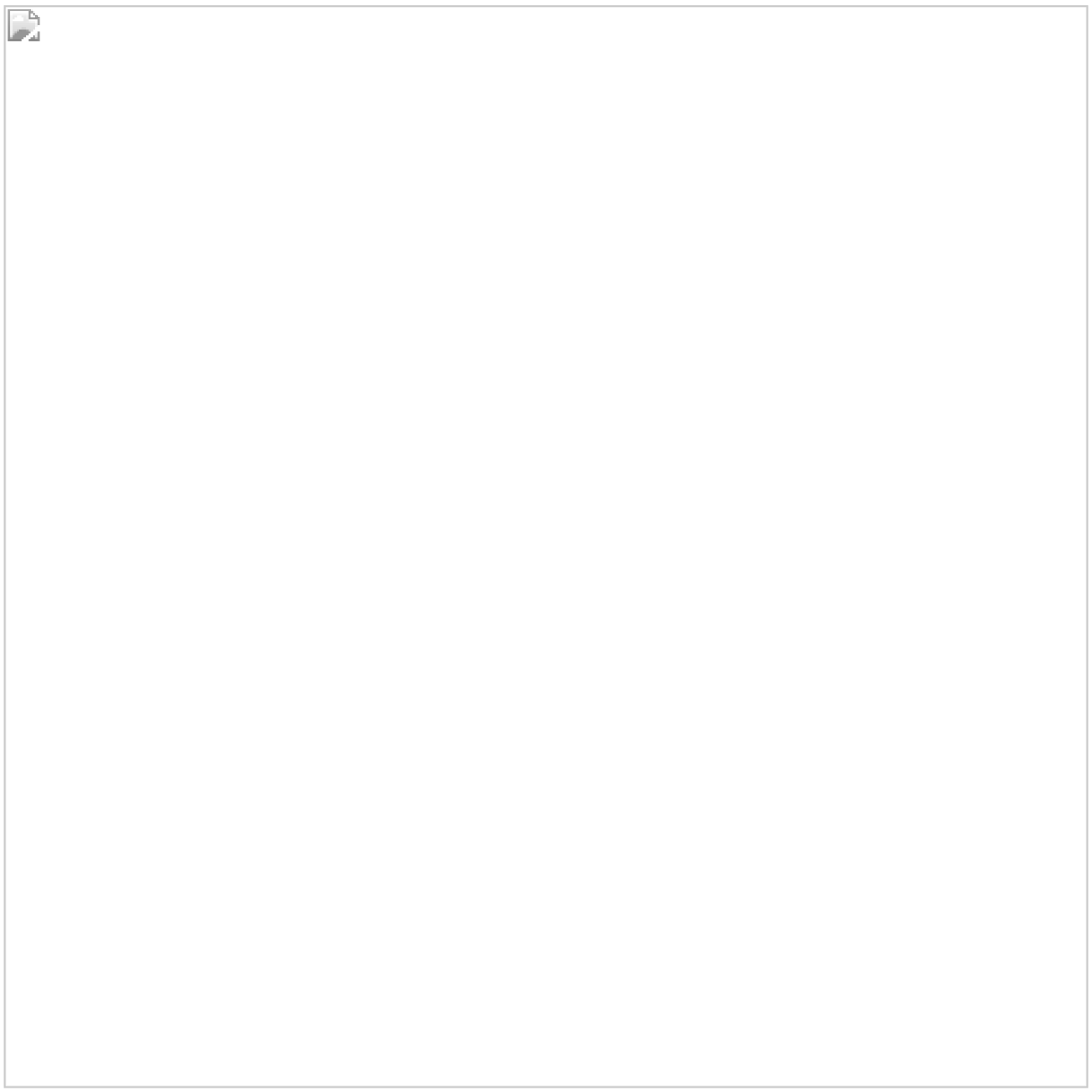
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Tom Hickathrift

A Hero of England



Long before William the Conqueror, in the Isle of Ely, there lived a boy named Tom Hickathrift. His father, a poor working man, had been so strong that he could do two people's work in a day. But now his father had died, and Tom's mother worked hard to keep them both.

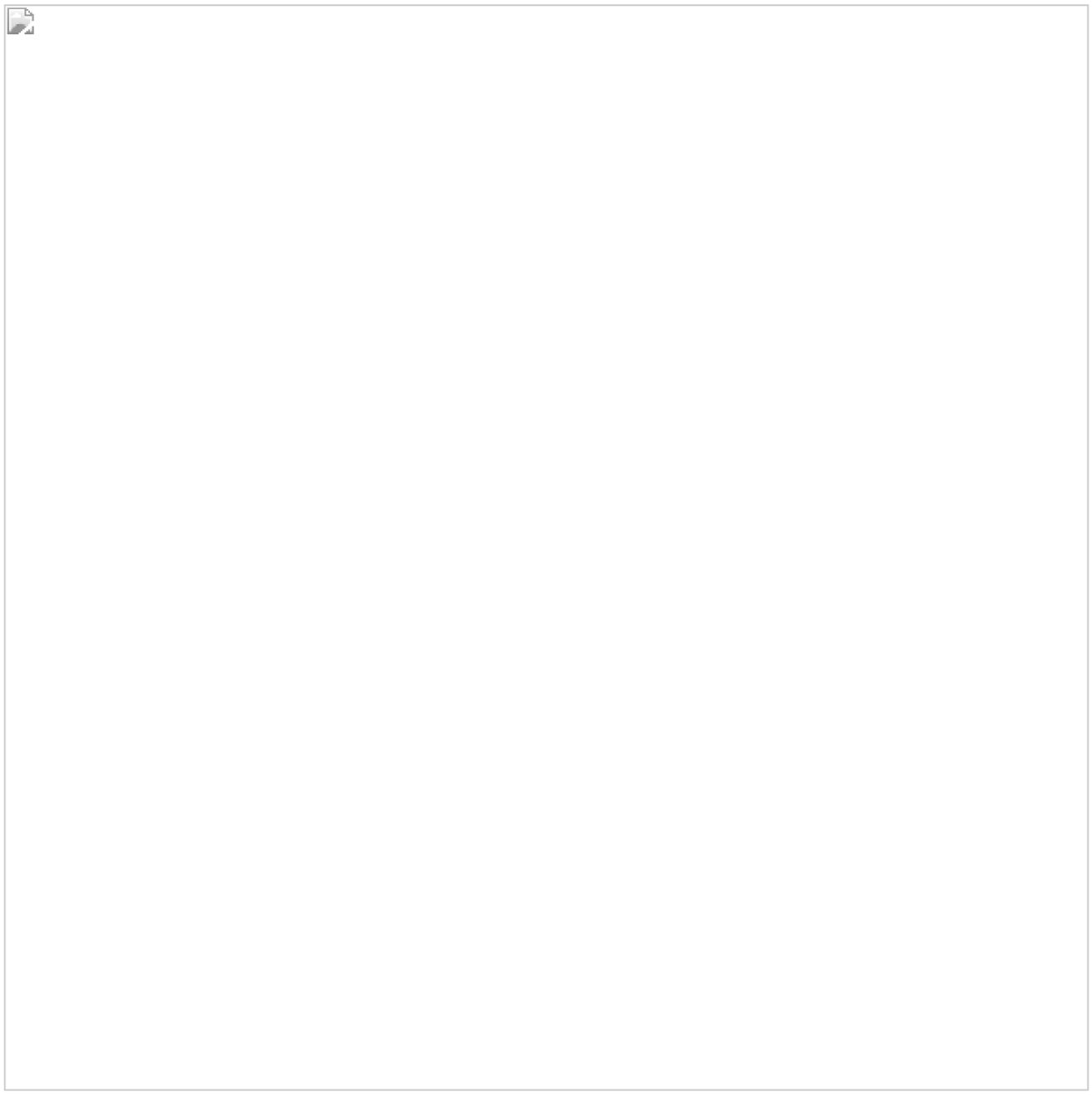
Tom did not help. He sat all day in the chimney-corner.

TALK ABOUT IT

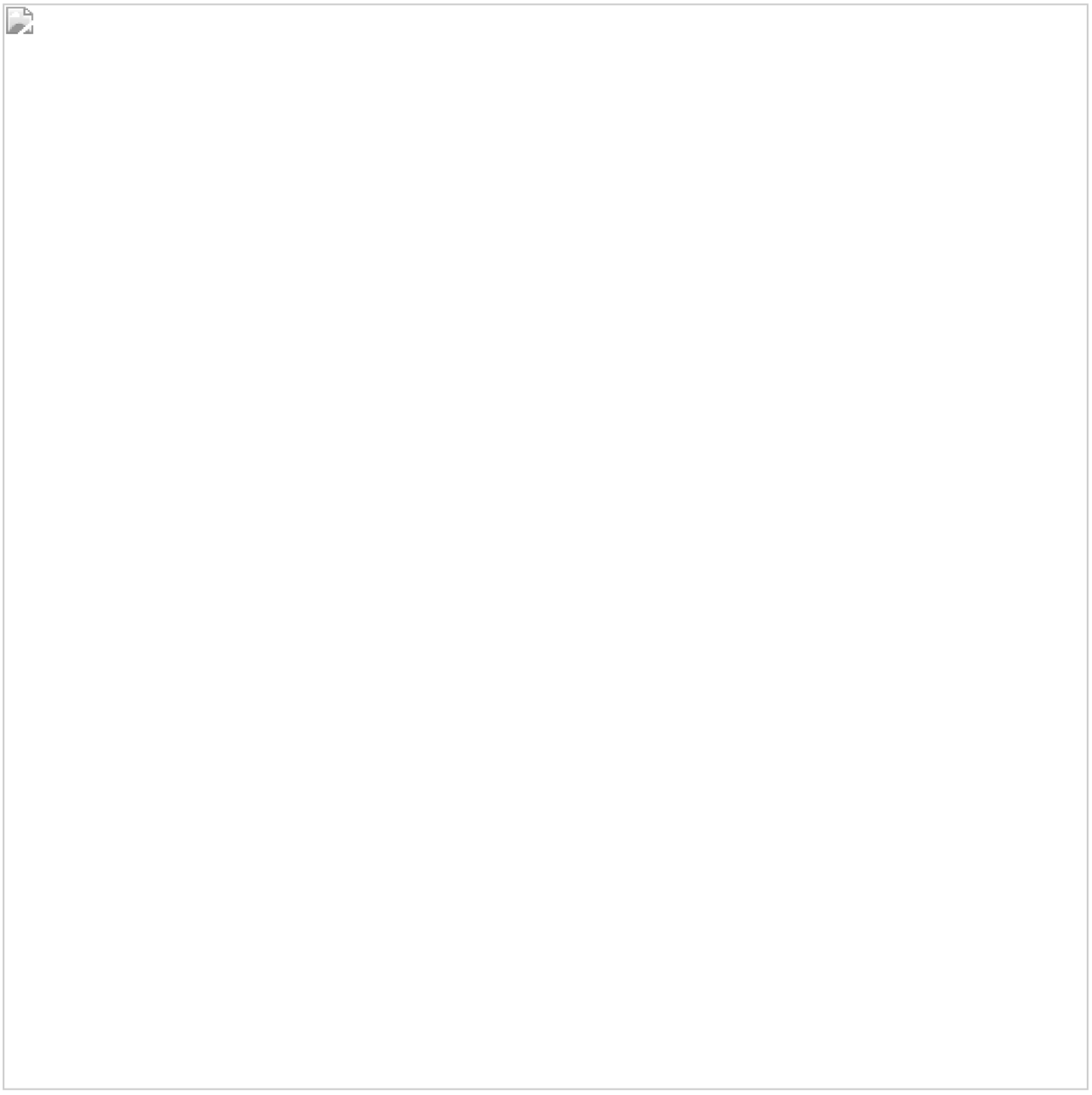
Tom's mother worked hard while Tom sat by the fire. What do you think she might have wished for him?

This book belongs to _____

Tom Hickathrift · another picture



A Very Big Boy



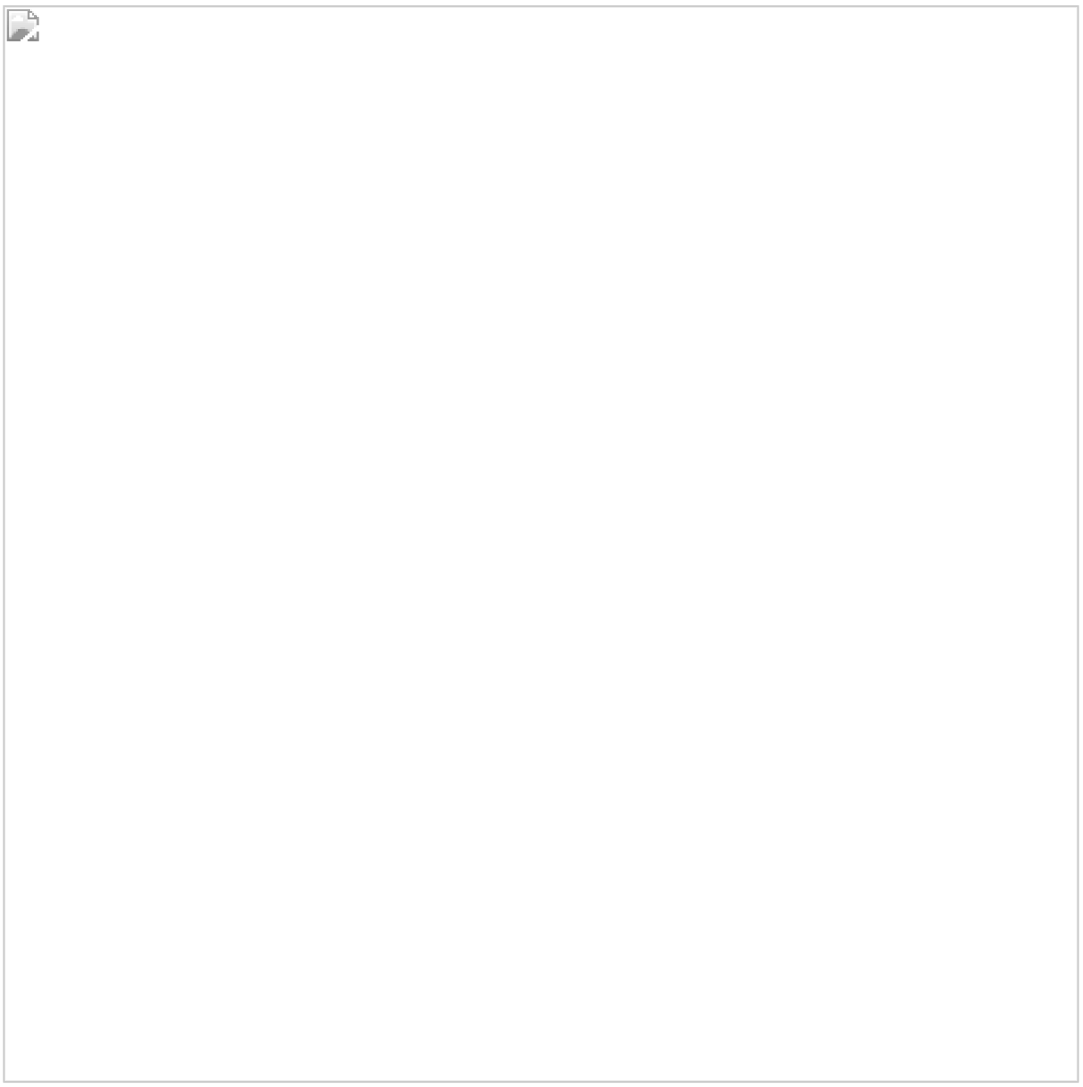
Tom was only ten years old, but he was five and a half feet tall and two and a half feet wide. His hand was as big as a shoulder of mutton.

He could eat as much as four or five grown men! His kind mother loved him just the same.

Nobody knew yet how strong he really was.

TALK ABOUT IT

Tom's mother loved him even when he was not helping. How can you tell someone loves you, even on days you are not at your best?

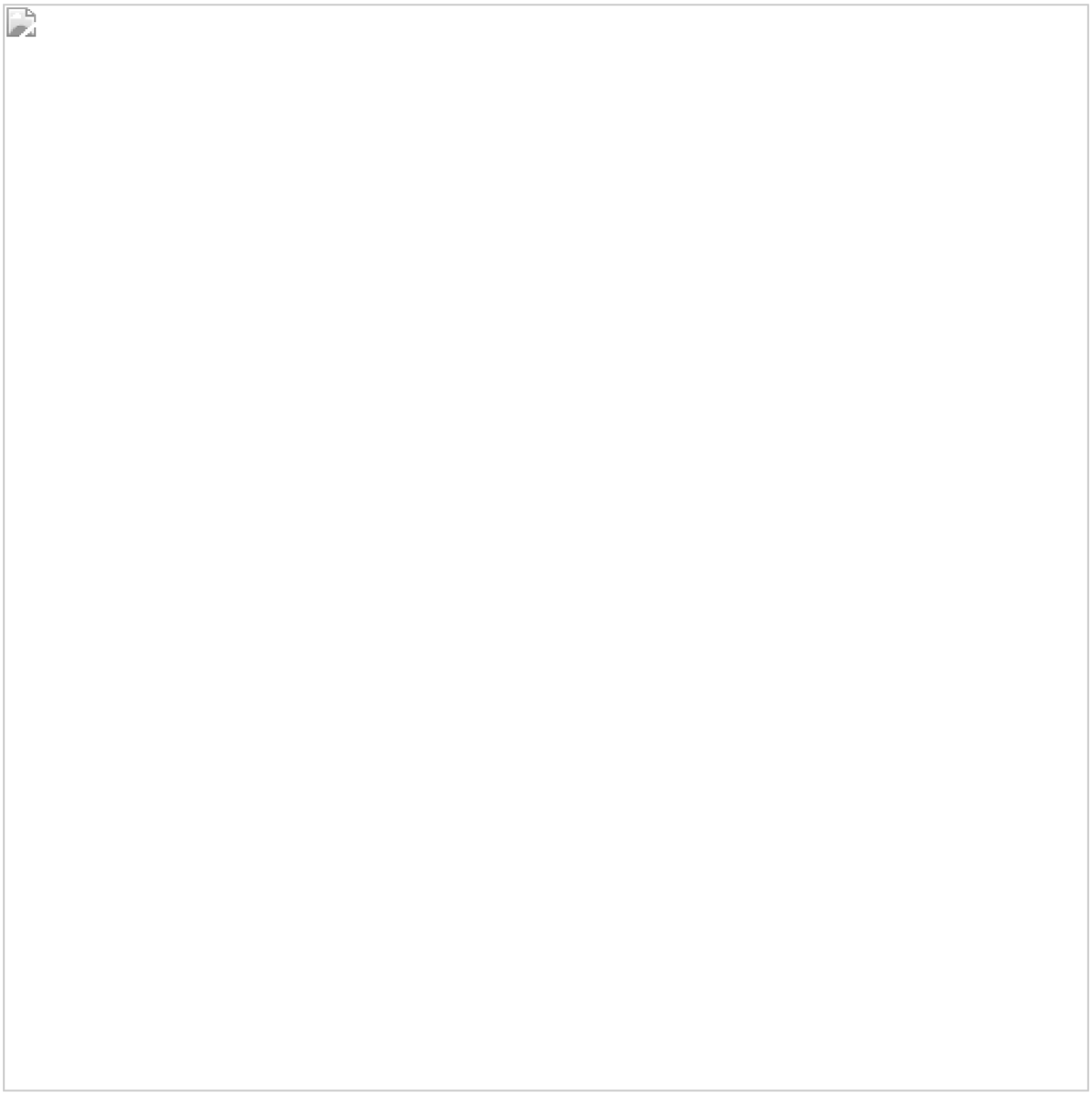


Think about it

1. How old was Tom?

- ○ Thirty
- ○ Ten
- ○ Four

A Rope and a Bundle of Straw



One day Tom's mother wanted a new straw bed. A neighbor farmer had promised her a bottle of straw, if Tom would fetch it. After a lot of begging, Tom agreed. But first he asked her to lend him a cart-rope.

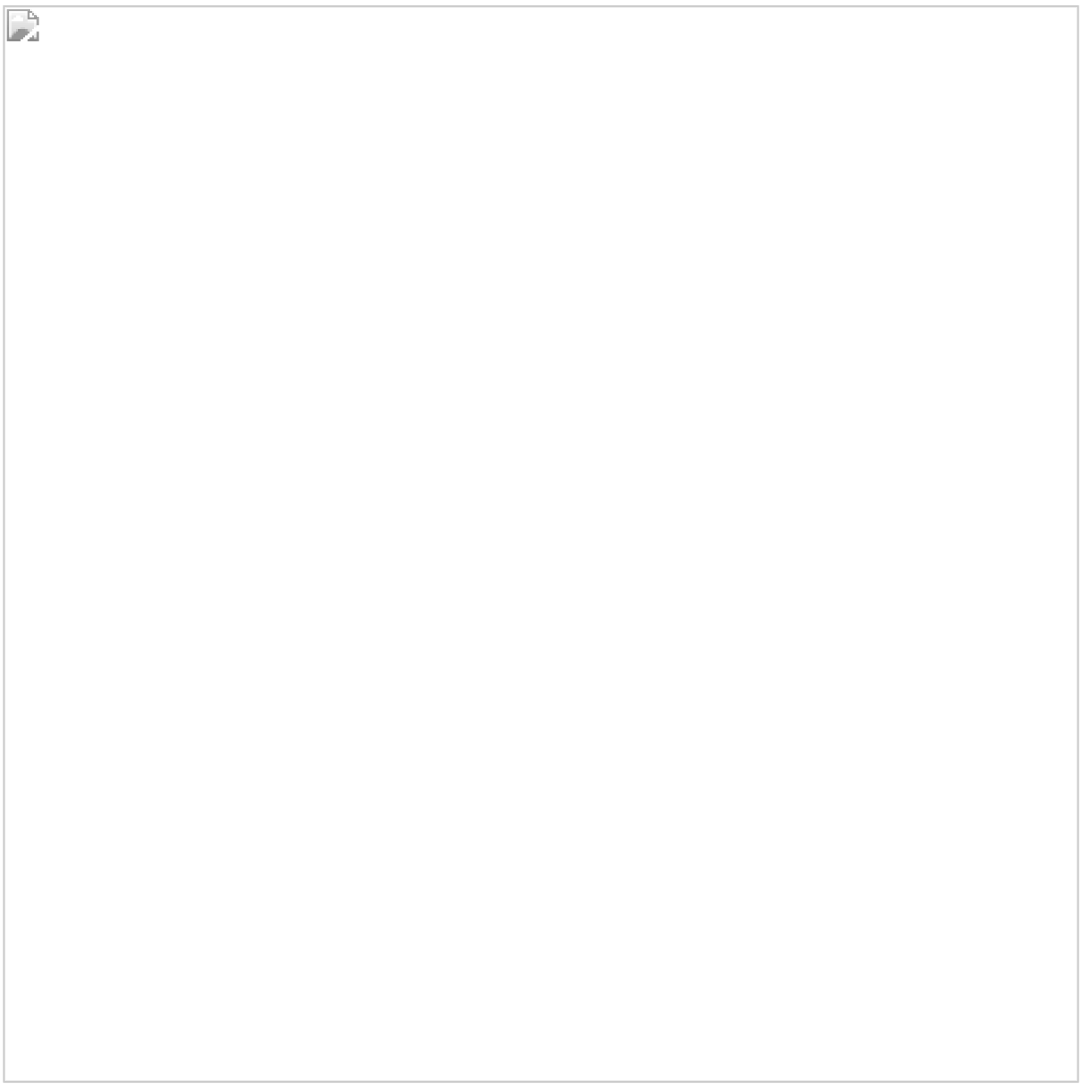
At the farm, the farmer told him to take as much straw as he could carry. So Tom wrapped the rope round a bundle as big as a whole cartload.

The farmer's men laughed at him. But Tom threw the huge bundle over his shoulder and walked off, and they stood there with their mouths open.

TALK ABOUT IT

The men laughed at Tom, and then they were amazed. Has anyone ever been surprised by something you could do?

A Rope and a Bundle of Straw · another picture

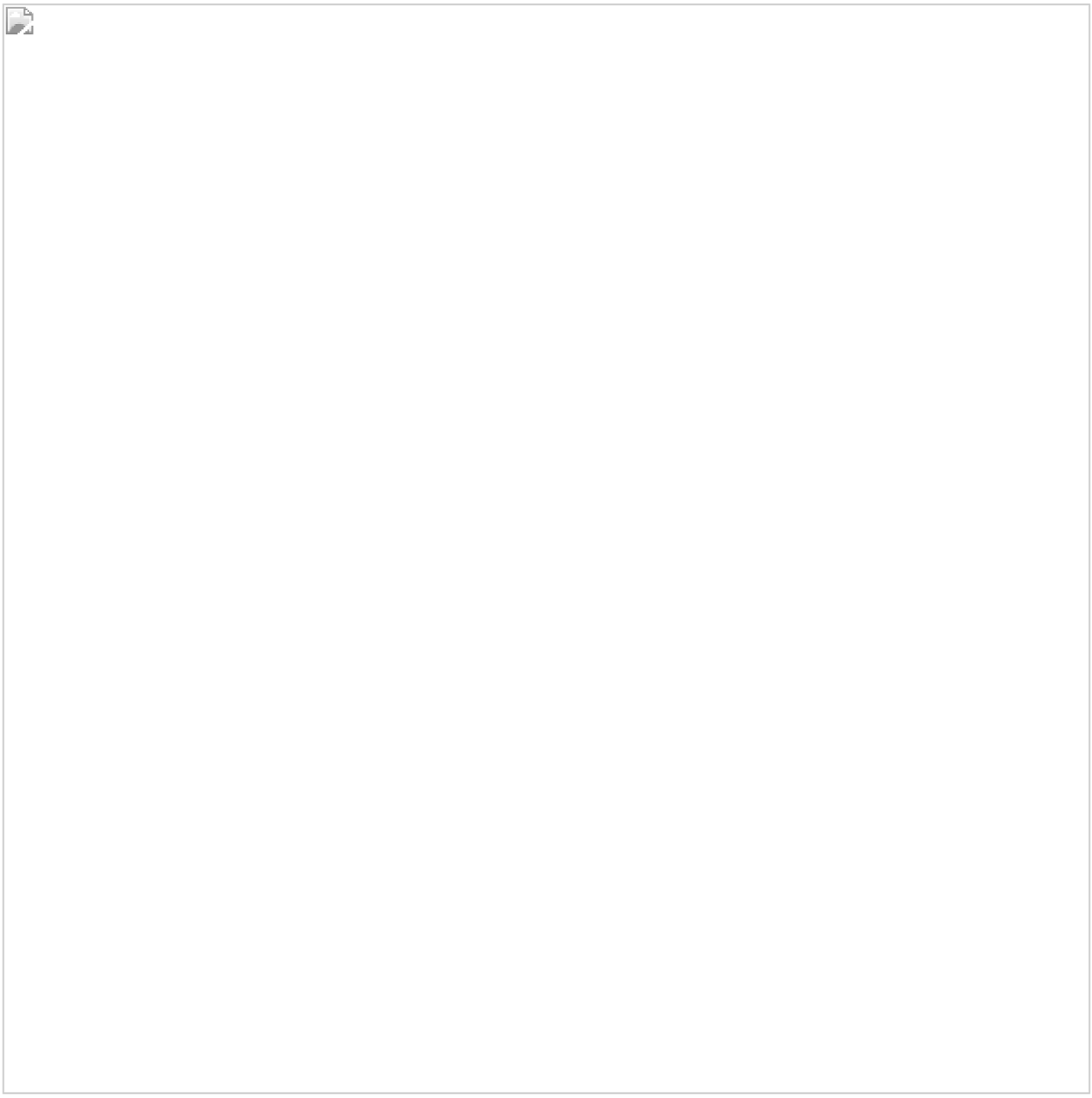


Think about it

1. What did Tom ask to borrow before he went for the straw?

- ○ A wheelbarrow
- ○ A pitchfork
- ○ A cart-rope

The Strongest Man in the Fens



After that, everyone wanted Tom's help. When he was offered as much firewood as he could carry, he walked off with one of the biggest trees in the forest.

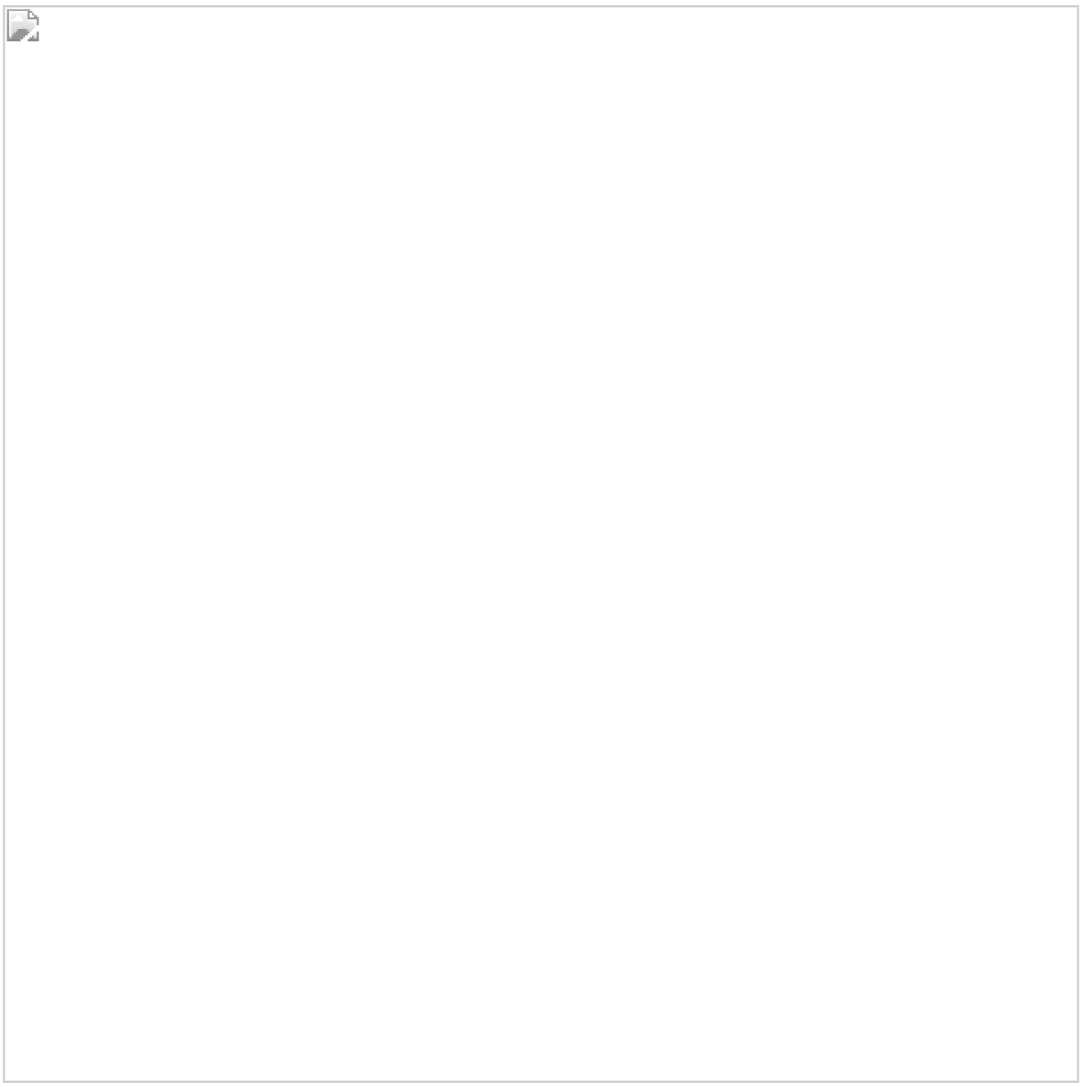
At the fairs, no one could beat him at wrestling, or at throwing the hammer. He could fling a huge hammer into a river a mile away!

A brewer at Lynn hired him to carry beer to the Marsh and to Wisbeach. He was promised a new suit of clothes and all he could eat and drink.

TALK ABOUT IT

Tom was strong. What is something you are good at? How could you use it to help someone?

The Strongest Man in the Fens · another picture

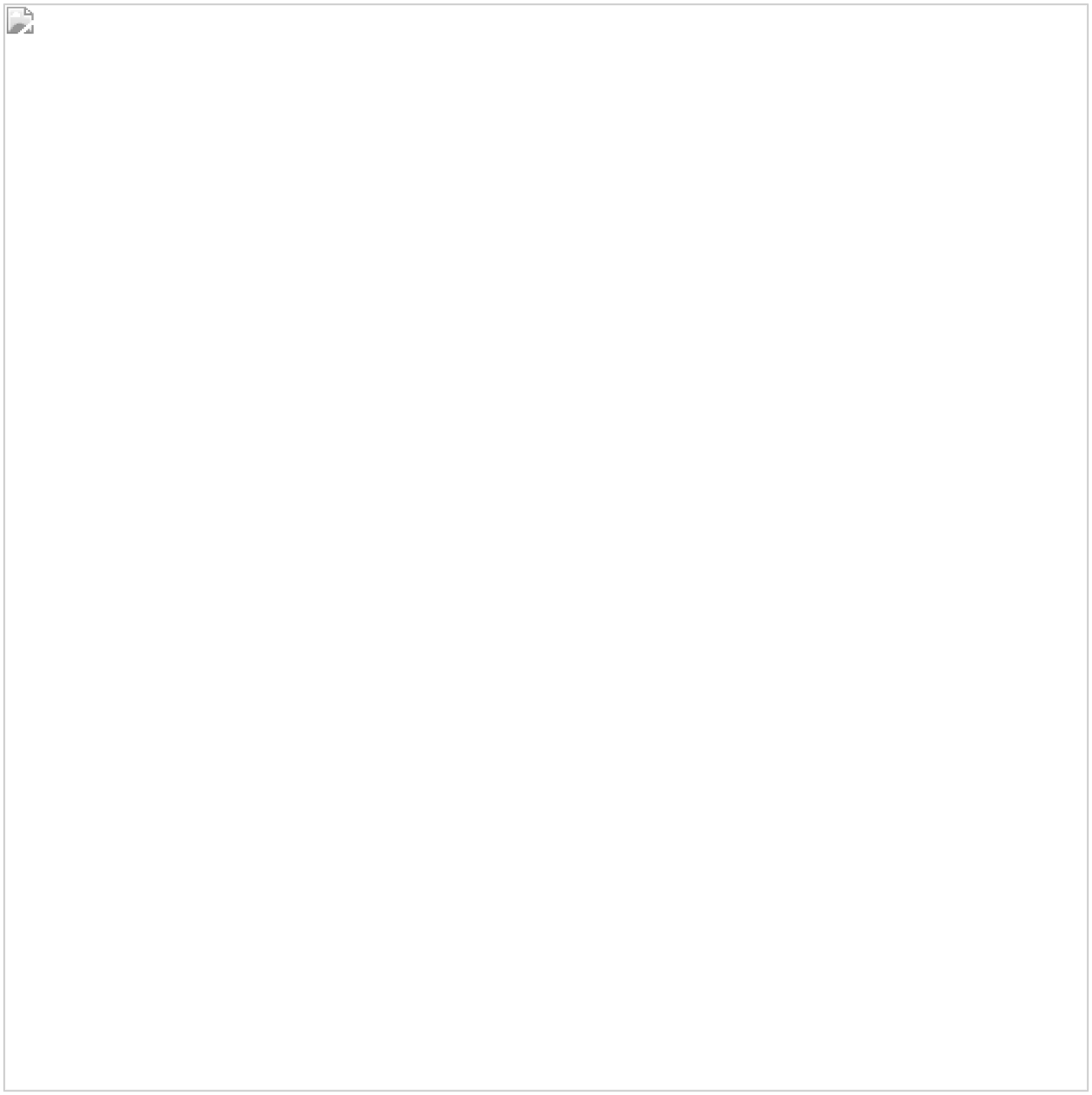


Think about it

1. What did Tom carry for the brewer?

- ○ Beer
- ○ Apples
- ○ Wool

The Forbidden Road

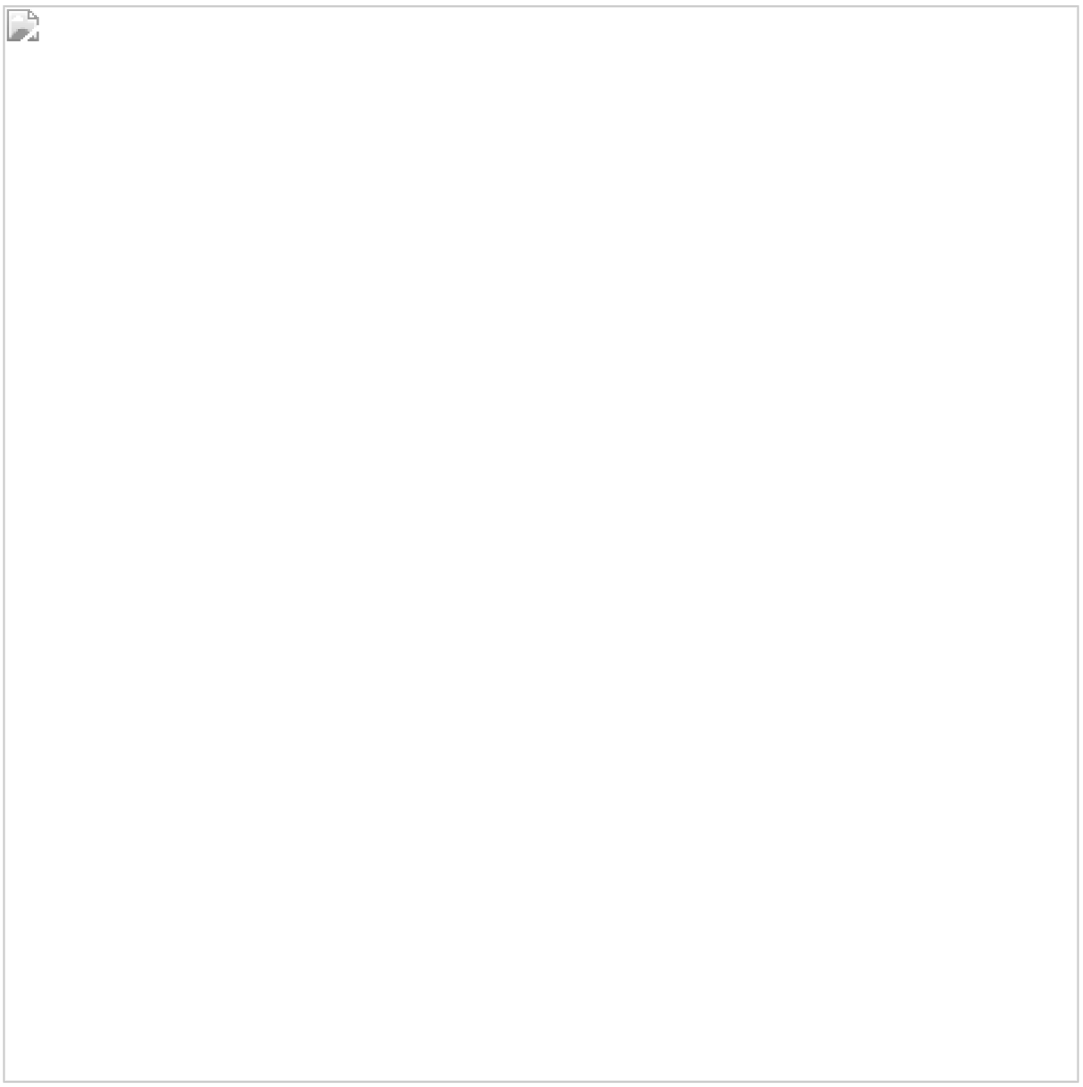


There was a short way through the Marsh, but nobody dared take it. A giant lived there, who was lord of that land and frightened everyone who came near.

Every day Tom drove twenty miles the long way round. One day he got tired of it. Without telling a soul, he turned his cart onto the short way, and flung the giant's gates wide open, as if to make sure everyone could see.

TALK ABOUT IT

Everyone else was afraid to go that way, but Tom went. Is that brave, or is it foolish, or both? What do you think?

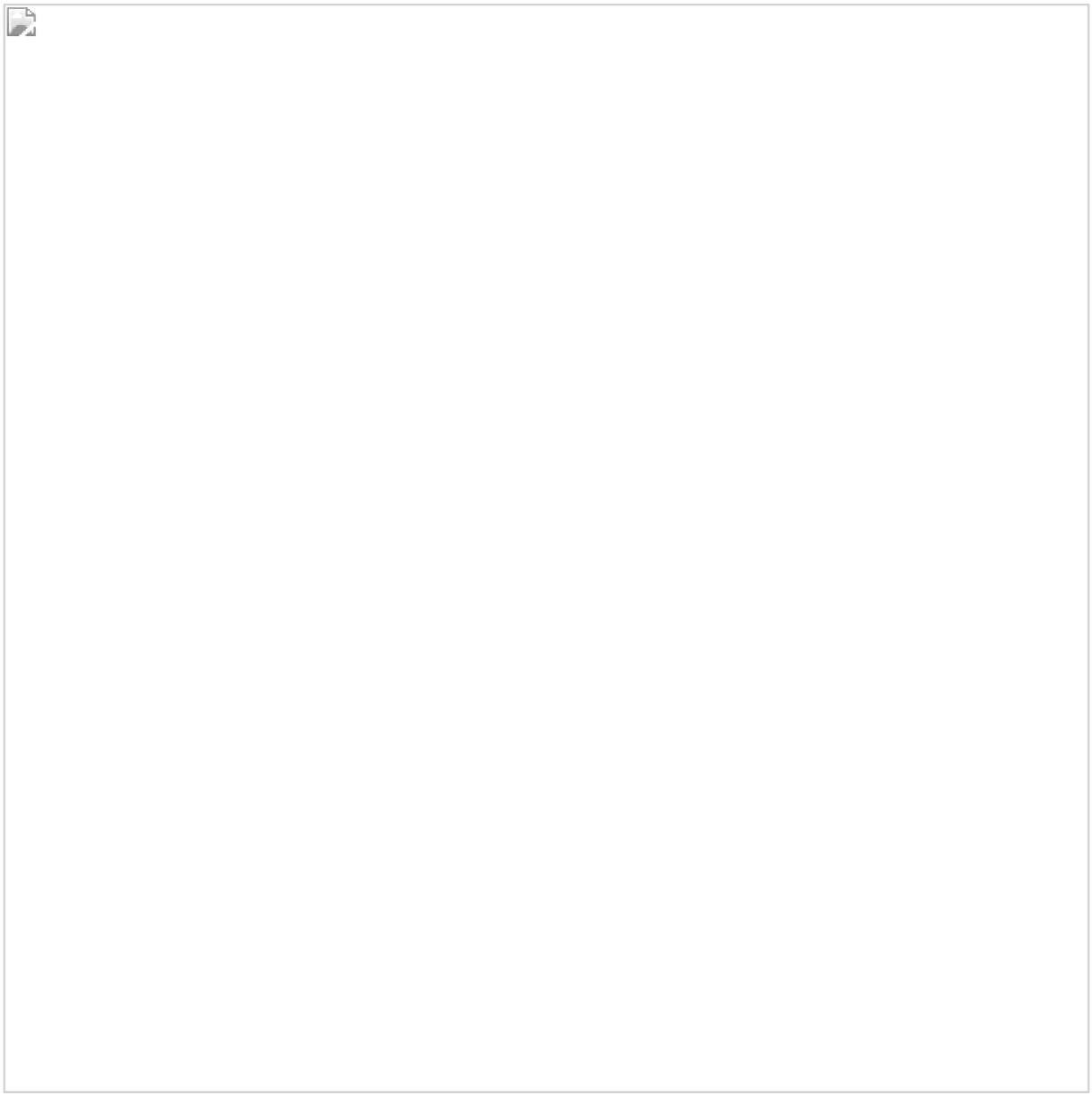


Think about it

1. Why did everyone take the long way round?

- ○ It was prettier
- ○ A giant lived on the short way
- ○ The short way was muddy

The Giant Roars



The giant saw him and was in a rage. “Who gave you permission to come this way?” he shouted. He was twelve feet tall.

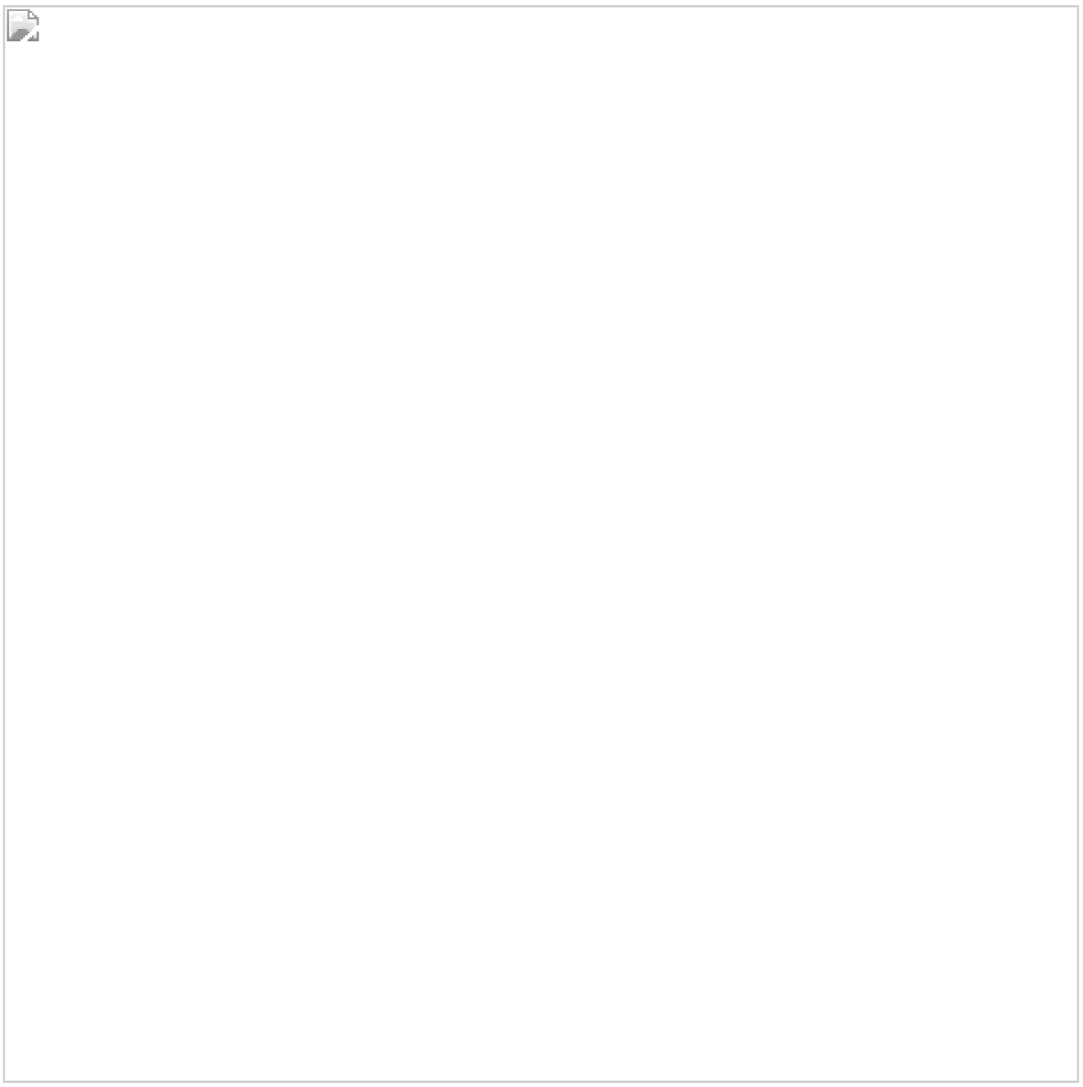
He said he would make an example of Tom, as he had done to others who had crossed him.

Tom looked up at him. “You shall not find me to be one of them,” said Tom.

Then the giant ran off to his cave for his club. And Tom realized that he had forgotten to bring a weapon.

TALK ABOUT IT

The giant was twelve feet tall, and Tom had no weapon. What would you do?

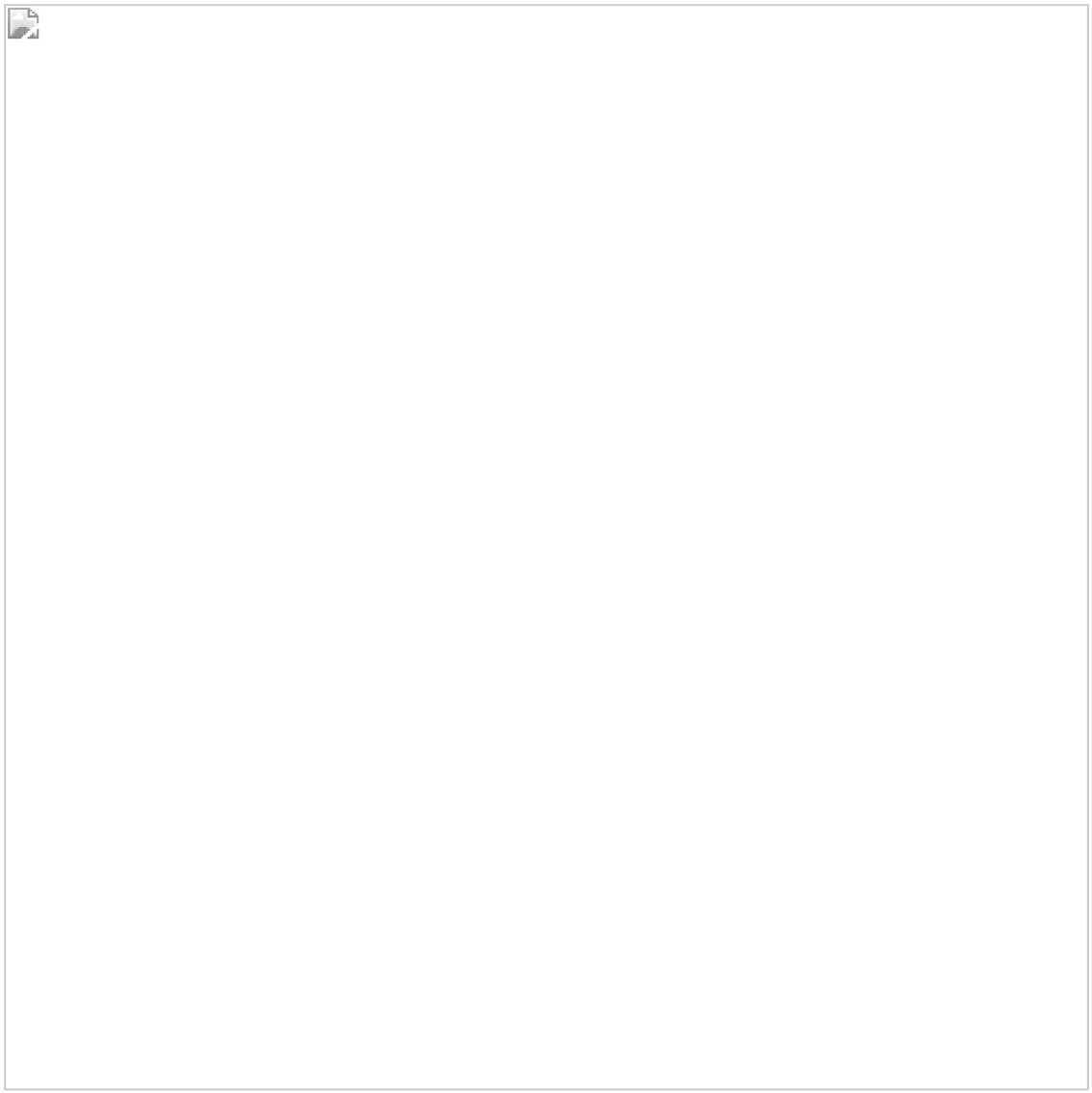


Think about it

1. What did the giant run to get?

- ○ His club
- ○ His supper
- ○ His horse

A Wheel for a Shield



While the giant was gone, Tom thought hard. He turned his cart upside down and took out the axletree, which would do for a staff. Then he took off a wheel and strapped it on his arm like a shield.

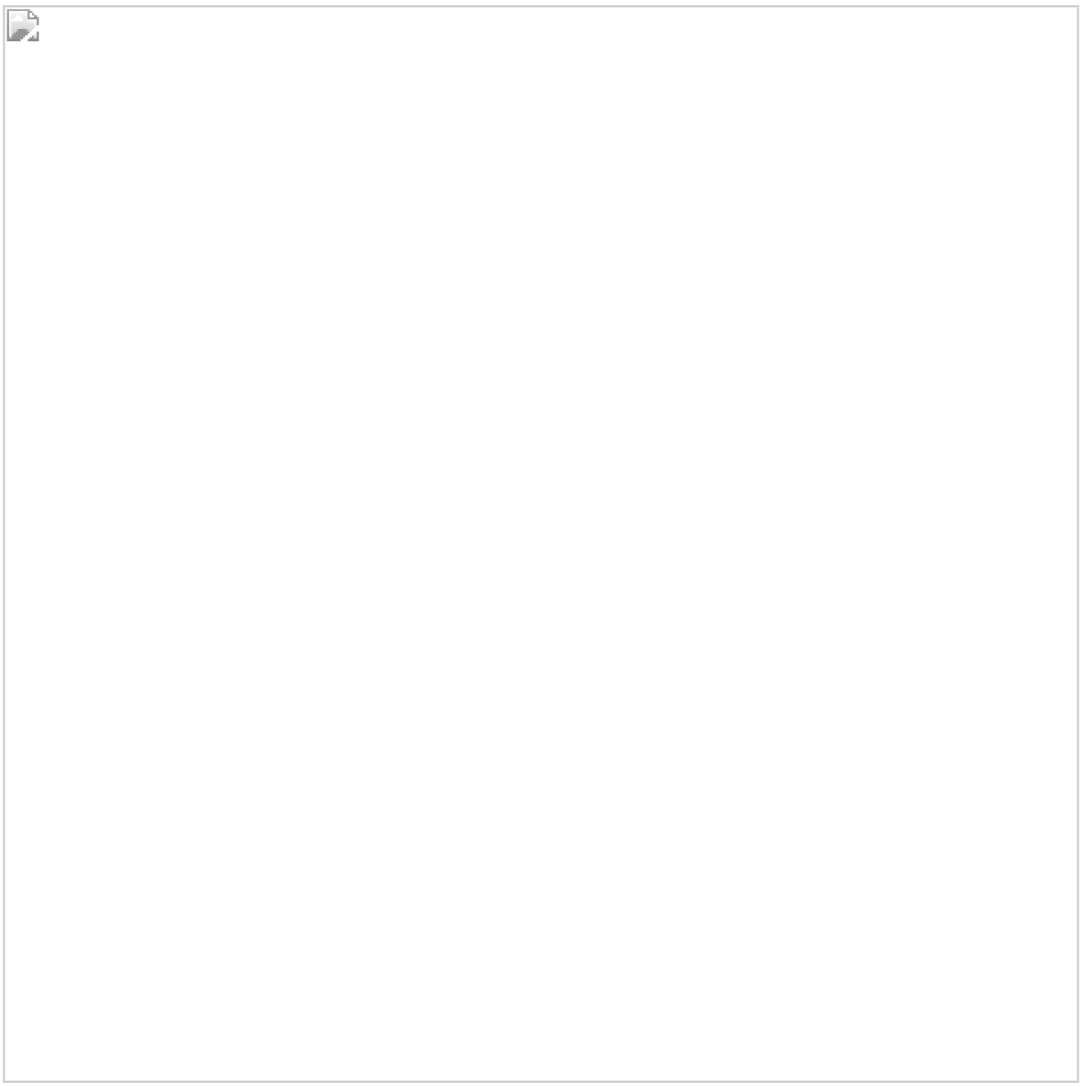
The giant came back and was amazed. They fought long, until the giant was tired. He asked if he could rest a little and have a drink, and then fight again.

“No,” said Tom, “my mother did not teach me that wit: who would be fool then?”

Tom won the fight, and the giant's bullying was over for good.

TALK ABOUT IT

Tom did not have a sword, but he used what he had. What things around you could you use in a clever way?

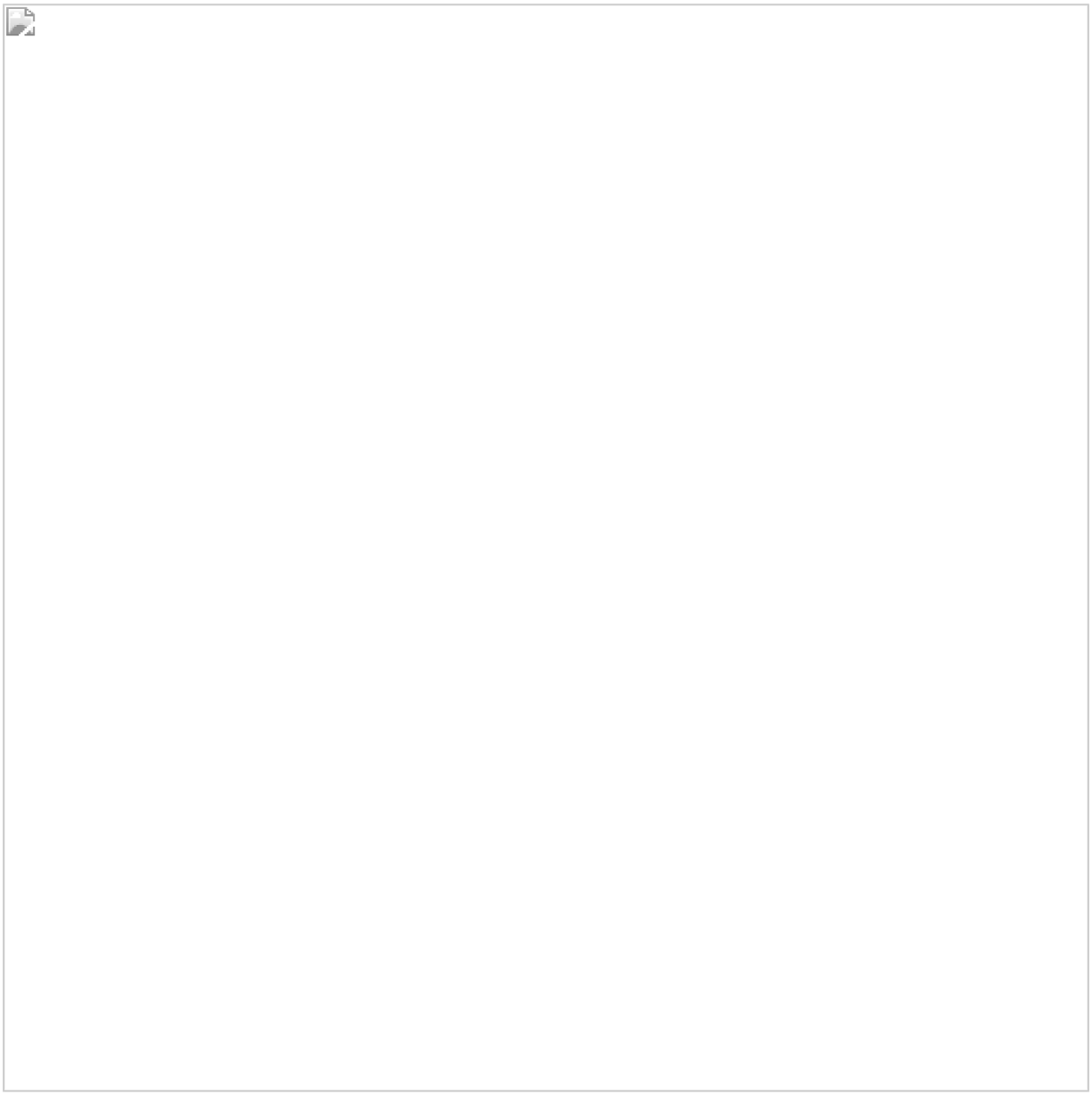


Think about it

1. What did Tom use for a shield?

- ○ A big pot lid
- ○ A door
- ○ A cart wheel

Bonfires for Tom



The news ran through the whole country, for the giant had been an enemy to everyone around. The people made bonfires for joy.

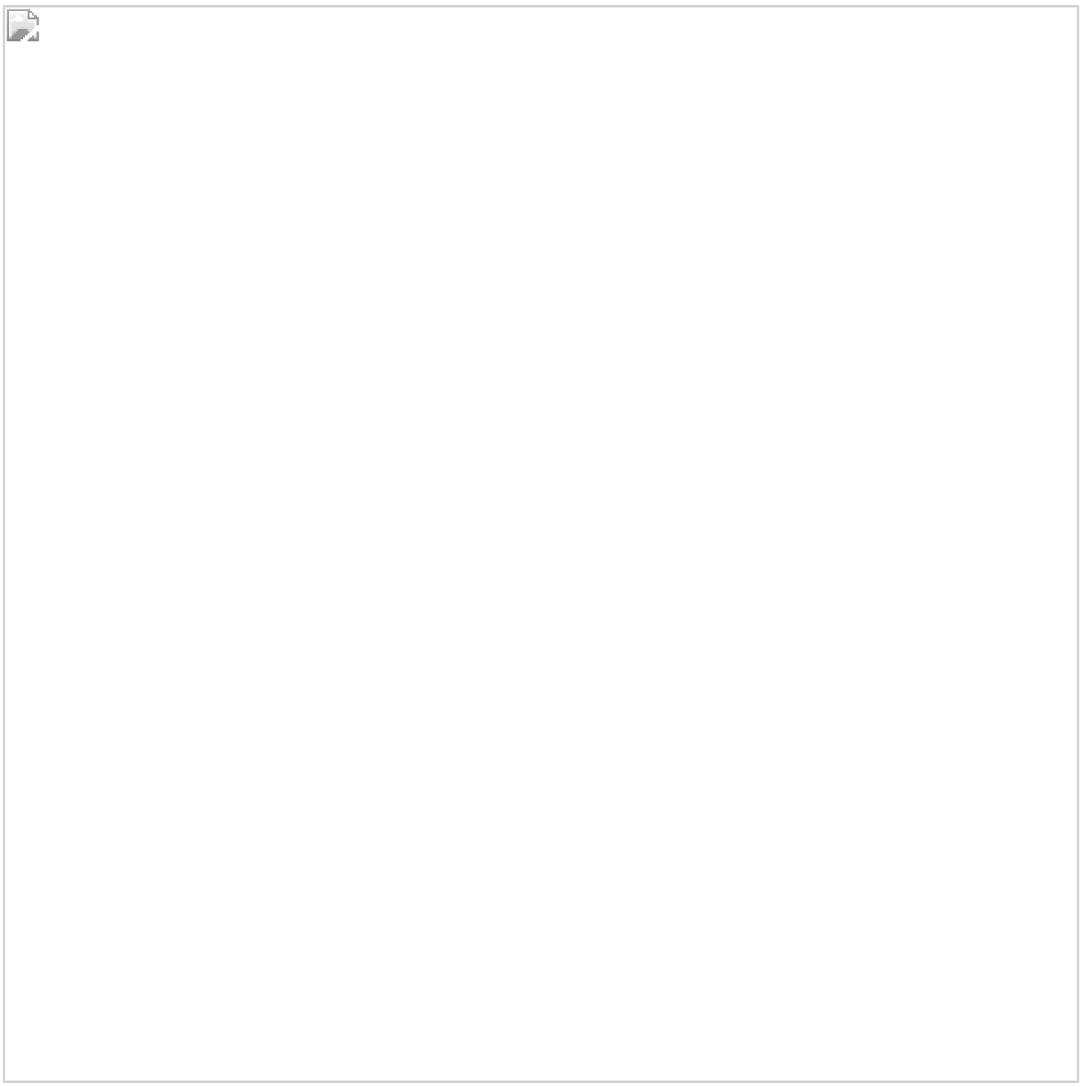
Tom went into the giant's cave, and found it full of gold and silver. He pulled the cave down and built a fine house on the spot.

The giant had taken a lot of land from the people. Tom gave part of it to the poor to share as a common, and kept just enough for himself and his good old mother, Jane Hickathrift.

TALK ABOUT IT

Tom had won all that treasure and land. Why do you think he gave some of it to the poor?

Bonfires for Tom · another picture



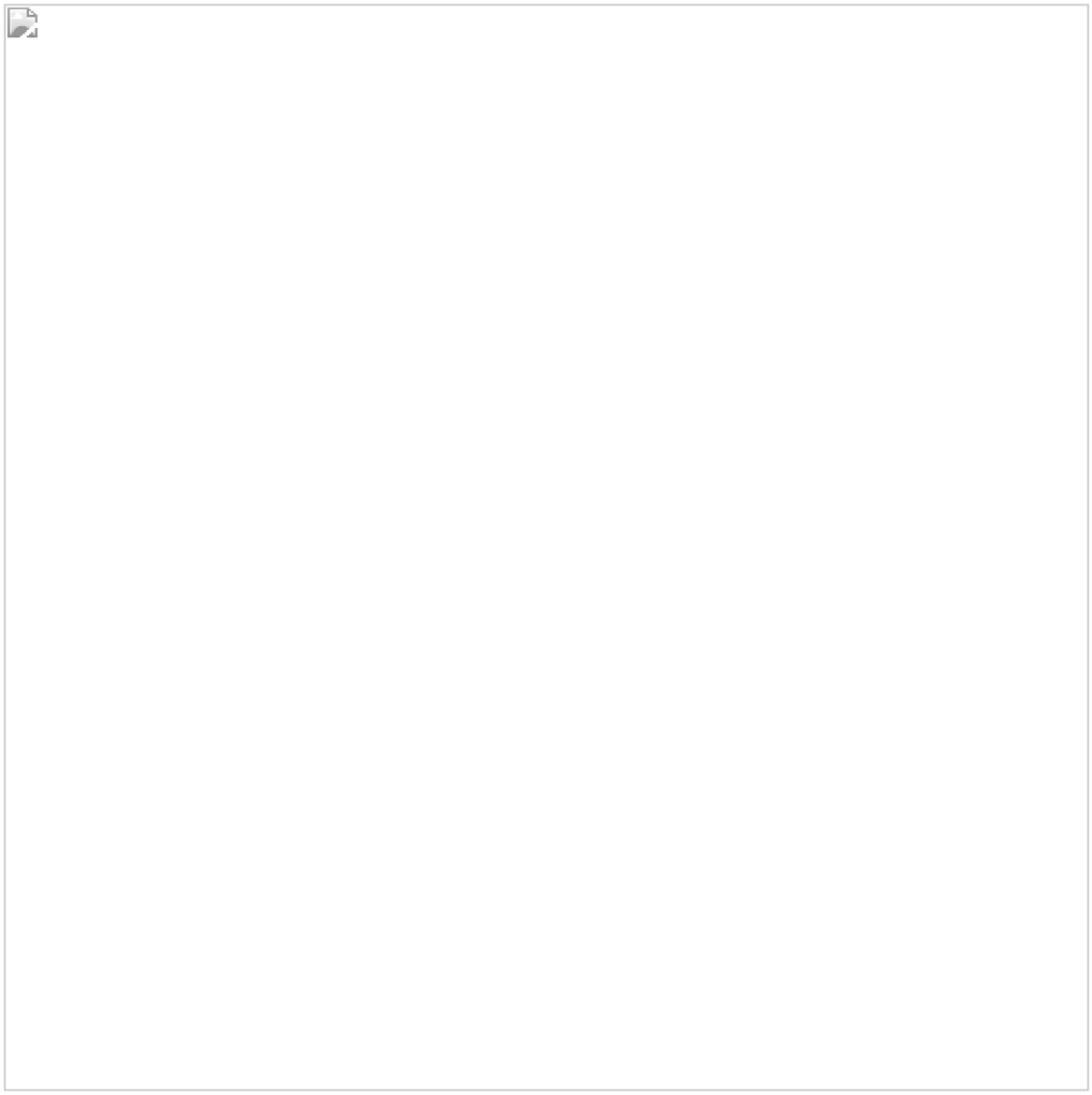
Think about it

1. What did Tom do with some of the land?

- ○ Sold it
- ○ Left it empty
- ○ Gave it to the poor for a common

2. If you won a treasure, who would you share it with?

Tom and the Tinker



Soon Tom was a hero to all the country folk, and whenever anyone was in trouble, they came to him.

He had a good friend now too, a tinker, nearly as strong as Tom himself.

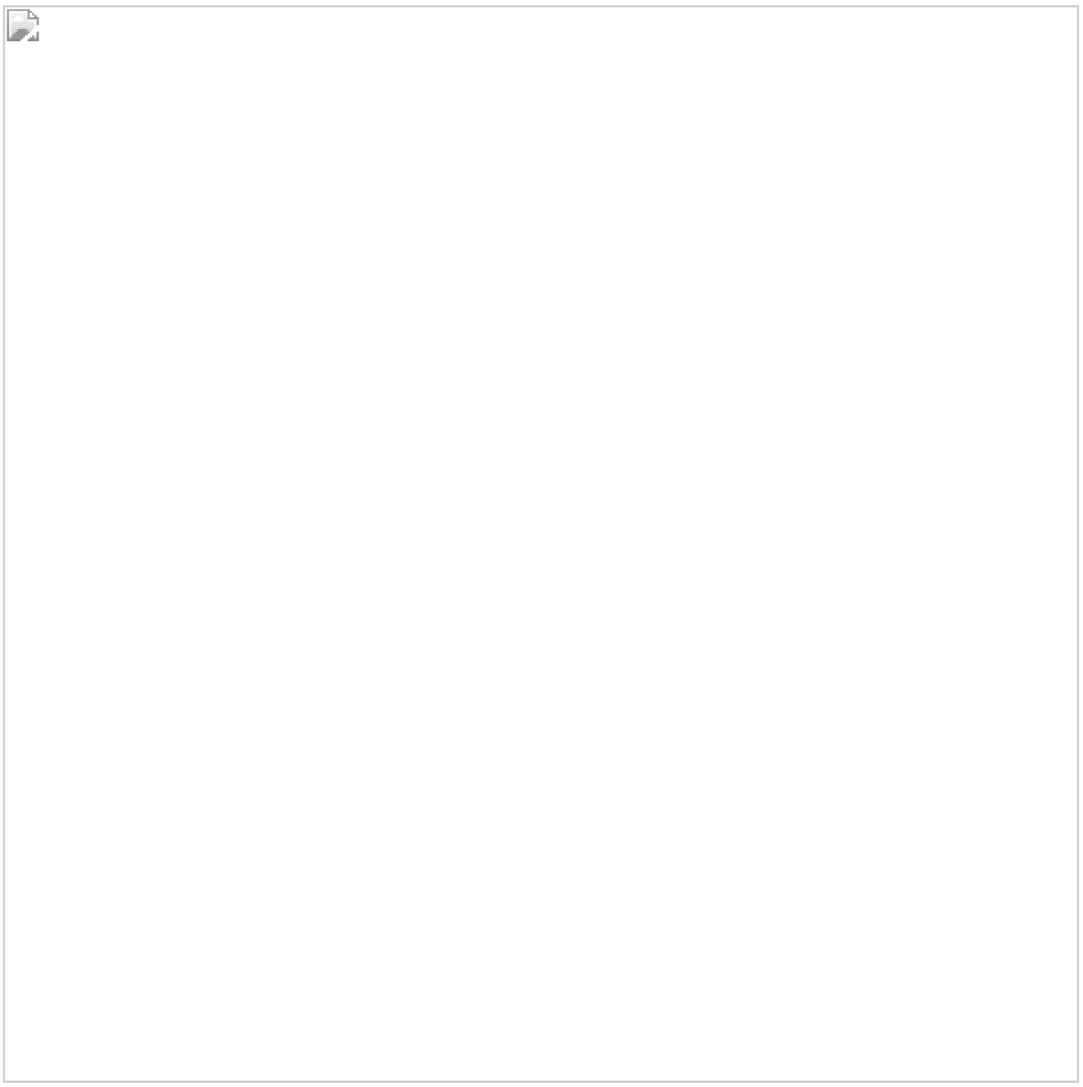
One night the sheriff crept to Tom, full of fear. A band of rebels had gathered in the Isle of Ely, who said, “Our will is our law.” Tom and the tinker took their big clubs and went out at daybreak to face them. They scattered the whole band, and the king's peace was kept.

When the king heard of it, he made Tom a knight. Sir Thomas Hickathrift.

TALK ABOUT IT

Sir Tom did not do it alone. Who helps you when something is too big for one person?

Tom and the Tinker · another picture

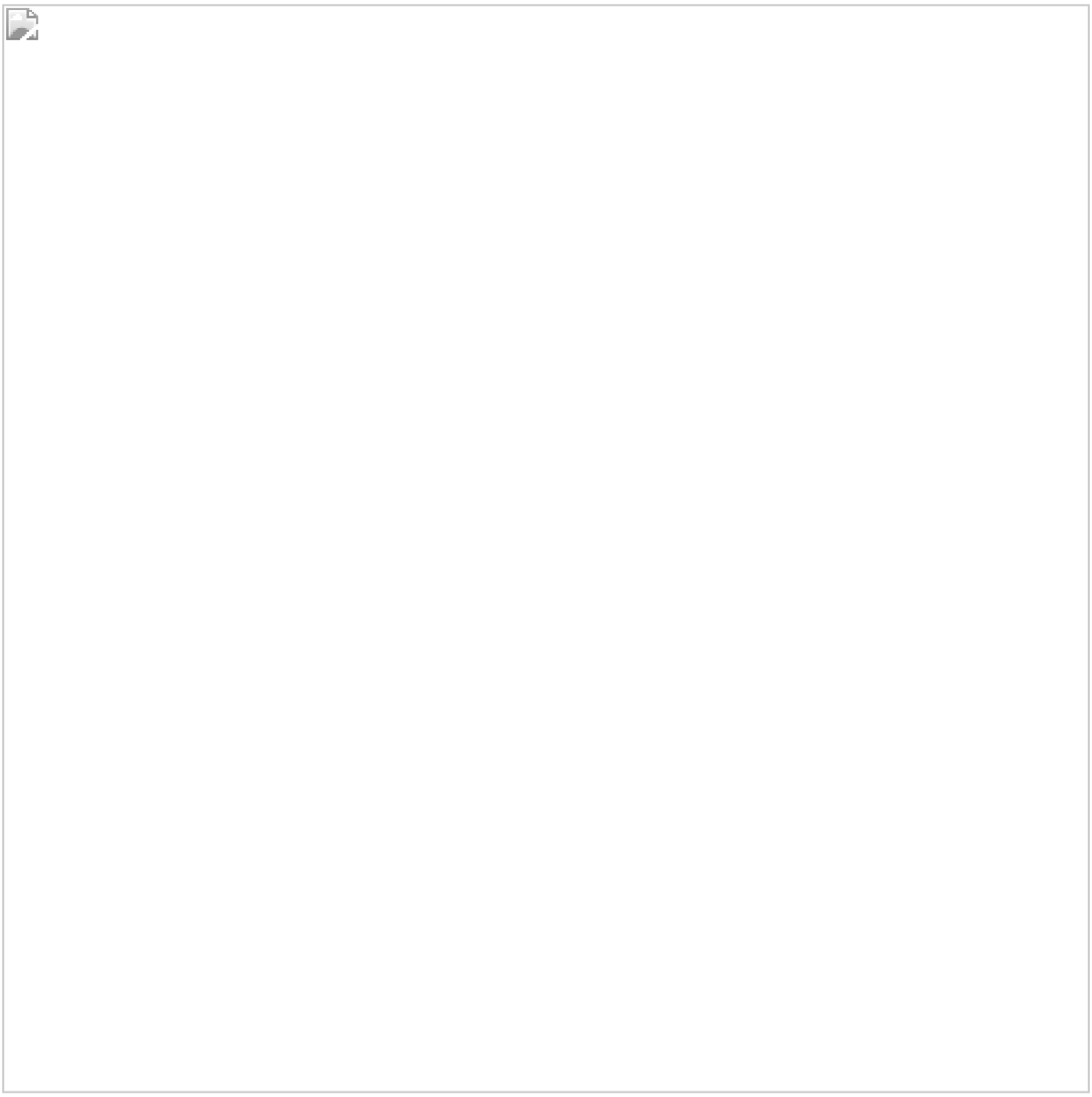


Think about it

1. Who was Tom's friend and helper?

- ○ A baker
- ○ A tinker
- ○ The sheriff

A Feast for the Poor Widows



Sir Tom married a great lady of the country, and they held a big wedding feast. Because of his own mother, he invited all the poor widows for miles round, and rich and poor feasted together.

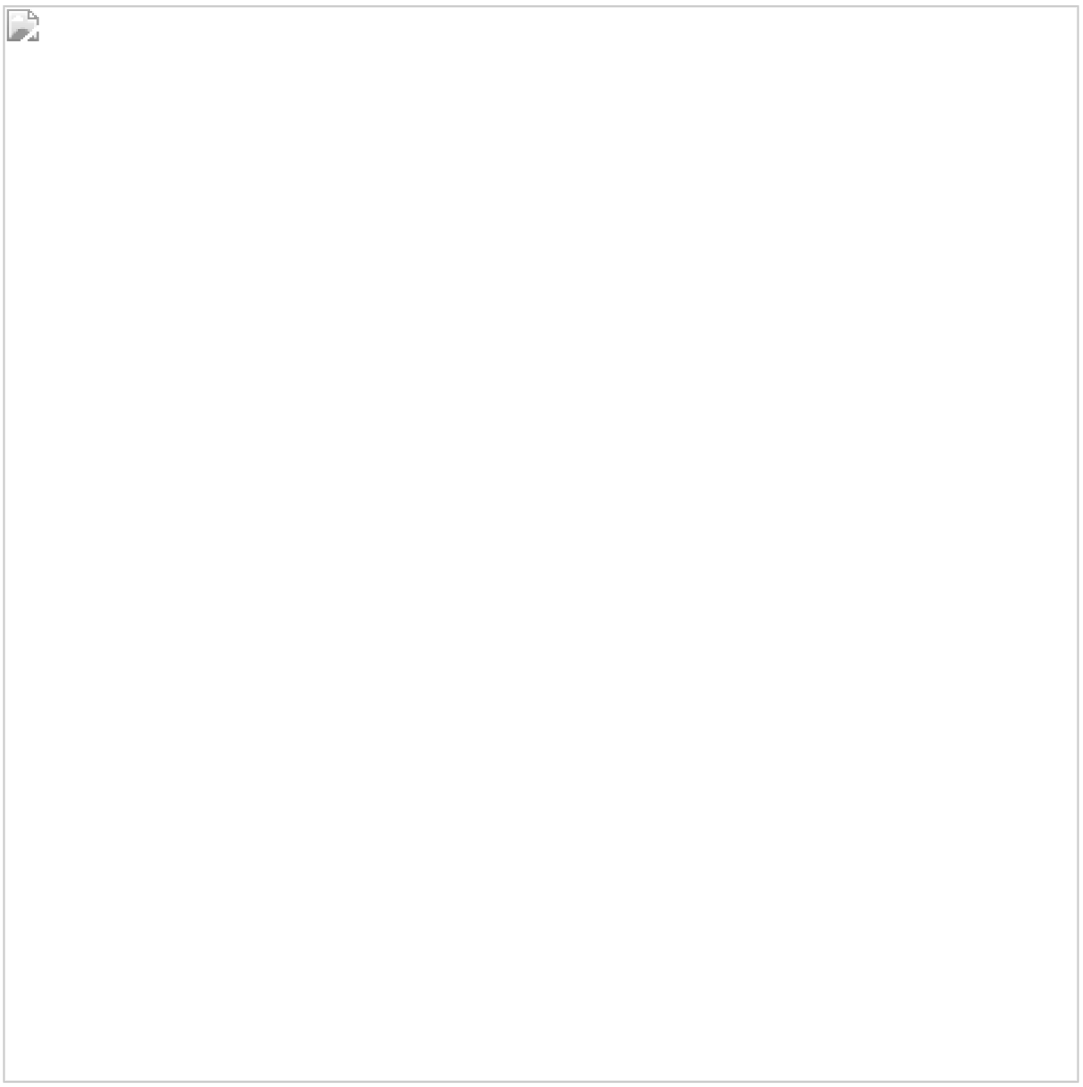
But one of the guests, an old woman named Stumbelup, stole a silver tankard from the table. She was caught, and the angry crowd wanted to punish her very harshly.

Sir Tom stepped in and had her rescued. As a punishment he said she must ride in a wheelbarrow through the streets of Cambridge, with a sign telling what she had done.

TALK ABOUT IT

Sir Tom could have let the crowd punish her. He chose to rescue her. What else could he have done for Stumbelup?

A Feast for the Poor Widows · another picture



Think about it

1. Who did Tom invite to his wedding feast?

- ○ All the poor widows for miles round
- ○ Only knights
- ○ Only the king

2. Do you think Sir Tom was kind to Stumbelup? Why or why not?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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