

“I can’t go out there, Sir!” Stephanie exclaimed as Sir Topham Hatt was about to open the door.

“Why not?” Sir Topham Hatt asked, barely opening the door.

“I only know how to transform into a rat!” Stephanie protested as she felt afraid. “That’s the only one! I’ll get myself discovered and stomped on before we can do anything else!”

Sir Topham Hatt looked confused after Stephanie exclaimed before perking as he turned away from the door, “Oh. So you must’ve discovered only *one* of these Zodiacs.”

“One?” Stephanie repeated in confusion. “There’s more than one?”

“Of course!” Sir Topham Hatt nodded as he placed his hands on his jacket’s collar. “Didn’t you study astrology back home?”

“No,” Stephanie slowly shook her head but was silently grimacing after he mentioned ‘home.’

“We only sped through history, math, English, P.E. and called that good.”

Sir Topham Hatt looked more confused after Stephanie explained as she paused after he mentioned the ‘second’ and ‘third’ Zodiac.

“Wait a moment.” She took her pocket watch out and looked at it, seeing the second and third symbols next to the Rat Zodiac, slowly piecing them together.

She pocketed her pocket watch, took out the journal from her sweater’s pocket, and opened it, looking at the writing on the journal.

Sir Topham Hatt perked after noticing the journal as she flipped through the pages, seeing the handwriting said, *‘transformed into a half-goat and half-human hybrid.’*

She placed the journal down and reached into her sweater’s pocket again, taking out another journal and flipping through it, noticing the pages for the Dusts, but there were a few other pages with the title: *‘Zodiacs.’*

“Why didn’t I notice that?!” Stephanie softly exclaimed as Sir Topham Hatt noticed the journal in her hands. “I must’ve sped through the pages without looking twice.”

“Then you need to slow down a little, Steph,” Notches chuckled from her sweater’s hood as Stephanie looked at him with a faint glare.

“Is that my friend’s journal?” Sir Topham Hatt asked.

Stephanie perked as she looked at him and asked, “Avril is your friend?”

“Yes,” he nodded. “But how did you find it? He was carrying it during that battle a few hours ago.”

‘Hours?’ Stephanie thought. “He thought it was hours?”

She decided to stay silent after Sir Topham Hatt asked before looking back at the journal, looking at the listed Zodiacs Avril wrote.

Mostly silently scolding herself for not noticing the second half of the Zodiacs or even *studying* Zodiacs before maintaining the pocket watch itself.

The first page reads;

Aries/Falcon/Rat:

Gemstone: Diamond

- *Aries Zodiac: The Aries Zodiac transforms you into a satyr, a mythical being half-goat and half-human. (Species can determine with whoever wields the pocket watch itself.)*
 - *Can rapidly heal over time.*
 - *Can use the abilities of a goat.*
 - *Has limitless stamina.*
 - *Has strength beyond peak humans.*
 - *Incredibly fast.*
 - *Pyrokinesis: fire manipulation.*
- *Falcon Zodiac: The Falcon Zodiac transforms you into a falcon or a half-bird and half-human hybrid. (Species can determine with whoever wields the pocket watch itself.)*
 - *Pyrokinesis.*
 - *Use the abilities of a falcon.*
 - *Can transform into a harpy.*

- *Rat Zodiac: The Rat Zodiac transforms you into a rat or a half-rat and half-human hybrid. (Species can determine with whoever wields the pocket watch itself.)*
 - *Can bring drawings to life.*
 - *Can use the abilities of a rodent.*

After reading the page about the Aries Zodiac, the Falcon Zodiac, and the Rat Zodiac, Stephanie felt curious, putting the journal away with the second.

“Okay,” Stephanie pushed back some hair from her face as Notches perked. “Maybe I could be stronger if I focus on either the Aries Zodiac or the Falcon Zodiac.”

“Yes, but be careful,” Sir Topham Hatt warned. “Even with the ability of the Aries Zodiac or the Falcon Zodiac, it is still not enough to stop the Nightmares.”

Stephanie nodded, and Notches climbed out from her sweater’s hood, landing on the ground before walking next to Sir Topham Hatt.

She took the pocket watch out from her sweater’s pocket and tapped the top once to look at the clock, seeing it was still pointing at the first three Zodiacs.

She closed the cover and pressed the top down again, soon feeling her body transforming.

Her legs curled into the legs of a ram with a tail, with two horns curled over her head and her ears growing long and flopping down, even her hair turning from blue to pure white, and a collar of fur was around her neck, including around her ankles, chest, and arms.

Her body gets covered in fur, but she only wears a blue sleeveless dress that reaches down to her knees.

After the transformation, Stephanie opened her eyes, and her pupils were rectangular instead of round, causing her to exclaim as she lifted her hands up but paused as she blinked, “Whoa! I can see everywhere?”

“That’s one of the abilities with the Aries Zodiac,” Sir Topham Hatt explained as the ‘camera’ showed Stephanie’s eyesight, which showed every square inch of the office. “Avril once transformed into his Aries form and was a little overwhelmed with the vision.” he paused a little as he moved his arm forward to gently hold her arm in case she wobbled. “Are you overwhelmed?”

“I am a little,” Stephanie nodded before chuckling but moved her arm away from Sir Topham Hatt, who looked faintly confused. “But this looks so much different because I am wearing glasses.”



She gingerly took a step forward but was shaking a little because of her newfound legs, and Sir Topham Hatt was prepared to grab her in case she fell over, but managed to get to the door as she felt hesitant.

“Be careful, Stephanie,” Sir Topham Hatt assured, placing a hand on her shoulder. “I’ll be right behind you.”

“And I am following after you, too,” Notches nodded confidently.

Stephanie nodded and soon opened the door, exiting the office with Sir Topham Hatt and Notches behind.

The goblin-like Nightmares perked after Stephanie stepped out from the office with Sir Topham Hatt and Notches, and she instantly stopped, looking worried after they saw her.

Then they started to run right towards her, causing her to panic and feel overwhelmed with the Nightmares coming in different directions.

“Don’t panic, don’t panic!” Sir Topham Hatt assured as he had his hands on her shoulders.

But Stephanie panicked when the goblin-like Nightmares attacked them, grabbing and tugging their clothes, hair, or fur.

They even grabbed at Stephanie’s long hair and collar with the Aries Zodiac sign.

“Let go of us!” Sir Topham Hatt frowned, giving one of them a good right hook, but got his tie grabbed by one of the goblin-like Nightmare and was choked.

Notches were hissing and scratching at the Nightmares attacking them, giving some good scratches that caused some bleeding while others were being bitten.

Stephanie perked and lifted one of her hands, focusing on its heat before emitting a small ball of fire in her palm.

Some of the goblin-like Nightmares perked after seeing the small ball of flame as Stephanie swung her hand down, emitting a small wave of fire that hit the group of Nightmares, causing them to be launched backward with a shriek of pain.

The Nightmares instantly scrambled back after Stephanie produced fire from her hand while releasing Sir Topham Hatt's tie and Notches' tail.

"There you go," Sir Topham Hatt nodded, adjusting his tie from being choked as Stephanie quickly hid her necklace to keep it from being yanked off during battle. "Keep going."

Stephanie focused more on her fire ability as the goblin-like Nightmares chased towards them before shrieking when Stephanie flung her hands around, making small waves of fire that caused them to scramble backward as Sir Topham Hatt was behind, keeping an eye out.

"That's right!" Stephanie huffed. "Don't come -!"

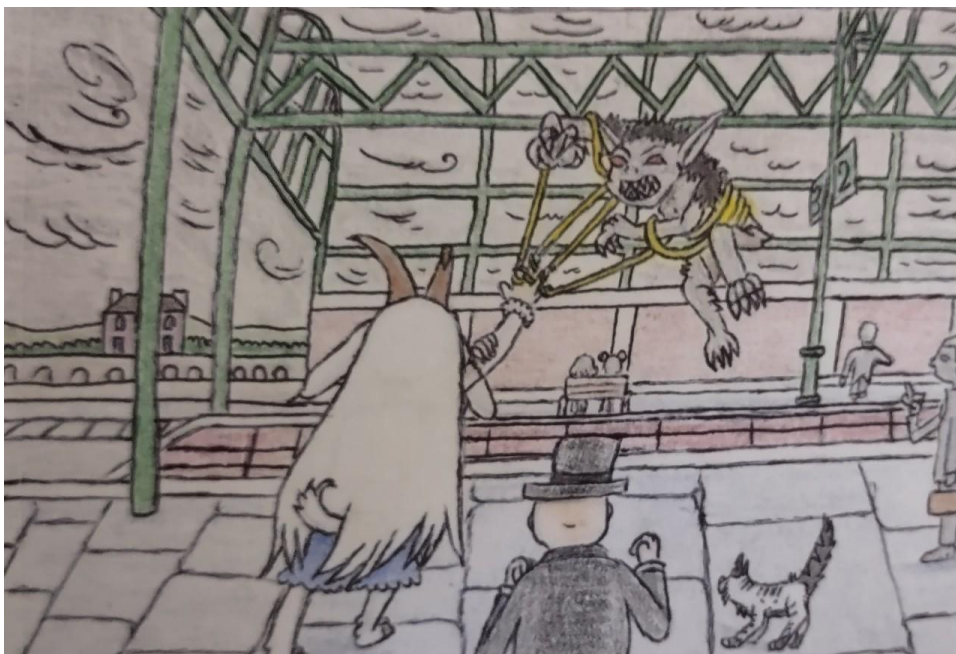
One of the goblin-like Nightmares was heading toward her from behind without Sir Topham Hatt noticing, and she perked after seeing it approaching and whipped around in front of Sir Topham Hatt, kicking it across the face with a heel that caused it to poof into smoke.

But the smoke soon reformed into the goblin-like Nightmare as it chuckled before shrieking when Stephanie moved her fire-covered hand towards it, not liking the brightness it emitted.

"Alright," Stephanie spoke as they were surrounded by goblin-like Nightmares while Sir Topham Hatt was prepared with balled fists. "This isn't working."

"I'm afraid I have to agree with you," Sir Topham Hatt nodded.

Stephanie flinched as one of the larger goblin-like Nightmares jumped towards them, moving her hands up as the fire vanished, but instead, *golden threads* came from wrapped around her fingers and towards the goblin-like Nightmare.



The goblin-like Nightmare was soon wrapped in these golden threads, and Stephanie, Sir Topham Hatt, and Notches looked surprised, hovering in the air while struggling as it was wrapped around their wrists, ankles, and body.

“I can do that?!” Stephanie exclaimed after the threads appeared.

“I never saw that before!” Sir

Topham Hatt nodded.

“*Me either!*” Notches added.

Stephanie then noticed something in the middle of the goblin-like Nightmare’s chest, seeing a heart-shaped object.

Curious, Stephanie flicked her fingers as the gold threads wrapped around the goblin-like Nightmare’s heart-shaped object, causing it to stiffen when it was covered.

She tightened the strings, and the heart-shaped object snapped, causing the goblin-like Nightmare to disappear, but it did not reform after it snapped.

“Stephanie,” Sir Topham Hatt spoke as he witnessed the same thing. “I think you found a way to defeat them.”

Stephanie nodded in agreement after discovering her newfound power, and the Nightmares continued attacking all three.

Stephanie used both fire abilities, goat-like abilities, and her newfound string ability, making the goblin-like Nightmares weak to reveal their ‘cores’ before using her string ability to completely defeat them.

Sir Topham Hatt helped Stephanie by protecting her back whenever she used the string ability, giving the goblin-like Nightmares a good right and left hook.

Seeing they were stronger than them, they started to leave the station as fast as they could as Stephanie tossed flame balls toward them, even using her string ability to wrap some of them that were defeated.

When the last goblin-like Nightmare disappeared with a good shatter of the heart-shaped object, the station was empty of these Nightmares, and a wave of relief washed over Stephanie as she sighed and the strings disappeared.

But since she was wrapping more Nightmares with her string ability, it started to hurt her fingers with the harsh rubbing feeling, leaving some marks on her fingers.

“You did it!” Stephanie was startled when she was suddenly hugged by Sir Topham Hatt, stiffening a little when he wrapped his arms around her. “You saved Knapford from those monsters!”

“Yeah, I did!” Stephanie nodded before being released. “But won’t they return?”

“Not after they discovered what you can do,” Sir Topham Hatt mentioned. “They never return after being defeated... unless they bring someone bigger to attack.”

“Oh great,” Stephanie groaned.

“But we need to find gemstones for the pocket watch,” Sir Topham Hatt mentioned as Notches approached Stephanie. “Ever since the last battle, most gemstones had been used up, but I kept an extra diamond for activating the first two Zodiacs.”

“So we are going to find a jewelry store to find some?” Stephanie asked.

“Not exactly,” Sir Topham Hatt assured. “We have to find *natural* gemstones.”

“Oh,” Stephanie winced. “That’s going to be hard to find with all these Nightmares on the loose.”

But then she paused and added, “But I have that string ability that seemed to help a lot in getting these Nightmares away.”

Sir Topham Hatt nodded after Stephanie mentioned as she transformed back to a human, holding the pocket watch before putting it away.

“Now that Knapford is empty,” Sir Topham Hatt turned around as Stephanie perked. “Let’s rescue the people.”

A hesitant expression appeared on Stephanie’s face for a minute, but she pushed that doubt down as she watched Sir Topham Hatt walking away before following him.