

# Outsider

*by phoenix*

Life is a series of choices. Severus Snape's choices have been more difficult than those most people are faced with. Step into his mind and see what he was thinking when he made his most important choices.

## None

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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**A/N:** This story was written for Sycophant Hex's Deathday Festival. Thanks to Sinaz for her help in beta-ing this story. If you have not yet read [Why Will Be Done](#), it is a companion piece that is actually set after the events in this fic.

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Part 1 Set during Severus Snape's sixth year at Hogwarts

All my life I have been an outsider. I have long since decided that I have no idea who to blame. As a small child, I blamed my father. We lived in a wretched hovel in an even more wretched neighbourhood. When they thought I was asleep, I could hear Mother and Father arguing with each other. They argued about many things. The more popular topics were money, or our lack thereof, and me. The arguments about money had always been loud, but whenever I was brought up, they spoke in harsh whispers.

When my Hogwarts letter came, I shifted the blame to my mother. How could she have kept a whole world from me? How could she abandon that world? Surely, magic could have made our lives better. I held onto this idea of blaming her until I was thirteen. By then, I had learned enough about magic and the wizarding world to know that it could not make your life substantially better, that there was still a need for money.

My Hogwarts letter. That was a memorable day. That was the only time I recall hearing my parents argue about me in my presence. It had not been a long argument and had ended when she grabbed my hand and took me out of the house.

For the rest of the summer, my father did not speak to her and barely acknowledged my presence. This had only enhanced my loneliness.

From the time I learned of the wizarding world until I left for school, I did everything I could to learn more about it. When no one was watching, I would sneak up to the attic and search through the dusty remains for anything from my mother's past. It didn't take me long to find her old school books. I snuck them downstairs a few at a time and started reading through them. I learned many interesting things from those books, especially those from her later years at Hogwarts. In secret, I would practice with my wand.

I had hoped that joining the wizarding world would make my life better, that I would get to start over. I had already decided that if I were to improve my position in life, I needed to be sorted to Slytherin. That was the House for the ambitious and cunning. I had also learned that most of the old pure-blood families that held the power were sorted into that House. As soon as I learned about blood distinctions, I decided that the less said about my father, the better.

I was quickly disabused of this notion. Even though I was sorted into Slytherin, the others did not readily accept me. Many of them had friendships going back several generations, and they were suspicious of me as an outsider. I was able to successfully dodge questions about my family, having learned enough in my reading to know the

importance of a well-placed lie.

Over time, they grudgingly accepted me due to my intelligence. Of course, I only had their acceptance as long as I provided them assistance with completing their schoolwork. The cheating was of no consequence to me. I could help them do their homework, but they would still need to take the test in the end.

This year, I began to hear whispers of a secret organisation, one dedicated to ensuring decent wizards received their dues, and that the wizarding world would be preserved and protected from Mudbloods. I thought of my mother's miserable existence, all because of a Muggle. It had taken me years, but I had finally learned the truth of how my mother, an accomplished witch, had come to be married to my father. I don't think she was even aware of what I was doing.

When I learned that secrets were a powerful commodity, I began searching for magic that would help me gather these secrets. Once I learned of Occlumency and Legilimency, I spent my fourth and fifth years mastering those fields. Legilimency was easier to practice, especially given how open-minded most of my classmates were. Even now, I have not had much practice with Occlumency, though I suspect that practice will be coming.

Using Legilimency, I probed her mind. She did not fight me. While I had not particularly liked Muggles, I had not hated them prior to that moment.

While my mother had never been a beauty, she was well respected and had many friends. One night, her friends convinced her she needed a night out on the town. They had encouraged her to find a man and have a good time. She had done what they had suggested and at the end of the night, went home with a man, my father, but only after he had plied her full of drink.

I had been conceived as a result of that one-night stand. She had known that my father was a Muggle and knew that he would not react well to learning what she was, Muggles rarely did. That's when she decided to hide what she was. He had only married her out of a sense of duty. That was why he had been cold and distant. I had always suspected I was an unwanted child, but it still hurt to have that confirmed.

My father had been deceptive and irresponsible. Although he avoided me when I was home, I was able to look into his mind once. My mother had not been the first woman he had done that to, nor had she been the last. She had merely been the only one to return, expecting him to fulfil his duties as a father. The fact that she was not the last incensed me. My father did not deserve to live. He was a cancer to society, one that needed to be destroyed. Now that I have heard the whispers of this organisation, I may have found a way to rid the world of him and others like him.

In order to gain the attention of the others, I began experimenting with poisons. At first, I tested them on the rodents and other vermin inhabiting the school for the amusement of my Housemates. As I became more proficient, I began experimenting with lesser poisons on those from other Houses, most notably, the Gryffindors.

My Housemates finally began to see my worth and began asking me to brew various potions for them. I always agreed, but for a price. It was not always a monetary exaction, but it was always to my advantage. Every now and then, I heard them whispering my name. I suspected it was only a matter of time before they asked me to join them. The prospect of joining this secret organisation excited me. I was finally gaining the recognition I was due. Soon, the wizarding world would give me the recognition I should have had my entire life.

Last night, I found a letter on my bed. It had been written in non-descript block letters and simply commanded my presence at a given location. Escaping the confines of the school was nothing new for me. I had long been sneaking away, generally to gather ingredients for potions.

Unable to concentrate on anything meaningful, I have been sitting in a dark corner of the common room, watching my classmates come and go. An hour before the appointed time, I leave the common room and slip out of the castle. Once clear of the Anti-Apparition wards, I Disapparate to the appointed location.

People in black robes and white masks quickly surround me.

"Severus Snape, you have come when called," says a disguised voice.

I assume that this is the secret organisation I had heard whispers of. "I have," I reply confidently. I know that they will not like me to show weakness.

"Do you know why you are here?"

"I suspect why I am here."

"Why?" the voice commands.

I have only a split second to make my decision of how much to reveal. "I have heard there are those who wish to preserve our way of life. To protect it from those that would destroy it. I believe you are those people."

"Would you wish to join those people?"

"I would do anything to preserve our way of life," I answer with conviction. It seems my suspicions were correct.

"Anything?"

"Yes, anything." I know that through this organisation, I can finally win the respect and recognition I need.

The speaker waves to the others, and I see them dragging an unconscious man into the circle. "Do what you will."

I grin, revelling in the idea of showing them how worthy I am. I had heard they tormented Muggles, and I assume that is what this man is. I kick him to roll him over. It is crude, yet satisfying. Staring up at me is a face that looks very much like mine.

I fight back a momentary sense of panic. This is a man that I have spent the last several years hating. A man I have dreamed of torturing. But now that I am faced with the chance, I find it harder than I had thought. Pushing the weakness aside, I let a cruel grin creep across my face. "I'm going to enjoy this, old man."

I wondered how many of them knew who he was. I had been careful to keep his identity secret, but with careful research, my parentage would not have been hard to divine. At least one of them had to know who he was. I focus on the greatness I can achieve and push aside the fact he is my father.

They may have thought I would be squeamish about torturing my father, and they were right. I have been dreaming of this for years, and I developed many spells with the hope that one day I would be able to use them on him, but I had never imagined I would really have the opportunity.

Seeing the fear in his eyes, I can tell he is about to plead with me, and I silence him. Having mastered non-verbal spells, I cast spell after spell. At first, it is difficult for me, but as time goes by, I become more confident, drawing strength from those I am about to join, and the spells become more and more cruel.

Since I have stolen his powers of speech, his screams are silent, but still satisfying. I watch him writhe in pain, never giving him time to regain composure between spells. He is a Muggle and thus weak. I am purging the weakness from my body. It is the only way I can continue.

A voice from outside the circle says, "I want to hear him."

I had not been aware there was another present, and this momentarily startles me. I should have been able to detect anyone else, but I had not. I assume this is the man that is in charge. The man whose name I had only heard in reverent whispers, Lord Voldemort. I quickly remove the charm and my father's screams ring out in the small valley.

Since I know someone powerful is watching me, even if it isn't Lord Voldemort, I decide the time has come to show my prowess. *Crucio!*" I call out. The resulting screams are even sweeter than I had imagined.

As much as I am enjoying torturing my father, I don't want to drag it out too long. I know that I am being judged. There is one last spell that I want to try. One that I have worked on for years, but have never had the opportunity to test. I don't want them to know the spell in case it fails, so I cast it non-verbally. '*Sectumsempra.*'

I watch in fascination as his chest splits open and begins to spurt blood. This is an even bigger success than I had imagined. I watch him grasp at his chest, trying to stop the blood, but it is a useless exercise. In short order, his skin goes white and his hands fall to his side. It did not take long for him to die, and I realise it is over.

The same voice from outside the circle says, "Congratulations. You have purged yourself of the Muggle filth. You are reborn as one of us."

I look into a face that is not entirely human, the face of my new master. "Yes, my Lord," I reply, unsure of which words to use to address such a great man.

"I have been following your time at Hogwarts with interest. You have demonstrated a proficiency in many skills that will prove useful for us. And now that I know you can be relied upon to destroy the Muggle threat, you can be one of us." He circles around me, examining me from all sides, before continuing, "Give me your left arm."

I respond without hesitation. I am nervous, but control my fear as he shoves my sleeve up and points his wand at my arm.

"*Morsmordre!*" he says sharply.

I feel a searing pain in my arm, but force myself to remain still. As the pain moves through my body, seeming to rend at my soul, I collapse to my knees.

He chuckles softly. "No one has ever remained standing. You are now a Death Eater, in my service. When I call, you will come without hesitation. Is that understood?"

"Yes, My Lord." I know it will be difficult if he calls while I am in school.

He seems to know what I am thinking. "No, I wouldn't do anything to expose you or the others at school. Of course, given the ease with which you snuck out tonight, a summons should not provide you with any difficulty. From time to time, you will receive orders in the same way you received the invitation. For now, you will be my potions brewer."

"Of course, My Lord." I know that I have impressed him. I will be a loyal servant and reap my reward. My natural affinity for potions is finally paying off.

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## Part 2 End of August 1981

The situation has been getting worse for some time. I have noticed that the Dark Lord is losing control of his minions and he doesn't seem to mind. Ever since I returned from my interview with Dumbledore and informed him of the prophecy, that is all he cares about. He is letting idiots like Bella run things. Her only goal is to torture Muggles and Muggle sympathisers. She has no sense of strategy.

The others all see me as too young or too much of an academic. They don't seem to understand the genius I possess. Yes, they will use my spells and potions, but they don't give me the credit I deserve.

I have begun to rethink my decision to ally myself with the Dark Lord. If he continues down the path he is on, I don't think that he will win. It is time for another plan. I have no interest in being sent to Azkaban Prison.

Regulus Black taught me a valuable lesson on how not to leave the Dark Lord's service. I had always known there was no way to quit. Little does the Dark Lord realise that he has given me the perfect opportunity to hedge my bets. He still wants me to get close to Dumbledore, thinking the old fool is naive enough not to know that I was ever a Death Eater. I will do as the Dark Lord has asked and get close to Dumbledore. But I will also use Dumbledore. I will convince him that I have seen the error of my ways and repented.

It is a truly brilliant plan. I will be a double agent for each side. What neither will realise is that I am on no one's side. Whichever side is victorious, I should be assured my freedom. All I have to do is convince my old Headmaster that I am sincere. It shouldn't be too difficult; he has always been a trusting old fool. And I have become quite adept at Occlumency. I will have no difficulty showing the old man what he wants to see. I have done it several times with the Dark Lord.

Yes, they ignored me, treated me as though I was not worthy, but when they are defeated, I will be the one laughing. I will be the one that has retained his freedom.

I pause outside the entrance to the castle. I have been granted audience in the Headmaster's study this time. He probably wants to ensure that there will be no disturbances. I school my thoughts in order to present a repentant person. I am in no rush.

Checking the letter he sent me, I notice that he has once again chosen a nauseatingly sweet candy as his password. I begin to wonder if I can really go through with this. Will I really be able to convince him? I have no choice.

I raise my hand to knock on the door, and it opens before I make contact.

"Come in, Severus," he calls.

I step through the door and am not surprised to find it has changed very little. After all, it has not been long since I was a student myself. "Thank you for granting me a second interview, Professor Dumbledore." I know that being polite and humble will earn his trust.

"I will admit the events of the first interview were quite unusual. Please, have a seat."

I take the seat and meet his eyes. I can feel him probing my mind, but I know that he is seeing what I want him to see.

"You are rather young to be applying to a position here. Most people your age are more interested in adventure."

I know he is probing me, trying to determine if he can trust me. "I have seen more than enough adventure to last me a lifetime." I try to determine the mood, find the right time to tell him. I can tell he is still sceptical. "I have made a grave error of judgment. " I will make him draw it out of me, act embarrassed.

"And what might that be?" he asks.

"I was lured through the promise of power. I have used my knowledge for evil." I pause a moment, judging his reaction.

I see the disappointment in his eyes. "I see. And why tell me this?"

"I wish to repent my sins. I can provide you valuable information about the Dark Lord. I was wrong to give him my loyalty."

After several seconds, he replies, "Voldemort is not known for his leniency towards traitors. If you have come for my protection..."

I interrupt. "Professor, I have not come seeking asylum. He believes that I am here to seek a job from you, so that I will be close to you and can pass him information about your plans. I will pass him information, but nothing of any value."

"You propose being a double agent?" he asks sceptically.

"I do."

We stare at each other for quite some time before he speaks. "Do you know how dangerous this would be?"

"I do." I know that my life is forfeit if the Dark Lord loses, which I believe is inevitable. This is my only chance to remain free.

"If it is so easy for you to betray Voldemort, how do I know that you won't do the same to me?"

I had anticipated this question. I know he has little reason to trust me, especially after admitting my Death Eater affiliation. My mother. She will be the reason for him to trust me. While many may think that being a pure-blood is protection, I know it is not. Those that have married Muggles or Muggle-borns are already being targeted. I fear that my affiliation with the Dark Lord will not be enough to protect her. "I vow on my mother's life that I will not betray you. Protect her, keep her safe and I will be your loyal servant."

I see him carefully considering my words. Surely he understands how powerful they are. He knows my mother is the only person I have ever loved. I have been trying to protect her myself, but my associates consider her tainted. It is only a matter of time before I am unable to protect her.

"You understand the seriousness of that vow?" he asks gently.

"I do and I am prepared to make it. Keep her safe from the Death Eaters."

He stares at me for a very long time. I can feel him probing my mind, and I let him. I know I must. Of course, I don't let him see everything, only enough for him to trust me. This is a skill I have honed in my years of service.

"You have asked to teach Defence Against the Dark Arts. I cannot let you do that."

"But why not? There is no one better than me to hold that position. I am intimately familiar with the Dark Arts. I have experience with them that can be invaluable in teaching others to defend against them."

"Severus, it is entirely probable that your affiliations will become known at some time. I will not place you in that danger. As you know, Professor Slughorn is eager to retire. I recall that you were quite the exceptional Potions student. Being Potions master will suit your talents well."

"But, Headmaster..." I have the strange feeling he is hiding something from me, but I cannot tell what it is. Like the Dark Lord, I am unable to read his mind.

He raises his hand, letting me know that he will not be swayed. "You will be no use to me if you are arrested under suspicion of being a Death Eater. It is safer for you to teach Potions."

"Very well." I am not happy. Once again, my innate talents are being ignored. The Death Eaters did not appreciate my creativity and skill, and apparently, neither does Dumbledore.

Finally, he reaches his hand across the desk. "Excellent. Then you shall be my new Potions Master. Welcome aboard, Severus."

I know that shaking his hand will seal the contract. I should be used to selling my soul by now, having already done it once. I imagine it will be less painful this time. After the briefest hesitation, I grasp his hand. "Thank you."

"It is I who should thank you. I will see to your mother's safety immediately. Once you are satisfied with the arrangement, we can discuss your extracurricular employment. I will give you a few days to settle in before you take over his teaching duties."

"There is one more thing." This will be my first act of loyalty to Dumbledore. "As you know, I overheard part of the prophecy last year."

"Yes," he replies patiently.

"I reported what I heard to the Dark Lord. He has expended a great deal of effort trying to decipher the prophecy from what I told him. He believes either the Potter or Longbottom child is the one the prophecy speaks of."

"The Potters and Longbottoms are safe."

"No, they're not," I insist. "There is a traitor in your midst."

"Do you know who?"

I shake my head. "No. I don't think any of us know. It is information he holds closely."

He leans forward, interested in what I have to say. "Do you know how soon he may act?"

"No. He wants to be sure he has the right child. If he destroys the wrong one he knows that the protection around the surviving child will be too great for him."

"We will improve their protection, but if you can get more specific information on the time and target of his intended attack that would be more beneficial."

"I will do what I can." I hope this will absolve me of the debt I owe to Potter. I do not like owing anyone anything. I also hope this information will prove my loyalty to Dumbledore.

"Thank you, Severus."

I nod my head and leave his office. I have now assured my safety. Whichever side wins, I will survive. Some may call me a coward, but I am not. I am a survivor. I am not a Gryffindor and do not believe in foolish self-sacrifice. What would be the point in dying?

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### Part 3 - After the final task of the Triwizard Tournament

The time has come. I have known it is coming, the Mark has been growing darker all year. Karkaroff has been trying to convince me to flee with him. I know that will not be necessary. Of course, I will never tell him that. He is a coward and not worthy of knowing my secret.

The Mark is now burning. The Dark Lord is calling the faithful to him. I know I will have to go, but not at this moment. I have discussed the possibilities several times with Dumbledore. In the end, there is only one choice.

Once the commotion following Diggory's death calms down, he sends me on my mission. Those few people still about do not notice me slip out of the castle and cross the grounds to get clear of the Anti-Apparition wards.

I Apparate to the place I was called to. I do not know if anyone will still be there, but it is the place to start. I am standing in a cemetery. I suddenly find myself petrified and

curse myself for my carelessness.

"Master! I've got a prisoner."

The voice is familiar, but I cannot put a name to it. I hear him coming closer, but I cannot see who it is. He is keeping himself hidden from my limited field of view. He lifts my sleeve.

The voice becomes more excited and says, "He has the Mark. It is one of the traitors."

"Bring him to me, Wormtail."

Ah, yes. Wormtail. The traitor. How ironic he is the one to find me. I can feel myself being levitated, but I still cannot see anything other than the sky. The moment of truth is near. He is taking me to the Dark Lord.

"Remove his mask," orders the Dark Lord.

I can feel the mask being removed, and it improves my field of vision slightly. I see the Dark Lord lean over me.

"Ah, Severus."

"Shall I kill him for you, Master? He has been at Hogwarts helping Potter," Wormtail asks gleefully.

"Have you been helping Potter?"

I find my power of speech is returned. "Only enough to remain above suspicion." I can feel him in my mind, and I am thankful the barriers are up. "I have been doing as you asked, My Lord. I am close to Dumbledore. The old man trusts me. I have learned many of his secrets."

"You claim to be loyal to me, yet you ignored my summons. Why I should I let you live?" He is clearly angry with me.

What I have to say it not for menial servants. "My Lord, I prefer not to speak in front of *overmin*." I nearly laugh when Wormtail hisses at me. Clearly, living as a rat all those years added his mind.

"Leave us," Voldemort orders.

"But, Master, I don't want to leave you with the traitor. Let me take care of him for you."

"Leave us!" Voldemort says in a voice that precludes any further argument.

Once alone, I quickly apologise, "Master, I did not answer your summons immediately so that I could remain in Dumbledore's good graces. I returned as soon as I was able. If I were not loyal to you, I would not have returned, but would have run as Karkaroff did." I know that he will have many more questions. Many of my actions over the last few years have been questionable.

"So, Karkaroff has run?"

"Like the coward he is." I know the Dark Lord has heard about Karkaroff, and he is not surprised.

He points his wand at me, and I writhe in pain from the Cruciatus Curse. "You claim to be less of a coward? You never came to find me, not even after there were signs. If you were close to Dumbledore, you should have seen those signs when the others did not."

He releases me from my torment. I crawl to my knees and pant, "I did see the signs, My Lord. I would have acted on them, but Dumbledore keeps me close. I cannot disappear for long periods of time." I try to make myself sound repentant.

"If he keeps you close, then how are you here?" he asks sceptically.

I know he is searching for lies, trying to catch me in one. I have prepared for this. "I told him of the Mark earlier this year. I knew your return was impending. I have spent the last few months convincing him that when you call, I should return and resume my place at your side."

I see him considering my words. "What of the Philosopher's Stone? Why did you try to stop me from gaining the Stone?"

"I did not know it was you. I thought it was weak and worthless Quirrell trying to get the Stone. I knew that I could not let someone such as him gain the Stone."

"And were you trying to secure it?"

"Not for me. If I had been able to secure the Stone, I would have been free to search for you. Since I did not have the Stone, I knew that finding you at that point would not be the best use of my talents. Surely one of the others would follow those rumours and find you. I was disappointed at how long it took, but I knew that I had to limit my contact with them."

"Lies," he hisses and hits me with the Cruciatus Curse again.

"No, Master," I force myself to say. Speaking is nearly impossible with all the pain.

He removes the curse and grabs my chin, forcing me to look into his eyes. "Do not lie to me, Severus."

"I'm not lying, my Lord. I knew that maintaining my cover was more important than ensuring all knew my loyalty." He is probing very deeply and there is a chance he will see past what I want him to see. I work hard to feed him images that show my loyalty.

"What can you offer me? What have you learned?"

"I will keep Dumbledore's trust. I am sure that he will call his cronies together now that he knows of your return. I can work my way into his inner circle. I will feed him disinformation. Keep your people safe. Tell you what his plans are." I know this is what he wants to hear. He is still in my mind and I hope he sees the truth.

"What has he planned so far?"

"He is assembling those who fought with him in the past. And he sent me here, to you. I will know more in a few days once he has everyone together."

"And what will you tell him of us?"

"I will tell him nothing more than he already knows, that you are assembling those loyal to you. Potter has mentioned names. I will give him those same names. We have an advantage, my Lord. The Minister does not believe that you have returned. He thinks Potter is lying and seems to have lost trust in Dumbledore." He will learn this information soon enough, and telling him now will improve my standing.

"So, no one believes Potter?" This seems to please him.

"No, my Lord. Over the last year, he has been painted as someone after personal glory. The Minister believes this. Only Dumbledore's ragtag band will be looking for you." I can feel him deep in my mind, trying to determine the truth. As I am telling him the honest truth right now, I let him in.

"If this is true, it is truly to our advantage."

He leaves my mind and walks around me. "You seem to have done more for me than the others. We shall see what you report back to me. When you return, we shall discuss Dumbledore."

"I am ever your loyal servant, my Lord."

"We shall see."

I know he will be watching me. I knew that he would be wary. I have lived with the enemy for thirteen years. He observed me for the better part of a year. While I did not do anything to seem overly loyal to Dumbledore, I did oppose Quirrell. I watch him begin to walk away. It seems he has chosen to let me live.

"Severus, do not disappoint me."

I watch him walk away. I am still on my knees, and I do not know that I can stand right now. In order to show strength, I struggle to my feet and force myself to walk away.

Once I am reasonably hidden in the woods, I collapse. People always mention how painful the Cruciatus Curse is, but they never mention the after effects. Not only are my muscles still cramped, but it feels as though my nerve endings are on fire. I know that it will be several hours before I can Apparate.

This is one of the rare times I lose control. I cannot control the twitching. After a few hours of rest, I will return to Hogwarts and my life on the edge. I must make each side believe I am loyal.