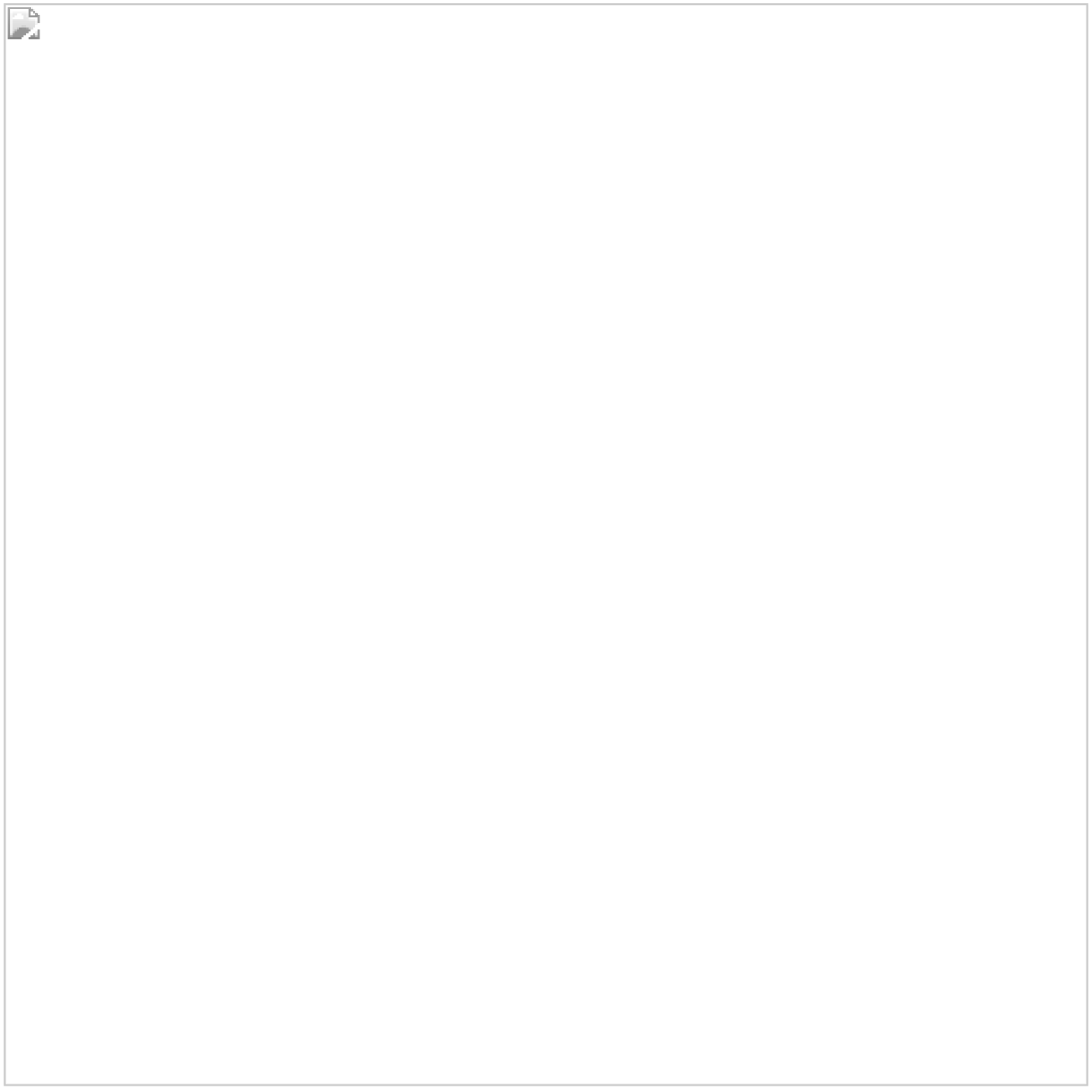
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Mad Goose and the Tiger Forest

A Tale from China



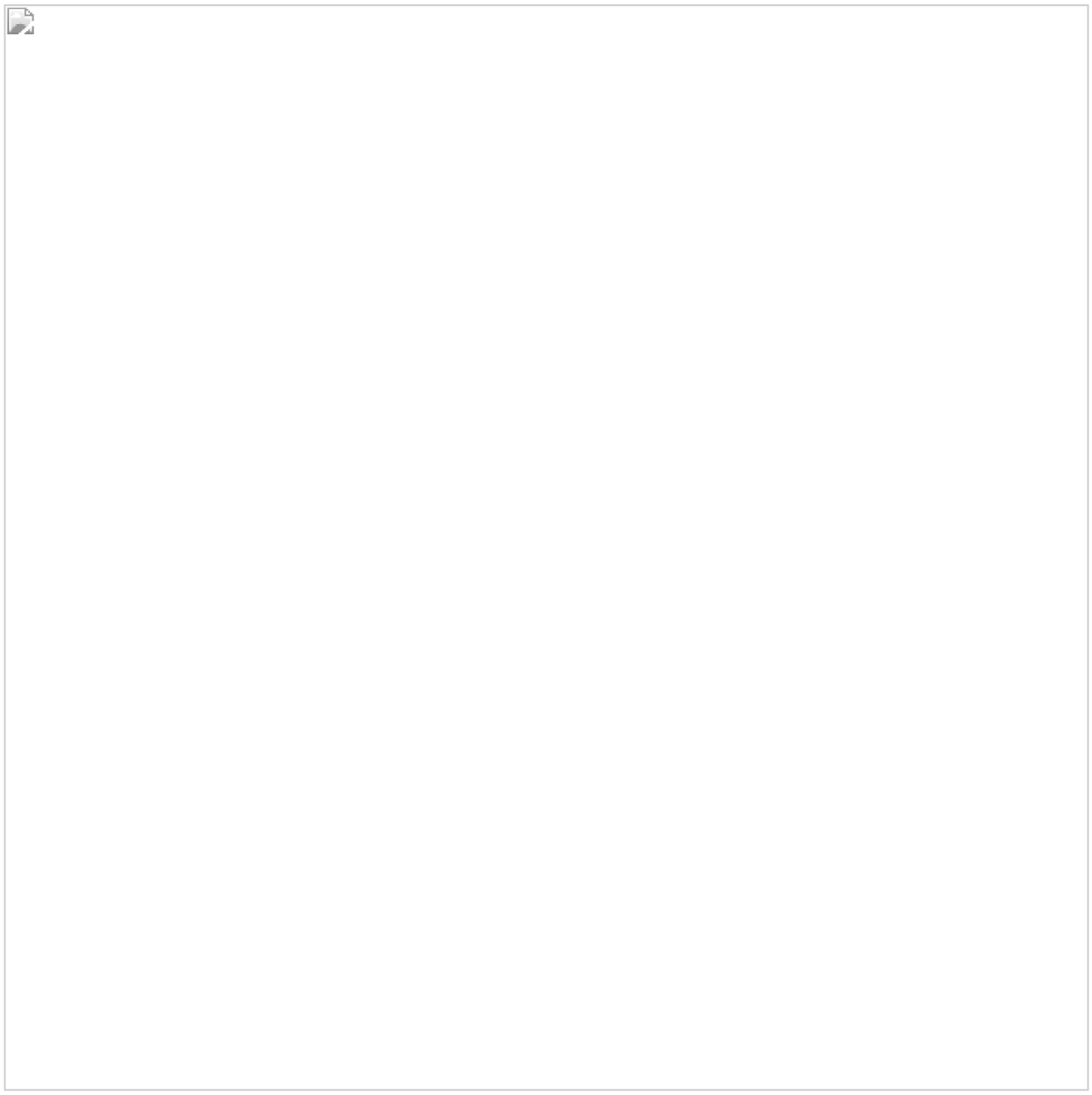
Hu-lin was a little slave girl. Her father had sold her when she was scarcely more than a baby. For five years she had lived with other children in a wretched houseboat, and their master made them beg in the street for a living.

TALK ABOUT IT

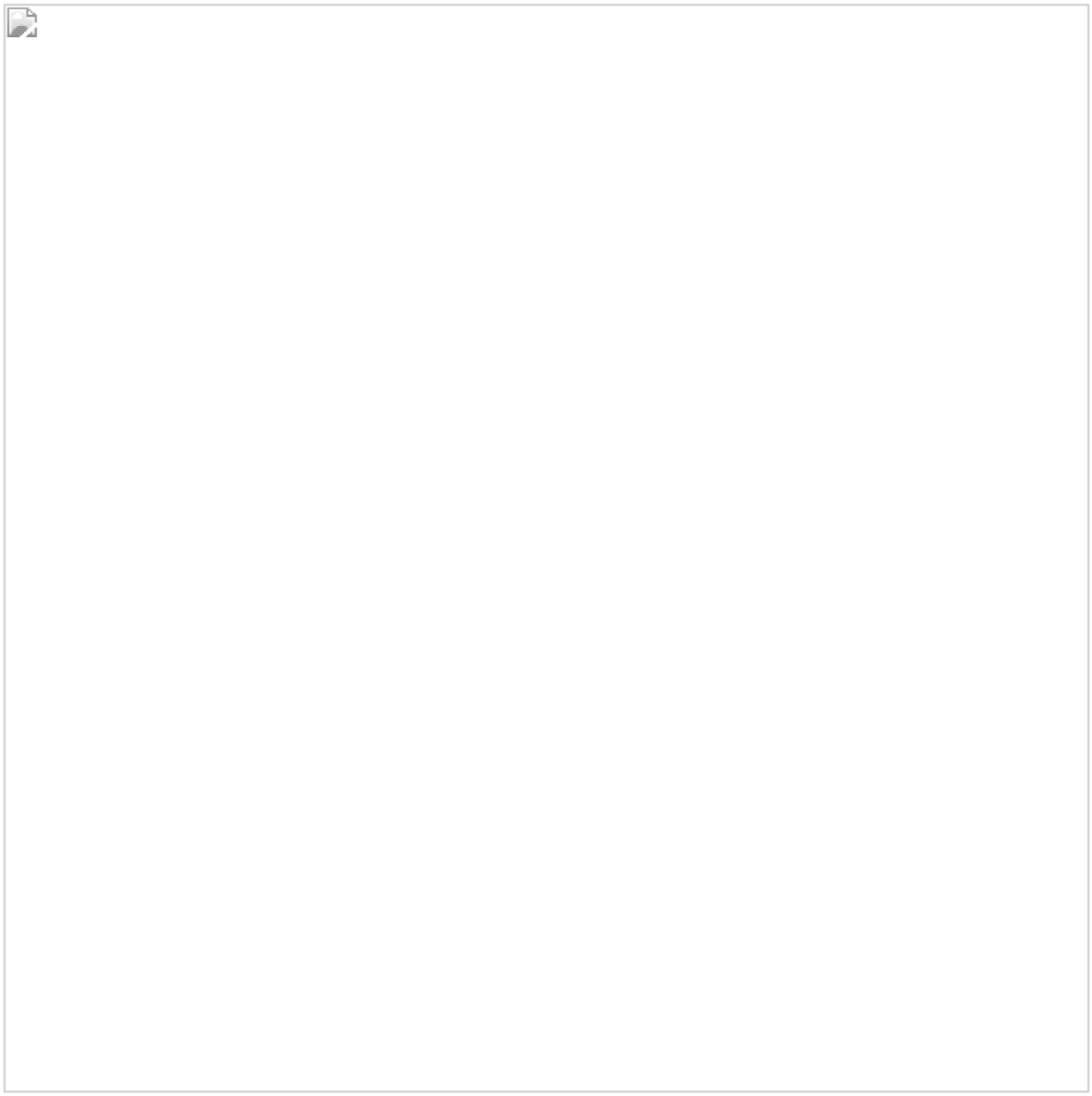
Hu-lin longed to play in the fields. Where do you like to play?

This book belongs to _____

The Mad Goose and the Tiger Forest · another picture



Black Heart



Hu-lin's master treated her very badly. He was so wicked and cruel that all the children called him Black Heart.

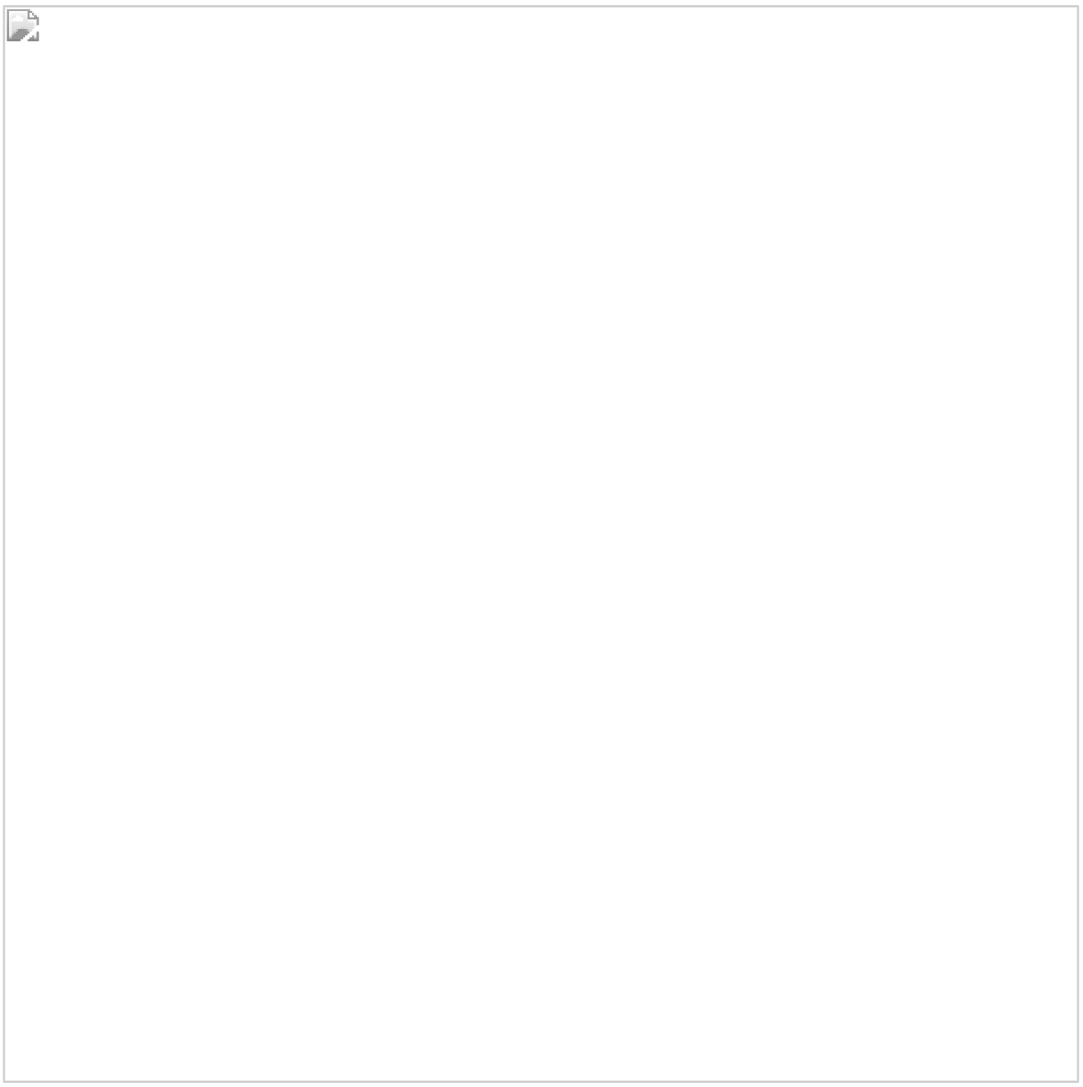
Hu-lin liked to watch the kites sailing in the sky and the crows and magpies building their stick nests in the tall poplars. But if her master caught her idling, he beat her and gave her nothing to eat for a whole day.

One morning she ran away. She had not gone a hundred yards when Black Heart caught her and beat her, and she lay on the ground, too faint to stir. “Ah! if only someone would save me!” she thought.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hu-lin wished that someone would save her. Who do you go to when you need help?

Black Heart · another picture

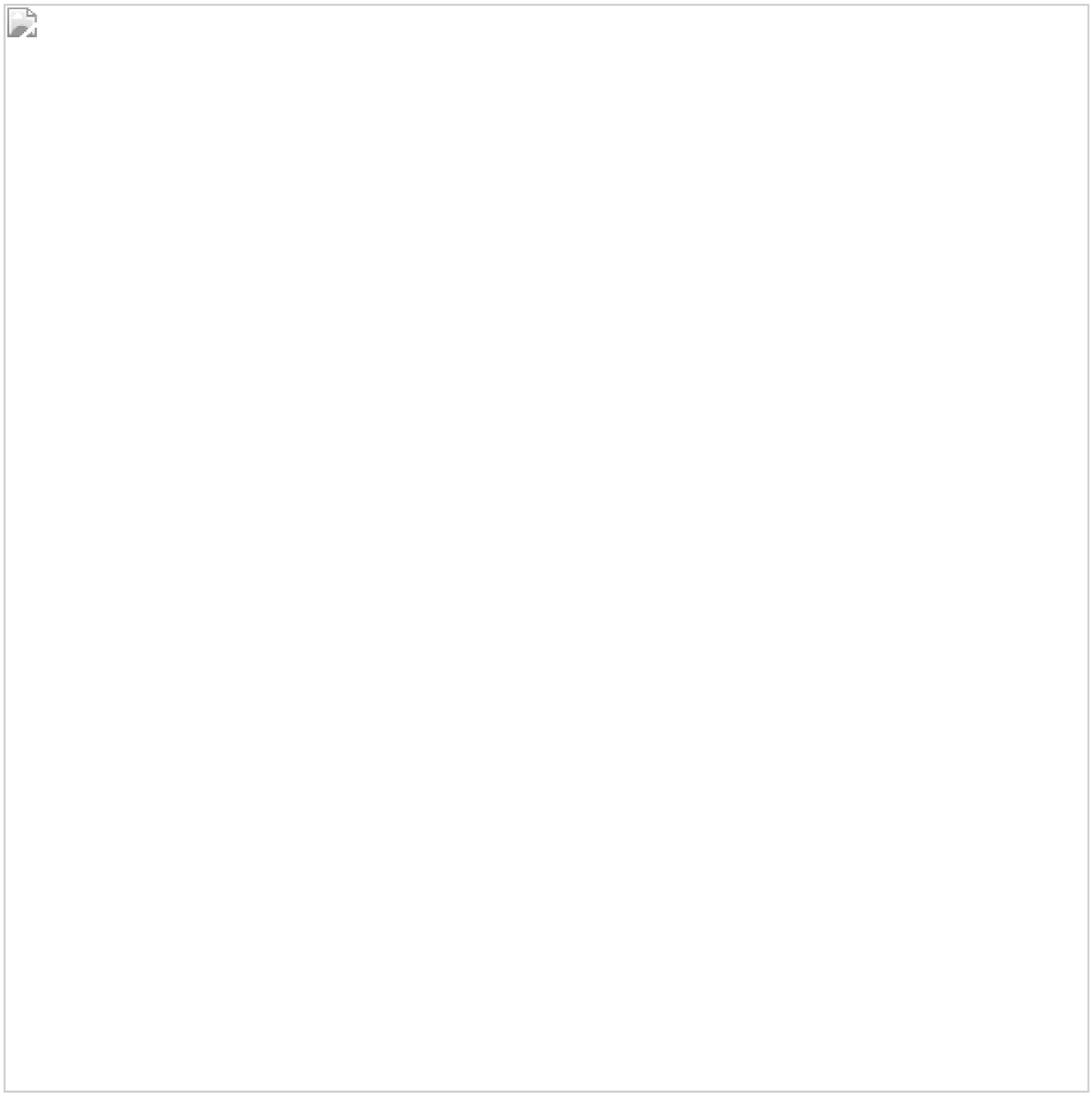


Think about it

1. What did the children call their master?

- ○ Black Heart
- ○ Old Kite
- ○ Master Magpie

Ch'ang the Goose



Not far from the river, an old man lived in a tumble-down shanty. His only companion was a goose named Ch'ang, who watched the gate at night and screamed if any stranger came near.

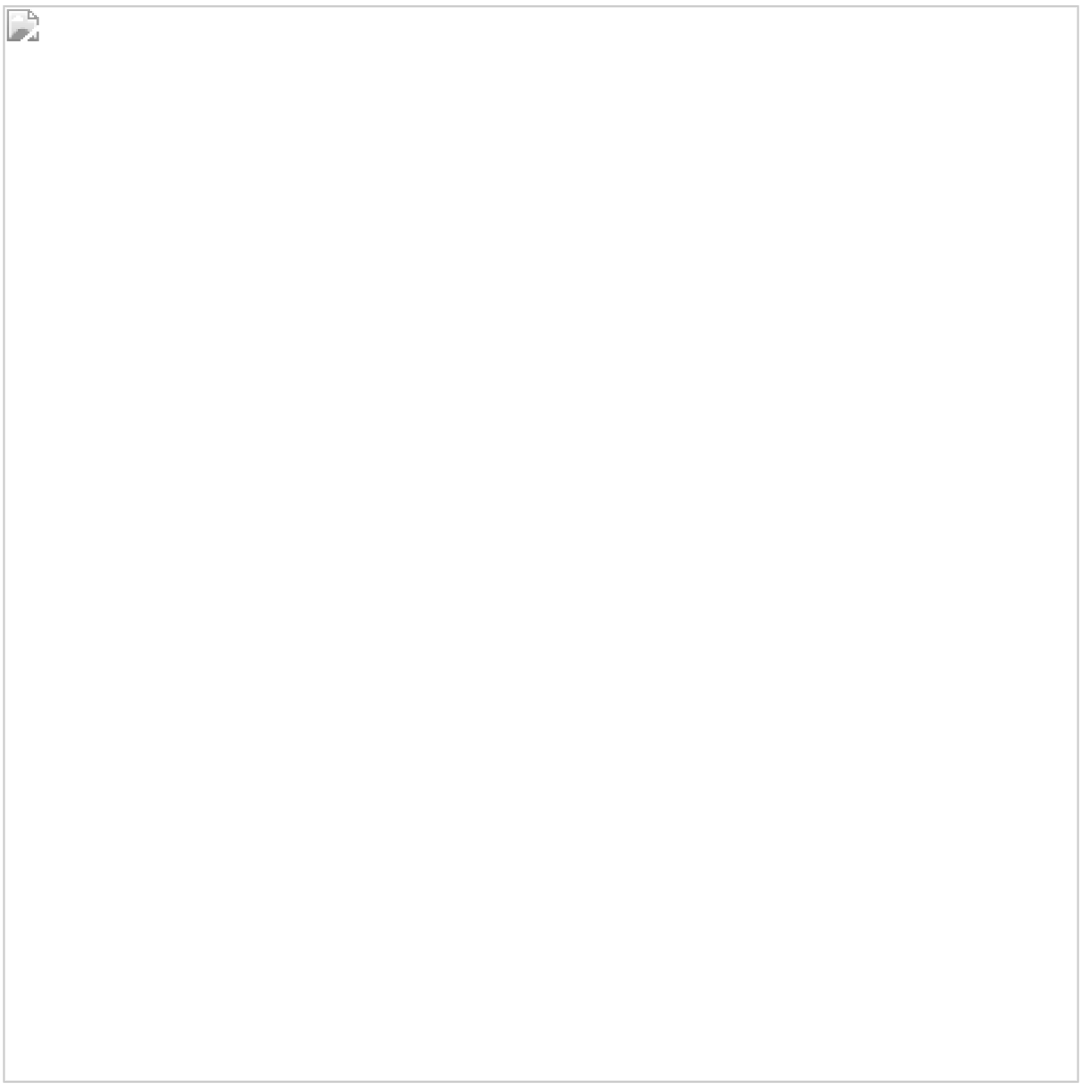
Hu-lin and the goose were close friends. She often stopped to chat with him when she passed the old man's cottage. Ch'ang had an unusually long neck, so he could pry into most of his master's affairs, and he told all he knew to Hu-lin.

That is how she knew that his master was a miser who kept a great deal of money hidden in his yard.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hu-lin and a goose were friends. Who is one of your friends, and what do you talk about?

Ch'ang the Goose · another picture

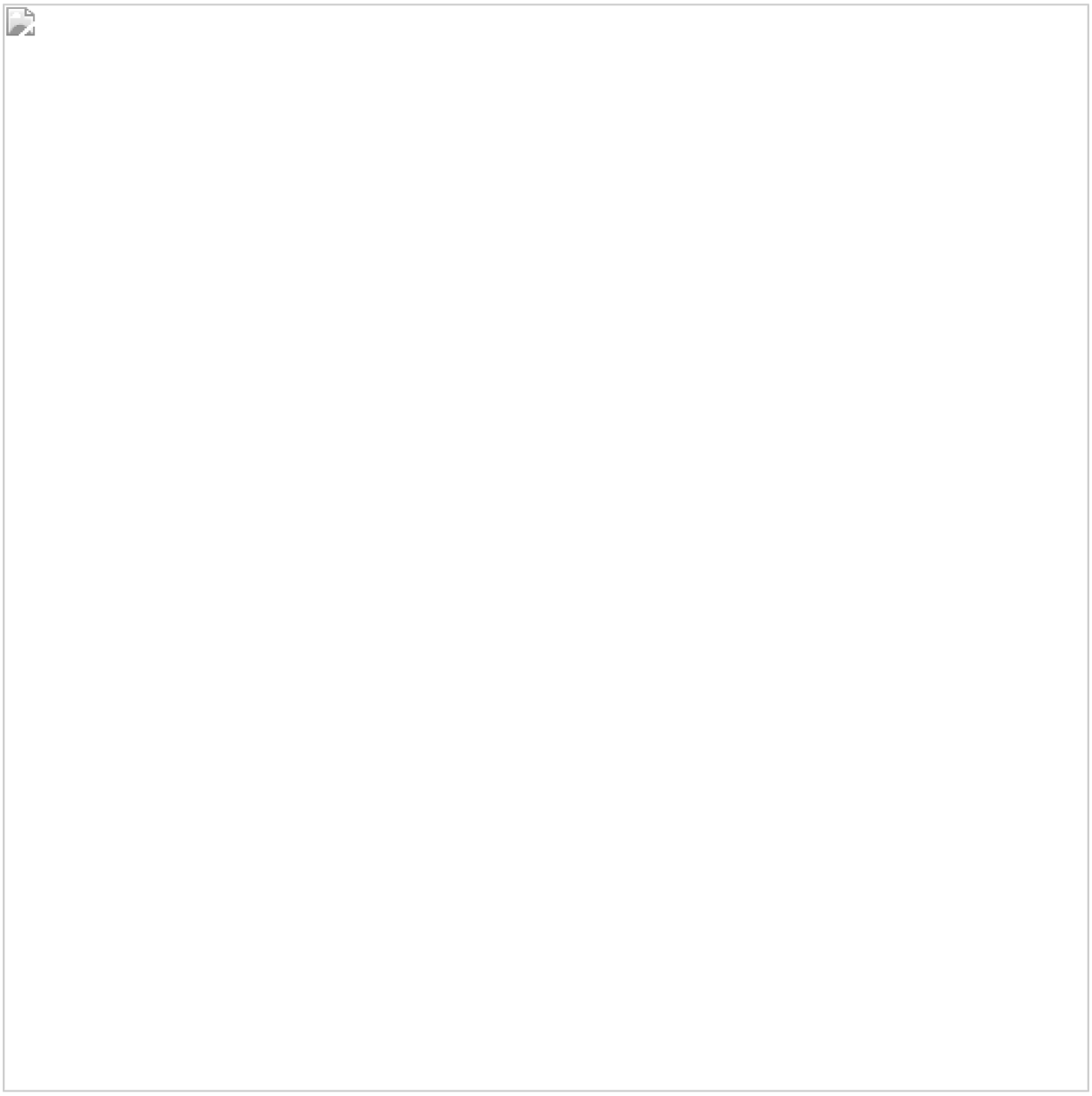


Think about it

1. What was Ch'ang's job?

- ○ Pulling a cart
- ○ Watching the gate at night
- ○ Catching fish

What the Goose Saw



On the very morning that Black Heart beat Hu-lin, Ch'ang made a startling discovery. He slipped into the house at daybreak, and there on the bed lay a young man sound asleep instead of the greybeard he called his master.

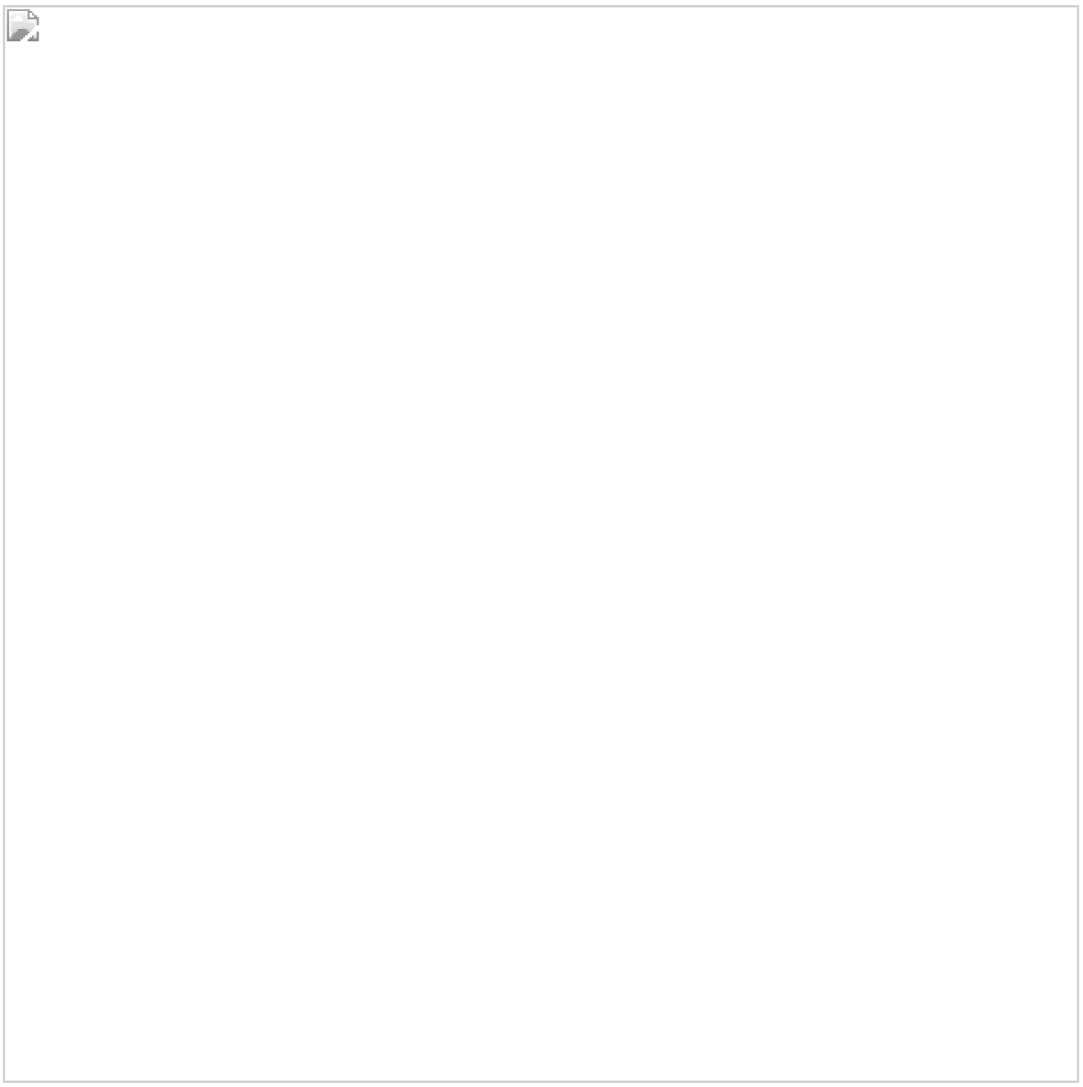
Then, before his very eyes, the youth changed suddenly into his former shape and was an old man again.

Ch'ang was terrified. When the old man left the gate ajar, the goose slipped out into the road and went to find Hu-lin by the river.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ch'ang had a secret too big to keep to himself. Who would you tell?

What the Goose Saw · another picture

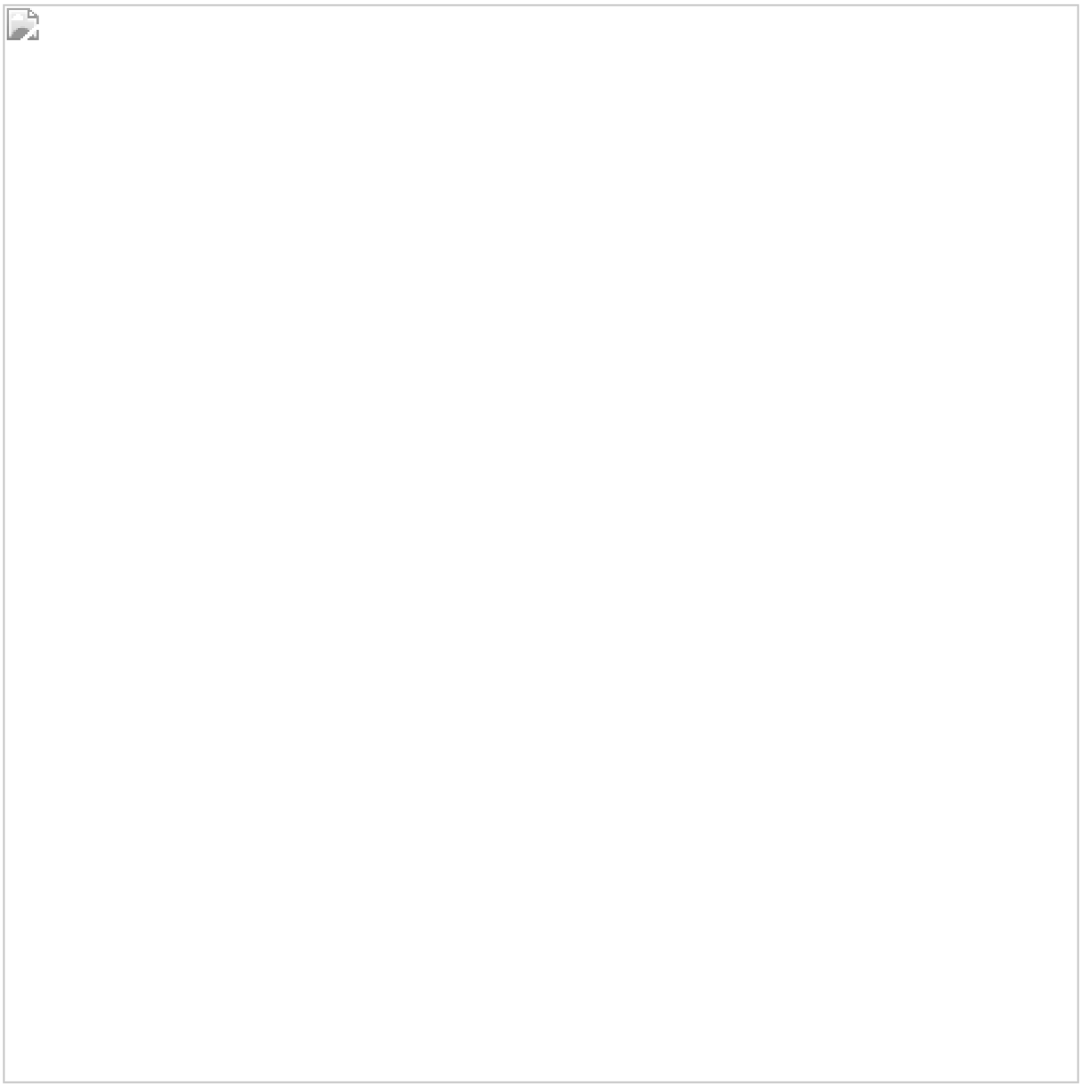


Think about it

1. What did Ch'ang see?

- ○ A young man turn into an old man
- ○ A tiger in the yard
- ○ His master fly away

A Fairy in Disguise



Ch'ang put his bill close to Hu-lin's ear and told her. She forgot her own misery at hearing his wonderful story.

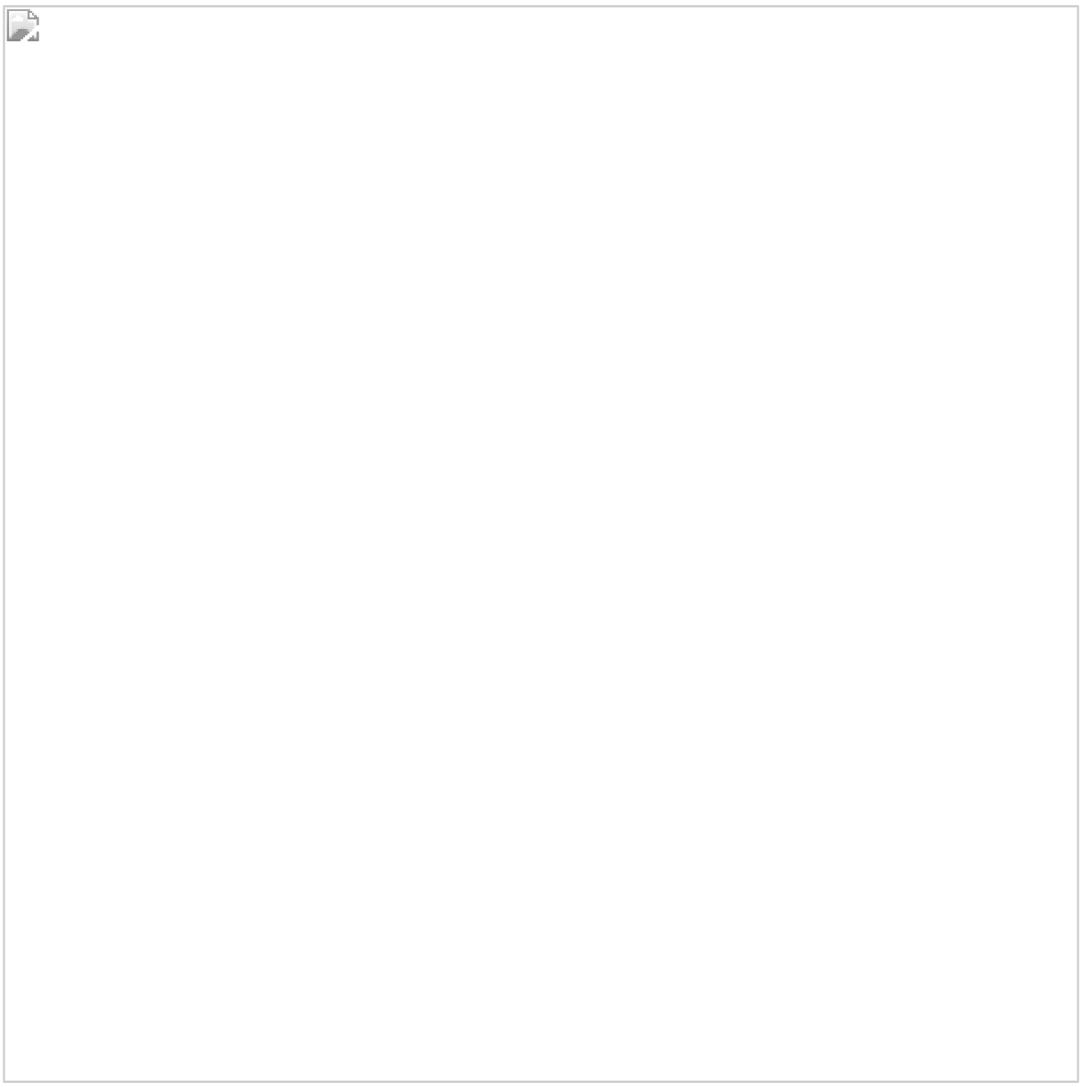
“Are you quite sure there was not some friend of the miser's spending the night with him?” she asked gravely. “Yes, yes, perfectly sure, for he has no friends,” said the gander.

“Then he must be a fairy in disguise!” announced Hu-lin wisely.

“A fairy! what's that?” asked Ch'ang. She told him, and he was speechless with amazement. “If my master is that kind of man,” he said, “he can save you from all your troubles.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Hu-lin forgot her sadness for a moment while she helped her friend. Has that ever happened to you?

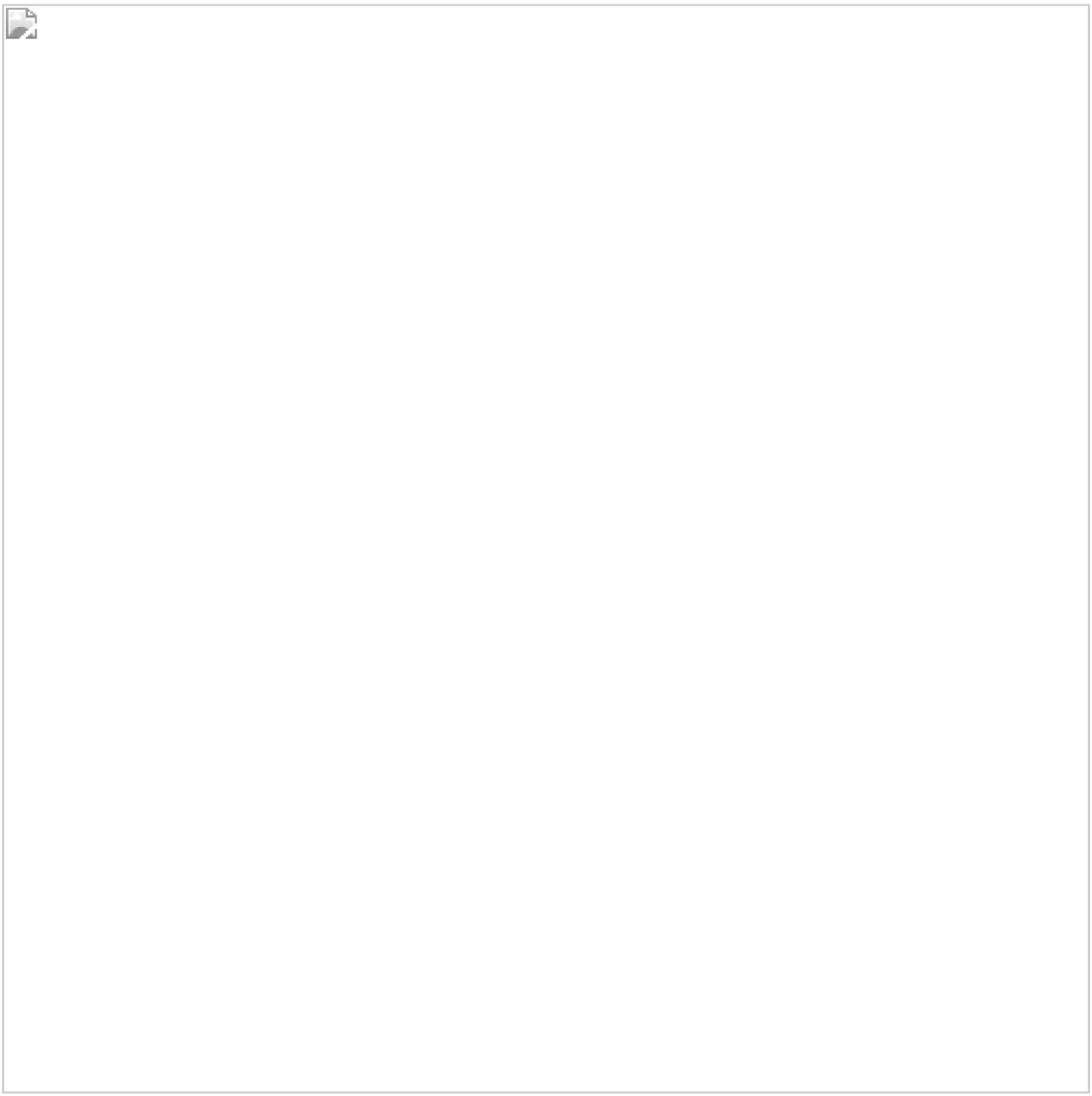


Think about it

1. What did Hu-lin think the miser must be?

- ○ A thief
- ○ A fairy in disguise
- ○ A king

Hiding Behind the Baskets



They hurried to the miser's compound, but the old man was nowhere to be seen.

Hu-lin looked at his brick bed. “Well, that's rather strange for a miser,” she said. “It costs more to keep a fire going than it does to feed a man.”

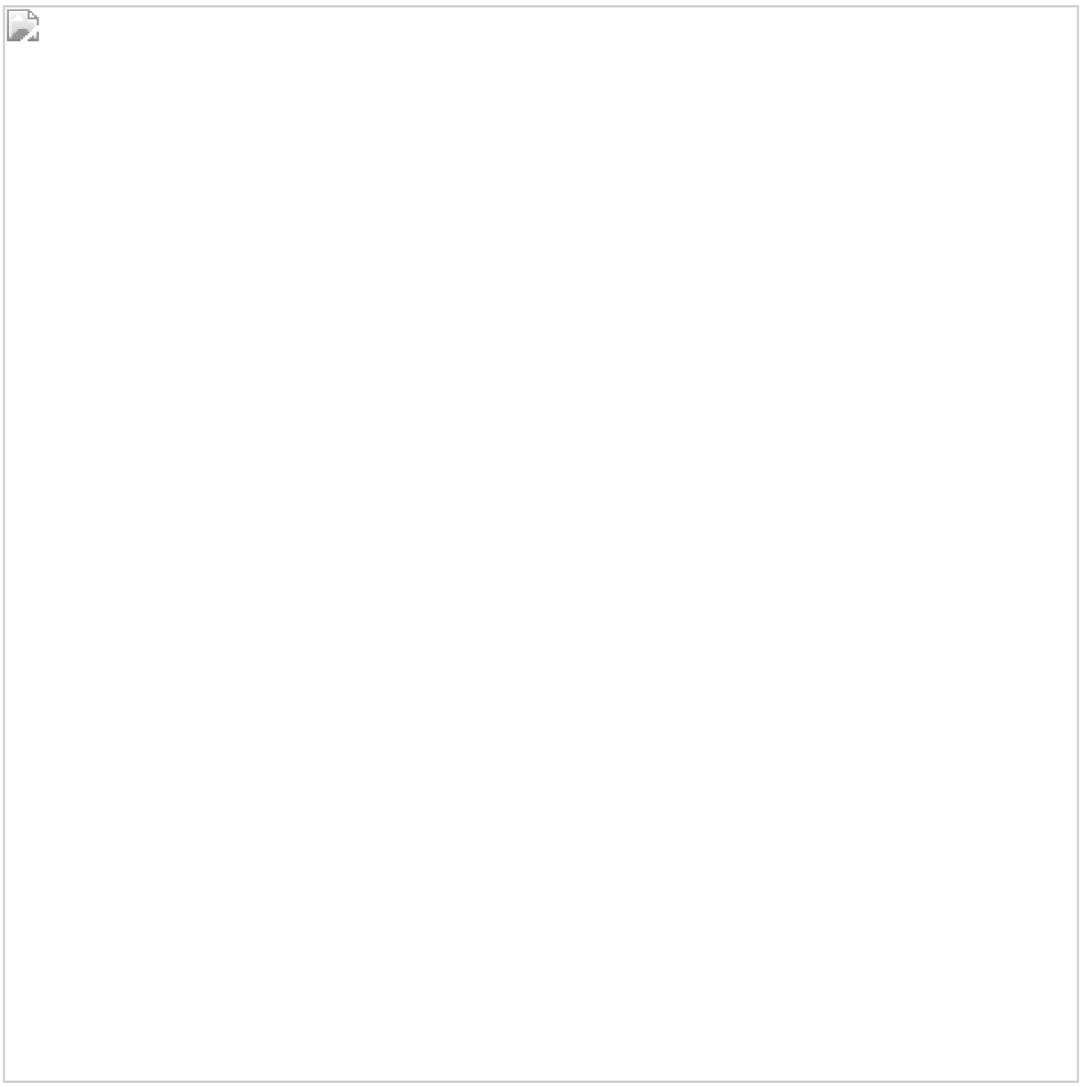
Just then they heard the gate slam and the bar thrown into place. “Good gracious! what ever shall we do?” cried Hu-lin. “Let's hide in this dark corner behind the baskets,” said the gander.

They stayed hidden all day. By nightfall, girl and goose were fast asleep in a corner of his room.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hu-lin noticed something strange that nobody else had thought about. What have you noticed that others missed?

Hiding Behind the Baskets · another picture

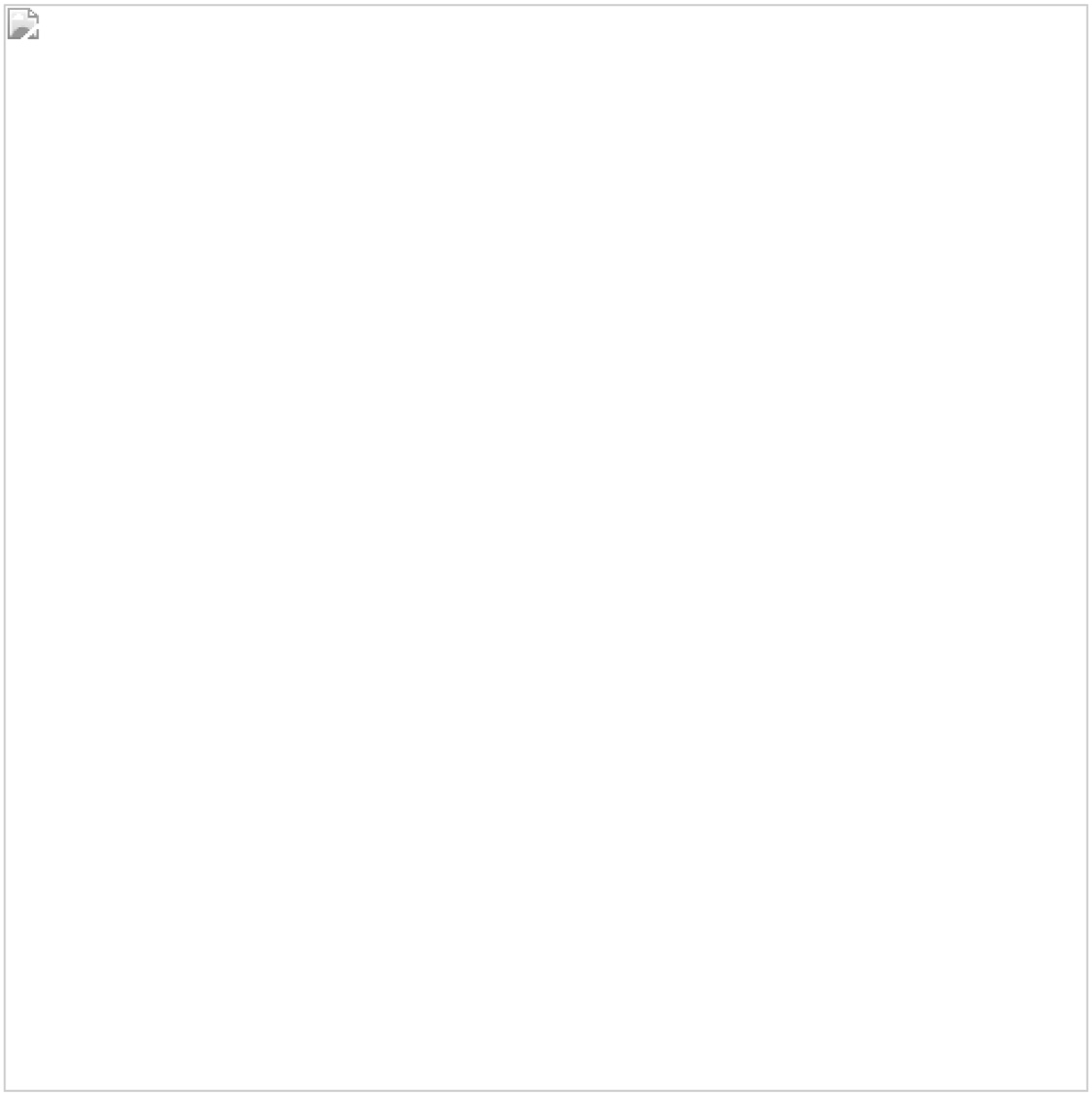


Think about it

1. Where did Hu-lin and Ch'ang hide?

- ○ Under the bed
- ○ Behind the baskets
- ○ In the well

The Young Man



At first light, Hu-lin awoke. On the bed, instead of the miser, lay a young man with hair as black as a raven's wing. Her cry of wonder woke him.

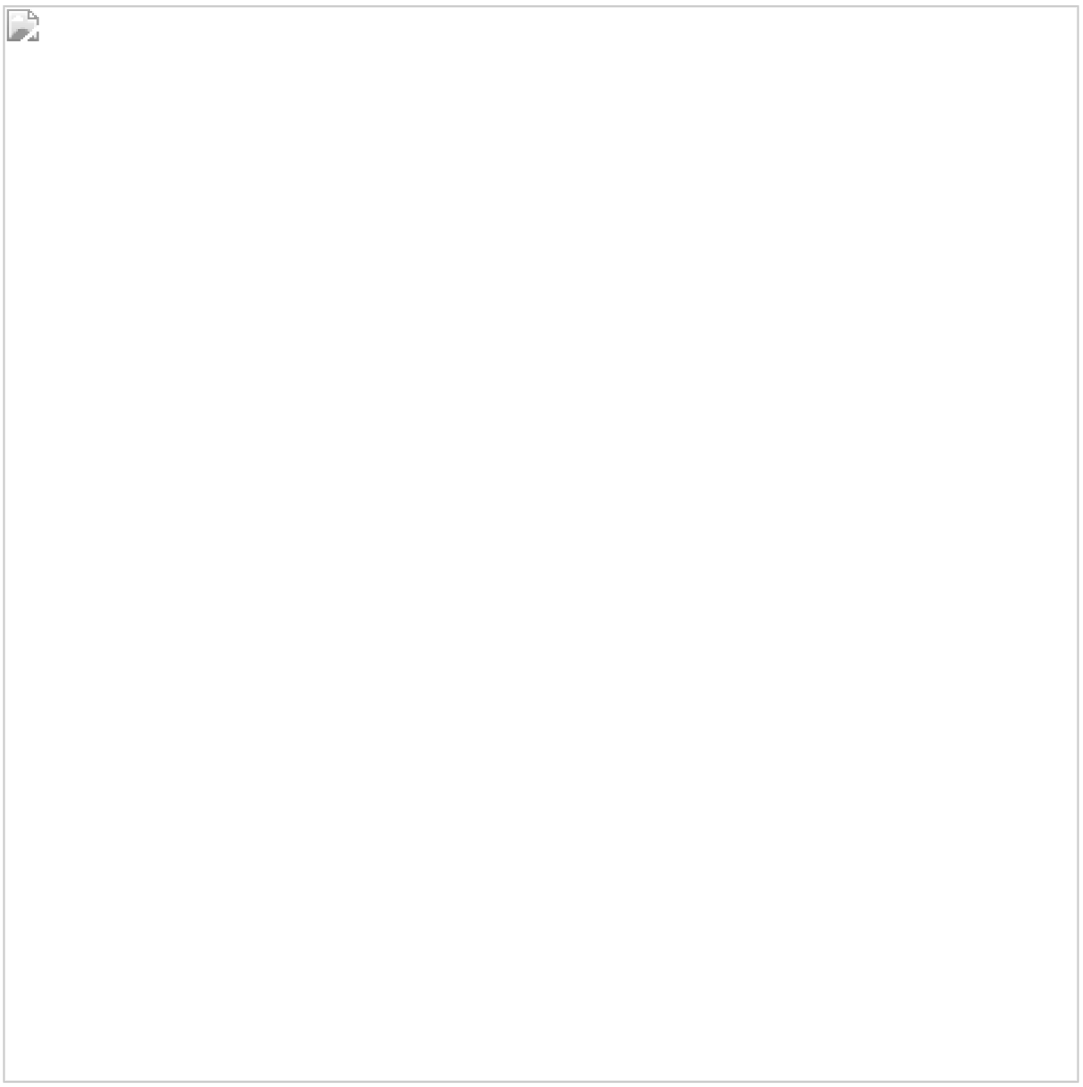
“What are you doing in my bedroom?” he asked. “And what have you done to my master?” asked the gander.

“Am I not your master, you mad creature?” laughed the man. “My master was old and ugly,” said Ch'ang, “but you are still young and handsome.”

“What!” shouted the man. “You say I am still young?” “Yes, indeed you are, sir,” said Hu-lin. “At last! at last!” he cried. “I am free, free, free from all my troubles!”

TALK ABOUT IT

The young man laughed with joy. What makes you laugh out loud with joy?

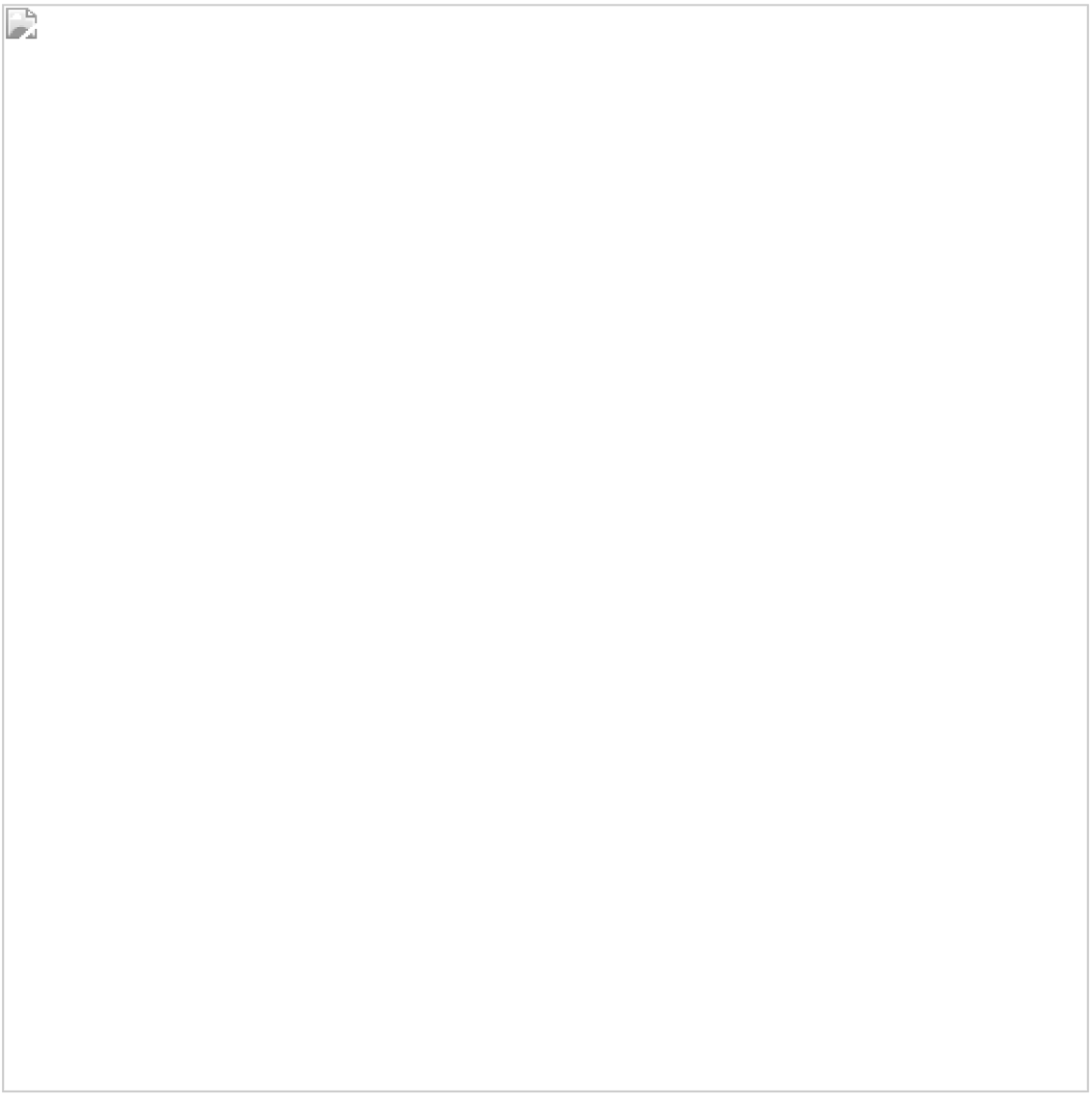


Think about it

1. What did the man call Ch'ang?

- ○ A mad creature
- ○ A good watchman
- ○ A little tiger

The Spirit of the Well



“I am Hu-lin, the slave girl,” said the child. The young man clapped his hands. “It is to you that I owe my freedom!” he cried.

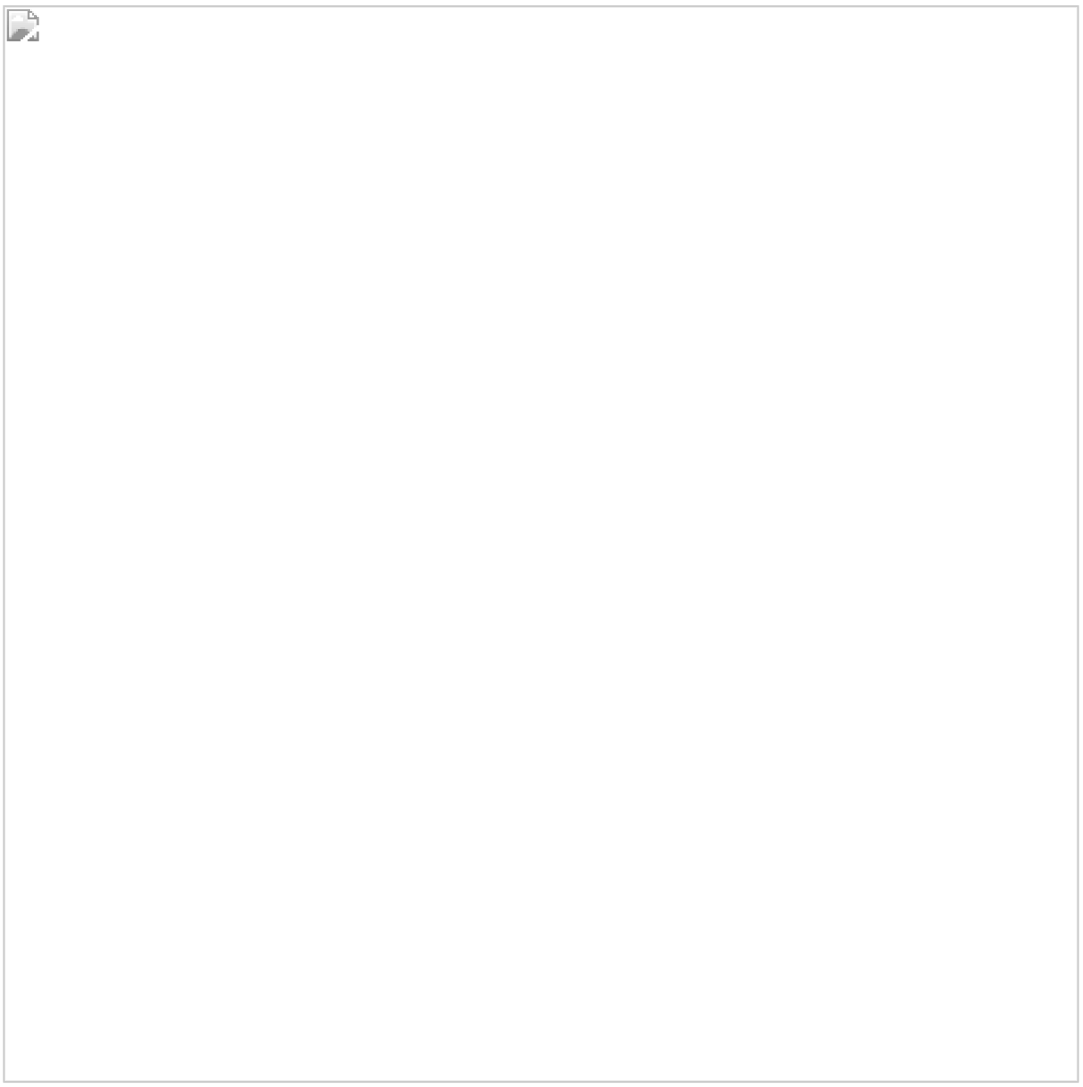
When he was a boy, his rich father gave him everything he wished. His teacher warned him not to anger the evil spirits, but the boy only laughed.

One day the teacher said a spirit ruled the garden well and would be vexed if anyone jumped over it. “I don't believe there is a spirit in this well,” said the boy.

“And before my tutor could stop me,” said the young man, “I leaped across the mouth of the well.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The boy would not listen to his teacher. Have you ever not listened to someone who was trying to help you?

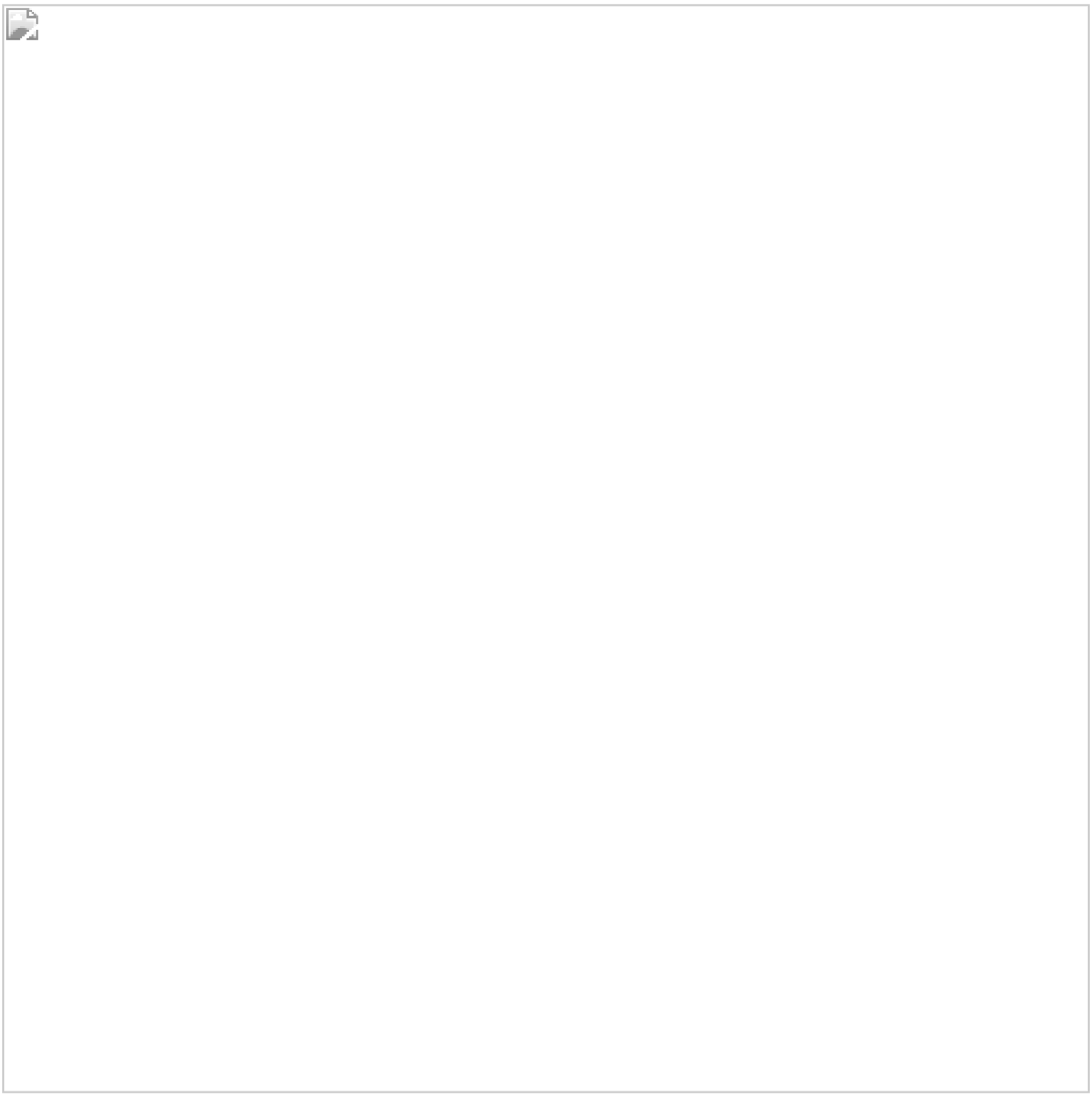


Think about it

1. What did the boy do?

- ○ He climbed a tree
- ○ He leaped across the mouth of the well
- ○ He ran away from home

The Riddle



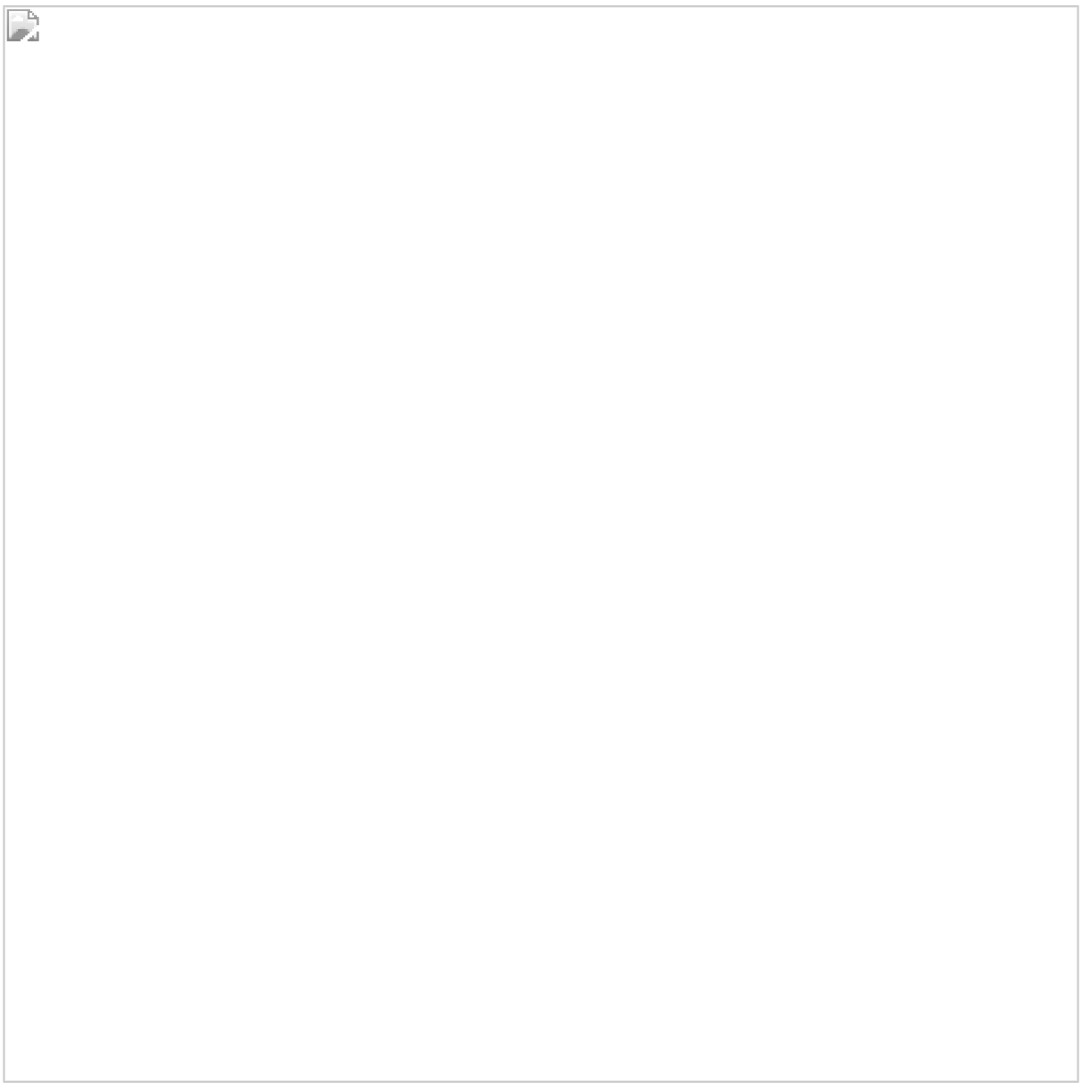
“No sooner had I touched the ground than I felt a strange shrinking of my body.” His skin grew yellow and wrinkled, and his hair thin and white. He had become an old man.

A fortune-teller said the spirit of the well had changed him into a miser. Only while he slept would he be in his natural shape, and if anyone saw him then, he would change back at once.

There was one small chance of a cure. If ever “a mad goose should come in, leading a tiger-forest out of slavery,” then “the charm would be broken.” No one understood this riddle.

TALK ABOUT IT

Nobody could solve the riddle. What do you think a mad goose leading a tiger-forest out of slavery could mean?

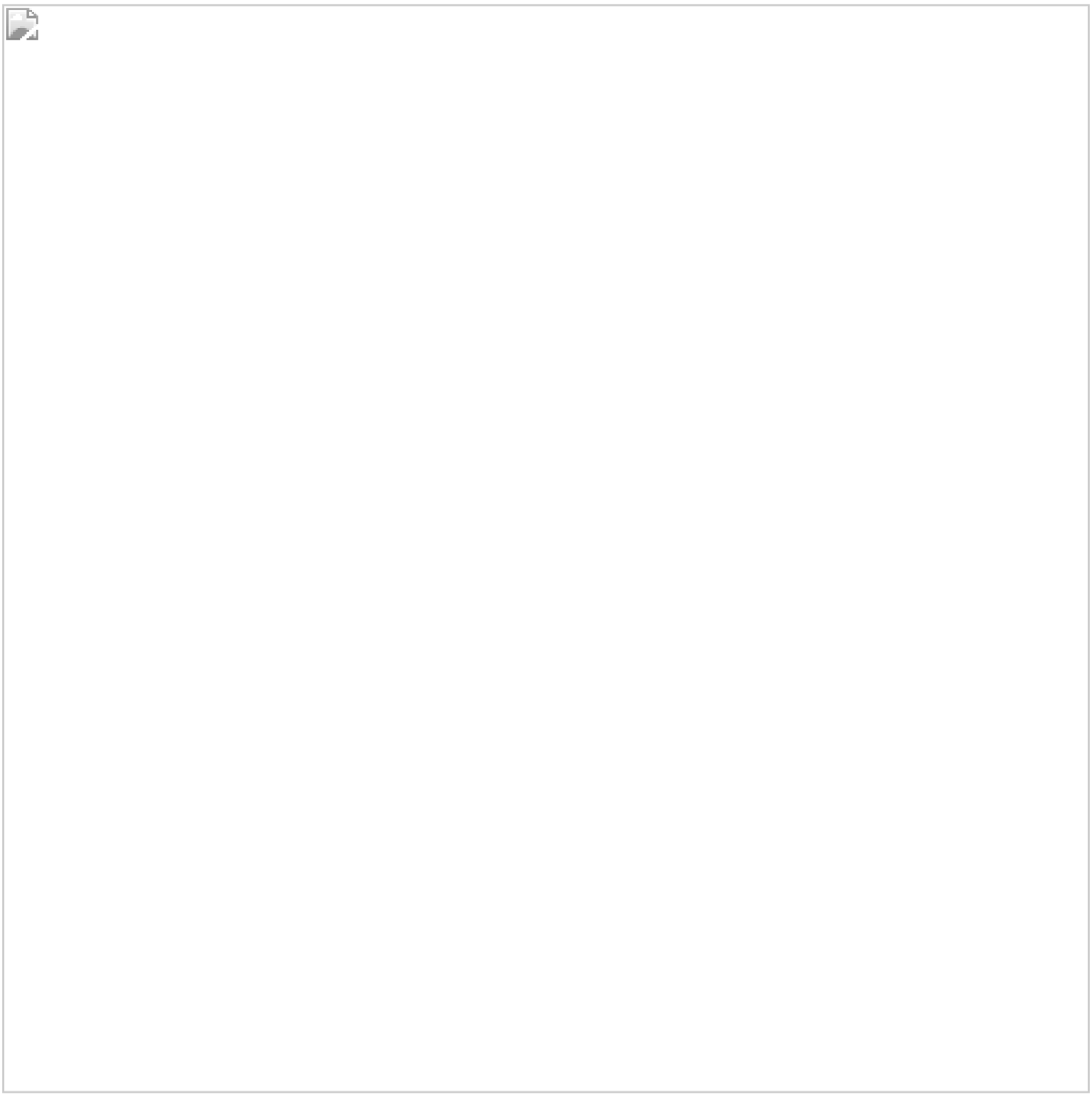


Think about it

1. When was the young man in his own shape?

- ○ At noon
- ○ Only while he slept
- ○ Only in the garden

The Miser and the Goose



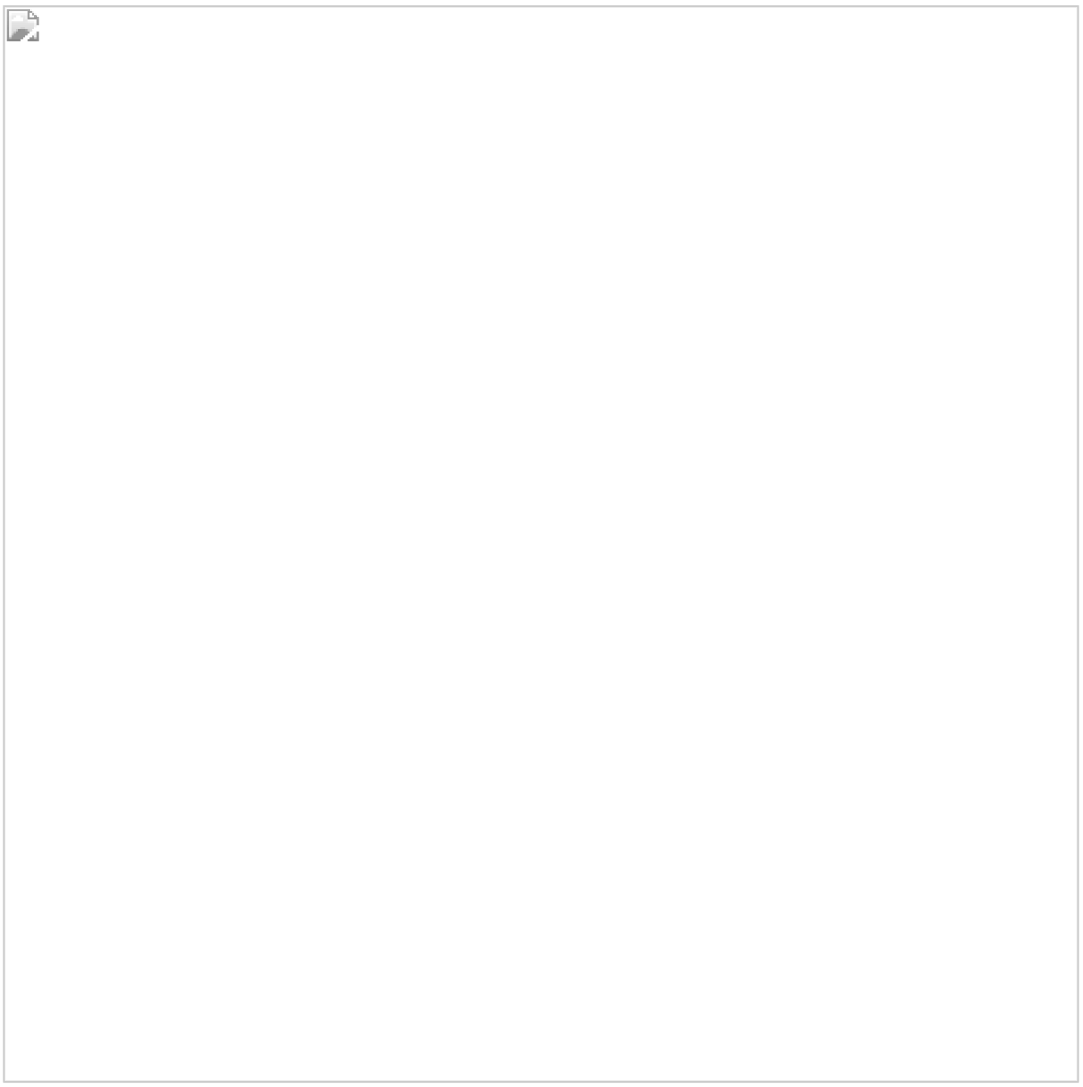
That night he left his city and came to this place, bought the house, and began the life of a miser. For five years he stored away money and starved himself, body and soul.

Remembering the riddle, he kept a goose to be his night watchman. “But I am not a mad goose,” hissed Ch'ang angrily. “If it had not been for me you would still be a wrinkled miser.”

“Quite right, dear Ch'ang, quite right,” said the young man. “You were not mad; so I gave you the name Ch'ang, which means mad, and thus made a mad goose of you.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The young man gave the goose a name to make part of the riddle come true. Do you know what your own name means?

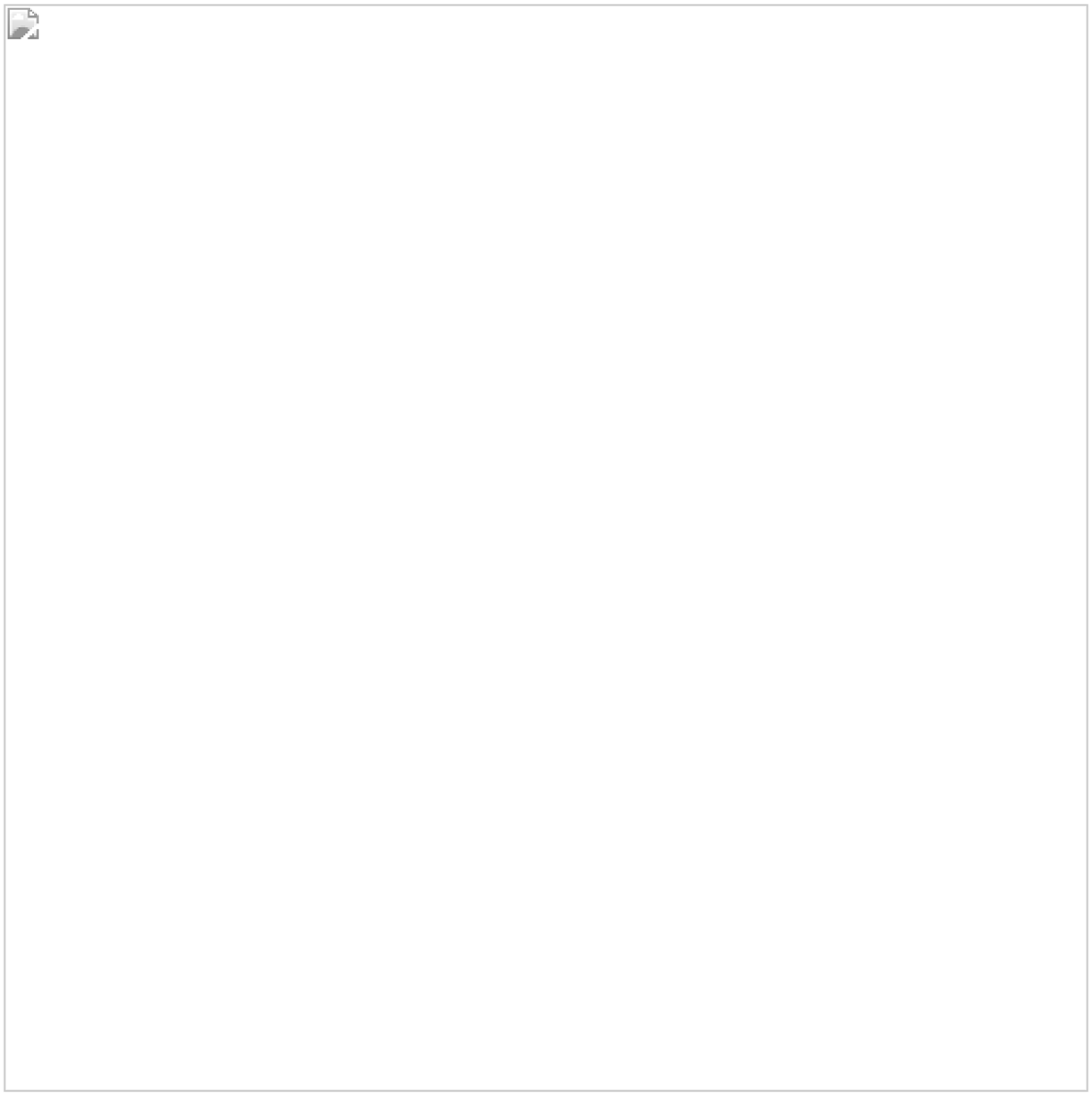


Think about it

1. What does the name Ch'ang mean?

- ○ Mad
- ○ Brave
- ○ Gentle

The Tiger-Forest



“I could think of no way of securing that Ch'ang should lead a tiger-forest into my room while I was sleeping,” said the young man. “To-day by accident it has really come to pass.”

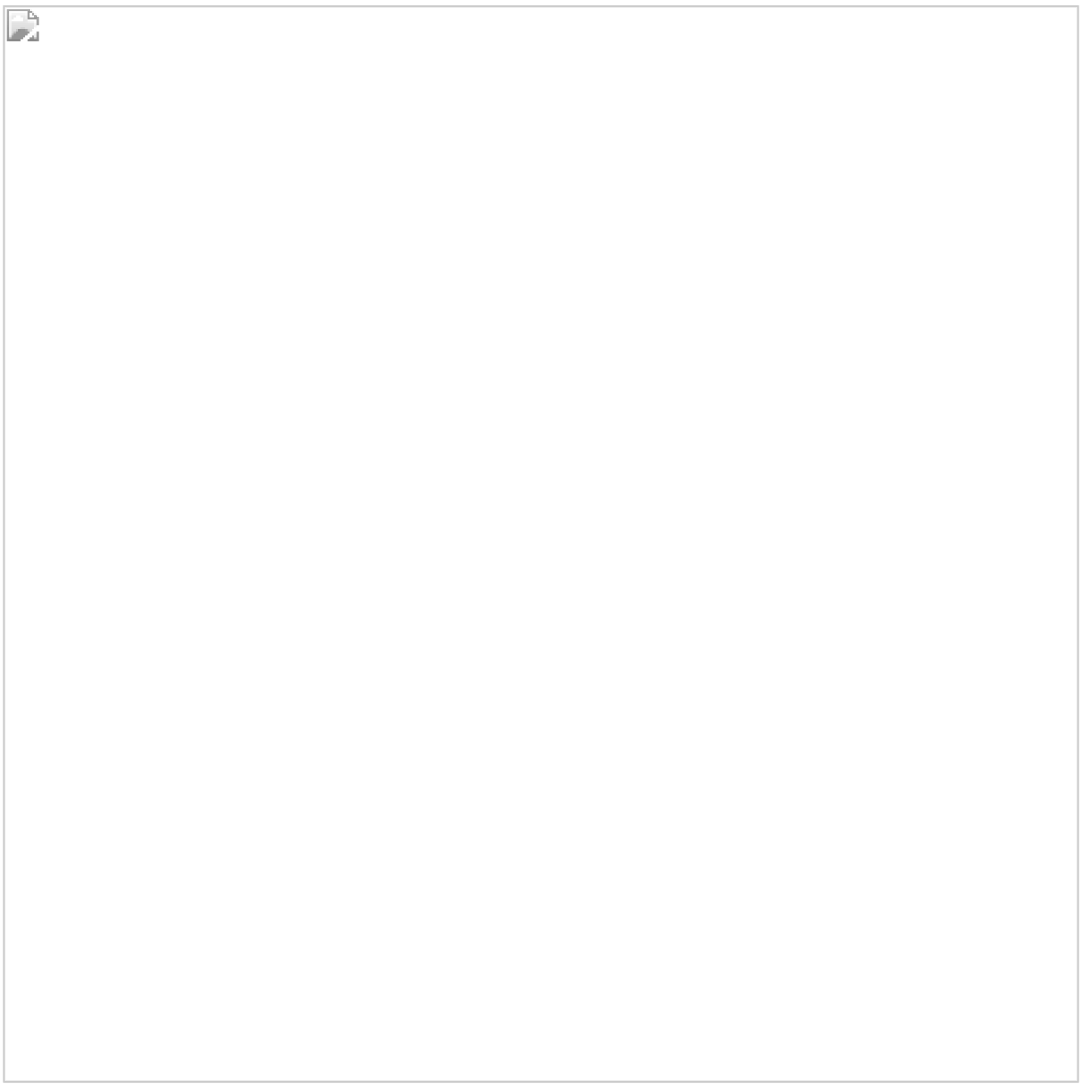
“So I am the tiger-forest, am I?” laughed Hu-lin.

“Yes, indeed, you are, my dear child, a pretty little tiger-forest, for Hu means tiger, and lin is surely good Chinese for a grove of trees. Then, too, you told me you were a slave girl. Hence, Ch'ang led you out of slavery.”

“Oh, I am so glad!” said Hu-lin, “so glad that you don't have to be a horrible old miser any longer.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Hu-lin was glad for him before she thought of herself. Why do you think she was?



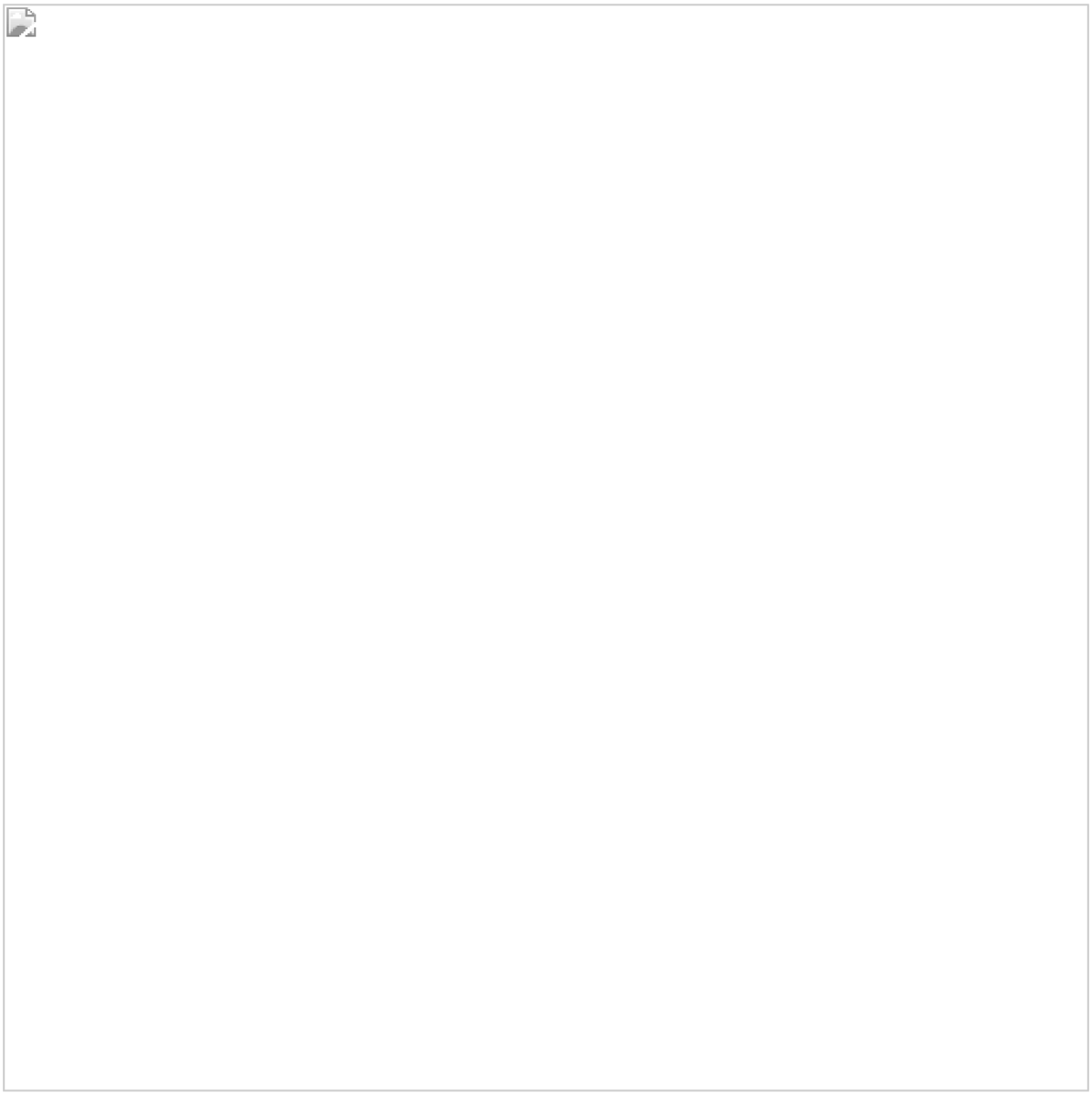
Think about it

1. What does Hu mean?

- ○ Goose
- ○ Tiger
- ○ River

2. Who was the mad goose, and who was the tiger-forest?

A Knock at the Gate



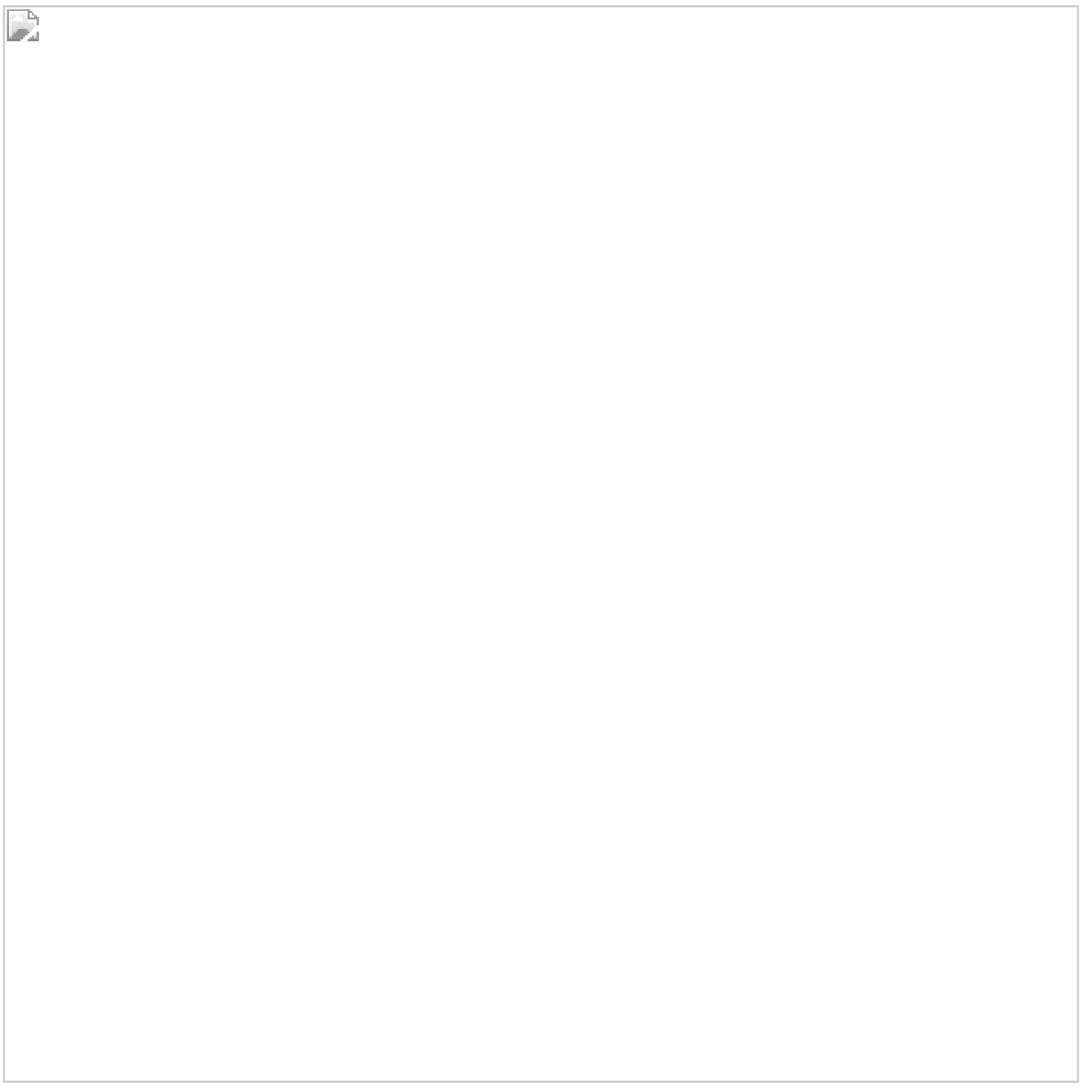
Just then there was a loud banging on the front gate. “Alas! it must be Black Heart, my master,” said Hu-lin, beginning to cry.

“Don't be frightened,” said the youth, stroking the child's head. “You have saved me, and I shall certainly do as much for you.”

It did not take long for the grateful young man to buy Hu-lin's freedom. He offered as much for it as her master had expected to get when she was fourteen or fifteen years old.

TALK ABOUT IT

The young man wanted to help Hu-lin as she had helped him. When has someone helped you back?

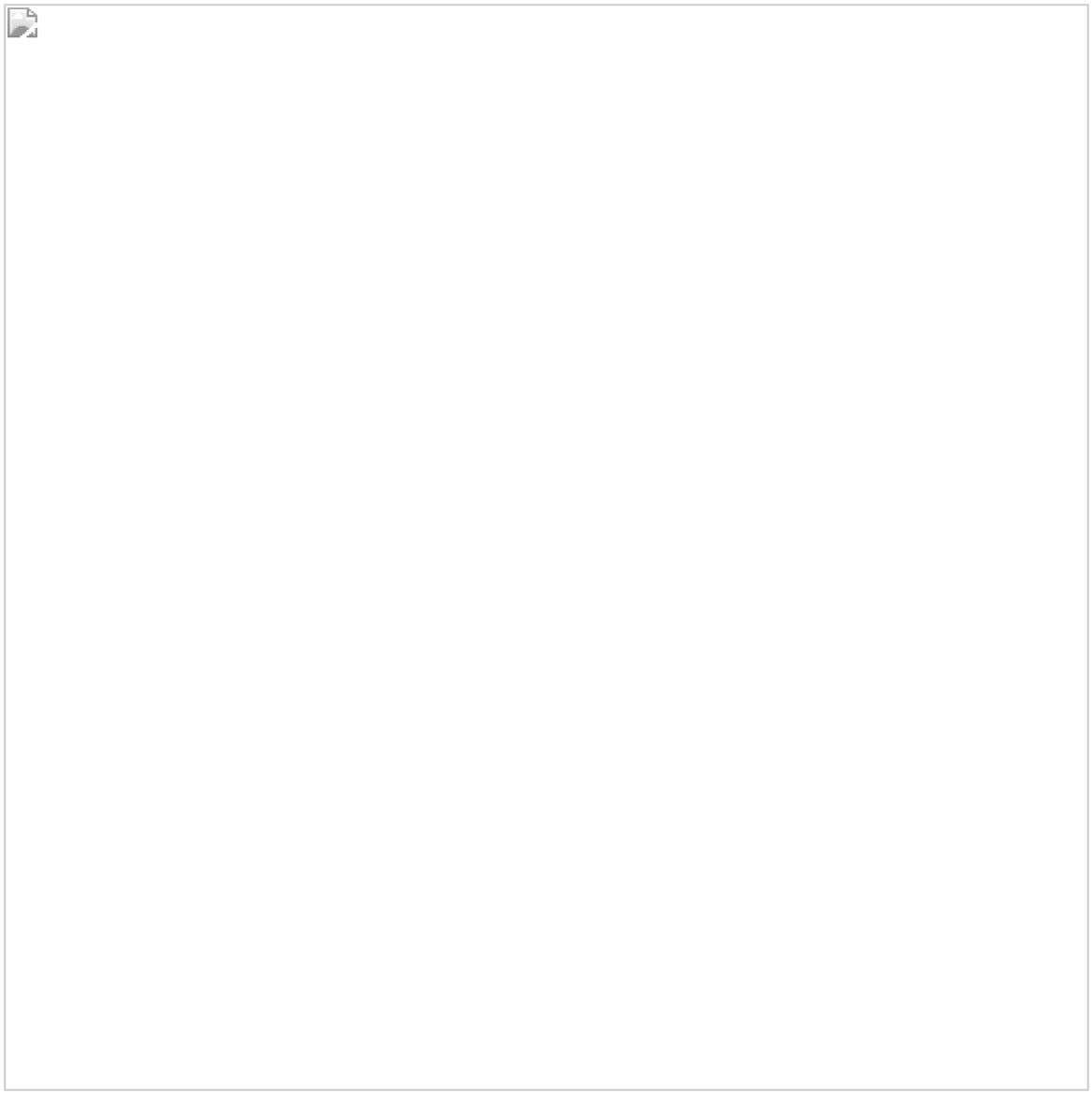


Think about it

1. Who was knocking at the gate?

- ○ The old teacher
- ○ Black Heart
- ○ The fortune-teller

Free at Last



When Hu-lin was told of the bargain she was wild with delight. She bowed low before her new master and cried out, “Oh, how happy I am, for now I shall be yours for ever and ever and ever, and good old Ch'ang shall be my playmate.”

“Yes, indeed,” he assured her. He said that she would go with him to his father's house.

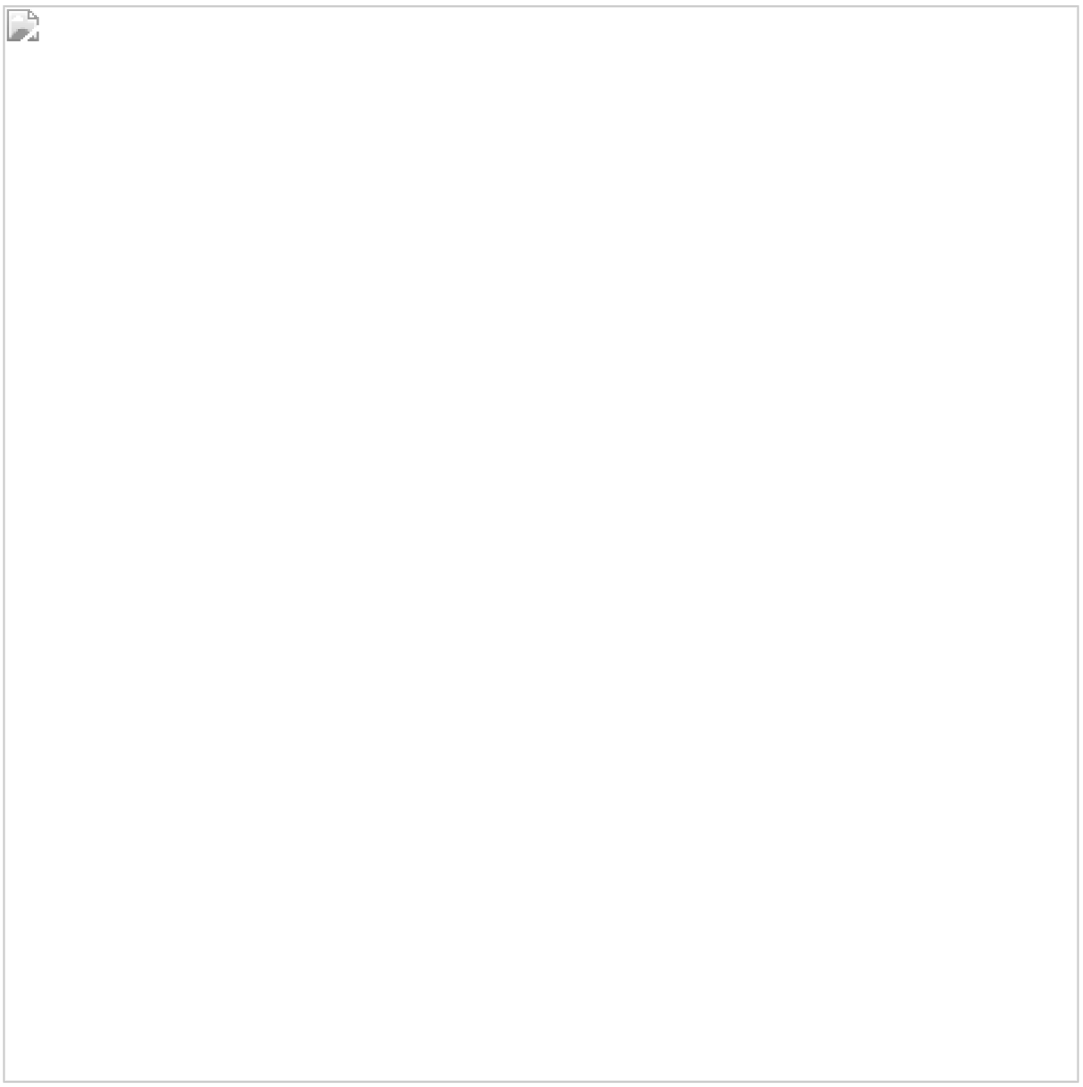
“And I shall never again have to beg for crusts on the street?” she asked him, her eyes full of wonder.

“No! never!” he answered, laughing, “and you need never fear another beating.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Hu-lin's eyes were full of wonder. What is something that fills your eyes with wonder?

Free at Last · another picture



Think about it

1. Who will be Hu-lin's playmate?

- ○ Black Heart
- ○ Ch'ang the goose
- ○ The teacher

2. Who in this story helped someone else? How?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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