

“Hey, watch out!”

Working the night shift at WashCo has its benefits and drawbacks. The good, you get to do your work in peace without anyone bothering you.

*Thwack*

The bad, there's no one to stop the automated machinery. Which can be bothersome when the cleaning bot knocks you into the Tunnel.

*Thump*

The Tunnel is what we call WashCo's testing tunnel, for their state of the art Cart Washes. Anytime they want to release a new feature, it goes through this tunnel. The tunnel is in the basement, with its top open to the first floor for ease of maintenance and installation.

“Ow”

Fortunately, they don't run tests at night, mostly because the night crew is making changes and calibrations for tests the next day. Unfortunately, whoever closed down the Trench forgot to turn it off.

“... wait, help!”

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Polished Gears managed to get a tenuous grip on the emergency stop button. But before the unlucky earth pony managed to hit it, the slippery pre-wash solution drenched him from head to hoof. Making him lose his grip on the button and his footing. He watched in horror, as the conveyor belt trundled along taking him farther away from the button and further into the steamy depths.

More soap rained down, as the first set of brushes closed in, scrubbing the lather into his coat. As brushes ran over a sensitive spot on his sides however, he started to writhe. But there was nowhere to go, with brushes on either side and soap so slippery, he couldn't get a grip on the belt. Eventually, his sides were spared, but by that time only his snout was visible from between the brushes. Making the chances that someone would spot him and stop the wash, slim to none.

While his head was getting scrubbed, another brush came down from above and started scouring the frogs of his sensitive hooves. Which caused him to gasp in surprise and turned this unexpected bath into an unplanned dental cleaning. Trying to close his mouth or even move his hooves from the soapy onslaught was useless.

After what felt like an eternity, his head emerged from the brushes. Coughing, sputtering, and generally trying to get the soap out of his mouth. He felt cloth strips swirling gently across his back, while something thick and weighty fell on his back hooves and spread up his hind legs. He thought he heard something, but it was incredibly muffled from the foam in his ears. Finally able to clear his eyes enough to see, he saw to his horror the blinking light on the wash selector was highlighting the Squeeky Kleen Wash. The highest and (until now) untested wash that the tunnel had to offer.

As soon as he realized this, the cloth strip curtain closed around him, sealing his fate. He could feel the drum brushes moving up his legs again. Before they even reached his sides his hooves were trapped by two more brushes one above and one below, almost sucking him in by how fast they were spinning. He emerged from the curtain and looked behind him and saw his backside covered in heavy expanding pink foam. Beyond that, a wall of brushes was slowly consuming the pink blob that was his hindquarters.

He wasn't able to see much beyond that, with the application of the foam to his head. The foam quickly expanded, doubling in size. Unfortunately, some foam got in his nose and quickly expanded into his mouth and down his throat, giving his insides a thorough cleaning. Distracted with the cleaning of his insides he didn't notice the side brushes had reached his head and that the over-under brushes had reached his soft underside.

His gales of laughter were muffled by the foam and brushes. His plot emerged from the other side of the brushes, his hooves dangling in the air. Only to be assaulted by the high pressure undercarriage wash. He tried to block the stream from his sensitive underside, but his hooves were thrown wide by the blast.

More side brushes pressed against his plot and slowly moved outwards, giving the stallion a very thorough wash. With his body almost through the under-over brush, Gears collapsed on the belt. He looked ahead to see what was left in store for him and in his (albeit upside down) view he saw a foamy rainbow blocking his view of the rest of the tunnel. Too tired to even roll over, he braced himself for whatever's next, facing it head on (not that he had a choice in the matter).

The rainbow foam flowed gently onto the stallion, making him think that this might be less intense than the last area. Then nozzles on the other side of the foam wall hosed him down. The intense deluge making it past his feeble attempts to seal his mouth.

A roller brush descended onto his barrel, leaving his head untouched. As it made its way over his belly, he let out a weak chuckle at the sensation. Disc brushes started on his head, these were specially equipped to polish the yoke of a cart and so they polished up, down, and all around to ensure an even shine.

More disk brushes engulfed his forehooves as the yoke brushes finished up, freeing the stallion's head. Only for a second drum brush to descend and began the polishing once again, much to his surprise.

After the second round of polishing, he managed to roll over and spotted a curtain of water ahead. Ecstatic by the sight, he manages to scramble to his hooves, despite the slickness of the polish and soap.

Barely able to keep his footing, he rode the conveyor through the water wall, and was blasted from all sides with water cannons. After all the soap and foam invading his mouth he was more than happy for a good rinse. Even if that rinse threatened to knock him over at any time due to the pressure. The high pressure rinse was followed by a light shower. He was pretty sure that he couldn't get spots, but was glad for the gentle summer rain anyways. He could've done without the chemical rinses, but he didn't much care at this point.

The rainstorm came to an end and he felt a breeze blowing from the next chamber. As he approached the breeze became gale force winds and he hunched low so he wasn't blown away. Arriving in the chamber proper, he was buffeted by these winds that quickly wicked away any remaining moisture from his coat and mane.

The dryers were much more powerful than he anticipated and, without the benefits of the wheel locking system, he was blown back through the rinse arches. Which activated, soaking his hide once more, he landed in a tumble and slid well past them.

Disoriented, he shook his head and stood up, only to get knocked flat by a drum brush. Which planted itself in the center of his back and slowly made its way towards his head. Pinned, he squirmed under the force of the brush, then several disk scrubbers planted themselves on his plot and began to give the yoke a second polish.

Despite all his squirming and struggling, he was no less successful in avoiding a good polish than he was the first time around. He was ferried once more through the power rinse and chemical arches, though he didn't pay them any mind, his focus was on getting in through the dryers and getting out.

He kept on having to backpedal in order to give himself more time to think, getting extra doused in a rain repellent solution. His hoof slipped and, with a thud and a click, there was something locked around his muzzle and his left forehoof. Feeling with his free leg, he found that he had accidentally triggered the wheel locking system. The rubber lined shackle putting a moderate amount of pressure around his muzzle and fetlock. He couldn't free himself and hoped that it would have to do to get through the dryers. The wind rose to a roar once more, the gale threatening to toss him again. His hindlegs lifted off the belt and flapped in the wind, only being anchored by his face and a hoof.

Then, to his horror, he felt his muzzle start to slip. Then with a jerk, his muzzle popped free and he was only held in place with his trapped hoof, but that was slipping too. Fortunately for him he was now bone dry and the dryers winded down. Once the winds died down, he opened his eyes expecting to see the end of the tunnel, instead he saw one last chamber. Deciding to take his chances, he pulled his hoof free and broke into a run.

His backhoof caught on something and he fell on the belt with a thud. Looking back, he saw wrapped around his hoof, was an oiled buffing cloth, sawing back and forth. His other hooves were captured in quick succession and soon found one wrapped around his head to finish off the yoke.

Though that wasn't the only thing that needed to be polished, he soon felt some sort of paste being rubbed into his coat over his cutie mark and being spread all over his body. It must have been a wax of some kind, since it wasn't long before electric buffers started roaming his body. The buffers swirling and heating up his pelt, the wax partially liquifying and flowing into every nook and cranny.

Finally, the buffing stopped and the stallion was finally released from the Tunnel, but his ordeal wasn't over yet. After a head first plunge down a short slide, he was picked up by another conveyor. Suddenly all the lights turned on, blinding him. He heard the clicking of what sounded like cameras, the hum of servos, and he felt the vibrations of an unknown device run down his back. Blinking the spots out of his eyes, the device was removed and two pincers seized his hindlegs and hoisted them into the air. His forelegs slid and bumped against blocks that definitely weren't there before.

He let out a squeak as the same vibrating device was dragged from his hindquarters and over his stomach. Finally able to see, he was surrounded by bright lights, cameras, and robotic arms equipped with various devices that pinched and prodded his entire body. His hindlegs were dropped, only for his forelegs to get grabbed and hoisted up. The same strange device rubbed over his head and down his chest.

Once satisfied with whatever it was testing for, the device was lifted away and a piston rammed into his barrel, winding him a little. The arms set him down and he could see the conveyor split, one lead past plastic dividers into another brightly lit room. The other, which he was being directed down, led into the storage and manual inspection area. The belt ended, and he slid down another small ramp ending in a little unloading platform. The lights shut off behind him, plunging the area into the dim glow of the emergency lights.

With a groan, he sat up on the exit platform, Gears could finally look himself over and see what the wash did to him. Hooves polished to a mirror shine, coat silky smooth and gleaming under the limited lights, surprisingly his mane and tail weren't all tangled and knotted despite what they went through. He was also pretty sure if he found a mirror, his teeth would shine almost as much as his hooves. Looking over his chest, he noticed a large stamp with the WashCo logo

and an inventory number underneath in thick black ink. Something fell around his neck, and he couldn't help but let out a snort in disbelief and amusement. A last parting gift from the Tunnel, an air freshener emblazoned with the words, *Now That's a Squeaky Kleen!*