

Bedtime stories about the dark.

3 stories to read aloud at bedtime, each with its own picture and a calm, sleepy ending. Written for ages 3 to 8.



Ellie and the Shapes in the Room

about 2 min

The Mouse Who Chose a Lantern

about 3 min

Will You Stay a While?

about 3 min

Reading times assume a slow bedtime pace of about 110 words a minute. Every story is also free to read online at pimlo.app/bedtime-stories/afraid-of-the-dark.



Ellie and the Shapes in the Room

When Dad switched off the lamp, Ellie's room changed. In the dark, there was a tall shape by the door, a lumpy shape on the chair and a long, thin shape on the wall. "Dad," called Ellie, "there are shapes."

Dad came back and sat on the bed. "Let's find out what they are," he said. "Shall we turn the lamp on for a bit?" Ellie nodded, and Dad switched it on low, so the room glowed soft and orange.

"The tall one by the door," said Ellie. Dad walked over and patted it. It was her robe, hanging on its hook. "Hello, robe," said Dad, in a deep, silly voice, and Ellie giggled.

The lumpy shape on the chair was her pile of clothes for tomorrow, with her teddy sitting on top. The long, thin shape on the wall was the shadow of her curtain, swaying a tiny bit in the breeze from the window. Dad showed her how it moved when the curtain moved.

Ellie looked around. Robe, clothes, teddy, curtain. "Can we leave the lamp on a little bit?" she asked. "Of course," said Dad, and he turned it down to its very lowest glow. Now Ellie knew every shape in the room by name. She said goodnight to each of them, and she fell asleep.

The end. Goodnight.



The Mouse Who Chose a Lantern

Tansy the mouse lived in a cozy hole under the roots of a tree. Inside, it was warm and soft. But at night, her doorway was very dark, and Tansy didn't like it. "I need a light," she decided.

First she asked a firefly. "Will you be my light?" The firefly glowed beautifully. But after a little while, it said, "Sorry, Tansy, I have to fly about," and off it went, blinking into the trees.

Next she asked a glow-worm. The glow-worm was happy to help, and glowed a soft green in her doorway. But it was a very small glow, and Tansy could only just see it. "It's lovely," she said kindly, "but I think I need a little more."

Then she looked up at the moon. It was big and bright, and it lit up the whole wood. But then a cloud drifted across it, and everything went dark again. "The moon has to share itself with everyone," thought Tansy.

So the next day, Tansy made her own light. She found an acorn cup, filled it with a stub of candle from the old shed, and hung it in her doorway. That night she lit it, and it glowed warm and steady, just for her. Tansy curled up in her bed of thistledown, looked at her own little lantern and fell asleep.

The end. Goodnight.



Will You Stay a While?

Oscar had brushed his teeth, put on his pajamas and climbed into bed. Mom read him a book and kissed him goodnight. But when she got up to go, Oscar's tummy went tight. "Mom," he said, "the dark feels big tonight. Will you stay a while?"

"Of course I will," said Mom. She didn't say he was being silly, and she didn't say there was nothing to be scared of. She just sat down on the floor by his bed, leaned her back against the wall and held his hand through the bars of the bed.

"Shall I tell you a story in the dark?" she asked. "A very quiet one?" Oscar nodded, and then remembered she couldn't see him nod. "Yes," he whispered.

So Mom told him a story, very softly, about a sleepy hedgehog walking home through a garden. The hedgehog said goodnight to the flowerpots, and to the watering can, and to the moon. Oscar's tummy began to feel less tight. His hand, in Mom's hand, felt warm.

By the time the hedgehog got home to its bed of leaves, Oscar's eyes were closed. Mom stayed a little longer, just to be sure, listening to him breathe slowly in and out. Then she tucked his hand under the blanket and whispered, "I'm just next door." And Oscar, half asleep, whispered back, "I know."

The end. Goodnight.