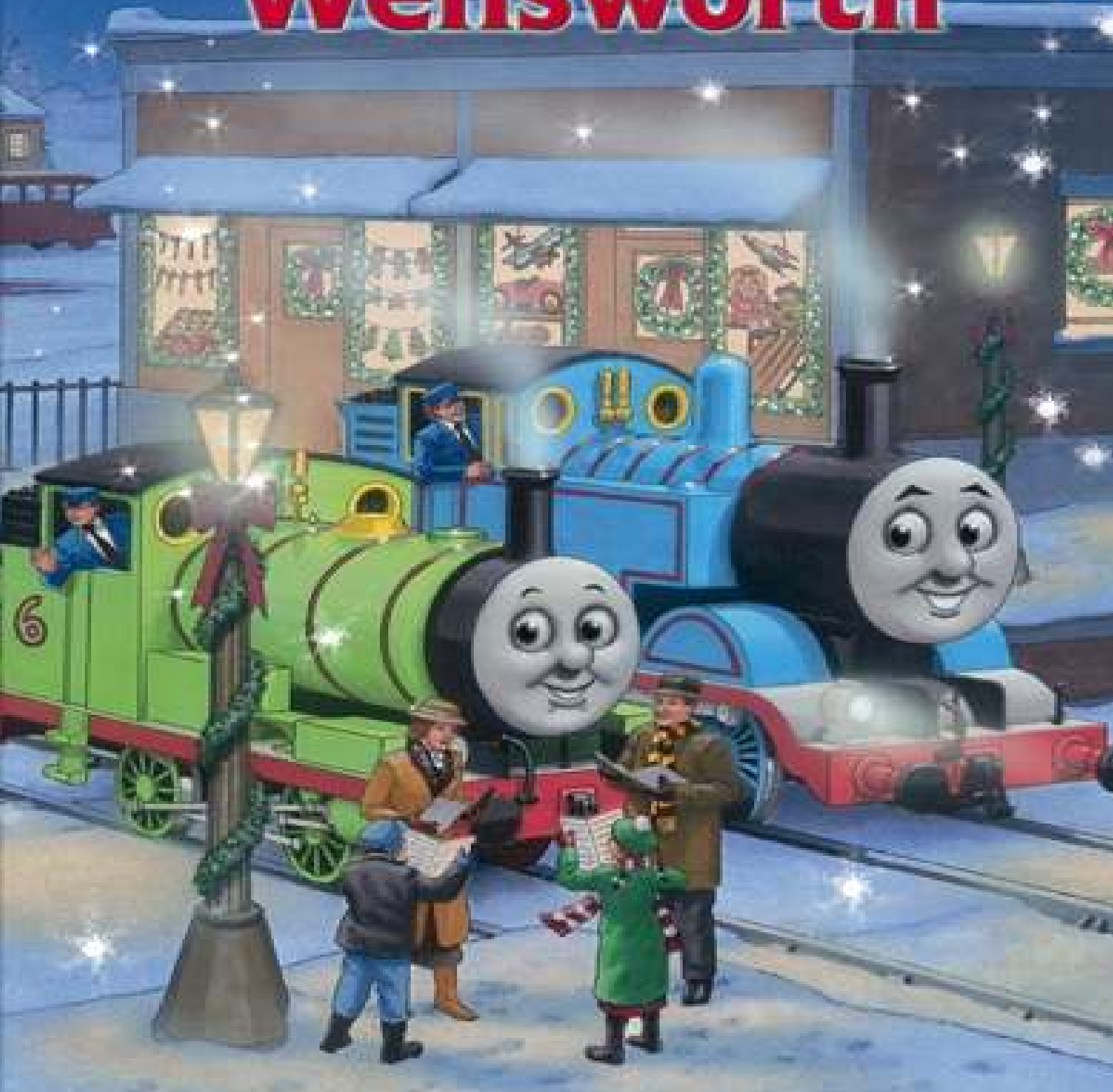


**THOMAS
& FRIENDS**

THOMAS IN TOWN

Christmas in Wellsworth






Christmas in Wellsworth



Based on The Railway Series
by The Reverend W Awdry
Illustrated by Richard Courtney

RANDOM HOUSE  NEW YORK

CREATED BY BRITT ALLCROFT

Based on The Railway Series by The Reverend W Awdry.

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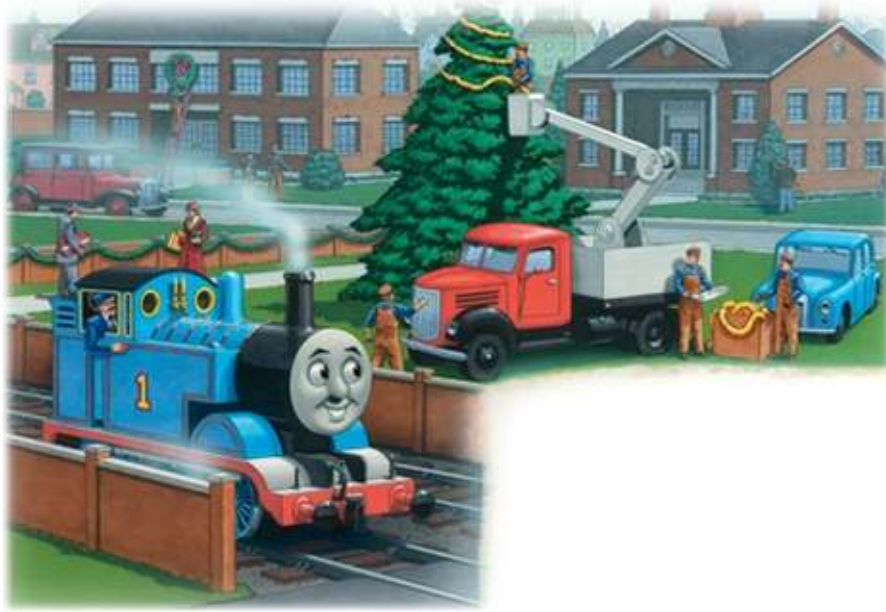
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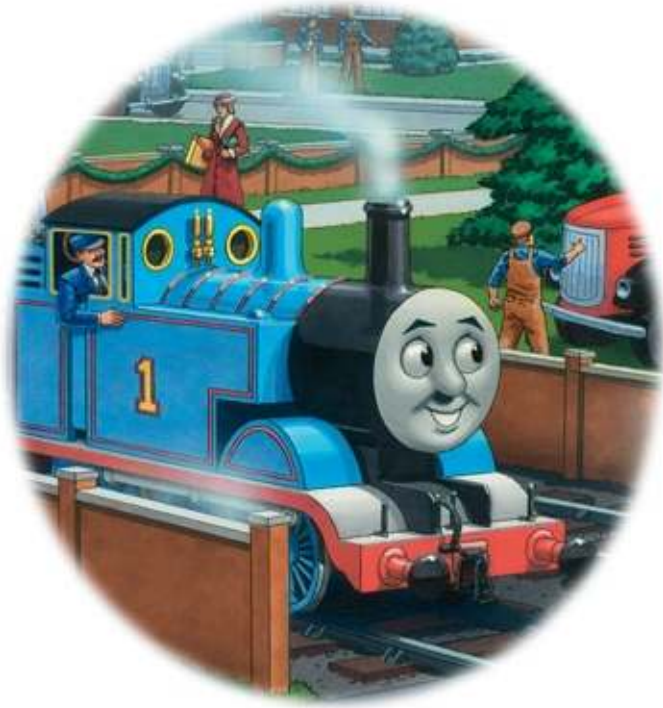


It was two days before Christmas. Everywhere Thomas looked, Wellsworth was bustling with preparations. Toby brought shoppers into town, James pulled freight cars full of decorations, and Henry had just delivered a large Christmas tree to the town square.



The following night, Wellsworth would have a wonderful Christmas Eve festival. Everyone would gather to watch the lighting of the tree. They'd sing carols and ring bells. Thomas couldn't wait.

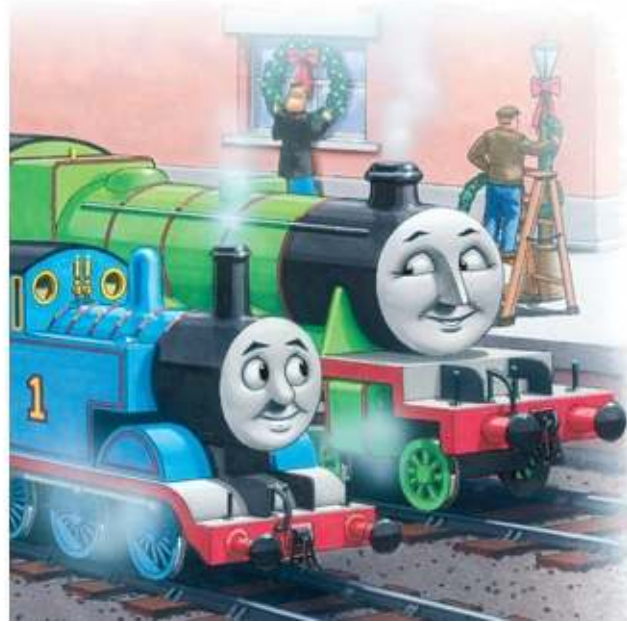
"If only it would snow," he thought. "Then everything would be perfect."



“I’m afraid we won’t have a white Christmas this year,” Thomas peeped as he looked up at the blue sky.

“That’s okay with me,” said Henry. “I have so much to do, I don’t need a snowstorm now.”

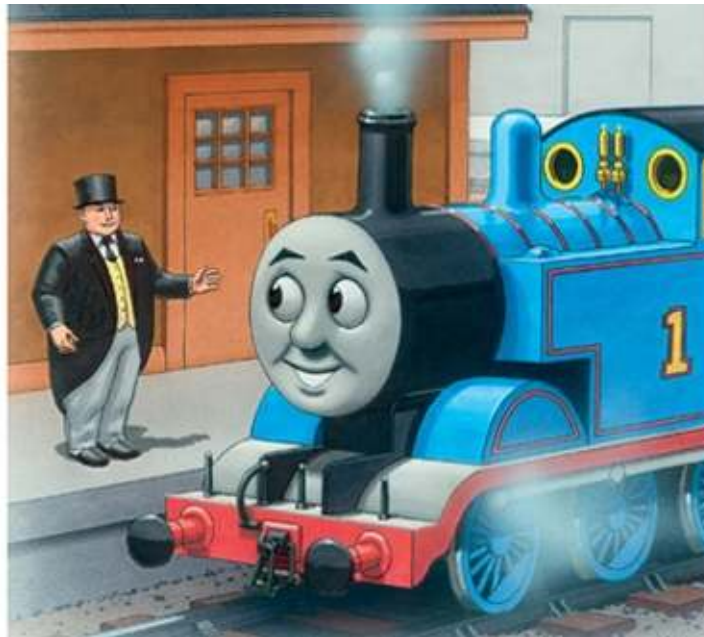
Thomas loved the snow, even if he had to wear his heavy snowplow. “Snow would make the Christmas Eve Festival so pretty.”



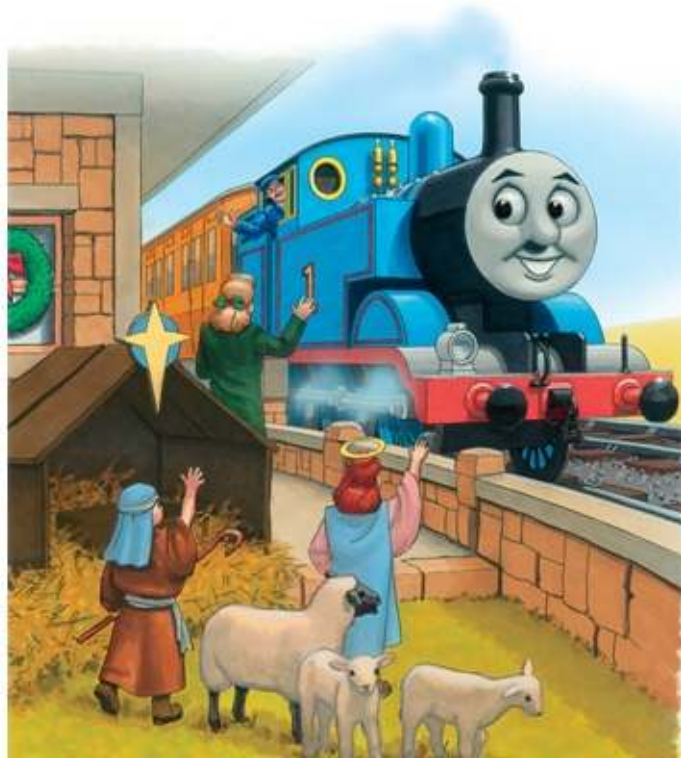
Just then, Sir Topham Hatt called to Thomas.

“I have a message from Lady Hatt,” he said. “She wants to come to the festival, but my car is in the garage for maintenance. I need you to run over to Kellsthorpe to pick her up. Please take Annie and Clarabel so you can bring my grandchildren as well.”

“Yes, Sir!” peeped Thomas. Of all the jobs on Sodor, pulling a trainload of children was his favorite.



Thomas was soon speeding across Sodor. Everywhere he looked, people were smiling and waving. In Maron, children prepared for a Christmas pageant—with real sheep!



And as night fell, the festive lights of Rolf's Castle shined brightly. The town looked like a magic palace.



Thomas arrived in Kellsthorpe. He had made good time and was eager to make the return trip the next day.



When Thomas awoke the next morning, the weather had changed. It was cloudy and damp—and getting colder by the hour. A chilly fog rolled over the town.



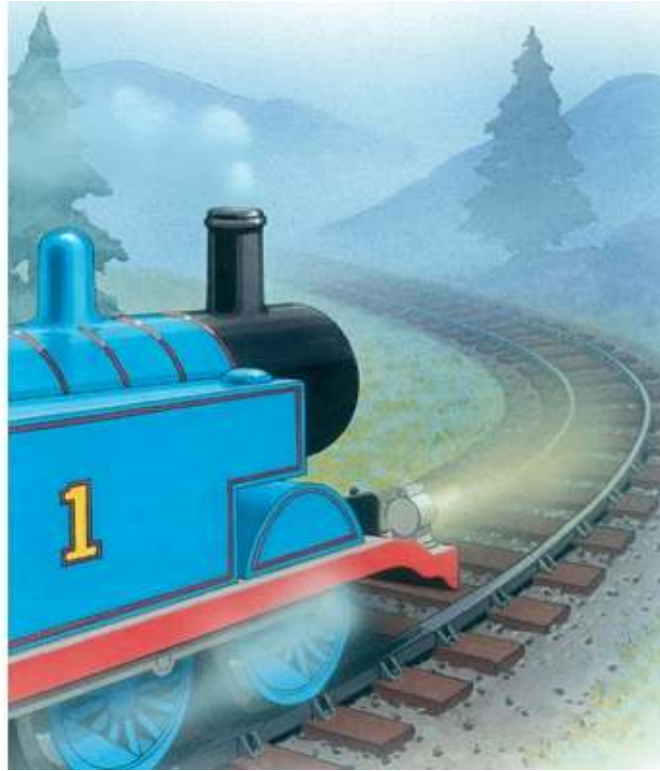
Soon Lady Hatt and the children arrived at the station. They climbed aboard Annie and Clarabel, dressed in their holiday best and carrying boxes of gifts. They couldn't wait to get to Wellsworth and the festival.

The fog grew thicker. Thomas chugged away slowly.



The cold wind blew and the tracks were wet and slippery. Thomas' lamp was useless in the fog, and his Driver held the throttle tight. They crept along more and more slowly.

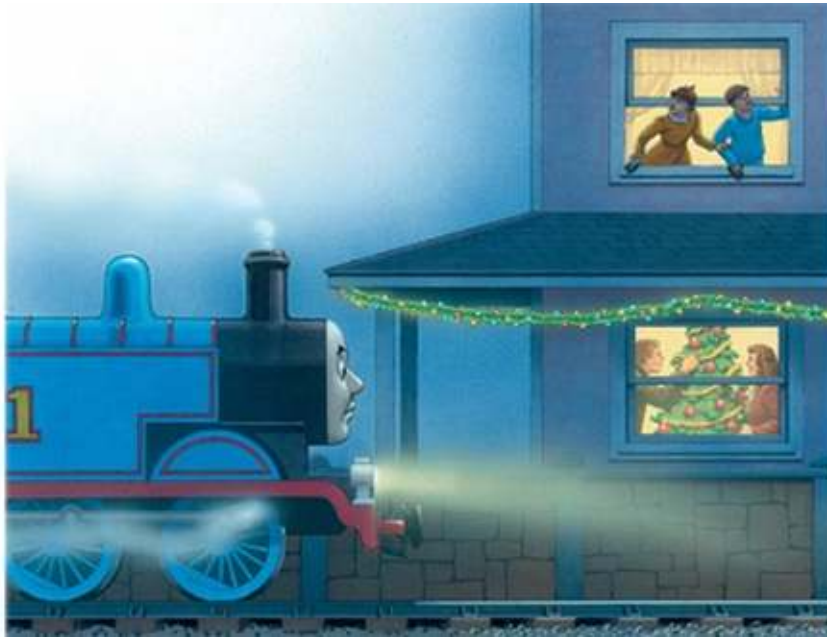
"This isn't very merry weather at all," Thomas peeped.



As he rolled past Rolf's Castle, Thomas couldn't see the town through the thick fog. He wanted to get to Wellsworth as soon as possible. Thomas knew they had to be careful and go slowly. He hoped they would pass through this bad weather soon.



But the bad weather didn't lift. And as it grew later and later, darkness soon added to Thomas' problems. As he climbed toward Killdane, Thomas knew he wouldn't be in Wellsworth in time for the festival. He would miss the tree lighting—and worst of all, he was sure he had ruined Christmas for Sir Topham Hatt and his family.

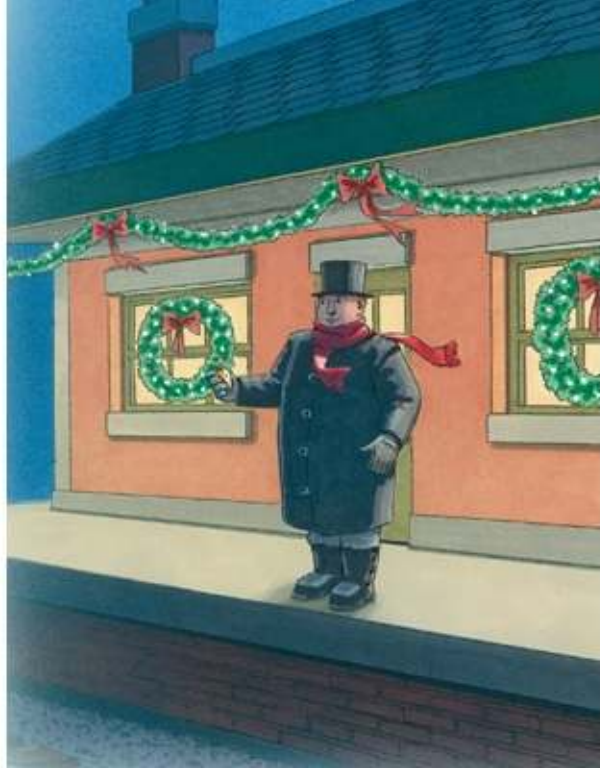


Meanwhile, the people of Wellsworth gathered around the tree in the town square. They lit the festive lights and sang carols, but Sir Topham Hatt was not with them.

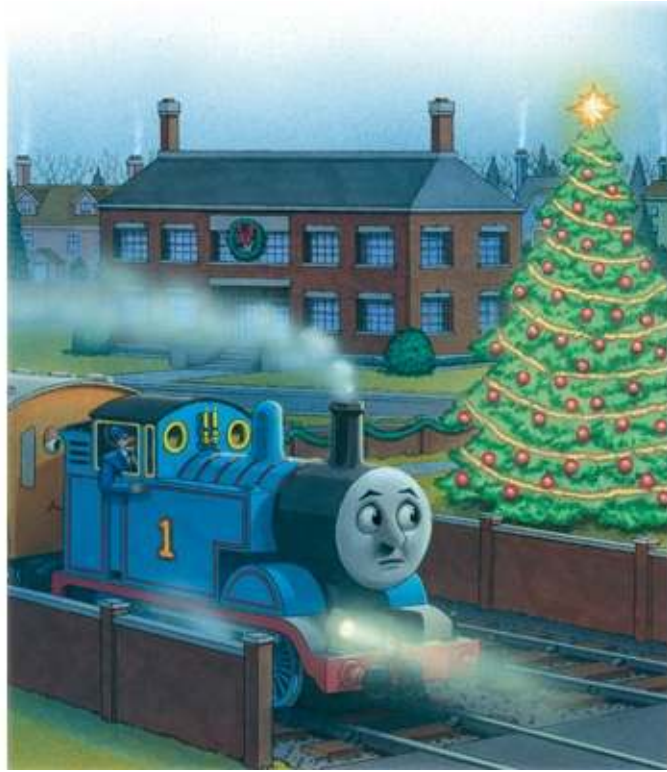


Sir Topham Hatt waited nervously at the Wellsworth Station. There were reports of fog and frost all over the countryside. He checked his watch and worried.

“I hope everyone is okay,” he whispered to himself.



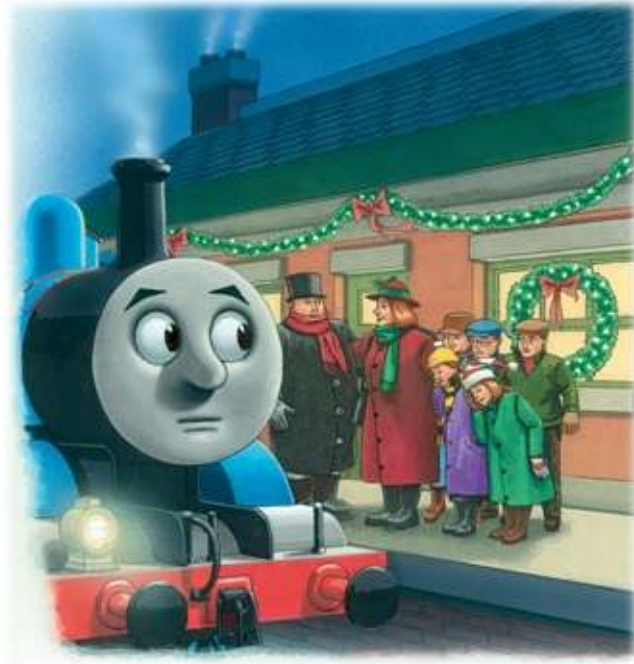
Finally, as Thomas chugged over the hills outside Wellsworth, the fog lifted. He could see candles flickering in the windows of homes he passed. The streets of Wellsworth were empty, and even the sight of the great glowing Christmas tree at the center of town didn't cheer Thomas.



When they reached the station, Sir Topham Hatt hugged his wife and helped carry the sleeping children off Annie and Clarabel.

“And now we must get these children to bed,” said Lady Hatt, “or Santa Claus will never arrive.”

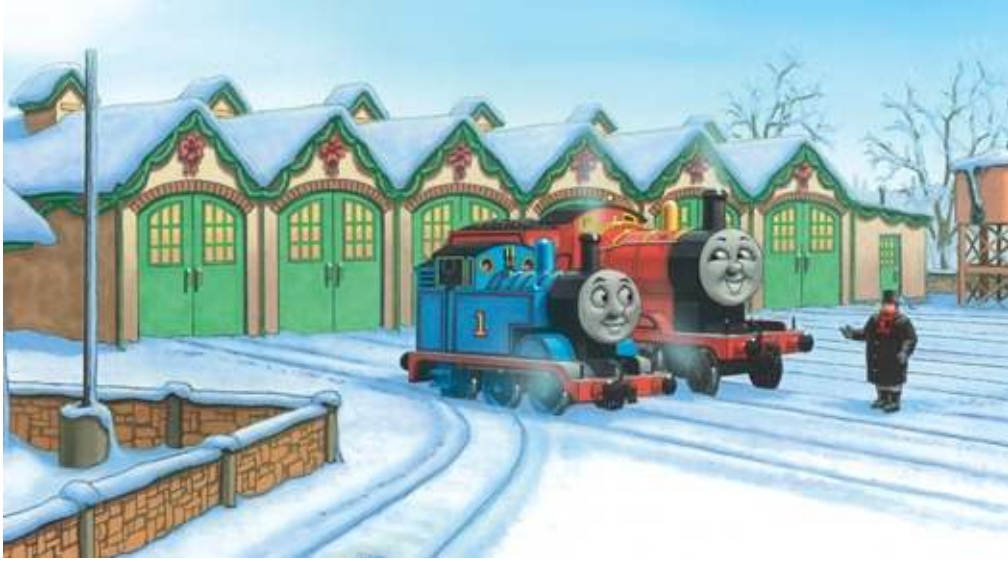
Thomas chugged back to the Yard feeling very low indeed.



The next morning, the Yard was blanketed with beautiful snow! All the engines wished each other Happy Christmas.

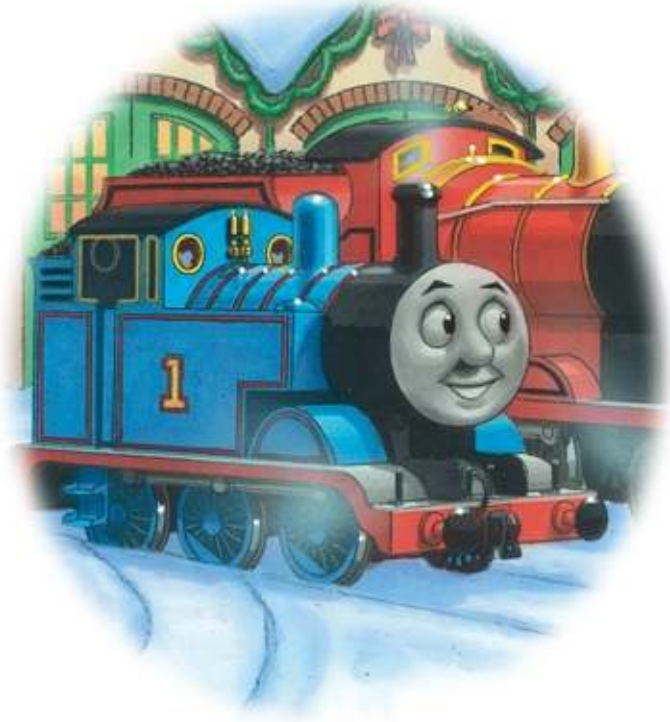
“I’m sorry I missed the festival,” Thomas peeped to James. “And worst of all, I think I ruined Sir Topham Hatt’s holiday.”

Thomas didn’t know that Sir Topham Hatt was standing nearby.



“Ruined?” said Sir Topham Hatt. “You brought my family to me safe and sound, and that’s the best gift of all! Taking your time in that terrible weather was the right thing to do. Thomas, I’m glad you’re such a Really Careful Engine!”

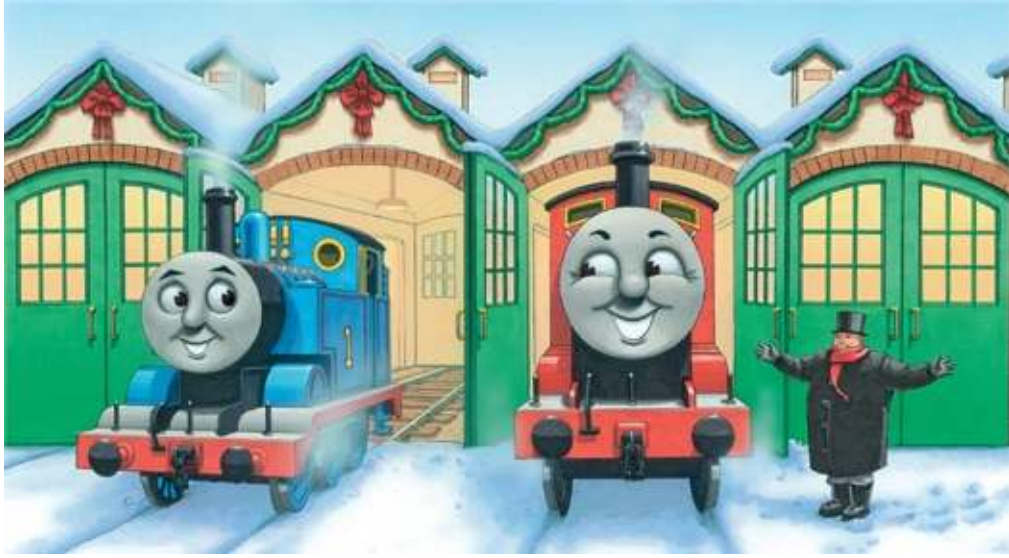
Thomas was delighted.



“I am so grateful for my railway,” Sir Topham Hatt announced, “I’m giving each of you a hopper full of the best coal to thank you for a wonderful year.”

All the engines tooted happily.

“And, Thomas, at the request of my wife, Annie and Clarabel will be getting new sea cushions.”



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