

If Only

by Savva

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One

Chapter 1 of 1

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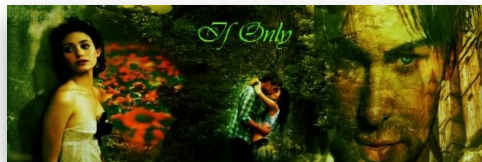
This little tale was written for hprarefest on LJ

Prompt: # 240. It's hard to forget someone who gave you so much to remember.

Pairing(s): Andromeda Black/Ted Tonks

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Notes: Enormous thanks to my alpha Quilter and my beta Danny.



If Only

I go to sleep

And imagine that you're there with me*

She had never meant for any of this to happen. She had never had the spirit of rebellion, as Bella did. She had never intended to go against traditions and customs. She wasn't that kind of girl at all. If anything, she was the most soft-tempered of the three, always the quiet one, never throwing tantrums, keeping everything to herself.

Fate, however, had very different plans for the Black sisters. Andromeda's story began at the end of 1963. She was just eleven and had only been at Hogwarts for a few months. Sorted into Slytherin, she didn't feel at ease there, even with Bella, or more likely, because of her. Often, she wandered through the corridors of the castle, alone, with her drawing pad and a pencil. That was where she stumbled upon Ted Tonks for the first time. She ran into him, and he smiled at her and asked, "Are you lost, little mouse?"

Wide-eyed and utterly smitten, she stared at him, not even trying to answer. Being thirteen and quite tall, he seemed so very grown-up to her, so amazingly attractive. She couldn't tear her eyes from his face, thinking that the dimples on his cheeks were the most beautiful things she had ever seen. His chuckle broke her trance, and blushing furiously and dropping her drawing pad, she ran away. He sought her a few days later and returned the pad, saying, "You left this behind the other day, little mouse." After that encounter, for many months to come, she drew only his smile. The fact that she never told Bella whose smile it was used to drive her sister bonkers.

She managed to keep her crush on a handsome Ravenclaw a secret right until he decided to ask her to the Yule Ball in her fourth year. She had heard that he was Muggle-born and meant to decline his invitation. Alas, she made the mistake of glancing at him, and it became a lost cause the moment their eyes met—she knew that she wouldn't be able to deny him anything. Sinking helplessly in the blue depth of his gaze, she again just stood there silently.

"Is that a 'yes'?" he said, smiling at her dreamy expression.

"Yes," she breathed and beamed at him.

He tilted his face closer to her, murmured into her ear, "Good. See you then, little mouse," and sauntered away down the corridor.

"Yes," she repeated as her eyes followed his tall frame until he rounded the corner.

At the ball, they danced all night, and in his arms she forgot everything: Bella's hysterical screams and threats, Cissa's scared eyes, everything. There were only his eyes on her, his arms wound around her waist, and his hot breath on her skin. Nothing else existed that evening. Nothing else mattered.

He walked her to the dungeons afterward, all the while keeping his hand on the small of her back. When they reached the Slytherin common room, and he leaned in closer to her, she waited with bated breath, hoping that he would kiss her. He didn't. He only brushed her cheek lightly with his knuckles, brought his lips to her ear, and said, "Thank you," gently nudging her toward the door. She was disappointed. Still, the evening remained the most magical she had ever experienced.

She found the reason for his hesitation the next morning when she spotted his black eye and split lip. Apparently, Bella's recruits had waited for him around the corner. There was talk that he had inflicted quite a bit of damage on them as well, in spite of having been outnumbered. Looking at his battered face and swallowing angry tears, she burst into their rooms. A sly, satisfied smile on Bella's face ignited the blind fury which the Blacks were well-known for and which she hadn't known she possessed. She struck her sister's cheek for the first time in her life, forcing a surprised yelp from her.

Not waiting for Bella's reaction and Cissa's tears, she fled to the Black Lake, and that was where he found her. She touched his bruised eye, making him hiss from pain. Feeling guilty and wretched, she whispered, "I'm so sorry," stretched up on her toes, and kissed him. As he eagerly returned the kiss, and his arms crushed her into his chest, the necessity to breathe faded into oblivion, as did all her worries and concerns. At that moment, she knew that she didn't need air any more: she only needed to find a way to keep his lips on hers. She had never been so certain of anything in all her fifteen years of existence.

They spent so many hours together after that day on the lake that she lost count. At times, it seemed to her that the whole world was against them. But the moment he whispered, "Everything will be all right. I promise," and his scent of rain, grass and sun enveloped her, she felt invincible. They could stay like that forever, embracing and engrossed in each other, if only the world allowed such luxury. However, as long as they had at least those stolen moments together, hidden from hostile eyes, she was grateful. Thanks to the memories of those encounters, she could make it through the school holidays.

Months passed, and as the moment of Ted's graduation drew nearer, he grew more and more worried and restless. Now it was she who had to comfort him. Alas, she couldn't really offer him anything reassuring except her loving caresses. Often, he rested his head on her lap, wrapping his arms around her and whispering a muffled, "I love you" into her midriff, while she ran her fingers through his wheat-coloured locks. It never ceased to calm him down, and he was back to his strong, protective self in no time.

It was his last week in Hogwarts, and their impending parting loomed ominously over them, tingeing their kisses and embraces with the coppery taste of desperation. On one of these days, the warm spring rain caught them wandering in the forest, forcing them to seek sanctuary under a centuries-old oak. It was then, when what she regarded as Ted's supernatural self-control finally slipped, and for the first time in their history, he allowed his hands to travel under her skirt.

She didn't need any other declaration of his intentions. She had wanted to be utterly his for a long, long time and had been puzzled by his hesitation. It was a Muggle thing, she eventually decided. Thus, it didn't take her long to strip off, not only her shirt, skirt and underwear, but his as well. For a moment, he paused as his eyes roamed over her naked form, and she was afraid that he would change his mind once again. However, the guttural growl with which he attacked her lips a moment later dispelled all her doubts.

He lowered her to the warm, wet grass, and they, drunk from the expanse of their bare skin and delirious with all-encompassing, overwhelming desire, clutched at each other, trying to kiss, suck, lick and caress everything at once. Soon, he was between her parted thighs, pushing into her, and she was moaning his name into the grey sky, shuddering and writhing under him. His movements, although frantic and unskilful brought her to the brink, and she was falling, listening to him shout in his husky bass, "Dromeda!" It was as far from perfection as possible, and yet, to her, it was absolutely, overpoweringly perfect. They stayed in the forest until morning, and her parents took her from school the very next day, probably thanks to Bella's efforts.

Once home, she was sick for a month, but she didn't die, even though she was certain that she would. Forced to continue her life without him, she attempted to stop loving him. She truly did. Her parents asked her to forget him, and as a good daughter, she promised that she would try. And oh, Merlin, did she try her best. And maybe she would have succeeded, if only she hadn't been reminded of him at every passing moment. If only everything around her, sun, rain, and grass, hadn't spoken his name.

There were so many memories that plagued her mind that she could scarcely do anything but think of him. Still, she might have been able to forget him, if only they hadn't been so utterly perfect together. If only his smile hadn't been the first smile that made her blush, and his eyes hadn't been so utterly mesmerising. If only the soft brush of his fingers hadn't made her skin tingle, and his lips hadn't made her forget how to breathe. If only his scent hadn't made her head spin, his hair hadn't been so soft to the touch, his skin so warm and inviting, and his shoulders so broad and strong under her frantic fingers, fuelled by desire. Looking back, she concluded that he was meant for her, and that's why it was so impossible to stop loving and longing for him. Defeated and dejected, she just endured the slow passage of time, minute after minute, day after day, month after month.

Despite her broken heart, she somehow managed to survive her last year in Hogwarts. When she returned, it was time for her to marry, and she took part in the balls given by her parents. Playing her role, she flirted with her pure-blooded, aristocratic fiancé, who answered her with his impeccably pleasant fake smile, curling his pale fingers around her waist and dutifully kissing her on the balcony. And when Lucius' indifferent, cool lips slid over her exposed neck, she couldn't help thinking of him again, remembering how strikingly different his kisses had been.

She didn't hate Lucius—he was a victim of their parents' little intrigues as well. It was Cissa he desired, but he was given her instead, and as an obedient son, he did as he was told. They both lied: to everybody, to each other, and to themselves. And by the end of each day, another tiny piece of her heart had died. After a while, it became numb, and she almost couldn't feel the pain any more. She almost forgot him. Truly, she almost did.

Fatefully, one day, after two years apart, she stumbled upon him in a bookshop in Diagon Alley. Cissa needed the latest bestselling novel, and she went with her. Wandering aimlessly between the bookshelves, waiting for her sister and lost in daydreams, she didn't notice him at first. It was only when he muttered huskily, seemingly to himself, "Dromeda," that she realised who was standing in front of her. Startled, she managed only a weak whimper in reply.

"Are you lost, little mouse?" he whispered and smiled at her. With his smile, everything she had tried so hard to forget assaulted all her senses at once. Apparently, her sneaky heart had not forgotten a thing—it had simply waited for the right moment. Thumping furiously in her chest, it forced her to look at him. And she lost herself in the blue depth of his eyes all over again, blushing, smiling and crying at the same time. He stepped closer and took her in his bear hug, murmuring something inaudible in his comforting bass into her ear. His scent cocooned her, and she knew that she wouldn't be able to leave him. Never again.

"Run, you two," she heard Cissa's voice. "Mum will be here any minute."

"Dromeda?" he whispered again, searching her eyes for confirmation. She nodded, and they ran, hand in hand, taking sanctuary in the first dark alcove they found, his lips finally on hers and her hands clutching his shoulders.

She didn't return home, not that day, not ever, and she gave not even one glance back. Papa burned her name out of the family tree and forbade anyone ever to mention her. Still, she convinced herself that he would probably have forgiven her if he had only known how complete she felt, running down the street with her hand in Ted's. And the thought of Cissa and Lucius' happy marriage warmed her heart for years.

Epilogue

Twenty-six years later, he was taken from her forever. This time she didn't even try to forget.

Fin

*I Go to Sleep/The Kinks