

## Rajkumar Gandhi The Reluctant Prince

By Bitchybee

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine being pushed into politics when all you ever wanted was a nice, steady airlines job. And bumping along dusty roads in Amethi district when you could easily be flying overhead. And giving speeches (in Hindi) when you could be talking to your beautiful Italian wife (in Italian).

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine having to wear a starched khadi kurta pyjama when you're dying to slip on your jeans. And a Gandhi cap that makes you look plain silly when a pilot's cap can cover the receding hairline so much better. And having to grin through it all, while the world has the last laugh. I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine having to attend opening ceremonies and valedictory functions when you'd like to go out dancing. And hearing a screaming chorus of "Rajiv Gandhi Zindabad," when you want to listen to Beethoven's fifth.



Helping Mummy run the country.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine having a mother who is a shrewd politician. And a brother who was a shrewd politician. And a sister-in-law who will be a shrewd politician. And knowing you'll never make it and wondering why you weren't shrewd enough to stay out of it. Enough to give anybody a complex.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine being called 'Mr. Clean' by the Press. And then, imagine having to live up to it! Also being badgered

for policy statements on state overdrafts and corruption by mean looking reporters who look as if they know that you don't know what to say.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine being plagued by successive chief ministers of Maharashtra state for 'advice'. Especially when you have none to offer and could do with some yourself.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi.

Imagine being bullied by Arun Nehru all the time. And letting a burly cousin tell you what to say when, what not to say where, and what to say to whom — and having no say in it at all.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine going home at the end of the day only to find your wife glowering at you and saying, "Maneka left home today, let's leave too...for Italy." And imagine explaining to your wife's Italian relatives over pasta and Cinzano that you've quit your well-paid airlines job and now spend your time helping your mother run the country. It must be hard to explain these things to foreigners who think a democracy is a democracy.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine having Amitabh Bachchan come to the airport to receive you and knowing that the crowds are there to see him!

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine being called 'The heir apparent'.

Very unfair considering it's so apparent that you're just another Congress (I) M.P. And imagine having every one say you're going to be prime minister when your prime consideration is only minister to mummy. Especially when you've made no secret of it and are tired of repeating, "I'm only here to help mummy."

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine being accused of sidelining Sanjay's cronies when you haven't

even got the parties (Congress (I) Congress(S) and what not) sorted out, let alone the factions within each of the parties. And imagine being accused of sacking V.C. Shukla when you're wishing V.C. Shukla or anybody for that matter would sack you. Anything to get out of here!

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine keeping up with the Falkland crisis and the progress of the No War Pact, not to mention the constantly changing chief ministers and the unchanging Assam situation. It must be a difficult and complicated task for a man who has only flown planes. And I doubt the advanced training course in Boeings that he took just before joining politics, helps.

Imagine having everyone say you're going to be prime minister, when your prime consideration is only to minister to mummy.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine protesting loudly and repeatedly that you don't like being garlanded and received by ministerial teams at airports and still being garlanded and received by ministerial teams at airports. I wonder why he hasn't thought of disguising himself as a pilot? It would be fun to see him make a quiet exit through the staff gates while the reception committee ambushed any khadi clad sop who might happen to be travelling on the same flight.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine giving up a pilot's life with all its perks: a fat salary and annual holidays abroad, for a thankless job without vacations and without even the right to strike.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine having as a political rival your own sister-in-law. Especially when she's brighter and pushier and far more likely to succeed — and never mind all that about your being the rightful successor.

I feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine being born into a politically inclined family without any political inclination. And having to give up flying planes because your brother chose to fly one. And finding yourself in politics because you are the victim of an accident — an accident that happened to your brother. And not knowing what to do, knowing only that you don't fit in here. Living with



"... and remember to smile at the end of your speech."



"Please, please, leave me alone."

your ineptitude day after day. Worse, living with an image that a feudal, dynastic minded nation has thrust on you. And not knowing how it will all end. Meanwhile bumbling along

somehow, with the help of chamchas, taking policy decisions, helping mummy run the country. I feel sorry for India.

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