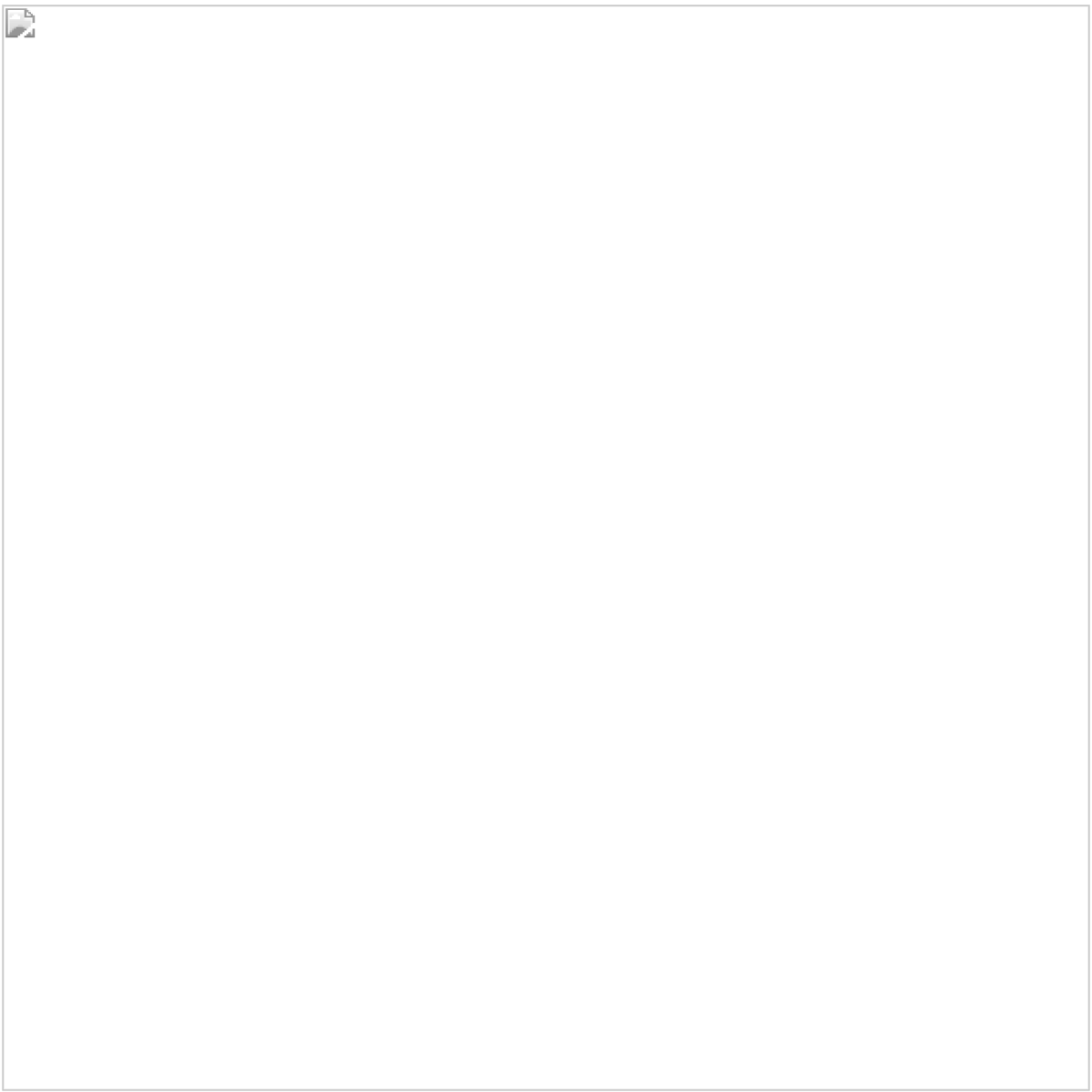
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Star-Lovers

A Tale from Japan



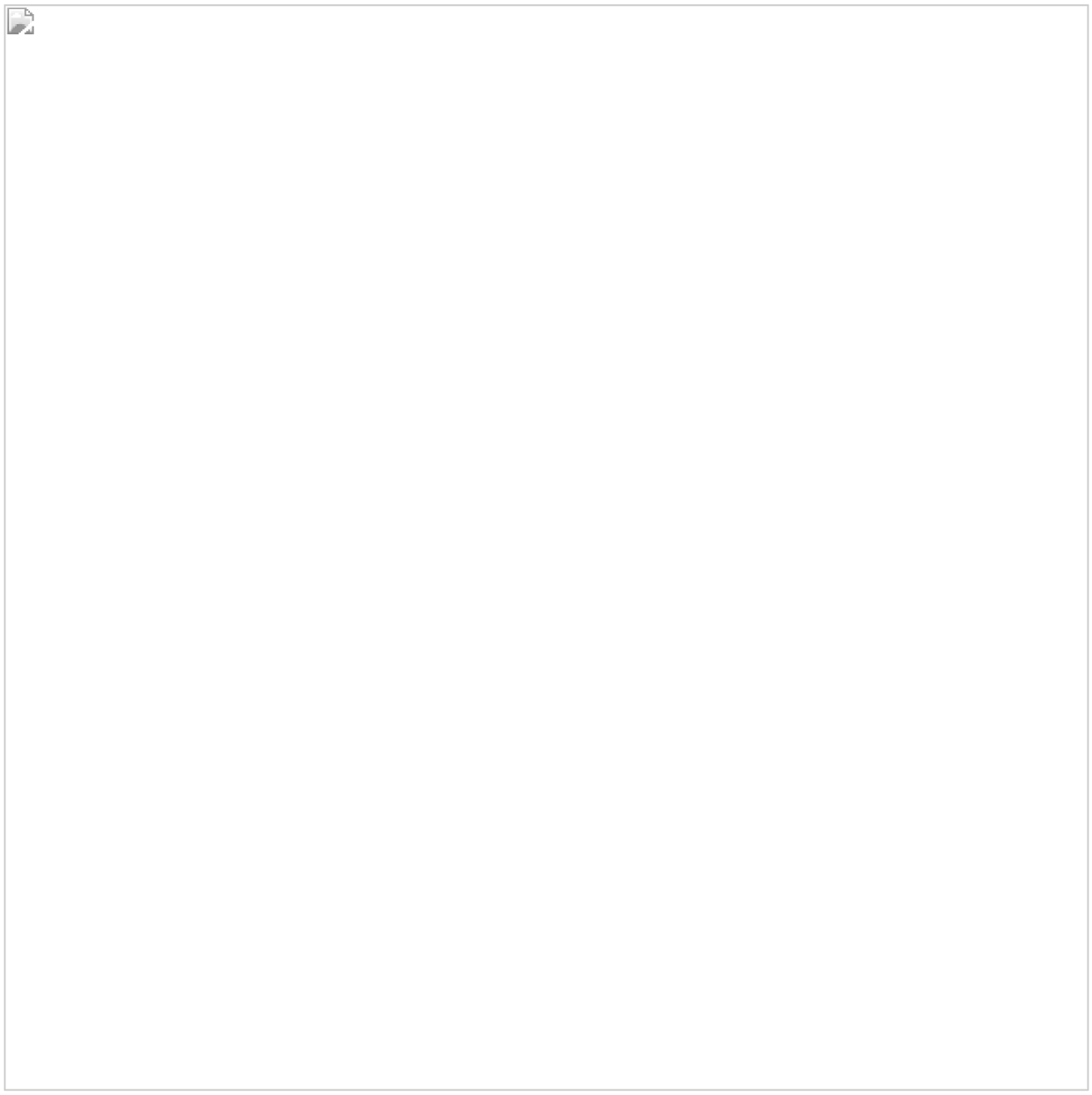
Shokujo, the daughter of the Sun, lived with her father on the banks of the Silver River of Heaven, which we call the Milky Way. Her eyes were as tender as a dove's, and she never grew tired of working for the good of others.

TALK ABOUT IT

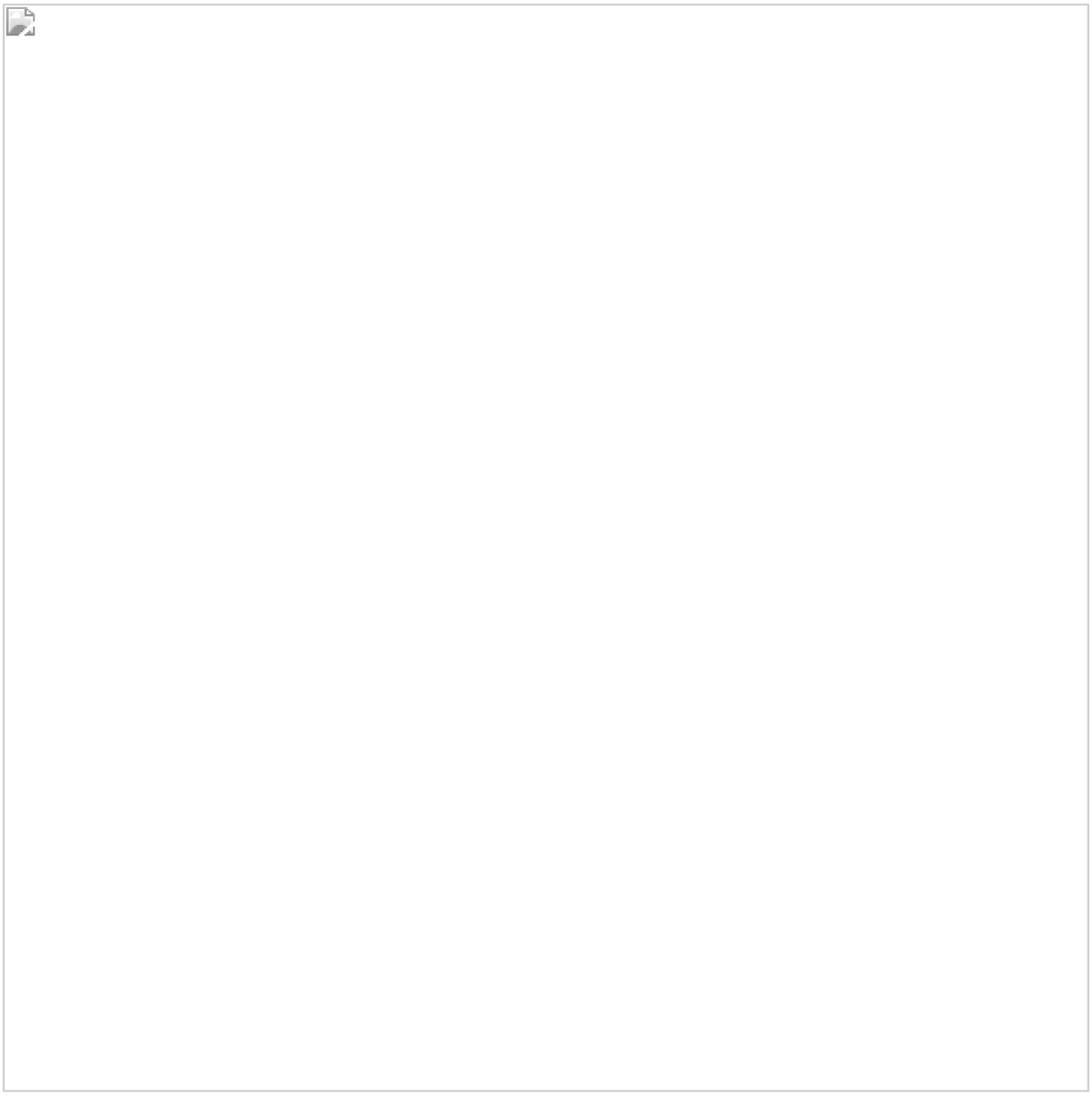
Shokujo liked to work for the good of others. What is one thing you do to help someone?

This book belongs to _____

The Star-Lovers · another picture



The Weaving Princess



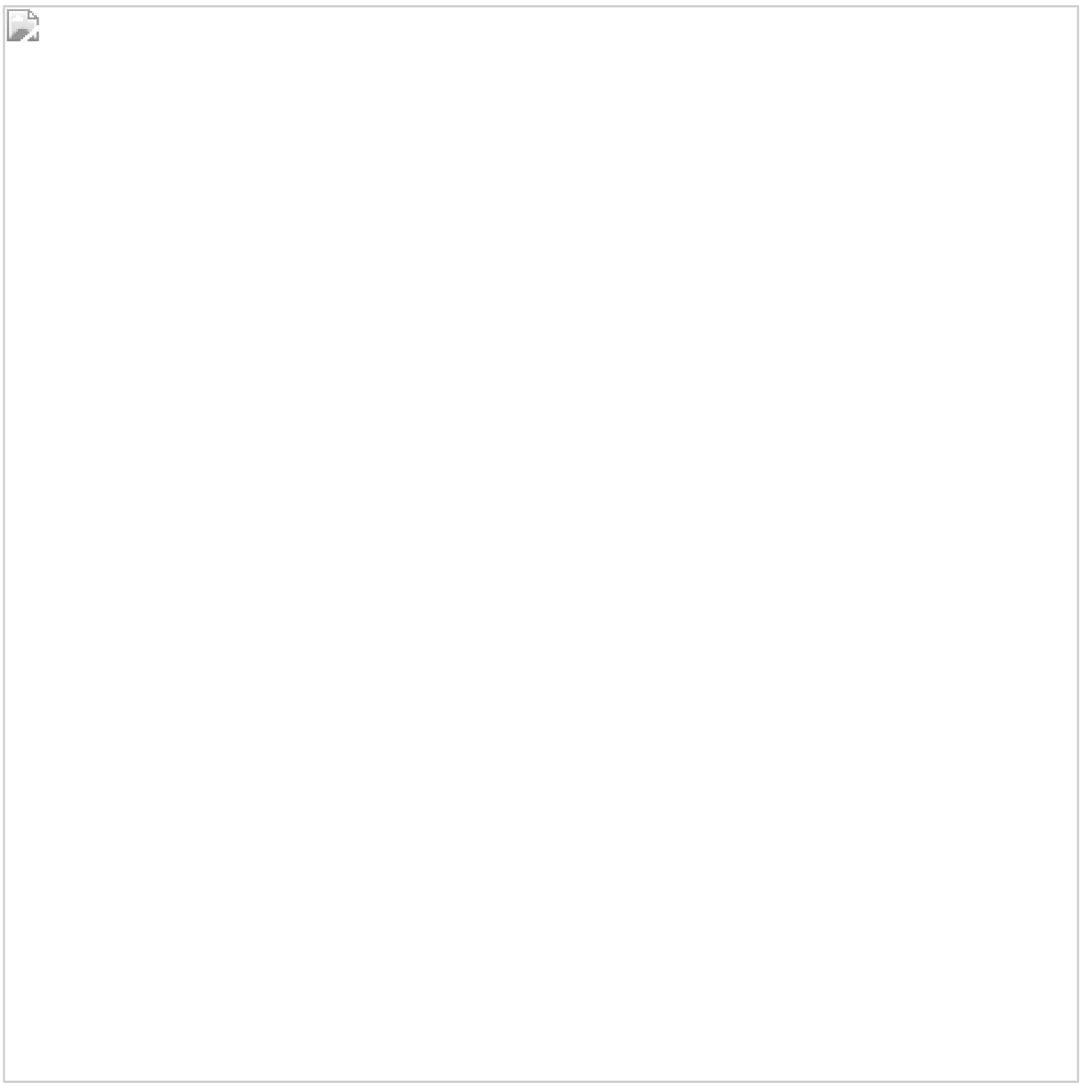
Shokujo's loom was always busy, and so she came to be called the Weaving Princess.

But her father, the Sun, was troubled. The other daughters of the air played and laughed together, and Shokujo did not join in. A soft sadness seemed to rest on her.

The Sun thought that if she were married, all would be well, and her heart would be warmed.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think her father could do to cheer her up?

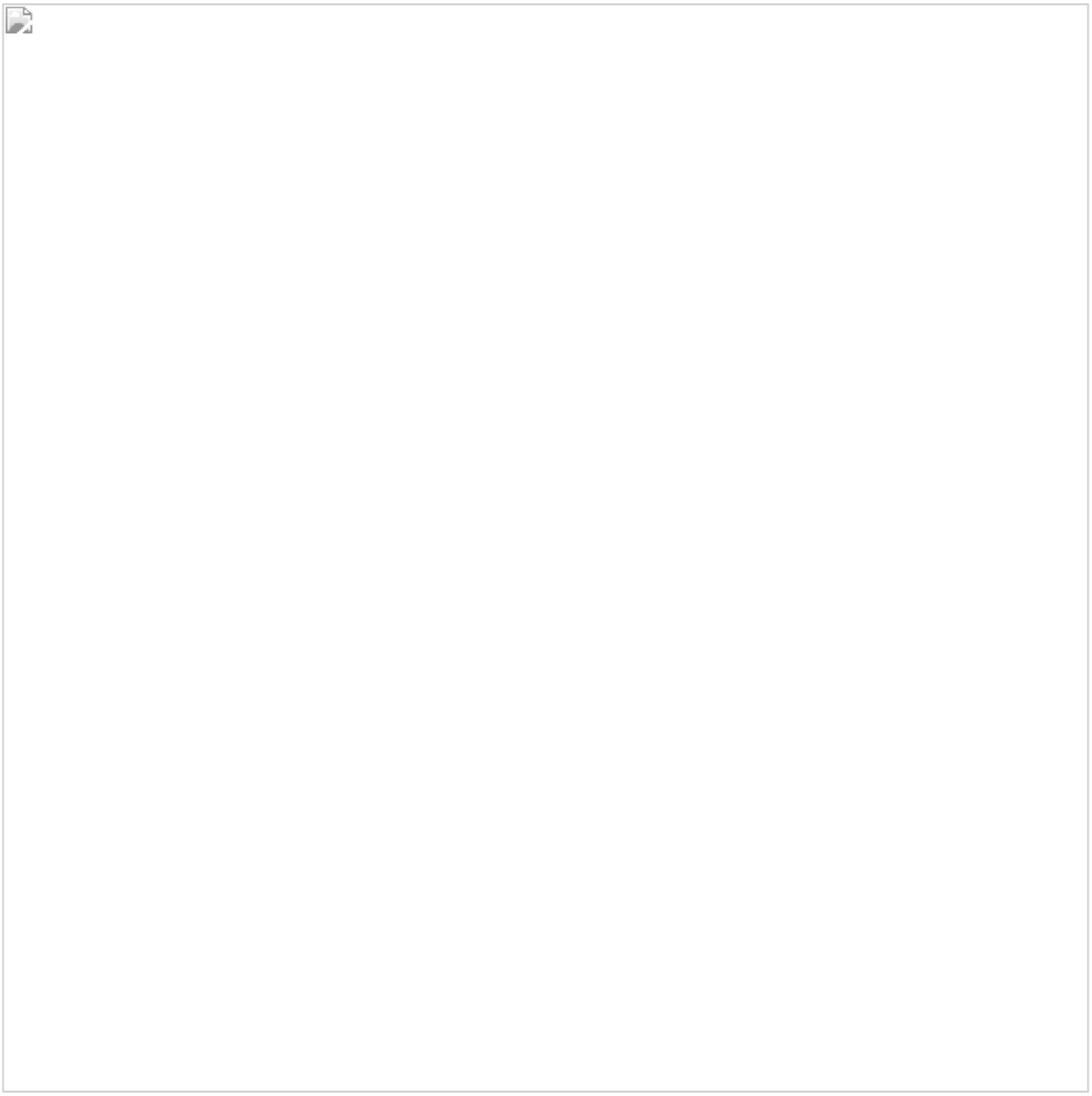


Think about it

1. Why was Shokujo called the Weaving Princess?

- ○ She worked at her loom
- ○ She wove clouds
- ○ She made boats

Kingen the Herdsman



Nearby, on the bank of the Heavenly Stream, lived an honest herdsman named Kingen. He looked after his cows.

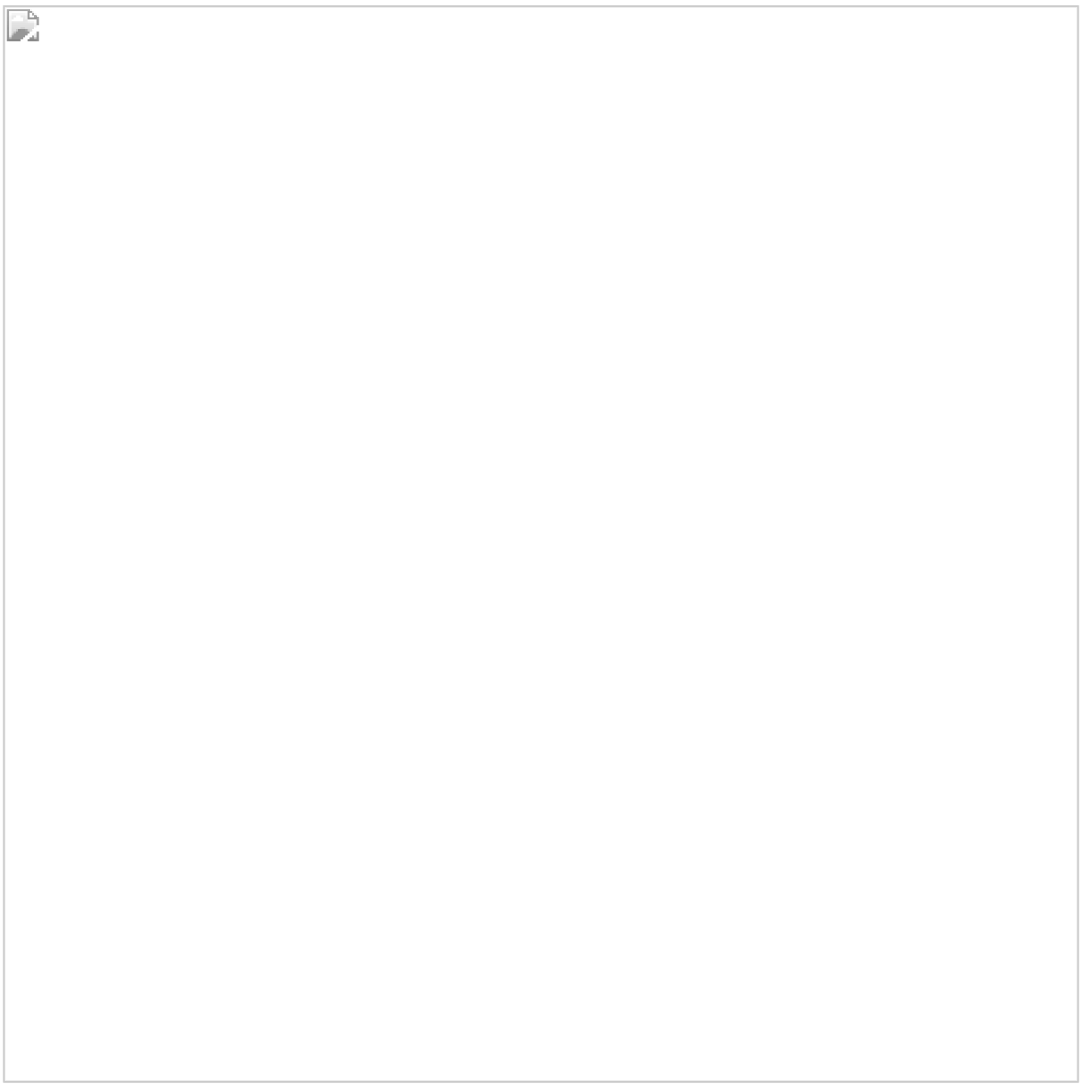
The Sun-King decided to give his daughter to Kingen in marriage. That way she would be happy, and she would stay near her father.

Every star shone its approval, and there was joy in the heavens.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the Sun-King chose an honest herdsman for his daughter?

Kingen the Herdsman · another picture

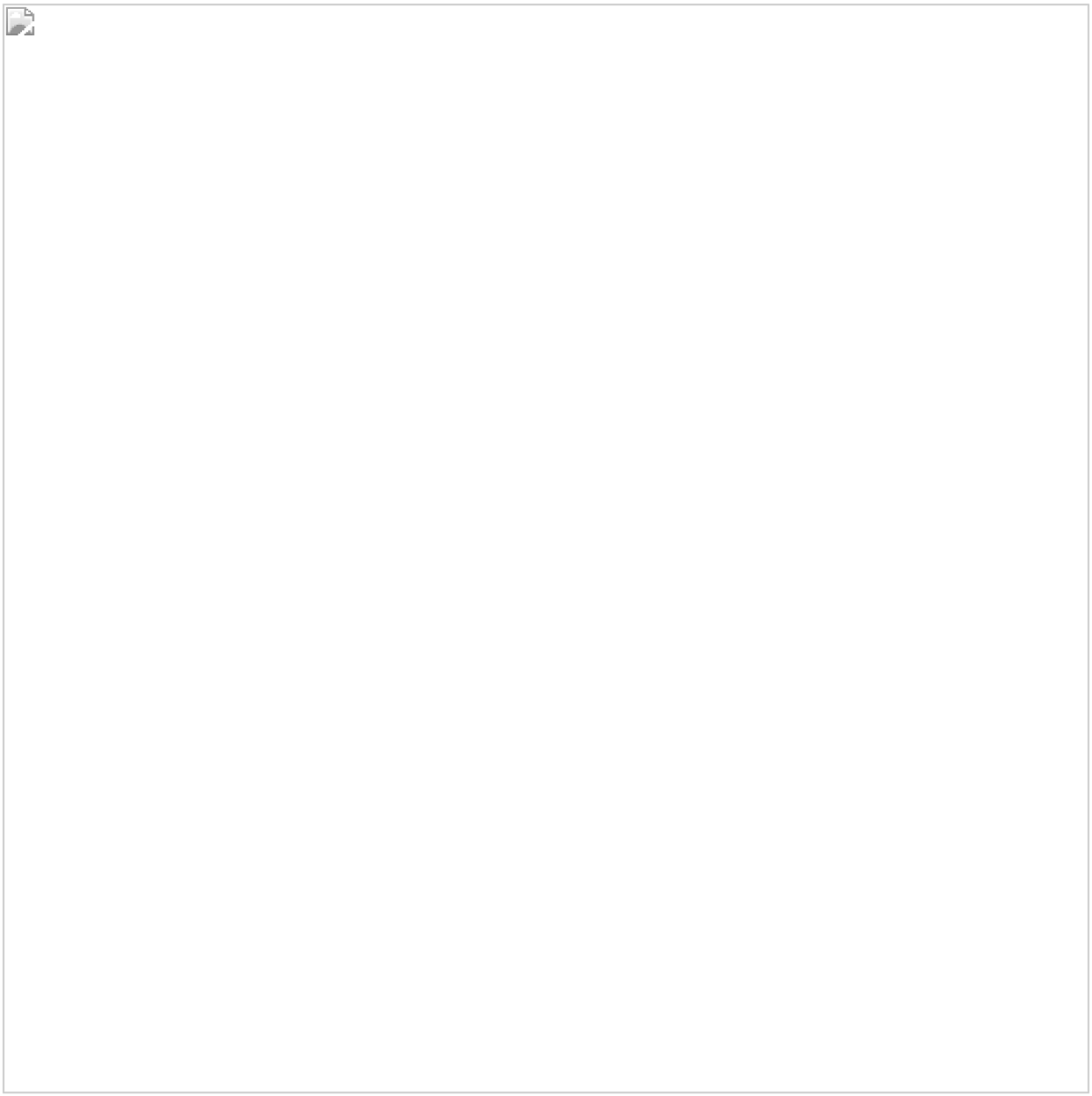


Think about it

1. Who was Kingen?

- ○ A weaver
- ○ An honest herdsman
- ○ A sailor

A Great Love



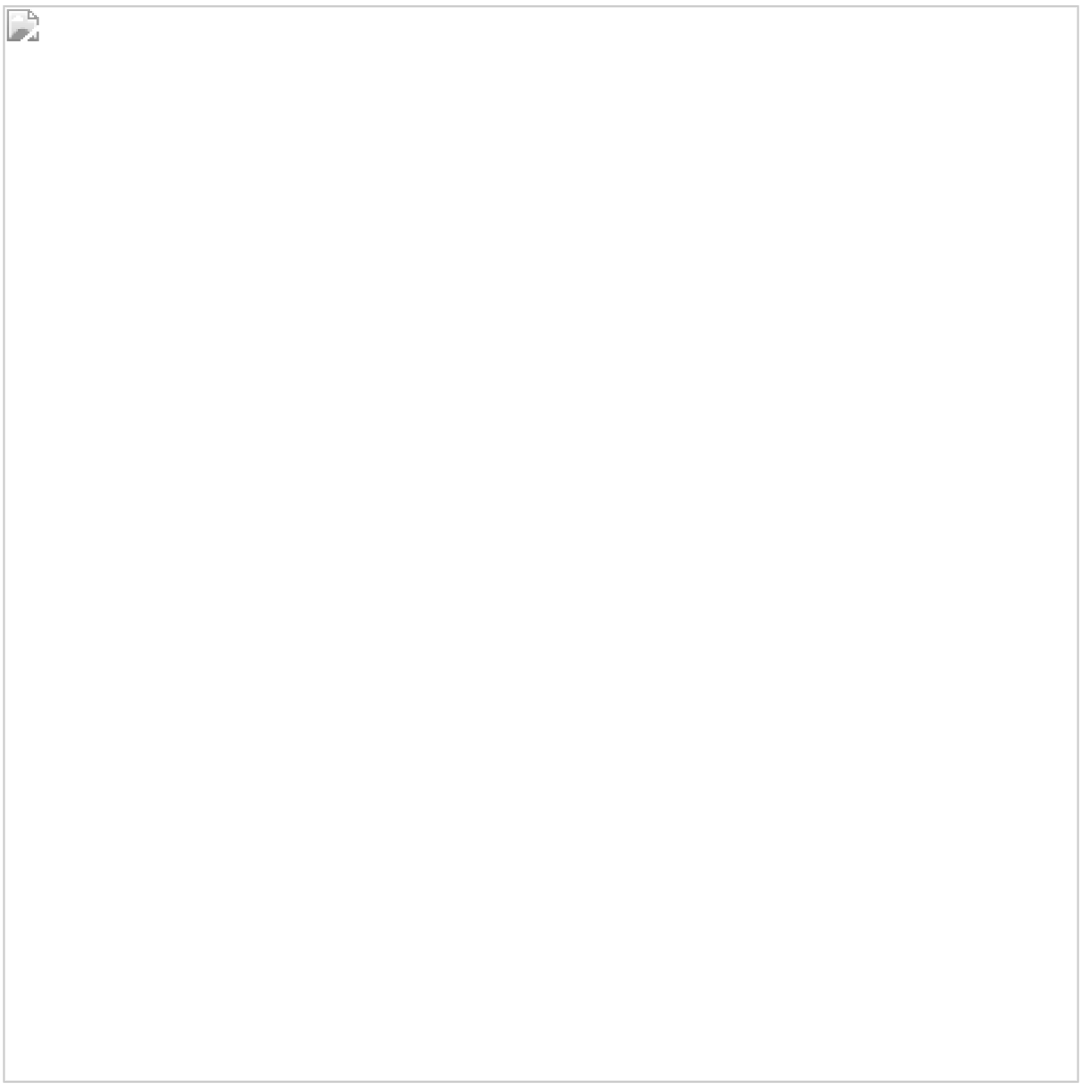
Shokujo and Kingen loved each other very much. It was a great love.

Shokujo gave up her old work. She did not sit at her loom anymore. She laughed and danced and sang and made merry from morning till night.

The Sun-King was grieved, for he had not expected such a change. His eyes grew angry. “Kingen is surely the cause of this,” he said, “therefore I will banish him to the other side of the River of Stars.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Sun-King wanted his daughter to be happy, and then she was. Why do you think he was upset anyway?



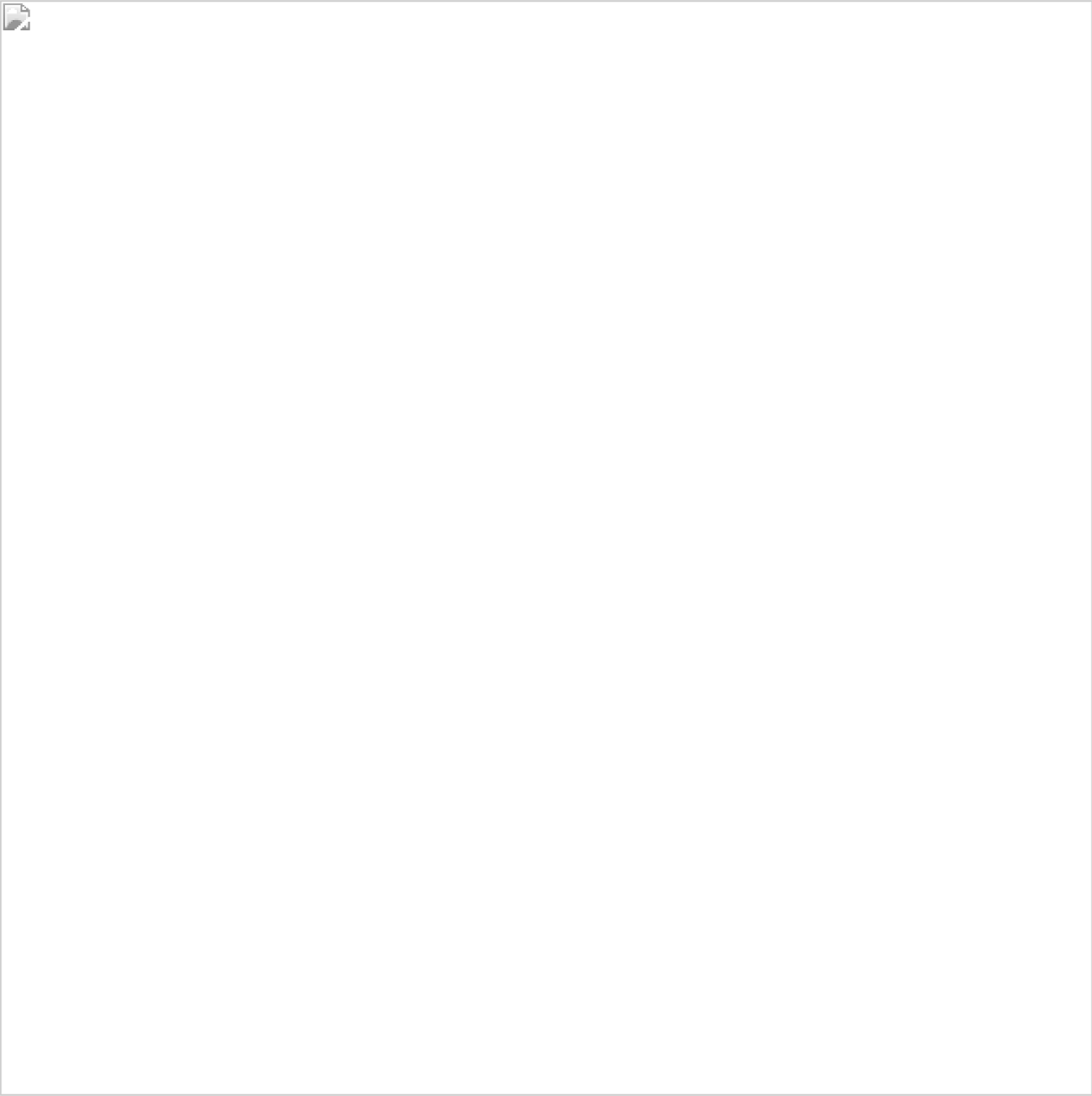
Think about it

1. What did the Sun-King decide to do?

- ○ Send Kingen across the river
- ○ Give them a house
- ○ Send Shokujo away

2. Do you think the Sun-King's choice was fair? Why or why not?

Only One Night a Year



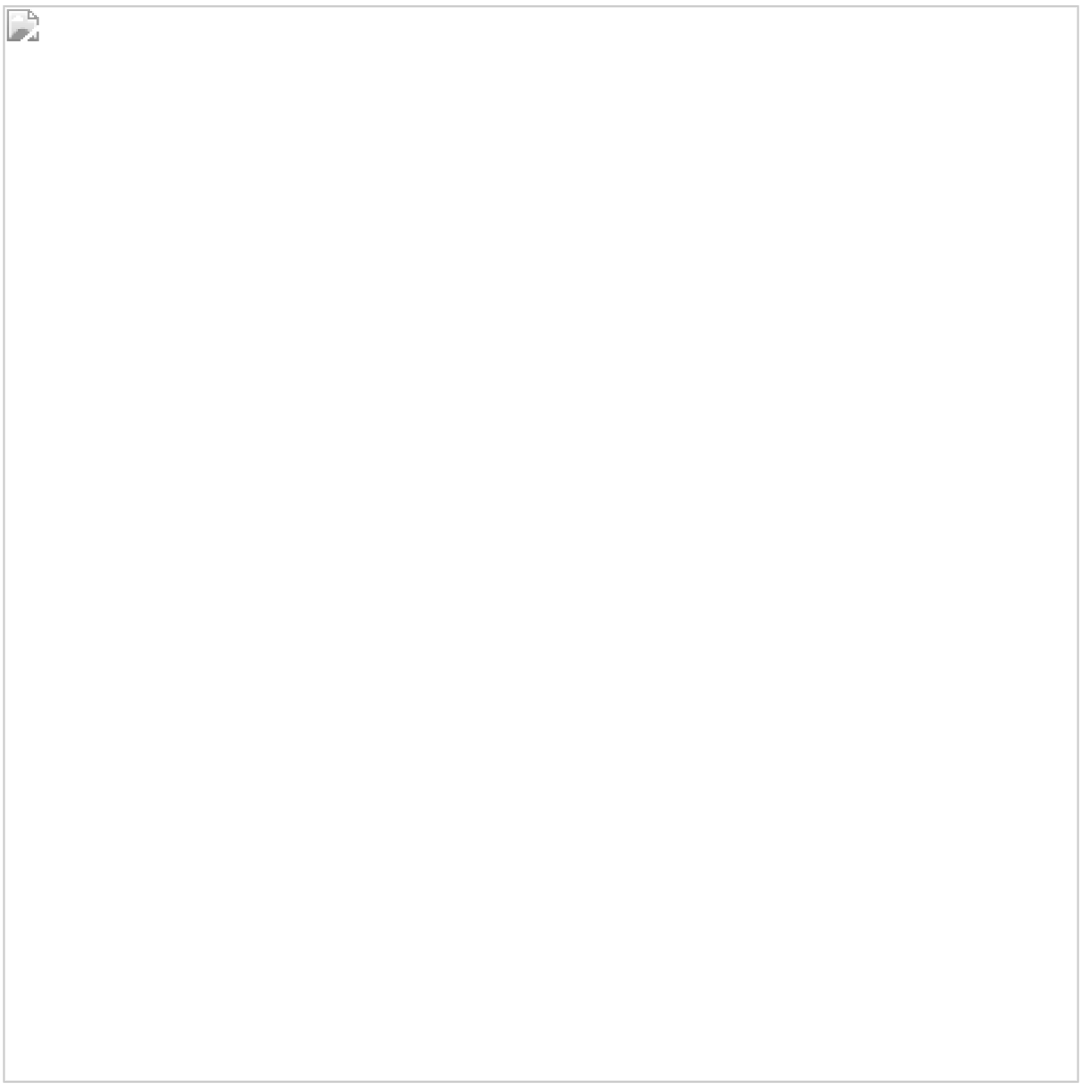
The Sun-King made a rule: Shokujo and Kingen could meet only once a year, on the seventh night of the seventh month.

When they heard, their hearts were heavy. Saying goodbye was very sad, and great tears stood in Shokujo's eyes.

TALK ABOUT IT

Think of someone you miss. What do you do to feel close to them?

Only One Night a Year · another picture

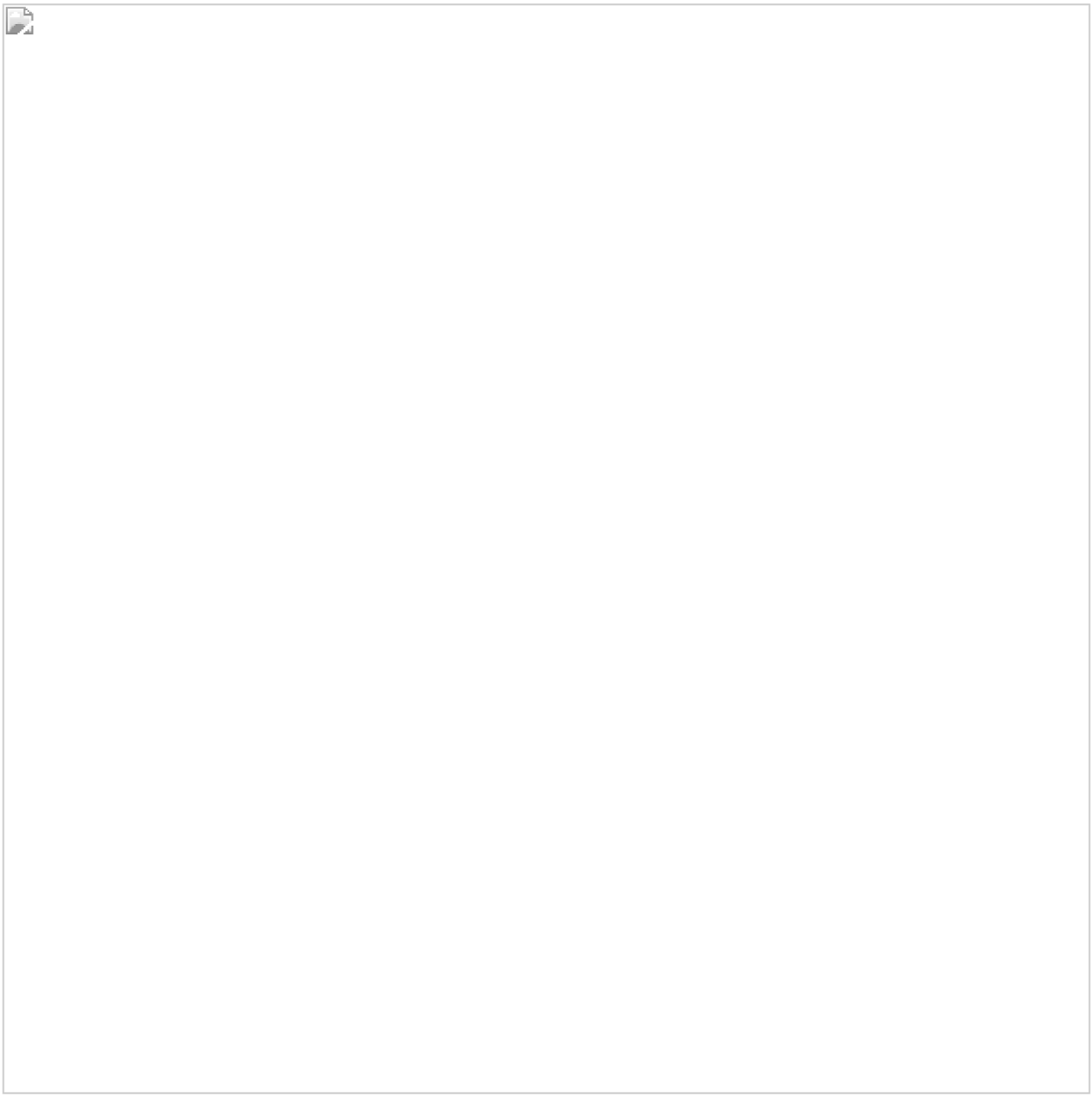


Think about it

1. How often could the two meet?

- ○ Every day
- ○ Once a month
- ○ Once a year

The Bridge of Magpies



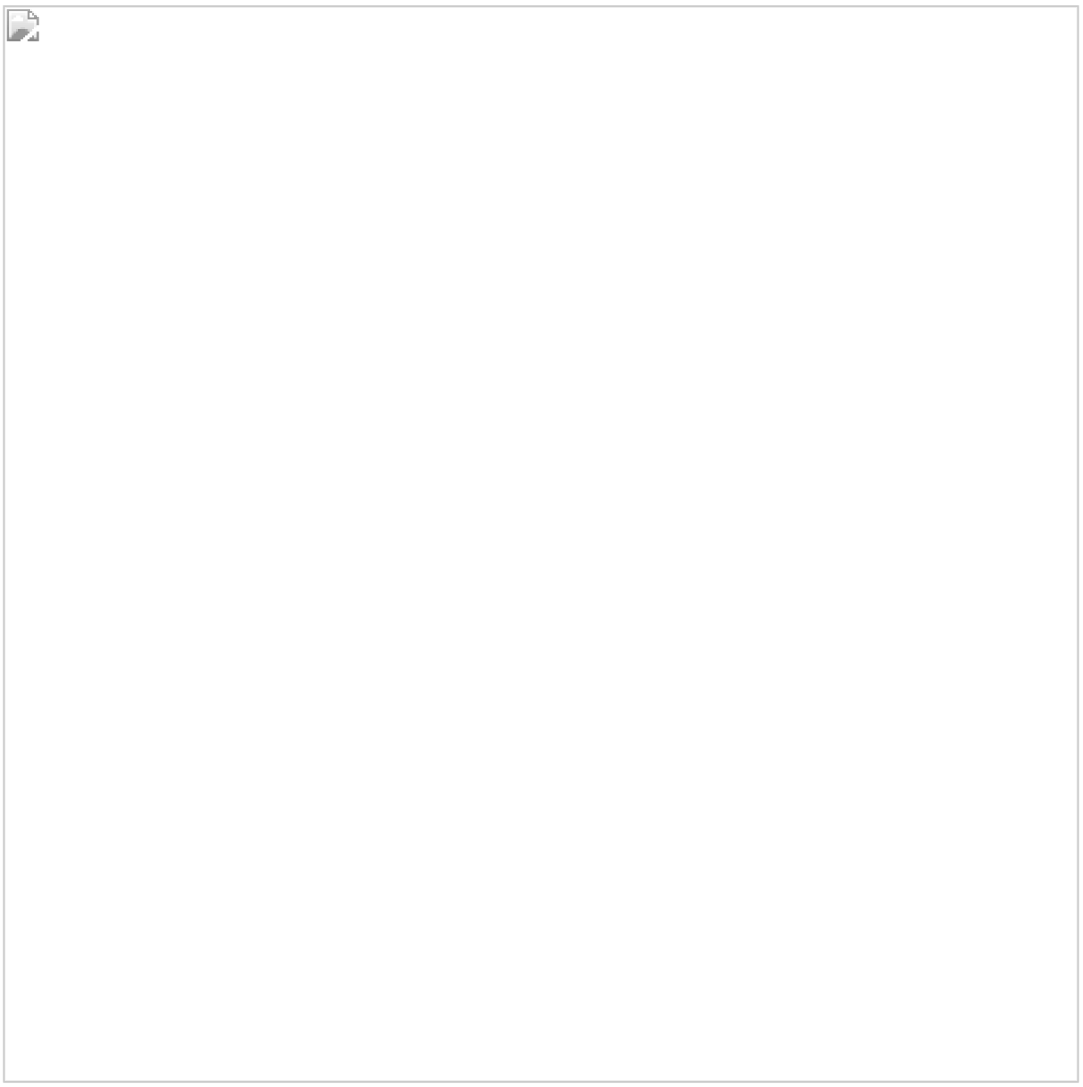
At the Sun-King's word, thousands and thousands of magpies flew together. They spread their wings wide and made a bridge across the river.

Kingen crossed over it. The moment his foot touched the other bank, the birds all flew away, chattering noisily.

Kingen was left alone on the far side. He looked sadly across to Shokujo, who stood weeping at the door of her empty home.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think the magpies felt about being a bridge?

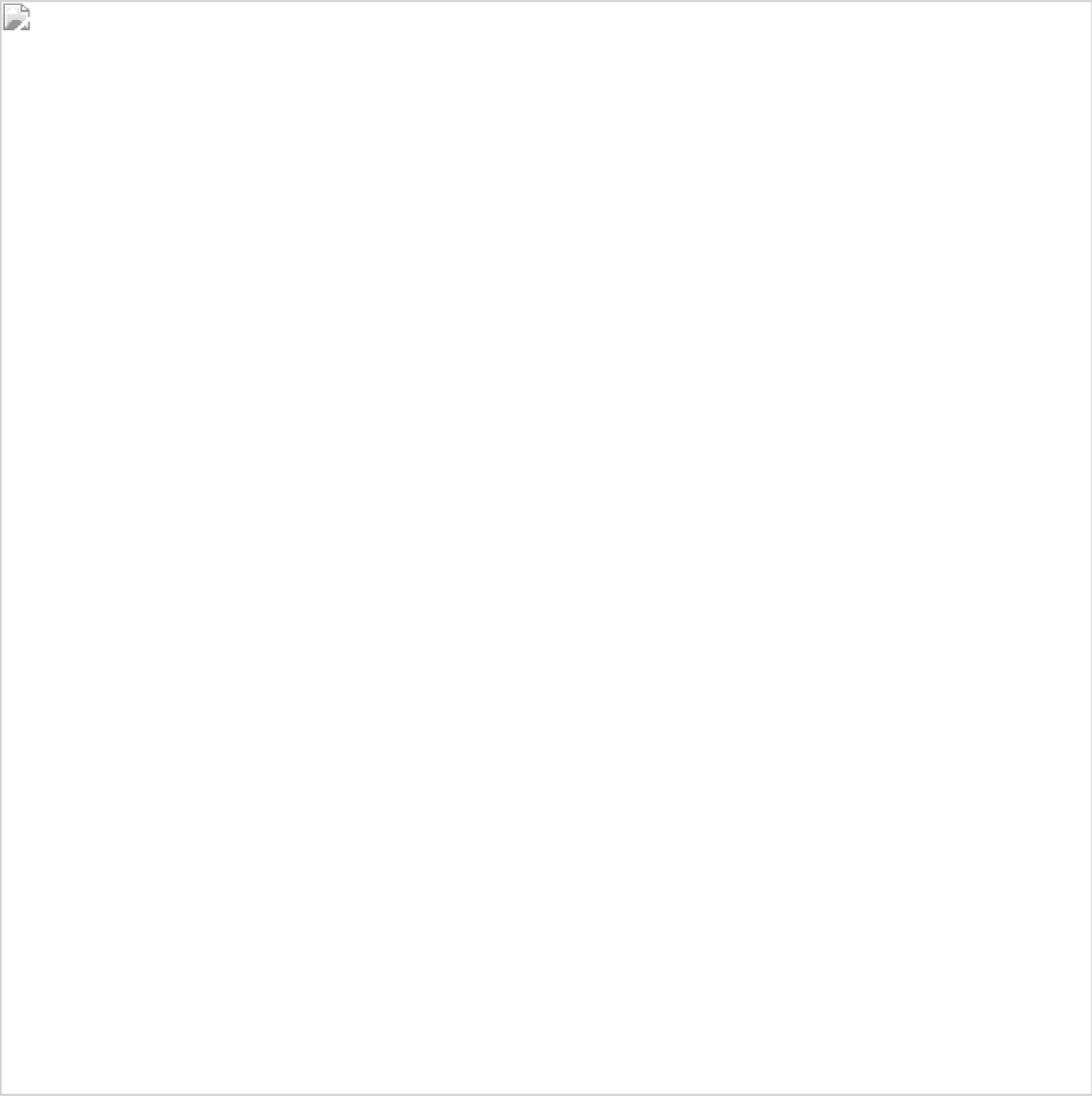


Think about it

1. What made the bridge across the river?

- ○ Stones
- ○ Magpies
- ○ Clouds

Waiting



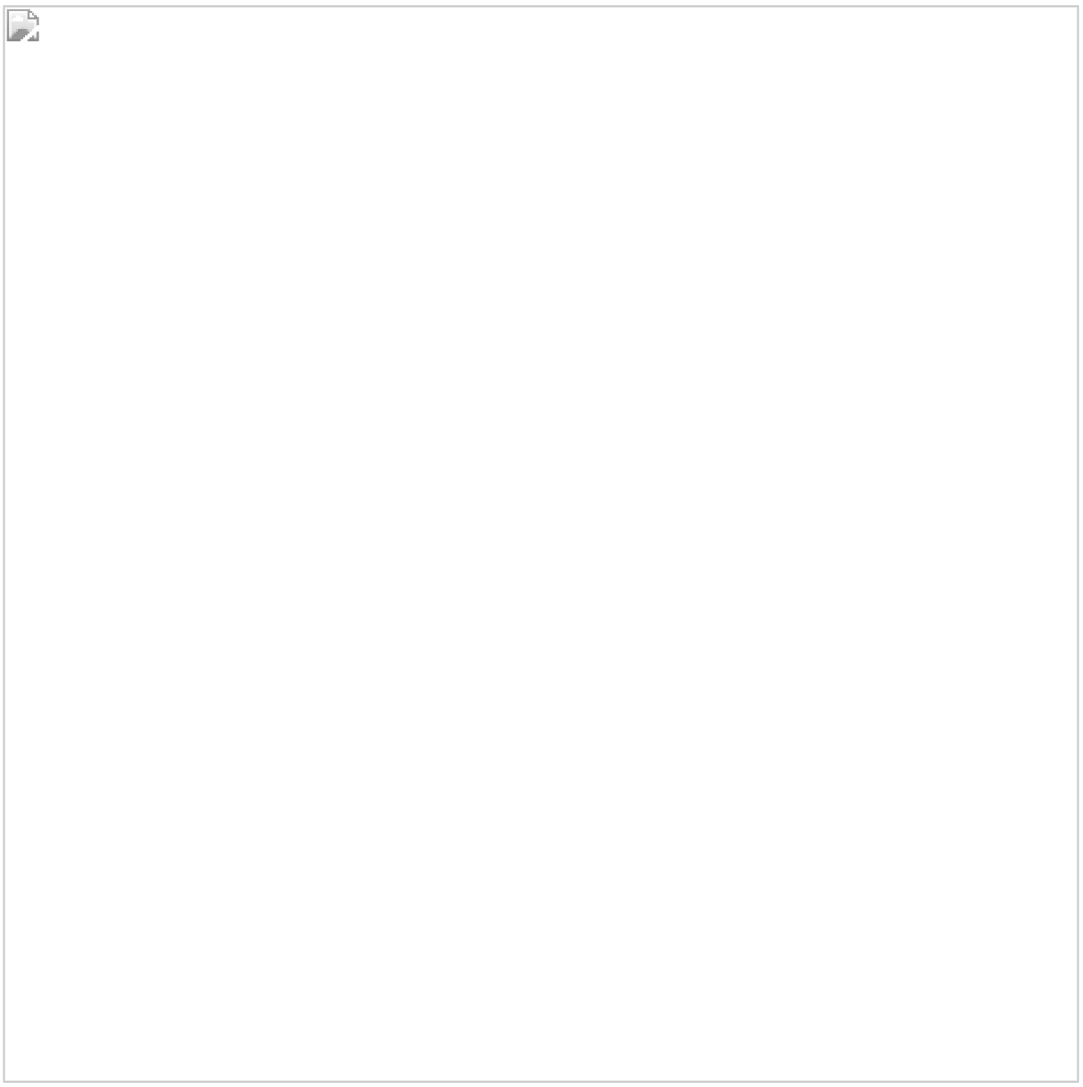
The days were long. Kingen drove his oxen, and Shokujo wove at her loom. The Sun-King was glad to see his daughter working so hard again.

When night fell and the sky filled with lights, the two stood on opposite banks of the River of Stars. They called sweet and tender messages across the water.

And each of them said a prayer that the wonderful night would come soon.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you do when you have to wait for something you want very much?

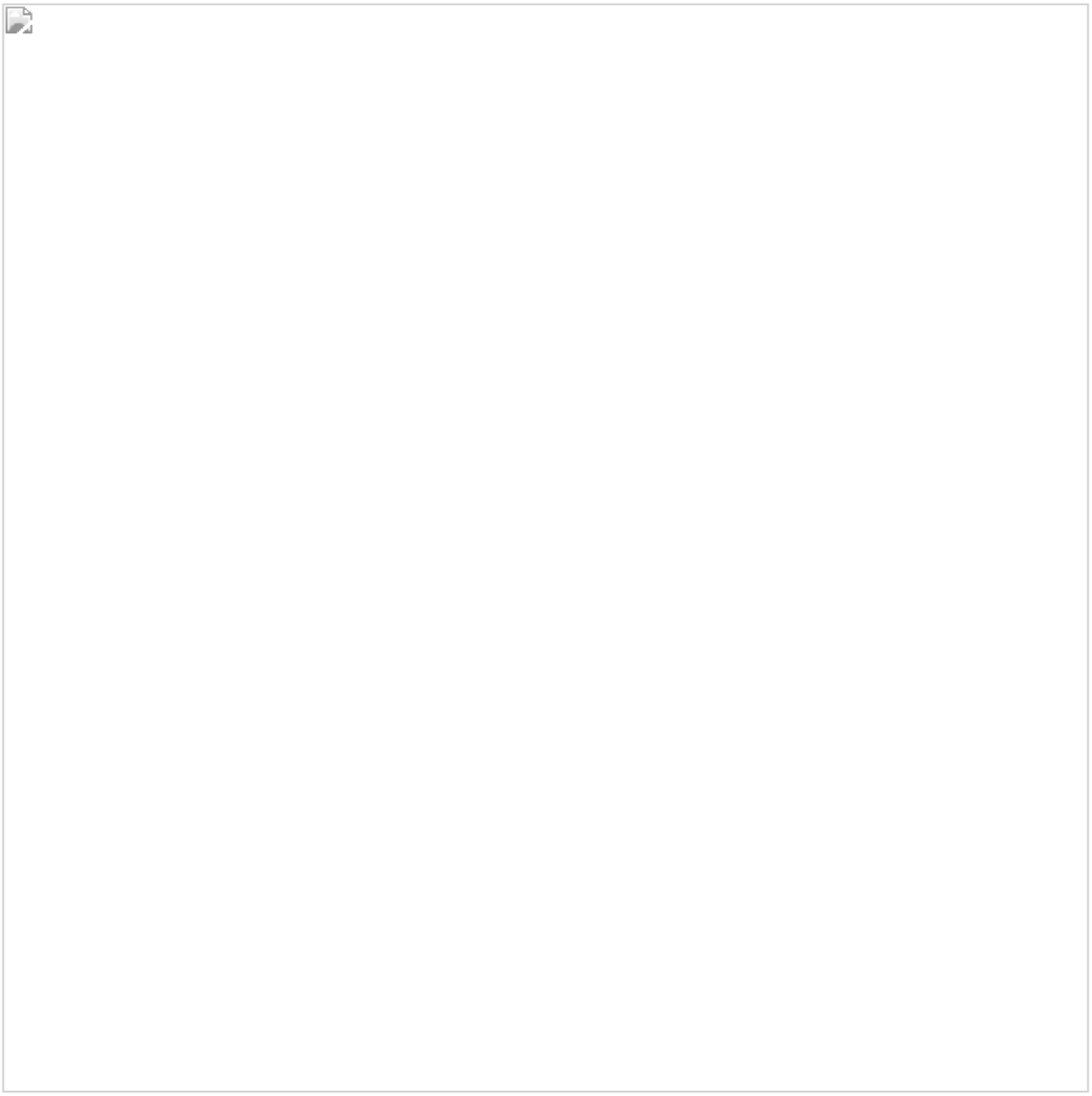


Think about it

1. What did Shokujo and Kingen do each evening?

- ○ Sailed boats
- ○ Sent messages across the river
- ○ Slept

Please Do Not Rain

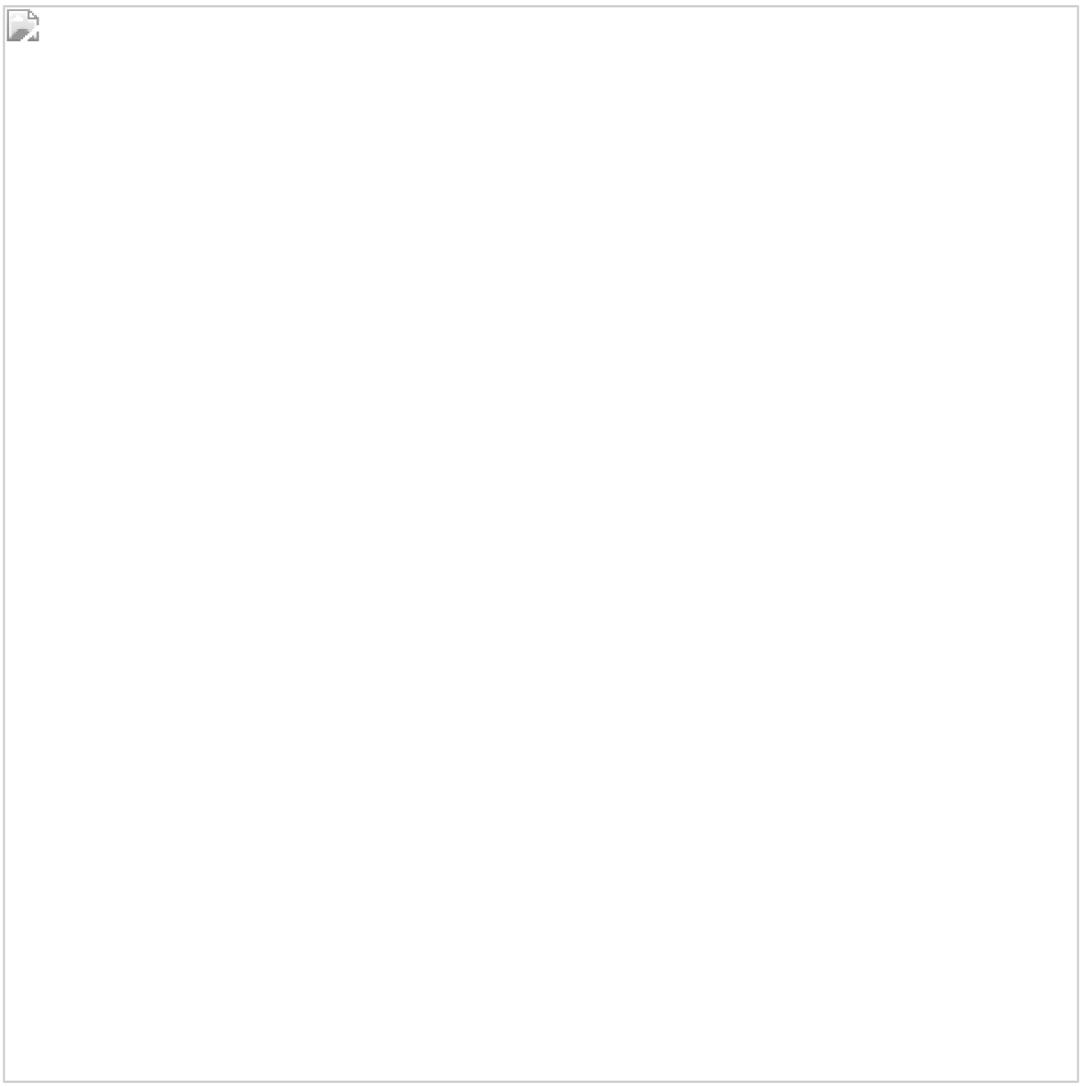


When the month and day came near, the two were worried. What if it rained?

The Silver River is full all year, but at that time it often floods. If it did, the bridge of birds could be swept away.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you hope for when you worry about the weather?

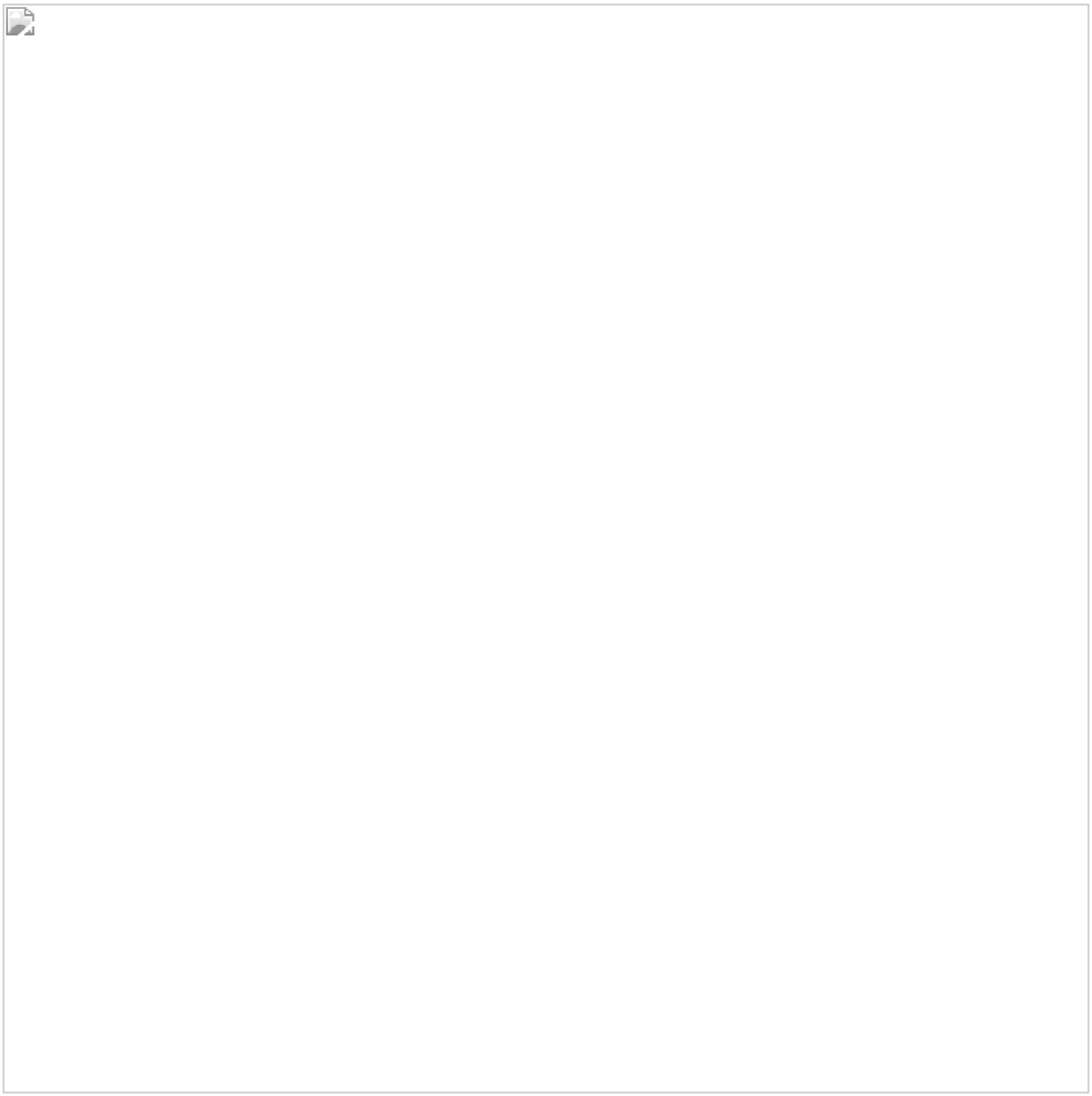


Think about it

1. What were they afraid of?

- ○ Snow
- ○ Rain flooding the river
- ○ A storm of wind

The Night Comes



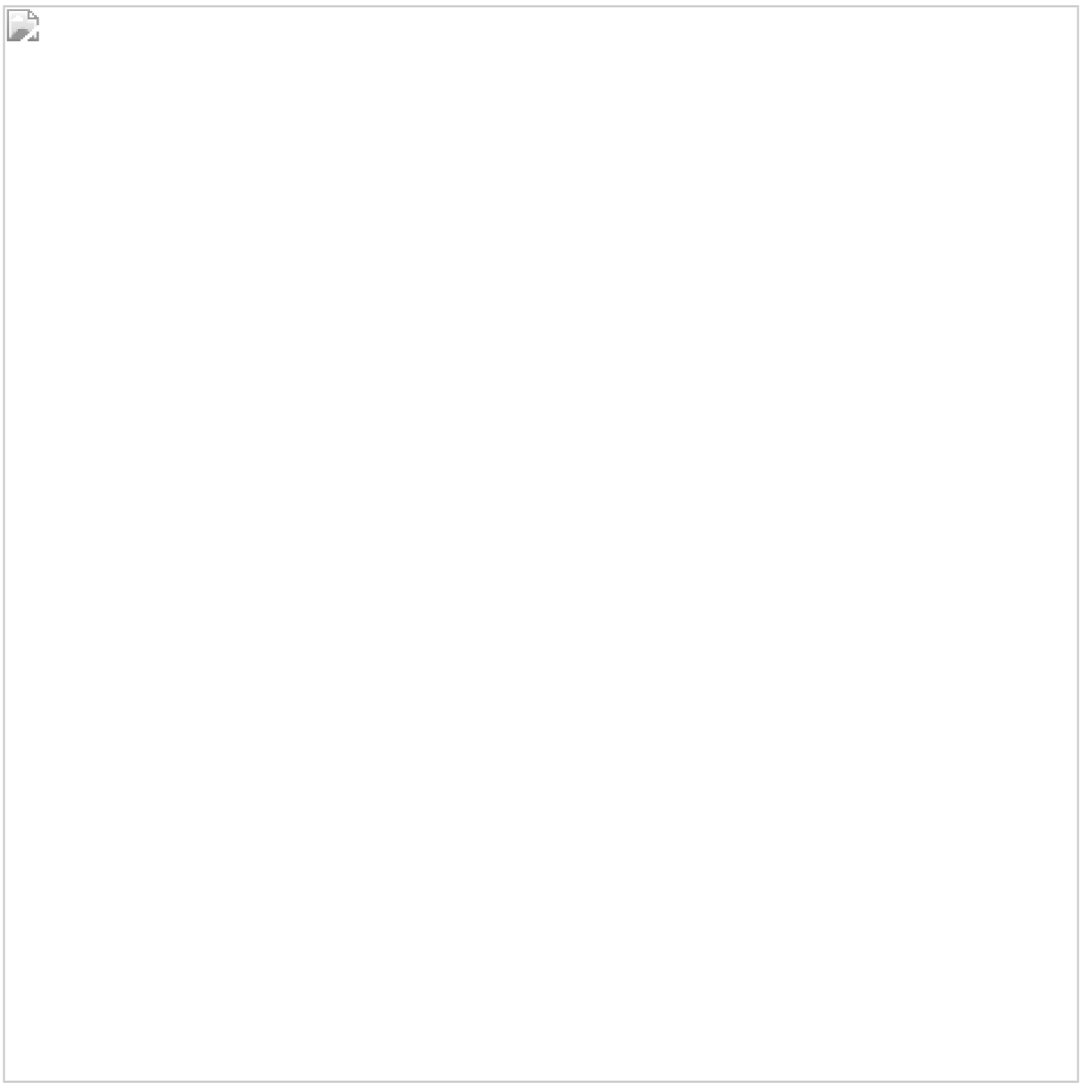
The day broke bright and cloudless. As the hours went by, the lamps of heaven were lighted, one by one.

At nightfall the magpies came together. Shokujo crossed the slender bridge, trembling with joy, and fell into the arms of Kingen.

Their joy was like a dry flower when the first raindrop falls on it. But the time to say goodbye came quickly, and Shokujo sadly walked back across the bridge.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think it felt to meet after a whole year? What would you tell a friend after a year apart?

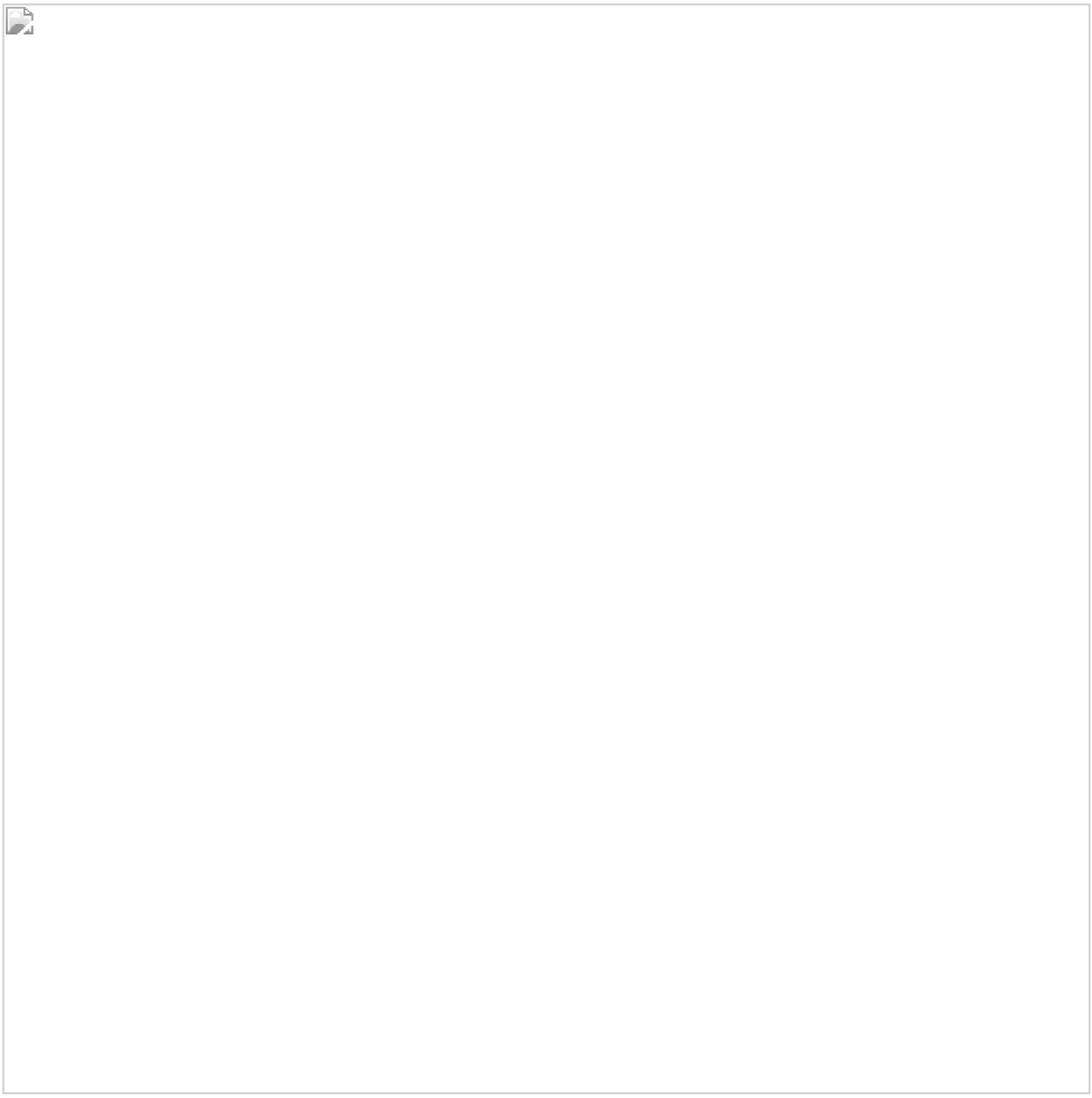


Think about it

1. How was the weather on the day they met?

- ○ Rainy
- ○ Bright and cloudless
- ○ Foggy

Every Year



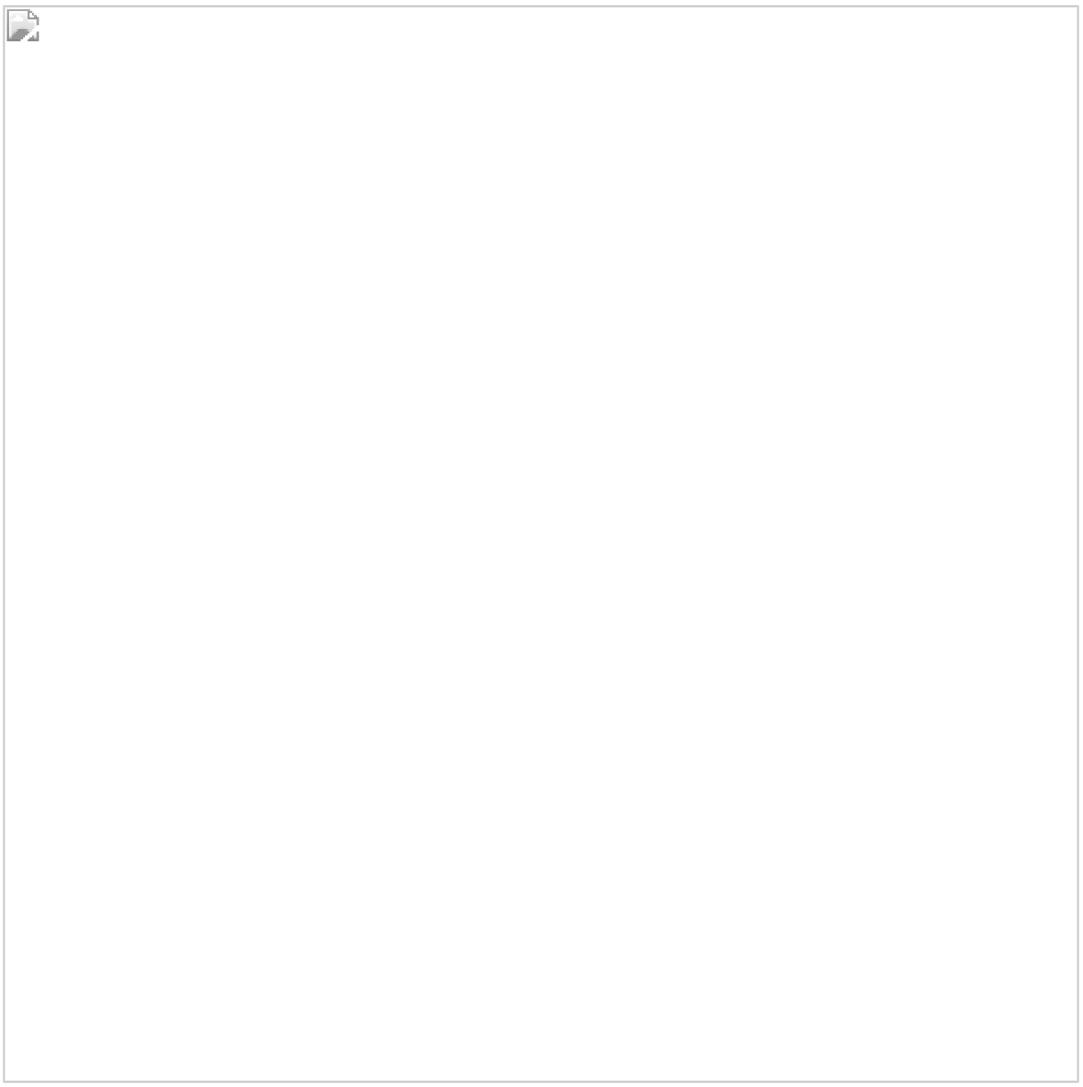
Year after year, the two meet on the seventh night of the seventh month, unless rain has made the Silver River too wide to cross.

They still hope that one day they will be together for good. That hope is, the old tale says, like a sweet smell and a beautiful dream.

In Japan, that night is a festival called Tanabata. People look up at the stars and hang wishes on bamboo branches.

TALK ABOUT IT

What would you write on a wish for the bamboo? Who would you wish it for?



Think about it

1. When do the Star-Lovers meet?

- ○ Every night
- ○ On the seventh night of the seventh month
- ○ On New Year's Day

2. The Star-Lovers keep hoping. What helps you keep hoping when something is hard?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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