

How I Met Your Mum

by Celisnebula

Every story love story has a beginning.

The Tonks Incident

Chapter 1 of 1

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Diagon Alley 1966

"Will you hurry up? I want to get into Madam Malkin's before the rush!" Bellatrix Black yelled, tugging on her younger sister's sleeve. "I *have* to get the perfect robe for this year's Yule ball, and if I end up in something puce, you're going to regret it."

"But, Bella, I'm supposed to go to Ollivander's first."

"Fine! Go to Ollivander's then!" Bellatrix shoved her sister away. "I'm going to Malkin's."

"I but... but Mum said to stay with you! I can't go there alone!" Andromeda gasped out, stumbling over the uneven cobblestones.

"Aw is the lil' baby scared?" Bella sneered, her dark hair flying into her face. "Just go. There's nothing to be scared about. Just go down the street, get your wand, and meet me at Madam Malkin's. It's quite simple."

Andromeda nibbled lightly on her lower lip, weighing her options. She really didn't want to go to Ollivander's by herself, yet she also didn't want to incur Bella's anger. Bella could be quite vindictive when she set her mind to it. She still had the bruise on her leg from the last incident.

"Go on," she cajoled. "It'll will take me forever to find the right robes you'll be out of Ollivander's and probably already fitted for your school robes before I'm even done."

"Well," Andromeda finally said, her voice filled with doubt. "I guess it'll be all right."

They walked down the cobblestone path from the Leaky Cauldron, Bella several steps ahead of Andromeda, as if trying to distance herself from her younger sister. As they passed Flourish and Blotts, Bella quickened her step and pushed into Madam Malkin's boutique without acknowledging her sister. Andromeda watched through the window as a group of girls greeted her sister inside the shop.

She wondered idly, watching the interaction between her sister and the girls within the shop, if this would be the norm once she started at Hogwarts. With a sigh, she turned from the window and moved down the cobbled path to Ollivander's.

It was strange how much going to school seemed to have changed her older sister. No longer had she time for Andromeda or Narcissa; it was almost as if they had gone from being the best of friends to strangers. Not a hard thing to be when Bella was only home for a few months out of the year. She hadn't even come home for the Christmas break last year. Yet still, Bella's defection hurt.

Bella had always been impulsive and quick to react, but she had never been outright malicious. At least not until the last year or so. Andromeda wondered if she too would

change as much as Bella had once she started spending time up at Hogwarts.

It was hard to imagine she was going to Hogwarts, though hardly unexpected the Noble and Most Ancient House of Black had solely attended Hogwarts since the days of Headmaster Phineas Nigellus Black.

With one last look over her shoulder, Andromeda turned from Madam Malkin's, walking up the uneven cobbled path to the wand shop. It was kind of scary, walking around in Diagon Alley without an adult, so she constantly looked behind her her brain conjuring up some phantom menace stalking her down the lone road. Because her eyes weren't watching the ground, Andromeda stumbled, falling awkwardly on her knee.

Andromeda felt strong, warm hands grasp her arms the scent of cinnamon and chocolate filling her nose as she was pulled upward into a warm embrace. As the strong arms lifted her from the ground, she squeezed her eyes shut, willing herself not to cry. She'd never hear the end of it if Bella caught her crying her eyes out in public. Instinctively, she burrowed closer to the warm chest, trying not to gasp out in pain. Her knees and palms stung wickedly.

"Will she be okay, Ted?" A voice asked.

"I think so; just let me get her to the benches over there so I can check." Andromeda felt his chest rumble with those words. His arms tightened around her as they walked down the sidewalk. His breath smelled of mint as it fanned out against her ear, her fingers clenching tightly at his robes.

She gave a soft mewing sound as he tried to set her down, her arms wrapping around his neck as she pressed her face against his chest. She still hadn't opened her eyes; afraid she'd see her palms and knee in bloody shreds.

"I don't think she's going to let you go," came a brisk voice from the left. "Why don't you just sit down and hold her on your lap, Ted, while I clean up her injuries. Sarah, be a dear and grab the band-aids out of my purse."

"Mummy, is she okay?"

"I think she'll be fine, Sarah. Just a bit bumped and bruised. As soon as we get this blood all cleaned up she'll be right as rain."

Andromeda felt a soft hand on her cheek. "Will you open your eyes up for me, sweetie?" She scrunched her closed eyes even tighter and shook her head no before burying her face back into Ted's warm chest.

"Can you at least tell me if anything else hurts?"

"Just my hands and my knees," Andromeda mumbled into Ted's chest.

"What's your name?" piped up a young voice. "I'm Sarah, and I'm going to Hogwarts this year."

Andromeda turned her head about, towards the sound of the young girl's voice, and squinted, seeing a small blond girl. "Andromeda," she said in a low tone.

"That's my brother, Ted," Sarah said, pointing at the person holding her. "He goes to Hogwarts too." The girl leaned in closer. "He's in Gryffindor," she whispered to Andromeda. "I think that means he has to be brave. But, he's not." Ted grunted, shifting his legs, and Sarah giggled. "I'm going to be in Ravenclaw, 'cause that's where all the smart people go."

"I'll probably go to Slytherin," Andromeda whispered softly. "Everyone in my family has been in Slytherin, so I think that means I have to as well."

"Oh," the girl said her furrowing her brow. "Does that mean we can't be friends then? Though, I don't know why it should, I mean, you can never have too many friends, right?"

"Sarah," Ted's voice rumbled against the ear Andromeda had on his chest. "Why don't you stop nattering on and let her be?"

"She doesn't mind my talking to her do you, Andromeda?"

Andromeda didn't know what to say; Sarah was quite unlike anyone she had ever met. She felt a sharp stinging sensation as something blotted against her knee, causing her to gasp out in pain. She shuddered, biting her lower lip to keep from crying out again and burrowed deeper into the arms that held her.

"Have you gotten your robes from Madam Malkin's yet?" the girl asked, trying to distract Andromeda from the pain. "That was one of the first things we did it took forever to get measured."

"I haven't gotten anything yet," Andromeda mumbled. "I just arrived with my sister. I wanted to get my wand first, but she wanted to get her robes."

"There you go," Sarah's mother said, patting Andromeda's knee dry. "Keep the elastoplast on until you get home, and it should be right as rain in no time."

"She can come with us, couldn't she?" Sarah piped up. "We were just going over to Ollivander's so I can get my wand."

Andromeda looked at the strange thing on her knee, then finally looked at Sarah's Mum, dressed in a knee-length skirt and white blouse. She gave a sharp gasp. "Y you're Muggles!" She tried to scoot off Ted's lap but he held her firmly. "Let me go," she cried. "Please... I'll get in trouble."

"What do you mean? Get in trouble for talking to us? But why?" Sarah asked.

Ted abruptly released Andromeda, and she slid to the ground. "She's one of those *purebloods*," he told his sister in a disparaging tone. Andromeda scrambled back from the harsh look on his face. "They think they're better than us, and all because they've got a family history of magic. They think we pollute the "

"That's enough, Ted," his mother interrupted. "You're scaring Andromeda." She offered Andromeda her hand.

"So?" he challenged. "Someone needs to scare some sense into them. They're horrible, Mum, simply horrible. Look, she won't even take your hand because she's afraid you'll taint her."

"And you think by scaring a little girl who's not much older than your sister is going to help? You're probably just confirming their worst fears when you act this way, Ted Tonks, and this is simply something I will not allow. I raised you better."

"It's okay," Sarah whispered, kneeling down next to where Andromeda sat, sprawled upon the ground.

"I'm sorry," Andromeda whispered, pulling her knees up to her chest. "I please..."

"What have you done to my sister?" Bella boomed, pushing Sarah away from Andromeda, fingering her wand in a menacing manner.

"Bella, don't..." Andromeda gasped. "I where but you can't be done with Madam Malkin's..."

"Oh, bloody hell, she would be *your* sister, Black," Ted grunted.

"Yes, she's my sister," Bella hissed. "You'd do well to remember that fact the next time you feel compelled to assault one of your betters."

"Bella, stop," Andromeda commanded. "I fell and they were helping me."

"And you let them? Do you know what they are?" Bella spat out.

"They were kind," she asserted, climbing to her feet. "I fell and they were kind enough to see if I needed help."

"You just don't understand," Bella grunted, pulling Andromeda up by her arm. "You can't be sullying our good name by associating with the likes of *them*."

As soon as Andromeda was on her feet, Bella yanked her down the narrow cobblestone walk way. "You stay away from my sister, Tonks or else I'll show you what happens to little upstarts who forget their place," Bella threw over her shoulder.

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A/N:

This has been languishing on my computer since... err, last September. There may, or may not be more, it just depends on various factors, meaning muse, time, and inclination to write.