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Entire Complacency and Satisfaction

by [Carlanime](#)

Summary

A quick look forward to the period immediately following Mina's sojourn in grad school.

Notes

Written for this prompt:

Archivist12 aka Judy/Mina de Malfois

I would love to see the fic where Mina and Arc finally get together, either after school ends or during her grad school years. Whether it's Arc being conniving and masterminding as usual or Mina finally taking the plunge, I'd just love to see how they finally work it out. (And any way you want to throw Xena in there is great. *kof*)

The title is taken from a quotation by Charles Lamb.

Of course throughout grad school I'd been spending weekends and hols at Arc's place, for the most part, except when events interfered. The fallout from that time I hosted a convention dedicated to my fanfiction took up all of one Christmas break, and I lost several weekends and one entire Easter bailing Joshen out of a couple of prisons and several mishaps. But generally speaking, I was a welcome guest at her house and also at her apartment, and could be confident of finding a place to lie my head, as well as a toothbrush and my preferred brand of toothpaste in the morning.

The thing was, though, Arc is so damnably organised on all fronts including that of hospitality that I was never quite sure if I'd been elevated to any status above mere cherished guest. I mean, there'd been moments too intimate to record, and I knew she was fond of me and all. But when you got right down to it, what did the toothbrush--and the pyjamas in my size, and even the monogrammed bath towels--really *mean*? They could have signified anything or nothing.

I'd seen, with my own eyes, that she could at the drop of a hat whip out toothbrushes fresh in their packaging for a whole van full of snowstorm-stranded fans *with no advance notice whatsoever*. And her friends all seemed to have things left at her place--nightclothes and spare pairs of glasses and the like. So I didn't know if she thought of us as a unit, or if I was just another something-or-other.

It wasn't like she was Nancy. *She* hyperventilated and tugged at her collar as though being strangled if having someone park a toothbrush at her place so much as came up in conversation. I'd seen *that* with my own eyes, too, and it was the first I'd ever realised that 'fear of commitment' wasn't just a convenient phrase but was, in her case, a rather mild way of describing a flat-out phobia. Funny she never seemed to mind strewing her own stuff around other people's places.

Arc had enough of Nancy's possessions lying around that I'd almost felt the slightest tinge of insecurity, until one night Nancy crashed on my floor, and left behind half her wardrobe, a stack of books, several unopened letters, and a handgun. After I'd been around them for a while I accepted it as just one of her things. Perhaps she was marking territory, or maybe it made her feel closer to us to know we were tripping over her belongings. She also, for the record, couldn't travel anywhere without getting several of us running around after her, mailing her her preferred brand of under-eye cream, or her favourite candy, or bottles of soda, none of which could ever be purchased in whatever country she was wandering through, and all of which cost a small fortune to procure and mail out.

But anyway, I didn't know if I was just Arc's most frequent guest, or if we kind of almost lived together, until after I'd left fandom (I'd thought forever) by faking my own death, thinking to pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion. I'd had to go underground, you see, because I'd published an absolute *smash* of a novel, and while I was entirely grateful for the unexpected financial boon it brought me I didn't *quite* want anyone guessing that I was its author. People might misunderstand that I'd been tapping into the zeitgeist; they might think those were my own insipid fantasies, written there in splashes of purple prose, Mary Sues, and appalling stalker-ish heroes.

So I'd gone underground, entirely avoiding fandom while it variously embraced and denounced the novel, and instead busied myself buying property. Not, alas, a manor, but a quite nice little condo. I spent my first nights there in a sleeping bag, and then when I'd finally bought bedroom furniture I almost had to use the sleeping bag again, on top of the bed, because I'd forgotten sheets and bedclothes. We can't all be like Arc, I told myself.

Then there was a knock at the door, and it was a package for me, full of Egyptian cotton sheets and huge bath towels. I felt that mix of pleasure and annoyance that comes from being well taken care of in a way that hints that the other party thinks you incompetent to take care of yourself. And then, hanging the towels, I noticed something: they were monogrammed. Not with my initials, though. With Arc's.

So were the sheets.

I called her. 'Some of your stuff,' I said politely, 'has been delivered to my apartment.'

'Well, yes,' she said calmly. 'You know I can't get to sleep on anything with a thread count below 380.'

And that was how I knew.

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