

Bedtime stories about trying again.

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



The Boat That Needed a New Fold

about 3 min

The Bridge That Kept Falling

about 3 min

The Blackbird's Tricky Tune

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/trying-again.



The Boat That Needed a New Fold

Felipe had made a paper boat. He had folded it all by himself from a page of an old comic, and it was a bit crooked, but it was definitely a boat. At bath time, he set it gently on the water. It floated for a moment. Then it tipped over sideways and sank. Glug.

Felipe frowned. He fished it out, soggy, and made another one from a dry piece of paper. He folded it exactly the same way, as carefully as he could. He set it on the water. It floated, wobbled, tipped over and sank. Glug.

Felipe felt hot and cross. "Stupid boat," he said, and he splashed the water. Mom didn't say anything for a moment. Then she said, "Shall we look at what the boats did? Not what you did. What the boats did." Felipe sniffed and thought about it. "They tipped over. Sideways. Every time."

"Hmm," said Mom. "Maybe the bottom is too narrow. What if it were wider and flatter?" Felipe dried his hands and took a new piece of paper. This time, he folded the bottom flat and wide, like a tray, and pinched the corners up. It looked different. It looked a bit like a box. He set it on the water.

It floated. It didn't wobble. It didn't tip. It sailed slowly all the way across the bath, past the rubber duck, to the taps. "It worked!" said Felipe. "Because you tried a different fold," said Mom, "not the same one again." That night, the dry boat sat on

Felipe's windowsill, a bit crooked, and Felipe fell asleep thinking about all the other boats he could make.

The end. Goodnight.



The Bridge That Kept Falling

Lucia wanted to build a bridge for her toy cars, from one side of the rug to the other, over a blue scarf river. She stood two tall towers of blocks on either side and laid a long flat block across the top. It wobbled. Then the whole thing crashed down. Clatter!

She built it again, the same way. Clatter! And again. Clatter! The third time, Lucia threw a block across the room and burst into tears. "It keeps falling," she sobbed. "I can't do it."

Mom came and sat on the rug. She didn't build the bridge for Lucia. She just sat there for a minute, while Lucia cried and then sniffed and then stopped. "That's very frustrating," said Mom. "Do you want to try again now, or have a break first?" Lucia thought. "Try again," she said. "But can you help me think?"

So they looked at the bridge together. "The towers are very tall and very thin," said Mom. "What do tall, thin things do?" "Fall over," said Lucia. Then she had an idea. She built the towers shorter and wider, two blocks side by side at the bottom instead of one. Then she laid the long block across. It sat there, steady. Lucia drove a car over it. Then a bus. Then a fire engine. It held.

"I did it!" said Lucia. "You did," said Mom. "You were cross, and then you had a breath, and then you tried a different way." At bedtime, Lucia left the bridge standing on the rug, with all the cars parked on it, and fell asleep thinking about

building a second bridge, even longer, tomorrow.

The end. Goodnight.



The Blackbird's Tricky Tune

Every evening, the old blackbird sang from the top of the chimney, and his song was the most beautiful in the garden. It went up, and up, and then it did a little twirl at the end: twiddle-oo. His granddaughter, a young blackbird called Merle, wanted to sing it more than anything.

She flew up to the gutter and tried. Up she went, and up, and then she tried the twirl. It came out as twiddle-ack. Merle shook her feathers and tried again. Twiddle-eek. And again. Twiddle-squawk. A sparrow on the fence giggled, not unkindly, but Merle's feathers went hot.

"I'll never get it," she said, and tucked her head under her wing. Her grandfather landed beside her. "You don't have to get it tonight," he said. "Have a rest. Sometimes a tune needs to be left alone for a little while." So Merle stopped trying. She sat on the gutter and simply listened.

She listened to her grandfather sing, all the way through, twiddle-oo. She listened to the wind in the apple tree and a robin far away. She watched the sun go down and the sky turn orange. She wasn't trying at all. She was just a small bird on a gutter, enjoying the evening. And, very quietly, inside her head, she heard the tune going round.

When the first star came out, Merle opened her beak and sang, without thinking too hard. Up, and up, and then: twiddle-oo. Not perfect. A tiny bit wobbly. But it was the tune. Her grandfather didn't say anything. He just sang it back to her, and she sang it once more, softer. Then they flew down to the hedge together, and Merle fell asleep with the tune still going round, ready for tomorrow.

The end. Goodnight.