

Rita-Good

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: "Rita-Good" was my entry in the 2011 "Hoggywartyxmas" story exchange on LJ. My recipient, who loves Rita/Severus, asked for *"something simple...nothing but character and sweat and sex"*. The fic is something of a departure for me in that it's a bit of a PWP. But I did try to make it primarily about exploring the natures of Rita and Severus, since I find sex boring to read if it's just there for its own sake and not as a way of illustrating or developing character. And I hope you'll find it fun, too.

Set just before GoF.

My deep thanks, as always, to my wonderful beta, The Real Snape, who improves everything she touches.

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Rita Skeeter let her dressing gown slide to the floor and surveyed her naked body in her full-length mirror. As she turned sideways to examine her stomach, she tsked in annoyance. Was that the beginning of a paunch?

"A few more daily crunches wouldn't come amiss, eh, dearie?" chirped the mirror.

"Piss off," Rita muttered absently, more out of habit than real irritation. She didn't actually mind the mirror's opinion, since most of the time, its assessments were right on the money.

And that was one of the major things at stake here: money. Rita's body was part of her livelihood...not to the same extent that her quill was, of course, but there was no law against a woman having more than one talent. She had no equal in the world of magical journalism, but writing well...oh, why be coy?...writing *brilliantly* was not enough. She had to have the story to write *about* in the first place. Despite what her naysayers claimed (and she was pleased to say that she had many; no journalist was worth her quill if she weren't willing to ruffle a few robes), Rita never made up a story. Every piece she wrote was based on hard fact.

Truth was, nobody in the business was better than Rita Skeeter at getting those facts. Each potential source was different, but they all had what she liked to call their "spill level"...the moment at which their pent-up information could no longer be contained, but would gush out like water over a spillway.

It was all a matter of knowing how to breach the dam, of having the right tools and the ability to use them.

Rita had those tools, all right, starting with her unparalleled understanding of House mindsets. Take Hufflepuffs, for instance. They could usually be had for just a sympathetic ear or an appeal to their sense of fair play..."don't you want the true story told?" (Of course, Rita knew that for Hufflepuffs as well as everyone else, "truth" was

just another word for "my version." But if they wanted to think they were being honest and good citizens, who was she to disabuse them?)

Ravenclaws were different, obviously. They had to be made to feel smarter and more in-the-know than everyone else. "It's a very complicated situation," Rita would say earnestly to a Ravenclaw mark. "I don't know anyone better qualified to explain such complex things than you...I'd hate to print anything inaccurate..."

As for Gryffindors...they'd deny it, of course, but they all wanted their little piece of fame. And they never seemed to mind how much of a cliché they were: tell them that no one else was brave enough to go on the record, and nine times out of ten they'd spill enough for a dozen stories.

Then there were the Slytherins...ah, the Slytherins. They were the ones that Rita liked best. Getting information from a Slytherin was a delicious challenge, a subtle game of cat-and-mouse that was all the more fun because Rita almost always succeeded in being the cat.

And if there was one Slytherin who could (very) occasionally turn her into the mouse, well...she'd found that there were interesting things to be learnt from a rodent's point of view, too.

Of course, when it came to bribes and blackmail, House distinctions fell away. No one was immune to the need for cash and self-protection, no matter how brave or honest or smart they thought themselves. Rita used these strategies sparingly, though, for it was a matter of self-respect to her to gain most of her information using only her own powers of persuasion. But if a bribe or a threat turned out to be the only way to learn what she needed to know, then a bribe or a threat was what she used.

Ditto sex. Although sex, from flirtation through actual seduction, might not be her first choice of strategy, it was never off the table (though it was sometimes *on* the table; at *le moment suprême*, one had to be willing to use whatever surfaces were at hand). Man or woman (or squid, but that had been a one-time thing and then only on an Ogden's-fuelled dare), House or no House, there was never any shortage of people willing to engage in a little intercourse-for-information *quid pro quo*.

No, Rita had no objection to using sex to get stories. The body was a tool like any other, and Rita's body was one hell of a piece of equipment, if she did say so herself, and why shouldn't she? She was in large part responsible for how good she looked.

Oh, true, she had good genes, but to them she'd added hundreds of bloody hard hours at the gym and quite a bit of skill with her wand.

Yes, her wand. Rita understood that even the smartest and fittest person might require the occasional Bosom Booster or Zit Zapper charm. And then there was the age issue. If left to herself, she would have worn her years proudly, but the world didn't share her same high opinion of forty-seven-year-old women. So she shaved a few years off her official age and did a little wand work on the most obvious of the wrinkles and sags.

Which brought her back to her mirror and the reason she was standing naked in front of it, worrying the little pouch under her jaw and casting a back-view spell to check the tightness of her butt.

Tonight, she had a date, and she wanted to be in tip-top shape for it.

The date was business, of course...all her relationships were. Good reporters didn't have the luxury of emotional commitments even if they wanted them (which Rita most definitely did not. She preferred to rely only on herself, thank you).

But as long as one kept one's wits about one (and when did Rita do anything else?) business could be effectively mixed with pleasure. Just because a story might come at the end of a process didn't mean the process itself couldn't be fun.

And tonight's particular process promised to be a great deal of fun indeed, for it was going to feature that one Slytherin who could sometimes be the cat to Rita's mouse.

Tonight's date was with Severus Snape.

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Rita spent an enjoyable hour deciding what to wear. The outer garments were easy to select...Muggle business attire, because this was, after all, a professional engagement. And since Snape didn't like anything bold or distinctive (no wonder he'd joined the black-cloaked DEs), she was limited to basically one choice: the plain(ish) black robes that she kept on hand for funerals and visits with elderly purebloods. A simple Transfiguration spell, and the robes became a black Muggle suit for the duration.

Normally Rita wore what she pleased and damn the torpedoes. (Muggles thought up the oddest expressions.) But she didn't mind submitting to Snape's taste in this instance, for it was better to yield on things that didn't matter so that you'd have more leverage on the things that did.

Besides, it was what she wore *under* the business suit that really counted. And when it came to "unders," Rita definitely had more than one option.

She Levitated the possible outfits to the center of the room and set them to rotate slowly, so that she and the mirror could get the full picture.

First up was the scarlet corset, a new relatively new acquisition that Snape hadn't yet seen. "Too Gryffindor," said the mirror at once, and Rita thought it was probably right. A flick of her wand changed the red to green, though she kept the black laces; they went well with the black garter belt.

Then there were the stockings. Now, Rita never skimmed on her stockings. She loved the sensation of them, the way their luxurious softness against her legs kept her always aware of herself, of myriad possibilities. She bought only the best, of course: nothing but the finest, sheerest black silk.

Tonight, though, she thought would she forego the silk in favor of net. Snape, for all his tendency to enswathe himself in concealing layers of black fabric, always showed a gratifying interest in her more sexually-extravagant clothing (he could get hard just by looking at her in her underwear), and she liked to keep his attention as closely focused on his prick as possible. The man was too sharp by half; any little touch that could help dull his wits was welcome.

She looked critically at the now-emerald corset. Much as she liked the thought of Snape's hands on it...or more precisely, on her *in* it...she wondered if it might not be a bit too...expected. Snape was used to seeing her in satin and tight lacing; perhaps tonight she should try distracting him through minimalism. Maybe the best way to make him think that she was being straightforward...that she had nothing to hide... was to hide nothing.

"How about this?" she asked, summoning a brassiere of plain black satin, nothing but thin straps and narrow, triangular cups, charmed to lift and separate in the most natural-looking way possible. It had a front clasp, too, that would nestle invitingly right at the base of her cleavage (and no augmentation charm was necessary *there*, as Rita frequently reminded the mirror).

"It's all ri-i-i-ight," drawled the mirror, in a dubious tone that clearly said it wasn't. "I suppose it all depends on how soon you want things to be over."

Of course, thought Rita. The mirror had seen the issue exactly. Barely-there bras and wispy knickers were for those encounters that she preferred to end quickly...like getting the names of passengers out of Stan Shunpike, for instance (she rarely even needed to touch him), or wangling introductions to VIP sources from Horace Slughorn (all it usually took was a strategically-placed dab or two of chocolate sauce).

But Severus Snape was in a different class altogether. She didn't mind spending time with him at all. Not only did she find Snape a damned good lay, but the longer she kept him unsatisfied, the better chance she had of getting more information.

Tonight's meeting could be particularly important. For the last month, rumours had been coming out of the Ministry that something big was going to be happening at Hogwarts in the coming term. Now, how it could be any bigger than last year's top Hogwarts story (that little business the school's defenses being breached by an Azkaban escapee bent on murdering Harry Potter), Rita didn't know. But she was determined to find out.

"I think I'll go with the enchanted dress, then," she said to the mirror.

"Just what I was going to suggest, luv," replied the mirror approvingly. "Make him work for it."

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She met Snape at a Muggle restaurant in Liverpool, far from the magical sections of town and from anyone likely to recognise them...not that they didn't both wear glamours just in case.

But they charmed the glamours so that they could see each other's real selves. Glamours concealed too much; Rita wasn't about to give up the chance to read as much of Snape's face as she could (it wouldn't be a lot, of course; the man was like stone. Still, as she knew from experience, there would be the occasional involuntary twitch. And later, once they were alone...well, even a [former] Death Eater lost a little self-control when Rita Skeeter had his cock in her hands.)

"I'm expecting something hot and juicy tonight," Rita said, as they waited for their drinks to be served. It was a little too early to play footsie with him under the table; he usually required at least one glass of wine or beer before a strategically-placed toe rendered him anything other than annoyed. But there was no reason not to soften him up with a bit of innuendo.

She was rewarded with a slight tightening of his lips. "After all," she continued, "this is the first time you've ever initiated a meeting with *me*. Usually I'm the one who has to chase *you*."

"I'd hardly call it 'chasing,'" Snape replied. "If you seriously needed to chase me, I can assure you that I would never be caught. But I work in a highly-structured environment; I cannot take off at a moment's notice whenever you happen to demand my presence. I come when I'm able."

His sallow cheeks turned a mottled red as he realised what he'd said, and Rita delighted in not letting him off the hook.

"Indeed you do," she murmured, running her tongue over her lips as she lifted her just-delivered glass of wine.

But if she'd hoped the little blunder would unsettle Snape, she was disappointed. He quickly had himself under control, leaning back to sip his own wine, and the moment passed. Well, it wasn't surprising, Rita thought. The man had gone tête-à-tête with He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named; he could hardly be expected to fall apart because of an unintentional *double-entendre*.

So she turned her attention to ordering, which for her was always an involved process. The waiter had to be made to understand exactly what she meant by "rare," and there were any number of questions to be asked about the ingredients and preparation of the accompaniments. Rita took food as seriously as she took all her pleasures; there was no point in paying for inferior quality.

When it was Snape's turn, however, he merely said curtly, "the salmon" and answered "whatever" to the server's questions about preferred side dishes.

Ah, well. Just because a man didn't enjoy his food didn't mean he couldn't enjoy other things.

Rita raised her glass. "Slàinte," she said. Snape nodded and took rather a larger gulp of wine than manners might dictate.

It was Rita's long-standing rule that they didn't discuss business during dinner. She knew Snape would have preferred to dispense with the dinner entirely (he wasn't a sociable man at the best of times, and she enjoyed teasing out some of the worst of him), but she insisted on their sharing a meal. When time allowed, she saw no reason not to conduct her affairs...all of them...in a civilised manner.

By the time the bill arrived, they'd finished a bottle of wine, and Snape's face was nicely flushed, though Rita thought that might have less to do with the alcohol than with the fact that she'd been running first her stiletto heel and then her bare toe up his calf. No matter how much he drank (and it usually wasn't much), Snape rarely showed any effects.

"You've booked a room?" he said as they rose.

Rita gave him her best feral grin. "Of course. I didn't think you'd fancy fucking in the restaurant loo."

His pained eye-roll was vintage Snape, but she didn't miss the surreptitious hand he ran over the front of his Muggle trousers. Probably half-hard already, the bad lad.

It was going to be a lovely night.

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They'd barely finished Apparating into the hotel room before Snape had Rita shoved up against the wall, and she purred in anticipation. If Snape liked it rough, Skeeter liked it rougher, and if he was in a hurry to get things started, she wouldn't say nay.

He still wore his Muggle garb...black trousers, black jacket, open-necked white shirt...but Rita banished her own Muggle suit to a convenient chair, then watched with satisfaction as Snape took in her under-robe attire: a high-necked, long-sleeved, floor-length robe of black silk, fastened down the front from top to bottom with dozens of tiny jet buttons.

She stood still and let him look. This robe was not just any robe...it was from Madam Malkin's private collection, the existence of which was known only to a *very* select clientele. This particular custom creation was shrink-charmed to be just a short, sleeveless shift until a moment of her choosing, since of course she didn't want such a bulk of fabric beneath her regular robes. But as soon as she whispered the counter-charm, the full glory of the gown could be seen: black and high-necked and long, yes...and completely sheer. Thanks to Madam Malkin's magical sewing abilities, there was not a seam to be seen anywhere...

...the better to show off what Rita was (hardly) wearing beneath: her skimpy black bra and a scrap of black satin that counted as knickers, plus a garter belt and the gorgeously-slutty net stockings.

And her black shoes, of course...pointed patent-leather stilettos with silver heels. They gave perfect definition to her net-clad calves (and as a not-to-be-dismissed side benefit, gave her a couple inches over Snape's own height; Rita never minded looking down on her men.)

She allowed herself a small smirk at the momentary expression of appreciation that crossed his face (quickly hidden, of course, but no matter; Rita's sharp eyes had seen what she needed to see).

And if he was impressed by the robe now...well, just wait until he saw what else it was charmed to do.

With a growl, Snape pushed Rita against the wall again, pinning a wrist above her head with one hand while the other found her breast through the thin silk of her gown. She slipped her free hand under his shirt and gave him a quick graze with her fingernails, just to remind him what he had to look forward to (that permanent, indestructible manicure charm had been one of her better investments, Rita always thought).

Then Snape's mouth was on hers, and for several minutes she didn't think about anything except thrust and bite and the heat of a strong thigh wedged between her own.

But when he began to try to lift her skirts, she pulled away from his teeth and tongue to laugh softly. "In a bit of hurry, are you? Go ahead, then. Have at me."

Snape tugged again on the sheer skirt, but it continued to swirl lightly around her ankles, its soft drape no more disturbed than it would be by the touch of a ghost.

"What in Merlin's..." Snape muttered, and Rita chuckled again.

"You might be ready," she said. "But *I'm* not. And until I am, the robe won't be ready, either. It's a charm. Clever, what? Anyway, what's your rush, Snape? Don't you want to play? I do." She paused to lean forward and run her tongue along his lower lip. "Let's play 'what's going on at Hogwarts,' shall we?"

Snape sighed and settled for biting her jaw. Hard. "International magical cooperation," he said finally, using his knee to move her legs further apart.

Rita pushed her hips lightly against his but was careful not to come in contact with his cock; let him yearn. "And what does *that* mean? Dumbledore is going to take the kiddies on field trips to faraway lands?"

"Hardly," Snape said, his hand continuing to work her breast. "He's going to bring the faraway lands to the kiddies. The Ministry wants to run the Triwizard Tournament at Hogwarts next year."

Rita was surprised...though not, of course, enough to stop the slow drift of her fingers down his back and under the waistband of his trousers; a nail drawn along his arse, she thought, might help loosen his tongue further. In terms of speech, that was. It was already loose enough otherwise.

"The Triwizard Tournament? Why now? Does this have anything to do with Harry Potter?"

Snape hissed as her nail found his bare skin. "You'll have to ask Dumbledore about the whys and wherefores. As for Potter, that brat is out of the picture for once, thank Salazar. He's underage."

Urging her hand further beneath Snape's trousers, Rita considered. Why was he telling her this? On the one hand, he had little to lose. If the school really was going to host a renewed Triwizard Tournament, that fact would be common knowledge soon enough. On the other hand, there was no particular reason for her to know early... Obviously there was more to the story.

She cupped a buttock and squeezed, making sure that he could feel the tips of her nails. Damn, but his trousers were constricting; they'd have to go soon.

But not yet. She still had too much to learn.

"That's very interesting," she said, trying not to hiss in her turn as his lips reached the sensitive spot where her neck joined her shoulder. "But it's not quite a scoop. What else have you got?"

With a snort, Snape butted his cock against her, but Rita was not about to be distracted (well, not much). Something else was going on here, and she meant to find out what.

That Snape was with her at least partly on Dumbledore's orders, Rita didn't doubt. Nor did she mind. If the old man wanted to plant information with her through Snape, that was fine with Rita; she didn't have to use what he told her, but it was always better to hear it than not. She could play cloak-and-dagger spy games with the best of them.

Hell, she was the best of them.

It was unclear whether Dumbledore was aware that Snape stayed on for a more intimate exchange after he'd imparted the headmaster's propaganda, though if Rita had been a betting woman, she would have put her galleons on the side of his knowing all about it. She didn't like Dumbledore, but she had to admire the man's prowess at gathering information; she admitted (though only to herself) that sometimes he was better at it than she was.

Sometimes.

She tried to reach between Snape's legs from behind to let her nails flutter against his balls, but she couldn't quite get the proper angle. Damn. Yes, the trousers would be disappearing soon as she had a little more information.

"What else?" she asked again, taking her hand from his arse and sliding her fingers through his hair.

Snape straightened and finally explained. "For the Tournament, Hogwarts will be hosting Beauxbatons and Durmstrang," he said. "Each school will select a champion. I can get you invited to the castle to interview them. An exclusive."

After a pause to let this offer sink in, he tugged at her skirt again. "Now can we get this damned robe off you?"

"Greedy," Rita said, batting his hands away. "Use the buttons."

Snape glared, dropping her still-pinned wrist. "There must a hundred of them."

"One hundred twenty-seven, if you want to be precise," she replied, fingering the top two and then letting her hands drift down over her breasts and stomach. "So get busy. Like this."

She began to unbutton his shirt, pushing the material aside to tweak a nipple when it appeared.

Snape cracked, as she'd known he eventually would. "Aarggh!" he snarled, grabbing the front of her robe and ripping with all his strength; the sinews in his neck bulged with the strain.

But of course the charmed fabric remained undamaged. Madam Malkin's work could never be faulted; it was worth every (considerable) knut.

"Naughty, naughty," Rita said, stilling his hands with her own and moving them to the top of her robe. "Buttons, like a good boy." Then just to remind him of the delights that lay ahead once the buttons were undone, she rocked her hips against his cock.

He very nearly groaned, but stopped himself; Snape's astounding self-control was one of the most enticing things about him. *But it won't be long now*, Rita thought. She licked her lips and smirked in the way she knew both infuriated and aroused him.

He gave a sneering growl, but said nothing as he attacked the first button. That was another attractive side to the man: he rarely wasted time in useless argument; he knew when he'd been beaten.

His hands were steady, his long fingers deft as he pushed each bit of jet through its buttonhole. He moved quickly, as she expected from a man who spent so much time with minute and precise potions ingredients, and very soon he'd opened the dress past her breasts.

Part of Rita wanted to knock him to the ground and mount him right there, but of course she didn't; she'd always been a woman who knew how to pace her pleasures. She waited until he reached nearly her waist, and then she slipped her hand inside the dress to cup her own breast

Snape said nothing and didn't even appear to be watching, but of course he'd noticed. After two more buttons, she began to stroke herself through the satin of her bra.

Aha! She'd got Snape to stop. An almost-infinitesimal pause, admittedly, but a pause nonetheless. Now was the time for the cat to pounce.

"Why?" she asked.

"Urg?" grunted Snape, his attention now fixed at her waist (and, she was certain, on the sliding of her thumb over her nipple).

"Why would you get me an exclusive with the Triwizard champions? What do you want?"

"I want you to use that mouth for something other than endless chatter," Snape huffed. "But since you appear to be constitutionally unable to shut up, I will settle for simply demanding that you do your talking later."

Rita charmed closed a dozen of the buttons he had just *unbuttoned* and took the opportunity quickly to open his flies. As soon as she could feel his heat and hardness through his pants, she squeezed. "Not later. Now."

Such was Snape's control that he still gave not the slightest groan. (Yet. But the night was young.) All the same, Rita thought she could see his chest rise and fall more quickly.

"Karkaroff," he said. "I need to know what you hear about Igor Karkaroff." His hands were on the buttons again, each one opening more quickly as his skills improved. Soon he was on his knees in front of her, and Rita was in no hurry to put an end to *that* visual.

"And what do you want to know about Karkaroff?" she asked.

"Anything you hear of him!" Snape snapped. "Where does he travel? Whom does he meet? Anything you find out. Beyond the size of his cock, which I've no doubt you already know."

"Six inches," Rita said promptly. Git. Let Snape go ahead and wonder whether she was making it up.

Still, it was a bit too early for this level of irritation from him, and she didn't want put him off. So after a moment she soothed him by slowly opening the clasp at the front of the bra to let herself spill out before his eyes. She was rightly proud of her breasts...their size unchanged by any spell, their high firmness the result of only the tiniest of charms.

Banishing the rest of the bra, she stroked herself lightly and then pinched her nipples when she saw that she had his attention. Ah, was there anything hotter than Severus Snape's narrowed eyes glaring at her from his delightful position at her feet?

Well, maybe a few things.

"So, I tell you about Karkaroff now," Rita mused, as if thinking aloud. "But I won't get my Triwizard interviews for at least two months, maybe longer. So what can you offer me in the meantime?"

In truth, he'd already offered quite a bit, but Rita saw no harm in trying to get a little more.

Unfortunately, though, this particular chance was lost. Snape had reached the last of the buttons, and with a cry of triumph, he stood up and wrenched the enchanted dress from her shoulders. It slipped off easily, with no catching of sleeves or twisting of wrists, thanks to Madam Malkin's best *Robe Begone!* charm. (The woman really did think of everything, even down to the fact that the gown would stealthily ease itself out of the way once it lost contact with a warm body. Rita could see it out of the corner of her eye, edging unobtrusively across the floor.)

Snape stood in front of her, unabashedly staring, and then, before she knew it, he'd pulled her across the room to the bed, evidently banishing his pants as he went, because she could feel his naked cock hard against her arse as he dragged her backward onto his lap.

It was a gloriously awkward position; she felt available to him at the same time that she could keep her feet solidly on the ground. She had to spread her legs just a little to balance herself, had to lean back against him to keep from sliding off. For good measure, she wriggled her arse to give herself better purchase.

Ah! *There* came his groan.

Rita reached back to wind her fingers into Snape's hair and to twist her mouth towards his. She could feel his chest hair on her back, feel the wool of his trousers on her thighs. His hands had been busy, too...one of them was already tight on her breast; the other had found its way inside the front of her tiny knickers.

His fingers were hot, and she was more than wet, and Snape was right.

They could talk later.

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She didn't know exactly how much later it was that she found herself astride him on the bed, her stockinged legs pressed tight against his naked thighs, the thin silver chain from her glasses grazing his chest as she leant over him, riding his cock slowly. (She'd discovered early on that wearing her glasses during sex tended to unsettle her partners, and now she never removed them. Her trademark, as it were.)

If they unsettled Snape, though, he never showed it. For the moment, he lay quiet beneath her, his eyes closed as she rocked. His trousers and pants were gone, but he still wore his Muggle jacket and shirt, and Rita held the cloth tight in one fist as she traced the fingers of her other hand down his stomach and along the outline of the snake tattooed down his left hip.

Slytherin males. Always with the phallic symbols.

Rita sighed with satisfaction as she moved. Delicious. She'd let Snape enjoy himself for just a few more seconds, and then...

His eyes flew open as Rita pinched a nipple hard.

"I tell you about Karkaroff now," she said, as if they were still having their earlier conversation. "And what do I get in payment...now?" She reached down to grip one of his balls. "Because tasty though it is, your cock isn't going to be enough."

"Depends on what you want," he said, pinching both her nipple and arse in return. Rita shivered; damn, she enjoyed a man who understood the nuances of a competition of touches.

"Nothing major," she shrugged. "Light gossip, that's all." She stopped moving and pretended to think. No need to let Snape know too soon that she'd recently begun moonlighting as the "Secret Sleuth" anonymous gossip columnist at *The Cackling Crone*. And she'd been hearing some interesting rumours lately.

"Let's see," she said. "Your colleagues should be good for some tittle-tattle." Pausing to give him a quick couple of pumps, she went on, "of course, everyone knows about old McGonagall's dirty weekends with the head of MLE, but I could use some background..."

Rita stopped, waiting. No response. Damn Snape's Slytherin hide. Anyone else would have said either a shocked, "Everyone knows *what*?" thus suggesting genuine ignorance, or a sharp, "Who said so?" thus giving as good as a confirmation. Usually, the "Everyone knows..." ploy usually worked like a Charm.

But not with Snape. She should have known. He simply placed his hands on her hips and gripped hard as he began to push upward, grunting as he moved, "I don't...concern myself with...the uninspiring private lives of...Gryffindor schoolmistresses...and certainly not...while I've better things to do..."

With a sudden tensing of his muscles, he flipped Rita off him and onto her back. She'd barely caught her breath before he was driving his cock into her and nipping her lips.

Deciding to allow him his little victory (she had nothing to lose), Rita wrapped her legs around his waist, shifting until she could rest a stiletto in the cleft of his arse. Then she settled in for the ride.

Now *this* was fucking.

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He didn't last long, poor boy. Men tended not to, when they were with Rita. She smiled with satisfaction as Snape came hard, throwing his head back and howling before slumping forward heavily onto her chest, his breath coming in great gasps.

Rita waited. She knew it would be only a moment...

...And it was. Almost immediately he pulled himself up and moved back to nestle between her thighs. That was another of the many things she appreciated about Severus Snape: he understood the nature of a good *quid pro quo*, whether in bed or in business. He repaid orgasm for orgasm, which was more than she could say for many of her bed partners. Not that she really wanted Umbridge's or Fudge's tongue in her cunt, but it was the principle of the thing.

Snape rested his hands on her thighs, his thumbs anchored in the mesh of her stockings. His tongue felt divine, tantalizing with quick touches before he settled in for a steady rhythm, alternately thrusting and stroking. She knew he could taste himself, and the thought made her muscles clench. So ready was she that she knew she wouldn't last much longer than he had, and sure enough, all too soon she could feel the heat build and then break, spreading through her like a tide, and she was bucking, shouting, even dislodging her glasses...

Now *this* was coming.

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She was still breathing hard when Snape stood up and began to dress. He never stayed long after they finished, and that was fine with Rita. They'd both got what they wanted, and they'd get it again eventually. No point in his hanging about.

"I'll owl you about the Tournament interviews," Snape said, pulling on his trousers as she watched him from the bed, her glasses now firmly back in place.

"I'll let you know what I hear about Karkaroff," Rita replied. This was a little ritual of theirs, to firm up the bargain verbally. Neither needed to mention that they'd write in charmed ink and use anonymous owls; she'd have been insulted if he'd thought he needed to tell her something so obvious, and he would have felt the same. What was the point of being Slytherin and Ravenclaw if they couldn't be indirect and trust the other to understand what wasn't said? It was the Gryffs and the Puffs who insisted on spelling everything out.

And of course, Snape didn't need to tell Rita not to mention to anyone his interest in Karkaroff (however much she planned to speculate about it in private). It was a matter of honour with her not to betray her sources. Especially those who knew about her unregistered animagus form.

Snape finished buttoning his shirt and pocketed his wand. With a nod and a crack, he Apparated away, and Rita roused herself to toe off her shoes and strip off her stockings before heading to the shower.

She planned to stay the night at the hotel, of course; she'd already billed the room to the *Daily Prophet*. It was a reasonable expense-account charge...after all, she was working.

In the morning, she'd have a lie-in and a good breakfast, delivered to the room. That charge, she thought, could go to *The Cackling Crone*; it was only fair that they paid for their share of the information-gathering when she learnt anything to their advantage.

As she had tonight when Snape confirmed Minerva McGonagall/Amelia Bones rumour. Well, as good as confirmed it. He hadn't denied the claim outright, nor had he said directly that he didn't know, as he would have done if he honestly didn't. She'd known Snape long enough to understand that what he *didn't* say was as much of an actual statement as what he *did* say. She trusted that tonight's information was at least good enough for a column of non-actionable insinuations and pointed hints.

And come autumn, she'd be able to scoop all the competition with her one-on-one, penetrating profiles of the Tri-Wizard Tournament champions.

Rita wanded the shower to the hottest temperature she could stand and stepped in. Various small bruises and cuts sprang to life in the heat, and she hissed in pleasurable pain, remembering the pressures of Snape's hands. Perhaps she wouldn't owl him with her Karkaroff information; perhaps instead she'd arrange to meet him again for dinner.

And afters.

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Humming, Rita tipped scented shampoo into her hand and massaged her scalp as the hot water pounded her skin. Then she spent a few happy moments indulging in a vision of the office door that she hoped one day to see at the headquarters of *The Cackling Crone*: "Rita Skeeter. Editor-in-Chief."

Oh, yes. It could happen.

And it would, she had no doubt. She was on top of the wizarding world (not to mention quite a few wizards), and life was good.

Rita-good, to be precise...the best kind.