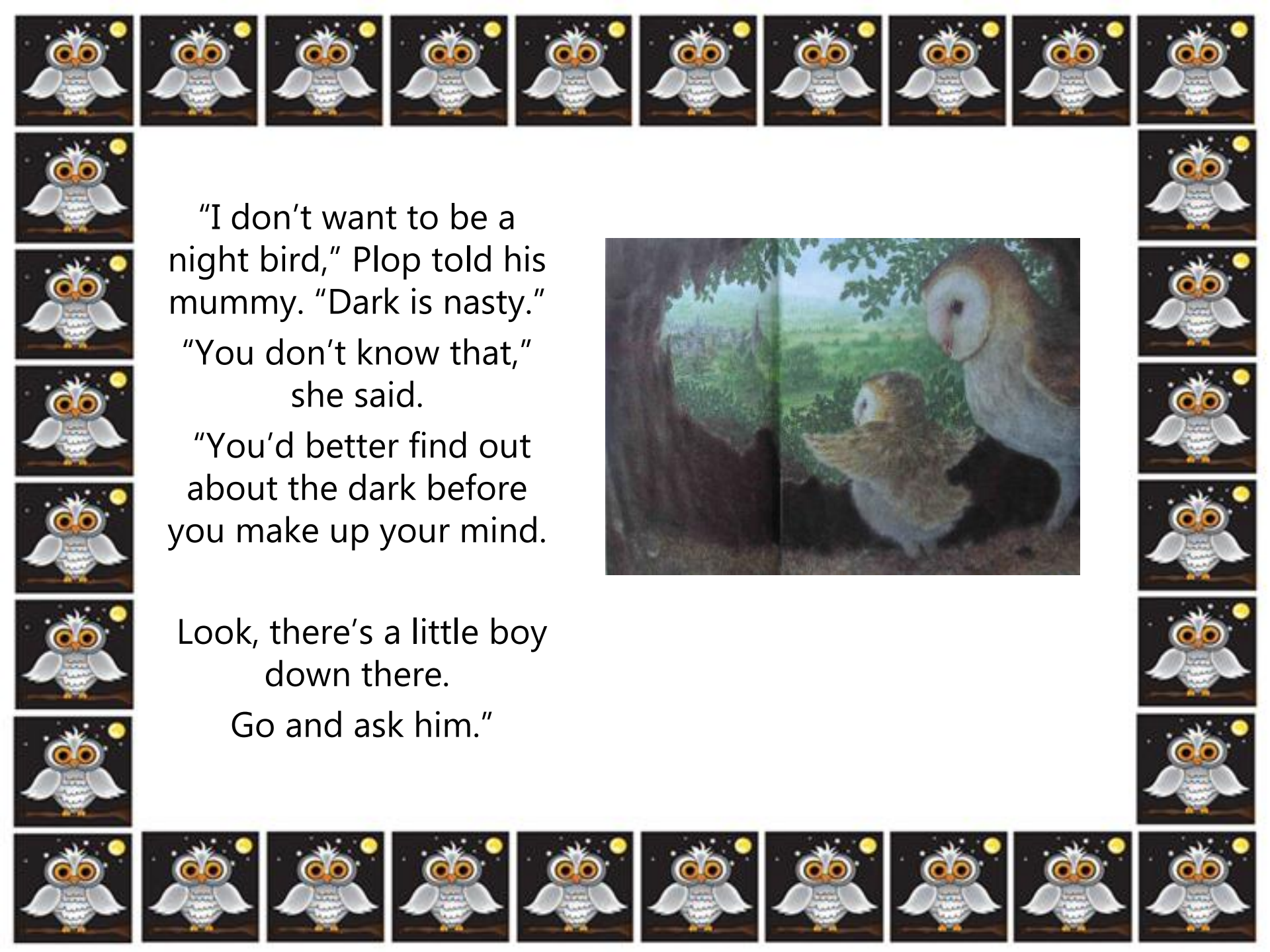


The Owl Who Was Afraid Of The Dark



by Jill Tomlinson



"I don't want to be a night bird," Plop told his mummy. "Dark is nasty."

"You don't know that," she said.

"You'd better find out about the dark before you make up your mind."

Look, there's a little boy down there.

Go and ask him."





So Plop, who was quite new at flying, took a deep breath and flew down.



"Ooh!" cried the little boy as Plop landed with a somersault.



"Hello!" said Plop. "I've come to find out about the dark."



"Oh!" said the boy.



"DARK IS EXCITING,

especially tonight. We're going to have fireworks!"




"Does it have to be dark?" asked Plop. "Of course!" replied the boy. "You can't see the fireworks unless it's dark.



Look out for them later!"





Well?" said Mrs Barn Owl
when Plop arrived back
at the nest.

"The little boy says
DARK IS EXCITING", said
Plop.

"I still do not like it
AT ALL!
But I will watch the
fireworks if you will sit
by me."





"We will sit by you," said his mummy and daddy.
So that is what they did.





When the very last firework had faded away, Mr Barn Owl went hunting.

All night he brought food back to Plop, until daylight came and it was time for bed.



Halfway through the morning, Plop woke up.

Mrs Barn Owl opened one bleary eye.
"Plop, dear," said, "why don't you find out some more about the dark?"

Go and ask that old lady in the deck chair."





Plop landed by the old lady with a thump.



"Hello!" he said. "I've come to ask you about the dark. I want to go hunting in the dark and I'm afraid of it."



"How very odd," said the lady.
"Now, I love the dark."



DARK IS KIND.

I can forget that I'm old and I can sit and remember all the good times."

"I haven't much to remember, yet," said Plop. "I'm rather new, you see."

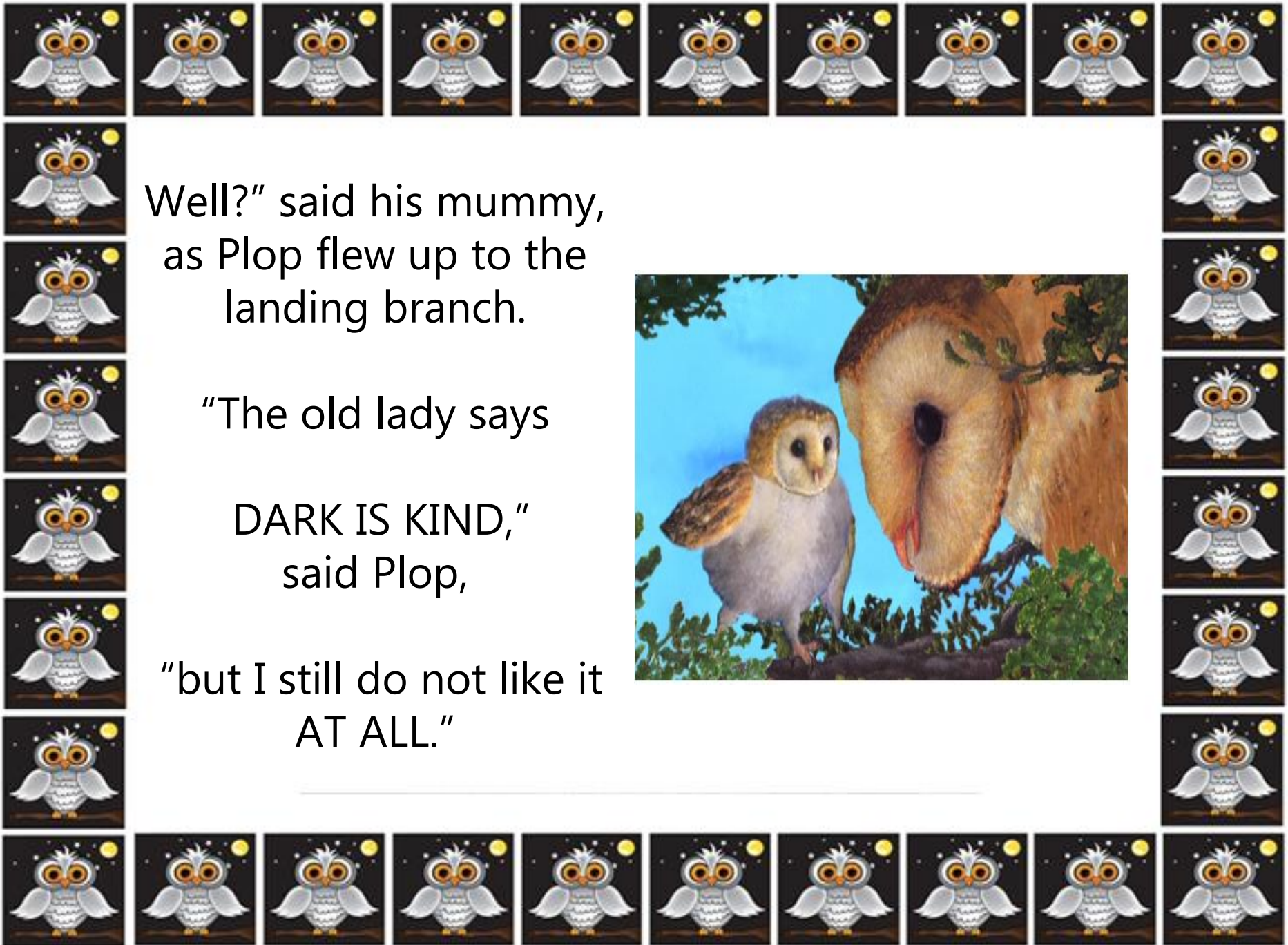


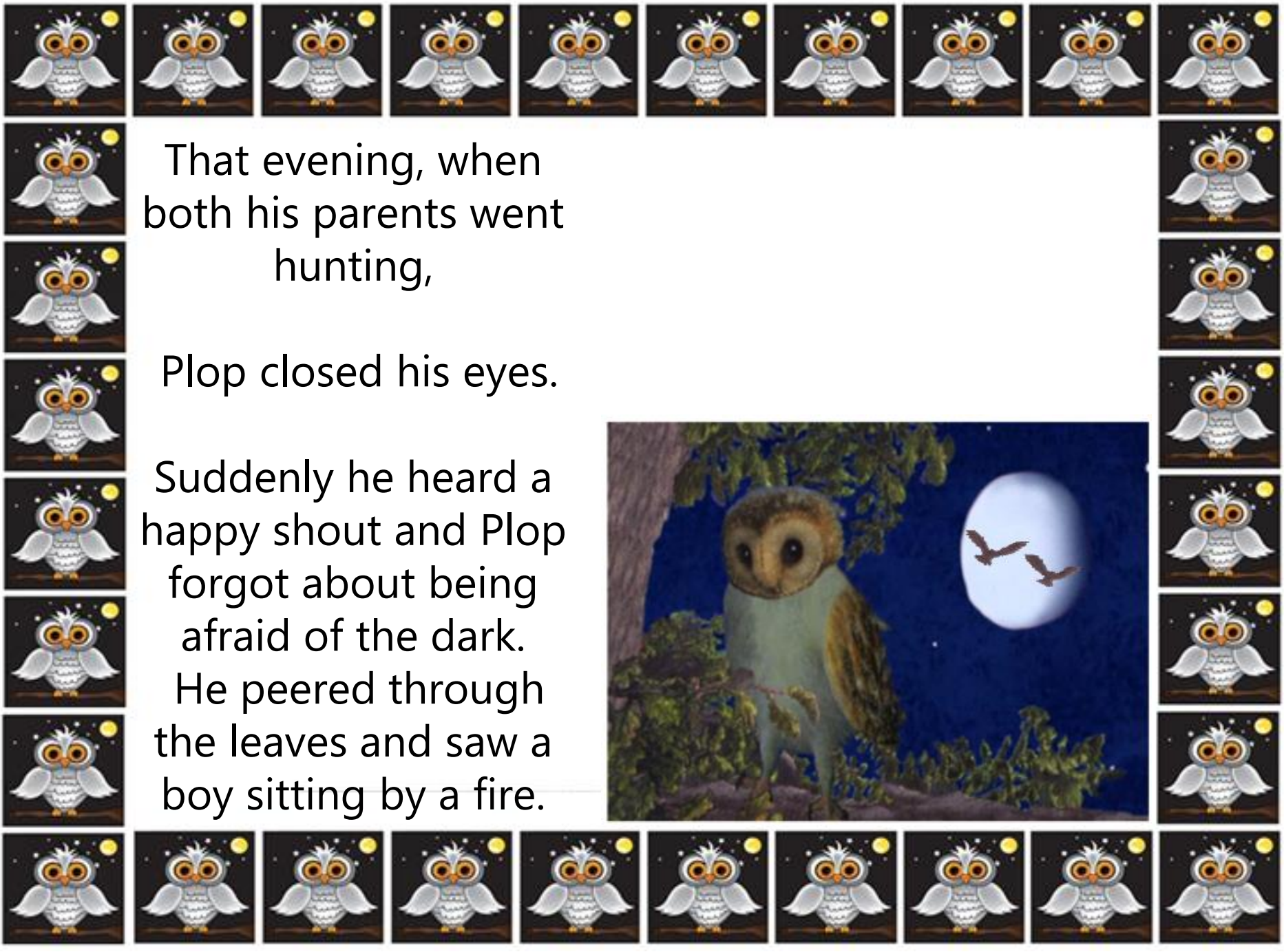
Well?" said his mummy,
as Plop flew up to the
landing branch.

"The old lady says

DARK IS KIND,"
said Plop,

"but I still do not like it
AT ALL."





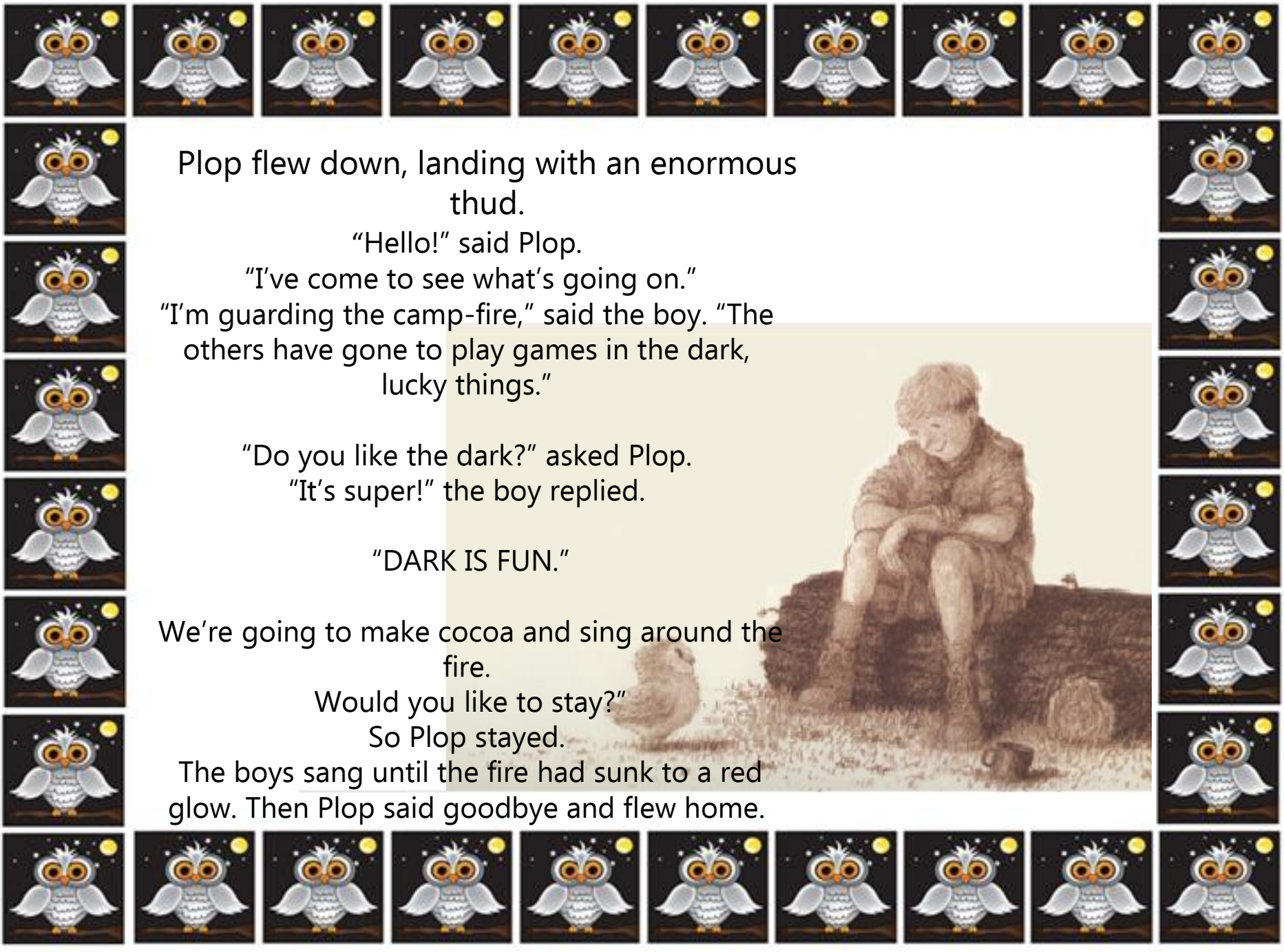
That evening, when
both his parents went
hunting,

Plop closed his eyes.

Suddenly he heard a
happy shout and Plop
forgot about being
afraid of the dark.

He peered through
the leaves and saw a
boy sitting by a fire.





Plop flew down, landing with an enormous thud.

“Hello!” said Plop.

“I’ve come to see what’s going on.”

“I’m guarding the camp-fire,” said the boy. “The others have gone to play games in the dark, lucky things.”

“Do you like the dark?” asked Plop.

“It’s super!” the boy replied.

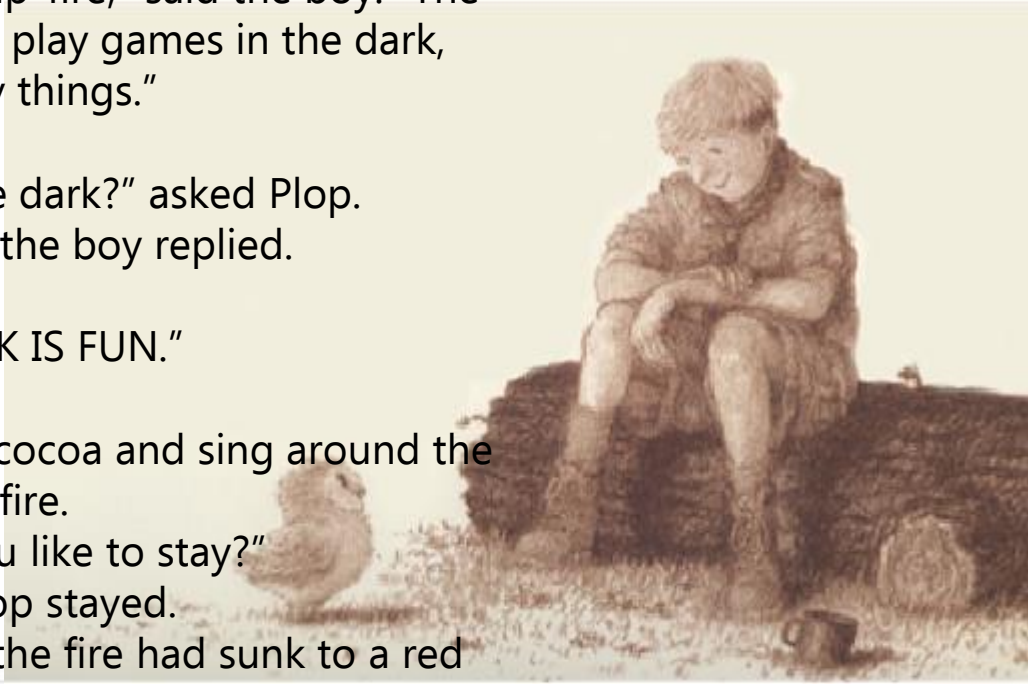
“DARK IS FUN.”

We’re going to make cocoa and sing around the fire.

Would you like to stay?”

So Plop stayed.

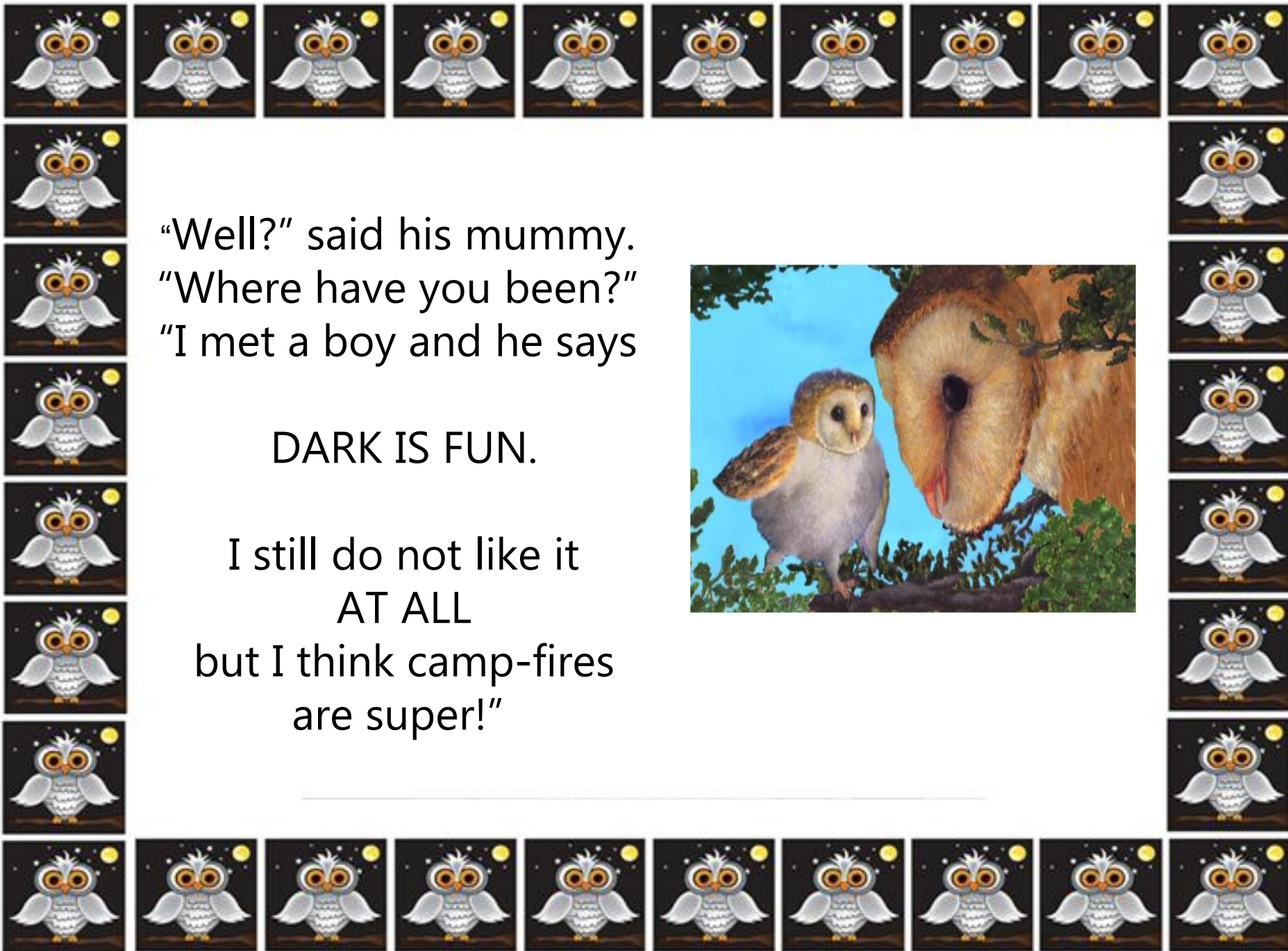
The boys sang until the fire had sunk to a red glow. Then Plop said goodbye and flew home.



“Well?” said his mummy.
“Where have you been?”
“I met a boy and he says

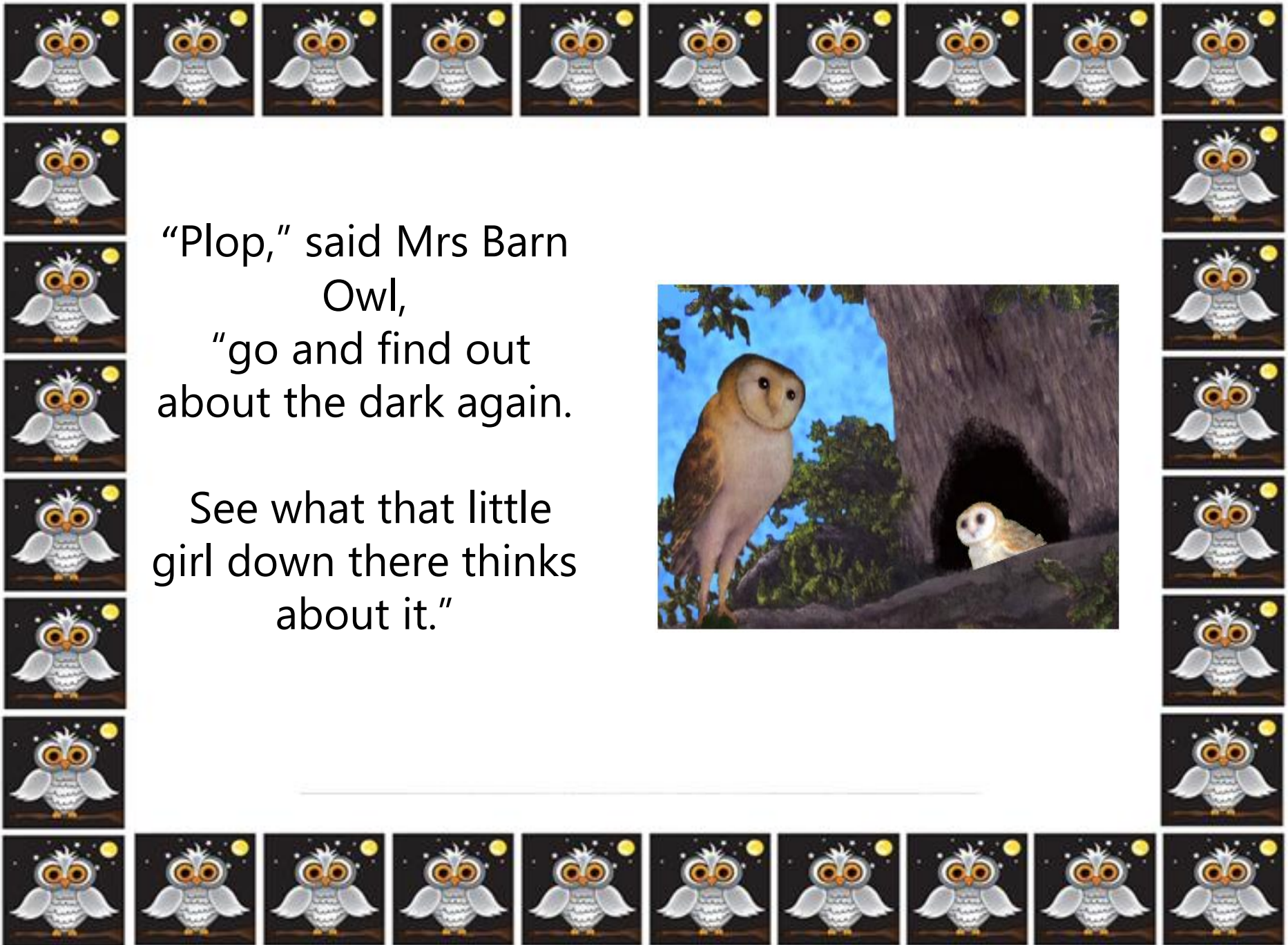
DARK IS FUN.



I still do not like it
AT ALL
but I think camp-fires
are super!”



“Plop,” said Mrs Barn Owl,
“go and find out
about the dark again.”



See what that little
girl down there thinks
about it.”





Plop landed by the little girl with a bounce.
"Hello!" he said. "I've come to ask about the dark. Do you like it?"
"Of course I do!" she replied.

"DARK IS NECESSARY."





Without the dark, Father Christmas wouldn't come. You'd have an empty stocking on Christmas day."

"I don't have a stocking," said Plop.

So the little girl took off her Wellington and gave him her sock.

"Here," she said, "hang it up on Christmas Eve!"



"Oh, thank you!" said Plop and returned to his mummy.



"Well?" said Mrs Barn Owl.
"The little girl says

DARK IS NECESSARY,

because of Father Christmas
coming,"

Plop said.

"I still do not like it
AT ALL

but I am going to hang up
this sock on Christmas Eve."



That night, Plop watched his parents take off
to go hunting again.



Looking through the leaves, he saw a man standing on
the ground below.



So Plop flew down, landing with a gentle bump.

"Heavens!" cried the man. "You startled me."

"Hello!" said Plop.

"What's that you've got there?"

"A telescope," said the man. "For looking at the stars and planets at night."

"I don't like the dark very much," said Plop.

"Really?" said the man.

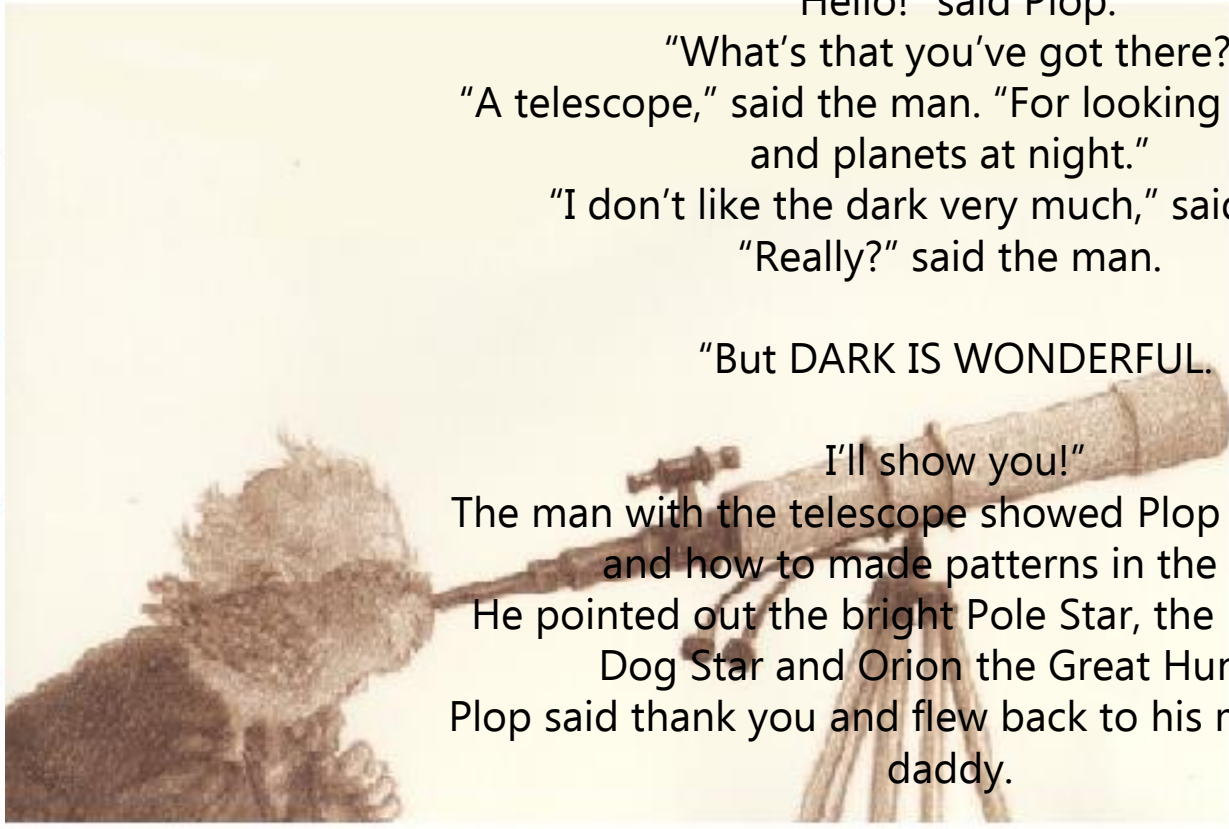
"But DARK IS WONDERFUL.

I'll show you!"

The man with the telescope showed Plop lots of stars and how to make patterns in the sky.

He pointed out the bright Pole Star, the Plough, the Dog Star and Orion the Great Hunter.

Plop said thank you and flew back to his mummy and daddy.



"A man with a telescope showed me
the stars!" Plop told them.



"He says DARK IS WONDERFUL!"



That morning Plop had his supper in bed and then, like a real night bird, he slept right through the day.



When Plop woke up, it was almost dark.

“Now who’s a day bird!” he shouted at the darkness.



Plop looked at his sleepy parents.

He wasn’t going to hang about waiting for them.

He might be missing something.





Plop floated down and landed like a soft white feather.

Under the tree, he saw a big black cat.

"Hello!" said the cat. "I was just exploring. Won't you come with me?"

"I would like to, I think," said Plop, "but I'm afraid of the dark."

"But DARK IS BEAUTIFUL," said the cat.

Come with me and I will show you the night-time world of cats and owls.

Will you come?" "Yes, I will," said Plop.

The cat took Plop up to the roof tops and they looked down over the sleeping town.

"This is my world!" said Plop. "I am a night bird after all!"

"And this is only one sort of night," said the cat. "There are lots of other kinds, all beautiful."

"Thank you for showing me," said Plop. "I must go now and tell my mummy and daddy."

"Good night," said the black cat, "and many, many Good Nights!"

Plop flew straight back to his tree.





Well?" said his mummy.
Plop took a deep breath.

"The small boy said DARK IS EXCITING.

The old lady said DARK IS KIND.

The camp-fire boy said DARK IS FUN.

The little girl said DARK IS NECESSARY.

The man said DARK IS WONDERFUL.

The black cat said DARK IS BEAUTIFUL."

"And what do you think, Plop?" asked his mummy.
Plop looked up at his parents with twinkling eyes.

"I think," he said,

"I think – DARK IS SUPER!"



Then, Plop took off to
go hunting in the
dark,
Mr and Mrs Barn Owl
on each side and Plop
in the middle...

Plop the night bird.

