

The Masks We Wear to Cover the Scars We Bear

by Gelsey

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require a mask...

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Chapter 1 of 1

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She stared into the mirror, looking as hard as she could to see if she could see the scars. Oh, the curse shouldn't have scarred, no ... but it had lingered, and she had picked at the purple pustules that slanted across her face. For a long while, she couldn't remember why the horrid marks were there, what she had done to deserve them. Why the word SNEAK was scrawled across her face for all to see.

And then Mother had let Cho come over to visit, and all it had taken to finish breaking the Memory Charm had been her best friend's words, recounting the DA and Marietta's own betrayal of it.

She had somehow managed to keep her cool and pretend she didn't remember. Cho had been upset at her betrayal, she knew, and still was. Because Cedric was dead, and they had been training to avenge him. Cho saw her as betraying Cedric; she could see the pained thought in her friend's eyes. Betrayed him and what he had died for.

Marietta had never been fighting for him. She'd been there because Cho was, and now Cho was against her like everyone else. Thought she was a sneak, like everyone else. She had only been following her mother's advice in turning the DA over to Umbridge ... Get in good with those you would get a job with, her mother had said, with those that can protect you.

Seeing how easily Cho blamed her, she knew her mother was right. Trust blood over friends--they'll protect you every time.

Not wanting a scene, Marietta had continued to feign ignorance and pretended not to notice when their correspondence quickly slowed and then died. Not much of a fight for that friendship, she had thought scornfully.

Memory recovered, she had stopped picking at the intriguing if grotesque spots. She had thought that they had healed with no scars until one day her brother had embarrassed her quite thoroughly at dinner, and she had blushed. The word SNEAK had showed up in small, white dotted scars across her face.

The intelligent, thoroughly Ravenclaw part of her knew that they hadn't been meant to scar, but she ignored the smart little voice in her head, overwhelmed as she was by anger. Fury, that she would always be branded with such an epithet.

And so when she was approached tentatively by some fellow purebloods at the end of her Seventh Year, she had gracefully accepted the invitation. A single peek into her mind had been enough to show the Dark Lord that she wouldn't make the same mistake of betrayal twice and assured him of her hatred for all Mudbloods, one in particular—the so-called witch who had cursed her, scarred her, with no warning.

Her mind was drawn from its dark thoughts by a flare of pain on her left arm, a scar she had been willing to take. The pain drained some of the blood from her face, and the

marks she'd been looking for vainly became obvious. She sneered at the single, painful word and Summoned her shiny silver mask, meeting her eyes in the mirror as the marks were covered.

Throwing the dark robes around her shoulders, she Apparated to the Dark Lord's side--the master who took care of her now, who she provided information for on her old school friends and their activities.

She no longer heard her conscience as it whispered, "Once a sneak, always a sneak."

A/N: A response to a challenge on the LiveJournal community 30minutefics.