

# Blind Fall

by Cecelle

A look into the lives of Andromeda Black and Ted Tonks. This is an entry to Romancing the Wizard's "Bring Out Your Dead" challenge.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: This was my entry for the current challenge ("Bring Out Your Dead") on Romancing the Wizard. The challenge specs were that the fic had to be exactly 750 words, feature a canonically deceased wizard (I chose Ted Tonks), feature an original magical device, and show a zest for life.

Blind Fall

*"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves." As quiet as his voice was, it rang glass-clear. The gaggle of boys surrounding her and Aspidistra Wilkes parted like the Red Sea, and she got an unobstructed view of the fair-headed boy. "They're only second-years."*

*"Oh, come on, Tonks," a tall redhead said defensively. "Have a sense of humor. Don't you know who they are? This one—" he pointed at Andromeda, his voice gaining confidence, "—is Bella Black's sister!"*

*"Is that so?" Tonks said levelly. "Well, as it happens, I'm the Gryffindor prefect. And if I catch you at something like this again, I'll take ten points. Each."*

*He walked over and knelt down in front of her, kindness in his eyes. "Are you all right?"*

*She nodded mutely, resentfully smoothing down ruffled hair.*

*"Run along, then. They won't be bothering you again."*

That's how they had met, back when she was twelve.

He'd left Hogwarts the following year, and she hadn't seen him again. Not until years later, on her first day in the new job at the Ministry. It turned out that Ted had the desk across the hall.

He was just the way she remembered him, she decided as the months went by. Someone unflappable, just, even-keeled, funny, kind, annoyingly chivalrous. A hard worker, respected by all.

And by the end of her first year, the only single male on the entire floor who had not asked her out.

Which could, of course, only mean that he was acutely aware of his place. That she was a Black, and he was a Muggle-born, and her family would never approve. What other reason could there be? None of the Black girls had ever been used to being ignored.

So one day, she had asked him out. And she'd kept asking him, until their dates had become an integral part of her life. Until she had found that as much as she loved her sisters and her parents, her status and her name, she loved him even more. Until she'd found that she'd fallen in love so deeply there was no way she would ever fall out.

At that point she'd asked him to marry her.

He had said yes.

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Andromeda breathed a sigh of relief when she heard the door open. She'd needed to talk to Nymphadora, but she didn't much like Ted going out by himself these days. There'd been so much ugliness lately ....

He planted a perfunctory kiss on her lips while putting the bags of groceries on the counter. "Sorry I'm late." He rummaged around the bags, pulling out a small cardboard box and handing it to her. "I'm afraid I got waylaid by a very persistent saleswitch at the Baby Emporium."

She opened the box to reveal a lime-green, vaguely potato-shaped object. "What is it?"

"It's a RattleHumDinger. For our grandbaby."

"A *what*?"

"It's apparently the latest in baby entertainment. It rattles. It hums. *And*," he ended with a flourish, "*itdings*."

*Who'd have guessed*, Andromeda thought as she gave the neon-colored lump an exploratory shake. It rattled all right.

Ted pulled out his wand. "Watch this. –*Hum!*"

The lump began to give off a high-pitched, mosquito-like buzz that shaped itself into the semblance of a melody.

"... Twinkle, twinkle, through the night, like a Clabbar pustule bright ..." Ted sang along. "*Another!* How much is that Kneazle in the window, the one with the ..."

"That'll do," Andromeda said, laughing. She wasn't even going to ask about the dinging. "You're a complete push-over, you know. This thing is hideous."

He grinned back at her sheepishly. "I told you that saleswitch was persistent. How's Dora?"

"Sleeping."

Putting a finger to his lips, he walked over to the bedroom and noiselessly turned the doorknob.

Andromeda followed as he tiptoed over to the bed and for a long moment looked down at the heart-shaped face of his pregnant daughter. There was pain in his face, even as his mouth relaxed and his eyes grew soft.

"I could cheerfully string Lupin up by his toenails right about now," he whispered.

"I know. So could I." She put a hand on his arm. "But we'll be okay."

An unexpected, fierce jolt of love and fear shook her, and the world suddenly seemed small. War raged around them, but everything that really mattered was right here in this room – Nymphadora, and the baby, and Ted.

She closed her eyes and exhaled slowly.

As long as they had each other, they'd be fine.