

Bedtime stories about moving house.

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



Rafi's Blanket Finds Its Corner

about 3 min

Isla's Map of Two Homes

about 10 min

The Last Box

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/moving-house.



Rafi's Blanket Finds Its Corner

Rafi's new bedroom had white walls, a window in a different place and a light switch on the wrong side of the door. Nothing was where it should be. On the first night, Rafi sat on his new bed and felt very far from home.

Then Mom opened the box marked RAFI: BEDTIME. On the top was his blanket, the soft blue one with the frayed corner that he had had since he was a baby. It smelled like the old house.

"Where should it go?" asked Mom. Rafi tried the blanket at the end of the bed. Not quite right. He tried it on the chair. No. Then he spread it over his pillow and tucked the frayed corner under his cheek, the way he always did. "There," he said.

Mom put his nightlight on the new shelf, the same little moon he'd always had. It glowed on the white walls, making the room look softer. His books went in a pile by the bed. His stuffed giraffe went on the windowsill.

"It still feels new," said Rafi. "It will for a while," said Mom. "And then one day it won't." Rafi rubbed the frayed corner of his blanket. It felt exactly the same as it always had. He closed his eyes, and in the new room, in his old blanket, he fell asleep.

The end. Goodnight.



Isla's Map of Two Homes

Isla had moved to a new house in a new town, three hours' drive from the old one. The new house was nice. It had a garden with a plum tree and a bedroom with a slanted ceiling. But at bedtime on the first night, Isla lay awake and found that she couldn't quite remember what her old street looked like, and that made her feel worried. What if she forgot it altogether?

So the next day, Isla took a big sheet of paper and her box of colored pencils, and she sat down at the kitchen table. "I'm going to make a map," she told her dad, "of my old home. So I don't forget." Dad sat down beside her. "Can I help?" he asked. "You can remind me of things," said Isla.

In the middle of the left side of the paper, Isla drew her old house: red bricks, a blue front door and the window of her old bedroom, where she used to watch the cats on the wall. She drew the wall, with a gray cat on it. Then she drew the path to the corner shop, where Mr. Patel always gave her a sticker when she helped carry the bags. She drew Mr. Patel waving.

"Don't forget the park," said Dad. So Isla drew the park, with the round climbing frame and the tall slide and the duck pond with the broken fountain that never worked. She drew the bench where she and Grandma used to eat ice cream on Sundays. And she drew her old school, with her best friend Leila's house right next to it. She drew Leila at her window, waving too.

When she had finished, the left side of the page was full of places, and Isla felt a little better. She knew where everything was. She pinned the map on the wall above her bed and looked at it for a long time before she went to sleep. But the right side of the paper was still empty.

A few days later, Dad took Isla for a walk around the new neighborhood. They found a bakery at the end of the road that smelled of warm bread. The baker gave Isla a free cinnamon roll because it was her first time. When they got home, Isla took the map down and, on the right side of the paper, she drew the bakery and the baker, holding out a cinnamon roll.

The next week, they found a library with a reading room shaped like a boat, where you could sit inside the hull and read. Isla drew that too. Then she found a path behind the houses where blackberries grew, and a little stream with a wooden bridge, where you could drop sticks on one side and watch them float out the other. She drew the bridge and two sticks racing.

One afternoon, a girl with two plaits knocked on the door. Her name was Beatrix, she said, but everyone called her Trix, and she lived three doors down. She had a scooter and a rabbit called Doughnut. Isla and Trix played in the garden until the sun went down, and they found out that the plum tree was very good for climbing. That night, Isla drew Trix and Doughnut on the map, and the plum tree, with two girls sitting in its branches.

Bit by bit, week by week, the right side of the map filled up. There was the bakery and the boat library, the blackberry path and the stick-racing bridge, Trix's house and the plum tree, and a bus stop where a very friendly dog always waited for its owner. The right side was beginning to look as full as the left.

One Sunday, Leila called on the video phone. Isla missed her so much that at first she didn't know what to say. So she held the map up to the screen. "Look," she said. "That's you, at your window." Leila laughed and pressed her nose right up to her screen to see. "You forgot the tree outside my house," she said, "the one with the swing." So Isla drew it in, while Leila watched. Then Isla showed her the right side of the map: the bakery, the boat library, Trix and Doughnut. "I want to visit

the boat library," said Leila. "When you come," said Isla, "I'll take you." After the call, Isla felt both a little sad and a little happy, all at once, which Dad said was a perfectly normal way to feel.

One evening, Isla looked at the whole map. The old home was on the left, and the new home was on the right, and in the middle there was a long, bare space where the two pieces of paper met. "They're too far apart," she said. "Three hours." Dad thought about it. "What connects them?" he asked. Isla thought too. Then she picked up a pencil and drew a long, winding road all the way across the middle, joining her old blue door to her new front gate.

Along the road she drew the car, with Mom and Dad and Isla inside, and a little heart above it. "That's the road we drove down," she said. "And it's the road we'll drive down when we visit Leila, and Grandma, and the park." Dad smiled. "Both homes, on one map," he said. "That's exactly right."

That night, Isla lay in her bed under the slanted ceiling and looked up at her map in the glow of the nightlight. On the left, Mr. Patel was still waving, and Leila was still at her window. On the right, the baker was still holding out a cinnamon roll, and Trix was in the plum tree. In the middle, the little car drove along the winding road between them. Isla didn't feel worried about forgetting anymore. Everything was there, old and new, all on one page. She yawned, closed her eyes and fell asleep in her new home, which was starting to feel like hers.

The end. Goodnight.



The Last Box

Max's family had lived in their new house for three whole weeks. The beds were up, the pictures were on the walls, and the kitchen cupboards were full. But in the corner of the living room there was still one last box, big and brown, with nothing written on it.

Nobody remembered what was in it. "Let's open it tonight," said Mom, after dinner. So the whole family gathered round, and Max pulled off the tape.

Inside, there were pillows: the squashy old cushions from the sofa in the old house, the ones that hadn't fitted on the new sofa. And underneath, a pile of Max's oldest picture books, the ones he'd read when he was tiny.

Max had an idea. He took everything out, laid the box on its side and filled the bottom with the squashy cushions. He put the old books in a row along the back. Then he climbed inside. It was a perfect reading nook, just the right size for him.

Dad lay on the floor with his head poking in, and they read one of the old books together, the one about the elephant who was afraid of puddles. Max knew all the words. "The new house has a bit of the old house in it now," said Max. Then he fell asleep right there in his nook, and Dad had to carry him up to bed.

The end. Goodnight.