

Snowdrift

“Please stop this!” Wanda, the little garbage truck looked at Wilma. “If you sing ‘Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow’ one more time, my battery will explode. I can’t bear to listen to it any more.”

“I don’t understand you,” Wilma shook her cabin, “I think this song is exactly right for today. We had more snow last night that we ever have before,” and with that the little street sweeper rolled over to the window. “If I look out the window, I think of this song right away.”

“But the sun is barely up yet, it is SATURDAY which is a day off, and you have already sung it at least a hundred times,” Waldemar grumbled sleepily, agreeing with Wanda.

“Yes, but...” Wilma tried to keep arguing, but at that moment a sharp sound cut through the air. Wera immediately picked up the phone.

“Hello, this is Waste Works Yard. How can we help?” she asked.

“Good morning everyone,” the Mayor said on the other end of the line. “I am sure you have noticed what a beautiful layer of new snow we woke up to this morning.”

“Of course,” the old water truck looked at Wilma meaningfully, “but if I’m not mistaken, not everyone is happy about this, right?” she asked.

“You are correct!” the Mayor responded. “Every road is covered with snow, the cars are stuck and traffic has stopped all over town. The snowploughs that arrived from Windy City worked all night long, but by now they have been completely exhausted and need a little rest. The snow just keeps falling. Could you please clear the snow off the roads so everybody can get to the stores and take care of their weekend shopping? I know that you have your well-deserved downtime; still, we would be very happy if you could help the residents of Wriggle Town.”

The trucks at Waste Works Yard didn’t have to be asked twice. Everyone started getting ready without a word. They fired up their engines, filled their tanks, and just to be safe everybody packed snow chains into their cabins. Wilma, Waldemar and Wili fastened the snowploughs to their bumpers.

“Samson, you will be the only one remaining at the yard!” Waldemar spoke to the large container carrier. “Somebody has to keep an eye on the Burner and the Heat Generation Centre while we are away. It is especially important to get enough heat through the pipes to



all the houses in Wriggle Town now. And don't forget to take the ashes out from the furnace of the Burner.”

“Don't worry; I will take care of everything!” Samson reassured the others. The garbage trucks, one after the other, rolled through the garage door.

The cold air immediately struck their windshields and suddenly they could barely see anything but the swirling snowflakes. In town everyone valiantly participated in the work. Waldemar tried to push the snow off the main roads, Wilma cleared the sidewalks, Wili the little tractor was in charge of the side streets, Malvina and Clara endeavoured to free the cars stuck in the snow and Wanda spread gravel on to the narrow Old Town streets so that all of the cars could safely get around on the slippery cobblestones.

In the meantime Samson enjoyed the peace and quiet in the toasty warm garage.

“I am lucky that there isn't much to do in the Burner, so I can loll around in front of the TV for a little bit.” And with that he rolled closer to the old television set that Walter had found next to one of the recycling bins. Waldemar's expertise brought life back to the discarded device, and the garbage trucks often spent their free time in front of the telly.

“Now I can watch whatever I want. I don't have to fight the others for the remote control.” Samson enthusiastically switched from one channel to the next. On channel 5 they were showing Samson Spatula, the famous chef's cooking show.

“Let's take out the breadboard and throw some flour on it,” came the chef's direction. “Now I'll show you how we can make the tastiest bread for breakfast. This will be child's play, listen carefully!”

“Wow, his name is also Samson, just like mine! We must have something in common. Maybe I also have a knack for cooking?” the container carrier was thinking out loud. “Let's see how he does it!”

Samson was so lost in the show that he didn't notice how much time had passed. “I would like to make delicious things like that,” he sighed wistfully, “I will ask Walter once he is back if he has found any dishes in the metal collection containers. I could treat all of the stray cats of Wriggle Town to a nice fish soup. I could even have my own cooking show: Samson, The Star Chef of Waste Works! The first episode would be called ‘How to cook something appetizing out of leftovers,’ he kept dreaming about a bright future. “I am sure I will find enough ingredients in the recycling bin: some sardines, fish bones or potato peels



that I can use to make a tasty meal for the hungry animals.”

Meanwhile, the other trucks of Waste Works Yard fought against the cold and the tremendous amount of snow outside. They were exhausted as they stopped for a little rest on Main Square, and that’s when they noticed that a lot of people were standing in front of City Hall listening to the Mayor. The garbage trucks rolled closer to hear what he said.

“When will the morning bread delivery arrive? Everybody is hungry, my children are waiting for their breakfast at home and I have been standing in front of the store for a long time,” a dad in a red hat asked.

“Is it possible to find out where the truck is right now?” another parent asked. “When will it reach Wriggle Town?”

“According to our latest report it is still stranded on the road to town,” the Mayor spread his hands out. “The snowstorm was so huge last night that the road got completely blocked, meaning the large vehicle couldn’t get through.”

“So if there isn’t a miracle and the snow doesn’t melt very soon, we will not have any bread for breakfast this morning,” someone sighed in the crowd.

“We are hungry, we want to eat!” two little boys in knitted hats shouted in unison.

“We are going to starve to death!” a little girl was weeping as she hugged her teddy bear.

“The situation is not that bad!” Wera, the wise old water truck interjected. “It’s just that there won’t be any bread in town, but I am sure there are other tasty things in the pantry at home. You could eat porridge with honey or jam. What do you think?” she asked the children.

“Can’t you help us?” the little girl looked at Wera hopefully. “The garbage trucks of Waste Works Yard always come up with something good!”

“I hate porridge,” the little boy added. “Please clean the roads leading into town instead!” he suggested.

“That would be great!” the others joined him immediately.

“I don’t think so,” the Mayor looked at them laughing and shaking his head. “The garbage trucks are very tired already, they wouldn’t have the strength. Only melting the snow will help.”

“Throw flames onto the road, like our favourite robot car!” one of the little boys



recommended. "I am sure that would make the snow melt."

As Waldemar was listening to them, he had a brilliant idea. He rolled over to Wera, and for a little while they were whispering something to each other before turning to the Mayor.

"We have a notion of how we could bring a little warmth here to make the wait easier and also how the bread truck could get into town."

"Hello Wera," Samson muttered into the phone. "The ashes from the Burner? I am about to clean that out," the large truck stammered. He felt he had been caught, and soon everyone would know that he had been gawking at the TV all morning instead of cleaning the Burner. "I was just about to head that way," he said quickly as he switched off the television.

"So does this mean there is enough ash in the Burner?" Wera kept on asking. "This is great news!" she went on to Samson's greatest surprise. "Could you bring a container full to Main Square? We could also use some empty metal barrels. I am sure you will find some in the Recycling Hall."

Shortly afterwards Samson rolled into Main Square. Everyone was curious to see what the trucks of Waste Works Yard had come up with this time.

"Some room, please! Be careful, no one come close!" Samson kept shouting. "I am carrying hot cargo!"

The people drew back. Samson stopped in the middle of the square and raised his container slightly, upon which a dose of ash fell on the ground. It melted the snow immediately, leaving a steaming pool of water on the asphalt.

"We thought," Wera pointed at the puddle, "that with the help of Samson and Goliath we could take the ashes gathered in the Burner to the edge of town and scatter them on the road. Snow relief, Waste Works style. This way the snow will melt, and the bread truck can easily get into town."

"Not in time for breakfast, but we may still have fresh bread," Waldemar smiled at the jubilant children.

Goliath skilfully lifted the barrels off Samson's side and lined them up next to each other on the square. They filled them with glowing red embers and hot ashes.

The people sticking around weren't freezing anymore; lovely warmth came from the



barrels. Soon everyone pulled closer, warmed their hands and started lively conversations with their neighbours.

“Tell us where the ashes are from!” One of the children asked Wanda. “Do you have everything at Waste Works Yard?”

“You can find almost everything at our place,” the little garbage truck laughed. “I am happy to tell you about the yard,” she pulled a wrinkled photograph from her cabin.

“This is the entrance,” she showed it to the children. “On its left you can see the Museum. There we keep the things that the first garbage trucks used, and we have an exhibition in the building with lots of old photographs. You should come and have a look!”

“On the right side the first building is the Big Waste Collection Tank,” Clara, the residential garbage truck took over. “When at the end of the day we return to the yard with our containers full, our first trip always takes us here. Right, Malvina?” she looked at her partner with a smile. “We get rid of all the garbage we've collected. We always have a race before that: the one who gets back to the yard the fastest wins.”

“Except for me!” Walter, the selective waste collection truck interjected. “I avoid that place as much as possible! I have a separate building all to myself!” he bragged to the children.

“Of course, it's easy for you, you bring the recycled waste,” Malvina retorted. “Walter rolls into the Recycling Hall with his cargo,” she explained. “There, out of every discarded item that the residents of Wriggle Town have collected, something new is created.”

“I always put the newspapers into the paper recycling bin,” a little boy said proudly. “Sometimes even my drawings, if they don't turn out well.”

“My mom lets me throw the empty jars into the glass bin. You should hear the loud crash as they break!” another child joined in.

“You are very clever!” Wanda praised them. “Look!” she pointed at the other buildings in the picture. “This is the Heat Generation Centre, or the Burner. All the waste that cannot be recycled or reused in any shape or form goes here. Every garbage bag that comes to Waste Works Yard goes on the conveyor belt of the Big Waste Collection Tank. We go over every bag and sort everything that is still recyclable. We only take those things to the furnace that truly cannot be used for anything. We also take the scrap wood here that is leftover from construction sites and is too small or in bad condition.”



“Can you see the interesting, thick pipes on its side?” the Mayor pointed at the photo. “That’s what carries the heat to Wriggle Town.”

“That’s right,” Wanda nodded, “there is water in the pipes, and the Burner’s huge furnaces heats it to boiling point. The heat goes to the school, the kindergarten and even to your houses with the help of the pipes,” she looked at the children.

“You have probably already guessed that Samson brought the ashes from there,” Wanda looped back to the beginning of the conversation. “In the end only this fine black dust remains in the Burner, and the heat goes to your rooms.”

The playful honking sound of a horn interrupted the conversations at the square, and soon Samson rolled into the middle with a wide smile on his face with the long-awaited bread truck in his wake. It was received with enthusiastic cheers! The hungry people couldn’t wait a minute longer so they immediately stormed the poor truck. They handed each other the still warm loafs and rolls. A huge table appeared in the middle of the square, and a mouth-watering smell spread everywhere. The residents of Wriggle Town couldn’t wait with their breakfast until they got home, instead they had a huge meal together right on the spot where they devoured all the tasty treats.

The Mayor was standing next to Samson, looking at the crowd with pleasure.

“When I was a child, my grandmother had a huge furnace,” he told the container carrier, “and she baked bread in it. I will never forget its flavour. When the fire completely died down she would put the dough into the furnace. Baking in the warmth of the ashes made everything especially tasty.”

“Food baked in ashes?” Samson immediately took notice of the important information. “I bet this is something that not even the famous star chef Samson Spatula has done! This sounds so much better than cat food! Perhaps my time has come? Beware star chefs, I’ll soon present my own recipes!” he cried out enthusiastically, and he headed to Waste Works Yard right away to try his ideas out.

THE END

