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Yours truly,

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PUFFIN' BILLY

By May Heward

The Little Engine had been very happy, plying up and down the little side line, and he was sorry when the Boss told the Engine-driver that that bit of line was to be closed and only the main line used.

The Engine-driver, cloth in hand, turned back to the polishing of the Little Engine's shining handles.

"Well, Billy," he said, "that's a oer." "Woof!" answered the Little Engine, puffing hard as he got up steam.

"What'll the little 'un say, Billy?" went on the Engine-driver, still polishing.

And Puffin' Billy became very still, thinking.

By the side of the little bit of line where he panted up and down there stood a neat little cottage, with the prettiest flowers in the garden, and in that cottage lived the Engine-driver's little son with his mother. Every day as Puffin' Billy passed he would whistle long and shrilly and out would run Billy too, his yellow hair full of sunbeams, his little overall blue as the summer sky.

Everyone called him Billy too since someone had asked him his name, and he answered "Billy."

"But," they said, "that's the name of your father's engine."

"Yes," answered the little boy, "but me's Billy too."

Now Puffin' Billy sat on the line thinking about Billy too. How he would miss them, he, who was used to sitting on the fence all day watching the trains go up and down. He had been so proud of the Little Engine's smooth body and shining sides, the big wheels and strong piston-rods, and now he would never see them unless he came to the big railway station where all the Engines were.

Well, well, what must be must be.

"Puff! puff!" said the Little Engine, and they were off on to the main line for their day's trip.

Up and down, up and down they went day after day, and they both weaned for a sight of the little house and Billy too.

One day when the Engine-driver was busy oiling up ready to start the Boss came along.

"Hello! Bolter," he said, "how's the wife?"

"She's quite well, thank you, sir."

"And the boy?" asked the Boss with a smile, he had a son of his own about the same age.

"He's not all that well, sir. The Missis thinks it's a bit of a cold; he seems to fret for the trains like, won't play in the garden, says it's lonely."

"Poor little chap, but he'll have to get used to that."

"I'm afraid he will, sir."

But the next day when his Driver came Puffin' Billy saw his face looked grave and worried; he drove carelessly, jammed on the brakes roughly and jerked the Little Engine's handles.

"I don't mind," shouted the Little Engine to the sky as he sped along, "he doesn't mean to hurt me but how's Billy too? How's Billy too?"

All day long the Little Engine called and called "How's Billy too?" but no one answered him. The other engines weren't interested, the birds and the wind did not go that way, and the Engine-driver did not understand.

Night came and work was over; the Engine-driver backed the Little Engine into his old sleeping-place, raked out the fire and left all secure for the night; or, at least, he thought so, but the Little Engine kept back some fire in his glowing heart.

"If they won't tell how's Billy, too, I'll go and see," he said.

So by-and-by when all was quiet he began getting up steam, breathing softly, panting to and fro.

"Do shout up!" said the other Engines, "how restless you are."

"Go to sleep," retorted Puffin' Billy, "don't you worry about me. Puff! puff! puff!" and as the fire in his heart burned up he moved slowly out of the sleeping-place and stole away down the old familiar side line where he used to be so happy.

Meanwhile the Engine-driver had hur-

ried home as fast as he could, for Billy too was very ill indeed. All day he lay with flushed cheeks and tumbled curls whispering hoarsely,

"Mummie, I want to hear the trains come; it's most time for Puffin' Billy, open the window, I want to hear."

But everything was still and silent save for the wind in the chimney, and Mummie, who knew there were no trains coming, didn't know what to do.

Downstairs the Boss and Engine-driver were talking.

"What! doctor says the little chap won't pull through! That's hard luck, Bolter," said the Boss. "Is there anything I can do? anything you can't afford to get, I mean?"

The Engine-driver shook his head sadly.

"He's just fretting for the sound of those trains, sir," he answered, "there's nothing that'll do him any good but that, and that will soon be too late."

"Look here"—the Boss suddenly laid a hand on his arm—"look here, get up to the terminus and get your Little Engine. I'll put it right with the company."

"You're very good, sir," began the Engine-driver. Then they both stood silent, heads up listening, for above the rumbling of the wind in the chimney came the unmistakable thunder of an approaching train.

Out rushed the Engine-driver, out rushed the Boss to stand staring at the Little Engine coming slowly round the corner and running down the slope to where the siding ended.

Bump! he ran against the buffers and stood there panting and snorting, the fire in his heart glowing fitfully.

"Here I am," he cried, "how's Billy too? How's Billy too?"

"Well, I'm blessed!" said the Engine-driver and scrambled aboard. He dumped coal on to the dying fire and his hand flew here and there among the shining levers. Soon Puffin' Billy began to whistle and backed joyously to where the Boss was standing.

"Got loose, I suppose," he said, as he climbed into the cab, "it's a mercy she didn't run over the points on to the main line. I'll see to her for a bit, Bolter, you go in and see—"

"How's Billy too?" shrieked the Engine.

"Exactly," laughed the Boss and Bolter went, leaving Puffin' Billy snorting outside.

When the Driver came back the Boss leaned down to him in the darkness.

"Well?" he said.

"He's sound asleep, sir, he'll pull through now," answered Bolter, "thanks to Puffin' Billy."

THE LURE OF THE PRAIRIES

By Fred Scott Shepard

As through the growing summer air,
We first behold the prairie fair,
And see the wondrous green of it,
The beauty and the sheen of it,
We wonder at its charm so rare—
So monotone when first 'twas seen.

We note the varying shades that creep
Across its face, and feel the sweep
Of gentle breeze or storms that blow
And see through all new beauties glow—
From that which seemed before asleep,
Charmed visions wake for us to know.

As o'er the sweep of level plain,
We see the fields of golden grain;
Behold the herd that feed at ease
On grass-lands, billowy as the seas;
We e'en forget the world of pain
And see God's loving hand in these.

Again we see it brown and sear,
Or in the grip of winter drear,
But ever there is lure to it
That draws and holds us sure to it—
It's changing moods and scenes are dear,
When once we know its charm so pure.

A patronizing young nobleman, says the London Tit-Bits, was seated opposite the late James M'Neill Whistler at dinner one evening. During a lull in the conversation, he adjusted his monocle and leaned forward toward the artist.

"Aw, y' know, Mr. Whistler," he drawled, "I pahssed your house this mawning."

"Thank you," said Whistler, quietly.

"Thank you very much."

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