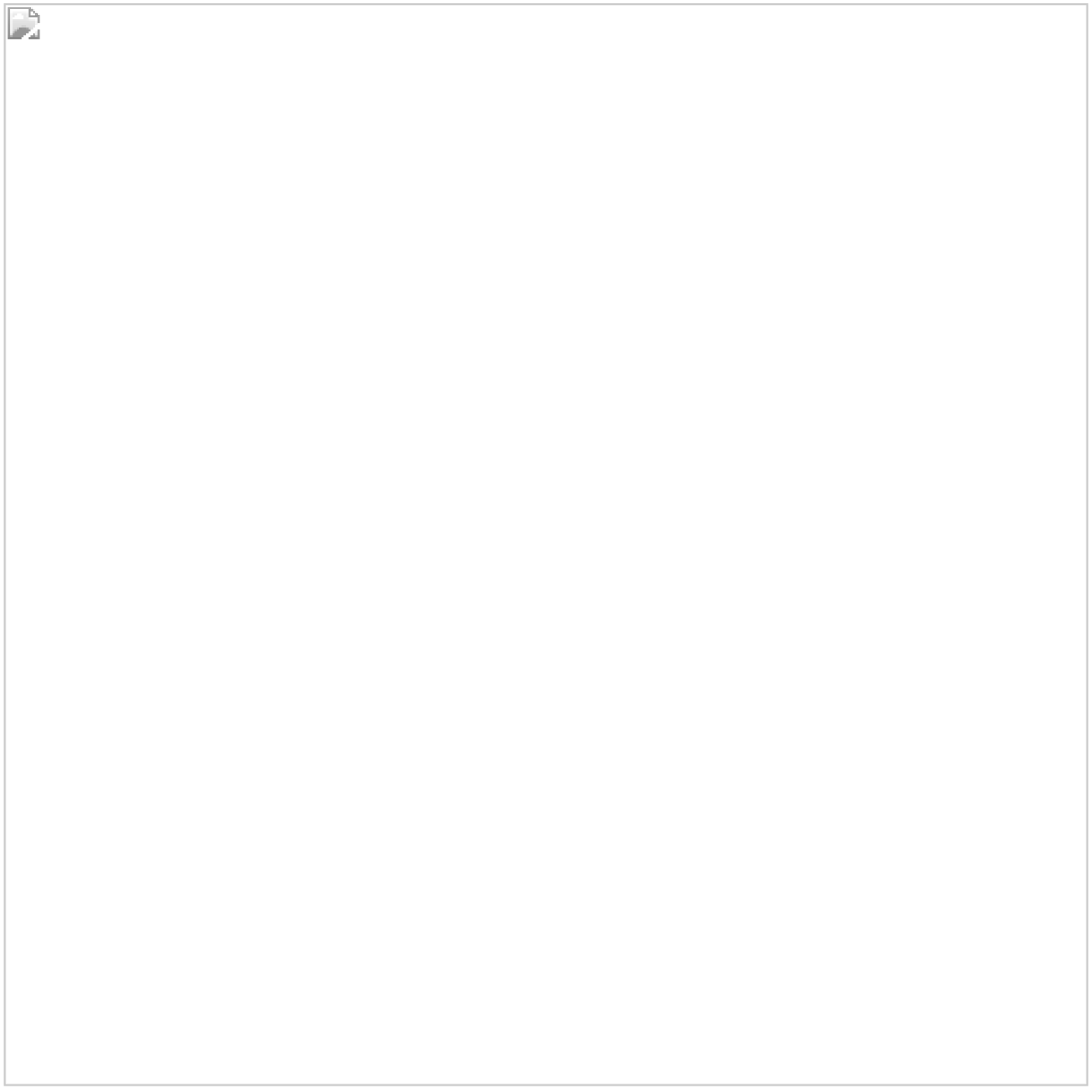
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Toad and the Boy

A Tale of the Dakota People



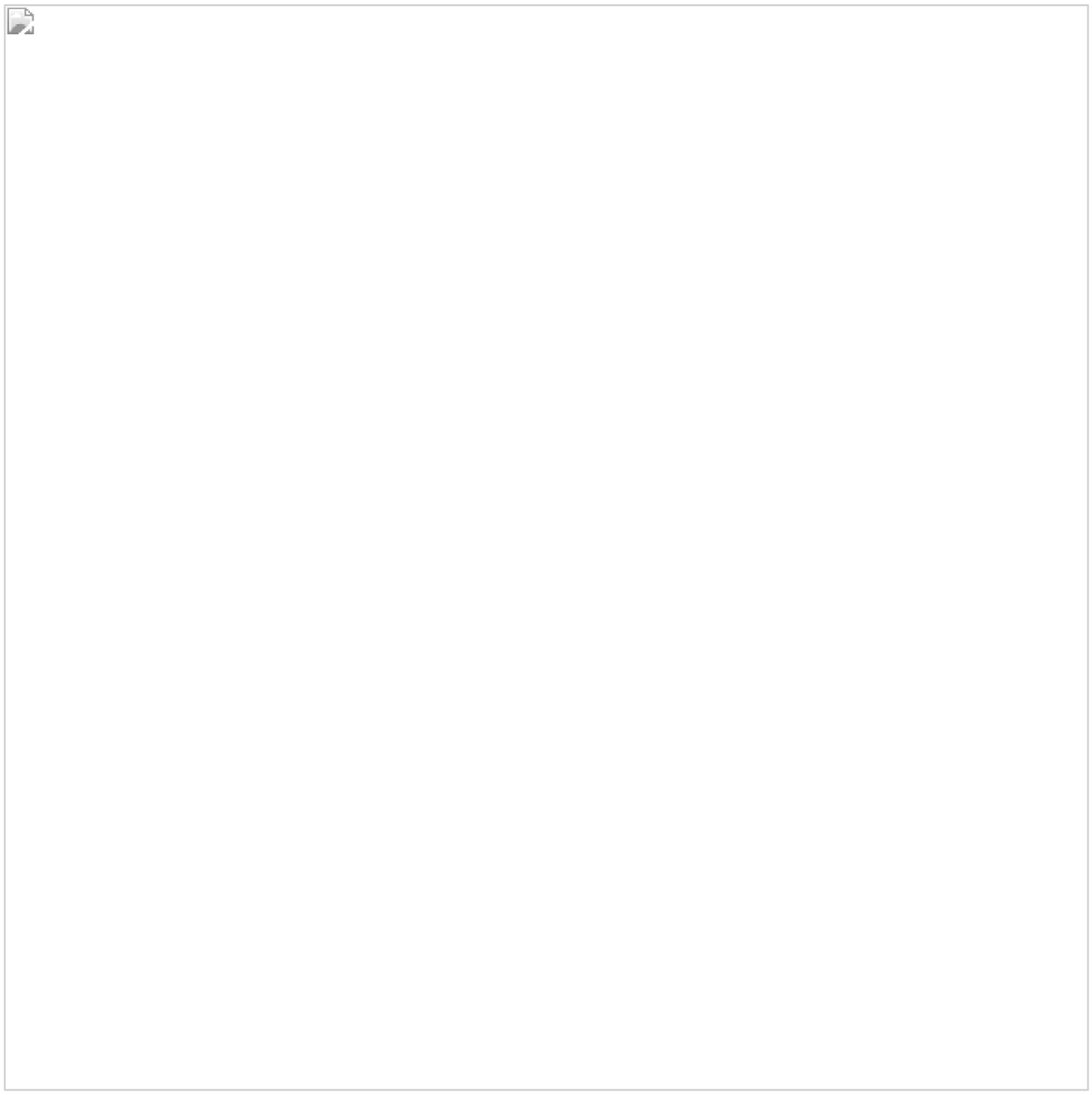
The water-fowls were flying over the marshy lakes. It was the hunting season. The men waded in the wild rice with their bows and arrows, and the wives stayed in their wigwams, roasting wild duck.

TALK ABOUT IT

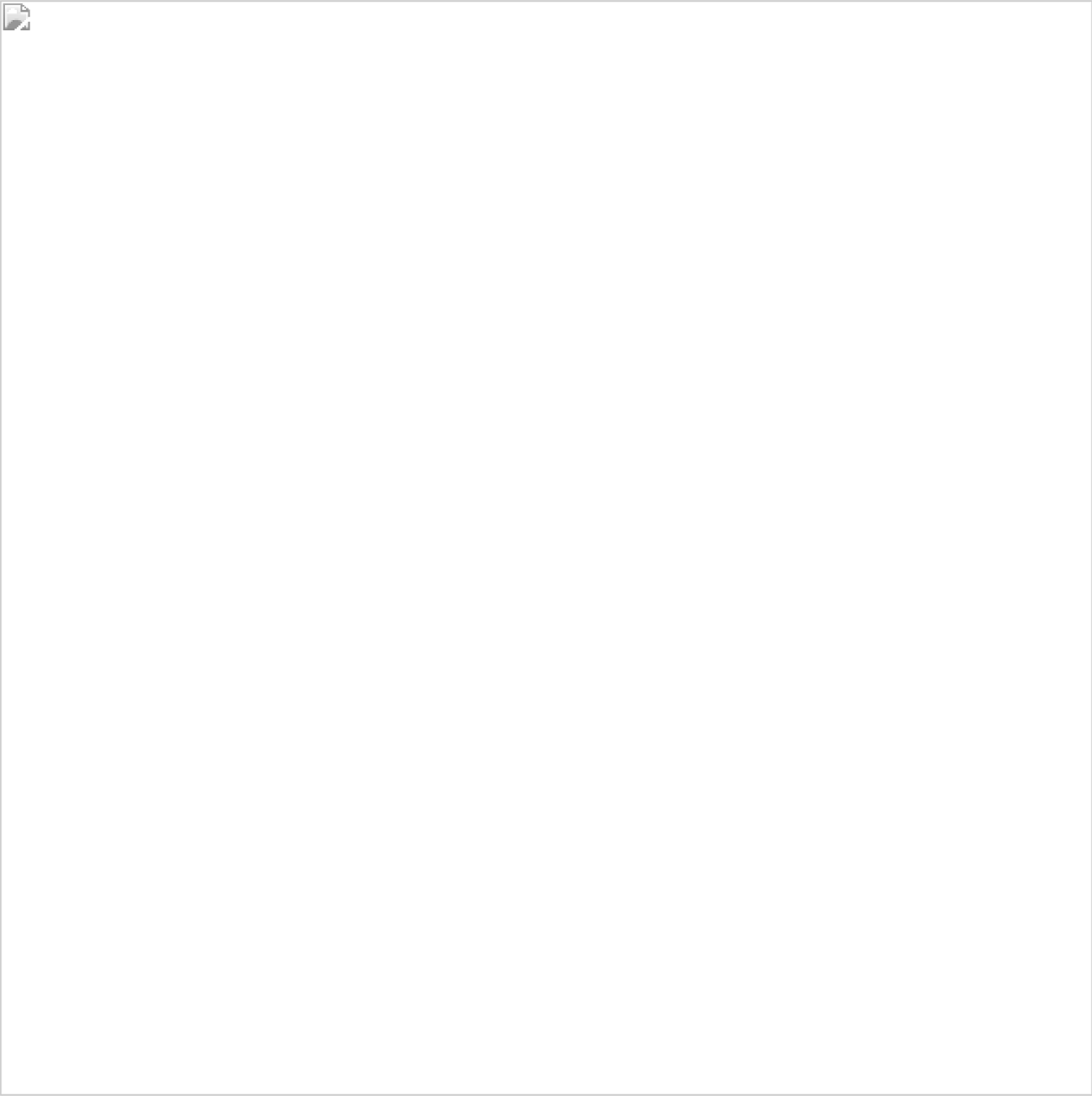
It was a busy time of year at the lake. What is a busy time of year where you live?

This book belongs to _____

The Toad and the Boy · another picture



A Mother and Her Baby



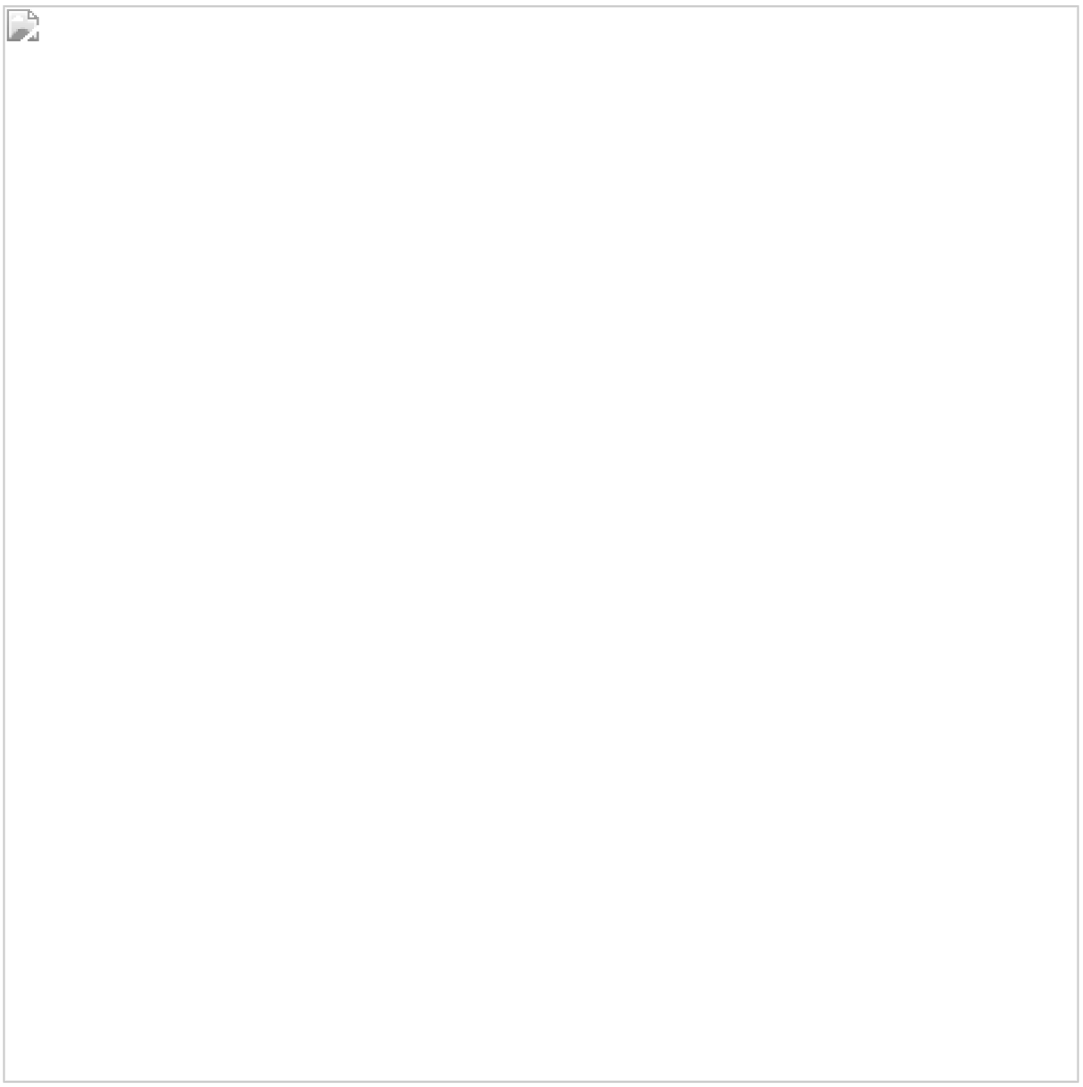
In the largest teepee sat a young mother, wrapping red porcupine quills around the fringes of a buckskin cushion. Beside her lay a black-eyed baby boy, cooing and laughing.

At length the baby fell fast asleep. His mother whispered a little lullaby and laid a light cover over him.

TALK ABOUT IT

What is a song or a lullaby someone sings to you?

A Mother and Her Baby · another picture

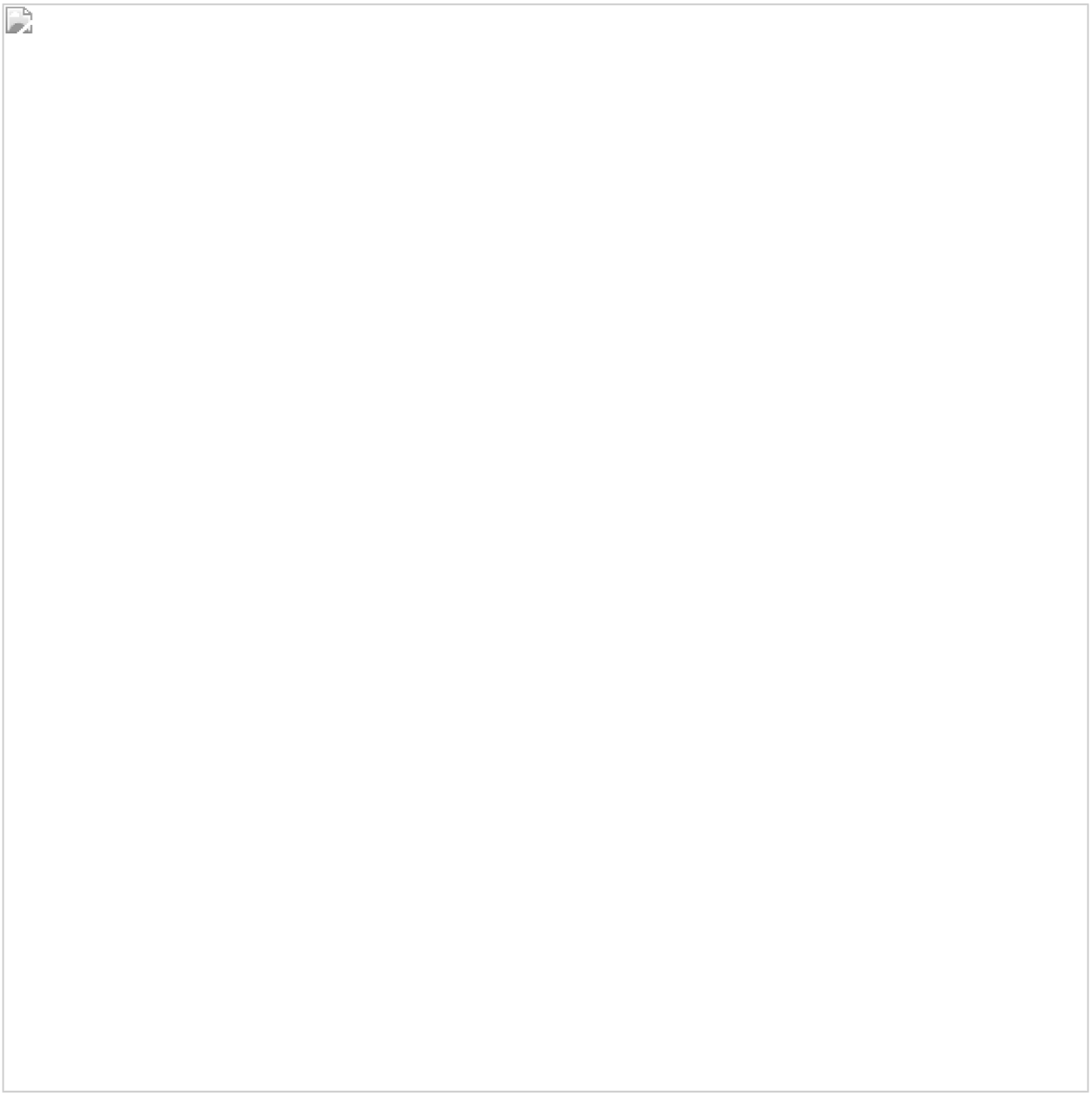


Think about it

1. What was the mother making?

- ○ A cushion with red porcupine quills
- ○ A blanket of wool
- ○ A pot of soup

Willow Sticks for the Fire



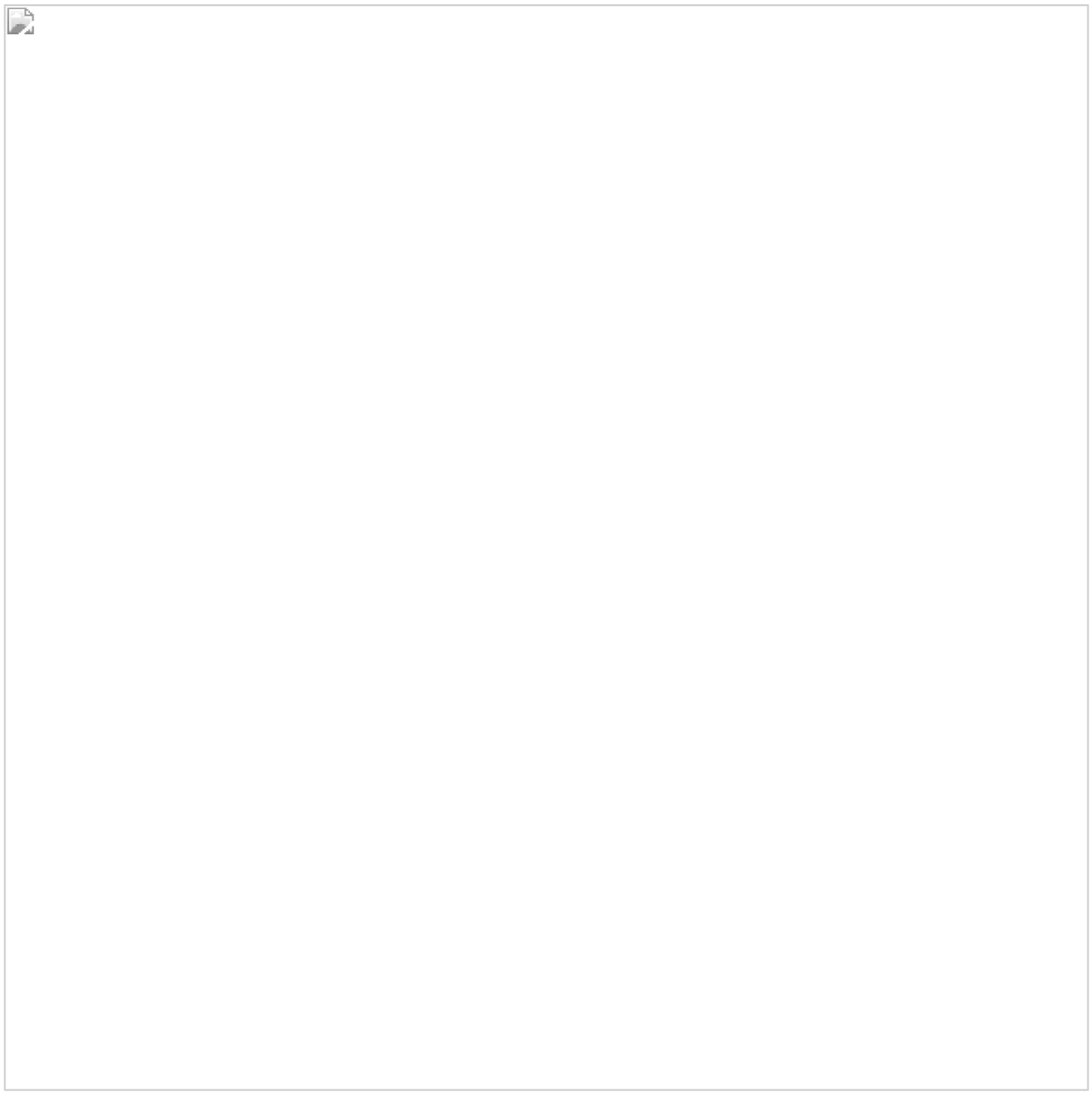
There were no willow sticks for the fire, and it was almost time for her husband to come home. So she tied her blanket tight, slipped a short-handled ax through her belt, and hurried to the wooded ravine.

She was strong, and she swung an ax as skillfully as any man. Soon she was striding home with a bundle of long willows on her back.

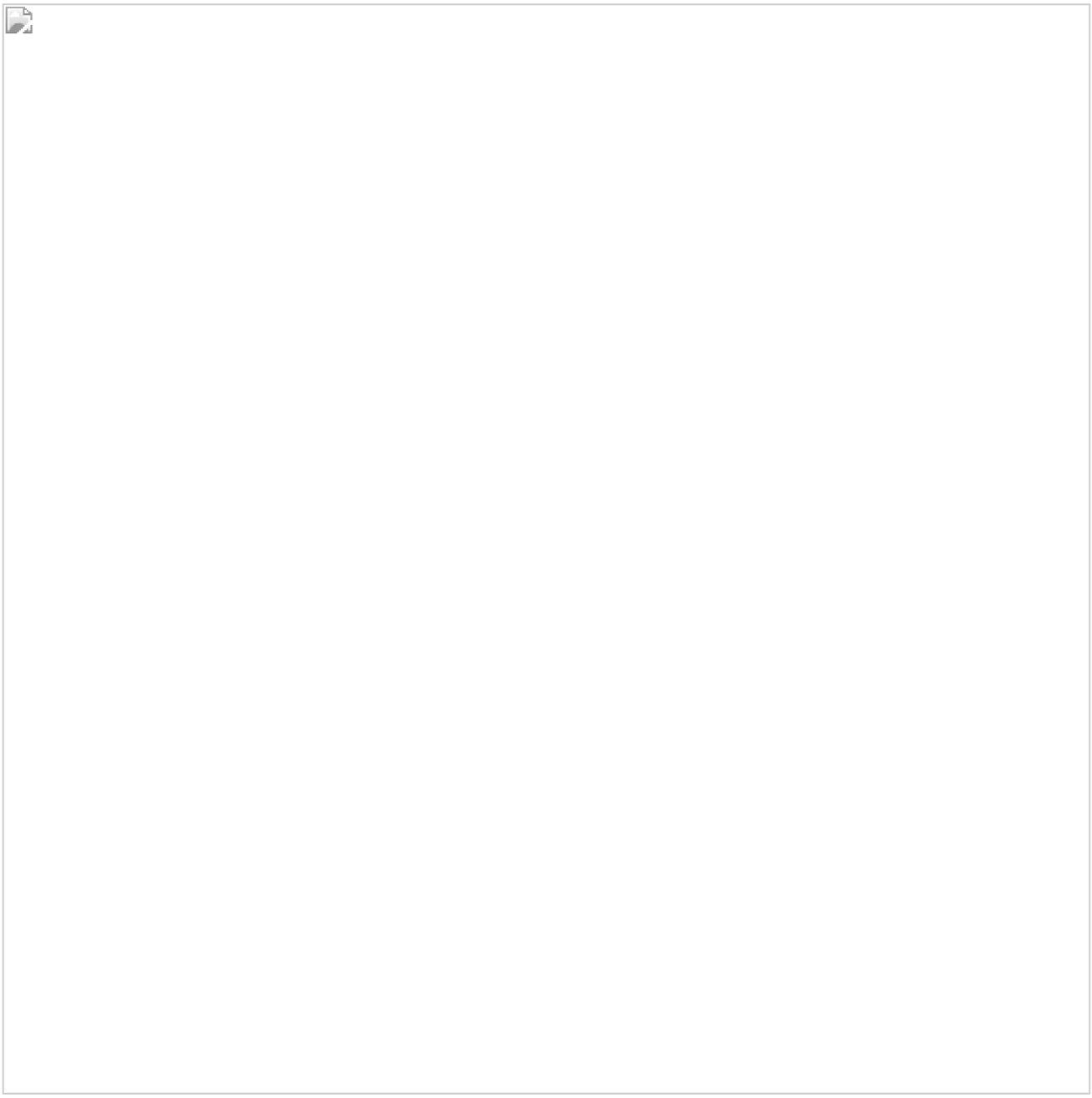
TALK ABOUT IT

The mother was strong and quick. What is something you are good at?

Willow Sticks for the Fire · another picture



My Little Son Is Gone



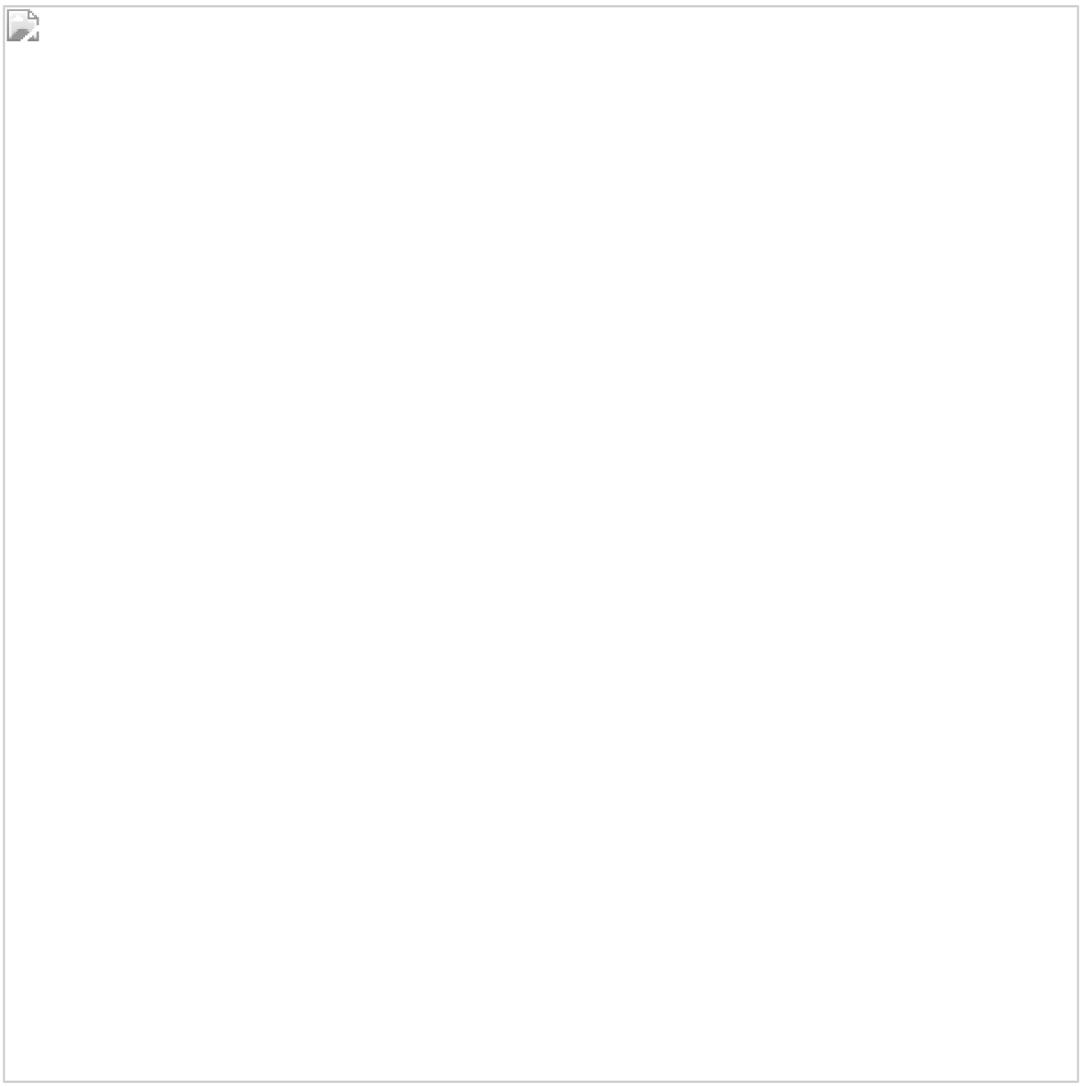
At the door she set down the wood and went into her teepee. In a moment she came running out again. “My son! My little son is gone!” she cried.

Her keen eyes looked east and west and all around. There was nowhere any sign of the child.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think the mother's heart felt? What would you want someone to do for her?

My Little Son Is Gone · another picture

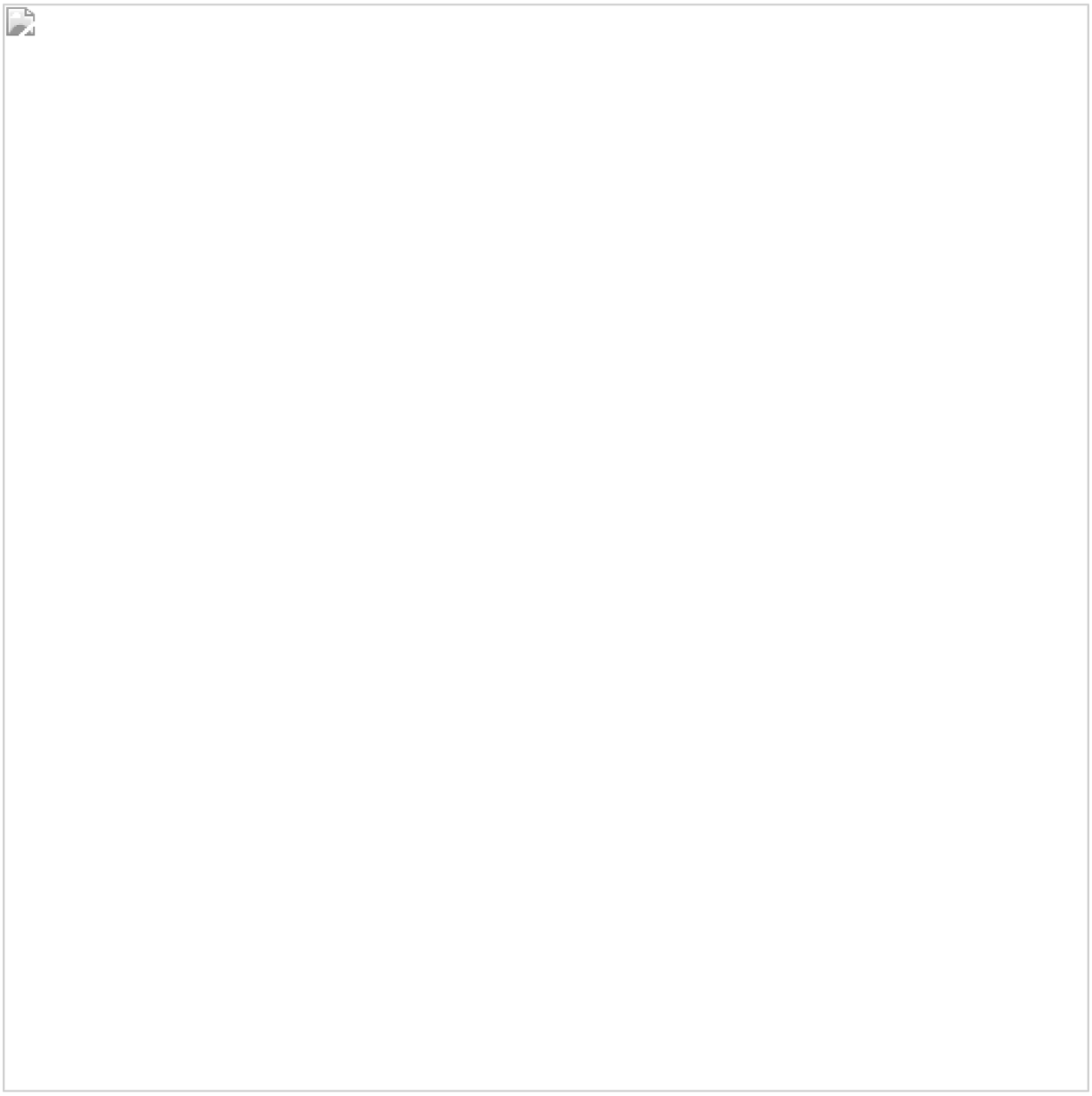


Think about it

1. Who was missing from the teepee?

- ○ The husband
- ○ The baby boy
- ○ The dog

The Whole Village Searches



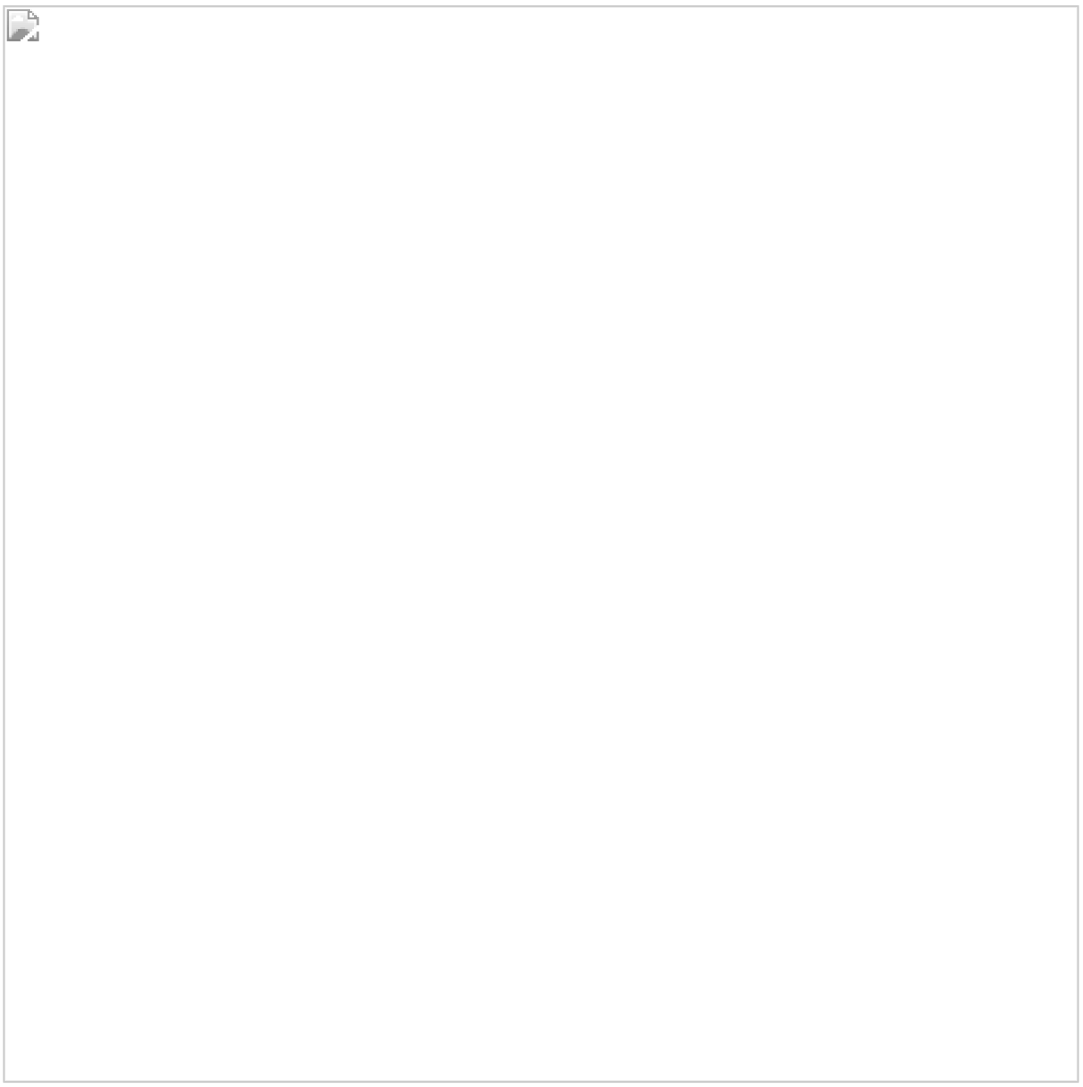
She ran to the nearest teepees. “Has any one seen my baby? He is gone! My little son is gone!”

“Hinnu! Hinnu!” said the women, rushing out. “We have not seen your child! What has happened?” They said, “We will search with you.”

The husbands came back from the hunt and joined in too. They looked along the shore and among the tall reeds, but he was nowhere to be found. After many days and nights the search was given up.

TALK ABOUT IT

The neighbors all stopped what they were doing to help. Who helps you when you need it?

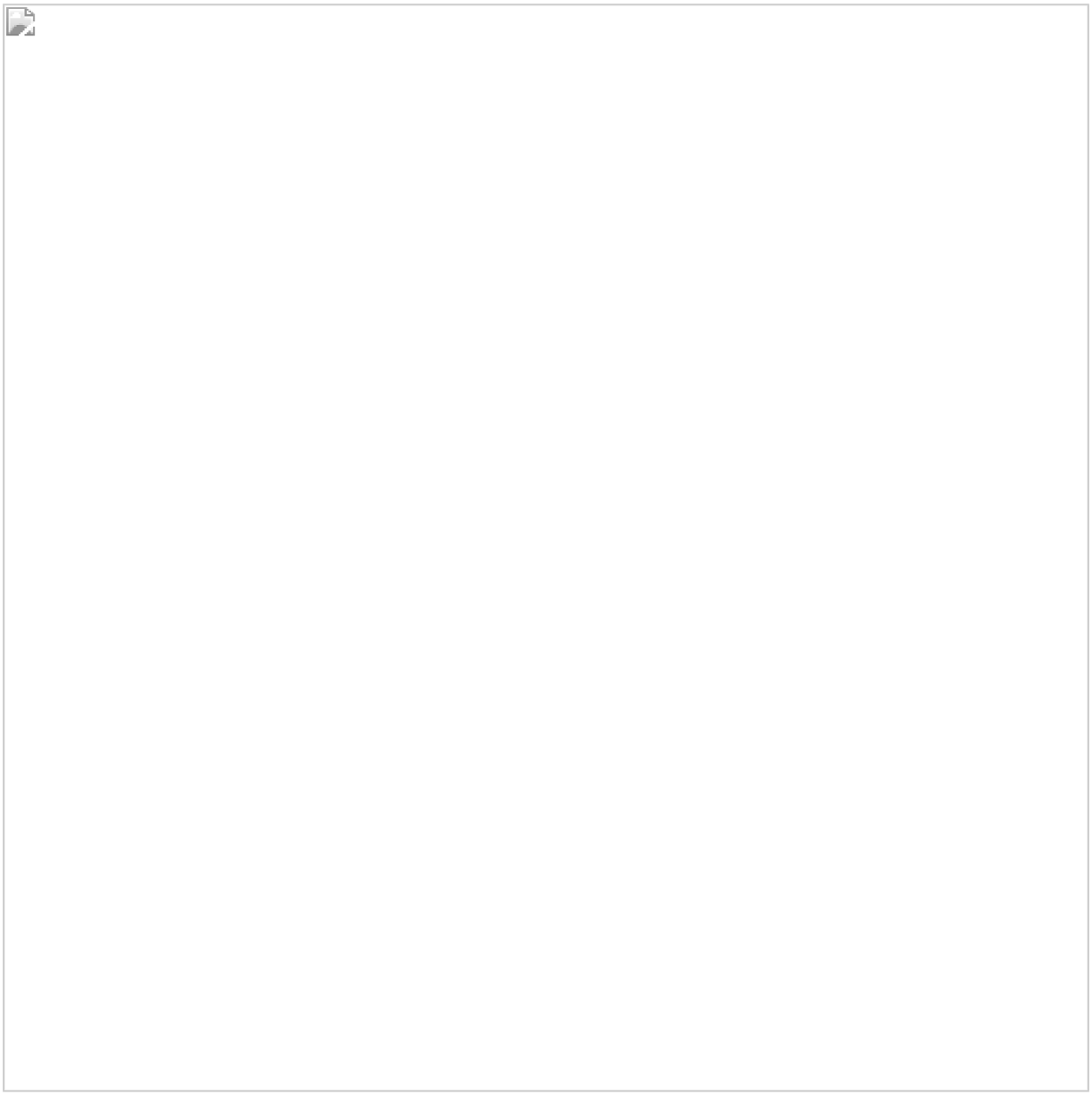


Think about it

1. What did the neighbors say to the mother?

- ○ They would search with her
- ○ They told her to go home
- ○ They were too busy

Ten Years of Searching



It was growing late in the autumn. The birds were flying south, and the teepees around the lakes were gone, save one lonely dwelling.

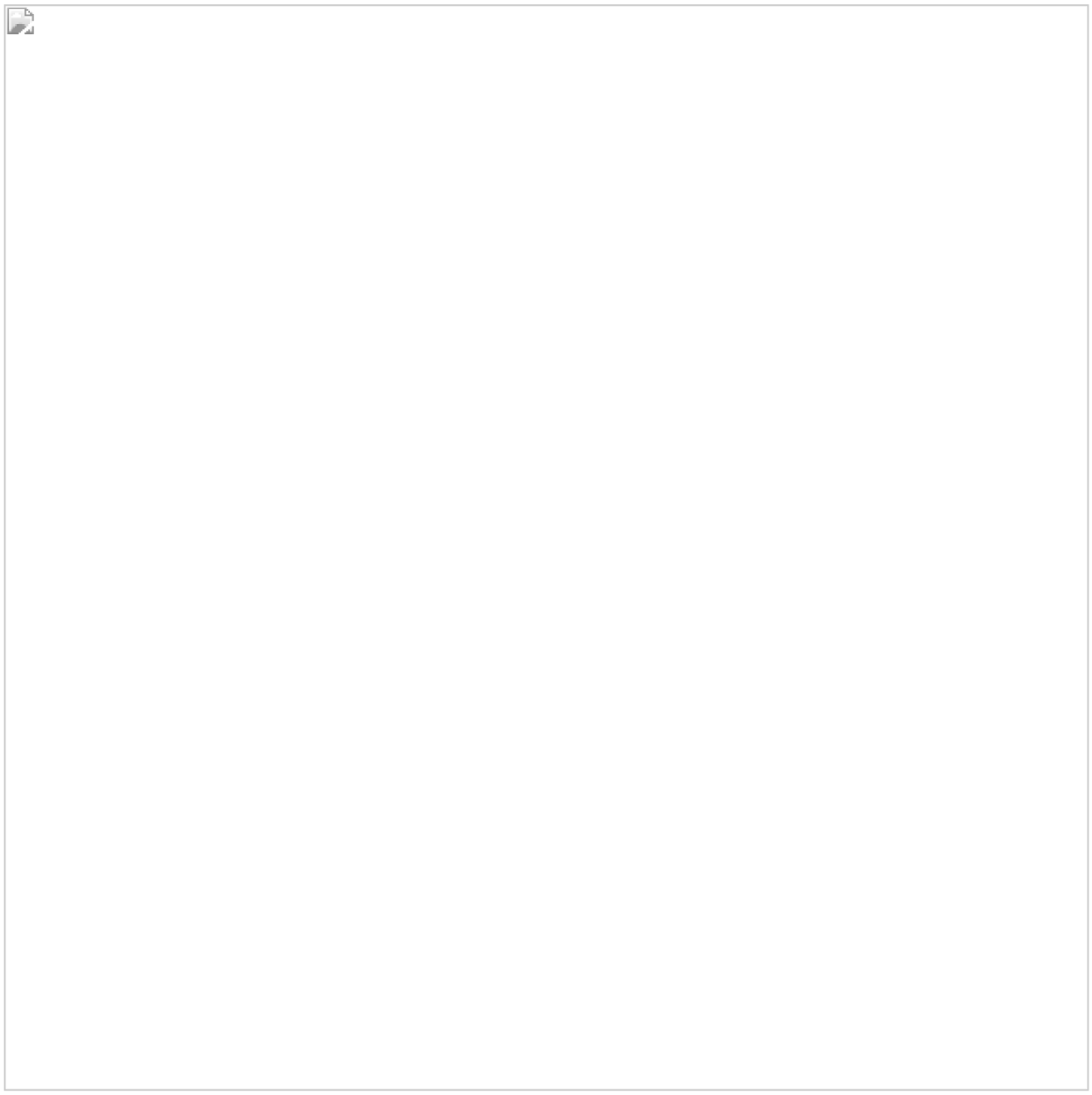
Until the winter snow covered the ground, the mother's wailing voice was heard from that wigwam. From far away came the sound of the father singing a sad song.

Ten summers and as many winters came and went. Every autumn the unhappy parents came back to the lake to search again for him.

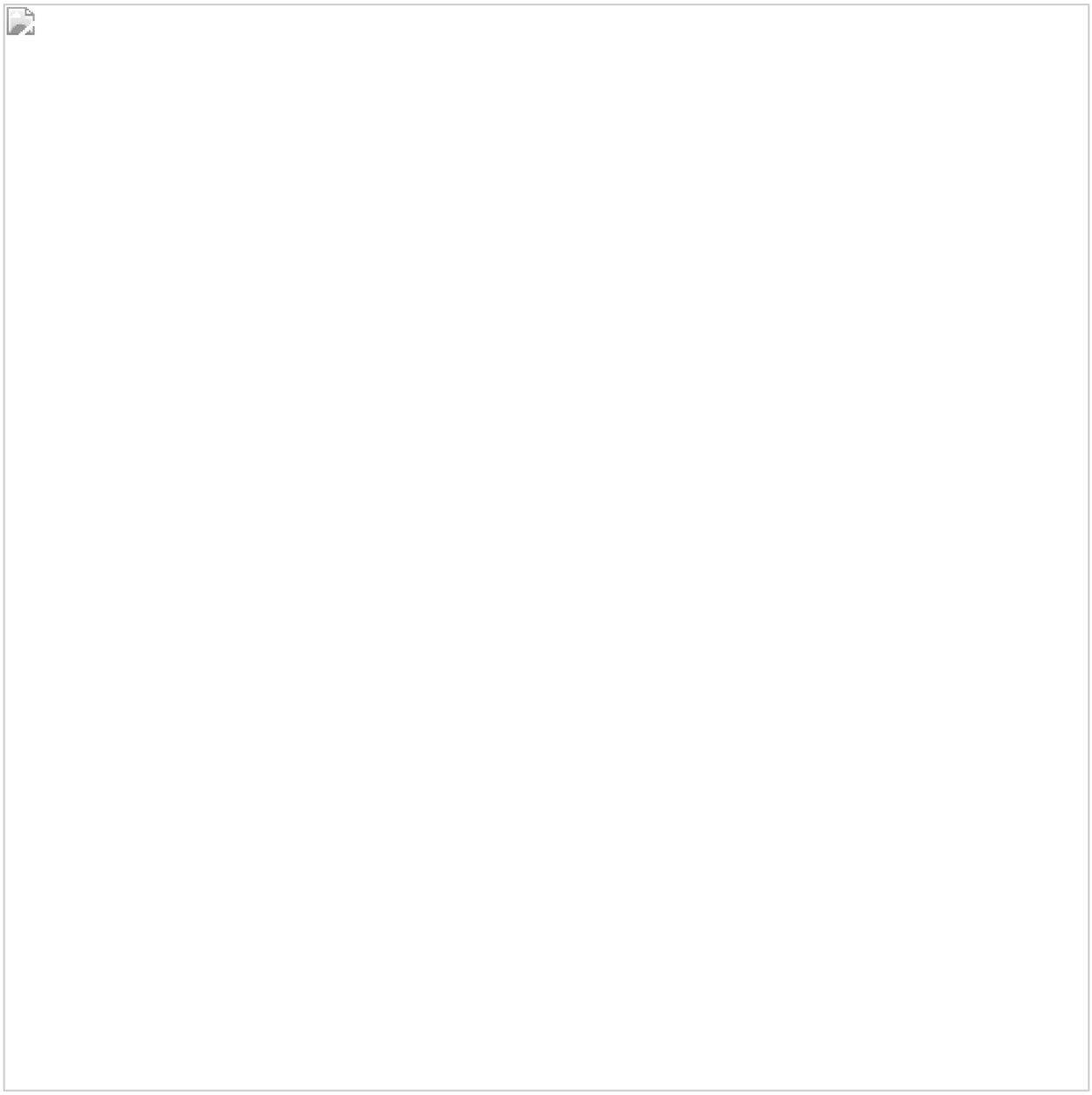
TALK ABOUT IT

They kept looking for ten years. Why do you think they never stopped?

Ten Years of Searching · another picture



A Pair of Bright Black Eyes



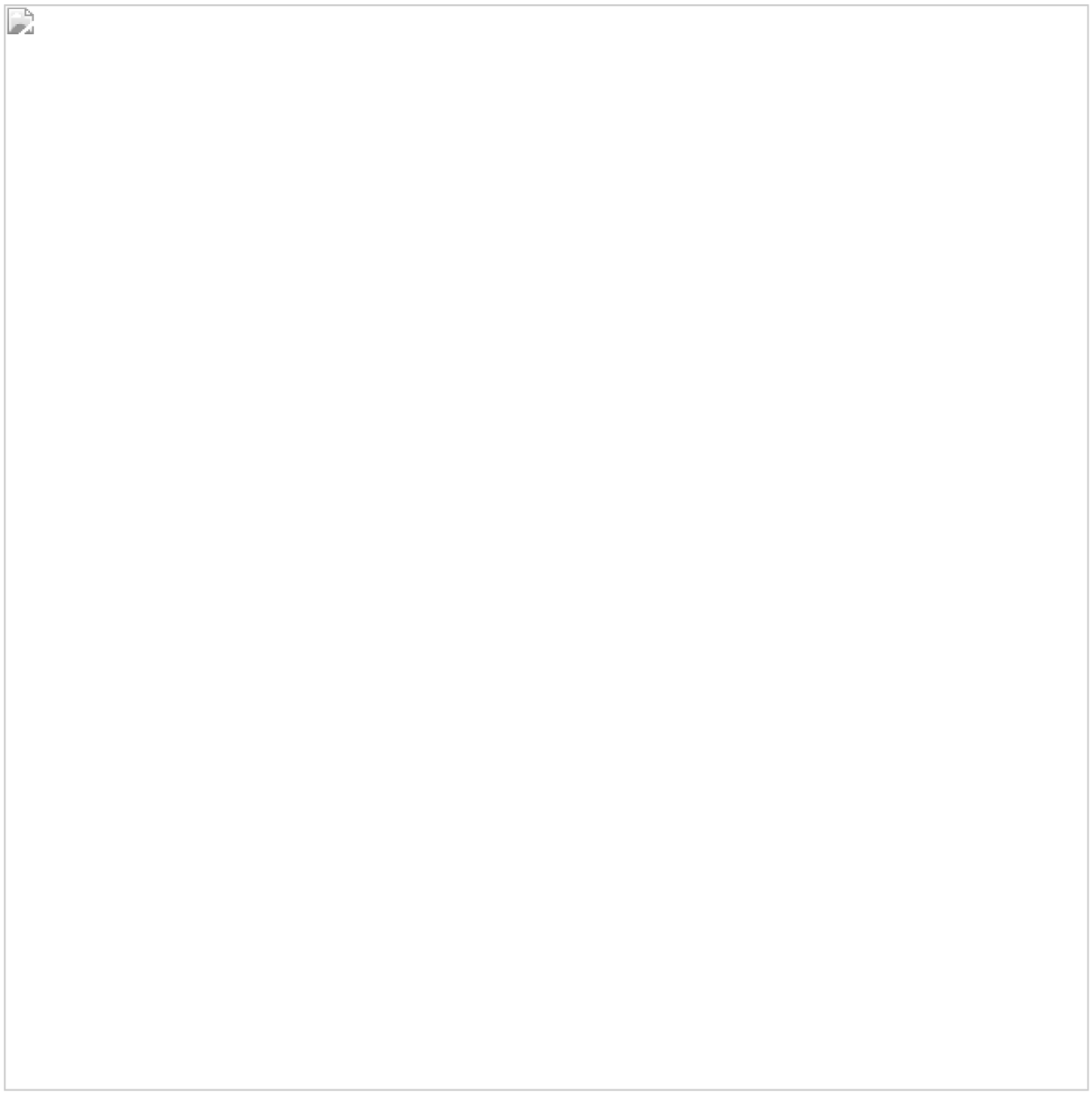
Late in the tenth season, the families were folding their teepees and going away. The mother walked along the lake shore, weeping. One evening, across the lake, a pair of bright black eyes peered at her through the reeds and wild rice.

It was a little wild boy, with long loose hair and a loin cloth of woven sweet grass. He crouched low to the marshy ground and listened. As the sobs shook the slender woman, the boy's eyes grew dim and wet.

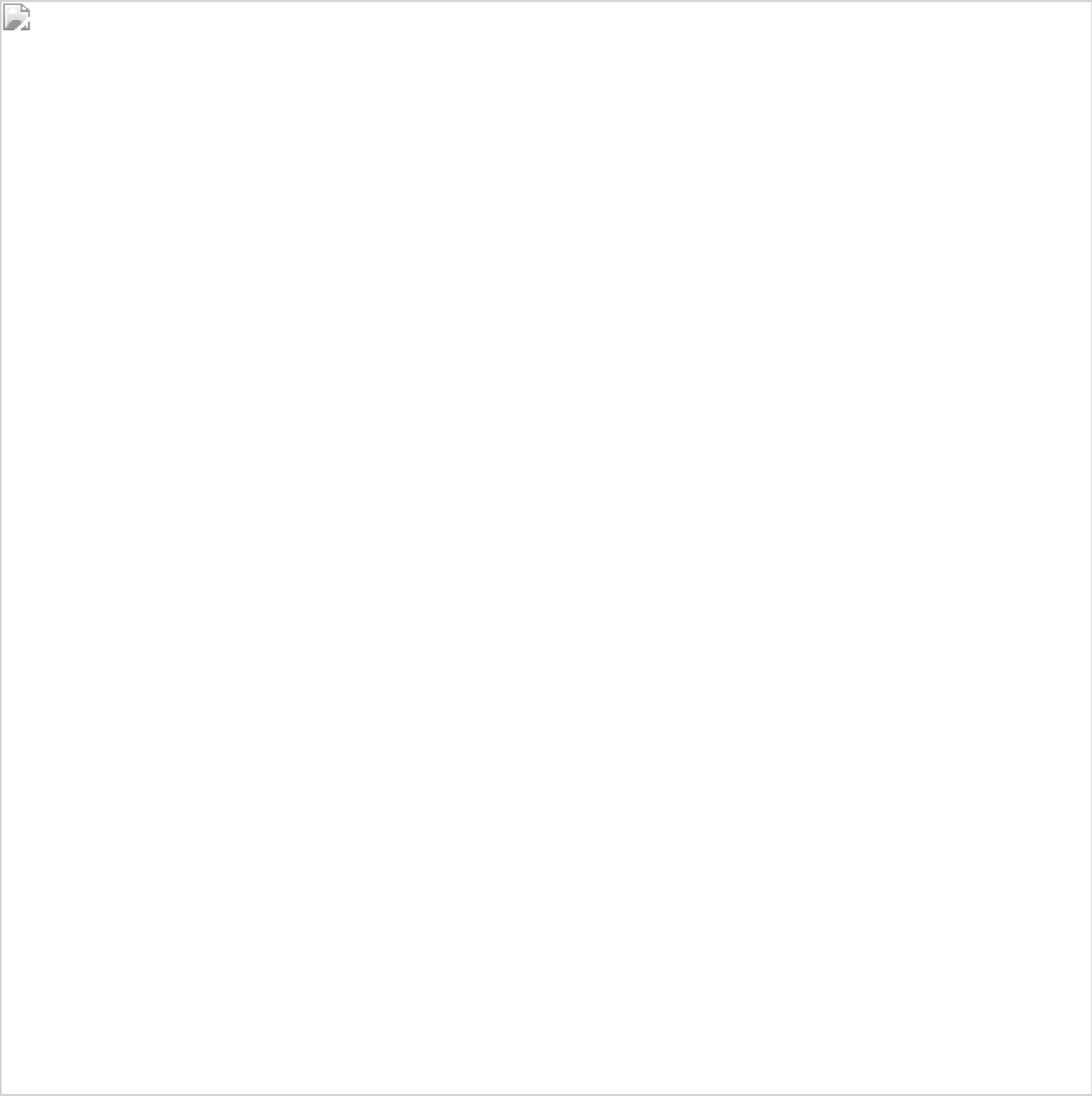
TALK ABOUT IT

The boy did not know the woman, but he cried with her. Why do you think his eyes grew wet?

A Pair of Bright Black Eyes · another picture



The Boy Asks His Mother



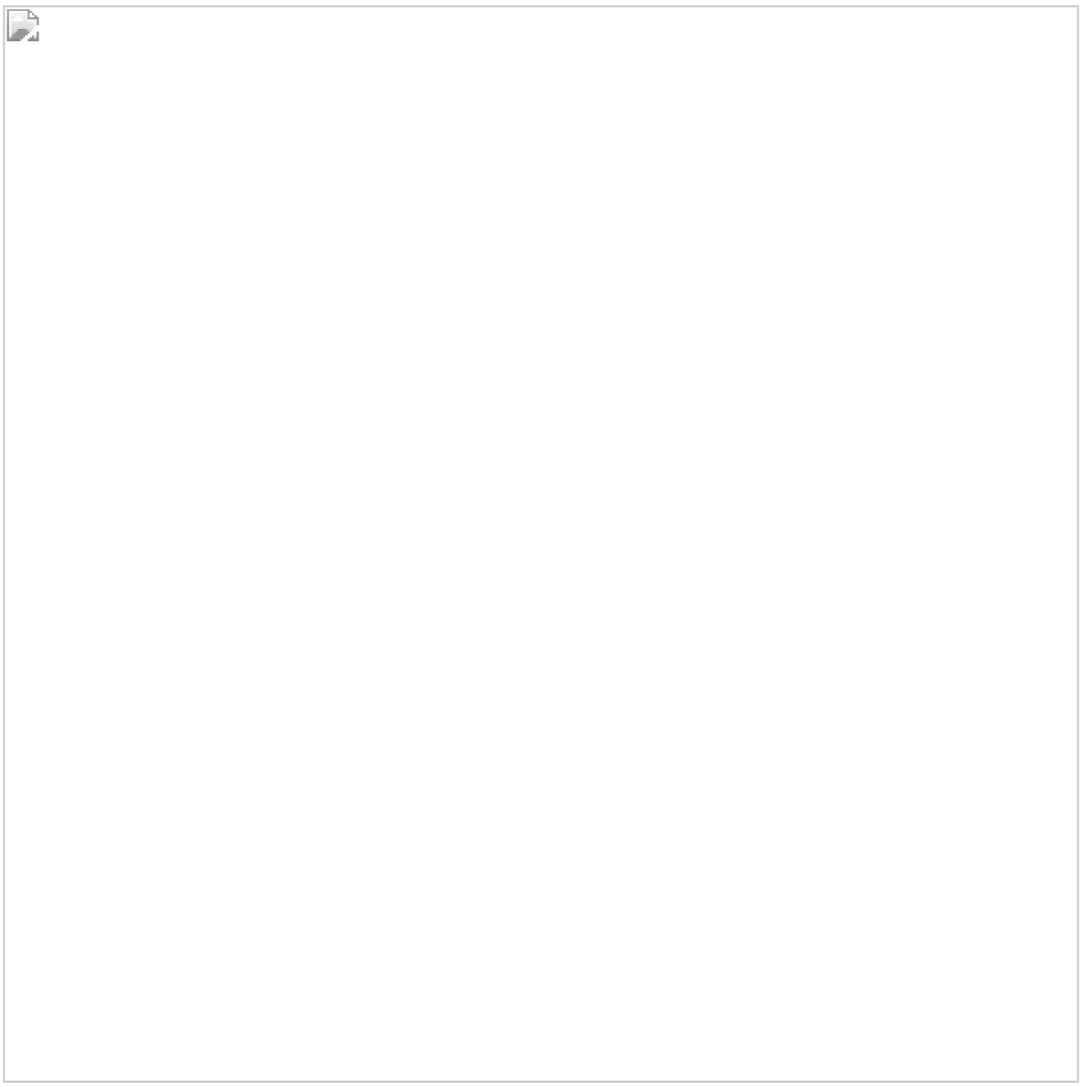
When the moaning stopped, he sprang up and ran to a small hut of reeds and grasses. “Mother! Mother! Tell me what voice it was I heard which pleased my ears, but made my eyes grow wet!” said he.

“Han, my son,” grunted a big, ugly toad. “It was the voice of a weeping woman you heard. My son, do not say you like it.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The boy called the toad his mother. Who do you call family?

The Boy Asks His Mother · another picture

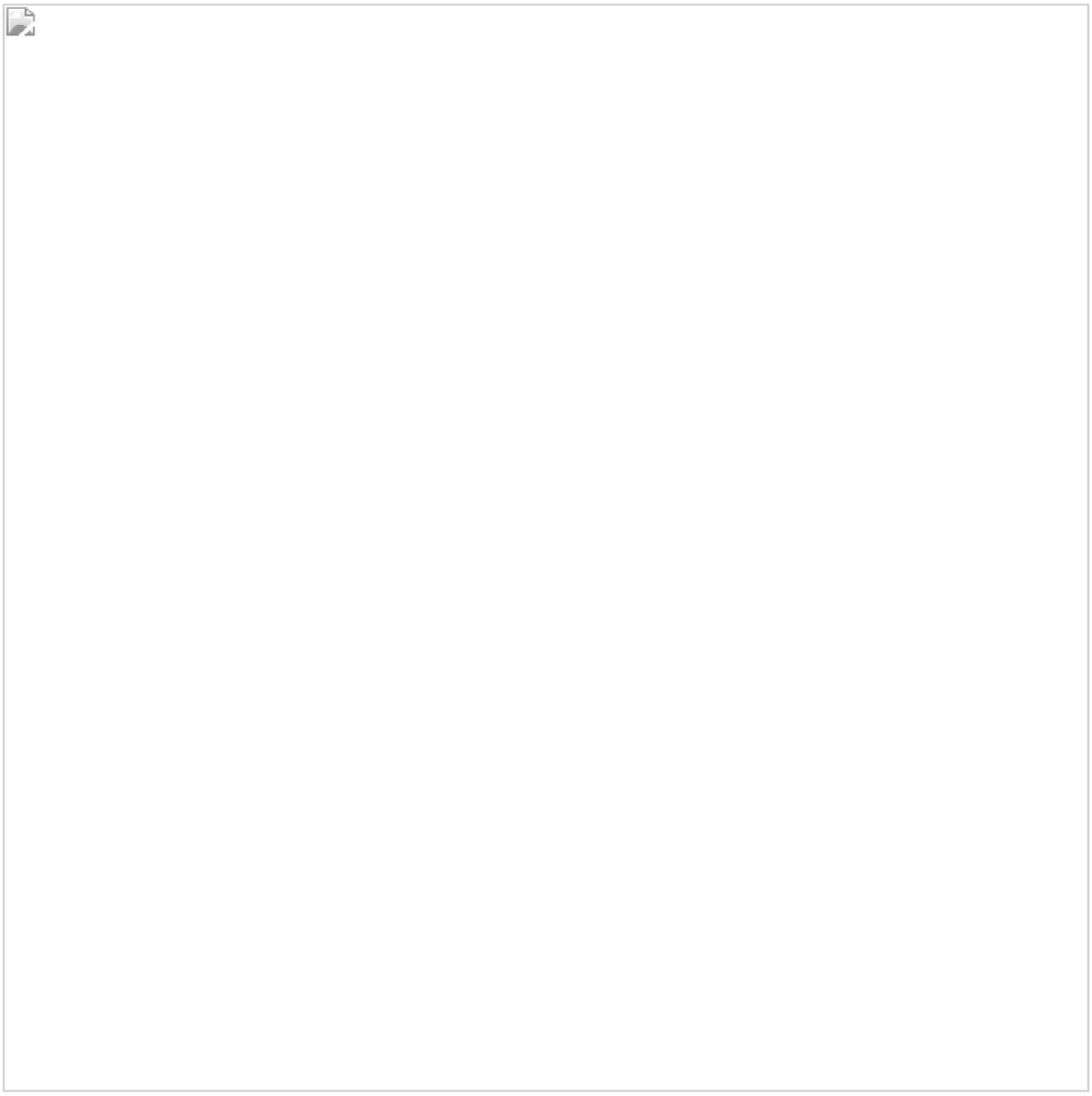


Think about it

1. Who did the boy call “Mother”?

- ○ A big old toad
- ○ A muskrat
- ○ A fawn

The Toad Tries to Cry



The toad had heard the woman's wail and wondered at the throat that made it. In her great wish to keep the stolen boy a while longer, she tried to cry the way the Dakota woman does.

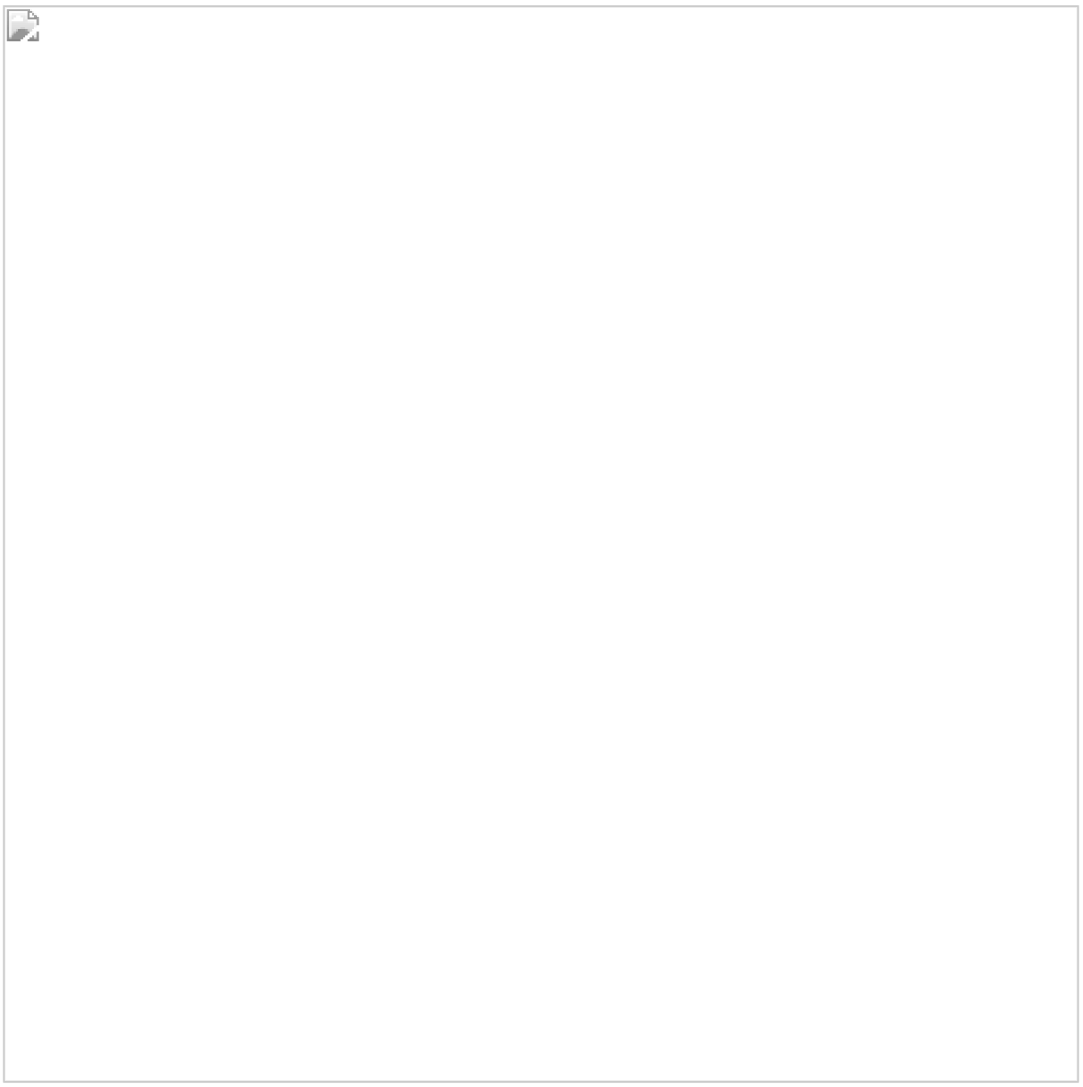
In a gruff, coarse voice she called, “Hin-hin, doe-skin! Hin-hin, Ermine, Ermine! Hin-hin, red blanket, with white border!”

She did not know that a Dakota's cry is made of the names of loved ones gone. So she used the names of valuable things.

TALK ABOUT IT

The toad called out the names of things. What would you call out for someone you love?

The Toad Tries to Cry · another picture

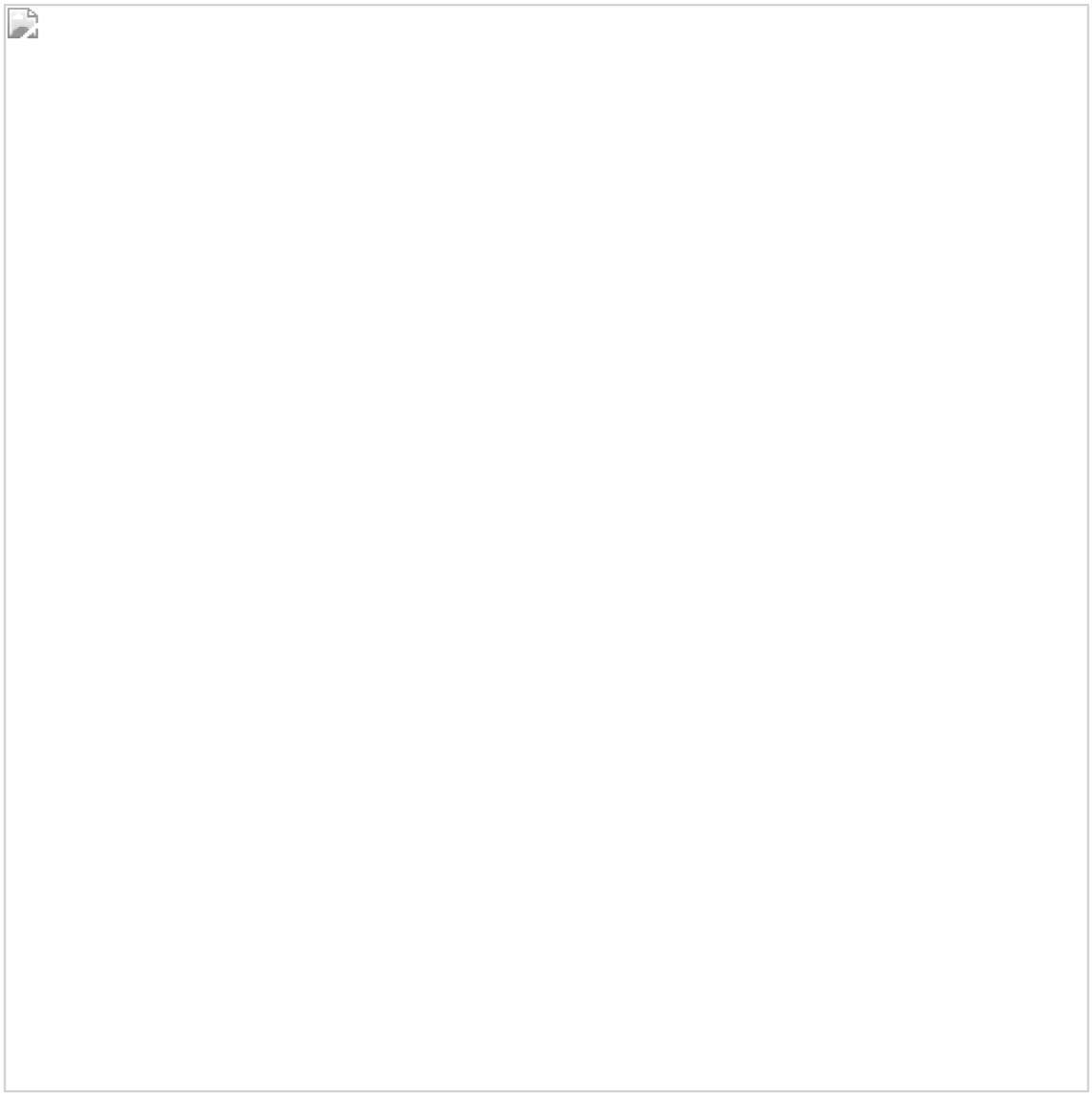


Think about it

1. What did the toad cry out?

- ○ Names of valuable things
- ○ A lullaby
- ○ The boy's name

The Eldest Is Always Best



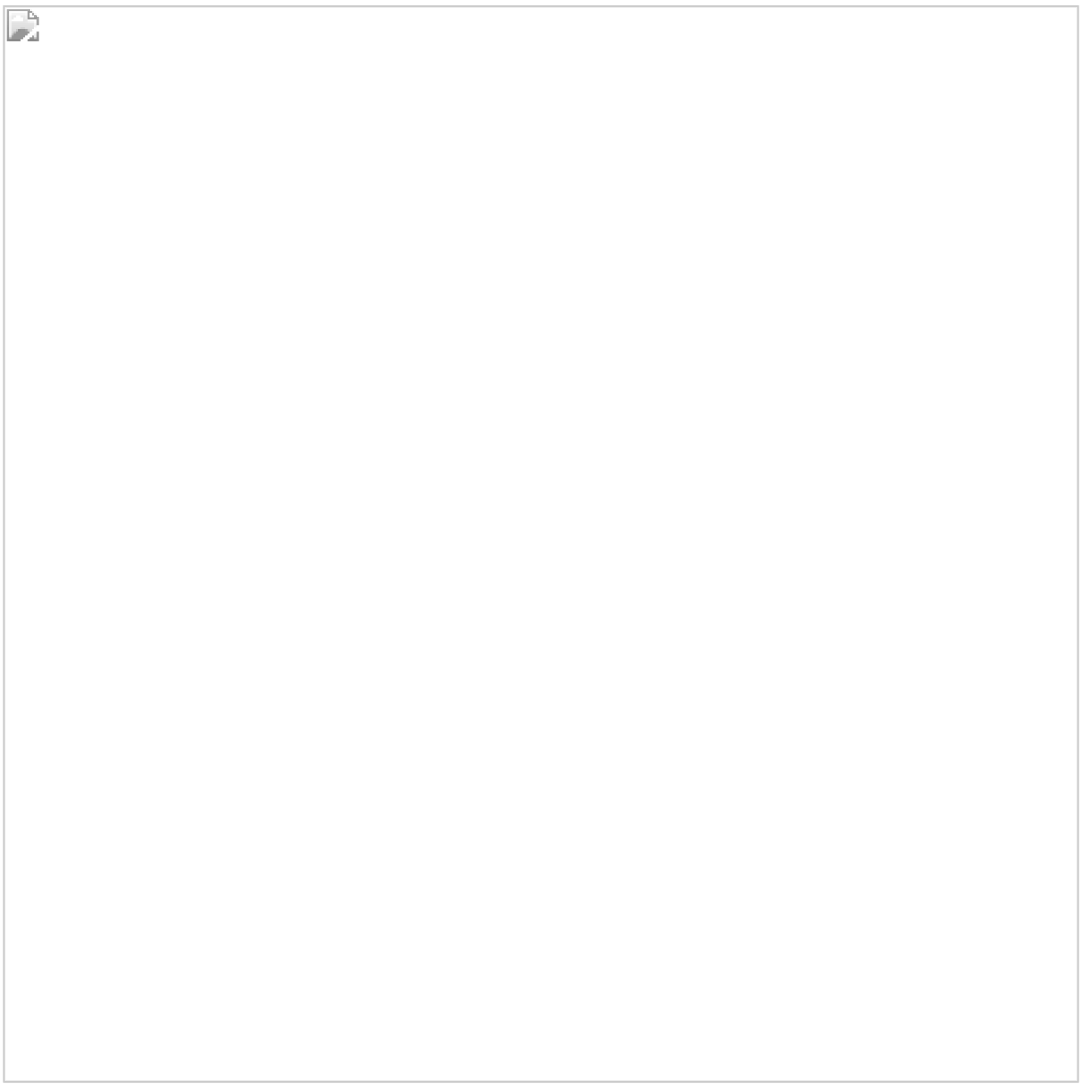
“My son, did my voice bring tears to your eyes?” asked the toad. “No, no!” said the boy. “I want to hear the woman's voice! Tell me, mother, why the human voice stirs all my feelings!”

The toad said inside herself, “I cannot keep him longer, I fear.” But she could not bear to give him away.

Then the boy asked, “Tell me why my little brothers and sisters are all unlike me.” The toad looked at her pudgy children and said, “The eldest is always best.” That quieted him for a while.

TALK ABOUT IT

The boy noticed he looked different from the toads. Have you ever noticed something that did not seem to fit?

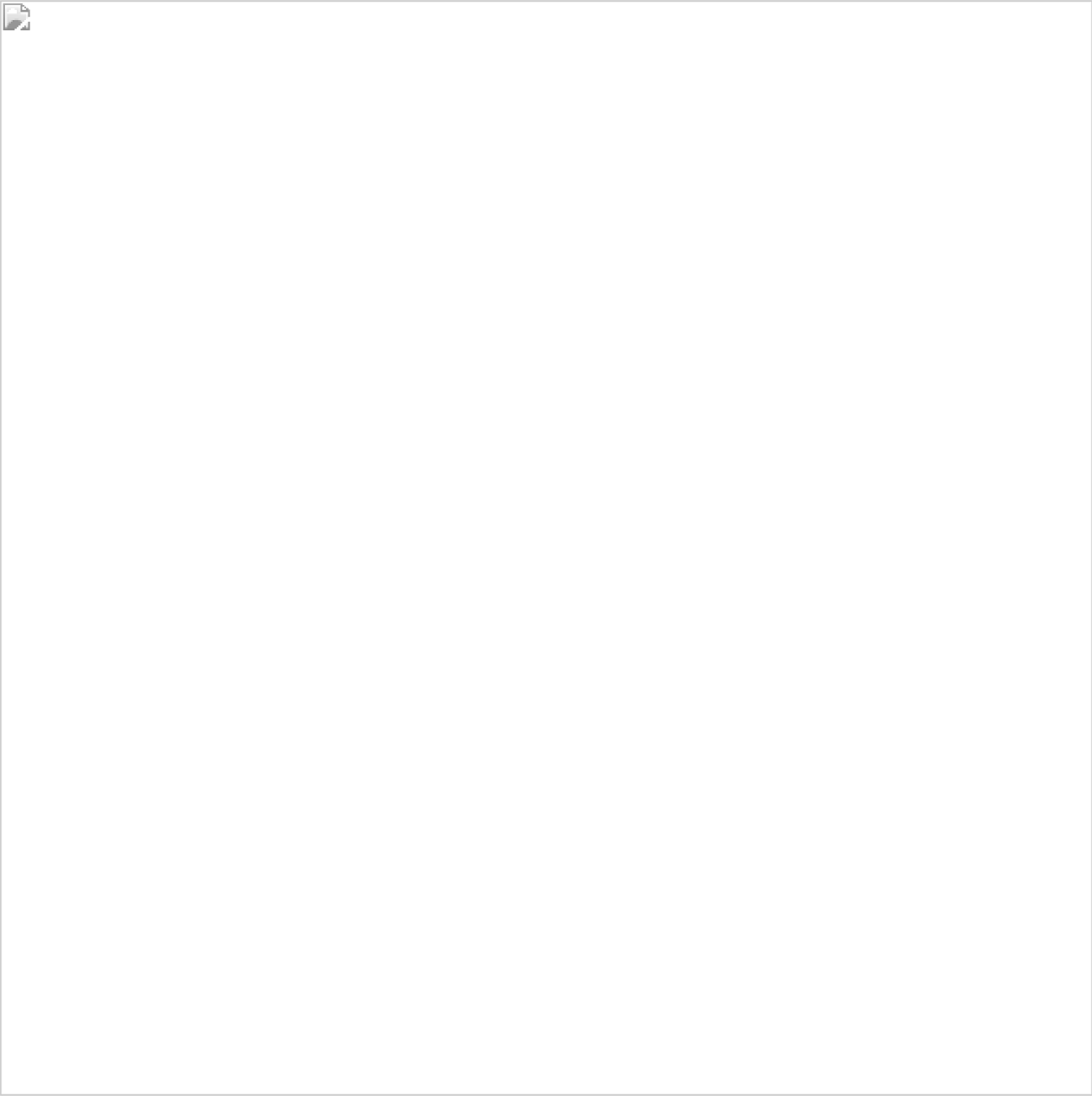


Think about it

1. What did the toad say when the boy asked why he was unlike his brothers and sisters?

- ○ That the eldest is always best
- ○ That he was not her son
- ○ That he should ask his father

Never Alone



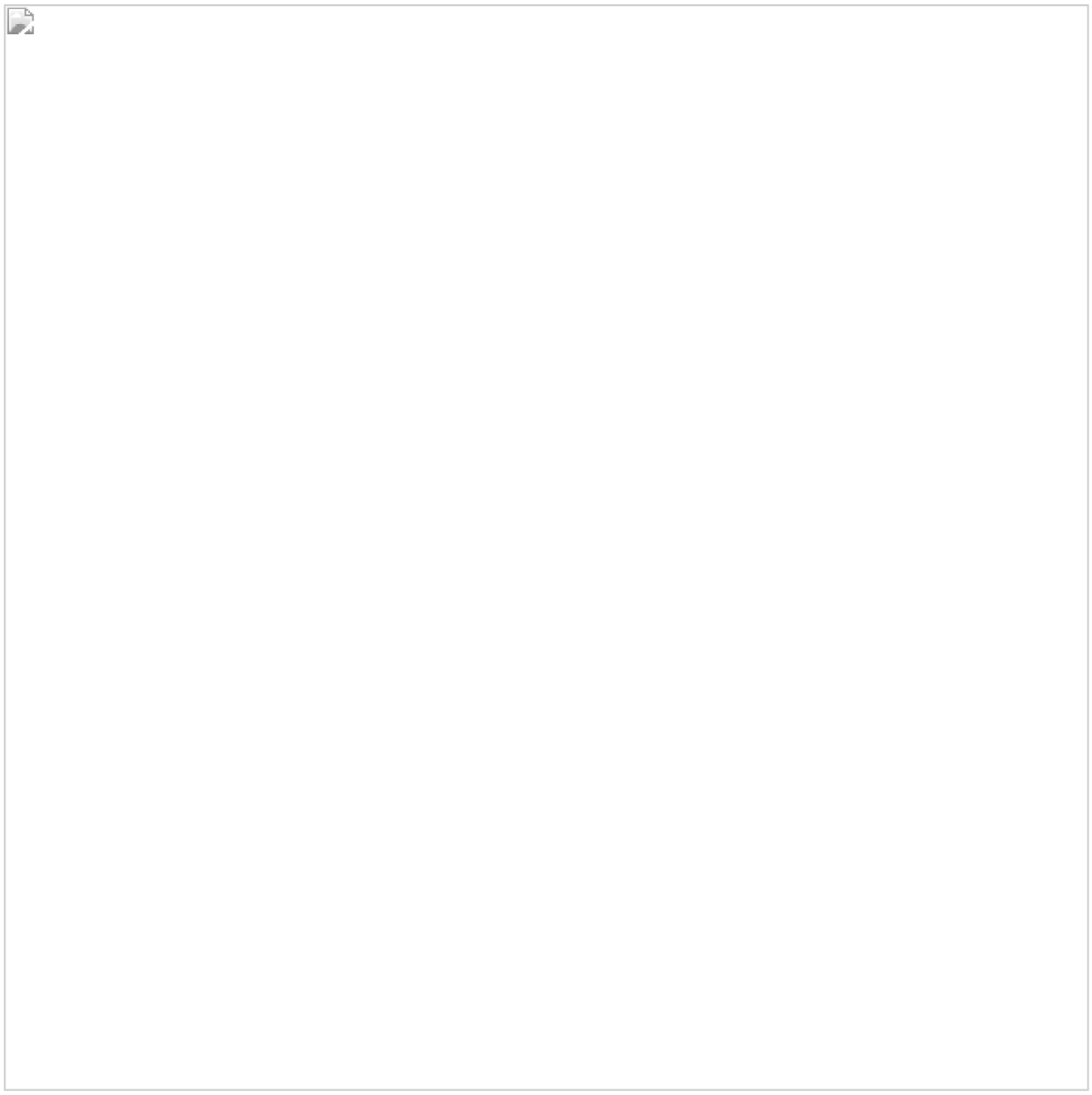
The old toad watched her stolen human son very closely. When he went off alone, she shoved one of her own children out after him, saying, “Do not come back without your big brother.”

So the wild boy with the long loose hair sat every day on a marshy island hidden among the tall reeds. And always at his feet hopped a little toad brother.

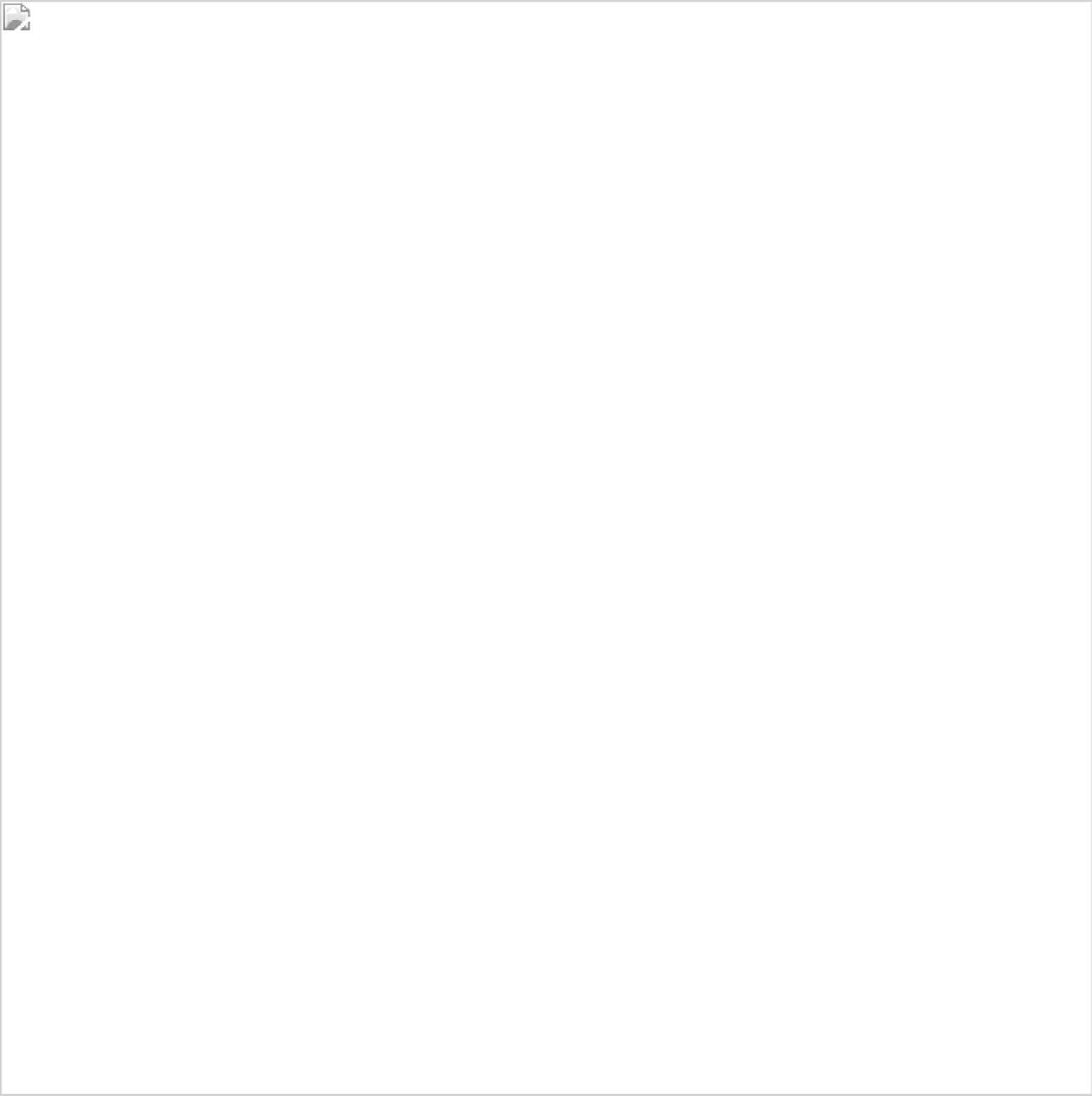
TALK ABOUT IT

The toad did not want to let him go. What do you think of how she kept him?

Never Alone · another picture



The Hunter Sees the Boy



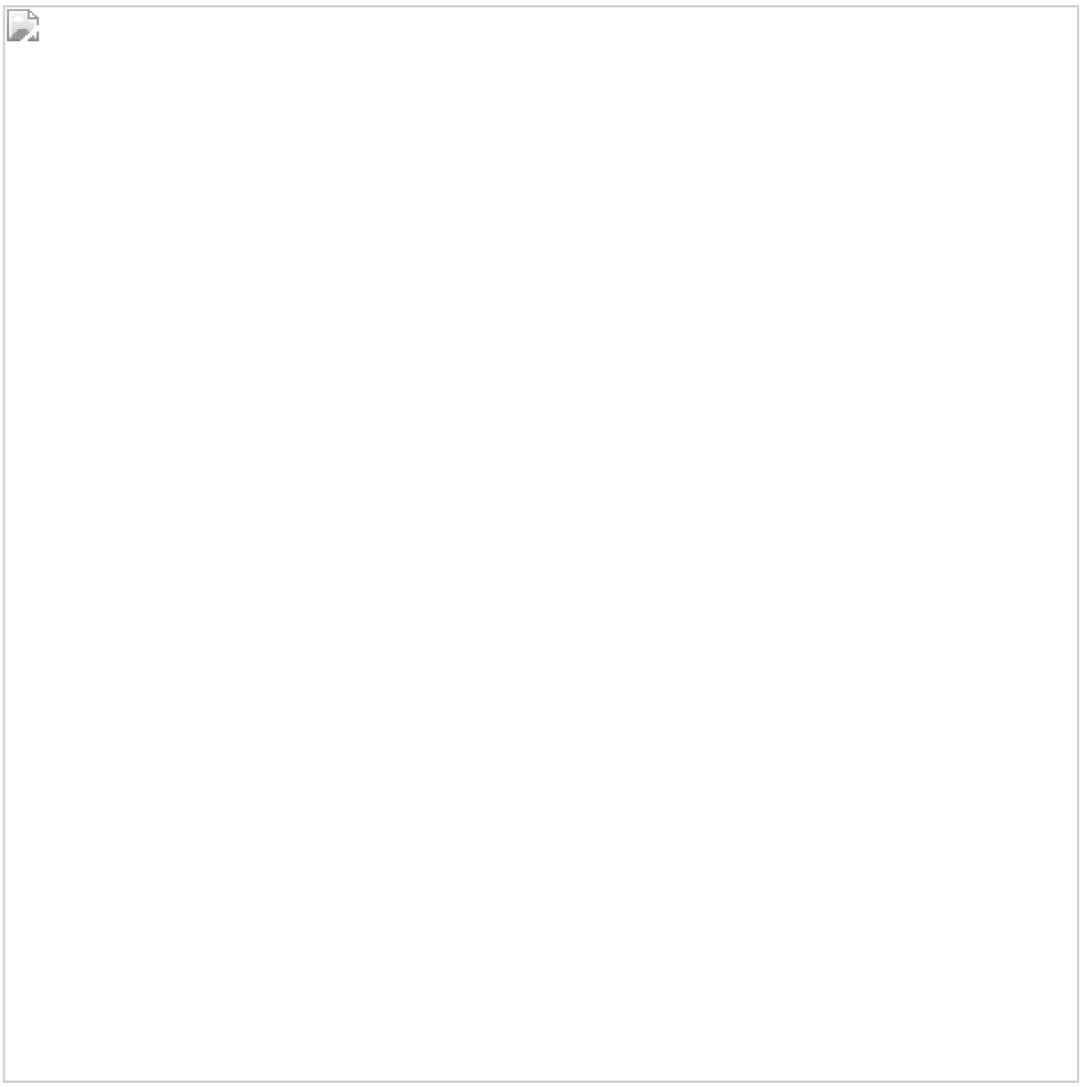
One day an Indian hunter was wading in deep water. He spied the boy among the reeds. He had heard of the baby stolen long ago.

"This is he!" he said to himself, and ran to his wigwam. "I saw among the tall reeds a black-haired boy at play!" he shouted to the people.

TALK ABOUT IT

The hunter remembered the lost baby after all those years. Why do you think he remembered?

The Hunter Sees the Boy · another picture

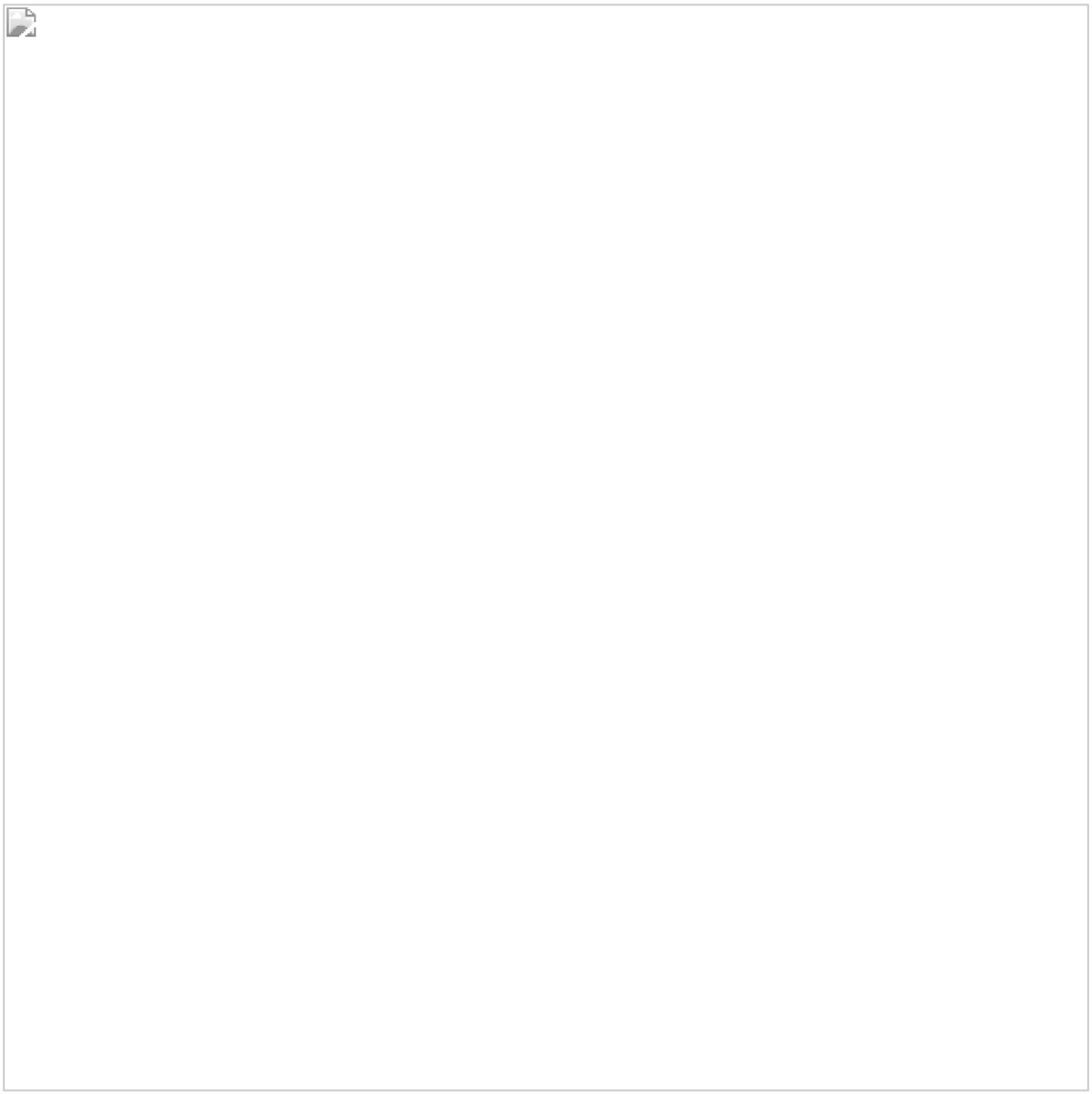


Think about it

1. Who found the boy?

- ○ The mother
- ○ A hunter wading in the lake
- ○ A toad

Our Boy



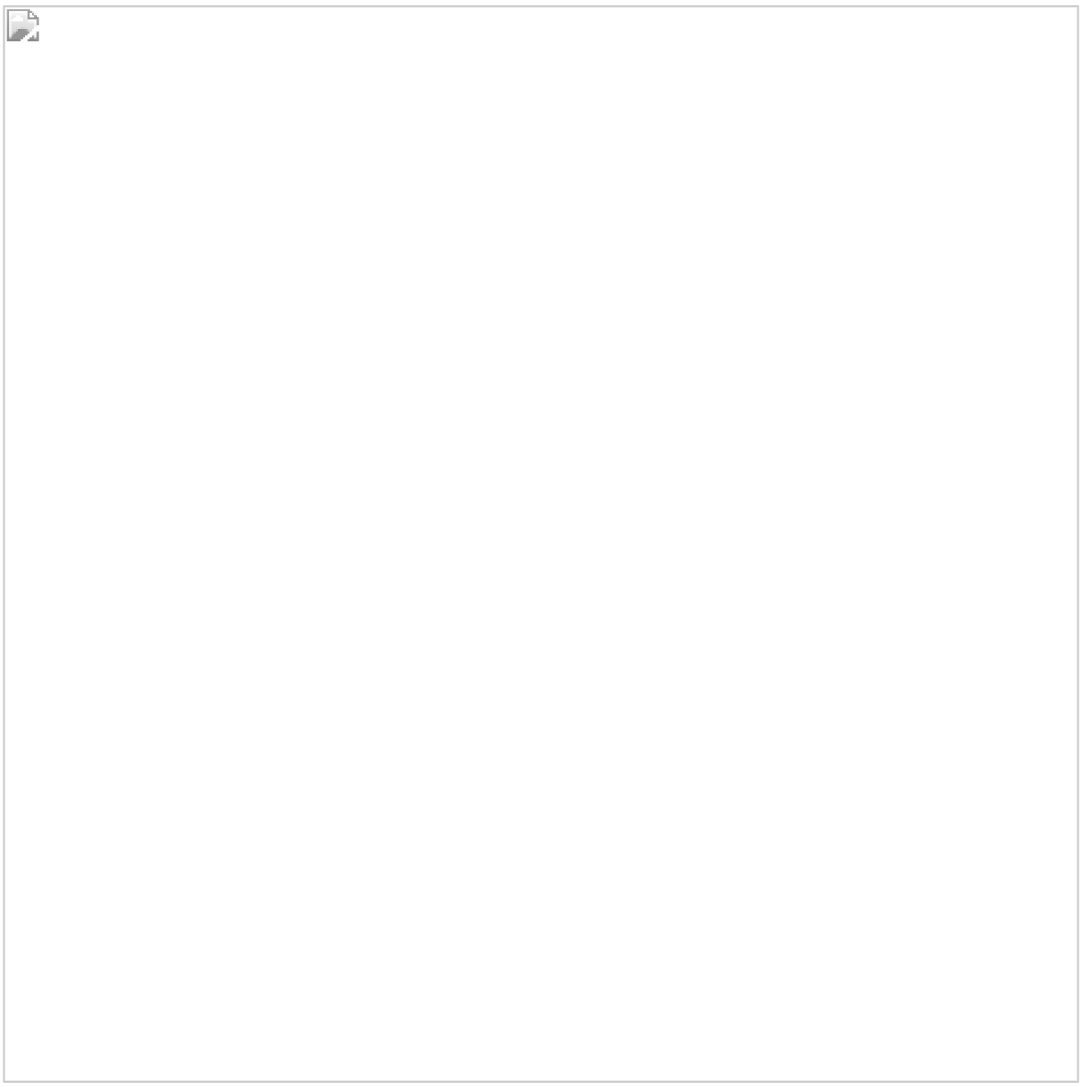
At once the unhappy father and mother cried out, “'Tis he, our boy!” The hunter led them quickly to the lake.

Peeping through the wild rice, he pointed with an unsteady finger toward the boy, who was playing all unawares. “'Tis he! 'tis he!” cried the mother, for she knew him.

In silence the hunter stood aside, while the happy father and mother caressed their baby boy, grown tall.

TALK ABOUT IT

After ten years, the mother knew her son right away. How do you know the people who love you?



Think about it

1. How long had the boy been gone?

- ○ One winter
- ○ Ten summers and winters
- ○ A single night

2. What would you say to the hunter?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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