

T.P.

A Short Story

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# Dedication

To my brother, Chris. When everyone is dreaming up vast universes, thank you for keeping us grounded by always thinking of the important things in life.

# Author's Note

This tale was inspired by a story written by my brother, Christopher Oliver. His original story has sadly been flushed away by the whooshing waters of time. He wrote it in high school within the span of one night. Let's just say that a writing assignment, panic caused by Chris's soul mate, procrastination, and Chris's wit created a funny tale about the future. In wonderful Christopher fashion, the first thing he thought to write about was...T.P. Even more hysterical, unbeknownst to him, every student that day would be required to openly read two pages of their stories to the entire class. Whether out of curiosity for his simple tale or to embarrass him, he was asked to read his entire story. He did so with vigor and a nervous smile. I have cherished this memory since he shared it with me many years ago.



# Courageous Justification

## YEAR: 2099

It was a day like any other. I woke suddenly from a blissful night's sleep, rolling out of bed. And by rolling, I mean jettisoned by my mattress onto the floor. A reverse Murphy bed. More like a Murphy's law bed. With my bladder jostled and my mind rattled, it was time for my morning visit to the bathroom. Upon arrival, I assumed the position. Standing at attention, I performed my duty by first commanding the smart toilet to sing me the song of my people, "Dancing Queen." I know, it is very old-fashioned. Be impressed. I stood there until I trickled dry. The tune masks the sound of me making water. Once empty, I politely waited for the song to finish. Technology has feelings, too, you know? No need to be rude. After giving Lou, my toilet, a standing ovation, I thanked it profusely. Being appreciative of those who take your crap is vital to a happy home. Before exiting, Lou kindly informed me that an item was out of stock.

It looks like it's time to go shopping. Wait!? Go out? I know what you may be thinking. Can't you just command your robot butler to have a drone drop off items at your front door? Or even better, the teleportation device can blink it to you in an instant! So why would you ever think of going out into the real world when you could simply

order all the best things online without ever leaving your bedroom? Great question!

You see, what I'm buying today must be bought in person! Not only is this item rare, but highly coveted. Not to mention, federally regulated and sought after by those who admire the days of old. No one these days is willing to take on the liability of transporting such an invaluable commodity. You see, at the beginning of the 2020 pandemic, people became temporarily insane when exposed to this product. Flying off shelves at the slightest whisper of its disappearance turned even the sanest of folks frantic. Scientists theorized that its surface was laced with a calming drug only seen in places like the wild and forgotten Amazonian rainforest. Able to soothe beings like cartoon bears, babies, or rowdy celebrities alike.

People stockpiled it like food or medicine! Hoarding it like gold for a dragon. As if it would shield them from the Black Death itself! Not surprisingly, over time, we humans found ways of not needing this commodity. By today's standards, it's considered an antique. A historical artifact. Others would say, obsolete. Wasteful even. Not me. No, sirs or madams. I am a preserver of history. A hero even. A savior of the past. Like those who protested the tearing down of libraries in 2055. Not dissimilar to animal rights activists opposing cruel experiments. Make-up on pigs? How terrible. Also, it's a waste of potential bacon. If you want a pig to test on, just visit any buffet and apply your cosmetics for free to one of those porkers using a funnel to consume fried shrimp.

So, what is this item that is so highly coveted that I would risk life, limb, and God forbid social interaction with actual live humans for? Well, I'll give you a hint. It belongs in bathrooms, and it comes on a cardboard tube. Before you say anything with your harsh words or excessive dramatic eye blinking, I feel the need to courageously justify



myself and this WONDER-product. You and the rest of the world may use fancy toilets called bidets, more like bi-don'ts, to do your rump cleaning. I prefer the tried-and-true method. Call me old-fashioned, but I believe one should take care of cleansing the ol' booty hole with the sacrificed bodies of hundred-year-old trees ground down, softened, and rolled up into the velvety cleaning item known as toilet paper.

# John Latrine

Departing quickly with the assistance of my super-nifty jetpack, I flew across the city like Tarzan swinging through the sprawling African jungles. Wearing nothing but a bathrobe and socks, my Sunday best. Happily flashing the walkers below, with vine on display. Not on purpose, of course. Yet another risk of leaving one's abode. The world is truly terrifying. Wouldn't you agree? Please do. I'm desperate for human validation.

Anyway, I landed with the grace of an Olympic gymnast arriving at my local supermarket. This grocery store is members only, conveniently nestled snugly in the clouds, positioned on levitating platforms. Immediately, I handed my jet pack to the tuxedoed gentleman. Where, in kind, the valet whooshed away like Tony Stark, but not before handing me a numbered ticket, 69. *Giggity*. I waltzed through the wide automatic doors to be greeted by an AI voice who welcomed me by name, and blasting warm air up my robe, both sanitizing and titillating me. No time for those kinds of thoughts. Pressure was beginning to mount.

Now to the acquisition of the aforementioned poo poo paper. First, one must take a long walk into the bowels of the store. Clenching a bit, I waddled gracefully to the office supply aisle. More specifically, the paper section. Toddling carefully to the shelf, I leaned up to the metal edge and whispered, "John Latrine." A silent moment passed,

as did a butt burp, followed by the sound of an airlock releasing. The hidden door behind the shelf slid open, and before I could release another aerosol turd plume, I was in.

“Welcome to the TeePeasy,” greeted another delicate AI voice.

With my lower intestinal intensity rising, I said, “Direct me to the” I paused. My eyes shifted wildly, and I said discretely, “Poop papyrus.”

“I do not understand. Please try again,” said the automated voice.

Shifting like an awkward child doing the potty dance, I said, “You know? Crap canvas.”

“I do not understand. Please try again.”

“Bum fodder.”

“Try again.”

“Loo paper.”

“Try again.”

“Bog rolls.”

“Try again.”

“Toot paper.”

“Try again.”

“Rump rolls.”

“Try again.”

“Silky smooth shit sheets.”

“Try again.”

“Excrement erasers.”

“Try again.”

“Tooshie towelettes.”

“Try again.”

“Dung deleters.”

“Try again.”

“Squishy squashy wishy washy wiperoonies.”

“Try again.”

“Rear-end rubbish redactors.”

“Try again.”

“The potty paperwork.”

“Try again.”

“Butt cleansing shrub sheets!”

“Try again.”

I exhaled in frustration, “I don’t know what to say. I’m running out of discrete ways to say toilet paper.”

Then, with a click, an overhead light illuminated the shadowy shelved room displaying the very product of my greatest desires.

“Proceed,” said the automated voice. Which, to be honest, sounded relieved. Judgy much?

Then, to add an extra layer of whipped cream that was my embarrassment sundae, it seems that in my attempt to preserve sneakiness, I had accomplished the opposite. Attracting nosy attention from other exclusive shoppers in the same secret room. How secret is this room, really? Sheesh.

At last, I arrived. In front of me stood my prize, the double-wide, six-foot-tall shelf displaying the very thing my fart factory deserved: T.P! I felt like Indiana Jones after successfully navigating booby traps, poisoned-tipped arrows, and most of all, snakes. I’m not saying I was his equal in courage, but I’m definitely a close second. Once my eyes acclimated to the appropriate spotlight shining on the glistening plastic wrap bathroom tissue, I went to work. Now the moment had arrived. A real choice had to be made. One that would mean the difference between a clean posterior or the betrayal of all that is good and humane in this world. One-ply or two?

# I Choose You

What I held in my hands at that very moment were two packages of the utmost importance. Not to mention urgency. The constraint on the old colon continued to grow ever combative. However, of this selection, one would be the solution to my salvation, while the other would be cast aside for another's bottom to serve. But which would I choose? One ply or two?

On one hand, one-ply is more cost effective. Coming in under the median price. I have money that needs saving. Jet pack maintenance don't come cheap, ya hear? While on the other side of the coin, two-ply would caress my rumpus hole with the care of a loving mother and the kiss of angels. However, the cost jumped well over the average fee, running up my bill higher than an overeager pole vaulter.

I stewed in analysis paralysis for what felt like hours of indecision. Moreover, one-ply could tear due to its thinner build. While two-ply could clog the toilet if overused! Oh, the pain of overthinking! Not only did my brain hurt, but my gurgling bowel began to grow an opinion of its own. Make the decision, or I'd regret it. Regardless of where I was.

I figured that I would risk facing more judgment by bringing both packages to the checkout counter. Face-to-face with the clerk, who would be egging me on to choose. There, I would make THE decision of the morning. Nay, my day! Quickly exiting the secret room, I

waddled, butt cheeks clenched, perspiration dripping from my brow. Them poop sweats are no joke.

Arriving at the counter, I had to wait. Third in line. With the nagging sensation growing stronger within me, I perused the digital magazines on the rack. Anything to get my mind off of impending doom. Headlines like, “Kardashians on 23rd plastic surgery,” and “Reality show, Survivor, now shooting 894th season,” distracted me as ol’ faithful grew closer and closer to eruption. Maybe more like Krakatoa? ‘Crap’atoa, perhaps? Things were getting dire, and I still needed to make a decision.

The clerk greeted me. I blinked. She looked at the two packages in my hand. I blinked some more. “Are you buying both of these, sir?” she asked.

Contorting my face like someone about to have an epileptic seizure, I focused all my mental energy on this decision. Like a super-computer, I imputed all the data I had about one and two-ply toilet paper, then I waited for the answer to pop into my head. Choosing between these two wildly similar bathroom tissues proved to be more challenging than choosing between the three starter Pokémon in the original games! At last, the answer appeared to me as if in a vision.

“No!” I said way too loudly, startling the clerk, “I choose two-ply!”. I choose you, indeed. Comfort over cost. With a task so paramount, you needed a product with the durability and sensitivity of a good nurse to carry out a job as shitty as this. Shitty, but vital to one’s survival. At last, I paid for my product, then shuffled, butt still clenched, picked up my jetpack, and flew home. All along the way, worrying about unloading on those poor jetpackless folks below. As funny as it would be, I did not want to earn the reputation of someone who poo pood the little people, like seagulls on a newly cleaned car. I wanted to preserve their innocence, and I’ll be honest, my pride.

Gratefully landing at home, I sprinted in the house like an eager emperor penguin, doing my best not to spread my legs too widely. One wrong move and I would be using the newly purchased toilet paper as paper towels. Ripping open the package with my fingers like a starving mountain lion, I pulled out the silky-smooth white round roll of salvation and darted into the bathroom. Watch out, world, and Lou, my toilet. Here I come. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm about to take this T.P. for a spin.