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Midnight Oil

by [Kadorienne](#)

Summary

"RPF" about Josh Amos and Mina de Malfois by someone who buys their PR.

Mina de Malfois seldom neglected her beauty sleep, yet tonight worries had her tossing and turning on her satin sheets until at last she had given up pursuing slumber. She turned on the lamp - a Tiffany stained glass creation her grandfather had given her grandmother on their honeymoon - and rose, crossing to the vanity table. She anointed herself with French perfume, one drop falling to the glass tabletop, a drop sparkling like a gem and as expensive, before pulling on a watered-silk kimono and descending the grand curving staircase of the Malfois estate.

She trod as softly as she could as she approached the library, not to awaken the servants. Elizabeth and Stacia were too faithful not to rush to dance attendance upon her if they thought she was in need of anything, but what she needed on this night, neither of them could provide.

She booted her computer, careful to leave the speakers switched off so as not to alert anyone to her wakefulness. The Pentium looked a bit incongruous among the twenty-foot shelves overflowing with rare first editions. Josh had joked about finding a copy of *The Nine Gates of the Kingdom of Shadows* amid the quaint and curious volumes of forgotten lore.

Josh. Mina sighed, pushing her thick flaxen hair back over her shoulders. She was down here to distract herself from thoughts of him.

If only she knew that he was safe. That neither his ruthless criminal family, nor the corrupt federal agents who could not forgive him for having once

followed in their footsteps, had caught up with him at last. That none of the irresponsible gadflies flitting about the internet had given him away in their careless, self-centered pursuit of low gossip.

Of course, the best thing would be to have him here, in her bed, in her arms. But just knowing that he was all right, that another day had passed with him safe and sound, would be almost as good. Almost.

For the next hour, Mina immersed herself in her latest work of fiction. Engaging in her art was the only thing that ever really made her forget the fear she had lived with since Josh had crossed her path and stolen her heart on that fateful day so many years ago. All those years in that grim English boarding school, bathing in cold water and swotting till the prefects made everyone put out the lights, had been worth it. Only those years of grueling study had given her native talent for storytelling the discipline and deep understanding of human nature that made her stories the works of genius that they were.

But even for an authoress as gifted as herself, it wasn't always enough.

A small sound broke into her concentration and she looked to the door, straining her ears. No other sound followed. It couldn't be one of the servants, then, or discreet footsteps would have made their way to the library door and she would have been respectfully asked if Madame required anything.

Perhaps it had been her imagination, or the timbers of the manor settling.

Or perhaps not.

Silently sliding a drawer open, Mina withdrew a pearl-handled pistol and tiptoed into the shadowy hall with it. She could see nothing but the familiar contours of the entry hall.

"I say! Who's there?" she demanded, pistol at the ready.

"Shh. It's me."

Mina whirled, aiming her pistol and immediately lowering it. "Josh!" It took all her self-control not to shout the cherished name for all the world to hear. There he was, silhouetted against the parlor door, dressed all in form-fitting black. "What are you doing here?"

"Are you not woman enough to know?" he whispered back huskily.

A moment later, she was in his arms, clasping him tightly to her, that familiar mouth pressed to hers.

"You frightened me," she murmured when their lips at last parted.

"My apologies," he whispered back, his voice rough with desire, his strong fingers buried in her abundant yellow hair. "I had to wait until after midnight and slip in. Your estate is being watched."

She drew back a little, limpid eyes growing wide. "By whom? Your family, or the feds?"

"Both."

She sighed, then lifted her chin. "So they know about us."

"They suspect. I'm sorry - I didn't want to drag you into this-"

Mina cut him off by drawing him down into another soul-searing kiss. When it was over, before he could protest further, she said, in a voice whose softness only made it the more emphatic, "You're worth it."

His eyes grew smoky in the dim light. "What have I done to deserve a woman like you?"

"Everything," was the breathless reply. A moment later, the lovers were hurrying up the stairs as quickly as the need for quiet would allow. Mina locked the door of her boudoir behind them before pulling Josh close again.

Tomorrow their troubles would come after them again, but for tonight, the world consisted only of the two of them on Mina's satin sheets.

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