

Voracious Vacuum (Mass Food TF)

Cindy slammed the fridge shut with a groan of despair. "Again?! How've I run out of smoothies *again*?! Ugh!" Gritting her teeth, she turned and stomped out of the kitchen.

Wrenching open the broom closet, she blew away the dust and peered inside. "Come on... come on... I know I left it in here somewhere... Ahah!" At last, her eyes settled on her object of her search: it looked a lot like an everyday vacuum cleaner, though somehow sleeker, more futuristic, as if it had been sent back in time from the distant future to terminate all that nasty dust.

It hadn't, but its actual backstory was just as compelling, we promise.

Hauling it out, Cindy placed it on the corridor floor and squinted at the touchscreen on the side. "S-M-O-O-T-H-I-E," she typed.

The 'vacuum' rumbled obediently. "Product selected," it declared, in a stiff, if feminine voice. "To begin production, please insert raw material."

Cindy chuckled to herself at the euphemism.

*

The people commuting looked at her oddly as she hauled the vacuum cleaner across the intersection. It was early morning, and the streets were choked with salarymen and office women hurrying to their place of work, as if by arriving with speed, they might somehow reduce the impact of their employment on their lifespan. Only a few thin rays of sunlight penetrated the smog.

After testing both sides of the intersection, Cindy decided the best place to stand was a small alleyway on the opposite side to the train station. From here, she had an excellent view of the entire crossing and, more importantly, all the men and women pouring across it. She couldn't tell *exactly* how people there were in that crowd as it teemed from one side of the road to the other like lambs to the slaughter, but by her estimate, there were no less than a thousand. The stream of cars waiting at the lights must contain another few hundred easily.

Standing upright, she licked her lips. Just the amount she needed.

Raising the vacuum's head, she took aim at the crossing and hit the 'On' switch. The main body of the machine started to shudder, to rumble, to roar, and with a scream of air from the head—

While it wasn't actually a vacuum, it did function very similarly.

—the recycler started to *suck*.

Cindy took a deep breath and held herself firm as the head of the machine shook in her hands like an angry serpent, fighting to escape. Air poured into its maw at an absurd speed, dragging every loose item in the vicinity with it. Dust, litter, leaves, all flew from the ground and spiralled into the machine, sucked into its maw like water down a plughole. With a roar, it intensified its suction, and the vast typhoon grew that much stronger...

Nearby, on the closest side of the crossing, a scarf flew from a young woman's neck, slipped through the air like an eel, and slid straight down the pipe of the vacuum's mouth. Its owner whirled to look, her eyes wide in confusion, and found herself sliding across the sidewalk, caught in the suction herself. With a squeal, she stumbled, falling to her knees and rolling a few feet before she managed to grab a loose slab. She screamed, kicking in horror, as her high heels shot from her feet and into the vacuum as well.

Her cries cut through the clamor of the traffic, turning heads in the crowd, though by this point even the most oblivious of crossers were taking notice of their missing hats and flapping coattails. One young salaryman, clearly trying to be a hero, made an attempt to grab the unfortunate young woman, but sadly it simply doomed both of them: as he ran to her aid, he tripped, fell, and, caught in the suction, slammed into her, sending them both screaming down the spiral and into the vacuum's head, through which they vanished like two strands of spaghetti. *Schlup!*

A fat bulge swam down the pipe. As it reached the tank, the thing juddered a little, as if stuck, and the roar of its motors intensified once more.

Screaming, a third person dropped. A third, and then a fourth and a fifth, and then— In seconds, half the people in the area were flying screaming through the air, flailing and kicking as they spun inevitably through the whirlwind towards the machine, vanishing into its metal maw one after another after another. *Schlup! Schlup!*

Schlupschlupschlupschlupschlup! Bulge after bulge slid through the pipe, while the tank jumped and kicked like a wild horse at the rodeo.

Cindy licked her lips and squeezed the handle a little tighter. Only a few more to go~!

As she finished off the people crossing, her vacuum started to test its teeth on the cars, making them rattle as they wobbled side to side, before finally flipping over and rolling towards her, drawn inevitably towards the recycler like everything else in the plaza. They were a little larger for its mouth, but it could handle them—she heard the metal screaming as it was crushed through the pipe.

Car after car, bus after bus, even a couple of trucks with the misfortunate to pass through the area... Swinging the head of the vacuum left and right, Cindy culled them and all the other remaining stragglers. Some of those on the far side of the intersection had had enough time to flee, but they made it all of ten meters before she kicked the suction up and caught them too, sending them down the gullet of the recycler just like everyone else before them.

Finally, one last plump office lady vanished squealing down the pipe, and with that, the intersection seemed to be empty.

Switching off the suction, Cindy lowered the vacuum's head and turned to the tank, which was jumping and jerking like an overpressured boiler, hissing too, like it might explode at any second. If you leaned in close, the escaping 'steam' sound quite a lot like screams.

After a minute or two of these, the machine finally stopped juddering. Bending down, Cindy popped open the tank as if to extract the dust bag, releasing a burst of steam, and reached inside to extract nothing more than a simple bottle of smoothie.

Popping the lid, she sipped it with a sigh. "Ahhhh... Not bad. A little thick for my tastes though. Next time I'll just grab one from the store."