



# Princess in love



#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MEG CABOT

“One of Sara’s ‘pretends’ is that she is a princess. She plays it all the time--even in school. She wants Ermengarde to be one, too, but Ermengarde says she is too fat.’

‘She is too fat,’ said Lavinia. ‘And Sara is too thin.’ ‘Sara says it has nothing to do with what you look like, or what you have. It has only to do with what you think of, and what you do.’”

A Little Princess, Frances Hodgson Burnett  
Monday, December 8, Gifted and Talented  
Lunch was a disaster.

Considering that everybody in the entire school seems to know, in the minutest detail, exactly what I’ve been doing or not doing with my tongue lately, I guess I shouldn’t have been surprised. But it was even worse than I could have imagined.

That’s because I ran into Michael at the salad bar. I was creating my usual chickpea and pinto bean pyramid when I saw him headed for the burger grill (despite my best efforts, both Moscovitzes remain stubbornly carnivorous).

Seriously, all I did was say Fine when he asked how

I was doing. You know, on account of how last time he saw me, I was bleeding out of the mouth (what a nice picture that must have been. I am so glad that I have been able to maintain an appearance of dignity and beauty at all times in front of the man I love).

Anyway, then I asked him, just to be polite, you know, how his dentist appointment went. It's not my fault, what happened next.

Which was that Michael started telling me about how he'd had to have this cavity filled, and that his lips were still numb from the Novocain. Seeing as how I have experienced a certain amount of sensation-deadening, what with my gouged tongue, I could relate to this, so I just sort of, you know, looked at Michael's lips while he was talking, which I have never really done before. I mean, I have looked at other parts of Michael's body (particularly when he comes into the kitchen in the morning with no shirt on, like he does every time I have a sleepover at Lilly's). But I've never really looked at his lips. You know. Up close.

Michael actually has very nice lips. Not thin lips, like mine. I don't know if you should say this about a boy's lips, but Michael's lips look like if you kissed them, they'd be very soft.

It was while I was noticing this about Michael's lips that the very bad thing happened: I was looking at them, you know, and wondering if they'd be soft to kiss, and as I looked, I sort of actually pictured us kissing, you know, in my head. And right then I got this very warm feeling--the one they talk about in all of Tina's romance novels--and RIGHT THEN was when Kenny went by on his way to get his usual lunch, Coke and an ice cream sandwich.

I know Kenny can't read my mind--if he could, he totally would have broken up with me by now--but maybe he caught some hint as to what I was thinking, and that's why he didn't say hi back when Michael and I said hi.

Well, that and the whole part where I said Um, okay after he said he loved me.

Kenny must have known something was up, if my face was anywhere near as red-hot as it felt.

Maybe that's why he didn't say hi back. Because I was looking so guilty. I'd certainly felt guilty. I mean, there I was, looking at another guy's lips and wondering what it would be like to kiss them, and my boyfriend goes walking by.

I am so going to bad girl hell when I die.

You know what I wish? I wish everyone could read my mind. Because then Kenny would never have asked me out. He'd have known I don't think of him that way. And Lilly wouldn't make fun of me for not letting Kenny kiss me. She would know the reason I don't is that I'm in love with someone else. The bad part is, she'd know who that someone else is.

And that someone probably wouldn't even speak to me again, because it's totally uncool for a senior to go out with a freshman. Especially one who can't go anywhere without a bodyguard.

Besides, I'm almost positive he's going out with Judith Gershner, because after he came back from the grill, he went and sat down next to her.

So that settles that.

I wish I were leaving for Genovia tomorrow, instead of in two weeks.

*Monday, December 8, French*

In spite of that disastrous incident at lunch, I had a pretty good time in Gifted and Talented. In fact, it was almost like old times again. I mean, before we all started going out with each other, and everyone became so obsessed with the inner workings of my mouth, and all that.

Which was really nice. Mrs. Hill spent the whole class period in the teachers' lounge across the hall, yelling at American Express on the phone, leaving us free to do what we usually do during her class... whatever we wanted. For instance, those of us who, like Lilly's boyfriend Boris, wanted to work on our individual projects (Boris's is learning to play some new sonata on his violin) which is what Gifted and Talented class is supposedly for, did so.

Those of us, however, like Lilly and me, who did not want to work on our individual projects (mine is studying for Algebra; Lilly's is working on her



cable access TV show) did not.

This was especially satisfying because Lilly had completely forgotten about the whole kissing thing between Kenny and me. The reason for this is that now she's mad at Mrs. Spears, her Honors English teacher, who shot down her term paper proposal. It really was unfair of Mrs. Spears to turn it down, because it was actually very well thought out, and quite creative. Here is a copy of it I made:

How to Survive High School

by

*Lilly Moscovitz*

Having spent the past two months locked into that institution of secondary education commonly referred to as high school, I feel that I am a qualified authority on the subject. From pep rallies to morning announcements, I have observed high school life and all of its complexities. Sometime in the next four years, I will be granted my freedom from this festering hellhole, and then I will publish my carefully compiled High School Survival Guide. Little did my peers and teachers know that as they

went about their daily routines, I was recording their activities for study by future generations. With my handy guide, every ninth grader's sojourn in high school can be a little more fruitful. Students of the future will learn that the way to settle their differences with their peers is not through violence, but through the sale of a really scathing screenplay--featuring characters based on those very individuals who tormented them all those years--to a major Hollywood movie studio. That, not a Molotov cocktail, is the path to true glory.

Here, for your reading pleasure, are a few examples of the topics I will explore in *How to Survive High School*, by Lilly Moscovitz:

1. High School Romance, or I cannot open my locker because two oversexed adolescents are leaning up against it, making out.
2. Cafeteria food: Can corndogs legally be listed as a meat product?
3. How to communicate with the subhuman individuals who populate the hallways.
4. Guidance Counselors: Who do they think they're



kidding?

5. *Get Ahead by Forging: The Art of the Hall Pass*  
Does that sound good, or what? Now look what Mrs. Spears had to say about it:

Lilly--Sorry as I am to hear that your experience thus far at AEHS has not been a positive one, I am afraid I am going to have to make it worse by asking you to find another topic for your term paper. A for creativity, as usual, however. Mrs. Spears  
Can you believe that? Talk about unfair! Lilly's been censored! By rights, her proposal ought to have brought the school's administration to its knees. Lilly says she is appalled by the fact that, considering how much our tuition costs, this is the kind of support we can expect from our teachers. Then I reminded her that that isn't true of Mr. Gianini, who really goes beyond the call of duty by staying after school every day to conduct help sessions for people like me who aren't doing so well in Algebra.

Lilly says Mr. Gianini probably only started pulling that staying-after-school thing so that he could

ingratiate himself to my mother, and now he can't stop, because then she'll realize it was all just a setup and divorce him.

I don't believe that, however. I think Mr. G would have stayed after school to help me whether he was dating my mom or not. He's that kind of guy.

Anyway, the upshot of it all is that now Lilly is launching another one of her famous campaigns.

This is actually a good thing, as it will keep her mind off me and where I am putting (or not putting) my lips. Here's how it started:

LILLY: The real problem with this school isn't the teachers. It's the apathy of the student body. For instance, let's say we wanted to stage a walkout.

ME: A walkout?

LILLY: You know. We all get up and walk out of the school at the same time.

ME: Just because Mrs. Spears turned down your term paper proposal?

LILLY: No, Mia. Because she's trying to usurp our individuality by forcing us to bend to corporate

feudalism. Again.

ME: Oh. And how is she doing that?

LILLY: By censoring us when we are at our most fertile creatively.

BORIS: (leaning out of the supply closet, where Lilly made him go when he started practicing his latest sonata): Fertile? Did someone say fertile?

LILLY: Get back in the closet, Boris. Michael, can you send a mass e-mail tonight to the entire student body, declaring a walkout tomorrow at eleven?

MICHAEL: (who was working on the booth he and Judith Gershner and the rest of the Computer Club are going to have up at the Winter Carnival) I can, but I won't.

LILLY: WHY NOT?

MICHAEL: Because it was your turn to empty the dishwasher last night, but you weren't home, so I had to do it.

LILLY: But I TOLD Mom I had to go down to the studio to edit the last few finishing touches on this week's show!

Lilly's TV program, *Lilly Tells It Like It Is*, is now one of the highest ranking shows on Manhattan cable. Of course, it's public access, so it's not like she's making any money off it, but a bunch of the major networks picked up this interview she did of me one night when I was half asleep and played it. I thought it was stupid, but I guess a lot of other people thought it was good, because now Lilly gets tons of viewer mail, whereas before the only mail she got was from her stalker, Norman.

MICHAEL: Look, if you're having time management issues, don't take it out on me.

Just don't expect me to meekly do your bidding, especially when you already owe me one.

ME: Lilly, no offense, but I don't think this week's a good time for a walkout, anyway. I mean, after all, it's almost Finals.

LILLY: SO???

ME: So some of us really need to stay in class. I can't afford to miss any review sessions. I'm getting bad enough grades as it is.

MICHAEL: Really? I thought you were doing

better in Algebra.

ME: If you call a D plus better.

MICHAEL: Aw, come on. You have to be making better than a D plus. Your mom is married to your Algebra teacher!

ME: So? That doesn't mean anything. You know Mr. G doesn't play favorites.

MICHAEL: I would think he'd cut his own stepdaughter a little slack, is all.

LILLY: WOULD YOU TWO PLEASE PAY ATTENTION TO THE SITUATION AT HAND, WHICH IS THE FACT THAT THIS SCHOOL IS IN VITAL NEED OF SERIOUS REFORM?

Fortunately at that moment the bell rang, so no walkout tomorrow as far as I know. Which is a good thing, because I really need the extra study time.

You know, it's funny about Mrs. Spears not liking Lilly's term paper proposal, because she was very enthusiastic about my proposal, *A Case Against*

Christmas Trees: Why We Must Curtail the Pagan Ritual of Chopping Down Pine Trees every December if We Are Going to Repair the Ozone Layer.

And my IQ isn't anywhere near as high as Lilly's.

*Monday, December 8, Bio*

Kenny just passed me the following note:

Mia I hope what I said to you last night didn't make you feel uncomfortable. I just wanted you to know how I feel.

Sincerely,

Kenny

Oh God. Now what am I supposed to do? He's sitting here next to me, waiting for an answer. In fact, that's what he thinks I'm writing right now. An answer.

What do I say?

Maybe this is my perfect opportunity to break up with him. I'm sorry, Kenny, but I don't feel the same way--let's just be friends. Is that what I should



say?

It's just that I don't want to hurt his feelings, you know? And he is my Bio partner. I mean, whatever happens, I am going to have to sit by him for the next two weeks. And I would much rather have a Bio partner who likes me than one who hates me. And what about the dance? I mean, if I break up with him, who am I going to go to the Non-Denominational Winter Dance with? I know it is horrible to think things like this, but this is the first dance in the history of my life to which I already have a date.

Well, I mean, if he'd ever get around to asking me, anyway.

And how about that Final, huh? Our Bio Final, I mean. No way am I going to be able to pass without Kenny's notes. **NO WAY.**

But what else can I do? I mean, considering what happened today at the salad bar.

This is it. Goodbye, date for the Non-Denominational Winter Dance. Hello, Saturday

night television.

Dear Kenny,

It isn't that I don't think of you as a very dear friend. It's just that

*Monday, December 8, 3PM, Mr. Gianini's Algebra review*

Okay, so the bell rang before I had time to finish my note.

That doesn't mean I'm not going to tell Kenny exactly how I feel. I totally am. Tonight, as a matter of fact. I don't care if it's cruel to do something like that over the phone. I just can't take it anymore.

## **Homework**

Algebra: Review questions at the end of Chapters 1-3

English: Term paper

World Civ: Review questions at the end of Chapters 1-4

G & T: none

French: Review questions at the end of Chapters 1-3

Biology: Review questions at the end of Chapters 1-5

*Tuesday, December 9, Homeroom*

All right. So I didn't break up with him.

I totally meant to.

And it wasn't even because I didn't have the heart to do it over the phone, either.

It was something GRANDMERE, of all people, said.

Not that I feel right about it. Not breaking up with him, I mean. It's just that after Algebra review, I had to go to the showroom where Sebastiano is flogging his latest creations, so that he could have his flunkies take my measurements for my dress.

Grandmere was going on about how from now on, I should really only wear clothes by Genovian designers, to show my patriotism, or whatever.

Which is going to be hard, because, uh, there's only one Genovian clothing designer that I know of, and that's Sebastiano. And let's just say he doesn't make very much out of denim.

But whatever. I so had more important things to worry about than my spring wardrobe.

Which I guess Grandmere must have caught onto, because midway through Sebastiano's description of the beading he was going to have sewn onto my gown's bodice, Grandmere slammed down her Sidecar and shouted, "Amelia, what is the matter with you?"

I must have jumped about a foot in the air. "What?" "Sebastiano asked if you prefer a sweetheart or square cut neckline."

I stared at her blankly. "Neckline for what?"

Grandmere gave me the Evil Eye. She does this quite frequently. That's why my father, even though he has the neighboring hotel suite, never stops by during my princess lessons.

"Sebastiano," my grandmother said. "You will please leave the princess and myself for a moment." And Sebastiano--who was wearing a new pair of leather pants, these in a tangerine color (the new grey, he told me. And white, you might be surprised

to know, is the new black.) --bowed and left the room, followed by the slinky ladies who'd been taking my measurements.

“Now,” Grandmere said, imperiously. “Something is clearly troubling you, Amelia. What is it?”

“It’s nothing,” I said, turning all red. I knew I was turning all red because a) I could feel it, and b) I could see my reflection in the three full-length mirrors in front of me.

“It is not nothing.” Grandmere took in a healthy drag from her Gitanes, even though I have asked her repeatedly not to smoke in my presence, as breathing second-hand smoke can cause just as much lung damage as actually smoking. “What is it? Trouble at home? Your mother and the math teacher fighting already, I suppose. Well, I never expected that marriage to last. Your mother is much too flighty.”

I have to admit, I kind of snapped when she said that. Grandmere is always putting my mother down, even though Mom has raised me pretty much single-handedly and I certainly haven’t gotten

pregnant or shot anyone yet.

“For your information,” I said, “my mom and Mr. Gianini are blissfully happy together. I wasn’t thinking about them at all.”

“What is it, then?” Grandmere asked, in a bored voice.

“Nothing,” I practically yelled. “I just--well, I was thinking about the fact that I have to break up with my boyfriend tonight, that’s all. Not that it’s any of your business.”

Instead of taking offense at my tone, which any self-respecting grandparent would have found insolent, Grandmere only took a sip of her drink and suddenly looked way interested.

“Oh?” she said, in a totally different tone of voice--the same tone of voice she uses when someone mentions a stock tip she thinks might be useful for her portfolio. “What boyfriend is this?”

God, what did I ever do to be cursed with such a grandmother? Seriously. Lilly and Michael’s Grandma remembers the names of all their friends,



makes them rugelach all the time, and always worries that they're not getting enough to eat, even though their parents, the Drs. Moscovitz, are wholly reliable at bringing home groceries, or at least ordering out.

Me? I get the grandma with the hairless poodle and the nine-carat diamond rings whose greatest joy in life is to torture me.

And why is that, anyway? I mean, why does Grandmere love to torture me so much? I've never done anything to her. Nothing except be her only living grandchild, anyway. And it isn't exactly like I go around advertising how I feel about her. You know, I've never actually told her I think she's a mean old lady who contributes to the destruction of the environment by wearing fur coats and smoking filterless French cigarettes.

"Grandmere," I said, trying to remain calm. "I have only one boyfriend. His name is Kenny." I've only told you about fifty thousand times, I added, in my head.

"I thought this Kenny person was your Biology

partner,” Grandmere said, after taking a sip of her Sidecar.

“He is,” I said, a little surprised that she’d managed to remember something like that. “He’s also my boyfriend. Only last night he went completely schizo on me, and told me he loves me.”

Grandmere patted Rommel, who was sitting in her lap looking miserable (his habitual expression) on the head.

“And what is so wrong,” Grandmere wanted to know, “about a boy who says he loves you?”

“Nothing,” I said. “Only I’m not in love with him, see? So it wouldn’t be fair of me to, you know, lead him on.”

Grandmere raised her painted-on eyebrows. “I don’t see why not.”

How had I ever gotten into this conversation?

“Because, Grandmere. People just don’t go around doing things like that. Not nowadays.”

“Is that so? Well, I’ve never observed such a thing. Except, of course, if one happens to be in love

with someone else. Then shedding an undesirable suitor might be considered wise, so that one can make oneself available to the man one truly likes.”

She eyed me. “Is there someone like that in your life, Amelia? Someone, ahem, special?”

“No,” I lied, automatically.

Grandmere snorted. “You’re lying.”

“No, I’m not,” I lied.

“Indeed you are. I oughtn’t tell you this, but I suppose as it is bad habit for a future monarch, you ought to be made aware of it, so that in the future, you can try to prevent it: when you lie, Amelia, your nostrils flare.”

I threw my hands up to my nose. “They do not!”

“Indeed,” Grandmere said, clearly enjoying herself immensely. “If you do not believe me, look in the mirror.”

I turned around to face the nearby full-length mirrors. Taking my hands from my face, I examined my nose. My nostrils weren’t flaring. She was crazy.

“I’ll ask you again, Amelia,” Grandmere said, in a lazy voice, from her chair. “Are you in love with anyone right now?”

“No,” I lied, automatically....

And my nostrils flared right out!

Oh my God! All these years I’ve been lying, and it turns out whenever I do, my nostrils totally give me away! All anyone has to do is look at my nose when I talk, and they’ll know for sure whether or not I’m telling the truth.

How could no one have pointed this out to me before? And Grandmere Grandmere, of all people was the one who figured it out! Not my mother, with whom I’ve lived for fourteen years. Not my best friend, whose IQ is higher than Einstein’s.

No. Grandmere.

If this got out, my life was over.

“Fine,” I cried dramatically, spinning away from the mirror to face her. “All right, yes. Yes, I am in love with somebody else. Are you happy now?”

Grandmere raised her painted-on eyebrows.

“No need to shout, Amelia,” she said, with what I

might have taken for amusement in anyone other than her. “Who might this special someone be?”

“Oh, no,” I said, holding out both my hands. If it wouldn’t have been totally rude, I’d have made a little cross out of my index fingers and held it up towards her--that’s how much she scares me. And if you think about it, with her tattooed eyeliner, she does look a little like Nosferatu. “You are not getting that information out of me.”

Grandmere stamped out her cigarette in this ashtray Sebastiano had provided, and went, “Very well. I take it, then, that the gentleman in question does not return your ardor.”

There was no point in lying to her. Not now. Not with my nostrils.

My shoulders sagged. “No. He likes this other girl. This really smart girl who knows how to clone fruit flies.”

Grandmere snorted. “A useful talent. Well, never mind that now. I don’t suppose, Amelia, that you are acquainted with the expression dirty dishwater is

better than none?”

I guess she must have been able to tell from my perplexed expression that this was one I hadn't heard before, since she went on, “Do not throw away this Kenny until you have managed to secure someone better.”

I stared at her, horrified. Really, my grandmother has said--and done--some pretty cold things in her time, but this one took the cake.

“Secure someone better?” I couldn't believe she actually meant what I thought she meant. “You mean I shouldn't break up with Kenny until I've got someone else?”

Grandmere lit another cigarette. “But of course.”

“But Grandmere.” I swear to God, sometimes I can't figure out if she's human or some kind of alien life force sent down from some other planet to spy on us. “You can't do that. You can't just string a guy along like that, knowing that you don't feel the same way about him that he feels about you.”

Grandmere exhaled a long plume of blue smoke.



“Why not?”

“Because it’s completely unethical!” I shook my head. “No. I’m breaking up with Kenny. Right away. Tonight, as a matter of fact.”

Grandmere stroked Rommel under the chin. He looked more miserable than ever, as if instead of stroking him, she was peeling the skin away from his body. He really is the most heinous excuse for a dog I have ever seen.

“That,” Grandmere said, “is your prerogative, of course. But allow me to point out to you that if you break off your relationship with this young man, your Biology grade will suffer.”

I was shocked. But mostly because this was something I had already thought of myself. I was amazed Grandmere and I had actually shared something.

Which was really the only reason I shouted, “Grandmere!”

“Well,” Grandmere said, flicking ash from her cigarette into a nearby crystal ashtray. “Isn’t it true?”

You are only making what, a C, in this class? And that is only because that young man allows you to copy his answers to the homework.”

“Grandmere!” I yelled again. Because, of course, that she’s right.

She looked at the ceiling. “Let me see,” she said.

“With your D in Algebra, if you get anything less than a C in Biology, your grade point average will take quite a little dip this semester.”

“Grandmere.” I couldn’t believe this. She was right. She was so right. But still. “I am not going to postpone breaking up with Kenny until after the Final. That would be just plain wrong.”

“Suit yourself,” Grandmere said with a sigh. “But it will certainly be awkward having to sit beside him for the next--how long is it until the end of the semester? --Oh, yes, two weeks. Especially considering the fact that after you break things off with him, he probably won’t even speak to you anymore.”

God, so true. And not something I hadn’t thought

of myself. If Kenny got mad enough over me breaking up with him not to want to speak to me anymore, sixth period was going to be plenty unpleasant.

“And what about this dance?” Grandmere rattled the ice in her Sidecar. “This Christmas dance?”

“It’s not a Christmas dance,” I said. “It’s a non-denominational--”

Grandmere waved a hand. This spiky charm bracelet she was wearing tinkled.

“Whatever,” she said. “If you stop seeing this young man, who will you go to the dance with?”

“I won’t go with anybody,” I said, firmly, even though, of course, my heart was breaking at the thought. “I’ll just stay home.”

“While everyone else has a good time? Really, Amelia, you aren’t being at all sensible. What about this other young man?”

“What other young man?”

“The one you claim to be so in love with. Won’t he be at this dance with the house fly girl?”

“Fruit fly,” I corrected her. “And I don’t know.

Maybe.”

The thought that Michael might ask Judith Gershner to the Non-Denominational Winter Dance had never occurred to me. But as soon as Grandmere mentioned it, I felt that same sickening sensation I'd felt at the ice-skating rink when I'd first seen them together: kind of like the time when Lilly and I were crossing Bleecker Street and this Chinese food delivery man crashed into us on his bicycle, and I had all the wind knocked out of me. Only this time, it wasn't just my chest that hurt, but my tongue. It had been feeling a lot better, but now it started to throb again.

“It seems to me,” Grandmere said, “that one way to get this young man's attention might be to show up at this dance on the arm of this other young man, looking perfectly divine in an original creation by Genovian fashion designer, Sebastiano Grimaldi.”

I just stared at her. Because she was right. She was so right. Except....

“Grandmere,” I said. “The guy I like? Yeah, he likes

girls who can clone insects. Okay? I highly doubt he is going to be impressed by a dress.”

I didn't mention that I had, of course, just the night before, been hoping that very thing.

But almost as if she could read my mind, Grandmere just went, “Hmmm,” in this knowing way.

“Suit yourself,” she continued. “Still, it seems a bit cruel to me, your breaking things off with this young man at this time of year.”

“Why?” I asked, confused. Had Grandmere inadvertently stumbled across some TV channel playing *It's a Wonderful Life*, or something? She had never shown one speck of holiday spirit before now. “Because it's Christmas?”

“No,” Grandmere said, looking very disgusted with me, I guess over the suggestion that she might ever be moved by the anniversary of the birth of anyone's savior. “Because of your exams. If you truly wish to be kind, I think you might at least wait until after your Final exams are over before breaking the poor little fellow's heart.”

I had been all ready to argue with whatever excuse for me not breaking up with Kenny Grandmere came up with next--but this one, I had not expected. I stood there with my mouth hanging open. I know it was hanging open, because I could see it reflected in the three full-length mirrors beside me.

“I cannot imagine,” Grandmere went on, “why you do not simply allow him to believe his ardor returned until your exams are over. Why compound the poor boy’s stress? But you must, of course, do what you think is best. I suppose this, er, Kenny is the sort of boy who bounces back easily from rejection. He’ll probably do quite well on his exams, in spite of his broken heart.”

Oh, God! If she had stabbed a fork in my stomach and twisted my intestines around the tines like spaghetti noodles, she couldn’t have made me feel worse....

And, I have to admit, a little relieved. Because of course I can’t break up with Kenny now. Never mind my Bio grade and the dance: you can’t break



up with someone right before Finals. It's like the meanest thing you can do.

Well, aside from the kind of stuff Lana and her friends pull. You know, girls' locker room stuff, like going up to someone who is changing and asking her why she wears a bra when she obviously doesn't need one, or making fun of her just because she doesn't happen to like being kissed by her boyfriend. That kind of thing.

So here I am. I want to break up with Kenny, but I can't.

I want to tell Michael how I feel about him, but I can't do that either.

I can't even quit biting my fingernails. I am going to gross out an entire European nation with my bloody-looking cuticles.

I am a pathetic mess. No wonder in the car this morning--after I accidentally closed the door on Lars's foot Lilly said that I should really look into getting some therapy, because if anybody needs to discover harmony between her conscious and her

unconscious, it's me.

**To do before leaving for genovia:**

1. Get cat food, litter for Fat Louie
2. Stop biting fingernails
3. Achieve self-actualization
4. Discover harmony between conscious and subconscious.
5. Break up with Kenny but not until after Finals/  
Non-Denominational Winter Dance

*Tuesday, December 9, English*

What was THAT just now in the hallway? Did Kenny Showalter just say what I think he said to you?

Yes. Oh, my God, Shameeka, what am I going to do? I'm shaking so hard I can barely write M

What do you mean, what are you going to do? The boy is warm for your form, Mia. Go for it.

People can't just be allowed to go around saying things like that. Especially so loud. Everyone must have heard him. Do you think everyone heard him?

Everybody heard him, all right. You should have seen Lilly's face. I thought she was going to suffer one of those synaptic breakdowns she's always talking about.

You think EVERYBODY heard him? I mean, like the people coming out of the Chemistry lab? Do you think they heard?

How could they not? He yelled it pretty loud.

Were they laughing? The people coming out of Chemistry? They weren't laughing, were they?

Most of them were laughing.

Oh, God! Why was I ever born????

Except Michael. He wasn't laughing.

He WASN'T? REALLY? Are you pulling my leg?

No. Why would I do that? And what do you care what Michael Moscovitz thinks, anyway?

I don't. I don't care. What makes you think I care?

Um, for one thing because you won't shut up about it.

People shouldn't go around laughing at other people's misfortunes. That's all.

I don't see what the big misfortune is. So the guy loves you? A lot of girls would really like it if their boyfriend yelled that at them between second and third period.

Yeah, well, NOT ME!!!!

Use transitive verbs to create brief, vigorous sentences:

Transitive: He soon regretted his words.

Intransitive: It was not long before he was very sorry that he had said what he said.

*Tuesday, December 9, Bio*

Gifted and Talented was so not fun today. Not that Bio is any better, on account of the fact that I am stuck here next to Kenny, who seems to have calmed down a little since this morning.

Still, I really think that people who are not actually enrolled in certain classes have no business showing up in them.

For instance, just because Judith Gershner has study hall for fifth period is no reason that she should be allowed to hang around the Gifted and Talented

classroom for fifty minutes during that period. She should never have been let out of study hall in the first place. I don't think she even had a pass.

Not that I would turn her in, or anything. But this kind of flagrant rule-breaking really shouldn't be encouraged. If Lilly is going to go through with this walkout thing, which she is still trying to garner support for, she should really add the fact that the teachers in this school play favorites to her list of complaints. I mean, just because a girl knows how to clone things doesn't mean she should be allowed to roam the school freely anytime she wants.

But there she was when I walked in, and there's no doubt about it: Judith Gershner has a total crush on Michael. I don't really know how he feels about her, but she was wearing tan colored pantyhose instead of the black cotton tights she normally wears, so you know something is up. No girl wears tan pantyhose without a good reason.

And okay, so maybe they are working on their booth for the Winter Carnival, but that is no reason

for Judith to drape her arm across the back of Michael's chair like that. Plus he used to help me with my Algebra homework during G and T, but now he can't, because Judith is monopolizing all his time. I would think he might resent the intrusion. Plus Judith really has no business butting into my private conversations. She hardly even knows me. But did that stop her from observing, when she overheard Lilly's formal apology for not having believed me about Kenny's weird phone call--any doubts about the veracity of which he managed to scatter today with his display of unbridled passion in the third floor hallway--that she feels sorry for him? Oh, no.

"Poor kid," Judith said. "I heard what he said to you in the hallway. I was in the chem lab. What was it again? I don't care if you don't feel the same way, Mia, I will always love you, or something like that?" I didn't say anything. That's because I was busy picturing how Judith would look with a pencil sticking out of the middle of her forehead.

"It's really sweet," Judith said. "If you think about



it. I mean, the guy's clearly got it bad for you.” This is the problem, see. Everyone thinks what Kenny did, it was so cute and everything. Nobody seems to understand that it wasn't cute. It wasn't cute at all. It was completely humiliating. I don't think I've ever been so embarrassed in my whole life.

And believe me, I've lived through more than my fair share of embarrassing incidents, especially since this whole princess thing started.

But I'm apparently the only person in this entire school who thinks what Kenny did was the least bit wrong.

“He's obviously very in touch with his emotions.” Even Lilly was taking Kenny's side in the whole thing. “Unlike some people.”

I have to say, this makes me so mad when I think about it, because the truth is, ever since I have started writing things down in journals, I have gotten very in touch with my emotions. I usually know almost exactly how I feel.

The problem is, I just can't tell anyone.

I don't know who was the most surprised when Michael suddenly came to my defense against his sister--Lilly, Judith Gershner, or me.

"Just because Mia doesn't go around shouting about how she feels in the third floor hallway," Michael said, "doesn't mean she isn't in touch with her emotions."

How does he do that? How is it that he is able to magically put into words exactly what I feel, but seem to have so much trouble saying? This, you see, is why I love him. I mean, how could I not?

"Yeah," I said, triumphantly, to Lilly.

"Well, you could have said something back to him."

Lilly always gets disgruntled when Michael comes to my rescue--especially when he does it while she is attacking me about the lack of honesty in my emotional life. "Instead of just leaving him hanging there."

"And what," I demanded injudiciously, "I now realize 'should I have said to him?'"

"How about," Lilly said, "that you love him back?"

WHY? That's all I want to know. WHY was I cursed with a best friend who doesn't understand that there are some things you just don't say in front EVERYONE IN THE ENTIRE GIFTED AND TALENTED CLASSROOM, INCLUDING HER BROTHER????

The problem is, Lilly has never been embarrassed about anything in her life. She simply does not know the meaning of the word embarrassment. "Look," I said, feeling my cheeks begin to burn. I couldn't lie, of course. How could I lie, considering what I now knew about my nostrils? And okay, Lilly hadn't figured it out yet, but it was only a matter of time. I mean, if Grandmere knew...

"I really and truly value Kenny's companionship," I said, carefully. "But love. I mean, love. That is a very big thing. I'm not, I mean, I don't..."

I dribbled off pathetically, acutely aware that everyone in the room, but most especially Michael, was listening.

"I see," Lilly said, narrowing her eyes. "Fear of

commitment.”

“I do not fear commitment,” I insisted. “I just--”  
But Lilly’s dark eyes were already shining in eager anticipation. She was getting ready to psychoanalyze me, one of her favorite hobbies, unfortunately.

“Let’s examine the situation, shall we?” she said. “I mean, here you’ve got this guy going around the hallways, screaming about how much he loves you, and you just stare at him like a rat caught in the path of the D train. What do you suppose that means?”

“Have you ever considered,” I demanded, “that maybe the reason I didn’t tell him I love him back is because I--”

I almost said it. Really. I did. I almost said that I don’t love Kenny.

But I couldn’t. Because if I’d said that, somehow it would have gotten back to Kenny, and that would be even worse than my breaking up with him. I couldn’t do it.

So all I said instead was, “Lilly, you know perfectly well I do not fear commitment. I mean, there are lots boys I--”

“Oh, yeah?” Lilly seemed to be enjoying herself way more than usual. It was almost as if she was playing to an audience. Which, of course, she was. The audience of her brother and his girlfriend.

“Name one.”

“One what?”

“Name a boy that you could see yourself committing to for all eternity.”

“What do you want, a list?” I asked her.

“A list would be nice,” Lilly said.

So I drew up the following list:

### **Guys Mia Thermopolis Could See Herself Committing To For All Eternity:**

1. Wolverine of the X-men.
2. That Gladiator guy.
3. Will Smith.
4. Tarzan from the Disney cartoon.
5. The Beast from Beauty and the Beast.
6. That hot soldier guy from Mulan.
7. The guy Brendan Fraser played in The Mummy.
8. Angel.

9. Tom on Daria.

10. Justin Baxendale.

But this list turned out to be no good, because Lilly totally took it and analyzed it, and it works out that half the guys on it are actually cartoon characters; one is a vampire; and one is a mutant who can make spikes shoot out of his knuckles.

In fact, except for Will Smith and Justin Baxendale--the good looking senior who just transferred from Trinity and who a lot of girls at Albert Einstein High School are already in love with--all the guys I listed are fictional creations. Apparently, the fact that I could list no guy I had a hope of actually getting together with--or who even lives in the third dimension--is indicative of something.

Not, of course, indicative of the fact that the guy I like was actually in the room at the time, sitting next to his new girlfriend, and so I couldn't list him.

Oh, no. Nobody thought of that.

No, the lack of actual attainable men on my list was apparently indicative of my unrealistic expectations



where men are concerned, and further proof of my inability to commit.

Lilly says if I don't lower my expectations somewhat, I am destined for a dissatisfactory love life.

As if the way things have been going, I've ever expected anything else.

Kenny just tossed me this note:

Mia--I'm sorry about what happened today in the hallway. I understand now that I embarrassed you. Sometimes I forget that even though you are a princess, you are still quite introverted. I promise never to do anything of the sort again. Can I make it up to you by taking you to lunch at Big Wong on Thursday?--Kenny

I said yes, of course. Not just because I really like Big Wong's steamed vegetable dumplings, or even because I don't want people thinking I fear commitment. I didn't even say yes because I suspect that, over dumplings and hot tea, Kenny is finally going to ask me to the Non-Denominational Winter Dance.

I said yes because in spite of it all, I really do like Kenny, and I don't want to hurt his feelings. And I'd feel the same way even if I weren't a princess, and always had to do the right thing.