

Blag, Blatch, Blurt—Snitchnip

by dracontia

Rose plays a clean game of Quidditch. Off the pitch, it's another story. A sequel to 'A Credit to Their Houses.'

'A Credit to Their Houses' sequel

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Only a few insignificant Original Female Characters are mine. The rest are on unpaid leave in this fanfiction.

Definitions of Select Quidditch Fouls:

Blagging: Seizing opponent's broom tail to slow or hinder.

Blurting: Locking broom handles with a view to steering opponents off course.

Blatching: Flying with intent to collide.

Snitchnip: Any player other than the Seeker touching or catching the Snitch.

By the beginning of Fourth Year, Rose was accustomed to Slytherin ways.

Indoor voices were preferred at all times. Younger years gave way to upper years when going through doors, unless older boys were trying to score points with a girl. Friendships between Houses were perfectly acceptable, but only well-trusted friends or close family from other Houses might reasonably be invited to the Slytherin Common Room (and even then, it resulted in a tangible chill to the atmosphere.)

At every meal, expectations for table manners were high, but not always met. Everyone sat with their year-mates: girls on one side of the table, boys on the other. There were gaps, as there were not always equal numbers of boys and girls in each year. If the resulting spaces allowed, guests from another year or even another house might visit, so long as they observed table rules. Hufflepuffs, who generally didn't mind observing conventions, were better at making themselves welcome than Ravenclaws. As one might expect, Gryffindors acquitted themselves rather poorly on that account...even Hugo and Lily, who both regularly forgot to sit across from their opposite-sex siblings rather than beside them.

For the last year or so, Rose was becoming accustomed to the idea that the separation of sexes was no longer altogether to her liking.

There were some consolations... all it took was waking up at an early hour and skipping such fripperies as elaborate hairdos and silly makeup to secure the plum spot opposite Al and Scorpius. Not that she wanted to look at her cousin's smug mug...she'd leave that dubious pleasure to... well, many girls of questionable taste, in all Houses and several years. Being a fourth-year male in possession of reasonably regular features and an unreasonably large allowance was apparently the same as being decked with a large sign that read 'fair game,' insofar as all ages of hussies at Hogwarts were concerned. (Al, for his part, had yet to object to the attention...though he'd also shown

the good sense not to spend any cash on any of the hussies in question.)

Scorpius' face was another story.

Honestly, Rose didn't see the supposed amazing resemblance between Scorpius and his father. To be sure, they were both gray-eyed blonds, but so was Lily's godmother. Scorpius' eyes were perfectly almond-shaped, with soft flecks of sky-blue and long, darker-blond eyelashes. Mr. Malfoy had paler eyes, and as far as Rose was concerned, they looked squinty. Scorpius' hair was far superior, a full, gorgeous head of it, with a breath of gold and a hint of bounce. While it was true the occasional spot showed rather badly on his light complexion, he generally had nice overall color. He definitely wore the narrow, aristocratic Malfoy nose and angular chin better than his father; maybe it was because they were balanced by a fuller set of lips that smiled rather often...

"Have I something on my face?" Scorpius asked anxiously.

Oops. Rose had to remember not to get caught staring at those lips. She smiled apologetically and pointed to the corner of her mouth. It didn't matter which corner, since he had been eating with impeccable neatness, as usual, and there was nothing to look at but handsome features. He quickly pulled the serviette from his lap and dabbed. Rose was quick to nod before he thought to check for a stain, and basked in his smiled thanks. A check of the reflections in her goblet showed more than one female face intent on that smile. The object of all this scrutiny was still charmingly oblivious, nibbling his toast and trying not to laugh with his mouth full as Al carried on in his usual uproarious early-morning fashion.

There were other unspoken rules that were more general to the school; in particular, starting about Fourth Year, was the idea that dating began in earnest... usually with selecting a study partner of the opposite sex. Rose frowned. Once, it had been a given that they were a study trio...Scorpius, Al, and her. But even last year, Al had occasionally blown them off in favor of cruising to the library with his harpy-of-the-hour. She could no longer be sure that Scorpius would choose to continue spending time with her, and his current cluelessness was no protection. All it would take was for the 'Lumos' to go on while he was studying with some other witch...

Rose wasn't very worried about the girls in Slytherin House. They might be sneaky, underhanded, and shrewd...but she knew where they slept, ate, and kept their most treasured belongings. And they knew that she knew. And most of all, they knew better than to put a finger on anything Slytherin's Star Beater was protecting...on or off the pitch. It made single-House classes like Charms and Astronomy almost relaxing.

It was the other three Houses, and the shared classes, that were a problem. Breakfast being nearly done, they would have to confront the boldest of those problem classes, Gryffindor, in double Potions very shortly. Rose suppressed a sigh and gathered her bag. When she looked up, she discovered that Gryffindor wasn't waiting to go on the offensive.

Victoria Alexander, third-year Gryffindor, was making her way up the wrong (boys') side of the Slytherin table, shaking her bouncy, brassy curls. It didn't take an Arithmancy expert to calculate that she was heading for Al and Scorpius, who had stood but weren't walking away yet.

Right. Well, Rose had heard rumors that Mum had used something called 'Oppungo' to good effect once. With Slytherin subtlety, Rose cast it on some spilled pepper...and aimed it into Alexander's nostrils.

"Scorpius? I was wondering if you wanted to study-stuh-uh-ah-ACHOO!" She scabbled in her robes for a handkerchief.

"Um, no, thank you," Scorpius said, backing out of potential flying bogie range. He (more or less politely) fired a quick, "Bless you," over his shoulder as they made their escape. Rose idly wondered how long the sneezing would continue.

"Antidotes are dead boring. Maybe I can convince Professor Davis to set something wicked cool, like Photographic Potions," Al mused.

"I hope she's not contagious," Scorpius said, glancing back at the still sneezing Third Year. "Maybe Pepper-up would be a better idea."

Rose tried hard not to laugh and just succeeded. "I hope the Gryffindors don't blow anything up during Potions," was all she said. Her mood dropped again at the thought of spending a double class period with the voracious fourth-year girls of Gryffindor. "I hate Tuesdays."

Rose wondered what idiot had decided it was a good idea to make Potions with Gryffindor and Slytherin together a Thing. That combination was generally best left unmixed, but if one must, why not something innocuous...like History of Magic, or Astronomy? No, the school in its infinite wisdom placed the two most incendiary houses together in Potions and Care of Magical Creatures...the Classes voted Most Likely to Facilitate Death or Dismemberment.

Well, that was neither here nor there for Rose. She hadn't much to worry about during class, as Professor Davis kept them too busy to look up from their notes or cauldrons, much less socialize. Anyone caught so much as glancing about was doused like an incipient Ashwinder fire. Al tried in vain to slip in Photographic Potions.

That was fine by Rose. Professor Davis was her ally for the duration of the double-length class. *As a Head of House should be*, she thought with satisfaction. The tricky part would come during the packing-up after class. Rose cast a weather eye over the female and Gryffindor side of the room. Guinnivere Coopersmith and Rachel Pang were staring like a couple of hungry Acromantulas in Scorpius' direction. She narrowed her eyes at them. Typical aggressive Gryffindor girls, fairly well-developed, overly made-up... and not friends, if the fact that they'd sat at separate stations though there was plenty of room to sit together, was any indication.

Rose zeroed in on the colorful, expensive pheasant quill on Pang's desk. With a grim smile, she Levitated it carefully over to sit in Coopersmith's open Potions book. Fate supplied the rest by causing Coopersmith to pick up the quill just as Pang had finished frantically searching her bag and the floor for it, and had looked about the room.

"I knew it! You've been eyeing my quill this past month!" Pang exclaimed.

"Why would I want your nasty old turkey feather? I just found it," Coopersmith shot back, tossing the quill disdainfully in Pang's direction. "Stupid bint," she added under her breath.

"Thieving cow," Pang replied unimaginationally.

"Do I need to take points from Gryffindor?" Professor Davis asked, her tone tacitly adding, 'Give me an excuse.'

They mumbled apologies, but continued their argument in evil glances (and by extension, no longer looked at Scorpius) right up to the classroom door. There it erupted afresh in hissed denials and insults, which escalated in volume and severity right down the corridor.

Scorpius glanced after them with a puzzled expression. "What was that all about?" he wondered.

"Just girls being mental," Al said dismissively. "I'm starved, let's see what's for lunch."

Rose allowed herself one small smirk before settling down in her favorite spot at the Slytherin table.

History of Magic was a class tailor-made for doing anything other than minding the lecture.

Al, as was his wont, sat beside Scorpius, who sat beside the window (the better to nap in the sunlight. Sometimes Rose swore the boy was half-Kneazle.) This obliged her to sit behind them; not the worst fate, given that Scorpius asleep was a rather adorable spectacle. On a more practical note, a slightly offset desk near the back gave her a comprehensive view of the room.

It didn't take long to spot the gigglers. As long as they kept it down to a dull roar, Binns never noticed. Too many of those fluttery eyes were glancing towards where Al and

Scorpius sat. That didn't necessarily mean anything, though. Rose had heard rumors that some girls just liked looking at Albus and Scorpius together. She didn't care to examine specifically *why* they wanted to ogle both boys simultaneously; she preferred to imagine that it was because they were always together anyway. Well, if Rose were being perfectly fair, she would have to acknowledge that they were not without complementary aesthetic qualities. Al had intense emerald-green eyes, a respectable tan, and rather dashing self-styling inky-black locks to aid and abet his features, all of which were rendered far more striking in contrast to Scorpius.

Horse-looking Veronica-something was definitely looking at Al, judging by how her face practically caught fire when he noticed her stare and raised an eyebrow at her. Now she turned to her friends, who were clearly engrossed in trying to interpret Al's facial expression. Rose could have told them to quit wasting their time, had she cared. If Al was interested, he had a whole variety of expressions that left no doubt in a witch's mind as to his intentions.

One, though, was not engaging in eyebrow analysis. Rose narrowed her eyes at the contender. Samantha Byrnes was a particularly persistent Hufflepuff. This could be a problem.

She'd left off whispering and giggling in favor of writing something on a square of pink paper. That was definitely not class notes. Byrnes began folding the paper into a sort of airplane shape at which Rose could barely contain a noise of contempt. Either the chit was taking Muggle Studies or was a particularly clumsy Muggleborn...that had to be the worst paper airplane since Granddad attempted one.

Rose made a quick mental calculation and hit it with a Gust Charm just as it passed the open window. Byrnes stared after it with dismay as it fluttered away into the early autumn sky. Flustered, she set about rummaging in her bag for another bit of pink paper.

Well. That was easily countered. Just enough push on a Banishing Spell was all it took to force the inkwell over on the new paper... the desk... and her robes. Rose relaxed and left Byrnes to a lengthy clean-up process.

Rose had to hand it to the witch; the Hufflepuff had spent most of the class de-inking herself and her belongings, and she STILL didn't seem ready to give up. She clutched her bag with a determined look on her face, headed straight to intercept Scorpius as the bell stirred him from his nap.

A subtle, whispered 'Diffindo' and Byrnes' bag ruptured at the seams. The Giggle Patrol fell to their knees to assist her. Rose shot a few more Gust Charms in that direction, making sure the papers weren't too easy to catch, before heading out into the corridor.

"A bit windy in Binns' classroom today," Al said, a little too innocently.

"If you mean the old shade was as talky as usual, I agree," Rose said. Scorpius' chuckle was music to her ears.

The problem was that Rose's last class of the day was Ancient Runes, while Scorpius' was Arithmancy. (Al, for reasons neither of them could fathom, was taking Divination.) No amount of Mum's disapproval could make Rose fond of numbers. She was beginning to see that as an error in judgment, though, since Victoria Pennington...clear-skinned and typically intellectual Ravenclaw...was enrolled in that class.

To cover that many hoops, it wasn't enough to be a Keeper born...a Time-Turner would have to be secured.

Rose was the first out the door of the Ancient Runes classroom. She puffed up two flights of stairs and pushed her way down the corridor just in time to see Pennington making her move outside the classroom door. Fortunately, cousin Sam (whose Quidditch fanaticism exceeded the family stories of Luna's amazing animated Lion Hat) had ambushed Scorpius to ask about Quidditch tryouts. Rose was glad that Pennington wasn't a Gryffindor, and was therefore polite enough to wait until they were done talking. She was also glad she already had her wand in hand.

A whispered spell and a few subtle wand motions that would have pleased Professor Gillete with their economy...and appalled him with their underhandedness...and Alexandra Pennington was face-first on the floor, courtesy of an expertly cast Trip Jinx.

Rose realized her mistake when both boys turned and asked, almost simultaneously, "I say, are you all right?" and "What a tumble! You okay?"

Rose dove in between Pennington and their hesitantly reaching hands. Flying as personal bodyguard to whichever of Slytherin's ace Seekers currently graced the pitch did wonders for her reflexes. "My, you poor thing! You should trot off to the Infirmary straightaway," Rose said, all faux-solicitousness. "Sam, could you be a dear and make sure she gets there?"

Pennington was still trying to gather her wits, and offered no resistance. "Sure thing," Sam said, always obliging to his favorite Quidditch stars. He took Pennington's bookbag in one hand and her arm with a farmhand's grip and cheerfully dragged her off.

"That was nice of Sam to look after her like that," Scorpius said absently. "Never realized she was so clumsy. I do believe she managed to trip while standing still!"

"Fancy that," Rose said. "Shall we head to dinner?"

That night in the Common Room, Rose ensconced herself on her preferred sofa by the Lake Window and indulged in a little self-congratulatory smugness, disguised as reading her Potions text.

"Say, cuz," Al murmured in her ear, startling her. "Try not to mark up the lookers while you're protecting my best mate's virtue, yeah?"

"Don't know what you're talking about," Rose huffed. She snuck a glance around the Common Room. Scorpius was busy playing Treat Catch with ZigZag and didn't notice their exchange. She sighed inwardly. *Just my luck... I'm crushing on the only boy in Fourth Year who would still rather train his owl than chase skirt. Why couldn't he have been an early bloomer, like Al?*

"Right. Let's say, end of term you transfer to Arithmancy with Scorpius, and if the witches still don't get the hint, I'll distract them. I'm sure I can find something... equally appealing for them to do," he said with a self-confident smirk.

This was beyond the ken, even for Al's usual measure of cheek. "Snape's Beak, Al, how many girls do you think you can get away with seeing?"

"Not sure, but I'm going to find out," he said, smirk unabated. "I'm thinking two or three for a start, though... no more than one from each house. Don't want them comparing notes too easily now, do I? And I think I'll leave Slytherin out of it for the present."

"They know where you sleep," Rose murmured, reflexively voicing the Slytherin preoccupation with potential intramural treachery.

"Exactly." His eyes took on a gleam that Rose didn't like at all. "Though rumor is that it's not impossible to find a couple of birds that don't mind sharing..."

"Don't, don't, DO NOT, EVER, tell me, Albus Severus Potter!" Rose just managed not to yell.

Al put up his hands in a 'don't shoot!' gesture, the laughter in his eyes spilling out his mouth.

"What's going on?" Scorpius asked, having done his daily bonding with ZigZag and sent the owl off for his evening exercise.

"Oh, Rose was just telling me how much she regrets not taking Arithmancy," Al lied breezily. "I was telling her how much Aunt Hermione was going to say 'I told you so.'"

"If you wanted to transfer in, I could catch you up," Scorpius offered with gratifying alacrity.

"I'm not sure... it would mean giving up Ancient Runes," Rose hesitated. Not that she really needed the subject, but she still wasn't fond of numbers.

Scorpius got a curious look on his face... almost a scowl, though not anything like his usual 'Transfiguration is hard' or 'Sugden is a git' expression. "Don't see why you'd want to take that, anyway," Scorpius muttered.

"It's dead easy, so I've more time for Quidditch practice," Rose said with a shrug.

"It's got that shifty Hufflepuff, MacMillan, in it. He's...he's not a gentleman," Scorpius said a little stiffly.

Rose opened her mouth to object. Macmillan had never been anything but politely attentive, opening doors for her and offering to carry...

...and it dawned on her that maybe Scorpius was beginning to catch up to the other boys after all.

"I suppose it would do me good to challenge myself... study a bit more," Rose said with a smile.

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