

My Dinner With Verlaine

I have always been a lover of the history and mystery behind absinthe. So many writers, artists, and other creatives have enjoyed the liquor with a special wish and hope that the Green Faery would visit them. So it was with my own curiosity that I purchased a small bottle of Grand Absente, Absinthe Originale. Vincent Van Gogh, one of my favorite artists, enjoyed this particular blend.

While watching the movie *The Triplets of Belleville*, I prepared to make my first glass of absinthe to enjoy while the French movie played on. What I did not expect, however, was that I would receive a visitor. In the solitude of my own home, I was honored to have the Green Faery visit me. At first, I was taken aback by her sudden appearance but I swallowed my shock and instead did something no one had ever done: I interviewed her.

Wow! After starting the movie, I prepared my first glass of absinthe and took a sip. The intense flavor threw me back; it burned my lips and went down my throat with quite a kick. The star-anise flavor lingered around in my mouth for some time and I smiled while the taste finally dissolved in my stomach. A couple of sips later and I felt like I had been drinking it all of my life.

After I prepared my second glass, I heard a small cough to my right. Glancing over with the glass raised to my lips, I saw a woman dressed in a long, green, and simple-cut dress that accentuated her sea-foam-greenish skin and spinach-green hair that flowed down her back in a braid. Her dark-green-colored eyes stared at me while a smile played on her lips as I shrugged my shoulders and took another sip.

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She asked me if I knew who she was and I nodded. *You're the Green Faery*, I said in a nonchalant tone that was in direct contrast to my fluttering stomach. Here she was in my apartment with me! I finished off my glass and placed it on the coffee table then asked her if she wanted anything to drink. She cocked her head to the side in a quizzical manner, as if no one had ever asked her that question.

Well, rather than go on with the narrative, I will instead give you the dialogue. Enjoy!

Me: So... you're the Green Faery, huh? Wow, I never thought....

Verlaine: Never thought what? That I was real? Oh my dear, I am very much real. I am real because of the world and their belief in me. That, and I refuse to go away.

Me: Huh. So, seeing as how you're in my apartment, would you like something to drink?

V: Actually, I would love a glass of water.

Me: (goes to kitchen, gets glass then gives it to her)

V: (drinks it down in one gulp then places glass on table) You know, I've never had anyone ever offer me something to drink. Ah yes, another reason why I'm glad I came to you.

Me: Well... thanks. So, do you have a name or do I just call you Green Faery?

V: (laughs) Actually, please call me Verlaine. That will suit me for tonight.

Me: All right, Verlaine it is, then.... Hey, I've got a really cool idea: do you mind if I write down this conversation? I don't think

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people would believe me if I told them I talked with the Green Faery.

V: (laughs) Sure, why not? Huh, I've never been interviewed either.

Me: Well, it looks as though this will be a night for a lot of firsts. Cool. Actually, do you mind if I prepare another glass?

V: Be my guest; I'm already here.

Me: (prepares third glass to calm me down) Okay, so I gotta ask; what was it like being around Van Gogh? He's one of my favorite artists! In fact—

V: You're drinking the version of absinthe he drank. (sigh) Yes, he was quite a man. Very disturbed. Do you know he actually asked me if giving a piece of his ear to a woman as a gift was a good idea?

Me: Really? Well, we all know he did it but what did you tell him?

V: I told him to close his eyes when he did it. (silence as I stared at her in shock) What? Did you expect me to be sympathetic to him? He was a loony, for goodness sake! He was going to do it anyway; seeing me gave him just enough courage to do it and not chicken out.

Me: Huh. Uh, okay, wow, what does one say to that?

V: How about asking me another question? (grinning while showing very pointed teeth)

Me: (taking a sip to help numb myself) Uh, so, well, tell me about some other creatives you've known and talked to.

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V: Well, my dear, I didn't exactly talk to them, just merely showed up, they announced their great *plan* and I gave them enough courage to actually go through with it... even commit suicide.

Me: (shudder) Wow.

V: Wow exactly.

Me: My tongue feels slightly numb.

V: (laughing) You'll get used to it. Trust me.

Me: (coughing) Okay, so tell me about Toulouse-Lautrec?

V: Oh, him? But why? He was short. Painted very pretty pictures. He was creative; in short, ha, he was disturbed. Enough said. Actually, I think that sums up most of the people I have visited in my time.

Me: Actually, speaking of time, just how long have you been around?

V: I don't know; how long have people wanted to believe in the supernatural? How long have people wanted to believe in faeries? Which, by the way, my dear, do you realize you're—

Me: Yes, well, we're talking about you right now (coughing) So, you've been around that long huh?

V: As long as I can remember, I have been around for quite some time. I have been called by many names and have had many faces. This one is my most current. I like it, actually. Stole it from Paul Verlaine, one of my favorites. (playing with dress) What do you think of the dress? Stole it from a dryad one night when she was out with some satyr for a tryst.

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Me: (fingering the dress—felt like very delicate leaves) Very nice, Verlaine. Dryad, huh?

V: Not too bright dryad. When no one calls upon me or I don't feel like visiting humans, I spend time in my own world. The world of faeries, elves, dumb dryads and other such creatures that supposedly do not exist. When people dream, they visit my world, but they always forget it the next day. However, creatives remember what they have seen and experienced and use them to create stories, novels, poems, paintings and other things. I like returning home whenever I've spent too much time around humans; it helps me clear my head.

Me: Well, that's cool.

V: (looking at me in silence for several minutes) You know, I'm glad I came to you tonight. You're the first person ever to talk to me and ask me about my life. You're not trying to get me to help you with something; you just want to talk.

Me: (nodding head) Uh huh, but my tongue is really numb right now.

V: (laughing)

Me: So, what do you do to relax, aside from going home to your supernatural world?

V: Well, don't laugh, but I love tinkering around in my garden at home, reading books from both my world and yours, love Charles deLint by the way, mainly because he's visited my world many times both knowing and not knowing, and I'm an excellent cook. Love trying out new recipes whenever I can or whenever someone gives me one to try out. D'you know I tried making quiche for the first time last week? Wow, loaded with calories but oh so good.

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Me: I actually wanted to try to make that myself this weekend (grin).

V: I love a good plate of pasta with sauce created with ingredients from my own garden. Sometimes, I have to worry about sneaky pixies stealing my tomatoes. Don't know why they love damn tomatoes but whatever. Damn pixies. Hey, do you mind if I get myself another glass of water?

Me: (mouth now tingling, waving hand towards her to go ahead)

V: (gets another glass of water then sits down in living room again; takes long sip) Ah, nothing is finer than a glass of water. So, are you feeling the effects yet? (looking at my slightly red and relaxed face) Well, that was a dumb question. Of course you are. Well, do you have several more minutes to talk?

Me: (nodding and speaking slowly) Well, I do have one last question: are you with anyone?

V: (arched eyebrow) With anyone? Oh, you mean dating? Well... (blushing somewhat) I *am* kinda of seeing someone right now. I will say this: he's in the place humans don't want to go to when they've been bad.

Me: (shocked look) Wait, you're dating a demon?! A freakin' demon?!

V: Well, he loves to give me fire flowers and he's quite the (cough) stallion in bed so—

Me: (blushing) Okay, okay, I get it! Well, as long as you guys are happy, then... I guess.

V: (Looking at me carefully) My dear, I think you've had enough. You're starting to turn into a color close to my own. So, I shall bid you adieu until next time... and by the way, I'll tell

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you my real name. That way, if you would ever like some company, just say my name and I'll be here (whispers name—sorry, can't tell you what she said!)

Me: Thanks so much for talking with me.

V: Thanks for wanting to talk to me. (slowly disappearing) By the way, loved your books and can't wait for the next three to come! I already know the titles—he told me.... (disappears)

So, there you have it. My first conversation with Verlaine. Mind you, it was quite exciting, fascinating, scary and all around wonderful. It made such an impact on me that I wanted to share it with everyone.

When or if you drink absinthe for the first or next time, tell Verlaine hello for me and that her secret name is still safe.

Bon soir, mes amis.

The End