

Bedtime stories about birthdays.

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



The Homemade Birthday Card

about 2 min

Rumi's Small Birthday

about 2 min

Goodnight, Birthday

about 2 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/birthdays.



The Homemade Birthday Card

It was Grandad's birthday tomorrow, and Nell wanted to give him something special. She didn't have any money for a present. But she had paper, crayons, a glue stick and a whole jar of buttons.

She folded a big piece of yellow paper in half. On the front, she drew Grandad with his woolly hat and his big smile. Inside, she drew all the things they loved doing together.

She drew them feeding the ducks at the pond. She drew them making pancakes, with one pancake stuck to the ceiling, because that had really happened. She drew them reading their favorite book in the big armchair. Then she glued on buttons for balloons.

At the bottom she wrote, in her very best letters: HAPPY BIRTHDAY GRANDAD, LOVE FROM NELL. The D was a bit backward, but that was all right.

The next day, Grandad opened the card very slowly and looked at every picture. "The pancake," he laughed, wiping his eyes. He stood it on the mantelpiece, right in the middle. That night, Nell fell asleep thinking about Grandad's smile, which was the best present of all.

The end. Goodnight.



Rumi's Small Birthday

For her birthday, Rumi didn't want a big party. She wanted to spend the whole day with her favorite person, Aunt Dina. And that's exactly what she did.

In the morning, they made pancakes, and Aunt Dina put one candle in the top pancake. Rumi blew it out and made a wish. She didn't tell anyone what it was, because that's the rule.

Then they walked to the park and fed the ducks. They found a bench in the sunshine and shared a bag of cherries, spitting the stones into the grass to see who could get them farthest. Aunt Dina won, but only just.

In the afternoon, they went to the library, and Rumi chose three books all by herself. They read the first one together on the library's big cushion, and Aunt Dina did all the voices.

At bedtime, Aunt Dina tucked Rumi in. "Was it a good birthday?" she asked. Rumi thought about the pancake candle, the ducks, the cherry stones and the cushion. "It was small," she said sleepily, "and it was just right." And she fell asleep, smiling, one year older.

The end. Goodnight.



Goodnight, Birthday

Jonah's birthday was nearly over. The cake was eaten, except for one slice saved for tomorrow. The friends had all gone home. And now the house was quiet, with paper streamers still hanging from the ceiling.

Jonah helped his dad take them down. Blue streamer, green streamer, yellow streamer. "Can I keep one balloon?" asked Jonah. "Of course," said Dad, and Jonah chose the red one and tied it to the end of his bed.

In the bath, Dad asked, "What was your favorite part of today?" Jonah thought hard. Was it the cake? Opening his cards? The game of musical statues? "When everyone sang to me," he said at last. "And Grandma sang the loudest."

He put on his pajamas and climbed into bed. The red balloon bobbed gently in the dark. He could still hear the birthday song in his head, and Grandma singing louder than everyone.

"Goodnight, birthday," Jonah whispered. "Thank you for being a good one." Dad kissed him on the forehead. "Happy birthday, Jonah," he said, one last time. And Jonah closed his eyes and fell asleep, a whole year older.

The end. Goodnight.