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Opening extract from

Royal Wedding
The Princess Diaries 11

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Meg Cabot

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Royal Scandal:

Prince Phillipe of Genovia Arrested

MANHATTAN – Prince Phillipe Renaldo, the 50-year-old crowned prince of Genovia, was arrested early Wednesday morning for driving his newly purchased 1978 Ferrari 312T3 Formula One race car down the West Side Highway, according to a spokesperson for the New York City Police Department. No injuries were reported.

Witnesses say the prince was driving at speeds in excess of 180 miles per hour before being pulled over by NYPD Highway Patrol officers. A spokesperson for the NYPD confirms that the prince complied with all instructions given by the officers, including taking a field sobriety test.

Police as well as Genovian embassy officials declined to share further details regarding the arrest. Prince Phillipe has had no previous arrests, either in the United States or abroad.

It is illegal to drive race cars intended for closed-track use only on public streets in the state of New York. It is not known whether the prince, whose primary residence is the European principality of Genovia, was aware of this. The prince is said to have purchased the vehicle earlier

in the day at an auction upstate.

New to Formula One racing, this is the first year the prince has taken part in Genovia's Grand Prix, infamous for its tight corners through the small principality's narrow, cobblestoned streets and precipitous cliffs overlooking the Mediterranean.

According to the prince's mother, the Dowager Princess Clarisse Renaldo, age unknown, this year's race will also be his last.

'The only place he'll be racing after this is down the aisle, with my granddaughter,' Princess Clarisse was overheard to say outside the Manhattan Detention Complex, where she was waiting to visit her son in jail.

According to the Royal Palace, however, there are currently no plans for a royal wedding between Princess Mia Thermopolis Renaldo, 25, and longtime boyfriend, medical entrepreneur Michael Moscovitz, 29. Moscovitz is founder and CEO of Pavlov Surgical, a successful medical robotics firm.

Princess Mia is the prince's only child and heir to the throne of Genovia. She was raised by her mother, American artist Helen Thermopolis, in New York City's Greenwich Village. Mia has stated in numerous interviews that she is thankful she did not find out she was a princess until she was a teenager, though it meant missing out on the glamour of being raised as a young royal on the Riviera.

'I was able to grow up in a fairly normal way,'

Mia has been quoted as saying. 'If I'd had a cell phone and constant access to the Internet like most kids do today, I probably would have caught on sooner.'

This is not the first unhappy event to strike the princess's family in recent months: her stepfather, Frank Gianini, passed away last year from congestive heart failure.

In his name, the princess founded the Frank Gianini Community Center in New York City. The center is designed to help children and teens acquire the skills they need to succeed in school or their chosen future career path. In a statement at its opening, the princess said, 'My stepfather was always there to help me with my homework, and my hope is that this center will carry on that legacy in his memory.'

Genovia is a constitutional monarchy and member of the EU, with Prince Phillipe having ruled as monarch since the death of his father over twenty years ago. He's also served uncontested as the country's prime minister for nearly a decade, but a distant cousin of the prince's – Count Ivan Renaldo – has drawn significantly ahead in recent polls, running on a campaign of economic and immigration reform. Genovia has seen a sharp rise in illegal immigration but a decline in tourism in the past few years due to the worldwide recession, losing revenue to better-known tourist destinations such as Paris, London, and Venice.

For these reasons, many are speculating that the prince's arrest could not have come at a worse time.

2:37 p.m., Tuesday, April 28
Third-Floor Apartment
Consulate General of Genovia
New York City

I don't know what's happening to me. I lie when I should tell the truth, and tell the truth when I should lie.

Like half an hour ago, when Dr. Delgado, the newly appointed 'royal physician,' was here, and asked if I've been under any 'unusual' stress lately.

I laughed and said, 'Gosh, no, Doctor, none that I can think of.'

You would think Dr. Delgado might have noticed the hordes of paparazzi gathered outside the consulate doors when he came in, and figured out that I was being sarcastic.

But no.

Instead, he said I shouldn't be concerned about the fact that my left eyelid has been twitching pretty much nonstop for the past week, which is why I asked for an appointment in the first place.

According to Dr. Delgado, this sort of thing 'happens all the time, and is not at all indicative of a brain tumor or stroke.'

Then he suggested I stop putting my symptoms into iTriage and instead get 'plenty of sleep and exercise.' Oh, and I might try eating healthier.

Sleep? Exercise? Who has time to sleep or exercise? And how am I supposed to eat healthier when I'm literally trapped by the press inside the Genovian consulate

and can only order food from places that deliver near the United Nations (which are basically steak houses, Chinese restaurants, or gyro joints)?

It wasn't until he was packing up his medical equipment that I realized Dr. Delgado was immune to sarcasm and really intended to leave without writing me a prescription.

So I said, 'The truth is, Doctor, I have been feeling a little stressed. You might have heard about my recent family difficulties, which have led to . . .'

I pointed meaningfully out the window. Dominique, the director of Royal Genovian Press Relations and Marketing, says if we don't encourage the media, they'll go away – like stray cats are supposed to, if you don't feed them – but this isn't true. I've never fed the media, and they still won't go away.

'Oh, yes, yes, yes,' Dr. Delgado said, seeming to realize things were a little out of the ordinary – as if the fact that he was visiting me in the consulate instead of seeing me in his office hadn't given it away. 'Of course! But your father is doing very well, isn't he? All the reports I've heard say that he'll most likely be given a slap on the wrist, and then he'll be able to return to Genovia. The press seem to find his little mishap with the law quite amusing.'

Little mishap with the law! Thanks to my father's decision to take a midnight jaunt down the West Side Highway in his newly purchased race car, Count Ivan Renaldo, Dad's opponent for prime minister, is ahead five points in the polls. If the count wins, Genovia will be

transformed from a charming medieval-walled microstate on the French Riviera to something that looks more like Main Street USA in Disneyland, with everyone strolling around in T-shirts that say WHO FARTED? and eating giant turkey legs.

'Oh, Dad's doing great!' I made the huge mistake of lying (I realize now). This is what we're supposed to tell the extended family and the press. It's not the truth. Royals never tell the truth. It isn't 'done.'

It's for this reason that I think I'm losing my grip on my sanity and can no longer tell the difference between what's real and what's a façade for the sake of the media (iTriage says this is called disassociation and is generally used as a coping mechanism to manage stress).

'Wonderful!' Dr. Delgado cried. 'And things are going well between you and – what is the young man's name?'

I swear Dr. Delgado must be the only person in the entire western hemisphere who doesn't know Michael's name.

'Is Michael Moscovitz the World's Greatest Lover? "YES!" Says Sex-Mad Princess Mia,' declares the cover of this week's *InTouch*.

Michael's dad thought this was so hilarious he bought dozens of copies to give to his friends and even his *patients*. Michael's asked him to stop, but his dad won't listen.

'You really expect me not to buy this?' Dr. Moscovitz asked. 'My son is the world's greatest lover! It says so right here. Of *course* I'm going to buy it!'

This could be one of the reasons for my twitch.

'Michael,' I said to Dr. Delgado. 'Michael Moscovitz. And yes, everything's fine between us.'

Except that's a lie. Michael and I hardly ever see each other anymore thanks to our work schedules and the fact that I'm being held a prisoner in my current home by the paps. I had to move out of my old apartment last year on account of my stalker, RoyalRabbleRouser, who enjoys posting online about how he's going to 'destroy' me for writing a historical romance novel (years ago, under another name) featuring a heroine who has premarital sex (he claims this is proof of how 'feminism has destroyed the fabric of our society').

The consulate is the only building in Manhattan guarded 24/7 by military police specially trained in the protection of a royal.

And now lately on the limited occasions Michael and I *do* find time to get together, we mostly just order in, then watch *Star Trek* on Netflix, because leaving the consulate is such a pain, unless I want to hear all sorts of horrible questions hurled at me on my way to the car by the press:

'Mia, what's it like to have a felon for a father?'

'Mia, is that a baby bump or did you just have too much of that falafel we saw delivered an hour ago?'

'Mia, how does it feel to know that seventy-four percent of those surveyed think Kate Middleton wore it better?'

'Mia, why hasn't Michael put a ring on it?'

I tried to show Michael my twitch earlier on FaceTime, but he said my eye looked perfectly normal to him.

'If you're twitchy, though, Mia, it's probably in

nervous anticipation at the prospect of going out with me, the world's greatest lover.'

'I thought we agreed we weren't going to read our own press,' I reminded him.

'How can I help it?' he asked. 'Especially since my erotic powers seemingly extend all the way to the Upper East Side, where they've rendered you sex mad.'

'Ha ha ha. You probably planted that story yourself.'

'You've grown so jaded and cynical since I last saw you. But really, Mia,' he said, finally getting serious. 'I think you're just stressing too much about all of this. I'm not saying things aren't bad – they are. But maybe all you need is to get away for a day or two.'

'Away? How am I possibly going to get away? And where am I going to go that the press can't follow me and ask about my alleged baby bump or how my dad looks in his orange jumpsuit?'

'Good question. Let me work on it.'

I know he's just trying to help, but really, how can I go away with Dad in so much trouble and the country in such an uproar and the election so close and Mom being a new widow and Grandmère as crazy as ever?

Plus my boyfriend having rendered me sex mad, of course.

No. Just no.

But of course I couldn't tell Dr. Delgado any of this. It's like my lips have been frozen into a permanent smile by all my media training (and compartmentalizing of my feelings).

'Well, that's fine, then,' the doctor said, beaming.

Fine? It's so *not* fine. Was it really so wrong of me to think that maybe, possibly, the palace physician might give me a little something to keep my eyelid from jumping around like a Chihuahua at dinnertime, or at least help me not lie awake all night?

And then when I *do* manage to fall asleep I have nightmares, like the one I had last night that I was married to Bruce Willis, and whenever Bruce got out of the shower, he would dry off his naughty parts while singing the song 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.'

I can't even tell Michael this. How do you explain it to the kindly old physician they found who is still willing to do house calls?

You cannot.

'I'll make sure the lab gets the blood and urine samples you insisted I take, Your Highness,' Dr. Delgado said. 'I should have the results in about a week. But I have to say that medically, I doubt they'll find anything wrong. Your pulse is strong, your skin tone looks even, your weight is within the normal range for your height. Despite this twitch you say you have – which frankly I can't see – and your fingernails, which I see that you bite, you seem to be glowing with health.'

Damn! He *would* notice my fingernails. I must be the only female left on the entire planet who doesn't get manicures because there's nothing left of my fingernails to file, let alone paint.

'Maybe,' I said, trying to keep the eagerness out of my voice so I wouldn't sound like one of those crazed Oxy-addicts on *Intervention,* 'I should be written a prescription

for a very mild mood stabilizer.'

'Oh, no,' Dr. Delgado said. 'Nail-biting is a bad habit, but very common, and hardly worth treating psychopharmacologically. The worst that could happen from compulsive nail-biting is that you might incur an infection, or pick up a pinworm.'

Oh my God. I am never biting my nails again. At least not before thoroughly washing them in antibacterial soap.

'What I suggest you try,' he added as he packed up his bag, 'is journaling.'

'Journaling?' Was he joking?

He was not.

'Why yes, I see you've heard of it. Journaling has been shown to reduce stress and help with problem solving. My wife keeps what she calls a gratitude journal. She writes down three things every day for which she feels grateful. She keeps a dream journal as well. She says it's helped tremendously, especially with her mood swings. You should try it. Well, I'll be in touch in about a week about that blood work. Good day, Princess!'

And then he left.

Which leaves me here. *Journaling.*

Why couldn't I have lied to make myself seem more pathetic so he'd have written me a prescription for an antianxiety medication, or at least a low-dose sleeping pill? Even the veterinarian does this for Fat Louie when I take him on the private jet back and forth to Genovia, and Fat Louie is a *cat*.

Granted, he's an extremely elderly cat who now needs a tiny staircase to climb up and down from my bed and tends to revenge-poop on everything when he doesn't get his own way. But still. Why does a *cat* get tranquilizers but the expensive concierge doctor we hired will not give them to *me*?

Oh, dear, I just read that over, and it sounds a bit odd. Of course I don't revenge-poop on things when I don't get my own way. I'm simply saying that it seems a bit unfair that we have the one concierge doctor in all of Manhattan who refuses to prescribe antianxiety medication. I'm sure every other celebrity (and royal) is loaded up on them.

- *Note to self:* Check on this. This would explain a lot about their behavior, actually.

But if 'gratitude' and 'dream' journaling really does help with stress, I'm willing to give it a go.

At this point, I'll try *anything*.

Let's see. I already wrote down what I dreamed about. Here are three things for which I feel grateful:

1. I don't have a brain tumor.

2. My father didn't die in that race-car incident. ~~Though given how reckless it was of him to have been in it in the first place, he probably deserved to.~~

3. Michael, the funniest, handsomest, smartest, and most forgiving boyfriend in the entire world (even if every once in a while lately I've noticed there's something going on with *his* eyes, too. Not a twitch. More like something brewing in there. If I still wrote historical romance novels – which I had to give up, not because of RoyalRabbleRouser's threats but because I don't have time, between all my public speaking, running the Community Center, and worrying about Dad – I would describe it as a 'haunted shadow.')

I know it's selfish, but I hope if there *is* something wrong with Michael, it's that he's passing another kidney stone – even though he said the one he passed last May was the most painful experience of his life, and the nephrologist compared it to giving birth – and not that Mr. G's death has caused him to re-evaluate his life and make him realize he's with the wrong person. I'm totally aware of the fact that it would be much, much easier for him to be with a girl who could meet him for drinks after work at T.G.I. Friday's without it first having to be swept for bombs, or go to the movies with him without having a plainclothes sharpshooter sit behind us, or simply stroll around Central Park without being followed by a phalanx of photo-hungry press.

But I'm never going to be that girl.

And my worst fear is that someday he's going to realize it and dump me the way my mom dumped my dad, leaving him the brokenhearted, race-car-speeding,

empty shell of a man he is today.

Honestly, what good is owning a castle if the person you love doesn't want to share it with you?