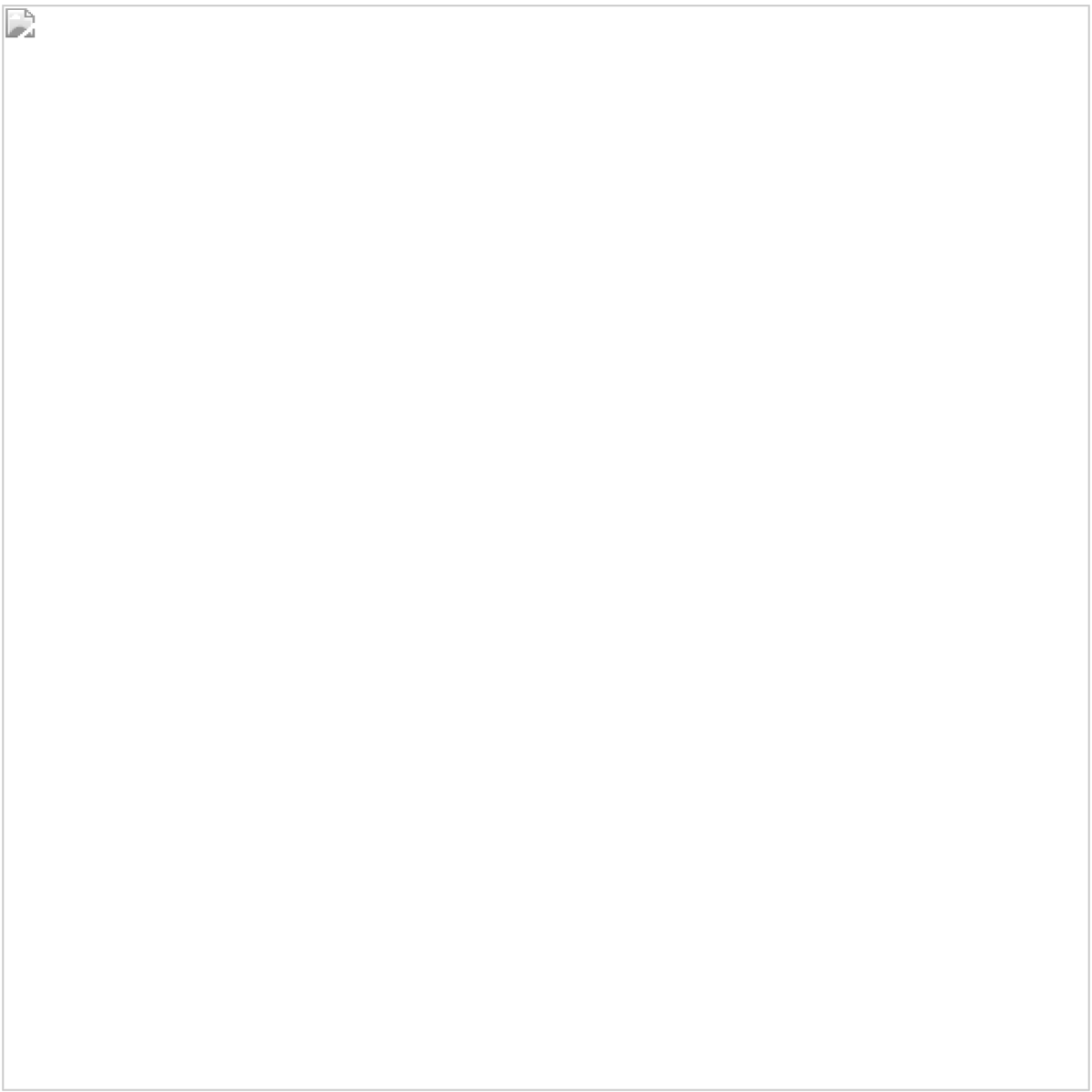
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Twelve Months

A Slavic Tale



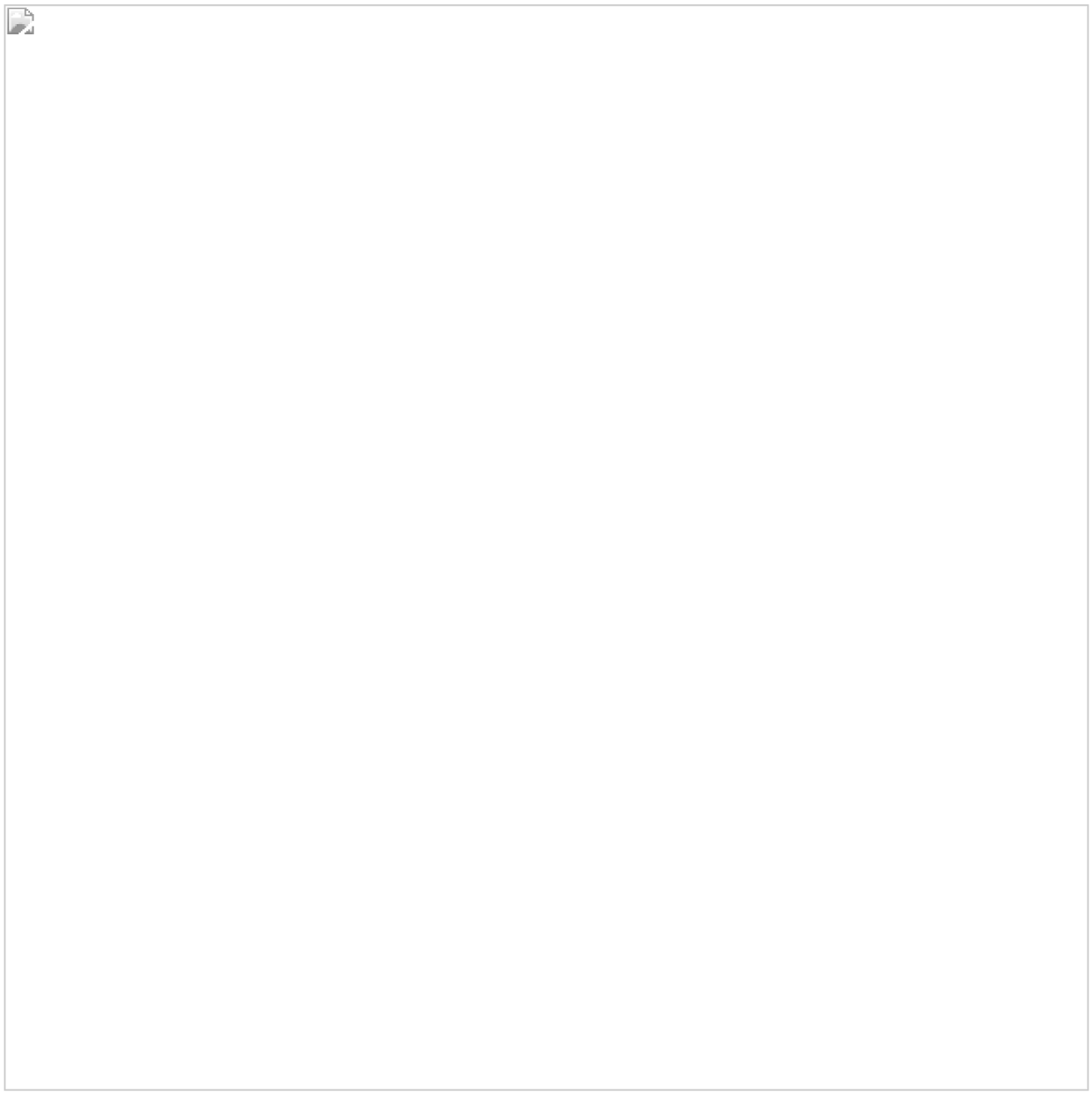
A girl named Marouckla lived with her stepmother and her stepsister Helen. Helen did nothing but dress up and go to parties. Marouckla did all the work: she cooked, washed, sewed, spun, wove, brought in the hay, and milked the cow.

TALK ABOUT IT

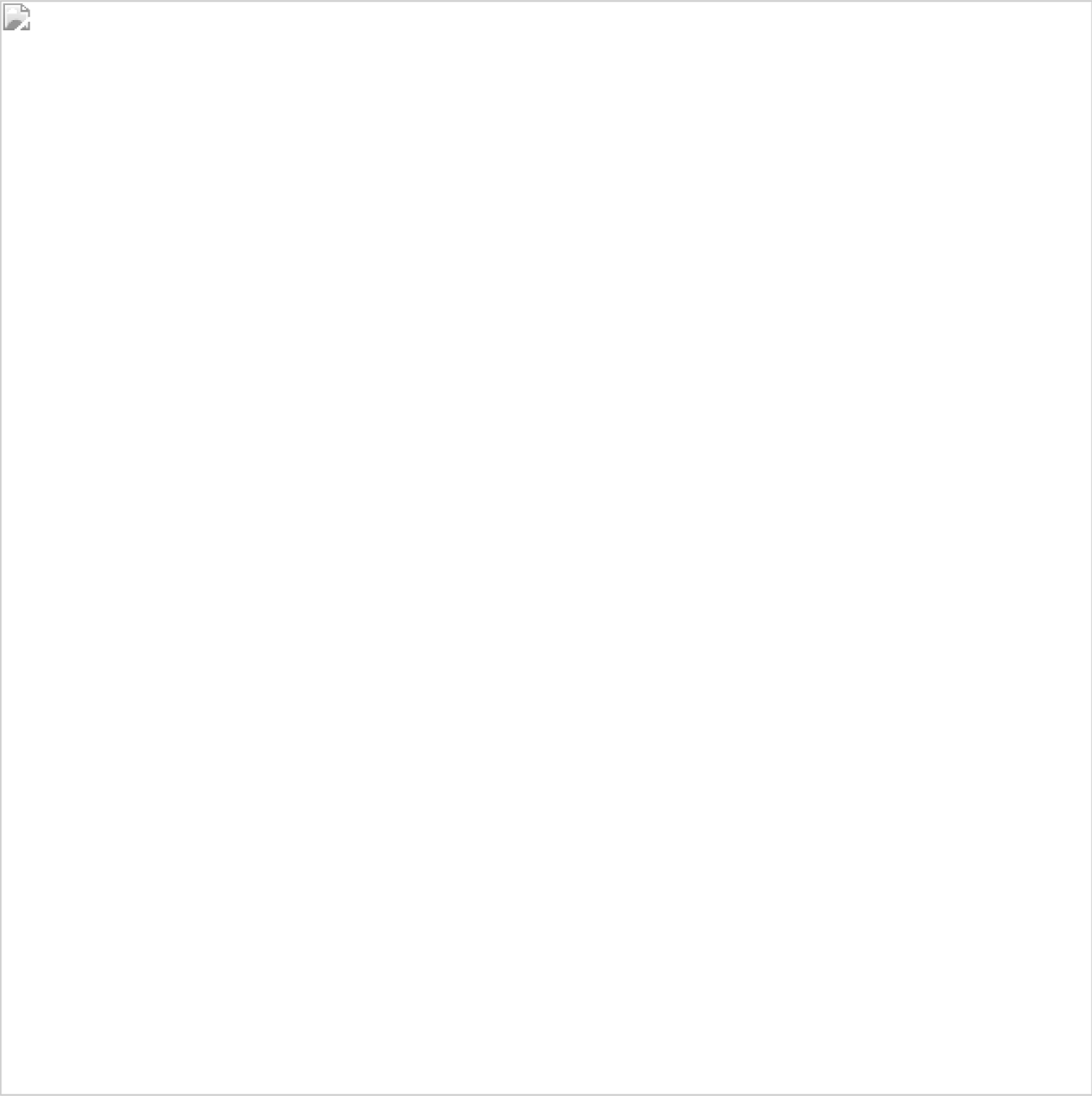
Marouckla did so much work, and never complained. What do you think kept her kind?

This book belongs to _____

The Twelve Months · another picture



The Hardest Work



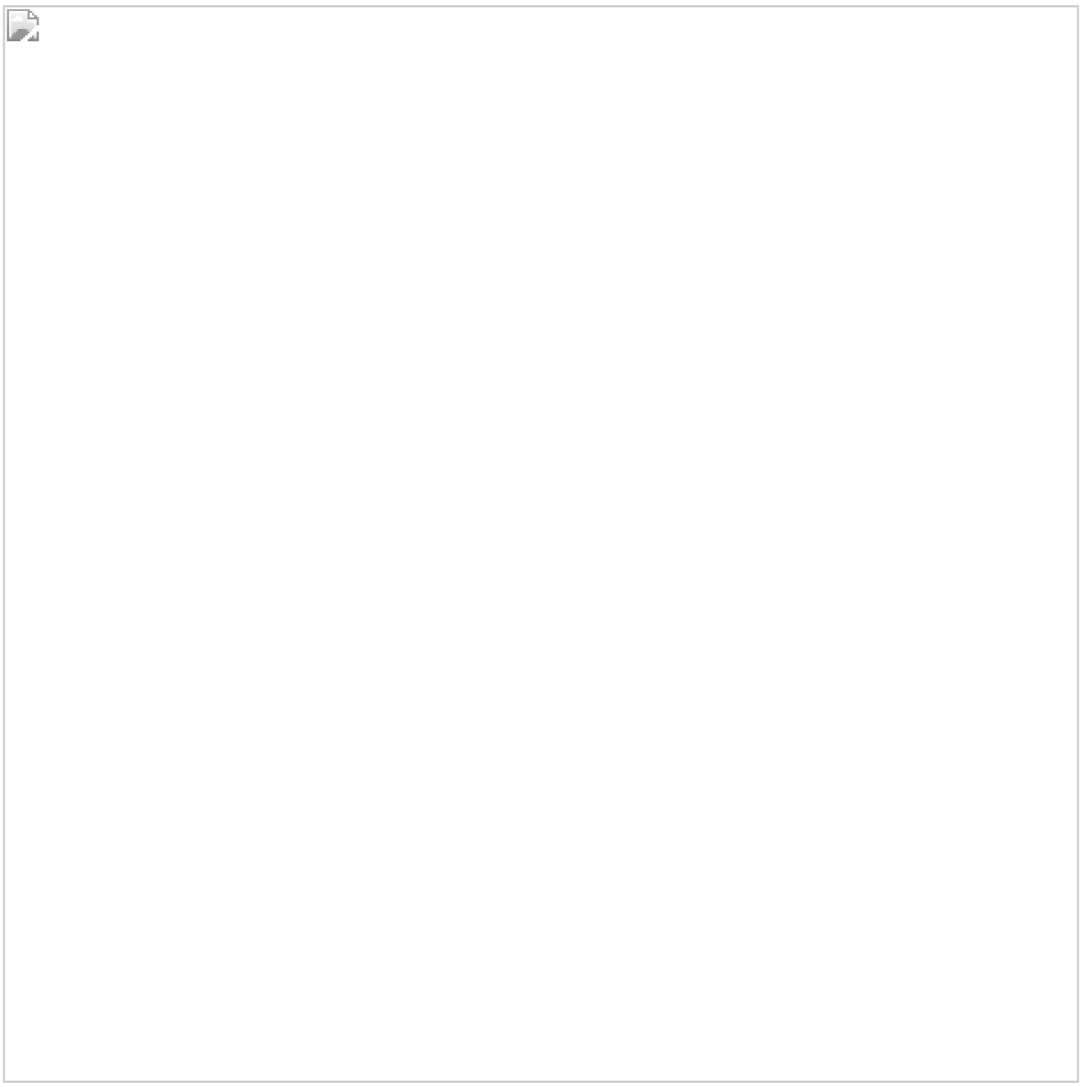
Helen and her mother were not kind to Marouckla. They scolded her and gave her little to eat.

But Marouckla bore it with a smile, and she grew sweeter every day.

That only made Helen and her mother more cross.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think kindness made Helen and her mother angrier instead of softer?

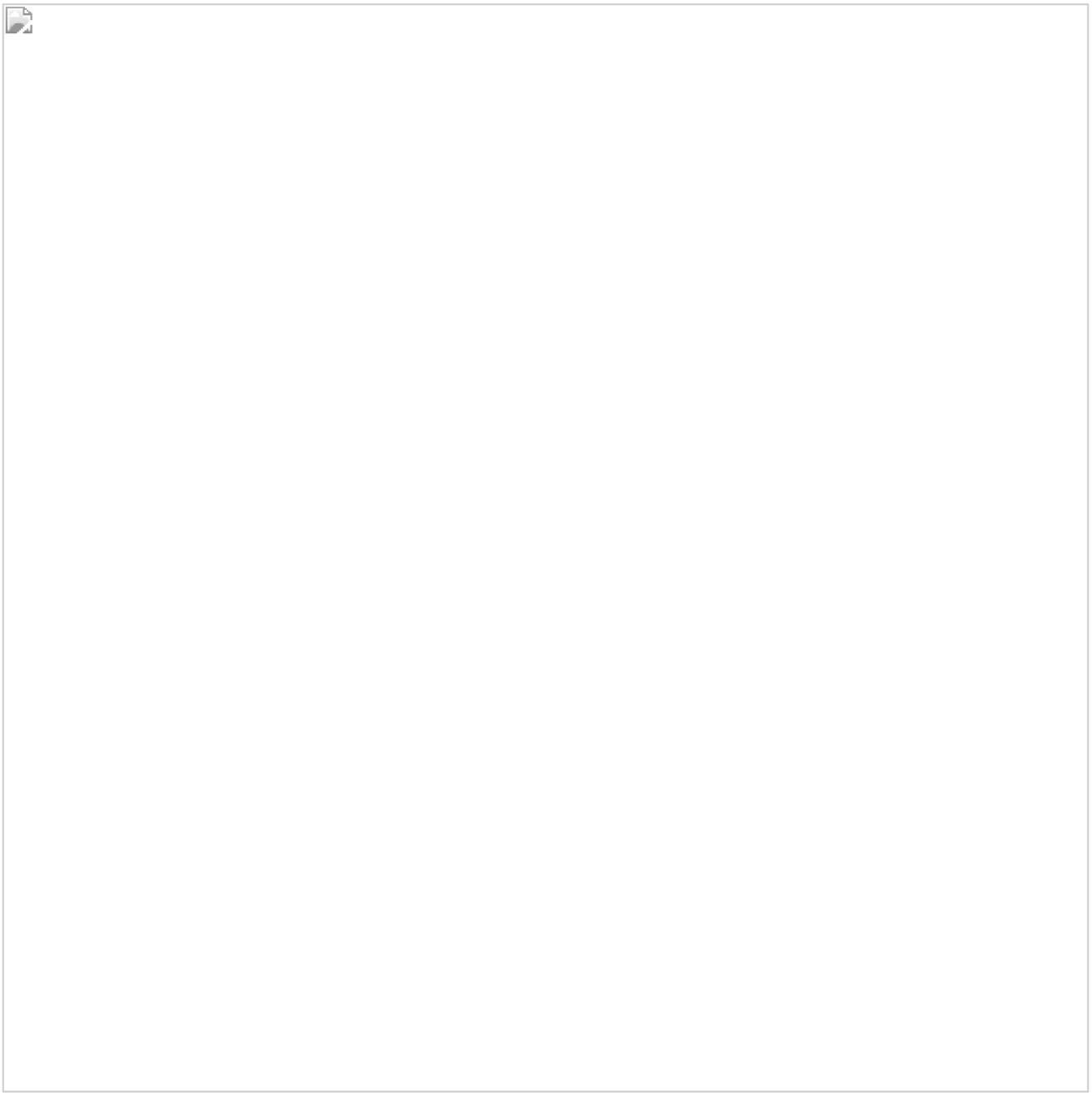


Think about it

1. Who did all the hard work in the house?

- ○ Helen
- ○ Marouckla
- ○ The stepmother

Violets in the Snow



One day in the middle of winter, Helen wanted violets for her gown.

She told Marouckla to go up the mountain and bring her some, fresh and sweet.

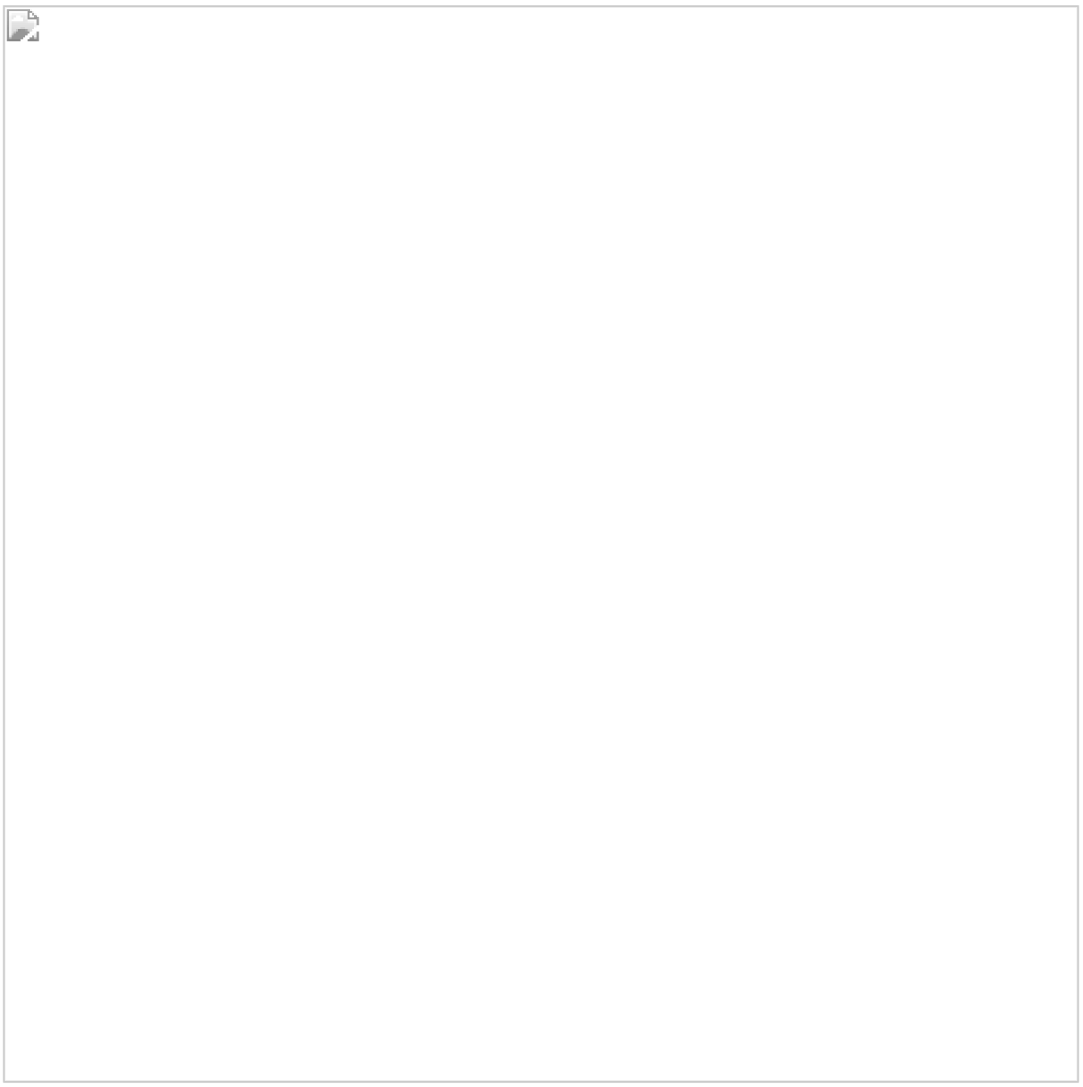
“Who ever heard of violets blooming in the snow?” said Marouckla.

Helen would not listen. Her mother pushed Marouckla outside and shut the door. So Marouckla set off, crying, up the snowy mountain.

TALK ABOUT IT

Could Marouckla say no to Helen? What would you have done?

Violets in the Snow · another picture

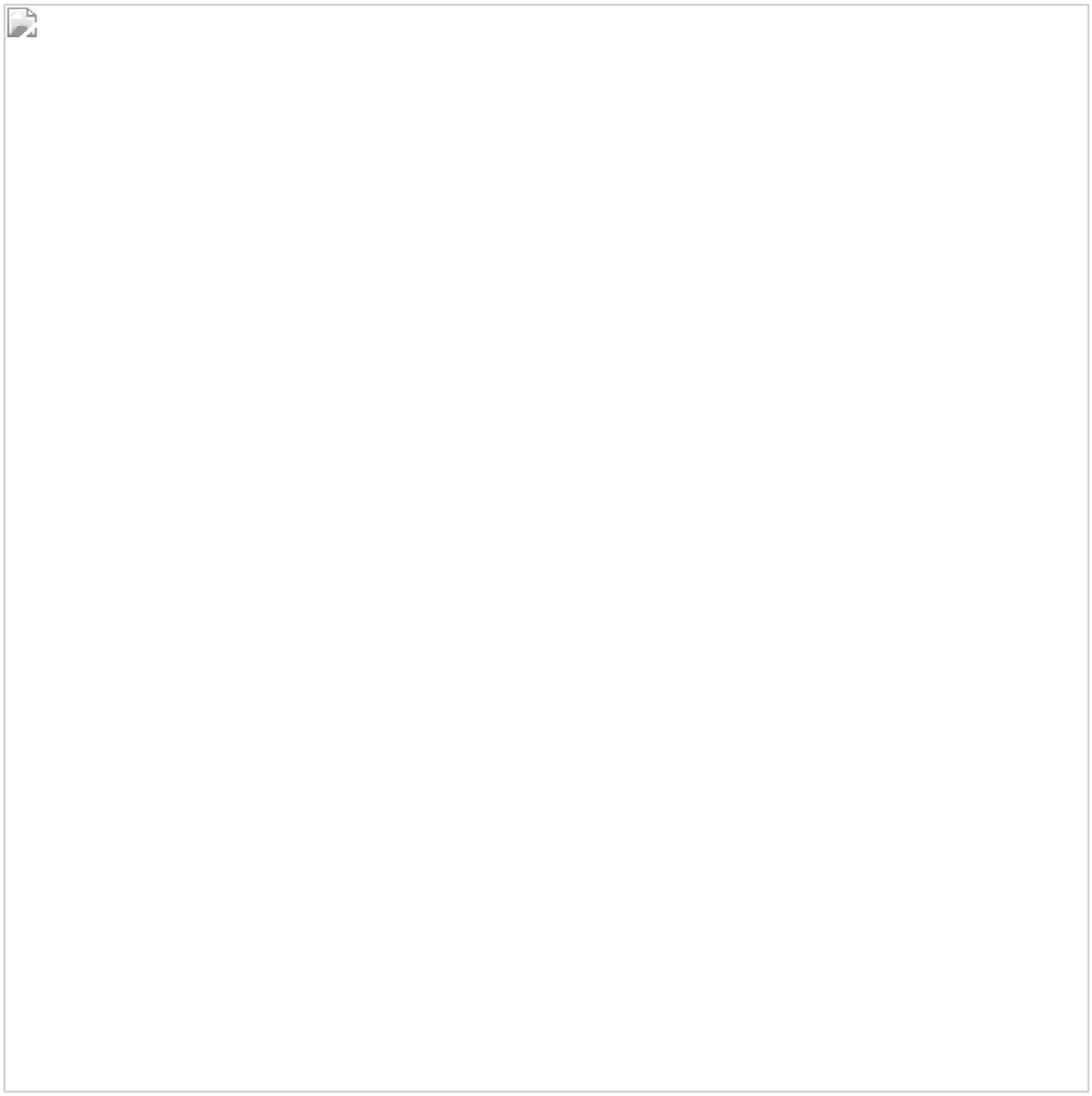


Think about it

1. What did Helen ask for in the middle of winter?

- ○ A warm coat
- ○ A snowball
- ○ Violets

A Fire on the Mountain



The snow was deep, and Marouckla got lost in the wood. She was hungry and cold. Then she saw a light far off, and she climbed towards it.

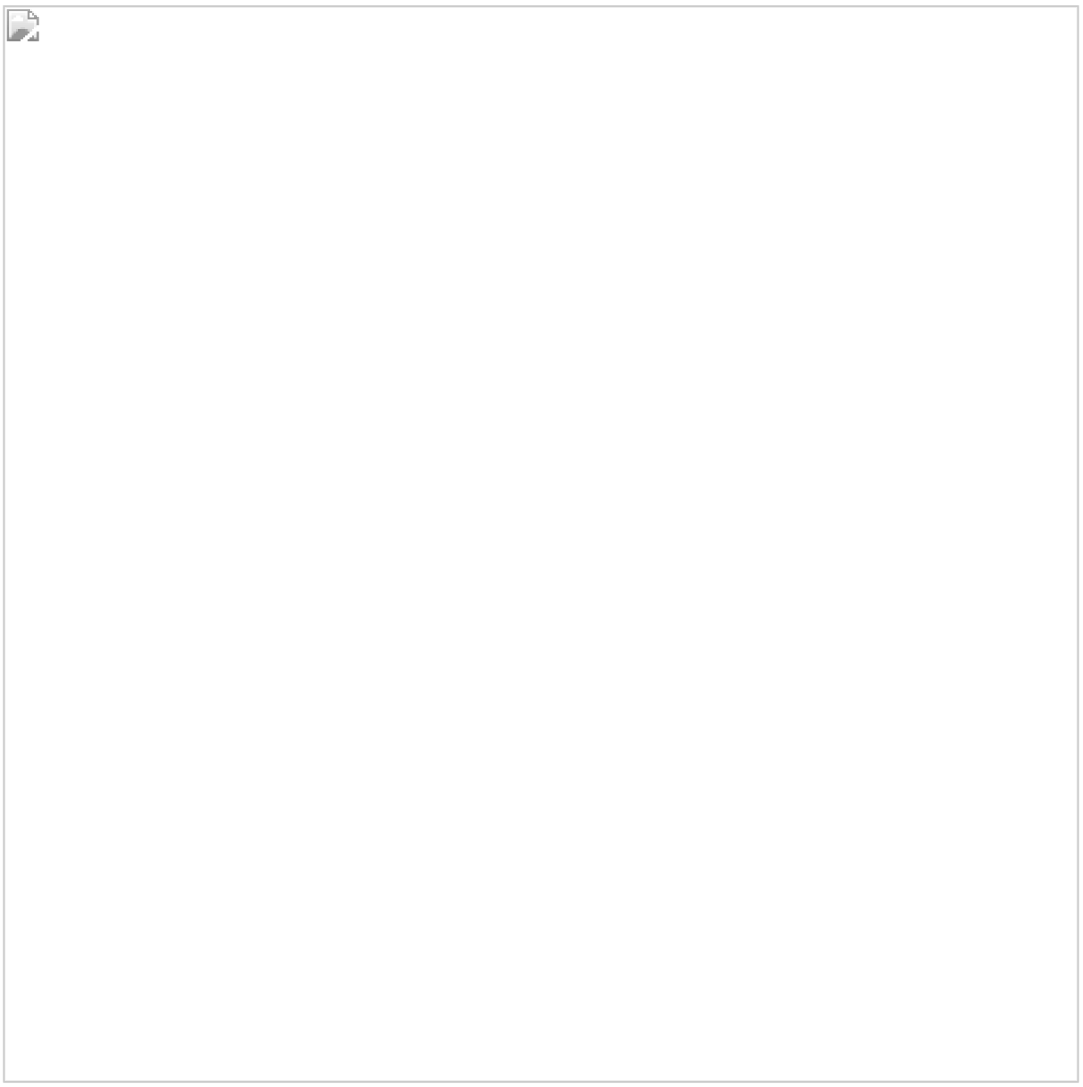
At the top of the mountain, a great fire burned. Round it sat twelve strange beings on twelve blocks of stone. Three had white hair, three were a little younger, three were young and handsome, and the rest were younger still.

They were the twelve months of the year. The oldest, the great Setchène, who was January, sat in the highest place. His beard was white as snow, and he held a wand.

TALK ABOUT IT

Which month would you want to meet? What would you ask?

A Fire on the Mountain · another picture

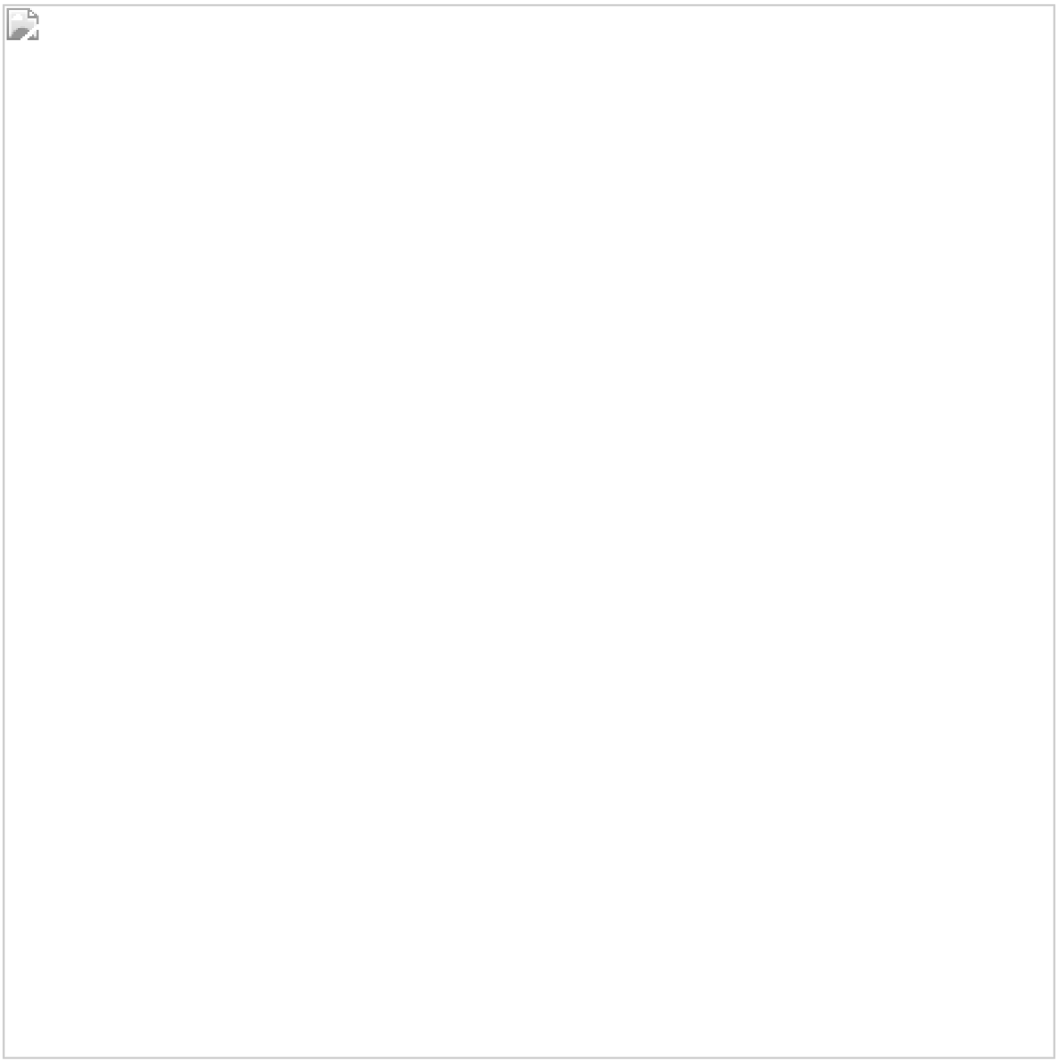


Think about it

1. Who sat round the fire on the mountain?

- ○ The twelve months of the year
- ○ Twelve shepherds
- ○ Twelve robbers

May I Warm Myself?



Marouckla was afraid at first. Then her courage came back. She walked up to the fire and asked, “Men of God, may I warm myself at your fire? I am chilled by the winter cold.”

The great Setchène raised his head. “What brings thee here, my daughter? What dost thou seek?”

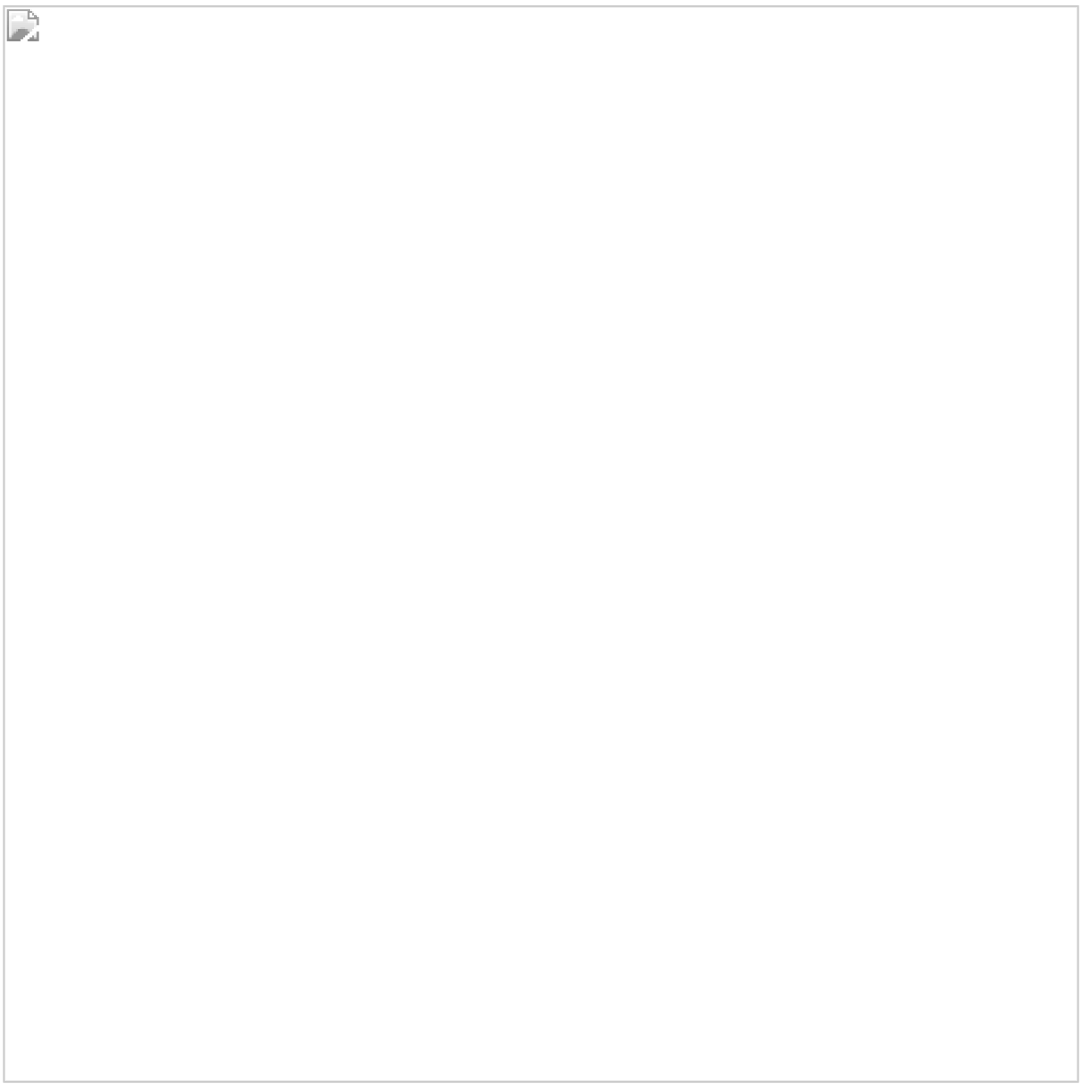
“I am looking for violets,” she said.

“This is not the season for violets,” said Setchène. “Dost thou not see the snow everywhere?”

She told him that her stepmother and Helen had sent her, and that she dared not go home without them.

TALK ABOUT IT

Marouckla asked politely and told the truth. Why does that matter?

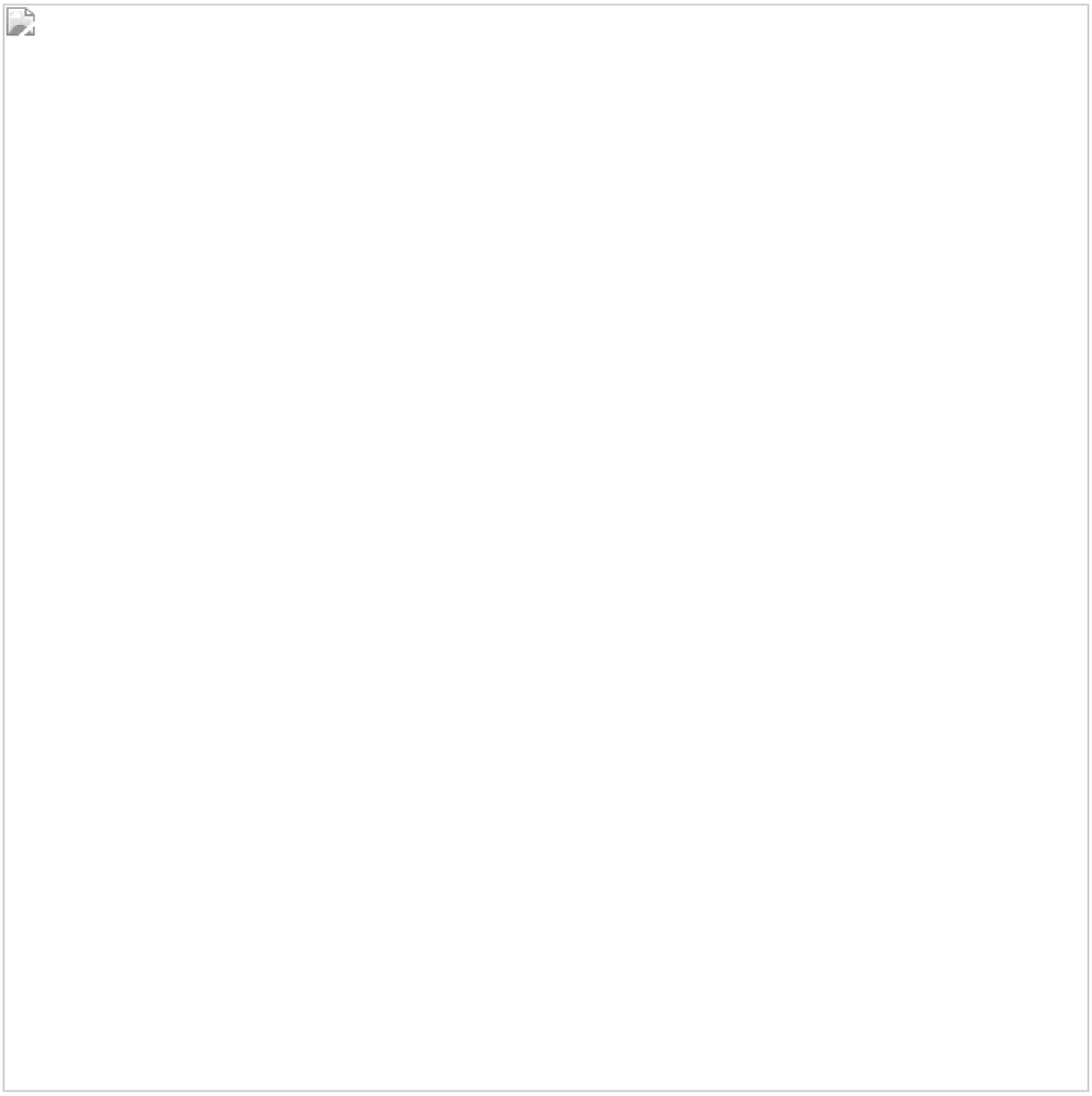


Think about it

1. What did Marouckla ask the months first?

- ○ For gold
- ○ If she could warm herself at their fire
- ○ To take her home

March Takes the Highest Place



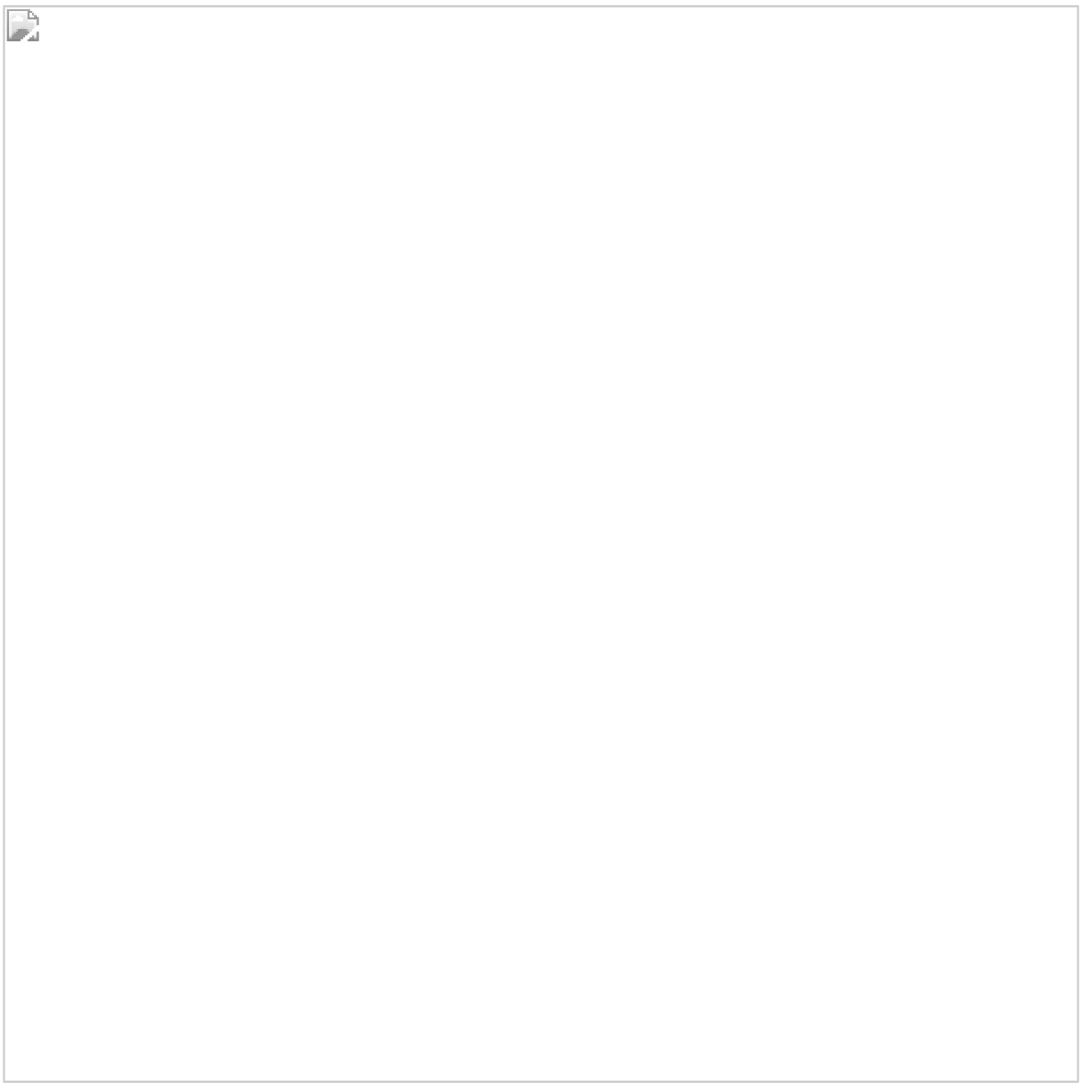
Setchène stood and went to the youngest of the months. He put his wand in his hand. “Brother Brezène,” he said, “do thou take the highest place.” Brezène is March.

March waved the wand over the fire. The flames rose, the snow began to melt, and the trees and bushes began to bud. The grass turned green, and the primroses peeped out. It was spring, and the meadow was blue with violets!

“Gather them quickly, Marouckla,” said March.

TALK ABOUT IT

What would it be like to be standing in the snow, and then, all of a sudden, in spring?

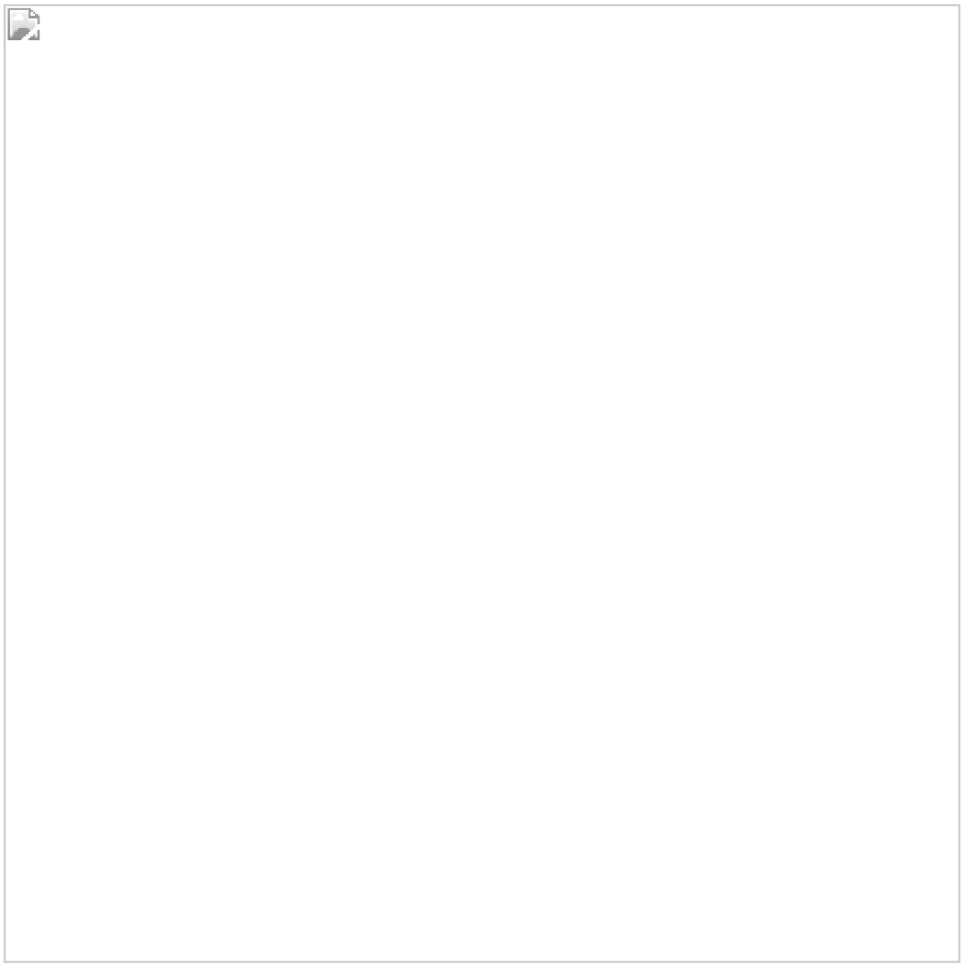


Think about it

1. Which month took the highest place to bring spring?

- ○ March
- ○ July
- ○ December

Strawberries in Winter



Marouckla picked a big bunch, thanked the months, and ran home. Helen and her mother were amazed at the sweet smell that filled the house.

Helen kept all the violets for herself and her mother. She did not even say thank you.

The next day she wanted strawberries. “They must be very sweet and ripe,” she said.

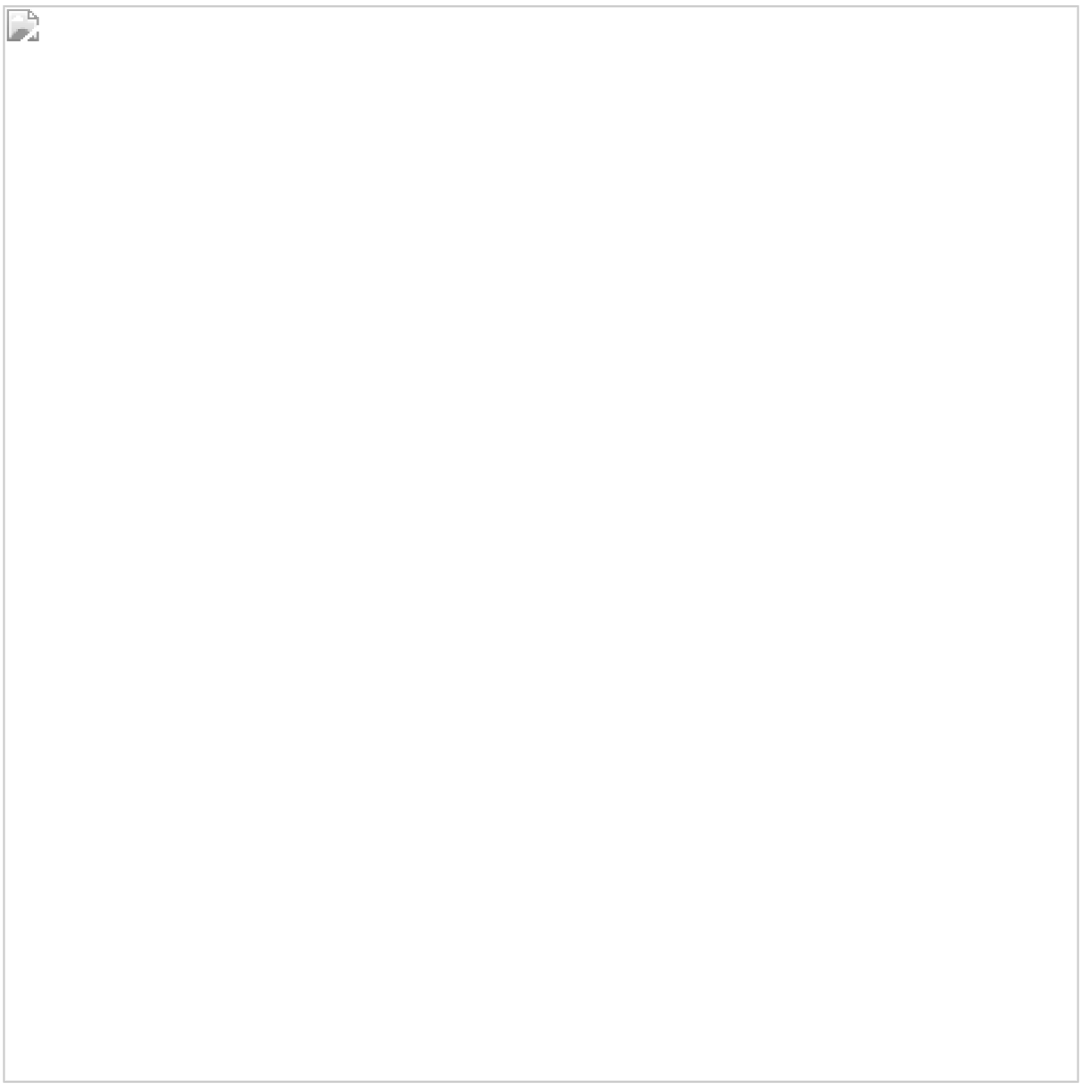
So Marouckla went up the mountain again, and asked the months again. This time Setchène called on Tchervène, who is June. The snow melted, the leaves came out, and the birds began to sing. Under the bushes, strawberries ripened all around.

Marouckla filled her apron, thanked the months, and ran home.

TALK ABOUT IT

Helen did not say thank you. How do you think Marouckla might have felt? What would you say to someone who did a favor for you?

Strawberries in Winter · another picture

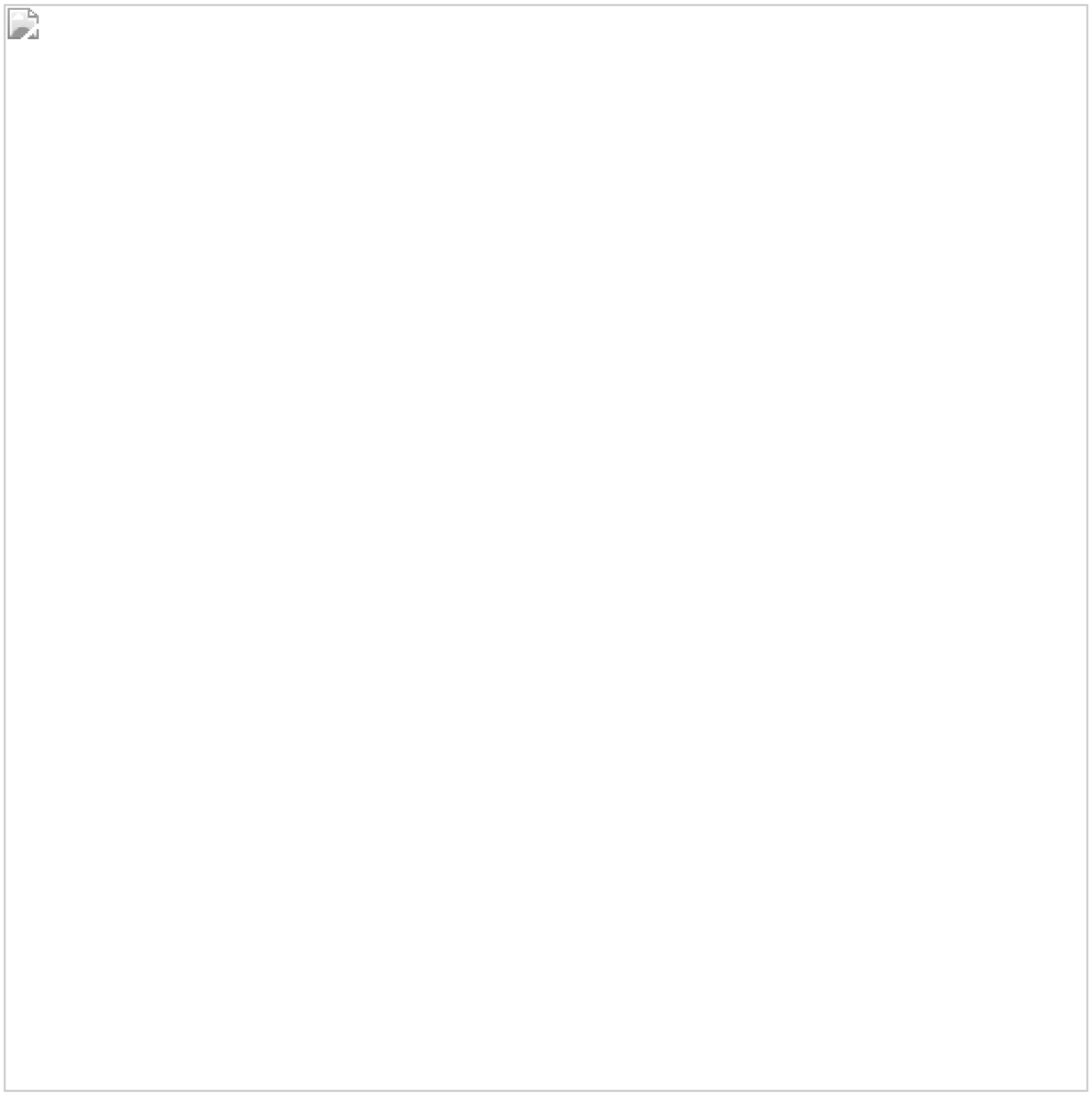


Think about it

1. What did Helen ask for on the second day?

- ○ Pears
- ○ A bouquet
- ○ Strawberries

Two Red Apples



Helen gave a few strawberries to her mother and ate the rest. She did not offer Marouckla even one.

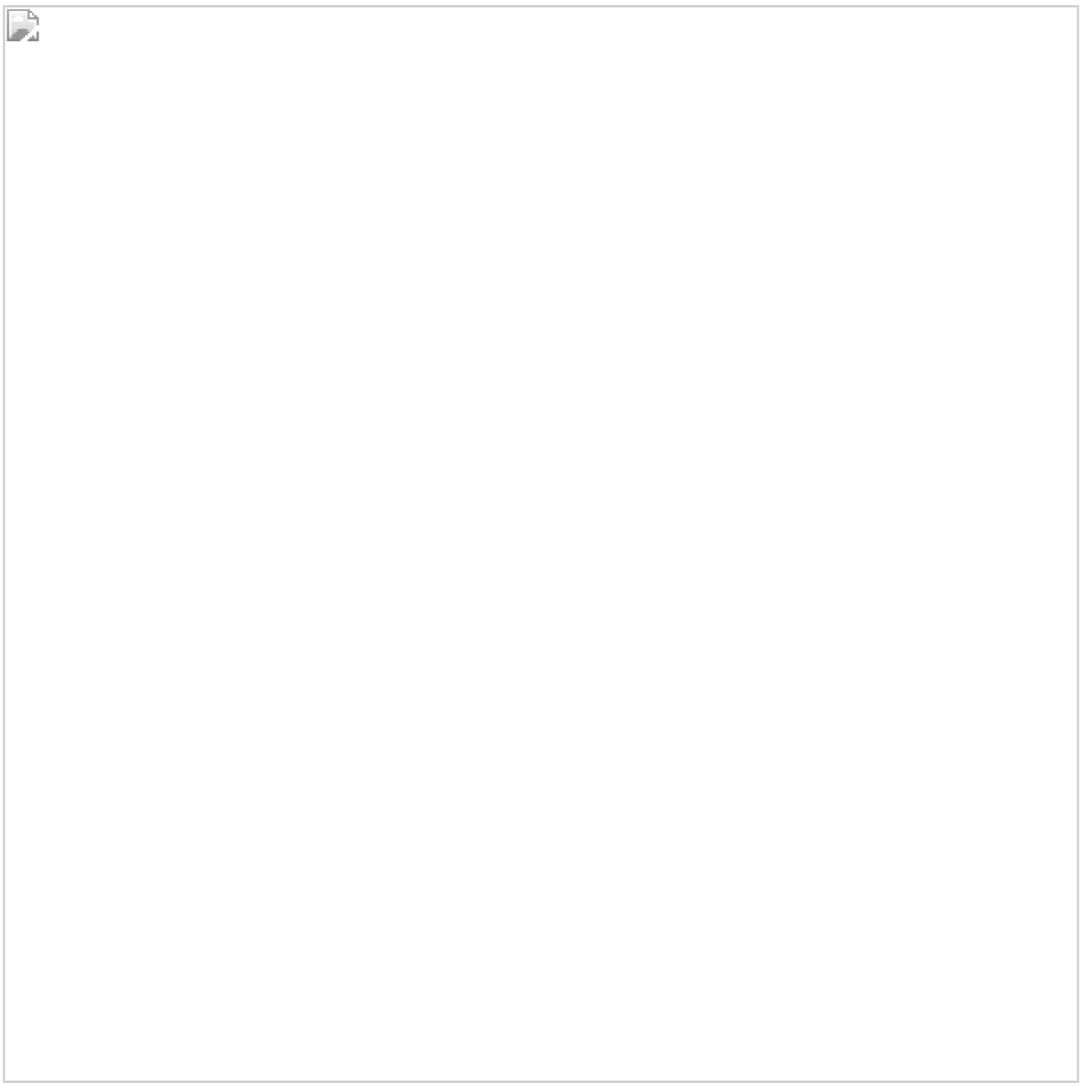
On the third day, Helen wanted red apples. Marouckla went up the mountain a third time.

This time Setchène called on Zarè, who is September. A cold wind blew the yellow leaves down, and far up in the tree hung bright red apples.

Marouckla shook the tree. One apple fell. She shook it again, and another fell. "That is enough," said Zarè, "hurry home." She thanked the months and went home.

TALK ABOUT IT
Marouckla only took what she was given. What do you think about that?

Two Red Apples · another picture

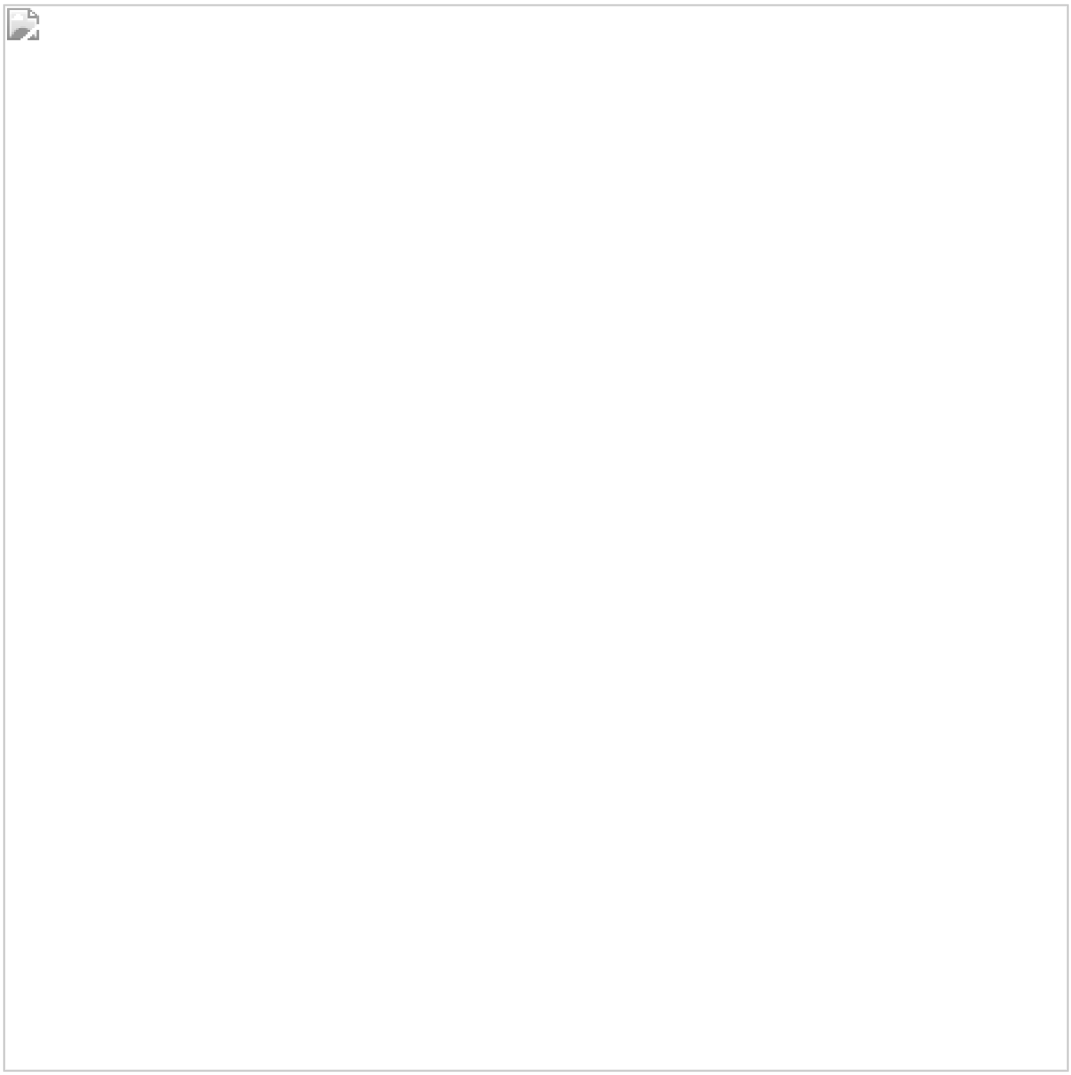


Think about it

1. How many apples did Marouckla bring home?

- ○ A basketful
- ○ One hundred
- ○ Two

Helen Wants More



Helen and her mother ate the apples. They were the best they had ever tasted, and they wanted more.

“Why did you not bring more?” said Helen. “You must have eaten them on your way back, you wicked girl.”

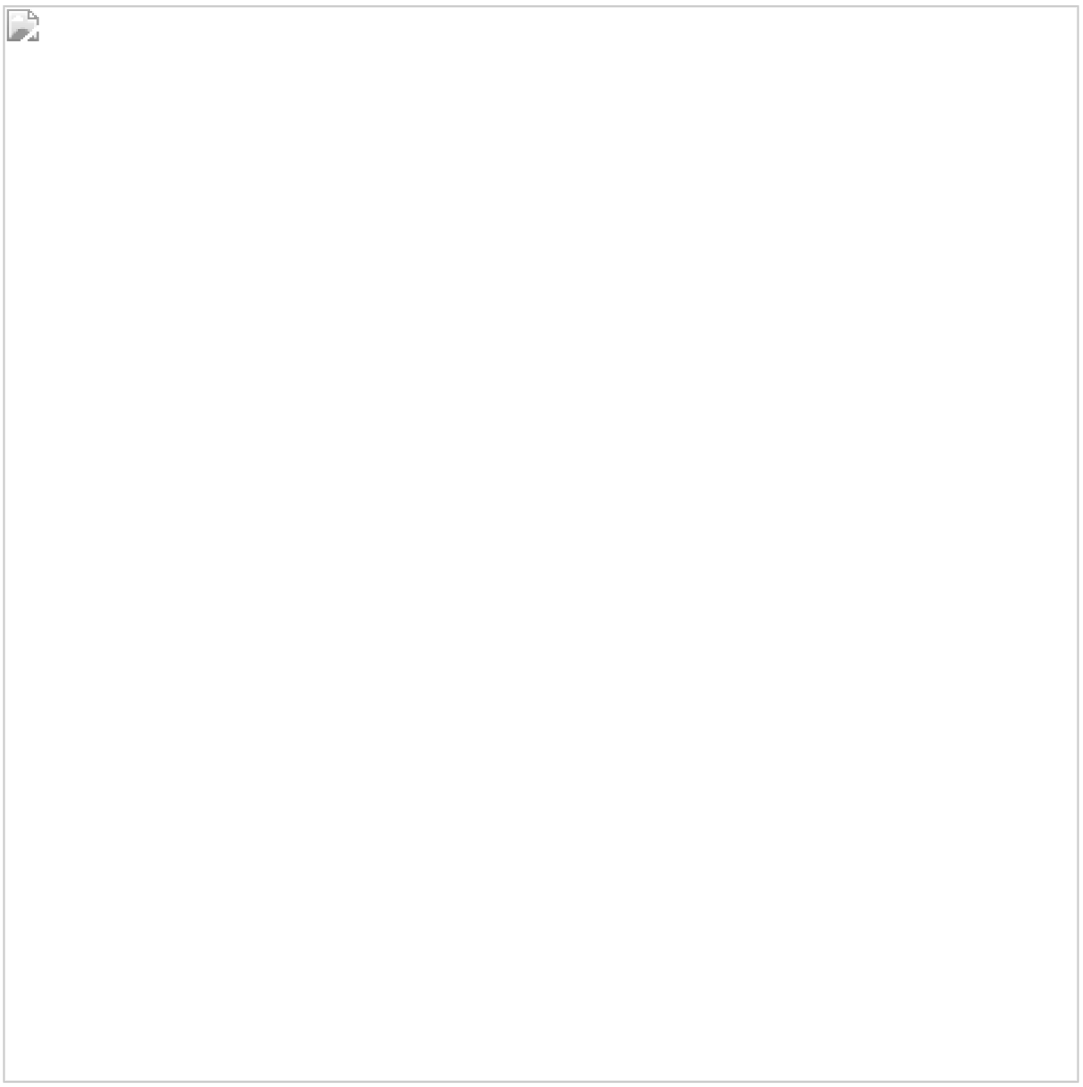
“No, dear sister,” said Marouckla, “I have not even tasted them.”

Helen would not listen. She hit Marouckla, and Marouckla went into the kitchen, weeping.

Then Helen put on her cloak and hood. “I will fetch some more apples myself,” she said. Her mother watched her go.

TALK ABOUT IT

Helen would not believe Marouckla. How do you think that felt for Marouckla? What would you do if someone did not believe you?

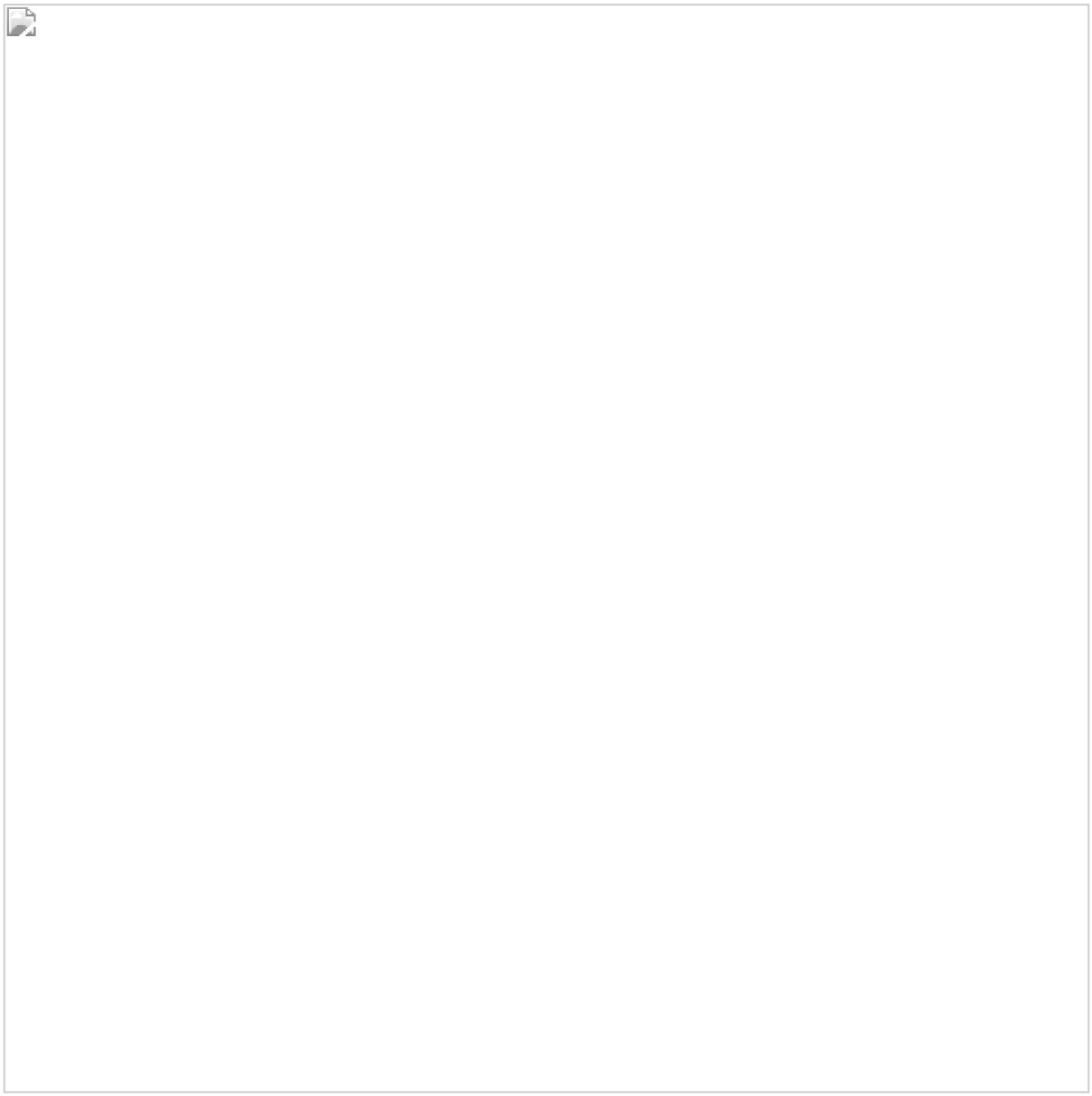


Think about it

1. What did Helen decide to do herself?

- ○ Say sorry
- ○ Go to the mountain for more apples
- ○ Bake a pie

Helen at the Fire



Helen found her way up the mountain. There was the fire, and there were the twelve months.

She did not ask permission. She did not say one polite word. She just stood by the fire and warmed her hands.

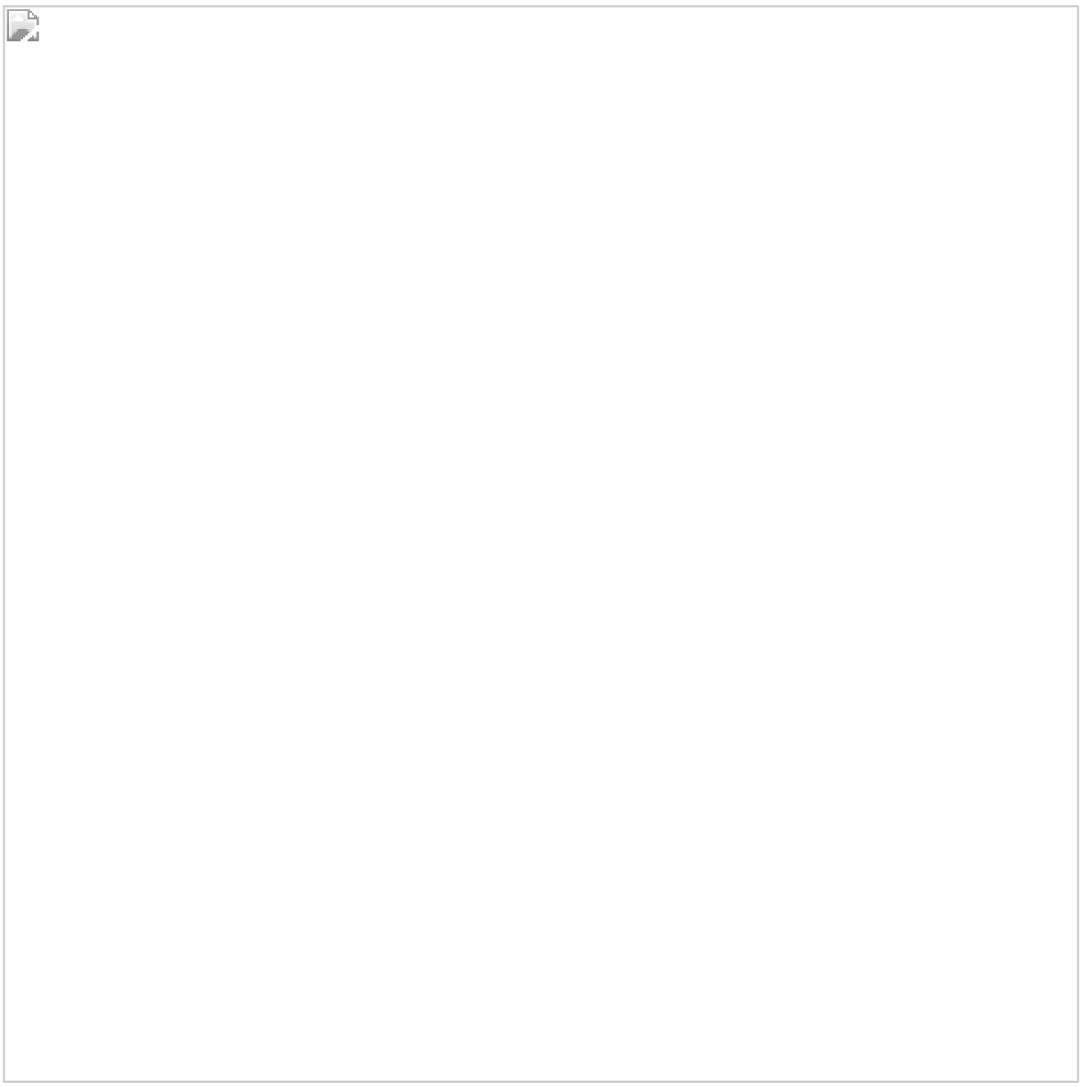
“What has brought thee here?” said the great Setchène. “What dost thou seek?”

“I am not obliged to tell you, old graybeard,” said Helen. “What business is it of yours?” And she turned her back on the fire and walked into the forest.

TALK ABOUT IT

Marouckla asked politely, and Helen did not. What difference did that make?

Helen at the Fire · another picture

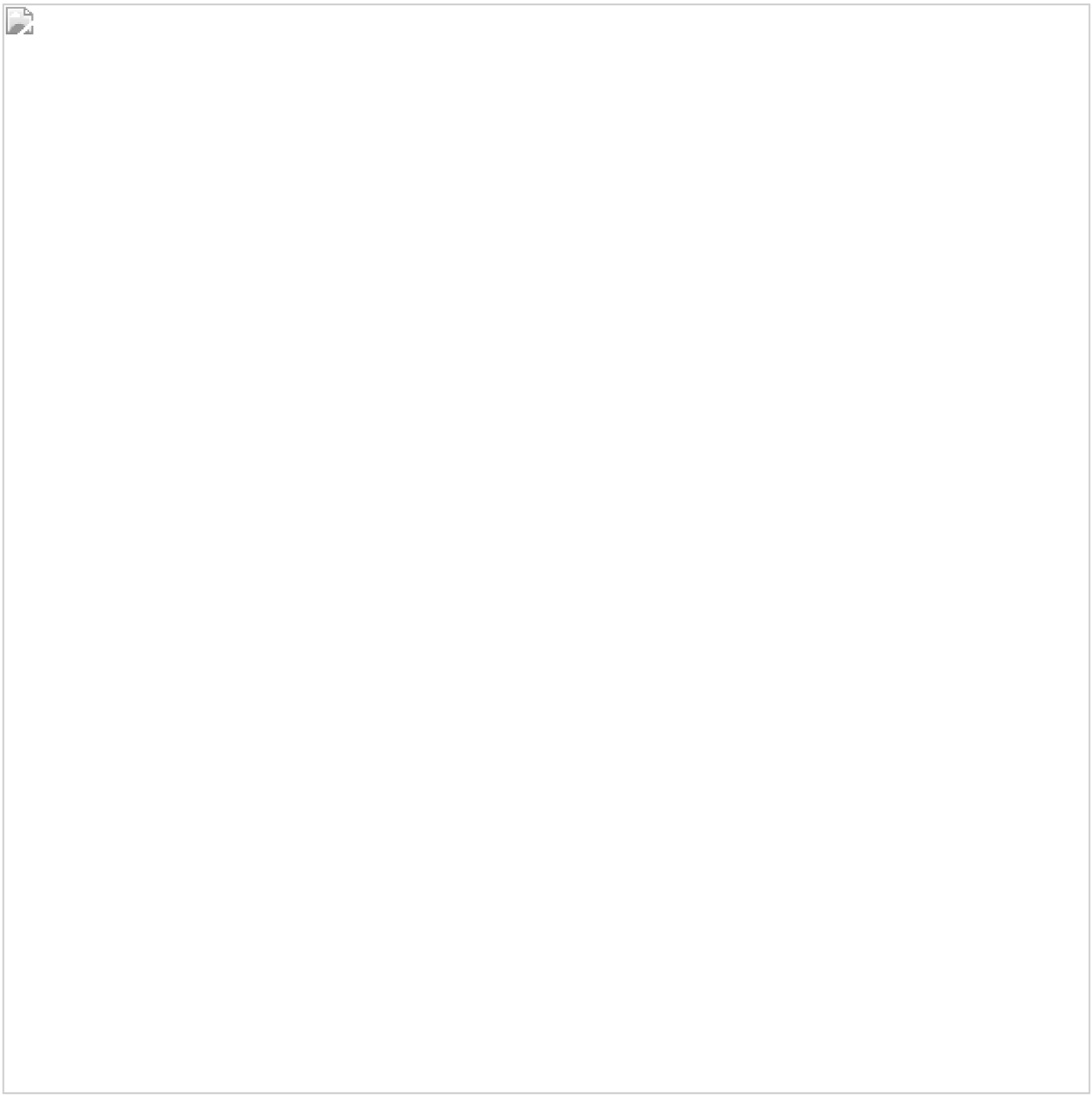


Think about it

1. How did Helen speak to the months?

- ○ Rudely
- ○ Politely
- ○ Not at all

The Storm



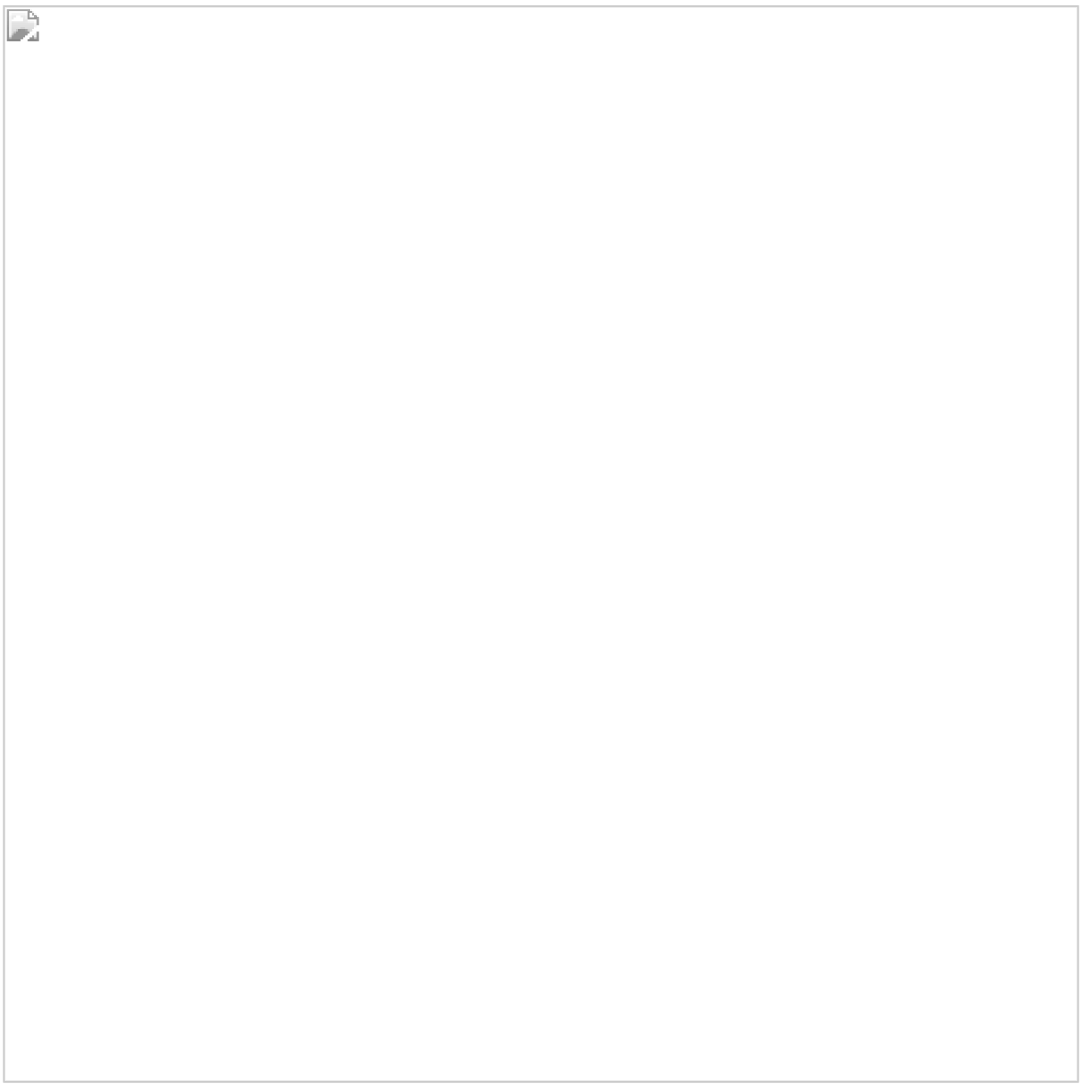
The great Setchène frowned and waved his wand over his head.

The sky filled with clouds. The fire went down. Snow fell in great flakes, and an icy wind howled round the mountain.

Helen's cloak did not keep her warm. Her mother waited at the window and then went out in the snow to look for her. But neither of them came home, because the cold had taken them on the mountain.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the months helped Marouckla but not Helen?



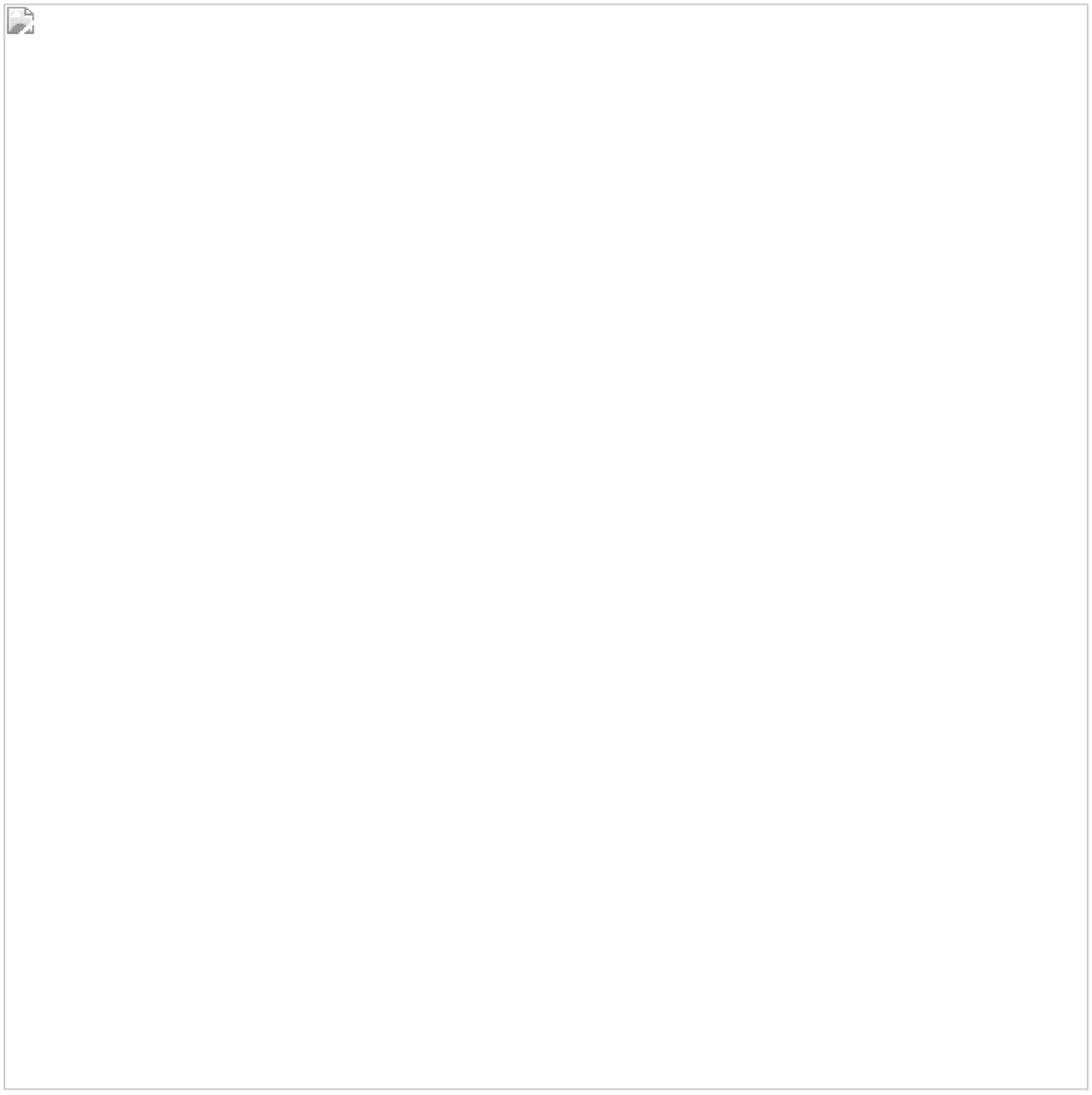
Think about it

1. What did Setchène do when Helen was rude?

- ○ Gave her apples
- ○ Waved his wand and sent a storm
- ○ Laughed

2. Helen and her mother never came back from the mountain. What do you think of how this part of the story ends?

Marouckla's Home



Day after day, Marouckla worked and prayed and waited. But nobody came home.

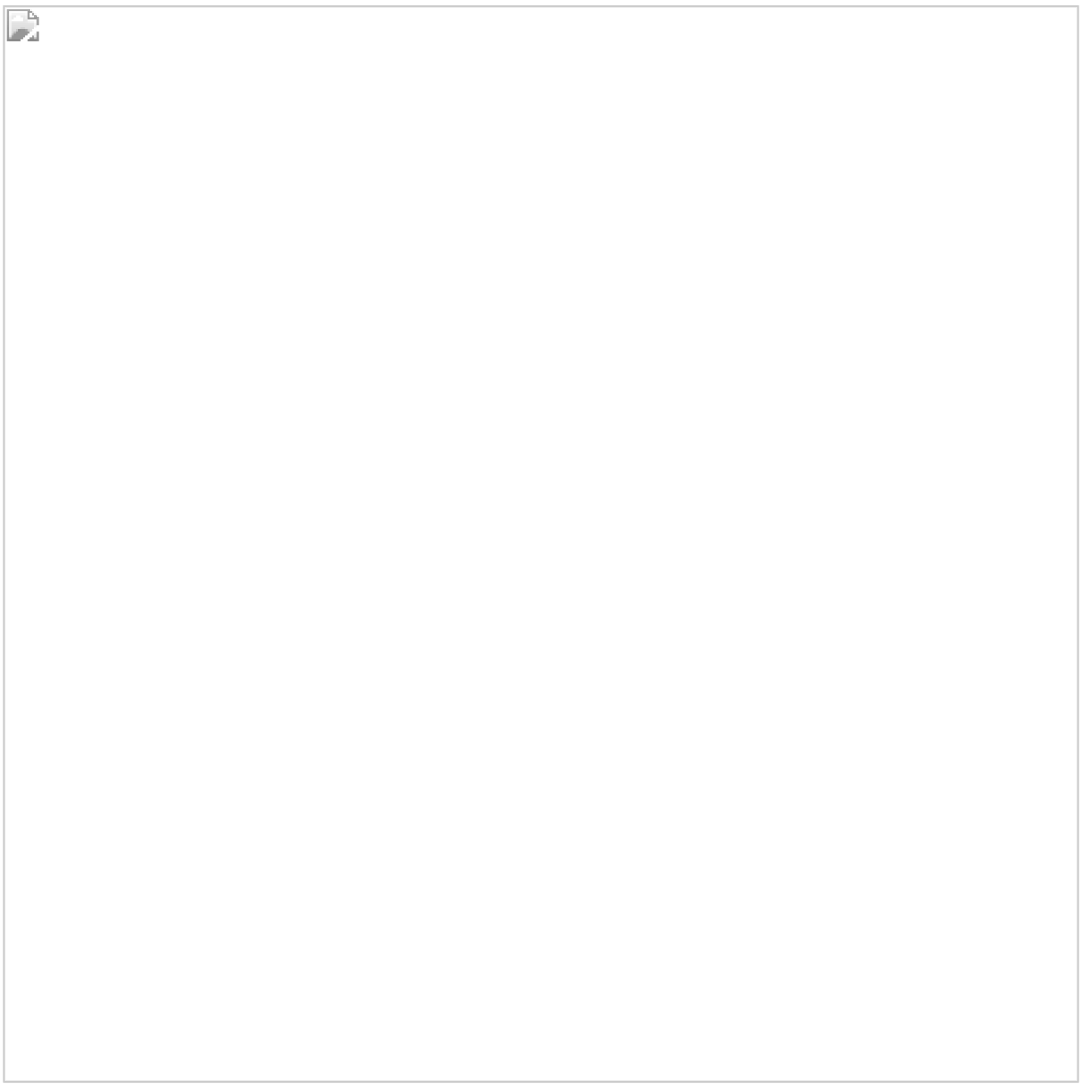
The little house, the field and the cow now belonged to Marouckla.

In time, an honest farmer came to share them with her. They lived happy, peaceful lives.

TALK ABOUT IT

The old Bible says, “A soft answer turneth away wrath” (Proverbs 15:1). When has a gentle answer helped you?

Marouckla's Home · another picture



Think about it

1. Who came to share Marouckla's home?

- ○ A king
- ○ The twelve months
- ○ An honest farmer

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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