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The Railway Children

By Lionel Jeffries

We were not
the Railway Children to begin with.
I don't suppose we even thought
about railways
except as a means of getting
to the theatre and the zoo.
We were just ordinary
suburban children
and we lived
with Father and Mother
in an ordinary
red brick fronted villa
with coloured glass
in the front door...
Come on.
... a tiled passage
that was called a hall
and big fires
in big fireplaces.
We even had a gas fire
in the breakfast room
and a servant's bell board.
In fact,
every modern convenience.
Chins up!
There we three of us.
Now let's arrange your pretty hair.
That's me, I'm Roberta.
They call me Bobbie,
sometimes Lanky.
I'm the eldest, worst luck.
That's Phyllis, who means well.
And that's Peter,
who wants to be an engineer.
And don't forget
to watch the dickey bird.
Watch the birdie.
Mother did not spend all her time
paying dull calls to dull ladies
and sitting dully at home waiting
for dull ladies to pay calls on her.
She was always there,
with us.
We had a father

who was just perfect.
Her light's growing dim
and if it goes out, then she's dead.
She says she would be get well again
if children believed in fairies.
- Do you believe in fairies?
- Yes.
That's not loud enough.
Do you believe in fairies?
Yes!
It's still not loud enough.
Do you believe in fairies?
YES!
Yes, I certainly do!
Mmm, it smells gorgeous.
It's fabulous,
absolutely fabulous.
Now altogether... one, two, three.
Well done!
Happy Christmas!
I love you.
You will think that we ought
to have been very happy
and we were but we did not know
how happy
till the pretty life at Edgcombe Villa
was over and done with
and we had to live
a very different life indeed.
Peter my boy, come here.
Dad... it's perfect.
It's more perfect
than any one could ever dream of.
Thank you, Dad.
The dreadful change
came quite suddenly.
You heaving brute!
And that was the last we saw
of poor Potts.
What a wreck!
- Is there any hope?
- Hope?
Of course, it'll want hope yes,
and a new valve.

I'll tell you what, I'll give up
Saturday afternoon to it.
Yes, and you can help me.
I hate doing a job like this
especially at Christmas.
Who on earth is that?
An Englishman's house is his castle, but
I wish they had moats and drawbridges!
Come in.
Yes?
Please, sir. There are two gentlemen
wish to see you.
I've shown them into the study, sir,
I hope that was all right?
Excuse me.
I wish we did have
a moat and drawbridge.
Then if we didn't want anyone to...
I've never heard anything
so preposterous. When? Who?
- Why's Daddy shouting?
- I don't know, dear.
Come in.
Yes, Ruth?
What is it?
Please, ma'am, the Master wants you
to just step into the study.
Look, I'm not going to say a thing!
Come in.
I will not!
All right, cabby,
Scotland Yard.
It's bed-time.
Ruth will put you to bed.
But you promised we could stay up late.
Daddy was going to play with us.
Father's been
called away... on business.
Go up at once darlings, please.
It wasn't bad news,
was it, Mummy?
Is anyone dead or...
Oh, no, nobody's dead.
I can't tell you anything about it tonight.

Up you go.

Well, good night then.

Ruth!

What's up?

Ask me no questions

and I'll tell you no lies.

You'll know soon enough.

- Phyl?

- Yes.

If Mother doesn't want us to know

she's been crying then we won't know.

- That's all.

- All right.

She's gone into London,

that's all I know.

Now just you eat up.

Some dire calamity's happening,

I just know it.

Good evening, Mrs Waterbury.

- Good evening, ma'am.

- Good evening, Sally.

Oh, it's so cold!

Let's get to the fire, Peter, come on.

My darlings, those men last night

did bring very bad news

and Father will be away

for some time

Is it something to do

with the Government, Mummy?

Yes... yes, it is.

Now it's bed time, my darlings.

And don't worry.

It will all come right in the end.

Don't you worry either

because we'll be as good as gold.

Oh, we used to say life was so dull...

Nothing ever happened like in books.

Now something has happened.

Yes, it has

and it's made Mother unhappy.

Everything's horrid...

...just horrid.

Stairs... stairs... stairs...

Everything continued to be

perfectly horrid for some weeks.
Mother was nearly always out,
the between maid was sent away...
... and Aunt Emma
came on a visit.

- Good afternoon, children.

- Good afternoon, Aunt Emma.

Your mother has sent for me
in her distress,
and I'm here for a while
but not for long.

I'm off to India as a governess
and as I shall be busy preparing
for my arduous journey,
I shall require you to be seen
and not heard.

Preferably to be not seen
and not heard.

Children should be kept
in their proper places.

- Do you understand?

- Yes, Aunt Emma.

- Yes, Aunt Emma.

- Excellent.

You may kiss me
if you wish.

You can hear them sigh
and wish to die

You can see them wink
the other eye

At the man who broke
the Bank at Monte Carlo

Altogether now

As I walked along the Bois Boulogne
with an inde... #

I have asked you not to use them utensils
in that manner.

I was up at four this morning
cleaning them

as if I haven't got enough to do
what with the between maid leaving
and now your aunt asking me
to heave bloomin' great boxes about
like I was a navvy or something.

- Ruth.

- Yes?

There's no need to be so rude.

Cook was just trying to cheer us up.

Come on, you two.

Well...

I'm very surprised at you, Cook.

Where's your dignity?

And take that silly hat off.

Get yourself dressed properly.

I don't know I seem to do

all the work round here.

We shouldn't really Peter,

she'll get soaked.

It's too late, she's coming.

Stairs... stairs... stairs...

I'll have fallen arches

before me holiday.

I hope you're undressed and ready,

master Peter.

I haven't got all night, you know.

- Yes, Ruth.

- Good...

You...!

- Oh! Stop it!

- You nasty little limb, you!

If you don't mend your ways

you'll go where your precious

father's gone, so I tell you straight.

Ruth!

Huh!

We're going to have to play

at being poor for a while.

We're moving to a darling little house

in the country, up in Yorkshire.

- What?

- I know you'll love it

- Is Aunt Emma coming?

- No, Peter, unfortunately not.

- Don't you want a 1st Class, madam?

- No, Second. Thank you.

Ah, looked like 1st Class quality to me.

- Are we on the right train for Yorkshire?

- Yes.

Thank you.

Ooh... careful.

Give that to me.

- I'll take that bag.

- Thank you so much.

- Goodbye.

- Thank you. Goodbye.

Excuse me.

We want to go to the house on the hill.

The Three Chimneys.

- Er, do you know the way?

- I daresay.

- Well, will you show us?

- I dare say.

- Phyllis, are you all right?

- Yes.

Can't we put just one box
on your cart?

You asked me to show you the way,
nothing was said about boxes.

Never mind, darlings.

It's only a few more yards.

I wonder why she didn't leave
the lights on.

Who is she?

Mrs Viney, The woman I engaged
to clean the place and to get the supper.

I expect Mrs Viney's gone home.

Your train was late, see.

But she's got the key.

What do we do?

She'll have left that
under the doorstep.

- We all do hereabouts.

- Well you might have said so.

You never asked, did you?

Nothing was said
about a door key.

- May I borrow your lamp, please?

- I daresay.

If you say "I daresay" once more,
I shall have hysterics, I daresay

Oh... there we are.

What's that?

It's only the rats.
God works in mysterious ways
his wonders to perform.
Ow!
Rats!
I wish we hadn't come.
Don't you worry, darlings.
I saw a paraffin lamp on the table,
we'll soon have some light.
Oh, those poor little mice,
they were so frightened.
I don't believe they were rats at all.
You've often said you wanted
something to happen, well now it has.
It's quite exciting, isn't it?
I told Mrs Viney to get
some meat and bread
and have some supper ready.
I wonder where...
Oh, I suppose she's laid it
in the dining room.
Come along darlings, up here.
Let's go and see.
Come along.
Oh darlings, mind the steps.
Mind how you go, Peter.
Oh, that beastly woman!
She's taken the money
and not left us any food.
Aren't we going to have
any supper tonight? I'm starving!
I know! There's some food
in the cases in the cellar.
Aunt Emma sent them on
ahead of us. Come along.
Mind the step.
Come along, Bobbie,
it's a real feast.
Sardines, biscuits, ginger.
Raisins...
No Phyl, no! You do not put
the marmalade spoon in to the sardines.
Oh, Mummy, it's gorgeous, Mummy.
Tell you what,

let's drink Aunt Emma's health.

- Good idea.

- Here's to Aunt Emma.

- To Aunt Emma.

- Aunt Emma.

And all who sail in her.

- Oh! What's that, Mummy?

- Pie.

- Pie?

- Apple Pie.

Apple pie for breakfast?

Then we're not poor after all.

This is the supper

we should have had.

I found it in that little room
that we thought was a cupboard,
so Mrs Viney wasn't so bad
after all.

- Good morning, can I help you?

- I expect so. Viney's the name.

Hilda Viney, ma'am... Missus.

Do come in.

We're just been talking about you.

Oh, I see you found your supper then.

Funny time to have it though.

It was like a great dragon
tearing by.

A dragon's house

looks like that tunnel.

I never thought we'd ever get so near
to a train as this.

- It's better than toy engines, isn't it?

- I don't know, it's different.

It seems so odd to see all of a train.

It's so tall.

I've always seen them cut
in half by platforms

I wonder if that train's going to London?

London is where Daddy is.

- We don't know that, Phyl.

- He might be.

How do you do?

- How do you do?

- Yes.

- Could I ask you two questions?
- Yes, well it depends what they are.
I can't spend all day conversationalising
with the junior public.
Now what are they?
What's the white mark
on the coal heap for?
That's to tell you how much coal there is
you see, in case anybody nicks it.
Second question, please.
Do you know anything
about engines?
Do I know anything about engines?
Why?
- Because I've got one.
- Er, what gauge?
I don't know anything about gauges,
but it's about this big.
Yes?
- It's brass and it blew up.
- It blew up.
Well just excuse me young man,
I've got a lot to do
cos the Station Master's
having his hair cut in Leeds, you see
and Perks must be about it.
- Perks? Who's Perks?
- Me, sir. I'm Perks.
Right on time.
- What is?
- This ere's the Scots Flyer.
Why is it going so slowly,
Mr Perks?
Why... well it's all up hill
to Scotland, isn't it?
That train's going to Scotland.
If Daddy's not in London,
he's in Scotland
and that train is going to Scotland.
Perhaps, Phyl.
I don't think we're going to enjoy
being poor, you know,
being cold and all that.
Phyllis, try to imagine it

as an adventure.
All sorts of things might happen.
Mother could write about it.
Write a book.
You never know.
We won't always be poor, Phyllis,
I'm sure.
All right. Good night.
Good night.
I'm still cold though.
...lightly on the-cheek.
...one of the men, in a bowler hat,
opened the door...
Father did not turn,
but left without a word.
Why don't we ask the next train
to take our love to Daddy?
Trains don't carry people's love,
they'd be above that.
Yes, they do if you tame them first.
I wonder why Daddy
hasn't written to us.
Mummy says he's too busy.
he'll write soon, she says.
Well, why don't we wave anyway?
Three waves won't matter.
We won't miss them.
Charming...
Charming!
About time they had it seen to.
The coal in the little shed
has held out well, Bobbie.
There was hardly any there yesterday
when I looked.
Well, we've only had one fire.
I know but I could swear there's more
than when we first came.
- That's silly.
- Course it's silly.
So it's you, Pete.
- It's you.
- It's me what?
It's you that's been putting
the coal in the shed.

But where from Pete,
for heaven's sake?
From the coal heap of course,
they've got stacks of it there.
But that's stealing!
Don't you remember your catechism?
"Thou shalt not steal sayest the Lord"
It wasn't stealing.
It was mining.
I took from the top.
That's mining, not stealing.
If it was, all the miners in the world
would be in jug.
Oh, Pete... Pete!
Oh Pete, Pete.
We'll have to take it all back.
- What?
- All of it.
- All of it.
- All of it!
All of it.
There can't be anything wrong in trying
to keep your own mother warm.
That can't be wrong.
It's all right Pete,
at least we can burn the evidence.
Mrs Viney, here we are.
I've got the buns for tea.
- Buns?
- Yes, Mummy sold a story and...
Mrs Viney, what's the matter?
It's your dear ma, master Peter,
she's... she's very poorly.
You'd better go back to the village
and get Dr Forrest.
Right.
Don't let her die, Mrs Viney.
Doctor Forrest!
Mother's very ill,
please come quickly,
Stay there, my boy.
Influenza.
But not serious.
Now my Lady Grave-airs,

I suppose you'll want to be head nurse?

- Of course, Doctor.

- Right.

Now we'll send down some medicine.

Keep a good fire going

and have some strong beef tea

ready to give her

the moment the fever goes down...

She can have the grapes now

and the soda water.

Oh, and you'd better get

a bottle of brandy.

You can go in now...

May I have the list?

Don't worry, funny face.

She's head nurse

but you can be Matron.

Oh, thank you.

Oh, what utter nonsense,

I can't afford all that.

I haven't an idea in my head

for a story

so there won't even be buns

for tea for some time.

Tell Mrs Viney to boil some scrag-end

of neck for your dinner tomorrow

then I'll have some of the broth.

But even if we never have

anything to eat at all

you can't afford all those other things.

Right. So we've got to think

of some other way.

Now everybody, think.

Just as hard as ever you can,

think!

- I, O, N.

- You sure?

Yes.

I...

O...

N.

There. Brilliant.

"Look out at the station. "

Definitely one of your best works,

Michael Angelo.

Oakworth Station!

Oakworth!

Oakworth!

Oakworth Station.

Oh, I thought I'd missed you.

You are the man who waves to us,
aren't you?

- Mind the doors, please.

- Aren't you?

- Yes my dear, I wave...

- Oh, will you take this, please.

We chose you because we thought
you had such a kind face.

Er, mind the doors please, Miss.

Sir. On the way, Mr, Mitchell.

Thank you, Mr Perks.

- Good evening.

- Good evening.

Good evening.

Oh dear!

Oh! Good evening.

The name's Perks.

I believe we've met.

Yes, you were busycause of
the Station Master being in Leeds.

Yes, even busier now

'cause he had a drop too much
down at the Britannia Arms and fell over
and broke his daft leg playing billiards.

- Of course it was his own fault.

- Why?

He should've used the rest.

He will do that

over the edge, you see.

The old gent asked me

to fetch this up straight away.

Thank you very much, Mr Perks.

I'm very sorry I haven't got two pence
to give you like Father does, but...

Hey! Just stop that, please.

I wasn't thinking about no tuppences.

I just came to say I was sorry

to hear your mama wasn't so well

and to ask how she finds herself
this evening.

Oh and I've er, I brought her
a bit of sweet briar.

It's very sweet to smell that is.

Tuppence indeed.

Thank you very much and I beg
your pardon about the twopence.

No offences, I'm sure.

No offence.

And just to show I'll er,
I'll have a look
at that blown up brass engine
of yourn, shall I?

- What?

- Yes.

Oh, can you manage?

Bit heavy... Here you are.

Oh. Is that it?

Bit of a mess, isn't it?

Still I'll er, I'll see what I can do.

- Good evening.

- Thank you, Mr Perks. Good night.

- Oh!

- Oh, look at that!

Oh, everything...

"Dear Roberta, Phyllis
and Peter,

"here are the things you want.

"Your mother will want to know
where they came from

"so please ask her to forgive me

"for taking the liberty

of allowing myself the great pleasure.

"Yours sincerely, G. P... Something. "

I can't read it.

I think we were right to ask him.

Right? Of course we're right.

I don't fancy telling Mother
the whole truth about this.

We shouldn't do that

until she's completely well.

And when she is, we'll be so happy
we shan't mind the fuss.

Oh, look at those roses!
I'll take them up to her.
- And the sweetbriar.
- Oh, thank you.
Cor, look!
I wonder what's in there.
So that's an end to it! Now listen.
It's true, we're poor,
but we shall have enough to live on
as long as I have ideas for stories.
But you mustn't go about telling people
of our affairs. It isn't right!
And you must never, never, never
ask strangers to give you things.
Always remember that.
- Yes, Mother.
- I shall write to your old gentleman
and I shall tell him
that I didn't approve.
I shall thank him too,
of course, for his kindness,
but it you that I don't approve of,
not the old gentleman.
He's been extremely kind.
You can give my letter to your Mr Perks
to give to him.
And we won't say any more about it.
Isn't she marvellous
when she's angry?
Hello, head-nurse.
That's funny, I was thinking about you.
I wanted to talk to you, Doctor.
- Your mother's not worse I hope?
- No, but...
Come on, we'll go for a ride.
This is great fun.
Come on, out with it, head-nurse.
What's the trouble?
It's rather hard, you see, toout with it'
because of what Mother said.
What did Mother say?
She said I wasn't to go telling everyone
that we're poor.
- But you aren't everyone, are you?

- Not at all. Well?

Well, I know doctors
are very expensive
and Mrs Viney told me that her doctor
only cost her twopence a week

- because she belonged to a club.

- Yes.

Well, could we join
your club too, please?

The same as Mr Viney.

You aren't cross with me, are you?

Cross? How could I be?

You're a very sensible little woman.

Now don't you worry.

I'll make it all right with your mother,
even if I have to make
a special brand-new club just for her.

Thank you.

Bobbie, you're to tidy yourself up
in here.

Here's a new ribbon for you.

There, the surprise is ready.

When the bell rings again
you can come into the dining room.

Come on, Pete.

Of course.

Happy birthday.

Happy birthday, head-nurse.

Happy birthday, Miss Roberta.

My darling.

I helped to make it.

Happy birthday, Lanky.

She was beautiful as a butterfly

Proud as a queen

Was pretty little Polly Perkins

Of Paddington Green

- Many happy returns.

- Thank you.

Lanky indeed!

Fatty.

- Hope you enjoy the cake.

- It's lovely. Thank you very much.

- Have a lovely party, my dear.

- Thank you for coming.

Thank you.
Wouldn't Daddy have loved this?
Thank you very much,
Mrs Waterbury.
Good night, good night.
Happy birthday!
Hey, happy birthday!
I hope Mother doesn't get too wet
in Wakefield.
We don't want her ill again.
It's like being in a besieged castle,
the arrows of the foe striking
against the battlements.
No, it's more
like a great big garden-squirt.
- You're a great big garden squirt
- Thank you.
Stop it you two!
There's a train coming.
Oakworth! Oakworth Station!
Oakworth!
Oakworth Station!
Come on. Don't mind the rain,
it's only a shower.
That's it, thank you.
Mind the doors, please.
Mind the doors now.
Mind the doors, come on.
Right away, Mr Mainprice
Mother should be on the next train
in about fifteen minutes.
That one was from London, I think.
Hey, there's something going
at the end of the station.
Yes, something's happened,
come on.
If you ask me this is a case
for the police courts.
No, the infirmary more like.
Let me pass please, will you?
I'll deal with this if you please.
- What's he say?
- Sounds like French to me.
I was in Calais once for a day.

- That's not French.
- Well what is it then if it's not French?
I don't know.
It's not French, I know that.
No, that's not French.
Nothing like it.
Try him with French if you know
so much then, clever dick.
Parlez vous franais, Monsieur?
Ah, Dieu merci! Dieu merci!
Enfin un amis.
Mon petit vous ne soures jamais
combien je suis content.
- Now that's French.
- What's he say?
I don't know...
Yes, well all right everybody.
Keep moving along, please.
I'll deal with this. Move along. Thank you.
All right now, now, now...
Go on.
Take him into the waiting room.
Mother can talk French.
She's on the next train
from Wakefield.
Right. Come on.
He thinks you're a policeman.
He thinks you're going to shut him up.
I know he does.
Look at his eyes.
They're like a fox's eyes
when the beast is in a trap.
Vous attendre.
Ma mere parlez franais.
Nous...
- What's "being kind"?
- Er, "bon" is good.
Nous sommes bon
pour vous, Monsieur.
Sorry, Malcolm. I'll see you down at
the Fleece later and I'll tell you all about it.
C'est bon.
Ma mere arrive, c'est bon.
Je vous aide.

Look I'm not sure
we oughtn't to send for police.
- Don't!
- Oh, don't. Wait till Mummy comes.
She speaks French beautifully.
You'd love to hear her.
I'm sure he hasn't done anything
like you're sent to prison for.
Yes, well he looks
without visible means to me.
Still I don't mind waiting
till your mama comes.
I'd like to know what country
has got the credit of him.
Look, I've got an idea.
Foreign stamps.
We'll show them these.
Regardes les stamps.
Quelle patrie?
Ah... Ruskie...
- Ruskie.
- My lord, he's Russian.
Yeah, I-I thought he was.
I'll wait here
till you bring Mummy in.
Not afraid?
No.
Oakworth Station! Mrs Waterbury,
I have something to tell you.
- Mummy, we found a Russian.
- There's a fellow in there, he's Russian.
Close the doors.
Right away, Guard!
You wouldn't hurt me, would you?
Hello, Bobbie.
Qui est vous?
Madame, je m'appelle Szczepansky.
Oh, it's all right.
Bobbie go and fetch Doctor Forrest.
- We'll take him home with us, Mr Perks.
- Thank you, Madam.
Come on, help him on the other side.
Don't worry.
Don't worry, she'll look after you.

I knew he was a Russian.
Doctor.
I need to tell you.
Mother's got a very shabby Russian.
Your mother's got
a very shabby what?
He'll have to join your club.
I'm certain he hasn't any money.
We found him at the station.
- Found him? Was he lost then?
- Yes, that's what he was.
He's been telling Mother
life story in French.
She said would you please
come directly.
He's got a nasty cough
and he's been crying.
Oh, don't smile.
Please don't.
You wouldn't if you'd seen him.
I've never seen a man cry before.
Haven't you?
I do it all the time.
Bobbie!
I know you said
we weren't to ask any questions
but Daddy isn't... isn't dead, is he?
Oh, my darling, no.
Bobbie, look at me.
Daddy was quite, quite well
when I heard from him last
and he'll come back to us
some day.
Do tell us about the Russian.
That can't make a long story, my darling,
because I'm very tired.
He's a very clever writer,
but in Russia one dare not say
anything about the rich people
doing wrong
or what ought to be done
for the poor.
If one does, one is sent to prison.
Well he wrote a book about it all

and he was three years in a dungeon.
No light, damp and dreadful.
Then they took him out
and they sent him to Siberia
and he was condemned
to stay there for life.

- For life? For writing a book?

- That's stupid.

Go on, Mama.

While he was at the mines,
some friends got a message to him
to say that his wife and children
had escaped to England.

So after many adventures he too escaped
and came here to look for them.

- Do you think he will find them?

- Oh, I do hope so.

I think my darlings, in your prayers
you might ask God
to show his pity
upon all prisoners and captives.

To show his pity
upon all prisoners and captives?

Yes, darling.

Upon all the prisoners and captives.

Merci.

He seemed pleased. I wish we could think
of other things to give him.

What about strawberries?

Perks promised me some
from his own garden ages ago.

Look at that tree over there!

Lor, it's moving!

So are the others...

It's magic.

What is it?

It's much too magic for me.

I don't like it, I'm going home.

Cor, that'll take some sweeping up.

Hey! The 11:

hasn't gone by yet.

We must let them know at the station,
there'll be an accident.

- Let's run!
- No, come back.
It's too late, it's two miles away.
- We do something to the telegraph wires.
- But we don't know how.
If we only had something red, we could
go down on to the line and wave it.
But the train wouldn't see us till it came
round the corner. That's too late.
We could go round
and wave to the train.
We might wave anyway.
No. They'd only think it was us as usual,
we've waved so often before.
- Flannel petticoats!
- I beg your pardon?
- Flannel petticoats.
- Of course! Take them off.
- Now.
- You're not going to tear them, Pete?
- Oh, shut up
- Yes, tear them into little bit if you like.
If we can't stop the train,
there'll be an accident with people killed.
Now sticks, come on.
- I'll have two. It was my idea.
- They're our petticoats!
What's it matter who waves what
if we can only stop the train.
Stand firm and wave like mad.
Keep off the line, Bobbie.
They won't see us.
It's all no good.
- Stand off the line, Bobbie.
- It's all no good.
- Stand back!
- Not yet. Not yet!
- Stop!
- Stop!
Stop!
- Stand back.
- Stop!
Stop!
- Stop!

- Stop!

Stop.

Stop...

Stop.

Stop. There's been an earthquake.

Don't move you'll all be killed.

The trees are walking down the bank
and there's a mountain of great stones.

We'll have a look at this earthquake
then get back to the train.

Bobbie.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think
you'll agree with me that we have three
charming children here

who are indeed an example to us all.

All right chaps, this is it.

One, two, three.

...I have learned

in the short time I have seen them
to look forward to knowing them better.

If I had to rename the Waterbury children,
I would call them

the Three Saviours of the Steel Road
or perhaps the Railway Children.

And now my dears, from the directors
of the Northern and Southern Railway

in grateful recognition

of a courageous and brave action

which averted an accident

on August 15th, 1905.

Oh, thank you.

It's your turn now.

Just begin with "Ladies and gentlemen".

- Oh, lor!

- No, "Ladies and gentlemen".

Ladies and gentlemen...

Ladies and gentlemen,

we shall treasure these watches
for the rest of our lives.

What I mean to say is,

thank you all very much indeed.

One, two.

You must be very proud,

Mrs Waterbury.

And er, this is from me.
It was a wonderful day, wasn't it?
The kind that very seldom happens.
But I did so want to talk to
the old gentleman about something else.
What did you want
to say to him?
I'll tell you,
I've written him a letter.
"My dearest old gentleman,
I want to ask you something, please.
"If you get out of the train
and go by the next it would do.
"I do not want you to give me anything -
Mother says we ought not to.
"Besides, we only want to talk to you
about a prisoner and captive.
"Your loving friend, Bobbie. "
Very good.
Yes, it is.
My heart's thumping like a steam engine,
right under my sash, too.
People's hearts
aren't under their sashes.
I don't care, mine is.
If you're going to talk like a poetry book,
my heart's in my mouth.
My heart's in my boots
if it comes to that.
- He'll think we're idiots.
- He won't be far wrong.
Oakworth!
- Morning, sir.
- Good morning, Perks.
- Hello. This is a very great pleasure.
- It was good of you to get out.
Er, may I extend a cordial invitation
to the use of my room, sir?
- Thank you.
- Right away, sir.
- Right away, Mr Mitchell.
- Thank you, Mr Perks.
If you'd care to follow me, sir
just along here.

- Nice and tidy for you sir.
- Ah, thank you, Perks.
- I'll leave you to it then, sir.
- Thank you.

Well?

Well?

What is it?

- Oh, please...
- Yes?
- What I mean to say is...
- Yes?
- I wish I might say something.
- I wish you would say something.

Well then... it's about our Russian.

- Captive.
- A captive.

We want more than anything in the world to find his wife and children for him.

Only we don't know how.

- What did you say his name was?
- I'll write it for you.

Um, would you have a pencil and the back of an envelope?

Here, write it here.

This is how you write it.

You say... Szczepansky.

That man?

Bless my soul...

I've read his book.

So your mother took him in like the good Samaritan.

I'll tell you what, youngsters, your mother must be a very good woman.

- Yes, she is.
- And you're a good man.

You flatter me.

Now am I to tell you what I think of you?

- Oh, please don't.
- Why?

I don't know why exactly, only if it's something horrid

I don't want you to.

And if it's something nice

I'd rather you didn't.
Then all I will say is that I'm very glad
you came to me about all this,
very glad indeed.
And I shouldn't be surprised
if I don't find out something very soon.
Well now tell me something
about yourselves.
Tea first.
Who on earth?
Let's go and see.
- Hello.
- Hello.
Hello.
Good news, my dears.
I've found your Russian friend's
wife and children.
- Oh!
- And I couldn't resist
the temptation of having the pleasure
of telling him
No, you tell him, my dear.
And the other two
will show me the way.
Mother, Mr Szczepansky's wife
and children have been found.
- Goodbye.
- Goodbye, sir.
Goodbye.
- Right away, Mr Mitchell.
- Thank you, Mr Perks.
Goodbye.
Excellent.
- Bye.
- Goodbye.
Ah! There, that's a likely
little brooch that.
I don't know as ever I seen a thing
more like a buttercup,
without it were a buttercup.
Mother gave it to me
for my birthday.
Oh, is that it?
I didn't see it close to.

It highly decorative that,
thank you.

- When's your birthday, Mr Perks?

- My birthday?

I gave up keeping my birthday
afore you lot were born.

But you must have been born
sometime, you know.

Even if it was 20 years ago
or 30 years ago or 60 or 70.

Yeah, well it weren't quite
so long as that.

If you really want to know,
it's my 42 years

come the 15th of this month.

Why don't you keep it then?

I've got other things to keep
besides birthdays.

Oh what?

Not secrets, Mr Perks.

No, the kids and bloomin' missus.

I've sold another story, darlings,
the one about the King of the Mussels
so there'll be buns for tea.

You can go and got them
the moment they're ready.

Would you mind if we didn't them tonight,
but on the 15th? That's next Thursday.

I don't mind, darling,
but why?

Well, it's Mr Perks' birthday,
he's 42.

He says he doesn't keep his birthday
any more, he's got other things to keep.

Not rabbits and secrets,
but the kids and the bloomin' missus.

- His wife and children, Bobbie.

- It's the same thing, isn't it?

Bloomin' missus is sort of a germ
of endearment, isn't it?

- Term of endearment, Phyl.

- Yes.

We thought we'd make
a nice birthday for him.

He's been very nice to us.
And we agreed that next bun day
we'd ask if we could.
It would be rather nice to write his name
on the buns in pink sugar, wouldn't it?
- Perks isn't a very pretty name.
- Albert's his other name, I asked once.
I think Albert's a pretty name.
What's the matter with that?
What about flowers?
He's got lots of flowers of his own,
hasn't he?
Yes, but it's always nice
to be given them.
Let's all just sit and think.
No one's to speak
until they've thought of something.
- I've got it.
- What?
- Perks is so nice to everyone, right?
- Right.
So there must be lots of people
who'd like to help make him a birthday.
Mother said
we weren't to ask people for things.
For ourselves, she meant,
not for other people.
I think we should ask Mummy first.
There's no harm in it,
it depends how you do it.
I only hope Mr Perks won't be offended
and think it's charity.
Poor people can be very proud,
you know.
It's not because he's poor,
it's because we're fond of him.
All right, I'll look out some things
that Phyllis has outgrown.
- Will that do?
- I'm sure he'd love that.
Come back tomorrow
and I'll see what I can do.
- Oh, thank you, goodbye.
- Goodbye.

Thank you, bye bye.

I've always liked Mrs Ransome.

- Oh, thank you.

- Of course.

Thank you very much.

Goodbye.

Bye!

Some people were kind
and some were crusty
and some would give
some would not.

It's Mr Perks' birthday on Thursday,
would you like to give him a present?

- No, I would not. I hate the man.

- Thank you!

That was pretty rude.

It's rather difficult work
asking for things, even for other people.
as you've no doubt found
if you've ever tried it.

Tobacco pipe,
half a pound of tea.

- Woollen scarf from the Drapers.

- A stuffed squirrel from Doctor Forrest.

There it is, you can have it
and good riddance to it.

- Oh!

- Thank you.

- Bye.

- Goodbye.

Thank you, Mr James,
he'll love that.

Goodbye.

Hello?

Hello, is anyone at home?

Me Mam's upstairs,
a- changing herself.

Mam, visitors!

Thank you Patrick,
just coming.

I'm a bit late changing, Miss,
owing to me having had
an extra clean up today
along with Perks happening to say

it's his birthday.
I don't know what put such an idea
into his head.
We keeps the children's birthdays,
of course,
but him and me... Well, we've no time
for suchlike as a general rule.
We know it was his birthday
and we've brought him some presents.
Oh, bring them in my dears.
Oh, don't, please don't,
Mrs Perks.
Whatever is the matter?
Do you mean to say
you don't like the things we brought?
Don't you like them?
Oh, there, there, don't mind me,
I'm all right.
Like them? Why it's a birthday
such as Perks never had,
not even when he were a boy.
Good, I'm glad you're pleased.
Could we wait and see
if Mr Perks is pleased too?
I won't say another word.
Could we have a plate for the buns,
Mrs Perks?
Oh, of course.
Fit for a prince, I'd say.
I never thought there'd be more for him,
except the ounce of his backie.
I'm feeling right today
Been a lovely day... #
Bless us, he's early.
Let's hide in there
and you tell him about it
but give him the tobacco first
as you got it for him.
When you've told him,
we'll shout "Many Happy Returns".
- How do.
- How do.
Hello, old woman.
- Well here's a pretty set out.

- It's your birthday tea, Bert.
And here's an ounce
of your extra particular.
Yes, she's a good old girl.
Eh, what's that pram doing here?
Hey, you're not...?
Well, what's all these bundles?
Eh?
And what's all this sweet stuff and...?
What's this squirrel
doing on the table, eh?
Oh, lor!
Whatever should we do?
I've forgotten to put the labels
on any of the things.
He won't know what's from whom.
He'll think it's all from us
and that we're trying to be grand and
charitable or something horrid like that.
Ssh, be quiet!
I don't care. I won't stand it.
I tell you straight.
But, it's them children
you make such a fuss about,
the children from the Three Chimneys.
I don't care,
not if it was angels from heaven.
We got on all right all these years
and no favours asked.
I'm not having these charity
goings-on at my time of life.
And don't you think it, Nell.
Ssh, Bert, shut your silly tongue,
for goodness sake.
All three of em is in the other room
a- listening to every word you speaks.
I'll give them something to listen to.
I've spoke my mind to these afore
and I'll do it again. Come out.
Come on out!
Out here, come on.
No, not you lot, you stop in...
Sophie, look put some pants
on Benjamin, we've got company.

Right, you can tell me
what you mean by it.

Have I ever complained of being short
as you starts this charity with me?

We thought you'd be so pleased,
Mr Perks.

I'll never try and be kind to anyone else
as long as I live.

- No, I won't. Not never!

- We didn't mean any harm.

It isn't what you means
so much as what you does.

We thought you'd love it.

We always have things on our birthdays.

Oh ay, from your own relations,
that's different.

No, not just our relations.

They're from all sorts of people
in the village.

- And who put'em up to it, I'd like to know.

- We did.

So you've been telling the neighbours
that we can't make both ends meet.

Now you've disgraced us as deep
as you can in the neighbourhood,
you can take that pack of tricks
back where it came from.

I'm very much obliged, I'm sure.

I don't doubt that you meant it kind
but I'd rather not be acquainted with you
any longer, if it's all the same to you.

Look here.

We'll go if you like
and you needn't be friends with us
any more, but...

We'll always be friends with you,
even though you're nasty to us.

But before we go, let us show you
these labels to put on the things.

I don't want to see no labels
except proper luggage labels
in me own walk of life.

- Please let Bobbie show you the labels.

- All right, go on.

We wrote down everything
everybody said
when they gave us the things
with the people's names on.
Because Mother said
that we ought to be careful because...
Well I wrote down what she said
and you'll see.
That's from Mother.
She thought Mrs Perks might like
some of Phyllis' things.
"I can't do much... "
Well that's all right.
I mean, your ma's a born lady.
We'll keep the little frocks
and what-not, Nell.
Yes, Albert.
Then there's the perambulator
and the gooseberries and sweets.
They're from Mrs Ransome.
I can't send the pram back, Bert,
and I won't so don't ask me.
I'm not asking anything.
Then there's the shovel.
Mr James made that for you himself
and he says...
Oh, where is it?
Oh, yes, here.
- No er, you can read it.
- He says,
"You tell Mr Perks it is a pleasure
to make a little trifle for a man
"as is so much respected. "
He's a good chap, that.
He's a very good chap, that.
He's not bad at all, that chap.
And everybody who gave anything
said they liked you
and thought it was
a very good idea of ours.
And nobody said anything about charity
or anything horrid like that.
We thought that you'd love to know
how fond everybody is of you.

And I've never so unhappy
in all my born days.

Goodbye.

Come on.

Stop!

I take back every word I've said
contrary to what you'd wish.

- Nell?

- Yes, Albert.

Put the kettle on.

We'll take away the things
if you're unhappy with them.

I'm not unhappy aboutem.

I don't know

if I was ever better pleased.

...Not so much with the presents
though frankly they're an A. 1 collection
but the kind respect
of our neighbours.

- That's worth having, eh Nell?

- I think it's all worth having...

And you've made a most ridiculous fuss
about nothing, Bert, if you ask me.

No, I haven't.

If a man didn't respect himself,
no one wouldn't do it for him.

But everyone respects you.

They all said so.

We knew you'd like it
once you understood.

Well you'll stay to tea, I take it?

May the garland of friendship
be ever green.

May our garland of friendship
be ever green, Mr Perks.

Hear, hear!

Oh, well that's all right then, isn't it?

Let's have a look at them buns
you brought in. Where are they?

Who wrote that?

It's Albert.

Holy Mary, Mother of God
pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Now go to sleep all of you
and not another word.

- Good night.

- Good night, Mum.

Yeah they're jolly good
little kids, those Waterburys.

Oh, they're all right,
bless their hearts.

It's you that's the aggravatingest old thing
that ever was.

- I was ashamed of you, I tell you.

- You needn't be.

I climbed down handsome
as soon as I understood it weren't charity.
Charity's one thing I never could abide,
and won't neither.

- Go to sleep, Albert.

- Yes, dear.

I tell you this though,
it isn't what you does
so much as what you means,
that's what I say.

- Now if it had been charity...

- Oh, drat charity, Bert.

Nobody won't offer you charity
however much you was to want it.
That were just friendliness,
that were.

I reckon it's what people call
loving kindness.

- Now go to sleep, Bert.

- Yes dear, good night.

Good night, Bert.

Happy Birthday.

Nell?

Oh, all right, Bert,
as it's your birthday.

Hello, my dears.

Hard at it, are yer?

Yeah. Well, er... Yeah.

One good turn deserves another,
that's what I always say.

Hello, Mr Perks,

how do mean?

Well I found these magazines, you see,
in the waiting room.

I was cleaning up.

They were in a cupboard and well
they're only collecting dust and...

Dust is, as you know, unhygienic.

- Hello.

- Hello.

I thought perhaps
you might like them.

There's a lot of pictures inem.

and that,

and you can colourem up

with chalks and that.

Anyway I don't wantem.

- You're a dear.

- Yes, you are.

- Hear, hear!

- Well, that's all right then.

I must be getting along.

I've got lots to do.

Perks must be about it.

Thank you.

That was very kind of him.

We'd better go inside,

it's going to rain.

Daddy...

- Where's Bobbie?

- I thought I heard her upstairs.

She knows it's tea time.

I wonder if she's all right.

Bobbie?

What is it darling?

Oh, Mummy!

You don't believe Daddy did it?

- No.

- Because it's not true.

They have shut him in prison,

but he's done nothing wrong.

He's good and honourable

and he belongs to us.

Will it make you very unhappy

if you tell me all about it?

I want to understand.

Do you remember the day
those two men took Daddy away?
Yes, I do.
Well they arrested him, charging him
with selling State secrets
with being, in fact,
a spy and a traitor.
How could anyone believe that?
How could anyone do such a thing?
Someone did.
Why didn't you tell someone,
a lawyer?
There wasn't anyone who could
hurt Daddy on purpose, was there?
I don't know.
It's all so complicated.
There was a man in the office
who was very envious of your father.
Daddy always said
he didn't quite trust him.
Why didn't you explain
all that to someone?
No one would listen.
Do you suppose
I haven't tried everything?
No, my darling,
what we have to do, you and I,
and Daddy, is to be brave.
Where have you been?
Where have I been?
Down to the station.
Don't ask why, it's a secret.
Oh, please yourself.
- There's a paper chase tomorrow.
- Oh, whoopee!
- Who?
- The grammar school boys.
Oh zippee!
Perks says we can see them
going along by the line.
Oh really?
What's a paper chase?
Let me pass please
Hey! That's against by-laws.

- I ought to report him.
- They're only having fun.
Passengers is forbidden to cross the line
on any pretence.
He ain't no passenger.
He's out of sight now, anyway.
What the eye don't see the heart need
take no notice of, that what I always say.
Come on then.
He's gone in the tunnel.
Oh, it is dark in here.
They don't know
what they're in for.
It isn't easy running in the dark.
They'll take a long time
going through, won't they?
Aye, they will that.
- They went that way.
- Oh thanks!
I know! Let's cut across to the top
and see them come out the other end.
- We'll be there before they are.
- Good idea.
Yes, good idea!
- This way!
- No, this way. Come on, quick.
There, that's all.
What should we do now?
Not yet,
there's one in a red jersey.
He hasn't come out yet.
Come on, let's go to the tunnel mouth
and perhaps we can see him
from the inside.
It's dark in there.
- Don't worry, Phyl. I'll protect you.
- I don't like it.
Still no sign of him. I reckon
he must have had an accident.
Let's go and rescue him.
Come on.
Come on, Phyl.
Keep close behind me.
If a train comes along

get flat against the tunnel wall
and hold your skirts against you.
I still don't like it.
- I want to go back.
- Ssh, don't be silly. What is that?
It's another earthquake!
- It's a train.
- Oh, let me go back!
Don't be a coward, it's quite safe.
Stand back.
Come in, come on.
It is a dragon.
I always thought it was.
Come on.
Supposing that boy
was caught underneath the train...
- Oh!
- We've got to go and see.
Can't we go and get someone
from the station?
- Phyl, you wait here.
- No.
Hello?
Hey you two, come quickly!
Oh, is that blood?
Is that red blood?
- Is he all killed?
- Phyllis, please.
Hurry up you two, get help.
"It was on a hot summer's afternoon... "
Oh, do come down, we've found a hound
in a red jersey and he's broken his leg.
They're bringing him here,
I've sent for Doctor Forrest.
But you should send for a vet,
I can't have a lame dog here.
Oh, he's not a dog, it's a boy.
Well then he ought to be taken
to his mother.
His mother's dead,
his father's in Northumberland.
Oh, Mother, you will be nice to him,
won't you?
I told him I was sure you'd want us

to have him here.

- You always want to help everybody.

- Come along.

I'm glad you brought him here.

- Let's get him to bed.

- It will hurt a bit, won't it?

I hope you don't think I'm a coward if

I faint again. I don't do this on purpose.

I don't want to cause you

any more trouble.

Don't you worry, you're the one

who's got the trouble.

We'd love to have you here,

wouldn't we, Bobbie?

Yes.

That will be Doctor Forrest.

I'll go.

- That's not the doctor.

- I know.

I know that voice though,

at least I think I do.

I thought I recognised it too.

It's not the doctor, that's for sure.

Could it be that Doctor Forrest

has been attacked by highwaymen

and left for dead and this is the man

they've telegraphed

- to take his place?

- Perhaps he's gone mad.

Perhaps he's caught something awful

from one of his patients

and that man's come to tell her.

Nonsense. Mother wouldn't take the man

up into Jim's bedroom.

Why should she?

Listen.

The door's opening.

Now they'll come down.

It's rude to listen like this.

It's not listening, nobody in their senses

would talk secrets on the stairs.

Bobbie?

A relative of Jim's has come,

he wants to see you.

Wash your hands and faces.
We'll be in the dining room
when you're ready.
Yes, Mama.
There now!
Fancy not thinking of that, hm?
- Any hot water, Mrs Viney?
- Righto love.
You all right?
There we are, that's it.
Well I never did!
This, my dears,
is Jim's grandfather.
Our own old gentleman!
I'm so awfully glad it's you.
When I just think of all
the old gentlemen there are in the world
it could have been anyone.
You're not going to take
Jim away though, are you?
Not at present.
Your mother has most kindly consented
to let him stay here.
I thought of sending a nurse but your
mother said she'd nurse him herself.
But we won't have anything to eat
if Mother doesn't write.
That's all right, Peter.
I see you trust your children.
- Of course.
- Then I may tell them our arrangement.
Sit down, my dears.
Your Mother, my dears, has consented
to give up her writing for a while
and to become
a matron of my hospital.
Does that mean we'll have to leave
Three Chimneys and the railways?
No, no, my darling. No.
The hospital is here.
The Three Chimneys Hospital
and my unlucky Jim is the only patient.
- Will Mother go on writing again?
- We shall see...

Perhaps something nice will happen
and she won't have to.

- But I like my writing.

- I know.

Don't be afraid I'm going to try
and interfere but one never know.
Very beautiful and wonderful things
do happen, don't they?

And we live most of our lives
in the hope of them.

I got your letter my dear,
but it wasn't needed.

When I read about your father's case
in the papers at the time I had my doubts.
And ever since I've known who you were,
I've been trying to find out things
and I have hopes.

- Oh...

- Yes, I may say, great hopes.

But keep your secret
for a little while longer.
Wouldn't do to upset your mother
with a false hope, would it?
But it isn't false.

I know you can do it.
I knew you could when I wrote.
It isn't false hope, is it?

No, my dear.

You don't believe Daddy did it?
Oh, say you don't believe he did.
My dear, I'm perfectly certain
he didn't.

Life at Three Chimneys
was never quite the same again
after the old gentleman
came to see us.

Oh, please Phyllis.

The house became a hospital.
I give you three guesses
who that is.

Is everything all right?
Good luck. I'll curtain up.

Have you...

Have you noticed

the ship is sinking?
Yes I know,
but don't blame me.
Oh, no!
Oh, no they'll all get so wet.
You'll need some light
on the subject.
As your solicitor
I must advise you.
Don't worry.
Don't worry,
I've managed to get most of the survivors.
Right, curtain down.
Thank you, good evening.
I hope you enjoyed it.
Children, will you please be quiet.
Oh, the blood!
- Oh, is it over?
- Oh, thank goodness.
- Oh, you are a good doctor.
- Can I have that please?
There we are. How's that?
- Cheerio.
- Bye.
Jim's leg got better
and he went home.
- Right away, Mr Mitchell.
- Thank you, Mr Perks.
Goodbye.
Goodbye.
- Goodbye.
- Bye, I'll write.
- Lor lummy, Pete!
- They'll have to marry now!
Lummy.
We seemed to be hardly
Railway Children at all in those days
and as the days went on each of us
had an uneasy feeling about this
which Phyllis expressed one day.
I wonder if the railway misses us.
We never go and see it now.
It seems ungrateful.
We loved it so when we hadn't

anyone to play with.

The thing I don't like is our having
stopped waving to the 9:15
and sending our love to Father by it.
Let's begin again tomorrow.

Hurry up, Fatty,
for goodness sake.

I can't, my bootlace is undone.
When you marry your laces
will come undone going up the aisle
and the man that you marry
will tumble over and smash his nose in.
I'd rather marry a man with
a smashed in nose than not marry at all.

- Take our love to Father!

- Take our love to Father!

Most extraordinary!

- Most extraordinary.

- Extraordinary indeed.

Now, Bobbie,

I wonder whether you could...

Don't you feel well?

I don't know.

I don't know how I feel...

Will you let me off lessons today?

I feel as if I want to be
quite alone, by myself.

Of course I'll let you off.

What is it?

You don't feel ill, do you?

No, not ill.

I've just got to be alone,
do you know?

Mm, sometimes Roberta,
you're so like me.

I'll be more alive in the garden.

- Morning, Miss, I'm sure.

- Good luck, Miss Roberta.

Thank you.

Hello. Look, if this is the train,
it'll be smart work.

Bless you. I seen it in the paper. I was
never so pleased in all my born days.

One I most have and no offence I know

on a day like this.

And one for luck.

You ain't offended, are you?

I haven't taken too great a liberty, have I,
on a day like this, you know.

- No, Mr Perks, of course it's not a liberty.

- No.

Dear Mr Perks, we love you quite as much
as if you were an uncle of our own
but on a day like what?

Well like thisere. I told you,
I seen it in the papers, didn't I?
Saw what in the papers?

Oakworth!

Oakworth Station.

Oakworth. There we are.

Thank you, Madam.

Yes, thank you.

Quick as you can, please.

Oakworth Station.

- Right away, Mr Cryer.

- Thank you, Mr Perks.

Daddy, my Daddy!

I think just now
we're not wanted there.

Not for a few minutes anyway.

I think it would best for us
to go quickly and quietly.

We'll go to the end of the field
among the thin gold spikes of grass.

We may just take one last look
over our shoulders, at the house
where neither we nor anyone else
is wanted now.

- Bye.

- Bye, bye.

Hope you loved it.

Goodbye.