



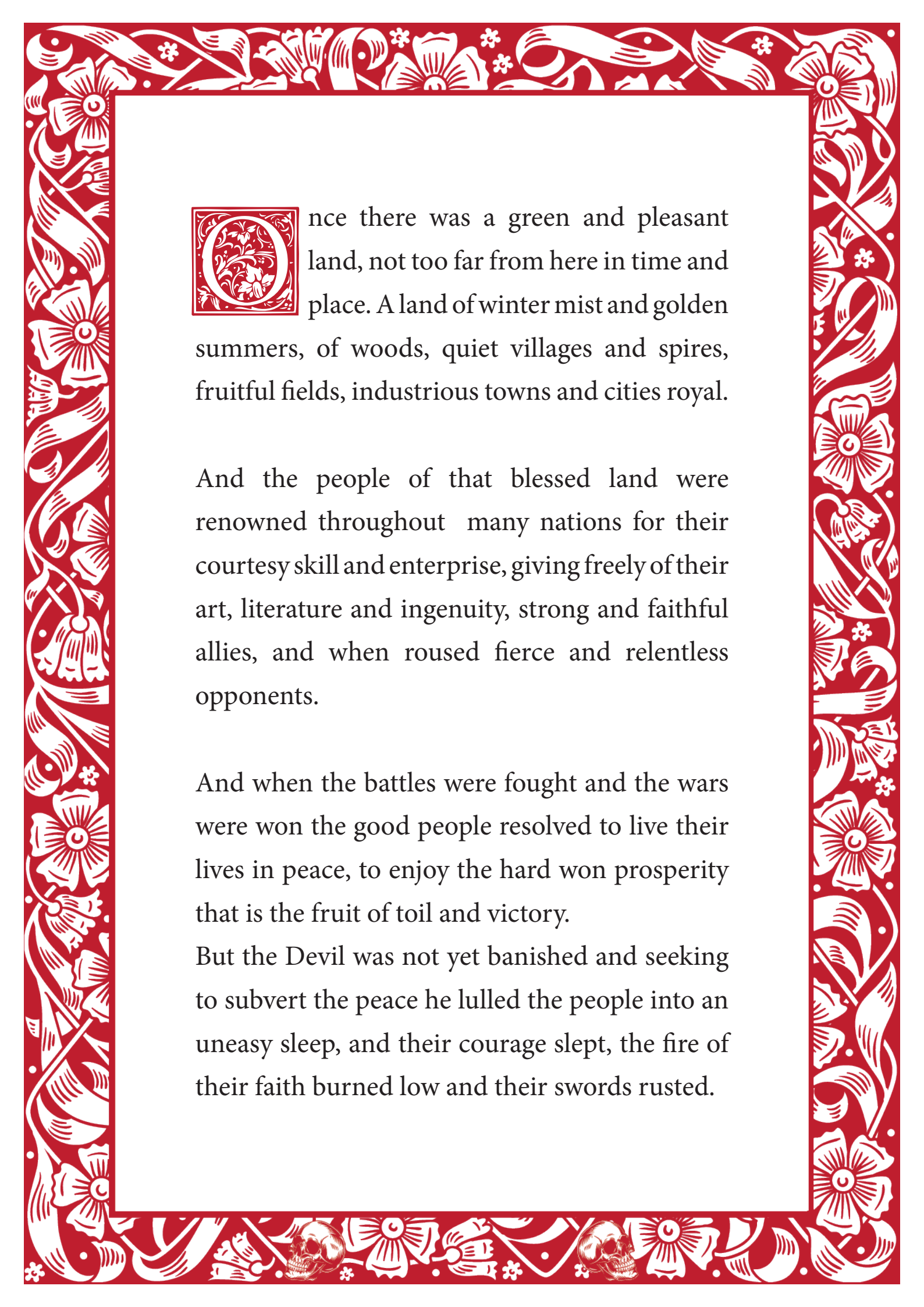
• TALES FROM THE BYGONE PRESENT •

THE TOWER OF IVORY

• THE SEDUCTION OF LITTLE LORD STARMER •



• BY WILLIAM GREY •

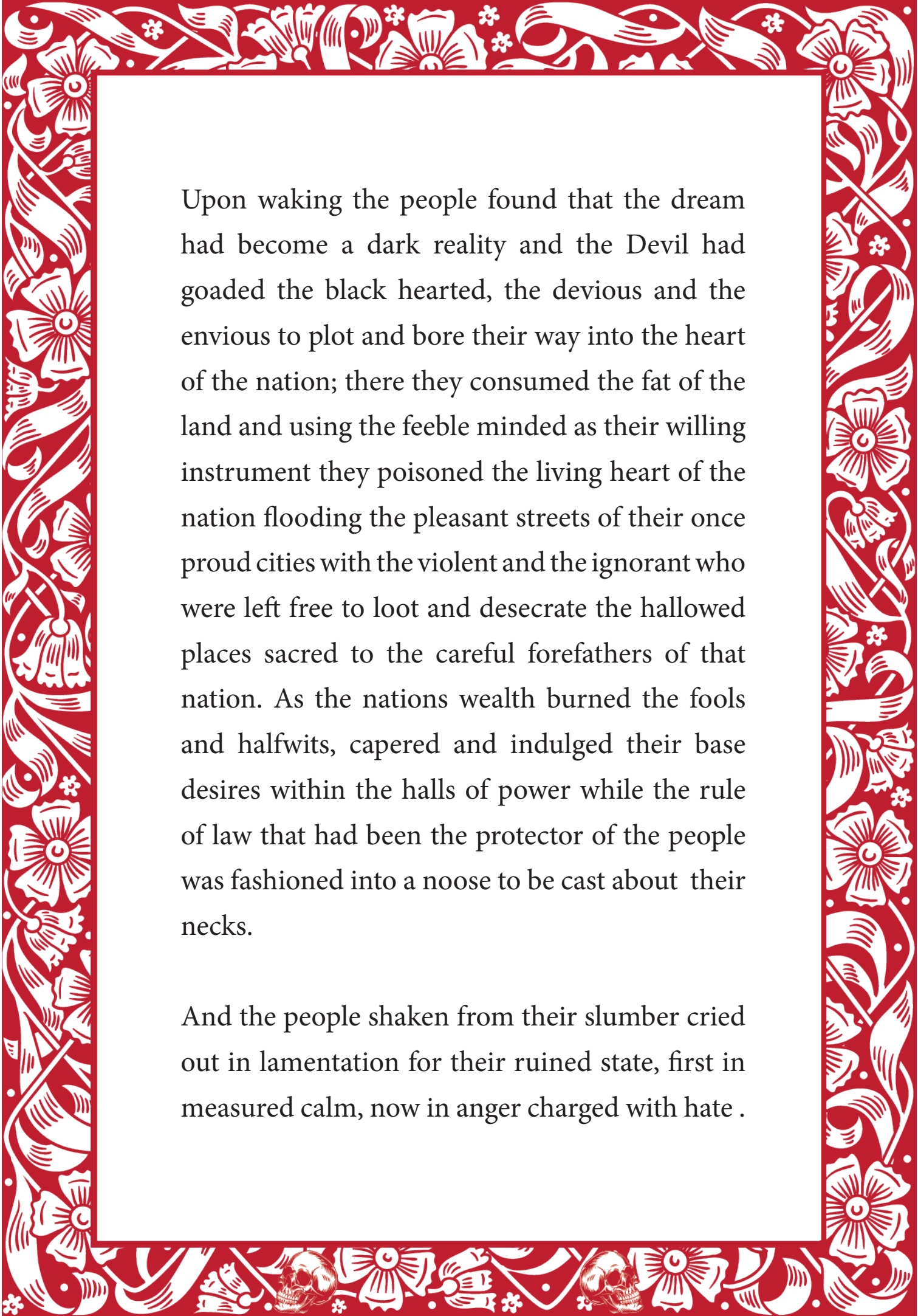


Once there was a green and pleasant land, not too far from here in time and place. A land of winter mist and golden summers, of woods, quiet villages and spires, fruitful fields, industrious towns and cities royal.

And the people of that blessed land were renowned throughout many nations for their courtesy skill and enterprise, giving freely of their art, literature and ingenuity, strong and faithful allies, and when roused fierce and relentless opponents.

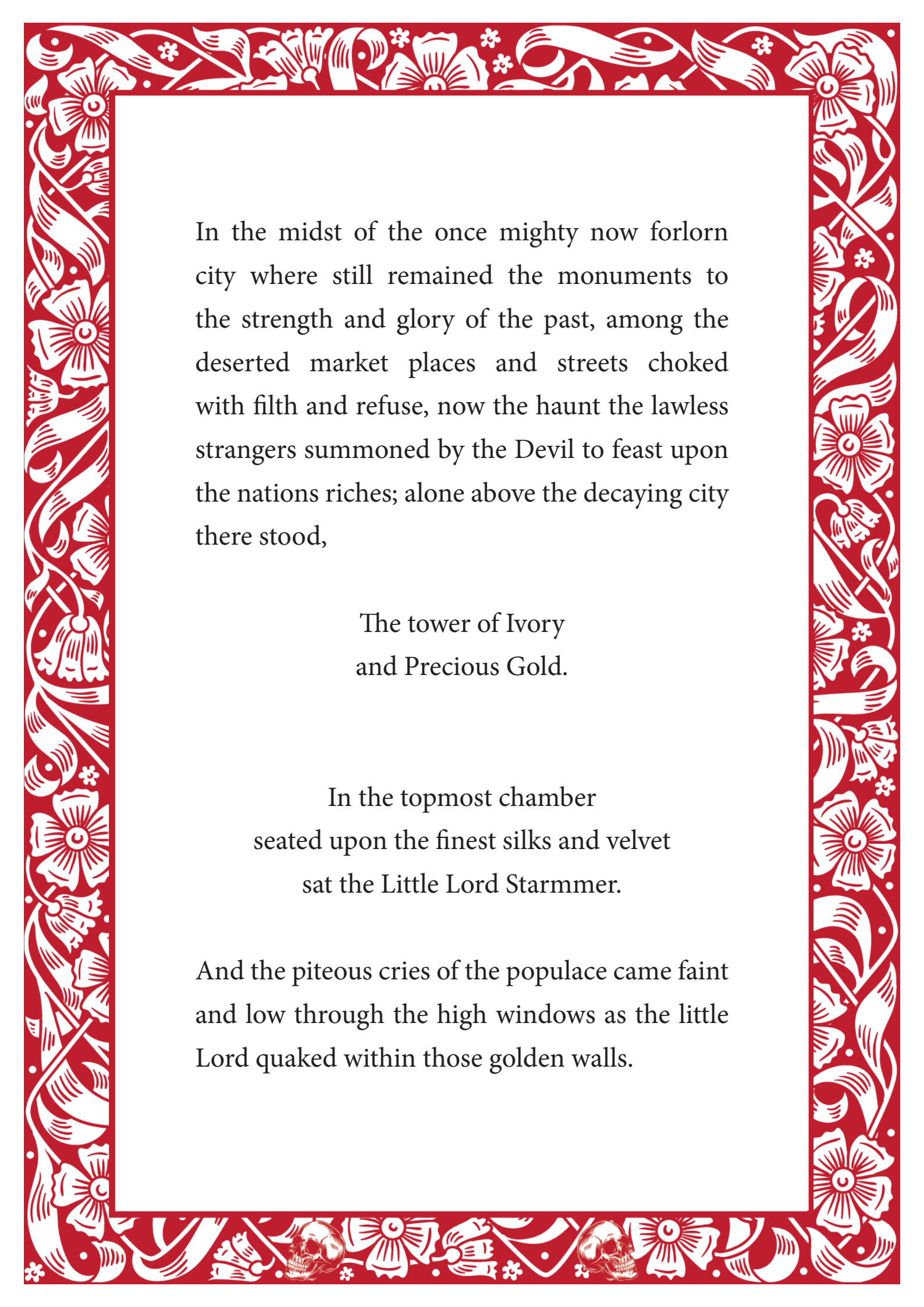
And when the battles were fought and the wars were won the good people resolved to live their lives in peace, to enjoy the hard won prosperity that is the fruit of toil and victory.

But the Devil was not yet banished and seeking to subvert the peace he lulled the people into an uneasy sleep, and their courage slept, the fire of their faith burned low and their swords rusted.



Upon waking the people found that the dream had become a dark reality and the Devil had goaded the black hearted, the devious and the envious to plot and bore their way into the heart of the nation; there they consumed the fat of the land and using the feeble minded as their willing instrument they poisoned the living heart of the nation flooding the pleasant streets of their once proud cities with the violent and the ignorant who were left free to loot and desecrate the hallowed places sacred to the careful forefathers of that nation. As the nations wealth burned the fools and halfwits, capered and indulged their base desires within the halls of power while the rule of law that had been the protector of the people was fashioned into a noose to be cast about their necks.

And the people shaken from their slumber cried out in lamentation for their ruined state, first in measured calm, now in anger charged with hate .

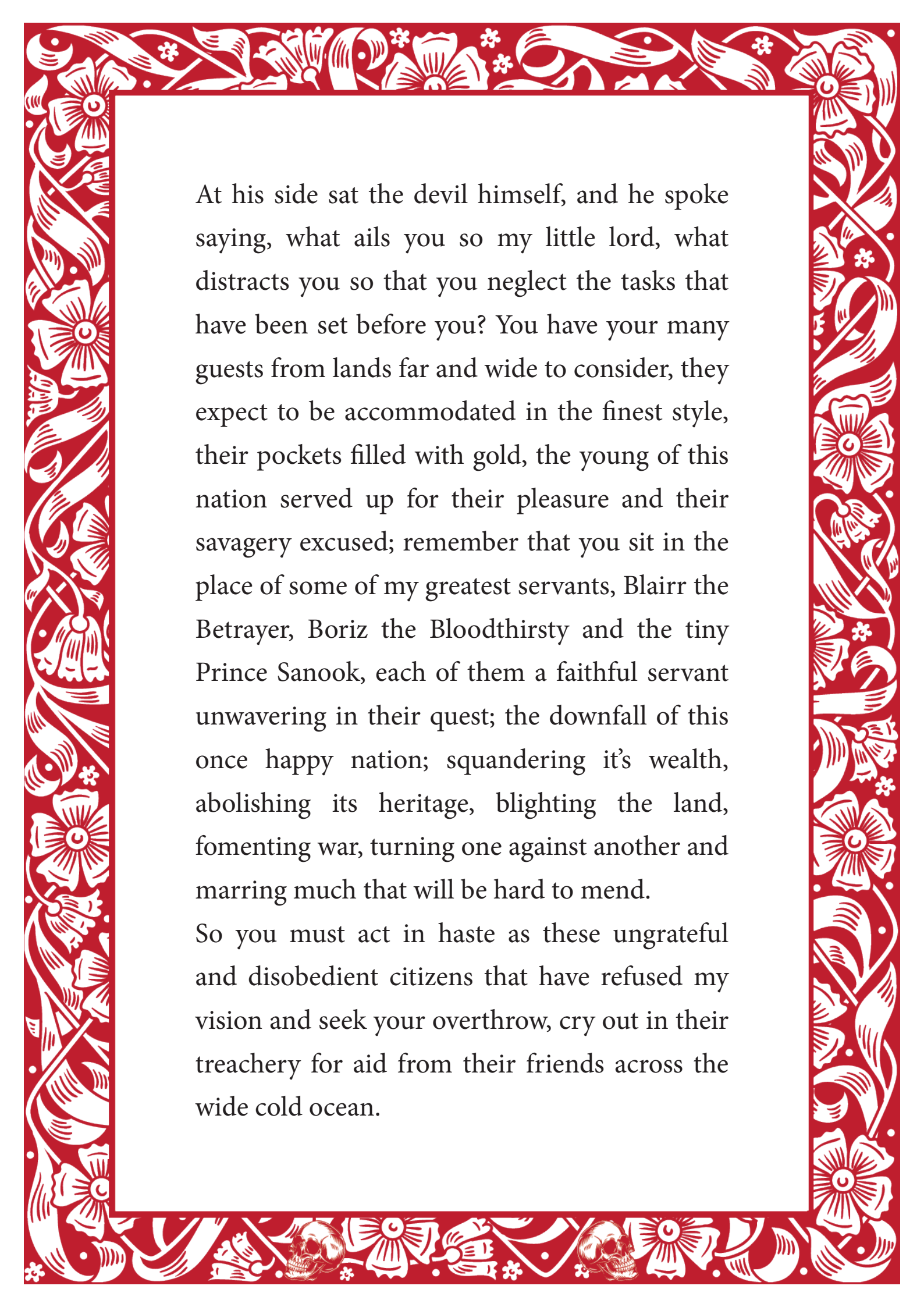


In the midst of the once mighty now forlorn
city where still remained the monuments to
the strength and glory of the past, among the
deserted market places and streets choked
with filth and refuse, now the haunt the lawless
strangers summoned by the Devil to feast upon
the nations riches; alone above the decaying city
there stood,

The tower of Ivory
and Precious Gold.

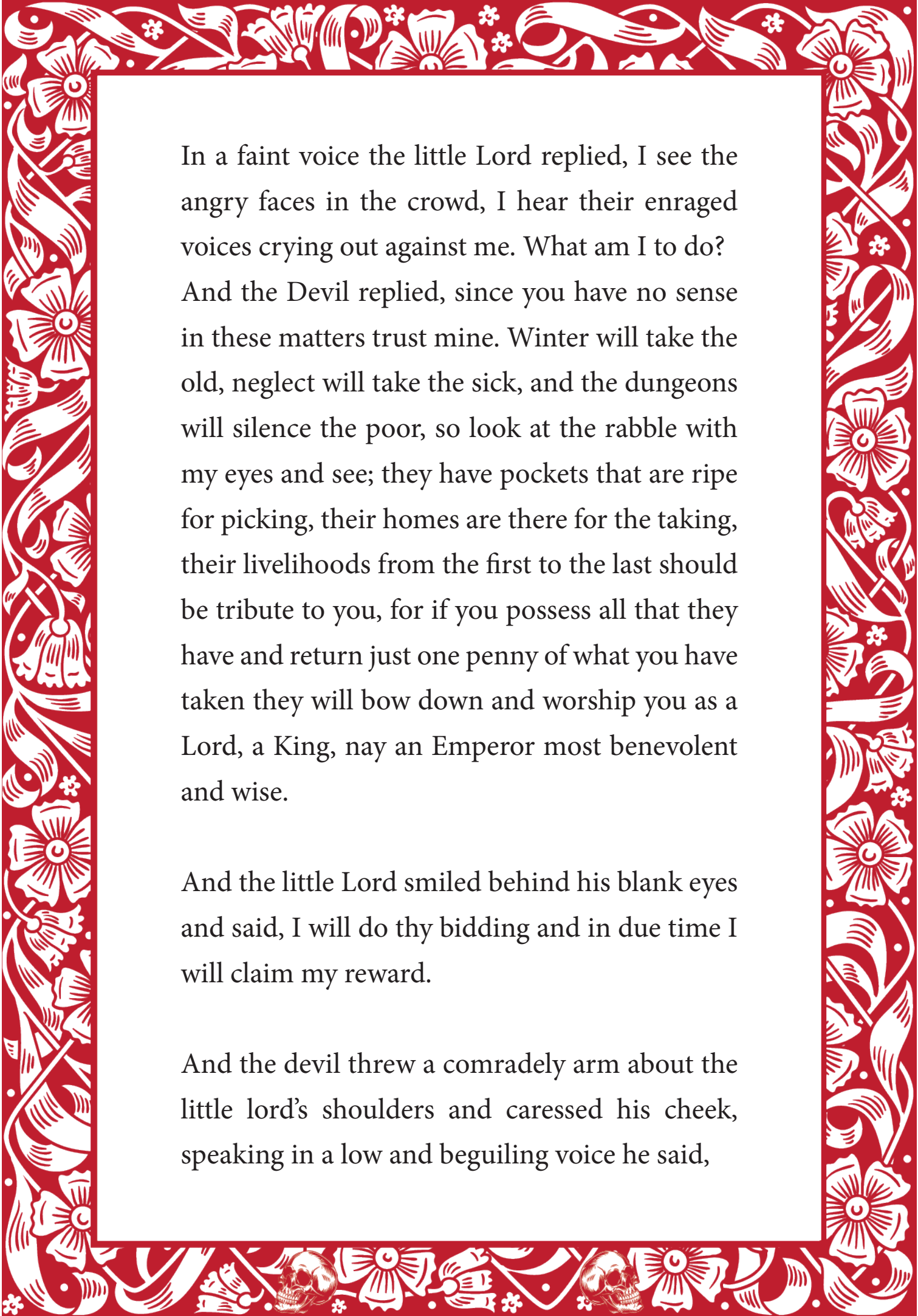
In the topmost chamber
seated upon the finest silks and velvet
sat the Little Lord Starmmer.

And the piteous cries of the populace came faint
and low through the high windows as the little
Lord quaked within those golden walls.



At his side sat the devil himself, and he spoke saying, what ails you so my little lord, what distracts you so that you neglect the tasks that have been set before you? You have your many guests from lands far and wide to consider, they expect to be accommodated in the finest style, their pockets filled with gold, the young of this nation served up for their pleasure and their savagery excused; remember that you sit in the place of some of my greatest servants, Blairr the Betrayer, Boriz the Bloodthirsty and the tiny Prince Sanook, each of them a faithful servant unwavering in their quest; the downfall of this once happy nation; squandering it's wealth, abolishing its heritage, blighting the land, fomenting war, turning one against another and marring much that will be hard to mend.

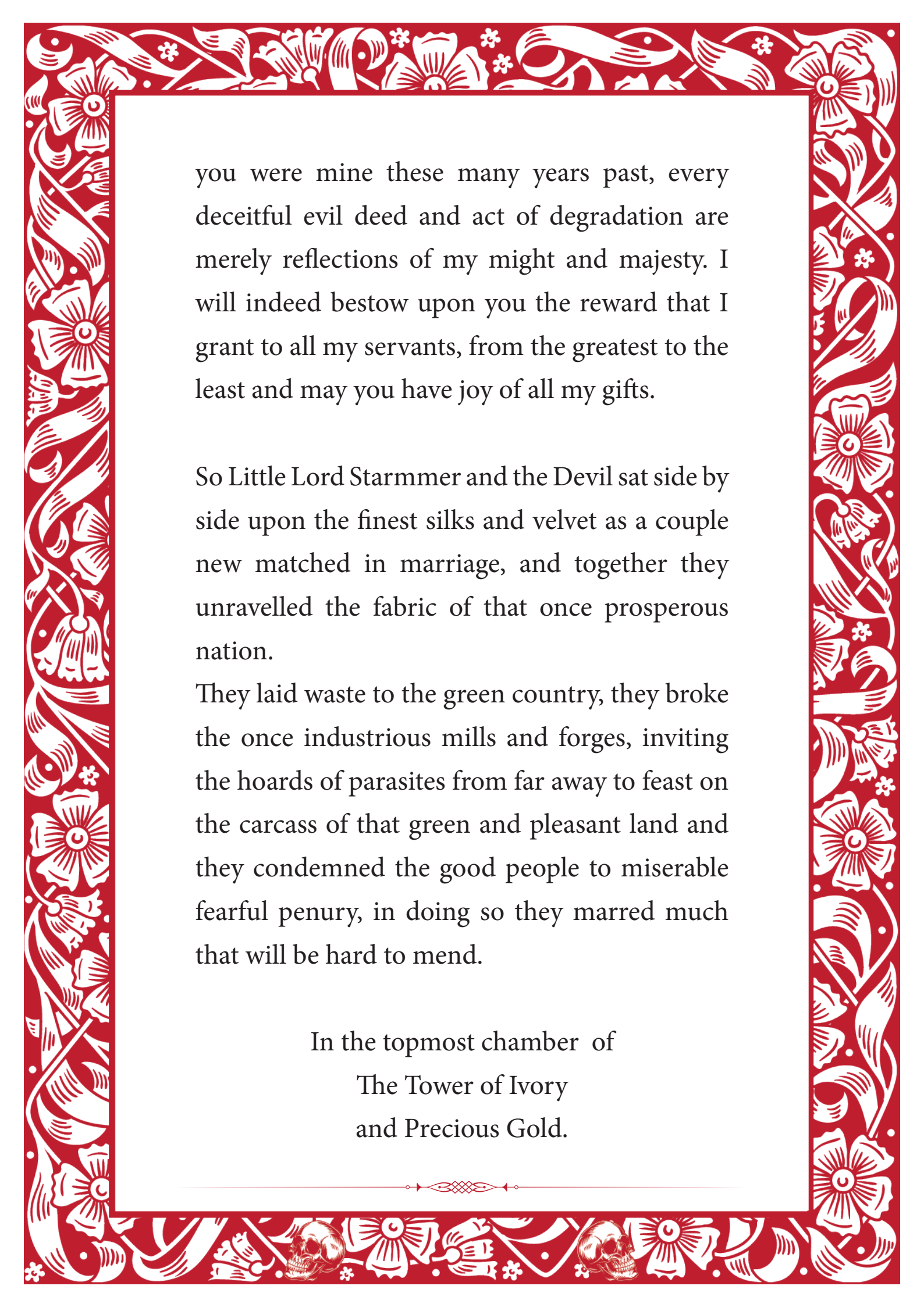
So you must act in haste as these ungrateful and disobedient citizens that have refused my vision and seek your overthrow, cry out in their treachery for aid from their friends across the wide cold ocean.



In a faint voice the little Lord replied, I see the angry faces in the crowd, I hear their enraged voices crying out against me. What am I to do? And the Devil replied, since you have no sense in these matters trust mine. Winter will take the old, neglect will take the sick, and the dungeons will silence the poor, so look at the rabble with my eyes and see; they have pockets that are ripe for picking, their homes are there for the taking, their livelihoods from the first to the last should be tribute to you, for if you possess all that they have and return just one penny of what you have taken they will bow down and worship you as a Lord, a King, nay an Emperor most benevolent and wise.

And the little Lord smiled behind his blank eyes and said, I will do thy bidding and in due time I will claim my reward.

And the devil threw a comradely arm about the little lord's shoulders and caressed his cheek, speaking in a low and beguiling voice he said,




you were mine these many years past, every deceitful evil deed and act of degradation are merely reflections of my might and majesty. I will indeed bestow upon you the reward that I grant to all my servants, from the greatest to the least and may you have joy of all my gifts.

So Little Lord Starmmer and the Devil sat side by side upon the finest silks and velvet as a couple new matched in marriage, and together they unravelled the fabric of that once prosperous nation.

They laid waste to the green country, they broke the once industrious mills and forges, inviting the hoards of parasites from far away to feast on the carcass of that green and pleasant land and they condemned the good people to miserable fearful penury, in doing so they marred much that will be hard to mend.

In the topmost chamber of
The Tower of Ivory
and Precious Gold.



ONE NATION IN CHRIST

THE TOWER OF IVORY



BY WILLIAM GREY



Written and illustrated by William Grey.
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