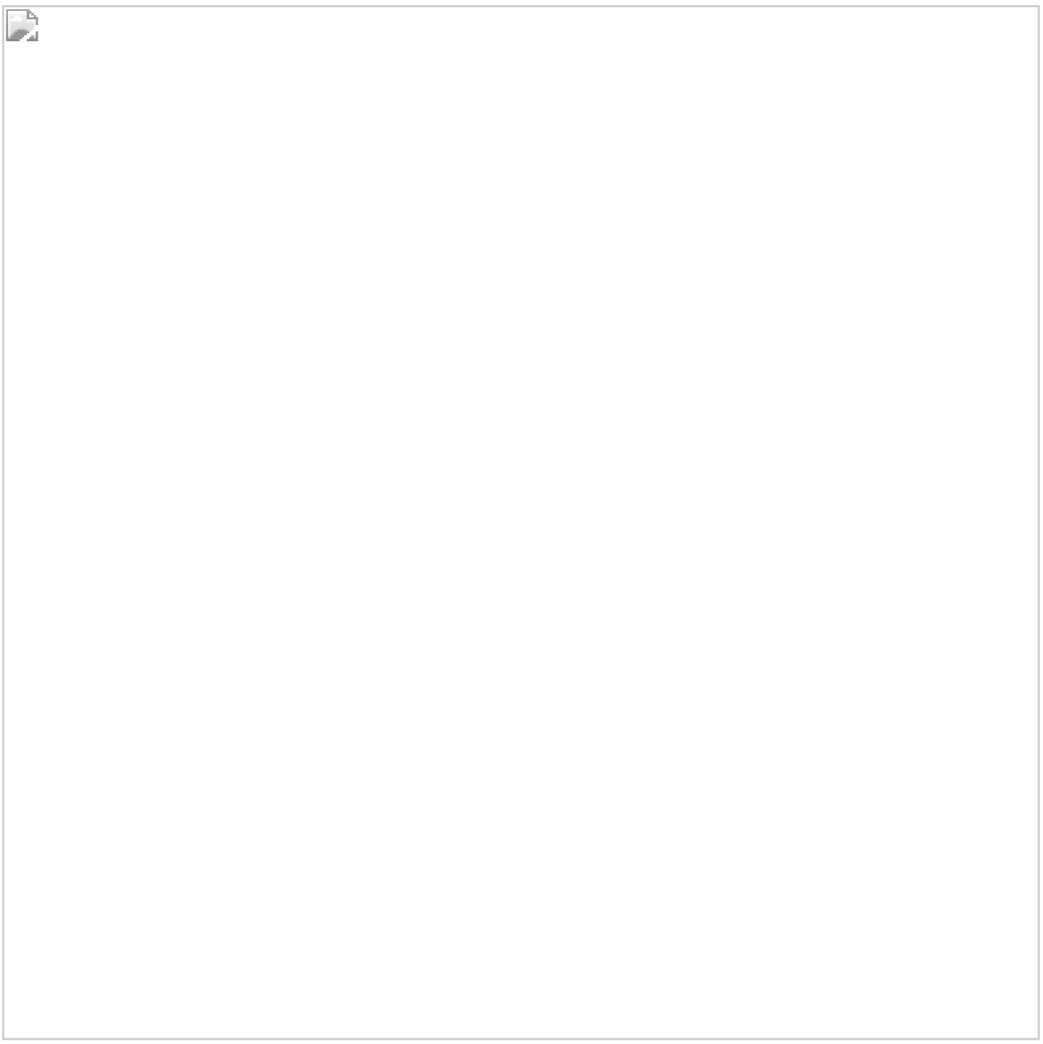
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Boots

A Story from The Holly-Tree Inn



One snowy winter, a traveller was stuck at the Holly-Tree Inn. To pass the time, the traveller asked the man who cleaned the boots, Cobbs, to sit down and talk. "Lord, he had been everywhere!"

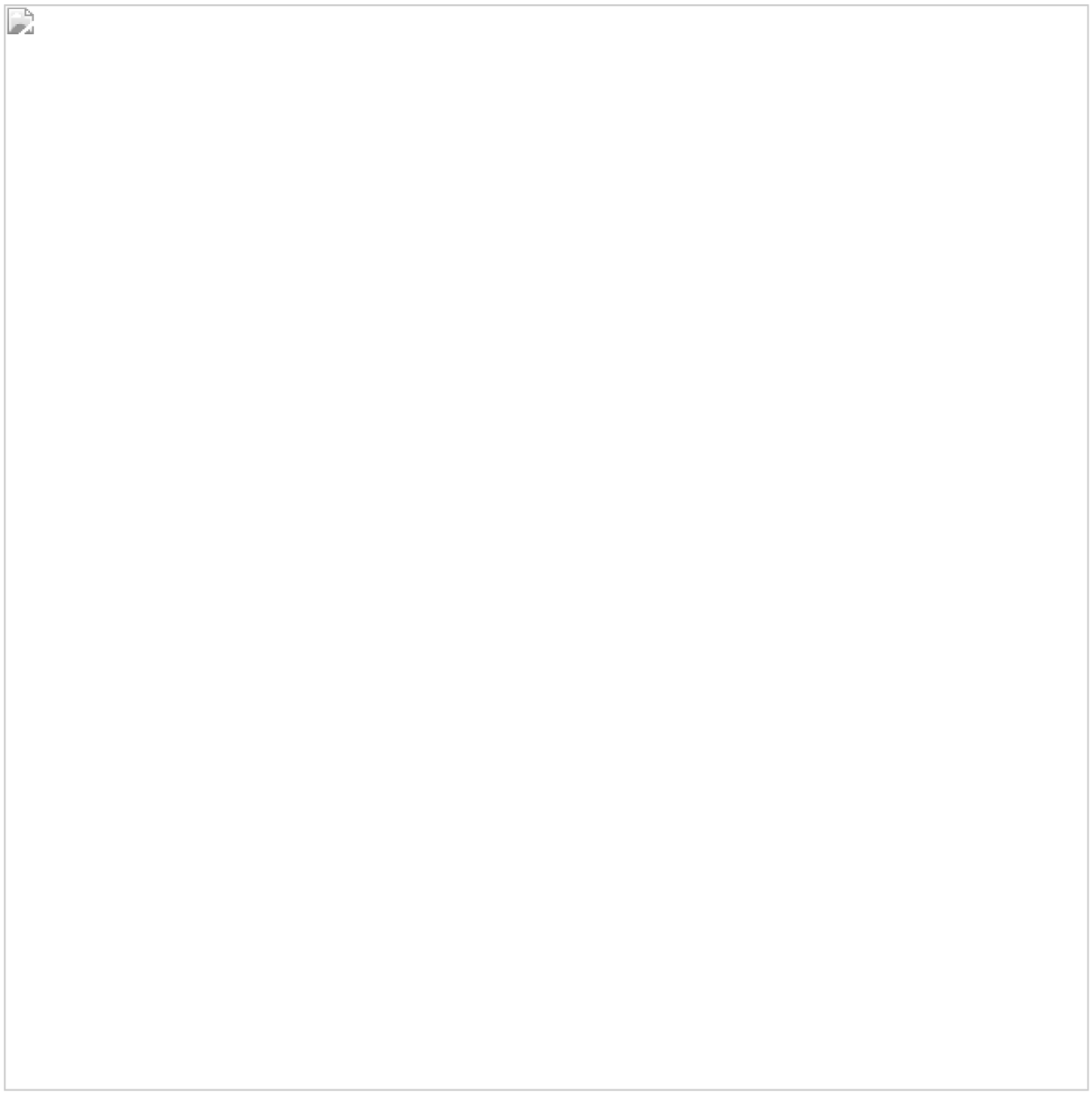
What was the strangest thing Cobbs had ever seen? It was when "a young gentleman not eight year old was to run away with a fine young woman of seven."

TALK ABOUT IT

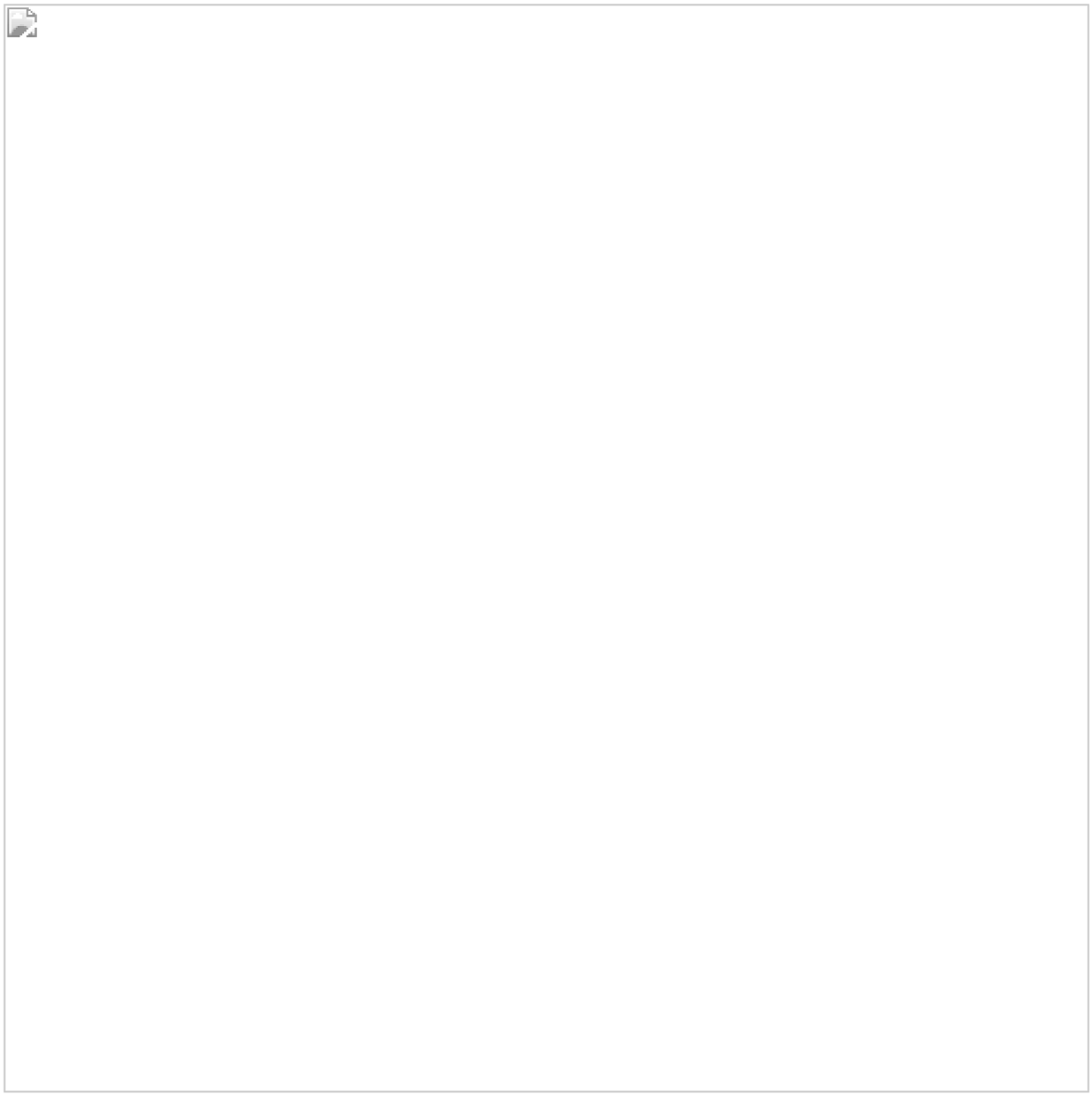
Cobbs had seen a lot, but this was the thing he remembered. Why do you think a story like this stays with a person?

This book belongs to _____

The Boots · another picture



Master Harry and Norah



Long before, Cobbs had worked as the under-gardener at a house called the Elmses, near Shooter's Hill. It was the home of Mr. Walmers and his only child, Master Harry. Mr. Walmers was proud of his bright boy, but he did not spoil him.

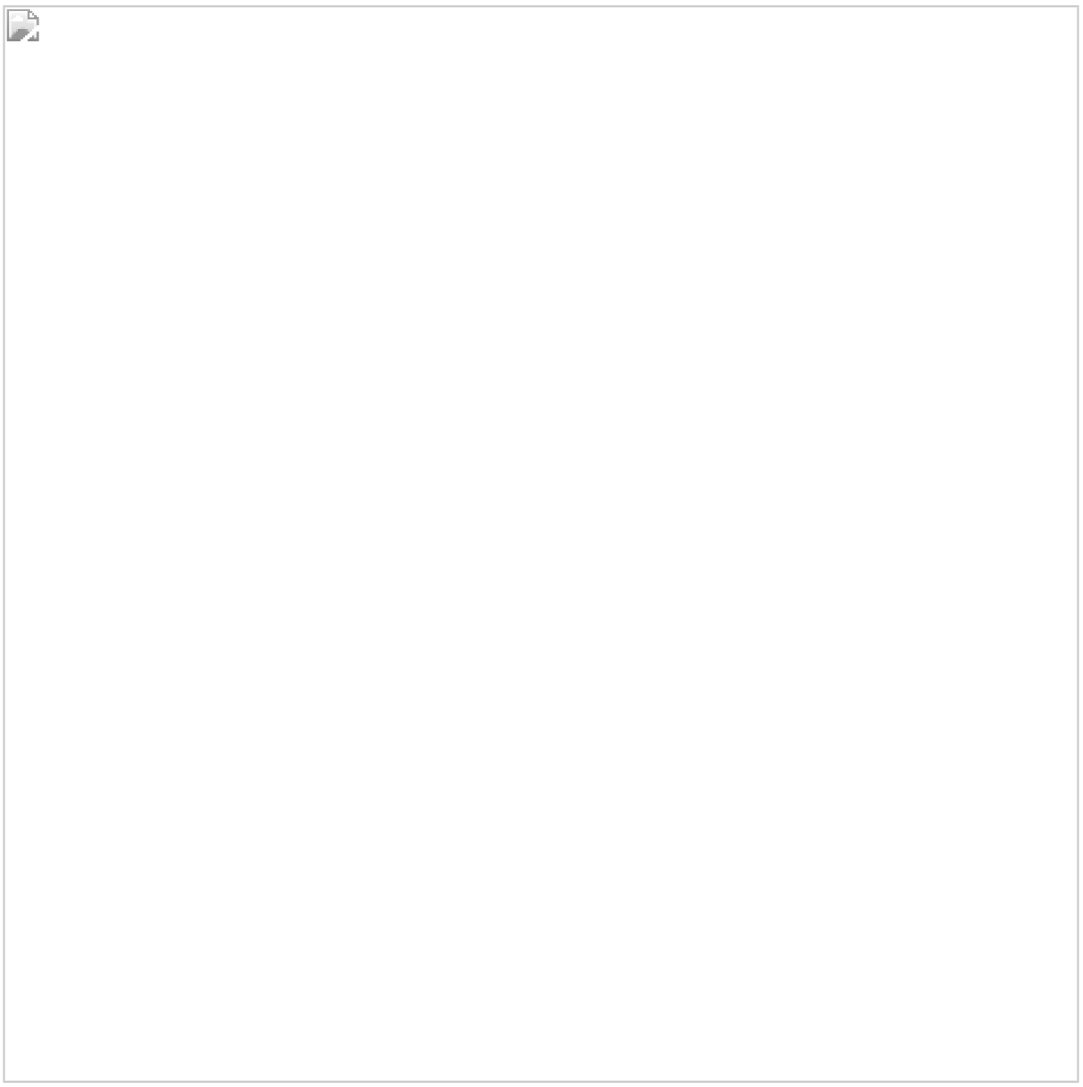
Cobbs saw a lot of the family, because he was always out mowing and weeding near the windows. One early morning Master Harry came to him and said, “Cobbs, how should you spell Norah, if you was asked?”

Then the boy began cutting her name into the fence.

TALK ABOUT IT

Harry cut Norah's name into the fence. What do you think he wanted everyone to know?

Master Harry and Norah · another picture

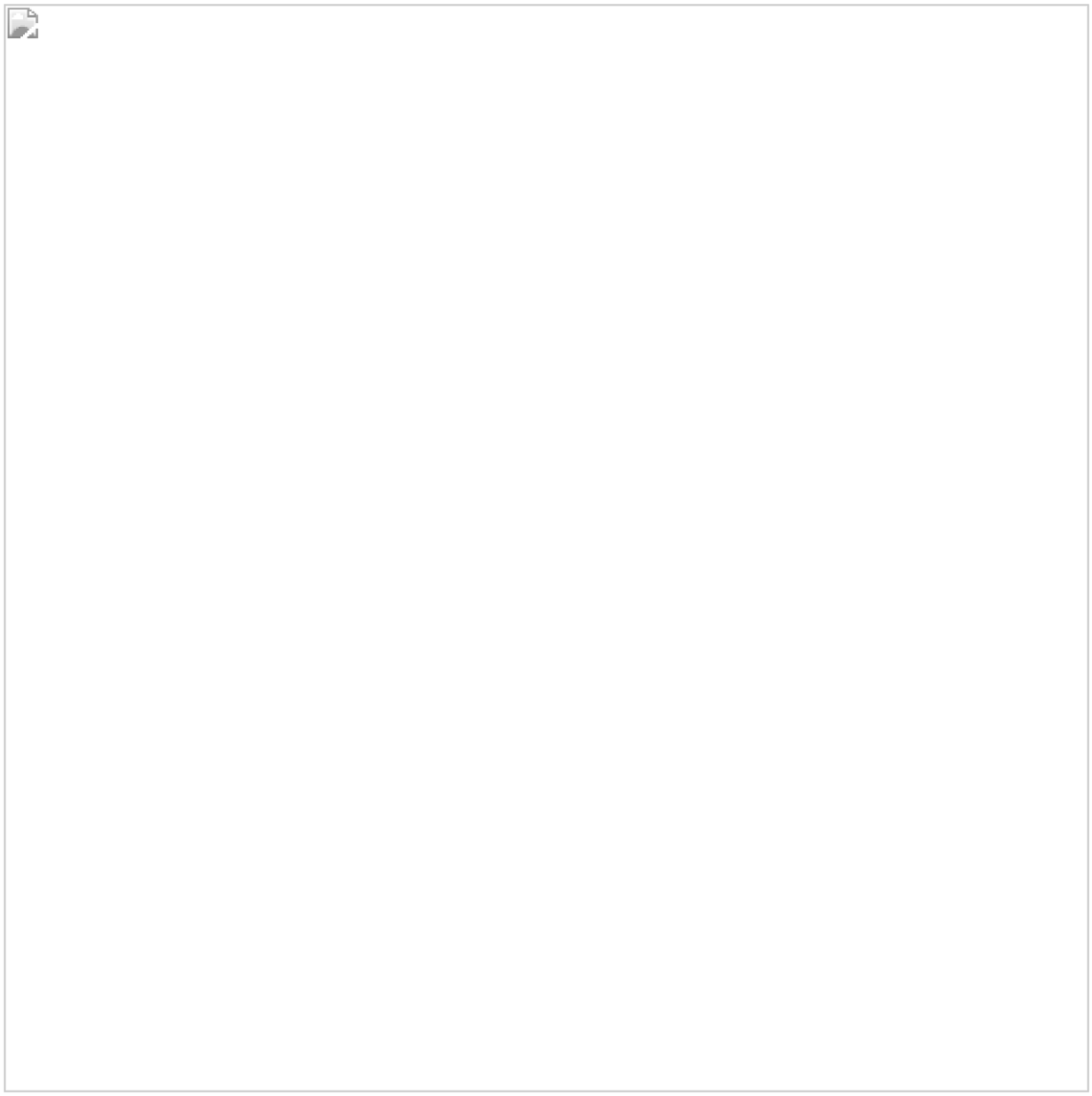


Think about it

1. What did Master Harry ask Cobbs to help him spell?

- ○ Gretna Green
- ○ Norah
- ○ Elmses

Our Head Gardener



Harry was eight and Norah was seven, and the two little ones were deep in love. Cobbs said the boy was so brave he would have gone in at a lion if Norah had been frightened of it.

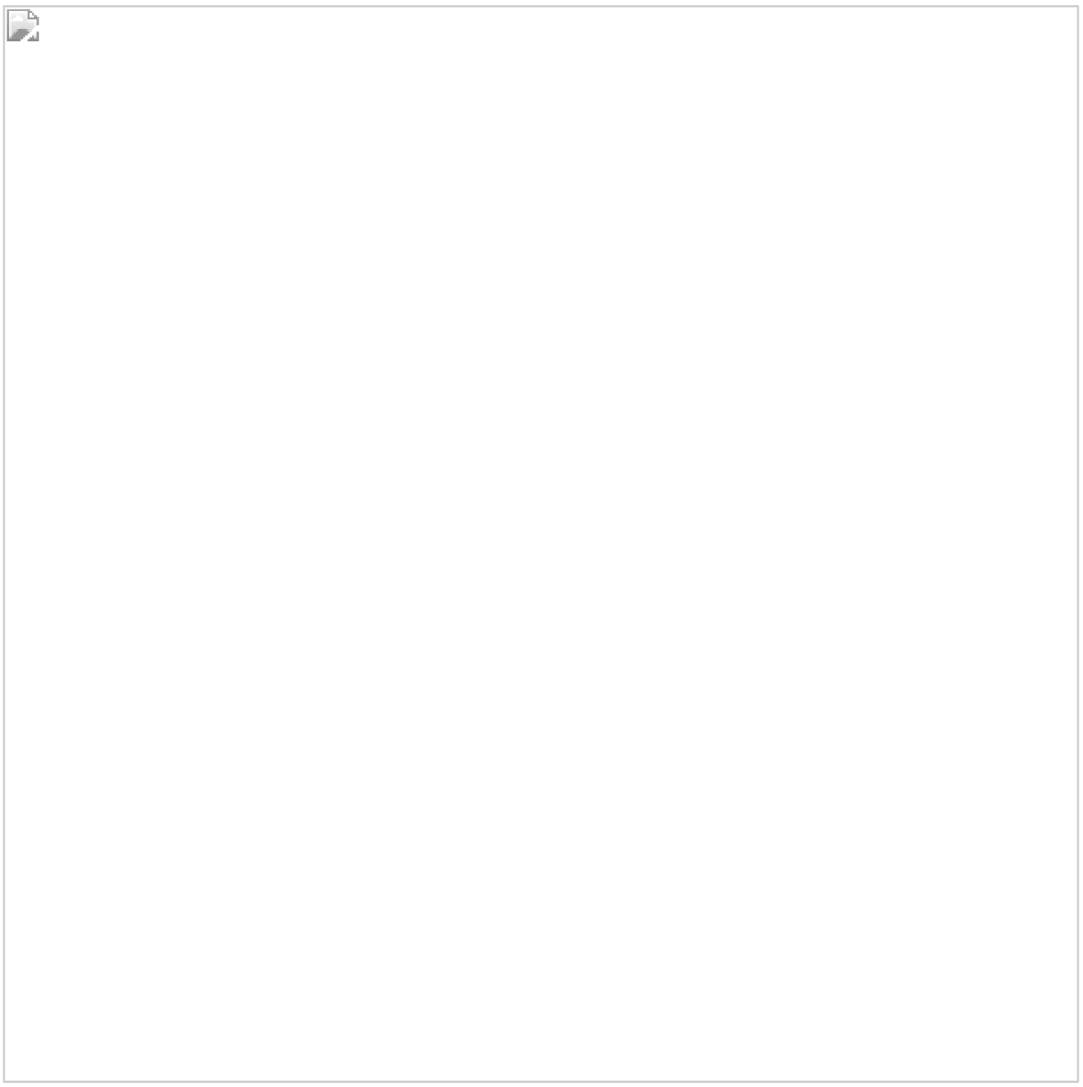
One day Harry stopped in front of Cobbs and said, “I like you.” Why? “Because Norah likes you, Cobbs.”

Cobbs was leaving his job soon, so Harry had a plan. “Then, Cobbs,” he said, “you shall be our Head Gardener when we are married.” And he tucked Norah, in her little sky-blue mantle, under his arm and walked away.

TALK ABOUT IT

Harry liked Cobbs because Norah did. Who do you like because someone you love likes them?

Our Head Gardener · another picture

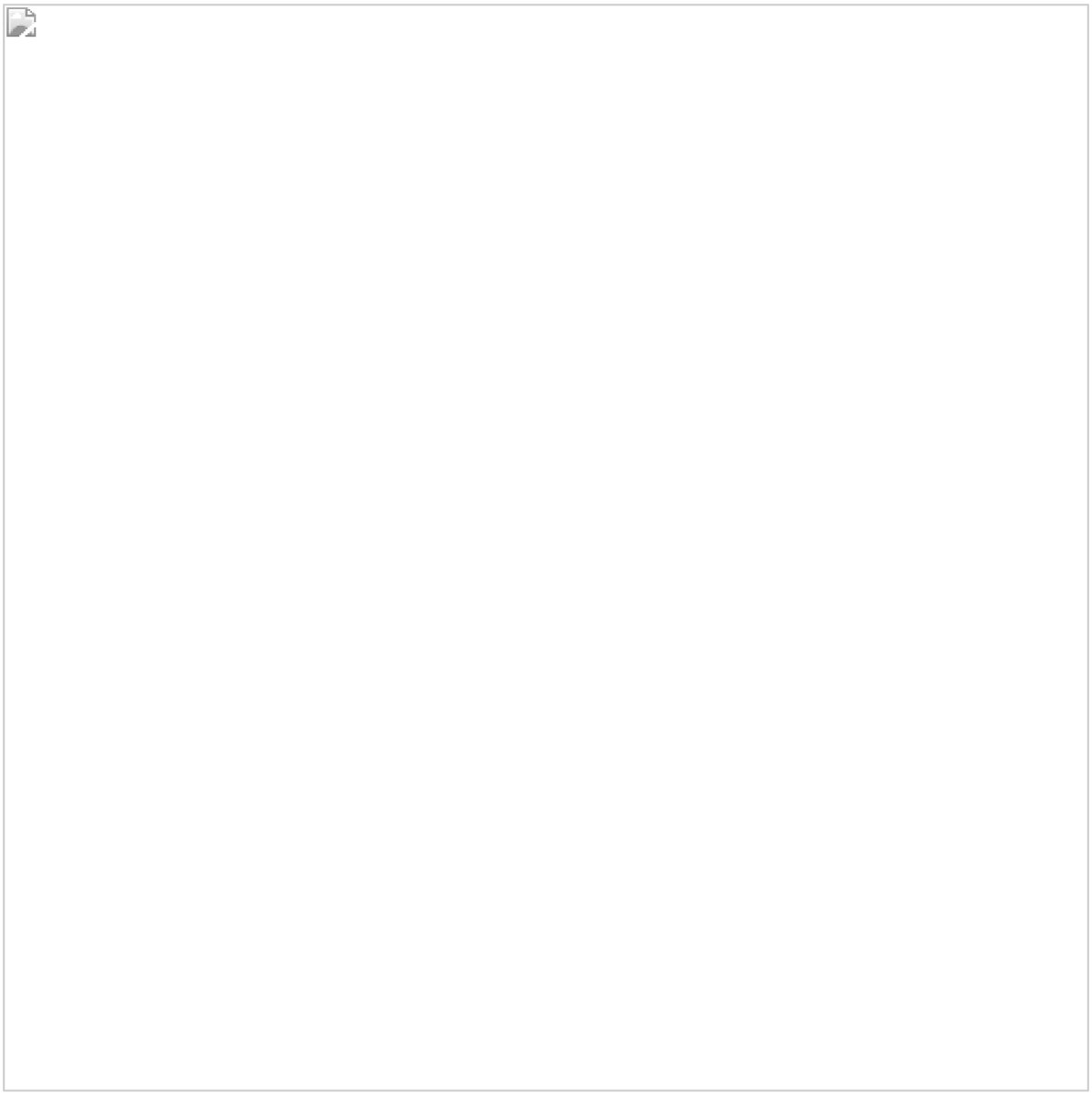


Think about it

1. What job did Harry promise Cobbs?

- ○ Head Cook
- ○ Head Gardener
- ○ Head Driver

Under the Tulip-Tree



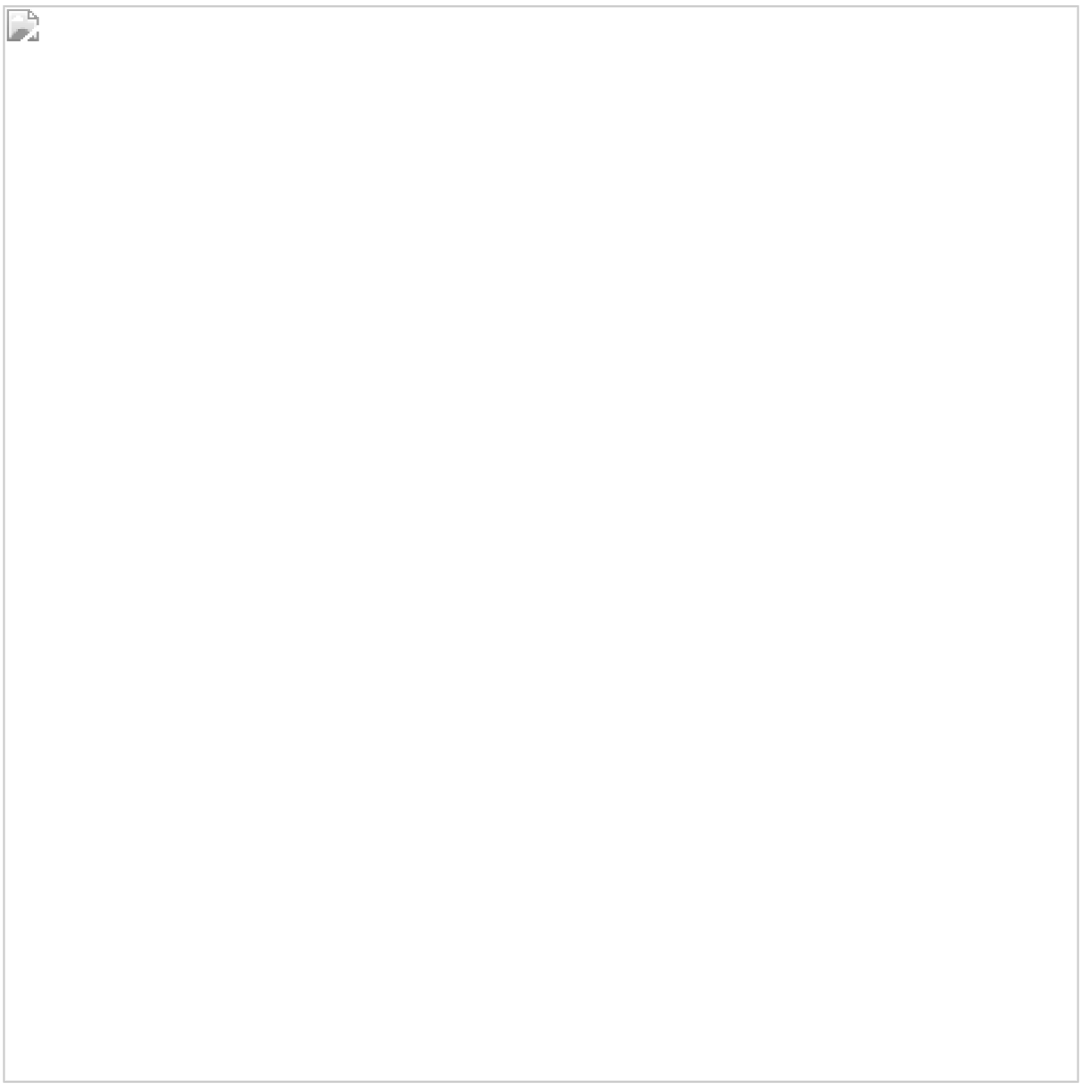
Cobbs thought it was better than a picture to watch them wander the garden together. He even thought the birds believed they were birds, and kept close, singing to please the two children.

Sometimes they sat under the Tulip-tree with their arms round each other's necks, reading about the Prince and the Dragon and the king's fair daughter.

Sometimes Cobbs heard them planning a house in a forest, with bees and a cow, “living entirely on milk and honey.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Harry and Norah planned a whole life together. What would be in the house you would plan?

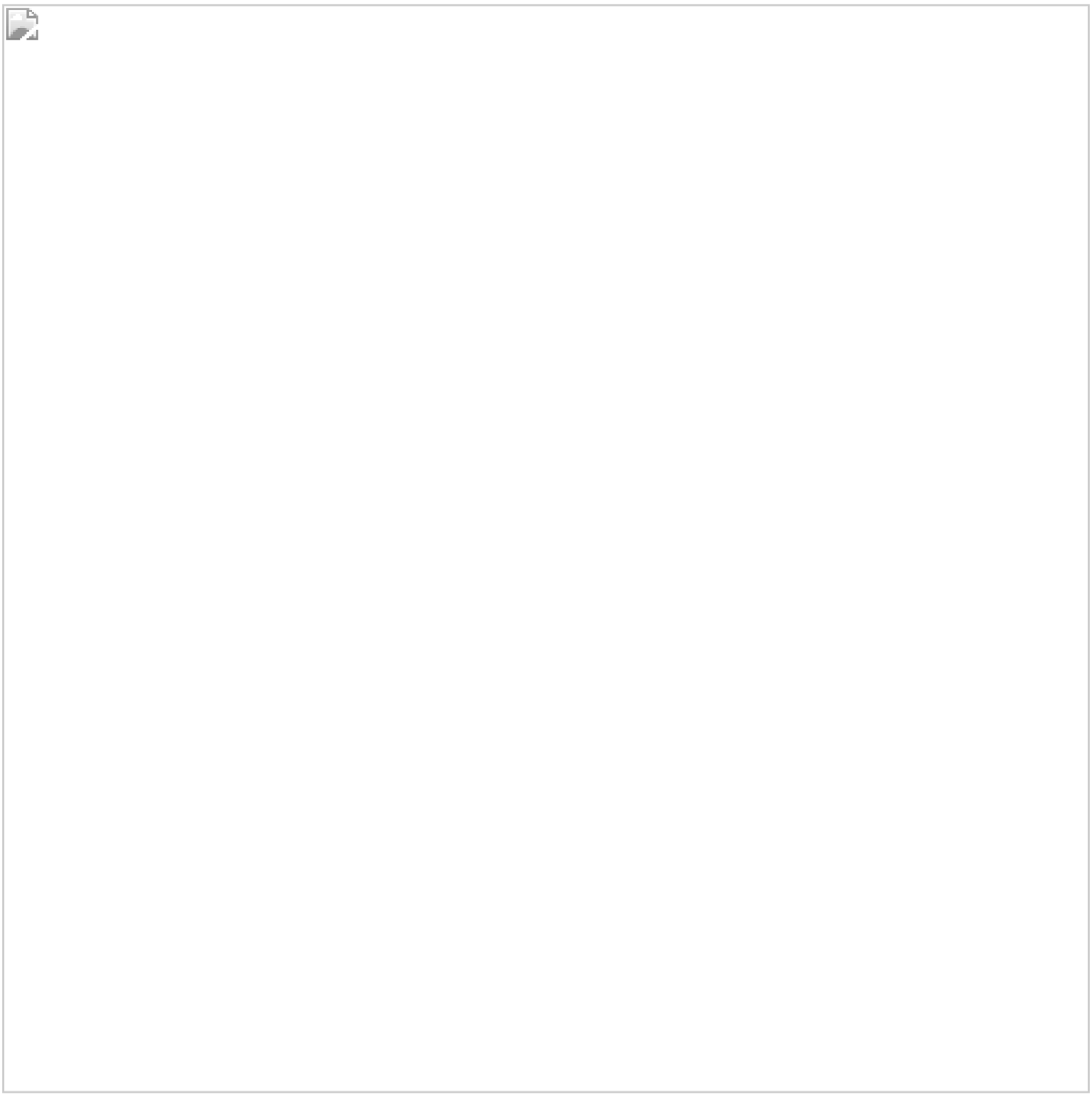


Think about it

1. What did the children read about under the Tulip-tree?

- ○ Pirates and ships
- ○ The Prince and the Dragon
- ○ Cows and bees

A Journey to York



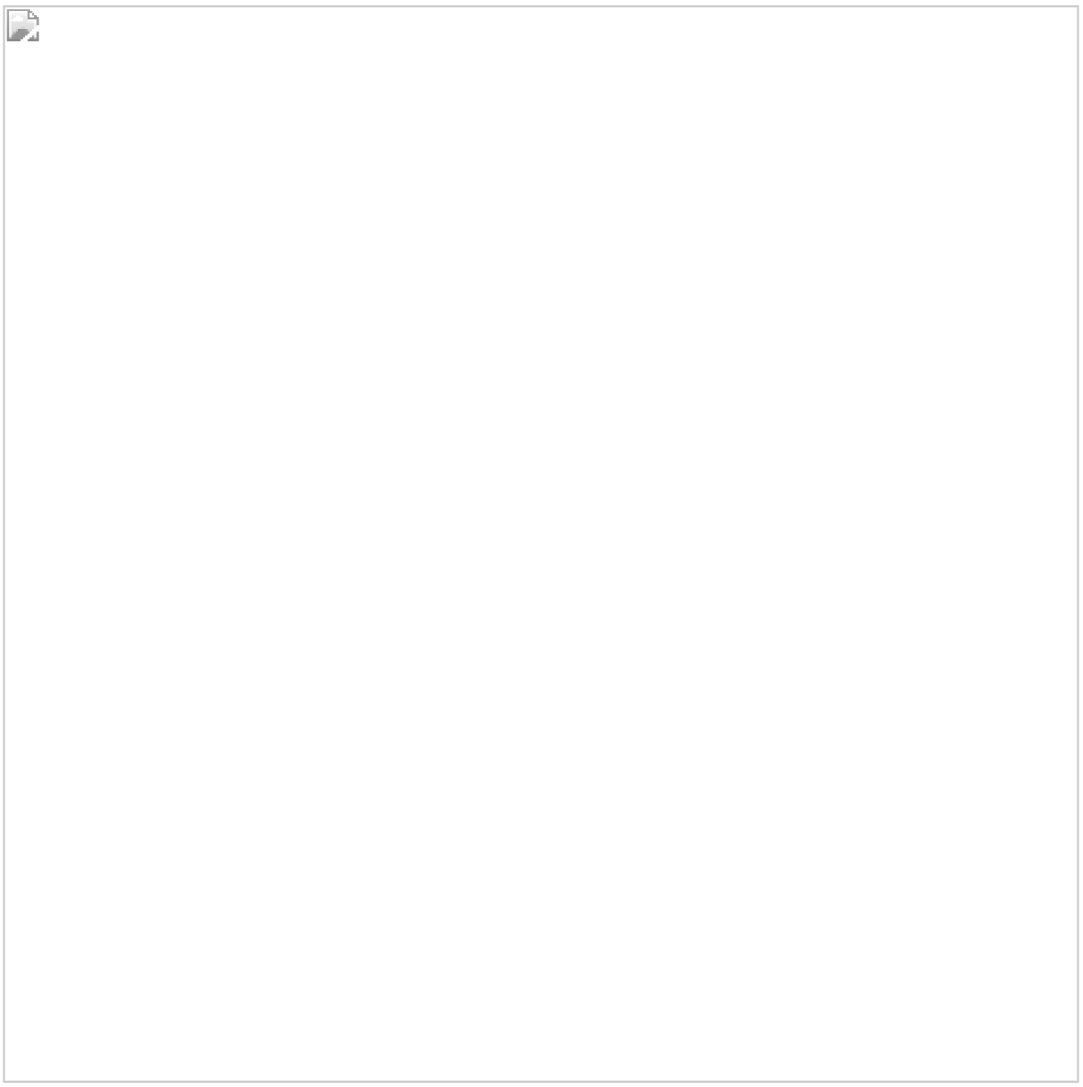
One evening, while Cobbs watered the flowers, Harry said he was going to visit his grandmamma at York. “I shall be very glad indeed to go, Cobbs,” he said. “Norah's going.”

His grandmamma always gave him a present. “A Bank of England five-pound note, Cobbs.” Harry thought a person could do a good deal with that much money.

Soon after, Cobbs left the Elmses to seek his fortune, and Harry went off to York. Then Harry did something nobody expected. He ran away from his grandmamma's with Norah, to go to Gretna Green and be married.

TALK ABOUT IT

Harry thought a person could do a good deal with a five-pound note. What do you think he planned to do with it?

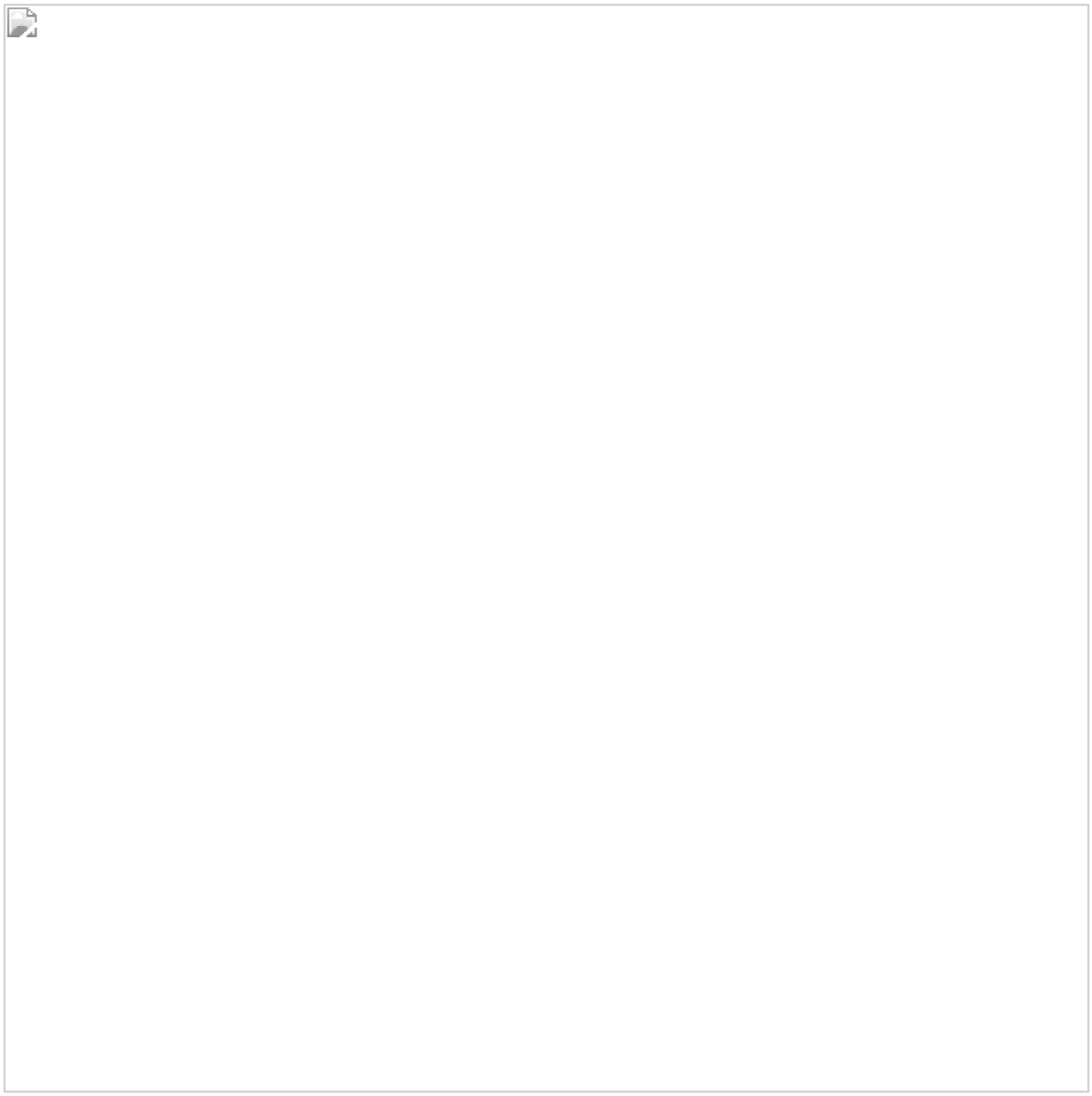


Think about it

1. Where were Harry and Norah running to?

- ○ Gretna Green
- ○ Shooter's Hill
- ○ The Elmses

The Coach at the Holly-Tree



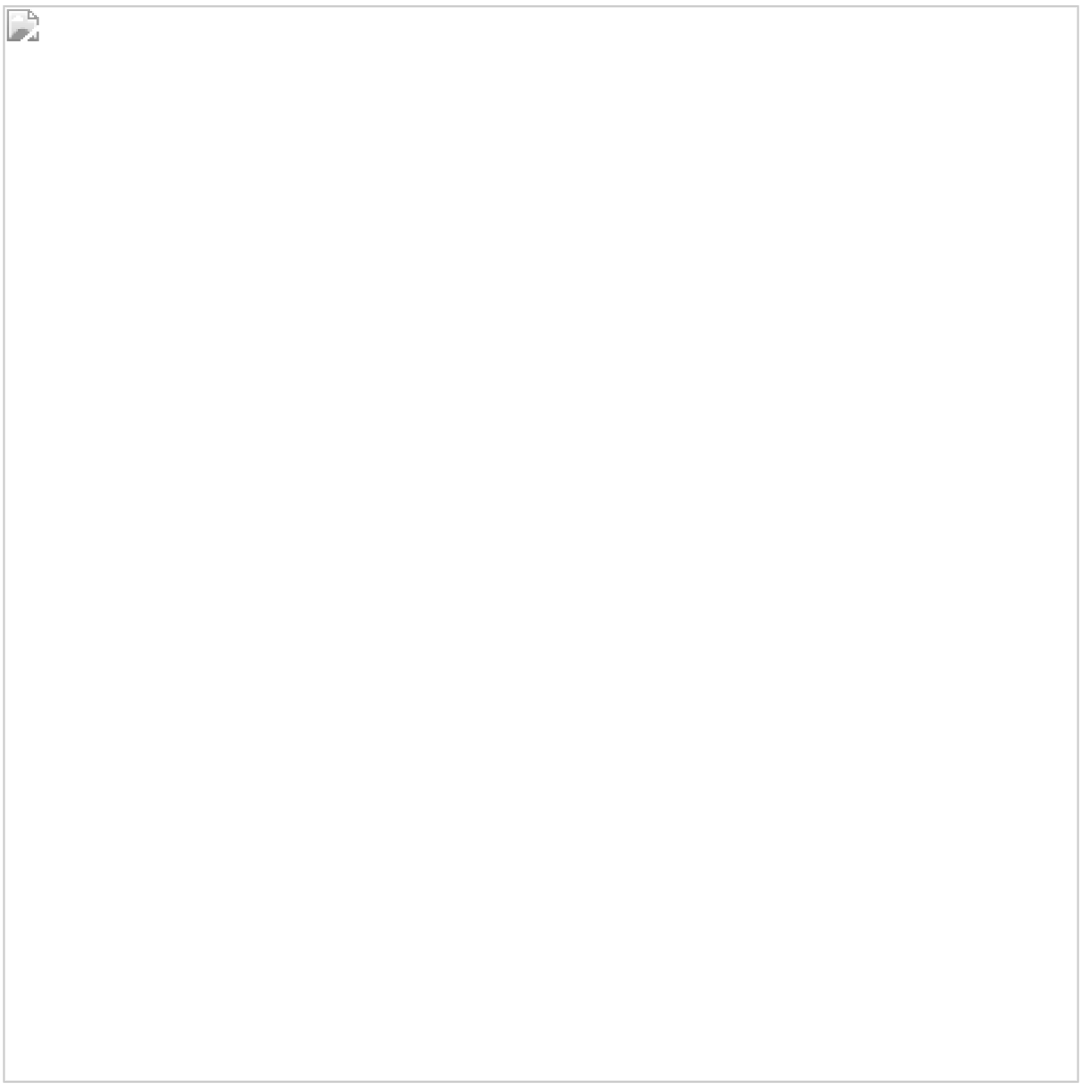
Cobbs, who had come back to work at the Holly-Tree Inn, saw a coach drive up one summer afternoon. Out got the two children.

The Guard said the young gentleman had told him they were to be brought to this inn. And the young gentleman said to the landlord, “We're to stop here to-night, please. Sitting-room and two bedrooms will be required. Chops and cherry-pudding for two!”

Then he tucked Norah under his arm, in her sky-blue mantle, and walked into the inn “much bolder than Brass.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Harry walked in like a grown-up. How do you think Norah was feeling inside?

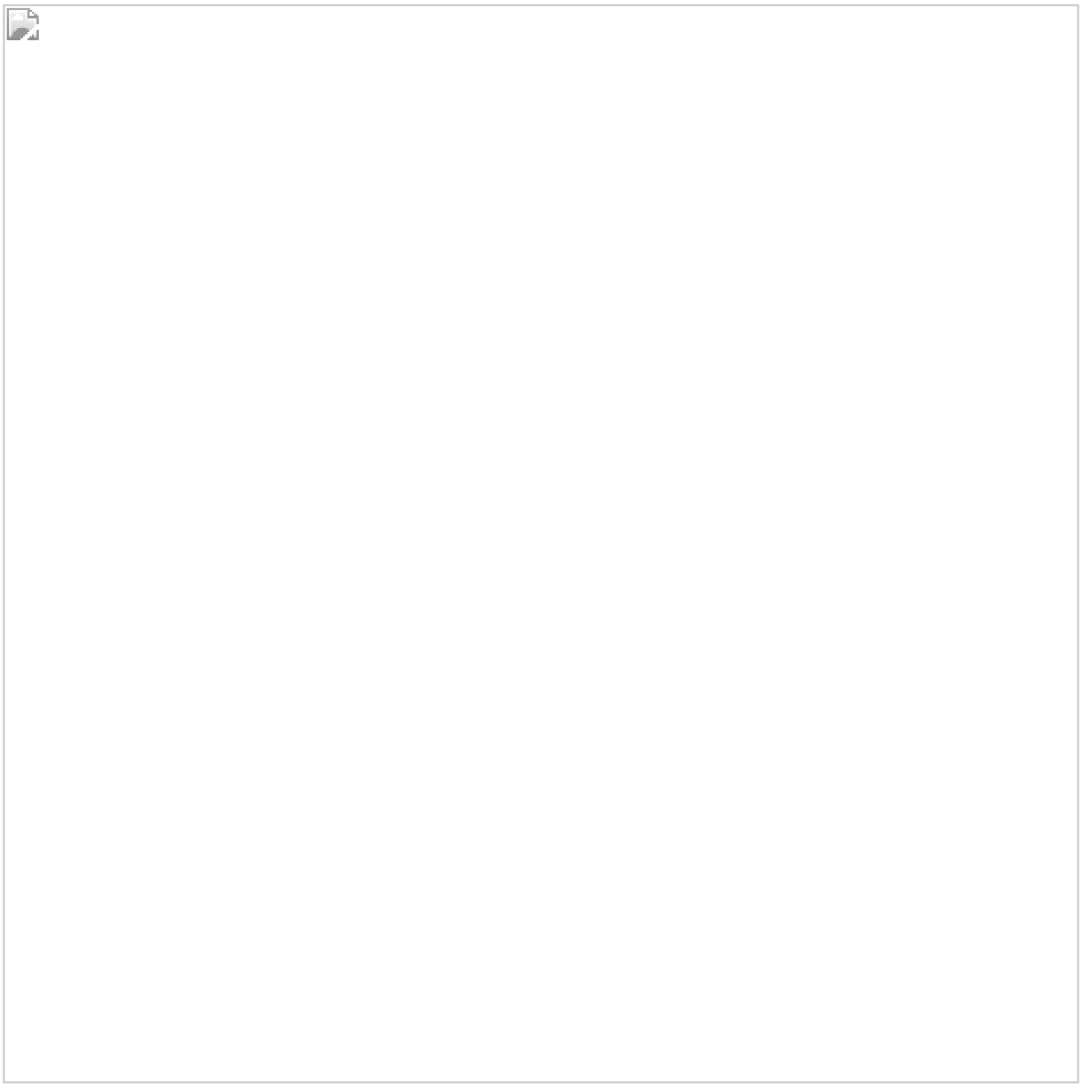


Think about it

1. What did Harry order for dinner?

- ○ Chops and cherry-pudding
- ○ Soup and bread
- ○ Fish and chips

It's Cobbs!



The Governor told Cobbs to keep an eye on the children and humour them, while he rode to York himself.

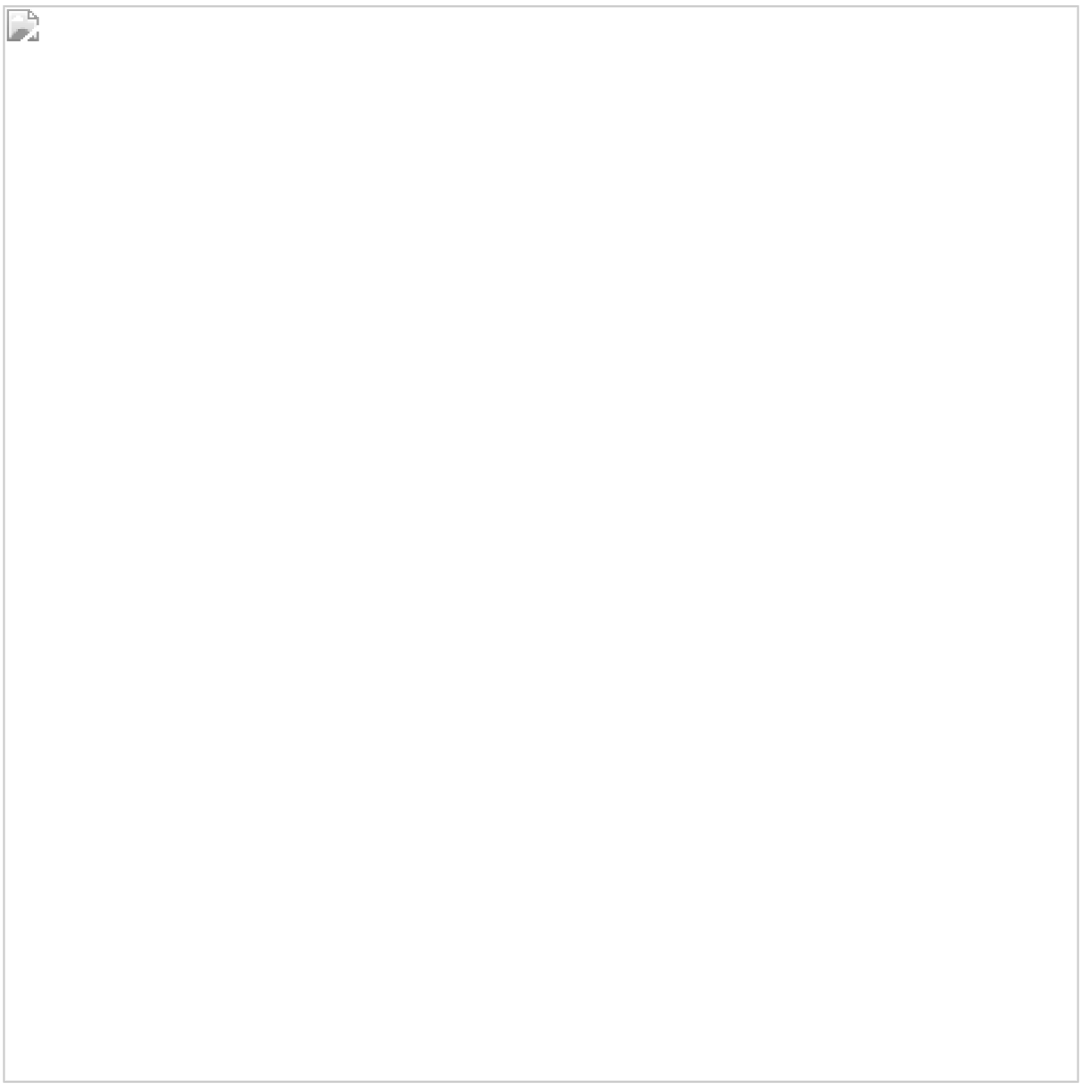
Upstairs, Harry sat on an enormous sofa, drying Norah's eyes with his handkerchief. “It's Cobbs! It's Cobbs!” they cried, and both jumped for joy.

“We are going to be married, Cobbs, at Gretna Green,” Harry said. “We have run away on purpose. Norah has been in rather low spirits, Cobbs; but she'll be happy, now we have found you to be our friend.”

Norah had a parasol and eight peppermint drops. Harry had some string, a knife, an orange, and a mug with his name on it.

TALK ABOUT IT

Norah was in low spirits, and Harry dried her eyes. What do you do to help a friend who feels low?



Think about it

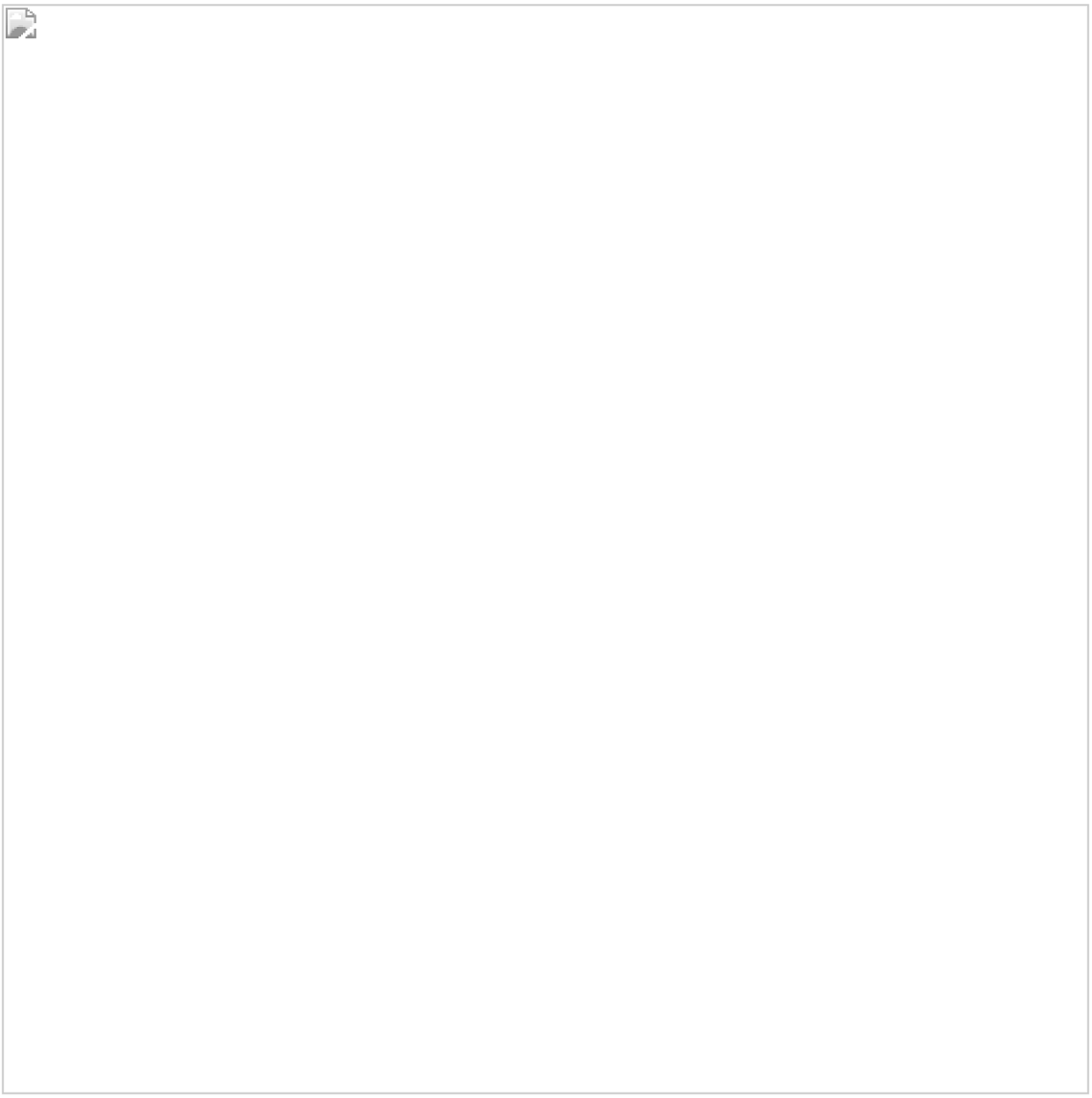
1. How did the children feel when they saw Cobbs?

- ○ Cross
- ○ Glad, and they jumped for joy
- ○ Scared

2. Which of these did Harry pack?

- ○ A parasol
- ○ A ball of string
- ○ A doll

Cobbs and the Pony



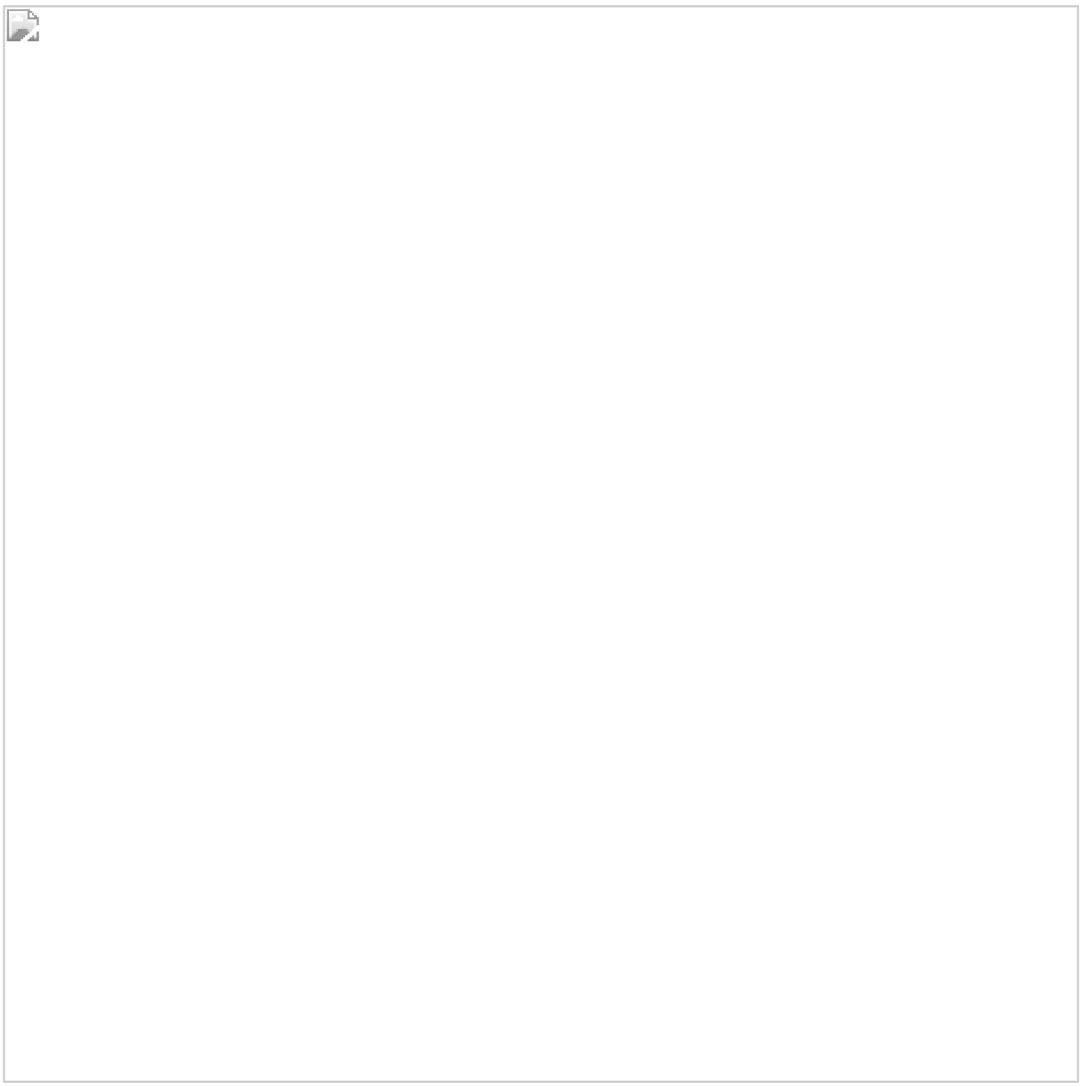
Cobbs said he knew a pony that, with a borrowed carriage, could take Harry and Norah all the way, and that he would drive them himself. The children clapped their hands and called him “Good Cobbs!” and “Dear Cobbs!”

But Cobbs was not telling the truth. He felt “the meanest rascal for deceiving 'em that ever was born.” He wished with all his heart that those two babies could be happy ever after, somewhere. But he knew it could not be.

So he went along with the Governor's plan, and the Governor set off for York in half an hour.

TALK ABOUT IT

Cobbs said yes to the children and said no to himself. Why do you think it was so hard for him?

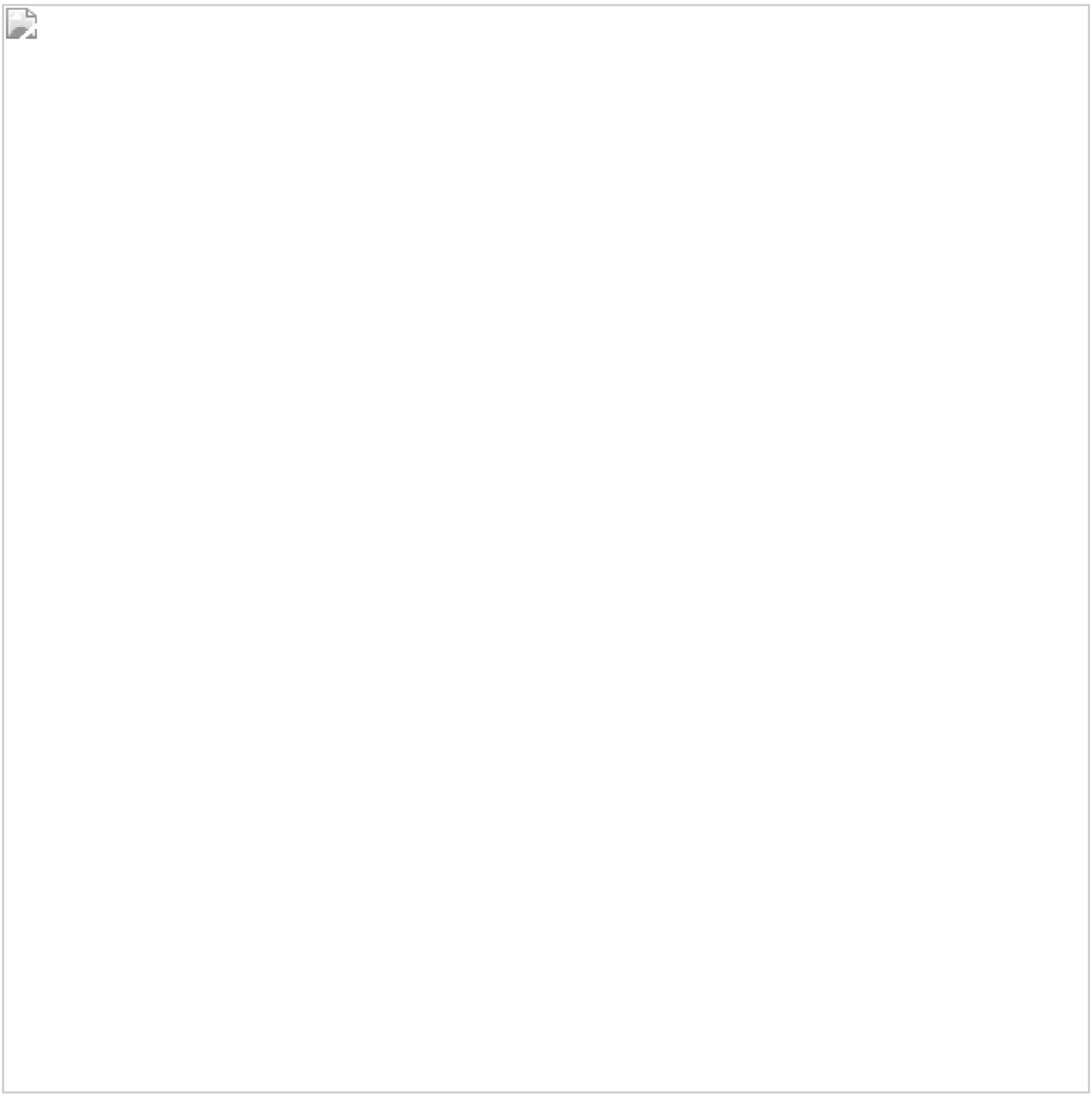


Think about it

1. How did Cobbs feel about fooling the children?

- ○ Proud
- ○ Ashamed of himself
- ○ Sleepy

Taking Care of Norah



All the women at the inn took to that boy. They were “seven deep at the keyhole.”

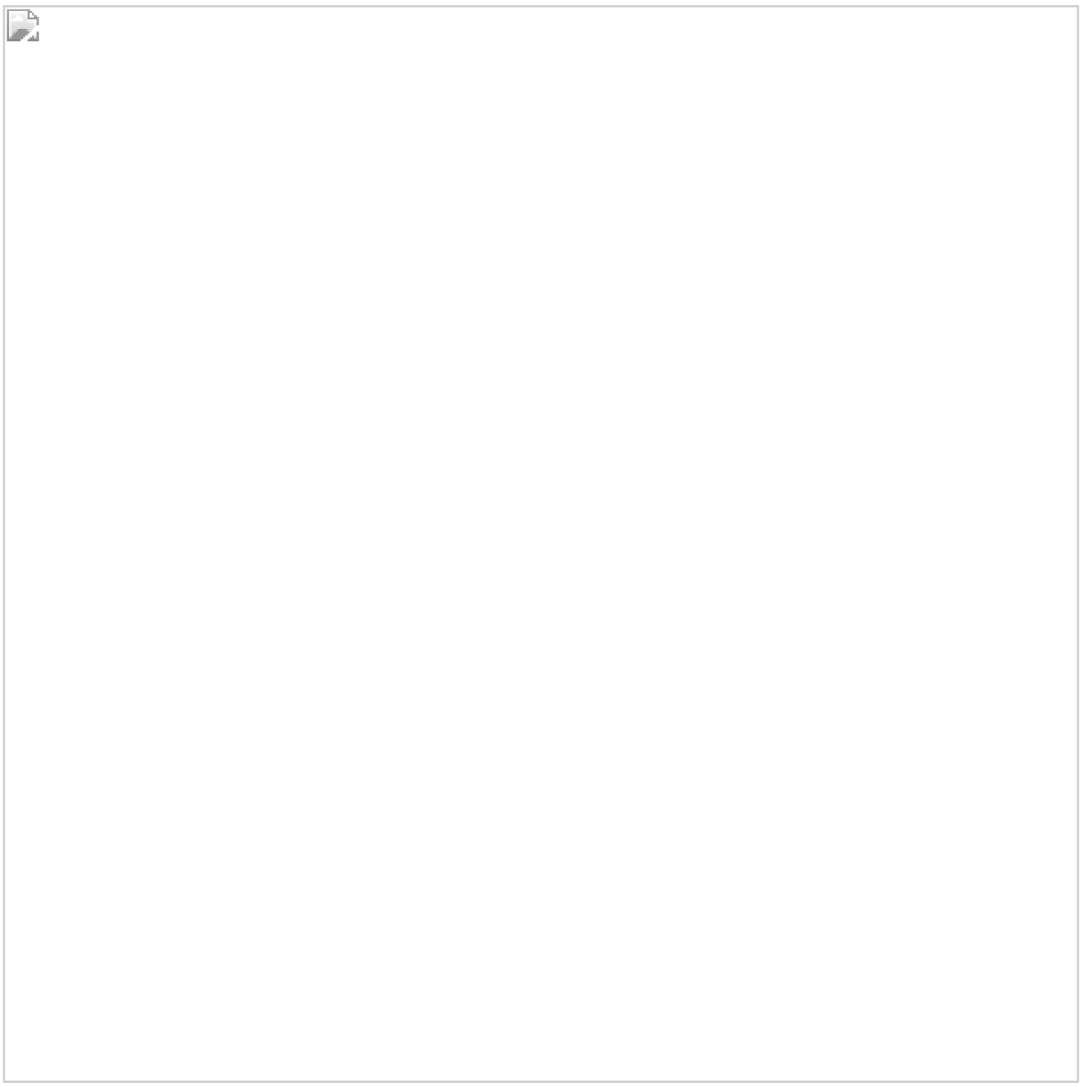
That evening Cobbs found Harry on the window-seat, holding Norah. She was tired, with her head on his shoulder.

“Cobbs, do you think you could bring a biffin, please?” Harry asked. “I think a Norfolk biffin would rouse her, Cobbs. She is very fond of them.” Cobbs brought one, and Harry fed Norah with a spoon and took a little himself.

Then each child went to bed in a room of their own, and Cobbs softly locked them in for the night.

TALK ABOUT IT

Harry fed Norah with a spoon and took a little himself. What does that show about how he treated her?

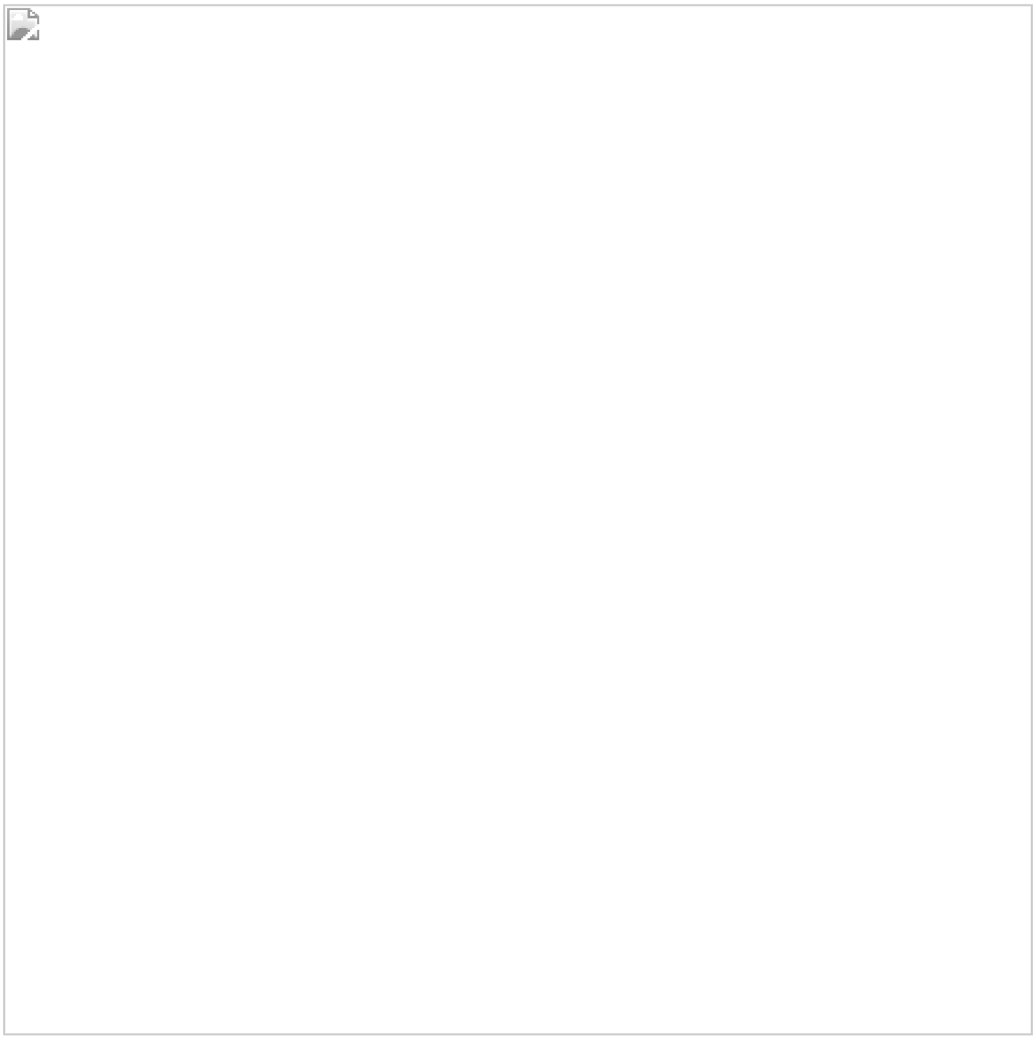


Think about it

1. What did Harry think would wake Norah up?

- ○ A Norfolk biffin
- ○ A cold bath
- ○ A story

Love Lane



At breakfast Cobbs kept up the pretend pony story. Norah was beginning to give in, but nothing put out Harry.

Harry asked if there were any good walks. “There's Love Lane,” said Cobbs. And there really was! The children said they would make him Head Gardener, because he was such a true friend. Cobbs felt so mean he wished the earth would swallow him.

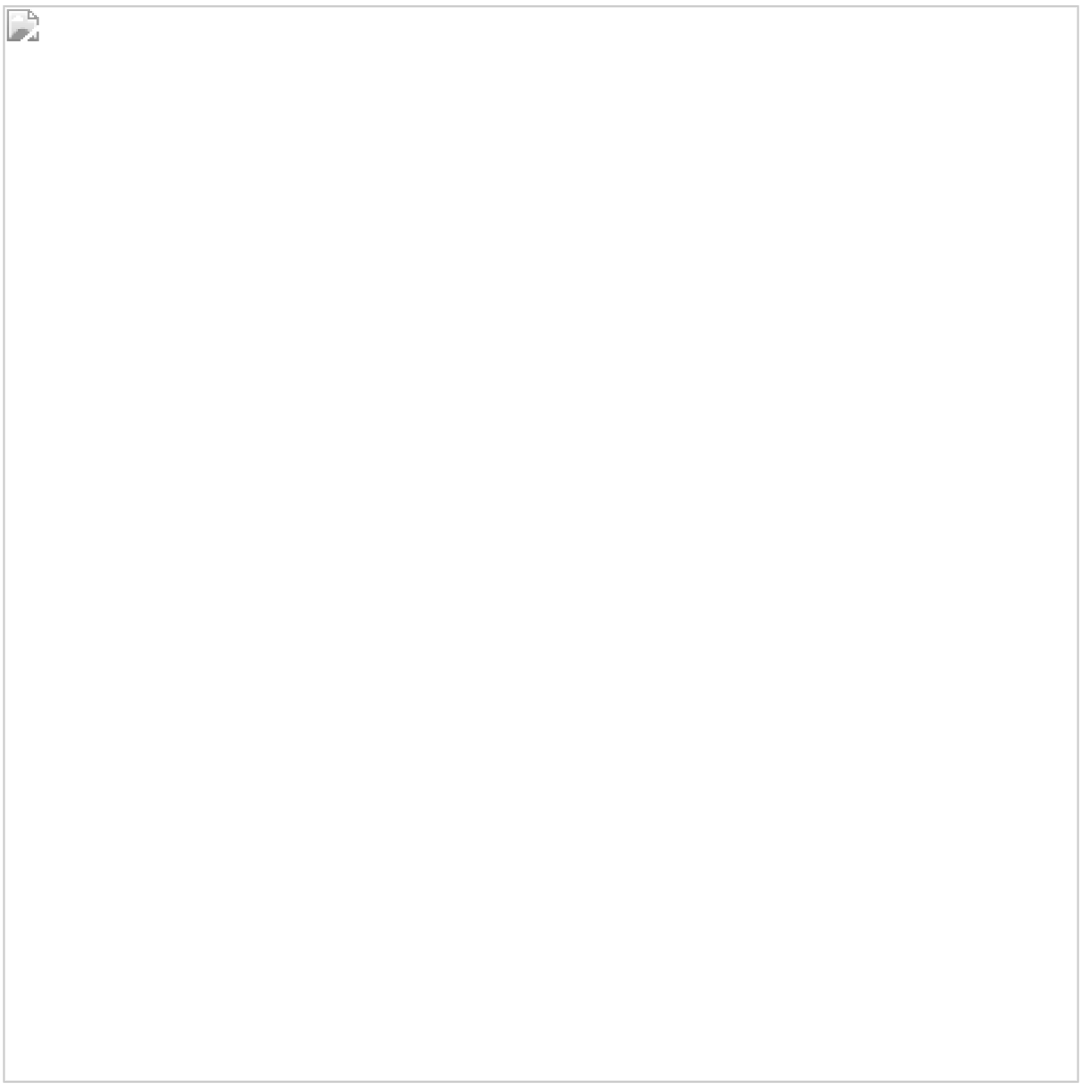
Soon the children grew tired. They lay down on a bank of daisies “like the children in the wood” and fell asleep.

Cobbs watched them and thought how, for grown-ups, “it's always either Yesterday with you, or else To-morrow, and never To-day.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Cobbs said grown-ups are always thinking of yesterday or tomorrow and never today. What do you notice about today?

Love Lane · another picture

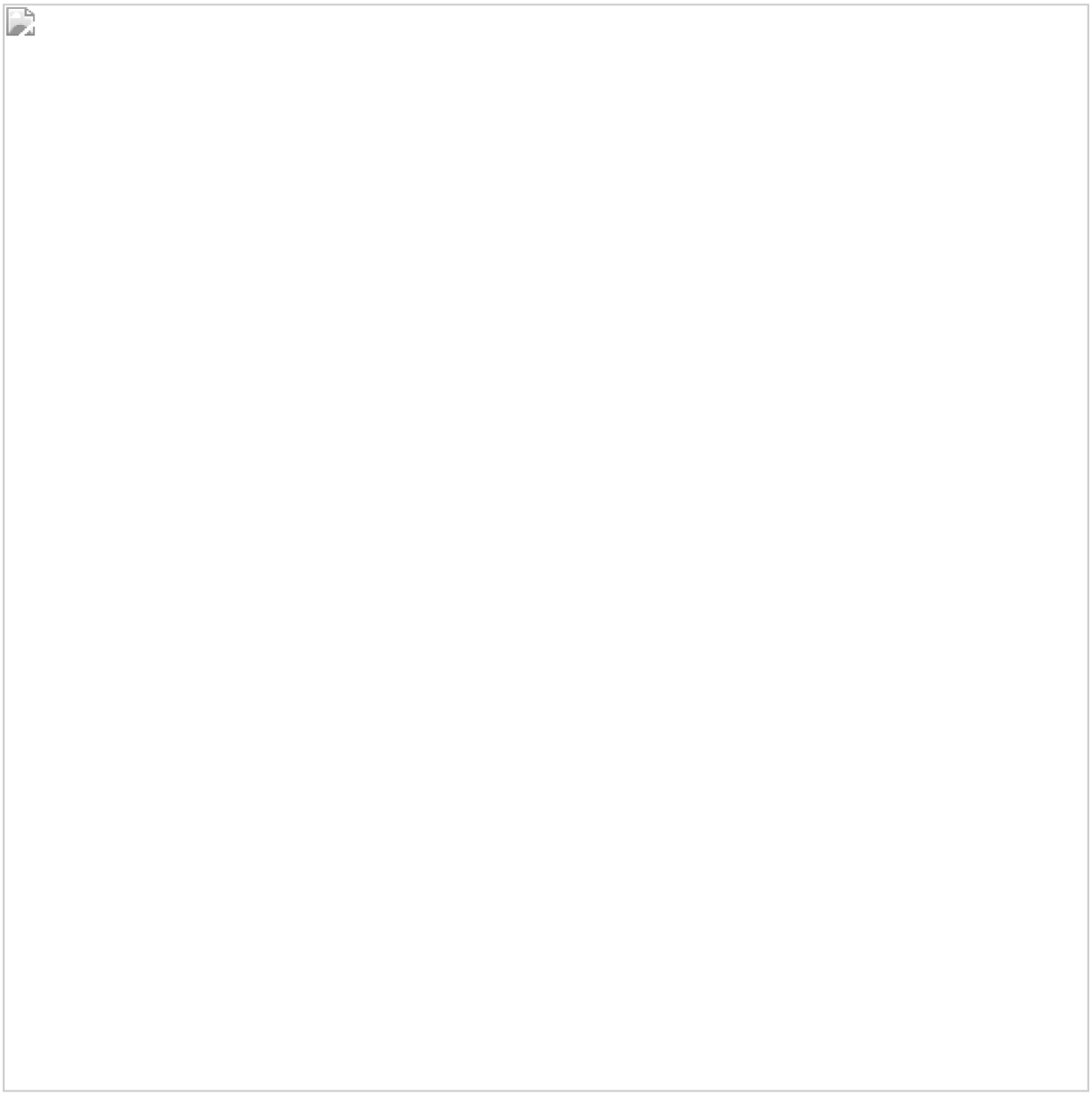


Think about it

1. What was the name of the pleasant walk Cobbs showed them?

- ○ Daisy Road
- ○ Love Lane
- ○ Pony Path

I Want to Go Home



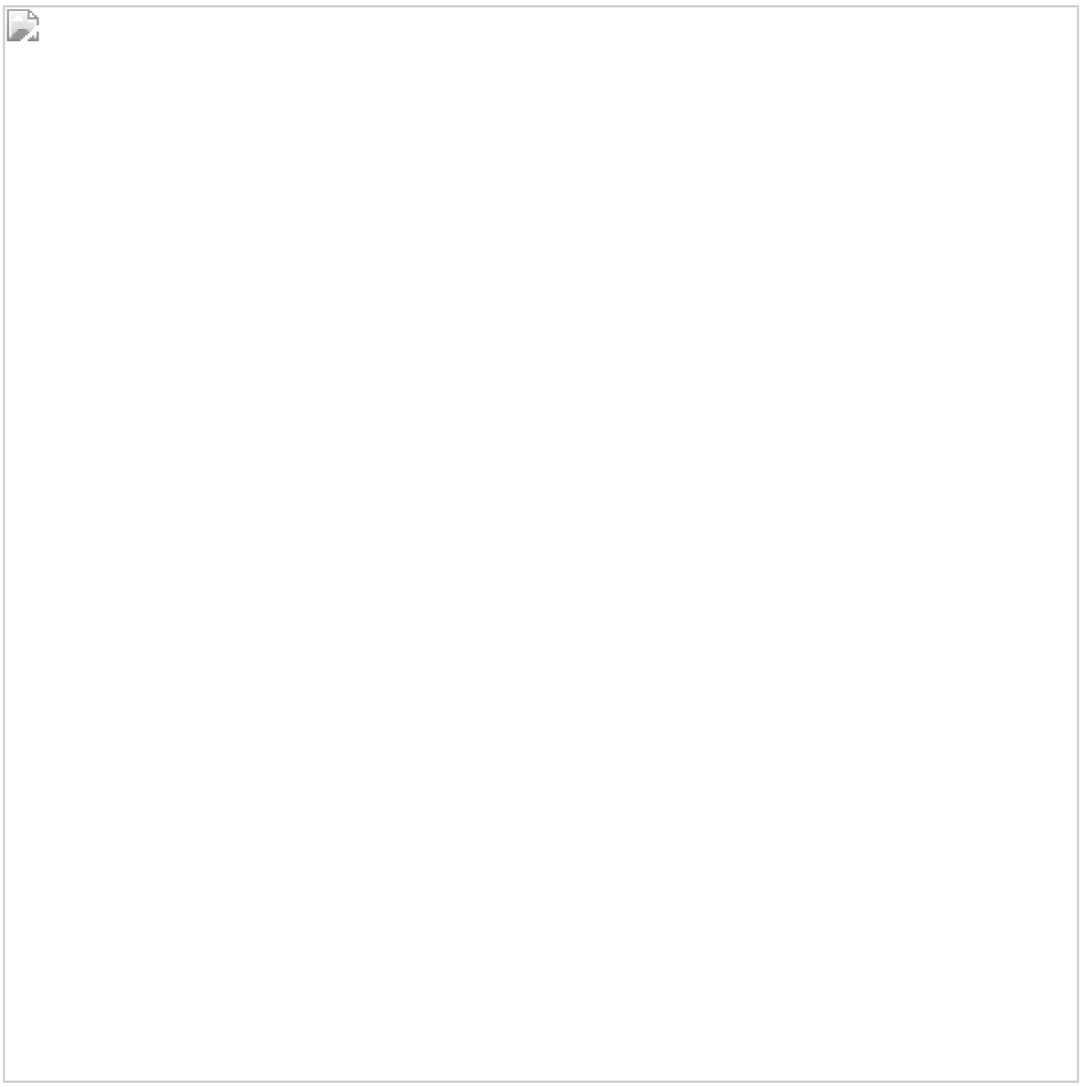
When they woke, Norah's mood had changed. When Harry put his arm round her, she said he teased her so. And she said, “Yes; and I want to go home!”

A boiled fowl and a bread-and-butter pudding cheered her a little. But Harry kept up, and his noble heart was as fond as ever. At dusk Norah began to cry, and went to bed, and Harry did too.

At about eleven or twelve at night, the Governor came back in a chaise, with Mr. Walmers and an elderly lady.

TALK ABOUT IT

Norah wanted to go home. Where do you like to be when you are tired and a little sad?

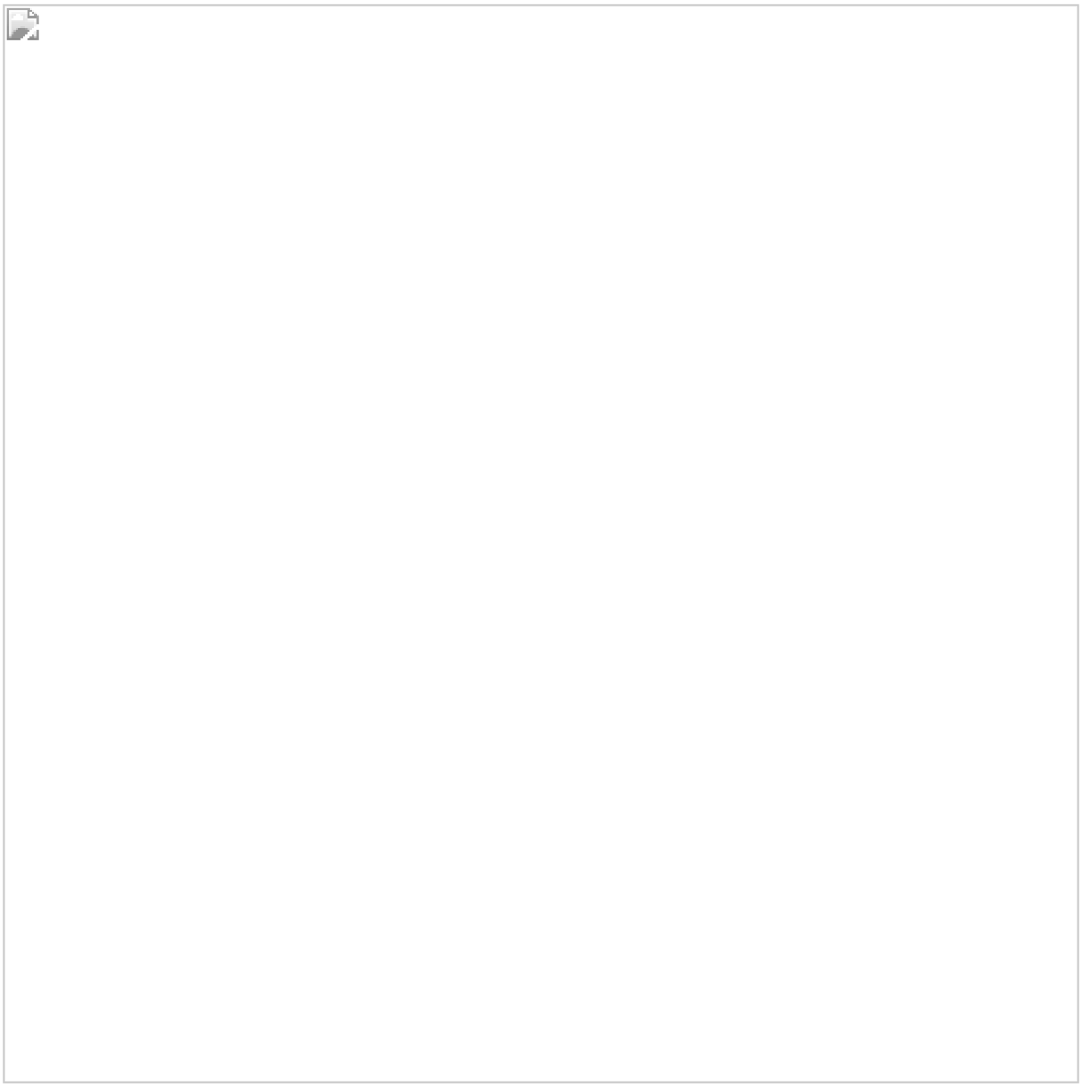


Think about it

1. Who came back with the Governor that night?

- ○ Mr. Walmers, Harry's father, and an elderly lady
- ○ The Guard
- ○ A pony

A Kiss Goodbye



Cobbs's heart beat like a hammer going upstairs. “I hope you are not angry with Master Harry,” he said. “For Master Harry is a fine boy, sir, and will do you credit and honour.” “No, Cobbs. No, my good fellow. Thank you!” said Mr. Walmers.

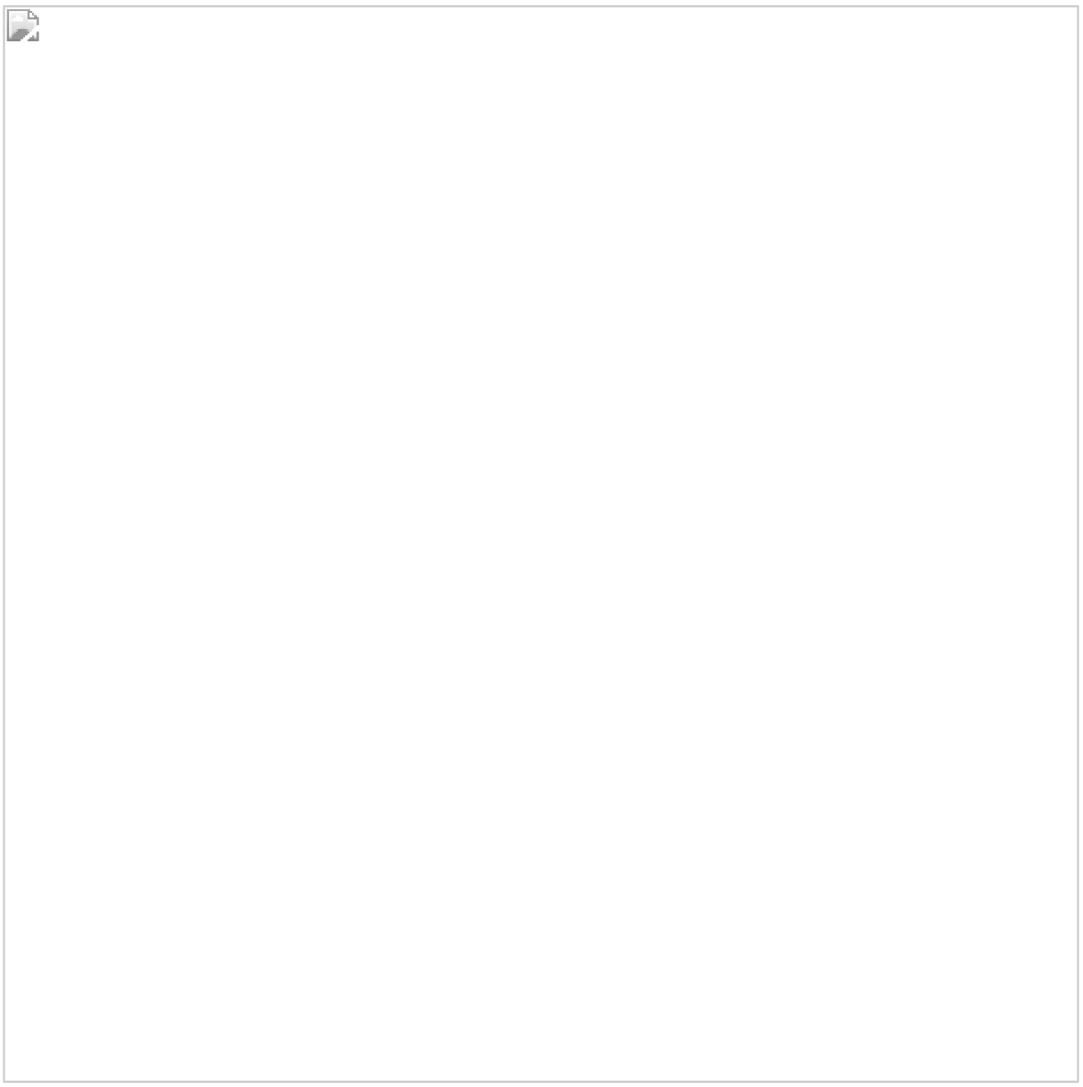
He bent down, kissed his sleeping boy, and gently woke him. “I am not angry, my child. I only want you to dress yourself and come home.”

Harry dressed, fighting back tears. “Please, dear pa—may I—kiss Norah before I go?” “You may, my child.”

His father lifted him to Norah's pillow. A chambermaid at the door called out, “It's a shame to part 'em!”

TALK ABOUT IT

Mr. Walmers was not angry. What do you think Harry felt when he heard his father say that?



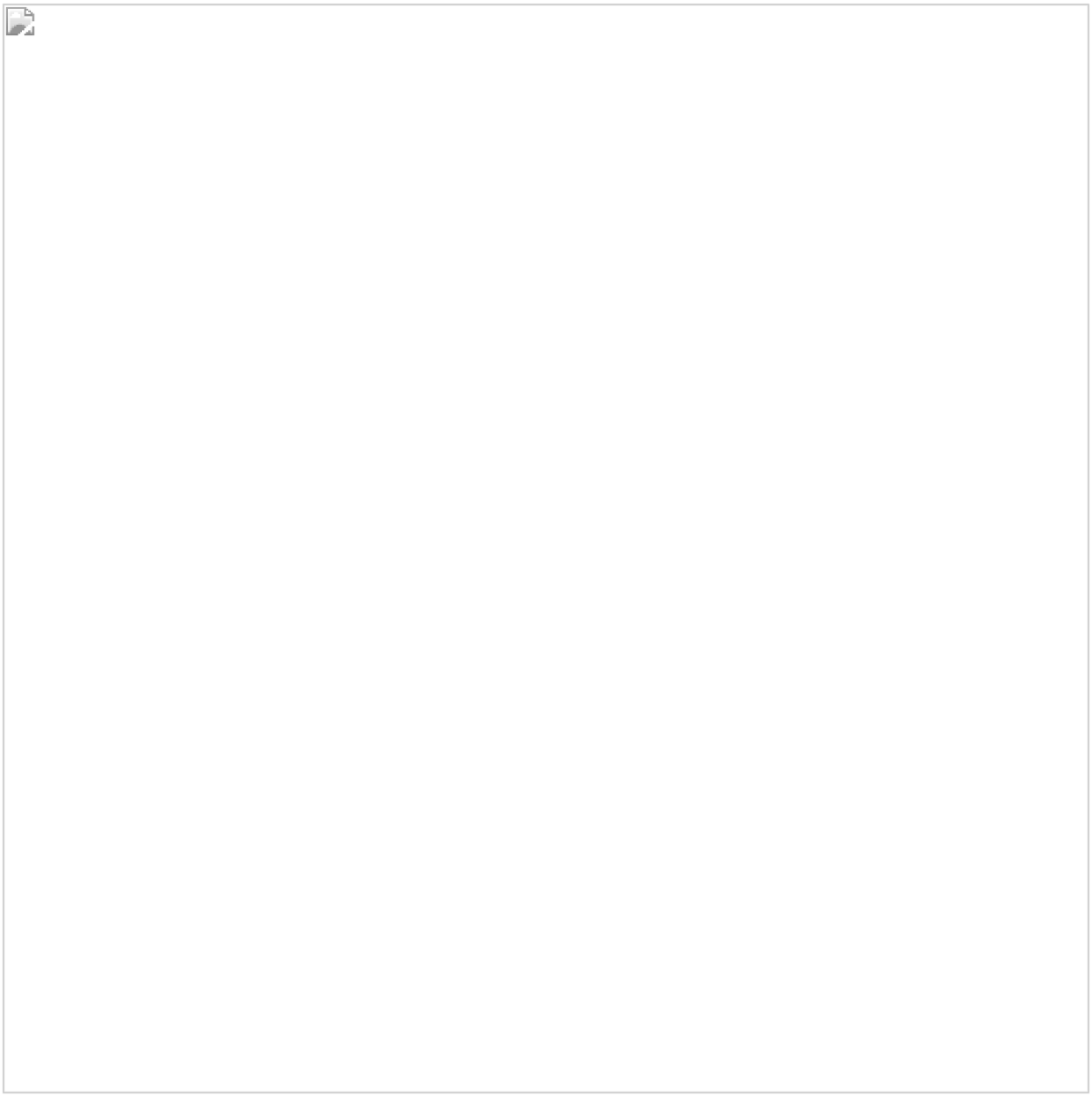
Think about it

1. How did Mr. Walmers answer when Harry asked to kiss Norah goodbye?

- ○ No
- ○ You may, my child
- ○ Not now

2. Why do you think Mr. Walmers kissed Harry's sleeping face before waking him?

That's All About It



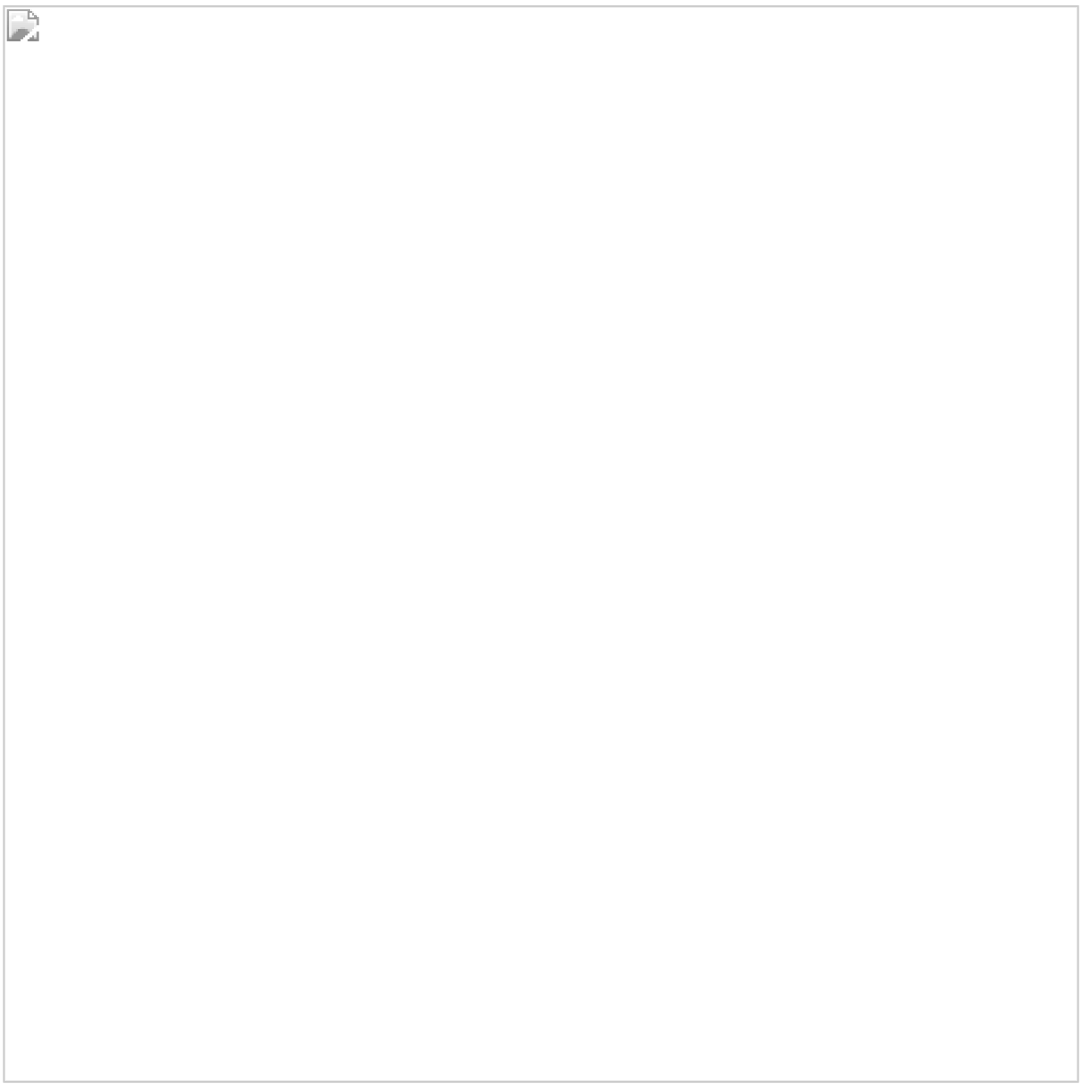
That's all about it, said Cobbs. Mr. Walmers drove away in the chaise, holding Master Harry's hand. The elderly lady and Norah went home the next day.

Norah did not marry Harry. Long afterwards she married a Captain.

Cobbs said that “there are not many couples on their way to be married who are half as innocent of guile as those two children.” And that was the story of the Boots.

TALK ABOUT IT

Harry and Norah loved each other in a small, kind way. What do you notice about how they cared for each other?



Think about it

1. What did Mr. Walmers do as they drove away?

- ○ He held Harry's hand
- ○ He scolded Harry
- ○ He went to Gretna Green

2. Harry looked after Norah the whole way. Who looks after you, and how can you look after someone else?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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