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From the desk of
Her Royal Highness Princess Amelia Mignonette
Grimaldi Thermopolis Renaldo

Dear Dr Carl Jung,

I realize that you will never read this letter, primarily because you are dead.

But I feel compelled to write it anyway, because a few months ago during a particularly trying period in my life, a nurse told me I need to be more verbal about my feelings.

I know writing a letter to a dead person isn't exactly being verbal, but my situation is such that there are very few people I can actually talk to about my problems. Mostly because those people are the ones causing my problems.

The truth is, Dr Jung, I have been striving for fifteen and three-quarter years for self-actualization. You remember self-actualization, right? I mean, you should – you invented it.

The thing is, every time I think I have self-actualization on the horizon, something comes along to mess it all up. Like this whole princess thing. I mean, just when I

thought I couldn't possibly become a bigger freak, POW! It turns out that I'm also a princess.

Which I realize to many people does not seem like an actual problem. But I'd be very interested to see how THEY would react if every single spare moment of THEIR lives was taken up by lessons in being a royal from their eyelid-tattooed grandmother; getting stalked by the paparazzi; or attending boring state functions with people who have never even heard of *The OC*, let alone know what's going with Seth and Summer's on-again-off-again romance.

But the princess issue isn't the only thing that's put a wedge between me and my quest for self-actualization. Being the sole sane caretaker of my baby brother – who appears to have grave developmental problems, because at ten months he still cannot walk without holding on to someone's (usually my) fingers (and while it is true that he has shown markedly advanced verbal skills for his age, knowing two words, 'tuck' – truck – and 'kee' – kitty – he uses them indiscriminately for all objects, not just trucks and cats) – hasn't helped much either.

But that isn't all. How about the fact that I have been elected president of the student council of my school . . . but am nevertheless still one of the most unpopular people in said school?

Or that I've finally figured out that I do have an actual talent (writing – in case you can't tell from this letter), but I won't be able to pursue a career in my field of choice, because I will be too busy ruling a small European principality? Not that, according to my English teacher, Ms Martinez, who says I have a problem with the overuse of adjectives in my descriptive essays,

I'm ever going to get published, or even get a job as an assistant writer on a situation comedy.

Or even that I finally won the love of the man of my dreams, only to have him so busy with his History of Dystopic Science Fiction in Film course that I hardly ever get to see him.

Do you see where I'm coming from with all this? Every time self-actualization seems to be within my reach, it is cruelly snatched away by fate. Or my grandmother.

I'm not complaining. I'm just saying . . . well, exactly how much does a human being have to endure before she can consider herself self-actualized?

Because I really don't think I can take any more.

Do you have any tips on how I might achieve transcendence before my sixteenth birthday? Because I would really appreciate some.

Thanks.

Your friend,
Mia Thermopolis

PS Oh, yeah. I forgot. You're dead. Sorry. Never mind about the tips thing. I guess I'll just look some up in the library.

Tuesday, March 2, After school, Gifted and Talented Room

Bimonthly Meeting of the AEHS Student Government Officers

Meeting Called to Order

Attendance –

Present:
Mia Thermopolis, President
Lilly Moscovitz, Vice-President
Ling Su Wong, Treasurer
Mrs Hill, student government advisor
Lars van der Hooten, personal bodyguard of HRH M. Thermopolis

Absent:
Tina Hakim Baba, Secretary, due to emergency retainer refitting after her little brother flushed her old one down the toilet

(Which, by the way, is why I'm the one writing the minutes. Ling Su can't, due to having 'artist' handwriting, which is very similar to 'doctor' handwriting, meaning it is actually indecipherable by the human eye. And Lilly claims she has carpal tunnel syndrome from typing out the short story she sent in to *Sixteen* magazine's annual short-fiction contest.

Or, I should say, the FIVE short stories she sent into *Sixteen* magazine's annual short-fiction contest.

I don't know how she found the time to write FIVE stories. I barely had time to write ONE.

Still, I think my story, 'No More Corn!', is pretty good. I mean, it has everything a short story SHOULD have in it: Romance. Pathos. Suicide. Corn.

Who could ask for more?)

Motion to Approve the Minutes from 15 February Meeting: APPROVED

President's Report:	'My request that the school library remains open on weekends for the use of study groups was met with considerable resistance by school administration. Concerns raised were: cost of overtime for librarian, as well as cost of overtime for school security guard at entrance to check IDs and make sure people entering were, in fact, AEHS students, and not just random homeless people off the streets.'
Vice-President's Response:	'The gym is kept open on the weekends for sports practices. Surely the security guard could check IDs of both student athletes and students who actually care about their grades. Also, don't you think even a moderately intelligent security

guard could tell the difference between random homeless people and AEHS students?'

President's Response to Vice-President's Response: 'I know. I mentioned this. Principal Gupta then reminded me that the athletics budget was determined some time ago, and that there is no weekend library budget. Also that the security guards were mainly hired for their size, not their intelligence.'

Vice-President's Response to President's Response: 'Well then, maybe Principal Gupta needs to be reminded that the vast majority of students at Albert Einstein High are not involved in sports, need that extra library time, and that the budget needs to be reviewed. *And* that size isn't everything.'

President's Response to the Response of the Vice-President's Response to my previous statement: 'Duh, Lilly, I did. She said she'd look into it.'

(Why does Lilly have to be so adversarial during these meetings? It makes me look like I don't have any authority whatsoever in front of Mrs Hill.

I really thought she was over that whole thing about me not stepping down from office so that SHE could be President. I mean, that was MONTHS ago, and she seemed to forgive me once I got my dad to go on her TV show so she could interview him about European immigration policies.

And OK, it didn't give her the ratings bounce she'd been hoping for.

But *Lilly Tells It Like It Is* is still the most popular public access programme on Manhattan cable television – after that one with the Hell's Angel who shows you how to cook over an exhaust pipe, I mean – even if those producers who optioned her show still haven't managed to sell it to any major networks.)

Vice-President's Report:	'The recycling bins have arrived and have been placed beside every regular trash can throughout the school. These are specialized bins that are divided into three sections – paper, bottles and cans, with a built-in mechanized crusher on the can side. Student use has been high. There is, however, a small problem with the stickers.'
President's Response:	'What stickers?'
Vice-President's Response to President's Response:	'The ones across the lids of the recycling bins that say *Paper, Cans and Battles*.'

President's Response to Vice-President's Response:	'They say *Paper, Cans and BOTTLES*, not *Battles*.'
Vice-President:	'No they don't. See?'
President:	'OK. Who proofed the stickers?'
Vice-President:	'That would have been the secretary. Who isn't here.'
Treasurer:	'But it isn't Tina's fault, she's been super-stressed about midterms.'
President:	'We need to order new stickers. *Paper, Cans and Battles* is unacceptable.'
Treasurer:	'We don't have the money to order new stickers.'
President:	'Contact the vendor who supplied the stickers and inform them that they made a mistake that needs to be rectified immediately, and that because it was THEIR mistake there should be no charge.'
Vice-President:	'Excuse me, Mia, but are you writing the minutes of this meeting in your JOURNAL?'

President: 'Yes. So what?'

Vice-President: 'So don't you have a special student government notebook?'

President: 'Yes. But I sort of lost it. Don't worry, I'm going to transcribe the minutes into my computer once I get home. I'll give you all printouts tomorrow.'

Vice-President: 'You LOST your student government notebook?'

President: 'Well, not exactly. I mean, I have a pretty good idea where it is. It's just not accessible at this time.'

Vice-President: 'And why would that be?'

President: 'Because I left it in your brother's dorm room.'

Vice-President: 'What were you doing with the student government notebook in my brother's dorm room?'

President: 'I was just visiting him, OK?'

Vice-President: 'Was that ALL you were doing? Just VISITING him?'

President: '*Yes*. Madame Treasurer, we are ready for your report now.'

(OK, seriously. What's with the, *Was that ALL you were doing?* You so know she was talking about S-E-X. And in front of Mrs Hill too! As if Lilly doesn't know perfectly well where Michael and I stand on *that* subject!

Could it be that maybe she's nervous about 'No More Corn!' being better than any of her stories? No, that's not possible. I mean, 'No More Corn!' IS about a sensitive young loner who becomes so distressed over the alienation he feels at the expensive Upper East Side prep school his parents send him to, as well as that of the school cafeteria's insistence on putting corn in the chilli, ignoring his frequent requests to them not to do so, that he eventually jumps in front of the F train.

But is this really a better plot than any of the ones in Lilly's stories, which are all about young men and women coming to terms with their sexuality? I don't know.

I *do* know that *Sixteen* magazine doesn't tend to publish stories with explicit sex scenes in them. I mean, it has articles about birth control and testimonials from girls who got STDs or had unwanted pregnancies or got sold into white slavery or whatever.

But it never picks stories with stuff like that in it for its fiction contest.

When I mentioned this to Lilly though, she said they would probably make an exception if the story was good enough, which hers definitely are – according to her, anyway.

I just hope Lilly's expectations aren't TOO unrealistic. Because, OK, one of the first rules of fiction is to

write what you know, and I have never been a boy, hated corn, or felt alienated enough to jump in front of an F train.

But Lilly's never had sex, and all FIVE of her stories have sex in them. In one of them, the heroine has sex with a TEACHER. You KNOW that's not written from personal experience. I mean, except for Coach Wheeton, who is now engaged to Mademoiselle Klein and wouldn't even LOOK at a student, there isn't a single male teacher in this school anyone could remotely consider hot.

Well, anyone except my mom, of course, who apparently found Mr G's alleged hotness – EW – irresistible.)

Treasurer's Report: 'We have no money left.'

(Wait. WHAT DID LING SU SAY????)

Tuesday, March 2, the Plaza, Princess Lessons

Well, that's it then. The student government of Albert Einstein High is broke.

Busted.

Bankrupt.

Tapped out.

We're the first government in the history of Albert Einstein High School to have run through their entire budget in only seven months, with three more still to go.

The first government ever not to have enough money to rent Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center for the senior class's commencement ceremony.

And it's apparently all my fault, for appointing an artist as treasurer.

'I told you I'm no good with money!' was all Ling Su kept repeating, over and over again. 'I told you not to make me be treasurer! I told you to make Boris treasurer! But you wanted it to be all about Girl Power. Well, this girl is also an artist. And artists don't know anything about balance sheets and fund revenues! We have more important things on our minds. Like making *art*, to stimulate the mind and senses.'

'I knew we should have made Shameeka treasurer,' Lilly groaned. Several times. Even though I reminded her, repeatedly, that Shameeka's dad told her she is only allowed one extra-curricular activity per semester, and she'd already chosen cheerleading over student governing in a decision sure to haunt her in her quest to be the first African-American woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court.

The thing is, it really isn't Ling Su's fault. I mean, *I'm* the president. If there is one thing I've learned from this