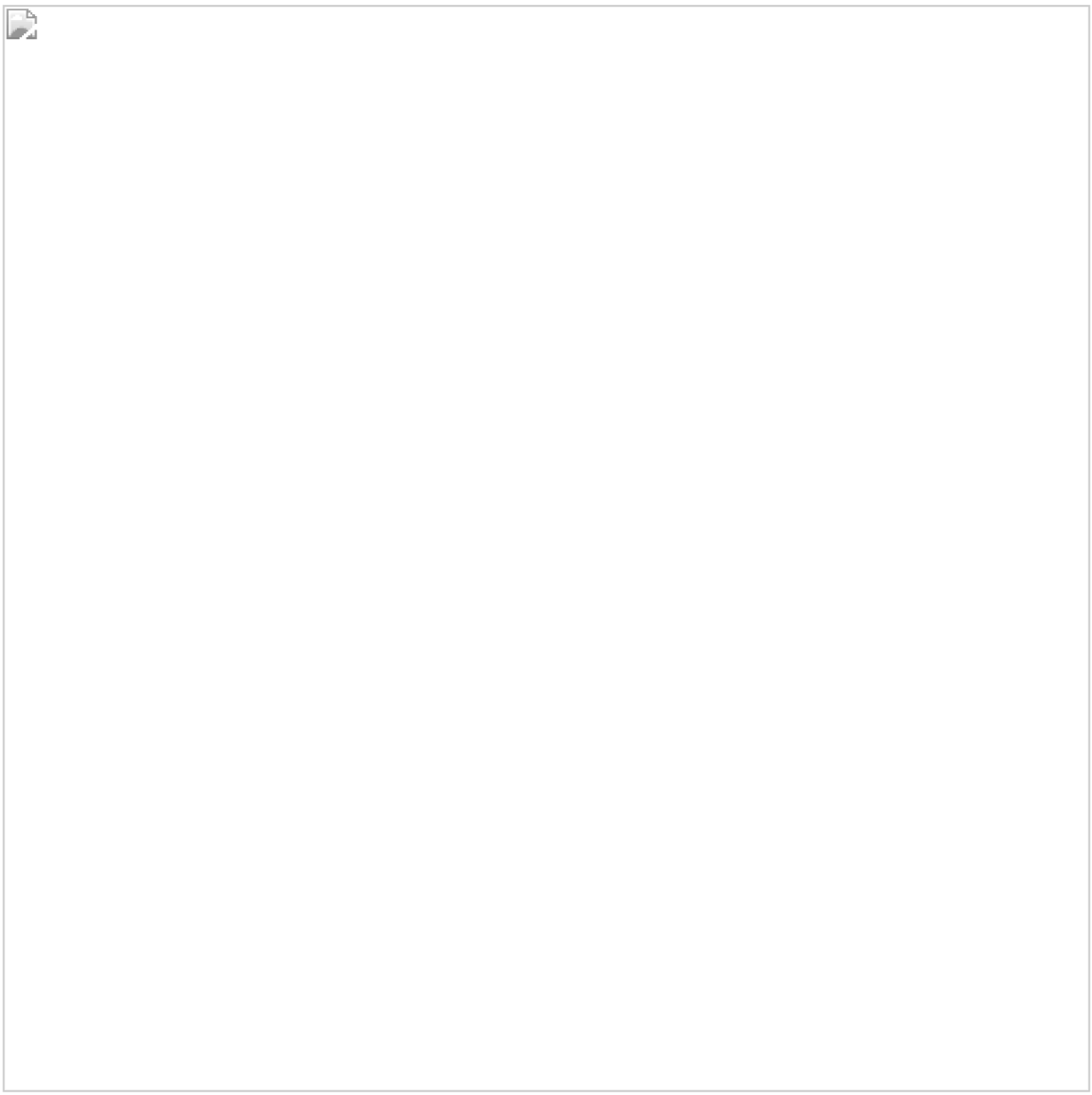
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Roland

A Hero of France



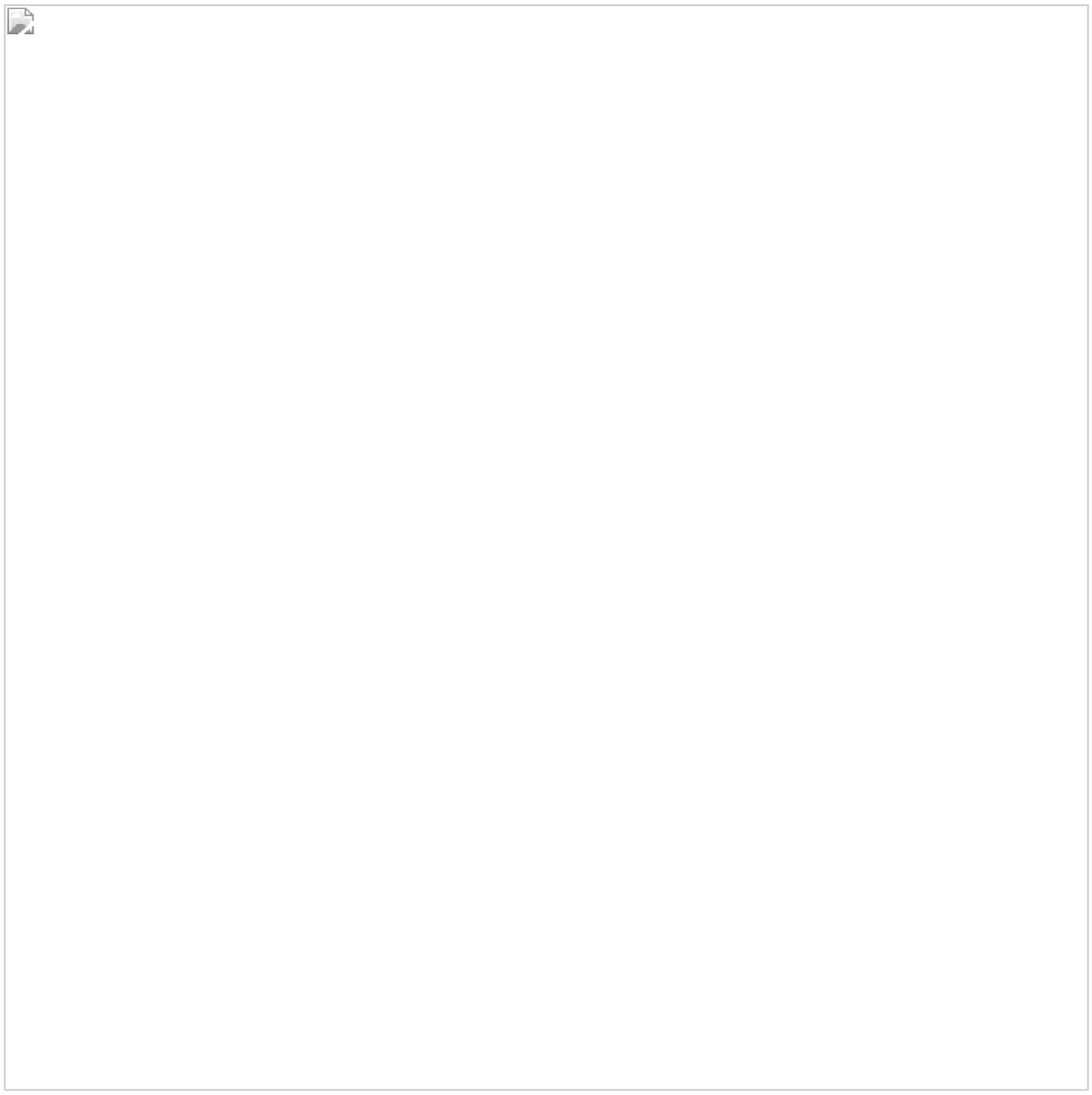
For seven long years the great Emperor Charlemagne had been fighting a war in Spain. Only the city of Saragossa still held out. King Marsil, its ruler, did not know how to save it, so he sent a knight named Blancandrin to the emperor with olive branches in his hand and a train of gifts behind him, to ask for peace.

TALK ABOUT IT

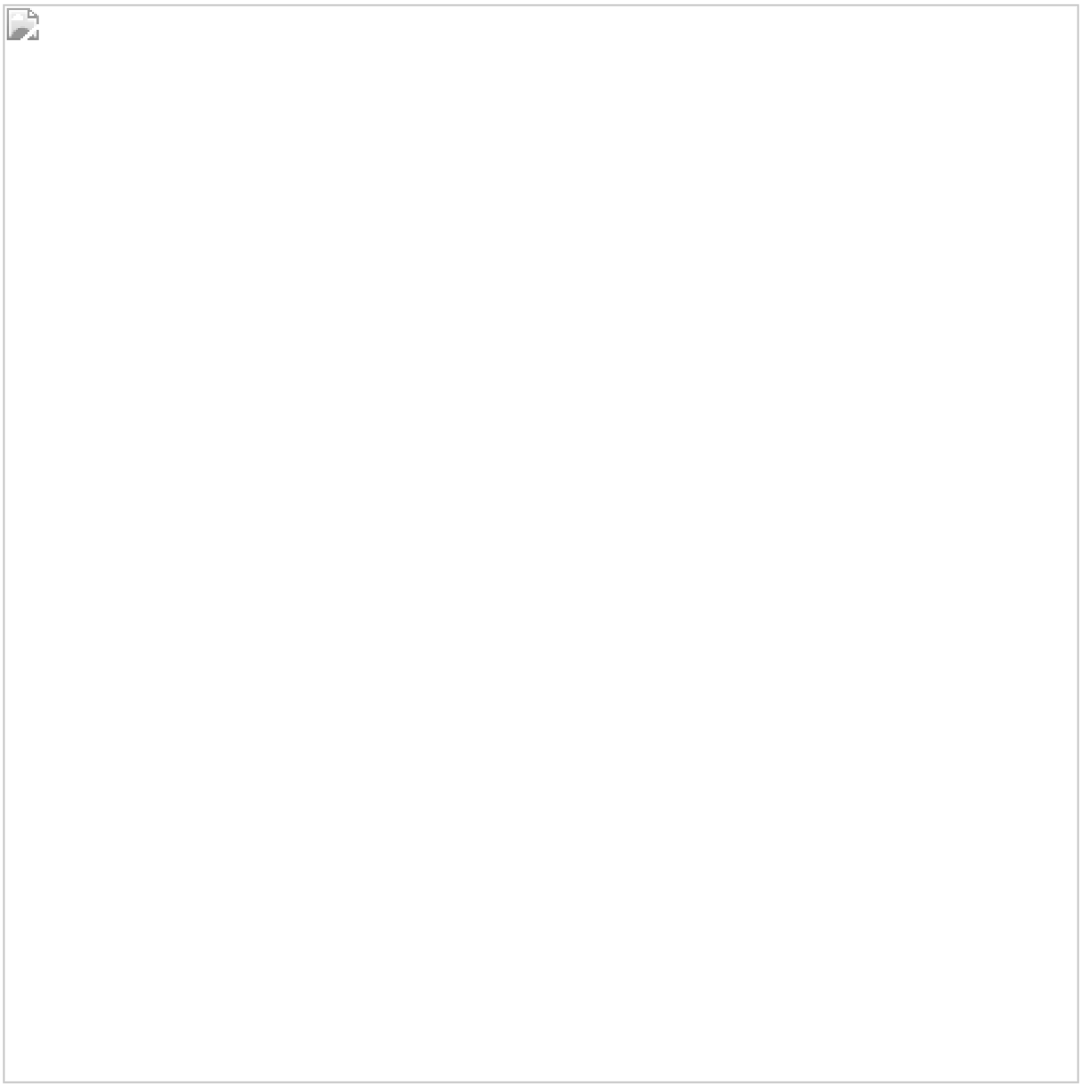
Blancandrin carried olive branches. In old stories, they were a sign that someone wanted peace. What other signs of peace can you think of?

This book belongs to _____

Roland · another picture



Who Will Go?



In the morning the emperor asked his wise men what to do. Roland, the emperor's own nephew, jumped to his feet. He did not believe King Marsil. “War! I say war!” he cried.

But another knight, Ganelon, who hated Roland, said that the emperor should take the gifts and the promises.

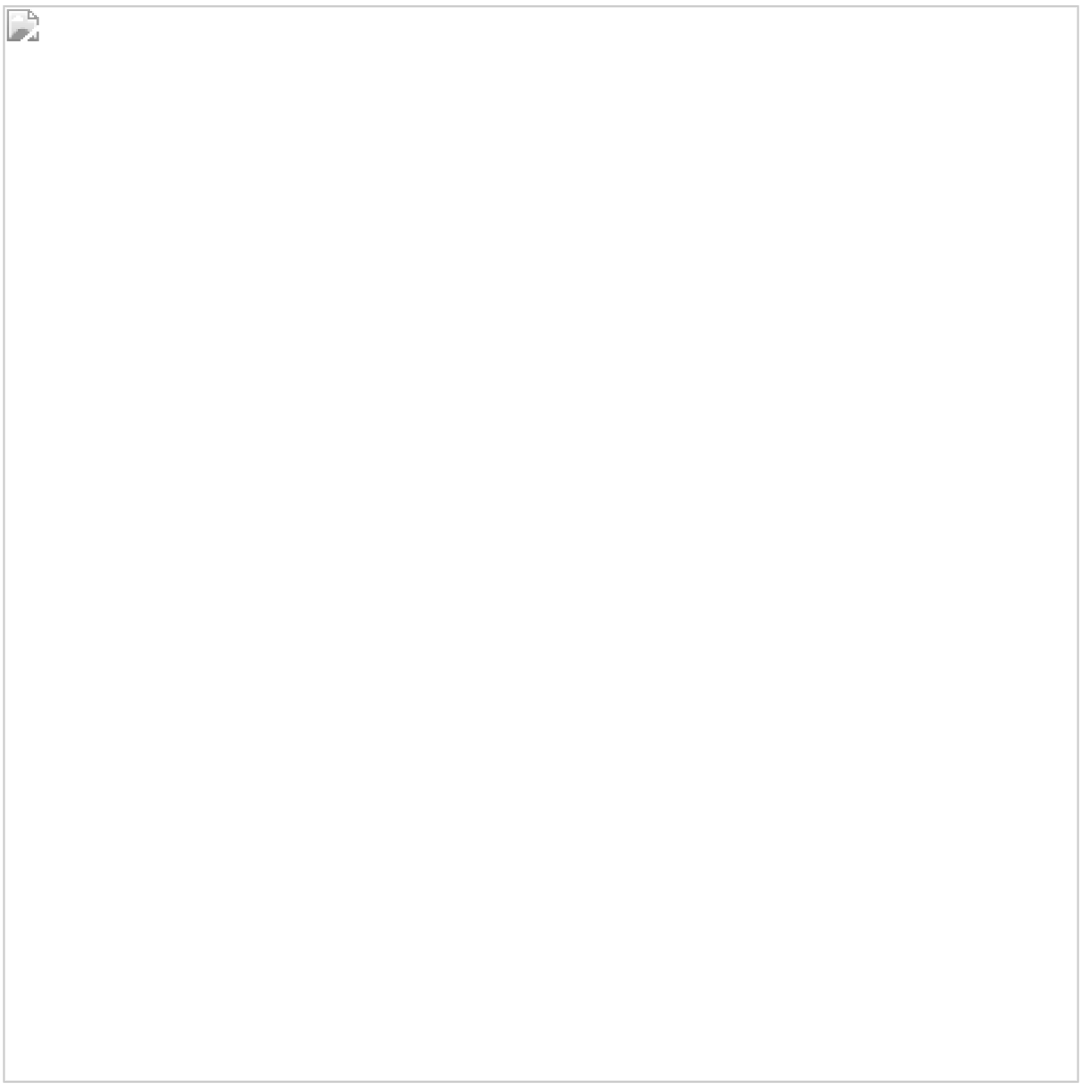
Someone had to carry the emperor's answer back to King Marsil. Roland and his friend Oliver each asked to go, but the emperor said no. Then Roland said, “Send Ganelon.” Ganelon was Roland's stepfather, and the emperor agreed.

Ganelon was shaking with anger. “I hate thee!” he said to Roland.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ganelon was angry that Roland had picked him. If someone made you angry, what could you do before the anger got bigger?

Who Will Go? · another picture

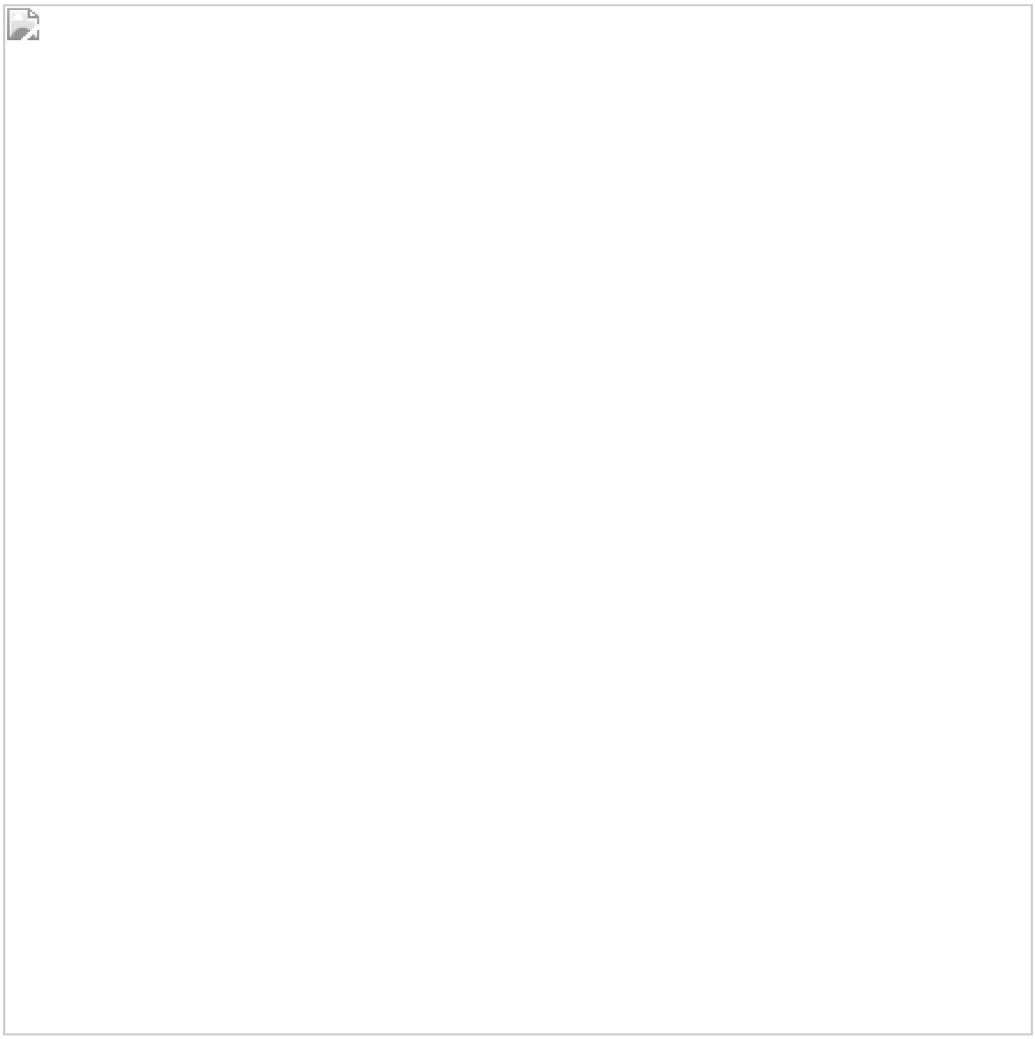


Think about it

1. What did Roland want the emperor to do about Marsil's peace offer?

- ○ Carry the war on to Saragossa
- ○ Accept it right away
- ○ Send a thousand gifts

Ganelon's Plan



Ganelon rode toward Saragossa with Blancandrin. All the way, Ganelon thought about Roland. “Such pride as his ought to be punished,” he said.

Blancandrin was a clever man, and he heard what Ganelon's anger was saying. By the time they reached the city, they had made a plan.

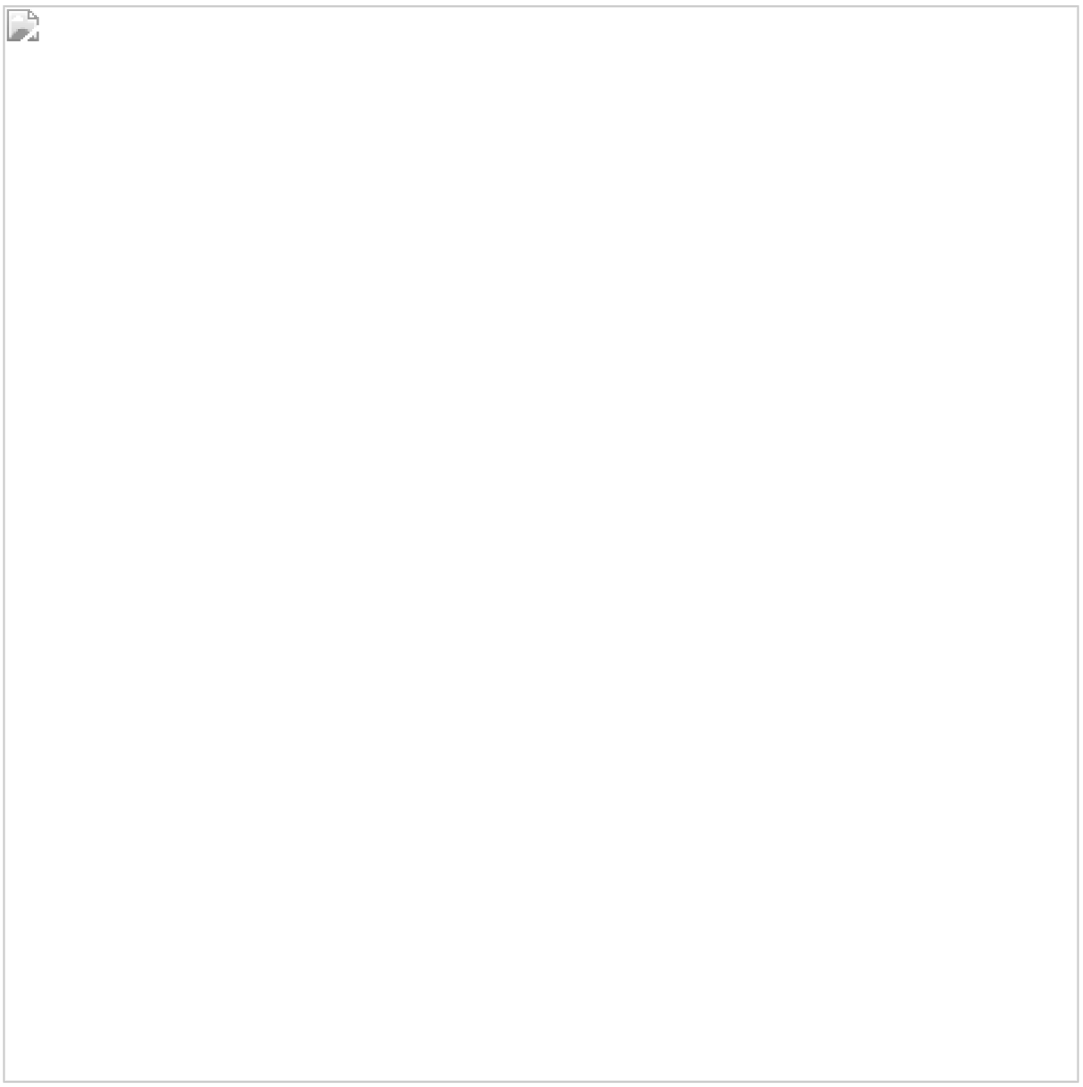
King Marsil would promise the emperor everything and send gifts. The emperor would march home across a mountain valley, and Roland, who would be in charge of the rear, would be last in line. The army of King Marsil would be waiting for him.

King Marsil, Blancandrin, and others piled rich gifts into Ganelon's hands, and Ganelon swore he would do it.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ganelon's hatred grew into a terrible plan. Who else might be hurt when one person's hatred grows and grows?

Ganelon's Plan · another picture

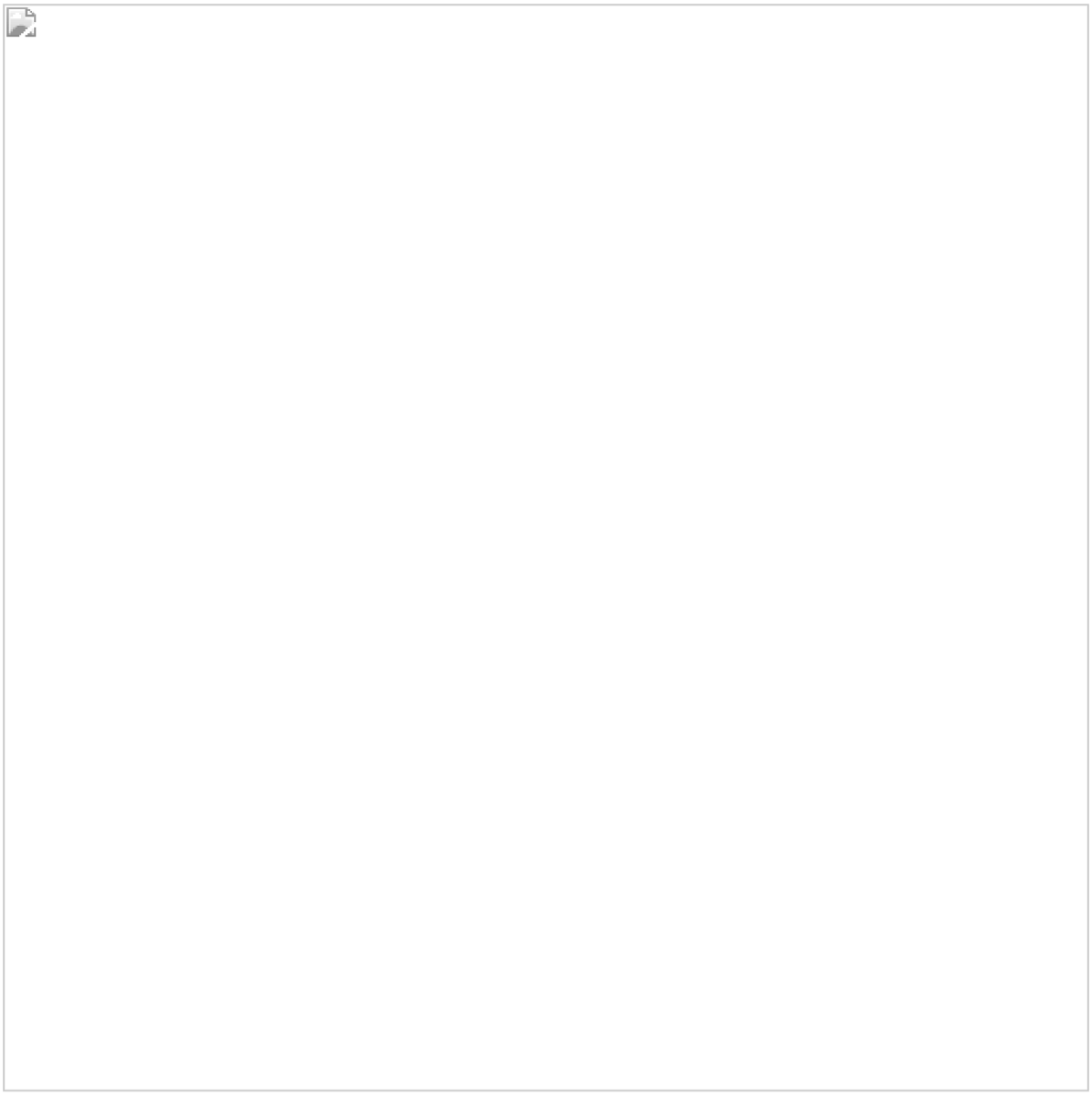


Think about it

1. Where did Ganelon plan to have Roland caught?

- ○ On a boat
- ○ In a mountain valley
- ○ In a castle

The Lie



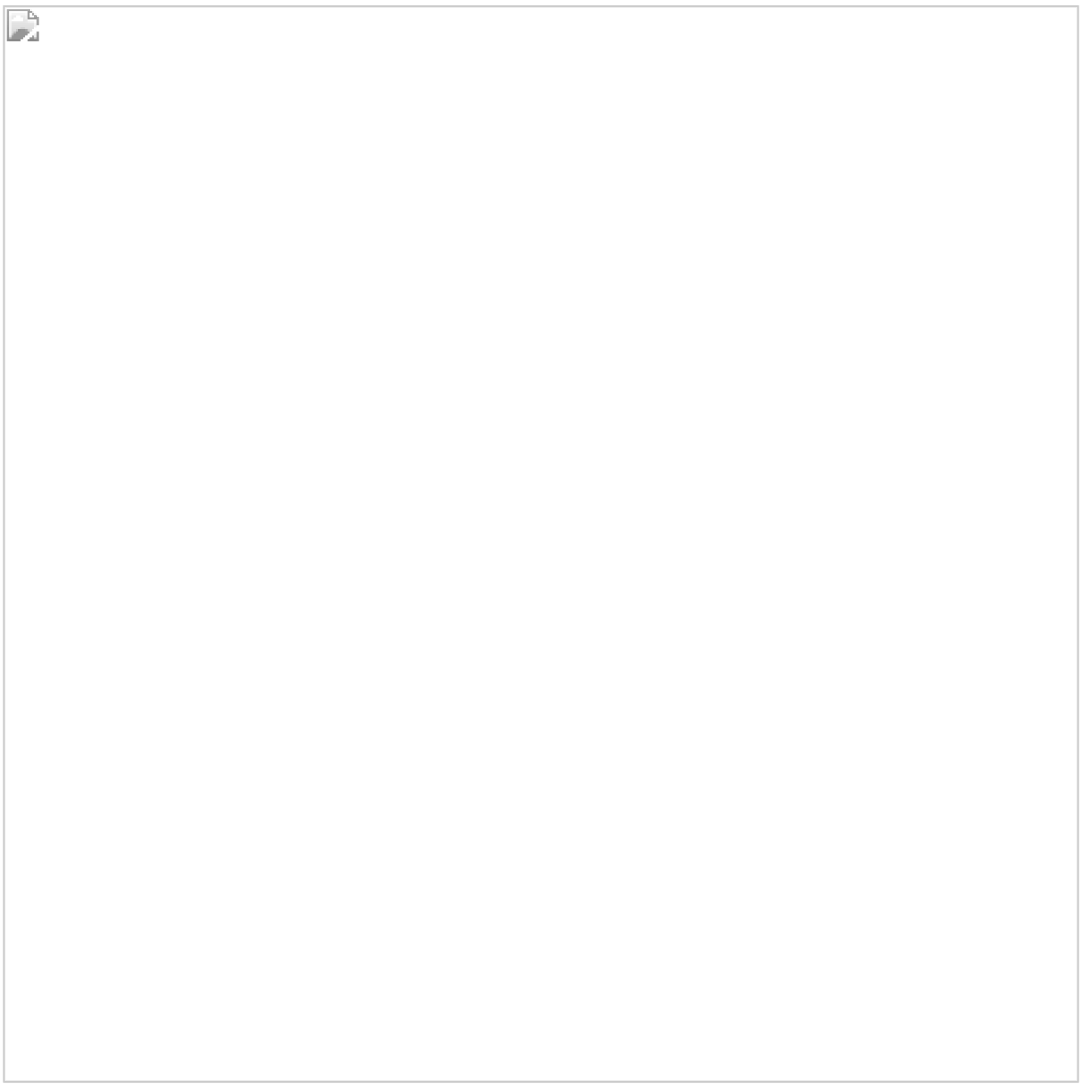
Ganelon rode back to the emperor's camp with the keys to Saragossa, rich treasure, and hostages. He told a smooth and false story.

Charlemagne believed him. “At length my wars are done,” he said, “and home to gentle France we ride.”

The trumpets sounded, and the army started home. Every man was glad. They had been away for seven years. But behind them, down the dark and secret valleys, crept King Marsil's great army.

TALK ABOUT IT

The soldiers were happy because they were going home. What do you think it was like to be sure everything was fine, when it was not?

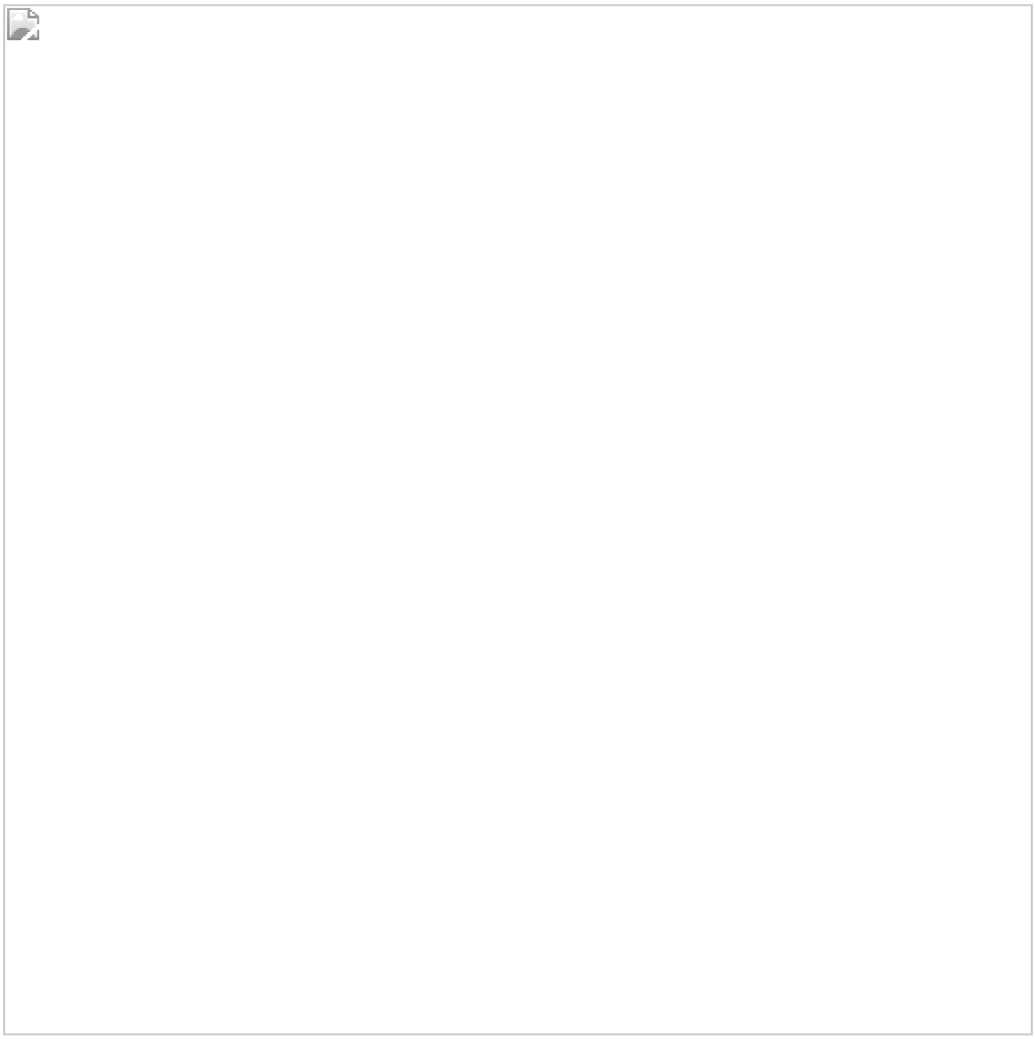


Think about it

1. What did the soldiers think was ahead?

- ○ More battles
- ○ A storm
- ○ Home

The Rear-Guard



That night Charlemagne dreamed that Ganelon broke the emperor's spear in two. He woke up uneasy.

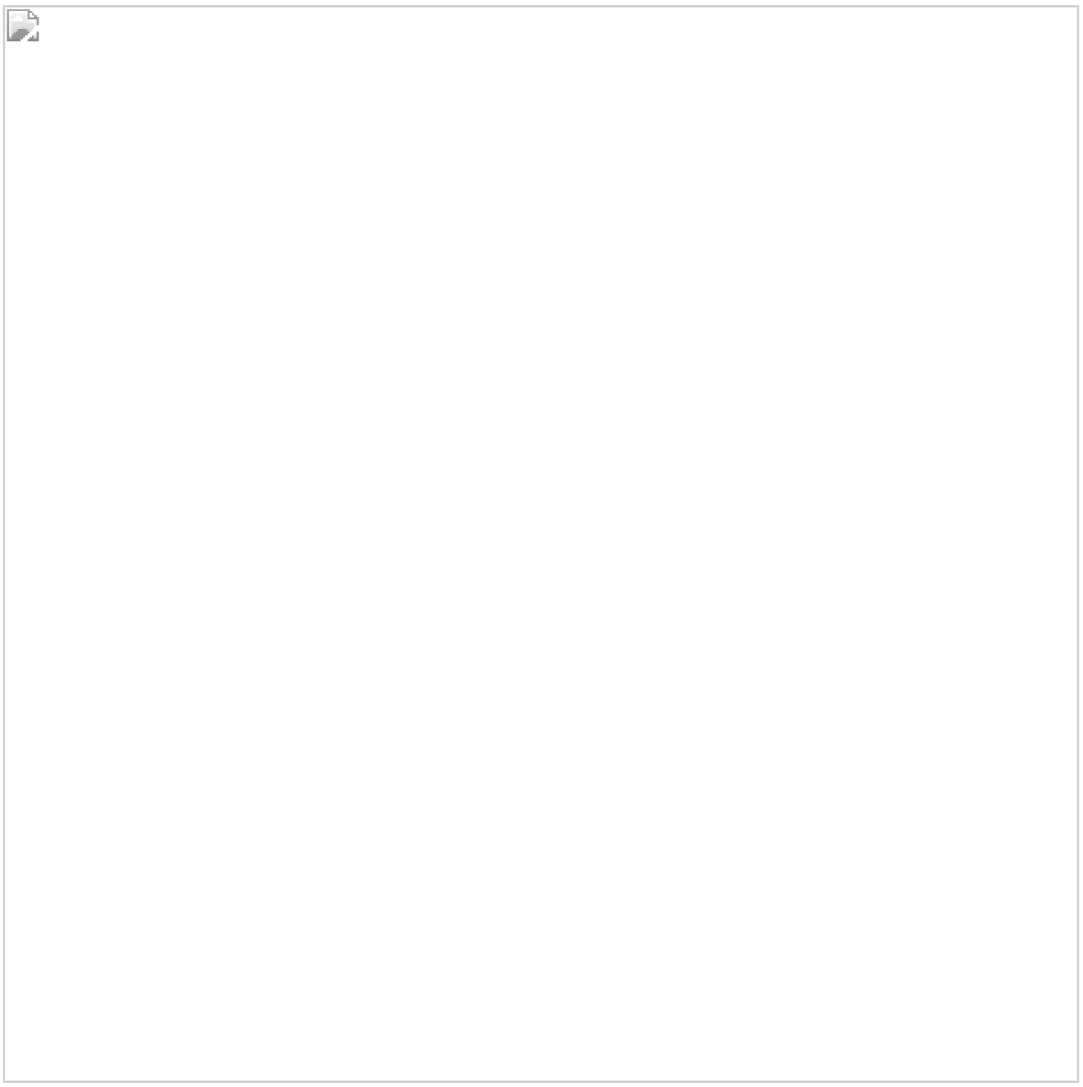
The emperor asked who should guard the rear of the army. Ganelon named his own stepson, Roland.

Charlemagne looked at Ganelon darkly. He did not want to send Roland, and he twisted his long white beard, and tears came to his eyes. But Roland asked for the command, and no one else would take it.

Roland said that twenty thousand men would be enough. The rest of the army went on through the valley, and Roland, Oliver, and the brave Archbishop Turpin stayed behind.

TALK ABOUT IT

Charlemagne loved Roland, and he was afraid for him. Who do you love enough to worry about?

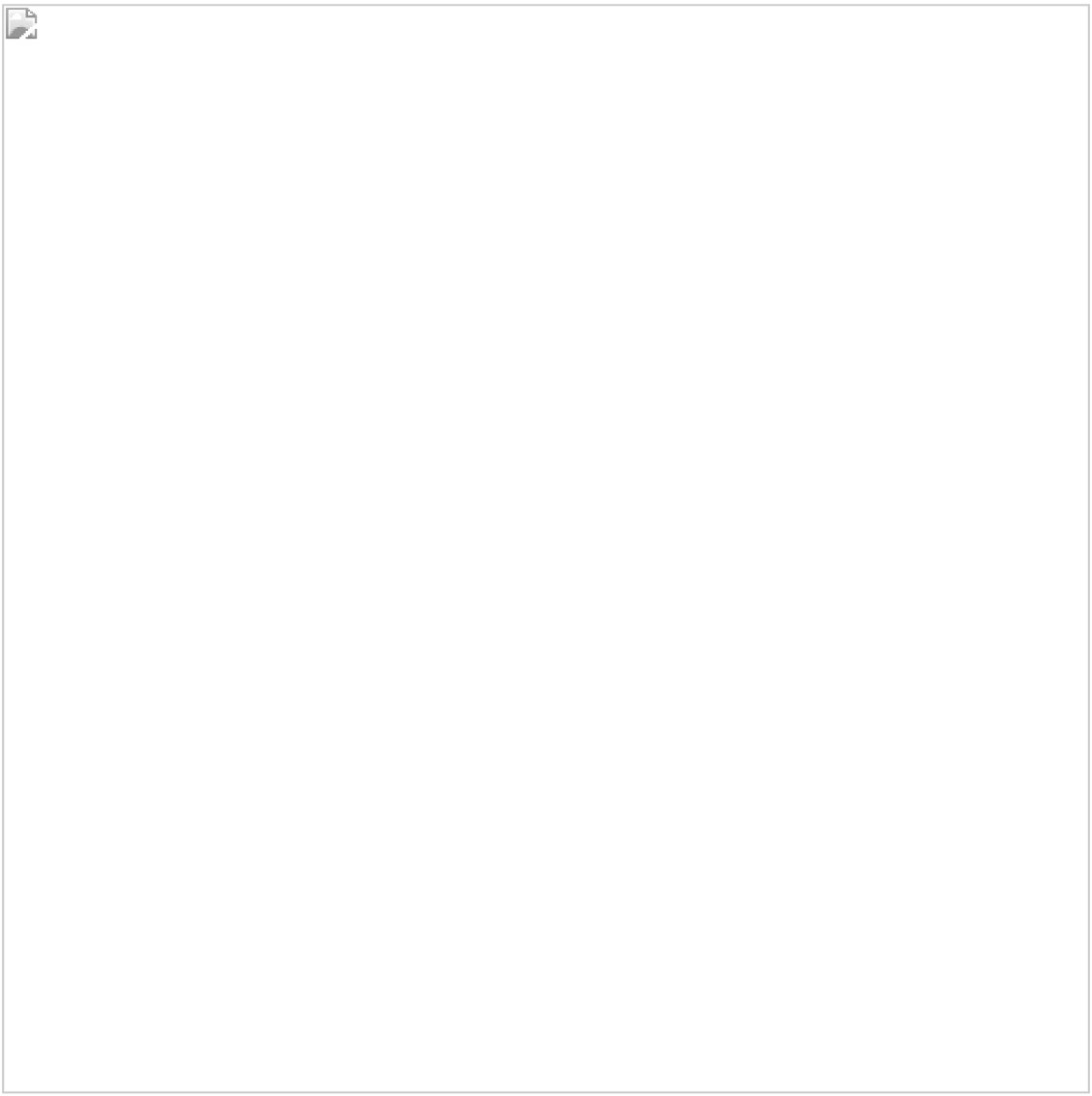


Think about it

1. Who suggested that Roland guard the rear?

- ○ Ganelon
- ○ Oliver
- ○ Turpin

Oliver Climbs the Hill



Soon Oliver heard trumpets coming closer. He climbed to the top of a hill and looked out.

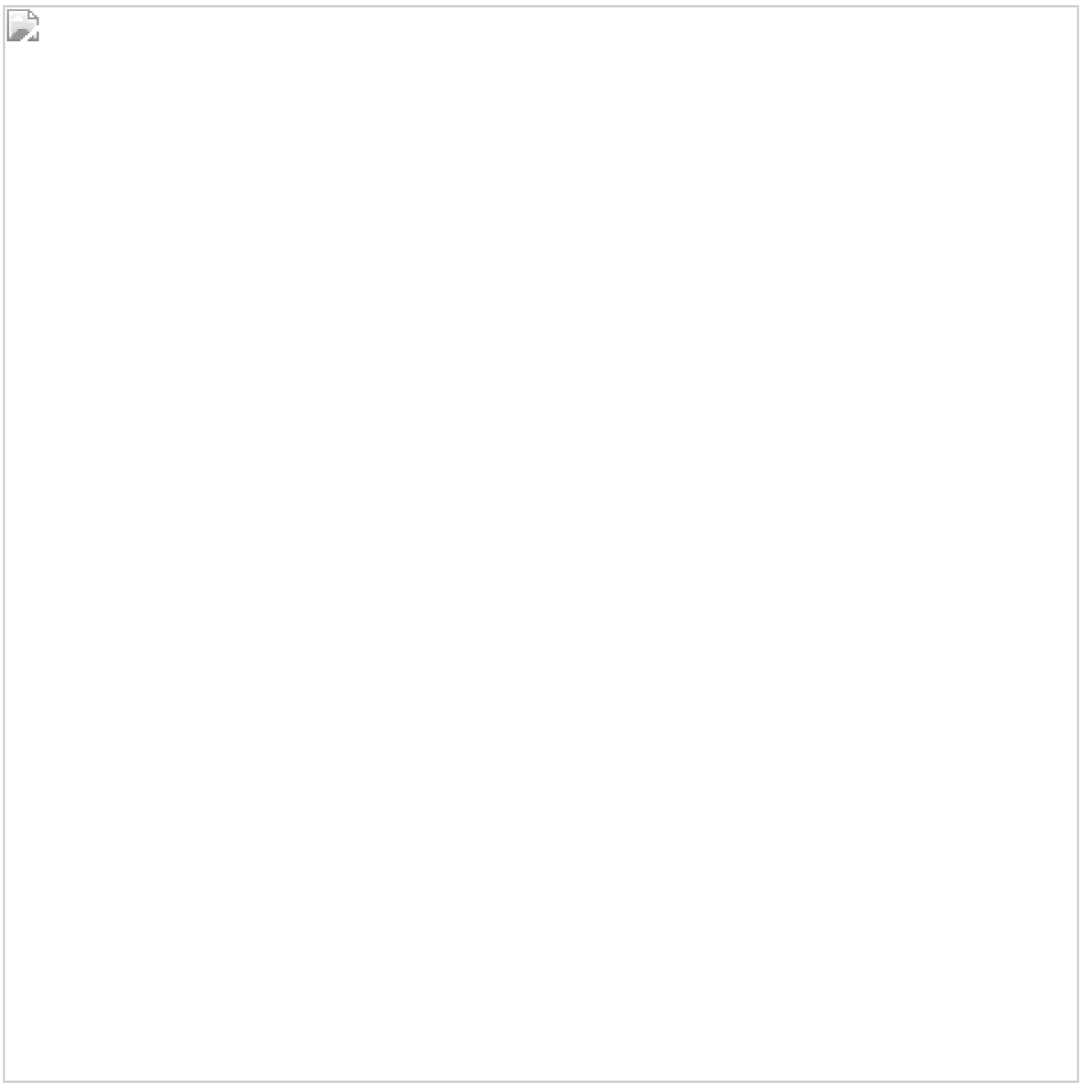
As far as he could see, the valley and the hills were full of King Marsil's army. Helmets and spears gleamed in the sun.

He hurried back down. “Friend Roland, sound upon thy horn,” he said.

Round Roland's neck hung a horn of carved ivory. Its sound could be heard for miles and miles. If Roland blew it, the emperor would hear, and turn back with the whole army.

TALK ABOUT IT

Oliver saw something scary and told his friend right away. Why is it good to tell someone the hard thing you see?

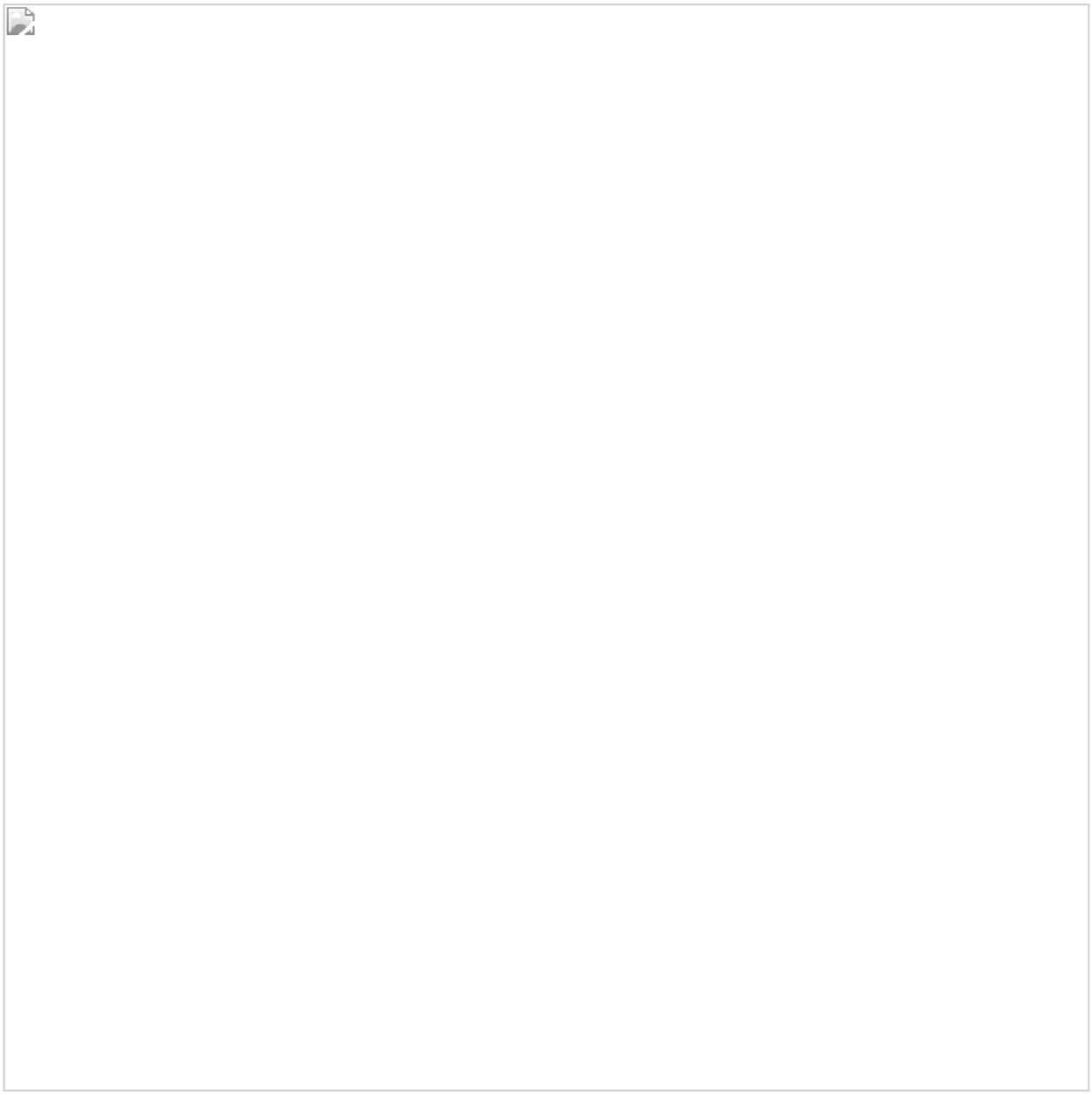


Think about it

1. What did Oliver tell Roland to do?

- ○ Run away
- ○ Sound his horn
- ○ Go to sleep

“No!”



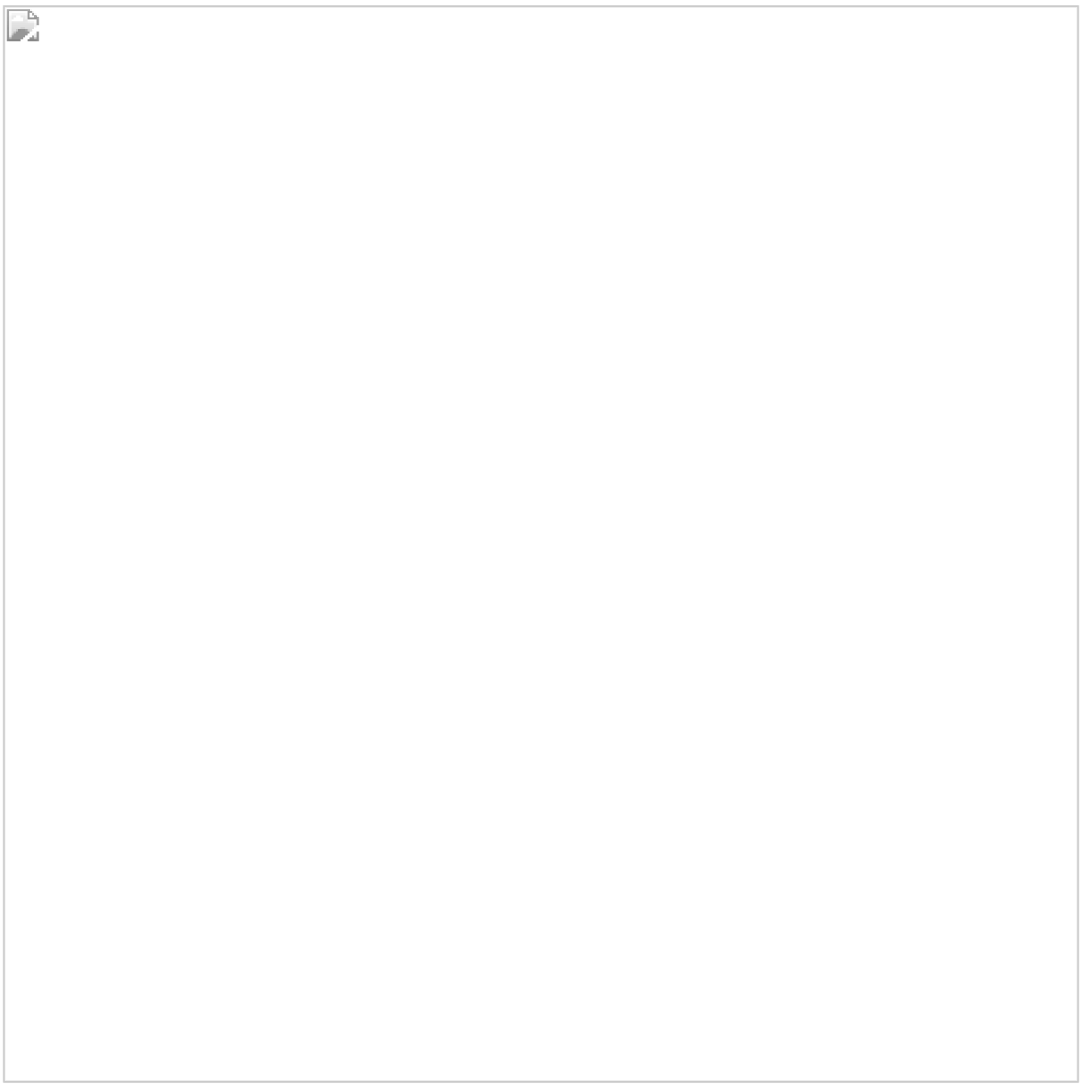
But Roland said no. He did not want to ask for help, or to lose his good name in France. “Death is better than dishonor,” he said.

Oliver asked him again, and again Roland said no.

The story says, “Roland was rash as Oliver was wise.” Oliver gave up asking, but his heart was heavy.

TALK ABOUT IT

Roland was too proud to ask for help. Is it hard for you to ask for help? A very old book says, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18, KJV). What do you think that means?



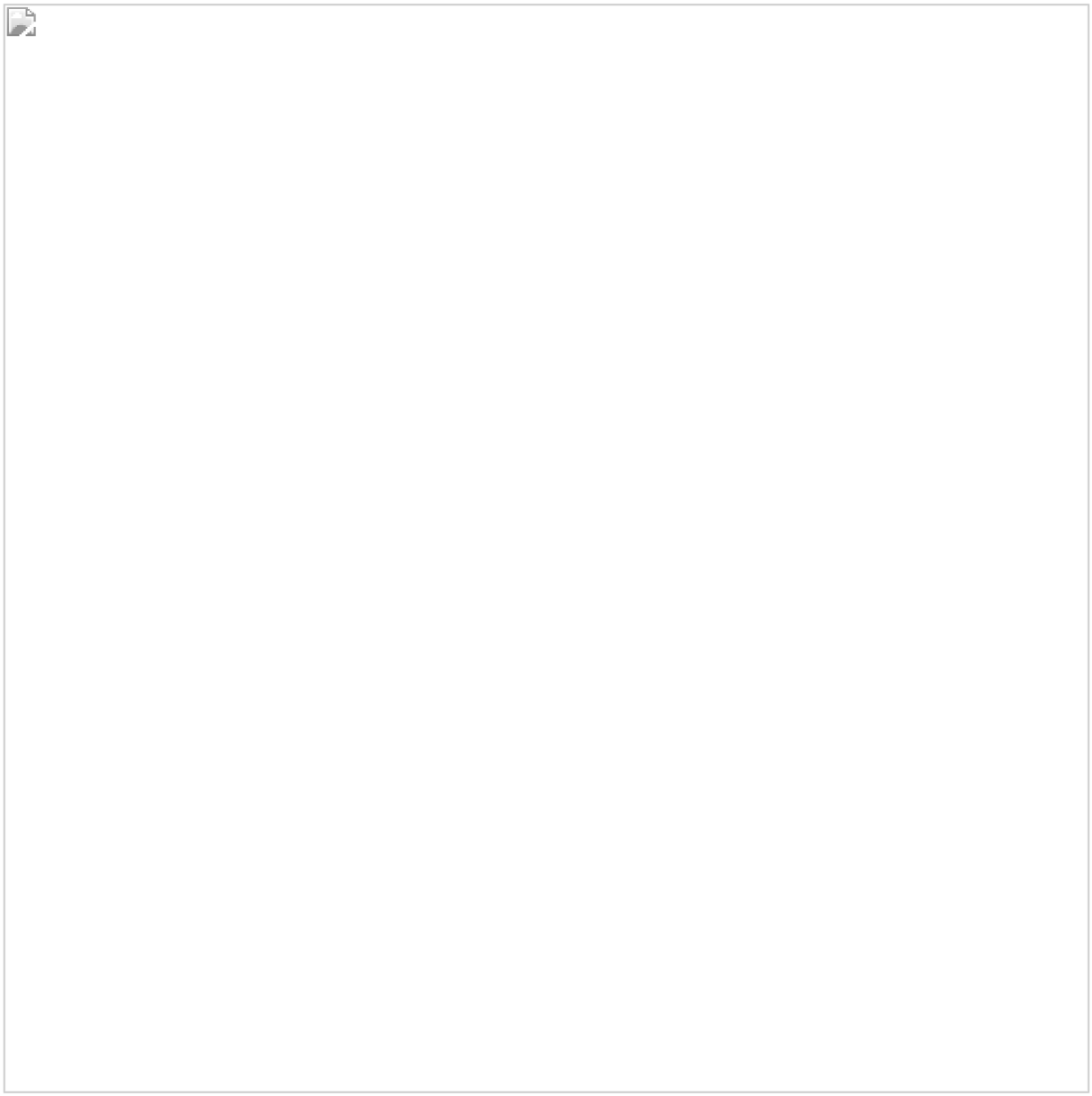
Think about it

1. Why did Roland not want to blow his horn?

- ○ He had lost it
- ○ He was asleep
- ○ He was too proud to ask for help

2. What would you have said to Roland if you were Oliver?

A Hard Day



Archbishop Turpin blessed the knights, and then the fighting began. The Franks fought bravely, and they won the first fight. But many of them fell.

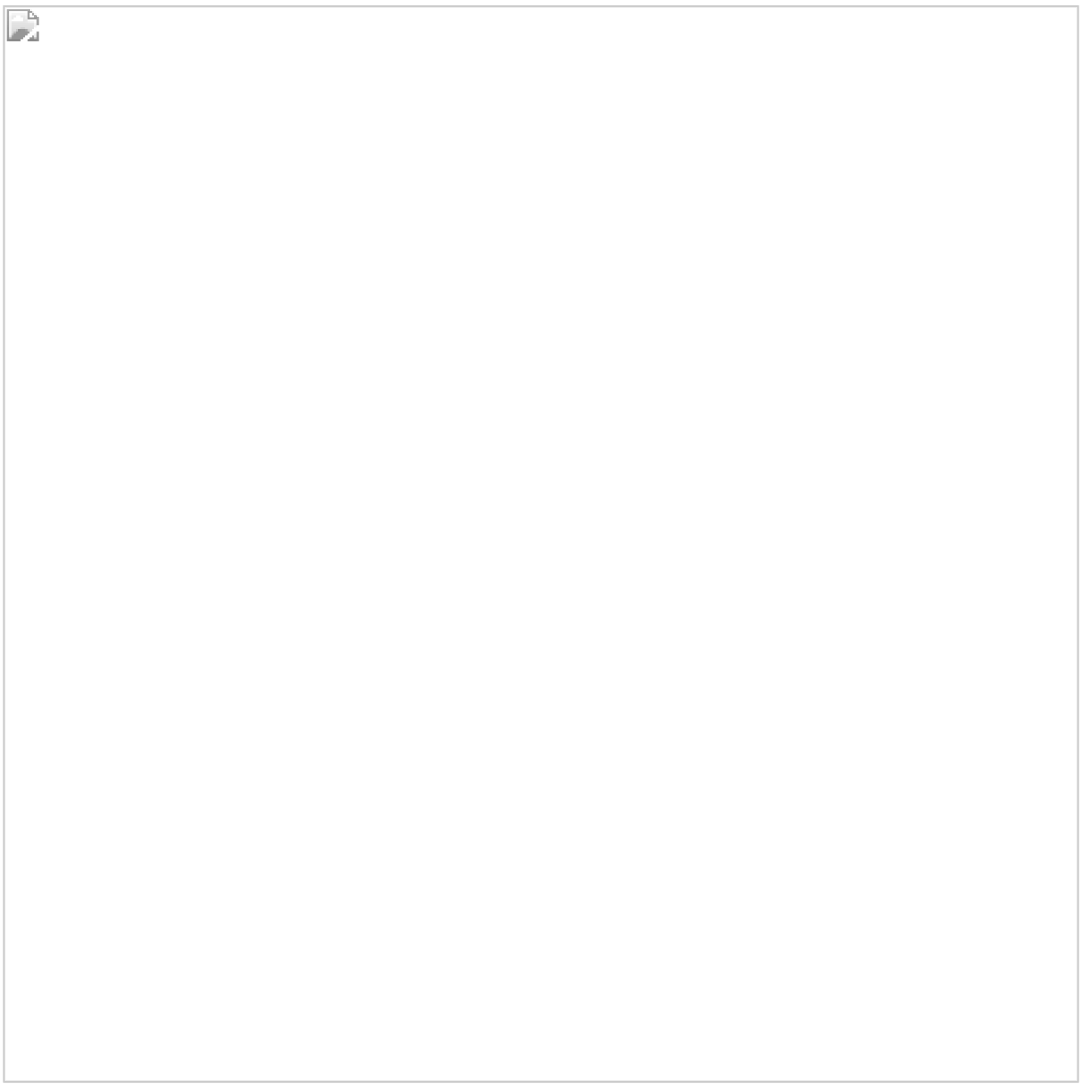
Then a new army came, and another fight began. More and more of Roland's friends fell. At last only sixty tired knights were left.

Roland looked at all his fallen friends. “Oh my Emperor, my friend, alas, why wert thou not here?” he said.

He thought of the horn.

TALK ABOUT IT

Roland's pride cost something. Who else paid the cost, besides Roland?

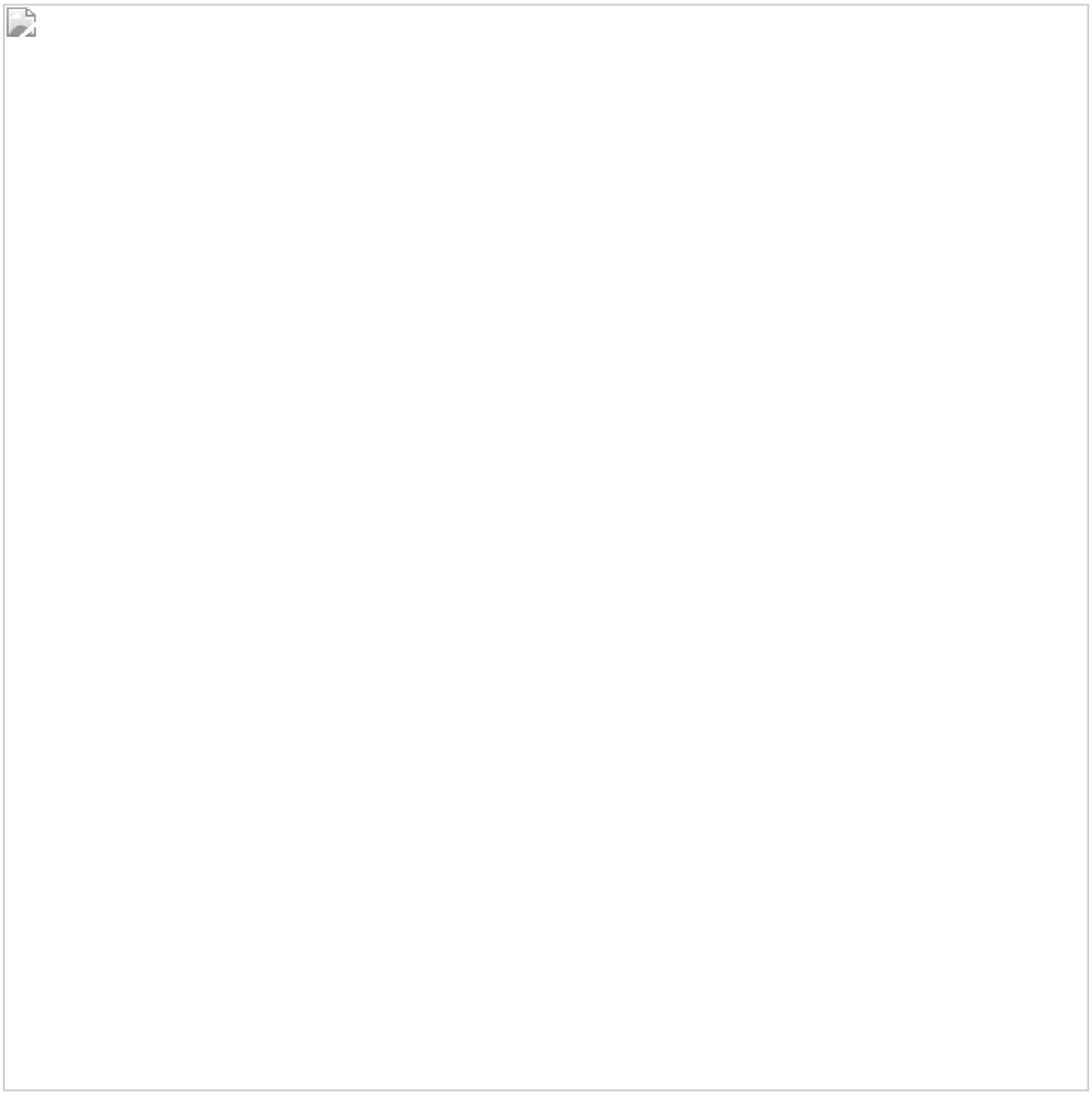


Think about it

1. How many knights were left at the end of the hard day?

- ○ Sixty
- ○ A thousand
- ○ None

Too Late to Say Sorry?



“I will sound upon my horn,” said Roland. All his pride was gone.

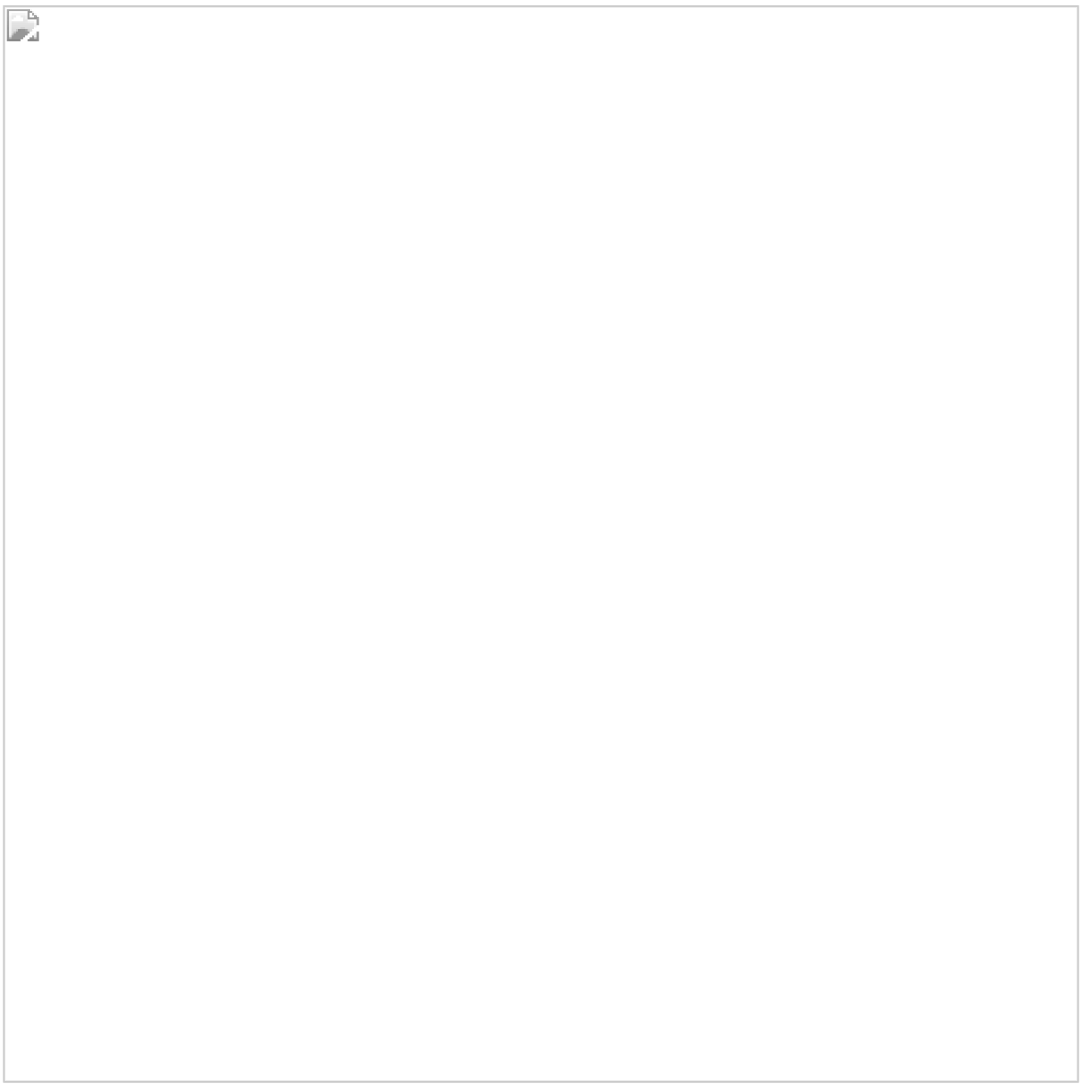
But now Oliver was very angry and very sad. “It is thy folly that hath slain them,” he said. He told Roland that if he had listened, the emperor would have been there, and the battle would have been won.

Roland looked at his friend and could not speak, he was so sad. Archbishop Turpin rode between them. “Strive not thus,” he said. The emperor might still come, he said, and he could still help them, and bring their friends home.

TALK ABOUT IT

Oliver was right, and he was angry. Roland was wrong, and he was sorry. What do you say to a friend when you were wrong?

Too Late to Say Sorry? · another picture

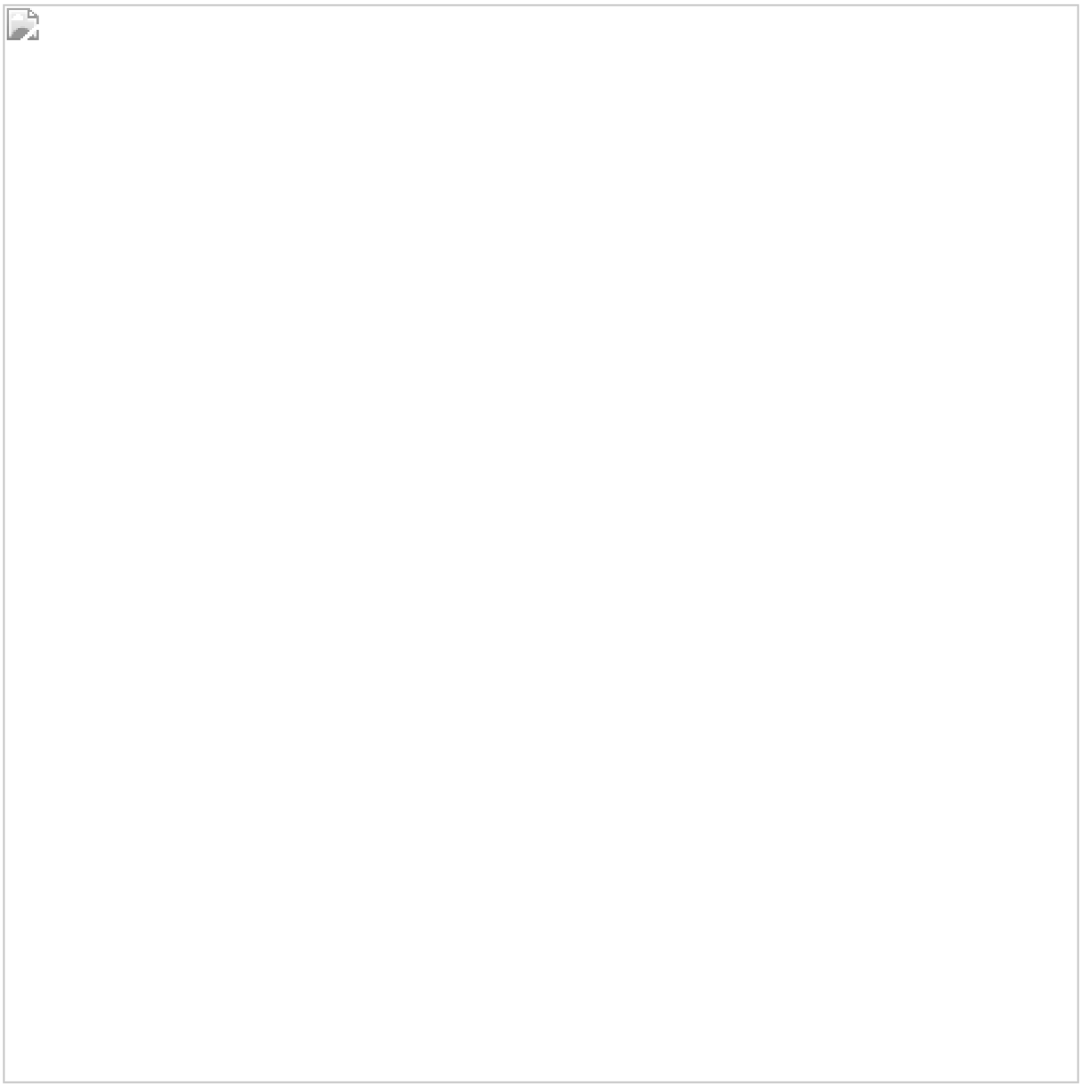


Think about it

1. What did Archbishop Turpin say when Oliver and Roland argued?

- ○ Run away
- ○ Do not quarrel
- ○ Keep fighting forever

The Horn



Roland put the horn to his lips, and blew with all the strength he had left. The sound rolled from mountain to mountain, thirty leagues away to the emperor's ears. “It is the horn of Roland,” said Charlemagne.

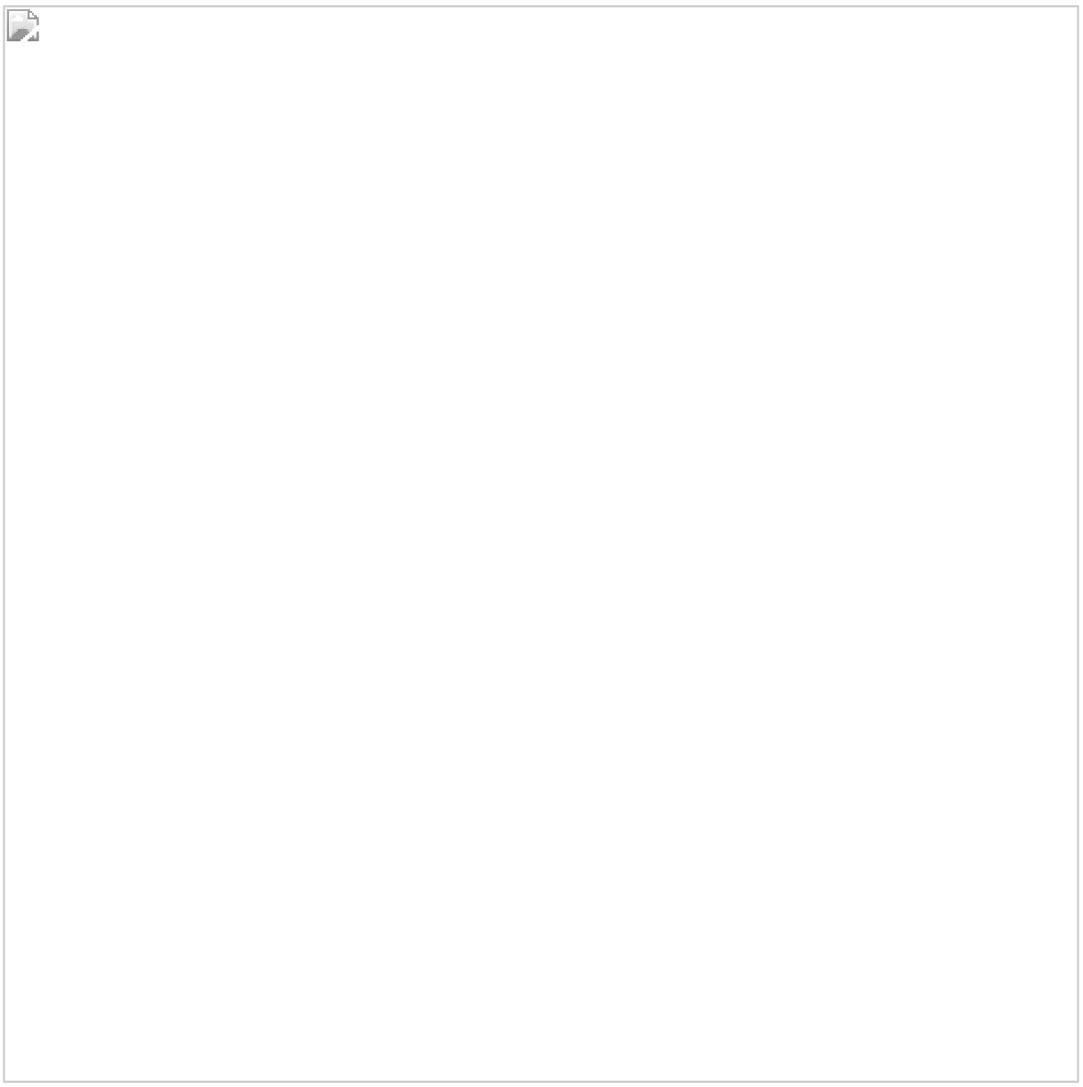
But Ganelon told the emperor there was no battle at all, and that he should ride on. The emperor rode on, slowly.

Roland blew again, more weakly. And again, softer than before.

Then Duke Naimes cried, “Some one hath betrayed him.” At last Charlemagne turned his army around, and they rode hard through the night. Ganelon was put under guard, and chained.

TALK ABOUT IT

It took three calls before the emperor turned around. Why do you think it matters to keep asking for help when you need it?

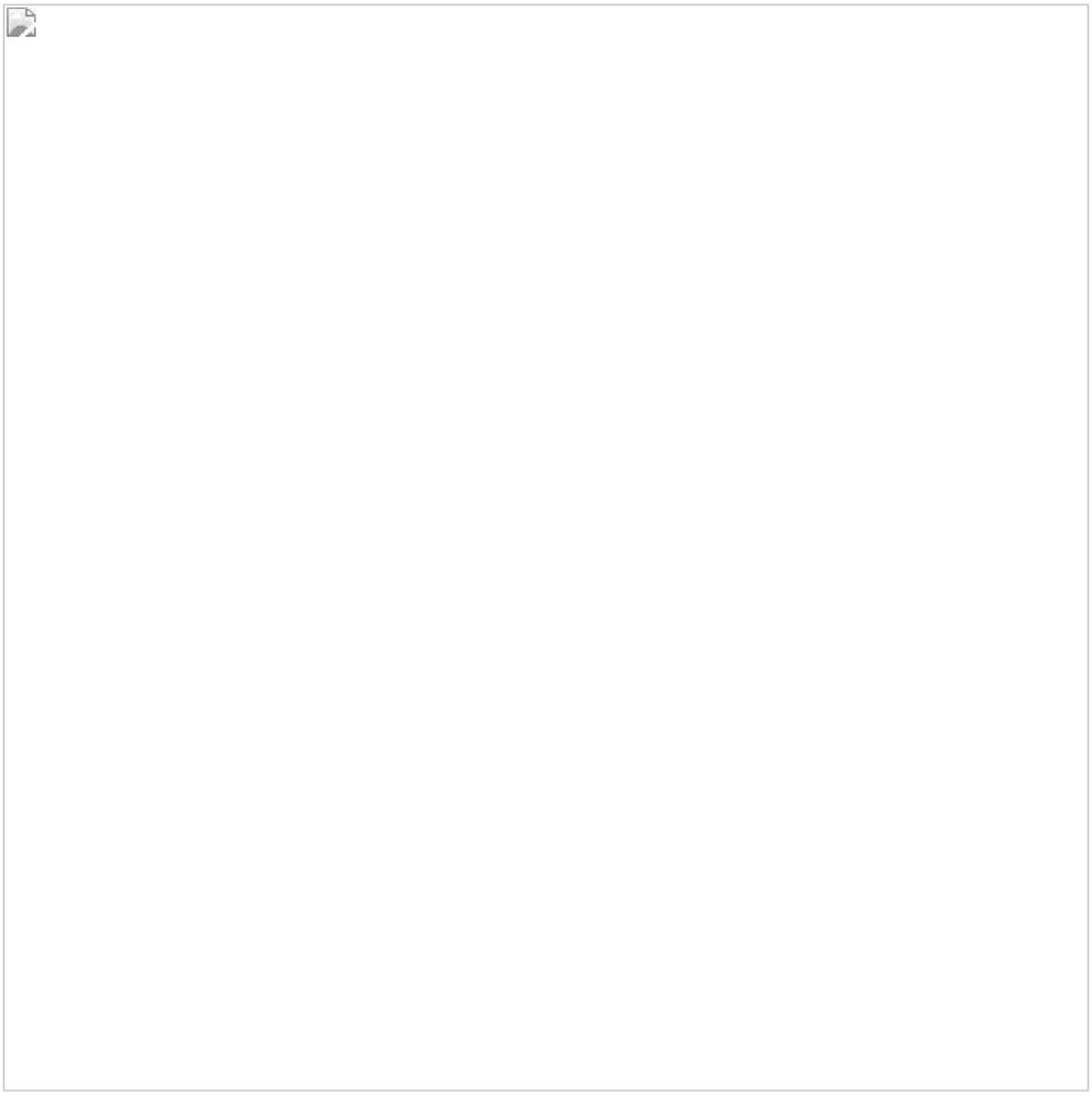


Think about it

1. How many times did Roland blow the horn?

- ○ One
- ○ Twenty
- ○ Three

Too Late



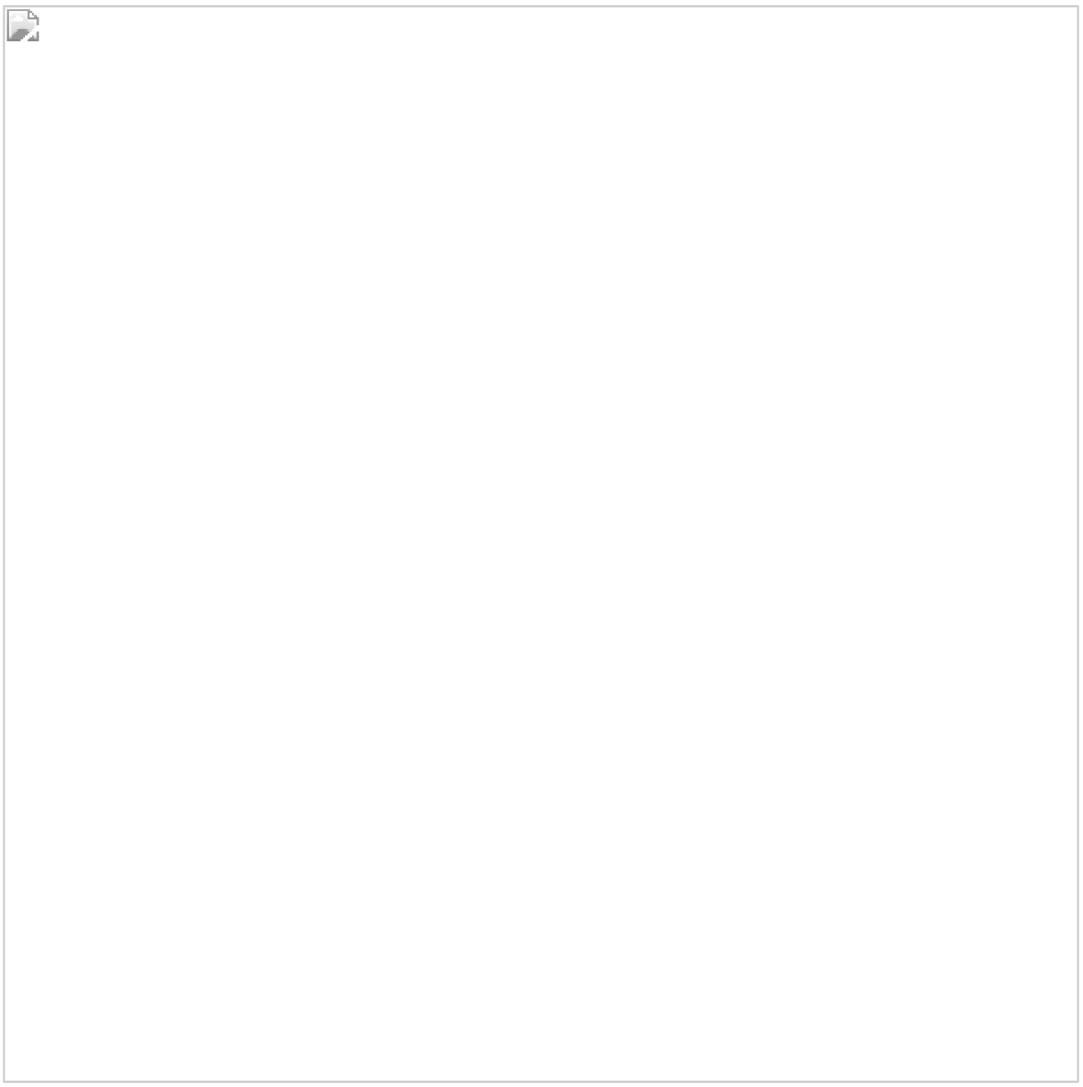
“Alas! alas! they are late, too late!”

When the emperor reached the valley of Roncesvalles, it was quiet. Brave friends lay everywhere on the ground. He called their names. “Where art thou, Roland?” he cried. No one answered. The wind moaned over the field, and a few torn banners fluttered.

At last the emperor found Roland. He took him in his arms and wept. “My friend, my Roland,” he said.

TALK ABOUT IT

The emperor called and called, and there was no answer. What do you think it was like for him to be too late?



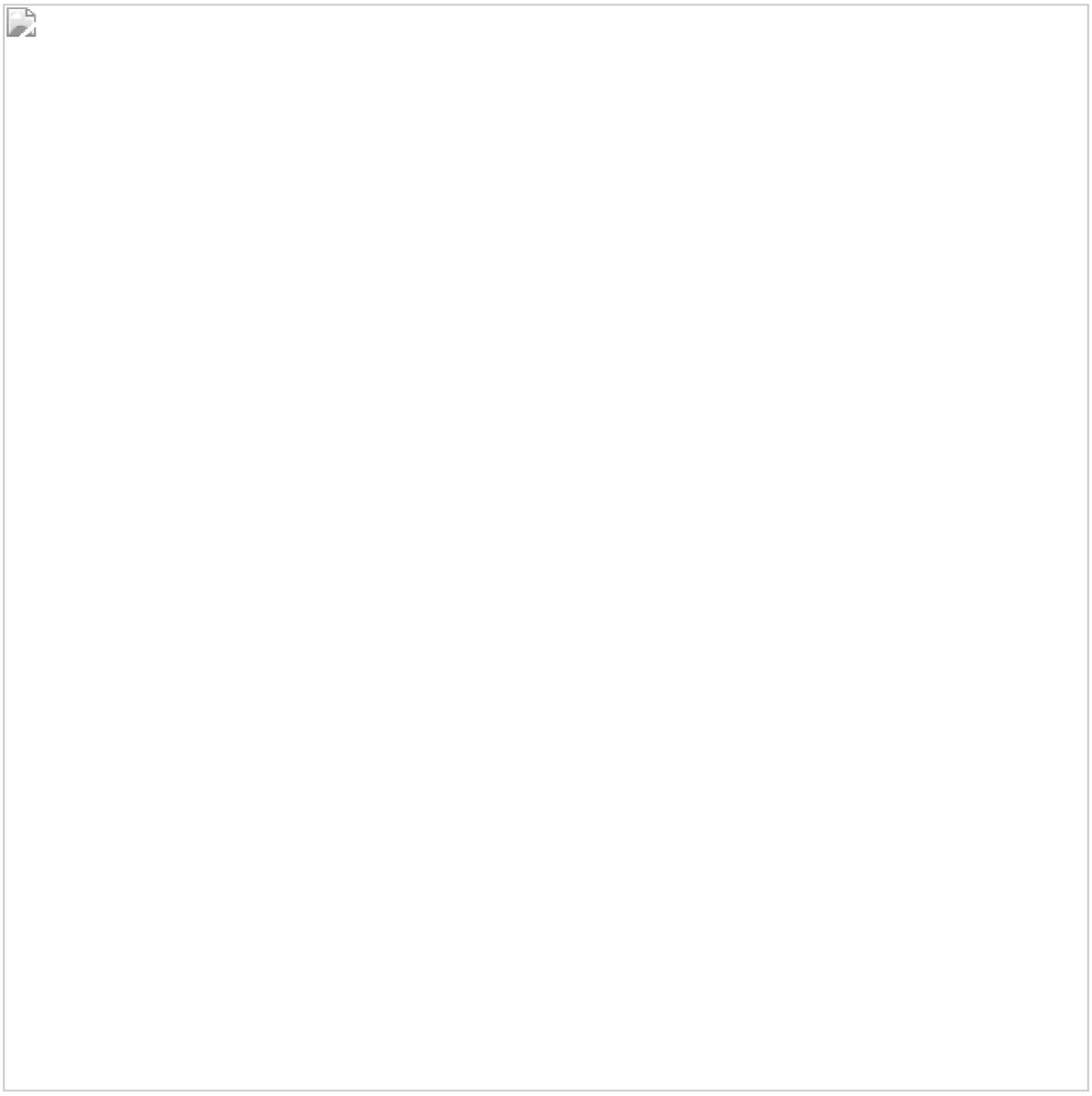
Think about it

1. What did the emperor do when he found Roland?

- ○ He wept
- ○ He laughed
- ○ He rode away

2. How do you think the emperor's knights felt, riding behind him?

Carried Home



The knights searched the whole field. They found their friends and buried them with hymns, prayers, and honor.

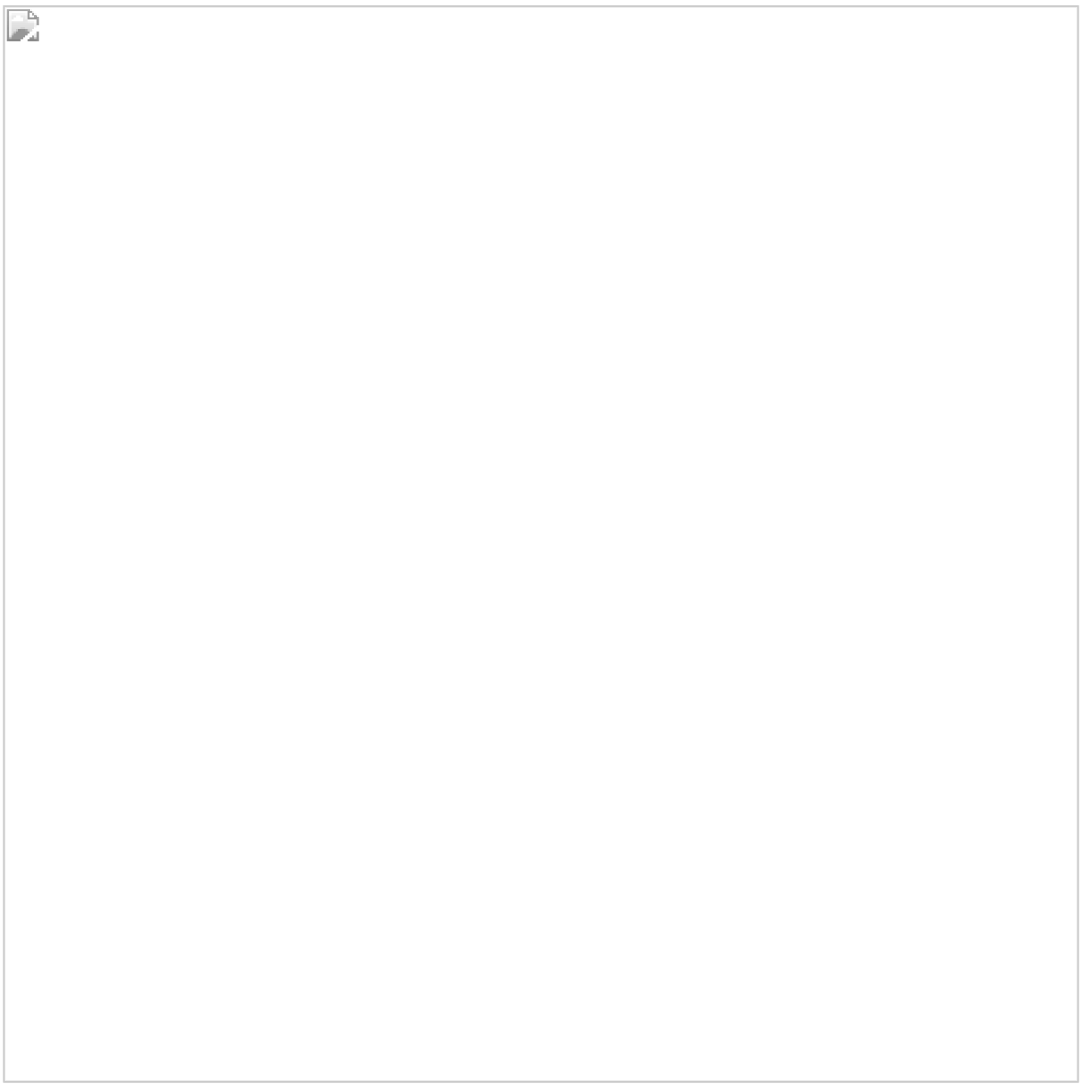
But they did not leave Roland, Oliver, and the Archbishop Turpin in Spain. The three were laid in white marble coffins, covered with silk, and carried back to France.

Roland had not listened to his wise friend until too late. But Oliver had stayed beside him to the end.

TALK ABOUT IT

Oliver stayed beside his friend, even when Roland was wrong. What do you think of that kind of friendship?

Carried Home · another picture



Think about it

1. Where were Roland, Oliver, and Turpin taken?

- ○ To Saragossa
- ○ Back to France
- ○ To the sea

2. What would you tell someone who was too proud to ask for help?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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