

The child continued riding on Notches' back as he followed the ghost through the place, passing by statues and railroads.

Steam locomotives were placed at random points of the place the child noticed, some with statues inside the coaches.

Even diesels, electrics, and many others scattered around Sodor as Notches passed everything, looking like everything was frozen.

The child sits up a little to look at the surroundings as they head towards what looks like a mountain, and Notches feels his fur tugging a little.

"Is something wrong back there?" Notches asked.

"No, nothing is wrong," the child answered. "I'm just looking at my surroundings."

"Mhh," Notches nodded as he continued following the ghost. "Sodor is famous for its vehicles."

"Really?" the child asked.

"Yeah," Notches nodded. "They all work on Sodor to help many people and even take visitors from different countries to travel."

The child stayed silent after Notches explained, looking thoughtful about what he said before he stopped when he entered a vast forest filled with animal statues and then stopped at the mountain.

Stephanie hopped off Notches' shoulders and took off her necklace, transforming back into her human self as she scooped him up into her arms, allowing him to climb into her sweater's hood.



The ghost transformed into their human form and pointed at a tree trunk near the mountain before disappearing into thin air.

"...*That was weird.*" Notches frowned.

She walked up to the tree trunk and felt around it curiously with her hands, feeling something in front of her that was a little loose.

“*What do you feel?*” Notches asked, walking up next to her.

“I feel a door,” the child responded.

She pushed on the log and heard a *click* before a door opened when she moved her hands back, revealing the inside.

“*A secret compartment!*” Notches perked.

“It’s almost like the desk back at *Shining Time Station!*” the child exclaimed.

“*That’s right!*” Notches nodded. “*What’s inside?*”

They poked their heads into the log and discovered a worn-out bag with a journal beside it.

The child reached in and took the items out from inside, placed the worn-out bag next to her, and noticed it was filled with something heavy as she held the journal close to her chest, closing the log’s secret door before sitting on top of it.

“*What’s that?*” Notches asked, hopping on her lap.

“It looks like a journal,” the child responded.

The child opened the journal and noticed handwriting from someone with a dark blue ribbon as a bookmark and a small flower symbol.

Strangely, it looked like the same symbol on the pocket watch she had found, as Notches cocked his head a little in curiosity.

The child went to the first page of the journal, and the page reads;

November 21st, 1987

You wouldn’t believe what happened today at the *Shining Time Station!*

I was told to wait as my dad went off to take a train to a meeting, and while waiting, I met a small man the size of a doll!

He told me his name was 'Mr. Conductor,' and he lives on the Island of Sodor.

I asked what the Island of Sodor was, and Mr. Conductor said the Island of Sodor is a magical world where steam locomotives, diesel locomotives, and any type of vehicle reside and work together to make Sodor a better place.

I felt excited and curious as Mr. Conductor explained further about the Island of Sodor, telling me some details about the island.

I wanted to ask if I could come with him to the Island of Sodor, but my dad, unfortunately, arrived before I could ask Mr. Conductor.

Mr. Conductor disappeared after my dad appeared, and I was surprised and a little sad when he disappeared and started to leave the station.

I told my dad everything about what Mr. Conductor told me, but my dad scoffed and told me that I 'shouldn't believe in a stranger's imagination.'

But it is real!

...Is it?

I need to see Mr. Conductor to see if that island is real and prove it to my dad to make him believe it!

I'll come to the station tomorrow since that is when Dad is busy with work, and there is no school that day either!

I just hope Mr. Conductor is there, though.

From: Avril Uriel.

The child cocked her head slightly after noticing the written page and flipped to the next, reading what the stranger named 'Avril' wrote.

November 22nd, 1987

When my dad was busy with work, I snuck out of the house and went to Shining Time Station, searching for Mr. Conductor as I had hoped in the previous diary entry.

And to my luck, Mr. Conductor appeared at that exact moment after I asked, "Mr. Conductor? Are you here?"

I told him what I wanted and how much I felt curious about the Island of Sodor, wanting to see it.

Mr. Conductor calmed me down and told me he could take me to the Island of Sodor, as he had done to other children he met.

I was curious about who the children were, but I followed Mr. Conductor's words as he used his whistle, and we were magically teleported into the mural of the train tunnel.

The tunnel was beautiful and had shimmers, almost like we were wading through the ocean's water.

To my surprise, Mr. Conductor had me shrink down to his size as we traveled through the tunnel and soon exited from it as we had popped out of the buffers.

After the ride through the tunnel, Mr. Conductor led me up the hill and showed me the Island of Sodor, which took me by surprise.

Millions of vehicles were around, mainly locomotives, as they were taking trucks filled with goods across the rails, and cars were driving through.

After finally arriving on the Island of Sodor, Mr. Conductor took me to the rails, and a train came over.

But it was not a normal steam train like the one back at Shining Time Station.

It was alive and had a face on the front!

I didn't scream when the train appeared but was surprised to see the live train.

Mr. Conductor helped me board the coaches the train arrived with, and we rode through the island.

During the ride, I was very excited about riding in a steam locomotive coach as I dreamed of experiencing it long ago.

We arrived at Knapford, and Mr. Conductor introduced me to Sir Topham Hatt the Second, who was with his twin sons, Bertram and Lowham.

Bertram was shy when I was introduced to him, as Lowham was confused about me, but I was patient and introduced myself.

When the adults talked in the office, I asked Bertram and Lowham about Sodor, causing Bertram to perk as Lowham started talking.

Lowham told me Sodor was a part of the Mainland (England), and he and his brother usually saw their cousins whenever Christmas or Thanksgiving came.

Of course, Bertram asked if I was American, and I said yes, even telling them it was my first time arriving in Sodor.

Lowham got excited and took me to their grandfather while Bertram followed, telling him they wanted to show me around Sodor.

And that is how I learned most about Sodor, from traveling with their Grandfather.

He soon took me to a playground and introduced me to his friends, a big group of people, to be honest.

They were friendly towards me and showed me games to play, and somehow I managed to win hide-and-seek.

I love being in Sodor and meeting with my friend, who we call the 'Dream Team,' having dreams of being a firefighter, a postman, a conductor, an engineer, a builder, and for me?

I have a dream of solving Sodor's mysteries!

It was a surprise for my friends, but they agreed with my dream, and we took this picture with the help of Bertram's grandfather's photographer.

For my father, I decided to keep this world a secret since he would never believe my words if I told him.

Ooh, we're going to play a new game!

I'll write later!

From: Avril Uriel.

A soft smile appeared on the child's face as she continued reading the pages written in the diary, explaining how close friends Avril was to his friends, from playing little pranks to showing them what he had discovered.

His relationship with his dad was strained because of his disbelief in Sodor and because he always forced him to become a business worker instead of pursuing his dream.

It almost sounds familiar...

But the picture the page said was missing, causing her to feel confused about where the picture could be.

Searching through the island could help her find it.

She flipped through the pages as the handwriting got better and more cursive before stumbling upon a page that perked her interest.

January 15, 1997,

I found the most incredible thing!

I searched my grandfather's house after he passed away from smoking, and I stumbled upon a secret compartment near his bed.

The secret compartment had what looked like a pocket watch inside with strange symbols and a letter that told me it was now passed down to him, which he had created.

I took the pocket watch and showed it to my friends when we met, telling them what my grandfather had written to me.

There was some suspicion that it could've been fake, and nothing was weird about it.

I accepted what they told me and decided to use the pocket watch for the time, noticing the time was not right.

But the pocket watch proved wrong when I turned the clock's arms to the exact time, and when I pressed the top, I had transformed into a half-goat, half-human hybrid!

After I changed into this hybrid, people started to panic, and I joined them by tripping over my new legs and making animal noises.

I spent time trying to figure out how to use the pocket watch, finally turning back to normal when Bertram and Lowham's father entered, and we pretended nothing had happened.

After he had left, we were gobsmacked that the pocket watch I thought was an ordinary pocket watch had transformed me into a goat hybrid.

Everyone told me I should hide the pocket watch since it was dangerous for a teenager and consider doing something else.

But I was amazed at its power and decided to use it for good, even though there was some concern among the friend group.

So, that is how I discovered that the pocket watch my grandfather gave me is a powerful item used for the name of good.

From: Avril Uriel.

“Hey, that’s the pocket watch I found!” the child perked.

“It does sound like it,” Notches nodded. “Avril might be the guy I saw transforming and saving me too.”

“Really?” the child perked.

“Yep,” he nodded. “He was a very nice man. I wish you could meet him someday.”

The child nodded in agreement after Notches told her before looking at the next page curiously.

She came across the end of the journal, looking confused as it read;

January 25th, 1997,

Something amazing happened today!

I was hiking in the mountains with my friends, and although Bertram and Lowham were panting and huffing at the end, we just continued.

As we were walking down the path, I suddenly tripped over something in the ground and nearly fell over the side, but Henry caught me before I could fall entirely.

When I was pulled up from the side of the trail, I inspected what I had tripped over, seeing what looked like a massive crystal!

It had split into different parts after I popped the entire thing out, so I took the parts with me as a single crystal.

I took the crystal with me after seeing it, and when I arrived home, I washed it off with some warm water in a bowl to loosen the dirt from it.

The phone rang, I walked away from the crystal to answer it, and Kathleen called to tell me about her day.

The call went a little longer than I anticipated, and something happened while talking with one of my friends.

So when I returned to the crystal, all the color had drained, and it was now surrounded with glitter where the water used to be.

Somehow the crystal itself absorbed the water and transformed it into glitter!

Ironically, I was excited about what I had discovered and kidnapped Bertram and Lowham, including Henry and the others, from their homes.

They were rightfully mad after being kidnapped, but I showed them what happened, even showing the same gemstone and the process.

This time, I watched as the crystal's color drained and absorbed into the water, transforming it into glitter.

Mr. Conductor was surprised to learn that the crystal I had found was made of gold dust remnants, which he thought only Lady would produce.

But this proved to be completely different from what we all thought.

I could look further into this dust part of Sodor, and I would like to know if there are any other dusts like the Gold Dust.

To remind me, I have kept a piece of paper for making Gold Dust with my tools whenever I encounter any Dust Crystals.

From: Avril Uriel.

After reading the journal, the child cocked her head slightly as she said, ““Dust Crystals?””

“I never heard of that before,” Notches responded as the child closed it.

The child looked thoughtful as she placed the journal into her sweater's pocket before picking up the worn-out bag next to her.

She noticed it was worn down from age and was heavy when she picked it up, but it did not rip when she lifted it... for the moment until it did so and the contents fell on the ground.

“Well, that works,” Stephanie sighed as she placed the bottomless bag to the side as Notches was chuckling.

Notched jumped off the child’s lap after the bag ripped and looked at the worn-out bag’s contents on the ground.

There were tools inside, ranging from a screwdriver with the tip covered in dirt, a hammer, a water sprayer, and a small journal.

‘How many journals does this Avril write?’ the child thought as she took out the small journal.

She opened the small journal, seeing the same handwriting from Avril and the process of making this ‘Gold Dust.’

A small note on the side read;

I have created the first Dust Whistle that allows me to travel between Sodor and Shining Time Station, even to avoid my dad whenever he comes around.

My friend Crystal helped me create the Dust Whistle and test it with the Gold Dust Sodor thrives on, which is a success!

If we’re lucky, we can make multiple Dust Whistles for conductors to use for travel without running low on Gold Dust!

But I can’t store the Gold Dust anywhere without the Dust Whistle; it is the only source for keeping it other than the conductor whistles I helped them make for themselves.

The child looked thoughtful and reached up to the Dust Whistle around her neck, looking at it thoughtfully as she looked at the gold symbol.

But it does not make any sense with the other symbols on it.

She shrugged as she put the Dust Whistle away, placing the journal into her sweater’s pocket, and turned to the mountain with Notches, watching as the ghost reappeared and pointed at something in the rock before disappearing.

“There’s another secret compartment?” Notches asked, mostly muttering.

“Mhh, that could be,” the child nodded.

The child and Notches approached where the ghost pointed and looked, seeing something golden stuck within the rock.

“Hey,” Notches perked. *“Is that what I think it is?”*

“It looks like it,” the child nodded.

She pushed her glasses into place and picked up the water bottle, spraying at the section where it was sticking out.

After a few sprays, the child placed the bottle away, took out the hammer, and aimed her screwdriver, using it as a chisel as she chipped at the rock from the crystal.

The chipping lasted a few minutes before finally removing all the rock around the golden item, coming across a hand-sized golden crystal!

The child took the crystal out of the rock and stared at it with surprise, finally seeing what this ‘Dust Crystal’ was.

“This is what a Dust Crystal looks like?” the child asked.

“It doesn’t say much, does it?” Notches asked as the child looked at him.

“Yeah,” the child nodded. “I’ll get a journal of mine and try sketching them out to let others and maybe Avril know what they look like.”

“Good idea.” Notches nodded.

She placed the Dust Crystal into her sweater’s pocket before stopping when she noticed something else sticking out of the rock.

“What’s that?” The child looked confused.

The child took out the sprayer and sprayed at the section before using the hammer and screwdriver to chip at the rock.

She sees something silver underneath, so the child continues to chip at the rock and pauses a few times to spray it with water.

Eventually, the child finally uncovered what was silver and took out another gemstone, except it was a Dust Crystal itself!

“Another one?” the child blinked. “I thought there was supposed to be only Gold Dust.”

She stared at the crystal with confusion before placing it into her sweater’s pocket, double-checking if any more Dust Crystals were poking out.

After double-checking, the child watched as the ghost transformed into an orb and toward one of the buildings.

“I think he wants us to enter that home,” the child perked, picking Notches up before following the ghost with the items and Dust Crystals she had collected in her sweater’s pocket.

But it was a little heavy for her to carry them all, and she was worried about her pocket ripping, reminding herself she needed a bag.

The child followed the ghost while carrying Notches in her arms and approached the house as the door automatically opened, signaling they could enter.

There was some hesitation as the child stared at the door, but she took a deep breath and entered, closing the door behind her.

She turned back to the ghost as the ghost mentioned the stove in the kitchen as it was connected to the dining room before disappearing into thin air.

“He wants me to cook something?” the child said out loud.

“I don’t think he means literally cooking something.” Notches spoke as the child placed him down. *“I think he is trying to show us something else.”*

The child perked after Notches explained before walking over to the stove and reaching into her pockets, taking out the two Dust Crystals she found and placing them on the counter.

She reached inside and removed the small journal from her sweater's pocket, opening it to the first page where the handwritten message was on the back of the front cover.

Only two pages from the journal were written, but the others were blank.

She wondered why this stranger only stopped on Gold Dust and did not write anything about the *silver* Dust Crystal.

'Maybe this is a good time to write down and draw sketches of different Dust Crystals,' the child thought.

The first section of the page reads;

1. *Gather pieces of crystals from Muffer Mountain and be careful not to break any open to get sick from the Wild Dust.*

The child looked over at the crystals worriedly, wondering what is 'Wild Dust,' flipping to the second page as it reads,

Black Goo: *This Black Goo results from mixing two or more different Dusts together while creating them and is very dangerous to use.*

It will corrupt any living being in contact with it and be permanent if nothing can reverse the effects on the victim.

By making this error, the user will also become corrupt.

Processed Dust: *Processed Dust can transform any electronic or vehicle into half-humanoids if touched or consumed instantly.*

It can be reversible if used properly Dust reverses the effects.

However, there are many different color types and results for each Processed Dust; some are more unique than others.

***Wild Dust:** Wild Dust does not affect humans much, leaving behind a runny nose, drained energy, and a coughing fit.*

It can transform electronics and vehicles into half-humanoids if touched or consumed over a week or two, giving them sentience/life.

Will not last long and will slowly revert after ten or more years pass and will soon lose their sentience.

“Oh, okay,” the child sighed in relief. “So I need to be careful with accidentally breaking these Dust Crystals open, and I would get sick. It’s better than getting COVID-19 back in 2019.”

She glanced at the camera from the corner of her eye with a slight grimace expression with Notches but noted the ‘**Black Goo**,’ not wanting to get herself corrupted if she accidentally mixed the Gold and Silver Dust Crystals.

The child flipped over to the first page after reading the description of what the Dusts do, and the second half of the first page reads;

2. Take a large pot and fill the pot with clean water up to the rivets, and place the pot onto a stove.

The child placed the book down and searched the house, eventually finding a large pot and going over to the sink.

She placed the pot in and started the water, filling it as she had one hand in to check if the water was up to the rivets.

When she felt her fingertips touching the water, the child removed her hand and turned the water off, picking the heavy pot up and placing it on the stove.

She dried her hands off and picked the book up, reading the second part of the first page;

3. *Bring the water to a boil and place the crystals inside the same color scheme, but **do not mix** two or more crystals of different colors in the pot.*

The child placed the book down and turned the stove on, watching patiently as the water soon boiled after two or three minutes.

She picked up the golden Dust Crystal and placed it into the water, watching it sink to the bottom, and picked the journal up as she had brought the boiling water down to a medium.

The second half of the first page reads;

4. *Stir the water gently with a spoon and watch as it turns into color until the crystals are drained of their color or until they are translucent and the water transforms into dust.*

The child took a wooden spoon and started to stir the water inside the pot, watching in amazement as the water slowly transformed into golden glitter.

The crystal in the middle was drained from its color and glitter and was translucent.

The child turned the stove off after the water transformed into glitter and picked the journal up, reading it as the next part of the first page reads;

5. *Once the crystals are either drained of their color or translucent, take the drained crystals out and pour the dust into a whistle of your choosing.*

The child placed the book down, picked up the Dust Whistle from around her neck, and turned to the Dust curiously.

Suddenly, the Gold Dust lifted from inside the pot and went into the Dust Whistle, flipping it with fresh Gold Dust, and each drop of the Dust filled the whistle to the top.

“I did it!” the child cheered.

“*Fantastic!*” Notches smiled.

“I can get back home now!” the child smiled back, then paused after mentioning ‘home’ and muttered, “But *where* can I go home now?”

“*What do you mean?*” Notches asked.

She looked at the Dust Whistle around her neck thoughtfully, her expression a mixture between worry and disappointment.

“Well,” she began as she looked at the Dust Whistle. “I was kicked out of my house by my supposed ‘parents,’” she quotes with her fingers after releasing the Dust Whistle. “But if I *do* return home... they’ll just continue controlling my life and make sure I do their bidding.”

She crossed her arms over her chest and slowly added, “And this world will be forgotten, and these people will be stone statues forever.”

She forced herself to stop as she shook her head, mumbling, “No, no, no, no, I don’t need to work myself up over that.”

Notches looked confused after the child muttered, but instead of pressuring her to explain more, he just went silent to let her take her time.

When she noticed two extra written works on the page, she placed her Dust Whistle around her neck and picked up the journal.

The two read;

6. *Use the dust at your own pace to help vehicles transform into different forms or transport from one spot to another.*
7. ***Hint:** Make sure you restock dust when you are low.*

After reading the two, the child blinked in confusion but noted the number seven, knowing she needed to fill it if she ran low on Gold Dust.

“Hey, Notches?” the child spoke as Notches perked.

“*Yeah?*” Notches responded.

“Uh,” she showed the writing on number six to Notches and asked, “What does this mean?”

Notches read what number six read and responded, “*I have no idea what that meant.*”

The child looked confused after Notches answered her question before, but it started to give some *curiosity* at what the Dusts do.

A thought entered the child's mind as she placed the journal down, looking at the Dust Whistle around her neck.

She turned the knob at the end, and it switched from the Gold Dust symbol to the silver symbol, wondering if it was *Silver* Dust.

So the child removed the drained crystal from the inside and repeated the same process as before with the previous crystal.

It was lucky because the pot was already cleaned out from Gold Dust, and there was no sign of any leftovers from accidentally mixing the Dust.

She placed the silver Dust Crystal inside once the water came to a boil and lowered the temperature from overboiling, watching as the water transformed into Silver Dust.

The child used her Dust Whistle to absorb the Silver Dust, seeing that the capsule that showed the amount of Dust inside was full.

“Okay,” the child noted with a nod. “Now two of the Dusts are filled. We need to figure out what to do next.”

The child collected her items, returned everything to be polite, and picked up Notches before watching as the same ghost appeared and exited the house.

She transformed into her rat form with the Zodiac Pocket Watch, pausing when she noticed that her items had magically disappeared, but reminded herself animals do not wear clothes.

Once she had transformed into her rat form, Stephanie climbed onto Notches' back, returning to the station.

“Alright,” the child nodded as she climbed off Notches' back. “I'll return to the office and transform into my human form inside, then let you in.”

“Good idea,” Notches agreed.

So the child squeezed herself through the same hole and went through the maze before entering the office, seeing nothing much that had changed inside.

She removed the necklace around her neck and transformed back into her human form before walking over to the door and opening it just enough for Notches to squeeze through and close it before any Nightmares entered.

Once they were both in the office, the same ghost appeared and looked over at Sir Topham Hatt, mentioning the statue of Sir Topham Hatt with a hand, the man said in the letter before pointing the Dust Whistle around her neck.

“You... want me to use the Dust Whistle?” the child slowly asked.

The ghost nodded after the child slowly asked and floated over to Sir Topham Hatt, having a soft, sad expression before disappearing.

The child was confused and hesitant about using the Dust Whistle but took a deep breath and took it out as she exhaled gently.

“Here goes nothing.” The child switched from silver to gold and blew into the whistle, watching as the Gold Dust emerged from the whistle and went to the statue.



The statue soon came to life after a whistle, and Sir Topham Hatt blinked, wobbling a little before falling out of the chair, causing the child to scramble over to him and grab him around his chest before he could collapse as Notches scrambled back in startlement.

But his weight against her small frame was heavy, and she stumbled a little when he went into her as his hat fell off, but she kept herself up as she helped him onto his bottom.

The child picked up his hat and knelt to his height, asking, “Are you alright, Sir?”

Sir Topham Hatt blinked dizzily after the child asked and looked over at her, seeing her standing with worry while holding his hat.

“I’m fine,” he answered before noticing the Dust Whistle around her neck.

He perked after seeing the whistle and asked, “Wait a minute! Where did you find the whistle?”

The child handed him his hat, and he placed it on his head as she explained, “I found it while in a station. It was in a secret compartment-”

“Underneath the ticket booth.” they both simultaneously finished.

Stephanie perked after Sir Topham Hatt finished her sentence with her.

“You’ve found the message left by Mr. Conductor?” Sir Topham Hatt asked.

“This?” The child reached into the pocket of her blue jeans and showed the message to Sir Topham Hatt, now understanding the term *‘Stoke up the magic in the mountain, and the Lady will smile. Then watch the swirls that spin so well.’*

“Yes, that!” Sir Topham Hatt nodded. “Thank you for helping me.”

“You’re welcome,” the child nodded before holding a hand out to him.

He took her hand as she helped him up to his feet, surprising him when she successfully helped him rise without strain.

Notches walked back up to the child as he looked up at Sir Topham Hatt, and the child bent down to pick him up, holding him in her arms as he climbed onto her shoulders and into her hood.

“Sir?” the child politely asked as Notches put his head on her shoulder. “What is happening? Where did those ‘Nightmares’ come from? Who is leaving these messages? When did this all happen? Why is this happening? And how did I get here in the first place?”

Sir Topham Hatt cocked an eyebrow after the child asked and was about to respond when she said, “I added the last part because I wanted to finish the main questions, even though I know *how* I got here.” she paused a little and added, “Somewhat.”

“Well,” Sir Topham Hatt gently said. “Let me explain what is happening here, so I can give you some information about this world and why these Nightmares are running loose. It may be long, but we’ll take this time to explain.”

The child nodded after Sir Topham Hatt explained before he asked, “Oh, I forgot to introduce myself properly, but my name is Sir Topham Hatt the Third.”

The child froze for a second, remembering she did *not* have a name or even was named in the first place!

So, she instead said, right off the bat, “Stephanie. Stephanie Allen is my name, Sir.”

Then she looked at Notches and responded, pointing to the cat with a finger, “And this is Notches, my pet cat.”