

Fallen Down

Gordon the Big Engine Rewrite by Tea Time Express

Original Stories by The Rev. W. Awdry

Gordon was resting in a siding at Tidmouth. Suddenly Henry rolled past whistling.

“Peep peep! Hello Fatface!” whistled Henry.

“Huff! What cheek!” spluttered Gordon. “That Henry is too big for his wheels; fancy speaking to ME like that! ME who’s never had an accident ever!”

Percy, who was shunting a train into the platform, overheard Gordon’s boasts.

“Aren’t jammed whistles and burst safety valves accidents?” He pondered.

“Heavens no!” Retorted Gordon. “It’s just high spirits is all, it could happen to any engine.”

“Rubbish.” Scoffed Percy, “Accidents are something that wasn’t your fault. Unless you intentionally burst your safety valve?”

“Puh such vulgar claims dear Percy. Surely you know the Express is the most important part of the whole railway! Why would I purposely delay its service? Besides to come off the rails like Henry did, well I ask you! Is it right? Is it decent?”

“Like I said Gordon, accidents aren’t your fault, Henry didn’t freeze the points on purpose. Stop acting like he’s purposely trying to ruin the railway.” Percy stormed off back to the yard, the conversation with Gordon left him in quite the sour mood.

A few days later it was Henry’s turn with the Express. Gordon slowly rolled past him as he was getting ready. “Be careful now Henry,” he said, “you’re not pulling the ‘Flying Kipper’ now; mind you stay on the rails today.”

Henry snorted away as Gordon rolled away to a siding to sleep.

Unfortunately he didn’t get to sleep for long as his driver came along and woke him up. “Come on, boy, wake up,” he said, “a Special train has come and the Fat Controller has asked us to pull it!” Gordon wearily tried to open his eyes.

“What is it,” he yawned, “coaches or trucks?”

“Trucks.” Said his Driver. Gordon’s eyes shot open; he was now fully awake.

“TRUCKS!?” He yelled, he was fuming.

“I’m afraid so.” said the Driver.

“I won’t take it.”

“Oh come on, Gordon, it’s just one train. You’ll be back on the Express tomorrow, and besides, it’ll give you a good image if you pull an important train like this.”

“No it won’t.” Retorted Gordon. “It’ll have quite the opposite effect. A grand express engine like myself pulling a goods train, I’ll be a disgrace to all express engines.”

“Don’t be daft,” snapped his Driver, “come on, we don’t want to be late.”

Gordon had no choice as much as he hated it he had to pull the train no matter what. Gordon’s crew lit his fire and oiled him ready for the train. Unfortunately the fire was sulky and wouldn’t burn; but they didn’t have any time to waste, so they called Edward to push him over to the turntable.

“I won’t go, I won’t go,” grumbled Gordon.

“Don’t be silly,” said Edward, “it’s a special train, you’re supposed to be proud in this moment Gordon.”

“Proud? Proud of what, becoming a disgrace?”

“You’re taking the train whether you like it or not. So stop being so difficult.” Scolded Edward.

Gordon tried hard, but he couldn’t stop himself from being moved.

Once Edward shunted Gordon onto the turntable he steamed off back to work, while Gordon sat there grumbling still. Gordon’s Driver and Fireman dropped down out of the cab to turn him around. The movement onto the turntable had shaken Gordon’s fire about and it was now burning nicely and making plenty of steam. Gordon was still cross, and didn’t care what he did. He waited until the turntable was half way around. “I’ll show them! I’ll show them!” he mumbled to himself, and moved slowly forward only a little bit though just enough to try and jam the turntable, as he had done once before. But this time he couldn’t stop himself.

“Woah! Why can’t I stop?” Yelled Gordon.

“Gordon what are you doing?” Shouted his Driver.

“Help me!” Gordon cried, but it was no use. Gordon crushed the fence and slithered down the embankment.

“OOOOUUUUSHHH!” He hissed as he settled into a ditch. “Get me out! Get me out!”

“Not a hope,” said the Fireman, “you’re stuck, you infantile pillock, don’t you understand that?”

“I’ll call the Fat Controller.” sighed the Driver, he then walked off to the nearest telephone.

The Fat Controller picked up the phone in his office.

“Hello, Sir Topham Hatt speaking.”

“Hello Sir, it’s Gerald Smith, Gordon’s Driver.”

“Good afternoon Smith, what’s the matter?”

“I wouldn’t particularly call it a good afternoon. It’s Gordon Sir, he’s fallen into a ditch because he refused to take the goods you assigned him to.”

“So Gordon didn’t want to take the Special and ran into a ditch.”

“Yes Sir, what should we do now?” Asked the Driver. “The Special is still waiting?” The Fat Controller was deep in thought and didn’t hear him properly.

“Sorry. What’s that you say?”

“I said the Special is still waiting, Sir.”

“Tell Edward to take it.”

“Alright, but what about Gordon, Sir?”

“Gordon? Oh just leave him where he is, we haven’t got the time to bother with him now.”

Gordon lay in the ditch all day sulking and soaking, his Driver and Fireman had to quickly put his fire out so his crown sheet wouldn’t fail, so he was also rather cold. Suddenly, a group of school boys showed up on the other side of the ditch.

“Coo! Look at this Billy doesn’t he look silly!” Said one.

“Yeah he’s stuck in there good. They’ll never get him out of there!” Said another.

Then the boys began to sing:

“Silly old Gordon fell in a ditch,
fell in a ditch,
fell in a ditch,
silly old Gordon fell in a ditch,
All on a Monday morning.”

Soon after they finished tormenting Gordon the school bell rang and they ran off giggling to each other “Pshaw!” Hissed Gordon, scaring off a family of toads that had been croaking at him crossly along with an inquisitive newt.

“What rude little rascals!” He groaned. “But I suppose they’re right, I’ll never get out of here, I’ll never pull another express train ever again.”

That evening James and Henry arrived with a large crew of workmen who brought out big floodlights and jacks to lift up Gordon so they could build a road of sleepers under his wheels to get him out of the mud. Strong wire ropes were attached to Gordon’s rear with James and Henry pulling hard to bring him back onto the rails.

“Bleeding heck he weighs tons.” Puffed James.

“He really is a fat face.” Laughed Henry.

“Alright you two enough of the insults, just focus on pulling him up.” Said the Fat Controller. At last the two engines managed to re-rail Gordon, who was a much sadder yet wiser engine.

Afterwards, Henry and James helped shunt Gordon back to the sheds where Edward and Percy were waiting for their return.

“I say Henry,” said Percy, “To come off the rails like Gordon did, Well I ask you! Is it right? Is it decent?” Percy explained what Gordon had said the other day and all the engines roared with laughter while Gordon’s expression remained a frown bigger than his now deflated ego.

The next morning, the Fat Controller arrived at the sheds and spoke sternly to Gordon.

“Gordon, I am placing you on goods duty until you can behave yourself. Once I can trust you again then you will be allowed back to your normal duties. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes, sir.” Mumbled Gordon. Once his boiler had gained enough pressure he set out to collect his first train of the day.

Soon Gordon had reached Gordon’s Hill. The rails were slippery in Autumn and it was hard to climb but when he reached the top he felt a sudden force behind him.

“Hurry! Hurry! Come on! Come on!” Yelled the Trucks.

“Oi! What do you think you’re doing back there?” Retorted Gordon. The silly trucks were trying to push Gordon down the hill, fortunately Gordon was a strong engine and managed to stand his ground and reach the bottom of the hill safely.

Once Gordon returned to the yard a pair of cleaners got out their buckets and hoses and began to wash off all the dirt after his incident with the ditch yesterday. Thankfully he didn’t sustain any major physical damage so there was only dirt and scratches to show for his stunt.

“Blooming hell, Gordon, you are filthy.” Said a cleaner.

“Just mind my eyes.” Replied Gordon.

“Whatever. Hey Bert, you ever seen this much dirt?”

“No I never Alf!” Said Bert. “You ought to be ashamed, Gordon, giving us extra work.” Gordon just shrugged off whatever the cleaners were saying and ignored them until they were finished. Once the cleaners had finished Gordon was told to go to the yard to shunt the trucks for his next train, but Gordon took it as an excuse to let off some steam.

“That’s for you! – You! – and you! – and you!” Gordon said crossly.

“Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!” Screamed the trucks as he shunted them about the yard.

“Trucks will be Trucks,” said James watching him.

“They won’t with me!” Snorted Gordon. “I’ll teach them. Go on!” and another truck scurried away.

“They tried to push me down the hill this morning,” Gordon explained. “It’s slippery there, you’ll probably need some help.”

“I don’t need help on hills, I’m not as heavy as you.” Said James huffily.

“If you say so.” Gordon laughed, as he got ready for his next train. James puffed off to take the express.

“Slippery hills indeed.” James snorted. “I don’t need help.”

Soon James was out on the mainline and perfectly on time.

“Come on! Come on!” Puffed James

“All in good time, all in good time, you’re not setting any records.” Said the coaches

“We’ll see about that.” Replied James. Just then a distant signal checked them near Gordon’s Hill. “Just watch how smoothly I can cruise over Gordon’s Hill!”

Gordon's Hill used to be bleak and bare and strong winds from the sea made it hard to climb, which is why trees were planted to act as a shelter and during summer engines would puff through a leafy avenue. But now that Autumn was here the dead leaves that fell off the trees would sometimes land on the rails. The wind usually just blew them away but the recent rain had made them too heavy for the wind to pick up. The home Signal showed clear and James began his climb.

"I'll do it! I'll do it!" He puffed confidently, but about halfway up he wasn't so sure.

"I must do it! I will do it!" He panted desperately, but try as he would, his wheels slipped on the leaves, and he couldn't pull the train at all.

"What's the matter?" He gasped.

"Steady old boy, steady!" Soothed the Driver. His Fireman put sand on the rails to help him grip but James' wheels spun so fast that they only ground the sand and leaves into slippery mud, making things worse than before. The train slowly stopped.

"Help! Help! Help!" Cried James; for though his wheels were turning forward the heavy coaches pulled him backwards down the hill. His Driver shut off steam, carefully put on the brakes, and skilfully stopped the train.

"Whew!" he sat down and mopped his face. "I've never known that to happen before."

"I have," said the Fireman, "in Bincombe tunnel in the Southern Region. It was not a fun experience."

The Guard walked up to the cab and poked his head in. "Now what?"

The Fireman grabbed the shovel. "Back to the station," He said, taking charge, "and send for a banker." So the Guard warned the Signaller, and they brought the train safely back down to Wellsworth. Gordon, who was following behind with a goods train, saw the whole thing. Gordon left his trucks and switched over to James' line.

"I thought you could climb hills," he chuckled. James couldn't respond; he had no steam, so he could only let out a depressed wheeze.

"Oh well we Live and Learn. Nevermind, little James," he went on kindly, "I'm going to push behind. Whistle when you're ready."

James waited until he had enough steam, "Peep! Peep!" he called.

"Poop! Poop! Poop!" Puffed Gordon. "Pull hard!"

"We'll do it!" Puffed James.

"Pull hard! We'll do it!" The engines puffed together.

Clouds of smoke and steam towered from the snorting engines as they struggled up the hill.

"We can do it!" Puffed James.

“We will do it!” Puffed Gordon.

The greasy rails still made Gordon’s wheels slip, but he never gave up, he was determined to make it to the top, and sure enough they did it.

“We’ve done it! We’ve done it!” puffed the engines.

Gordon stopped at the top of the hill. “Poop poop!” He whistled.

“Goodbye!”

“Thank you!” James whistled, “Goodbye!”

Gordon watched proudly as James and the coaches went out of sight; then he slowly trundled back to his trucks and triumphantly carried on with his journey.

On Gordon’s way back to Tidmouth he stopped at Knapford, the connection between The Mainline and Thomas’ Branchline, to fill up on water. Thomas was there dropping off passengers. He had heard about Gordon’s accident with the ditch and intended to mock him about it now that he had the chance.

“Poof!” Remarked Thomas, “What a funny smell! Can you smell a smell?”

“I can’t smell a smell.” Said Annie.

“Nor can I.” Replied Clarabel.

“A funny musty sort of smell.” Said Thomas.

“No one noticed it until you did,” grunted Gordon. “It must be yours.”

“Annie, Clarabel! Do you know what I think it is?” Whispered Thomas loudly. “It’s ditch water!”

Annie and Clarabel gasped, and Gordon snorted in frustration but before he could give a proper reply the Guard blew the whistle and Thomas was already puffing off. Annie and Clarabel couldn’t believe what they had heard.

“He’s dreadfully rude!” Said Annie.

“I feel quite ashamed!” Replied Clarabel.

“You mustn’t be so rude, you make us quite ashamed!” The coaches kept telling Thomas. But Thomas didn’t care.

“That was Funny! That was Funny!” He chuckled. He felt quite pleased with himself. Annie and Clarabel were deeply shocked, they had great respect for Gordon the Big Engine™.

Thomas shunted Annie and Clarabel away and went to his shed, it was getting rather late. Just as he settled in, the Fat Controller arrived.

“Hello Thomas and Toby. I hope you both had a good day.” He said.

“It was rather pleasant indeed, Sir.” Replied Toby.

“My day went well. Thanks for asking, Sir.” Said Thomas.

“Excellent. Now, Thomas, I’ve had a call from the Lead Mines Manager, he asked if you can lend him a hand tomorrow?” Informed the Fat Controller.

“But, Sir, don’t they have their own engine now?” Replied Thomas.

“I know they do but he’s broken down, again, so they asked if they could borrow you until they fix him up.”

“Alright, Sir, if you say so.”

“Marvellous. Now, Toby, you can carry on as normal, you don’t need to worry, I’ll bring Percy up to do Thomas’ trains.”

“Alright Sir, Thank you, Sir.” Smiled Toby.

And with the messages delivered The Fat Controller trundled happily back to his car.

“I’m not too fond of doing this.” Said Thomas. “But maybe I can finally see what happens when I go past that board!”

“It says Danger on it for a reason Thomas. It’s not a good idea to pass a danger sign, you could get hurt.” Scolded Toby. But Thomas just ignored Toby and went to sleep.

“Oh well, maybe the shunter will tell him off. I heard he’s strict.” Said Toby as he slowly drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, Thomas headed off for the mine. Long ago, Miners, digging for Lead, had made tunnels under the ground. Though strong enough to hold trucks, their roofs could not bear the weight of engines. A large notice said: “DANGER. ENGINES MUST NOT PASS THIS BOARD.” Thomas had often been warned about going past the board, but he didn’t care, he thought the board was silly. He often tried to pass it, but never succeeded. This morning he laughed as he puffed along. He had made a plan.

Once Thomas reached the Lead Mines the Foreman approached him.

“Hello Thomas, you remember what to do, right?” He asked.

“Yes Sir, shunt empty trucks into the sidings and pull full ones out.” Answered Thomas.

“Good lad! Right off you go then.” Replied the Foreman.

Thomas saw a few full trucks in a siding so he did as he was told and pulled them out of the siding and into another down the line so they could be taken away in a train. When he came back he went over to where the Danger Board was, it was also where the shed for the little engine that usually works at the lead mines sleeps. This little engine was named Ron. Ron was a one off

design and didn't perform exactly as intended which often caused problems leading to him breaking down a lot.

"Hello Thomas." Called Ron.

"Oh hello, Ron." Replied Thomas. "Feeling well?"

"Not amazing but I'll make it through." Said Ron.

Thomas suddenly saw one of the trucks in front of him trying to get his attention.

"Hi Thomas!" it called.

"Why is that truck calling my name?" Asked Thomas.

"Oh that's Bartholomew, he's one of the old 4 planks they used to have here." Answered Ron. "Surprisingly he's quite friendly."

"I see." Said Thomas. "Ummm... Hello Bartholomew."

"Hello!" Called Bartholomew.

While the two engines were chatting Thomas' Fireman jumped down to change the points and check with all the miners that the trucks were all ready. Afterwards he would guide the Driver down the siding to couple up to them.

"You do remember what I told you about handling trucks, right?" Ron asked Thomas. But Thomas wasn't paying attention; he was mumbling something to himself.

"If I bump the trucks hard, Driver will be knocked off and I'll roll right past and no one can stop me!" He said.

"Are you listening to me?" Shouted Ron.

"Huh? Oh sorry Ron. Yeah I remember," replied Thomas, "be calm and gentle, it's been useful when taking goods."

"Glad to hear it." Smiled Ron.

Then the Fireman called out to the Driver to tell him to come into the siding. The Driver patted the side of Thomas' cab.

"Alright you two, enough chat." He said. The Driver leaned out of the cab to see where they were going.

"Now!" Said Thomas to himself, and bumping the trucks fiercely he jerked his Driver off the footplate.

"Thomas! What are you doing?" Yelled Ron.

"Hurrah!" Laughed Thomas, and he followed the trucks into the siding.

"Stupid old board." Said Thomas as he passed it. "There's no danger, see?" His Driver, unhurt, jumped up. "Look out!" He shouted.

The Fireman clambered into the cab. Thomas grunted crossly as his brakes were applied.

“It’s quite safe.” He hissed.

“Come back!” Yelled Ron, but before anyone could move there was a rumbling and the rails quivered.

“Erm Thomas.” Said Bartholomew with a slightly scared tone in his voice.

“What is it Bartholomew?” Asked Thomas.

“Look out below.” Replied Bartholomew, as he said that, the Fireman jumped clear, the ballast slipped away and the rails sagged and broke.

“Fire and Smoke!” Said Thomas, “I’m Sunk!” - and he was.

“Look what you’ve done!” Screamed Ron, a worker calmed him down, they didn’t want him to be shouting while he was still being repaired. Thomas could just see out of the hole, but couldn’t move, mainly due to the fact he was now stuck in a mine but also because his crew had to put his fire out.

“Oh dear!” He said. “I am a silly engine.”

“And a very naughty one too,” said a voice, “I saw you.” It was The Fat Controller he had seen everything.

“Please get me out; I won't be naughty again.”

“I’m not so sure,” replied the Fat Controller. “We can’t lift you out with cranes, the ground’s not firm enough. Hm... I wonder if Gordon could pull you out?”

Thomas gasped he didn’t want to see Gordon this soon after what he said the evening before, but he didn’t really have a choice.

“Yes Sir.” He said nervously.

Back at Tidmouth, Gordon had just pulled into the station when the Station Master ran over to tell his Driver that Sir Topham was asking for him on the telephone. A few minutes later, Gordon’s Driver walked out of the office and spoke to Gordon.

“Come on, Gordon.” He said. “We’ve got to go rescue Thomas, he’s fallen down a mine.”

“A- A mine!” Said Gordon, he could barely contain his laughter. “He’s fallen down a mine!” Gordon suddenly burst out with laughter, his voice boomed throughout the entire station.

“What’s his problem?” Said a confused James from the other side of the station.

“I know what we can do.” Said the Fireman. “We can use that winch that workman gave us while they were getting Gordon out of the ditch.”

“Good idea!” Replied the Driver.

During the night where Henry and James rescued Gordon from the ditch, Gordon's crew were talking to the workmen at the scene, and one man said that they were clearing out any old stock, such as tools or equipment they don't use anymore, and that he found an old winch that he was willing to give to Gordon's crew so they could attach it to Gordon and rescue any engines that might be stuck. So Gordon's crew agreed to the offer and have kept it in Gordon's cab in case of emergency.

After Gordon was done laughing he was uncoupled from the train and he headed on his way up to the Lead Mines, he was still laughing from hearing the news.

"Down a mine is he? Ho! Ho! Ho!" He laughed. "What a joke! What a joke!" Soon Gordon arrived at the Lead Mines and his crew and the workmen on site all prepared for the rescue.

"Poop! Poop! Little Thomas," Whistled Gordon, "we'll have you out in a couple of puffs." Gordon's crew clamped the winch to his front and then attached the steel wire rope to Thomas' rear coupling.

"Are you ready? HEAVE!" Called the Fat Controller. But they didn't get Thomas out in two puffs; Gordon was panting hard and his face was nearly purple by the time they dragged Thomas out of the hole, and safely past the board. The Fat Controller was pleased that the rescue operation went well, but he still wasn't pleased with Thomas' actions today.

"I shall speak to you later." He said sternly to Thomas, and with that he walked back to his car and drove off while Gordon shunted Thomas back home.

"I'm Sorry I was cheeky." Said Thomas.

"That's alright, Thomas. You made me laugh. I like that. I'm in disgrace, you know." Gordon went on pathetically, "I feel very low."

"I'm in disgrace too after that." Said Thomas.

"Why! So you are Thomas; we're both in disgrace. Shall we form an Alliance?"

"An Ally- What was it?"

"An Alliance, Thomas, 'United we stand, together we fall,'" Gordon said grandly, "you help me and I'll help you. How about it?"

"Right you are!" Said Thomas.

"Good! That's settled." Rumbled Gordon. And buffer to buffer the Allies puffed home.