

The Greater Good

by KingPig

A daring collection of interviews taken with those in Wizarding Britain is finally released, after the MoM has thoroughly inspected each article for falsities.

The Beginning of the End

Chapter 1 of 1

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Kingsley Shacklebolt, Minister of Magic

January 9th, 2000

Azkaban

7:30 a.m.

It has been nearly two years since the fall of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and the deaths of the many brave witches and wizards who sacrificed themselves on that historical battlefield. Through the unyielding insistence of Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, the Minister of Magic, and several others who were central to the outcome of the War, thousands of magical beings are gathered outside the infamous Shrieking Shack today the national memorial day of the controversial anti-hero, Severus Snape.

There are several speakers today, including Minister Shacklebolt himself; however, unlike my journalism colleagues, I am not there to report on the saccharine speeches of those who boast to have always had an unrelenting belief in the 'goodness' of former Headmaster Snape. Instead, I am here, miles away from Hogsmeade, to provide you, dear readers, with the unadulterated, undiluted, true account of the life of Severus Snape, as told by those who knew him best. This will be no fluff piece, but the real story of the man behind the legend, filled with fallible humanity. Those of you seeking a falsified tale of hero-worship at its best, I refer you to the published work of Rita Skeeter's, *Severus Snape: A History*.

For those of you with constitutions of steel and a desire for the true knowledge of the life of the notorious double-spy, I invite you to join me now as we begin our first interview within the confines of the recently rebuilt Azkaban prison with a man just re-apprehended by Magical Law Enforcement six months ago, despite Harry Potter's claims of the man's 'change of heart.'

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When he first enters the cramped, claustrophobia-inducing visitor's chamber, his cold, grey eyes quickly size me up appraisingly before he is led by the guards (thankfully flesh-and-blood, living beings, as opposed to the banished Dementors) to his uncomfortable-looking chair, one of only a pair that reside in the room. The other chair, mine, is cushioned and plush, clashing with the glacial look of the steel table that is the only thing to separate me from the aristocratic, mass-murdering man with platinum blond hair.

Lucius Malfoy sits across from me regally, as though the creaking, metal chair he perches on is, in actuality, a luxurious throne. Though not fooled, I do flash a subtle smile at him, knowing that the interview will flow much more smoothly if I fabricate a sense of submission toward him. My strategy seems to pay off as he nods slightly at me before flipping his hair over his shoulder and gesturing dismissively for the guards to leave. When the men look to me, I give a small nod of my own, and they exit the room after magically binding him to his seat.

Malfoy retrieves a cigarette from his prison-issued robes and lights it, silently challenging me to ask him to put it out. Instead, I pull out my own pack of Muggle-brand cigarettes and remove one from the box, lighting it before setting the rest of them defiantly on the table. He cannot hide his distaste as he glares at the offending box, and I cannot hide my pride at out-Slytherining a Slytherin.

Right, I decide. It's time to get started.

How long have you known Severus Snape?

Since he was a first year.

How did you two first meet?

He was sorted into Slytherin, and I was in my seventh year. He was being bullied by that disgusting group of Gryffindor boys, and seeing as he was quite small and sickly-looking, I decided to take him under my wing.

How magnanimous of you. It had nothing to do with the rumors of his gifted talent at the Dark Arts?

He lazily flicks the ashes of his cigarette onto the floor. Undeterred, I simply conjure an ashtray on the center of the table.

Yes, well, our friendship of course had its perks; his wealth of knowledge of the Dark Arts was simply one of them.

What other perks did your relationship present?

He sprouts a wicked grin.

I believe that is a little too personal.

Alright. Did you keep in touch with him after your graduation from Hogwarts while he was still in school?

Not initially, no. Not until, perhaps, the end of his fifth year. I had heard stories about him, of course.

Malfoy examines the end of his cigarette closely, watching the tiny fireball of tobacco consume its surrounding paper. He seems enthralled by its action.

What sort of tales did you hear?

Twitching slightly at my voice with a guilty expression, his eyes snap to mine. His face goes under an almost imperceptible change as he works to control his emotions, and soon he is once again the cold, indifferent Malfoy.

That he was brilliant. The most brilliant student Hogwarts had taught for decades. Since, of course, the Dark Lord's time. I was also told how he excelled at Potions and how he failed miserably in Quidditch.

He failed miserably in Quidditch?

Malfoy waves his hand distractedly.

Terrible at it, from what I originally heard. His story, of course, was different. Something about that Potter gang and some hex on the broom or some such nonsense.

He acquires a sudden pensive look.

Though, he did seem to follow the game well enough and was even a referee, I seem to recall. And he flew adequately.

He shrugs.

I suppose I'm not really the person to ask.

Since we're on the topic of air travel, there have been accounts of Snape flying without the aid of a broomstick, just as there are reports of V...the Dark Lord doing the same. Is this true?

Malfoy shuffles uncomfortably in his seat and flicks the ash off his cigarette harshly with a tap of his thumb. He watches the ash drift onto the floor with a smug smirk.

Yes, that's true. Our Master taught him the art of flight without the need for a broomstick.

He seems suddenly agitated and unwilling to say more.

Is it true flight, or is it more of a glide?

Flight.

He spits the word out as though it has a bitter taste.

Are you capable of this same feat?

Malfoy suddenly acts as though he cannot hear me. I decide to try another approach.

Were you in attendance when Snape was being taught this, this well, rather incredible achievement?

He snorts and rolls his eyes.

No, but I watched him practice it. It seemed utterly foolish, and he appeared to be destined to fail at it. Kept falling on his presumptuous arse.

His eyes flicker with sudden mirth as he seems to recall the incidents.

Quite entertaining really, watching him stumble and crash into furniture like an injured bird.

He lets out a snort of laughter.

Broke his nose so many times that it almost set it straight. Those injuries, he kept playing it all off as though they were battle wounds. It was very entertaining, to say the least.

It seems as though he did, eventually, get the hang of it, though.

Yes, well, more likely out of pure luck than skill.

Perhaps. Have the two of you ever been very close?

His laughter dies down quickly at my abrupt change of subject. It takes a few moments of silence before he graces me with an answer.

I thought we were. In the end, it seems, I was proven wrong. I doubt anyone could ever claim that Severus was a close friend. Not even that bumbling old man that met his death at the end of Snape's wand. And certainly not the Dark Lord, as we've all come to see.

Do you regret that you could not 'claim him as a close friend,' if I may paraphrase?

His expression turns somber.

Yes, I think I do regret that. As you can see, I put family above all else in my life, including megalomaniac madmen. I thought, I truly believed, that Severus was a part of my family. Merlin, he was the godfather to my only son!

He pauses a moment and blinks his eyes rapidly, dispelling what looks suspiciously like tears.

I thought he knew that.

An awkward silence descends upon the room.

I see.

I pause for a moment out of respect.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to talk to me today, Mr. Malfoy. Should I find that I have more questions, would you be open to me calling upon you again?

He turns away but gives a slight nod to the affirmative.

I stand as the whisper of footsteps announce the arrival of the guards. Malfoy is escorted out first, and he seems like a deflated balloon compared to his confident demeanor when the interview began. He avoids my eyes and bows slightly at the shoulders as he shuffles out of the room. I allow myself to watch his progression to his cell until his figure is no longer in my line of sight. Sighing, I snatch up my Dicto-Quill and parchment and make my way through the labyrinth of the prison to the exit, my thoughts still on the conversation.

A/N: Thank you, thank you, thank you to Angel Mischa who graciously accepted this WIP in addition to her other duties, I am eternally grateful! Thanks also to those who have helped refine this chapter from its scrappy beginnings on my LJ.

This will become a chaptered story (and the following chapters will be longer), as other characters in the HP world are interviewed. The warnings and such are there just to be safe, in case in the near future an interviewee lets slip any kind of naughty tidbits.

Also, story title and chapter title are taken from song titles of Nine Inch Nails, off the album, *Year Zero*.