

The Prince and the Teenager,

Allegedly

By

Maggie Gallant

WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... *In Maggie Gallant's, 'The Prince and the Teenager, Allegedly,' "Pizza Express. Founded in '65 / when Andrew was only five. / But no pizza birthdays for him, / not for second in line to be King, after Charles, / his clueless brother. What a shame their mother / isn't immortal." Just had to treat you to the entire first stanza brought to you by this expat-royal-bashing-Brit who now hails all the way down in Austin, Texas--where prevailing wind begins. Was she exiled or just emigrating on their nerves. Don't you just love her already? And I, an absolute, ardent colonist-monarch-kiss-ass-maximus, of even less than lower still birth, abroad. It's exquisite. Let's take a look, shall we? "And the photo with his arm draped around a teenager? / It's a fake and I never raped her. / My hands are small, can't be mine at all." "Trafficking. By Epstein and Maxwell, / the latter now languishing in a cell, her only hope is a rope / to follow her boyfriend's lead" It goes on, as I do, except she's Hilary-leslie, knope, Rodham-to-the-core more amusing: "you'll be forever remembered as the / defender of a sex offender," Maggie! Knave, maven or Möbius, stripping herself forever from the Motherland, poor sod. We share much more than you might imagine in common. She is a playwright, performer, and a has been stand-up comic--the real indefinite article. For myself, it has been a lifelong dream of mine to have become a celebrated, professional mime, but nor could I stop talking in the initial interview, just nervous chatter really, consequently, no one asked for second. I'm not really sure why there wasn't a follow-up; I'd dressed quite nicely, got a fresh haircut, had a good breakfast, matching socks; brief resume highlighting credentials, less than ten pages; good weather that day, sun shining, not much cloud... All presumptive bloodlines, orders of succession, male-preferential-primogenitures and apparent-heirs-in-dentures kidding aside, Gallant is searing sizzling, dizzily delightful, mind you don't lose your head, in her manifestly successful "attempts to defame the good name of the Royal Duke. A rebuke." It's a hit and a hoot. . . Anyway, these appointments are as much without loyalties, nor for that matter royalties, as they are reflectively subjective . . . Let's get some perspective, who's next in line?*

The Prince and the Teenager, Allegedly.
By Maggie Gallant

Pizza Express. Founded in '65
when Andrew was only five.
But no pizza birthdays for him,
not for second in line to be King, after Charles,
his clueless brother. What a shame their mother
isn't immortal.

Pizzas were always frozen
before that first branch opened on
Wardour Street in Soho,
not far from Chinawhite, the club where late at night
Andrew was seen leaving, sweaty, heavy breathing,
running to royal protection.

And that's not even the one
where the Queen's favorite son
took his dancing queen, Virginia,
young and sweet, only seventeen,
who said he sweated so much it felt like rain.
But not our pizza La Reine.

Of course he denies the claim.
Said he barely knew them,
Epstein and Ghislaine.
And the photo with his arm draped around a teenager?
It's a fake and I never raped her.
My hands are small, can't be mine at all.

No recollection of that meeting. In fact he was eating.
You see on the day in question,
he was digesting a meal, at four or five, couldn't quite decide,
at Pizza Express in Woking. Wish I was joking.
Too arrogant to care whether Quattro Formaggi
was a believable alibi or a ludicrous lie

A birthday party for Beatrice, his daughter.
Surely they oughta know if they saw her
but no-one remembers if Bea and her friends were
ever there, let alone what they ordered.
Isn't it sordid to use your 10 year old child
as the proof that it's your victim that lied?

You expressly deny all wrongdoing,
but your victim is suing for sexual assault on three occasions.
Not liaisons. Trafficking. By Epstein and Maxwell,
the latter now languishing in a cell, her only hope is a rope
to follow her boyfriend's lead. Her greed
as disgusting as yours.

Full of bluster and denial, said you'll take it to trial,
these criminal claims,
attempts to defame the good name of the Royal Duke. A rebuke.
Then perhaps still a hint of a decent man left?
Some ounce of integrity
passed down through heredity?

But in the end you caved because Virginia was brave
and wouldn't be intimidated
by a legal system created
in favour of the rich. That bitch. Who does she think she is?
Rip her to bits. Her false memory's to blame, you'll clear your name
on the back of discrediting hers.

But couldn't further risk your reputation
on a cross-examination that would expose far darker truths.
Settle on a number in the millions.
Bailed out but stripped of your dominion.
No medals. No titles. No right to complain.
Shattered reputation. A nation ashamed of you.

Gone from public life. No longer a working royal,
you've soiled the family name, a stain
on your mother's glorious 70 year reign.
Your excuses are inexplicable,
you're despicable,
you'll be forever remembered as the
defender of a sex offender,
a perpetrator of the same,
traitor to the Windsor name.
No-one to blame but you.
Wallow in your shit, Andrew.

END

THE POET SPEAKS: *I've always been ambivalent about the British Royal Family. Neither an outright monarchist or republican, I am respectful of the Queen's stoicism and dedication to*

duty. But her children's lives have been a scandal driven soap-opera. While I'll admit to schadenfreude over much of it, Prince Andrew's fall has been vile to witness.

I don't often turn to spoken word poetry but this piece came tumbling out. Once the rhythm took hold, the anger really came through and it hasn't left. Especially seeing Andrew back in public.

My first introduction to poetry was via Pam Ayres and Spike Milligan, favorites of my parents. I was fortunate that the poetry classes in school were far from traditional. We learned the work of the Great War poets when I was eleven. My high school English teacher took us from Betjeman and Auden to John Cooper Clarke and Carol Ann Duffy, the latter termed a 'poetess' at the time. Duffy then led me to Jackie Kay, a writer whose work has had a huge influence on me, especially around adoption.

AUTHOR BIO: I'm a British-born playwright, performer, and reformed stand-up comedian, now living in Austin Texas. I write mostly dark comedies about identity and loss, and complicated family dynamics. My plays have tackled adoption, caregiving, motherhood, and end-of-life decisions. *Hot Dogs at the Eiffel Tower*, my critically acclaimed solo show, premiered in Austin's FronteraFest Short Fringe. Other full-length solo works include the Freddie Mercury tribute 'Don't Stop Me Now' and 'Our Angle in Heaven', a response to the death of Princess Diana.