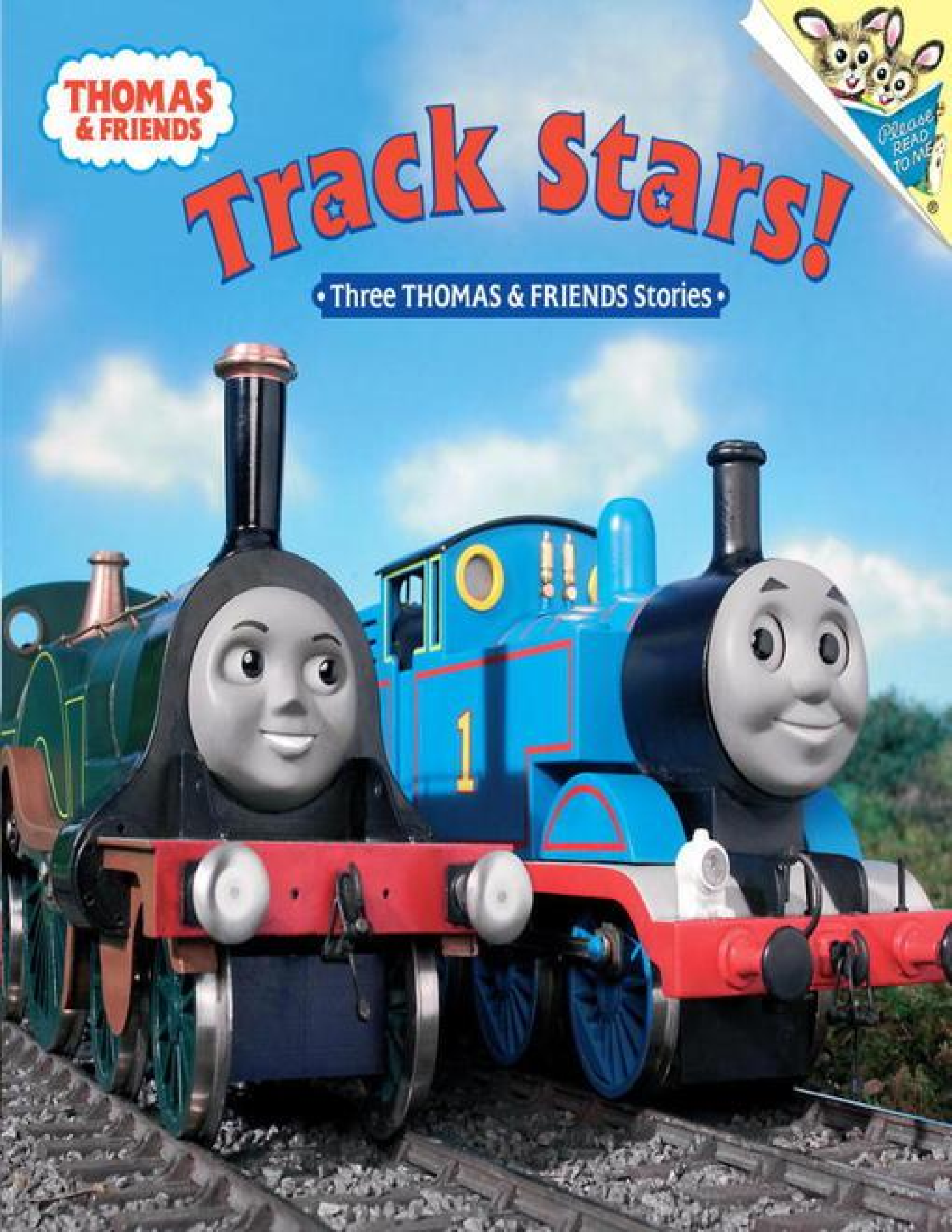
THOMAS & FRIENDS
Track Stars!
• Three THOMAS & FRIENDS Stories •
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Random House New York

A Random House PICTUREBACK® Book

Photographs by Terry Palone and Terry Permane

Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends®

Based on The Railway Series by The Reverend W Awdry

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www.randomhouse.com/kids/thomas
www.thomasandfriends.com
Library of Congress Control Number: 2005926445
eISBN: 978-0-375-98419-8

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Thomas Gets It Right

It had been a stormy night on the Island of Sodor. Telegraph poles had blown down. Tiles had blown off the station roofs. And branches had fallen onto the lines. All over the island, the storm had made a terrible mess.

Sir Topham Hatt came to Tidmouth Sheds.

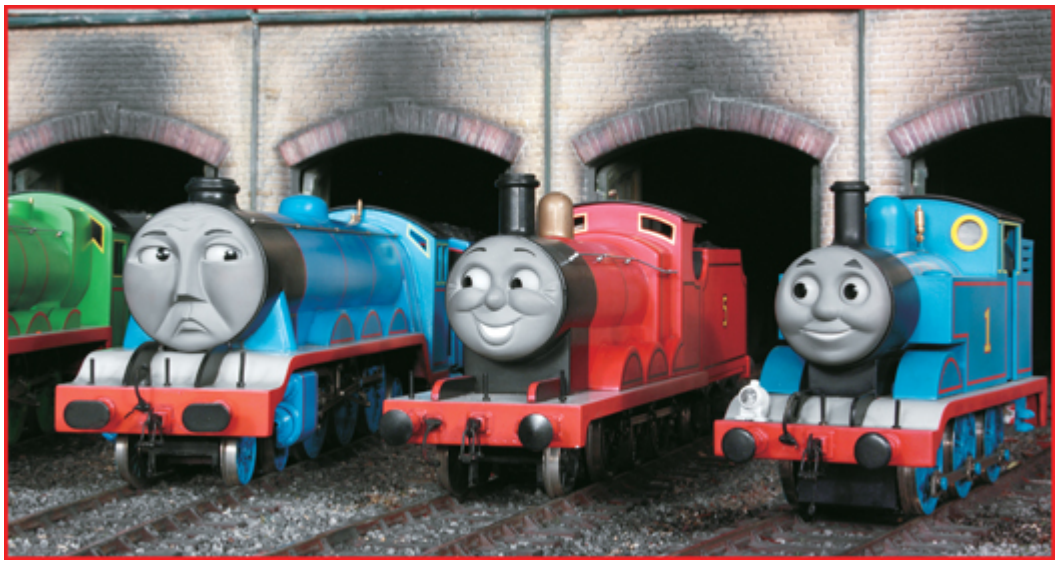
“The storm has caused confusion and delay,” he boomed. “So you must all be Really Useful Engines.”

“I’ll be the *most* useful engine,” boasted James.

“No, I will,” sniffed Gordon. “I’m the fastest—*I’ll* do the most journeys.”

Thomas hoped he could finish his Special Delivery as quickly as possible. He wanted to do the most journeys and be the most useful engine of all.

Soon all the engines were steaming away from Tidmouth Sheds.



James went to Knapford Yard to pick up the workmen.
Gordon went to the goods yard to collect telegraph poles.
Toby trundled to collect new roof tiles.

And Thomas steamed over to Maron Station. Farmer McColl was waiting for Thomas. Next to him were boxes and boxes of newly laid eggs.

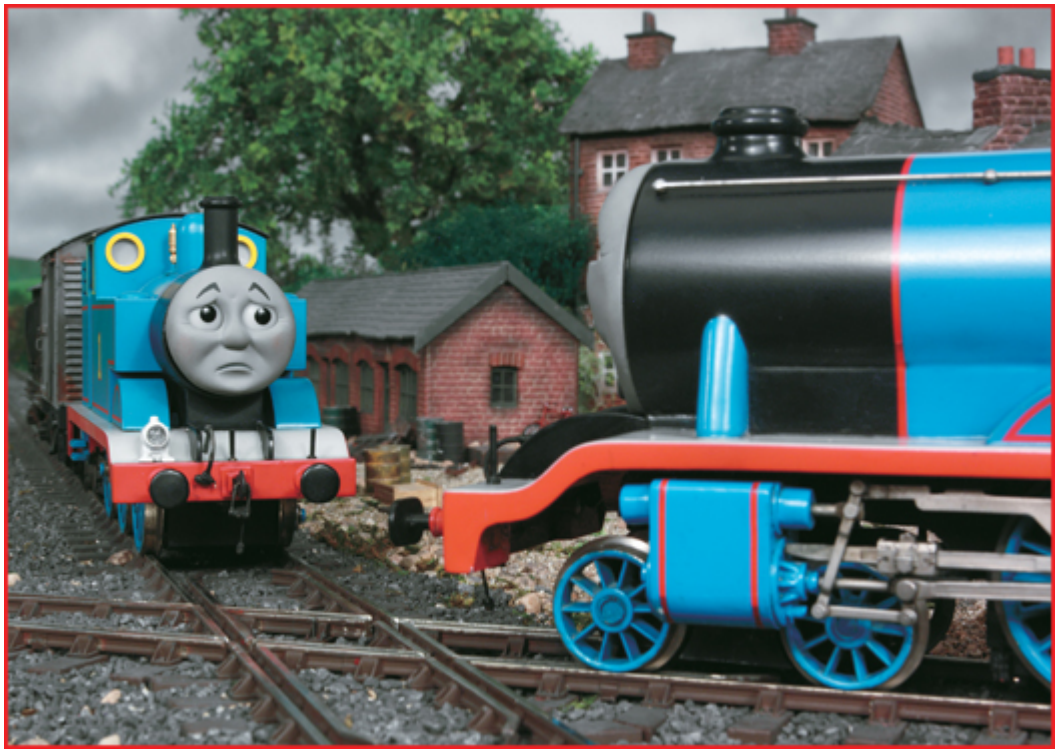
“These fresh eggs are needed across the island,” said Farmer McColl.

The station staff quickly loaded Thomas' freight cars with the eggs, and Thomas was raring to go.

"My eggs must be delivered safely," said Farmer McColl. "So I am coming to make sure you go slowly and carefully."

“Slowly,” wheeshed Thomas sadly. He wanted to finish his job quickly and make lots of journeys. Thomas gave one sad toot of his whistle and slowly pulled away.

Thomas trundled on. He huffed and puffed as gently as he could.
Thomas had to stop at a crossing.
Gordon steamed by. “Fastest and best,” he chirruped.



Gordon looked very happy. Thomas felt very sad.
Thomas pulled into Maithwaite Station.

James was waiting. He was carrying workmen. They were fixing the station-house roof. Station staff unloaded four boxes of eggs for the village store.

“How many journeys have you done?” asked James brightly.

“This is my first,” said Thomas.

“Ha!” huffed James. “I’m on my third. I’m as red as a rocket and twice as fast!” And he steamed quickly out of the station.

Thomas was upset.

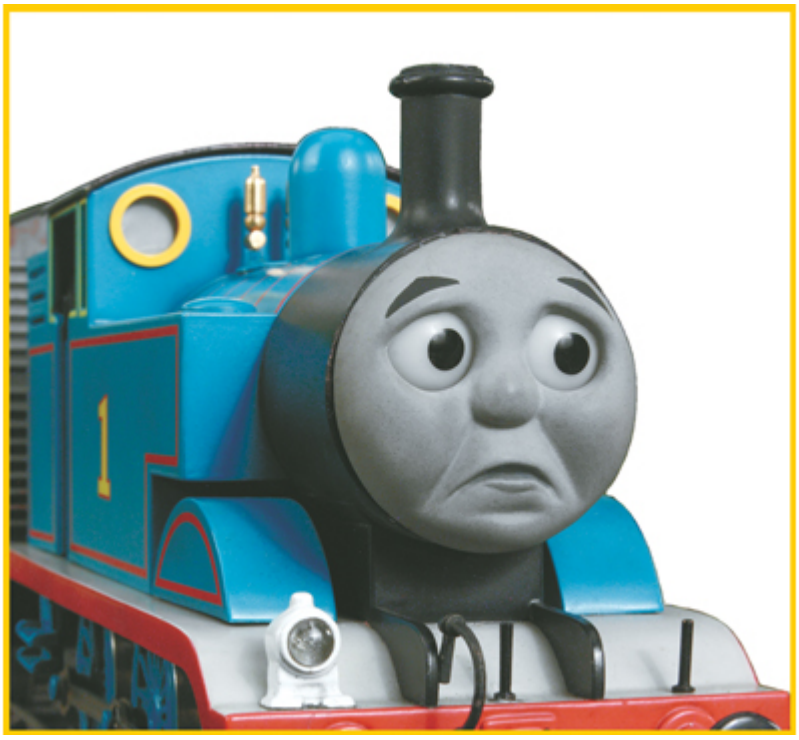
He wanted to go fast more than ever.

Now the eggs were unloaded, and Thomas chuffed slowly out of the station.

Thomas puffed across the countryside—very, very slowly.
Then Thomas saw Toby taking on coal in a siding.
His freight cars were full of roof tiles. Toby was having a wonderful day.

“I’m on my second journey,” he whistled proudly.

Thomas was very sad. Toby rushed past him. It made Thomas want to go faster than ever! “Even Toby has made more journeys than me,” he moaned. “It’s not fair—I can be fast *and* careful.”



So Thomas started to speed up!
“Fast *and* careful, fast *and* careful,” he huffed happily.
But Thomas was going so fast, he *wasn’t* being careful.

Farmer McColl was worried. “Slow down, Thomas,” he called. “You will break my eggs.”

But Thomas was going so quickly, he didn’t hear Farmer McColl. And he didn’t slow down. He went even faster! The eggs started to bounce in their boxes.

Then Thomas changed lines. It caused a big bump! The eggs were breaking!!

Thomas came to a junction. He had to slow down.

“Stop, Thomas!” cried Farmer McColl. “You have broken my eggs!”

This time Thomas did hear Farmer McColl, and he stopped right away.
“Cinders and ashes!” he cried.
But Farmer McColl was still cross.

Thomas felt bad. “I’m sorry,” he whistled. “I just wanted to be Really Useful.”

Farmer McColl checked his eggs. Luckily, only a few were broken.

Now Thomas knew he had to go slowly. So he pulled away as gently as he could.

Thomas headed for Brendam Docks. Suddenly he heard an impatient toot.

James was behind him. He blew his whistle loudly.

But Thomas knew he couldn't speed up. "Sometimes going slowly can be just as important as going fast," said Thomas. And he puffed carefully on.

That evening, Sir Topham Hatt came to Tidmouth Sheds. He looked very pleased. “You have all worked hard and been Really Useful Engines,” he said proudly.

The engines were very happy. Except for Thomas. He was thinking about the broken eggs.

"I only made one journey, Sir," he said sadly. "And I broke Farmer McColl's eggs."

“But most of the eggs were delivered safely,” boomed Sir Topham Hatt. “Farmer McColl gave the broken ones to me. And I love having scrambled eggs for my breakfast. You, Thomas,” he added, “are a Really Useful Engine.”

Thomas just beamed.

Emily's New Route

It was summertime on the Island of Sodor. All the engines were very busy. They carried freight and passengers up and down the lines.

Sir Topham Hatt came to see Emily. "I am opening some new routes for the summer," he announced. "Emily, you will pull the Flour Mill Special."

“Thank you, Sir,” said Emily. She was pleased.

Emily stopped to fill up with water on the way to the flour mill. But James was already there.

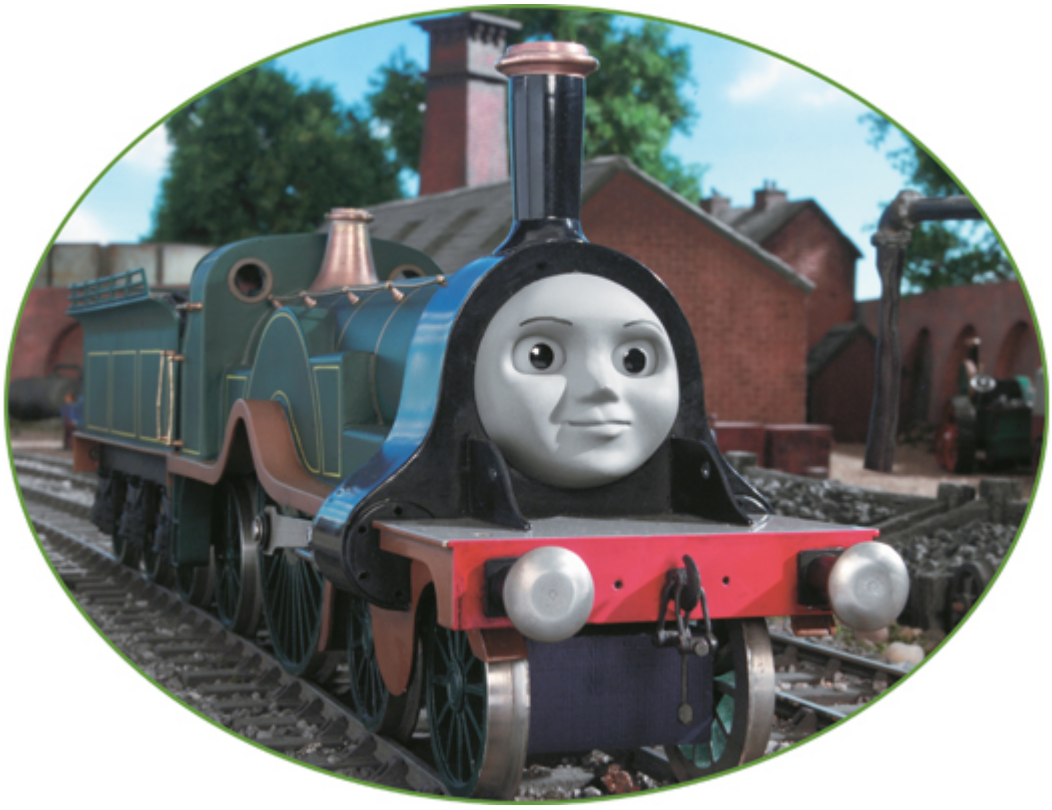
“Sir Topham Hatt has given me the Flour Mill Special,” said Emily.
“You’re lucky,” James huffed. “I have to do the Black Loch Run.”
“Why don’t you like going to Black Loch?” asked Emily.

“There are boulders all over the tracks,” he moaned. “They bash your buffers and scratch your paint. And there’s the Black Loch Monster!”

“What’s the Black Loch Monster?”

“Nobody knows,” said James. “Black figures move in the water and then they disappear.”

“Ooohhhhh!”
And James puffed away.
Emily was pleased *she* didn’t have to go to Black Loch.



At the flour mill, the flour had been loaded onto trucks. Emily was coupled up. Then she puffed across the countryside to Knapford Station.

But the Troublesome Trucks saw a chance for mischief. “Hold back, hold back,” they screeched.

Emily pulled as hard as she could, but the Troublesome Trucks made her go very slowly.

Emily was late delivering the flour, so there would be no fresh bread that day.

Sir Topham Hatt was cross. “This means I won’t have any toast or muffins for breakfast. If you are late again, you will have to do the Black Loch Run instead of James.”

Emily didn’t want to have her buffers bashed by boulders. And she didn’t want to see the Black Loch Monster. “I must get the flour to the station on time,” Emily puffed.

The next morning, the Troublesome Trucks tricked her again. “Off we go, off we go!” they chuckled. But they weren’t coupled up properly. “Mustn’t be late, mustn’t be late,” they giggled. So Emily puffed quickly away.

But only half the Troublesome Trucks went with her.

Emily arrived at the station.

"But you've only brought *half* the flour!" the Station Master cried.

So Emily had to go back for the rest of the Troublesome Trucks. "Oh, no!" Emily cried. "I don't want to get the Black Loch Run."

When Emily arrived at the mill, the trucks were more troublesome than ever. “Emily the late engine, Emily the late engine,” they sang.

This made Emily *very* cross, and she biffed them, very hard.

“Oh, no!” they cried. And they splashed into the duck pond.
Emily was covered in a floury mess.

That evening Sir Topham Hatt came to see Emily. “Emily, you have caused confusion and delay,” Sir Topham Hatt said. “Now you are to take over the Black Loch Run.”

Emily was very unhappy.

“Wait until you’ve tried it,” Thomas puffed. “The Black Loch Run might be nice.”

“I don’t think so,” Emily moaned. “Bashed buffers and a big monster. It sounds miserable to me.”

The next morning, Emily puffed sadly to the station. Lots of excited children and vacationers climbed on board.

“They’re all looking forward to their vacation,” she thought. “I mustn’t let them down.”

Soon Emily was steaming up hills and through valleys. “I bet it won’t last,” she said to herself.

Emily reached the murky waters of Black Loch. “Ohhh … that’s where the monster’s supposed to be,” she puffed nervously.

Then there was trouble.

Rocks fell and blocked the line.

“Oh, no!” Emily had to wait for help. “I knew I wouldn’t like this route!” she huffed.

Suddenly she saw something dark and mysterious moving in the water. “And now the monster’s coming,” Emily gasped.

Emily was scared. Her boiler quivered and her valves rattled. She wanted to steam away. “I never want to see Black Loch again!” she cried.

But Emily thought of the children in the coach behind her. She was determined to get them to their vacation, whatever it took.

At last the water settled, and Emily saw what the monster really was.

“It’s a family of seals.” Emily was delighted.
The children were delighted, too.

Soon the line was cleared. Emily steamed on through the countryside. The children would reach their vacation on time.

That evening, Thomas and Emily both stopped to watch the seals.

"You were right," said Emily. "Black Loch *is* a nice route after all."

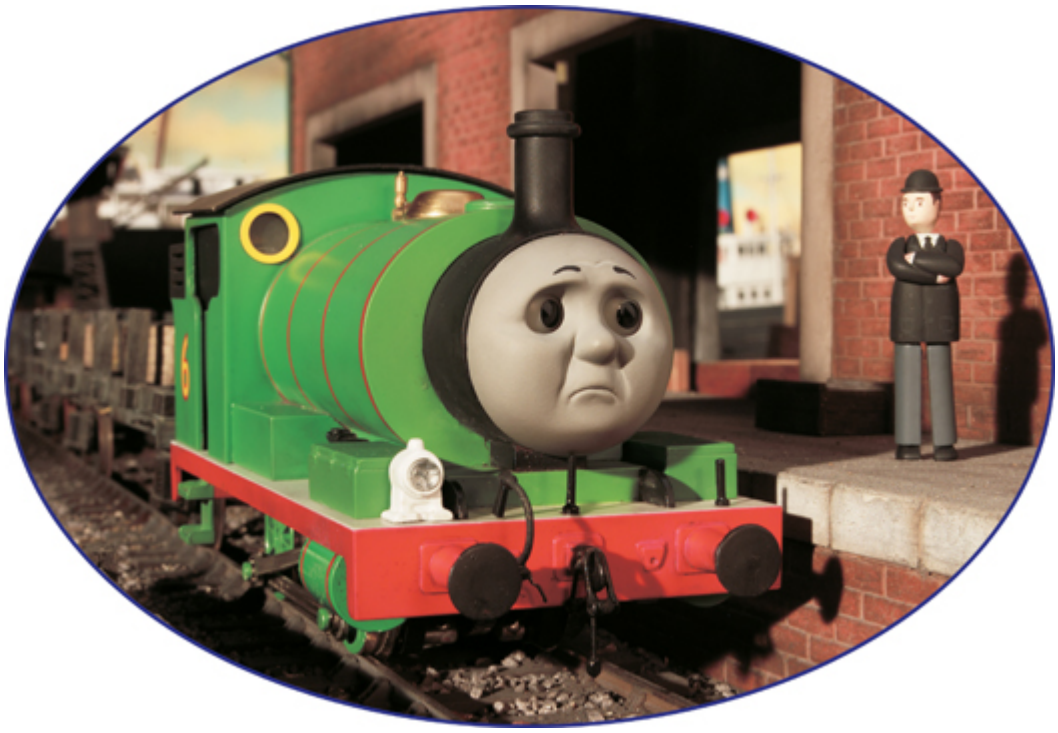
Percy's Big Mistake

Percy is a little green engine who can shunt and pull. He pulls both passengers and freight. At the docks—and at the quarry. Percy's favorite job is carrying the mail. But sometimes Percy has so much to do, he ends up running late.

One evening Percy arrived late at Brendam Docks.

"You're late again, Percy," said the Dock Manager. "I will have to speak to Sir Topham Hatt."

Percy was upset.



Percy returned to Tidmouth Sheds. The other engines were already asleep. Then Percy heard voices on the other side of the Sheds. It was Sir Topham Hatt! And he was talking to Percy's Driver. Percy tried not to listen, but he couldn't help himself!

“Percy has been late too often this week,” said Sir Topham Hatt. “He must go to the scrap yards tomorrow.”

“Sir Topham Hatt wants to scrap me!” gasped Percy. Percy worried all night long.

The next morning, the sun shone and the birds sang, but Percy was too upset to notice.

“Sir Topham Hatt wants to scrap me!” he cried. “And all because I was late.”

“Sir Topham Hatt wouldn’t scrap a Really Useful Engine,” said Thomas. “And you, Percy, are a Really Useful Engine.”

Percy felt better, until he noticed the time.

“I’m going to be late!” he cried.

Percy wheeshed away. If he was on time, maybe Sir Topham Hatt wouldn't send him to the scrap yards.

Percy's first job was collecting pipes from Brendam Docks. But when he arrived, Cranky was still unloading.

“Hurry up, slow coach,” wheeshed Percy.
“I *must* be on time!”
“I’ll take as long as I like,” said Cranky. And he went slower than ever.

The moment Cranky had finished, Percy took off. He hadn't waited for the pipes to be tied down. Percy rounded the bend. The pipes slipped and fell all over the track, but Percy puffed on.

Percy thought he had delivered the pipes, so he chuffed away to his next job. Percy was to take some tar wagons to the workmen mending the roads.

"Be careful," said his Driver. "Tar is sticky stuff."

But Percy wasn't being careful. He was going too fast. Percy charged down Gordon's Hill. He didn't see Gordon and the Express until it was too late. The brake van passed Gordon—but the tar wagons didn't!

Luckily, no one was hurt, but Gordon was very cross.

“Now look what you’ve done!” he wheeshed. “What will Sir Topham Hatt say?”

Percy thought he knew. “Oh, no!” he cried. “I’m *sure* to be scrapped now!” And so Percy decided to run away.…

Harvey was clearing away the tar wagons when Sir Topham Hatt arrived aboard Thomas. “Where is Percy?” he said. “He has caused confusion and delay!”

Gordon didn’t know. “He just left very quickly, Sir.”

“He heard you at the Sheds, Sir,” said Thomas. “He thought you were sending him to be scrapped.”

“Hmmm, I think I need a word with Percy,” said Sir Topham Hatt. “You must all help me find him.

And so everyone looked for Percy. They searched high—and they searched low. They looked to and fro, but they couldn't see Percy anywhere.

"What's to become of me?" Percy whispered, but there was no one around to hear. Percy looked very small and felt very lonely.

Thomas and Sir Topham Hatt were looking for Percy on Thomas' Branch Line.

Thomas suddenly had an idea. "I think I know where Percy is, Sir." And he puffed back to Tidmouth Sheds as fast as he could.

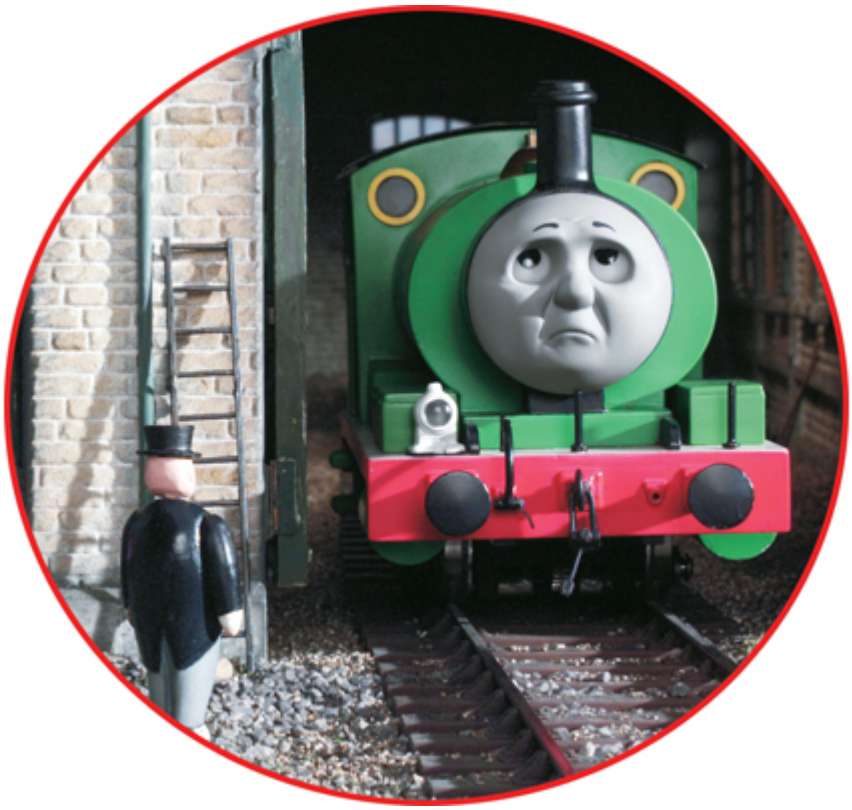
The Sheds were very quiet as Thomas rolled into the engine berths.

“Percy?” called Sir Topham Hatt. “Are you there?”

“Please don’t scrap me, Sir,” he said. “I didn’t mean to be late or cause trouble.”

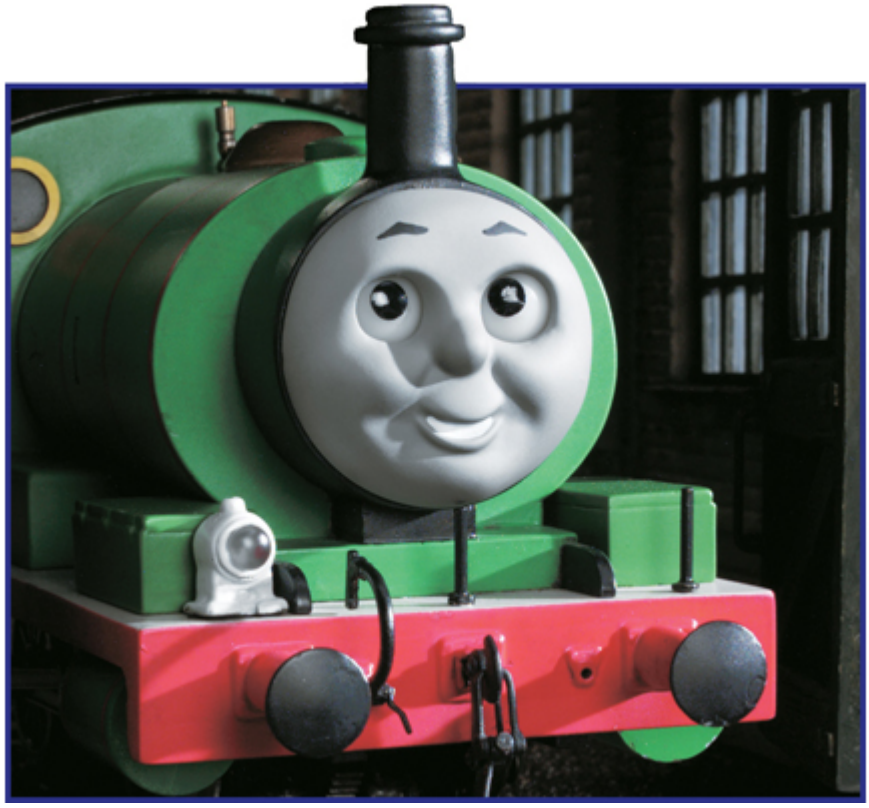
“Scrap you?” boomed Sir Topham Hatt. “Why, the very thought of it!”

And Sir Topham Hatt told Percy what he had *really* said. “I told your Driver you had been working too hard, and *that* was why you were late. I had decided that after taking some scrap to the smelters, you were to carry the mail—all week!”



Percy was as happy as he had ever been. “Do you really mean it, Sir?” puffed Percy proudly. “The mail—for a whole week! Thank you, Sir!” Percy couldn’t stop himself tooting for joy.

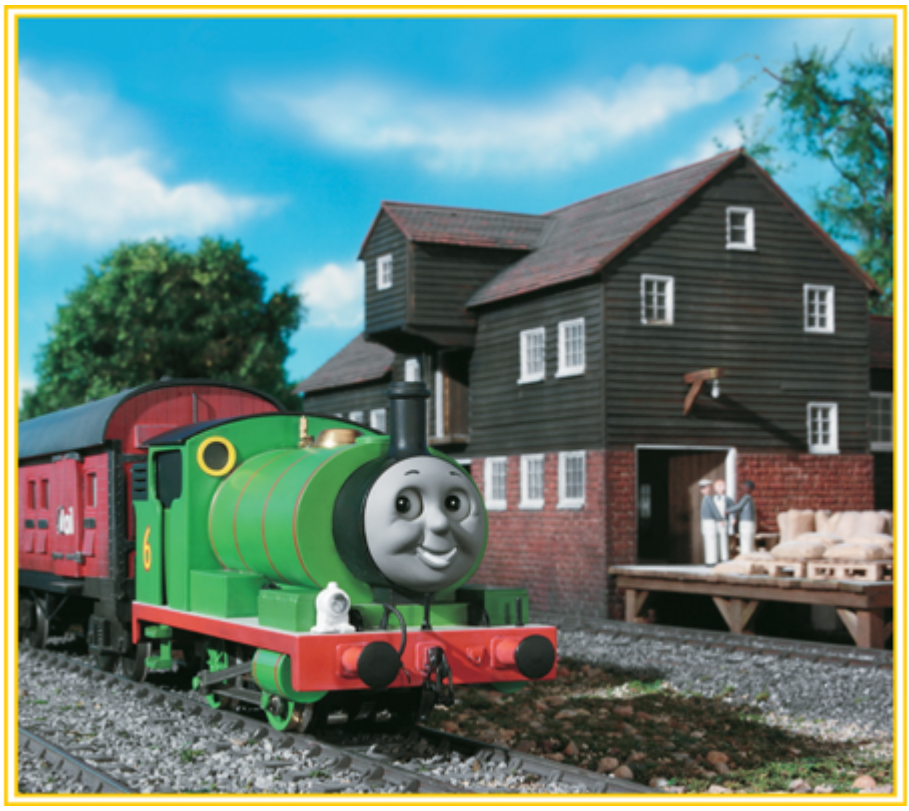
Thomas tooted, too. It was good to have his friend back.

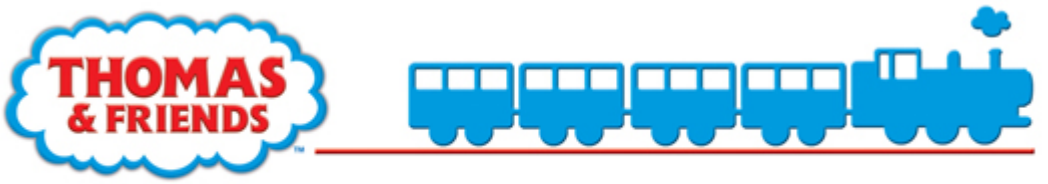


So Percy carried the mail all week. He wasn't late and he didn't make a mistake—not one!

And Percy decided never to listen to silly stories ever again.

Especially not ones made up by himself!





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