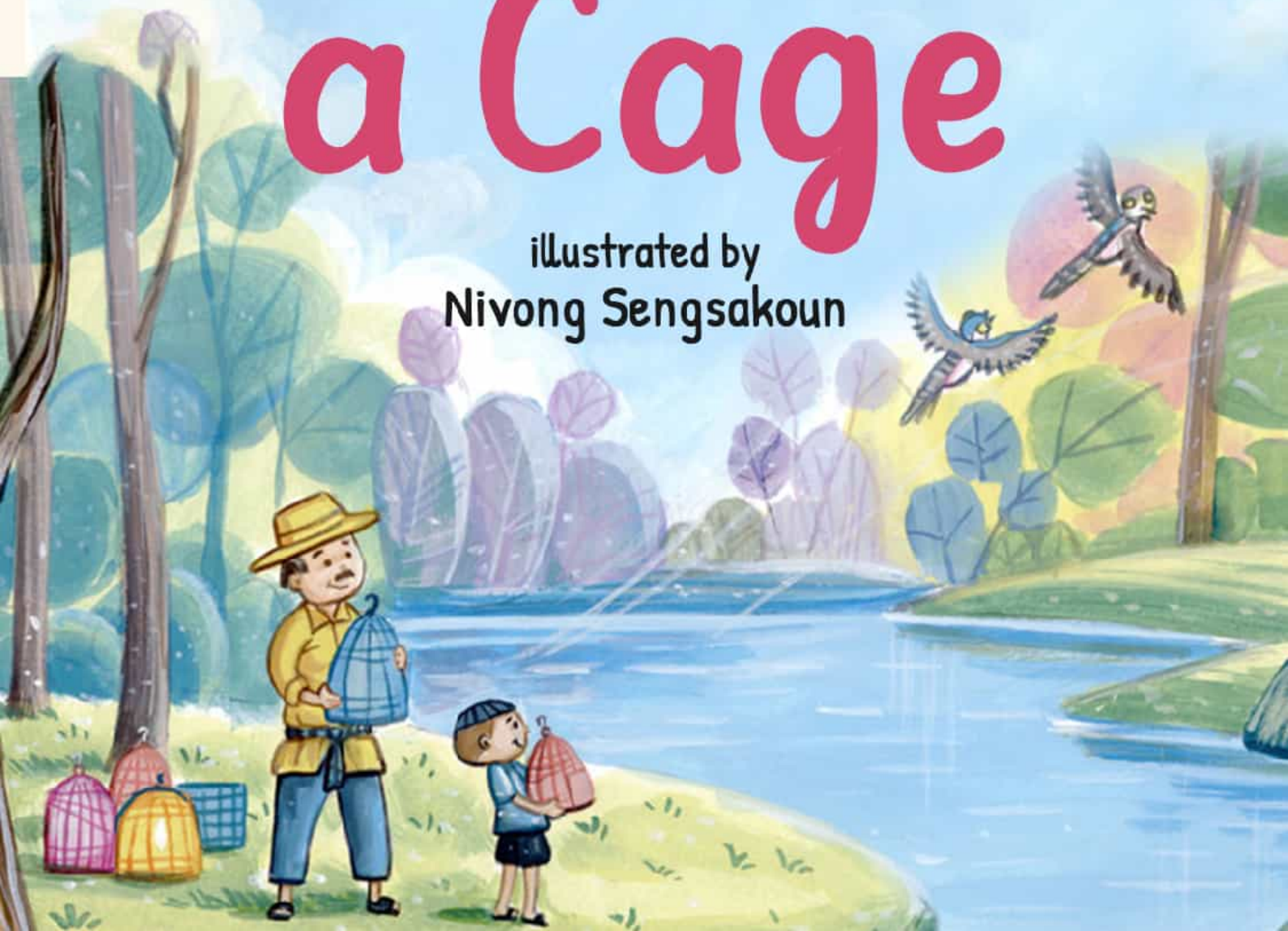
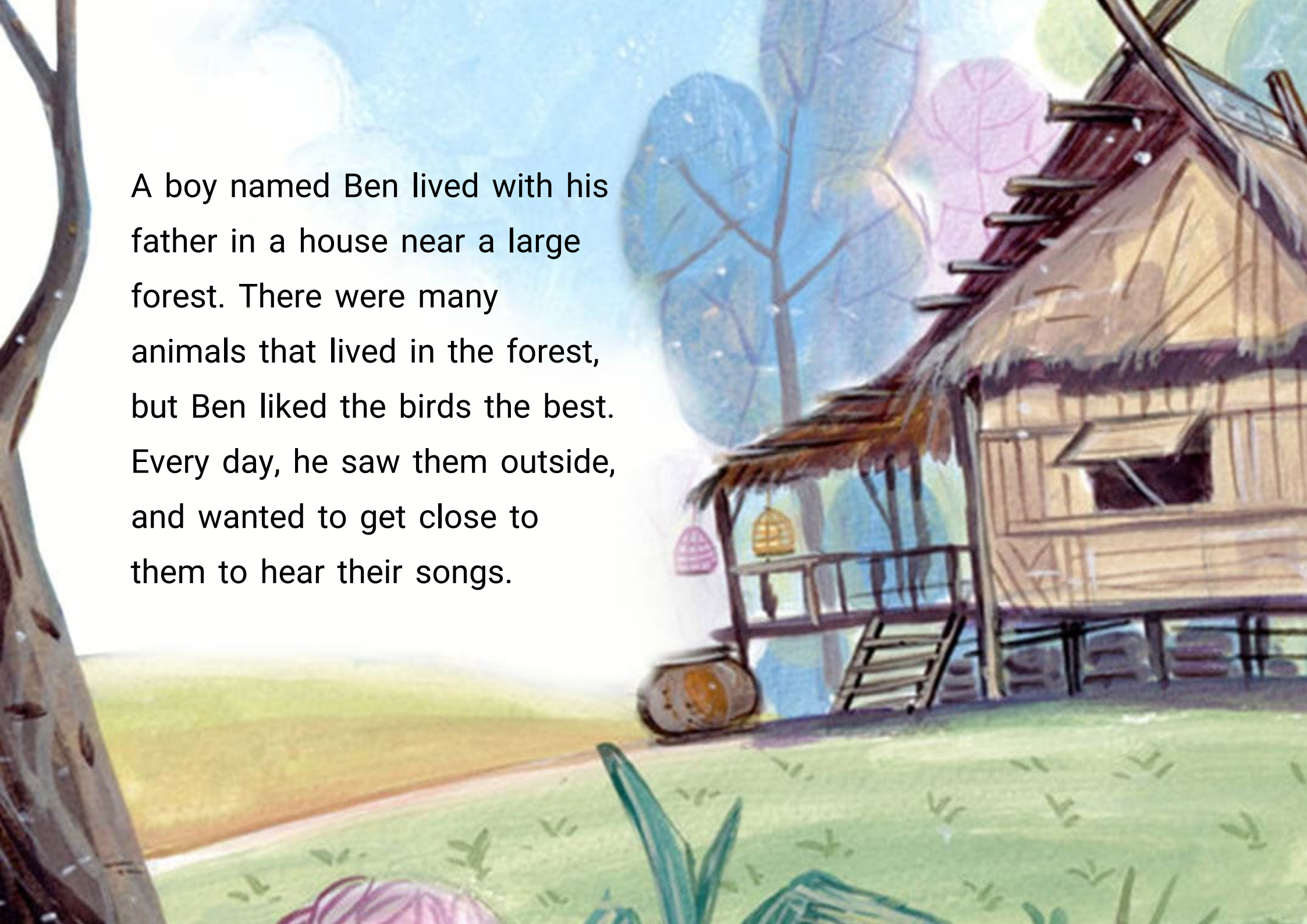


Bird in a Cage

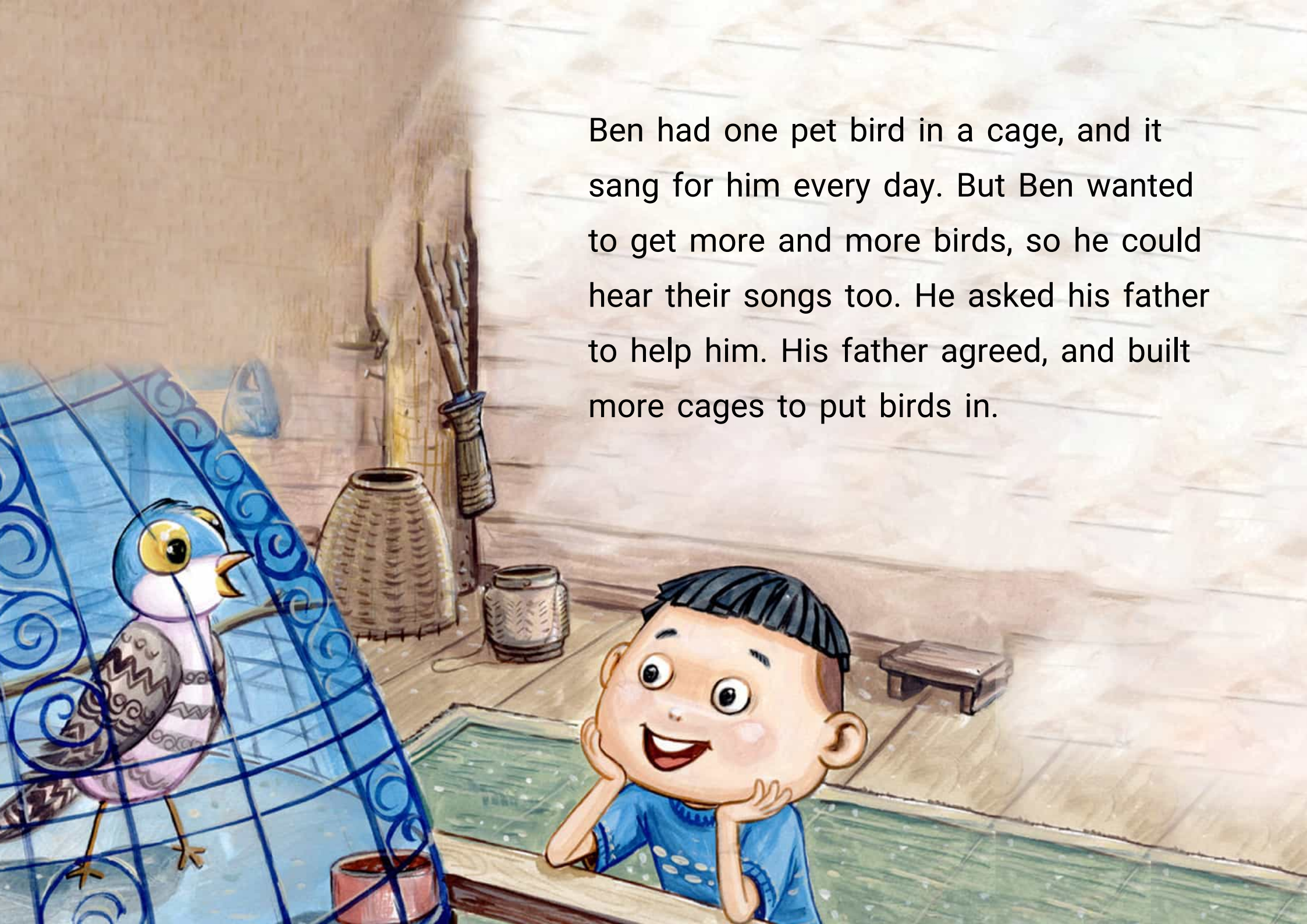
illustrated by
Nivong Sengsakoun



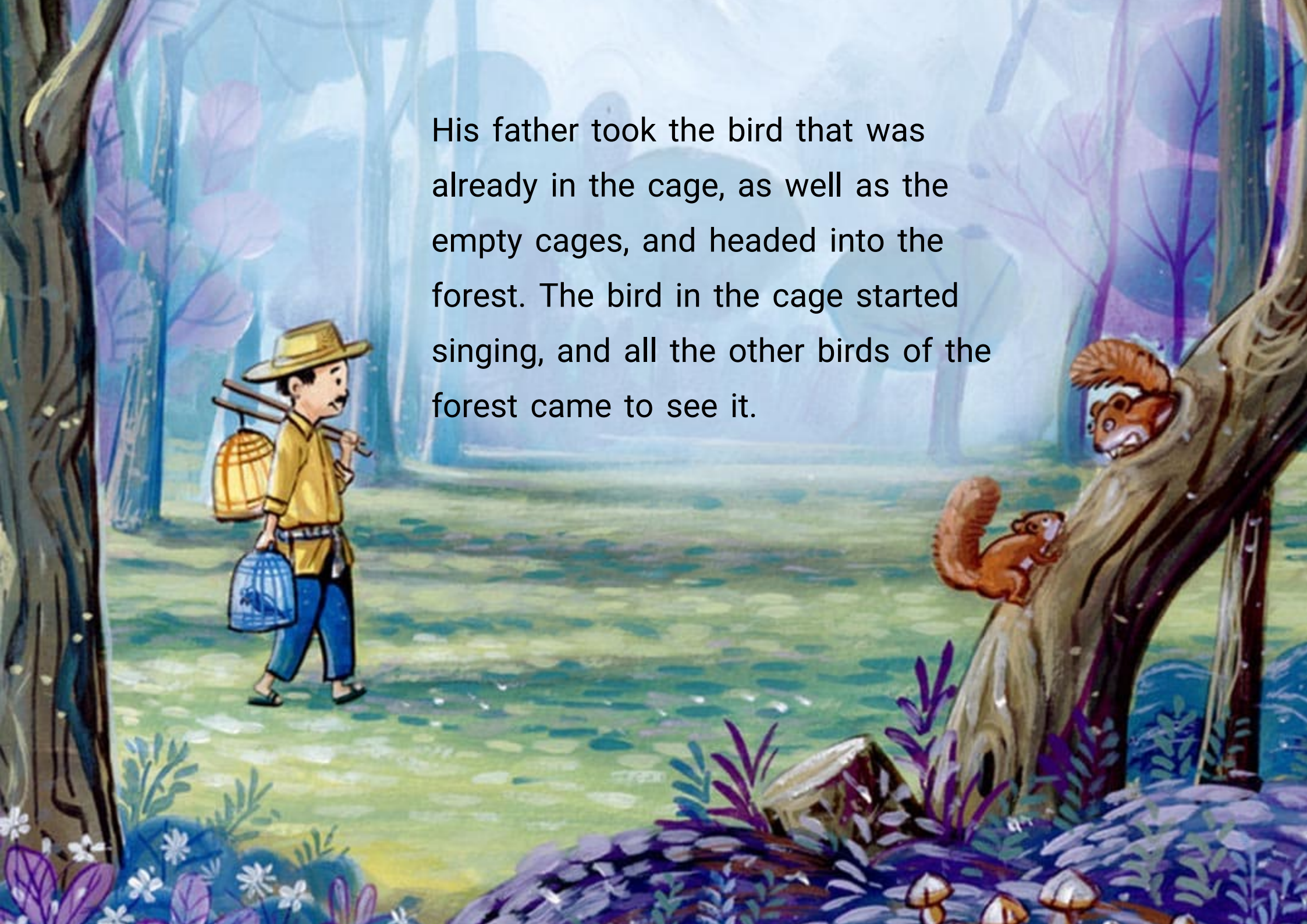
A boy named Ben lived with his father in a house near a large forest. There were many animals that lived in the forest, but Ben liked the birds the best. Every day, he saw them outside, and wanted to get close to them to hear their songs.

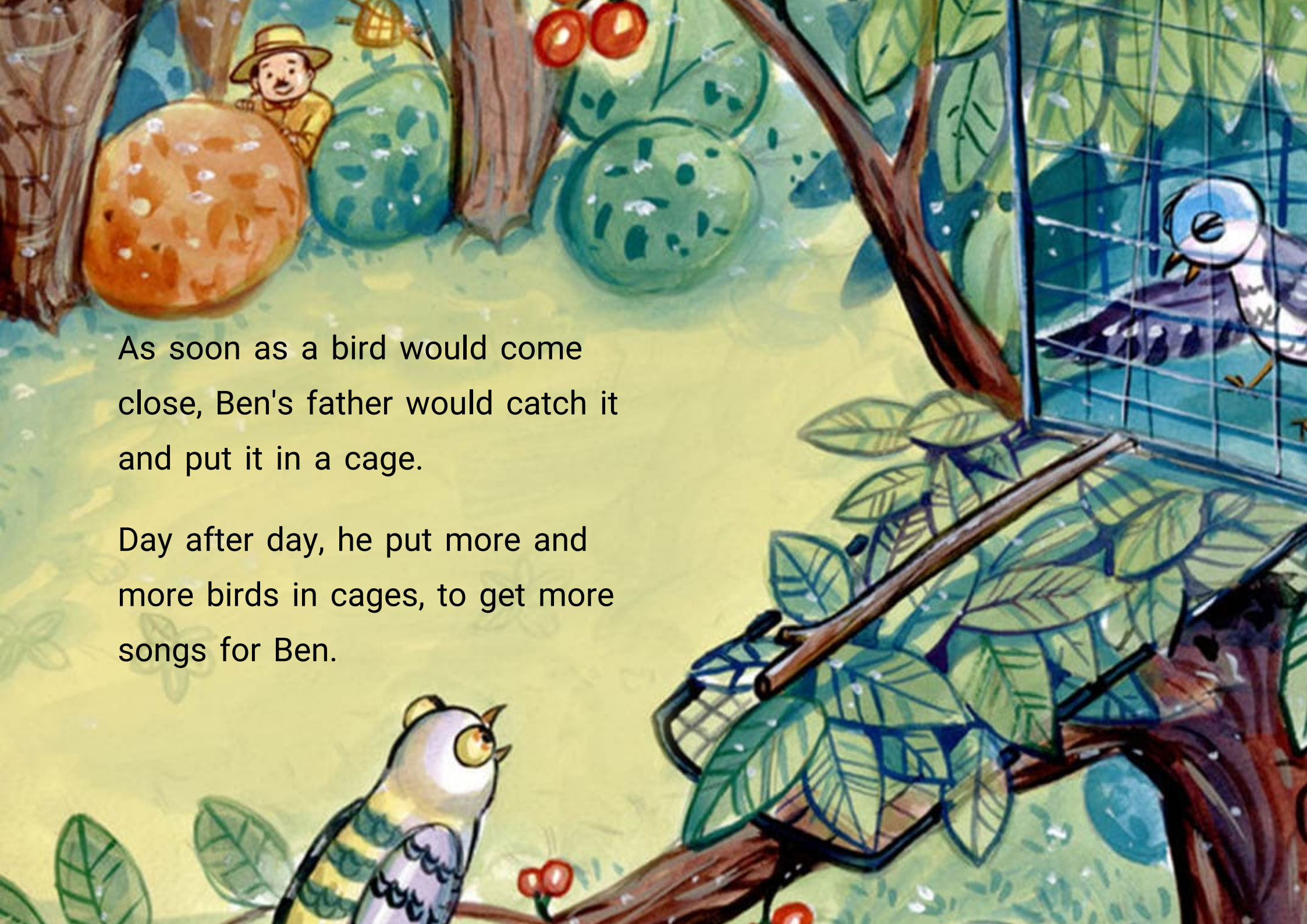


Ben had one pet bird in a cage, and it sang for him every day. But Ben wanted to get more and more birds, so he could hear their songs too. He asked his father to help him. His father agreed, and built more cages to put birds in.



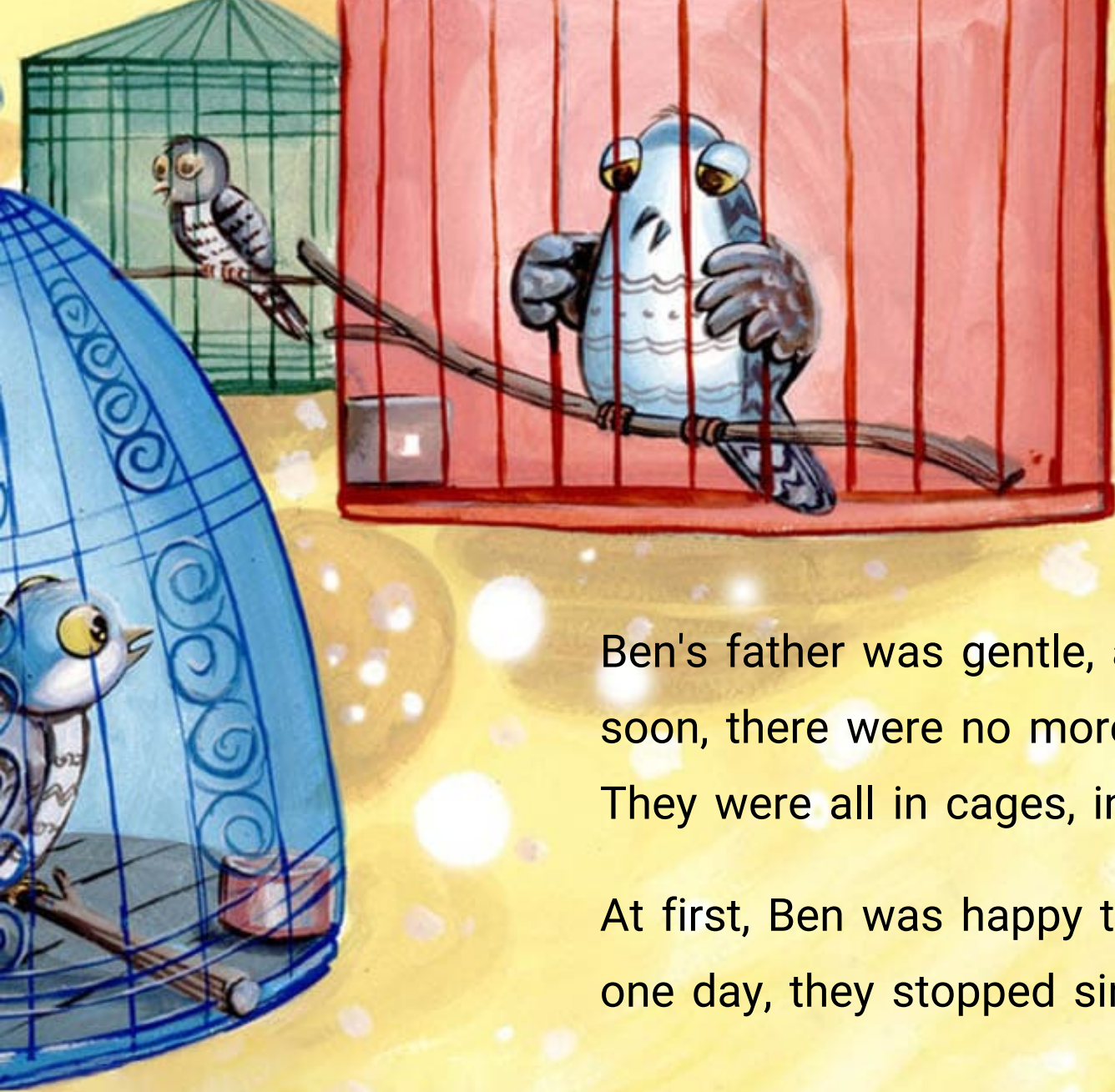
His father took the bird that was already in the cage, as well as the empty cages, and headed into the forest. The bird in the cage started singing, and all the other birds of the forest came to see it.





As soon as a bird would come close, Ben's father would catch it and put it in a cage.

Day after day, he put more and more birds in cages, to get more songs for Ben.



Ben's father was gentle, and did not hurt them, but soon, there were no more birds left in the forest. They were all in cages, inside with Ben.

At first, Ben was happy to see all of the birds. Then one day, they stopped singing.

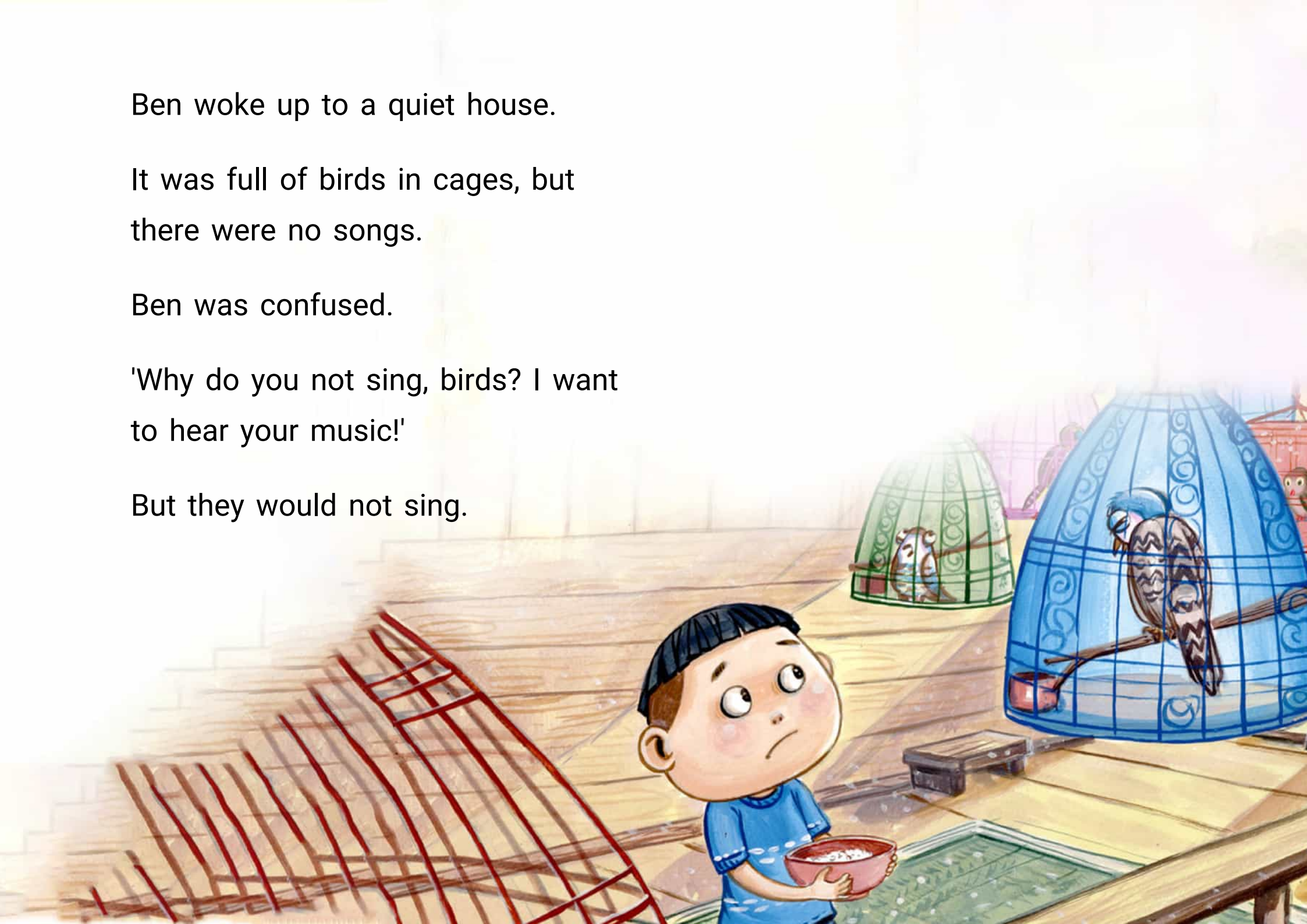
Ben woke up to a quiet house.

It was full of birds in cages, but
there were no songs.

Ben was confused.

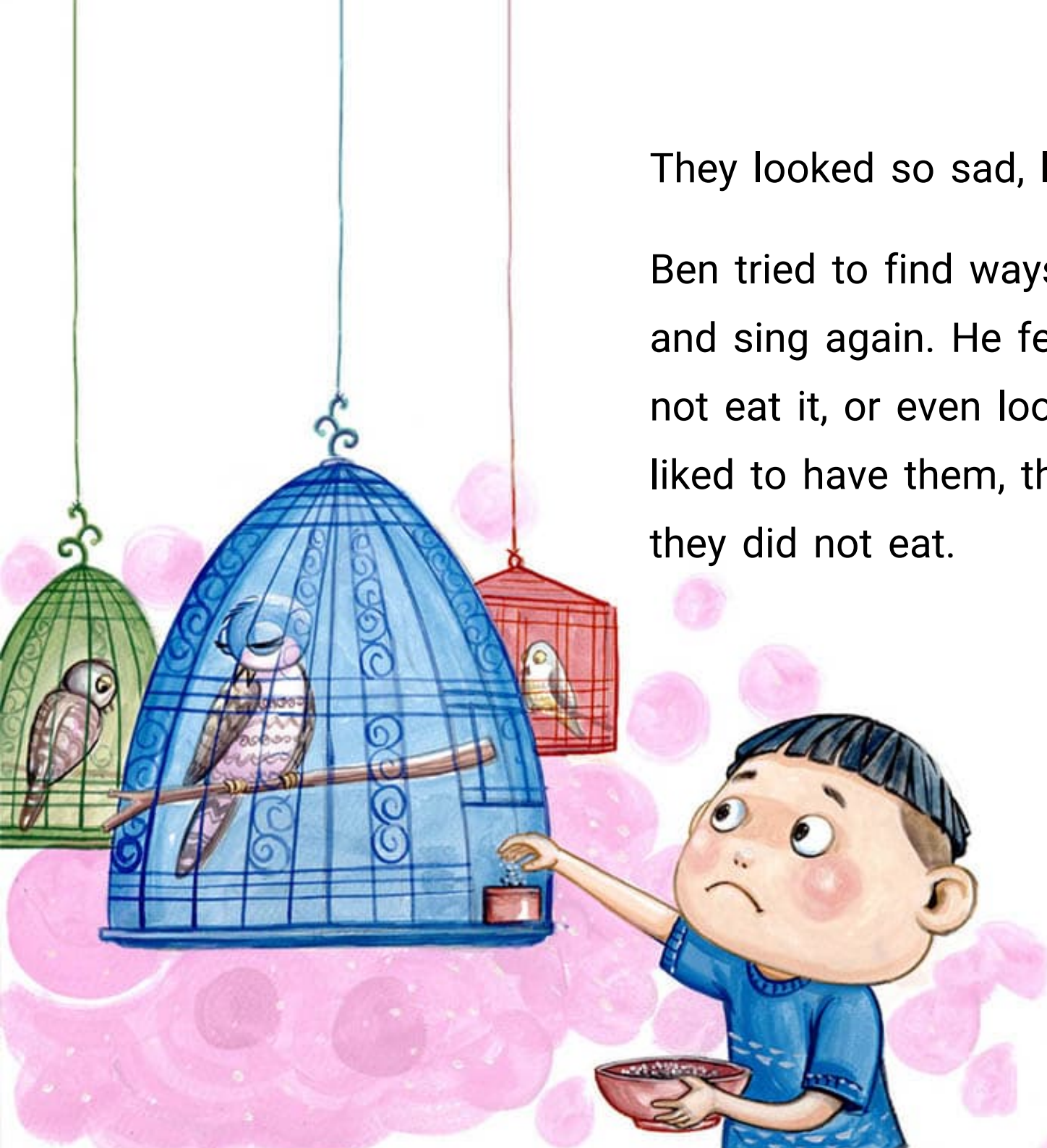
'Why do you not sing, birds? I want
to hear your music!'

But they would not sing.



They looked so sad, locked up in their cages.

Ben tried to find ways to make them happy and sing again. He fed them rice, but they did not eat it, or even look at it. As much as Ben liked to have them, they would be in danger if they did not eat.



'What happened to you, my birds?' Ben asked them.

'Do you want to go back to the forest?'

The birds could not talk, but he could tell that is what they wanted, to be free from the cages and to fly in the forest again.





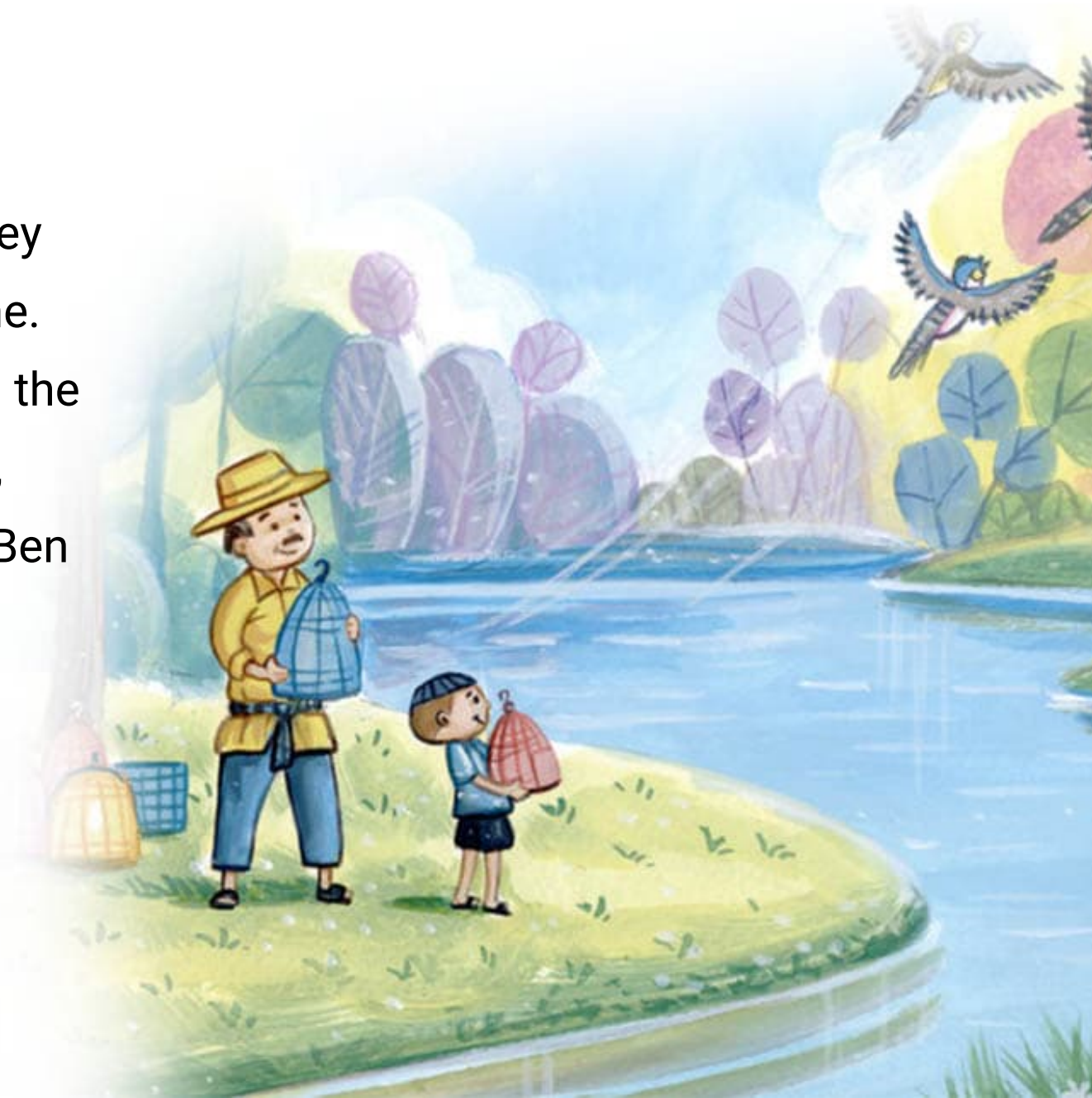
Ben decided to talk to his father.

'We need to let all the birds go,' he said.

'But don't you want to keep them? I thought you liked birds,' his father said.

'They are so sad in the house, and they will not sing. I want them to be free,' Ben replied.

Together, being as gentle as they could, they took all the cages to the forest. Then, they set each bird free, one by one. As soon as they were out of the cage, they were happy again, flying off through the trees. Ben knew he had done the right thing.



Suddenly, Ben could hear singing! The songs of the forest had returned, and the birds were happy enough to sing them again.

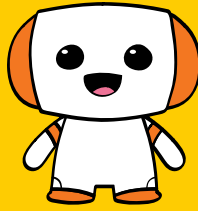
Ben saw them eating seeds from the trees, and was glad they were no longer in danger. He picked up the cages with his father, and went back home happy.





Ben could still listen to the birds singing from his window, and that was enough for him.

'Well done, birds!' he said.
'What lovely songs you sing!
You will never see another cage again!'



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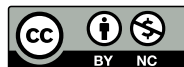
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