Bella's Very Dark Night Pack

Gentle activities for little ones who find the dark a bit big, and for the grown-ups who help them.

Bella, her mom Rosie and her dad Gus find gentle ways to make the dark feel smaller.



You don't have to feel brave all at once.

A free printable help pack from Collyvale · Pick one activity at a time

Collyvale
A little place for big feelings.

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A note for grown-ups

Fear of the dark is common in young children. It's a normal part of growing up, and it usually eases with time, patience and a little gentle practice. This pack is here to help you take small, kind steps together, at your child's pace.

What can help

- Stay calm and close. Your steady voice helps your child feel safe.
- Name the feeling: "It sounds like the dark feels big tonight."
- Keep bedtime predictable, with the same steps in the same order.
- A battery-operated nightlight or landing light is fine, for as long as your child needs it.
- Notice small tries, not just big wins.

What tends not to help

- Teasing, or "There's nothing to be scared of."
- Long monster hunts every night, which can suggest there's something to find.
- Scary programs, games or stories close to bedtime.
- Rushing. Little steps, repeated often, work best.

How to use this pack

Choose one activity at a time. There's no right order and nothing you have to finish. Stop whenever your child has had enough, and come back another day. Activities like Shadow Detectives work best in the daytime, when everyone feels calm and the room is light.



When to ask for extra help. If your child's fears are severe, getting worse, not easing, or affecting their sleep or everyday life, speak to your pediatrician or school nurse. You don't need to wait. It's always fine to ask.

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Bella’s Bedtime Steps

Bella likes the same steps in the same order, so she knows what comes next. Color a star each night you do a step.

		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	Bath or wash	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
2	Pajamas on	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
3	Brush teeth	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
4	Story time	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
5	Nightlight on	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
6	Cuddle and goodnight	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
7	Our own step:	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Grown-up tip: Bella’s lantern is a battery-operated nightlight, never a candle or real flame. Change the order or swap steps so the chart fits your family.

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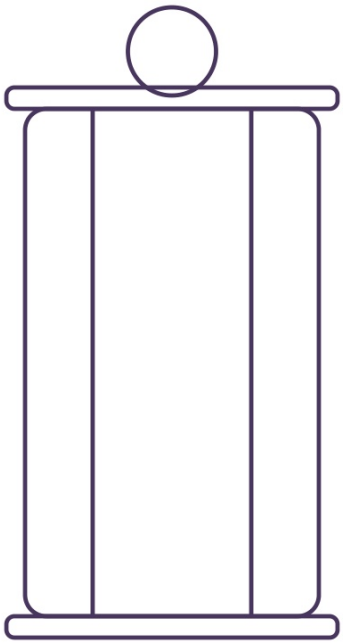
Gentle Lantern Breaths

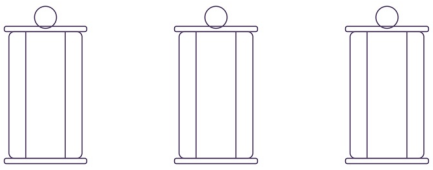
A calm, cozy way to breathe when the dark feels big.



1. Get cozy. Sit or lie down, with your grown-up close by.
2. Imagine a little lantern glowing softly beside you.
3. Breathe in slowly and comfortably through your nose.
4. Breathe out gently, as if making the glow softly flicker.
5. Do it three times. Your lantern keeps glowing the whole time.

Color in your lantern!

Color a lantern for each breath



1 2 3



The dark can feel calm and cozy too.

Grown-up tip: Practice in the daytime first, then try it at bedtime. Breathe along together, slowly and comfortably. No need for big breaths or holding your breath.

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Shadow Detectives

Shadows are just shapes made when something gets in the way of the light. Let’s be detectives and find out what makes them!

You will need: a flashlight, a plain wall, a grown-up



1. Play in the daytime or early evening, with a lamp on. Shine the flashlight at the wall.
2. Hold up something friendly, like a cup, a teddy or a spoon. Can your grown-up guess what it is from its shadow?
3. Swap! Now it’s your turn to guess.
4. Try hand shadows: a bunny, a bird or a snail.
5. Move closer to the flashlight, then further away. What happens to the shadow?

Draw a shadow you made

It was a: _____

It was a: _____

It was a: _____

Grown-up tip: Let your child lead and keep it playful. Stick to friendly, familiar objects, and stop whenever they want. Seeing how shadows are made can make them feel less mysterious.

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Nighttime Noises

Nighttime sounds can seem bigger in the quiet. Draw a line from each sound to something that might make it. There can be more than one answer!

Creak!	•	•	A car going by
Whoosh...	•	•	The wind outside
Tap tap tap	•	•	Floorboards or stairs
Hoo-hoo!	•	•	An owl in a tree
Brrrrm	•	•	Rain on the window

What sounds do we hear at home?

Sound: _____ It might be: _____

Sound: _____ It might be: _____

Sound: _____ It might be: _____

Sound: _____ It might be: _____

Grown-up tip: These are only possible sources, and every home sounds different. If you're not sure what a noise is, it's fine to say "I'm not sure, but you're safe. Let's listen for it together tomorrow."

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Bella's Little Steps

Choose your own little steps together and write them on the stones. Color a star each time you try one.

Look how far I've come!

6 _____ ☆

5 _____ ☆

4 _____ ☆

3 _____ ☆

2 _____ ☆

1 _____ ☆

Start here

Ideas you could try

- The big light a little dimmer for story time
- The door a little more closed
- Nightlight on instead of the big light
- Grown-up sits by the door instead of on the bed
- Staying in bed while a grown-up pops out for one minute
- Snuggling down with your cuddle buddy

Remember: Trying counts. Doing a step again counts too. Go at your child's pace, and go back a step whenever you need to. A nightlight can always stay; the goal is feeling more settled, not sleeping in full darkness.

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My What-If Jar

Sometimes the dark brings “what-ifs.” Draw or tell your what-if, and your grown-up can write it in the jar. Then pop the lid on until the daytime.



Draw or write inside the jar

If you need help now, tell your grown-up.

For grown-ups

1. Listen first, without rushing to fix it.
2. Acknowledge it: “That sounds like a really big worry. Thank you for telling me.”
3. Pick a calm daytime moment to open the jar and talk about it together.

We’ll open the jar together on: _____

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My Cuddle Buddy

Bella loves snuggling her soft cream bunny at bedtime. Who’s your cuddle buddy?



Bella’s bunny
is soft, squishy and just right for cuddles.

Draw your cuddle buddy here

My cuddle buddy’s name is: _____

My buddy is great at...

- ☆ big squishy cuddles
- ☆ being soft and snuggly
- ☆ listening to my what-ifs
- ☆ keeping me company

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Story Chat

Stories can be a gentle way to talk about big feelings. These questions are optional, and there are no right or wrong answers.



If you're reading Bella's story

- How do you think Bella felt at bedtime?
- What helped Bella feel a little cozier?
- Has the dark ever felt big for you, like it did for Bella?
- What would you like to say to Bella?

Any night, with or without the book

- What's the coziest thing in your bedroom?
- What can you hear when you're snuggled in bed?
- What helps you feel snug and settled?
- Who can you tell when you have a what-if?
- If a Collyvale friend came for a sleepover, who would you choose?
- What's one thing you like about nighttime? (The moon? The stars? Pajamas?)

Draw something cozy about nighttime

Grown-up tip: Follow your child's lead. If they don't want to talk, that's absolutely fine. Reading and snuggling together is plenty. You can find Bella's story at collyvale.com.

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My Little Nighttime Steps

This certificate is for

_____

for being brave in your very own way.

I...

- ☆ shared a worry
- ☆ asked for help
- ☆ tried an activity
- ☆ tried a little step
- ☆ tried a step again
- ☆ had a cozy bedtime



Date: _____

With a big Collyvale hug, from Bella

You don’t have to feel brave all at once.

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