

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

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Short Story by



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Bill hated this part of his job, as a maintenance worker he had seen more surreal events, it was beyond crazy. Marty was supposed to be following him, but Marty was a lazy shit, he only got this job because his brother was a manager. Marty tend to take advantage of that nepotism everyday of his life.

It was Bill's turn tonight to get saddled with the dead weight. Sighing he hitched up his tool belt, pulling out his flashlight. The train just came and went. The subway was deserted. Slipping through the maintenance gate he ambled down the steps taking them slowly one at a time. Stepping on to the ground he moved along until he found the maintenance crosswalk stepping up, he gingerly walked down to the malfunctioning panel. Someone once asked him a couple years back if there were aliens that took the subway. He had laughed and shook his head. In the last few months there were things he had found and heard that there were substances that were unaccountable found on a few trains, they had been pulled from duty and were under investigation.

Finding the faulty switch, it was loose. Bill hauled out his screwdriver and went to work. Twenty minutes later, it was tighten, secured and back on track so to speak. He chuckled at his own pun. Turning around he shook his head there was no sign of the infamous Marty. Frowning Bill knew he shouldn't be surprised by it, but he was a little disappointed.

Checking his watch, the next train would be coming soon. Stepping back up onto the maintenance catwalk he grabbed the holding bar that was attached to the wall and wrapped his other hand around the railing.

The train horn blasted ... it echoed and bounced off the walls as the sound felt ten times louder. Behind him a high pitch screech called back. It caught his attention, it sounded like an animal of some sort. He had called animal control last month because he had heard that same sound, but they didn't find anything. It was the same time he was stuck with the ever-reliable Marty.

The train zipped by him kept his mouth and eyes closed shielding them with his arm. Once the train was gone, he brushed his face off with his sleeve then turned and headed back into the direction of the noise. He just needed to catch a glimpse of the stray animal. A small part of him suggested going back up to the topside and call animal control again. Carl once found a baby crocodile in the subway it was hungry and had thought Carl was fast food on the move of course that was before Bill got hired on. Carl was a co-worker that told that story to everyone and anyone who would listen.

Bill made a chirping sound trying to coax the animal out so he could get a glimpse of it. The nagging voice in his mind, suggested this was a bad idea. Pausing he stood up and looked around the platforms were less than twenty feet away. Maybe he should avoid searching for the stray by himself ... whatever it was.

Frowning, he shook his head. Now he wasn't chicken, he took a couple more steps deeper into the tunnel. His flashlight flickered. Just great now was not the time to run out of batteries. Feeling a little annoyed he decided to head back topside, and he

would have to worry about the stray another time. Stepping back towards the platforms. He spotted Mary standing a few feet in front of him on the maintenance catwalk.

"Look who decides to show up when the job is done," Bill kept walking towards his co-worker.

Finally, Marty was feeling a little sheepish, maybe there was a god. Then heard that chirping sound. Only it was coming from ... Marty? Bill paused and looked around him, there was only Marty and himself in the tunnel. Marty was standing between him and the stairs that led back to the topside.

Swallowing hard he felt his throat constrict. Marty said nothing but made that sound again.

"You heard that too? That's a good interpretation of it Marty. Let's go topside and you can show the others that sound." Bill didn't like the sick feeling of bile that crawled up in the back of his throat. Was this Marty? Was it really the Marty he knew? Or was it something else that looked liked Marty? Flashing the flashlight on Marty's face ... everything about the man who stood in front of Bill suggested that it was indeed his co-worker Marty. The flashlight flickered.

"Where were you?" Bill had asked.

"Working," Marty replied.

Feeling relieve he started to approach his co-worker again. Maybe he had imagined it. "Working on what?"

"Construction."

"Construction?" Bill was confused there were no construction details on the tracks. At least none he was aware of. "Where?"

"Back there," Marty pointed over Bill's shoulder.

Bill furrowed his eyebrows and turned to look at where Marty was pointing at. "I don't know what you are talking about. Come on let's go back up topside, I'll buy you a coffee." He chuckled. The guy was obviously off ... delusional ... Turning back towards the stairs that led to the platforms he started to brush pass Marty. Marty didn't like it. He looked at Bill, opened his mouth and the loud screeching almost knocked him over.

With his heart racing and palms sweating, a scream caught in his throat as he scrambled towards the platform staircase. He had stepped on the third step heading upwards and felt something lash out around his legs dragging him back down. A large grey slimy tentacle clung to his legs. His right hand got sliced on a piece of protruding metal. Crying out in anguish. Bill screamed out for help, something wide and slimy slapped across his face and whatever the sticky substance was ... it burned his skin, it was extremely painful, and all Bill could think of was I gotta get away.

Then something sharp pierced through him. Breathing got really hard and painful with every lung full he inhaled ... felt like a thousand knives cutting into him.

People ... he heard people on the platform, he could see their shapes peeking down the tunnel to see if the train was coming. A rumbling on the tracks answered their question. Bill couldn't see, breath or think anymore as he felt his body slump forward.