

THE NIGHT TRAIN TO ANYWHERE · BOOK 27

The Rainbow Repair Crew

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.

Forewoman Clay — Boss of the Rainbow Repair Crew — a stout old wombat in a small yellow hard hat, fourteen storms on the job, with a satchel of tools on her back and no name on anything. Read her flat, gruff and unhurried, like someone who says the fewest words possible — she never tells Rowan what to do; she says what the job is, and waits.

Preen — The young peacock apprentice with the small crest and the big plans, who is going to be FAMOUS for this. Read Preen bright, quick and delighted with itself — “I’m the one who’s going to be FAMOUS!” — and let it go quiet and careful the first time it pours a stripe and doesn’t say a word about it.





The Night Train came on a night that smelled of rain just finished. Rowan noticed the smell before the train—wet grass, wet stone, the clean cold smell a storm leaves behind—and then the thunder, grumbling away over the hills. Rrrrrumble.

Rowan opened the window. Beyond the train lay a high wet meadow, and over it, rising out of the grass, a rainbow—huge, glowing, and BROKEN! Snapped right in the middle, its two halves ending in ragged edges with dark sky between. Bright shards of color lay in the grass below like dropped glass.

“Alllll aboard,” said the Conductor. “No hurry. Well—before sunrise. That's Dapple Valley. The storm snapped its rainbow, and the repair crew is one worker short tonight. And I'll tell you now, so you know: nobody ever finds out who mended a rainbow. That's the rule. They only see the rainbow.”

A rainbow you could FIX? Rowan grabbed the orange coat. Tick grabbed Rowan's pocket. “I would like it noted,” squeaked Tick, “that I am afraid of ladders!”

The train is waiting. Turn the page.



At the rainbow's foot was a round pond where the colors ran into the water like paint, and beside it stood a stout old wombat in a small yellow hard hat, a satchel of tools strapped across her back. "Forewoman Clay," she said. "Rainbow Repair. Fourteen storms. My cousin's home with a cold, so we're short. You'll do."

A young peacock with a small blue-green crest hopped down off a rock. HOP! "Preen," it said, fanning what tail it had. "Apprentice. I'm the one who's going to be FAMOUS for this!"

"Nobody's famous for this," said Clay. "Seven stripes, bottom to top, one at a time. Color from the pond, up the ladder, pour, smooth. When it's whole, the valley wakes and sees a rainbow. Not us. Not ever. That's the job."

Rowan looked at the broken rainbow, and the tall, tall ladder, and the dark valley below where nobody would ever know. "Not EVER?" whispered Tick. "Not ever," said Clay.

★ Mend a rainbow, and nobody will ever know it was you! Does Rowan join the crew?

- **Pick up a bucket and start on the red stripe:** *If you choose to start, the work is simple — and somewhere around the first stripe you'll want someone to know. → turn to page 5*
- **Go with Preen, who has a plan for being seen:** *If you choose Preen's plan, the valley will wake up and watch — and rainbow color doesn't keep! → turn to page 19*
- **Ask Forewoman Clay why nobody ever signs a rainbow:** *If you choose the question, she has fourteen storms of answer — and a job too big to do in one pour. → turn to page 33*



Red first! Rowan dipped the bucket in the pond where the red ran, and it came up glowing like a lantern. Up the ladder—the ladder-moths held the bottom, soft and steady—to the ragged end of the lowest stripe, and Rowan tipped the bucket. Glug, glug, glug. The red ran along the gap as if it had been waiting to, and joined, and was WHOLE!

It was the best thing Rowan had ever done. And nobody, ever, would know.

Preen, on the rung below, said, “You could scratch a little mark in it. Tiny! Just an R. Nobody'd see it from the valley, but YOU'D know it was there.” Rowan had a stick in one pocket. The red stripe glowed, smooth and new and unsigned.

★ **The red stripe is whole! Scratch one tiny mark in it — or leave it?**

- **Scratch a tiny R in the corner, just for Rowan:** *If you choose the mark, it's tiny — and a rainbow, it turns out, is not the kind of thing you carve!* → **turn to page 7**
- **Leave it whole and go down for the orange:** *If you choose to leave it, the red stripe stays perfect — and the only one who'll ever know is you.* → **turn to page 9**



— Rowan Was Here —

Just an R, in the corner. Rowan pressed the stick into the new red—and a thin line ran out from the R, then another, spreading like cracks in ice. The stripe went tick, tick, tick along its whole length. Then—CRACK!—it split, and red light poured out like a spilled bucket, down the rainbow and into the grass.

The stripe was broken again. WORSE than before, because now Rowan had broken it.

“Fourteen storms,” said Forewoman Clay, from the bottom of the ladder, not unkindly.

“Every apprentice tries it once. Rainbows don't hold a name, dear. A rainbow's a thing everybody looks at. Put a name on it and it's a thing one person owns, and it can't take the weight.”

Preen said it had only been a suggestion. Rowan looked at the empty red gap, and the pond, and the bucket. Tick looked at the stick and said, “Oh dear.”

“The mark was for me,” said Rowan. “The stripe was for THEM. Let me go back and just help!”

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



Rowan put the stick back in the pocket and went down for the orange!

Orange ran along the gap and joined. Yellow after it—Rowan was faster now, and knew to smooth it with the flat paddle before it set. Swish, swish. By the yellow, Rowan had stopped thinking about who would know and started thinking about the pour: tip slow, walk it along, smooth twice.

Preen carried buckets up, complaining—“This is NOT the famous part!”—and did it well. Forewoman Clay stood at the bottom on all four feet and said nothing, which from her was a speech.

Three stripes whole! Three to go, and the violet at the very top, thin as a thread.

Turn the page.



Green, blue, indigo! The gap closed stripe by stripe, and the rainbow got brighter as it got whole, until the meadow was lit like a lantern and Rowan's mittens were seven colors deep.

And down in the valley, one window lit. Then another. The village was waking—early, because a rainbow that bright comes right through the curtains.

“They'll see it,” said Preen, crest going up. “They'll ALL see it! And if we do the last stripe at sunrise, in front of everyone—” Rowan looked down at the windows, and up at the one thin gap left at the top, and thought about what the valley was going to see, and what it wasn't. “Hmmm,” said Rowan.

Turn the page.



END OF YOUR FREE SAMPLE

Will the rainbow be mended?

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

Chose "Go with Preen, who has a plan for being seen" or "Ask Forewoman Clay why nobody ever signs a rainbow" 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)

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Next in this file: The Grown-Up's Ticket, your parent guide to Book 27.

Books that branch. Minds that grow.

A storm has snapped the rainbow over Dapple Valley, the repair crew is one worker short — and nobody ever finds out who mended a rainbow. They [★]only see the rainbow!

Tonight, every choice belongs to YOU. Scratch a tiny R in the red stripe, just so you'll know? Wake the whole valley to watch you work? Skip the thin violet stripe, because six is nearly seven? Sunrise is coming, and the sky is leaning on the piece nobody would notice.

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 27 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 Choose What's Right — do the whole job, and need no one to know — and Break Big Problems Down, one stripe at a time.

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 Rainbow Repair Crew* together

Tonight the Night Train stops in Dapple Valley, where a storm has snapped the rainbow clean in the middle and the repair crew is one worker short. Forewoman Clay, the old wombat who runs it, has one rule: nobody ever finds out who mended a rainbow — they only see the rainbow. Preen, the young peacock apprentice, is going to be FAMOUS for this, and has a plan. Seven stripes, bottom to top, before sunrise, and your child — as Rowan — is about to learn that doing the right thing doesn't get smaller when nobody sees it, and that the hardest piece of a big job is usually the one the rest is leaning on.

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

Choose what's right

Doing the whole job well when nobody will know it was you — and finding that the wish to be seen, which is real, isn't a reason to sign the sky.

✦ SECONDARY SKILL

Break big problems down

Turning one impossible job into seven bucket-sized ones — red, then orange, then the rest — and doing all of them, including the thin violet at the top that everything else leans on.

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

Choose what's right

The habit: would we still do it if nobody knew?

The crew's rule is the skill in one line: nobody finds out who mended a rainbow; they only see the rainbow. Every dead end is a way of making the job about Rowan — a tiny R scratched in the red stripe, a crowd summoned to watch, a hard stripe skipped because nobody would count — and every good ending is Rowan doing the whole thing and needing no one to notice, even handing the last stripe to Preen and holding the ladder. Watch how the book treats the wish to be seen: it never calls it bad. Clay simply explains that a rainbow can't hold a name — the second it's somebody's, it can't take the weight. At ages 3–8 this looks wonderfully simple: *"who is this for? Would we still do it if nobody knew?"*

PARENT MOVE № 1

The Compass vs. Clock Test

When a choice is really *easy* versus *right*, **hold up two fists** — one is the clock (quick, and everybody sees), one is the compass (the right thing, and nobody does). Ask: **"Which fist is 'scratch a tiny R'? Which one is 'leave it whole'? ... Which one does Rowan want to be holding when the valley wakes up?"** Let them tap the fist. Then read on and see whether the compass cost anything — and whether it was worth it. (Use it at least once a night.)

✓ TRY SAYING

✗ INSTEAD OF

"Who is the rainbow for? Would we still mend it if nobody knew?"

"Scratch a tiny R — just so *YOU* know." (the stripe cracks, and the red runs out)

"The color's drying. Is this a show, or a job?"

"Wake the valley first so they can *WATCH*." (buckets of crust, and a crowd that goes home)

"Which stripe is the rest of them leaning on?"

"Six is nearly seven — nobody's going to count." (a rainbow folding like a bridge with no keystone)

SECONDARY

Break big problems down

The habit: seven small buckets, not one big one — and don't skip the thin one.

A snapped rainbow is too big for one bucket. In Branch C Rowan pours all seven colors at once and gets a brown smear; then lines up seven small buckets, one color each, and the night gets smaller — red, then orange, seven times a thing one bucket can do. Then the twist at the top: the violet is the thinnest, hardest piece, and it's the keystone. Six stripes sag like a bridge with the middle missing. Breaking a job down isn't only about making pieces small; it's about noticing which small piece the others depend on, and doing that one too.

PARENT MOVE № 2

The Backwards Map

When the big goal appears, **start from the whole rainbow and walk backwards**. Ask: **"For the rainbow to hold, what has to be there? ... And before that? ... Which piece would break everything if we skipped it?"** Count the steps on your fingers — seven stripes, bottom to top — and put a special finger on the violet. Working backwards turns one impossible wish into a checkable plan with its keystone marked.

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 Preen do?**" (Preen's answer at every fork is the one where somebody's watching — "*scratch an R!*" "*wake the valley first!*" "*six is nearly seven!*" — and it's quick and sure, which is exactly why it's useful. Even a 3-year-old can hear a plan that's really about being seen. And watch it learn: in two of the endings Preen pours the violet, at the very top, and comes down without saying a word about it.)

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.

Forewoman Clay

The stout old wombat in the small yellow hard hat, fourteen storms on the crew, with a tool-satchel on her back and no name on anything. Read her flat, gruff and unhurried, like someone who uses the fewest words possible — she never tells Rowan what to choose; she says what the job is, and waits.

Preen

The young peacock apprentice with the small crest and the big plans. Read Preen bright, quick and delighted with itself — "*I'm going to be FAMOUS for this!*" — and let it go quiet and careful the first time it pours a stripe and doesn't mention it.

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.

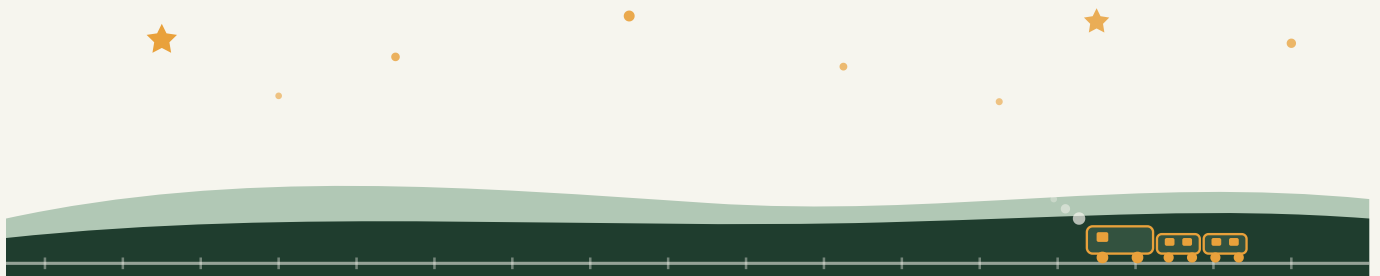
AFTER THE LAST PAGE — THREE LIGHTS-OUT QUESTIONS

1. "Which choice was the hardest tonight — and what made it hard?"
2. "Nobody in the valley knows who mended the rainbow. Did that make it worth less — or more? What's something we did today that nobody saw?"
3. "Which stripe was the hardest one tonight, and why couldn't it be skipped? What's the 'violet stripe' in something big we're doing?"

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.

