

Bedtime stories about owls.

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



Little Owl's First Hoot

about 3 min

The Barn Owl Counts the Farm

about 3 min

Mira and the Owl 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/owls.



Little Owl's First Hoot

High in an old oak tree, in a round, cozy hole, lived a little owl called Pip. Every evening, when the sun went down and the sky turned purple, her father flew to the branch outside and said, Hoo-hoo. It was the deepest, softest sound in the whole wood, and Pip wanted to make it too.

So she hopped onto the branch beside him, took a big breath and puffed out her feathers. Squeak! Pip blinked. That wasn't a hoot. She tried again, louder. Squeak, squeak! A mouse in the grass below looked up, puzzled. Pip's feathers drooped. "I can't do it," she said.

"Hoots don't come from trying hard," said her father. "They come from being calm. Breathe in slowly, like the wind in the leaves. Then let your breath go out, slowly, slowly, and let the sound float out with it." Pip closed her eyes. She breathed in, as slowly as the wind. She breathed out, as slowly as a cloud drifting past the moon.

Hoo. It was small, but it was a hoot. Pip's eyes went wide. She breathed in again, slow and deep, and out again, slow and soft. Hoo-hoo. Across the wood, from another tree, another owl answered: Hoo-hoo. "Someone heard me," whispered Pip.

All night long, Pip and her father sat side by side on the branch, hooting softly to the wood and listening to it hoot back. When the sky began to turn pale and the first bird sang its morning song, it was time for owls to sleep. Pip snuggled into

the round hole in the oak, tucked her head into her feathers and breathed slowly, in and out. Hoo, she said, very quietly, to no one at all. And she fell asleep.

The end. Goodnight.



The Barn Owl Counts the Farm

When the farmhouse lights went off one by one, Pearl the barn owl opened her eyes. She lived up in the rafters of the big red barn, and night was her time to fly. She stretched her wide, pale wings, floated out through the barn door and rose into the moonlight without making a single sound.

From up high, the whole farm looked silver. Pearl liked to count it every night, to make sure everything was safe. "One gate," she said, gliding over the gate by the lane, shut tight for the night. "Two haystacks," she said, sailing past the two round haystacks in the field, each with a little cap of moonlight.

"Three ducks," she said, looking down at the pond, where three ducks slept with their heads tucked under their wings, bobbing gently on the water. "Four cows," she said, as she passed the meadow, where four cows lay in the grass, chewing slowly, their breath making little clouds in the cool air.

"Five sheep," she said at last, over the hill, where five woolly sheep were huddled together like a fluffy cloud that had come down to rest. One gate, two haystacks, three ducks, four cows, five sheep. Everything was there. Everything was safe. Everything was asleep.

Pearl flew one more slow circle around the farm, past the farmhouse, where one small window still glowed. As she watched, the light in that window went out too. Somewhere inside, a child was snuggling down in bed. "Goodnight, farm,"

whispered Pearl, and she floated back to her rafter in the big red barn to keep watch over everyone, while everyone slept.

The end. Goodnight.



Mira and the Owl Box

In the spring, Mira and her grandpa had built a box. It was made of wood, with a round hole in the front and a sloping roof to keep the rain off. Grandpa had sawed the pieces, and Mira had hammered in the nails, very carefully, with both hands on the hammer. Then Grandpa had climbed the ladder and fixed the box high up on the old walnut tree at the bottom of the garden. "It's an owl box," he said. "Now we wait."

They waited all summer. Sometimes Mira looked up at the box, but it always looked empty. Then one cool autumn evening, Grandpa came in from the garden with a smile. "I think," he said, "we might have a visitor."

After dinner, Mira put on her pajamas and her warmest socks, and Grandpa wrapped them both in the big blanket from the sofa. They sat on the back step in the dark. The garden was full of shadows. The walnut tree was just a shape against the stars. "Now we listen," whispered Grandpa.

They listened. Mira heard a car far away, and the leaves moving, and a dog barking two gardens down. Then the dog stopped, and everything was still. And out of the dark, from the top of the walnut tree, came a sound: Hoo. Hoo-hoooo. Mira held her breath. She couldn't see the owl at all. But it was there, in their box, in their tree.

"Some friends," whispered Grandpa, "you only ever hear." They sat a little longer, listening, until Mira's eyes began to close. Grandpa carried her up to bed, and he left her window open just a crack. Mira lay under her covers, warm and still. Hoo, said the owl, from the bottom of the garden. "Goodnight, owl," whispered Mira, and she fell asleep.

The end. Goodnight.