



ADVENT

“Exile”

Hope cracks dry
underfoot,
tinder for despair.

Dreams sweaty,
fevered, tossed.

Chewed stories stale in the mouth.

Waiting souring
in curdled expectation.

A promise fatigued.

This is the brittle season.

Burnt eyes
scanning the horizon
for a dawn long delayed.

We wait in the city
of the dead.

Life is war. That's not all it is. But it is always that...But most people do not believe this in their hearts. Most people show by their priorities and their casual approach to spiritual things that they believe we are in peacetime, not wartime...Very few people think that we are in a war that is greater than World War II, or than any imaginable nuclear war. Few reckon that Satan is a much worse enemy than any earthly foe, or realize that the conflict is not restricted to any one global theater, but is in every town and city in the world.



Matthew 1:18-25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Matthew 2:2-5 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose[and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

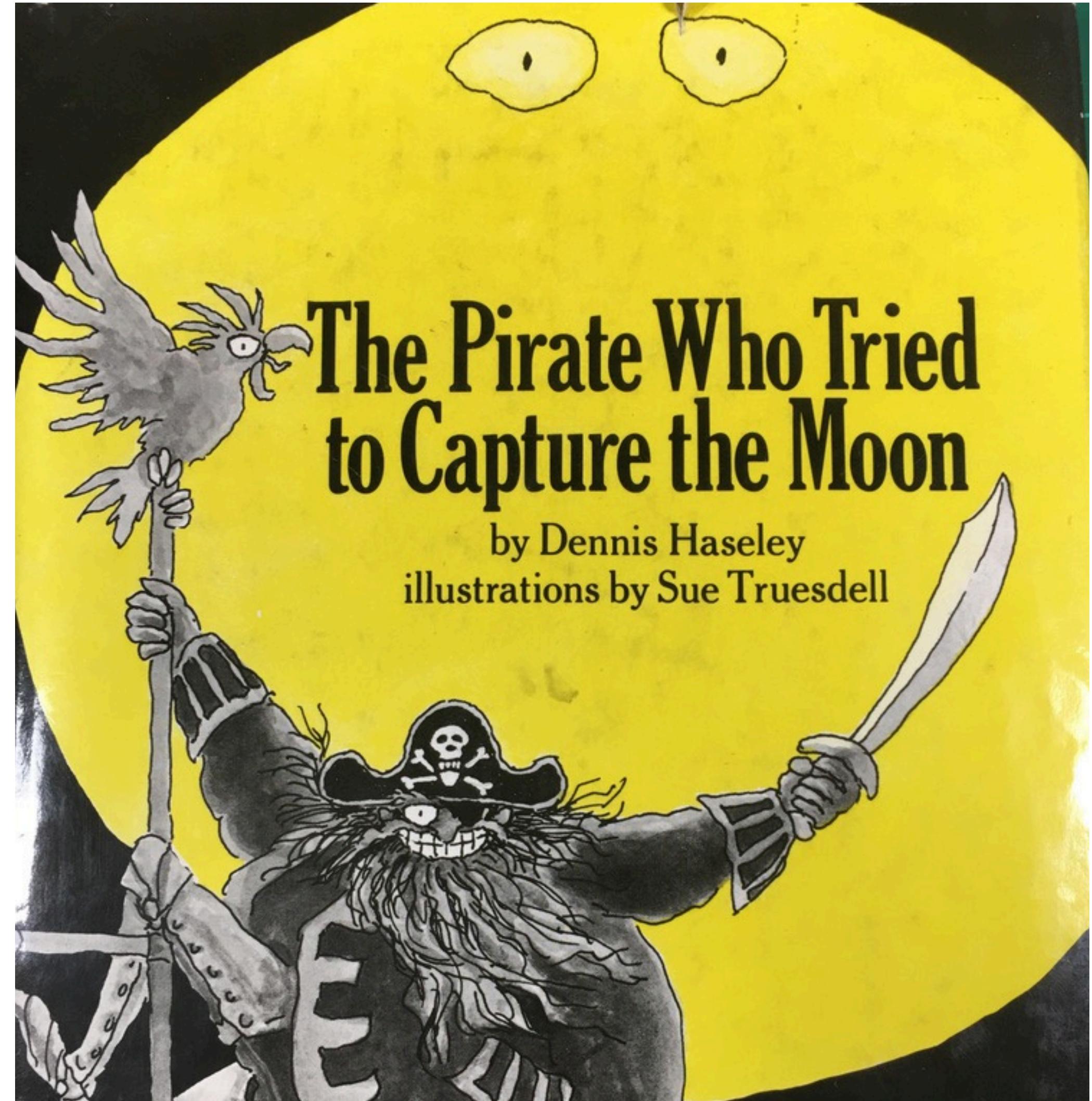
Matthew 2:7-8 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”

Matthew 2:9-12 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:13-15 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”

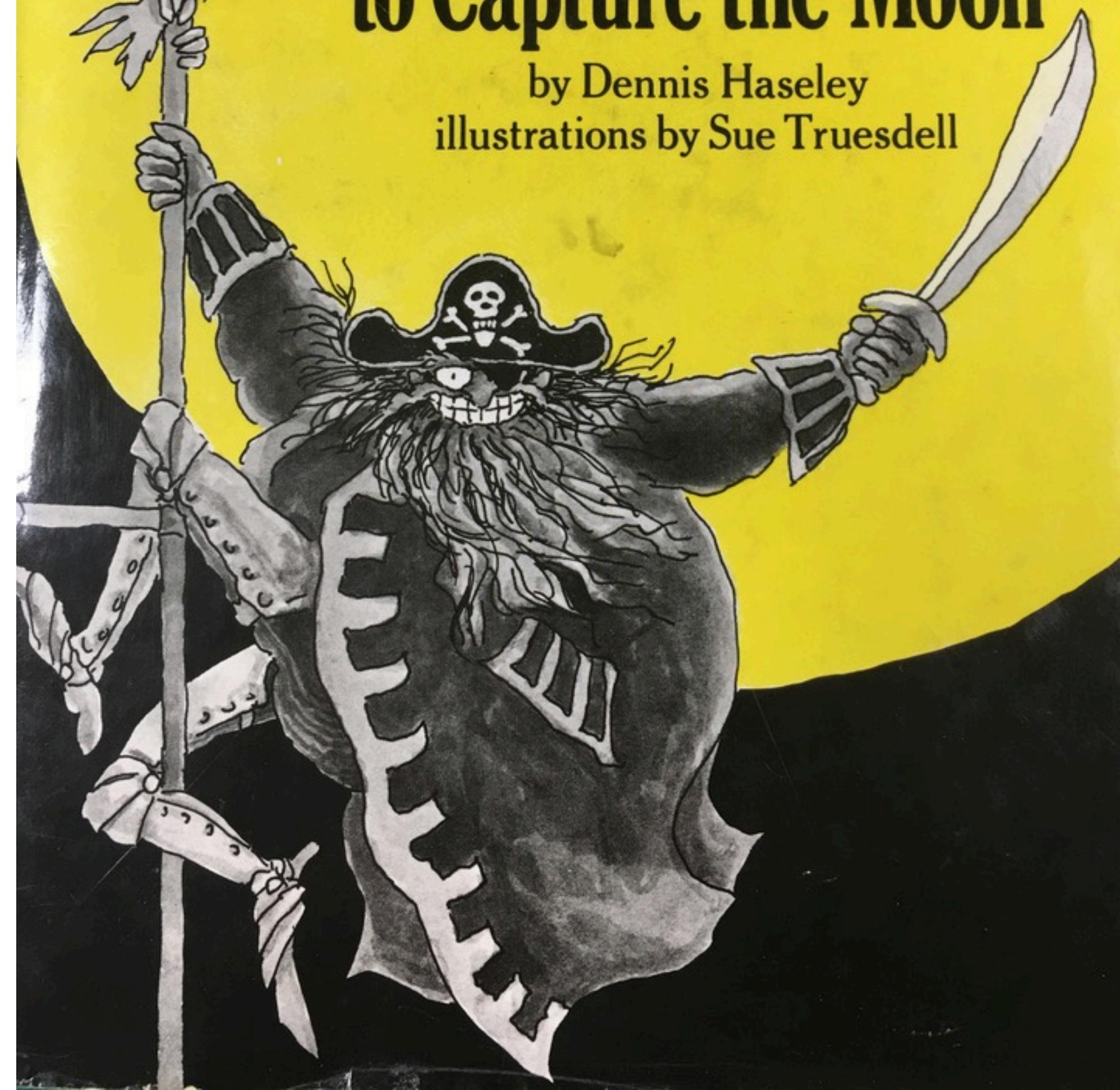
Matthew 2:16-18 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”



The Pirate Who Tried to Capture the Moon

by Dennis Haseley
illustrations by Sue Truesdell





There was once a fierce pirate who loved nothing.



The pirate stared into its light, and a wild shiver ran through him like a wave. He forgot about being afraid. He forgot about being fierce. He lowered his sword, he dropped his armor, and he whispered, "Moon, wonderful moon, it is you who have captured me."



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