

THE NIGHT TRAIN TO ANYWHERE · BOOK 10

The Library of Unfinished Stories

A story where YOU choose the way



STORYBRANCH

Books that branch. Minds that grow.

Meet Your Fellow Travelers

Every journey on the Night Train is better with friends. Here's who is riding with you tonight — and how each one sounds when you read them aloud:

Rowan — The hero of every journey — curious, brave, and wearing the orange coat. Rowan's choices belong to YOU.

The Conductor — Keeper of the timetable and the wisdom. Read him slow as syrup, in your deepest, sleepest rumble.

Tick the Ticket Mouse — Punches the tickets, panics the loudest. Read him fast-fast-FAST, squeaky and tremendously official — and tonight, very keen to open every drawer.

Miss Ledger — The librarian — an elderly tabby who has seen every kind of question. Read her crisp and dry, with a purr underneath, and a pause before every 'well.'

Chapter — The little blue book that forgot its ending. Read it small and papery, like a whisper through pages — and let it snap SHUT when someone tells it what to do.





The Night Train came on a quiet night, and stopped, for once, right at the very end of the line—where the rails ran up to the doors of a building so big it had its own weather.

Every window glowed amber. Every window was tall and arched. And in every window, Rowan could see small shapes fluttering—like moths, or birds, or—no. Like BOOKS. Little books, flapping!

“Alllll aboard,” said the Conductor's slow voice. “No hurry... no hurry at all... but tonight is Shelving Night at the Library of Unfinished Stories, and I'm told a great many books have wandered off their shelves looking for their endings. And every one that hasn't found it by opening time goes to the Forgotten Wing for another whole year.”

Books that walk? Books that LOOK for things? Rowan grabbed the orange coat and went down the stairs two at a time, and Tick came bumping after, squeaking, “Wait for meeee!”

The train is waiting. Turn the page.



The Library of Unfinished Stories was a hall of shelves so tall they vanished into the dark—and along every aisle, little books were WALKING. On the corners of their covers. Sleepily. Pages fluttering, looking for something.

“Their endings,” said the librarian—an elderly grey tabby in a cardigan, with half-moon spectacles and a ring of tiny jingling keys. “Miss Ledger. Every book here was begun and never finished. At night they wander, trying to remember how they end. They CAN—if someone asks the right question. Ask wrong, and they snap shut for a week!”

A small blue book with an empty gold rectangle where its title should be trotted up to Rowan's boot and looked up, pages trembling.

“That one's called Chapter,” said Miss Ledger. “Been unfinished the longest. Dawn's in five hours. Well? Where would you start?”

★ **A library of books that forgot their endings! Where does Rowan start?**

- **Sit down with Chapter and ask it questions:** *If you choose Chapter, the little book is right here and wants to remember — but it answers only good questions, and it snaps shut on bad ones. → turn to page 5*
- **Search the Card Catalogue for Chapter's beginning:** *If you choose the catalogue, every book's first line is on a card in one of a thousand drawers — but the drawers open only for exact questions, and there are a thousand of them. → turn to page 19*
- **Follow the wandering books into the Stacks:** *If you choose the Stacks, the books go somewhere every night and come back knowing more — but the Stacks are dark, the books are shy, and following is not the same as finding. → turn to page 33*



Rowan lifted Chapter onto a reading table under a green lamp and knelt down to look at it properly.

It was a small, worn, blue-cloth book with two round eyes near the top of its cover and a red ribbon trailing behind it like a tail. Its first pages were full—pictures in faded gold ink—and then, halfway through, they simply stopped. Blank. Page after empty page.

“It's not that I don't KNOW,” said Chapter, in a small papery voice. “I did know, once. I just can't—reach it. When someone asks me right, it comes back a page at a time. When someone asks me wrong—” it shuddered, and its ribbon curled up tight.

Tick, on the table edge, cleared his throat importantly. “Simple! Tell it a good ending. 'And they all lived happily ever after.' Works for everyone.”

Chapter's eyes went very, very round.

★ Tell the book its ending — or ask?

- **Ask Chapter about its beginning:** *If you choose to ask, a book that's forgotten its ending still remembers its start, and one good question leads to the next — but it's slow, and questions have to be small enough for a book to answer. → turn to page 9*
- **Tell Chapter how it should end:** *If you choose to tell, 'happily ever after' is a perfectly good ending and it's ready right now — though it's the ending to a great many stories, and Chapter is one particular story. → turn to page 7*



— Happily Ever After —

“Chapter,” Rowan said kindly, “here's how you end. Everybody's safe, everybody's home, and they all live happily ever—”

SNAP!

The book shut so hard that dust puffed out of it, the lamp swung, and Tick was blown clean off the table onto a cushion. Chapter lay there closed tight as a clam, ribbon tucked in, eyes shut, radiating offense.

“Oh dear,” said Miss Ledger, from the doorway. “You TOLD it. They hate being told. Wouldn't you? Somebody walks up and says, 'I know how you end,' when they don't even know how you begin?” She sighed. “A week, usually, before it opens again. Unless you can find something to ASK it that shows you actually want to know.”

Rowan looked at the shut book, and at the blank stretch of pages inside it, and thought: I don't know its hero. I don't know its first line. I told it an ending to a story I haven't even heard!

“Chapter,” Rowan said, very gently. “I'm sorry. Can I ask you something instead?” One eye opened, just a crack.

↻ **Go back to page 6 and choose again.**



“Who's your hero?” Rowan asked.

Chapter's pages riffled. Gold ink stirred on the very first one. “A rabbit,” it said slowly. “A girl. In a yellow raincoat. I remember her raincoat!”

“Where does she live?” “By a—a lighthouse.” The ink drew one, line by line, while they watched. “Her grandfather keeps it.”

“What does she want?”

A long pause. Then, all in a rush: “To light it. The lamp. HERSELF. Because her grandfather's ill, and it's the stormiest night of the year, and there's a boat—” The pages were filling now, one after another, gold ink racing to keep up: a rowing boat, a black sea, a small rabbit on a spiral stair.

“You didn't tell me anything,” Chapter said, wonderingly. “You just asked. Small things. And each one pulled the next one out.”

“Keep going,” said Rowan. “What's in her pocket?”

Turn the page.



Matches. A whistle. Her grandfather's key. Page by page, question by question, Chapter remembered itself—until only one page was left. The last one. And it stayed white.

“I can't,” said Chapter. “I can FEEL it. It's right there. But every time I get near it —” The ribbon trembled. “It's the part where—I think something goes wrong. I think she loses something. I don't want to look.”

Rowan looked at the small blue book for a while, and thought about how questions had worked all night: small, exact, one at a time, each one built on the last answer. And how the last page was different. It wasn't a page Chapter had forgotten. It was a page Chapter didn't WANT to see!

That needed a different kind of question. Or—Rowan glanced at the book's worried eyes—a different kind of asker.

“Take your time,” Rowan said. “I'm not going anywhere.” Tick, who had been about to say something, closed his mouth and nodded instead.

Turn the page.



END OF YOUR FREE SAMPLE

Will the stories find their endings?

You've reached the end of the free pages, and the biggest choice of the night is waiting on the very next page.

Chose "Search the Card Catalogue for Chapter's beginning" or "Follow the wandering books into the Stacks" on page 4? Those paths are in the full book too: 9 choices, 3 friendly dead ends and 7 different endings, so it's a new adventure every time you read it.

Start the series — \$49/month

A new adventure every month · parent guide included · shipping included (US & Canada)

Or get just Book 10 for \$59. Pause or cancel anytime.

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Next in this file: The Grown-Up's Ticket, your parent guide to Book 10.

Books that branch. Minds that grow.

The books in this library forgot how they end — and they'll only tell you if you ask just right!

Tonight, every choice belongs to YOU. Sit down with Chapter, the little book that snaps shut when it's told? Ask a wall of a thousand drawers one exact question? Follow the wandering books to the room where they remember? By opening time, every unfinished book needs its ending — and 'happily ever after' is not a question.

Storybranch books are parent-guided choose-your-own-adventure-style stories for kids 3–8, made to be read together. You read, they choose — and every fork in the story builds the core skills of smart thinkers for the next AI revolution.

- ★ Read together · ages 3–8
- ★ 9 choices · 7 endings · a new adventure every night
- ★ Book 10 of 30 in The Night Train to Anywhere series

THE SKILLS IN THIS BOOK

Every Storybranch adventure practices two of the seven skills of smart thinkers. This book builds Ask Sharp Questions — small, exact, and never 'everything' — and Learn From Every Outcome — nine questions miss so the tenth can land.

Storybranch

Books that branch. Minds that grow.

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★ ADMIT ONE GROWN-UP ★

The Grown-Up's Ticket

Your guide to reading *The Library of Unfinished Stories* together

Tonight the Night Train stops at the end of the line, at a library so big it has its own weather — and inside, the books are walking. Every one of them was begun and never finished, and every one has forgotten how it ends. They'll remember, Miss Ledger explains, if someone asks them the right question. Tell them how they end, and they snap shut. Your child — as Rowan — is about to spend a night with a little blue book called Chapter, learning the difference between a question that opens a door and a statement that slams it.

And here's the fun part: **your job isn't to teach.** You're the Conductor — you set the pace, do the voices, and ask one good question at the forks. Your child drives. This guide gives you everything you need: the two skills hiding inside the story, two signature "parent moves," a few tricks for making every choice feel like an event, a tracker for the nights ahead, and an observation log for noticing how the thinking grows.

★ PRIMARY SKILL

Ask sharp questions

Giving an ask a shape the answer can fit through — the difference between "*how does it end?*" and "*what's in her pocket?*" The quality of every answer your child will ever get depends on the quality of the ask.

✦ SECONDARY SKILL

Learn from every outcome

Treating every result — especially the misses — as information. Nine questions do nothing so the tenth can land; the skill is noticing what each miss taught you about the next one.

9

CHOICES TO MAKE

7

DIFFERENT ENDINGS

3

FRIENDLY DEAD ENDS

∞

WAYS TO READ IT AGAIN

★ **The one golden rule: never pick for them.** Ask, then wait — even when the silence stretches, even when they're clearly about to pick the "wrong" one. The pause is where the thinking happens, and the wrong turns are where the learning happens. Everything in this book is safe to get wrong.



PRIMARY

Ask sharp questions

The habit: ask small, ask exact — and never 'everything.'

Every helper your child will ever meet — teachers, librarians, and one day the machines they'll direct — runs on the same rule: vague in, vague out. In this library the rule is literal. A book can answer *who is your hero?* and *what's in her pocket?* and *what does she do NEXT?* — but ask it *how does it end?* and nothing happens, and ask a wall of a thousand drawers for *everything* and you'll be waist-deep in cards. Every dead end here is a question with no edges, or no question at all: an ending told instead of asked, an ending borrowed from somebody else's book. At ages 3–8 this looks wonderfully simple: cutting one big question into three small ones a book could actually answer.

PARENT MOVE №1

The "Vague vs. Specific" Upgrade

When the story offers to ask a character something, **pause before the asking**. Try: *"Wait — if we just say 'how does it end?', Chapter will snap shut. What's one SMALL thing we could ask that it could actually answer?"* Then upgrade the ask together: a who, a where, a what's-in-her-pocket. Read what the sharper version earns — then marvel at it, loudly. (Use it at least once a night.)

✓ TRY SAYING	✗ INSTEAD OF
"What's one small thing we could ask?"	"Just ask it how it ends." (that's the question that shuts the book)
"What does the book already know that we could start from?"	"Let's just tell it a good ending." (SNAP)
"Hmm, that one didn't work. What did it teach us about the next one?"	"This book is broken." (the ask was mushy, not the book)

SECONDARY

Learn from every outcome

The habit: a miss is a clue about the next try.

Most of Rowan's questions in this book don't work — a catalogue drawer with forty cards in it, a shout that scatters the whole herd, nine questions from the Reading Room circle that do nothing at all. Watch what Rowan does with each one: writes it down, notices what it taught, and asks something sharper. That's the whole engine of the night. Your reaction at a miss teaches more than the page does: groan, and a wrong question is embarrassing; grin, and a wrong question is the next clue.

PARENT MOVE №2

The Dead-End Post-Mortem

When a question flops or a page snaps shut, **resist flipping back right away**. First: *"Ooh — that one missed! Before we go back ... what did it teach us? What would we ask differently?"* Ten seconds of detective work, then flip back with full ceremony. Try counting out loud — *"miss number three, collected!"* — so misses become clues, not embarrassment.

Showtime: making every choice a moment

THE GROWN-UP'S TICKET

A choice page is a tiny stage play, and you're the stage manager. You don't need all six of these — pick two that fit your kid and make them *yours*. Rituals are the point: by Book 3, your child will be doing them to *you*.

1 The Conductor's Whistle

When a choice is coming, give a long, low, sleepy **"whooooo..."** — the signal that a Big Decision is pulling into the station. Slow everything down. Decisions get drama; page turns don't.

2 The Finger Hover

One finger hovers over each option while you think out loud together — but **no touching until the choice is made**. The hover makes the pause physical (and very hard to rush).

3 The Ticket Punch

Decision made? Your child "punches the ticket": two firm taps on the chosen option and a squeaky **"Tickets, please!"** No punch, no page turn — Tick the Ticket Mouse insists.

4 Freeze the Picture

On each full-page painting, stop before reading on: **"What do you see? What's about to happen?"** Predict, then read, then check. Wrong guesses are cheered — that's a scientist at work.

5 Ask the Cast

Stuck between options? **"What would the Conductor do? What would Tick do?"** (Tick's plan is always the big, easy version — "tell it 'happily ever after,'" "ask the catalogue for EVERYTHING," "just stamp an ending on it." Which is exactly why he's useful. Even a 3-year-old can hear a question that's too big to fit through the door.)

6 Swap the Chooser

On re-reads, flip the roles: you choose, your child holds **veto power** — but a veto must come with a reason. Or let a stuffed animal choose, and audit its judgment together. (Be a deliciously bad chooser. Getting overruled is the goal.)

THE VOICES — YOUR FIVE-MEMBER CAST

Rowan

Warm and wondering — but mostly, Rowan speaks with your child's voice. When Rowan decides, hand the line over: **"what do we do?"**

The Conductor

Slow as syrup, deep and sleepy, with looong pauses. The easiest voice in children's literature — and the one they'll beg for. **"No hurry... no hurry at all..."**

Tick the Ticket Mouse

Fast-fast-FAST, squeaky, tremendously official. Sit up straight when he speaks. He is very busy and everything is an emergency.

Miss Ledger

The librarian — an elderly grey tabby in a cardigan, with half-moon spectacles and a ring of tiny keys, who has seen every kind of question. Read her crisp and dry, with a purr underneath, and a pause before every **"well."**

Chapter

The little blue book that forgot its ending. Read it small and papery, like a whisper through pages — and let it snap SHUT, loudly, whenever someone tells it what to do instead of asking.

Performance note: you need exactly *one* voice you love — the Conductor is the beginner's choice — and the Train needs no voice at all: whistles, hums and rumbles are your child's job. Consistency beats talent. Nobody is grading you, and the reviews in that bedroom are already five stars.

Punch your ticket: the re-read tracker

THE GROWN-UP'S TICKET

One night is one path — but this station holds **seven endings and three secret dead ends**, and no single read finds them all. Keep this page by the bed. After each ride, check off where you landed and give the ending a name of your own invention. Completing the whole card usually takes a week or two of bedtimes ... which is rather the idea.

★ THE SEVEN ENDINGS

☐ Ending 1 _____	☐ Ending 2 _____
☐ Ending 3 _____	☐ Ending 4 _____
☐ Ending 5 _____	☐ Ending 6 _____
☐ Ending 7 _____	

Write the name YOU gave each ending on the line.

• THE THREE DEAD ENDS — A BADGE OF HONOR, NOT A RECORD OF FAILURE

☐ Wrong turn 1 _____	☐ Wrong turn 2 _____
☐ Wrong turn 3 _____	

What did each one teach you? Jot the lesson.

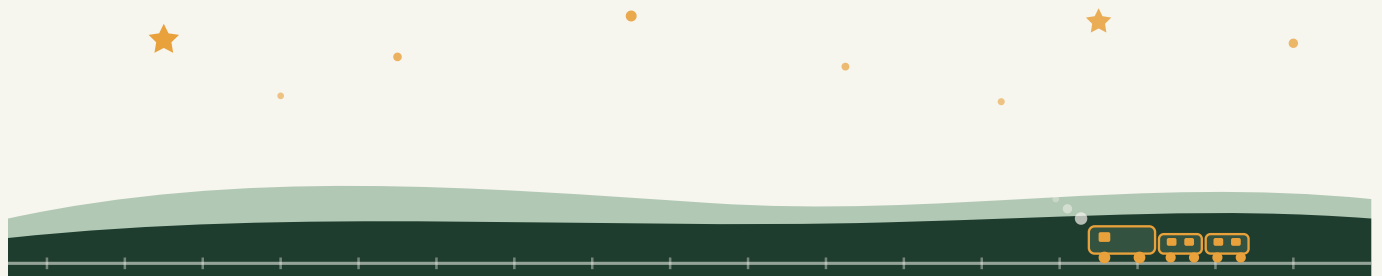
AFTER THE LAST PAGE — THREE LIGHTS-OUT QUESTIONS

1. "Which choice was the hardest tonight — and what made it hard?"
2. "What was the best question we asked tonight — and what made the book able to answer it?"
3. "Which question missed — and what did the miss teach us about the next one?"

Sixty seconds, lights low, no quiz energy. If you only have time for one, ask the second — it's the whole book in a single question.

Same station, different night.

Every reader who boards makes different choices — which means the book your child read tonight isn't quite the book they'll read tomorrow. When you've collected every ending, leave the card in the book: it's the story of how your child learned to think, one fork at a time. Next month, a new station.



The observation log: what you noticed tonight

THE GROWN-UP'S
TICKET

Page 4 tracks **where the story went**. This page tracks **how your child thought** along the way — the part that carries over to homework, playgrounds and every station still to come. After each read, take a quiet minute to score the six behaviors below. It isn't a test, and "not yet" is honest, useful information: over a few weeks, the *pattern* is what matters.

0 Not yet tonight 1 With a nudge from you 2 On their own *Write the date in the top box of each read.*

WHAT TO WATCH FOR	READ 1	READ 2	READ 3	READ 4	READ 5	READ 6
DATE						
Paused before choosing Waited, thought, or offered an idea before picking an option.						
Went back after a dead end Chose to return to the fork and try a different path.						
Named what went wrong Could say, in their own words, why a wrong turn was wrong.						
Accepted an outcome they didn't want Stayed with the story after a disappointing turn, without a meltdown or a demand to undo it.						
Kept track across pages Remembered something from earlier in the story and used it at a choice.						
Stayed with the story Attention held from the first page to the ending, without needing a break.						
Found choosing stressful tonight Tick if the forks felt like pressure rather than fun. If this gets ticked often, read one path straight through and choose only at the final fork — fewer decisions, same story.						

NOTES — ONE LINE PER NIGHT

READ 1

READ 2

READ 3

READ 4

READ 5

READ 6

Scores aren't grades, and no single night means much. What you're collecting is a picture of a growing mind at work — the same six behaviors, book after book, station after station. Keep the page with the book and compare it to next month's.

