

fic post!

- Jun. 20th, 2006 at 1:19 PM



This particular piece of crack was inspired by a [comment](#) which [bookshop](#) made over at the last chapter of MsScribe saga, suggesting that [charlottelennox](#) should have a fandom. And...well, we all know that [charlottelennox/ mina de malfois](#) is the world's most natural OTP, right?

So here it is. A [mina de malfois/charlottelennox](#) crossover fic, from their most ardent and loving fangirl.

ETA: I was posting this in a rush as I was running out the door to meet [angharadsol](#) and I forgot three things.

- 1.) The disclaimer. Mina de Malfois and Charlotte Lennox belong to themselves, not to me. I merely adore them with the fiery heat of a thousand suns.
- 2.) The thanks: to [glossing](#) and [gunderpants](#) for audiencing, encouraging, listening while I bandied the plot around, and coming up with the most dreadful puns.
- 3.) The html tags for italics. *fixes*

At Her Grace's Behest part 1 of 2

by Branwyn

Mina/Arc and Mina/Charlotte ahead, fyi.

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“Arc,” I said, typing somewhat delicately into the IM box, “Have you been keeping something from me?”

I waited expectantly for Arc's reply, which was a suspiciously long time in coming. I sighed and shook my head, eyes fixed on the italic text at the bottom of the window which informed me that *Archivist12 is typing...* Arc, I have occasionally had cause to reflect, is imbued with many lovely qualities, but she is not always as attentive as her friends might wish her to be.

But eventually she replied, “What on earth do you mean?”

I responded quickly, so as not to lose momentum. “This Charlotte Lennox character everyone’s talking about,” I said. “No one seems to know who she is.”

“No doubt,” said Arc, “that is because she’s keeping her identity a secret.”

I sighed. “Don’t be tiresome,” I said. “Do you know who she is?”

Another long pause followed. I drummed my fingers on my desk. “Why do you want to know?” she said finally.

It was my turn to hesitate at that. Arc, you see, can be quite subtle at times—though I fancy she’s no more intelligent than I am, as my own IQ is very nearly that of a genius (or it was in third grade, when it was last measured). I had been depending on her to see the difficulty the moment I brought the issue of Charlotte Lennox’s identity to her attention. She was quite good at that ordinarily—anticipating my thoughts, I mean, and I found her sudden caginess to be just a touch disconcerting.

“I just wondered,” I said after a moment. “She seems a savory sort of character. I thought I might invite her round to the Malfois Estate for a cup of tea and a chat.”

Arc’s next reply came almost instantly. “What makes you think she plays *Sanguinity*?” she said.

At this point it must be confessed I did lose my temper a bit, which led me to make my first mistake. “Doesn’t everyone?” I snapped. *Who matters*, I left unspoken.

“I don’t,” said Arc immediately.

I winced.

“Yes,” I said soothingly, “but you have an avatar, which is almost as good.” I thought a moment. “Better, really.”

Arc took her time replying to this. “I may know Charlotte’s identity,” she said. “But if I did, I couldn’t tell you without her permission, and I doubt she’ll give it.”

Relief coursed through my veins like the bliss of some narcotic drug—a nicely poetic metaphor which I remembered to file away for use in the next installment of *At His Lordship’s Behest*. “Of course,” I said. “But this is the Internet. Everyone uses pseudonyms. Surely she would have no objections to communicating with me *au roquelaure*, as it were.”

“It’s possible,” she agreed.

I’d had a long day at work that day, mostly because I had stayed up for most of the previous night reading Charlotte Lennox’ account of a BNF gone mad, and my patience was at a low ebb. “Well then,” I said, typing very precisely so as to convey a sense of frostiness, “if you feel you

can be bothered, please let her know that Mina de Malfois requests the pleasure of her company at the Malfois Estate tomorrow evening. I will give the housekeeper orders to admit her.”

"What housekeeper?" said Arc.

And at that, I lost patience entirely. I signed off, even though the text at the bottom of the IM window told me that Arc was typing another reply.

This turned out to be my second mistake.

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I feel that I should take a moment to explain why the question of Charlotte Lennox’ identity was of such pressing concern to me, and why I was so keen to speak with her.

Earlier that week, fandom had been rocked to its core when a series of articles, posted to an obscure JournalFen community, had appeared to level accusations of deceit, manipulation, and cruel and unusual sockpuppetry against a former BNF known as LadyWriter, whose popularity, only a few years ago, had very nearly rivaled my own. As a BNF myself, I know all too well what the jealousy of less esteemed individuals can lead to in terms of unwarranted accusations of dishonesty, and I paid the posts no mind at first. I read them, of course—it was best to know what tunes the devil is playing, after all—but I studiously ignored the posts appearing on my friend’s list in defense of Charlotte Lennox (who had the impertinence to style herself “the Duchess of Richmond,” as though in mockery of my own frequently-guessed-at aristocratic roots) and I replied to all comments directing my attention to her posts with a lofty scorn. I was not acquainted with LadyWriter personally, as she had declined to friend me back when first I made overtures toward her, and I certainly have no need to pad my own friends’ list with dead weight. But I felt that the dignity demanded by my own position in fandom required that I at least give some appearance of solidarity with her, or at least decline to participate actively in her degradation.

As the week wore on, however, it became steadily more apparent that the majority of fannish opinion was on the side of Her Grace. And for good reason, I had to admit; the scrupulous thoroughness with which she had assembled her evidence against LadyWriter was fairly damning. She had collected IP addresses proving that certain notorious fandom trolls of bygone years who had targeted a number of BNF’s, LadyWriter included, was none other than LadyWriter herself, who had risen to fannish fame on the tide of all the sympathy and outrage the troll provoked.

I was, in almost equal measures, smug and chilled by these revelations, and the pent up hostility they seemed to unleash in the fandom. I can safely ascribe my own popularity to the quality of my writing, helped along, naturally, by a certain style, a *je non ses qua*, in my icons and journal layout, and by keeping only the best company—to wit, Arc, who has a certain genius for marketing. It is true, however, that during my first forays into fandom, I had seen clearly that a fledgling fic writer, whatever her obvious talents, would need a boost before anyone would deign to notice her. So I...helped myself along a bit, you might say, by the strategic creation of one or

two sockpuppets. Nothing malicious, and nothing nearly on the scale of LadyWriter's MasterSock Theater—just an imaginary fangirl or two, who brought my first stories to the attention of SophistiFic, the central mailing list at the time. Once I began to receive a certain number of reviews, both _Ameliana and VampLvr24 had melted into the shadows, never to be seen again, but I felt that I owed something to their memory. And it occurred to me that in the present climate, if anyone should start to get nosy about IP addresses, it might go the worse for me. The dogs of fandom had been loosed, and blood was in the water. One or two anonymous comments had even appeared in Charlotte's most recent posts, suggesting that when she had finished eviscerating LadyWriter, she might, for the sake of the fandom, apply her extraordinary investigative skills to the actions of other BNF's. This comment had been followed by a snide reference to "certain militant deGravina-fen" which I could hardly pretend was anything other than a veiled reference to myself.

Apart from the mild-mannered sockpuppet I had maintained strictly as a window into BalletChic's friends locked posts, my stocking activities had dwindled entirely to a halt over the last year. Nevertheless, it struck me that it would be prudent to have a nice conversation over vintage Malfois cellar wines with the Duchess of Richmond, as one member of the fandom aristocracy to another, and determine just how far she intended to inquire into my affairs—and, if possible, divert her attentions in another direction. All this, of course, would depend on whether Arc had passed along my message to Charlotte, as I had asked of her. Thinking back on our conversation, I began to wish I had taken the effort to be a bit more conciliatory. I mean to say, I know I can be a bit imperious at times—it's in my nature, and we can none of us help our nature. But it was just possible, I thought, that Arc wouldn't see it this way.

The following evening, however, I discovered how foolish I had been to doubt her.