The Terror And The Horror, Gotta Wonder Why We Bother?

by exceedinglymediocre

Summary

Everything seems to be working out when Jay and Mal are invited to escape the isle and attend Auradon Prep, but there was one problem– they had to leave their best friends (and maybe soulmates?) behind. Left to fend for themselves, Carlos and Evie go to extreme measures to keep themselves safe. When Evie and Carlos are invited to join their friends at Auradon a year later, will they be able to put their past behind them and pick up where they left off with their friends? Or will the horrors of the last year follow them to their new found "paradise" and haunt them forever?
“Go.” Evie said. Mal looked at her unsure. She had tears in her eyes.

She shook her head, “I can’t.” she let out a deep breath as a tear fell down her cheek, “I won’t go without you.”

Evie smiled sadly, “Mal! Don’t worry about me, okay? Carlos and I will be fine, you and Jay need to go! You finally have a chance to get off this damn island! Eventually, you guys will figure out a way to get us there, I know you will.”

Mal looked into her best friend’s eyes, Evie seemed sad but sure. Mal had been in love with Evie since the day she met her, ten years ago. She could remember the scared six year old with ocean blue hair hiding behind a dumpster for safety. Mal took one look into those deep brown eyes and vowed she would dedicate her life to making sure the girl never felt scared again.

“I won’t rest until you’re there with me” Mal said, taking Evie’s hands into her own, “I love you so much.”

Evie sighed, relieved to hear that Mal would go. She pulled Mal into a hug, “I love you too,” she whispered into the crook of Mal’s neck.

A few feet over, Jay and Carlos were having a very similar conversation. The day before this, the VK’s hideout was visited by six guards dressed in Auradon attire. They had informed the group that Miss Mal, daughter of Maleficent, and Mister Jay, son of Jafar, were invited to attend Auradon prep and live out the rest of their lives in peace, far away from the island. The offer was unprecedented- no one had ever gotten off the isle before.

Maleficent had immediately insisted that they accept, in seconds she had already thought up an evil plan to carry out. Little did she know, Mal and Jay had no intention to participate in her scheme, nor did they even want to go. They insisted they couldn’t leave the other half of their group behind.

“What do you think Evie finally convinced Mal?” Carlos wondered aloud, looking over at his best friends who were sniffing and hugging.

Jay chuckled, “Evie could convince Mal to jump off a cliff if she wanted to, that girl is so whipped.” Mal’s feelings for Evie were common knowledge amongst their friends. Everyone could pick up on it- except for Evie, of course. Somehow she remained oblivious. Jay looked back over at Carlos. Carlos was his best friend, and had been for years. He had no idea how he was going to say goodbye to him- Jay felt like he was leaving a part of himself behind. “I really don’t feel right about this C, I can’t imagine what it’ll be like for you two here on your own.”

Carlos gave him a reassuring smile, “we’ll be just fine,” he said, faking confidence. The truth was, Carlos was terrified of what would happen once they left. All four of the VKs were strong and could take care of themselves just fine, but Jay and Mal had always been their protectors. People cowered in the streets when they saw them. Cruella had stopped abusing Carlos once Jay was around. He knew that he and Evie didn’t stand much of a chance on their own.

“It won’t be for long,” Jay said, resting his hands on Carlos’s shoulders, “we’ll be back for you soon, we just have to convince those Auradon people, which won’t be hard! You know how persuasive Mal can be.”
Carlos chuckled. He didn’t think Mal’s ways of persuasion would work as well in Auradon as they did on the island. He was sure the people there viewed ‘outright violence and terror’ a little more negatively than the people of the isle did.

The girls walked over to where they were standing. Evie wrapped her arms around Jay, squeezing him tightly. “You always give the best hugs Evie,” he said, his voice breaking slightly.

Evie was still crying, “take care of our girl okay?” Jay nodded.

Carlos stepped over to Mal, neither of them were big huggers, but they knew it might be a while before they saw one another again. Mal gave Carlos a quick hug and stepped back. Everyone looked sad.

Carlos cleared his throat, “look happier!” He nudged Jay playfully, “Auradon is going to be great! You'll forget all about us and the dumb old isle!” He was trying, but failing to cheer everyone up.

Jay grabbed Carlos’s shoulders and gave them a gentle squeeze, “we will never forget about either of you. That’s a promise.”

“You’ll be there with us in no time!” Mal added. Evie forced a smile and nodded in agreement.

“You two ready to go?” Fairy Godmother interrupted the group’s moment.

Mal looked on at her with anger. How on Earth could she insist that the invitation was only for her and Jay? If anything Evie and Carlos were the good ones! How much harder would it have been to include just two more?

Mal bent down to pick up her bag, but a hand on her arm stopped her.

“One more hug?” Evie asked in tears. Mal could feel her eyes start to water as she pulled Evie into her arms.

“Be careful E, I don't think I could bare it if something happened to you.” Mal whispered in a moment of pure honesty. Mal could feel Evie nodding against her.

Jay loaded their bags into the limo. Then he proceeded to hand two small bags to Carlos. “Here are all your things, take them to the hideout as soon as we leave and stay there for a few days, our parents will come looking for us, but should give up after a few days,” he instructed, “there’s enough food there for a week, if you don’t go outside they'll assume you're with us, and hopefully by then you will be.”

Carlos nodded confidently. He knew the plan, but he also knew they'd be stuck on the isle for a lot longer than a week. He wanted to be as optimistic as Jay was, but he had a sinking feeling that they'd never come back for Evie and him. Their luck was never that good.

Jay gave Carlos one last squeeze, “I love you bro.”

“Yeah, you too,” Carlos responded.

Carlos put his arm around a sobbing Evie as they watched their best friends get into the Limo and drive away. “Come on, let's get out of here before someone finds us,” he suggested.

They walked to their hideout and stayed there for a week as instructed. It was quiet just the two of
them. Carlos could hear Evie cry at night, even if she insisted it must have been some stray animal outside that he was hearing. On their last night in the hideout Carlos laid awake staring at the mural Mal had spray painted on the wall. He thought of Jay. The way Jay always made him feel safe, the way Jay always managed to make him laugh, even in the most dire situations. He wondered if Jay was thinking of him too.

‘No of course he isn't’ Carlos thought, ‘he’s got a new life now, Jay can't waste his time thinking of his old life on the isle.” Carlos decided to shut Jay out of his mind and think about what was important now: keeping himself and Evie safe.
Chapter One

Evie woke up and attempted to wiggle out of her boyfriend’s tight grasp. His gross, sweaty arm was slung over her, and his face was close enough to hers that she could smell the stench of alcohol on his breath. She looked over at the alarm clock next to their bed. August 22, 6:49 AM.

‘Shit,’ she thought. She had no idea it was the twenty second already.

Evie snuck out of bed and threw on the first pair of shorts and shoes she found on the ground. She headed out of the room and down the long hallway towards the crew bunks. She grabbed a couple of cups of water from the old sink and crouched down to Carlos’s bunk.

Evie nudged his shoulder gently. “Morning C,” she whispered, handing him a cup of water, “how late did she have you working last night?” Evie was worried about how little sleep Carlos had been getting lately.

Carlos took the water graciously, “not too late,” he responded, taking a sip. Evie wasn't satisfied, so Carlos continued, “once we finish setting up the new security system, things will calm down. I promise!”

“Yes, yeah that’s what you said last time” Evie stood up, and Carlos got out of bed to follow her out of the sleeping quarters and onto the main deck of the boat. “Do you want me to talk to Uma for you?”

“Do you want me to talk to Harry for you? I hear he was out drinking last night and flirted his way through the entire female population of the isle.”

Evie rolled her eyes, “point taken.”

They walked the rest of the way to the kitchen in silence. They arrived early enough to grab some stale bread before it was all gone. Evie hopped up on the counter and Carlos leaned back against the wall across from her.

“Hey, did you know today was the twenty second? I noticed it this morning, it kind of snuck up on me.” Evie asked.

Carlos was quiet as he thought for a minute, “yeah,” he finally responded, “didn't think much of it though.”

“I just can't believe it's been a whole year.” She said with a far off look in her eyes.

A year. It had been one whole year since Mal and Jay left. A whole year since she'd seen, touched, and hugged the person she trusted and loved most in the world.

“Evie, you know they're not coming back right? We can't just keep waiting around for them, we have to focus on our lives here.” Carlos said.

Evie sniffled and refused to look him in the eye, “yeah, I know,” she responded quietly.

Not a day had gone by that Evie hadn't thought about Mal. Wondered how she was doing. If she was making friends. If she still remembered Evie and Carlos, stuck on the isle, waiting to be rescued.
Once Evie and Carlos had run out of their weeks supply of food, they knew they wouldn't make it on their own for long. They were only on the street for a couple of days before someone tried to mug them. Out of the shadows, Harry Hook had emerged and saved both of them. He invited the pair back to Fish and Chips to meet Uma.

Harry took a liking to Evie quickly, and Evie admired his bravery, and more importantly the safety that it offered her. Carlos quickly proved himself to be a useful hand on the ship, and Uma invited the two to be permanent members of her crew. Out of options, they had accepted and had now adjusted to life on the ship. Carlos spent his time building things for Uma, and Evie spent hers bartending at the restaurant, or doting on her philandering boyfriend. The two VKs still spent every second they could together, but neither ever dared to mention the friends that had left them there.

Evie and Carlos left the kitchen and headed below deck after finished their breakfast.

“A years a long time, that's all I'm saying,” Evie said, hoping to get some sort of emotion out of Carlos.

“Evie drop it,” she had failed.

“Do you ever think about them?” She asked. She searched Carlos’s face for any sort of sign of emotion. Nothing.

“No. And neither should you.” They stopped walking, they had arrived at the door to Evie and Harry's room. Carlos could sense Evie’s sadness and wanted to alleviate it in some way. He grabbed her hand, “we’re better off without them, okay? We have each other, that's all that we need.”

“Okay,” Evie responded sadly. She then went into her room without so much as a goodbye.

Evie was cleaning glasses in Fish and Chips, waiting for the lunch rush to come in. She looked up when she heard the door swing open.

“Baby blue!” Her boyfriend slurred loudly, “how about a couple of beers for your favorite guy?”

Evie sighed and poured two beers for Harry and his friend Gil who had come in and sat at the bar. Shortly after, Carlos entered with a few of the guys from the crew. They took their usual booth in the corner.

Uma walked up to their table. “De Vil!” She boomed, “how's our little project coming?” She said, loud enough for the whole table to hear.

“Almost finished boss!” Carlos replied in a respectful manner, “just a few more days and we should have it.”

“Perfect!” Uma replied with a sinister smile. Carlos was trying to delay the completion of this project for as long as he could. Uma had asked him to build a new security system for the boat, one that had the potential to kill many of Uma's enemies on sight. Carlos wanted to keep himself safe, but he usually drew the line at outright murder.

Uma leaned in closer to Carlos so that the other crew members couldn't hear, she motioned over to
where Gil and Harry were sitting at the bar, “he’s been asking about you again, you know? When are you just going to forgive him and put this all behind you?” She whispered.

Carlos’s face turned beet red. He had no intention of ever going back to Gil, and he hated that Uma knew all about their embarrassing little affair. It was short lived and burned out quicker than it had started, but it had confirmed one thing Carlos had always suspected about himself: he was definitely into dudes, and only dudes.

Uma stepped back, “just think about it, okay?” She said aloud as she walked away.

Carlos stayed after lunch to help Evie with dishes. Evie appreciated the help, but he was mainly doing it to avoid going back to work.

Harry was still sitting at the bar, Gil at his side, as always.

“So are you aardvark?” Harry slurred out. He was drunk and had somehow convinced his girlfriend to play a game of twenty questions with him while she worked.

“No!” Evie laughed, “I said I wasn't an animal like three questions ago!”

“Right, right, I must've forgot! Silly me!” He smiled and Evie sighed. She knew she didn't love him, and likely never would, but she treasured these little moments. The ones where she could pretend that she was like any other girl out there in a happy, loving relationship.

Both Gil and Carlos stayed silent, and the bantering couple didn't try to engage either one of them in the game.

“What about a raccoon?” Harry guessed again, downing his beer.

“Still not an animal!” Evie laughed. Harry was about to pose another question, but was cut off when the doors to the restaurant swung open.

Evie’s jaw dropped when she saw six men, dressed in the uniform of the Auradon soldiers, enter the room. “Mister Carlos De Vil, son of Cruella De Vil, and Miss Evie, daughter of the evil queen, are you present?”

“Ye-yeah that's us” Carlos stammered out.

The man continued, “King Adam, Queen Belle, and Prince Ben would like to extend an invitation to the both of you. You are invited to leave the isle at once and live out your days in Auradon, where you will receive the finest education at Auradon Prep amongst your peers. Do you wish to accept this invitation?”

“What?” Evie cried out in Joy.

“Why them?” Gil whined.

“Yes! Of course we would!” Carlos exclaimed.

“Miss Evie,” the guard looked at her, “do you wish to come as well? We need your verbal confirmation.”

Evie nodded, “yeah,” she smiled.
“Alright then, we will give you each the rest of the day to say your goodbyes and pack your things. Your ride to Auradon will be waiting for you at the loading docks,” he turned his attention to where Gil and Harry were sitting, mouths still open in shock, “the vehicle will be surrounded by armed Auradon guards, if any other resident of the isle tries anything, they will be caught and reprimanded on sight.” Gil gulped loudly after hearing the last part.

Evie packed quickly, still in shock. Harry had come back to their room with her and passed out on the bed. ‘Good,’ she thought, she didn't want him to try and stop her or mess this up somehow. She knew exactly what this meant. Mal and Jay had actually come through! And she was free! Finally she and Carlos would be getting the chance at goodness they deserved. Evie smiled to herself.

Evie left her room and headed up to meet Carlos on the top deck without so much as a look back at her drunk, sleeping boyfriend. Ex boyfriend. Now that she was going to the isle, she could be free of Harry too.

Carlos greeted her with a smile, one bigger than Evie had ever seen on him. They were almost off the boat when they heard a voice behind them.

“Leaving? Without so much as a goodbye? I'm disappointed in you two.” Uma said with an evil laugh. Uma wasn't all bad, but Carlos and Evie knew not to ever go against her. They braced themselves for the worst.

“The Auradon guards are waiting for us and will come to get us if we're not there soon. Do you really want a bunch of them snooping around the ship?” Carlos threatened. Evie smiled, impressed with his newfound bravery.

“Oh you can go! We'll probably be better off without you! Two less mouths to feed,” she took a few steps closer to them, “just remember, no matter where you go you'll always be mine. My powers extend beyond this island, so don't let those ‘good guys’ fool you. You're one of us. And if you forget it I'll make you remember.”

Evie and Carlos quickly left before Uma could make anymore threats. Evie knew Uma was right. They'd always be the kids from the isle, no matter what. But she also knew they'd be safe in Auradon. Uma couldn't get to them there. Right?

Many doubts crossed Evie and Carlos’s minds as they sat in the limo, opposite the six guards who had come to the restaurant earlier. Neither of them dwelled too long on Uma’s threats, but both had anxieties about leaving.

Evie was angry that Mal and Jay had taken so long to save them. Carlos was shocked that they had saved them at all. They were both ready to get off the island, but were totally unprepared for what was waiting for them on the other side of the bridge.
Mal picked at her food, listening to her friends talk about their first days back at school. It was meatloaf for dinner, not one of her favorites, but ten times better than anything she’d had on the isle. Mal took a bite of the meat and wondered what Evie was eating right now, or if she even had food to eat.

Mal’s train of thought was interrupted by an out of breath Ben running towards the table frantically.

“Woah, babe, what the hurry?” Chad asked, concerned about his boyfriend’s current state.

Between breaths Ben managed to get a few words out, “Mal, Jay… the request… went through… your friends from the isle… they’re coming!”

“What!” Jay yelled, smiling from ear to ear.

Mal couldn’t contain her excitement either, “Oh my gosh really? After all this time they’re finally coming? What made Fairy Godmother change her mind? Never mind that, most importantly, when are they coming?” Mal was thrilled to hear the news. It’s not that she didn’t love her new friends in Auradon, because she did, but not a day had gone by that Mal hadn’t been racked with worry and guilt over leaving Evie and Carlos behind.

Ben sat down at the table, “The twenty-second, that’s what my dad told me.”

“Oh my goodness that’s the day after tomorrow!” Jane exclaimed, “this is so exciting! We have to start preparing!”

“Where are they going to live? With us right?” Jay asked. Jay was in a single room now, but could easily move to a bigger double room when Carlos came. Mal’s roommate Lonnie had recently moved out, into her own spacious single room, so Mal was also currently without a roommate.

“Yeah of course! Whatever makes them most comfortable!” Ben replied.

Mal looked around the table at her friends smiling faces. Ben, Chad, Lonnie, Jane, and hell- even Audrey, were some of the most important people in her life, and they had made her and Jay’s adjustment to Auradon so much easier. She couldn’t wait for them to meet Evie and Carlos. She couldn’t wait for Evie to come here and experience all this. If anyone deserved it, it was Evie.

Lonnie- Mal’s closest friend here outside of Jay and Ben- squeezed Mal’s hand as she watched her process all of this. “It’s going to be great, don’t worry. They’re going to love it here, and neither of them are going to think twice about this last year.” Lonnie reassured.
It was like Lonnie could read her mind. Mal was terrified that Evie would be angry with her. She had been trying, begging anyone who would listen, for the last year to get them here. She and Jay had never given up on their best friends.

“I hope you’re right” Mal whispered back.

The next two days went by in a flash. Mal and the girls had gone into town to pick out some clothes for Evie and Carlos, and to get some stuff for their rooms. The boys stayed behind to Move Jay’s stuff into his new room.

It was finally Thursday evening. The evening of the twenty-second. The evening that Mal and Jay had been waiting for since they left a year ago.

Jay was incredibly nervous, and he could tell Mal was too, but for different reasons. Jay knew, no matter what, that Evie would eventually forgive Mal, but would Carlos ever forgive him? All Carlos had ever known in his life were people who mistreated, abused, or abandoned him, and Jay was worried Carlos would think of him as one of those people. Not to mention that Jay was going to have to make his big confession to Carlos sooner or later.

After a few months of soul searching, and an ill advised hook-up with Chad - before he and Ben had gotten together- Jay figured out that he was gay. On the isle, none of the VKs had ever really pursued a relationship, so he knew that his newfound sexuality was a long awkward conversation waiting to happen.

Jay peered behind them, looking at his friends standing at the front of the school. He and Mal stood up front with the King, Queen, and Ben awaiting their friends arrival. Lonnie, Jane, Chad, Audrey, and Doug waited a few feet behind them with Fairy Godmother. Jay worried that this was all going to be too much for Carlos and Evie. He pushed that thought to the back of his mind when he saw the limo pull up.

Mal took a deep breath, “this is it,” she whispered up to Jay. He could see the happiness and fear in her eyes.

The door to the limo opened, and Evie and Carlos stepped out. They looked… rough. Neither of them had much meat on their bones to begin with, but both were looking more malnourished than Jay had remembered. Evie’s hair was done back in a braid, exposing a small, fading, hickey-shaped bruise on her neck. Jay made a mental note of it and otherwise ignored it.

They both looked frightened, and stood huddled together, so that their arms were touching.

Ben was the first to speak, “Welcome to Auradon! We are all thrilled that you’re here! We don’t want to overwhelm you, but we all wanted to meet you two! How was the trip over?” Neither responded. Ben wasn’t surprised- Mal and Jay had acted the same way when they first came over.

After introducing himself and his wife, King Adam spoke, “It’s been a pleasure to meet the both of you, but I’d imagine you want to catch up with your friends,” he turned to Mal and Jay, “Would you two show them to their rooms? And maybe give a quick tour? You’re free to do what you want for the night, but don’t forget, Evie and Carlos are expected at the clinic for their check ups bright and early tomorrow morning!”

Mal nodded enthusiastically, “of course!” She smiled.

Jay watched as Mal tentatively took a step towards Evie. Evie looked frightened and flinched when
Mal went into hug her. Mal must not of noticed because she proceeded to wrap her arms around Evie’s waist. Evie did not return the hug, but she didn't push Mal away either. She just stood there, arms to her side, seemingly indifferent to the whole situation.

Jay approached Carlos, “you look good bud,” he said with a smile. In all the excitement, he almost missed Carlos blushing at his compliment.

Jay decided against going in for a hug with Carlos, but tried his luck with Evie. “How about one of those classic Evie hugs? I sure have missed you!”

Evie didn't move or respond. She let her arms hang limp again as Jay attempted to embrace her. When he pulled back, he saw Carlos whisper something into her ear. Jay wondered if the hickey on Evie’s neck was from Carlos. That though angered him for some reason.

Evie nodded to Carlos, then turned to Jay and Mal. “You sent for us?” She asked, almost no emotion in her voice.

Mal responded, “yes of course! We’ve been trying to get you two here for months, but there was always a road block. But none of that matters now! We're here and we're safe and we're all together.” She looked hopeful.

“A year,” Carlos spoke up. That was the first time Jay had heard Carlos’s voice since their sad goodbye on the isle. “It was a year not just ‘months’, it was a year.” He said matter of factly.

“Right sorry, I-”

Evie cut Mal off, “what Carlos meant to say was thank you.”

Jay tried to keep his cool, but Evie and Carlos just seemed… different. He worried about what they'd been through in this last year. “Of course, we’d do anything for you two.” He tried to pat Carlos on the shoulder, but he jerked it away.

“Who are they?” Evie motioned to where everyone else was standing.

“Our friends!” Mal answered happily, “and yours too! Everyone’s just so excited that you're here.”

Mal went down the line and introduced everyone to Evie and Carlos. There were a lot of names and Evie was afraid she would forget some of them. She asked Mal if she could see her room, and the four VKs went inside, leaving everyone else behind.

Evie loved the way the inside of the school looked. It resembled one of the castles she had read about as a little kid. Mal pointed to the third door on the left of the long wood hallway.

“This is our room!” She stated. The door had a some sort of white surface stuck to it. The plastic board had ‘Evie and Mal’s Room’ scrawled on it in beautiful blue ink. Evie touched it and was upset when some of the letter disappeared. Mal giggled, “whiteboards confused me at first too. Don't worry about it though! Audrey can always redo it. Or we can decorate it ourselves. Whatever you want!”

Evie smiled, “okay.”

Jay and Carlos followed the girls inside their room.
Evie’s jaw dropped. The room was gorgeous. It was huge and was expertly decorated with different shades of blues and purples.

Mal smiled, “you like it? We can change anything you want to!”

Evie smiled back at her. She was still angry with Mal, but she didn't want to be. She couldn't stand to see the hurt that was ok Mal’s face. “I love it,” she responded honestly.

Mal let out a huge breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding in.

“Let's give the girls some space, we can go check out our room C!” Jay offered.

Evie was hesitant to let Carlos go off alone with Jay.

Carlos nodded to Jay, but walked over to Evie first. He gave her a quick hug and whispered into her ear, “emergency exit is the fifth door on the right, if anything happens make a run for it and I’ll meet you there.” Evie nodded in agreement.

She knew that Carlos had a much more pessimistic view of the people of Auradon than she did, but she knew it was smart to always have an escape plan anyways.

Once the girls were alone a silence fell over the room. Mal attempted to fill it by showing Evie where everything was, and pointing out all her new stuff to her. Evie ran her fingers across one of the sweatshirts in her new drawer. She gasped. It was the softest thing she'd ever touched.

“Eves?” Mal asked quietly from across the room. The blue haired girl looked up, meeting Mal's eyes. “I'm so sorry, I never should have left without you.” It was barely a whisper, but Evie could still hear the sadness in her voice.

“I told you to go.” Evie stated, “it's what had to be done. We can't change it now.” Evie was trying to find the right words, but she knew she couldn't go off on Mal now, she seemed to fragile.

“Things will be better here, I promise.” Mal made her way over to Evie's side of the room. The girls stood a foot apart. “I never stopped thinking about you, you know that right?”

Evie didn't know how to respond. This didn't change anything, Evie was still mad, but she couldn't help but feel a little bit better, knowing that Mal hadn't forgotten her. Instead of saying anything, Evie reached up and pushed one of Mal’s loose violet curls behind her ear. She gently cupped Mal's cheek with her hand. It reminded her of the way Mal used to hold Evie's face in her hand when she cried. Mal had always been there for her, for so many years of their lives Mal was her protector. How could Evie still be mad about the one year she wasn't?

She felt a tenderness for Mal in that moment, but her anger rose up again and she dropped her hand. She walked to the door of their room.

“Can we go see the boys’ room now?” Evie asked. Hoping for a way out of this conversation. She didn't look at Mal as they walked to the boys room, and was relieved to see that Carlos seemed just fine alone with Jay.
Chapter Three

Carlos loved his new room. He’d never really had a real room of his own before, only various beds across different places. He couldn't believe this whole big place was just for him and Jay.

Carlos was ready to explore the room, but a hand on his shoulder stopped him.

“Hey C, can we talk for a minute?” Jay asked anxiously. Carlos was dying to look through all the draws and into every nook and cranny of the room, but he knew there was time for that later. He nodded.

“I know it couldn’t have been easy for you two on the isle by yourselves, and I’m so sorry you had to go through that without us. We never should have left you.” Jay’s words had a soothing effect on Carlos. He’d never admit it, but Carlos missed the warmth of Jay’s hand when he removed it from his shoulder.

“I appreciate you saying that. I’m sorry I snapped at Mal earlier, that was out of line, I was just-”

Jay cut him off, “Carlos don’t be sorry! You're allowed to be mad, hell, you're allowed to be furious! I would be!” Carlos was confused, he knew he had no right to be upset with Jay and Mal. Carlos fully expected them to never come back, to never send anyone for Evie and him. He assumed they had forgotten all about them.

“I’m grateful to you guys for getting us here,” he said.

“It’s the least we could do,” Jay said. He decided this was a good time to collect his hug from Carlos. Carlos leaned into the embrace, he felt safe being surrounded by Jay. “You and Evie are our family, Auradon’s not home unless you’re here.”

Carlos didn’t say any more. He and Jay stood there, hugging for a few more seconds before they both reluctantly pulled away.

The girls came in later that evening, after Jay had shown Carlos around the room. Mal suggested they go on a tour of the school then join their ‘friends’ for dinner. Carlos and Evie didn’t say much during dinner, but were polite and gracious to the other Auradon Prep students.

After the long day, Carlos was happy to crawl into his new bed and get a good night’s sleep for the first time in a long time. As he laid in bed, he thought about Jay. He wondered what Jay had been doing here in Auradon for the last year. He wondered if the girl he’d met earlier- Lonnie- who had teased Jay and put her arm around him, was his girlfriend. Carlos didn’t know why, but he hoped that she wasn’t.

The next morning the four VKs, along with Fairy Godmother, loaded into a limo to head to the clinic. Evie and Carlos needed to have the same check up Mal and Jay had when they first arrived a year ago.

Mal looked at Evie sitting next to her. Evie was just as breathtakingly beautiful as she remembered her being. She could understand why Evie was mad, but she desperately hoped that it would fade. She’d missed her best friend so much, she couldn’t stand to think about a life where Evie hated her.

Fairy Godmother signed them in at the clinic and a doctor came and got Carlos from the waiting
Evie turned Mal, “This doctor? What exactly are they going to do?” Evie looked scared.

Mal looked into her big brown eyes and melted, just a little bit. She tried to comfort Evie, “It’s not bad, I promise. They’re just going to weigh you and check your height and blood pressure, then probably do a physical and mental exam.”

“Physical exam?!” Evie’s eyes got big, she looked terrified.

“E, it’s going to be okay, you just-” Mal was cut off by the doctor walking in requesting Evie to go back with her.

“I can’t, I don’t think I can do it,” Evie panicked.

“You’re friend can come in with you, if that will make you feel better,” the doctor offered.

Evie nodded, “yes please,” she turned to Mal, “would you mind? I know I’d feel better if you were there.”

Evie’s words rang in Mal’s ears. ‘I make her feel better,’ Mal thought. She smiled, “of course E, I’d be happy to.”

Mal and Evie followed the doctor back to the exam room. They made Evie change into one of those scratchy hospital gowns and they took down her basic data. Mal happily held Evie’s outstretched hand while the doctors gave her her shots.

One doctor left, and announced the next one would be in shortly, leaving Evie and Mal alone in the exam room.

“I feel like a lab rat,” Evie whispered.

Mal could sympathize. She remembered all the poking and the prodding when she first arrived. Mal knew it was in their best interest, but it didn’t make it any more pleasant. “It’ll be over soon, you’re doing great though, much better than I did.” She smiled to herself, remembering how she almost bit the doctor when he tried to check her throat.

“Thanks for coming in with me,” Evie said, Mal could swear she saw a smile creep onto her face.

“How are you feeling E? About everything?” Mal waited hesitantly, she was nervous Evie was regretting coming here.

“I’m happy, I really am,” This time Mal knew she saw a smile, “I mean it’s a lot you know? But I feel really lucky to be here… I feel safe, which is not something I’m used to.”

“I know exactly what you mean,” Mal paused, she scooted the stool she was sitting on closer to Evie, “If there’s anything I can do to make this easier on you just let me know.”

Evie nodded and let out a sigh. The two girls locked eyes and Mal could feel herself falling all over again. Even after all this time, she was still madly in love with Evie. She would do anything for her.

Mal could feel tears forming in her eyes, “Evie I missed you… so much.”

Evie smiled softly, “Yeah Mal, I missed you too.” Mal smiled back at her.
The next doctor chose this moment to burst through the door and ruin their moment. He informed the girls that he was there to do Evie’s psychological evaluation and that he needed to speak with her alone. Mal left reluctantly and promised Evie she’d be waiting right outside.

It felt like Evie, Mal and Carlos had been gone for ages, so Jay was thrilled when he saw his friends come through the big double doors of the clinic at the end of the day. They all agreed that Evie and Carlos had already had a big enough day, and they didn’t want to overwhelm them anymore, so the gang went to the girls room and ordered pizza.

Evie laughed as she took a bite of a slice of pepperoni. “What?” Jay asked, “do I have sauce on my face?”

Evie smiled, “No, it's just… this feels just like old times, except instead of eating stale bread and rotten fruit in our hideout we’re... here.”

Mal and Jay locked eyes and shared a private smile. This is exactly what they'd been hoping for, all of their friends back together and safe.

Later that night, Jay and Carlos bid goodbye to the girls and went back to their room. Jay suddenly had an idea.

“Hey C, can I show you something real quick? I promise you’ll like it!” Jay said, already headed over to the Xbox.

“Sure,” Carlos shrugged. Jay handed him a controller and explained the basic rules of the game. Jay looked over at Carlos. He realized that he had never really noticed how attractive Carlos was, or how cute he looked when he made his ‘concentration’ face, and how… oh no. Jay stopped himself immediately.

He knew he couldn’t have those thoughts. Carlos was just getting acclimated to life here, the last thing he needed was Jay crushing on him. Besides Carlos was straight, right? Now that Jay was thinking about it, he had never heard Carlos express interest in girls before.

Jay pushed the thought to the back of his mind. It didn’t matter, he needed to focus on getting Carlos and Evie settled here. Other things could come later.

“Penny for your thoughts,” Carlos said, not looking away from the TV screen.

“What?” Jay hadn’t noticed how lost in his thoughts he was.

Carlos laughed, “It’s an expression. Do you guys not have them here in Auradon?”

Jay smiled, “You’re making a joke! That’s the Carlos I remember!,” Jay paused the game, “Carlos, you’re happy to be here right?”

“Of course,” Carlos answered, Jay scanned his face, searching for a sign that he was lying. He wasn’t, it seemed like Carlos really was happy to be there.

“Good, I just want to make sure you’re okay with all this,” he resumed the game they were playing, “Are you ever going to tell me what happened to you and Evie this year? You guys just seem a little… different.” Jay regretted the words as soon as they left his mouth.

Carlos raised his eyebrows, “Different?” he put his controller down and stood up, “yeah, well if
you’d gone through what we did you would be a little different too,” Carlos walked over to his bed and got in, “goodnight Jay.”

Jay was kicking himself inside. He should have known not to push Carlos too hard, but he was worried about him. What had happened to him and Evie back on the isle? What weren’t they telling him and Mal?
Carlos woke up next the next morning and peered out the window at the sunrise. It was the most beautiful thing he’d ever seen. The smog and pollution in the air on the isle had always blocked the sunrises. He took a deep breath, ‘this is why we’re here,’ he thought. They were safe in Auradon, and could now experience normal things like this.

“Pretty, huh?” Jay interrupted his train of thought. Jay cleared his throat, “Listen C, about last night, I’m so s-” Carlos cut him off.

“Don’t be,” he turned around and smiled, the morning sunrise had put him in a good mood. “I overreacted.”

“We’re good then?” Jay asked. Carlos could see something in Jay’s eyes, a sort of… longing that he hadn’t noticed before.

“Of course,” Carlos smiled again, and he meant it. He decided that he came into this with the wrong attitude. He was going to give Auradon a chance. “So what are we doing today? More doctors?” Carlos had hated yesterday, but he was going to comply with whatever Auradon threw at him, as long as he and Evie were safe.

Jay laughed, “No, no, you get to be done with doctors for a little while, I was thinking we could hang out with some of the guys today? I thought it might be good for you to get to know them more, but only if you’re okay with it.” Carlos noticed that Jay was standing a few feet away from him, trying to give him space. Carlos appreciated it, but wanted to let Jay know he didn’t have to walk on eggshells around him.

Carlos hopped off his bed and patted Jay on the shoulder, “that sounds great!”

An hour later there was a knock on the door. Carlos watched as Jay answered and three guys stepped in, Prince Ben, Chad, and… Carlos couldn’t quite remember the third one’s name.

“Hey! Ben! Chad! Doug!” Jay greeted the three of them. Doug. That was the third one’s name. Whew, Carlos didn’t want to admit that he had been too overwhelmed that first day to remember everyone.

“Are you two ready to go?” Ben asked.

Carlos nodded, “Where are we headed?” he asked.

“We were thinking of seeing a movie,” Chad spoke up, “Carlos is that alright with you?”

“Yeah, yeah sounds fun!” Carlos tried to fake as much enthusiasm as he could. He hadn’t seen that many movies before. When they were kids, the VK’s used to steal film tapes and watch them on their old rusty projector in the hideout. They were always in black and white, and sometimes the
volume cut out, but he had loved them all the same.

Jay slung his arm around Carlos’s shoulder, “You’ll love it C, it’ll be just like old times, but better.”

Jay was right. Carlos loved it, the movie was bright, and loud, and colorful, and Carlos loved every minute of it.

“What’d ya think bud?” Jay asked him afterwards.

Carlos nodded enthusiastically, “It was awesome! And this,” he said pointing to the popcorn, “is delicious.” Jay smiled at him, beaming.

“Eh, I’m not a huge fan of rom-coms, but this one was alright,” Doug weighed in.

Carlos scrunched his eyebrows together, “Whats a rom-com?” He asked.

The other guys laughed, “it’s short for ‘romantic comedy’, movies that are romantic, but have happy endings, and are sometimes funny and…” Chad was cut short.

“I think he gets it,” his boyfriend interjected playfully. Chad put his arm around Ben’s shoulder and Ben put his around Chad’s waist as the group walked towards a table in the little coffee shop next to the theatre.

Carlos recalled Chad and Ben calling each other ‘babe’ the other night at dinner, but hadn’t quite put two and two together.

“You two are a couple?” He asked innocently, looking at Ben and Chad.

They laughed, both a little surprised at Carlos’s forwardness, “Yeah, it’ll be four months tomorrow!” Ben answered. Chad’s eyes widened, Ben gasped. “You didn’t forget did you?” He joked.

Carlos looked on, intrigued. Back on the isle, relationships between two guys were not typically accepted, and were something people kept hidden. He couldn’t imagine being this open and affectionate in public with Gil- not that he would want to be.

Ben must have noticed Carlos’s expression, because his smile faded a little bit, “Carlos, can I ask you something about the isle?”

“Sure,” Carlos nodded. He didn’t know why the people of Auradon avoided bringing up the isle in front of him, he didn’t have a problem talking about it. Maybe they were the ones who had a problem with it.

Ben ignored Jay’s glare, and Chad elbowing his side, motioning for him to stop, “Do guys have relationships with…. Other guys back on the isle? You know, the way Chad and I are together, is that common over there?”

Carlos blushed, not expecting the question, “ummm, I mean it happens certainly, but no one talks about it. I mean relationships in general over there aren’t as a big a thing as they are over here, but no, to answer your question, the way you and Chad are is not very common over there,” he answered honestly.

“At the end of the day, it’s more about survival than it is about love,” Jay added. Carlos noticed the way Jay’s eyes met his when he said the word ‘love’.
“I see,” Ben nodded, “So I guess you didn’t leave behind a lot of broken hearts when you came here?” He laughed. Carlos thought that Jay’s glare must have been burning holes in Ben’s skull at this point.

Carlos smiled and laughed back, putting the rest of the table at ease, “No, no, not a ton, Evie on the other hand,” he paused, “Well, it’s not my place to say.”

Carlos noticed a peculiar look on Jay’s face- was it relief?

Mal had decided that since Jay was taking Carlos to spend a day with the boys, maybe it would be a good idea for her and Evie to spend a day with the girls, but after three straight hours of Audrey and Jane teaching Evie cheerleading moves, she regretted that idea. Mal was happy that Evie was making other friends, and that joining the cheer squad would give her some sort of anchor in Auradon, but she wished she’d had a little more time alone with her favorite blue haired girl.

Mal and Lonnie had been sitting on the sidelines for most of the day, chatting. After a short silent period, Mal started the conversation up again.

“So how are things with Jane?” Mal asked. She was thrilled when Lonnie and Jane started dating last month- if anyone deserved to be happy it was Lonnie- but had been sad that she couldn't spend as much time with her former roommate.

Lonnie smiled, “perfect,” she gushed, Mal rolled her eyes in response, Lonnie continued anyways, “I don’t know Mal it’s like, she’s the first thing I think of when I wake up and the last thing I think of before I go to sleep. And even when I’m not with her physically, I can feel her, like she’s buried herself in my heart and now she’s a part of me…. Sorry I’m rambling.”

“No Lon, it’s okay,” she looked over to where Evie was laughing with Audrey about some tumbling move, it was the first look of pure joy she’d seen on Evie’s face in over a year, “I know exactly what you mean.”

Lonnie noticed the way Mal was staring at Evie, she nodded to herself, “Evie, right?” she asked Mal.

Mal was pulled out of her train of thought, “what do you mean?” she asked Lonnie back, faking a puzzled look.

“Come on Mal I know you! How many nights did we spend talking about how much you missed her? You love her! It’s obvious!” Lonnie looked excited as she embraced Mal in a big hug.

“Oh my evil, Lonnie! Speak louder would you, I think there are people in Agrabah who didn’t hear you!” Lonnie gave Mal an amused look.

“Hey, I told you about Jane, you watched me pine after her, embarrassingly I might add, for like six months. It’s your turn sister! Spill!” Mal knew she owed Lonnie the whole truth.

Mal took a deep breath, “Yeah, it’s Evie, I’ve kind of been in love with her for the last decade. And now she’s here and I thought it would be amazing, and that this would be our big chance, but it’s not. She hates me, Lonnie! What if she never forgives me for leaving her?” Mal could feel herself well up with tears for the gazillionth time in the last three days.

Lonnie put her hands on Mal’s arms reassuringly, “Mal, there is no chance in hell that she hates you. Look Mal! Do you see the way she looks at you?” Mal looked over at Evie again, this time
Evie noticed and gave her a grin and a little wave, “If you ask me I don’t see a girl that hates you, I see a girl that’s hurt, but still loves you, a lot. And who knows, maybe she’s in love with you too.”

Mal let out a snort, “I doubt that, there’s no way someone like her could ever love someone like me.” Evie was so trusting and kind. All those years on the isle, surrounded by hatred and evil, had definitely affected Mal, Carlos and Jay, but not Evie. Evie was a shining light in the sea of darkness that was the isle.

Mal hated the look of sympathy Lonnie was giving her. “Mal you're a great person, anyone would be lucky to love you. Especially Evie.” Lonnie sighed, “My advice would be to take things slow, give her time to adjust here, rebuild your friendship, and then who knows? Maybe it’ll all work out! Maybe you guys can be the next Jane and Lonnie!”

Mal laughed and faked a look of disgust, “Oh no, I hope not! You guys are gross!” They both laughed.

As if on cue, the other girls finished their cheering for the day and bounced over to where Mal and Lonnie were sitting. Jane sat down on Lonnie’s lap and gave her a quick kiss.

“See, just like I said, gross!” Mal laughed.

“What? Did I miss something?” Jane asked, confused.

Lonnie put her arm around her girlfriends waist, “nothing baby, she's just joking,” Lonnie turned to face everyone else, “how’d it go?”

“Great!” Jane said enthusiastically.

“Evie's definitely ready for tryouts this week! And we’re ready for her, we need some fresh blood on that team!” Audrey added.

“Eves, how are you feeling?” Mal asked, squeezing Evie’s hand. She was surprised when Evie had taken Audrey and Jane up on their offer this morning, she had no idea that Evie was interested in cheerleading- or even that she knew what it was.

“Feeling good!” Evie squeezed Mal’s hand back, making butterflies flutter inside Mal’s stomach, “I'm excited, I've never been on a team before.”

Evie finally looked happy. She was starting to adjust to being here and Mal could not be more thrilled. She thought about what Lonnie had said, maybe Evie was starting to forgive her. Mal hoped more than anything that she would.
Hey guys! This chapter came a little early (I'm procrastinating on my school work haha). I'm traveling again this weekend so the next one will probably be up on Monday! I'm loving all y'all's feedback! I hope you're liking it!

Jay felt like he could finally relax. Yesterday had gone so well, Carlos and Evie really seemed like they were adjusting to being here. He felt as though his world was finally at peace.

Which is why what he saw that morning shook him to his core.

Jay woke up Sunday morning, hopping in the shower while Carlos was still sleeping. When he got out, Carlos had just woken up and the two chatted for a bit. Carlos yawned loudly and stretched his arms up into the air. That was when Jay saw it- the one thing he assumed he'd never have to worry about.

It was a little tattoo on the bottom left side of Carlos’s stomach. The mark was of a small octopus, and it looked like it had been burned into him, not drawn on with ink.


“N-nothing,” Jay stammered out. He wanted more than anything to ask Carlos about it, but he didn’t want to push him too hard again, like he had the other night. Jay was furious. How could Carlos betray him like that?

Carlos looked skeptical, but brushed it off anyways, heading to the bathroom. As soon as the bathroom door shut, Jay sprinted out of the room and banged on Mal and Evie’s door. Evie answered.

“Hey E! Is um, is Mal here?” he said, out of breath from running there.

Evie looked amused, “Hey Jay, getting in a morning run?” Jay didn’t answer, still catching his breath. Evie continued, “Yeah she’s here, come on in.”

Jay shook his head, “Mal!” he yelled, “Wanna grab a coffee?” Jay was trying as hard as he could not to seem suspicious, but was failing miserably.

Mal walked to the door, “Sure! Just let Evie and I change real quick and-”

“No, no!” his eyes got wide, “I mean, that’d be great, but Mal I kind of want to discuss something very personal and private with you, please.” Jay felt bad for a brief moment, seeing a look of disappointment on Evie's face, but then he remembered why he was here.

“Okay weirdo, I’m coming.” she pulled an old sweatshirt over her pajama top. Mal turned to Evie, “I’ll be right back okay?”

“Okay!” Evie said happily, squeezing Mal’s arm. Jay was a little surprised, and jealous, to see that Evie was warming back up to Mal so quickly.
Jay pulled Mal out of the building and onto a bench far enough from the building that no one would hear them.

“Hey Crazy, who are you and what did you do with Jay?” Mal asked when they finally sat down.

“Carlos has Uma’s mark on his torso. I saw it this morning, but I don’t think he knows I saw.” Jay said quickly. Mal looked devastated.

“Are you sure?” Mal knew what this meant and didn’t want to believe it.

Jay nodded, “that’s how they stayed safe this year. I knew they couldn’t have made it that long on their own, I just never thought that they’d… do this.”

Uma and her gang of thugs had been terrorizing the VKs most of their lives. Uma and Mal declared each other enemies years ago, and things had been bad ever since. Jay and Mal knew that, in a test of loyalty, Uma christened each of her crew members with her mark. The mark symbolized their lifetime commitment to serving Uma, and legends had it that there were forces of magic behind it too, binding whoever had the mark to Uma forever.

“Do you think Evie has one too?” Mal asked nervously.

“Yeah, I bet,” Jay said, rubbing Mal’s shoulder, “I mean Carlos wouldn’t do something this drastic without her.”

“What are we going to do?” Mal asked quietly.

“We can’t say anything, I tried to get Carlos to open up the other night and it went very badly.” Jay couldn’t lose Carlos again, even if he was mad at him.

“No, we shouldn't avoid this, we just need to get everything out in the open, then maybe we can all heal, together.” Jay was going to protest, but Mal kept talking, “whatever they did, they did it because we left! It's our fault Jay! It's my fault that Evie was stuck on the isle alone for a year! It's my fault that she joined Uma. It's all my fault.” After four days of shedding the occasional tear, Mal finally let it all out. Every emotion she was holding onto came flooding out all at once.

Jay didn't know what to do, so he just held Mal and patted her back, hoping he was comforting her in some way.

A few minutes passed, and Mal had collected herself. She stood up. “Come on Jay, we know what we have to do.”

He nodded solemnly. They walked back to Mal’s room and were both surprised to see Carlos and Evie huddled together on the floor whispering intensely.

Jay’s sudden burst into the room and weird attitude worried Evie. She paced back and forth across her room. Had she done something wrong? Had Carlos told Jay something about their year on the isle? Evie gulped and thought the worst…. what if they were getting sent back?

There was a soft knock on the door. Evie opened it up and was relieved to see Carlos standing on the other side. Evie pulled Carlos down to sit on the floor with her as she tried to regulate her breathing.

“Did Jay come by here?” Carlos asked, making sure to keep his voice down.
Evie nodded, “He came in out of breath and insisted he needed to talk to Mal alone. He was acting very cold towards me. I’m worried Carlos. What did you tell him?”

“Nothing! I swear E, he looked at me funny then left in a hurry this morning. I didn’t tell him anything.” Carlos looked like he was telling the truth.

Evie held her face in her hands, “Are they going to send us back?” she whispered with fear in her voice.

The door opened before Carlos could answer. Jay and Mal came in, and slammed the door loudly behind them.

Evie could tell Mal had been crying, but she wasn’t sure why. Jay looked furious, Evie could see him seething in the corner.

Without saying anything, Mal walked closer to Evie, until their bodies were only inches apart. Mal gently grabbed the bottom of Evie’s pajama shirt. She looked into Evie’s eyes before she did anything else.

Evie knew exactly what Mal was doing. She could see it in her eyes, she could hear Mal’s silent question. Evie nodded slowly, giving Mal permission. Mal lifted the bottom of Evie’s shirt up an inch, revealing the small octopus mark burned into her abdomen.

“I’m so sorry,” Evie whispered. Mal dropped her shirt and walked back to the other side of the room, next to Jay.

“How could you?” Jay asked. Evie stood frozen, unable to answer. There had been a reason she hadn’t told Mal about where she and Carlos had been this last year. Evie knew it would be the one thing that would kill Mal.

“You have no right to be angry!” Carlos said back, “We did what we had to do! You don’t understand what it was like out there. We couldn’t defend ourselves, and our parents would have found us soon if it weren’t for Uma!”

“What exactly did you guys do for her? She doesn’t let just anyone on her crew.” Mal asked. She remained much calmer than Jay and Carlos.

“I fixed things around the ship for her, and built security devices. Nothing too extreme. It was a job, I worked, and in return I had a place to live, food, and protection.” Carlos answered confidently.

“And you?” Mal turned to Evie.

Evie shook her head. She didn’t want to tell Mal. She didn’t want Mal to think of her that way.

“Evie worked at Fish and Chips.” Carlos answered for her, concealing most of the truth.

Mal sensed there was more. Evie wished more than anything that Mal would just let it go, but Mal was going to make her say it.

“What else?” Mal pressed.

Evie was shaking as she spoke, “Carlos and I were on our last bit of food, we had stretched it as far as it could go. A group of men came up to us, threatened us, they would have killed us.” Evie took a deep breath and continued, “Harry Hook saved our lives. I owed him.”
“So you screwed him?” Mal asked, her voice full of anger and sadness.

Evie began to cry, “It was more than sex!” She protested, “I think he might have loved me, in his own way.”

Mal stepped closer to Evie, “Did you love him?” It was barely a whisper.

“No, I didn’t.” Evie answered honestly. “Do you hate me?” Evie had never felt more vulnerable. She was still mad at Mal for leaving her there for so long, but she knew she couldn’t live without Mal. She loved Mal so much, Evie loved Mal in a way she didn’t fully understand.

“No, of course not,” Evie reached out for Mal, but Mal shrugged her off. “I'm gonna go, I just need sometime to myself.” Mal backed away slowly headed for the door.

After Mal left Carlos spoke again, “you guys can't be mad at us about this.” He sounded angry.

No one felt like arguing anymore. Carlos and Jay left shortly after, separately. Evie laid in her bed for a little while. She was devastated at the thought that Mal was mad at her. These last few days had been so confusing, but delightful. She was glad she and Mal were getting closer again, but it felt different this time, like there was a spark there that there wasn't before.

It didn't matter now, Evie was sure Mal would never speak to her again.

Mal didn't return to their room until late that night. She had seen Evie at dinner, eating with Audrey and Jane earlier, and it nearly broke her. Just one look at Evie's radiant face, and all her anger melted. Carlos was right, Mal couldn't be mad at them for the choices they made while she and Jay were gone.

She had been relieved to hear that Evie didn't love Harry Hook, but the thought of the two of them together made her sick to her stomach. Even worse, she worried about what he had made Evie do. Mal knew Evie, and if Evie believed she owed her life to Harry, she would have done whatever he wanted her too.

Evie was asleep when Mal got back to their room, she looked so peaceful and angelic. She was so beautiful. Mal wished she could hold her, and comfort her, and erase all of the bad memories from her mind.

Mal was nearly asleep when she heard Evie start to whine. She was breathing heavily and sweating. Mal knew exactly what was happening, Evie used to get nightmares a lot back on the isle. The big fight today must have triggered another one for her tonight.

Mal remembered what she used to do for Evie when she got like this. Mal put one hand on the top of her head, running her fingers through Evie’s hair. She placed the other hand on Evie’s arm, slowly rubbing it up and down. Mal sat on Evie’s bed and tried to comfort her.

“Shh E, it's okay, I'm here, you're safe.” Mal whispered. Evie awoke suddenly, gasping for air. Mal patted her back and helped her sit up. “Evie are you okay?”

Evie caught her breath, “Yes, I'm so sorry did I wake you?” Mal's heart broke. Evie had just had an obviously traumatic nightmare, and yet she was concerned about Mal.

“No, I wasn't asleep yet,” Mal offered up a smile, “can you go back to sleep? Or do you want to talk about it?”
Evie smiled back, “I think I'll be okay.” Mal stood up to leave but Evie grabbed her wrist, stopping her. “Will you stay with me? Please?” She asked desperately.

Mal's heart swelled with excitement. Evie scooted over to make room for Mal in her bed and Mal got under the covers next her, careful to keep her distance from Evie.

Mal woke up the next morning, legs intertwined with Evie's. A mess of blue hair was resting on her chest, along with most of Evie's head. Mal ran her fingers through Evie's long hair. Mal wished she could stay in this moment forever, but as per usual, life got in the way in the form of Mal's alarm going off, alerting them that it was time for Evie's first day of classes
Hey guys! Thanks again for waiting so long! This has been my favorite chapter to write, so I hope you guys like it! I should have another one up on Wednesday! All comments are appreciated so keep them coming :)

Carlos’s first week of classes went by quickly. He really loved his math and physics classes, but could barely tolerate Fairy Godmother’s pandering during Remedial Goodness. Evie had easily made the cheerleading squad after one round of tryouts, so Carlos and Mal would sit in the bleachers after classes. There they could see Evie practice for cheer, as well as Jay’s tourney practice.

The first game wasn’t until next week, so Carlos and Mal looked on as both teams had relatively low-key practices Thursday afternoon.

“So are you and Jay still in your dumb fight?” Mal asked Carlos, not taking her eyes off of where Evie was practicing her round offs.

“It’s not dumb!” Carlos protested. He decided that Mal just didn’t know what she was talking about.

“Oh come on ‘los! He’s mad at himself for leaving you, and he’s stupidly taking it out on you. Meanwhile you’re only mad at him because he’s mad at you.” She had a point. As if Mal could read his expression, she added, “you’re both just too stubborn to admit it.”

“I don’t know, what do I even say? I already tried apologizing!” Carlos exclaimed.

Mal rolled her eyes, “no you didn’t, I believe your exact words were ‘you have no right to be angry’,” Mal said, mimicking Carlos’s voice.

“That’s not what I sound like,” Carlos cracked a smile.

Mal playfully pushed his shoulder and the two erupted in laughter. “I really missed you, Carlos,” Mal said earnestly.

“Yeah Purple, I missed you too,” He responded with a sad smile. Carlos and Mal never had the easy connection either of them had with the others, but they shared a camaraderie and respect for each other. Emotionally, they were the two strongest of the group and tended to keep everyone sane during hard times.

“Ugh Purple? I thought we retired that one years ago!” The pair laughed again.

“Eh, maybe it’s making a comeback,” Carlos grinned.

Mal put her arm around him as her face turned serious. “He missed you so much you know? He worried about you every day,” she paused, “we both did.”

“How was he this last year? I mean you guys have these great friends and you both really seemed
to have put down roots. Was it always this easy?” Jay just fit in so perfectly here. Carlos couldn’t imagine Jay taking time to worry about him, while he had all of this going on for him.

“Seriously? He was a mess when he first got here! We both were,” she laughed, knowingly, “he adjusted much easier than I did. Other than constantly worrying about you and Evie, nothing seemed to bother him, not even that whole thing with Chad.”

“What thing with Chad?” Carlos asked quickly. Carlos’s mind started racing. Did it have something to do with Chad’s relationship with Ben? Oh no, what if Jay had a problem with gay people? Would Jay hate him when he found out that Carlos was gay?

Mal clammed up a bit, “Oh um he didn’t tell you? That’s uh- that’s probably a conversation you two should have.”

This only worried Carlos more. He tried to act casual as he pressed Mal further, “Does Jay have a problem with Chad dating Ben?” he asked nonchalantly.

“Oh no- I mean Jay’s totally over Chad and he’s thrilled that they’re in love and-”

Carlos interrupted her, “Wait Jay’s over Chad? Was Jay ever…. into Chad?”

A strange feeling washed over Carlos. ‘Is Jay into guys?’ he wondered. Then he started to wonder if Jay was ever into him. ‘Wait’ he thought, ‘Am I into Jay?’

Before Mal got a chance to answer, Evie walked over to where they were sitting.

“Oh thank Evil,” Mal whispered under her breath. Only Carlos heard. “You did great out there E, the squad’s lucky to have you!”

Evie giggled, “Thanks Mal, you wanna go back to our room? I think I need some help with my Remedial Goodness homework.”

Mal nodded enthusiastically. “See ya later ‘los!” she yelled back at him as she followed Evie back inside.

Carlos’s conversation with Mal made him antsy. He wanted to talk to Jay right then, but knew he had to wait another half hour until tourney practice was over. First he had to think up a proper apology. Mal was right, this fight was dumb.

Jay was completely exhausted after tourney practice, so he laid on his bed and tried closing his eyes. He couldn't get comfortable though, he could feel someone staring at him.

“I can hear you thinking, you know?” He said to Carlos, not opening his eyes.

Carlos seemed startled, “oh um, I'm sorry.” He paused for a second, “Look Jay, I wanted to talk to you about everything that went down on Sunday.” Carlos started to sound more confident towards the end.

Jay sat up, he also wanted to talk about the other day, he felt horrible about the way he reacted and had spent this week obsessing over every word he’d said to Carlos, and how he could try to fix things.

“Yeah I want to talk about that too. I'm really sorry C, I shouldn't have reacted the way I did. I
just… I mean you hear all those stories about Uma’s mark and… I don't know, I'm just worried for you.” Jay was getting nervous opening up to Carlos like this. ‘Since when does Carlos make me this nervous?’ He wondered.

“I'm sorry too,” Carlos said with a sad smile, “and you don't need to worry about me, Jay. I know what I got myself into, and I got myself out of it. I'm here aren't I?” His smile turned to a happy one and it made Jay grin from ear to ear.

“Yeah you're right dude. Hugs?” Jay, unlike Carlos, was a big hugger. Carlos blushed and nodded. Jay embraced Carlos tightly, noticing the way his head fit perfectly into the crook of Jay’s neck. He could feel Carlos melting into him. Jay wished that they could stay like that forever. Carlos didn't seem to want to pull away either.

They both jumped backwards when they heard a knock at their door. Jay answered quickly. Chad and Doug were standing on the other side.

“Hey Man, are you guys coming down to dinner? Ben and the girls are already there, and if we don't go quick, they'll eat all the pizza again!” Chad said enthusiastically. Jay noticed that Carlos was studying Chad intensely.

“Uh, go down without us, I need to change.” Jay responded, he saw the way Carlos was staring Chad down and it worried him.

Chad looked disappointed, “your loss!”

The door swung close and he turned to Carlos. Carlos looked like he was deep in thought.

“You okay dude?” Jay asked.

Carlos looked up at him with a mischievous grin, “you two hooked up, didn't you?” Carlos didn't seem upset, or disgusted. He just seemed intrigued. Jay started to panic anyways.

“Who told you!” He demanded.

Carlos laughed, “no one, I'm just a good guesser.” Carlos seemed like he was lying.

‘It must have been Mal,’ Jay thought.

Jay got flustered, “I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier, it's just being here… I sort of figured out a lot of new things about myself, and I guess Chad was just a part of that journey, but it was way before he and Ben got together. And I'm so happy for them now, I swear!” Jay was rambling, he could feel his face getting hot.

Carlos laughed again, “Jay relax! It's fine, we’ve all been there!”

Jay was confused, “we have?” He questioned.

Now it was Carlos’s turn to get flustered, “oh um, yeah, during one of my lower points on the isle I kind of had a few very regrettable nights with this guy Gil. He was on Uma’s crew too, and I don’t know, I think we were both just lonely and—”

Jay cut him off, “you and Gil? Gaston’s son?” He laughed, “you win yours is worse!” Jay knew exactly who Gil was. Other than being a member of Uma’s crew, Jay never really had a problem with him, but now, for some reason, all he felt towards Gil was white hot rage.
Carlos seemed to be put back at ease, “shut up, it was slim pickings on the isle!”

After a little bit more joking, Jay and Carlos went down to the cafeteria to meet their friends for dinner. Everyone was engaged in a heated debate over some movie they were watching in history class, but Jay wasn’t paying a bit of attention. He spent the entire meal looking at Carlos. He was shocked to find out that Carlos was also into guys. It was like he was seeing Carlos in a new light. Jay was finally realizing just how beautiful Carlos was. His blond curls, his freckles, his eyes, his full lips- ‘oh no,’ Jay thought. It was in that moment that Jay realized that he was definitely falling for his best friend.

Mal looked over at where Evie was sitting at her desk, quietly concentrating on her homework. It was Friday afternoon, and Evie’s cheer practice had been cancelled due to the bad weather. Mal loved the rain. On the isle, rain usually meant flooding, and less food going around, but here on Auradon the rain soothed her.

Mal caught Evie looking out the window. “It’s nice isn’t it? Easier to appreciate here,” she said aloud, knowing what Evie was thinking.

Evie chuckled, “yeah, it’s more… comforting than I expected.”

“You want to go for a walk?” Mal asked. Evie looked puzzled, “The storm’s passed, it’s just drizzling now. You can finally use your new rain jacket!” She enthused.

The idea made Evie smile, which made Mal’s heart flutter. “That sounds great actually. Maybe we can go explore those gardens, you know the ones you pointed out on our tour last week?” Mal couldn’t resist Evie’s wide eyes. She nodded and the two quickly threw on rain jackets and boots.

As they strolled through the bushes quietly, Mal realized that she’d never noticed how romantic the gardens were. Or maybe it wasn’t the gardens, maybe it was just being here with Evie.

Evie seemed like she was deep in thought. Mal didn’t say anything, she knew Evie would bring up whatever was on her mind when she was ready.

A few minutes later Evie cleared her throat. Without looking over at Mal, she spoke up, “Mal, I’m really sorry I didn’t tell you about Uma and Harry earlier. It was wrong of me to try to hide that from you.”

Mal smiled. She and Evie were making real progress. “It’s okay E, I’m sorry too. I was shocked, but I was angrier with myself than I was with you. I wish I’d reacted better.”

Evie scrunched her brows together, “Why were you mad at yourself?” She seemed genuinely confused. Mal took a long look at Evie, and wondered how someone so good could have been left on that rotten island for so long.

“You guys only did what you did because we left. And I know what you’re going to say. We did have to leave and everything, but I don’t know.” Mal paused and thought for a moment, “Evie, there’s nothing in this whole universe that I love more than you, and when I think about that day when I got in the limo and watched you disappear… my heart breaks.” They both stopped walking.

“Mine does too,” Evie whispered.

Mal started to tear up, “Finding you, scared and alone, all those years ago… it changed my life. Evie you’re the best thing that’s ever happened to me.”
Evie reached her hand up and cupped Mal’s face, “Mal, that can’t be true, I’m just-”

Mal cut her off, “Evie it is! How can you not see that? You are so good and pure and beautiful and…” She saw the look Evie was giving her, but she couldn’t quite place it, “and I’m rambling. I should stop before I embarrass myself any further.” Mal’s face flushed red.

“Mal,” Evie said with a soft smile.

“No, E, it’s fine, we should probably just keep walking,” Mal couldn’t believe she had let all that emotion slip in front of Evie. She’d been able to hide her feelings from Evie for years, why were they all rising to the surface so quickly this week?

“Mal,” Evie said, a little more firmly this time.

“Evie, drop it,” Mal said, tears falling freely. Mal just wanted to get out of there. Evie’s warm hand on her face and the romantic gardens around them were all too much for Mal. She was afraid she would say more and regret it.

Suddenly Mal felt a pair of warm lips pressed to hers. She was surprised at first, but quickly realized what was going on and wrapped her arms around Evie’s waist. Evie pulled back, and rested her forehead against Mal’s.

“Mal, I think you might be the greatest thing that’s ever happened to me too.” Evie whispered.

Mal chuckled, “Really?”

Evie wrapped her arms around Mal’s neck and nodded. Mal leaned in for another kiss, and Evie kissed her back softly. They both knew what this meant, and that their lips were conveying a thousand feelings that words never could.

The girls held hands as they walked the rest of the way through the gardens. Mal knew that they’d have to talk about this later, but for now she wanted to live in this moment forever.

It started raining heavier as they got closer to the building. Mal couldn’t resist pulling Evie in for one more long kiss in the rain. They giggled as they ran back inside and dried off. They were supposed to meet their friends for dinner in a few minutes, but Mal had no idea how she could sit through an entire meal when she and Evie could be off kissing in the rain, and holding each other close.
Evie stood on the sidelines of the field with the rest of her squad, cheering on the first tourney game of the season. She turned around and sent a quick wave to Mal and Carlos, who were sitting up in the bleachers.

It had been a week since Evie had mustered up the courage to kiss her best friend in the gardens, and so far it had been the best week of her life. She had always loved Mal in a way that she didn't love anyone else, but it wasn't until that moment in the rain that Evie discovered what she truly felt for the violet haired girl. Mal was home for her. Auradon, the isle, it didn’t matter where they were. Home was wherever Mal was.

After the game she rushed up to her room.

“Hey baby, you were great out there tonight, I-” Evie cut Mal off by kissing her. Mal put up no protest and returned the kiss.

Evie sighed loudly, “Sorry, I’ve been waiting to do that for like four hours,” she smiled as Mal laughed. Mal wrapped her arms around the blue haired girl and pulled her down onto her bed. Evie started to lean in for another kiss, but was stopped by a knock at her door.

“If that’s Jay I swear to Evil, I will kill him,” Mal said, annoyed. Evie giggled in response. She couldn’t help but notice how adorable Mal was when she was angry. There was another loud knock at the door.

Evie rolled her eyes, “Alright, alright I’m coming!” She yelled. She opened the door to see Jay on the other side, still in his tourney uniform. “What’s up?” Evie asked, trying to act casual.

Evie noticed Jay’s skeptical look and followed his gaze to where Mal was laying on Evie’s bed, looking pissed off. “Oh no, what did I interrupt?” Jay asked.

Evie and Mal had only told Jay and Carlos about their new found love and ill-defined relationship. They were going to wait before they told everyone else, but they couldn’t keep a secret this big from their best friends. Both of the boys had been very happy for them, but had seemed unsure of how this would change the dynamics of their group.

Mal groaned, “nothing yet.” Evie sat down next to where Mal was laying on the bed, and Mal put her head in Evie’s lap. Evie began to lazily run Mal’s long strands of violet hair through her fingers. Jay hesitantly sat down at the foot of the bed. “So what’s on your mind, cock-block?” Mal asked.
Jay snorted, “I’m sorry I’m not quite as interesting as Evie’s tongue, but I could use some advice from my best friends.”

“Of course Jay,” Evie looked apologetic.

“It’s Carlos. I don’t know, ever since we got you guys back, he’s been acting different,” Evie nodded, she and Carlos had both changed a lot in the last year, she could understand why Jay might be struggling. Jay continued, “I mean it’s certainly not a bad different, there are just things—feelings I’m not sure how to handle.” Jay seemed lost in his thoughts.

“So you’re not sure how to deal with Carlos’s feelings?” Evie asked, a little confused.

“No, my own feelings.” Jay answered sheepishly.

Mal laughed, “What feelings?”

Jay stood up, “I don’t know!” he answered defensively, “I just know that I love spending time with him and that he’s my favorite person to be around, and that I miss him when I’m not with him.”

Evie scrunched her brows, she wasn’t quite sure what Jay was getting at, “wait, weren’t we talking about how Carlos was acting different?”

“He is!” Jay exclaimed loudly.

“Hmmm, Carlos is acting weird, you have feelings that are weird…. I wonder what these two things add up to?” Mal said sarcastically.

Jay looked confused. Evie cleared her throat and looked disapprovingly at Mal. “What she means is, maybe you like Carlos as more than a friend. I know it may seem confusing now, but believe me-”

Jay cut her off, “woah, woah, woah, just because I’m gay doesn’t mean that I have feelings for every guy I’m friends with.”

“We know that,” Evie said, attempting to calm Jay down.

It didn’t work. “Besides, let’s just say that I, hypothetically, did like Carlos like that, where do I go from here? What, do I just blurt my feelings out and hope for the best? What if he’s totally weirded out?” Jay rambled.

Evie felt her lips curl into a smile. She had never thought of Jay and Carlos as a couple before, but, then again, she’d never thought of herself and Mal as a couple before either, and look where they are now.

Mal sat up and gave Evie a look that could only be described as pure adoration. Evie blushed and intertwined her fingers with Mal’s. Mal then turned to Jay, “what if he isn’t?” Jay was silent but he seemed to be considering what Mal said, so she continued, “Jay I know what you’re feeling right now is really scary, and that all of this could end in heartbreak, but believe me it’s worth it.” She turned and looked at Evie again, who was beaming back at her, “I know that for sure.”

Jay left the girls’ room with more questions than answers, but he knew what he had to do. He was going to confess his feelings for Carlos.
When he got back to their room, Carlos was sitting at his desk working on his homework. Jay smiled to himself, only Carlos would be doing homework on a Friday night.

“Is that the Physics worksheet? You know that’s not due until Wednesday right?” Jay asked, amused. He couldn’t figure out how to start the conversation he really wanted to have.

Carlos laughed, “yes, but it takes me like six times longer to do than everyone else so I have to start early. I’ve never actually been to school before you know,” Carlos was clearly joking, but Jay immediately felt guilty thinking about him on the isle. Carlos could sense Jay’s unease and quickly changed the subject, “Great game tonight by the way! I saw your big score in the second half, it was very impressive!” Carlos enthused.

Jay blushed, “thanks, C.”

“Now you should probably get in the shower, you reek,” Carlos responded with a laugh.

Jay smiled and headed over to the bathroom. He took a long, hot shower and thought about what he should say. Maybe he should start by talking about how hard it was here for him without Carlos. ‘No,’ he thought, ‘that’ll just remind him that I abandoned him there for all that time’. Jay didn’t have any semblance of a plan, but he’d been in the bathroom long enough and it was starting to get late.

He walked out in his pajamas to find Carlos in bed, with all the lights turned off except for the small lamp on his dresser.

Jay sat on the foot of Carlos’s bed and took the book out of his hands. “Hey, could I maybe talk to you about something?”

“Sure! What’s up?” Carlos said eagerly.

“Umm,” Jay quickly chickened out, “what umm, what are you reading?”

“Oh, it’s a biography on Ben’s dad. The king is actually a pretty interesting dude.” Carlos furrowed his brows.

Jay gulped loudly and avoided eye contact with Carlos.

“Jay, what did you really want to ask me?” Carlos asked quietly. Jay looked into his eyes, trying to convey everything without having to say it. A look of realization swept across Carlos’s face, and Jay felt his stomach drop.

‘Oh no,’ he thought, ‘I’ve completely ruined everything’. He panicked for a few more seconds before turning back to look at Carlos, and noticing that the other boy was slowly inching closer towards him.

Jay leaned in too, and soon their faces were only an inch apart. Carlos was the one to bridge the final gap and put his lips to Jays. He kissed softly- hesitantly even- and pulled back slightly to gauge Jay’s reaction. Jay smiled wide and wrapped his arms around Carlos’s waist, pulling him in for a kiss this time.

The two boys fell back onto Carlos’s bed, bodies intertwined.

Jay stopped suddenly, “are you sure you’re okay with this, C?” Jay had never felt this vulnerable before.
His fears were immediately squashed. Carlos brushed a strand of Jay’s long black hair out of his face. “Of course I am Jay. There’s no one I’d rather be doing this with than you.” Jay smiled and resumed kissing his best friend. He reached his hand under Carlos’s shirt and Carlos began to moan in satisfaction.

Carlos’s moans slowly grew louder, and Jay realized they weren’t from pleasure. He pulled back, “what’s wrong?” Jay was worried. Carlos looked like he was in pain. “Did I do something?”

Carlos shook his head and clutched his side, “fuck!” He shouted. Jay could tell he was in a lot of pain. Carlos was holding his side so hard Jay knew it would leave a bruise.

“Let me see it!” Jay demanded, and Carlos removed his hands long enough for Jay to lift up his shirt. He gasped. Uma’s mark was glowing bright red and looked as if it was burning Carlos’s skin.

Just then, the boys heard a blood curdling scream coming from down the hall. Jay recognized it immediately. “Evie!” He exclaimed. Jay knew he had to do something. Those damn marks were going to kill two of the people he loved most in this world. He scooped Carlos off of the bed and slung one of his arms around his shoulder. “If I help you can you walk?” They tried to take a few steps and it seemed to be a success.

They stepped out into the hallway where many other students were looking around, curious as to the source of the scream.

“Back to your rooms, all of you!” Fairy Godmother shouted. Jay hadn’t seen where she came from, but he was thankful she was there.

Jay tried to get Carlos out a few more steps, when they saw Mal burst out of her room. She had tears running down her cheeks. Even after sixteen years together on the isle, Jay had never seen her look this scared before. “Jay!” She yelled. “Please, I need you!”
Mal turned off the last light in their room and curled into bed next to Evie. “Can I sleep in here tonight? Pleeease?” She fake begged.

Evie laughed, “of course babe, as long and you’ll stay close and keep me warm.”

“Deal,” Mal responded, leaning into kiss Evie. Mal laid there, and looked deeply into Evie’s eyes. “Hey E?”

“Hey Mal,” Evie chuckled.

“I think I love you. Like love, love you.” Evie placed a soft kiss on Mal’s lips.

Evie bit her lip and looked at Mal, “I think I love, love you too.” Mal let out a sigh of relief. She was so worried she would scare Evie off with her confession. Mal had never felt safer or happier than in that moment, laying in bed, Evie snuggled up in her arms.

“Yeah?” Mal asked, a smile forming on her lips.

Evie nodded, “yeah.” She pressed another kiss to Mal’s lips, this one lingering a little bit longer than the last.

Mal could feel Evie drifting off to sleep in her arms and she began to fall asleep herself. She was almost completely unconscious when Evie started to stir. Mal didn’t think much of it at first, but Evie quickly began to moan. Her moans turned into cries of pain, and soon she was completely awake screaming out in horror. Mal didn’t know what to do, she was so scared, what was wrong with Evie?

“Babe, what’s going on?” Mal asked, attempting to soothe her.

Evie pointed to her abdomen and Mal immediately knew what was bothering her. Mal quickly discovered Evie’s mark glowing bright red and making a sort of sizzling sound, as if it was burning into her skin all over again.

Mal started shaking, she placed a kiss on Evie’s forehead, “I’m gonna fix this babe I promise.” Evie only screamed louder in response.

Mal could feel herself begin to cry as she opened their door into the hallway. She saw Jay hobbling through the hallway, supporting Carlos’s weight. “Jay!” She called out in desperation, “please, I need you!”

It was then that Mal noticed Fairy Godmother sprinting towards her. She barged in and walked to where Evie was still writhing in pain on her bed. Fairy Godmother gasped, “I’m going to get a car pulled up out front to take them to the hospital, can you two get them downstairs?” She asked to
Mal and Jay, who had just entered the room with Carlos.

Mal nodded. The VKs has been through worse, they could get through this. Fairy Godmother quickly left the room.

“Here,” Mal said. “I can take Carlos if you’ll take Evie,” she offered to Jay. He agreed and passed Carlos’s arm onto Mal’s shoulder. Mal could support Carlos easily.

She looked down at Evie, in more pain than she’d ever seen her. Mal saw the love of her life dying before her eyes and Mal couldn’t help it but to dissolve into tears.

“Mal,” Jay said firmly, “we can do this. We can save them.”

Mal nodded, agreeing. She watched as Jay picked Evie up, bridal style. Evie had passed out from the pain at this point and her head fell limply into Jay’s shoulder.

The four of them rushed downstairs and into the limo Fairy Godmother had pulled up out front. When they arrived at the hospital the doctors quickly wheeled Evie and Carlos away, leaving Mal and Jay alone in the waiting room.

Jay held Mal as she cried into his shoulder. After she finished she stepped back. As menacing as she could, she promised, “if anything happens to them, I will kill Uma and her entire crew. I will burn that whole damn isle down if I have to.” She meant it.

“They’ll be okay, I know it.” Mal could hear Jay’s voice break, just a little bit. “They have to be okay, Mal.”

Jay and Mal waited for what seemed like forever. As time went on, more of their friends began to arrive at the hospital. Jay updated each one of them as they came, Mal sat with her head in her hands, silent. She was aware of the others’ presence, but was too focused on Evie to acknowledge them. She finally looked up when she felt an arm around her shoulders, it was Lonnie coming to comfort her. Mal hated the look of pity in her eyes, she could tell Lonnie didn’t know what to say, so she leaned her head over to rest on Lonnie’s shoulder. They sat like that until Mal heard a commotion and looked up. She could see Fairy Godmother walking towards them frantically, a disgruntled nurse trailing behind her.

As Fairy Godmother approached the group, Jane spoke up first, “Mom what’s the news? Are Evie and Carlos going to be okay?” Jane seemed worried. Mal hadn’t realized how closely bonded Evie and Carlos had become with their Auradon friends in just a few short weeks here. She looked at all the concerned faces surrounding her and took comfort in them. She wasn’t alone.

Mal held her breath as she waited for Fairy Godmother to answer. “We don’t know yet,” She responded, “the problem is magical not medical, so for now all the doctors could do was put both of them in medically induced comas. It will stop the pain and hopefully weaken the strength of the magic that has a hold on them.”

“Can we see them?” Mal asked, she was so drained, it barely came out as a whisper.

Fairy Godmother gave her the same pitiful look Lonnie had just offered up, “yes, but it’s a small room, we should limit the amount of visitors. Jay and Mal why don’t you come back with me first?”

Mal trailed behind Jay, Fairy Godmother and the nurse. Jay was incessantly offering up solutions to Fairy Godmother, none of which she seemed to think would work. Maybe there was a spell they didn’t know about that could break Uma’s bond? Maybe Mal’s magic combined with Fairy
Godmother’s could overcome Uma’s powers? Fairy Godmother just shook her head.

Mal nearly broke into pieces when she saw Evie, lying there, barely breathing. Evie and Carlos were both in their own hospital beds laying side by side. The machines beside them were beeping too loudly for Mal’s taste, and the room was too sterile. Mal walked over and picked up Evie’s hand. She gave it a soft kiss and then placed it in her own hand, holding it as if her life depended on it. She noticed Jay was doing something similar with Carlos.

“I’ll give you all some time alone,” Fairy Godmother and the nurse left the room, closing the door behind them.

“What’s with you two?” Mal asked gruffly, motioning to Jay’s intimate grasp on Carlos’s hand. Mal hated being sad and helpless. She needed to focus on something else, something other than the fact that the person she loved most in this world was unconscious and in pain.

“Shut up, Mal,” She could tell Jay wasn’t in the mood. Last she checked Jay and Carlos were still pining after each other, both too chicken to make a move.

“You and de Vil finally bone?” Anger was forming Inside Mal, she knew she shouldn’t be, but she was taking it out on Jay.

“I said shut up, Mal,” Jay repeated, louder and angrier than before.

“Oh come on Jay there’s no need to overreact, I was just-”

She’s really done it now, Jay was fuming, “would you stop talking for once in your life?” He barked at her, “do you even care that Carlos is dying? That Evie, the love of your life, is dying? Why do you always do this? Don’t you realize you can’t sarcasm your way out of this one?”

“Of course I do!” She yelled. She dropped Evie’s hand. She didn’t want her rage to somehow transfer onto her sleeping girlfriend. “Don’t you know it’s killing me that there is nothing I can do to save Evie? I love her and she could die and I can’t stop that!”

Jay didn’t respond, instead he looked away from her, he seemed deep in thought, like he was trying to solve a complicated problem on his head. “Jay?” She asked, quieter.

“Maybe there is something we could do.” He said.

“What do you mean?” Mal was confused.

“Uma put these marks on them right? So she can take them off. If we can convince her to remove them and to stop messing with Carlos and Evie, we can save them!” Jay seemed very pleased with his plan.

“Why would she take the marks off? She very clearly was trying to send some kind of message to us with this little stunt,” She motioned to Evie and Carlos. “She would sooner kill both them before she ever did something I wanted her to do.”

“There’s got to be something she wants. Come on Mal, you know Uma. She loves to torture people, but she likes to see her work. She wouldn’t be doing this without a reason.” Jay was right. If they could figure out what Uma wanted, they could trade it in exchange for Evie and Carlos’s freedom.

“Well then we’ll have to find out what it is. We’ll do whatever it takes,” she looked into Jay’s eyes, “we can’t lose them again Jay, we just can’t.” Mal could tell Jay was feeling exactly what she was.
She knew that Jay loved Carlos the same way that she loved Evie, even if they hadn’t had the balls to admit it to each other yet.

“Okay, I’m in, but you and I alone can’t take on her whole pirate crew. We’re gonna need some backup.”

Jay smiled mischievously, “I’m way ahead of you.”
Chapter Nine

Chapter Summary

The gang begin their mission to save Carlos and Evie

Chapter Notes

Sorry I've been MIA. I promise i really love this story and these characters a lot and am rededicating myself to finishing it. I will try to update with a chapter a week. Thank you all for sticking with it!!!

“Does everyone understand the plan?” Jay asked a room full of his friends. He was met with wide eyes and confused looks.

“So once we get to the isle we’re going to do what? Just storm a pirate ship full of villains who have no problem killing us on the spot?” Chad asked, fear and shock in voice.

Jay and Mal had carefully explained their plan to the rest of their friends. The two of them, along with Ben, Chad, and Lonnie would go to Uma directly to find out what she wanted. Jane and Doug would go back to the hospital and stay with Carlos and Evie, just in case they woke up. That left Audrey at Auradon Prep running interference with the adults, covering for the students traveling to the isle.

“Yes,” Mal answered carefully, “I know this is a lot to ask of you, but I promise if this was just for Jay and I we wouldn’t even be discussing it. The only reason we’re doing this is to save Evie and Carlos. They’re too good to die like this, especially after we left them on that island alone.” She pleaded with her friends.

“Count me in,” Lonnie said, sending Mal a comforting look.

“Me too,” Jane piped in, locking hands with her girlfriend.

The rest of the group echoed the sentiment with enthusiastic agreement. They all wanted to save Carlos and Evie, no matter the cost. Jay thought they were all naive. Granted, he could tell how scared they all were, but many of them were entering a dangerous territory they knew very little about. Jay cared about his friends, and would have tried to stop them from making this decision has Carlos’s life not been on the line, but he knew he would risk anything to get the one he loved back.

Ben informed everyone that he knew how to get a limo out of Auradon undetected. The group going to the isle planned to meet back up in half an hour after they’d all properly prepared.

Jay was in his room changing out of what were basically his pajamas when he heard a quiet knock at the door. It was the knock he and Mal had come up with as their secret code when they first moved to Auradon. It had first started out as a self defense mechanism, but as they felt safer in Auradon, it had continued into being a shared secret that made the two of them feel more
connected to one another, even as the isle wore off of them.

“Hey there,” Mal whispered as she entered the room.

“You all set?” Jay asked.

Mal hesitated for a moment, not answering. She shut the door behind her and leaned against it.

“I’m sorry I was such a bitch earlier, at the hospital. I just—”

Jay cut her off, “It’s okay M, you don’t need to explain yourself, I understand.”

“Do you?” She asked, her tone was a little too accusatory for Jay’s liking.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” he asked, exasperated. He continued to rummage around his and Carlos’s room looking for any and all weapons he could find. Anything to help them defeat Uma. Mal remained still in her spot at the door.

“Jay, I love Evie more than I can explain. I literally don’t think they make words to describe the way I feel about her, and without her….” Mal looked away from Jay, he could tell she was trying to keep her emotions at bay, “without her here with me, it’s harder to breathe. The world is a different place…. A place I really don’t want to live in.”

Jay saw how hard all of this was hitting Mal. Evie and Mal were soulmates, anyone who had met them could tell. He felt the same way about Carlos that Mal felt about Evie. He’d known Carlos for years, and some part of him deep down had known he loved Carlos for years, but it was just now coming to the surface. Now that he knew his feelings for Carlos he couldn’t imagine living in a world where he no longer existed.

Mal continued, cautiously, “I really am sorry I teased you earlier, back at the hospital. I see the way you look at Carlos. I see the way you act around him. You’re lighter, it’s like you constantly have the weight of the world on your shoulders Jay, but when you’re with him, that weight’s gone. It’s when you’re most truly yourself.”

She was right. Jay knew she was right. “So?” he asked, fighting back tears, continuing to keep his hands busy by tearing through some old storage boxes he kept under his bed, that obviously didn’t have anything even resembling a weapon in them. None of what Mal said mattered. If Carlos died, or if Carlos ended up stuck under Uma’s control forever, it wouldn’t matter how much Jay loved him. He didn’t understand why Mal was making this whole big thing out of it.

“So! Use it Jay!” Mal walked towards him and yanked his hands away from the tubs he had pulled up onto his bed. She put her hand on his face, “You love him! Use it! Fight with everything you have, because by Evil we are getting them back. They don’t belong to her, Jay! Hell, they don’t even belong to us either. They’re their own people and that’s why we love them! But, they won’t get to be if we don’t save them.”

Jay nodded. Sometimes Mal could be incredibly profound. “We’re going to save them, Mal. There’s absolutely no other option.” Jay slung the bag of weapons he’d collected over his shoulder. He raised his eyebrow, “You coming?” he asked, opening the door.

“Fuck yeah I’m coming, let’s go save our soulmates!” She exclaimed, racing past Jay and out of the building. The two of them were headed out front to meet Ben at the limo, just as the sun was beginning to rise.
Mal was glad her plan to motivate Jay worked. Not that she thought for a second that Jay wouldn’t have fought his hardest to save Evie and Carlos, but she had to do everything she could to make sure he was prepared to kick some sea urchin ass.

The limo ride was much shorter than Mal and Jay’s first ride to the isle a year ago. They quickly arrived and hid the limo in a seedy corner of a back alley way.

Mal did not like being back on the isle. She didn’t like knowing that she was this far from Evie. She didn’t like that her mother was now within walking distance and could find her in an instant. But most of all she didn’t like that the bitch who was quickly killing two of the people she loved most in this world was running rampant and acting like she owned the place.

She noticed Lonnie, Ben, and Chad attempting to hide their fear. Ben looked terrified and Mal noticed Chad subtly reaching his hand over and intertwining his fingers with Ben’s. She could tell it had a calming effect on Ben, but she knew it would do more harm than good.

She gave them an apologetic look, “Sorry guys, but there can’t be any of that here,” she motioned to their conjoined hands, “as if we don't already look enough like a bunch of Auradon narks, the hand holding will give us away instantaneously.”

Chad looked annoyed, but they separated as requested. “Don’t worry about us Mal,” Chad assured, “Me and Ben and Lonnie, we’re as tough as they come. We can fight just as hard as the rest of these island folk.” He seemed way too sure of himself.

Mal opened her mouth to make a sarcastic retort, but she felt Jay’s hand on her shoulder. “Drop it,” he whispered so only she could hear.

She just nodded to Chad and lead the team through the old pipe ways. This was the fastest way to Uma’s ship.

Despite their best efforts, they were spotted immediately.

“Well, well, well, what do we have here? Some lost royals and their charity cases,” Harry drawled out in his thick accent.

It’s a miracle Mal didn’t kill him then and there, but she knew that wouldn’t help save Evie any faster. “Where’s your boss?” She responded, “you know, the only person with any real power around here.”

Harry’s face turned red and angry. He was not amused, but some of the other crew members were. “Listen you little brat-” he started, but was cut off as Uma emerged from below deck.

“Settle down Harry, there will be time for petty insults later,” she turned to Mal, her lifelong nemesis, and continued, “I see you've brought me more of your friends. Shall I find them positions on my crew or just kill them right now? It’ll be faster and they’ll end up dead either way.”

Uma’s crew cheered her on. Mal was undeterred. “What do you want Uma?” Mal was mad. This was not the time to test her.

“I don’t know life, liberty, a diamond ring.... What else is a girl’s best friend?” She asked laughingly, turning to where Harry stood at her side.

“I’m not playing around here Shrimpy, what do you want in exchange for getting those horrific
little marks off of Carlos and Evie?” The use of Uma’s childhood nickname got her attention. She was no longer in a joking mood.

“You. My dearest darkest enemy. I want you and the big dumb dope,” she motioned to Jay, who was standing next to Mal, ready to attack at any point, “I want to two of you to join my ranks, don my mark, and spend the rest of your miserable lives serving me in my debt forever. My marks are made from a special kind of magic. They cannot ever be removed or destroyed, but they can be transferred.” She paused, Mal and the rest of the group stood listening in shock and fear, “take their place, become the ones that were left behind. Evie and Carlos can live freely in Auradon, you have my word,”

No one spoke, they were all too stunned to react. Mal was processing what Uma had just said when she heard Jay speak up beside her.

He said one word. “Done.”