

# Two to Tango at the Three Broomsticks

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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The landlady of The Three Broomsticks certainly kept herself busy, despite the lack of patronage at her pub this evening. After all, there were glasses to wash, brass to polish and tables to clean. There was always something to do when one was the sole proprietor of such an establishment, punters or no punters.

Even so, it was unusually quiet for a Tuesday night, and Rosmerta was now putting up the chairs and stools on the back of the freshly-cleaned tables. It had been a slow night. She might as well close the pub a little earlier and spend the rare time she had to herself on a little pampering and beautification. She wasn't getting any younger, she thought wistfully, and she needed all the help she could get to maintain her looks. Yes, a nice hot bath, a manicure, a pedicure and a new hair curling charm would be just the ticket.

The sound of the front door bursting open interrupted Rosmerta from her reverie. Whoever had decided they needed a drink now when she was about to close? To her great surprise, standing in the doorway was the imposing figure of Severus Snape, wearing a black cloak and a scowl that was even darker.

'Severus? Whatever's the matter? Is everything alright?'

Rosmerta looked at the dark wizard with concern. Like many of the teaching staff at Hogwarts, she and Severus went back years. Five years older than him at school, Rosmerta had taken over her father's business after his sudden death in her seventh year and left Hogwarts with only a handful of OWLs to her name. NEWTs did not seem important to her at the time. All that was important was keeping the pub open, to protect the little business her father had devoted his life to, and to retain a sense of normality for everyone else when all around her was chaos. It had been that way ever since, through the war with Voldemort and beyond. And whenever anyone needed a sympathetic ear, a chance to moan or a good old-fashioned gossip, it would be Rosmerta they turned to.

Severus slammed the door shut behind him and stalked forwards into the gloom of the pub.

'I sincerely hope you are not closing up because you are out of Firewhisky?' he growled, grateful that the pub was empty yet annoyed that Rosmerta was closing the place. He needed a drink, by Odin's raven, and if Rosmerta wouldn't serve him then he would serve himself.

'No, it's been a quiet night,' Rosmerta answered, watching the muscle twitch at Severus' jaw. He looked as agitated as he sounded. 'I can see you need a drink. I was just about to lock up... Are you happy with a lock-in?'

Severus stalked past the witch and chose a chair in a booth in the darkest corner of the pub, signalling his agreement. 'No need to bother with a glass,' he sneered. 'Bring the bottle.'

Rosmerta hurried over to the bar to retrieve the bottle, her heart racing. Severus had not visited her for a long time. The rare times he did, he would sit and scowl into some Firewhisky while she would smile and laugh and fill him in on the latest rumours and scandals that had reached her ears. He would typically answer monosyllabically or with biting sarcasm, and once he'd had his fill of liquor, he would thank her politely and give her a long, intense look before making his way back to Hogwarts. He never shared what was on his mind, and for all Rosmerta knew, her company did nothing to soothe his ills. But he would come back eventually for more of the same, so she presumed she was doing something right.

She returned to the table and placed the bottle and a little tumbler carefully in front of Severus. She knew he would not be so uncouth as to drink straight from the bottle and watched as he carefully filled the glass to the brim.

'Care to join me?' Severus asked, his black eyes glinting. She wouldn't say no. She never did.

'Why, yes, I would,' Rosmerta replied, smiling at him fondly. 'Give me two minutes to put the till away and lock the doors, and I'll be all yours.'

Severus responded with a grunt and continued drinking, watching the curvy witch the whole time. She bustled about, humming to herself as she put up the rest of the chairs.

*How does she stop her cleavage from falling out of that wench's outfit?* he wondered to himself, admiring the comely swell of her bosom. Must be magic, he thought as she watched her lean over and one of her ample breasts threatened to spill over the top but stayed miraculously in place.

Now Rosmerta was charming money from the till into the safe and locking and warding the doors. Severus watched the way her blonde ringlets bounced at her shoulders as she waved her wand. There was no denying she was an attractive witch.

Satisfied that everything was done to her liking, Rosmerta eventually tucked her wand into her skirts whilst simultaneously grabbing a glass from the side before hurrying over and slipping opposite Severus in the booth.

'Haven't seen you in here for a while, Severus. You must be very busy.' She topped up his glass whilst pouring a thumb-full for herself.

'Busy does not even start to describe it,' Severus replied before taking a big swig of the burning amber liquid. His voice was so cold it gave Rosmerta chills and made the hair on the back of her neck stand on end.

'You seem to have a lot on your mind,' she began, once more looking with concern at the morose man in front of her. 'If you need to talk...' She smiled reassuringly and placed her delicate hand gingerly on his, the one that was clutching onto the tumbler of Firewhisky as if it were a life raft in a storm.

Severus flinched at Rosmerta's touch and pulled his hand away as if burned. 'This is a pub, is it?' he snapped. 'I came here to drink, not to talk.'

Rosmerta withdrew her hand quickly. If she was hurt, she did not show it. 'Of course, Severus,' she murmured instead.

Once again, the muscles in his jaws twitched. He knew that this wasn't a nice way to treat his hostess and immediately regretted his outburst, but Severus Snape was a man who did not apologise easily. In place of an offered apology, he took another gulp from his tumbler, leaving it almost empty.

'Business is slow, I see,' he growled, attempting to move on from his indiscretion. He had indeed come here to drink, but if he were honest, he had come for her company, too.

Rosmerta sighed. 'It always is around this time of year. The lull before the summer starts,' she explained. 'Not that I mind too much. I'm thinking about shutting up for a week or two and visiting my sister in Devon.' She sipped delicately at her Firewhisky and swilled the golden liquid around her glass. 'How about you? Any holiday plans? It looks like you could do with a break.'

Severus snorted. 'Not bloody likely.'

'You work too hard, Severus.'

'It's not like I have a choice,' he retorted sharply before downing the rest of glass.

Rosmerta watched him carefully. 'You take your responsibilities very seriously, don't you?'

Severus looked hard at the witch in front of him. 'I have to,' was all he said in return. She had no idea.

'That's what makes you such a good teacher,' Rosmerta replied brightly.

Severus snorted once more and filled a third glass. Of all his responsibilities, pedagogic teaching methods were as far down the list as the Chudley Cannons in the Quidditch league table. But Rosmerta wasn't to know that.

He slumped back in his chair, exhaling through his nose. 'This is a year from hell, I tell you.'

'Dear Severus,' Rosmerta murmured kindly. 'You look like you have the weight of the world on your shoulders.'

'Let me tell you, Rosmerta. It feels like it.' Wasn't that an understatement? Trying to appease two masters and protect a reckless little brat at the same time was pushing him close to breaking point. How he had become so pivotal in the war, he had no idea. Harry Potter may have been the Chosen One, but Severus had unwittingly become his guardian angel and protector. The irony was not lost on him.

'Is there anything I can do to help?' Rosmerta asked, her blue eyes searching the black.

Severus merely shook his head. No, there was nothing Rosmerta could do, apart from what she did best: offer up her hospitality, as warm as freshly-buttered toast and equally as comforting.

'Do you still have your jukebox?' he asked suddenly, tearing his eyes away from hers.

Rosmerta brightened. 'Sure do. In the corner, there.' She pulled her wand from her skirts and waved it quickly. 'Free credit,' she grinned. 'Help yourself.'

She watched as Severus stalked towards the jukebox, as lithe and graceful as a panther. The raven-black curtain of hair fell across his face as he scanned the titles, shielding himself from view.

'How about *Sympathy for the Devil*?' he sneered. The Devil certainly deserved sympathy. He, Severus Snape, deserved nothing.

'Whatever you like, Severus,' Rosmerta smiled.

She watched him with interest as he tapped in some numbers, and after a few moments and a crackle of vinyl, the song began with distinctive acoustic guitar chords and a honky-tonk piano.

*Well, we all need someone to lean on. And if you want it, well, you can lean on me...*

Severus lingered by the jukebox, standing over it and gripping it as if to steady himself. He was holding on so hard to the machine that Rosmerta saw his knuckles whiten.

She felt an overwhelming surge of concern go through her. What burdens was he carrying all on his own? Burdens only he could bear? If only there were something she could do to ease his troubles.

Severus returned to his chair and downed the third glass easily before taking a deep breath and clearing his throat.

'Roz?'

Rosmerta smiled. He almost never called her "Roz". But she had to admit, she liked the sound of her nickname on his lips. 'Hmm?'

Severus made a beckoning movement with his head, urging her to come nearer.

Rosmerta looked puzzled. Surely, the stern Potions master was not going to ask her to dance?

A smile played on her lips as she slipped out of her side of the booth and walked towards Severus, who had shifted position so he was facing out of the booth. His obsidian eyes drew up her body, taking in the curve of her hips, the nipped-in narrowness of her corseted waist and the round, succulent orbs of her breasts he had been admiring before. As she stood before him, he forcefully reached forwards and grabbed her by the hips and pulled her down, so she straddled his knees.

Rosmerta let out a little "Oh!" of surprise, her hands on his chest and her big blue eyes searching his for answers. Severus' onyx eyes held her gaze as he placed both hands on her shoulders, then let them slowly glide down her arms.

Rosmerta smiled gently at the tenderness of the gesture, and Severus let his hands glide back up her arms again, his eyes still locked on to hers. When his hands reached her shoulders, he grabbed them and pulled her towards him, claiming her mouth with his own. His kiss was forceful, demanding, and Rosmerta moaned into his mouth as he kissed her hungrily. She let her head fall back in order to grant him access to her neck and cleavage.

Severus' hands now began to glide down her back, slowly, gently caressing her, and as he sank his teeth into the soft flesh of her neck, he pulled her hips towards him and bucked up slightly, rubbing his arousal against her.

Rosmerta could not help but make a delicious sound as he sank his teeth into her throat. Her hips instinctively pushed forwards too, reacting to the swell of his bulge underneath her.

She began to feel giddy as his long fingers skilfully started pulling up her skirts whilst he continued suckling at the sensitive flesh at the side of her neck. Her eyes were half-closed now with delight as each nip and nibble at the sensitive skin behind her ears made shivers run down her spine. Carefully, she ran her hands lightly through his thick raven hair, finding it to be sleek and soft.

Severus' hand had found its way under her voluminous skirts and was now sliding up her thigh. He gave a grunt of approval when his curious hand discovered that she was wearing no knickers, and he wondered if she usually dressed without them. The thought made him yet harder still. His wandering fingers softly caressed her golden curls, while the tip of his tongue made its way up her neck and his other hand, now nestled between her thighs, found her hot and wet for him.

Rosmerta whimpered at his touch. Without warning, she felt the tip of one of his fingers dart inside her, whilst the ball of his thumb pressed up against her clit. Inhaling sharply, she began to grind against his fingers, searching for his mouth at the same time for another deep and passionate kiss.

With one swift motion, he grabbed her around the hips and pulled her off his knees, more or less throwing her onto the table. The tumblers skidded off and smashed on the floor whilst the bottle of Firewhisky rolled with a clatter across the wooden floorboards. Rosmerta looked up at Severus, wide-eyed and panting with desire, half fearful of the intensity of the situation yet aroused beyond compare.

Unceremoniously, Severus pushed up her skirts and positioned himself between her legs. With swift fingers, he opened his robes, unzipped his fly and freed his erection, which stood to attention immediately, thick and hard.

Rosmerta's heart was thudding in her chest as she watched him stroke himself twice with long, slow movements and then forcefully thrust inside her with a deep growl, burying himself inside her hot flesh. She yelped as he thrust in deeper, clinging on to his shoulders and holding on to him tightly. His hands found her breasts, and he desperately started tearing at the fabric, whilst his hips continued to pound into her in a steady rhythm. He needed to see flesh, he needed to knead and squeeze those huge tits that had been driving him mad. Rosmerta meanwhile wrapped her legs around him, urging him deeper, mewing with every thrust.

He pushed her upper body down on the table and, with the sound of tearing fabric, ripped open the lace at her chest, freeing her breasts and making her gasp in shock.

He leaned forward, and his lips felt hot on her exposed skin, teasing the pink nubs of her nipples with his tongue and kneading the soft flesh with his hands. He was thrusting into her slower now, but still with force. And the combined sensation of his thick cock inside her and his mouth and fingers beautifully assaulting her breasts was almost too much pleasure to bear.

'Oh, gods, Severus,' she cried as he found a new rhythm with which to drive her crazy, pulling out ever so slowly just to thrust into her with full force seconds later.

He exhaled audibly through his nose with every thrust, watching Rosmerta let her arms fall above her head, her blonde curls fanned out on the table behind her, locking eyes with him once again. She synchronised her own muscles with the rhythm of his thrusting, gripping him tightly.

He brought his hand between them to rub her clit while he picked up speed. As soon as his fingers touched her sensitive nub, Rosmerta's back arched and she cried out in pleasure.

Severus pinched her clit with two fingers as he once more buried himself deep inside her. 'Cum for me, witch,' he growled, watching her intently as her eyelids fluttered shut and the flush began to creep across her skin. He felt her contract around his thick shaft, and as he pinched her once more, she let out another delicious moan.

'Hm, yesss...' Severus hissed, leaning forwards, pressing his body against hers and burying his face at her neck. His thrusts were shorter now, faster. Rosmerta held onto him tightly, her body becoming rigid as her moans became higher and higher; all the while her internal muscles at her core clamped wildly around him as her orgasm hit.

Now Severus bit her neck, relentlessly thrusting into her as she shrieked like the Shrieking Shack with pleasure. As he drove onwards to his own peak, his thrusts became spasmodic.

Rosmerta felt his body tense as he moaned. Her arms were wrapped around him still, holding him close, as Severus released months and months of pent-up frustration into her warm and willing flesh.

They lay still for some moments to catch their breath.

Severus broke the spell by growling "Fuck!" in Rosmerta's ear. Reluctantly, he withdrew from her. He couldn't look in her eyes. He'd used her. 'Sorry, Roz,' he muttered, looking sheepish.

Rosmerta gazed up at him, a puzzled look on her features. He had just given them both a knee-trembling orgasm not to forget in a hurry and the man now said he was sorry?

'Why are you sorry?' she asked him, a smile still dancing round her lips.

'I should not have,' he replied, rearranging his robes and still not looking at her.

Rosmerta could tell that his black mood, dispersed by the physical passion they shared, was now creeping back around him like fog around a Dementor. She sat up, breasts still bare and barely recovered from orgasm. 'Do you regret it?' she asked, afraid to hear his answer.

'Do you?' Severus replied, skilfully deflecting the question.

He grabbed the whisky bottle and drank from it, since the glasses were now shattered on the floor. To hell with manners, he thought. He had already shown himself to be a caveman tonight.

Rosmerta did not know why Severus would even think such a thing. Her only regret was of his present reaction. 'Of course not,' she answered quietly. 'Although I think one of my fillings might have come loose after that.'

Severus snorted and looked at her for the first time and saw she was smiling up at him. He sighed, and his shoulders slumped. 'You must think that I am a real prick by now.'

Rosmerta gave a burst of unexpected laughter. 'No, Severus, I don't think that.'

'Maybe you should,' he muttered.

Rosmerta paused for a second, watching the dark wizard carefully. 'I think you are a complex man, a private man, and a man with many troubles and worries... worries you are unable to share and have to bear alone.'

Severus stared at Rosmerta and took another gulp right from the bottle. She was on the money, and the depth of her perception shocked him.

'A man who does not want to get too close to anyone,' she continued quietly with a sad smile.

'Trust me, Rosmerta. Being close to me is not safe.' He sounded both rueful and adamant at the same time.

'Trust me, Severus,' Rosmerta whispered. 'I'm old enough to take the risk.'

Whether Severus ignored this comment or did not hear, Rosmerta did not know. Either way, he did not respond. 'How much do I owe you for the drink?' he asked instead.

Rosmerta blinked a few times. So, it seemed as though he did regret it. The conversation was closed. How foolish of her to think it could be any other way.

'It's on the house,' she answered hoarsely, trying to pull the tatters of her laces around her still-exposed chest.

Severus walked towards the blonde witch slowly, cupping her chin with his long fingers and looking deep into her eyes. If she only knew the half of it. But of course, he couldn't tell.

'Rosmerta ... You do not want to be close to me. Trust me.'

Rosmerta opened her mouth to react, but Severus hushed her gently. 'You don't,' he said bitterly, shaking his head.

She gazed up at him now with her blue eyes, wanting to understand but of course not being able. She was perceptive, but how could she know or even guess any of the mess he was in?

He caressed her lips with the pad of his thumb before cupping her face once more.

'In another lifetime, perhaps,' he murmured.

Rosmerta watched Severus leave without either of them saying goodbye. As he closed the door, a lonely tear ran down her cheek. She felt unspeakably sorry for him and hoped that the moment they had just shared would not add to the burden he was already carrying.

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The songs mentioned in this story are *Sympathy For the Devil* and *Let It Bleed*, both by The Rolling Stones.