

Transcript

Train & the Whateveritwas

Narrator: Trains & Tracks.

This is Train and her friend, Track. Train and Track work together to carry heavy things long distances. "I love carrying a heavy load," says Train. "I love feeling the wind against my face when I'm moving along. I love being strong, big, and heavy. Even though I'm strong, big and heavy, I can sneak up on people because I can be very quiet. Plus, I'm a fantastic whisper-chant-singer. When I travel, I like to whisper a chant that goes like this.

Train on track,

Clickety-clack.

Train on track,

Clickety-clack."

One morning, Train was moving quietly along, whispering her favorite chant.

"Train on track, clickety-clack. Train on track, clickety-clack."

Suddenly, she noticed something shining on the tracks ahead. Something made of metal. Something that did not belong there. Train couldn't see exactly what it was, but she knew that she needed to do everything she could to avoid hitting whateveritwas. Train applied her brakes, but she was so big and so heavy that she couldn't stop right away. Her wheels were screeching on Track. Even though Train's brakes were slowing down her wheels, she was getting closer and closer and closer to the shining whateveritwas ahead.

Train realized that she wasn't going to be able to stop in time. If she were a car, she could turn her wheels and drive around it, but Train was a train. She didn't have a steering wheel. She had to follow the tracks. She was going to hit the whateveritwas. Train did. The shiny metal whateveritwas went flying off Track when Train ran into it. It flew through the air and landed in a patch of dandelions. Poof. Train finally came to a stop.

"Whew," she said. "It took me a long time to stop." "Longer than two kilometers," spoke up Track. "That's farther than 18 football fields." Train looked behind her at the place the whateveritwas had landed. "That was lucky," she said. "I'm so glad there weren't any people nearby. Someone could have been hit by that flying whateveritwas. It's a good thing the whateveritwas so small. Larger objects on the tracks can cause a train to

derail, which means it comes off the tracks, sometimes turning over and spilling what it's carrying."

Train asked Track what that whatever it was had been. "I don't know, Train," said Track. "It's not the first time someone has come through and left something on this stretch of me." "What do you mean?" asked Train. "Well," Track said, "people will sometimes play or walk along my shiny rails, and sometimes they leave things behind." "Why would anyone do that?" asked Train. "They don't know how dangerous it can be? Did you see that whatever it was go flying off the tracks? It could have really hurt someone."

"Or," Train gulped, "what if a person had been on the tracks? I can't stop quickly. I can't swerve. People should know how dangerous it is to be around train tracks, even if they don't see a train. I could come by at any time." "Plus, added Track, just being close to me is trespassing, and that's breaking the law. People should always stay far away from me, unless they're crossing at a marked crossing."

"I just remembered," said Track. "Someone was walking through the train yard last night. That scared me because stopped trains can move suddenly, and a person might get hurt. That person was also trespassing." "You're right," replied Train. "Do you know what I think, Train?" asked Track. "I think some people just don't know that you're so strong, and big, and heavy, and quiet, and take such a long time to stop, or that you can come by at any time. I think people don't realize that they're making choices around us that are dangerous."

Train thought about that. She thought and thought. "I want people to be safe around us, Track," said Train finally. "People just need to keep back. Hey, that could be my new favorite chant. Train or Track? Just keep back. Train or Track? Just keep back." "That's great, Train," said Track. "If people would just keep back from you and me, we would all be safe. People can admire us from a distance."

"Well, we still have a long trip ahead of us," said Train. "It's time to get going again. Maybe you can help me whisper my new favorite chant as I travel." "I would love to," said Track.

As big, strong Train moved on quietly, carrying her heavy load, she and Track both whisper-chanted, "Train or Track? Just keep back. Train or Track? Just keep back." They're still whispering it to this day.

[00:05:55] [END OF AUDIO]