

Midnight, Thursday, January 1, Royal Genovian Bedchamber

My New Year's Resolutions

by Princess Amelia Mignonette Grimaldi Thermopolis Renaldi

aged 14 and 8 months

1. I will stop biting my fingernails, including the fake ones.
2. I will stop lying. Grandmére knows when I am lying anyway, thanks to my traitorous nostrils, which flare every time I tell a fib, so it's not like there is even a point in trying to be less than truthful.
3. I will never veer from prepared script while delivering televised address to the Genovian public.
4. I will stop accidentally saying French swear words in front of the ladies-in-waiting.
5. I will stop letting Francois, my Genovian bodyguard, teach me French swear words.
6. I will apologize to the Genovian Olive Growers Association for that thing with the pits.
7. I will apologize to the Royal Chef for slipping Grandmére's dog that slice of foie gras (even though I have told the palace kitchen repeatedly that I do not eat meat).
8. I will stop lecturing the Royal Genovian Press Corps on the evils of paparrazism.
9. I will achieve self-actualization.
10. I will stop thinking so much about Michael Moscovitz.

Oh, wait. It's okay for me to think about Michael Moscovitz, BECAUSE HE IS MY BOYFRIEND NOW!!!!!!!

MT + MM = TRUE LOVE 4-EVER

Saturday, January 3, Royal Genovian Rose Garden

Poem for M.M.

Across the deep blue shining sea,

is Michael, far away from me.

But he doesn't seem so far away--

though I haven't seen him for sixteen days--

because in my heart Michael stays

and there he'll be forever always.

OK, that poem sucks. I can see I am going to have to work harder if I am to come up with a fitting tribute to my love.

Tuesday, January 6, Royal Quarters of the Dowager Princess

Grandmére is yelling at me again.

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As if I don't totally get why everybody is so mad about the whole speech thing. I mean, I have already sworn I will never again veer from the prepared script while addressing the Genovian populace.

But why am I the only one in this country who thinks pollution is an important issue? If people are going to dock their yachts in the Genovian harbor, they really ought to pay attention to what they are throwing overboard. I mean, porpoises and sea turtles get their noses stuck in those plastic six-pack holders all the time, and then they starve to death because they can't open their mouths to eat. All people have to do is snip the loops before they throw the holders out, and everything would be fine.

Well, all right, not *everything*, since you shouldn't be throwing trash overboard in the first place. That is why my dad fully had all those Grecian urn-shaped trash receptacles placed at convenient intervals all along the pier. You would think people would consider actually using them. I mean, the ocean is not their garbage can.

I cannot stand idly by while helpless sea creatures are being abused by trendy Bain de Soleil-addicts in search of that perfect St. Tropez tan.

Besides, if I am to be the ruler of Genovia someday, people need to realize I am not going to be merely a figurehead, like *some* royals I could mention. I intend to tackle serious issues during my reign, such as plastic six-pack holders in the bay, and the fact that all the foot traffic from the day-trippers coming off the cruise ships that dock out in the Genovian harbor is destroying some of our most historically important bridges, such as the Pont des Vierges (Bridge of the Virgins), so named after my great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother Agnes, who threw herself off it rather than become a nun like her father wanted her to be (she was all right: the royal navy fished her out and she ended up eloping with the ship captain, much to the consternation of the house of Renaldi).

You would think people--okay, Grandmère and my dad--would recognize that it is important for me to establish my voice as regent now. Mr. Gianini once told me that it is better to start off mean and get nicer as the semester goes by than start nice and have everybody think they can walk all over you.

Whatever. I wish I could call Michael, or even Lilly, but I can't because they are spending Winter Break at their grandmother's in Florida and I don't even know the number. They are not getting back until the day before I do! How I have survived this long, without my boyfriend and best friend to talk to, is a mystery wrapped in an enigma.

I am fully starting to hate it here. Everybody at school was all, *Oh you are so lucky, you get to spend Christmas in a castle being waited on hand and foot.*

Well, let me tell you something: there is nothing so great about living in a castle. First of all, everything in it is really old. And yeah, it's not like it was built in 4AD or whenever it was my ancestress Princess Rosagunde first became princess or whatever. But it was still built in like the 1600s and let me tell you what they didn't have in the 1600s:

1. Cable
2. DSL
3. Toilets

Which is not to say there isn't a satellite dish, but hello, this is my dad's place, the only channels he has got programmed are like CNN, CNN Financial News, and the golf channel. Where is MTV 2, I ask you? Where is the Lifetime Movie Channel for Women?

Not that it matters because I am spending all my time being run off my feet. It isn't as if I ever even get a free moment to pick up a remote and go, *Ho hum, I wonder if there's a Tracy Gold movie on.*

No. I mean, even now I am supposed to be taking notes on Grandmère's lecture about the importance of sticking to the prepared script during televised public addresses. Like I didn't get it the first time she said it, or the nine hundredth time, or however many times it has been since Christmas Eve, when I supposedly ruined everything with my treatise on plastic six-pack holders.

But let's say I even did get a moment to myself, and I wanted to, you know, send an email to one of my friends, or perhaps even my BOYFRIEND. Well, not so simple, because guess what, castles built in the 1600s simply aren't wired for the world wide web. And yeah, the Palais de Genovia audio-visual squad is trying, but you still have like three feet of

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sand stone or whatever the palace is made out of to bore through before you can even start installing any cable. It is like trying to wire the Alamo .

Oh, yeah, and the toilets? Let me just tell you that back in the 1600s, they didn't know so much about sewage. So now four hundred years later, if you put one square too much toilet paper in the bowl and try to flush, you create a mini indoor tsunami.

Plus the only person living here in the castle who is remotely close to my age is my cousin, Prince René, who spends inordinate amounts of time gazing at his own reflection in the back of his ceremonial sword. And technically he isn't even really my cousin anyway. Some ancestor of his was awarded a principality by the king of Italy way back in like 600 AD, same as great-great-and-so-on Grandma Rosagunde. Except that René's principality no longer exists, as it was absorbed into Italy three hundred years ago.

René doesn't seem to mind, though, because everyone still calls him His Highness Prince René, and he is extended every privilege of a member royal household, even though his palace now belongs to a famous shoe designer, who has turned it into a resort for wealthy Americans to come for the weekend and make their own pasta and drink two-hundred-year old balsamic vinegar.

Still, just because René is four years older than me and a freshman at some French business school doesn't mean he has the right to patronize me. I mean, I believe gambling is morally wrong, and the fact that Prince René spends so many hours at the roulette wheel instead of utilizing his time in a more productive fashion--such as helping to promote the protection of the nesting grounds of the giant sea turtles who lay their eggs on the Genovian beaches--irks me.

So yes, I did mention this to him. It just seems to me that Prince René needs to realize there is more to life than racing around in his Alfa Romeo or swimming in the palace pool wearing nothing but one of those little black Speedos which are very stylish here in Europe (I asked my dad to please for the love of all that is holy stick to trunks, which, thankfully, he has).

And okay, René just laughed at me.

But at least I can rest easy knowing I have done everything I could to show one extremely self-absorbed prince the error of his profligate ways.

So that's it. That is my life in Genovia. Basically all I want is to go home. I would not even mind having to start school early if it meant I could forgo this evening's dinner with the King and Queen of Liechtenstein. Who are totally nice people, but hello, it's Tuesday, I could totally be watching *Buffy* instead.

With my new boyfriend.

My new boyfriend with whom I have not even been able to have a date yet, because the very day after we finally confessed our secret passion to one another, we were cruelly torn apart and cast to opposite sides of the earth--I to my castle in Genovia, and he to his grandmother's condo in Boca Raton.

You know, it has been exactly nineteen days since we last spoke to one another. It is entirely possible that Michael has forgotten all about me by now. I know Michael is vastly superior to all the other members of his species--boys, I mean. But everyone knows that boys are like dogs--their short term memory is completely nil. You tell them your favorite fictional character is Xena, Warrior Princess, and next thing you know, they are going on about how your favorite fictional character is Xica of Telemundo. Boys just don't know any better, on account of how their brains are too filled up with stuff about modems and *Star Trek Voyager* and Limp Bizkit and all.

Michael is no exception to this rule. Oh, I know he is co-valedictorian of his class, and got a perfect score on his SATs and was accepted early decision to one of the most prestigious universities in the country. But you know it took him about five million years even to admit he liked me. And that was only after I'd sent him all these anonymous love letters. Which turned out not to be so anonymous because he fully knew it was me the whole time thanks to all of my friends, including his little sister, having such exceptionally large mouths.

But whatever. I am just saying, nineteen days is a long time. How do I know Michael hasn't met some other girl? Some Floridian girl, with long, sun-streaked hair, and a tan, and breasts? Who has access to the Internet and isn't cooped in a palace with her crazy grandma and a homeless Speedo-wearing prince and a freakish hairless miniature poodle?

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"Amelia!" Grandmére just shrieked at me. "Are you paying attention?"

Yeah, sure, Grandmére. I'm paying attention. You are only squandering what are supposed to be the best days of my life, and probably because of you right now my boyfriend is strolling down the beach with some girl named Sandy who can do long division in her head and knows how to ride a boogie board.

But yes, I am paying attention to your very boring lecture about maintaining regal poise at all times.

"I swear I do not know what is wrong with you," Grandmére said. "Your head has been in the clouds ever since we left New York. Even more so than usual." Then she narrowed her eyes at me--always a very scary thing, because Grandmére had black kohl tattooed all around her lids so that she could spend her mornings shaving off her eyebrows and drawing new ones on rather than messing around with mascara and eyeliner. "You are not thinking about *that boy*, are you?"

That boy is what Grandmére has started calling Michael, ever since I announced that he was my reason for living. Well, except for my cat, Fat Louie, of course.

"If you are speaking of Michael Moscovitz," I said to her, in my most regal voice, "I most certainly am. He is never far from my thoughts, because he is my heart's breath."

Grandmére gave a very rude snort in response to this.

"Puppy love," she said. "You'll get over it soon enough."

Um, I beg your pardon, Grandmére, but I so fully will not. I have loved Michael for approximately eight years. That is more than half my life. A deep and abiding passion such as this cannot be dismissed as easily as that, nor can it be defined by your pedestrian grasp of human emotion.

I didn't say any of that out loud, though, on account of how Grandmére has those really long nails that she tends to "accidentally" stab people with.

Except that even though Michael really is my reason for living and my heart's breath, I don't think I'll be decorating my Algebra notebook with hearts and flowers and curlicue Mrs. Michael Moscovitzes, the way Lana Weinberger decorated hers (only with Mrs. Josh Richters, of course). Not only because doing stuff like that is completely lame and because I do not care to have my identity subjugated by taking my husband's name, but also because as consort to the regent of Genovia, Michael will of course have to take my name. Not Thermopolis. Renaldi. Michael Renaldi. That looks kind of nice, now that I think about it.

Thirteen more days until I see the lights of New York and Michael's dark brown eyes again. Please God, let me live that long.

HRH Michael Renaldi

M. Renaldi, prince consort

Michael Moscovitz Renaldi of Genovia

Friday, January 9, 2AM, Royal Genovian Bedchamber

This just occurred to me:

When Michael said he loved me that night during the Non-Denominational Winter Dance, he might have meant love in the platonic sense. Not love in the tides of flaming passion sense. You know, like maybe he loves me like a friend.

Only you don't generally stick your tongue in your friend's mouth, do you?

Well, maybe here in Europe you might. But not in America, for God's sake.

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Except Josh Richter used tongue that time he kissed me in front of the school, and he was certainly never in love with me!!!!!!!

This is very upsetting. Seriously. I realize it is the middle of the night and I should be at least trying to sleep since tomorrow I have to go cut the ribbon at the new children 's wing of the Prince Philippe Memorial Hospital .

But how can I sleep when my boyfriend--the first real boyfriend I have ever had, since my last boyfriend, Kenny, doesn 't count, seeing as how I did n't actually like him back as more than just a friend--could be in Florida loving me as a friend and possibly at this very minute actually falling in love with some girl named Sandy?

Why am I so stupid? Why didn 't I demand that Michael specify when he said he loved me? Why didn 't I go, "Love me how? Like a friend? Or like a life partner?"

And even if he managed to find the phone number of the palace somehow--and if anyone could, it would be Michael, since he once figured out a way to program his computer to auto-dial the *700 Club's* toll-free donation hotline every two seconds, thus costing Pat Robertson a quarter of a million dollars in a single weekend and causing him to yank the toll-free number off the air, which, in the world of computer hacking, is practically like winning a Nobel prize--I am sure the palace operator wouldn 't even send the call through. Apparently I get something like seven hundred calls a day, none of which are from people I actually know. No, they 're all from creepy pedophiles who would like to receive an autographed photo of me, or from girls who want to know what it was like when I met Prince William (he is a very cute guy and everything, but my heart fully belongs to another).

I am never going to be able to sleep now. I mean, how can I, knowing that the man I love could conceivably think of me only as a friend he likes to French kiss?