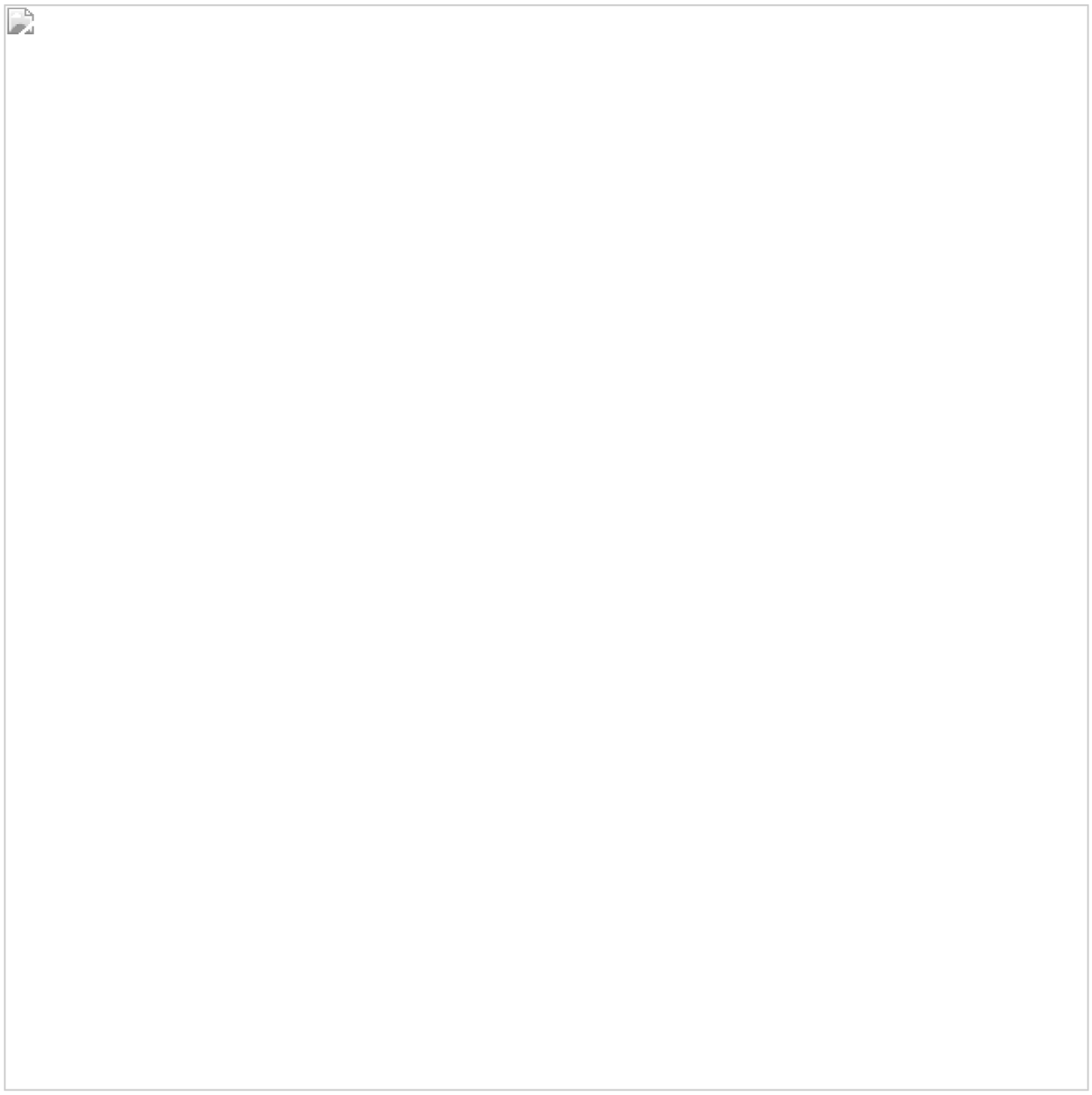
Orpheus, the singer from Thrace, was the most famous musician in all of Greece.

TALK ABOUT IT

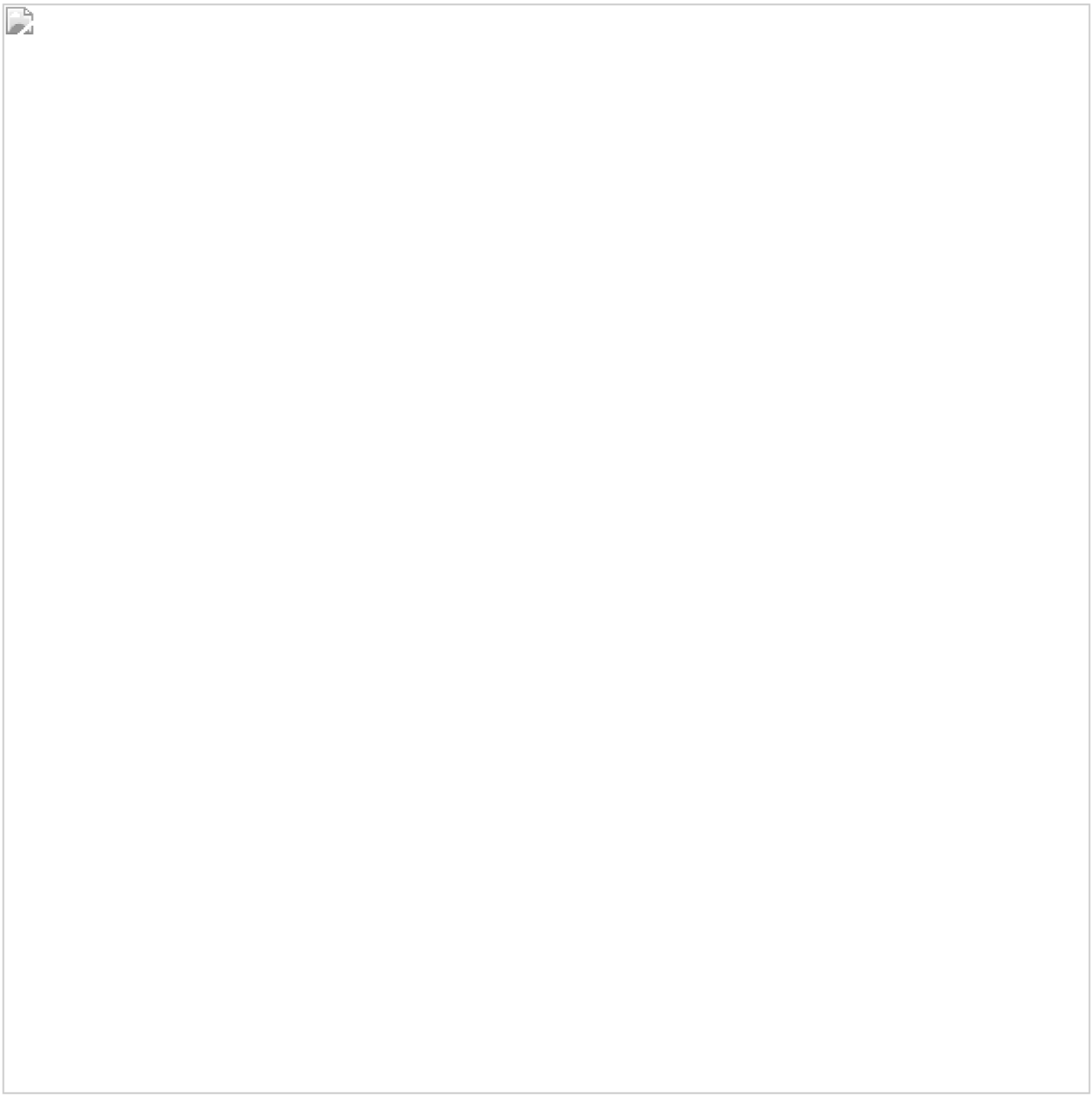
What is the best music you have ever heard? What made it so good?

This book belongs to _____

Orpheus · another picture



The Singer



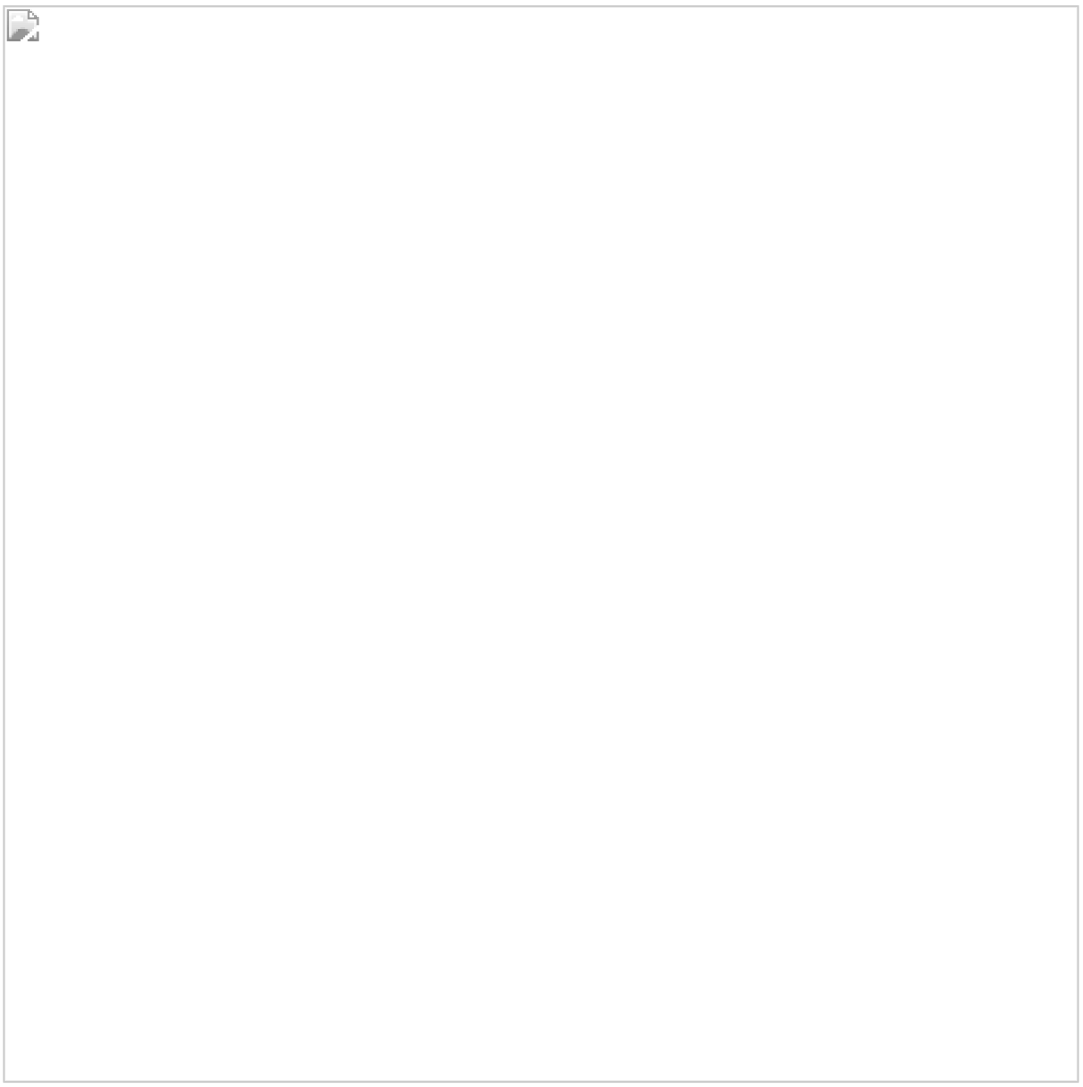
The god Apollo himself had given Orpheus a golden harp.

When Orpheus played, rocks, trees and wild animals would follow him just to listen.

He even sailed with Jason and the Argonauts. Once, when the ship passed the rocks of the Sirens, whose songs lure sailors, Orpheus played so sweetly that their dreadful singing was no use at all.

TALK ABOUT IT

Orpheus used music, not a sword. What can music do that other things cannot?

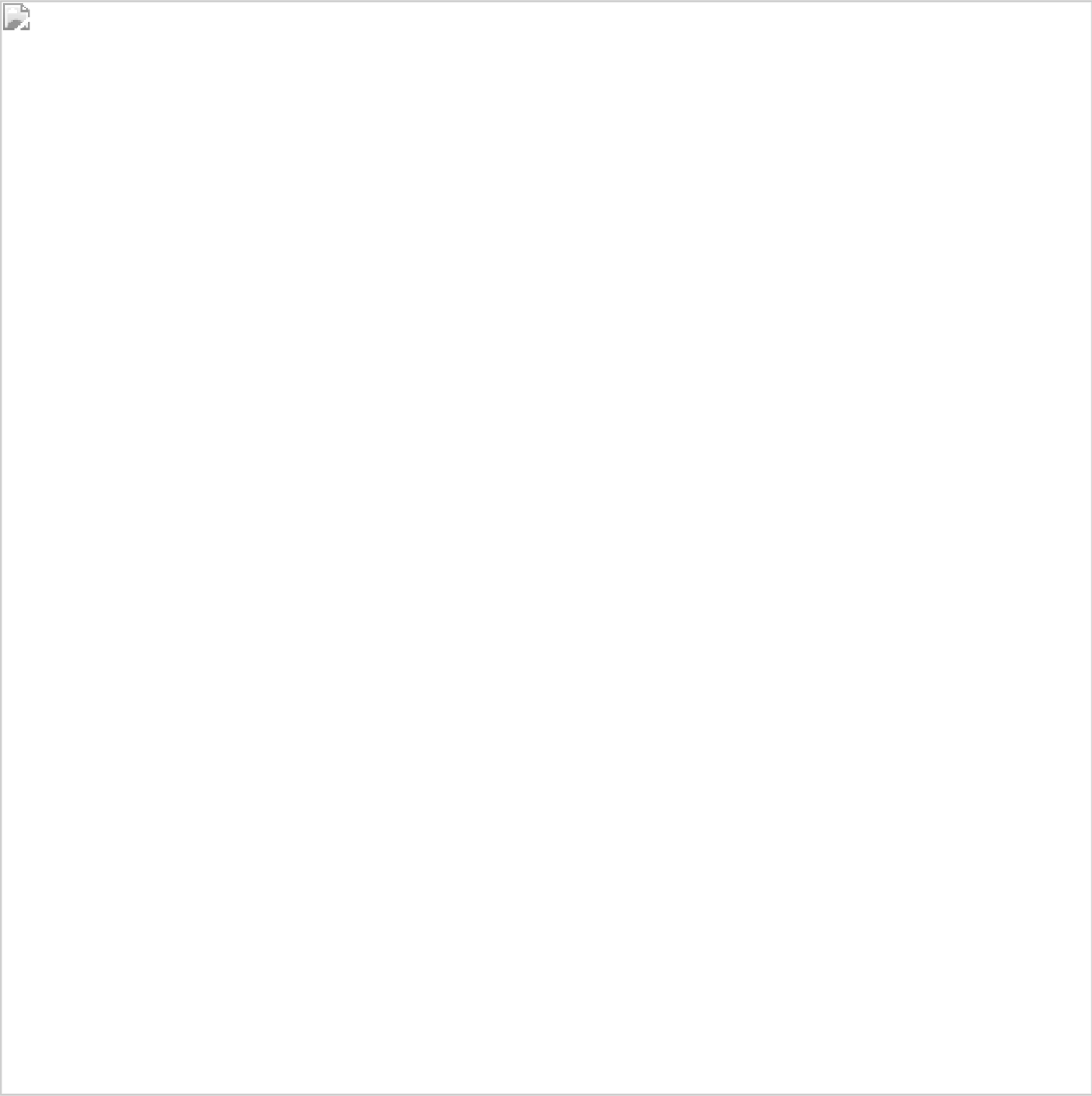


Think about it

1. Who gave Orpheus his golden harp?

- ○ Apollo
- ○ Jason
- ○ A sailor

Orpheus and Eurydice



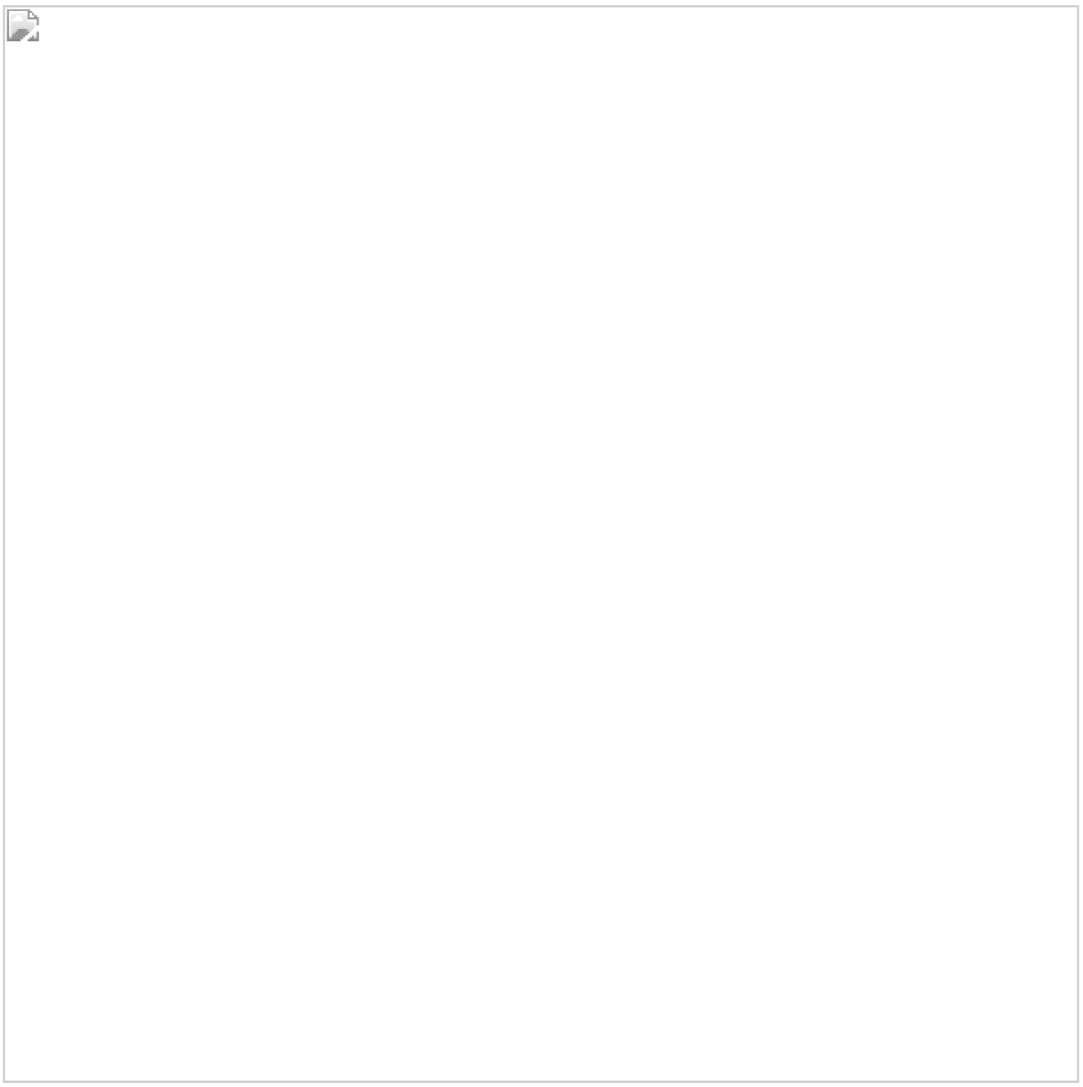
Orpheus married a gentle nymph of the woods named Eurydice. He loved her dearly, and she loved him.

But the day was not as bright as it should have been. The wedding torches smoked and would not burn cheerfully.

TALK ABOUT IT

Wedding days are supposed to be happy. What things make a day feel special to you?

Orpheus and Eurydice · another picture

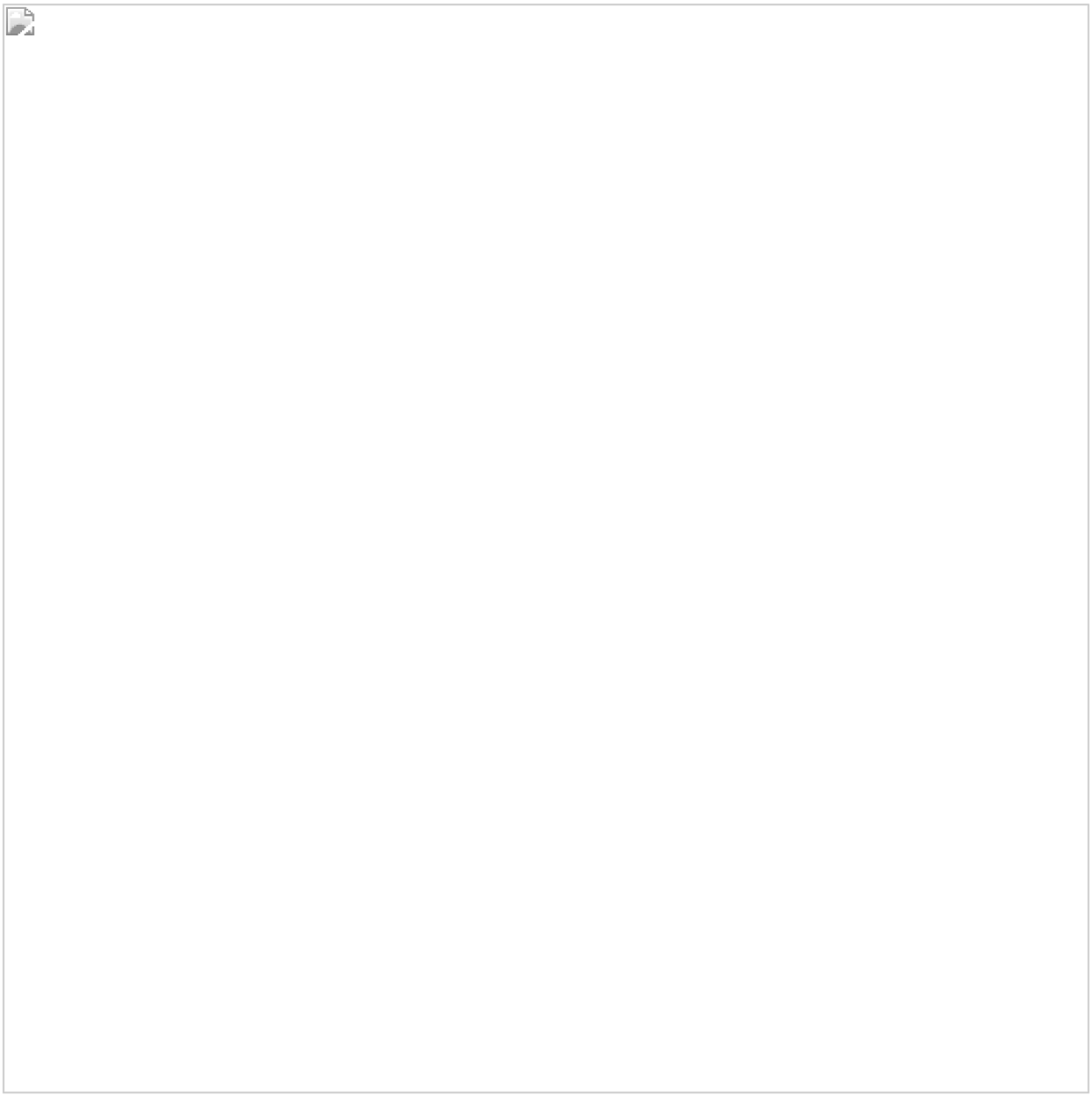


Think about it

1. Who was Eurydice?

- ○ A sailor
- ○ A nymph who married Orpheus
- ○ A goddess of the sea

A Very Sad Day



Soon after, Eurydice was walking in the woods with her friends when a snake bit her heel. Nothing could save her, and she died.

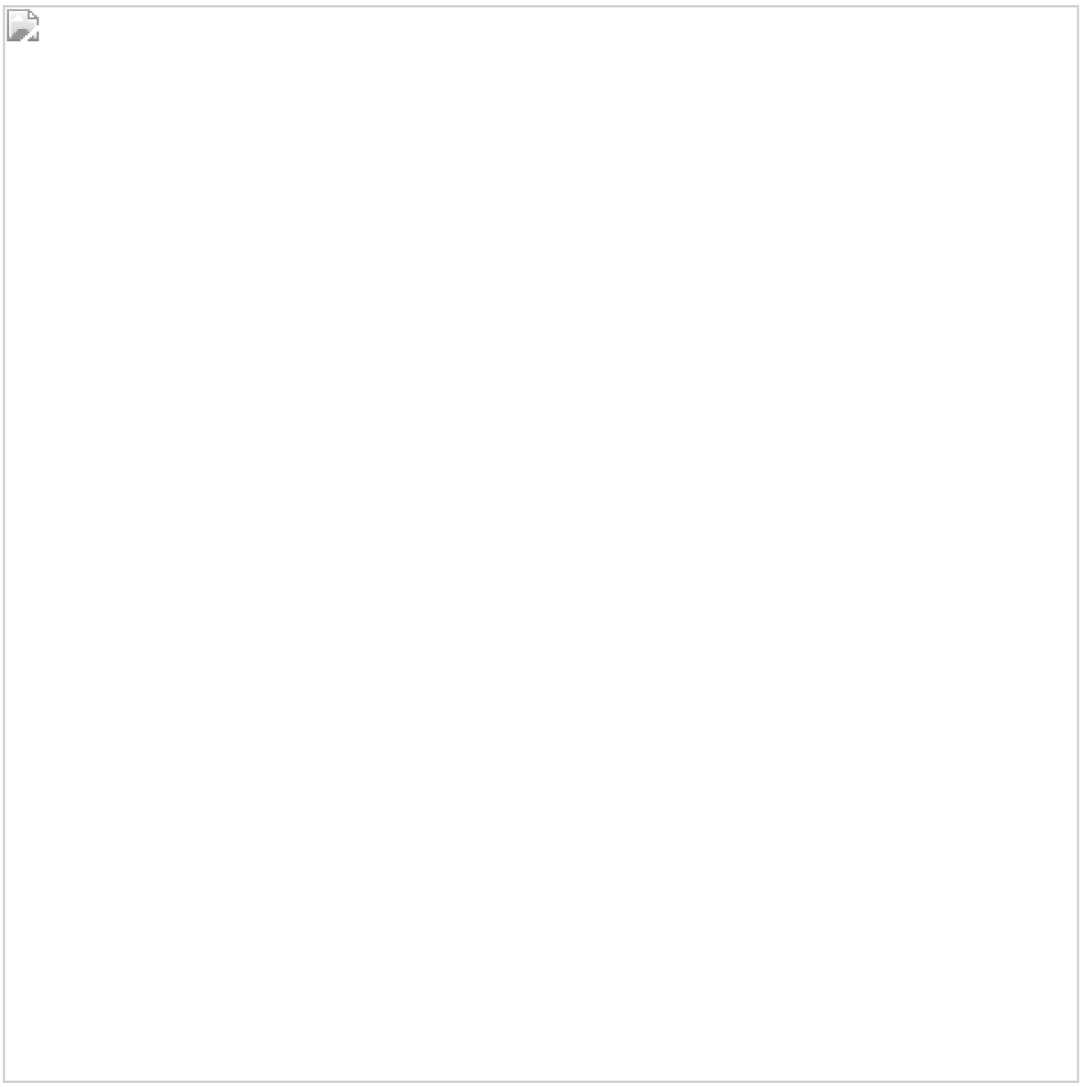
Orpheus could not believe he had lost her forever. Day and night he prayed to the gods to give her back, but they did not listen.

So he made up his mind to do something nobody had done. He would go down into the Land of the Dead himself and ask for her to come home.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think Orpheus felt when the gods would not listen? What would you want someone to do if you were that sad?

A Very Sad Day · another picture

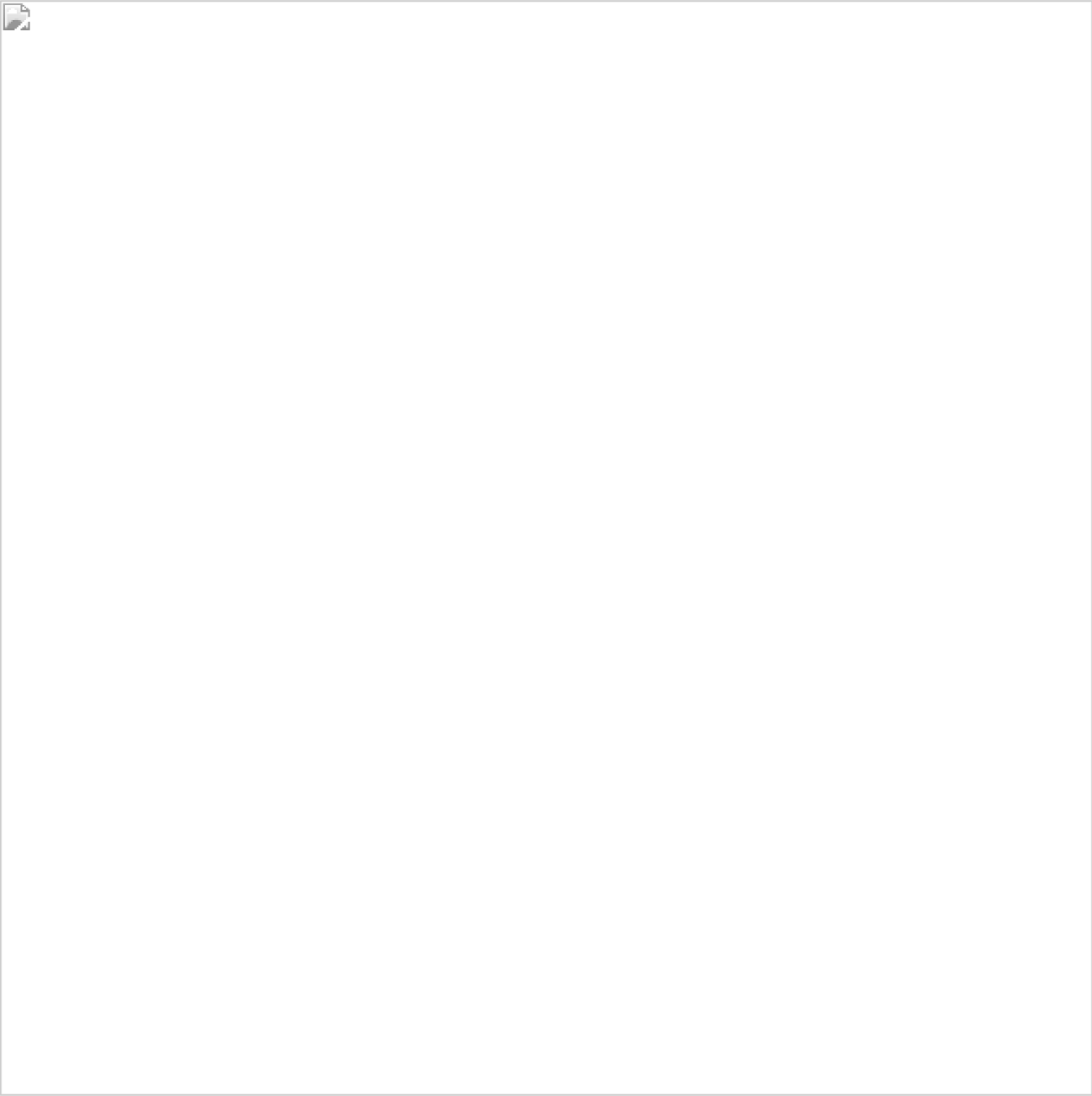


Think about it

1. What did Orpheus decide to do?

- ○ Forget about it
- ○ Go down to the Land of the Dead and ask for her back
- ○ Build a new house

Down into the Dark

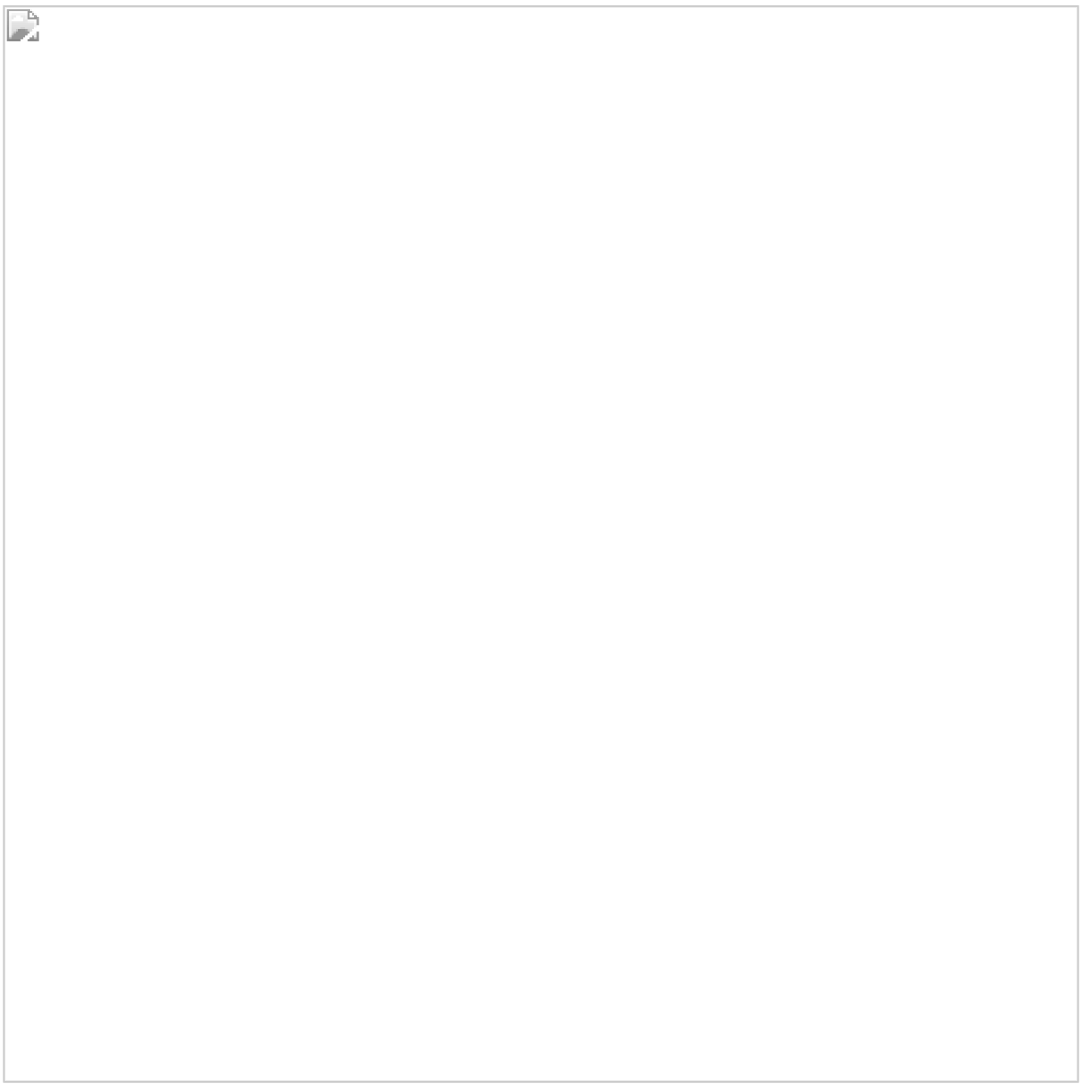


In a place called Laconia there was a dark cave among gloomy rocks. It was one of the doorways to the Lower World, where the dead go.

The road was dark and dismal, and there were crowds of ghosts. But Orpheus was not scared away by the terrors of the place. He walked on, all the way down, until he stood before Pluto and Proserpina, the king and queen of that land.

TALK ABOUT IT

It takes courage to walk into the dark for someone else. Who would you be brave for?

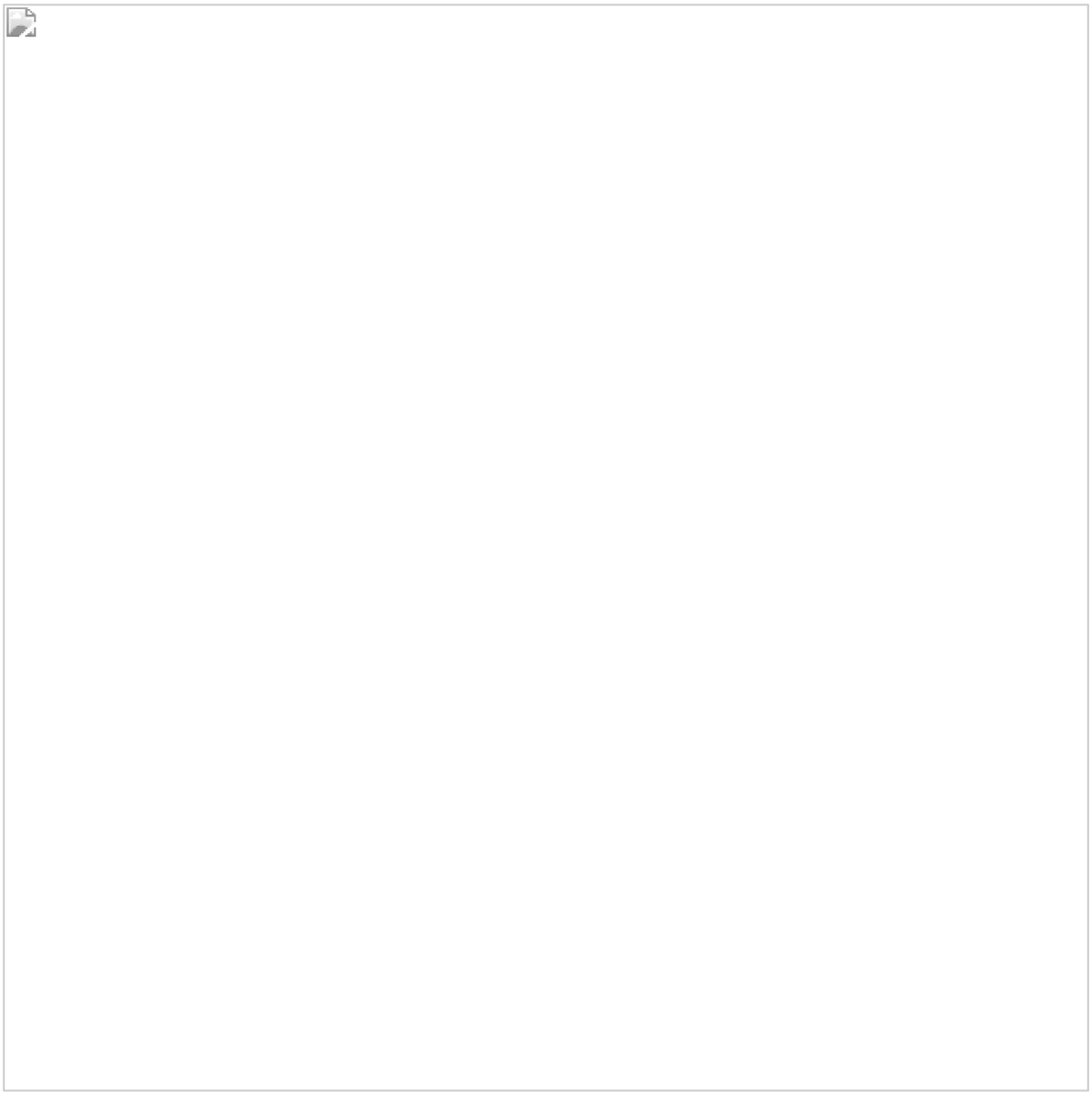


Think about it

1. Whom did Orpheus walk down to meet?

- ○ Pluto and Proserpina
- ○ Apollo
- ○ Jason

The Song That Made Ghosts Weep



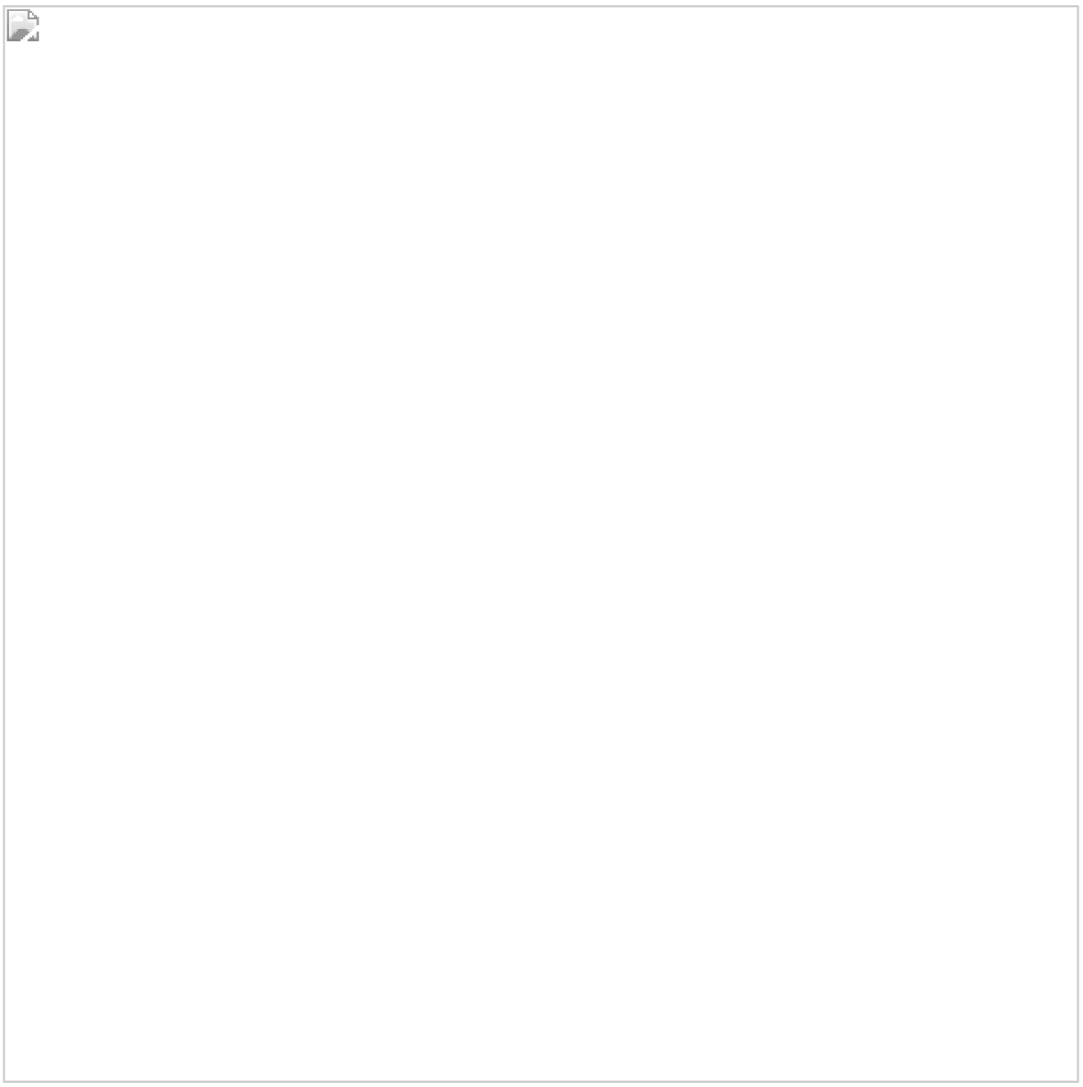
Orpheus touched the strings of his harp and sang. He told the king and queen that he had not come to see their dark land. “It is my wife I seek.”

He said that everyone must come to them in the end, and that Eurydice would too, someday. “Till then, I implore you, let her be mine.”

All around him the ghosts came crowding to listen, and they wept. One hungry man forgot his hunger. A wheel stopped turning. Even the Furies, who had never cried before, had tears on their cheeks.

TALK ABOUT IT

A very old book says, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it” (Song of Solomon 8:7). What do you think that means?

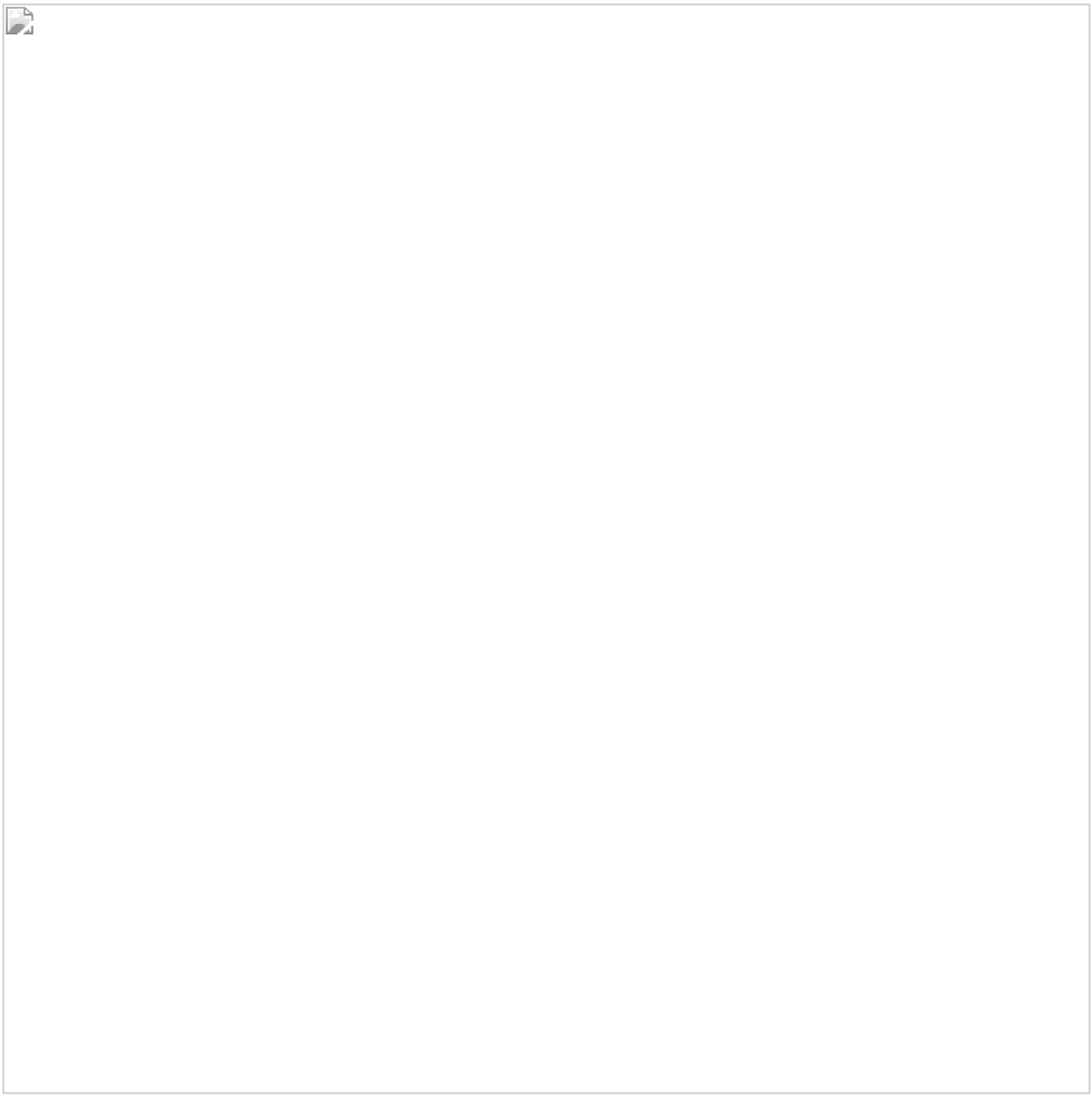


Think about it

1. What did Orpheus ask for?

- ○ Gold
- ○ A longer life for himself
- ○ His wife back

The King's Rule



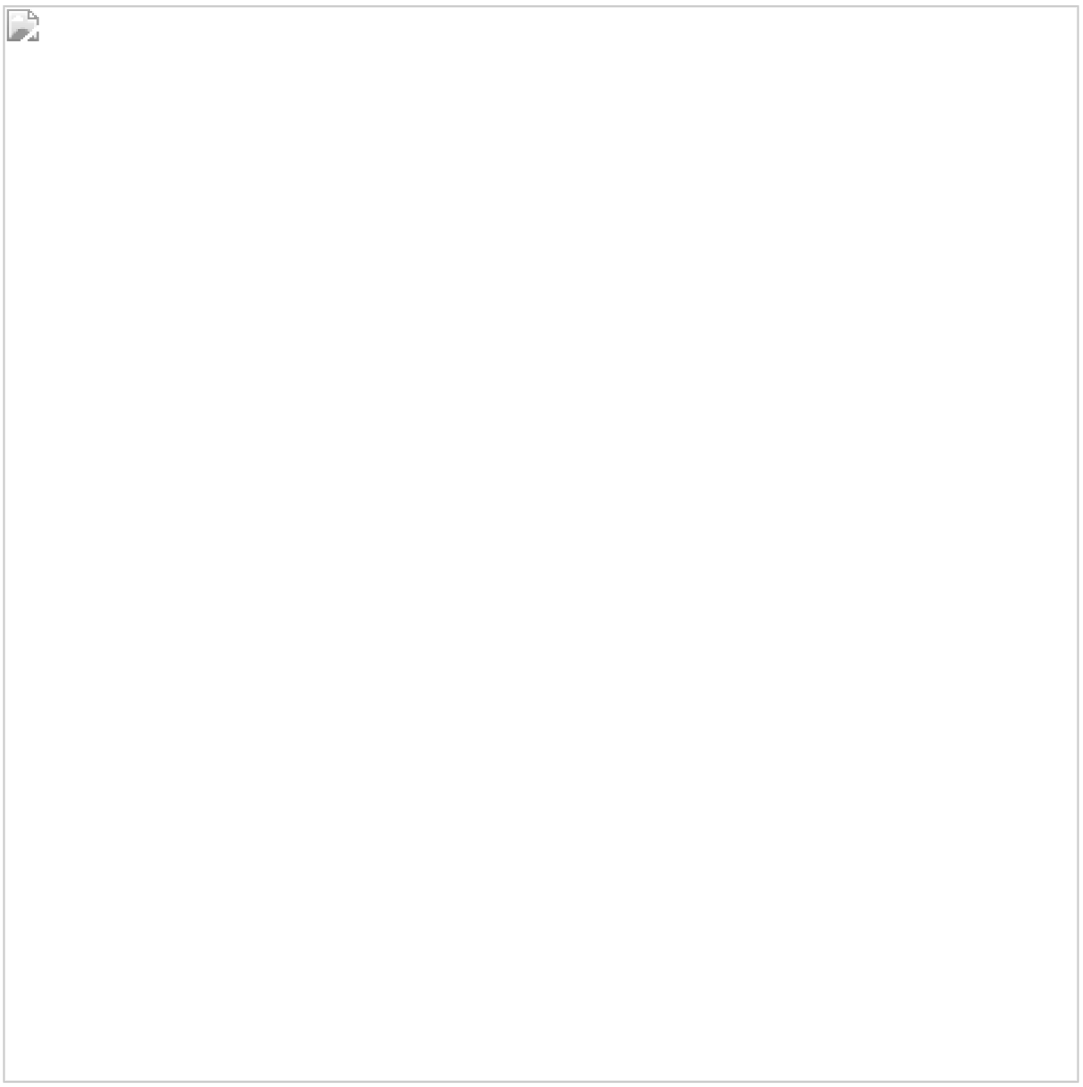
Even the king and queen were moved to pity. They sent for Eurydice, and she came slowly, still weak from her wound.

“Take her,” said Pluto, “and lead her back to the light.” But there was one rule. She must follow behind him, and he must not turn around “to look upon her” until they had left the Lower World.

If he did, they could not keep their gift.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think it might be hard to follow a rule like that?

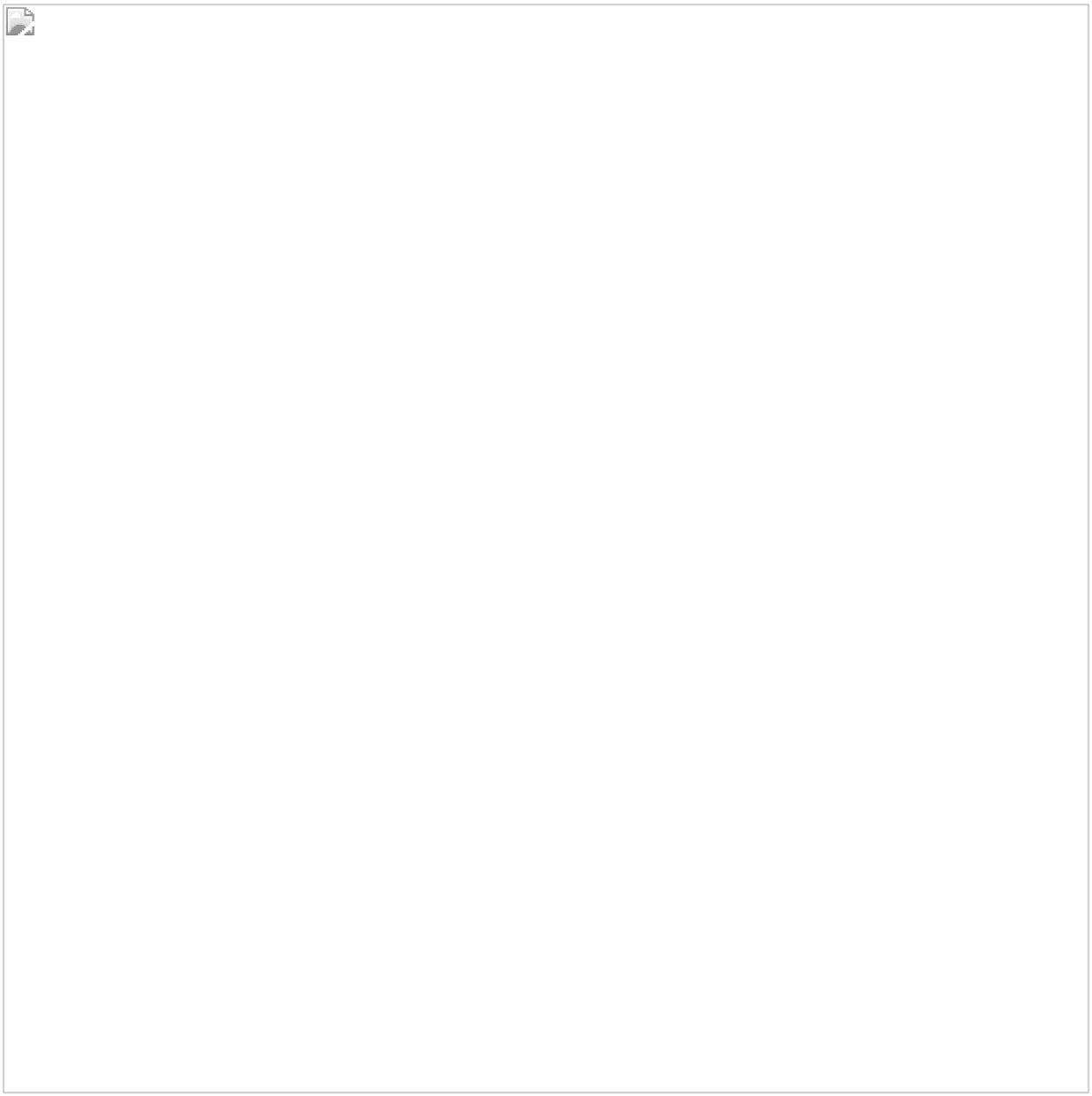


Think about it

1. What was Orpheus's one rule?

- ○ Never sing again
- ○ Never turn around to look at her until they were out
- ○ Never speak to the ghosts

The Long Climb



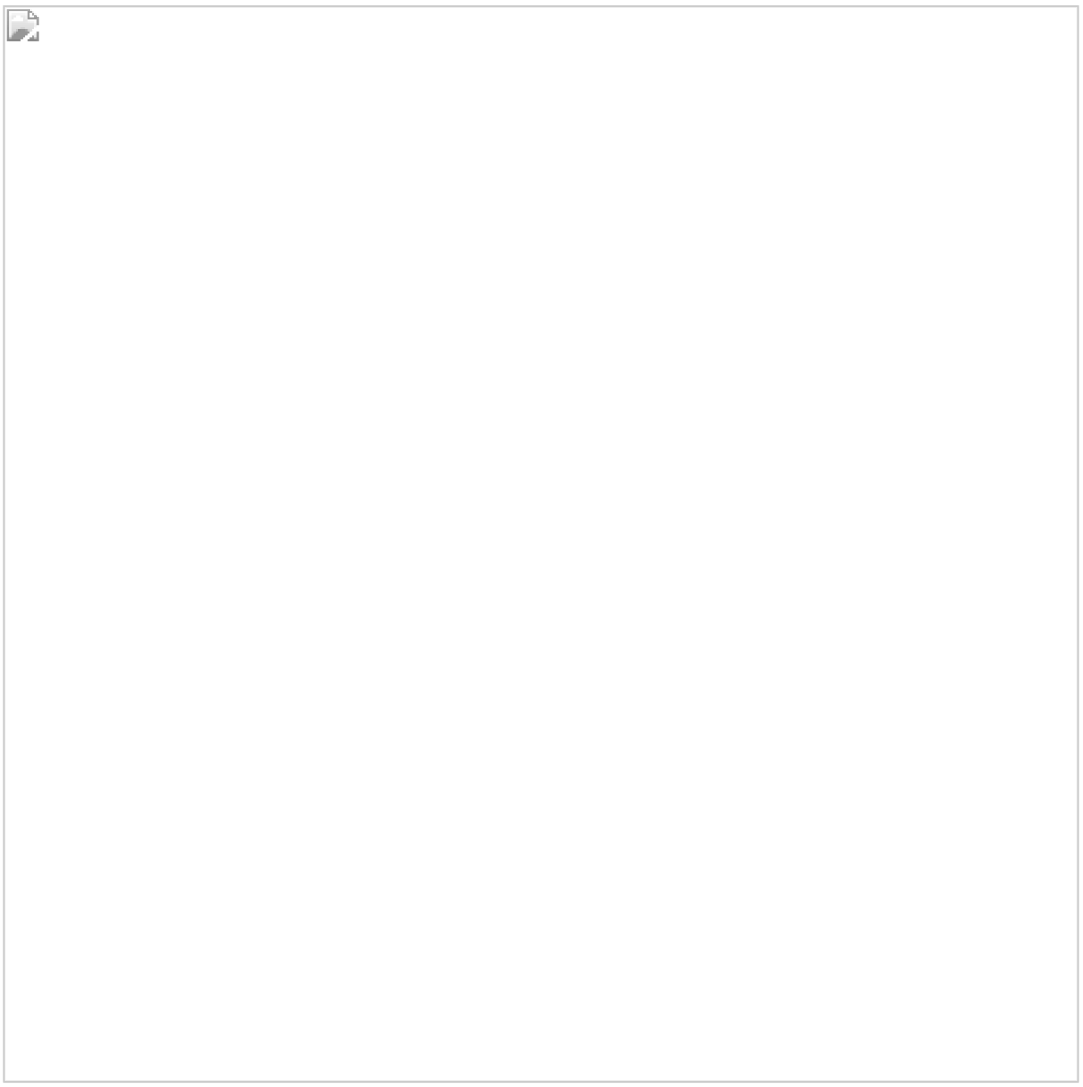
A steep path led up from the dark. Orpheus went first, in silence, and it was hard to find the way.

At last the goal was close. Light from the world above was beginning to shine through the gloom.

Then a sudden fear came over him. Was Eurydice really behind him? Had she turned back? Was his journey for nothing?

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever wanted very much to check on something, even when you had been asked to wait? What was it like?

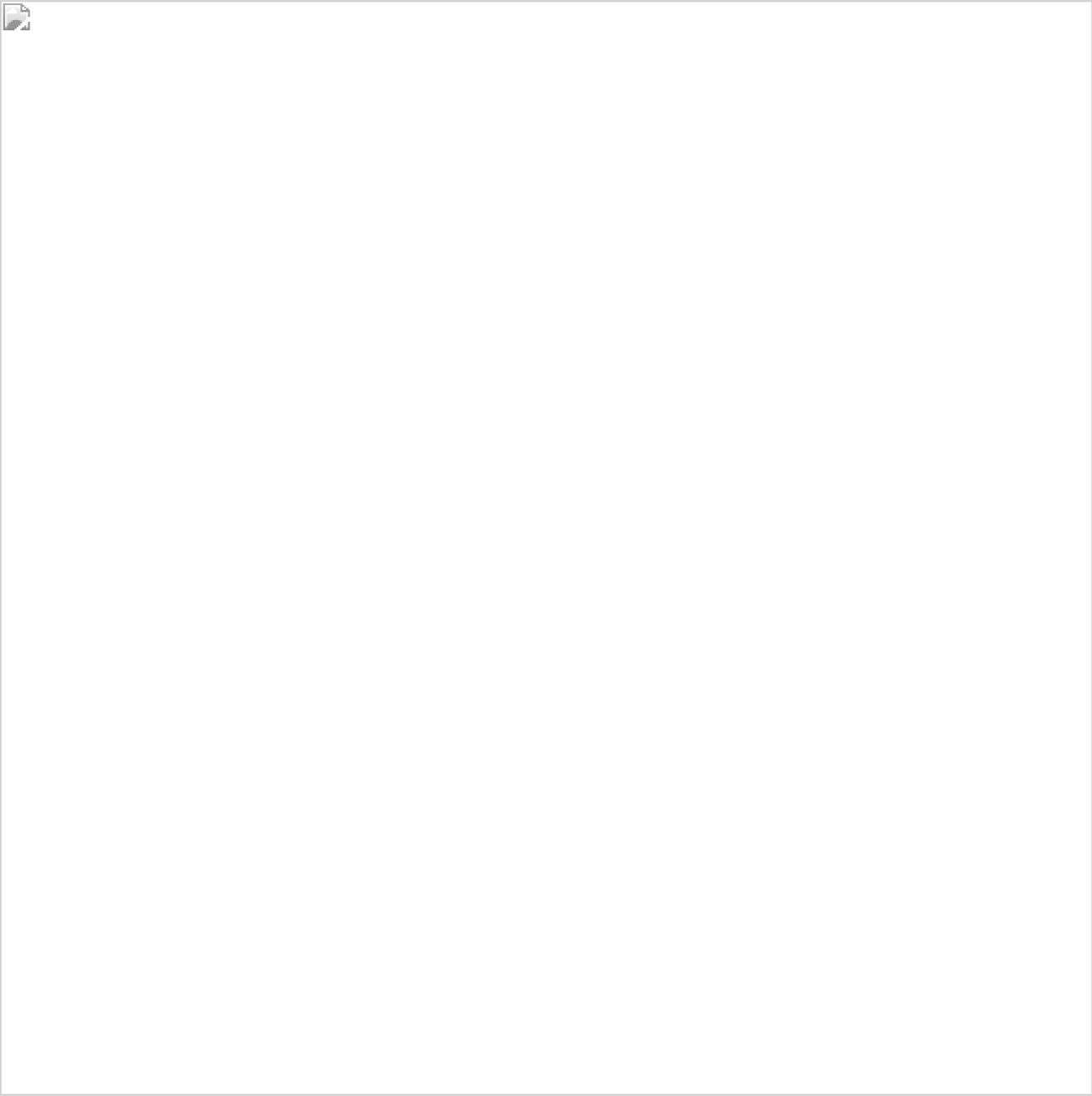


Think about it

1. What did Orpheus begin to wonder as the light came near?

- ○ Whether it would rain
- ○ Whether Eurydice was really following
- ○ Whether he was lost

A Last Farewell



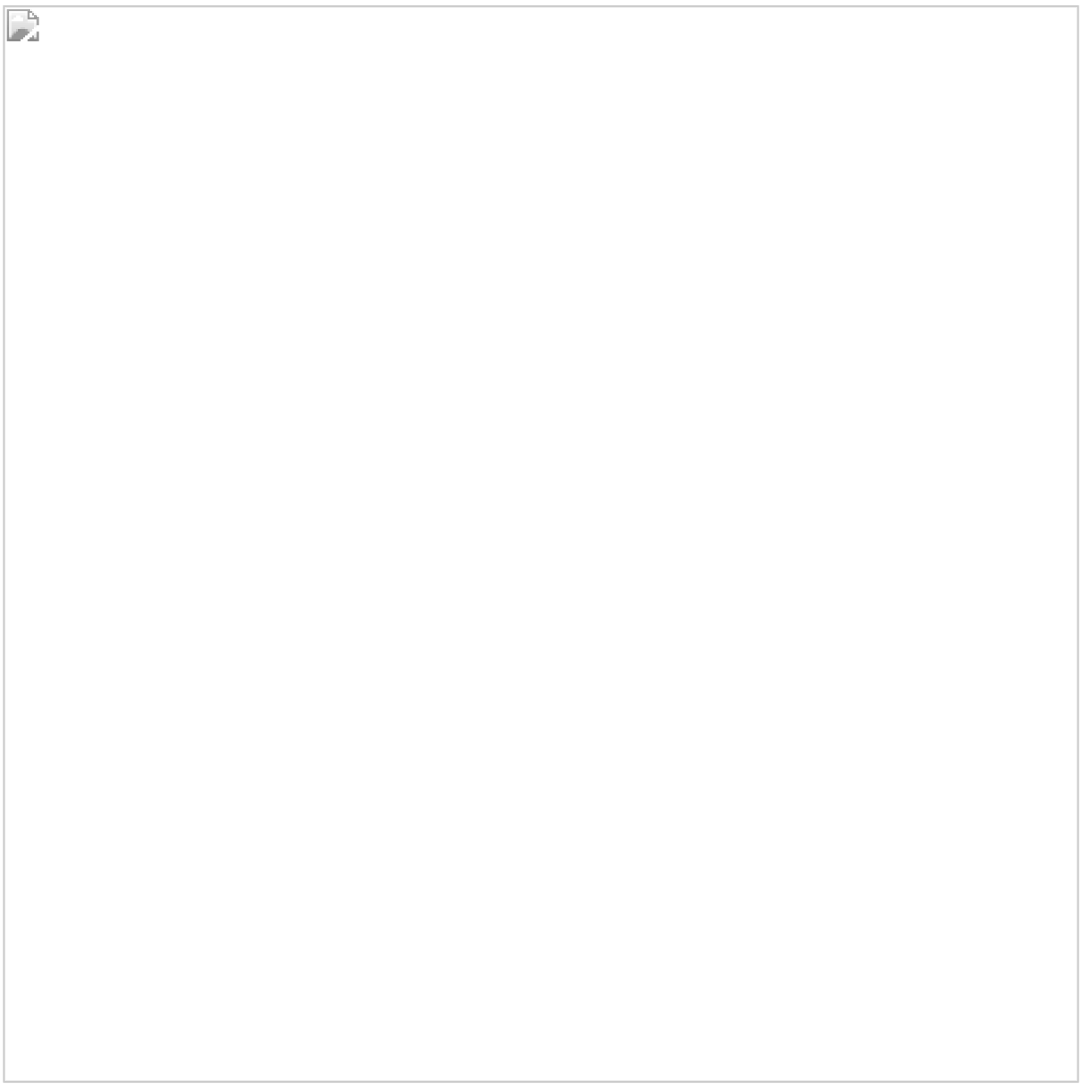
Torn with worry and longing, Orpheus turned around to look at the one he loved.

For one moment he saw her dimly. He reached out his arms for her, but a power she could not stand against drew her back, and he held only the empty air.

“Farewell, a last farewell,” she said softly. And she was gone.

TALK ABOUT IT

Orpheus turned because he loved her so much. What do you think about that?



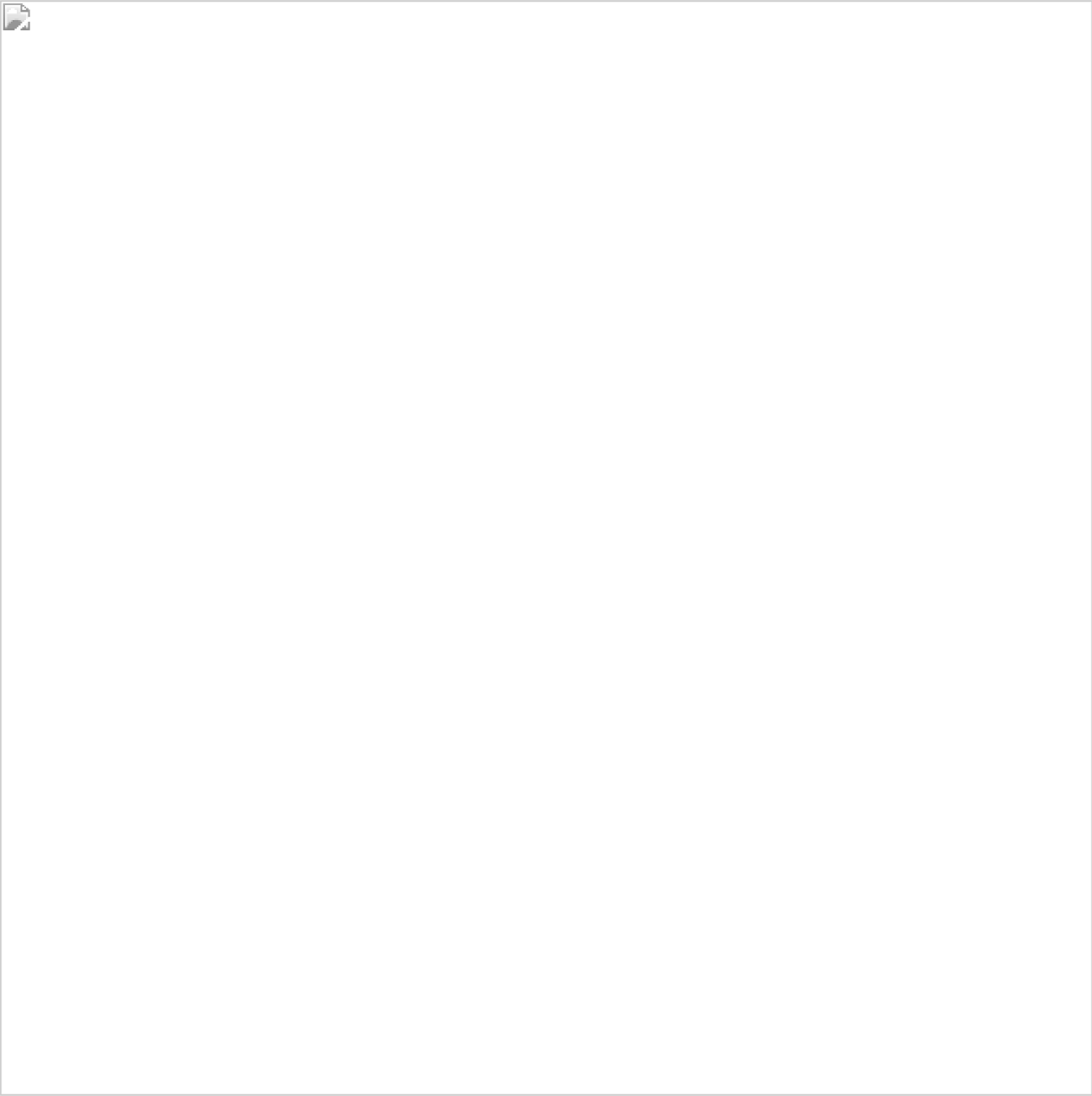
Think about it

1. What did Eurydice say as she faded away?

- ○ “Farewell, a last farewell.”
- ○ “Follow me.”
- ○ “Sing for me.”

2. Have you ever missed someone very much? What helped?

Sitting by the River



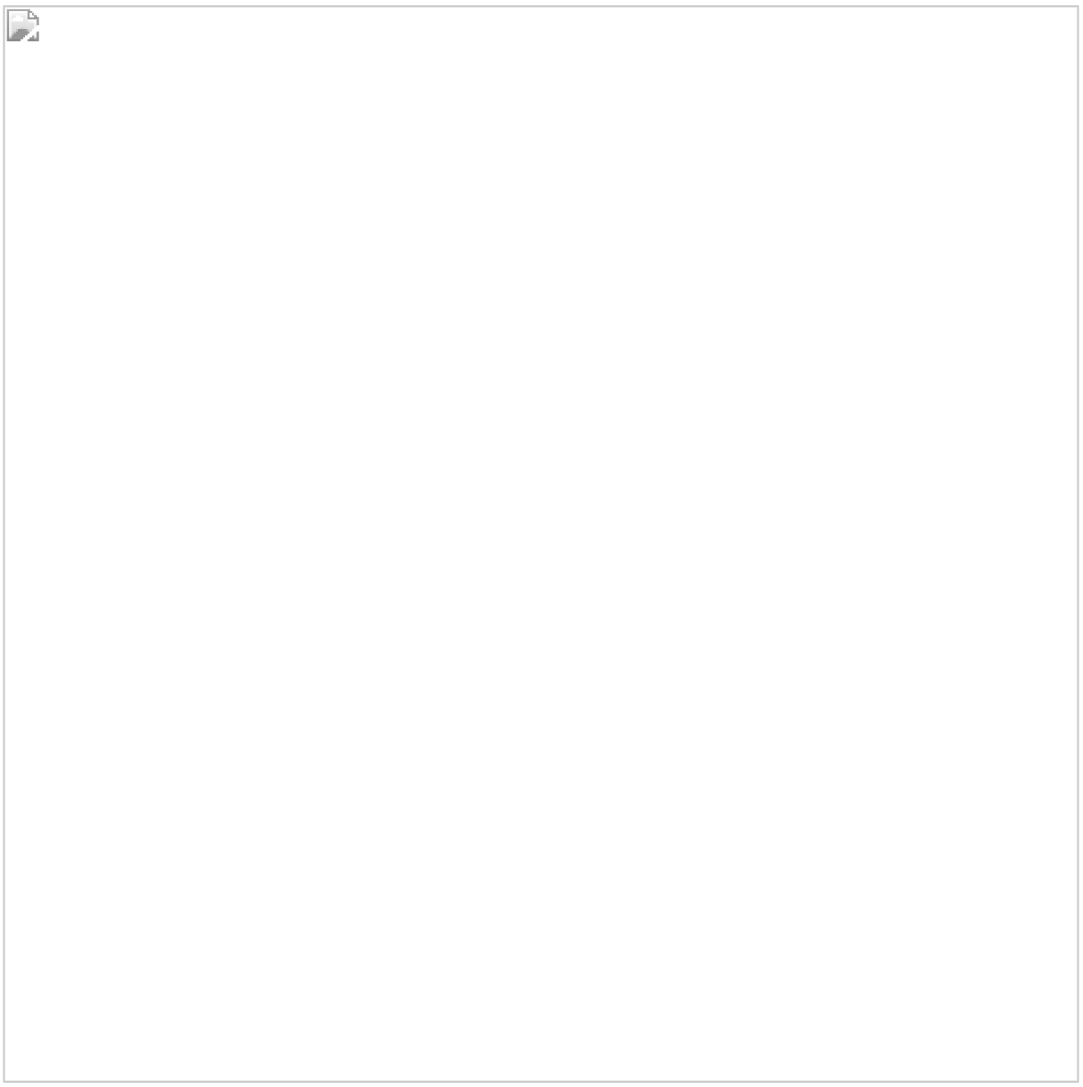
Orpheus tried to follow her, but he could not. For seven days he sat by the dark river, with no food and no drink, only his sorrow.

Then he knew that the gods below would not change their minds, and with a sad heart he went back up to the world of light.

TALK ABOUT IT

Orpheus stayed as long as he could. Why do you think he stayed?

Sitting by the River · another picture

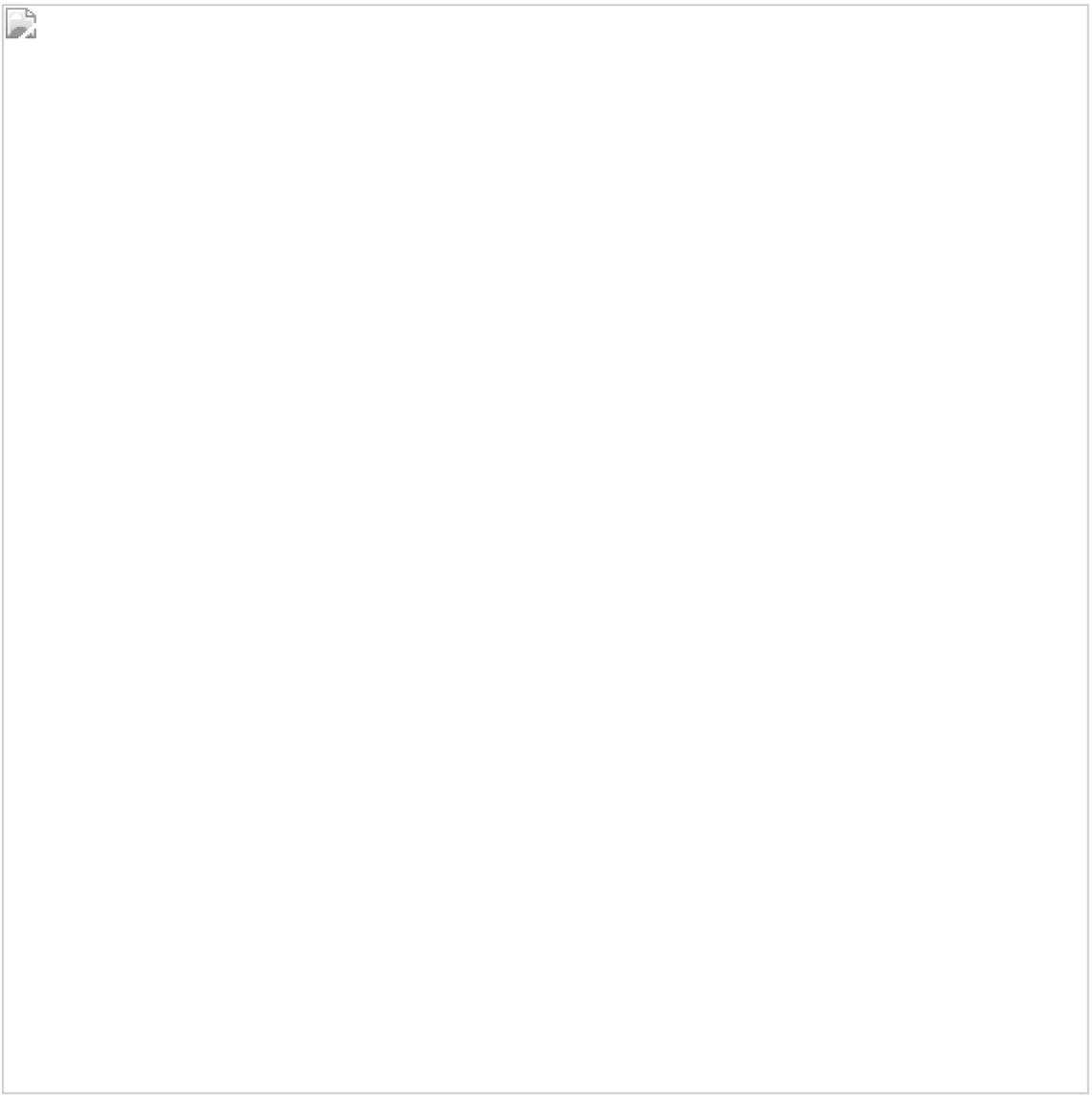


Think about it

1. How long did Orpheus sit by the river?

- ○ One hour
- ○ Seven days
- ○ A hundred years

Wandering with His Harp



For three years Orpheus wandered the mountains of Thrace. His only comfort was his music. He did not want any other bride after Eurydice.

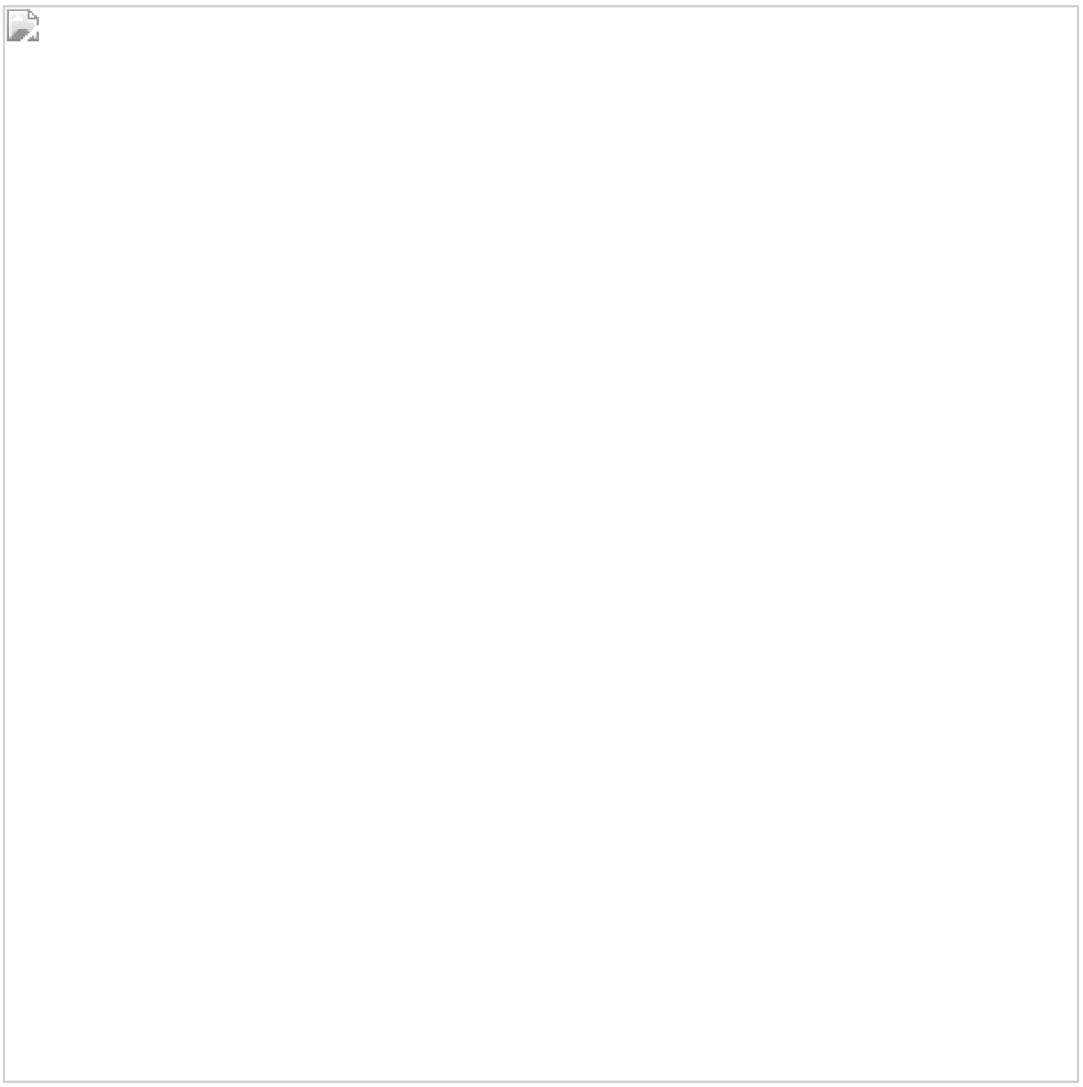
One day he sat down on a grassy hill in the sunshine and began to play and sing his sad songs.

As he played, he felt the coolness of shade all around him. When he looked up, he was in the middle of a wood. Oaks, poplars, beeches, laurels, pines and maples had all come from far away, drawn by the sound of his harp. The birds and beasts came too.

TALK ABOUT IT

Orpheus sang his sad songs, and the trees came to listen. Who listens to you when you are sad?

Wandering with His Harp · another picture



Think about it

1. What came to listen to Orpheus on the hill?

- ○ Only the sheep
- ○ Trees, birds and beasts
- ○ Nobody

2. How do you think a song can help keep someone you love close to you?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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