



The Friendship Enigma

Episode 2: *What Could Go Wrong?*



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Several months after the Fat controller's visit to the works, the three engines futures had been sealed. "The Railway Board" agreed to keep the three engines and purchase them if necessary from their previous owners. Repairs to Richard and Robert were then soon under way. For them it was mostly a lot of cleaning and replacing one or two worn parts. Jinty however would take a bit longer. After being hidden away for quite sometime, almost all of him needed to be refurbished, besides his frames. Although some things such as his cab and smoke box could be put off for a while, due to them being in an alright state. However the aim of the crew at the works was to get Jinty running under his own power once more. So these parts were not as important. Because of this, the three shunters' sudden arrival had gotten the local papers attention. Soon, the three engines were front page news...on an admittedly small local paper.

Regardless of its reach, this wasn't good news for Mr Michael Cramley, manager of the Crovans Gate Works. Michael was angrily ranting to John, his second incharge, in his office. "This is the last thing I need John! Bloody journalists buzzing around the workshop, snooping around! You can't scratch your arse without it making front page news!" John was of course confused "But Michael... they haven't got a picture of your arse on the front cover! See I've got today's edition here." Michael moved his hand up to his face. "I'm exaggerating John! Of course they don't have a picture of me scratching my arse!" he sighed "look all this attention is not what I planned for, I was rather hoping to have our...secret project already installed. However, with all the papers pointing at us we can't do it can we?" John was quiet for a moment, until all of a sudden his face lit up with excitement. "What if we just did it anyway, but told the press it was something else!" Michaels face turned from an angry scowl into a look of pure joy "That's it! Oh you wonderful idiot! Of course why didn't I think of it before haha!...Although we have to be sure they don't take any photographs of us doing it otherwise big old 'fatty' will find out." John smiled "we could just do it at night..." Michael stared. This was the second good suggestion from John all day "What's wrong with you John? Why do you suddenly have all of these great ideas fluttering around that thick little skull of yours?" he qizzed. John beamed and pretended to straighten a tie that wasn't there. "I've been going to night school" Michael swiftly whacked him over the head with the Sodor Times newspaper "I'm the smart one here and don't you forget it! Idiot!" John whilst rubbing his head looking rather ashamed replied "alright boss". "Right, come on John...we have some work to do!".

Soon the day when Richard and Robert would be tested had arrived. They were painted, polished and oiled for their first test runs. Richard was still painted in a grey sort of colour that looked like br black, only faded. Robert on the other hand had gone from an ex LNER black, to what was an under coat "Oh I really like this colour, it really makes me stand out!" Robert smiled as if he was posing for a photo. The workmen shot his hopes down though "Actually its just an undercoat, we usually would use pink but we ran out yesterday while painting your friends buffer beams." Robert then suddenly had an idea "Is there any chance that I could have this be my final colour please?". The workman was taken aback "er I suppose although it is rather irregular, I'll see what I can do ". And so from then on Robert was white...a kind of off white, although as is natural for white, it would obviously look more and more weathered over time, of which Robert was clearly not thinking about in the present. Although nothing could change his stubborn mind about it.

Richard, being younger (and a diesel), went for a test run first. It was a very straight-forward test. Run up to the other side of the works yards and then reverse back to the workshops. This was all to mainly check the brakes, gears and such. Richards' test went perfectly. But, this unfortunately all went straight to Richard's head. "Ooohhh a perfect test aye! Aren't I great Robert! Try and beat...perfection". Richard, was of course just riding up Robert by being overly smug. Although Robert was now determined for nothing to go wrong. "What could go wrong!" he mumbled to himself.

The workman moved Robert forwards slowly. To Robert it was a sense of freedom being bestowed upon him. He hadn't run under his own power for ages! "Ah this is lovely!" he cheered. But he'd spoken too soon. Just then Geoff, the work's diesel, was entering the yard and was honking his horn. Robert hadn't been paying attention and was quite startled and braked as hard as he could, stopping right before the points where Geoff was about to cross over! Thankfully Geoff stopped in time although the sudden stop had broken something on Robert. So, Richard had to take him back to the workshops, Robert felt rather embarrassed.

Geoff was very apologetic. He was a kind diesel, a sort of friendly giant of sorts who was eager to help engines in need. Therefore the fact he'd hurt poor Robert really got to him, "I'm so sorry Robert I didn't mean to startle you! I was just signalling to you I was coming is all" Robert wasn't too upset, although he felt his pride had been hurt more than anything, especially since Richard couldn't stop smiling to himself about the incident.

"Its all right Geoff, it wasn't your fault. I just wasn't paying attention to my surroundings" Robert said while the workman discovered his brakes were to fault and thus began mending them. Geoff was relieved "Oh thank goodness. Well I'd best be off again. I need to pick up some more parts for Jinty from The Docks. See you all later". Richard, with a smug look still attached to his face, said a cheeky "Goodbye Geoff" and honked his horn imitating Geoff's from earlier. Robert wasn't amused in the slightest. "You cheeky git you! Stop that. Its not funny and you know it" Richard wisely decided to back down "you're right, sorry bud. I'm only joking around". Jinty looked on nervously as he'd seen everything. He wondered how he'd go when it was his turn.

A few weeks later, the pair were sent to shunt the yard's around the workshops and Crovan's Gate. Robert's brakes had been fixed and after a thorough test, were now working properly. Richard was now the one suffering from a few hiccups of sorts. He was coughing and wheezing after just a little while running. "It must be some bad fuel or a clogged up exhaust" Richard decided. "Or its because of the boxy thing that John installed for fuel efficiency or something" Robert replied. Richard was a little confused "but you're not having any issues" "Well maybe its a diesel thing" Robert prodded "maybe, i'll talk to John tonight about it" replied Richard.

That night Richard and Robert went to visit Jinty, who was sitting in the back corner of the workshops, all alone. Richard looked at his friend without his funnel, dome and tanks. He almost mistook him for another engine. "Hey Jinty! You're looking a bit different, how are you going?" said Richard. "Yeah I'm alright, still getting used to having someone to talk to...and not having a funnel" Jinty chuckled. "Ah well that's good then! You are going to look like a whole new engine when they've finished with you." Robert laughed who'd come over to join them "You should ask them to give you a saddle tank and a giesl funnel! Then you'd really look like a new engine!"

At that moment Geoff spluttered in with some more parts for Jinty "A saddle and a gies!!! That's not what I picked up!? Unless Peter Sam is due for one?" Jinty Laughed "No, no Geoff their kidding! Besides I'd look silly!" Geoff was relieved "Oh thank goodness I almost thought I'd had a wasted journey! I had to go all the way to the other railway to get these." Jinty shivered "Still gives me tingles down my frames when that place is mentioned" Geoff was puzzled "How come? I figured you three escaped a diesel infested Barrow and all, but why does it make you feel that way?" Richard and Robert were intrigued, most of all Robert "Yeah you didn't really mention much about your past when we first met" Jinty took a deep breath "Well!...Its not that interesting really!" Richard was puzzled and instantly said "Oh come on Jinty! Were your friends right? You can tell us anything!" Jinty looked forlorn "Of course I'm your friend guys! Its just...I need some time to reflect on my time before that shed " Robert was annoyed "A real true friend would tell us about where they came from at least! We told you!" Richard was fuming "Robert back down! If he doesn't want to tell us right now that's fine, calm down, friends don't shout at each other like that! Ok Robert?" Robert was miffed "Alright, sorry Jinty. Its just...I don't like other engines keeping things from me, or anyone for that matter!" Jinty smiled "Yeah I get it. I just want to remember it all correctly, you know? Being stuck in that shed for so long, has made my memory a bit fuzzy."

Just then Michael came up after hearing them all chattering "What's this all then? Gossiping around the Jinty aye? Well you two best get to your place in the sheds lots of shunting to be done tomorrow! And Geoff here needs these waggons sorted before then! So if you'd all mind getting on with it and leaving me to office work in peace! That would be splendid!" Richard stutterd "uh yes sir will do sir! Right now in fact sir!" Michael gave a sarcastic smile "good...now be quiet! And let me finish my work in silence please!" he stomped away back to his office, as he was hoping to go home once he'd finished some important paperwork. Richard and Robert after sorting Geoff's train, parked up in their place at the works, still wondering about where Jinty came from. "I'm sure his life before us was like he said, wasn't that interesting" Richard venturtd. Robert, still slightly ticked off about the situation, moaned "Yeah but what if he's not! What if we can't trust him! Or, what if he's a war criminal" Richard was flummoxed "How could Jinty be a war criminal?" Robert thought for a moment "...alright good point" Richard then continued "I don't think he would be hiding anything, he's got no reason too." "Yeah but what if he does!?" The two engines looked towards where Jinty was, then to each other "Goodnight Robert" Richard said softly "night" Robert replied still wondering what life Jinty had once lived.

The months passed and before long it was the middle of a cold December. Richard and Robert had all but forgotten about Jinty's possible past and had continued to shunt wagons and coaches for the other engines somewhere, even trains for the holiday's celebrations. A frosty wind blew through the workshops one day. Although Jinty wasn't cold, he was being fired up for his first test run. The warmth and steam spread through his old and new parts for the first time in years! "Ah finally after so long I feel like myself again!" he said. Richard smiled "Its good to see you in steam for the first time Jinty! I never thought when we pulled you from that old shed, you'd be like this again!" John then dropped a spanner "oh oops! I guess not with alot of help from me!" Jinty laughed "yeah but thankfully theres alot of other workmen around that are a bit more 'clever' lets just say" Richard and Robert chuckled "well! I hope you have a better test run than me!" Jinty had almost forgotten about Robert's test run. Just then Geoff rolled up "Well don't you worry about me this time I'm staying out of the way!" Jinty chuckled "oh good, -

I wouldn't want to break my brakes now would I" Robert laughed "Alright mr full of steam! go on then, be 'Mr' perfect like Richard then!".

Just then some local journalists and train spotters arrived at the workshop's car park. Michael, who was overseeing Jinty's first tests, heard a commotion from there and went to inspect. "What's all this then!" he shouted towards the group of people with cameras and notebooks. One of the men was the tv presenter of the sodor's nightly news program David Marriot "Hello sir, we're just coming to see the infamous Jinty on his first test! You must understand that these spotters would like to see him off. Oh also if you don't mind, we'd like to film a piece and perhaps interview you for tonight's news!" Michael was taken aback "Well I'd rather not although I do see this a grand opportunity for the spotters!" The crowd were pleased "So can we come in then Mr Cramley sir?" Said one of the spotters. Michael thought for a moment. Knowing the press would turn up, he had hidden all of his plans away. So reluctantly he then decided "Alright fine...But! Don't touch anything and I want you all out of the way when Jinty is on there test run, please. We don't want to cause an accident!" So then Michael showed them in.

The news crew began rolling cameras on Jinty and then moving back for a wider shot. The engines were curious "I wonder what that box he's got is?" Jinty wondered aloud "It's a camera" said Richard "Its a box that captures moving pictures for what I'd assume the nightly news" Jinty then spotted a man holding a stick with a ball on top "ok then smarty pants what's that then!" Richard smiled "that's a microphone! It records noises and sounds. He's probably here for the radio news!" Robert was most excited! "I hope they get my good side!" he chuffed. Jinty chuckled "Oh please they're here for me! You'll be lucky to get in the moving pictures at all!" Robert grumbled "Well at least those spotters might write my numbers down!" Richard was confused "You don't have a number!?" Robert scoffed "Well they can at least write down my class!" Geoff laughed "What class Robert?"The comment sparked laughter all over the workshop. Robert just rolled his eyes.

Jinty was about to go. The News crew had gotten all the footage they needed before he was to go and they all stood well back and got into position. John was going to be Jinty's test driver had Michael was concerned "Don't you dare mess this up John! Especially in front of all these lovely new people" John gave a thumbs up "Righty oh sir, I'll try my best!" Michael grumbled to himself and then waved to the press to start their recordings. Jinty was nervous and had mostly forgotten how it felt to move under his own power. Richard saw this and gave him some advice "You'll be alright Jinty. Besides, what could go wrong?". This made Jinty feel a little better although with the frosty weather and all the attention from the press he *had* to get this right.

John then exclaimed "Smile for the cameras Jinty!" As he moved his regulator, steam flowed into his cylinders and he began to move! Jinty was ecstatic! "Look at me, I'm doing it! Ha ha!" Robert yelled out "You're doing great Jinty!" Jinty was now picking up a bit of speed. Up ahead, was a brake van. They were a grumpy character of sorts who was always one to spout remarks and was one of the newest additions to the island. [*cockney accent*] "Oi mate, crash into me yeah! I've got a date with a goods train later you see and i would rather not go if ya know what i mean" said the Brake van. Jinty was annoyed. "Hey let me just have a good test run alright" Jinty responded as he approached the brakevan and stopped. "Oh my days look at you actually stopping, should I be surprised or something?" Jinty then went for another run. One of the

spotters had a camera of their own amongst the newspaper photographers and it took still pictures, it's large flash lit up just as jinty looked over to the press "Ouch! My eyes!" he yelled. John comforted Jinty "You alright its only a flash from a camera" he said as he then realised his eyes were also caught in the flash and should have applied jinty's brakes already! The brake vans siding was fast approaching! John panicked "argh reverse...BRAKES! Ahhh!" Jinty was horrified! "No, no! Stooooop!!!" He tried to grip but without his sanding gear on, he just slid on the icy cold rails! Michael shouted "John what are you doing!" Geoff then remembered and shouted "Those vans are full of explosives for the Skarloey quarry!" Jinty braced for impact "OHH AHHHHHH!". BANG!!! The vans exploded into a fireball! Michael was horrified and ran to the office to call the fire brigade! Richard, Robert and Geoff were stunned "Jinty!" they yelled!

As the dust cleared the fire brigade soon entered the yard. The fire chief then called out "Stand back we've got it from here!" and in no time at all the blaze of the remains of the brake van and its van's behind were put out. Jinty was soon moved by Geoff out of the way. He was very shaken and utterly speechless. Luckily, he was unhurt. Richard was stunned "are you alright Jinty?" he was still processing what even happened and didn't respond. Robert then chipped in "Well, at least my test run went better than that!" Richard scowled "Too soon Robert! He's just seen an explosion happen right in front of him!" Michael yanked John from the cab "WHAT! DID I SAY JOHN!" John was ashamed "I did try my best boss" Michael gritted his teeth "NOT GOOD ENOUGH!" Michael then began to tear up a bit. John wasn't sure if it was anger or him being thankful he was alive. Michael then turned to see the press walking up "I'll deal with you later John" Mr Marriot pointed his microphone up to Michael's face "What do you think exactly happened here Mr Cramley?" from behind a spotter yelled "was this all staged for the press sir? How could a stream engine light these explosives just by biffing a truck?" Michael pulled at his collar "Well, I'm not sure exactly although I can assure you we will inspect the evidence that we have and then see who should be punished or what the cause of this accident was, although from what I...well we saw. I could only assume that it was a fault with the icy tracks more than anything!" The press then went wild! "When will this engine move again!?" "Call the police!", "where's the fat controller!" "We want compensation" They all shouted, Michael stutterd "Well..I, er..." Just then Sir Richard Topham Hatt more commonly known as The Fat controller walked sternly up.

The press then turned to him. Michael was thankful and walked back to John who was leaning up against Jinty. Mr Marriot spoke first "Sir Topham could you please explain to the Sodor and British public's why this accident occured if you can please sir?" The Fat controller straightened his tie and held his jacket firm with both hands "I couldn't guess any more than you I'm afraid. Fact is that this accident was just that! An accident! However I will be personally Investigating what precisely happened to cause these vans meant for the Skarloey lines quarry, to explode in the way they did, not to mention why they were here in these yards at all! The railway can only guess at this time as far as what was seen of which was slippery rails and an incompetent driver to blame at this point. And for those concerned, the North Western Railway will be sure that such an accident will not happen again after we find out what the cause of this was. Now please leave as this is railway property. That will be all gentlemen. I will now talk with Mr Cramley here about this at length and do wish you all to leave these works as I suspect you'll need to get this story ready for tonight's news broadcasts. good day!" He then pushed through the press and the spotters and calmly moved Michael and John into the offices as the press began to leave.

The end of the TV broadcast cut off and a workman switched the TV off. Richard was worried "This doesn't look good. I hope poor Geoff or us don't get punished for this" The other engines all agreed. Geoff stamored "I shouldn't have put those vans there, I didn't think they'd be in the way" Geoff felt very sorry for himself "I didn't mean for this to happen Jinty. I didn't think about what was in the vans. I just forgot they were there until you were approaching Jinty" Jinty was still silent. Richard piped up "Thank you Geoff I think he appreciates that. I don't think it was your fault, like The Fat controller said, icy rails and an incompetent driver" Geoff was was a little puzzled "Yes but one of the spotters had a point you know about how Jinty could have lit the vans alight" Jinty then spoke "It could've been the sudden change of direction that caused sparks from my funnel" he shuddered. The engines were lost in thought.

Meanwhile The Fat controller was giving Michael a grilling. "How could this have happened Michael!" Michael didn't know what to do. He pondered, trying to come up with an acceptable answer. "Well you see sir..." John cut in, "I tried my best, but I panicked.." The Fat Controller sighed. "Did you try the sanding gears? Or the hand brake?" John went silent "You just threw him into reverse didn't you?" John nodded his head, ashamed. The Fat controller seized his Top Hat from Michaels desk lamp. "I've heard enough for today I must speak with the engines at once!" he left the office and *slammed* the door shut. Michael and John followed slowly behind.

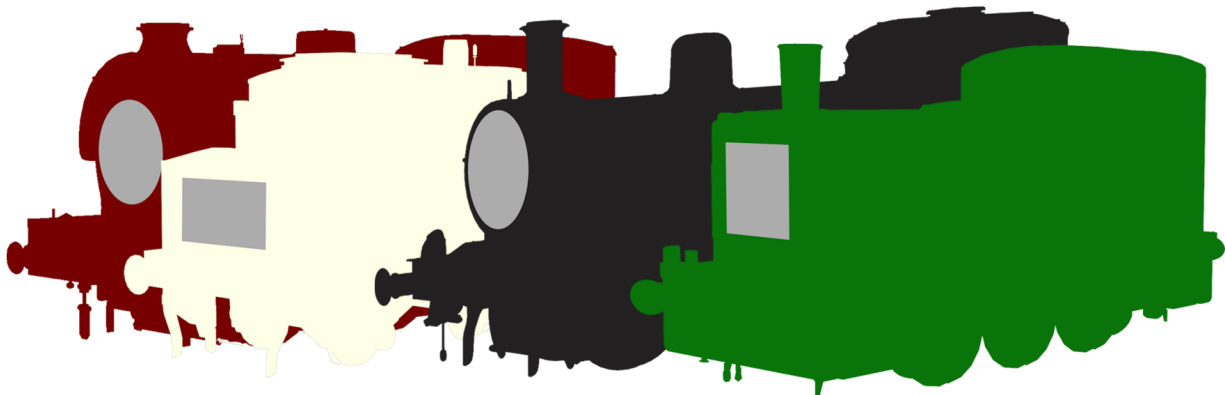
The Fat controller stood in front of Geoff, Robert, Richard and Jinty "I would like to know your sides of the story please and no tricks either! Now please be honest, which one of you moved those vans to that siding?" "It was me sir!" Richard stammered "me too sir!" Robert joined in. The Fat controller smiled "Come on now, you couldn't *all* have done this!" Richard looked downwards "Well if we'd kept track of what vans were for where, we would have moved it out of the way. Besides, Jinty wasn't meant to go that far and please don't send us or Geoff away sir!" Richard stopped as The Fat controller pointed to Geoff "Did you leave those vans in that siding?" Geoff gulped "Yes sir but I didn't know they were full of explosives and the brake van was rather rude to me the other week and..." The Fat controller interrupted "that is all Geoff...now Richard, Robert and Jinty due to the amount of press attention upon these workshops at the moment I'd prefer you three to work as far away from me and these works at least until after christmas. Vicarstown has a harbour in need of a much needed tidying at the moment and judging from the fact that Geoff's had to make trips to the other railway, says something about our docks and harbours. I know it wasn't your fault. But, if you'd all been more diligent about what we were shunting, then we could have avoided all this fiasco! Once Jinty has been properly retested safely and the root cause of the accident has been found, you will go to Vicarstown to do some proper work and to learn how to sort things out properly! And right now it would be better if you were as far from my office at Tidmouth as possible! Am I clear?Good. Evening Engines" he looked over to Michael and John watching on "Evening gentlemen. I'll be speaking with you over the phone tomorrow." And with that, the Controller then got into his car and left for home.

Michael and John then went back to the office as Richard, Robert and Jinty looked rather solemn. Robert was annoyed, "if it wasn't for the brake van hiding those vans, I would have moved them". Jinty perked up "Well the brake van was being rather rude to Geoff to be fair. And to be honest, it was all rather sad to me! And I suppose I did them a favour?" Robert growled "You

and that brake van may as well have exploded together! Robert wheeshed. He then disappeared into the workshops, Richard then followed "Robert come back here!" Geoff sighed "Come on Jinty, let's get you over to the inspection pit".

Richard caught up to Robert "What's up mate?" Robert looked wistfully out into the setting evening sun as the wind slowly swept its way around the yard "I'm mad that that brake van was such a little...annoyance, AND that Jinty still after all these months, hasn't told us about them or where they're from. Or even where and when he was built!" Robert finished and looked to Richard for sympathy. "I see where you're coming from...but we haven't told him about the colliery fire yet have we?" Robert smirked "I suppose not...However if it wasn't for that brake van we wouldn't be in this bloody mess!" Richard had to agree "into a load of explosives too!" Robert was now getting cross "He just gave it a little push and boom! I realise that it wasn't necessarily his fault but I'm still...mad!" The two engines grumbled back and forth till they finally fell asleep. Meanwhile, Jinty still couldn't fathom what had gotten Robert all fired up...

The accident was later found to be a combination of faults, but mostly the obvious things were the frosty rails, John's poor driving and the vans being there in the first place. With Richard, Robert and Jinty now going to Vicarstown, Robert was grumpy about Jinty and the brakevan and a little bit at himself for not moving it or any engine for that matter. Richard felt similar whilst Jinty felt helpless. The three of them said their goodbyes to Geoff and headed to Vicarstown on December 23rd 1974. The day Jinty would attempt to save Christmas...What could go wrong?



The Story Continues with Jinty Who - Part: 1

T.FE Continues with
Episode: 3 'Blackout'