

One Rather Awkward Family

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One Rather Awkward Family

by [fight_flight](#)

Summary

Marshall and Lily are married with Robin and Ted as their children. Ted and Barney are best friends at school.

Robin comes home from her two year exchange in Canada and things start changing.

Being rewritten as of 2019.

Returning Home

Chapter Notes

Hi! This is my first How I Met Your Mother fanfiction (but not my last! I have a band AU in mind).

Unfortunately I'm terrible with the American school system so although they're in America, they have an Australian school setup (Primary School grade R-7, High School grade 8-12). Sorry if this is confusing but the years don't really matter anyway.

This first chapter is really short but I kind of just wanted one up and running so I don't forget to do more.

Anyway, enjoy the first chapter. Sorry it's kind of about nothing. Just introductory,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Ted shifted on his feet at the airport gates.

His big sister was coming home from her almost two years in Canada.

When they had first talked about the exchange she had wanted to go to Germany at the same school where Ted's ex-girlfriend Victoria had gone off to. In addition to the great cooking department they had a large media focus.

It was too far for them though and she had settled on Canada, hoping to improve her French a bit while over there.

Ted had barely seen her over the past couple years but when he saw her walking through the security gates, it felt almost as if he were a little kid again, welcoming his big sister home from school.

Once she was past the gates, Lily rushed over, throwing her arms around her daughter.
"Sweetheart! Welcome home!"

Marshall was close behind, a fond smile on his face.

Ted grinned as they reached the seventeen year old girl. Her hair was light brown, straightened neatly. She wore jeans and a loose blouse.

"Robin, we missed you!" Ted said, gathering her up in a hug.

As soon as Robin was released, Lily was dragging her away, wanting to hear about her whole trip.

"Barney, *no*. My parents hate you. There's no way they'd let me run off to Atlantic city with you. I don't care what you got tickets to. I'm *not going*."

Ted could almost hear his best friend, rolling his eyes at the phone. "*C'mon, Ted! I already got Zoey to make us some fake IDs! She's a pro at this stuff. We could go get smashed, hit the Victorias Secret after party and have an awesome night!*"

"No way. I am never getting drunk with you again. Last time was an absolute mistake."

The line was quiet. "*Yeah. We really shouldn't be talking about that again.*"

"Exactly. We also shouldn't be getting drunk again. So I'm going to stay home. You have fun."

Barney sighed. "*Welcome Robin home from me.*"

Ted hung up, feeling uncomfortable. Maybe he shouldn't have brought up that night.

A knock brought him back to the present and he shifted. "Come in!"

Marshall walked in and dropped into his desk chair. "Hey, buddy. What's up?"

"Nothing, Dad. Just got off the phone with Barney."

Marshall let out a small chuckle. "That kid is going to get a real shock when he leaves high school. I wonder if he'll get a job with his lack of interest in anything actually *important*."

Ted shook his head. "He's Barney. I'm sure he'll get some high paying job that I won't understand."

It was difficult for Ted to tell whether his parents hated Barney or not. They seemed to like him but they didn't seem to like him being friends with their son. Marshall clearly thought he was funny to be around but Lily didn't enjoy the sexual jokes he was always spouting.

"Well, I guess we'll see in a couple years." Marshall stood up. "We're going out to dinner in half an hour. Don't forget to wear something... kind of nice?"

Ted thought to his baggy jeans and flannel shirts. "Yeah, sure."

After reluctantly slapping on a nice jacket and some slacks, Ted made his way down stairs.

Robin was sitting on the last step looking a little tired.

"Hey," Ted said, falling down next to her.

She smiled.

"You okay?"

Robin sighed. "Just tired. Mum and Dad keep asking me all these questions. It's kind of making me sleepy."

Ted nodded. "You know them. They're just excited to have you home. I am too."

"Thanks. I missed you guys. But I also kind of think I'm going to miss Canada."

"Don't let Barney here you say that."

"Is he still bashing on Canada?"

"Of course."

She laughed. I haven't seen Barney in ages. Two years in fact! Has he changed at all?"

"Not in the slightest," Ted told her, grinning.

She shook her head as Lily came into the room, followed by Marshall.

"Ready to go, kids?"

They stood up, walking out of the house.

Chapter End Notes

So? How'd you like it?

Please leave your comments and kudos!

And if you'd like to check out my Tumblr click [here](#).

The Good The Bad And The Barney

Chapter Summary

Ted and Barney go to school.
There is greetings.
And for once Barney and Robin agree.

Chapter Notes

Hello again!
Sorry, I forgot to say this last chapter but their family name is Mosby. Like they suggested in the wedding reception episode, Marshall and Lily decide to pick a completely new name for their family.
Hope you enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A week later school was starting up. The first term of a new year.

Ted threw his stuff into the back of the old Fiero Marshall handed down to him last year.

"You need a drive?" he called inside.

Robin walked to the front door. "Na. Patrice *insisted* on picking me up."

Ted laughed. "Have fun."

She rolled her eyes. "See-you, dork."

It was so like two years ago that he felt Robin had never left. "Bye, Sparkles."

He started the engine and made his way down the driveway, ignoring his sisters glare.

Barney's house was the opposite direction to their school. Ted had been picking up Barney since he had his license. Before that Marshall had driven them both. Loretta, Barney's mother, couldn't drive him due to her late night shifts at the local bar.

He honked once and Barney walked out slowly, straightening his tie.

That was another thing about Barney. He couldn't just wear normal clothes. It was suit and tie. Every day, all day.

He slid into the car. "Hey, Ted."

"Good morning, Barney."

They took off and Barney launched into a story about his awesome trip to Atlantic City.

Ted sat there, his eyebrow raised to the road. Zoey had told him just yesterday that Barney had cancelled his trip.

"... and then I woke up in her bed with another chick I didn't even remember meeting. It was legen- wait for it - dary! Legendary!"

"I'm sure it was," Ted said, laughing a little.

"So, how's Robin settling in?"

Ted pulled into the student parking lot. "Good, I think. I thought it'd be weird. It's not though."

"I think the last time I saw Robin was at your Birthday, the year she left. She changed?"

Ted shrugged. "I dunno. I mean it's not like there was radio silence for two years. She's kind of different though, yeah."

"I meant her looks, dude. She still hot?"

"Barney, that's my sister."

He grinned. "I wasn't serious. Although, I suspect I will find out today."

Ted climbed out of the car, digging his bag from the back.

The day went on pretty normally. Lunch came around and Barney decided he wanted to see Robin.

Ted followed his friend into the senior centre, spotting his sister immediately, sitting on the carpet with her group of friends.

This included a very hyped-up Patrice, a bored-looking Quinn and Barney's ex-girlfriend Nora.

They got closer and Ted noticed one more person sitting amongst the group, laughing.

Her eyes were dark brown, little crinkles sneaking in on the sides as she laughed. She had warm chestnut hair, resting by her shoulders in waves. Her laugh was the type that made you want to laugh too and Ted found himself smiling involuntarily.

"Hey, Ted!" Robin called, waving them open.

He blinked away his focus on the girl. "Hi."

Barney tilted his head to Robin. "Mosby The First, it's been a while."

Robin squinted at him for a second. "Barney?"

"Obviously."

"You grew. You're taller. Still not Ted's height though."

His shoulders slumped. "I am so! Can't you just... okay?"

Robin turned away, chuckling. "Tracy," she said, looking over at her new friend that Ted had *definitely never met*. "This is Ted, my brother and his friend Barney."

"Hi," Tracy said, smiling at them. She didn't seem to have that nervous quality most people had when meeting someone knew.

"Hi," Ted replied, feeling a little timid.

He glanced over to see Robin with her eyebrows raised. Barney wore his perplexed expression. As if he didn't understand why Ted was being so quiet.

"Anyway..." Quinn said, coughing. "Was there a specific reason for you coming over?"

"Barney wanted to check if-" Ted began before being shushed by Barney loudly.

"I wanted to check how Robin was settling in."

Ted could almost hear the collective thought of *lie* in everyone's head.

"It's been fine," Robin said, disbelief colouring his words.

Nora, who had been sitting in a pool of silent anger the whole time, shot Barney a glare. "Go. Away."

Barney scoffed, straightening his jacket. "See-ya."

Ted scratched his head, "Bye."

He followed after Barney.

"What was that?" Barney asked him outside.

"What was what?"

"You were acting... un-Ted. It was weird."

Ted rolled his shoulders, uncomfortably. "I was not."

"You totally were. Was it that chick?"

"Tracy."

"Was it?"

He looked over at Barney. His eyebrows were drawn in, but his face was blank. Ted recognised this as irritation combined with... something else? He couldn't tell.

"Fine. Yes. It was."

"Do you like her?"

Ted shot him a look. "Dude, I don't even know her."

"Meaning you're already in love with her! Damn it, Ted." Barney gestured in the air wildly.

"Come on, Barney! It's nothing. I just get weird with new people. Don't worry."

Barney eyed him for a second before smirking, covering his obvious relief. Ted knew him too well. "It's cool."

Ted didn't even know why he was trying to reassure Barney. He didn't know why he thought Barney *needed* reassuring.

The two of them spent the rest of lunch, sitting uncomfortably by the stairs.

Robin cornered him at home as he was fishing for a drink in their fridge.

"Hey," he said at the head above the fridge door.

"Ted..."

"What?"

"You can't date Tracy," Robin told him forcefully.

Ted straightened up. He was only a little bit taller than his sister but he tried to look intimidating. "Don't tell me what to do. Besides, I've said one word to her. It's not like I'm about to propose."

"I know you, little brother," she said, cautiously.

He sighed. "Why does everyone seem to think I'm five seconds from asking random people out?"

"Probably because you had that crazy look in your eye."

"What crazy look?"

She frowned at him. "You know the one! It's like 'omg I love you'. Just not Tracy, okay? I really like her. I don't want you guys to be together or break up and stuff."

Ted closed the fridge. "So, what? You've like called dibs on her?"

"You sound like Barney."

Ted let out an angry huff. "*You* sound like Barney. Can you both just leave this alone?"

Robin folded her arms. "*Don't date Tracy,*" she hissed before leaving the room.

He watched the spot she had been standing in with a special sort of hatred one can only feel towards a sibling. After a few seconds he trudged up to his room.

His phone was already out, on his favourite contacts when he stopped himself. He looked down at Barney's name before sighing and locking the phone again.

It was always his first instinct to call Barney when he was angry or something had happened. But this time he didn't want to. Barney would just agree with Robin and that sucked.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment and leave your kudos!
Thanks for reading!

Again if you'd like to check out my Tumblr click [here](#).

Her Party

Chapter Summary

Barney and Ted go to a party.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ted frowned, shooting a glare at Barney.

Barney seemed to ignore this, looking out the car window.

"Barney, why are we even going to this?" Ted grumbled. "Who is this party even for?"

"Ted, please! Why do you have to be so negative? It's a party! You like parties!"

Ted sighed. "That doesn't mean I want to go to some random girls house who doesn't even go to our school. Who will we even know there?"

"She's not some random girl. It'll be fun. Trust me."

"Then who is she, Barney? Why are you so nervous?"

He shifted. "I'm not nervous! Why? Do I look nervous? Oh god, this was a bad idea."

"Barney! What the hell is going on?"

He crumpled back into the chair. "This party... it's being thrown by Shannon."

"*Shannon*? You have got to be kidding me. Why are we going to Shannon's party? Can't you just avoid her like a normal person?"

"I... thought I could win the relationship. I mean before I was... well you remember."

Ted nodded.

"But now I'm awesome! I want to rub it in her face."

Ted glanced over at his friend. "Okay. Then let's go do this."

"Really?" Barney sat up.

"Yeah. Let's deal with this and then go get some food because I'm starving."

He laughed. "Yes!"

Ted thought back on when Barney and Shannon first met. Shannon had turned him into a peace-loving weirdo. She changed him so much that they had stopped being friends for over a year.

The two of them were only fourteen and dated for a whole year before she had left him to move to a school with her new boyfriend.

At the time Ted had thought his friend might come back to him. But Barney had turned into someone different from the care-free and kind kid he was. Surprisingly he didn't mind the change though. They had become friends again rather quickly and left the Shannon disaster behind them.

When they finally got to the house, Ted was feeling amped up at the thought of Barney confronting his ex. He hated Shannon.

After a little convincing, Barney got out of the car and straightened up. He was hiding his nervousness rather well although Ted could see his hands shaking.

"Let's go. You can do this!"

Barney gave him a nod and they walked over to the house, colourful lights spilling from the doors and windows. A techno song had been put on for the masses, so many people bumping bodies together in the large house.

As soon as they were inside, Barney turned to Ted. "I can't do this, Ted," he yelled against the music.

"Yes you can, dude! Look, I'll be right there with you!"

He stood there for a moment, deliberating before the two of them headed further inside.

They went into the kitchen, grabbing drinks from the keg before heading upstairs with their plastic cups.

It was quieter on the second floor. More people were actually talking up here although they still had to scream their sentences.

They were just starting to think that Shannon might be downstairs when they heard a voice.

"Ted! Barney!"

They turned to see Robin, heading towards them.

"What're you doing here?" Ted said into her ear.

"What does it look like? Quinn used to go to this school. She knows most of the people."

"Is Tracy here?" Ted asked, looking around the room.

Robin shook her head, anger heating her voice. "No, Ted! She's not into parties. And she's not into you! So lay off!"

"Jesus, I was just asking."

"What're you guys even doing here anyway? Who could you possibly know here?"

"Shannon," Barney replied. His voice was strong and the cup in his hand was empty although there was a new one in his other hand. Somehow he had gotten his hands on another beer.

"You guys know Shannon?" Quinn asked, coming up behind Robin.

Barney nodded, looking around the room.

"She is such a slut," Quinn told them casually.

Barney nodded again and then froze. "There she is."

Ted followed his eyes. Shannon's hair was now shorter and she was hanging off some guy wearing expensive clothes.

"That's him, then?" Ted asked.

"Yeah. I can't believe she left me for *him*. He's not even... good-looking or anything. He's just rich."

"I hate rich people," Quinn commented.

"Quinn! Maybe you could help us!" Ted yelled, excitedly.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, we want to shove the fact that Barney is doing awesomely without her. You're hot and if she sees you guys making out..."

She looked over at Shannon. "You know what? I'll do it. I hate her anyway."

Barney grinned at her.

Robin groaned. "This is a stupid idea."

"No it's not! This is going to work!" Ted snapped at her. "Go! Do it!"

Quinn grabbed Barney's arm and weaved them closer to Shannon and her boyfriend. Robin and Ted followed them at a distance.

Ted watched as Quinn turned quickly and pressed her mouth to Barney's. She was still moving them closer to Shannon and Ted watched Barney's ex-girlfriend waiting for something to happen.

Quinn drove them so close to Shannon that the three of them collided, Barney and Quinn still in a tight lip lock.

"What the hell?!" Ted heard Shannon screech, falling against the wall.

Quinn finally broke her kiss to look at Shannon.

"Barney?" Shannon asked, confused. Her eyes looked him up and down. Gone was the colourful beads and dyed clothes. There he was in a suit, Quinn's hand curled around his tie.

"Shannon?" Barney replied, acting surprised. His tone of voice was instantly insulting. He had almost scoffed her name as if she had turned into some disgusting creature during their time apart.

This had clearly affected Shannon. She frowned. "What are you doing here? I didn't invite you."

"I invited him!" Quinn announced, smirking at her.

"I don't care. He shouldn't be here."

Barney laughed. "Still so uptight Shannon? How annoying. Whatever. I wouldn't want to be found at your party anyway.

She gasped and turned to her boyfriend. "Don't let him speak to me like that."

The boyfriend looked confused. "Uh... don't speak to her like that, buddy."

"Seriously? Not only have you not changed, you're still using dumb idiots to speak for you!" Barney said, turning away.

"Hey!" Shannon's boyfriend growled. "I'm not an idiot."

The guy stepped forward, followed by his rather large friend.

"Doug, maybe we need to teach this guy a lesson."

Doug grinned. "Yeah, Greg. I think we do."

Barney looked over at Ted, shooting him a panicked look.

Ted rushed over. "Hey, guys! There's no need to be so hasty!"

"Are you his friend?" Greg asked.

Ted hesitated. "Uh... yeah?"

"Outside. The four of us. Now."

A crowd had gathered around to watch and Ted and Barney looked at each other, trying to convey the levels of fear they had. Ted's only fights were in verbal form. He couldn't win

this!

The four of them made their way outside, a crowd of people trailing behind them. Robin looked worried and Ted tried his best to send her a reassuring smile.

It was on the front lawn that Doug and Greg wanted to fight. Ted knew that if he ran Barney was screwed and Barney would never run because it would ruin all the work he and Quinn had just gone through.

The two of them shuffled on their feet, waiting for the fight to begin.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you liked this chapter! The next one will be up really soon. I promise!
Please comment and leave your kudos at the tone!

My Tumblr is [here](#).

tone sounds

Wounds And Scars

Chapter Summary

Ted and Barney get into a fight

Chapter Notes

It's 2015! The first chapter of many this year. I hope you guys are having an amazing day and enjoy the rest of the year.

I'm actually a real hater of New Year and always dislike New Years Eve but if you're ready for a new start: good luck this year. If you're like me and dislike this day... well welcome to the club! :)

But this is about the new chapter! I hope you love it!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Ted didn't know how fights were started. Did someone ring a bell? Fire a starting gun? Was there a woman waiting to count down?

Apparently it was none of the above. At least in this case it wasn't.

The fight started with a laugh from Greg, Shannon's boyfriend. The laugh sounded, the atmosphere tensed and Doug lashed out his fist at Barney.

The punch was slow and Barney dodged out of the way quickly, Doug stumbling a little.

Greg was faster, more agile. His first hit was to Ted, hitting him on his stomach with the force of an anvil. Ted fell to the ground, winded and struggling to regain his breath.

He watched through watery eyes as Doug grabbed Barney's arms and Greg smacked him in the face, a cut appearing on his cheek from a ring none of them had noticed.

Barney grunted, thrashing against Doug's beefy arms.

Ted felt himself gaining the ability to move again and kicked his feet out at Doug.

Doug pulled his leg away, letting Barney go. He turned to Ted, nostrils flaring.

"You little shit!" He yelled, kicking Ted before he could scramble away.

Ted curled up, trying to get away from the pain yet unable to escape. He covered his head with shaky hands and settled in for being kicked to death.

Doug suddenly fell to the ground.

Ted looked through the gaps in his fingers. Barney had tackled Doug onto the ground and for a second Ted's spirits lifted.

He had completely forgotten about Greg through the pain.

Doug pushed Barney off of him, his friend taking the blonde kid's arms in his own hands, dragging him over the lawn roughly.

"Barney!" Ted croaked out, trying to stand up.

He cried out in pain as Doug kicked at his chest, stopping him. Grabbing one of his legs, Doug pulled him along, following the path Barney was being dragged on.

Ted couldn't even hear the crowd of people yelling and laughing anymore. All he could hear was the sound of his own body being dragged along grass and then eventually concrete.

Thankfully it all stopped and Ted opened his eyes, not registering that they had been closed. Barney was slumped next to him, his face heavily bruised, the cut on his cheek still red with blood.

"Go home, losers. I never want to see you again. And if I do..." Greg laughed, walking away, Doug on his heels.

Ted saw through the blur in his eyes that everyone was slowly trickling into the house.

A few hazy shapes ran over to them and Ted recognised Robin's voice. "Holy shit. Are you guys okay?"

Ted's voice sounded almost normal in his own ears. "Not even slightly."

Barney just groaned in ascension.

"That was pretty hot though. Watching you guys get beaten to a pulp," Quinn said from somewhere to his left.

"Thanks," Ted replied dryly, pulling himself into a seated position.

His whole body screamed in pain.

"Crap, this hurts."

"We should go to the hospital." Robin looked worried, now that Ted could see her better.

Ted shook his head. "No way. If we go to the hospital... Mum and Dad are going to find out about this."

Robin rolled her eyes. "That doesn't matter! You guys look like hell."

"Nothing's broken! Right, Barney?"

There was no reply.

"Barney?"

Ted looked over to see a defeated looking Barney, sitting slumped on the road.

"Nothing's broken," he murmured.

Ted felt a pang of sorrow. They were supposed to have proved how great Barney was without Shannon. Instead it was like they had done the opposite.

"Then where do we go?" Robin asked, her voice softer. "We can't go home."

"Can't go to my place either," Quinn chimed. "The 'rents are angry enough about last week's party as it is."

"My place," Barney coughed, looking up. "Mum isn't home. James just left for college."

Robin gave this some thought. "Okay. Quinn, are you coming with us or...?"

"Sorry, I have to give a ride home to a couple people. I'm the designated driver. Hilarious, huh? See you tomorrow?"

"Yeah. Bye."

Quinn hurried back to the house.

"Can you guys stand?"

Ted pushed himself up off the road, his whole body feeling a little numb.

Together, he and Robin pulled Barney to his feet and half carried him down the road to Ted's car.

Barney was so quiet that it was starting to scare Ted. Even Robin, after being away for so long, knew that this wasn't good.

Robin drove them over to Barney's house. Again, Ted and her carried Barney inside and settled him on the couch.

They left him there to search for the first aid kit in the bathroom.

"I'm going to stay here tonight," Ted said, filling up a small bowl with warm water.

Robin nodded. "Lucky it's Friday night. I can tell Mum and Dad you're staying here over the weekend. Heal up. Hide the bruises."

Ted nodded. "Thanks. I'll call you tomorrow."

"Sure. Get Barney... back to normal. Okay?"

Ted gave her a smile.

When the two of them went back into the living room, Barney was passed out on the couch. They put the first aid equipment down on his coffee table and Ted walked Robin out.

"Drive safe," he told her after a brief hug.

"I always do."

He watched his car go down the road before heading back inside to a sleeping Barney.

Ted didn't really want to wake him up. His friend looked so tired and peaceful. But the cut on his cheek was bleeding still, shallow but nasty.

"Barney," he whispered, shaking him a little.

Eyelids fluttered and Barney's eyes found Teds. "Ted?"

"Yeah, buddy. C'mon, I have to look at this before you sleep."

Barney sat up and it was like everything that had happened that night washed over him. He groaned and slumped in his seat.

Ted watched him for a few seconds before pulling the hung head up to see the damage.

He took the facecloth from the table. He made sure it was damp from the water before pressing it to Barney's cheek.

The cut was just as he thought. Shallow yet nasty. Barney winced but stayed quiet.

It didn't take long to clean out the wound and stick a bandaid on it. There wasn't much he could do about the other bruises on Barney's face. His own body was covered with the painful marks, one spread out on the side of his jaw.

"Thanks, Ted," Barney said sadly. "I'm sorry you got dragged into this."

"What're you talking about?" Ted laughed. "I did an amazing job. Tonight was legendary!"

Barney met his eyes. They were more sincere than they had been for a long time. He smiled in gratitude and shook his head a little. "Where's Robin?"

"I sent her home. I'm going to stay her for a couple days. Hopefully I'll figure out a good excuse to tell my parents about this." He gestured to the bruise on his jaw.

Barney lifted a hand, pressing it softly against the mark. "Does it hurt?"

"No," Ted assured him. In fact it did hurt. Quite a bit. But for some reason that wasn't what Ted was focused on. The soft feather-like pressure on his face was the most demanding thought in his mind. His heart was speeding up the longer it stayed there. He didn't breath, scared it would come out shaky.

Barney caught his eye and suddenly dropped his hand, clearing his throat. "Good. I'm going to go to my room and try and sleep. You can take James' room. Or the couch. Your choice."

"Goodnight," Ted replied, his voice a little breathy.

Barney stayed still for a few more long seconds before disappearing upstairs, limping.

Ted packed the first aid box away, storing it back in the bathroom. Once everything was in order, he fell onto the couch, fully dressed and extremely tired. He slipped off his shoes before falling away into a heavy slumber.

Chapter End Notes

If you enjoyed the chapter please leave your comments and kudos! Happy New Year, everyone!

My Tumblr is [here](#).

The Weekend

Chapter Summary

Quinn has some news.

Chapter Notes

Sorry if this chapter is a little boring. It's a little bit of a filler. I didn't have a lot planned when I started writing this one but there's a lot better chapters to come!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Ted woke up to soft shaking.

His eyes opened to meet a pair of baby blues.

Ted's mind flooded with memories. The clearest of which was those eyes looking up and finally dropping the hand on his jaw.

"Let's go get some food."

Sitting up, Ted nodded. He was starving. He hadn't had anything last night. They had been too busy getting beaten up.

Barney left the room to get something and Ted swung his legs off the couch.

He couldn't stop thinking about it. That moment last night. It had almost been like that night last year...

Ted shook his head, standing up. He didn't want to think about this right now. Or ever. Barney had probably already put all of it to the back of his mind. So should he.

"Ready?" Barney asked, coming back into the room.

With a last quick look at himself, Ted nodded. "Let's go."

They got halfway to the door when Ted cursed.

"What?"

"Robin took my car. We'll have to take the bus."

Barney groaned. "Ted, the nearest bus stop is 30 minutes away. And do I look like I'm going to take the *bus*?"

"I don't have enough cash to call a cab and get myself some food. My job doesn't pay that much."

"Then just call Robin."

"Do you mind if she eats with us? There's no way she'd come all the way here without something in return."

Barney shrugged. "Robin's cool. As long as she doesn't get all annoying about last night."

"I'm sure it'll be fine," Ted said, fishing his phone from his pocket.

Robin answered after a few rings. "*Hello?*"

"Hey, sis. I need the car. Wanna drive down and get some lunch with me and Barney?"

"*Yeah, okay. Was just thinking about food. I'll be there in like 10.*"

"Cool." He hung up. "She's on her way."

Barney grinned. "Great."

They went outside anyway, sitting down on the porch steps.

"How's the eye?" Ted asked, eyeing the bruise on Barney's face. The band aid was still stuck on tight.

"Hurt a little when I woke up, but its fine now," he told Ted.

"Good."

They shifted into silence. It didn't feel overly uncomfortable but Ted felt himself getting anxious as each second passed. They weren't the type of people to fall into silence. Barney was always talking. Ted was always teasing or trying to tell him something that no one else found interesting.

"So..." Ted started, looking over at his friend.

"Yeah?"

"Uh... how's James doing at college?"

Barney shrugged. "He says it's been easy so far. Basically parties all the time. But you know him. He's probably just ignoring the work entirely."

Ted laughed. "Wouldn't surprise me."

They fell back into silence.

This time Ted didn't say anything. He just sat there waiting.

"Hey, Ted?"

"Yeah, Barney?"

"Can we just forget about everything that happened last night? It's making things super awkward."

Ted blinked. Was he talking about the fight or...?

"I just really don't want to think about Shannon and that anymore."

"Of course!" Ted smiled. "She's not worth thinking about, man."

Barney nodded.

It was then, thankfully, that Robin pulled up.

She got out of the car and looked them over. "You guys... still look like you got in a fight."

"Yeah I was just wondering what to tell Mum and Dad," Ted said.

"You could go with the 'fell down the stairs' routine."

Barney shook his head. "Lily is way too smart to buy that one."

Ted put a hand over the jaw bruise. "There's no way to cover it up either. I could just... say we got in a fight?"

"No way. They'd end up trying to call the other kids parents..." Barney shuddered.

"That's not what I'm saying," Ted began.

"Oh!" Robin said. "You mean..."

"That we got in a fight with *each other*."

"Wouldn't they hate me even more?" Barney asked.

Ted thought on this. "Maybe. But at least we wouldn't get in trouble. We could just say that it was all worked out. And we both look pretty bad so..."

Barney straightened his tie. "That could work."

"Great. Now let's go get some breakfast." Robin walked over to the passenger door, throwing Ted his keys.

Barney glared at her. "Seriously? You're forcing me into the tiny backseat?"

"Yep."

Ted gave him an apologetic look that he only half meant before slipping behind the wheel.

They drove for approximately seventeen minutes. Ted knew this from the time he had first gotten his car and they started going to the new cafe just by the school.

It had been this bar called MacLaren's Pub. They had been open since their parents were in high school and Marshall and Lily had gone there all the time.

It had closed down after they opened a new one closer to the city. The café was still owned by the same people who had changed it to a more age-friendly café suited to the neighbourhood. Even the same name: MacLaren's Café

After going there for a few weeks they started timing how long it had been to get there. They had placed a bet. Ted said fifteen minutes. Barney said ten.

Ted had one the bet and they kept that time as their average.

They headed inside while Ted explained all of that to his sister.

"Hey, guys," the man behind the counter said. He looked at them with the same suspicious eyes he always had. He had assumed that something would go wrong every time they walked in the door.

"Hey, Carl," Ted replied, waving. "Oh, this is Robin by the way. My sister."

He nodded to her before handing a paper cup to an old woman waiting next to the counter.

The three of them hopped in the usual booth that was rarely empty and looked through the menu.

Well, Robin looked through the menu. The other two already knew what they wanted.

Wendy The Waitress walked over. "Hello, what can I get for you g-" she stopped, gaping at them. "What happened to you guys? Did you get in a fight."

"It was nothing," Ted told her lightly. "Barney and I were just really angry at each other."

She frowned. "You guys? Fighting? No way. You're not violent people."

"We fight!" Barney protested.

Wendy laughed. "Yeah with your voices. You guys yell at each other until Carl has to kick you out. You don't use your fists."

"This... was different." Ted glanced at Robin.

She sighed as if the next words caused her physical pain. "It's true. I was there. Something about Star Wars."

"This is Robin," Ted explained.

"You're sister? Nice to meet you, Robin. Now, what can I get for you guys?"

They ordered quickly and Wendy made her way to the kitchen doors.

Breakfast flew by and just as they were about to leave a familiar face came through the door.

"I knew I'd find you guys here," Quinn said, sliding into the booth next to Robin.

"How?" Ted asked.

She winked.

Robin laughed. "So why *are* you looking for us?"

"Right. Well I just wanted to tell Barney some news about Shannon."

Barney blanched. "Do I even want to know?"

Quinn grinned. "Shannon broke up with Greg."

"Really?" Robin frowned. "Why?"

"Apparently she didn't like how he handled last night. They had a massive fight in the middle of the party. The two of them had it out like crazy and he ended up saying that he'd cheated on

her with two other girls including her best friend. I saw the whole thing. It was brutal and so, so perfect." Quinn finished with a sigh, sitting back in her chair, smiling lazily.

"Wow," Ted commented.

Barney nodded. "That's good. I think?"

"You should've been there," Quinn said, dreamily.

"Without you, Quinn, none of this would have happened. You're a better wingman than Ted."

Ted rolled his eyes. "I am sorry that I didn't volunteer to make out with you in front of Shannon."

"Does that mean you would've offered if it wasn't in front of Shannon?" Quinn asked, raising her eyebrows.

"Quinn!" Ted barked, trying to hide his embarrassment. "Of course not."

Robin and Quinn shared a look before bursting out into fits of laughter.

"Oh, Teddy! I was just kidding," she coaxed.

"I *know*," Ted coughed. "I was just making sure *you* knew."

"Sure, Ted."

Ted leaned on the table awkwardly. This conversation just kept reminding him of 'that night' and looking over at Barney it seemed her wasn't the only one.

"Let's get out of here," Ted finally voted, digging some cash out of his wallet and waving over Wendy.

Chapter End Notes

Leave your kudos and thoughts below!

My Tumblr is [here](#).

Sleeping Secrets

Chapter Summary

Ted dreams.
Robin and Barney smoke and talk.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the long time away! I have to do these hiatuses to keep everyone on their toes. Actually it's because I'm lazy and school's been horrible. Anyway I hope you enjoy this short chapter. A taste of what's to come. An insight into Robin's mind and Barney's feelings! :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"You're so good, Ted," Barney said, his words slurring and tripping over each other. "I'm so glad I met you. Couldn't ask for a better person to be around."

Ted gave him a lazy smile, his eyes trailing over Barney.

Barney grabbed his shoulders suddenly. "Ted! Ted, listen! You..." he stopped, his eyebrows knitting together in confusion. "You..."

Ted's eyes dropped to Barney's lips before sliding back up to those confused eyes. His thoughts were clouded, unreadable even to himself.

He closed the gap between them, Barney's confusion still heavy on his face.

The taste of expensive scotch was still on his tongue, the smooth flavour matching perfectly with the feel of his lips, responding so easily to Ted's own.

Hands that had grabbed his shoulders so violently, eased up, one curling around to the back of his neck and sliding through his mess of black hair.

When someone finally pulled back - Ted wasn't sure who - Barney's eyes locked with his own, clearer than before, more alert.

Ted's mind wasn't as clouded now but it was just enough that he wasn't planning on stopping.

The two of them grabbed at each other again, tongue's begging on lips, breaths ragged when they needed to split, hands roaming, so in tune with what Ted wanted.

"Barney," he breathed, head light from the buzz of alcohol and the lack of oxygen.

Instead of replying, his best friend kissed at his neck, biting down hard only to drag his tongue softly over it.

That was going to leave a mark.

When their hands finally stopped sliding over one another and their lips were swollen, Ted's t-shirt was on the other side of the room and Barney's button up was buttoned down.

But they stopped there. Ted wanted more but Barney laughed against him, pulling back and lying on the couch, his eyes half-closed.

He fell asleep before either of them could say a word.

And Ted woke up.

He woke up in his bed, his head crowded with the thoughts of that night and certain parts of him *aching* to be touched.

Ted hurried into the bathroom, running a shower, jumping into the cold water and letting it run over his hot skin, trying desperately to shake off the dream. The memory.

Why was all this coming back up in his mind? Was it because of the night before? Nothing remotely similar had happened but... it was probably just his hormones. How often did his dad go on about raging teenage hormones? Marshall was probably spot on. And that night with Barney... it had been one of the only few sexual experiences he'd had. That was normal to dream of, right?

When Ted had finally dried himself off, ready for a Sunday at home, he was assured again. Everything was fine.

Robin took the cigarette away from her lips and let the smoke blow out through the air. She flicked some ash onto the grass and stared at the soccer team, kicking the ball around on the oval in front of her.

"So, you smoke?"

Robin turned around and saw Barney, a small smile on his face.

She sighed. "Yes. Don't tell Ted."

"As long as you don't tell him I smoke." He pulled out a pack, shoving one of the thin objects between his lips.

Robin held up her lighter. "Deal."

Barney leant next to her on the fence, his eyes drifting to the soccer players too.

She wasn't exactly surprised he had found her there. This was kind of a smokers den for teenagers who didn't like getting caught. Just a few meters (*yards!* she reminded herself) away another kid from a neighbouring school stood, puffing away with a friend.

Robin didn't come here for the company though so she stayed silent, looking moodily out at the large oval ahead.

"Something up with you?" Barney asked. He didn't seem his usual self. She had to remind herself that he hadn't come here for the company either.

"No."

Barney grunted. "Of course." A barge of smoke poured out his mouth.

Robin's mind strayed inevitably to Tracy and she frowned. She didn't want to think about it.

"Barney, what do you think about Tracy?" Robin asked. She didn't want to think about it. But she couldn't stop herself.

He gazed out at the field and she watched as his eyes flickered and his lips twitched in what looked like irritation. "I dunno. She seems okay, I guess. I don't really know her."

"But you don't want her to be with Ted?"

"He told you?"

Robin nodded. "I agree."

"Why do you agree?" Barney looked at her with surprise.

"I just think..." The real answer popped in her head and for a second she considered telling him. "...that they would eventually break up and I'd either have to be mad at Ted or lose a great friend." Her voice was uneven on that last word but either Barney took no notice or he was graceful enough to ignore. "Why do *you* not want them together?"

Barney shrugged. "Just looking out for my best friend."

The bitter edge to his words made her pause before inhaling the smoky addiction in her hand. "That's not it, is it?"

He took a second, his eyes resting on the soccer goal. "Nope."

Robin dropped the cigarette and turned to face him. "Are you afraid you'll lose him as a friend or something?"

"No, Robin."

"Then..." she studied his face. "Oh, Barney. What is it? This is killing you. Tell me."

A humourless laugh slipped out between his lips and the pungent smell of cigarette smoke. "I don't want him with Tracy because *I* want him."

She watched his face. As soon as the words had popped from his mouth her suspicions on the matter were confirmed and she was simultaneously crushed and joyous. They were stuck in the same boat. But she couldn't tell him that.

"Barney-"

"Don't, okay?"

They stayed silent for a while and Robin pulled another cigarette out, lighting it with the practise of her whole high school years.

"Thing's never go how we want them to," Robin said quietly.

Barney dropped his head. "It's not like I expected things to go right all of a sudden."

The two of them rested there for a while, the cloud of a bad habit engulfing them with ever breath and the stench of smoke clinging to the fabric of their clothes.

Chapter End Notes

Comment below and leave me some of those wonderful kudos!

Also if you want to follow my How I Met Your Mother Blog click [here](#).

Family Dinner

Chapter Summary

Heather comes by for dinner.
Robin is angry.
Ted is confused.

Chapter Notes

Ahhhh I hate myself for leaving this story for so long and returning with such a short, useless update.

I will try my hardest to get another one up soon but things haven't been the most interesting in the past couple of chapters and this story is in desperate need of some actual events.

Anyway, I hope this at least helps to show that I haven't forgotten about this rather awkward family I'm writing about. And hopefully neither have you! Enjoy the chapter, guys.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Robin got home that night any traces of smoke were gone.

Quinn could work wonders in minutes and when she walked into the house, all traces of cigarette smoke were gone and she could taste a trace of mint from the gum she had just thrown out. Even Lily didn't notice anything.

Ted noticed something else though. Something in the way she looked at him, as if he'd done something to piss her off and made her sad all at once.

Lily came home shortly after Robin, her arms heavy with grocery and the news that aunt Heather and her new husband were coming for dinner.

Ted wanted to groan but he held back because Marshall was giving him that look that clearly said "don't".

He went to say something to Robin, vent a little to her so she could vent back like usual, but when he turned to her, she was already on her way to her room.

For a second he thought about following her, demanding what was going on. He couldn't make himself take the first step though. They might've been acting like those two years she

spent in Canada didn't exist but Ted knew better. Things weren't the same. They were both a little different but it was that gap of time that took the more familiar parts of being siblings from the two of them.

The next hour was spent watching Lily rush around the kitchen, worrying about impressing Heather. It wasn't as if she was a special guest though. Lily's sister was always coming round. Ted had the faint suspicion that Lily liked the stress.

Marshall convinced him to play some Wii tennis as the roast went in and for a while that took his mind off of things.

Ted never really loved seeing his aunt and whatever guy she had on her arm. He was sure this divorce would end as bad as the last one but he was willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. A part of him was glad she was coming over. It would give him something other than Robin walking away or Barney in general to think about.

If Heather wasn't over he would've called up his best friend to hang out with and tried to dispel some of the awkwardness he was feeling.

When the doorbell rang, Marshall headed away as Ted turned off the game. He heard Heather talking happily and went out into the front hall to welcome her.

"Teddy!" she crooned happily, hugging him. Ted was almost as tall as her and remembered when she used to be able to swing down and scoop him up from the ground.

Robin walked into the now-cramped hall too, smiling as her aunt greeted her.

"I've missed you, kid! How was Canada? Oh, I want to hear everything!"

Heather's new husband stood awkwardly in the doorway, shaking hands with Marshall. His name was Don and he looked fairly nice. He was tall with dark hair and brown eyes.

The six of them went into the living room before Lily took off to finish the roast off in the kitchen. Ted followed her, planning to set the table like usual.

"You okay?" Lily asked cautiously as he pulled out forks.

He looked up. "Uh... yeah. Why?"

She shrugged. "Just look like something's bothering you. Ted, you know you can talk to me if something's up."

With the array of cutlery in his hands, Ted paused. "Thanks, Mum. I'm fine though. Seriously."

She pondered this, her hands wrapped up in two oven mitts. "Okay. If you say so. But I'm still here."

I left her to go set up the table. Glasses, knives, forks, plates, napkins. How many times had he done this in his life? Too many.

Lily brought in the chicken and a plate covered in roasted potatoes and carrots. She went back in to bring out the gravy and vegetables, calling Marshall's name out in the process.

Ted took a seat at the table, watching as Marshall carved up the chicken and Robin guided in their guests. She sat down beside him, shooting over a frustrated glance.

"What?" Ted muttered to her.

She shook her head. "It's nothing."

"The hell it is. Something's been up all night. Are you mad at me?"

"No," she snapped. The force of her words shocked them both into silence. "Let's just talk about it later."

The dinner went on smoothly, Marshall interrogating Don a little and Heather forcing Robin to spill all the details on her time in Canada. Ted stayed quiet for the most part along with his strangely silent mother.

It was late when they finally waved Heather and Don out the door and before Ted got the chance to talk to Robin again, Lily was rushing them to bed.

"What is *with* you tonight?" Ted grumbled at her, grabbing his toothbrush.

Lily's voice became unusually high. "Nothing! No more questions. I want you two up and ready for school tomorrow."

She hurried away.

Robin gave a shrug and left the bathroom, her teeth clean.

Ted spent his time brushing away, thinking about the change in Robin that night. That morning she had seemed fine with him, clearly a little desperate to get away from the house but nothing more. He didn't know what he could've possibly done.

When he finally crawled into bed that night he had a worrying suspicion he'd dream about Barney and that night. He pressed his face into the pillow, trying to dispel the memories. He couldn't sleep like this. Desperate to stop the thoughts, Ted got out of bed and wandered down the hall to the bathroom. In the movies, washing your face always made the problems go away, right?

He was about to turn on the tap when raised voices streamed into the room. Ted crept toward them, his feet stopping at the top of the stairs. He could hear well enough from there, Marshall's anger drifting from the living room.

"What the hell, Lily? When did you decide to just leave us? You never even mentioned this to me!"

"I thought... I thought I wouldn't have a chance. That's why I'm telling you now. It's not even for very long. I don't get why you're so mad. Ted and Robin are old enough that I can leave

them to you for a couple months."

"Why not find a program closer to home? There must be art programs here. Why San Francisco?"

"It was a spontaneous decision! Marshall, it's not like I wanted to be away from you guys. I just saw the ad online and applied. Why are we even talking about this. It's just an interview. I still might not get in."

Ted heard Marshall sigh. "What if you do?"

"Well... If I do..." she paused. "It won't be until mid next year. Robin will have graduated and maybe even be moved out to go to college elsewhere. I can do the course, see how it goes, come home and be back in time to see Ted graduate. It's three months, honey. Not three years."

"Yeah... maybe you're right. I'm sorry, Lily."

A small noise made Ted turn to see Robin, standing just behind him.

"Should we go tell them we know?" she whispered.

Ted shook his head. "Not tonight."

The two of them snuck back down the hall. Ted waved Robin off before going into his room and shutting the door. He fell asleep quickly this time, thoughts of dreams gone completely.

Chapter End Notes

I forgot to mention this earlier (or actually write it in the chapter) but Ted has already told Marshall and Lily that the bruise on his jaw was because of a fight he got in with Barney (see chapter 4-5) and they accepted it even though Ted wouldn't explain. He also went home Saturday night instead of Sunday (which was originally planned) because he felt awkward with Barney at the time. Sorry if you don't remember that part of the story but I screwed up a little and wanted to fix it.

A Platonic Movie

Chapter Summary

Ted feels awkward around Barney.
James comes for a visit.
Tracy and Ted become closer.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Robin was back to normal the next day.

They ate breakfast, grumbling about going to school like normal. She shouted a farewell when Quinn got there and by the time Ted was leaving the house, he was calm again.

And then he saw Barney.

Up until that point his mind had somehow made him forget about Barney completely, focusing on the issue of Robin instead. That was all good except that all the embarrassment and confusion he'd felt over the weekend crashed into him when Barney got into his car.

How he had not felt this on the ride to his house baffled him.

"Hey," Barney grinned.

Ted's face was hot and he almost cried at the thought of blushing over *Barney* of all people.
"Hi, Barney."

He started on his way to the school. Flashes of the night they had spent together flashed over and over in his mind, the dream somehow bringing them back in full force. Ted could practically feel Barney's tongue on his neck.

"Ted? Are you okay?" Barney asked.

With a deep breath, Ted nodded. "Of course. Why?"

"You just... seem kind of out of it."

"Do I? I'm just tired."

They pulled into the school and found a good park.

Ted didn't concentrate much that day. He felt a bit dazed and slightly hot every time Barney was close by. At one point Barney had suggested he go home, claiming Ted had a fever. He

almost agreed but couldn't justify leaving when he knew it was all because he was *slightly* turned on whenever Barney looked at him.

He couldn't lie to himself but by the end of the day he was in desperate need to be with someone besides the guy he was confused over.

"You don't have to drop me home. James' coming back home for a couple days and wants to hang out. He'll come pick me up."

Ted felt a small wash of relief. "Oh. Okay. Say hi to him for me."

Barney nodded before disappearing to find his ride.

It was a while before Ted decided to grab his bag and go home. There weren't many people left on the grounds and only a few cars were still parked. He noticed Tracy frowning at her phone by the park's exit as he walked to his car.

"Hey," Ted said, approaching her.

She looked up and a smile replaced her frown. "Ted."

"What's up? It seems like your phone's offended you."

She laughed, shaking her head. "No. It's just... my ride seems to have made other plans. I was going to go see a movie with my cousin but he's ran off on me."

"What movie?"

"Ah... it's just this documentary on coin collecting."

Ted blinked. "You like coin collecting?"

"Yep. Imagine how much history some of those old coins have gone through..." Tracy's eyes drifted off. "But now in addition to not being able to see that, I have to catch a bus home."

"Well... I know I'm not your cousin but you could see it with me? If I'd known there was something like that out in cinemas I would've already gone and saw it."

"It only came out today. But... do you really want to go? Most people find this stuff boring." She looked as if the thought baffled her.

Ted looked about the same. "Boring? No, I love documentaries. And old coins. This must be destiny. Plus I can give you a ride home after."

Tracy glanced back at her phone. "Okay. Thanks, Ted."

He opened the passenger door for her, trying not to get too excited. This wasn't a date but... it *seemed* like one.

They drove over to the mall close to their school. The cinema connected to it was small and didn't play a lot of popular movies but Ted went there a lot for some of the less appreciated cinematic masterpieces. He'd seen plenty of documentaries there.

"So, Tracy... did you transfer this year?" Ted asked, as they chose a couple chairs in the cinema.

She nodded. "Yeah. Kind of stupid to transfer for senior year."

"Then why did you?"

"I was having some trouble at my old school and needed a change. My mum decided it was a good excuse to move."

"Well, I'm glad you moved here. If you don't mind me asking... what trouble were you having?"

She shifted. "My boyfriend at that time graduated and went off to Africa. Max was amazing and he wanted us to keep going but we broke up anyway and the school just kind of made me sad after that."

"Yeah I get that. Similar thing happened to me. My ex-girlfriend moved to Germany and we split. We weren't nearly as close as you and... Max must've been though."

Tracy nodded. "Yeah... it's sad. I loved him but I just couldn't deal with the situation. I'm happy with this place though. Everything's new and I feel like I can be someone else, you know?"

"I think everyone wants to feel like that sometimes."

The lights dimmed and the two of them turned to watch the documentary.

"I was so relieved when they brought in those third-party graders!" Ted exclaimed, clutching his cup of coffee.

Tracy nodded, her cheeks rosy from the heat of her drink. "That slabbed coin really was something though, wasn't it?"

The documentary had been a success and any nervousness Ted had felt when they first met was gone. They were walking together to the car, coffee in hand and discussing the past two hours in detail.

Ted found he really loved talking to Tracy. It felt easy and fun. She was pretty and they shared so much in common.

"Shall I get you home now?" he asked.

They reached the car and she smiled. "Yes. Thank you, Ted. This has been... kind of awesome."

"That's what I was aiming for. I had a good time too."

The two of them hurried into the car and she gave him directions to his house. The trip was quick and soon enough she was saying goodbye.

Ted watched her get inside before driving off again.

"So, my man, what're we going to do tonight?"

Barney shrugged, sitting on the couch.

James gave him a look. "What's with you today, little brother?"

"I dunno, James. Ted was acting weird at school."

"And? Did you guys have a fight?"

"No... I'm sure it's nothing. What do you want to do tonight?"

"Ask you something."

Barney looked up. "Ask me what?"

"Do you like Ted?"

"Of course. He's my friend," Barney replied awkwardly.

James gave him a look.

"Okay, okay. Maybe. I dunno."

"Huh. And here I thought Mum would have *one* straight kid..."

"It's not like I don't like girls," Barney murmured. "I just also happen to like Ted."

"Alright. Well at any point today did you actually ask why he was being weird?" James asked, fiddling with his phone.

Barney frowned. "Well yeah. Not like really directly but he just told me nothing was up."

"Then maybe you should just ask him seriously what's going on. That's probably the only thing you can do..."

The two of them sat there for a while longer. Staring at the black TV screen.

"How's school?" Barney asked, dully.

A small smile crawled onto James' face. "Really good."

"Still doing the whole 'no work, all play' thing?"

"Ah... not anymore. Actually I... met someone."

Barney turned to face him. "Who?"

"His name's Tom. Actually I came back to talk to you and Mum about it. I was thinking of bringing him by..."

"How the mighty have fallen."

"Barney..."

He shook his head. "Sorry. Yeah of course. It'd be great to meet him. I never thought you'd stray so far from our path though."

"And you haven't done the same?"

Barney thought back to Ted's face that day. He had been flushed, skin pink all over. He'd bit his bottom lip over and over, rolling it between his teeth. It was hard to think past his fascination with his best friend at the moment.

"Mmm."

"Why are you so late?" Lily sounded frustrated. Worried.

Ted closed the door behind him, listening for the click of the lock. "I was with a friend. Why? What's up?"

"Just... text next time, okay?"

"Okay..."

Robin flitted out into the hall. "Hey, little brother. Been hanging with Barney?"

A hand of panic grabbed him. He didn't understand why but Robin didn't want him around Tracy. "Uh... no."

"Then...?"

He sighed. Lying would be stupid. "I was with Tracy."

As he'd expected she was mad. Her eyes closed and her nostrils flared. Her voice was tight when she replied. "Where? She was supposed to be with her cousin tonight."

Ted shifted as Robin opened her eyes again. "Well... he cancelled at the last minute and so I went to see the movie with her."

He expected yelling, another warning maybe. It's a mystery why Robin was so touchy about Tracy. "Did anything happen?"

"No. We saw the movie and I dropped her home. All we did was talk a little."

Instead of replying, Robin nodded once before leaving the room.

Ted almost followed her. The glimpse he caught of her expression shocked him. Robin looked more pained than angry.

Lily called out for him from the living room and he sat with her for a while watching *The Price Is Right*. When Marshall walked through the door, complaining about some evil clients, Lily called in Robin as well.

His sister walked into the room and sat in one of the recliners, looking impatient.

They shared a quick glance, knowing what was to come.

"So your mother has some news," Marshall started, looking tired.

Lily cleared her throat. "Um... Next year I'll be starting an art program in San Francisco. I had a video interview today and it seems they've accepted me. I applied only about a month ago and I want you to know-"

"We already know," Robin told her, cutting off further speech.

Marshall blinked. "How?"

"Overheard you yelling last night," Ted said.

"Oh." Lily shifted. "Y-you know that I don't want to leave you kids right? It's only for-"

"A couple months," Ted finished. "We know, Mum. Good luck. I'm proud of you."

Tears sprang to her eyes. "Teddy... thank you. I don't even know if I'll be any good."

"You'll be great," Robin commented, smiling. She walked over and pulled Lily into a hug.

Soon enough the four of them had been squashed together forcefully by Marshall's 'group hug' declaration.

They ordered Thai food that night and Lily told the three of them what she'd be doing over in San Francisco, dreaming up what she might get to paint. Every so often Marshall looked sad but none of them voiced their concerns at having Lily gone. She'd never left them for so long. Robin was the only one who'd been away from the family for so long.

During all this, Ted somehow made the resolution to ask Tracy out on a real date. It wasn't his imagination that she liked him. Robin would get over it hopefully and things would cool off. Even if they didn't for a while... Ted was just as annoyed by Robin telling him he couldn't be with Tracy as she was with him ignoring her words.

Their eyes met over the dinner table and he felt a stab of guilt.

Everything would be fine... right?

Chapter End Notes

Ha, ha! I told you I'd update soon! It's a decent length too... at least for my usual updates.

Give me your comments and kudos!

I'll try to write up the next update quickly too! :)

Confessionals

Chapter Summary

Ted goes for it.
Robin and Barney sulk.

Chapter Notes

Two updates in one night? I'm on fire!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Tracy, do you want to go on a date sometime?"

Tracy's mouth opened and closed, trying to answer quickly. "Huh... I..."

"It's okay if you don't want to," Ted blubbered. "I know you just got out of a relationship-"

"Yes."

"What...?"

She laughed. "Yes, Ted. Let's do the dating thing."

They were standing next to the senior centre. Ted had managed to catch her going in for lunch before Robin had gotten out of class. The air was chilly and Tracy was in a warm blue coat, the material hugging her closely. Ted himself was in a grey hoodie. Not the most attractive thing to wear in this situation but he hadn't really thought about it that morning.

"Do you have any plans Saturday?"

Tracy shook her head. "What do you want to do?"

"There's this new exhibit at the museum. It's supposed to be great. We could go get some dinner after? Or anything really. The aquarium? Whatever you want to do."

"The museum. I've been wanting to see it since I moved anyway. Dinner sounds nice too."

"Great." Ted grinned. "I'll pick you up at 2 on Saturday?"

She smiled. "Sounds good. I have to go so..."

"Right. See you later."

Tracy hurried off, waving goodbye. Ted watched her go before turning to go find Barney for lunch together. Something about seeing Barney made him suddenly worried. The stupid smile he'd been wearing seconds ago faded and something tugged at his thoughts. He couldn't place what was wrong. It wasn't like Barney had ever approved of Ted in a relationship... but usually that never bothered him. He would shake it off like usual. Robin's reaction to this was bothering him too. Something wasn't right. But when he thought of the idea of spending more time with Tracy, Ted was able to lock away those thoughts.

"He... what?" Robin asked, looking carefully into Tracy's warm eyes.

"He asked me on a date." Tracy wore a worried expression. "I said yes. I'm sorry. I know it must be weird... me dating your brother."

Robin's throat tightened and she coughed away the strong need to cry. "No, no. It's fine. If you want to. Ted's... a good guy." Her words rang true. Ted was a good guy. There was no reason he shouldn't date Tracy. Her emotions flattened out and she put on a fake smile.

Tracy looked relieved. "Good. If it was going to make things weird... just say the word and I won't be anything but friends with him."

How tempting, Robin thought. "Of course not."

Quinn's voice called out to them from where she and Nora were standing. "Ready for lunch?"

"Yeah!" Robin turned and walked over to them, Tracy in her wake.

The four of them headed to the cafeteria, Robin's stomach uninterested in the concept of food.

Ted glanced over at Barney who was playing with the meatball sub on his tray. Usually Barney loved meatball sub day...

"So... Barney," Ted started awkwardly.

Barney looked up. "Yeah?"

"I asked out Tracy."

Barney looked down at his sub again. "Is that so? Good for you, Ted."

Ted stayed silent, watching his expressionless friend. "That's... it?"

"Yes. Way to score the girl you like."

"How did you know she said yes?"

"How could she not?" Barney sighed and got up. "I've got to go."

"Where?" Ted felt his stomach sink. What was going on?

"Just got stuff to do. Bye."

"Bye..."

Barney left the cafeteria and Ted slumped in his seat, alone and confused.

"Barney!"

Barney turned to get a view of Robin rushing down the empty hallway.

She caught up to him and slowed her pace. "Do you know?"

"Yeah," he said, sliding a hand through his blonde hair.

Robin grabbed his arm, stopping the two of them. "Come to my place after school. I want to talk to you."

Barney went to speak.

"Don't worry. Ted's going out with Dad to get some new clothes. He's going straight to the mall."

"I guess... but why? Talking isn't my strong suit."

"It's not mine either but... I need to talk to someone anyway and I think it can only be you."

"Well... James was going to come pick me up after school but we didn't have anything planned so I guess it's fine."

Robin smiled, her face looking a little strained. "Quinn usually drops me off so I'll meet you in the parking lot and she'll give us a ride, okay?"

Barney nodded as the bell rang in their ears.

Barney saw Ted as he was leaving to find Robin and Quinn.

His best friend waved and Barney sadly turned away, unable to even raise his arm in farewell.

"Let's go!" Quinn said, grabbing his arm all of a sudden.

"Hey," Barney replied. Quinn's attitude was almost enough to smile at.

Robin slid into the backseat, granting Barney the honour of the passenger seat.

Quinn filled up the silence to the Mosby residence with a long story about a prank she had pulled on their Mathematics teacher with their German exchange student Klaus. Apparently he'd become quite popular due to his unique sense of humour.

When they'd finally reached Robin's house, Quinn had made them laugh quite a bit, an amazing ability considering how down Barney had been feeling.

Robin takes him inside and Barney almost takes the route straight to Ted's room, something he'd usually do straight away when going there.

Lily seemed to be the only one home and she froze at the sight of them together.

"What's going on? This is a strange pairing..."

Robin rolls her eyes. "It's not that weird, Mum. I invited him over to listen to some music. He has terrible taste. I want to change that."

Lily laughs and gives them a nod, sensing something more but letting it go. "I'm going out to do some grocery shopping. I'll be home quick. I don't need much so don't do anything bad."

"Don't you trust me?" Robin said, annoyed.

Lily's eyes drifted to Barney. "It's not *you* I don't trust, sweetie."

Barney sighed and Lily left the house in a hurry.

"C'mon," Robin instructed, climbing the stairs and going past Ted's room to her own.

The room was bigger than Ted's and was newly changed since she'd come back from Canada. A photo was framed on the small desk with Robin and some friends, all holding donuts. There were a few posters on the wall of musicians she liked and some famous hockey team he'd never heard of. She had a double bed, surprisingly covered with purple sheets and matching comforter.

Robin headed to the stereo on her dresser, playing some random song from her iPod. He didn't recognise it but it wasn't bad, slow and strangely calming.

"Okay," she said finally, taking a breath. "So... let's talk."

Barney stole her desk chair to sit at and Robin sat cross-legged on her bed.

"How're you feeling?" she asked.

"Like crap," he replied honestly.

She nodded slowly. "This really sucks..." The silence stretched for a long moment, Robin picking at a thread on her comforter. "I wasn't exactly honest with you before."

"What do you mean?"

"When we were at the oval smoking. I made up some excuse as to why I didn't want Ted with Tracy but... that wasn't true."

Barney sat back, watching Robin's face. He'd already known she wasn't being truthful but he didn't want to presume her real reason.

"Then what's the truth? Why don't you want them together?"

"Because I'm in love with Tracy. I have been since we met. She's amazing."

Barney didn't know Tracy. He wanted to disagree angrily about her being anything but horrible, his mind begging to blame her instead of Ted. "I didn't know you were..."

"I'm not. I guess I'm open to both? I like guys and girls. What about you?"

"The only guy I've ever been into is Ted," Barney mumbled awkwardly.

Robin groaned and lay back on the bed. "What the hell is wrong with the world? Why can't things just be *simple*?"

Barney stood up and fell down beside her, not wanting to be upright any longer. "I don't know."

They were silent again. The song had changed and a girl was singing softly about the changing seasons. Barney liked it more than the last. He closed his eyes and let her voice wash over him.

"Why did you fall in love with my brother, Barney?"

Barney opened his eyes to see her watching him closely, her lips turned down at the corners.

"Lots of reasons. It wasn't anything like love at first. I think I just wanted to have sex with him. And then things just changed all of a sudden. There was no specific reason. It just happened. What about you?"

Robin propped up her head on her hand. "She makes me feel warm. It's stupid but as soon as we met I didn't want to be apart from her. She's lame in so many ways and yet so kind. They make a good match."

"I suppose."

This time they didn't speak again and while Barney lay there, Robin drifted into sleep. He watched her before quietly getting up, sending James a text to pick him up. He scrawled a quick note and placed it next to her head before hurrying out of the house and waiting for James on the sidewalk.

Gone home. Call if you need to talk more or want to hang again. Thanks for today -B.

Robin smiled at the note. Since when had Barney turned into an actual decent person? She made her ways downstairs, sluggishly looking around for anyone who might be home.

It seemed everyone was, Lily preparing dinner, Marshall watching a movie. Ted was nowhere to be seen.

"Ted's in his room doing homework," Marshall told her, eyes stuck to the TV.

Robin went back upstairs and knocked on his door.

"Yeah?"

She poked her head inside. Ted was on his bed, laptop open and reflecting in his eyes.

"Hey," Robin said. "Don't hurt Tracy, okay?"

Ted blinked, putting the laptop down. "What-"

Robin left, closing the door and shut herself up in her room, turning the music up and switching to a different playlist.

The note Barney had left was still sitting on her bed and she folded it up, slipping it in one of her desk drawers.

Her mind drifted again and she let herself think of that friendly smile and those dark brown eyes. Would these feelings ever go away?

Chapter End Notes

Comments and Kudos if you will!

Also if you want to follow my How I Met Your Mother Blog click [here](#).

First Date

Chapter Summary

Ted and Tracy have their date.
Barney and Robin involve themselves.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Barney shuffled down lower in the car. "Robin, what the hell are we doing?"

"What?! A van costs more."

"This is a station wagon! What was the difference? Like five dollars? That's not what I was referring to anyway."

Robin sighed, turning away from the window to look at him. "You were the one who wanted to know how things went."

"But I didn't mean for us to go and spy on their first date. Anyway Ted would've called me up later to rant about it."

"Well, Tracy and I aren't close enough for her to talk to me a whole bunch about my own brother's love life with her. That'd be weird no matter what. Barney, please. I don't want to do this by myself."

Barney grabbed the binoculars from her hands. "I'd be lying if I said I wasn't dying to know how this goes."

With a relieved smile, Robin turned back to watching Tracy and Ted get out of the car and begin walking. "Where are they going anyway?"

"This is Ted so most likely... yep. The museum." Barney watched the two of them go inside, chatting away. He was curious but... seeing them looking so good together was killing him.

"Let's go," Robin said, getting out of the car.

The two of them headed inside and proceeded to hide and follow Ted and Tracy at a safe distance.

Barney felt torn between thinking the situation was funny to just being jealous and a little depressed at the perfect image of them together. They stopped to take a look at some cases full of rocks and Barney almost smiled at the thought of Ted blathering on about some of this

crap. He'd never really been interested but despite that he would trade places with Tracy in a heartbeat.

She was smiling at him, nodding her head along with his words, attention focused on him. Tracy could keep up with this stuff. The two of them seemed like the perfect match.

He looked over at Robin and saw her blank face as she watched them.

It was suddenly clear that they shouldn't be here. Staying around and suffering like this was so obviously unhealthy. But Barney couldn't force himself to leave.

They spent hours in the museum that felt like days. He felt too tired to joke about it all and Robin didn't look like she'd appreciate it either. When Ted and Tracy finally made their way out both Barney and Robin followed in relief. They followed the couple to a small restaurant in the station wagon.

Robin looked at the place before letting a small smile spread across her face. "This is so weird. I remember my first boyfriend taking me here."

"Next thing I know you'll be complaining about the kids on your lawn," Barney teased.

She laughed. "Shoot me before I get that old."

"So your first boyfriend, huh?"

"Simon. God, I was so in love with him. It was short. He lived in Canada."

Barney rolled her eyes. "Please tell me that is not why you studied in that backward-ass country last year."

"No way!" she barked. "I'm not that much of a girl."

Ted and Tracy were looking over menus.

"I'm starving," Robin groaned, turning from the restaurant window. "There's a diner down the road. Do you want to get some stuff? Make this a proper stakeout?"

"Sure. Don't think they're going anywhere."

They got out and walked the distance, Barney prodding a few questions about Simon and Robin detailing their first date. The story ended with the couple on the beach with a six-pack of cheap beer and Robin drunkenly making up some sad love song about sandcastles.

They ended up eating burgers and fries in the back of the car, slouched down awkwardly to avoid Tracy and Ted.

There was a surprising amount of laughter and it was kind of fun just sitting and joking with Robin, grinning at accidental curly fries. Even if it was dampened by the fact that the people they really wanted to be with were just across the street, falling for each other.

They finally stopped following Ted and Tracy when they left, holding hands on the way to the car.

Robin looked at him for a moment. "Come over and wait with me until he gets home. We can put on a movie, pretend we didn't just follow our friends around tonight. I honestly came back expecting you to be my little brother's asshole friend like always but you're officially my asshole friend too. So come over and act like it."

Barney blinked. "Sure. What're you going to do about the car?"

"I'll park it away from the house in case Ted has suspicions. I can return it tomorrow."

When they got back to the Mosby house, walking a few blocks from where Robin had parked the car, Barney slouched on the couch with Robin, letting her reply to Lily's inquisitive glances.

He brought up Netflix and spent the next couple of minutes arguing about what to put on before giving up and letting Robin put on the first *Harry Potter* film.

Just as Hagrid was telling Harry he was a wizard, Ted came through the front door, freezing at the site of the two of them on the couch, watching the movie with interest that was a lot more fake now that Ted was home.

"Barney... hey, dude. Sorry I wasn't home. Thought I told you I couldn't hang today?"

Robin rolled her eyes at him. "I asked him to come over, Ted. Barney's my friend too."

Ted frowned. "Since when?" he asked, an irritated smile on his face as if the two of them were playing some kind of joke on him.

Barney felt a wave of irrational annoyance. "What, I can only have you as a friend?" he snapped.

"Barney, come on. You know that's not what I meant."

"It doesn't matter when," Robin commented. "We're friends. We do things like hang out now. Welcome to new developments."

Ted still looked slightly shocked but he nodded slowly. "Okay..."

"How was your date?" Lily asked warmly, walking out from the kitchen with a smile.

The mention of his date was enough to bring a smile to his face. "Great, mum. It was awesome. Tracy is so cool. You'd love her."

Barney tuned him out as he prattled on about the date, knowing he'd hear nothing new from Ted talking to Lily. He wasn't going to spill anything about dropping her off to his mother of all people. Barney could ask later.

Robin seemed to be focused on the TV but every so often her eyes would flicker as if she was trying to see her brother. If anything they didn't know came up Barney was sure she'd catch the information.

When Ted finally finished blathering on about Tracy (the guy could *really* go on about this crap) he fell to a chair near the couch Robin and Barney were occupying.

"So did you guys just hang out here today?"

Barney's first instinct was to lie, laugh and joke and pretend Ted's parents had been nagging him all day. It would've been a stupid lie to tell considering said parents were fairly close by.

"We hung out around town," Robin said, shrugging.

Ted nodded, watching her for more information.

"Nothing exciting," Barney added.

"Oh...kay. Well, I'm going to talk to Dad and then go get changed so I'll be back soon."

"Right. I'm taking Barney to my room for a second." Robin stood up, stretching out a bit.

Ted squinted at her. "Uh... alright?"

"It's pretty late, Robin! He can't stay for too long!" Lily called out from the kitchen.

"Yeah okay, Mum!"

"Want me to drive you back in a while?" Ted asked, turning to Barney.

He nodded. "Yeah thanks, bro."

Robin pulled at his arm and he followed her quickly upstairs.

They got into her room and she landed on her bed. "He's going to interrogate you about what we did today when he drives you home, you know?"

Barney nodded. "It'll be fine."

"You better not let him find out this shit, Stinson."

"I *won't*. Jesus."

Barney wandered over to her dresser, random junk piled on the top. He poked at a pile of letters, pulling a few off. "Are these..."

"Letters from colleges? Yeah."

"When did you get them?"

"I started receiving them a couple weeks ago."

"Does anyone else know?" Barney asked, flipping past the large NYU envelope to the one with 'Columbia' printed in the corner.

"No... I don't want to talk to Mum and Dad until I figure out where I want to go."

"Which ones did you get into?"

"All of them..." she said sadly.

Barney blinked at her. "That's awesome! Why aren't you psyched?"

"Because they all have these great Media and Journalism programs. It's too much choice."

"Have you visited any of them?"

"A couple. Back when we were first thinking about colleges last year. I flew back for about a week to look into a few with Dad."

He sat down next to her, letters still clutched tightly in his hand. "And you don't have *any* idea?"

Robin slumped a little. "Well... I really like NYU. But I also got into Ohio University which is so much closer. Ted wants to go to Wesleyan in Connecticut. One of us needs to stay here for Mum and Dad."

"Neither of you *have* to stay, Robin. Lily and Marshall are grownups who also happen to be married. That means they have *each other*."

"What if that's not enough?"

Barney frowned at her. "You really need to talk to them about this."

She shrugged. "Where do you want to apply next year?"

"MIT."

"The MIT? Like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology? That MIT?"

"Yeah."

"Could you actually get in there."

Barney rolled his eyes. "Yes, Robin. Believe it or not: I am intelligent. My grades are kind of perfect."

"There's more to it than-"

"*I know that*. I've done my research. I'll get in."

Robin laughed. "I guess I just didn't expect you to answer that way."

"No one ever does," Barney said, irritated.

"Sorry, Barney. Don't pout." She gave a snort.

A knock sounded at the door and Robin's grin slid off her face a little. "You should probably head home. It's been fun, Barnstormer."

Barney nodded. "Alright. I'll see you soon."

"Bye."

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so hi!

That chapter wasn't exactly perfect but I was hoping uploading *something* was better than leaving it before my motivation disappeared.

I don't actually know how long it's been since I updated this but let me just say first of all that **I am so damn sorry!**

My only excuse is that I just haven't cared enough about the story. I felt like it wasn't really living up to the potential and that I was doing a terrible job. I still think that but if other people like it I want to keep it going.

On that note I regret to inform you that my updates will not gain frequency. At least not for a couple months (if that).

School has been a nightmare and I'm working through the last term and not only am I backed up on heaps of stuff, I'm going away for the week so won't have time to work on any of it.

But I thought that I may as well finish a chapter, upload it and hopefully get some more interest in it that way.

This story still has about 15 chapters to go give or take a few. I've planned most of it out and although it isn't anything incredible I still would like to finish it when I can. So if you have the patience to keep with this story: please make sure your subscribed. Your loyalty to my crappy work is appreciated.

P.S. Time is complete bullshit in this and makes no sense. College applications and acceptance letters are coming at weird times in this story not like real life (although I don't live in America so I wouldn't know).

P.P.S. If you want to follow my How I Met Your Mother Blog or message me or see updates (if I ever post any) you can find it [here](#).

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!