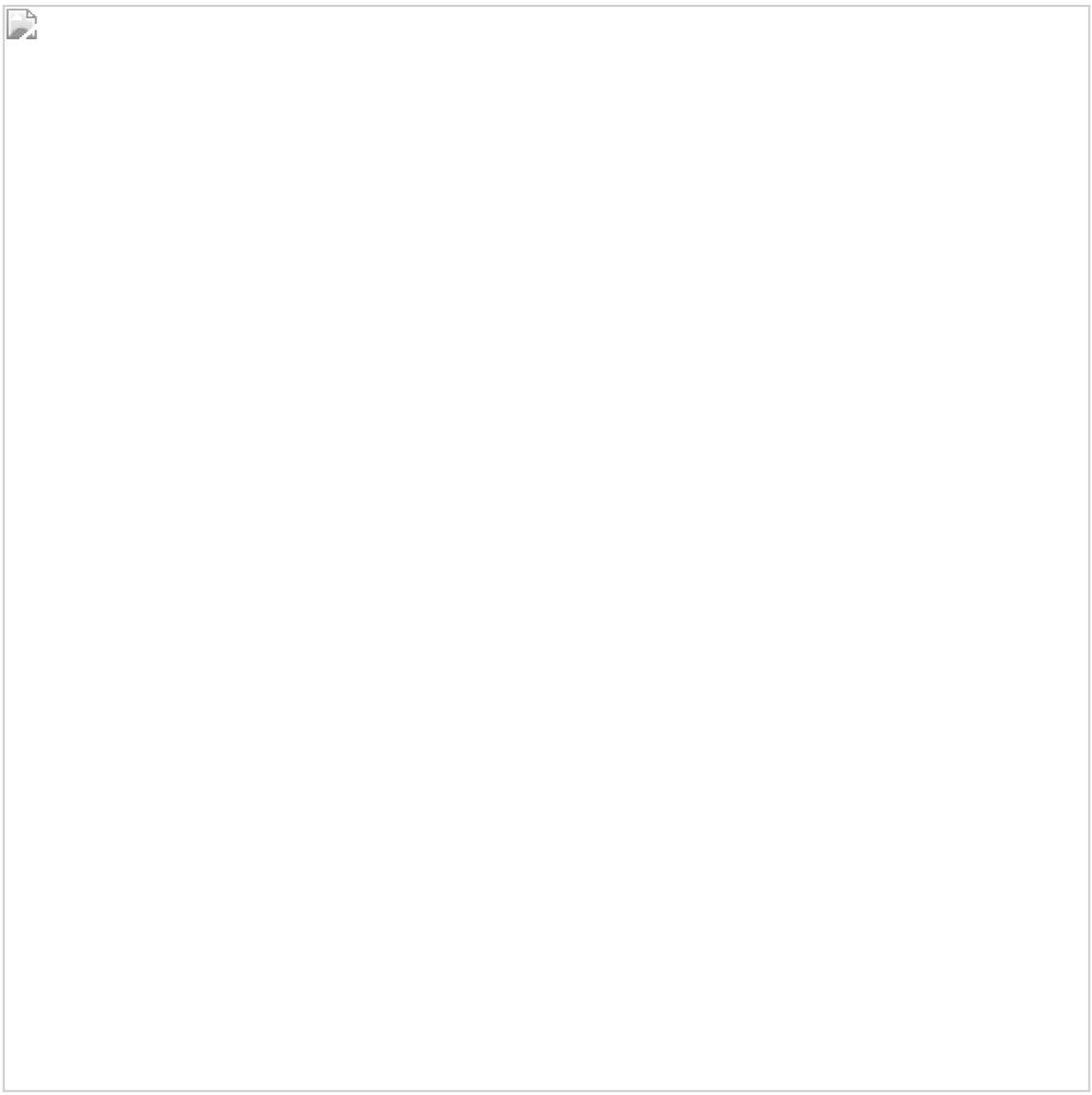
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Rustem

A Hero of Persia



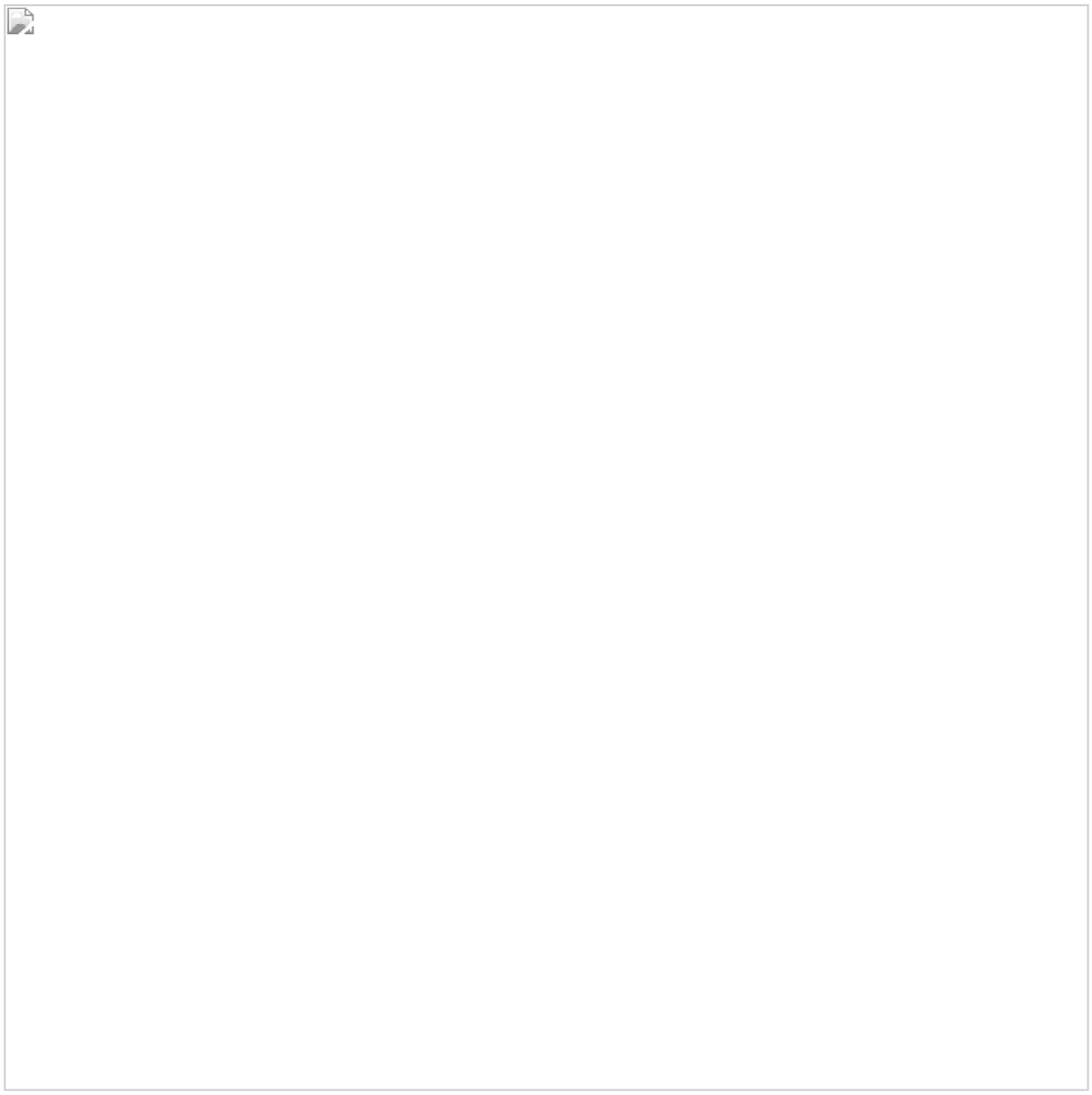
King Kaous of Persia had grown rich, and his armies had grown large, and he had begun to think there was “no one equal to him in the whole world.” One day he sat in his palace, feasting and boasting, when a minstrel with a harp came to the gate and asked to sing for the king.

TALK ABOUT IT

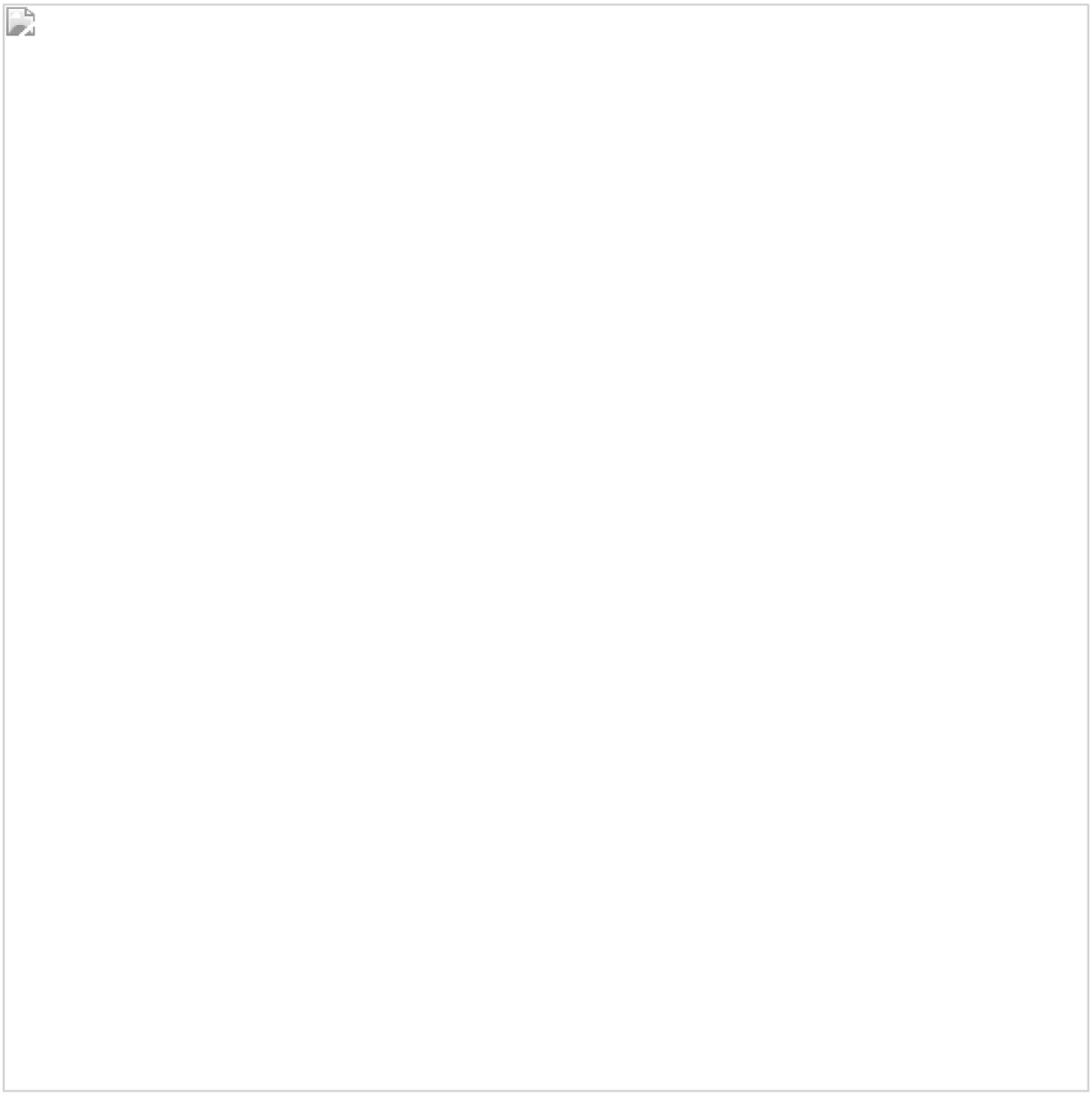
King Kaous sat boasting at his feast. What do you think can happen when someone believes nobody is as great as they are?

This book belongs to _____

Rustem · another picture



The Song of Mazanderan



The minstrel was no ordinary singer. He was one of the Genii, the magical folk of the land of Mazanderan, and he had come in disguise.

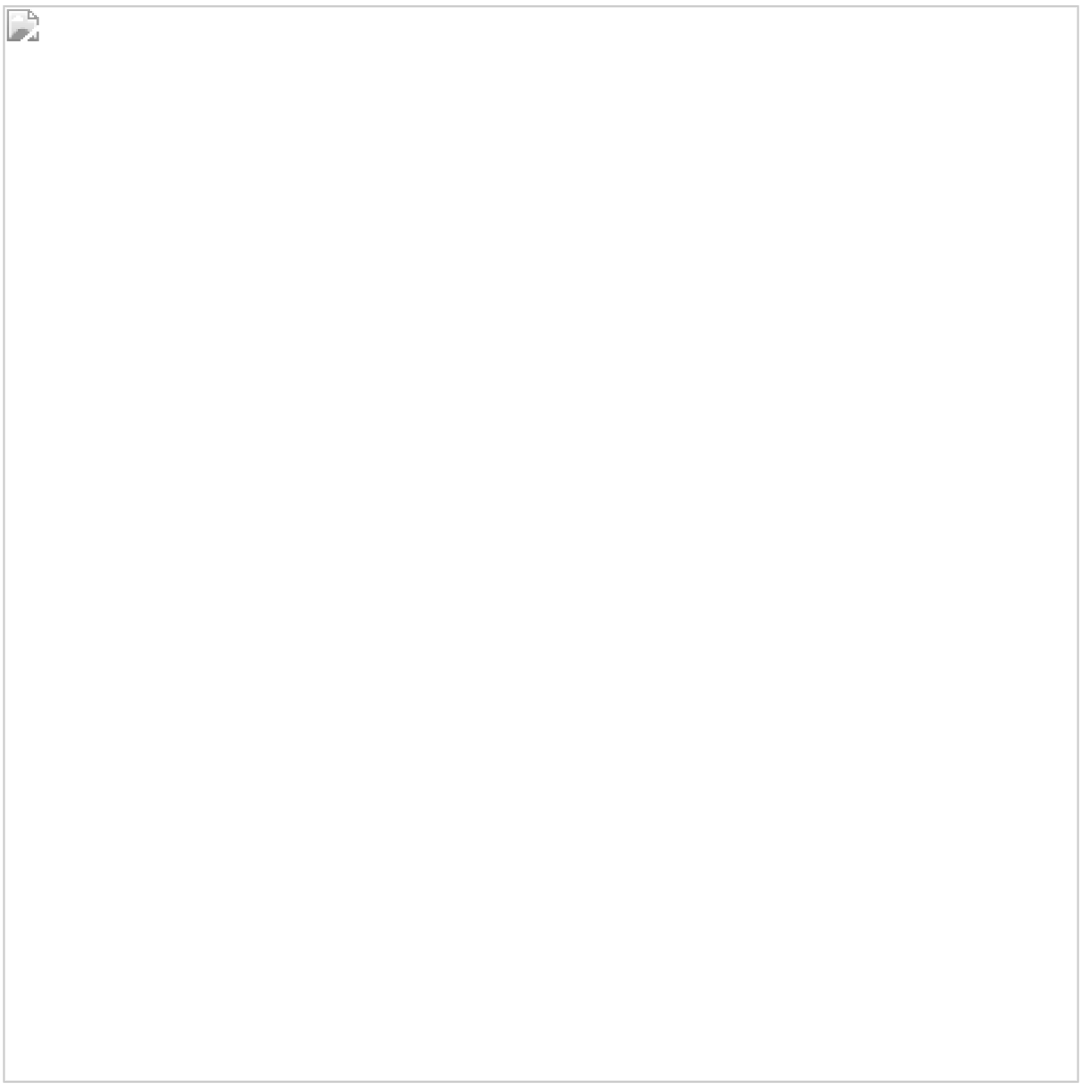
He sang of a country where roses bloomed all year long, nightingales sang in the thickets, and deer wandered through the valleys. “No man can say that he is happy,” he sang, “unless he has seen Mazanderan.”

The king listened, and a greedy thought came into his head. He would march across the land and take it for himself.

TALK ABOUT IT

The king already had a great kingdom. Why do you think a song made him want even more?

The Song of Mazanderan · another picture

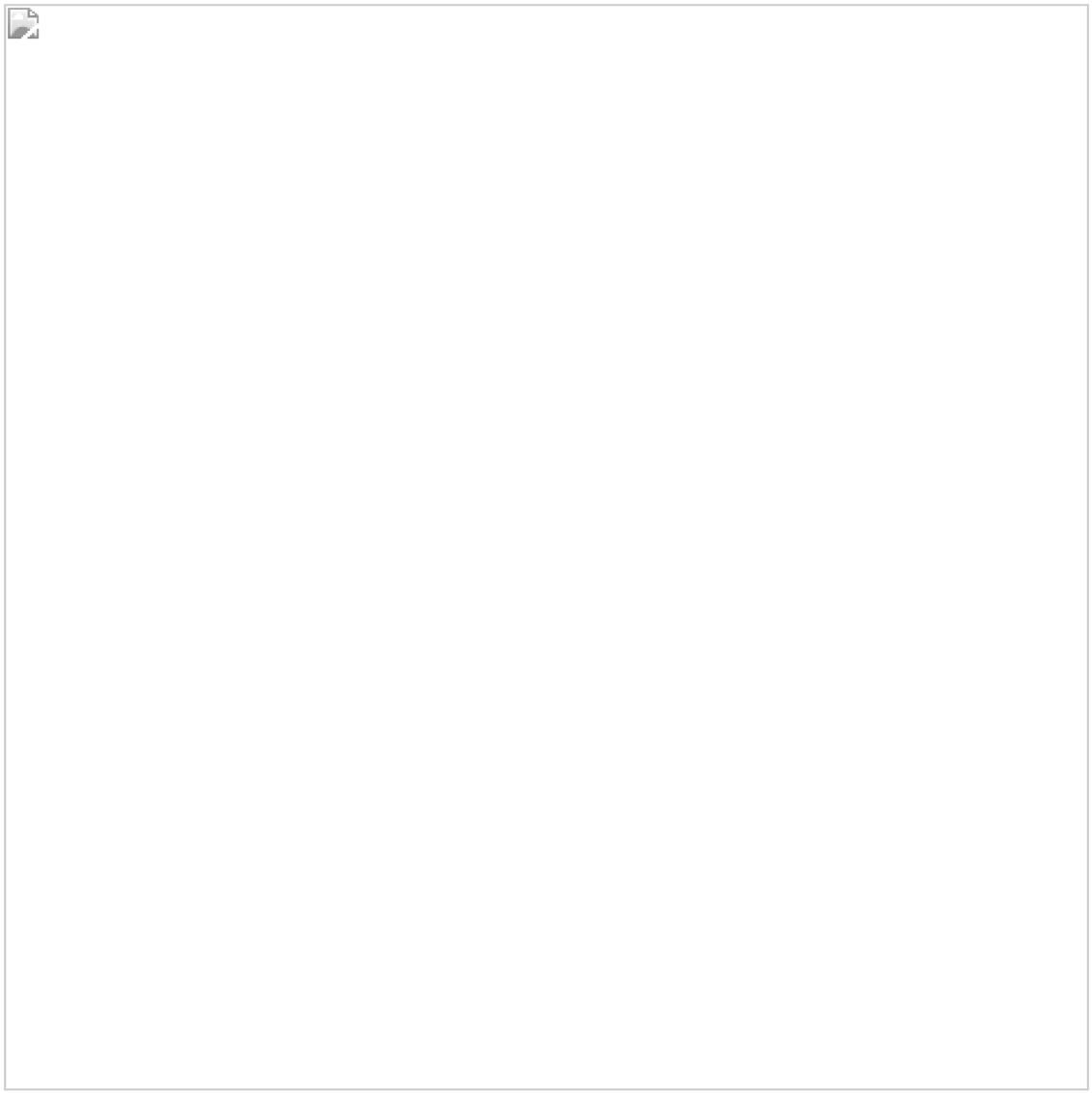


Think about it

1. What did the king decide to do after the song?

- ○ March against Mazanderan and conquer it
- ○ Visit Mazanderan as a friend
- ○ Give away his gold

A Wise Old Warning



The king's warriors were troubled. They did not want this war, but no one dared to say so to the king.

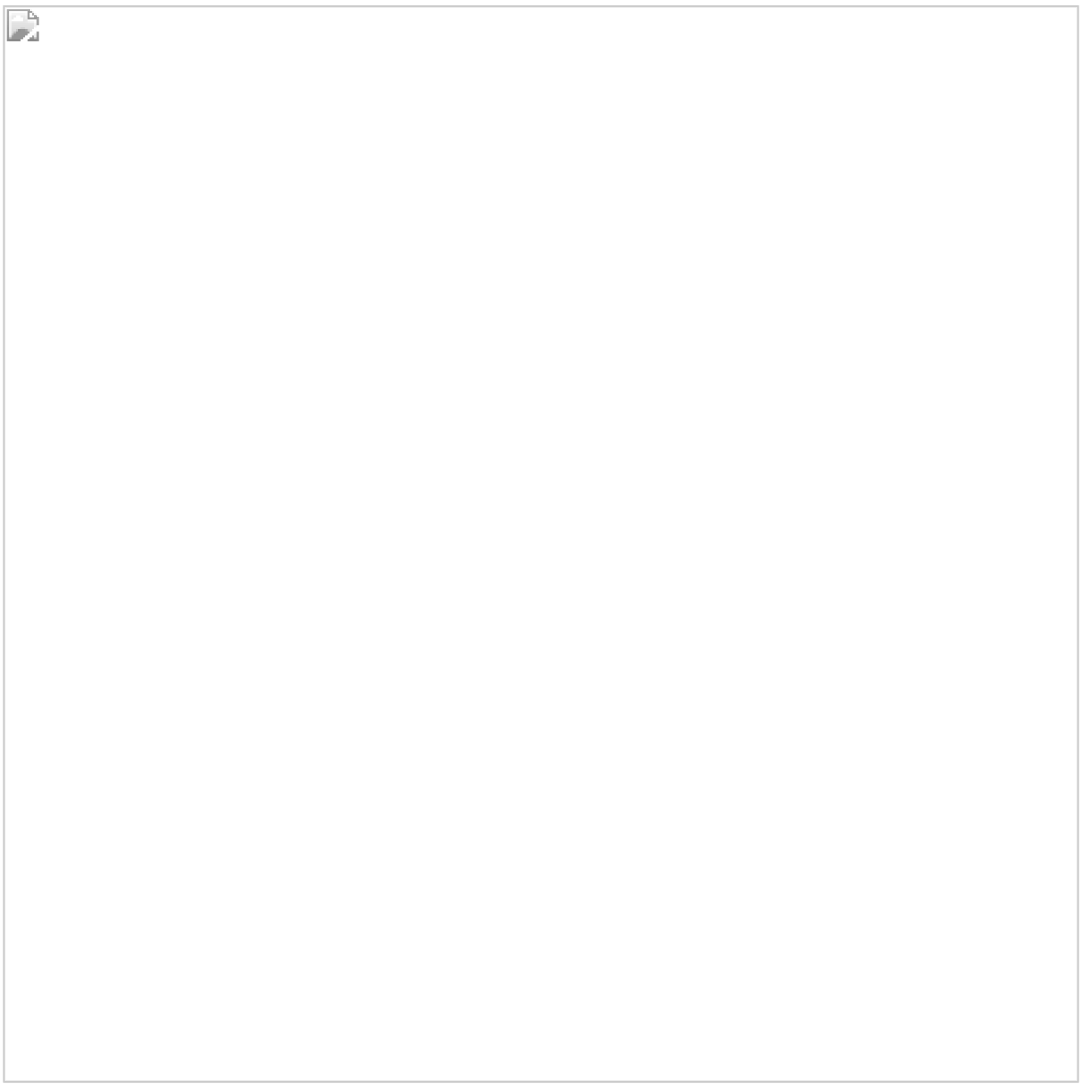
So they sent a swift camel across the land to old Zal, the white-haired, with a message: “Though your head be covered with dust, do not stay to wash it, but come.”

Zal came, and he spoke plainly. Mazanderan was full of strong magic, he said. The king would waste his riches and his people's lives.

But the king would not listen. Zal bowed sadly, and went home.

TALK ABOUT IT

Zal told the king the truth, even though the king did not want to hear it. Is that easy or hard to do? Why?



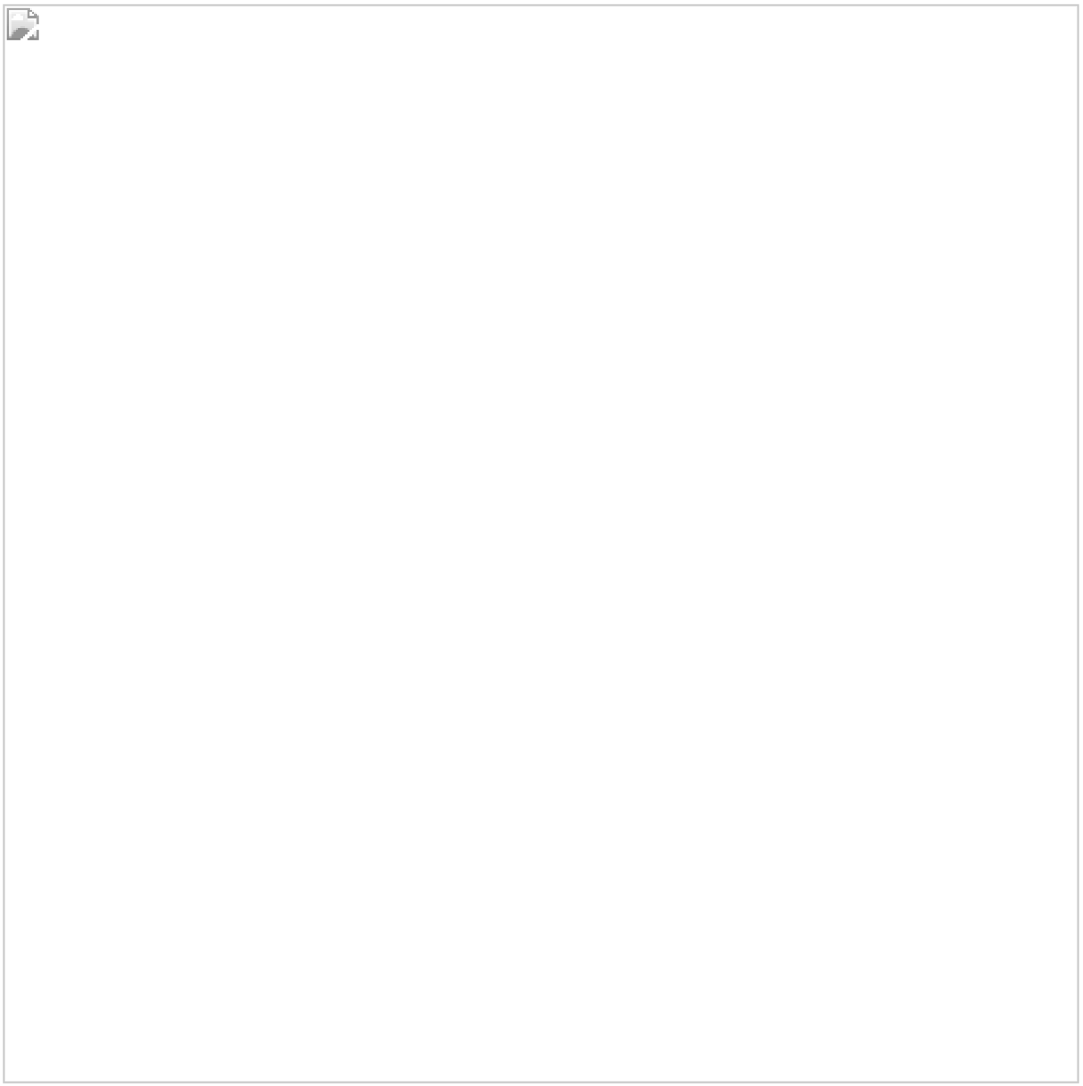
Think about it

1. Who did the king's warriors send for?

- ○ The minstrel
- ○ Zal of the white hair
- ○ A cook

2. Have you ever had to give someone advice that they did not want to hear?

Storm and Darkness



The king set out with his army. At Mazanderan his men broke down the city gates, and the beautiful city became a ruin.

The king of Mazanderan sent word to the White Genius, a huge and powerful being. That night a black cloud covered the Persian camp, and a terrible hailstorm fell. When morning came, the king and his men who had stayed were blind.

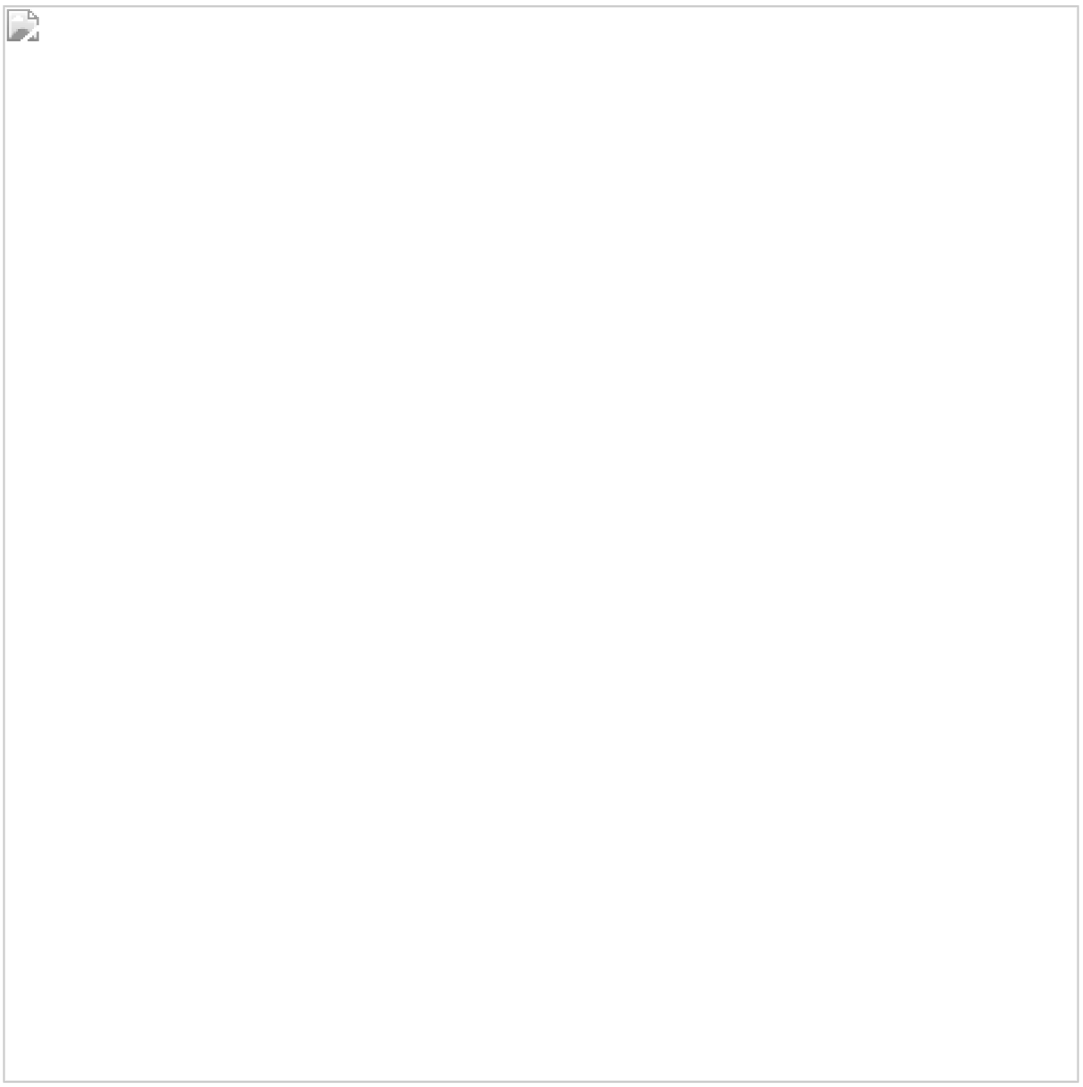
For seven days they sat frightened and helpless. Then a voice like thunder said, “Your lot is of your own contriving.”

The Genii took the king and his men, and held them prisoners.

TALK ABOUT IT

The White Genius said the king had caused his own trouble. Do you think that is true? Who started this war?

Storm and Darkness · another picture

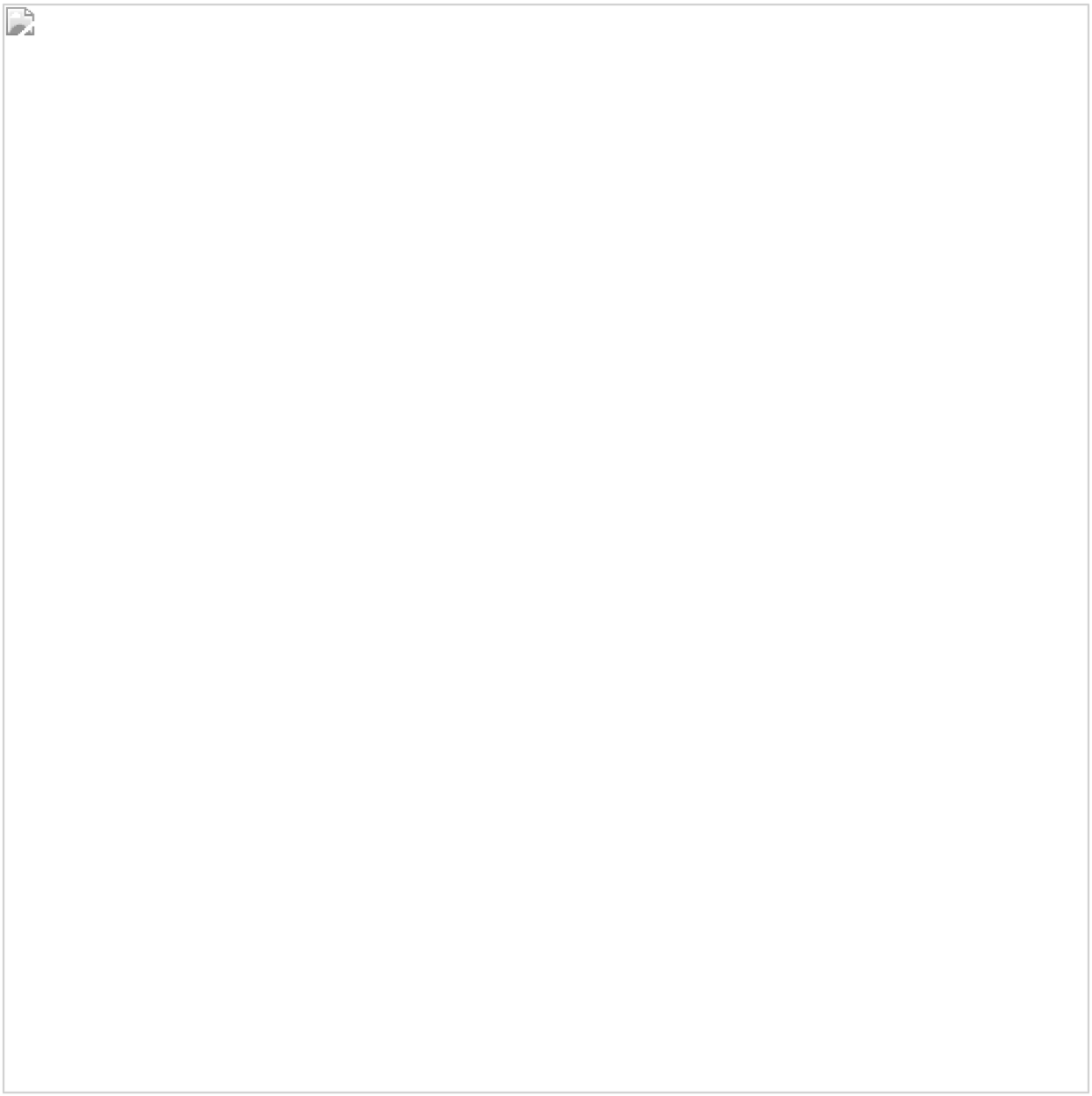


Think about it

1. What happened to the king and his men after the storm?

- ○ They were crowned
- ○ They went home happy
- ○ They could not see

Rustem and Raksh



Somehow the blind king sent a message to Zal. Zal called for his son, the great hero Rustem.

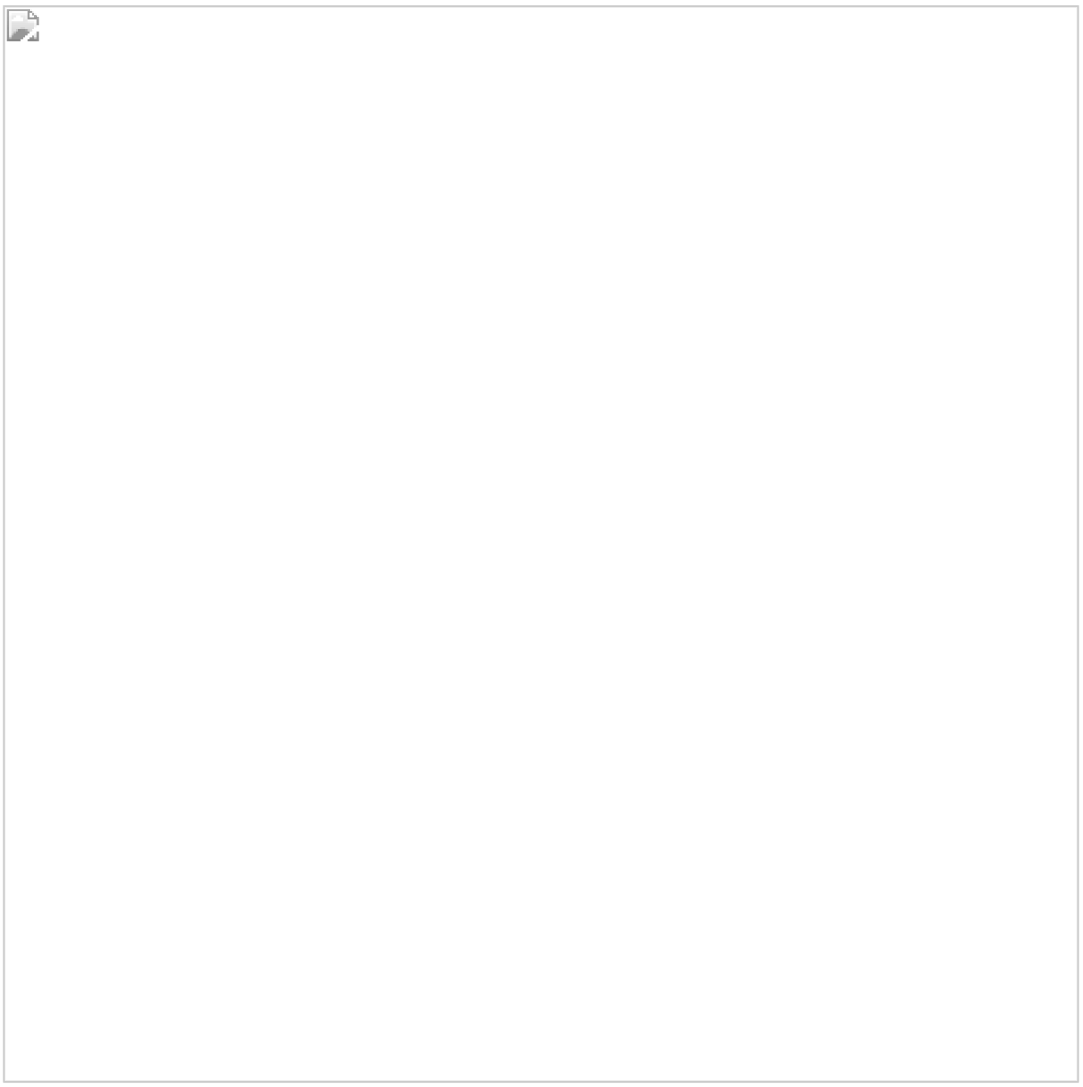
“Saddle Raksh, your horse,” said Zal, “and set forth without a moment's delay.”

The short road was full of lions and darkness and danger. “My father, I am ready to do your bidding,” said Rustem. He did not pretend to be unafraid. But he went, and Raksh, his swift horse, carried him on like the wind.

TALK ABOUT IT

Rustem knew the road was dangerous, and he went anyway to help the king who had been foolish. Why do you think he went?

Rustem and Raksh · another picture

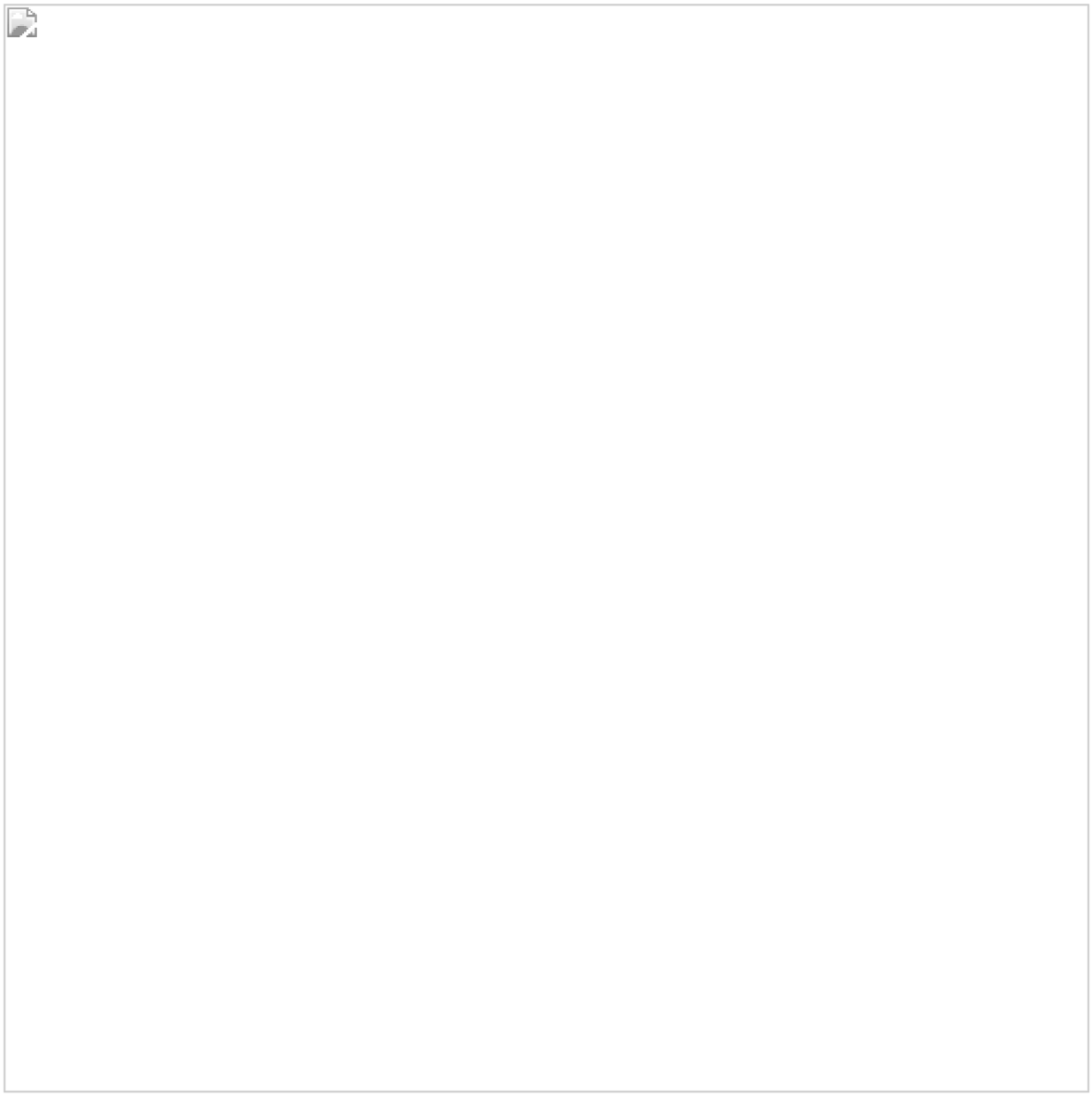


Think about it

1. What was the name of Rustem's horse?

- ○ Raksh
- ○ Gana
- ○ Bavieca

The Lion and the Ram



At night Rustem lay down to sleep in a bed of rushes. But it was a lion's bed! When the lion came home, it leaped at Raksh, and the brave horse fought it off with his hooves and teeth.

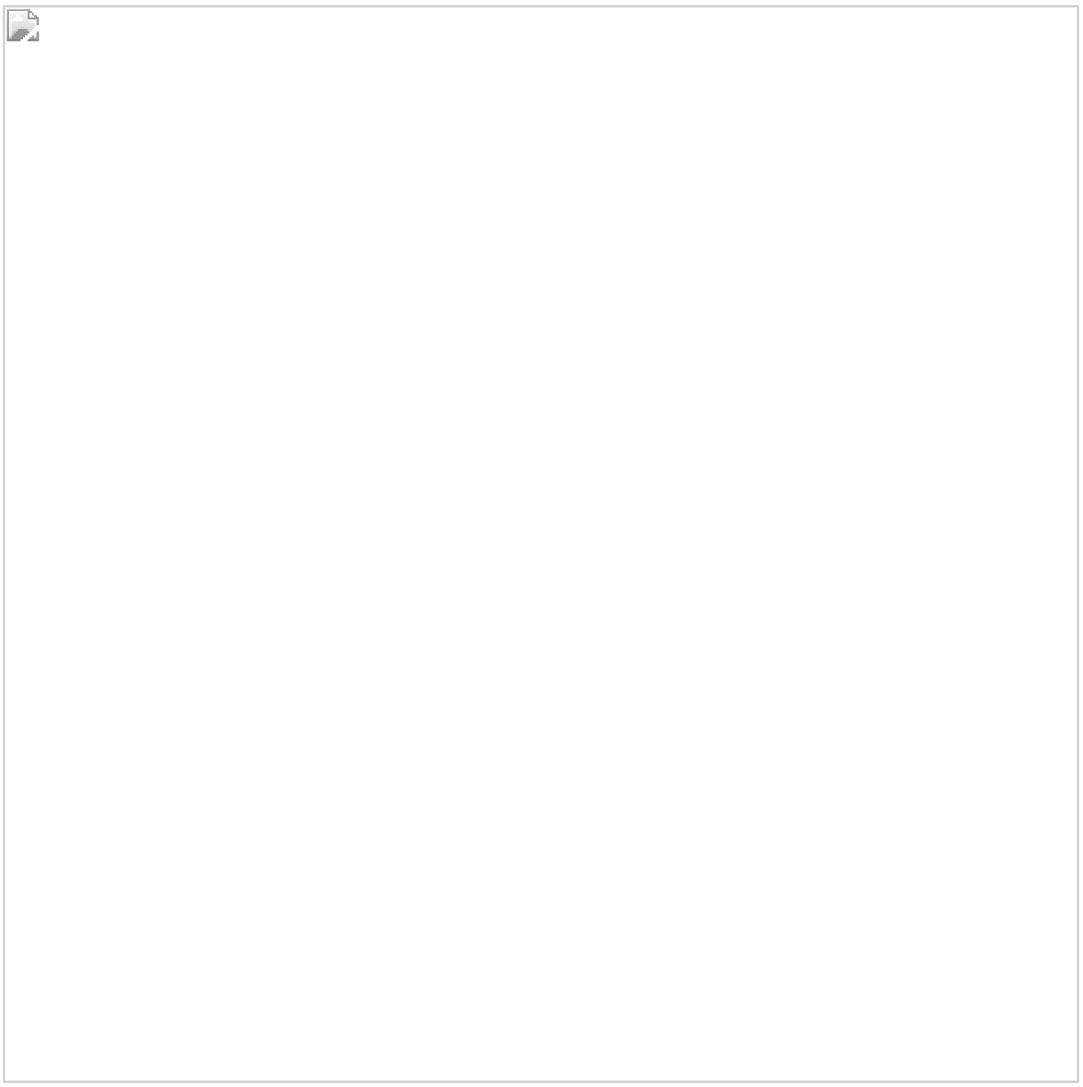
Next came a burning desert. Horse and rider were dying of thirst. Then Rustem saw a well-fed ram walking by. He wondered where such a creature found water, and he followed it, all the way to a spring.

Rustem thanked God, and then he thanked the ram. “No harm come to thee forever!” he said.

TALK ABOUT IT

Rustem stopped to thank a ram for showing him water. What does that tell you about him?

The Lion and the Ram · another picture

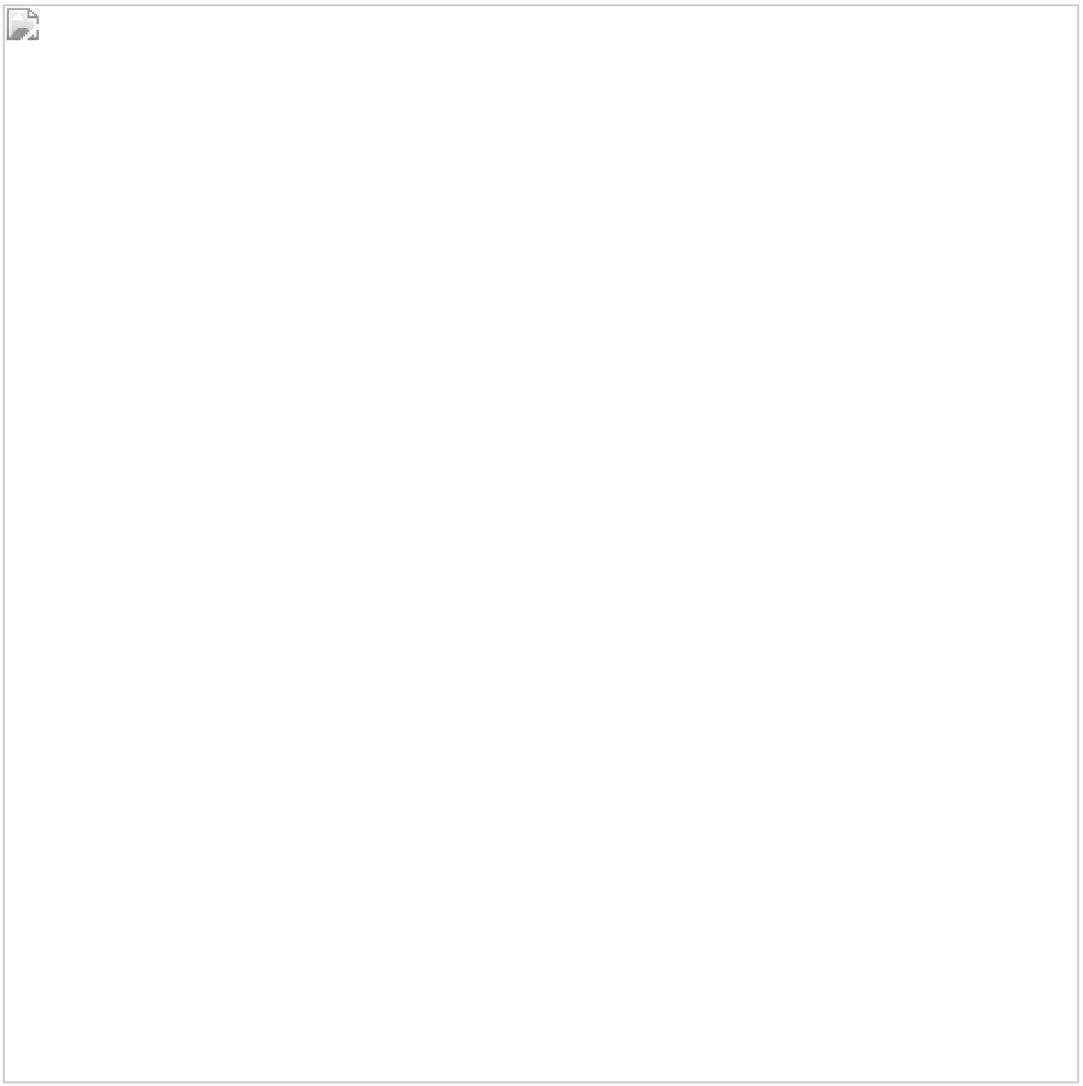


Think about it

1. Who led Rustem to the spring?

- ○ A bird
- ○ A ram
- ○ A fox

Raksh Tries Three Times



Rustem lay down by the spring. He told Raksh not to fight with any lion or Genius.

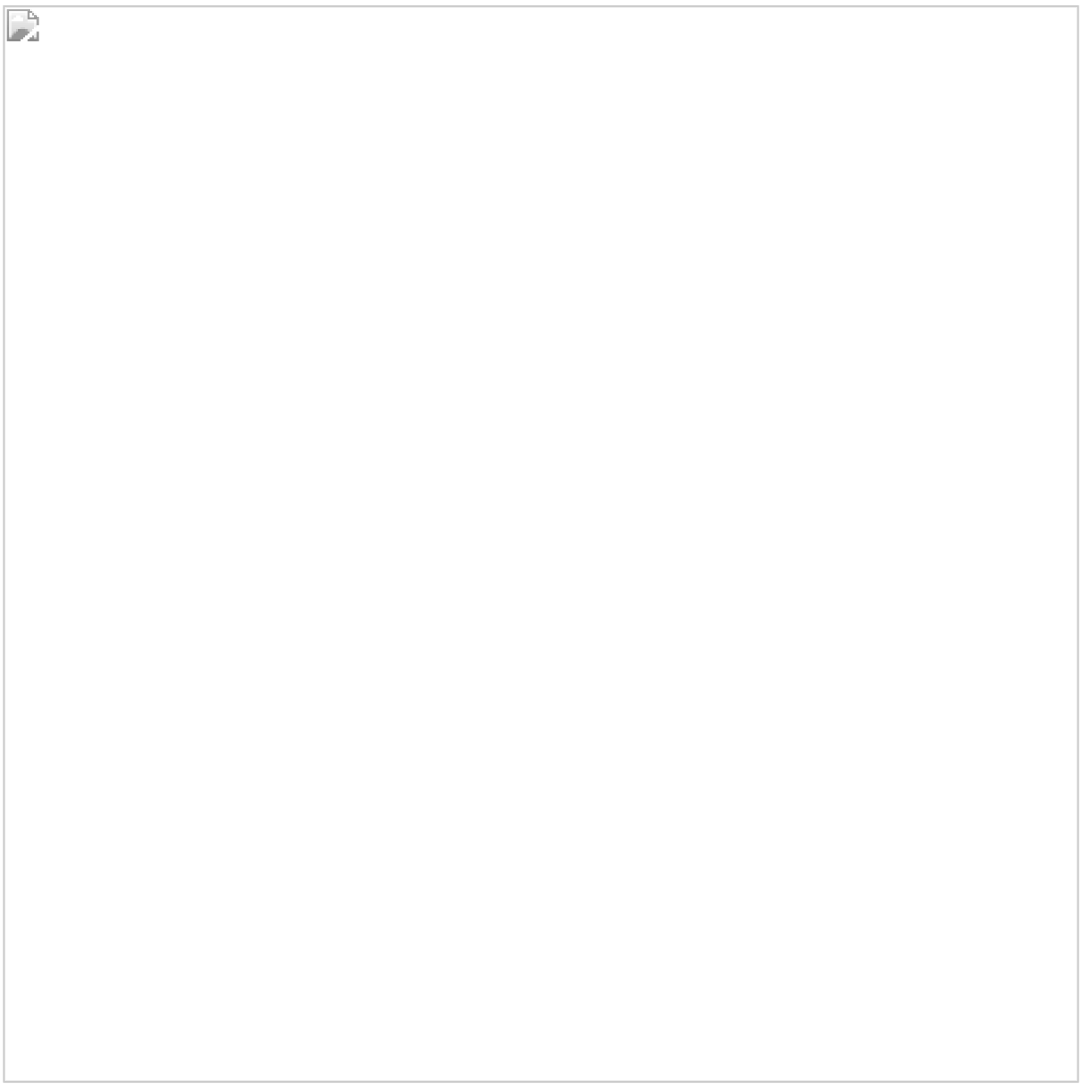
But a great dragon crept near. Raksh ran to Rustem and stamped. Rustem woke, saw nothing in the dark, and grew cross. It happened again, and a third time.

Frightened, Raksh fled, but his love for his master would not let him rest. He neighed and tore up the ground until at last Rustem saw the dragon and drew his sword.

“I am Rustem, son of Zal of the white hair,” he said, “and there is nothing on earth that I fear.” With Raksh's help, Rustem won.

TALK ABOUT IT

Raksh kept waking Rustem, and Rustem was angry with him. But Raksh was right! Has someone ever tried to warn you, and you did not listen?



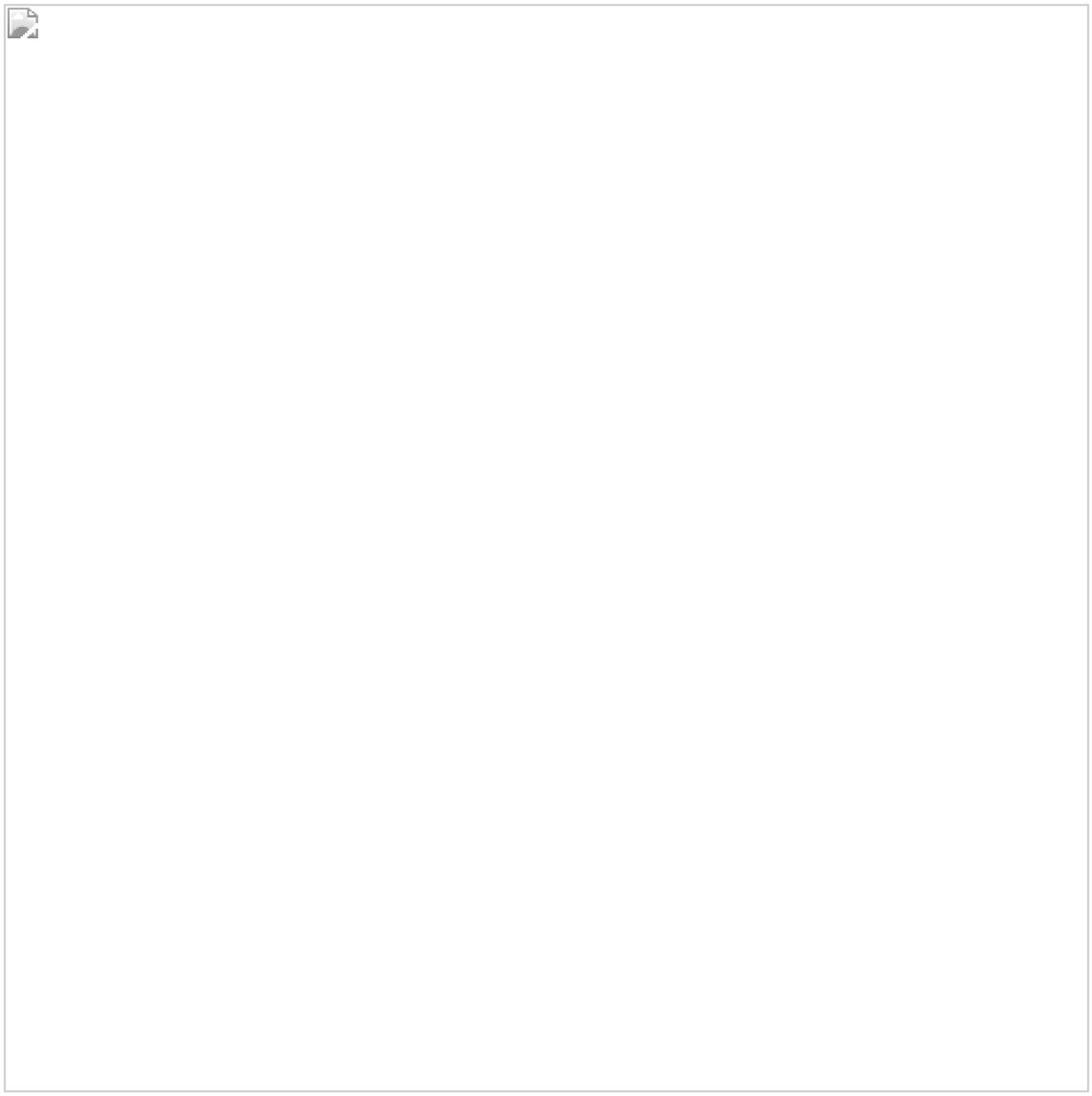
Think about it

1. How many times did Raksh try to wake Rustem?

- ○ Once
- ○ Ten times
- ○ Three times

2. How do you think Rustem felt about Raksh afterward?

A Promise to Aulad



Rustem came at last to a green land with sunny fields. Its owner was a young warrior named Aulad, who came riding out against the stranger with all his men.

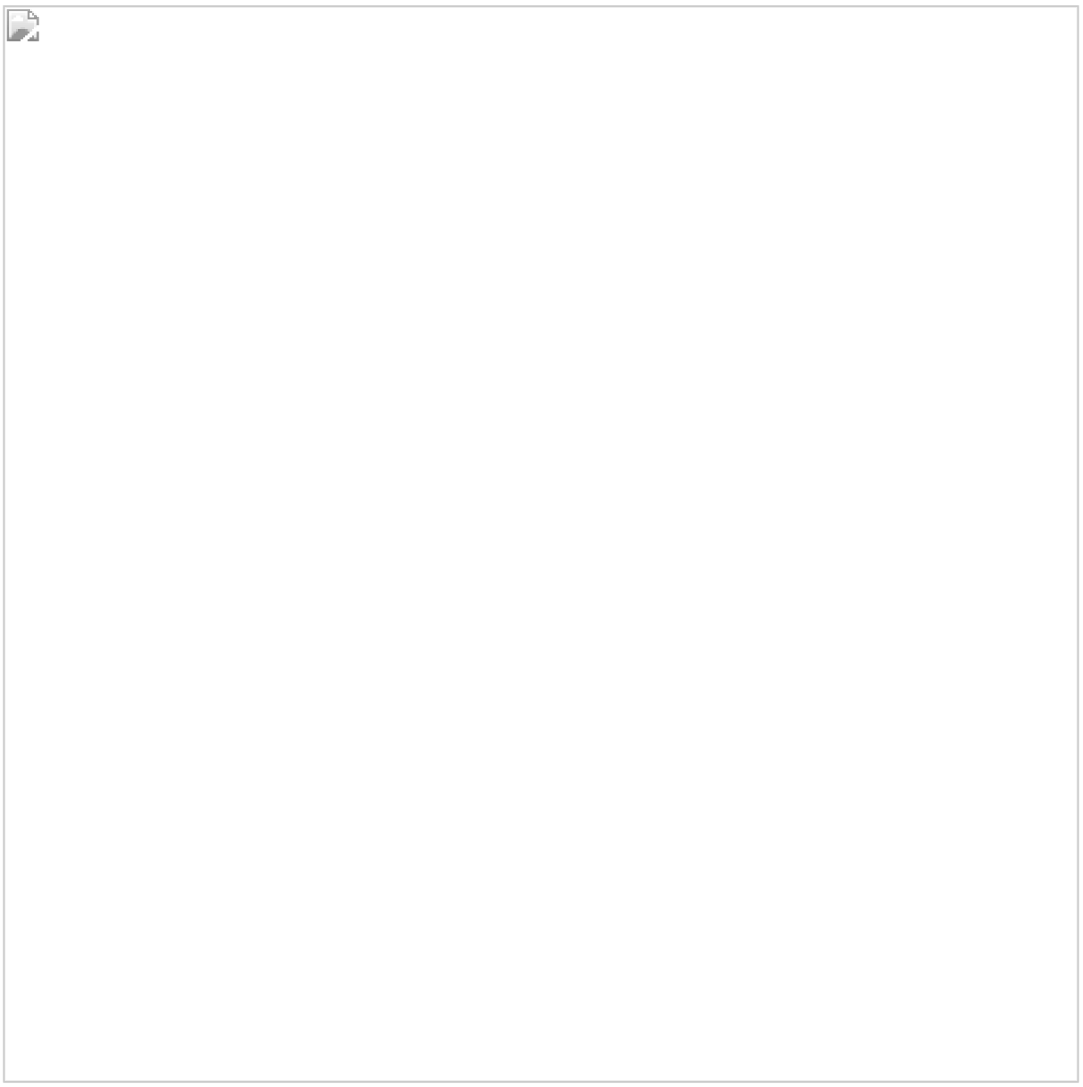
Rustem was too strong for them. He caught Aulad with his lasso, and tied his hands, but he did not hurt him. Then he made a bargain. If Aulad would tell the truth and show him where the king was held prisoner, Rustem would make him king of Mazanderan.

Aulad agreed, and he ran in front of Raksh, showing the way.

TALK ABOUT IT

Rustem made Aulad a promise, and asked him for the truth. Why do you think telling the truth matters so much on a long road?

A Promise to Aulad · another picture

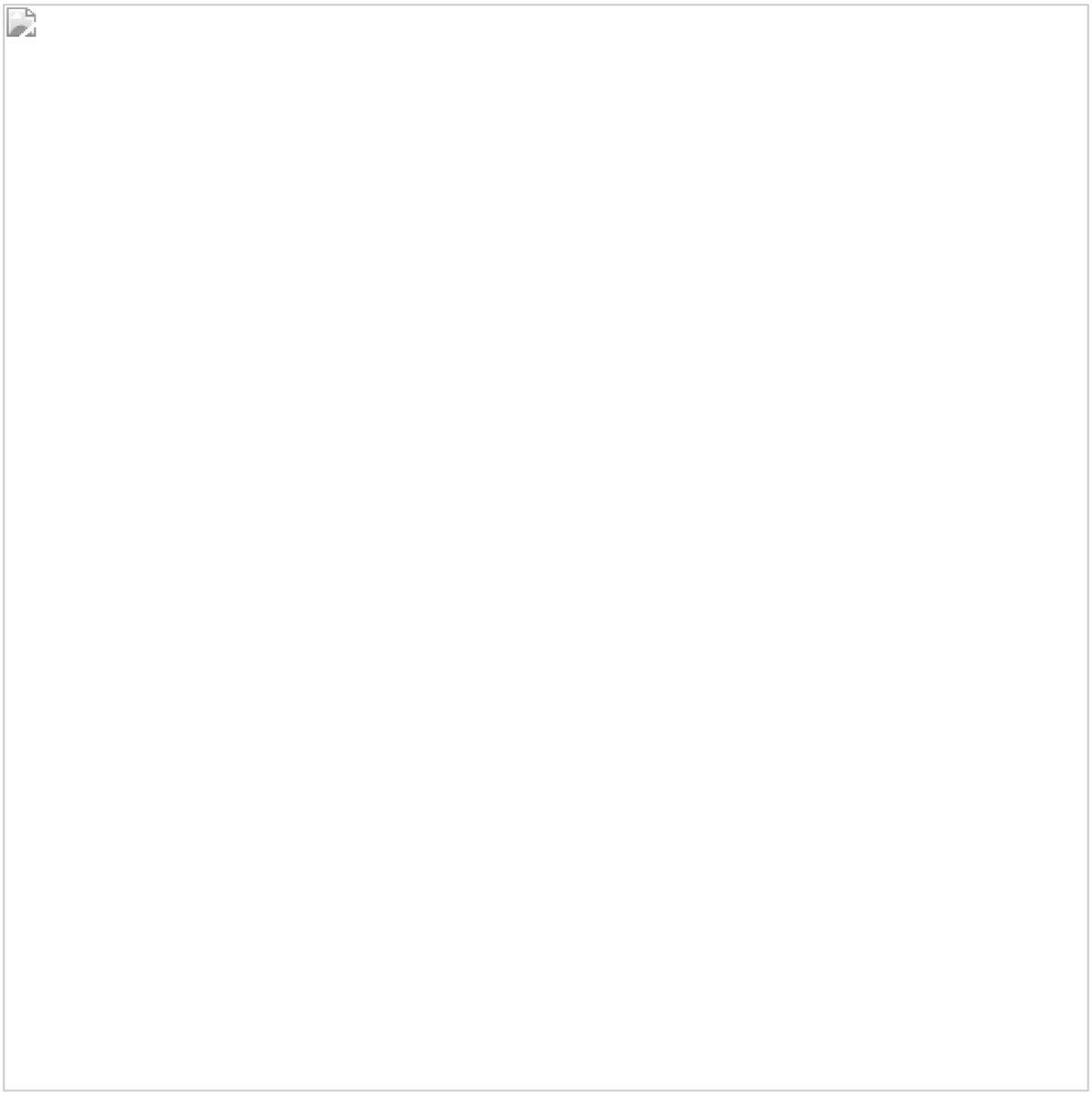


Think about it

1. What did Rustem promise Aulad?

- ○ That he would be king of Mazanderan
- ○ A bag of gold
- ○ A new horse

Raksh Neighs



Rustem dealt with the first army of the Genii that stood in his way, and rode on into the town where the king was kept.

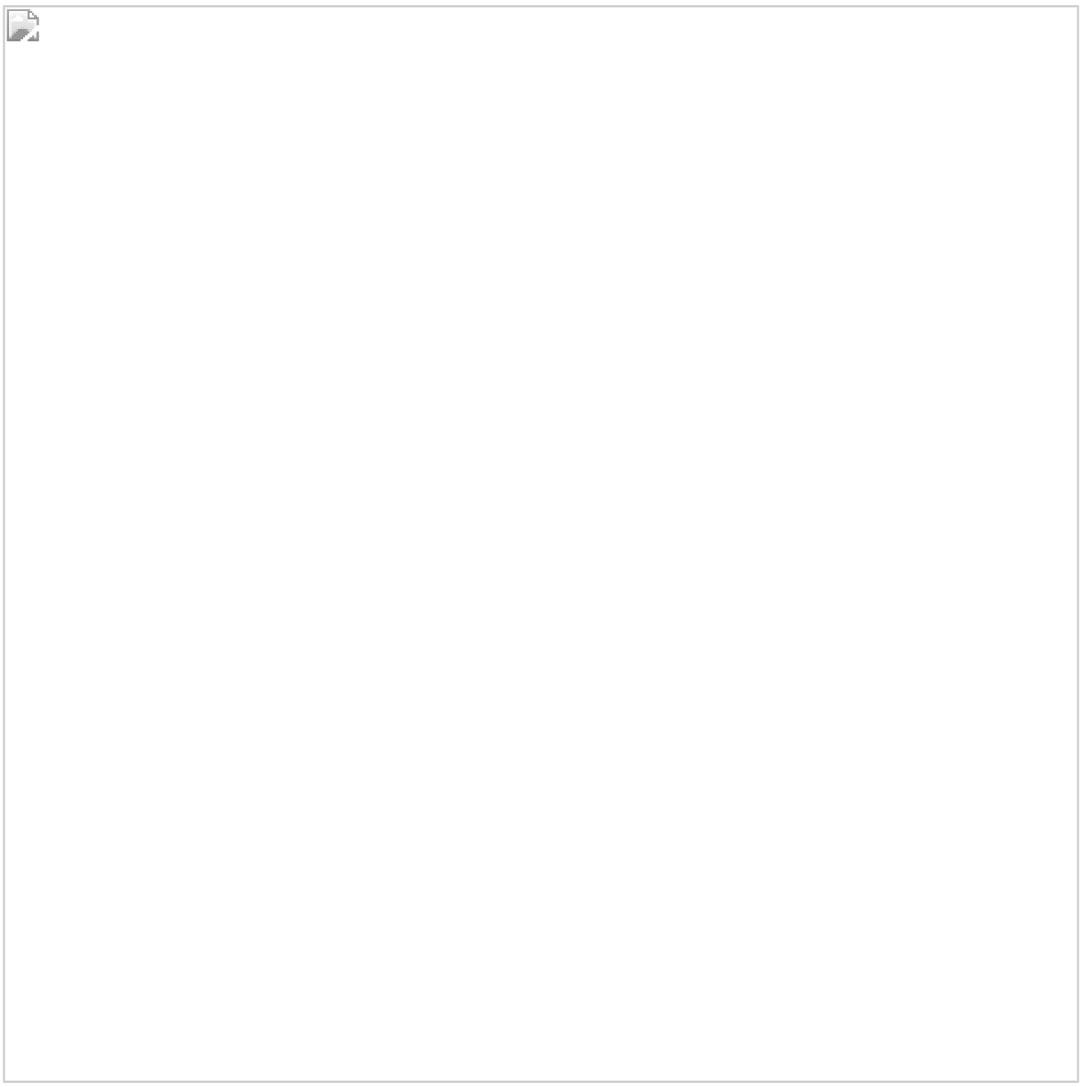
Raksh neighed, loud as thunder. The blind king heard it from his prison. “That is the voice of Raksh,” he said, “our evil days are over.” His friends thought he was dreaming, until Rustem walked in and bowed.

The king told him what a wise doctor had said: only three drops of the White Genius's blood could heal his eyes.

TALK ABOUT IT

The king knew Raksh by the sound of his neigh and began to hope. Whose voice do you love to hear when things are hard?

Raksh Neighs · another picture

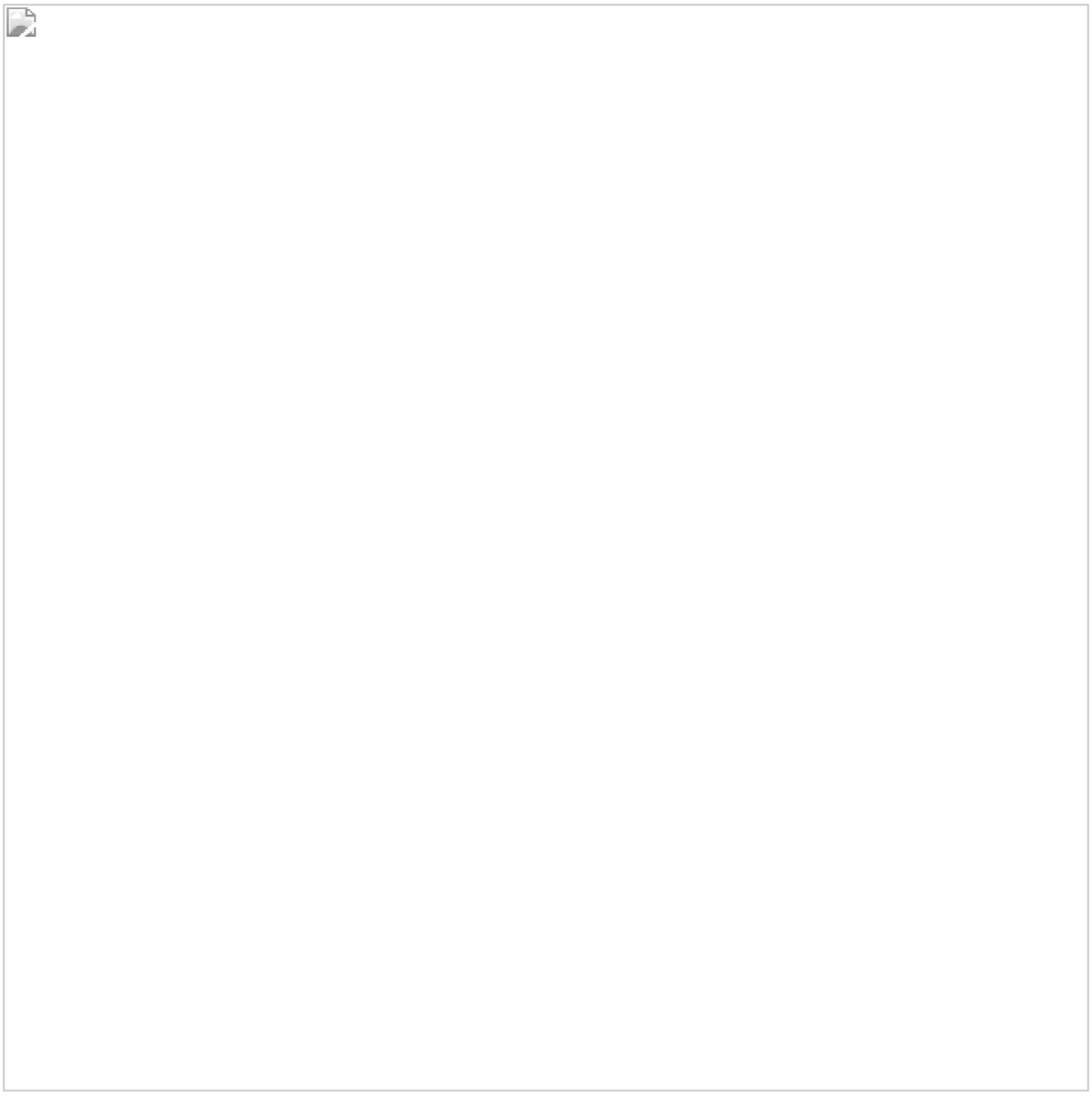


Think about it

1. How did the king know Rustem had come?

- ○ A bird told him
- ○ He heard Raksh neigh
- ○ He saw Rustem's banner

The White Genius



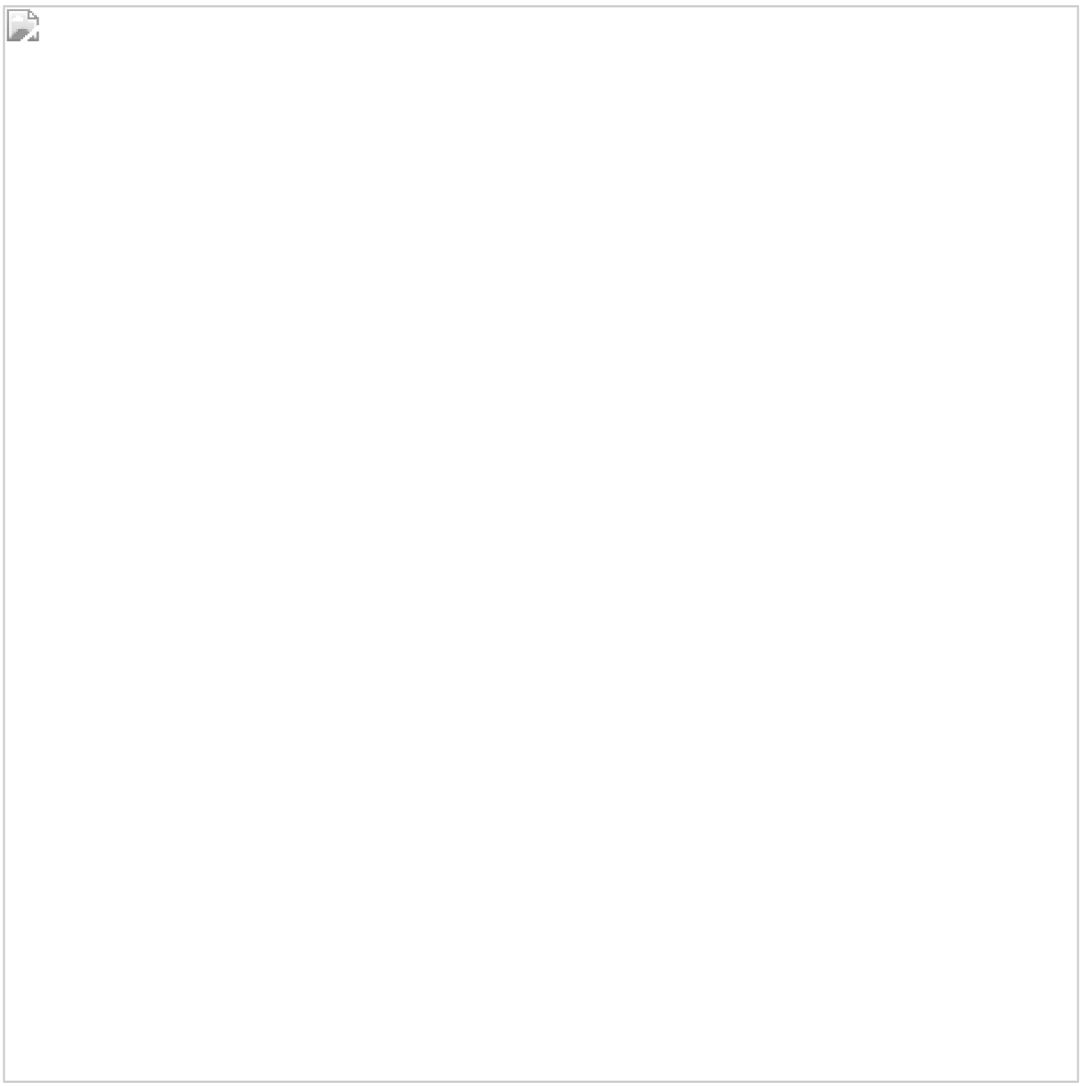
Rustem rode to the great cave in the dark mountains. At noon, when the guards were sleepy, he went in.

In the cave lay the White Genius, as huge as a hill. Rustem woke him with a shout, and the two fought a long, hard fight. The White Genius threw a rock as big as a millstone, and Rustem was hurt, but he did not give up.

At last Rustem won. He took three drops of the White Genius's blood back to the king and dropped them into his eyes, and the king could see again.

TALK ABOUT IT

Rustem was hurt, and he kept on until the king was healed. Who do you know who keeps on helping, even when it is hard?

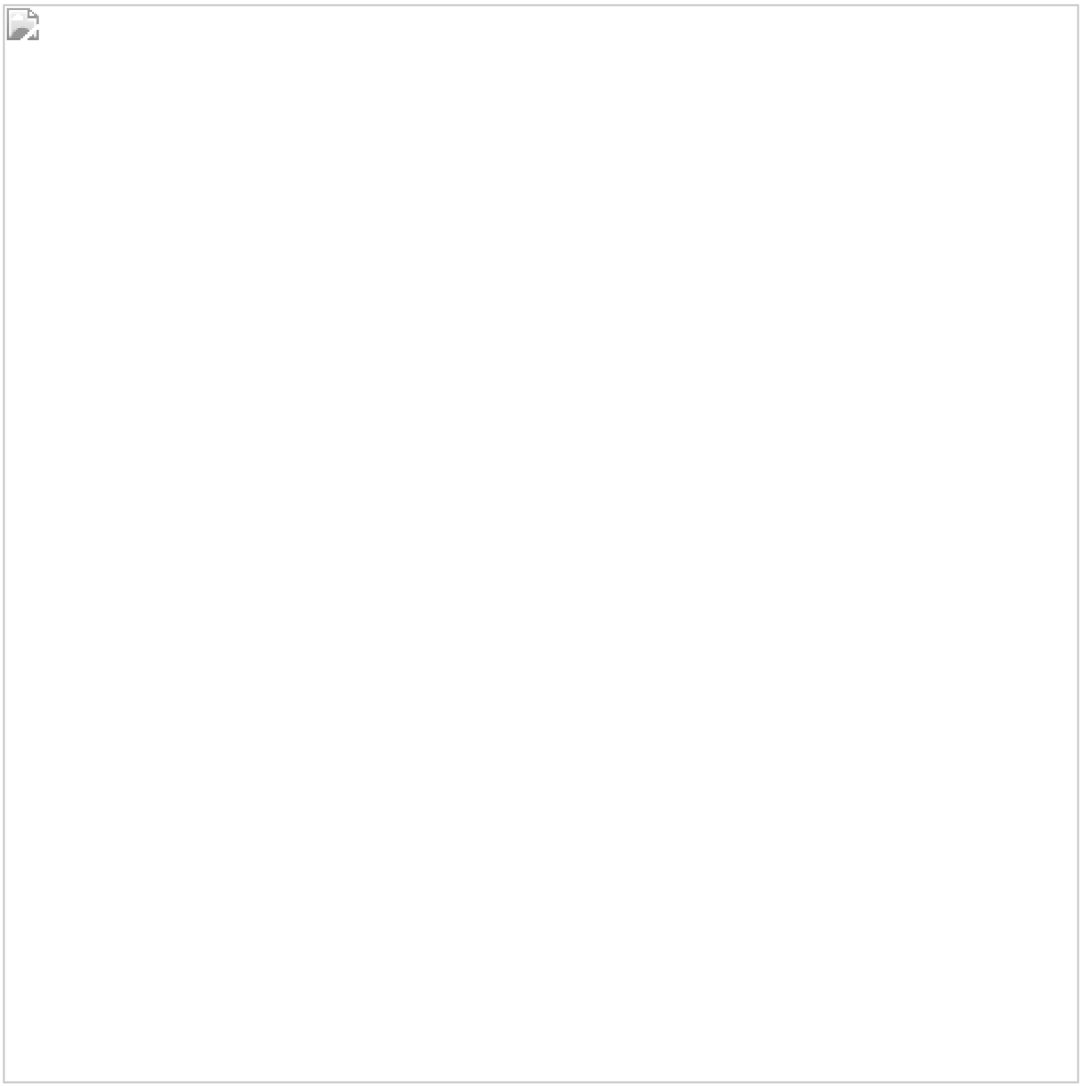


Think about it

1. What healed the king's eyes?

- ○ A magic song
- ○ A drink from the spring
- ○ Three drops of the White Genius's blood

The King Who Became a Rock



The king of Mazanderan would not bow to Persia. He gathered an army, with horsemen and elephants, and the two armies fought for seven days.

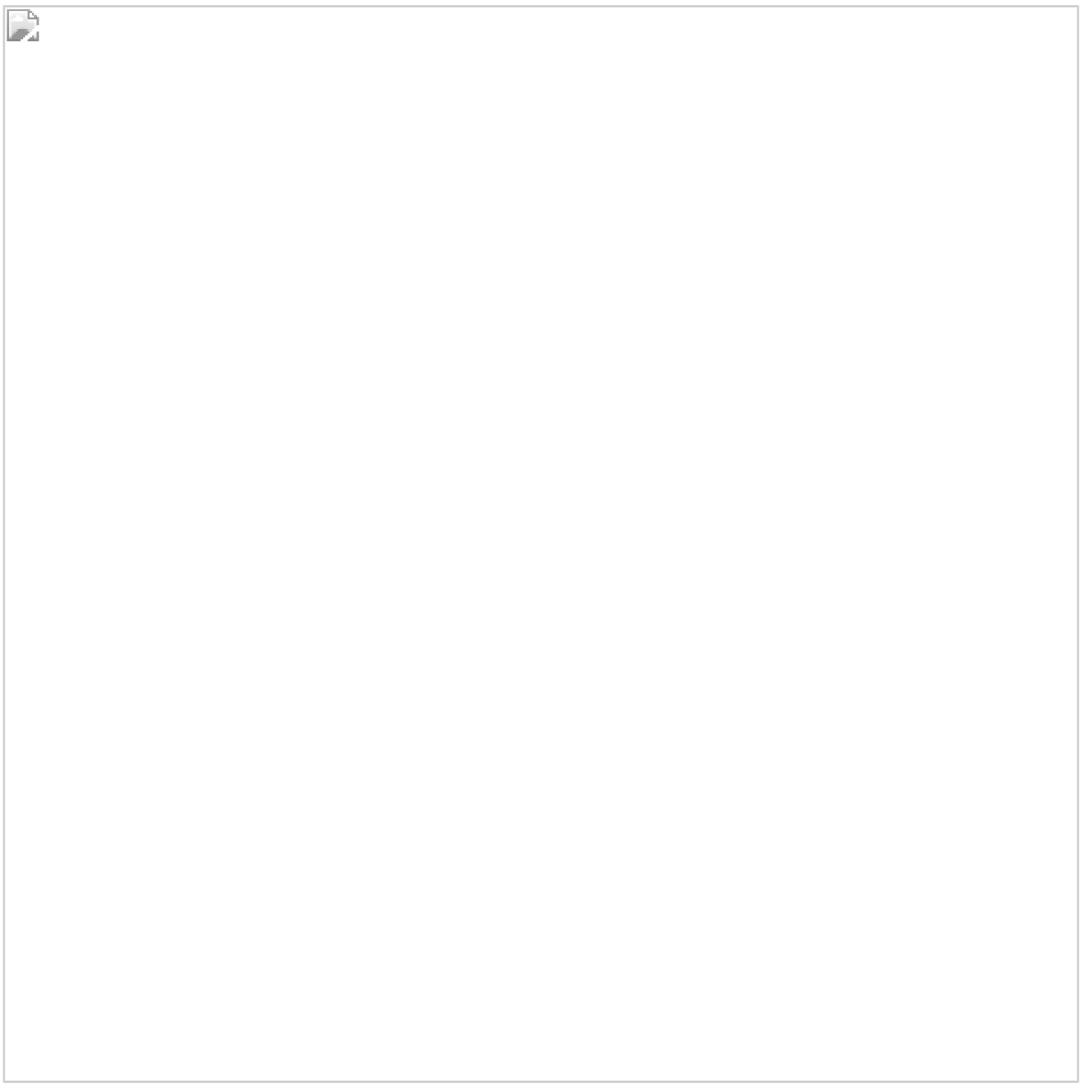
On the eighth day King Kaous took off his crown and bowed to the ground. He prayed that God would give him victory.

In the thick of the fight, the king of Mazanderan changed himself by magic into a huge rock, so he could not be hurt. Rustem picked up the rock and carried it into the camp. “Give up these cowardly tricks,” he said.

The tricks were over. The king of Mazanderan's power was ended, and the war was done.

TALK ABOUT IT

King Kaous prayed and took off his crown. How is that different from how he started the story?

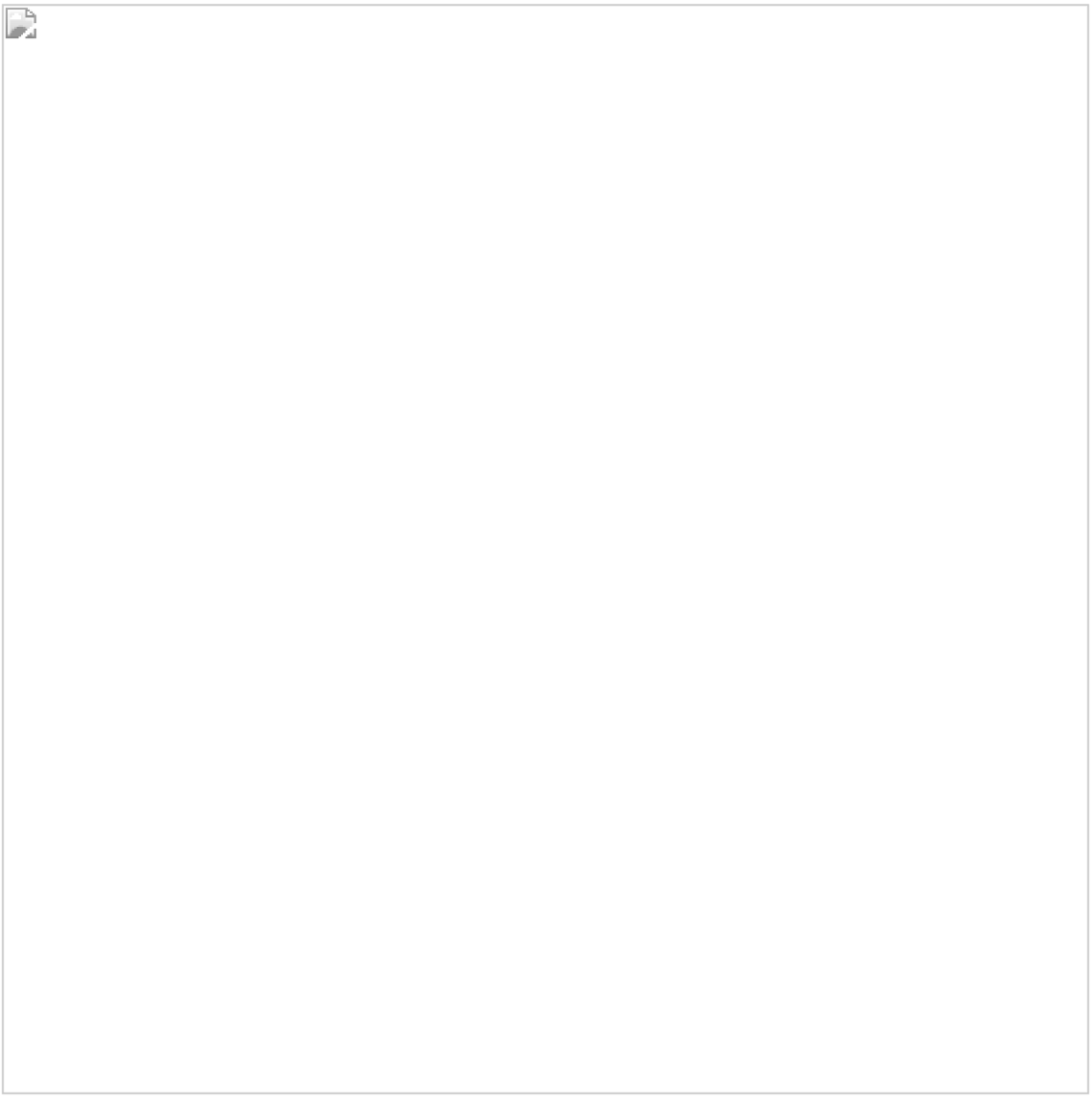


Think about it

1. What did the king of Mazanderan turn into?

- ○ A rock
- ○ A tree
- ○ A bird

A Promise Kept



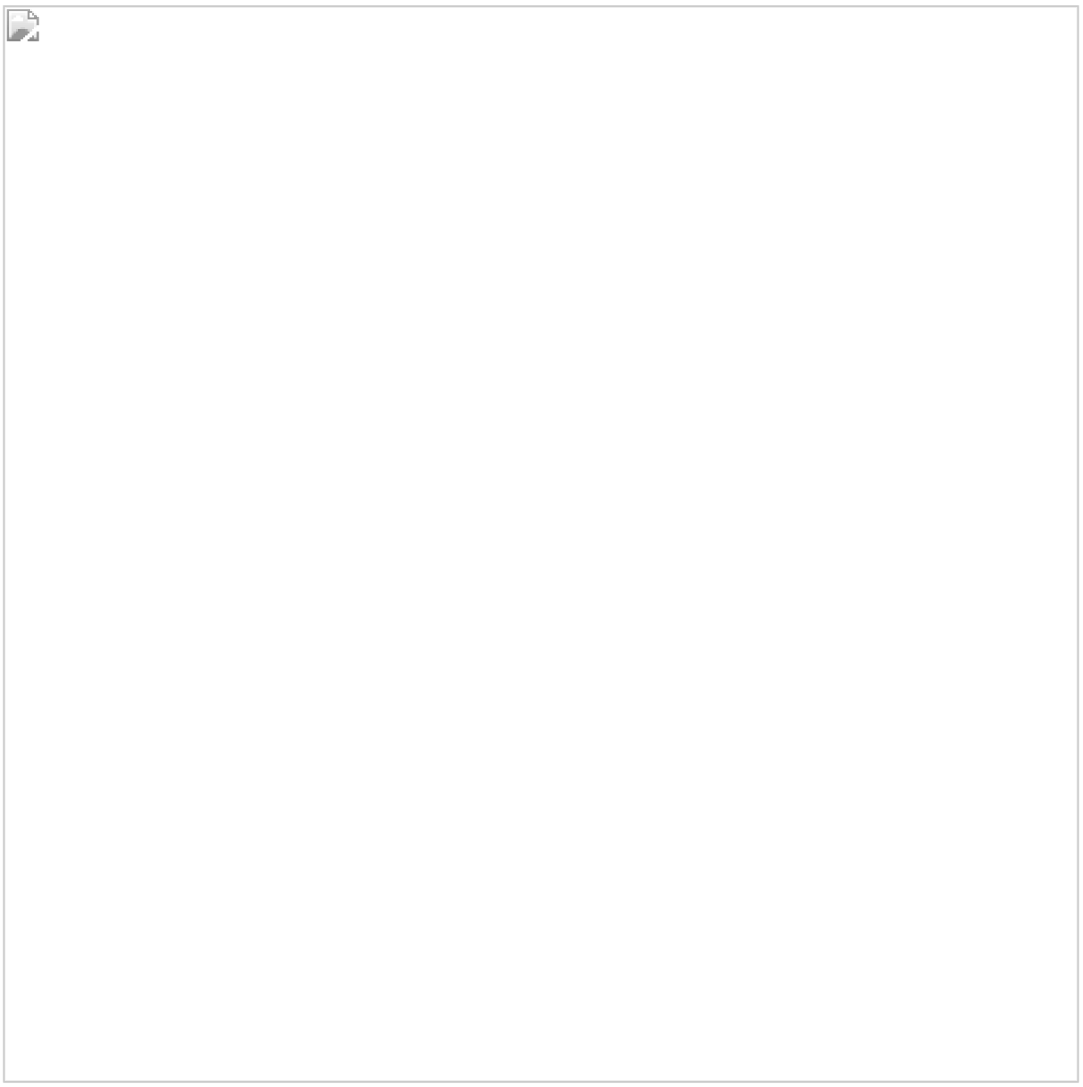
Before the end, Aulad came to Rustem. He still had the marks of the lasso on his arms. “A hero is bound to keep his word,” he said.

Rustem had not forgotten. When King Kaous wanted to thank him, Rustem said, “A man must do his duty.” Then he asked the king to put the crown of Mazanderan on Aulad's head.

The king did. At last Rustem asked leave to go home to his old father. The king gave him gifts and a blessing: “May your own soul be full of modesty and tenderness!”

TALK ABOUT IT

Rustem could have taken all the honor. Instead he gave credit to Aulad and kept his promise. Why do you think he did?



Think about it

1. Who did Rustem ask the king to crown?

- ○ Zal
- ○ Aulad
- ○ Himself

2. A very old book says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom" (Proverbs 11:2, KJV). Who in this story was proud? Who was lowly?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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