



# The Three Railway Engines

*Wilbert Awdry*

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## **The Three Railway Engines** Wilbert Awdry

This very first book about the now famous engines was originally published in 1945. Written by Awdry in 1943 to entertain his son, Christopher, who was suffering from measles at the time, this was the first book in what was to become The Railway Series.

Here are the original four stories about kind, hard-working Edward, proud Gordon, and fussy Henry. Watchful readers will recognize a very popular little blue engine hiding in one of the pictures ... waiting for his own book.

## **The Three Railway Engines Details**

Date : Published September 3rd 1998 by Heinemann Young Books (first published 1945)

ISBN : 9780434803774

Author : Wilbert Awdry

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## **From Reader Review The Three Railway Engines for online ebook**

### **Bex says**

A nice introduction to the railway engines. No Thomas in this but I quite like Edward who is in every short story. Good use is made of the motion of steam trains when writing what the engines say, you can just hear it coming from them.

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### **Nicholas says**

I want to read it

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### **Hillary Mitchell says**

If you want to get your kid on the right track to reading, this is the book for you. The stories, the characters, and the illustrations are still entertaining to me years later... and I'm almost 20!

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### **Ben Valentine says**

This can be forgiven for only scoring 3 stars out of 5 by me.

It was the first book of what became the Railway Series (never Thomas and Friends!!!) and whatever you do, DO NOT compare the books to the awful television series!!!

The first book introduces three locomotives that become important characters throughout subsequent books and these stories were first conceived to keep Christopher amused while he was in bed with measles. The Reverend had no thought about publishing the stories but his wife persuaded him to look into it with help from her cousin.

A fourth story was added which was the release of Henry from the tunnel.

The reason Thomas never appeared in the first book is simple. Thomas only appeared in stories after Rev. W Awdry had made a wooden model of a tank engine for Christopher and it had a 1 painted on its side. It was named Thomas and that is when stories were written about him.

Although these stories were based on real life incidents they were not as good as later stories. That is one thing to keep in mind. The rest of the Railway Series is in my honest opinion so much better than this one as Rev. Awdry did his research to make his stories interesting for parents to read and children to enjoy whilst still being true to life incidents.

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### **Josh Caporale says**

The Reverend Wilbert Awdry's Thomas the Tank Engine series began here with a story not about Thomas, but about three engines named Edward, Gordon, and Henry that would establish their part as a strong

supporting cast within the upcoming stories involving the trains and other vehicles that inhabit the Island of Sodor. This series started as bedtime stories that Rev. Awdry would tell his son, Christopher, which began during Christopher's very own bout with measles (don't worry, though, Christopher is still alive to this day and he would pen several books of his own that would continue the series). These stories would make up Edward's Day Out, the very first in the series, Edward and Gordon, and The Sad Story of Henry. Edward, Gordon, and Henry would be added right before publishing upon a contingency of the publisher, who wanted the book to end happily for Henry.

From these books, we get an idea of three different engines with three different personalities. Edward is perhaps the engine we are meant to root for and I feel that this strategy was a success. Edward (the blue engine) is an eager train that is not as big as the others, but has a great deal of confidence to make up for it, but at the same time a sense of modesty that does not turn his confidence into a larger ego the way that Henry is known to develop. Gordon (the big blue engine) is the complete opposite of Edward, the biggest engine from the shed and has a level of confidence that really boosts his ego to the point of cockiness. In Edward and Gordon, he expresses great interest in getting jobs done, but is specifically interested in pushing the express. Henry (the green engine that is a bit smaller than Gordon) has traits from Edward and Gordon, a sense of meekness that can easily turn into arrogance when things go well for him. In these books, we get a sense of how Henry is compulsive, in which he does not want his newly painted coat to get wet in the rain. The Fat Controller (Sir Topham Hatt) and the other drivers and humans provide a sense of humor that will definitely catch the attention of adults, while it may catch the attention of children through what they hear from adults. James (the red engine) makes an appearance unnamed in scenes from the shed and when trying to get Henry out of the tunnel.

To me, this is a five-star story, because it does an outstanding job laying the groundwork for Rev. Awdry's series that would become the Thomas the Tank Engine series. What started out as clever bedtime stories turned into an ongoing global phenomenon that is only growing bigger and bigger. These stories were read to me as a youth and I am quite fond of the memories I had with watching these episodes that were narrated by either Ringo Starr or George Carlin. These engines were fleshed out well enough and I feel that it was something that both younger children, older children, and adults could get something out of reading. It was mentioned in the 1,001 Children's Books to Read Before You Grow Up and I think it was rightfully so. I read this as part of the complete collection of stories from the Thomas the Tank Engine series, but am reviewing it as an individual work, one that I would recommend either which way.

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### **Conrad says**

This is another childhood favorite of mine it reminds me of the little engine who could, since Edward who was a little engine was able to push Gordon the big engine and his train up the hill when Gordon couldn't pull it himself.

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### **Erik says**

Ok stories that owe a lot to The Little Engine That Could, even down to the repetitive phrases from the trains. Art is pretty good.

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## **Chent Higson says**

Thomas the Tank Engine was my life when I was a kidlet. And I'm p sure the story of Henry being bricked up in a tunnel gave me my abandonment issues.

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## **Cherene says**

The art work and the story lines behind these stories amaze me. They are truly well imagined, well thought out, and a must for any child with a love for trains.

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## **Gail says**

I don't really get why this one is on the '1001 books to read before you grow up' list. It's another book from the Thomas series - the first book. But in terms of content, it's pretty similar to Thomas the Tank Engine, so why have both on the list? Both books consist of a few short stories about trains. The Thomas book features Thomas in all the stories. This book features different engines. It's even more obviously influenced by The Little Engine That Could than the Thomas stories are. There is a story where one engine puffs 'I can't do it, I can't do it, I can't do it,' while the other one puffs 'I will do it, I will do it, I will do it.'

There's really not a lot to say about these stories that I haven't already said about Thomas the Tank Engine. They were more obviously moralistic - and a bit annoying in that way. When one rather vain train gets his come-uppance, the story ends with an intrusive narrator (who's never popped up before!) declaring 'But I think he deserved it, don't you?'

So yes, not as good as the Thomas book. The stories were also a bit fragmented, whereas the Thomas ones all hung together more. Not really worth reading unless you're a hardcore Thomas fan and want to read the whole series.

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## **Suzanne Moore says**

These three engines are competing for attention here. Edward is demanding and anxious to start, calling impatiently for the guard. He taunts Gordon and Henry about being the first to go out. Gordon is cross and grouchy because he has to pull dirty coal trucks rather than shiny coach cars. Edward is recruited to help Gordon when he complains about his heavy trucks. With Edward's help pushing Gordon is able to reach the top of the hill. Gordon takes all the credit for the hard work and forgets to thank Edward for the push. Henry is a vain engine who hides in a tunnel to keep out of the rain. Henry refuses to budge from the tunnel. Henry is so stubborn about coming out of the tunnel, that the train director instructs his men to seal the tunnel and leave him there. Edward and Gordon tease Henry about his dilemma as they chug past the tunnel on their rail adventures. When Gordon bursts a safety valve while showing off, Edward is called to pull Gordon's heavy cars. Edward isn't strong enough and the director finally agrees to take down the wall blocking Henry's tunnel and give him a go at the job. When Henry comes to the rescue, the passengers are so grateful. In the end Henry learns it is better not to be stuck-up. He missed chugging the tracks! Gordon and Edward are glad to have Henry back in service again, and they learn to work together. The story of these three trains make a

good lesson for little ones about the consequences of bragging.

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### **Melissa says**

My son is utterly obsessed with Thomas the Train and he loves to read. I'd love to read the classic stories to him. We're still in the board book stage, but this book is definitely in my future.

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### **Tammy says**

I like the videos...

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### **Esther says**

I've had this on my list of betterment as I was drawn to the title, because it reminded me of Thomas the Tank Engine...then realized it obviously is part of that wonderful series! So I've been happily re-reading these lovely books.

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### **deborah says**

This is a reprint of the original, and measures 10 x 14 cm - just the right size for little hands. The tiny watercolour illustrations are lovely, my favourite feature. This is the first of the series, ever, and the trains don't have their numbers yet - an interesting detail my 3 year old pointed out. Gordon, Edward, and Henry are introduced, and although the plotline is tighter and more logical than in current Thomas stories, Gordon's personality is nasty. The Thomas empire remains true to the original in this regard! We censor as we read aloud.

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