"Would you believe me if I tell you I didn't kill them? Would you trust me that all I ever wanted was to see you happy. Daniel was your happiness. Why would I take that away?" Regina looked stricken with grief as she uttered the words that would cause them both pain. "Because I was your happiness.

Notes

This story was originally posted back in 2014 on FF but I never got around to finish it so deleted. So last years I began to re-upload the chapters I already had but did have to tweak a lot. My writing has improved a bit plus I've evolved from the original idea. Nothing is what it seems. That all I can say. Hope you enjoy.
Chapter 1

There comes a time in our lives in which we want to give up everything and pretend that pain doesn’t exist. We make ourselves believe that our past doesn’t exist, or that it is merely an illusion that doesn’t take part from the future self you want to create. Sometimes we even fool ourselves into believing that some memories are bad dreams that its sole purpose is to destroy the base of the resolve that took so much time in building up. But what happens when that science fiction of reality comes back to bite you? What happens when you are forced to acknowledge it? Does the pain come back with a dull sensation in your chest? Or does the pain come back with such a force that you feel like breathing is practically impossible?

Returning to the scene of the crime where your heart was butchered, would cast a burning shadow to your soul. That is where the fight or flight option kicks in. Everyone undergoes it, even people that seemed to have all together. People that on the outside look so strong but inside they are a mess, a tornado of emotions that never dies down.

Regina Mills wasn’t all that different.

Running, that was her greatest ability.

Storybrooke looked as grim as Regina remembered from the day she left. Everything she used to think or believe from the small little town changed the day Daniel was brutally murdered by the hands of a soulless person. Life itself for her in the not so quaint town of Storybrooke was unbearable. She needed a fresh air, a new beginning even if it meant to put Daniel's memories in the darkest part of her mind in hopes of moving forward? Better yet, actually live her life. Remembering him was too painful for words to even begin to describe and being in the place where they shared so many beautiful memories just made her realize with a soul shattering pain that she had lost such a good future, forever. When the acceptance letter to NYU arrived, she didn't think about it twice and took the opportunity to leave her hometown forever to study psychology. It was an odd choice for Regina. Her entire life has been dedicated to arts. Music, painting, dancing and oh she was a pretty good dancer. The catastrophe struck, and her muse was lost forever.

Years passed by slow and painful, but she got to the place where she could take a deep breath and didn't feel the stabbing feeling in her chest. A new beginning in another city was exactly what Regina needed in order to heal the wounds that still felt too raw.

Though it wasn't an easy feat to simply land in a place and watch her life to built like a lego castle. There were many factors that could contribute to a healthy living, like friends. Making friends wasn't the easiest thing for Regina. After leaving behind all the people she used to know, in order to move on, she became closed off to everyone but not everybody accepted her choice to not have any friends. A certain woman called Elsa had made it hers life mission to convince that they could be good friends if only Regina tried. They met at the New York University their very first semester and since then they have been inseparable. It wasn't easy, Elsa had annoyed Regina to no end but for some reason they different personas mixed so well. Though the did have one thing in common, they reeked of a regal air.

Regina only maintained communication with her parents (who moved away after a few years) and her childhood best friend, Jefferson. He tries to visit as much as he can but circumstances were hard
for him since he was, after all, director of the Storybrooke mental institution and he didn't dispose of
the time to visit as often as he would like to. He did go to Regina's graduation and there he met Elsa.
That very first moment in which their eyes met sparks, fireworks whatever you like to call it,
detonated. Jefferson's dorky smile and Elsa's shy eyes were all it took for them to fall in love almost
instantly, much to Mills' dismay (not really). Regina was happy for her friends seeing as they found
love in the most unexpected of about them automatically made her mind wander off to Daniel, even
though she lost her love time ago she sometimes on super rare occasions, she hoped about finding
love again. Those moments were reminders of moments that shouldn't make their way up front, some
memories are better off left sealed, forever. Besides, with the broken heart and soul she carries, there
was no space for it.

Her career took off with a bang after graduation. In a short time, she became a well-known
psychologist in the United State. Regina alongside Elsa opened their own practice in New York and
things were as perfect as they can be. Dealing with other people's problems when dealing with ones
wasn't an easy but Regina promptly found out that she does a better job working with others that
with herself.

Every year for the last five years, they received an official job request from Storybrooke Asylum.
Jefferson, as director of the mental institution, had faith that they would accept it. As if wearing them
down was the only tactic available in his arsenal. Elsa wanted to accept but she didn't have the heart
to leave Regina alone in NYC with all the patients they had. It wasn't like they haven't discussed it
before, Regina had encouraged Elsa to leave. It was pretty clear to the brunette that her friend wanted
to be closer to Jefferson.

Regina couldn't really blame her.

Still, Elsa stuck around to which Regina was secretly grateful for. The blonde has become a pillar in
her life, losing her wasn't something Regina felt ready to go through, not now, not ever.

Like every other morning, Regina has been going through the files of cases sent to her from the
courthouse many lawyers asked for her view on their clients to get a better sense of them and the
defense they should prepare. Elsa enters Regina's office without knocking earning her a glare from
the brunette. The blonde brushed it off, she clearly wasn't afraid of Regina's wrath, actually, she did
it on purpose. Elsa sat down, leg crossed and elbows on top of Regina's desk tucking her hands
under her chin. The blonde stared at Regina, watching every move, learning every face expression.
The constant sense of vigilance made the brunette raise her gaze, annoyance coloring her dark eyes.
"What is it?" Regina blurted out, pen placed down on the desk with a soft thud. Elsa didn't flinch or
move her body in any way that might showcase fear. She simply smirked to her friend, enjoying the
fact that she could annoy Regina so easily, well sometimes. After a few moments of silence, Elsa
sighed, face turning serious in two seconds flat. The new she was about to deliver causing her
delivery to become a tad tense as she spoke her words with expert precision.

"Jeff and I decided where we are having our wedding." Regina looked at the silver blonde
skeptically, a brow raising. Elsa was giving her a look that only served to unsettle Regina. The 'I am
not going like this' feeling kicking into overdrive as Elsa fidgeted in her chair.

"Why do I get the feeling that I'm not going to like what you are about to say next." It was in Elsa's
eyes. Those blue eyes filled with guilt and remorse about what she was about to say next. Regina
knew her best friend well enough to know that she is actually sorry for the next words that are about
to leave her mouth next.

Elsa licked her lips nervously letting show that Regina was, indeed right, but rapidly recovered. She
wasn't the type of girl to let petty things control her, one of the qualities that allowed this friendship
to thrive. "I know you are going to love it. We can do tons of things together there."

Elsa said.

The brunette glanced at the door, for some reason she thought Jefferson would walk in at any
to rescue the floundering Elsa but when he didn't Regina's gaze landed on the woman
across her. "Elsa stop beating around the bushes and tell me already. My patience has been fading
from the very moment the idiot DA crossed that door this morning. You are making more difficult
that they need to be."

Regina clasped one hand on top of the other.

"Well..." Elsa began, she took a deep breath deciding in that moment that it was best ripping the
band-aid quickly. All this preamble is making her dizzy. "We decided on having it in Storybrooke. All
of Jefferson friends are there and I really don't have many people to invite, plus it is your hometown
and I assumed you would like to spend some time with your parents..." Elsa rambled on and on,
only stopping when she saw the brunette's face.

Regina felt her stomach dropped to hell if that was even possible. Her eyes widen and for a moment
she the voice box function.

"Ginny?" Elsa questioned already standing up ready to rush to Regina's side if the need arose.

"Out of all places in this goddamn planet, you guys decided on having it there." Too many emotions
were coursing through her veins as the realization of Elsa's words, and her own sat better in her head.
"Sorry, Elsa." Because no matter how bad or absurd the news was for her, going off on Elsa like that
was wrong. She was simply sharing her excitement, whilst Regina rolled around in the long buried
pain from years ago. The fact that she despises for Storybrooke keeps growing each day more,
surprised even Regina.

"Don't worry. I knew this wasn't going to be easy for you. Jefferson was going to tell you instead of
me but he said and I quote 'She is most likely to kill me. She likes you more.'" Regina laughed
despite the situation that was less than ideal.

"True." After her little outburst, Regina sat back on her leather chair, breathing in and out for a few
seconds. She doesn't like the idea, absolutely hates it but it wasn't her big day and she shouldn't ruin
it with her pettiness. Maybe this was they way life, destiny wanted her to finally resolve those issues
Regina will carry around like a cloak. What was the worse that could happen, right? "In any case, I
will go along with whatever decision you two make. My only wish is to see you guys happy even if
it means returning to that hell of a town for a few weeks."

Elsa stared at her for a beat or two, reading, analyzing Regina's words and body language. It was
more than obvious that the brunette across from her wasn't all too keen on the idea but she was
willing to give it a shot. In the end that was all Elsa could hope for. "Thanks, Regina. I will try hard
to make your stay there as pleasant as possible." She tried to give a reassuring smile.

"I know you will and I appreciate but I also know pretty well..." Regina crossed her arms, "That I
will have some sour moments. Everyone that Jefferson invites are or were part of my life a very long
time ago, meaning the memories that come with them will be hard to brush off." Regina threw her
head back and closed her eyes. There was a dull pain in her skull threatening to spread everywhere,
most like a migraine waiting to happen. And she can't actually blame her head for it. That day overall
has been pretty hectic. Between meetings, patients and a jerk of a DA, Regina was ready to go
home, lock herself in her dark room and sleep the stupid pain away but that was impossible for
another few hours and the news of her inevitable return to Storybrooke will fester in her mind until
there's nothing else there. That migraine has all the means to be the worse one of all times.

"Maybe this is a good thing." The blonde said with an apologetic look. "Maybe this is where you
finally close that chapter forever and allow yourself to be happy." Regina didn't move she just stared
at Elsa, dumbfounded trying to process the words but not truly letting them in.

"That doesn't seem possible."

This time Elsa did walk around the desk, sitting on the arm of Regina's chair, slender arm wrapped around the brunette's shoulder as she leaned closer. Regina went in willingly, sighing a bit loud. "It is. You just aren't willing to open up completely, to feel the burn of the past in full so you can actually move on. As long as you keep those feelings locked up without a chance of them being thoroughly felt you won't start living. Having all this success, all the material things will always be a coping mechanism, no a life."

Regina knows Elsa is right. She chose a career that will allow her better understand human emotions but she doesn't understand her own. How is she even able to help others and not herself? That a question with an answer Regina doesn't wish to know. She shook her head, not saying anything back to Elsa. There were no words to be spoken when the truth left the blonde's mouth like sour honey. Regina will have to deal with the consequences later on, now, now she just wants to feel sorry for herself for what is about to come.

And boy she did not have the slightest idea the turn her life was about to take.

Elsa and Jefferson.

They are the reason why Regina found herself in Storybrooke again. That ominous place she thought she'd never visit again but here she is. There her heart was ripped straight out of her chest many years ago. Why did Jefferson and Elsa decide to get married here? She is still clueless. Out of all the places in the world, they decided on a place that lacks charm and magic. (It is honestly a complete lie. Storybrooke had hidden gems that only the townspeople would know about but Regina wasn't going to admit it, especially with all the hate she feels.) Regina had been away for 12 years and not even once went crossed her mind to go back but there she was in front of the big white house she grew up, the house filled with memories of a loving family, memories of a happy life lived before disaster struck. Looking at her childhood home now, it made her heart clench. Back then the walls seemed to pour life and now it felt bleak, rusty even. Before entering, before announcing her arrival, Regina rounded the house heading towards the backyard.

There was one thing she truly wanted to see before seeing people's faces, her apple tree. And there it was as majestic as ever. Big, tall, filled with the red ripped fruit she loved so much. Branches long and beautiful, reaching high into the sky but bound forever onto the ground. That is how Regina felt in Storybrooke bound to a place that she no longer wanted to be a part of, almost like a curse. She reached for one of the fruits and took a taste of it. Delicious, juicy exactly like she remembers them. In twelve years she had been away, not once did she have the opportunity to try one of those luscious red apples. Maybe Elsa was right, maybe something good will come out of this visit, other than the wedding of course. With a deep breath, she turned around and made her way to the back door of the house, nervous energy coiling in the pit of her stomach.

Time to face the music.

The house was empty, oddly tranquil even though many, many things went down there. Cora and Henry moved out a few years ago. They said that living in such an empty and sad house made them feel hollow. She couldn't blame them.

Regina moved through the house in slow pace touching every dusty object that was upon reach and trying to tamper down the nostalgia that was bubbling up her throat. She cleaned around for a bit, wanting to make the house presentable and when she was done, sort of, Regina walked to the one-room she hated the most in the house, her old one. She placed her things in that old room where she shared so many memories with Daniel. Cora and Henry trusted Daniel so much to the point that he
stayed at her house, not in the same room, never in her room but that didn't mean he didn't sneak out from time to time.

"Gina?" Daniel called her name in a low voice. He always was very careful whenever sneaking into Regina's room.

Regina opened her eyes trying to adjust to the darkness of her room. Before she could muster any words Daniel was hovering on top of her with a grin on his face. He ghosts his lips on top of hers before plunging in for a proper one. Regina smiled into the kiss, she loved so much whenever he surprised her like this. Breaking the kiss she cupped his face and bit her lower lip.

"My parents may love you and all but if they ever found out that you sneak into the room like this the probabilities of you even staying here again are slim." She teases him a little before giving into another kiss. Daniel put his forehead on top of hers breathing her scent, Regina did the exact same thing.

"That is a risk I am willing to take my dear Regina." Daniel said closing his eyes, her cinnamon scent taking his breath away.

"My prince." She said giving him another sweet kiss.

Pushing down those memories to the vault they should've never left, she walked around her old room and everything seemed the way she left it years ago with the difference that it felt foreign to her "I can't wait for the next two weeks to be over." Regina said, tearing her eyes away from a photo of her still hanging on the wall. With one last glance around the space, Regina shook her head and began making her way out. She left the house and walked to Granny's diner. The local place where everyone, on some point of the day, would go to. Jefferson and Elsa were going to meet her there and honestly, she was glad. Regina felt the need to eat Granny lasagna since it has been years since the last time she had a slice. Jefferson always tried to bring a piece with him whenever he visited her in New York but the only thing that always seemed to arrive was an empty container and a guilty smile.

Regina placed her hand on the door knob ready to hear the long forgotten bell sound when someone spoke behind her with curiosity. Regina turned around to the female voice and went completely blank when she saw the familiar green eyes. It was Mary Margaret as beautiful as Regina remembered. Her long hair was gone and was now replace by a pixie cut that made her eyes pop out beautifully. Mary gasped upon recognizing Regina. "Oh my God, Regina! What a pleasant surprise." The brunette said smiling wide. Regina mirrored her smile though not as wide and opened her mouth to answer. "It's good to see you, Mary Margaret. It has been a very long time." Regina tried to maintain her smile but it was getting hard to do knowing where she was. Mary outstretched her hands to hug her to which Regina oblige and that was when she notice a little boy hiding behind her. When Regina broke the embrace she tilted her head a bit and crouched to his level. "And who are you?" she inquired with a genuine smile. Regina couldn't help it, she loved kids so much. In her first years of college, she had to volunteer as part of her curriculum and the only place available by the time she decided to do so was an orphanage. It was there that she discovered her love for children and secretly started wishing for one of her own even though she was all alone.

The little boy was shy and hid behind Mary before answering her question "I-I I'm Roland." He said really low. Regina offered him a hand before saying her name. "Hi, Roland. I am Regina it's really nice to meet you." They boy took her hand with reservation and when he notice that she wasn't going to do anything bad he got out of his hiding place behind Mary and gave Regina a full view of him "You're really pretty 'Gina." Regina blushed and smiled at that feeling all warm and fuzzy. "Well thank you. You are quite handsome yourself." Roland gave her a toothy grin.
Mary Margaret was astonished to the sudden acceptance Roland had with Regina. She cleared her throat and Regina stood up again. Her knees ache a bit from being crouched for so long but she pushed the pain away. She wasn't that old to be feeling pain in her junctures. "I have to say, this is the first time Roland has taken into strangers this well."

Regina smiled to that, looking at the boy then at Mary. "Well I am a psychologist; I know how to express and what to do when it comes to shy handsome kids." Mary smiled, and Roland giggled at the sound of Regina calling him handsome again. "Anyways, is he yours?" Regina asked. Mary shook her head, astonishment long gone, replaced by something Regina couldn't quite place. "No. I am actually taking care of him for a few days." Mary sighed and Regina was acutely aware of the distress in the younger woman's eyes. "Is everything alright?" She asked. Mary didn't know what to tell her. Regina did notice the change in the atmosphere and oh boy she knew well she was about to get some bad news. Storybrooke really didn't disappoint.

When she was about to answered Elsa and Jefferson arrived. "Mary." Jefferson greeted her. Mary smiled at the both of them. "I have to go. It was really nice seeing you again Regina. I hope we can get together and catch up. C'mon Roland is time to go." She took Roland and left.

Regina turned around to see them go and she couldn't help feeling a pang in her heart for the little boy sad expression. Elsa's voice pulled her out of her thoughts though, causing Regina to shake the image of Roland away, for now.

"Everything okay Regina?" she just shook her head in answer and opened the door to the diner, Elsa and Jefferson followed her in but not before sharing sad glances.

They were discussing wedding plans and who to invite by the time they sat down. Jefferson gave Regina the guest list to the wedding for her to review when she noticed something strange. "You didn't invite Robin?" She asked. The look Jefferson gave him was of pure sadness, Elsa noticed the same. When he didn't respond Regina talked again "Why you didn't invite your best friend?" Regina blushed but quickly sighed heavily. "He's married remember? Besides, that was a one-time thing." Jefferson arched a brow, eyes calling bullshit on her blatant lie. "Yeah, a one-time thing 2 months later after Daniel's death. I was surprised when he finally told me. He has always been in love with you." Regina shifted uncomfortably on her side of the booth, not really liking this conversation. "We are not here to talk about my lack of love life. Besides he is married." Elsa was the one to talk this time. "So, you do admit you want to see him?"

Wait, Jefferson hasn't said anything about him in a while. Now that strikes her as odd.

"If I didn't know any better I'd say you want it to see him." Regina rolled her eyes and stayed quiet for a moment. "I know about the kiss Ginny. I had to pride it off him." Regina blushed but quickly sighed heavily. "He's married remember? Besides, that was a one-time thing." Jefferson arched a brow, eyes calling bullshit on her blatant lie. "Yeah, a one-time thing 2 months later after Daniel's death. I was surprised when he finally told me. He has always been in love with you." Regina shifted uncomfortably on her side of the booth, not really liking this conversation. "We are not here to talk about my lack of love life. Besides he is married." Elsa was the one to talk this time. "So, you do admit you want to see him?"

Regina huffed glaring at the pair before her. "Really can we change the topic. Will you finally tell me why you didn't invite him? I could have sworn he was going to be your best man." She was prepared for that. Jefferson expression fell, and Regina and Elsa looked at each other with worried eyes. He takes a deep breath before settling on the best way to answer the question. "He can't go, Ginny. He is actually patient in the asylum." Regina stared at Jefferson like he had grown a second head. All the conversations they had he never, not once, said anything to her. Something wasn't adding up. "Why is he a patient?" Elsa asked the question plaguing Regina's head, the question she couldn't even utter. Her tongue felt heavy in her mouth, her mind reeling with the countless of possibilities that might have made Robin land in such a place.
Jefferson didn't have the words or the courage to say why. In some way, it affected Regina as well. Not because of a one-time shared kiss but something else entirely. But there was no use to keep it hidden anymore, Jefferson realized that maybe he should have said something sooner so Regina could deal with coming here better. "He was accused of murdering his wife… it had the same pattern as…" his voice trailed off not daring to say what could trigger Regina.

But Regina made the connection rather quickly. She began swallowing hard and felt anger simmering up like champagne.

"Jefferson," Regina said lowly, her voice coated in the anger that began growing more and more.

"It had the same pattern as Daniels murder." When he finally said it Regina felt her world collapsing around her. The air was too thick to breathe and she felt her lungs close, she was pretty sure that at any moment she would have a panic attack if she didn't control her breathing but it was hard, the news knocked her down hard.

Sensing her distress, Jefferson quickly stood and sat at her side and hugged her hard. She buried her face into his chest trying to control the sobs that were leaving her body without her permission. The words left her completely while she tried to fully grasp her best friend words.

Robin killed the love of her life, he killed Daniel without mercy, without touching his heart. Not only did he kill the love of her life but in the process he murdered her heart and for what? He made of Regina a martyr, a person incapable of loving again.

Jefferson looked at Elsa with eyes full of sorrow and in that moment he knew perfectly that his revelation was going to change Regina's life forever.
Chapter 2

The Greek word for return is nostos. Algos means suffering. So nostalgia is the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return.

— Milan Kundera, Ignorance

lxXlx

Both of them dismounted the horse, they found themselves rather agitated after a very long ride. Daniel was pretty privileged. He worked at the animal shelter and from there he borrowed Rocinante, the beautiful and majestic black horse that was found wandering through Storybrooke’s streets. It was quite the situation but Daniel, as the caring soul he truly is, managed to calm the beast. When Regina met Rocinante, she instantly fell in love. She always loved horses, ever since she was a little girl. The memories of her early years learning how to ride still very much close to her heart.

After what it felt like forever of catching her breath, Regina finally looked at her surrounding she gasped. They were standing in the middle of a breathtaking meadow. The sun was shining in all its splendor making the alluring flowers vibrate with colors and the slight breeze caressing the tree branches, giving them mesmerizing and carefree movements.

Daniel tied Rocinante to one on the trees and caressed his head before picking up the picnic basket that was on top of the enticing horse. Not quite understanding, or rather trying to take it all in, Regina frowned slightly. Maybe he was just trying to spend as much time possible before they made their separate ways? It was most likely the case. After all, Regina was heading for New York and Daniel for Ohio. Long distance relationship are a hassle but if there were two people that could handle it, they could.

After the strange look Regina gave Daniel, he simply chuckled and continued on to accommodate the blanket and settled the picnic basket on top of it.

"What is all of this about?" Regina asked, she knew Daniel was really dedicated to her and she loved him for that even more. They have been in a relation for two years now and he always knew how to surprise her, even now when they were about to put some distance between them. He was always there for her, good, bad and the worse. Whatever the situation, she knew Daniel wouldn’t fail her. But the future was still uncertain.

Daniel gave her a side smile making her heart beat frantically.
"What? Can't I be thoughtful with my beautiful girlfriend?" he asked teasing her.

Regina squinted her eyes and tilt her head to the side in disbelief.

"Don't be silly Daniel. You know I love it when you get all prince charming on me. It's just that you had never brought me here before." She looked at her boyfriend who was trying to open a bottle of wine. His eyes locked with her for a moment.

"Stealing alcohol from your father again?" She asked while laughing. He just shrugged his shoulders.

"You know it," he laughed. "I just wanted something to celebrate with." He simply explained while taking two small glasses and serving the blood like color liquor.

"And may I ask, what are we celebrating today?" She asked curiously, brow arched.

Daniel drank the contents of his glass, shifting his gaze to the flower-patterned blanket. She then knew he was nervous.

"Daniel..." she called to him conspicuously.

"Try it, is really good." He said avoiding the topic but only for a slight moment.

Regina took a sip, her eyes never leaving him. She had to agree with him, the wine was really good but her curiosity was at its peak, so she placed the glass on top of the picnic basket and looked at him straight into his blue eyes.

"Daniel, What's wrong? You're nervous I can sense it."

Daniel breathed in heavily, yes he was nervous. He rubbed his hand over his jeans, most likely sweaty. He got up all of a sudden and started walking away from her. Regina couldn't understand what was happening, so with a clumsy movement she stood up and followed Daniel. He stopped to appreciate his surrounding (he always took the time to take everything in) the landscape was
otherworldly for lack of a better way to describe it. You could see the mountains in the distance, a lake shining like it was made out of tiny diamonds and the sky was full of different and beautiful colors, the place was perfect, canvas worthy. Regina halted right behind him and was amaze with the sight in front of her. Never had she ever seen such a perfect sight before.

"This is amazingly beautiful." The young woman whispered.

Daniel nodded in agreement with her. He needed to find the perfect place for this moment, he wanted to give her a great memory of what he was about to do. He found that place one day he was riding Rocinante and the moment he saw all the magic that surrounded that meadow he knew it was time.

"Regina." He breathed out while turning on his heel to look at her. He took her hand in his, taking in a deep breath to muster his courage. "I want you to know that I love you, even though we're going to be apart really soon," he said making Regina's eyes go all glassy. "I wanted so much for this day to be really special for the both of us, and," Daniel laughed a little bit "it has been a little hard, I want everything to be perfect when I'm with you, but..." Regina chuckled and shook her head.

"Daniel, I am not understanding you at all right now." She sincerely told him, feeling a bit nervous all of a sudden. Somehow it felt like he was saying goodbye and her heart was squirming inside her chest. Letting go of Daniel isn't something she would like but she also wouldn't make him stay with her if he isn't happy. Though the former may not be the case, still she worries.

"Regina Mills, my Regina..." Daniel breathed in and out quickly, biting his lip afterward. "I love you," he sighed and continue with his monolog. "...And I know perfectly that we have a long way to go, but we have so much to live. I know that we have a lot of growing up to do and we have so much to learn. But I also know that no matter the distance, no matter what, my heart will always belong to you and I believe that your will always belong to me. You are my true love, and that is why I want nothing more than to be with you forever. Doesn't matter that you are going to New York and I am leaving for Ohio, that is only a three hours distance." Both of them laughed. Regina washed her tears away with the back of her hand, tears that were falling fast but they were from happiness and she didn't actually mind them. "Who cares about distance? Our love can conquer any trial, nothing will get in our way. True love can overcome anything."

Regina was sure her heart was about to explode. Many emotions course through her heart thanks to Daniel. Loving him was easy, especially when he talked like this. Heart and soul were devoted to him, there was no space for anyone else. Just thinking about the distance made her heart ached with longing but in order to make their dreams come true, some sacrifices needed to be made. He was going to study Veterinary, he always loved animals. She was accepted in one of the most prestigious universities in the country. They were just finishing high school but Regina knew in her heart that Daniel was her one and only love, in her heart she just knew.
"Regina, I have a very important question I need to ask." He said while opening a little satin box where inside reside a white gold band with an emerald stone. "I want you to be my partner for life. Would you give me the honor to call you my wife?"

Regina looked at him perplexed. Both of them were barely 18, they were young and not everyone thought about marriage at such a young age. Regina actually really didn't care, her relation with Daniel was mature and truly honest. They understood each other's dreams better than anyone else could even come to comprehend. It was like a fairy tale, a love so pure and real that could become timeless. She trusted him with everything, and he trusted her as well. Regina has never known another man, and she has no desire for it either. Daniel and she were a sure thing.

Daniel didn't know another woman than her. He was a determined. He was the type of guy that would accomplish anything he set his mind to. They both shared dreams and goals, plus they were always present in each other's mind future. They knew that in the long run, they would end up together, married and with an amazing family, but it wasn't something Regina felt that was going to happen right away, especially now that they were going to start the university.

Regina stood quite for a long beat, so long that Daniel couldn't take it, he got scared thinking the worst. She blinked when he started walking away from her, walking towards the picnic area where he started packing up everything.

"Daniel," Regina yelled, but he ignored her and continue packing up. "Daniel!" She yelled. With a few strides, Regina managed to reach him, grabbing him by the wrist. He stopped his movements, and she took the opportunity to take the glass he was holding in his hand and placed it inside the picnic basket.

"What?" He said clearly a little mad and hurt that she actually didn't react to his question the way he hoped. Honestly, he felt ashamed.

"Daniel, my love..." Regina took his face between her small hands, trying to placate him with a smile.

Daniel leaned away from her touch with a little too much force in his movement, he didn't dare to look at her. She still hasn't answered his question and dread began accumulating in the pit of his stomach.

Why was she torturing him this way? Does she not believe in their love like he does?
"Regina, please… I don't want to talk about it. I'm sorry…” But Daniel didn't finish his sentence.

Regina stood in front of him, and taking his face between her hands, again, and with force, she crashed her lips against his. Daniel opened his eyes in surprise, but after the initial shock, he responded to her kiss with agility. Regina moaned when Daniel picked her up, and she immediately rounded him with her legs. Slender digits tangled into Daniel's hair causing him be more pressed to her lips and to her body. They stumbled a little and fell on top of the blanket. Regina's back hit the floor and Daniel kneeled in front of her. Regina took his face to her again, kissing him sweetly before breaking away from him. They both were panting, lips were swollen, and they could feel their heartbeats in their throats. She dared to look at him, she could see how his eyes were shining, there was confusion, desire, and shame. Daniel backed away from her but she tightened her hold on him.

"Daniel, give me my ring." She said while smiling brightly.

Daniel looked at her confusion tugging in his eyes but he obliged. It took him a bit to understand what was happening. He reached for his back pocket provoking her to untangled her legs from his waist. Daniel kneeled in front of her and taking her hand he made Regina sit down straight. "I do accept to be your wife." Regina grinned and added, "You are too silly to believe I would say otherwise."

Daniel laughed, relief coursing through his veins. "Let me tell you something. You scared the hell out of me." He confessed taking her left hand and making the ring rest on her finger. Perfect fit.

Regina just shook her head giving Daniel a lopsided smile. She raised her hand where the ring was resting adorning her finger in all its splendor. She noted how the rays of the sun made the emerald shine a bit. The brunette bite her lower lip, she wanted to yell how happy she was, she just couldn't believe she was going to marry Daniel, her Daniel the love of her life, her happiness, and stability.

Regina stretched her hands and grab Daniel by the lap of his shirt making him stumble on top of her for a passionate kiss.

"Of course, I accept to be your wife! Of course, I want to be with you forever. What the hell were you thinking?"

Daniel was about to answer but she just put her arms around his neck and kissed him again. Their bodies pressed together and the only thing they wanted was to be pressed skin to skin.
Regina was so determined to always be with him. The day Daniel proposed was the greatest day of her life. She took one of the most honest and love filled decisions she had ever taken. Many plans traced, so many goals to be reached together and that made the future exciting for her. Emotions and adrenaline were taking over their bodies. They kissed passionately, but the kiss was filled with something more, it was filled with promise.

Regina felt how the scene around her was changing, how her heart went from warm and hope to dread and fear, an infinite fear, fear of happiness, pain instead of relief.

The peace that rounded was escaping her hands like grains of sand, and that feeling was making her body tremble with even more fear.

Regina opened the door to the animal shelter in search of her fiance. When she didn't see him at the reception area she immediately thought that he was at the back feeding the animals so she decided to wait. She leaned on the counter waiting for him. It was strange of him to leave the reception alone especially for so long. Regina looked at her wristwatch and noticed that she been standing there for the past 20 minutes with no signals of him. She looked from the front door to the back one curiosity taking place in her, curiosity that won her over and she decided to go to the back room where Daniel most likely was being distracted by puppies. For some reason, it always happened. When Regina put her hand on the doorknob she suddenly felt her heart drop. The sensation that she was feeling was overwhelming but it wasn't strong enough to make her back away. When she walked through the long hallway she noticed the animals were nervous and others were barking. The place was vast, there was a room that looked like a hospital room, where the veterinarians took the sick and injured animals. At first, she didn't think he would be in was weird for Daniel since only the veterinarian was allowed inside but never the less she gave it a try.

The moment her eyes fell upon the ominous door a chill ran down her spine making her shiver. There was no explanation for it. The room wasn't too cold so it didn't garner such a reaction. Regina pushed down the feeling, thinking that maybe there was a draft somewhere. When she opened the door, something made her stop. The brunette stepped on something, something liquid that was making her converse rather squeaky and heavy. When she shifted her to the floor, dark eyes opened like saucers. Her white converse was stained with something red like the wine she drank a few days ago with which both Regina and Daniel celebrated their engagement. Her face was cover by horror when she opened the door wider. What she saw there made her screamed so loud, the heartbreaking type of scream that could be heard throughout the whole town.

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Regina's eyes opened with a start, heart hammering hard against her chest. Her body was covered by a thin layer of sweat and her hair got stuck onto the skin of her neck and cheeks. It was Regina's heart that suffered the most from the nightmares involving blood and Daniel dead corpse. It was beating so fast that she was afraid it would break out of her chest (maybe that way having that nightmare would hurt less), the dull ache on the back of her skull announced a pretty bad headache for her. She looked around, the room was dark the only light that streamed inside was the moon's
through the window. Regina swallowed hard and tried a few breathing exercises to calm the storm inside of her. She was aware that returning to Storybrooke would give her nightmares once again but it has been such a long time since she had one of those episodes that she nearly has forgotten, nearly being the operating word. Remembering Daniel body surrounded by his blood… she shook her head while shutting her eyes closed, she hated that image in her head. She hated the fact that was her last memory of Daniel.

Regina felt uncomfortable; the heat was driving her mad the silence in the room was too loud. She threw the sheet that was covering her body to the side, got out of bed and left the room. Jefferson and Elsa invited her to stay with them while her house was being thoroughly clean and fumigated. It has been years since someone stayed there and even though someone came to clean it from time to time the truth was that it wasn't in the condition to be lived in. Besides, staying there right of the bat was a pretty bad idea. It was a big house filled with too many memories that she actively taught herself to forget in order to survive the rest of her life. Memories of her parents, friends, and Daniel.

The brunette tiptoed into to the kitchen and opened the fridge in search of a bottle of water. Even now when she closed her eyes she still could see the perturbing image of Daniel's lifeless body. It was a permanent photo etched into her mind, a photo that no matter how much she tried to erase it always came back to haunt her. His body completely mutilated, drained of all its blood. What kind of monster would do such a horrible thing? While Regina was asking herself a million and one question in her head the light to the kitchen were turned one and she saw how her best friend lean against the counter.

"What's wrong?" Jefferson asked between yawns.

Regina reached for the bottle and opened it, taking a long gulp of it before turning around to her friend with red eyes and a yawn. The brunette took a step closer to the kitchen island, placing the bottle over the smooth surface.

"Nothing." She simply said. Trying to not look too affected by her nightmare but fully aware that Jefferson wouldn't actually eat up her answer. If there was someone in this world that knew her well it was him, and of course Elsa.

Jefferson tilted his head and looked at her intently. Jefferson knew better than to believe her initial answer.

"Don't lie to me." He simply said, looking more alert now than he did a few moments ago. The man crossed his arms over his chest, a brow arched up waiting for the real answer to his question.
Regina sighed in defeat. It was quite useless to try and hide something from Jefferson. Like her, he was well versed in reading human behavior, plus there's the added bonus that they've known each other from as long as they can remember. She is pretty sure her mother has a photo of them in pampers. Speaking of which she should get that photo to put it in the slide show she is making for his wedding. Elsa would get a good laugh out of that. "I…" Regina released an over tired breath, "I had a nightmare." She explained while sitting in one of the stool that was in the kitchen island. "I saw his body all mangled up and drained of blood." Chewing on her lip, Regina picked up the bottle of water and began playing with it.

Jefferson pursed his lips into a thin line and furrowed his brow. He knew perfectly that topic of conversation was a really sensitive one to be having at the late am, especially after what he had told her that afternoon.

"I should have kept quiet." He said feeling guilty while shaking his head.

"No Jeff, it isn't that exactly," she explained while talking a greedy breath of air through her nose, even her breathing was shaking like jello. "Ever since he died, I had the same nightmare over and over again." She explained hanging her head in sadness and sorrow. "and now with Robin… I just don't know what to make of it."

Regina lifted her gaze and Jefferson saw her teary eyes and it only broke his heart.

"No sweetie," he commented while stretching over the counter his hand to cover Regina's giving her a light squeeze. "I shouldn't have said anything, not yet at least…" He said looking directly into his eyes, he knew he had to tell her eventually. "I knew that coming here, to Storybrooke was going to affect you too much. I should have thought of it first, I never intended to hurt you, Regina."

Regina looked at him surprised, no! How does he dare to say something like that? For Gods, it was her best friends wedding and she dreamed of being the maid of honor, she needed to be there with them, for them. Jefferson couldn't feel guilty for bringing her back to Storybrooke. Regina had to do at some point in her life and maybe it was better to do it sooner. She stood up and rounded the counter so she could hug him.

"Don't be silly Jeff. This is not your fault, this is just something that I haven't processed completely, it is long and complicated." She said while hiding her face into his chest. Jefferson put his arms around her and kissed her on top of her head. "But I have to go through it for the sake of my sanity."

"Regina, honey I will understand if you want to leave, Elsa and I…"
"No! Don't you dare finish that sentence." She said taking a few steps back away from him, a frown etched onto her features. "I wouldn't miss your wedding for anything in the world Jeff, my two best friends are getting married, that doesn't happen often."

She sighed tiredly, "You just need to understand me. I close my eyes and all I can see is his lifeless body but If I have to endure being here to see my friends being happy I will."

"You don't have to just endure it. You have to allow yourself to go through that pain. It is the only way to get over it." He said firmly, eyes locked together to make his words stronger, so they stick. "You have to get over it Regina, it has been more than 10 years. You can't let that stop your life, or dictate it for that matter. Daniel wouldn't want it that way, Daniel would have wanted you to continue and be happy to give yourself a second chance to love again. He clearly wouldn't want you to live in sadness for almost 13 years." He said desperately.

Jefferson wanted so bad for her to understand it, but it was complicated. Regina was the type of person that was too stubborn for her own good and that sometimes can become a problem. He felt guilty that she returned to the one place he knew well she was going to suffered. He felt even worst that her opinion on Robin had changed (or maybe not?), he was his best friend after all and everything that was happening to him had Jefferson on edge. But Regina needed to understand that life goes on, no matter how horrible was that one moment in her life that made her lose all hope.

She looked at Jefferson surprised, she could pinpoint the desperate tone in laced into his words. Jefferson didn't understand, nobody could ever understand her. Jefferson didn't lose the love of her life in the cruelest of ways, Jefferson didn't understand the way illusions, happiness and plans for the future were completely destroyed along with her heart. He just didn't understand how it felt to have your heart utterly destroyed. He lost a friend, but she lost her last line to happiness. Her true love.

"You don't understand, you'll never understand," She said expanding the distance between the two of them. "You don't I've felt all these years. What I saw, what I lived, it doesn't remotely compare with the worst of memories nor the worst of physical pain." She expressed desperately on the verge of crying.

Jefferson looked at her for a few seconds, as she washed away the tears that couldn't be held in any longer. He sighed heavily and shut his eyes hard. No, he couldn't understand her pain, but he knew someone who did.

" You are right Regina," he said looking at her. "I don't understand, but I know someone who does..." Jefferson trailed off, no more words were needed. Regina was smart enough to make the connection all on her own.
Regina looked at him first not understanding his words, but upon realization, her eyes widen and a snarl covered her lips.

"Jefferson, you don't pretend…"

He confirmed with a nod.

Regina stood quietly looking at him.

"Robin," he breathed out. "he went through it as well. If there's someone who could understand the pain you've felt for the last thirteen years it is him. The only difference would be that the pain is fresher for him."

Jefferson looked at her intently waiting for a reaction, any reaction from Regina. Whether it was anger, disgust or simply walked out of the room, but she did nothing for a very long moment. The brunette looked at him in shock and disbelief. Out of all of the things, Jefferson could have suggested, visiting Daniel's killer wasn't something she could even fathom. Though she is having a hard time believing that he actually was the killer, the possibility was there. And it wasn't like he didn't have a motive. Regina ran her hand through her short locks, shut her eyes and shook her head frantically. Was Jefferson actually asking her to talk to Robin? To the person that most likely murdered the love of her life? Jefferson was delusional. How in hell was he doing this to her?

Jefferson didn't do or say anything without a motive. He was organized and even though people tend to call him crazy for becoming the director of the Asylum at such a young age, the truth was that he made big improvements in the facilities. That and the fact that he had been working with troubled people for a very long time and the fact that he is actually telling her to go and visit Robin, means there's more that meets the eye, right? If it was any other person he wouldn't have suggested this but this is Robin, wasn't that a conflict of interest for the both of them? Her head hurts now more than from the moment she woke up and she needs to take something for the pain before she goes mad herself and ends up as Robin's neighbour in the asylum.

"Jeff..." she said dangerously low, eyes full of warning.

"Regina, I don't think he is the culprit. You are the only one who can help me, help me to discover the truth and set him free."

Ha! There it is. She just knew that there was something else he wasn't telling her. Regina frowned and gave him an incredulous look. "That is why you offered me a job in the asylum in the first place? Because of Robin?"

Stricken with a bit of guilt, Jefferson nodded, but before she could say anything else, he spoke.
"Partly, yes. But I also offered you a job because it is better than the one you have in New York, plus I'd get to have you close. I know Elsa doesn't want to part with you after we decide where we are living. I cannot leave Storybrooke and she has a secured position here but she'll be sad having you so far away."

Oh boy, he made a good point but that isn't what they are talking about at the moment. They will round that later on, for now.

"Jefferson, I can't just go into the institution to simply visit, it doesn't work that way and you know it." She shrugged.

"You'll have to go in as a psychologist, I know." He wanted to smile. Why in the world did he want to smile? Jefferson had an ace under his sleeve.

"There's months worth of permission I need to get in order to visit. I just can't flash my degree and they will let me in." Regina picked up the bottle of water and began drinking a hearty portion.

Jefferson sat straighter, "We can cut through red tape through Gold."

With that Regina almost choked on her water, coughing after she forcefully gulped down the liquid. "No."

"Too late." Jefferson simply said to which she frowned.

"You sneaky son of a b-"

"So you'll do it?" He said, Regina groaned.

"Do I have another choice?"

He shook his head no.

"I'm going to kill you, Jeff."

The turmoil inside was horrible. On one hand, she got to see Robin, reproach him for all the pain he had caused and finally close this chapter in her life that had caused her unimaginable pain. But on the other hand, she got to see Robin. She got to see his beautiful blue eyes, got to remember that one kiss they shared long ago. She got to remember the hope she felt the moment their lips met. Regina had never told anyone that one of the main reasons, apart from Daniel, that she left Storybrooke was Robin. To actually feel like she could like Robin in any other way that wasn't friends scared the shit
out of her. If she were, to be honest with at least herself, it truly felt like she was betraying Daniel and knowing what she knows now about Robin she is glad that she left before her heart was even more compromise.

"Fine but..." She swallowed thickly, "I'm not responsible for the reaction I might have."
"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depths of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more."
—Alfred Tennyson

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The sun began to shine with the promise of a new and great day. Even though she was back in Storybrooke, it didn't deny the excitement she was feeling. It was, after all, Jefferson's and Elsa's wedding day. Regina got off bed quite excited about the ceremony that was going to happen in a few hours. Her best friends were getting married. She felt overjoyed and nervous at the same time and she wasn't the one getting married. Thoughts ran through her head. Memories of Daniel running wildly from this end to the other provoking a pang in her heart reminding her that she never got or will get to feel the real excitement of a wedding day, of her being a bride. She shook her head, collecting herself once more. There was no point of feeling sorry for herself. The last thing she needed was to ruin their wedding day. They were nervous as it is already without Regina's emotions making the situation even worse.

Elsa and Jefferson had agreed to keep the tradition going and be apart the night before and Regina quickly told Elsa that she could stay back at her house down Miffin street. The platinum blonde tried to convince her that they could just stay at Granny's knowing well how much Regina must feel by stepping into her house but the brunette just shrugged it off. After all, Elsa would need a big space to get ready and Granny's just wasn't big enough. It didn't take too long before Regina had her friend agreeing with her. Alone in that big house, Regina would probably feel lost, but with her friend then things wouldn't be so bleak.

"Elsa is time to get up, today is the big day," Regina yelled from the other side of Elsa's door.

When she didn't answer Regina's more than loud wake-up call, the brunette opted on entering the room. She found Elsa curled up to her side taking deep breaths apparently to calm herself down.

"Nervous?" asked Regina taking a few strides to reach Elsa bedside. The blonde took one last deep breath and sat against the headboard.

"Is it that noticeable?" Elsa inquired. Regina sat in front of her, legs tuck under her thighs as she then
proceeded on taking one of Elsa's hands in hers.

"Pretty much, I could hear your heavy breathing all the way to the door." Regina smiled a little. Elsa dropped her gaze to their hands and took another deep breath.

"Are you having second thoughts?" Regina asked giving a light squeeze to Elsa's hand. When the blonde shook her head no Regina felt relief.

"I am just afraid 'Gina." Regina tilted her head to get a better view of Elsa's face. She could see the excitement and happiness but under all of that, she could also all the fear that she was desperately trying to hide, to which she failed miserably.

"Afraid of what?" Regina just asked.

"I am afraid that I won't be enough for Jefferson. I know he loves me and all but what if it doesn't last forever? What if he discovers that he doesn't love me like he thought? That maybe he and I weren't meant to be." Hearing those words from Elsa's mouth made Regina cringe. How can she say something like that? Jefferson was head over heels for Elsa from the very first time he lay eyes on her. Thinking otherwise was rather insane.

"Hey sweetie look at me." Elsa did as Regina told her, "Jefferson loves you and I am pretty sure that his love is forever. You guys are perfect together," Regina brushed away a stray tear that was going down Elsa's cheek and grinned. "I am so happy that my two best friends in this world found each other because that assures me that you both will be endlessly happy." Elsa smiled at Regina's words and threw herself to her to give her a hug. Elsa always felt safe in Regina's embrace and the brunette couldn't deny that a hug was exactly what she needed in these tough times. With everything that had been happening lately, it was nice to enjoy the simplicity of a warm hug.

"You always know what to say." Elsa moved back to see Regina's face "Thank you so much. I love you." Regina smiled a bright smile that could illuminate the whole room.

"I love you too sweetie. Now we should start getting ready, you don't want to be late to your own wedding." Elsa's lips curled into a bright smile as she stood up from the bed with a firm nod. Forgotten were the thoughts of not being good enough. They began both getting ready for what it was most likely the most hectic day in all Storybrooke.

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The ceremony was absolutely beautiful. Regina cried, tears like a waterfall falling down her cheek endlessly but she truly didn't care. It was happiness pouring out of her in waves, and the awe she felt deep within her soul couldn't even begin to be described.

"I'm so happy for the both of you, really." Regina, commented to Jefferson and Elsa whose smiles never seem to falter not for a second. They both took each one of Regina's hand in theirs and tugged her into a hug.

"This is all thanks to you." Jefferson told Regina who didn't seem ready to let her go.

"All I did was introduced you guys," Regina said head buried into Jefferson's chest "the rest was up to you." She motions between them. Elsa who was now away from the embrace put one hand behind Regina's head.

"Well, that doesn't matter. The point is that our happiness comes in part thanks to you." Elsa smiled at Regina who finally took a few steps back to see them both.

"Whatever makes the both of you happy. Now you two should greet the guest is not polite to stand here talking to me. I'll be around." With that Regina turned around to see the entire room full guest. "There is a lot of people here, start mingling." Elsa and Jefferson walked passed her and a smile tugged on Regina's face.

Regina was looking around, watching everyone talking, drinking and dancing. The atmosphere was so joyful that for a moment Regina let it take over her. Her eyes fell on Mary Margaret who was standing talking to someone Regina didn't quite know, but that didn't stop her from walking to Mary and greeting the brunette.

Regina put a hand on Mary's elbow and the pixie-cut brunette turned around to see to whom it belong to. A smile graced her face when she got sight of Regina.

"Regina. We haven't talked since the day you arrived," Mary excused herself with the person she was talking to and turned around to see Regina "It's a pity I've been looking forward to talking to you." Regina tucked one of the loose strands of her behind her eyes and gave an apologetic smile to Mary. It really wasn't her intention, but Regina had so much to do preparing for Elsa and Jefferson's wedding she, and it was the maid of honor, after all, it was her duty to keep everything perfect for the day. Besides Regina felt so much joy helping out her best friends.
"I'm so sorry. I have been so involved in wedding planning that I actually tuned everything else out." Mary gave a reassuring smile that Regina found herself returning.

"Don't worry I noticed and I have to say the ceremony was beautiful. It is so nice to see Jefferson so happy; I think the only other thing that could make him even happier is you deciding to stay." Regina cringed at the idea of staying in Storybrooke to which Mary took notice. The other woman lips curled into an apologetic smile. "I know is not a possibility, but you are always welcome. Maybe before you leave we can do a little gathering for old times’ sake." Regina didn't deny the appeal of such an idea but the mere thought of reuniting with old friends without Daniel made her heart hurt like most things lately. Taking a deep breath but concealed enough to Mary's eyes she gave a slight nod.

"That sounds like a good idea, but it has to be on another occasion. I am leaving tomorrow, and I can leave my office unattended any longer. Besides I'm pretty sure everyone here sees me like a stranger, I've been gone for almost 13 years after all." Mary took her hand and squeezed it.

"That's not true," she stated, "you have been missed." Before she could say anything else another voice interrupted the two brunette's conversation.

"Your were greatly missed." A deep voice said. Mary tilted her head to the side to see who was behind of Regina when she saw John she smiled.

"Hey, John." The pixie-cut brunette greeted. The big man smiled at her.

John, Robin's little brother. Regina suddenly felt a little dry to the bone. She couldn't face the brother of the man that was the first and only suspect of Daniel's murder, but she couldn't find it in herself to walk away from him. So she did the polite thing, she turned on her heel to confront the man. She stood with shock when she saw Roland in the man arms. She immediately smiled to the little one when she heard him called her 'Gina'. Both Mary and John were really surprised.

"Roland. How are you, handsome little boy?" Roland giggled at her just like he did when they first met, that only made her heart soar more.

"I am good, how about you 'Gina?" Regina took one of his little hands and smiled.

"I'm great, thank you for asking sweetie." Roland took his free hand and put it against Regina's cheek. The gesture took her by surprise but she liked it and couldn't explain herself why.
"It's good to see you, Regina. You are as beautiful as ever." John commented. That took Regina out of little daydream and back to reality.

"Good to see you as well John." Regina didn't know if she was being honest or not but she wasn't about to be rude to the man. John was always attentive with her and he was always willing to help her out.

"Looks like little Roland here is taken with you. Doesn't surprise me though, his father was always taken with you, we all could see that a mile away." Regina scrunched her brows. She quite didn't understand John's comment. The big man took notice on Regina's reaction and shook his head. "This little lad here is Robin's adorable son." Regina felt her lungs close off, and her hands began to shake. A son. That wasn't something she was expecting. Mills stood there motionless for a moment that felt like an eternity. It wasn't until Elsa and David them that Regina seemed to snap out of it.

"Regina?" Elsa called, grabbing her gently by the elbow. The brunette took a shuttering breath before turning to her friend. "I have something to talk to you about." Regina nodded and began to move away, grateful that she wasn't in the presence of John any longer.

John called after her before she left and so she turned around a question look in her face.

"Regina, can we talk tomorrow before you leave? Jefferson already told me that you don't plan on staying more but I really have something important to tell you." Regina examined him; his eyes were shining with something she couldn't quite put her finger on.

"Meet me tomorrow at Granny's in the morning." Regina turned on her heels and resume walking beside Elsa.

While walking to a mildly secluded place Regina notice someone that she really didn't expect to see. It did surprise her when she saw his name on the guest list but wasn't quite sure if he would attend. But there he was, Archibald Hooper. Regina remembered how he and Jefferson had a little problem, but it appears that they buried the hatched. It wasn't something really grave, but Jefferson was or rather is passionate and used to make things bigger than they really appear to be.

Regina shook her head lightly and directed her gaze to Elsa again. Apparently, Elsa been talking all this time while Regina was too immerse on her own thoughts. She still couldn't believe that someone who's a killer (It wasn't confirmed just yet, speculations about Marian's death had been made and the authorities haven't confirmed anything. But they have Robin in custody since he was the only suspect they had,) had such an adorable son. Robin has always been pro-family so doing something so atrocious that could separate him from his son didn't make sense. Then again killing Daniel didn't
make sense to her either.

"Regina, did you even listen to a word I said?" Elsa enquired at little annoyed that Regina was completely ignoring her.

"I'm sorry Elsie, I was just wondering when did Archie and Jefferson settle their differences." Elsa arched a perfect brow in Regina's direction and released a heavy sighed.

"You can ask him later you know. Anyway, did you hear what I told you?" Elsa asked again. Regina shook her head and Elsa just took a deep breath, she really hated when Regina when all blackout on her.

"I asked you about your thoughts on Jefferson proposition?" Regina looked at her confusion etched onto her face. Elsa blinked at her before continuing. "Working at the asylum here?"

"You know well is not in my best interest. I don't want to live here, and I especially don't want to work at the place where Daniel's murderer is." Regina's voice came out flat. Void of any type of emotions, the type of tone one may use when feeling emotionally drained.

Elsa knew that pushing the matter more would only make Regina mad. So, she let it be for the time being.

"But you Elsa you should accept it, you don't have to wait for me. I know well you want to be with Jefferson all the time, and you guys just got married. I think it's important that you guys be together." The brunette got closer and smile sadly to her friend. As much as it pains Regina to admit it, Elsa's future was her with her husband. Mills would miss her blonde friend, but she would absolutely hate herself if she was the reason why there's distance between husband and wife.

"I will be fine; you don't have to worry about me. Go and be happy that is all I want for the both of you." Regina smiled at her but it didn't reach her eyes, she tried hard to not give the blonde, expression but she was losing the only company she had ever known since Daniel. Friends like Elsa were hard to come by but Regina finds solace in the fact that at least she will be happy and loved.

Loved that it will make Regina feel good in the long run.

"Well at least stay for a few days. When Jefferson and I return from our honeymoon, I can go to New York with you and finish the cases I still have running before working here. I don't want you to go alone." It was clear that Elsa wasn't going to take 'no' for an answer, so Regina took a deep breath.
"Fine, but only one more week," she looked around, eyes landing on Mary Margaret and David that seemed as close as ever. Maybe that little gathering will be possible after all. "I don't think I can manage more."

Elsa smiled in victory.

"That is all I'm asking." Elsa glanced at Jefferson who was looking at Elsa, smiling like an idiot. It was adorable. "Now if you excuse me I have a very handsome husband who is literally calling me with his eyes." Regina rolled her eyes. She thought that Elsa and Jefferson were hopeless romantics, but that made her even happier.

"Go and enjoy your day, you guys deserve it." Regina embraced Elsa, shutting her eyes close for a moment, finding herself being tethered back to earth. "I am really happy for you guys and I, most likely, won't ever get tired of saying it." Elsa took a step back to see Regina's teary eyes.

"I know you will be happy as well 'Gina, I have hope." Regina took a deep breath.

"That doesn't seem possible, but you know I am content with my life. I get to help people and that gives me a sense of accomplishment." The blonde eyed her for a beat.

"That may be Regina, but that isn't happiness. You're forgetting that your heart needs to feel."

"My heart feels, Elsa." Regina bites her lip for a moment, before finally speaking again. "It feels sadness, hatred, loath and hurt. My heart has been wounded for the last 13 years. I was lucky to have felt love at all and for that I'm grateful." Elsa shook her head. It was more than obvious that in wasn't the first time hearing these words. But it was the only answer Regina could give. She wasn't in the business of finding love again or forgiving the person that killed the one man that meant the world to her, no. She was sick and tired of the pain even though it still was the only thing keeping her from spiraling down the rabbit hole.

"I don't believe that. I've seen you have genuine good feelings, but this isn't a conversation to have now." Regina agreed with her on that. What is the point of ruining a perfectly good day with her feelings? It wasn't about her, it was about Elsa and Jefferson.

"Good. You can now resume going to your husband."
"This isn't over, not by a long shot." Regina rolled her eyes and Elsa began to walk back to Jefferson, leaving a raw Regina behind. The less attention she puts to her feelings the most likely she'll go numb. Going through the motions of the days was the only way to ensure herself at least that.

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The rest of the reception ran smoothly.

Regina didn't have to worry about having a heart to heart conversations or even had the time to be attacked by memories. She consumed herself completely on her task as Maid of honor, making Elsa and Jefferson rest of the day perfect.

After they sneak out without being noticed Regina gave the green light to start packing up the place. By the end of the night, she was exhausted to the max but that only made her happier. She was part of one of the most important moments of her friends' lives. When she bid goodbye to everyone she made her way to Jefferson house.

The house was empty; it was poetic to be honest, empty just like her heart was feeling. She walked through the hollow corridors and welcomed the darkness that was all around. She wasn't scared of letting it consume her heart but she also knew that she shouldn't let that darkness take a hold of it. There's so much darkness one person can actually take. Regina made peace with the idea of not letting love again in her life but she couldn't turn into a monster. She found herself constantly asking herself why she became a psychologist, why she was trying to help others when she couldn't even help herself, but she always came to the same conclusion; she knew that would make her Daniel proud. The best way to live a life Daniel would be proud of was to make her dreams come true, being a psychologist was one of them.

She finally reached her bedroom and the moment she entered she threw herself on the bed. Her whole body ached and begged for rest, so she obliged. Regina fell instantly asleep without any other thought in her head.

"Are you sure about this?" He repeated with a half grin, though worry still was clear in his face. Regina simply nodded, pulling him closer, wanting to feel his heat and his lips on hers.
"I haven't been surer about anything else in my entire life. This, this I know for sure." Regina grinned, taking a single step back to looks at Daniel. "I think my parents love you more than me. I don't think they would object to us wanting to get married."

Daniel rolled his eyes, taking her hand, "I know but..." He bites his lip before saying what was on his mind, "I'm afraid of their reaction. Especially your dad. I'm taking his little girl away." Regina couldn't help laughing. It was just like Daniel to take everyone's feelings into consideration. It just made him the more lovable.

"New York is doing that." Regina said with a smirk. "They love you, I love you." Words flow out of her mouth as water courses down the river path. Her feelings couldn't be clearer. Regina's destiny is to walk forever beside Daniel and she just wanted to share that happiness with everyone, starting with her parents'.

"I will always love you, Regina."

Regina woke up with a smile on her face. Some nights were better than others and this one at least was greeted with a different image of Daniel. She was still fuzzy from her sleep, but she did remember that she needed to go to Granny's and talk to John.

Many thoughts ran through her head, many questions began to formulate. What was so important that he wanted to talk to her? Was he going to tell the same thing that Jefferson said to her? That he didn't believe Robin to be the murderer? Regina in the almost thirteen years that have gone by she never had a face to pin the blame to and now having one is making pain grow even stronger. How could someone kill Daniel in that awful way? How could Robin do such a horrible thing? Daniel was well loved and respected in Storybrooke, heck even her mother, that sometimes seemed heartless, loved Daniel.

She scolded herself mentally, she needed it all the stability possible when talking to John. Yes she is human, and yes emotions are strong but she is also a professional and John is still a human being worried about his brother's future, so she was going to treat it like any other case.

She swiftly got out of bed and made her way to the bathroom, she needed to get ready physically but also mentally because she knew well that today was going to be one of those days that will stretch so much that even her emotions would become more skittish than usual.

Regina decided to walk instead of taking her black Mercedes to the diner. Walking was always the
best method for her to center herself, and right now she needs all the tranquility she could muster. When the diner was in her line of view she stopped completely in her tracks and took a deep breath.

"Let's get this over with." She just said to herself, while resuming her walk there.

When she entered the establishment, Lil' John was sitting on one of the booths that were farthest from the door. Before walking to him she scanned the whole room. Ruby was around busting some tables, Granny Lucas was talking to someone intently, Regina thought it was Leroy, she wasn't quite sure, Mary Margaret was having breakfast with her husband David and their little girl and a little boy that she couldn't see well. She saw some other people she didn't quite know. She gave Mary a smile and began to walk towards John. Better to face her demons now that she has a chance.

"Good morning." Greeted John with a smile plastered on his face, Regina reciprocated his with one of her own though she didn't feel like her own was genuine. They were to talk about God knows what and smiles weren't part of the package deal. Alas, she wasn't impolite enough to not return a simple smile.

"Good morning John." She as she sat down across from him. She quickly realized he was not with the Roland. "Where's Roland?" Regina asked, placing her purse right beside her and taking out her phone. She was expecting a call from either Jefferson or Elsa to know that they are alive and well. A friend's job never ends.

John sighed as he ran a hand over his tired face. The years or maybe was it the months? Hadn't been kind to the poor man. The bag under his eyes is a true testament to his lack of sleep and peace. Regina felt sorry. Worrying about siblings was taxing. She can't say she knows the feelings, as the only child she is, still many cases she had in the last decade about siblings had given her a pretty good outlook in some situations. She doesn't know if her knowledge covers Robin and John. "He's with Mary Margaret right now, she helped a lot lately, after all..." He trailed off, waving his hand in the air. Then abruptly changed the subject. "May I say you look as beautiful as ever?" Regina blushed at his compliment. The Locksley clan had a way to charm a lady. Not that she ever been charmed by either of them, especially Robin whose bright blue eyes had come across her thoughts many times before in the last thirteen years.

"I think you covered that base yesterday, dear." Regina said with a smirk on her face to hide the fact that those types of compliments were still foreign to her.

"Well forgive me but I haven't seen you in many years. I got a lot of compliments to give." He gave his own lopsided smile that was, as Regina remembers, a Locksley trademark.
"The Locksley boys, charming as ever." Regina simply said.

John's demeanor fell completely.

"I am sorry John, I didn't mean…” Regina words trailed off she really didn't know what to say. This situation was new to her.

John just shook his head.

"Don't worry about it. That just makes me think that you don't really believe Robin could murder someone." Regina scrunched her brows.

"I never said that."

"You don't have to. If there is someone on this earth that knows Robin like they know themselves, it's you." John said in a rather serious tone.

"I haven't seen or talked to him in years John. My opinion about him might be altered by that fact. Times changes people, and alters hearts." Regina simply stated. "You can't simply assume I'll be on his side."

"I don't believe that. You know well he wouldn't do anything to hurt you, even when you chose Daniel. The only thing he wanted is for you to be happy even if it wasn't with him." John's words were a knife to her heart. She hasn't forgotten Robin words when she made her decision. She always thought that if she met Robin before Daniel she would have chosen him but destiny had other things in mind and her feelings for Daniel were strong. She did, many times, imagined a life with Robin. She wondered if she had chosen Robin instead of Daniel would he had suffered the same fate as Daniel? Or... not, she can't think about this. The last thing Regina needed was to create a storm in her head. Her life was a big mess as it was without adding wild theories that would only serve to make her go insane.

"John, that's in the past. It's time to let it go."

"Just like you let go Daniel death?" John questioned.

Regina was pretty sure she was going to burst into tears. The way John talked let it believe that her eyes were expressing what he implied, there was something about the Locksley that were able to read her eyes like a book. It was a good ability but when used against her it was simply annoying.
"That is different. Daniel is dead, and I won't get to see him. I won't get love him anymore." Regina blinked back her tears, she wasn't about to show more vulnerability that she already had.

"But Robin is alive Regina, and he needs your help. I'm not saying that you need to love him because it's clear that your heart is still with Daniel. I am just asking for you to listen to me, to him." John took a deep breath, his emotions were getting the best of him and if he wanted Regina's help, he needs it to get a better hold of himself.

Regina bit her lower lip nervously. She felt like she was in a fork way. In one path there was the easy way out, leave Storybrooke and never look back to keep Daniel memories as they were for the last thirteen years. In the other path, there was Robin, she was curious to see him after all these years but knowing that he might have murder Daniel made her cringe into the deepest part of her soul. Staying implied battling her demon in more than daily basis, it meant confronting the truth, that even though she spent so much time wallowing in Daniel's memory it meant that she need it to let him go and that was something Regina was afraid off, forgetting was a curse but also was remembering.

What a situation.

Regina was about to replied to John's words when another voice snapped her attention from the conversation at hand.

"Good morning." David said casually with a smile that looked rather sad at the same time. Regina and John greeted him somewhat coldly, tension still lingering in the air thanks to the conversation they were having before the man interrupted them. David noticed it and opted on sitting down beside John. Robin's little brother looked at him with a confused expression. He was supposed to help Mary with the kids but when he just sat there, he just didn't know what to do or say.

David felt the heavy stare upon him and looked at the younger Locksley, "I had an emergency at the station, Mary told me she was going to be ok with the kids by herself." John nodded, then both of them look at the brunette expecting her to say something, anything. When she didn't speak, David took it upon himself to restart the conversation. "I am guessing you guys were talking about Robin?" It was more of a statement than a question. Regina nodded.

"Can- can I know…" Regina struggle a little trying to get the words out. "why is Robin your suspect?"

John and David looked at each other but it was David who answers her.
"Robin was found holding the murder weapon. He was kneeling in front to the bath tub where Marian's body was drained out of her. She was bathing in her blood." David said those words like he had been rehearsing them, Regina noticed but she didn't blame. She still remembered the day she found Daniel and after saying what she saw a million times word came automatically from her mouth.

Regina picked up a glass of water that was in front of her, Ruby brought it to her while she was having the conversation with John. Her throat felt dry and drinking water wasn't helping at all. It was like needles were going down her throat no matter how much liquid she drank, it still felt the same way.

"The fact that you found him holding the murder weapon doesn't mean he did it. There are so many factors to consider." Regina was surprised that those were the first ones to leave her mouth. John looked at her, hope shining in his eyes. "When Daniel died..." She lost her voice for a moment, trying to compose the emotions swirling inside of her, "...I was the one to find him and no one suspected of me." Why was she saying all of this? Was it true? Her mind and her heart were dictating two completely different things. It was insane that she, somehow, was defending Robin.

"I knew that you wouldn't believe that Robin could have done something so horrible." John took one of Regina's hands that were on top of the table. "You have to help him."

Regina wasn't even sure what she really believed anymore.

"I can't John. I'm leaving in a week. I'm sure Elsa can help you once she establishes herself here." Regina felt a pang in her heart when she dared to look at John crestfallen face.

"Besides Robin hasn't talked since that day and neither has Roland." David said flatly.

Roland's name caught her attention.

"Roland?" she asked a bit alarmed.

John stiffened, Regina could feel his blood run cold as he kept touching her hand. Something was amiss here. She was missing a vital piece of information.

"It seems like Roland witness his mother being murder." Regina's eyes opened wide that revelation. Such a young boy witnessing such a horrible tragedy can have a huge impact on him.
"Has Roland been getting help?" She asked. Truly worried about the fate of the little boy that managed to make her smile genuinely despite her better judgment. That boy didn't deserve to carry such a heavy burden on his shoulders.

"We have tried to make him talk but nothing has been working, well at least not until you arrive here." David answered, eyes locked on Regina's form.

It all made sense to Regina in that moment. The day she met Roland and Mary's words 'he doesn't take well to strangers.' Roland witness something no one should witness, especially not at such a young age. Makes sense that he would shut down completely and not speak. The horrors of relieving such a moment would take a toll on the small boy. It wouldn't be easy to make him speak. The fact that he spoke at least to her was progress but she isn't sure anyone else would be able to establish a relationship truly transparent for him to feel comfortable to speak. Kids can feel the bad intentions of other people. There must be something stopping him, someone that instilling fear in him, more fear than he already feels at the moment.

"You can't just make a little boy talk just because you want an answer, it takes time David. Kids are different than adults and their emotions have to be treated with more care you can possibly imagine. They are sensible and easily scare. It's all about trust and you know children don't trust easily." Regina was already feeling stressed out, the conversation was making her really weary even more knowing what that poor little kid has gone through.

"Well he seems to trust you, why don't you talk to him?" John asked Regina in a pleading tone.

"Because John I am leaving and if I talk to him now and leave then he is going to close more into himself and it takes time for him to open up, time that I am not planning to spend in this town." John huffed to her words but Regina couldn't really blame him, he only wanted his family to be normal, well almost.

"Regina think about it, please. I am not asking this just for Robin, I am also asking you this for Roland. He needs his father now that his mother is gone."

Regina sighed heavily. "Fine," she looked directly into John's eyes, making sure he understands. "I don't promise anything though. You have to understand that I made my life out of here and I don't intend to change it." Regina stood up. "Now if you two excuse me I really need fresh air." She turned on her heels and walked away before any of them could talk more.

Once Regina was outside and breathed in the cool air her eyes shut for a few seconds letting all the information sink in. The only thing she could actually think about is that sweet dimpled little boy that
witness something so horribly cruel. She didn't actually quite saw how Daniel was murdered but she had his bloody body engrave on to her memory and that is something that no little kid should have their little head.

She began to make haste in the all familiar direction, the forest. For some reason it always calmed her and not having one near her in New York made her missed at least that from Storybrooke. She passed by some building that was strange to her, well she has been gone for quite a while, but she would have thought that she wouldn't notice the difference. Someone called her and when she turned around it was Archie.

"Good morning Miss Mills." Archie politely said. Regina shook her head.

"Regina is just fine Archibald." He smiled at her.

"Archie is just fine, Regina." He shot back with that adorable smile that Regina actually liked. "May I say it's quite the pleasure to see you even if it is for such a short time. I heard you are leaving today." Archie stretched his hand to Regina to which she shook it.

"I was but Elsa convinced me on staying for one more week even though she is going to be away on her honeymoon." Regina chuckled. Archie accompanied her with a chuckle of his very own.

"Well, we have to thank her for giving another week of your presence here. Things were always better when you were around." Archie's words took her by surprise. Since when he thought that about her?

There was always something about him that unsettled Regina but she never found out what. Maybe she was just being paranoid or maybe was Jefferson constant remarks and his constants teasing about him that fuel her strange feeling for him. She pushed it down; clearly, it wasn't the moment to think about that.

"Yeah well, I'm not the best of companies these days." Regina said sticking a strand of hair behind her ear.

Archie looked at her in disbelief. "Nonsense, I bet you still as lovely as ever. You know what? I have an idea." Regina arch a brow, what was he to up?
"Since you are staying here, would you do me the honor of accepting going to dinner with me tonight?" Regina looked at him at loss for words. She wasn't really keen on accepting his request, but he has been so polite in doing it so.

"Archie I don't think…” But before she could finish he was talking again.

"It's just a friendly dinner, we can catch up. We share the same profession and I am quite curious to know about your practice in New York." 'Ah, that.' Regina thought. That was a safe topic of conversation.

"Well if you insist I would love to. It's always good to talk to a fellow colleague." Regina said with a knowingly look on her face.

"Well then is a professional date then. I'll pick you up, say 7:30?" Archie asked.

"Sounds perfect. I'm staying at Jefferson's you can pick me there." Archie smiled at her.

"Well then see you tonight. Now if you excuse me I was supposed to be at the mayor's office 10 minutes ago. Mayor Belle gets quite grumpy about tardiness. Have a good day Regina." He courtesy and Regina found that gesture quite ambiguous, but she mentally laughed.

Once Archie was gone she resumed her walked to the forest. Just like she remembered it was a sight to see.

Everything was calmed, the sun shone through the canopy of the tree and the cool fresh air made her lungs scream of happiness. She sat down at the foot of one big tree and threw her head back, letting herself be completely lost the quietness of the forest. The light breeze that moves the leafs around making sweet noises in her ears, the birds chirping nostalgic sounds that made her oblige into the sea of memories that she had about that place. Memories of laughter, memories of friends, memories of love and memories of an almost second chance that she was going to have with Robin. She opened her eyes wide.

Why did her mind betray her in such a way? Why did she have to think about him?
She shouldn't, she went to the forest for clarity and ended up fogging her brain even more. She got up and began to shake her head like if that was going to erase his name and face out of her brain. She walked even deeper into the woods and without even realizing it she walked to that place, the meadow where Daniel proposed to her.

It was as magical as ever. It was like a fantasy picture right in front of her eyes. The lake still had the diamond appeal that she loved, and the colorful flowing flowers were moving slowly, dancing to the beat of the wind ever so slightly.

Daniel and her went there a few times after he proposed, it seems like the perfect place for them. Secluded and peaceful, their own little nest of pure love.

"Oh Daniel, how I miss you." She said sitting down in front of the lake. Sorrow installed in her heart.

She let herself cry. She needed to because it was never enough. Missing him was bad enough when she was in New York, but here, the place where they spent too many moments together, where they made love so many times and promised each other the world made it hurt even more. She looked at her left hand where the engagement ring rested, and more tears came. She never took it off, she felt that the moment she did Daniel's memory was going to leave her forever and Regina wasn't willing to let it go. She knows it isn't healthy but that was better than insanity.

She sat there in silence for what it seemed like forever. When she glances at her watch it was 1 o'clock. When she finally found the strength, she stood up. Legs moving on automatic, making her walk out of the forest and straight to Jefferson's house. After what it seemed like a lifetime of pondering made her get to one conclusion. Regina just hoped she made a good decision staying in Storybrooke.
"If all the world hated you and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved of you and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends."

— Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre

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Regina sat on a bench admiring her surroundings. Fresh air blew every which way, blowing through her dark tresses making it dance alluringly. The breeze as cold as it could get thanks to the nearness to the Storybrooke harbor. She could hear the children enjoying the day, and their laughter took hold of every empty space in the park. The sun shined brightly in the middle of the sky, and even though the sun rays pierced through the canopy of the trees it was too hot to be regard as annoying. It was just right, perfect even. Even though the school was out of the semester, the parked was filled with kids. Most of them on playdates, others enjoying a family day. It made Regina quite nostalgic. This could have been her, them, maybe with a little kid with Daniel's green eyes and her dark hair or a little girl with a dirty blonde hair and her dark eyes. But that was something she could dwell on for too long. Her heart has been too raw since she arrived in Storybrooke and torturing herself will amount to nothing. Monday, the day where all energy seemed to be drained from an adult body it wasn't the same for kids. Always full of endless energy and Regina sometimes wishes she could be as energetic as them. Bringing them to a park seemed like a pretty good idea.

She took a sip of her dark roast, her all so delicious coffee she hasn't had in years. At least she had a few things to look forward to while in town.

Elsa and Jefferson made sure to let her know they were alright. They kept sending pictures of them beach, of themselves, enjoying the Caribbean sea. Regina laughed, she told Elsa not to use her phone unless it was an emergency, but of course knowing her blue eyes friend, she most likely couldn't stand the excitement and had to share it, at least with her. Jefferson asked her to help around the Asylum even though there were medics and nurses that were more than capable of running the place, beside Storybrooke wasn't too big.

Regina was aware how difficult things would be staying in this town, but she had to, not because Elsa and Jefferson asked, -to which she was happy because being with the was all she needed they were family- but because no matter how hard she tried she couldn't wrap her mind around the fact that Robin, the same Robin that she knew so well could commit such a horrible crime. She knew him by heart, she knew his heart well enough to deduct that he didn't display that type of character, a murderer, it just wasn't inside of him but people can change that much was clear. It has been almost thirteen after all since the last time she saw him. She remembered Daniel funeral, remembered how her heart was being buried with Daniel. She lost her best friend and lover that day. Robin knew her perfectly and he knew that no matter what her heart will always belong to Daniel and he understood. She asked herself a million times how did they get to the conclusion that he was the one who killed his wife, that he killed Daniel. Did they investigate? Did they even have a case built against him?

A laugh full of glee drew her out of her musings, her gaze fell on the little boy that was running from
one place to another followed by the cutest little blonde girl. Both of them climbed the slide stairs with agility. When they reached the end of the slide both gave screeches of victory and they repeated the notion all over again.

Regina couldn't help smiling, how easy was life at that age. No cares, no worries just unlimited fun. She wished so many times over to feel that free but alas, her mind was occupied by blood, murder, and doubts that are certainly trying to make her insane. The blonde little girl was the first one to reach the end jumping excitedly. The little boy followed her but he didn't stick the landing. His little feet tangled together and he fell hands and knees to the rocky floor. Regina opened her eyes scared when she heard the boy cry.

"Oh shit." Regina murmured while running to where they were, throwing the coffee cup she was enjoying. She noticed how the blonde girl was looking to both sides, but her eyes fell completely on the kid that was still crying.

"Roland." She said while picking him up and putting him on her hip.

Roland showed her his hands and she noted he had a little scraping and filled with dirt, thank god he had pants that cover his knees, but he kept pointing to them.

"Gina." He murmured through his sobs.

Regina looked around, who the hell was taking care of them? Where is John? And where were the little girl parents? Regina cradles him and took the little girl hand and began to move towards the bench she was sitting.

"Ouch, Ouch." Cried, Roland. Regina sat down, placing him on her lap, shushing him softly.

"Roland, sweetie, I just want to see your knees, okay?" He looked at her and she saw how his lower lip was beginning to tremble and his eyes began to be filled with tears.

Regina began to look down to his legs and began to gently move his jeans to see his knees. Both of them were red but other than that he was fine, she released a breath she was holding and was relieved to see that he didn't hurt himself badly. Regina put Roland's jeans to their place again and took his hand in hers to see the damage to his hands.

"Everything is going to be alright sweetie." She said while kissing the top of his head and hug him against her chest.

Regina began to search in her purse for some wipes to clean Roland's little hand. She couldn't understand how a woman could manage to be a mother and everything else they do, to take care of them without faltering in their action, without hurting them even more.

"Where are your parents?" Regina asked the little girl while beginning to clean Roland's hands, he was whining a little, but she kept him calm as much as she could, after all, this was brand new territory for her.

The blonde girl, that appeared to be the same age as Roland, shrugged her shoulders and pointed to the school that was beside the park. Regina met the little girl at Jefferson's and Elsa wedding. If she wasn't mistaken her name was Emma and she was Mary and David's daughter, speaking of Mary she was running towards them frantically.

Regina felt a little anger rise in her chest, What was Mary thinking when she left the kids alone in the park? Or did they run out of school without her noticing? Whatever the case, things could have been worse. Someone could've kidnapped them, even thought it was a peaceful place, but any crazy
person could harm them.

"Mommy!" Emma yelled while running to her. Mary Margaret picked the little girl up, hugged her tight and began to walk where Regina was sitting with Roland. The teacher seemed agitated but the sight of Regina calmed her nerves although when she saw Roland's teary eyes and red nose her heart accelerated a little. Mary sat down accommodating Emma on her lap shifting her a little so she could see Regina and Roland.

"What happened?" Mary asked.

"He fell down at the end of the slide, but he is okay. It was more of a spook, I cleaned his hands but he has little scraps." Said Regina, showing Mary his tiny little hands.

Roland shifted his body more against Regina side and put his head on the crook of Regina's neck.

"Where were you?" Regina asked Mary, her tone had traces but barely perceivable.

Mary Margaret closed her eyes and began to breathe in and out when she noticed Regina's anger. The brunette might be good at hiding her emotions but somehow Mary always knew. It was infuriating but it was what it was.

"I was cleaning the classroom, they were bored so I told them to play in the school playground, not in the park…" she sent both kids a scolding look to which they both lowered their eyes to the ground. At least one of Regina's theories was right. " I was looking for them everywhere Regina, I was really worried. I came here to see if by chance they were…" She said while accommodating little Emma to her chest.

Regina noted Mary's honesty in her eyes, she looked tired and especially frightened.

"Do you always take care of Roland?" She just couldn't stand the curiosity anymore, needed to know why Mary always had Roland with her.

Mary shook her head ever so slightly, kissed her little girl on top of her head and answer to Regina's question. "John is taking care of the family business alone since Robin is not there anymore." Both shifted uncomfortably on the bench when Robin was mention. "Ever since that happened, John has been taking care of Roland and the store. You remember the sports store here in Storybrooke."

Jefferson had commented about it one time a long time ago and she was glad to know he was doing okay. She knew how Robin loved sports, and after his father died he took over the store to which he didn't mind at all. But there was a time where Robin doubted himself but she never doubted him relaxed and she always made sure to tell him that. Regina found herself smiling remembering how happy Robin was whenever he was doing something exercise related. He was good in everything, from basketball to archery the former being his favorite one of them all. They shared a lot of memories even in that store.

"I know something is not right Regina, something just doesn't make sense in all of this. John doesn't have anyone else some and David told him we would help him while he worked beside Roland and Emma are always together, they are best friends." Mary wanted to tell Regina that Marian and Mary were pregnant at the same time, but decided not to for the little boy sake, he was going through a lot already and talking about his mother could only harm him more.

"I understand." Was the only thing Regina said.

Mary smiled gratefully to Regina's understanding on not pursuing the topic any further. She extended her hand to take Roland from Regina, but he cried out and buried himself deeper into Regina's
embrace. Both brunettes were surprised to the boy's reaction. He began to cry and both of the felt a pang in their hearts. Roland had suffered so much in his short age. He didn't have his mother and was a witness to her murder and he also lost his father in a way and that can make anyone lose their mind.

"I want papa!" Cried out Roland while sobbing his little heart out and it just made Regina feel even worse.

"Oh, Roland!" Mary said in a low tone rubbing Roland's arm up and down in a calming matter. Regina noticed how Mary was at a point of crying herself. The younger brunette has always been a bit too sensible when it came to matters of the heart.

Regina moved the boy little, far enough so she was able to take his face in her hand, clearing away his tears with her thumbs. The hurt and confusion on his face were enough to break her heart. He was sobbing so hard and she felt even like dementor was sucking out her soul. She wanted to do something, her mind and heart told her she needed to give peace to this child that wasn't culprit of anything. She needed to take all of her doubts out, she needed to be a professional but it was Robin son in her arms crying out like no little kid should. The little boy that with a smile stole her heart. She can't be cold when he had given her a warm smile. "I'll see what I can do."

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The afternoon passed by painfully slow. After some convincing, Roland agreed to leave with Mary but only with the promise of ice cream on the table. She didn't mind, to be honest, the mere fact of seeing those little dimples on his face made Regina smiled and her heart fluttered, he reminded her of his father so much it was unbelievable.

Regina looked at herself in the mirror; Archie would pick her up any minute now and she needed to professional. She decided on a black thin straps dress that goes all the way to her knees. The dress wasn't that elegant, just casual. Then again this dinner was anything but romantic, it was just two colleagues talking about their job. Regina didn't have time for any romantic notion of a sort. Her hair was in a ponytail and since she had short hair a few strands were adorning her face. It wasn't very cold, but it wasn't hot neither but she took a black cardigan and some red flats that match her red lipstick. It was just dinner at Granny's not a fancy one, and she wasn't planning on impressing anyone.

She heard the sound of a horn outside and she assumed it was Archie. When she approach the window and confirmed it was him, she picked up her purse and phone and walked to the entrance.

Regina really didn't know why she accepted his request to dinner but being both in the same profession they could have a nice conversation that didn't transcend into the personal field. She also has a slight feeling that Archie has something to do with Robin's case and as long as they are having dinner, Regina can pick his brain. She hasn't really read any reports on it but she decided to give it a go.

When she opened the door there he was waiting for her. She got a little startled because she thought he was in his car. Archie was always the strange one but he was a peaceful person that never got into trouble with any one of which she still didn't understand why he and Jefferson really didn't get along. In high school, he was the geeky one and Regina wonders if the years had changed that. Certain patterns are hard to break, maybe this one was impossible for him.

"Wow." He exclaimed and a sighed softly. "You look great." He commented in all sincerity. Regina looked at herself and shrugged her shoulders, for her she was dressed normally, then again he hasn't seen her in years, he doesn't really know what normal is for her.
"Thanks," she curtly said. Regina looked from side to side, feeling suddenly aware of what she was doing. If Jefferson knew she was going out with Archie. She wouldn't live it down, "Are we leaving?" she asked quickly.

"Um, yes, yes." He delivered clumsily, still staring at her but after she moved to close the door behind her, his gaze shifted down the pathway to his car.

When she turned to him, he was already heading to the car and she felt a sigh leave her lips. Maybe this was a very bad idea? She likes Archie, they always had a good relationship back in school. He helped her and Robin a lot. Actually, Archie considered Robin one of the only friends he had seeing as he was picked on and bully in school but Robin was always there, defending him. It wouldn't surprise her if Archie was doing the same for him now that he was deep in trouble.

When they arrived at the diner, it wasn't too full. Monday nights were slow ones. She remembered clearly how Ruby used to study at this hour while working. Regina sat with her from time to time, helping her through math and literature so she could get a passing grade. Regina had forgotten about all the good memories stay had with other people that weren't Daniel. Maybe she can actually get together with her old friends before she left to New York.

There were one or two patrons ordering coffee, and some takeout. Archie directed her to the booth that was farthest from the door, she found that to be a strange behavior, like he was hiding from someone but she didn't linger a lot on it. Regina really needs to stop overthinking things. She sat down and began looking around the diner while Archie followed by sitting across her. Rapidly Ruby made her way to them with two menus in her hands, the girl smiled to Regina, but when gave Archie the menu her eyes were filled with anger, Regina really didn't understand what was happening.

"Hey, whenever you are ready to order." She suggested before turning away.

Regina wanted to say something, talk to her to know how the years had treated her but she psychologist the chance to do so. One second she was there, and the next she was gone with an agility of a wolf. Regina stared at her back for a long moment before moving her gaze back to Archie who was looking at the menu with intensity even though he knew what to order.

"What is wrong with her?" She asked, whilst opening her menu.

Archie simply shrugged his shoulders back as he closed the menu with a sigh. "She never liked me." Storybrooke's psychologist murmured.

And okay sure, he was bullied a lot in high school and that could make a permanent dent on his perception but she found it highly unlikely that Ruby didn't like him. Ruby was a colorful character, always happy, she was a social butterfly and everyone got along with her maybe too much and that is why she had a certain reputation, well that was when they were in high school. She didn't believe him either because everyone got along with Archie even if his track record back in the day proved otherwise. Her mother used to tell her stories of Archie and the brilliance of his mind and how people from across the country came to Storybrooke to consult cases with him. Regina arched a perfectly plucked brow into her direction.

"Archie, is Ruby your partner?" Regina asked skeptically.

Archie almost blurted out laughing, Regina looked at him intently. "Oh heavens no."

"Did you have something with her?" She asked curiously.

Archie looked at her with this sort of look that said 'yes' but at the same time it was like he was
ashamed. Regina didn't know how to categorize it, but if she could use one word to do so it would be.

"Tired would be the accurate term." He said cutting the topic short. "Now, tell me about yourself."

Regina didn't quite understand but she pushed it down for the time being. She could always ask Ruby, right? "About me?"


Regina nodded while watching how Ruby approaches them with two glasses of water.

"Well is good. I work a lot so I don't have time for an actual personal life. But it pays the bills and I honestly love my job." She supplied with a little grin.

Ruby arrived. She smiled at Regina and gently put the glass of water in front of her but when she turned to Archie she literally threw the glass and it spilled on him. Ruby quickly left without even giving him a break to react.

Regina couldn't help it and a chuckle escaped her lips. It wasn't like her, honestly but an angry woman shouldn't be trifled with, especially someone who had a reputation of becoming like an animal when angered or messed with. She watched as Archie dried himself off with napkins. Regina shook her head. You leave for thirteen years and the rarest of couples come together.

"I think it is wise if you fix things with her. An angry woman is a dangerous woman." Regina picked up her glass of water, taking a deliberate sip of it. She had dealt with angry women back in New York. Whether because her husband was cheating or their bosses were being pricks, she found out that they could become monsters if hurt, badly.

Archie tried to act like it didn't bother him, and any other person would have believed him. But Regina could see it in his body language, in his eyes, he was mortified about the situation. Maybe it was because of her job, and how she worked with people constantly that she learned to read the signs better. Archie wasn't feeling all comfortable with the situation. So Regina tried to not comment on it, it was easy actually, and came to a decision on what to eat. Lasagne seemed like the perfect choice, Granny's cooking was perfect after all.

"So… what are you doing in New York?" He enquired while he took a sip of what was left of his water.

Regina imitated Archie's action and looked at him over the glass. He knew her profession the question was rather stupid.

"Well, as you might know, I am a psychologist. I have my own practice along with Elsa even though our specialties are different we make things work." Archie arched a brow in question and she answers his unspoken question. "Elsa dedicates her work to clinical whilst I have the forensic view, my cases are special." She said in an ambiguous tone.

Archie didn't quite understand, he tilted his head in question. "Forensics." He echoed. "I thought you were heading towards the clinical line as well. At least that is what you told me all those years ago."

Regina chuckled, placing the glass back down. "Not a lot of people know the field I specialize. I honestly started studying clinical but I lost all interest after..." She trailed off, clearing her throat. Archie looked at her surprised. "I work with a lot of government agencies, I know you understand."

The red headed man nodded. Fidgeting with the napkins he used to dry himself off. Regina tilted her
head, watching his action with the utmost curiosity.

"Are you nervous?" She asked laughing.

"No!" he answered low but defensively.

Regina simply shrugged.

"So you are dedicating your life to..." He trailed off for Regina to continue with her explanation.

"Criminal conduct, among other things. I had to testify in court and had to interview killers and everything in between. But I sometimes get some domestic cases. Elsa says it keeps me from going insane, she is right." She actually tried to sound intimidating but in reality she just wanted to laugh at Archie's face, it was all a poem. He seemed taken aback by the path she had taken, completely different from what she wanted years ago.

Ruby placed their meal on the table and began to walk away, this times there weren't any glares. Granny probably scolded her from the behavior she was engaging in.

"So, your job is risky?" He stated more than he asked about it.

Regina shook her head. "It's similar to what you do Archie, we are both in the same line of work, the only difference is that I take the riskier cases or rather complicated ones. We both have the task to decipher the human mind. Their process, everything, in the beginning, the middle and the end. To understand is to place yourself in their shoes. It is a scary notion." Regina explained though she felt stupid while doing so. Archie, more than anyone in this town, knew what her profession was about without her explaining it. But she won't lie, this is better than actually talking about her personal life. With all the fucked up shit she sees, reads and is part of in her job, it was easier to speak about it. One would think that under the circumstances Daniel died she would walk away from that instead of diving head first into the macabre world. But there she was, dipping toes and the very last strand of her hair into something that wouldn't be deemed normal behavior by another behavior specialist. She is on a mission of understanding, to see why would a human being kill another one but so far she had found nothing. Killing should be normalized, and she hell won't ever make it normal. In her head, it wasn't just a crime for the criminal justice, but a crime against nature itself. Human beings don't have the right of taking another's life. Regardless of the reason, war or just because of stupid daily things, murder was a horrible sin that should never be pardon. But she is just a single human being whose screams and pleads were never answered. Before she thought that getting into this line of work was just to be reckless but as she spends more time in Storybrooke, she is coming to realize that the real reason was to solve Daniel's murder.

She wants to stay.

But at the same time, she doesn't want to. A big reason for her reluctance is Robin.

"So if that is your dedication why are you here? Other than the logical, your friend's wedding."

Archie has always been a curious lad, but she doesn't really like it when his curiosity falls upon her like this. She feels like Archie is shining a spotlight on her.

"Jeff asked me to help him..." she explained shrugging her shoulders.

Archie looked intrigued, "With Robin's case?"

She was getting so tired of his incisive curiosity. Jeff had told her that the terms of her staying needed to stay between them. It was true that everyone knew about the rather complicated relation she had with Robin but didn't mean she that couldn't be professional about it. Besides, she hasn't actually
agreed to take the case nor stay more than she has to.

She shrugged her shoulders one more time "He asked me to help in general. He won't be here for a week and the sanatorium can't be left without a director for too long." She tried to not sound impolite or biting, but Archie was turning this conversation in a direction she doesn't want to head. It wouldn't take long for him to prod about Robin and her thoughts on his situation. There is so much she can handle for one day. Especially after her afternoon with Roland who just wants to see his father. Her, not so subtle, promise still lingers in her head. 'I'll see what I can do.' She should have said that kids hope easily but they are as easily crushed. Regina had plans of leaving and this attachment she is feeling for Roland isn't healthy, for either of them. She is afraid that he would close himself off more because of her. It breaks her heart but she is already overstaying her welcome as it is.

Regina needed to shift things a little, without it being too obvious.

"Is it true you are working at the Asylum? I thought you only had your private practice."

Archie arched his brow surprised by her question or more like her knowledge on him.

"Yes, two times a week and yes I have a private practice but I only give group therapy at the asylum. Now that Jeff is going to be away for a few days I was asked to work a little more."

Regina understood but a little doubt was playing in her head, who was the one to ask Archie to work more there? It certainly wasn't Jeff he would have told her. She brushed it off for the moment though. There was a more pressing matter, his work with Roland but she knew it wasn't the time to discuss it, everything will fall into place eventually, she hoped. Helping Roland and Robin was a priority but she needed to smart about it.

Robin.

Freaking Robin.

She wanted to help him even though there's a part of her actually believing he did do it. The part of her that needed justice.

"I presume there is no problem with me working there?" she said taking a sip of her soda that Ruby brought with the food.

Archie was a good man, everyone saw that, but when it came to his work he could be rather jealous and over protective. Jefferson, despite not liking the man, had always spoken to her about his professionalism and the way his mind works. Working with him will prove to be helpful to Regina. She needed that advantage that only Archibald Hopper could provide.

Archie seemed too curious to know about Jefferson's request. The board of directors had wanted to add Regina to their roster for a very long time and the fact that Jefferson had managed to actually bring her to Storybrooke was a step forward, positive, or least he hoped.

"No, on the contrary, " he began "it will be of great benefit to have you around. Maybe you can finally say yes at staying on a more permanent basis. The board of directors has been trying to recruit you for years now."

She didn't know why, but her gut was telling her that something about the way he said it wasn't truthful. Regina blames her dislike to this place and her distrust of people. There were a handful of people she trusted, that only included Jefferson and Elsa, maybe her parents.

They both sat there in awkward silence for long minutes her hands playing with the silverware. She
felt rather strange, the food in front of her was losing its appeal.

Archie was probably the only person that could understand her on a mental level. It was common knowledge to everyone that Mills left after Daniel's death. But no one really tried to understand the toll of leaving a death hanging over her head. Regina couldn't stand the town anymore because memories were getting the best of her. And her feelings were upset even more when certain things transpired with Robin. So she left without a second thought and didn't return till now.

Everyone was surprised to see her for the wedding, people thought she wouldn't agree but there she was and now that she was staying which surprised people even further.

He understands more than anyone, after all, he was a master of human behavior. Regina was uncomfortable under his scrutiny. He was reading her intently, probably looking for flaws that he could pick on later. Or maybe she just being paranoid? Probably that. She never liked shrinks. After Daniel's death, she had to go to one and that was most likely the reason she didn't pursue a career in clinical psychology.

"Do you remember when we were in high school?" he asked giving a slight smile at his change of pace. Regina eyes pose on him and smile a little.

"Of course, good times." She said but she seemed rather timid now.

"Do you remember how Robin and Daniel used to fight for you? How they always compete for your affection?" He said laughing while cutting a piece of his chicken.

Regina looked at him with wide eyes and an indignant stare. She felt the need to slap him across the face with such force that when he wake up in the morning bruises of her fingers were to pose on his face. Out all the things he could talk about, he chose that. That was something she could never forget. To this day those memories are fresh in her head. But he didn't have to handpick them like he wanted to hurt her. He should know better than this.

"Archie." She reprimanded with a scoff, taking her eyes off him to look anywhere. Last things she needed is for him to see the pain she was feeling thanks to his tactless words.

"Forgive me, Regina…" He raised his hand in apology. Archie seemed sincere in his apology.

"I really do not wish to talk about it." She said anger simmering down again.

"Regina it is only a memory from when we were young. Are you not over Daniel's death?" He asked in sincerity and curiosity.

Regina couldn't stand his stupid questions. His bluntness was beginning to blow her over.

"What does it matter to you?" She tried to keep her voice down as much as she could. But her blood thumped loudly in her ears and her veins and the more she tried to look put together the harder was it to keep the anger and sadness. For someone with a psychology degree, he was being rather rude. She doesn't have any recollection of him being this way. Archie was sweet and caring and this isn't what she remembered at all. Or maybe she was being too sensible. After all, thirteen years has passed by, enough for her to talk about Robin and Daniel without feeling completely dishearted. Still, her voice was barely concealed and people were beginning to turn their heads to their table.

"Regina I ask this because I consider myself to be your friend. Have you ever asked for professional help?" Regina felt her eyes stings with unshed tears. Was he torturing her? Wasn't it clear to him that she really didn't wish to talk about it any longer? Of course she tried therapy, but it only brought her more pain and misery, which she didn't want to dwell in anymore. It was ironic in all honesty, she
was a psychologist but wasn't able to help herself.

"Archie stop it now..." she said uncomfortable, steel and ice in her voice.

Archie's eyes turned softer, softer than she had seen them before and it made her feel at peace but at the same time her defenses went up.

"Regina listen to me..." he put his hand on top of hers, he could feel her shaking a little under him, she was stronger than she looked. "I didn't want to hurt you, I believe that remembering the good times can overcome the bad ones, to which why I believed that you had overcome Daniel's death." He sighed, smiling sadly. "He loved you so much," Archie laughed a little. "He only talked about you, you were everything to him." Archie smiled to Regina. "He did fight a lot with Robin because he also was in love with you but that didn't matter to Daniel, fighting with Robin on daily basis. Because at the end of the day you loved him. You guys promised the world to each other and that is all that matters. As hard as it is to accept losing someone we love, we have the memories that will forever live in our hearts."

Regina couldn't help the swell of emotions currently rising within her chest. All the 'I love yous', all the 'I miss yous' said into the small space between Daniel and her. All the times that they walked hand in hand down main street, eating ice cream and talking about the future, their future together. The dinners with both of their families, the way her parents absolutely loved Daniel. It was too much, her heart wanted to break all over again, as the way of feelings washed over her like a tidal wave. All she wants is to run to him and drag him to their special place to watch the sunset. She had a million reasons to love him so much back then, and today she has millions more to love him today. If only she could see his smile again, one last time, her life would be less bleak.

But death claimed him forever, all thanks to a soulless person that didn't touch his heart to let him live another day.

"Regina," Archie called, pulling her from the storm within herself. He knew she was broken hearted and his intention was to help her out. "You may think you are the best therapist in the world, but you can't help anyone else if you can't help yourself."

Regina rolled her eyes, she had heard that before, countless of times. "I've been doing pretty well." She bites out with a shake of her head. The food in front of her long forgotten. Her leg moved up and down nervously. She was ready to run out of the diner any minute now.

Archie didn't even acknowledge her words. "If Jefferson asked you to help Robin out because I'm certain he did, then you can't be holding onto that pain so tight. You need clarity in both heart and mind. Otherwise, Robin will certainly stay in prison, forever."

What was his intention with all of this? Was he trying to convince her to stay and take Robin's case? Because he is doing a bang up job. If he was able to read her this way with so little time spent together, imagine how it would be if they were working together? No, she doesn't want to stay and find out. She might as well be Robin's neighbor in the Asylum.

"You are not working with the same criminals like in New York, you are going to work with someone that was important for you, a friend that most might have or might not have killed Daniel. Are you up for that? Because if I were in your shoes, I would let the justice system to take care of it."

Regina analyze his words intently and drop her eyes to her hands that were clasps on top of her lap. She knew Archie was right, seeing Robin wasn't going to be easy and yes this wasn't New York. She wasn't dealing with a stranger. This was Robin's life that was at stake. This was a person that was truly special at some point in her life. Seeing him meant reliving the past. Was she ready for
Regina cleared away the tears that were falling down her cheeks as she realized something. In all her turmoil she didn't realize it later but as she counted word for word everything he had said, something did stand out. "Archie I haven't nor will tell you my reason to stay, my personal business is that mine I don't think I have to run it by you or any other on that matter." She slipped back on the mask of indifference that had worked so well in the past.

"Well that may be true, but your tears tell a different tale." He believes he won. Regina can see it in his eyes. "We better order desert. Any request?" He asked trying to recover the peace that they had at the beginning of dinner.

"Not really." Her voice was low and tired. Regina is drained and it is all because of him. "I am tired and I want to go home." She explained standing up.

Archi mirrored her move he took money from his wallet and put it on the table.

"Come, I'll take you home."

Regina didn't let him. She raised a hand and smiled.

"I want to walk a little."

"I'll go with you." He offered.

Regina shook her head. Archie really did a number on her she needed to think.

"Thank you, Archie, I'll just see you later." Regina didn't let him react. She walked away, leaving him alone. Leaving the diner behind.

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Regina began to walk through the streets of Storybrooke where she grew up, she still didn't get why Archie had to talk about that precise topic, why did he have to talk about them, but she knew Archie was right. Which made the whole thing the more bitter. If she did accept to take Robin's case, she doesn't know how to approach it without her mind fogging. Technically it was a conflict of interest but since she hasn't really seen or talked to Robin in years than it wouldn't too heavy.

But it was.

She proposed herself to do everything in her power to help Roland, he needed his father. But in all honesty was she doing this for the boy? For Robin or herself?

Regina cared so much for Robin, he was one of her best friends, they grew up together, Robin Jefferson and her. Yes, she met Daniel before Robin but it was only by technicality. Robin moved to Storybrooke when he was three years old and Daniel had just moved away. But a few years later Daniel came back. Robin, according to Jefferson, always had a crush on her. But she didn't believe at first but then his fights with Daniel commenced and well she couldn't deny it anymore.

Was Robin really a murderer? Did he really kill his wife and Daniel?

She shook her head in disbelief while walking down the streets, the memories seemed so painful. Like Archie said, this wasn't just like any other case in New York, this one was worst. This was a friend who was accused of being a criminal, the main suspect in her fiance murder.
She elevated her gaze and stopped in front of a store, a store she knew well. It was The Locksley sports store. Regina lifted her hand and pressed it against the glass and closed her eyes. If she breathed in long she could smell the scent of the forest, she could hear Robin's laughter playing in her head, she could feel him close.

A fifteen-year-old Regina ran and ran, her long silky hair dancing to the sound of the breeze. Her olive skin kissed by the sun and her eyes shining with excitement. Her smile genuine and contagious as it always was. She ran as fast as her legs let her, she felt her heart running a million miles an hour and even more when she got deeper into the forest. She stopped quickly and her hands landed on her knees automatically trying to catch her breath that was running as frantically as her legs were carrying a few seconds ago.

Regina strained her ears trying to listen to a much silent pair of footfalls. It was like he was one with nature, concealing him from her. The forest best-kept secret. If it wasn't for his voice she wouldn't have even noticed where exactly he was coming from.

"You cheated." She heard him say.

She looked at her side and her partner was just like her trying to catch his breath. She straightened herself throwing her long hair back.

"C'mon Locksley, is your pride preventing you from admitting that I am a much more faster person?" She inquired teasingly. Truth is that she did cheat. When he was distracted she immediately began running.

Robin who was the same age as her mirror her movements and with one hand he messed up her hair.

"Hey." She whined as she pushed Robin.

"Well Mills, are you ready for today's lesson?" He said picking up his bow and arrow.

They arrived at the place where Robin always practices his favorite sport. That summer he promised Regina to teach her how to shoot, to which she was really excited.

"When Jeff finds out that you are learning before him..." said Robin laughing at his words. They both knew Robin was an excellent archer but Jefferson was better at baseball.

"Hey! Is not my fault his parents decided to travel this summer." Regina was taking an arrow from Robin's hands. She immediately felt a pump of adrenaline running through her veins, her hands were excited to take the bow and feel the rush. How she loved learning new things.

"Come here little Apple," he called to her while laughing. She sent him a glare.

"You really should stop calling me that." Regina began picking up the bow.

"Not a chance, it suits you. Besides we are here for you to learn not discuss my cute nicknames for you." Regina rolled her eyes and ignored his comment.

Regina stood at the perfect distance with the bow in her hands just like Robin had taught her. He was behind her the minute she lifted her hands and accommodated the bow just like they practiced in the previous lesson. She always pointed to the bull's-eyes but she never quite reached the stupid red circle in the middle. Robin explained to her again how her shoulders should be relax or she would have a serious pain when everything was over, how to stretch back the string with three fingers to make it easier for her, how her body should create the illusion of a T, how to hold the arrow.
rolled her eyes but whenever she didn't listen to him her arrow didn't reach very far.

"Regina you are doing it wrong!" he said frustrated.

"Ugh." She whined running a hand over her face.

Robin stood behind Regina and lifted her elbow, his hand covered the one that was holding the bow and fix it how it was supposed to be.

"Now." He said in a low voice near her ear.

Regina focused her eyes to the red point. She could feel Robin talking to her extremely close, she internally shook herself she couldn't lose her concentration, not over his nearness. She wanted to reach the bulls-eyes so bad, she spent the past two weeks and still nothing.

Robin breathed in, his nose inside Regina's hair, her scent was heavenly to him. He shut his eyes close and moved a little closer to her all that without moving his hands out of place. When he opened his eyes again he gathered his courage to instruct Regina again.

"When I count to three let go of the string." She nodded a little, but her eyes were locked on her target.

"One…” she took a deep breath trapping the air in her lungs.

"Two…” Regina's fingers tighten around the bow and Robin took his hand off from on top of hers.

"Three." Regina let go of the arrow, her stance was perfect and the release flawless. Everything happened fast, the arrow finally reached the target. Regina opened her eyes in excitement.

"Yes!" she yelled out throwing the bow to the ground, turned on her heels and jumped into Robin's arms.

Robin arms went around her waist instantly and swiftly picked her up from the ground. Regina put hers around his neck, still not believing that she actually did it. She spent two weeks practicing non-stop to reach her goal and now she was able to accomplish it.

She looked into his eyes and saw how proud he was of her, also she saw there kindness; his blue orbs were filled with love and sincerity. Regina took one of her hands that was surrounding his neck and he lower her back to the ground. Regina caressed his hair tracing a path, destination the base of his skull, while the other hand was tracing his face. Robin tensed under her touch, he felt his heart practically wanting to leave his chest, he loved her ever since he lay eyes on her. She looked at his lips and then his eyes, when she bite her lip Robin felt like he was losing his mind. The brunette began to caress his cheek and pushed herself closer to his face. Robin thought he was going to die.

Regina's lips were on top of his. Robin trembled at the sensation of her lips, this was something he always dreamed off, a kiss from her lips, his first kiss. Robin pressed her against him, he didn't want to let her go.

Regina was definitely bolder than he was so she deepen the kiss even when it was her first kiss as well.

When the kissed ended, and his eyes opened her cheeks were red. His hands traced her cheek and grinned, "Red as apple."

Regina opened her eyes and bite her lips nervously, she didn't notice the tears going down her
cheeks. Lately, she doesn’t even notice how much she has been crying. She was still standing in front of the store for so long immerse in her memories that her fingers were running across the glass.

Archie was right, if she was to work on Robin's case her mind couldn't be distracted with old memories of him, but she didn't see him a killer, she saw him as the friend she always adored. The man she hurt so much when she chose Daniel over him even though they shared something that could never be repeated and right now it was too late to fix all of her mistakes but she could try to reunited father and son.

Robin deserved at least that.

Robin deserved to live again.
Chapter 5

The sound of her heels echoed in the deserted hallway. The place was somber and uneasily cold for her taste. But she didn't expect it to be any other way, sanatoriums held a certain dark aura about them, even though they are supposed to promote 'healing'. Regina woke up very early in the morning – well she didn't sleep much in all honesty— and like Jefferson had asked, Regina was about to abide by his wish of talking to the other person that could actually comprehend her feelings, her heart and the pain of losing someone's love. While walking through the security door she began to remember her friend's faces when she told them about the decision she made that day.

Jefferson and Elsa looked at Regina in disbelief.

"Can you repeat what you said? I didn't quite catch your words. They felt foreign." Jefferson said stunt. He was sitting in front of Regina and Elsa was at his side. They had to come early from their honeymoon in the Caribbean because two days in storms gathered and they were forced to leave before the weather got worse. They made plans to retake their trip somewhere along the summer.

"Seriously Jeff I don't have time for this." Regina huffed out, arms crossed over her chest. If she kept talking about this there was a chance that she might just regret making this choice altogether and she couldn't. There were still so many things she needed to know and there was only one person in the world that could give her the answers.

Robin.

"I am sorry but I cannot believe that those words went through my ears." Regina rolled her eyes and after a few seconds of staring at the happy couple, she sighed heavily. The decision of staying still was strange even to her.

"Isn't this what you want it? Me staying here and accepting your job offer?" Regina questions her best friend who only gave a nod in confirmation.

"What made you change your mind?" It was Elsa who talked, curiosity sprung in her eyes. Regina knowing her best friend so well knew that question was going to be asked eventually.

"Roland deserves peace, happy memories. No this dreadful chain of events he is spiraling in." Regina explained before any other question could be uttered. Because the whole reason, he was the only reason for her to stay and try to give him happiness. She isn't quite sure how's that going to be accomplished but it isn't impossible.

"Regina just admit it you are worried about Robin too." Jefferson teased her. Regina crossed arms only tighten a clear sign of annoyance.

"That may be, but my main concern is Roland. By the way who is Roland's therapist?" Jefferson got a bit uncomfortable before giving Regina an answer.

"Archibald."

Regina scrunched her brows.

"Archie, Really?" Regina asked trying to understand. She had her suspicions, and in her dinner, with the man, she had implied it but he never gave her a clear cut answer. But then again he was too
"There aren't a lot of psychologists who are good with kids here in Storybrooke. As much as I have my reservations with Archie, he is good at what he does." Regina nodded in understanding. Even though Storybrooke was a small town that now everyone knew about, Archibald Hooper was well known outside. She had heard his names in courtrooms and lawyer buffets. Though it made her wonder why he hasn't really branched out, why hasn't he left this town? He could do so much more in a much bigger city.

"Speaking of him, did you resolve all the 'issues' you guys had?" Regina air quoted for emphasis. To this day Regina didn't quite understand the feud between those two. Yes, Jefferson used to be a knucklehead back then and sort of a bully at some extent but there was something more there that she quite couldn't understand, so she stopped trying to understand. But today she was curious and that isn't always a good idea to feel.

"We haven't. But he works at the asylum as well and we have to keep things civil. We agreed upon that and since then we haven't had a single problem." Regina wasn't satisfied with the answer but she let it go for the time being.

"Ok then. Returning to the original topic, how come Archie is Roland therapist?" It was part of her job description to ask questions, to know everything about potential patients especially someone as special as Roland.

"Well he is really good with kids, but I'm beginning to sense that we need to treat Roland in a different way. Maybe you could be his therapist. I heard from Mary and John that Roland actually talked to you." Regina opened her mouth to talk but Elsa beat her to it.

"You should think about it, Ginny. Making an emotional connection with someone who is dealing with his thoughts, memories, and trauma, especially a little boy, is difficult to establish and it seems to me that Roland is quite smitten with you." Elsa gave her an explanation that Regina couldn't refute.

"Yes well, all the Locksley seem to be smitten with me." She rolled her eyes in an over exaggerated way before sighing. "Well, working with Roland won't be a problem he is the sweetest most handsome kid there is but I'm not certified for this task. I could assist Elsa if she took the case." Regina said those words with a smile on her face.

Elsa nodded in agreement and that was all that Regina needed.

"And, what about his father?" Jefferson quickly blurted out. To his bluntness, Regina scoffed.

"Robin is another story. You need to understand that I cannot let my feeling cloud my judgment."

Jefferson nodded. "Regina, everything that happens from now on regarding Robin and Roland needs to stay between us..." Regina looked at Jefferson and then at Elsa and that is when she realize that Jefferson had something up his sleeve.

Regina found herself standing in front of the door that will connect her to Robin. Her body was trembling and couldn't help the goosebumps that she felt at the mere thought of seeing him again after so many years.

Some sort of dread and fear were slowly creeping through every inch of her body. Her blood began to run icy cold through her veins and her breathing came out in short and heavy puffs. It has been almost thirteen years without seeing Robin and the last time she saw him things were rather shaken
up between them, it was Daniel's funeral. In the past years whenever she thought about him some
type of regret took over her. Things were left unsaid but she tried hard to push them down and now
that the only thing separating them is a door, she felt all those unresolved matter surface again. 'I can't
let it control me' she thought. With a deep breath, she put a hand on the door handle and turned it
around.

When she entered the room and saw his form sitting in a corner his head in his hands attempting to
dig himself into oblivion. The sight made Regina's heart crumble, that wasn't the happy and joyful
man she used to know. The man that always had a knowing smile on his face that could melt
anyone, the man that no matter what he felt always took the highway in order to see her happy and
that was breaking her more. She quickly took a deep breath and put on a mask of indifference that
could help her go through the ordeal - or so she hoped.

The room was somewhat dark and the only things in it were a bed that was against the wall with
dirty sheets and a chair. What made the room even more dreadful where the bars at the windows that
gave the room an air of a jail cell. He was a prisoner, that much was clear but the bars were a bit too
much. Robin would never just run away, he would always face his problems head on even if his
head right now wasn't standing tall.

"Good morning, Robin?" Regina called in an insecure tone. Really good morning? She shook her
head. When he didn't answer she put her things on top of the bed. Slowly she began walking to
where he was and called his name again, this time sweetly, maybe in a tone that he might recognize.
She notices he was wearing a white shirt and sweat pants, and his barefoot feet were dirty. Jefferson
had told her that Robin hasn't talked since his arrest and that he had refused to get out of the room a
few times.

He didn't respond again.

She took a few steps and closed off the space between them and crouched to his level. Regina
swallowed hard, being this close to him made it more real, made it seem like the past decade were
some kind of spell a curse you might say that made everything frozen and now time was actually
moving forward again.

Regina raises her hand hesitantly.

"Robin is…” She was cut off by Robin's hand catching her wrist. She gasped at the brusque
movement.

"Regina." His voice was low and croaky, probably from the lack of usage. Regina just gulped,
waiting for him to say something else but when he didn't she took a greedy deep breath. With her
other hand, she reaches for the other one of his that was still holding his head. She swept it from his
face and quickly lifted his chin. That wasn't her Robin, this Robin looked done and destroyed, he
had a long beard, and his hair was longer that he let it grow. His face was pale, almost lifeless and
full of pain.

"Yes, it's me. I need you to open your eyes and look at me." Regina said lowering the hand she was
using to hold Robin's chin. Missing the warmth of it, he grabs her by the other wrist. He was holding
them both greedy as in trying to decipher if it was an illusion or reality. Curiosity won him over and
slowly he began opening his eyes.

Regina saw those blue eyes that were always shining like the sun, now turned off into sorrow and
pain, his expressions lines at his eyes were more pronounced than ever. It tore her apart.

"Regina what are you doing here?" he asked her. Not fully convinced that she was real. He always
thought that seeing Regina again wouldn't be possible, that he couldn't live in the past anymore. He needed to make a life for him and that is why he married Marian. He did love her so much and she gave him the most important thing in the world, his son. Marian was a kind and understanding person, and she has been in love with him since forever but it wasn't until a few years back that they actually had something. She knew of his love for Regina and that is why she never pursued him.

"Well Robin…" her words trailed off, she quite didn't understand why she couldn't explain to him something so simple. She lost all her words, all her technical terms she was going to use the moment she stared back into his eyes and with a deep breath she resumed her line of thoughts and words "I am here to help you and Roland." She said calling out his son name. Robin opened his eyes wider to her words did she believe he wasn't the culprit? Would she help his boy too?

"Do you think I'm innocent?" he asked trying to muster a little hope into his words but they came flat and void of any emotion.

Regina stood and turned around walking away from him. Regina knew that she couldn't answer his question; doing so would mean that she was compromising her integrity as a professional so she needed to explain that to him.

"I cannot answer you that Robin." She said with utmost sincerity she could, she turned again to see him, where he was sitting on the dirty floor. "All I can say is that I'm here to evaluate you. I need you to talk to me. From what I gathered from your record you haven't been talking to no one."

When Regina finished explaining herself she walked to him again and crouched to his level. Robin stirred under her touch but didn't say anything else, taking in once more his vow of silence. To this action, Regina took one of her hands and grabbed his which she squeezed.

"If you want me to help you I need your trust. I need you to talk to me." When Robin shook Regina's handoff she sighed in annoyance.

"Look Robin. I know I'm the last person you want to see and right now this is getting difficult for me as well. For what is worth I am deeply sorry, I never meant to break your heart. I really don't want to believe that you murder—" Robin cut her off.

"Daniel." He said void of any emotion. "You believe that I killed him? He was like a brother to me even though everything that happened." Robin finally stood up on weak legs, laughing bitterly. "Would you believe me if I tell you I didn't kill them? Would you trust me that all I ever wanted was to see you happy. Daniel was your happiness. Why would I take that away?"

Hearing those words from his mouth gave her goosebumps once again. Regina stood up and made her way to the chair in the room. When she sat down she proceeded to take a deep breath. She looked stricken with grief as she uttered the words that would cause them both pain. "Because I was your happiness."

Robin looked truly hurt by her choice of words but why it surprised him? The last time they spoke she did say things that utterly broke his heart, things that made him realize that there wasn't a future with her. Regina had been holding on so tight to Daniel's memory that she didn't let anyone else in. "You are putting too much stock on my feelings for you, Regina." He sat again in his corner, not really looking at her.

"What I think or not about it is not important right now." She slipped her emotionless mask once more it was safer that way. "I am here to evaluate your predisposition to commit a crime of that magnitude." Robin looked at her from the far corner he was sitting, he dared to look at her for a second time. He reflected sadness and hurt.
"What is the point? You don't believe in my innocence. I don't have anything to say to you." Robin crossed his legs, back meeting the hard wall as he scoffed.

"If you believe that, you are more than welcome to change my mind, though I am not accepting or denying anything." Robin rolled his eyes to Regina's words. She smirked at him because she knew that Robin, her Robin was slowly beginning to be himself, so he was rising to her challenge.

"You haven't changed at all Apple." Robin simply stated.

Regina mind didn't register quickly what he had called her but when she did her cheeks turned red. Her heart was beating so fast.

"You still blush." He finally was able to smile a little.

Regina forgot he called her Apple. Which was stupid seeing as the other day she remembered the first time she hit the bulls eyes and how she had kissed him for the first time as well and fuck, not the appropriate time to think about that. He gave her that nickname because ever since they met he always saw her blush red as an apple. She didn't mind the nickname for some reason it always appealed to her.

"I haven't been called like that in—" she tried to muster her words but she was quite stunned at hearing that. Regina felt like the whole scene was turning to intimate for her own good.

"In thirteen years, I know. I was the only one who called you like that." Robin said now smiling a bit more brightly. "Why are you in Storybrooke? I was sure that I was never going to see you again." Curiosity took the best of him.

"Well Jefferson got married…" she began "and I was the maid of honor, he did marry my best friend."

"Yes Jeff…" he sighed hurt. "I am sad that I couldn't attend the wedding." His voice was filled with regret and sorrow. "But why did you stay? I don't suppose it was because of the scenery."

Regina without faltering answers his question.

"Well, I suppose you are right. Me staying here is…" she then realized that no, Roland wasn't the only reason. She wanted to believe Robin was innocent, really she does but she can't dare to say or think it to be true. "Because of Roland."

At the mention of his son, Robin's demeanor changed completely. Finally, everything was starting to click for the man. He had been in seclusion for such a long time.

"My boy, Why?" Robin asked.

"He doesn't deserve what he is going through. If you are innocent as you claim to be we need to find out. There will be a full investigation. My diagnose is really important in all of this process Robbie." She was completely stunned at the fact she called him Robbie maybe it was because he called her Apple, and old habits do die hard. She shook her head before continuing talking. "Besides I think I might be in love with that dimpled little kid." Regina looked at her hands and smiled at the memories she had of Roland in such a short time. The boy was so sweet and she couldn't help being reminded about Robin. Made everything rather bittersweet.

Robin tilted his head to look at her smile more clearly. He missed that pearly glow that adorned her face, it was a masterpiece.
"I don't blame you, Roland is adorable. The last thing I heard of him was that he wasn't talking to anyone. Has he spoken to you?" Robin asked her.

Regina looked up again to him the smile was still there but it was smaller this time. Her professionalism was slipping through her fingers quite fast and no, it couldn't happen. Why was it that, even after all this time, Regina feels so comfortable around him? She couldn't stay mad at her and by the looks of it neither could he.

"Yes, he has. From what I know it was the first time he had since…” But she didn't continue both of them knew perfectly where her train of thought was heading to.

"That's a relief." Robin sighed out, "I don't blame him for actually talking to you. You did always pour out peace. Your voice was always my safe haven." Regina swallowed hard to his words; to this day he had an effect on her. The situation was turning a little too personal for her taste and she couldn't allow it. She needed to regain control again.

Shaking her head Regina straightened up her back and look at him, he interpreted the look quickly. Robin, as good as he was years ago, could read her like a book something that unsettled and excited Regina at the same time. So when he opted from not saying anything else about it, the brunette sighed out in relief.

"So what am I supposed to do?" Was all Robin was able to ask. His eyes, his blue eyes stormy and confused as to what is going to happen next.

Regina looked around the room, seeing more clearly the conditions he was living in and it tore her heart a little. It was rather inhuman in her opinion and she wondered if Jefferson knew this. Being the director of the asylum made it rather impossible to go through every room in the building seeing as he was constantly dealing with huge amounts of paperwork that didn't seem to end. Even when he visited Elsa and her back in New York, he took important documents with him just so he wouldn't lose any time with his job. It was a twenty four hours thing. When Regina was done assessing the room, her gaze finally landed on the man, she sighed a bit loud shaking her head. She’ll have to talk to Jeff after she finishes her session (if this could be called that) with Robin.

"You need to work with me, Robin. Answer my questions, and accept a treatment if I see it viable."

With a sighed, Robin shook his head. She could clearly see that he didn't like the idea at all but he didn't have any other option on the matter, not if he wanted to get out of this without a scratch.

"One thing Regina," Robin said when Regina nodded him to continue he breathe in and out. "I want, no, I need to see Roland."

Regina's face softens at his request. Of course, he wanted to see his son. Robin has always been a caring and loving person. Regina always knew that he would be an excellent father and that is one of the main reasons why it was hard to believe he was a killer. She remembered how Roland was crying out to see his father and that mere memory broke her heart 10 times over.

"Well…” she began, "I think he needs to see you as well but it will all depend on your first session with me." Robin stood up and began to pace around the room running his hand through his hair.

"He is all that I have left Regina. I need to see him." Regina stood up and catches one of his hands making him stop.

"I know and I'm not saying you are not going to see him. I simply said that it will depend on your first session which you passed with flying colors I might add." She said with a tone that sounds like
sarcasm and Robin arches a brow.

"Come again?" he asked stupefied.

Regina gave him lopsided smile. It wasn't the first time saw her smile like that, he had a book of memories that could sell out if he ever wrote it. That smile conjured in her sarcasm and sass also it meant that she was up to something. But it was the first time in years that he had seen it and he wondered if it meant the same thing it did back then. He remembered that smile from one time that he and Jefferson were trying to pull a prank on her but she found out before they were ever successful. When Regina let go of his hand, Robin brows shoot up quickly. She was definitely up to something.

"Robin." She said standing face to face with the man, arms crossed in front of her chest. "When I was studying at the university I learned a lot of things, things that are like an extension of my perception. I tried hard to expand my knowledge in all the fields of psychology even though I'm not certified in them. In New York, I work every day with people that in your same state or condition." She sighed but continued talking when he gave her a confused look. "Some are aggressive, and others just don't care about their fate, but those who are in shock," she air quoted around her last word "those are the most difficult to work with because they close themselves off from everyone." She uncrossed her arm and clasped the together in front of her.

Robin was worried, Regina was looking right through him and he knew it. If he knows her well enough, then he must have finally piece the puzzle together, that she wasn't going to be easily fooled by him. And because he knew her, he must also know that she wasn't about to be brutal with him but that didn't mean her uncensored honesty wouldn't make its great entrance. "People like that refuse to talk altogether. They don't react or they just begin to lose composure, to be honest, there are a lot of type of shocks states, do you understand what I am saying?"

Regina sighed and sat down once more in the same chair she had claimed a while back. Robin was trying to decipher her words but it was getting hard to do with her eyes burning holes into his.

"When I got here to Storybrooke. I was told that you were in a shocking state because of your wife passing, because how you found her and your son. Jeff told you weren't in a good place, that he barely recognized you."

The intensity of her gaze was a piercing as ever, her arms crossed. Regina gushed out power and knowledge. She was the embodiment of an all knowing for a flicker of a second. It was moments like this that made Robin's hair stand and other things too but he really didn't need to think about that, not now.

"Since I stepped into this room I've been analyzing everything about you, that is my job after all. A person in shock doesn't have a clear recollection of memories especially really old ones. I noticed something wrong from the moment you called me 'Apple'." Regina crossed her legs before continuing talking. "What I see now is totally different from what I was told. You are not in a state of shock, maybe you were at the moment when you found Marian. Or maybe you were just pretending like you are doing it at this very moment."

Regina sent him a serious glare and after a few second, she turned cold.

"Regina you don't know what you are saying, you don't know what I feel..." He said angrily.

Regina laughed bitterly, how dare he say she didn't know she he felt?

"Robin I am so surprised at how lucid you are. You instantly passed this first session. I would have thought that you did because you really want to see your son, which I know is true, but I don't like to be played. Besides who are you to say that I don't know what you feel? Did you forget that I lost
Daniel the same way?" This rollercoaster of emotions she was undergoing at the moment was beginning to physically drain her. The more time she spent in that room with Robin the more likely it was for her to simply erupt like a volcano that has been inactive for way too long.

Robin, on the other hand, looked mad and hurt and honestly about to throw a tantrum of some sort. His blue eyes boiled with fire and all the things he had wanted to keep in. The brunette rose a brow in his direction waiting for him to say whatever excuse he had in mind.

"Regina," He said exasperatedly. Robin couldn't even look into her eyes long enough for her to read more. He commenced walking around the room, searching for the words. He stopped once or twice to look at her, to talk to her but whenever he settled on something he changed his mind. Lying wasn't an option anymore. It was with a deep sigh that he finally stopped moving, sitting on top of the bed face in his hand as he uttered those five words that made her eyes pop open in shock and honestly? Anger.

"This was all Jefferson's idea."

But she nodded in understanding instead of lashing out on Robin.

"I am innocent; my biggest desire is to find the culprit." He expressed with rage.

"Why did you guys do this, why have such an act? You were bound to get caught."

Robin blew out some air, a mirthless laugh leaving his lips. "Jeff told me to fake shock that way I wouldn't have to go to federal jail in Maine." Regina shook her head in disbelief. "Regina please you have to believe me."

Regina closed her eyes shut and began to think and over about everything. What the hell was going through Jefferson's head? Why did he get her into?

"What I believe or not is irrelevant at the moment." Regina did stand up, ready to just leave the room and Robin behind because really she couldn't deal with this at the very moment. "You and Jefferson know me well enough to understand that I wouldn't accept something like this especially when it involves Daniel's death. You can't pretend that I will be alright with all of this." Her voice dropped and octave but she filled her tone with all the anger she was feeling.

"Regina what you believe is important to me. You are still important to me." Robin took a deep breathe. "And I didn't know Jefferson was going to ask for you help. I told him quite clearly to not involve you in this. You have your life and I didn't want to intrude in it." He dared to step close to her, his hand on her arms quickly. Robin cannot lie, seeing her was all he ever wanted. For years now it was his only wish to the point that almost seven years ago he went to New York. He had begged Jefferson to give him her home and work address. When he got to the city and saw her so in peace, Robin couldn't dare to disrupt that so he left without saying anything to her. It hurt but he needed to move on, that is when everything with Marian happened. Still, his heart was still pretty much with her. Love never died, not even now.

"Don't touch me, Robin!"

That broke his heart but he stepped back.

Regina couldn't breathe. Her lungs closed off and her heart was beating abnormally now. If she didn't leave that room now, things would only get worse. So she began to walk to the door with the intention of leaving but she didn't.

Robin thought she was going to leave, but all she did was support her hands against the door and
hang her head.

She noticed his lucidity the moment he began talking to her to which it was strange but the more they talked the more she sure that something wasn't right and the moment he called her Apple made everything crystal clear. Jefferson constant insistence of her staying and working at the Asylum wasn't because he wanted her near, but because he needed her to help with Robin's case. Sooner all later she was going to notice how Jeff was playing her and she was pretty sure her best friend knew it was going to be too late before she could decline.

"Marian was my wife. My love for her was truthful and genuine. You know me well enough to see that I am not capable of killing someone, especially someone I hold dear to my heart. I just got there, saw her lifeless body drenched in blood. My mistake was taking the murder weapon, that is the only thing they have against me." Regina was still giving him her back but he knew she was listening. "Roland was there, he saw who killed his mother. He was cover in blood as well, Marian's blood his mother." Robin growled out "I am doing this for him, justice needs to be served."

Robin got to her and turned her around. Regina looked into his eyes that only reflected extreme sadness, anger, and honesty. Those blue orbs lost all the light and happiness that once was so contagious to her.

Regina took a shaky breath and made him take a few steps back from her. "I will do everything in my power so you can see Roland, but you need to clean your appearance. The last thing we need is for Roland to see you defeated and bad looking. He is still too young for this."

Regina walked passed him and picked up her things. When she gathered everything in her hands she walked to the door but before leaving she turned around and said "I am going to talk to David. I need to know what is the status of your case. You better hope as hell all of this works out in the end because if it doesn't you are going to rot in jail and Jefferson is going to respond to a very angry person and probably lose his position as director for taking advantage of it."

All Robin was able to do was a nod and take a few step back to watch her leave. The moment the door closed behind her, the man slumped to the floor with a groan. He wasn't expecting his day to go like this, he wasn't expecting to see Regina again, especially not in this situation but now the cards had been laying down and whatever happens next will still remain a mystery. But at least now he felt like there's a fighting chance for freedom. If there is something he truly believed in was in Regina Mills. The still love of his life.

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She left the room and directed herself to Jefferson's office. She still didn't believe that he tried to play her like an idiot but then again when it came to his friends, he could be quite irrational. Her heels echoed down the hallway like they were bullets being fired and that is how she felt, like a gun ready to aim and fire at Jefferson for being such an idiot, for keeping her in the dark about Robin's supposedly status. The moment she got into the office she shut the door loudly for the entire hospital staff to hear and locked it so no one would interrupt her going off. Regina threw all the documents that reside on top of the desk to the floor. She got out her cell phone and began to dial Jefferson's number. She didn't care that she almost broke her phone.

"Ginny I am on my honeymoon." He protested.

Regina inhaled and exhaled angrily trying not to yell. "Cut the crap you are in Storybrooke it isn't precisely honeymoon worthy destination."

And Oh, Jefferson didn't say anything. Probably because of her tone.
"Jefferson, would you mind explaining to me what the fuck did you do?" Yeah she couldn't hold it in, the anger won out and she found herself almost yelling those words into the phone.

Regina was pretty sure that Jefferson had taken the phone off his ear.

"Regina what the hell?" He whined.

"Do you believe I'm stupid? Did you really think I wouldn't notice?"

As Jefferson sat on top of his bed, he looked at the door that lead to the bathroom. Elsa was showering and he took the opportunity to walk out of the room and into his office a few doors down. The last thing he needed was his wife asking question about why Regina was angry.

"Would you care to explain yourself? Because I don't understand a thing you're saying." He was exasperated.

"All this bullshit with Robin. What the hell were you guys thinking, better yet what were you thinking? Robin told me you were the one with the idea. He was talking to me like nothing had happened. Some pathetic excuse of a shock victim."

Regina began to feel like a massive headache was rapidly approaching. Feeling betrayed by her best friend was something she didn't like, it made her question trust and belief and quite frankly this was a hard enough without adding Robin, a man that was clearly into her. It hurt her so much not only because her career was at stake but also her friendship.

Jefferson sigh in defeat "Regina you need to understand—" Regina cut him off

"Can you two stop saying that I need to understand, this is getting ridiculous." Regina spat out.

"I asked you to help me not in a direct matter. I didn't tell you of my plans because I knew this would happen. Robin is innocent, I believe in him and I'm pretty sure you do as well. I knew that you weren't going to accept if I told you my hidden agenda. Honestly, Robin didn't want to involve you in this, you know well he wouldn't ask you anything that could put you at risk."

All the pent up anger in her was making Regina tremble. If she had known her life was going to take such a turn, she would have returned home the date she had stipulated and not a day more but she had to say yes and now because of that she wouldn't find it in herself to leave, especially because of Roland.

He deserves a better fate than this.

"What proof do you have of his innocence? You tricked me! You weren't honest with me. You are putting at risk everything I tried so hard to accomplish. Not only me, you are risking your job and now of all time when you just got married. What will happen if Robin did kill Marian? Have you thought of the possibility?"

"Regina he is innocent I just know it. I have faith in him. I know I'm risking a lot here." Regina huffed but allowed him to continue speaking. "This is Robin we are talking about, I've known him all my life and you as well. He wouldn't be capable of such a horrid action."

Regina was grateful that Jefferson wasn't in front of her otherwise she would have punched him in the face and it wouldn't be the first time.

"Jeff..." she began, "Robin is being accused of killing his wife and he is a suspect in Daniel's murder, MY DANIEL. How do you think I feel? What do you pretend me to do in all of this lie you
dragged me into?" she asked between gritted teeth.

Regina heard her friend take a deep breath. She still couldn't believe how he was risking everything for a hunch, for blind belief. It is true, Jefferson had been spending much time with Robin and he saw something Regina didn't but she just can't make a case out of belief alone, they need hard and cold facts that would at least free Robin of prison for the time being while the investigation ran it course.

"I need you to be there for him." Jefferson's voice was calm, he wished that his tone would be enough to at least calm the fury that was Regina Mills at that moment. "His brother and son are suffering because of this. Robin's mere sanity is at stake. Yes is true that right now he is more lucid that you and I but anyone can have a mental breakdown at any moment and the only thing keeping him from crossing that line is the hope of resolving this at his favor.

Having you will make him not lose it, even if you don't want to accept it you are still one of the most important things he ever had and loved. I can't take his case because everyone knows he is like a brother to me but you haven't seen him in almost 13 years and your judgment is clear in the eyes of the board of directors. Please, Ginny bear with this." At the end of his speech, Jefferson's voice was filled with sadness, sadness that didn't go unnoticed by Regina but anger was stronger to her.

"I fucking don't understand that blind belief you have."

"Regina stop being so stubborn. This isn't just about facts, this is about knowing well a person. I know him. I saw him fall in love with her, I saw every step he took towards happiness with her and the day she told him she was pregnant he was over the moon. He utterly idolized Marian to no ends. All I'm asking is a few months of your help. Please do it for the friendship all of us shared."

"I really don't know…" Murmured Regina.

Jefferson knew his next words were a low blow "Do it for Roland then. He needs his papa."

"That is not fair Jefferson." Regina cried out.

"I know it isn't but you saw and talked to Robin, you know well in your heart he is innocent and all of this isn't fair for him."

Regina felt like crying, actually, she was crying. The brunette didn't even notice when the tears began to fall down, all she knew that the extreme anger she was feeling a few moments ago had been replaced by sadness.

She didn't want to risk herself. She cursed Jefferson for being right. Even though she was pissed at Robin one thing was certain, he was honest the whole time they were talking. It made it impossible to think that he was a killer.

"Regina—" he began.

"Bye Jefferson…" and with that, she hangs up.

Regina placed her cell phone on top of the desk and reached for the folder that had Robin medical history. She opened it curiously and eyed if first for a few seconds before reading it intently. After a few heartbeats, she began reading from top to bottom once, twice and even a third time. Robin was diagnosed with a psychogenic shock. That type of shock produced by bad news or a deep fear it can even affect some organs 'What the hell were they thinking?' she voiced.

The record said that Robin had a few mental breakdowns and had to be sedated. Regina continued
reading and she found it odd that it didn't say he acted aggressively or strange in most cases. It was a shallow case, and it was truly a miracle that no one really took noticed to it.

For almost a month he didn't have any type of episodes, if someone outside the Asylum read it they would be processing Robin as a criminal right now. She kept digging but she never found a professional interview or anything that could help him in a court of law, meaning that Robin's rights were violated. At the end of the record was signed by Jefferson Perkins. Regina huffed and closed the folder.

Jefferson acted like a newbie, and that action could cost him his license and in the process hers as well. If she was going to help Robin she needed to create a transcript with some of Jefferson's notes and maybe a new diagnose, build a better defense but what he needed more is a lawyer because it was time to move forward with a case. Regina decided that It was time to talk to David about Robin's status.

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Regina entered the sheriff station looking for David. The place wasn't really big but the buzz was. She made her way directly to the sheriff office and opened the door without even knocking first.

"Regina!" said David surprised while standing up.

"We need to talk about Robin's case." She said. Regina closed the door behind her. The fewer people knew what they were talking about the better.

David nodded and pointed to a chair in front of the desk.

"What exactly do you wanna talk about?" David shifted on his chair and Regina moved to sit down.

"I am going to work on his case in the Asylum and creating a new expedient for him. Robin was evaluated according to his right. He doesn't have a lawyer and he hasn't even had a hearing."

David placed both of his elbows on top of the desk tucking them under his chin. He took a deep breath.

"I know Regina. I talked to John. The state is going to provide him one."

Regina shook her head, knowing exactly what that meant. Usually, the lawyers that the state provided were crappy professionals that just went to the hearing in order to grab money. Robin needed someone capable of a good defense.

"No," she denied, after a few seconds a devilish smile appeared on her face "Jefferson is going to pay one for him." David tilted his head in question she just kept her smile in place.

"You sure?"

Regina chuckled "Oh I'm sure, Jefferson is going to pay for one." If the wanted to play dirty so can she. "I just need you to give me the name of the prosecutor and the judge. I need to know how much work there's need to be done."

David looked at her strangely, almost worried and Regina couldn't help scoff.

"What now?"

The man shrugged, "Judge hasn't been selected yet but I have a pretty good idea who is going to
picked as to prosecutor..." He trailed off.

"Just spit it out, I don't have all day, dear."

David simply ran a hand over his face, "Keith."

And of course.

Because things couldn't be easy.

"You've got to be kidding me," Regina said with a groan while standing to move around the room.

"I'm afraid so. You know that he would jump on any chance to destroy Robin. He still bears a grudge against him, especially after Robin married Marian. He thinks Robin stole her from him." Regina shook her head, but not too much, there was pain beginning to spread and if she wasn't careful it would just turn into a full blown migraine. "And there's also you," David added, Regina snorted.

"He still hasn't gotten over that?"

"I know, shocker." David stood up and began looking for something when he found it, he extended his hand to Regina, a file in his hands. "This is all I have in Robin's case. Some evidence got contaminated because they failed on gathering them on time. The strongest thing they have against Robin is the fact that he was found holding the murder weapon but that can be quickly turned around if we prove that he hasn't seen the knife in his life. It was custom made from another country and he hasn't really gone out of town for a while, well not in the last seven years." Regina quirked a brow at that, David shrugged. "Before he met Marian he made a trip to New York, to see you."

Regina felt her throat close off for a moment. Did he go to New York to see her? That's not true. She didn't see him, she hasn't spoken to him in years, not till today and now she is hearing about this?

"You must be mistaken. I didn't see him."

David smiled sadly, "I know. He saw you but you didn't see him. He wanted nothing more than a chance with you but..." He trailed off and Regina frowned.

"But what?"

"But he saw you were doing well and didn't want to interrupt your life. So he never said hi to you. Robin just left and tried to move on himself."

Something in her heart shattered. For a very long time, she thought Robin didn't want to see her. They left things in rather sour note all those years ago and now, well she knows that he wanted her in his life even though she was dead against loving again. Some feelings never die, and she for him didn't but the pain Daniel left behind had marked her in ways no human should feel. Love, her love, was cursed and the last thing she wanted as to curse Robin as well.

"I..." Regina didn't find the words to speak. She took her things and file and just tried to pretend that the revelation didn't make her feel som sort of way. "I need to go. Thanks for this." David simply nodded and watched her go.
"Sometimes you try to make yourself believe that your first love is the first person you say I love you to. But I need to tell you something extremely important, it isn't always the case. Sometimes it is the person that makes you laugh and blush at the same time. Sometimes it is the person that had lies down with you to count the stars. Sometimes, your first love is the one that takes the highroad when you think you love someone else. That person is your best friend. The one that walked away because, he or she thought that you found someone that could make you truly happy. But have you wondered about that empty space in your heart that no one else can fill? Have you wondered how that person that 'walked away' can leave such sadness behind? Are you too blind to see that your first and truest of loves had always been there but you decided to turn a blind eye because, subconsciously you didn't want to lose him? But you did anyway and you hate yourself more than words could ever express."

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"In that case…" David said while searching for something in the top drawer of his desk. Regina kept an eye on the man, tilting her head with utter confusion on her face. When he found what he was looking for the man extended his hand and placed the small card in Regina's hands. "This is the information of the best lawyer in the whole area. When you find her and explain the case, if she accepts, come here so we can move forward with Robin's case. When won't get much done until you find someone who can truly represent him." He explained to the brunette whose confusion that had been slowly disappearing from Regina's face.

Regina eyed the card carefully, noting the name in bold print on the small piece of paper. The name sounded so familiar, in particular, but she quite couldn't place her finger as to why exactly. Nevertheless, she looked up at the man biting her lips gently. "You know her?" Regina inquired. Maybe if he knew her then, Regina, would have at least seen her once or twice, hence why the recognition.

"Yes, Mulan she is the best. You are going to find her in Maine. She hasn't lost a case yet." David's words were all enlaced with hope.

Regina pondered his words and looked at him in the eyes for what it seemed like forever. She was pretty sure that David didn't believe that Robin was the killer and it was getting rather easy to think that as well. Hope was a rather contagious thing. She had forgotten that thanks to all her years spent in New York.

"You believe he is innocent?" she dared to voice out, but she already knew the answer to that particular question. David, not once, didn't give any indication of thinking otherwise.

David inhaled deeply and threw himself back, his chair.
"What I believe or not is not important here, but I can't let a friend go down that way. I saw him fall in love, I saw him healing and collecting the broken pieces of his heart that you..." David cut it short right then and there, deciding to go about his thoughts in a different way that didn't call out Regina. "He may have been heartbroken once but he is not soulless human being." He said bitterly, failing completely on his task of not calling her out.

Regina was taken aback by how he talked to her but she couldn't blame him. He wasn't the first person to tell her something along this lines. She still remembered vividly the way Jefferson angrily lash at her when she first moved to New York. She is aware that she had broken Robin's heart, she just didn't know how much was the damage. And after finding out that he actually went to New York years ago to look for her, Regina finally learned that he was still pretty much hurting, probably to this day.

Regina stood up and nodded while looking at the clock. Looking into David's blue eyes at this moment would be a horrible idea.

"I have to go. I have a date in half an hour."

David was surprised to hear that. "Robin?" he asked in a voice that had Regina rolling her eyes. Even to this day, he is too nosey for his, good. Regina snarled while pointing up a sharp brow.

"No. I have a date with Roland, I promised him ice cream, and actually, your daughter will be there as well." David chuckled, saying something like 'Emma doesn't miss a chance and accommodating his desk.

Regina smiled and turned to leave the office.

The thought of spending time with Roland made the brunette grinned stupidly. She didn't understand why but that little boy gave something back to her, a spark she thought that disappear forever. For her, it was like for the best time she had genuine feelings for someone – other than her two best friends—that can make her smile to the max. For so long Regina felt lost in darkness and she had so little lights – surprising at it is—she let someone else in.

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As Regina walked down the street to Mary Margaret's house, it was with a bright smile on her face. Even though she had gotten herself into quite the messy (bloody) situation, there was at least one good thing in all of this, Roland. That little boy had managed to lighten up at the bit the dreary mood she had been since her arrival to Storybrooke and to that she is truly grateful even if now she is stuck with working this case she really didn't need. Regina supposed it was only a matter of time. One way or another she would have ended up here, at least this way she has a truly valid excuse. Though it is stupid for her to believe she didn't care for Robin because she did. More than her heart would like to admit.

When she arrived and rang the doorbell Mary greeted and allowed Regina in. The brunette's eyes were quickly searching around the house for the tiny toddlers, and she found them, watching TV intently like they had no care in the world. They didn't and she envied them a bit for that. What Regina wouldn't give for one day of not thinking and over thinking about the things drowning her in her life. Shaking them thoughts away, Regina cleared her throat and called for the boy. When Roland heard Regina's voice he immediately stood up and began to run towards the woman, crashing his little body to her legs that made her lose balance but quickly recovered. She looked down and smiled at him.

"How are you, little knight?" She asked with clear amusement in her voice. Roland gave her a toothy
"I'm better now that you're here 'Gina." Roland extended his arm up so Regina could scoop him up to which she happily obliged. She ruffled his hair, and he released a little giggled.

"Are Emma and you ready for ice cream?" Regina directed her question to Roland and she noticed he pouted a little. "What's wrong?" at the moment Mary decided to explain.

"He is just sad that Emma won't be able to accompany you two." Regina adverted her eyes to the other brunette that was now holding Emma in her arms. Emma had her head in the crook of her mother neck and looked kinda feverish. Regina took a few steps towards Mary and touched lightly little Emma.

"What is wrong sweetie?" When Emma didn't respond to Regina Mary gave her a sad smile.

"She is sick. Apparently, there is a virus going around in school and it looks like Emma was the next victim." Regina gave her an understanding nod feeling a little sad for the girl and Roland who was really looking forward to hanging out with Emma. David had informed her that the two tykes had become really close friends and it made the brunette wonder if Roland had talked about what happened to her mother with the little blonde girl but that was something she needed to discuss with Elsa before saying anything to anyone else. The last thing they needed was to provoke a storm in a glass of water for nothing.

Though it is possible, Regina just knows it, she felt it in her very bones.

"Roland and I will bring you Ice cream, Emma. So you won't miss the delicious goodness." Emma lifted her head and smiled.

"Promised?" Emma asked.

Regina took her little hand and smiled.

"I promise. You have to tell Roland what's your favorite ice cream." She settled Roland down touch his little nose. "Mary, can I talk you for a minute?" Mary tilted her to Regina's direction.

"Sure. Emma why don't you help Roland to get ready to leave and you can tell him what Ice cream you want."

"Ok, Mommy." Emma took Roland by the hand they walked to her room. Mary motions Regina to sit down on the couch where Roland and Emma were sitting mere minutes ago.

"From your face, I can tell this has something to do with either Robin and Roland." Regina sighed heavily 'Of course she was going to mention Robin' she thought to herself.

"You are half right. I wanted to ask about Roland. You're the person that spends the most time with him." Mary looked at Regina quizzically not understanding where exactly she was going with this. "I want to know if you've seen any changed in his behavior since he started therapy with Archie?"

Mary shifts her body to get a better look of Regina. Thequestion seemed strange to Mary, Regina could see it in the younger female eyes but it disappeared when she decided to answer. "Actually no. It has been months now since he started but I haven't seen anything different. Well not until you arrived in Storybrooke. That was the first time I heard him talk since the..." Mary trailed off. She didn't need to finish that sentence for Regina knew well where it was heading, to begin with.
Regina pinched the bridge of her nose, trying to relieve some tension. It has been a very long day and all she wants is to eat ice cream with Roland and just relax. She can do that with him. But at the moment there were more pressing matters to attend to. "If there wasn't any progress with him why Archie didn't refer him to another therapist?"

Mary seemed to ponder on that, her lips twisting, brows knitting in a way that was so familiar to Regina.

"You know Archie he doesn't like to give up. He believes he can help him. I think it's sweet but also that he is out of his league, Roland has never been particularly fond of him but since there isn't another psychologist in town that like kids there wasn't any much more to do," And yeah, okay, Mary had a point there. Storybrooke isn't precisely the epitome of progress when it came to social sciences. Here people like hard labor, getting up early in the morning work at the port and even at the mines. Few people decided to get out of town and return with a degree about a career that specializes in the human mind. Other than Regina, Archie was the only other person who actually decided to branch out. Jefferson decided to go with business to please his father that was the previous director of the asylum (and owner). Though Jefferson was forced to take some online courses that would give him an edge when he took over what Regina always called 'Family business.'

It was ironic really, the Hatter family had a lot of members that ended up with psychological problems. She hopes for Jeff and Elsa's sake he doesn't end up the same way.

"Well maybe is time for a change," Regina said standing up and calling Roland.

"What do you mean?" Mary asked following Regina's movements closely. Something sparked in her, Mary couldn't tell what exactly but Regina was different somehow.

"Exactly that. I think is time for a change, a change for Roland." Roland ran towards her – she was glad that she decided on wearing flats instead of heels because that sudden movement would have thrown her on her ass- she picked him up and he squealed in excitement.

"Ready to go?" She asked grinning at the boy for what it felt like the millionth time but she didn't get tired of it.

"Yes. Emma said she wants vanilla with lots and lots of sprinkled cause she like the rainbows." Roland's delights get her in the best of moods.

"Well, lots of sprinkles it is." She turned to see Mary. "I'll return him to you in an hour."

"Why don't we meet at Granny's? I am meeting John there anyway, Roland is leaving with him today." Regina nodded, she needed to talk to John and the sooner the better.

"Granny's it is." Regina was about to leave when something came into her mind. She turned to the woman again, "Can you keep what we talked about between us?"

Margaret narrowed her eyes in Regina's direction but nodded.

Regina, on the other hand, had a bit of trouble trusting the other woman with secrets. She wasn't known as the best secret keeper but Regina didn't have any other choice. She just hopes that Mary knows well it was for Roland's best interest has heart. "Thank you." Regina managed a smile before finally leaving the house.

\text{Previously Extracted Text}:

Roland and Regina were sitting in front of the Ice cream shop enjoying a delicious Rocky Road ice
cream which apparently was their favorite. It doesn't surprise her, really it doesn't, Robin had an obsession with Rocky Road. Regina remembers clearly how he used to arrive at her house with two pints because he was too stingy to share his. Though Regina really didn't mind, more for her.

She watched Roland and she couldn't help feeling a little sadness because he wasn't spending this kind of moments with his father, and even though she was still mad with Robin for deceiving her, she knows well that he is suffering a lot inside that Asylum without his son. Many thoughts were running through her head, memories lived with the man that once meant so much (still does, why is trying to pretend he doesn't?) but Roland sweet little voice pulled her out of her eerie thoughts.

"Gina?" he called. Regina shook her head and looked down. His expressive dark eyes were looking at her with curiosity.

"Yes, sweetheart?" Roland shifted a little, his body getting closer to her own.

"Do you know my daddy?" Regina was taken aback. She knew that he would eventually start asking questions, and she was trying to get ready for that but even so, she wasn't ready to talk about Robin. It was inevitable, and she will have to push through it. With a deep breath, she decided to answer him the most truthful –without divulging too much information he should know- that she could.

"Yes, I know your daddy." Roland looked at her.

"How do you know him?"

"Well Roland…" she sighed. "We grew up together. Him Jefferson and I are friends since we were hopefully."

"How come I never saw you before?" Regina thought that he was a curious little thing just like his father and somehow that made her laugh internally.

"Because I left Storybrooke to study and I liked it where I was so I stayed." Roland scrunched his brow they way Robin used to do and it did something to her.

"hmm… okay." He took another bite of his ice cream, thinking what else to ask her. They were quite for a few seconds before Roland resume his 20 questions game.

"Do you have a boyfriend?" Regina widens her eyes to the question.

"You sure a curious little man." Regina ruffled his hair. "No, I don't have one."

"Why not? You are so pretty." Regina blushed to his words and couldn't find a way to respond to that. She was right, Locksley are rather charming.

Eventually, she did answer his question.

"I guess it's because I haven't fallen in love." There was no other way she could answer that question. It was an honest one. She hasn't fallen in love since Daniel's death and honestly, she doesn't plan on it either. Her life is simpler without the complication of a relationship that might sink quickly. She always felt cursed, and Daniel's death confirmed it. Then there's Robin and she doesn't know exactly what she feels, but she sure as hell doesn't need to feel anything for him. She is afraid, yes. She is afraid that something bad would happen to him.

"Am I going to see my daddy again?" And just like that, the focus on her was gone. Regina was glad but at the same time a little sad. She had been waiting for this question ever since she left Mary's
house. It was only natural that he wanted to know. She did, sort of, promise him that and she will try her very best to abide by that. Doesn't mean it will be easy, there is a lot of procedures she needs to go through and cutting through red tape isn't an option at the moment thanks to Jefferson poor handling of things. If the board even go a whiff of the mishandling of Robin's diagnose, then the chances of Roland and Robin seeing each other would go down the drain and Robin would be transferred to a real jail. Still, it was heartbreaking that Roland asked because she doesn't really know how to answer him without hurting the already battered boy. He lost his mother and if she isn't careful with the situation he might lose his father and then the boy would be sent away.

"Well sweetie…" she motions Roland to sit on her lap. When he did, she continued talking. "I know you are going to see him again but it will take a bit more time for me to make it happen." Roland's expression fell and Regina was pretty sure she was hurting herself telling Roland that. "But I promise I will do everything in my power so that you and Robin can spend a little more time together."

Roland looked up at her searching in her eyes if she was being honest. After a few minutes of doing so, he smiled at her.

"I know. I trust you." Regina felt tears sting in her eyes. This little boy was trusting her with something so important, the same little boy that she met a few weeks ago.

"Thank you, Roland. Your trust means a lot to me." Roland took her by surprise and hugged her tight. Regina reciprocated the hug gladly. She honestly needed a hug at the moment. Actually, she needed one since she returned to Storybrooke. This was genuine, the most beautiful kind of feelings and she was honestly glad to be at the end of it.

Regina thought about asking Roland about his sessions with Archie but after their little exchange thought better of it. Plus, it wasn't professional of her to do so. If she wanted to know more about it, she needed to go directly to the source, Archie. Getting information out of him was going to prove quite difficult. His jealousy with his work would, the main rock she was going to find in her way. She was determined to try but if he didn't oblige willingly she would have to take other measures in the matter. She was hoping she wouldn't end up taking them. Asking for favors to a certain man she really doesn't feel like talking to, wasn't in her plans at the moment. It was her last resort, one she truly hopes she doesn't have to resort to.

The brunette looked at her wrist watch, and when she noted the time she inwardly cursed. She was supposed to be at Granny's half an hour ago and they were so wrapped up that she didn't even notice the time. Regina ate the last of her ice cream, Roland had already finished him. "Lets buy Emma's ice cream so she can take it to her at Granny's." The young boy nodded, taking his empty vase and Regina's, throwing the in the trash can. The act made her smile.

Such a polite little boy.

"Well thank you." She grinned offering him her hand. Roland gladly accepted it as they made their way inside and order Emma's treat. When they were done, they began walking down the main street to Granny's.

As they walked into the hand in hand, Roland holding the promised ice cream in his other hand, Regina was feeling truly happy. The very moment they stepped inside they were greeted by little Emma who, walking around the diner while John, David, and Mary were talking.

Emma stopped in front of them and Roland handed her the ice cream sundae he was holding.

"Thank you." The little blonde girl said.
Regina smiled at her.

"You're welcome. Why don't you and Roland sit down and talk a little." Emma didn't need a lot of convincing she wanted to enjoy her delicious treat. But Roland didn't want to let her go.

"Are you leaving 'Gina?" he asked sadly. Regina crouched to his level and kissed his temple.

"No yet sweetie. I am going to talk to your uncle. I promise to say goodbye when I leave." Roland put his little arms around her neck and shut his eyes closed.

"No, I don't want you to leave." Roland was about to start crying but before he had the opportunity to do so she spoke.

"I promise to see you again sweetie. I'm not leaving Storybrooke. If you want we can go to the park on Monday after you get out of school what do you say?" Roland disentangled his arm from around her neck.

"Okay. And they after that and the day after that." Regina had to chuckle at that. She was falling hard for that little boy.

"One day at a time Roland." She cradled his head with both hands. "For now lets just focus on tomorrow." Roland nodded.

"Now go keep Emma company." Roland kissed her cheek and walked towards the booth where the little girl was sitting.

Regina stood up and for the first time since she entered the diner she scanned the area. It was Saturday afternoon so the place was pretty packed. She looked around for a moment and when her eyes fell on the booth where David, Mary and John were sitting a voice from behind her call her attention. When she turned around her eyes open comically. There she was her cousin Zelena Greene. Mayor of Storybrooke and probably the most annoying person in her life.

Cousin, now that was something she never truly believed. There were rumors that Zelena was actually Cora's daughter, the one she gave away a long time ago to Henry's brother because her mother didn't have the necessary resources to take care of her. And Zelena's father went missing after Cora said she was pregnant. Of course, they were just rumors. Regina did actually ask her mother about it but Cora never gave a clear cut answer but deep within herself, Regina knew that this, completely annoying woman was her sister.

And so did Zelena.

"Well look what the cat dragged in," Zelena said in her mocking trademark voice.

"I knew it was a miracle that I haven't run into you. I was beginning to consider myself lucky." Regina said.

"What did I do to deserve such coldness?" Zelena feign hurt.

"I don't have time for this."

"Yes, I forgot you never have time for family. You should really visit Cora and Henry more don't know why but they actually miss you." Regina rolled her eyes. Zelena and her never were the closest of friends or family for that matter. It was always a constant competition between them even for the affection of certain person.
"Then again you never cared much for family." Regina was about to burst into flames if that was possible, Zelena always knew how to push her buttons. She was about to say something when John approached them.

"Madam Mayor." He said courtly claiming the space on Regina's side. Zelena's face softens a little at his intermission.

"John. How are you holding up?" Regina was amazed to the change in Zelena.

"As well as the situation can provide." Zelena nodded in understanding.

"Well, I hope that her. Zelena pointed to Regina which made the brunette arch a brow "Presence give a little more clarity to Robin's situation." Regina didn't miss the tenderness of the ginger voice when she said Robin making Regina wonder if she ever got over Robin, Regina guess was no.

"Actually John I wanted to talk to you about Robin…" John told her he knew, Mary told him.

"Well, then I have things to attend to." Zelena said she turned to the door but before she opened it she looked over her shoulder "I'd say it was a pleasure to see you but I would be lying." With that Zelena left.

Regina rolled her eyes once more and John just laughed.

"You two are never going to get along." He simply stated.

Regina huffed out a 'probably' and shook her head.

"Shall we?" Little John directed her, an empty table.

David and Mary proceeded to sit in the same booth that Emma and Roland were sitting at. The two little kids chatting. It was the first time she had seen Roland talking to someone else that wasn't her that true progress and she needed to tell Elsa about it later on.

"What is it that you wanted to talk to me about?" John enquired. He called for Ruby who took his order of a fresh soda, Regina ordered a ginger ale. The brunette sat comfortably before giving him an answer.

"I want to know everything legal in Robin's case. David already told me that the state was going to provide Robin with an attorney." John eyed her curiously.

"Was?" he asked. Regina liked that he could catch the minor fluctuations in her sentences, nothing went missing to him.

"Yes, I also asked David who was the best attorney around." She searched in her purse for the card that the sheriff had given her. "He gave me this." She handed it to him.

"Mulan." He sighed "I know her. But isn't that kind of expensive?"

"A good lawyer always is but you don't have to worry about it. Jefferson is going to cover the expenses." Regina gave her a mischievous smile and he knew that this was some sort of payback.

"Remind me to never get on your bad side." He said smirking. "But I am grateful." John took her hand.

Regina smiled eerily.
"With that covered, there is another thing I need to know. You are aware of who is the DA in this case." Regina knew who it was thanks to David but she still couldn't believe.

Regina noticed how John demeanor went ghostly. He gulped hard before answering the question.

"Keith Nottingham."

It wasn't going to be easy. Keith was like a dog with a bone, he wouldn't let go. Especially when it came to the man that stole the heart of the woman he loved. It wasn't a secret that Robin and Keith had a rivalry going on. He even dared to hit on Regina to annoy Robin. So he was dangerous.

"Why am I not surprise." She breathed out. "You know this will make things more difficult for Robin? There's nothing worse than a fight against someone who clearly is moved by anger." Regina warned John.

"I know. Thus the reason we need you more than you think." John said in a hopeful whisper. Regina needed to make things cleared for John if she was to continue this travesty that Jefferson is putting her through.

With a deep breath and a gulp of ginger ale provided by Ruby just a few seconds ago, Regina started to organize in her head the exact words she wanted him to understand.

"John…" she started. "Me being here working this case can do more harm than good."

John tilted his head and opened his mouth to talk but Regina beat him to it. "I am saying that if you and everyone else wants this to work out for the best you need to stop working on my emotions. Yes Robin is a really important person in my life and yes Roland has stolen my heart but if a judge sees that I am not being partial because of my past with him my statements won't be valid." She took another deep breath before continuing. "The only thing working for me is the fact that I've been away from here for almost 13 years and that might have changed my feelings." Regina licked her lips nervously. "The moment I feel that my feelings are clouding my judgment I will recommend a colleague and leave this case."

Regina exhaled.

"Is that is what it takes for Robin to gain his freedom it shall be like that. You have my word Regina I won't do anything to jeopardize this. For the first time we have a real shot at getting something good for Robin and it won't be me who stands in the way of that." John squeezed Regina's hand and she smiled.

"Good then." She said when she looked around and saw Roland she remembered the conversation she had with him.

"Oh, John before I forget. Roland asked me today if he was going to see his father again." John gave her a sad look but when he saw her smiled he lifted a brow.

"Why are you smiling?" he asked.

"Because it might be possible soon. I didn't tell him because I didn't want to get his hope up for nothing but in my first session with Robin, I saw that it was viable for him to see Roland." John eyed her carefully. There was happiness in his eyes but at the same time there was tiredness, and worries, lots and lots of worries and she couldn't blame him.

"But?" John was always perceptive when it came to Regina.
"But I need the other half approval for it, in this case Roland's therapist."

"And you think Archie won't allow it?" Regina pinched the bridge of her nose.

"I think Archie won't see it with good eyes at first. I don't know the details of his sessions, or the diagnose Archie had given him but if he plays the card that it is too soon for him to see his father then that's the end of my appeal." Regina felt a little bad but the truth needed to be said.

"When are you requesting Archie his permission to see Robin?" It was a fair question.

"I was thinking after my second session with Robin which is this Monday." Regina bit her lower lip. "I think you might want to consider changing Roland's therapist." John scrunches his brows.

"Why?"

"Because I think Roland needs a change of phase. It's obvious that Archie isn't accomplishing anything. I know he is an excellent professional but this case is beginning to be far too big for him." John understood where Regina was coming from so he needed to ask.

"Would you considered treating Roland?"

Regina shook her head no. As much as she would like too, it wasn't possible and she also wasn't a child therapist.

"I can't because I am already treating Robin and even though Roland has opened up to me. It would look rather bad in front of a judge if I'm treating a victim and the potential killer." As rough as it sounded, it was the truth. She might not believe anymore that Robin's was the killer but before the eyes of the law he is the only suspect they have. She needs to thread carefully.

That didn't mean she doesn't have a solution. The brunette likes to cover her bases well. "But I think Elsa can do it. She has the license to treat kids plus this is more of a clinical requirement and she have that as well."

John looked hopeful in that moment. Regina felt a bit at peace.

"Let me talk to Elsa and I let you know if she accepts." John nodded.

"Thank you, Regina, for everything." The woman smiled at him.

"It's my job." She simply said. "Now I have to go. I'm supposed to be having dinner with the newlyweds and Elsa honestly hates it when I'm late." She stood up, "Don't forget to call Mulan when you have the appointment ready let me know I would like to accompany you."

John stood and walked around the table and without notice he hugged Regina. She was so surprised, she hasn't had a bear hug from him in years it gave her goosebumps and transported her to better times. She found herself returning the hug.

When they broke the embrace she grinned at him and walked to where Roland and the others were sitting.

"Hey, my little knight." She called and Roland knew she was talking to him. He jumped out of the chair and looked up with a smiled and Regina felt what she always felt, a light of happiness in her heart. She crouched to his level.

"I'm leaving now but remember we have a date in the park on Monday okay?" He was sad to see her
go but that made her promise more exciting because he was going to see her again and he loved that.

"Okay." He raised his pinky and she did the same when the interlock on a pinky swear Regina kissed his forehead and hugged him tight.

"See you on Monday Roland."

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Regina wasn't quite fond of Sunday's. The fact that she had a whole day free really did upset her. she liked to be busy because that way she didn't have time to think about anything else other than her job.

Minutes went by painfully slow and Regina thought that she might die from the excessive flow of memories. She decided to explore Jefferson's house a little more. She went through every room, from the attic to the basement. Every picture that she found held a certain amount of energy that could bring her down or lift her spirit. She shared a lot of moment with her best friend and even if she was really mad at him at the moment she couldn't help feeling grateful to him.

Jefferson helped her through Daniel's death.

The first week when she moved to NY she was a messed so Jeff made the choice to accompany her for a month which helped her so much. After that she decided that it was time to try and move on so when he left she put an ad for a roommate and that is where Elsa and Regina meet. Looking back at that now made her feel like she was never alone, that she always had a guiding and helping hand at her side.

She arrives at the attic and began to look around. There were so many toys they used to play with, so many fond and amazing memories glued to the walls. Something in particular caught her attention and when she got a closer look and saw what it was a tear began to fall. It was her bow, the one that Robin had given to her for her birthday.

She remembered that her parents didn't like that she had one so she always left it at Jefferson house. She picked it up and instantly memories followed…

"Apple," Robin called lovingly. Regina turned around with a scowl on her face.

"Would you stop calling me that?" She said more than she asked.

Robin smirked at her. "Sure. When you stop blushing so much."

Regina rolled her eyes.

"Whatever." She sat at his side on the log he was sitting. "Why did you bring so deep into the forest?"

Robin took a deep breath before opening his mouth.

"Well I wanted to give you something." He stood up and walked behind a tree.

For a moment Regina got a little worried when he disappeared. He was stealthy in his movements and that made her rather jumpy. Robin had this bad habit of startling her without any type of notice and more often than not she hurt him, badly. But it was his own fault, why would he scare someone prone to violence?
"Robin?" she called out. She stood up and began to walk to the tree where he had disappeared to.

"Regina." He said from behind her. She felt her heart almost get out of her chest. She glared at him and pushed him a little.

"You just wanted to scare me." Regina huffed "Well good job you did it."

Robin chuckled heavily and that only made Regina annoyance grow even more. When he noticed that she wasn't playing anymore he gulped and handed something to her.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Open it and you'll see." He just said.

When Regina opened the rather large box her eyes were full of amazement. There lied the most beautiful bow she had ever seen. It kind of looked like Robin's –one of a kind- and she couldn't believe.

"What is this for?" Regina's eyes were solely on the bow, she couldn't take her eyes off it.

"Soon it will be your birthday and I wanted to give you something special. I made this bow myself and..." He took the bow out of the box, "It has your name engraved on it and also the word apple and beauty because for me you are the most beautiful girl in the world."

Regina blushed to his words.

Regina took a deep breath, clearly remembering Robin made her sensitive and emotional. She took the bow in her hands and her quiver was full of arrows. So she decided to go to the woods and clear her head shooting some arrows.

She doesn't really remember when was the last time she actually shot at something. Odds were that she had forgotten how to do it all together. But as the seconds go by and she is still stuck in that big house while Jefferson and Elsa went away for the day, Regina soonly realized that going crazy wouldn't help Roland or Robin for that matter.

Her mind was a mess, a labyrinth of memories that wanted to break her down into million tiny pieces. And living amongst items that held moments attached to them, wasn't making things any easier to her.

So with a heavy sigh, Regina left and tried to remember things that wouldn't make her sad.

Such a contradiction, but at least she is trying to not cry her heart out.
Chapter 7

Regina sat on a cold chair in the small room that was provided for her interviews. The cold air nipped at her skin, her right hand constantly squeezed her pen as shoulders rolled this way and that. The pain there was starting to piss her off but that is what she gets for using her bow for so many hours straight after years of not practicing. Regina grunted a little as she turned her neck, the motion caused a new sting of pain resurfaces. The brunette was in need of a good and long massage and if she doesn't leave this place in a bad temper then maybe she will indulge and if not well, maybe tomorrow.

She placed a book on top of the steel table, a small tape recorder and the folder that Jefferson gave with several entries of Robin's diagnosis. The room had no windows, only a conduit through which the air conditioning went out and one of the walls had a dark glass, Regina knew that the other side was a small room where people could see and hear was happening in the room where she was, only this time there was no one, ordered that way by Jefferson.

The doorknob turned and Regina felt her neck and shoulders tensed, causing even more pain. She looked up at her new company and had to bite her lip so the gasp that wanted to escape never reached his ears. He still had the same clothes as last time, but he had shaved and trimmed. Regina stood up leisurely and Robin could not help but scan her completely, causing Regina blushed. She felt somewhat exposed to his eyes.

After a few seconds of a sepulchral silence, Regina cleared her throat which made Robin react taking a deep breath. Regina that day was dressed in a dark blue shirt and a white silk trouser suits, her heels were a pale pink and her hair was completely down. It wasn't exactly the greatest ensemble, but it will have to do. All the clothes she brought with her weren't exactly up to code but this was better than nothing. Regina and he stared at one another, many thoughts running through their heads only to be interrupted.

Jefferson rushed in behind Robin causing both lend their full attention to him.

"Regina, I have to attend a patient. I brought Robbie personally. When you're finished at the door is one of the nurses who can escort Robin to his room." Jefferson explained that last with some embarrassment, he knew that his friend was alright, that he didn't deserve this kind of treatment but is was mandatory that things were done this way.

Robin looked down and Regina felt her heart break just a little more.

"If anything happens, call me. Please let me know if there's anything that I can do to help ..." Jefferson said as he headed for the door.

Regina felt a bit of rage for a moment. Jefferson already made Robin feel humiliated, but the bad mood quickly passed since in some way they brought what was happening upon themselves.

"Don't worry Jeff, I think Robin is sane enough to behave." She said sarcastically.

Robin looked up annoyed but not that much surprised with Regina's attitude. She sent a sly smile moving from Jefferson to Robin.

"Regina ..." began to repress Jefferson.

"Forget it." She raised a hand stopping Jefferson from saying anything else. "Leave before I change
my mind," Regina said to Jefferson while looking at Robin.

Jefferson nodded while giving a supportive pat on Robin's shoulder and then left the room.

"Sit," Regina ordered, pointing to the other seat across from Regina.

Regina sat down in front of him. When he did the same she opened the book that contained several questions and then proceeded to set the recorder on. The folder Jefferson had given her was open in front of her with all the logs of the suppose previous interviews. She had marked all of the inconsistencies she could find on with few notes she wanted to go through with Robin.

"I will ask you several questions answer them if you feel ready, if not let me know so I can stop everything. I will start slowly because the issues we are going to address won't be easy as you already know." Regina went on explaining while taking some notes.

Just like that, Regina Mills, the woman he used to know was replaced by the professional she was. Usually, she wasn't cold or hard with her patients, but in this particular case, she couldn't help it, besides it was necessary. With Robin, all sense of right and wrong went down the drain. Like all those years ago, he was a weakness of hers and she needed to separate the emotions from professionalism. Hard task, but not impossible.

"I need to make several changes to what Jefferson wrote, things that don't make sense to me, I understand it was to get by fast but inconsistencies will only lead to more problems..."

Regina continued on without looking at Robin once. Not showing any type of emotions was the best strategy to treat this situation because the moment she did, then everything will go downhill. Regina felt something on top of her hand, something cold. When she directed her gaze to her hand Robin's was on top of hers not letting Regina write anymore. Her breath was caught in her throat and instantly felt her cheek and nose turn red. The neck and shoulder pain was worse because of the stress and Robin wasn't making thing easier. Regina squeezed his eyes and exhaled. When she opened them she looked at Robin. There was concern in those blue eyes that, once upon a time, meant the entire world (Who is she kidding? They still mean a lot to her.)

"Apple ..." Robin called softly, and that was what made Regina react.

Regina took her hand back and blinked a few times trying to take back the tears that wanted to fall down. She was so engulfed talking and well she thought to put distance between herself and what was she saying would help, but she didn't take into account the rising emotions. They sneak up on her, causing a minor ache in her heart.

Regina couldn't allow something like this to happen again. Not in front of Robin. She just couldn't a breakdown and allow him to see the broken human being she still is to this very day.

She slipped on her all reliable mask of indifference that she carefully crafted by the passage of the years. Emotions had nothing to do here. There's a time a place for everything but now? Now it was time to be the professional she was hired to be. Even though her whole involvement in this had been shady from the very beginning.

"No," she emphatically said, placing both hands on her lap. A stern look in her eyes that left no room for any argument he might make. Grounds rules need to be established and this was a perfect moment to do so. Settled accounts keep old friends, or in this case their sanity. "If I'm going to work with you, I don't want you to call me that, I don't want anything that happened in our past our friendship we once had to interfere with this, you're my patient, nothing more. You'll call me Dr. Mills Understood?"
Robin clenched his jaw in annoyance. It was clear to Regina that he was pissed off the situation as well as she was, probably, even more, seeing as he is the one that has to live in this hell hole of a place. Still, if they were to succeed in proving his innocence they needed guidelines, he needed them.

Robin has always been a kind and understanding soul, but he had problems with following rules. Well at least back when he was a teenager, right now she doesn't know him as well as she used to.

"Understood," He said, sitting back in his chair.

Regina sighed with relief, but could not stop the wince of pain across her face, her hand automatically went to her back up to her neck to massage it. So unwise of her to go hours practicing with her bow, now she'll have to deal with an uncomfortable feeling during this session.

Bloody brilliant.

Robin's lips opened a bit, ready to say something but Regina rose her delicate hand, stopping him from saying anything that wasn't related to the session.

"I'm fine, now Robin I want you to pay attention," He nodded, though the reluctance was there.
"Jefferson made some notes that I strongly disagree with, because for effects even if you had a small crisis –that wasn't that a big of a deal I might add- you can be prosecuted, and could be in jail right now," Regina explained it as she dropped a shaky breath.

Why was she nervous? This isn't amateur hour. She had done this a million times before, with worse criminals she might add but why must Robin put her on edge?

Robin nodded. "Well, you better start with your questions then."

Regina gulped. For a moment she wanted to forget that the person in front of her was someone she grew up with. Someone who seen her cry, made her laugh and taught her how to live carefree. (Though that last one was completely forgotten.)

"Tell me about your relationship with Marian." Regina, as casually as possible, said as she read the notes on Marian on his file.

Robin exhaled wearily; he knew that this particular conversation would not be easy. He closed his eyes as he remembered the first time he saw Marian, years after Regina left Storybrooke, years after he finally accepted she was really gone.

"Marian was John's best friend." Regina looked up surprised, she didn't remember if the girl had gone to the same school with them. "She was not from here. They met at University in Boston. But she had visited before, she has family here. That's how everyone here knew her, even you though I'm pretty sure you never paid attention to her." Regina nodded. She tried to remember the woman but nothing came.

"When my father died I couldn't finish my studies in college." She was surprised because in all honesty she didn't know anything, and she always knew that Robin had goals he wanted to accomplish. He was a dreamer, always been but maybe now more than ever those dreams had hit pause.

"I had to return from Augusta," he said smiling slightly, he remembered when he told Regina he would study at a university in Boston, while she excitedly told him she would go to New York. "I was studying administration but didn't get to finish it," His voice shifted to something akin to anger. When Regina looked up, there was clear frustration in his stormy blue eyes. His brow knitted together, handballing to fist. Not finishing was, is, one of his biggest regrets and she can tell by the
way his body trembled. Robin hated to leave things half done, even if circumstances made it inevitable. Even when he taught her how to shoot, he would get frustrated every time Regina wanted to quit. It was admirable really, or maybe an OCD? Whatever it was, it didn't sit well with him.

"So you returned to Storybrooke?" She simply asked.

Robin nodded. "Yes, that same year John was to begin studying. Our father's death quite was unexpected, his heart gave up, all the worries were getting to him until well…” He trailed off, the lament in his voice thin.

Regina remembered well Mr. Locksley he was father and mother at the same time. Robin's mother died when she gave birth to John and he never remarried. Always said that there was only one love for him, and no one else could ever replace his dear Elena. Regina loved hearing stories about Robin's parents, their meeting, how they fell in love, their wedding day and when they were told that they were going to be parents. Regina never knew Robin's mother and she would have loved to.

"How did John meet Marian?" Regina was rather curious, even though everything was part of her investigation; she really wanted to know the story. She wanted to know more of the woman that replaced Regina in Robin's heart.

Robin smiled making her heart beat too hard in her chest.

"Like I said they meet at university, he went to Boston. John's thing was computers, so he made his Bachelor degree in system programmer." Robin laughed, "He is really good and he could have had a great future out of Storybrooke but instead he returned so he could help with the family business. On one of the trips I did to visit him I met Marian."

Regina, at this point, stopped writing and looked into Robin's eyes, he sent her a grin. Eyes shining brightly in that moment she noticed that he really did love her. Her heart constricted, a type of feeling took a hold of her. She hasn't felt like that in a long time, not since Daniel. She felt jealous…

"They became best friends in Boston?" Regina asked clearing her throat. Robin assented with a nod.

"Both of them were studying the same thing so they had most of their courses together. Everything started from that point on. I thought that they had something but John made it pretty clear to me that they didn't. He wasn't interested in having a steady girlfriend, well he loved his life as a 'ladies' man." Both of them laughed lightly making a bit of the tension dissipate. "Marian and I fell in love quickly, so quick that she didn't even finish university and move to live with me."

"What about her family, what did they think?"

"Marian didn't have any family not anymore. After she started university, the only relatives she had left, here, went to traveling and there was an accident that took her aunt and uncle away." He answers shaking his head "They weren't good people, to begin with. After a while they gave her custody to the states, so she had to grow up in the system." He took a deep breath, "I was her only stability, Storybrooke became her home."

Regina saw Robin's body tremble again but this time not because of anger, but sadness. The man sitting across from her really did love her. She was the mother of his son, someone who returned his hope in love and gave him his heart back. Regina felt like someone was driving a needle into her heart, and that jealousy she felt before became more intense. It was stupid, really it was her choice to leave without him but the thought of him loving someone else still burn. But it wasn't the time to be selfish, she is supposed to be helping Robin, not being petty in her own mind.
"Robin…" Regina spoke, ready to cut short this session and try again later but Robin didn't allow her to say anything else.

"No. I need to follow through. This whole mess needs to be clarified." He said squeezing his eyes to chase the tears away.

"And then?" She asked when she was absolutely sure he could continue.

Robin took a few moments to himself, steeling his resolve to speak up. "Marian gain the love of everyone here, she became really close to Ruby. Mary Margaret and Marian were pregnant at the same time so they spend their time together talking about baby names to everything else related to their pregnancies." Regina nodded. Mary had spoken to her a little about Marian but not that they were close. "Marian, John and I worked together we made a pretty good team. We even planned on expanding our store to other cities." She looked at Robin amazed.

Again Regina stopped writing down and was completely engulfed in Robin's and Marian's story. He had a lot of plans with her, and now more than ever Regina thought it was really unfair what he was going through. It took him so much to finally move forward, and this situation might as well undo everything he had fought for.

"All of this was before Roland was born…" That snapped Regina out of her daze, her attention was solely on this, high alert to whatever Robin might say. She placed both of her elbows on the table tucking her hands under her chin. Doing so made her neck hurt even more and rapidly directed her hands to her neck so she could try to ease some of the tension away. Robin saw her brief pain face and got worried.

"Are you okay?" he asked concern latch to his voice.

Regina nodded but in reality, she was hurting greatly.

"Regina…" he called standing up.

"No, sit down. I'm fine. Continue please, why did you say that all of that was before Roland's birth?" Regina said it to distract him but Robin knew her well enough to be sure she wasn't well.

He threw himself back to the chair. Thinking about how his relationship with Marian was hurtful especially in the last years.

"Marian was that little light that my life needed when you left." He sincerely said.

Regina was about to pick up her pen and start writing when he spoke those last words. She raises her gaze to him and there was an incredulous spark in her eyes.

"Robin I told you…"

"No" he interjected, shaking his head. "You wanted to know what happened, and I'm going to tell you everything. You will have to hold every detail like the professional you claim to be." His last words were filled with disdain and poison. He was blazed because of Regina's coldness, so much that for a moment he wanted to hurt her, but in doing so he was hurting himself too.

"You broke my heart when you left – not counting what happened before that- I begged you to stay you know it. I was lost Regina, you actually made me feel like I was nothing in your life." Regina flinched at his words, she wanted so bad to say something but Robin wouldn't let her. " When Marian entered into my life I didn't believe in love nor formal relationships, I had a few affairs, but she was my second chance or so I thought. Marian made me forget about you for a brief moment and
in some strange way I did love her, she gave me hope."

"I don't understand, at that moment?" She said, something like hope creeping inside of her and she hated herself for feeling that way.

Robin nodded.

"I actually never stopped loving you and when I notice it was already too late. I had already married her and to top everything she was pregnant."

Oh, Fuck!

Was everything Regina could think off.

"That's where all the problems started. Marian fought with me a lot because she knew that after all of the years that passed I still wasn't over you. You were always present in every waking moment of my life. She knew about you, about my first love but she never expected me to be hangover over you."

Regina shut her eyes tight, trying to tune out Robin's voice. All the stress was taking place once more on her shoulders and neck. Her hands went – once more- to her neck massaging carefully trying not to hurt herself. Everything got even worse with Robin's revelation. His words swimming in her head and the more she tried to chase the away the more stress she accumulated.

"Regina, what the hell is wrong with you?" He asked anxiously. He noticed she was uncomfortable and wouldn't stop massaging her shoulders.

"Nothing Robin." She said but at the moment a whine escaped her mouth.

He didn't care for her answer any longer. He just stood up and rounded the table getting close to her. Regina stood up as well trying to figure out what he was doing.

"What are you doing?" she asked confused.

"Turned around." He commanded.

"Robin, just sit down." she said shaking her head.

"I don't know what the hell is happening to you. You haven't stopped massaging your shoulders since you entered. What happened?" He asked rather mad but also very worried about her. Regina huffed but stayed quite.

Robin didn't wait for her permission he just turned her around. Regina's back was against his chest. Robin put both of his hands on her shoulders and squeezed them, Regina groaned it did hurt a lot.

"Are you ready to tell me what is wrong?" Without warning, he began massaging her shoulders.

Regina felt like everything got out of hands quickly. She was there to talk about his situation, not for a free massage, even though it felt good, the truth is that the air turned heavy and she wasn't comfortable with the current situation and to make matters worse his words were still clinging on to her. His hands on her shoulder made her feel nervous but the relief she felt was heavenly.

"I spent my entire afternoon practicing with my bow." She said so low that he could have missed it.

Robin tensed. Did he hear right? Was she practicing the one thing he taught her?
He stopped his hands and turned Regina around to look into her eyes.

"Regina?" He wanted to hear her say it again, as stupid as it sounded. When they were younger that was their pass time not even Jefferson was part of it. It was the moment they both felt united.

Regina nodded slowly. At that moment she couldn't really grasp what was happening. Her heart was racing and Robin could probably hear it.

"I found the bow and the arrows you gave me for my birthday." She confessed.

Robin looked at her inquisitively; he thought that she might have gotten rid of it.

"I found it in Jefferson's house; he had it in the attic." She explained shrugging her shoulders. Robin still had his hands there and lightly squeezed her. That was the closest he has been to her in so many years.

"And you hurt yourself?" It was more of a statement than a question. She nodded and closed her eyes when she felt Robin's fingers on her neck. "You didn't stretch like I thought you?" The man reprimed.

"Cut me some slack it has been years since I touch a bow." She was exhaling, eyes closed and feeling good. Robin continued rubbing her shoulders.

"I honestly thought you had thrown the bow away." Regina shook her head a little smile gracing her face.

"I couldn't throw out the best birthday gift I was ever given." Regina felt at ease once those words escape her mouth.

"Good, because when I made it I pour my heart and soul into it."

She turned around. The tone of his voice made Regina open her eyes. She pant when she noticed how close his face was from hers, so close that she could feel Robin's breath ghosting all over her face. His eyes were in a shade of blue that was almost transparent all possible to the fluorescent light in the room. As their eyes locked together, Regina felt her heart beating so hard that it would probably break out of her ribcage. For a moment they became those united best friends they always were each other's confident.

Regina felt her cheeks and nose turned a million shades of red so quickly that a giggle escaped her mouth. Regina lowered her eyes almost timidly, with a sudden urgency of running away, she couldn't have Robin so near to her, made her weak in the knees. In that moment she felt Robin place one hand on her lower back and by instinct, she placed her hands flat on his chest. She was determined to push him away, to run out of the room but she felt powerless when his other hand began to rub against her neck. He closed the distance between them making them become face to face without giving Regina any other chance to react.

Robin caressed his lips on top hers, her hands began to fist against his broad chest and the moment she decided to push him away his tongue began slowly to play with her lower lip and she was gone.

Her became completely foggy, she couldn't think straight no matter how hard she tried. A normal person whole just push him away, a normal person would also return the kiss, so she did. The kissed turned heated in a matter of seconds and Regina couldn't find the strength to stop everything. Robin pressed their bodies together, hugging her with force, too afraid to let her go, too afraid to watch her disappear. They shared kisses before but all of them were timid and inexperienced ones, they were 15 years old after all. It was more of sweet pecks and light touches but all of that change when
Regina met Daniel she became a little bolder with him but now In Robin's arms she could actually feel more than passion, more than attraction she felt something that she didn't dare to voice.

Robin lifted her from the floor and she instinctively rounded her arms around his neck. He turned around sitting her on top of the table and she moaned into his mouth.

He couldn't believe that after all these years Regina was in his arm enjoying –like him- their kisses. She always let him know that her heart was with Daniel, that she only loved him as a great friend but at that moment, sharing such intimacy he knew for sure that wasn't true.

Regina tangled her fingers into Robin's hair, desire building up in her belly. She rounded her legs so Robin could be closer to her. Her fingers latch on to Robin tighter while he bit her lips, taking them one at a time. Robin moaned, his hands around her waist traveling down to her hips and encourage her closer to him, he wanted to feel everything of her. Their lips broke apart, hers running over his cheeks and neck forgetting where they were. He began to trace his tongue over her jaw all the way down her neck, her taste was rapidly becoming his favorite flavor. His hands were desperately trying to feel her skin so in a swift move one of his hands was traveling under her silky top and when he cupped her breast Regina threw her head back giving Robin a better access to her neck. He took the opportunity to trace his tongue over her throat and nipped her jaw ever so slightly. Regina whimpered at his touch aching ever more for him.

Regina could feel him hard between her legs. All the lust that was building up was making her senses go into overdrive. She felt disconnected from the world and the more Robin's hands ran her body they more she wanted to rip apart his clothes. Her hand ran down Robin's chest all the way to the lap if his shirt. She needed to feel his skin and when she did spark flew. She swiftly tangle her fingers in his hair again, kissing him hard pressing her chest against him making them both moan at the same time. One of her hands ran to it's on accord cupping Robin's obvious arousal over his sweat pants. That action made him shuttered and her ministration was making him kiss her even harder.

Regina was loving his reaction and couldn't help loving how he was making her feel the same way. It has been so long since a man touched her they way Robin was doing at that moment. She had lovers, yes but it was the physical release, a need to take care off, not love and not what she was feeling with Robin right now. She couldn't find no one could compare to Daniel.

She opened her eyes abruptly, Daniel.

She was about to completely give herself to Robin when her heart was still drunk on Daniel (or so she makes herself believe because she doesn't feel deserving of love anymore, not while she is cursed to lose everyone she loves). The worst part was her heart was beating hard against her chest and it wasn't because of Daniel like it always did, it was because of Robin.

Robin.

Regina pushed him with all the force she could muster making him lose his balance for a moment. He looked at her confused, both of their breathing agitated. She felt her eyes were beginning to fill with tears, she couldn't believe she was about to do, some professional she was.

"Regina?" he found his voice to call her, his chest moving up and down in quick succession.

She got off the table and shook her head. Tried to gather her messy hair with shaky hands. She couldn't muster the will to get a grip of herself so she picked up her things, it was time to leave the room she couldn't stand another more minute in a closed space with Robin.

"REGINA!" he tried to stop her but Regina was faster and got away.
She opened the door and the nurse that was outside looked at her with confusion. She didn't know of her appearance and worst she didn't notice Robin's.

"You can take him away." She said without looking at his eyes and giving her back, her voice was just like Robin's.

The moment she began to walk down the hall sobs came through and tears fell like a waterfall.

"What the fuck did I do?"

She didn't fathom what happened between Robin and her. She felt 15 again but with way too much arousal built in her. All the years that passed by with only Daniel, she always believed that she couldn't feel what she felt with Robin. The only person she really loved was him, Daniel.

Loved?

She felt the tears going slowly down her cheeks. Her heart was breaking with every step she took, making her feel weak. All the things in her hands were almost falling. While on her way to the small office Jefferson gave her she bumped into a few patients and nurses.

Her eyes were completely fogged by her tears. She felt that she just had betrayed Daniel.

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When she entered her office she threw everything on her desk and quickly ran to a small bathroom she had there. She looked at herself in the mirror and the sight that greeted her wasn't a pretty one. Her face was red, smudged makeup, a trail where her tears went down and swollen lips kissed with passion and intensity. Her hair was a total mess, she began to comb through until it seemed like nothing happened.

Regina was feeling stupidly guilty, she firmly believed to be strong enough to do this but she was proven wrong. Her feelings for Robin were stronger than she ever would have thought possible and the worst part was that for a moment she actually forgot about Daniel.

As she wept, she returned to pick up her hair this time successfully. She turned on the faucet and began to wash her face.

Regina still felt Robin's kisses and light touches making her flushed even more. She could still hear his hungry moans in her ears and the way his need to devour her shook her to the very core.

Regina shook her head sharply.

She made a mental note to get an open space for her sessions with him from now on. They couldn't be in such close quarters together, especially alone.

The more she tried to push away what happened, the clearer it got into her mind. The worse part of it all? She still has the desire to continue kissing and touching Robin like she did.

With Daniel was more of a romance thing, more gentle but Robin was totally different perhaps because both were adults and had more knowledge or maybe because deep down she never stopped caring for him. What Regina could be sure of was that what she felt in that moment she hadn't experienced it before and that fact that it was with him it frightened her terribly.

Her contact lenses were beginning to bother her. She began to feel a headache and her vision was starting to blurred. Quickly Regina began to look through her things, and after a long search, Regina
found her contact lenses case. The brunette removed them in a level of difficulty that that laughable. She was still trembling from what occurred. She turned to look in the mirror once more. Her face was still flushed and with the glasses on, she seemed younger.

Regina let out a shaky breath when someone started knocking on the office door strongly. She took one last glance in the mirror and gathering her things came out of the small bathroom. She quickly organized her desk that had all the papers all over the place.

"Regina" Jefferson called as he walked in, startling her.

"Jefferson, what the hell?" she asked annoyed, Jefferson had frantically entered the small office.

"That's what I'm asking you!" He said as he handed her a paper. Jefferson had not even noticed the image of her best friend.

Regina took the paper in her hands and read it. A sly smile touched her lips. She looked up and raised an eyebrow in a challenging form.

"What's up with this?" He asked Regina anger apparent even in his body movements.

She didn't look at him.

She continued organizing her desk. The distraction wasn't enough to mask the sensitivity she was feeling but it was enough to calm her nerves back down.

"Regina! How do you intent me pay for this?" He said rather annoyed.

Regina took a deep breath and filled herself with courage as she turned to see him.

"Did you really pretend that you and Robin were going to get away with tricking me?" she said as she laughed wryly. "Every act have consequences. Besides you cannot expect that your best friend has a mediocre lawyer?" Regina gaze was fiercely on him.

Regina leaned against the desk while crossing her arms over her chest.

"Ginny is not that," Jefferson said protesting like a child "It's too expensive, there are other less expensive."

Regina shook her head in amusement.

"No honey, Robin will have the best lawyer, and Fa Mulan is the best. In addition, you have the money, Jefferson, so stop complaining like a baby. It doesn't suit you." Regina said tiredly. She could only think about going to bed and forgetting this day completely. It was intense, and completely unexpected and to top it off, her neck and shoulder still lingered with pain. So she needs to get out and rest, or at least out of this place.

Jefferson furrowed his eyebrows confused. He walked up to her and turned the chair so he could see Regina clearly.

"Regina, did something happened?" He asked getting straight to the point.

"Nothing. Why?" She answered him, Jeff knew Regina well and that nothing meant something was up.

"Ginny don't lie to me. Did something happen with Robin?"
Regina pressed her lips into a tight line, brow furrowed remembering what had happened. She was determined not to let what happened to get to her. So she shook her head.

Jefferson sighed, Regina proved him right then.

"Regina please, you know you can trust me"

Regina did not know whether to laugh or mourn at the time because that same she expected from him, and he decided to play her like a fool.

"Jefferson, you're talking about trust?" She asked as she laughed bitterly. "No, Jeff, at this time you have lost a bit of my confidence when you tricked me into Robin's case." She was hurt and angry and sad and all the emotions in between. Regina was a storm inside, and if anyone decided to get too close, they would feel the wrath of the strong gusts.

"I love you Jeff, but what happening to me now is something that you couldn't solve," Regina looked at the paper that she had in her hands. "Better take care of paying Robin's lawyer. That is the least you can do. This whole situation is your fault after all."

Regina picked up her purse and checked her watch.

"I have to go, I have a date." She walked to the door, "Lock up when you get out."

Jefferson was embarrassed and hurt at the time, her best friend did not trust him and it was his fault. He walked up to her stopping Regina. Jefferson only wanted her to know he will always be there so without warning he hugged her. Regina then felt a huge desire to cry her heart out in his arms. In the few days she had been in Storybrooke I felt that their relationship had deteriorated somewhat due to the lie, the situation with Robin was getting out of hand and her feelings were mixed. It felt like she was failing Daniel, and worst of all, she felt that he could fail the Locksley's. Jefferson kissed her head and she broke the hug.

"Sorry Jeff, I need time. See you tonight at the house I'll bring a guest."

Regina left his friend in the office, confused and worried for her but at the moment all she needed was a pick me up, a distraction.

Regina almost ran out of the Asylum.

It has been a super long morning filled with many emotions and an exuberant headache that was killing her. Getting out of there help her ease it a little but not enough. The dull ache reminded her that the day wasn't over just yet but maybe the second half of it wouldn't be so bad. After all, she was going to spend it with Roland.

The thought of him made her smile.

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The ringing sound echoed through the walls of the elementary school and when the doors opened she saw how all the children came out looking for their parents.

Most of the kids were there for summer camp, and other, the older ones, were retaking classes.

The happiness on their faces was remarkable because the thought of school being over for the day made them smiled.
Regina scanned the crowd looking for the smaller group of kids. All she wanted was to be on her way with little Roland and have fun. John agreed to Regina picking up Roland from summer camp, mainly because the boy wouldn't want it any other way and honestly? She didn't mind. Still, Regina was beginning to feel anxious Roland was nowhere to be seen not even Mary Margaret was in sight. All of a sudden she felt scared. Where was Roland? And why she felt the desire to scream his name.

Something struck her legs. It felt like a little hurricane that made her lose her balance. When she looked down she felt air return to her lungs.

"Roland" She was more relief than excited.

Roland extended his arms up asking her silently carry him. Regina obliged instantly and quickly lifted him off the ground placing him on her hip. Regina noticed that Mary was approaching her with a smile.

"John and I agreed that I was picking Roland from school today." She quickly clarified causing the brunette to release a short laugh.

"I know Regina, don't worry. John told me he would pick him up tonight at Jefferson's." Regina smiled shyly, she knew she was breaking Roland's routine, but sometimes a little change is all the boy needed to open up more.

"I thought that you were gone," Regina said sincerely.

Mary Margaret looked at her blankly.

"When I saw all the kids leave and I couldn't find Roland I got scared." she confessed.

Mary Margaret smiled and sent her an understanding look. John didn't explain to her how things went down, so she got a bit to scared.

"Oh, sorry Regina. Since kindergarten is the smallest group they are the first one to leave. The teacher takes Roland and Emma to my classroom." Regina nodded, then looked down waving to Emma with a smile, the shy girl hid her face behind her mother legs.

"Oh come on Em, you know to Regina." Said, Mary Margaret, while patting her daughter back.

"Don't worry," Regina laughed, "I promised to take him to the park for a while, want to come?"

"Oh no! Regina Don't worry, I have to get home, I still have exams to grade."

Regina nodded in understanding as she settles Roland back to the floor. They wave their goodbye.

When they arrive at the park Roland was struck in awe. He told Regina that he has never visited that park before. It was close to the beach with a lot of swing set and a fort in shape of a huge castle.

"Wait here for a second," Roland nodded. Regina made her way to her black Mercedes popping open her trunk revealing a long white box with a big red bow.

Roland's face lit up when he saw what Regina had in her hands.

"Is that for me?" he asked excitedly.

Regina squatted before him and nodded as she gave him the box. Roland quickly undid the tie pulling to the side and when he opened the box he began moving the paper that was inside. He drew a sword made of wood and a tiny bow and arrows. The cry of pure happiness that struck the child
was heard throughout the park. Roland went into Regina's arm and gave her a kiss on the cheek with gratitude.

"You liked it?" Regina asked already knowing the answer.

Roland nodded, looking at his new toy and a "Can we play?" Was immediately out of his mouth.

Regina did not know how long they were in the park. The boy was swinging the sword in all directions. He proclaimed the fort and he vowed to protect his Queen Regina from the bandits and all the bad people.

Regina was touched.

She didn't know how much of an impact she made in his life until that moment. There were kids there that wanted to use Roland's sword and bow but he didn't allow anyone else to touch his new favorite toys especially because it was a gift from the queen. Regina had to intervene a few time because some kids wanted to fight Roland.

Regina soon stated that moments like this, was the best therapy, for the both of them. He was happy, giggling and smiling. He interacted with other kids, he ran around joyful and for the first time since she met Roland she could actually see the child in him rather than a broken little person. He was a precious thing Regina thought and knowing the thing he had gone through made her despise even more the person that killed his mother.

"Are you tired?" Regina asked. Roland position himself between Regina's legs.

"Yes," he said quietly.

Regina smiled as she moved the hair that was on his forehead. Roland was all sweaty but Regina really didn't care his happiness made her happy.

"Come sit." Roland obeyed, sitting at her side with a very tired expression.

"Did you have a good time?" Roland nodded accommodating his new toy under his arm.

"Yeah, do you think daddy can come?" She could feel the shyness his words had.

Regina sighed as she began to pass a wipe on Roland's face and hands. Answering that wasn't an easy thing. Roland deserves to be with his father but she couldn't just tell him, yes just to make him happy. She felt scared. What if she couldn't keep her promise?

Roland would probably hate her and Regina couldn't fathom the thought.

"I will try hard to get him to you. You just need to be patience." She sincerely said.

His brown eyes were just as expressive as his father's blue ones. "You know when?" he asked.

Regina looked down to the floor and around the park. She was at loss for words. Regina didn't want to break the news to him that she didn't know yet, especially not the day when he had made the most progress. He didn't deserve to be broken heart and she didn't have the heart to be the one to do it.

"I can't answer that yet honey." She stroked his faces. Roland leaned into her touch. "But I promise you that as soon as Daddy gets home I will tell him to bring you here. You can play with him all you want."

Roland exhaled heavily. Eyes shining with tears.
"Gina?" He called.

"Yes?"

"You won't leave me like my mommy right?" Regina's heart felt stomped by his words. His lower lips was trembling and he lost all interest in his new acquired toys.

"Oh, Roland sweetie come here." She said while placing the boy on her lap.

What can she tell him? She had planned on leaving as soon everything with Robin was resolve. Her first priority was to give Roland his father back. But now listening to him requesting her not to leave was doing things to her, she was feeling things she never thought she could feel. Roland was becoming rapidly one of the most important people in her life and thinking about leaving him and not seeing him again didn't make her feel good at all.

"Gina, you won't leave me with that man?" Suddenly Roland's body began to shivered and the fear in his voice didn't go unnoticed by Regina.

"Roland honey what are you talking about?" Regina felt worried.

The child's eyes were full of tears.

"He took her away. That man made my mommy leave me forever."

Regina gasped in surprise. It was the very first time that he actually spoke about his mother's murdered. Whoever he was referring to scares the poor boy more than words could express. For a moment Regina couldn't speak. Words left her as she stared at the castle where a few moments ago Roland was pretending to be a knight. Regina eyes peered down at Roland, "What man?" It left her lips quickly but by the time her brain and mouth were on speaking terms it was too late. Roland had fallen asleep on her lap and the curiosity in her festered.

"Shit..." She muttered to herself. Regina allowed a golden opportunity to slip away. The chances of the boy speaking about this again were slim. But it wasn't impossible they just needed to continue on the track they were. Regina was here for him, and she will make sure to help Roland (and his father) as much as possible. It was only a matter of time until they find out who is the culprit. But for now, she'll wait. Regina picked up the little boy and walked to the car where she lay him down on the back. Then she returned for his toys. As she stared at them, Regina realized that life was about to get more hectic and that she should allow it to completely throw her off her game. She'll deal with one thing at a time.

"I promise you two that I won't rest until the culprit is behind bars..." She said, tucking the bow and sword back into the box.
Roland's words played on a loop in Regina's head. He had spoken for the very first time about that night, and even though it wasn't much, it was a start. It meant that he was warming up the idea of finally speaking about that horrible night as long as he felt protected and Regina will do just that. She didn't push him to talk more and it was more than obvious the boy had too many fears lingering in his head to allow himself to say more than he has already. Nevertheless, Regina took what was given to her and decided to work on a plan to help the young boy open up more, hopefully, therapy with Elsa will provide Roland the courage and safety to speak about the horrors of that night. Now more than ever a change was highly needed.

When they arrive at Jefferson's house it was empty. Elsa and Jefferson seemed to be having a long day in the institution which didn't surprise Regina, Elsa was still pretty much-playing catch-up and Jeff, well he is wherever his sweet wife was. So deciding to make Roland a snack in hopes it would ease his nerves, Regina placed her purse down and looked at the boy in question.

"Roland sweetie are you hungry?" Regina asked sweetly. It amazed her how Roland could look at her with warm eyes even though they met a short time ago.

He looked up at her a little smile playing on his face while nodding.

Regina crouched at his level and with one finger she touch his nose gaining her a giggle from him.

"Well, wait here," She motioned to the couch. "let see what I can find." Regina caresses his cheek and stood up.

When she turned around and move one foot forward Roland grab her hand and motioned her to crouch again. She gave him a confused look but comply nonetheless. He rounded his tiny arms around her neck and gave her a hug. Regina was taken aback by the sudden action but couldn't help feeling a huge sense of love that was crawling into her heart. In such a short time Regina really had come to love this amazing little person that was the mere image of his father. The former always been a giver, a person that would give you his undivided attention, whether you were in trouble or not. And if you were in trouble he would help out to look for a solution. That was the type of man he was, the man that she once felt something akin to love.

After a few long moments of hugging, Regina was standing again and heading to the kitchen. Her trip there was rather short. The brunette walked into the living room with pieces of apples in a bowl ready to be shared with Roland. They sat, tv on and began eating, completely sucked into the program they were watching when Elsa and Jefferson arrived.

"Regina." Called Elsa from the door. The brunette whirled her head around, opening her mouth to speak. "In the living room." She said directing her attention back to Roland who was explaining something about the show they were watching. Roland loved the Justice league and he couldn't stop talking about how much he loved Batman. Regina was just glad that Roland seemed to be doing a lot better.

Elsa and Jefferson were hand in hand when they entered the living room.

"Well, look at this handsome little boy." Elsa greeted. Roland smile shyly at her. He was such a sweet little lad that blushed at any compliment given to him. Regina had found that quite endearing and most likely a trait that came from his mother because Robin was a bit of cocky guy, to begin with.
"Elsa, can I talk to you for a moment?" Regina asked standing up from the couch. Jefferson took Regina's place beside Roland while Elsa and Regina walked to another room.

"Roland told me something strange." Elsa arched a brow and signaled Regina to keep talking. "When we were in the park he told me not to leave him like his mother. He asked me not to leave him with the man that took his mommy away."

Elsa, like Regina, once did, opened her eyes like saucers at this information.

"He actually talked about that night? Did he say anything else?" When Regina shook her head in a negative form Elsa released a heavy breath. "Well, that doesn't matter right now. He said something that is better than nothing. I really think that you are his best therapy, Ginny."

It made her feel special, somewhat, that Roland would speak to her but there were a lot of variables that needed to be considered and well, Regina has done just that, which brings them to the current situation. "Maybe but I don't think I could be Roland's therapist even though he has open up to me and all, the truth is I have so much emotional baggage right now. For now, you'll need to get to know him, see if you can get anything else out of him." Regina passed her hand over her face.

"Are you okay?" Elsa asked taking one of Regina's hands.

"I'm fine. Other than my shoulders and neck hurt like hell, overall I'm okay." She lied, she was everything but okay wasn't one of them.

Elsa let it slide for the moment and Regina was glad her friend understood but that didn't mean that her blonde friend wasn't making a mental note to ask later on. If that happened, Regina needed to be ready with a convincing answer.

"Well, I think it is time to spend some quality time with my new patient." Regina had to roll her eyes, the tone Elsa used to say those words felt rather uneasy for her, which meant Elsa was cooking something in that pretty little blonde head of hers.

They walked again to the living room where Roland and Jefferson were talking about who would win in a fight between Superman and Batman and by the looks of it Roland was winning the argument.

"Roland, honey, come here," Regina called. Roland wiggled his little legs until he was off the couch and running towards Regina crashing into her legs. Every adult in the room had to laugh a little it was clear as day that Regina was Roland's favorite person.

"You remember Elsa right?" Roland nodded.

"She is going to play with you a bit while Jefferson and I prepare something to eat. Are you okay with that?" When Roland didn't respond she continued talking to assure that everything will be alright. "I promise you'll have fun." She crouched to his level and whispers in his ear "Between you and me Elsa is kinda like a little girl." Roland giggled to that and agreed to play with her.

"What did you tell him?" Jefferson inquiries.

Regina gives him a mischievous grin, "Oh, just the truth. That your wife is kind of a little girl." Elsa pouted and that made Regina laugh, she points at Elsa "See what I mean."

"I won't argue with that." That gained Jefferson a punch to his arm by Elsa. Roland and Regina were laughing by now so much that it surprised the married couple.
"We better get starting with dinner if we want to feed my little knight before John comes to pick him up." Regina kissed Roland on top of his head and made way to the kitchen. Elsa and Jefferson shared a look filled with awe to Regina action and words. Later on, Regina would find out that the pair thought she would make an amazing mother to Roland and any other kid that comes along the road.

A few seconds later Jefferson joins Regina in the kitchen. He noticed she was nervous. He grabs her by both of her wrists and encourages her to look at him.

"Regina Mills, can you please tell me what is wrong with you?" Regina gulps.

"Jefferson I am fine. I was just thinking about what Roland told me a while ago." Both of them gaze to the little boy talking to Elsa in the living room. Jefferson had to admit that he didn't think Regina would have such an amazing relationship with his God kid but it was clear to him that Roland was becoming someone really important in Regina's life.

"You care for him very much don't you?" the question took Regina by surprise but a smile graced her face.

"Yes. Jefferson, and I am really worried about him. He told me not to leave him with the man who took his mother away. The worst part is that he doesn't want to name him. HE KNOWS WHO KILLED MARIAN." She didn't mean to scream, or her version of it, but in that moment Regina realized that Robin was innocent. No, she always knew, her very soul screamed his innocence to her but she was stubborn to not believe because it was easier to pretend to hate him than to realize there were other feelings inside her heart trying to get out. Keeping them under lock and key for such a long time was starting to have a toll on her.

"Regina you need to calm down we knew that was a possibility or did you really believe Robin was guilty?" Regina took a deep breath. She was afraid to voice her thoughts.

"I wanted to believe he was because maybe just maybe this thing I am feeling would disappear." Regina threw her head back. "But Robin is not the issue here. I think Roland been in contact with the killer and for a while now."

"What makes you believe that?" Jefferson leans against the counter to watch Regina while she has her eyes on Roland. Elsa is trying to have a conversation with him but he isn't talking.

"Look at him, Jeff. He is always on his toes looking over his shoulder. And when he told me that I could feel him trembling scared." Regina turned to the refrigerator to take some things needed for her lasagna. When she turned back to look at Jeff he had a certain look in his eyes that she couldn't decipher. She decided to ignore him and continue talking "I just hope that we can get more progress with Elsa. I still think Archie isn't helping to the case." Jefferson took a deep breath. He turned on his heels to look at Elsa and Roland.

"I protested against Archie being his psychologist but the board of directors thought it would be best since there aren't any other here good with kids. I just don't trust him." Regina didn't doubt his words. Jefferson has been always open to his distrust of Archie.

"Let's just hope that he doesn't create a storm in a glass of water when we officially request Roland's case be moved to Elsa's hands." Jefferson rolled his eyes to Regina's words.

"Oh trust me he will do more than that." Jefferson simply stated.

"In the mean time let's just hope that Elsa and Roland can bond. It will make things easier for all of
us." Regina had everything prep by now. All she needed to do is preheat the oven. Jefferson had a questioning look on his face and Regina knew he was dying to ask what happened in the morning with Robin. Regina didn't have the strength to talk about it. So before Jefferson could dare to open his mouth Regina interjected.

"I don't want to talk about it. Not now." She simply said. When the beep from the oven sounded she slipped inside the lasagna.

Jefferson sighed in defeat "Fine. But you know I am here for you right? I am truly sorry how I handle things. I feel really bad that our relationship is on thin ice." His apology was truly sincere, Regina knew well he didn't mean any harm. But the damage was done and it will take a little time to walk through it because he forced her to do something she had been avoiding for years, confront her heart.

She placed a hand on his cheek and gave him an apologetic smile. "I know. I just need time Jeff. I am feeling too many things at once and I need to try and cope with them alone." Regina tilted her head and deep and smiled a little more, "and I know you are here for me. I could never hate the person that was with me through the darkest of time. I just need you to have patience with me that is all." Jefferson placed his hand on top of hers.

"Well you know I am here just a shout away." This time Regina smile a little more brightly and Jefferson was glad he could get one of those out. "I better go and prepare the table. Should I place a space for John as well?" Regina ponders it a little but then remembered John was going to arrive at any moment. She nodded and Jefferson was off getting everything ready. When Jeff finally left the kitchen Regina finally let out all that she was holding in. Her breathing was heavy and shaky and the look on Robin's eyes when she left the asylum was still lingering in her mind. It was amazing what that moment they shared was making of her and all she could think of is how her body was actually yelling his name.

"Get it together Regina." She was so into her thoughts that she didn't even hear the door bell ring.

"Is everything okay Regina?" John asks curiously.

Regina huffed she was already annoyed.

"Why does everyone keep asking me that today?"

"For starters, you look like you've walked through hell and back."

Regina quirked a brow to his bluntness but after a few second a laugh escaped her mouth.

"Well looks like someone hasn't lost his trademark bluntness." Regina crossed her arm amuse.

"It has always been the best way to get through you without making you sulky because honestly gloomy Regina is the worst of all." Regina shook her but couldn't help laughing.

"Gods I forgot how the Locksley brothers could seriously push my buttons."

"I take it Robin hasn't lost that ability?" John said crossing to the other side of the kitchen.

"Apparently not." She went back to the events of the morning and flushed a little, something that didn't go unnoticed by John.

"Anyway. How have you been John?" Regina asked while cleaning the kitchen counters. John shifted so he could see Regina move around.
"I could be better. Tired as expected but I pray all of this nightmare will soon be over." Regina bit her tongue slightly. John's words cut her a little. She really wanted this entire setup to be over as well.

"And I as well." Regina swallow some words that she wanted to say but it wasn't the moment for them, instead, she directed the conversation to another route a safer one. "Have you contacted Fa Mulan?"

It took a few second for John to process her question but when he remembered who she was talking about he shook his head.

"Yes. I got an appointment with her in 2 days. You are still going to accompany me?"

Regina nodded in affirmation. "Send me an email with all the details of the meeting. Should we meet up somewhere or will you pick me?"

"I'll pick you up at 9 am. The appointment is a 10:30 we can take the time to go over all we want to say."

In that moment Regina remembered that she hasn't officially introduced Elsa to John. Maybe as her best friend or Jefferson's wife but not by the professional she is. If Elsa was going to take care of Roland's mental health it will be best if John knew the woman who was going to be in charge of him.

"I think it's time for you to officially meet Elsa." Regina started walking guiding John to the living room where Elsa, Roland, and Jefferson currently reside.

When they join the other John called Roland who came crashing into John's legs.

"Did you have fun today buddy?" John asked.

Roland began to enthusiastically nod his head in response. Then he started to wiggle so John can put him down and went running to pick up something on the couch. When he went back to his uncle Roland lifted what Regina gave him.

"Gina gave me a sword and a bow. I am her little knight and she is the queen so I am going to protect her." Roland said every all at once by the end he was gasping for air.

"Roland, breathe buddy," John said between laughs.

Regina was so touched by his words. Surely she didn't expect him to talk about her with such endearment and love. He was just as charming as his father. What was she thinking about Robin again? Her mind was running around without any care of sanity.

She shook all the thoughts out of her head in hopes of having at least 5 minutes of clarity, enough time to actually enjoy a dinner without murder being constantly mocking. She had enough of that for the last decade.

"Elsa I want you to meet John, he is…" Regina took a deep breath, "Robin's younger brother." Elsa was sitting on the floor. Jefferson helped her to stand up and the blonde stretched her hand to shake John's.

"It's a pleasure to meet you. Although I think we already meet at the wedding." Elsa smiled.

"Yes, but we didn't speak much since you were busy trying to greet all of the guests." John
proceeded to take a sit on the large couch, Elsa sat beside him so they could talk about Roland. Regina was going to join them but a sound from the kitchen capture her attention. She excused herself and went to attend the lasagna that was ready to eat.

"I started the process to put Roland under your care," John said to Elsa who gave him a smile.

"It won't take long. You are Roland's legal guardian after all. I think the most difficult part will be breaking the news to Archie. From what Regina and Jeff have told me he can be quite protective of his work." Jefferson agreed with his wife words with a soft 'hum' hurtling her way. He more than anyone knew how Archie wanted to be in control of everything and when he finds out the sudden change things won't be pretty. It was obvious that a blow to Archie's ego was something Jefferson would enjoy and the chastising look his wife gave him was enough to make those thoughts leave before their roots went deeper into his mind.

John took a deep breath "Yes well he will have to suck it up. All I want is Roland's well being and my brother out of the hell hole." Elsa gave little John an empathic look.

"Don't worry Regina and I will do everything in our power to make it so." The look given by John to the blonde said many things. There was trust there, belief that things will work out. That was one of the perks of the job, and Elsa fully enjoyed being the source of hope for the people that didn't believe it was possible. That is why her work was so important. Especially since this particular case would help Regina as well. The brunette's peace of mind was one of the motives that moved her forward to find a solution to this pesky situation.

Elsa, John, and Jefferson were really into the conversation. It flowed effortlessly even though the topic was of high sensitivity. The tiny toddler must have sensed it or was bored of it for he got up and went to the room where his Gina had disappeared to.

"Gina." He called. Taking careful steps, almost shy ones, into the kitchen. Regina heard his voice and turned to the boy standing at the edge of the kitchen and smiled. Mills picked him up and placed him on top of the countertop (not close enough to the stove, wanting to prevent him from getting burn.)

"You like lasagna right?" Regina asked while opening the fridge. She was about to make ice tea.

"Yes, so far the best one I had is Granny's." Regina releases a long 'hmmmmm' before she responded back.

"Well, you are about to try the best one in the world if not the whole galaxy." She tickled Roland side and he squirmed with laughter. Regina loves the sound, it was quickly becoming one of her favorites.

"Anything you do is the best thing in the galaxy." Regina felt her heart grow ten times more of its usual size. How was this little boy able to make her feel so happy with such few words. Even a smile from him made her feel at ease. A handful of people were capable of such thing, she could count them with one hand but if she is being perfectly honest, Roland is her favorite.

"Well thank you, my little knight."She kissed his forehead "Wanna help me take things to the table?"

When Roland said yes Regina put him back down on the floor and handed him a bowl of salad.

When everything was ready on the table Roland went running to the living room yelling 'dinner is ready.' And everyone rapidly found a place on the table. Roland was seated between Regina and John and he kept talking to Regina happily.
After dinner was over John decided that it was time to go home. Roland didn’t want to leave so he made Regina promise him another play date. She was powerless again those puppy dog brown eyes. John said ‘looks like he got you under his spell’ and ‘Robin and you are bewitched by Roland’ Regina couldn’t help but laugh at John’s choice of words. When they left Jefferson excused himself, he needed to get things ready for the next day of work while Regina went to her room and Elsa was following close behind her.

"You know we need to talk?” Elsa’s voice went running through the hallway making Regina stop. She whirled around to see her blonde friend in the eyes.

"If it’s about Roland of course.” Regina drew an imaginary line in her head of the thing that she should keep apart from talking. Even though Roland was Robin’s son she really didn’t feel strong enough to touch that particular topic.

Elsa sighs and began walking towards Regina. They entered the brunette’s room and sat down on top of the bed.

"So…” Regina started. Elsa took a deep breath before starting to give Regina a full report.

"Roland is not trusting with other people that much is clear.” Regina nodded she already knew that. A blind man could see that. "But I think is more than that. Do you know how Roland is with his sessions with Archie?” Elsa asked Regina. The brunette didn’t have an answer and she regretted it not asking Archie went they went out for dinner.

"I really don’t know," Regina answered, feeling something strange surge in her chest.

"If it’s anything like he was with me today I’m guessing that Roland doesn’t trust anyone that has to do with the psychology field.”

Regina tilts her head.

"Wait that would mean he wouldn’t trust me as well and we all know that is not true." Elsa raised a finger to her lips thinking about Regina's words.

"For him, you are different somehow.” Elsa released a breath, "I will know more once I officially start therapy with him, it’s too early for me to come to a conclusion.”

"We still have to formally request the case to be transferred. I will start that tomorrow first thing in the morning.” Regina threw her head back against the headboard. Elsa was meticulously watching Regina. The blonde knew something was eating Regina up.

"Okay, Regina spilled. What the hell is wrong with you? And don't go saying nothing because Jefferson commented me something happened with Robin.” Regina passed both hands over her face, eyes shut close.

"It's thread nothing Elsie.” Regina tried but Elsa was having none of it. If there was someone who knew Regina from head to toe it was Elsa.

"I know you, Ginny, this 'nothing'...” she air quoted around the last word for more emphasis, "...is eating you alive.” Elsa gave her a knowing look and in that moment Regina knew it was pointless to try and keep shut because when Elsa decided to get annoying, no one was safe.

Regina let her hair down and massaged her neck. Elsa cleared her throat letting Regina know she was waiting. With a heavy sigh, Regina looked at her friend and uttered the words she dreaded repeating out loud.
"Robin and I kissed." Elsa's eyebrows almost disappear into her hair line. She wasn't expecting that at all. Regina buried her face into the pillow and all that she could hear were her friend loud squeals.

"Wait weren't you guys in the middle of a session?" Elsa questioned.

Regina realized something.

"OH MY GOD," Regina exclaimed. She quickly stood up and went to look for her purse. When she found what she was looking for she returned to sit on the bed. Regina showed the recorded to Elsa and she quickly understood.

"Wait you just kissed right?" Regina shook her head.

"Yes but..." Regina trailed off.

Elsa almost screamed when she realized what was Regina getting to.

"So things got intense and you forgot to turn off the recorder." When Regina said yes Elsa was way too excited.

"I want to listen." Regina shot her a death glare and Elsa just raised her hands.

"So why is the whole thing bothering you?" Elsa began to scratch her head because even though it was Regina, her best friend, sometimes she didn't understand her.

"Where should I begin?" she said sarcastically. "Well for starters he is my patient and that is not ethical at all. Secondly, he is in a mental ward hospital accused of murder but he and Jefferson are too busy tricking me to work on his case, third I still love Daniel..." Elsa got annoyed.

"Regina you can't keep living in the past. Daniel is gone you have to move one." Regina was fighting the tears that wanted to come down while getting really pissed with her best friend.

"You don't understand. I love Daniel and I feel like I'm betraying him is not fair to him, to his memory."

"I know you loved him greatly but you are not being fair to yourself, you can't keep hanging on to a thread that is no longer there. I didn't get to meet Daniel that much is true but I know well he wouldn't want you to be like this. Negating yourself a second chance to love-"

Regina cut her off.

"I don't love Robin." She almost yelled.

Elsa shook her head.

"Okay, you don't love him. Tell me something. How did you feel when you shared that kiss? Because you are an emotional wreck and I don't think that is because of the Daniel thing." Elsa crossed her arms in wait for an answer that she knew in her heart that wouldn't come.

Regina was biting her lower lip to the point of almost drawing blood. One hand clutching so hard the recorder that her knuckles turned white. Regina was determined not to answer but Elsa went on to say 'I'm not leaving until you do.' And that is when a tear escape.

"I felt desire and too much lust." Regina said Elsa looked at her intensely.

"This..." Elsa pointed at Regina "looks like more than a desire to me. Be honest with yourself for the
first time, what are you afraid of?"

That was the question, wasn't it? What does she fear? The tears that she, valiantly, been fighting began to fall on their own accord, her heart contracting with fervor. When it came to love, Regina was such a newbie, even after years of loving a memory, she still doesn't know how to deal with it. With the pain inflicted to her in the past, with the way how deeply she felt everything. Love can be called a curse in her life, and she can't quite understand the base of it, not years later.

"I am afraid of forgetting Daniel. Because the moment my lips touched Robin's I forgot the world around me. I forgot that Daniel's face and name. I forgot all the pain these 13 years gave me." Regina released a shaky breath "I felt longing towards Robin. I felt like the bottle inside of me containing all my feeling for him broke and I couldn't bottle them up again. All I wanted was to stay in his arm and never let go. When he told me that I broke his heart when I left, my heart was breaking with his words. I felt jealous when he told me he actually loved Marian," Regina admitting that took Elsa by surprise but she continued to listen because there was no way Regina would open up like this again. "I almost gave him everything in that moment. His hands felt like home, I felt greedy I wanted more of him. Everything I forgot about him was remembered in a blink of an eye. All the sweetness, all the free love he constantly gave him. The way he always smiled at him to make me feel safe. Honestly, I don't know why I even ended up with Daniel because today I finally admit it to myself that what I felt for Robin was stronger than my feelings for Daniel." Elsa was taken aback with Regina last statement, never in a million years, she would have thought of Regina admitting something like that. This was the first time in years that Regina let the volcano of feelings erupt.

Regina threw her head back and closed her eyes.

"I wanted so bad for Robin to be guilty. It seems selfish but that would give me a reason of leaving when all of this was over because I know in my heart that the moment everything was clear I would want to be with him. Thinking about being a family with him and Roland actually sounds so beautiful to me."

"Seems to me your feelings are pretty clear Regina." Elsa took one of her hands. "Stop fighting what you feel, you're gonna drain yourself emotionally."

Regina sat up, looking at Elsa directly in the eyes.

"You know very well I can't. For god's sake Elsa, Robin is my patient. I can go and play lovers with a person that is in a mental institution. I could lose everything I have worked so hard to accomplish. Besides I wasn't going to let him fuck me on top of a table where I work."

Elsa rolled her eyes, "You are being paranoid Regina. You don't have to act on your feeling now but knowing where your heart lies would make things a lot easier."

"Yes well, I don't plan on acting on my feelings at all. After this, I'm done. I will return to my life in New York and all of this will be just a memory more." Mills could see in Elsa's eyes that she wanted to call bullshit on this. But she took another course of action instead.

"And what about Robin? What about his feelings for you? I am pretty sure he adores you. Most importantly what about Roland? Are you going to break his heart just like you broke Robin's?" That hit Regina like a train. Elsa has always been the type of person to call it how it is, and as much Regina loved that about her best friend, there were moments that bite, like now.

"Elsa that is not fair." Regina cried out.

"Exactly isn't." Elsa took a deep breath before proceeding to speak again. "That boy has developed
strong feelings for you Regina an attachment that won't be easily broken. I'm certain that he sees you as a mother figure. He is not the only one who is going to suffer when you leave, Robin as well and especially you. I've seen you around Roland. All that care and love you give him is also therapy for you. You are happy around that kid. I love how he can bring out of you a genuine smile. Don't be selfish Regina if you feel love and you know it's reciprocated why would you run away from it?" Elsa questioned.

"Because running away is what I'm good at."

"Well running away isn't really an option anymore, is it? Besides, it was a cowardly way to live." Elsa threw herself on to the bed and tilts her head to see Regina. "What is going to happen now? It's obvious that you and Robin need to talk this through especially because all of this can play even worst in his mental state and I don't think you need more complications."

Regina hated to admit but Elsa was right. For Regina, it was too soon to have that conversation with Robin. The brunette grunted she was already feeling even more mentally drained. Elsa didn't push it anymore because it was clear that she got her objective, she got Regina to think about all the possibilities. How her life would be lived from now on. Life wasn't easy, and Elsa just made it so she had to think about it and take the best course of action. The brunette was so into her own thoughts that she did not notice when the blonde reached for the recorder.

When Elsa press play Regina's eyes widen when she heard herself moan. She jumped right away to snatch the recorder from Elsa's hands. It was a war between them and when Robin obvious sound of arousal came through Elsa froze and Regina took the opportunity to swipe the recorder from her hands and stop it. Regina was a rainbow of thousands of reds and pink.

"Well, it's good to know that Robin can obviously take you over the edge." The blonde chuckled.

"ELSA!"

"Alright, alright." She exhaled. "Ginny, when are you going to take Roland to Robin?"

Regina seemed to ponder on it. She did tell John that after the second session it was possible but since it was abruptly interrupted well she really didn't have a clue.

"I was thinking after the second session but…" Regina trailed off.

Elsa began to watch to the ceiling.

"I think you should take him as soon as possible." Regina looked at her friend surprised.

"Why?" Regina asked.

Elsa balanced herself with her elbows before talking.

"Roland made progress and it was all because of an outside factor, you." The blonde sat in front of Regina legs tucked under herself, "You taking Roland to Robin will improve his mood greatly. He needs his father and Robin needs his son." Regina closed her eyes and let Elsa's words swirl around her head, she was right.

Regina sighed and bit her lower lips before saying anything.

"You are right. But I'm going to take him when you officially have Roland as your patience. I am afraid if I try to do it now Archie isn't going to allow it."
"Messing with another psychologist job always ends up badly," Elsa said while stretching.

"You got that right." Regina about said.

When John picked up Regina for the appointment with Robin's new lawyer he noticed how tired she seemed. Dark circle under her eyes and her slow movements gave her away. Last time he had seen her, she was wrestling with something in her head, and it looks like that fight carried through the night.

"Regina you look even worse today." Regina arched a brow.

"Well, it hasn't been the best of weeks." Regina countered. John chuckled a little.

"So if I am getting this right your session with Robin didn't go well?" Regina whipped her head around to see John.

"Excuse me?" Before Regina could say anything else John swiftly interjected.

"Oh come one. When it comes to Robin you are an open book." He had his eyes on the road but gave a little side look at Regina who was looking at him in disbelief. "Well I wasn't right was I?"

"I am not confirming nor denying." John laughed, he knew well he once more pushed Regina Mills buttons.

"How is Roland?" That question didn't take John by surprise, actually, he was impressed that she didn't ask it as soon as she got in the car.

"He is a good mood today. Since he began spending time with you he has been smiling more. You are changing his life." Hearing that warmed Regina's heart.

" Honestly? Is the other way around. I haven't felt this happy in a long time." Regina gave John her most genuine smile.

"Roland has the power to make you feel happy. Makes me sad he had to endure such trials lately. I really want this situation to be over so he can be the same cheerful little boy he always been."

"He is a strong little boy, he really does takes after his father. I just…" Regina trailed off.

"You just?" John asked.

Regina took a deep breath.

"I'm afraid that he will end up hating me." John scrunched his brow.

"Why would he hate you? Regina, I think that kid might actually adore you."  

"John you know well that I don't plan on staying." John understood her and yes he knew Roland would be heartbroken if she leaves.

"Look Regina…” he sighed "I know that staying here has been hard for you and it wouldn't surprise me if you leave. But analyze it well, you get a handful of chances for happiness and I truly believe that you can be happy with my brother…” The Portland sign was in view and John press the gas to go faster. "Don't forget that we all grew up together and I did get to see your eyes shine every time you were near him. I know you love Daniel and you will love him always but he is gone. You have always been so stubborn when it comes to Robin I really don't understand why. Everyone could see how much you…” John cut his sentence short he knew if he continued talking Regina would get
"That I what? You have never been the one to shut up, you always been really blunt towards me so…” Regina was waiting for him to continue arm crossed and brow raised.

"Fine." He said. That you love him." John blurted out and before Regina could counter back he announce their arrival.

Regina replayed John's words, she was doing a lot of that lately. No matter how much she tried to keep all words at bay they always found a way to sneak around. She was walking mindlessly and when she heard a strange voice she was snapped out of her gaze. In front of her lied a beautiful brunette with cinnamon color skin and she swore she could smell a hint of it as well.

"Good morning." The sweet but stern voice soar through the air. The woman was truly beautiful, a masterpiece and she was struck with awe.

"Good morning." Regina and John said in unison.

"Please step into my office." The brunette walked through the door motioning John and Regina take a sit.

They oblige and when they sat down Mulan took out pen and paper. Regina figured that the question were to roll quickly and she was about to answer them all.

"First of all, you must be Regina Mills." When Regina confirmed it she went on her line of thought. "It's nice to finally meet you. Ever since John here told me you were going to be here I've been looking forward to it. You are after all one of the best Forensic psychologists in the country. What surprises me is that you're taking a case of a small town like Storybrooke."

Regina was surprised by Mulan's words. And John was stunt he didn't know Regina specialize in that precise field.

"Well thank you for that introduction. The pleasure is all mine is not every day you meet one of the best Criminal lawyers in the country as well." Regina cleared her throat. "I am originally from Storybrooke, and Robin is one of my best friends." Mulan nodded in understanding. She asked Regina for Robin's record so she can examine it carefully. In the whole exchange, John hasn't said a word he knew that Regina could take care of it.

"You know that the DA is going to use your friendship with Robin against us." Regina took a deep breath before she said anything.

"We haven't seen each other in 13 years." Mulan continued reading on and spotted the same inconsistencies that Regina notice.

"This record is all over the place. We won't have a case unless all of this mess is organized."

"I've been trying to fix it. I also took the liberty to bring to his arrest record." Regina handed the record to Mulan. When she read it she also noticed some things that didn't make sense.

"Who made the arrest?" Regina went back to her conversation with Jefferson days prior. But she didn't quite remembered. She looked at John in hopes he knew and he didn't disappoint.

"It was Killian Jones." John provided. Regina was trying to get a face of the man in her head.

Mulan wrote down the name. "And who is the DA?" John shifted in his chair.
"Keith Nottingham."

Regina looked at him with wide eyes. "Wait, Keith?"

Keith and Robin have never been friends. Keith was also in love with Regina and since she never gave him the light of day he believed it was because of Robin and made him hate the other even more. Keith was always really possessive and aggressive and every time he was near Regina he made her skin crawl with disgust.

Mulan eyed the pair in front of her curiously.

"Yes." John just said.

"I take it that isn't a good thing," Mulan said going through the papers.

Regina threw herself back on the chair and scoffed. Out of all the people, Keith. This was insane.


"Well, that can be use to our advantage." Mulan had a sly smile on her face and Regina felt the sudden urge to mirror it. Grudges, hate, were a weapon. People like Keith were short temper and it would be easy to deal with him.

"I am really going to like working with you." Regina said out loud.

"You know why you've been call into this board meeting?" Jefferson told Archie who was sitting in front of the board of directors. The board composed of Philip Prince, Blue Fay, and Sean Herman. At Archie's side was Elsa rapping nervously her fingers against the table.

Archie nodded. "This is about Roland's progress."

"Correct." Blue began. "Roland Locksley hasn't had any improvement under your care."

Archie felt insulted by those words.

"It hasn't been for lack of trying." He responded. They all sent each other some looks that Archie really didn't like.

"It's time for a new approach," Sean said. Those words capture immediately the ginger man.

"What do you mean?"

"It means that we are transferring Roland case to Elsa." Archie's eyes widen and looked at Elsa. He found it really odd that the blonde woman was in the meeting but all made sense to him now.

"Under what pretenses you are taking this case away from me?" Anger swelled in his chest but he didn't let it show. The moment emotions bleed into the crowd, everything would be over. The way to effectively take care of a situation was to prove to everyone that feelings didn't rule over him. That he is the perfect candidate to take care of certain positions and losing this case made him seemed incompetent by comparison. "Don't tell me this is all Regina Mills idea?"

Jefferson took a deep breath before answering.

"This has nothing to do with Regina. If it had she would be here right now don't you think?" Archie anger was taking a hold of him but he didn't let it show because he knew that would play against it.
"And who requested the change?" Archie's tone was calm, even with the raging storm inside of him.

"His legal guardian, John Locksley," Philip said while placing his hands on top of the table.

"So Regina has everything to do with this. I won't stand for this. I can help Roland. This is my life, helping those in need to rediscover themselves, to find the answer they seek." Jefferson was beginning to feel stiff in his chair and Archie was starting to get mad.

"Archie you will oblige to John's wishes and that is final. It's not your call it's his and the decision has been made." Jefferson maintains composure just like Elsa told him. The moment Archie got a rise out of him, the ginger would have the tools to make this decision lose it hold.

"You are more than welcome to assist me. I have no problem with that." Elsa tried but Archie looked at her with disdain and that action made Jefferson stand up.

"Archibald Hooper you are dismissed." Jefferson commanded.

Archie sent him a glare before walking out of the board room. The door slammed hard and everyone was stunt by the psychologist action. They didn't paint him as a person with anger issues. Actually, Archie always been, is still because really anyone would be angry about losing a case, beloved by everyone but this just proves that every human being has the capacity to lose it top. The frustration of not being able to get something out of Roland and the fact that everyone was expecting him to do well was probably the cause of this outburst. Elsa had explained that this might happen to the board but seeing it in the flesh was something else entirely.

Elsa pursed her lips tight looking at Jefferson.

"Well, that went better than I expected." Jefferson huffed out.

Elsa rolled her eyes, her pursed lips relaxing but not enough.

"Let's just hope he doesn't take any action against us." Elsa muttered to herself.

She had a strange feeling that couldn't shake off. Something about Archie's attitude left her with a nagging feeling in her head and chest. She just hopes that nothing bad comes out of this. Because that man was unpredictable and she is very good reading people but not him and that is quite worrisome to her.
Chapter 9

"My decision is final, Robin." Regina said with all the pain in her heart as she stood. They were on their spot, sitting on the log they always sat on when they needed to have a serious conversation, and this was as serious as it got. She gave him what could only be called the look of despair before turning around. The more she looked at him, the more self inflicted pain she caused. "I am leaving Storybrooke and I'm not coming back." She began to stalk away from him hoping Robin would allow her to leave in peace but she knew better. Robin wouldn't, couldn't let her go. With two huge strides he reached and grabbed Regina by the wrist making her spin, their faces close together.

"Regina you can just take off like that and expect that It won't hurt anyone." He placed his hands on both of her arms. "Have you thought about Jefferson, Rosaline, your parents..." he trailed off tears beginning to gather in the corner of his eyes. "Me." He finished, his voice was beyond a whisper. His hold on Regina was stronger now and he shut his eyes tight as if trying to will her words out of existence.

"Robin..." she began but he didn't give her time to muster any other words.

"Regina I'm begging you. Please don't leave." He crashed her into his chest, tears streaming down his cheeks now. Robin has never been afraid of being vulnerable in front of her. Regina could see that he was aching, his heart was breaking and it killed her that she is the cause of such pain. Hurting him wasn't her intention but she did see it coming a mile away. A goodbye would always leave wounds behind.

"I CAN'T STAY HERE." She cried out. Regina tried to fight him off but he wasn't letting his hold on her loosen up. "I can't be in a place where I am constantly reminded of Daniel." She closed her eyes giving in to Robin's embrace.

"That doesn't mean you have to leave forever." He simply stated and maybe he was right, maybe saying she would be leaving forever was exaggerated but the pain runs bone deep and everywhere she goes, everywhere she turned to she was reminded of Daniel. It was like traces of him where ghosting around her, mocking her, making her feel like her damaged heart would never beat quite the same again. It was a feeling she loathe and Regina wasn't about to stay here to allow it to fester to the point where the infection would turn cancerous.

"I have to. Don't you get it?" She finally had the strength to push him away, to look into his blue eyes and see that she was single handling crumpling his heart and soul. "I can't be here knowing that you love me and that I could never give you what you want, what you really deserve. I don't want to love again, I can't love again."

In that moment as her words settled into him, Regina saw how his heart finally fell and shattered into a million pieces to never be repaired again. Her words were a knife coated with nightshade to his heart and the more she continued spiting hurtful words the more that knife began to twist. If the knife through it wouldn't kill, the poison certainly will. He gulped down the sobs that were making their way out and sighed tiredly before saying anything else. The was so much in his eyes, words that he couldn't quite released, sentences he couldn't calculate well. So much to be said but the only thing that he was able to put together, were words Regina knew he didn't feel.

"Regina I am not expecting you to love me." The conviction behind them seemed real. "I stopped hoping for you to love me the moment you picked Daniel over me."

Regina looked surprised at his words or maybe she was faking it? Regardless of what she thought
about what he said, it didn't mattered. He loved her, as stupid as loving someone so cursed was, he truly loved her and it made everything harder for her. Because Robin was perfect from head to toe. His heart was the purest of them all and if needed he would take a bullet for her. That big was his love and Regina was undeserving of it. She failed him once, she cannot do it again.

"Truth is I already made peace with myself that I would never have you again. Yes It did break me and no I haven't stopped loving you but all I want is for you to be happy..." He closed the distance between them as he cradles her face in his hands. "I do love you with every fiber of my being. I love you enough to not per-sue you anymore. But please don't take away from me the gift of seeing your beautiful face every day. Don't take away from me the opportunity to try and make you smile once more." Regina placed her hands on top of his and for a brief moment she felt at ease. She hasn't felt like that since Daniel's passing 4 months ago. Every day that passed she felt her heart clenched even more. But that feeling quickly faded away and she once more felt her world crumble beneath her feet. Daniel was gone forever and here was Robin begging her to stay but she couldn't, her need to run away was stronger than her desire to believe Robin's words.

"I am sorry Robin..." She took a deep breath and mirrored his move, cradling his face with her hands. "I can't be the culprit of you not finding love. You deserve better than a broken woman like me." Regina gave the saddest of smile before leaning in and gives him a sweet little peek on his lips. Robin places his forehead against hers breathing her in, knowing well that was the last time he was going to be able to do so.

Finally Regina broke the silence, heaviness settling in her heart. "Robbie thanks for at least trying to make me stay. I know that what I'm doing isn't something easy to accept or understand..." She felt a surge of sadness taking place in her stomach that she didn't want to feel anymore but then again she was going to learn to live with it forever. That was her curse. When she finally found the strength to speak, Regina took a deep breath "But I need a new space to call my own. I need to walk different streets that aren't full of Daniel's scent. I need to be able to look in front of me and not feel that constant sadness that has incrusted in my being. I know I am breaking your heart but maybe it is for the best. Maybe you –finally-can move on with someone who can love and cherish you like I wasn't able to do. You deserve happiness so please don't hold on to me anymore because knowing you sad can only break my heart even more."

In that moment Robin lost it. He hugged her tight so tight that they both felt knees first to the floor. Robin was sobbing, hiding his face in the crock of her neck while Regina tried to fight and failed to contain all the tears that were shining in her eyes. Regina heard Robin mumble something into her neck but she didn't understand his words. She just hugged him even tighter, the last comfort she would ever give him because the morning after this she will be gone forever, and even though the words forever was awfully big and hurtful she knew that was going to stick.

After a few minutes on the ground both of them feeling numb he gathered the courage to ask the thing he dreads the most. He already knew what her answer was going to be, Regina was an open book to him but he knows well he needed to hear it from her.

"When are you leaving?" He mumbled, not daring to look at her. Regina shrugged her shoulders trying to keep her sobs away from his ears.

"I leave tomorrow. So this is good bye."

Robin woke up with hollowness in his heart. A hollowness that dreaming with Regina always brought to him. He hasn't dreamed with her departure in a long time but ever since Regina came back all those memories, all the feelings were resurfacing, rising like foam. Those restless nights were back with full force and now knowing Regina is so close he can't help trembling beneath all
those bottle up feelings of love he saved in his heart. And to make matters worse for him the moment they shared in that small asylum room was making him ache more for her. If things were to continue like that he might actually go insane for real. Years of making himself believe that Regina was just a figment of his imagination where shattered when he got married to Marian that is how he knew that no matter what happens, no matter how much time passed by Regina will always be the one for him. The one that got away.

Robin had been tossing and turning in his bed, searching for the off switch that would finally kill his heart from hammering so loud when a loud knock on the door made him sit up. Somewhere deep inside of him he wished Regina was at the other side of the door but he was met with disappointment when Jefferson crossed the door and sat down on the only chair in his room, or as Robin likes to call it his jail cell.

"Were you waiting for someone else?" Jefferson asked crossing his arms.

Robin sat at the edge of the bed and passed a hand over his face. When he looked up to his friend he saw on his face a knowing smile.

"If you already know the answer to a question why ask it?" Robin simply stated. Jefferson chuckled in an amuse way.

"Because…” He shifted in his chair to look directly at Robin. "It's more fun to see you flushed."

Robin rolled his eyes. "What are you doing here anyway?" The man asked, in hope of directing their conversation into a more neutral topic. Talking about Regina will either sour more his mood or make him feel more like an idiot. So far there was a combination of both.

Jefferson licked his lips before giving an answer. His best friend had this tell that whenever he was about to give Robin bad news his whole body seemed like it was grimacing. The nervous tick of him licking his lips was just a bonus.

"You got a visitor." Robin arched a brow in Jefferson's direction.

"And why you look like the devil is here to see me?" Robin questioned.

"Because he might as well be the devil." Jefferson answered clear disdain in his voice.

"Jefferson can you quit the crap and stop beating around the bushes. Who came to see me?" But before Jefferson had the opportunity to answer the door creaked sound that capture Robin's attention. Through the door came walking none other than Keith Nottingham.

"I won't lie this is most amusing." Keith said looking down on Robin.

Robin felt a raise in his anger and stood up. Before he could take another step Jefferson stopped him.

"Robbie, take it easy. Don't do anything stupid." Jefferson didn't let go of Robin until he looked into his eyes and took a deep breath.

"What is he doing here? I thought I couldn't have visitors other than Regina and you." Robin said not once moving his gaze from Keith.

Keith had a smuged smile on his face that only made Robin's anger flare even more.

"OH. Haven't you heard?" He sends Robin an evil smirk. "I am the DA in your case."
Robin clenched his fists. "You have got to be kidding me. Next thing you're going to tell me is that Gold is the judge."

Keith grin grew bigger and Jefferson just puffed all the air in his lunges.

"Oh come on. Is this some kind of joke?" Robin was already feeling like hell was calling his name in prison. "Isn't that conflict of interest or something?"

Jefferson tried his best to be a buffer. Standing between him and Keith, but Robin's disdain for this man before ran stronger than any other negative feeling he had felt inside these wall the past couple of weeks. When he saw Regina the other day, that anger lowered into a simmer but seeing this man, and knowing that Gold would take over his case was the final piece to make him feel volatile. If it wasn't for Regina entering the room the exact same moment he was about to right cross Keith face, then he would have been in deep shit.

"Sorry I'm late." Regina said. Just like that his level of anger lowered and his eyes locked onto her. He stared at the woman for a long while and when she looked his way, he could see that her cheeks turned a shade of crimson that reminded him why he used to call her Apple. But the moment passed quickly and Regina looked away from him to land on the man he wanted to beat the shit out of a moment ago.

"Shall we move this to the interrogation facility?" Keith said. Robin gave a questioning look from Regina to Jefferson.

"Yes. Fa Mulan is already there. She would like to meet you before we begin." Regina explained. She sent a look to Jefferson that he understood all well.

"If you care to accompany me to the holding area." He directed Keith to the door leaving Regina and Robin alone. Robin was glad that the man was gone, with it the need to break every bone in his body. Still he was confused, and when the door to his room closed, his mouth opened quickly.

"Regina was going on." He asked. Robin wanted to reach for his hand but the moment he thought about doing so, he decided against it. He knew Regina well and the last thing he wanted is for her to recoil to his touch even though last time they were alone they weren't shy with their touching, feeling.

He knew she noticed about his want to touch her but seemed relieved when he didn't. He knew her very well.

"The DA office wanted to interview you. Apparently us getting you a good lawyer set their alarms on." Robin nodded, half in understanding and half in confusion.

"How did you manage to get a good one? That cost money." Robin leaned against the wall waiting for Regina's answer.

"You don't have to worry about that. I made sure Jefferson paid for it. He owns me since he tricked me to take your case." After those words got out of her mouth she regretted it them. It might have been the expression he gave her, his certainly felt hurt by his words but she was quick to speak, "Robin I..." but he was quicker to stop her.

"Don't worry about it." He crossed his arms in front of his chest.

"Robin I have a few things I want to tell you before the session. If you promise me you'll do everything I say the surprise I want to give you might be possible." That caught Robin's attention fully.
"If you are going to give me a kiss I will totally agree to anything you say." Regina shook her head. The need to diffuse the tension was big.

"Keep dreaming, no more kisses for you. Besides what I have in my mind is better than anything I can give you." Robin scrunched his brow.

"I doubt it." Robin countered.

Regina had a grin on her face to his answer.

"Really, not even your son?" Robin's body went numb when Regina said those words. A smile spread across his face and the excitement was taking over him. He couldn't contain the happiness so he went to Regina picked her up and spun her around. For a moment time stood still and they were fifteen again. Regina bit her lip while Robin was lowering her down. By instinct she places both hands on his shoulders and looked at him intensely in the eyes and in matter of seconds they were sharing the same air. The kiss was sweet and short and apparently took both of them by surprise. It was nothing like the other day, this one was of pure happiness. Whatever happened in that split second he won't give it time to break apart. He wouldn't give her time to regret it.

They broke the embrace. Robin was the first to speak.

"Thank you Regina seeing my boy is all that I want." The smile Regina gave him was the most beautiful and sincere one and Robin locked it in the vault with his other memories of Regina.

"You're welcome. Now are you ready to listen to what you have to do?" When Robin nodded she continued talking.

"First of all I want you calm all the time." Regina motion Robin to sit down and she did the same. "I know your history with Keith and me being in there won't make thing easier so I am asking you not to succumb to his provocations understood?"

"Yes Ma'am." Robin said Regina rolled her eyes.

"Second cooperate with everything Mulan says. I already filled her in with your history with the DA and judge. By the way I really can't believe Gold's is the judge." Regina released a heavy sigh.

"Well now more than ever I feel like all of this is a frame job." Robin noticed that Regina didn't get jumpy like every time he had told her he was innocent.

"I know you are innocent." She said those words like she was reading his mind. "But right now we need to prove it and I think we are on the right track to do so." Robin for the first time was allowed to feel hope and the fact that his beloved Apple was the one giving it to him made him feel like he could accomplish everything.

"Thank you." He this time didn't hesitate to take her hand and place it on top of his heart. "This mean to me more than you could ever imagine." Regina gulped. Robin smiled at her. "Is there anything else?" He asked.

Regina cleared her throat before proceeding on talking. "Also after the session you will meet Elsa. She is Roland's new therapist."

"What happened with Archie?"

"There wasn't any progress so I suggested a change. But I will explain everything later. Right now is time for you to meet Mulan so we can finally make progress with your case."
Robin had a feeling that his luck was about to change. He didn't dare to hope much but knowing Regina was there it was all the reassurance he needed to at least see a change.

When Robin entered the conference room he suddenly felt nervous. If this didn't go well the chances of seeing Roland were going to diminish, and he couldn't allow that. Regina gave him a light squeeze on his shoulder encouraging him to take a step towards his chair. Regina sat at his side and at the other was Mulan. They got a few minutes to get acquainted and quickly his trust on Mulan increased, which for him came as a surprise.

Keith clear his throat gaining everyone's attention. When he was sure that Regina was looking at him he sent a flirty smile to her to which she rolled her eyes and Robin scoffed. He fought the insane urge to cross his face with his fist. Regina placed a gentle hand on top of his making him calm in an instant.

"Shall we get started?" Regina asked. Everyone hummed in agreement.

"I'll kick off things." Keith said with a sly smile on his face. "I think it's unwise to keep Robin secluded in the asylum. He obviously is in full capability of his faculties." Keith took Robin's record and looked at it. "His record is full of inconsistencies; he should be in jail while the trial stands."

Regina and Mulan look at each other neither of them revealing any type of worried or please in their faces. Their masks remain unreadable and that in turn made Robin confident and nervous at the same time. He had never seen Regina in action, let alone Mulan that he just met. But he had confidence in them, he hope that everything will turn in their favor.

Keith continued with his explanation.

"Comparing his new record with the one Jefferson created first it is clear that the only reason Robin is not in jail is because of a false diagnose." Keith stood up and began to pace. "Also we cannot ignore the fact that Regina being here makes everything around Robin shady." Robin tightened his jaw. Keith words struck, the fact that he was calling Regina unprofessional was beginning to connect with his anger.

"My argument is the only argument valid. It's based on facts." Keith sat down again a certain victory smile cross his face. Regina looked at Robin directly in the eyes and smiled.

"Are you done Nottingham?" Regina questioned. When he motioned in approval Regina and Mulan stood up.

"First of all," Mulan began picking up some papers she had on the table. "The terms of Robin's arrest are not under regulation." Mulan motioned Regina to take over.

"He didn't have his rights read to him. There wasn't a proper investigation to fully go with the verdict you wish to inflict on him." Mulan motioned Regina to take over.

"He did have a mental breakdown when he found his wife. It required attention which he got but while he was here in the Asylum no one continued the investigation on Marian's murder. Plus you are trying to link to him to…" Regina took a deep breath and that made his own breathing stop. He knew where this was heading, the pain that must cause Regina's heart. Robin wants to take her hand and comfort her but she gave him clear instructions and even though she didn't say anything about not touching her, he needed to respect that in that moment it would look bad if he did. "Daniel's death."
Keith stood up. "It's obvious he killed them both, especially Daniel. He couldn't have you so he took away your happiness." Keith words were filled with venom and Robin's vein hummed with that all too familiar hatred he felt for this man. He hasn't forgotten all the bad things he did all those years ago, and even now he keeps pushing Regina's and his buttons until he get a violent reaction but Robin kept his cool, the anger tied tight with self control.

"I could never do anything to hurt Regina." Robin stood defensively. Regina placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Robin sit down please." She said. Robin complied remembering her earlier words.

"What are you basing on your accusations?" Mulan enquired.

When Keith didn't respond Mulan hummed almost in victory.

"Your basing this on personal reasons, aren't you? Let me tell you one thing: In cases like this evidence is everything and since you don't have a single one I request for Robin freedom until the trial starts." Robin was perplexed with his lawyer request. Surely when he entered the room he believed this to be another routine thing since Regina told him if he behave she would bring his son to him. What he didn't envisioned was something resembling freedom.

The protest was there in an instant. "Have you forgotten you need the judge permission?" So far, Keith looked like he was pretending to be in control of the situation. As much as Robin hated the man, he couldn't deny he was born to be an attorney. He had a way with engaging with people even if right now he was failing to keep his cool and fancy words. So now he was depending on the only other person who hates Robin more than Keith, Robert Gold.

"I know. That is why judge Gold is at the other side of the glass." Mulan pointed out. "And if he doesn't stand on neutral grounds I can take this case higher up. I love a challenge and I never lose."

Robin was astonished. She was intimidating and beautiful for some reason he looked at her in awe. He could feel Regina looking at him. He felt the intense gaze but he wasn't looking at her, he wouldn't dare to look at him for one reason. The aura she was emitting was honestly frightening.

Regina cleared her throat and he finally looked at Regina. She wasn't pleased with him.

"So do we have a deal Gold?" Mulan spoke up, before sitting down. Regina remained on her feet, waiting for Gold to enter the room.

Gold entered the room a smirk on his face.

"Of course dearie, wouldn't want this error to wreck this fine asylum reputation and the sheriff's department." He turned around. "But remember you're going against the clock and if he is guilty well..." He looked over his shoulder before finishing his sentence. "Death penalty will certainly play on the table." Robin gulped to Gold's words.

"Well good thing he is innocent then." He still couldn't wrap his mind around Regina thinking he was innocent. The first time she said so it didn't click not until now. Not until the level of certainty in her voice made his inside run hot like molten lava.

Keith picked up his things and left the room followed by his two assistant Robin, not once, heard them speak. It was almost like they weren't there. The only people left in the room were Jefferson, Regina, Mulan and him. Gold muttered his goodbye before going to the front desk to filled the papers of Robin's release.
"Seems to me like you are leaving today my friend." Jefferson hugged Robin tight and he was more than happy to do so.

"I believe this small little victory should be celebrated." Mulan said with a smile. Robin went to her and extended his hand to thank her for what she had done.

"Thank you so much for this." He smiled at her. When his eyes lingered on Regina for a moment, he swore that they were filled with jealousy. No, he couldn't think like that.

Mulan reciprocated his smile. "It is my job and I am happy to do it. You should get your things ready to leave. I'll be on my way to prepare your defense." Mulan tilted her head in Regina's direction. "I believe you can take care of things from here." And with that she left.

Regina took a deep breath before turning to Jefferson never once directing again her gaze to Robin.

"You should get the papers in order." Jefferson nodded and left the room as well.

It was only Robin and Regina now and he was dying to hug her but he didn't. It was obvious she wasn't quite content with him. And to top it all off things still were a little awkward since what happened a few days ago.

"Thank you Regina." This snapped her out of her daydream.

"I was just doing my job, it is nothing." She said taking a shaky breath. "Now we should get you ready to leave." She turned to move out but he grabbed her wrist.

So much for not touching her.

"Regina we should talk about this." He motioned between them. "I want to know where we stand."

"There is nothing to talk about Robin, there is nothing between us." Regina tried to pride her hand away from him but he didn't let go.

"You can't honestly believe that?" He pulled her to stand right in front of him. "I refuse to believe there is nothing when that made me feel like there's everything between us."

"Robin there is no time for this now. We can talk in another moment. Right now there is a little boy in school waiting for his daddy to pick him up." It was obvious that she just wanted to brush this off, and mentioning Roland might have just worked if it wasn't for the fact that his heart was locked on her.

He did grinned. "I can finally see my boy." He said but added, "And this isn't over." Her face fell but she should have known better, they were both bullheaded.

Regina put her hand on top of the one grabbing her wrist.

"Yes so if you don't hurry up I'm going to leave you here another night more." Biting her lip, Regina took a deep breath. "I thought so."

Walking through Storybrooke once more was something he didn't think it would be possible. Even more so when Regina was walking next to him. There was an awkward silence lingering between the two of them, stretching with every step they took making it impossible for him to even breathe. He felt nervousness creep onto him, taking a hold of his body which made him stopped walking all together. Regina stopped and turned to him with a scowl on her face while was motionless, looking to the ground mustering the courage to move forward.
"Robin what's wrong?" Regina asked from where she stood. Her voice penetrated the heavy layer of nervous silence. He looked up, staring blankly at her. Robin felt his chest tightening to the point that he just stares at Regina not a work spoken, he had gone mute for a moment. By the look Regina was giving him, he knows she was worried but words weren't forming and the fears that had plagued him for so long had managed to finally make a home out of him.

"Robbie?" Regina called out his name and it is then when Robin takes a deep breath and voices out his thoughts.

"I am fine. It's just..." he sighed. "I have been secluded for so long that I don't know how the people are going to react to my sudden release." Robin takes a few steps reaching to where Regina's was standing motioning to continue walking while he gathered his thoughts.

"It's perfectly normal but don't have to worry, you'll see Roland, you will go home and spend as much time as possible with him." Regina looked at him from the corner of her eye. "Though first I intent to keep a promise to him." Robin finally looked at her while they walked not understanding what she was saying. Regina's chuckle a low tone and continued to speak. "I promised him that when you get out we would go to the playground near the beach, the one where you and I used to play as little kids." Robin smiled at the memory of two nine year olds pretending to be fairy tale characters. Him as Robin Hood and Regina as The Evil queen. For some reason Regina had a special fascination with that particular character, something Robin couldn't understand but he love how happy she seem casting curses and using magic. Robin on the other hand always been fascinated with the tale of Robin Hood and since they shared a name he took it upon himself to learn archery.

"I won't lie I haven't been to that park in years. I always meant to take Roland but sometimes the memories were too much to handle." Robin saw how the light in her eyes dimmed at that. Going back to his morning, to the dream he had about her goodbye, the man had come up with a fresh wave of question to ask Regina. The only reason he hadn't dare to ask was because it wasn't right moment. Seeing Roland took the majority of him mind. Robin had missed his tiny son. Missed waking up to his little squeals of excitement to a brand new day, missed hearing him talk about the dreams he had the night before, he missed seeing his son give him that toothy and dimpled smile. All Robin wants is to finally hug him, to tell him he loves him with his entire heart and that he won't allow anyone else to separate them again. That's all that mattered.

"It was hard going back there..." Regina finally spoke and Robin looked at her, expecting to hear something else, what? He doesn't quite know but he is disappointed when Regina decided to not say anything else.

"I suppose we still have a lot to let go off." Robin supplied with an airy laugh. Letting go, not his strong suit. He hadn't been able to let go of Regina in the last decade, expecting him to do so now was utterly stupid. Robin loves her, but how he felt didn't matter, not as long as Regina was still pretty much convinced that there wasn't anything between them anymore. They should talk, they will talk but first things first, and Roland is all he wants to think about at the moment because if he gives Regina more breathing space in his mind, he'll go insane. "I'm worried..." He said, cutting the corner that would lead to Roland's. If he is not mistaking, the boy is at school.

"About?" Regina asked, grabbing his hand and pulling to a stop. Whatever fears he had, it was obvious she wanted him to face them now before seeing his son. "If you are worried about how Roland is going to react we both know he'll be --" But she didn't finish that sentence that was just a shy word away of being finished, of that he was certain. She must have seen something else in his eyes. "Everyone else." She decided to say instead.
Robin nodded his head, affirming what she just said. "I know I am innocent." He began running a hand over his face. "But I'm sure a lot of people around want my head for something I didn't do." Regina looked at him like he had grown a second head. The idea of people actually disliking him seemed too farfetched in her head. Robin had to suppressed the smile he wanted to free, Regina believing in his character so blindly (okay, not that blindly she had her doubts at the beginning and whatever happened during the days she didn't visit him gave her a clear view of things, of him.) Instead he took a step closer, placing his free hand on top of her, the one that was still holding his wrist.

"I find that hard to believe." The brunette said and Robin could kiss her if not were for the fact that they were in a public space, prying eyes everywhere. Really, he felt eyes on him, a heavy energy settling on the back of his head. Instead he just squeezed her hand and gave Regina a small, sad smile.

"Before anyone comes whispering in your ear, I wanna tell you something." He took a deep breath. "I happened two years after I married Marian. We were out celebrating Little John's birthday which you know it is the same as yours..." When Regina simply nodded, he continued. "That particular year was a rough one and I got a little bit drunk."

And with a little bit he meant a lot.

"Anyway I stood at the karaoke stage, and started singing but by the end of the song I confessed my love..." A beat, "For you." Regina's eyes widen like saucers. "Needless to say, everyone was there when Marian took off and I didn't go after her."

To this day Robin feels like an ass for that. He did care for Marian, more than words could ever come to express but his heart was settled on Regina ever since they were little kids. How did you get over a love that commenced so purely? Robin always did imagine that he would end up marrying her, but life had other plans and even now he didn't believe it was possible but at least she is still in his life, saving his arse, but still there.

"Robin that's awful." Regina didn't seem to know what else to say, if he was the one hearing such a story he would probably feel the same way.

"Tell me about it. I got grief for it for a very long time. Even my brother stopped talking to me for an entire week. He took pity on me on day eight when I was drowning in regrets." The man shook his head, appalled by his own stupidity. "Marian was special and I did love her in a very different way I love you. She eventually forgave me but never forgot that my heart wasn't hers." He bites his lips with force. "And people seeing me with you, makes me fear not for me but for you, Regina."

The understanding poured out of her like water from a faucet. This has always been one of Regina's greatest assets, probably why she is so successful in her job. Ever since they were little, Regina's levels of understanding surpass the normal one from an adult, even though sometimes she couldn't understand herself. Regina shook her head, took a step closer to him and placed a hand on his cheek. Her touch was warm and soft, made his heart fluttered more than it has in the past couple of years. How was it possible that his love for her only grew stronger? With all the distance and silence between them for such a long time he managed to love her even more. Was he cursed or blessed? Robin wasn't sure. "I'm a big girl, Robin. I can take care of myself. All you need to worry about is you and your son, okay?"

Was this meant to appease him or her? Why bring this memory out? That night in the bar was the main reason why people suspected of him. Certainly warped everyone's head to think he had motive. "I'll never stop worrying about you." That was a fact, they both knew it well.
"Well at least try to be less obvious, okay?" Regina said and Robin chuckled.

"I make no promises." He replied and she nodded.

"Now lets go see Roland."

Roland. His son. He was so close to see him.

Regina tugged at his hand to resume walking. The silence now was more comfortable. Gone was that pesky ghost of Marian and back was his excitement to see his son. He wasn't aware of the time. But by the feeling of the sun overhead, it must be noon. Lunch time. Their steps came to a full stop in front of the school, eyes looking from side to side. It had been such a long time since he was last here, such a long time since he had been out of that Asylum, period.

"They should be out any minute now." Regina muttered. He felt bile raise. He was still in his baggy clothes, not shaved and his hair had been longer than he usually allowed it to be. Overall, he didn't look like the Robin he always was, didn't feel like a normal human being at all. After what he been through it was hard for Robin to face his son.

"Regina I can't." He gyrated, facing her profile. After a second she did the same, standing face to face with her.

"Why?" She asked, baffled.

"Look at me." He motioned at himself, his clothes, his face. "I'm a mess I don't want Roland to see me this way."

"Oh, I didn't think you'd care about that." And in another moment that would have been true but right now he felt truly insecure.

"And you are right I wouldn't but I don't want him to see me as I been this month. When he does, I want to see his papa, not a stranger with a beard." As much as it pained him to delay this, he was determined to give his son a first good memory.

"I think the beard suites you." And Gods he feels so blessed for this woman for the millionth time that day. "But I understand. Lets get you cleaned up first and then we can returned or unless you want to wait to school closing time. If things didn't go well today and you were still in the asylum, I was going to pick up Roland anyway." She took his hand, this time there wasn't any hint of nervousness, or any indication that she would recoil away. "What do you say?"

Robin thought about it carefully. It was the best course of action they could take. He looked like a homeless. He missed his leather jackets, his simple cargo pants and comfortable shoes. This whole dressing in a white that looked almost beige had him feeling like he was part of some cult. Taking a deep breath, he glanced at the school once more and then back at Regina. "I'll feel better after a shower and all that. Please, lets go." Saying that felt horrible. His son was so close to him, so close for Robin to hug and kiss and tell him how much he loves him but he needed to show him that he was good old dad.

"Okay, lets go to your house then…"

The mention of his house had his breathing hitching. The last time he was there, was when he discovered Marian's body, he couldn't make himself go there, not just yet. "Would you mind going alone and picking up clothes I can't go inside that place…" He trailed off and Regina gave him a sympathetic look.
"Alright. We can head to Jefferson's first and I'll go to your house." He had a feeling that Regina didn't want to leave him alone, not just yet and for that he was eternally grateful. Being alone at that exact moment would make him go insane and he might as well be locked again in the asylum.

"Sound perfect to me." With one more look at the school, Robin turned on his heel and walked down the path to Jefferson's house, a path his body knew well by instinct.
Robin couldn't recognize the person looking back at time. Yes, the reflection didn't lie and Robin Locksley stood in the bathroom, gazing at himself in the mirror but there was something about him that had changed in the past few months. Other than the obvious, long beard, hollow cheeks and pale skin but his eyes, they no longer reflected the glee of life in them. He had lost all hope of ever being free, of ever seeing his son and enjoyed the sun again, but here he is outside the asylum, standing in his best friend's house and waiting for Regina to bring him clothes. That was another part of this story he did not believe, Regina being in Storybrooke again. Locked inside the four walls that had been his home for months, it was easy to pretend that she wasn't there even if her kiss had burned him to the very depth of his soul. But now he can't pretend that she isn't there, what's worse? He can't pretend that his heart felt like it was beating for the first time in a very long time. Robin sighed softly and picked up the razor. His hand were trembling, but he managed to get a grip long enough to shave his face with minor cuts. By the time he was done with his task, there was a knock on the door.

"Can I?" A tentative voice asked, Regina's. Robin looked at the door through the mirror and released a small come in. Regina slowly opened the door and walked inside closing the door behind her afterwards. "You look like a decent human being again." She muttered, placing the clothes she was holding on top of the closed toilet. Robin chuckled, but he didn't turn, didn't say anything. He just kept staring at himself, waiting to recognize some part of himself there.

Still nothing.

"You know…" Regina began, arms crossed, intently watching him. Her gaze was like fire over his skin and he fought really hard to not allow it to get the best of him. "The beard suits you." At that he finally turned to Regina. He touched his jaw, and grimaced at little. Robin had gotten so used to the longer one that the little he had left made him feel lighter, like he was about to float away, drift off into nothingness.

"It is weird." Robin muttered, turning fully so he gave his back to the mirror while leaning against the sink. "Even before Marian I never allowed it to grow so much. The beard makes me look like my father."

Regina hummed her agreement. If there was someone who knew him well it was her. His entire life was spent alongside her, well his younger life that is. After she left, there was no one else left for him to share his hopes, his insecurities, his regrets.

And there were a lot of regrets in his life. Even now he regrets not fighting for Regina. Even now he regrets that their relationship deteriorated with the passage of the years. Maybe if they kept in contact, maybe if they talked more than all of this wouldn't be happening. He dared to imagine that they would be together back in New York. He didn't have qualms with leaving Storybrooke for her. But Regina never asked him and Robin never dared to be bold. That was something that both of them were to blame for all that had gone down between them.

"You father wasn't that bad." Regina countered and sure, not that bad for her. Robin loved his father, he cannot deny that but there were time where he wanted to smack that man's face. God forgive him for it but his father had his moments where he was just cruel. Unlike his mother who was the greatest woman to ever live. He misses her now more than ever.

"With you." He shot back crossing his arms. "That man adored you and John, and virtually everyone in Storybrooke except his older son." Someone once told him that bitterness is a sure way to poison
once self and he was starting to understand those words at that very moment talking about his father. It wasn't hate, it never got that far because at the end of the day Robin wasn't someone who could easily hate but there was a negative feeling in his heart that was feeding from his grief and the pain that was inflicted to him day by day and his father was the catalyst for all that.

"Robin you know that's not true." The brunette took a step towards him, the first real closeness since they left the school two hours ago. Her hand grasped gently his arm and that was incentive enough for him to look at her. "I know you and him had your differences regarding on the life that you wanted but he did love you." He tried, really he tried to not scoff at that but he did and it made Regina pull back her hand and he instantly missed her touch over his bare skin. Actually he should dress; the only thing that was covering him was the towel over his lower section.

"And in the end he got his wish." Robin finally turned to her, a sad smile on his face. "I got stuck in Storybrooke running his shop, instead of pursuing my dreams and…"For a moment he stopped himself from talking. It was too much to handle too fast. He wanted to fully express himself, not that he hasn't done it before, but there was no way for Regina to run away from his words and deep inside he wanted her to run without him being able to run after her. That was the only good things that dreadful Asylum provided him, an excuse. The first time he didn't go after her, and when he actually did it was too late, Regina already had made a life, a name for herself, now if he convey his feeling into words once more, she'll walk away through that door and he will go after her and make the rejection even worse. He is over thinking this. Now was the time to leave those fears behind and see what's beyond the end of the tunnel. He had been in darkness for such a long time that he fears the light. He fears burning out of existence like a damn vampire.

"Me." She finished for him and Robin rolled his shoulders.

"You." He confirmed. His heart started beating frantically in his chest even more so with the look Regina was giving him, a look that made him question everything about his life. "For a very long time I thought that I might never see you again. I made myself believed that it was for the best because chances were you were happy in New York. Seeing you again that day made all of that a big fat lie. I wanted to see you, I wanted to see you smile and laugh and complain about the little things that annoyed you. Made me think of all the moments we shared together and how simple things were before Daniel." There it was his resentment with Daniel. Robin never really hated the guy. He was honest and good and wanted to make Regina smile. How could Robin hate someone that wanted the same as him for Regina? He just hated the fact that Regina chose him. But eventually Robin learned to live with it. Still, when Regina left, Robin actually began truly resenting Daniel, only in death did Robin harbor negative feelings for the man. For one simple reason, he was the why Regina left.

Regina shifted from one leg to the other, her eyes everywhere but on him and Robin had the slight feeling he had struck a nerve there. The woman before him always told him to be truthful and always been even now if the truth stings a little. It certainly made him feel like a douche even though he knew he wasn't being exactly that. "I don't know what you are expecting from telling me this." And Robin had the bad sense to laugh at that to which he was rewarded with a glare that oh boy if looks could kill he'd be dead in that exact second.

"I'm not expecting anything. I'm just being honest just how you like it." Robin walked around her and picked up the clothes she had brought him. Robin had the slight feeling this conversation won't go any further, it was for the best.

"There's honesty and then there's this. Whatever this is." Regina dropped her arms to the side, face stony just like he remembered Cora's. Wow, those two were really alike.
"Yeah, whatever this is." He motioned between them, "That's a good way to explain you and I." And before she said anything, Robin left the bathroom. He wasn't ready to hear whatever Regina was about to say, he wasn't ready to hear her shot down whatever is it that they had, if they had something.

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In the end, Robin went alone to the school. As soon as he was dressed, he left Jefferson's house. After his not so helpful conversation with Regina, he knew that the woman didn't have the tolerance to be beside him so he spared her the torture of his company and went along. Seeing Roland for the first time in months made him happy but at the same time his nerves reached an awful peak. He wanted Regina right by his side for this moment but he knew that this was something he needed to confront alone; maybe that's why their conversation took a turn for the worse. His subconscious was telling him he needed to grow a pair and do this. Robin stood before the school, people filtering in and out, giving him strange looks. Some of pity, others of disgust, there was no middle ground. "Alright." He muttered, taking a step towards the school. "Here it goes."

Robin walked around the school, searching for Mary's classroom. If he remembered correctly, it was at the end of the corridor, right beside the fountain. It had been a while since he entered the school. Marian usually was the one going in and out of it, her friendship with Mary giving her more of an excuse to spend days in and out of the place. He was glad for it. Robin didn't like going into the school. The hallways were filled with memories that were too painful to even remember and there were still a few teachers still were around, teachers that had given him class. But for today he made an exception, for today and every day afterwards he would walk in and out because of his son.

Upon reaching the classroom, Robin's hand became sweaty. He tried to dry them on his jeans but it was no use. His nerves were on fire and apparently so was his skin. Locksley took a deep breath, trying to calm himself down long enough to place his hand on the handle and push it open he wouldn't budge. He shouldn't have come here all alone. Now he really needs Regina.

"Don't be stupid." Robin said under his breath, shaking his head.

"You are stupid." A female voice replied and when he turned around Regina stood there with a raised brow and arms crossed. "You should have waited for me." Her voice was softer than it had been in the beginning. Most likely because she took in his pitiful expression.

"Honestly? I thought I needed to do this all on my own." Robin turned, to the door taking three steps back until he was standing right next to Regina. "Turns out I'm a coward."

Regina shrugged, dropping her arms to the side. "I could have told you that." And Robin sent a glare her way. "It is good that you are self aware though." Mills half turn, getting a better glance at his profile. "You know what's your problem?"

When Robin turned to her, all ears trained on her words. Regina was never the type to hold back, not when dropping a heavy dose of honesty, and he didn't expect any less. "Enlighten me." Was all Robin managed to say.

"Your problem is that you want to take every problem you have and resolve it in one go instead of going piece by piece trying to identify what's wrong." She placed a hand on his arm, squeezing it softly before letting go. The touch was comforting, to the point that it cut through his nerves leaving behind a sense of calm that made him see things more clearly. If he could live in a moment, in an action forever it would be there, in her touch.

"This feels like you are lecturing me." Robin countered and Regina smirked.
"Wasn't I always doing that?" She arched a brow.

"Good point." There was no lie there.

"Will you allow me to help you in this?" Her eyes searched his face. Robin couldn't tell what she was looking for in that moment. All he knew was that at least her eyes didn't hold any type of resentment and he could live with that. "I may not be a mother but I've been learning new things ever since I met your son." The smile on her face made Robin's heart beat a different beat, a joyful one and he wondered, not for the first time, how much have Regina and Roland have bonded. He cannot wait to see how that relationship had developed; no doubt it was a wonderful one. "So will you trust me?"

Now that was a stupid question. Robin trusted this woman before him with his entire being. Years of separation have never really destroyed that. Sure, there are new things to learn, new patterns, likes and dislikes but Robin pride himself in knowing her soul. He took comfort on the fact that his very own reacted to hers with the same weightless and light it had a decade ago. They made have been distance to one another but their essence was pretty much the same which in turn brought and unlimited comfort to Robin.

"Always." The replied came out without any type of delay. The feeling in his chest when Regina exhaled and smile was enough to make him know he was doing the right thing here.

"Good. Now I'll go inside and get Roland." Regina grabbed his hand softly, and the final know inside him finally loosen. "Don't leave again."

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She could tell Robin was nervous. It was only natural, after being locked for so long, being out, interacting with other people might be a challenge. It was the reason why his fear of seeing Roland had rooted deep within his heart. After all, Roland was the only thing left he had from Marian, and the fear of being hated by his son was big. Regina knows better though. All this time she had spent with the little boy had allowed her to see that the boy misses his father, which made her promise to him the more important. Now that she was finally about to fulfilled that promise, Regina felt a bitter sweet feeling in her heart. All this time spent with the boy had made her a happier person and well there was a possibility that time might be cut short with the appearance of his father. Don't get her wrong she is happy, for the both of them, but at the same time there's a nostalgia in her that grew every day more.

She didn't think it possible, but motherhood was starting to grow on her.

Regina shook her head softly, the thoughts rattling in her mind as she took the necessary steps towards the door, knocking softly. After a few seconds, Mary opened the door a slight smile on her face upon seeing Regina but when she looked a few paces back, eyes landing on Robin, her eyes widen.

"Robin." The pixie haired brunette said in tandem with the surprise on her face. "It is nice to see you." Her voice was low, no doubt to not distract her students, though if Regina strained her eyes more she could make out the sounds of giggles and squeals inside the classroom.

Robin, finally, stood closer to the door trying to look inside but with the angle he was standing he probably couldn't see anything.

"Where's Roland?" Regina finally asked. Mary stood aside, allowing Regina to walk in but Robin stayed outside. The brunette looked around the room until her eyes landed on the messy mopey head.
Her smile was instant. "Roland." She called softly and the boy looked up quickly his own smile matching hers before he got up from the floor and ran straight to her legs.

"Gina!" He exclaimed and the brunette felt her heart soar. There was something about the way he called her name that made her truly happy.

"There's someone who wants to see you." At her words the boy paled. Regina had come to learn that interacting with people was a hard task for the boy. Not only because of what happened to his mother in his presence but because he wasn't a person that easily trusted and it was understandable. "I promise you'll love this visit." Regina picked up the boy from the floor and stepped outside Mary closed the door behind them. The boy's head was instantly hidden in the crock of her neck, arms around her tight almost as if she were to disappear and it broke her heart to know he was afraid. "Roland sweetie," She called out, trying to make him see his surroundings but nothing. Regina looked at Robin and mouthed 'say something.' Locksley took a deep breath.

"My boy," Robin said and she swore Regina felt Roland stiffen in her arms. It was slow. First, he released the tight hold he had on her then, slowly; the boy raised his head eyes closed still. Regina could read in his face the apprehension, the fear that voice wasn't real but when he finally opened his eyes, and saw that Robin was there in the flesh, Roland released the loudest wailed she had ever heard. Putting him on the floor quickly, the younger Locksley ran to his crouching father and put his arms around his neck.

"Papa!"

Regina's eyes watered at that precise moment. Robin's was already crying by the time Roland made it to his arms and the boy was a mess of emotions. When she first arrived to Storybrooke, her only intention was to attend Elsa and Jefferson's wedding and leave quickly. Attaching herself to a place that no longer felt like home wasn't something that ever crossed her mind but watching this reunion between two beings that had suffered so much had made Regina rethink everything she thought she knew. Home, no matter how much distance she put between herself and this small town, this was home. Where she grew up, where she made friends for life, where she loved and mourned and suffered. This was home and no matter how hard she tried to erase it from her mind, it was tattooed to her soul. The revelation hit her squared in her chest just like the sight before her, father and son holding each other tight.

"I'm here…" Robin whispered into Roland's curls. The boy was crying. Sobs wrecked through his tiny body and it made Regina's heart ache even more. "…And I'm not leaving you ever again."

That was a promise Regina knew well Robin intended to keep, forever.

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Waking up to the squeals of his son was something he was looking forward to everyday of his seclusion in the asylum. Hearing Roland cried out 'Papa' in happiness and glee was filling his heart exponentially with a type of love that could never die down. In all honesty, Robin didn't think it possible finding freedom, and what surprise him the most was the fact that Regina helped him out of that hellhole. Finding himself playing with Roland was a kinda like a dream, a dream filled with laughter and happiness but for some reason he felt that something was missing. It was a void impossible to fill no matter how happy he felt. For a flicker of a second he thought it was Marian's absence that made that void grow but he knew well what was missing, who was missing.

"Are you okay daddy?" Asked Roland when Robin all of a sudden spaced out.

Robin looked at Roland and smiled trying to shake off the thoughts that had plagued his mind for the
better part of his night and morning. "Everything is perfect buddy. You are here with me and that is all that I need." Roland looked at his father skeptically, trying to decipher what was really going through his mind. When he was not convinced of his father words he sat down in front of his father legs tucked together and arms crossed in front of him. He looked so much like Marian in that particular moment that Robin couldn't help the slight little laugh that left his mouth but it only fueled Roland's determination to know what was bothering his father. Robin could tell by the way his son's pout grew and his arms tighten over his chest. 

"Nah ah." He simply stated, still holding his sitting formation. Robin looked at Roland and bite back a chuckle. Roland's serious expression made crinkles appeared on his forehead and the pout seemed a bit funnier than it should have been. 

"Oh!?” Robin exclaimed, crossing his arms over his chest as well. Locksley didn't know what to tell the younger boy, though he was rather amused by the situation. 

Roland bite the inside of his cheek. The action so Robin now that the man fought valiantly the need to chuckle again. Here was his son all serious trying to get to the bottom of Robin's thoughts and his father was trying hard to not laugh. 

What a pair. 

"I know what is going on.” Roland informed, giving a cheeky grin. When he didn't say anything else, Robin was sure that his dearest son wanted him to ask what exactly was going through his father's head. 

"So what is going on?” Robin knew how smart Roland was to the point that it surprised him on daily basis. He missed how well his son could read him even in such a short age. 

"You are thinking about Gina." And there it was Roland didn't disappoint. 

"What makes you think I was thinking about Regina?” Robin questioned. 

Roland moved to sit on his papa lap taking one of his hands. 

"Because you got that silly look on your face you had the other day when you went to school with Gina." It was almost a week now since Robin got out and it surprised him that Roland could distinguish so well facial expressions. Robin was about to say something as well but Roland's voice cut him off. "Gina had that silly face too." At that, Robin's bubbling emotions began to rise to the surface. 

"Did she?” When Roland nodded, Robin smiled. 

"I think she likes you daddy.” Robin began to tickle Roland until his laughter was loud enough to be heard all around the house. After a few minutes they both sat in silence. 

"Do you like Gina daddy?” The answer to that question was an obvious one. Of course he did, more than like anyway, he love Regina with all his heart about that he was certain. Robin made sure that Roland was looking at him directly in the eyes before he gave the young boy his answer. 

"Well buddy…” He began shifting in his place to get comfortable. "I like Regina very much. She and I have known each other since well we were really little. She always has been my best friend.” Roland hummed contently to his father words. Robin could tell that his son liked Regina a lot. Maybe it was his way of coping, to fill the empty space his mother left behind. It made Locksley sad that Roland was trying to find some sort of comfort meaning to all that is happening around him. He certainly doesn't deserve all the sadness that has surrounded the boy, even before Marian's death.
Robin and her weren't on the best of terms, they fought a lot and even though they tried their best in front of their son, Roland knew. His boy is way too smart for his young age.

"How come I never met her before?" And that was the question Robin dreaded the most.

"Because she left many years ago to study and she found a job so she never returned." Telling Roland the other part of that story didn't seem wise. Regina ran away from the truth of Daniel's death, from the memories Storybrooke gave her and ultimately from him.

"Daddy I don't want her to leave." Roland said with a pout on his face. Robin felt his heart constrict in his chest. He knew well what his son was feeling because he wished with everything he had that Regina could find a reason to stay, even if it wasn't him, he just wants to be close to her and if that meant being only friends well he'll take what he gets.

"Me either my boy."

Robin made a promise to himself in that moment. He vowed he would not let Regina escape from him. That he would fight for her. He let her go once because he thought that she would find that happiness she deserve even without him, disregarding how painful it was for him to see her go. But now he knew with all the certainty in his heart that they could be happy together and he would not stop until she could smile more freely and even if she didn't find it wise to be together than, friends. As long as she is in his life and in his son well, he won't complain.

"What do so say if we go to Granny's and have ourselves a big breakfast?" Roland nodded enthusiastically in response and it made Robin grinned. Spending the day with his boy only brought happiness to his life.

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The diner was peaceful when Robin and Roland entered. Only a few tables were occupied but he couldn't focus on anyone else the moment Regina laughter filled the air. She was sitting with Rose in an apparent conversation of catching up after almost thirteen years of not seeing each other. His gaze fell on the soft olive skin woman that had his heart in her hands. In her deep chocolate eyes that held all of the secrets of the universe, in that dark hair that made her look even more goddess like. He was absolutely awe struck by Regina. Nothing else matter in that moment. His heart leap out of his chest when her eyes fell on him and his mouth went dry like the dessert. Words became superfluous and he scolded himself for being so susceptible to her. If it wasn't for Roland sudden tug of his hands he was pretty sure he would have turned into stone just by staring at Regina.

"Daddy I'm hungry." Roland stated. Robin crouched to his level and tapped his nose lightly.

"Why don't we say hi to Regina and then we can order all the food you want?" Roland grin was so huge Robin was pretty sure it shone brighter than the sun. Roland turned around and ran to Regina's direction.

"GINAAA!" he exclaimed in full glee.

Regina look at his direction and the smile appeared almost instantly. Her face was an art of work, beauty in oil canvas. Robin felt his heart go warm and thought that she had the most beautiful of smiles.

"Hello my little knight." Regina was going to stand up so she could lower herself and hug him but Roland beat her to it and jumped into her laps releasing a few giggles while doing so.

Regina was startled by his sudden action but couldn't help on smiling even more. That little boy
somehow knew how to surprise her, how to make her smile with the most littlest of actions.

"How was your first week with your papa?" Regina asked genuinely curious to know. The little boy looked up at her with the smile still plastered on his face.

"It was so much fun." He began to look around for his daddy. "He promised me lots of food today." Robin approached the table where Regina and Rose were sitting.

"Good morning Rose." He looked at the brunette after abiding good morning to the blonde. "Regina." The way he said her name was almost in reverence.

Watching Regina was like watching a movie. Many emotions played out on her face as she struggled for words to speak to him. He quite couldn't understand why, though after a week of barely seeing each other and how stupid he acted the last time they had seen one another it was only natural. Though the one who should be having problems speaking was supposed to be him, not her. After all, she did nothing wrong. Rose apparently noticed Regina's struggle because she was the one chirping in her answer to his good morning.

"Good morning, Robin." Rose countered giving time to Regina to compose herself. "Say Roland why don't we go to the countered and start ordering all that food your father promised?" Roland was hesitated at first but the moment Rose (Well, Roland had taken to call her Tink like the fairy) mention chocolate pancakes he was to convinced. He gave Regina a sloppy wet kiss on the cheek and wiggled out of her lap. Regina sent an almost death glared at her friend for leaving her alone with Robin. Tink sent her a mischievous grin and ran off with Roland.

There was an awkward moment of silence dropping slowly between them. Robin didn't know if he should just follow Tink and Roland or sit down and talk to Regina. It was obvious by the way she had been avoiding him that Regina didn't feel like talking but he needed to know, to make sure there wasn't any bad vibe between them. Robin then made his mind and motion to the chair in front of Regina when she nodded he sat down. Up close he could admire her beauty even more. Regina was avoiding Robin since the day they last spoke at Roland's school and he knew well that this was his only chance he had to talk to her.

"Regina I…" Robin started. But Regina raised a hand to stop him.

"Robin please don't. I can't do this now." She was about to stand up but Robin grab her hand and she froze.

"Can you at least listen to me? You don't have to say anything. I really need to get this out of my chest. This whole week I've been trying to do so but you made pretty clear that it wasn't the time to talk and I respected your wishes." His heart was beating so fast and he slightly wondered if Regina's heart was feeling the same way? Were their hearts in perfect sync going 'tun, tun, tun, tun' like the beating of drums? He wants to believe that yes, they are in sync, he needs to believe it to not lose hope for them.

"You are not going to give up if I say no now aren't you?" Regina question was more of a confirmation to herself. Robin was always a persistent fellow. It was true that he gave her space but that didn't mean that he would stop. Robin nodded but didn't let go of her hand. "Okay fine, talk." Robin gave a brief smile.

"Well…" He began but he couldn't find the words to speak. It was weird. He had this speech in his mind all planned out but seeing her made everything go blank. It was almost as if nothing could ever come to describe what really lies in his heart. All the memories they have together, all the memories he wants to create with her, everything about Regina Mills managed to make him putty. What could
he say? What set of perfectly crafted words would ever let her know what he wants to convey? There was only a sentence he could speak that would ever come close and even then it wasn't enough. "I love you Regina." And with that he has done it.

Regina opened her mouth as if to speak but not a sound was released.

"You don't have to say anything, just listen to me." Robin said when he noticed that Regina was most likely trying to shut him out again. "I never stop loving you that much you already know. I am not waiting for you confess your feeling for me. I would never make you do something you don't want to. You are really important to me just like Roland is. You are the one person in this lifetime I have love with everything, heart and soul..." He grasped tighter Regina's hand when some unshed tear gather in the corner of her eyes. "You are all I can think off every waking moment. All I want is to make you smile and laughed like nothing else matters in the world. I want to make you feel loved because you deserve it, I want to take care of your heart forever and always grasp your hand like I am doing right now but the difference is that I don't want to ever let go."

There was conflict in her face clear as day. His honesty, his devotion was lay down for her to see and feel. Even if she couldn't fathom that he was there, that he loved her with his entire soul, she couldn't deny the feelings that were sent into the universe. If she were to correspond, blessed be he but if not, if she didn't want anything to do with him well tough break for him. At least he was honest with her.

"I know what are you thinking, I know you so well. I know that you are thinking how you broke my heart when you left. And you did and I fell into a dark period in my life but I also learned that I could never hate you because I understood well what you were going through." Robin released a breath remembering so many things that he wished he could forget. After she left, he was lost for a very long time and there was a time he didn't think it was possible to be better but Marian came into his life and the Roland and that dark period was a mere stain in his life. Even if there were times his mind wandered off to those years, he knows better than to let those memories haunt him forever.

"All these years I wanted to go to New York and tell you how much I missed you but I was reminded that you would never return, not even to be with me so I gave up. I met Marian and well my life began to move forward. I really believe that I forgot about you, it gave me a false sense of happiness..." He trailed off. There was no need to repeat it once more. While Robin pretended to play happy family, his heart was bleeding out thanks to a woman that was thousands of miles away oblivious to his inner turmoil.

"Robin..." Regina whispered when a tear fell down his cheek. With the hand that wasn't in Robin's she whipped away the tear. "Maybe we should talk about this in a less public place." Regina finally said.

"How do I know you aren't going to avoid me again?" He questioned her. Regina exhaled audible.

"I won't I promise." She began to ponder in her head and had an idea. "Why don't we meet tonight in that clearing?" Robin looked at her perplexed.

"You wanna meet there?" When Regina confirmed with an ‘uhum'. He almost grinned at her.

"Of course what milady wishes." Regina blushed at his words.

"Good. Now with don't you go with Roland and have breakfast for what I can see he is going for a second stack of chocolate chips pancakes and Tink is actually considering them for herself." Robin tilted his head to see his son and the blonde. Roland was jumping up and down the bar stool.
"Yes I suppose I should. Care to join?" Regina was taken aback with his request.

"I don't think I should these are your moments with Roland I don't think you should share them that much." Robin shook his head.

"I am most certainly happy to share new memories with my two favorite people in the world. Besides all that Roland has been talking about this week is about you and the three of us spending time together." Regina smiled a beautiful magnificent smile that made Robin want to gather her in his arms and never let go.

Robin stood up and offered her a hand. Regina accepted and they were on their way to the bar. When Rose saw them she excused herself and left.

"Gina do you want pancakes?" Roland offered her a piece that was dripping syrup all over the place. She gladly obliged and ate it.

"Umm this is delicious. But I prefer apple pancakes." Roland tilted his head.

"How can chocolate chips not be someone favorite?" He questioned seriously as if Regina said something ludicrous to him. Regina chuckled and sat down at his side. Robin took the stool on the other side of Roland and started ordering something. He asked Regina if she wanted apple pancakes she said yes and told him with bananas as well.

"Well I am a really big lover of apples." Regina began trying to explain why she love apple pancakes. "I tended to an apple tree when I was little, actually the tree still stands do you want to see it sometime?" Roland took another bit of pancake.

"Yes please." He answered with his mouth full of food. Regina chuckled a little.

"Roland sweetie don't speak with your mouth full." Regina said sweetly. Roland swallowed and sent Regina an apologetic look.

He had a little syrup dripping out of the corner of his mouth. Regina reached to clean it with a napkin that was on top of the bar. Roland gave her a cheeky grin to which Regina carelessly returned.

Robin watched their interaction silently. They way both of them treated each other with so much love and care. It was amazing to him since they didn't know each other that long and they were clicking life they spent a life time together. It mesmerized him to no avail.

Regina glanced down to her wrist watch and opened her eyes wide.

"I have to go." She announced. Roland's face fell to her words.

"Why?" he pouted. Regina felt her heart swell by this face.

"I have to go and see Mulan." Roland's confuse expression made her laugh a little.

"Who is Mulan?" Roland questioned.

This time was Robin who answered.

"She is a pretty lady that is helping daddy to keep out of that awful place." Roland looked at his father in question. Regina felt a little surge of something in her heart when he said 'pretty lady' the same type of feeling she felt the first time Robin and Mulan.

"Is she is prettier than Gina daddy?" Robin gaze fell on Regina who was slightly red. He couldn't
"Mulan is certainly beautiful…" he began and there it was that little scowl on Regina's face, he could see it clearly. "But Regina here in the most beautiful woman in the entire world. No other woman can compare to her." And there it was that deep shade of Red creeping on Regina cheeks, the type of red that gain her the nickname Apple from him in the first place. Regina had to look down to the floor.

"Gina is really, really pretty daddy." Roland said smiling brightly.

Regina stood up and kissed Roland's forehead. As a good bye, she really didn't know what to say. When she was about to turn to leave Robin grab her hand gently and placed a kiss there.

"See you tonight?" He asked. Regina couldn't trust her voice so she nodded and left.

"I think we made her blush daddy." Roland said with a certain type of victory tone that didn't escape Robin. When he turned to see in front of him Ruby was in front of him with a mushy smile on her face. "I'm glad to see you guys together again." She smiled and Robin shook his head but couldn't help smiling a bit. "We aren't together just…" But Robin wasn't able to finish talking when Ruby spoke once more.

"You should at least give her the pancakes." She said motioning to the now packed food. Ruby, like Rose, always been on Team Robin, or so John explained once. They both like Daniel a lot but in the end it was Regina's decision the three of them knew that they needed to respect Regina's wishes. No matter how much it hurt Robin.

He nodded. "Would you mind watching Roland while I go to her?" Ruby said yes and he was off through the door.

"REGINA." He yelled. She stopped and turned around watching him reaching her.

"What is wrong?" she asked baffled by his sudden outburst of the diner.

"You forgot this." He handed her the bag.

"OH." She said disappointed that it wasn't something else.

"I know they are your favorites and I am almost sure you haven't had anything to eat but like at least 3 cups of coffee." Regina raised a brow in his direction.

"What makes you think you know me so well?" she asked playfully.

Robin closed a little the distance between them. "Well for one you always had a coffee addiction and when you don't eat you get these little wrinkles in your forehead…" he softly touched her forehead and it took Regina everything not to close his eyes and let his touch spread throughout her body. "Announcing that you are hungry, plus you don't have a really good poker face."

"Yes… well thank you." She said taking the bag out of his hands. He said good bye and turned around, he took one step but some impulse made him turn to her.

"Regina wait…" Robin cried out. He closed completely the space between them, cradled her face and planted a kiss on her lips.

She felt dizzy and warm and all the feeling she was trying to bury resurface once more. She didn't fight it. She dropped the bag and rounded her arms around his neck giving in into the sensation of his
lips on hers. It felt right and amazing. Everything around them disappeared and in that instant they were alone in the whole world. It was a clash of tongues and bite lips. It was a fight between the past and the future. Something clicked at that moment. Everything made sense to Regina once more. Who was she kidding? All that she wanted, all that she needed was express in that kiss. They parted for air, none of them willing to open their eyes and leave their embrace. It felt safe, a warm cocoon of beautiful feeling and sweet kisses.

"Regina I love you." He said in a whisper. He then opened his eyes to see her beautiful features. She still had her eyes closed but her soft expression let him know that she finally was accepting his love for her.

"Robin…" she started but Robin didn't let her continue. He placed a peek on her lips.

"You don't have to say anything now." He hugged her tight into him. She buried her face on his chest, on top of his beating heart. "I am going to wait. I've waited for 13 years for your return and I'll wait for you as long as it takes." He rounded her around her shoulders to coax her closer to him, she obliged without a second thought. "I'll see you tonight and we will talk." She nodded and smiled into him. Robin could feel her heart beating and he knew that it was possible for them to be together he just needed it to be patience, and she deserve all the time in the world.

When they broke the embrace Robin didn't want to free her hand.

"Robin you need to give me back my hand I am going to be late." She said with a smirk on her face. Robin sighed.

"All right." He crouched to pick up the back that Regina dropped. "I sure hope so the pancakes didn't suffer any permanent life altering damage." Regina rolled her eyes.

"You were never a very good comedian Robbie." Robin bites his lower lips and gave him the most handsome smirk he could.

"Point taken." He said. "So see you tonight?"

"I already told you yes, why do you keep asking?" Robin caressed her face with his other hand.

"Because every time you say yes my heart leaps a million miles an hour and I quite like that feeling." Regina lower her face to hide her warm blush that was about to creep on her face but Robin move her head up to see her. "See you tonight Apple." Robin kissed her forehead and turn to leave. Regina was feeling weak in the knee at that moment.

"What did I get myself into?" She walked to her car, opened the door and sat inside.

Both Robin and Regina were clueless of the person witnessing the whole event. They were clueless of how much it made their blood boil. Seeing the person that their heart belong to embrace and kiss another was taking out those suppressed urges, the urge to feel red, crimson blood running through the fingers. To see life fade out of someone's eyes. It was time for action, it was time to feed the monster inside their soul.

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Nightfall came slowly and torturous for Robin. After seeing good bye to Regina he felt anxious and nervous, thing that didn't go unnoticed to Little John. Robin remembered his earlier conversation with his brother and hoped to heaven that his words were true.

"Robin why are you so nervous?" John asked clasping his hand to Robin's shoulder, who was sitting
at a park bench watching Roland play with his favorite toy his wooden sword and bow.

"I am supposed to see Regina tonight to talk. I was pretty sure I had everything under control but right now I am actually terrified." His voice was low, whether it was for what he was feeling or prevent Roland from listening, Robin couldn't tell.

"Terrified of what?" John encouraged him to voice out his fears, he knew that once they were out a feeling of relief will surely take place.

"To how she feels about me. One thing is to kiss her and feel like she feel so much for me as I do for her but the other is that I may be misreading things." Robin threw his head back to look at the sky. "I guess I am afraid of being wrong."

"You just have to take that leap of faith." John began, "Besides I am pretty sure that Regina is in love with you..." John laughed heartedly as a memory crossed his mind. "Remember she has always been the most of stubborn woman. All you need is patience."

"How can you be so sure?" Robin finally looked at his brother.

"The same way you were sure to kiss her this morning at the parking lot in Granny's." Robin eyes widen comically which only added more to John's amusement.

"You saw that?" Robin was flustered at that moment.

"Of course. Me and other 5 or 6 people more. You guys pick a rather public place to kiss." Robin was about to questioned who exactly were the other people that saw them but John almost ready his mind and began to list people. "Zelena, Rose, Jefferson, Elsa, Keith and- " Robin stooped his brother there.

"Keith? Are you serious?" John clasped his hand on his lap.

"I am quite serious and by the look on his face he didn't look happy about it so if I were you I watch my back." Robin nodded.

"I knew the moment Regina returned he was going to be all over her again; seriously that man doesn't know how to take a hint. To this day I still can believe Regina went on a date with that guy." John laughed at his brother words.

"Yes well Regina might have accepted but she had other plans about that particular date..." Robin arched a brow to his brother, he didn't understand what he was talking about. John was really amused. "Oh come on Robbie. You didn't notice at all?" Robin shook his head. "She was trying to make you jealous. That was by the time Zelena started to round you and you took her for lunch one day and you forgot that you were supposed to have archery lessons with her." Robin gasped and released a heavy sigh.

"Regina did always know how to torture me." He said looking at his hand in shame, "I really didn't think she would mind me missing a lesson." Robin in that moment felt awful.

"Robin you really were clueless. That was the only time of day you two had for yourselves." John shifted on the bench to look at Roland who was yelling gibberish he couldn't understand. "Besides this isn't the point of this conversation. The point here is that it's obvious Regina loves you but she needs time to process everything."

"I hope that you are right."
The forest always calmed him down. The movement of the tree branches, the cold breeze that collide with his skin and the way that grasped his whole being and relaxed him. It had been such a long time since he last visited the clearing. The place where he taught her how to shoot, the place where he got his heart ripped out of his chest. When he reached his destination he noticed it has changed, years of absence would do that. What was funny to him is that the same changes happened to him as well, he became a different person since the last time he was there. He thought about all the things – good and bad—that he did when Regina left and it was so surprising how a simple good bye that shattered his heart had been the culprit of so many things in his life.

"I can hear you thinking loud and clear." Regina voice played at his back. When he turned around he was surprise to see her. She had a grin on her face. "I think you are losing your touch I was just behind you when you entered the forest but since you didn't say anything I just followed you. Whatever you are thinking about must be really loud because you didn't hear my footfalls." Robin shook his head.

"Is nothing really." Robin tried. But Regina wasn't having it.

"When was the last time you were here?" she asked but for some reason she already knew the question.

"They day you left." Regina took a deep breath and started walking passed him.

"Maybe I shouldn't have told you to meet me here." Robin followed her with his gaze, now hearing clear as day her steps.

"No is fine. I had to come eventually." Regina sat on a log and watched him intently.

"Robin this was the place where I told you to forget about me, to find another person to make you happy, like you deserve to be. I practically told you I would never love you, how can you say you love me when I broke your heart in the most awful of ways?" Robin reached her in three longs strides and crouch in front of her.

"I realize that my happiness is you Regina, no one else. I tried so hard with Marian. And it took me some time but I understood what you were feeling my only wish is to see you well and happy." Robin took a deep breath looking for some words of reassurance to give Regina.

"Robin c - can I ask you something?" she shuttered.

"Anything." He simply said.

"What did you mean that you went through a dark period in your life?" She felt Robin go stiff for a moment. His handsome features fell almost immediately to a sorrowful face. Regina had been thinking about it all day and it wasn't going to leave her alone.

Robin swallowed hard, he didn't know how to begin to explain, but he had to somehow, somewhere was the beginning to his darker story. He took a deep breath and sat at her side, never once breaking contact with her hand, the only thing that was anchoring to the earth.

"When you left I entered into a severe depression." He started and Regina was already cringing. It was her fault he was suffering that was hurting her. "I tried twice to harm myself… it seems so stupid right now but I was so blinded by the hurt in my heart. I began to think that I hated it you with all my heart because you left me alone." Regina felt tears going down her cheek and even more when Robin tighten her hold on her it was painful but she didn't say anything at some level she felt like she deserve it.
Robin was trying not to scare her with his revelation but it was beginning to bring back memories that were spitting out of his mouth like bullets to the heart. When he fell silent Regina nudge his shoulder to let him know she was listening that he can continue talking, she could take it. He took another greedy deep breath and continued.

"Dad was so worried that he started to take me to some therapy. He finally cared enough to help me out." He shifted to straddle the log they were sitting and motioned Regina to do the same; he wanted to look directly at her eyes while confessing. When she complied he resumed. "At first I used to skip sessions, go into the forest with a bottle of whiskey and drink until I was numb. Until one day I got home and heard John sobbing into my father chest because he was scared that his older brother would one day disappear." That broke Regina's heart. Not only was Robin suffering because of her, but also John who didn't have anything to do with the situation.

"Robin I…" Robin shook his head.

"Let me finish please. I fear I will never be brave to open up about this ever again." Regina understood all too well so she became quite and Robin gave her a silent thank you.

"The day I saw John crying I realize I wasn't doing all of that because you left. I was doing it because I was being selfish, only thinking about my feelings and never got to look around me and see I was hurting everybody else. I wanted to be with you, to kiss you, hug you and constantly remind you of how much I love you that I was going down a dark path. I realize that you wouldn't be proud of me, that I let you down and my family. I wasn't acting like myself; I was acting like a soulless monster." Robin gave her a watery smile. "So I started to take the sessions seriously. I began to help around the shop more and I tried my best to give back all the months of darkness I was in. Everything eventually became normal so to speak. I missed the deadline to start studying so I was waiting to the next semester so I could enroll and then many things happened and I never go to do it. I stayed here, took care of the store. It was almost a year and John was leaving for college." Robin scooted a little more close to Regina. "I was tempted to go to New York and visit you. I had an urge to see how you were and how life was treating you but your last words kept playing in my head so I never pursued my nagging heart wanting to see you." Robin was crying freely and all Regina could do was wash away his tears.

"Everything else after that I already told you. I stopped believing in love. I had occasional encounters with women, nothing serious at hand. That was until I meet Marian." Regina was touched and hurt at the same time. Touched that after all this time Robin could be the most honest person she knew – forgetting the fact that he and Jefferson tricked her, but for some reason relief that they did- but hurt because like it or not it was her fault he went through so much.

"I am so sorry Robin, I truly am. It was never my intention to hurt you, well maybe it was but all I wanted is for you to open your eyes to see that out there were other people that could make you happy because I have never deserved you." Regina cradled his face. "I… didn't think that leaving would put you in that state. I could never forget myself if you were really gone." Tears began to fall down from Regina's chocolate orbs and Robin heart began to hurt.

"Hey…" He mimicked Regina's action and cradled her face in his hands. "I don't blame you for what happened. I stopped blaming you a long time ago because I realize then that it was my will breaking and not your departure."

"Wait I don't understand."Regina said.

"What I mean is that all of this…” He motioned between both of them. "Made me stronger. I will never forgive myself for not going after you when I had the chance but…” he took one of her hands and placed it on top of his heart. "I will try my best to gain your love and trust again."
“Robin I don't deserve this. Ever since I got here all I've been doing is doubt you and be mad at you.” Robin smiled at her and that confused her even more.

“Well I did deserve you being mad at me and about the doubts well we all have our moments Regina it's inevitable.” Robin's hold on Regina tightens.

“I will never understand that blind faith you have when it comes to me.” Robin took one of Regina's lose hair strands and tucked it behind her ear.

“The only thing you need to understand is how much I love you.”

Regina looked at him like he was crazy and maybe he was. Heck all these years have been a rollercoaster of emotions that took him into unexpected places. Robin never imaged to get married but he met Marian. He never thought he would have kids and now Roland is the most important person in the world. He went through the motions of life, every possible outcome and managed to live through them. Robin became a strong man because of everything, maybe now he can finally be worthy of her.

“You are impossibly optimistic.” Regina countered and Robin smiled.

“T'm glad I am now.”

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**Somewhere in Storybrooke.**

There was an eerie sound clashing against the walls. The cold air gave away goosebumps and the scene around felt like a moment from Nightmare on Elm street. Ruby was silently walking back home after a long shift at Granny's diner. Every time she had one of those shifts she swore to herself to do something more interesting with her life but then things happened and she was back in the same routine all over again. For some reason she felt things were going to be different, that maybe this time she will turn her life around and leave this town. There was so much to do and she wasting her life away in a place where her talents and good looks weren't appreciated.

This night for Ruby felt oddly different like a bad omen was creeping all over her skin. She shrugged the feeling off like a coat the moment she arrived at her apartment door. Ruby fumbled for the keys in her purse and when she finally found the she unlocked the door. Ruby went through the door frame and closed it behind her and started reaching for the light switch. The light didn't turn on.

"Great lights out." She muttered to herself walking through the darkness to reach her room. She noticed a dim light beneath the closed door and got a little nervous. When she opened and saw who was sitting at the edge of the bed her face automatically scowled. "What are you doing here?" She asked walking to the other side of the room to put her things down. "I told you to scram."

"Well dear I am not the one to take no for an answer." The voice behind her said. She never turned around, never got the opportunity because she was out like a light.

The next thing Ruby saw was herself in the mirror on top of her bed almost naked and strap on hands and legs to each of her bed post. Her eyes were opened, she tried to move but her body was none responsive. She felt helpless.

"Did you know that there are 4 types of transfusuable products that can be derive from blood?” The mysterious voice said while cutting a large gash on Ruby face. She felt the pain deeply. Her senses where all on but her body was practically on shut down.
"Red cells, platelets, plasma and cryoprecipitate." The strange figure cut below her breast, making a large puddle of blood dripped down to her belly. "Usually 2 or 3 can create a pint ready to be donated." The knife began to run up and down the valley of her breast hollowly creating scratches with the tip. "But I what I find so interesting is how blood can look so beautiful outside the body. The crimson color, the odor it fuels the most of obscure desires I have deep within my twisted soul." The knife began to tear her skin apart on her thighs just above the major artery. "When I was little, I was so fascinated by the biology of every animal, it was fun to play doctor rip them open and see the blood spat out." The person released a manic laughed that could scared even the most of evil villains. "It's ironic you know. Your name is Ruby and you are going to die bleeded out of everything inside of you..." The person gave a wicked grin and slashed Ruby jugular vein, struck deep within the Renal vein and finally arch of aorta in the middle of her chest. "Blood is my ambition, so that is why I am so done with you my pet."
Another morning goes by in Storybrooke.

Regina was feeling different this one morning from the two months she been in town. Her last conversation with Robin had put things in perspective to the point where she felt that closure, finally, was reached within herself. For the first time in so long Regina’s heart felt truly free from the reigns of the past and she intended to take advantage of it, fully. She stood up from the bed humming a happy song (she realized then what she was doing but honestly didn’t care). There was happiness and song in her heart and regardless of the dire situation, the tough case she is working on, Regina did not deter in the way that she felt. She moved swiftly across the room, picking up comfortable clothes before running off to the bathroom and taking a well deserve bath. After an hour of perfecting her look she went downstairs dreaming of a good breakfast and for her surprise Elsa had cooked for like ten to fifteen people. Not that Regina cared, she was extremely hungry that morning.

"What did you do that you are bribing me with food?" Regina asked almost absentmindedly, reaching for the fridge handle and pulling it open. From the corner of her eye she could see the blonde shrugged the question away.

"Can’t I treat my best friend to a nice breakfast?" Elsa countered also sassily, and the brunette turned to her with cocked brow. Regina then gave a I-don’t-believe-you-what-so-ever look that Elsa felt the need to shake her head to it.

‘hummmm’ was Regina’s answer before sitting on the bar stool with a plate of omelets, bacon and toast. The fork plunging easily into the eggs and Regina would have marveled in the deliciousness of her breakfast if it wasn’t for the fact that Elsa looked almost put out. She was nervous, that much Regina could deduce, but why? She’s afraid that finding out it closer than she thought.

"So…” Elsa began unsure, which was something utterly out of character. For all the time they have known each other, her blonde friend had always been without filter and without boundaries, something that at the very beginning of their friendship made Regina angry. Now it was expected, and Regina appreciated how she didn’t beat around the bushes. She spoke the words that were running through her head like a cascade. But looking at her how she, tentatively, served Regina coffee, the brunette was sure that whatever Elsa needed to say wasn’t easy for her best friend.

"Elsie spit it out." Regina said between bites, annoyed and curious.

Elsa sighed. "Your friend Tink," Elsa managed to say as she took a sip of her coffee. "Is she
going to be around a lot now?"

The brunette looked at her blonde friend with an amusement that shone clear in her face. "She is my friend and family, so I am guessing she is." Regina replied. Elsa rolled her eyes.

"Wonderful." Elsa’s sarcastic answer made Regina grinned pleased with the turnabout of events.

"Don’t tell me you’re jealous?" Regina had a mild high pitch voice that she knew well it annoyed her blonde friend. Truthfully, she was expecting some end-of-the-world type of news, not this, not jealousy.

"Jealous me? Of what?" Asked Elsa after sipping her coffee nonchalantly. The blonde had a tell, whenever her eyebrow twitched it meant she was annoyed and boy Regina thought her brow would just blow off her face. The notion made her released a short laugh that was shot down by a glare from blue eyes.

Regina stared at her friend a few seconds before clearing her throat and taking another bite of her delicious breakfast, she had to handed to Elsa she improved in her culinary skills. The memory of the first time Elsa had tried to cook crossed her mind in that second, how she almost burned down the kitchen and tried to hide from her. The ‘I prefer cold food anyway’ phrase that had managed to coax a laugh out of Regina made the brunette realized that her semester was going to be quite interesting. What she really didn’t envisioned that years later that quirky, cold, blonde would turn out to be her best friend.

"I did tell you about Rose while we were in New York. Besides you don’t have anything to worry about. The both of you are weird and annoying from time to time, actually you guys have something else in common – you can both drive me insane." Regina huffed out a laugh. "I am way over my head with you two." Elsa raised her gaze to Regina and the brunette was worried about the twinkle in the blonde’s eyes.

"Maybe I will get along with her after all." Elsa articulated each word.

"I am really going to regret introducing you guys."

"Well it’s good to know. I can never pass on an opportunity of making you blow up the lit." Elsa was about to say something more when Jefferson made his way to the table. Before sitting
down, he kissed his lovely wife who went from jealous school girl to royal pain in the buttock.

"So, you decided to greet us with your presence." Regina said looking at her best friend with a cocked brow but when she noticed his demeanor was all swollen and bitter, Regina frowned. "What's wrong Jeff?" Momentarily forgetting about her breakfast and conversation with Elsa, Regina pressed her lips in a thin line.

These were bad news about to be broken out. God forbid it was too much to have a single good day in her life.

Jefferson shuffled in his chair uncomfortably before giving Regina a look that she knew very well. The sympathetic look that only once before he had the audacity to give her before Regina began hitting him squared in his chest daring him to feel sorry for her any further. Regina did not take pity well, it was something that irked her. Call it a pet peeve of some sort. It has been that way since forever, way before Daniel’s death.

"It's Robin. He is down at the Sheriff station. Last night…" He trailed off trying to gather the right words to speak. Regina was beginning to feel the sharp claws of worry and anger. All poisonous, all fatal.

"Out with it, Jefferson. What is Robin doing in the sheriff station and why wasn’t I informed of this. Or Mulan for that matter?" Regina slammed her hand against the table and it throb, like fucking hell it did but at that moment the only thing she could think of was Robin spending another night in seclusion, and Roland without him, again. There was a dark feeling eating up the good mood she had woken up to. It was like toxic substance, slowly spreading through her veins and into her heart, making it beat so fast to the point where it can lurch out of her chest.

Jefferson took a very deep breath.

"Ruby was murder in her apartment last night and Robin was the first suspect. She was killed the same way as Daniel and Marian." His face morphed into a grimace.

Regina felt time stop. The feeling in her heart grew big and grey and made her breath come out in short puff. The fact that Robin was a suspect had her body going numb. Some evil and perverted human being killing like this, without a shred of remorse had the brunette feeling worried that this might escalate more. Though was it more there to escalate to? There were horrific murders happening in Storybrooke, for years now. It couldn’t possibly be worse than that.
She is trying to take deep breaths, to calm the erratic beating of her heart. Regina is trying to reach a more stoic persona, but she is failing, miserably and all she really wants is to scream the murderer out of existence forever. So many people are suffering because of this, so many souls aren’t resting in peace because the culprit hasn’t been caught. Now more than ever she is sure that Robin is innocent. This is a curse. This is her punishment for returning to this God forsaken town.

"That’s impossible. Robin killing someone, that’s impossible. “She already went down that road of doubting him, never again. Especially when, "I was with him last night. There’s no way that Robin would have done such a thing. He has so much to lose."

Both Jefferson and Elsa looked up at her with surprise marring their faces. Sure, they have been insisting her that she should talk to Robin and put the past behind them, but it was surprised that she took their advice and went ahead talked to him. At least now they won’t be annoyingly poking at her about it.

"Well I guess it’s time for us to go to the sheriff station. You might want to call Mulan." Regina could tell Jefferson was worried. His facial expression was easy to read, almost like a children’s book where the plot unraveled in three, two, one… "Keith is already there and he might make things difficult specially…” Jefferson trails off and Regina was starting to get this nagging feeling at the back of her head that just made annoyance flare up rather quickly. Jefferson lack of forwardness lighting the fuse at the first spark.

"Jeff if you are going to talk you might want to do it in full sentences so I can get a very picture of the situation." Regina stood up and Elsa followed suit, clearing the table, appetite long gone. A full minute passed by before the man cleared his throat gaining his best friend and wife attention once more.

"Keith wants to invalidate you and the diagnose from the case.” Regina’s arms crossed over her chest,

"His argument is that you are too close to the suspect and that might make you alter your perspective in all of this."

"I gather as much." She isn’t doing her job right if she didn’t see that coming. A good DA would exhaust all his sources to ensure that they case would go their way. Being cunning is one of the main traits to have in order to succeed but Regina was above all of that. She did not get where she is today by being too soft.

Jefferson and Elsa shared a look of confusion even though Elsa had a better understanding of what’s going through Regina’s mind. Whether she was faking for the sake of her husband? Well you never know.
"What do you mean Regina?" The blonde voiced out the question and Regina knew that Elsa had some idea but wasn’t seeing the full picture.

In turn, Regina smirked at the pair, dropping her arms to the side.

"It means that I knew this was going to happen and I have a plan." Regina had a triumph smile on her face at least she could find solace in her ability as a professional.

"I’m guessing you already have a plan in motion." It wasn’t a question from Elsa it was a statement to which Regina hum in confirmation. "I thought that it was weird you were so soft with everyone."

"What do you mean Elsa?" Jefferson asked. Regina and Elsa shared a looked and started laughing.

"Regina is quite scary even for a psychologist. Let’s just say I don’t want to be at the end of her wrath." Elsa moved to the kitchen when she collected things from the table.

"Oh, Elsa you make it sound like I’m the devil." But then she gave Jefferson a devilish smile.

“Aren’t you?” Was the last thing Elsa asked before Regina walked out the kitchen, determination sparking her steps. If she was going to do this, she was going al.

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"I haven’t done anything wrong." Came Robin’s voice through the door. Regina just arrived at the Sheriff station Jefferson and Elsa on tow. She called Mulan on their drive there and she immediately agreed to go, it would take some time to get into town since she was in Portland closing off other cases before giving her full attention to Robin’s, but she will be there.
"He’s right." Regina said. Keith, David and Killian turned to see her entered the room.

"And how can you be so sure?” Came in Keith rather smug question. Regina rolled her eyes and moved passed him to stand at Robin’s side.

"Simple.” She turned to see Robin briefly and he inclined his head briefly, eyes muddled. "Robin was with me last night." This seemed to have her desire effect because in a matter of seconds after those words left her mouth Keith demeanor turned sour and his face was almost greenish. The brunette half expected him to go full Hulk. Alas, it didn’t happened and it left an air of disappointment in the room.

"How can we be certain that you are telling the truth? For all we know you are just trying to cover for him.” Keith practically spat out the words as they gather on his tongue. Whatever feelings he had been struggling, whether thanks to her revelation or not, he achieved to compose himself into a more professional stance. "This is why I am requesting a change in psychologist. Regina Mills isn’t suitable for the best interest of this case."

Regina crossed her arms in front of her and began to move a few steps closer to the Prosecutor. It was like all of all sudden she turned into a Lioness and Keith was her prey. The air around the room became loaded with obvious intrigue and Regina was about to spark a match for it to go up in flames.

"I agree." Everyone in the room, including Robin who stood up quickly ready to protest, looked at her like she’d grown a second head. The thing about Regina is that in all her years as a Psychologist she’d learned that there are cases one can become too attached to, therefore alter your perspective and vision. That’s why she always prepared for such an occasion. "Which is why I already contacted Judge Gold, so he can find a replacement in the earliest convenience. I know well my history with one of the victims and the suspect is something that weighs in gravely, so the Judge has agreed to call in someone not corrupted into the lifestyle of Storybrooke. I am to give all the information to the person he appoints. I believe everyone can agree with all of this?"

Everyone was shocked of Regina’s revelation. That much was clear in the way they openly gawked at her. She supposed it was only natural, after all her involvement with Robin wasn’t a secret to anyone. They were best friends and they will always be best friends – and maybe a little more but that wasn’t something anyone else should care for.

"I agree to the new terms. You have saved me the problem of putting the official request.” Keith said sitting down but he isn’t at all too happy about it. He wanted to be the one to burst the bubble not the other way around. Oddly enough it was satisfying for Regina. "Now about Robin, he
"And you are all too eager to pin the blame on him." She neared one of the desk and leaned against the edge. "Doesn’t matter he is innocent and it’s only a matter of time I’m proven right. For the time being you’ll have to talk to Mulan and get into an agreement with her because it’s getting ridiculously dragging Robin every time something happens." The moment Regina finished talking the door opened.

"Sorry I’m late." Mulan voiced.

"Ah yes thanks for coming in such a short notice." Regina approached her, she reached for some papers near her purse and gave them to the lawyer. "I already informed them about some of the changes regarding me, I think you should handle the rest." She walked to Robin. "You should come with me, Mulan can handle the rest." Then her eyes fell on Jefferson and Elsa. "You two should stay here and catch up. There are a lot changes coming." Without another word Regina grabbed Robin’s hand and walked out of the Sheriff station. He hadn’t say a single word and when Regina looked at his face there was pride and something else in his eyes.

"What just happened?" Jefferson ask his wife. Elsa just shrugged her shoulders.

"I told you it was weird she didn’t do anything drastic already."

"This is more than drastic Elsa. She just rendered down our only chance of proving Robin’s innocence." Jefferson huffed a breath out.

"Actually, what she has in mind is just brilliant." Mulan argued with a grin on her face. "No wonder she is one of the top forensic psychologists in the country."

"Relax Jeff. Regina knows what she is doing." Elsa squeezed his hand lightly.

"I hope so." He just breathed out.

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What the hell was all that about?” Robin almost yelled once they were completely out earshot from everyone.

"Robin can you please calm you –” Robin cut her off grabbing one of her wrist. His hold wasn’t too tight and he was shaking. Why was he shaking? Regina felt her stomach overturn.

"Why didn’t you tell me you were going to quit?” Robin didn’t let go. In her defense she tried to look as appalled as he was. Even with the butterflies swarming in her belly, she could contain the mixture of mischievousness and amusement in her face. "Is this funny to you? Regina, I can’t do this without you. It was your help in the first place that got me out. Or you just don’t care about me."

Regina took a deep breath, waiting for Robin to be done with his meltdown.

"Are you done?” Was all she mustered to say. His face was the perfect painting of fear and pain.

"Yes, I am. I’m quite curious on what you are going to say.” Robin then released her wrist giving her much needed space.

"First of all, I didn’t quit, I just gave my responsibilities to another. It was just a matter of time before Keith requested me out and if he did I wouldn’t be able to involve myself. I am sure who is going to take your case and if I play things correctly I won’t be cast aside. Second I know what I’m doing Robin you don’t have to called me out on it and third…” She closed the distance between them and gather his hands in hers. "Don’t you ever say I don’t care about you because I do, greatly so actually." Regina tilts her head and with one hand caresses his cheek. "I know how I do things is rather strange and sometimes ruthless but is the only way I know how to do things. I need you to trust me.” Robin released a short breath. Regina could see how his face went from worried to relieved in a matter of seconds. It was a wonder he didn’t blow up inside the room with everyone’s eyes trained on them. For that she is grateful.

"I do trust you Regina and I wish you would trust me enough in the future and tell me these types of things before you go out and do them. For a moment there I thought…” Regina scrunched her eyebrows together tilting her head in the process giving him a questioning look.

"You thought what?” Regina inquired and in that very moment she felt the need to hold on really tight to his hand.
Robin took a deep breath before voicing out his fear.

"I thought that you wanted to leave because of what I told you last night. For a moment I didn’t even care about my freedom; I was worried that I would never get to see you again."

Regina’s heart cracked at Robin’s words.

"Robin, I am sorry that my actions made you feel like that. I never had a personal attachment to my cases – not like this – and I am so used to doing things on my own terms. I think that for a moment I forgot it was you." Regina let go of his hands and wrapped her arms around him. She wasn’t a big hugger, so it took her by surprise how right it felt to hug Robin who, by the way, enveloped her in strong and warm arms. Her day might have gotten ruined, but this moment made up for it.

"I understand I really do. Just next time you are going to do something so drastic let me know. Surprises like that tend to be a miss in my life." Regina nodded against his chest, eyes closed tight as she inhaled his snow and pine scent. Mills just wished she could peak into his mind and see what he was thinking. There was so much fear in his eyes before that it made her wonder where his mind went.

"Since I’m supposed to be honest with you I guess it’s time for me to explain everything to you." Robin shook his head in response.

"Maybe later. Right now, all I want is to go home and take a shower. I’ve been the whole morning in the station and listening to Granny cry her heart out over Ruby truly broke my heart break. The house is alone, so it would be nice to rest for a bit.” After a while of him speaking, Regina pulled back. She inspected his face closely and what she could gather was this: He didn’t want to be alone.

"Where is John and Roland?" The brunette grabbed his hand and began heading to her car.

"They are in Portland. Since I was collected early in the morning I told John to take Roland with him to check on the status of the new sports wears the store. I don’t want Roland to be more involved in this. It’s bad enough that he wakes up every night screaming." Regina nodded in understanding. When they arrive to her car Regina turned to see Robin.
"Have you talked to Elsa about Roland’s nightmares? I think it’s important for her to know his routine, night terrors and all." Robin sighed heavily.

"I will tell her the next time I see her, or you can tell her." She could tell Elsa, yes, but it was best if Robin was involved in the process as well. Regina will tell him that, later.

"Do you want a lift home?" She asked before opening the door to her car. It wasn’t really a question.

Robin rubbed the back of his neck, the new wave of tiredness appearing on his features.

"I would like that." Robin rounded the car and moved to open the door.

The whole ride to Robin’s house was filled with a comfortable if really loud silence. It was nice for them to finally breathe easy around each other and for the first time in a long time Regina didn’t feel the need to run away. She felt her heart swell with a love she hasn’t felt in a long time and the thought of accepting her feelings was daunting. When they arrived at Robin’s house he was looking for millions of ways to drag on being in her presence but since he didn’t find nothing he said good bye and got out of the car. She wasn’t ready to leave all she wanted was to spend a little more time with Robin. She got out of the car and called out his name. Robin turned to her, visibly relieved when she called out his name.

"Did you eat something this morning?" The reality is after the soul gripping fear she felt earlier in the morning, Regina was starting to be afraid of leaving Robin all alone. Keith is hellbent on pinning the murder on him that he wouldn’t hesitate on coming in with the stupidest of excuses and taking Robin in.

Robin shook his head. "They didn’t give me even a chance to even drink coffee." Regina scoffed.

"Well why don’t you take a shower and I make lunch? But if you don’t want me to stay I can g-" Regina was about get inside the car when Robin grab her hand and turned her around flushing her body against him.

"I would love that." Robin’s eyes locked with Regina’s lips and it took everything she had in her to not cut the distance between them. The temptation was big.
"Okay…" she whispered, mentally scolding herself at her tone of voice. So fragile and frail two things she most certainly wasn’t.

Robin cleared his throat while letting go of her. The missing of his body was instant but she was sure glad because having him so close was intoxicating. "You do remember the layout out the house, right?"

"I think so."

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"Everything alright?" Elsa took the empty space beside Jefferson on the couch. He beheld the blonde, brows weave together in utter confusion.

"Don’t know. I’ve been thinking about what Regina did." The blonde gripped her husband hand tight in an attempt to alleviate his worry. Didn’t work.

"I am guessing you didn’t expect her to do something like that?" The flicker of pure confusion still covered his eyes. Elsa wished she could say something that would get rid of that, but nothing came to mind, just yet. The more he tried to understand, the more his pained expression grew. Whatever he was thinking, it wasn’t nice.

"I didn’t paint Regina as a person that could just…” A beat of silence, “…give up." It occurred to Elsa that Jefferson has never seen Regina in action unlike her. For all the time they’ve been apart, her husband wasn’t aware of Mills capabilities and that would have wounded Regina if she knew. Whenever she was at work, her entire personality shifted. The way she could comprehend human emotions on a higher level was outstanding. You wouldn’t think that if she knew her life story, all the pain and suffering she had gone through in order to get to where she was but it was because of that Regina was able to feel everything so deeply. Which is why, at the beginning, Elsa thought this case could break Regina. Now she knows better than to underestimate Regina Mills.

Elsa was quick to squeeze his hand even tighter. "Everything Regina does has a reason. Just like every ‘why’ has an answer. Believe me, I doubt she is giving up. Besides you heard her. She is pretty sure about Robin’s innocence." Jefferson sighed loudly making Elsa chuckle. "Hey, don’t worry this is Regina freaking Mills we are talking about, besides I am more scare of her than any killer out there, she can be ruthless."
"I will take your word for it." But that wasn’t everything bugging him, and Elsa noticed.

"There is something more is it?"

"When Regina left years ago I had this absurd idea in my head that she wasn’t leaving willingly. There is something she never told me, and I am pretty sure it has to do with Robin."

There was fear and curiosity lacing through Jefferson’s words. "Regina is pretty good keeping secrets and if she doesn’t want to say something you might as well prepare a funeral for the words that will never be spoken. Unless…” Elsa trailed off.

"Unless what?"

Regina is going to hate her for this. "Unless you tell Robin what you think. My guess is that you haven’t told him this.” When Jefferson shakes his head in a negative motion she took a deep breath. "The go to the source, tell him what you think and any other crazy theory your head can conjure up. If we are lucky he can talk to Regina and we will know, eventually."

"Do you know something I don’t?"

"Maybe…” Elsa quipped. "Just talk to him. If Regina is hiding something he will probably be able to get it out of her."

"I will."

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The kitchen was filled with amazing odors by the time Robin entered the kitchen. From a well roasted chicken seasoned to perfection to the homemade salsa alfredo that Regina made from scratch. Toast with garlic gave the perfect touch to the mini Italian fest Regina prepared for Robin. She even managed to make a little apple pie that he so loves when they were kids. She was quite happy to get to cook like this. Totally free and happy. And sure, she got to cooked for Jefferson and Elsa all the time, but this felt different but all so welcoming.
"Well I might have to let you in to cook more often. Everything smells so delicious," Robin shirtless, or at least she could tell he was with the little line of view she had. When she finally turned to him her cheeks felt rather hot, red hot. He was holding his white shirt with strips, looking over at everything she had prepared for lunch. If she was lucky, Robin would not notice how her face turned bright red because if she is being honesty? It was.

"I haven’t cooked like this in some time. I even made apple pie. Which reminds me you took a lot of time taking a simple shower." Fighting how flustered she felt, her gaze moved somewhere else that wasn’t his broad shoulder and muscles chest. Dear God help her.

To no avail, Robin noticed.

In his smugness, Locksley placed the shirt on top of a counter top and approached her with measured steps. Though she wasn’t looking Regina could sense his nearness. It made the hair on the back of her neck stand and her skin crawl with sparks. Shit.

"I was just giving you time to finish cooking. I know you don’t like to be bothered when you’re doing so." Robin took another step. “Or at least you used to loath it.”

"Well you remembered that is a good sign. Oh, before I forget do you have wine?" Anything to keep herself staring and feeling flushed and shit. Why must Robin be like this?

Robin pondered on it. "Merlot or Cabernet?" He managed to get a bottle of each from the cabinet, standing right in front of Regina. Her eyes went from one bottle to the next, then his chest and repeat the motion with the bottles and his chest and so on and on. It was a laughable sight, and Robin certainly made it worse with his smirk.

"Ummm… Merlot sounds nice." She was immediately moving to the cabinets getting plates and wine glasses out, inwardly grateful for the split second of not seeing him naked from the waist up. "Now go and sit down while I serve the food."

"Of course, milady." Robin winked at her and moved out of the kitchen. Regina releases a breath she really didn’t know she was holding. ‘What the hell did I get myself into?’ Her head resounded with her voice in the form of that question.

"I hope you’re really hungry. I got a little carried away cooking." She placed the food in front
of Robin and he simply genuinely at her. Robin looked happy, unlike that first-time months ago. Sure, he may have been happy to see her, but the woman wasn’t exactly forthcoming with him. Her coldness and stoic demeanor should have been enough to push Locksley away but no. Here they are about to share lunch together like nothing hadn’t really happen. Which they both know it was a lie. Everything happened.

"Truth is I’ve been dying to try Regina Mills cooking again. I still remember the mess you used to make in your parents’ house when you first go the cooking bug in you. I think Cora had to apply for a bigger insurance policy because of you." As a response, Regina rolled her eyes and well Robin being Robin chuckled.

"Well it was your fault. You were the one who challenge me to cook something and I ended up liking so thank you." For some inexplicable reason, Regina sat beside him instead of across from him. Maybe a habit, something that never went away? When they were teen they used to seat like this at Granny’s and at dinner in her house. Doing anything different felt unnatural. Robin didn’t seem to mind it either. He opened the bottle of Merlot and served in both of their glasses before he reached for his own and took a sip. His face light up and her chest felt truly light in that moment.

They talked about everything good that happened to them in the past decade. Regina told him about how her career quickly took off after graduation. She told him about all the international invitations she had to participate in the most of important cases. Robin talked to her about the store growth in Storybrooke and how he wasn’t to give up in expanding to other places. Time passed by slowly, but they didn’t mind. Being in each other’s company felt like old times never really escape them.

"So, did you date anyone?" That question took Regina off guard.

"I only dated one person for a while but after that I want it to be alone. I guess being with someone wasn’t in my plans." Robin gave her a slight nod and served himself a little bit more of wine. He offered some to her and she accepted it.

"Well at least you weren’t completely alone. What was his name?"

"His name was Graham Hunter. Like me he is also a forensic psychologist." Robin licked his lips before another taste of his drink. Regina could tell there was something bothering him.

"Ah. Someone who can understand you completely." Robin simply said. Regina just shook her head.
"Not entirely, but he tried."

"Well at least he tried. There is no shame in effort." Regina straighten her back and pull her chin up looking at Robin with the corner of her eyes.

"I suppose." And in that moment a silence befallen them both, a silence full of tension that could be cut with a knife. After a few moments Robin finally broke the god forsaken silence.

"Do you miss it?"

Regina lifted a brow questioning him.

"I mean do you miss being with someone?"

"Do you miss Marian?" Was Regina’s countered. Robin seemed to ponder on her question long moments before giving her an answer.

"I miss you." He bit his lips. “What I regret of not having Marian in my life is the fact that Roland will grow up without a mother.” Fair enough. “But in the matters of the heart, I miss you.” Not fair.

"Robin don’t…” She kept her hands to herself, words beyond a whisper.

Robin turned to look at her. He took her hands in his, lifted one of them to give a kiss at the palm. His lips were warm, almost like fire that singed off every cell in the palm of her hand. Something deep inside of her came alive. It called out to Robin, to the passion buried under the pain and suffering they’ve both gone through. In that simple action Regina finally understood many love song and poems. She finally understood the degree of missing Robin had gone through all this years but what mattered the most, she finally recognized why it never did work out with Graham.

Her heart, soul and even her passion were here, with Robin.
"I am just saying what is on my mind. Whenever I look at you I get lost in the depths of your eyes. I feel like after all this time I finally feel complete for the first time in my life. I don’t know how I survived not having by my side these past 13 years, but I am quite sure that I could never move on if you were to leave again. Regina, I love you with everything I am and everything I got.” His words always had the effect to move her to places she never even thought her mind and heart could go. The pull to him was too big to be denied. If she continued to put that pause on them, then they will never get to see where things would lead. Deep down she wants that. Robin was always there for her and he tried to be there for her after Daniel’s death, but she was the one to push him away and now she was beginning to regret that decision. She took a deep breath not sure on how to respond to him, but she couldn’t continue staying quiet every time he spoke with his heart on his sleeve. That was perhaps her problem, Regina doesn’t quite know how to deal with feelings.

"You are really important for me don’t forget that.” Regina hard-pressed her lips for a split second. “Truth is I don’t know really what I feel. Well maybe I know but I just don’t know how to tell you. Words like this always came easy to you but you know me and I’m not that good at expressing myself, or at least in the matters of the heart like you said. I just need you to be patience, to wait for me to be comfortable enough to express the secrets of my heart. I know is not in my place to ask this…” Robin shook his head and gave a smile and in that moment, she knew he understood.

"You have all the time in the world. I’ve waited for you thirteen years and I can wait thirteen. But please, don’t leave for that long.” Robin’s short laugh made her heart fluttered. “Stay here where I can see you smile every day, where I can see you play with my son who loves you so much and where I can be able to tell you every day of our lives how important you are to me.” Regina cried. Actual tears cascaded down her cheeks in that moment. In fact, she hasn’t cried like this out of happiness and for a moment she just wanted to get lost in his words and in his eyes, that were bluer than ever.

"Robin, I really don’t deserve you.” She cradled his face trying to muster a smile but failing because the surge of feeling in her chest were getting the best of her.

"Don’t say that. Because it is I who don’t deserve such an amazing person like you.” He closed off the distance between them and kissed her. Sweet and simple at first but after a few seconds the heat turned up.

Robin tangled one of his hands in her hair and the other one on her hip. When Regina parted her lips giving him permission of exploration, his mind railed up and instinctively he pulled her closer deepening the kiss and flushing their bodies together.

After a while of kissing and curious hands exploring carefully they broke apart panting and seeking much needed air.
"Regina..." he whispers against her lips struggling to get his mind straight, "We don’t have to do anything that you don’t want to." He said in a low tone.

Regina’s gaze flickered to his lips.

"Who said I don’t want to?"

And then she slammed her mouth against him giving not time to react properly. After a chaste kiss, Robin found his rhythm once more against her lips. It was a perfect symphony they were playing.

"In that case…" he began. Regina was exploring his neck with outmost preciseness and for a moment he lost his train of thought ‘fuck this’ He stood up and took her in his arms. She automatically wrapped her legs around his waist "God Regina…" he whispered against her neck while moving around the table and walking to his room. When they arrived he closed the door behind them and gently set her down on the bed.

"Are you sure about this?" he asked once more time, and she pulled him to her by the lap of his shirt.

"Really sure." And he didn’t need anything else.

Robin claimed her lips once more. Slowly building up the kiss until it turned so hot that their lips could grow fire in their skin. He buried his head against her neck, devouring every inch of skin he could find there. Biting hard and then soothing her skin with his tongue.

She threw her head back against the pillow moaning aloud and that only fueled Robin even more lust and desire for her. He started to play with the zipper at the side of her dress and when he finally got it down, he looked into Regina’s eyes asking permission to take it off which she obliged.

When he placed his eyes on her again all he could do was admire. The black laced lingerie played perfectly against her olive colored skin. For a moment she felt shy but the look of utter admiration in Robin eyes chased it away. He began to trace kissed down her neck, shoulder and down the valley of her breast.
Regina began to tug on his pants and he gladly took them off exposing to her his whole manhood that was really hard for her. She felt like she was soaring with just feather kisses that all she wanted to know how she would feel once he was inside of her. Robin began the task of unclasping her bra and when he did he gasp at the perfection of her breast

"Simply stunning. Perfect in every way."

He said against her skin and he then took one of her nipples in his mouth. As Robin was biting one of her nipples, it was painfully pleasurable for her to the point for her to moan. With his other hand he twisted and turned her rosy peeks until he released the one in his mouth with a pop and giving it the one in his other hand the same attention.

After he was done with her breast he moved once more to his mouth. Savoring every corner of her mouth was a journey he could take every day for the rest of his life. Regina felt her heart wanting to get out of her chest. Every single of Robin’s caress was filled with love and admiration for her. Regina felt fire in her belly a fire that needed to be put out one way or another.

As in reading her mind one of his hands was making its way down low south. Feathering touches against her thighs until he slowly pulled down her panties and discarded them, completely forgotten.

"You are so wet."

He said biting down her lips before kissing his way down to where his mouth was mostly needed. He first licked her folds and felt how Regina shivered in anticipation. He took her clit in his mouth and began to play with the little erect bundle. Her moans were ringing against his eardrums making Robin go even crazier.

Regina breathed out an ‘Oh god.’ At his perfect administrations. Her senses were on full on and every touch he made only took into more of a frenzy.

"Robin!" she whispered out grabbing his shoulder with such a full force that she was pretty sure it would have bruised but she didn’t care the pleasure she was feeling was filling all her pores.

He pushed one finger into her and then another one. The force of the heighten pleasure was making her grab the sheets. "OH my god." Regina whispered.

Robin curled his fingers inside of her. "Don’t hold your screams back, I want to hear you."
He then began to rub her clit with his palm and that was all necessary to have Regina screaming and panting against him. He moved to kiss her and the taste of herself in his mouth had her moaning, and Robin was drowning her moans with a fiery kiss.

"I want you inside of me Robin…" she breathed out his name and that was enough for him to take his finger away from her and began to position himself against her folds. When he finally entered her they both released a twin groan.

He began to move slowly giving Regina time to adjust to the sensation and his length. After a few slow deep thrust Regina bit her lip when the pure pleasure began to take over. Robin wrapped his arms around her trusting in and out in a faster pace that had Regina panting.

"I love you..." he said against her eyes and quickly biting her earlobe. She released a long moan into the crock of his neck. She began to bit down the pleasure peeking up and she could feel Robin was feeling the same because his pace was faster, hitting that amazing spot inside of her that had her yelling out his name.

"Faster, harder!" she demanded and he was more than welcome to oblige.

Everything became so intense.

"Come with me Regina." He said and with 1, 2, and 3 thrust they both began to feel waves of pleasure that where covering them limb from limb.

Robin collapse on top of her, his head on top of her shoulder and trying to steady his breathing again. He tried to move a little so he won’t be squashing her but she stopped him.

"Don’t move yet." She said sweetly placing a kiss on his lips. He smiled at her and returned the kiss.

"But I’m squashing you." He said lovingly. Regina shook her head.

"I don’t care I just want to feel you close to me for a little while." He placed a kiss on her forehead and turned them over so she would be on top of him.
"How about now?" He asked caressing her face, learning ever single detail about her.

Regina nodded.

"I love it." Regina rested her head against Robin’s chest. After a few moments of silence, she talked. "Umm Robin."

"Yes." He answered.

"There is another reason why I had to quit being part of your case." Robin balanced himself on his elbow furrowing in brow in her direction silently telling Regina to go on. She took a deep breath before saying anything. "it was because I might be in love with you."

Robin’s eyes widen in surprise.

"Well I wasn’t expecting that but it surely made me the happiest man alive." Robin was still in awe with Regina’s words.

"I need time to explore this but the feelings are there." She smiled at him and Robin returned her smile. "Now then…” She began shifting to get more comfortable on Robin’s chest. "I want to invite you to dinner tonight. You, Roland and John."

"And behalf of my family and myself I’ll gladly accept."

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Sheriff at the same moment.

"So, are we all in agreement?" asked Mulan. "Regina decision on changing FP was a wise one."

The board of directors, David and Judge Gold all agreed with Mulan’s words.
"Yes, well I don’t trust her." Keith voiced out.

Mulan raise a brow in amusement. "Doesn’t this make things supposedly easier for you? After all you wanted to begin a substitution process against her."

Keith scoff at her words. "I don’t like surprises."

"Regina is full of surprises and so am I." It was a direct challenge, not only to Keith but everyone in the room. Mulan loved a good challenge and this case was that and so much more. Never did she really expect to meet someone quite like Regina Mills, someone who is three steps ahead at all time, but Mulan was glad she got this experience under her belt. Just thinking about all the good she can do with Regina after proving Robin’s innocence? Mulan was looking forward to the future.

It was obvious that Keith had something poisonous at the tip of his tongue, but he was interrupted – thank God – by the judge, Gold.

"As much as I love hearing people fighting I must go." He moved to stand up. "Before I forget I phone the new FP and he is on his way here." Gold bid his good bye to everyone in the room, including her.

"I guess I better leave there is much to do." Mulan raised from the chair and began gathering her thing as she spoke. "David when you get a chance can you tell Jefferson and Elsa to contact me. There are a few things I would like to discuss with them."

"I will do it tonight. I am having dinner with them."

"Thank you." When she moved to the door it swung opened.

"Can I help you?" came David’s voice.

The stranger smiled. "Yes, I was called here by Judge Gold."

"Ah yes you must be the new FP." Mulan said.
"Yes. My name is Graham Hunter. It’s nice to make you acquaintance."

End Notes

I would love to hear about your thoughts. Don't be afraid to leave your notes and inquires about this story. Thanks for the attention. Have a nice day and or night.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!