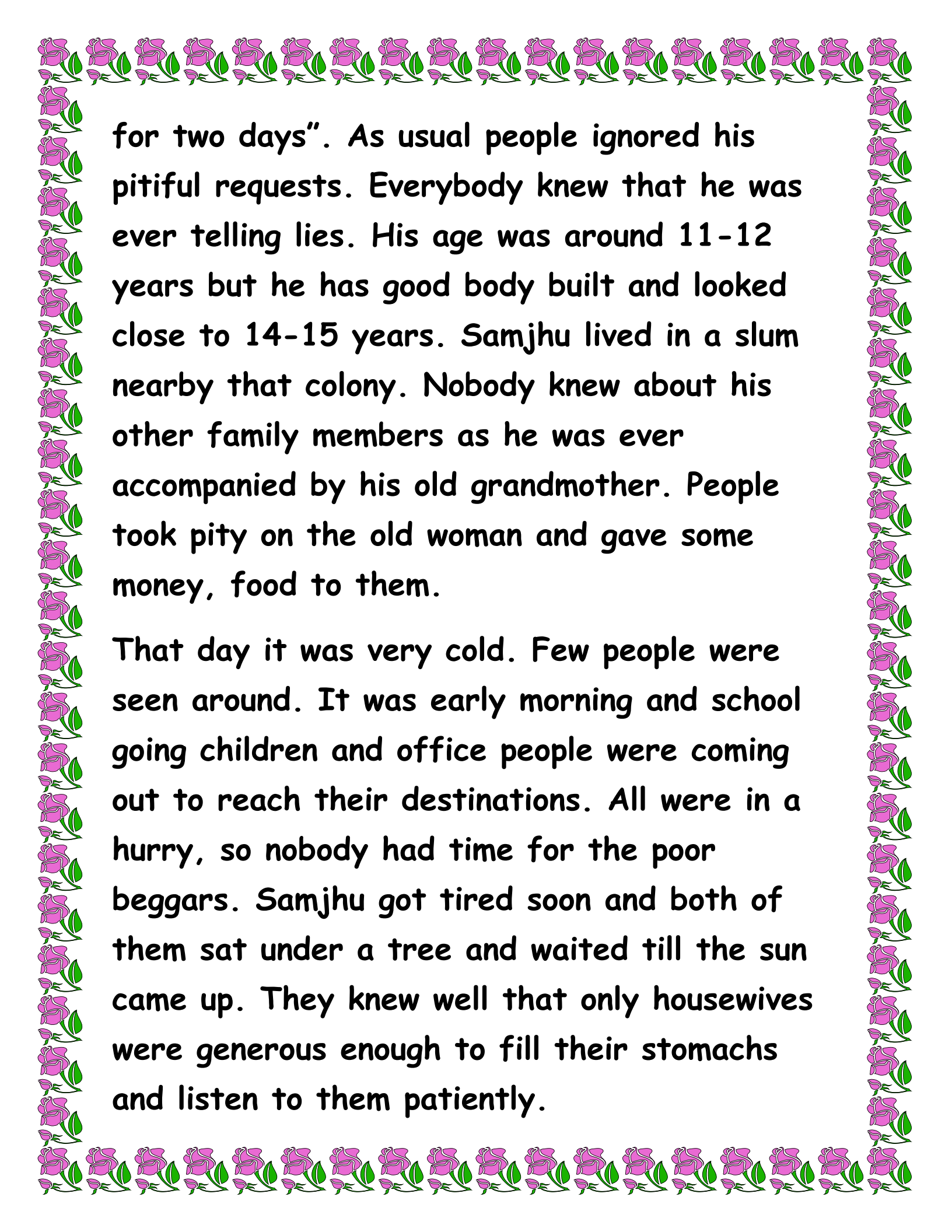


Poverty is Curse



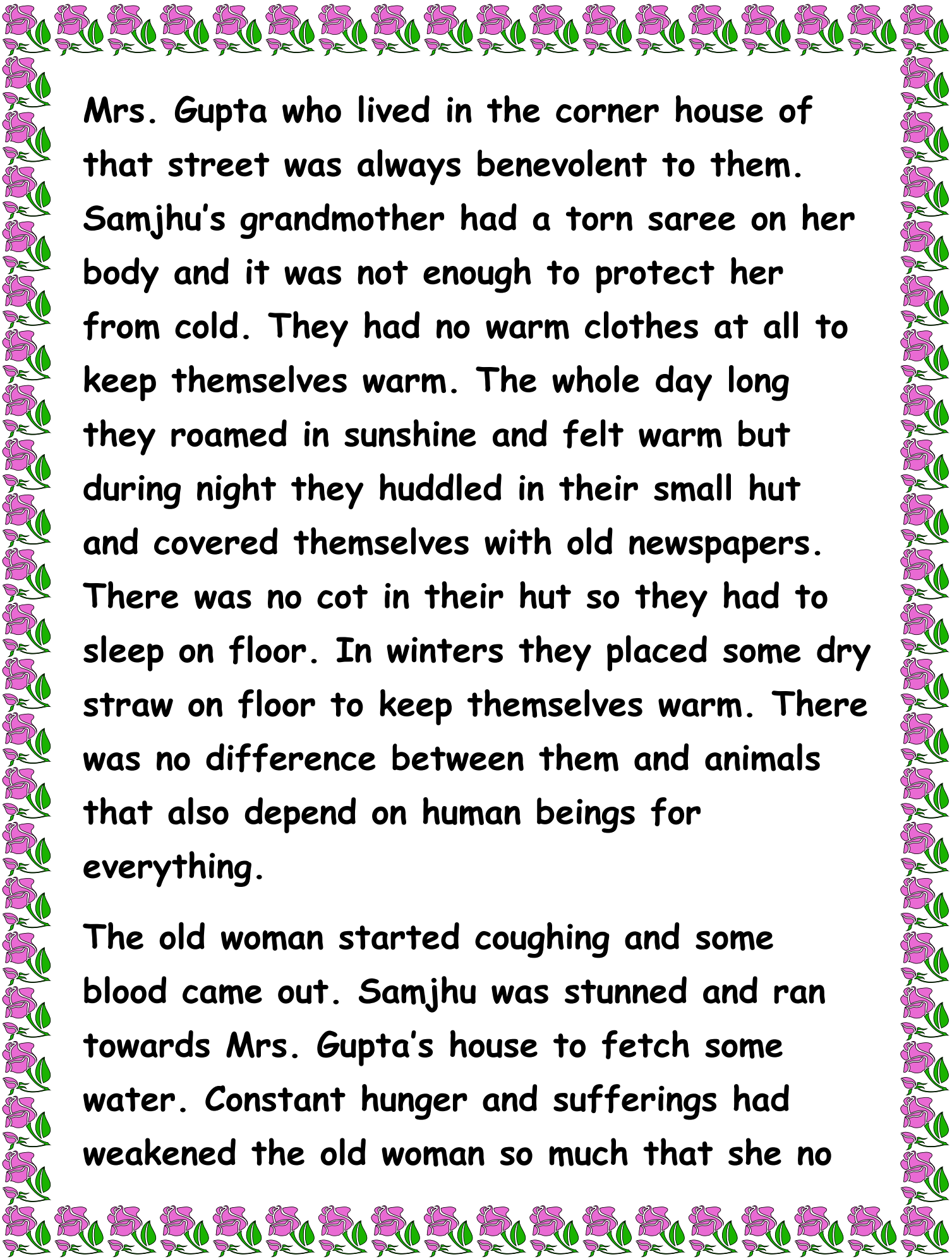
Samjhu was holding hand of his grandmother and going on his first round of begging. He was trying to attract attention of passerby.

"Babuji, please give me some money. My old and sick grandmother has not eaten anything



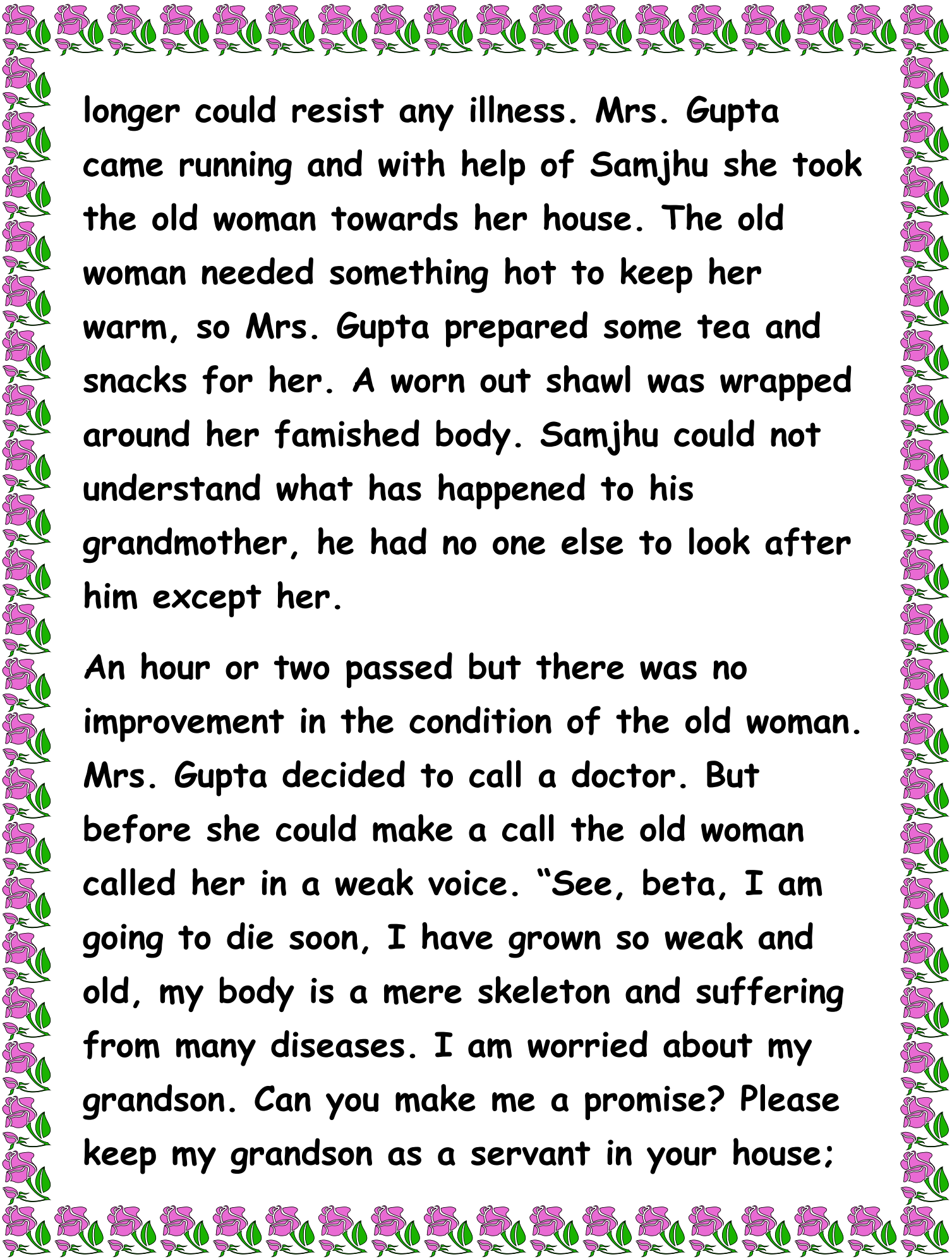
for two days". As usual people ignored his pitiful requests. Everybody knew that he was ever telling lies. His age was around 11-12 years but he has good body built and looked close to 14-15 years. Samjhu lived in a slum nearby that colony. Nobody knew about his other family members as he was ever accompanied by his old grandmother. People took pity on the old woman and gave some money, food to them.

That day it was very cold. Few people were seen around. It was early morning and school going children and office people were coming out to reach their destinations. All were in a hurry, so nobody had time for the poor beggars. Samjhu got tired soon and both of them sat under a tree and waited till the sun came up. They knew well that only housewives were generous enough to fill their stomachs and listen to them patiently.



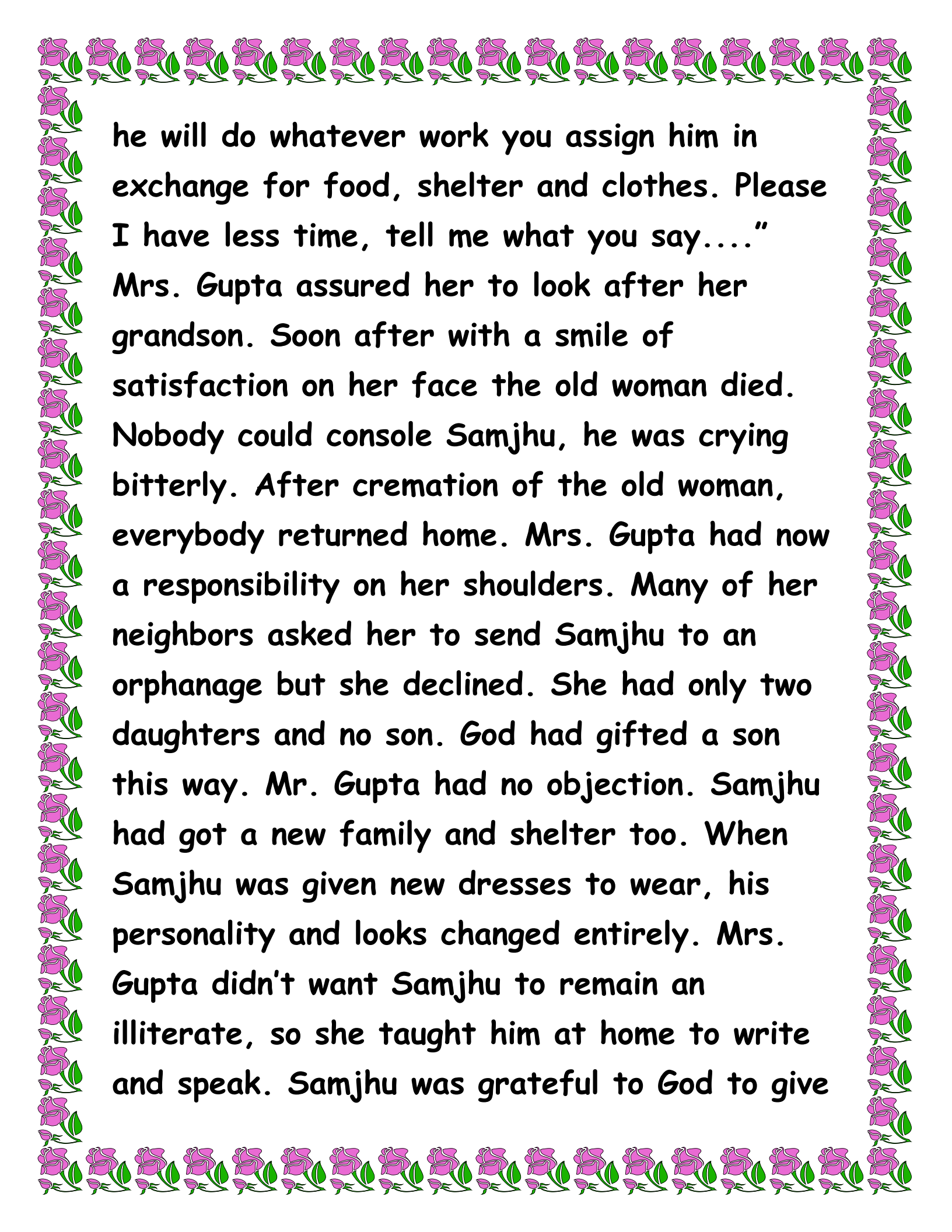
Mrs. Gupta who lived in the corner house of that street was always benevolent to them. Samjhu's grandmother had a torn saree on her body and it was not enough to protect her from cold. They had no warm clothes at all to keep themselves warm. The whole day long they roamed in sunshine and felt warm but during night they huddled in their small hut and covered themselves with old newspapers. There was no cot in their hut so they had to sleep on floor. In winters they placed some dry straw on floor to keep themselves warm. There was no difference between them and animals that also depend on human beings for everything.

The old woman started coughing and some blood came out. Samjhu was stunned and ran towards Mrs. Gupta's house to fetch some water. Constant hunger and sufferings had weakened the old woman so much that she no

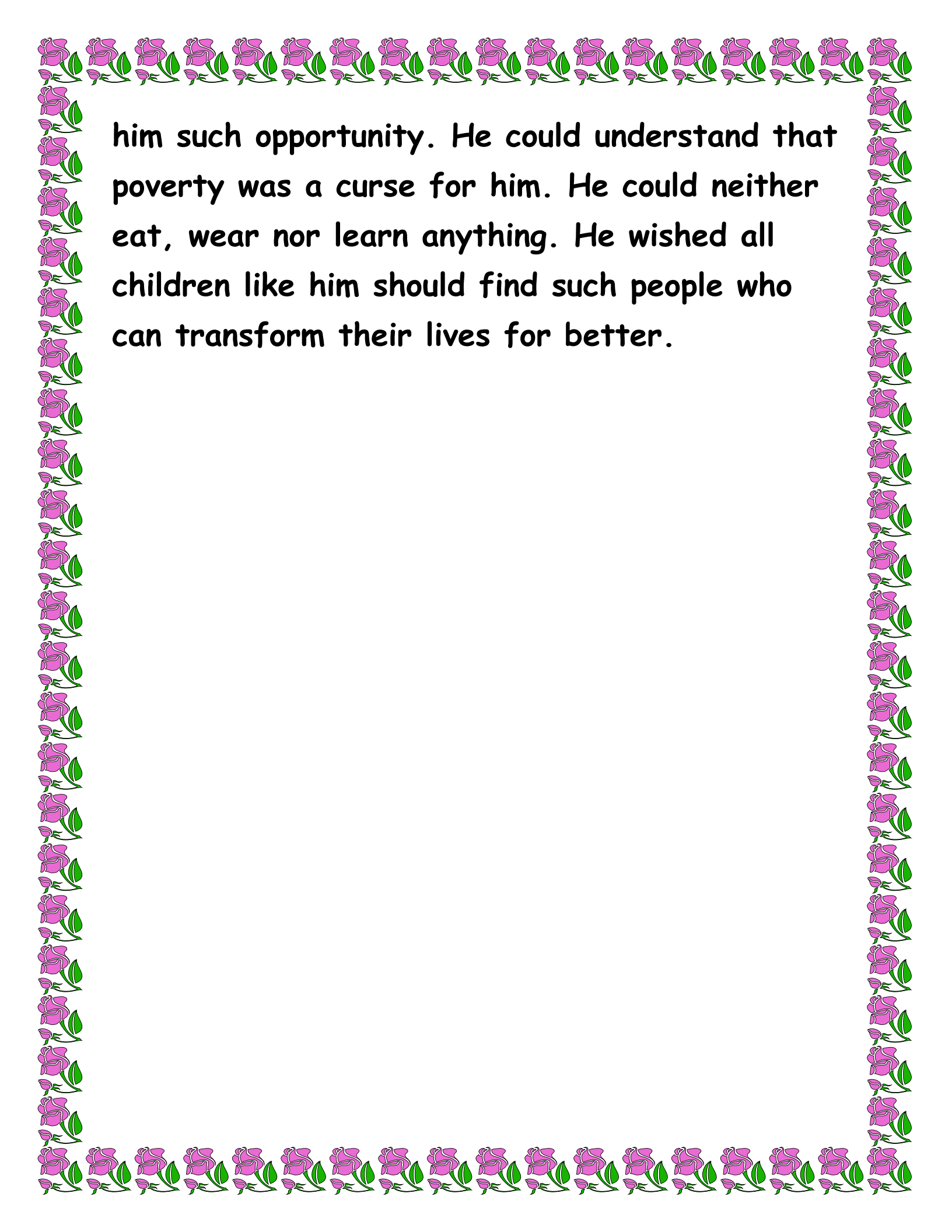


longer could resist any illness. Mrs. Gupta came running and with help of Samjhu she took the old woman towards her house. The old woman needed something hot to keep her warm, so Mrs. Gupta prepared some tea and snacks for her. A worn out shawl was wrapped around her famished body. Samjhu could not understand what has happened to his grandmother, he had no one else to look after him except her.

An hour or two passed but there was no improvement in the condition of the old woman. Mrs. Gupta decided to call a doctor. But before she could make a call the old woman called her in a weak voice. "See, beta, I am going to die soon, I have grown so weak and old, my body is a mere skeleton and suffering from many diseases. I am worried about my grandson. Can you make me a promise? Please keep my grandson as a servant in your house;



he will do whatever work you assign him in exchange for food, shelter and clothes. Please I have less time, tell me what you say....” Mrs. Gupta assured her to look after her grandson. Soon after with a smile of satisfaction on her face the old woman died. Nobody could console Samjhu, he was crying bitterly. After cremation of the old woman, everybody returned home. Mrs. Gupta had now a responsibility on her shoulders. Many of her neighbors asked her to send Samjhu to an orphanage but she declined. She had only two daughters and no son. God had gifted a son this way. Mr. Gupta had no objection. Samjhu had got a new family and shelter too. When Samjhu was given new dresses to wear, his personality and looks changed entirely. Mrs. Gupta didn't want Samjhu to remain an illiterate, so she taught him at home to write and speak. Samjhu was grateful to God to give



him such opportunity. He could understand that poverty was a curse for him. He could neither eat, wear nor learn anything. He wished all children like him should find such people who can transform their lives for better.