

The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark

By Jill Tomlinson

When the very last firework had faded away, Mr Barn Owl turned to Plop.

“Well, Son,” he said. “I’m off hunting now. Would you like to come?”

Plop looked at the darkness all around them. It seemed even blacker after the bright fireworks. “Er – not this time, thank you, Daddy. I can’t see; I’ve got stars in my eyes.”

“I see,” said his father. “In that case I shall have to go by myself.” He floated off into the darkness like a great white moth.

Plop turned in distress to his mother.

“I wanted to go with him. I want to like the dark. It’s just that I don’t seem to be able to.”

“You will be able to, Plop. I’m quite sure about that.”

“I’m not sure,” said Plop.

“Well, I *am*,” his mother said. “Now, come on. You’d better have your rest. You were awake half the day.”

So Plop had his midnight rest, and when he woke up, his father was back with his dinner. Plop swallowed it in one huge gulp. “That was nice,” he said. “What was it?”

“A mouse,” said Mr Barn Owl.

“I like mouse,” said Plop. “What’s next?”

“I have no idea,” his father said. “It’s Mummy’s turn now. You’ll have to wait till she gets back.”

Plop was always hungry, and his mother and father were kept very busy bringing him food all night long. When daylight came, they were very tired and just wanted to go to sleep.

“Bedtime, Plop,” said Mrs Barn Owl.

"I don't want to go to bed," said Plop. "I want to be a day bird."

"Well, I *am* a night bird," said his mother. "And if your father and I don't get any sleep today, you won't get anything to eat tonight."

Plop did not like the sound of that at all, so he drew himself up straight and tall – well, as tall as he could – and tried to go to sleep.

