

The Hidden Mark

by Alison

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One shot short story

Chapter 1 of 1

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The Hidden Mark

By Alison Venugoban

"Listen to my voice. You will relax." His eyes are hypnotic, dark pools that I long to dive into.

His long pale fingers part my school robe and lift the jumper underneath, exposing my prepubescent breasts. Even in this dreamy trance state, I feel a stab of concern. Nobody should look at me there. I struggle feebly, trying to sit up.

A hand rests on my forehead, calming me, and my muscles relax in spite of my misgivings. His voice caresses my mind, and I sink back into the peaceful depths of his eyes. "Shh. I will not hurt you, Ginevra."

I smile dreamily at that. Nobody calls me by my full name; I am Ginny to everybody else. But with him I am always, will always be Ginevra. For he is my best friend, the one I tell my deepest secrets to. I trust him.

His fingertip traces a pattern onto my skin, just under my left breast. The finger is warm in the chill air of this dark cavernous place, and I push up slightly against his hand. When I first met him, he was wraith-like, a mere ghost of a memory in an old diary. But he has been growing steadily more solid, so much so that now I can feel his touch on my cold skin.

His lips quirk into a slight smile, which flashes across his handsome face before disappearing. "This is the covenant between us," he murmurs, his hand tracing a shape just over my heart. "When you feel this Mark burn, you will remember. That is when I will have need of you. Then I will send for you once more."

"Tom?" My lips shape the word, but I have no strength left to speak. I want to tell him I love him, I want to say so much, but my mouth is slack. His hand leaves my chest and caresses the side of my face. Somewhere far off, a vague rumble as of approaching thunder sounds. Tom's eyes flick to the entrance of the chamber.

"And so, he comes to attempt a rescue! I will finally meet this boy, this Potter, face to face." His gaze returns to me. "This is not goodbye, Ginevra. When we meet again, I will be whole and not merely a memory. We will be together then, I promise you. But for now, you must sleep. You will not remember anything of your time here, only that I possessed you and that you were not acting under your own volition. You will forget, until you feel the throb of the hidden mark. Sleep now, Ginevra. Sleep..."

The outhouse door creaks open. I need to get away for a bit, Fleur is driving me mad with her affected manners and hauteur. And I hate the way she talks to me you'd think I was three! So I'm going to go up to the field at the back of the house and play a bit of solitary Quidditch. I did try to interest Ron in a game, but he's too busy making puppydog eyes at Phlegm, and Hermione is hopeless when it comes to flying. She's like a grandma on a broomstick, butterflies can overtake her.

I look over the brooms stored inside with a critical eye. It's a pity Harry hasn't arrived at the Burrow yet, I could borrow his. It's not like I'm exactly spoiled for choice: three solid, slow Cleansweeps and an ancient Shooting Star that used to belong to Charlie. Ah, well. Beggars can't be choosers, I s'pose. I shoulder the old Shooting Star and head off towards the trees, my mind still on bloody Fleur Delacour.

Why couldn't Bill have got engaged to Tonks instead? I know Mum's not happy about him and Fleur, she keeps asking Tonks over for dinner. Funny about that, though, Tonks isn't the laugh she used to be. We were talking it over the other night, Hermione and me, and Hermione reckons Tonks might have fallen in love with Sirius Black. It would explain why she's been so moody and tragic lately.

Well, Sirius has been dead for three months now, and nothing we can do will bring him back. I sigh and shift my shoulders restlessly. My bra is really uncomfortable today, I've got a cut or something under my left breast, and the bra is rubbing against it, making it worse. It's been throbbing on and off all morning. I looked in the mirror but whatever is causing it's in a difficult position, and I couldn't see a thing. I asked Hermione to take a look for me. She said I must have scratched myself in my sleep; apparently I've got some little silver marks there like fingernail scratches.

That wasn't all I was doing in my sleep. I grin briefly, a little guiltily. I dreamt of that man again last night. As usual, his face was in shadow, but I went to him joyfully, and we made passionate love. He called me 'Ginevra'. It was so romantic; nobody ever calls me by my full name. I dream of him now nearly every night, but this morning I woke up pressing against my hand, sighing and coming. Lucky Hermione's a deep sleeper, she was in the bed on the other side of my room, but she didn't wake up.

You'd think I'd be dreaming of Dean, but I've hardly thought about him at all these holidays. Compared to the man in my dream, Dean seems so immature, all rough adolescent fingers and wanting to snog...

I'm into the woods before I realise I'm not alone. Two men step out from behind tree trunks in front of me and I feel a sudden flicker of fear. I halt, clutching my broom tightly: If they're Muggles looking for trouble, I'll use the broomstick to get away, and to hell with the Ministry. I curse myself for leaving my wand in my bedside drawer, but I never use it during the holidays, not being underage. A voice behind me makes me whirl about, heart pounding.

"Miss Weasley, good morning." Professor Snape stands there, his wand pointed casually at my chest. "I hope I find you in good health?"

I feel a bit more hopeful. He's my teacher, and a member of the Order, he wouldn't hurt me... would he? But why would he want to speak to me, and why ambush me here in this wood?

"What do you want?" I manage although my mouth has gone dry with apprehension.

He smiles tightly. "I have been sent to collect you. But we won't be needing that filthy old log." A flick of his wand and my hand is grasping empty air as the broomstick flies to him.

I jump as big muscular hands clutch my upper arms in a firm grip: I'd forgotten about the two goons behind me. I try to pull away, try to stamp on their feet, but one arm is twisted up behind my back painfully, and I desist, gasping.

"Now, now, Miss Weasley, there's no need for that." Professor Snape strolls over, still with that infuriatingly patronizing smile. "Lift her shirt. Thank you, Goyle..."

"Get off me!" I yell, hearing my voice crack in panic as a rough hand fumbles at me. But my T-shirt is raised despite my struggles, and Snape touches the tip of his wand to my chest, the wood jabbing painfully against the abraded skin there as he mutters a spell...

...EPIPHANY!

Memories flood back, overwhelming me. Oh, how could I have forgotten? My subconscious surrenders it all up, the man from my dreams, my Tom, how wonderful that he needs me again! I hang from my captor's hands, barely able to stand from the miraculous shock of remembrance. I gaze up at Professor Snape with grateful eyes, and now his smile does not seem supercilious, but kindly, that which a beloved uncle might bestow when delivering a longed-for present.

"Side Along Apparition, I think," he says, replacing one of the men at my side and linking my arm through his. "It's such a nice day for a white wedding; don't you agree, Miss Weasley?"

I went to Tom as his bride, a brief ceremony with only his most trusted Death Eaters present. After they were dismissed, we ascended the stairs of his father's home to the bedchamber, and my dreams of that morning were realised. It was better than anything I've ever dreamed of, so gentle and caring, so right.

Afterwards I gazed at him raptly. He is older than I remembered, and the years of his exile in the wilderness have not been kind. The handsome face I remember is ravaged and blank now, his eyes red. But it doesn't matter what he looks like: His magical power is undiminished, strong and deep as the ocean, awe-inspiring to we lesser humans. I love him and will be his forever. I smile smugly. I saw the jealousy and envy on that woman Bella's face. She wants my Tom, as if he could be interested in a dried-up old prune like her! I am the one he chose, back what feels like a lifetime ago in the Chamber of Secrets. I am his favoured one, the one who will bear his heir.

Beautiful Ginevra, he called me, whispering it into my ear as I writhed in ecstasy under his touch, my deadly flame.

But I have a mission before we can be together always. It broke my heart, but I allowed Professor Snape to Apparate me back to the wood behind the Burrow before sundown. I explained to Mum that I'd been out all day playing Quidditch and had forgotten the time. She's cross with me now, but that's better than her knowing. Nobody must ever find out my secret.

Oh, but I must look different, act different, for surely my life will never be the same again! How can my chattering family downstairs not see it? I am a married woman, not some naïve little virgin anymore! The Mark under my breast stings slightly; it's burning bright now, an echo of the slight discomfort of my torn hymen. Together they are the reminder that this is real, that it happened, that Ginevra belongs to Tom, always and forever.

I put a chair under the door handle in my bedroom, stand in front of the mirror and lift my shirt. The Mark is hidden, tucked under my left breast, but with the aid of a hand mirror I manage to angle myself so that I can see it. Tom had touched it when he'd disrobed me, and it had burned with an insistent, not unpleasant throbbing, setting my pulse racing in time, making all the blood in my veins feel like warm honey as Tom ran his long fingers over my body, letting my arousal build slowly.

"Do you love me?" he'd murmured afterwards, his eyes burning into mine.

"Yes," I answered in a whisper, because the intensity of his red gaze was a little frightening: His power would even be obvious to a Muggle, and up this close it was overwhelming.

"Then get close to Potter this year. Be his... friend. Find out his secrets. It has been foretold that neither of us can live while the other survives, and I fear that this may be the year he attempts to finally defeat me. You must let me know what he is doing while you are at school with him."

I avert my eyes for a moment, the drowsy post-coital languor fleeing. Harry is my friend; I used to idolize him. For a brief moment, I wonder at myself. Have I been enchanted? But even as the thought enters my mind, it slips from my grasp, and I feel Tom's power soothing me, making me forget all other considerations...

"Ginevra? What is it you are thinking?" Tom's voice is a silky purr, but there is an undercurrent of something else there, something very dangerous, and I turn my gaze back to him.

What was I thinking, I wonder dazedly. Something about... enchantment? His power again washes the thought out of my head. Forget, it whispers. You are mine now. Do my bidding and you will be happy...

I raise my eyes to meet his once again and feel my resolve strengthen. One look at his poor ravaged face and I know I will do anything for him, up to and including giving my own life. Harry must not be allowed to murder my love, my husband!

"I'll do it," I answer with utter conviction. "Is there any...limit...to how friendly I become?"

Tom smiles, and he reaches out to stroke my hair. "None at all, my beautiful flame. Seduce him physically, if that is what it takes. Don't concern yourself that I will be jealous. Some sacrifices must be made for the cause. Pass any information to Severus. He is my most trusted Death Eater."

I start. Trusted? I should have told him before! "You should know," I say quickly, "that Professor Snape is..."

Tom holds up one hand with a little chuckle. "The Order of the Phoenix believes him one of theirs, yes, beautiful flame, I know. They are duped; Severus is my most valued operative." He pauses and leans down to kiss me. "After you, of course," he murmurs.

Now I stare at my reflection in the mirror and allow my fingertip to trace along the Hidden Mark, following the route Tom took. Once again, the Mark burns, its magic overflowing into my veins, and I close my eyes, blocking out the noise of my family downstairs, letting myself remember my husband's eyes as he took my virginity, letting my fingers caress away the residual soreness. I bite my lower lip as the pleasure swells once more...

I cried at Dumbledore's funeral. It would have looked out of place for the persona I had built for myself this past year if I hadn't.

But at the end, sitting beside Harry, I could see he was about to give me his "speech" about us no longer continuing together. I decided to let him say his piece. He thinks, after the time we've had together this year, that he knows me perfectly, but how little he really understands me!

We've had sex a few times, and I didn't have to fake the discomfort I felt. Each time was hurried, frantic and fumbling, so unlike Tom's long experienced fingers and knowledge of a woman's body. I felt no pleasure in the act at all, just a grim determination to get it over with each time.

So Harry believed he took my virginity, as I'm positive I took his, and he believes me to be his girlfriend. Early on, before we first had sex but during a heavy snogging-and-petting session, his hand had brushed the bandage I'd taped over the Hidden Mark, and I'd told him that it covered a bruise I'd got in the last Quidditch match. I said I needed the bandage to cushion my bra strap against rubbing. He's never questioned it since; how long does he think a bruise takes to heal anyway, the prat?

Now I could see him steeling himself. "Ginny, listen..." he said quietly as the buzz of conversation grew louder around us and people began to get to their feet. "I can't be involved with you anymore. We've got to stop seeing each other. We can't be together."

I knew he was going to say this and try to hide my sigh of exasperation. How many, many times have I heard this before? "It's for some stupid, noble reason, isn't it?"

"It's been like... like something out of someone else's life, these last few weeks with you," said Harry. "But I can't... we can't... I've got things to do alone now."

I said nothing, just simply looked at him. No way will I let him pull this stunt on me. If we stop seeing each other, how can I keep reporting to my husband what Harry's up to? Tom already knows about the Horcruxes and has been swapping them with fakes to ensure their safety, hiding the real ones in places only he knows of.

"Voldemort uses people his enemies are close to," Harry continued, his face earnest. "He's already used you as bait once, and that was just because you're my best friend's sister. Think how much danger you'll be in if we keep this up. He'll know, he'll find out. He'll try and get to me through you."

"What if I don't care?" I ask, thinking, you fool! It's not me that's in danger.

"I care," said Harry. "How do you think I'd feel if this was your funeral... and it was my fault..."

I have to look away from him then, over the lake, to hide my expression. "I never really gave up on you," I said, giving it all the conviction I could muster. What a good actress I've become over this past year! "Not really. I always hoped... Hermione told me to get on with life, maybe go out with some other people, relax a bit around you, because I never used to be able to talk if you were in the room, remember? And she thought you might take a bit more notice if I was a bit more myself."

"Smart girl, that Hermione," said Harry, and I could see he was trying to smile. "I just wish I'd asked you sooner. We could've had ages... months... years maybe..."

"But you've been too busy saving the wizarding world," I answered, trying not to sound as sarcastic as I felt. What a child he is! "Well... I can't say I'm surprised. I knew this would happen in the end. I knew you wouldn't be happy unless you were hunting Voldemort." (I'll see you dead before I let you kill him! I think fiercely to myself.) "Maybe that's why I like you so much."

Harry stood up miserably and left me sitting there. I was getting bored with this repeated conversation. He's said much the same thing every day since Dumbledore died. As he walked away, I let my wand point casually in his direction and murmured the charm Tom taught me. It hit Harry squarely in the back, and he stopped for a second, as he always does, then continued on as if nothing had happened. The charm wipes all memory of the preceding ten minutes away.

Harry will not remember he broke up with me; he'll only recall that he was thinking about doing it. Oh, no doubt he'll try again tomorrow, and the day after, ad infinitum. And I'll continue to wipe his memory each time. The longer we're together, the longer I can feed my Tom information and the sooner we can be together forever.

I turn and gaze at Dumbledore's tomb. So strange, I used to be quite fond of that old wizard. Again, a thread of thought whispers, "Enchantment"; and again, I ignore it. As the Hidden Mark burns on my skin and in my blood, I feel only a sense of satisfaction that my husband's greatest nemesis is dead.

"One down, one to go," I murmur to myself as I stand up and prepare to walk back inside.

The End.

Author's note: If you liked this story, please have a read of my original story "Love Inhuman" at this link:

<http://www.thepetulantpoetess.com/viewstory.php?sid=11932>

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