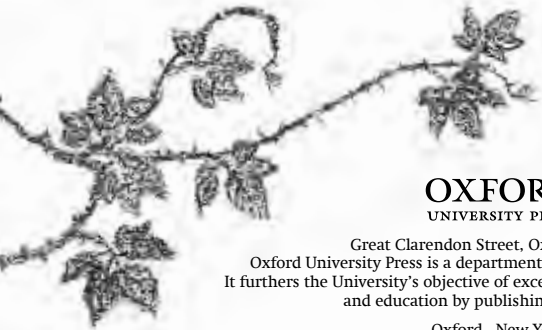


Tilly's Moonlight
FOX

JULIA GREEN



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*For my parents
Barbara and Reg Green
with love*



Chapter 1

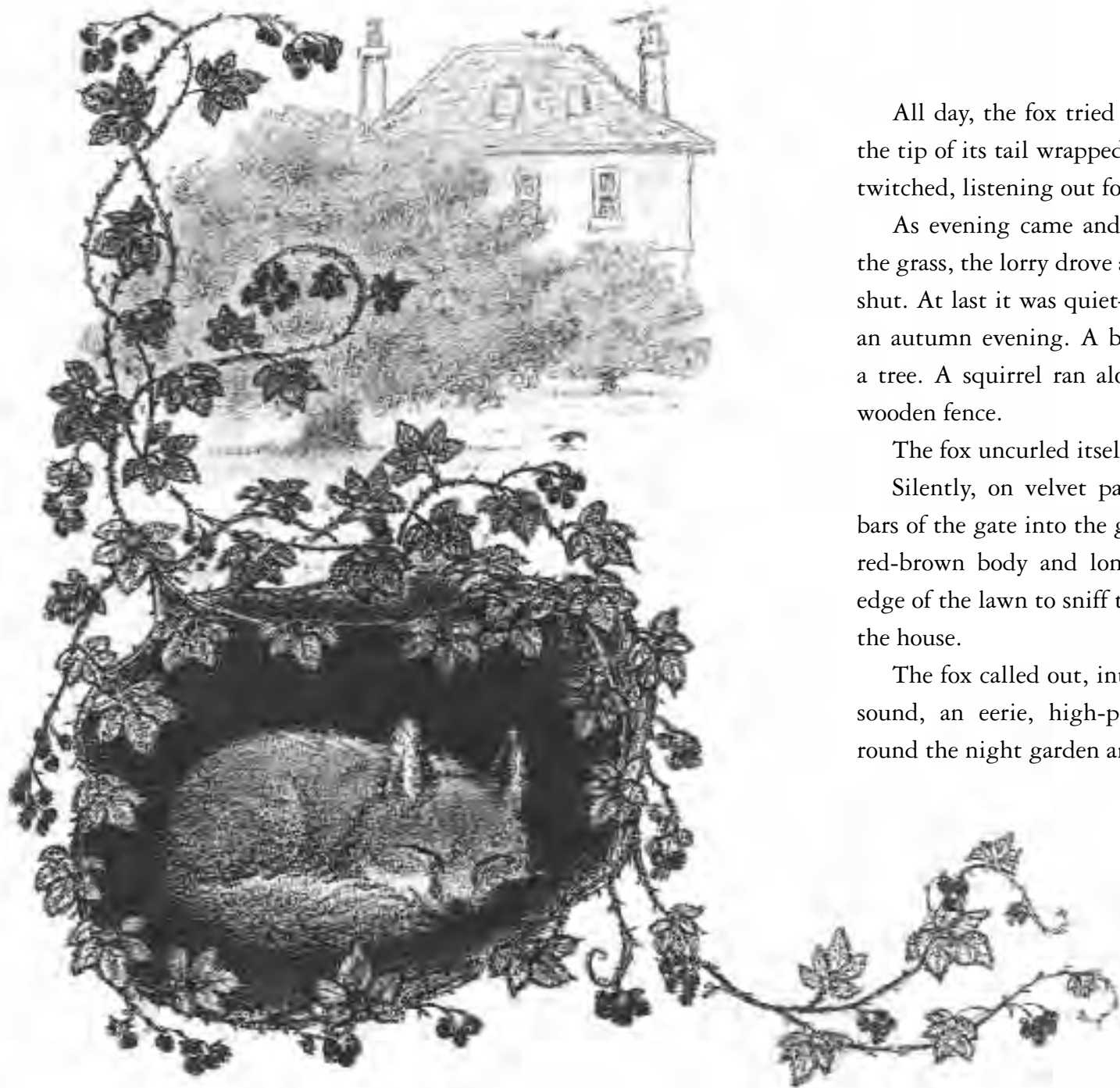


Something was different.
The fox sensed it.

Curled up in its daytime hiding place in a nest of brambles, the fox lifted its head. It pricked up both ears to listen.

It heard a car, and voices. Next, a big removal lorry drew up on the road outside the house. Someone banged a door at the back as they opened it.

For hours, the removal men went to and fro, carrying boxes into the house. Tables and chairs came next; beds and bookcases, lamps and cushions and rugs. A whole house-load of things was carried out of the lorry, up the front path, through the open door into the house.



All day, the fox tried to sleep, curled round with the tip of its tail wrapped round its body, but its ears twitched, listening out for danger.

As evening came and shadows lengthened across the grass, the lorry drove away. The front door banged shut. At last it was quiet—just the normal sounds of an autumn evening. A blackbird sang at the top of a tree. A squirrel ran along the edge of the rickety wooden fence.

The fox uncurled itself. It yawned, and stretched.

Silently, on velvet paws, it slipped through the bars of the gate into the garden. No one saw its slim, red-brown body and long tail as it stopped at the edge of the lawn to sniff the night air. It looked up at the house.

The fox called out, into the dark. It was a strange sound, an eerie, high-pitched scream that echoed round the night garden and made everything afraid.