



Hey kids, I'm Flash and I'm the fastest train in town. Hop on board and let's go on an adventure.

## Adventures with Flash: The Engine Shed

Once upon a time, hidden deep within hundreds of corn and cabbage fields was a very old shack, which was in fact an engine shed, called Corncob. It was a run down, old shed, which had been standing for eighty-two years! It was only small with just enough space for three engines, some tiny field mice, and lots of pigeons. After eighty-two years of standing though, the shed was beginning to fall apart; planks of wood were hanging off the walls, water dripped through the holes in the roof after a rainstorm, ivy was rapidly growing over the outside of the shed and even the tracks were rusty and starting to rot away. It may have been falling to pieces but that didn't bother Oliver at all!

Oliver was Chief of the Engine Shed, well at least he thought he was! Oliver was just four years old and lived down the road in Peartree Cottage. His house was so close to the track, that he grew up watching the engines go in and out of the shed, delivering hay and animal feed to the nearby farms and transporting sheep from one field to another – there was never a dull view from Oliver's window! He would carefully stand on a small blue chair, stare through his binoculars and out of his window all day, but after a few years, Oliver gradually got bored of looking out from his window and instead wanted to be up close and see the trains for real, not just through his small, round window. So, with that Oliver would set off every morning with his binoculars hung safely around his neck, his dinosaur backpack filled with peanut butter sandwiches and his hand-written train timetable held out in front of him with both hands.

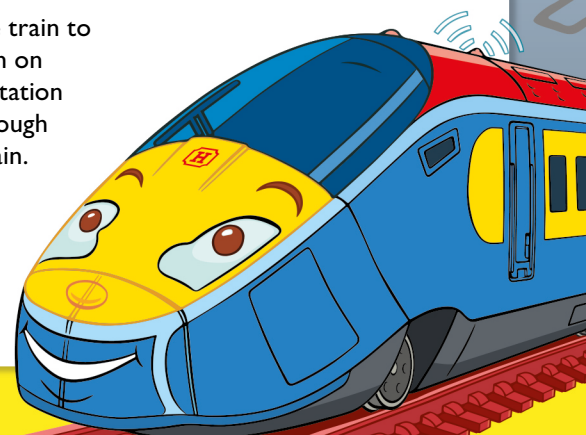
Oliver had the perfect train-spotting location right in front of a compost heap. It smelled a bit like rotten eggs, but Oliver didn't mind, all he cared about was seeing the trains, whilst hiding from the engine drivers and staff. There was only three of them though, so it was quite easy for him to sneak past them, especially when they spent most of the day in the signal room eating hundreds of chocolate digestive biscuits.

On one particular day Oliver had set off for a day of train spotting, but on this occasion, he decided to borrow his Mum's special camera, so his backpack was a little heavier than normal, but as usual he marched through the fields, his pink, rosy cheeks glowing from the reflection of the misty, morning sun. Oliver finally got to his compost spot, placed his bag on a cabbage and then laid out his coat on the ground to use as a seat so that he didn't sit on any rotting vegetables! He raised his train timetable up to eye level and intently looked over it.

"Just ten minutes to go – I can't wait!" Oliver excitedly announced to himself.

He knelt down on his coat with the binoculars at the ready, waiting for the train to arrive. He was particularly excited today, because he had heard the signal man on the phone a few days before saying that a new train would be arriving at the station today. He had only ever seen two trains before and although he was lucky enough to see them every day, he was delighted over the thought of seeing a third train.

"Come on, where are you?" Oliver impatiently sighed, as he pulled an apple from his backpack.



With the binoculars in position Oliver glanced across the fields and along the track to the furthest track point that he could see. He moved his head up and down the track as he crunched through his shiny apple and then suddenly in the far distance, he could hear a gentle chug.

“It’s close, it’s close,” he squealed, before quickly covering his mouth in the hope that the engine shed staff hadn’t heard.

With his eyes glued to the track, Oliver could hear another noise that was a little closer. It was a soft rustling coming from the ground. He checked out the whole area and then suddenly he caught sight of a tiny mouse near the tracks. He zoomed in and realised that there was a whole family of mice trying to cross the track, including a straggler!

“One, two, three, four... five!” He nervously counted as the sound of the train echoed closer. With his Mum’s camera now in hand, Oliver set it to record and held it in the trains’ direction, while he anxiously waved his other arm towards the mice, urging them to cross.

The family of mice speedily rotated their legs, their long, thin tails straggling behind, but suddenly high above in the air was a huge crow with a pointy, sharp beak, looking down with its beady eyes, preparing to catch its dinner!

“Quick, quick, quick – there’s a train coming and a crow. Quick, run!” Oliver mumbled, as waves of panic rolled over him.

Four of the five mice made it to the other side but the last and smallest mouse in the family struggled to get over the ledge. He was too short and no matter how many times he bounced on his teeny-weeny paws, he couldn’t get over. As his family waited in fear on the other side the baby mouse desperately reached up and tried to get over, but he was running out of time. In the distance and across three large fields came the smooth chugging of the new local express train.

The mouse’s legs were moving in clockwork as he kicked, bounced, and wound them round and round as if he were a jack in the box, but it was too late. The hungry crow was on the move and swooped headfirst towards the mouse, its beak ready to bite and wings spread wide, fighting against the breeze. The jack-in-the-box mouse wiggled and kicked and bounced and finally he reached the top of the ledge and ran as fast as he could across the track. The eager bird was seconds away and the chugging was getting louder. The mouse jumped at the other side and finally made it over before a huge gust of wind arrived and the local express chugged over the tracks. The angry crow circled back up into the sky and the mice darted towards their nest under the engine shed platform.

In a flutter of panic, Oliver looked up as the most extraordinary train glided past him. Unlike the other trains he was used to seeing, this one was bright blue and yellow and red! It slid over the tracks so smoothly and instantly, Oliver was stunned, in awe and amazed. His head moved as the train rolled past, now more slowly. With his mouth wide open and eyes in a trance, his hand moved to capture the back of the train as it pulled into the shed.

Still transfixed, Oliver strained his ears so that he could just about make out the conversation taking place in the shed.

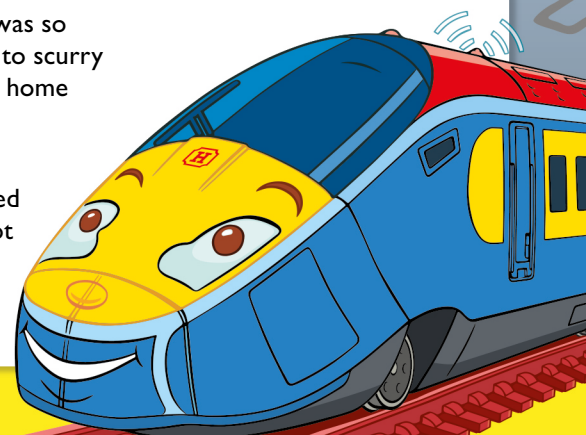
“I don’t know why they named it Flash. It’s even slower than I expected and look at the colours, it’s truly hideous!”

Oliver squinted an eye and whilst hanging on to a big branch in the compost heap, he leaned towards the engine shed desperately trying to listen to every word.

“I can’t believe we have taken this one on. I guess we can test things out tomorrow, but I don’t have high hopes.”

Oliver couldn’t believe it. The train was different, yes, but it was beautiful, it was so colourful, and he had never seen anything like it before. He was so desperate to scurry on into the shed just like the mice, but the sun was setting and if he didn’t get home and replace his Mum’s camera he would be in deep, double trouble!

While intently looking at the new train in the shed, Oliver threw on his coat, threw his backpack over the top and with the continuing wide mouth, captured more footage of the back of the train so that he could re-watch it when he got home. As he slowly and discreetly tip toed around the back of the shed, the engine released a final grumble, which sounded an awful lot like a sigh!



“A train that sighs?!” Oliver thought to himself, as he caught one final glimpse of the train’s shiny, gleaming blueness, before heading down the track to his house.

When Oliver got home, he went straight up to his bedroom, climbed up onto his chair and pressed his binoculars right against the window, which instantly misted from his heavy breath. Oliver smeared his hand over the condensation, leaving a big smudge in the middle. He looked again and could just make out the head of the trains in the shed.

“So, you’re called Flash. I can’t wait to properly meet you,” Oliver whispered to himself.

“Don’t worry about what anyone says, I think you’re a beautiful train and if I was a train, I’d want to look just like you,” Oliver continued.

As dusk fell and the engine shed lights turned on, Oliver admired the front of the train a little more, until suddenly he gasped and forced himself to blink a few times before banging the binoculars against the window once more. He gasped again! This time he put his binoculars down and rubbed both eyes before quickly picking them back up again and pressing as close to the window as possible. With the front of the train in full view of the lens, Oliver released the longest gasp yet as Flash the train blinked his eyes, shook his body, and nuzzled his head into the track.

“It’s alive! Flash is alive.”

***Never be scared to be different. Be original and shine bright like Flash.***

## More stories featuring Flash coming soon!

### Writing with Flash!

Flash is on the hunt to make some new friends! Hey, how about you! Will you be friends with Flash? If you will then why not write a story about the adventures and journeys that you and Flash 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](mailto: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!**

