

Reflection

by wingless

An insight into the traumatic life of an unwilling Death Eater.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 1

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This is an angsty, dark fic. If you are easily offended by this, then do not read.

Smoke curled lazily out of the chimney, the pale grey puffs hardly distinguishable from the nondescript colour of the sky on this dreary October night. He watched as it reached greater heights, twirling freely without any restraints; nothing could hold it back or control it until it simply vanished into thin air.

He envied it.

The sun was setting in a completely unappealing way, partially hidden by massive clouds that drifted slowly across the sky. Bulky, smokey formations that looked heavy and sluggish, yet were nothing but vapour.

He often dreamed of them; dreamed of walking, or sometimes falling through them, his body tumbling wildly through different shades of grey. No sense of up or down, left or right. A silent descent that always ended with a black cloud that promised nothing but pain and fear, and yet he approached it without moving a single muscle to stop his fall.

He always woke before reaching it, gasping and wild eyed, flinching when gentle hands soothed his panic. It always stymied him why he woke so frantic; in his dreams, he was always completely calm.

"Snape!"

The harsh voice mercilessly pulled him out of his daydreams. Who was he to complain? He deserved no mercy. Not for what he was supposed to be doing.

His wand arm seemed to rise without conscious thought, the act ingrained from years of practise.

He snorted mirthlessly, drawing disapproving frowns from his black-robed brothers, but he ignored Dolohov. Practise! He actually dared to call the repeated killings of Muggles and Muggle-borns he had been forced to perform over the years 'practise'...

Gods, he was an arse!

The merry band of murderers, sadists and rapists moved forward like a ravenous group of lions. Out for blood, but not driven by a natural hunger, only a perverted lust for inflicting pain and inspiring fear and terror in the helpless victims.

The front door banged open noisily as McNair's spell hit it with his usual brute force. Severus could hear the man's amused laugh as frightened squeals came from within the house. Only children made those noises. Severus closed his eyes for a moment, desperately wishing to wake from this nightmare, wishing to feel calming fingers on his

sweaty skin.

It was no dream, however, so he slowly followed the other Death Eaters, who had already stormed into the small and cosy looking cottage. The smell of a Sunday roast streamed out of the house, and he actually salivated.

Stepping into the hall, he heard curses from his comrades and the terrified screams of pain from their victims somewhere from his left. He didn't look, didn't need another image of carnage to soil his mangled mind.

What did draw his eye was the Inferus he saw in the mirror across the room: a ghastly looking thing with stringy black hair and eyes that held no emotion. Gaunt and pasty, it had cheekbones that protruded under almost grey skin. Quite ugly, really.

He bared his teeth at it and turned away. With slow steps, he neared the kitchen, closing the front door as an afterthought and belatedly casting a Silencing charm. There was no need for it really; the closest neighbour lived almost a mile away. No one would come and heroically rescue this family. No one would save him from witnessing this massacre either.

Severus breathed deeply, inhaling another lungful of the roast the family had for dinner. He smiled. Hermione loved making a roast on Sundays, and she cursed so adorably when her potatoes turned black and the meat turned dry. He had half a mind to ask the lady of this house for her recipe so that he could report it to his beloved, but the woman was too busy gurgling her own blood to answer any questions.

The coppery scent mingled with the rich smell of gravy, and he turned away from the kitchen; he didn't want to look at the gore that was beginning to cover the beautiful golden potatoes that had landed on the floor. What a waste of a perfectly good meal.

"Daaaaddyyyy!"

The high-pitched voice belonged to a little girl with straight, light-brown hair. She was running straight towards him. Severus had no idea how old the wee one might be, but she reached up to his groin. Terrified blue eyes found his for a second, and she squealed breathlessly, flinching away from him as she searched for her father.

What a gorgeous child, he thought, and made no move to stop her as her little legs carried her over to the living room which held her father her saviour, her protector. Severus knew that he wouldn't even be able to save himself, let alone his progeny.

Malfoy was with the man, which meant that the poor child would be traumatised by the sight of her daddy once she reached him. She might not even be able to recognise him anymore, even though they had only arrived a few minutes ago.

He pitied the girl, but it helped him to know that she would not have to live in her traumatised state for too long. She would be united with her family in no time.

See? There was Dolohov, already hard on her heels. Not long, little one. Be brave and you can see them all again beyond the veil. No more pain, no fear. That thought put a weak smile on Severus' face. He managed to turn it into a smirk as the brute that was Antonin Dolohov passed him in the hall. As soon as the man was gone, the smirk slid off Severus' face, and he groaned quietly.

He was stuck now. Stuck between the no doubt mutilated woman in the kitchen to his left, and the father and child to his right. Only male grunts could be heard from the left, whereas father and child were very vocal in their fight with death.

Severus turned into the kitchen, dispassionately watching McNair rut on top of an immobile body. The pervert was driving the corpse through a still spreading puddle of blood and piss with relish. The woman hadn't had to suffer long.

Severus carefully stepped around the mess, his eyes on an open cooking book he spied on the counter. He grunted with something akin to satisfaction as he saw the recipe for beef roast. Little specks of blood covered the well-used pages. He didn't touch the object and merely read the proposed cooking times.

"Ahhh, look at these tits, Snape. Wasted on a filthy Muggle," McNair grunted and raised his body to allow Severus to inspect the naked woman under him.

"Nothing special," the black-haired man answered, after looking at the body for less than a second.

McNair laughed loudly. "You fucking eunuch," he said with humour, lowering himself onto the lifeless, yet still soft body to resume his thrusts.

Severus sneered at the idiotic statement and tried to make a hasty retreat. However, in his haste, he didn't see the knife that had fallen on the floor in the earlier struggle and kicked it across the room with his boot. As it hit the curly hair of the woman, McNair stopped his activities to pick it up

"Thanks, Snape. I can take my souvenir with this."

Severus fled the scene, but wasn't fast enough to miss the unmistakable sound of a knife cutting out an eyeball. McNair whistled cheerfully as he worked, his cock still inside his victim.

Severus stopped in the hall again, this time spitting on the monster in the mirror. He watched the saliva run slowly across the visage and spat on it again. What a vile looking creature.

He heard the excited grunts, enraged growls and hearty guffaws coming from the living room. Muffled cries from the father; sobbing from the child. He lowered his head, wanting to pray for a fast end for those two. He didn't pray, though. He'd long ago lost his belief in God. If there was a God, then he must be raving mad; who else would allow such gruesome murderers to be born?

This poor Muggle man must have spent uncountable days and months of work on this house, putting his hard-earned money into creating this safe haven for his family. Only to have it ripped away from him in the most atrocious way by a bunch of insane and sadistic fools who imagined themselves superior by blood.

Superior because they could wield a wand... Maybe wizards were the freaks and not Muggles or Muggle-borns! It wasn't the first time this thought flitted across the wizard's mind.

Severus had no wish to enter the living room. Malfoy and Dolohov working together was the stuff of nightmares, and he already had enough of those. He knew that he could not just stand here, either, and so decided to go upstairs.

On the wall next to the staircase were family pictures. The first one he looked at was a picture of the little girl that had run past him earlier. Here she smiled, nay, grinned, displaying a row of uneven milk teeth. She would never reach the age where those teeth would be replaced by adult ones.

He turned his eyes away from the picture, watching his black boots on the cream carpet on the stairs instead. He didn't want to soil the soft-looking fabric and hoped that he hadn't accidentally stepped in the blood from the kitchen.

The landing was dark, forcing Severus to light his wand. There were only three doors up here. One led to the bathroom, as the little plaque on the door told him. He walked to the next one, which turned out to be the master bedroom. The bed was made and a big wedding picture hung over the headboard. The smiling bride was no more, and her proud looking groom would soon follow.

The next room must be the child's, Severus deduced, and cautiously opened the door. The room was painted in different hues of green, the colour distorted by the bluish light of his wand. A small bed stood in the corner by the door, a wardrobe, a shelf filled with toys and in the far corner... Oh, God a crib.

Severus could not move. His legs felt leaden, and his heart was beating frantically. No noise was coming from the crib; no soft breathing, no mewling, no rustling bed linen.

Only the hope of finding the crib empty drove him forward, his wand hand shaking.

He could have howled in anguish when he saw a chubby hand peek out from under a red blanket. His feet refused to move any further. Seeing the babe's face would haunt him. But wasn't that what he deserved?

One step. One step was all he managed. The floorboards creaked under his feet and he held his breath. Please don't wake, little one!

The child slept soundly, tiny lips parted slightly, and blond, downy hair covered the beautifully shaped head. So much promise, so much potential. The hopes of its parents had been riding on those tiny shoulders.

A promise unfulfilled. A life unlived.

Severus knew that he could not save the child. No one left alive when he and his brothers invited themselves. The only thing he could, and would, do was keep the child's suffering to a minimum.

Boy, girl? He didn't know, and he had no wish to find out. It did not matter. What mattered was to reunite it with its mother. His wand arm lifted for the second time tonight, this time with intent.

Footsteps could be heard coming up the stairs and his name was being called.

"In here," he answered, and as the last word left his lips, green light erupted from his unwilling wand, crossing the short distance from the slender black wood to the innocent little bundle. The spell hit the infant in the chest, stopping its rhythmic rise and fall instantly. The small body never moved; the spell's impact had been gentle, and the green light had swathed the body in vicious green light almost lovingly.

Severus gratefully wrenched his eyes away from the sight as Dolohov burst into the room.

"Oh, another brat?" he asked, in a hopeful voice that made goose bumps appear on Severus' arms and neck.

"They procreate like animals," Severus heard himself say disdainfully. He strode from the room as slowly as his overbearing instinct to flee allowed him to. The sounds of a ripping nappy could be heard, followed by a disgusted grunt from Dolohov.

A boy, then. Had it been otherwise, Dolohov would have voiced his paedophilic delight with a demented coo over his next victim.

The two men came back downstairs to where Malfoy and McNair waited for them. Both were drenched with blood and wore satisfied grins.

"What were you doing, Snape?" Malfoy asked conversationally, rubbing the drying blood between his fingers with a pleased air.

"Killed another spawn," Dolohov answered for him.

Malfoy sighed theatrically, amused by the Potions master's predictability. The black-haired man was known as the silent killer, the one who wasn't interested in gore and blood, but who merely wished to rid the world of unworthy, filthy Muggles and their spawn. "Scotch now, Severus?" Malfoy asked, already knowing the answer. At Snape's bored nod, the blond man indicated the living room with a jerk of his head.

"There's plenty. Take what you want, and don't forget to leave the Dark Lord's sign when you leave," he ordered before leaving the house with the other Death Eaters.

Severus turned into the living room, carefully stepping over a severed arm and the shredded remains of the girl's dress. Without great ceremony, he chose an unopened bottle of scotch and carried it out of the room, once more keeping his eyes on the his feet, not looking at the bodies.

He stood in the hall and took a deep swig from the bottle, suddenly not in any hurry to leave the house. Everything was quiet now, and the house still felt welcoming. It didn't care who set foot in it.

His throat burned, and his eyes watered as he gulped down the alcohol far too quickly. An old clock ticked away, but time had no meaning for anyone in the house anymore.

He coughed harshly when he stopped drinking and looked sideways, coming face to face with a beastly creature. A killer with a tarnished soul. A fiend that had retained the ability to weep over his victims. Severus didn't think that it made him any more human. Maybe it only made him insane...

A single tear slid down his face. He hated the pleading and helpless expression on the face in the mirror. The next second, the face was gone, shattered into hundreds of pieces that tumbled to the floor. For good measure, he stepped on them. The crunching under his boots felt oddly cleansing.

He left the house without a backward glance. Carelessly, he shot the Morsmordre into the night sky. There was no more smoke curdling from the chimney; the fire had gone out. How long had he been in the house? He had no idea.

Instead of smoke, there was the sickening green of his Master's insignia. Green vapour that refused to vanish, obnoxious and unnatural. With a sneer, Severus walked away, the bottle of scotch his only companion as he followed the narrow road into nowhere.

He needed no light and oriented himself solely on the noise his boots made on the rough gravel and sand. Occasionally, he would step on the grass that grew on both sides of the rural path, but the sudden quietness jolted him out of his daze and he would step back onto the gravel. The steady crunching helped him to suppress the all-too-fresh memories of the latest raid.

A light appeared in front of him, and he looked up with narrowed eyes, straight into the headlights of an oncoming car. He pitied the people that would discover the ghastly scene the Death Eaters had left behind. He Apparated away, only one possible destination in mind.

He landed on his knees, his hand losing its grip on the bottle of scotch. It fell to the ground, the loud clink making Severus twitch as it connected with something hard. The ground was littered with bottles of alcohol, hundreds of silent witnesses to the many dirty deeds this Death Eater had to carry out under duress.

Severus did not pick it up again, but lurched to his feet. The walk to the castle was familiar, taking too long and somehow not long enough at the same time. He was afraid to go home, guilty of having a place to call home when he had just helped invade someone else's with the order to kill.

One night, less than a measly thirty minutes if you counted the time to play with the victims was all it took to destroy a family, a home, a piece of humanity that should have been untouchable.

How difficult was it to find the right partner to share your life with? How utterly amazing was it to build a life with that special person? How mesmerising and unique was the feeling of creating life with said person? How easy was it to take it all away...?

There was no stopping now, and before he knew it, he stood in front of the door to his quarters. His hand touched the smooth wood, and it swung open silently. He was greeted with the welcoming heat and smell he had come to identify with home.

A small fire crackled in the hearth, and he was grateful for the gesture, as always. Deserved or not, he needed those signs of welcome. Following his routine, he rid himself of all his clothes, using a spell instead of his hands. He walked into the bathroom and climbed into the shower, where he stood under the scalding spray for a long moment. He washed his hair, face and hands with harsh movements before stepping out.

Next, he brushed his teeth, scrubbing the stale taste of scotch away as he stared straight ahead at nothing but white tiles.

No mirror here. No mirrors anywhere in these rooms.

After slipping on his ancient nightshirt, he walked out of the bathroom. Steeling himself, he opened another door. Hesitating, he lit his wand and cringed at the sight of sapphire green walls. With a quiet murmur, the walls changed to a soft yellow. The colour of this room had changed uncountable times, and would no doubt change again as soon as he came across a child's yellow bedroom during a raid.

With slow steps, he closed the distance between him and the sturdy pine cot that stood by the far wall under an enchanted ceiling which mimicked the night sky. His most guarded secret lay here with an inner peace that Severus occasionally envied.

The child in the cot slept soundly, drooling happily on his small pillow, a thumb stuck between plump lips.

Severus raised his hand and reached out, but stopped before he could actually touch his son's face, a mere inch away. He retracted his hand and leaned over to whisper a soft, "My treasure," to the small human being. The intoxicating smell of baby drifted up to him and he inhaled greedily. The stinging in his eyes heralded tears, and Severus left the room before he could wake his son with a sob.

He all but ran to the next room, finally allowing a quiet sob to burst from his aching chest. The curled-up figure on the bed stirred and sat up when Severus crawled under the covers. He encountered wonderfully warm and naked skin, and he shivered as he enjoyed the sensation on a purely comforting level.

He allowed himself one more sob and a keening moan that the tightness in his throat muffled effectively. A few tears escaped his tightly clenched lids, dripping onto his pillow and into Hermione's hair. He cradled the witch to him, sure in her understanding and her forgiveness. His frame shook as he mumbled the evening's events into her hair. She was not meant to understand anything, but it helped him to "talk" about it.

She caught snippets of it, though, and stroked his back soothingly, never once interrupting. He was out of breath when he finished his tale, and it took him another fifteen minutes to stop trembling.

She kissed his forehead, then, knowing that it was silence he needed and not verbal reassurances. To her surprise, he spoke again, though.

"I have a fantastic recipe for a beef roast, Hermione." His voice was wobbly and thick.

"Thank you," she said with a smile that he heard in her voice.

He calmed as he imagined her sincere smile, her amber eyes full of genuine gratitude. What a treasure she was, one that he would guard until the demise of his Master. Not only her, but also the little one next door. They were everything to him the only ones that made him believe that there was more to him than the vile monster he was forced to portray as soon as he left these rooms.

He did not need or want any mirrors here. Hermione and his son were so much better than any mirror. They healed his soul every time they showed him his real self. With every smile, every laugh, every kiss, and every expression of happiness he elicited in them. What they saw in him, no mirror could ever portray.

The End