

Joe And The Train Yard

by: S. Hunter Smith

Joe's blue eyes popped wide open not long after he heard his parent's bedroom door close. He tossed his blankets up into the air and leaped out of bed as they settled back down upon his mattress. He prepared to go on a short journey by pulling on his coveralls over his bed clothes and placed his favorite hat on his head. He opened his bedroom window and picked up his boots before climbing outside.

The window was only a few feet from ground level and the sound of the air conditioner unit masked the noise of his escape. Joe enjoyed sneaking out late at night to walk to the nearby railroad yard. It was surrounded by a fence but he knew that there was a hole that he could easily fit through. Train cars, to him, seemed like mountains. He enjoyed climbing into a box car and jumping out the other side and clambering up between two cars to stand on top and gaze across the entire property. His favorite part was to climb into the locomotive. The dials and levers reminded him of some his video games that he loved to play for hours every day.

This night however, was about to become more adventurous than he could imagine. Joe leaned down on one lever and, after losing his balance, he fell onto a few buttons and the engine roared to life. Joe thought about jumping off of the engine but it quickly picked up speed and was moving too fast, his blond hair was blowing in the breeze. He panicked for a few minutes before he realized that he really wasn't to blame for starting the engine. Hiding in a dark corner of the cabin was a man who began to laugh.

"What? Who's laughing?" Joe asked.

"It's me, Joe. I am the engineer for this train. Your parents told me that you liked to sneak out of your room at night to come play at the train yard. They have known about your adventures for quite some time and your dad even followed you here most nights. He and I would watch to be sure you didn't get hurt. We decided to give you a little thrill tonight. I hid here with this remote control and waited for you. This allows me to operate the engine from a inside or outside the cockpit." the engineer explained.

“Wow, thanks!” Joe exclaimed.

“You’re welcome. Now wave at your Dad and then get ready to learn a lot of things.”

Joe waved out the window as the engineer continued to speak.

“You must understand that a train yard is a dangerous place to play, especially in the dark. You should be home where your parents know you will be safe and so you can get rested for the next day. You are welcome to come here any time, of course with your parent's permission, and I will show you around. Do you understand?” the engineer asked.



“Yes sir!” Joe responded.

The engineer took Joe on a short ride down the tracks and back. He hooked up to a few other cars and answered the many questions that Joe asked. When it was time for Joe to walk back to his home, his dad thanked the engineer and Joe gave him a big hug. Joe’s smile was bigger than ever before as he climbed back into his bed.

“Mom, Dad, I had a lot of fun tonight. I’m sorry I sneaked out of the house, but I really love trains.”

“We know son. It’s okay to be curious, but we need to keep you safe. So if

you want to learn about the trains, let’s do it the way the engineer suggested.” His father replied.

Joe smiled and then hugged his parents before snuggling into bed and getting some sleep. The family visited the train yard often after that night and Joe learned all he could about the railroad equipment, infrastructure and business.