

Tay & C

“I still can’t get that tomato soup stain out of the white shirt you left at my apartment...”

That was the first thing she said to him after 10 years of not speaking to each other.

I mean... What else was she going to say...and he had no idea how hard and how often she tried to get that fucking stain out. Cold water wash. Hot water wash. Hand bleach wash. Lemon and baking soda wash. She even prayed on it.

But there was always the tiniest bit of soup stain showing. It was incessant...but she really liked wearing that shirt.

It made her think of him. Obviously. And even though she would inject his veins with cyanide if she could get away with it — she liked thinking of him.

“What shirt?” he replied dumbly with almost no reaction time as if to make sure she knew that he had absolutely no idea what she was talking about.

“Ouch” what a twat, she thought. “How could he not fucking remember the white shirt soup night...”

“Oh, uMm - Nevermind — Hi...” she course corrected the conversation and they entered into a **soft casual small talk dystopia** – just like every other dead inside human on this planet. Gross.

::: Tay and C spent 5 wild, crazy, beautiful years together before the epic blowout that left them wreathing in silence for nearly a decade.

They met at a truck stop in New Jersey or as they would say in unison “*The armpit of America!*” while cupping their left armpit with their right hand any time anyone would ask them where they met.

It was so cute...to them.

Tay was pumping her gas, minding her own business when C ran up to her like a maniac shouting “This is New Jersey !! You don’t have to pump your own gas here !!” He was extremely excited to share this information with her and – her being jittery and a born skeptic, she instinctively reacted by spraying him directly in the face with the gas hose.

That’s right. A full force stream of gasoline — straight to the teeth.

She was...he was...They were stunned. The only thing she could muster to say was “I guess it’d be a bad time to offer a cigarette, yA?”

They both laughed and spent the next 2 hours getting to know each other and wiping C clean of petrol, making sure he wasn’t going to spontaneously combust...or vomit from the fumes.

Tay was passing through on a cross country road trip to California from her small town in Upstate New York - - “Trading one crazy for another...” she’d joke to every person she encountered along the way.

C actually worked at the truck stop gas station so it wasn’t weird at all that he was eager to share with her that she didn’t have to pump her own gas.

This made the situation even more comical and they couldn’t get over how destined their encounter felt.

2 hours turned into 4 which turned into dinner which turned into a long weekend at C’s beach house in Asbury Park which turned into C joining Tay on her cross country road trip to California.

She didn’t have an exact location in mind, she just knew she needed to cut the chords and felt a pull out West... and now she had a partner in crime to fly along her side.

Which wasn’t a shocking decision at all for C. He was a wild child and lived his life energetically from impulse to impulse. It was scary at times because you could never predict what he was going to do next – but that’s kind of what Tay liked most about him.

His sporadic existence validated her jitteriness and she liked the balance he created in her heart.

She also found him to be jaw droppingly handsome and would often envision licking syrup off his washboard stomach and nipples at every pancake house they pit stopped.

So it stung a little when C waited until Utah to reveal that he was rip roaringly gay. Like not just a little tap tap curious from time to time but a full blown hairy butt loving homosexual.

This made Tay’s giant brain combust for the whole Beatles White Album through Nevada. Trying to play it cool on the outside while canceling the wedding she had planned in her head the entire road trip, wondering how she could have missed this big flaming detail.

At first she was pissed, thinking that was an important thing for him to mention as they embarked on this new relationship together and shared intimate space. But then she got in her head a bit further and realized that he didn’t have to reveal his sexuality to anyone for any reason at all. It was his right to keep it to himself and why does this world care so much about who we’re fucking

and how we're fucking and we assume every relationship we begin is going to be about fucking - It's madness - and C was the coolest person she'd ever met - sex or no sex...

She let her mind spiral out of control about the pressures and contradictions of society and then 4 hours later blurted out...

"I was gay once..."

"Dope." C replied.

It took them 5 days, 120mg of adderall and every flavor of Pringles to get to their final destination of Los Angeles. Which was always the plan in Tay's mind but she didn't like to speak in certainties. What if she broke down in a small crunchy town outside of Portland and had to spend all of her money on repairs, forcing her to get a job and sleep on her boss's couch until she could save back up to continue her journey — but then, her and her boss fall madly in love and she gets pregnant and he can't leave the business so now she is a full-time Oregonian with twins on the way????

Tay's mind spiraled a lot...but with C by her side, they made it. Proving better together with every breath.

They settled into a tiny studio in Echo Park, securing a duck tape line down the middle to "draw separation and keep the peace". Which was really more of a decorative decision than anything else because they genuinely loved each other's company and in reality — needed help enforcing their own boundaries.

The only topic that caused even the slightest bit of tension between the two was money. Well, that and C's taste in movies but that's for later ... Money was really the only major hot button. As in...they had none and needed it. Bad and always. They were barely getting by with all of the part-time jobs, odd jobs and sometimes even blow jobs (legalize sex work ya'll !) and were running out of hours in the day to just be them. They were desperate to find a more strategic way to spend their time and earn more dough.

Keeping in mind they wanted to live like royalty...like even the lowest of the low of the family would be fine. A knight or a duchess. Even a court jester. Just someone that got to feast on whatever and look fancy as fuck.

"To live like royalty is to act like royalty" they thought and leaned into a "do less, spend more" mentality with their problem solving. Manifestation, right? So after some light math and the pooling of their savings, they figured they could live like the Royals for exactly 2 weeks before spending every dime they've ever earned. Meaning they had 14 days to come up with a fool

proof plan that would afford them with instant and infinite riches – or else it was going to be more backaches and blow jobs for the foreseeable future.

“Here we go...”, they nodded in agreement.

For 13 days they bought what they wanted, ate where they craved, self-cared when they needed and lived how they felt happiest. No questioning. No hesitation. They put full faith and full trust in the fact that being happy... was really the only thing that mattered and the rest would follow suit.

And of course they knew they needed an actual plan. But instead of defaulting into society’s idea of success they took a step back and decided to define that word for themselves. How did they want to spend their time in this life? In these bodies? How much did they really need? To live lives they could smile about?

They were also fucking brilliant. Separately, but even more so together. So in between spa treatments and dinner dates, they made lists about their strengths...

Things Tay is good at:

Convincing people that things aren’t always the way they seem

Riddles

Hacking*

Things C is good at:

Seeing the good in every situation

Break dancing

Hacking*

Ding ding ding. A match.

[*Plot twist, both Tay and C were cRaZy coding wizards in their teen years. They led all sorts of hack rooms and pioneered techniques that still leave tech giants scratching their heads. They bonded a lot over this on their road trip out West.]

Then they’d make lists about what they wanted in life...

Tay wants to:

Have A Family She Can Sing Show Tunes With

Help People**

Laugh A lot**

C wants to:

Travel The World

Help People**

Laugh A lot**

**DOUBLE MATCH.

They were onto something...and just needed to find the thing that strung it all together.

So they anchored it in a shared purpose of bettering the world...

Things That Needed To Change:

Amount Of Trash In Los Angeles [The World]***

More Opportunities For The Houseless Population ***

Exurbantly Wealthy People Spending Their Money On Exurbantly Stupid Things ***

[***add in statistics]

There were of course, so many things that needed to change in this warped weird Earth but they figured they'd narrow it down and organize it by location and things they felt they could realistically play a hand in changing.

And on the 14th day... well fuck. On the 14th day - something COOL happened... Tay and C figured out the perfect way to combine their super powers into super profits while doing their divine duty in the process.

They devised a plan so good - so genius - so immaculately holy - that they went ahead and started writing their Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech..

“Let us begin by thanking the great state of New Jersey - [The armpit of....]”

“Okay okay okay, back to work...” they'd digress.

Here's how the brilliance unfolded...

They were sitting up late staring at their lists and got into an intense conversation about how people just carelessly and recklessly toss their litter on the streets without realizing or acknowledging that we all share one Earth and it's kind of like them throwing trash all over their

own living rooms...Which spiraled into a discussion about how self-involved and unaware the humans are...which led C to pose the question:

“Well, what if we could somehow incentivize people for cleaning up the trash on the street - even if it wasn’t technically “their trash”?”

“Hmm” Tay thought – “Kind of like how you can collect cans and bottles and trade them in for money – what if there was an opportunity for every day people to clean up a dirty street and somehow get paid for it...” –

“Trash Bucks!” C blurted out.

“Trash Bucks!” Tay echoed, smiling.

They erased everything that was written on the white board and wrote the words TRASH BUCKS in huge letters in the center – brainstorming all of the ways they could bring the concept to life...They loved the idea that someone who lived on the streets could make money off of keeping it clean. The holy housekeepers of our one home, our Mother Earth and the shared incentive to keep her looking beautiful...

After 6 hours of deliberation, 6 red bull vodkas [each] and many mini dance breaks – they were getting close.

They figured they’d need some sort of dumping facility where people could drop off the trash they picked up from the street and somehow convert it into spendable income.

LA had plenty of empty lots that they could transform into recycle sites and the conversion part was way easier than it sounded. All it took was a few phone calls to some friends who were self-proclaimed “Crypto Gurus” to learn that creating your own currency these days was actually not that hard at all - and it was extremely possible to have a monetary system backed in trash.

But the hiccups they kept running into were:

1. Who was going to fund this prolific plan?
And –
2. Where will people spend these Trash Bucks?”

It was going to be tough to convince companies to accept a whole new form of currency. Especially one made of garbage.

But where there’s a will there’s a way! Where there’s a Tay there’s a C! And they dug even deeper into the vision...

That's where it got really interesting...and where their hacking chops came into play. It's also where they saw the biggest opportunity to check the third box off on their "Things To Change List.."

Exurbantly Wealthy People Spending Their Money On Exurbantly Stupid Things ***

They knew Trash Bucks could help incentivize cleaning up the world and would give people more opportunities to make an honest dollar. Like Uber drivers for planetary maintenance. They just needed someone to pay for it all because as they were constantly reminded – they had no money... and this world loves to weigh us in gold.

So they made another list...this time of the wealthiest people on the planet.

Starting with, Jeff Fucking Bezos. The Amazon founder that's responsible for putting crazy amounts of trash in the world and probably has a bigger eco footprint than several countries combined. The multi billionaire getting his rocks off by taking joy rides up to space while he could easily be solving major global issues with one cash of a paycheck. Priorities Jeff.

Then they added the CEOs of other big time, big waste corporations to the list. Places like McDonalds, WalMart, Nike, Apple, etc. Companies that were putting so much garbage into the ecosphere without doing much of anything at all to clean it up. I mean how many times have you seen a lone Mickey D's wrapper lodged into a sidewalk corner or have almost suffocated from a plastic WalMart bag floating through the street?

It blew Tay and C's minds that these people had the power to make huge improvements in the world but without fail, would choose their bottom line profit and a yacht full of strippers over the heart of humanity. I mean strippers yeah but clean up after yourself. And like sure, they were cutting checks to charities and attempting to use eco-friendly materials when they could, but that stuff was a no brainer. We needed ACTIONABLE change and these people had the tools to deliver, you know?

"Enough." Tay and C agreed.

With ease, they hacked into the company's main databases one by one and gathered as much evidence as possible to prove they were doing way more harm to the planet than good. Starting with their annual earnings, net income of top tier employees, raw materials used, resources consumed, product sold, product wasted, total emissions, corners cut, right down to the exact amount of gasoline used in each of their private jets. They made a graph of the eco footprint each company made public to the world and then another graph of the actual eco footprint which was hidden behind tax write offs, loops holes and waste generated in other countries.

Their discovery was outrageous. The amount of TRASH these companies put out into the world [and then tried to hide from the world] was so sad, it was laughable. They realized that if just one of these major monarchs went away, the amount of world waste produced would decrease by nearly 30%.* What a wild thought.

**This is completely made up but it's probably true*

How are they even getting away with being such obvious contributors to breaking the world down but no one is holding them responsible for building solutions?

Once Tay and C had all of the data they needed, the fun part started. They took each of the fancy graphs they made and sent cut throat, cryptic emails to each CEO asking [bribing] them to invest in their Trash Bucks concept, threatening to reveal the truth and populate it all throughout TikTok if they didn't.

And if this doesn't sound like a foolproof plan to you, you obviously don't know TikTok. This platform has the power to cancel companies in a snap - fueled and led by an angry Generation Z that was born into a burning world. If they truly knew how little these companies cared about the planet, they'd shut them down in an instant and move their spending over to a more eco-conscious, good for the Earth buying experience.

With 8 million ways to shop, these heavy hitting corporations didn't have as tight of a grip on the market as they used to. Nikes? Are they even vegan? And these companies knew it too - they could smell the stench of their expiration date getting closer and would do anything to maintain shelf life.

So Tay and C presented Trash Bucks as the perfect opportunity for them to show up for the world, hold onto their consumers and even get some good hearted press in the process.

They were obviously met with some resistance but once the duo helped them look past the bribing and into the ways that this idea could actually HELP each company [and the communities they served] – everyone slowly got on board.

Well, not slowly. Tay and C only gave them 48 hours to decide but still – it seemed as if all parties were aligned.

“That was eerily easy...” Tay and C thought. But they didn't question it. If it's meant to be, it's meant to be easy! And it was true...Once the startup capital was secured, the rest took off without a hitch.

In just a few months they set up recycling sites all over Los Angeles and made it extremely effortless for people to drop off street piled trash in exchange for Trash Bucks that could be used at major retailers – thanks of course to the full hearts and bank accounts of America's wealthiest;)

The streets were getting cleaner by the day and Tay and C were considered visionaries ...enough so to finally dust off that Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech.

After 3 years, Trash Bucks proved to be an actual solution and was running like a well oiled machine in several major US cities with plans to roll out globally. With little need for Tay and C's guidance anymore, they took their earnings and cashed out - acquiring all of the money they needed to live out their royal lives smiling, happy and fulfilled. They'd have to pinch themselves every so often to make sure they weren't caught in a lucid dream or parallel universe. But nope, they actually did it. They helped change the world while laughing all the way to the bank.

"Now what?" They'd joke.

Now that they were financially free, all that was left to do was hang out with each other. Which was a blast – at first. They'd frequent all the "hip" socialite parties, had all access spa passes and got specialty cocktails named after them at all their local hangouts. But overtime, it all got old. They bored easily and the longer they submersed themselves into the world, the more problems they saw with it. People were hollow and they needed a break. Or like a really really really long nap.

Truly, the only thing that made sense to them was taking recreational drugs and watching movies. So in classic Tay and C fashion, they made a thing out of it. Movie Year ! Let's take the whole year off and see how many movies we can watch. We'll be so cultured and interesting!

"Brilliant", they thought.

7 months in and they were LOVING it. Feeling so revved up and rested and eventually the drug binges turned into juice cleanses and they were feeling mentally and physically recharged from all the Trash Buck stimulation. They were also watching a crazy amount of movies – which led them to feeling and discussing every emotion ever written about. Intense Joy. Extreme Sadness. Epic Love. Rage. Regret. Jealousy. Fear. Kidnap. Rape. Abandonment. What a wild experiment they accidentally got themselves into. As time went on, they became so emotionally involved with the characters and plots in each film, they were using the stories to help process their own emotional experiences.

You know, that deeply rooted childhood trauma stuff that wrecks you unless you address it? And eventually past life traumas and future traumas and it was all very healing and spiritual. They worked through heart aches and break ups and misspent youth and really helped make each other feel full. Another big life milestone Tay and C were soaring through together.

It wasn't until the Pitch Perfect series that things started to go awry. They both really enjoyed the films but C like really really really enjoyed them. He wouldn't shut up about it. The music. The comedic timing. The nuance.

To be honest, Tay was kind of shocked about how much he loved them. Especially now knowing the inner workings of his soul. They were entertaining, yeah, but "The best film in decades" or "An Instant and Forever Hollywood Classic" was definitely pushing it.

She found his obsession to be odd – but because it was him, it was kind of cute. Until he started going off about Anna Kendrick...and how he thought she was....

The
Best
Actress
Of
Our
Time.

"Um what?" Tay snapped back "I'm sorry, that's just not true, not even a little, nope. Best actress of our time? You can't really think that.."

C got pissed.

"How can you NOT think that? She is pitch fucking PERFECT"

C was really passionate about the things he felt passionately about. Tay was less so but she felt strongly that Anna Kendrick was absolutely far from the best actress of our time and couldn't let this one slide. She just couldn't. No offense to Anna but like – C was being delusional...and kind of a bitch.

They fought about it for weeks. Not always meaning to but it would somehow come up. This one time was particularly gnarly. Tay and C had plans to start all of the SAW torture movies and C arrived way late without a call or a care. Impatient Tay had all of the snacks hot and ready to go and was just sitting on the couch fidgeting, fuming and staring at the horrific opening scene paused on the screen. When C finally showed up he was being all moody and weird. No apology. No explanation. It was annoying and Tay was kind of over his *bitch perfect* attitude. So she started to poke...

"I bet if we were watching an Anna Kendrick movie your ass would be here dusting off the television, making sure her highness looked her most polished..."

“Don’t even start with me today Tay - you’re just so obsessed with me you can’t stand the thought of me out in the world doing anything else but worshiping you – must be all of those unresolved abandonment issues sprouting up...”

Oh real nice, Tay thought. Using their deep healing journey against her in a frivolous bicker was a low blow. But fuck it, Tay gave it right back to him and things started to get nasty. One by one, they clawed each other apart, taking the most hurtful digs at their biggest insecurities and pouring salt directly atop the open wounds they’ve been working so hard to heal.

It ended with Tay throwing a piping hot bowl of tomato soup at C’s head, missing and winding up all over his favorite white shirt.

He took it off, threw it right back in her face and then walked out the door for good. Seriously, that was that. That was the epic blowout that left them wreathing in silence for nearly a decade.

Because shortly after, the guy Tay was kind of serious about became the guy she was seriously serious about and then the guy she’d call her soulmate and life partner.

C didn’t hesitate to start his plans to travel the world. Their fight was just the excuse he needed to jump ship and never look back. And remember, they were rich as fuck, so they could do whatever they wanted – settling into the idea that maybe it was time for the infamous Tay and C to part ways.

They texted each other once or twice in an effort to make peace and reignite the spark Anna Kendrick blew out but they were both really hurt...and really stubborn.

But they also really, truly loved each other...

So it came as no surprise to either of them when they both decided to reach back out after 10 years of silence on the exact same day.

A “Meet Me In LA?” text from Tay crossed hairs with a “I miss your butt” text from C and they picked right back up with their harmonious banter, arranging the in-person reunion where Tay opened with...

“I still can’t get that tomato soup stain out of the white shirt you left at my apartment...”

And after they breezed through all of that boring small talk of kids, houses, lovers and 10 years passed - Tay couldn’t hold it in anymore and blurted out...

“You *really* don’t remember the tomato soup stain?”

What happened next was out of control...

C cracked open the lid of the coffee cup he had been holding and poured a lukewarm stream of tomato soup right down the middle of Tay's crop top sweater.

"Of course I do." C proclaimed through a scared smile. That decoy cup was payback the whole time and he was just waiting, plotting, planning his sworn revenge.

Tay just kind of sat there, open mouthed and glitched out for a minute or two, not fully sure how to take it all in. Not fully sure if she should hit him or hug him. So she did both. Squeezing him so tight that she secured another tomato soup stain on his freshly pressed white shirt.

They then held each other laughing and reminiscing for a full two days. Swearing in soup to never fall apart again.

- THE END -