

Penguin Random House to release audiobooks to send listeners to sleep

“O gentle sleep! / Nature’s soft nurse, how have I frighted thee / That **thou** no more **wilt** weigh my **eyelids** down.” Henry IV, as portrayed by Shakespeare, would have sympathised with people who struggle with insomnia. Now a major publisher has come up with a novel idea.

thou 你; 汝

wilt 枯萎; 凋谢

eyelid 眼睑; 眼皮

In a project to be launched this week, Penguin Random House has collaborated with the Sleep Council and the Children’s Sleep Charity in creating collections of “Sleep Tales” for adults and children.

Combining “**cutting-edge** technology and the ancient art of storytelling to help solve an age-old problem”, these audiobooks are part soundscape, part descriptive **narrative**, with softly spoken voices to calm anxieties and take listeners to the **land of nod**.

cutting-edge 领先的; 尖端的

narrative 叙事的; 故事

land of nod 睡梦之乡

wind down 平静下来

Each story lasts about 15 minutes, enabling listeners to set their sleep timer.

The stories draw on the Sleep Council’s research into sounds that help people **wind down**, such as waves lapping on a shore, soft rainfall and birdsong.

Richard Lennon, publisher at Penguin Audio, told the Guardian the project was inspired partly by the realisation that increasing numbers of people were listening to audiobooks “as they’re going to sleep or as part of their bedtime routine”.

He said both adults and children respond to something comforting and familiar as they are nodding off.

Asked whether a boring story could have the same effect, he said the stories needed to be “engaging enough not to put you off”: “This is about creating the right environment and headspace for you ... to go to sleep. Strangely, if you’re bored, it doesn’t have that effect.”

Audience research had been very positive, Lennon said. One listener reported: “The story made my mind stop racing.”