

# Toffee and Crumble

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Translated by ChatGPT

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James is a medium-sized mixed-traffic engine. His body was painted a striking red, which he took the most pride in. However, his pride could sometimes cause trouble.

One autumn evening, Percy arrived at the main line sheds. He had a job to deliver goods to the harbour of the big station. But the tender engines were so engrossed in their conversation that they didn't notice Percy. As it turned out, James was boasting again.

"I'm the pride of this railway! Even the children know how splendid I am!"

Gordon, Henry, and Emily were fed up, and Percy looked puzzled.

"Why is James so full of himself?" he asked Edward.

"This morning, some children saw James and said he was a 'bright red, splendid engine.' He's been puffed up about it all day."

Edward chuckled. When James noticed Percy, he couldn't resist boasting to him as well.

"Percy, you must be jealous. With paint as fine as mine and the air of a grand engine, I get praised everywhere I go!"

Percy thought for a moment, then decided to knock James down a peg.

He replied cheekily, "I don't know about that! Maybe the children thought you looked like a big, shiny apple. After all, apples are bright red and splendid this time of year!"

James was annoyed. "An apple, you say? Don't compare me to something so small and ridiculous! You, on the other hand, are green and round—perhaps they mistake you for a green apple!"

Percy wasn't about to back down. "Don't be silly! There's no way a handsome engine like me could be mistaken for anything else! I'm much more dashing than you with your long, lumbering shape!"

"Don't make me laugh! You're just a little green goblin!"

"A green goblin, am I!?"

Just as the argument was about to escalate, Emily scolded them.

"That's enough, both of you! You're loud enough to be heard outside the sheds!"

Percy and James fell silent. But even after that, both engines remained convinced they were the more splendid and dashing.

The next morning, Percy was preparing to return to the branch line at the yard. Nearby, James was coupled to a few vans. The vans were loaded with bright red apples.

"Look here, Percy! It's your relatives!" James teased.

"Oh, surely not! Must be *your* siblings," Percy shot back.

"Hmph! Rubbish!" James huffed.

The doors of the vans banged shut. It was nearly time for James to depart.

"See you later, Percy! The children will compliment me again today! These apples are going to be used at school! They'll be making toffee apples and apple crumble while thanking me!"

The guard's whistle blew, and James set off proudly.

"Toffee apples and apple crumble? What are those?" Percy asked his driver and fireman.

"A toffee apple is an apple with a stick in it, covered in toffee – a kind of sweet," the driver chuckled.

"And apple crumble is cooked apples with a topping made from butter, flour, and sugar, all baked together. Both are delicious," the fireman added with a grin.

James was happily puffing along the line from Tidmouth to Knapford, his red paint gleaming in the sunlight. He had no idea that a disaster was waiting just ahead.

A lorry was rumbling along a country road. It reached a level crossing. That's when trouble struck. The lorry's rear wheels slid off the tarmac and got stuck in the ballast of the tracks! Its load was still over the line. The driver, swearing under his breath, got out and tried to push the lorry from behind, but it wouldn't budge. Just then, the crossing keeper ran out of his signal box.

"What have you done! There's a train coming soon!"

Suddenly, the rails began to rattle, and the sound of puffing could be heard in the distance! The lorry driver turned pale.

James was humming to himself as he approached the signal. The signal arm lowered just after he passed! By the time he noticed the danger, it was too late.

"Whoa! Get out of the way!"

James could see the closed gates and the lorry stuck on the tracks! The crossing keeper and the lorry driver were waving frantically!

James's driver slammed on the brakes, but the heavy vans pushed James forward, making it impossible to stop in time. The lorry driver and the crossing keeper leapt clear, and James shut his eyes!

CRASH!!

When James opened his eyes, the shattered gates were caught on his front, and the lorry, split in half, lay on the tracks ahead. His body was covered in a sticky, amber thing.

The lorry had been carrying cans of toffee. Now, James was coated from his funnel to his cab in toffee.

"My beautiful paintwork!" James cried miserably.

Luckily, no one was hurt, but the truck driver was furious with James.

"You silly engine! All that toffee I brought all this way is ruined!"

"Oh, never mind toffee! Just go and call for help!" James's driver snapped, clearly annoyed.

As Percy was heading back to Thomas's branch line, he was stopped at a station and told about the accident. He was ordered to return to the yard and bring the workmen to help clean up the mess.

When Percy saw James covered in toffee, he burst out laughing.

"See, You thought you were an apple after all! The driver said they put toffee on apples!"

"Hmph!!" James snorted.

Percy dropped off the workmen and then coupled up to the back of James's train to take him back to the yard.

On the way, James fumed in silence. He was so angry that he didn't notice black smoke starting to puff from his funnel.

Back at the yard, once Percy had been uncoupled, he moved to the front of James and laughed even harder than before.

"Shut up! Stop laughing about the same thing!" James grumbled, but just then, Gordon arrived.

"Well, well, little James! Fancy going back to your old black paint, do you?" Gordon smirked. James was confused.

"*Black* paint?"

Just then, James's driver appeared with a large mirror. James gasped when he saw his reflection.

"Ahhh! What's happened to me!?"

The toffee that had clung to James's body had burnt and blackened from the heat of his boiler! To make things worse, soot from his funnel had stuck to the toffee, making him even blacker.

James's face turned red with embarrassment as Percy laughed so hard he nearly shook himself off the rails.

"A giant burnt toffee apple! Hahahaha...!"

Before James could say anything, Percy puffed away, still laughing. James was furious, and for the rest of the day, all he could think about was how to get back at Percy.

Since James's paint was ruined by the toffee and soot, he was sent to the works to be repainted.

While he was away, Percy amused the other engines by telling them about James getting covered in toffee. Thomas, Toby, and the main line engines found it funny at first, but after hearing the story repeatedly, they began to grow tired of it.

The trucks felt the same. In the yard of Thomas's branch line, they grumbled to each other.

"That noisy engine! We should teach him a lesson!"

They hatched a plan while Percy wasn't around, chuckling mischievously.

Percy received trucks of stone from Toby every day and hauled them to the harbour on the branch line. As he rolled down the tracks along the valley, he couldn't stop thinking about James.

"What should I say to him next time I see him?" Percy muttered to himself with a chuckle.

The distant signal showed "Caution" – the harbour was near. Percy's driver shut off steam and signalled the guard with the whistle.

"Peep peep! Put the brakes on, guard!"

But that was just the signal the trucks had been waiting for.

"Now! On! On! On!" they cried.

The trucks banged their buffers together and shoved Percy forward with all their might!

"Whoa!!" Percy shouted. Neither he nor the guard could control the train as they raced down the line at breakneck speed!

On the harbour pier, some vans were being loaded with goods from a ship. The workmen were thinking it was about time for Percy to arrive when they heard a whistle in the distance.

Looking up, they saw Percy hurtling towards them at a frightening speed!

The workmen scattered in all directions, but the vans couldn't move!

"Get out of the way!!" Percy screamed as he shut his eyes, charging straight into the harbour! His driver and fireman jumped clear!

And then...

**CRASH!!**

The driver and fireman picked themselves up off the ground and ran to the front of the train, but Percy had vanished.

He had ploughed straight into one of the vans and was now stuck inside it! Steam hissed from the gaps between the van, while behind him, the troublesome trucks were laughing hysterically, not sorry at all for what they'd done.

That evening, James had just been repainted at the works. He was feeling restless, eager to return to the shed with his shiny new coat of paint.

Just then, Wendell the Works Diesel entered the works, pulling another engine behind him.

James burst out laughing when he saw who it was.

“Well, well, well! A giant green-apple crumble!”

It was Percy, and he was completely covered in butter, flour, and sugar—the loads of the van he had crashed into. The butter and sugar had melted from the heat of his boiler, baking the flour into a crust. Just as James said, he looked like an apple crumble.

“I’ve got a good story to tell when I get back to the yard! See you! Hahahaha...”

James puffed away happily, leaving a very cross Percy behind.