

CRAPPY JOB

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FADE IN:

EXT. FACTORY - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Cartoon rendering of a Depression-era factory running half a dozen smokestacks at full power. Sign reads "Worldwide Whoozits and Whatzits."

An acoustic version of Tori Amos' "Happy Worker" plays.

One of the smokestacks sputters.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

A small army of WORKERS (20s to 50s) in coveralls and yellow hardhats work away at their stations in six distinct Product Lines within the cavernous space. Their FOREMAN (50) in a white hardhat watches over them from a large control panel.

Yeah, this story won't be passing the Bechdel Test.

In sync with the music's lyrics, a beefy Worker on Line Two pulls the lever, starts the engine, pumps the water, builds the pressure, pushes the piston, and presses the button.

The machine bucks, gauges go haywire, steam pours from the pipes, and the alarmed Worker rings a bell twice.

Foreman checks the second of six rows of gauges. Inputs all in the green: Water, Oil, Electricity, Beer, Pretzels. Output gauge for Product sinks to zero while Waste gyrates wildly.

Foreman slams Line Two's big red emergency-stop button. A panel opens next to it uncovering "Are you sure?" with "Yes" and "No" buttons. He exhales, reluctantly pushes "Yes." A SIREN blares briefly as Line Two grinds to a halt.

Foreman beckons to a lanky, yellow-hatted CUSTODIAN (20) who rushes over. Foreman points to the vibrating Waste gauge. Custodian gulps, points to his chest. Foreman scowls, nods forcefully, points at a circular hatch in the floor.

Custodian hangs his head, shuffles to the hatch, opens it, and descends the ladder within.

INT. STEAM TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

A labyrinth of pipes large and small. Custodian glumly raps the large "Waste: Number Two" pipe with a wrench. The pipe responds with a hollow sound, so the Custodian moves on.

Here, the music is Peter Tchaikovsky's "Marche Slave."

Custodian raps the pipe every few paces until it turns downward through the floor. Custodian sighs, pries open a manhole cover, gags, coughs, waves uselessly at the odor.

He uses a handkerchief as a make-shift gasmask, looks around, spots a large "Break Glass in Case of Emergency" case.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Custodian, in hipwaders and big rubber gloves, carries a shovel gingerly through ankle-deep green and brown sludge. O.S. toilet flush. Custodian dodges as a glop of fresh sewage drops from somewhere above.

Ripples in the sludge slide back the way the Custodian came. He comes to what should be an opening, but it's packed with mud and sticks. A pair of beady eyes look on from a dark crevice in the wall.

Series of shots of Custodian digging at the blockage to show passage of time. He stops mid-step when a loud STEAM WHISTLE blows O.S., shoulders his shovel, heads back toward the steam tunnels and factory.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Many Workers mills around tables and a water cooler. The room is filled indistinct banter and laughter.

The music here is still "Happy Worker."

Custodian arrives without the rubber gear, but he picked up a few hovering flies. Workers hold noses, give him a wide berth. He hangs his head, exits.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Custodian, back in gear, arrives with a two-handed pick.

Ludwig van Beethoven's "Symphony No. 5 in C Minor" plays.

Not only is the blockage still there, new boards have been nailed on top, and the sludge is shin deep! Custodian stomps in frustration then immediately regrets it.

Series of shots of Custodian striking the blockage with the pick in time to the music. He halts mid-swing when the steam whistle blows O.S., shuffles back toward the factory.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Custodian emerges from the hatch. Foreman stands meekly before a MANAGER (55) in a three-piece suit and a green hardhat. Manager points angrily at the Line Two gauge for Product sitting a zero "\$/HOUR".

Foreman spots Custodian, seethes until he turns red, points emphatically at the Custodian and then down. Custodian sighs, climbs back down.

INT. STEAM TUNNELS - DAY

Custodian lugs a jackhammer with its pneumatic line trailing out of frame.

Frank Mills' "Music Box Dancer" plays.

Custodian looks directly at the camera, furrows his brows.

Gioachino Rossini's "William Tell Overture" plays.

Custodian smiles, picks up the pace.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Frustrated Custodian attacks the blockage - which now has added pipes and girders - with his jackhammer in sync with the music across a series of shots. He doesn't make much progress before the O.S. steam whistle stops him.

The beady eyes continue to watch from the dark crevice.

LATER

Custodian bores several holes in the newly reinforced blockage with a hand-drill, slips red sticks of dynamite into them as Gustav Holt's "Mars, Bringer of War" plays ominously.

INT. STEAM TUNNELS - DAY

Custodian stands half-crouched, fingers in ears, eyes closed, as the O.S. dynamite fuses HISS.

Somehow, the hissing gets louder. REVEAL: the dynamite sticks, fuses still lit, have been built into a tiny log cabin behind the Custodian.

His eyes bulge, he tries to run, but BOOM!

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Custodian shoots up through the hatch on a plume of flame.

The music here is still "Happy Worker."

Custodian flails helplessly as he almost but not quite reaches the ceiling, then begins to fall. More flailing.

Oblivious Foreman consults a wrist watch. Just before the Custodian impacts, Foreman pulls the steam whistle. TOOT. Custodian's fall screeches to a halt. He rolls over to a standing position on the floor.

Custodian faces the steam whistle, holds up an "I have an idea" finger, smiles deviously while wringing his hands.

LATER

Custodian stands on the top rung of the hatch's ladder, holds up five fingers, points to his wrist where he'd have a watch if he could afford one, holds up five fingers again, then makes two tugs downward.

Foreman nods, Custodian climbs down.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Custodian - standing in knee-deep sludge - leans heavily into a prybar to remove new steel plates from the blockage.

Igor Stravinsky's "Sacrificial Dance" plays.

He stops the moment the steam whistle blows O.S., walks away with a pathetic attempt at nonchalance.

Once he is out of frame, the beady eyes from the crevice emerge as a BEAVER who surveys the damage.

Custodian leaps into frame, grabs the Beaver, loses his grip when tail-slapped in the face. Custodian chases Beaver, losing his handkerchief-mask in the process, with near-misses as the Beaver runs between his legs or over his head.

Beaver dives back into the crevice. Custodian thrusts his arm deep inside. CHOMP!

Custodian pulls his hand out of the thick glove, pulls out the glove with both hands, Beaver still attached. He grabs the Beaver by the tail, it thrashes about helplessly.

LATER

Beaver stands in a cage, chewing its nails nervously, next to Custodian whaling away at the blockage with a sledgehammer. After each blow, Custodian gives the Beaver a smug smile.

Peter Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" plays.

Beaver chitters, on its knees, forepaws clasped, begging.

Custodian reached the final layer of the blockage: a brick wall. He lines up a swing of the sledgehammer. Beaver shakes its head. Custodian nods condescendingly. Music crescendos.

With one mighty swing, the bricks collapse into a pile, creating a cloud of dust. Cloud clears, behind the wall stands a SEWER MONSTER - a nine-foot-tall half-man/half-fish covered in green scales. And sludge.

Beaver covers its eyes. Custodian piles the bricks up again in desperate haste. Sewer Monster ROARS as the music reaches its trademark cannon blast. Bricks fly in all directions.

Sewer Monster chases Custodian back toward the factory.

INT. STEAM TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

Sewer Monster bites at the Custodian each time the music reaches a cannon blast.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Custodian's attempt to close the hatch fails, Sewer Monster leaps into view, Workers run in every direction. Sewer Monster picks a Worker at random and gives chase.

As "1812 Overture" concludes, Foreman gets in the Sewer Monster's way, holds up a "Stop!" hand. Sewer Monster skids to a halt with a confused look on its face. Foreman scowls, points angrily at a cabinet labeled "Safety."

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Sewer Monster, now wearing a yellow hardhat, continues to chase Workers to and fro as "Happy Worker" plays.

FADE OUT.