

True Love Spreads Like Peanut Butter

by [Scot Walker](#) (April 2021)



The Resting Acrobats, Glyn Warren Philpot

Dedicated to Alice Anne English

Michael Prince is a distant cousin of Hal Prince, the great impresario, but even though Michael is an aspiring mime, clown, and comedian, he has none of the notoriety of his distaff cousin. *If mama had only named me Prince Hal I might have been a Shakespeare actor and led a glorious life in Hollywood*, Michael dreams, but he also dreams in black-and-white and has less than two dreams a year, so there's nothing scientific about his limited excursions into his private stygian night.

Michael had no interest in sexual conquests or encounters until he turned twenty-three and met his soul mate, Ginger Magoffin, an art director at the Corcoran Art Gallery, in downtown Washington, DC. Although they never consummated their relationship, they frequently visited the *China Doll Restaurant*, where they would split an egg roll (not evenly—Ginger always took 2/3—since she jokingly said she was 2/3 larger and had twice the appetite as the stunned Michael pondered the mathematical equation that would mete out fair shares), a bowl of won ton soup (they passed the same porcelain spoon back and forth—so, depending on who could take the biggest slurps, it was a battle to see who first reached the embossed lotus leaf on the bottom of the bowl), and argued over spending an additional \$2.59 for the entrée of the day. 87.2% of the time, Michael won and they left after slurping the soup because he was a Scotsman by ancestry and it rankled to his argyle socks if he had to break a sawbuck just to add a pile of Kung Pao chicken or Szechwan beef to his and Ginger's communion plate.

After dining so frugally at *The China Doll* for over a year, Ginger ultimately left Michael for a CPA named Fred N. Felt, the six-foot-three-inch heartthrob, herbal biologist and grandson of Deep Throat's Mark Felt. Anyway, after a voodoo herbal healing ceremony in which they danced naked around an ancient Brazil nut tree, Fred and Ginger were married on April 15, 2011, in celebration of their commitment to combine

their income tax returns for the rest of eternity, but their divorce became effective on April Fool's Day 2012, days before their 2011 tax bill was due! Ginger was devastated. Michael smiled and went back to the China Doll where he slurped soup for the rest of the day.

"Our marriage was never a joke and I'm no fool," Ginger contended at the divorce proceedings, but her X and his newfound boyfriend, Carlos DeLope Ortega, an aspiring community playhouse actor, who secretly wanted to be a dental hygienist, merely laughed . . . gaily. Since then, Ginger has lived as a recluse, holing out in a studio apartment in Dunn Loring, Virginia, a hundred yards from the southeast entrance of the metro where the lights never go off and the rumbling of the trains jiggles her single bed back and forth across her efficiency apartment all night long (and during the well, as well, she assumes, but what the hell a girl has to work, doesn't she and she doesn't have time to hurry back at lunch and break time to watch her wiggling bed). But, back to Michael. After his abysmal break-up with Ginger (whom he joyously refers to not by name, but by snapping his ring finger against his thumb as "She Without Name Whose Tongue Doth Slurp Sour Soup . . . or more openly to his gay friends, SSS gal") as they all rock in sibilant laughter savoring the memories of that their own history with soup slurping.

Michael realized he was a gay, albeit shy boy, who needed a macho man' in his life, someone like the Indian or the cowboy or maybe even the construction worker if you really stretched your Levis; or someone like Ginger's former husband Carlos; or a gaucho Argentine with a riata and a steaming hot ass—oh forget the damned rope, his ass will suffice . . . for now.

Meanwhile, since sex was still basically consummated only in his mind and not in his loins, and in order to scratch out a living from the proverbial dirt that he walked on but never slung, Michael finessed his high school diploma from *The*

Duke Ellington School of Arts with his entrée into professional show business by auditioning for a bit part in Twenty-First Century Production Company's version of *Corked* where he performed in a production of Scot Walker's *James Dean, Abbot and Costello and the Martians* and he played the sexy bare-chested young James Dean and who ended up at the Hungry Hippo Restaurant—where they didn't serve hippos—just giant sized hamburgers which, James discovered he could only buy if he purchased the life insurance policy that went along with them. The hamburgers, he later learned, were not the major cause of death at that damned infinitesimally small hole-in-the wall—it was being tusked to death from the peppermint sticks that adored the warthog waffles, which were automatically included as the house specialty dessert! Well to make a long story extraordinarily longer, it wasn't long before dozens of Hollywood and Bollywood and Dollywood offers came pouring in until Michael ultimately accepted the role of the Gay Vamp in the short-lived but highly acclaimed production of another of Scot Walker's plays: *Count Dracula's Cafe* (a gay vampire play). Nevertheless, he was still unable to find his niche on the stage and ultimately settled down as a part-time handyman and plumber in the Cavalier Arms Hotel Apartments at the intersection of Fourteenth Street and Columbia Road, Northwest, Washington, DC, within sight (if you stood at the edge of the balcony with a pair of binoculars) of the famous cherry trees.

After losing Wanda Schlepwylder's newborn kitten down her bathtub drain (and being fired for no reason at all), Michael then accepted a job as a singing busboy at *Barney's Paramount Sauerkraut Emporium* in the New Downtown (across the street from the Old MCI Center, and mere steps to *The China Doll Restaurant*, where the entire town still commemorates his and Wanda's marvelous soup slurping antics with a mile long parade down H Street each year on Michael's birthday, July 10th, unless there is inclement weather, at which point the event is postponed and rescheduled as a boat regatta sailing

up the Potomac River from Gravelly Point to Point of Rocks), but he gave all that up for a chance to become a light bulb installer, with an exclusive territory (guaranteed by "Lights R US," which some people interpreted as 'light as us' and dream of losing untoward amounts of body lard and blobs of extraneous flesh and others interpreted as 'Lights are U.S.,' but that's really a never mind, as Gilda Radner would have said) because his job merely consisted selling, installing and maintaining lightbulbs in all the, and I quote, "two-and three-story residences and stone castles between Laurel, Maryland and Mt. Holly, South Carolina." End quote.

Michael loved his new job because the company provided two clean uniforms a week, paid his motel bills up to \$99.83 per night, and gave him twenty-one meal vouchers each week—including extra succulently slurpable soup and all the egg rolls he could eat—and the position ultimately led him to the Baker Family Castle on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay—and his first sighting of his true love: Alan Baker. Unfortunately, Michael arrived at the Baker Castle moments after three drunken Hungarian dwarfs had fallen to their deaths while trying to change the light bulbs in the massive San Francisco Tower at the west end of the castle. (And even though he tried not to think of that famous Alka-Seltzer tune: "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relieve it is," he couldn't stop the words from humming inside his mind every time he thought of midgets or got the fidgets.)

Within moments of the dwarfs plopping like liquid sunset onto the recently-waxed and granite floors, Milton Bradley, Mrs. Baker's paramour and perennial guest at the Baker Family Castle, whom Anita Baker, Michael's grandma and retired Oscar winning movie star, referred to as "my own special little daffodil erupting like a burst of sunshine from the newly falling snow", approached Michael and offered him a job that would pay him a thousand dollars. Michael's only question, "Whom do I have to kill?" was met with a silent

stare and a fistful of hundred dollar bills shoved into his left front shirt pocket as Milton explained that three Hungarian dwarfs had just fallen off a ladder, literally goulashing themselves to death because they had each worn six pairs of slippery silk socks to stretch high enough to reach the hot bottoms of the burned out bulbs, as they stood on a treadless ladder trying to unscrew what others had so deftly screwed. (It seems that, unbeknownst to Michael, the dwarfs were operating under an expired licensing agreement from the same franchise [Lights are U.S. {whereas Michael worked for Lights are Us} under the unratified 1985 Teamsters Union contract], that licensed him, but he didn't put three and goulash together because the hundred-dollar bills were so crisp he felt them rubbing against his ever engorging left and dominant nip. {Michael refused to let his mind wander into the dichotomy of the word "felt" as in feel and as in the family of Felts that married his ex-girlfriend, Ginger}, so he listened with tongue dangling from his lips as the hundred dollar bills continued to titillate his left nipple {to the chagrin of Alan Baker who peeked out over the top of the staircase, ogling the hot young stud, dreaming of titillating Michael with his right nipple digging through his I love Bimini T-shirt} and Milton explained what he had in mind] which make Michael's and Alan's erections simultaneously hard.)

Three short dwarfs," Milton began, "each no bigger than this (Milton held his hand an inch above knees) were changing the lights in the San Francisco Tower's Grand Staircase when they realized the ladder wasn't tall enough. They stood on their tiptoes on each other's shoulders, but they were still just a tad shy of the highest bulb, so they firemaned themselves down the ladder, tugged on eight pairs of silk socks apiece, and scurried back up, standing on each other's shoulders as they stretched out on their tippy toes to unscrew the burned-out bulbs. Well, what they didn't know was that the ladder was treadless and the bottom dwarf, Oscar de

la Ortega (who was distantly related to Carlos on his father's uncle's side), looked down at his socks, which had slid into a bunch. Instinctively, he reached down to pull them up, but, unfortunately, forgot to tell the other Hungarian dwarfs his plan and just as he felt the dwarf tower trembling, he veered up. . . but he wasn't fast enough and they all slid headfirst down the ladder, plopping themselves to death right here." Milty paused—pregnantly, "All that was left was this puddle of glop that resembles the Wicked Witch of the West, a shattered forty-watt light bulb, and a sticky wad of dwarf sized silk socks." Milton gagged, forcing back the reflux. Then he took a deep breath, trying to judge Michael's reactions, trying to focus on a pair of empty eyes, wondering if the Homer character standing in front of him was more than, D'oh, a cartoon. "I'm afraid, if the dead dwarfs are found like this, someone will sue the Baker family for damages." Again Milton looked Michael in the eyes. Again a vacuous stare glared back at him. "I need to cover-up a potential lawsuit before anything else happens." Milton made a circular motion with his left hand, trying to speed up Michael's thinking process. "I can do that by having you replace the treadless ladder with a treaded one and disposing of these." Milton held up several dozen pairs of smooth, albeit soggy, silk socks.

Red flashes blinked on and off in Michael's cerebellum as he remembered watching the Fox TV ads where the ambulance-chasing lawyers warned about law suits, promising victory if you would just call GET-ALAWYER-NOW, and never have to worry about money again, wondering why he couldn't keep his mind on Milton's blah, blahs, feeling the slight drum-drum-drumming sound of the hundred dollar bills as they lay poignantly, gently against his heart, reminiscing about hot brown-skinned boys lying on the black sandy beaches at Diamond Head in their yellow Speedos, trying to imagine what it would be like to make love while watching the sun slither into the Pacific, rubbing his hands down his legs thinking about the boys, honed up, boned up, trying desperately not to show . . . until the

blah blahs became words again and Michael tried to grasp the reasoning behind the money and what he'd have to do to earn it. So, he did what he had done since he was a fourth grader in Rose Helen Hardsock's science class, he mentally slapped himself in the head trying to drive the self-indulgent thoughts from his mind, but no matter how hard he tried to raise his imaginary hand to his head and how often and how hard it slapped his noggin, he couldn't get it out of his pocket and his horny thoughts lingered on and on.

"Using your mime legerdemain, you can save the Baker Family Castle and what's left of their Hollywood residuals. Besides," Milton laughed, "the dwarfs are already dead," he stepped into the slime pit that was a mere memory of the dwarfs, "it's not like you're an accessory to murder or anything. You're just doing a guy like me a big favor—you're just a clean-up man—cleaning up after the scene of an accident," Milton laughed, but his laugh seemed vacuous and mean-spirited to Michael and, had it not been for the hundred dollar bills pressing against him, he would have gotten up and left.

Nine minutes later, replete in an orange wetsuit and make-shift fins made from a pair of mismatched purple crocs, and after having switched the treadless ladder with a treaded one, Michael negotiated a perfect swan dive from the top of the San Francisco Tower into the moat and hid the midgets' slippery silk socks in the most secluded section he could find, leaving nothing behind except a small sample of his DNA, (which was subsequently tracked down by the same legislature that had been collecting DNA samples from mime school graduates, actors, and clowns across the Commonwealth for the past three years [and promoted by Assemblywoman B. O. Taney, the Virginia House of Delegate House majority whip {who was heavily into SM in the privacy of her own home and at the Black Demon Salon, which she ran from the rear of a barber shop in downtown Richmond}, the woman who was responsible for

the strict conservative interpretation of the Virginia State Constitution and had made the entire mime, clown, and wizard issue the hot point of her last election, superseding the previous years' hot buttons of abortion, gay rights and immigration] because the assembly sided with the her suburban conservatives with her platform: "You never know how many crimes these perverted mimes and clowns commit until you compare their DNA with that of all the other criminals. Clowns are as different from us as bricks are from flatworms, after all.")

Michael Prince's kangaroo justice trial lasted less than the dying breath of Hugo, the three-foot four inch dwarf who was the last to die in the ladder incident, and he was sent to the Hopeless Penitentiary for Homosexuals and Dwarf Killers to serve hard time, working twelve hour shifts, six days a week (Sundays, however, were reserved for prayer, mediation, and pot luck suppers, which were brought in by the Women's Auxiliary of the local Pentecostal church), lengthening men under five foot eight inches tall—and even though his success rate was an impressive 49%, the Hopelessian prison officials are still hesitant to discuss the remaining 51% disfigured dwarfs, midgets and gnomes, and since the state legislature is predominantly hard on crime, no one there has the balls to approach such a slippery silk socked shibboleth.

Before he was taken into custody, however, Michael spotted Alan Baker in the front row of the courthouse as they eyeballed each other and, more or less, fell in love (though in retrospect, most would say lust . . . or some other insidious cardinal desire, but be that as it may) and for his entire tenure at Hopeless State Prison (where the cheer at the un-refereed soccer games was always, "Rah, rah, let's hear it for the Hopeless Hungry Hippos!" the prison's fictitious mascot), Michael could think of nothing other than Alan and the place where their eyes originally locked in passionate bliss back at the Baker Family Castle's San Francisco Tower—as

Alan loitered (and lusted) just above the Grand Staircase, which caused Michael to hum incessantly as he hungered in his heart for the man of his dreams, praying the dwarfs killers and homosexuals at Hopeless Pen would never learn about his passion for the handsome Baker boy and beat him to a bloody pulp, so each morning on his way to the Stretch-o-rina, he lifted up his soft sonorous voice in song, singing, "I left my Heart in San Francisco tower," pining for his lover, Alan, and not for the sanguine City by the Bay.

After stretching and pulling dozens of legs and arms akimbo, Michael's mind snapped one day at lunch while he was eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich where he saw the face of a god which looked a lot like Alan hovering in between the crunched up chunky nuts and the half-smashed strawberries. *It's a sign*, Michael thought, as he spread the Adonis-like face back and forth over his wonderless bread, absent-mindedly staring out the window, imagining his true love as if he were Rapunzel, trapped forever in the San Francisco Tower of the Baker Family Castle—unable to grow his hair long enough—or fast enough—to escape.

After Michael's miraculous conversion in which he saw the face of the Greek god spreading before him in chunk style Planter's Peanut Butter, he divided his time between masturbation while picturing his nude lover lying on the beach at Waikiki, and tutoring the taller (and as yet unstretched) dwarfs in their GED preparation classes, secretly praying that the illiterate dwarf killers would learn how to read the Grimm Brothers' tale of Rapunzel on their own and grow enough collective hair that he could weave it into a fifty foot braid and climb out of prison.

Despite a raspy voice, however, Michael read the fairy tale over and over again—to the point that he had memorized every word—and by the time he finished each rendition, there was never a dry dwarf killer in the pen. Even Sammy C. Davis, the great-grandson of the entertainer, and the only glass-eyed

midget prisoner at Hopeless, shed a few tears from his good eye—his right one for the brave prince who scaled Rapunzel’s hair, rescued his true love, and lived happily ever after in the castle of love. (Sammy even composed a song about it, to the tune of “The Candy Man” but because of copyright issues, it was never released). Rapunzel, of course, became the code word for Alan Baker—and no sane man (and there were, perhaps as many as a half a dozen) at the Hopeless Penitentiary for Homosexuals and Dwarf Killers—would willingly bring on the wrath of the guards by mentioning the name of Michael’s true love—let alone admit to liking a gay clown like Michael.

Unbeknownst to the general population, however, there were insidious things being done to the prisoners each evening: subliminal messages were being sent through headsets hidden deep inside their pillows: musical renditions by off-key singers, and re-broadcasts of George W. Bush’s Emmy-award winning series Great Big Bushes indigenous to America, (which was nominated for a Nobel Prize but lost by one vote), and sonorous monotone readings by that twice-fired idealistic author, George McTavish whose only claim to fame was writing this line “Every Day in Every Way I am getting Better and Better.” He urged us followers to repeat that adage a hundred times a day

Each evening from 7:15 until lights out at 8:00, Michael wrote notes to Alan in invisible ink, hid them in small plastic capsules resembling pigeon poop, and smuggled the messages out of the prison via the Hopeless Penitentiary doves that roosted in the eaves of the prison gift shop, (to which Michael had access as a GED tutorial aide).

As soon as the doves flew back to the Baker Castle and landed on the battlements, Alan would remove their message bands, supplant them with his answers from Michael’s previous note, and sequester the latest messages in his Tightly Whities until he had time to sneak into the nethermost parts of the castle, hide under his mother’s Afghan and read the secret

messages by flashlight while dreaming of whacking off deep into the night. And as Alan lay in the same bed his mother had slept in when he had read her forensics books, never dreaming of the manner in which love and forensics could reach across the decades and touch two people so macabrely different, he pined for his man until his loins ached (he hadn't 'exercised' in over two weeks, refusing to ponder, let alone articulate the word 'masturbate', a phenomenon that happened spontaneous-like creation, itself) for the love of Michael Parker. After the exchange of the sixth dove letter, Michael and Alan formulated a master plan (thanks partly to Michael's longtime friendship with Ginger Magoffin, who was now the city planner and had taught him that the best laid plans of city planners and managers often only go astray because of lack of foresight) and Alan and Michael agreed that as soon as he was released from the Hopeless Penitentiary, Michael would stand outside the San Francisco Tower and sing, "Once I had a Secret Love," as Alan, reminiscent of the moment he first fell in love with Michael, would be decked out in an orange wetsuit and purple crocs and skydive into the moat, swimming to the safety of Michael's elongated arms (because, yes, even Michael was stretched in that horrible stretch-o-rina room at the Hopeless State Prison), even if he had to hand-wrestle the crocodiles, he knew he'd live long enough to and marry the man of his dreams. But now, as Alan read Michael's last epistle, wondering about the strange directions, wondering if he should really head back to the kitchen at this hour of night, he almost heard the prison doors clanking shut, locking his true love in for the last time. "Tomorrow Michael will be free with car keys in hand, wearing all his earthly possessions—even the crocodile boxers I overnighted him yesterday and he'll drive directly to the castle and rescue me." Alan tugged at his hair—wishing it were as long as Rapunzel's—knowing, even he couldn't live long enough for it to grow like hers.

Then Alan hurried to the kitchen, reading and re-reading Michael's latest dove-delivered missive. "Take two

slices of wonder bread, spread chunky style peanut butter on each side and jam them together. Count to ten and gently remove the slices. Look at the one on the right and tell me what you see.”

“Tell me what I see?”

“Tell me what I see?”

“What in the hell am I supposed to see?” Alan ripened open the bag of Wonder Bread, jabbed on a few spoonfuls of peanut butter and smushed the two halves together. “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.”

At the count of ten, Alan gently pried the two halves apart and spread them onto one of his granny’s large turkey platters. He sat at the yellow Formica kitchen table, staring, flicking his eyes from right slice to left, back and forth, back and forth, right, left, right left, flickering like a cat watching a bird through a chain link fence. Finally, he turned the platter at a ninety-degree angle and staring back at him was the image of his lover: Michael Prince.

“But he’s wearing a beard and . . .” Alan turned the plate two degrees further to the left, “What’s this? Peanut chips? No, oh my goodness, they’re sprinkles! My true love has sprinkles in his hair!”

Alan’s mind raced as he dug his finger into the peanut butter chunks and licked off his lover’s jeweled beard, smoothing the globs of chunky nuts and smoothing out Michael’s auburn hair.

Alan took his knife and smeared the peanut butter back and forth across the slices of Wonder Bread, smushing the two slices together, then he took a gulping bite.

True Love spreads like peanut butter. Alan thought. Michael will never believe this. Never in a thousand years.

Alan finished the peanut butter sandwich and smiled.

Better having both inside, he thought, make them part of me . . . make them mine.

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Scot Walker is celebrating his 60th year as a published author with hundreds of published novels, short stories, essays, poems and plays. He is a member of the Dramatist Guild and his plays have been produced throughout the USA.

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