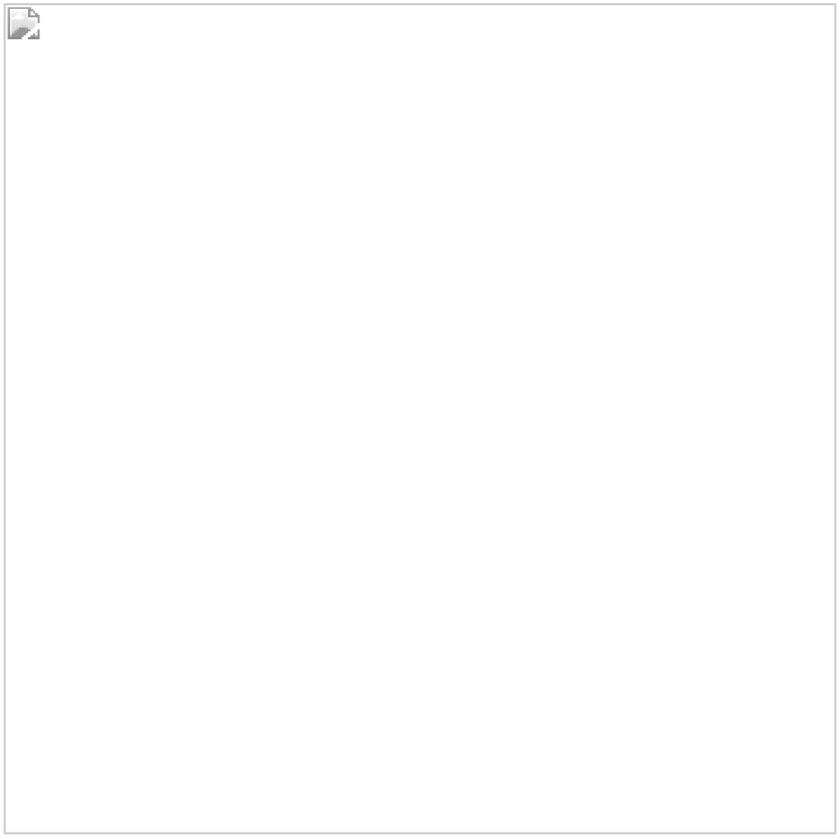
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship

A Tale from Russia



There were once an old peasant and his wife, and they had three sons. Two of them were clever young men, but the third was the Fool of the World. He was as simple as a child, and he never did any one a harm in his life.

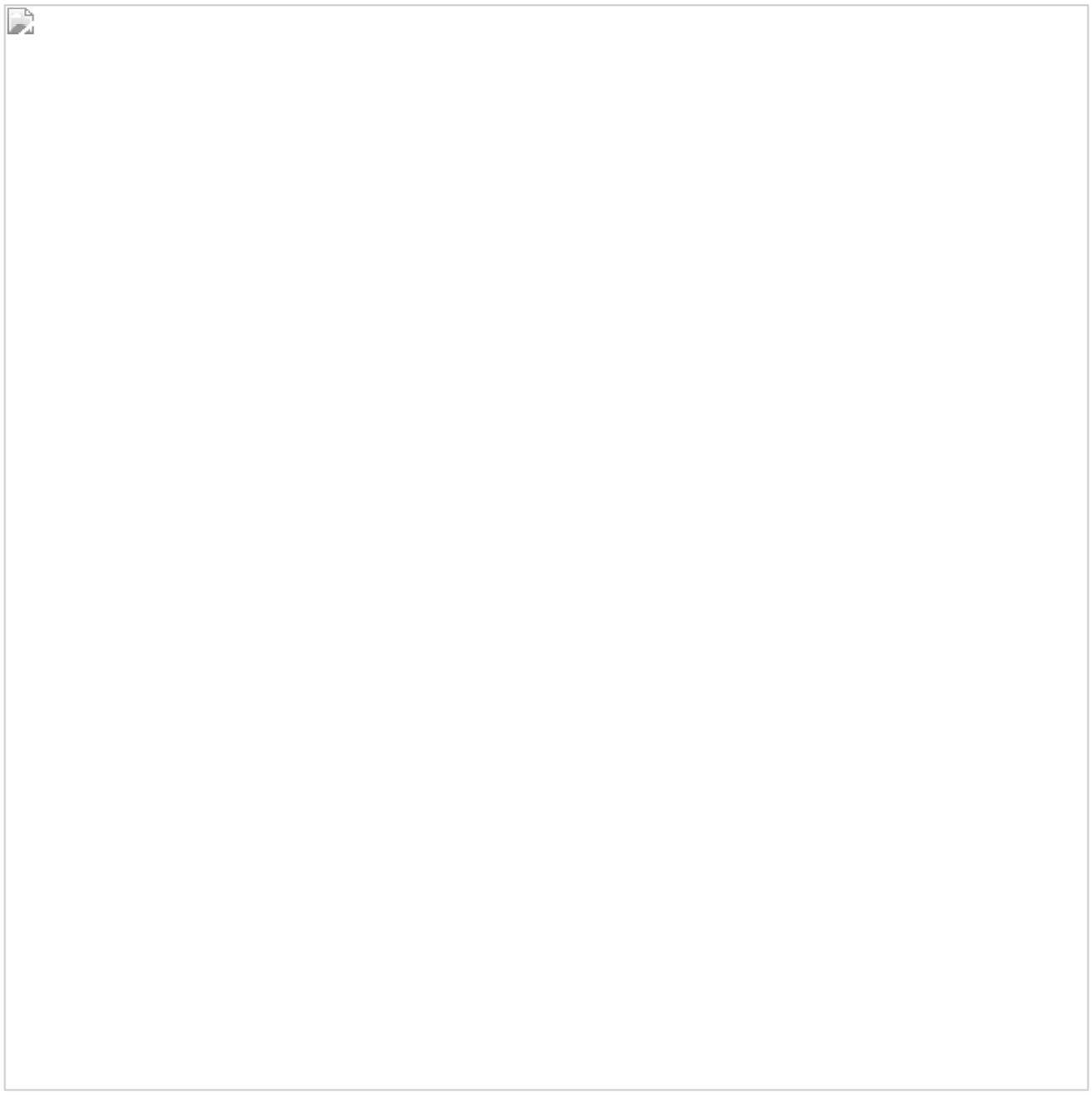
His father and mother thought a lot of the two smart young men. But the Fool of the World was lucky if he got enough to eat, because they always forgot him.

TALK ABOUT IT

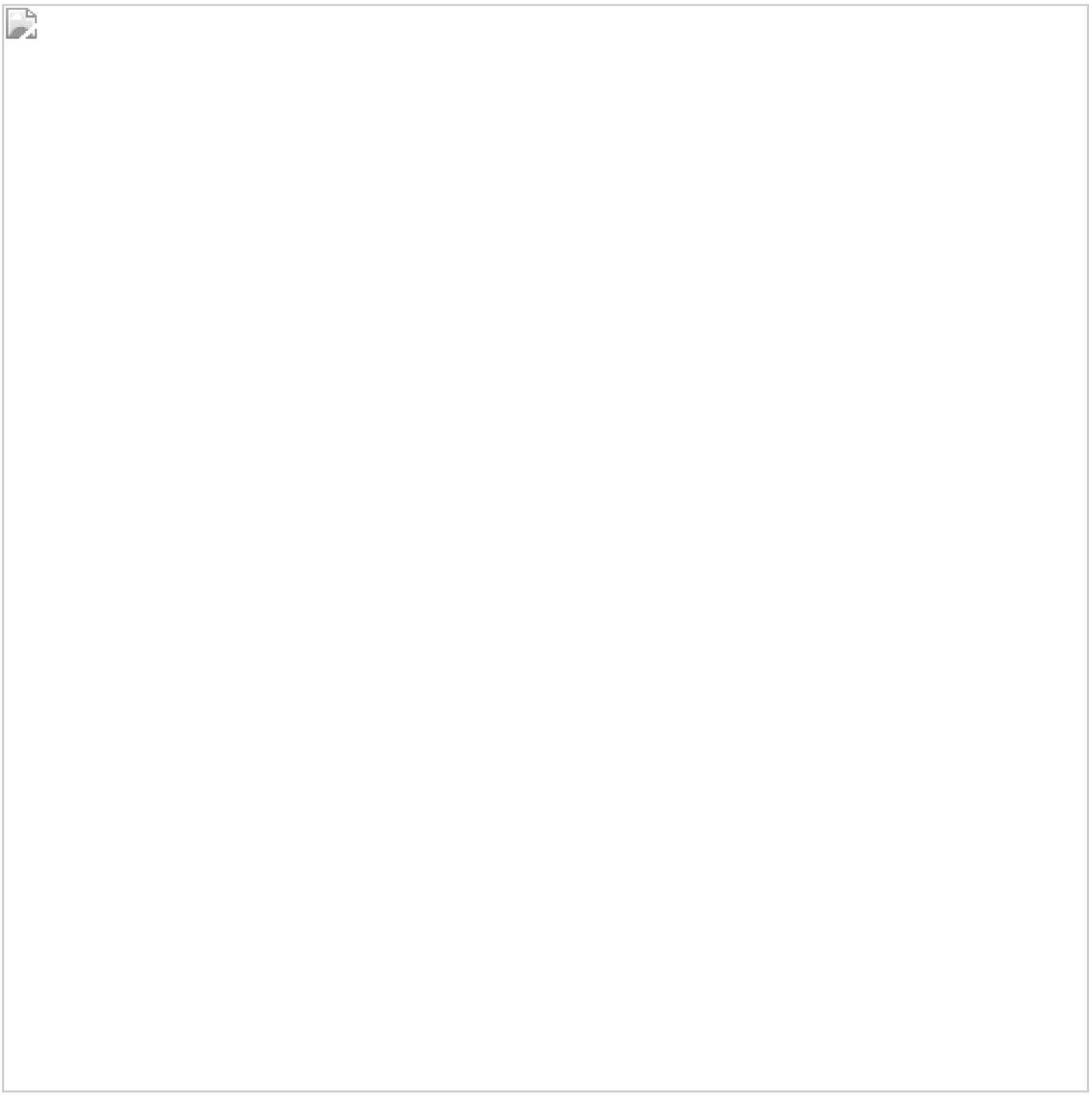
Nobody paid much attention to the Fool. Have you ever felt forgotten? What helped?

This book belongs to _____

The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship · another picture



The Tzar's Flying Ship



One day the Tzar of that country sent out messengers to say that he would give his daughter, the Princess, in marriage to any one who could bring him a flying ship, “a ship with wings, that should sail this way and that through the blue sky.”

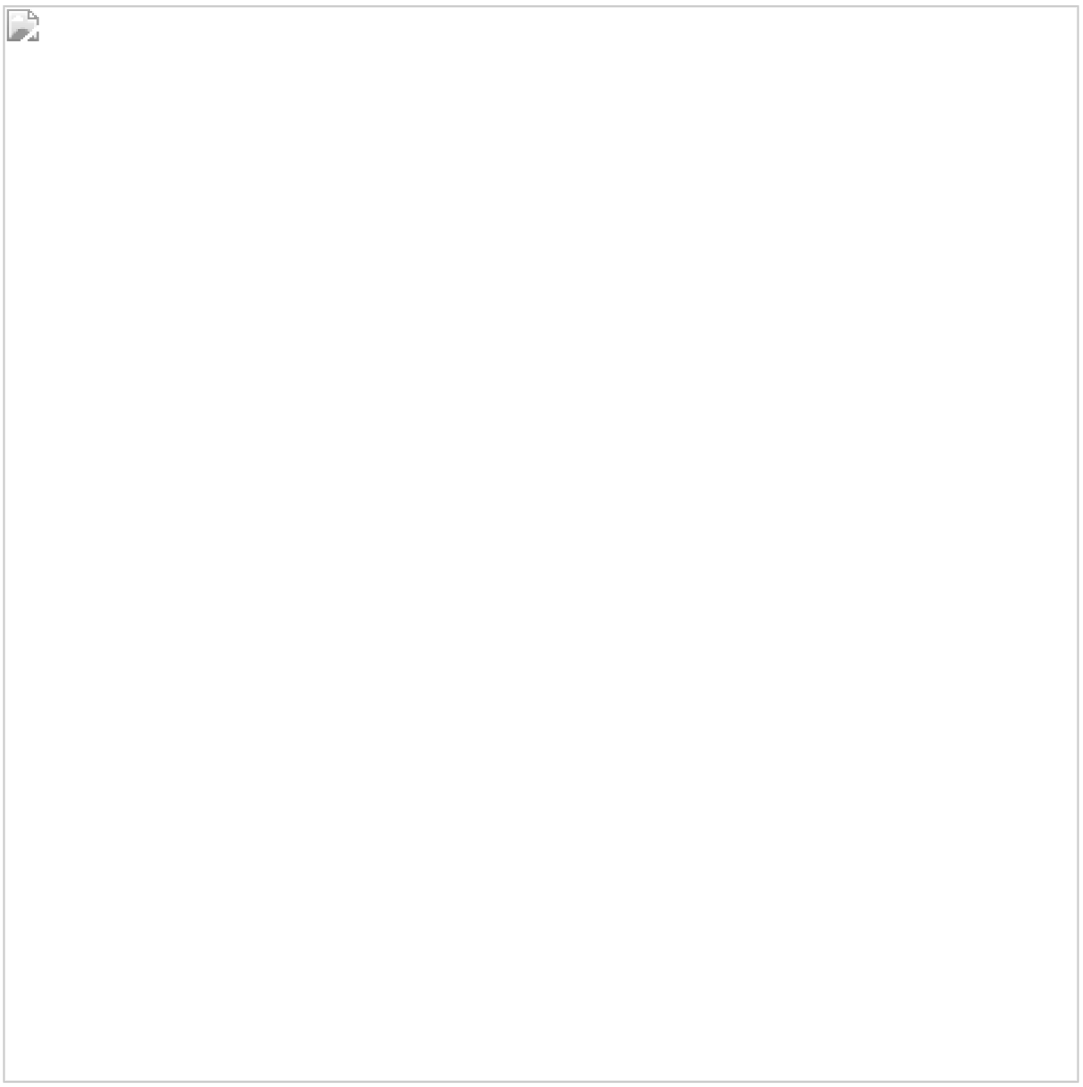
“This is a chance for us,” said the two clever brothers, and that same day they set off. Their father blessed them and gave them finer clothes than ever he wore himself. Their mother made them up hampers of food for the road.

And what happened to them, the storyteller does not know, “for they were never heard of again.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Tzar wanted a ship that could fly. What would you build if you could build anything?

The Tzar's Flying Ship · another picture

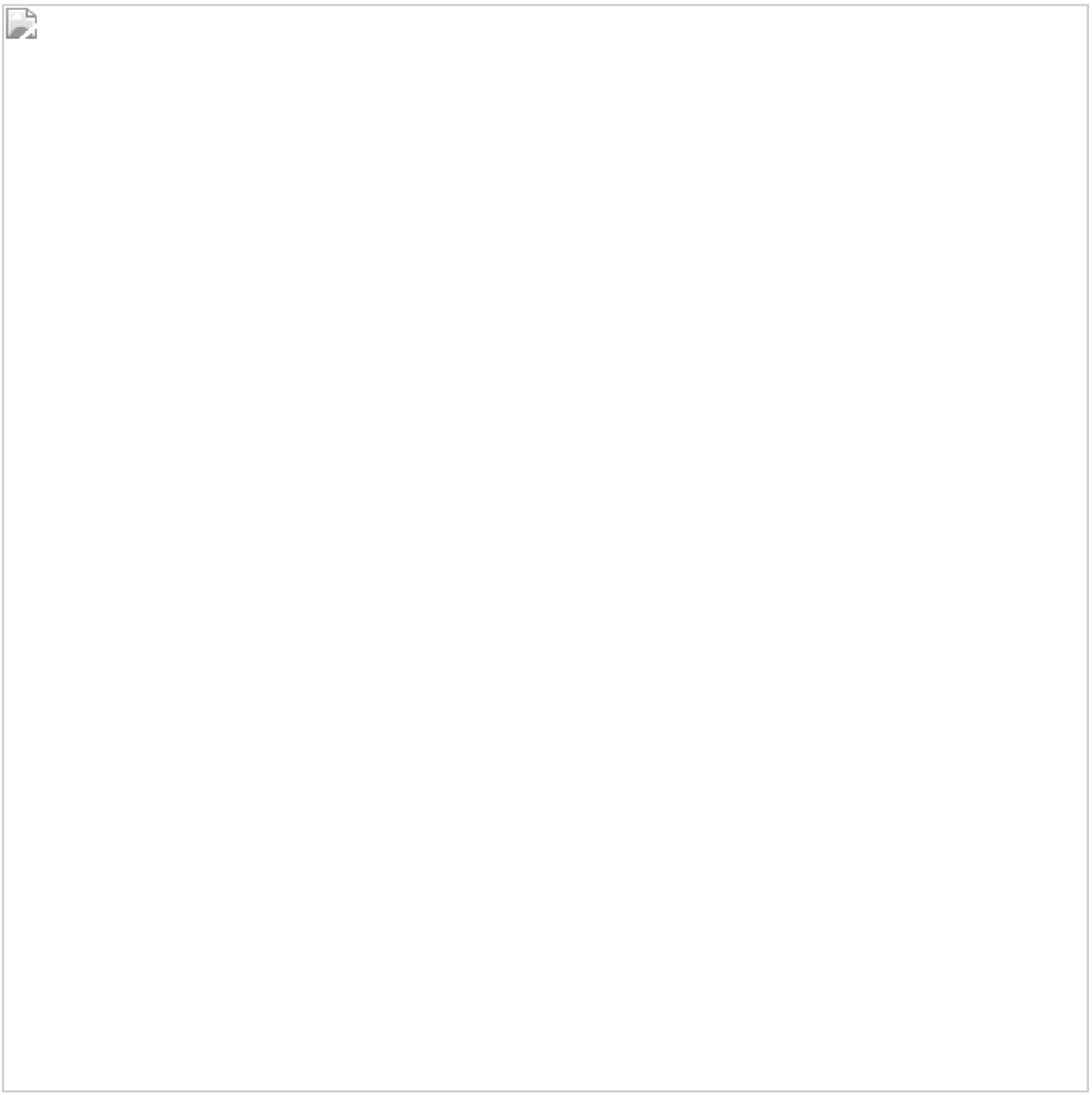


Think about it

1. What did the Tzar want?

- ○ A flying ship
- ○ A golden horse
- ○ A wooden bridge

I Am Going



The Fool of the World saw them go. “I'd like to go too,” says he.

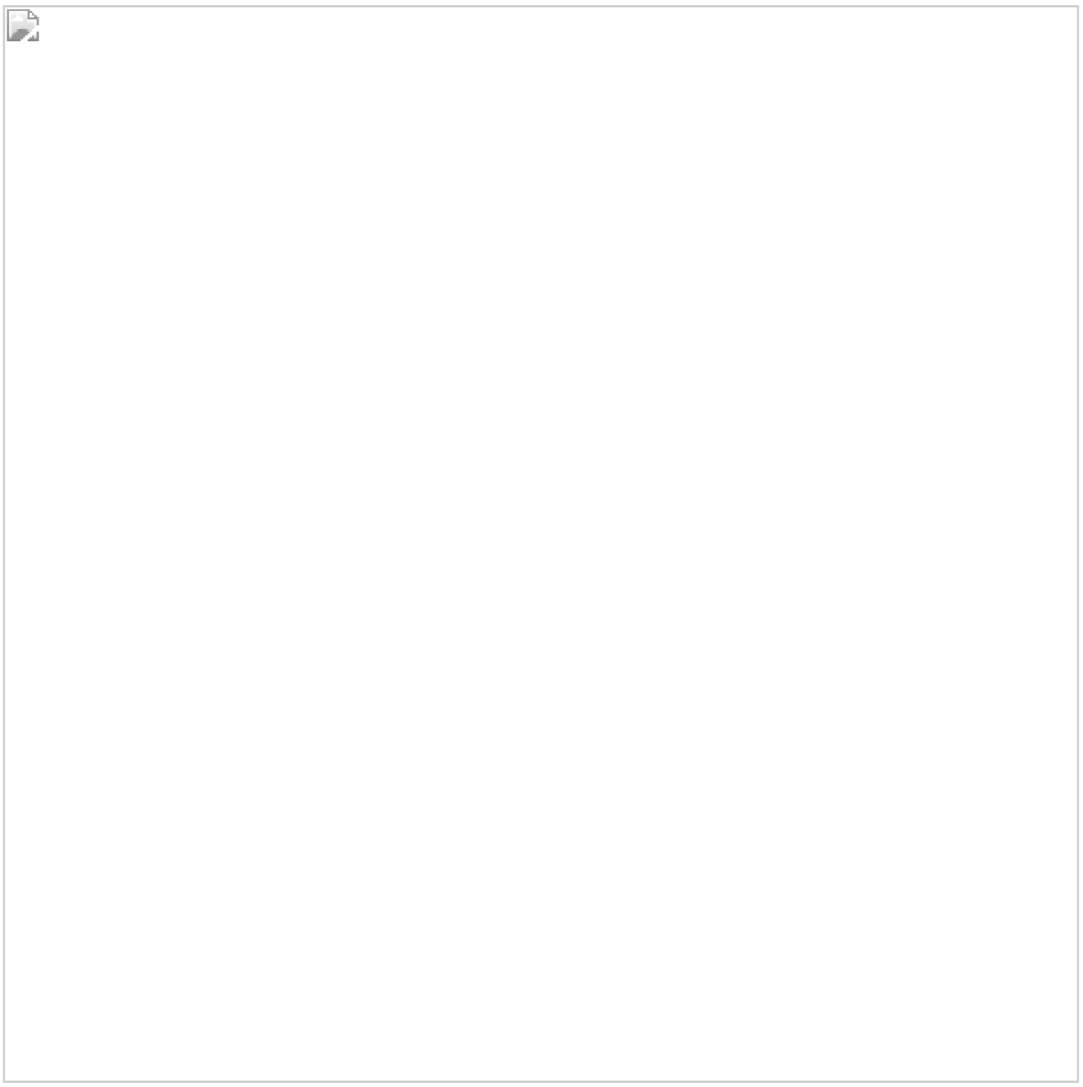
“Stupid fellow,” says his mother, “what's the good of your going? Why, if you were to stir from the house you would walk into the arms of a bear.”

But the Fool would not be held back. “I am going,” says he. “I am going. I am going. I am going.” At last his mother put some crusts of dry black bread and a flask of water in a bag for him.

Off he went, singing, because the trees were green and there was a blue sky overhead.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Fool was not stopped by what people said. Has anyone ever told you that you could not do something?

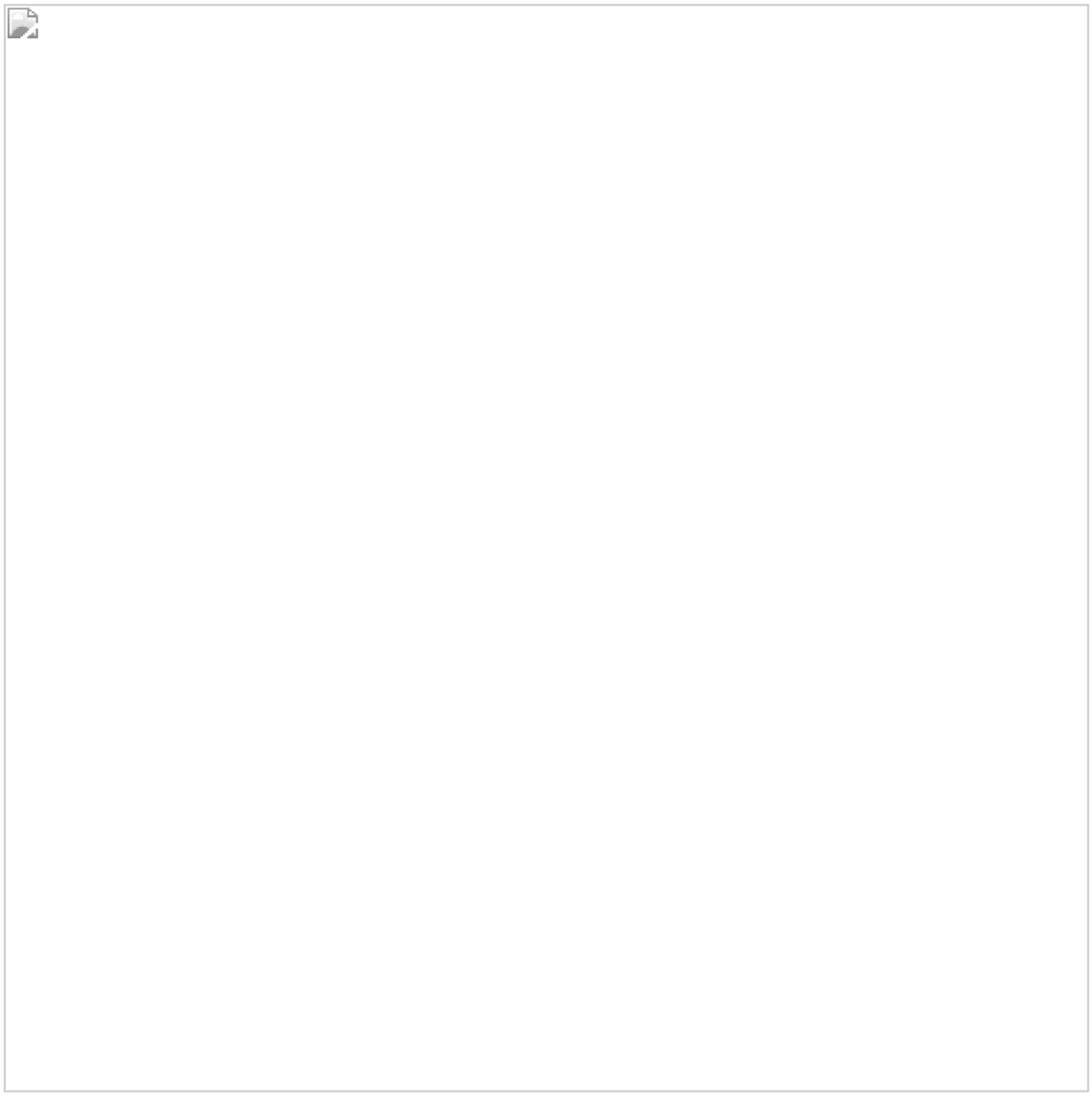


Think about it

1. What did the Fool's mother put in his bag?

- ○ Soft white rolls
- ○ Crusts of dry black bread and a flask of water
- ○ Cooked meats

The Ancient Old Man



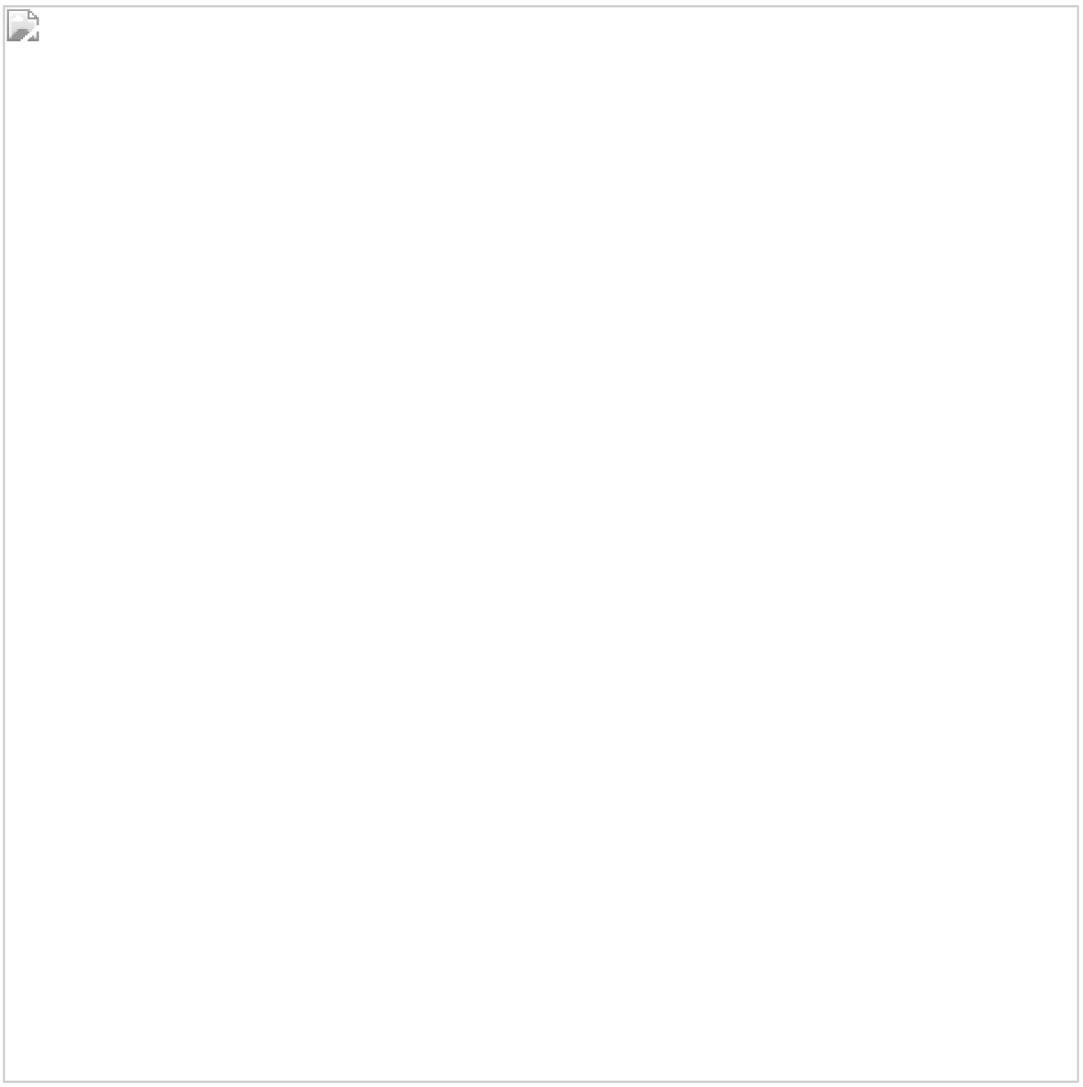
He soon met an ancient old man with a long beard. “And you can really make a flying ship?” “No, I do not know how,” says the Fool. “Then what are you going to do?” “God knows.”

They shared a meal. The Fool was ashamed of his crusts, but his bag now held fresh white rolls and cooked meats, and the flask a fine drink.

“You see how God loves simple folk,” said the ancient. He told the Fool to strike the first big tree with his hatchet, then sleep till someone woke him. “But be sure on the way to give a lift to everyone you meet.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Fool was ashamed of his little meal, and he shared it anyway. Why do you think that was a good thing to do?

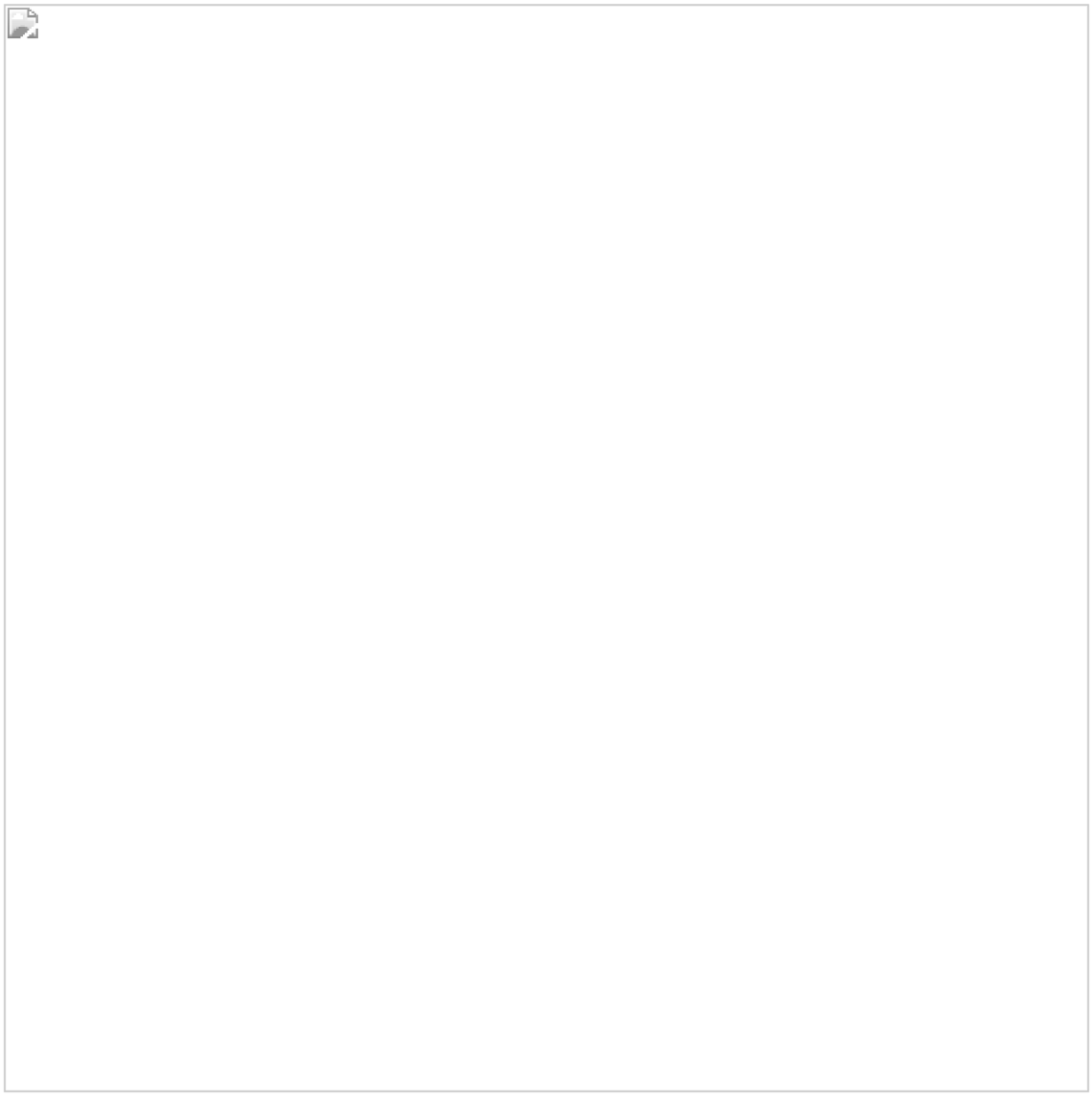


Think about it

1. What did the ancient say to do on the way?

- ○ Fly without stopping
- ○ Give a lift to everyone you meet
- ○ Never speak to anyone

The Ship in the Forest



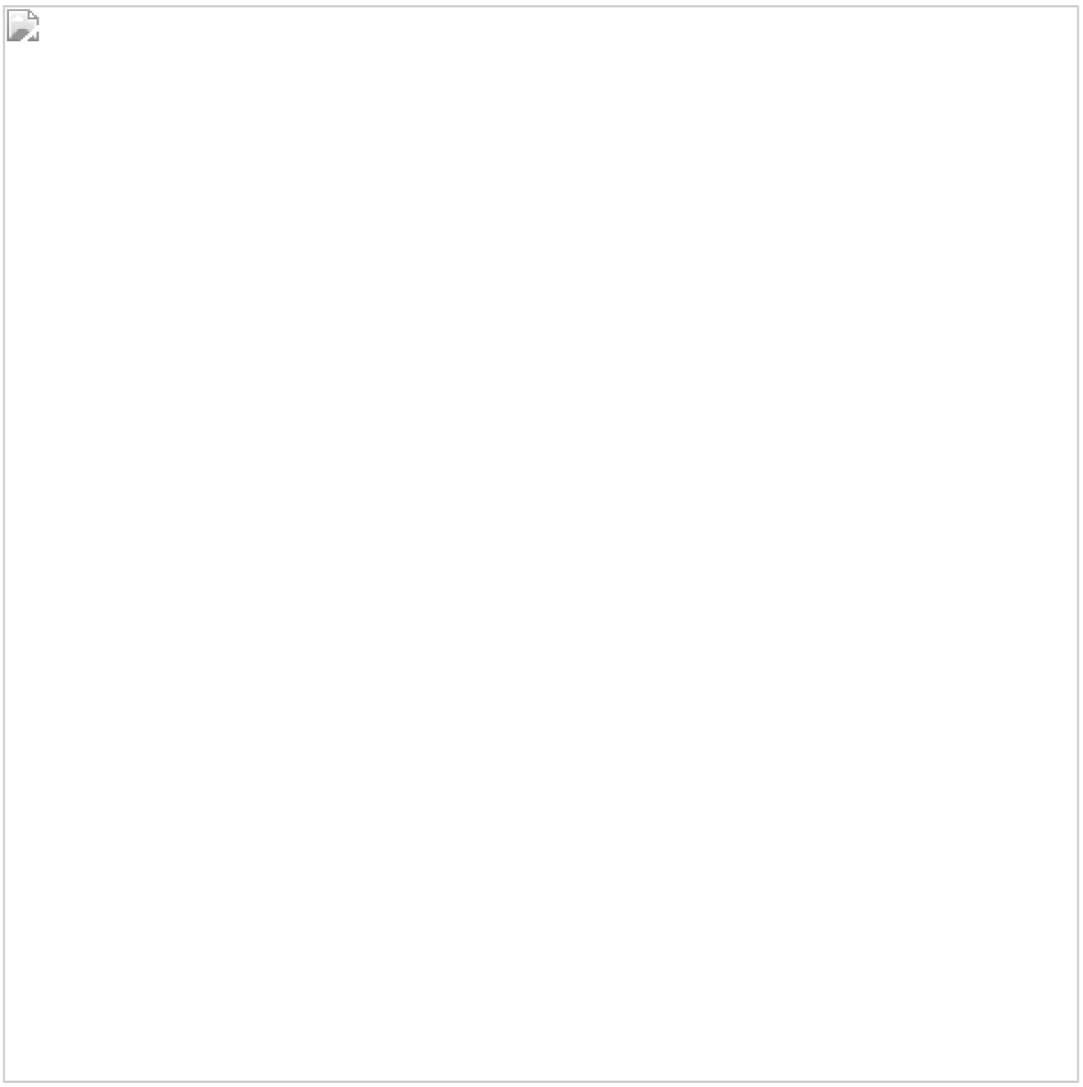
The Fool of the World thanked the ancient and went off to the forest. He struck the first big tree with his hatchet, fell backwards on the ground, closed his eyes, and went to sleep.

A little time went by, and it seemed to the Fool that somebody was jogging his elbow. He woke up. His hatchet, worn out, lay beside him. The big tree was gone, and in its place stood a little ship, ready and finished.

He jumped in and seized the tiller. Instantly the ship leapt up into the air and sailed away over the tops of the trees.

TALK ABOUT IT

Did the Fool do exactly what the old man said? What do you think of someone who listens like that?

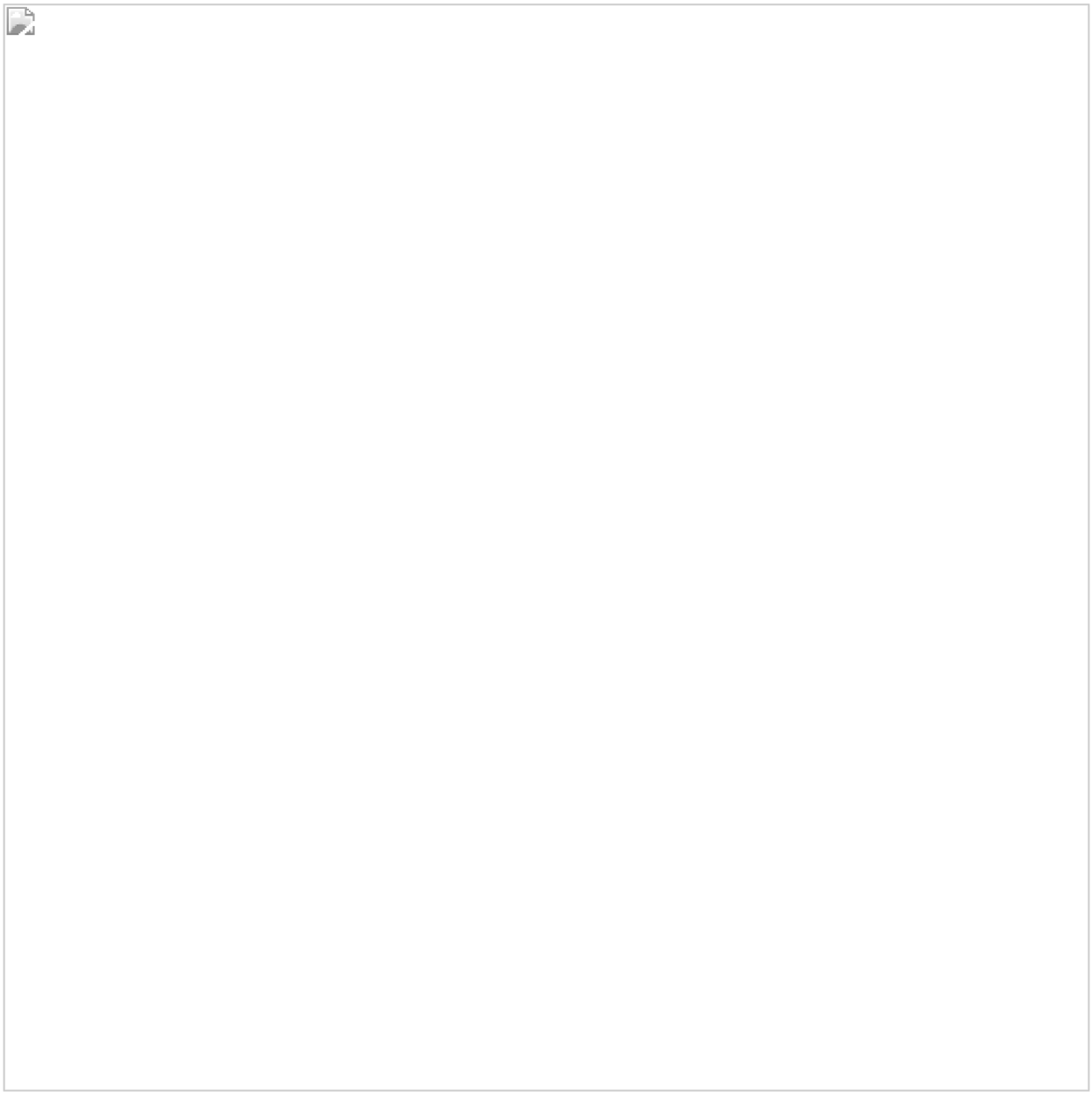


Think about it

1. What was in the place of the big tree?

- ○ A little ship
- ○ A stone house
- ○ A river

The Listener and the Swift-goer

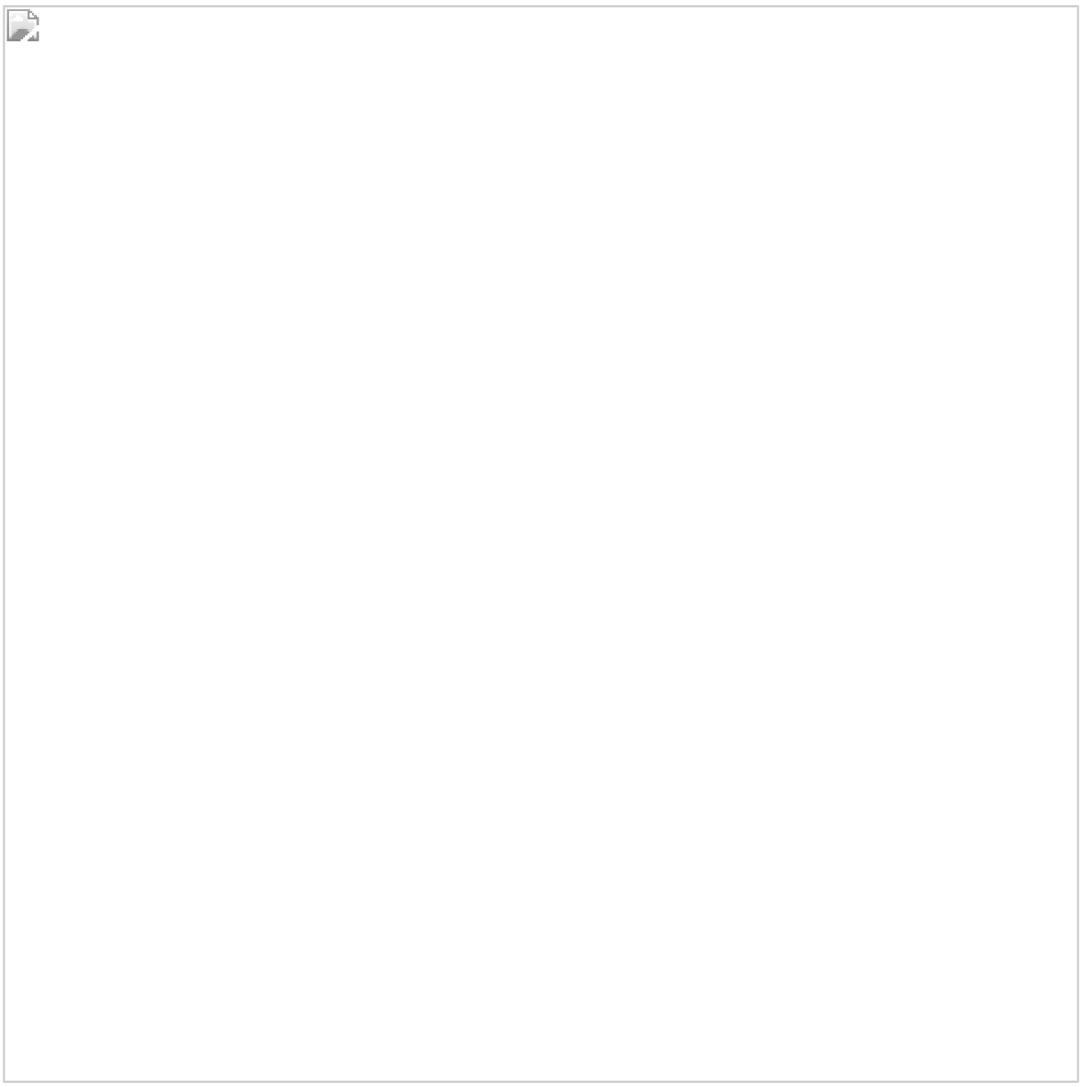


He flew on and saw a man lying in the road with his ear on the damp ground. “What are you doing down there?” says the Fool. “I am listening to all that is being done in the world.” “Take your place in the ship with me.”

Next there was a man hopping on one leg, with the other tied up to his head. “If I were to untie the other I should move too fast,” he said. “I should be stepping across the world in a single stride.” “Sit down with us,” says the Fool.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Fool asked each stranger to come along. Who would you ask to come with you on an adventure?

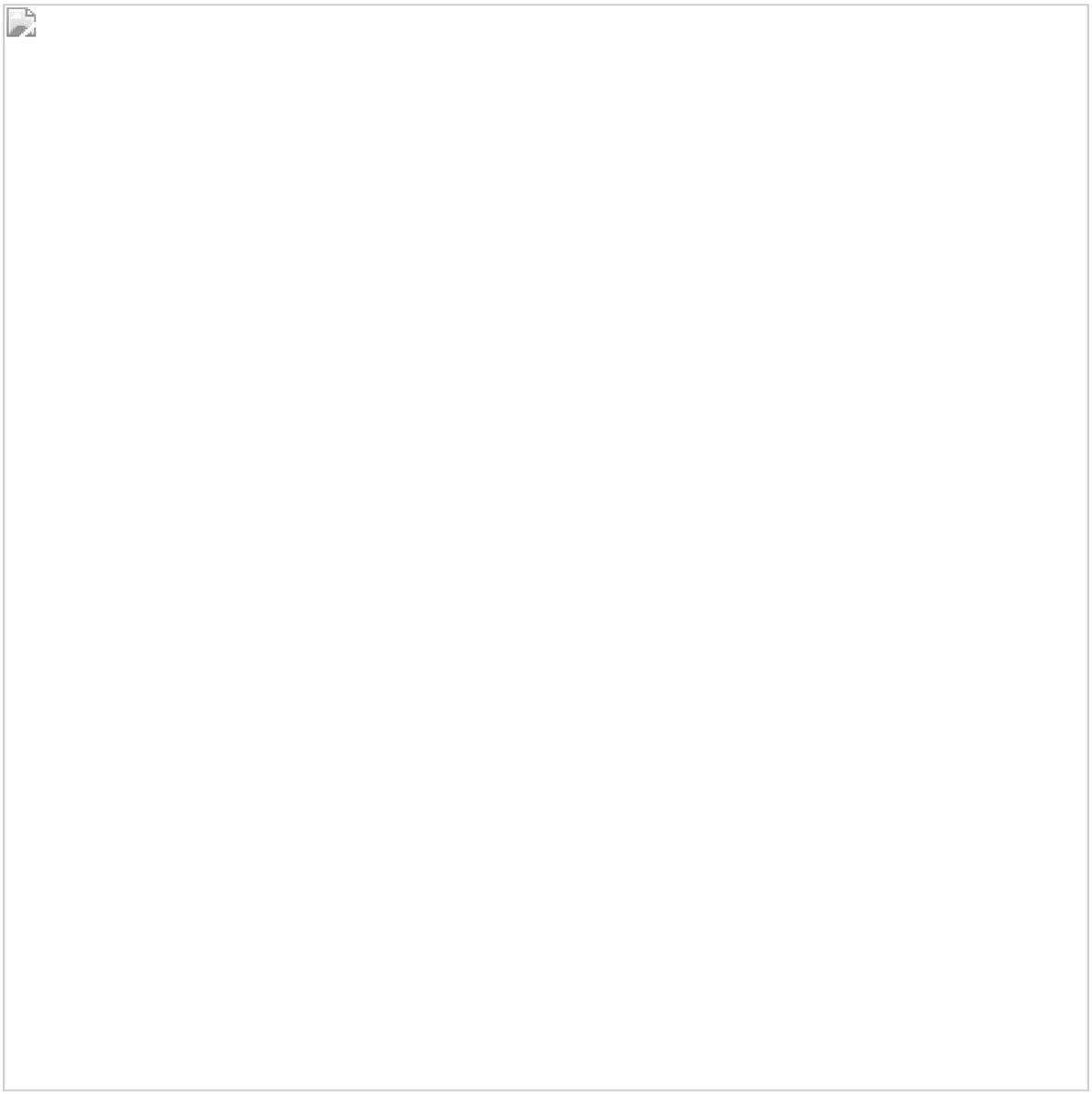


Think about it

1. Why did the man hop on one leg?

- ○ He had hurt his foot
- ○ He would move too fast with both
- ○ He was learning to dance

The Far-shooter, the Eater, and the Drinker



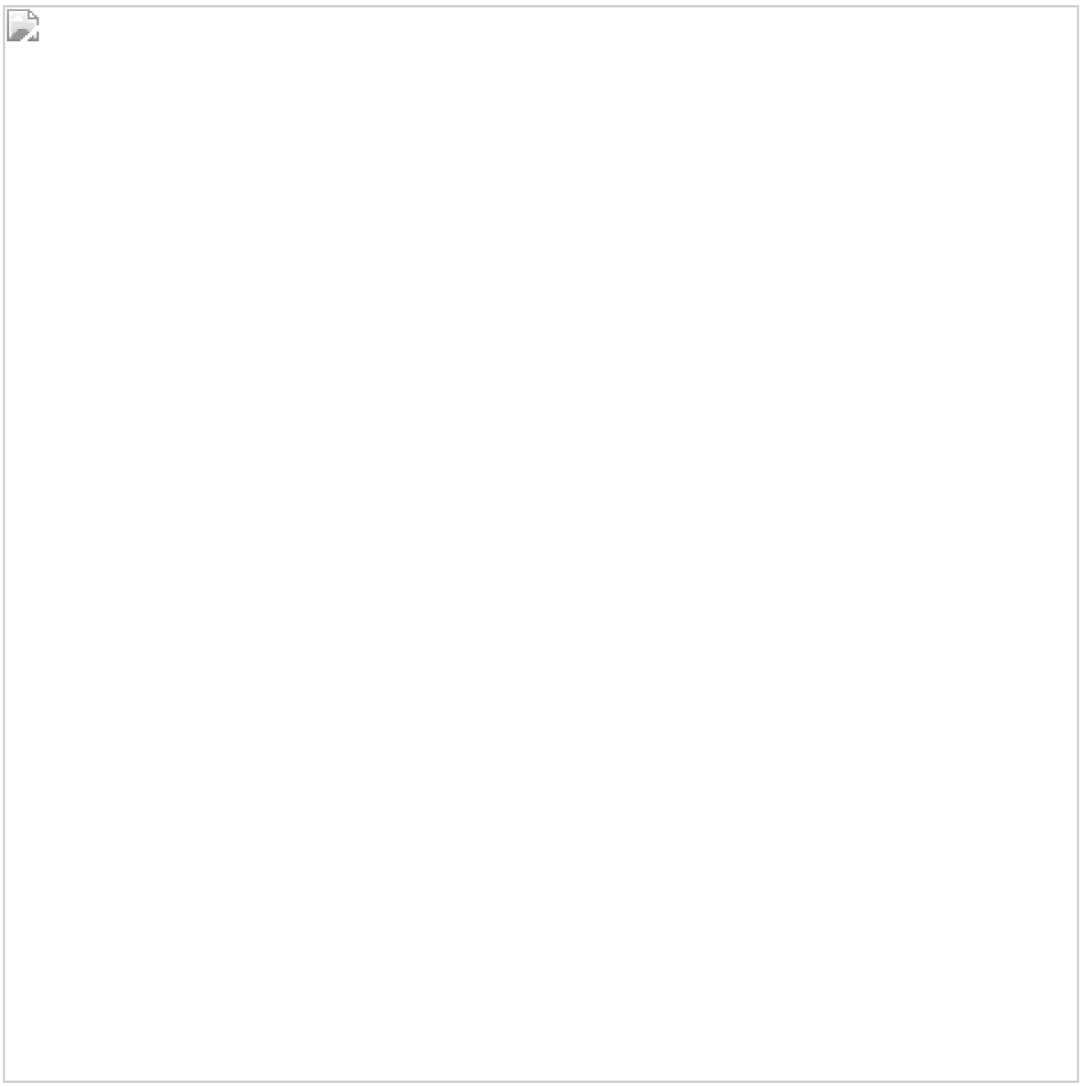
Next they saw a man taking aim with a gun, though there was no bird to be seen. “A bird or a beast a thousand versts away, that's the sort of mark for me.” “Take your seat with us,” says the Fool.

Then came a man with a full sack of bread, off to get bread for his dinner. “That--that little scrap! Why, that's not enough for a single mouthful.”

Last, a man walking round a lake: “I want a drink, and I can't find any water.” The lake? “That little drop!” Each took a seat in the ship.

TALK ABOUT IT

Each new friend had a gift that looked a little odd. What is something you do that seems small, but might be a gift?

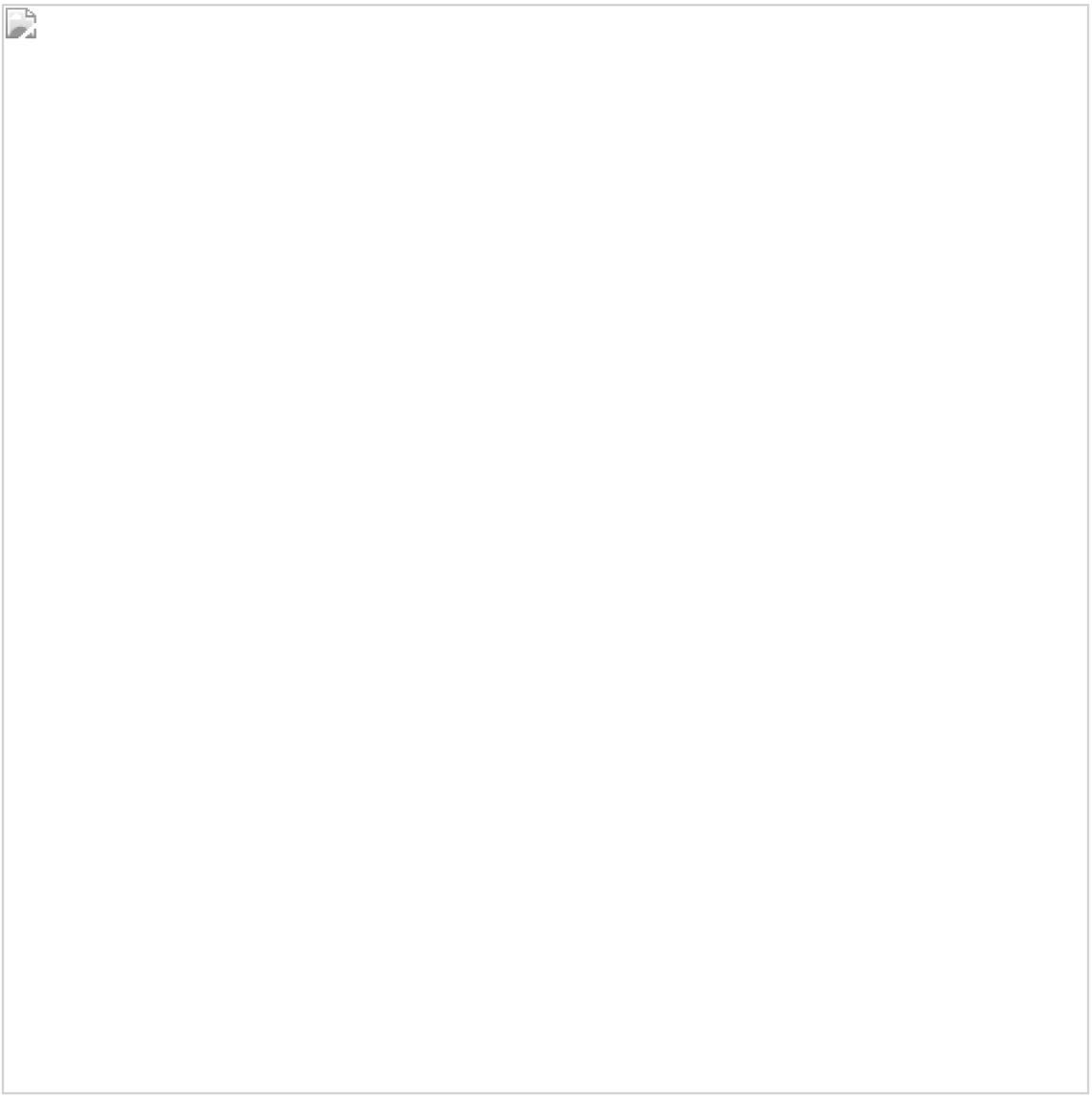


Think about it

1. Why couldn't the Drinker find enough water?

- ○ The lake was dry
- ○ He thought the lake was only a little drop
- ○ He did not look

Wood and Straw



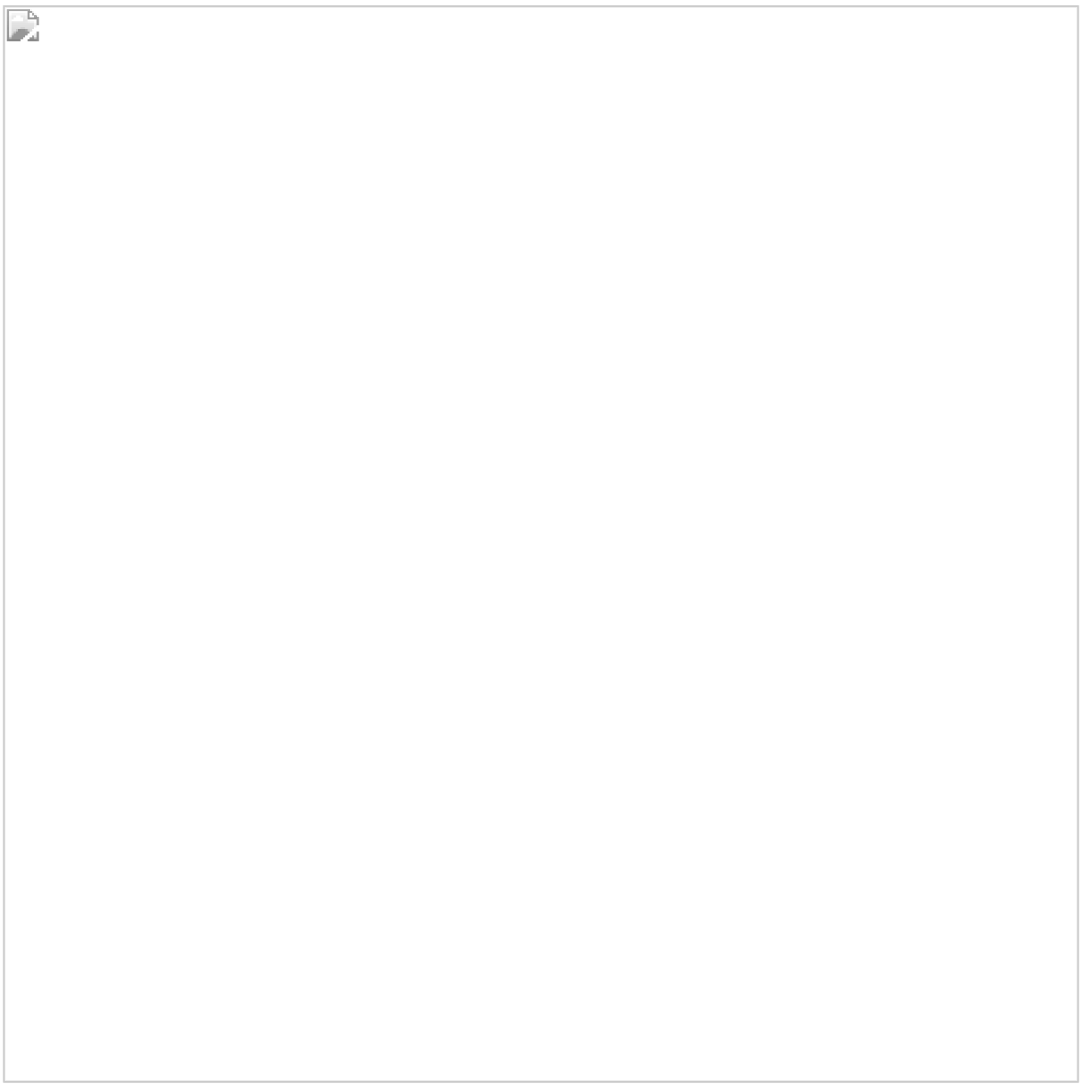
They flew on, and saw a man with a fagot of wood on his shoulders. “This isn't simple wood. If it is scattered about, a whole army of soldiers leaps up out of the ground.” “There's a place for you with us.”

Then they saw a man with a sack of straw. “This is such straw that if you scatter it abroad in the very hottest of the summer, instantly the weather turns cold, and there is snow and frost.” “There's a place here for you too.”

“Very kind of you,” says the man, and away they all sail together, “singing like to burst their lungs.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Fool gave everyone a place in the ship. Have you ever made room for someone? What happened?

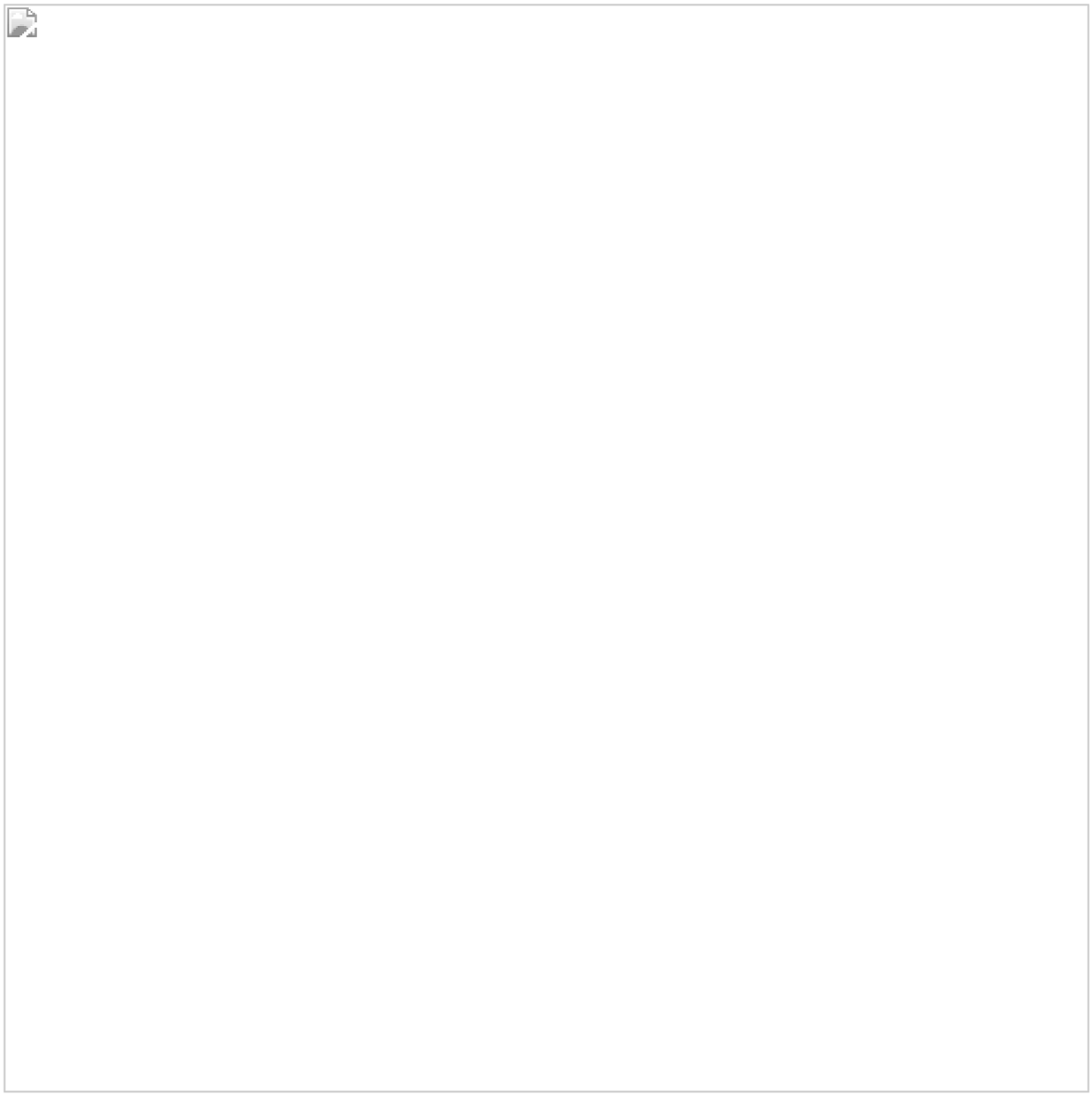


Think about it

1. What would the straw do if it was scattered in summer?

- ○ Make the weather cold with snow and frost
- ○ Grow into a field
- ○ Light a fire

The Tzar's Palace



They met no one else, and soon came flying up to the palace of the Tzar, and cast anchor in the courtyard.

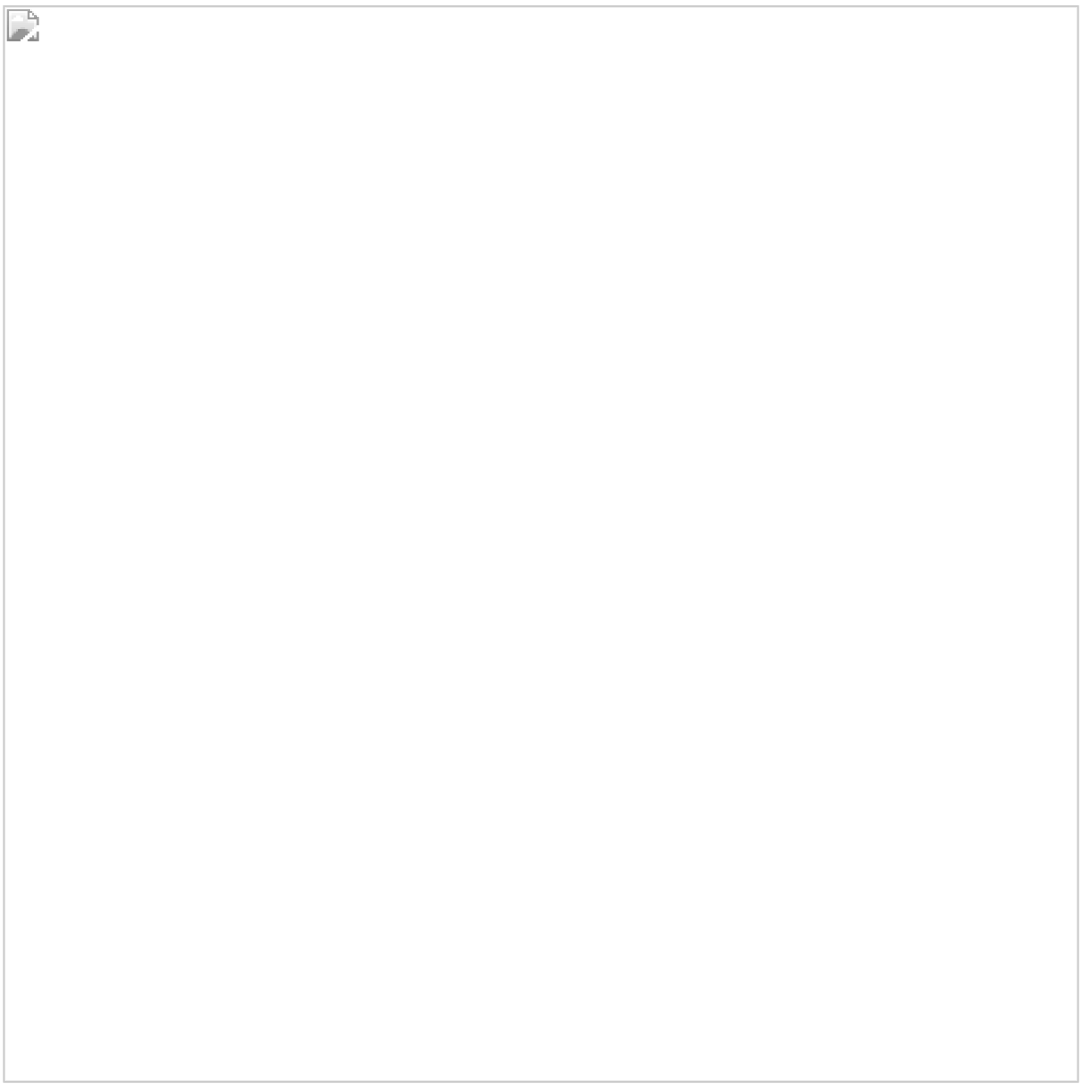
The Tzar was at his dinner, and sent his servant out. The servant saw the Fool and his companions cracking jokes. They were all “simple peasants,” he told the Tzar; there were no gentlemen in the ship at all.

The Tzar did not want to give his only daughter to a simple peasant. He thought, “I'll set them such tasks that they will not be able to perform, and they'll be glad to get off with their lives, and I shall get the ship for nothing.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Tzar did not want to keep his promise. What do you think about that?

The Tzar's Palace · another picture

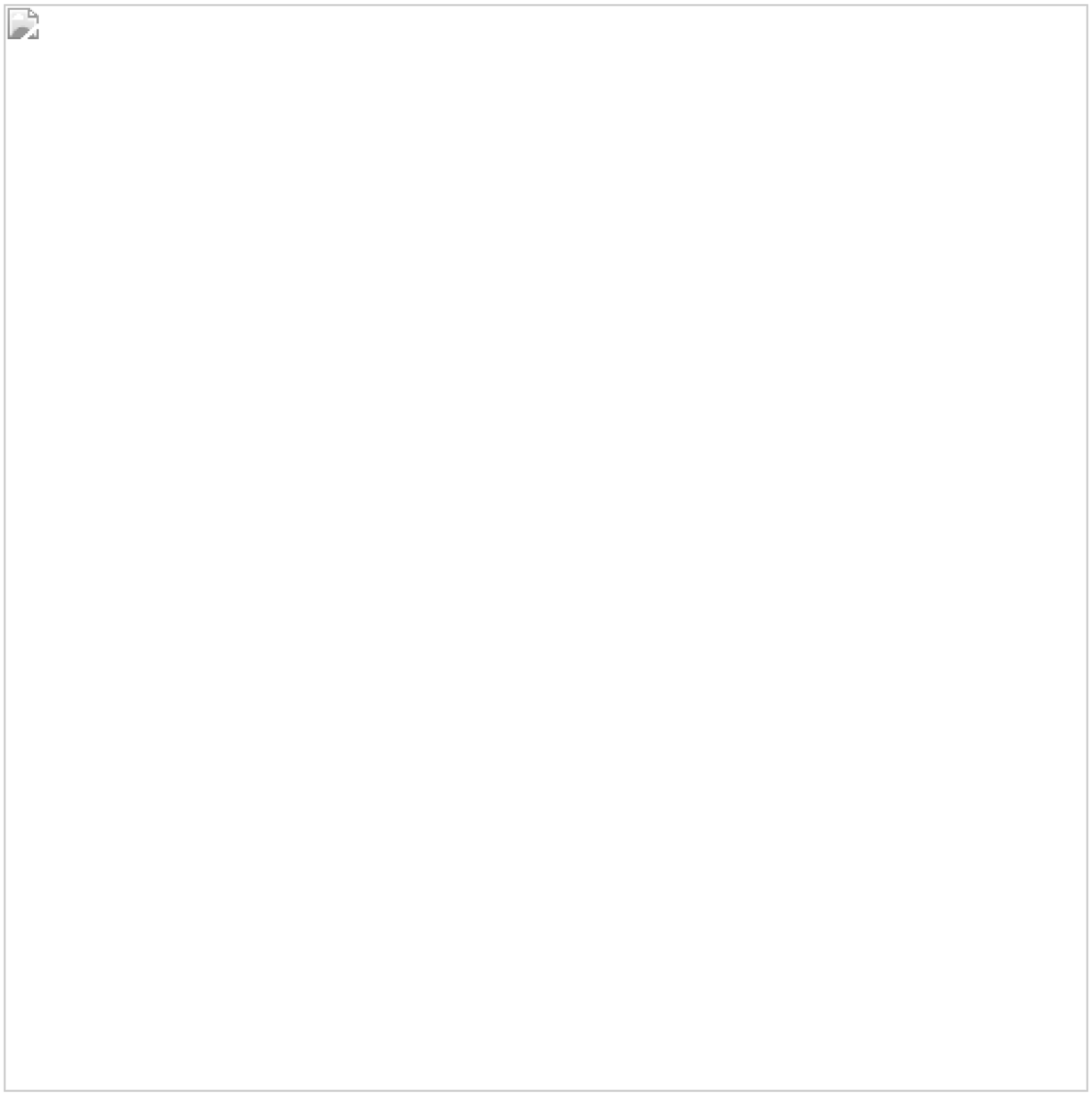


Think about it

1. What did the servant tell the Tzar about the people in the ship?

- ○ They were great princes
- ○ They were all simple peasants
- ○ They were soldiers

The Water of Life



First, the Tzar wanted the water of life before he finished his dinner. The Listener heard, and told the Fool.

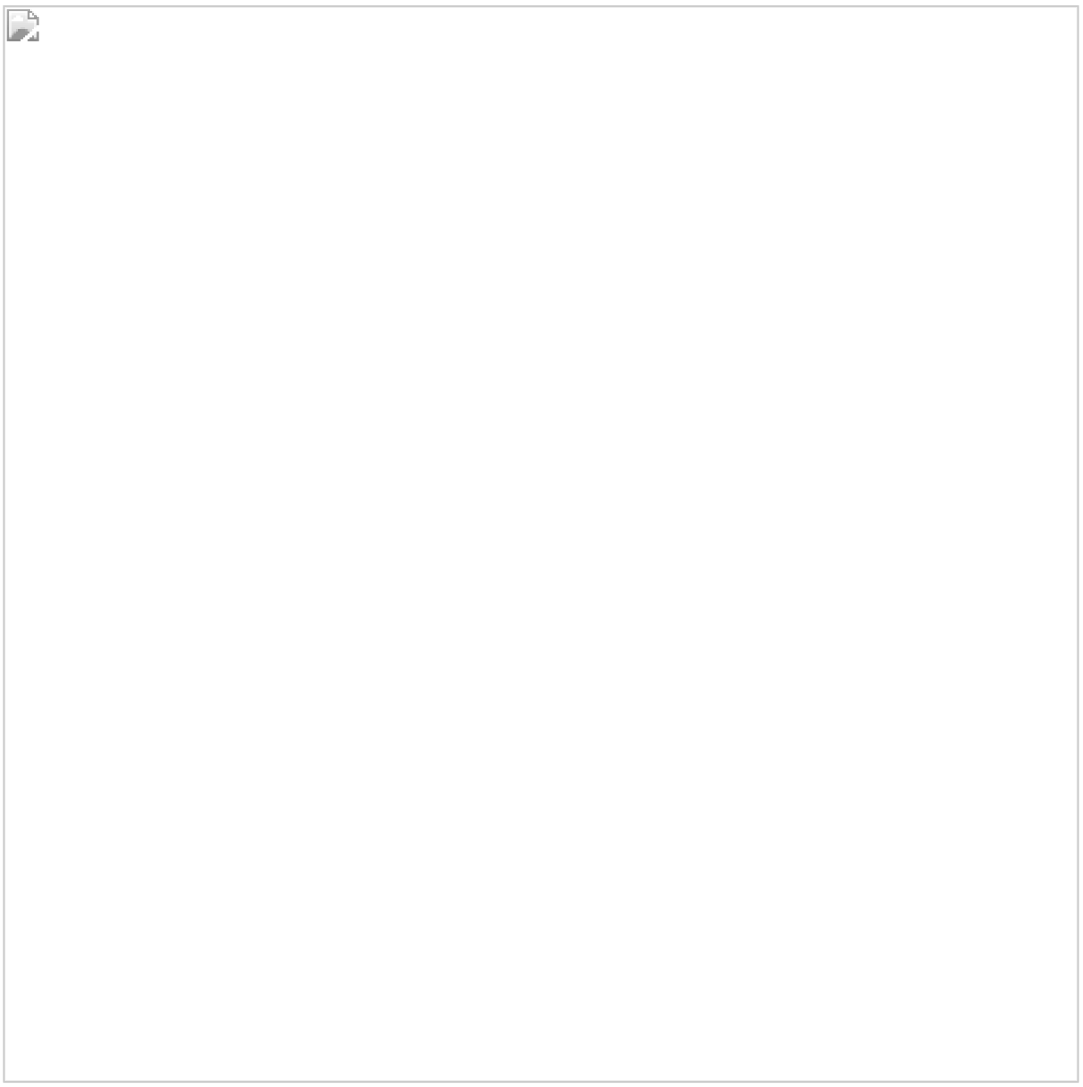
“I never could find that water!” says the Fool. “Don't you worry about that,” says the Swift-goer. “I'll deal with that for you.”

He untied his foot and, quicker than a story, had the water. Then, sure he had time, he lay down under a windmill to sleep.

The Listener laid his ear to the ground and heard him snoring. “This is my affair,” says the Far-shooter. His bullet struck the mill and woke him, and the Tzar had the water before he left the table.

TALK ABOUT IT

Each friend did what only he could do. What is something only you can do?

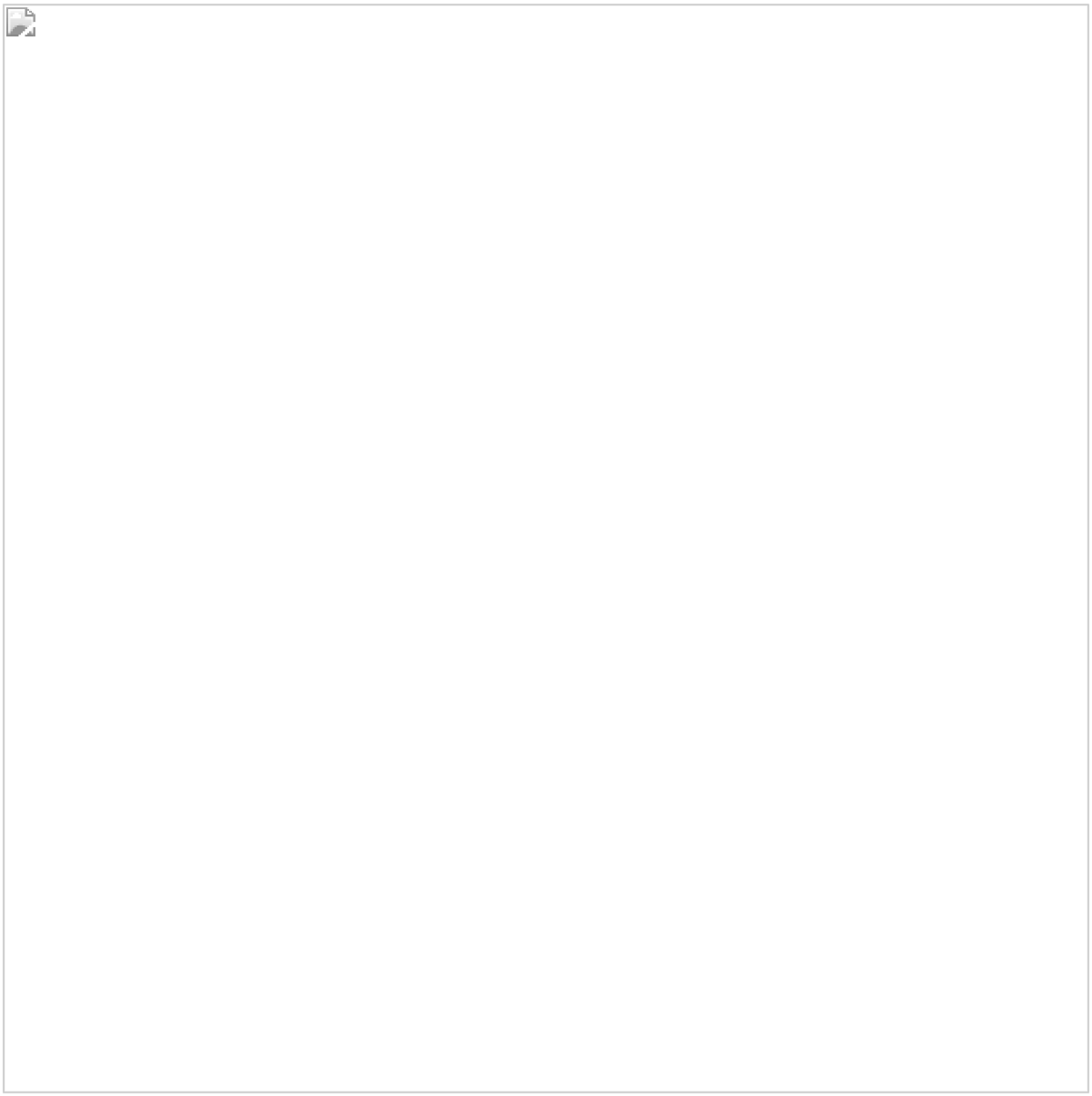


Think about it

1. Who woke the Swift-goer?

- The Listener shouted
- The Far-shooter's bullet hit the mill
- The Eater poked him

Twelve Oxen and Forty Barrels



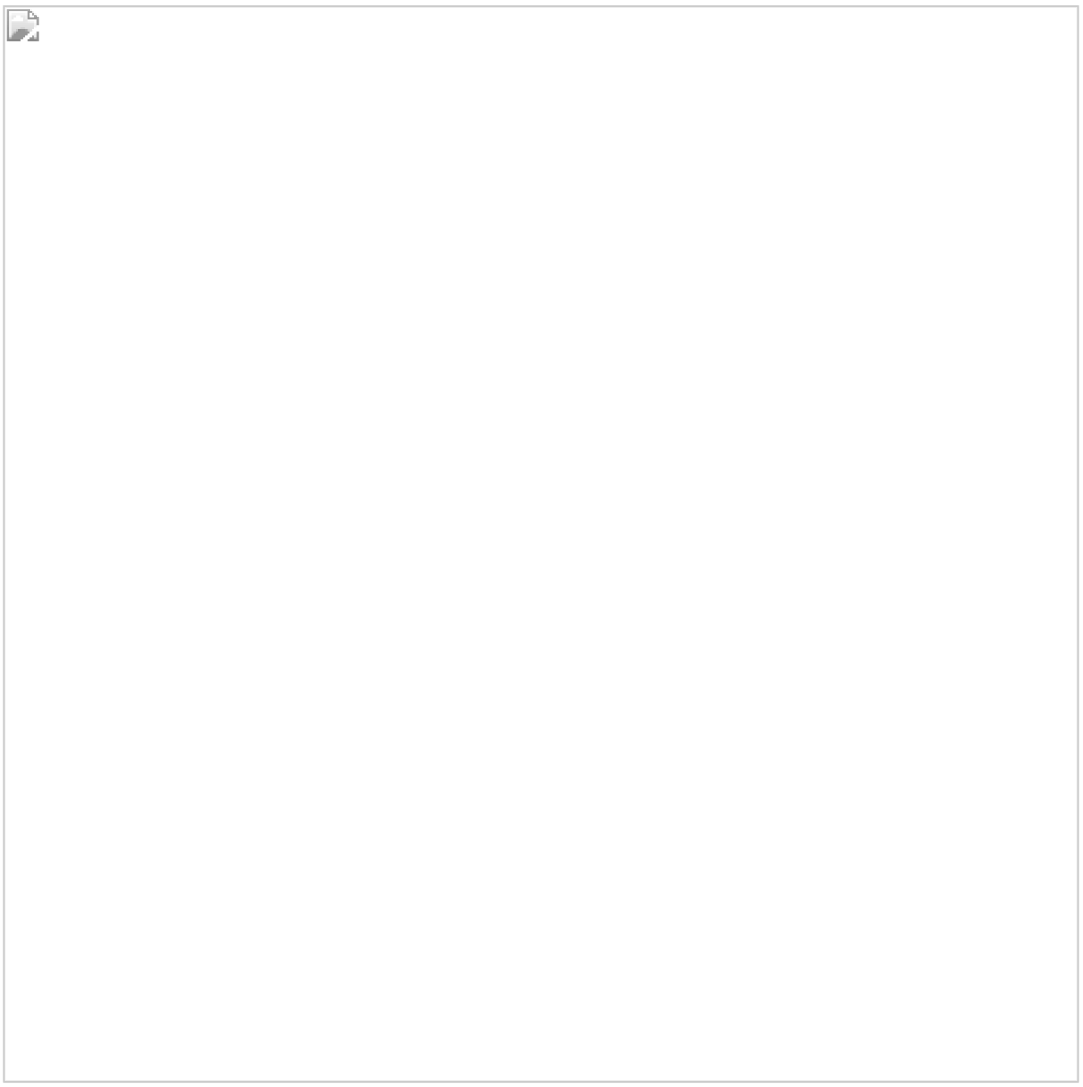
“What fellows these peasants are,” thought the Tzar. Next they must eat twelve oxen roasted whole and as much bread as forty ovens could bake. “I can't get through even a single loaf at a sitting,” said the Fool. “It won't be more than a mouthful for me,” said the Eater, and he finished the lot.

Then they must drink forty barrels of wine. “I never in my life drank more than one bucket at a time,” says the Fool. “You forget that I am thirsty,” says the Drinker. He drained them all. “Why, I am thirsty still.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Fool kept saying he could not do it, and his friends did it for him. Is it easy to let friends help?

Twelve Oxen and Forty Barrels · another picture

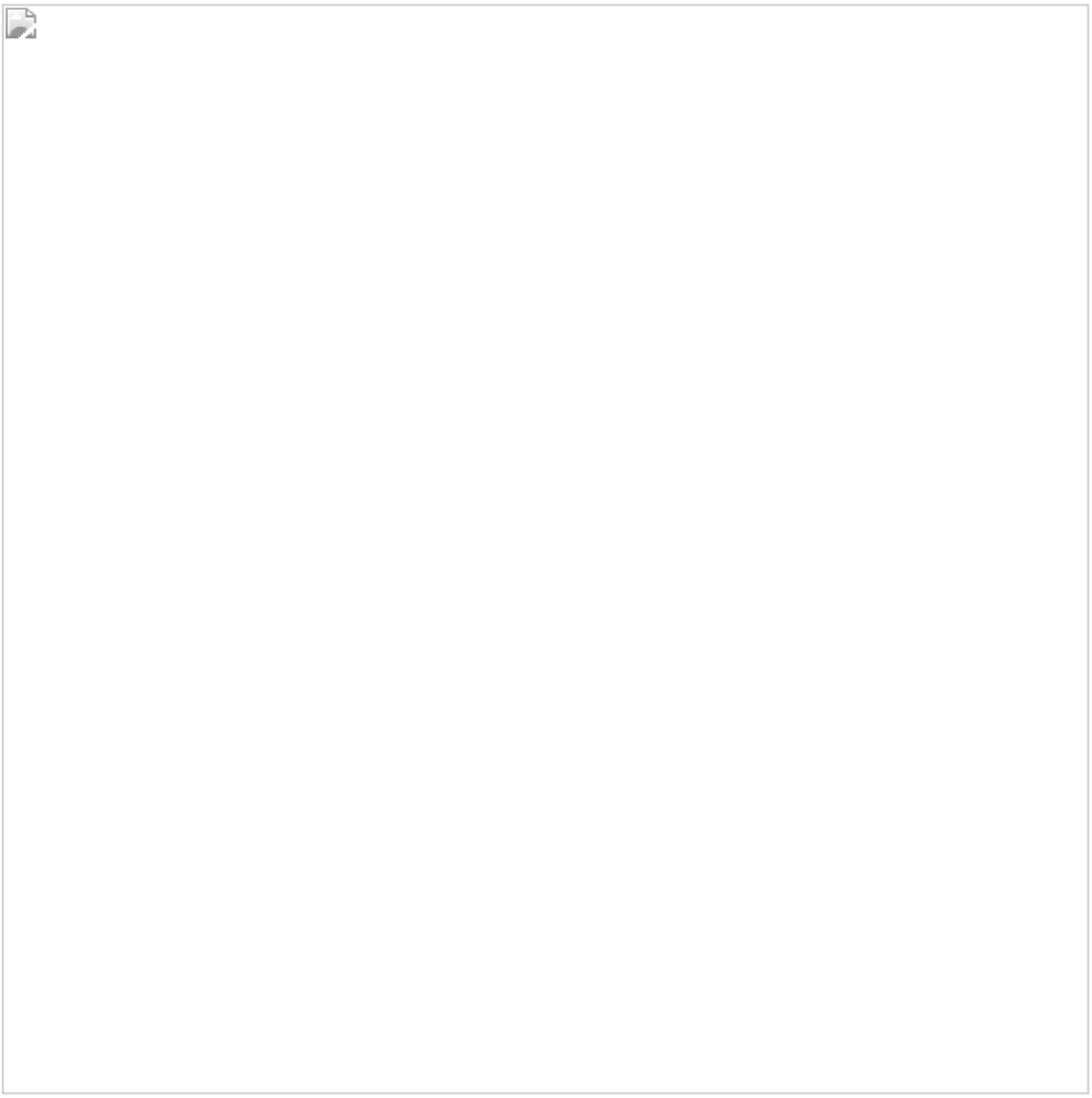


Think about it

1. How many oxen were roasted?

- ○ Four
- ○ Twelve
- ○ Forty

The Red-Hot Bath-House



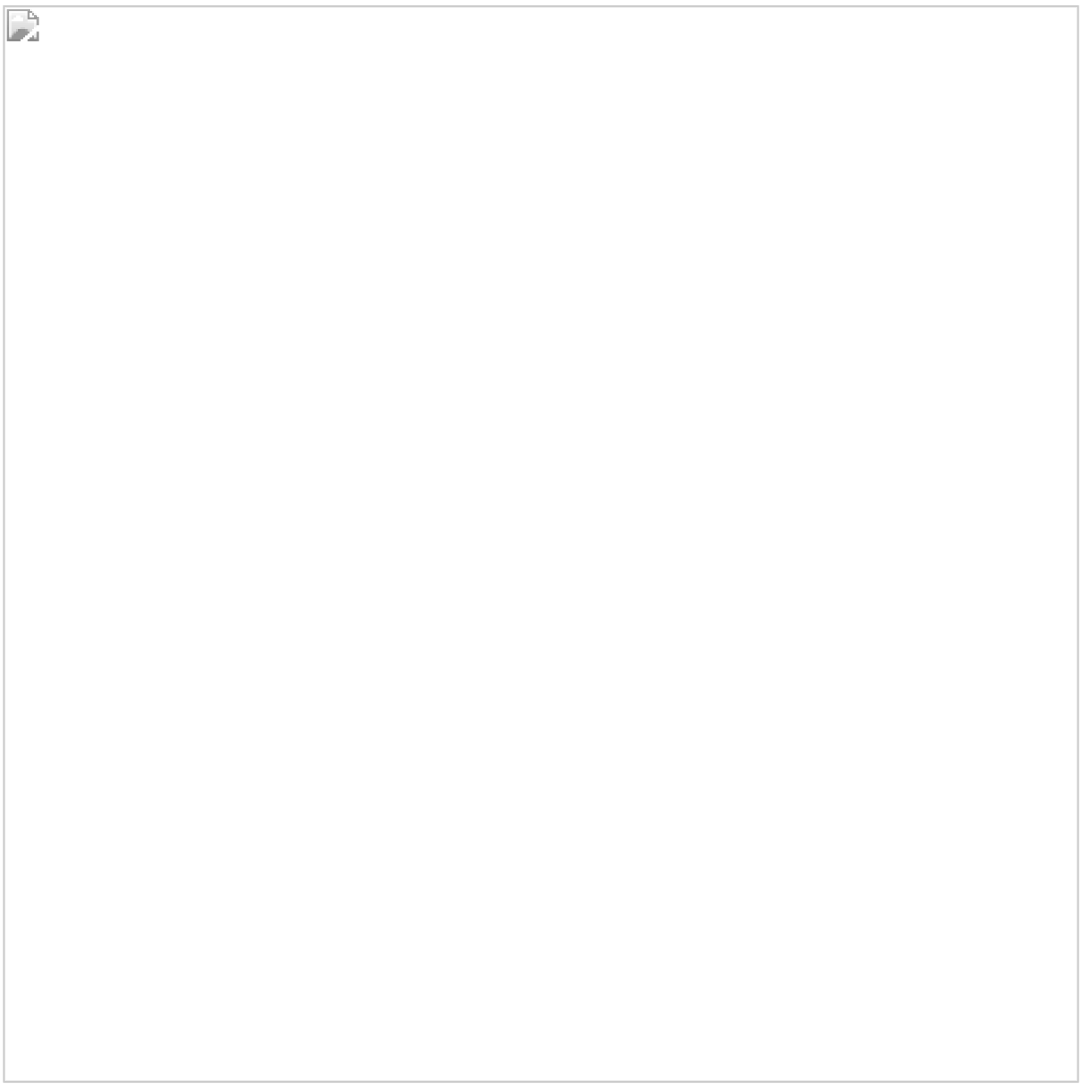
The Tzar told his servant to have the Fool bathe in an iron bath-house made red hot, so hot that the man would not live. The Listener heard it and told the Fool. “Don't you worry,” says the man with the straw.

They made the bath-house red hot, and the Fool went in with the moujik with the straw. The moujik scattered his straw before them, and it became so cold that the water in the cauldrons froze to solid ice.

In the morning the servants opened the door, and there were the Fool of the World and the moujik, alive and well, lying on the stove and singing songs.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Tzar tried to hurt the Fool, and did not stop trying. What do you think about the way he treated his guests?

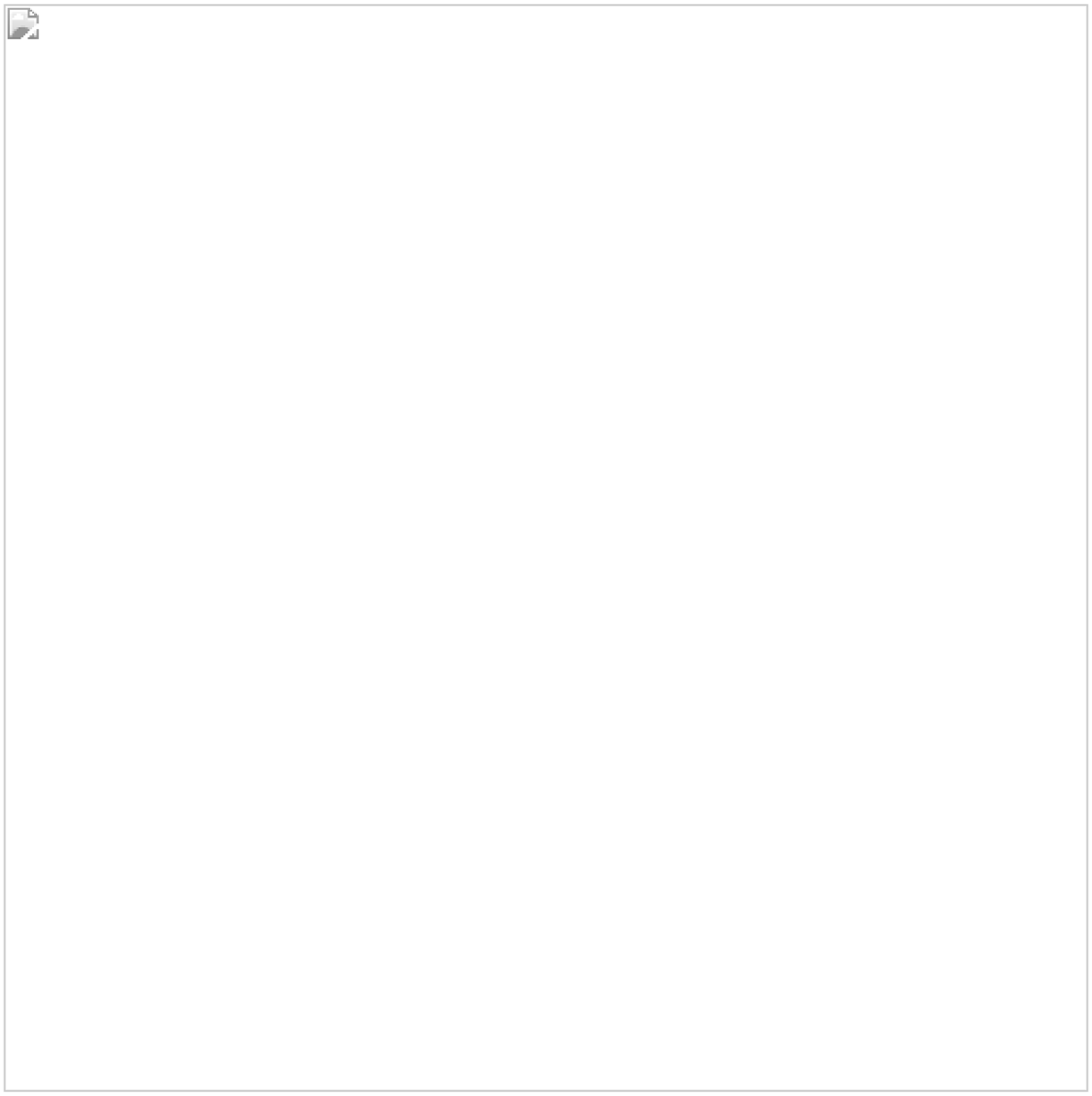


Think about it

1. How did the Fool stay safe in the red-hot bath-house?

- ○ The straw made the place so cold the water froze
- ○ He ran away
- ○ The Tzar changed his mind

The Army in the Night



“There is no getting rid of this fellow,” says the Tzar, raging. Now the Fool must show a regiment of soldiers to defend the Princess.

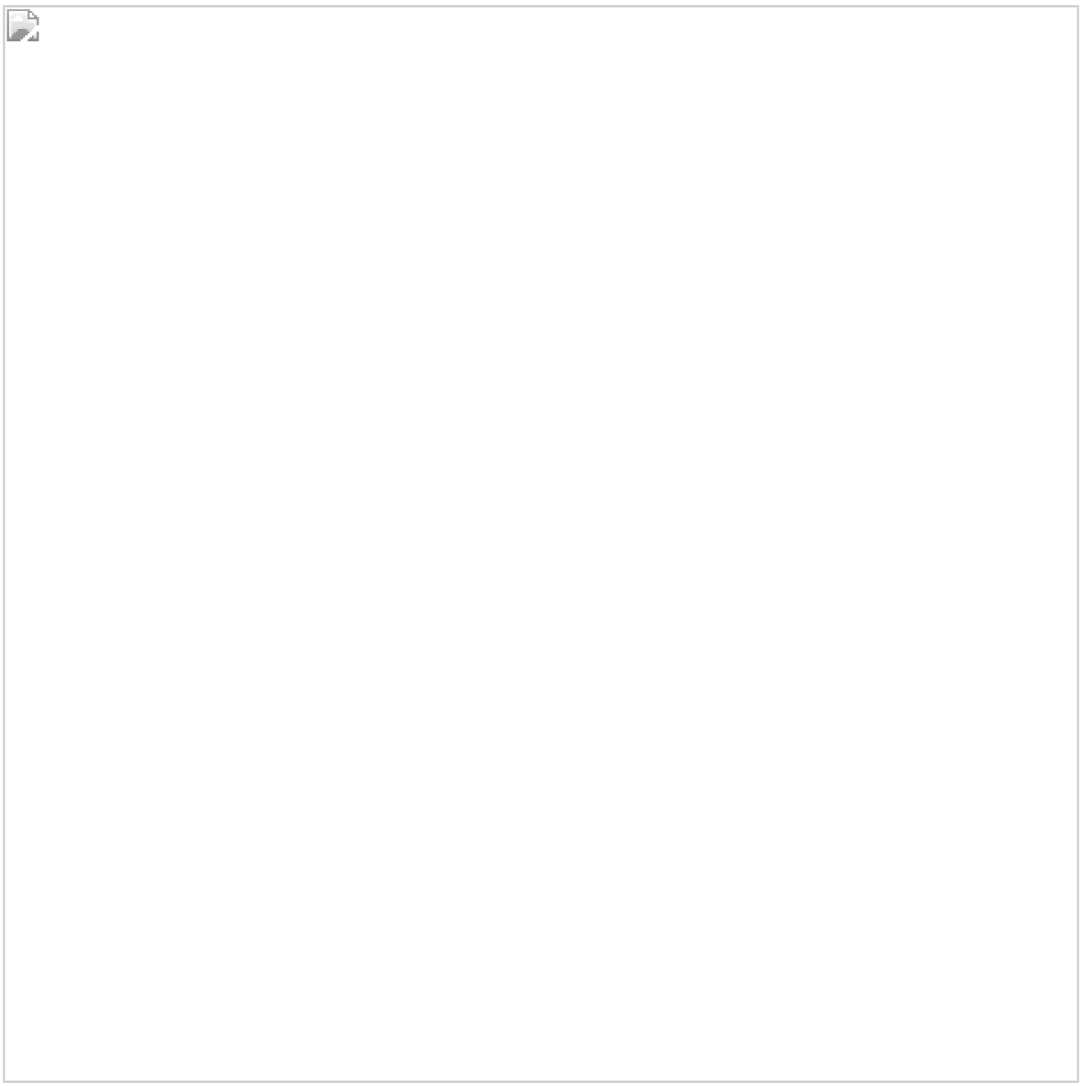
“This time,” says the Fool, “I am done indeed.” But the peasant with the fagot said, “I suppose you've forgotten about me.”

“Tell the Tzar,” said the Fool, “that if after this he puts me off again, I'll make war on his country, and take the Princess by force.”

In the night the man scattered his sticks, and where they fell a gigantic army appeared. By morning the Tzar was surrounded, and generals in cocked hats took orders from the Fool of the World.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Fool forgot that his friend had a gift. Who do you sometimes forget to count on?

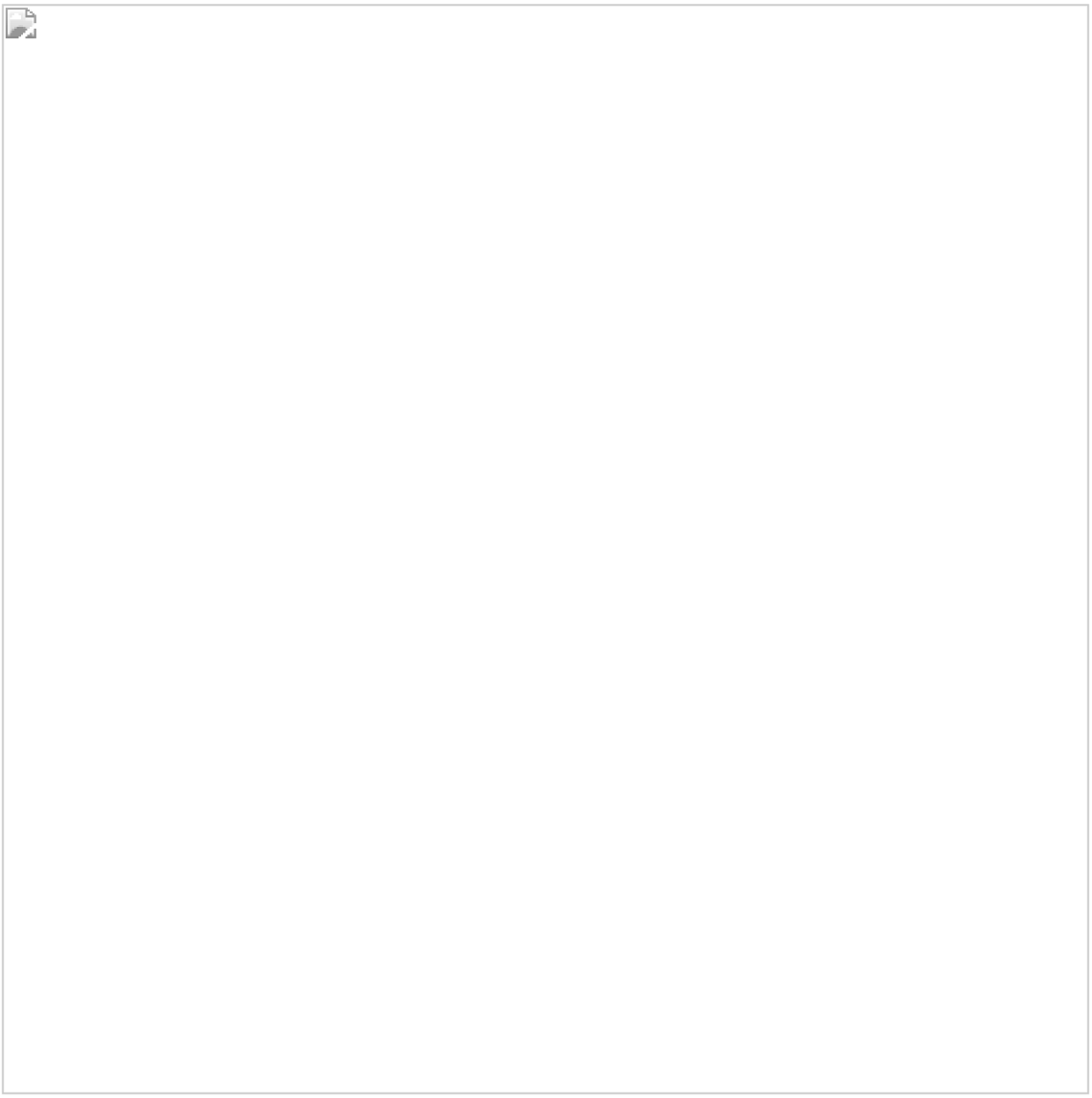


Think about it

1. Where did the army come from?

- ○ The Tzar's barracks
- ○ The sticks scattered by the man with the fagot
- ○ Far across the sea

The Wedding



Now it was the Tzar's turn to be afraid. As quickly as he could, he sent the Fool rich jewels and fine clothes, and begged him to marry the Princess.

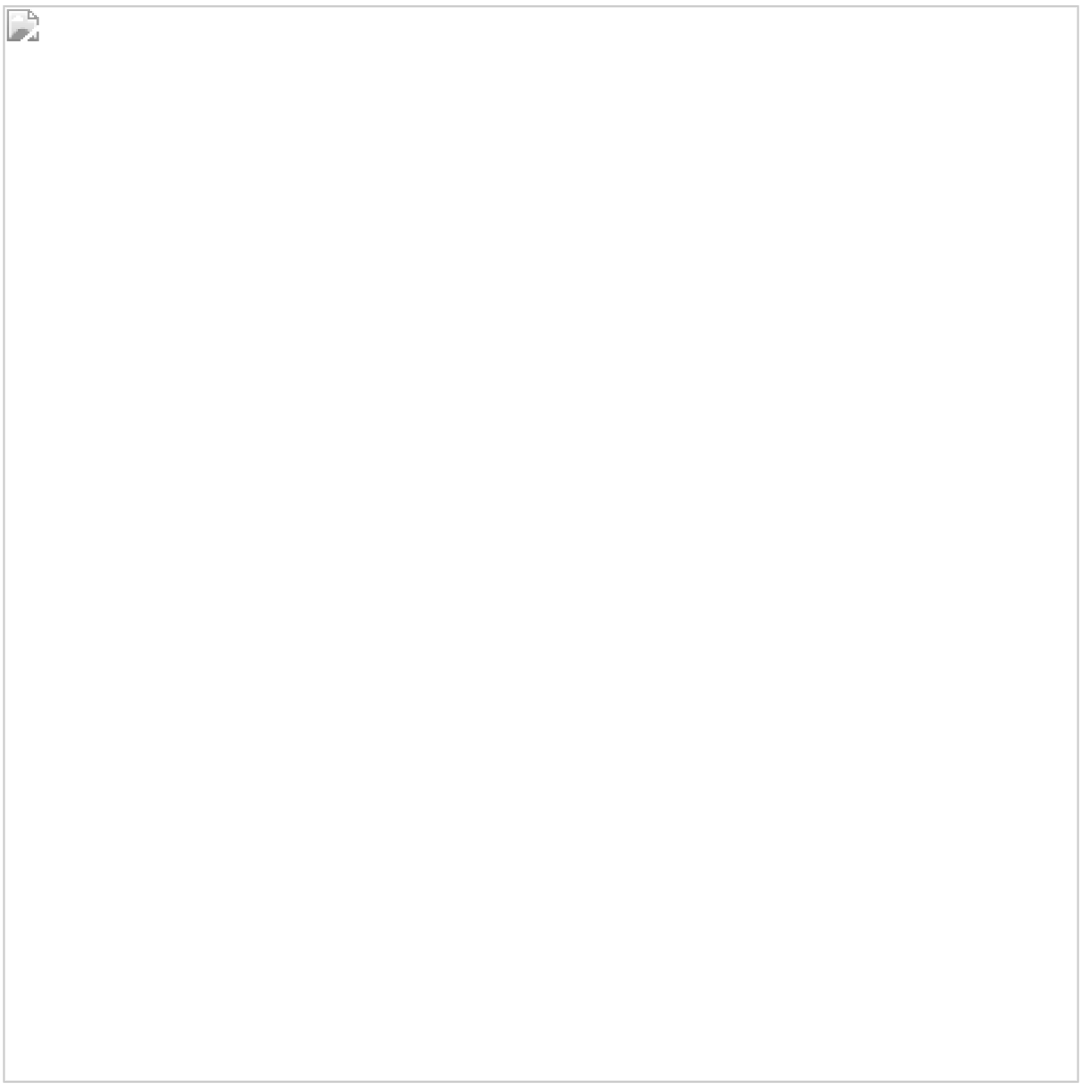
The Fool put on the fine clothes, and stood there as handsome a young man as a princess could wish for. He fell in love with the Princess and she with him, and they were married the same day.

He became so clever that all the court repeated everything he said. The Tzar and the Tzaritza liked him very much, and as for the Princess, “she loved him to distraction.”

TALK ABOUT IT

In the end the Fool was loved by everyone. What was it about him that people could not help liking?

The Wedding · another picture



Think about it

1. How did the Tzar behave when he saw the army?

- ○ He was afraid and begged the Fool to marry the Princess
- ○ He sent more tasks
- ○ He ran away

2. Why do you think the Fool had so many good friends?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

Free to read, color, and print in the Book Library

Made with love by Love is a Habit