

SILVER & RUSTY #1

(An Argument)

The Train Yard.

Silver (the head of the railroad) is there – lecturing Rusty.

NOTE: The four actors who play the engines of this railroad have no external “machine” pieces. They do not move mechanically or stiltedly. They may refer to their feet as wheels, but they walk normally. They are dressed in engineer’s overalls. The most important trait of these “engines” is their humanity.

RUSTY is the oldest engine at the railroad – warm & wise, but not weak or easily pushed around. In fact, she has no fear of Silver and easily stands up to him when she thinks he is wrong – which she seems to think he is about his running of this railroad. She obviously loves this railroad and wants to see it succeed; but without losing its heart and soul and reason for being.

SILVER is authoritative, in command, in charge, strong, a strict disciplinarian – not because he is mean, but because he feels he must be that way to keep things running smoothly here at “his” railroad. He is fastidious: the trainyard must always be in order and the trains must run precisely on schedule. Most of the time he carries a clipboard with a duty roster and a work checklist. He may seem a bit harsh at times, but he sees it as just being practical – not letting sentiment get in the way of running an efficient railroad.

Here – near the beginning of the play – Silver is questioning Rusty about her ability to continue to pull the railroad’s Toy Express train. [The train that Little Blue will eventually pull and thus become the “Little Engine That Could.”]

SILVER

(lecturing Rusty)

Rusty, lately you have not been observing all the rules – like – Rule #1... – Blowing your whistle to give “a friendly hello.”

RUSTY

Oh, but the children love it.

SILVER

(ignoring her)

Rule #2 – Your train, the express, is the shortest run – up the mountain.

RUSTY

Yes.

SILVER

Yet you’re taking longer and longer.

RUSTY

Yes. It does take me longer to get up the mountain.

SILVER

Maybe you’re getting a little old for this job?

(pause)

...This railroad must be run on time. The express must...

RUSTY *(cutting him off)*

Oh no. Excuse me, Silver – I don’t mean any disrespect – but you are very wrong.

SILVER

I beg your pardon.

RUSTY

Pulling trains is about much more than just being on time.

SILVER

What else is there?

RUSTY

The magic of a train.

SILVER

Magic of a train?

RUSTY

They joy children feel when a train goes by.

SILVER

Enough. At my railroad, everything runs on time. And if you can't remember that, maybe it's time you retired and left the train yard.

END OF SIDE.