

# KISSA TANTO

WORLDS COLLIDE AND BURST INTO A **TANTALIZING** ARRAY OF TASTE SENSATIONS

## KISSA TANTO

WORLDS COLLIDE AND BURST INTO A TANTALIZING ARRAY OF TASTE SENSATIONS

I have no business writing restaurant reviews, so I won't.

Instead, hold on a second: I eat, + I'm a writer, hmm.

What I meant to say: I find most restaurant reviews make me want to gag. The template bores: at times, being riddled with foodie snobbery.

### 1.

For eighteen of the last twenty-four years, I've lived in Yaletown. When I moved in – in 1993, I had a connection. I had no idea what Yaletown was. I didn't fit the demographic. Lucky for me, my contact dropped an almost rent-controlled apartment onto my lap. My landlord forgot about me over the years, hence; rent control.

Almost sixteen years after moving in, I received a notice:

#### THE YALETOWN CITIZENRY PRESERVATION SOCIETY (TYCPS)

**Dear Resident,**

It has come to our attention recently, you've aged. We know we're all ageing daily however, in your case, Bob, sexy-suave-svelte Bob, noticed your crow's feet are etching deeper into your face. We can't have this. It goes against neighbourhood aesthetics.

As the spokesperson for TYCPS, I regret to tell you; you only have two options:

1. Immediately schedule Botox appointments to fix your ghoulish face.
2. Vacate Yaletown within three months, or else –

**Yours Truly,**

**Beth**

Beth's a: rhymes with – witch.

Before I moved out, I accidentally set the bathroom vanity on fire and covered it with a candle to hide the damage.

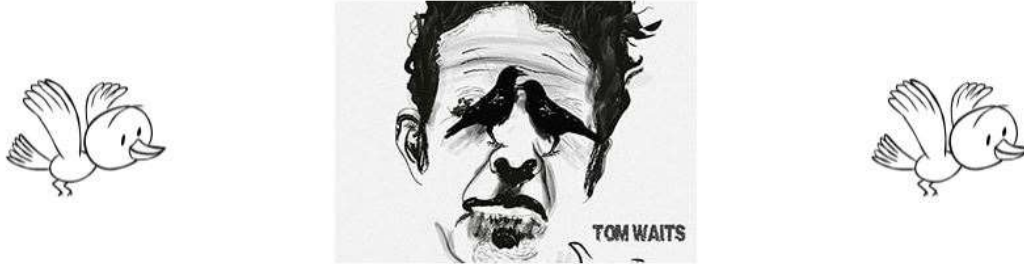
I was being forced to vacate. The realtor began parading potential home purchasers in front of me in a steady stream, my ticket to somewhere else. During showings, I'd sit at

my computer pounding the keys. During one parade, a potential evictor asked: *What are you writing?*

*I'm writing about the pleasant feeling churning in the pits of my stomach.*

*Why?*

*Because you may be the person who kicked me out of my home for the past sixteen years.*



Mr. Potential Evictor stared at me with a slightly stunned + pissy expression and meekly said: *That's nice.*

That night, I accidentally set the kitchen countertop on fire and covered it with a throw rug.

I moved out.

I love my depth-filled crow's feet.

I used to be model beautiful—except in pictures—or in person—only when I'm not wearing my glasses + the lighting is dimmed just right, + I'm standing 30 feet from the mirror.

## 14 MARCH 2017

I'd lived close to Olympic Village for six years in a funky one-hundred-year-old restoration, a loft. History abounds. I often tumbled into adventure when I left my abode. But, like the time, my friend Ian asked me: if I'd like to try a cookie he baked. I tried. The following day, I woke up to find fourteen-litres of chocolate milk in my fridge + a medal-winning Vancouver Winter Olympic Ski-Jumper from Germany—passed out on my sofa.

Apparently, as the story goes: the cookie may not have been only chocolate chip. As for the Olympian, after he'd won his medal—his life became foggy—he misplaced two days—when we stumbled into each other, he was desperately trying to get back to the Olympic Village.

I poured two tumblers of milk, handing him one; we then clinked our nutritious bebies together.



*Prost!*

I gingerly sauntered out to my balcony with Mr. Medalist—took another swig of chocolate gold—pointed to my right. My throat ached. My voice scratched new. *Mr. Olympian, Olympic Village, is right – there – you were oh-so-close.*

Another clink + another calm yet exuberant, *Prost!*

## BACK TO YALETOWN

My near Olympic Village *land-family* sold my place out from under me. It's okay—my *land-family* had been fair to me. With relocation imminent, I searched for new digs. The first place I found was back in Yaletown—a one-block from my home of sixteen-years.

I exfoliated + moisturized frantically before being subjected to the judgment of viewings. When I arrived at my potential new place, the Agent showing the place went to flick on the lights: I stopped her.

*I like it dimmer*, I sheepishly said.

Everything was in order. Moving back to Yaletown was a lock until we walked out into the harsh light of day where the Agent could see the *crows* had been working hard.

*Lindsay, I'd love to rent to you, but...is that your vehicle? It is. Okay, you're in; your ride is barely lovely enough for the TYCPS to overlook your many other flaws barely.*

Fitting where one (I) likely don't belong has never felt so grand!

If you find yourself a tad lost in this restaurant thingy, that's okay; we'll eventually arrive at **Kissa Tanto**.

My smashing friend, Jay, his birthday was up in a few weeks: April 4. I like to eat. He does as well. I wanted us to go to a—like him—smashing joint.

I researched. I'm good at researching (Googling) stuff; I really am. I typed in **Smashing**

**Restaurants** or something along those lines into the search engine: up popped **The Globe + Mails: TOP NEW VANCOUVER RESTAURANTS OF 2016; Kissa Tanto** just so happened to be, *drum roll*: Numero Uno!

**Kissa Tanto** it would be – fortune turned – the earliest reservation we could score was June 27. Damn, the food must be (insert your own snobby food descriptive words: here).

I asked Jay to legally change his birth date. Apparently, you can't-do that. So, I booked a table for June. I'm good at booking tables at restaurants I find by Googling. I really am. I think **Holden Caulfield** would be proud of me.

On Jay's birthday, we got takeout from a chicken shack and then sat across the street from **Kissa Tanto**, and ate, chicken!

2.

27 JUNE 2017

The day was glorious. The sun was draping Vancouver in luscious warmth, and it was time to meander to **Kissa**.

Before meandering, shall we flash to the future: September 7th—a visit to the Ophthalmologist. A new prescription was in order – for my one functioning eye + new specs—a treat for me.



The doctor seemed pleasant enough. He asked if I was taking any medicine. *YES—Powerful toxic shit in upsetting doses ravaging my being in an attempt to stomp out a phantom un-diagnosed ailment attacking my joints.*

If you'd like to know the crap I'm on: visit my beautiful tale of my day with a **Lady Bug**.

If you'd like to know the roots of my ailment, visit: the hilariously dark + disturbing, ten-Part Story: **Black Shorts + The Dissembling of Social Media** – the story includes tasty-delectable-penis-cookies. It really does. **Thanks, Holden.**

*Place your chin on this chin-thingy, the good doctor said.*

## AND NOW FOR THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR FROM YOUR MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

- When asked what you see and you say, *NOTHING: REALLY*, being said, several times, isn't comforting.
- When asked about the medicine you're on, *I'm sorry for you*, doesn't slow the pulse.
- Starting a sentence with: *I don't mean to freak you out--*

*You have (medical term) in your blind eye.*

*Your brain isn't communicating with it.*

*I think you may have the same inflection with your one functioning eye.*

*I think your brain may stop sending signals.*

*Promise me, once you receive your new glasses, if things aren't perfect – you'll come in right away to see me again, promise.*

## NOWORDS

### I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. I DON'T MASTURBATE.

Masturbating more than 21 times a month can actually decrease your chance for prostate cancer. This was discovered after testing to see if increased masturbation was linked to an increase in prostate cancer.



Jay and I: start to amble.

First stop: Yaletown 7/11.

*The 7/11 employs a doorman (1)?*

He's filthy. Past dishevelled. I think his life prescription consisted of Meth + lickable toads, + putrid-flavoured roadkill.

Inside, I buy a lottery ticket + check an old ticket, a loser. *Filthy* opens the door and reaches out; I hand the Filthy the losing ticket.

A block later, we passed a furniture store I used to work at during my previous stint in Yaletown, during a period where I was struggling desperately, financially. At times, I debated between buying cat food, toilet paper, or food – food. The cat food was for my cat – I usually chose cat food – for my cat.

Stepping into a non-religion-based confessional: I borrowed rolls of TP from my employer, my justification: I compared it to stealing bread for my family.



One day, I did find a French loaf in my cupboards next to the cups. It had solidified. I took it outside for a picnic. I smashed it violently against the side of my building, attempting to soften it.

Smashed + violently, can you break any other way?

I smashed again. Much like my life, it crumbled, flaking into thousands of dust-like pieces to be washed away by the next rain.

I took a second job. When I came home after Day 1, I opened my mailbox to find a repossession notice for my car – due in ten-days. My car: a \$33,000 tan, hubcap-free, Toyota Corolla, I had financed with a mob-like car financier.

It used to have one hubcap, one stylish cap. One day, I pulled up to a traffic light, the tattered blades of a man's hand tapped on my window. I lowered the window. The man was holding up a hubcap.

*I think this is yours,* he said.

*You keep it,* I returned.

I drove away. Before hitting the gas, I pulled up the window with my hands.

Elevator up, fourth floor, posted on my door: **AN EVICTION NOTICE** – due in ten days.

*Fuzzy Nose + Toes, this isn't a good day, we may soon be losing our indoor home + unfortunately, on the same day, we are probably going to be losing our secondary indoor home.*

*Meow*





I filled her dish. I microwaved a slice of TP for myself. I sprinkled a packet of pepper I borrowed from McDonald's on it. Bland.

Jay and I crossed out of Yaletown into Crosstown. Crosstown morphed into the neighbourhood, Towntown <sup>(2)</sup>, Railtown then the drug infused DTES, then finally: our destination in the Chinese influenced: Chinatown.

Each neighbourhood is a stark contrast to the last – Yaletown's glass towers scratch the sky with thousands of eyes looking down in judgment. Crosstown is a drop in status. The doormen don't bother with doors – they just worry with – Crosstown is no different from Yaletown in opulence or housing – it just doesn't have the correct Postal Code; thus, it's less non-affordable for everyone, except the wealthy. And it houses the Post Office + Main Library Branch + a stadium or two.



Turning a corner, the DTES, a gentrifying cancerous eyesore that won't fade away. Gentrification has brought the tweaked-out lost and forgotten who've been warehoused in the area. Living out their lives in altered states – with the up-and-coming looking for affordability with a hint of an edge, together. Walking through the *Night of the Living Dead* springs to mind.

Glance down an alley, and you may see a young girl frothing at the mouth, banging a needle into her arm, close to overdose, her injection, visible even to the blind.

She glances our way.

Her eyes are gray, fragmented, bloodshot, and dripping death.

She bangs more.

She's not the only one; many are victims of insidious knaves who prey on the broken.



Two tourists walk past us (American?). Their chatter floats in the air. *We've never seen anything like this; it's shocking.* Words lathered in judgment.

I want to scream. *Your cities aren't immune. You have super expressways allowing you to bypass areas you condemn so you can live in denial, fuckers.*

I refrain, swallowing my words. I love Vancouver!

Unlike large American cities with festering underbellies, we can't hide societal failures. Our forgotten are on stage for all to see.

It's easy to judge. It's best not to—the fall from “have” to “have-not” —is not as far as many think.

We cross the street entering Chinatown, old and new juxtaposed, pensioners hunched over from years of hard work, Canadians, English not their first language; they struggle to hold onto their identities as time leaves them behind. New, is replacing old. Manual work is now for the unfortunate, the broken, the lonely, many of which: hang-on, one neighbourhood behind, until time expires.

## WORKPLACE LEVITY BREAK



Jeff is sixty. He's still working temp labour. The office is half-full—about fifteen workers—waiting to be driven to work. Bruce, a driver, enters. He walks past the employees, opens the counter gate, comes to my desk to check his drives.

It's time for Jeff to entertain. He shouts across the room. After barking, he breaks into a gargling chortle and bangs his fists repeatedly on his knees. He guffaws as if though he's brought the house down.

What did he shout?

*Hey, Bruce, if a faggot was to land on your shoulder: would you flick him off?*

Jeff is the only one laughing.

I decided: to speak up.

*Hey, Jeff, I don't understand what you are saying. Did you write your cutting comedy yourself? Wow. What spins in your head? Do you see small faggots twisting in the air around your head?*

He cocked his head and stared at me blankly. A fly landed on my shoulder.

Bruce and our other driver—name not relevant, let's call her NNRD; drive away,

thankfully taking Jeff with them.

Two hours pass. The NNRD returns walk into the office – we’re the only two people present. The beautiful silence of alone comes to a crashing halt. NNRD develops a burning need to hear her own voice, dropping a conversation-starting gem on me.

*I see that you have a couple of scrapes on your vehicle.*

My mind spins, so I scan it for a reply.

*I see that you’re wearing shoes.*

Work ends. I stop for a pop at my neighbourhood watering hole, without the scratched vehicle – which rests at home.



A friend (who shall remain nameless, like NNRD), let’s call EJ, starts a conversation about late-night talk show hosts. He says he wishes they’d stop talking about 45 (the president). I tell him: *Unfortunately, everything is now tied to 45, somehow, everything.*

I shared my opinion of the importance of calling out our elected officials, regardless of country, on the insanity they spew. So, I suggested: if you have a platform where you can speak up for the rest of us, you must SPEAK UP!

EJ, now perturbed, said: *He’s no worse than any other politician. They all say stupid things.*

I looked for the on-switch for his brain, and then, changed subjects.

Jay and I continue walking, and we pass Safeway – on a different walk – but now part of this story.

A troubled young man stands near the entrance.

He’s dirty.

He’s probably: without a home.

He pitches his needs.

*I don’t want money. I won’t take money. All I want is eight buffalo chicken wings. Can you help me?*

Specific, interesting – hmm – near impossible to pass by.

3.



## KISSA TANTO

Prepare yourself to be blown away by the amazingly descriptive descriptions about the grub we will soon be chowing down.

Jay and I floated up the stairs, with each rung blasting us backward in time. Atop Kissa opens into a bygone era – the decor could be an illegal drug den, booze-can, or a secret place for aristocrats to gather outside (inside) the prying eyes of peasants – only commoners are allowed.

The hostess guided us to our seats.

The restaurant was buzzing.

Jay ordered a cocktail.

I ordered a beer.

Our server, OS for short, was delightfully perky.

She quickly transitioned from server to friend.

Jay began following her cat on Instagram.

OS possesses this rare unobtrusive trait where she made us feel like we were the most important guests in the place.

THE FOOD  
THE FOOD



THE FOOD  
THE FOOD



OMG – that’s it – review completed; you want more descriptively?

Okay, OM-bleeping-G!

I ordered a bottle of wine; I am, without question, one of the world’s greatest wine aficionados. I perused the list. *Hey, Jay, we’re going to Osoyoos in a couple of weeks, right?*

They just so happened to have wine from an Osoyoos vineyard. Luckily, it was the second or third least expensive. I ordered.

The first dish of OM-bleeping-G came.

Here’s the scoop: a colourful plate of food would come--we would slowly devour it; every bite more flavourful than the last – every dish became our new favourite.

The food is outstanding; it has the power to transform. Like said, the restaurant was buzzing. Glancing at the other guests, long-term couples, perhaps the odd: first date, friends out grabbing a fabulous dinner – all seeming to share something in common – their daily stresses were drifting away. Fantastic food tends to make the dining experience – not about the food. The food without question is center stage – but it’s so much more. Kissa strips away the mundane from life and opens the mind. At Kissa, diners don’t sit in silence, eat and leave; they talk, enjoy, and perhaps: recapture, or for the first time, engage in conversation.



THE FOOD  
THE FOOD





THE FOOD  
THE FOOD



We kept dining.

We kept engaging.

We ate our way through Beef Carne; Croquettes; Truffle Pasta; Eggplant; Octo Salad; and –

Each dish: impeccably impeccable + artfully presented.

I was about to freak out. I'm blind in one eye. I know you know. I've always had an aversion to food that looks at me.

--a Whole Ocean Perch, eye focused on me – was delivered to our table – we'd ordered it – Jay ordered it.

*Jay, it looks like you will be eating a whole fish.* I continued. *Hey, OP, what do you see? Nothing, really – really.*

*Why are you freaking out!?!?*

*OP's lips didn't move. Fish can't talk. What's that? Use my inner voice. Fish can't talk.* I sobbed.

Jay broke me off a piece, and I closed my eye(s).

I bit down.

*Bleeping* was about to be inserted into OM...G – OP became the new favourite.

The OP battering: a delectable potato flour. It was borderline Orgasmic. *Harry Met Sally*. An incredible array of taste sensations burst forth in my mouth. I could go on – half-stop – my mouth began watering, just typing about it.

Two hours passed in what seemed like a heartbeat; **Kissa Tanto** deserves the accolades.

We floated down the stairs.

## 4.

We happily drifted back through Chinatown crossing into the sweltering, now desolate DTES. The smearing light of day began slowly fading into the neighbourhoods' gripping toxicity of addiction—gentrification is attempting to gloss over.

### PICTURE TIME



Another new restaurant (Sai Woo)—barely new—a place for another day—Jay snaps away.

We are the only people on the street. We turn a corner; JP walks by; he's one of my workers. He may be homeless. His work and the work of many others provide me with the means to try new places. JP probably lines up for his daily food.

I feel blessed, grateful for the cards dealt my way, the shit I've been through, for JP's hard work, and for the hope bestowed upon me.

I don't feel guilty for where I am, I have learned the importance of kindness + respect.

We keep walking. The DTES turns into the sparkling seawall of Yaletown. To our right, jutting out of the ground, is a glorious, close to \$1-billion casino. Where dreams are lost more than found.

The seawall is full of couples holding hands, friends riding bikes, and friends and families, strewn across blankets on the adjacent green spaces, enjoying the end of this spectacular, early summer night.

We glance right. A small child's shoe hangs on a tree—a gang initiation?

I Googled it—I really did.

# LET'S WALK



# LET'S WALK





# LET'S WALK



LET'S WALK  
GET 2 MATH





## KISSA TANTO: 9.75

1. Although I feel that he was a bit of a dick for the doorman's situation.
2. I have just been informed: "Towntown" doesn't exist.

## WHO IS LINDSAY WINCHERAUK?

Lindsay Wincherauk is a fearless writer. He has published two books and has had more than eighteen OPEDs appear in major commuter newspapers. Lindsay wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His father (who wasn't his father) worked as a mechanic. His mother (who wasn't his mother) worked as an excellent chef in a diner. In fact, his birth was in a secret place where | society deemed | unfit mothers were sent to give birth in isolation – shading families from shame. If the babies survived being born, usually, they were sold to wealthy Americans or adopted out to farm families.

*Lindsay's life began with a lie.*

Despite Lindsay's perilous beginnings, starting with deception, Lindsay knew no better and went through life excelling at things, usually in two-year stints. Be that athletics (hall of fame, record holding, one-eyed quarterback), scholastically, career-wise (generating more than \$70 million in revenue for one company), socially, + without question: creatively!

Lindsay's challenging beginning instilled in Lindsay heaping doses of compassion and empathy. Lindsay's life starting out as a lie gave him a keen sense to spot BS from miles away. It also provided him with a dry sense of humour and an understanding those born with silver spoons in their mouths will never be self-aware enough to understand (or admit) their good fortune.

During Lindsay's work career, he was well-liked by all coworkers. Lindsay was also well respected by his diverse collection of clients, developing several fantastic friendships, primarily because Lindsay is known for his unflinching integrity and ability to hold conversations on most topics.

Lindsay's life mantra is:

*The most valuable part of life is the fabulous people we meet during our journeys. If you treat people with respect (leaving judgment at the door), and more importantly, by opening doors for those less fortunate or who can't speak up for themselves, you are living a good, compassionate life. Making money at all costs is not the only thing mattering. Life can be difficult + devastatingly unfair.*

*Lindsay believes sharing vulnerability is what makes us human. Lindsay will never shy away from being honest about his pain.*

*Lindsay also believes we must stand up for ourselves, + more importantly, for those who are too burdened by the injustices of life, they can't find the strength to stand up for themselves.*

## SOME THINGS LINDSAY IS MOST PROUD OF ARE WHEN:

- A sixty-year-old employee of his, who had entered a point of life where life had become more struggle than joy (it happens to all of us as we age), said to Lindsay, *"I must thank you. I've listened to how you treat people, + by listening, I've learned so much about compassion and patience. Thank you. I consider you a great friend."*
- Another employee who was struggling with addiction thanked Lindsay for his kindness, presenting Lindsay with a Christmas card from him and his girlfriend. Tucked inside the card: lottery tickets.

*LINDSAY WINCHERAUK, compassionate, empathetic, well-read, kind, blessed with unflinching integrity, humour in balance, loved by coworkers + friends alike.*

Lindsay will always stick up for the underdog. Lindsay understands there are countless older people suffering job loss because COVID gave some companies an opportunity to – Lindsay thinks it is essential to draw attention to this life-threatening issue by being the voice for those too broken to speak up for themselves.

Lindsay is currently pitching four manuscripts to publishers and literary agencies. One of the manuscripts (he can't talk about) will blow the roof off the predatory practices of – Lindsay is writing relentlessly and is also pitching OPEDs and short stories, fiction, + non to literary magazines around the globe.

Lindsay has appeared on Breakfast Television, radio programs in Montreal, + several others in the Vancouver area. Lindsay has also been a featured guest on CKNW + CBC, both on several occasions. And Lindsay was a vital witness of a Hate Crime. This led to the first Hate Crime conviction in Canadian legal history, resulting in him being a speaker at an Enough is Enough Rally (anti-violence rally) with dignitaries, politicians, law enforcement, and community leaders in front of a crowd of approximately five thousand.

Lindsay was the **#1 MIXED-TAPE DJ** at the **UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN** for most of the nineteen-eighties, a fact bringing him joy.

Lindsay resides in Vancouver.

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