

Thursday, June 26. The Loft

Oh my god. I am so dead. After the unmitigated disaster that was my stay in Genovia, and being cursed with Grandmère's presence as a result of that disaster, my royal duties are being stepped up. That's right. I am officially representing Genovia while I am here in New York.

You know, that's kind of stupid, considering the fact that I can't do anything right. Why make me an ambassador of sorts when I can't even follow a script?! But Dad insisted.

So this is what I get to do as Genovia's 'representative' to New York:

- Attend balls
- Meet with various dignitaries
- Meet with various visiting royals (oh yeah, after terrorizing the royals of Monaco and Sweden that ought to be a ball).
- Visit hospices, hospitals, orphanages, homeless centers, and other places where the underprivileged hang around.

Oh well, it can't be that bad. No wait, it's really bad. I don't want to shake people's hands and make small talk with overpaid diplomats. I want to go out there and WORK. Instead of just visiting the hospital wearing some ridiculously priced haute couture piece from Chanel or wherever I want to volunteer in the hospital. Help the nurses take care of the patients. Be there for them, make them feel better, take care of them. Something USEFUL.

Or doing what I did this spring break by building a house for the homeless. THAT was something I really like doing, although at the time it didn't seem like it. I mean, making out with Michael was way more fun than building houses considering the fact that I suck at building houses, or anything else for that matter. But at least I got to do something worthwhile.

But no. I have to be a princess just like every other princess in Europe. Those princesses who are always being photographed in not-really-there minimalist bikinis, who are always being photographed throwing tantrums (especially when the paparazzi is around...I hate the paparazzi just like the rest of them but acting STUPID is only going to drive up the price of those pictures, so they always win in the end. Don't these kids REALIZE that?!), wearing low-cut dresses to official engagements (oh my god, Grandmère AND Dad and mom would kill me all at the same time if I ever wore a dress like Princess Madeleine's—even though I have nothing to show).

Or those princes who are always speeding, dating girls one day and dumping them the next, skipping school to go skiing in the Alps or wherever, constantly flouting their duties...you know. The only decent royal in Europe might be the crown princess of Sweden.

I was talking to Lilly about all this yesterday afternoon and she was surprised.

“I had no idea you hated all those people!” she said.

“I don’t hate them, Lilly. I hardly know them. But it bothers me that they don’t do enough for other people. Prince William is okay...he isn’t as publicity hungry as some royals I could mention.”

“You mean like Prince Rene? I see where you’re coming from, Mia. You’re practically one of a kind. You care about helping people, but at the same time you aren’t publicity hungry about it,” Lilly continued.

Wow, that was one of the nicest things she’s said to me.

Anyway, I am bringing Lilly with me to Genovia next month. I came up with this amazing idea for her show, of which is on Comedy Central every weekday evening at eleven. We are going to shadow all the day-trippers and see how clueless American tourists can be. I’m not anti-American or anything, but clueless tourists are SO funny. Lilly says it will illustrate the pathetic, decrepit state of education in this country. So as usual, not only will it be entertaining, it will be enlightening and educational as well.

Oh yeah. I have to go to Genovia next month. School just let out last week (FINALLY, I AM NO LONGER A FRESHMAN AND I PASSED ALGEBRA). Lilly, Michael, Shameeka, Ling Su, Tina Hakim Baba and I are going to the dollar cinema this weekend to celebrate our graduation. Or in my case (and Lilly’s, and Shameeka’s, and Ling Su’s and Tina’s), the completion of freshman year. Michael is the best boyfriend ever. He is coming to the dollar cinema to see the new *Matrix* movie with us—a bunch of sophomore girls.

Oh, that’s Lilly knocking on my door. She’s coming over to discuss the outline for our ground-breaking episode on American tourists.

Still Thursday, The Mall

Okay, I am at the mall right now. Lilly wanted to do some filming for her show *today*. It just couldn't wait, so we are here, watching a bunch of tourists—some out of state and some from Europe—browse around the stores. It is so boring...nothing remotely funny has even happened. Lilly says we have to be patient, but we've been hanging around here for two hours already...my patience has gone down the drain.

Oh yeah, guess what? Lilly has a cell phone now. Yep. Practically everyone I know has a cell phone now. Yet I don't have one. I am fully going to hit up Dad for a cell phone the next time I see him. Think of it as a 'graduation' or 'passing Algebra' present. So while Lilly was filming the out of state tourists (okay, so they did do something funny...they tried to speak in a 'New Yawk' accent while at the Foot Locker and the cashier burst into unrestrained laughter) I was talking to Tina Hakim Baba on the phone.

Tina said that someone strange had been following her for the past two weeks, and that she had been totally freaking out:

Me: Hi, Tina. How's that new teen romance?

Tina: It's really good...and suspenseful, actually. I haven't been able to concentrate on it lately. I think I'm being stalked.

Me: WHAT?!

Tina: I know. This weird group of guys keeps following me everywhere I go, to the mall, to school—before the break—to the movies, to the bookstore, and even the library. I don't know what's going on. Wahim hadn't even NOTICED until I pointed the guys out!

Me: Oh my god. What are your parents going to do about it? Do they know?

Tina: Of course they know. They've given me a second bodyguard. I am supposed to meet him today.

Oh my god. I feel so sorry for Tina. One bodyguard is bad enough, but to have TWO?! I'd kill myself.

We then talked about the new series with Paris Hilton and her friend, until Lilly told me to get off before I used up all her minutes. I am now in the bathroom—I was going to count my change so I could use a pay phone (I can't abandon my friend in her time of need), but sadly, I don't have any.

I am going to ask Mom if I can stay the night at her house tomorrow night, so I can offer moral support. Tina's father is a rich Arab oil sheik, so it's hardly surprising that she has stalkers...probably henchmen from rival oil companies, who want to kidnap Tina for ransom or something.

Friday, June 27, the loft

It's Friday morning and Lilly wants to go out to Times Square to film even more clueless tourists. She called me at SIX in the morning, and expects me to be ready by seven. Shameeka, the location scout for *Lilly Tells It Like It Is* picked it out for obvious reasons...it being one of New York's biggest tourist attractions. We are going to hang out at the TRL studios and ask all the out-of-state kids about New York and all of that.

There are two problems. One, they're filming a special TRL episode today, and if we go, they might spot us and put me on camera or something, and then my parents would have a coronary or two. Two, Tina's parents don't want her to go anywhere without two bodyguards AND parental supervision due to the stalker scare—which means we will have no funding, and basically no way of getting there. My cruddy learner's permit won't get us anywhere because I can barely drive and I have to have a licensed driver in the car with me anyway...and I don't think Lars counts, him being foreign and all.

I was telling Lilly all of this when she called me back at six-thirty to make sure I was up and ready.

"Lilly, how are we supposed to get there? We have no money for the subway or a cab. Can Michael drive us?"

"Michael doesn't have a car, dorkus. I'm sure I can get Tina's parents to come with us. This is one of the most important episodes, and I HAVE to film at Times Square."

Lilly truly is the most determined person I know...after Grandmère. Plus, there's that little problem I didn't mention...the fact that I haven't even talked to my parents about this yet. I said this to Lilly and she told me to talk it over and call her back by eight.

Friday, the loft

Oh my god. My parents are totally unfair. My dad says I have to go to the Plaza this afternoon to welcome Prince Rene and his evil sister Princess Isabella. She is two years older than me—seventeen (I turned fifteen in May) and looks like Lana Weinberger with dark hair. I am not kidding. She also ACTS like her too. I HATE ISABELLA SO MUCH!!!! And you would think that my own mother would stick up for me, but NO. She told me that I had to go anyway, since I 'didn't have anything better to do' and that it would be 'good for me' to get to know my cousins a bit more. I am so sure.

Shortly after that stupid black and white ball the Contessa Trevanni held, Princess Isabella came to New York to see her brother. It was a two day stay. Apparently she was jealous of Rene because he was ditching school and she was stuck in some boarding school in France, so she complains to Grandmère and Grandmère gets her out. I barely spent a day with her, but that was enough for me.

The first time she saw me she winced. Seriously. We were in Grandmère's suite at the Plaza. Rene was sitting in on another one of my hideous princess lessons when the evil one sauntered into the room. Here is what happened:

Isabella: *This* is the princess of Genovia? She is so...plain.

Me: And you are so...shallow.

Isabella: (completely ignoring what I said) And she slouches. How common. And look at those fingernails! So short and *bloody*. Where was she raised—a barn?

I was absolutely furious and almost went off on her, but she stopped tormenting me and went up to Grandmère and the two of them started gushing over how good they looked and all that. It was enough to make me puke.

So now I have to welcome Rene and Isabella to the Plaza AGAIN and endure her torture for an entire day...who knows...possibly a week, knowing my luck.

Still Friday, The Plaza

Oh yeah. Today has gotten off to a great start—NOT! I walked into Grandmère's suite and Isabella and Rene were sitting on the foofy chairs in the 'sitting room' talking to each other in Italian. See, they're exiled Italian royalty. Their family was kicked out of Italy during the World War II era and they've been living in exile ever since. I believe they're members of the Savoy family. That's pretty much when the socialists ran them out of Italy, and when the war was over, they weren't exactly welcomed back. Instead, they were not allowed to set foot on Italian soil. The last king of Italy, Umberto II, went into exile with his family in 1946. Male members of the royal house of Savoy were not allowed to set foot in the country until recently. Rene and Isabella are cousins of the late king's son, Vittorio Emanuele. His son is really good-looking, but I'm taken.

Oh yeah....all history lessons aside, they were talking in Italian and then I walk in and trip over Rommel, who's fur has grown even longer. I land on my knee and utter a curse in French.

"Merde!" I said and *Princess* Isabella snapped her head in my direction and gave me a look that could shrivel small plants.

“Look at you...ever the street urchin, I see. A real princess would never swear, although I must say it is interesting to note that you tried to cover up your little indiscretion by speaking in another language. Unfortunately for you, we speak French as well,” she said grandly. Oh my god. Why me?

“As if I could possibly care whether you spoke French or not. I tripped and fell, and believe me it wasn’t fun. Of course I’m going to curse. What did you expect me to do, jump for joy?” I asked her tartly.

“No, I expected you to get a grip on your emotions and refrain from making an utter spectacle of yourself.”

Let me point out that Heart-throb Rene just sat there with that damned cynical smile on his face...as always. So I sat there in my own foofy chair, listening to them gab on and on about nothing in Italian, feeling every bit the reject that I am while Grandmere is on the phone with the prime minister of Genovia.

Oh yeah, an update on those parking meters and garbage receptacles. I am happy to announce that the garbage receptacles all along the pier are being used by all the day trippers. The amount of garbage in the harbor has been reduced by ten percent. Not much, but it’s better than nothing. The parking meters are NOT a hit with the Genovian public, though. See, the ministry of transportation is charging too much, so people are getting annoyed. Tourism is down five percent, and everyone in Genovia is going absolutely ballistic over it. Tourism is a major source of income for many Genovians, and you can bet that they aren’t happy over this. So the prime minister is going crazy, asking Grandmère and my dad to come back to Genovia and fix the situation.

So then I got so bored that I decided to go down to the gift shop downstairs. It is really nice, but the things in there are so expensive. Traveling is so expensive...no wonder tourism is a viable industry. People can make a lot of money off of tourism. I mean, I saw this stupid, cheap Statue of Liberty mug in there for \$35. I am not even kidding. **\$35**. It is probably only worth five dollars.

Sometimes I kinda forget that I am famous. I went down there without Lars, so there was no one to protect me from crazed stalkers, which is exactly what I encountered while looking at the postcards. Some weirdo with dusty blond hair, dirty clothes and major BO walked up to me holding a greeting card (there’s a greeting card rack near the postcards) and a pen in his hand. He wanted me to sign the birthday card for his cat.

“I hear you’re a big cat fan. Can you sign this for my cat?” he asked. I was totally freaked out but I signed it anyway. He thanked me and I figured he’d go away, but he so fully did not. So I moved from the postcard rack to the hat rack. He followed me. I went from the hat rack to the sweatshirt display. He FOLLOWED me. I even left the stupid gift shop and went to the newsstand

(there was some dopey story about me trying to steal Charlotte Casiraghi's boyfriend in the latest issue of *National Enquirer*—ever since I became a princess a lot of European royals and pseudo-royals became popular in the US. I am sure they all hate me for it) and he followed me. He followed me to the bathroom, the restaurant—EVERYWHERE. I did manage to lose him in the elevator, though. There was a huge crowd of people—a band, I think—and I just blended in with them and rode to Grandmère's floor.

When I got back, I caught major hell from Grandmère.

"Where have you been? I have been looking all over for you! A princess *never* leaves the room without saying 'excuse me'—and she at least informs her guests that she is leaving the room," she snapped as soon as I walked through the door. Oh yeah. Never mind the fact that I could have been snatched, raped and killed by the Cat Guy. Oh no. Good manners are so much more important than my own welfare.

For once, I had nothing to say, and I just walked in and went to my chair to sit and continue being a reject. Princess Isabella wasn't in the room. Thank god. So Rene and I talked.

"So what's this I hear about you and Charlotte's boyfriend?" he asked. I rolled my eyes. "Who really cares? If you must know the truth, I don't really know. I don't know her or any of her friends," I replied. "I can't believe you read that tabloid trash," I continued, glaring at him. Rene looked totally surprised.

"But she told me that her friend saw you with him. And I don't read tabloids. Gentlemen don't read tabloids."

OH MY GOD. What a crock.

"Gentlemen don't gossip either," I countered. "Her friend was obviously lying. I haven't been to Monaco or France in a long time anyway. When would I have time to run around with *her* boyfriend?"

"Goodness, Mia, you don't need to bite my head off. I was just asking," he replied, looking embarrassed.

"Well, I'm tired of gossip, that's all."

The rest of the afternoon was not worth remarking on—in detail, anyway. While Rene and I were talking about gossip, Grandmère was on the phone with the minister of finance, who had also called to complain about the decline in tourism. She fielded calls all day from many cabinet ministers and other politicians who were worrying about the economy. As if Genovia wasn't wealthy enough already. I mean, there are millions of morally bankrupt people who are perfectly

willing and able to throw their money away in gambling casinos, so they really don't have much to worry about.

Saturday morning, June 28, the Loft

I finally got to leave Grandmère's suite around three yesterday. Lilly had found us a ride—one of the Computer Club's members has a car, so he drove me, Lilly and Shameeka to Times Square. Traffic was really, really bad.

Tina couldn't go because she got a scary letter yesterday. It was written in cut out letters—you know, the person cuts out letters from magazines and arranges them in sentence form, to disguise their identity—and it said this:

"You are being watched."

Well, duh. But Tina was totally freaked out, and so were her parents. Now she's not allowed to leave her apartment. The only place she's allowed to go is school...unless her parents are with her. That is pretty iffy because her parents are so busy trying to find out WHO is stalking her!

To me, that simple little sentence seems like nothing...but you have to have seen the rest of the letter. The graphic on it spoke louder than words—it was a picture of a dead Arab woman. How horrible. Everyone is thinking it's a racist person that is doing this.

So I spent the whole time at Times Square worrying about Tina. I am the main cameraperson, so luckily nobody recognized me because I had a camera attached to my face for the majority of our stay there.

We went to the TRL studios and started asking the out-of-state teenagers about New York and America in general. Here are our questions and the most common answers:

1. What is the capital of New York? "Um, New York?" No, it's Albany.
2. Which country gave the Statue of Liberty to America as a present? "Uhhhh, England??" NO, FRANCE.
3. What is Broadway? "A fancy theater?" No, it's a street...with lots of theaters on it.
4. How do you pronounce 'Greenwich'? "Er, Green Witch?" No, it's 'greenich'—you don't pronounce the W.
5. Who was the first president of the US? "George Bush?" No, George *Washington*.
6. Who was the president of the confederation (Lilly the genius threw this in)? "Robert E Lee?" Nope, Jefferson Davis.

There was more, but all the answers were far too depressing to even mention. We also asked people about other countries, and the answers were even worse:

1. What's the capital of Sweden? "Erm, Copenhagen?" Oh my god. Copenhagen is in Denmark. The capital of Sweden is Stockholm.
2. What continent is Egypt on? "Erm, Europe?" No, it's in Africa.
3. (Now for a geography question) What are hurricanes called in Australia? "Typhoons?" No, they're called 'wally wally'. Weird, I know. People in Asia call hurricanes 'typhoons.'

As I stated earlier, the rest is totally not worth remarking on. I thought I was stupid. I guess going to a private school has its merits, you know. Public schools in this country are seriously under-funded. Personally, I think that is the problem. Teachers aren't getting paid enough, and the schools don't get enough funding to pay for better equipment and books and stuff. The schools that do get money—and that are overpaid—spend all that money on sports. Sports are good and all, but the basic subjects are much more important. Fortunately in Genovia it isn't like that.

So we stood around the TRL studios asking these questions and it started to rain. We only filmed for two hours, and Lilly was all angry about it. I told her that we should save up for Genovia, since she's coming with me (I haven't even told Grandmère about it, but Lilly is COMING no matter what she says), but Lilly says that a TV show shoots LOTS of footage—which makes it seem as if it's more than enough. But she says that the more she shoots the more good stuff she'll get. She says she is going to film even more in Genovia.

I personally cannot wait. That is the only good thing about my trip to Genovia...is that Lilly's gonna be there with me.

But what about Tina? I hope this whole stalker thing gets resolved before I leave.

Grandmère insisted that I go to this boring garden party at the Plaza. The garden party is being held indoors, which makes no sense to me, but whatever. Contessa Trevanni and her granddaughter Bella are going to be there, as well as Rene and his evil sister. Guess who else is making an appearance? Sebastiano. I couldn't believe it...I hadn't seen or spoken to him in quite a while. He's one of my cousins...if my dad hadn't had any children at all, he'd be the next Prince of Genovia. But right now Sebastiano is a designer, and ever since I 'modeled' some of his designs, he's been very much in demand...in Europe anyway. Sebastiano is in New York to show off his latest collection, and since he's family, he cannot just ignore us.

I am supposed to be getting ready, but I don't want to. Lilly didn't tell me about any plans, but I'd rather do ANYTHING but sit around with snotty Isabella and all those other people. I mean, seriously.

Mom was in here earlier, telling me about some TV special that was on last night. They were doing a special on MTV about famous people who make a difference and I was on it. They were talking about my building homes for the homeless during spring break. FINALLY, some attention for the good things I do. I was very happy about it, but a little surprised that some pictures of me building the house leaked out. Oh well.

Mom was telling me how proud she was, and that my future baby sibling is very lucky to have such a wonderful big sister. Mom is really, really happy these days because any day now she will give birth to my new sibling! I hope it's a girl, but I'll probably be happy if it's a boy.

Saturday afternoon, the Plaza

I am in the bathroom right now. The garden party is boring, but nothing horrible has happened. Isabella has left me alone, Rene was seen making out with one of the Hilton sisters and Bella and I sat at our table, talking. She speaks English, but with a thick Italian accent...something her grandmother, the Contessa, does not like.

Elena Trevanni is a lot like Grandmère. She is old-fashioned; thinks that looks and wardrobe and deportment are the most important things in life, and both are strict and determined. They're also both rather insensitive—Elena more so than Grandmère. Lately Grandmère has softened up a little. But not the contessa. She is absolutely MEAN to Bella.

Bella has gotten better looking, though. Her dark hair is short now, and it suits her. She has better posture and a tan. She was telling me about her new boyfriend.

“Grandmama does not approve of him, because he is not aristocratic or wealthy, but I love him anyway. He loves me for *me* and that is enough,” she says. I smiled.

“That reminds me of my boyfriend. He doesn't care about my looks, or title, or money. He just loves me, and that's it. I'm glad you found someone like that...who cares what your grandmother says anyway? They're still living in the forties,” I replied.

Which reminds me...I haven't spoken to Michael in nearly a week. He hasn't called me or instant messaged me or even e-mailed me. And like the horrible

person I am, I forgot!!!! If I had a cell phone with me, I'd call him right away. I might have been able to invite him to this boring party.

Hold on, I think I have some change...I'll find a pay phone...

Still Saturday, the Plaza bathroom

Oh my god. I am in a state of crisis. Two horrible things have happened:

1. Tina has gone missing. Apparently, she sneaked out of her apartment to speak with her ex-boyfriend Dave, who dumped Jasmine and wanted to get back with Tina. She left, spoke to Dave (and totally rebuffed him) and went missing on her way back to her apartment.
2. Michael had been in the area at the time. The last person to see her was Michael. He said that he had gone to her place to ask about ME. He thinks I am mad at him, and that Lilly won't tell him anything, so he decided to go to Tina and ask her about it. He saw her, asked her about me, and then started to walk to my place. When he got to the loft, the police were there...they took him to the station to question him about Tina's disappearance!

I can't believe this!!!! Tina's GONE, and my boyfriend is at the POLICE STATION. They might throw him in jail, and my friend has been snatched by racists or terrorists!!!! What am I going to do?