

Tragicomedy in Britain



Horace Walpole

by Theodore Dalrymple

One small consolation for the present political turmoil in Britain is the brilliance of the *Telegraph's* cartoonist, Matt, who produces a [small cartoon every day](#), without fail. He is the grandson of the writer and critic V.S. Pritchett and son of the journalist Oliver Pritchett, and he combines the sharpest commentary with the greatest good humor. His genius is always to be irresistibly funny, without spite or intention to wound. Even the victims of his shafts must laugh.

Consider the cartoons he drew in the week before and after Liz Truss's downfall as prime minister after her U-turns in policy.

On the [Tuesday](#) before her resignation: two ladies are sitting at a tea table with a cake. One says to the other, "Liz Truss

gave me the recipe for this cake. If you change every ingredient, it's delicious."

[Wednesday](#): two Members of Parliament are leaving the building. One says to the other: "I hope Liz Truss isn't forced out this week. I got November 15th in the sweepstake."

[Thursday](#): the two policemen outside Number 10, Downing Street, are seen shaking because of an earth tremor. One says to the other: "I hope this is fracking and not more political turmoil." (In Britain, opposition to fracking for gas is based upon fear of earth tremors.)

[Friday](#): we see one of the seventeenth-century gunpowder plotters (who wanted to be blow up Parliament) being told by two guards as he digs a hole of gunpowder: "Don't bother, they're blowing themselves up."

[Saturday](#): a waiter with the menu asks a couple in a restaurant: "'Are you members of the Conservative Party?'" And then he says, "'We try not to give you a choice because you always get it wrong.'"

[Sunday](#): two tourists in London stand in front of a tour bus, and the guide tells them: "'You can see the Changing of the Guard in the morning and Changing of the Prime Minister most afternoons.'"

I am reminded of what Horace Walpole said: "The world is a tragedy to those who feel, but a comedy to those who think." And to those who think and feel, it is a tragicomedy.

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