



Jackie ([jackiejlh](#)) wrote,
[2007-05-16 22:42:00](#)

Mina Fanfiction -- Untitled

Word of warning to the flist: This post is not Harry Potter, Sycophant Hex, or Real Life related, so I will not be offended if you skip over it. ;)

Also, if you have never read the wonderful stories posted over at [mina de malfois](#)'s journal, nothing below the cut will make one bit of sense to you. Sorry. I highly recommend her stories, though, because they're just so awesome, and witty, and intriguing, not to mention quite addictive. So addictive, in fact, that I have *gasp* written Mina fanfic. It picks up right at the end of [mina de malfois](#)'s last posted chapter, [Mina de Malfois and the Brides of Fictionstein \(Part One\)](#), however, so if you've never read it, or haven't kept up with it, you might want to do so before or instead of reading this story.

This didn't start out as fanfic, really, but as a way for me to get through an evening of boredom, and the end result amused me, even if it was nothing near as fabulous as the original, so I sent it to the wonderful [mina de malfois](#) in the hopes that she would get some laughs from my rather odd attempt at Mina fic. I was more than a bit surprised when she encouraged me to actually post it for others to read, but decided that, well, what can it hurt? My flist already knows I'm crazy anyway... *shrug* So anyway, please enjoy, and if you think that I've depicted the characters all wrong, well, oops. I tried. :)

Obviously, all things Mina belong to [mina de malfois](#), and I'm just borrowing them. And, of course, many, many thanks to [mina de malfois](#) for the wonderful stories she's treated us all with, and for allowing me to mess with her characters. *fangirls* And a warning to the readers, there is hints of femslashy subtext (and just a tiny, tiny, squint-and-you'll-miss-it bit where subtext is dropped in favor of the real thing). Just in case anyone's bothered by that sort of thing...

Summary: Xena acts dramatic but endearing, Arc is absent but thought of often (I gave up the attempt long before I got to the planned scenes with Arc *is sorry*), Mina discovers she might have a crush on our favourite librarian, Adage hates Xena with a passion, Jen is more than a little mean, italics are abused wildly, and I concoct a rather random layout for the library that, well, I really can't explain beyond, 'It's what it looked like in my head, sorry.'

It didn't take me long to realise that I was in a fair bit of trouble, surrounded by the more unstable members of fandom—not the least terrifying of which was Mrs. Sev. The thought that the woman with her arm wrapped around me was the same woman who had admitted to keeping

shrines to characters from books in her house... well, that did very little towards making me feel *safe*, you know? I mean to say, did she live nearby? Would she expect me to associate with her offline now that she knew I was within meet-up range? One could never tell with people like this....

That disconcerted feeling, I found, was small compared to the one that overwhelmed me a moment later, when she started introducing me to random fen scattered around the room. Whispers of things like, 'It's Mina! Did you read her story about-' and, 'I wonder if we can talk her into finishing her Sanguis-' floated past my ears as I was quite literally dragged around the library by that all-to-friendly guiding arm. Perhaps I should have been flattered, but, to be honest, I was barely paying attention to the women whose hands I was shaking (or who were randomly enveloping me in rather tight hugs that lasted just a bit longer than I was strictly comfortable with), opting instead to keep a close eye on the second floor railing. I could only imagine what sort of rumours would spread if any of the library staff were to see me not only being accepted by the women who had infested the place like cockroaches, but being treated like some sort of *idol*.

Thankfully, the attention turned away from me a moment later when the library doors swung open and a rather annoyed looking Xena stepped inside, throwing an angry glance back at the protestors, who were causing enough noise to have been a group of hundreds instead of just a dozen or so. They seemed to have been trying to keep her from entering, but apparently hadn't been all that successful, and the security guards were doing a rather admirable job of keeping them outside, where they were significantly less of a nuisance.

Xena looked as though she fully intended to knock over anyone who got in her way as she walked up the stairs to the second floor, and yet, considering the white-robed women around me, I decided she was probably quite a bit safer to be around. Not wanting to brave the placard-toting crazies outside anymore than I wanted to continue to chat with the prayer-bead-toting crazies *inside*, I quickly made my excuses and hurried after her.

Nodding to Seldom where he sat at a table near the top of the steps, looking for all the world like he was guarding the entire floor from the library's 'visitors', I looked around just in time to see Xena disappear into the Media Fandom Special Collection section. I followed, giving the confused grad student sitting at the table inside a small wave as I continued on to Arc's office, where Xena was rummaging around in a desk, a determined look on her face.

'Hi,' I said softly, feeling for a moment like I was talking to a rather irritated tiger of some sort, and not wanting to startle her and prompt an attack. Really, she did look a bit scary, with her hair mussed in a way that was a bit extreme even for Xena—I was certain it could only have been the work of either a very fast moving convertible or an angry protestor—and a look of sheer annoyance on her face.

I needn't have worried, though. When she looked up and saw me hovering in the doorway, she smiled brightly and said, 'I'm surprised to see *you* here, Mina. I didn't think you usually associated yourself with this particular brand of insanity.'

'Yes, well, I wasn't warned properly,' I said simply, shaking my head at her raised eyebrow. 'Looking for something?'

'They all hurried out of here in a bit of a huff,' she explained, waving her hand in the general direction of the door. 'There's some sort of meeting this afternoon between the head of the Atheist Society and the leader of the... well, of them,' and here she motioned again towards the door before bending over the drawer again, plucking out files seemingly at random, 'and just in case that doesn't go well, there are a few things in here that your darling librarian would rather not have found. You know, if they should get it into their heads to overwhelm the remaining staff and start ransacking things or something.'

'Do you really think they'd do that?' I asked, wondering if perhaps I'd underestimated the level of danger associated with what was, from all appearances, the real-life version of the Cult of the Tented Tartans. There was fandom obsession, and then there was, well, breaking into a librarian's office and destroying actual books. That, to me, was just an entirely new level of wtf.

'Who knows? They're not exactly proving their sanity and willingness to be understanding by taking over the school's library, are they? Most of them aren't even students here. Besides, I'm just doing as I was asked. The entire non-student staff refuses to come back until everyone associated with this whole thing has left. Apparently they can't *force* anyone to leave, and so they're doing a bit of a protest of their own until everyone has vacated the area—and taken their candles with them. I mean, honestly, the lobby was one thing, but who puts candles on bookshelves? If they come anywhere *near* the second floor with those things, I have a feeling heads will roll....'

Pushing her hair out of her face, she shut the drawer and dropped the ever-growing stack of file folders on the desk, looking around for a second and then heading for a filing cabinet near the door. Adage, who had followed us in, jumped down from his perch atop the cabinet and scurried away from her, and she rolled her eyes. I got the feeling that there wasn't much love lost there.

Stepping gingerly out of her way, I leaned carefully on Arc's desk, fighting the urge to look at whatever files she'd deemed important—or damaging—enough to send Xena in here to collect. I was horribly curious, but I couldn't help but feel like I'd already pushed the limits of Arc's trust quite a few times already, and though she'd never said as much, or even alluded to it, I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to take the risk. Truth be told, I'd been thrilled to have her back online after her cruise, and even more delighted that she'd not held any of my... *youthful aspirations* against me. If anything, she'd seemed friendlier as of late—I attributed this to having just come back from vacation, which can put anyone in the best of moods for a time. Eventually the day to day of life would wear the shiny off of everything again, but I hoped that would happen later rather than sooner.

'So are you just hiding in here, or do you have research to do?' Xena asked me, chuckling as I jumped a bit, startled out of my thoughts. 'I could use some help carrying all of this downstairs, once I've gathered it all,' she explained.

'No, no research,' I answered quickly, not wanting to be left behind to fend for myself. 'I came to

see what all the fuss was about and was blindsided by "Mrs. Sev," and the protestors looked like they were getting a bit violent, so I decided to wait until they calmed down before trying to leave.'

'Mrs. Sev? Be careful with that one, Mina, she has... issues.' She wrinkled her nose, frowning. 'You should have heard some of the things she was talking about on that island of theirs in-game. She even made James nervous,' she said with a laugh, and then added, 'PrinceC,' in way of explanation when I gave her a questioning look.

'Is his name really James?' I couldn't help but ask. 'Or is that just what he goes by online?'

'That's really his name,' she said, brushing her hair out of her face again and leaving a small streak of dirt on her cheek from when her hands had touched some of the older, dusty files. 'It's his first name, anyway. His last name is Hamill, just like his mother. Don't know what he's on about with the rest of that crap.'

I thought back to Xena coming out of Eva Hamill's cabin, and Arc's admission that she'd gone to school with both women, and realised that there was a fairly good chance Xena knew PrinceC better offline than on. I'd been reluctant to ask Arc for her opinion on the recent revelation about PrinceC's... *non-fandom interests*—I'll admit, I was hesitant to associate myself with him too much at the moment, all things considered—but I'd had more than one conversation with Xena in person now, and I was beginning to feel significantly less intimidated by her. It helped that instead of exhibiting her own rather unique kind of odd, as she usually did, she was dressed in jeans today and had dirt on her face. Though somehow she managed to make even that look glamorous, I noted with just the smallest pang of jealousy.

I took a steadying breath, not entirely sure how to phrase this sort of question, and then finally blurted out, 'He can't really believe he's been reincarnated, can he?'

Xena gave me a long, serious look, and I got the distinct feeling I'd said something wrong. She didn't answer, but instead handed me a rather large stack of files, piling the other stack from the desk on top, and nodded her head towards the door. Once I'd passed through, she locked the door behind us and then disappeared behind a row of shelves, emerging a moment later with a very disgruntled Adage held tightly in one arm.

Without warning, she grabbed my shoulder with her free hand and steered me towards the railing that overlooked the first floor. For a second I nearly pulled back, but then reasoned that no matter how much I'd offended her, or her friend, she wasn't likely to actually *kill* me in front of so many of my devoted fans. After all, they were surely unstable enough to try and avenge me.... It was a bit disconcerting all the same, though, and as if only to add to my discomfort, Seldom and another one of the special collections assistants were looking on in interest, obviously wondering what was going on. I'd gotten the impression the last time I'd talked to them that they didn't particularly know what to think of Xena—frankly, I wasn't sure I knew what to think of her, either—and I was more than a little surprised that she'd even gotten as far as Arc's office without question. Though I supposed the fact that she had a key would have been enough to convince them that Arc had consented....

I was snapped out of my musings by Xena leaning her arm across my shoulders and bending her head down enough to speak directly into my ear.

'You want to understand why James seems a little... *different*?' she asked, her voice soft so as not to be heard by others in the room, and I nodded, trying to ignore the tingling feeling that shot through me at the feel of her breath against my skin.

'You see those people down there, Mina?' She motioned at the women gathered around the library with the hand that was holding Adage, much to the cat's displeasure, and he growled softly. I nodded again, and she continued. 'Jamie was *raised* around people like that. Instead of bedtime stories, his mother tested out her Lord of the Rings plot bunnies on him. Well, the G-rated ones, anyway.'

'By the time he was five, he was acting out his own little Star Trek fanfiction stories in the living room, much to the delight of his entire family. They're all like that; his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.... Their lives seem to revolve around not only fanfiction, but around role-playing, fan art, cosplay, fandom in general. They *do* have a good grip on reality, it's just that it's buried under quite a few layers of just plain *weird*. And unlike the rest of them, who began participating in fandoms as teenagers or adults, James grew up surrounded by all that.'

I couldn't help remembering what he'd said to me not all that long ago about his Christmas plans, and realised that Xena was probably telling the truth. I wasn't even sure I understood how that was *possible*, though. I mean, I'd done my best to keep everyone I'd ever known in my real life from finding out about my hobby. I would have been mortified if my mother, or worse, my grandmother had read some of the things I'd written—*Bound for Detention* came to mind—and I couldn't imagine the horror I'd feel if they'd not only encouraged my stories from day one, but possibly written something similar of their own.

'So,' Xena said after a pause, giving me a moment to let everything sink in, 'give the kid a break. He might seem a bit crazy, but it's a harmless, fun, good kind of crazy, and he's much saner than he probably has any right to be.'

Stepping away from me, she turned towards the stairs, leaving me looking out at the robed figures sprawled around the library floor and realising with horror that quite a few of them probably had children of their own at home. When she was halfway down the stairs, she stopped and looked back, calling, 'I do need to leave here at some point today, you know, and I'll never hear the end of it if I show up without any of the stuff I came for,' and smirking as I hurried to catch up.

Getting outside was much easier than I'd thought it would be—everyone gathered *inside* the library seemed a bit too intimidated by Xena's stern glare to come rushing at me again, though quite a few did call their goodbyes to me and made noises that bordered on what could only be described as a 'squee' when I nodded at them, and everyone *outside* the library didn't seem to care what we did as long as we didn't try to get back in again. They were too busy arguing with the security guards to notice us, anyway.

Xena led the way to her car—a rather *nice* car at that, but then, the woman had her own seaplane, so it hardly should have surprised me—opened the back door, and all but tossed Adage inside. 'If you throw up in, pee in, or scratch up my car, your "Mommy" will find you skinned and hanging from her front door by your tail,' she hissed at him, her eyes narrowing, and he hissed back, dug his claws into the seat as if out of pure spite, and then turned around a few times before settling down for a nap.

'Not a fan of cats?' I asked, not sure whether to be amused at their obvious animosity for each other or worried that she might have been serious with her threat.

Frowning, Xena stood up, took the files from me, and dumped them haphazardly onto the floor behind the front passenger seat, shrugging as they fell out of order. 'I love cats. That one,' she said, glaring at him one last time before shutting the door, 'hates *me*. And makes it painfully obvious by destroying as many of my things as he can get his paws on.'

For the briefest of moments I was curious about just how often Xena's "things" were around for Arc's pet to mess with, but then decided I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to know.

'Where are you headed now? I could give you a ride,' she offered, raising one eyebrow, and her eyes danced with amusement as I froze in place. I was horrified to find that my brain seemed to have turned completely to mush at her words—and more horrified when I realised that she'd probably meant them in a completely innocent way. I could feel a hot blush creeping its way across my face, and I looked away quickly.

I spend way, way too much time reading fanfiction, I decided, worrying that the ever increasing levels of poorly written smut that had infiltrated fandom as of late were starting to do rather unfortunate things to my mind.

After a very awkward two seconds that felt as though they lasted a year, I finally stammered out, 'Uh, no, that's all right. My dorm's just over there, and it's faster to walk than to drive all the way around.' I half-heartedly pointed towards the Tia House, which stood not too far away, and shrugged. 'I'd better get back anyway; I have some studying to do.'

'Studying?' she repeated with a frown, giving me a disbelieving look. 'For what?'

'A test....' I wasn't entirely sure what she was getting at. I mean, honestly, how long had it been since she'd been in school? Neither she nor Arc looked even remotely old enough for her to be looking this confused at the prospect of studying.

'On Monday?' she pressed, and I shook my head.

'No, Thursday.'

She sighed, hanging her head down as if supremely disappointed, and then said, 'Mina, you need to get out more. It's Saturday. You're young; you should be going to a party, or spending time

with friends.'

'I don't really know anyone around here,' I admitted, feeling more than a little self-conscious, and shrugged. 'Besides, I'm not much for large crowds of loud people.' Not to mention, I added mentally, *I'm sure the large crowds of loud people would rather not have a shy computer geek crashing their parties*. I'd never really been the sort that did well in social situations—perhaps part of the reason I adored my online popularity so much. I very rarely made 'Real Life' friends these days, and with being at school, away from what few friends I did have back home, I'd, unfortunately, become somewhat of a hermit. Not that I was going to tell Xena all of that.

Xena stared at me for a long moment, her expression thoughtful and serious, and I struggled not to fidget under her gaze. Finally, she said, 'Do you know that little café on Chambers Street?'

'The one with all the green decorations and curtains?' I answered slowly, wondering what that had to do with anything.

She nodded. 'We're going to be stopping by there tonight around ten,' she said, and she motioned towards the library, which I assumed meant that the other half of 'we' was Arc. I was beginning to think that the fact that she'd not mentioned Arc's name nor her own during any of the conversations we'd had was deliberate, and I couldn't help but wonder if she was waiting for me to ask, or if she expected me to call them by their online names in person—something I wasn't overly anxious to do, since that's usually the first sign that someone is spending just a *bit* too much time on the computer.

'You should stop by,' she continued, walking around the car to open her door. 'They have the best coffee in town.'

'I... I'm not sure. I have quite a bit of work to get done,' I said in a rush, a bit panicked at the idea of having coffee with Arc on such short notice. I know this probably seems silly, considering I'd now seen and talked to her in person, but frankly, the idea of having a real conversation with Arc when she could actually see my reactions to things was a little unnerving. I'd done fairly well making myself seem rather intelligent and mature online, and possibly a bit older than I really was, and even though I realised that she probably knew my exact age and all that—and, to my annoyance, probably thought of me as some sort of *kid*—I wasn't looking forward to having to stumble through awkward small talk with her. I'm far better at speaking my mind, and doing so articulately, online than in person.

'Well, if you can manage to tear yourself away from your books,' Xena said with a grin, 'the offer stands.' And with that, she ducked her head inside the car and drove away.

I spent the rest of the day debating whether or not meeting them at the café would be a good idea. Well, I mean, I knew it wasn't a particularly *good* idea, but I wasn't sure if it would rank somewhere around 'not so bad', or 'absolutely awful'. To be honest, I was still trying to figure out

why on earth Xena had extended the invitation in the first place.

Finally I decided that I had nothing to lose, and really, I *was* curious to know what Arc was like in person, when she wasn't busy being the intimidating special collections librarian. Was her rather cool, calm attitude part of a necessary façade that came from dealing with too many idiotic students day in and day out, or was she always so serious and... well, I was looking for another not-so-flattering adjective, but my mind refused to come up with anything other than 'amazing'.

Still, it seemed that she must be a trifle dull, if she was always so... *standoffish*. I reasoned, though, that perhaps she had to be that way. After all, Arc *was* amazing, as far as I could tell, and absolutely gorgeous, and I imagined she'd have quite a hard time discouraging the hordes of men—or women, apparently, if what I'd gathered about her relationship from Xena was anything to go by—if she was anything *but* standoffish.

I'd just finished getting ready, and was spending the last few minutes before I had to leave looking myself over in the mirror—one must present the right *image*, after all—when Jen finally reappeared. She breezed into the dorm room, unlocked her desk drawer, grabbed something from inside which she quickly deposited into her pocket, and then turned to leave, but stopped as she caught sight of me.

'Where are *you* off to?' she asked, sounding amused, and I frowned.

'I'm going out with friends,' I answered coldly, not bothering to look at her. Really, I was over the fact that she'd practically abandoned me in the library. After thinking about it on and off over the course of the afternoon, I'd come to the conclusion that she must have run into some of the fandom people at cons while she was pretending to be Josh—or at least, that was the only thing that made sense at this point, though after my visit into the teen section of Sanguinity, I wasn't all that sure of anything when it came to Jen/Josh—and assumed that she'd been afraid of being recognized. Considering that being alone had given me good excuse to spend some time talking with Xena, I could hardly still be angry with Jen, but it was the *principle* of the thing, I suppose.

'Has Mina found herself a *man*?' she teased, sitting down on the edge of her bed. At my questioning look, she explained, 'You're looking at yourself like you're wondering what someone else will see, wondering what they'll think of you, and people rarely do that unless they're hoping that the other person will...!' She paused for a second, looking me up and down in a way that wasn't *exactly* how I was used to roommates and such looking at me, and I felt inordinately shy for a moment. Finally, she finished, 'Unless they're hoping the other person will like what they see.'

I rolled my eyes, shaking my head. 'Unlike most of the women around here, my life does not revolve entirely around getting the attention of boys.'

'No, I suspect it revolves around getting the attention of girls quite often too,' Jen said with a grin, laughing at my "have you lost your mind" expression.

'What's *that* supposed to mean?' I ground out through partially gritted teeth as I smoothed out my

hair one more time, trying to keep from letting on that I was getting annoyed, which I was sure was what she was hoping for. After only one day of spending more than five minutes at a time with Jen, I was beginning to realise why no one in the dormitory seemed to like their roommates. I mean, I was *covering* for her, keeping her secrets, and she was going to go out of her way to purposely get under my skin?

'It means exactly what I said,' she answered simply, her smile widening and her eyes adopting an innocent expression.

Well. That wasn't, strictly speaking, an *answer*, but it irritated me nonetheless. Or perhaps that was the reason it annoyed me. Regardless of my *reasons*, I had the overwhelming urge to forcefully wipe that ridiculous grin off her face. I spun on my heel and in an instant was standing over her, glaring. She looked startled for a second, and met my eyes as I said, as calmly as I could manage, 'I, for one, know *exactly* who I am—something I doubt you can claim. So I'd appreciate it if you'd stay out of my business, and keep your *comments* to yourself.'

And with that, I whirled around, picking up my bag as I stormed towards the door, fully intending on making a rather loud and dramatic exit—if there ever was a moment when one was warranted, I felt that this was it. I didn't get that opportunity, though, because in a fraction of a second Jen leapt up from the bed and grabbed my arm, spinning me around and pinning me against her desk. Before I knew exactly *what* she was doing, she had pressed herself against me and tilted her head *just so*, pausing with her lips less than an inch from mine. And once again, my body, horrible traitor that it is, froze.

Oh, don't get me wrong, part of me wanted to shove her away, tell her to seek professional help for her sake as well as mine, and march out of the room as planned. But some other part of me thought that I'd much rather remain right where I was, thank you very much, and as the two sides seemed to battle in my brain, I couldn't move, instead opting for just staring at her in shock.

Jen stayed still for a long moment, meeting my eyes, and then moved closer when I did nothing to protest. But just as I was sure I'd have a heart attack right then and there because my heart was beating faster than I'd ever thought *possible*... she pulled her head back and reached her hand up, patting my cheek patronisingly.

'Oh, Mina,' she said, 'I don't think you know yourself at all.'

I pushed her away as hard as I could—which wasn't all that hard, considering she practically had my arms pinned against the desk with her body—and she stumbled back a step, then steadied herself and continued to laugh as she shook her head and walked out of the dorm, letting the door fall shut behind her.

I don't think I'd ever been so furious—at least, not at Jen/Josh/whoever the hell she was. The overwhelming urge to do something horribly mean, like log on and reveal her as Josh Amos, came over me, and I was already across the room and turning on my computer before I thought that maybe, just maybe, that wasn't the best of ideas. Jen knew more about me than anyone in fandom, with the possible exception of Arc, and also knew my online reputation. She could do

some serious damage to my 'practically-British, independently-wealthy' image, and while I, quite frankly, didn't care at the moment, I suspected I'd feel quite differently in the morning. Or in a few days. Or whenever I stopped being angry, anyway. Besides, I'd probably have enough damage control to do whenever Mrs. Sev and friends got back to the internet, after them seeing me looking rather less than my best in the library.

Glancing at the clock, I realized that I was supposed to be meeting Arc and Xena in just a few minutes, and I seriously considered just not going after all. I was hardly in the mood to be sociable, and the last impression I wanted to make on Arc—on either of them, really—was that I was whiny and had a foul temper. But at the same time, I refused to let Jen ruin the first invitation out on a Saturday night that I'd had in nearly a year.

Resolving to not let her win at this ridiculous little game of hers—because really, what else could she have been trying to do, if not upset me?—I slipped out of the room and hurried to the lift, hoping that I wouldn't be too late and miss them. The entire ride down to the main floor, Jen's words echoed in my head. *I don't think you know yourself at all.* That was insane. I knew myself perfectly well, thank you, and knew exactly what I wanted in life, and who was *she* to say any different?

But as I walked out of the building, I caught myself watching my reflection in the plate glass window that looked in on the office, appraising how I looked and frantically wondering for a second if the shirt I'd chosen was flattering as I'd originally thought. Stopping in my tracks, I searched my mind desperately for a reasonable explanation of why I cared so much what Arc and Xena—*oh, all right, mostly Arc*—thought of my appearance, but kept coming up with the same unnerving answer.

Maybe there *was* a possibility, however remote, that Jen had been right after all...

[Part two now posted!](#)

Tags: [mina fanfic](#)



Jackie ([jackiejlh](#)) wrote,
[2007-05-28](#) 11:50:00

Untitled Mina Fic (Part Two)

Once again, f-list, this post won't be Sycophant Hex, Harry Potter, or Real Life related, so feel free to skip. ;)

Disclaimer: Mina and friends, of course, belong to the fabulous [mina de malfois](#). I'm just borrowing them, and I fangirl her to death for giving permission for us crazy authors to do so.

So, I wrote part two. Sort of. Don't hate me for skipping over the cafe scene, damn it, I tried. *hangs head in shame* It just wasn't happening, and so you get this instead. Sorry. :p

[Part One](#)

'God, Mina,' she whispers, and her voice is so soft that I can barely make out the words. Arc's head falls back against the pillow as I kiss my way down her neck, licking and sucking the pale skin teasingly. She shudders under my touch as my fingers slide inside of her, curving up and pressing into that spot that I know will make her-

The front door flew open with a bang and I nearly jumped out of my skin, clicking the window closed just as Nancy walked into the room.

'What are you looking at?' she asked, that damnable grin on her face.

'I'm just validating some stories.' Trying to calm my rapidly beating heart, I opened the browser again and clicked back to *Penn'd Passion*, shooting her as innocent a look as I could muster.

Unfortunately, Nancy didn't appear to be convinced. 'Then why do you look so guilty?'

Rolling my eyes, I answered without missing a beat, 'It's not guilt, it's nausea. I never should have started this real-person fiction section. You know, not once in my life did I ever have any interest in the sex lives of my friends' children, and if I have to read one more story about James meeting up with "Josh" at a convention and bending "him" over a ta-

"Heard enough!" she insisted, just a bit louder than was really necessary, and she hurried out of the room and thundered up the stairs. I swear, that woman makes enough noise to wake the dead, even when doing the simplest of things.

Opening the site admin panel, I warily eyed the first story in the submission queue and shifted in my seat uncomfortably. Really, this story was just... well. It was something. Something I probably should just validate before someone I knew came along and read it. Of course, then it would be out there for *anyone* to read, and... and... well.

Rolling my eyes at my inability to deal with what, in all honesty, probably amounted to the fantasy writings of some middle-aged man, I leaned my head back against the couch and closed my eyes, trying to clear my mind. Nancy came down the stairs, and I heard her bag drop on the floor by the door with a thud.

'I wish you'd wait until morning to leave,' I called to her. 'I don't like the idea of you driving so far by yourself overnight.'

'Too much traffic in the morning,' she answered. 'Besides, Val's party thing is in the afternoon tomorrow and I promised I'd be there before it started.'

I debated pointing out to her that she'd never once in her life been on time for anything and Val probably wasn't actually expecting her for a few days yet, but she seemed to have made up her mind already. If there's one thing I've learned about Nancy over the years, it's that there is no limit to her stubbornness.

'You know, Judy, you could come with me,' she offered, wandering into the room and leaning against the back of the couch so that the side of her face leaned casually against my own. Reaching one arm out, she closed my laptop so quickly I barely had time to move my hands, ignoring my annoyed glare.

'I can't and you know it,' I told her with a sigh. 'Between the cruise and those idiotic protestors, I've barely been in the library at all for a month. And frankly, I think my assistants were enjoying my time away just a bit too much. I found coffee rings on some of the tables upstairs.'

'Oh, the horror,' she said mockingly; I smirked in spite of myself.

'Nan,' I said after a minute, avoiding her eyes, 'what would you do if someone wrote a story about you and posted it online?'

She frowned. 'Why, has someone?'

'No.... I'm just curious.'

'Um... ' She considered it for a moment, tilting her head to the side slightly and looking pensive. 'Don't know. Depends what they said about me, I guess. Why?'

'Someone wrote... ' My voice drifted off, not entirely sure how to describe that story to her, and finally I did what I decided was probably easiest—opened the laptop and clicked on the story link. After all, she'd see the story eventually. Nancy had a rather irritating habit of always finding

the one thing you hoped she'd never stumble across. 'Here, read this,' I said, tilting the screen so that she could see it, which turned out to be pointless because a second later she practically vaulted herself over the back of the sofa and agilely landed next to me with her legs tucked beneath her.

She took the laptop from me and read silently for a moment, her eyes dancing with ever-increasing amusement, until she finally laughed openly.

'It's not funny.'

'Yes it is,' she insisted, grinning over the top of the computer at me before her eyes darted back to the screen. 'Who wrote this?'

'I don't know; it was submitted anonymously.' Annoyed with her reaction, I reached out to take the computer out of her hands, but she stood and backed away before I had the chance, still giggling to herself. 'And just what is so funny about this?' I demanded, frowning when I realised that I sounded like a pouting child.

'It's... it's *Mina*. And *you*. That amuses me,' she said simply, shrugging. 'It's just a bit ridiculous, don't you think? I mean, she's so *young*.'

'She's not *that* young,' I replied, narrowing my eyes at her and getting just a bit annoyed.

'She's... what, twenty-four?'

'Twenty-three,' I admitted, feeling just a flash of guilt at the thought. 'Her birthday isn't until May....'

Nancy raised an eyebrow sardonically—she's always amazed me with her ability to say so very much with a single expression, but at the moment I was less than impressed—and said, 'Don't tell me you actually like her.'

I didn't answer, but, of course, I didn't have to; not with Nancy. My face turning what I'm sure was a very violent shade of red probably didn't do much to help matters either.

'Oh.' She sounded surprised, and maybe a little shocked, but at least she'd stopped laughing. I, for one, couldn't find anything even remotely funny about the situation. 'So that's why you were acting so quiet the other night. I swear, I've never seen you act so awkward.'

'Yes, and thank you for that, by the way,' I grumbled, looking away. 'I'd done a very good job of keeping a rather large distance between myself and Mina in the real world whenever possible, and you had to go and invite her for coffee. Now I can't get her voice out of my head.' I only received a grin in response.

Rolling my eyes and resolving to ignore her for the time being, I stalked past her and into the kitchen, grabbing a glass from the cabinet and pouring myself a glass of water. Between reading

that *story* and then talking with Nancy, I was feeling more than a bit on edge, and I needed a moment to just *think*. Of course, with Nancy around, there is rarely much opportunity to idly stand around thinking, and she didn't disappoint. An instant later she followed me in, depositing the computer on the counter and instantly pulling cookies out of cupboard. I will never understand how she eats so much, really—it seemed like every time I turned around, she was nibbling on something—but decided that maybe chocolate was in order, all things considered, and grabbed one for myself.

'So are you going to tell her?' she asked abruptly.

'No!' I all but shouted, leaning back against the refrigerator and crossing my arms resolutely across my chest. Schooling my expression into one that I hoped didn't like quite as horrified at the thought as I felt, I finished, 'Anything but friendship between Mina and I would be a very, very bad idea.'

'Still not over me, huh?' she asked with a laugh, popping an entire—rather large—cookie into her mouth, and I grimaced.

'Of course not. How could I be when you do such attractive things?' I said sarcastically, shaking my head. 'Besides, if I recall, *you* were the one crawling into *my* bed every other night on the ship.'

'That's what you get for letting me drink too much.' She at least had the decency to blush, though she looked distinctly proud of herself at the same time, so perhaps that wasn't much to go on. 'And it's not like I heard you complaining.'

Rolling my eyes, I bit back impudently, '*That's what you get for letting me drink too much.*' Grabbing another cookie, I muttered, 'She's a student; I'm a member of the staff. It wouldn't be right to even consider it.'

Nancy started at me for a long moment, then said, 'Judy, you do realise that not only are you her archivist, the one person whose opinion of her stories she actually has to care about, but that you've also spent a decent amount of your time over the last year or so running along behind her, cleaning up her messes like some sort of fandom fairy godmother, right? I mean, I would think *that* aspect of your relationship would make things awkward more than the fact that you might run into each other on campus two or three times over the entire course of her schooling.'

I glared at her. 'Thank you, I feel so much better about all of this now.'

'Just here to help,' she said with a shrug and a wink, laughing at herself—or maybe at me; I couldn't even tell at this point. Regardless, it was time for this conversation to be over. This was definitely not something I wanted to discuss with *Nancy*, of all people. Her biggest qualms over relationships were usually things like, "She's legal, right?" and "Does convention-sex count as cheating? I mean, what happens at a convention *stays* at the convention, doesn't it?" It was almost amusing—if you weren't dating her at the time, anyway.

'Look, I don't think I want to talk about this anymore,' I finally said, leaning on the counter and resting my chin on my hands.

'Okay... so are you going to post the story?' she asked, turning the laptop back towards her and looking over the submission again.

I shrugged. 'I can't reject it. It's well written.' *Very well written*, I thought to myself, nearly shuddering at the thought—and not exactly in revulsion either, I noted guiltily. 'And I want to get it out of the submission queue before another editor stumbles across it. I already have no idea how I'm going to show my face around the site until the story falls off the front page update list.'

'Oh please, Mina and Jamie have hundreds of stories on there about them, and they don't let it get to them at all. I refuse to believe that you would let something as silly as fanfiction embarrass you.'

'You know,' she said after a pause, 'I wonder if the author has met you. They've got you described perfectly. Dark hair, dark eyes, glasses-'

'That would describe a third of the population, not to mention my *Sanguinity* avatar,' I pointed out.

'*Coldly delicious*,' she finished, smirking, and looked me up and down appraisingly. 'I like that. It's fitting.'

'Half of the people whose stories I've rejected have called me a cold-hearted bitch.'

'I don't think this author wrote it with that *particular* sentiment in mind.'

'Aren't you supposed to be leaving for Val's at some point?' I asked, shooting her an annoyed glare, and she grinned.

'I'm going, I'm going.' She gave me a quick hug and a kiss on the cheek before breezing out the door, yelling back over her shoulder, 'I'll call you when I get there. I'm sure I'll be back this way before too long!'

'I'm sure you will be,' I said to the now-empty room, frowning as the front door slammed shut behind her, and scooped up the laptop from the counter as I went back into the living room. Ensconcing myself into my usual corner of the sofa and shifting around into a comfortable position, I propped the computer across my lap and stared at the screen for a moment.

Well, I finally said to myself, *I was distracted the first time around. I should probably read it again, from the beginning. For the sake of editorial fairness, of course.* Trying not to think too much about the fact that self-deception was rather pointless, all things considered, I scrolled back up to the top of the page.

And... a bit of an epilogue, just 'cause I can.

I'd spent the better part of the night tossing and turning, trying to get to sleep, but hadn't had much success. Jen was snoring quietly on the other side of the room, and the campus seemed to have fallen silent in the early hours of the morning. I wasn't usually awake at this time, and I was rather used to falling asleep to the sound of music playing somewhere in the building or the girls on the other side of the wall arguing over something silly, not my roommate's snores and *crickets*.

Finally deciding that I wasn't going to get any sleep at this point anyway, I slipped out of bed and tiptoed to the computer, turning on the desk lamp nervously and then glancing back to make sure Jen hadn't woken up. She didn't even flinch—not surprising, really, since she only seemed to sleep a few hours a night anyway. Living a double life must be ridiculously time-consuming.

I signed on and saw that Arc was still online, which was odd. Usually she disappeared long before I went to bed. I stayed invisible on the messenger, though. To be honest, things had been a bit tense between us lately. Well, not tense, per se, but... off. We'd had that coffee last weekend, and I think that was when it had started. I mean, she'd been friendly, of course—I had a hard time picturing her being anything *but*—but she had seemed quiet and almost... distant. Perhaps, though, that was just *Arc*. She never had been all that talkative, after all.

I'd ended up chatting with Xena—*Nancy*, I mentally corrected myself, though she would always be Xena to me, I think, just as Arc would always be Arc in my head—for most of the night, who never seemed to run out of rude gossip or outrageous things to say. I was no closer to figuring out what was going on in my head, but... well, it wasn't like I ran into Arc every day or anything. I had time to get it all straightened out. And in the meantime—

I clicked my bookmark for the *Penn'd Passion* homepage and scrolled through to the RPF section, fighting back a grin when I saw the first story on the updated list. *Well*, I thought, *it's up, then*.

In the meantime, I'd decided, it couldn't hurt to at least get the idea out there for Arc to stumble across. Just in case.

[Part Three now posted!](#)

Tags: [mina fanfic](#)



Jackie ([jackiejlh](#)) wrote,
[2007-06-07 02:57:00](#)

Untitled Mina Fic - Part Three

I should really stop being such a lazy bum and think up a title for this thing if I'm going to keep adding chapters. Any suggestions? :D

Real life has been inordinately stressful the last few days, and so tonight, since I was too tired to do anything else productive, I actually finished the third part of this story--which up until today I'd been swearing I'd never finish, let alone post, considering Part Two ended with an epilogue, and therefore should *technically* be the last chapter. *shrug* Since it's written, I figured I might as well post it. And considering the way it ends, I suppose I'll be writing Part Four at some point. *shakes head* I have no will power.

Disclaimer: It all belongs to the lovely [mina de malfois](#), who is kind enough to let me play with her characters on what's becoming, scarily enough, a semi-regular basis. ♥ I promise to stop at some point. It's just that writing Minafic works as serious stress relief.... Lol.

Big thanks to [vaughn7272000](#) for giving this a beta read (and in under ten minutes, little overachiever that she is), and to [maddyridde](#) for her input and suggestions. :)

[Part One](#) ~*~ [Part Two](#)

Part Three: *In which Mina realises that she's made a rather large oversight, and Xena gets angry.*

When I'd written my latest bit of fanfiction, I hadn't had much in mind other than nudging Arc's thoughts in a particular direction. I'd figured that if—and that was definitely an "if", not a "when" at this point—I came to terms with what it was that I actually *wanted* one day, it might not be a bad idea to have a sense of where she stood on the issue, so to speak. But while making the rather impulsive decision to post the story, I will admit that I had overlooked the fact that the online fandom can adopt a rather sheep-like quality on occasion. I hadn't, you see, taken into account the habit that the average ficcer has of falling in love with any idea, no matter how seemingly uninteresting to the general public it had been at its start, and running with it.

Imagine my surprise—perhaps horror would more accurately describe it—when I logged into

Penn'd Passions a few days later to find that my story was... well, no longer the only one of its kind. Word had gotten around quickly, it seemed, and for some reason, the "pairing" had become something of an overnight success. While I'd certainly been the subject of hundreds of fics of a femmeslashy nature before, Mina/Arc was apparently far more interesting than Mina/Rabbit, or Mina/BalletChic, or Mina/anyone else, for that matter.

The fangirls had started arguing over "facts" that had never really occurred to me as anything out of the ordinary, such as the time Arc mentioned having been a guest at the Malfoy Estate—an all together untrue story, but I couldn't very well *tell* them that, could I?—and detailed accounts of how much time we'd spent together in-game. Apparently the fact that we'd generally been surrounded by other Sanguinity players at all times—not to mention the fact that it was a *game* and had no basis in reality—was irrelevant, which really shouldn't have surprised me at all. Those few details were enough for the 'ship to sail, and sail it did. Very, very quickly.

The thing that shocked me more than anything else, though, was the fact that suddenly I'd been made the center of a 'ship war. While the Mina/PrinceC and Mina/Josh shippers had generally coexisted peacefully in Penn'd Passions RPF section with only small amounts of wank between them, the het vs. femmeslash issue seemed to be the controversy of the week. Tartanists, outraged on my behalf, were setting up journals and blogs and every other manner of thing to scream insults, ad nauseam, at the other side. I was half-expecting them to turn up outside my dorm room one day, white robes and candles and all, in a show of misguided heterosexual support.

Another slightly saner but equally loud faction on the het side seemed to be acting more rational, but were still set on convincing everyone that femmeslash was disgusting and that a BNF such as myself should never be depicted in such work. The femmeslash authors and supporters were returning the wank at lightning speed, and were rallying around the comments section of *Bound for Detention*, posting drabbles and fics at a rate which, to be honest, I envied, as I'd never written story after story that quickly in my life. Not that they were necessarily good stories, but they were stories nonetheless.

The group that really was starting to make me nervous, however, was an altogether different angry mob that had descended upon anyone who had *dared* to write stories featuring me in relationships with both men and women, be it at the same time or in two completely separate fics, because they felt I was being portrayed as bisexual. Their stance was that bisexuals were greedy, and that no one, not even a BNF, should get to have 'the best of both worlds'. I wasn't quite sure what side of the fence this lot was sitting on—frankly, I don't think *they* were all that sure either—but they seemed bent on bombarding anyone straddling said fence with insults and thinly veiled threats until they toppled off onto one side or the other. No one seemed to know quite what to say to them, and so they were generally ignored by all but the newest and youngest of the fen, who were happy to engage in debate with anyone because they had yet to learn that nothing they said would ever actually be heard by the opposing side.

I watched it all silently, staying invisible and generally avoiding *Sanguinity*. I wasn't sure whether to be flattered by their concern over my fandom sex life or horrified by it, but I was beginning to lean towards the latter. The constant barrage of emails asking me which pairing I

supported was more than a little worrying as well; I was beginning to have nightmares in which I found out that I was really just a character in their heads all along, and had never been a real person.

And during all of this, Arc had disappeared. She'd sent me a quick email saying that she was going out of town for a week or two, and hadn't been online since. From all accounts, other editors had been dealing with the RPF section as well as all the other sections on Penn'd Passions, and so I had no way of getting in touch with her. At this point, I wasn't sure I wanted to talk to her anyway. While one story might have given her, well, *ideas*, hundreds of them flooding the submission queue had probably scared her off the thought completely, or caused her to write it off as an odd fandom craze that should be ignored.

I didn't hear anything from Arc for days, and when I finally heard *of* her, it was through PrinceC. He'd sent me a message when I'd been offline, saying that he needed to talk to me, and though I was reluctant—after all, fandom was busily writing the two of us doing all manner of... *interesting* things, and that made for a fair bit of awkwardness between us—I answered him the next time I signed on. To be perfectly honest, my online life was getting dreadfully boring, now that I was spending all of my time pretending I wasn't interested in my online life at all.

'They're talking about castrating me,' his message said, and I frowned, hoping I'd misread it or that he'd mistyped. No such luck. 'They had some big discussion on your review thread this morning about the most effective way to keep me from "tainting you" with my maleness, and apparently castration is the way to go.'

Not sure whether to be amused or alarmed, and feeling a bit guilty that he was being dragged into all of this when, really, I'd started the whole thing, I considered my response for a moment before answering, 'The Tartanists were considering various ways to get me thrown out of school, in order to "free me" from an all-female environment.' I wasn't entirely sure that was true, but I wouldn't exactly put it past them to consider such things, and at the moment, I felt a show of mutual suffering and solidarity against the obsessed was in order. 'How long do you think they can keep this going for? They have to get bored eventually, don't they?'

'I've seen 'ship wars go on for *years*,' he pointed out, and I reluctantly admitted that he was right. There was no telling how long it would take for them to get distracted by something more exciting

'It's awful,' he complained. 'I can't even log on to *Sanguinity* these days. I thought I'd relax a bit by coming home for the weekend, but Judy's visiting, and she and my mother have taken over the better part of the house. I get weird looks whenever I wander out of my bedroom.'

'Wait, Arc is at *your* house? What on earth is she doing there?' Not wanting to sound like I was prying, and cringing at what I'd written, I hurried to add, 'It's just, the last time I talked to her she said that she was looking forward to staying home and having a calm life for a while.'

'I have no idea. I think it's this 'ship war thing,' he said, and I felt a pang of guilt at the thought. 'It didn't seem to be bothering her *too* much, really, but then some PrinceC/Arc and

PrinceC/Arc/Mina stories started popping up and now she can barely look at me. Do you have any idea how *weird* those stories are for me? Not to mention disgusting. I mean, she's practically family. She's known me since the day I was born. I know that none of the authors know that, but... still. Gross.'

Deciding that I didn't really want to think too closely on the "practically incestuous" stories he was talking about—mostly out of fear that my brain would decide there was entirely too much pretty in that pairing for me to resist reading at least a few of them—I asked, 'It's really bothering her, then? They're just *stories*. Slightly embarrassing and ridiculous stories, but stories nonetheless.'

'Don't know. She seems okay most of the time; I think spending time with my mother is good for her. Scary as hell for me and my dad, though. The two of them are completely insane when they get together. I mean, you've met Judy in person, haven't you?' he asked, and I said that I had. 'Okay, so you know how serious she usually is. Well, after two days with my mother, they both start acting like teenagers. And, on occasion, drunken teenagers, which I think is even worse.'

I tried, but couldn't picture Arc, or Mrs. Hamill, for that matter, acting like silly children. I wasn't really sure I wanted to, either.

'Do you think you'll be online tomorrow? We need to come up with a plan to kill this 'ship war before I lose my mind.'

'I'll be around,' I assured him.

'Okay. I have to go,' he typed a moment later. 'I hear eighties music and way too much laughter; it can't be a good sign. I think it might be in the best interest of my sanity to spend the day out of the house. I'm almost looking forward to going back to school on Monday.'

He was definitely right about one thing, I mused once he'd signed off. The 'ship war had to be ended *somehow*, and considering the fact that I'd inadvertently started the whole thing, perhaps it was up to us to put a stop to it all. For a moment, I felt vaguely as if I were in a poorly scripted movie and this was my classic epiphany scene, but then realised that if this were a movie, I'd already be springing into action with a brilliant plan to make everything right and normal again, and I was at a complete loss for ideas.

Days later, I still hadn't gotten very far with the whole save-the-day thing; I was beginning to wonder if perhaps I'd started something that couldn't be stopped. And then, as is so often the case with disasters such as this, things got infinitely worse.

Friday afternoon found me sitting on my bed and Jen on hers, both of us studying in silence. We'd barely spoken two words to each other since that night when she'd... well, since *that night*, and I didn't foresee things changing on that front anytime soon either.

There was a knock at the door, and Jen got up to answer it, as she usually does. It was always

someone looking for her anyway, though they rarely seemed to come as far as our actual room, and I didn't even bother to look up until someone walked right past Jen, pushing the door open with a bang, and stopped in front of my bed.

It was Xena, or Nancy, whoever, standing with her arms folded across her chest. She looked back over her shoulder only long enough to say, 'Give us a minute, okay?' to Jen, who promptly took that as her cue to disappear. The second the door fell shut, Xena turned back to face me, all of the friendliness gone out of her expression. 'We need to talk. Now.'

'What's going on?' I asked, trying to appear calmer than I felt. I'd never seen Xena act so serious before, and the complete change in her personality from the last time we'd talked was enough to make me almost sick with nervousness.

Wordlessly, she reached into her jacket and pulled out a few sheets of paper, tossing them on the bed in front of me. My heart dropped like lead as I picked them up and glanced over them quickly, realising that it was a printout of the RPF story I'd written. She walked past me and to the window, seeming to be watching whatever was going on outdoors, and kept her back to me as she spoke.

'You know,' she began, 'when I first read that story, there was something about it that bothered me. Something all too familiar about the way the author wrote the characters, first of all—I couldn't shake the feeling that whoever had written it had met both of you before—but the writing style seemed very familiar as well.'

'Now, you know that I've been a fan of your writing for quite a while. I'd venture to say I've read everything you've written, and so I've become very accustomed to your particular writing style over time. And after reading through that story a few times, I'd be willing to bet quite a bit that you wrote it.'

Panicking, I hurriedly said, 'I don't know what you're talking about.'

'I don't appreciate being lied to,' she said calmly, no emotion whatsoever in her voice. I wasn't sure what to think. I mean, had I misjudged her relationship with Arc? I'd been certain that they had been lovers once, but just as sure that they were nothing more than friends now. Perhaps I'd been wrong, and she was angry that I'd had the audacity to write such a story?

'When Judy first started talking about you—and she talked about you quite often, back when she and I started spending a lot of time together again, and still does—I wasn't sure you were to be trusted, I'll admit that,' she continued. 'As far as I could tell, you'd gone to rather amazing lengths to create an identity for yourself built on lies. But Judy assured me that she thought you were, all around, a nice person, and that you hadn't done it with the intention of hurting anyone. She pointed out that people lie all the time online, enhance their realities to make themselves sound better. They make themselves wealthier, a different age, more attractive,' she paused, briefly glancing in the direction of Jen's half the room and the turning back to the windows, 'sometimes they even lie about their gender entirely. And Judy maintained that she thought of you as a friend, no matter how many lies you'd told her.'

I didn't respond; at this point, I really just wanted to die quietly from embarrassment, and I blinked back tears as quickly as I could.

'She trusts you, you see, quite a bit more than you probably deserved at the start of things. And then you wrote this *story*, and I can't help but wonder why. Now, in a perfect world, you'd have a relatively understandable explanation, or at least a harmless but misguided reason, and if that is the case, then I will happily walk out of here and leave you alone and never say so much as a word to Judy about this.

'But the truth of the matter is, at the end of the day, you're still the girl who has built her popularity on lies, and so a part of me keeps wondering if maybe you did this for some other reason entirely. If you're trying to manipulate her into doing something or thinking something. And you know, Mina, I don't like people trying to mess with my friends. Trust me when I say that I have the resources and the connections to make people who do wish they'd never been born. And I care about Judy much more than most of my friends...

'She's confused and on edge because of all this, reluctant to log on to her own archive, so wary of running into you that she's left town for the time being because she isn't sure she can face you with all of these stories running through her head, and it all started with a story that *you* wrote.' Xena finally turned around, leaning stiffly against the windowsill, and I looked away, focusing on the bed in front of me and trembling from head to toe.

'So I want to know why,' she said, and I glanced up hesitantly to see her watching me with an unwavering stare. 'If someone I care about is going to be this stressed out, there had better be a good reason for it, a completely *harmless* reason. And don't even *think* about trying to lie to me.'

Without warning, she moved across the room and sat down on my bed—directly in front of me so that I had almost no choice but to look at her—and said, 'Well? Start explaining.'

[Part Four](#)

The bit about the crazed anti-bi people? Scarily enough, that's the one part of this story that's actually based in fact. I used to know more than a few people like that. They kind of scared me--they're much more terrifying in real life than I can properly express here. Part Four may be a few weeks in coming, sadly, but I'll get it written eventually. :)

Tags: [mina fanfic](#)



Jackie ([jackiejlh](#)) wrote,
[2008-03-25](#) 01:55:00

That Untitled Mina Fic, Part Four

I know, I know, I fail at WIPs. The last time I updated this fic was sometime last summer, but I swear, RL hasn't allowed me the time or energy to write much of anything since then. However, finally the fic is finished in five parts. This is part four. ~~Tomorrow, when I'm semi-conscious again, I'll make Part Five post-friendly and put it up.~~ ETA: Part Five is [Up](#). :D

Keep in mind, this story was started a year ago, and is so ridiculously canon-shafted that it *hurts*, but... well, I had to finish it sometime, right? Part One started directly after [Mina de Malfois and the Brides of Fictionstein \(Part One\)](#), and everything from that point is on so very, very AU.

Disclaimer: Mina, Arc, Xena, and all other Mina-related characters and things belong to the lovely [mina de malfois](#) and as always, I am beyond grateful that she allows us to play with her characters. Many thanks to the talented [scifantasy](#) for allowing Case to help out our darling Arc, and to [mosellegreen](#) for agreeing to let her namesake make an appearance. And of course, many thanks to [fierydream](#) for acting as a last-minute Clive. *hugs*

[Part One](#) ~ [Part Two](#) ~ [Part Three](#)

That Untitled Mina Fic, Part Four

It was late by the time I arrived home from Eva's, and I was so tired that I didn't notice Nancy's car parked in the grass beside the house—I would see it the next day and exasperatedly wonder if perhaps the entire point behind having a driveway was entirely too hard for some people to properly grasp—and so I was admittedly caught off guard when I tossed my bag onto the bed and the bed *growled* back at me. I quickly reached for the light switch, flicking it on in time to see my bag tumble to the ground and Nancy unearth herself from among the blankets, confused and angry.

"Why? I don't.... Judy, why?!" she muttered incoherently, glaring at me and then pulling a pillow over her face. "Oww...."

"Aren't you supposed to be at Val's?" I asked, sitting on the bed beside her and pulling the pillow away, much to her displeasure.

"Yeah, had stuff to do here.... and Johnny was starting to get on my nerves with his complaining

anyway, so I came back." John, Val's husband, despises Nancy—probably because she insists on calling him 'Johnny' despite his insistence that he hates it—but Valerie pretends to be cheerfully unaware of any animosity between her husband and her best friend. It makes for awkward moments, to say the least, but I suspect that Nancy finds quite a bit of amusement in it all. She tends to be amused by most things, it seems, especially if it involves irritating someone she thinks deserves it.

"You threw that on my head," she said, trying to look wounded and failing.

I laughed, only feeling vaguely guilty for my lack of sympathy. "Serves you right. Maybe next time you'll warn me that you're going to be in my bed."

"Wasn't expecting you home," she mumbled, closing her eyes and then forcing them open again. "Have fun with Eva?"

"How did you know I was with Eva?" I asked, having a feeling I already knew.

Nancy confirmed it when she answered, "Jamie. He called me. Said he was worried about you."

Frowning and shaking my head, I stood up and kicked off my shoes, taking off earrings and things while walking towards the bathroom.

"Why on earth would he be worried about *me*?"

Nancy appeared in the doorway dressed in nothing but bright blue underwear, her arms folded casually across her chest as if pretending at some hint of modesty, one eyebrow raised. "I can't imagine," she said sarcastically.

Ignoring her—well, most of her; some parts were easier to ignore than others—I turned back towards the mirror and set about getting ready for bed.

She stared expectantly at me for a moment, and then when it became apparent that I wasn't going to respond, she continued, "He said this whole RPF thing was bothering you."

"Wouldn't you find it hard to be around your godson if you'd just read a story where you and he had—"

"Not those stories," she interrupted. Nancy has always been vehemently against hearing anything even remotely related to Jamie's fictional sex life. I haven't figured out yet if it's because of the sheer awkwardness of it all—we knew that boy when he wore diapers—or if it's due to the fact that his stories are more wild and kinky than hers and she's jealous. Though James at least keeps most of *his*... adventures... strictly fictional. I hope.

"The Mina ones."

"I have no idea what you're talking about," I answered, belying my actual feelings about the

subject by glaring icily at her, hoping she'd take the hint. Nudging my way past her, I walked back into the bedroom, shedding clothing. I was very much not in the mood to have this conversation right this second.

"Liar," Nancy stated flatly, and I rolled my eyes.

"Okay, so maybe they..."

"Freaked you out?" she supplied helpfully, fighting back a grin.

I hesitated, and then, knowing Nancy probably already knew what was going through my mind anyway, conceded, "A bit. At first, anyway. I wasn't exactly expecting them to flood the submission queue by the dozen. And Eva had been pestering me for weeks to come visit, so it seemed as good of a time as any to get away for a bit. Besides, I half-wondered if Mina would die of embarrassment if we were to actually run into each other."

"Um... about that," Nancy said slowly, suddenly no longer grinning. "I know who started it... the author who wrote the first story."

I paused, wondering how on earth she would have come across that particular bit of knowledge. "So do I," I stated. "It was Mina."

Unnervingly, all the color drained out of her face. "You *knew*?"

"Yes. Well, not at first, obviously, but there are benefits to owning the archive. Nothing can truly be done anonymously on the internet." At her questioning look, I added, "I had Case look into it for me."

Nancy winced slightly. "And this doesn't... bother you?"

"I'm more than a little curious, I'll admit, but no." The truth was, I'd finally decided that while I could not possibly reconcile the idea of actively pursuing Mina with my overwhelming sense of guilt at the thought, if *she* were to take any further steps in that direction on her own, well... I wasn't entirely sure I would be turning her away. She'd obviously at least given the idea some thought, even if it was only in fiction form, and while I wasn't about to assume that she was actually interested in the RL version, if she ever *were*... well. But Nancy's guilty expression was beginning to make me nervous.

"Why?" I asked. She avoided my gaze.

"Nancy..." I said, a warning tone in my voice.

"I might have... mentioned to Mina that I knew she wrote it," she said, adopting her best innocent expression.

I couldn't keep my eyes from widening in horror as I turned back to face her. "Why on earth

would you *do* that?"

"Now, Judy," she said quickly, "I was only trying to—"

"Make my life difficult?" I interrupted.

"Protect you," she said, and then winced again at my furious look. "You would have done the same thing if it were me," she insisted. "I was *worried*, and let's face it, Mina is hardly the most trustworthy person we know, and I wanted to make sure that she wasn't trying to—"

"No, Nancy, I have never and would never interfere in your life the way you insist on interfering in mine," I pointed out angrily.

"I'm *sorry*," she said, her voice almost a whine, grabbing my hand.

I glared daggers at her for a moment, unsure whether I wanted to scream at her—something I *never* do, but a scream felt warranted right at this moment—or just ignore her until she left. But what was done was done, and if nothing else, I had to figure out how much damage had been done. Doing my best to force myself to look and sound completely calm, which was something that I knew would unnerve her more than any show of anger could anyway, I asked, "And what did Mina have to say about all of this?"

"She kicked me out of her dorm room," Nancy answered, looking apologetically amused. "I told her I wanted an explanation, and she was crying—"

"You made her cry?"

"Well, yes, but apparently she's got more backbone than I'd thought because she refused to say anything but 'get out' until I left."

"You made her *cry*?" I asked again, anger seeping back into my expression.

"I'm *sorry*," she repeated, not looking sorry at all, and flinched as I jerked my hand away from her grasp. "Okay, okay, I'll talk to her."

"No, just... let me handle it," I said with a sigh, already trying to come up with a plan. "I'm going to bed. Goodnight, Nancy." I walked across the room, holding the door open for her.

"Are *you* kicking me out of your room too?" she asked with a small smile, looking down at her nearly bare body. "C'mon, Judy, I'm almost naked here."

"The last time you visited, I came home to find you dancing across the kitchen dressed in nothing but a pair of socks. I think you can handle the walk to the guest room topless," I insisted, not letting myself think too hard on the memory or focus too much on her current state. Nancy has a way of destroying my will power, and if I thought about it too hard I'd have a difficult time making her go. "I need to think, and I need to get some sleep, and I doubt either of those things

will be accomplished if you stay."

Looking vaguely hurt but also mildly relieved—after all, we hadn't had an actual fight... yet, anyway—she held my gaze for a moment before leaving the room.

Fighting the overwhelming urge to rip my hair out in frustration, I stripped off the rest of my clothes and collapsed back onto my bed, my mind reeling.

~

The Plan (which formulated in my head while in my office two days later, capital P and all) wasn't going to be easy, I decided—nothing ever was when it came to Mina because she had an extraordinarily strong tendency to do the exact opposite of what I expected her to do. Eva has always been a sort of open book, Valerie tends to wear her heart on her sleeve, and I know Nancy well enough after all these years to predict almost everything she does despite her penchant for spontaneity, but Mina sometimes just seems to go along with whatever idea pops into her head without any further thought on the subject, consequences be damned, and there was no telling what 'solution' she'd arrive to first on most things.

I'd tried instant messaging and emailing Mina, with only a quick email saying that she was busy with schoolwork and didn't have time to talk in return... even though I saw that she'd been online and even on *Penn'd Passions* recently. I wasn't sure whether to be annoyed or worried that she was obviously avoiding me. Nancy, despite my protests, had tried to contact her as well, but hadn't received any response at all—not surprising, but frustrating nonetheless.

I'd begun debating whether or not it would be a horrible idea to just show up at her dorm—I decided it probably was, but at this point, no viable option was being brushed aside completely—when opportunity came in the form of one of my assistants.

"I don't know how you even read that thing anymore for all the writing," I heard Moselle say.

"I usually have one copy to read and one to take notes in," Seldom answered, and I almost tuned him out completely, realizing he was talking about his thesis and Jen's awful, albeit imaginative, novel. Luckily the conversation continued to hold my attention long enough to hear him continue, "But I loaned the other copy to Mina, and I haven't seen her in ages. I hope she plans on returning it—it's not that easy to find, you know. There was only one printing, and it's such an interesting—"

"I'm sure she'll return it," Moselle reassured him quickly, cutting off another long monologue on the life and lies of Razzberry Martini, and I could hear her stand up, point out that they both had work to do, and hurry away.

The Plan came into being in that second. It wasn't the most well thought out plan, perhaps, but if nothing else it would get Mina within twenty feet of the library, and me, without having to ask Nancy to kidnap her.

I walked to the doorway of my office and called, "Seldom, do you have any classes tomorrow?"

"No, Ms. Silverman."

"Good. I need someone to stay after hours tonight and help me with reorganize some things." Stepping closer to him and lowering my voice, I added conspiratorially, "There is some paperwork I need to re-file that I'd rather not have out while there are other people around. I can trust you, though, I'm sure?"

"Of course, Ms. Silverman," he answered quickly, no longer looking quite as reluctant to be stuck in the library on a Friday night.

"Good. Plan to be here until at least eleven," I told him, feeling mildly guilty as his face fell, and I turned to go back into my office. Stopping just before I closed the door, I said, "Perhaps you can email Mina and ask her to bring your book by the library. She can't possibly be busy all evening. Tell her you'll leave the staff entrance open for her."

He shrugged, nodding his understanding, and began pulling his laptop out of his bag.

"Remember, Seldom, not a word to anyone about why you'll be here, not even Mina," I said sternly despite the fact that he really had no idea *why* he'd be here anyway, and he nodded fervently.

I finally stepped completely into my office, closing the door behind me and shutting my eyes for a moment, trying to determine if there was any way this could backfire on me. *A million ways, actually*, I inwardly acknowledged, but I would find a way to make it work. It had to work.

~

Seldom had been steadily filing pages—all torn from books or photocopied, much to his bewilderment, but at least he knew better than to ask too many questions and had skimmed enough of them to know why he was being sworn to secrecy—while I worked on paperwork quietly from my seat by the window, every movement outside catching my eye. Finally, at nearly ten-thirty, I saw Mina leave her dormitory and start walking across the parking lot.

"Seldom, it's getting late and you look tired," I said, and he frowned, undoubtedly thinking that he wasn't actually tired at all, and hadn't looked even remotely so. "Why don't you go home for the night? If Mina stops by, I'll have her leave the book with me and give it to you tomorrow."

He quickly began gathering his things, obviously not about to argue—it was still early for a Friday night, after all, and surely there was some party he wanted to be at, or something.

"Go out the front door," I told him. "The staff door locks behind you and I don't want Mina to get locked out. I'll never hear her knocking from up here."

He nodded. "Thanks, Ms. Silverman. Goodnight."

"Seldom," I called as he turned towards the stairs, my gaze only leaving the window for a moment. I had to time this perfectly. "Not a word about—"

"Of course not," he said quickly, obviously still confused as to why he was being trusted with the secret, not to mention why it was a secret to begin with, but again not asking questions. He was practically running in place, he seemed so anxious to get out the door. Clearly the evening hadn't held nearly as exciting a revelation as he'd hoped.

"Thank you. Good night, Seldom."

"Night," he said again, rushing down the stairs. I heard the library door open and shut loudly as the lock slid back into place, and then saw Mina disappear into the back entrance of the building just seconds before Seldom turned the corner and headed directly past where she'd just been walking. Amazed that had even worked, I leaned against the nearest bookshelf and waited patiently.

[Part Five](#)

Tags: [fandom](#), [fanfic](#), [mina fanfic](#), [riting](#)



[mina de malfois](#)

March 25 2008, 12:40:11 UTC

Oh, I do love this. All the little flirtatious hints of perversity and affection warm my heart. ♥

And I enjoy that there's now non-canon fanon. It makes the Minaverse *that much more official*. *grins* All that's missing are factions of fangirls fighting it out over which version they relate to.

- [Reply](#)



[jackiejlh](#)

March 25 2008, 13:07:43 UTC

All that's missing are factions of fangirls fighting it out over which version they relate to.

...I so can't wait until the day there's wank in this fandom. Seriously. It would be *awesome*. I usually avoid wank like the plague, or just watch from the sidelines, but Minawank would just... kill me. With over-giggling.

- [Reply](#)



[mina de malfois](#)

March 25 2008, 13:33:29 UTC

I'm longing for wank, seriously. And you'd think with season one all footnoted and available for free download, someone somewhere would start *something*.

Is your story posted anywhere un-flocked? Your would-be readership wants to know!

- [Reply](#)



[jackiejlh](#)

March 25 2008, 13:34:53 UTC

Ack! My journal defaults to flock to keep me from accidentally posting things openly that I shouldn't, and I must have forgotten to switch that. :(That's what I get for posting while tired. It's a public post now. *blush*

- [Reply](#)



[mina de malfois](#)

March 25 2008, 13:35:20 UTC

Excellent. *beams*

- [Reply](#)



[jackiejlh](#)

March 25 2008, 23:05:28 UTC

And as promised, part five is [up](#) without a nine month wait. Lol.

- [Reply](#)



Jackie ([jackiejlh](#)) wrote,
[2008-03-25](#) 18:18:00

That Untitled Mina Fic, Part Five

Disclaimer: Everything belongs to the wonderful [mina de malfois](#), and I'm just playing with the characters.

Huge thanks to [fierydream](#) for being a wonderful Clive. *adores*

This is painfully, horribly AU, and so far from canon that it hurts, but it's Mina/Arc fic, so no complaining. :p

[Part One](#) ~ [Part Two](#) ~ [Part Three](#) ~ [Part Four](#)

That Untitled Mina Fic, Part Five

The email from Seldom seemed to come out of nowhere, and I spent a few very long minutes wondering how to reply. He said that he'd be working in the library late, and he wanted to know if I could return his book because he 'missed it'. I hesitated for a moment, then typed a quick reply letting him know I'd come by that evening after the library closed. Arc, I knew, was almost never in the library outside of her scheduled hours, and she would be long gone by closing time.

When I reached the library *no one* was there as far as I could see, but there was light coming from the direction of the second floor offices, and I hurried upstairs, feeling slightly nervous. I'd never been in a library with all of the lights off before, and the shadows and sound-deadening stacks made it intensely nerve-wracking.

I made my way to the Media Fandom Special Collection section, Seldom's book clutched tightly against my chest, and rounded a corner created by the shelves only to come face to face with... Arc.

"What are you doing here?" I practically shouted, then simultaneously winced and blushed. "Sorry, you... startled me."

Arc smiled warmly, giving me a curious look.

"Um, is Seldom here?" I asked quickly, glancing around nervously.

"No, I sent him home," Arc explained. "He said you'd be dropping off his book; I told him I'd

hold it for him until tomorrow... I suspect he wanted to be somewhere else on a Friday night anyway."

"Oh," I answered. I stood awkwardly for a moment, not wanting to meet her eyes. She didn't seem to hate me, so obviously Xena hadn't actually followed through on her threat to tell her just who had written that fic, but I still wanted to get away as quickly as possible. Suddenly I realized I was still holding the book, and blushed an even deeper red. "Here," I said, holding the book out towards her, and she reached for it, but then held her hand in mid-air, not actually taking the book from me.

"What about you, Mina?" she asked.

"Huh?"

"Do you have somewhere else to be right now?"

I almost answered with, 'Bed,' but then decided that bed was the last thing I wanted to talk about with Arc, and so settled for shrugging and mumbling something about studying.

"Perhaps *you* can help me finish this, then," she said, finally taking the book from my hand and motioning towards the loose papers scattered in piles and untidy stacks all over the surrounding tables. "I trust that you can keep a secret, yes?"

'Oh, of course,' I answered hurriedly, wondering what was going on. My curiosity was getting the better of me.

"I had Nancy collect some things for me during the library... *infestation*, and now I need to re-file it all. I'm trying to put everything in order by author and then by title. Nothing too difficult, just time-consuming. Interested?" Somehow she made that sound not at all like a request, and I felt compelled to agree to help her. Besides, I'd finally get to know what Arc had deemed so damaging or secret that it had to be removed from the library at the very thought that someone might come across them.

"Start over there," she said before I'd had a chance to answer, pointing at a table a few feet away, and then without another word, she picked up the nearest, neatest stack of papers and carried them into her office, carefully placing them into an open filing cabinet.

Glancing at the clock and almost groaning at how late it was already, I picked up the first page. It appeared to have been torn from a 'zine, and was clearly fanfiction. Pure smut, at that. But I'd seen plenty of this in the Fandom section of the library before... After a few minutes of silent working, I realized that Arc had no intention of giving me an explanation, and so forcing myself to actually form a coherent sentence for what seemed like the first time all night, I asked, "Arc— Um, Ms. Silverman—"

"Judy," she interrupted from within her office.

"Okay, Judy, um... why are you hiding fanfiction in your filing cabinet?"

"It's not just fanfiction, Mina," she answered, emerging from her office and beginning to straighten another stack of paper.

I grabbed another page from the table and began reading through it quickly, and then another, frowning. "It's... it's *chan*."

Arc nodded absentmindedly. "Yes."

"But why hide it? I mean, it's not like it's illegal or anything, right?' I had a sudden pang of worry that perhaps I'd been mistaken on that particular point, and thoughts of my own foray into what really amounted to written underage porn and the possible legal ramifications of that story suddenly rushed into my mind.

"No, it's not, which is why it's still here," she said, calming my fears. "The school doesn't feel it belongs in the library, and I was told to get rid of it," she explained, her eyes never leaving her work.

"But that's... that's censorship!" I blurted out, feeling righteously indignant in a way, I've discovered, only fandom can make one feel. "Why would they do that?"

"Perhaps you've missed the fact that you're attending *Saint Scholastica's*?" she asked, sounding amused. "This is a private university, Mina, as is St. Benedict's, and neither school was overly excited at the idea of having a Fandom section to begin with. I managed to get one started, but it was a battle the whole way, and there were quite a few regulations and stipulations put in place as to what could be archived here. Work that most of them only understood enough to erroneously label as child pornography was not about to make it into their collection."

I stared at her in amazement. "So you've been hiding it right in the library the whole time? What if they find it? Would they fire you?"

"They'd probably ask me to leave, if the wrong person found the entire collection. But you can't exactly fire someone you don't pay, and most of them are willing to look the other way if they see anything suspicious because I volunteer all of my time and fund most of this section of the library myself," she pointed out.

"But... why do it? I mean, it's just..." I stumbled through my words, trying to put my thoughts together. "Well, I didn't think you liked this sort of stuff."

"I don't," she answered seriously, "but I like censorship even less. Now, we have work to do. We probably won't finish this tonight as it is, and I don't much like the idea of carrying this all back out of the building tonight."

Nodding, I hurried to sort out the pages, wondering how on earth they'd gotten so out of order. It occurred to me that perhaps Xena throwing them into the floor of the car hadn't helped anything,

and I couldn't help but wonder how Arc had reacted to the sight.

"I guess that solves the mystery of why you're here so late, then," I said, and then almost kicked myself for stating the obvious. She didn't seem to mind, though.

"It gives me something to do. Nancy left this afternoon, and I found myself unexpectedly without plans."

"Oh... you must miss her when she's gone," I said, trying to sound sympathetic and not at all angry with Xena, even if the very thought of her made me almost tremble with a mix of fear and rage.

"Not really," Arc said with a grin. "Well, I mean, I *do* miss her *sometimes*, but it's quite a bit easier to get used to having Nancy out of your life for a time than to deal with having her involved in it."

I silently agreed, thinking that I'd never seen Arc so talkative online *or* off.

"Besides," she continued, "she'll come back eventually, and she never fails to make life *interesting*, if nothing else."

Shrugging, I refrained from commenting.

"She has an awful habit of becoming involved in things that don't concern her, though," Arc went on, and I froze for a moment.

"Oh?" I nearly whispered, dread overtaking me.

Arc pursed her lips. "Yes. It's rather frustrating at times, as I'm sure you're aware," she said, finally glancing up at me with a knowing look, and suddenly I was certain. She *knew*. She'd known the whole time. I wanted nothing more than to melt into a puddle on the floor right at that moment. I nodded miserably.

"I..." I looked away, feeling tears gather in the corners of my eyes.

"I don't need an explanation, Mina." I held back a sigh of relief. "Though I would *like* one," she added.

Damn. I couldn't very well refuse. Well, I *could*, and had done so when talking to Xena, but this was *Arc*. Arc, who trusted me. And who was probably thinking all sorts of awful things about me. Still, I couldn't help but wonder if that were better than her knowing the truth.

"I..." I began again, pausing and folding my arms across my chest protectively, looking down at my feet. "I just... I couldn't get it out of my head," I said slowly, and out of the corner of my eye I saw her go still for a moment, the papers in her hands momentarily forgotten as her gaze fixed

on me. "I had to get it down on paper just to get it out of my head, and then... I don't know why I posted it." There were some things I just was not going to discuss with Arc, and my reason for posting that story to her archive was one of them. I couldn't; I'd die, right there in the middle of the library. "I never meant to upset anyone," I finished quietly. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be," I heard her say, and I looked up in surprise to meet her warm, not-even-a-little-angry expression. "I don't get nearly as easily upset as Nancy seems to think I do. Just don't be too angry with her—she means well."

I wasn't sure I would be forgiving Nancy anytime soon, but then Arc seemed to be furious with her most of the time anyway, so... perhaps that was just a side-effect of being friends with Nancy?

"Besides," she added with a small laugh, "it was the first anonymously submitted story I didn't have to turn back due to errors in weeks. You can't ask 'Anonymous' to make corrections."

Giving her an incredulous look, I stared at her as she returned her attention to her work. She couldn't be *serious*, could she? After two weeks of terror at the very thought of facing her, she was just laughing it off as if nothing had ever happened? I wasn't sure if I should be relieved or angry, but I quickly settled on relieved and continued on with my work, still not daring to meet her eyes. Even the slightly edited version of the truth I'd given her had been enough to cause overwhelming embarrassment, and I wished for nothing more than to know what Arc's real thoughts on the story had been. She didn't seem to be inclined to elaborate, though, and I wasn't about to bring it up again, so we worked in silence for the next hour and a half.

"I can't believe how long this is taking. I'd offer to buy you a coffee in thanks, but I'm pretty sure the café closed hours ago," Arc said with a look at the clock, standing up to put away a few more files. "Oh well. Perhaps some other time."

I smiled shyly, not daring to tell Arc that I honestly wasn't all that much of a fan of coffee. Anyway, if meeting for coffee was a sure way of spending time with her in real life, then I would gladly become as caffeine-addicted as she seemed to be. I was amazed that she even still *wanted* to spend time with me.

"Maybe Monday instead?" she continued, and I paused in my file-sorting, unable to stop myself from turning to look at her. She was focussing intently on the files she was still trying to squeeze into the already over-stuffed cabinet, though.

"Um... all right," I said, and then winced at how ridiculously unenthusiastic and inarticulate I sounded.

"Good. I'll be finished here around five that evening, so how about we meet there at five-thirty?" she suggested.

"Okay." Wanting to say something more, but not able to come up with anything that didn't sound ridiculous, I just offered her a quick grin.

"I think it's time to go home," Arc said suddenly. "It's disgustingly late, and I think everything's been accomplished tonight that I actually *needed* to get done, so the rest can wait until another day." And without another word, she quickly stood up, gathered the remaining papers into a very un-Arc-like stack, dumped them back into the box they'd come out of to begin with, and settling the box on her hip to be taken home with her.

Realising that I *was* getting rather tired myself and that Arc—who usually seemed to log off her computer and go to bed much earlier than I did—must be absolutely exhausted, I left the office so she could lock up, waiting near the railing overlooking the empty library. "It's kind of creepy at night, isn't it?" I commented as she came up behind me.

"My library is not *creepy*," she insisted. "I think I like it better here at night. It's so dark and comfortable and quiet... The perfect place to be alone."

When she put it that way, it was a bit hard to disagree.

I let her lead the way down the stairs and through what seemed like a maze in the dark library, down a twisting corridor and out the staff entrance. Once outside, I walked in the direction of her car with her, watching as she put the box she was carrying into the back seat and opened the front door to get into the car.

"Judy," I said quickly, causing her to pause, and for a second I almost reached out to grab her hand, but then hesitated, blushed, and muttered, "Good night."

She gave me a small smile, and I hurriedly turned around to walk away, only to be stopped by her hand grabbing my wrist. Turning around to face her, my heart almost stopped as she took a step closer to me so that our bodies were almost touching. The heat from her skin cut through the cool air around us. I nearly shuddered as her free hand rested gently against my cheek, and let my eyes drift shut as she leaned toward me.

~

I drifted back into my dorm room feeling as though I were floating, and even the sight of Jen sitting on her bed and still very much awake didn't do anything to lessen my good mood. Not until she began staring at me in shock and rolled her eyes, anyway.

"So much for 'knowing exactly who you are'," she said with a snort, shaking her head, and I frowned.

"Excuse me?"

"You have..." And then she paused, standing up and advancing on me, one hand outstretched, so fast that I nearly stumbled backwards. She gave me a withering look and reached for me again, running one thumb—coarser than Arc's, I noted, and not nearly as gentle—over the corner of my lower lip, drawing it away to show me a smudge of something on her finger.

"I wasn't aware that you usually wore this shade of lipstick, Mina," she said innocently.

I stared at her for a minute, not knowing what to say, but she didn't seem to expect any response. Without another word she turned off the light and climbed into her bed, rolling to face away from me.

Forgetting all about changing clothes or brushing my teeth or anything, I flopped onto my bed, a million thoughts running through my head. What if Jen told someone? What if....

I smiled softly into the dark, remembering the feeling of soft, warm lips against my own, the touch of Arc's hand as it rested against my cheek and then gently tangled in my hair, pulling me closer....

Letting the memory wash over me, and trying not to tremble with excitement, I decided to worry about it later. I had more important things to think about before Monday evening, anyway.

The End.
(for real this time)

Tags: [fandom](#), [fanfic](#), [mina fanfic](#), [writing](#)