



The Desert

Wasn't Quiet!

A 'Brave Ben's Big Adventures' Series Book

The Desert

Wasn't Quiet!

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Barry Celliers



For his fifth birthday, Ben got a book,
So yellow and bright you just *had* to look.
'The Noisiest Book in the World' was its name —
He loved to hear it more than playing a game.

So, *two* things were needed: a *quiet* peaceful place,
And *someone* to read it — a kind, friendly face.

Now in the kitchen, the pots went BANG!

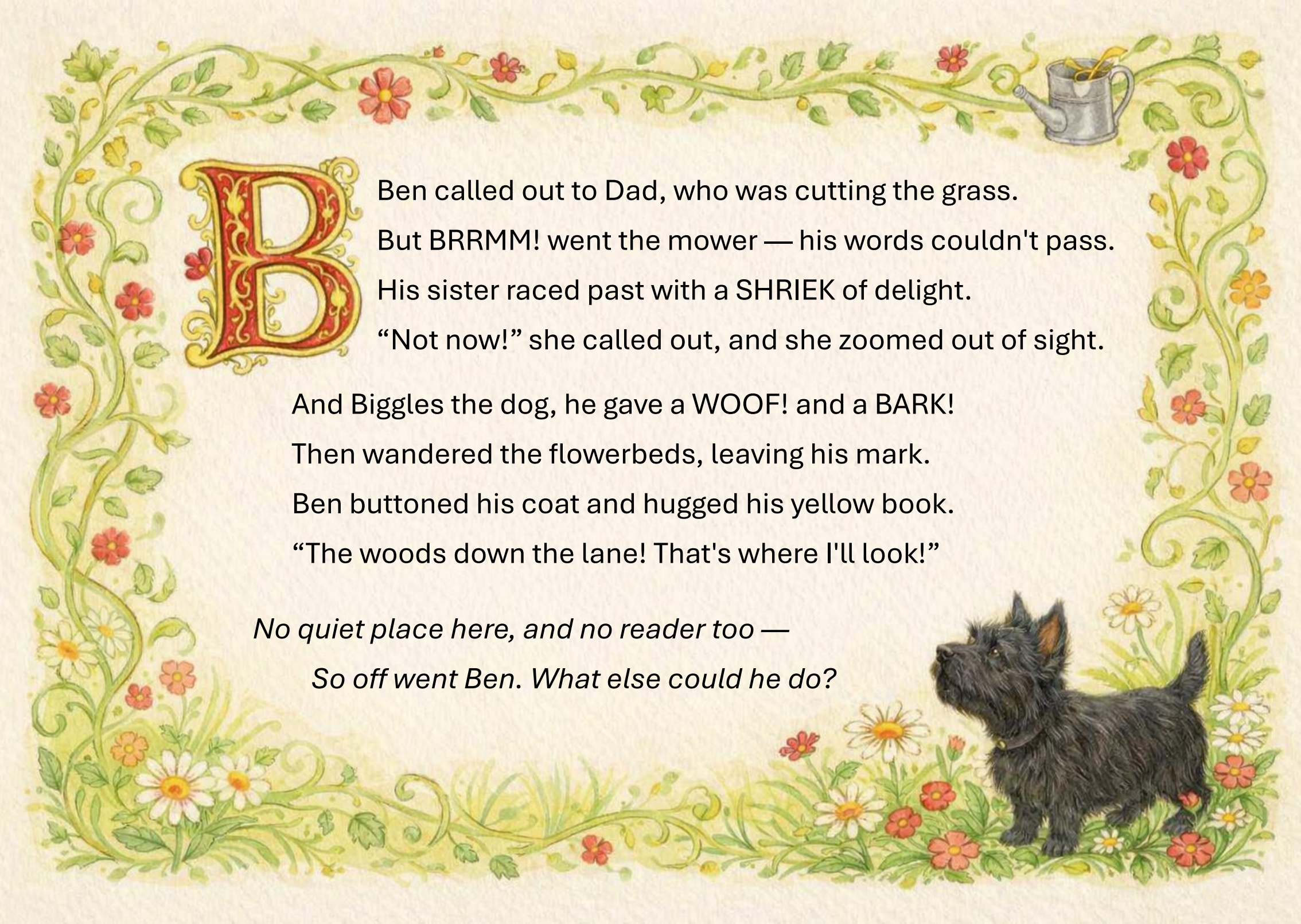
Telly in the lounge BLARED! Even the doorbell RANG!

So, he looked for Mum, who wasn't about...

...then off to the garden, Ben trotted out.







B

Ben called out to Dad, who was cutting the grass.
But BRRMM! went the mower — his words couldn't pass.
His sister raced past with a SHRIEK of delight.
“Not now!” she called out, and she zoomed out of sight.

And Biggles the dog, he gave a WOOF! and a BARK!
Then wandered the flowerbeds, leaving his mark.
Ben buttoned his coat and hugged his yellow book.
“The woods down the lane! That's where I'll look!”

*No quiet place here, and no reader too —
So off went Ben. What else could he do?*







The woods down the lane were all dappled and green.

“At last!” whispered Ben. “The best place I've seen!”

He sat on a stump with his book on his knee —

Then TAP-TAPPITY-TAP! from a hole in a tree!

The leaves went a-RUSTLE, the branches went CREAK.

A robin flew over him — CHEEP! went its beak.

A crow gave a CAW! and a twig went SNAP!

A squirrel above dropped a nut in his lap.

“Oh, dear”, chuckled Ben, “there’s noise even here!”

Then something came tumbling...

...with a nose and two ears!







Out tumbled a fox cub, all bramble and fluff,
Who landed, BUMP! — hard. “Ooh! That was rough!”
“I’m Fumble the Fox!” said the cub with a grin.
“I live in these woods. What a state I am in!”

“Is there somewhere that’s quiet? And can you read too?”

“Me? Read?” chuckled Fumble. “I haven’t a clue!

And quiet? Round here? Why, the woods never rest!

But the sea, try the sea. I have heard it’s the best!”

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?







The sea was enormous! It rolled and it waved —
So big and so blue — well, it's how it behaved.

The waves crashed in, WHOOSH! then dragging back, ROAR!
then BOOM! came another, and CRASH! came one more.

The seagulls swooped over him — KEE-AAA! they cried.

The wind whipped his hair, and it tugged at his side.

Ben felt very small on that wild, windy shore.

But small can be safe — he had known that before.

So, he sat himself down and he opened his book.

Then FLUB! and then FLOP!...

...he just had to go look.







It flumped up the beach — SLAP! SLOP! — with a THUD,
All wobbles and whiskers and flippers and mud.

“I'm Shuffle the Seal, and I'm best in the sea!

On land I'm a flump — but in water... that's for me.”

“Is there somewhere that's quiet? And can you read too?”

“Read? With these flippers? Oh no, what could I do?

And quiet round here? Why, it thunders all day.

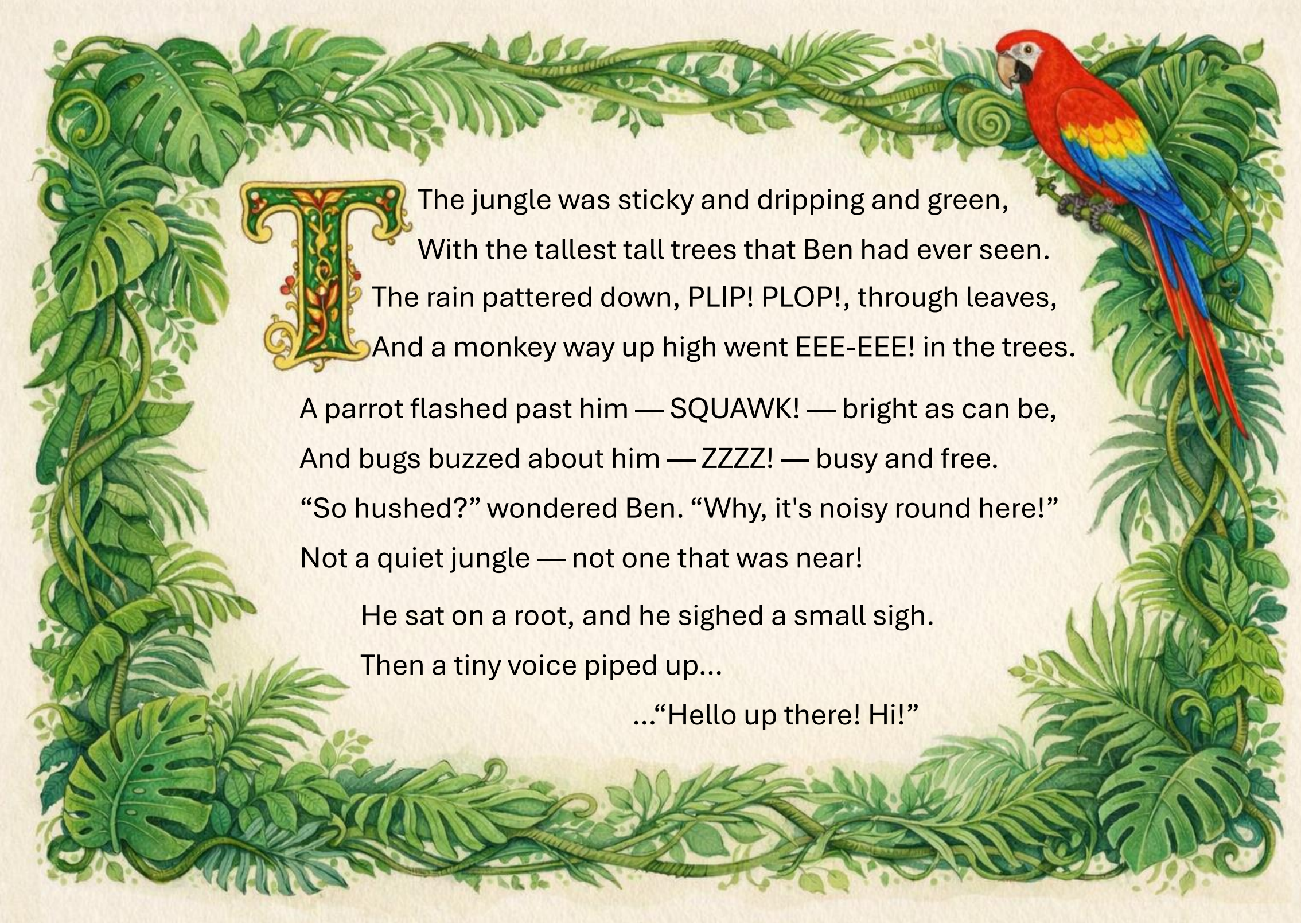
But the jungle! Try there — it's all hushed, so they say.”

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?







The jungle was sticky and dripping and green,
With the tallest tall trees that Ben had ever seen.
The rain pattered down, PLIP! PLOP!, through leaves,
And a monkey way up high went EEE-EEE! in the trees.

A parrot flashed past him — SQUAWK! — bright as can be,
And bugs buzzed about him — ZZZZ! — busy and free.

“So hushed?” wondered Ben. “Why, it's noisy round here!”
Not a quiet jungle — not one that was near!

He sat on a root, and he sighed a small sigh.

Then a tiny voice piped up...

...“Hello up there! Hi!”





A frog, small and bright, on a leaf by his shoe —

So red and so yellow, so bright and so blue!

“I’m Flick the Frog, and I flick, just you see —

My tongue is so quick, it can catch a bee!”

“Is there somewhere that’s quiet? And can you read too?”

“Read? I’m too small to hold your big book for you.

And quiet? Round here? With this racket all day?

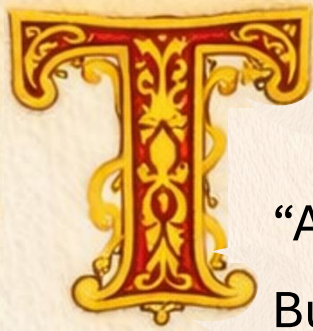
But the plains! Try the plains, they’re wide open, they say.”

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?







The savanna was golden, all grassland and sky,
So wide and so flat that it made Ben sigh.

“At last!” exclaimed Ben. “Here it's peaceful and still!”

But then — DRUM-DRUM-DRUM! Came a sound from a hill.

It thundered! It rumbled! It shook the ground —

A great herd of wildebeest came pounding around!

They GALLOPED and SNORTED, a dust-cloudy crowd,

So, Ben felt the thunder — too big, and too loud!

He waited, it passed, and the dust settled clear.

Then a shadow fell over him...

...something was near.







Then up rose a creature — so HUGE! — to the skies,
With ears like two sails and enormous kind eyes.

“I’m Chant the Elephant,” she rumbled deep and low,
“The biggest and oldest of all that you know.”

“Is there somewhere that’s quiet? And can you read too?”

“Read? With this trunk? I could never help you.

And quiet? Out here? When the wildebeest cry?

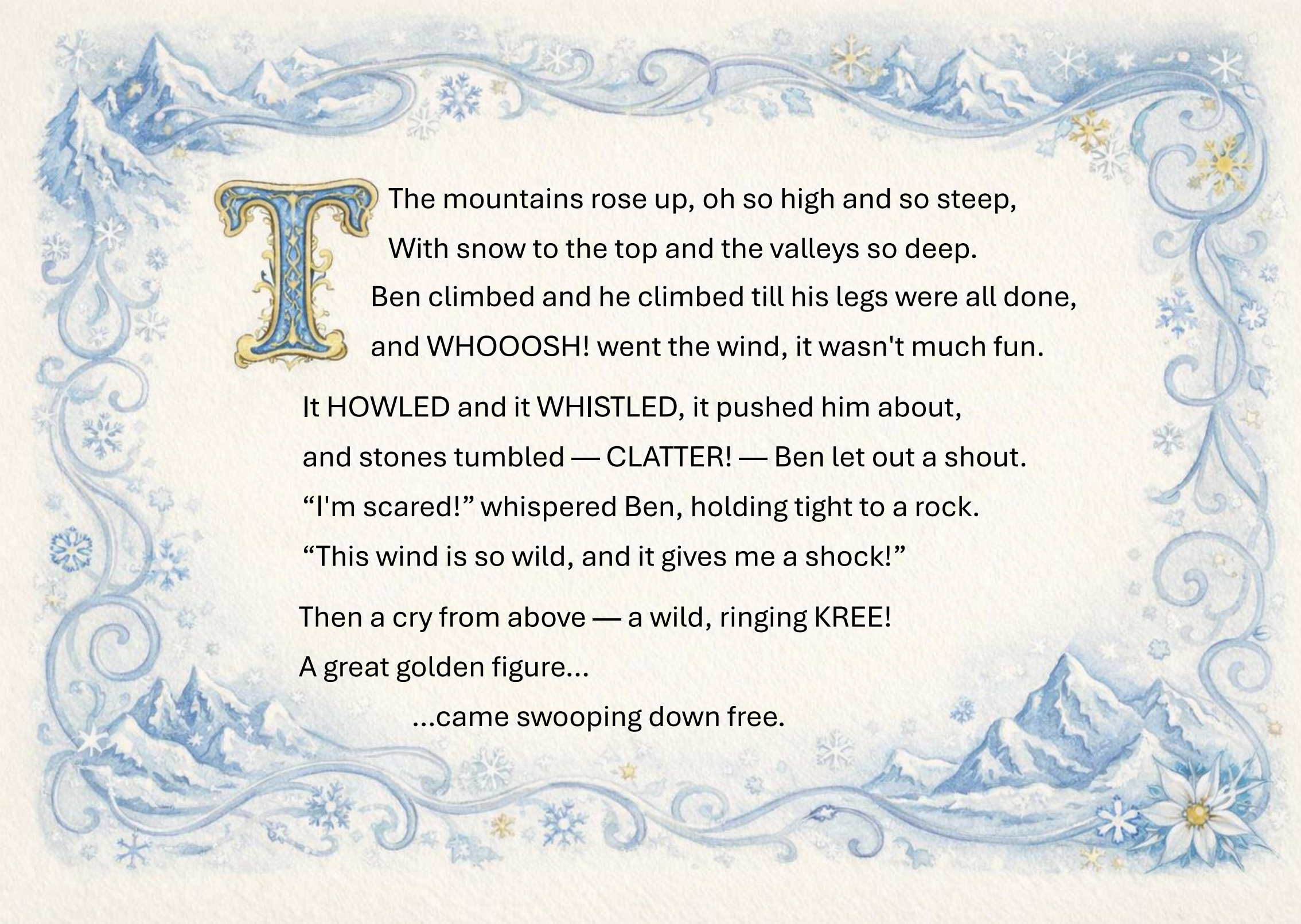
But the mountains! Try there — where the eagles fly high!”

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?







The mountains rose up, oh so high and so steep,
With snow to the top and the valleys so deep.
Ben climbed and he climbed till his legs were all done,
and WHOOOSH! went the wind, it wasn't much fun.

It HOWLED and it WHISTLED, it pushed him about,
and stones tumbled — CLATTER! — Ben let out a shout.

“I'm scared!” whispered Ben, holding tight to a rock.

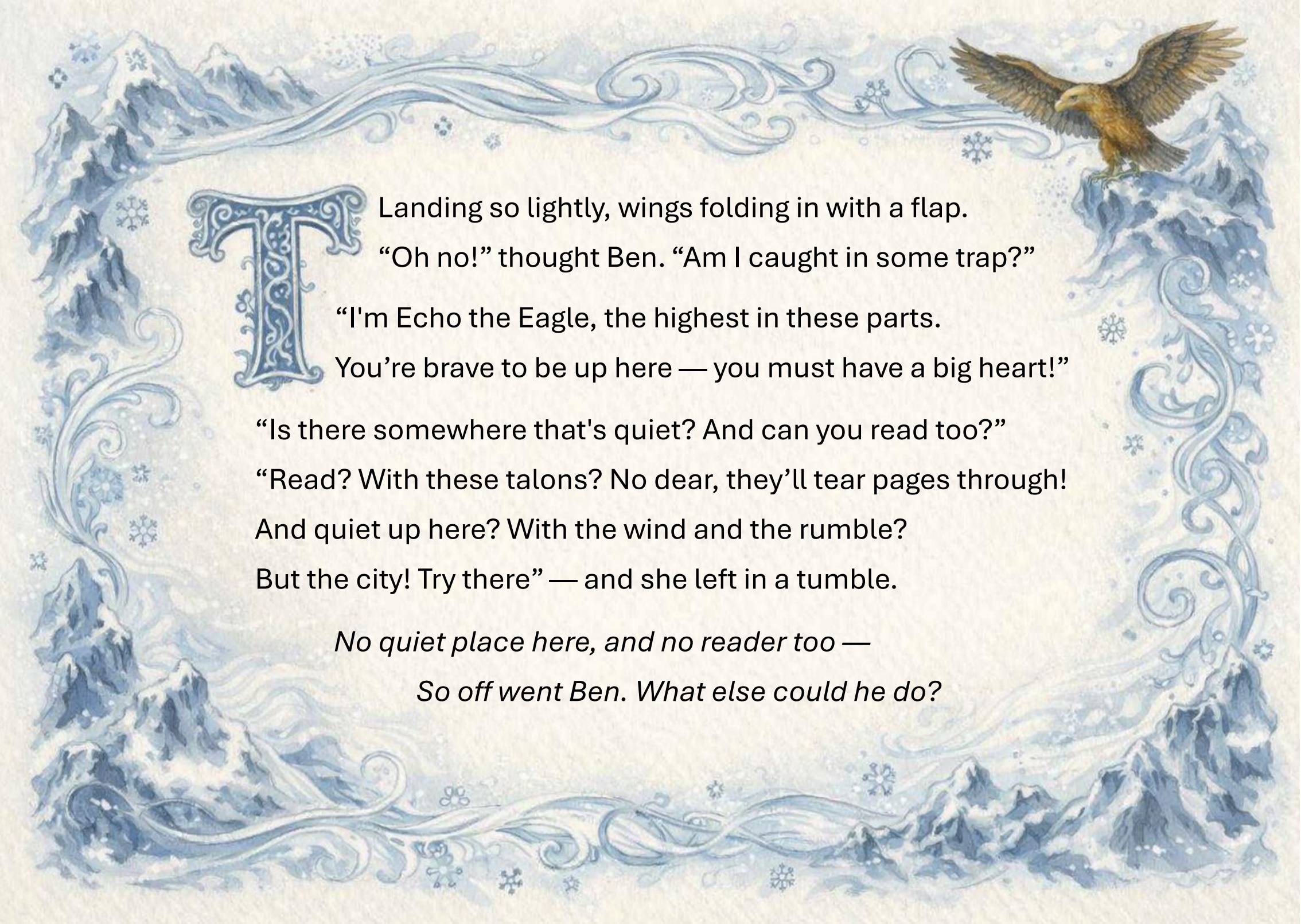
“This wind is so wild, and it gives me a shock!”

Then a cry from above — a wild, ringing KREE!

A great golden figure...

...came swooping down free.





T Landing so lightly, wings folding in with a flap.
“Oh no!” thought Ben. “Am I caught in some trap?”
“I’m Echo the Eagle, the highest in these parts.
You’re brave to be up here — you must have a big heart!”
“Is there somewhere that’s quiet? And can you read too?”
“Read? With these talons? No dear, they’ll tear pages through!
And quiet up here? With the wind and the rumble?
But the city! Try there” — and she left in a tumble.

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?





The city was busy, all bustle and glow,
With buildings so tall and the streets down below.
The buses went HONK! and a siren went WAIL!
A drill went DRRR-DRRR! at the end of a rail.

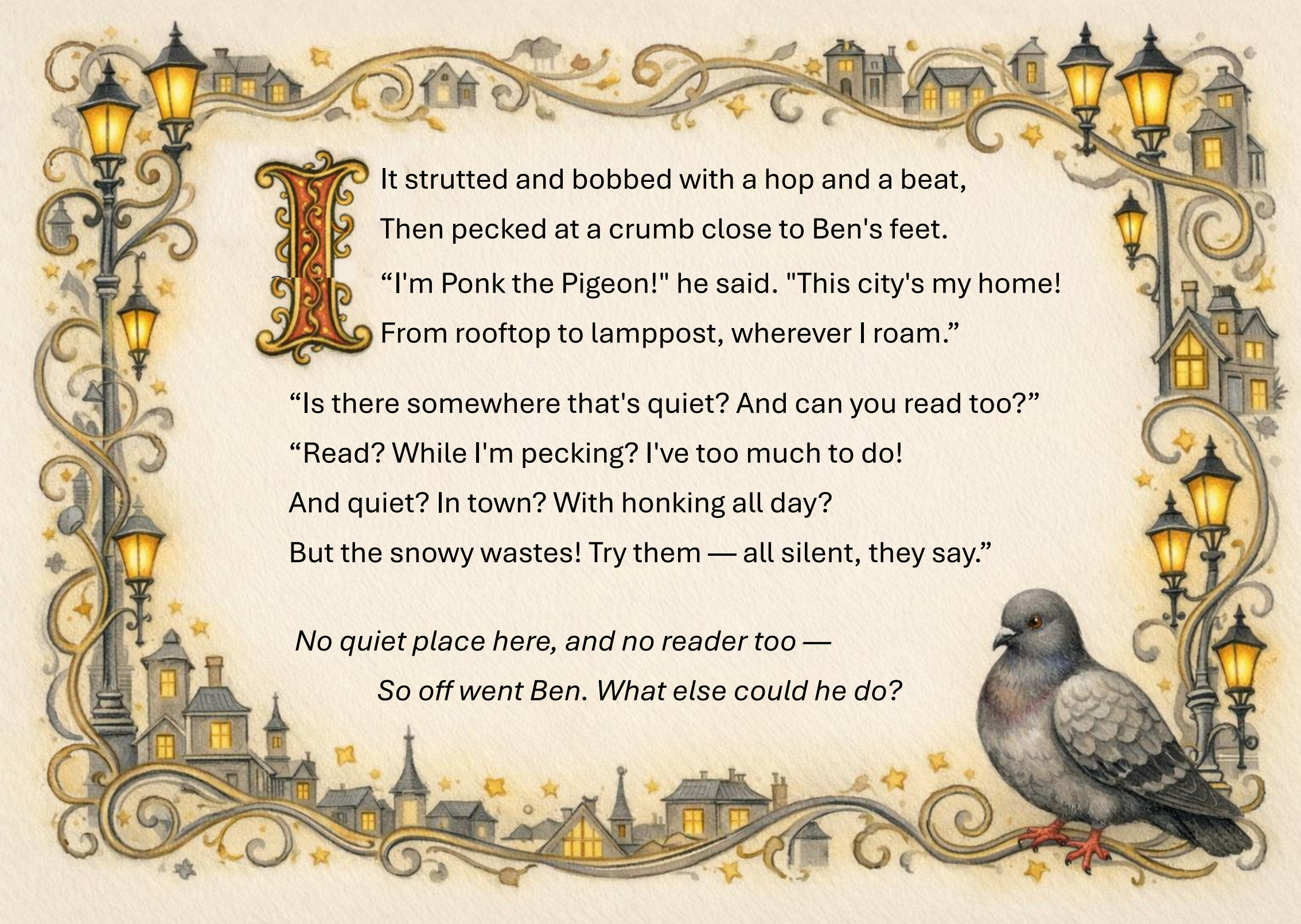
The people rushed past with a chatter and hum,
And a busker played tunes on a RAT-A-TAT drum.
“Too noisy!” sighed Ben. “It's the loudest one yet!
I'll never find quiet in this place, I'd bet!”

He sat on a bench with a slump and a frown.
Then FLUTTER!...

...what's this that came flapping down?







It strutted and bobbed with a hop and a beat,
Then pecked at a crumb close to Ben's feet.
“I'm Ponk the Pigeon!” he said. “This city's my home!
From rooftop to lamppost, wherever I roam.”

“Is there somewhere that's quiet? And can you read too?”

“Read? While I'm pecking? I've too much to do!

And quiet? In town? With honking all day?

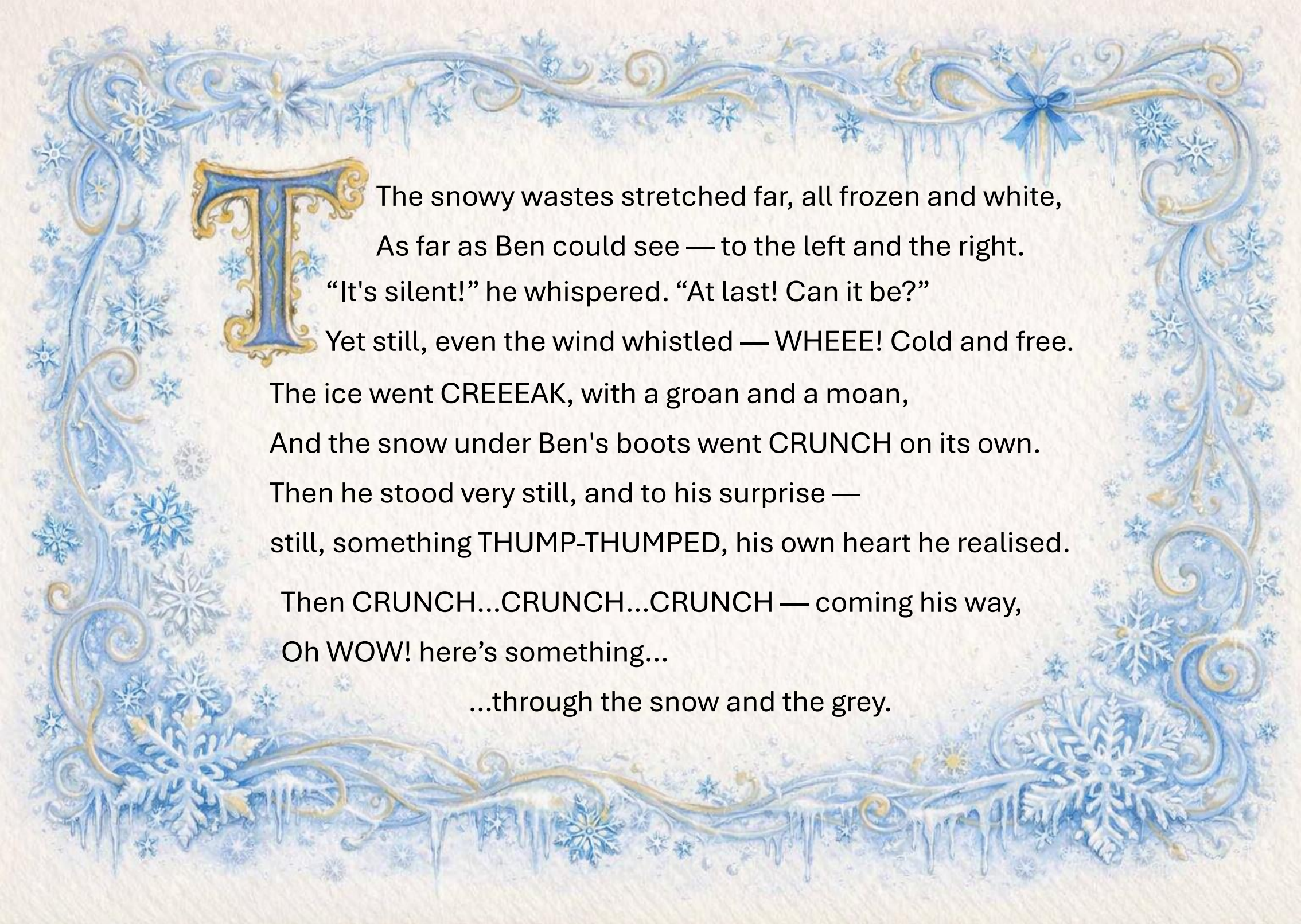
But the snowy wastes! Try them — all silent, they say.”

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?

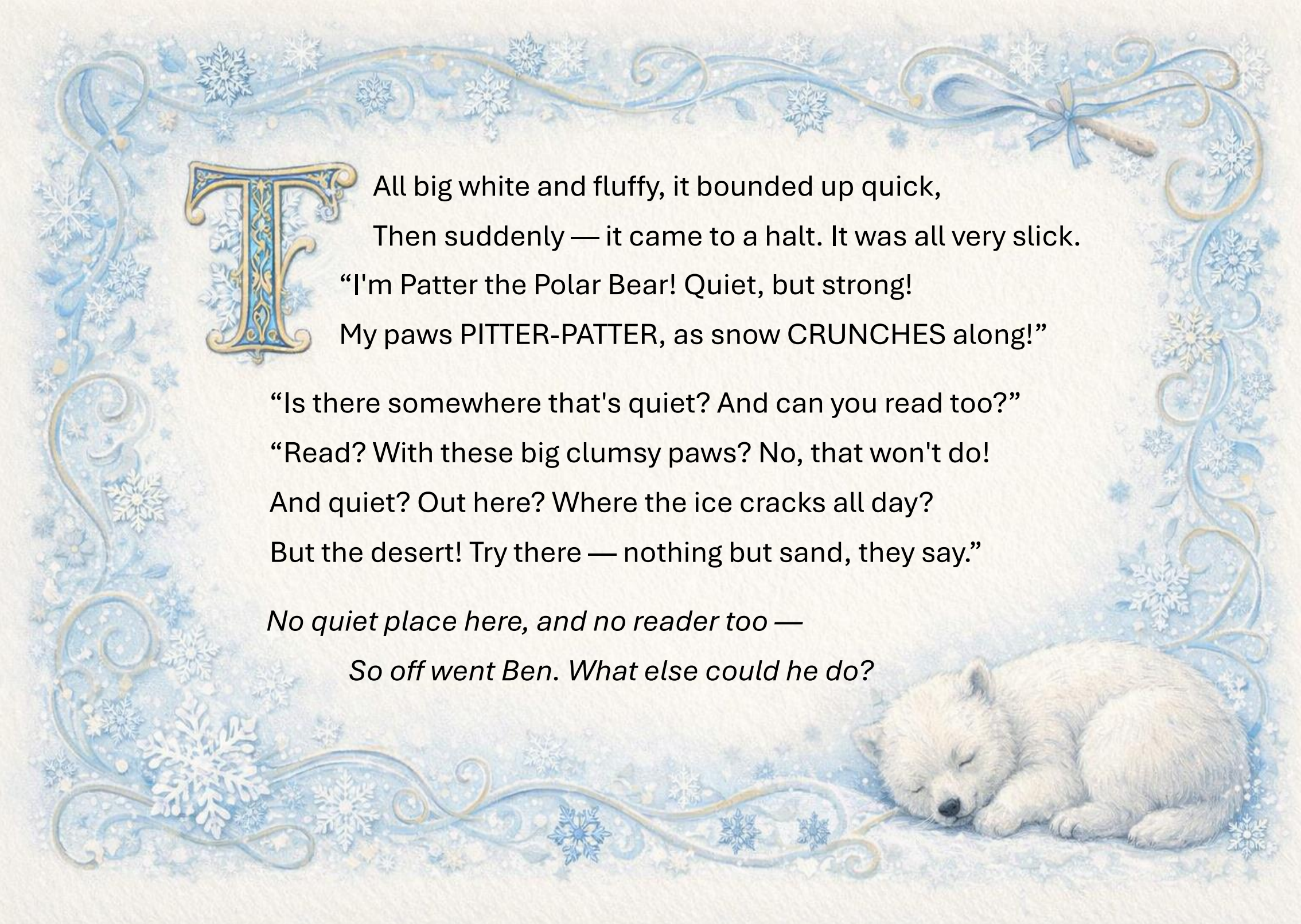






The snowy wastes stretched far, all frozen and white,
As far as Ben could see — to the left and the right.
“It's silent!” he whispered. “At last! Can it be?”
Yet still, even the wind whistled — WHEEE! Cold and free.
The ice went CREEEAK, with a groan and a moan,
And the snow under Ben's boots went CRUNCH on its own.
Then he stood very still, and to his surprise —
still, something THUMP-THUMPED, his own heart he realised.
Then CRUNCH...CRUNCH...CRUNCH — coming his way,
Oh WOW! here's something...
...through the snow and the grey.





T All big white and fluffy, it bounded up quick,
Then suddenly — it came to a halt. It was all very slick.
“I'm Patter the Polar Bear! Quiet, but strong!
My paws PITTER-PATTER, as snow CRUNCHES along!”

“Is there somewhere that's quiet? And can you read too?”

“Read? With these big clumsy paws? No, that won't do!

And quiet? Out here? Where the ice cracks all day?

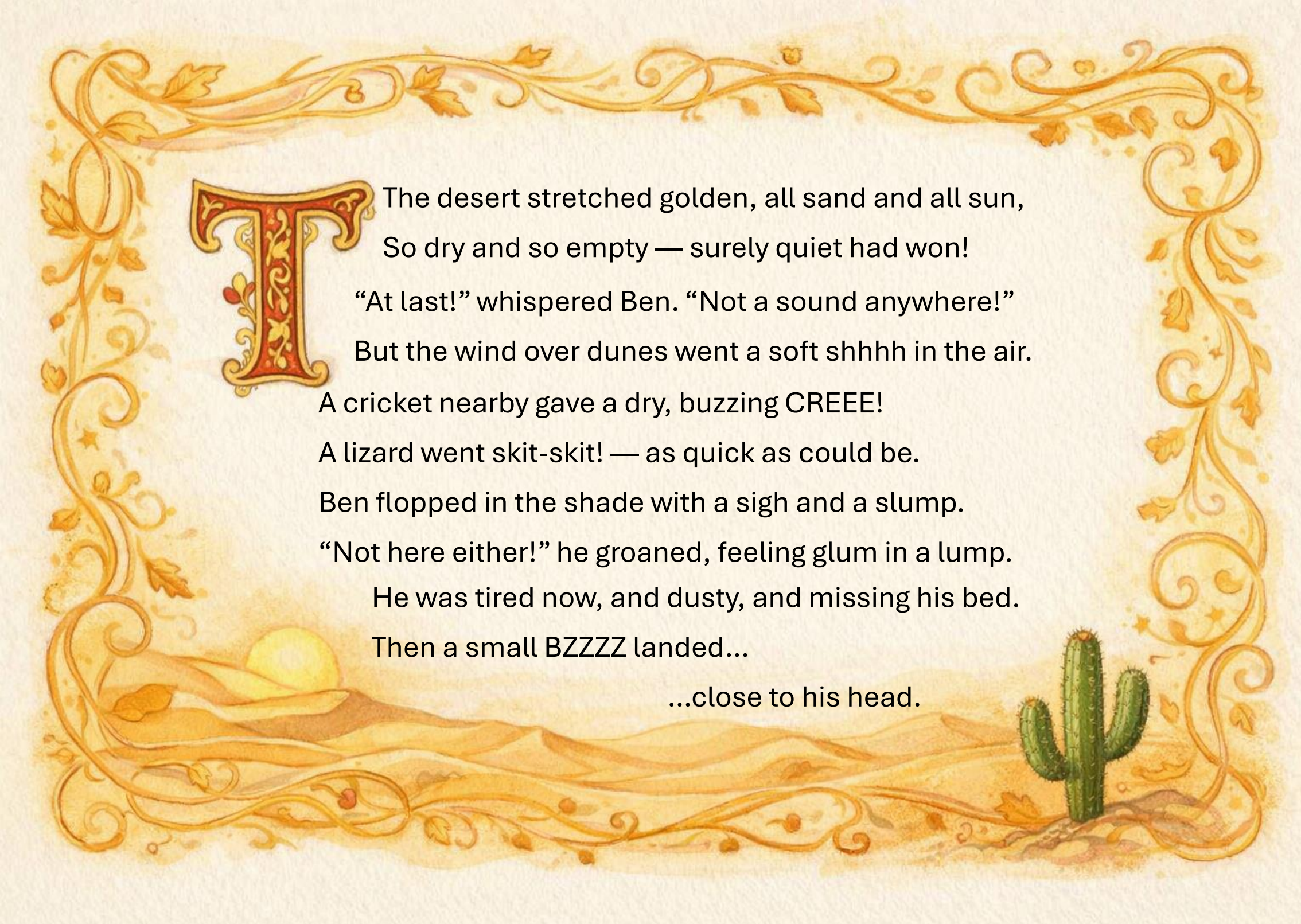
But the desert! Try there — nothing but sand, they say.”

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?







The desert stretched golden, all sand and all sun,
So dry and so empty — surely quiet had won!

“At last!” whispered Ben. “Not a sound anywhere!”

But the wind over dunes went a soft shhhh in the air.

A cricket nearby gave a dry, buzzing CREEE!

A lizard went skit-skit! — as quick as could be.

Ben flopped in the shade with a sigh and a slump.

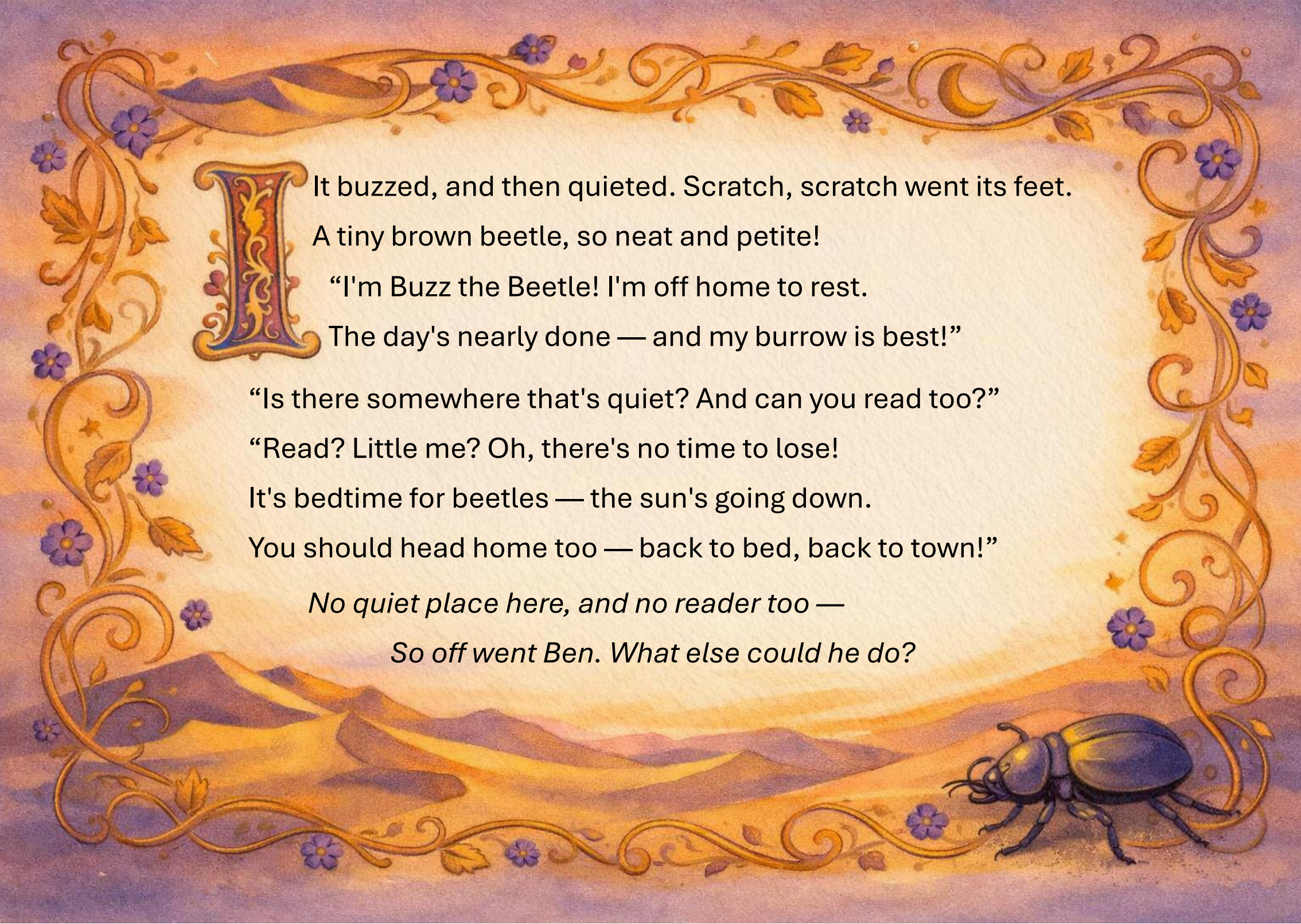
“Not here either!” he groaned, feeling glum in a lump.

He was tired now, and dusty, and missing his bed.

Then a small BZZZZ landed...

...close to his head.





It buzzed, and then quieted. Scratch, scratch went its feet.
A tiny brown beetle, so neat and petite!
“I'm Buzz the Beetle! I'm off home to rest.
The day's nearly done — and my burrow is best!”

“Is there somewhere that's quiet? And can you read too?”

“Read? Little me? Oh, there's no time to lose!

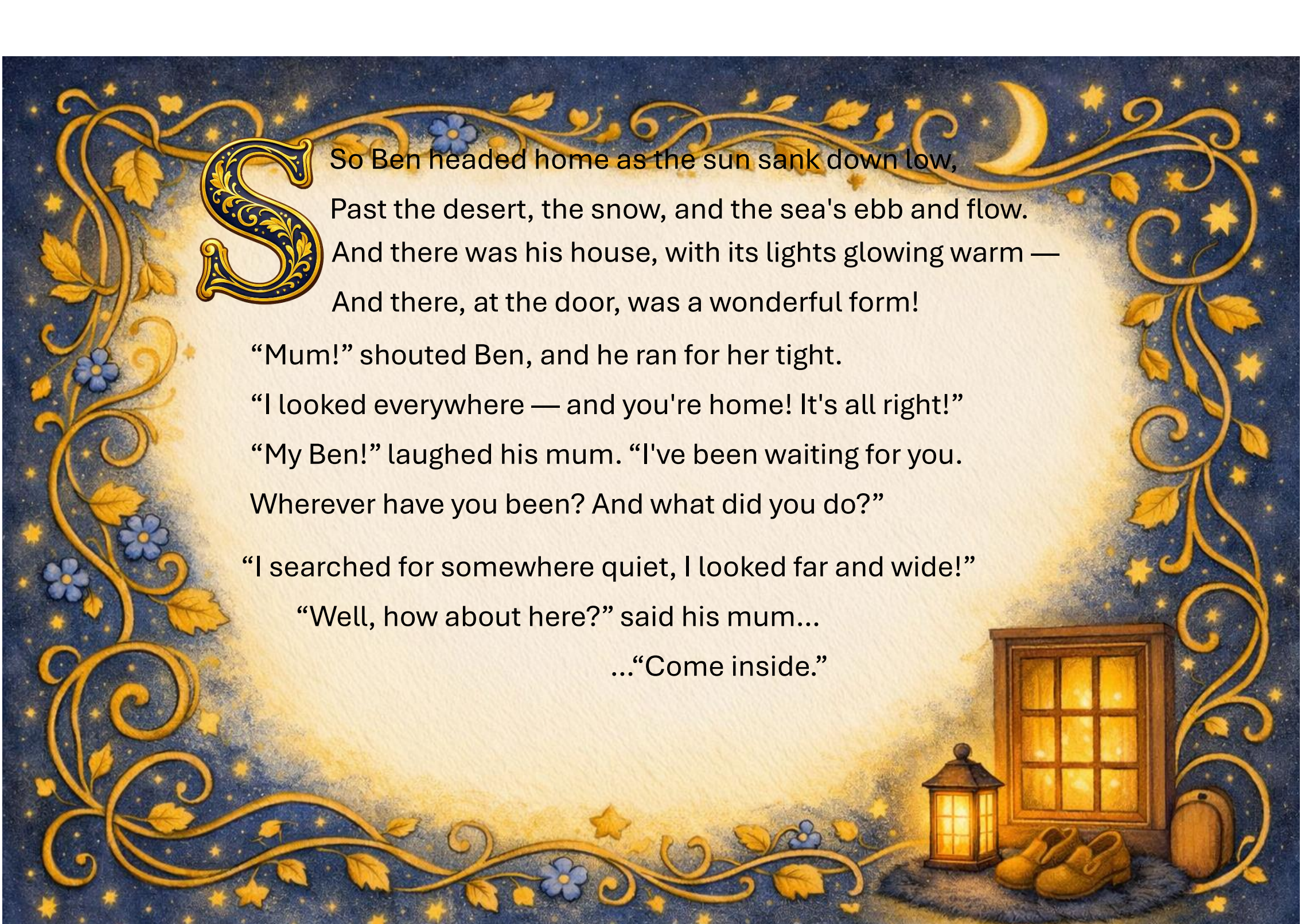
It's bedtime for beetles — the sun's going down.

You should head home too — back to bed, back to town!”

No quiet place here, and no reader too —

So off went Ben. What else could he do?





So Ben headed home as the sun sank down low,
Past the desert, the snow, and the sea's ebb and flow.
And there was his house, with its lights glowing warm —
And there, at the door, was a wonderful form!

“Mum!” shouted Ben, and he ran for her tight.

“I looked everywhere — and you're home! It's all right!”

“My Ben!” laughed his mum. “I've been waiting for you.
Wherever have you been? And what did you do?”

“I searched for somewhere quiet, I looked far and wide!”

“Well, how about here?” said his mum...

...“Come inside.”





She settled herself down, as the evening fell deep.

And Dad set down his paper and came for a seat.

She sat Ben between them, all snug on her knee,

And she opened his book — “Now then, let's see!”

And she read, and she read, in a soft, gentle voice,

Of a boy and his journey, the sounds and his choice —

And Ben heard each word, every page, every line.

A quiet place found. And a reader — all mine.

A quiet place found. And a reader too —

At home, all along...

...who ever knew?







Then up to his bedroom, all sleepy and small,
And into his bed, the best place of all.

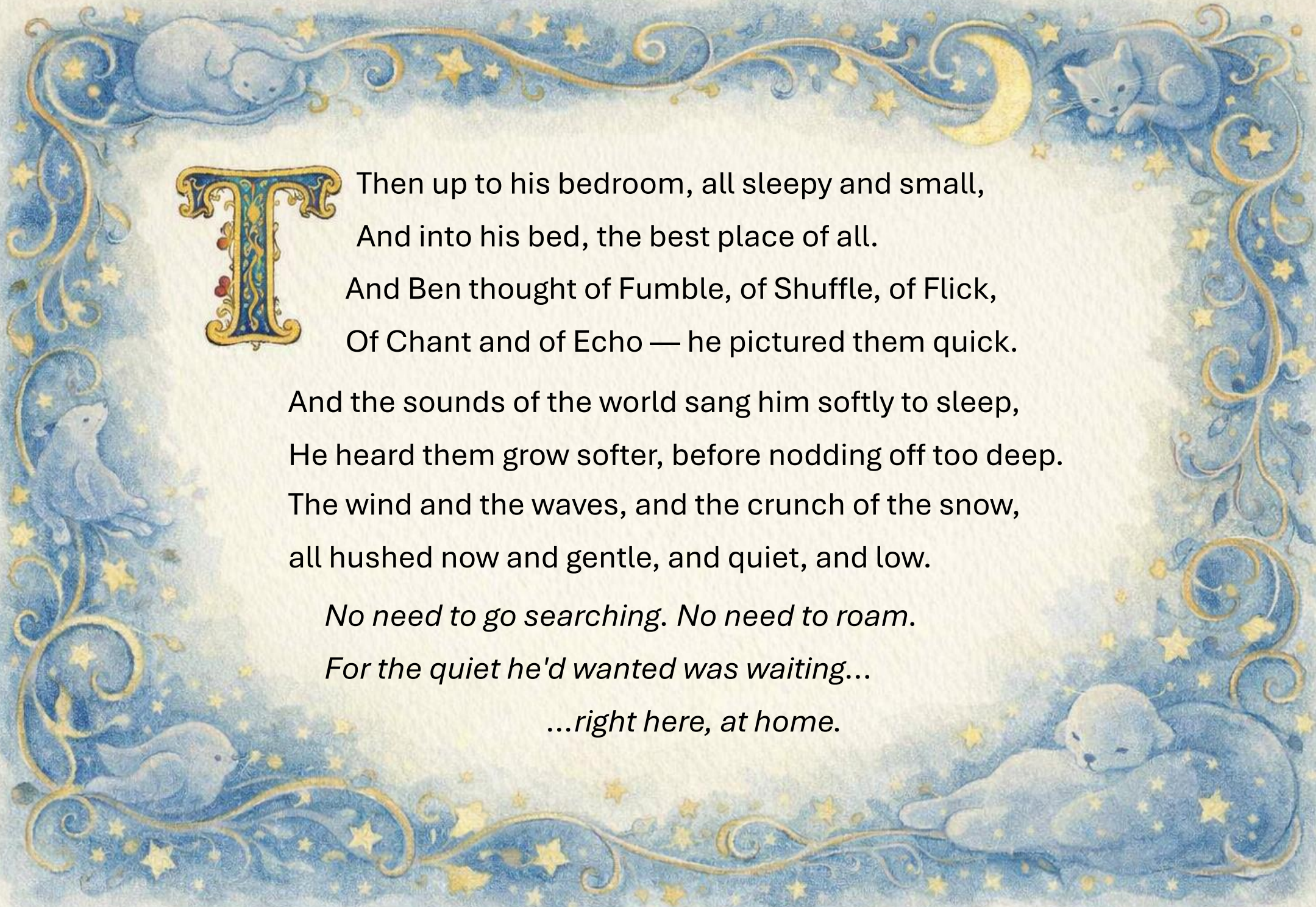
And Ben thought of Fumble, of Shuffle, of Flick,
Of Chant and of Echo — he pictured them quick.

And the sounds of the world sang him softly to sleep,
He heard them grow softer, before nodding off too deep.
The wind and the waves, and the crunch of the snow,
all hushed now and gentle, and quiet, and low.

No need to go searching. No need to roam.

For the quiet he'd wanted was waiting...

...right here, at home.





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A 'Brave Ben's Big Adventures' Series Book

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First edition

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*Ben has a book, the 'Noisiest Book in the World',
and he wants someone to read it to him.*

*But where Ben lives there doesn't seem to be any quiet place,
or someone to read to him.*

So off went Ben, what else could he do?

*Join Ben on his adventure to find a quiet place, and someone to read,
which takes unexpected turns to interesting places, and encounters with unusual
characters along the way.*

Will he ever find somewhere quiet?

Can anyone read him his book?

*In 'The Desert Wasn't Quiet!' find out what Ben finally realises about quiet places,
and those who read books best.*

A 'Brave Ben's Big Adventures' series book.

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