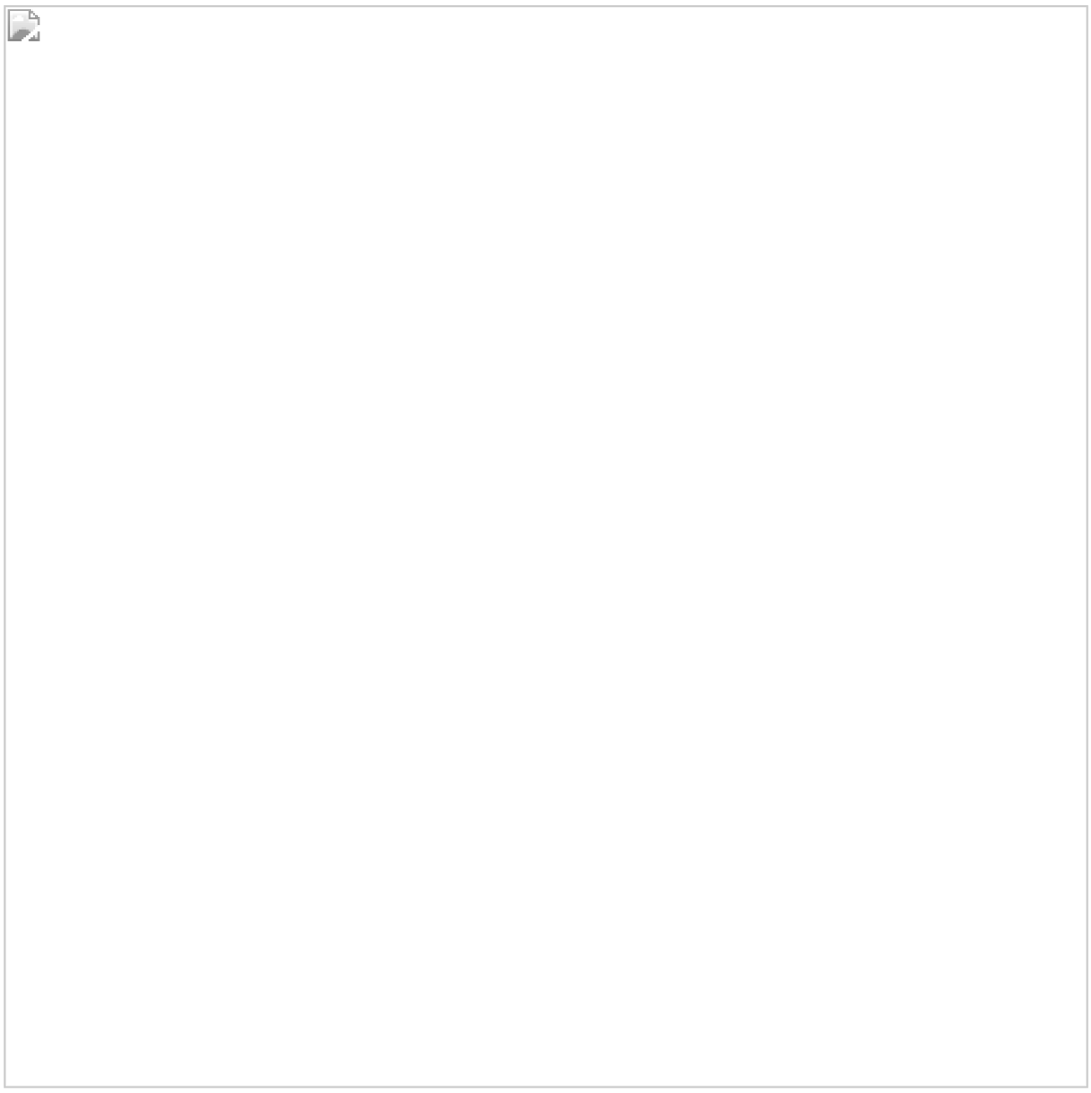
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Enchanted Horse

A Tale from Persia and the Arabian Nights



It was the Feast of the New Year, the oldest and most splendid feast in the Kingdom of Persia. The king had spent the day in the city of Schiraz, watching the wonderful shows his people had made.

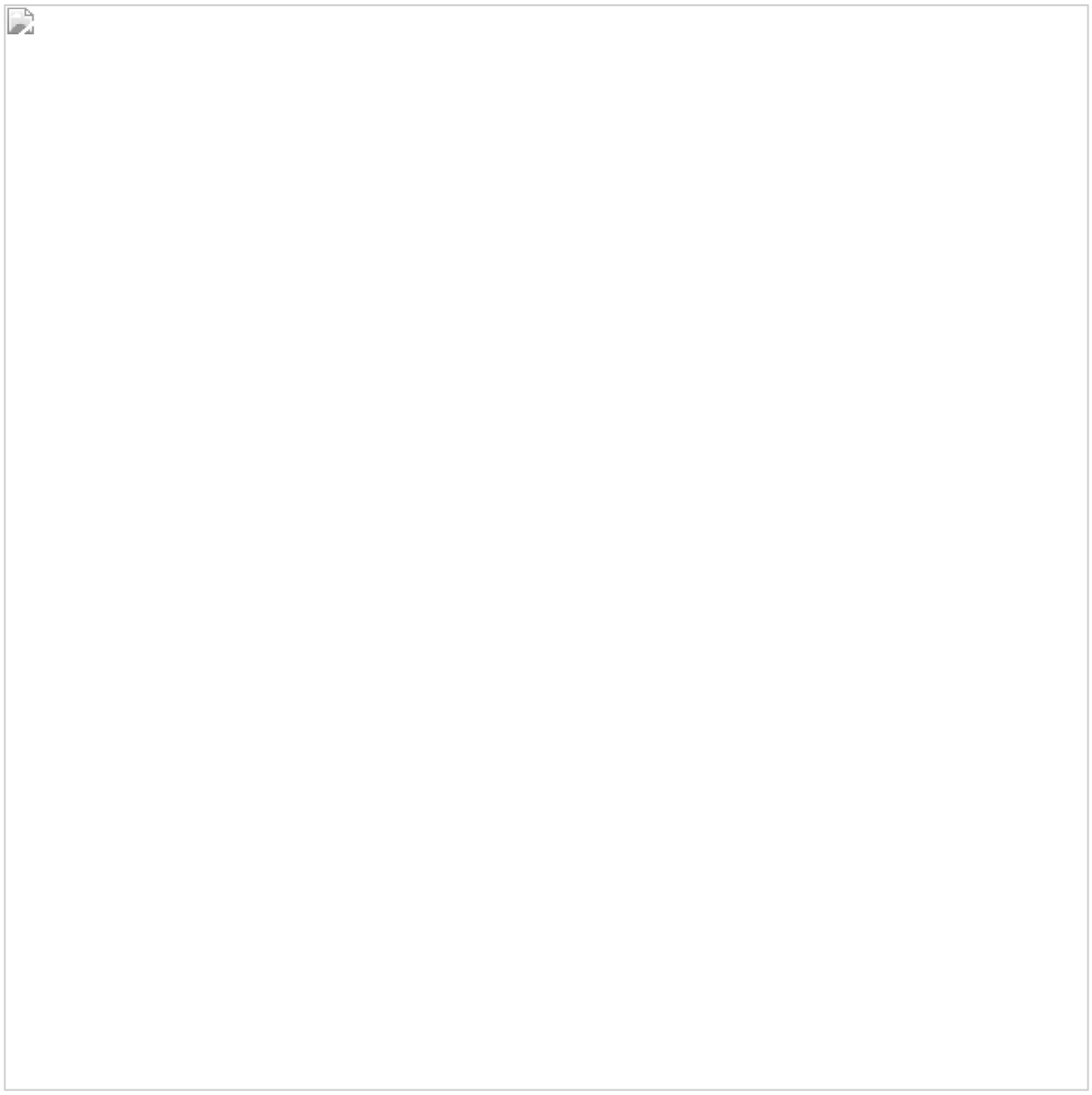
The sun was setting. Suddenly an Indian came before the throne, leading a horse in rich harness that looked exactly like a real one.

TALK ABOUT IT

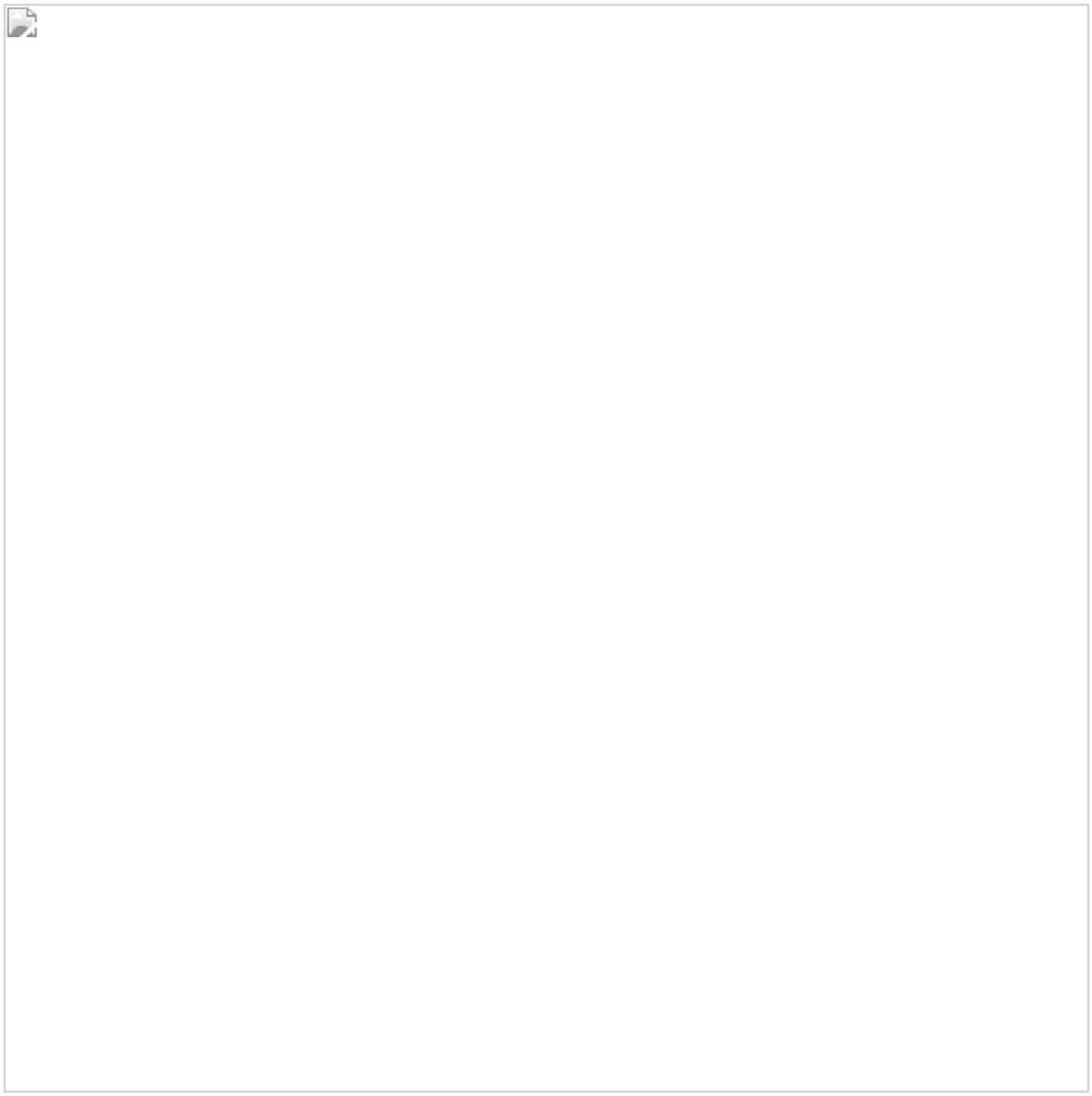
The king had seen many wonders that day. What is the most wonderful thing you have ever seen?

This book belongs to _____

The Enchanted Horse · another picture



The Horse That Flew



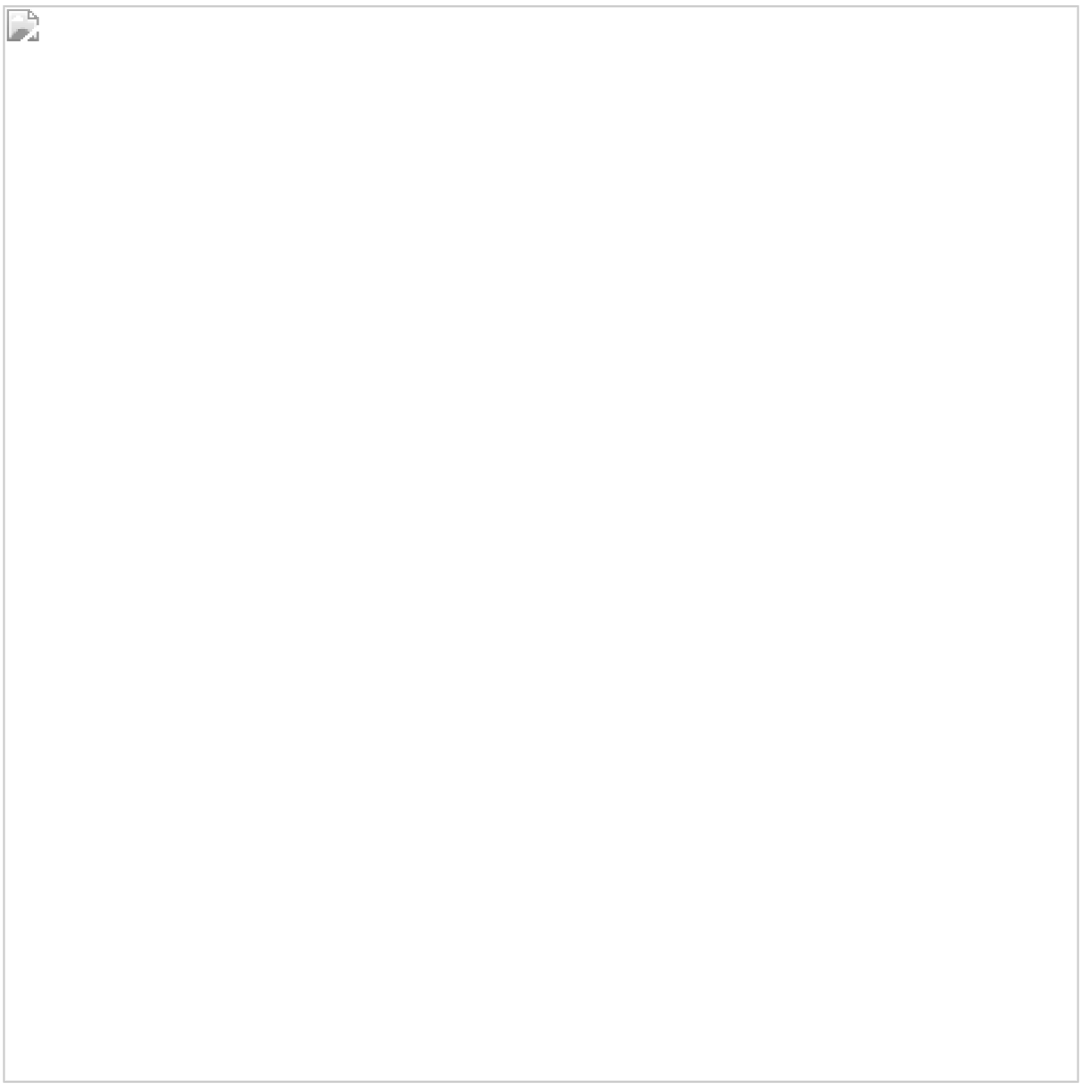
The Indian said this horse was the most wonderful thing the king had seen that day. “I see nothing in it,” said the king. To him it was only a clever copy of a real horse.

“It is not of his outward form that I would speak,” said the Indian, “but of the use that I can make of him.” On its back he could go anywhere in a few moments.

The king asked for a palm leaf from a mountain three leagues away. The Indian turned a screw in the horse's neck and rose like lightning, and in a quarter of an hour he was back with the leaf.

TALK ABOUT IT

If you could fly to anywhere in a few moments, where would you go first?

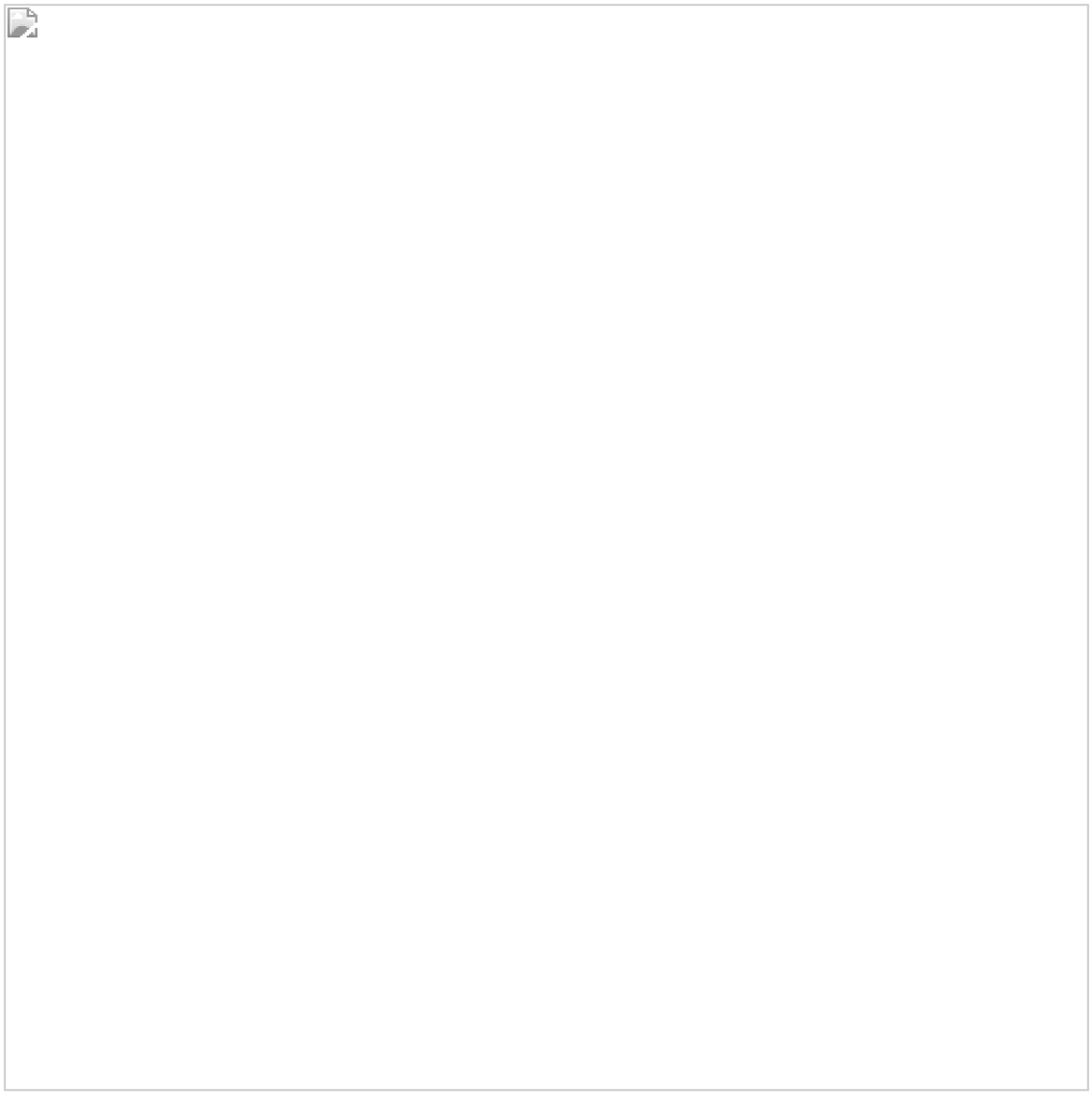


Think about it

1. What did the Indian bring back for the king?

- ○ A palm leaf
- ○ A golden apple
- ○ A feather

The Price of the Horse



Now the king longed to own the horse. “Name your own price,” he said.

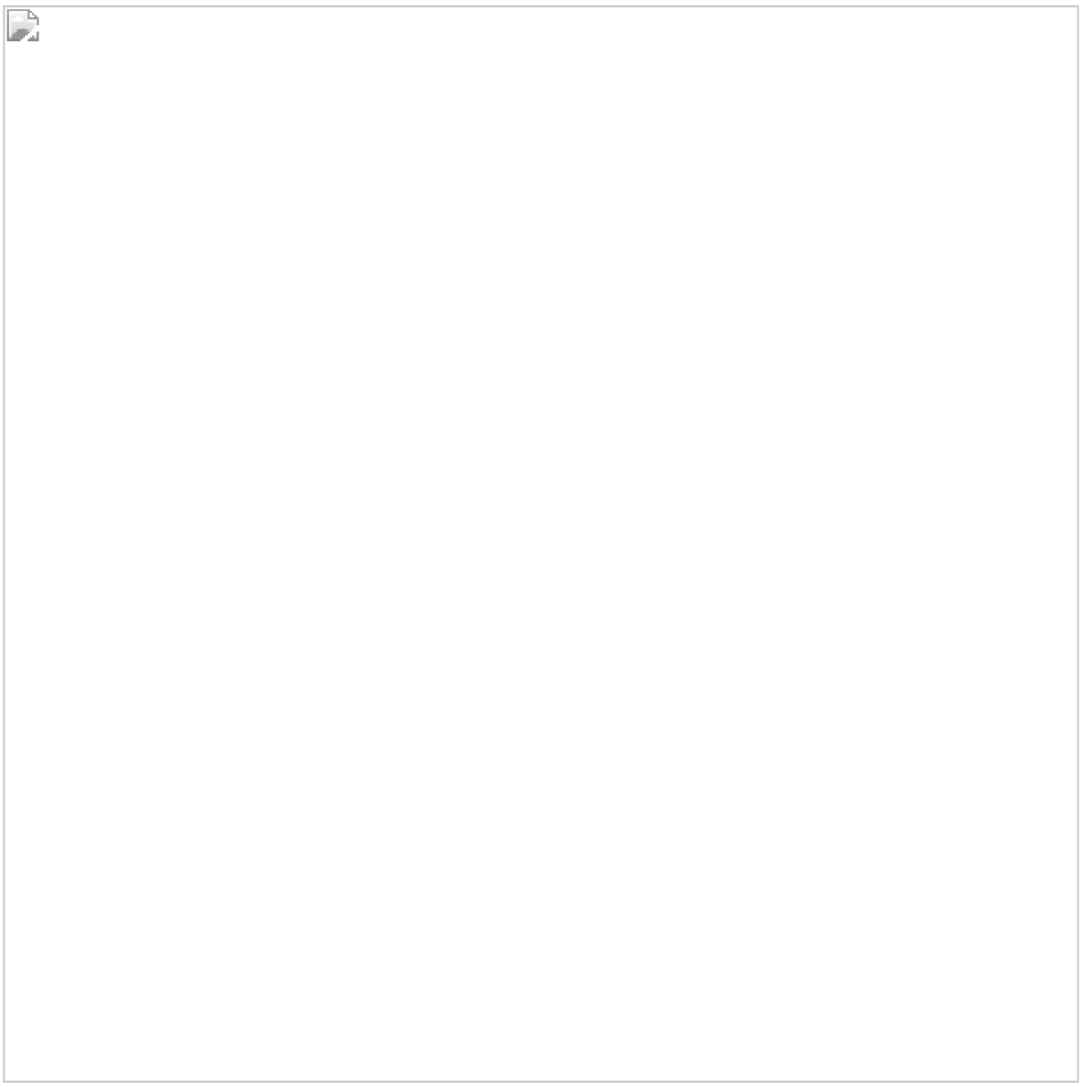
The Indian said its maker had given it to him for his only daughter, and he had sworn never to part with it except for something of equal value: the hand of the king's daughter, the princess.

The court laughed. Prince Firouz Schah, the king's son, was angry. “Consider what you owe to yourself, and to the blood of your ancestors,” he said.

But the king feared the Indian would only offer the horse to another king. He asked his son to try the horse first.

TALK ABOUT IT

The prince was angry at the Indian's price. What would you have said to the Indian?

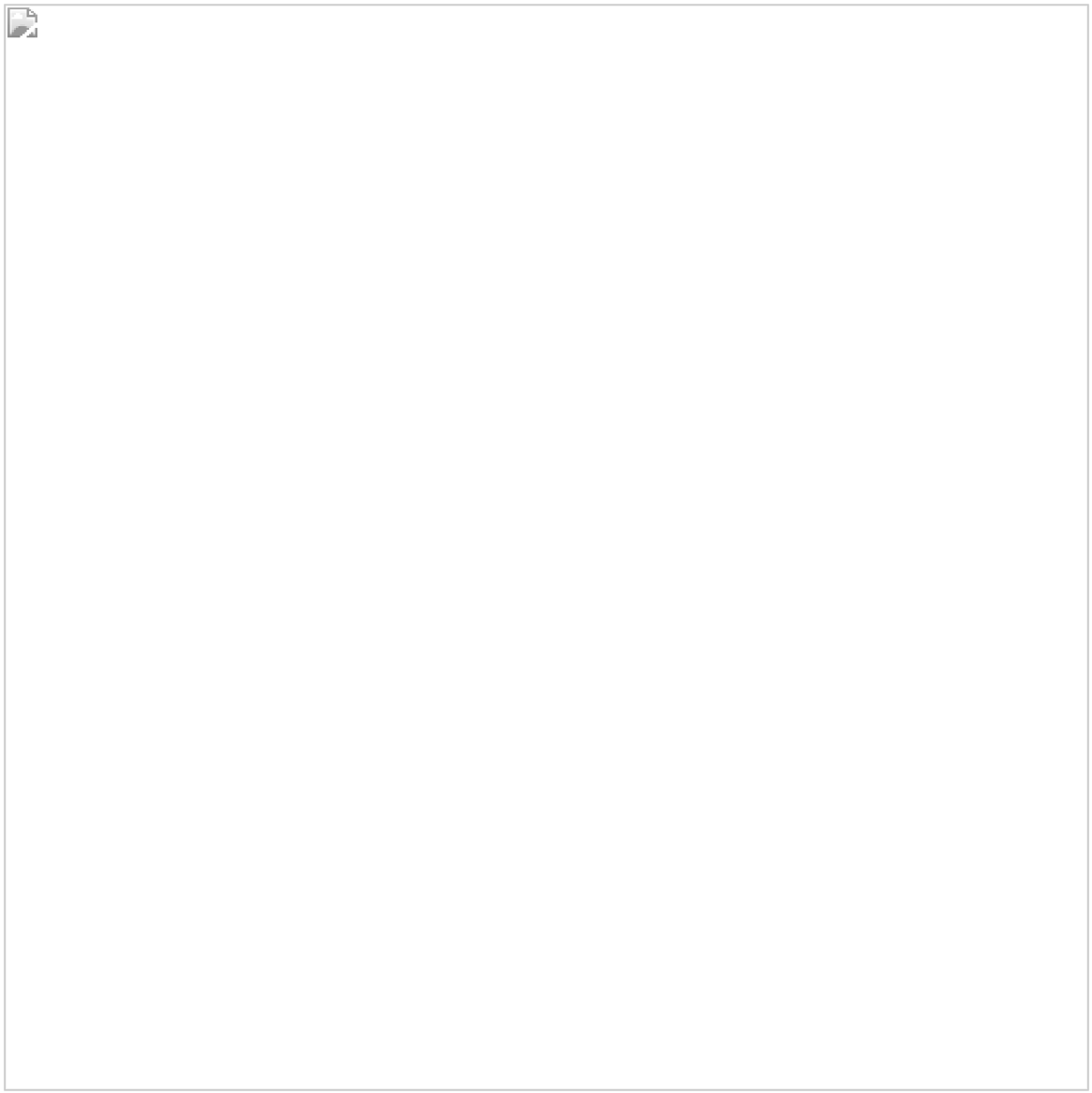


Think about it

1. What did the Indian ask in return for the horse?

- ○ A mountain of gold
- ○ The hand of the princess
- ○ The king's crown

Up, Up, and Away



The Indian began to show the prince how to guide the horse. But before he had finished, the young man turned the screw, and in a moment he was out of sight.

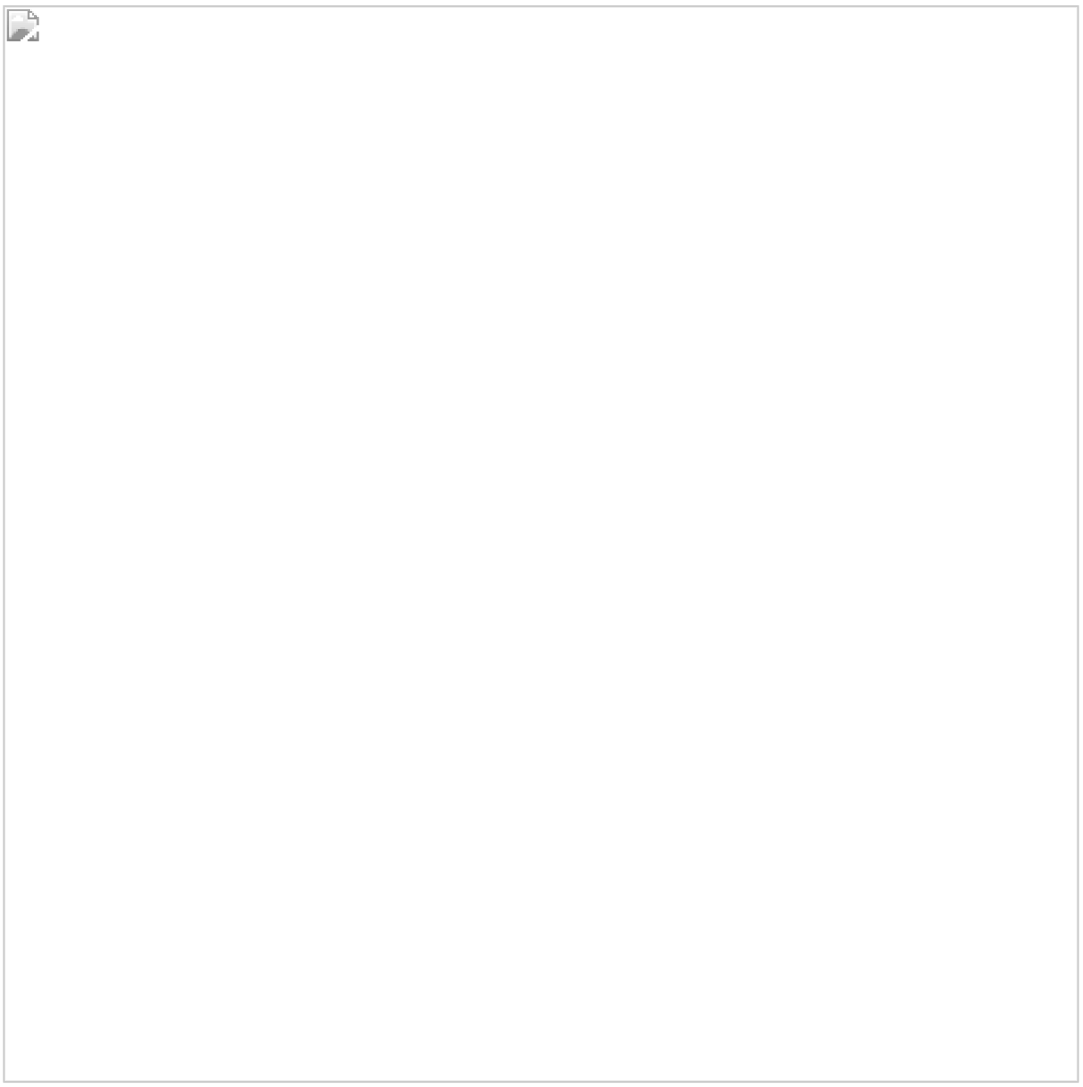
They waited and waited, until the frightened Indian told the king that the prince had not let him say how to come down.

“Well, your head shall answer for it,” said the king. If the prince was not safe in three months, the Indian would pay, and he was put in prison.

Meanwhile the prince flew higher and higher, until the mountains looked like plains. He turned the screw the other way, but nothing happened.

TALK ABOUT IT

The prince was in too much of a hurry to listen. Has that ever happened to you?

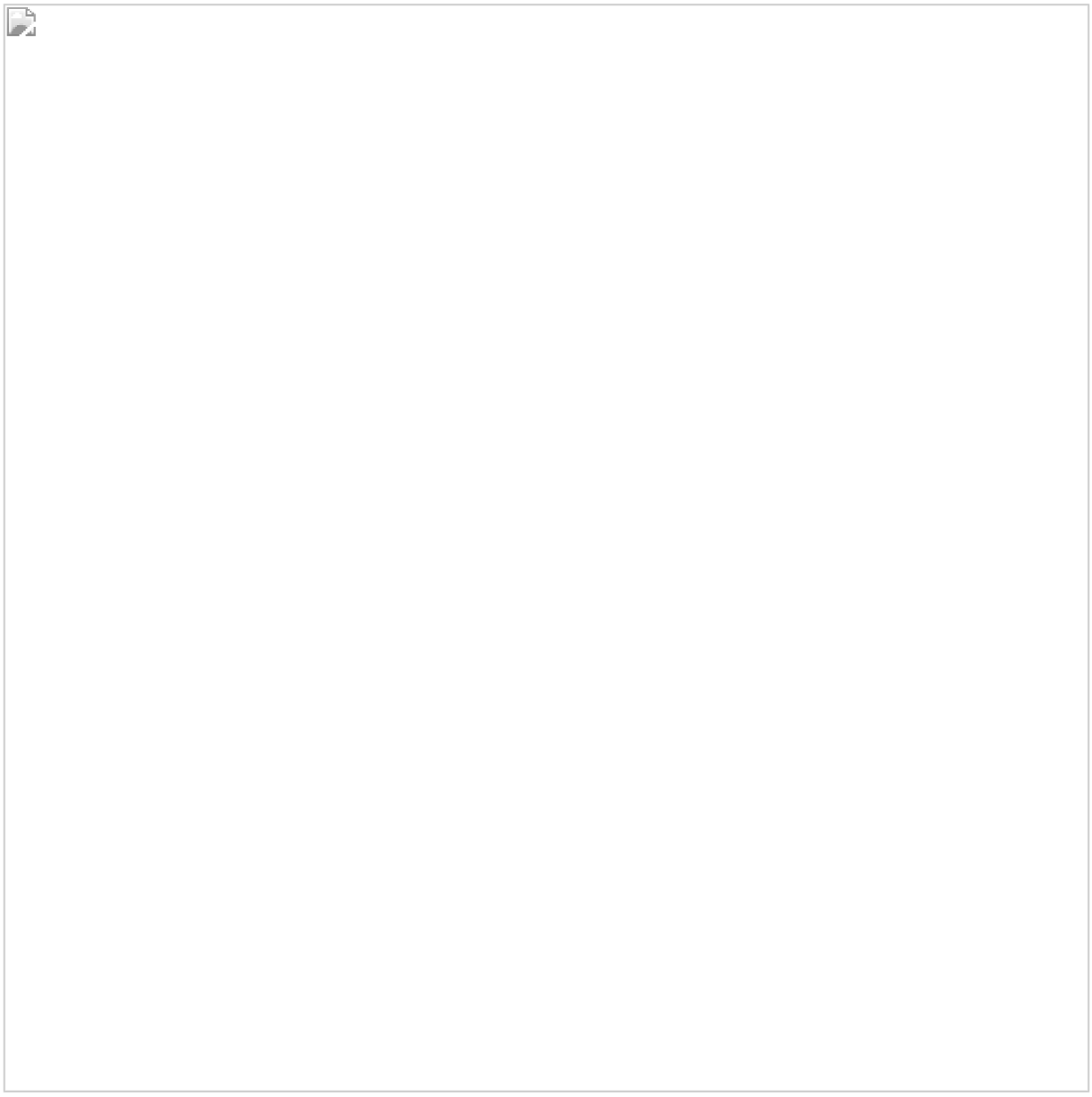


Think about it

1. What went wrong when the prince flew away?

- ○ The horse fell sick
- ○ He did not know how to come down
- ○ The sun went out

The Little Peg and the Sleeping Palace



The prince did not lose his head. He searched the horse's neck and found a tiny peg close to the right ear. When he turned it, the horse came slowly down.

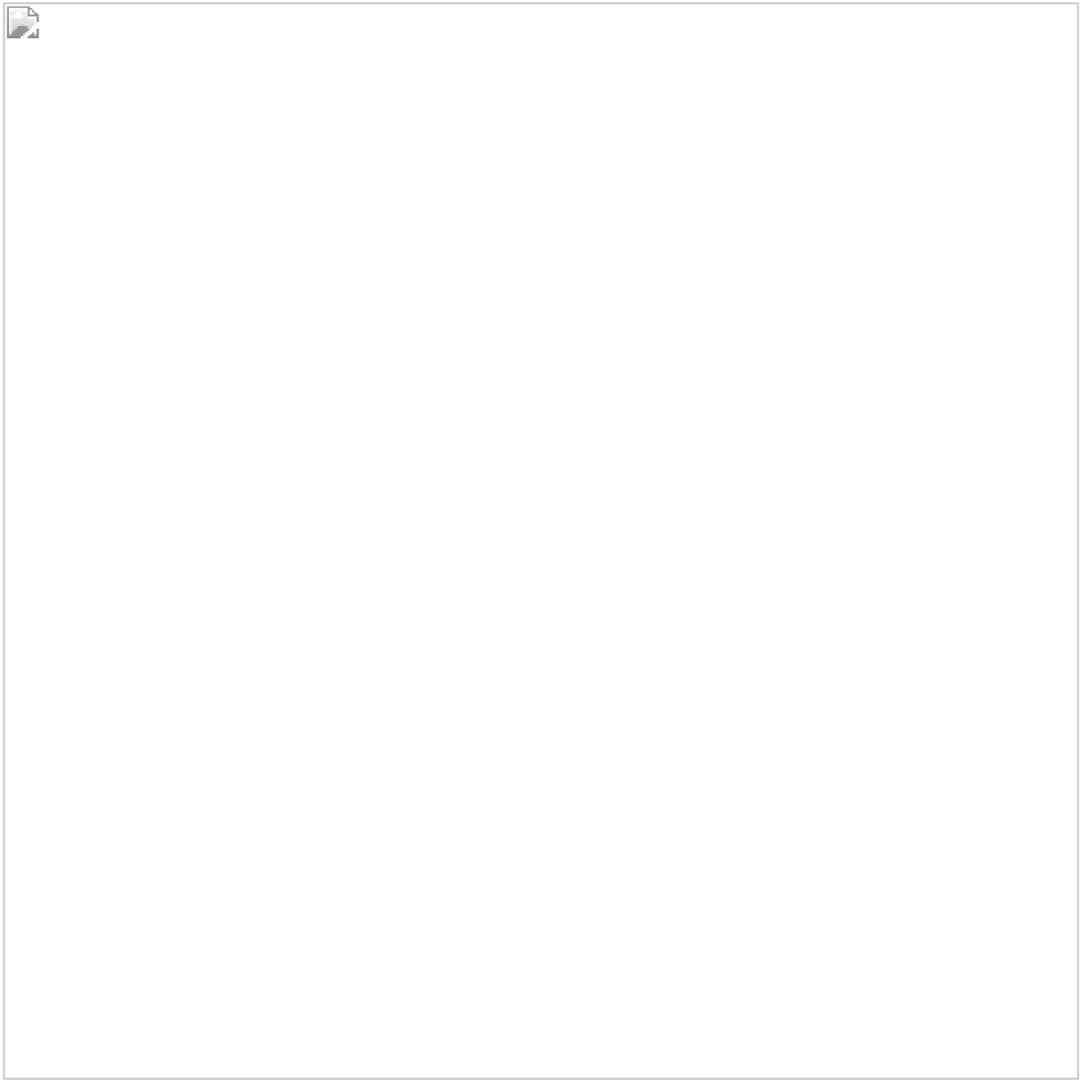
Past midnight, he landed on the flat roof of a huge palace, tired and hungry.

“I am doing no harm,” he said, and crept down a staircase, past sleeping guards. Behind a curtain slept a room of women, and one was a princess.

He knelt and gently woke her. “You behold, madame, a prince in distress, son to the King of Persia,” he said.

TALK ABOUT IT

The prince had to be very brave and very quiet. When have you had to be brave and quiet?

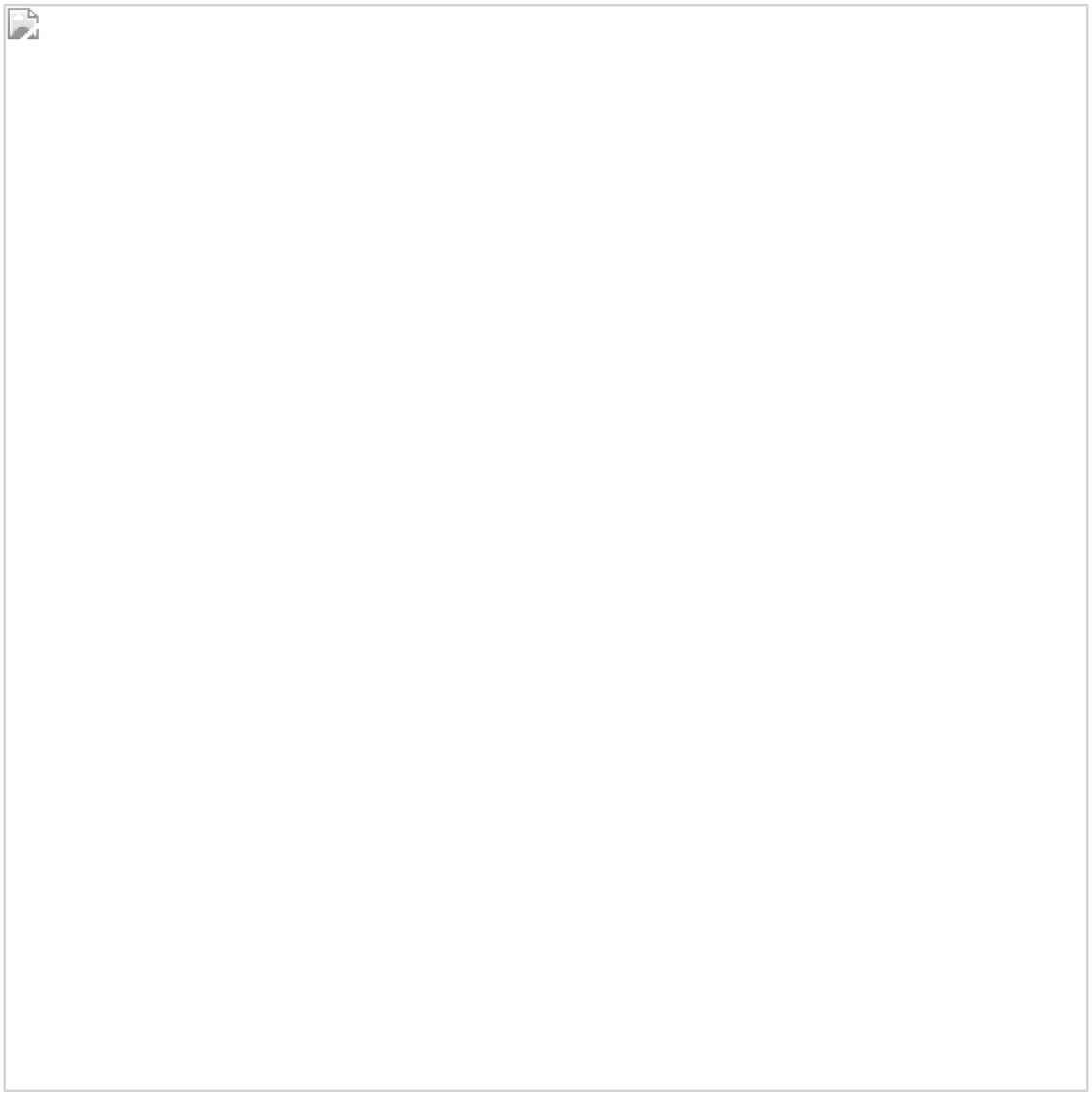


Think about it

1. How did the prince bring the horse down?

- ○ He pulled its tail
- ○ He turned a tiny peg near its right ear
- ○ He said magic words

The Princess of Bengal



The lady was the eldest daughter of the King of Bengal, resting in a palace her father had built for her near the capital.

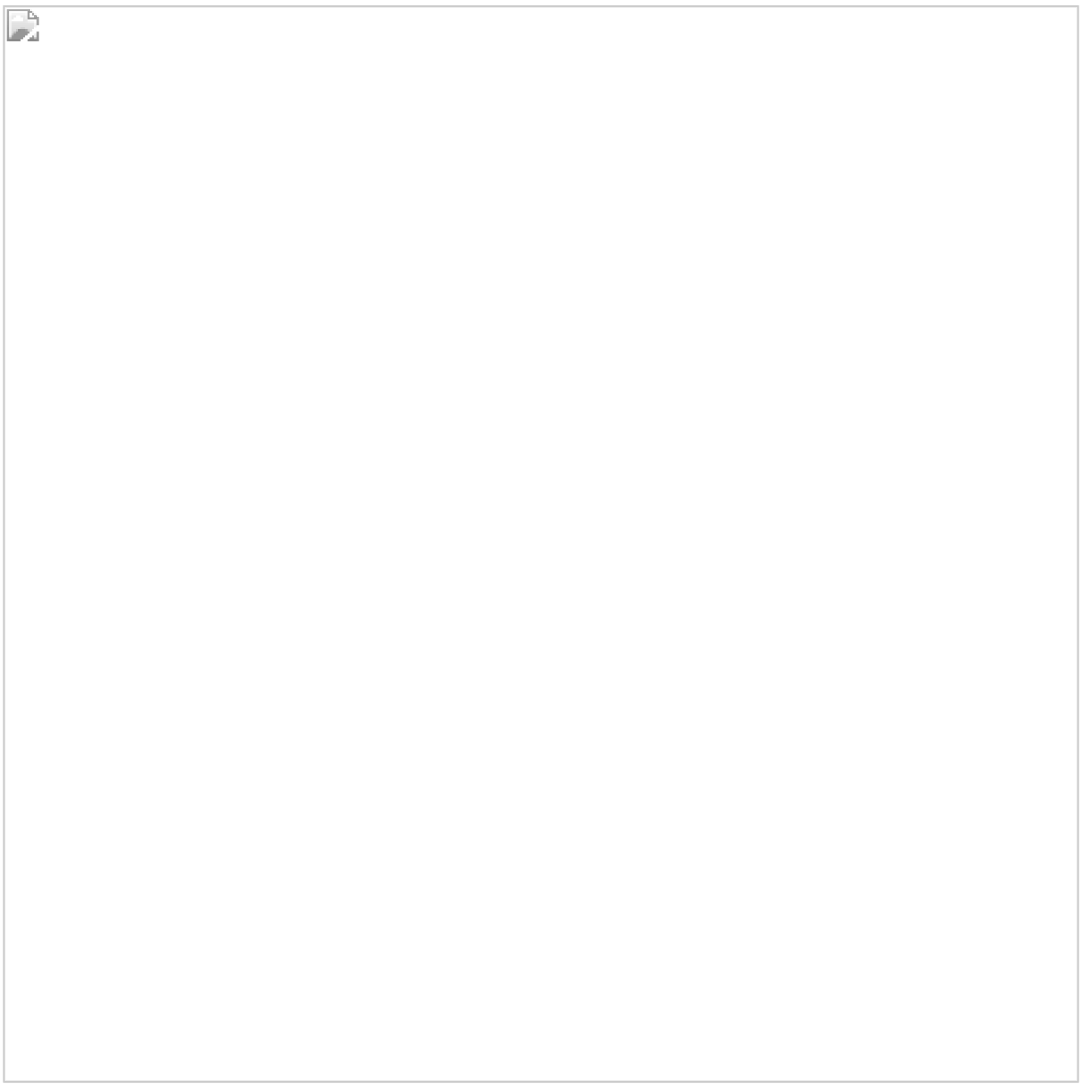
“Prince, be not uneasy,” she said. “Hospitality and humanity are practised as widely in Bengal as they are in Persia.” Her women took him to a room with supper and a bed.

Next morning, dressed in her finest, she sent for him. “Her will is my law,” said the prince, and he told her everything: the Feast, the horse, the Indian's price, and how he had flown away.

She said he was as free in her house as in his father's court.

TALK ABOUT IT

The princess welcomed a stranger. What is a kind way to welcome someone who is new?

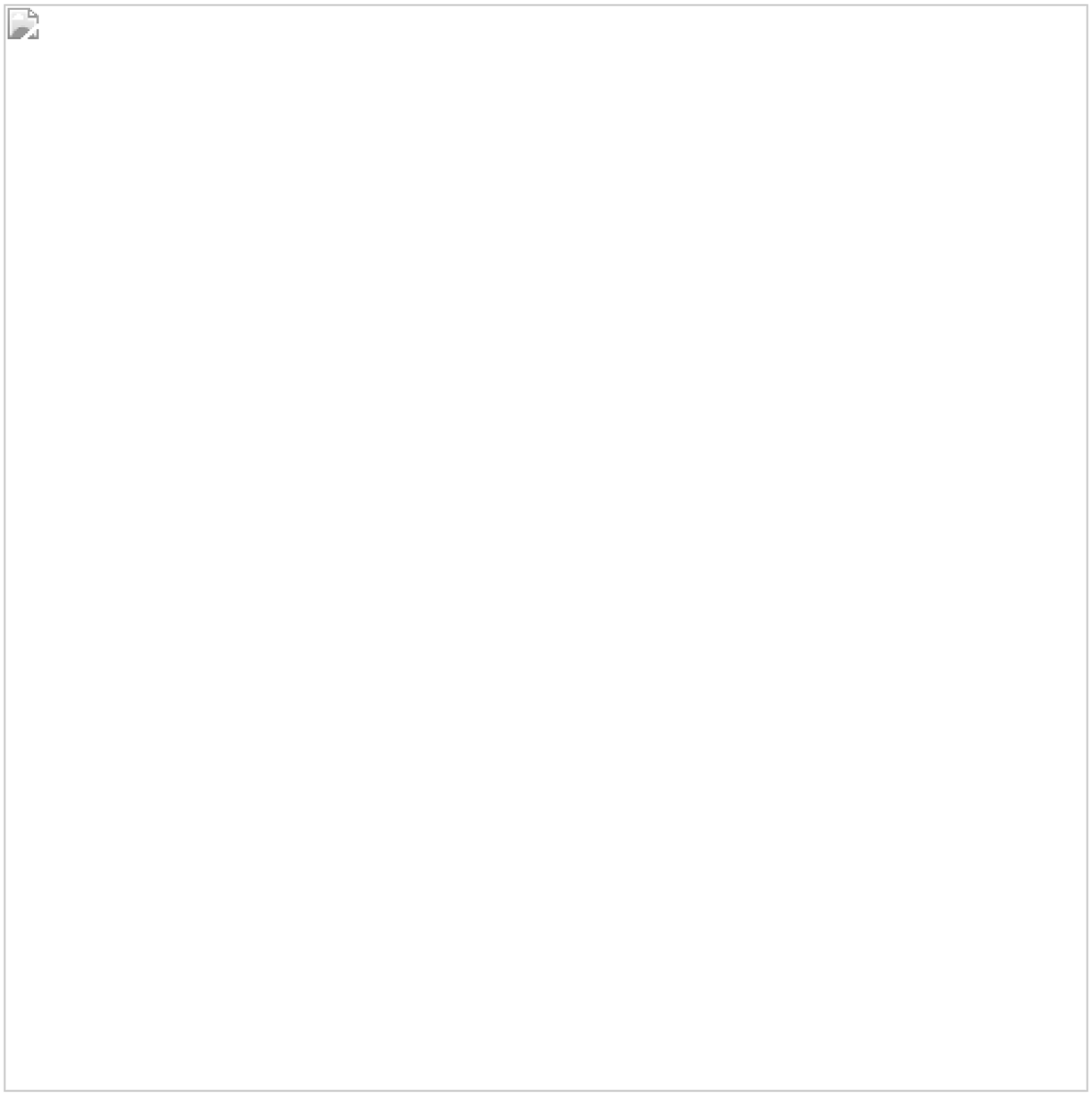


Think about it

1. How did the Princess of Bengal treat the prince?

- ○ She called the guards
- ○ She gave him supper and a place to rest
- ○ She sent him away

A Son Must Go Home



But the prince longed to go home to his father. “I should be unworthy indeed of all the love he showers upon me, if I did not return to him at the first possible moment.”

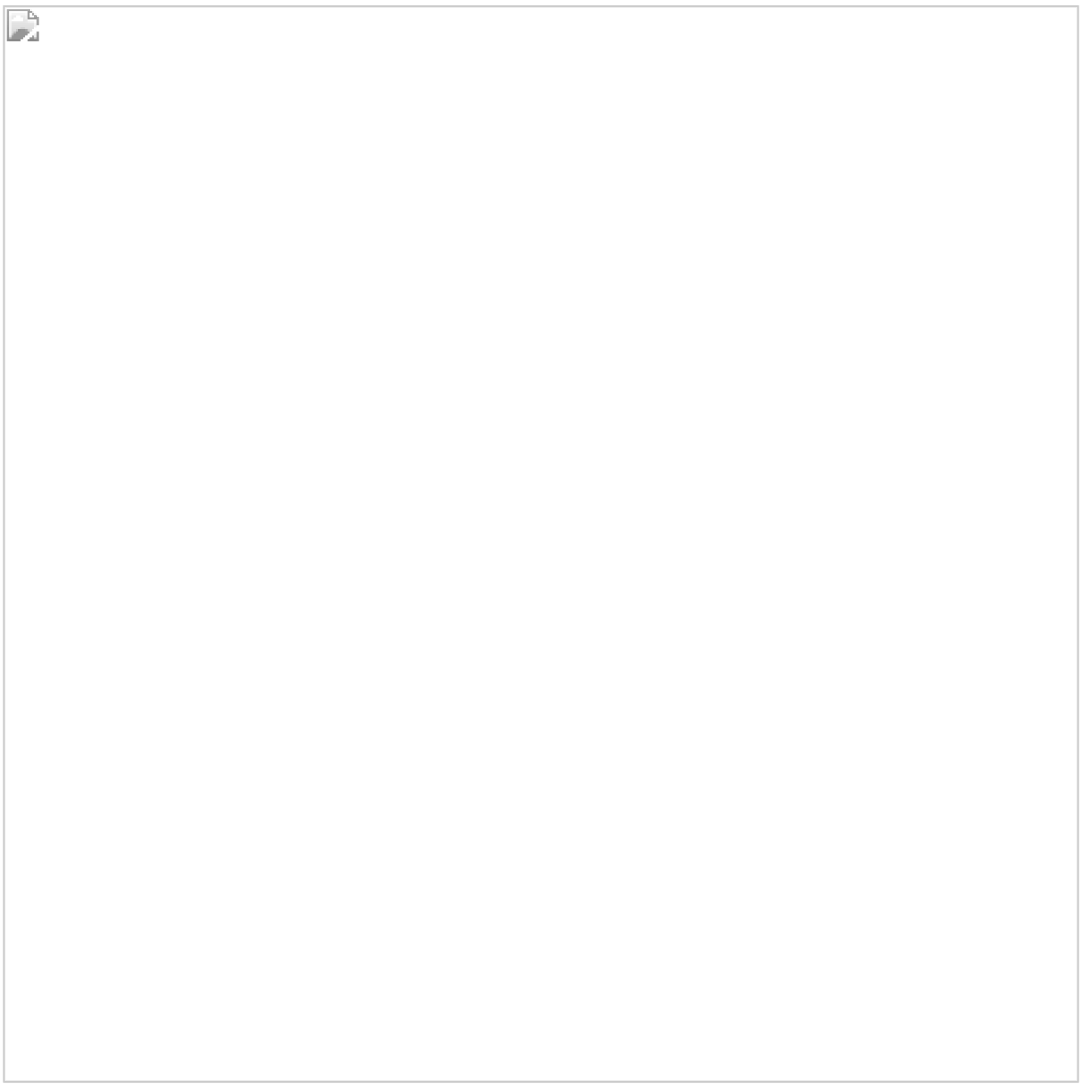
She begged him to stay a day or two more. With music, shows and hunting, two months slipped away before he said he could wait no longer.

He asked her to come with him to Persia. She said nothing, but her downcast eyes said yes.

Early next morning they flew from the palace roof, and in two hours and a half they saw the capital of Persia below.

TALK ABOUT IT

The prince missed his father and went home. Who do you miss when you are away?

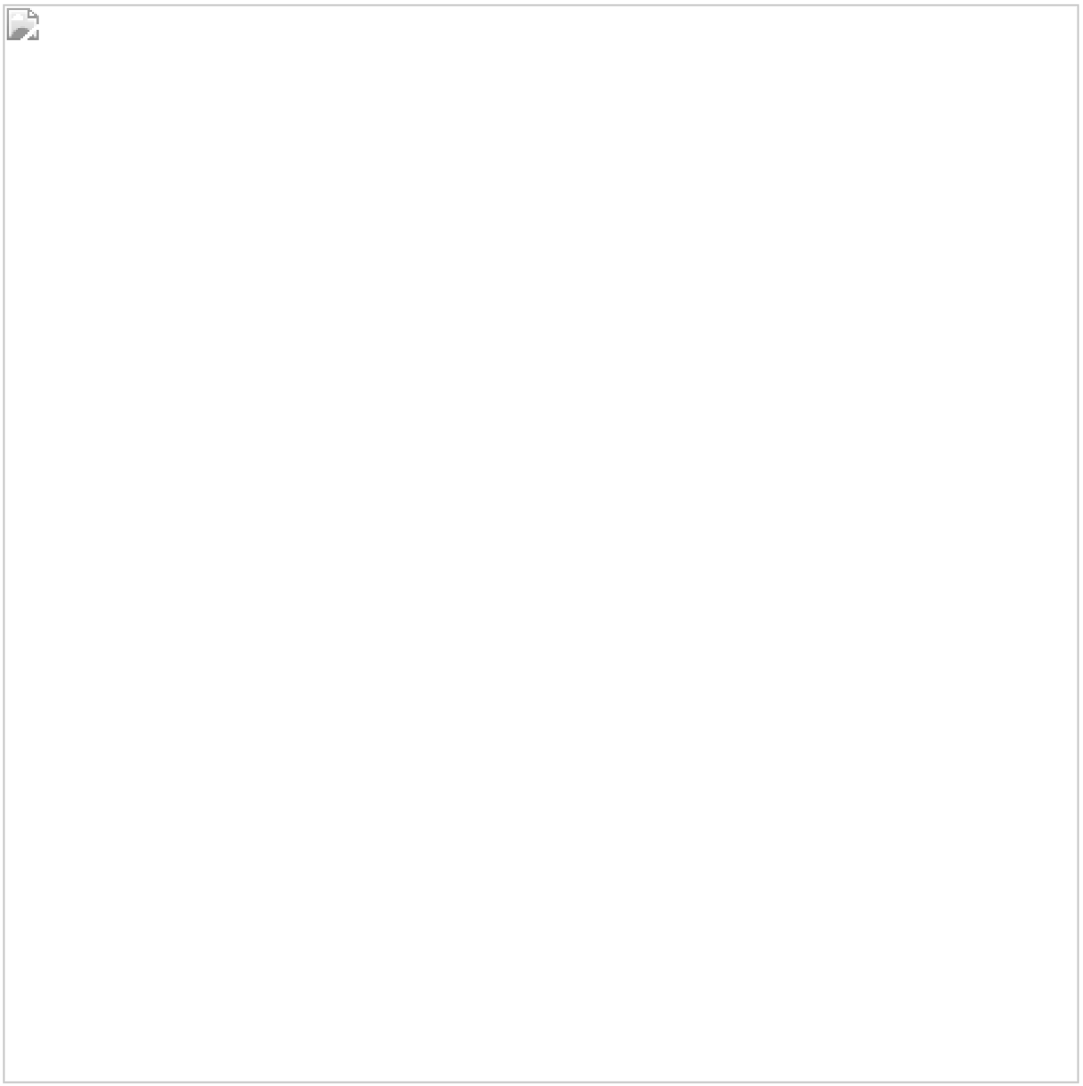


Think about it

1. How long did the prince stay with the princess before he said he must go?

- ○ Two months
- ○ Two days
- ○ Two years

The Prince Comes Home



The prince left the princess resting at a country house outside the town, and went to tell his father.

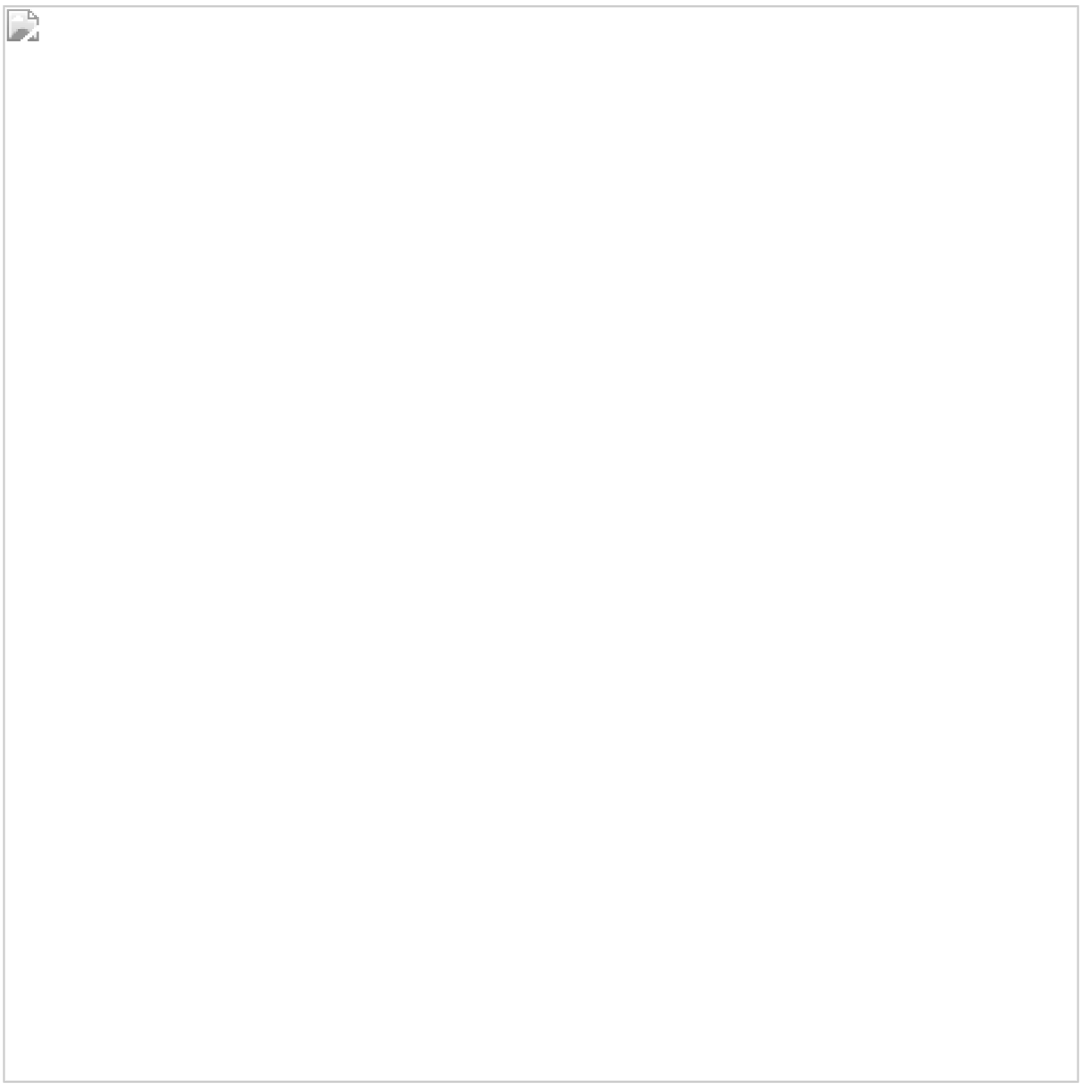
People shouted for joy in the streets, for they had given up hope. At the palace the Sultan, in deep mourning, nearly lost his mind with joy at his son's voice.

The prince asked his father's blessing. “My son, not only do I gladly consent to your marriage with the Princess of Bengal,” said the Sultan. The wedding would be that very day.

Music played, and the Indian was brought from prison. “So take your horse, and begone for ever,” said the Sultan.

TALK ABOUT IT

The whole city was glad when the prince came home. What makes you glad when someone comes back?

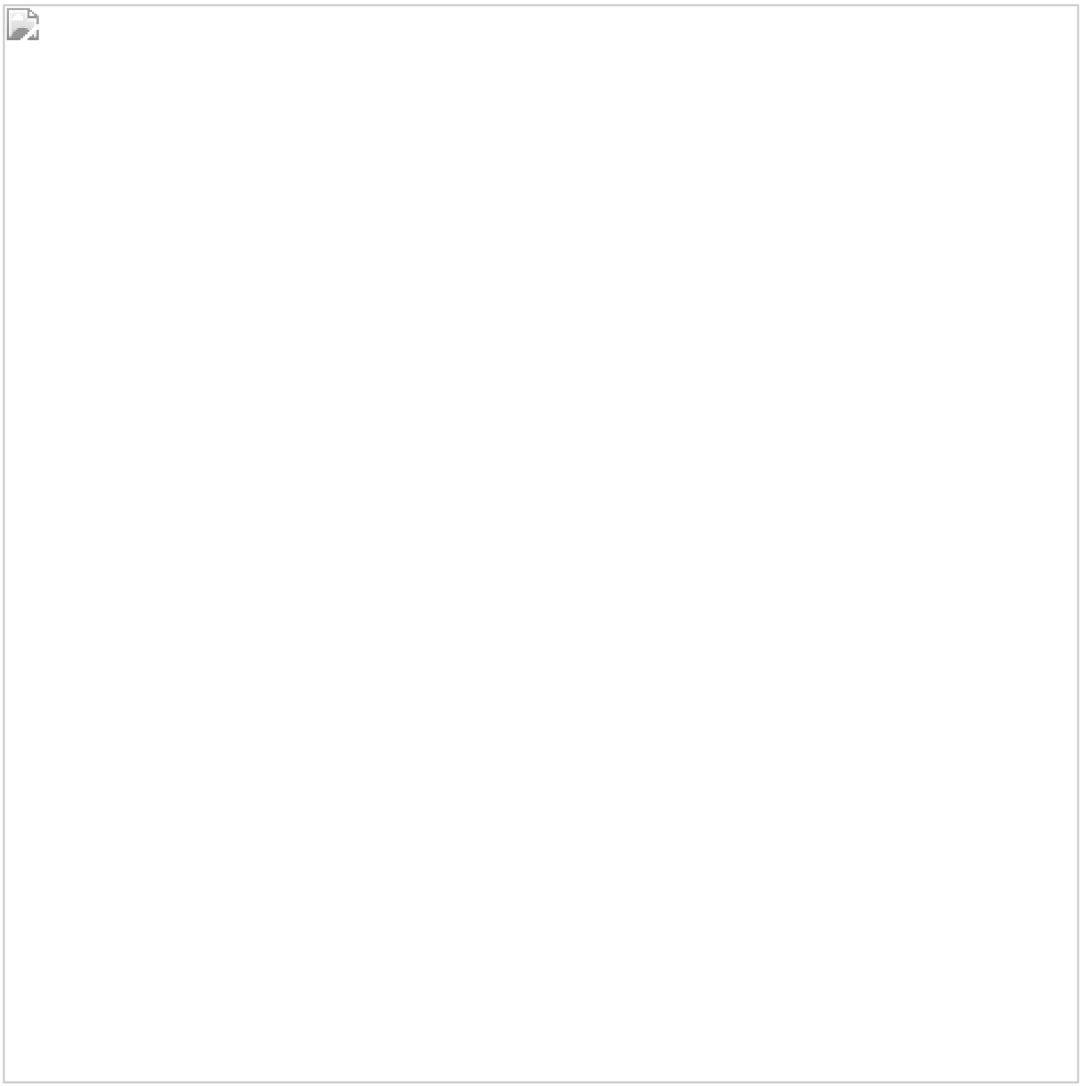


Think about it

1. What did the people do when they saw the prince?

- ○ They hid
- ○ They shouted for joy
- ○ They gave him a gift

The Indian Takes His Revenge



Outside the palace, the Indian learned that the Princess of Bengal was waiting at the country house. He decided to take his revenge.

He told the doorkeeper that the Sultan and the prince had sent him to bring the princess on the horse. Seeing him free, the doorkeeper believed him, and the princess, hearing he came from the prince, went gladly.

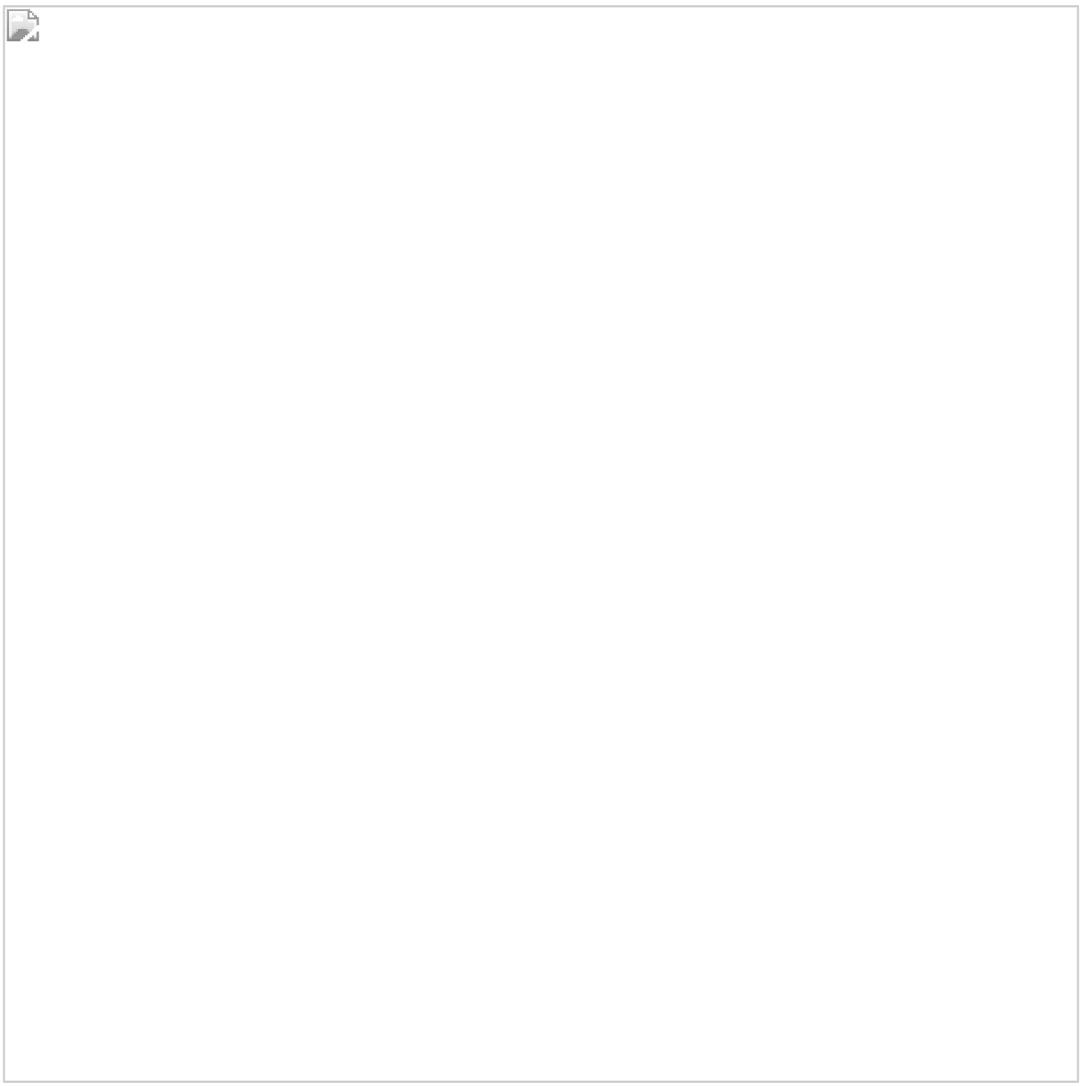
The Indian lifted her up behind him, turned the peg, and flew right over the city, just as the prince and the Sultan were setting out for the country house.

The prince was speechless with grief to see her carried away. But he would not give up.

TALK ABOUT IT

The doorkeeper believed the Indian because he looked free. How can we find out if someone is telling the truth?

The Indian Takes His Revenge · another picture

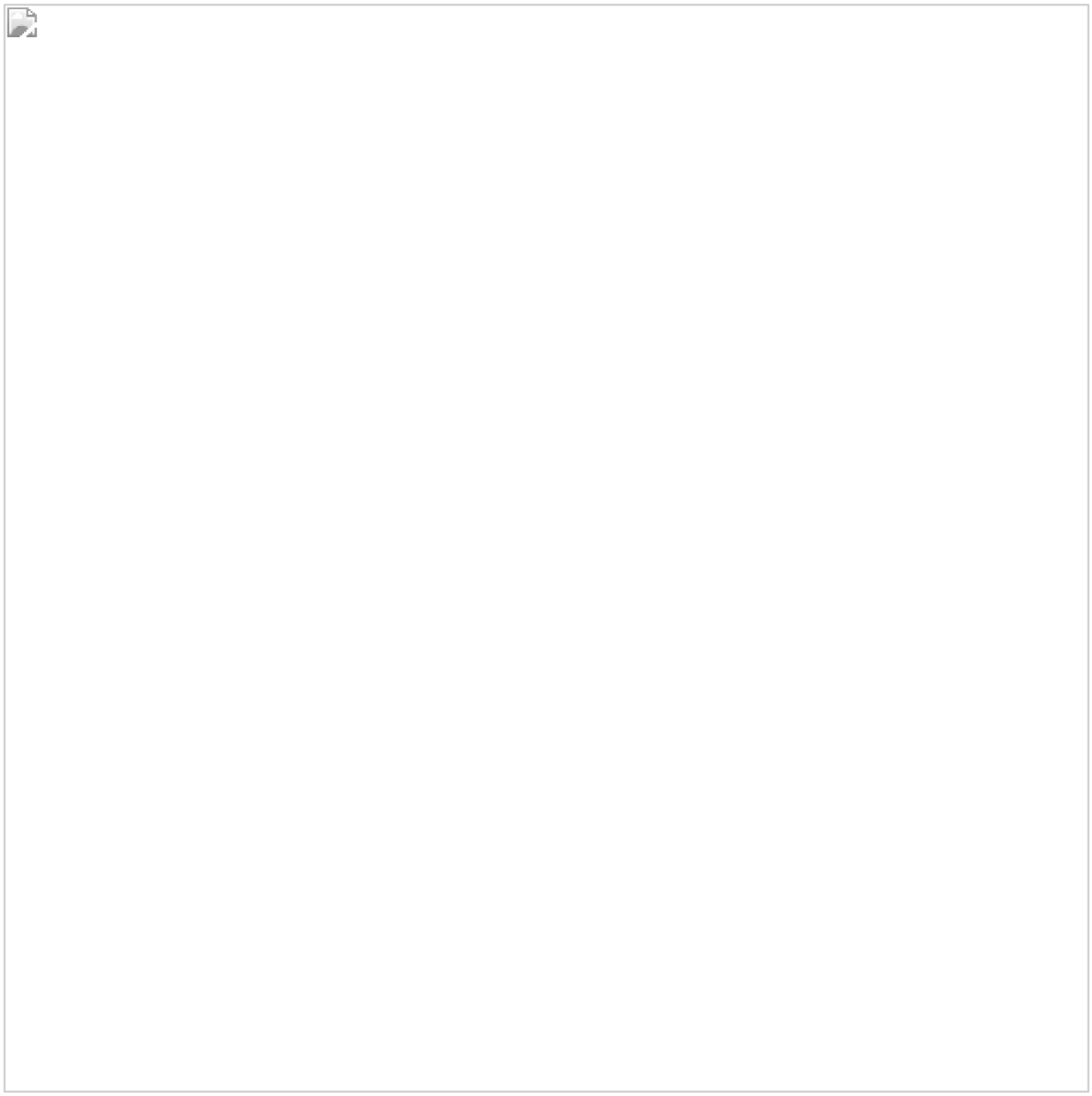


Think about it

1. What did the Indian tell the doorkeeper?

- ○ That he was lost
- ○ That the Sultan and prince had sent him for the princess
- ○ That the horse was broken

The Prince in a Dervish's Robe



The doorkeeper fell at the prince's feet and begged forgiveness. “Rise,” said the prince, “I am the cause of this misfortune, and not you.”

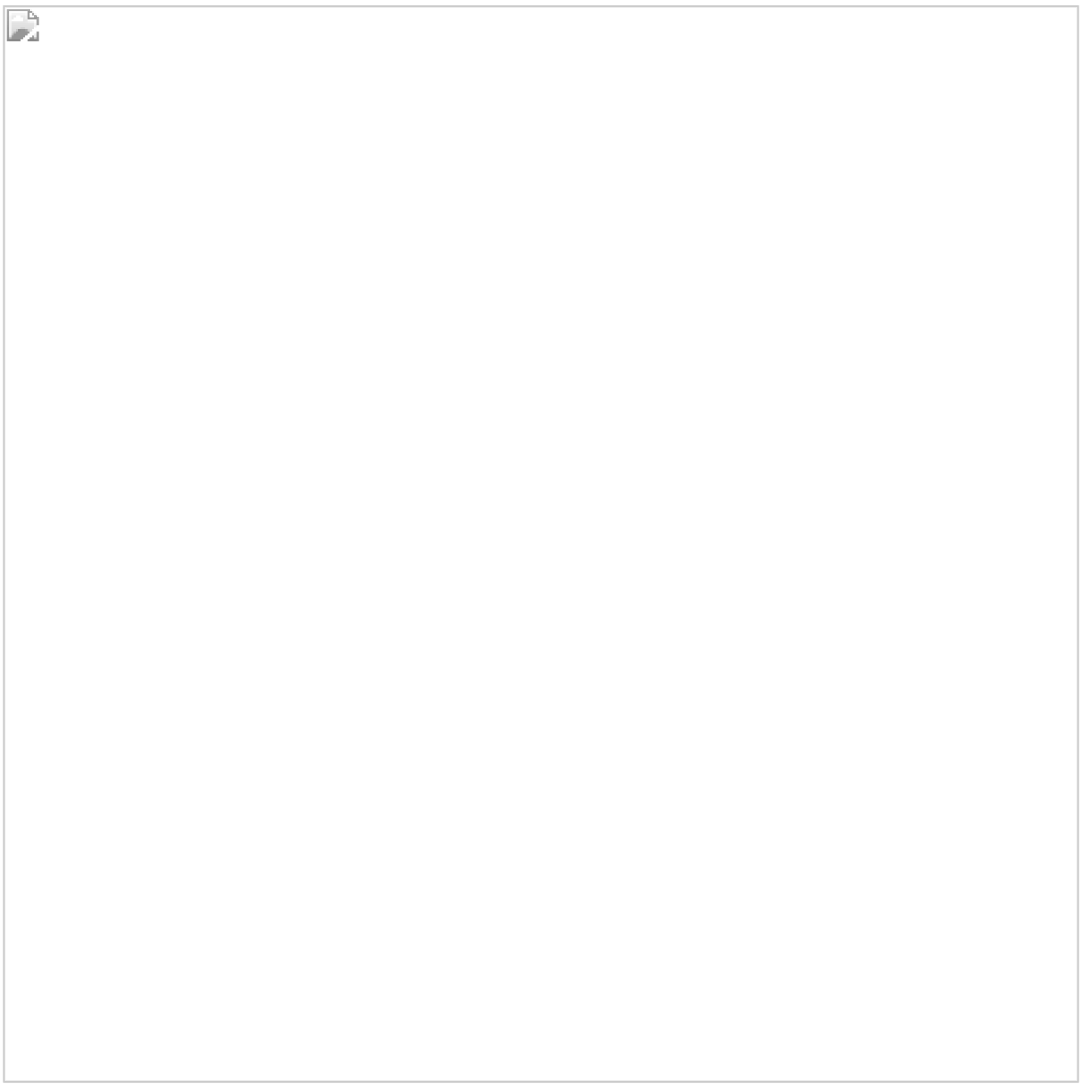
He asked for the dress of a dervish, a holy wanderer, and told him not to say it was for the prince. A convent of dervishes was close by, and the doorkeeper had a friend there.

The prince put on the dress and hid a box of pearls and diamonds, meant for the princess, under it. At nightfall he left the house. He did not know where to go, but he would not return without her.

TALK ABOUT IT

The prince blamed himself and not the doorkeeper. Why might that matter?

The Prince in a Dervish's Robe · another picture

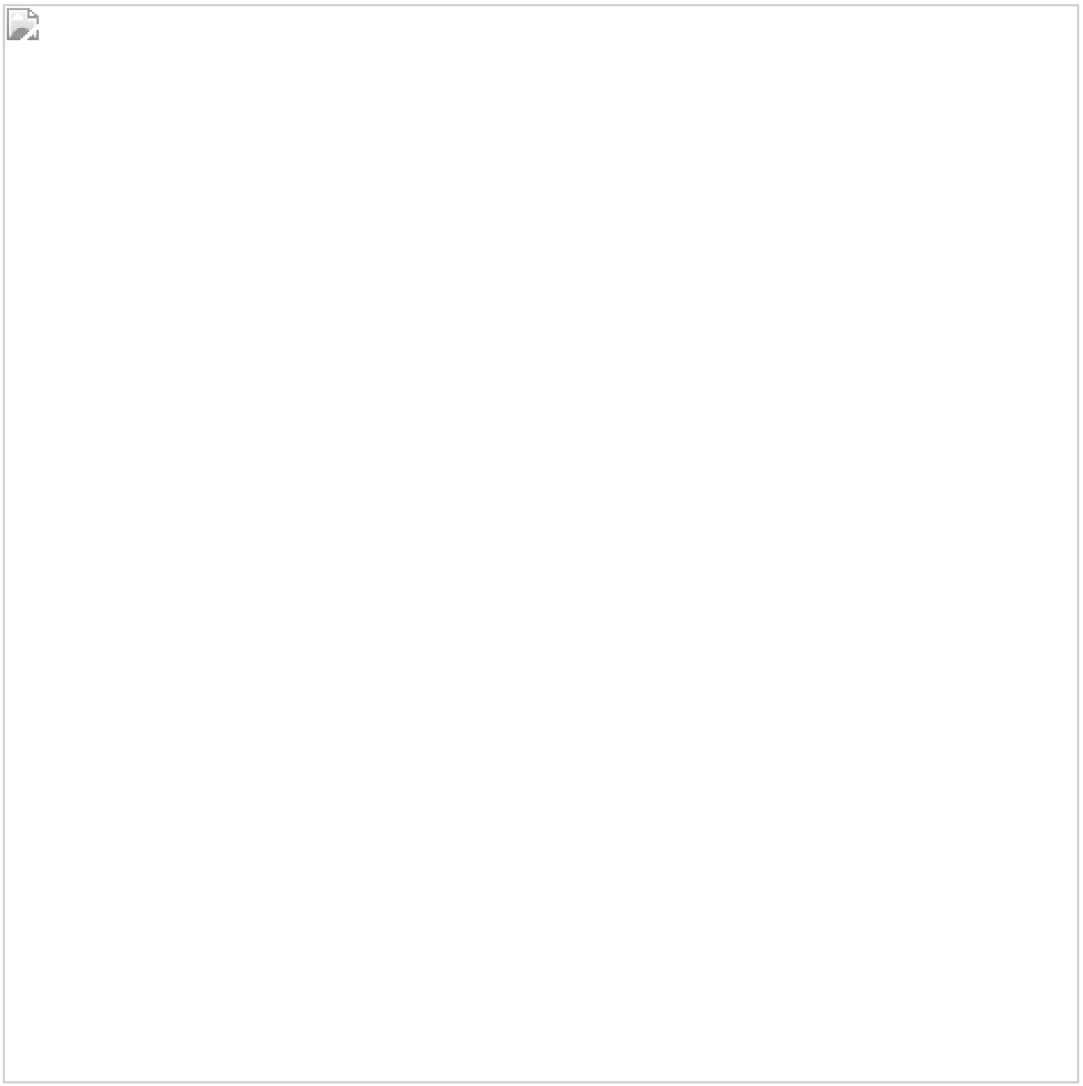


Think about it

1. What did the prince wear to hide who he was?

- ○ A dervish's dress
- ○ A king's crown
- ○ A soldier's armor

The Sultan of Cashmere



The Indian landed in a wood near Cashmere and left the princess by a stream while he went for food. Then she called loudly for help, and some horsemen rode up.

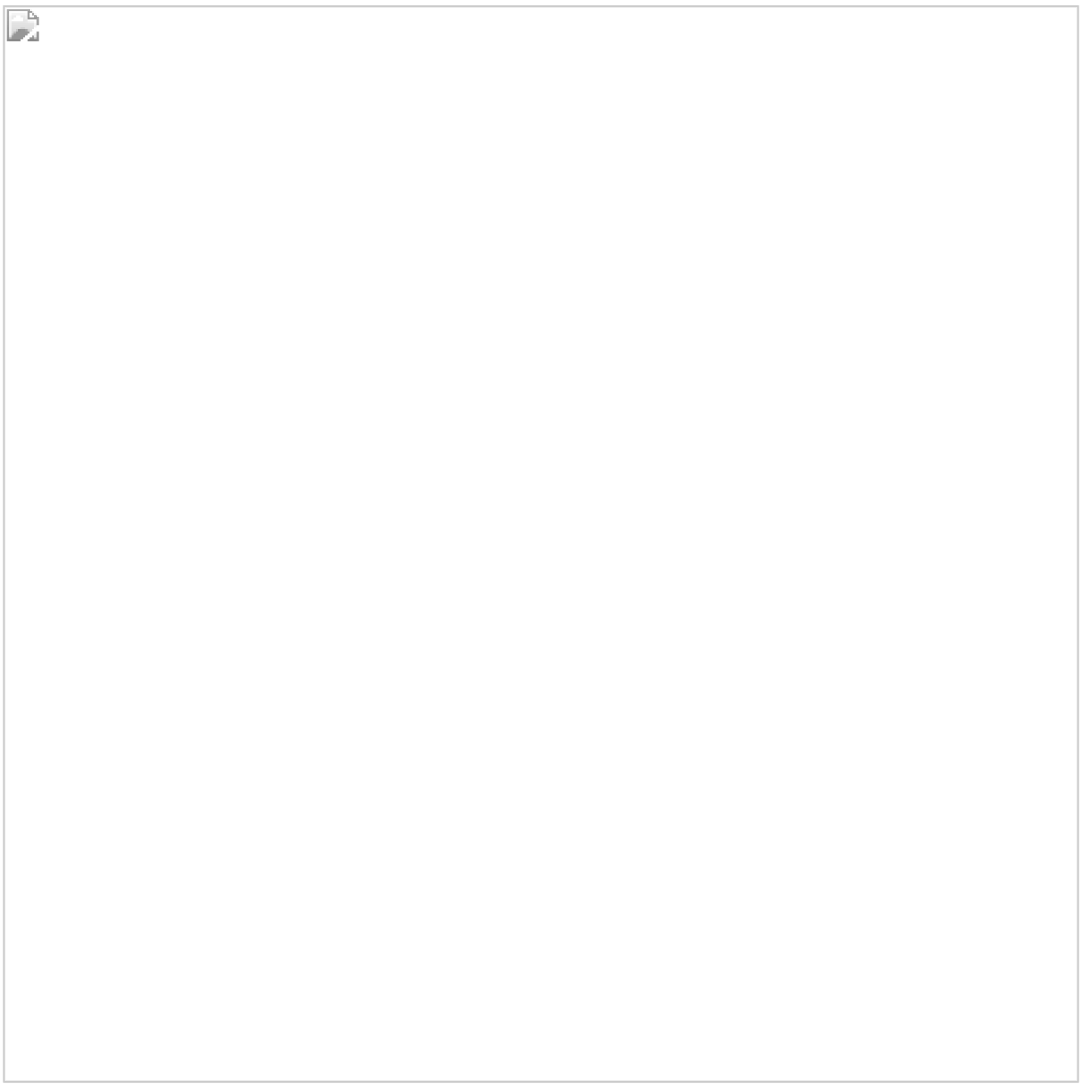
Their leader was the Sultan of Cashmere, back from hunting. The Indian said she was his wife. The princess cried, “put no faith in this impostor,” and told how she had been taken from the Prince of Persia.

The Sultan's men seized the Indian, and that was the end of him.

But the Sultan took the princess to his palace, meaning to marry her himself. At daybreak, drums and trumpets announced the wedding. The princess fainted.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Sultan saved the princess, then did not ask what she wanted. How would you want to be treated?

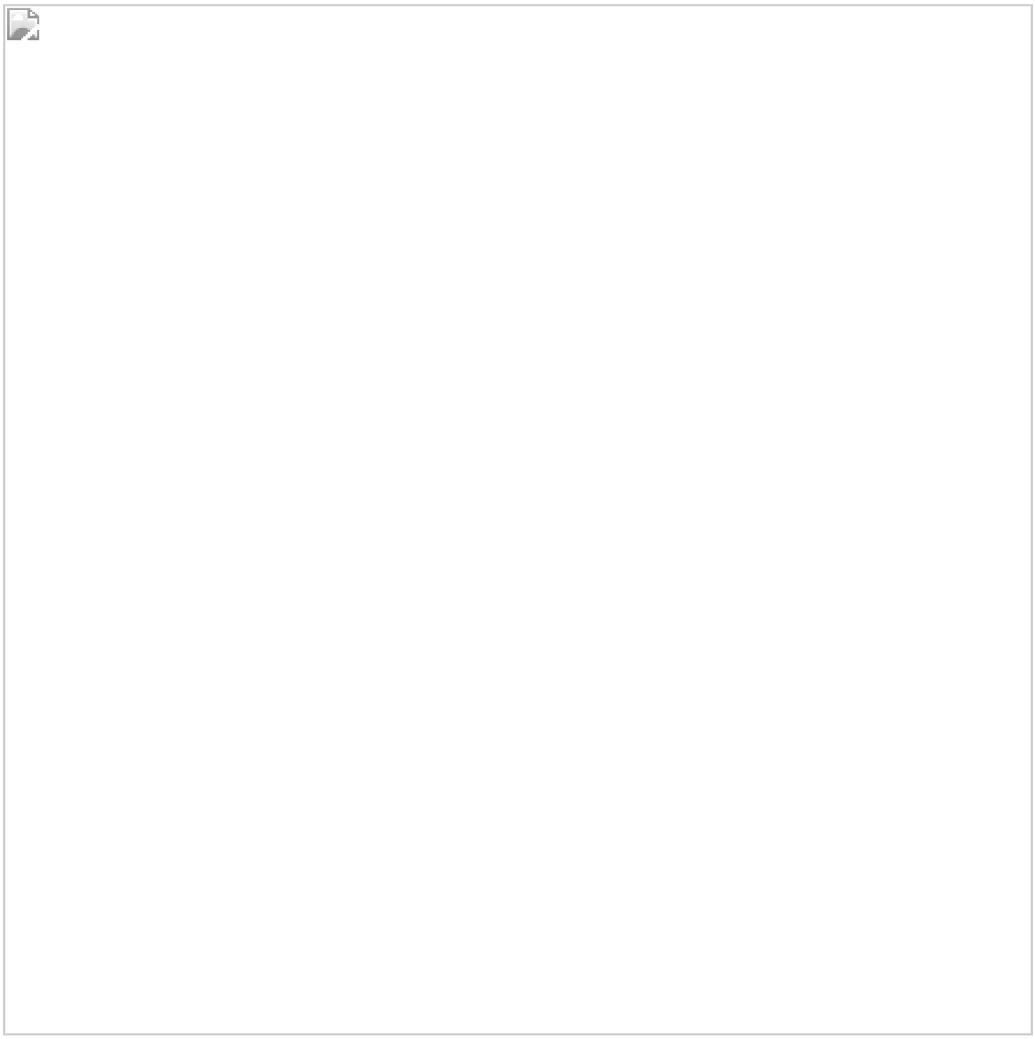


Think about it

1. Who found the princess in the wood?

- ○ The King of Bengal
- ○ The Sultan of Cashmere
- ○ The Prince of Persia

A Princess Who Played Mad



When she woke, the princess would not break faith with the Prince of Persia. She pretended to be out of her mind.

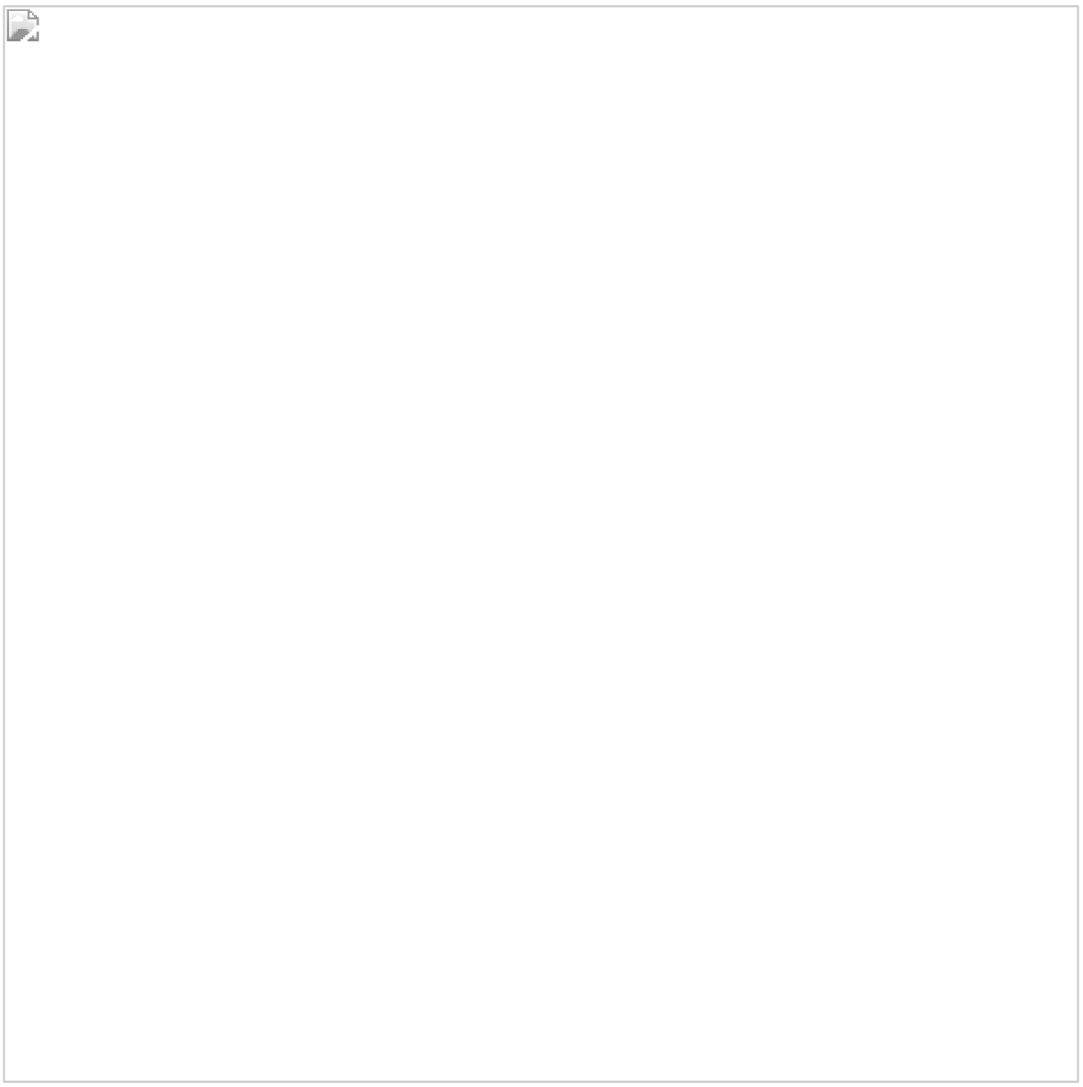
Doctors came from the court, the city and other towns, but none could help. "The cure depended neither on them nor their skill," the story says, "but only on the princess herself."

Meanwhile the wandering prince heard, in a city of India, of the Princess of Bengal, who had lost her senses on her wedding day to the Sultan of Cashmere. He set off at once.

Dressed as a doctor, with the long beard he had grown on his travels, he told the Sultan he could cure her.

TALK ABOUT IT

The princess pretended so she would not have to marry someone she did not choose. What do you think about her plan?

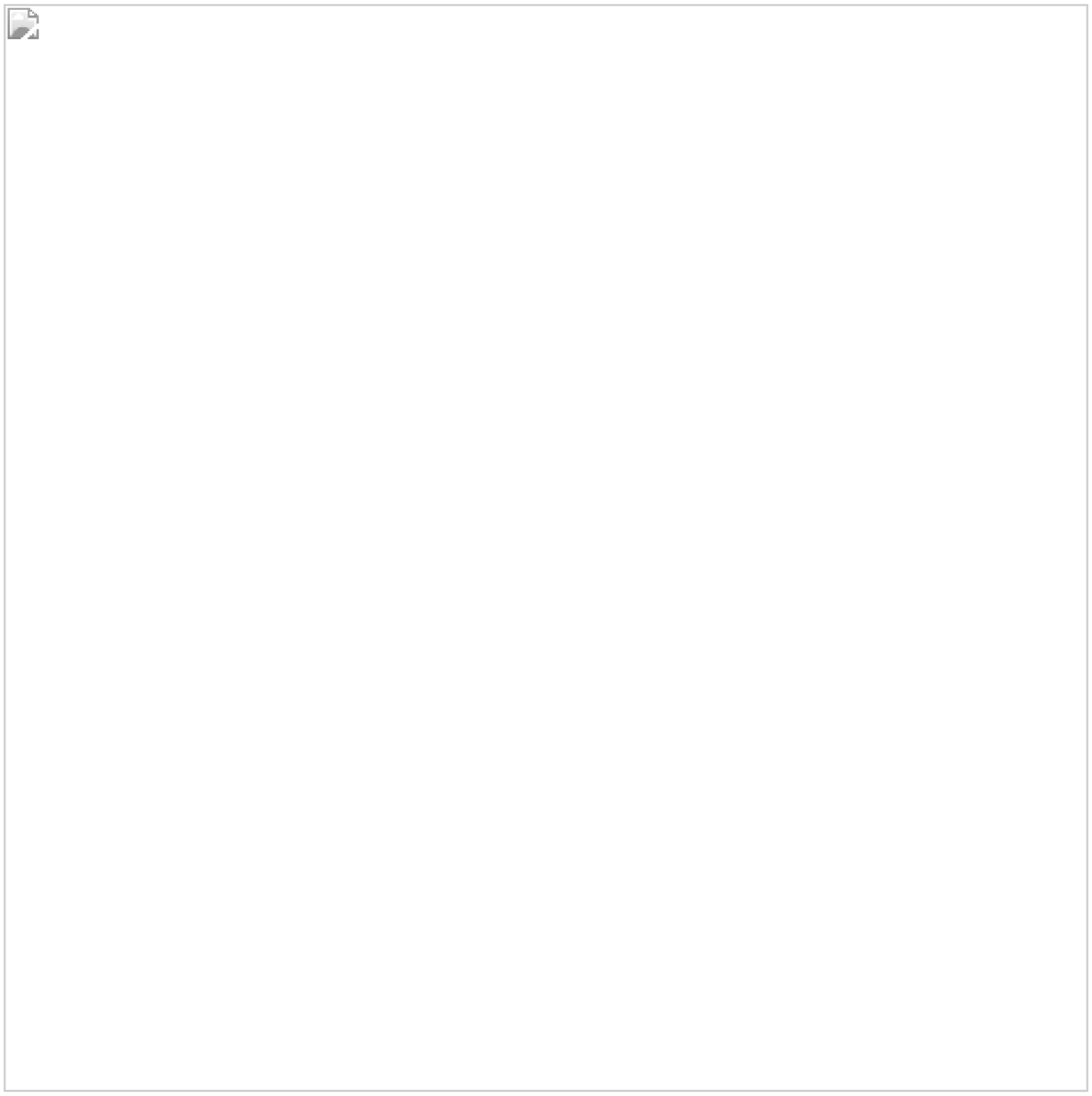


Think about it

1. Why did the doctors fail to cure the princess?

- ○ They were too young
- ○ She was only pretending to be mad
- ○ They had no medicine

A Whisper in the Palace



Through an opening, the doctor watched the princess. She lay on a sofa, softly singing a sad song with tears in her eyes, and he knew her madness was feigned.

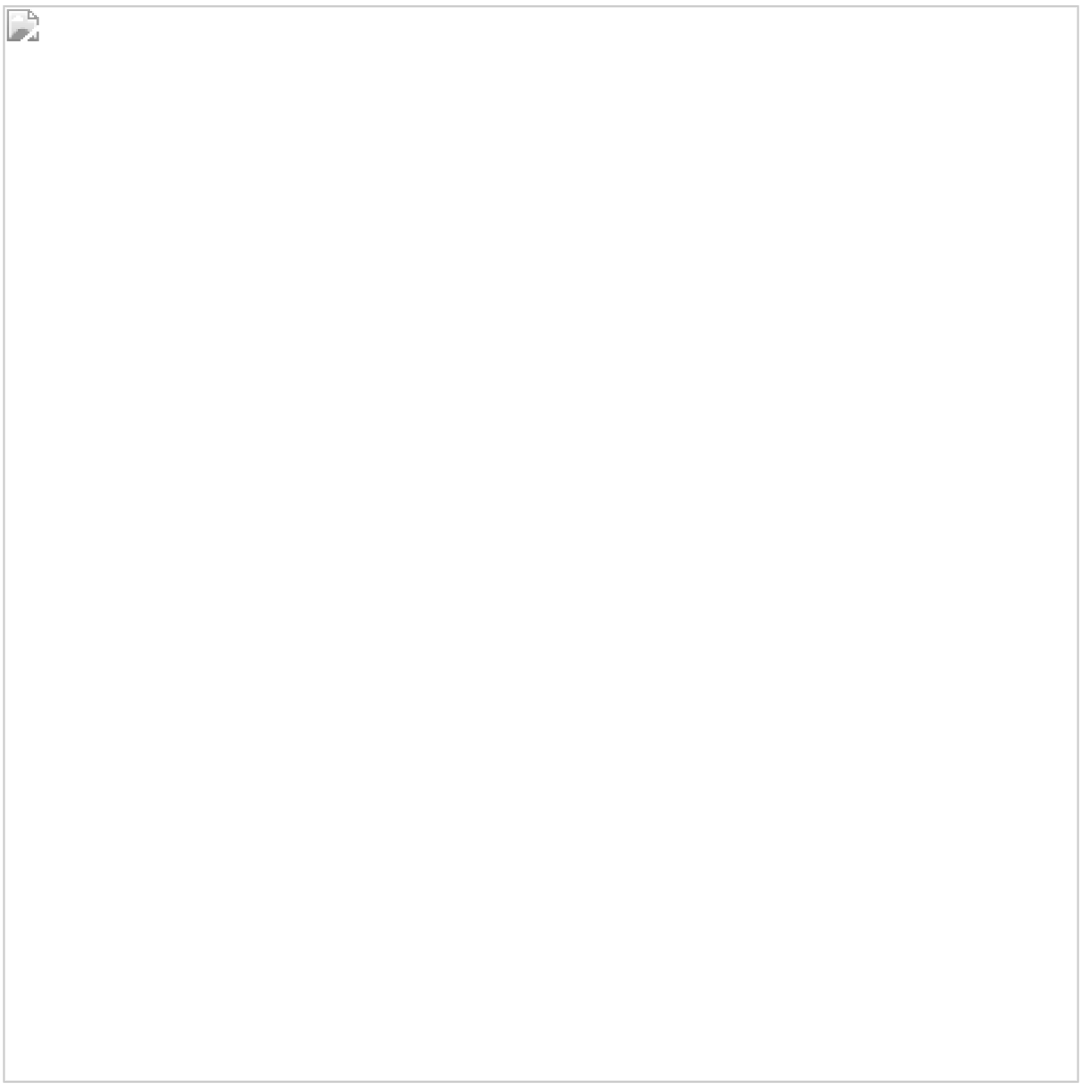
When he went in, she shouted at him. He came close and whispered so only she could hear: “Look at me, princess, and you will see that I am no doctor, but the Prince of Persia, who has come to set you free.”

She grew calm at his voice. They told each other all that had happened, and made a plan.

Next morning she dressed with care and was polite to the Sultan, who thought the doctor a wonder.

TALK ABOUT IT

She knew his voice right away. Whose voice can you always recognize?



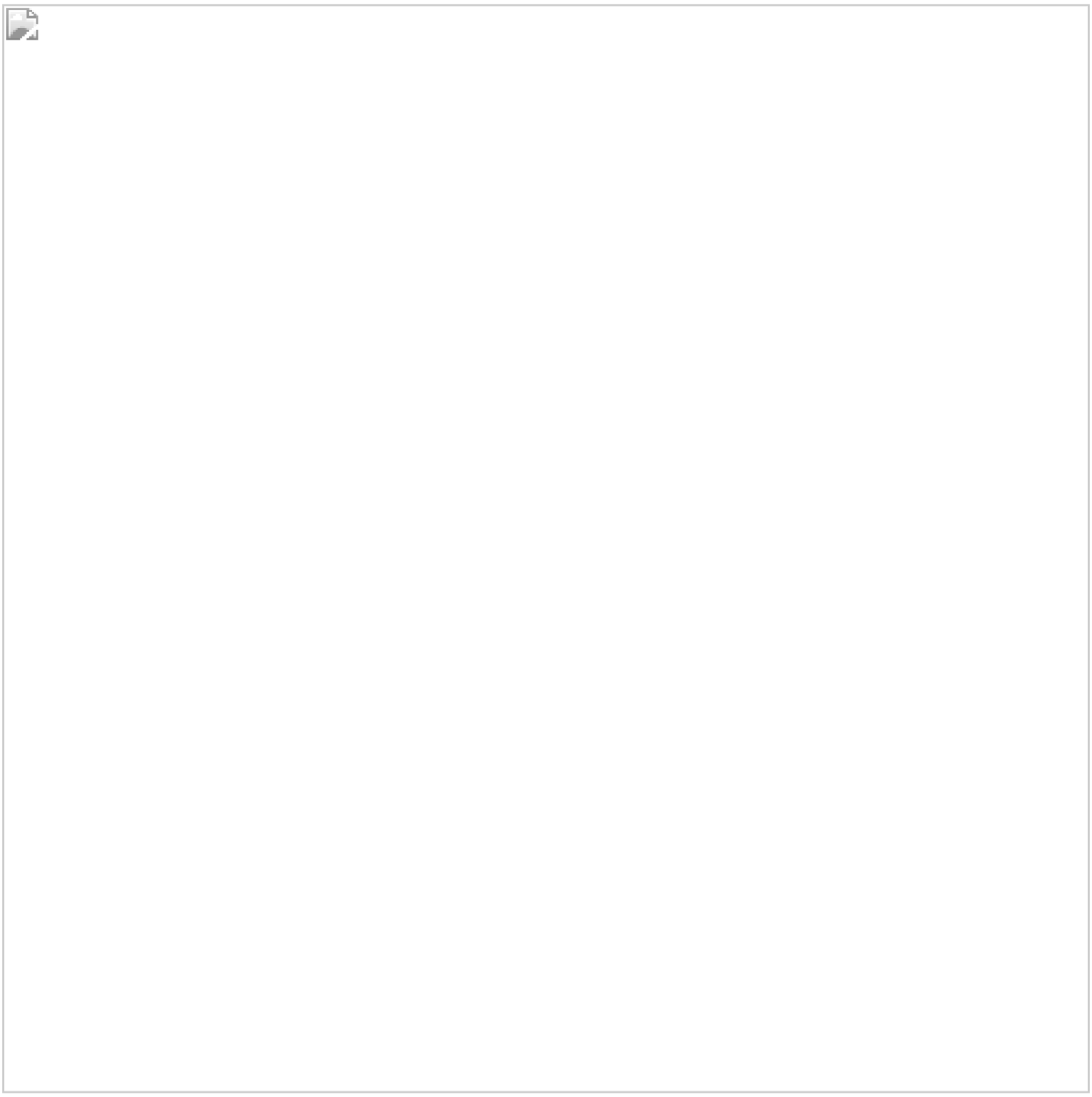
Think about it

1. What did the prince whisper to the princess?

- ○ That she must run
- ○ That he was no doctor but the Prince of Persia
- ○ That the Sultan was kind

2. Why did he whisper instead of speaking out loud?

Back on the Horse



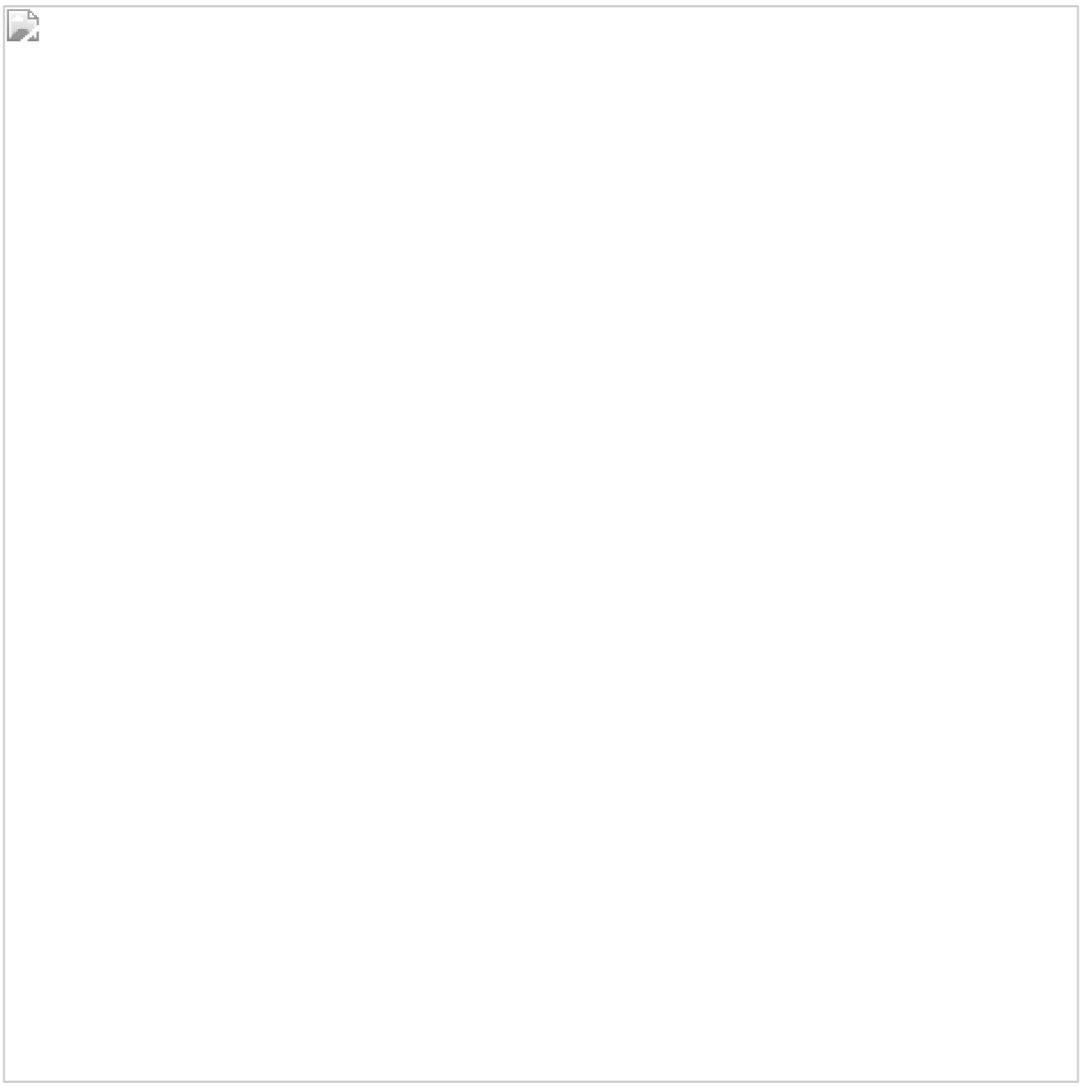
The doctor learned that the enchanted horse was in the Sultan's treasury. Some of its enchantment had passed to the princess, he said, and only his perfumes could cure it. The horse must be brought to the great square.

Before a great crowd, with the princess on the horse, the doctor threw perfumes on burning coals, and thick smoke hid them. He sprang up behind her, turned the peg, and cried as they rose, “Sultan of Cashmere, when you wish to marry princesses who have sought your protection, learn first to gain their consent.”

They landed in Persia and were married, with the King of Bengal's hearty consent.

TALK ABOUT IT

The prince said the Sultan should have asked for her consent. What does it mean to ask someone first?



Think about it

1. What did the prince say as he flew away?

- ○ Goodbye, and thank you
- ○ Learn first to gain their consent
- ○ I will return

2. Which part of the story did you like best, and why?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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