



Hi children, I'm Thunder and
it's so lovely to meet you!
Fancy going for a train stroll?
Hop in and let's go!

Adventures with Thunder: Making Friends

It was the start of another busy day at Foggy Train Station. Fast-paced commuters stormed through the crowds with their briefcases in tow. Station work men and women stood out in their bright yellow vests as they helped people through the gates, took their tickets, picked up their litter and blew their whistles as trains continually departed and arrived at the station.

The sun had only just started rising as it stretched through the thick mist in the city sky. The sunshine pinged through a gap in the station roof and shone across all the freshly cleaned trains, as they puffed, chugged, and whistled at the platforms. Each train had its very own, unique sound and that's what made Foggy Train Station so famous. It was the nosiest station in the whole world.

Some of the trains made relatively normal train sounds, but others almost sounded as if they were talking to one another. The largest steam engine would whistle a 'hellewoo' every day, which to some sounded like 'hello'! Passers-by would always look quizzically at the train with scrunched up eyebrows and open mouths. The smallest shunter was another with a distinct voice as it let out a 'coo coo' every day, which sounded a little like an owl, but also a new-born baby. The train that stood out the most though was not so popular at the station - well it was, but for all the wrong reasons. The express goods, diesel train was a new arrival at the station and it instantly stood out like a sore thumb due to its fluorescent blue, red and yellow livery. Commuters and workers would walk past pointing and sniggering.

"Look at that train. It looks like my child has coloured it in!"

"Ouch, my eyes, that train is so bright."

"What a peculiar-looking train," people would say as they glared while they walked by.

The train wasn't just known for its unique livery though, it was more so known for being... mute! The train was completely silent! No chug, no choo, no woo, no nothing! Even when its engine fired up, it was silent. It slid along the track as if it were ice-skating and not even the breaks made a squeak.

While most people pointed and laughed, there was one regular visitor to the station who thought the train was absolutely beautiful.

Maisie was just four and she walked to the station every morning on the way to her Grandad's house, where she stayed until five o'clock every day while her Mum was at work. Maisie loved trains and always had her sketch book in hand so that she could draw them while she contently waited at the station. Alongside each drawing Maisie would write down the features of each train, along with some special details of what she liked most about the train and what she disliked - but she mostly liked everything about every train!



One day as Maisie perched on a platform bench, swinging her feet backwards and forwards, while scribbling in her sketch book, she caught sight of the most captivating train she had ever seen. Whilst everyone else laughed, Maisie ran over to the train and inspected every inch that she could get to, whilst making sure she wasn't stepping over the platform safety lines, of course! She peered round the front, peered round the back, and jumped up in the air to get a glimpse of the inside. She knelt down and inspected the bogies, she checked out the windscreen wipers, the doors and finally the name plate, which said 'Thunder'. She pressed her hand against the side of the train, as if she were shaking its hand. It was freezing cold.

"Why are you so cold Thunder? All the other trains are nice and warm, but you feel freezing!"

Maisie wiggled her mouth and raised her eyebrows, as she considered the potential reasons.

"Hmm, maybe you need a blanket or a snuggle. Here you go, I'll give you one."

Maisie kindly put her arms out in front of her, as to give the train a big air hug.

Inquisitively, Maisie pressed her hand back onto the side of the train. She scratched her chin with the rubber at the end of her pencil and thoughtfully walked slowly beside the train while staring at her moving feet. As she looked up towards the opposite platform, she noticed just how many people were pointing, laughing, and sniggering at Thunder.

Maisie's lip rolled.

"Oh no, Thunder, are you so cold because you're sad that people are pointing and laughing? Oh no, poor train," Maisie whimpered as she reached her arms out again to hug the engine.

Maisie suddenly heard bustling and her voice being called as her train pulled in. More concerned about Thunder, she looked deeply into its door and said, "Don't worry Thunder, I think you look wonderful and it doesn't matter if you are a silent train because with or without sound you are great to me! Ignore all those silly people, they are all stupid heads." And with that Maisie skipped off towards her train, still looking back every few seconds.

Maisie couldn't stop thinking about Thunder all day and was so excited to return to the station and see Thunder again. In the meantime, he sat silently on the tracks while all the other trains hooted and tooted. Thunder hadn't always been mute though, he was certainly timid and a tad shy but he did used to have a voice, up until he was separated from his twin brother, Bolt. Thunder and Bolt were unidentical twins with very different personalities, but they were the greatest of friends, in fact Bolt was Thunder's only friend. He was too shy to try and build friendships because he was embarrassed of his bright, bold livery. Bolt on the other hand, who was also very bright didn't care what other trains thought of him. Thunder had always wanted to be like his twin, but he was the way he was, so without his brother he felt like the loneliest train in the world. It didn't help that none of the trains at the station welcomed him and all the people laughed at him. Thunder silently hoped and wished that he would be sent back to the junk yard so that he could reunite with his brother, but unfortunately that didn't look like it would happen. Thunder was being used as back up for transporting coal to and from local stations, but all the other diesel engines got chosen first which meant that Thunder was left to sit on the tracks on his own, all day, every day, but at least he had one fan who seemed to be awfully interested in him.

Maisie visited Thunder every day, twice a day. She would sit cross-legged beside the front of him, with her sketchbook on the ground, colouring in and writing about her favourite train, Thunder. She would tell Thunder everything. From what she had for breakfast to how her Grandad always had a little nap in the afternoon, what the weather was like, what book she was reading, how she desperately wanted a ginger cat for her birthday, but her Mums said no, even down to the detail of how she'd learnt to tie her show laces. She proceeded to show Thunder on several occasions how they had to be tied, but Thunder didn't need to know that, because he was shoeless!

Thunder would always listen but he was too sad to speak back so he just listened and listened and listened, until one day he realised that there was nothing to listen to. Maisie was sitting in her usual spot, but she wasn't speaking. Her head was rested in her hand which was propped up on her knee, her eyes were watery, her face was pale, and her bottom lip was quivering. Thunder listened to her silence which hurt his insides – he was so used to Maisie being happy, bubbly,



and full of life and it made him sad to see that she wasn't happy. He had to do something to cheer her up, he couldn't stand seeing her miserable and lifeless, so with that he gently rolled backwards on the track. In all the time he'd known Maisie he'd not made one single movement, so he thought that maybe it would do the trick. As he rolled a few inches Maisie rolled her eyes to the side, before lifting her head and glancing at the train in shock. He gradually came to a halt and then slowly started creeping forwards. Maisie jumped to her toes in surprise and her frowning lips gradually changed and turned into a smile.

Shortly after, Maisie's Mum called her over as their train pulled up and in shock, she abruptly ran over forgetting all about her sketchbook and pencil. Thunder however saw it instantly, so he peered over the platform to see what she'd been drawing. It was a picture of him, looking bright and bold, but the only difference was that in the picture Thunder looked happy and was smiling. Beside the carefully drawn and neatly coloured picture was some writing which he proceeded to read.

'Thunder, Thunder, bright as day,
 You came along and I'd like you to stay,
 I know people laugh, but they're just silly,
 Although I must say, you do seem chilly.
 You might be mute, but that's okay,
 Because when I see you, you make me want to say hooray.
 Above all, you make me smile,
 So, thank you and hopefully I'll see you again in a while.
 Love from your friend Maisie.'

Thunder felt a spark of warmth in his engine and an oily tear in his eye. For the first time in months, he didn't feel alone, but as he carried on looking down the page his mood quickly changed. At the very bottom was a drawing of a girl with a sad face and the words 'no friends'. Thunder knew what that felt like and he couldn't stand the thought of Maisie feeling that way too, so when the station was quiet, he reached over to the platform and wrote a message on the piece of paper.

Thunder waited anxiously until 5.16pm when he knew Maisie would be returning to the station to go back home. He sat and waited and waited and sat and finally he caught sight of a sorrowful Maisie who went wandering over towards him. She spotted her sketchbook on the ground and thoughtlessly picked it up, but then she saw it, the message, which said:

'Dear Maisie,
 You are my best friend.
 Thunder'

Beneath the message was a sketch of Thunder and Maisie both with big, happy smiles across their faces.

Stunned, Maisie looked around to see if someone was playing a trick on her and then she whispered, "Thunder, did you write this and draw this picture," whilst pointing at the paper.

Thunder had to give some form of sign, so just like before he gently glided backwards on the track and then slowly moved back into position.

A huge smile spread across Maisie's face.

"It was you, wasn't it, you're real, aren't you?"

Maisie was so happy that she reached out to give Thunder an air hug and then patted his door, only to find that he wasn't cold anymore, he was so warm, it felt as if he had been sunbathing.



On the other side of the station Maisie's train pulled in and her Mum called her over. Maisie, who was now full of happy beans whispered, "Bye best friend – see you tomorrow." And with that Maisie skipped, ran, and hopped across the platform and onto the train. As she sat in the window she looked across at Thunder and just as the whistle blew and the train doors closed, she heard the loudest, happiest train grumble she had ever heard before. With her jaw wide open and her face pressed up against the window she glared at Thunder who blinked and released a happy thunderous roar once more.

***Never be scared to be yourself. Always be kind and remind others to be kind too.
Be original and roar like Thunder.***

More stories featuring Thunder coming soon!

Writing with Thunder!

Thunder is on the hunt to make some new friends! Hey, how about you! Will you be friends with Thunder? If you will then why not write a story about the adventures and journeys that you and Thunder would go on.

We've created a special story sheet for you to download, print and write on and then once you're done you can send your story to us at marketing@hornby.com or you can post it to Hornby Hobbies Limited, Westwood, Margate, Kent, CT9 4JX.

We can't wait to read your stories!

