INTO THE BREACH

by gwieniechi

Summary

This story takes place immediately after 60 Days. Will their lives be perfect or will there be more battles to separate them? How will they handle the forces that try to keep them apart.
INTO THE BREECH

CHAPTER 1

Deep in the forest around that surrounded the town of Storybrook, a small hole opened allowing dark smoke to come up through the earth. The hole grew slowly in the shadows.

Storybrook woke to a new day. Businesses opened, school busses picked up the children to take them to the Elementary and High Schools. Clean up continued in the park and Main Street after the grandest wedding the town had witnessed in all the years of its existence. The wedding of the Mayor and Sheriff brought almost the entire population of nine hundred twenty seven residents to the festivities.

The town was still protected from the outside world. Anyone who drove through the area would only see forests around them. The only way the residents could leave was with the help of the magic beans that were cultivated in one of the fields nearby. The beans were divided among the residents with a surplus held in for emergencies.

Storybrook relied on the outside world for those items they could not produce or grow. At the present time several filled trailers sat in a large secured parking area. The building materials were for the the upgrades to the hospital, schools, Library, several businesses and Sheriff's station. The sounds of construction could be heard throughout the town.

In the driveway of 108 Miflin Street, the black Mercedes sat, it's trunk opened as the two women loaded their suitcases. The blonde returned to the house as the dark haired woman closed the trunk and wove to the woman in the dark green car that pulled into the driveway.

"Almost ready to go?" The red haired woman asked as she opened the car door.

"Almost. Emma decided to make a last minute bathroom stop before we go. I just have to bring the cases with the sample dubloons for the museum and then we will get on the road."

"Thanks again for letting us stay here while the farm house is being renovated, sis."

"You couldn't stay there with all that work being done and you are not a Granny's Inn type of person."

"My magic is coming back more and more, I could have..."

"No Zolena." Regina cut her off. "If you attempt to use your magic before it is back to full strength, it could cause irreparable harm. It is not worth the price. We are finally the family we were meant to be and I want to keep you around."

"Aw I love you too sis." Zolena said. "So what are you going to do with the money?"

"Emma does not want the money Hook left her so she is putting it to good use upgrading things here in town and putting people to work."

"Gina I have the last two bags." Emma said as she walked out of the door.

"Give me those." Regina ordered. With a wave of her hand the cases were in the back seat of the
car. "Those were too heavy for you to carry." Emma sighed as Regina scolded her.

"This is going to be a long pregnancy." Emma complained.

"It's not only that. Doctor Whale said you still need to take it easy. No heavy lifting."

"You can't fault her for being overprotective little sister, you almost died." Zolena said. "What was in those cases?"

"Some of the dubloons we are taking to the museum. They agreed to buy them for an obscene amount of money."

"I thought the plan was to get rid of the money not get more?"

"It is, but to the outside world, Storybrook does not exist. I have to take the money and open an account outside of town so that I can pay for the supplies and do a few other things I want to do."

"Okay. Is there anything you want me to take care of while you are gone?"

"Continue to oversee the unloading of Hook's ship into the warehouse. Here are the keys." She handed the keyring to Zolena.

"Yeah and make sure the dwarves keep a log of everything they put in there." Emma added.

"I think they are doing that already."

"We had better get going before Emma needs another bathroom break."

"Speaking of that." Emma said and ran back into the house.

Regina and Zolena laughed. "The joys of pregnancy. Sis I hope you both take some time for yourself and not just work. This is your honeymoon after all."

"We will." Regina said as Emma walked back to the driveway. "Ready Princess?"

"Don't blame me. This is partially your fault, your majesty."

"Get in the car." Emma hugged Zolena and kissed the baby before she got into the driver's seat. Regina hugged her sister and tickled the baby. "There is plenty of food. Make yourself at home. We will call you when we get there."

"Get out of here Regina. Drive carefully and don't worry about anything here." She said and waved as Emma backed the car out of the driveway.

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Four hours and several pit stops later they pulled up in front of the the museum. The curator came out of the museum to greet them. He was a small balding man with thick glasses who held out his hand to each of them.

"Dennis Fahey." He said.

"Emma Swan Mills."

"Regina Mills."

With the introductions complete, he looked at them. "You supposedly have several hundred
millions of dollars worth of dubloons you want to sell?"
"There is nothing supposedly about that professor." Emma said angrily.
"Sweetheart the man is just doing his job. He cannot just take our word that the coins are real."
"Thank you Miss Mills."
"It is Mrs. Mills."
"I beg your pardon. Are you two married?"
"We are. Is that a problem?" Emma snapped.
"Professor, my wife is pregnant and hormonal."
"I understand and have absolutely no problem with you being married to each other. I have been
with my husband for thirty nine years. Will it be possible to put the animosity behind us and get
down to business?"
"Absolutely. What do you need to do?" Regina asked.
"We will bring the cases inside, count them in front of you, take a dozen samples from each case to
run some chemical tests. If they are authentic, I am prepared to give you a cashier's check today."
"How long will the tests take?" Emma asked.
"At least two hours for the preliminary round. That will tell us if further tests are needed."
"Further tests?"
"Yes. Those will tell us if the museum owes you more money."
"Is there somewhere we can wait?" Regina asked as Emma's stomach rumbled. "Maybe get
something to eat?"
"And a bathroom." Emma added.
"Certainly." He waved to the two guards that stood by the doors. They walked to the car and
grabbed the cases from the back seat. "Bring them to the lab. Do not open them until we are all
present." He ordered. "Ladies, if you will follow me we can get the paperwork done before we
start. There is a ladies room on the way." He added quickly. They walked into the museum. He
pointed to the ladies room. Regina waited with him for Emma to return. "As I said before, once we
are all present, the guards will open the cases and a count will be done. If we agree on the amount,
I will give you a receipt for the dubloons. We will run the tests."

Emma returned. They headed into the lab where they were handed white lab coats. Fahey nodded
to the guards. The cases were opened and the dubloons counted. Twenty minutes later the count
was finished. The number written down on a piece of paper that was handed to Fahey.

"Do you know how many dubloons were in the cases?"
"There were seven hundred fifty in each case." Emma said.
"That is the amount my people came up with." He said. "Take the samples and run the necessary
tests. Return the rest of the coins to the cases and lock them up." Fahey ordered. Scientists picked
up the samples and went to other tables that contained machines, chemicals and instruments. After the cases were locked up, Fahey led them out of the lab into his office where he gave them a receipt for the dubloons. "I will take you down to the food court. Once the tests are complete I will figure out how much money I will be paying you today." They walked back through the museum to the food court. "I will return when the tests are complete."

They ate lunch held hands and talked while they waited. "If everything checks and we leave here with a check, what do we do next?"

"Our next step will be to go to the bank and deposit the check. Then we can go back to my place."

"Your place? Do you still have an apartment here?"

"Yeah. I have to keep a residence here to keep my driver's license valid. You may not require citizens in Storybrook to have a driver's license, but everywhere else does."

"You never cease to amaze me princess."

"Good." Emma said. "We will need to stop at the store for groceries."

"Or we could get a hotel room for tonight and order something decadent for dinner from Room Service. Tomorrow we can get food and go to your apartment."

"I like that idea. It will give me a chance to get the cleaning service in to spruce up the place."

"Excuse me Mrs. Mills." Fahey said as he walked to their table. They looked up at him. "Would you come with me, please."

They deposited their trays on the rack and followed him to his office. "Please have a seat." He waited for them to sit down. "The preliminary tests turned out better than we hoped. Those dubloons are the real thing and worth a great deal of money. Are you certain you want to sell them?"

"I am." Emma answered.

"May I ask how the dubloons came into your possession?"

"They are not stolen Mr. Fahey. I inherited them when the person who owned them died."

"You don't want to keep them for sentimental reasons?"

"No Mr. Fahey, I do not want them."

"Alright Mrs. Mills. I have the paperwork for the sale here." He pulled a stack of papers forward. "Date of sale." He wrote the date. "Sellers name?"

"Emma Swan Mills."

"Do you have proof you are who you say you are? A driver's license?"

"Sure." Emma pulled her wallet from her pocket and took her license out. She handed it to the curator. "We were just married on Saturday and I haven't been able to get my name changed yet."

"We can accept this. As rotten as my eyesight is I can see that you are the person in this photo. Is this address correct?"
"Yes I have an apartment here in the city."

Fahey wrote for several minutes before he pushed the papers to Emma to sign. "Read these over and if you agree with the amount, sign your name at the bottom of each page."

Emma read the pages with Regina looking over her shoulder. Emma gasped at the amount written down. "Three hundred million? Is this amount correct?"

"That is just the start. After all the tests are completed, there will be additional money coming your way. Are you agreeable with that amount?"

"Yeah, I mean yes I am." Emma signed the papers and handed them back to the curator. He stood and walked around the desk to hand Emma the check. She took it with a shaky hand.

"Mrs. Mills we are here if you have any more items like these that you want to sell."

"Mr. Fahey, I will come to you first with the rest of my inheritance. Do you have some sort of contract I need to sign?"

"I take that to mean you have additional items to sell?"

"I do."

"Are you aware that the museum is currently planning a tribute to the shipping industry, the good and the bad from the 1700's and 1800's?"

"No I wasn't."

"That includes the pirates that plagued the east coast from Maine to Florida for several years. You won't find a lot of information in the History books, but they did exist. I won't bore you with all the details. Suffice it to say we are collecting items from that time period. We are also looking for a working replica of a pirate ship. You wouldn't happen to have one of those would you?"

"Actually I do."

"The museum will pay a handsome price for it." Emma and Regina looked at each other. He noticed the look. "I must not keep you. You no doubt want to deposit the check as soon as possible."

"Why are you planning on stopping payment?" Emma joked.

"Of course not, but this is the city and not everyone here is honest."

"You're right, Mr. Fahey." Emma handed the signed contracts back to him. They all stood, shook hands and left the office. He walked them back to their car. After they drove away, he pulled a phone from his pocket. "I have a line on the items we need to get this project off the ground." He said without preamble and hung up before the questions started. He went back into the museum.

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Emma drove through the city traffic like an expert. Regina kept one hand on the dashboard as the cars around them honked and drove past. Her normal dark complexion, pale. Emma glanced at her as she drove.

"Gina relax. I know what I am doing."

"I trust you Emma it's the idiot drivers out there I am unsure of." Regina said. "I find it hard to
believe that you drove through these streets and lived to tell about it."

"This world is where I lived for the first twenty eight years of my life. I know what I am doing." Emma signalled and changed lanes in front of a bus causing Regina to close her eyes tightly as she waited for the crash that did not come. She kept her eyes closed until she felt another turn and the car came to a stop. "Gina we are here. You can open your eyes now." She said and put a hand on Regina's shoulder.

"Where?" Regina asked as she kept her eyes closed.

"We are at the parking lot next to the bank. There is a very nice hotel next to the parking lot. We will not have to drive anywhere else today."

"Oh okay." Regina opened her eyes and looked around. They got out of the car and walked toward the bank. People rushed and pushed past them. "Damn walking is just as dangerous as driving." She complained as they reached the bank. The door opened for them. Inside there was a high vaulted ceiling with thick marble columns Emma looked around and headed to one of the desks.

"May I help you?"

"Yes, I would like to speak to the bank president about opening an account." Emma said.

The woman looked Emma up and down. "I am sorry the bank president doesn't see potential clients who only want an account to deposit their tax refund check." She said in a haughty manner as she looked at Emma's leather jacket, tee shirt and jeans.

Regina saw Emma stiffen and slapped her hands on the desk. "Excuse me, my wife wants to open an account and not just for a damned refund check." She leaned over into the secretary's space. "I suggest you get off your Gucci covered ass and get the damn President out here."

"Gina, hold on." Emma pulled the check from her jacket pocket and shoved it into the woman's face. "Does this look like a tax refund check? If you do not want our business say so now and we will find another bank that does."

The secretary's eyes widened at the numbers on the check. "My sincere apologies, ma'am. I will call Mr. Wilkins. If you will just have a seat. She pointed to the row of chairs, picked up the phone and pushed a button. "Mr. Wilkins, I have two potential depositors who would like to talk to you." She listened to the president. "No sir, I really think you should meet with them. Why? Sir there are an awful lot of zeros on the check." She hung up the phone. "He will be with you shortly."

The door opened. The secretary pointed to the two women. He walked to them. "Ladies, I am Richard Wilkins the bank president. I am told you want to open an account? Please come in."

"Before we do this Mr. Winkie,..."

"The name is Wilkins." He interrupted.

"Whatever, I want your secretary to come into this meeting also."

"Certainly. Marcie, come in here."

She rose from the desk and followed them into the office and closed the door.
The large office suited the man and the bank. Thick carpeting muffled their footsteps. Dark paneling covered the walls that contained pictures of past bank presidents. Two comfortable chairs sat in front of the massive cherry desk. Even without windows the office was brightly lit. A large conference table with twelve chairs sat on one the side of the office. The opposite side held an oversized bar that contained a large coffee urn with a built in refrigerator.

The President motioned for them to sit in the chairs in front of the desk. He waited for Regina and Emma to sit before he did. The secretary remained standing unsure of why the poorly dressed woman wanted her there.

"Now then, young lady, what can the bank and I do for you today?"

"First of all you can teach your secretary some manners on how to talk to potential customers." Emma said as she crossed her denim covered legs. "She took one look at how I was dressed and assumed that I was just a nobody who asked to see the head honcho. Her comment about only wanting an account to deposit my tax refund check was uncalled for."

"That is very true, Miss."

"It is Mrs. Mrs. Emma Swan Mills. This is my wife, Regina Mills. I am not young lady, sweetheart or any of those other insulting names men like you tend to use." Regina sat rigid next to Emma and beamed with pride as she handled the meeting. "It wasn't until she saw the amount of the check that grudgingly gave me just the tiniest amount of respect. I spent my life having people look down at me because I didn't come from money. I did not grow up having everything handed to me by white gloved butlers. Every thing, every single damn thing I had in life, I worked for. Now I am in a position to help others. I want this bank to help me do that. In all fairness, I have to tell you that I am pregnant, hormonal and licensed to carry a gun." She watched the president stiffen. "Which I do not have on me at this time or all your fancy machines out there would have gone bonkers." The man visibly relaxed. "Now that we have the bullshit out of the way, can we get down to business?"

"Mrs. Mills, I would like to apologize for my earlier attitude. It was uncalled for."

"Apology accepted. Now pull up a chair, sit your designer covered ass down and do what all good secretaries do and take notes. Or would you prefer to be called an Administrative Assistant?"

Regina put a hand on Emma's arm. "Sweetheart, I think you made your point. There is no reason to enter into bully territory."

Emma took a deep breath. "You're right Gina." She looked at the secretary. "I apologize. Would you join us and keep a record of this meeting?"

The President stood. "Shall we move to the conference table? Marcie would you get us coffee, please?"

"Coffee would be great." Emma said. After a nudge from Regina added, "Thank you."
Marcie walked to the sideboard and returned with a tray that contained a carafe of coffee, cream and sugar in silver containers. She poured each a cup of steaming coffee and sat down in front of a computer.

"Mister Wilkins, we are prepared to do a great deal of business with this bank. If you can set everything up the way we need it."

"If it is legal, we will do whatever you need."

"It is legal." Regina said. "We went over everything with our bank back home."

"Why not use them instead of us?" He asked.

"That bank is just a small town bank and is not equipped to handle the amount of money we will be depositing." She handed him a folder with the information. "We want to set up a sort of foundation."

"Miss Barbara's Safe Haven." He read. "There was a Miss Barbara who ran a diner on Seventh Street and took in street kids. Helped to keep them out of trouble. She was quite the institution in this city."

"I know. I was one of those street kids that she helped." Emma said. "I want to continue her legacy."

"The diner is still there. Two of those kids now own and operate it. I commend you and your plan. Now let's see what we have to do." He read the pages. "Auto bill pay, line of credit, yes, we can set this up without any trouble. Whose names will be on the account?"

"Mine, Regina's and one or two others that I will bring in as soon as they are on board."

"Alright. We will get all the paperwork done. Marcie, inform the head teller that we will need ten thousand in cash."

Two hours later, they walked out of the bank. Regina walked across the parking lot to the hotel while Emma took the car to the Valet Parking area to unload their suitcases. The doorman loaded a luggage cart and pushed it into the hotel lobby. Emma handed him a tip. He touched the brim of his hat in thanks.

At the desk, the man handed the bellhop the room key. "Room 2017." He said.

"Yes sir. Would you follow me ma'am?"

They walked behind the luggage trolley into the elevator. The ride was quiet. When the doors opened, they followed their luggage to their room. He opened the door and let them enter before he pushed the trolley into the room. They looked around the well appointed suite as the young man took their luggage into the bedroom. Emma tipped him before he quietly left.

"The honeymoon suite babe?"

"Of course. We are on our honeymoon after all."

"I like it."

"I have an ulterior motive my dear. I plan of having my wicked wicked way with you." Regina pulled Emma into her arms and kissed her.
"Wow, if that is a preview of what is to come, I like your plan."

"It most certainly is. If you tell me what the Hell you thought you were doing at the bank earlier." Regina demanded.

"We were setting up an account."

"No I am talking about you stomping all over that woman."

Emma pulled away from Regina. "Did you see how she looked at me? Of hear how she spoke to me before I pulled that check out of my jacket? Most of my life people have looked down on me because I was a foster kid. Do you know what I hated the most about changing families? Having all my clothes put into a garbage bag as if my life and what little I had was garbage. I worked my ass off to leave all that behind me."

"Today that woman brought all that back. I thought I had outgrown that, but today," she sobbed. "Today I was that foster kid all over again. The kid that no one loved, whose clothes smelled like garbage bags."

"Oh sweetheart, I am so sorry. I didn't know."

"It was one of those things I tried to forget. For many years, I was able to forget."

"Until today."

"Yeah until today." Emma repeated. She went to the couch and sat down. She pushed her hair out of her face.

Regina went into the bedroom and opened the suitcases. She pulled out Emma's sleep clothes and a special outfit she had purchased for tonight. Inside the large bathroom, Regina turned on the taps to fill the large round tub. She added bubbles to the water. With the tub filling, Regina returned to the living room and knelt down in front of Emma. Regina unzipped one boot and pulled it and the sock off before she moved to the other foot.

"What are you doing?"

"Shh no questions. In fact no talking at all. " Regina removed Emma's jacket and tee shirt, before she stood to pull Emma to her feet. She unzipped Emma's jeans and struggled to pushed the tight denim over the slender hips. Emma stood in just her underwear. Regina took her hand and led her into the bathroom. Undoing Emma's bra she dropped it to the floor before pushing the tiny scraps of her lace underwear down. "Get into the tub." Regina ordered. She helped Emma into the steaming water. Quickly shedding her own clothes, she got in behind Emma and pulled her backwards until she rested against her chest. "Put your head against my shoulder and let me take care of you." Regina picked up the washcloth and soap and proceeded to wash Emma. She passed the cloth up one arm, over her chest where she felt the pale nipples harden, and down the other arm. Regina smiled and dropped the cloth into the water and used her hands to finish the task. She heard Emma sigh in contentment. Regina hand travelled down the flat stomach and found or thought that it was a little less flat.

"That feels so good." Emma murmured.

"Good. That was my plan."

"We should stay here all night."

"That would not be a good idea."
"Why?"

"For starters the water would get cold."

"We could add more hot water."

"We would get all wrinkly."

"Those wrinkles actually serve a purpose."

"They do?"

"Yep. It has something to do with making things less slippery or being able to grab things under water or something like that."

"Interesting. Well how about this reason, we can't order room service from here in the tub."

"Oh there is that."

"Or like I said before, I plan on having my way with you. What I plan to do cannot be done in a slippery tub full of soapy water."

"That is an even better reason babe." Emma said as her good humour returned.

They remained in the tub until all the bubbles were gone and the temperature cooled. Regina's hands traced circles over Emma's breasts causing her to shiver.

"Cold sweetheart?"

"A little, but that is not what caused the shiver." She felt Regina laugh silently behind her.

Emma's stomach gave a loud growl. "Damn stomach." They laughed. Emma turned and knelt between Regina's legs.

"Em can I make a suggestion without you getting upset with me?"

"I can't make any promises, but go ahead."

"What would you say to staying here instead of going to your place?"

"Don't you think we would be comfortable there?"

"Not at all but does your place have a tub like this?"

"No just a small shower."

"Or a king sized bed?"

"Just a regular size one."

"How about room service?"

"Nope." Emma said. "Maybe we should stay here."

"Good idea sweetheart." They laughed again until Emma's stomach rumbled again. Regina slapped Emma's backside.
"Hey." Emma protested.

"Time to get out and get that beast inside you fed." She poked Emma's stomach.

Emma stood and held out a hand to help Regina stand. They wrapped their arms around each other as their lips met.

"We are not making a lot of progress here." Emma said.

"No we are not." Regina replied as they kissed again. "I guess it is up to me to make the first move." Regina stepped out of the tub and wrapped a large towel around Emma before she wrapped a second one around herself. "Now I can concentrate."

Emma opened the tub drain. "Are you calling me a distraction?"

"I am. When I see you naked, all rational thoughts leave my head. My mouth goes dry and sometimes I find it hard to breathe because you are so beautiful."

"Wow. I knew how I feel when I see you naked. I had no idea you were going through the same things."

"We are quite the pair. Here put on this robe." Regina held the robe so that Emma could slip her arms in. Regina reached around her to tie the robe closed. She put a second robe on. "Now let's go see what is on the room service menu."

"Do you think they have grilled cheese and onion rings?" Regina turned quickly and held her arm against the door frame blocking Emma from leaving. She gave her a look. "Maybe not."

"Good decision, princess."

They walked into their living room. "Gina will the day ever come when you don't give me grief over my diet?"

"It might, but as long as you are carrying my baby, you can count on a great deal of grief."

"I love you and I love how you love our baby as much as I do."

"I love you both very much." Regina said and kissed Emma. She opened the room service menu. "What do you feel like eating? Italian, seafood, chicken, pork, steak, turkey or any combination. They even have something called surf and turf. Do I want to know what that is?"

"It is some sort of seafood like lobster and steak. It sounds good."

"It does. Is that what you want?" Emma nodded.

"With a loaded baked potato and broccoli if they have it."

Regina picked up the room phone and punched in the number for room service. "Yes this is room 2017. Can we have two surf and turf, with loaded baked potato. Do you have broccoli? Hold on." She covered the phone. "They don't have broccoli. What about a side salad?"

"Okay with ranch dressing."

"And two salads with ranch dressing. Medium on both the steaks. Oh and a bottle of white wine with two glasses." She waited while the order was read back to her. "That is correct. Could you add strawberries with melted chocolate to that order? Thirty minutes? That is fine."
"Two glasses for wine, Gina?"

"Yes, I believe we both deserve a drink to celebrate."

"What are we celebrating?"

"How about the fact that our marriage is out in the open, that we don't have to hide our wedding rings any more. We defeated the curse, survived an attempt on our lives and are now in the honeymoon suite of this fantastic hotel. You were able to set up the account the way you wanted it and you are pregnant with our baby, my baby. Do you need more reasons to celebrate?"

"You do realize that is the second time you have said that this baby is yours."

"Because it is. Blue confirmed it."

"When did that happen?"

"This first time was right after you were shot. She said the baby's aura was a combination of yours and mine with just a tiny percent of the men who took part in the transfer."

"So you impregnated me." Regina nodded. "That means you are the baby's father."

"I would rather not be a father. We can both be the baby's mothers just like we are with Henry." She placed a hand on Emma's stomach.

"I like that better too."

Their food arrived on a linen covered cart. The waiter transferred the covered plates to the dining table, opened the wine and poured two glasses. Regina tipped him.

"When you are finished, just put everything on the cart and push it into the hall." He left the room. They sat down to eat. "Who are the other people you told Mr. Wilkins you wanted on the account?"

"I am not sure yet. I asked a friend to scope out buildings and find someone to manage everything."

"Do you trust this friend?"

"I do. I used to work for her. I think you will like her. I hope you like her."

Regina lifted her glass. "Then here is to us and this newest adventure we are embarking on."

Emma touched her glass to Regina's. "To us and our next adventure."

Dinner was finished with the last of the strawberries they fed each other between many strawberry chocolate flavored kisses and finished a second glass of wine.

"I have one more surprise for you, sweetheart."

"You do?"

"Yes so you put all the dishes on the cart and put it in the hall while I get your surprise ready." Reigna pulled Emma into her arms and kissed her. Their tongues danced for several heartbeats. Regina put her hand inside Emma's robe to fondle her breast. She felt the nipple harden.
"Wow you expect me to think after a kiss like that?" Emma whispered her breath tight in her chest.

"I believe you are up to the task." Regina left Emma trying to catch her breath. Rousing herself, Emma tossed the empty plates onto the cart before she pushed it into the hall. She watched the bedroom door. Then ran to the small bathroom. The bedroom door was still closed when she returned to the living room.

The door opened. Emma looked at Regina standing just inside the room. The sight took Emma's breath away.
Chapter 3

Sorry for the delay in posting this chapter. Real life kicked my keister the last two weeks.

CHAPTER 3

"Regina." Was all Emma was able to get out.

"Do you like your surprise?" Regina asked. The sheer black robe worn over an equally sheer black bra and pantie set along with black three inch heels and stockings took Emma's breath away. Emma's mouth hung open at the vision before her. She tried to swallow but her mouth were dry. She picked up the wine glass and quickly swallowed the contents.

"You are an incredibly beautiful woman." Emma finally was able to get out.

"I take that to mean that you like my surprise."

Emma walked towards Regina on legs that were very shaky. "Was there any doubt that I would?"

"Nope." Regina answered. "So how about you come into the bedroom and show me how much you like what you see."

Emma pulled Regina into her arms and kissed her. With their lips fused, Emma took a step forward forcing Regina to take a step backward. She took another step, then another until Regina felt her legs touch the bed. Emma broke the kiss and took a step backwards, holding Regina's arms away from her body to take in every inch of the body before her. Starting with the dark chocolate eyes, to the full red lips to Regina's chest. Even without being touched, Regina felt her nipples harden under Emma's scrutiny. She felt moisture seep on to the tiny scrap of lace that made up the panties as Emma's eyes continued the long slow journey down her body. Emma's eyes finished the journey and started back up Regina's body.

With less an inch difference in their height, the heels made Emma look up into Regina's eyes. She stepped forward and claimed Regina's lips. Her tongue traced the outline of the plump lips. Regina's mouth opened to grant Emma's entrance. Their tongues danced. Emma's hands traveled up Regina's arms to her shoulders and slowly down to her breasts. She kneaded the soft flesh and felt the nipples harden more.

Emma's hands moved back up to Regina's shoulders where she pushed the robe off the tanned shoulders. It fell softly to the floor. She sat Regina on the bed and knelt down to remove first one shoe and stocking before she moved to the second. She threw the stockings behind her. Kissing her way up each leg until she reached the apex. She could smell the intoxicating scent of Regina's arousal and could see the wet area. Emma stood and pulled Regina to her feet where she unhooked the bra and tossed it with the stockings. Taking first one tip into her mouth while her fingers teased the other. She switched breasts. Paying loving attention to the tanned breasts, Emma dropped first one hand then the other to release the silver snaps on the side of the lace underwear. They too fell to the floor.

A moan of pleasure escaped from Regina as she felt Emma's hand travelled down to her center. She felt her knees weaken when Emma's finger brushed over her clit. Emma stopped her assault on Regina's breasts and looked into the dark eyes.
"So wet for me babe." Emma said and stuck her finger into her mouth. She licked every bit of essence from her finger.

"I don't know how much longer I will be able to stand sweetheart." Regina said.

Emma smiled and helped Regina onto the bed. "I like this view better my beautiful wife."

"You my darling have way to much clothing on. Lose the robe princess." Regina ordered.

Emma undid the tie on the robe and slowly removed it. She tossed it onto the chair by the bed. Climbing onto the bed, she knelt by Regina's side. Her eyes travelled very slowly from Regina's eyes to her feet and back up to the eyes that were black with need. Emma leaned over to capture Regina's lips, while her hand traced a figure eight from one breast to the other. The figure grew smaller with each pass until her hands concentrated on just touching the hardened nipples. She teased the peaks into hardening more. Her mouth left Regina's and zeroed in on her breasts. She captured one nippled that she licked and nipped. Regina moaned with pleasure. Emma switched breasts and bit again while her fingers tweaked the other.

She felt Regina's hands in her hair, encouraging her to continue. After several minutes of feasting on Regina's breasts, she felt the slight pressure on the top of her head letting her know Regina wanted her to move downwards. Emma resisted leaving the breasts she loved, but let her hand travel down over Regina's flat stomach to the neatly trimmed hair and the copious fluid she found. She circled the clit slightly. Regina's hips raised off the bed hoping to add pressure to ease her need. Emma removed her hand.

"Please don't tease." Regina pleaded. Emma looked up into Regina's eyes, not stopping her torment of the ever hardening nipples. She felt more pressure on her head. With a final lick, Emma left the breasts and moved slowly down Regina's body. Her tongue swirled into the small indentation of Regina's navel. She felt the pressure again. Moving between Regina's thighs she lay and parted the folds to expose the hardened pearl. She blew gently on the clit and felt Regina shiver. Emma traced her finger through the moisture to Regina's opening. One finger slipped in easily. She moved her hand in and out. She added a second finger then a third as she continued the movement. The silken walls surrounded her fingers. Knowing she had teased Regina enough Emma lowered her head and licked the moisture. Emma licked over the sensitive bud several times before pulling it into her mouth. Holding it gently between her teeth she flicked her tongue rapidly over the bundle of nerves. She felt Regina's hips move and heard the sharp intake of breath. Curling her fingers she applied pressure to the nerves behind the clit and increased the speed and pressure of her tongue.

"Don't stop Em." Regina gasped. "If you love me please don't stop."

Emma felt the first flutter of Regina's impending climax and continued her double assault. Pushing against the nerves she felt Regina tense as her climax exploded. Regina gripped the bed covering as Emma continue her assault. Regina was gasping for breath. Emma slowed her movements to let Regina relax before taking her over again.

"Apples." Regina managed to squeak out. Emma stopped and rested her head on Regina's thigh. Her fingers still buried inside Regina. The contractions of the smooth walls continued for several heartbeats. Emma knew that Regina loved it when she remained inside after she climaxed. She waited for the subtle hint that she could removed her fingers. The shift came and Emma moved, yet she remained between Regina's thighs. Regina touched Emma's hand that rested on her stomach. "Come here sweetheart."

Emma moved up next to Regina and took her into her arms. She felt Regina's tears wet her shoulder. "Hey I hope those are happy tears, Gina."
Regina took a shaky breath. "I am sorry."

"For what babe? For wetting my shoulder?" Regina shook her head no. "How many times have you held me when I cried?"

"It's just that I thought about how close I came to losing you. I don't think I could go on if you died."

"I didn't die, Gina. I am right here with you."

"Promise me."

"What?"

"That you won't put yourself into harm's ways trying to protect me again."

"I don't know if I can promise that. If I see you in danger, my first thought will always be to protect you."

"It is not just your life anymore. You have to think about the baby. And Henry and you parents. They would be devastated if you died."

"You fight dirty, your majesty."

"I have to when dealing with a very stubborn, hard headed princess." Regina lifted her head and looked into Emma's eyes. "Would you at least promise to be more careful?"

"That I can do."

"Now princess," Regina turned them over. "Let's see what I can do to make you feel as good as you made me feel."

---------------------------------

"What time are we meeting your friend?" Regina asked as they sat down for breakfast.

"Eleven. Gus said to go right to her office."

"Her office?"

"Yeah. Her full name is Ferguson Kathleen O'Donnell."

"That is a mouthful."

"That is why she goes by Gus."

"Understandable. Don't forget to take that stuff Blue gave you."

"Already took it."

"Do you trust this Gus person?"

"I do. She is the one who took me out of that dance club, trained me and gave me a good job. She taught me how to be a skip tracer. She saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself. She taught me self respect and how to believe in myself."

"Then I trust her also sweetheart."
"Thank you Gina."

"You're welcome. Now eat your breakfast."

------------------------

The three storied building sat on the corner just outside the affluent section of the city, yet still in the mainstream of activity. The red brick blended in with buildings around it. The police station was next door. The two buildings separated by the large parking lot and impound lot.

Rather than taking the car they hailed a taxi to take them from the hotel to Gus's office. Regina kept a firm grip on Emma's hand as the taxi moved in and out of traffic. The driver looked them in the mirror.

Your friend is not a fan of city driving?"

"No not too much." Emma answered.

"First time in the city?"

"No." Emma turned to Regina. "We are almost there."

"Does everyone here drive like demons?"

"Live here long enough you get used to it. You are just used to the slower pace of home."

"That is for sure."

The cab pulled over to the curb in front of the building. "That will be fifteen fifty." The driver said.

Emma handed him a twenty as the cab moved in and out of traffic. Regina kept a firm grip on Emma's hand as the taxi moved in and out of traffic. The driver looked them in the mirror.

"Yeah come on in. There is no need to take the damn door off its hinges."

"She is not usually that angry sounding." Emma said and opened the door. The woman behind the desk was in her mid fifties. Short black hair that was sprinkled with grey framed a face that was unlined and showed off her bright blue eyes.

"About Goddamn time you got here Swan. I am not getting any younger ya know."

"Hi Gus."

"Seven years, "Gus said. "Seven goddamned long ass years and all you can say is hi Gus. Get your ass over here and give me a proper hello."

Emma walked over to the woman as she stood shakily behind the desk. She pulled Gus into her arms. When they separated, Emma noticed the crutches on the floor. "What is with the crutches?"

"Small injury. Who is that beauty you came in with?"

"That beauty is my wife. Regina Mills, this the Ferguson Kathleen O'Donnell. Gus, Regina Mills."

They shook hands. "Regina don't ever use that pretentious name. Call me Gus."

"Please to meet you Gus. Emma told me a great deal about you."
"I wish I could say the same, but Emma took her damn sweet time waking up to which side of the fence she belonged on."

"You knew?"

"Oh honey, I knew from the very first time I saw you in that grubby little dance club. I was just waiting for you to catch up with the fact and stop denying the truth."

"She is very stubborn." Regina said which earned her a dirty look from Emma.

"You two are ganging up on me so knock it off." Emma protested. "Truth time Gus, what is with the crutches?"

"I broke my leg." Gus admitted.

"What happened?"

"I didn't get out of the way in time and a skipper shot me. The bullet broke my femur." Gus said.
"That is why I decided to sell the business."

"What?"

"Swan I am closer to sixty then I am to fifty. I decided that I am too damn old to be chasing skips any longer."

"What will you do now?"

"I gave that a lot of thought after you called two weeks ago."

"And?"

"Well you asked me to look into properties around here that could be turned into a refuge for street kids. I found one that fits what you are looking for. I also think I found you a manager for the place."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, me. I need a new profession. I know all the tricks that kids use and how to keep them on the right path. You didn't turn out too badly."

"Hey." Emma protested.

"She is right sweetheart."

"Hey." Emma said again. "Stop ganging up on me. I am pregnant and hormonal."

"You're pregnant? Emma that is fantastic."

"Thank you. Can we get back to talking about business? Where is this building? Does it need fixing and upgrades?"

"It is located right next to Miss Barbara's Diner. The building used to be an S.R.O. Needs a bit of work to bring it up to code, but the building itself is sound"

"What is an S.R.O?" Regina asked.
"That means single room occupancy. " Emma explained. "The rooms are small with a very small bathroom. Just big enough for one person. The rooms usually had a bed, dresser and a small desk that doubled as a table and a very tiny refrigerator."

"Is it for sale?"

"It is. The owner died a few months ago and his son wants nothing to do with it."

"When can we see it?"

"We have an appointment with the realtor in thirty minutes."

"Can we walk there?" Regina asked.

"For the two of you, certainly. For me," she pointed to the crutches, "not so much."

"Regina is not a fan of city drivers and traffic." Emma explained.

"The traffic will not be as bad where we are heading."

"Can we just get the car ride over?" Regina asked causing Gus to laugh and Emma to kiss her.

-------------------------------

Blue hurried from the convent followed by several fairies. They ran into the forest after the call came about the fissure opening. The large fissure was smoking when they arrived. Dark acrid smoke poured from the hole. They all covered their faces against the smoke.

The head fairy walked around the perimeter of the hole and returned to the group. "Has anyone called David?"

"Yeah he will be here shortly."

"What caused this Blue?" A fairy asked.

Blue shook her head." I do not know. We need to put up a protection barrier until we can find out what is going on." Blue ordered.

The fairies moved around the hole and pulled out their wands. Blue chanted with the fairies following her lead. A dome formed and covered the hole preventing the smoke from escaping.
Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

David walked around the dome that covered the fissure with Blue at his side. Black smoke poured out of the fissure and filled the inside of the dome, until they could barely see the opening.

"You have no idea where this came from?" David asked.

"No idea at all. I will tell you that I am afraid that anything that comes through will not be good for any of us." Blue answered.

"Are you certain?"

"I felt the evil before we put the dome into place."

"I there any chance the dome was erected before anything came through?"

"I do not know David."

"This would have to happen now with Regina and Emma out of town."

"Will you tell them?"

"Not yet."

"They would want to know." Blue argued.

"They are on their honeymoon. After all the trouble of the past few months, they deserve some time alone to relax and regroup. If Emma calls tonight, I will ask how long they will be gone and take it from there."

"They need to be told, David."

"Tell them what? Until we know more about this I would rather not alarm them for nothing. We don't even know if anything has come through or will come through."

"I think you are wrong David but for now I will defer to you." Blue said.

"We will keep guards posted and warn everyone to stay away from this area until we know more." David said. "I will ask Ruby to increase the number of Guardians here."

"That fairies and I will help."

They talked to the fairies and deputies before they left.

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The outside of the building looked sturdy and well tended. The inside told another story. Peeling wallpaper, dirty threadbare carpets and broken furniture littered the lobby. Many of the windows were broken and boarded. The air was musty smelling. An old fashioned board hung behind the scarred registration desk. The board was filled with room keys and mail slots. The realtor stood off to the side and let them wander around the ground floor.
"There is an apartment for the manager behind the sign in desk." He said. "There is a laundry room in the basement, and a kitchen that has not been used in many years. The walls and floors are sound. It will take some work to get the building up to city codes. I have the city inspectors and the board of health reports as well as estimates of the costs to get this building into shape where you can rent the rooms."

"How long has it been since the last tenant left?" Regina asked.

"Two months."

"I am surprised that no one has tried to break in. With all the homeless in the city, I would have expected to find squatters."

"During the summers, the homeless prefer to be outside. But with the colder weather coming that would have changed. The broken windows are a sign of the degenerates getting ready to move in."

"What did you call them?" Emma snapped.

"You know the type, those dirty drunks that live in all the alleys."

Regina noticed Emma's eyes blazing and put a restraining hand on her shoulder. "Mr. Jackson, I would suggest that you refrain from making statements like that. Unless of course you want to have your tongue removed by my pregnant, hormonal wife." He held up his hands in surrender and swallowed. "Can we see the inside of the rooms"

"Certainly, they should all be open. I will wait here while you look around. You don't need me hovering."

"Good choice." Emma said. As they walked down the hallway, the realtor pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the sweat off his face.

They spent an hour walking through the downstairs, checking on the windows that were not broken, banging on walls, opening faucets. Gus made copious notes on the pad she carried to ask the realtor questions. When they returned to the lobby he was talking on the phone.

"Yes sir. I am here with them now."

"Do you think they will put in a bid?"

"They might. Hold on sir they are coming now." He held the phone away from his ear. "Well ladies what do you think?"

Gus handed the pad to Emma. We are interested, but have a few questions first."

"That's great. I have the owner on the phone. Let me put it on speaker for you."

"Forget it. I will not do business with a voice on the phone. Where is he?"

"Tell her I am just outside the city." He handed the phone to Emma when she signalled for it.

"Who is this?" She demanded.

"My name is William Eckert."

"Well Mr. Eckert, if you want to sell this hotel, you will meet us at the restaurant next door in one hour and we can talk business."
"Now hold on Miss."

"It's Mrs. Mrs. Emma Swan Mills."

"Yeah is that supposed to mean something to me? How do I know this is a legitimate offer. I am a very busy man and cannot just drop everything for a meeting in the city."

"You will if you want to sell this property." She handed the phone back to the realtor. "Let's go eat, I'm hungry. You too Jackson." Emma walked past him followed closely by Regina and Gus. He stuffed papers into his briefcase and hurried after them, stopping long enough to lock the door and security gate.

The diner was a throwback to the seventies. Old fashioned booths lined the walls. A row of table ran down the center of the room and a long counter with red plastic covered stools took up another section of the room. The kitchen opened up to the dining area. The floor was black and white checkered tiles. The same colors were on the walls. Each table boasted a small jukebox.

They sat at a booth in the center of the wall. The waitress brought them water and menus. Emma looked around the room.

"This place has not changed at all."

"Really?" Regina asked. "This place makes Granny's look modern."

"Yeah. It looks the same as when I had a bed in the basement."

"You were one of Miss Barbara's street kids?"

"Yeah I was. Got a problem with that?" He shook his head no. "Then give me the list of repairs that need to be done to bring the hotel up to code."

He reached into his briefcase and pulled out several papers. Emma flipped through the reports.

"All this has to be repaired or upgraded?" Regina asked as she looked over Emma's shoulder.

"If the building is changing hands it does. Had Mr. Eckert decided to keep the hotel open, the repairs and upgrades would not have to be done. The hotel was built before those codes were put into effect. Therefore the hotel was grandfathered. With the sale the hotel loses the grandfather waiver. The hotel now needs the repairs and upgrades in order to obtain the necessary permits to reopen the hotel to paying guests."

"If I don't accept money for the rooms, I wouldn't have to make the repairs?" Emma asked.

"I am afraid those still have to be made."

"Ok. Gus do you know any trustworthy contractors who can handle these repairs?" She handed the papers to Gus.

"I do and so do you Emma."

"I do?"

"Do you remember Rowen Duquense?"

"Yeah, I think so. She was a year older that me. She was the one who got me into Miss Barbara's."
"She has her own construction company and does a lot of repairs and upgrades around the city."

"Is she available?"

"Let me call her and see if she can meet us." Gus pulled out her phone and left the table.

"I have three estimates from reputable contractors." He pulled more papers from his briefcase.  "There is no need to bring in outsiders."

"Really Mr. Jackson?" Regina asked.

"Really Mrs. Mills. I mean how good can some former street kid be?"

Regina felt Emma tense next to her. She placed a calming hand on Emma's arm. "Before you say anything take a deep breath or several to calm down." She said quietly in Emma's ear. Emma stared at the realtor until he became uncomfortable with the scrutiny. His hands started to shake with fear that the blonde woman would come over the table at him. "Mr. Jackson," Regina spoke before Emma could. "I will tell you how good a former street kid can be. Emma managed to pull herself up and become the Sheriff of the town we live in. She is also the head of our Emergency Management Department and sits on the Town Council. She is loved and respected by every citizen including being married to the Mayor. If I were you I would apologize to my wife before one of us reaches down your throat and pulls your heart out"

He tried to swallow and found his mouth dry. He reached for the water glass and took a long drink before he spoke. "I do heartily apologize ma'am and commend you for having the strength to rise above..."

"Don't go overboard, Jackson."

Gus returned to the table and noticed the tension between the three people. "Did something happen?"

"Just a little attitude adjusting," Regina said.

"Rowen will be here shortly."

The waitress returned to take their orders. Regina rolled her eyes when Emma ordered her usual grilled cheese and onion rings, but smiled when she added a salad and strawberry milkshake to her order. The waitress left with their orders. Regina rubbed her thumb over Emma's wrist to help her calm down. The door opened to admit a young woman as they meals were being served. She had close cropped hair and a deep tan. She wore sturdy work boots and coveralls with the sleeves rolled up to reveal toned muscular forearms. Gus waved her over. Emma stood and hugged her old friend.

"Swan. Damn girl you turned out fine and cleaned up good."

"You look great, yourself, Ro. Let me introduce you to my wife, Regina Mills."

"You finally came to your senses."

"You too? What the Hell was it written on my forehead or something?"

"No writing, but damn girl, you put out some really serious vibes back then." She held out her hand to Regina. "Please to meet you. I have to hand it to you Swan, she is definitely a keeper."
"I agree." Emma replied winking at Regina. "Sit, have you had lunch yet?"

"Yeah, but I won't turn down a cup of coffee." She pulled a chair to the end of the booth and sat down. "Gus said you might have some work for me?"

"Yeah, if we can come to an agreement with the owner."

"Which place?"

"The S.R.O next door. It needs a great deal of work to bring it up to code."

"That is a good building. Do you have a list of the upgrades and repairs?" Emma handed her the papers. "Also the estimates the realtor gave me." Rowen looked over the papers while they ate. "Any chance I get get inside to take a look around?"

"If an agreement can be reached with the owner." The realtor said.

"Okay. Let me tell you Swan, these two estimates are not worth the paper they are printed on. This one," she tore the paper in half, "is under investigation for using substandard materials. This one," she tore the second paper, "is on his way to prison for bribing city officials to get city work. That leaves this one. Even a blind alley cat can tell this estimate is padded."

They all looked at the realtor. "Hey every contractor pads their estimates. In the event that more extensive repairs are needed they can be done."

"I don't." Rowen said. "I don't need or want to cheat my customers."

"Then you are a fool girl."

"Possibly, but I am an honest fool. I know that everything I have earned has been earned honestly through fair dealing and hard work. Tell me Jackson, how much of a kickback do you expect from these so called contractors?" She tore the third paper and tossed all the papers onto his plate.

Regina looked at Emma. "I like your friend. Was she always like this?"

"Honest? Hell yeah. When we were younger, she always said that the only thing that was truly her own was her name. She wanted to make sure that name was equated with being honest."

"If he tried to scam us with the repairs, what else is he scamming us with?"

"Good question. Let's find out." Emma said. "Mr. Jackson, how much is the asking price on the hotel?"

"One million six."

"Rowen, do you think that building is worth one million six?"

"It is possible. I will know more when I can see what the inside looks like."

"We took pictures while we were there. Will that help?"

"Not a whole lot, but it is better than nothing." She took Emma's phone and scrolled through the pictures.

The realtor sat afraid to say anything to the women. He silently hoped he would still collect his commission. The door behind them opened again to admit a man in his fifties with thinning grey
hair and stocky frame. The buttons over his stomach strained against the bulk.

Gus turned and smirked. "That figures. That is William Eckert, he is supposed to be a lawyer but is really just an ambulance chaser."

"A what?" Regina asked.

"I will explain it later, babe." Emma said.

Jackson stood up when he approached the table. "This had better be worth my time, Jackson. I was at a very important meeting."

"I could be sir. Mr. Eckert, you know, Gus. This is Emma Swan Mills, and Regina Mills."

"Ah you are the one who ordered me here."

"I am." Emma extended her hand to shake hers. She tried not to cringe at the weak sweaty hand took hers. Emma resisted the urge to wipe her hand on her pants leg. After seeing Emma's reaction, Regina nodded to him.

"This is Rowen Duquense." Rowen grasped his hand firmly and watched him wince with the force of her handshake. Emma hid a chuckle behind her napkin.

The waitress returned to remove their dirty dishes then refill their coffee cups.

"You own the hotel next door and want to sell it?" Emma asked.

"I do."

"Well this is your lucky day, because we want to buy it."

"Is that right." He looked at Emma's clothes. "Are you sure you can afford the asking price?"

"Don't you worry, I can afford it." Emma said looking him square in the eyes. "What is your asking price?"

"One point two million."

"Are you sure?" Regina asked.

"It is my hotel. Of course I am sure."

"The reason I asked is that Jackson here said the price was one million six a few minutes ago."

"What?" He looked at the realtor who blushed.

"It is standard practice sir. Give them a number that is higher than the asking price and let them talk you down to the real amount. That way they think they are getting a deal"

"Mr. Eckert, what do you say we cut out all the bull shit and get down to business. The bottom line is you want to sell the hotel and I want to buy it. What do you say we eliminate the middle man."

"You can't do that." Jackson whined. "We have a contract."

"Fine then you sit there and pretend you are a door stop and keep your mouth shut." Emma snapped.
"You can't talk to me like that."

"Jackson shut up." Eckert shouted. "Mrs. Mills the asking price is one point two million."

"Fine. Do you have a contract or a bill of sale we can sign?"

"Not so fast young lady. I need to see the color of your money first."

"Gina do you still have the bank's card?"

"I do." Regina answered and pulled the card from her wallet, Emma dialed the number.

"Marcie, this is Emma Swan Mills, I need a bank check for one million two hundred thousand dollars. The name is William Eckert."

"E-C-K-E-R-T?"

"That's right. I also have two more people to add to the account. When can we come in?"

"It's three now. Can you be here for three thirty?"

"Are you all free to go to the bank at three thirty?" Emma asked.

"Yeah, yes, sure." The three said. Eckert nodded.

"We will be there Marcie."

Emma signalled for the check and hurried to the bathroom. Regina paid the bill and added a generous tip to the total by the time Emma returned. They left for the bank.
CHAPTER 5

The meeting at the bank went smoothly and took little more than an hour. Eckert left with his check. Gus and Rowen left with notarized copies of their contracts and cards giving them access to the hotel account. Emma and Regina left with the bill of sale, deed and the keys to the hotel. The realtor left with a much smaller commission check than he had hoped for.

Now they had to register the sale at City Hall. With the notarized papers in hand they now owned the hotel. Keys in hand they all climbed into Rowen's truck. Rowen was given an expense account for the materials needed to bring the building up to city codes, and both of their salaries would be paid directly from the main hotel account.

Emma found the correct key and opened the security gate, then the door to let them all into the lobby. Rowen pulled pads, pencils, a flashlight and ruler from her battered duffle bag in the back of the truck. She stuffed the items into the many pockets of her coveralls.

"First thing you need to do is change all the locks on the doors and security gates. Just in case Jackson kept another set." Rowen said.

"That will be the first thing you have to do then." Emma replied.

Rowen looked around the lobby and took measurements. They spent time in what would be the manager's apartment. She banged on walls with Emma by her side. They found the door that led to the basement. Gus and Regina took the dust cover from a battered sofa and sat down to watch them.

Not trusting the elevator Rowen turned on her flashlight to walk down the old staircase. They found the laundry room, storage areas and an ancient looking furnace and boiler. Rowen made copious notes on her pad. While the two friends were in the basement Gus and Regina relaxed in the lobby.

"If you don't mind me asking, how did you and Emma meet?"

"I don't mind you asking, but that is a very long story. Before we get into that, why don't we go next door and get some coffee first?"

"That sound good." Gus replied.

Regina pulled out her phone and texted Emma. Within seconds her phone rang. Emma's face filled the screen.

"Hey babe, I would not say no to another strawberry milkshake. Rowen will take a black coffee."

"That's it?"

"Well now that you ask, I could go for another grilled cheese and onion rings."

"Emma." Regina sighed.

"Hey don't blame me Madame Mayor. Blame your kid. She wants that." Emma joked.

"Oh I see how it is going to be princess. You clog your arteries and blame it on the baby."
Emma gave her a cheeky grin. "It is what it is, babe." Emma blew her a kiss. "Besides I had a salad with lunch."

"You are extremely lucky that I love you."

"Love you back, babe. Hey Gina, if they have any of that lemon meringue pie left, she would like a piece of that too."

Regina shook her head. "Yes dear. Does Rowen want anything?"

"She will take a deluxe cheeseburger." Emma said.

"Okay. I am going to lock the door when we leave. I have the key."

"Okay babe."

Gus and Regina left as Regina started their story. "You know about Emma's early years?"

"That she was abandoned by her parents, and bounced around in the foster system and did time. Yeah I know all about that."

"Did you know she had a baby while she was in prison?"

"No I didn't."

"She gave the baby up for adoption. I adopted that child." Regina continued their story as they walked into the diner.

Rowen and Emma continued to walk the hotel. "So a baby?"

"Yeah."

"Can't be too far along."

"About six weeks give or take a few days."

"I never took you for the turkey baster sort of girl."

Emma laughed. "We didn't use a turkey baster."

"You went the whole ugly route with a man? I have been watching Regina and don't think she was the sort of person who would let that happen."

"Not exactly that either."

"Then how the Hell did it happen?"

"Would you believe magic?"

"Sure why not."

"Really?"

"Emma we have been friends for a lot of years. If you say it was magic, then it was magic." Rowen said and went back to taking notes. "How did you and Regina meet?"

"After I left Miss Barbara's, I got into some trouble with my jerk boyfriend and ended up doing
time for possession of stolen merchandise. I had a baby while in prison. Regina adopted that baby."
They continued to walk the hotel while Emma told her story. "After six years of sending off
serious sparks we decided to stop fighting our attraction and admitted we were more than just
friends." Emma said.

Gus sat at the counter while they waited for their order to be boxed up. Regina sat next to her
drinking a coffee.

"So who made the first move?" Gus asked.

"It was a mutual move. Our son and his girlfriend ran away to Boston or what we thought was
Boston. He tricked us. Emma had G.P.S installed on his phone and it showed his phone was in
Boston. He wasn't. While we were in the bus terminal arguing which direction to head in, we
stopped and kissed. I don't know if I kissed her or she kissed me, but it happened and we haven't
looked back."

"And now you are expecting a baby."

"We are."

"Regina, I love Emma like a daughter or younger sister. I don't want to see her get hurt ever." Gus
said. "Do I need to say more?"

"Not at all, Gus. Your message is loud and clear. I love Emma with every fiber of my being. In all
honesty I can promise that I will never hurt her. I would die first then ever do that."

"That is good to hear, Regina because I really like you and I love seeing Emma happy. You make
her happy."

Their order was finished and in a box on the counter. "She won't be happy if we make her wait for
her food."

Gus laughed. "She does have a big appetite for a small person. I hope you can get her to slow down
as her pregnancy progresses."

They left the diner and went back to the hotel. Regina handed Gus the keys as they walked and
continued her story. "Emma was shot five days before our first scheduled wedding date." Regina
blurted out, "Damn I didn't mean to say that."

"I am glad you did. What happened?"

"That piece of shit I told you about was going to shoot me and Emma jumped in front of me. She
saved my life. I almost lost her. She was in the hospital for eight days. We missed the first wedding
date. Was she ever mad. I thought the doctor would have to sedate her. So no I don't think this
pregnancy will slow her down any." Regina admitted. "I have to tell you, I will miss the sight of
her ass in those tight jeans she loves to wear."

"You do have a point there. She does have a mighty fine ass."

"Hey. Do I need to be worried about you?" Regina protested.

"Relax Regina, I may be older, but I am not dead. I can appreciate a thing of beauty in motion."

Gus opened the door and placed the box on the old sign in desk. She pulled out her phone and
texted Emma. "Food's here."
"Be right there." Came the reply.

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The protective dome was filled with dark smoke. The smoke started to take shape under the dome. The guardians watched the shapes form. One of them took out his phone and called Blue. "You and David need to get out here right away. There is something happening under that dome." She said and put her phone away. Other guardians gathered around her with Ruby coming from town at a run. Blue and the fairies arrived with David a few minutes later.

Glowing white eyes stared out at them. "What are those things?" David asked.

"I have been studying the Fairy Chronicles. They are called Shades. They come from the Shadow Realm. They come through fissures like this one or portals every hundred years. They were not supposed to be able to come through for another thirty years. There must have been an upheaval in the Shadow Realm for them to come through now."

"What do they want? Are they good or evil?" David asked.

"Some are benevolent protectors. Others are not. As to which these are I do not know."

"Can we communicate with them?"

"I hope to find a way soon. David I think these are protectors." Blue said as they walked around the dome. Blue looked directly into the eyes of the largest form.

"A minute ago you said you didn't know. What makes you sure know?" Blue continued to stare at the white eyes. "Blue? What is it?" David asked. "Blue?" He gently shook her breaking her eye contact. She sagged in his arms. He easily picked up her unconscious form and carried her away from the area.

-------------------

Regina and Emma lay in their bed in the afterglow of their love. After their busy day, they returned to their hotel room, showered, ordered room service and relaxed. Tomorrow would be another busy day as they needed to go to City Hall and register the sale of the hotel, make sure the title was clear and obtain all the necessary permits to begin the renovations. Rowen had promised to have the estimates for them before the end tomorrow. She would move her crew once all the necessary permits were obtained. Her crew were finishing up a job and be able to start right after.

Emma started to doze off when she jumped up and said. "Oh damn."

"What is it?"

"We were supposed to call home before we were sidetracked."

"Sidetracked? Is that a new word for making love?" Regina joked.

"No silly. But when I saw you in that skimpy outfit, all rational thought left my head."

"I am sure Henry and your parents will understand. We are on our honeymoon after all."

"It's just with everything going on I,"

"You worry."
"Yeah."

"Sweetheart, if there were anything out of the ordinary going on that needed our attention, they would call."

"I know babe."

"Let me guess, the hormones are in an uproar?"

"Yeah. suddenly I find myself worrying about everything. Hell it seems at times I am even worrying about being worried."

"It is too late to call tonight, but if it makes you feel better, we can call tomorrow morning. Okay?"

"Okay." Emma agreed. "Gina?"

"No do not apologize. Don't even think about it princess. You have nothing to apologize for."

"I was going to say thank you for putting up with me and my insecurities. For always knowing the right thing to say to talk me down. And for loving me."

"Then you are very welcome." Regina said and kissed her. "I really like your friends. They are good people."

"They had a lot of good things to say about you too."

"Really?"

Yep, they did."

"Emma I was very proud of you today in how you handled that lawyer and realtor. How much of that attitude was due to Jackson dissembling street kids?"

"All of it. I know it isn't rational to still let stuff like that get to me. Not every kid chose to live on the streets like we did. They do the best they can. I get angry when some idiot like Jackson assumes that street kids are less than human. That they are throwaways. Where no-one would care if we lived or died. We aren't."

"Sweetheart, you were never a throwaway, I would have cared. Hell I do care that you lived. You grew up to be this incredibly beautiful woman with more integrity that a thousand Jacksons. You want to give every homeless child a safe place to live and a chance at life. I am proud that you are here to stand up for them. And I am extremely proud to be able to call you my wife."

Emma's eyes filled with tears. She wiped them away. "Look at what you made me do." She joked.

"Damn hormones." They said together. They laughed before they settled down to sleep.

---------------------------------------

Blue was still unconscious. David and several fairies stayed by her side through the evening and night. The doctors were baffled by her condition. At the Convent, other fairies poured through the Fairy Chronicles to find any information on the shades, or how to help wake Blue. David felt his phone buzz in his pocket. He walked out of Blues room and continued out of the hospital.

"Snow is Neal alright?" Has something happened?"
"Neal is fine. How is Blue?"

"Still unconscious. There has been no change since she was brought in."

"Is there anything I can do? Should I call Emma and Regina?"

"It is the middle of the night Snow."

"They would want to know."

"It can wait until morning. Blue might wake up by then."

"And she might not, David. They need to know."

"They are on their honeymoon. There is nothing they can do here until Blue wakes up. They deserve this time Snow." David said angrily.

"Is there some other reason you don't want them to know about Blue?"

"Like what?" He snapped.

"Oh maybe that you like being the only Sheriff in town. Or you might be tired of taking orders from our daughter or coming in second."

"How the Hell can you even ask that?" He demanded.

"How can I not ask it, David." Snow snapped back and hung up before he could respond.

David stood outside after the call ended. The cool night air was refreshing after that stuffy room. It helped cool him off and clear his head.

Shadowy forms watched him from the trees. "He is one of those that will get him close to her."

One shadow said.

"Let's take him now."

"No it is not time yet. We will watch and wait. Those fools blocked the light ones from coming through. As long as the one stay asleep, they will not be able to be freed. We will chose the humans we will take over to blend in. Return to the mine."

The shades backed away from the Hospital.

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Another City Hall and another long line that stretched down the hall. They could only hope they were in the correct line. To their surprise, the line moved quickly until they reached a large room where the line branched off to different departments. They found the correct line and moved to it. This line was much shorter, but moved much slower. After an hour they stood in front of a friendly clerk.

"Good morning. How may I help you?"

"Morning." Emma said. "We would like to register the sale of some property."

"Are you the seller or the buyer?"

"Buyer." Regina said as she handed the file folder to the clerk.
The clerk opened the file and pulled out the papers. "Notarized bill of sale, title, deed, signed statement from the bank. Everything seems to be in order. Is this the bank that is financing the purchase?"

"No it was bought outright." Emma said.

"Do you have a closing date?"

"Do we need one when it was bought outright?"

"Bureaucratic red tape. That will give us time to do a title search and make sure there are no liens against the property and that the seller was in fact the owner."

"How long will that take?"

"Not long if there are no problems. Do you have identification?"

Emma pulled her wallet from her back pocket and handed the clerk her driver's license. "I haven't had the chance to get my name change yet. We were just married last Saturday."

"You are on your honeymoon. Congratulations. You have thirty days to make it official. I believe that you can do that right on line instead of fighting the lines at the DMV."

"Thanks, I will check on that today."

The clerk typed in the information into the computer. The screen turned red. "There is a problem with a lien on that property for unpaid taxes, water and sewer bills. That can be taken care of right away."

"It can? How much?"

"It doesn't say how much, but you just go upstairs to the second floor to pay the taxes, water and sewer bills. Then come back and see me and we will finish up."

"That means we have to stand in line again?"

"Not at all dear." She opened a drawer and pulled out a card. "After you finish upstairs, just give this to the guard and he will escort you directly to the head of the line. If I am with a customer, you will be taken next."

"Thank you."

"Just go back out the door. You will see the staircase to your left. There is also an elevator on your right. You want room two eighteen."

They left the friendly clerk and went in search of the tax collector.
Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

Two hours and a bathroom break later, Emma and Regina walked out of City Hall. The sale was registered and a closing date set. They presented the clerk with the notarized Power of Attorney papers that named Gus to handle the official signing of the sale and anything dealing pertaining to the hotel. They decided to eat lunch in the hotel dining room. Rowen called to let them know that she had changed the locks on all the doors and security gates. The four women made plans to meet for dinner in their hotel room later in the day.

Emma brought up the D.M.V. website on her phone to avoid the long lines to have her name changed on her license. "Gina did you happen to bring our marriage license with you?"

"No why?"

"According to this I have to have show them the marriage license in order to have my name changed on my driver's license."

"Can we have someone back home fax us a copy?"

"No it has to be an original. Damn that means I will have to come back here at a later date to change it."

"You could always give up your apartment here and make the official move to Storybrook. Then you wouldn't have to change your name. I don't understand why you kept that apartment when you haven't lived here for seven years."

"I kept it as sort of a refuge. In the event things got to crazy with my family. I knew I could escape for a few days to regroup and get my sanity back."

"Did you ever feel the need to use it?"

"A few times in the beginning. Those first couple of years when my mother loved to interfere in my life."

"What about now?"

"Not at all. Now I know if mom starts to get on my nerves, I have the power to stop her. I can zap her to the town line to get some peace and quiet. Does that make me a bad person?"

"Only if you actually act on that ability. Have you done that?"

"Zap her somewhere else? No, but I did make my phone ring and pretend that I was needed elsewhere."

Regina laughed. "That is genius. I will have to remember that."

"Gina, the more I think about it the more I am convinced to give up that apartment."

"Good."

"Yeah now that we own the hotel I can use that address instead."
"Emma." Regina sighed.

"Babe, I lived in this world most of my life. I need an actual address for things like paying taxes, voting and other things. My landlord will probably be happy to see me give it up."

"Why is that? You haven't lived here for several years. It can't be that you are a noisy bothersome tenant."

"No it is because I have been locked into a very low rent. The next tenant will probably pay double or even triple what I pay."

"That doesn't seem legal."

"It is completely legal. I will call him tomorrow." Emma said.

"Is there anything you need to pick up?"

"Not too much. Every time I stayed there, I brought stuff back with me. I was never one for collecting a lot of stuff."

"The less you have the less you can lose?" Regina asked.

"Exactly."

"So we have a few hours to kill before Gus and Rowen show up. Is there anything you want to do until then?"

"I know this will sound strange, considering how much I hate shopping, but would you mind if we go to the mall?"

"Of course I don't mind. Is there anything in particular you need?"

"Yeah I need to get some new jeans. These are getting tight and I won't be able to wear them for too much longer."

"Okay. I will miss seeing you in those jeans."

"It is only for a few months babe."

"I know. Even Gus mentioned how good your ass looks in those jeans."

"Really?"

"Really. Do we have to drive to the mall or is it within walking distance?"

"Sorry but we have to drive there. Buck up your majesty we will take the car and not a cab."

"Good. I trust your driving more than I trusted that cab driver's. I swear that last one had a death wish."

Emma laughed as they paid their lunch bill and called for the car to be brought to them.

-------------------------------

The sounds of construction could be heard throughout the town. Additions to the hospital, school, library, and jail were ongoing. With all the new people arriving, the tiny two cell jail was not big
enough to fit the town's needs, especially on Friday and Saturday nights. The forest that surrounded the town was push back. Trees were magically moved and not cut down to accommodate the growing town. Lumbermen only removed the standing deadwood to make room for those trees that still lived.

The Dwarves continued to offload any items of value from the pirate ship. They kept a detailed list of what was removed and put into crates that were locked into a small warehouse. With Blue unconscious, and Regina and Emma out of town there was no one to maintain the expanding spell that was used on the warehouse and they soon ran out of room to put the treasures. The fairies were busy reinforcing the protective dome over the fissure that opened and had no time to help them. They had to stop searching the ship for hidden areas. They marked the locations of those areas in a pad.

The guardians kept a close eye on the ship to keep any looters away. Leroy made his way into the Sheriff's station and entered the office without knocking. "Do you know when Emma and Regina are due back?" He demanded.

"What's wrong now Leroy?" David snapped.

"What's wrong? We are at a standstill. With Blue down and them out of town, there is no one to maintain the expanding spell we have run out of room."

"How much more do you have to do?"

"Who the hell knows. In the last two days we found six more areas. What are we supposed to do with it all. If that ain't enough we now have to keep guardians posted to discourage looters. We need them back like yesterday. Do they even know what is going on?"

"No they don't and no one is to tell them. They are on their honeymoon Leroy. I am not about to bother them."

"Yeah well we need them. If you don't call them I will." Leroy shouted.

"Absolutely not." David shouted back. "I will let them know."

"Sure you will." Leroy yelled and slammed out of the office.

David grabbed his phone, but stopped himself from calling. He sat for several minutes holding the phone before throwing it down and leaving the office with a gruff, "I will be at the hospital if you need me."

------------------------

Emma stood at the window, dressed in the fluffy robe the hotel provided and looked down at the busy street below. From the twentieth floor the cars below looked like toys. They had spent a lazy morning in between bouts of Emma running to the bathroom as morning sickness reared it's ugly head. Regina held Emma's hair while she retched. Helpless to do anything else but offer support and help her back to bed once her stomach was emptied.

She sipped the ginger ale Regina gave her from the mini bar in their room, before she left to search for some crackers to ease the upset. She walked into the room. "How are you feeling sweetheart?"

"Better, the ginger ale is helping some."

"I asked at the desk where I could get some crackers. The manager sent one of the bell hops to get
crackers. He will bring them up here."

"Thanks babe."

"Did you go through this with Henry?"

"Yeah. It started earlier and I didn't have anyone to hold my hair or rub my back or even bring me a cool cloth. I was eighteen and didn't know shit about pregnancy."

"It's a good thing we didn't have anything planned for today. We can just laze around here if you want."

"I should feel better this afternoon."

Regina answered the knock on the door and gave the young man a generous tip for bring the crackers to them. "Thank you ma'am. I hope these do the trick. If not there is a doctor on staff if you need her. Just press nine on the phone and she will come up."

"Thank you." Regina closed the door. "Emma come eat some of these crackers." Regina opened the box and pulled out a sleeve. She opened the plastic and pulled several from the stack.

"Thanks babe." Emma nibbled one of the crackers slowly hoping it would soothe the nausea. "I'm sorry, I was hoping to show you a few of my favorite places today."

"Sweetheart in case you haven't noticed, it is pouring out there. I like walking in a gentle rain, but that is a deluge out there."

"The nausea should stop in a few hours. At least with Henry it did."

"If it doesn't, the hotel has a doctor on staff. Maybe she can give you something for the nausea."

"I don't want to take anything to hurt the baby. She..."

"Oh you know the baby is a girl?"

"Just a feeling I have. Seeing how she was magically conceived, I would rather wait and talk to Blue."

"That makes sense. Did you take that potion she gave you?"

"Not yet. I was waiting for the morning sickness to let up. No sense in having it come right back up."

"You never told me why Blue gave that to you."

"I told you it was to control the magical surges."

"You had a magical surge?" Emma nodded. "What caused the surge? What were you doing when it happened?"

Emma sighed and picked up another cracker. "The day we got married when mom insisted on getting manicures and pedicures, I went to Granny's like you said instead of having my nails done. I thought I could get the perfect manicure with magic so I tried. I ended up with a perfect manicure. Nicely shaped nails, but pink. Do I look like a pink sort of person? I was thinking clear or maybe white polish. No I ended up with pink. Anyway I felt a strange sensation here." She put her hand over the baby. "The pink was really pink. a girly girl shade of pink I am no a girly girl. Never have
been, never will be."

"That is true and I would not have you any other way." She kissed Emma's head. "Was that all that happened?"

"No the damned nails started to grow and I couldn't stop them. I yelled for Helen when my nails got to be six inches long. She had to pull my phone out of my back pocket and dial it for me."

"Wait, are you telling me that Helen touched your ass?" Regina asked trying not to laugh. "Do I need to have a talk with her?"

"Hey not in that way. She only got my phone out for me and called Blue." Emma protested. "There is no need to talk to Helen. So anyway Blue poofs in and pulls me into the back hallway. She told me to calm down because of course the hormones were raging and I was crying. She said that the more upset I was the faster the nails would grow. By this time they had to be least a foot long. I calmed down and she said a few weird words over my hands and the nails shrunk to normal size. Still pink though, but normal. Then she gave me the potion to counteract the surges." Emma looked at Regina trying not to laugh. "Go ahead and laugh before you hurt yourself."

Regina let go and laughed until her stomach hurt and tears ran down her face. She wiped her eyes and caught her breath. "I am sorry I laughed. I imagine it wasn't funny for you at the time."

"Looking back at it now, I can see the humor in the situation. I didn't then."

"Blue just happened to carry that potion around with her?"

"She said that she was expecting it to happen and was prepared."

"Thankfully she was prepared."

"Yeah."

"It is also a good thing you didn't try to give yourself a pedicure. The nails would have gone right through those boots you love to wear" Regina said with a smile. "Although that would mean you would have to throw them away and buy a new pair."

"They are comfortable. I love these boots."

"Emma they are falling apart. You have the money to buy yourself a new pair." Emma took the throw pillow from the corner of the couch, placed it on Regina's leg. She lay down with her head in Regina's lap. "Tired?" Regina ran her hand through Emma's hair.

"A little. Do you mind?" Emma opened one eye and looked at Regina.

"That you are using me as a bed? Not at all sweetheart. You rest and later if your stomach feels better we can order room service."

"Okay."

-------------

Deep inside the darkness of the abandoned mine shaft, the shades gathered to wait for night to come. Daylight was their enemy. The sun depleted their energy and blinded them. The darkness replenished their energy. The only way they could remain in the sun was to take over the bodies of the humans. They floated above the ground as their red eyes glowed in the darkness
"When The One returns, we must be in human forms. Do you all have your human targets chosen?" Murmurs of yes were heard. "Before the morning sun rises we must find our targets and enter the bodies. In order to be closer to The One, when she returns. She cannot be allowed to talk to the light ones. She must be turned to our side if we hope to succeed."

"As long as that human female remains asleep, she cannot tell anyone of our plan."

"Even if she wakes, who will believe a wild story like that?"

"These are not ordinary humans. Who is to say what they believe. We cannot take that chance."

"She will not awaken. There is only one cure for the little death. As long as her spirit remains contained she will not wake."

The shades looked at the container that rested on the rock shelf and made a noise that sounded like laughter.

--------------------------

While Emma slept, she held one of Regina's hands under her chin. Regina turned on the television and muted the sound. Her eyes widened at the action on the large screen. The movie left nothing for the imagination, yet she could not make herself change the channel. After a few minutes she picked up the remote to change the channel and dropped it. She reached for the remote when Emma opened her eyes. She glanced at the television.

"Whoa Gina, what are you watching?"

"Well um, I just turned on the television and went to change the channel and I dropped the damn remote." Regina said blushing.

Emma giggled. "What would your constituents say Madam Mayor if they knew you were watching porn."

"Hey it was a mistake." Regina protested. "I turned it on and there they were in all their glory."

"Babe, don't worry, your secret is safe with me."

"Thank you. How are you feeling?"

"Hungry."

"Well that is a good sign. Let me get the room service menu."

"Um Gina, you might want to turn off the porn first." Emma joked.

Regina blushed again. Emma moved to allow Regina to stand.
CHAPTER 7

The day before their honeymoon ended, Emma had the car brought out. She wanted to surprise Regina with a trip to the Cape before they left for home. They had quickly learned to handle the morning sickness with the help of the ginger ale and crackers Emma kept on the night stand next to the bed. Mornings had become tolerable as long as they avoided certain smells or foods. The scent of onions was guaranteed to have Emma running for the bathroom.

The drive out of the city was relaxing after they left the city traffic behind. Regina relaxed her white knuckled grip on the dash board. The leaves on the trees had turned, but the colors were still vibrant as they headed to the Cape. The traffic on Route 6 was slight and when they made the change to 6 A they were the only car on the road for several minutes at a time. With Labor Day behind them, there were no crowds as they drove down Bradford Street to the public parking lot. Emma grabbed the camera from the back seat as they climbed out of the car.

Regina looked out at the ocean before her. Emma snapped her picture with the ocean as a backdrop.

"It's beautiful." Regina said as she turned her head as Emma took another picture.

"You certainly are." Emma replied. Regina smiled and held her hand out for the camera. She took Emma's picture. The ocean breeze caused Emma's hair to blow into her face. She pulled a hair tie from her jacket pocket and pulled her hair into a pony tail. She smiled into the lens of the camera.

Together they watched the boats bob on the water. "This reminds me of home. It is quiet and peaceful." Regina said.

"You think Storybrook is quiet and peaceful? Have you forgotten what we have gone through the last six or seven years?"

"I haven't forgotten, but when we are between crises, it can be quiet and peaceful. The water, the boats, the pier, hell even the people are not rushing around like they are in the city. This is how home feels."

"Yeah, it is how home feels." Emma repeated as Regina pulled her close and kissed her. "You are my home, Gina."

"And you are mine." Regina said as they kissed again. "So sweetheart, where do we go from here?"

"We take a walk down Commercial Street, look at the shops that are still open, find a place to have lunch. Then we can go shopping until dinner where we can have a nice romantic meal at one of the swankier places before we go to the beach and watch the sun set."

"You gave this some thought."

"Yeah I did. you are partially to blame your majesty."

"How do you figure that princess?"

They started to walk away from the water. "I bought these boots here. So seeing how the cobbler at home said there was no way he could resole these again, I need to buy a new pair."
"How many times have they been resoled?"

"Four or five times. Hey I told you they were comfortable. Have been since the day I bought them. I never needed time to break them in."

"Then my dear it is time you buy a new pair. Which store was it?" They headed to the shoe store. "I like this place, Em. It is quiet." Regina said again.

"It is now that summer is over. This is a tourist town. During the season, there can be twenty or thirty thousand people here."

"Really? Why?"

"This is a place were same sex couples are free to be themselves. That is why no one cares that we are holding hands or even that we kissed in the parking lot. There are many places where people like us can get into trouble. Not because it is against the law, but some people feel that loving a person of the same sex is wrong. They are very vocal, nasty and sometimes brutal about it."

Emma pulled her into the store. Rows of shelves lined the store. The smell of leather greeted them. A friendly clerk smiled at them as they walked in. "Good morning, ladies. Are you looking for anything in particular or just browsing?"

"Good morning. We are looking for new boots for my lovely wife." Regina said.

"Like the ones I am wearing." Emma added.

"We have several styles like that and we are having an end of the season sale."

"Fantastic." Emma said and headed for the boots.

Thirty minutes later they walked out of the store each carrying large bags that they placed into the trunk of their car. They walked down the street to the small restaurant where they took a table overlooking the water. After lunch they spent the afternoon walking into several of the stores that were still open. After making purchases in several of the quaint shops they made their way back to the car to deposit their purchases. There was just one shop left that they had not gone into yet.

"Em we have gone into almost every open store except this one. Is there a reason why we are avoiding this one? Other than the name that is. What sort of name is Spank The Monkey?"

"Well um, it is an eclectic sort of store."

"Meaning what exactly?"

"It's sort of a different sort of clothing, art and toys store."

"Emma?"

"It has adult toys, like that device you had me wear after our first wedding."

"Oh. So are we going to go in or just stand here?" Regina asked as she headed across the street to the door.

"Gina wait?" Emma called out and hurried after Regina.

They looked around the first floor, made a few small purchases before they headed to the back of the store. There was a staircase that led to the second floor with a sign posted. ADULTS ONLY
Emma followed Regina upstairs to a large room. All sorts of toys, devices and sexual aids were hung on hooks or on shelves around the room.

"Wow I didn't realize there were so many aids available." Regina said.

"I know. The first time I came here was quite the education." Emma responded.

"Some things are self explanatory but others like these," she held up a package containing several rubber rings.

"Neither of us have the equipment for those babe. Men use them to maintain an erection." Emma explained. Regina put the box back on the shelf and walked to another display. They walked around the room and picked up several items to purchase. They left the store and those purchases joined the others in the car trunk, before they headed to the restaurant for dinner.

After dinner, they walked back to the car. Emma drove them to the beach where they could watch the sunset. Several couples were already there when they arrived. Regina took the camera while Emma grabbed the blanket they could sit on. Donning the sweatshirts they had purchased against the cool breeze that blew off the water they sat and watched the sunset. They snapped pictures of the red setting sun and each other. Emma sat in Regina's arms as they watch the last of the sun disappear below the horizon. The air grew noticeably colder now that the sun was gone. They reluctantly stood, shook the sand from the blanket and walked back to the car.

"Sweetheart, thank you for this perfect day." Regina said as they waited for the car to warm up.

"It was my pleasure babe. I am glad you enjoyed yourself today. You know I haven't been back here since I moved to Storybrook." Emma said as they left the parking lot.

"If and when things stop taking all our time perhaps we can visit again."

"I would like to do just that in the summer time when this town comes alive."

They made one stop for hot drinks before they headed back to the city and the last night of their honeymoon.

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David stayed outside the hospital after checking on Blue. He was still angry at what Snow had said to him and avoided going home. The shade inside of him pulled him towards the far end of the parking lot where he could see other shades milling about. The night Blue had collapsed, when Snow had accused him of being jealous of Emma, he walked away from the hospital entrance where he was forced to endure being taken over by a shade. He remembered his arms being held away from his body while the spirit entered his body. He shuddered as he remembered the pain and how he was powerless to stop the takeover. Then the shock of finding out the shade was his dead brother James.

From that point, he was one of them. He helped other shades take over the bodies of the town's residents.

They had gathered away from the bright lights of the parking lot. "When The One returns she will be surrounded by us. We must do everything in our power to stop her and her unborn child from destroying our plan to take over this realm. These bodies will allow us to get closer to our target. The female leader remains unconscious and as long as she stays that way The One will have no success. Go about your business and we will meet again in the cavern."
David walked in their house a short time later. The bright lights made him blink several times. Snow sat at the table grading papers. Their son slept peacefully in a chair after wearing himself out playing while he waited for his father to come home. Snow went to his side as he removed his jacket.

"Are you hungry? I made stew for dinner it won't take long to heat it up. How is Blue?"

"Stew sound good." David said as he walked into the bathroom to wash his hands. "Blue is the same." He called from the bathroom. "No change at all. Whale has no idea what is going on."

"When Emma and Regina return, maybe they can help."

"Maybe." David replied.

"Emma called earlier."

"What did you tell her?" David demanded grabbing Snow's arms.

Snow pulled her arms away from David's grip, angry at him she snapped. "I did not tell her a damn thing. What is wrong with you?" Snow rubbed her arms where David had grabbed her.

David took a step back. "Nothing, I am just worried about Blue." He said as he headed to the bar and poured himself a drink.

Snow frowned as this was not her husband's normal behavior. She picked up their sleeping son and carried him to his room. She returned to her papers after she put David's dinner on the table. David carried the bottle to the table. He picked at the meal then pushed the dish away and finished the whiskey that was in his glass. He poured himself another.

"David, what is going on?"

"Damn it Snow. Stop talking. Just sit there and grade you little papers and leave me the Hell alone to have a few minutes peace." He pushed his chair back, picked up the bottle and slammed out of the house.

-------------------

Regina and Emma arrived back at the hotel. They left their purchases in the trunk rather than carry them to their room only to have to bring them back down in the morning. This was the last night of their honeymoon. Even after extending it several days to take care of hotel business this was it.

They ended the day in the over sized tub as they enjoyed the relaxing whirlpool jets. Once again Emma sat between Regina's legs with her head against the tanned shoulder. She sighed in contentment.

"Comfortable?" Regina asked.

"I am." Emma replied. I am also super happy, but also a little sad that this is our last night here."

"Me too, but we both have responsibilities back home."

"I know, but I really enjoyed not having to share you with everyone in town."

"I feel the same my darling."

"Gina?"
"Yessss."

"When we talked to mom earlier did she seem kind of, I don't know, distracted? Like she was holding something back and not telling us the truth?"

"Is this your super power talking?"

"Maybe. It just felt like there was something going on that she didn't want to talk about?"

"Perhaps she had a bad day. Or Neal was sick. Or the toilet backed up. Or even that she was pregnant again and wants to tell you face to face."

"Gina." Emma yelped. "I do not need or want the image of my parents doing..." She stopped, shook her head to get the image out of her brain. Regina laughed. "It is not funny. They are my parents. They are to old for, for, for..."

"Sex? Sorry sweetheart but your parents are still young, and healthy, they can enjoy an intimate relationship."

"No, no, no. Saying the words parents and sex in the same sentence is just wrong."

"It does happen."

"But I do not have to think about it."

"Okay so clear your mind of that image and replace it with thoughts of us in that nice, big comfortable bed."

"That I can do." Emma said and closed her eyes. "Gina can we get a tub like this at home?"

"Sure. That is just one of the many reasons why having magic is so great. We can zap up one of these whenever we want without all the hassles and dust that remodeling causes." Regina said. "Now princess I think it is time to get out of this tub. Room Service will be bringing up that snack you wanted."

"You can blame you daughter for that." Emma protested as she reluctantly moved away from Regina to stand up. She offered her hand to Regina. Regina took the hand and stood up. She placed her hand on Emma's not so flat stomach. "Sweetheart, I am going to make a suggestion that I hope you don't get upset about."

"It's time to switch to a larger pair of jeans." Emma said. "Is that what you were going to say?"

"It was." They dried off and put on the thick robes. There was knock on the of their suite. "There is your snack." Regina opened the door to allow the waiter to wheel the cart in. Regina tipped him before he left. She lifted the cover from the dish to find strawberries and cheese. "I am impressed princess."

"Hey it is what she wants." Emma said shrugging her shoulders.

"You still think the baby is a girl?"

"Yep." Emma selected a large berry that she offered to Regina who bit down on the fruit. Emma popped the rest into her mouth. The juice coated her fingers. Regina took Emma's hand and licked the juices from each finger.
"Delicious." Regina picked up another berry that she offered to Emma. "What makes you think the baby is a girl?" Her voice was husky and her eyes locked onto Emma's.

Emma chewed and swallowed before answering. "I don't know. It feels different from when I was pregnant with Henry."

"In what ways?"

Emma took Regina's hand and licked the juice from the long fingers. "A lot of things."

"Like what? I have never been pregnant so I don't know what you are going through."

Emma thought for a short time as they shared a piece of cheese. "When I was pregnant with Henry, I was 17 and in prison. There wasn't any healthy fruit available. I craved whatever junk food I could get from the vending machine. With this baby I want fruits, vegetables and other disgustingly health stuff."

"That doesn't mean the baby is a girl."

"I know. This will probably sound weird, but she told me?"

"Why is that weird? Emma this baby was magically conceived. We have no idea what her powers are. We can ask Blue when we get back."

"I tried to call her, but her phone went to voice mail and she hasn't returned any of my calls." Emma said. "I also decided what to do with Hook's ship."

"You are going to sell it to the museum."

"I am. To run the hotel the way I want will take money, a lot of money. The renovations alone will take a good portion of the money. Then I was thinking that after we open we will have to find a way to keep the kids fed. Then maybe get a teacher so that they at least get the basics." Emma was talking fast. "A steady supply of money."

"Em, sweetheart, take a breath." Regina said loudly which stopped Emma's rambling. "Mr. Fahey said the museum will pay top dollar for any pirate merchandise you have. It will fund the hotel for several lifetimes. When we get home, we do an inventory of everything that is left. Then have Josiah Worthington give you an actual total of the dubloons he is holding at the bank. Once we get that information we get in touch with the museum and make arrangements for the sale. Okay?"

Emma threw her arms around Regina and kissed her. "That is more than okay." They kissed again and made their way into the bedroom.
The car sat outside the hotel entrance while the doorman loaded the suitcases into the trunk and back seat. Regina paid the hotel bill while Emma tipped the doorman before they climbed into the car for the trip home. Emma's phone buzzed in her pocket. She pulled it out and checked the caller I.D. before she pushed the talk button.

"Rowen?"

"Hey Em, look I know you guys are heading home today, and was hoping you could stop by the hotel first."

"Sure, we were just leaving. We can be there in ten minutes."

"Great. See you then."

Emma ended the call and turned to Regina. "That was Rowen. We need to make a quick stop at the hotel first. Do you mind?"

"Of course not, Emma. I don't mind postponing the end of our time away."

Emma smiled as they pulled away from the hotel that had been their love nest for the last ten days. During their time in the city, Regina began to get used to city traffic. The traffic still made her nervous, but she no longer kept a death grip on the dash board. They pulled up in front of the old hotel where Rowen and Gus waited for them. The four walked into the lobby.

The room was filled with building supplies. Pallets of sheet rock, plumbing supplies, paint, nails, roof tiles, and large spools of electrical wire filled most of the space.

"Wow you have been busy." Emma exclaimed as she looked at all the supplies.

"Yeah and you my friend have made several home grown stores very very happy."

"Home grown?" Regina asked.

"That means local businesses instead of the big chain stores. I find their prices to be competitive and the quality of the goods much better."

"I am all for helping the little stores."

"This is only a portion of the supplies I ordered. We found a small parking garage below the hotel that we are using for a staging area for the supplies until we need them. They are coming in daily." Rowen said. "I have a crew working on the new roof now. The only problem we have come across is the elevator. It needs to be replaced. We are only using it to move the supplies right now. None of us wants to use it."

"If you think you need a new one then go ahead and order one. You have the authority to order whatever you need." Emma said.

"I know, but for big purchases like that I want to talk to you first." Rowen said. "Em I don't remember thanking you for this job. I was going to have to lay my people off for the season, but this hotel will keep us busy for several months."
"I'm glad I could do it Ro."

"I also ordered a new boiler, and heating system as well as new appliances for the kitchen. After the roof is finished with the exception of the manager's apartment, we will start in the basement and work our way up. Gus was there anything else?"

"The sprinkler system." Gus said.

"Right. The sprinkler system is almost non-existent. I have ordered a new twenty thousand gallon water tank that will be installed on the roof. The tank now is old, rusted and only holds five thousand gallons. Each room will have its own sprinkler. Right now there are only sprinkler heads in the lobby, kitchen and manager's apartment."

"Okay."

"Can the roof support the weight of a tank that size?" Regina asked.

"Yes, but to be on the safe side, we are reinforcing that area of the roof. Em as your friend, I have to ask again, you do realize how much all this is going to cost?"

"I do. There is enough money to cover the expenses. When we return there will be enough money to upgrade a dozen places."

"Okay, you're the boss."

"Do you know when you will be returning?" Gus asked.

"Not sure, but I will call you as soon as I know." Emma said, looked at her watch and sighed. "I guess we really should get on the road."

Rowen hugged Emma. "Don't be a stranger, Em. Regina don't let her be a stranger."

"She won't" Regina said and went to Gus. "I am glad I got to meet you both."

They left the hotel and within minutes left the noise of the city behind as they drove onto the highway.

------------------------

Snow woke to find David gone. His side of the bed was cold and empty. He had either been gone for several hours or had not come to bed at all. She got out of bed and went to check on their son before she took a shower. The sitter would be there before she needed to leave for school. With Emma and Regina returning today, she would have a chance to tell them everything David would not let her tell them on their video calls. She walked into the kitchen. Henry sat at the table with a bowl of cereal and his nose in a book.

"Good morning Henry."

"Morning grandma. What time do you think my moms will be home?"

"That all depends on what time they left. If Emma's morning sickness is bad they may even put off leaving until the afternoon." Snow answered. "I expect they will be home by dinner time." She poured a cup of coffee and bowl of cereal that she carried to the table.

"Has there been any change with Blue?"
"I am afraid not."

"My moms will figure it out."

"I hope so. Doctor Whale has no idea what is going on. He said it's like she is in a very deep sleep, but nothing can wake her."

"Like a sleeping curse?"

"I don't know how that could have happen." Snow said.

"Well if she is then all she needs is true love's kiss to wake up."

"Do fairies even have true loves?"

"I don't know, but all the fairies could kiss her to find out." Henry suggested.

"Anything is worth a try at this point. Doctor Whale is stumped."

"I want to be there when you suggest that. Those fairies are going to freak." Snow laughed. "Henry do you know what time your grandfather left?"

"I think I heard his truck start around four. It makes a lot of noise and it woke me up. Do you think something changed with Blue?"

"Maybe. I don't know." The doorbell rang. "There is the sitter. Would you like a ride to school?"

"Sure. I will get my stuff." He rinsed his cereal bowl and put it in the dishwasher. He went upstairs as Snow let the sitter in. When Henry returned he had Neal with him. Snow talked to the sitter for a few minutes before they grabbed their jackets and left.

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Emma stopped the car just outside the town line. She pulled off the road and turned off the car. Regina turned to her.

"Why did we stop? Is something wrong sweetheart?"

"I don't know. It's just that once we cross that line our honeymoon will be over. I don't want it to be over." Emma said. "Over that line is a fairy tale world. I have enjoyed not having to worry about portal jumping villains or time travelling trolls that want to tear the town apart."

"First of all, Emma, our honeymoon is not over. It will never be over. We love each other. That will not change. Our honeymoon will last an eternity. Together we will tackle what ever comes our way. It doesn't matter if they are portal jumping villains or time travelling trolls. We are stronger together. Our love makes us stronger. So no matter what life throws at us, darling we will defeat it together."

"I love you Gina."

"I love you back Em. Do you feel better about returning?"

"Yeah, I do."

"Then princess start the car so that we can go get our son and go home."
Emma pulled Regina over the console and kissed her. "Okay your majesty." Emma started the car and pulled back onto the road. They both felt the ripple of their magic return as they passed through the protective barrier.

Regina looked into the back seat. "We should make a quick stop at home first. There is no place for Henry to sit."

Emma looked behind her. "You are right. Do you think we went a bit overboard with presents for our family and friends?"

"Maybe a little. But we also spent quite a bit on ourselves. Which by the way you will be throwing out those old boots right?"

"Uh sure as soon as the new ones are broken in, I promise I will throw these out."

Regina sighed. "Emma. Our magic is back we can break them in very quickly."

"Gina these boots are like an old friend. You don't throw away a friend just because they are old and worn." Emma argued.

Regina shook her head. "What am I going to do with you princess?"

"Anything you want your majesty."

"You may regret that." Regina joked.

"I don't think so. I am stronger that I look and have a lot of stamina."

"We shall see." Regina said with a smile and a wiggle of her eyebrows.

The car pulled onto Miflin street and they waved to the people they knew as they made their way home. The gossip grapevine in a small town ran at the speed of light. They had no sooner pulled into their driveway, when Leroy's van parked behind them. He jumped out of the van. Zelena ran out of the house before the car had come to a complete stop.

"Thank goodness you are back sisters." He shouted as he ran up the drive way.

"What's wrong, Leroy?" Emma asked as she climbed out of the car.

"We got problems."

"That is what I came out to tell you." Zelena said.

"Let's get out things inside and we can talk." Regina said with a wave of her hand and all their bags were inside the house. They went into Regina's office where Zelena brought out a tray with coffee for everyone. "What is going on? Talk sis."

"To make a long story short, a few days ago a fissure opened and Shades from the Shadow Realm came through. The fairies put up a barrier to stop anymore for coming through and to keep them confined."

"That's good right?" Emma said.

"That is the question of the day. We don't know if the Shades that came through are good or evil. From what David said, the Blue Fairy locked eyes with one of the Shades then she collapsed. She is in the hospital. That idiot Whale doesn't know what is wrong with her or how to wake her."
"Is the barrier still up?" Emma asked.

"Yeah and there are guardians and fairies watching over it." Leroy said.

"They have all been ordered not to make eye contact with any of them in case they ended up the same way."

"That ain't all sister." Leroy said.

"There's more?" Emma sighed.

"Yeah with Blue down, the fairies all busy with the barrier and you two gone, there was no one to maintain the enlarging spell so we ran out of room to put the stuff we have taken off that damn ship."

"How much more do you need to do?"

"Who the Hell knows. There are more hidden places on that ship. We have spent the last two days prying open walls and moving things around."

"I had a feeling mom was not telling us everything."

"David gave us orders that we could not say anything." Zelena said.

"Why the Hell would we do that?" Regina asked.

"Maybe it was because you were on your honeymoon." Zelena answered. "I know I would not want to be pulled away from something like that."

"He has changed since you left." Leroy blurted.

"Changed? How?"

"He is angry all the time. He looks and sounds like David, but it's like his body has been taken over by his evil twin or something."

"That is impossible. James is dead. He went into the River of Souls in the Underworld."

"Who's to say what happens to those souls. There could be a way for the souls to cross over into the Shadow Realm?" Zelena said.

"You mean they become these Shades?" Leroy asked.

"Who knows Leroy."

"Then what do we do sister? How do we fight this?"

"What the fuck do you want me to say?" Emma shouted. "We have been home less than an hour. Within minutes of pulling into the driveway, we were hit with this. We need time to come up with a battle plan. We need all the information we can get then come up with something." She got right into his face.

"Emma stop." Regina shouted and placed an hand on Emma's shoulder to calm her. "Go sit down." Emma stepped away from Leroy and went behind the desk where she put her head in her hands. Regina watched for several minutes. "What do we know about the shades?"
"Not much. The fairies that aren't at the barriers or with Blue at the hospital, are going through their chronicles to find out everything they can about them. The one person who can tell us anything is unable to at this time." Zelena said.

"Then the first order of business is to find a way to wake Blue."

They heard the door open. Henry ran into the house. Snow with Neal followed close behind. "Moms?"

"In here Henry." Regina called out. Henry ran into the office where he was engulfed by both his mothers.

"How was your trip? Do you do anything exciting? I am glad you are back."

"Slow down kid. We had a great time, bought a hotel and stuff for everyone too." Emma said. "Your mother is not a fan of city drivers."

"They are all lunatics.". Regina proclaimed.

"Hi mom." Emma greeted her mother and tickled her brother.

"Hi we are all glad you are back. I take it you heard the news?"

"Yeah why didn't you tell us?"

"You father ordered us not to say anything."

"He is your husband Snow not your lord and master."

"Yes well there is a problem there."

"Meaning?"

"For the last few days he has been so angry all the time and he is drinking a great deal."

"Did he hurt you?" Emma asked.

"No not really. He just grabbed my arms and... He has a lot on his mind right now."

"Show me." Emma demanded.

"What are you getting so upset about. There are only a couple of bruises."

"I just want to see, mom."

Snow removed her jacket and pushed up her sleeves to show the finger sized bruises on both arms. Emma swore when she saw the marks. "He had no God Damned right to do that to you. Has he done this before that you haven't told me about?" Emma demanded.

Regina pulled Emma away from her mother. "Emma calm down. Go slap some cold water on your face then come back." She gave Emma a nudge to the downstairs bathroom. Regina let out a breath. "Leroy have you kept a list of everything you have taken off the ship?"

"Yeah. Dopey has kept a careful log of everything and in which crate it was put into. He may not talk but he is great at organizing and keeping lists. Even the stuff that is still on the ship has been crated and noted. Marco has been keeping us supplied with crates."
"Good now put everything back onto the ship. Emma has a buyer for everything including the ship."

"Who has that kind of money?"

"A museum in Boston. They are doing a display about pirates and the fishing industry of the city. Emma has a contract to sell everything she wants to them."

"I will go tell the boys. Do we still look for hidden areas?"

"Yes continue with that, just try to put the walls back the way they were."

"Will do." Leroy said and left the house.

"Is that where you took those dubloons? Did you get a good price?"

"Yes and yes. Enough for Emma to purchase a small hotel that is being renovated into a safe haven for street kids. How are the renovations going here?"

"Great. The builders say they should be finished with the school by the end of the school year. The hospital, sheriff's station and library, are still ongoing."

"Why did mom get so angry about grandma's arms?" Henry asked.

"I don't know. You know there are things from her past that she does not talk about."

"Yeah but..."

"But it's time you heard about this one." Emma said from the doorway.
Chapter 9

There is a dream sequence in this chapter. I wish I could figure out how to get the italics to work. Until the italic fairy comes and enlighten me that section will be between two rows of ***************.

CHAPTER 9

Regina walked to Emma's side. "Emma you don't..."

"Yes I do. It's time you know the story."

"Would you like me to take Henry and the children outside so that you can talk?" Zelena said

"I want to stay." Henry protested.

"No you are family and Henry is old enough to hear this." Emma said. She sat on the couch with Regina on one side and Henry on the other. Snow and Zelena sat in chairs across from them, while the children played on the floor.

"After I ran away from Ingrid's house, I was found and taken to a group home. I wasn't there long before I was sent to live with a minister and his wife. They couldn't have children of their own so they took in foster kids. When I arrived there, there were three others. Two brothers who were thirteen and fourteen, and another girl who was also fourteen. I was the oldest because I was fifteen. They had a big house so that each of us had our own bedrooms. That was a first for me. I never had a room that was only mine. The girls shared a bathroom, as did the boys. There was another in the master bedroom, one on the main floor and one in the basement." Emma paused to take a sip of water Regina handed her. "We were not allowed in the boys rooms, and they were not allowed in the girls. The chores were divided along those lines. The girls did the inside work, of cooking, cleaning, laundry and stuff like that while the boys did all the outside work."

"Emma why...?" Snow started to say. Emma interrupted her.

"This is all just background information, mom." Emma said. "The other three had been there longer and filled me in on all the rules of the house. You know like making sure all our chores were done, stay out of trouble and others. The biggest and most important rule was not an official rule. That was to never ever get near him on Friday nights. For six days a week, he was a kind but strict man. He took care of his congregation and family. But Friday nights, Friday nights was his night. His alone time except for a bottle of whiskey. If anything went wrong on Friday nights he would get furious and..." Emma stopped.

"Sweetheart, no more." Regina said.

"Regina's right, you don't have to continue." Snow said.

"No, you need to hear this." She took a deep breath and held Regina's hand. "He became a hitter when he drank. Oh he never left marks where they could be seen. He was a preacher and could not let it be known that he was a mean drunk who hit his wife or the children that lived with them."

"That explains why you were so upset about the bruises on my arms. Thank you for telling us. We know it wasn't easy for you."

"That is not the whole story mom." Emma looked at Regina for strength. "It was summer and the fair was in town."
"Oh no." Regina blurted. "Is this the fair you told me you tried to sneak into?"

"Yeah. I did try to sneak into the fairgrounds. I was caught and they called my foster mother. Being a Friday, she came to pick me up and took me home. She sent me down to the basement where he and the other children waited. He had a small whip that he used on my back. He made me count the number of hits." Snow covered her mouth with her hands. Zelena and Henry looked as if they would be sick. Regina had tears in her eyes. "When he finished, he allowed his wife, who was a nurse to take care of the broken skin before he locked me into the basement bathroom. For two weeks I was locked in that small room with only a sleeping bag. Twice a day she would bring me food and take care of the wounds. Even with the care, a couple of the cuts became infected from my shirt getting caught in the cuts. When they let me out of that room, I waited for a chance to run away. I knew where she kept the household money he gave her every week. I took a few dollars at a time. The day came when I had enough money to hold me over, I stuffed as many clothes and food I could take into a backpack and small duffel bag and ran away. I climbed out my bedroom window and climbed down the large tree that grew near my room. From that point on I lived by my wits on the streets and never looked back." Regina and Henry put their arms around Emma. Snow cried. Zelena looked like she would either cry or vomit. "Now you know the story of the scars on my back. I don't ever want to hear another mention of them." Emma said as she stood up and walked to the liquor cabinet to pour herself a drink.

Regina walked to her side. "I have just one thing to say and then I will never mention the scars gain." Emma looked at her. "Tonight when we go to bed, I will heal those scars. That way you will not have to speak of that part of your life ever again."

"Thank you Gina." She downed the drink and poured another. She looked at Regina. "Blue said two drinks were okay as long as I didn't do it every day."

"I was not going to say anything."

Emma kissed Regina's cheek and returned to the office. "So what are we going to do about Blue?"

"First things first. Henry call Nikio's and order two extra large pizzas."

"Okay. What do you want on them?"

"Pepperoni, sausage, oh Hell get the works. Everything but anchovies and olives." Emma said as she rubbed her stomach. "She doesn't like those."

"Who doesn't?" Henry asked.

"Your baby sister."

"When did you find out it was a girl?" Snow asked.

"We didn't. Not for certain, but she told me."

"Emma is convinced the baby is a girl."

"A sister, wow." Henry said.

"Henry, the pizza."

"Oh yeah." Henry left and returned a few minutes later. "I asked them to put a rush on it. It will be here in about 20 minutes. Grandma and I had an idea about how to wake up Blue."
"Let's hear it kid."

"Doctor Whale said it was almost like Blue was under a sleeping curse."

"You think true love's kiss will wake her? Do fairies have true loves?" Emma asked.

"I have no idea." Regina shrugged. "What do you suggest we do, have all the fairies kiss her to see if she wakes up?"

"It could happen." Snow said.

"I am not saying it wouldn't work, Snow." Regina argued.

"Those fairies are going to freak out if you tell them they all have to kiss Blue." Zelena said with a laugh. "Freaked out fairies that would be something to see."

"Who is going to tell them?" Emma asked.

"Well we thought that you and Regina would do that."

"Why us?"

"As Mayor and Savior you should do it."

"Oh no. It was your idea you tell them."

"We can't, and you are the town leaders not to mention two of the most powerful magical practitioners in town. It should be you."

"She is right Em." Regina said. "You also have to think about running out of that stuff Blue gave you to prevent magical surges."

"What magical surges?" Snow asked.

"Lets concentrate on finding a way to wake Blue." Emma said quickly.

"Did something happen?"

"Snow this is a precaution because the baby was conceived through magic. If Emma uses her magic, things could have unexpected consequences." Regina explained. Emma looked at her gratefully.

"Oh."

"That reminds me, one of the fairies dropped off several boxes for Emma. She said it was in case Blue didn't wake up. I put them in your bedroom so that the kids don't get into them." Zelena said.

"Thank you. Did she say anything else?"

"Just that the boxes are numbered and you would know how to take them."

"I do."

"Will you two talk to the fairies?"

"Yes we will, but tomorrow. We need one night to kick back before we get sucked into the latest craziness." Regina said.
"Then we have the start of a plan. After you talk to the fairies we can address this again to figure out our next move." Snow said. "So tell us more about your trip."

After they ate, Snow left with her son, Henry took this things up to his room and Zelena carried a sleeping Robin up to the guest room. Regina and Emma cleaned up the kitchen and put any leftovers in the refrigerator. They headed to bed snapping off the lights as they went, until just the small lights on the stairs were left.

They got ready for bed. Regina put a silencing spell on the bedroom. Emma went to pull her sleep shirt on. "Don't put it on yet." Regina said.

"Okay. Do you have something in mind?"

"I do. I told you I would make those scars disappear. Can you lay on your stomach?"

"Yeah." Emma laid on her stomach. Regina straddled her legs and pulled down the waist band of the cartoon character boxers Emma wore to bed to expose the scars. She placed her hands over as much of the scars as possible. Her hands glowed against the scarred flesh. When she lifted her hands the scars were gone. She moved to the next section and healed the scars. Twice more she moved her hands until all the scars were gone leaving Emma's back smooth and unmarred. She stood up and handed Emma her sleep shirt.

"Thanks, babe."

"You are very welcome sweetheart. Now no one need ever know. The past will remain in the past."

"I love you." Emma said and kissed her.

"I love you back." They climbed into bed. "Almost forgot." She snapped her fingers and a bottle of ginger ale and a package of crackers appeared on the table on Emma's side of the bed.

"You take such good care of me babe. I had forgotten."

"I almost did." Regina said as she got into bed. Emma put her head on Regina's shoulder. Regina waved her hand and the lights went out.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The woman was quiet on the ride from the fair grounds. The young girl knew enough to remain quiet because she was in trouble from the way the woman looked. She also saw fear in her eyes. The girl stood by the car. The woman grabbed her thin arm and pulled her into the house. They walked down the hall to the basement stairs. She hesitated a second before being pulled down the stairs to where he and children waited, He held the small whip in his hand that he waved back and forth.

She knew what was about to happen. She had been on the witness side of the punishment but not on the receiving end. Emma took her place. She heard the whine of whip a second before she felt the bit of the leather through her this cotton shirt and shorts. She screamed.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Regina was awake the second she felt Emma start to thrash about next to her. She took Emma into her arms to ease her out of the nightmare. Emma screamed again in the horrors of the nightmare. "Sweetheart, it is just a bad dream. Listen to my voice. Follow my voice. I will protect you. No one will ever hurt you like that again. Just listen to my voice and come away from that dark place. Please sweetheart you need to wake up." Emma screamed again. Regina held her and repeatedly kissed her head. She rubbed Emma's back gently. Emma's struggles lessened and she quieted.
"That's it sweetheart. Listen to my voice it will lead you home."

"Gina?" Emma whispered.

"I am right here, baby."

"Don't leave me."

"I have no intentions of ever leaving you. It was just a bad dream. You are safe now."

"I was back in that basement and alone. I had only a sleeping bag between me and the cement floor. There was barely any light in there and only a small window that a child could not get through."

"I am so sorry you had to go through that." Regina said. Emma was quiet for a long time. Regina thought she had fallen back to sleep, until she started talking again.

"The other kids would sneak food down to me and slip it under the door. Then I got sick. So sick I wanted to die."

"Did he ever you know hurt you sexually?"

"No never."

"Is he still alive?"

"I don't know. I did hear a few years ago that the congregation found out about his dirty secret and kicked him out of the church."

"He should have been horse whipped."

"I ran away on my sixteenth birthday. It was my present to myself."

"I am so sorry."

"Not your fault."

"It is."

"Babe that was another lifetime in a whole different realm. You were as much a victim as I was. I am all for leaving the past in the past. We fought together and conquered those demons from the past. This is our life now, together and heaven help whoever or whatever tries to come between us."

"You have that right princess." Regina glanced at the clock as Emma yawned. "Do you think you can sleep now?"

"I don't know if I can or even want to."

"Sure you can." Regina pulled Emma closer and rubbed circles on her back. She felt Emma relax in her arms. "That's my girl. Just relax. I have you. You are safe here." Regina said softly. Emma's breathing deepened as she relaxed into sleep. Regina continued to rub the strong back for several minutes until she fell asleep.

The shades in their human host's bodies met in the caved in mine. One by one the shades left the bodies. The hosts remain leaning against the cavern wall. They stood in a tight circle. "The One
has returned." The leader said.

"From what I have heard she is powerful." Another said.

"If we can turn her, and make her work for us, we can rule both this world and the Shadow Realm."

"She was the Dark One for several months. She can return to that darkness with a little help from us."

"How can we do that?"

"Find the person she loves the most. Find that person and eliminate them. The One will turn."

"Wouldn't that make her come after us? I have heard stories about how she has defended this town against evil and won each time."

"We make it look like one of the do gooders was responsible. She will return to the darkness."

"Are you certain she is that powerful?"

"Hades was defeated which opened a portal and allowed us to travel from the Underworld to the Shadow Realm. She made his defeat possible. With that fairy still unconscious there is no one to warn her of us. She will not wake as long as we hold her spirit captive here." They all looked at the container on a large rock. "We continue as we are. We will succeed and soon our brothers and sisters who are still trapped in the Shadow Realm and the Underworld will be free to walk in this world and see the light of day. We will take over this realm."
Chapter 10

CHAPTER 10

Through the closed door, the scent of cooking bacon, onions and coffee filtered into the room and woke Regina. She stretched and glanced at the clock next to the bed. Surprised to see that it was eight, Regina glanced at the still sleeping woman next to her.

Emma was curled on her side. One hand was tucked under her chin the other lay on Regina's stomach. Regina brushed a lock of blonde hair off Emma's face. She stirred. Regina kissed her forehead. Emma snuggled deeper into her pillow but didn't wake. Regina slipped out of bed, grabbed clothes and headed into the bathroom. After taking care of personal business, she brushed her teeth, stripped off her silk pajamas, as she waited for the shower water to turn hot. She stepped under the hot spray.

Her shower finished, Regina wrapped herself in a large fluffy bath sheet and stepped out of the tub. Through the open door Regina heard the rustle of paper. Emma woke and reached for the package of crackers. Regina looked into the bedroom. Emma was laying down, her eyes closed as she ate a cracker to help soothe her upset stomach.

"How are you doing sweetheart?" Regina asked. Emma wiggled one hand not opening her eyes. "That good?" Regina joked.

Emma raised her head and opened one eye to give Regina a dirty look. It only succeeded in making her stomach flip more. She closed her eye and let her head fall back onto the pillow. With her eyes still closed, she reached blindly for the ginger ale and only succeeded and knocking the bottle over. It rolled toward the edge of the table. Regina hurried to her side and grabbed the bottle before it rolled onto the floor. She opened the bottle and handed it to Emma, who took a sip and grimaced. Regina sat on the bed near Emma's legs.

"Who the fuck is cooking onions so damn early?" She complained.

"It has to be Zelena. Henry has already left for school."

"I know she is your sister and that you love her, but, " Emma stopped and hiccuped. "I am going to kill her."

"I can not allow you to do that sweetheart."

"How about," she hiccuped again and swallowed several times. "Can I just hurt her?"

"I can't let you do that either."

"For shit's sake, why not?" Emma groaned and clutched her stomach. "Gina move." Emma yelled, kicked off the blankets, and jumped out of the bed, knocking Regina to the floor in her dash to the bathroom.

Regina followed her into the bathroom. Emma knelt on the floor and vomited into the toilet. Regina pulled the blonde hair away from Emma's face and rubbed her back in sympathy. Regina reached up and wet a cloth that she pressed against Emma's neck when she stopped vomiting. "I wish there was something more that I could do."

"You're here, babe." Emma said as she sat on the floor and leaned against the sink cabinet. "You
hold my hair out of the way, put wet clothes on my neck and rub my back. That is so much more than I had when I was carrying Henry."

"I still wish there was more I could do." Emma reached for the toilet as her stomach rebelled again. For several minutes, she hung onto the bowl. When she finished, Regina handed her a glass of water.

"Gina I have been tossing my cookies for the last twenty minutes. Do you expect that water to stay down?" Emma snapped.

"No sweetheart. It is not for drinking, it is for rinsing your mouth out."

"Oh, sorry babe." Emma said, took a mouthful of water, swished it around and spit it into the bowl. She repeated twice more until the sour taste was gone. She pushed the button to flush the toilet and sat back down next to Regina. "Did you mean it when you said that you wished you could do more?"

"Of course I meant it. I love you."

"Then there is something you could do for me."

"Name it."

"Is there a spell to block smells? I know there is one to block hearing and speech, is there one for blocking smells? Can't you find one that would block smells?"

"That is worth looking into. I will check my books."

"I have an idea. She took a blue bottle of chest rub from the medicine cabinet."

"What good is that. I have morning sickness not a cold."

"I know but it could overpower the smell of anything that brings on the vomiting."

"It is worth a try, I know a few cops that swear by that stuff when they have to watch a really bad autopsy or have to deal with a decomposed body. What made you think of this?" Emma put some of the medicine under her nose.

"From that doctor show you like to watch. One of them put stuff under the nose of a younger doctor when they were treating a burn patient."

"I remember that episode. Thank you for remembering."

"My pleasure. Would you like to go back to bed and lay down?"

"No, I am comfortable right here."

"How about trying to drink some ginger ale or eat another cracker?" Emma shook her head no.

"I think that stuff might be working. My stomach is calming down."

"Good. I should let Zelena know what is going on so that she doesn't come looking for us."

"Okay." Emma opened one eye. "Babe you might want to put something else on. Zelena may be your sister, but I would rather she didn't see things that were for my eyes only."

"I was going to call her not go downstairs." Regina held out her hand and her phone materialized in
her palm. "I thought you liked the way I looked in just a towel."

"I do but that doesn't mean I want to share."

Regina sent a text to Zelena. Her phone rang within a few seconds. "I was going to come up and see if you were still alive, but didn't want to interrupt anything in case you were busy."

"Emma is having a bad bout of morning sickness and I don't want to leave her."

"Anything I can do?"

"Get rid of the onion smell. That sets her off."

"Damn, I didn't know."

"Our fault we didn't mention it last night."

"See what I can do sis."

"Thank you." Regina ended the call and glanced at Emma whose head rested on her shoulder. "Are you still awake?" Regina asked softly. She got no response. "It looks like I am a bed again." Regina kissed Emma's head where it rested against her. From past experience, she knew Emma would not sleep long and remained on the floor holding her. The damp towel was uncomfortable and chilly. She shivered. With a wave of her head the towel was replaced with dry clothes. She felt better immediately.

-------------------------

David walked into the Sheriff's station. The night deputies were finishing up their reports as he entered. They took one look at the angry look on his face and quickly turned their attention back to their reports. David entered the office he shared with Emma and slammed the door. He paced the office for several minutes. The deputies could see his pacing. He stuck his head out of the office.

"Have either of you heard from Emma this morning?"

"Are they back? I thought they would be gone for two weeks." One deputy asked.

"Nah, I heard they came back yesterday." The other said. "She may call in later."

"Yeah right." David replied angrily and started to close the door when the deputy spoke again.

"David, we had a report earlier of a second fissure opening."

"Who reported it?"

"One of the Guardians called it in."

David mumbled. "Meddling bastards." Then spoke louder. "Where is it?"

"About a mile from the first fissure."

"So what are you two doing just sitting here?"

"The day people are out there along with the fairies."

"So you fools assumed that you didn't need to be there? You are both idiots." David yelled and stormed out of the station.
The deputies looked at each other. "What the Hell crawled up his ass?"

"I don't know, but Emma needs to be told it looks like David has gone off the rails. I will stop on my way home to talk to her."

-----------------------------
Zelena cleaned up the kitchen in order to get rid of the smell of the fried onions. She found a can of air freshener under the sink and sprayed the air. She opened a window to help clear the air. She finished and sat down to drink a cup of coffee when Regina walked into the kitchen. She helped herself to coffee and sat at the breakfast counter.

"How is Emma?"

"Better. She is taking a shower and will be down shortly." She said. "I feel so helpless to see her go through that. She is so sick and all I can do is hold her hair out of the way or rub her back."

"You're with her. That means a great deal."

"Do we have seven more moths of this?"

"Speaking from personal experience as a fake midwife, and not from my fifteen minute pregnancy, it should only last for another month. Every woman is different, but morning sickness usually last for the first three months. When does she see her doctor?"

"Friday morning."

"She might be able to prescribe something for the morning sickness" Zelena said. "I have some good news. My house will be ready tomorrow. Robin and I will be out of your hair."

"Zelena, about that. Emma and I talked about you going back home. We think you should stay here until we take care of this new threat or at least until your powers have fully returned. You have to think of little Robin too."

"Thanks but you guys are newlyweds. You don't want extra people around at this time. We will be alright at home."

"Then we would spent all our time worrying about you." Emma said from the doorway. Her wet hair tied back into a ponytail. "You don't want to worry a pregnant woman."

"Using the pregnancy card. That is so not fair. You fight dirty."

"Of course I do. Did it work?"

"Yeah it worked. Damn it." Zelena said.

"How are you feeling, sweetheart?"

"Better not one hundred percent, but at least my stomach isn't trying to make an escape through my nostrils."

"How about some dry toast and tea?"

"Okay."

Regina put water into the tea kettle and bread into the toaster. "Zelena said the doctor might be able to give you something for the nausea."
"We can ask I guess."

"What's wrong?"

"For a regular pregnancy, it might help, but this is a magical one. Would any medicine she gives me help or hurt?"

"You would rather talk to Blue."

"Yeah."

"Then our first priority is waking Blue." Regina said.

"It is. Any ideas how?" Emma asked as she eyed the toast that was placed in front of her. Wondering if her stomach would accept food, she sipped the tea first and waited. Several minutes later, she picked up the toast and nibbled it. She waited for her stomach to rebel. When it didn't she took another bite.

The doorbell rang as she finished eating. Regina left to see who was at the door. She returned with the two deputies. "Sorry to bother you at home, but we need to talk to the Sheriff."

"Come into the kitchen. Would either of you like coffee?"

"No thank you Mrs. Mills."

"Hey guys, what's up?" Emma said.

"We're not sure, Another fissure was found. But that is not why we are here."

"Look we know he is your father, and all, but there is something off with David."

"Off? How?"

"For the last few days he has been angry."

"Well from what we heard, there is a lot going on right now. It is expected given the seriousness of the situation." Regina said.

"We understand the seriousness, Madame Mayor, but this is anger. Not just a regular anger, but a real mean and nasty anger."

Regina looked at Emma. "Angry enough to hit someone or leave bruises?" Emma asked.

"Yeah, but that is not all Emma. He is um..."

"What?"

"He is drinking. A lot"

"That doesn't sound like David at all." Regina said.

"It's like he isn't David at all, but his evil twin." The deputy said.

"What?"

"I mean he looks and sounds like him, but..." He stopped.
"I met James once, years ago." The other deputy spoke. "He was mean and arrogant. A real bastard. Pardon my language but that is the only way to describe him. David is acting just like James."

"I met him to. There is no need to apologize. He was a bastard. He and my father fought in the Underworld. He went into the River of Souls."

"You said David is acting just like him?" Regina asked.

"Yeah."

"I need to check my books." Regina kissed Emma's head and disappeared.

"Where did she go?"

"To check her special library." Emma answered.

"Okay, well if you don't need us, we will get out of your hair."

"Sure guys. Thanks for stopping by."

Zelena walked them to the door. Emma fixed herself another cup of tea after thinking about changing to coffee. She stuck with the tea. Emma took a small bottle from her pocket, snapped the top off and drank the contents. Zelena returned with her daughter in her arms. The young girl held her arms out for Emma. She took the girl and bounced her.

"I am going to give her a morning snack. Would you like something other than toast?"

Emma took stock of her stomach before answering. "Sure, thanks. Just nothing with onions."

"Scrambled eggs?"

"That sounds good."

---------------

Regina reappeared in front of her vault. She went directly to her secret room where she kept all her books on magic and potions. After searching, she found the books she needed and a few others that she put into a box. She left after securing the room and vault. Seconds later she reappeared in their kitchen. She placed the box of books on the counter and one by one removed them.

The baby looked up from her plate and said, "Gigi."

Regina kissed the red curls. "Hey there sweet girl. What are you eating?"

"Yeggs. Mommy make. Want some?" The little girl held out her spoon.

"No thank you. You eat them." Regina said as she went to Emma and kissed her head. "How about you sweet girl? How are you doing?"

"Better. Zelena made me scrambled eggs also. So far so good."

"There are more in the warmer if you want them." Zelena called from the laundry room.

"Thank you." Regina called back. She took the plate from the warmer, poured herself another cup of coffee and sat next to Emma. "So you stomach has calmed down?"
"Yeah, I think the crud has ended for today."

"Did the deputies say anything more after I left?"

"No they left right after you did. I take it from the stack of books that you found what you went looking for?"

"I did and a few others."

Emma picked up one of the old books and read the title. "Sensory spells?"

"Very good. You are getting better at reading Elfish."

"I have an excellent teacher." Emma replied. "How does that help us with the fissures?"

"You asked if there was a spell to block certain smells. If there if one it will be in that book."

"Oh yeah. I forgot about asking that."

"You were a little busy with, what was that phrase you used?"

"Tossing my cookies?"

"That's the one."

"What do we do first? Read or go to see Blue?" Emma asked.

"Why don't you let me do the reading while you go to the hospital." Zelena said as she walked out of the laundry room. "I can do your laundry while you are gone." She laughed. "Will you look at me. Who would have thought that the Wicked Witch would become so domesticated."

"That is was motherhood and having a family that loves you will do to you." Regina said. She placed their dirty dishes in the dishwasher. Emma walked to the hallway where she left her boots. She sat on the stairs to pull them on.

They left the house for the short drive to the hospital.
The hospital was quiet except for the construction that could be heard through the thick walls. With the heat turned on the place was stuffy which intensified the normal smells of the hospital. Nurses and aides hurried by as they took care of their patients before visitors arrived. The staff greeted them as they walked down the hall to Blue's room.

"Tell me again why we just didn't magic the expansions to the hospital?"

"Well my dear, this way people can take part in the building and earn their money."

"Will we at least change the color? This grey is depressing."

"We can paint it any color you want, sweetheart."

The entered Blue's room where Doctor Whale was updating Nova and Tink.

"There has been no change. He vitals while low are steady. Why she is still unconscious, has me puzzled. I have to ask. It has been suggested that Blue is under a sleeping curse."

"That is not possible doctor. Fairies protected against things like a sleeping curse." Nova said.

"How long can Blue stay like this?" Tink asked.

Whale shrugged. "She is receiving fluids and we will continue to monitor her condition. We will also be running more tests later today. Truthfully I am baffled."

"That would not take much." Emma whispered to Regina causing the brunette to chuckle. She covered the sound with a cough.

Whale turned. "About time you two got back." He said angrily. "Maybe now you can find a way to fix this problem." He left the room.

"Emma, now that you are here, maybe we can wake Blue."

"I don't know what to do Nova." Emma said. "Tell us what you know about what happened."

"A fissure opened and Blue put a barrier up to stop any beings from coming through. Blue and one of the beings stared at each other for several minutes. Then Blue collapsed. She has been like that ever since."

"We heard a second fissure opened. Many of the fairies are out there putting up a protective barrier until we know if the beings are good or evil."

"Is there any way to tell?" Emma asked.

"According to the Fairy Chronicles, the eyes will tell us. With a good shade, the eyes will glow white. While the eyes of an evil shade will glow red."

"We heard that the eyes that caused Blue's condition glowed white."

"That means they are good right?"
"Yes but we cannot lower the main protective barrier to communicate with them."

"Why the Hell not?" Regina asked.

"Blue put that primary barrier up. Only she knows the exact spell she used. We can only remove the reinforcements but not the actual barrier."

"That just bites." Emma said. "What else can you tell us about these shades?"

"Because they come from the shadow realm, the only way they can move in daylight and not in shadows or darkness is to take over the bodies of living beings."

"Like humans?"

"Yes."

"Then there is no way of knowing who has been affected."

"There are ways." Nova said. "According to the chronicles the personalities will change. If a person is good they will turn dark."

"Will a person who is dark turn light?" Regina asked.

"No unfortunately. They will turn darker. Take Doctor Whale. He is an adequate doctor, but everyone knows he is a womanizer. If he were taken over then he would become worse."

"So if someone like Happy is affected her will become grumpy and someone like Grumpy will become grumpier?"

"Yes. I think so."

"You think?" Emma snapped.

"I am sorry but the only person who can correctly interpret the chronicles is Blue."

"And she is not talking." Emma said and walked to Blue's bedside. She placed a hand on her arm. She turned to face the fairies. "So we are royally screwed."

Nova blushed at her comment. "Yes."

"Emma we need to get out to those fissures. Perhaps we can help."

"Okay."

"Do you know where they are?"

"Yeah Leroy told us last night." Emma answered. "Nova if there is any change or if something happens no matter how small call us."

"I have Blue's phone and will call immediately."

They left the room and walked out of the hospital. Hand in hand they disappeared in a cloud of purple smoke. They reappeared near the first fissure. Ruby and several guardians in human and animal forms patrolled the barrier. Four fairies pointed their wands at the barrier. Ruby waved at them.
"Glad to see you two." Ruby said.

"We have been hearing that a lot." Emma said. "Fill us in on what the fairies are trying to do?"

"They are trying different spells to bring down the barrier."

"Is that wise?"

"According to the fairies, those are good guys. Their eyes glow white."

"Are they having any luck?"

"None. Blue put the barrier up and it seems that only she can bring it down. They can take down the reinforcements but not the barrier."

"Great." Emma said. "What about the second fissure?"

"It's about a mile away down that path. There are several other fairies and deputies there."

"Is my dad there?"

"Yeah I think so."

"What do you mean?"

"Well it looks like David, but... What is up with him?"

"Why?"

"He came by two hours ago yelling and being very abusive."

"Did he hit anyone?"

"No but only because the guardians were here and stopped him. He yelled that they should be at the other fissure instead of here where the threat was already blocked."

"You didn't tell him that the fairies were trying to bring down the barrier."

"Oh hell no. Emma I know he is your father, but the way he is acting we are not telling him anything."

"Good keep it that way." Emma said.

"I agree. He cannot be trusted until we know if he has been taken over by those shades."

"I know and I agree with you. Pass the word to the fairies and guardians that he is to be kept in the dark."

"Those things can take over humans?"

"Nova told us that earlier. She said their personalities would change."

"Then I would guess David had been taken over. He would never say those things to anyone let alone a woman. What about Snow and Neal? Are they in danger?"

"Maybe."
"What happened? Did he hit her?"

"No, but he did get angry and grabbed her arms hard enough to leave bruises."

"He hurt her? I am going to kill him." Ruby shouted.

"Ruby no. We will protect Snow and Neal even if we have to have her stay with us." Regina said.

"Gina as irritating as mom can be, you would invite her to stay with us?"

"Of course. She is family. We take care of each other. You taught me that."

"Thank you."

"I cannot have you worried about their safety."

"We need to talk to him."

"Well just go down that path you will probably hear him before you see him. Be careful."

"What is he going to do? We have magic, he only has a temper."

"Be careful anyway."

They left and headed down the path. Minutes later as Ruby predicted they did hear David before they saw him.

"You bitches are useless. Get that damn barrier up before that hole opens more."

"Dad." Emma shouted.

David turned. "Its about time you two showed up." He yelled. "Maybe you can light a fire under these broads."

"It is good to see you too dad." Emma said sarcastically.

David shook his head. "Sorry, with everything going on I am a bit on edge." He hugged Emma. "Welcome back." Through her clothes she felt the sting of the burns where his hands touched her back. She pulled away from him.

"David let us handle this. You look exhausted. When is the last time you ate or slept?"

"There has been so much going on that was the last thing on my mind." His attitude changed. "Not everyone has the liberty of disappearing for ten days on vacation." He pointed his finger in Emma's face.

Regina stepped between the two. "All right David." She shouted. "How about you just back off. We would have been here sooner but you ordered everyone not to say anything. You do not get to bitch at us. So you back the Hell off before I back you off."

David took a step back. "Fine you handle things your majesty. Maybe you can get those stupid broads to do what they are supposed to do." He yelled back and left the area.

Emma walked to the fairies who still pointed their wands at the barrier. "Thank you for getting him to leave."
"No problem Yellow. What are you trying to do? Maybe we can help."

"We are waiting to see if anything come through?"

"What if they are evil?"

"There is a temporary barrier in place until we can see their eyes."

"Nova told us about the colors."

"Emma when David was yelling at us I am certain his eyes glowed red."

"We think one of the shades has taken over his body."

"That is not good."

"There is more. We also think that the shade is his twin James." Emma's phone rang. She reached into her back pocket and pulled out her phone. "Sheriff Swan."

"Emma it's Nova we have more information. Can you come back to the hospital?"

"Of course we will be right there." She put the phone back into her pocket. "Regina we have to go. Yellow keep us posted."

Regina took Emma's hand and they disappeared.

-------------------------------
David stormed away from the area and headed directly to the mine to report to the leader. He shed the human body of his brother as he entered the collapsed cavern.

"What have you to report?" The leader asked.

"A second fissure is opening. Those useless bitches, the fairies are trying to put up a barrier, but they are very slow moving. Without their leader, they are not very powerful."

"Their leader is still unconscious?"

"Yes and hopefully she will stay that way."

"What of the Savior and Mayor?"

"They have returned. I spoke to both of them. They suspect nothing."

"Is that right?"

"Yes they are women. They only see me as my good hearted brother. Stupid bitches are only good for one thing."

"Do not underestimate your adversaries, James. What of the child?"

"You said it is of no consequence as long as it remains unborn."

"That is correct."

"Then we have time. It takes months for a child to be born."

"Once again you underestimate those magical beings. Do you think they cannot find a way to
harness the power of that child? Do not forget the Savior was once the Dark One."

"She destroyed the darkness."

"Yes but she still possess the knowledge she gained. You have much to learn James. Go back and keep and eye on her."

-----------------------------
Regina poofed them near the hospital entrance startling the people who were entering the hospital. The people moved away so they could enter. Two fairies had joined Nova and Tink at Blue's bedside. The fairies stood when they entered. Regina closed the door.

"We have more information." Nova said.

"What have you learned?"

"Emma as Savior you are the only person who can wake Blue."

"Who the Hell are you?"

"Forgive me. In this realm I am called Astra. But if you would rather you can call me Periwinkle."

"Okay Astra. How do i wake Blue. Don't tell me I have to kiss her. I am a married woman."

Astra blushed. "Nothing like that. You have to touch her heart."

"Wait I touch Blue earlier and nothing happened."

"Where did you touch her?"

"On her arm."

"Then you need to touch her heart."

"Do you mean actually reach into her body and touch her heart?"

"Goodness no. Just touch the area over her heart. That should be enough."

"Okay." Emma went to Blue's side and put her hand over her heart. A pulse of white light radiated from her hand. They all looked for Blue to wake up. The glow faded. "Was that supposed to actually do something?" Emma asked.

"It didn't work."

"That is evident. Maybe you read the directions wrong."

"Maybe. There were a couple of words we couldn't translate. I wrote them down." She handed a copy of the page to Nova. "That is the whole sentence. I underlined the words I didn't know."

The paper contained symbols that look a little like Elfish, yet were different. "What language is that?" Emma asked.

"It is the ancient fairy language. I am still learning it myself." Nova said. It reads, A surge of magic from the unborn child of the savior will return the spirit and break the spell. Emma you unborn child will wake Blue."
"That is just great. I take a potion that Blue gave me to counteract the magical surges. I took it this morning after I finished vomiting from morning sickness."

"That is why it didn't work. Tomorrow come here before you take the potion."

"Okay. Nova are you certain that I will not blast Blue into dust?"

"Fairly certain."

"I would definitely feel better if you said you were completely certain."

"It will be all right, Emma." Tink said. "Tell her the rest Astra."

"The shades cannot touch you without leaving a mark on you."

"Like a burn?"

"Yes."

Emma removed her jacket and shirt. The fairies looked away from Emma in her sports bra. "Gina check my back."

There were two hand prints on her back. "Where did these come from?"

"When dad hugged me, I felt the burn through my clothes."

"Do they hurt?"

"No more than a sunburn."

Regina placed her hands over the marks and they disappeared. "Now we know that David has been taken over by a shade." Regina said. "I am sorry Em."

"Does that mean mom and Neal are in danger?"

"We cannot take that chance. We have to tell her."

"Okay. Nova do you have anything in you magic bag to make my mother less irritating?"

"I am afraid not Emma. I do have a suggestion. Tell no-one outside this room what we know."

"I have to tell mom something to explain why she needs protection."

"Only tell her the barest facts for all our sakes."

"Will we ever have a normal quiet life." Emma asked as she put her jacket on.

No one had an answer for her.
Chapter 12

CHAPTER 12

Emma leaned against her car as they waited for the school day to end. Regina paced in front of her. They heard the bell ring.

"Have you figured out what you are going to say to her?" Regina asked as she stopped pacing.

"No damn it. How am I supposed to tell her without really telling her anything?"

"Tell who what?" Snow asked as she walked towards them.

"Mom." Emma yelped in surprise.

"That's me. What a nice surprise. What brings you both here? How was your doctor's appointment?"

"The appointment was great. We heard the baby's heart beat."

"Fantastic. Boy, girl or too soon to tell?"

"We already know the baby is a girl, Snow." Regina answered.

"Really?"

"Yeah, mom." Emma rubbed the side of her nose. "Um, the baby told me?"

"Okay."

"That's it? You don't have all sorts of questions?"

"Honey, just because we have lived in this realm for years, doesn't mean that I have forgotten that we still have magic here. So, no I am not surprised when you say the baby told you. Now why are you both here?"

"Mom, um, well, we think you, um..."

"Snow for your safety and Neal's we think you should come and stay with us for awhile."

"Why? Do you mean that we are in danger?"

"We can't go into all the details here, but please trust us when we say you could be in danger."

"From whom? You are both being very mysterious. Who are we in danger from?"

"Snow we cannot go into the details out here in the open. Please don't fight us on this. When you are safely in our home we will give you more details."

"What about David? Does he know about any of this?"

"No and we need to keep it that way."

Snow looked at both women. "Okay." She watched them visibly relax. "We need to stop at home first to get the things we will need."
"We will go with you to help." Emma said.

Snow started to argue, but stopped when she looked at their faces. They followed Snow to the farm where they helped her pack clothing for both her and Neal as well as toys and personal items for them both. With the packed bags by the stairs, Regina waved her hands and the suitcases were in Snow's car. They drove home. Emma signaled for Snow to pull her car into the garage. The door closed behind her. Emma shut off her car and they walked into the house. Regina waved her hands again.

"I put your bags into the back bedroom."

"I have done what you asked. Now would you both explain why it was necessary?" Snow demanded as she removed her coat and Neal's and hung them on the hook by the front door.

"Go into the office, I will get coffee or cocoa if you prefer. Although you may want something stronger after we tell you." Regina left Snow and Emma in the office as she went to fix their drinks. Zelena sat at the counter with a steaming cup of coffee as she thumbed through a magazine. Robin sat in her chair munching on small pieces of apple. She smiled at Regina.

"Gigi." The baby called. She held out the apple piece clutched in her small hand.

"Hi sis. The coffee is fresh."

"Thank you. Snow and Neal will be staying with us for a few days."

"Are things getting that bad?"

"Go into the office. Emma and I will fill you both in as much as we can."

A few minutes later Regina carried a tray with their drinks on it. She put it on the coffee table as they helped themselves. Emma started to fill them in on what they had learned. When they finished the four were quiet. The only sound was the children's laughter as they played near the desk.

"So if these Shades can take over a person's body, how can you tell if they are affected?"

"From what we have learned, their eyes will flash red when they are angry. You have to be really paying attention. It could be easily missed. We think anyway."

"You think?" Snow asked.

"So far only one person has witnessed it." Regina answered.

"Do you know whose body was taken over?" Zelena asked.

"It's David." Regina said.

"Are you certain?"

"We are mom. I'm sorry."

"That is why you insisted we stay here."

"Yeah. He is dangerous."

"Not David. You said you only have one person who witness the redness. There could be several explanations to what happened. It could be a trick of the light or she only thought she saw his eyes
change. You just cannot accuse someone of being possessed." Snow yelled. "Emma that is your father you are accusing."

"I know that mom. Do you think I like accusing him?" Emma shouted back.

"That is enough." Zelena shouted as mother and daughter stared at each other. "Is there more you haven't told us?"

"Yes. We found out that the Shades cannot touch Emma without leaving a mark on her."

"What sort of mark?"

"Dad hugged me earlier." Snow started to protest but stopped when Regina held up her hand to stop her. "I felt the burns through my clothes. At the hospital, I took off my shirt and there were two burn marks in the shape of his hands on my back."

"Show me." Snow demanded.

"I healed them." Regina said.

"Well that is convenient isn't it." Snow snapped.

"If you don't believe us, you can ask Nova or Tink. They both saw the burns."

"Okay, say I believe you. David would not hurt me or Neal."

"Those marks he left on your arms say differently." Emma said.

Snow rubbed the areas on her arms where the bruises were fading. "So how do we separate him from the Shade?"

"We don't know that yet." Emma answered

"Who would know?"

"Blue. We are working on a way to wake her up."

"Then what? If you can wake Blue, how do we banish those Shades?"

"We have no idea on that either, mom. Hopefully Blue will be able to tell us." Emma said.

"Did you have any luck with the books?"

"Other than a few references to the Shadow Realm, no."

"Damn." Emma said.

------------------------------

David walked into the house to find it strangely quiet. He walked through the empty house. He frowned at the absence on his wife and child. As a Shade James had no use for food, water or the companionship and feel of a woman. But in his brother's body, he wanted the feel of a woman in his arms.Personally Snow would not have been his first choice, but he would have to take what he could get for the time being. Until the time when more Shades could over and he would have more of a choice. So far, in this world there was only one woman who stirred any sort of feelings inside him. That woman was Ruby. 'That is one fine woman.' He thought. 'Until I can make a move on
her I have to settle for David's chatty wife.' James's hatred for David grew after he was tossed into the River Of Souls in the Underworld. Now in David's body, he could live David's life and have the ultimate revenge by sleeping with Snow. He would show he what a woman's body was for.

He went to the bar and poured himself a large glass of whiskey. Taking the bottle into the living room he flopped down in the comfortable chair to wait for Snow to come home. He finished his drink and poured another. The hours ticked by and Snow still had not returned home. He continued to refill his glass until he passed out in the chair. The empty glass fell from his fingers with a muted clunk.

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Emma sat in the chair by the window and hugged the large bear Regina had won for her, and looked back into the still dark early morning. Regina's hand reached out to touch Emma and found the bed empty. She opened her eyes and searched for her wife. She found Emma hugging the bear. Regina sat up.

"Em is everything okay?" Regina asked her voice husky with sleep. Emma shrugged. "Did the morning sickness kick in early?"

"No not yet anyway."

"Then what is wrong?"

"I don't know Gina." Emma replied still looking out the window.

"Are you worried about today?"

"Yeah."

"Come back to bed. I can give better hugs that that silly stuffed bear."

Emma smiled. "I like this bear. You won her for me."

"That I did."

"Did I tell you that that was the first time anyone had ever won for me?"

"You did. The look on your face was precious. It is one of my favorite memories of us."

"Really?"

"Really. You were like a kid in a candy store that day." Regina said. "Are you going to came back to bed so that I can prove that I give better hugs?"

Emma smiled, stood up and put the bear back in her normal place. She placed a kiss on the shiny nose and went back to the bed where Regina opened her arms. She went inside those loving arms without hesitation, her head comfortably on Regina's shoulder.

"You were right. You do give better hugs then the bear." She lifted her head and kissed Regina's cheek.

"What has you worried, sweetheart?"

"What if it doesn't work and I am unable to wake Blue?" Emma said. "Or worse what if my magic surges too much and I blast Blue into dust."
Regina's hands made small circles on Emma's back. "My darling, you cannot think that way. You have to have faith in your abilities, and in the fairies to have safe guards in place to protect against things like that happening. Any surge will not kill Blue."

"You babe, are spending way too much time with mom. You are starting to sound like her and her eternal hope and faith speeches."

Regina laughed. "Perhaps, but that affliction she has is contagious. You have it to. It is in your D.N.A."

"No, I don't think so. I told mom a long time ago that I thought it skipped a generation."

"I do not believe that for a second. That gene is in there. It may be lying dormant and just needs a little nudge to wake it up."

"It may need more than just a nudge. More like a swift kick or several."

"If that is what it takes, then I am the right woman for the job."

"Thank you." Emma whispered as she relaxed in Regina's arms. "Gina?"

"Yes."

"Are you trying to put me back to sleep?"

"I am. It is only four thirty. We don't have to get up for another two hours."

"It's working." Emma said as she drifted back to sleep.

Regina continued rubbing Emma's back and kissed her head. "Good girl." She whispered and joined Emma in sleep.

---------------------

Emma's nerves were jumping by the time they arrived at the hospital. Nothing Regina said could say would calm her down. Her hand trembled in Regina's as they silently rode the elevator up to Blue's room. Two fairies stood by the door as they approached. They both bowed. Six more fairies stood around Blue's bed which had been moved as far away from the wall as the tubes and wires allowed. The fairies all bowed to Emma.

"That's new." Emma said.

"It is a sign of respect for you and your child Emma." Nova said. "Are you ready?"

"Not really, but it has to be done so let's do this." Emma replied.

"Emma, We have been working through the night to put safeguards into place to insure that Blue will not be harmed. Or you for that matter. You must believe in your abilities and your child's. Also believe in the love you and Regina share. She will ground you."

"What do you mean?" Regina asked.

"We ran our own tests last night. What we have found is that Blue's spirit is not in her body."

"What the Hell?"
"We believe that is why Blue did not wake yesterday. Regina will be your earthly tie in the event your spirit wanders to find Blue's" Nova said. "Please come and sit while I explain what could happen." She waited for Emma to sit before she started talking. "With Blue's spirit not in her body, when your magic surges, your spirit will probably search for hers. Regina will be in constant contact with your body while your spirit searches. She will be the one to call your spirit back."

"Why me? Why am I the one who has to search for Blue? Why not one of the fairies?" Emma asked.

"None of the fairies are as powerful as the combination of you, Regina and your child." Nova explained. "With your blood bond, Regina is the only one who can call your spirit back."

"You know for certain that Blue's spirit is not in her body?" Regina asked.

"Yes."

"What effect with this have on Emma or the baby?"

"The baby's spirit will travel with Emma's"

"Will I have my magic? Or will my spirit have my magic to protect us?"

"I don't know. We are travelling into unknown territory here."

"Will we know when Emma's spirit leaves?"

"Yes. Emma will lose consciousness. Her body will be rigid and she will feel cold to the touch. It is at that point that you must remain in physical contact with Emma. You cannot break that contact. You are her tether to this world. Only you can call her spirit back. She will be disoriented and may not be able to find her way back without you."

"How much danger will they be in?"

"There could be dangers. What kind we don't know. We have put every possible precaution in place that Emma's spirit will be returned safely."

"The eight of you will do that?"

"When we are ready, all the adult fairies will come." Nova explained.

"Will my spirit meet up with other spirits?"

"It is possible, now that the barriers between worlds has been lowered."

"Will Blue look like Blue?"

"No."

"Then how the Hell am I supposed to find her if she doesn't look like herself."

"We have a potion for you to drink that will help you find Blue. It contains one drop of Blue's essence."

"I have to drink essence of Blue?" Emma joked lamely. "How about you define exactly what sort of essence you are talking about. Do you mean blood, tears or sweat or other body fluids?"
"No, goodness no." Nova said her cheeks turning red. "Emma have you ever walking out on a misty day?"

"Yeah so?"

That mist is made up of trillions of very tiny droplets of water. Your essence is made up of trillions of those droplets. We took a single drop the size of one of those droplets and placed in it the potion. It will not harm you or your child."

"This is starting to give me a headache. Let's just do this."

"Alright. Here are two robes for you to change into while we get the room prepared and call the fairies."

Emma and Regina took the robes and went behind the curtain to change. Regina took Emma into her arms and kissed her. They stayed like that for several minutes. When they emerged the room had been magically expanded to accommodate all the fairies. Nova handed Emma the small vial to drink. She showed Emma where to place her hands on Blue and showed Regina where to hold Emma.

"Remember you cannot break physical contact with Emma at any point in all this." Tink said.

"I understand."

"Certain body functions will be stopped until Emma wakes up again."

The fairies started to chant as Emma drank the potion and placed her hands where Nova showed her. Emma's hands glowed a brilliant white where they rested on Blue's chest. Her eyes closed. Regina felt Emma stiffen and caught her as she collapsed unconscious. Only Regina's hands kept her from hitting the floor.
"Emma." Regina cried as she supported Emma's weight. A bed materialized for her to lower the unconscious woman.

"Lay next to her, Regina." Nova ordered. "Her spirit is not in her body. Do not break physical contact with her." Regina gathered Emma into her arms tightly. Emma's head rested above Regina's heart. Emma's breathing was slow and shallow. Regina had to lay perfectly still to feel any sort of movement in the slight rise and fall of Emma's chest.

"How long can she stay like this?" Regina asked.

"Until she completes her mission to find Blue."

"She is not a fairy. She is human and needs food, air and water to survive."

"We know Regina. Doctor Whale has been advised and will administer fluids if needed." Nova replied calmly. "What you must do Regina is hold her and keep her grounded. When the time comes you will need to talk to her to call her spirit back. Your voice will help her find her way back once her mission has been completed."

The fairies continued to chant softly. Nova closed her eyes as she felt a presence. She opened her eyes to see the faint shadow hovering above Regina. "Find Blue's spirit and return back here."

"Is her spirit still here?" Regina asked as she felt a slight touch on her cheek. So fleeting was the touch that she thought she had imagined it.

"Yes it takes a short time for the spirit to acclimate itself. "As soon as you are ready, find Blue." The shadow nodded and flew through the window.

Emma's spirit soared out of the hospital and headed towards the forest that surrounded the town on three sides. She ended up at the dome that covered the first fissure. Circling the dome she looked for a way through the protective dome. The shade behind the dome motioned for her to stop. He placed a hand on the inside of the dome. Emma placed her's against the dome on the outside. The two communicated through the dome.

Guardians that patrolled the area felt the change in the air but could not see Emma's spirit. They sensed her presence.

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David woke up in the same chair that he passed out in the night before. His head pounded from the amount of whiskey he consumed and his muscles protested being in the cramped position for so many hours. He swayed when he finally made it to his feet after several failed attempts. His mouth felt like a sewer. Stumbling to the kitchen, he filled a glass with water and quickly drank it down. He drank a second and a third before he felt hydrated.

He could hear the real David laughing inside his head. "Whiskey is one hundred times stronger than the wine you drank when you were alive."
"Just shut up you weak fool." James spoke out loud to David's voice. He stumbled up the stairs to the bedrooms. The large bed was neatly made and looked as if it had not been slept in. The closet door was open. Half the hangers were empty. He opened the drawers in the dresser to find them empty as well. "What the Hell. Where did that stupid bitch go?"

"Don't call my wife a bitch. It is evident you dumb ass, she left you."

"Where did she go?"

"What makes you think I would tell you even if I did know?"

"You are as useless as everyone else in this damn town. I don't know why the idiot leader decided to come here."

"What particular idiot are you talking about?" David taunted. "It seems you are all idiots coming to a world where you need to take over human in order to be out in the sunshine."

"That is none of your business you weak minded fool." James yelled. He slammed out of the house to David's truck.

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The Guardians patrolled around the dome trying to pinpoint where the presence was. One called Ruby to relay the news of the disturbance. Ruby in turn called Emma. Regina cradled Emma in her arms and heard Emma's phone ring. She reached down and pulled the phone out.

"Who is this?" Regina demanded.

"Regina, this is Ruby. Is Emma available?"

"No, um she is not available right now. Is there something I can do for you?"

"There is something going on at the first fissure."

"Explain."

"It is something we are not able to see but can sense. It is a wolf thing."

"I will take your word for that. Can you come to the hospital?"

"Yeah sure."

"Come to Blue's room and we can talk then."

"Okay." Ruby ended the call.

Regina looked at the fairies. "Emma is so stiff and cold. How long can she remain like this?"

"Until her spirit returns." Nova answered.

"It has been hours. Emma is barely breathing. Can you recall her spirit?" Regina snapped.

Nova shook her head no. "There is no way to recall her spirit. It will return when she has completed her mission."

"That could take days. Or her spirit could be captured like Blue's"
"Have faith in Emma. She will find Blue's spirit without being captured."

------------------------

Emma's spirit stood at the dome. "Tell me." She said to the shade. "What caused this?"

"When the Lord of the Underworld died, the barrier that kept the unfortunates in the River of Souls fell allowing them to enter the Shadow Realm. Those evil souls became Dark Shades. They are the ones who created the unrest in the Shadow Realm and opened a gateway into the land of the living."

"How do we send them back?"

"They must be separated from the humans they have taken over."

"How?"

"There is a plant that grows here in the Shadow Realm that will freeze the shade. You must injure the body to direct the plant to the shade."

"Injure?"

"Yes with an arrow or dart, anything that will pierce the skin. The plant must be ground up and made into a serum that the tips are dipped in."

"With this toxin harm humans?"

"I do not think so. The leader will know more about that."

"The leader?"

"The one whose spirit you seek. She is the only one who will have the knowledge of both our worlds."

"Blue knows."

"Yes."

"How do we get the plants we need if they only grow in your realm."

"I will have them collected and brought here in four days. By that time I will also know how many Shades made it to your world."

"Okay."

"Savior, the fairy's time grows short. If her spirit is not returned to her body before this day ends, she will become a shade."

"I understand. But once we freeze the shades what do we do with them?"

"They must be contained in a special vessel. The fairy knows how to construct the vessel."

"That is a problem as long as she remains unconscious."

"That unfortunately is my fault. When we communicated, her spirit was sucked out by a shade and is being held captive. As long as her spirit is held she will not wake. You must not delay in finding her spirit."
"How the Hell do I do that?"

"Shades prefer dark places. Find the darkest place and you will find where her spirit is held."

"Dark, like a basement or, wait could they be in the mines?"

"Yes. Once you find the container you must break it and free her spirit. You will need to lead her back to her body. She will be disoriented and as her time grows shorter will become more disoriented. She will feel the pull of the Shadow Realm and may not be strong enough to resist that pull."

"Thank you."

"Good journey Savior."

Emma's spirit broke the connection with the Shade and headed towards the mines. She entered the closed mine, feeling the pull of Blue's spirit. Floating near the ceiling until she came to the collapsed cavern. The force pulling her became stronger as she traveled through the caverns until she notices a faint light. Hovering in the shadows she extended her senses to make sure she was along. The light came from a container that sat on a rock ledge. Satisfied that there were no Shades near, she swooped down and knocked the container off the ledge. It shattered on the rock floor. Blue's spirit was released. The two spirits floated to the ceiling. Emma held out her hand, which Blue grasped. She led them out of the cavern. Several minutes later they left the mines completely.

------------------------

Ruby arrived at the hospital to find all the fairies surrounding Blue's bed in the expanded room. In another bed, Regina held Emma's unconscious form.

"What happened?" Ruby asked. "What is wrong with Emma?"

"We are attempting to wake Blue." Nova answered.

"How, by knocking Emma out? She pregnant. What will this do to the baby?"

"Emma and the child are protected. Her spirit is searching for Blue's. We must have faith and believe they will both wake when their spirits return."

"When will that be?" Ruby demanded.

"When she has fulfilled her mission."

"Ruby you said something was going on at the fissure?"

"Yeah, we could sense a presence, but could not see anything. The being behind the dome stood pressed against the dome for a long time. We could hear murmurs but not any actual words."

"Emma's spirit has made contact with the Shades." Nova said with conviction.

"How can you be so sure?" Ruby demanded.

"That is where faith, trust and belief come in Ruby."

The door slammed open. Whale stood in the doorway, angry. "What the Hell is going on in here? I gave permission for two of you to remain for religious purposes, not the whole damned convent." He yelled, his eyes turning red. Ruby and Nova noticed the color and looked at each other.
"We understand Doctor Whale. We are sorry we have disrupted the hospital routine. It will not happen again. Tink and I will remain here. The rest of you will return to your duties," Nova ordered.

One by one the fairies bowed to Blue and vanished from the room. The room shrank back to normal size..

"Have you noticed any change?" Whale asked.

"None but we are hopeful she will wake up."

He scoffed. "At this point I doubt that will happen." He turned and left the room without checking Blue.

Nova waited until the door closed before she spoke. "Did you see it Ruby?"

"Yes I did."

"See what? What the Hell just happened?"

"Whale's body has been taken over by a Shade. His eyes flashed red."

"You told him of your plans."

"I did."

"So now he has the power to stop us." Regina said. "Or worse harm both Emma and Blue."

"Not necessarily. From what I have learned, once a Shade take over a being, they need to go dormant for short periods of time, like a nap. Where the host is once again in charge of their bodies. It must have been during one of those times that I spoke to Whale."

"There are two separate beings inside one body?" Ruby asked.

"Yes."

"What stops the Shade from knowing what the host knows?"

"Eventually that will happen. The longer the Shade remains inside it's host the stronger it gets. It is extremely important that we find a way to drive the Shades out of the hosts, before they are completely in charge."

"How long has Emma's spirit been gone?"

"Almost six hours. I am worried about her well being. More so now that we cannot trust Whale."

"Is there anything I can do?"

"Not unless you enter my body and become me. Emma needs to hear my voice to lead her back."

Nova closed her eyes and concentrated. She listened over the sounds in the room. "You must talk to her now, Regina."

Regina put her head down near Emma's ear and spoke softly. "I was thinking about turning the room across from our into the nursery. We can decorate it together. I may regret this, but you can choose the color. We can have Henry help us so that he doesn't feel left out." Regina paused to take
a sip from the glass of water Tink handed her. She talked to Emma again.

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Emma’s spirit with Blue still holding her hand passed through the tree tops. People passed underneath them. The mine was far behind them as the continued through the forest to the town. Many times when the trees thinned out, they paused in the tree tops as people passed by. Not knowing if they were friend or enemy, they waited until the way was cleared to proceed. They hid for what seemed like hours.

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The Shade made it's way to the collapsed cavern. He sensed the disturbance and looked around the cavern until he arrived to find the container smashed on the floor and the woman's spirit missing. He opened his mouth to emit a loud shriek that echoed through the cavern and out into the forest.

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The sun was setting when the two spirits made it to the edge of the forest. They could see the lights from town in the distance. They were about to leave the scant protection of the trees when a loud screech filled the air.

"What the Hell is that?" Emma asked.

"It is an alarm. They must have found the broken container and realized that my spirit was gone. The Shades will soon be out in force searching for me."

The noise continued for several minutes. Emma found herself disoriented. The pull of the scream became stronger."

"What is going on?"

"That scream is meant to call the Shades. We are feeling the effects of that call. We cannot give into that pull and must find our way back to our bodies."

Both spirits covered their ears to try to drown out the hypnotic sound. "How do we resist? I don't know where to go. I feel the pull back to the mines. I don't know much much longer I can resist it."

"We must resist, Emma."

"How? It feels as if the noise is inside my head."

"Listen with your heart. It will allow you to hear beyond the alarm." Blue said. "Emma if my spirit is not reunited with my body soon, I will become a Shade for all eternity. You must listen with your heart."

"The Shade I spoke to mentioned that. Will I become a Shade?"

"You have several days before that happens. I no longer have that luxury. I am already feeling the pull of the Shadow Realm. Listen with your heart, Emma. Regina will be calling your spirit back to your body."

Emma listened. She thought of her love for Regina and listened with her heart. Beyond the scream she heard Regina's voice. "I hear her."

"Concentrate on Regina's voice." Blue said. "Find the direction that the sound is loudest and clearest. It will lead us back. Trust your heart, love and bond."
Emma turned to find the strongest sound. The direction the sound will lead her back. "Come back to me Emma. Listen to my voice and it will lead you home. You must return. You keep me sane and complete me."

"Blue I hear Regina's voice. This way back to the hospital."

"We must hurry Emma. The pull of the Shadow Realm is getting stronger. I may not be able to resist for much longer."

"We must go now. Take my hand Blue. I can see the town from here. If we stay above the lights we will be in the shadows and no one below will notice us."

Blue nodded and grabbed Emma's hand. They left the safety of the trees and flew above the lights towards the hospital. Emma followed the sound of Regina's voice as it got louder and stronger. Like a homing beacon it pulled them both through the window of Blue's room.

Regina, Ruby and the fairies felt the rush of air as the two spirits returned. The monitors around Blue's bed showed an increase in pulse, breathing, blood pressure and body temperature. Regina felt the stiffness leave Emma's body. With a flutter of her lids, green eyes met worried brown eyes watching her.

"Hi." She said weakly.

"Hi yourself." Regina kissed Emma's forehead. "You had me worried princess."

"I'm sorry Gina." Emma started to shiver. "Cold." Regina waved her hand and Emma was surrounded by a warm blanket.

"Is that better?"

Emma nodded as she snuggled closer to Regina. "I love you." She whispered and closed her eyes again as she slowly warmed up.
CHAPTER 14

Blue's eyes opened. She took several deep breaths and looked around the room. Nova and Tink sat close to the bed. Both smiled at her. A warm blanket was placed over her chilled body. Near bye Regina lay with Emma in her arms. Her eyes met Regina's and they both smiled.

"Welcome back." Regina said softly to not wake Emma who dozed in her arms.

"Thank you." Blue said. "She did it. Emma did it."

"Yes she did." Regina said proudly.

"You both did. We would not have succeeded without you. It was your voice Emma heard that led us back. We were confused and the pull of the Shadow Realm was strong. Your voice saved us both."

Regina shrugged. "We all had our parts to play. I am happy I could help and that it worked. Is there any thing else we need to do?"

Blue closed her eyes and nodded. "Not today. Tomorrow we will talk about what we need to do next. What we both need right now is rest. Take Emma home and let her regain her strength. I know what she had to do to save me. She will need food and rest. We both do. Take her home, Regina."

"Are you certain you will be safe?"

"I am well protected."

"Alright, Blue." Regina waved her hand and they both disappeared in a puff of smoke. Reappearing seconds later in their bed, still in the same positions they were in, in the hospital. Regina waved her hand again and they were both in their sleep clothes. Regina knew she should let Snow and Zelena know they had returned, but she was tired and far too comfortable to move. Another waved of her hand and paper and pen were in her hand. She wrote, 'We are both back safely, but exhausted. Will fill you both in on everything in the morning. R'. She sent the note downstairs.

The Shades were gathered in the cavern with the broken pieces of the container on the floor. Anger radiated off the leader as her walked around the Shades. Red eyes blazing as he held the Shades immobilized as he ranted. He stopped in front of David.

"You said there was no need to post a guard. You said the humans were not smart enough to find this place. Now the female leader's spirit is gone. Once again you have underestimated the humans." He moved to Whale. "And you, you were supposed to make sure she stayed out of commission."

"I chased the fairies out of her room. I had no idea they were..."

"SILENCE." He yelled. "No more excuses. No more mistakes. Find that spirit and return her before she finds her way back to her body. GO NOW." He shouted and kicked the broken pieces of the container towards the Shades who jumped back. The Shades left the cavern.
Regina lay on her side with Emma tucked tightly against her, still sleeping soundly. The events of the previous day took a toll on the younger woman so Regina lay awake and watched her sleep. The slow even breathing and strong pulse under her fingers assured her that Emma was sleeping. Emma's chilled body had warmed during the night and she no longer felt like a block of ice.

Not wanting to move and take the chance of waking Emma, Regina continued to watch over her wife. She glanced at the clock and saw it was still very early. Regina knew she would not be able to go back to sleep so she was content to remain holding Emma. Until her body reminded her that the spell the fairies used to pause her body functions had worn off during the night. Now her bladder demanded attention.

With a wave of her hand, she left the bed and was in the bathroom. Regina took care of her personal needs and took a quick shower before she returned to bed where she would watch over Emma until she woke naturally. She heard the muted voices through the closed door. Emma stirred beside her. Regina watched as her eyes slowly opened.

Emma stretched and rubbed her eyes. "Hi."

"Hi back."

"Were you watching me sleep again?"

"Guilty as charged. You know how much I love watching you sleep."

"What time is it?"

"It's early, just a little after six. How are you feeling?"

"Hungry."

"Considering how you have not eaten since breakfast yesterday, that is understandable. And a very good sign."

"Gina did it work? Did Blue wake up?"

"Yes and yes. You did it my darling. You found Blue's spirit and brought it back to her body."

"How did we get here? I don't remember leaving the hospital. Why can't I remember?"

"You were asleep. Blue said that you both needed rest and food to regain your strength. So I zapped us back here into our bed. Oh and I sent a note to your mother to let her and Zelena know we were home safely and that we would talk to them in the morning." Regina said. "Speaking of morning, how is your stomach? Any morning sickness?"

Emma took stock of her body before answering. "None, not yet anyway."

"Then that means we should take advantage of the reprieve and get you fed. You take a shower while I go fix breakfast."

"Blueberry pancakes?"

"If that is what you want my darling, then I will make you blueberry pancakes."

"Then I will go shower."
Neither woman moved for several minutes as they lay in each other's arms. "We are not getting very far are we?" Regina said. Emma's stomach rumbled. "Time to move princess so that we can get that beast inside there, fed." She poked Emma's stomach.

Reluctantly they separated. Emma headed to the shower while Regina made the bed with a snap of her fingers. She dressed and headed downstairs to face the hundreds of questions that awaited her.

Snow and Zelena sat at the breakfast counter and greeted Regina as she walked into the kitchen.

"How is Emma? What happened yesterday? What about Blue? Any luck waking her? What was with that note? Why were you exhausted?"

Regina held up her hands. "We will answer all your questions. First Emma is fine. Hungry but tired. She wants blueberry pancakes. Let me get started and we can talk." Regina said as she pulled ingredients from the cabinets and refrigerator. Turning the griddle on, she mixed the batter. Flicking a few drops of water onto the griddle, she watched them dance and sizzle across the surface. She poured batter onto the hot surface and added blueberries when the batter bubbled.

Dressed in her new jeans and boots, her still wet hair tied back into a pony tail, Emma walked into the kitchen. She poured herself a large glass of orange juice. "Morning everyone." She said and kissed Regina's cheek. "That smells good babe."

They will be ready shortly. Go sit."

"I love it when you get all bossy." Emma said with a cheeky grin.

"There is fresh coffee in the carafe." Snow said when Emma sat down.

Regina expertly flipped the pancakes to let them brown evenly, before putting them on a plate that she placed on the counter. She started another set. Emma took two of the golden brown pancakes, placed large pats of butter on each and drowned them in syrup. She took a large bite. Chewing quickly she swallowed and took another bite.

"Hey sweetheart, slow down, there are plenty more. I can make more batter if I need to."

"Sorry, babe." Emma said as she swallowed quickly. Regina refilled the platter and filled the griddle a third time. "Did Henry leave for school already?"

"It's Saturday, Emma there is no school today. He had the early shift at Granny's"

"Oh, it's Saturday already?"

"It is dear. A great deal has happened since you returned." Snow said.

"Speaking of yesterday," Zelena said, what happened? Were you at the hospital all day?"

Regina placed two more pancakes on Emma's plate.

"Thanks babe. What about you? You need to eat too."

"I will. But we need to satisfy that beast inside you first."

"That is no way to talk about our daughter." Emma joked. The edge taken off her hunger.

"I was talking about that big hole inside you that you call a stomach." Regina joked back. "We are
not ignoring your questions, Snow. I just needed to make sure Emma ate before all the craziness starts again." Regina turned off the griddle and sat down to eat. "Where are the children?"

Snow and Zelena held up baby monitors. "They are still sleeping. We kept them up late last night so that we could talk this morning."

Regina sipped her coffee while Emma started the story of their adventure from the day before.

Blue woke to the sound of Nova and Tink talking softly by the window. She listened to them as the fog left her brain.

"We cannot trust anyone here. We know that Whale has been affected. Who knows how many others have been taken over by the Shades." Nova said.

"Will Whale let her leave?"

"He cannot stop her if she wants to leave. It is against the law."

"We will ask her once she is awake."

"Ask me now." Blue said. The two fairies turned from the window.

"We do not think it is safe here and want to take you out of the hospital." Nova said.

"You are correct Nova. I do want to leave. It is not safe here." Blue said as she pulled the needle from her arm.

"I will get the nurse." Tink offered and left the room. Blue got out of bed and searched for her clothes. Tink and the nurse came back into the room.

The nurse was angry. Her eyes flashed red. "You can't leave yet. Doctor Whale has not released you." She shouted.

"You cannot hold me here. It is against the law. Bring my discharge papers, I am leaving." Blue demanded. "Or I will leave without them." She turned to Nova. "Find my clothes."

Nova hurried to the metal cabinet and pulled out a bag with Blue's clothes. Tink pushed the nurse out of the room and closed the door. She noticed the red eyes again. Leaning against the door to stop the nurse from returning until they wanted her to, she said. "She has been taken over by a Shade. We need to get out of here Blue."

Blue nodded and took her clothes into the bathroom. When she emerged, fully dressed a few minutes later she said, "Emma must be notified immediately." Nova looked around the room to make sure they had everything. Tink opened the door. An angry Whale and the nurse stood on the other side and blocked their escape.

"Going somewhere?" He asked, his eyes flashing.

"As a matter of fact, yes I am leaving." Blue said.

"I cannot let you do that."

"I do not want to hurt you, doctor, but if you do not get out of my way, I will."
"You cannot leave." Whale argued.

"And you cannot stop me. So doctor I suggest you get out of our way." Whale didn't move. Blue waved her hand sending Whale and the nurse flying backwards into the wall. The fairies disappeared.

"Call the Sheriff. Tell him a dangerous patient has escaped. I will contact the Leader." Whale ordered.

"He will not be happy. First her spirit was released and now she has escaped. Damned do-gooders."

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Emma continued her account of the night before. Empty plates covered the breakfast island. "We were headed back to the hospital when we heard this awful screeching fill the air. Did you hear it?" They all shook their heads no. "Blue said it was a call to the Shades to tell them Blue's spirit had escaped. We both became confused and didn't know which way to go. The longer the screeching went on the more confused we became. Blue said that she could feel the call to go to the Shadow Realm and that she didn't know how much longer she could resist the pull. That is when Blue said to listen with my heart not my ears. Eventually I was able to hear Regina's voice calling to me. She led us back."

"I felt her spirit return immediately. Then they both woke up. Blue said to take Emma home and let her rest and regain her strength. That is what I did." Regina finished.

"You held Emma for twelve hours and did nothing? Kudos to you sis." Zelena said.

"With Blue awake, she will be able to tell us what we need to do to send those Shades back." Emma said.

"Speaking of that, we really should get back to the hospital." Regina said as she loaded the dishwasher. The door bell rang. "Who the Hell is that? It is not even eight a.m."

"I'll get it babe." Emma left the kitchen and returned with the three fairies.

"It was no longer safe for me to remain in the hospital." Blue said as they walked into the kitchen. Snow jumped up and hugged her friend. Zelena started another pot of coffee.

"Would you like some breakfast?" Regina asked.

"I don't want to go through any trouble."

"Blue you were unconscious for days, living on I.V. fluids. You need to regain your strength also if you want to take on the Shades." Regina argued.

"Alright then, yes. Thank you."

Regina turned the griddle back on and prepared the batter for more pancakes. Emma pulled plates and silverware from the cabinet and drawer that she put on the counter which expanded to make room for all of them instead of moving into the dining room. The children were moved to the play area so they could talk. Emma poured them all coffee and placed the sugar and cream where they could be easily reached.

"Why do you feel the Hospital was no longer safe?" Snow asked.
"Whale and the nurse in charge have been taken over by Shades. We have no way of knowing how many others have been affected."

"How can you tell?" Zelena asked.

"At a glance, you cannot tell. However their eyes will flash red when they are angry."

"So we need to go around a piss people off to see if their eyes change colors?" Emma asked. "The Shade I talked to said you had the answers we would need."

"You talked to him?"

"Well my spirit did."

"You were lucky your spirit was not captured like mine was."

"I was protected against that happening. Anyway he told me where to look and how to defeat the Shades that are here."

"How?" Snow asked.

"They have to be injured in some way. There are special plants that do not grow here that we need. He is going to have them gathered. The plants need to be made into a serum. Then we coat the tips of arrows or darts with the serum. It will freeze the Shade and drive them from the body they have taken over. The Shades will then be locked into special enchanted containers. He said Blue would know how to make the serum. Once the Shades are captured, we can send them all back to the Shadow Realm. If they are not contained the Shades will just seek another body to enter."

"Do we know how many humans have been taken over?" Regina asked as she placed a full platter on the counter and motioned for the fairies to eat. She filled the griddle again.

"No we do not. However there is another way besides going around making people angry. We will give Emma extra sight." Blue said.

"What?" Emma said.

"You used to wear glasses correct?"

"Uh yeah, but I had surgery to correct my vision and I don't need them anymore."

"Then we change the lenses to plain glass, enchanted but plain."

"The lenses were plastic."

"Plastic then, but they will be enchanted to show you the auras of every person. Those who have been invaded by a Shade will have a dark or even black aura."

"Then what?"

"We put a list together until we have the plants to make into serum and the vessels we need to capture the Shades. Then we injure them."

"Just like that?" Snow asked.

"I am not saying that it will be easy, because it will not. We have no idea how many Shades we are dealing with. It will take time to make the containers and get everything ready."
"So I just walk around town with a pad and pen and write down any names that have a black cloud around them"

"For now."

"I have a better way." Regina said as she looked at the calendar. "There is a Town Meeting on Tuesday. Most adults show up for that. Emma can sit outside the auditorium and have people sign in. she can see who has the black aura and check off their names."

"We need something that can bring more people to the meeting." Snow said.

"Like a kick ass agenda." Emma offered.

"With Miner's Day and the Holidays coming up it would not be so dry and boring. Some people might actually be able to stay awake." Regina tilted her head in Emma's direction.

"Hey that only happened one time." Emma protested.

Regina's phone rang. "It's Henry." She answered the call and listened for a short time. "Henry slow down, you are not making any sense." She put the phone on speaker and placed it on the counter.

"Grandpa was just here. He said that Blue escaped from the hospital and could be a danger to herself and to others. He said that she suffered an injury that is affecting her mental state. He said that if we see her we should call him immediately. He even offered a reward. Granny told me to call you right away. Mom what is going on? Blue is not dangerous?"

"No she is not dangerous Henry. We will explain everything when you get off work."

"Okay. He also threatened to arrest anyone who helped her."

"What? He does not have the authority to do that on his own." Emma shouted.

"Whale must have told him that Blue was too mentally unstable to leave the hospital." Regina said. "He also does not have the authority to offer a reward. That has to go through the Mayor's office. Henry keep us posted if you hear anything else."

"Will do mom."

"Damn it." Regina said. "Someone inside the Mayor's office has been affected. The funds for any rewards must go through me. Someone has gone rogue. That money has to come from a special fund. Emma get those glasses so that Blue can prepare them."

Emma left and returned with the glasses. Blue took the glasses. "I will also make eye drops that will do the same as the enchanted lenses. When do you need to go back to get the plants."

"He asked me to give him four days. So probably Tuesday?"

The fairies stood. "We will contact you when we are ready."

"Blue you cannot go outside when the Shades are looking for you." Snow protested.

"Then it is a good thing that we are fairies." Blue said. The joined hands and disappeared in a puff of smoke.
CHAPTER 15

The police car pulled up to the convent with a screech of tires. David jumped out of the car slamming the door. He stormed onto the porch and pounded on the door. When his pounding did not get an immediate answer he pounded again.

The fairies watched from the hidden window as he continued to pound on the thick wooden door. Blue spoke to Emma on the phone.

"He looks very angry. Do we need to let him in?"

"Only if he has a search warrant. If he doesn't then no, you don't have to open the door. Regina and I will be right over."

"There is no need, Emma. I think we can handle him. We have magic, he does not."

"He also has a gun. Can we pop right into the convent?"

"I will lower the protection barrier so that you can."

Blue ended the call and waved her arm. Within seconds Regina and Emma stood before her. They could still hear David pounding on the door. Emma took charge immediately. "I will open the door."

"Be careful." Regina said. Emma nodded and left the office. She went to the foyer an pulled open the sturdy door.

"It's about damn time one of you... Emma. What are you doing here?"

"The question is what are you doing here?"

"Blue escaped from the hospital. Is she here?"

Emma saw the red in his eyes. "Blue?"

"Yeah. Doctor Whale said she left the hospital without his okay. I am looking for her."

"It is not a crime to leave the hospital."

"It is if she is a danger to herself and others. She and her accomplices attacked Whale and a nurse and escaped."

"Blue?"

"Yeah, Blue. The bitch leader of these meddling fairies. I need to look around for her. Are you going to allow me to come in?"

"Do you have a search warrant?"

"No."

"Then no no you cannot come in."
"I AM THE SHERIFF, I DEMAND..." David yelled.

"STOP RIGHT THERE DAD. YOU ARE ONLY THE ASSISTANT SHERIFF. I AM THE SHERIFF. I WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT DO." Emma yelled right back at him. David grabbed her arm. She felt the burn through her leather jacket. She brought her free hand up and blasted him backwards off the porch to the dirt driveway. "DON'T YOU EVER GRABBED ME AGAIN DAVID. GET YOUR SORRY ASS OUT OF HERE." Emma watched as he stood, dusted himself off and got into the car. She watched until he left the convent grounds before reentering the convent.

Regina pulled her into a hug. "Are you alright? I saw him grab you. Did he hurt you?"

"I felt the burn, but other than that, no. I didn't give him the chance." She replied as she unzipped the sleeve of her coat and pushed it up to show the red hand print on her arm. Regina placed her hand over the mark and healed the burn. "Thanks babe." Emma said as she pulled her sleeve down. "If he somehow manages to find a judge who will issue a search warrant, I am afraid you will have to let him in." They returned to Blue's office.

"Do not worry, Emma. There are many rooms here that cannot be seen or entered unless you are a fairy or with a fairy. He would not be able to even see the door." Blue reassured her. "I have enchanted your glasses." She pulled the glasses from the desk drawer and handed them to Emma. "With those you will be able to clearly see who has been taken over by a Shade. I am working on special eye drops so that you do not have to rely on the glasses. It will take a couple more days until they are ready."

"Good, because these are a real pain to wear."

"We have the fairies making the special containers. I am afraid it is slow going to get the precise size."

"Take your time, Blue. It is better to get them right then to have the Shades escape because the containers are wrong." Regina said. "This will give us time to find out how many we will need and who has been affected."

"I guess there is no time like the present to take these babies for a spin." Emma said as she put the glasses on.

"A what?" Nova asked.

"It means to try them out."

"Oh okay."

"What do you say. Madame Mayor, fancy a stroll around town?"

"Why not. I have to stop by my office to pick up some files that I need to go over before I return to work on Monday." Regina said. "Blue if David returns let us know immediately."

Blue nodded. They walked out of the convent and disappeared in a puff of smoke. Reappearing at the Town Hall, Regina unlocked the door and shut off the alarm. They walked up the stairs to Regina's office. Their steps echoed off the walls.

"It is really quiet here on Saturday." Emma said.

"It is. That is one of the reasons I used to like working on Saturday. No distractions from ringing
phones and people demanding attention or meetings to attend. I would get more work done in a few hours then a whole day during the week. Until Henry came into my life. Then I would take work home so that I could be with him. Then this annoying blonde entered the picture. I really wanted to hate her, but she has this fantastic ass and beautiful green eyes." Regina joked.

"Still think I am annoying?" Emma asked.

"At times, you can be."

"Really?"

"Yes, there are times when I don't know whether to kiss you senseless or paddle that fine ass."

"Are you threatening me with a good time?" Emma joked with a suggestive wiggle of her eyebrows. Regina stopped walking and looked at her. "Did I surprise you, your majesty?"

"That you did princess. But that is a discussion for another time." Regina unlocked her outer office door and disabled that alarm. "Delores said she would put the files I need on her desk." She picked up several thick files, looked for a large envelope. She placed the files in the envelope. With a wave of her hand sent the files to their home. "Where would you like to start our search?"

"How about at Granny's?"

Regina glanced at her watch. "It is lunch time. Granny's would be as good a place as any to start." Regina turned off the lights, locked the door and reset the alarm. They walked down stairs where she reset the main alarm and locked the door. "Em I just realized that you didn't have any morning sickness today."

"I know babe. Who knew having an out of body experience would also be a cure for morning sickness. At least for today anyway."

"I would not recommend that as a cure for anyone. I was so worried. I held you in my arms for twelve hours. Your body felt like I was holding a block of ice. You were barely breathing."

They walked to Granny's. Emma looked around as they walked. She did not see any dark auras. "Everyone is normal."

"So far anyway." Regina finished. "You know you look really cute in those."

Emma adjusted them. "Yeah sure. I hated wearing them before. They never stayed in place especially when I had to run after someone." She pushed them up again. "You have the same problem. I see you pushing yours up all the time."

"That is very true. But I only have to wear them for reading and thankfully not all the time."

"We have to come up with a reason why I am wearing them again. Any ideas?"

"We could say, um, We could say that the pregnancy is affecting your eyesight."

"I don't think I like the idea of blaming the Goober for this. She might not like it either."

"So it wasn't the best idea I ever had."

"How about this. I ran out of contacts an had to resort to wearing these again. Do you know what contacts are?"
"Of course I do. They are those little discs that people put in their eyes."

"I am impressed. Look at you acting all this worldly."

"There were commercials on television advertising those things the couple nights we stayed in when we were in Boston."

"Must have been when you weren't watching porn." Emma joked. Regina felt her face warm with a blush. "You are never going to live that down babe." Emma was still laughing when they walked into Granny's. They headed for their regular table to find Snow, Zelena and the children already there. "Hi. We didn't expect to see you both here."

"We decided that we needed to get out of the house for a bit. I know I am at school five days a week, but..."

"You got cabin fever." Emma finished.

"Plus we were nosy and wanted to hear all the gossip." Zelena added. "What better place to hear gossip than here. I have to say Emma you look good with glasses."


Emma looked around the diner and waved at Ruby. "Anything?" Regina asked.

"No just regular people."

"Good. Let's get that beast in there fed." She poked Emma in the stomach.

They sat with Snow and Zelena. Ruby brought over coffee. "What's with the glasses Em?"

"I ran out of contacts and have to wait until the new ones come in."

"Okay. Do you want your usual?"

"I do." Regina said.

"Me too, but I would like a strawberry milkshake extra thick with mine."

"Would that be your usual B.P or A.P?"

"Huh?"

"Before pregnancy or after pregnancy."

"After please."

"Gotcha. I will be back shortly with your orders." She left and returned within a short time for Snow's and Zelena's orders.

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David watched the diner from the alley across the street. After leaving the Convent, he went to the only Judge the town had and was shown the door quickly. With no evidence the Judge would not issue a search warrant. He had to redeem himself in the eyes of the leader. In order to do that, he had to find Blue and recapture her spirit. He was certain she was hiding at the Convent. He also needed to find out where his or rather David's wife was hiding. The few times he had seen her, she was never alone. He was feeling the lack of female companionship. Not even the women who
frequented the seedier bars in town would have anything to do with him.

His ego was bruised and battered from the rejections. "Damn that do gooder jackass," He said to himself. "A man has needs." He could hear David laughing at him. "You won;'t be laughing when I take that simpering wife of yours and teach her what a real man can do. I just have to get that bitch alone without all her protectors around."

"Do you see him?" Regina leaned over to talk softly to Emma.

"Yeah. He has a black aura around him. No surprise there."

"At least we know they work."

"What are you two whispering about?" Snow asked.

Emma looked around the diner to make sure no one was close enough to hear her, "Our mutual friend enchanted these so that I could tell if someone had been invaded by a Shade. David is, or rather his body is in the alley across the street. He has a dark aura around him. His body has been taken over by a Shade."

"We thought that already."

"Now we are sure."

"What do we do?"

"Nothing yet. We have to wait until we get word from our friend that the containers are ready." Regina answered.

"We have no idea if there are two or a hundred Shades. We need more information."

"You are not planning on going after them alone are you?" Snow asked.

"No she is not." Regina answered quickly.

"I guess I'm not. Although it wasn't something we had discussed yet."

"There is nothing to discuss. Do you think for one minute that I would sit by and allow you to go after those things alone. Then you had better think again. There is no discussion to be had, Princess." Regina argued.

Ruby brought their food which ended their discussion. Ruby looked at the four. "Is anything wrong?"

"Not at all Ruby." Regina said.

"That's good. Em can we get together later today. I need to talk to you."

"Sure, come to the house later. I will give you a call when we get home."

"Okay. Well enjoy your food."

"Damn, I'm sorry your Maj. I should have asked permission before asking someone over."
"What? Emma it is your house too. You do not have to ask permission to ask friends over." Regina said and placed her hand on Emma's arm.

Emma shrugged it off. "Yeah right. I have things to do." She pushed her plate away and disappeared.

"What the bloody Hell was that all about?" Zelena asked.

"I overstepped and made a decision for her. Now she is mad at me. Would you have Ruby box these up for us and bring it home?"

"Of course, Regina. Go find her before she does something crazy." Snow said.

"Thank you. Well I had better go after her and do some grovelling. Tell Granny I will square the bill with her." Regina placed a hand over her heart, picked up Emma jacket and disappeared.

Snow and Zelena looked at each other and said together, "Hormones." Snow signaled Ruby to put the food into containers.

Regina let her heart lead her to Emma. Not surprised to see her in her favorite spot. Emma leaned against the large rock and watched the river as it rushed by. The leaves fell from the large tree over her head. She shivered in the cool October air, silently cursing herself for leaving without her jacket.

Within a very short time she felt the familiar buzzing around her heart and turned to watch for Regina. She appeared holding the red leather jacket. Regina held out the jacket. "You forgot this."

"Thanks." Emma took the jacket and put it on against the chill.

Both women spoke together. "I'm sorry."

Emma motioned for Regina to speak. "I should not have overstepped. I'm sorry."

"I should not have gotten so upset. I'm sorry, Gina."

"I should never have made the decision for you or said there was nothing to discuss. There is plenty we need to talk about."

"Yeah."

"The thought of you and our baby in danger makes me anxious, possessive and a bit crazy. I want to protect you both. I was wrong to take the decision out of your hands."

"I had planned on talking to you about everything. You know how much I hate it when people make decisions for me. I know you want to protect us and I love you for it. I forget at times that I am not alone any more."

"That is right, sweetheart. You have many people who love you. You will never have to go it alone again."

Emma sniffed as her eyes filled. She swiped at her eyes. "I know babe. Damned hormones started raging and well you know what happened."

"Did you go through this with Henry?"

"Yeah. Ended up in solitary a few times because of them." Emma said with a small smile.
"Honestly Gina I was going to talk to you tonight about this. I can't do it without you. We are stronger together. I may not have a fancy college degree, but I have street smarts. And know how to use every tool available."

Regina pulled her in for a hug. "That we are my darling." She felt Emma shiver. "What do you say to going home where it is warm and eat the lunch we ordered. Hopefully Snow and Zelena will be back by now."

"That sounds like a plan, babe." Emma said.

They held hands. "Oh just one more thing, Emma. Don't ever call me a tool again or there will be consequences. Understand Princess?"

"Gotcha." Emma said.

They disappeared and reappeared within seconds in their home just as Snow and Zelena walked in, startling them.

"We were followed here. David is outside." Zelena said.

"Maybe I should go out and talk to him." Snow said.

"Mom, no. You can't trust him."

"Emma he is still my husband, still your father."

"No he isn't mom. That is not my father. It may be dad's body, but it is James inside of him. He cannot be trusted. Please don't take any chances."

"Alright, Emma, I will not take any chances." Snow said. "Are you feeling better?"

"Yeah, somewhat. Look I am sorry I got so angry at the Diner."

"Not to worry Emma. We both know how pregnancy hormones kick as then take names." Zelena joked.

Emma removed her glasses and rubbed her nose. "I hate how much I hate wearing those things."

"What are they supposed to do? For the record I did not buy that excuse about running out of contacts. I know for a fact you had surgery on your eyes to correct your vision."

"If someone has been taken over by a Shade, they will have a dark aura around them. The glasses help me see that aura. Blue is working on eye drops that will do the same thing."

"David has that black aura?"

"He does."

"No wonder you don't want me alone with him."

"Thanks mom. That is one less worry we have."

"What is on the agenda for the rest of the day?" Zelena asked.

"Seeing as our walk around town didn't work out, I have some reports I need to get caught up before Monday."
"I may still take that walk." Emma said.

"What?" Regina and Snow said together.

"You said earlier that we needed some stuff at the store. I thought I would do the shopping and look around at the same time."

"Were you planning on going alone?"

"Uh yeah. You just said you had things you needed to do."

"I will go with you." Zelena said. "Let me put Robin down for her nap and we can go."

"I really don't need a baby sitter." Emma protested.

"I am not your baby sitter. I need to get a few things for Robin."

"Sure you do. For the record, I don't believe that for a single second, but sure you can come with me."

"I will get the grocery list." Snow said as she hurried out of the hall way leaving the two alone.

"Did you have anything to do with that?" Emma asked.

"How could I? You were standing right here next to me."

"No secret signal?"

"There was no secret signal. It will take Zelena a few minutes to get Robin settled. Lets go eat lunch" Regina gave Emma a little push towards the kitchen.

Snow handed her the grocery list. "Your lunches are on the counter. I am going to put Neil down."

"Thanks mom." They heated their meals and sat at the counter.

"Emma, you hate grocery shopping. Why volunteer to do something you hate?"

"Well I think of it as a recon mission. Maybe I can find a few people out there."

"I don't think Shades will be found at Drover's Market. Do they even need food?"

"Maybe not, but their human hosts do."

"Okay, I accept that. I also think you are getting those weird pregnancy cravings for things that are not on the list." Emma blushed, shrugged and gave her a cheeky grin. "I thought so. Don't buy too many crazy things. And please be careful."

"I can't promise anything on the food, but I will be careful." Emma said.
Zelena drove through town slowly so that Emma could look at those citizens who were out on the street. Emma held a pad on her lap as she looked out the window. Three times she noticed the dark aura and wrote the names down under the three people they already knew were taken over by Shades. Two more names were added as they pulled into the grocery parking lot.

They took a cart and strolled down the aisles of the store. Emma added several items that were not on the list that Snow handed her. Zelena arched an eyebrow at her choices. Emma shrugged and caused Zelena to laugh.

"Taking a walk on the wild side Em?"

Emma patted her stomach. "It's what she wants. Besides I picked up loads of fruits and veggies."

"True, but," she picked up a box, "I don't think that snowballs and chocolate can be considered nutritious."

"Sure it is. Chocolate comes from cocoa, which grows on a plant or tree. Plants are considered veggies. So chocolate is a vegetable."

"Somehow I do not see Regina buying that at all."

"It's true. You can look it up." Emma looked around the store. She pulled out the pad twice and wrote the names down.

"More?"

"Yeah, that makes ten so far."

"It's strange."

"What is?"

Zelena leaned in close to talk. "If these Shades are supposed to be the dregs of whatever society they have in the Underworld, you wouldn't expect them to be doing mundane things like grocery shopping."

"You have a point, but they have to eat. Or rather their human hosts do." Emma agreed. "Maybe these are junior dregs?"

"Or maybe they are more likely to hang out in bars."

"Are you suggesting a girls night out?"

"Why not?"

"Hey I'm game. Now we just have to convince Regina."

They finished shopping headed to the check out lines. After loading the bags into the back of the car, Zelena walked across the street to the pharmacy. Emma waited by the car. Zelena returned carrying a large bag. Emma noticed the items for Robin.
"You really did need to pick up stuff for Robin."

"Of course I did. Did you really think I was only volunteering to baby sit you?"

"Yeah, I did." Emma shrugged. "Sorry."

Zelena held up her hands in a no problem motion. "Time to go home before all that ice cream you bought melts."

Emma blushed. "Gina may freak at three gallons."

The climbed into the car for the ride home.

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The younger fairies, those that had earned their wands, worked at creating the containers Blue needed. The finished containers were brought to Blue to either enchant or reject depending on the quality. Blue found a picture of the container in the Fairy Chronicles and gave it to the younger fairies to work with. The fairies had been hard at work since Blue's spirit was returned and she woke up. Even those fairies in charge of the nursery where the new born fairies spent their time until they were old enough to begin their training in the fairy school, helped out.

Blue spent many hours pouring over the Chronicles for any additional information on the Shades and how to send them back to the Shadow Realm. More importantly to find a way to stop the Shades from coming through ever again.

Nova and Tink did a fantastic job keeping everything going while she was unconscious. She needed to find a way to reward them when this latest crises was over. Blue sighed and pushed away from her desk. She needed a break from the large books and left her office to check on the progress of the younger fairies. Her first stop was the nursery where the newborn fairies lived.

During the first curse, when time was at a standstill no new fairies were created. Since their return, after the second curse, three new fairies found their way to the convent. There were two ways for a fairy to be created. In a magical world, when a baby laughs for the first time, a new fairy comes into being. Since the second curse was broken three new babies were born and three fairies appeared. Now with at least four expectant women, they could expect four new fairies in the future.

Back in the Enchanted Forest the second way a fairy came into being, was for the tears of a child to fall on a fire fly. The fire fly carried the tear to Pixie Hollow and a new fairy was born. She noticed that the fairy nurses changed the furniture as the situation changed. Small beds instead of cribs lined one wall. As soon as they reached the age of ten, they began their training.

Blue next went to the workshops where the fairies worked to perfect the vessels needed. She only looked in. She didn't break their concentration. Blue sighed and returned to her office.

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David was still sitting inside the house when they returned. They drove through the barrier protecting the house with only a small ripple. He climbed out of the squad car as soon as they pulled into the driveway.

Emma and Zelena ignored him as they magicked the grocery bags into the house. David tried to step into the driveway but was kept out by the barrier. They heard him swear as he took a step
back. They walked towards the door when he called to her.

"Emma."

"Tell Gina I will be right in." Emma walked towards David. "What do you want?" She demanded as she stopped by the barrier.

"Where is Snow? Have you seen her? She hasn't been home for the past few days."

"Maybe she just got sick of your foul mood and decided not to put up with it any more."

"She is my wife and property. She belongs at home."

"No she does not. This isn't fairy tale land. This is the real world. Mom is not your property. In this world she is a free woman. If she doesn't want to put up with your abuse that is her choice. I saw the bruises you put on her. You will leave her alone."

"I am her husband. That is my right. I demand to speak with her."

"You can demand all you want. You will not go anywhere near her. In this world it is not your right to lay a hand on your wife or children in anger. She is not your property."

"A woman needs to be trained to service her husband." He yelled, his eyes red with fury. "You cannot keep her from me."

"You make me sick, David. Go home." Emma turned to walk away from him. He ran at the barrier and was thrown back onto the squad car. Emma looked over her shoulder and smiled as he rolled onto the ground. She continued to the porch where Regina waited. They walked into the house together. As soon as the door closed behind them, Regina pulled Emma close and hugged her.

"Are you alright?" She asked as she felt Emma shaking in her arms.

"Yeah, I think so. He is just so damn angry."

"You have to remember that isn't David. That is James inside of David's body. James was a miserable bastard on a good day."

"I know babe."

"You cannot let him rattle you. I know him and if he finds any weak spots, he will go after them to use for his advantage." Regina said. "Come into the kitchen. Snow has a cup of tea for you. It will help you relax."

"That sounds good."

"Then you can explain some of those questionable purchases you made, Did you really need three gallons of ice cream and all that junk food?"

------------------------

The bar was dimly lit and the juke box blared out from the corner when the five entered. Emma talked Ruby and Dorothy into coming out for girl's night. Regina found them a table away from the juke box near the bathrooms. They were guaranteed a steady line of people to look over.

With a wave of her hand, Regina cleared away the dirty glasses and dishes from the restaurant next door. Couples danced on the small dance floor. The waitress hurried over to take their orders.
Emma looked around the room.

"Anything?"

"Just Whale and we already knew about him."

"Okay, Em, what is going on?" Ruby asked.

"What do you mean?"

"This is the fourth bar we have been to tonight. All you do is look around or right a name in that pad. What are you looking for?"

Emma waited for the waitress to place their drinks on the table. She gave her money to cover the drinks and a generous tip before looking around to see if anyone was close enough to overhear her. Ruby would be able to hear her, but not Dorothy. She motioned for them to lean in closer.

"We are here to find people who have been taken over by the Shades." She said softly.

"How? They look like everyone else." Emma looked around again and touched her glasses. "I knew that line you used this morning was a bunch of crap."

"Sorry about that."

"Not a problem Em. But if you want to find them, this is not the place to do it."

"Then where?" Emma asked.

"Heads up ladies, slime ball at two o'clock." Zelena said as Whale sauntered over to their table.

"Well, well, well, look at this. Five lovelies just waiting for a chance to dance with me."

"Back off Whale, this is a private party." Emma said.

"Party? What are we celebrating? How about if I join you?"

"How about you go back to the bar and leave us alone." Zelena snapped.

"Now that is not very friendly. Those four are misguided, but I didn't think you were that way. Come and dance with me." He put his hand on Zelena's shoulder.

She looked from his face to his hand. "Let me ask you this Victor. How many one handed doctors do you know?"

"None, why?" He rubbed his hand over her shoulder.

"Because if you don't remove your hand immediately, I will rip it off and feed it to my dog." Whale removed his hand. "Shoo asshole." She made a go away motion with her hands. Whale looked at the five before turning and walking back to the bar. He could hear their laughter behind his back and felt his anger rise.

"What were you saying before we were so rudely interrupted?" Regina asked.

"We are looking in the wrong place if you are looking for, you know."

"There is a place in the forest."
"That place was closed down." Emma said.

"He just moved to a new location. My people found it by accident. I have had someone keeping an eye on it ever since."

"Then drink up ladies. We have places to go and people to see."

They left the bar and climbed back into Zelena's car. "We will need to find a place to change how we look, including Zelena's car."

"What?"

"This place we are going is extremely rough. We need to blend in. If we go in looking like ourselves, especially with the Mayor and Sheriff along, they will crawl back under their rocks. We need to look like their regular customers, the rougher the better."

"Why my car?"

"Zelena, everyone in town recognizes your car. If we were to show up in your car looking like someone else..."

"They operate under the radar, Rubes. They wouldn't call the Sheriff."

"No they wouldn't, but they would strip the car for parts."

"Oh."

"Pull in behind the Town Hall we can change things there. No one goes there this time of the night." Regina said.

Zelena drove her car behind the darkened Town Hall. They climbed out. Zelena waved her hand and her car changed to a newer model.

Ruby shook her head. "That car is just begging to be stolen. It has to look beat up."

Zelena sighed and waved her hands again. The car changed to a beat up rusted old car. Most of the windows were broken and it had only one headlight. "Does this work?"

"Perfect We need to look as rough and beat up as that car." Regina waved her hands and instead of five women, there were now five men. They sported beards and wore rough work clothes. Ruby nodded in approval.

"Anything else we should know?" Dorothy asked.

"Yeah don't drink anything there."

"How are we supposed to blend in if we can't drink anything?" Emma asked.

"We can order drinks, but don't drink them. They serve pure rot gut liquor there. Oh one other thing. Try to disguise your voices. We look like men, but sound like women. We can work on that in the car."

The climbed back into the car with Emma driving. Regina sat in the front with her. Zelena reluctantly climbed into the back with Ruby and Dorothy. Ruby gave her the directions.

"Drive towards the Troll Bridge. Just before the bridge there is a dirt road. The bar is about a mile
"from the main road."

"What if we need to use the bathroom?" Dorothy asked.

"Does this place even have a bathroom?"

"Yeah it's called the outside."

They found the road, if it could be called that. It was little more that tramped down grass with hidden holes and large ruts. It twisted through the trees and jostled them.

"Hey take it easy on my baby." Zelena said from the back seat.

"Sorry, this so called road is a nightmare." Emma said as she tried to avoid another hole. "At least we will be able to poof out of here car and all."

"That is very true." Regina said and braced herself as the car dipped into another large hole.

"Holy shit what a dump." Emma exclaimed.

The small building looked like it was thrown together with mismatched pieces of wood. The unpainted boards were uneven. There was one small window with filthy glass panes. The flickering light told them the place was lit by lanterns or candles. The roof was rusted tin.

"This place is a disease looking for a place to happen." Zelena said.

"You have that right sis. The first thing I will do after this crises is over is to torch this dump."

"Lets go ladies, I mean gentlemen. Remember don't drink anything here."

They walked into the dim room. Smoke was heavy in the air from the lanterns and from cigarettes and pipes. The bartender looked them over as they walked in. The bar was planks of unpainted wood on several barrels. A few dirty bottles lined a shelf behind the bar. A large piece of cardboard hung on the wall with the house rules. It read, CASH ONLY, NO CREDIT EXTENDED, NO REFUNDS."

"What'll you have?" He asked.

"What do you have?"

"We got whiskey and tequila. Oh I may have a bottle of rum left over. One had one customer that drank it and he died a few months back."

"Five tequilas" Ruby said.

The bartender placed five plastic cups on the bar and poured five drinks. "That will be fifty dollars." Ruby handed him the money.

Regina stood in front of Emma to allow her to look around the bar. "Jackpot." She whispered in Regina's ear. She pulled her pad out and quickly wrote down names. Even in the dim light, she could easily see the dark auras.

"Ain't seen you fellas here before. You knew in town?"

"We have been here a couple weeks. What happened to your other place?"
"Bitch Sheriff shut us down after her equally bitchy wife ordered her to."

"Why would she do that?"

"She blamed me for letting that damned pirate get away. He ended up shooting the Sheriff."

"Really."

"Yeah. Heard he was aiming for the Mayor. Have you met them yet?"

"Nah. They weren't in town when we got here."

"I heard they were back now. Went on a honeymoon. It's a pity."

"Why is that?"

"They are both fine looking women. Why they chose each other is way beyond me? Hell I would like to tap the mayor myself to get her back on the natural path of things. That woman is sexy as hell. I bet she is a wildcat in bed. Wonder if the Sheriff uses things to get her to scream." The bartender moved to the other end of the bar.

Regina felt Emma stiffen and turned to whisper. "Calm down."

"Did you hear what he said?"

"I did. It was just a bunch of male bull shit."

"I don't care. I want to reach down his throat and pull his testicles out of his mouth."

"Calm down." Regina said again. "You will get the first chance to throw a fire ball at this place. Okay?"

"Yeah, okay." Emma said. She looked over Regina's shoulder. "Oh shit, it's David."

"Relax. We don't look like us remember?"

"I remember. Well if he is here he isn't bothering mom."

"Correct."

They watched the bartender pour David's drink. He tossed it back and motioned for another. They inched closer to listen to their conversation.

"Any luck finding that fairy?"

"No but I am certain the bitch is hiding out at the convent."

"You are the Sheriff. Can't you go in and get her?"

"No, not without a search warrant which the idiot judge in this back water town refused to give me." David said. "And as I was reminded earlier, I am only the Assistant Sheriff."

"It sucks to have to take orders from a woman. Too bad things here are not like they were back home where a woman knew her place. Men were in charge like they are supposed to be." Both men laughed. David signaled for a third drink. The bartender poured the drink and walked over to the five. "Do you want another round?"
Ruby looked at the others who all shook their heads. "No. We have to be on the job early tomorrow."

"What do you do?"

"Construction. We are working on the hospital addition."

"About time. This dump of a town has needed a bigger hospital for years. Sure you don't want another round?"

"Positive, but thanks."

Emma felt Regina tense and waited for any signs of an impending fireball. "Gina its your turn to calm down." She said as she pulled Regina to the door. The others followed quickly after they dumped their drinks on the ground.

"How much did that prick charge you for the drinks?" Regina asked.

"Fifty dollars." Ruby answered.

Regina snapped her fingers. The money appeared in her hand. "Here is your money back." She gave the money to Ruby.

"Did you...?"

"We should not have to pay for drinks we could not chance drinking. He will find his cash box fifty dollars poorer at the end of the night."

They laughed as they climbed back into the car. Ruby put the money in her pocket. They drove away from the bar. The car disappeared and reappeared in front of Regina's house, changed back to her beloved green wagon. They were once again the five women.
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Some old enemies are making an appearance.

CHAPTER 17

The fairies worked through the day and into the night creating the vessels to hold the Shades that had taken over humans. They did not have a complete count yet on how many vessels they would need, so Blue ordered them to continue working. It would be better to have too many, then to have to scramble to get more made. There were thirty enchanted vessels safely locked in the secret room in Blue's office.

Once they had the vessels then they could implement the next part of their plan to capture the Shades and return them to the Shadow Realm. Once they had a plan of action that is, to insure complete success that is. They had a few ideas but nothing that could guarantee them that success. Blue had not been back out to the fissure since the first day. She relied on Emma to communicate with what they now knew was the leader of the Shadow Realm. Emma alone was immune to the hypnotic pull. The child she carried protected her and gave her the immunity to resist having her spirit captured by the dark Shades. The child would be a powerful practitioner of magic. "Her mothers would need to be made aware of this. But that was a discussion for another day," Blue thought as she enchanted another vessel.

David was still a problem for the whole town. If he wasn't harassing the citizens, he kept watch on the convent waiting for Blue to make an appearance, or the school to see Snow. A quick call to the Principal assured that Snow would not leave the school alone. A Guardian followed her discreetly at all times.

Emma had her hands full when she returned to work. There was a stack of complaints on her desk of citizens being harassed by David and those who had made it onto her list. A list she had put together after their return. Many names were added to it after their girl's night out. She read the complaints that ranged from drunk and disorderly, to destruction of property, vandalism, harassment, excessive force to attempted rape by several women in town. The newly built cells were filled with men. Many of those had the dark auras. Most were asleep on cots in the cells but a few leaned against the bars scowling out into the office. An enchanted unbreakable wall separated the cells from the rest of the office.

Emma worked steadily on the reports and complaints for the first few hours. The prisoners were fed and a few were released once they had sobered up. A few with dark auras were released even though she disliked the idea of letting them back out onto the street. Her hands were tied by the law and she had no reason to hold them once they were sober as long as there were no additional charges. She was able to add more names to her list which was now over fifty.

Her phone rang in her pocket. The song Witchy Woman sounded loud in the quiet of her office. The song told Emma that Regina was calling. They had laughed the first time Regina heard her personal ring tone.
"Madam Mayor, to what do I owe the extreme pleasure of you call?"

"Well Sexy Sheriff, I was hoping you could meet me for lunch before the budget meeting."

"There's a budget meeting?" Emma asked.

Regina sigh could be heard through the phone. "Emma. It is the quarterly budget meeting."

"Didn't we just have one of those?"

"Yes dear, but that was last quarter. This is a new quarter. I told you to put it on your calendar."

Emma laughed. "Relax babe, I was just yanking your chain."

"You were doing what?"

"I was joking."

"You are going to pay for that Princess." Regina scolded.

"Counting on it your Majesty."

"Meet me at Granny's in ten minutes."

"Will do babe." Emma put her phone down and picked up another report. She sighed, put the report down, stood, grabbed her jacket, phone and two folders and left her office. "Hold down the fort. I am going to lunch and then to the budget meeting."

"Okay Emma. What do you want us to do with this motley crew?" He asked pointing over his shoulder to the cells.

"All the D and Ds released?"

"Yeah, those are the vandals."

"Keep them there." She turned to leave, stopped and turned back to face the deputies. "Under no circumstances is David to be left alone in here."

"Really? But..."

"No buts. If you value your jobs, neither of you will leave David alone in here. Understood?"

"Understand Sheriff."

"Pass the word to the other shifts. I will try to get back here after the meeting, but I am not sure how long it will last."

"Do you want us to put a notice on the bulletin board?"

"No. He is not to be informed."

"Has he been taken over by a Shade?"

"He has."

"What about these prisoners?"
"They have."

"Okay Sheriff."

Emma left the station for the short walk to Granny's. She met Regina as she arrived.

"How has your day been so far?" Regina asked as they walked into the diner and sat at their usual table. Granny waved at them.

"The usual?" Granny asked. They both nodded.

"My day is about three inches past sucking. It has been long and tedious. I spent the morning going over all the reports and complaints that have been filed during the last ten days."

"The joys of being the Sheriff, sweetheart."

"I know. There is one part of the job that I really, really hate doing. I have to arrest one of my staff."

"Who? For what?" Regina asked.

Emma slid the file across the table. Regina opened the file and read through the papers. "Assault? Who is the deputy."

"Keep reading."

Regina flipped the first page over and read the next. "Assault, excessive force, assault with a deadly weapon, attempted rape? These are all from one deputy?" Emma nodded. "Who is he?"

"Gina, it's David."

"Oh sweetheart, I am so sorry. These are all serious complaints. He not only has to be suspended but also arrested."

"I know. Can we discuss this in you office?"

"He is still out on the streets with a gun and the keys to the station." Regina scolded. Then remembering where they were, lowered her voice. "What is to stop him from releasing the other prisoners?"

"Babe please, can we discuss this later?"

"All right. Who else knows about these?"

"Just the deputies who took the complaints. I did tell my deputies that under no circumstances was David allowed to be left alone in the station. The one good thing is the cells the prisoners are in are the special ones that only I have the key to."

Regina closed the folder and pushed it back to Emma. "That is a start. Emma I know he is your father, but..."

"No he isn't." Emma interrupted her. "That is James inside of David's body. He is controlling David. He is not my father."

"When do you have to meet back with the other Shade?"
"Tomorrow. He will have the plants we need and the directions to make the potion to separate the Shades from the humans. I will have to get Blue out there to open the dome."

"Then this," she tapped the folder, "has to be taken care of today. He is still looking for her. We will do it in my office."

"How will you get him there?"

"I am the Mayor."

"That's it, because you are the Mayor?"

"You my darling come when I call."

"That's different. I am the Sheriff, and your wife, he is not. You don't usually call David."

"I have an idea."

"Will you share this idea, oh Mighty One?" Emma asked with a smile.

"Mighty One? I like that new title, Princess. It sounds supreme."

"Gina." Emma whined.

"Do you trust me?"

"Of course, always."

"Then as Mayor, let me handle this."

"Handle what?"

"This is where the trust comes in sweetheart."

"Okay."

Their lunches arrived and all other thoughts were filed away for later.

-------------------------

David waited outside the school, determined to speak to Snow. He heard the bell ring. Minutes later the doors opened and students ran out. His phone rang.

"What?" He yelled into the phone. Snow walked out onto the steps of the school with several other teachers. "This is not a good time."

"David, it is Regina. I need you to come to my office immediately."

"Now?"

"That is what immediately means David. I want to talk to you about a promotion. However if you do not want this, I can call in one of the other deputies and promote them to Sheriff."

He looked at Snow, who was still surrounded by other teachers. "I will be there in five minutes." He put his phone away and entered his squad car. He took one more look at Snow. "You get another day, Bitch." He said starting the car and driving away.

"A promotion?" Emma asked. "Gina you are planning on giving him a promotion?" She yelled as
she paced in front of Regina's desk.

Regina walked around her desk into Emma's path. She took Emma into her arms to stop her pacing. "Sweetheart, stop." She ordered.

"You said to trust you. I really am trying to trust you, but you are giving him a promotion? That would be giving him my job." Regina pulled Emma close and kissed her. Emma relaxed into the kiss. "You ambushed me." She said when the kiss ended.

"I did. Now will you listen to me?"

"Yeah."

"That promotion was just to get him here. I have no intention of replacing you, yet. I plan on telling him, and I hope you back me up on this, that due to your pregnancy, you are taking a step back from the Sheriff's office. At least until after the baby is born if not longer."

"Oh, so what am I supposed to do between now and then?"

"You are the head of the Emergency Management Office. You could spend some time there. But sweetheart this is just an excuse. Although I think I like that idea of you and the baby not being in harm's way."

"Oh no don't go getting all protective on me, Madam Mayor."

"Relax my darling. That will not happen for a few more months." They kissed again. A knock on the door broke them apart. Emma went to stand behind the desk where she leaned against the window frame. Regina sat at her desk. "Come in." She called out. The door opened. David walked in. "David thank you for coming so quickly."

"You pulled me away from an important stake out. What is this about a promotion?"

"Emma and I have been talking and we have decided that she should take a step back from the Sheriff's job."

"Yeah so? She got knocked up and wants to take it easy for the duration. That is typical of women like her."

"What the Hell do you mean by that?" Emma shouted. Regina sent her a warning look.

"It is just that women want to have someone support them so that they can sit on their asses when the are in a 'delicate condition'.

"Tell me David, why should I make you the Sheriff over the other deputies?"

"Why? Because I deserve it. I have been playing second fiddle for the last three years. I have earned the position. Those others are useless."

"You do have the seniority."

"Then what the Hell is the problem. Make me the damn Sheriff." David demanded.

"All in good time. Let me ask you this. We have a situation where there are several complaints against a deputy. Reports of harassment, abuse of power, assault with a deadly weapon and attempted rape. How would you handle this?"
"That depends on the circumstances."

"Explain."

"There are times when force is needed to apprehend a suspect. They do the crime but do not want to be arrested so they resist. Times like those a little extra persuasion is needed. Then they complain about the use of force when they are arrested."

"What about the attempted rape?" Emma asked.

"Who said it was rape? It was probably a whore who didn't..."

Regina waved her hand freezing David where he sat. "You are frozen, but you can still hear me. Emma take his gun and keys."

Emma disarmed David, took his keys and handcuffs. She brought his wrists together and clicked the cuffs on tightly. "David Nolan Charming you are under arrest for assault, harassment, and attempted rape. You have the right to remain silent. If you give up this right, everything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law." Emma ran through the lists of his rights, finishing with, "do you understand these rights? You can not move or talk, so blink once for yes." David looked at her until he was forced to blink once. Regina waved her hand again and he disappeared. "Where did you send him?"

"To one of the special cells that only you can open."

"Good. No wait that's bad."

"Em, we took a dangerous person off the streets, why is that bad?"

"Because now I have to go to the station to process the intake and officially charge him. I was hoping to go home on time."

"You are the Sheriff, delegate."

"Okay, but I still have to do the preliminary stuff."

"Give me a few minutes to finish signing these budget requests and we can do together."

"You don't think I can handle David on my own?"

"Emma you can handle anything you put your mind to. If you would rather I did not go with you, I wont."

"Gina, I'm sorry. This whole thing has made me... ugh." She growled.

"Is crazy the word you are looking for?"

"Can I blame it on the pregnancy hormones?"

"Of course you can, sweetheart."

Emma sat on the couch and pulled out her phone. She kicked off her boots an lay back against the arm, putting a pillow behind her head.

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The leader paced in the cavern as he waited for the remaining Shades to respond to his summons.
His patience had run out. The humans now held several of his key Shades in their jail. From what he had been told those cells were specially designed to hold magical beings. Only the savior could open those cells. The Shades in their human hosts arrived. "Time is running out for us. Right now eleven of our Shades are being held in the jail. Your orders were simple, cause dissension and get close to the savior so that we could turn her. You have failed. The time for destruction will come when we have taken over this realm. Now the leader of the fairies has been returned to her body, she has the knowledge to send us back to the Shadow Realm. You, Doctor failed to stop that."

"I had no idea they would find a way to bring her spirit back." Whale complained.

"The flowers they will need are not of this world. They will not succeed." Another spoke up.

"Your stupidity never ceases to amaze me, Captain. I should have left you in the Underworld and not given you another chance to redeem your self. You were supposed to get close to the Savior, not spend your time getting drunk in the tavern."

"I don't see you getting closer to your son, Pan."

"Silence." He yelled. "My son may not have his powers any longer, but there are strong protections around him and his family. I am slowly getting through the protection barrier. We no longer have anyone inside the jail. James was arrested earlier today. Now more than ever, we must find a way to release our brothers and sisters."

"One person close to the Mayor is still free."

"Yes she is because she knows how important our mission is and how to keep her head down. She works behind the scene quietly to bring down the leaders. I suggest you all follow her example. Get out of my sight."

The Shades left the cavern until only Pan remained.

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The Town hall was quiet after the officials left for the day. Only the lights in Regina's office were on. Regina sat behind her desk as she finished signing off on the last of the budget reports. Emma lay on the couch, her glasses on coffee table, boots on the floor while she waited for Regina to finish. She had her phone in her hand as she answered emails. The scratch of the pen and the large ticking of the mantle clock were the only sounds in the office. Regina looked over at Emma and smiled. The tip of Emma's tongue poked out as she read.

She looked up from her phone to see Regina looking at her. "You are watching me again."

"Guilty as charged, Sheriff. Are you going to arrest me?"

"I may just do that. You did just admit your guilt."

"I did." Regina said. "So what is my punishment?"

"You will just have to wait and see what your punishment will be." Emma joked with a suggestive wiggle of her eyebrows.

"I am finished. Lets go finish your work so that we can go home."

"I was thinking about that Gina."
"Oh no, an unsupervised thought?"

"Hey."

"Sorry sweetheart, you left yourself wide open for that one. What were you thinking about?"

"By law, I have seventy two hours to charge David."

"Yes and?"

"I do not have to do anything other than sign the intake paperwork today."

"Okay, but don't you have to fill in all the particulars?"

"Not really. I asked Mulan to fill in all the paperwork. That way all I have to do is sign it. You said to delegate so I delegated."

"Very good my darling." Regina reached into her bottom drawer and removed her purse. She turned off her desk lamp, locked and shut down her computer and stood up. "Lets go sign those papers and go home."

"That sounds like a plan babe." Emma sat up and put her boots on. She placed her glasses in her pocket as they left the office. Regina shut off the lights, locked the door and set the alarm. "Hey, I got a text from Rowen."

"You did?"

"Yeah, she said they reinforced the roof. The water tank will be installed tomorrow and then they will have the roof finished by the end of the week."

"They work fast."

"She brought in extra people to finish the outside work, while other crews are working on the electrical and plumbing inside. She wants the outside work finished before the weather gets too cold."

"She knows her business. Both her and Gus said Hi."

Emma lay in the protective circle of Regina's arms. Their day had come to an end as they relaxed, not tired enough to sleep yet. The silencing spell was around their bedroom.

"Would you promise me something Em?"

"If I can."

"When you talk to David, have someone you can trust with you."

"According to Blue, David cannot hurt me." Emma argued.

"I would rather you did not take that chance. Just in case she is wrong. Please?"

"I promise Gina." Emma's hand drew lazy circles around Regina's breasts as they talked. "Do you really just feel like talking?" She asked as she felt the nipples harden under her roaming hand.
"Is there something else you had in mind?"

"Oh yeah," Emma sighed. "With a wave of her hand their night clothes disappeared. Emma knelt next to Regina and leaned in to capture the soft lips. Her tongue slid across Regina's lips and was granted entrance. For several heartbeats their tongues danced while her hand continued drawing circles from one hardened to tip the other. Regina arched into Emma's hands. Emma left Regina's lips to trace a line of kisses to one delicate ear. Emma pushed the dark hair away from her target. Her tongue ran around the rim of the ear and caused Regina to shiver. She sucked the lobe into her mouth. Emma left the ear and trailed kisses down the slender throat to Regina's tanned breasts. Taking one stiff nipple into her mouth her hand pinched and teased the other. Holding the tight bud between her teeth while her tongue flicked the nipple back and forth as she sucked. Regina gasped as Emma bit down slightly on the tip. Emma switched breasts and treated the second to the same attention.

She heard Regina moan with pleasure and doubled her motions. She looked up into Regina's eyes. Brown met green as she continued to lavish attention on the sensitive nipples. Not breaking contact with the breast, her hand slowly moved down the toned stomach to the silken curls. Regina's legs parted to give Emma better access as her hand continued down. Her way was made easier from the copious moisture she found there. Emma passed over Regina's clit and continued to her entrance. She entered with first one finger and added a second. Her fingers rested within the smooth walls for a short time, her palm rested on the small bundle of nerves while her tongue continued to flick over Regina's center. Regina's hips moved in a silent plea for Emma to bring some relief to her growing need. Emma looked into Regina's eyes and smiled at the look of pure lust in the chocolate orbs. She raised her head from the breast and gently blew across the hard nipple.

"Is there something I can do for you babe?" She asked innocently.

"Please, Em, I need you."

"You have me." She lightly nipped the breast causing Regina to moan in pleasure. "What would you like me to do?"

"Please don't tease."

"You mean like this?" Emma wiggled her fingers inside of Regina brushing against the walls and grazing the underside of the nerves connected to the clt that her palm pressed against outside. Regina jumped.

"Yes please, my darling."

"Seeing as you asked so nicely, I think I can take care of your need." Emma gave the still hard nipple a final lick before moving down Regina's body. Her tongue traced a path down the tight stomach, spending several seconds licking the belly button before continuing to Regina's center. Regina's legs moved apart to give Emma room. Emma removed her fingers causing Regina to moan at the loss. Emma didn't leave her empty long. Her fingers reentered Regina, and slowly moved within her wife and love. With her other hand she parted the soft folds to give her better access to the jewel that was hidden there. She passed her tongue through the slick folds, grazing the pearl and caused Regina to jump. Her fingers continued their slow motion within Regina until a third finger was added. Regina moaned again as she was filled. Her hips began to move on their own. Emma stopped the slow movement of her tongue as her lips latched onto the small hard nub. She sucked it into her mouth and captured it between her teeth. Emma's tongue whipped across the clt, bringing Regina closer and closer to the edge.
Regina's hands clutched the pillow under her head as she felt the pressure building within her. Emma felt the first flutters of Regina's impending climax and curled her fingers to press against soft walls to the backside of the clit. Her tongue flew over the captive pearl. The flutters quickly turned to spasms as Regina's powerful climax crashed over her. Emma kept up the pressure as she guided Regina through her climax. She slowed her movements as the contractions eased against her fingers. Regina fought for breath as her climax ended. Until Emma redoubled her movements and quickly brought Regina to another climax.

"Apples." Regina gasped as the second climax ended. Emma stilled her hand and tongue. She looked up at Regina who lay gasping for breath. Her fingers still buried inside Regina. Emma waited until Regina's breathing eased before slowly removing her fingers. She gave one final lick to Regina's clit as she moved up to gather Regina in her arms.

Emma kissed the dark head that rested on her shoulder.

"You my darling are incredible." Regina said softly.

"I have incredible inspiration, babe."

"Give me a few minutes so that all my bones can return to my body and I will see how inspired I can be."

"Take all the time you need, babe. I am not going anywhere." Emma said and kissed the dark head again.
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Some old friends come to town to help our heroes.

CHAPTER 18

Regina stepped out of the bathroom wrapped in a large towel, to find Emma seated on the edge of the bed, as she listened to whomever was on the other end of the call. She looked at Regina and rolled her eyes at what the caller was saying. Then smiled at how Regina was dressed or undressed as the case was.

"I was expecting that Rubes." Emma said.

"What do you mean?"

"Can you come over here to talk? I would rather discuss this face to face rather than on the phone."

"Sure will an hour work?"

"Yeah, I have to contact Blue also. We are going to need her."

"Is it safe for her to leave the convent?"

"I hope so." Emma ended the call with Ruby and called Blue.

"What is going on sweetheart?" Regina asked.

Emma held up a finger for her to wait. "Blue, it's Emma. Ruby just called. I need you to come to the house in an hour. I think I will need your help."

"Certainly Emma."

The call ended. Emma threw her phone on the bed behind her where it bounced off and landed on the thick rug. She lay back against the pillows and covered her eyes with her arm. "Being the Sheriff and the Savior really sucks at times." She complained.

"What's wrong?" Regina asked.

"The first call was from Ruby. She reported that there is a great deal of activity behind the dome."

"But you were expecting that." Regina stated.

"Yeah, but it could have waited until I had a chance to shower and at least have coffee." Emma whined.

Regina laughed. "My darling you sound like a petulant child who has been told she couldn't have her favorite snack."

Emma lowered her arm and glared at Regina who only smile back. That caused Emma to pout. Her
bottom lip stuck out which caused Regina to laugh again. Eventually Emma laughed with her. "I guess I did sound a little bit bratty."

"That is putting it mildly." Regina said as she pulled Emma's arm to get her up off the bed. "Time to be a grownup sweetheart. Hit the shower princess so that you will have time to eat before Ruby and Blue get here."

Emma allowed herself to be pulled up. "How about joining me?" She reached for the towel Regina wore.

Regina slapped her hand away. "I am afraid not. If I did that, you would not have time for coffee before Ruby and Blue arrived." She gave Emma a little push towards the bathroom. Emma grumbled, stretched and walked past Regina.

Regina reached out and swatted Emma's naked backside. "What was that for?"

"Because I find that I cannot resist that beautiful naked ass. And because I can." Regina said as she went to the dresser to pull out her underwear. Emma stuck her tongue out and hurried out of Regina's reach, leaving Regina laughing. She loved those rare glimpses of the child inside Emma. The child that so rarely was let out. She undid the towel, put on underwear, and pulled her work clothes from the closet. With a snap of her fingers she made the bed and walked downstairs.

Snow, Zelena, Henry and the children were gathered around the breakfast island when Regina walked into the kitchen. "Good morning everyone." She said.

"Morning sis. There is coffee in the carafe.

Regina poured herself a cup of the rich dark beverage. She leaned against the counter and sipped the hot coffee. "Thanks Zelena."

"Regina do you think I should go see David?" Snow asked.

"Absolutely not, Snow. That is not David. Yes it is David's body, but James is calling the shots."

"Okay, I won't go. Can Neal and I move back home?"

"Yeah that goes Robin and I too." Zelena cut in. You and Emma just got married. Having in-laws around could cramp your style this early in your marriage."

"You are not cramping our love life. There are still Shades out there who could target you both to free those being held in the jail. Neither Emma or I want to take the chance with your safety. You are safer here."

"Then can we at least lose the guard dogs?" Zelena asked.

"I do not believe Ruby would like you calling her Guardians, guard dogs." Emma said from the doorway. "How long have you known about the protection?"

"Since the day after you returned. I lived many years by my wits Emma, I did not forget how to tell when someone is following me."

"Then she told me." Zelena said. "We can take care of ourselves. I have magic and Snow has fantastic fighting skills."

"What about Henry, Robin and Neal? They don't have either. Who will protect them? You both
have to think about them."

"The bodyguards remain." Regina said as she started to cook breakfast. "Besides Ruby has to be the one to call them off."

"Cool." Henry said. "I like Billy."

"All right for now." Snow conceded. Zelena nodded. "Henry would you like a ride to school?"

"Sure I will get my stuff." He said, kissed his mothers good bye and left the room.

"Mom please be careful." Emma said.

"I will. You both do the same." She said.

"What is on the agenda for today?" Zelena asked.

"Ruby and Blue will be here shortly. There is something going on at the dome."

"Okay. You were waiting for that right?"

"Yeah at some point today."

"What is bothering you Emma?" Regina asked as she placed their breakfasts on the counter.

"What makes you think something is bothering me?" Regina touched Emma's chest above her heart. "Oh yeah, I forgot about that."

"So?"

"I don't know. It is more of a feeling than anything. I have this feeling that we are not seeing the whole picture. That there is something crucial we are missing. Some important information is missing," Emma sighed.

"The not knowing that part will pull your attention off the main objective?"

"Yeah. How did you know?"

"I have a lot of time on my hands and have been watching a lot of crime shows on Netflix. They are always talking about getting all the facts, and not losing focus."

"Thank you Netflix." Emma said. "We know we are dealing with Dark Shades, but what do they want here? Who are or were they when they were alive?"

"Maybe your new friend will be able to fill in that information." Regina said.

"That would be great. Cuz other than James we have no idea who we are dealing with. One of those Shades could even be Jack the Ripper."

"Who?" Regina and Zelena asked together.

"He was a serial killer in London who targeted prostitutes. He was never caught."

"Lets hope he is not one of the Shades. We certainly do not need a string of murders here in Storybrooke."

"Were you able to get a notice about Blue not being dangerous?"
"I did. I sent the notice to the paper and said to make sure it was on the front page in big black letters and radio station and told them to run it at least once every hour."

"Did you find out who authorized the reward?"

"The Deputy Mayor. He said David made it sound worse than it actually was so he okayed it. I told him that only the Mayor had the authority to issue any rewards. It has been cancelled and he will not do that again."

"Good, thanks babe."

"You are very welcome. There is the door bell. I will let Ruby and Blue in." Regina left and returned with Ruby.

"Where is Blue?"

"Right here." Ruby said and held up the bag she carried. She opened the bag. A blue light rose from the inside and turned into Blue.

"What the Hell?" Emma shouted as she jumped in surprise.

"There was a group of men outside the Convent. I could not leave the normal way."

"They asked me to bring her out so that they could take her back to the hospital and collect the reward."

"I cancelled that last night." Regina said.

"Well they either didn't hear about it or they decided to ignore it." Ruby said. "Emma many of those in the group were at that tavern we went to."

"So in order to leave, I made my self small and Ruby took me right out through them." Blue added.

"Why didn't you just poof yourself here?"

"As a fairy, we cannot just poof ourselves into someone's home. It is against fairy law."

"Oh I didn't know that."

"Consider yourself having permission." Regina said.

"Thank you Regina. Very few people know about the laws we follow. In fact we have to follow two sets of laws." Blue explained. She pulled a small bottle from the pocket of her cape. "I have those eye drops to help you see the dark auras. One drop in each eye every morning. You will also be able to see who the Shade was when they were alive."

"Great no more glasses." Emma said and took the bottle. "Babe would you help me?" She sat on the stool and tilted her head back.

"Emma those drops will sting." Blue cautioned. "It will only last for a couple seconds, but they will sting a great deal. Just keep your eyes closed and no rubbing."

Regina put a drop into each eye. Emma hissed as the drops hit. "Holy shit Batman, you weren't kidding about the sting." Emma kept her eyes closed. Regina grabbed her hands as she raised them towards her eyes.
"No rubbing." She reminded Emma.

Emma opened her eyes when the stinging stopped. Her vision was blurry, but cleared when she blinked several times. "I am okay, you can let go of my hands."

"I like holding your hands."

"So do I, but you can get our guests some coffee."

Regina leaned over and kissed Emma's nose. "Okay, but no rubbing."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." Emma said and turned to Blue. "We are going to need you lower the dome so that we can get the flowers we need."

"Does it have to be completely taken down?" Ruby asked.

"No. Just a small portion."

"What if they could help us?" Emma asked.

"Are you suggesting that we let them out?" Regina asked.

"We don't have enough problems with the ones that are here, you want to let more loose?" Ruby complained.

"Obviously I don't mean the Dark Shades, but I guess it was a bad idea."

"It is not. The Shade I was speaking to when my spirit was stolen wanted to help."

"So we only let a few out. Can you control that?"

"I can."

"How will Emma be able to tell the good Shades from the Dark Shades? Especially if they take over humans?"

"Their auras will be white."

"Gina, I think we should do this. We can use all the help we can get. We have no idea how many Dark Shades escaped to this world."

"What about that list of names you collected?" Regina argued.

"That is just a start. For all we know there could be hundreds of them here."

"Wouldn't they have to take over a human in order to be in the sunlight?" Ruby asked.

"Yes, but unlike a Dark Shade, a Light Shade will ask permission first."

"I will do it." Emma volunteered.

"Absolutely not Princess. I forbid you from doing anything like that." Regina shouted.

"You forbid it?" Emma shouted back.

"Emma, it cannot be you." Blue said softly.
"Why the Hell not?" Emma snapped.

"For the obvious reason, you are the Savior. The one person person the Shades cannot enter or touch. Secondly, you are with child."

"Then I will do it." Regina offered.

"No fucking way babe."

"Ladies, please. It cannot be you either Regina. We know that if a Dark Shade touches Emma it will burn her skin. We don't know if the Light Shade will have the same effect. If that is also true, and you let a Light Shade enter you, you would not be able to touch Emma. Plus we do not know if the effects would carry past when the Shade left your body."

"Oh." Regina said.

"How about me?" Ruby asked.

Blue shook her head no. "I am sorry Ruby. You are the leader of the Guardians and part wolf. The wolf part of you will not let the Shade enter."

"Then who? You have turned us down. Who can do it?" Emma demanded.

"I can." Zelena said.

"What?" Regina exclaimed.

"Look sis, I have done nothing since this whole thing started."

"You just got all your powers back."

"I know, but you have been protecting me for several months, let me give a little back. Please."

"Is that your wish?" Blue asked.

"It is."

"What about Robin? What if something goes wrong?"

"Regina we will give Zelena every possible protection to insure that she is not harmed."

"How about Robin and Neal? What do we do with them while we are off taking care of this problem?"

"The children will be taken to the convent for safety." Blue answered.

"For the record, I still don't like it." Regina said.

"Noted sis."

Guardians and fairies waited near the protective dome for the others to arrive. The weather had turned cooler and the leaves continued to fall, their colors muted with the passing days. The fairies wore their blue capes over their uniforms. Three figures stood behind the dome with a large pile of strange looking flowers. Two of them were distinctly human and not Shades. The five women arrived at the dome. Ruby went to talk to the Guardians. Emma placed a hand on the dome. The
Shade did the same.

'I see you were successful Savior."

"I was."

"We have the flowers that we spoke about to make the serum. I also brought two champions to help you.'

"We talked about that. We will allow you to come into this world also. We know you cannot come into the sunlight, so we have a volunteer who will allow you to enter her body to help us fight the Dark Shades."

"I was hoping it would be allowed."

"Blue will open the dome to allow you to come into this world."

The others could only hear Emma's side of the conversation. Zelena leaned over to Regina and whispered. "Can you hear what the Shade is saying?" Regina shook her head no. Emma turned to look at them.

"Let me discuss this with my friends and we will open the dome."

"Certainly Savior."

Emma turned away from the dome to walk to where Regina stood. "You don't whisper as softly as you think you do, Zelena."

"What did he say?"

"He said he had hoped he would be allowed to come through. And he has help in the form of two champions."

"Who are these champions?" Regina asked.

"I don't know, you didn't give me a chance to ask."

"Sorry."

"Emma do you trust him?"

"I do. He told me where to look to find you and how to use your essence to it's fullest."

"i will open the dome." Blue said. She pulled her wand and walked to the dome. She tapped the dome and a hole opened. She spoke softly and waved her wand in a figure eight to expand the opening.

The plants were handed out first. The Shade stood just inside the dome. Zelena stepped closer to the protection.

"Before we do this, I want your promise that there will be no messing with my bodily functions."

The Shade smiled. "I remember insisting on that same thing many years ago when I helped a friend. You have my word, Zelena. I have to say I like this new version a lot better."

"Thanks you, I think. What do I have to do?"
"Hold your arms out and relax. This may hurt, but I will try to make it as painless as possible."

Zelena looked at Emma and Regina. "If this doesn't work or if something happens to me, promise me that you will look after and love Robin."

"Of course we will." Regina said.

Zelena nodded, took a deep breath and closed her eyes. "I'm ready."

"I assure you Zelena, you will be in control of your body at all times. I will be like a voice inside your head. If at anytime I need to take control, I will ask your permission first. I will speak through you."

"Okay."

The Shade stepped forward, wrapped his arms around Zelena and slowly entered her body. Zelena gasped at the sensation. After the Shade was inside her, Zelena sagged. Regina and Emma grabbed her arms to support her.

"Are you alright sis?"

Zelena opened her eyes. They glowed white before they returned to their normal green. "I'm good." She replied her voice deeper than normal. "We need to get those flowers into a dark place." Blue waved her wand. The flowers disappeared. "We will work together to make the serum."

"I am grateful for your help, The chronicles do not tell us the whole story. Do you have a name?"

"Before I became a Shade, I was called Autolycus. Also known as the King of Thieves."

"Really? The one from ancient mythology?"

"Yes that one. My fame precedes me. You sound surprised. How do you know of me?"

"Emma what is going on?" Regina asked.

"I had no idea you were real."

"We get that a lot."

"Emma." Regina snapped.

"I am not sure how to explain this."

"Then try. You know how much I hate being kept in the dark."

"Who is this ravishing creature?" He asked as he took Regina's hand and kissed it.

"Hey, none of that lover boy. This ravishing creature is my wife, Regina Mills." Emma pushed in between the two.

"Knock off that crap, that is my sister you are hitting on." Zelena said. She could hear him laughing inside her.

"My apologies, Savior."

"Gina this is Autolycus, the King of Thieves, who is inside Zelena."
"Why does that name sound familiar?"

"He was a character on that television program we watched in Boston."

"With those two half naked women? The one you said you liked when you were younger?"

"Yeah that one." Emma replied. "How did you end up a Shade?"

"It is a thrilling tale my dear, but a long one. One that is better told in a warm tavern with a pitcher of ale. You can hear it all later. Right now we have more pressing matters to attend to. After the Dark Shades escaped, I knew we would need help. I petitioned the council and two of my closest friends offered to help us. I have used both of them in the past. They are trustworthy and formidable women."

Two women walked out of the dome carrying supplies and weapons. Emma's jaw dropped when she recognized the two. The taller woman wore dark leathers, with a bronze breastplate covering her chest and stomach. A large sword was strapped onto her back in a worn scabbard. She carried a crossbow and a quiver of small bolts. Her hair was as dark as Regina's but her eyes were as blue as the sky on a Summer day.

The smaller woman was also dressed in leathers. The deep red short skirt and halter top showed off tanned muscular legs and toned stomach. She carried a long staff, and a short bow with a quiver of arrows that was slung over her shoulder. The tips of two short swords stuck out from her red boots.

"I don't believe it. You are both real too?"
Some old friends come to pitch in.

CHAPTER 19

The women smiled. "So asks the daughter of Snow White." The taller one said, as she dropped the bags she carried on the ground. With her free hand she smacked Zelena on the back of the head. "Hey! What the bloody hell was that for?" Zelena yelled and rubbed her head.

"Sorry that was for our friend inside of you. Contrary to what he said, he is the one who came to us asking for help, after securing Council approval. We did not volunteer. He asked for a favor. How many does that make now Auto, somewhere around five thousand?"

"The number escapes me at this moment." The tall woman laughed a rich deep sound as the Shade inside Zelena responded with a casual wave of her hand.

"As Auto said, we are here to help. Is there somewhere we can talk that is less open and exposed?"

"Yes we can go to our home. We will be safe there." Regina said.

"Zelena and I will head to the convent to get started on the serum." Blue said. "Do you have everything you need from the dome?"

"Yeah we do." Xena said.

Blue waved her wand and closed the opening in the dome. Blue took Zelena's hand and they disappeared. Regina, Emma and Ruby held hands with Xena and Gabrielle and they too disappeared.

Blue and Zelena appeared in her office, where the piles of flowers were neatly stacked. "What do we need?" Blue asked.

"We will need three large pots that you won't be needing for any cooking and sturdy gloves. Once we use the pots, they will be unfit for food. We need to separate the petals, leaves and stems with the thorns. Each will go into different pots. The thorns can give you a nasty cut so the gloves will protect our hands. This must be done by hand and not with magic."

"I will get what we need and bring back coffee also. This may take awhile." Blue said. Blue left the office returning several minutes later with a heavy pot and gloves. "The coffee and the other pots will be here shortly. I also asked for help. Two other fairies will assist us."

"Good. We will also need a few other chemicals and ingredients. Do you have a pen and paper?" Blue went to the desk and handed over the requested items. Zelena made a list that she handed to Blue. Blue read over the list.

"We have all of these here." Blue tapped the paper and waved her wand. Several bottles and boxes
 appeard on her desk. Zelena picked up each item. "Perfect, these will do nicely."

The door opened to admit Nova and Tink. Nova carried two large pots. Tink carried the tray with coffee, cups, cream and sugar. Blue poured the coffee while Auto explained to Nova and Tink what they needed to do.

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Regina, Emma Ruby and their guests appeared in the living room. Regina looked at Emma.

"Now princess, i would like an explanation. Who are these women and how do you know them?"

"Gina, Ruby, I would like to introduce Xena and Gabrielle. I don't really know them personally. Until today I thought they were just fictional characters on a television show that I really liked. We watched a couple of episodes when we were in Boston."

"Evidently they are not fictional characters on some television program. They are real and standing in our living room."

"Excuse me." Gabrielle said as she held out her hand. "I am Gabrielle and this is Xena. We are problem solvers. We came to help you recapture the dark Shades. After we have accomplished that we will return to our home in the Fields."

Emma completed the introductions. "I am Emma Swan Mills," She shook the smaller hand. This is my wife Regina, and our friend and leader of the Guardians, Ruby Lucas."

"Hello." Regina said as they exchanged hand shakes. "Please have a seat. I will get us something to drink. Emma would you give me a hand?"

"Uh yeah, sure babe. Excuse us."

Emma followed Regina into the kitchen. "What do they drink?"

"I don't know. In the show they drank wine, or mead or cider maybe tea. I don't think they had coffee there."

"What the Hell is mead?"

"I think it was something like an ancient form of beer maybe?"

"Beer, wine, cider we have."

"Cider would be the safest choice."

Regina pulled two glass pitchers from the refrigerator, while Emma took out glasses and a tray. Ruby remained with their guests. The unwavering stare from Xena made her uncomfortable.

"You are a wolf." Xena said.

Ruby held her head high and met the stare. "I am." Ruby answered. "I am also the leader of The Guardians who protect the town."

"You are The Alpha. That is good. An Alpha is needed for what we have to do."
"What exactly do we have to do?" Regina asked as she carried the tray with drinks. Emma followed with a tray of snacks.

"The first thing you will need to learn is how to load and use a small cross bow. One that will fire the serum coated darts." Xena said.

"Without sticking yourselves with the darts." Gabrielle added. "That is the tricky part. I used to stick myself all the time, but Xena is a good teacher."

"How small are we talking?" Emma asked. Xena reached into one of the bags and pulled out a small dart about four inches long, with a feathered back and wickedly sharp point." Do you throw these?"

"They could be thrown, but unless you are a professional dart thrower, you would have to be really close to your target. Are you a professional at throwing darts?"

"No, I'm not." Emma answered.

"It will take three days before the serum is ready. That means we have three days to train as many people as possible in using the crossbows." Gabrielle said.

"Learning how to use the crossbow is not enough. You have to be accurate also. How many guardians do you have?"

"Fifty two." Ruby answered. "Including myself."

"Good, that is a start. We will need more people on our side."

"We have the fairies, and my mom is excellent with a bow. We can add in the dwarves and deputies ." Emma said.

"Count in my Granny. She is really good with a cross bow. Plus she was a Guardian." Ruby said. "She helps me coordinate the schedules of the other Guardians. She runs a diner and inn here in town."

"Does she have a room available?" Gabrielle asked. "I know we could camp out, but after doing this for centuries, I think we have earned the right to a little comfort." She added looking at Xena.

"I'll call her." Ruby pulled out her phone and left the room.

"Do you know how many Shades escaped?" Emma asked.

"We have an approximate number. With the barrier between the Underworld and Shadow Realm, it is hard to know the exact number. As close as we can figure out one hundred fifty came through."

"A hundred fifty? Damn." Emma said.

"How many names do you have?" Regina asked.

Emma pulled the pad from her pocket. "Less than seventy."

"Then we have three days to increase that number."

"Thank you for saying We."
"You don't think I would let you go hunting all by yourself? We are in this together sweetheart."

Emma leaned over and kissed Regina's cheek. "Love you babe."

Xena cleared her throat. "We also have the identities of most of them. Gabrielle do you have the list?"

"I do." Gabrielle reached into her bag and pulled out two scrolls that she handed to Regina. Emma leaned close to read the flowing script.

"James we knew." She gasped as she read the next three names. "Are you certain of these?"

"I am afraid we are. Pan, Hook and Cora were the ringleaders."

'That is impossible. Zelena and I watched as our mother walked into the light. How did she end up there?"

"She did not go into the light at all. Cora was able to leave the Underworld because she took care of the unfinished business holding her there. She reunited you and Zelena. When she left the Underworld it was to face judgement for her crimes. One good deed does not erase a lifetime of murder, cruelty and sadistic crimes. She was given the choice of entering the Shadow Realm or being sent to the fires of Hell." Xena explained. "She chose the Shadow Realm."

"What of my father? Was he also judged?"

"He was. His only crime in his life was not being strong enough to protect you from Cora. He is in a much better place. He is happy and misses you." Regina sniffed and brushed away a stray tear. "He sent you a note." Gabrielle handed her a second parchment. Regina held it unopened in her hand.

"Aren't you going to read it?" Emma asked.

"I will later."

"We have obtained permission to carry back a letter from you. This is a one time offer." Xena said.

"I understand. Emma, sweetheart, I am sorry, but I have to ask. What about Daniel?"

"Not a problem, babe. I know he was your first love."

"Daniel is fine also. He and your father are great friends. They spend their time talking, playing chess and watching over you and your family." There is a note from him also on that parchment." Gabrielle answered.

"I will read them both later." The scroll disappeared. "I put it in a safe place."

"Can I ask you what will happen to the Shades after they are recaptured?" Emma asked.

"That information is best left for another day. Knowing the outcome might change the way you approach the mission." Xena said.

"I need to know that they, especially my mother and Hook will not be able to return to this world to ruin our lives."

"They will never be able to return, Ever." Xena said.
Regina looked at her waiting for Xena to say more. Ruby came back into the room. "Granny has a room for you. I also put out the word to the Guardians that we will all need some specialized training. Granny will make a schedule for them all."

"We need to get started as soon as possible. Do you have an area that we can set up as a practice field? One that is secured and away from prying eyes. A place that is not a public area?"

"Sure, you can use the back yard. The pool is closed up and covered and we have a privacy fence that is seven feet high. If we need more room we can go out to a field by the town line and put up a barrier spell." Regina said.

"Emma take our guest out back. I will start lunch. Ruby will you stay for lunch?" Emma took Xena into the back yard.

"Sure, thanks Regina."

"Would you like some help?" Gabrielle asked. "Xena is better at training than I am."

"Certainly, come into the kitchen."

Ruby followed Emma and Xena into the back yard. Xena walked to the far end of the back yard. "This will do nicely. There is a pool back here?"

"Yeah it's covered for the season. The covering is strong enough to walk on."

"The yard is what about seven hundred feet?"

"Good eye, it's seven hundred ten feet."

"And the back about eight hundred feet from the house?"

"It is. If we need more room we can magic the fence backwards."

"No need for that we have plenty of room."

"What is the range of the cross bows?"

"Depending on weather conditions, three to four hundred feet. Wind is a big factor. The darts are light and the slightest breeze can throw off the trajectory." Xena explained. "We should get started."

Xena took several rolled forms from one of the bags and went to the fence where she tacked them up. She returned to Emma's side.

"Xena I have to ask you something."

Xena smiled. "I did not die the way the show said. Gabrielle and I lived to a ripe old age and ran my mother's inn after she died. Gabrielle was so mad at that show. She wanted to haunt the writers. It took a lot of time and arguing to get her to change her mind."

"I am glad to hear that, I hated the way the show ended. But that is not the what I wanted to ask. What didn't you say when Gina asked you what would happen to the Shades? How do you know they will never be able to return?"

"Like I said earlier, in Cora's case she was given the option of where she would end up. She chose the lesser of the two punishments. That courtesy will not be given again. Once the Dark Shades are
captured, they will be taken to the fires of Hell where they will remain for all eternity."

"Thank you for being honest."

"I expected you to ask. We all know about your super power."

"Emma is like a human lie detector." Ruby said. "Will you tell Regina?"

"I think she may know or at least suspect that you didn't tell her the whole story."

"That decision is in your hands Savior."

'She was manipulated by her mother and Rumple into becoming the Evil Queen. Every day she fights against the darkness to redeem herself. If I withhold this information, then I will be no better than Cora. I will not do that to the woman I love. I trust her to make the right decision."

"I expect no less from you." Xena paced off three hundred feet from the targets and placed a marker on the ground. She paced off until she reached four hundred feet and placed another marker. She returned to the table and took several boxes of darts and cartridges from the bag and placed them on the table.

Emma picked up one of the darts and looked closely at it. "Wow they are small." She commented.

"First I will show you how to load the cartridges without sticking yourselves. Pick up the cartridge and hold it here." She showed them the correct way. Emma and Ruby each picked up a cartridge. "Grasp the dart by the feathered end and insert the point into the back of the first hole on the cartridge. You will hear the small click when it locks into place. Each cartridge hold ten darts."

They practiced loading until they had a large pile of filled cartridges on the table. "Pick up a crossbow and turn it over. You will see a slot that you will slide the filled cartridge into. If it is inserted correctly you will hear a whirring noise which means the first dart has entered the chamber."

"Why go through all of this? Why not coat bullets with the goop the fairies are cooking up?"

"We do not want to harm the unwilling hosts. The darts will do little damage beyond a small puncture. The real damage will be done to the Dark Shade. The shade will be frozen. At that point the fairies come in with the enchanted vessels and extract the Shade from the hosts."

"Then guns are out." Emma went back to the crossbow and put the cartridge into place. She heard the small whir.

Xena pointed to a small lever. "That is the safety. The bow cannot be fired as long as that is engaged. Push it into the down position. Aim it away from people when you release the safety. Come to the last marker. Point the bow down when you are walking. You don't want to shoot someone accidentally."

"Can I make a correction, Xena?" Emma asked. Xena nodded. "If you are walking with any sort of gun the safety should be engaged."

"I stand corrected and will adjust my teaching. Emma you stand here," She pointed to a spot on the ground. "Ruby you stand there." She pointed to a spot ten feet away. "We are at the furthest reach of the crossbows." She stood between the two. "Once you are set, release the safety if you turned it back on. Pull back this lever." She pointed to the lever. "This will prime the crossbow. It is now ready to be fired. Take aim at the target. It is not necessary to hit a vital spot. No matter where the dart hits, the serum will have the same effect. Just try to avoid the eyes. There is no reason to blind
"The person." They aimed at the target. "Put your finger on the trigger and when you are ready, fire. At no time should your finger be on the trigger unless you are ready to fire." They fired. The soft whoosh of the darts leaving the bows could be heard. All three darts fell to the ground. "We will need to move up to the next line. There is a slight breeze coming towards us. The darts are extremely light and the slightest breeze will affect them."

"The windier it is the closer we would have to be to the target."

"Correct." They moved up, took aim and fired. All three darts hit the targets. Emma's dart hit the arm, Xena's hit the stomach area while Ruby's ended in the groin. "Interesting. Was that where you were aiming Ruby?"

"Yeah. I pictured Whale's face on the target and thought that would be the ideal spot to hit him."

"Why?"

"Whale is our resident scum bag who thinks that he is god's gift to women. He is a fairly good doctor so we keep him around."

"He is a womanizer?"

"Yeah and he is on my list." Emma answered.

"Then Ruby that was a great choice. Emma did you aim for the arm?"

"No I aimed for the shoulder."

"You did not miss by much. When you fired the breeze came at us and threw the dart off."

"What if we enchanted the darts to fly true? I mean if it is a windy day or something."

"Magic is a good backup if needed, but we shouldn't rely just on magic." Xena said. "Shall we try again?"

Regina looked out the kitchen window at the three practicing, while their lunch slowly cooked. The rich aromas filled the kitchen from the stew that bubbled on the stove. Gabrielle worked at cutting up vegetables to go into the pot. She chuckled at the spot Ruby's dart hit. She watched them for a few minutes more before turning their attention back to their lunch.

"How are they doing out there?" Gabrielle asked.

"Not bad. It looks like they are trying another round of practice."

"Xena is a great teacher. She will have them experts in no time."

"Can you shoot a crossbow?"

"Yes, Xena taught me many years ago. I prefer to use my staff in a fight. Those smaller crossbows are harder to use because of the size."

"How is it that you can come into this world at a different time then when you lived and be at ease with everything here? Did they give you a crash course on how things are done?"

Gabrielle laughed. :"Not at all. We are immortal. As such we have the knowledge we need to go
"So this isn't the first time you have come into the modern world?"

"No it isn't. We became immortals only after the gods agreed to let us leave and go where we were needed. Xena would go crazy if she didn't have anything to do all day. To be perfectly honest so would I. I have lost track of the number of times we have come into this world to help. This is the first time we wore the clothes we wore when we were alive."

"Why is that?"

"Mainly because we knew Emma would recognize us if we dressed the part. I imagine she has already asked about how the television show ended."

"She told me she hated the ending to the point where she refuses to watch the last episodes. She said it is the episode that did not happen."

"I wanted to haunt the writers. Xena talked me out of it."

Regina laughed as she gave the pot another stir before she returned to the window. "Did you have any children?"

"Gods yes. We had seven. Four girls and three boys."

"Seven? How did you do it? I am trying not to get overprotective of Emma because she is pregnant. I can only imagine how Xena was."

"We both were. Xena and I took turns carrying our children. We had originally planned on six, but during the last pregnancy Xena had to show off and have twins. That is when we decided to stop. Then those children grew up and had children and on and on. There must be sixty or seventy generations now. Soon our family tree will have another leaf."

"Really? You have descendants here?"

"We do." Gabrielle looked pointedly at Regina.

"What? You don't mean..."

"Yes I do. You and Emma are descendants of ours. Emma is from my line while you, Regina, are from Xena's line."
"What?" Regina exclaimed.

"You have the coloring of Xena's father. The dark hair, complexion and eyes, they are all his. I noticed that the minute I saw you. Not all of you will carry the exact coloring. All of Xena's descendants will have the dark hair, but the eye colors vary from her blue to his deep chocolate brown. The funny part is that all of my descendants will have blonde hair and green eyes. Right now there is only one exception to that."

"Wait? What? Does that mean that Snow...?"

"Yes Snow is from Xena's line. David however is from mine. In each generation there is one couple that is destined to be together. They will move heaven and earth to find each other. Eventually they do. Sometimes they have to fight the fires of Hell to do it, but they do succeed. It is part of being our children. You and Emma were destined to be together. We have known about it for centuries. Before you say something silly about incest, remember that our first children do not share the same fathers. Our children were not related by blood, but by something much stronger, love. Which is more powerful."

"What about Henry? He has the dark hair and brown eyes."

"Right now he is the only exception."

"Explain please?"

"Emma is his birth mother and is of my line. Henry's father was an indirect descendant of Xena's. It all comes down to the ancient gods being a bunch of horn dogs who spread their genes all over."

"You said right now he is the only exception. Will there be another?"

"Yes. The child Emma carries will also be an exception. She is part of both of you."

"We know that except for one tiny little cell from another, I am basically the father of the baby. She carries both my genes and Emma's."

"The joy of magic. The baby will be a very powerful magical being. You may have to think about binding her powers until she is old enough to handle them and be trained properly."

"Oh."

"I am not telling this to scare you or put you in a panic. I want to prepare you."

"We knew she would be magical."

"It is not a decision that you have to make immediately as you still have a few months before she is even born."

Regina watched Emma and Ruby running around the back yard firing darts at the targets. Her phone buzzed on the counter. She picked it up and spoke. "Regina Mills."

"Madam Mayor, it's Constance. I know you are off site today, but Delores from Accounting is
here. She said you were supposed to return a report from yesterday's budget meeting?"

"Damn, I forgot to do that."

"She is not happy to have to come get it."

"She is never happy. You tell her that if she had bothered to show up for the meeting, this would not have been a problem."

"I will tell her."

"The report she needs is on my desk. You can let her in to get it."

"Certainly Miss Mills." She disconnected the call and turned to the stern looking woman. She was a slight woman with grey flecked dark hair that was in a tight bun. Dark framed glasses hung from a chain on her slight chest. "Miss Mills said the report is on her desk. Any if you had bothered to show up to the meeting..."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, so she is pissed at me. What else is new." She turned and walked into Regina's office. Going to the desk, Delores pushed the leather chair out of the way and searched through the folders on the desk. She looked to make sure the secretary was busy, before taking a small device out of her pocket. She placed the device under the desk. She hurriedly left the office slamming both doors behind her.

"Bitch." Constance swore to the now empty office.

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The flowers were separated and sitting in their pots. Auto gave them the next step. "Add just enough water to cover the parts." He pulled three bottles from the bag he carried. There was a small mark on each bottle. Blue waved her hands water filled the pots. He placed a single drop from each bottle in the water. "Now we wait until morning for the next step." Auto said. Zelena pushed through. "Blue would it be possible to um use your facilities?"

"Of course Zelena. What about your tag along?"

"Hey, the name is Autolycus, or Auto if you prefer. I can leave your body if someone closes out the sunlight. I only need a human to get from point A to point B during the daylight hours." Blue waved her wand and all the blinds closed pushing the room into semi darkness. "Zelena, relax now so this doesn't hurt too much. If you tense up it will be painful. As it is you may feel some cramping and dizziness."

Zelena took a deep breath and relaxed. Autolycus left her body. She sagged against the desk. "Whoa."

Tink was at her side. "Are you alright?" She asked.

"Yeah. That was...." She sat quickly.

"Put your head down and take deep breaths. It will ease the dizziness." Tink said and pushed Zelena's head down towards her knees."

"Will that happen every time?" She asked.

"Unfortunately yes, but I will only have to use you during the daylight hours. Once night comes, I
can be out and about on my own."

"Why would you need to go out?" Blue asked.

"Isn't there some sort of town meeting tonight?"

"Yes there is. With everything that is going on I had forgotten about it." Blue said. "Is it wise for you to attend? Won't the dark Shades recognize you?"

"Only if they see me. I am well versed in hiding in the shadows. Years of being the King of Thieves have taught me a thing or two. If I can find a good hiding spot, I can watch the crowds and pick out those affected humans. We can't let the Savior have all the fun can we?"

Zelena stood up once the dizziness had passed. "If you don't need me, I will take Robin and Neil back to Regina's. Snow will be worried if he is not there when she gets home from school. It is getting late."

"Are you sure you are alright to leave? Sit for a few minutes more while Nova and Tink get the children."

"I still have to use the facilities."

"Of course. Nova will you show Zelena where to go. Stay with her in case she is not as steady as she thinks she is. Tink will you get the children?"

"Of course Blue." Nova led Zelena from the room. Tink left right behind them.

"Will you need a place to stay tonight?" Blue asked Autolycus. "Do shades sleep?"

"Yes but not in the true sense of the word. We recharge. If it is not breaking any rules, I can stay right here. I will need to add water throughout the night."

"Of course. There is an available room next door you can use." She waved her hands and the pots disappeared. "There is a comfortable couch there should you wish to lay down. There are pillows and blankets in the closet if you need them. I only ask that you do not roam the Convent."

"That will not be a problem."

"What about food? Do Shades eat?"

"In the shadow Realm, there is no need to eat, but here in this world we do. Especially if we are outside a human body. If you have a leg of mutton and a tankard of mead, I would not say no."

"I cannot guarantee that specific meal, but I will see what I can do." Blue said.

Zelena returned as Robin and Neil were brought to the office. She took hold of the children's hands and disappeared.

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Emma sat behind the sign in table near the entrance to the auditorium where the town meeting would be held. She had a list of all the town residents on the table in front of her to check off those who attended. This was the part of these meetings that she hated. It was long and boring and called for her to be there at least an hour before the meeting. She stifled a yawn. The practice session was long. Running back and forth across the back yard firing the crossbows from every conceivable position put her body through paces that she had not done in a long time. Xena sat next to her and
whispered the names of Shades in Emma's ear.

The eye drops helped Emma see not only the dark auras, but also the Shade inside the human. Thirteen names had been added to her list. Somewhere behind the council table she knew Autolycus hid behind the curtain. She stifled another yawn as three people walked in together. She stared at the three instantly alert with her mouth slightly open when she recognized the Shades inside of them.

"Are you going to sit there with your mouth hanging open and looking stupid or are you going to write our names down Sheriff?"

"Oh sorry. Name?"

"Delores Peterson."

Emma wrote the name down and put a 'C' next to her name.

"Lawrence Cooper." The first man said.

She wrote the name and put a 'P' next to it.

"Thomas Fischer." The second man said.

Emma wrote the name and put 'H' next to it. She checked the time after signing in a few more persons. "Almost time." She thought. From inside the auditorium she heard someone tapping on the microphone. That was her cue to pick up her papers and take her place at the council table.

"Sheriff would you close the doors please?" Regina asked from her place in the center of the table.

Emma closed the double doors, walked down the aisle to the stage where she took her seat.

Xena and Gabrielle sat in the front row with Granny, Snow, Zelena, and Ruby sat with them. They had changed out of their warrior clothes and now wore regular clothes to blend in. There were no weapons visible, but Emma knew the warriors were both armed.

The Dwarves sat in the next row with Archie, and August. Doctor Whale sat in the end seat.

"Shall we begin?" Regina said, as she banged the gavel on the table. "We have a lot to discuss so I would like to dispense with the reading of the last town meeting's minutes. You each have a copy of the minutes to read. Are there any objections?" The room was quiet. "We will move on. Treasurers Report."

Delores stood up. "Due to the very generous donation from the Sheriff after the sale of items from the pirate ship, there will be no tax bills sent out until next summer."

Her words caused Hook's spirit to become restless. He leaned over and whispered to Pan. "That bloody bitch had no right to sell me property." The news caused people to talk excitedly covering Hook's whispers. Regina rapped her gavel again. Delores continued with her report. "Storybrooke continues to have a surplus of funds totaling two hundred million. That number is expected to increase as more merchandise is sold." She finished and sat back down.

"Thank you Delores. Next we will hear from the Building Committee Chairman. Marco stood up. "Expansions to the Sheriff's Station and Library are almost completed. The school and hospital expansions are expected to be finished before summer. Most of the framing has been completed and the builders are boxing it in. They hope to be able to finish that in the next few weeks before
cold weather sets in. Supplies are still being delivered daily to the field outside town. August has trained two other drivers to bring the supplies across the town line which frees him up for those trips outside. There are also several houses in various stages to provide for new arrivals. The next place to be expanded will be Granny's inn. That will take place in the Spring." He sat back down.

"Thank you Marco. Does anyone have any other old business they want to discuss?" No one stood or raised their hands. "On to new business."

Whale stood up. "Madam Mayor?"

Regina sighed in frustration. "Doctor Whale."

"Can you explain why you and the Sheriff cancelled the reward and arrest warrant on a dangerous person?"

"Tell me Doctor Whale, how in your opinion is the Blue Fairy considered to be a dangerous person?"

"She was unconscious for over a week. Then you return and with the fairies performed some sort of voodoo and she woke up. She left the hospital against medical orders. She attacked myself and a nurse when we tried to stop her. She could have mental defects and should be considered dangerous until proven otherwise."

"So you are mad because she didn't wait for permission to leave from the all powerful Viktor Whale. You concoct some bullshit reason and complain to the Deputy Sheriff and Assistant Mayor in order to get a bogus arrest warrant and reward issued for an innocent woman."

"Innocent according to Whom?" Whale asked.

Archie stood up. "Madam Mayor if I may speak?"

"Doctor Hopper the floor is yours." Regina said.

"I have talked to the Blue Fairy and in no way is she a dangerous person. There are no mental defects. Blue is healthy medically, mentally and emotionally and is a danger to no one." He sat back down.

There were grumblings from several people. Regina banged her gavel again. "Are you satisfied Doctor Whale?"

"Not in the least. as far as I am concerned we will watch for her and take her back to the hospital for further evaluation."

Emma stood quickly rocking her chair backwards. "If I hear from the fairies that you or any of your friends are bothering them, or trespassing on convent property, I will arrest the lot of you?" Emma shouted.

"On what grounds." Whale shouted back.

"On whatever charges I can come up with. Need I remind you what a felony change will mean to your medical license? Hell you are standing here in front of a room full of witness and threatening an innocent woman. From what I can see Blue is not the dangerous person here. You are. So sit back down and shut up before I haul you out of here in handcuffs."

Whale gave her a dirty look and stormed out of the auditorium followed by several men. The door
slammed behind them.

"Now that the unpleasantness has ended shall we continue?" Regina said. "Good. Miner's Day and Halloween fall on the same weekend..."

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Whale and his followers headed to a secluded area where they could talk. "Is that what you call keeping your head down Viktor?" Pan asked getting into Whale's face.

"If she tells them about us..."

"What makes you think they don't already know. What you should be worried about are those who came into this world today. Even more worrisome is that they brought the flowers needed to separate us from the humans. Two warriors came with them. That is what you should be worried about."

"We need to find a way into that damn convent. Hook said.

"Damn it Hook, stop and think for once in your sorry excuse for a life. The place is protected by magic inside and out. Even if you do find a way inside, the magic would keep you wandering around for days before it spit you back outside. What we need to do is find a way to get our hands on one of those fairies. Then we could exchange her for Blue. Owen do you have those cuffs?"

"I do."

"Then we get one of those bitches alone, slap the cuff on them and use them as a bargaining chip to bring the head bitch to us."

"You do that Pan. I however will go and find another way to protect me property." Hook said angrily.

"You own nothing you drunken fool. You left everything to the Savior. A very stupid move on your part." Pan yelled. "How are you going to stop her?"

"I will kill her if I have to, but she will not sell off any more of my property. I worked too hard..." Hook stormed off grumbling to himself.

"Follow him. Make sure he doesn't do anything stupid." Pan yelled. Two men walked away. "The rest of you keep an eye on the convent."

"The sheriff said..."

"I don't care what that bitch said. Just stay off their property while you watch. Is that so hard to figure out? We just need to get one of those fairies alone. So watch for any opportunity."

"What makes you think they will just walk outside for us. If they want to leave they can just poof wherever they want to go."

"Not all of them are able to poof anywhere. The younger ones do not have that ability."

"Target the young ones?"

"We target the younger ones." Pan said.

The Guardian backed away from the clearing silently and headed to the convent.
Emma walked out of the bathroom to see Regina sitting on the bed as she applied lotion to her tanned legs. Regina watched Emma watching her as she massaged the lotion into her shapely calves. She smiled at the look of clear lust on Emma's face.

"Do you like what you see Princess?" She purred.

"I do very much, Your Majesty." Emma purred back as she walked to the bed.

"What do you plan on doing about that?"

"Babe there is nothing I want to do more than make love with you, but right now I am wiped out. Can you forgive me?"

"Of course I forgive you. I saw how Xena ran you ass off training today. Then you sat through a three hour town meeting on top of that. I love you"

"Love you back babe." Emma lay on the bed as Regina opened her arms. Emma lay enclosed inside the loving embrace. Emma sighed in contentment as her head lay on Regina's shoulder. "Gina?"

"Yes."

"What are you going to do about that woman Delores or Cora?"

"I don't know. I don't interact with her on a daily basis so I will just have to see what develops."

"Did you see her face when she mentioned there would be no tax bill sent out until Summer? She looked as if someone put a shovelful of shit under her nose."

Regina laughed. "She really did look like that. Mother was all about money, power and status. She lived a very comfortable life with no thought of others. She only cared about her own comforts. Cora was selfish and cruel and made my life a living Hell. Speaking of Hell did you ask Xena what she meant when she said mother would not be able to ever return?"

"I did. Cora will not be given a choice when she is returned."

"She goes to Hell."

"Yeah. Babe I know she is your mother, but if you want to sit this one out when the time comes, that is perfectly alright."

"No sweetheart. We are in this one together one hundred percent. She is a powerful witch. There is no way I want you to go up against her alone."

"Was babe. She was a powerful witch when she was alive."

"Storybrooke is a magical place. We can't discount the possibility that some or all of her magic has returned. Please don't go up against her alone."

Emma yawned. "I promise."

"Did you ever figure out what that bad feeling was that you had earlier?"

"No, its not as strong as before but its still there."
"We will figure it out."

"Thank you for saying We."

"No thanks are necessary sweetheart. It is the truth. No sleep. Tomorrow will be another busy day."

Emma lifted her head and kissed the waiting lips. "Love you Gina."

"Love you back."

Regina reached over and turned off the light as both women closed their eyes.
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

My apologies for the wait in getting this chapter posted. Two weeks ago my internet was down and then next week, I was down. Surgery is a real bitch to bounce back from when you get older.

CHAPTER 21

Blue sat behind her desk after Ruby left. She was disturbed by what the Guardian overheard in the forest. The pots of soaking flowers were moved to another room where Auto could tend to them without disrupting the Fairies.

Blue covered her face with her hands, only to look up when a knock sounded at the door.

"Come in." She called out.

The door opened to admit Nova and Tink. "You wanted to see us Blue?"

"I know you are busy and I apologize for disrupting your work."

"Blue it is almost midnight. Just about everyone has gone to bed. No one is working now." Nova said.

"Is it really that late?"

"What is going on Blue?" Tink asked.

"Ruby just left. It seems there was a disturbance at the town meeting tonight."

"We told you that earlier, Blue."

"After Whale and his cronies left, they went into the forest where they were overheard by a Guardian. They threatened the younger Fairies."

"Threatened? How?"

"They plan on taking one or two of them to trade them for me,"

"Have you told Emma?"

"Not yet. I just found out a short time ago." Blue said. "I will notify Emma in the morning. As you said it is almost midnight."

"Are you certain you want to wait?" Nova asked.

"Everyone is safe here in the Convent. No one can get in without permission from us. As of right this minute, everyone is safe within the protective area. We are all safe, especially the younger ones."
"We can take care of ourselves Blue. I understand the need to keep the young Fairies that have not earned their wands, safe." Tink argued.

"How are we supposed to take on the Shades, if we are not allowed to leave the Convent?"

"That is a discussion for tomorrow, after we have all rested. We will pick this up at a more reasonable hour."

"Blue are you thinking about letting them take you?" Nova asked.

Blue evaded the question. "Does Autolycus have everything he needs?"

"He does." Tink answered.

"Blue please don't do anything rash. We need you if we want to have even the smallest hope that we can win this upcoming fight." Nova added. "We need you."

"Yeah there are things only you can do."

"I have been thinking about that. When this crisis is over, it is time to train you both as my second and third to take over some of the duties, in the event..." She stopped speaking. "You have my word I will not to anything rash. Time to call it a day ladies."

"That goes for you also Blue."

"Very true."

Blue stood up and turned off her desk lamp. They left the office and headed to their rooms.

---------------------------------

Hook wandered down to the docks where his former ship was berthed. The streets were quiet given the late hour. He pulled the flask from his pocket and took a long drink. His boots sounded loud as he walked on the wooded pier.

"There you are me lovely. I have missed you." He said. "Ye are a beautiful sight to this old sailor's eyes. Time to see if those fools have destroyed ye." He walked towards the ship and hit the protective barrier. He bounced back. "Bloody Hell." He yelled. "They can't keep me from boarding me ship." Hook felt around for any opening. All he found was a solid barrier. The dock side search proved fruitless. He headed back down the pier to the beach where he climbed into a small row boat. Untying the craft he pushed away from the beach. Rowing away from the sand to his ship where once again he was thwarted in his search for an opening. The small boat bounced off the barrier. "Damnation. Those bitches cannot keep me from you me beauty. I will find a way me sweet girl." He spoke lovingly to the ship. Hook turned the boat around after searching for an hour for a way in. He rowed back to the shore and left the small boat on the sand without retying the rope. Muttering to himself he stormed off. "Those bitches will pay for trying to keep me off me ship."

The Guardian watched until he was out of sight, before leaving the shadows to follow. He pulled up the boat higher onto the sand and securely retying it before following Hook.

---------------------------------

Blue met Emma and Regina as they walked onto the Convent porch. She led them directly into her office. They sat down in front of the battered desk after handing them both coffee. She told them
why she called.

"We received word of a meeting in the forest after Whale and his friends left." Blue said. "It is as we expected. They know they cannot win against the united front you present. They are going to try to drive a wedge between you. They want to break the love and trust you have in each other."

"Can they even do that? We have love and our blood bond." Emma asked. "If we are destined to be together how can they do that?"

"They will not succeed for those very reasons." Blue answered.

"But?" Regina prompted.

Blue sighed. "It is possible to block you bond for a short time. I do not know if they are aware of that fact."

"How?"

"There is a plant that grows here. It will limit the power of your bond."

"What can we do?" Regina asked.

"Trust in each other and your love. Do not let it falter for even a second. To do so would allow them to gain the upper hand. Do not believe anything they tell you."

"Wait a minute, Blue. When we went through that ritual, you said it couldn't be broken."

"It cannot, however, that does not mean it's power cannot be blocked temporarily."

"You are telling us about that little glitch now?" Emma yelled.

"Sweetheart calm down." Regina said. "Blue is there anything we can do if the bond is blocked?"

"Yeah there is." Emma said. "Gina hand me your phone. It is time to let technology work for us." Regina handed her phone to Emma. Emma's fingers flew over the keys. After a minute she handed the phone back to Regina and pulled her phone out. Again she pushed buttons. When she looked up she said. "I have activated the GPS on both our phones. If by chance the bond is blocked you push tools on your phone, scroll down to GPS and push enter. It will find my phone. Mine will do the same for yours. I will do the same with our older phones, that we should carry as backups. Only the GPS will be active on them."

Regina pulled Emma close and kissed her. "That is just one of the many reasons why I love you Princess."

Blue blushed at the display of love between them. "Then you have a back up plan in place." She said. "Now I need to tell you about the threat against the younger Fairies."

Granny set up a training schedule for the Guardians that she relayed to her new guests. They sat in a booth as she explained the schedule. Guardians filed into the Diner. Emma and Regina were the last to arrive.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. We were called to the Convent." Regina said as they entered.

"Not a problem, Regina. We were just about to start." Granny responded. "I just handed the
Guardians their training schedules. Xena said she will train ten at a time."

Xena nodded. "I will have them in three to four hour sessions. If there are any others you would like trained, we can add them later. Just give the names to Ruby or Granny. We have a short amount of time to get everyone trained to use the crossbows. If you find that you cannot show up at your appointed time, please let us know as soon as possible. Once everyone has the basics, and if you feel you need more training, don't be ashamed to ask for more time. The small crossbows can be hard to learn to handle. Emma has a list of the affected persons and the Shades that have taken over them. We know who the ringleaders are. Emma do you have anything you want to add?"

"Yeah keep an eye on Whale and his associates. They are determined to get Blue back into the hospital to do God only knows what to. They are planning to kidnap some of the younger fairies to exchange for Blue."

"Should we also have someone watching the convent and the fairies?"

"Yes, I know it is asking a lot of you especially as they have magic, But remember that the younger ones, those who have not earned their wands yet do not have magic to fall back on. They are powerless. Those are the ones who will need the extra protection. They have been advised no to leave the security of the Convent."

"We will do our best. Sheriff."

"I know you will Ben and we appreciate your hard work and dedication to keeping this town safe. We will get through this together."

"With time so short we should get started, Emma." Xena said.

"Ben would you drive Xena and Gabrielle to the house. There is a training area set up in the back yard. Zelena is there to let you in. The first group should head out now."

Several Guardians stood and left the diner.

--------------------------

Delores and the humans that held Pan and Hook's dark Shades met in the accountant's office. She locked the door so that they would not be disturbed.

"There was some sort of meeting at Granny's this morning. The place was filled with Guardians." Delores said.

"All the damned heroes were there. Then those two bitches took a group of them to the Mayor's house." Hook added.

"To do what?"

"I don't know. There is a protection spell around the property. We can't see what they are doing back there."

"Then you need to find out Captain." Pan ordered.

"Just how the bloody Hell am I supposed to do that?"

"Find a way you fool." Delores yelled.
"How about you find a way to drive a wedge between your daughter and the savior, Cora." Pan said. "We have to find a way to divide them. together they are too strong."

"I am in the process of doing just that. I plan on convincing the Savior that Regina is cheating on her."

"Perhaps I can add a little fuel to really stoke that fire." hook said.

"Your being unable to split them up is the reason you ended up dead you drunken fool."

"If I could get onto me ship, I have things I can use. But those bitches put one of those damn spells around her."

"I heard Emma plans on selling the Jolly Roger to a museum in Boston." Cora said. "She is using the money to build some sort of hotel for homeless urchins."

"What? I didn't make that bitch me heir so that she could sell off me possessions. I worked hard for that money."

Pan laughed. "Oh please you never worked hard a day in your life."

"She will pay for this betrayal." Hook shouted. "Emma is mine and she will pay."

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The flowers sat in the water filled pots. Every two hours Autolycus would add a single drop from the bottles he carried. The drops set off a reaction in the pots as the serum steeped. Each second brought it closer to being ready.

With the completion of this mission, he hoped his punishment would finally end and he would be able to take his rightful place the The Fields. He had spent centuries in the Shadow Realm helping humans. all because he lost a bet with a god. Autolycus was caught stealing the wrong item from the wrong god and was sentenced to several centuries in the Shadow Realm. He checked the ingredients and gave the pots a stir before he returned to his chair.

------------------

When Hook left the Town Hall, he wandered to the tavern in the woods. He waited for his contact. The run down bar looked worse in the daylight as it did at night. The warped boards pulled away from the poorly constructed frame, with the tin roof showing many large areas of rust. Hook paced back and forth as he waited. When the man finally arrived Hook had worked himself into a temper.

"Do you have it?"

"I do." He pulled a brown cuff from his pocket.

"Then give it to me."

"Not so fast there Captain. Let me see the color of your money first."

Hook pulled a bag from his pocket and pulled out several gold coins. He started to hand the coins over but stopped. "This will block her magic?"

"It will. Plus a little extra something thrown in."

"What do you mean?"
"Are you aware that they have a special bond?"

"Of course, they are married."

"No Captain, it's more than that. Before that last curse hit, I heard they went through some sort of special ceremony with the Fairies, so that they will always be able to find each other. I don't know exactly how it works, but no matter where they are they can find each other."

"This," he touched the cuff, "will block that?"

"It is supposed to."

"Supposed to? You don't know for sure?"

"Every bond is different. This is the best we could come up without knowing the exact degree of that bond. Do you want it or not?"

"Yeah I do."

"Then it will cost you another five hundred dollars."

"What? We had a deal."

"This one will do more so it will cost you more. Hey you can give it a pass and try to take on the Savior by yourself. It's up to you."

Hook looked at him. "Why are you doing this? What do you have against Emma?"

"It's not her. Let's just say I have no love for the Evil Queen. She had my whole family killed as well as the woman I loved. If I had not been in the next village, I would have been killed too."

"That makes you one very lucky lad." Hook said and pulled more coins from his pouch.

"How do you plan on getting close enough to the Savior to put that cuff on her?" He asked. "Do you think she will just let you walk up to her and slap the cuff on her? Or are you planning on using your charm to get to hold out her arm?"

"What do you suggest?"

He pulled a round tube several small darts and a small bottle from his pocket. "Dip the dart into this bottle, then place it in the tube. Then you blow the dart at your target. She will be knocked out for several hours."

"How much?"

"A mere two hundred dollars, Captain." He smile showing a mouth full of rotten teeth.

Hook pulled more coins from his pouch and completed the sale. "How close do I have to be to her?"

"Unless you have the lungs of an ogre, which I am thinking you don't, you have to be fairly close. Five to ten feet at the most. You might want to give yourself some practice time before you take on the Savior." He took the money and left Hook.

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Emma walked across the park towards the Town Hall. She carried a bag containing lunch for her
and Regina. Regina called to say that she was swamped with writing up the town budget and would not be able to meet for lunch. Emma decided to take the chance and bring lunch to her instead. Even Mayors have to eat not matter how busy they were. She whistled as she walked. People took advantage of the sunny yet cooler weather to spend time in the park before the frigid Winter weather kept them inside. She smiled and waved to many as she passed them. As she approached the Town Hall, Delores walked out. The dark aura around her stood out in the sunshine. Emma narrowed her eyes. Delores was a difficult and nasty person at the best of times, but with Cora inside her she was even worse. She smiled a nasty smile.

"Sheriff, what brings you away from protecting out fair town?" She asked sarcastically.

"Even Mayors deserve to eat Delores." Emma answered with equal sarcasm.

"Oh dear, then I am afraid you are out of luck. Regina received a call earlier. She is at Granny's Inn."

"Really? I thought she was working on the town budget."

Delores laughed. "You are naive are you?"

"What do you mean?"

"I am surprised that you haven't caught on yet. You are a poor clueless creature aren't you." Delores sneered. "Regina meets with Mal at least once a week at Granny's Inn. They have been carrying on a torrid affair for months."

"I don't believe you. Regina and I love each other. She would not throw our relationship away."

Delores laughed again. "You foolish, foolish girl. Regina is incapable of love or being faithful to anyone."

"You lie." Emma shouted.

"Am I? Then go to Granny's Inn. Their favorite room is seven. Go see for yourself."

Emma wanted to slap the nasty smile off the woman's face. Her hand was balled tight around the bag. But the Sheriff hitting a private citizen would not look good to the town. She turned and walked away, reminding herself that Cora was inside the woman. Cora was trying to drive a wedge between her and Regina. She pulled out her phone and called Regina. It went straight to voice mail.

"Gina it has started."

The call was picked up. "Sweetheart what has started? Where are you?"

"I am leaving the Town Hall. I know you are busy, but I thought you might want lunch."

"Why are you leaving?"

"Delores stopped me and said that you were at Granny's Inn because you and Mal were carrying on a torrid affair. Blue said they would try something like this."

"With Mal? That would never happen. She looks crappy in tight jeans and red leather. Plus I love you not her."

"You are such a sweet talker Madam Mayor."
"Only for you." Regina said. "Are you heading to Granny's?"

"Yeah, may as well let the bitch think I believed her."

"Please be careful. And Emma, call me if you run into any trouble."

"I will babe. Love you."

"Love you back."

Delores watched Emma leave the Town Hall before she pulled out her phone.

"Yeah?"

"The Savior is on her way. Are you set to go?"

"We are. So you were able to convince her?"

"Of course. It wasn't hard. She is not the smartest person I have ever met and was easy to convince."

"Don't get overconfident Cora." Pan warned. "What she lacks in brains she makes up for in street smarts."

"You do not get to lecture me Pan. Just make sure you take her out of the picture."

Delores closed her phone and walked back into the Town Hall.

Emma walked up to the desk in the lobby of Granny's Inn. The young clerk greeted her. She was seventeen years old with red hair and bright blue eyes. Her slender frame was encased in bib overalls with one strap left undone, over a tee shirt that showed an old rock group.

"Hey Sheriff, what can I do for you?"

"You can tell me who is registered in room seven."

"Oh um, I don't know if I can do that."

"This is personal and not official police business, Donna."

"I am sorry sheriff, but let me call Granny and see if she says it's alright." She turned the Guest Book around and went into the office ignoring the phone on the sign in desk.

Emma smiled and checked out the entries in the book. She found room seven and the name listed was M. Ficient." Emma shook her head and looked to see that the clerk was still occupied. She went behind the desk and grabbed the Master Key. Running up the short flight of stairs she approached room seven. She listened for sounds inside the room before she inserted the key. The door opened. The room was in darkness but the light from the hallway shone on the empty bed. She looked cautiously around the darkened room before she stepped in searching for the light switch. She felt the pin prickle and the world went dark.
Chapter 22

CHAPTER 22

Regina worked through the afternoon and finished all the reports that piled up on her desk. All the new department budgets were added into the town budget for the next fiscal year. She felt her heart beat pick up until it felt like it was beating triple time. Regina wondered if it was their bond that was alerting her that Emma was in danger. She dialed Emma's phone and it went to voice mail. "Sweetheart call me when you get the chance." Regina signed off on the last one and threw it into her out bin for her secretary to deliver to the correct departments. She checked her phone again for any messages from Emma. She had expected to have heard from her before now, but the phone remained silent.

Regina called Emma again. "Emma, please call and let me know how you made out at Granny's. I was hoping to hear from you before now. Love you."

She next called Granny's Inn. "Granny's Inn this is Donna. How may I help you?"

"Donna, this is Mayor Mills. Is Sheriff Swan still there?"

"I'm sorry Mayor, but i haven't seen the Sheriff all day." The clerk lied.

"Really? When we spoke earlier she said she was on her way there."

"Maybe something else came up."

"Perhaps. Thank you."

"If I see her should I tell her to call you?"

"Yes, please." Regina said and ended the call.

From the office the voice said. "Well done. Now forget everything you have seen. If you value your life and those you care for you will keep your mouth shut."

"What will you do to her?"

"That is none of your concern. Just keep your mouth shut."

Two men carried an unconscious Emma out the back door of the Inn to a waiting pickup truck where they dumped her into the back. After making sure the bed spread totally covered her they climbed into the cab and drove off towards the forest.

While she worked, Regina had kicked off her heels under her desk. She shut down her computer and picked up her phone again to check for any texts from Emma as her feet fished around under the desk for her shoes. Remembering the app that Emma had placed on their phones, she opened the GPS. She frowned when the red dot that was Emma's phone, showed it to be deep into the forest that surrounded the town on three sides.

"What the Hell?" She said out loud. A knock sounded. "Come in." Regina called out.

Constance stuck her head into the office. "Mrs. Mills do you need me for anything else today?"

Regina glanced at the clock. "Is it that time already? All I need you to do is take those reports and
get them to the right departments. You can deliver them tomorrow. Close up and go home."

"Very well ma'am. I will bid you a good night and will see you in the morning." Constance said as she picked up the reports and left the office, closing the door behind her.

Regina continued to search under her desk for her missing shoe. She reached one with her foot without problems, but only managed to kick the other further under the desk out of her reach. Regina sighed, pushed her chair back and crawled under the desk for her errant shoe. She grasped the shoe and backed out, only to stop when she noticed the device stuck to the bottom of the drawer. Regina knew immediately who put the device under her desk. "Bitch." She swore.

Regina picked up her phone to place a call but changed her mind and sent a text instead. Madame Mayor: Trouble brewing. Ruby can you meet me outside the Town Hall in ten minutes?" She sent the text. Within seconds she got a response.

Wolf Leader: I will be there.

Regina donned her shoes, grabbed her purse and coat and she walked out of her office, locking the door and setting the alarm before she walked down the stairs. She only waited a minute before Ruby pulled up in her red convertible. Regina climbed into the car.

"My office has been bugged."

"Who would do such a thing?" Ruby asked.

"Who else, Delores or rather Cora."

"Is it still there?"

"I left it alone. I figure we could use it to our advantage later after we find Emma."

"Emma?"

"Drive to the Inn and i will tell you what has happened." On the drive over, Regina told Ruby what had happened during the afternoon ending with, "The clerk Donna said Emma had not been there."

"So you and Mal have been having a torrid affair?" Ruby joked.

"We certainly have not. I love Emma too much to ever hurt her like that."

"You want me to sniff out the truth?"

"Yes. With your enhanced sense of smell will you be able to tell if Emma was there?"

"That is easy to do."

They left the car for the short walk to the Inn office. A bell above the door tinkled as they walked in. Donna walked out into the lobby. Surprised to see Ruby with Regina, she stuttered. "Hi R-Ruby. what brings you here?"

Ruby sniffed the air and found traces of Emma's lingering scent. "She was here." Ruby said to Regina. "Donna, for starters, you can tell us why you lied to Regina."

"I didn't..." Donna protested.

Ruby sniffed again. "That is another lie. You told Regina that Emma wasn't here, but," she sniffed
again, "she was and not more than two hours ago. How about we try the truth this time."

"I can't. They said they would kill my whole family and make me watch if I said anything." She cried as she collapsed into a chair.

"We can protect your family, but you have to be completely honest with us." Regina said.

"You can do that?"

"Yes we can." Regina answered. "Tell me."

Donna looked between the two women. "They came a little before noon."

"Who are they?" Ruby asked.

"I don't know if they were the real names but they called each other Pan and Captain."

"What did they want?"

"They said they needed to use room seven for a few hours. They signed the register and paid for the room up front." She explained. "Oh and they also said if anyone came around asking about the room, that I was to stall before letting them go up. I didn't know they were going to ambush the Sheriff. A few minutes later they came down carrying Emma who was wrapped in the spread."

"You are certain the person that was wrapped up was Emma?"

"Yeah, i could see her hair and part of her red jacket."

"Give me the key for room seven." Ruby ordered. Donna checked the board. "Both keys are gone."

"Then give me the damn master key."

Donna handed the key over. Ruby ran up the short flight of stairs and down the hall to the room. The door to room seven was open and she entered slowly snapping on the light. The bed was messed with the spread missing. She sniffed the air. Emma had definitely been there. Ruby looked around the room for any clues. Off in the distance she heard the wail of sirens and knew that Regina had called the station. She saw the small dart laying on the floor. Grabbing a tissue from the box by the bed, she picked up the dart and sniffed it. She pulled out her phone and called Regina. "if I haven't come down before the deputies arrive, send them right up to room seven. Emma was here, but she has been drugged and taken." She ended the call and immediately placed another. "Gather as many Guardians as you can and meet me at the Inn. Emma is missing."

"Sure thing Ruby. You want one of us to bring our visitors?"

"Yeah we will probably need their skills." Ruby returned to the lobby as the deputies entered.

"Room seven is clear. The bed spread is missing and I found this on the floor." She handed the dart to the deputy who placed it in a small plastic evidence bag. "i called the Guardians to meet us here. They are picking up Xena and Gabrielle. We can start a search for Emma."

Regina pulled out her phone. "I have a starting point." She handed the phone to Ruby.

"That looks like it is close to where that dive bar used to be."
"I think so, Ruby."

"That's where we will start our search."

The lobby filled with Guardians. The deputies went up to room seven while one remained behind to watch over the clerk who had been crying non stop. Ruby gave instructions to the Guardians.

"Go out to where that old dive bar was located and secure the area. See if you can locate the tunnel that was used. If you do find the tunnel, do not go in until I get there."

"We" Regina said.

"What?"

"We will be going out there. I am going with you, Ruby."

"Regina you should go home. I will call you as..." She stopped at Regina's look. "Right."

The Guardians left. Xena and Gabrielle walked in. "You have evidently organized a search party. what can we do to help." Xena asked.

"I am not sure, but we have a starting point thanks to the GPS Emma placed on our phones."

"Regina i don't want to make light of a bad situation, but it seems that the getting into trouble gene in Gabrielle's line if alive and well in the world." Even after all these years." Xena followed Regina out of the Inn.

"Hey." Gabrielle yelled after them. "I will get you for that comment Warrior Princess."

Outside the four held hands and disappeared in a cloud of red smoke.

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Deep inside a the tunnel in a small alcove Emma lay unconscious on the dirt floor. Her hands and legs were strapped to four post that had been driven deep into the floor. The dark cuff was on her left wrist.

The cuff stopped Emma from using her magic. The spread was tossed into the corner. Two men stood over her.

"You are certain that cuff will block their connection?"

"Fairly certain." The Shade said. "Look Hook we are dealing with forces that are extremely rare. My people were working on very sketchy information. They did the best they could. Plus we are underground. That has to count for something."

"You better hope it does Mendel. If Regina finds her and us she will kill us very slowly with her bare hands."

"Pan was right, you are a fool. We are already dead. She can't kill us again."

Hook grabbed him and pushed him up against the stone wall with his forearm on Mendel's throat. "She can still kill the bodies we have take over. Not to mention they have the flowers that can freeze us. That happens and we end up in the fires of Hell. They will be no second chances. You may not care, but I certainly do. Before I leave this world, I intend to sample the fruits of the lovely Swan again. And teach her a lesson in the process. She is going to pay for throwing me over for the bitch that killed me. She will learn her place and that she is mine now and forever."
"I warned Pan about your obsession with the Savior. He should have left you in the Underworld."

"Well he didn't boyo. I am here and I plan of having my way with my love. For that I do not want an audience. Leave now and keep your mouth shut." Hook gave Mendel a shove. He watched him leave before he knelt down on the floor. Pulling a knife from his boot he sliced through Emma's shirt and bra. Pushing the fabric aside, he leered at her now naked breasts. "Very nice Swan." He said as he roughly grabbed Emma's breasts.

---------------

The forest was filled with Guardians, deputies and family members as they searched for Emma. The sun was low in the sky causing the forest to be dark. Flashlights and torches were brought out and lit. Regina held her phone and checked the area. According to the phone, Emma was exactly where Regina was now standing. Regina placed her hand over her heart trying to feel their bond. Willing it to work, but it remained silent.

Ruby and Snow came to her side. "Anything?" Ruby asked.

Regina shook her head no. "I don't understand it. This thing says she is right here. Evidently she is not."

"The tunnel." Ruby shouted. "The tunnel must be right under our feet. Find the tunnel entrance." Ruby told the guardians.

"I thought that tunnel collapsed when the bar burned down." Snow said.

"Obviously it didn't." Regina snapped. "I am sorry for snapping Snow."

"Don't worry about it Regina. We are all on edge. I understand. We will find Emma. Have faith."

Regina took a deep breath and closed her eyes. She let her heart and their bond reach out. She could feel her bond to Emma, but Emma's was quiet. She thought. "Emma sweetheart, I hope the silence is because our bond is blocked and not because of anything more sinister. Please be alright.

"Regina?" Gabrielle called softly.

"What?" Regina snapped again.

"Whoa easy Tiger. Ruby and I are taking a group of Guardians over to where that bar stood to see if we can find another entrance to the tunnel."

"That's a good idea, Gabrielle. And Gabrielle..."

"No need to apologize. I have been there done that after spending centuries with the queen of snapping When Xena comes back will you tell her where I have gone."

"I will."

"Try not to worry. There are plenty of people searching for Emma. Xena is just about the best tracker in any realm." Gabrielle patted Regina's arm before she walked off with Ruby. Regina watched Xena and the Guardians walk slowly around the forest searching for any sign on the ground. A stray bent or broken branch, crushed leaves, or footsteps in the forest floor to help them find the entrance to the tunnel. They had been searching for over two hours. Night had fallen making it difficult to see any sign. No one wanted to call off the search until morning. With the cooler weather anyone out in the night air without proper clothing would be in trouble come
morning. Ruby and her group had returned a short time before with reports that the other end of the tunnel was collapsed.

A piercing whistle split the air. They all ran to where Xena stood with her hand on a large tree.

"Did you find something?" Gabrielle asked.

"A hollow tree." Xena said as she ran her hands over the tree trunk.

"Are you certain?" Ruby asked.

Xena pulled a knife from her boot and pressed it into the bark. A door opened. "Unless hollow trees are normal in this world, I would say I am certain." Once the doorway opened, Xena led the way into the tunnel with Ruby right behind her. Gabrielle walked with Regina. The beams of the flashlights bounced off the walls. There was a short flight of stairs that led them down into the earth. They started down the stairs slowly.

Hook heard them coming before he had a chance to finish what he wanted to do. He fixed his pants and ran from where Emma lay still unconscious. He opened a secret chamber to wait for them to leave.

Xena led the group down the tunnel. She pulled a small crossbow out of the pouch at her side, slid the rack of darts that were coated with a strong sleeping potion, into the bottom and held it at waist level. It was slow going as Xena kept stopping every time they came to a slight bend in the tunnel. She held up her hand for quiet as she peaked around the bend. They reached the last bend. Xena looked around and saw Emma tied to the posts with her clothes ripped off. She turned to Ruby and whispered knowing her wolf hearing will pick up her words.

"Keep Regina back for a minute. Emma is there. Her clothes have been torn off." Ruby nodded. Xena left and Ruby turned to Regina.

"Xena went to check out something. She will be back shortly."

"What did she find?"

"Please Regina, just do as she asks."

Gabrielle took Regina's arm. "Regina, I learned very early in our travels together that when Xena says to stay put, it is for a very good reason. She means exactly that. We wait. She will not be long."

Xena returned and went directly to Regina. Blue eyes met brown. "It's Emma. She is alive. I have covered and untied her."

"Take me to her." Regina demanded. Xena took her arm and led her to where Emma still lay. Regina dropped down to the ground and took Emma's hand. Tears filled her eyes.

"Regina, Emma has been drugged. We need to get her home so that I can treat her."

"What aren't you telling me."

"Regina I will tell you what I found when we get her home. Trust me." Their eyes met in an unwavering stare. "Trust me." She repeated. "Please." After several heartbeats Regina nodded. "Ruby?" Xena called out.
"Yeah?"

"Have your people search every inch of this place. Look for any sign of the people responsible."

"Will do."

"Then get in touch with the Dwarves or who ever you have to and make sure this place is collapsed." Regina added.

"I will take care of everything Regina. You concentrate on Emma."

Regina placed her hand on Emma's chest and held Xena's with the other. The three disappeared. They reappeared in their bedroom. Regina released Xena's hand, but kept her hand on Emma. "Emma is my wife and I love her. Tell me everything."

"Regina what I didn't want everyone else to see is evidence of possible sexual assault." Regina sat on the edge of the bed quickly as her legs would no longer support her. "I saw what looked like bite marks on her breasts, stomach and inner thighs. I need to get the bite marks cleaned and could use your help."

"Can you tell if she was... if she was assaulted?"

"Yes I will be able to tell. I need a basin of warm water, soap, any antiseptic you have as well as bandages, towels, and washcloths."

Regina went into the bathroom to gather the items Xena needed. She could have used magic, but needed a few minutes to compose herself for the task ahead. When she returned she placed the basins of water within easy reach. Emma was still wrapped up in the bed spread.

"Are you ready?" Xena asked. Regina nodded.

"When will you wake her?"

"Not until we have finished." Regina went to remove the cuff when Xena stopped her. "Leave it for now. We don't want her magic surging while we are cleaning her."

"I can heal the bite marks with magic."

"The outside yes, but my main concern is the inside. The skin is broken is several places. A human mouth has more germs in it that an animal's, We have to stop any infections from setting in. I will wash the marks. You go behind me and put a good layer of antiseptic on the bite then cover it with a bandage. If there are no signs of infection tomorrow, you can heal the ones where the skin isn't broken. You can heal the burn marks after we finish also." Xena said. "Now prepare yourself. Those marks aren't nice to look at." Regina took a steadying breath and nodded. Xena removed the spread. Regina gasped at the many marks on Emma's body. "Regina, Regina." Xena said loudly to get Regina's attention. "If you can't do this then go sit out of my way."

Regina shook her head no. "She is my wife, I love her. I can do this."

"Alright lets get started."

Xena washed each bite mark, while Regina worked behind her putting a large glob of antiseptic on each and placed a bandage over the bite. They worked together for almost an hour making sure every mark was cleaned and covered.
"Now comes the hard part." Xena said as she dried her hands on a towel. "I need you to raise both her knees and hold them open so I can check for assault."

Regina did as directed and held Emma's knees open while Xena looked at her intimate parts. When she finished helped Regina lowered Emma's legs until they were flat on the bed. "There are no signs of sexual assault."

The tears Regina was holding back let loose and ran down her cheeks. "Thank you Xena." She said quietly and hugged Xena.

"Are you sure you are from my line and not Gabrielle's. She is big on hugging." Xena complained with a smile and hugged Regina back while she cried.
"Regina when I wake Emma, she will be disoriented. That is only temporary and will fade quickly. It will be your decision how much you tell her."

"I will not lie to her Xena."

"Good. Honesty between you is always important." Xena pulled a pouch from the bag she carried. She took a small pinch of the yellow powder between her thumb and forefinger. Using her other hand she opened Emma's mouth and sprinkled the powder on her tongue. "It won't take long."

Within seconds, there was movement behind Emma's closed eyelids. Her breathing sped up and she moaned. Emma's eyes fluttered and she searched for Regina.

"Gina," she whispered. "You found me."

"I had a great deal of help. But did you even doubt that I would Princess?"

Xena smiled at them as she cleared up the rest of the cleaning supplies and medicine. "You can remove the cuff now."

Regina reached down and took the brown cuff from Emma's slender wrist. Immediately she felt the return of their bond.

"What happened?" Emma asked as she struggled to sit up. Regina placed pillows behind her back as she leaned against the head of the bed.

"You were drugged when you went to Granny's Inn. After I specifically told you to be careful."

"It wasn't my fault. I was bushwhacked."

"I know sweetheart. I am not mad but I was so very worried."

"I'm sorry, Gina."

Regina leaned over and kissed her. When they parted Emma looked at the bandages. She lifted the blanket to see them liberally covering her body. "Would you explain why I look like a reject from a mummy look a like contest?"

Xena returned to the room. "Emma you should take it easy for the rest of the night. That stuff they hit you with was powerful and the stimulant I gave you will wear off. You will probably feel the effects for several hours."

"I will Xena."

"I will see about having some food sent up for you. Drink plenty of water, It will help flush the drug from your body."

Xena left the bedroom leaving the two alone. Emma held onto Regina's hand and looked into the tear filled eyes of her wife.
"Gina in the few seconds after that dart or whatever it was they used to drug me and the time I blacked out, I saw who did it. It was Hook. Did he do it again? Did he rape me?"

"No. He didn't have the chance. We found you before that happened."

"You're sure?"

"Xena examined you. She said no. But there were several bite marks that we cleaned and bandaged. We will be checking them for any signs of infection. Ruby and the Gaurdians are searching every inch of the tunnel to find that bastard. Then the tunnel will be collapsed so this sort of thing can't happen again."

"Is there something you are leaving out?"

"From the look on Ruby's and some of the Guardian's faces, if they find him I am afraid they will tear him to pieces."

"Wait. What about the person that Hook is inside? He is an innocent. Would Hook find another person to take over?"

"I don't know sweetheart. We can ask Xena when she returns."

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Ruby led the Guardians through the tunnel, searching every inch. She sniffed the air following the scent until they came to a dead end where the tunnel was collapsed. The scent was still strong. She turned to find which direction the scent was the strongest. For several minutes she turned and sniffed. She pointed in the direction they were to search. "Check all the walls for hidden rooms or a trap door that could lead to another tunnel."

The Guardians spread out and pushed on the walls, moved stones and sticks that looked as if they were purposefully placed. After half an hour a Guardian let out a shrill whistle. They all hurried to his side. He showed them what he found. Stepping on a rock, they all heard a click and the wall opened to show the hidden room. Inside the room the man stood with his back to the rock wall a long knife held in his hand that he waved in front of him. Ruby's eyes flashed yellow and she released a feral growl which the Guardians followed. Several Guardians turned into wolves.

Mulan pushed through the wolves. "Ruby, No. Emma would not want you to do this. Do not let your wolf control you."

"Did you see what he did to her?"

"I did and she would not want any of you to become murderers." Mulan pulled Ruby to the back. "It is the Shade inside him who attacked Emma. The man himself is an innocent. Hook made him do those things. Until we know more about this, killing him is not the answer. Killing the man would not kill the Shade. Hook will only find another human to enter."

Ruby shook herself, took several deep breaths to gain control. "Thank you Mulan."

"You are very welcome, Ruby. The Deputies are waiting to arrest him. Time to let them do their jobs."

Ruby nodded and they walked back through the Guardians to where the man still remained with the knife flashing in front of him. The Deputies walked into the room with their guns drawn and ready to shoot him. He looked at the guns and dropped the knife. Quickly the Deputies pulled his
arms behind him and fastened the cuffs tightly.

"Make sure he is placed in one of the special cells." Ruby ordered.

"We have one with his name on it, Ruby. He will not be going anywhere." They escorted him from the tunnel. Ruby led the way out to where August and the construction foreman stood.

"This the tunnel you want collapsed?" He asked.

"Yeah. Can you do it?"

"Certainly, the best way is to place some small charges and bring the whole thing down."

"When can you do it?"

"Tomorrow morning all right?"

"That will be fine."

"You will need to put out the necessary blast warnings on the radio and paper to warn people to stay away from this area."

"I will take care of that Ruby." August said.

He touched the brim of his hat as he and August walked away. Ruby turned to the Guardians.

"Keep a guard posted here all night."

"We have this. You go check on Emma."

"Thank you." Ruby and Mulan walked away from the Guardians. "Mulan, thank you also for stopping me from doing something I would regret."

"You and Dorothy are my friends. There was no way I wanted to have to tell her that you were arrested for murder. If that weren't enough, I would have to explain to the Savior why her best friend was arrested."

"I get it. Thank you anyway."

They walked out of the forest to Granny's where they got into Ruby's red convertible for the short drive to the Mayor's home.

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The deputies man handled the man into the jail and threw him into one of the special cells next to David's. David watched silently from where he sat on his narrow bunk. He was walked to the far end on the cell before his cuffs were removed. He turned and ran towards the door as it slid shut. The deputies laughed as he ran into the solid barrier and bounced back. He banged on the wall.

"Do you fools think this puny cell will hold me? Then you are dumber than you look. Do you know who I am? I am the only person to escape from the Evil Queen's dungeon. There isn't a cell in any realm that can hold me."

"Good luck with that buddy. There is only one way out of that cell and that is for The Savior to open it. After what you did to her, she will never let you out." He taunted which only made Hook madder. The deputies laughed as they left the room securely closing the second door behind them.
He looked at David who returned his look with scorn. "You never learn Hook. Emma will never love you."

"She did once."

"Really? Do you honestly believe that?"

"Of course she did until that bitch Regina put a spell on her. She loved me. If she didn't why did she go to the Underworld to save me?"

"You are a bigger fool than I thought. She went there to right a wrong. The Dark one played you. He had you kill yourself to kill the darkness because he was too much of a coward to do it himself. That is all it was."

"Pan and Cora won't leave us here. They will find a way to get us out."

"You keep thinking that jackass. Didn't you hear what that Deputy said? Only the Savior can open these cells. Get that through your rum soaked brain."

David laid on the cot and closed his eyes, tired of talking to the idiot.

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They stood in the alley, just out of the reach of the street lights, across the street from the Sheriff's Station. They watched as the person that held Hook was brought into the station.

"What the Hell happened, Pan?" Cora demanded. "You were supposed to keep an eye on him."

"What was I supposed to do? He is delusional when it comes to the Savior." Pan argued. "The plan was to only put her put of commission. How the Hell did they find her? That cuff was supposed to block whatever that bond is."

"It did. They had some sort of back up defense, something to do with their phones. Why didn't you idiots take her phone?"

"We did. How were we to know she had a second phone? They are tricky, Cora. You told me that many times. We will know better the next time." Owen said.

"What makes you think there will be a next time, idiot? They are on the alert now," Cora stated. "Now we have a more pressing issue."

"Yeah? What is that?"

"Hook and his inability to keep his mouth shut. He loves to brag and will spill our whole plan to the heroes."

"Then it is a good thing he was never told the whole plan."

"What do you mean?" Owen asked. "Just what is the plan?"

Cora laughed. "Do you think us fools? You have proven that you cannot be trusted with even the simplest task. You know as much as you need to know. Get out of my sight." She ordered.

He walked away leaving Cora and Pan alone. "What do you want to do about the dear Captain?"

"He must be silenced."
"I agree, but how. He is in a special Cell that only the Savior can open."

"These things can be arranged. They just have to be handled delicately."

"Again I ask, how?"

"Leave that to me Pan. I have experience in making accidents happen."

"It's a shame that we never teamed up when we were both alive. We would have made a great team."

"I wasn't the one who hid out on a magical island just to stay a boy." Cora said. "Have you made any progress with your son?"

"Not yet but I will."

"Good luck. This town has very powerful protections in place. In these forms our powers are nonexistent. Each day brings those blasted heroes one step closer to defeating us. We need to move soon or all our work will be for nothing."

"I know that Cora."

"Then give up your revenge on your son and find a way to get inside that damned convent to stop them from finishing that serum."

"We don't need to get inside the Convent."

"Oh do you think they will just hand over those flowers if we ask them nicely?"

"Think Cora. With all the construction around town there are all sorts of things that can be used to blow up buildings. We get out hands on a few sticks of dynamite and bury them under the Convent and everything is demolished."

"How do you plan on getting your hand on dynamite? All that stuff is securely locked up."

"They plan on blowing up that tunnel tomorrow. A few sticks of dynamite can be liberated at that time. We can't get into the Convent so we blow it up."

"Just see that you do, Pan. Time is running out. They need to be stopped before that serum is ready."

They separated and went in different directions.

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Regina sat outside the bathroom while Emma took care of her personal needs. She heard the toilet flush and the water turn on as Emma washed her hands. She was pale and shaky when she opened the door. Regina helped her back to bed and held her. The stuff they used was still in her system and caused Emma to drop into sleep quickly. Xena brought them food earlier. They talked as they ate. Regina filled Emma in on everything that happened after she was ambushed.

Emma slept safe in Regina's arms, her head laying on the strong shoulder. Regina closed her eyes only to open them quickly when a soft knock came to the door. She sighed and slowly extricated herself from Emma's arms.

Emma mumbled in her sleep but didn't wake up. She snuggled deeper into her pillow. Regina softly
closed the door behind her as she stepped out in the hall. Ruby and Snow waited in the hallway.

"Don't you ever have time off Ruby?" She joked.

"Not lately, but once this latest crises is over, I plan on taking Dorothy and hiding away in my cabin for at least a week." Ruby joked back.

"How is Emma?" Snow asked.

"She is sleeping right now. I hope she remains that way for the rest of the night. Has something else happened?"

"Some of my people overheard a plot to blow up the Convent to stop Autolycus from completing the serum. I have already informed Blue. Xena and Gabrielle went over there to help them. I have a group patrolling around the Convent." Ruby explained. "Xena also said that is Emma starts to run a fever to give her some of this." She handed Regina a small pouch. "Mix a spoon of this in a glass of water and have her drink it."

"She also said to tell you that your place is here with Emma. They will call if they need help." Snow said. "She sounded as if she really understood how you think."

"She should, we are related. Very distantly, but we are related." Regina answered. "That is a story for the morning."

"Of course. One more thing. Henry ask me to give you this." She handed Regina a note.

"Thank you Snow." Regina took the envelope.

"Now go take care of our girl."

Regina nodded and walked back into the bedroom. With a wave of her hand, she was changed from her work clothes into silk pajamas. Regina lay next to Emma and pulled her close while she read the note from Henry. She smiled at his words and placed the note on the night stand, turned off the light and settled down to sleep with Emma safe in her arms.

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Xena walked the perimeter of the Convent grounds with several Guardians in human and animal forms. They nodded as their paths crossed but didn't say a word. The clock in the tower struck three when footsteps alerted them. Xena brought her crossbow up before her heart registered who was walking towards them. Gabrielle came into view.

"Easy there Tiger. It's only me."

"Gabrielle what are you doing here at this time of night?"

"I came with you remember? I also came to get you. It's three in the morning, you need to get some sort of rest, if you expect to train all day tomorrow or rather today. Plus checking on Emma."

"I will be alright Gabrielle. We are immortal after all. That comes with some perks."

Gabrielle sighed. "Yes we are immortal, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't rest for a short time. We are not in The Fields right now. Besides at this time of the night, I doubt that the only ones awake are us and our friends here. If you don't want to take advantage of the nice comfortable bed we have a Granny's, then Blue has a very comfortable area of the porch with hot tea and comfortable chairs. She even enchanted it to be nice and warm."
"She's right Xena. We have this under control. We can keep an eye on things. I don't think those yahoos will try anything before sun up. This is what we do. There are several Guardians who prefer to work at night." He said. "I don't know how things are in that place you are from, but do you really want your partner mad at you?"

Xena rubbed the side of her nose. "You're right. I can count on one hand the number of things I am afraid of, and have three fingers left over. But Gabrielle in a temper tops the list." She said which made him laugh.

Gabrielle pulled herself to her full height, took Xena's hand and pulled her towards the porch. "You being scared of me is exactly as it should be Warrior Princess." She said. "Blue has enough for everyone if you want to take a break."

"I will pass the word, Gabrielle. Thank you."

They left the Guardians for the short walk to the porch. The warm air felt good after the brisk outside air. "This soft stuff is going to make me lose my edge and slow me down." Xena complained.

"Oh please, Xena. You would have to be shackled, tied up and encased in cement before you even slowed down a tiny bit. Even then I doubt that would be the case. So stop complaining."

"Yes dear." Xena said with a smile, pulled Gabrielle close and kissed her. They sat on the wicker love seat. Xena kissed the top of the blonde head. "You are getting feisty in your old age."

Gabrielle poked her in the side with her elbow. "Watch it Warrior Princess. Who are you calling old? You are older than me"

Xena mocked coughed then started to laugh softly.

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Dawn broke grey and overcast. The newspaper and radio warned the townspeople of the demolition that would take place at ten A.M. Warning all citizens to stay out of that section of forest until workers cleared the area.

The construction foreman unlocked the utility shed that held the demolition supplies. He quickly gathered several sticks of dynamite, blasting caps, fuse and detonators that he carefully placed in separate containers. He relocked the shed and placed the containers into the cab of his truck. He drove off stopping briefly to give a group of men half the items before driving off.

The group took the dynamite and headed towards the Convent.
The group stood inside the tree line behind the Convent and watched the Guardians patrol. The men shivered in the cooler damp early morning hours. The weather did not bother the Guardians. Even when a light drizzle began to fall, the Guardians remain on patrol.

'Damn it. With those Guardians around the place we can't even hope to get close enough to the place."

'Someone must have tipped them off."

"We need to tell Cora and Pan. They will not be happy."

"Screw them. They can be as angry as they want. I am not about to go up against a pack of Guardians. Hell I heard they were about to rip Hook apart when the She Bitch stopped them. I plan on this body remaining in one piece for some time. We can try again tonight."

"It seems to me we are doing all the dirty work while they remain safe. I am tired of it. If they want that place blown up they can come out here and do it themselves."

The Guardians were aware of the group as soon as they entered the forest. With their wolf hearing and sense of smell they knew exactly where the group was located. Several broke off their patrol, changed into their animal forms and entered the forest surrounding the group. Another went to inform Xena who spent a part of the night on the Convent porch with Gabrielle. They joined the Guardians making their way into the forest. They were as silent as a leaf falling from a tree until they were only a few feet behind the men.

"Now what would bring you all out here on such a cold damp morning?" Xena said. They all jumped at the sound of her voice. She continued speaking. "The way you are sneaking and hiding one could jump to the conclusion that you were up to no good."

The ring of Guardians who had changed slowly advanced on the men, growling. Most of the men put their hands in the air in surrender.

"Put your God damned hands down." The leader ordered. "They are heroes and won't hurt us."

A couple men dropped their hands in false bravado as they eyed the approaching wolves. One of Xena's eyebrows reached the bangs of her dark hair. "Are you certain of that Buster?"

"Yeah I am certain. We are unarmned and you are the supposed good guys."

Xena laughed. "Let me tell you something Buddy. I wasn't always a hero. I was once the most feared Warlord in ancient Greece. I took great joy in killing assholes like you. I have long since lost track of the number of men I killed." She fired the crossbow directly at him. The dart landed in the center of his chest. He laughed as he pulled the small dart out and threw it onto the forest floor. Seconds later he dropped to the ground unconscious.

"You bitch, you killed him." Another shouted and started forward. A large wolf jumped in from of Xena, growling, his jaws snapping to warn the man back. Xena laid a calming hand on the wolf's
head. The man stopped and put his hands in the air.

"He isn't dead, dumb ass. That dart was coated with the same strong sedative that was used on Emma yesterday." She turned to the Guardian. "Better call the Sheriff's Station. We have more guests for them."

"At the rate we are going, the jail will run out of room fast."

'We will come up with a solution. It is only until the serum is ready and we can get these bastards back where they belong."

"Did anyone call Emma?" Gabrielle asked.

"After what happened yesterday..."

"She is still the sheriff, Xe."

'Yeah, you're right, Gabrielle." Xena admitted. "As soon as the Deputies pick up this bunch, we can go talk to Emma. Things like this are better said face to face. Besides I need to check those bite marks again."

They could hear the sirens coming from two directions. Within minutes three squad cars pulled into the area between the Convent and the forest. The flashing blue and red lights cut through the dark and lit up the area. Lights went on inside the Convent. The outline of fairies could be seen in the windows. The Deputies got out of the cars and walked to where a Guardian waited for them.

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Regina lay in the semi darkness watching Emma sleep in her arms. One tanned hand rested on the swell that was their baby. She felt a movement under her hand. Regina stayed still, hoping yet afraid to feel the movement again. She also felt a little guilty as she realized that was the first time since yesterday that she had thought about the baby. Worry for Emma's safety pushed all other thoughts aside. She vowed to herself that she would not forget again. Both were very important to her.

Emma stirred in her arms. "Gina?" Emma said her voice husky from sleep. "What's wrong?"

'What makes you think anything is wrong?' Regina asked. Emma touched her chest over her heart.

"Tell me what's wrong?"

'I feel terrible. I am a horrible terrible person."

"What? Why would you think that?"

"In all the chaos yesterday, I only worried about finding you safe and sound. I didn't give a single thought to the baby's well being."

Emma pushed away slightly to look into Regina's eyes that were filled with unshed tears. "No babe, that doesn't make you horrible or terrible."

"What if that stuff they used harmed her in some way?"

"I didn't think of that. Damn babe, you're right.. I will call Dr. Chrystal later."

"That is a good idea. Maybe we can even talk to Blue."
Emma nodded. "So what's the deal with your hand?"

"I felt something earlier. I think it could be the baby moving."

"You felt that?"

"Have you?"

"Yeah. Yesterday I felt it for the first time. I was going to tell you at lunch, but all Hell broke loose."

"That is understandable. How are you feeling?"

"No too bad. Pretty good actually, except for some of these bandages itching."

"When Xena comes over to check you over, I may be able to heal them so you won't look like a reject, from, what was the phrase you used?"

"A reject from a Mummy look a like contest."

"That's it. Sweetheart, I am going to ask you to do something that will probably make you mad."

"Then don't ask it babe." Emma joked.

"I have to. I love you too much not to ask it."

"I love you back. So ask away. I promise I won't get mad."

"Yesterday, I was so scared for your safety. Please take the day off today."

"I can't babe. With everything that has happened, I need to file a report on the attack." Emma explained. "I will try to stay in my office, but if, for whatever reason I have to leave, I will take someone with me."

"I would rather you stayed safely here, but I will settle for that."

"If the Doctor can fit me in, do you want to come with me?"

"Of course I do. You, Henry and the baby are the most important people in my life."

In the quiet, they heard the doorbell ring. Regina looked at the clock next to the bed. "Who the Hell is at the door at this bloody hour?" Emma complained.

"Snow and Henry are up. One of them will take care of who ever it is."

"Sounds goods to me. So Regina we have time, how do you feel about making out like teenagers?" Emma asked sneaking her hand under Regina's pajama top.

"Em-ma"

"Come on babe, you know you really want to." Emma's hand moved up to capture Regina's breast.

"Oh I do." Regina pulled Emma close and kissed her. A knock on the closed door stopped them.

"There is always tonight."

"Damn it." Emma cursed as she pulled the blankets up over their bodies.
'Come in.' Regina called out. Xena walked in with Gabrielle and Snow right behind her.

"Good morning." Emma chirped.

"You look better this morning Emma." Gabrielle said.

"i am almost back to normal. But why do you both look so grim?"

"We had an incident at the Convent this morning. A small group of men had dynamite and were planning on blowing it up."

"We stopped them and they are on their way to jail." Gabrielle added.

"How many is a small group?" Regina asked.

"Six or seven." Gabrielle answered.

"There were seven." Xena corrected.

"How could they be so stupid?" Emma asked. "The convent is as protected as Fort Knox."

"Where?" Regina and Snow asked together.

"Fort Knox. It's where the country stores all it's gold. Must be trillions of dollars in gold there."

'By the gods, don't tell Autolycus about that. He will try to break in." Gabrielle said.

"If he did that, he would never get out of the Shadow Realm." Xena added. "To answer your question, Cora and Pan did not recruit the smartest souls to join them."

"Evidently not." Regina said. "My mother liked people she could easily manipulate."

"That settles the question of my taking the day off. I will have to go in and sign the paperwork on those bozos."

"Let me check out those marks so that you can begin your day."

"Snow and I will leave you to it." Gabrielle said and gave Snow a not so gentle push out the door.

Regina stood up and walked into the bathroom for the items Xena would need. Xena walked to the bed. "I'm sorry Emma but you will have to remove your clothes so that I can look at those bite marks."

"No problem besides you already saw everything last night."

"Yes but you were unconscious then. You are awake now. There is a difference."

"I will close my eyes and pretend to be asleep if that would help." Emma joked.

"Stop being a smart ass sweetheart." Regina scolded as she walked back into the bedroom. She placed a basin of water, towels, bandages and antiseptic on the table next to the bed. Emma pulled her tee shirt over her head. Regina placed a towel over Emma's chest before she help her remove her sleep shorts. Regina placed another towel over the slender hips.

Xena pulled back the towel in small sections, removed the bandage, washed off the old antiseptic before either applying more or leaving the mark alone. Those that Xena left Regina healed with
magic. When they finished only a few of the bite marks remained bandaged. Two of which made Xena frown.

"What is it?" Regina asked.

"These two are red and swollen. There is an infection starting. You need to have a doctor check them out."

"I was planning on calling my O.B today because of that stuff they hit me with. She can look at them."

"That is a good idea." Xena said.

Xena left them to dress. Twenty minutes later they walked into the kitchen.

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Regina stood by her side as Emma lay on the exam table while they waited for the doctor to come in. A nurse had already been in to draw several vials of blood after hearing of Emma's adventure from the day before.

Shiny stainless steel counter tops with several drawers that held all sorts of medical necessities such as masks, gloves and instruments. Emma had already changed into the open front gown to make the exam easier. Pictures of women in various stages of pregnancy lined the walls. Emma looked up into Regina's worried eyes.

'Hey?'

'Hey yourself." Regina answered.

"Why are you so worried?"

"Is it that evident? Aren't you? Sweetheart you were given a powerful drug yesterday. Even the doctor wanted to see you immediately."

"That is what we are here to find out babe. I am worried too. What if that shit gave the baby two heads or something. She is still in the developing stage."

"If Doctor Chrystal can't tell us for certain that the baby is okay, maybe Blue can. We do have to go see her when we leave here." Regina said. "Oh I see what you just did Princess."

"What is that Your Majesty?"

"You moved my focus away from going off the deep end with worry." Emma shrugged and gave her a cheeky grin. "Good job."

"We are both worried, Gina but now is not the time to panic yet."

"That is very true." Doctor Chrystal said as she enter the exam room. "I will let you know if and when the time to panic arrives. I am sorry it took so long to come in. I was waiting for the blood test results." She sat on the stool next to the exam table. "Emma so far your blood work came back normal. There does not seem to be any residual effects from the drug they used. You white blood count is slightly elevated. There is an infection brewing in your body. You blood pressure is okay. Not great. It is slightly elevated and I want to keep an eye on that. It could just be an after effect of yesterday, but I would like you to come in once a week to check. There is no need to make an
appointment. A nurse can do the check."

"She will be here doctor." Regina said.

'Yeah doc, I will be here."

"Good. Let me check those bites before we get down to the fun stuff." Emma opened the gown. Doctor Chrystal removed the bandages and looked at the angry red bite marks. She probed each one. "These are showing signs of infection which explains the elevated white blood count. when was your last tetnus shot?"

"A few months ago when I was shot."

"Then you won't need another one. I will however order an antibiotic, both pills and cream that you will need to take and apply three times a day. I will also give you some plastic guards so that you can shower. You will need to take every pill until they are gone. No stopping when signs of the infection are gone. Every single pill. Do you understand?"

"Gotcha Doc."

"How is the morning sickness?"

"I haven't been bothered for about a week?" Emma looked for confirmation.

"Yes it was shortly after we returned from our honeymoon."

"Really? Hmm, that is good. You are one of the lucky ones. Morning sickness usually last for the first trimester. I have even had women who suffered during their entire pregnancy."

"Certainly glad i wasn't one of those."

"i would like to do an ultrasound."

"Go for it Doc." Emma said.

The Doctor wheeled over the machine and picked up a bottle of light green gel. "This will be cold. I must caution you both to not be upset or worried if you cannot make anything out at this stage of your pregnancy, or even hear a heart beat. It will still be too early for a heart beat. You are only two months and may only look like a small blob at this point."

"What about movement? We have both felt her move."

"It is way too early for that. Ready Emma?"

"As I ever will be." Doctor Chrystal squeezed a good amount of the gel onto Emma's stomach. Emma jumped. "Yeow, damn Doc, you weren't kidding about it being cold."

"I am sorry Emma." She placed the wand in the gel and moved it over Emma's stomach while she watched the monitor. She turned a knob and the sound of the baby's heartbeat sounded. "That is very interesting."

"What is?" Regina asked.

"You became pregnant in early August? You are certain of that?"

"Yeah it was a byproduct of doing that magic transfer to stop the witch's curse," Emma said. "Is
something wrong?"

"Not wrong. Definitely not wrong. Given the baby's size and development, you are closer to five or six months than three. And it is definitely a girl."

"Five months? Are you certain about that?" Regina asked.

"Yes Emma was impregnated during a magical transfer, therefore this is a magical pregnancy. It will not last as long as a regular one."

"How long until the baby reaches full term?" Emma asked.

"Truthfully, I don't know. It could be anywhere from a week to two maybe three months as the most. I know that was not what you wanted to hear."

"Damn Doc, you are the queen of understatements," Emma said.

"The baby is okay?" Regina asked.

"Yes. She has all the correct number of body parts." She said, as she printed out two copies of the ultrasound, turned off the machine and cleaned off the gel. "You can get dressed Emma. I still want you to come in once a week to check your blood pressure."

"What do we do now?" Emma asked.

"Live your lives, try not to worry and prepare for that little one. Oh and Emma try not to get kidnapped again." She said and left them alone.
CHAPTER 25

Emma dressed on auto pilot after hearing the news of the accelerated pregnancy. Regina watched her silently from the stool the doctor used. They paid the bill and walked out of the office to the car. Regina opened the passenger's side door to let Emma in. She stopped her before she sat down on the leather seats.

"Hey." Regina said. "What is going through your mind right now?"

"I forgot to thank you?"

"For what?"

"You didn't assume that I cheated on you when the doctor said I was closer to five months than three."

"My past self would have jumped to that conclusion, but..."

"You are not that person anymore."

"No I am not. It seems this wacky blonde with a killer ass walked into my life and captured my heart."

"Gina she said I have between one and three months before the baby is born."

"Yes she did."

"We are nowhere near ready for that to happen. There is so much we need to do."

"Emma, sweetheart, relax. We will get everything ready. I have all of Henry's baby furniture in the basement and attic. It will only take a little magic to get it all cleaned and assembled. Lets go talk to Blue." Regina said as Emma sat down and pulled the door closed. Regina blew out a breath as she walked around the car. She noticed two men watching her, and met their stares until the men left.

-----------------------------------------------------

The Fairies continued to work on creating the containers to hold the Dark Shades. They younger Fairies had improved to the point that Blue no longer rejected any that were brought to her office. Autolycus continued to work on the serum. The color in the pots ranged from a sickly green to a deep purple to a midnight black. All three had reached the consistency of a thick syrup. He added more drops to each pot and gave them a stir. Once completed he sat back down in the comfortable chair the Fairies had provided for him.

The blinds were closed and the drapes pulled shut to keep the sun from shining in. Lamps were lit to give the room a soft glow. Soon the fireplace would be lit so that the potion could be finished. By morning the pots would be combined and allowed to simmer down to the desired thickness. Then came the task of hand dipping each small dart into the potion. After the darts were dried, they needed to be loaded into the cartridges for the cross bows.

Xena would be done training the Guardians if nothing disrupted the training schedule by then and will be able to find volunteers to help with the task.
The town went about its usual routine. Workers headed for their jobs. Granny's was busy with the morning rush. Between taking care of their in-house customers, the diner was also responsible for supplying meals to the prisoners currently residing in the jail. The cooks boxed the meals that were brought over by several delivery people. The only thing that varied was the type of soup that went with the sandwiches for lunch and dinner. They were prisoners who did not rate her special lasagna or her deluxe sirloin burgers. They were given basic nutritious food with no perks or special treatment. In Granny's opinion, if they wanted special meals then they needed to keep their asses out of jail.

Cora and Pan watched the meals being delivered. "We would need to intercept those meals and add a little something to each." Cora said.

"Why each meal?" Pan asked.

"Because there is no way to know which meal would be given to Hook you fool. Do try to keep up, Pan."

"Look Cora the whole plan to come to this world was my idea."

"Yes it was, but you were sidetracked by revenge on your son to be of any use. You may have been a leader on that island of little boys, but here in the real world, you are almost useless."

"Cora you are a real bitch."

"I am. You will do well to remember that Pan. Let me do the thinking from now on and we will be able to pull this off. We will remain in this world and you will have all the time you need to exact your revenge. Can you get the drugs we need to put into the meals?"

"Yeah I can."

"Then tomorrow we will take out all the prisoners."

"Agreed, Cora."

Regina held Emma's hand as they walked onto the Convent porch. The door opened before they even had a chance to knock. Nova greeted them,

"Good morning."

"Were you watching for us?"

"Not at all Emma. I heard the car. Blue is in her office." Nova stepped back to let them enter. "I think she has been expecting you. She asked for coffee for three brought to her office a few minutes ago. She has been locked in there pouring over the Chronicles since yesterday."

"Thank you Nova."

Nova nodded and walked them to Blue's office where she knocked on the door.

"Enter." Blue called out. Nova opened the door to let Regina and Emma in. "Nova I need you to check on the younger fairies that are making the containers. I would rather have more than we need than need more and not have them." She said from the window where she stood before a large book on a podium.
"Of course Blue."

Blue closed the book after marking the page. Several other equally large ancient looking books were scattered around the office. She motioned for them to sit as she poured them each a cup of coffee.

"Emma how are you feeling?"

"I'm good. We need to talk Blue."

"What is on your mind?" Blue asked as he sat behind her old battered desk.

"When I first became pregnant, you said you thought it would be a normal pregnancy."

"Up until today, I thought it would be."

"Today I went to see my O.B. According to the scan, I am closer to five or six months pregnant than the three I actually am."

"I was afraid that would happen."

"Meaning what exactly?" Emma demanded.

"Up until your spirit left your body to search for my spirit, it was a normal pregnancy. When your spirit returned it jump started the magical portion."

"Wait, that out of body thing, caused this? Why weren't we told this little side effect could happen before Emma did that?" Regina asked.

"We did not know at the time. I only found that side effect this morning in the Chronicles. Nova and Tink knew nothing about it. I was going to call when you showed up."

"Is there any way to slow this pregnancy down again?" Emma asked.

"I am afraid there is not. Once it has sped up there is no way to slow it back down. I am sorry."

"So if we go the maximum the doctor said, we are looking at a possible Christmas birth instead of May when she was supposed to be born."

"Yes, I am sorry." Blue said again.

"You already said that." Emma snapped. "What are the chances I go to bed tonight at five month's pregnant and wake up in the morning ready to deliver?"

"I do not think that will happen."

"But it could?" Regina asked.

Blue hesitated before answering. "It could, but I do not think that will happen. You have time."

"How much time?"

"That is hard to say. What did your doctor tell you?"

"Between one and two months with a small possibility of going three months."

"Then we have time to finish with the Dark Shades." Blue said.
"How is that coming?"

"Autolycus said the serum will be ready by tomorrow morning. Then he will coat the tips and after it is dried, reload the cartridges."

"Then we go Shade hunting and send them all to Hell."

"Yes the containers are ready. I am having extra made just in case we need them."

"Hey I just thought of something." Emma said. "That stuff I take to control the magical surges."

"What about it?"

"Each month's bottles are bigger than the month before. Should I skip the third and fourth month's and use the fifth's"

"Yes. That brings up another subject that needs to be discussed, that is binding her powers as soon as she is born."

"You want to do what?" Emma shouted.

"Your child will be or rather already is a very powerful magical person. Her powers must be bound until she is old enough to be trained to use them. For your safety and her's, and to allow her to have as normal a childhood as possible. It has to be done. We do it to all the newborn Fairies until they are old enough to be trained. It will not hurt her and is not dangerous."

"Would you put one of those cuffs on her?"

"Oh goodness no. It is a simple spell that i can do as soon as she is born. It will take less than a minute to perform. This is not a decision that you have to make today."

"That is good to know. Regina and I will discuss it and let you know our decision."

"I found a book that lists what could happen if you do not bind the powers of a magical child. It mostly pertains to Fairy children, but you should be prepared in any event." She pulled the book from a drawer and handed it across the desk. The cover was old and fragile looking. Regina picked up the slim book. "This will answer most of your questions. After you read the book we can talk again if you need additional information or have questions the book doesn't answer. I will be here."

They took that as their dismissal and stood up. At the door Emma turned and asked, "Blue you really didn't know about the side effect of spirit wandering?"

"I did not." Blue answered. Emma's super power was quiet as Blue continued. "Emma we are in realms of magic that have not been seen in many centuries if ever."

"Well it had to happen at some time, if it is in your precious Chronicles." Emma snapped as she opened the door with so much force that it banged against the wall, startling the Fairies in the hall. She stormed out of the office.

"Regina if we had known we would not have let Emma rescue my spirit. Please believe me." Blue pleaded.

"What's done is done. Now we all have to live with the consequences." Regina left to search for Emma. She found her sitting on the porch steps. She sat next to Emma and rubbed her back.

"Hey?"
"Hey."

"Are you alright?" Emma shook her head no. "How about we go to Granny's for breakfast? You didn't eat anything this morning."

"What I want to do is go grab Henry, go home, pack and get the Hell out of Dodge."

"We are not in Dodge. Whatever that is."

"It means to leave town. I want to go somewhere anywhere, away from being the Savior, away from magic and away from realm jumping holy wars and pissing contests."

"Is that what you really want to do?"

"Yes." Emma answered quickly, She looked into Regina's eyes, saw the raised eyebrow and changed her answer. "No damn it." She leaned into Regina's arms. "Gina what I want to do after all this crap is finished is go away for a few days and visit Betsy and Fiona."

"Really not Boston? to check on the renovations?"

"No I sort of told Fiona that we would return before the baby is born."

"How did she know back then?"

"She said she had the ability to see those sort of things."

"Okay. As soon as we are finished here we will go for a visit."

"You would do that for me?"

"Someday my darling, you will realize that I will do anything for you." Regina kissed Emma's head that rested on her shoulder.

They sat for another few minutes before both stood and walked to the car. Emma took one last look at the convent before sitting in the passenger's seat. Regina drove them to Granny's.

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After leaving Granny's, Emma walked into the station. She waved to the deputy on duty and entered her office. A large stack of arrest and intake folders waited for her signature. Each report was the same except for the perp's names. They showed name, date and time of the arrest, any evidence collected at the scene. She read through the first one and signed her name. Closing the folder she reached for the second. She read through each folder making sure all legal protocols were followed to insure the case would not be thrown out on a technicality. She continued until she opened the last folder. Thinking it was just more of the same, she froze when she read the name and the charges. Her hands started to shake and she broke out in a cold sweat.

In less than a minute, Regina appeared in a cloud of red smoke. Emma didn't move, her hands still clenched around the folder. Regina looked at the state Emma was in and went to her side. She gently placed one hand over Emma's clenched one and rubbed her back with the other.

"Emma, sweetheart, what is it?" Regina asked softly as she tried to take the file away from Emma. She continued to rub soothing circles on Emma's back until she started to relax. Regina tried to take the file again.

"I thought it was the same as those others with the dynamite. But it wasn't." Her grip relaxed
enough so that Regina could take the file. She read the name and charges.

"Oh Emma." Regina said as she continued to rub Emma's back.

"It took me by surprise. I wasn't prepared for what it said."

"Hand it off to someone else to sign."

"I can't. This is part of my job. The only other person who can do this is David and he is..."

"Sitting in a cell." Regina finished.

"Even then I would still have to sign off on all of them before we can take them to the D.A."

"Are you sure you are alright?"

"Yeah babe. Now that you are here."

"Would you like me to stay until you finish that one?"

"I can't ask you to do that."

"You didn't ask, I volunteered. Just think of me as an extra level of protection."

"My own living breathing security blanket. Don't you have meetings and Mayor stuff to do?"

"You my darling are so much more important that my duties. Although Constance may think that the world is coming to an end."

"Why? What did you do?"

"She was giving me my meeting and appointment schedule when I felt you and I disappeared without any explanation."

Emma started to laugh. "Poor Constance. Gina if you have a few minutes, I wouldn't mind your company until I finish this report." Regina sat on the desk. Emma's eyes strayed to the toned legs next to her. "Um babe, if you sit there I won't get a thing done."

Regina laughed and stood up. She walked behind Emma and placed her hands on Emma's shoulders. She leaned down and whispered. "Is this better sweetheart?"

She felt Emma shiver, and clear her throat. "You can be evil babe."

"Surely not evil my darling." she said and licked the delicate ear near her mouth.

"Yes, but in a totally good way. I will show you tonight." Emma turned her head and looked at Regina's lips so close to her own. "If you are good I may just tell you a fantasy I have."

"Oh sounds intriguing. You win this round." Regina whispered and gave Emma a quick kiss. She kept her hands on Emma's shoulder to offer moral support. Emma cleared her throat again and concentrated on the report folder. Regina felt her tense and rubbed the strong shoulders until Emma finished reading and signed off on the report. She tossed the folder on top of the others and turned in her chair.

"Thank you babe." She said and kissed Regina. "I love you."
"Love you back. Meet me for lunch at one?"

"You have a date."

"Good." Regina waved her hands and disappeared.
CHAPTER 26

The serum was finally finished. Autolycus dipped every dart into the thick liquid until each tip was coated. Every flat surface in the room was covered with drying darts. He worked through the night and finished the last dart as the sky was lightening with the coming dawn.

It was a painstaking process as he could not touch the serum and wore heavy gloves to protect himself from freezing and would be no help to anyone. The serum made no distinction between light and dark Shades. Autolycus placed the last dart to dry and sat on the only surface available, a small stool that he used by the fireplace to stir the parts of the serum. His part of the mission was finished for now.

Only when the dried darts were loaded into the cartridges and the hunt for the dark Shades began, could he be able to fully relax. For now he was content to just sit and not have anything to do for the first time since he arrived. He leaned against the now cool stone of the fireplace, long leather encased legs stretched out in front of him, he folded his arms and closed his eyes.

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Regina stood wrapped in a large bath towel, wiped the steam from the mirror. From the partially opened bathroom door she heard a loud "Damn it," followed by the sound of a dresser drawer slamming. She looked into their bedroom to see Emma sitting on the foot of the bed, with what looked like all her jeans thrown on the floor.

"Hey, what's going on?" Regina asked which earned her an angry look from Emma. "Sweetheart, what's wrong?"

"What's wrong?" Emma shouted. "What's wrong is I haven't got a single God Damn pair of jeans that I can zip up." She snapped kicking the pile of jeans near her foot.

Regina held back a laugh at Emma's tantrum. She coughed and cleared her throat several times before she could talk. "Emma, sweetheart, this is fixable."

"No I have to go clothes shopping. You know how much I hate..." Regina stopped her tirade by pulling her close and kissing her. "Damn it you ambushed me again."

"I did. Now will you listen to me?"

"Yeah."

"Stand up." Regina told her. Emma stood. The zipper of her jeans were open with several inches separating the two sides. Regina waved her hands and the zipper closed to cover their child, as the jeans expanded. "Now all you clothes will fit and will expand until the baby is born. They will revert back to their original size after she arrives. All it took was a little magic."

"Thank you babe. I completely forgot about using magic. I don't understand it. Yesterday my jeans fit, sort of. They were a little tight, but I could zip them up. Today I could even get the zipper to budge."

"The thought of using magic would have come to you eventually."

"If you say so."
"I do. Now let me put those drops in your eyes then we can go down to breakfast."

Emma sat back down and tilted her head back. Regina grabbed the small bottle from the dresser and placed one drop in each eye. Emma hissed with the sting and kept her eyes shut. "Those things don't get any better with use."

"You won't need them much longer."

-----------------

Gabrielle sat in the kitchen with Snow, Henry and Zelena laughing when they walked in. "What is so funny?" Emma asked as Regina poured them each a cup of coffee.

"Gabrielle was just telling us about one of their adventures." Henry said.

"If it was a funny one then it must be the one with Hower."

"That was one of our more fun adventures."

"Has something else happened?" Regina asked changing the subject.

"Autolycus sent word through Blue that the darts have all been coated and are drying. He will need people to load the cartridges when they are ready. Several volunteers will be going over later today."

"I am going over later. The kids like going there to play." Zelena said.

Emma pulled the pad from her pocket. "How is the list coming?" Gabrielle asked.

"If what Autolycus said is true and one hundred fifty dark Shades came through then i am still lacking about twenty names. Guess I will be patrolling the streets looking for the rest. Before you say anything, babe I will not be alone. I can't drive and look and write down names at the same time. It isn't safe."

"I was not going to say anything." Regina said, which earned her a raised eyebrow from Emma. "Okay I was going to caution you."

"Mom, what if they have jobs?" Henry asked.

"Then they wouldn't be out on the streets. That is an excellent point, Henry." Emma sighed. "I haven't visited the businesses in a long time. Guess it's time."

"Instead of bothering a Deputy, how about if I walk around with you." Gabrielle offered.

"You don't have to do that. My deputies will get fat and lazy if all they do is ride around in the squad cars."

"I know I don't have to do that, but maybe I just want to spend time with my very distant granddaughter."

"That is a great idea, Emma." Snow said. "You can learn more about your roots."

"Okay, sure. Why not."

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Emma and Gabrielle made their way down Main Street after making their first stop at Granny's.
With a coffee for Emma and a tea for Gabrielle, they carried their paper cups out of the Diner. With each business, they acted the same. They walked in, talked to the owners, looked at the customers and employees, even made a few small purchases before they headed to the next business.

When they left the seventh store, Emma had only added one name to her list. She sighed. "This is useless. We are not going to find the rest." She complained. "How sure is Autolycus about the number of Shades that escaped?"

"He said it was just a guess due to the barrier between the Shadow Realm and the River of Souls in the Underworld being down."

"So it is possible that we have already found them all."

"Yes, it may be possible, but I am afraid it is not probable."

"So we keep looking?"

"We keep looking."

"Gabrielle," Emma stopped. "Calling you by your given name seems, I don't know, like disrespect giving that your are my great, great, great etc grandmother. Should I call you grandmother, or grandma, or granny or how about Nana?"

"Gabrielle will do, Emma."

"Okay."

"I heard some very impressive swearing this morning. Is everything okay?"

"Oh yeah, the baby grew a lot during the night and none of my jeans fit this morning. Regina fixed the problem. But how did you hear that? We have a silencing spell on our bedroom."

"That works for mortals. Not so much with immortals." Gabrielle laughed when Emma blushed. "Don't worry, I only heard because I was in close proximity."

Emma blew out a breath. "That is good to know."

"You should have seen me the first time I was pregnant. Some barkeep made a comment about my gaining weight, and I almost went over the bar to attack him with my staff. I was very sensitive at that point. Xena grabbed my belt and had to step out of her comfort zone and talk me down."

"She seems okay with talking now."

"Yes, now she is. It took me centuries to get her to that point. When we were younger and on the road, there were days when I could not get more than a few words out of her. And that was only because I asked her a question that called for more than a grunt or a yes or no for an answer."

"I watched that show and she seemed to be talkative."

"Not everything in that show was fact. It didn't show what happened in real life. It would have been a really boring show if I was the only one doing the talking all the time." Gabrielle admitted. "Where to next?"

Emma looked at her watch. "We can try Madam Stitches. She is a seamstress and only has a couple of employees. It will be fast. Then we can meet Gina for lunch."
They entered the shop. The older seamstress greeted them from behind the counter. "Good morning Emma. How is everything? What bring you to my humble shop today?"

"I am just showing my friend Gabrielle around town."

"Welcome to our small town, Gabrielle."

"Thank you Madam Stitch."

"Madame Stitch made Gina's and my wedding gowns. She is a whiz with a needle and thread." Emma looked around the shop. There were three customers and two employees in the room. They were regular humans with no dark auras. A clerk came out of the back room. Emma noticed the aura immediately. It was an off color. Not dark but not quite white like Auto's when he was in Zelena's body, either. She smiled at Emma. It was the identity of the Shade that surprised Emma. Emma walked to her side. "Milah?" She said quietly.

"Please don't give me away." Milah asked.

"What are you doing here?"

"To make a very long story short, I was offered a chance to redeem myself because Rumple and Hades conspired against me."

"I don't understand."

"I can't go into any detail here. Gabrielle knows and she will explain. Just know that I am on your side."

"I believe you." Emma said. "Maybe you can help us locate..."

"Not here Emma." Gabrielle said as she walked up to the two.

"Check out the Hospital and construction areas. You will find what you are looking for there." Milah said.

"Thanks," Emma said. "Milah I hope what ever you are doing works out for you."

"Thank you, Emma."

Gabrielle took Emma's arm and pulled her out of the shop. "Hey." Emma shouted and dug in her heals almost pulling Gabrielle off her feet. "What the Hell was that all about?" She demanded.

"Not here. Lets go to the Diner where we can talk."

Regina was already at their usual table when Emma and Gabrielle walked in. They waved to Granny and Ruby as they sat down. Emma kissed Regina's cheek.

"Hi babe."

"How was your morning?"

"We found one." Emma said in a disgusted voice. "Until we went to Madam Stitch's."

"Jackpot?"

"I am not sure what to call it. Milah was there."
"Milah? Gold's first wife?"

"Yeah."

"What is she doing here? How did she end up being a dark Shade?"

"She isn't." Gabrielle said. She looked around the diner to make sure they were not overheard and waited for the waitress to take their orders. "Emma are we in the clear?" Emma looked around before she nodded. Gabrielle leaned over and talked softly. "How much do you know about how she ended up in the River of Souls?"

"Just what Gold told me. Hades caught her helping us in the Underworld to free Hook, and blasted her into the river."

"I don't think I will ever understand why you did that. Maybe when this is over, you can explain your reasoning behind the rescue." Gabrielle said making Emma feel like she was being scolded. "Hades did not throw her into the river. The man you call Gold did. He was working with Hades to protect his unborn child from a deal he made back in the Enchanted Forest. When Milah realized that you were betrayed, Gold threw her in the river to silence her. She ended up in the Shadow Realm." Gabrielle paused to let customers walk past their table. "When a soul is neither good or bad, they are given a grace period when they enter the Shadow Realm. A truly dark soul like James or Hook, enters they automatically becomes Dark Shades. In Milah's case where she wasn't an evil person she was given a choice. She became what you would call a double agent. She is helping us, yet can fit in with the Dark Shades to report back to us. She is doing this because what she wants most in any realm is to be reunited with her son Baelfire."

"That is why she knew where to direct us."

"Yes. I know what you are thinking. You want to know why she abandoned her son to be raised by his cowardly father if she loved him so much? Right?" Emma nodded. Their food was delivered. "You have to understand, Emma. She was in an impossible situation. She was married to a man, if you could call him that. A man who maimed himself to get out of the Ogre War, and then traded the life of his second child to save the life of his first. He planned their lives without talking to her first. He took the easy way out. When he became the Dark One, he killed the man that he made the bargain with in the hopes that it would break the deal. He tried to cheat again. Milah felt that she had no choice but to leave him. Sometimes we aren't given a choice."

"You might be surprised to hear that I do understand that." Emma said. "How do we help her?"

"We don't, what is that phrase? Oh, we don't blow her cover. By helping us, the powers will allow her to move on to be with her son. She is able to go where we can't."

"Where will you look this afternoon?" Regina asked.

"Our friend said to look at the Hospital and construction site there.*

"I hope you are both careful."

'We will be." Gabrielle answered. "Have you heard anything from the Convent?"

"I talked to Blue earlier. She said the process is very slow going. There are a lot of darts and they have to be very careful loading the cartridges They are all working with heavy gloves to prevent getting stuck. That makes it harder."

"Why don't they use magic?" Emma asked.
"The potion is tricky. There can be no magic used once the process has been started. Even the fire used must be hand made and not magically made."

"Maybe we should go there to help instead of searching for something that might not even exist." Emma said.

"No you cannot. You are both magical persons. Not even the Fairies can help. Even if you could help, any more people will probably end up getting in each other's way. It is more important to find the rest pf the Shades."

"What if we have already found them all?"

"it still would not hurt to check out those areas."Gabrielle argued.

"I can join you later as I only have one meeting scheduled this afternoon and it shouldn't last too long."

"Hell yeah babe."

"That would be great, Regina."

Regina paid their bill and they left the diner. She kissed Emma before they went their separate ways.
Chapter 27

CHAPTER 27

The yellow bug pulled into the parking lot of Storybrooke General Hospital. The five story building contained hundreds of patient rooms, labs, operating areas, closets and all sorts of nooks and crannies that needed to be searched. It would take hours if not days to search the whole building. Emma and Gabrielle stood outside the car and looked at the building. Across the parking lot was the construction site with additional rooms and people they would have to check out. Emma blew out a breath.

"We won't get anything accomplished standing here," Gabrielle said.

"I know." Emma said with a sigh. "I feel defeated before we even begin." They started to walk towards the Hospital when Emma's cell phone rang. She pulled it from her pocket. "Sheriff Swan."

"Sheriff are you near the hospital construction site?"

"Yeah what's up?"

"Dan Phillips, at the Construction Office needs to talk to you about some missing dynamite."

"I will take care of it." She ended the call and put the phone back in her pocket. "We need to head to the construction site first." They walked to the barricades that separated the site from the parking lot. A man wearing a yellow hard hat waited for them.

"Sheriff?"

"Yeah."

"Dan Phillips." He held out his hand to shake Emma's. "I want to report some missing dynamite."

"So I've heard. How many sticks and when did you find it missing?"

"Six sticks, as well as blasting caps, fuse and a detonator. I found the count off when I did inventory this morning."

"How often do you do inventory?"

"Every morning. Except for yesterday. I was sick and it wasn't done."

"Where do you keep the dynamite and who has the keys?"

"It is kept in a locked shed by the office. As for keys only myself and the Foreman have them. I know the town requisitioned dynamite to blow up that tunnel. Twice that much was removed."

"I need to speak to your Foreman."

"Do you think...?"

"I think I need to talk to the Foreman, Mr. Phillips," Emma said.

"Yes ma'am." He pulled the radio from his belt. "Kyle Kingsly?"
"Yeah?"

"Meet me at the office immediately."

"Gotcha boss."

"Ladies if you will come with me." He walked them to the office where he removed two hard hats from a closed bin. "Sorry, regulations state that no one can enter the site without a hard hat."

"No problem, Dan." They took the hats and put them on. Gabrielle's fell over her eyes. Dan took the hat, adjusted the inside band and handed it back to her.

"Thank you that is a lot better."

"Sheriff here come Kyle."

Emma looked at the tall broad shoulder man as he walked towards them. He carried several rolled blueprints in his large hands. There was a dark aura around him.

"Oh damn." Emma said.

"Got another one?" Gabrielle asked. Emma nodded.

The man walked up to them. "You wanted to see me boss?"

"The Sheriff wants to ask you a few questions."

"Me, I didn't do nothing." He protested.

"You opened the shed to get the dynamite the town asked for?"

"Yeah."

"How much did you take out?"

"They asked for six sticks, blasting caps, five hundred feet of fuse and a detonator."

"I know how much they asked for. I want to know how much you took out of the shed."

"Just what they asked for."

"You are certain about that?" Emma asked as her lie detector pinged loudly inside her. He started to sweat, his hands shook, and his eyes shifted between the woman and his boss. Emma watched his face waiting for him to make the decision she knew was coming. This could go one of two ways. Either he would attempt to bluff them or he would run. Emma hoped for the bluff as her quickly advancing pregnancy would stop her from giving chase. In her condition she doubted that she could run ten feet let alone give a full blown chase. His eyes continued to shift nervously between them. Emma saw him reach a decision. He threw the blue prints and took off running. Emma started to go after him, but Gabrielle stopped her.

"I have this." She said and took off after Kyle. After a few steps she pulled the hard hat off her head and threw it at the man's legs. His feet tangled in the hat and he landed face first in the dirt. Gabrielle jumped onto his back with her legs pinning his outstretched arm to the ground. Emma and Dan hurried to her side. Emma drew her gun and pointed it at Kyle. Pulling the handcuffs from her pocket she handed them to Dan.
"Would you put these on him?"

"Certainly Sheriff." He took the handcuffs and placed one on the wrist under Gabrielle's knee. She climbed off him to allow Dan to cuff the other wrist.

"Nice throw Gabrielle."

"I had a great teacher."

Emma took her phone out and called the station. "I need a squad car at the construction site. I have apprehended the person responsible for the theft."

"That was quick. I have a car on its way now."

Emma put her phone away. "Sheriff that dynamite is still out there somewhere."

"It's at the station. This fool gave it to a bunch of other fools who planned on blowing up the Convent."

"Isn't that place protected?"

"I said they were fools. You can come down to the station later and give a statement and take possession of the stolen merchandise."

"I will need Kyle's key to the shed also. It's not that I don't trust the Sheriff's Department, but..."

"I understand. I would rather not have that key out there either. But Dan maybe changing the lock would be a good idea."

"I will get that done today. Will five be okay to come in to make the statement?"

"Five will be great." Emma stated. "Dan would it be alright if we take a look around the site?"

"Uh yeah go ahead. Just make sure you keep the hard hats on. Don't go throwing them at anyone else."

"I won't." Gabrielle said with a smile.

The deputies arrived to take custody of the prisoner. Dan went into the office. Emma and Gabrielle began their walk through the site. Within half an hour, Emma added five names to her list. When she thought about it later, she figured she would know them even without the dark auras. While all the others were busy, they did as little work as possible. Regina met them as they left the site.

"Hey babe." Emma said as they met up.

"I figured you would still be searching the Hospital. Have you finished already?"

"Haven't even started yet. We got called to the construction site."

"Any luck?"

"Yeah got five more. One of which is probably safely locked in a jail cell by now."

"Really? Why?"

"The Foreman is the one who gave the dynamite to those fools that planned to blow up the
convent. He tried to run but didn't get far."

"Emma Swan Mills do not tell me you chased him down in your condition?" Regina snapped pointing a long finger at Emma.

Gabrielle stepped between them. "Regina stop. Emma didn't chase him, I did."

"Yeah babe. You should have seen it. Gabrielle ran after him, pulled the hat off her head and threw it at his legs. It tangled in his feet and down he went. Then she jumped on his back and held him there. It was freaking fantastic. Will you show me that move?"

"Sure." Gabrielle said and looked at the scowl on Regina's face. "If we have time before we leave." She added quickly.

Regina looked at her watch. "The shifts will change in less than an hour. Why don't we go sit in the car and watch from there. My car is right by the entrance."

"Really a stakeout. We haven't had a stake out together since Zelena came to town. But we need coffee. Its not a proper stakeout with out coffee."

"Is that right? Is there an actual set of rules that define what constitutes a stakeout?"

"Of course there is."

"You will have to show me those rules someday." Regina said calling her bluff. "I will get us some coffee. Gabrielle would you rather have tea?" Gabrielle nodded.

"Gina would you bring back some bear claws? The goober wants one."

"The baby wants a bear claw?"

Emma shrugged. "That's what she wants."

Regina sighed, rolled her eyes and kissed Emma's cheek. "It's a good thing I love you. I will be back shortly." Regina disappeared. Gabrielle smiled.

"What?"

"She loves you so much."

"I know and I love her."

"That love will get you through any crisis. Don't ever lose sight of that love. You are stronger together."

"We know. Gabrielle what will happen to the people the Shades have taken over?"

"What do you mean?"

"Zelena was very dizzy and Autolycus was only inside her for a short time. The others have been taken over for weeks. and probably not given a choice."

"They will have a much harder time to the point of needing medical attention."

"Could they die?"
"It is possible because they were taken against their will."

"Do you think Blue is aware of that?"

"She might be. Blue knows a great many things. Things that she is not forth coming with. Why?"

"Well she said she didn't know that my spirit wandering would speed up my pregnancy."

"Did she lie?"

"I don't know. My super power didn't ping me but the baby could be throwing it off. Or Blue is super good at lying."

"You have a good heart, Emma, and very good instincts. Trust them. What are they telling you? Did Blue lie to you?"

"I don't think she lied. But I am hormonal and don't know if I can trust those instincts right now."

"For what it's worth, I don't think Blue lied to you. She may be the head Fairy, but lets face it, Fairies have been around for thousands of years. That's thousands of years of History. We can't expect one fairy to remember every little bit of that History. They are not all knowing and still need to research to find the answers."

"Thank you."

"I have been around for centuries and managed to pick up a few things along the way. I am happy I could help."

Regina reappeared with their hot drinks and Emma's snacks. She looked at the two. "Is everything all right?"

"Yeah we were just talking."

"Oh. Then how about we go sit in the car where it will be warm instead of standing out here in the cold."

They walked to the car and sat inside. Regina turned on the car and warm air came from the vents. They watched the employees walking in and out of the building.

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Delores sat at her desk in the cramped office when the door slammed open. She jumped at the noise and scowled at the person. "Did no one ever teach you how to knock before entering a closed door?" She asked angrily.

"No." He said. "We lost another one today."

"Close the damn door. Who was taken this time?"

"Felix. He was inside the construction foreman."

"At least we know he will keep his mouth shut. Have you found a way to doctor the prisoner's food?"

"No they must have been tipped off. A Deputy escorts the delivery people back and forth from the diner. This damn town is cursed. They find out our every plan."
"Or we have a mole. Without magic we can't do a damn thing either. This was an ill conceived plan. I should just cut my losses and let the rest of you rot."

"Hey how was I to know that we wouldn't have our powers in this realm." He argued. "Are you giving up? You are going to let your daughter and the rest of the heroes defeat you without a fight?"

"Of course not, but we have to be smarter then they are. The serum should be ready by now and we will become hunted. We need to keep our heads down until the child is born. My sources at the hospital tell me that her pregnancy has sped up. She will deliver sooner that anyone expects. Once we get our hands on that child we can return to our human forms."

"What about the Savior's other child?"

"No his blood will not work. His father may have been the son of the Dark One, but he was conceived in the normal way and not through magic."

"What are we going to do about those in jail?"

"What about them?"

"Are we just going to leave them there?"

"Yes. They were stupid enough to get arrested, they do not deserve to become human again."

"You want to leave them behind."

"Yes all of them. If we have to share the baby's blood it will take years to become human. You know we need a steady supply to remain human. There will not be enough for everyone. Sharing will only give us a year or two. If we keep it between the two of us we can become immortal after a few years. Together we will rule this realm and have our powers back."

"You and me?"

"Of course. Unless you are not up to it, Pan."

"I am up to it Cora."

"Then keep you head down and your ass out of jail. Don't do anything stupid to give them a reason to arrest you. They have no idea who we are so we are safe."

"We are safe. We will be the victors, Cora."

Pan left the office. Cora watched from the small office window until he left the building. She started laughing. "You stupid fool. How gullible the weak minded are. There is no way I will let you become immortal. I will rule this realm alone. I do not need a sewer rat by my side. I alone will take revenge on those whose killed me."

The recorder in Regina's home office shut off when the voices stopped.

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Autolycus sat back and watched the volunteers fill the cartridges. Those that were filled were placed in the cartridges in small boxes. Each box held ten filled cartridges. As a Shade, Autolycus could not handle the darts so he sat out of the way. His part was done. He only remained in the event one of the volunteers stuck themselves with the coated dart. While the serum would freeze a
shade it would give the humans a nasty infection at the puncture site. He was there to administer the antidote if needed. So far only one person needed the antidote. Once the rest saw the results of a stick they were extra careful in handling the darts.

The Fairies supplied them with food and drinks throughout the day. Blue walked to the door and motioned for Autolycus to come into the hall.

"Is there a problem Blue?"

"Emma called. Are you certain on the number of Shades that escaped?"

"As near as we could figure it was around one hundred fifty. Why?"

"She has a list with a hundred forty seven names on it. She doesn't want to continue looking if the Shades don't exist."

"It is possible I suppose. With the barrier down between the River Of Souls and The Shadow Realm it was hard to know just how many came through."

"I will tell her to stop looking then."

"If they are out there, we may get lucky when we start hunting and find them."

Blue looked into his dark eyes. "Autolycus, I asked you this before and I have to ask again. Shades have come through for thousands of years without any problems. Why is this time different? What are they after?"

Xena joined them in the hall. "Tell her, it's time they all knew."

"By them you mean Emma and Regina?"

"Yes especially now that her pregnancy has progresses so quickly."

"Meaning?"

"I would rather explain this only once, Blue." Autolycus said.

"I will call them." Blue said and walked into her office.
CHAPTER 28

Emma popped the last of her bear claw into her mouth when her phone rang. She swallowed quickly and answered the call. Regina's phone rang as she said, "Sheriff Swan."

"Emma, you and Regina are needed at the Convent."

"We will be there shortly Blue." She said and disconnected the call as Regina shouted into her phone.

"Zelena, calm down. Tell me exactly what you heard."

"Sis they want to, wait let me replay the recording for you." Regina heard the phone being placed on the desk as the recording was turned on. She listened to the recording. Her face paled then reddened with anger.

"Gina what is it?" Emma asked.

Regina held up a finger for her to wait as she continued to listen. "No Zelena, leave it."

"Will you tell Emma?"

"Of course I will then I will go skin a Fairy. There is no damn way she didn't know about this. Don't wait on us for dinner. We may be very late. Oh and Zelena I may need bail money."

"Emma won't arrest you. If the Bitch knew and didn't say anything, that makes skinning her justifiable in my book."

"Thanks sis."

Regina dropped the phone into the center console, started the car and they left the Hospital parking lot with a squeal of tires.

Emma put her hand on Regina's arm. "Babe what is it? What's wrong? Why will you need bail money? Where are we going? Blue wants to see us right away. Is that were we are heading?"

"Yes we are going to the Convent. That Bitch has a great deal of explaining to do."

"Regina what happened?" Gabrielle asked.

"You tell me, Gabrielle."

"I don't know what you mean."

"Tell me." Regina ordered, as she pulled the car over to the side of the road and turned to stare at Gabrielle. "Tell me how much you knew and when did you know it?"

"Gina?"

"Sweetheart, the Dark Shades came here because the blood of our child will restore them to human form and in a few years, will make them immortal."
"How do you know that?"

"That bug that Delores planted in my office was moved into her's. She and Pan discussed that in her office." She answered. "So Gabrielle. tell us."

"Yes we knew." Gabrielle admitted. "It will all be explained when we get to the Convent."

"For your sake it had better be fully explained or I will take Emma and Henry and leave this town and you all can go straight to Hell. You can handle this problem without the Savior." Regina shouted as she pulled the car back onto the road for the short drive to the Convent. After they reached the Convent, Regina turned once again to Gabrielle. "One more question before we go in. Did Blue know?"

"No she didn't know. Regina when we came here, we had no idea that Emma's pregnancy had been sped up. Our plan was to come here, get the serum made, and recapture the Shades so that we can send them to Hell, before her pregnancy reached fruition."

"Why should we believe you after hearing this? What other secrets are you hiding?" Emma asked even though her super power was quiet.

"Emma at this point you should not believe anything I tell you. But what does you heart tell you?"

"Leave my heart out of the Granny." Emma snapped.

"Then let's go listen to what Xena and Autolycus have to say. They will answer all your questions."

Gabrielle left the car but Regina and Emma remained seated.

"Gina?"

"Let's go hear what they have to say. If you get the slightest ping from your super power then you tell me, and we will be out of there. We go home, grab Henry and leave town. I meant what I said."

"Okay."

They left the car and joined Gabrielle where she waited by the porch steps. Emma held Regina's hand. Blue met them at the door. She took one looked at their faces, stepped back so they could enter.

"Go into my office. I will have refreshments brought in." Blue said as she stopped Nova.

"Would you like coffee brought in?" Nova asked.

"Not this time. I am afraid this meeting calls for something more potent than coffee."

"How many glasses?"

"Oh, six. Thank you Nova." Blue took a deep breath before she opened her office door. There were two distinct battle camps with Emma and Regina staring daggers at Xena, Gabrielle and Autolycus. "I am having some wine sent in. This meeting looks like it will need it." Blue said. "Now that we are all here, shall we get this meeting underway before the tension in the room blows out the windows?"

Nova knocked on the door before she entered carrying a tray with six glasses and two bottles of wine. Blue waved her hands and the glasses were filled. She handed everyone a glass before sitting behind her desk.
"What has happened?" She asked.

"What has happened is that they have not been honest with us. They left out a big part of the story." Emma shouted. "They didn't tell us the real reason those Shades came here."

Regina went to Emma's side. "We discovered that the Shades need the blood of our unborn child to return to their human forms and eventually become immortals." Regina said.

"They kept that information quiet." Emma added.

"Is this true?" Blue asked.

Gabrielle handed her glass to Xena and went to Emma. She stopped less than a foot away. She looked into eyes that were the same shade as her own and answered Blue's question. "Yes it is true. You have to understand that when we heard the reason behind their escape, we came immediately, but because of the protection dome the Fairies erected, we could not come through. We lost precious time that we could not afford to lose. When Blue tried to communicate with Autolycus, her spirit was taken. You were out of town so we knew you were safe."

"Yeah that went to complete shit didn't it."

"Things did not go according to our original plan. When you returned and your spirit searched for Blue's, we knew that the consequences would be that your pregnancy would advance." Gabrielle explained. "We thought we would still have time to recapture the Shades before we had to tell you the real reason the Shades were here."

"Or not tell us at all? Right Grandma?" Emma said sarcastically.

"Hey." Xena shouted.

Gabrielle held up a hand. "It is all right Xe. No more half truths. You're right. If we could have accomplished everything without telling you we would have. We did it to protect not only you but Regina and Henry." Gabrielle reached out to touch Emma's hand, who backed away. She took a deep breath and turned to Regina. "You are right, Regina, you should take Emma and Henry and leave town. For your safety you should leave and let us handle this."

"Are you crazy?" Emma shouted. "Regina is the Mayor and I am the Sheriff. This town is in crisis and we just can't leave. Besides we have magic, they don't."

"Right now they don't have magic." Xena said. She pushed away from the wall that she had been leaning against. "Let me tell you what will happen if we don't recapture every Shade before Emma delivers. They need her blood to make them human again. Not all of it, but a steady supply for..."

"Xena?" Gabrielle protested.

"No Gabrielle, you said it yourself. No more half truths. They need to hear exactly what they are facing."

"You could use a little finesse. There is no need to frighten them."

"I disagree. They need to be afraid for themselves and their children."

"We are right here." Regina shouted.

"Xena please let me." Xena held up her hands and took a step back allowing Gabrielle to talk.
"Xena is right. Depending on if any of the Shades are still free when your child is born, she will be in danger. They will need her blood to return to their human forms. The more Shades there are, the longer it will take. To keep from killing her the first day they will have to divide the blood they take which will make returning to humans slower. Regina we all know that Cora is not known for her patience."

"We know she is planning on double crossing the others." Regina said.

"How do you know that?" Xena asked.

"We recorded her from a listening device that was planted in her office."

"You got lucky there." Autolycus said.

"Luck had nothing to do with it. She put the bug in my office. I found it and put it in her office." Regina took Emma's hand. "You should take Henry and leave town until this is all over."

"I am not leaving with out you." Emma protested. "Is Henry is danger too. I gave birth to him."

"He is not totally in the clear." Xena said.

"What the fuck does that mean? Is he or is he not in danger?" Emma was on her feet with her hands clenched at her side.

"Yes Henry is your son. He carries your blood but it is not pure like the baby's is. He did not come from two magical parents. But they could use him to get to you."

"How can you say that? His father was the son of the Dark One."

"Henry's father was already born when Rumple Stiltskin became the Dark One. Was he magical in any way?"

"Uh no."

"Was Henry conceived through magic?"

"No."

"That means his blood cannot be used. Your child was magically conceived which means her blood is pure and contains everything they need to succeed. They will not hesitate to kill you to get to her." Xena said.

"We have magic we can protect her. When you said they didn't have magic yet what did you mean?"

Xena sighed. "She is definitely from your line Gabrielle. Look Emma, it is true that Cora does not have her powers yet, but if she gets her hands on your child she will not only become human again but she will also regain her powers. If that is not enough, she will also absorb the magic your child's blood possesses making her almost unstoppable."

"If you choose to remain, we can throw every protection we have on you." Blue spoke for the first time.

"Listen, could you all give us a few minutes to talk alone?" Regina asked.

They all left leaving the two alone. Emma relaxed and sat back down. She held Regina's hand.
"Are you going to tell me that I have to leave?"

"Sweetheart a big part of me says no, that we will fight this the way we are the strongest. Together."

"Then I will stay."

"Hear me out. But an equally big part of me say Hell no. We need to get you and our children to safety. To what was that phrase you used the other day. Oh yes, Get the Hell out of dodge."

"How can I run? I am the Savior. Blue said the Fairies can protect us."

"She said they would use every protection spell they had to protect you. What if it isn't enough? What if Cora regains her powers?"

"We can't live our lives by what ifs. Gina what should I do?"

"Emma, I honestly don't know. If Cora regains her powers neither of us is strong enough to defeat her."

"Separately but together we can babe."

"Then we have the answer. You are staying and we will take those Bastards down."

"We start with Cora."

"Are you sure?"

"I am positive. Between the Fairies and what we can come up with, we will be safe." Emma leaned in and kissed Regina. "And we will win."

"To borrow a phrase from you, You can bet your sweet ass on that." They kissed again. Regina went to open the door. "You can come back in now."

Xena pushed away from the wall and entered the office first. "What did you decide?" Xena demanded. Regina returned to Emma's side.

"I am staying. Regina and I know that we are stronger together. Even when we were barely friends we knew that. The same way you and Gabrielle are."

Gabrielle nudged Xena. "You owe me fifty dinars Warrior Princess."

Xena scowled and pulled a coin from the pouch on her belt. She handed it to Gabrielle. "Emma even with all the protections the Fairies can give you there are still rules you will need to follow."

"Rules? I am the God Damned Sheriff, you can take your rules..."

"Stop right there." Xena shouted. "The rules are just added protection for you and your family. The first is that you wear a tracker that Blue has. The second is you do not go anywhere with out a body guard."

"I will agree to the tracker, but not to the body guard. That is just bull shit."

"Then you will be placed under house arrest either at home or here in the convent for your protection. It is your choice."
Emma looked from Regina to Xena. Each had an eyebrow that reached their hairlines. "Fine I will do the tracker and body guard." She huffed.

Xena turned to Blue. "You were right."

"Right about what?" Emma demanded.

"Blue said to give you a choice but to make the second option so absurd that you would choose the first. Which you did."

"You played me."

"Yes we did. I will not apologize for it. Emma the child you carry is their goal. We need to recapture every Shade before she is born."

"We have time. Do you think it will take months to recapture them all?"

"We don't know for a fact that you actually have months. Once that is it known that we are hunting Shades, they rest will go into hiding making it harder to find them."

"When will we start hunting them?" Regina asked.

"Tomorrow morning. All the cartridges will be ready to go by then. But lets get back to you. Blue would you insert the tracker?"

Blue went to Emma. "May I have your left hand, please?" Emma held out her hand. Blue put the small tracker in the palm and pushed on it. Emma flinched as she felt the device enter her hand. Blue kept pushing the tracker deeper. When she released Emma's hand, Emma looked at her palm. There was only a red mark over the area. "That will fade. By tomorrow you won't even know it is there."

"So it stays in there forever?"

"Goodness no. When we are finished i will remove it."

"Is this a listening device also?"

Blue blushed at the implication of her question. "Absolutely not. It will only tell us where you are at all times."

"Who is going to be my body guard?"

"That would be me." Gabrielle said. "Is that okay?"

"Yeah sure, but tell me how are you supposed to guard me. I have magic, you have a big stick."

"Hey show a little respect." Xena shouted. Don't underestimate what Gabrielle can do with that stick. For the record, it's called an Amazon fighting staff."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah I know what it's called. I watched the show."

Regina leaned over to whisper in Emma's ear. "Looks like you just got the smack down from Granny Xena."

"I would rather you didn't call me that." Xena said with a smile and touched her ear. "Excellent hearing."
"Oh sorry."

"No problem. Now can we discuss our tactics for tomorrow?"

"What is the plan?" Emma asked.

"Starting at first light, we will go out in groups of three with a Fairy who has the enchanted containers. Once the Shade is frozen, the Fairy will consign it to the container and send it back here where Blue will place them inside a protective barrier until we have them all. Emma do you have your list with you?" Emma pulled the pad from her pocket. "Give it to Blue. She will make copies that she will enchant. As a Shade is recaptured the name will disappear from the list."

"The groups will be staggered so that there are ten groups out at all times." Autolycus added.

"I have divided the town in sections. Each team will concentrate on their assigned section during their shift." Xena said and opened a map on Blue's desk. The map had lines drawn across it.

"That is a big area for one team to search." Emma said.

"What areas in a section that are not covered by one team will be covered by the next team assigned to the area."

"What happens to the humans that the Shades are in? When Autolycus left Zelena's body it knocked her on her ass. He was only inside her for a short time. Those others have been in place for weeks."

"Truthfully, I don't know." Xena said.

They looked at each other in shock.
"We have never come across anything like this before. Yes, Shades have been coming through to this realm for thousands of years. They inhabit humans for a short time then leave. There would be some dizziness like Zelena went through, but it was temporary. We don't know what a prolonged take over will do to a human body. They may pass out, or go into a coma." Xena said.

"Could they die?" Emma asked.

"It's possible. At this point we just don't know."

"Should we notify the Hospital that they will be very busy?" Regina asked.

"Only if it is someone you trust completely."

"That leaves Whale and Ratchet out." Emma said.

"Once we start, we cannot hesitate for a single second. Word will get out quickly and the rest will go underground. So we have to take out as many as possible in the first hours."

"There are twenty two sitting in the jail right now." Emma said. "I can get them first thing in the morning."

"No, you will not." Xena said. "You are to stay away from the jail tomorrow."

Emma jumped to her feet. "The Hell I will. I am the fucking Sheriff." She shouted.

"And you have a personal relationship with at least two of them. Do you honestly think you will be able to walk into the jail and fire at an unarmed person? Especially if that person is your father?" Xena walked and stood right in Emma's personal space.

"He is not my father. That is his brother James inside his body."

"You may think you are able to separate the two, but you can't. I know from personal experience it can't be done. No matter how strong you think you are, it can't be done."

Gabrielle got between the two and pushed both back. "It's true Emma. If there is time before we go back I will tell you that story."

"Okay, I won't go to the station. So tell me oh mighty one, who will you get to open the special cells."

"Damn, I knew I was forgetting something. Okay, you will be with me. But only to open the cells. After they are open you will stay in your office while I do the shooting. Do you understand?"

"Yeah, I understand."

"Good be here at seven a.m. That is the first step."

"I have assigned Nova to be with your group. She is my second in command and an excellent Fairy." Blue said.
Emma was silent on the ride home after the meeting had ended. She turned down the offer for a late dinner at Granny's. She absentmindedly rubbed her stomach as if soothing the baby inside her. Regina casts worried glances at Emma. As they passed the Hospital she waved a hand to send Emma's car back to their driveway. The house was dark except for the hall and outside lights.

"Would you like a cup of tea or something to eat?" Regina asked.

"No thanks babe. I just want to go to bed. I am wiped out."

"Are you alright, sweetheart? You have been rubbing your stomach. Is it the baby?"

"Yeah, she is just very active right now. Maybe a cup of tea would soothe her."

"You go upstairs and get comfortable, I will get our tea."

"Thanks babe. You take good care of me."

"That is love my dear. Scoot."

Emma kissed Regina's cheek and started up the stairs. She stopped halfway up to soothe the baby. "Okay peanut, how about you take it easy on my insides, if only for a little while."

Emma was standing by the window looking out at the quiet street below when Regina entered with their tea. Gone were the sleeveless tee shirts and sleep shorts that she favored in warm weather. Now she wore a long sleeved shirt and pajama bottoms. Regina placed their cups on the tables next to the bed. With a wave of her hands she was changed into her favorite silk pajamas. Her make up gone. She walked behind Emma, put her arms around the ever expanding bulge that was their child. She placed her chin on Emma's shoulder.

"You tea is ready."

Emma put her hands over Regina's. "Thanks babe."

"What is bothering you?"

Emma sighed. "Xena was right."

"Come to bed and tell me what she was right about." She led Emma to the bed and got under the covers. They leaned against the headboard and sipped the tea.

"Chamomile, thanks."

"You are very welcome. Now tell me what Xena was right about."

"That I would not be able to separate the fact that it is James inside of David's body. I would not be able to shoot him. Even knowing the dart would not hurt David, I couldn't do it. The same with Thomas Fischer."

"Who?"

"The man Hook is inside. Fischer is an innocent victim." Emma said. "I have not been inside the jail since David was arrested."
"That is not true. You have been in the station."

"Only as far as my office. I can't bring my self to go into the cell section. I am a coward."

"That is not true sweetheart. You are perhaps the bravest person I know."

"You're prejudiced."

"I am but that does not lessen the fact that you are a very brave and strong person. I know in my heart that when the time comes you will find that courage and face whatever fears you have."

Regina placed her free hand over the baby. "She seems to have quieted down for now."

"For now anyway." Emma repeated. "She likes the sound of your voice."

Regina placed her cup on the nightstand, scooted down to place her mouth next to Emma's stomach. She lifted Emma's shirt. "Hi there little one, this is your other mommy. How about you quiet down in there and let you mommy get some much needed rest. We have a very busy day and need to sleep. I will make a deal with you. If you quiet down, i will not give your mommy a hard time tomorrow when she eats those disgusting bear claws you both seem to love." The baby gave a little kick. "I will take that as a yes. We love you." She kissed the baby bulge which caused Emma to laugh.

"You know babe you may have just kissed her butt and not her head."

"What's the problem, I have kissed your's many times."

"No problem at all. Hey, I think she listened to you. At least she is not kicking me black and blue."

"Then my work is done for now." Emma yawned. "Do you think you can sleep now?"

"I think so, now that the Goober has quieted down."

"Goober, peanut, you are going to give her a complex if you keep calling her names." Regina joked. "We really have to come up with a name before she actually gets here."

"I know, but we have a little time left, I hope."

"Emma would you like me to come with you in the morning?"

"That would be great, but I can't expect you to hold my hand every time something hard comes up. Don't you have meetings or something tomorrow?

"Tomorrow is Saturday, sweetheart, and being moral support for my beloved wife and mother to our children is my extreme pleasure."

Emma finished her tea, put her cup on the night stand and curled into Regina's arms. Regina turned out the lights leaving the bedroom in darkness.

The driveway leading to the Convent was filled with cars and trucks. The sun was just peaking over the horizon. Guardians, Dwarves, and many others waited for the boxes of crossbows and cartridges to be brought out to the porch. The door opened. Boxes floated out and neatly stacked themselves. The people left their vehicles to circle the porch.

Xena, Gabrielle and the Fairies walked out. A large map appeared on the wall of the Convent.
Xena spoke to them.

"You are the first groups to go out. You will be in groups of three with a Fairy in each group. You will each be given a list of the infected persons. Once the Shade has been captured, their names will be magically erased from the list. Come up here and take a crossbow, ten boxes of cartridges, a smaller copy of the map that is hanging here and a list of names. Break into groups of three with a Fairy. Once the Shade is captured the container will be returned here to the convent. Be careful handing the cartridges. The tips have been coated. While they will not freeze you, they can give you a nasty infection. Each fairy has been given a bottle of the antidote. If you stick yourself, tell her immediately. The longer you wait the more the infection will spread. You will be out on patrol for eight hours. The next group will go out at three. The town and surrounding forest has been divided into sections. Pick a section and head out. Any questions?" The crowd was silent. "The jail has been covered. And remember to avoid the eyes. There is no reason to blind the infected person to get to the Shade. We need to recaptured as many Shades as possible in the first wave before the rest get wind and go underground. Work quickly but work smart. Good hunting." The groups left. Xena motioned for Regina and Emma to come onto the porch. "Are you ready for this?"

"Not really, but lets get this done."

"Emma once you open the cells, you will go wait in your office. You do not need to see the Shades being recaptured. Gabrielle, you and Regina will go with her. You do not leave the office. Mulan will meet us there. She and I will handle the prisoners. Do you understand?"

"Yeah." Emma replied.

Xena packed several bags with cross bows and several boxes of cartridges. "Lets go."

They headed to the car. Regina waved her hand to expand the inside of the car so that the three women could fit into the backseat comfortably for the ride to the Sheriff's station. Mulan was waiting outside the station when they arrived. Emma led the way into the station where the night deputies were finishing up their shift.

"Morning Sheriff." The older Deputy said before he noticed the group with her. "Ah today's the day then?"

"It is Pete."

"Good we are sick and tired of listening to those yahoos complain about everything."

"Tonight will be much quieter."

"Be careful of those two." He pointed to James and Hook. "They have had their heads together for the last two hours. They are plotting something."

"Thanks for the heads up. Go grab some breakfast or something."

"You sure you don't want us to stick around?"

Emma looked at Xena who nodded. "Okay guys stick around." Emma said. "Where do you want to start?" She asked Xena.

"The special cells first. Remember you open the cells then go to your office."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know."
Emma opened the door to the special cells and walked in. The two men looked at her from where they stood separated by a magical barrier.

"It is about time you showed up Emma." James yelled at her.

"Hey take it easy on the lovely Swan. I knew you couldn't stay away. Come for more of what I have to offer." Hook said as he moved his hips suggestively.

Emma tried to ignore him. "How can you lock up your own father. What sort of ungrateful daughter does that to her own father." James shouted.

"You are not my father. You are James inside of David, You took over his body that's all."

"So you figured it out. You are not as dumb as I thought. Come to kill us then?"

"Hey don't go calling me girlfriend dumb, ya bastard." Hook yelled. "You and me Swan are going to have a good time when you let me out of here. Open the door love. You won't kill me, you love me."

Emma stood frozen in place. "No one is going to kill you." Xena shouted. "We are going to send you straight to Hell where you belong. Emma open the cells." Emma stared at Hook as he continued to move his hips. Her hands shook and her breathing sped up. "Emma."

Regina put her hands on Emma's shoulders to calm her down.

'Get your filthy hands off me woman you bitch. She belongs to me."

Regina waved her hand silencing him. Not having a voice made him angrier. He beat against the barrier.

"Sweetheart open the cells. He won't hurt you again."

Emma took a shaky breath, nodded and opened the barrier with a wave of her hands. The barrier opened leaving just the bars in place. She went to the hidden lock, waited until Xena and Mulan were in position with their crossbows aimed and ready, before she pulled the key out and opened the cells.

Nova pulled two containers out of the bag she carried and took off the tops. The containers magically expanded.

"Now leave." Xena commanded. Gabrielle and Regina each took one of Emma's arms and pulled her out of the cell area to her office. Gabrielle stood guard inside the office door. Regina held Emma as they waited.

The darts left the crossbows and easily found their targets. The men stood still as the Shades inside were frozen. The Shades left their bodies and were pulled into the containers. Nova put the lids on the containers and sealed them before sending them to the convent. Once the Shades were gone the bodies slumped to the floor unconscious. Xena felt each neck for a pulse.

"Call the hospital tell them to expect a rush of patients." Xena said.

"Will they all react this way?" Nova asked.

"More than likely."

Mulan took out her phone to call the Hospital. They moved into the jail proper to take care of the
rest of the prisoners. Nova took out more containers and put one in front of each prisoner. Those prisoners who were awake silently watched them. Xena took one end of the cell row and Mulan took the other. They waited until Nova was ready before they fired. One by one the Shades were forced out of their humans and into the containers. Each human victim crumpled to the floor as the Shades were forced out. The prisoners protested as they watched their fellow prisoners fall to the floor.

In the office the three could hear the yells and protests from the prisoners. With the blinds closed, Emma could not see what was going on in the station. And with Gabrielle blocking the door and Regina's arms holding her tightly, she could not leave. After what seemed like hours but was only twenty minutes the station was quiet. Gabrielle moved away from the door when Xena knocked on the glass.

"Finished?" Gabrielle asked.

"Yeah. We had to call the ambulance."

"Why?" Regina asked.

"Every one of them collapsed when the Shade was removed."

"Are they dead?"

"No just unconscious. The Hospital has been notified."

"That will take hours. We only have three ambulances. We have a better way." Regina said as she released Emma.

"What do you want to do Gina?"

"We my darling are going to magic them all to the Emergency Room."

"The Hospital is ready and waiting." Mulan said.

"Come on Emma, we have work to do." She held out her hand which Emma readily grasped. They walked out of the office to the cell area where the prisoners were still laying where they fell. With their hands still clasped, they combined their magic and all the prisoners disappeared.

"If Whale sees them will he know the Shades have been recaptured?" Emma asked.

"I don't know if he is smart enough to make the connection." Regina said.

"Can we afford to take that chance?"

"We need to go there." Regina said.

"We need to go there." Emma repeated.

"Have all the containers been sent to the convent?"

"They have. Where do we go next. Xena?"

"We had better get to the Hospital also just in case Whale hasn't been neutralized. We can't afford for him to raise the alarm."

"Hold hands everyone." Regina ordered. They disappeared as soon as their hands touched.
The Emergency Room was in chaos when they reappeared. Every bed in the room was filled, with patients waiting on every available stretcher lined the hallway and several on blankets on the floor in the waiting area. The staff hurried from patient to patient, taking vitals and starting I.V.'s

The harried nurse looked at them. "Please tell me you are not here for a medical emergency, Madam Mayor."

"No, no emergency for us."

"Good then please leave the area. We have an emergency on our hands. Every bed is filled and there are even patients laying on the floor waiting for medical attention. More keep showing up. Every time the ambulance shows up they drop off more patients then hurry off. We have no idea what is happening. I don't know what I am going to do at this point."

"Have you called in extra staff?"

"Please, that was the first thing I did when the first group of twenty showed up."

"Where are Whale and Ratchett?"

"They were the first to fall. Along with four men from the construction site." She said. "Is there some sort of epidemic?"

"Not an epidemic Nurse Sawyer, but you can expect a total of one hundred fifty patients by the time this is over." Regina said. She looked around the room. "A few weeks ago we were invaded by beings from another realm. They took over the bodies of our citizens. What you are seeing is the end results of the beings being recaptured."

"So what do we do?"

"Keep them hydrated, stable and hope they wake up on their own without any problems." Xena said.

"Are you a doctor?"

"I am a healer and I can help."

"I will get you a trauma gown and gloves." She said and left, returning in less than a minute with a yellow gown and box of gloves. Xena put on the gown. Gabrielle helped tie it.

"While I am here you can go out and help the others if you want. But stay away from Cora and Pan."

"Are you kidding me? There is no way in Hell I can do that. That's who..." Emma stated to protest, but Xena cut her off.

"By the gods, can't you do as your told just once?" Xena yelled. "We will get them. Regina make sure she does not go near them."
"I can't do that Xena. I agree with Emma. Cora is a threat to our unborn child. We need to capture
her before she has the chance to go into hiding."

Xena took a deep breath to control her anger. "We will get her, but you two are too damn close to
this. Stay away from her." She ordered. "Gabrielle do not leave Emma's side for a second."

"I won't."

Emma rolled her eyes and quickly headed for the exit with Regina, Gabrielle and Nova rushing to
catch up with her.

------------------------

Delores hurried around the bedroom throwing clothes into suitcases. Less than an hour ago she was
relaxing over her cup of morning tea, when word came that they were under attack from the heroes.
Inside her body, Cora knew that if she wanted to successfully return to human form, and regain her
magic, she needed to protect herself until the Savior's child was born. She needed to go into hiding.

From inside the bedroom she heard the front door crash open. She tensed until she heard the voice
call out.

"Cora?"

"In here." She answered.

"Is it true?" He asked before he noticed the open half filled suitcases. "Evidently it is. I find it very
hard to believe that the great Cora Mills is running away like a beaten dog." He taunted as he sat in
an arm chair near the window.

"I do not consider it running away, Pan. It is more like a strategic retreat. If we are to have any
hope of returning to our human forms until that baby is born, I suggest you do the same." Cora
snapped.

"Okay, I will grant that you are correct, but it will be months before that child is born."

"Has you head been under a rock Pan? Her pregnancy has been sped up. From the looks of her, we
will not have to wait months. Weeks maybe. From what I heard, a third of our people have been
recaptured. James and Hook were the first to fall."

"How did they know who to target? No one was supposed to know about us."

"It must be those wretched fairies. Once that Bitch woke up she probably told the Savior
everything."

"What do we do?"

"We make a strategic retreat until that child is born."

"How? There are groups of hunters all over the town and forest."

"We leave town."

"There is a curse on the town line. We can't leave."

"You are a fool Pan. That spell only affects those who were part of the two dark curses. We were
not so therefore we can leave."
"We weren't but the bodies we are in, were. They will not be able to leave. If they try to leave we will be forced out. I don't need to tell you what sunlight will do to us."

"What do you suggest?" Cora demanded. "Do you have a better idea?"

"I do. Rumple has a cabin. A very comfortable cabin deep in the forest. As soon as the hunters have left the area we can go there. It is protected and well stocked. Rumple is all about his comforts. We will be comfortable and safe there."

"All right meet me back here in one hour, Pan." He nodded. "If you are not back here then, I will leave without you."

"I will be here."

He left as Cora resumed packing. She carried several cases to the opened trunk. After several more trips to bring out boxes of food she went back into the house to wait for Pan.

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"Emma stop." Regina shouted as she hurried to catch up to her angry wife. "Emma." She shouted again and waved her hands to throw up a barrier in front of Emma.

Emma walked into the barrier. She turned angrily and shouted. "God damn it Regina, stop doing that."

"What did you expect me to do? You wouldn't stop and talk to me. It was a barrier or a freezing spell." Gabrielle and Nova stopped several yards away to give them some privacy. "What the Hell do you think you are doing? Why are you so angry? Where are you storming off to?"

Emma folded her arms in anger. "Ya want me to answer those questions in the order they were asked?" Emma sniped.

"I don't care what order, just talk to me."

"She is treating me like a little kid."

"Xena?"

"Damn right. She has no business..."

"Stop right there. Cora is after our baby. Xena is only trying to protect you and her. Where are you going?"

"I am not going to sit around and wait for Cora to come after us. I will find her and take her out." Emma turned to walk away then remembered the barrier and stopped. "Drop the barrier."

"Hold on Emma." Regina put her hand on Emma's arm.

"Drop the God damned barrier, Regina."

"No not until you calm down and listen to me."

"Okay your Majesty, talk but make it quick. I am listening." Emma snapped. "Once Cora knows..."

"Sweetheart she is extremely cunning and dangerous. You can't trust her for a single second."

"I know that. I have met her before"
Regina sighed. "Cora may not have her powers, but she has her sights on you and our baby. By going after her you are walking into her territory. You will give her the upper hand."

"We have a little time before," Emma stopped talking and doubled over in pain. "Oh fuck." Regina reached for Emma to keep her from falling over. Nova and Gabrielle ran to her side.

"What is it sweetheart?"

Emma gasped in pain. "The baby. Doctor Chrystal." Was all she could get out as waves of pain racked her body. The three women held onto Emma and disappeared.

"How many is that?" Autolycus asked as more containers appeared in Blue's office.

"Fifty seven." Blue answered.

"Not too bad for the first few hours, eh?"

"That still leaves ninety three to go. Cora and Pan are still unaccounted for. We have a long way to go, Autolycus. Plus we still do not know what toll removing the Shades took on their human hosts." Blue's phone rang. She picked up the receiver. "Hello." She listened for a minute. "Nova, Nova, slow down so that I can understand you. Where are you?"

"I am at Emma's Doctor's office with her, Regina and Gabrielle. The baby,"

"What is wrong with the baby?"

"We don't know. She and Regina were arguing and she doubled over in pain."

"Why was she angry?"

"That is a long story. We were at the hospital. Blue all the people that the Shades were removed from, collapsed. They are unconscious, but still alive."

"Can they be woken up?"

"No one knows yet. I know you can't leave there Blue so I will stay here."

"Excellent idea. Keep me posted on Emma."

"I will, Blue."

"What happened?" Autolycus asked.

"Without seeing it for myself, I would guess that the baby may want to make an early appearance. I was afraid that would happen. I noticed yesterday that she was stressed and snapping at everyone. This crisis is taking an awful toll on her. Or in the worse case, their bond is making it's presence known."

"Then maybe this town should learn to rely more of themselves and less on her. I know she is the Savior and all that, but she is also a human who should be able to lead a normal life. Or as normal as possible in a town filled with story book characters."

"You are correct, Autolycus. We are all so used to going to her and Regina when problems crop up. We are magical beings who can take care of ourselves and protect those who do not have magic."
"I admit that I know next to nothing about what a woman goes through when she is in a delicate condition."

Blue gave him a tiny smile. "Autolycus, the words Emma and delicate do not go together. She would probably kick your backside for even thinking that."

He laughed. "You are probably right. Does Xena know about Emma?"

"Nova did not say."

"She needs to be told."

"Let me call Nova and find out."

----------------------------------

Cora peeked out from the side of the drapes to make sure the coast was clear before she walked outside. A quick glance at the clock told her the hour she gave Pan was almost up. Her car keys were in her hand and her purse will all Delores' important papers were by the door. When the hour was up she picked up the purse, and ran from the house to the car. Just as she started the car, she noticed movement in the tree line. She put her car into gear as Pan ran from the trees. He threw his bags into the back seat as he jumped into the front.

"Go, there are hunters headed this way." The car sped off.

"You cut that close Pan."

"I couldn't help it. I had to dodge hunters all the damn way. I found this on the ground. I think one of them dropped this." He held up papers.

"I am driving you idiot. What is it?"

"It's a list of people that we have taken over. Not only that it also lists who we are. It is enchanted so that once a Shade is captured, their name is magically removed from the list. From all these open spots you were right about a third of our people falling."

"Where is this cabin?" Cora demanded.

"Head towards the town line. Just before you reach it, there is a side road that goes into the woods," Pan explained. "I also heard that the Savior collapsed. Seems that you were right about the child."

"Of course I was right you fool. Once we are settled at this cabin we can formulate a plan to get our hands on that child. You are certain this place is protected."

"Yes. No one can get through the protection barrier except with blood magic. There is the town line, take a right here."

Cora turned the car onto a dirt road and slowed down. The trees folded in behind the car hiding the road.

----------------------------------

Snow sat at the dining room table grading papers. Zelena played with the children while Henry played a video game until he needed to leave for his shift at the Diner. Snow's phone rang. She checked the called I.D. before answering. "Regina how goes the battle?" She joked. What she heard wiped the smile from her face. "Wait let me put this on speaker." Zelena and Henry went to
the dining room to listen.

"I am here in the Maternity Wing at the Hospital. Emma and I were having a difference of opinion."

"Meaning they were arguing." Zelena said. Snow motioned for her to be quiet.

"She doubled over in pain. We are waiting for the doctor now."

"Can I talk to her?" Snow asked.

"She is in too much pain to talk right now."

"Do you want me to come..."

"No." Regina cut her off. "No one is to leave the house."

"I have to work today, mom."

"Not today Henry. I will let Granny know what is going on. Zelena make sure the protection spell around the house is still strong. We can't take the chance of any of you being taken hostage by the Shades."

"I will take care of that sis."

"Thank you."

"Keep us posted and give Emma our love." Snow said.

"I will."

"Is mom having the baby?" Henry asked when the call ended.

"We don't know for sure Henry." Snow said.

"I thought she looked a little low this morning." Zelena said.

"What does that mean?"

"It means that the baby is dropping into position to be born."

"Oh, okay. I don't need to hear any more than that. I will keep an eye on the little ones while you take care of what you need to do."

-----------------------------------------

Emma lay curled into the fetal position on the exam table as waves of pain tore through her. Regina rubbed her back offering support, but she felt helpless. Their disagreement from earlier faded far into the background.

The nurse came in and after a struggle was able to take Emma's vitals and draw blood. She took a hospital gown and blanket from the warmer. "Emma I need you to change into this gown. Can you do that?"

"I will do it, Mrs. Davis. Do you have any idea how long Doctor Chrystal will be. Emma is in tremendous pain."
"She is in the middle of a delivery right now and will be here when she has finished. I am in contact with her. She said to start and I.V. and give Emma a mild pain killer. I can't do the I.V. until Emma has changed into this gown. Cover her with this warm blanket when she is changed. I will be right outside the door. Just flip this switch when she is ready."

"Give me ten seconds and she will be ready." The nurse nodded and pulled the curtain closed. Regina waved her hands. Emma's clothes were replaced with the hospital gown. "We're ready." Regina called out.

The Nurse returned. "Not even ten seconds, your Majesty. You cheated and used magic." She hooked a bag of fluid to the I.V pole and connected the fluid to the tube still in Emma's arm. She injected medicine into the second port.

Regina shrugged. "It has it's uses. Besides desperate times call for desperate measures."

She patted Emma's hand. "That should help ease the pain dear."

"Thank you Mrs. Davis."

She left the room leaving Regina rubbing Emma's back.
I am sorry for the lack of update last week. I went away for a birthday weekend with friends.

CHAPTER 31

Emma felt the pain lessen as the pain medications worked their way into her body. She slowly relaxed from the cramped rigid fetal position she was in. She found it easier to breathe as the pain continued to recede.

"Gina?" She whispered and held out her hand.

Regina clasped Emma's hand. "I am right here sweetheart."

"Doesn't hurt as much any more."

"That is the pain medicine working." Regina said as her tears flowed down her cheeks.

"The baby?"

"Doctor Chrystal will be in shortly. She will be able to tell us she is fine."

"What if she isn't fine?"

"How about we leave the what ifs for another time like after we talk to the doctor. I think it is best to concentrate on being positive."

"You are spending too much time with mom." Regina gave her a small smile and shrugged.

The door opened. Doctor Chrystal entered with the nurse. She was still in her scrubs from the delivery room, and held Emma's chart. "Did not expect to see you so soon Emma. You are experiencing some pain?"

"That is an understatement Doctor." Regina said.

"On a scale of one to ten with ten being the worst, what was your pain level earlier."

"Fifteen." Emma responded.

"I see. What is it now?"

"Five maybe six."

"Good the pain meds are working. Blood pressure is also coming down. It was dangerously high when you arrived. It is still high but out of dangerous territory. While it is not great, it's better. What were you doing when the pain started?"

"We were talking."

"Emmal" Regina said, "Be truthful. We were having a difference of opinion that could have quickly fallen into an argument."

"Is that right, Emma?"
"Yeah it is."

"So you were stressed out, angry?"

"I guess. We have a lot going on right now that..."

"Stop right there, Emma. You have to stop. Your blood pressure when you came in was two fourteen over one sixty. That may have been caused by the stress and pain. But you could have had a stroke, killing both you and your baby. Is that what you want?"

"Of course not."

"I have no idea what caused that level of pain that isn't labor. I would like to do a few tests and another scan to check on the baby. Okay?"

"Okay."

"You know the drill lay on your back and get ready for the cold gel."

Emma, with Regina's help, turned on the narrow table while Doctor Chrystal moved the machine closer. She lifted Emma's gown and squirted a liberal amount of the gel on her stomach. Emma jumped, and the baby gave a kick.

"I don't think she likes that stuff any more than I do." Emma said.

The baby's heart beat filled the small room as the doctor moved the wand over Emma's stomach. "Heart beat is strong and steady. She is a little lower than the last time."

"What does that mean?" Regina asked.

"It doesn't mean anything bad. All babies will drop lower as the birth nears. She hasn't turned into position yet, so she is not ready to be born. We can definitely rule out labor as the cause of your pain."

"That is good right?"

"Yes that is a good thing. Emma I would like you to stay over night so that I can run a few more tests."

"Not going to happen, Doc." Emma said.

"Em-ma" Regina sighed.

"Gina I am the only Sheriff right now. I cannot take time off right now."

"Then delegate. I can promote a deputy to acting Sheriff for now. Who do you recommend? Who is more capable that the others? Who do you trust the most?"

"Gina?"

"You life and the baby's are more important than the damn job." Regina snapped.

"Not today. Getting the Shades, especially Cora and Pan need to come first." Emma snapped back. As soon as the words were out, she doubled over in pain again. "Damn."

The alarm on the monitor sounded as Emma's blood pressure spiked.
"Okay stop." Doctor Chrystal ordered. "Is this what happened before?"

"Yeah." Emma gasped as she clutched her middle.

Regina held as much of Emma as she could. "Damn it. Did our disagreement cause this pain?" Regina asked.

"I believe it is." The doctor answered. She pulled up a stool and sat down. "Look you two have breached the realms of magical possibilities. Things that might never been done before and probably will not happen again. Add in that blood bond you spoke about on our last visit. I think the baby does not like the fact that you were arguing."

"Why is Emma the only one experiencing that pain? Why not both of us?"

"Like I said, I believe it is a combination of that bond and the pregnancy. Right now you two have to make peace with each other, kiss and make up, or whatever, but you need to do it. Or this will keep happening."

"Emma, she is right. We have to stop arguing about this."

"Yeah. Gina, I think Mulan is the best choice for acting Sheriff"

"Good choice. I will call her as soon as you are admitted for observation."

"I didn't agree to that."

"But you will right?"

"One night only. But if the tests don't show anything I can leave tonight."

"We'll see. Have a stretcher brought in and transfer Emma to a patient room," Doctor Chrystal said. The Nurse left. "I will get the admission papers signed and order those tests."

When the doctor left Regina kissed Emma's head. "Thank you sweetheart. I will be right by your side. All night if needed. I will call the family as soon as your are settled into a room."

"Don't let them go out. It isn't safe."

"I will tell them to stay put. Try not to worry. How is the pain?"

"Still there but bearable."

--------------------------

Xena went from bed to bed assisting the staff as the Emergency Room was still filled with patients. Her main focus was finding the small punctures from the darts and administering the antidote to the flower serum. The number of arrivals slowed down as the day progressed. By late afternoon the last of the fallen had been treated and sent to a room. The staff was finally able to stop and catch their breaths. Xena pulled the list from her pocket. Over half of the Shades had been recaptured in the first few hours. There was still a long way to go. Especially with the two most dangerous Shades still out there. Cora and Pan were still free. By now they had gone into hiding. That will make their job harder.

She looked across the now empty Emergency Room, to see Gabrielle standing alone. Xena frowned and went to her side. "What are you doing here? Where is Emma? You were supposed to stay by her side. You know how dangerous it is for her."
"Xena if you will stop scolding me like a naughty child I will tell you." Gabrielle snapped. "Emma is upstairs in Maternity. She..."

"Tell me on the way." Xena said and took Gabrielle's arm to lead her to the elevators.

"Emma was angry and stormed off." Gabrielle explained as the doors closed. When they reopened she was still talking, "They were arguing and she doubled over in pain. The doctor is keeping her for observation.

"I imagine she is not very happy about that. There is no question that she is one of yours." Xena said with a laugh.

"Oh you are going to pay for that comment Warrior Princess."

"Looking forward to your trying."

They walked down the hall to see Regina standing outside of a room talking to Mulan. Ruby stood by the door.

"Emma trusts you to fill in as acting Sheriff."

"Of course Regina. How long will Emma be out?"

"We don't know yet. It could be until after the baby is born."

"What about David?"

"He is down too and we have no idea how long that will be."

"I will step in for as long as you need me to."

"Thank you Mulan."

"What about the hunting parties?"

"Hunting parties?"

"That is what everyone is calling the people who are looking for the Shades. Do I go out with my assigned group or stay at the station?"

"Is the station covered?"

"Yes."

"Then go out with your group. Emma did not spend her whole day in the station. So yo don't have to either."

"I will keep in touch." Mulan said and left. Xena took her place.

"How is Emma?"

"Better, the pain meds are working and she is sleeping right now."

"Gabrielle filled me in on what happened. The doctor is certain it isn't labor?"

"That is what she said. How goes the battle?"
"It has slowed down. The hunters managed to recapture over half in the first few hours. Now things have slowed."

"Meaning the rest have gone into hiding."

"I am afraid so. That will make it harder, but we will not stop until they are all recaptured."

"Cora and Pan?"

"No, they are still out there." Ruby answered.

"Damn it."

"I went to Delores' house myself." Ruby said. "Her car was gone as well as her clothes and from the looks of her kitchen cabinets, so is a lot of food. From the looks of the place, she left in a hurry."

"She has gone into hiding."

"Regina there is more. I picked up on Pan's scent while I was there."

"So they are together." Gabrielle said.

"That is a safe bet."

"Where could they hide?"

"They could be anywhere. There are a great many hiding spots in town." Regina said.

"What about Gold's cabin." Ruby asked.

"That place is protected. Unless you are a blood relative or actually have been there, you can not find the place. Let along get through the protective barrier." Regina said.

"Regina you have been there. You can lead us to the cabin."

"There are two problems with that." She responded as she look at the still sleeping Emma. "One is that I will not leave Emma's side as long as she is here. Secondly even if Emma was not here, I still could not get through the barrier."

"It doesn't have to be today, Regina." Gabrielle said.

"Gold put that spell on the cabin when he was still the Dark One. With his powers gone, wouldn't that break the spell?" Ruby asked.

"Not necessarily. As the Dark One, Gold had a great deal of power. He could have used several different spells for protection. Finding the right spell or combination of spells will be an insurmountable task."

"We could ask him. He had no love for Pan and will not want him to return to human form." Ruby argued.

"Good luck with that." Regina said.

"He has changed a lot since he lost his powers and the birth of his son. He may be very cooperative. Let's face it Regina, after what he did to Pan in the Underworld, he will not want his
father back in human form with all his powers intact."

"You do not need my permission to talk to him. Go talk to him." Regina said. "Ruby will take you."

"No I won't." Ruby said. "I am not leaving here until my replacement arrives. Emma is my friend. You both are. So I am not leaving you without a guard while you are here. There will be a Guardian on this room at all times."

"Ruby that is not necessary."

"Regina listen. You may be the Mayor, but with both Emma and David out of commission, I discussed this with Mulan. As acting Sheriff, she agrees with me. We out voted you two to one."

"Regina, Ruby is right. What harm would it do to have a first line of defense in the event one or more of those idiots showed up here?"

"Okay. Thank you for helping me protect her and our child." Regina returned to the room and sat by Emma's bed. She held Emma's hand through the bed rail. Emma stirred.

"Gina?"

"I am right here sweetheart. How are you feeling?"

"Tired, but it doesn't hurt anymore."

"That is the medicine they are giving you. Go back to sleep."

"Kay. Gina?"

"Yes."

"Stay with me."

"Always my darling."

"Love you."

"I love you back."

Ruby smiled as she overheard their talk.

---------------------------------

The car pulled up to the bridge and stopped. The road that was supposed to lead to the cabin only led them to a large empty field. She turned to her companion.

"Is this some sort of joke, Pan? Where is this supposed refuge?"

He pulled the vial from his pocket and held it up. "I told you it was protected."

"What is that?"

"Our way in. This is some of my dear son's blood."

"How did you manage to get his blood. I thought you couldn't get close to him."

"Do you want to sit here and talk or go through the barrier?"
"Do what you have to do, but hurry before someone stumbles onto the car."

Pan left the car and walked to the far end of the bridge where he opened the vial and through it onto the barrier. Cora could see the well built large cabin. Pan motioned for her to drive over the bridge. Once inside the barrier, the cabin and car were hidden from view. The car stopped near the porch. Cora looked at the cabin. "If the inside is as well made as the outside we shall be quite comfortable here." She left the car and walked to the front door. She tried the door expecting to find it lock and was surprised when it readily opened. "Not locking you doors was not a very smart move Rumple."

"No one can find this place Cora." Pan said.

"True. Bring in the bags, Pan, while I look around." Cora ordered.

"I am not your servant Cora."

"I do not like repeating myself Pan. Bring in the bags." She ordered again as she looked around the inside of the cabin, leaving Pan standing just inside the door. Cora walked into the living room and down a hall, to disappear into one of the bedrooms. When she returned, Pan was still standing where she had left him. "What are you doing just standing there? Get the damn bags. You can put mine in the Master Bedroom."

"Get your own damn bags, Cora." Pan yelled.

"Then bring in some firewood for all the fireplaces. It is chilly in here."

"That is what central heating is for." Pan argued. "Smoke will give away the general location of the cabin. No fires."

"Fine, no fires." Cora conceded. "Will you at least help me bring in the suitcases and boxes of food?"

"Okay, but you are doing the cooking."

Belle left the Library for the day, picked up Gideon from Ashley's Day Care and walked to the store where she would meet Rumple. They would wait until he closed the store before they headed to Granny's for supper, then go home for the night.

"Rumple?" Belle called out when the tinkling bell did not bring him from the back room of the store. She started towards the curtain that separated the front of the store from the cluttered back room. She found him laying unconscious behind the counter. There was a large pool of blood by his ear and hand. She felt for a pulse before reaching for the phone to call for help.
"Is papa sleeping?" The young boy asked.

"No sweetheart, he is hurt. You stay right here while I call for help. Okay?"

"Okay mama."

Belle walked to the front of the counter and picked up the phone. She dialed nine one one. "This is Belle Gold. I need an ambulance sent to Mr. Gold's shop. He is unconscious and has a deep cut on his head and hand."

"Not another one." Belle heard the man say. "We will be there shortly ma'am."

"Thank you." Belle said. She ended that call and quickly dialed another.

"Sheriff's station, Deputy, sorry acting Sheriff Mulan speaking. How can I help you?"

"Mulan this is Belle. I am at the shop, Rumple has been attacked."

"Try not to touch anything, Belle. We will be right there."

In less that two minutes, Mulan and a Deputy hurried into the shop. Belle picked Gideon up to keep him out of the way. Mulan put on a pair of rubber gloves before she went behind the counter. She checked for a pulse. Finding a slow steady beat under her fingers, she stood up and looked around the front room of the shop.

"I called for an ambulance." Belle offered.

"Good." Mulan responded still looking around the shop. She walked a few steps and bent to look at an object on the floor. Taking the camera from the deputy she took several pictures of it. She handed the camera back to the Deputy. "Take pictures of everything in this room." Mulan said, as she bent to pick up the object that she placed in an evidence bag. Blood and hair clung to the corner. "What is this?" She asked Belle.

"It is a paper weight. Usually it is on the counter by the register."

The E.M.Ts came into the shop pushing the stretcher in front of them. They went to Gold's side.

"As soon as they leave, fingerprint everything."

"Everything?" He looked around the room. "That will take days if not weeks."

"Belle do you notice anything out of place?"

Belle looked around slowly. "Other than the paper weight? No."

"You can start with the counter and everything behind it. If we need more than we can increase the search area." Mulan ordered.

Within minutes they lifted Gold onto the stretcher and out to the waiting ambulance. "We are taking him to the hospital, Sheriff. He has a deep cut on his hand and another on his head. We
bandaged both. His vitals are low but stable."

"Thank you." She pulled Belle and Gideon behind the side counter. "Belle I need both you and Gideon to come to the station to get fingerprinted."

"You don't think we had anything to do with this?"

"Of course not. We expect your fingerprints to be in the store, this will enable us to exclude you both. I do however have to ask you a few questions."

"Okay."

"I am sorry, but where were you this afternoon?"

"It was my Saturday to work at the Library. I opened it at ten this morning, and was there until four. Diana was there with me all day. I talked to several people during the day. After closing I went to pick up Gideon from Ashley's Day Care. We talked for a few minutes. Then drove here. When I work on Saturdays, we go to dinner at Granny's before heading home for the night."

"I apologize again for having to put you through this, Belle."

"I understand, Mulan. The door was unlocked when we arrived. I called for Rumple when he didn't come out of the back when the bell above the door rang. I found him laying on the floor, checked for a pulse and called for an ambulance then called you."

Mulan scanned the room again and noticed blinking lights high on the walls around the shop. "Do you have security cameras here?"

"Yes, Rumple had them installed after he lost his powers and we had several break ins."

"I will need to see the video footage."

"It goes directly into the computer. I can show you where it is." Mulan followed Belle to the small office where the computer was set up.

"Could you send this to the Sheriff's Station?"

"Of course" Belle typed in the request and sent the file off. "Done."

"Good. I will drive you and Gideon to the Hospital."

"Thank you. Mulan, please don't take this the wrong way, but why are you acting Sheriff? Where is Emma?"

"I will explain everything on the way to the Hospital."

Mulan dropped Belle and Gideon at the Emergency Room. Rumple had been taken into a treatment room as his injuries were different from the patients they had treated all day. Belle was directed to the waiting area after being told that the doctor was with her husband.

"I will need his clothes to check for evidence and a report on all his injuries."

"I can get you the clothes. As for the report, I will need Mrs. Gold's permission to give out that information. After I get her permission, I will give you whatever information you need."

"Thank you." Mulan said and left the desk. She returned to Belle's side. "Belle they need your
permission to give me a report on Gold's injuries."
"I will make sure you get the information."
"Will you be all right here for a few minutes? I need to talk to Regina and see how Emma is doing."
"We will be fine."
Mulan left the emergency area and went to the elevator getting off on the fourth floor. Ruby remain outside Emma's door.
"How is Emma?"
"The doctor is in there right now." She answered. "How goes the hunt?"
"It has slowed down. The remaining Shades have gone into hiding making it harder to find them. We have a deadline to find them all, but don't exactly what that deadline is."
Mulan nodded. "They don't need the extra stress and worry about Cora or Pan on top of everything else."
"True. And add to that, Mr. Gold was attacked in his shop earlier."
"Gold? He wasn't on the list."
"I think the attack was for something else entirely."
"Was it robbery?"
"I don't think so. As soon as she can, Belle will check, but she doesn't think anything was taken. She is downstairs now."
----------------------
"When can I get out of here doc? The pain is gone." Emma said.
"Your blood pressure is still elevated. I would still like you to stay overnight to be sure."
"We made that decision earlier, sweetheart. You agreed to stay."
"Yeah that was when I was feeling like crap. You caught me at a weak moment. I feel much better now."
Dr. Chrystal what is your opinion? Is Emma well enough to go home?"
"Personally? Yes, she is well enough. Professionally, no. Emma your blood pressure is still a problem. It is coming down and I believe it is pregnancy related. I would like to run a few more tests to be certain."
"Then I can go home and get back to work?"
"Home yes, work is another matter."
"What sort of tests?" Regina asked.
"What do you mean that work is another matter?" Emma asked.
"I would like to do a few more blood tests, a more detailed ultrasound, a fetal M.R.I, possible check the amniotic fluid, keep you on a fetal monitor."

"Wait is there something wrong with the baby?"

"No this is just a precaution. She shows no signs of being in distress. She is active"

"Say I stay here until you run all your tests, and they don't show you anything, what about returning to work?"

"That is a discussion for after I get all the results back."

"I don't like the sound of that at all."

"You will probably hate it." Doctor Chrystal said. "Can I put the orders in for those tests?"

"Yes please, Doctor." Regina said and looked at Emma daring her to object. Emma nodded. She left the room allowing Mulan to walk in."

"Mulan what brings you back?" Emma asked.

"Things have slowed down as we expected. Only five shades have been recaptured during the afternoon."

"We expected that to happen."

"What we didn't expect was that Gold was attacked in his store earlier. He is downstairs right now."

Emma sat up straighter in bed. "Did someone mistake him for a Shade? His name wasn't on the list. How badly was he hurt?"

"He is unconscious, has deep cuts on his hand and head."

"I know he is not the most popular person in town, but who would attack him in his own shop? Did the video show who did it?" Emma asked. "I helped Gold pick out the security system for the store."

"I am waiting for the doctor's report."

"Keep me posted."

"Emma," Regina sighed. "Mulan is the acting Sheriff. Let her do her job."

"I am. I just want to offer her, um guidance and support."

"Sure sweetheart. We will be here for a few more hours at least, if you have any questions, Mulan."

Mulan nodded and left the room.

----------------------------------

Snow stormed around the house, angry that she was not supposed to leave. Worried about David and Emma, but not able to be at their sides drove her crazy. Zelena watched her rave and pace while Henry kept the children occupied so that her crazed ramblings did not scare them. He put a movie on to keep their attention and motioned for Zelena to come into the dining room.
"Aunt Zelena, maybe we should let her go see Grandpa and mom."

"You mothers said the streets aren't safe."

"Yeah, but couldn't you just zap her to the hospital, then mom could zap her back?"

"I would have to poof us both there. But otherwise that will work, cuz I have to tell you Henry I am just about knock her out."

"I would help you do that. I will watch the kids."

"I don't think your mothers would like leaving you unprotected."

"We aren't. There is a protection spell around the house. No one but family can get in. We will be safe. Besides if anyone does manage to get through the barrier, all I have to do is call and you would be back here in a heat beat. There is also a loaded cross bow in the closet that I know how to use."

"I will go tell Snow."

----------------------

Zelena would have known which room Emma was in even without the Guardian standing by the door. She could hear her complaints from several doors down.

"It would be nice if you left some blood in there ya know. How the Hell can I leave if you take all my blood?"

"I am sorry Emma, but Doctor Chrystal has ordered several blood tests that need their own vials. Just a couple more than you go down for the ultrasound and fetal M.R.I soon."

"Damn I am so sick of all these tests."

"The doctor wants as clear a picture of what is going on as possible."

"We know what is going on. I am pregnant."

"You must be feeling better because I can hear you complaining down the hall." Zelena said walking into the room, as the Nurse finished up and left.

"What are you doing here, Zelena? You know the streets aren't safe."

"Relax sis. I popped Snow and my self here."

"You brought mom here?"

"It was either that or have your house demolished. With both her husband and daughter in the hospital she was a raving mad woman. We decided to get her out of the house before she traumatized the kids."

"We?" Emma asked.

"Henry came up with the idea and I agreed with him. He even volunteered to babysit."

"Emma Swan?" The nurse asked walking into the room.

"Uh yeah. I haven't changed or switched bodies since you were in here a few minutes ago to take
half my blood."

"We have to ask every time. I am here to take you for the ultrasound and M.R.I." She said pushing the stretcher into the room."

"I can walk."

"Doctor's orders. Sorry."

"Damn, you take half my blood, and I have a tube in my arm and up my who haw, now I can't even walk to the end of the hall." Emma complained.

"The reason for that is that you will be sedated for these tests and will not be in any condition to walk back. Now stop giving my Nurses a hard time, because I really like them, and get on the stretcher." The Doctor ordered as she walked into the room.

Emma moved onto the stretcher without further argument.

"How long will the tests take?" Regina asked.

"At least an hour. You can wait here as there is no waiting area in that section. I know you would rather be with Emma, but believe me you will be more comfortable here. She will not be alone at any time."

"Okay. Doctor, take care of her please."

"She is my top priority, Regina."

Regina leaned over and kissed Emma. "I love you and will be right here when you return. Try to behave yourself."

"Love you back babe and not giving any promises on behaving."

The Nurse raised the sides of the stretcher and pushed it out the door. Regina motioned with her head to the Guardian who nodded once and followed the stretcher.

---------------------------

Mulan sat behind the desk as she watched the video of the inside of the store. She fast forwarded it through several hours of footage until she reached the fifth hour of business. The man walked in. Mulan figured it was just another customer. She leaned in the chair and sipped her coffee. The man pointed to something behind the counter. When Gold turned to retrieve the item, the man picked up the paper weight and struck Gold behind his ear, dropping him to the floor. He pulled a knife and several bottles from his pocket. Mulan watched him slice Gold's hand and fill the bottles with his blood. The filled bottles were placed back into his pockets and he left the store. Mulan dialed the phone.

"Regina Mills."

"Regina, it's Mulan. Why would someone need Gold's blood?"

"There are several spells that use blood, but the main one is to get through a barrier or place that is protected by blood magic."

"Blood magic?"

"That is where an ordinary object can be enchanted that would be nothing special in everyone's
hands except someone who is related by blood. Or used to lock a door or erect a barrier that only blood relatives could get through."

"Neal did tell me that years ago."

"Mulan, they are hiding at Gold's cabin."

"Do you know where it is?"

"I do, but I would not be able to open the barrier. We need a blood relative of Gold's or have some of his blood to get through."

"How much do you need?"

"Not much at all."

"I know where to get it."

"Please don't say you are going to hurt Gold. We may have a contentious relationship, but I don't want him or his family hurt again."

"I won't Regina. There was a small pool of blood at the shop. I will gather that."

"That will work."

"I will keep you posted."

"Thank you Mulan. I will tell Emma when she returns from her tests."
Chapter 33

CHAPTER 33

Regina stood by the window and watched the lights go on in the houses as people headed home from their jobs. Zelena sat in the chair by the bed.

"So sis, where is Emma's bodyguard?" Zelena asked.

"Please don't call her that, especially around Emma. That is what started this whole thing today." Regina answered turning away from the window. "Her name is Gabrielle."

"I know her name. Where is she?"

"She is close by. Xena went back down to the Emergency Room before she and Nova headed back out."

"Any idea how many Shades were captured today?"

"Sixty I think. Emma has a copy of the list in her jacket pocket."

"It's not important sis. Look Regina I know you are worried. I can see it on your face."

"I am very worried." Regina admitted. "What if the test show that there is something wrong with Emma or the baby or heaven forbid, both of them." Regina's voice cracked. "I can't lose either of them. I can't."

Zelena went to Regina and put her arms around her younger sister, holding Regina as she cried.

------------------

Xena and Nova crept silently through the forest as they followed a group of men that hurried further away from the town. They had been following the group for close to an hour. Xena knew she could take the four without any problem. After all there were only four and not like an army of hardened soldiers. But she decided to follow them instead, hoping they would lead her to whatever hiding spot they had. The men were easy to follow even from a distance as they laughed and joked loudly. Their flashlights cut through the gloom of twilight.

They had captured over sixty in the first hours but still had a long way to go. Pan and Cora were still among those who were free. She could see the half moon through the breaks in the trees as it rose in the ever darkening sky. The trees thinned and they could make out a clearing in the distance. A wide wooden bridge crossed the river that cut through the forest. She watched the group stop on the far side of the bridge. They hid behind the large trunk of an old growth tree and watched one of the group throw a liquid in the air. Seconds later the men disappeared.

"There be a magical barrier by the bridge." Nova said.

"I think your're right. We need to get back to the hospital and talk to Regina."

Nova held out her and. Xena took it and they disappeared.

------------------

Cora was in the bedroom pulling clothes out of the suitcases and either refolding them or hanging them in the closet. She and Pan had barely spoken since they arrived at the cabin. They sat at
opposite ends of the table as they ate dinner in silence. Through the closed bedroom door she heard loud banging. Cora poked her head out into the hall to see Pan opening the door to admit several men.

"What the Hell is going on Pan?" She demanded.

"Just a little insurance, Cora."

"A word, Pan."

"Make yourselves comfortable. I'll be right back. There is food in the kitchen and liquor in the cabinet." He told them before he joined Cora.

"What is the meaning of this?" Cora hissed. "This was supposed to be just we two."

"Relax yourself, Cora. Consider them a safety net."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"On the off chance the heroes find our little hiding spot and get through the barrier, they will be the diversion so that we can get away."

"Do they know that?"

"What do you take me for a fool? Of course they don't know."

"Can we expect more?"

"Yeah if they haven't been captured."

"How much canon fodder do you need? Or is there another reason?"

"What that we don't trust each other? That is true. They are my insurance that you don't try to turn on me. So that we will be the last two standing when that baby is born."

"Fine, but they will have to supply their own food and do their own laundry. I am not their maid or your's. Oh and Pan, make sure they bathe. I am not about to live with a bunch of dirty smelly men."

Pan laughed at her and walked away.

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Emma was groggy when she was returned to her room. She was moved from the stretcher to her bad. The wires and tubes were straightened. The Nurse finished and left the room saying, "The doctor will be in shortly to talk to you."

Regina moved to Emma's side. She kissed the blonde curls and held Emma's hand. "Hi sweetheart. How are you feeling?"

"Hi babe. I feel good. They really use some good shit here."

"Still feeling the effects of the sedative they gave you little sister?" Zelena joked.

"Oh yeah." She smiled, closing one eye. "I love your eyes Gina?"

"What?"
"I love your eyes. I really fucking love your eyes. I mean I love every part of you, but your eyes are super great. They are like to pools of melted dark chocolate. The really dark kind that we dipped those strawberries in that night in Boston. Do you remember that night? How we got creative with the left over chocolate when the strawberries were gone. Then how adventurous we got in the hot tub."

"Emma." Regina squeaked her face turning red. Zelena laughed.

"Creative and adventurous? I need to hear more."

"That is not going to happen, Zelena."

"Relax sis." Zelena said with another laugh.

Regina leaned close to Emma. "Sweetheart, while we are waiting for the doctor, you should relax and let the drugs leave your body."

Emma nodded, took their clasped hands, tucked them under her chin and let the sedation take her back under.

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Xena stood outside Emma's room and motioned for Regina. She tried to remove her hand from Emma's grip but couldn't. Regina motioned for Xena to come in.

"Is there a problem?"

"Yeah. Nova and I were following a group of men in the forest. They crossed a bridge and one of them threw something and they disappeared. Nova said they went through a magical barrier."

"Was it a liquid?"

"Yeah and from where we were standing it was red. I am not one hundred percent sure are it was getting dark."

"It was blood. Were you heading south towards the tow line?"

"Yeah."

"Was the bridge wooden?" Xena nodded. "They are at Gold's cabin. That liquid was Gold's blood. That is the only way to get through the barrier without knowing the exact combination of spells used. It is called blood magic."

"How did they get his blood?"

"He was attacked in his shop earlier and has been admitted for observation with head and hand injuries. Last I heard her was still unconscious."

"How is Emma?"

"She is better. They sedated her for one of the tests. We are waiting for the doctor to give us the results."

"Then she is out of this battle. We will not take any chances with her or the baby."

"I was hoping you would come to that conclusion and not expect her to do more than she is able. Emma puts herself at risk too many times for this town. I will not allow it to continue."
"Good. Regina, Gabrielle and I can stick around after the Shades are recaptured. We can train the citizens to fight their own battles."

"You don't have to go back with Autolycus?"

"No our situation is different. We can come and go as we please. Which is a good thing as Gabrielle wants to stay here until the baby is born."

"Are things that boring in The Fields?" Emma asked groggily.

"Hey sweetheart. How are you feeling?"

"Not as tired, hungry and thirsty."

"That's good." Zelena filled a cup with water that she handed to Regina. "Here take small sips."

"Can we go home now?"

"We have to wait for the Doctor first."

"Fine, but I want a grilled cheese, onion rings and an extra thick strawberry milkshake while we wait."

"I will get them for you."

"From Granny's not the cafeteria?"

"I would never subject you to the hospital cafeteria food." She disappeared.

"Tell me what is going on." Emma said as she continued to sip the water. "Did something happen?"

"We know were several Shades are hiding." Xena said.

"Then what the fuck are you doing here? Go get them." Emma snapped.

"Sweetheart take it easy. We think they are at Gold's cabin. You know what sort of protections are around that place."

"You need blood magic to get through. So go tell Gold you needs some of his blood."

"Emma he was attacked today. Mulan is collecting blood from his shop."

"Are Cora and Pan there?"

"We think so."

"Then we need to get there. Let's go get them."

"Whoa tiger. You will not be going anywhere." Xena said with authority.

"Bull shit. You are not going to tell me what I can do. Gina, would you get my clothes."

"Wait Emma. The Doctor hasn't discharged you yet. Plus you have tubes going into and out of you. They need to remove them. Besides Zelena went to get your food from Granny's."

"Okay I will wait for the doctor, but she had better hurry up."
"Is this fast enough for you Emma?" Doctor Chrystal asked from the doorway as Zelena reappeared with Emma's food.

"Food is here." She announced.

"Great I am starved." Emma took the large cup and took several swallows before she opened the bag. "Okay doc, what's the verdict? Can I go home?"

"The verdict is that the pains you felt were definitely not labor pains."

"Is the baby all right?" Regina asked.

"She gives all the appearances of being all right."

"I spoke to Blue earlier. She said that those pains were a combination of our bond and the baby. Because we were arguing, she showed her displeasure. You got hit with a double whammy."

"So we don't argue until after she is born. I am definitely not is labor?"

"You are not."

"Then I can go home?"

"Yes you can go home."

"Great, can you get all these tubes out of me. We have a lot of work to do."

"Hold on Emma. I said you can go home. I did not say you could return to work. While everything looks good, with your rapidly advancing pregnancy, you could deliver at anytime. From the baby's size and development, i would say you are in your late eighth month."

"Holy shit. Are you sure?"

"Positive. Emma if I were to allow you to return to work, it would be desk duty only."

"Riding in a patrol car is the same thing as desk duty?"

"No it is not." Regina answered. "We are in the middle of a crises. You are in no condition to be chasing anyone on foot or in a patrol car. That is exactly what you would do."

"So what am I supposed to until she decides to make an appearance."

"We could use the time to set up the nursery. We can't leave it to your mother to do. She would make it all cutsy unicorns and rainbows and cute little forest animals."

Zelena made gagging noises which made Emma laugh.

"There are a couple more items we need to discuss before I discharge you."

"Lay them on me doc."

"Your blood pressure is still borderline high. How much caffeine do you consume on a daily basis?"

"I never really counted. Maybe four or five coffees."

"Emma" Regina interrupted. "It is more like nine or ten, Doctor."
"That stops now. You are allowed one cup of coffee a day until the baby is born. That includes coffee tea, soda chocolate. Those all contain a lot of caffeine. Herbal teas and decaf drinks are okay in moderation."

"It is only for a short time so I guess I can do that."

"There is more. No salt or greasy foods like those onion rings you are devouring. The milkshake is fine, but not the grilled cheese or onion rings or fries. I will not stop you from finishing those, but no more for the next few weeks. You can eat all the fresh fruits and vegetables, grilled chicken and fish you want. Take it easy on the sugar content."

"We can do that right Em?" Regina asked. "Emma?"

"Do these new rules cover bear claws?"

"How many do you eat in a day?"

"One maybe two if the goober wants a snack."

"They have absolutely no nutritional value, but as long as you use moderation as the key, I will allow two a week."

"So I can go home now?"

"She definitely has a one track mind." Zelena said.

"Even though I would still like you to stay for observation, there seems to be no after effects of that pain. All your tests are within normal parameters. There is no medical reason to keep you here."

"Plus it is against the law to hold me against my will."

"That too. I will sign your discharge papers and have the Nurse disconnect you from the machines. Emma I meant what I said about no working except for desk duty. Use tomorrow as a rest day and you can return to work on Monday for a few hours. Work your way up to a full shift. I will see you on Wednesday for your regular appointment if you don't go into labor before then."

"Can that happen?"

"It could."

"I will go see if Snow is ready to go home." Zelena said.

"Mom is here?"

"I brought her."

"Nice." Emma said sarcastically. Regina looked at her, but waited until they were alone.

"Are you mad at Snow?"

"You could say that."

"Why?"

"She has been here, for a couple hours and has not made an appearance."
"Sweetheart, she did come here twice. The first time you were down having the tests and the second you were sleeping. Where is all this anger coming from?"

"I just want to go home Gina."

"We will sweetheart."

Emma pushed the table and the remnants of her meal away. The Nurse entered carrying bandages and supplies she would need. She started with the I.V. Shutting off the fluids, she cut off several pieces of tape and gauze before she removed the needle from Emma's hand. Holding pressure to the puncture, she taped the pad in place.

Cora lay in the darkness as she tried to drown out the sounds of the drunks in the living room. In all thirty people entered the protected area. They found Gold's wine cellar after emptying the liquor cabinet. She hoped they would all soon pass out so that she could finish taking care of the lot of them. Drugs that she put in the stew they consumed was now mixed with copious amounts of alcohol should work shortly. the bags she made a show of emptying earlier were now repacked and waiting by the door so that she could escape.

The noise level decreased and she smiled. "Soon." She said in the darkness. Her original plan was to drug Pan and then drag his unconscious body past the protective barrier for the heroes to find. She could not do that for all of them. She poured a whole bottle of pills into the stew she made them earlier. She smiled again as her plan fell into place. With the sudden absence of sound from the living room, she got out of bed and and tip toed into the hall where she found all the guests passed out. The first chore was to bring the car to the back door where she carried her bags and placed them into the trunk. She filled several bags with food that she transferred into the car. Cora turned off the furnace, blew out all the pilots on the burners and in the oven before she turned on all the jets. Opening the oven door so that the gas filled the room. She grabbed her coat and purse before leaving the cabin.
CHAPTER 34

Emma stumbled down the stairs the next morning in her long sleeved tee shirt and cartoon boxers, rubbing sleep from her eyes. Splashing water on her face did little to wake her up as she headed for her morning jolt of caffeine. The low buzz of voices from the dining room as she walked into the kitchen, but ignored it as she went directly to the coffee maker.

She pulled the largest cup she could find one that held at least three regular sized cups. She filled it to within a quarter inch of the top. Blowing across the hot liquid, Emma prepared to take her first sip. She heard a throat clearing behind her and turned to see Regina standing with her arms folded, one foot tapping and an eyebrow reaching her hair line.

"Morning babe. You don't look happy. Is something wrong?" Emma asked innocently.

"Wrong?" Regina answered softly. Her anger evident in how she said that one word. She walked slowly towards Emma. "Emma Swan Mills, what exactly do you think you are doing?"

"I am having the one cup of real coffee that I am allowed."

"One? Emma that cup is three times the size of a regular cup. That makes it three cups of coffee. You are allowed one cup and not a super sized one."

"Honestly Gina the Doctor did not specify what size cup I could have."

"You might want to rethink that dear." Regina took the cup from Emma's hands and poured a third of the dark liquid into a regular sized cup. She handed the cup back to Emma. "There you go. One cup equals eight ounces." With a wave of hands, Emma's boxers were replaced with sweat pants that covered her shapely legs.

"What did you do that for?"

"There are several people in the dining room that I would rather not have them see what is for my eyes only."

"Oh getting possessive Your Majesty?"

"You bet you sweet ass I am. Now behave yourself and come into the dining room." Regina ordered as she filled a carafe with coffee and started another pot before she went back into the dining room.

Most of the chairs around the long table were filled with Guardians, Dwarves, Fairies. Xena and Gabrielle were there as well as Snow, and Zelena. Regina walked around the table and refilled their cups. Leroy changed seats to allow Emma to sit next to Regina at the head of the table.

A large selection of food sat on the sideboard. Regina fixed Emma a plate with scrambled eggs, ham, fruit and toast that she set in front of the younger woman.

"Thanks, babe. Where did all this food come from?"

"Granny sent it over this morning when she learned about this meeting."

"When was this planned? Did I know about this?"
"No dear, we set it up after you fell asleep last night. Now eat." Regina said as she sat down.

"What's going on?" Emma asked as she nibbled a piece of fruit.

"Yesterday, several groups were tracked to the forest clearing where they disappeared."

"They are at Gold's cabin?"

"Yeah. We figured at least thirty are there including Pan and Cora." Xena said.

"If you know where they are, why the Hell are we sitting here instead of going after them?" Emma demanded. Regina placed a restraining hand on Emma's arm.

"Easy there Tiger. We will be going after them. If we go in daylight they will see us coming." Xena said.

"Okay so what is the plan?" Emma asked. Xena looked at Regina for permission which was granted with a nod.

"We are meeting tonight at midnight and go through the barrier. We will surround the cabin. They will not be expecting us and we will have the element of surprise on our side. We pull this off and we recapture thirty more Shades including the last two ring leaders."

"All right. I am in and ready."

"Absolutely not." Xena and Snow said together loudly.

Regina held Emma's hand and whispered into her ear. "Sweetheart please, you were in the hospital just yesterday. Don't take that chance. I can't lose you both. Please?"

"Will you be going? Cuz if you are I will be at your side. We are a team."

"No, I will not be going. I showed Mulan and Ruby how to find the road to the cabin." Regina explained. "I cannot forbid you from putting yourself in harm’s way and then turn around and do the same thing.

"Wait. What?" Emma pushed her plate away and turned to face Regina. "You. Forbid. Me." she said slowly and loudly. All other conversation around the table stopped to look at them.

"Oh shit." Ruby said.

"Stop." Xena shouted. "You two can have your little spat later. Right now we have more important matters to discuss."

Emma felt the baby give a vicious kick and she placed a soothing hand on their daughter. She also started to feel the first spasms of the blinding pain she felt the day before. She took several calming breaths to soothe her anger. Emma felt the pain recede.

"Are you all right?" Regina asked.

"Yeah just got a little reminder not to get angry with you." She replied. "I can't wait until we can actually argue again without feeling like my insides are being ripped out."

"You like it when we argue?"

"Hell no, but making up is always fantastic." Emma leaned over and kissed Regina's cheek.
Xena sighed loudly. "We are all so happy that you two have kissed and made up." She said sarcastically. "Can we get back to the business at hand?"

Emma waved her hand in a go ahead motion. Regina pulled her plate closer and with a snap of her fingers, the food was once again hot. "Let's go over everything again."

"We have been over it five times already sister." Leroy grumbled.

"Yes and we will go over it another five times until everyone here can quote the plan without hesitation or mistakes. Now once again we know that Cora and Pan are more than likely there with almost thirty Shades. We cannot afford to make a single mistake or misstep. Understand?" She looked directly at Leroy.

"Yeah sister, I understand."

"Leroy, where and when do we meet?"

"Eleven thirty at Granny's" 

"Right. You?" She pointed to a Guardian. "Then what?"

"We drive to the road leading to the cabin."

"And?"

"Then we go on foot until we get to the bridge leading to the cabin."

"Nova, what's next?"

"Mulan will open the barrier using Gold's blood that she collected from his shop."

"Good. Wait, what did Mikah forget to mention?" She pointed to another Guardian. She was silent for a minute before answering. "I don't know."

"This is exactly why we need to go over this again and again. Does anyone know what Mikah forgot?"

"From the minute we leave the cars, talk is kept to a minimum." Ruby supplied.

"Correct. People stealth is very important. We cannot afford for any of the Shades hearing us and escaping." Xena said. "We are through the barrier, what happens next?"

"We separate and surround the cabin. The Fairies will get out the containers so that they are within easy reach." 

Xena nodded and pointed at another Guardian. "Next?"

"Once we hear the signal we break in and fire."

"What is the signal that everyone is in place and ready?"

"Ruby's howl"

"Right. Once we enter the cabin you will have only seconds to mark your targets. There will be a lot of people in a small area. Try not to shoot at one of our own. If this is successful, we will not
only recapture close to thirty Shades but also the remaining ringleaders. That will bring the number of recaptured Shades to one hundred twenty seven. That will leave twenty three left. Hopefully when they learn of the leaders recapture, they will go quietly. Make sure you relay everything to your groups."

"What about Milah?" Emma asked.

"What about her?" Xena asked back.

"Will she be crammed into one of those containers too? You can't do that to her. She has been helping you. You can't betray her. She was promised that she would be reunited with her son. If you lock her into a container, she will be sent Hell with the rest."

"That is enough." Xena yelled. "No one said a single damn word about her being sent to Hell. She will eventually be with her son."

"Is that a promise?"

"As much of a promise as I can give you."

"What does that mean?"

Xena sighed. "It means that once this is all over she will be given another judgement. If she is found lacking, she will be returned to the Underworld."

"That is not what Gabrielle told me or her. We were told that if we were successful she would be with Neal or Baelfire."

"Eventually."

Emma jumped to her feet. "That is bullshit." She yelled. "What is it with you both? You only give us half the story. You have been doing that since you got here."

Xena stood to face her. "Emma, I don't make the rules. Milah knew from the start what was at stake. For what it is worth, Gabrielle and I will both be speaking at her judgement."

"Yeah right. Like I would be believe anything you say now." Emma stormed out of the room.

"She's right you know. You have only been telling half the story." Regina said as she left the room to look for Emma. She found her out in the back yard. Even from the door she could see Emma shiver against the cold. Summoning their jackets from the hall closet she went to Emma's side. Regina put Emma's jacket over her shoulder.

"Thanks babe."

"I should scold you for being outside with out your jacket." Regina said with a smile. She held the red leather up so Emma could slip her arms into the sleeves. Turning Emma around she pulled the zipper up to just below the pale throat.

"I am not a little kid, Gina, I can zip up my own jacket." Emma protested.

"True you are not a child. I never said you were although you do act that way at times. Put you hat and gloves on dear."

"Hey."
"Case in point, you got angry, yelled at Xena and stormed outside. Not bothering to take a few seconds to grab your jacket. Now you are standing here pouting like a petulant child. What is next stomping you foot? Which sweetheart if you decide to do I will treat you accordingly and take you over my knee and blister that sweet ass f yours."

"You wouldn't"

"I would and it would not be negotiable. If you want to act like a child I will treat you like one. Understand?" Emma nodded then started to laugh. "What is so funny?"

"I am sorry babe." Emma gasped when her laughter petered out. She held her aching sides as she tried to catch her breath. "Whoa I needed that laugh."

"I am very glad to hear that dear. Would you care to explain?"

"I was trying to picture how that would happen. Especially with my stomach standing three feet in front of me. It would be a logistical impossibility." Emma started to laugh again.

"I assure you sweetheart that I would find a way to accomplish that feat."

"Really?"

"Are you daring to question your Queen, Princess?" Regina asked with a smile.

"Not at all Your Majesty. Is that bullshit meeting still going on?"

"it is. Emma come over here and sit for a minute." Regina led Emma to the swing they had not yet put away for the Winter. "I am going to ask you a question that I hope you will answer."

"Not making any promises but ask away."

"Where is all this anger coming from lately?"

"What does that have to do with anything? Why does there have to be a reason? Can't we just chalk it up to pregnancy hormones?"

"No Emma, we cannot blame all this anger on hormonal changes. What is going on with you?" Emma shrugged. "I am not accepting that. Want to try again? Or would you rather talk to your mother?"

"No fucking way." Emma said quickly.

"Ah okay I think I understand."

"Understand what?"

"That where ever this anger is coming from, Snow is at the head of it."

Emma sighed. "When did you become a Shrink?"

"I don't need to be a Shrink to know when Snow is involved. Lately it seems everything she says or does pisses you off. I see the way you look at her. I can see the anger and sadness lurking there. Why?"

Emma took a shaky breath as she fought to contain the tears that suddenly filled her eyes. She leaned into Regina for strength. "She's pregnant."
"Snow? How do you know? Did she tell you?" Emma shook her head no. "Then how?"

"I found a used pregnancy test Thursday when I collected the garbage from the upstairs bathrooms. Zelena isn't dating anyone and I already am pregnant. That leaves her."

"Why does that make you angry?"

"That is how they operate."

"Meaning?"

"Isn't it obvious? They had me and within minutes of being born, they threw me into a tree and then had another child. Now that he is getting older they are pushing him aside to have another child."

"Sweetheart, you know why you were sent to this world. Secondly there are over thirty years between you and Neal so they did not have him to replace you. Third, you don't know that they will push him aside for a new child."

"Gina, we can't do that to Henry."

"We won't. Henry knows how important he is to us. Why are you getting stressed over this?"

"I don't know. Really."

"I have an idea."

"Find an enchanted tree and send mom to another realm?"

"You don't really mean that."

"No I guess not. What is your idea?"

"Seeing how both of us are grounded from this mission, how about we take this time to go visit Betsy and Fiona?" We can come back tomorrow night."

"We can't do that. You are the Mayor and I am the Sheriff."

"Mulan is the acting Sheriff. You are on maternity leave. Next objection?"

"That is a hell of a drive for just an overnight visit."

"Who said anything about driving. We do have a supply of magic beans at our disposal. We can be there in seconds and home again just as quickly if the need arises. Do you want to get away for the night?"

"Hell yeah, babe." Emma shouted and kissed Regina. "Um Gina, how do we explain," her hands moved over her stomach. "I wasn't pregnant when we were there in the summer, now a few months later I am almost nine months pregnant."

"We tell them the truth."

"The truth? Do you know how that will sound? That you are all fairy tale characters. That I am the daughter of Snow White and Prince Charming. That I got pregnant during a magical transfer to stop a curse. That you are the father of said baby. And that my pregnancy was sped up after my spirit left my body to search for the Head Fairy's spirit after it was taken by escaped Dark Shades
from the Shadow Realm who want to take over this world."

"Emma sweetheart, take a breath."

"They would think we were delusional and fit us for those white coats with the extra long sleeves that wrap around our bodies and fasten in the back."

"They will not think that we are crazy and I will tell you why. Fiona used to be a Fairy."
"She was a what?" Emma exclaimed. "How did you hear that? How long have you known?"

"Breathe, sweetheart. I only found out yesterday. Nova told me while we were waiting for those tests to be finished. Fiona was originally from an Irish sect of Fairies."

"Wait, there are different sects?"

"Yes, Irish, Spanish, French, Roman, Chinese and many others. May I finish please?" Emma nodded. "Blue is the leader of all the Fairies. Before the curse, Fiona, whose Fairy color was lavender but also her name, saved a woman from being killed. The woman's name was Betsy McGill. They fell in love, and Lavender petitioned the Fairy Council to be allowed to leave the Fairy world to be with the woman she loved."

"Why did she need to do that?"

"I am getting to that. I asked Nova the same thing. Fairies are supposed to be like Dwarves and not be able to fall in love or get married."

"That sucks. So evidently she succeeded as they are together."

"Yes, so our showing up with you heavy with our child will not surprise them. They know about the magical world."

"How the Hell did they end up as motel owners outside of Bangor Maine?"

"I don't know. Maybe they used a magic bean as the curse hit or maybe the force of the curse caused them to land there. That is something we can ask them."

"How did..."

"Emma, what would you rather do, sit out here in the cold talking, or go inside, pack a bag and leave this afternoon for the night?"

"Let's go My Queen." Emma stood and held her hand out to Regina. Together they walked into the kitchen where Snow and Gabrielle were cleaning the breakfast dishes. Both turned as they entered. Snow wiped her hands and went to hug Emma. Emma took a step back out of her mother's reach.

"Emma, honey are you all right?"

"Yeah I'm fine."

"Go pack, I will call to let them know we are coming." Emma nodded and hurried from the room.

"Pack? Where do you think you are taking my daughter?"

"She is my wife, Snow. We are going to visit friends for the night and will be back sometime tomorrow."

"In her condition? She can't be taking any road trips now."
"Snow stop. We are not driving anywhere."

"Why now?"

"Emma is very stressed right now. Something the doctor does not want her to be. I am hoping this trip will relieve that. So just drop it. We will talk tomorrow."

"Is it safe to be away right now?"

"We will be going by portals and can be back here in seconds in the need arises." Regina argued. "We are not part of this mission tonight. Plus Emma has wanted to go back and visit our friends before the baby came. I am not about to say no at this point."

"Did you at least find out why she is so angry?"

"Yes. And no I will not tell you, so don't ask. She will talk when she is ready, so please don't push her."

"I am her mother, she is my daughter."

"True, but she is my wife and I am asking you not to push her." Regina left the kitchen leaving Snow and Gabrielle looking at each other. She headed to her office when Xena stopped her. Regina rolled her eyes at yet another delay.

"I heard what you said to Snow, so I will not keep you. You are doing the right thing taking Emma away for the night or even two if you want."

"Really?"

"Yes, Regina, I see the amount of stress you both are under. We can handle everything here. Hopefully by morning we will have Cora and Pan captured. After that I hope the remaining Shades will be captured quickly. Go take care of Emma."

"Thank you Xena." Regina walked into her office where she called Betsy. A few minutes later she walked out of the office and upstairs with a postcard in her hands. Henry was sitting on their bed while Emma packed an overnight bag.

"Hey mom." Henry said. "I think it's great you are both getting out of town for the night."

"You do?"

"Yeah, you both deserve the night off"

"There has been a change of plans."

"What?" Emma shouted. "It's her isn't it. She talked you out of going, didn't she?" Emma flopped onto the bed. "Why can't that God Damned woman mind her own business and stay out of mine?" Emma pulled a pillow over her face.

"Who is mom talking about?" Henry asked.

"Could you give us a few minutes Henry?"

"Uh sure, mom. Give me a shout when you need the bags carried downstairs." He left the room. Regina closed the door and with a wave of her hand put a silencing spell around the room. She leaned against the door and watched Emma for several heartbeats. She walked to the bed and sat
down by Emma's legs.

"Sweetheart, take the pillow away from your face so that we can talk."

"No." Came the muffled answer.

Regina pulled on the pillow but found it clutched tightly. "You need to be able to breathe. Let go so that we can talk."

"Don't wanna talk." Regina bit her cheek to keep from laughing. With a snap of her fingers the pillow disappeared. "Hey I said I didn't want to talk." Emma crossed her arms over her chest.

"Emma please sit up." Regina tried to pull her arms open to get her stubborn wife to sit up and listen.

"No." Emma said and turned on her side facing away from Regina.

Regina sighed. "I was hoping I would not have to deal with a petulant child for at least a few years."

"I am not a child."

"Really? You are certainly giving a great impression of one. I am about to give you the same treatment I gave Henry when he was five or six and acted like this. You have until I reach the count of three to sit up and talk to me."

"Or what?" Emma snapped and jumped when she felt the sharp slap on her backside.

"One." Regina started counting. Emma looked over her shoulder at Regina, whose eyebrow was raised and waiting. "Two."

"Okay stop counting." Emma turned over and pushed up into a sitting position with her back against the headboard. "So talk Your Majesty."

"I was actually talking to Henry about the change in our plans."

"You could have said that."

"You didn't give me a chance to sweet heart. You started throwing your verbal tantrum"

"I'm sorry, babe. How have our plans changed?"

"Apology accepted. Xena..."

"Xena changed your mind?"

"Will you let me finish? Xena suggested we go for two nights instead of one. So pack for two nights."

"Really?"

Really."

Emma hugged Regina before climbing off the bed to resume packing. Thirty minutes later Henry carried their large suitcase downstairs and out into the back yard. Regina went into her office, waved a hand to remove the cloaking spell from the safe. She removed a small bag and took two
rainbow colored beans from it before returning the bag to the safe. Another wave of her hands and the safe was once again hidden under a cloaking spell. She joined Emma who stood talking to Henry and Gabrielle.

"Grandma is upstairs talking to Xena."

"Good she can stay there." Emma said.

"Why are you angry with her?"

"I have my reasons kid. Do me a favor and let it go for now."

"Sure mom." He hugged his mothers. "Have a good time."

Regina's phone buzzed with an incoming message. She read the message and responded.

"Something wrong?"

"No that was from Betsy, saying to concentrate on the back of the motel. There is a protected area that will hide the portal from prying eyes."

"Do you remember the name of the motel?"

"I can do more than that." She pulled the postcard from her pocket. "Betsy must mean this area here where the pool is located. If I remember correctly there is a privacy fence around the whole pool. Once the portal is open we concentrate on that area and will be there in seconds."

"Great lets go before..."

"Emma?" Snow called from the stairs.

"Damn it." Emma swore and looked at her watch. "Sorry can't talk we are on a tight schedule." She hurried from the foyer and out to the back yard. Regina shook her head.

"Let her be Snow."

"I was only going to apologize for what ever it is I said or did to make her angry. Will you talk to her? Try to convince her to talk to me? She will listen to you."

"I will not make any promises Snow, but I will try."

Regina followed Emma into the back yard. They both hugged Henry before walking to the center of the yard. Picking up the suitcase, Regina pulled one of the beans from her pocket and tossed it several feet away. Emma took the postcard with one hand and held Regina's hand with the other as the swirling portal opened.

"Concentrate on the area behind the motel. Do not let go of my hand."

"No problem there babe."

They stepped into the vortex and disappeared. Seconds later the vortex let them out behind the motel. Fiona and Betsy ran out to meet them. They hugged before quickly entering the back door of the motel.

"We have so much to talk about." Betsy said with a laugh. She led them to a table by the window in the empty dining room. "You room is not quite ready. I put you in the same room that you used
before."
"Thank you Betsy."
"Would you like something to eat or a cup of coffee while we wait?"
"Coffee would be great." Emma said.
Regina tapped her hand. "That will be decaf for you dear."
"But I didn't get the chance to finish the other one." Emma argued.
"Whose fault was that? I recall you throwing a hissy fit and storming out of the dining room."
"They should not have pissed me off."
"Pregnancy hormones raging?" Betsy asked.
"Yeah." Emma answered.
"Not exactly." Regina answered at the same time.
"Oh okay, I think we understand Your Majesty." Betsy signaled the waitress to bring them coffee.
"Did you know who we were when we were here last Summer?"
"We did."
"But you didn't say anything."
"True." Fiona said.
"You were paying customers who deserved your privacy."
"That's not the whole truth is it?" Emma asked as her lie detector pinged.
"We could not say anything that first time. I may no longer be a Fairy, but there are still rules I have to follow. Blue keeps us in the loop. We know about the Shades How you saved Blue and how your pregnancy was put on fast forward."
"Are there other fairies around?"
"There are. You know them. Just know that when Marco decided to send his son through the portal instead of allowing Snow to go with you, Blue called for volunteers to go with you."
"How if the wardrobe," Fiona held up her hand.
"Patience child. All will be explained, or rather all that pertains to your journey to this world will be explained."
"Patience has never been her strong suit, Fiona." Regina said laughing.
'I can see that. Emma there were so many volunteers Blue had to choose who would come with you to this world."
"How was that possible?"
"I am getting to that. I was still a Fairy then, but had petitioned the Fairy Council for permission to leave and marry Betsy. Blue called me to her throne room with a proposition. I would be allowed to leave and become a human if I would accompany you to this world. Betsy would be given temporary Fairy abilities for the journey."

"But that doesn't..."

"Emma give her a chance." Regina said.

"You know that Fairies can change their size," Emma nodded. "We shrunk to the size of a pin head and were on your baby blanket when you went through the wardrobe."

"Our duty was to protect and guide you until you were old enough to break the curse." Betsy added.

"That didn't work out so good did it?" Emma snapped. Regina placed a restraining hand on Emma's arm.

"No it did not work as planned. The force of coming through blasted us from the blanket. We ended up here, but others landed as far away as New York and Boston."

"Boston?"

"One who was charged with getting you off the street after you ran away from your last foster home."

"Rowan?"

"Yes and the second who was charged with making sure you were safe after you got out of prison."

"Gus too?" Fiona nodded. "Why now? Why tell me all this now?"

"We were forbidden from saying anything until the time was right. With your advanced pregnancy, that time is now." Fiona explained. "Now that you are settled and safe, they have the choice to remain as humans or return to the fairy world. I do not think they will return as they are both busy with the Safe Haven you are building for street children in Boston. They share your passion for helping those who need it the most."

"What about you?"

"No I will not be returning. I planned on leaving the Fairies before everything started. I still have some Fairy capabilities such as seeing into the future and a few other minor abilities."

"Minor she says," Betsy laughed. "This woman can fix anything from a broken water pipe to a blown engine. Saved us quite a large sum of money in repairs I can tell you." She looked at the woman who entered the Dining Room. "It looks like your room is ready."

Regina stood to follow Betsy. Emma went to stand but a hand on her shoulder stopped her. "I have this sweetheart. You stay here and visit with Fiona while I get us registered and take our suitcase to the room." Regina leaned down to kiss the top of Emma's head. "Remember no caffeine." Emma rolled her eyes. "There will be none of that Princess." She softly scolded before following Betsy.

"She is very overprotective." Fiona said.

"That she is. Even more so since I had a health scare yesterday."

"Is everything all right now?"
"It is."

"What else is bothering you child?"

"What makes you think," A raised eyebrow stopped her question. "Is this another of those fairy abilities you spoke of?"

"It is." Fiona said and waited for Emma to talk. She signaled the waitress to refill their drinks, folded her hands and waited. Emma's eyes filled with tears and soon she told Fiona everything that was bothering her.

Regina felt Emma's emotions through their bond. She turned to go to her side when Betsy stopped her.

"No Regina, she needs to talk to someone who isn't a part of her family. Let her talk to Fiona. Give Fiona a chance. Tell me have you picked names for the baby yet?"

"She is hurting Betsy."

"Aye lass she is and what she needs right now is talking to Fiona. She does more that fix things that are broken, she can also fix people."

"Emma is not broken." Regina argued.

"No but there are cracks forming that will eventually break her. A broken Savior is something none of us want to ever see. That will destroy her." Betsy pulled a book out from under the counter and handed it to Regina. "This may help you find a name for the baby. Come I will take you to your room."

Regina hesitated before following Betsy out of the lobby.

"Why is she so angry with me?" Snow asked.

"I know she was upset yesterday at the hospital when she found out you were there. She thought you didn't go up to see her."

"I did twice. I hope to were able to set her straight."

"Regina told her but she was still pissed." Zelena said. "Did anything happen between you two?"

"No not that I remember. I know Emma has been under a lot of stress and pressure. With the pregnancy, I thought it was just the hormones. Friday it was like she took an angry pill that was directed at me."

"It started Friday?"

"Yes, no wait, Thursday night. She was collecting the trash from the upstairs bathrooms... Oh no."

"Did you remember something?"

"She must have found the used pregnancy test I took that morning. I wanted to throw out the bathroom trash, but she beat me to it."

"You're pregnant?"
"Yes, I wanted to tell her but she wouldn't give me the chance. Emma had a hard time accepting Neal. She didn't say it, but it took her a long time before she would hold him. Now there is going to be another child. She must be feeling abandoned and betrayed all over again."

"Even now when she is having a child of her own?"

"Especially now."
After leaving the comfortable cabin and its occupants to their deadly fate, Cora drove off into the night. She headed for the back up location she had chosen deep in the forest. The small trailer that was accessible from a narrow, rut filled path that was barely wide enough for a single car to squeeze though. The branches of the trees scraped against the sides of her car as she slowly drove through. The trailer belonged to the mine which sat less than two hundred feet away. Once she unloaded he clothes and the food she bought with her, she drove her car to the mouth of the mine. Getting out of her car she moved the barricades out of the way, before she drove her car into the mine to hide it from prying eyes. Leaving her car again she replaced the barricade and headed back to the trailer. The trailer itself had no windows to show any light into the darkness and give away her location. The trailer had a small kitchen and bathroom. It even boasted an ugly, uncomfortable looking sofa.

"Beggars cannot be choosers." Cora said, her voice sounding loud in the quiet. Turning on the thermostat she heard the small furnace kick on. Within minutes the trailer was warm and she removed her coat. Cora was exhausted. After leaving the cabin she drove through the night taking a very round about way to avoid the hunters that were probably still out there looking for the Shades. She dodged many patrols as she drove to the safe haven. Leaning her head back and she let sleep overtake her.

Regina, lay on their bed in the motel room. She head the sound of the key card in the lock. The door opened and Emma walked in.

"Hi sweetheart. You look a lot better. Did you have a good talk with Fiona?"

"I did and I do feel a bit better. Thanks for sending that text telling me you would be here when I was finished."

"You're welcome. Betsy advised me to let you and Fiona talk. That it was what you needed to do."

Emma sat on the bed before she flopped backwards with he eyes closed. Regina ran her hands through the blonde curls,

"Tired?"

"No, but my eyes are burning."

"Crying will do that."

"How did, never mind."

"It was all I could do to remain here and not go to your side. I felt your pain, anger and sorrow."

"You did the right thing, babe. I probably would not have said as much as I did if you were there. It
was weird."

"How so?"

Fiona sat there looking at me with her arms folded and waited. She even did that eyebrow thing you do so well. Next thing I knew, I was spilling my guts to her."

Regina winced. "That is a terrible visual, sweetheart."

"It just means that once I started talking I couldn't shut up."

"Anything you would like to share with me?"

"You know most if not all of it. I carry a shit ton of emotional baggage. She gave me a different way of taking each one and looking at it from another angle."

"Should I say I told you so now? How many times have I suggested you talk to a professional?"

"I don't do Shrink. Gina." Emma said cracking one eye open allowing Regina to see how red and bloodshot they were.

"You take off your jacket and boots while I get you a cold compress for your eyes." Regina left the bed, pulling Emma into a sitting position as she went into the bathroom. Emma heard the water running in the bathroom. She removed her jacket and threw it towards the chair. She missed and the red leather fell to the floor. Unzipping her boots, Emma kicked them towards the corner. Scooting back onto the bed, she lay on the fluffy pillows, closing her eyes again. Regina returned to the room where she scooped several ice cubes from the filled bucket that she added to the face cloth for a minute to get it as cold as possible. She looked at the jacket and boots tossed on the floor. "Emma." She sighed. She picked up the jacket and hung it in the closet before moving the boots to the side of the bed out of the way. The ice cubes were returned to the ice bucket. Regina placed the cold cloth over Emma's eyes.

"Thanks babe." Emma whispered. "This does feel good."

"It is my pleasure darling."

Emma felt the bed dip as Regina joined her. Without moving the cloth, Emma found Regina's shoulder. "You take good care of me Gina."

"That is because I love you. You do make it a challenge at times."

"Love you back babe."

"You rest for awhile then we can either have a late lunch or an early dinner."

Emma yawned. "Damn I don't know why I am so tired. I slept a good portion of yesterday and all last night."

"You are emotionally tired dear heart. So you just relax and recharge."

"You make me sound like a battery."

"Shh rest sweetheart."

"Kay."
Within minutes, the slow even breathing told her that Emma was asleep. She pulled Emma close, pulled a blanket over them both and joined her wife in sleep.

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It was late afternoon before they both woke up. After having an early dinner, and bringing a snack back to their room, they settled in for the night. Fresh from the shower, Emma walked out of the bathroom covered only by the large bath sheet the motel provided. Regina, dressed in her silk pajamas, half lay half sat on the bed reading. Her glasses perched on the edge of her nose.

"Hey Gina?"

"Yes."

"Can I ask you a question?"

"You just did. Or is there another question?"

"Ha ha. Yes there is another question. But I need you to be one hundred per cent completely truthful with me."

"Hate to break this to you my darling, but what you said is redundant. One hundred percent is complete. What would you like to know?"

"What are you reading?"

"A book of baby names, but that is not what you wanted to ask me."

"You're right. But babe, you look so damn beautiful and sexy laying there."

"Emma ask. What ever it is that is on your mind, ask."

"Okay. Gina if you had got to baby me before I was thrown into a tree, would you have killed her um I mean me?"

"Oh wow." Regina exclaimed. She marked her page in the book, removed her glasses and put both on the night stand next to the bed, as she collected her thoughts.

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Gabrielle sat next to Xena in Granny's Diner. The remnants of a late dinner on the table. Xena's eyes flicked to the clock behind the counter every few seconds as she nursed an ale.

"Watching the clock will not make time go faster Xe." Gabrielle said.

"Did you notify the hospital that there would be an influx of patients in the next few hours?"

"The answer is the same as the last four times you asked. I did and they are ready. Why are you so worried?"

"A great deal rests on tonight being a success. We capture the rest of the leaders, not to mention the biggest threats to Emma and the baby."

"So tell me why we are sitting here three hours before we are scheduled to meet instead of our nice warm comfortable bed?"

"I told you that you did not have to come sit with me. I want to be available in case there are any
last minute problems or questions that need to be fixed. You can go back to the room. I will come get you when it is time."

"Not without you. I have to be here to keep you out of trouble."

"Don't you have that a little backwards, my bard. I am not the trouble magnet in this relationship." Xena said taking a sip of her ale.

"Nope not backwards at all. I think you just like the ale Granny serves."

"It is very good. But I really do want to be available if needed."

"I doubt that there will be any problems. You thought out every possible contingency. You are too good a leader."

Gabrielle, if there is one thing I have learned through all our many years together is that we can not over plan. We have to be able to change directions in a heart beat if we need to."

"Has there been any more activity at the cabin?"

"No one else has entered or left that area since we posted a guard last night."

"What if someone left before you posted that guard?" Gabrielle asked.

"We hope that isn't the case, but if they did, there is nothing we can do about it now." Xena answered as she took another sip and glanced once more at the clock.

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"Gina?"

"Yes sweetheart. I am just organizing my thoughts so I can give you the complete truth. While I am doing that you can get changed for bed and we will talk."

"I figured I would sleep in this."

"A damp towel? There is absolutely no way that I will sleep next to a cold clammy towel all night. I don't think you want to get sick from doing that. Not to mention I do not think Betsy and Fiona would appreciate their mattress smelling musty."

"I was hoping that maybe after we talk we could, you know, maybe possibly make love? Only having a towel on means there is less to remove."

"True, but my darling I am finding it very hard to think knowing you are sitting there in nothing but a towel. The longer you wait to get changed, the longer you wait to talk and the longer it will take for us to make love. It is your choice." Emma sighed, left the bed, dropping her towel on the floor and she pulled her sleep shirt and boxers on. "One more thing sweetheart."

"Yeah babe."

"Put your damp towel in the bathroom where it belongs."

"Yes dear." Emma said, picking up the towel to take to the bathroom. When she returned she said, "Okay mom my towel has been hung up."

"There will be none of that princess." Regina scolded, as she patted the bed next to her where the blankets were already turned down. She waited until Emma sat next to her. Taking Emma's small
hands into her own, "When I cast that curse I was in a very dark place. Years of being manipulated by Rumple, my mother and in a small part by Snow put me there. Years of torture, yes actual torture by them, I was so filled with hate. Before I banished Cora to Wonderland, and Rumple was imprisoned by your parents, my original plan. Wait correction there for complete honesty, their original plan was to kill you so that you would not be able to break the curse. I did not want to do that. In my mind, children were always off limits. I let them think they had convinced me into killing you."

"You weren't..."

"Shh let me finish. Have you ever heard the saying one and done?"

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"Think of it this way, you have a large bar of chocolate, wait there is a better way to explain this. Take the one cup of real coffee you are allowed to have a day. Do you dink it quickly until it is done, or do you take your time to really enjoy it and make it last as long as possible?"

"That is easy, I would make it last as long as possible."

"Correct. Killing baby you would mean that your parents would live their cursed lives never remembering they had a child. If I had gotten there in time, I would have taken you with me to raise and yes love as my own. They would see me with a child and feel empty and jealous, that I had what they did not. It was the ultimate revenge on Snow."

"You would have raised me?"

"And loved you. Yes, sweetheart I would have."

"I wouldn't have been sent to foster care? You really would have been able to love me?"

"I would have loved and cared for you the best I could. Just like I did for Henry."

"Henry."

"What about him?"

"If you had raised me, I would not have been in the foster system. Would not have run away from that last home, or been on the streets or stolen that car, met Neal, gotten pregnant. I would not have been caught with stolen merchandise or gone to prison. Never have given the baby up for adoption."

"That is very true."

"There is more, babe. There would never be an us. Cuz babe what we have right now would be against the law."

"Because we are Gay?"

"No because the relationship we would have had would make us mother and daughter and make our relationship, incest."

"Oh, then I am certainly glad that I did not get to you in time."

"Me too babe." Emma leaned over and captured Regina's lips. Their tongues danced until they had to break to take a breath. Emma pulled back. "Thank you for being honest with me. But,"
"But?"

"Now that you told me, I can't help but wonder what our lives would have been like."

"I would have been strict and pushed for order, just like I did with Henry. Knowing you now, I imagine you would have been a handful. Probably getting your ass blistered over my knee on a weekly or even a daily basis."

"Probably, but at least then I would know that the punishments would have been because you loved me."

"That I most certainly do." Regina pulled Emma close. "Now I have a question for you. And like you I want your complete honesty. I may not have your internal lie detector, but I do know how to read body language. I will know if you are trying to bull shit me."

"Okay, shoot."

"How are you feeling?"

"I was afraid you would ask that."

"Emma?"

"Ask me another question."

"Emma Swan Mills."

"Uh oh you used my whole name." Emma joked.

"Answer my question."

"I am a little tired, but no too tired to make love."

"Sweetheart, there is nothing I want more than to make love with you."

"There is a but in there right?"

"I am afraid so. Emma, you were in the hospital only yesterday. I thought this trip would help relieve some of the stress that your doctor suggested, no ordered you to do. Today has been an emotional roller coaster for you. We portal jumped which can take a lot out of a person. I suggest that we take tonight to rest and regroup. Tomorrow morning we can make love before and after breakfast if we have the strength.

While you were in the shower I called Betsy and asked if we could have breakfast delivered instead of going to go to the dining room. She said it would be delivered for us at nine. I ordered those strawberry pancakes you like so much."

"Then we don't have to leave the bed at all tomorrow if we don't want to?"

"That is correct."

"Okay." Emma lay with her head on Regina's shoulder. "What do you think they are doing now?"

"Emma we are not part of that mission. Leave it."

"Humor me."
Regina glanced at the clock. "They are probably starting to gather at Granny's."

The line of cars, led by Mulan, with Red, Xena, Gabrielle and Nova in the squad car made their way out of the town proper to the cut off to the cabin. Ruby turned in the front seat.

"As I was saying earlier, Belle called just before we left Granny's. She has been doing some research on the barrier Gold used. Due to the size of the barrier, Gold adjusted it. Animals can enter the area, but humans cannot."

"Interesting."

"Yeah, I was thinking the Guardians can change and go through to scope out the place."

"That works in our favor."

"There is more. Once the barrier is open, it will remain open for only a few seconds. She sent over a potion that will open the barrier for at least a day."

"Okay."

The cars reached the turnoff and pulled off the road. They all gathered around Xena for any final instructions.

"The Guardians will go in first in their animal forms to look the place over. Leroy do you have your tool belt with you?"

"Sure do sister." He left returning a minute later fastening the heavy belt around his ample middle.

"From this point on, no noise." Xena warned. Ruby and the Guardians changed into their animal forms and ran ahead. One guardian remained behind to lead the group. The trees closed in behind them and blocked out the light of the half moon. They walked at a brisk pace.

Xena heard a noise in the quiet and held up a hand to stop the group. She brought her cross bow up into position as Ruby ran back down the path. Changing back to human form, she held her hands up in surrender. "Stand down Tiger, it's me."

"Weren't you able to get through the barrier?" Gabrielle asked.

"We made it through without a problem and got right up to the cabin. Then we smelled it."

"Smelled what?"

"Gas. I looked into the window. Xena there are bodies all over the living room. It looks like they are all dead. We can't get in there until the gas is turned off and the place is aired out. Leroy we need you to turn off the gas."

"Let's go people." Xena ordered as they took off at a run. They got to the barrier. Mulan threw Gold's blood onto the barrier. Xena threw the potion Belle gave them to keep it open. "Nova can you and the Fairies get those people out of there?"

"We can."

"Good. Do it. There is a chance that they are still alive."

The Fairies raised their wands. Within seconds the yard was enveloped in white smoke. When the
smoke cleared the bodies lay on the grass. Xena went around checking for any signs of life. She shook her head no. "Get those containers ready. The Shades are stunned. We need to capture them before the air revives them."

Nova directed the Fairies to place an open container beside each body. Once the Shade was revived, it would be sucked into the container.

Leroy returned from the cabin. "The gas is off. But no one can go in there until the place airs out." He noticed they bodies. "That works too."

Xena pulled the list from her pocket and watched as the names disappeared one by one."

Damn it." She swore loudly.

"What is it?" Gabrielle asked.

"We have Pan, but Cora is not here. She killed all these people to hide her escape."

What do we do now?"

"We take care of these and regroup. She cannot leave town. We will get her."
Chapter 37

Chapter Summary

Over the next few chapters, a few things about Snow will come out. This will cause a rift between Emma and Snow. There is a reason for this as I am setting up for the next part in my saga. Snow is not as sweet or innocent and she wants the people to believe.

CHAPTER 37

"Cora killed all those people? How can you be certain it wasn't an accident? It could have happened that way." Gabrielle said, as she sat next to her partner.

"Gabrielle, this was no accident. It was a deliberate act of murder."

"She could have seen everyone in trouble and went for help?"

"I know you want to see the good in people, but this is Cora we are talking about. She is a cold blooded murderer. When we can get into the cabin I will prove it to you."

"Xena, I have notified the Fire Department. They will be here shortly. Also the Coroner has been notified. Doc has gone to wait for them." Mulan said. "They will be able to get in there to air the place out for us."

"Want to guess what we will find when we do get in there?"

"I do not have to guess. We will find that all the pilot lights have been blown out and the burners turned on. Probably the oven too. Then we will find that the furnace has been shut off. With the amount of gas that is in there, the first time the furnace kicked on, the cabin would have exploded. No furnace, no explosion, giving Cora more time to escape."

"Exactly. Have all the Shades been captured?"

"The Fairies are collecting the last of them now. Blue has been notified and is waiting for the containers. Xena they are all dead and from the smell, they have been dead for many hours."

"I thought so."

"Do you have any doubts that this was murder and not accidental?"

"None what so ever. Cora would be captured if this were accidental. She murdered these people and is more dangerous than ever."

Flashing red and blue lights lit up the trees and the sound of sirens filled the night as emergency vehicles pulled up to the cabin. Paramedics went from body to body searching for any signs of life as Mulan and Ruby talked to the Fire Chief.

"We had Leroy turn off the gas and the Fairies used magic to get the victims out. We were hoping that they were still alive."
"You did the right thing. We will suit up and go in to open the windows to air the place out. How long ago was the gas turned off?"

"Twenty minutes, maybe thirty tops?" Ruby answered.

"After you open the windows, how long before we can get in there?" Mulan asked.

"An hour but I would rather it be two hours. I know you need to collect evidence, but for your safety, I would prefer you wait the two hours. After we finish here, I will leave a couple people here to check the gas levels for you."

"Thank you Chief."

By dawn the last of the bodies had been loaded into Ambulances for the short ride to the Hospital Morgue. Autopsies would be performed later in the day to find the actual cause and time of death if possible. That gas was the main cause was not in doubt, but he wanted to know of any underlying factors that prevented them from leaving. The Coroner reported his initial findings to Mulan.

"They have been dead for several hours. I would even go as far as saying twenty four hours. Rigor Mortis has come and gone and from the way the blood has pooled once they fell they weren't moved." He said. "Nasty business, Mulan. I will need to call extra help to get the autopsies done. I will try to get the preliminary report to you by tomorrow morning."

"I would appreciate your expediting your results. I am sure the Mayor will authorize the extra funds you will need."

He left with the last of the bodies. Mulan and the Deputies had collected several empty liquor bottles, and a pan of what looked like stew from the kitchen. She sent that along with the Coroner for testing. Xena remained seated at the tree.

"Hey." Gabrielle said as she returned to the tree.

"Hey yourself."

"Is something wrong?"

"Those people did not have to die. If we had left earlier we might have been able to stop the slaughter."

"No, the Paramedics and the Coroner all have said that they have been dead for at least twenty four hours. We had no way of being here before that happened." Gabrielle said. "Mulan will call Emma and Regina later."

"That is not a good idea. This sort of news deserves to be delivered face to face not over the phone."

"How can they do that when no one can leave town?"

"They will not be going, you will. Nova will get a magic bean from Blue."

"Me, why not you?"

"How many times have you told me that you do the sensitive talks while I bust heads?" Gabrielle shrugged. "This talk calls for a sensitive talker rather than a fighter. Emma and I have butted heads too many times in the last few days for me to go."
"I have noticed, but Xena, she has been angry with me also."

"Yeah, but for some reason, I tend to set her off. If the task at hand is to keep her stress levels down, my delivering this news will have the opposite effect. Can you do this?"

"I can do it."

"That's my girl. Nova will take you to Blue. She will tell you what you need to know to use the bean"

"How much do I tell them?"

"Everything. No more half truths. Come back with them. Granny will set you up with some regular clothes for the outside world. Don't leave until I get there."

"How much longer will you be here?"

"Until Mulan has finished. I will get a ride back with her. You may want to get a few hours sleep."

"Okay. If I am not at the Inn I will be at the Diner."

Xena laughed. "I expected that. It has been all of, what, six hours since you last ate?"

Gabrielle elbowed her. "I will have you know, oh mighty Warrior Princess of Snarky Comments, that the last time we ate was around eight last night."

"My mistake my Bard." Xena pulled Gabrielle close and kissed the top of her head.

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Regina woke early and slowly worked her way out from under Emma's arm to leave their bed. Emma murmured and snuggled into the pillow Regina used. Regina walked into the bathroom where she quickly showered. After brushing her teeth she returned to their bed. Propping her head on her hand, she watched Emma sleep. She marveled at how young and innocent Emma looked when she slept. The lines of stress and worry were gone from her wife's face. Regina smiled when she felt their baby move where Emma's stomach rested against her leg. She knew if the baby became too active Emma would wake up. Emma turned onto her back as she started to wake. Regina rubbed slow circles over the bulge that was their child, hoping the child would settle down and let Emma sleep a bit longer. She felt the baby's movements slow and Emma relax in sleep.

"That's my girls." Regina whispered as she continued to watch over her loves.

Emma slept or another hour before she stirred. She stretched and opened one eye to see Regina.

"Morning babe." She said, her voice hoarse from sleep.

"Good morning sweetheart."

Emma cleared her throat. "Were you watching me sleep again?"

"I was. You look so young and innocent when you sleep. When you don't have the worry and stress of our daily lives on your shoulders." She added quickly.

"Nice save babe."

"It is the truth. I did not mean it to sound like I thought you looked old and beat up."
"I know what you meant. I wasn't insulted. Thank you for calming the peanut down earlier."

"It was my pleasure." Emma stretched again and winced. "Are you all right?"

"Yeah she is laying on my bladder right now. So I have to get up or it will not be pretty." Regina laughed as Emma stood quickly and hurried into the bathroom.

The phone on the night stand buzzed with an incoming message. Regina picked up the phone and read the text from Ruby. Gabrielle arriving by portal sometime late morning with news. Fiona and Betsy have been advised. Make sure you are both decent." This was followed by a wink.

"Damn it." Regina cursed.

Emma poked her head out of the bathroom with her toothbrush in her mouth. "At's up abe." She said around the brush.

Regina sighed. "I got a text from Ruby. Gabrielle will be coming here by portal sometime late morning."

"Wha?" Emma went back into the bathroom. She came out wiping her mouth on a towel. "Why is she coming here?"

"Ruby said she has news."

"Then it must be bad news. Otherwise they would have just called."

"I agree."

"There goes our plans for staying in bed all day making love"

"We have the next ninety minutes before breakfast is delivered, sweetheart."

Emma smiled, threw the towel into the bathroom and went back to bed where Regina waited with open arms. Regina undid the buttons on her pajama top and shrugged it from her shoulders. Emma removed her tee shirt. Their lips met as their passion quickly grew. With every kiss, their hands followed familiar paths and soon their pants joined their shirts on the floor.

Regina knew that most positions were uncomfortable for Emma with her advanced pregnancy, she pushed her onto her back. "Let me." She whispered. Emma nodded once. Regina knelt next to Emma and leaned down to capture the pale lips. Their tongues danced. Regina's hand traced a figure eight from one breast to the other. A move she knew Emma really enjoyed. The pattern got smaller and smaller until she reached the hardened nipples. Her lips moved from Emma's, down the slender neck to take one stiff peak into her mouth while her hand rolled and pinched the other. She lightly captured the tip with her teeth as she swirled it with her tongue. Switching breasts she gave the other the same loving attention. Mindful of how sensitive Emma's beasts were due to her pregnancy, she was careful with her touches and kisses. Breasts that would soon nourish their child.

She felt Emma's hands massaging her own breasts. Her body responded to Emma's touch just as Emma's responded to hers. She left the breast and recaptured Emma's lips as her hand traveled down Emma's body to the patch of neatly trimmed golden curls. Emma's hips moved up to meet her hand.

"Impatient, my darling?" She whispered.

"A bit. Gina please, together."
"Of course, sweetheart." Regina took a pillow and slipped it under Emma's raised hips. She then pushed another pillow behind Emma's head. She moved one leg over Emma as she got into position so they could make love together. She leaned down for her first taste as she felt Emma pull her down for easier access.

Emma ran her tongue over Regina's center before she entered her. She found a copious amount of fluid waiting for her. She slowly moved her fingers in and out in the way she knew Regina loved and drove her passion higher. She felt her own body responding to Regina's touch and knew it would not take her long to climax. The tension in Regina's legs told her that she was not far from reaching her peak. Emma felt the first flutters in the soft walls that surrounded her fingers as Regina's climax neared. Within seconds she felt those walls contract. Regina tensed as she crested. Even as she climaxed Regina did not stop to make sure Emma was satisfied. A feat that always amazed Emma. She knew she would never be able to pull it off.

Emma felt the familiar tightening in the pit of her stomach as she climaxed under Regina's loving hands and lips. Regina rested her head on Emma's thigh as she caught her breath before she moved. Laying down next to Emma she puller her close and kissed the blonde curls.

"This is probably my fifth favorite thing to do."

"What is?"

"Holding each other after we make love. Or even when we are falling asleep."

"Oh what are the other four?"

"Number four is being able to wake up next to you every morning. Number three is that I can kiss you whenever and where ever I want. Number two is actually tied with number one. They are making love with you and knowing that I have finally found a place where I belong. Here with you is where I belong. I know that you don't keep me around for a monthly check. You actually love me and will not throw me back if things get too bad."

"Throw you back? Sweetheart you are not a fish that I caught. I do not do catch and release. At least not where you are concerned. I would tear my own heart out before I would ever give up on you or our love. That would destroy us both and I am not about to let that happen."

Emma sniffed as her eyes filled with tears. "Damn hormones." She said as she wiped her eyes. She felt the silent laughter from Regina. "Laugh it up Chuckles." She said with mock anger.

"Chuckles?"

"Yeah. If you think the pregnancy hormones are bad just wait until the after pregnancy ones kick in."

"I will still love you no matter what. It was in our wedding vows from both of our weddings. Not to mention it was part of the oath we took at the blood bond ceremony."

"I'm glad. I love you back. I can't or don't want to even think about not loving you."

A knock came at the door. Regina glanced at the clock on the bedside table. "That must be breakfast." She said. "Just a minute" Regina called out and slipped out of bed. Putting on her robe she picked up Emma's shirt and handed it to her as she pulled her robe belt tight. Removing the security latch, Regina looked at Emma to make sure she was covered before she opened the door. Fiona pushed the cart containing several covered dishes, two pots of coffee and a carafe of orange juice into the room.
"Every thing is good and hot." she said as she transferred the covered plates to the small table. "Pancakes with strawberries and whipped cream, a side of turkey bacon, Western omelet also with turkey bacon. A small pot of regular coffee that will give each of you one cup. The large pot is decaf coffee and a carafe of orange juice."

"Thank you Fiona."

"You are welcome. Blue called earlier advising us that someone named Gabrielle would be arriving by portal later this morning. She also asked if we could rent her a room for a few hours as this will be her first portal jump."

"I was going to tell you after breakfast."

"That is okay. Emma is your answer still the same as yesterday?"

"Yes."

"What answer? What was the question?"

"Before this Gabrielle arrives and you have to leave, Emma wants me here when she tells you what we talked about yesterday."

"Is this what you really want to do, Emma?" Regina asked.

"Yeah, it is."

"All right. Fiona I will call you when we have finished breakfast."

"I will wait for your call. When you have finished just push the cart outside the door. Enjoy your breakfast."

Fiona left. Emma stood and pulled her sleep short on before she joined Regina at the small table. Regina poured them each a glass of juice before she poured their first cup of coffee. She handed the juice to Emma first.

"You take good care of me babe."

"I try."

Emma drank the juice before she picked up the coffee and took he first sip and savored the rich smooth taste. "That is good." Taking the lid off her breakfast she looked at the three large pancakes that had strawberries covering the top as well as large dollops of sweet whipped cream. Another bowl of strawberries and whipped cream sat off to the side. A small pitcher of syrup that was still on the cart. Three strips of bacon sat on yet another small plate. Regina's meal consisted on a omelet filled with chopped ham, and cheese, one slice of rye toast and a fruit cup. Emma picked a grape from the fruit cup. Regina smiled and pushed the fruit closer to Emma.

"Gina?"

"Yes my darling."

"The reason I asked Fiona to be here when I tell you what we talked about yesterday is because I tend to go off on tangents or leave things out."

"That I know for a fact."
"She will be here to keep me focused. There is one thing I want to talk to you about before she returns."

"That sounds serious."

"It could be."

"What is on your mind?"

"I don't know if I can be the type of mother the baby will need. She will be totally dependent on me for all her needs. Food, clean clothes, I am scared that I will not be able to do it."

"Emma you are a great mother."

"Sure to a seventeen year old. I didn't even meet Henry until he was ten years old. You are the great mother not me." Emma said. "This baby, from her first breath will be counting on me for her every need. I don't know if I can do it."

"First of all my darling, there is no part including labor and delivery that you will have to go through alone. I can even help with the nursing."

"How can you do that?"

"For the last several weeks, I have been taking certain herbs to help produce breast milk. I am hoping to be ready by the time the baby is born."

"Where did you get these herbs?"

"Doctor Chrystal and I talked last Summer. She is the one who prescribed the herbs. I am not just doing this for you. Well most of it is, but part is for a very selfish reason." Regina said. "You know I am unable to get pregnant, therefore cannot enjoy the full pleasure of motherhood. This gives me a chance to do just a small part."

"Wow."

"The main reason is that neither of us are exhausted. Remember how tired your mother was after Neal was born."

"Can we not mention her right now?"

"Of course. There is another reason I am doing this. That is because I love you."

"Damn, Gina, that is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me or done for me." She sniffed and wiped her eyes again. "I love you back."

"Good now eat your breakfast."

"Yes ma'am."

"There is one more thing I need to mention."

"Are you all right? Are you sick? What can I do to help you?"

"Emma, sweetheart, stop, breathe. I am fine. The herbs that I am taking have a possible side effect."
"What are you going to grow two heads or six fingers?"

"Nothing like that, but it is possible that the herbs may will heal my torn uterus and allow me to conceive a child." Emma stared with her mouth open. Regina reached across the table and closed her mouth, laughing as she did it. "Did I shock you dear heart?"

"You certainly did. You want to have more kids?"

"That is a discussion for another time. Maybe when this one is at least a year or two old."

"Okay."

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Regina moved the cart with their empty plates out of the door as Emma called Fiona. Emma quickly dressed and Regina ducked into the bathroom to dress when a knock came at the door. Emma opened it to allow Fiona to come in.

"I did what you suggested and asked Regina last night."

"What did she say?"

"That killing me was never part of her plan. Cora's and Rumple's yes, but not hers. She would have raised me. I would not have been alone. I would have been loved. I am sort of glad it didn't work out that way. As that would mean I would never have met Neal, had Henry or fell in love with the most fantastic woman in all the realms. That woman that I am proud to call my wife and mother of our child. Or should that be father?"

"That is good to hear because you two will need all that love and support after you hear what I have to tell you."

"That sounds very serious." Regina said as she left the bathroom.

"It has the potential to be very serious. Emma what I am about to say is not to make you angry or rather angrier at Snow. But you should know the whole truth about what happened during the time leading up to you birth and the day you were born." Fiona said as she sat in the overstuffed chair by the window. "What I told you yesterday was not the whole truth. Don't worry, your super power was not malfunctioning. I am able to block that."

"What is there to tell. Mom said her choices were to keep me with them and hope the Queen didn't get me or stuff me into a tree and send me to Maine."

"Typical of Snow to only tell part of the story. She had a third choice in the event you were born before the curse hit."
"What third option?" Emma demanded.

"Two days before you were born, I had a vision of your birth. Not only a vision but a solution to saving you from the curse, a way to succeed. I went to Blue immediately and together we went to talk to Snow the next day."

"What the fuck is the third option?" Why can't you just talk straight?" Emma shouted.

Regina rubbed Emma's back to calm her down. "Sweetheart, be patient and let her talk."

"I told Snow of the vision about you being born shortly before the curse hit. I told her, she would be able to strap you to her body under her clothes before she climbed into the wardrobe. The wardrobe would recognize her alone and you could travel together to this world. She said she would talk to her husband."

"Did she?"

"I do not know, Emma. When the time came, we were on your blanket when your father took you to the wardrobe alone."

"So she decided to toss me away and remain with her "true love". Emma complained making air quotes.

"I do not know why she decided to stay behind. Perhaps she did not believe it would work."

"I don't believe that for a single second. She is the one always spouting that perpetual hope bull shit. She was only looking out for herself and what she wanted." Emma argued. "It sounds as if you are defending her."

"Not at all, Emma."

"Why should I believe you. You just said that you can block me."

"I have lowered the protection. You tell me if I am lying."

Emma looked into the unblinking blue eyes and saw no sign of deception or lies.

"Why tell her this now?" Regina asked.

"It all ties into what we talked about yesterday. Emma said she was finished with people only telling her half truths. I was guilty of doing the same thing. I contacted Blue and explained what I was going to do. She forbade me from telling you. But I am no longer a Fairy. I do not take orders from her any more."

That comment made Emma smile. "You are a rule breaker too. I knew there was a reason I liked you."

"Emma, you are more of a rule bender than a rule breaker."

"Now yes, but a few years ago, I broke as many rules as possible without going back to prison."
"I am so very happy you wised up my darling." Regina said kissing Emma's cheek. "How exactly does this tie into what you talked about?"

"It all revolves around Snow and her god awful, teeth grinding annoying ways. How she has to stick her nose into my life as if she had any right to. Dammit she may have given birth to me but she was never my mother."

"With her and Neal staying with us, that is hard to avoid."

"Once the Shades are captures, they can return to their home and we can have some peace and get our lives back." Emma said. "I have to admit there have been times in the last few days that I wanted to poof her to the town line. Maybe even over the line. Her unasked for advice has stomped all over my last nerve and Fed Exed it to London. I have had a baby before. Okay I may not have raised him because I was eighteen and in prison so I did what was best for him. I gave him up for adoption. The best for him was Regina. She took care of him, loved him and gave him what I was in no position to do."

"How does that differ from what Snow did?"

"She threw me in a tree and sent me to another realm with no one to look after me. Without a second thought, she chose her husband over her child and tossed me out like I was garbage. She did what was best for her, not for me." Regina shouted as she paced the room. "That bitch could have gone with me, so that we wouldn't have been separated. She would have raised me instead of my being sent from one bad foster home to group home before going to an even worse foster home."

Regina continued to shout as she paced.

"Damn when you put it that way, maybe she did me a favor."

"Do you really think that?"

"Fuck no, I am still pissed at her." Emma said and gave a humorless laugh. "Tell me babe, how is all this supposed to keep my stress levels down?"

Regina blew out a breath. Between the anger and tears from yesterday and the anger today, our time away from Storybrook did not end up as planned.

"This morning was fantastic and really lowered my stress especially when you..."

Fiona cleared her throat loudly, knowing the two had forgotten she was there. "Do you really want me to hear about that now?" She joked, causing twin blushes to appear on their faces. They walked back to the table and sat down. "Right now it seems your biggest stress inducer is Snow White. Emma you have a lot of anger that you need to work through concerning Snow. That grew today by what I told you. It will grow more after what I am about to tell you both. Regina, Snow did more than tell a secret when you were younger. Snow was and probably still is a spoiled princess. Whatever she wanted her father gave her. That day you supposedly saved her from that runaway horse, was a set up. Snow noticed you one day and wanted you to be her mother. Cora in her greed and ambition worked with her to make that happen. Even though you were only a few years older than her, she wanted you. Snow was very good on a horse even at that young age. It was a set up. She knew her father would be so grateful he would make you his queen because his daughter wanted it. Leopold was a cold and sometimes cruel person after Queen Eva died. It was as if he
only had room in his heart for one person, his daughter. Would he have been different if the Queen had lived? I do not have that answer. I do know that Queen Eva reined in Snow's selfish ways and feelings of superiority. Once she was dead, all those feelings were left to run loose. She knew the King would do nothing to stop his precious child. She did try to change after she met the man who was her true love. But those attitudes are still there. That darkness is still inside her. Be very careful when dealing with her."

"Do you think she would harm Henry or the baby?"

"She could. Jealously is a hard emotion to deal with. She always wants to be first in everyone's life."

"Why the Hell would she be jealous of me?" Emma asked. "I had nothing all my life. It has only been the last few years when I have had love."

"You have replaced her as favorite in the hearts of the people. Even more so now that you are about to deliver a child. She has always hated coming in second to anyone, even her own child."

"She was supposed to be one of the good guys."

"Emma no one is completely good or evil."

"History is filled with some really evil people. Gina did you know this?"

"Some, Hell most of it."

"You never said anything."

"How could I? You were trying to build a relationship with her. Then we got together."

"Is that why you are always so reserved around her?" Regina nodded. "But you were the one who suggested she stay with us until the Shade problem was resolved."

"That was so that you did not drive yourself and quite possibly me crazy with worry."

"So what do we do?"

"Be careful. I would advise you to not confront Snow at this time. You said you thought she got pregnant because she was jealous. That is possible. As I said before, she wants to be first in your heart. Then Henry found you. After the curse broke, she wanted to be first but that was not to be. Henry was. She came in second. Then you fell in love and married Regina, and now you are going to have another child. Each time she falls further down the line."

"So she gets pregnant again in order to be first again in someone's life. For some reason, her husband and son do not count now." Regina offered.

"Evidently not, so be careful."

"You said that already."

"It cannot be said enough."

"Fiona seeing as how you came from the Enchanted Forest, would you be able to see and enter Storybrook?" Regina asked.

"Both Betsy and I have been there in the past."
"That means Rowen and Gus can see it also?" Emma asked.

"Yes."

"Why are you bringing that up now?"

"We were wondering how we were going to get that blasted ship to Boston, when there are only three or four people who can leave town without problems. Gus knows how to sail. More important she has sailed on the ocean. We can get rid of the damn ship once and for all."

"Okay sweetheart. When this is over, we will see about getting her help to move the ship and everything that goes with it."

"I love you babe." Emma kissed Regina's cheek.

"I love you back. Did you talk about anything other than Snow?"

"Yeah we talked about you."

"Me why?"

"Because you aren't afraid to call me on my bull shit or stop what you call my savior complex. I may get angry at the time you do it, but I am also grateful. I tend to run head first into trouble."

"You certainly do that, my darling. I expect to find a ton of grey hairs popping out because I worry about you."

"What I need to tell you Regina Mills is thank you. Thank you for taking care of me and loving me. I don't tell you that enough."

"I knew what I was getting into with you. You keep life interesting." Regina said with a smile.

"Fiona what about Blue? She is Snow's friend and confidant."

Fiona shook her head. "Blue always plays her cards close to the vest. I have not a single clue to what she knew then or knows now. You can ask her. Blue knows more that she says. But if you ask her a direct question regarding a specific subject, she will tell you the truth. She has no choice in that. You just have to know how to ask the questions. Did Blue mention binding the child's powers after she is born?"

"She did." Regina answered. "We are undecided at this point."

"For her safety and yours, not to mention your sanity, I suggest you do it as soon as she is born. It is a simple ritual and will only take it a minute to perform. It will not harm her in any way. It can also be removed in stages when she is old enough to begin her training."

"Emma, I think we should allow Blue to do it."

"Yeah, I know. We can tell Blue when we get back home."

"Speaking of which, I am going to go and let you get dressed before your friend arrives. We can talk more later as I have several other things to tell you."

Fiona left. Regina and Emma got out of their sleep clothes and into street clothes to meet Gabrielle. Fifteen minutes later they walked into the office where Betsy waited for them.
"She should be coming though any minute. Fiona is waiting out back. Come this way. Do you know what is going on?"

"She has to be delivering bad news, otherwise they would have just called."

"You will probably be going back today then."

"Probably but not until later. Portal jumping is a shock to the system and the body needs time to regroup."

Fiona rushed into the lobby. "The portal is opening."

Inside the protected area, the air rippled. The ripples grew until a large swirling vortex opened. Within seconds Gabrielle stepped through and promptly fell to her knees. The vortex closed leaving her gasping for breath. Regina stopped Emma from rushing to her side. She and Fiona went instead. They helped Gabrielle to stand. She swayed on her feet. Regina kept a protective arm around her waist.

"By the gods, I was not expecting that." Gabrielle gasped.

"It is a shock the first time you portal jump. Don't try to walk yet. Let your legs stop shaking."

"We don't have to go right back yet do we?"

"No it is always better to put a few hours between jumps."

"That is good to know." Gabrielle said taking a deep breath. "I think I can walk without falling down."

"We will get you inside with a nice cup of tea or a stiff drink."

"Tea sounds good."

"Take it slow Gabrielle." Regina said as they walked to Emma. Together they helped her into the darkened bar. The lights came on.

"Would you like something to eat Gabrielle?" Betsy asked.

Gabrielle shook her head no. "Xena will never believe I am turning down food, but not right now thank you."

Regina smiled. "Just like someone else I know."

"You got that right babe."

They sat at a table where a steaming pot of tea was brought to Gabrielle and decaf coffee for Regina and Emma. We will leave you to talk."

"No stay. You know about the Shades so its no secret."

Fiona pulled up chairs while Betsy brought a pot of coffee to the table.

"What happened?" Emma asked.

"We got to the cabin with out any problems. Ruby and the Guardians went ahead. They smelled the gas when they approached the cabin. She was able to see the bodies in the living room when
she looked in the window. The Fairies were able to use magic to bring all the bodies outside in case they were still alive. Twenty eight Shades were captured including Pan. Cora escaped. She has gone into hiding. There are search groups out looking for her. The Guardians are trying to pick up her scent."

"What about those people?" Regina asked.

"Mulan thinks they were drugged along with drinking. We could smell the alcohol underneath all the other smells. Mulan collected of the food found in the kitchen and sent to the hospital lab for testing."  

"Gabrielle what about the people?" Emma asked loudly.

"I am getting to that." Gabrielle answered just as loudly. "They were all dead."

"What? If we could have gone as soon as we knew where they were, that could have been prevented. All those people would still be alive."

"No Emma. Even if we did go earlier or even yesterday morning, they would have still been dead. The paramedics as well as the doctor we talked to said they had been dead for twenty four hours."

"But yesterday,"

"Emma, they were drunk, drugged and gassed. Once the burners were turned on without the pilot lights, the cabin quickly filled with gas with all the windows closed tightly. Cora even turned off the furnace so that the place didn't explode."

"Damn it, Cora killed them all."

"She did."

"You have no idea where she is?"

"Sorry no."

"Gina can she cross the town line?"

"She would have to leave Delores's body to do that. I can't see her putting in that effort."

"Then we have to go home now."

"We will, but not right now. Gabrielle cannot do another portal jump so soon. We need to wait a few hours. Betsy do you have an empty room that Gabrielle can use to rest up?"

"I believe the one next to yours is empty. I will get the key." Betsy left and returned with the key card.

"Put the room on our bill."

"Ruby has some of her Guardians trying to find her scent."

"We could do a locator spell."

"I think they were going to use that after you got back."

"How many Shades are left?" Emma asked.
"Five or six, I think."

"Including Cora?"

"Yes. I'm sorry but I think I need to lay down now."

"Of course. I will walk you to your room." Regina offered.

"Emma for what it is worth, if any of those people were friends, I am sorry for your loss."

"Thanks Gabrielle."

Emma covered her face with her hands. Fiona looked at Betsy who nodded and left the two. Fiona moved next to Emma and put an arm around her shoulders. They sat in silence. She could feel the tremors in Emma's shoulders and knew the younger woman was crying. She heard the sound of running feet and knew they belonged to Regina. Fiona quickly gave up her seat to Regina who held Emma while she cried.

"Twenty eight people. She killed them." Emma managed to get out.

"I know sweetheart."

"She didn't have to kill them. They were drunk and drugged and unconscious. Why did she have to kill them?"

"It's Cora my darling. She is cunning, ruthless and totally devoid of any redeeming qualities or even a conscience."

"Gina what I am about to say will probably piss you off."

"You want to be there when Cora is found."

"It is more than that. I want to be the one to take the bitch down. I know she is your mother, but,"

"No buts darling. I will be at your side when it happens. As you so aptly put it, that bitch is going down."
Chapter 39

CHAPTER 39

Snow and Zelena watched from the kitchen door as the portal opened in the back yard. Henry stood with Xena on the patio. Within seconds of the portal opening, Emma, and Regina stepped through with Gabrielle between them. Emma carried their suitcase as Regina supported most of Gabrielle's weight. She dropped the suitcase on the grass once they had cleared the portal. Henry hurried to pick it up while Xena went to Gabrielle and caught her as her knees buckled.

"Sorry it took us so long to get back. The body cannot take two jumps back to back. Gabrielle needed to rest for a few hours." Regina said. "Take her into the living room and lay her on the sofa. There blankets in the hall closet. Two portal jumps in one day took a toll on her. She will be fine with rest and food. She didn't eat after the first jump, only some weak tea. I will see about getting some broth heated. There is plenty in the freezer."

"Thank you." Xena said as she carried Gabrielle into the house and lay her gently on the sofa. Zelena took a blanket from the closet that she lay over the fallen bard.

"I will get the broth started, Gina." Emma volunteered.

"I will heat water for tea." Zelena said and walked into the kitchen.

Emma ignored Snow as she walked into the pantry where the large freezer was located.

"We thought you would have been back earlier." Snow said.

"Did you not hear what Regina said about Gabrielle needing to rest after the first jump? She was in no condition to make a return trip immediately. Oh wait, I forgot, the only person you care about is yourself."

"Em-ma," Snow exclaimed. "That is not true. How can you even think that let alone say it. I am your mother, I love you. Why are you so angry with me?"

"Let me set you straight on one thing, Snow. You may have given birth to me but you are not my mother. I think it best if you kept your distance."

"Emma." Snow said again. "Are you angry about the baby? I was going to tell you, but you found the pregnancy test before I had a chance to say anything."

Emma ignored her as she looked for the containers of broth. She removed two before slamming the freezer door. She looked angrily at Snow. Turning quickly she left the pantry. She set the containers in warm water while she pulled the large stock pot from the cabinet. Emma put a small amount of water in the pan before she opened the containers and tipped them into the pot, just as Regina had shown her. turning the burner on low to melt the blocks of broth that she moved around with a wooden spoon.

Snow walked out of the pantry and went to Emma's side to try to talk to her again. Emma handed the spoon she was using to Zelena, waved her hands and disappeared in a puff of white smoke. Regina entered as Emma disappeared.

"What happened? Why is Emma upset? Where did she go?" Regina demanded.
Zelena shrugged.

"I tried to apologize for not telling her about the baby right away. She got so angry."

"Damn it Snow. She is dealing with a full plate of problems right now. She doesn't your drama on top of it. I am asking you to just let her be."

"Regina, I am afraid she is reverting back to her old ways of running away instead of facing her problems."

"I can assure you Snow, that is not the case here. Let her be for now. When she is ready to talk to you she will. Do not pour added stress onto her."

"Are they both all right, her and the baby?"

"They are both good. Emma is extremely upset that Cora killed those people and some things we learned earlier. I will give you fair warning, Snow, when she is ready to talk to you, you will not like what she has to say."

"What have I done?" Regina shook her head in frustration. "Perhaps it is time for Neal and I to return home."

"Not until Cora is captured. Emma is angry with you, but no matter how angry she is, she would not want either of you in harm's way."

"That is why I asked Mulan, Ruby and Nova to meet us here in an hour." Xena said from the doorway.

"How is Gabrielle?"

"She has an upset stomach, but is sleeping right now."

"That is the best thing for her right now. Portal jumping is hard on a body. Two jumps in less than eight hours can really throw a person." Regina said. "Do you have any idea where Cora is hiding?"

"The Guardians are trying to find her scent. Blue mentioned a blood locator spell and that the best persons to perform it would be you and Zelena."

"The question I asked was are we locating Cora or Delores?"

"They are the same person at this point." Regina stated. "Emma and I were talking after we found out about the murders."

"Oh what did you decide?" Xena asked.

"We let you exclude us from last night's mission. That will not happen when we go after Cora."

"Regina, Emma can't be running around in the forest, she is about to give birth. That is extremely careless..." Regina waved her hand and froze Snow.

"So will I Zelena said."

"Are you certain Zelena?"

"I am one hundred percent certain. Some of those people she killed were friends of mine. They didn't ask to be taken over by the Shades. Cora must be held accountable."
"Then we shall do this together, sis."

"What about Emma?" Xena asked.

"She will be at my side. I promised her."

"Where is she?"

"I know where she is. I will go talk to her. Zelena will you keep an eye on that broth?" Zelena nodded. Regina started to leave then remember Snow was frozen. Another wave of her hand Snow was released.

"and irresponsible of you." She finished, looked around to find Regina walking away.

"She is all yours Sis." Regina told Zelena.

"Can I refreeze her?" Zelena whispered.

"Better yet send her to the hospital to visit her husband, that will get her out of our hair for a few hours."

"Thanks for the suggestion."

Regina left the kitchen and walked upstairs where she knew Emma was. Entering their bedroom she found Emma laying facing away from the door. From the tense set of the slender shoulders, Regina knew she wasn't asleep. She heard a sniff and knew Emma was crying. Not a cry of sorrow but one of anger. She walked to the far side of the bed and sat down. Emma moved over to give her room to sit. Regina placed a comforting hand on Emma's hip.

"I'm sorry for disappearing like that." Emma wiped her face with her hands. Regina handed her tissues from the box on the night stand next to the bed. Emma rolled over onto her back after blowing her nose and throwing the tissues in the waste basket. "I couldn't listen to her bullshit apology any more. Not when I know what she did."

"Don't beat yourself up over it sweetheart. She pissed me off and I froze her."

"Can we leave her like that until this is over?"

"No."

"Damn. What did she say to piss you off?"

"She went off on me after I told Xena that we would not be left out of the search for Cora."

"Good girl. You are my hero." Emma said with a laugh. "You have my permission to do that whenever you deem it necessary."

"Thank you. Xena called a meeting."

"Not another one."

"I am afraid so. But it will only be a few people. Ruby has the Guardians trying to find Cora's or rather Delores' scent. If they are not successful then Zelena and I will perform a blood location spell."

"Would either of them work if Cora is a Shade?"
"Good point. Maybe I should pop over to Delores' house and get a personal item of hers." Regina said."I will be right back." Regina disappeared in a puff of blue smoke. She returned within a few seconds carrying a sweater Delores often wore. "We can use this to cast the locator spell on Delores and the map to use for the blood locator spell. No matter what we will find her or them or whatever."

"Gina are you okay? You sound flustered."

"Cora would never win a mother of the year award and she made my life a living Hell, but,"

"But she is still your mother."

"Yes, but any feelings of affection I had left for her have disappeared when she threatened you, our baby and Henry. I will not allow her to hurt those I love."

"Henry has a body guard, and a protection spell around him. The house is protected by magic. We have done everything possible to be safe."

"Now you know what is on my mind, tell me what is on your."

"I wish we could have stayed and heard what else Fiona wanted to tell us."

"Maybe when this is over we can drive up there with Henry and the baby for a long weekend as a family. Do you believe what she said about Snow?"

"I do. I also would like to talk to Blue and whatever Fairy was there at the time."

"That we can do. Go slap some water on your face and come downstairs. I imagine you and the little one are hungry."

"Yeah, we would have no trouble eating a grilled cheese." Emma said with a cheeky grin.

"Emma," Regina sighed and shook her head. "On one condition no make that two. You have a salad with it and no coffee."

"You drive a hard bargain, Madam Mayor."

"It is a necessary part of the job taking care of you, my darling. If Snow starts in again I will refreeze her."

"You really are my hero babe."

"That should be heroine, dear, but it is my pleasure to protect my wife and children. Come down when you are ready."

Regina patted Emma's leg before she stood and left the bedroom. Emma lay on the bed for several minutes before she got up and walked into their bathroom. She walked down the stairs. As she turned the corner to go into the kitchen when Snow walked out of the living room. Emma tensed waiting for Snow to speak. A muscle jumped in her cheek as she clenched her jaw.

"Emma how are you feeling?"

"I'm okay."

"Can we..."
"Sorry, Gina is waiting for me."

Emma tried to move past Snow, but found her arm grabbed. "You are reverting Emma and running..." Emma looked from Snow's hand on her arm to Snow's face. She reached over and removed Snow's hand before walking away. "Emma wait." Snow called out.

Emma stopped, turned towards Snow. "Do us both a favor, Snow and leave me the fuck alone." She shouted which brought Regina into the hall as Emma brushed past her.

Regina gave Snow an angry look. "Why don't you ever listen?" Regina said angrily before she too returned to the kitchen. Emma stood at the stove stirring the melting block of broth.

"Why does she have to push like that?"

"I don't know sweetheart. Hang in there she will not be here much longer."

An hour later they were seated around the table when the door opened. "We have a tentative location on where Cora is hiding." Mulan said as she entered the dining room. "We think she is at the old mine."

"You think?" Emma asked as they took seats around the table.

"The Guardians have been trying to find her scent, but they kept losing it. Probably because she was in her car. Then they decided to track her car's exhaust."

"She drives that old car and it has a unique exhaust smell. She evidently drove around all night after she left the cabin." Ruby added.

"Dodging the patrols?" Regina asked.

"That is my theory." Mulan said. "In the last few hours the scent has been leading them closer and closer to the mine."

"The one they kept Blue's spirit in?" Emma asked.

"The front end of it where the fairy diamonds are mined. There is a trailer not far from the entrance that is used when the Dwarves go into the mine. The power is still on. The trailer is small but functional."

"How often is it used?" Xena asked.

"Just a few days a month when the Dwarves go into the mine. It is mostly used for checking the pureness of the diamonds."

"Are there any windows in the trailer?"

"A small one in the bathroom I think, but there are several air vents for circulation."

"She wouldn't see us coming in the daylight."

"You want to wait until tomorrow to go after her?" Emma asked.

"We at least have to wait to find out if she is there, Em." Ruby answered. "Before you ask, I am waiting to hear now."
"Lets do that locator spell instead of waiting."

"We will but it will still take time to follow the object, right?"

"Yeah."

"So we wait until we hear for certain that her car has been located. From what I have heard about Cora, and Delores, neither one would be caught dead walking anywhere. Emma I know you are anxious for Cora to be recaptured and have every right to be. But everyone who took part in last night's mission is exhausted. Myself included. I may be immortal, but we still can't go indefinitely. Tired people make mistakes. Once her car is located we will know that she will not be far away. That is when we move."

"Is she alone?" Emma asked.

"As far as we can tell, yes. Twenty nine bodies were pulled from the cabin. Twenty eight were seen going in. Cora and Pan made it thirty. She is the only one from the cabin who is unaccounted for."

"Time to resurrect those dormant bounty hunter skills, dear, and consider this just another stakeout" Regina said.

"I can work with that. Coffee is part of a stake out." Emma joked.

"Nice try sweetheart, but that is not going to happen."

Ruby's phone rang. She pulled it from her pocket. "Hey Byron." She listened for a short time. "Good. Keep on it. I want at least two Guardians there at all times in case she decides to leave." She stopped talking and listened again. "Wait what did you say?" She was silent again then laughed. "I will get back to you shortly. Thanks." Ruby ended the call and put the phone on the table. "They found a car inside the mine entrance that they think belongs to Delores. It is less than two hundred yards from the mine."

"It is a good bet that she is there." Regina said.

"Yes. Emma I know you want to go now, but can we at least let everyone get a few hours of sleep before we do?" Xena asked.

"Yeah, as long as we go tonight."

"Emma, Cora is not going anywhere. There are Guardians watching her. You know how hard that road is to navigate during the day. At night it would be much worse."

"Okay, okay, okay."

Ruby's phone buzzed again. She picked it up. "Yeah." She said. "Good. She will not be going anywhere unless she walks. Take turns watching the trailer until we get there tomorrow morning. Do not approach her." Ruby ended the call. "Cora is at the trailer. One of the Guardians saw her. Her car has been disabled."

Mulan's phone buzzed with a message. She read it out loud. "Three more people have shown up at the hospital. That leaves," she looked at her list, "only three. Cora, Milah and Rob Tailor. Owen is the Shade."

"Before you take Milah back, I have one request." Emma said.
"If it is within reason I will see what I can do." Xena said.

"Seeing as she has been helping you, and chances are she will not be allowed to move on to be with her son, I would like to give her the chance to at least meet her grandson." Regina nodded in agreement.

"I will arrange that. One other item that I think you will be pleased to hear, Emma."

"Yeah what's that?"

"Milah will not have to sit another judgement. Once we go back she will be with her son."

"How did you pull that off?"

"Now I can't be giving away all my secrets. Lets just say I have my ways and many skills."

"What ever and how ever you managed it, thank you."

"You're welcome. Can we get back to this crises before we plan any happy reunions?" Emma nodded. "We know where she is. She can't leave. If she attempts to leave the Guardians will know immediately and follow her."

"Not to mention her car is disabled and she would have to walk that will make it easier for the Guardians to track. As you said earlier, Delores does not like to walk any where." Ruby said.

"Cora either." Regina added.

"Then she is trapped with no means of escape. I suggest we all get some rest and go at first light. We will meet back here at six in the morning." Nods from most around the table. A nudge from Regina and Emma nodded also. Xena stood up signalling the end of the meeting.

"You wake Gabrielle up and I will drive you back to Granny's" Mulan said.

"Hold on." Regina said, as she went into the kitchen, returning with a covered dish. "Try to get her to drink some of this broth. It will help. I have enchanted it to stay warm."

"Thank you." Gabrielle leaned heavily on Xena as they walked to the cruiser.

Emma and Regina watched they leave from doorway. "It's almost over sweetheart." Regina said as she held Emma. She felt Emma nod against her shoulder. "Lets go to bed."

"Yeah. After tomorrow we can concentrate on the goober."

"We have to come up with a better name for her." Regina laughed as she locked the door, shut off the lights and together they walked up stairs.
CHAPTER 40

Regina, and Emma along with Zelena, Ruby, Xena, Mulan and Nova stood on the front porch just as the sky started to lighten with the coming dawn. They held hands and disappeared. Snow watched them from the doorway, still not happy with Emma's decision to go with them. She closed the door with a shake of her head.

Not knowing how long they would be gone, Snow hurried upstairs to finish packing her suitcase and Neal's. As soon as all their bags were in the car, she went to wake Neal. Once he was up she went to Henry's door and knocked. Henry stumbled out of bed and opened the door.

"Grandma, what time is it? Is anything wrong?"

"It's six thirty and nothing is wrong. Neal and I are going back home and I need you to listen for Robin. You mothers have gone after Cora so we will be safe. I don't know how long that will take."

Henry yawned. "Don't you want to wait until they get back?"

"No. It is for the best right now. I want to get as much unpacked as possible before school. Regina and I talk about this yesterday. I will see them later."

"Is everything okay between you and mom?"

"Yeah, it's just that there are four adult women living in close quarters. That is four different personalities. Problem crop up. Emma asked me to leave her alone and give her some space. That is hard to do living in the same house. She made it clear she doesn't need any advice from me at this time."

"What if they aren't back by the time I have to leave for school?"

"You can take Robin to Ashley's Day Care or to the Convent. They will take care of her."

"Okay." Henry said.

Snow left his room, picked up Neal and went out to her car. Once he was safely buckled into his car seat, she started the car and backed out of the garage. She drove away from the house. Henry watched from his bedroom. He knew there was tension between Emma and Snow, but for her to leave before was captured was crazy and dangerous. He picked up his phone to call his mothers, but changed his mind. He decided to shower before he called.

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The women appeared in the slight dip in the road that led to the mine entrance. In the predawn light they could just make out the outline of the trailer from their position.

"Has there been any activity from the trailer?"

"Nothing since four when the small light in the bathroom went on. It went off a few minutes later. It has been quiet since then."

"Can we kill the power to the trailer?" Zelena asked.
"Yeah, there is a switch on the pole."

"What do you have in mind, Zelena." Emma asked.

"Kill the power and she will come out to see what's wrong. Then we take her down."

"Simple and to the point. I like it." Emma said. "I will get the power." Emma started forward, but Regina's hand on her arm stopped her. She looked at Regina who only shook her head no.

"Let me do it." Mulan said and took off running. She made it to the pole, turned the power off and ran back to the forest. They waited for Cora to make an appearance. Thirty minutes later they still waited.

"Could she still be asleep?" Emma asked.

"It might be too early for the bitch to be up." Zelena said. "Was dear old mom an early riser?"

"No way in Hell." Regina answered. "The lady got her breakfast served at exactly nine in the morning. Then she lounged in bed until the servants drew her bath at ten. She never made an appearance downstairs before eleven."

"That would be a No, then." Ruby said.

"So she is still asleep and doesn't know the power is off." Zelena said. "I have an idea. Regina what do you say to our shaking mom up a little?"

"Let's do it. You take this side I will go around to the other and we rock the trailer. I will send up sparks when I am ready."

"I am coming with you." Emma said.

"Absolutely not, Emma. You stay and take her down when she come out."

"Then you had better be careful." Emma ordered. "Wait, just give Nova and I a chance to get into position."

Nova went towards the trailer where she place the open container by the stairs. She waved to Regina. "You be careful too." Regina ordered before she disappeared in a puff of smoke. Once she was in position she sent up sparks. Emma walked towards the trailer with her crossbow raised. Zelena raised her hands and the trailer tilted. It rocked back towards them.

"Not too close Emma in case that tin can decides to go over." Zelena hissed. Emma waved a hand to show that she understood and stopped several feet from the trailer as it continued to shake.

The door flew open as Cora forced Delores' body out of the trailer.

"Stop right there, Cora." Emma shouted as she aimed the crossbow.

"Now aren't you the clever one. You know who I am. Not bad for a homeless, unloved and abandoned gutter rat. The only reason you have any worth at all is because of that child you are carrying. That is my grandchild and should be raised by people who will teach her how to be a lady. How to dress and behave properly, that dear is not you or even Regina. I know all about Regina being the so called father. She does not love you, you know. She is not capable of loving anyone."

Regina walked around the trailer to Emma's side. "Don't listen to her Emma."
"Oh I forgot. You are just her type. Poor, without any station in life or ambition. Where is our bastard sister?"

"That is enough." Regina shouted as Zelena ran forward. All three aimed their crossbows. "Emma is my wife and Zelena is my sister and unlike you mom, I am capable of love and I love them both deeply. That will never change."

"Reinforcements, Regina? Of course I forgot, you are too much of a coward to face me alone."

"I don't need reinforcements Cora. You made my life a living Hell. We know what lengths you went through to force me to marry the King. It was a set up from the very beginning. A ruse you set up with Snow."

"You clever girl. Is that supposed to impress me?"

"Not at all and now it is time for you to finally pay the full price for all the people you have murdered here and back in the Enchanted forest."

"I didn't murder anyone here."

"You murdered twenty eight people here, Cora." Emma shouted.

"They were peasants not people. Unimportant disposable gutter rats like you. They served the singular purpose of getting me to this world. That feat was accomplished and were of no further use to me. They became nothing more than dead weight. Now they are just dead." She said without any sign of remorse.

"Your reign of terror has come to an end Cora. NOW." Regina shouted.

All three fired their crossbows hitting her with all three darts. Delores froze in place as the Shade was pulled from her and forced into the container. Delores collapsed. Her body fell off the stairs onto the hard ground below.

"I suppose we should send her to the Hospital." Regina said.

"I will not say anything if you want to leave the bitch here to rot." Zelena said and kicked the unconscious form.

"Delores was a bitch on a good day. Since Cora took over her body, she was much worse."

"How much of what she did was Delores or Cora's doing?" Ruby asked.

"I think Cora brought out all the worse things in Delores." Nova said.

"So then why can't we leave her out here to rot?" Ruby asked.

"We cannot take the chance of innocent wildlife being poisoned by her." Nova added as she sent the sealed container to Blue.

"No we cannot." Mulan added.

Regina sighed, waved her hands and sent Delores to the Hospital." They can deal with her now. Who is left?"

Mulan pulled out her list. "Charles Smith. Owen is the Shade."
"Owen? The Owen that tortured and almost killed you. The one that kidnapped Henry and took him to Neverland? That Owen?" Emma asked.

"That Owen." Regina answered. Her phone rang. She pulled it from her pocket, checked the I.D. and answered. "Henry is everything alright?" She put the phone on speaker.

"Grandma took Neal and left."

"Left to go where?"

"She said home. Woke me to have me listen for Robin. What should I do? I need to finish getting ready for school."

"We are almost finished her."

"Regina, you three go home. We will finish up here." Mulan said.

"I will stay to help. When we have finished, I will poof everyone back to your house." Nova offered.

"Henry we will be there shortly." Regina said and hung up the phone.

"God Damn it. Of all the stupid, self centered bullshit she could have pulled." Emma swore. "She only did this for attention."

"What do you want to do?"

"I am not going to give in to her."

"That sounds like you talked to Fiona."

"We did."

"I am glad. Emma I apologize for not telling you myself. We were under strict orders not to."

"Come to the house when you are done here so that we can finish talking. We have to go."

"I will."

The three disappeared, reappearing inside the house. Henry was bringing Robin downstairs when they arrived.

"Gigi." She cried running to Regina. "Emmy."

"Bloody Hell what am I chopped liver?" Zelena complained.

"Mama." She cried and jumped out of Regina's arms into her mother's.

"Did you get her?" Henry asked.

"We got her Henry." Emma answered. "There is only one Shade left. Charles Smith's body has been taken over by Owen."

"What about that one in the dress shop?"

"She was working for us Henry. She is one of the good guys." Regina said.
"She is or was your father's mother which makes her your grandmother."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Hey how would you like to meet her before she goes back?"

"I sure would. Will she be returned to the Underworld?"

"No because she helped us, Xena said she will be sent to a better place where she will be with your father."

"I have thought about him a lot lately. I am glad he won't be alone anymore."

"No he won't be alone anymore Henry. He will be with his mom for all eternity," Emma said pulling Henry in for a hug.

"How about some breakfast?" Regina asked as the air became very emotional.

"I'm in." Henry and Emma said together.

They settled around the breakfast island as Regina and Emma started pulling the ingredients for pancakes from the cabinets. Emma left Regina to mix the batter while she started a pot of coffee and pulled fruit out of the refrigerator.

"Mom now that almost all the Shades have been captured, does that mean that Miner's Days will go on?"

"Henry that is not until the last week of October." Emma said. "I think it will."

"This is the last week of October." He replied.

Emma glanced at the calendar. "Damn he's right. How about it Regina?"

"It is the main fundraiser for the Convent. We should be safe. People will need a chance to unwind and take part in some form of mindless entertainment."

"Don't forget the Miner's Day Dance Friday night. Did you ask Violet yet?" Zelena joked. He nodded.

"Hey Gina, wanna go to the dance with me?" Emma asked giving Regina a hip bump.

"Do you think you will feel up to dancing?" Regina answered expertly flipping the pancakes. Emma shrugged. "I don't see why not. I'm pregnant not dying of the plague."

"Then yes, providing Doctor Chrystal says it's okay when we go see her later today."

"It's a date then."

"I will call Blue and tell her the festival is on," Regina said.

"I can tell her as I plan on going over there to talk to her anyway."

"Sweetheart, the last two days have been emotionally exhausting for you. Why not just spend the day relaxing and clearing your mind?"

"You know I hate doing nothing?" Emma said with an almost whine in her voice.
"There is always laundry that needs to be done, dear." Regina said giving Zelena a smile and wink. "Or you can come to work with me and we can finish setting up your office for Emergency Management. That needs to be up and running before the Winter weather arrives.

"Anything is better than laundry duty." Emma grumbled.

"Good then eat your breakfast before we go."

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Emma blew out a breath as she sat on the exam table waiting for the doctor to come in. She checked the clock for the tenth time in as many minutes.

"Relax sweetheart, she will be here soon." Regina said.

A knock on the door stopped Emma's remark. "Sorry to keep you waiting Emma. This must be the Nolan family day."

"What? Let's get one thing perfectly clear Doc. I am not now nor have I ever been a Nolan. My name is Swan-Mills. Emma Swan-Mills."

"Okay. I apologize for assuming that you would take the Nolan name." Doctor Chrystal said as she checked Emma's chart. "Your blood pressure is better. Not great but closer to normal than it has been in the last few visits. How are you feeling?"

"Like the back end of a cow."

"That will not last too much longer. Lay back and let me check you and the baby out." Emma lay back on the table as the doctor pulled out the bottom of the table for Emma's feet. Doctor Chrystal lifted Emma's gown and attached the fetal monitor. The sound of the baby's heartbeat filled the small room. "Good strong heart beat. Nice and steady. When did the baby drop into birth position?"

"Last night. Scared Regina speechless for several minutes." Emma laughed.

"I imagine it would. You are not working are you?"

"Not in the Sheriff's Office. But we are currently setting up the Emergency Management Office. It's not strenuous or stressful, like doing laundry is. Besides Gina is just down the hall if I need her."

"That is true." Regina said.

"Seeing as how the baby is in position, I want to do an internal exam after the ultrasound."

"Is that necessary?" Regina asked.

"At this stage of Emma's pregnancy, yes it is necessary." She said as she pulled the ultrasound machine closer to the exam table. "Here come the part you don't like." She squirted a liberal amount of the cold gel on Emma's stomach causing her to jump. She pushed the wand through the gel as the picture showed on the monitor. "There she is. She is in a head down position which is good and she is not likely to move from that position. I hope your aren't planning any trips in the near future."

"Damn there goes our trip to England. I hope we can get our deposit back."
"Emma don't joke about this." Regina scolded.

"Sorry doc."

"No problem Emma. How is the search for the Shades going?"

"We captured the last of the leaders this morning. There is only one left to find."

"That means you are completely out of it?"

"Now I am."

"Good." She wiped the gel off of Emma's stomach. "Now we get to the hard part." She pushed in the bottom of the table and pulled out the stirrups. She helped Emma put her feet in the devices. "Scoot down a bit."

"Why is it you ask us to scoot down after we are in those damn things. Do you know how hard it is to do that?"

"Blame it on the ancient healers." She said as she pulled on latex gloves and sat on the rolling stool. She turned the light on. Regina held Emma's hand. "Just relax Emma."

"I never liked this part of the exam."

"It will only take a minute. Have you experienced any labor pains?"

"Some, but they don't last long and stop after thirty or forty minutes."

"Is there a problem?" Regina asked.

"Not at all. The mucous plug that acts like a sort of cork barrier sealing the cervix closed has weakened and your cervix has softened."

"What does that mean?" Regina demanded.

"It means that Emma is close to giving birth." She removed the gloves and stood up.

"You can get dressed Emma. I want you to come back next week if you don't go into labor before then. I will be surprised if you make it past the weekend."

"Hey Doc we have decided to go ahead with Miner's Days this weekend. There will be announcements made, but if you can help spread the word we would appreciate it."

"Certainly. I always enjoy the festival. When I don't have laboring mothers that is."

"Can't make any promises Doc."

"How are you feeling Regina? Any problems since you started taking those herbs? Any tenderness or discharge from your breasts?"

"Some tenderness but no discharge."

"After your milk does start I want to take a sample before you try breast feeding."

"When can I expect that to happen?" Regina asked.

"You have been taking the herbs for three weeks now so it can happen any time. When all the
craziness dies down, I would like to schedule a couple tests to see if your uterus has been repaired."

"Okay, we can do that." Regina answered. The Doctor left the room. Emma hopped off the table and put her clothes back on. "Do you have anything other places you need to be?"

"Need to? No. Want to? Yes. I want to see Blue. There are a few questions that I want to ask her."

"Wouldn't it be better to wait until you hear what Fiona has to say before you talk to Blue? I know Blue has all the answer you need to hear, but going there will out knowing exactly how to ask the questions, will not give you what you need. Remember what both Fiona and Nova said it is all in how you word the questions. If you ask the right questions she cannot refuse to tell you the truth."

"Okay I will wait."

"That's my girl."

"Do you have to go back to the office?"

"No, you?"

"I have all the files and requisition order forms I need. I can fill them in at home."

"Then my dear, let's call it a day."

They left the Doctor's office.
Chapter 41

CHAPTER 41

Emma walked into the dress shop looking for Milah. Milah walked out of the dressing room area when the bell above the door sounded. The shop was empty except for the two of them.

"Emma I heard you captured Cora yesterday."

"We did. Now only Owen remains running around. We have teams out constantly looking for him, but we have not been able to find him. Do you have any thoughts on where he might be comfortable hiding out?"

"I know he liked to spend time at that dive bar in the woods."

"We searched there."

"The owner has a secret room that leads to a tunnel."

"Where? That place is a shit hole."

"There is a door next to the so called bathroom that leads to the room. It is supposed to be an office, but is just a front for the tunnel entrance. It comes out a short ways away from the bar. But it is a quick escape for someone who is in hiding."

"Thanks Milah, I will pass that information on to Ruby. The second reason I stopped by today is to ask if your would like to meet Henry, your grandson?"

"Grandson? The child you and Baelfire had?" Emma nodded. "I saw him from a distance in the Underworld, but didn't get the chance to talk to him. Then Rumple threw me into the River Of Souls and I lost my chance. I lost all hope of ever seeing my son again. Meeting his son would be like seeing him again."

"He forgave you for leaving you know. Neal, Baelfire and I talked after he came to town. He realized that you found yourself in an impossible situation and that staying with a coward became too much. One of his regrets was that he never got the chance to tell you himself."

"He was the unfinished business that kept me in The Underworld. I never got the chance to tell him how very sorry I was that I didn't take him with me when I left."

"When this is all over, maybe you will have that chance." Emma put a comforting hand on Milah's shoulder. "Henry is in school right now, but tomorrow is the start of our Miner's Days. I will introduce you to Henry then."

"Thank you Emma."

"You're welcome."

Emma left the shop, leaving a happier Milah behind. Knowing that Ruby was probably getting some much needed sleep, she wanted to give her a chance to rest. Her next stop was to see Marco. She stepped into his workshop behind the toy shop he owned and operated. Business was good for the old wood carver, allowing him the freedom to hire apprentices to help with all the orders he had. When August was not out picking up supplies the town couldn't produce, he too helped out in
the workshop and store.

The old man looked up as she entered. His broad smile lit up his face. "Emma, come in. Come in."

"Hi Marco. I need your help."

"Of course come into my office." He led the way to his office, opened the door and turned on the light. He stepped back so that Emma could enter the small space. "Please have a seat. Can I get you something to drink? A coffee?"

"I would love a coffee, but I have to say no. I am on a caffeine restriction right now."

"Ah yes, the Bambino. What can I do for you?"

"I need a large enough storage building for holding all the emergency supplies in case the power goes out this Winter."

"The building should have heat? Yes?"

"Yeah so that the cases of water and emergency food don't freeze."

"I don't know of any places that are available right now."

"There isn't. What I want you to do is build one. It would need to be fifty feet by fifty feet, with shelves to keep the food off the floor."

"Where do you think you want to build this?"

"In that vacant lot by the school. The school is the evacuation center in case of emergencies. So the building should be near it. It would make accessing the supplies easier. The town owns that lot."

"I will take a look at it and have plans drawn up for you by Monday. We can get the permits we need and start excavating and pouring cement by the end of the week. Construction will take maybe a month."

"Thank you Marco."

"How are you and the Bambino doing?"

"We're good."

"An Regina, she is getting excited about the birth?"

"Definitely."

"The problem with The Shades it is over?"

"Just one more to capture and then it will be finished."

"Then we go back to normal then, yes?"

Emma laughed. "Marco, this is a town filled with living breathing fairy tale people, it will never be normal." Emma waved as she left the office and workshop. She checked her watch and found that it was almost time to meet Regina for lunch. She headed for Granny's

Xena and Gabrielle sat in a booth with Ruby when Emma walked in. "Any luck finding Owen?"
"None." Ruby answered. "We think he has gone into deep hiding."

"Have you tried that dive bar again?"

"Several times. We follow his scent into the bar and it disappears."

"There is an office of sorts that hides a tunnel out of the place."

"Who told you about that?" Xena asked.

"Milah."

"Then it is a good lead."

"I will get the Guardians on it right away." Ruby left the booth.

"Xena if you are able to capture Owen today, would you be returning before tomorrow night?"

"Why? I would think you would want us all gone as soon as possible."

"The Shades yes. I don't want to take the chance of them escaping. But for you, not really. I just want my son to get the chance to meet his other grandmother."

"Milah will not be returning with the Shades. She will return with us."

"Really? You are not just bull shitting me are you?"

"Emma, I told you that Milah will be reunited with her son. When we go back, she will be with us. As for how long we are staying, there is no way Gabrielle is going to leave before your child is born."

"You can do that?"

"We can. We are not bound by the same rules. Although we are immortals, we cannot remain forever, or we will lose our immortality."

"Really? I always thought that immortality was a forever sort of thing."

"It is and it isn't"

"Huh?" Emma said. "Is this one of those um what is it called," she thought then snapped her fingers, "Ambrosia things?"

"Exactly."

Regina entered and joined them. "Hello my darling. How was your morning?" She asked kissing Emma.

"Productive. Seeing how I couldn't stay home because of some surprise Zelena is cooking up, or go to my office because it's being painted, I did a few errands. First I went to see Milah, got a lead on Owen's whereabouts, asked her if she wanted to meet her grandson. She does and was very happy when I asked her. So I am going to introduce them at the fair tomorrow night."

"That is great."

"Then I went to see Marco to talk about the new building for the emergency supplies. He will have
the plans drawn up by Monday. I need to get all the permits applications filled out and submitted. He thinks he could start by the end of next week and take about a month to complete. Then I came here to meet you."

"That sounds like it was a productive morning."

"I did. And you will be proud of me. Marco offered me a cup of coffee and I turned him down cuz I already had the one I was allowed."

"I am always proud of you, sweetheart." Regina answered with a kiss to Emma's cheek. "What is on the agenda for this afternoon?"

"I thought I would take a hike up into the hills or take August's motorcycle for a spin."

"Emma Swan Mills, I certainly hope you are joking." Regina scolded.

"Relax, Gina I was joking. I had thought about going home to work on those requisition forms, but Zelena has banned me from the house for the day. What is she doing and why all the secrecy?"

"I have no idea."

"Would you tell me if you knew?"

"Being that it is a secret, probably not, but I really don't know. You can always use my office. I will be in and out most of the afternoon for meetings. You can even stretch out on the sofa if you want."

"I might just take you up on that."

"Then I will tell Constance to let you into my office."

They ate their lunches and left the diner.

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Shortly after dinner, the dishes were placed in the dishwasher. Henry went to his room to finish his homework. Zelena was in hers after giving Robin a bath. That left them snuggled on the sofa as the television played softly. A fire burned in the fireplace. Emma sighed in contentment and closed her eyes as she was held in Regina's arms.

"Tired?" Regina asked softly.

"Comfortable, happy and a little tired. I was able to get a lot done today."

"You did." Regina traced the tattoo on the inside of Emma's wrist with her thumb. "You never did tell me the story about this. What made you decide on a flower? Why on the inside of your wrist?"

"After I got out of prison, I was walking to my bug, that was brought to the prison parking lot, by I hoped, Neal. Even though he was the last person I wanted too see. I sat in the car and looked back at the prison, and thought that never again would I fall for anyone. Never again would I trust my heart to another. We both know what happened to that promise I made myself."

"Do you regret putting your heart in my hands?"

"Not for a single second. The love I thought I felt for Neal is nothing like the all encompassing love I feel for you. The type of love that when we are apart I feel empty."
"I feel the same way." Regina said. "Finish your story about the tattoo."

"There was a field near the prison, that was filled with yellow flowers. I used to see them every day from my cell and could even touch a few when I was in the exercise area. They were just dandelions. It's a weed more than a flower. Anyway I decided to get a tattoo of that flower on my wrist where I would see it every day to remind me that I never wanted to go back to prison. The nearest the guy could do was this. It's called a lion flower."

"Lion flower?"

"You sound surprised?" Emma sat up a little and looked at Regina.

"You know the story about when I was still married to your grandfather, and Tinkerbelle took me to a tavern and showed me a man with a lion tattoo that pixie dust told me was my true love."

"That was Robin Hood and you didn't go in."

"Yes. A few days later I went back to that tavern to see if he was still there. Where Robin was sitting, his body hid a drawing of a woman with a tattoo of a flower on her wrist. This flower." Regina tapped the flower. "There was still remnants of pixie dust on the drawing."

"Does that mean we are true loves as well as two people who were destined to be together?"

"I want that to be true." Regina said.

"So do I." Emma replied.

"Tink said Fairy dust doesn't lie."

'So you think it led you to a drawing of a woman with a tattoo of a lion flower?"

"Emma that drawing looked exactly like you."

"How can that be? I wasn't even born yet. Or even a twinkle in my father's eyes at that point."

"Fairy magic perhaps, but I really have no idea. It's funny but I haven't thought about that drawing in well over thirty years."

"Damn that give me the chills." Emma said rubbing her arms.

"It could also be because the fire is almost out. We have two choices here. We can throw another log on the fire or let it go out and go to bed."

Emma yawned. "I vote for bed. We can talk more there."

"You go up while I bank the fire and close the door on the fire place."

"Don't be too long babe, the bed is cold without you."

"Go. I will be up shortly." She sent Emma off with a tap on the butt.

Emma was already in bed when Regina entered their bedroom. Her glasses were perched on the top of her head and a book under her arm. She placed both on the bed before she headed into the bathroom to remove her make up and brush her teeth. She emerged clad in her silk pajamas, make up free.
The sight still took Emma's breath away. "You are so very beautiful. I can't believe how lucky a gutter rat ended up being."

Regina put her hands on her hips and looked angrily at Emma. "Emma Swan Mills, if I ever hear you refer to yourself as a gutter rat again, you will not be able to sit for a week."

"Hey, easy babe."

"No, Emma. You are not now nor have you ever been a gutter rat. Yes you were homeless and lived on the street. Yes you were a foster child, but that does not diminish you in my eyes. You are an incredible human being. Do i make myself clear?"

Emma smiled, got out of bed, went to the window and opened it. She pantomimed removing her skin which she tossed out of the window. Once the window was closed again she turned around. "Perfectly clear. No more of that other thing. I really like sitting." They laughed as the climbed back into bed. "I talked to Gus and Rowen today."

"How are they?"

"They are both great. Upgrades on the hotel are coming along. I told them I knew about the part they played in my coming to this world. Gus said they would be up in a couple weeks, now that I know. She said there are a few things that I need to know."

"More dirt on Snow?"

"I don't know. She just said we would talk. I asked if she could still handle a big ship. She can. Then I asked if she would be willing to take a ship back to Boston. She will and will have a crew waiting outside the limits to help her. Then I called Mr. Fahey at the museum and faxed him pictures of the Jolly Roger. He said he would contact his benefactor, what ever that is and get back to me."

"A benefactor is the person who is probably financing the project."

"He said he would have an offer in a few days. I also faxed him the lists of everything we took off the ship and want to get rid of. The benefactor will probably take everything."

"Don't you want to keep anything for yourself? Or something that Henry...?"

"Gina, there are things set aside for you and the children as well as several others who have helped me over the years, in the event, well in case."

"That sounds like you have it all planned."

"I hope so."

"Emma is there something you are not telling me? Is there something wrong with you?"

"Gina, I am fine. I just wanted to make sure everyone was taken care of in case I got stuck back in the Enchanted Forest or something." Emma winced in pain.

"Sweetheart?"

"Just a twinge in my back. Not used to all the walking I did today." She said changing positions. "Hey Gina, do you have a date for the dance?"

"You asked me that earlier in the week dear."
"What did you say?"

"I said yes you goof" Emma shifted again. "Your back again?"

"Yeah. Damn it didn't hurt downstairs"

"Would you like a back rub? It might help."

"I would love one." Regina went into the bathroom and returned with lotion and a towel. Emma turned onto her side as much as she could and raised her shirt. She pointed to the area that hurt. "Right here is where it hurts the most." Regina poured a liberal amount of lotion in her palm, rubbed her hands together to warm the lotion before she massaged Emma's back. "Oh god, that feels wonderful." Emma sighed.

"I have told you before, you don't need to call me god. Regina is fine"

"You have magical hands, Gina." Emma mumbled as the back rub relaxed her into sleep. Regina continued with the motions until she knew Emma was deeply asleep. She slowly stopped rubbing, pulled Emma's shirt down before she stood up. After pulling the blankets up she went into the bathroom to wash her hands.

Returning to bed she turned out the light instead of reading as she had planned, and quickly joined Emma in sleep. A short time later she was awaken by the restless motion next to her and a gasp of pain.
Chapter 42

Chapter Summary

The end is almost here as things start to get interesting for our ladies.

CHAPTER 42

The movements from Emma as she turned in bed several times woke Regina. The loud gasp of pain made her sit up and turn on the light. She looked at the clock and noticed that only an hour had passed since they had fallen asleep.

"Is it your back again?"

"Yeah. I can't seem to find a comfortable position tonight."

"Would you like me to rub it again?"

"You can't rub my back all night, Gina."

"If that is what you need me to do to make you more comfortable, then that is what I will do."

"I know. Maybe a couple of Advil would help."

"Do you really think you should be taking any sort of drugs right now?"

"Doctor Chrystal said I could use them periodically."

"Okay, but only one, but no more than that, understand?" Regina said and went into the bathroom. She returned with the pill and a glass of water.

"I understand, babe. The goober must be laying on the nerves or something. Hopefully she will move soon."

"Are you sure it is not something more like labor, maybe."

"It could be, but I don't think it is. Doesn't feel like labor. She is just laying wrong."

Regina looked at Emma. "If you are one hundred percent sure."

"Maybe not one hundred percent, but pretty close to that." Regina held out her hand with the pill. Emma reached for the pill and looked into Regina's worried eyes. "Honestly Gina, I don't think it is labor."

"You had better be right my dear." Regina said as she climbed back into bed and pulled Emma close. With a wave of her hand the light went out leaving the room in semi darkness. They both fell asleep, but that was short lived as Regina woke every time Emma tried to find a comfortable position.

The moonlight streamed in the window allowing Regina to watch as Emma yet again changed position. Emma knew her constant movement was keeping Regina from getting any sleep. She
eyed the chaise that her bear sat on and remembered how her back didn't hurt when they were downstairs. She slowly tried to leave the bed.

"Emma?"

"I'm sorry Gina, I know my tossing and turning are keeping you from sleeping, I am going to try the chaise for awhile. If it doesn't help, I will come back to bed."

"Or I could come with you and hold you."

"Oh I like that idea maybe even..."

"No my darling wife. You are in no condition to make love."

"It might take my mind,"

Regina interrupted her. "Do not even finish that sentence Emma Swan Mills. If you can behave yourself I will come over there. If not I will stay right here."

"I can behave. You are right, I am in no condition for anything other than trying to get comfortable. You will be safe."

Regina took her pillow and went to the chaise. Emma moved the bear. Regina snapped her fingers and the chaise expanded to fit them both. They both lay down. Another snap and they were covered by a blanket. A third snap and the light was extinguished.

Regina quickly fell back to sleep. Emma tried to keep her breathing slow and even against the pains that came and went. Finally around five the pains stopped and Emma was able to sleep. Regina felt the difference immediately as Emma relaxed when the pains stopped. With a wave of her hand they moved back to their bed. Regina hoped Emma would not wake up with the move. She quickly fell back to sleep until the beeping of her phone alarm woke her up. Regina groaned and slowly got up. She moved her pillow into Emma's arms. Emma murmured but didn't wake. She snuggled into the pillow and slept, showing Regina just how tired the younger woman was.

Regina took a quick shower and dressed for her day. 'Thankfully it is only a half day due to my only duty was to make sure all the vendors for the Miner's Days had their permits. Maybe I can talk Emma into skipping the opening ceremony of the fair. The Deputy Mayor can take over her duties.'

She softly closed the door as she left the bedroom. Henry was coming into the hallway. She motioned to Henry to return to his room. She followed him.

"What's up mom?"

"I need you to be very quiet going downstairs. Emma had a very hard night so I would like her to sleep a little longer."

"Is she all right?"

"Yes, she had a back ache and couldn't get comfortable enough to sleep. She only fell asleep about an hour ago."

"Was it labor pains?"

"She said no, but I hope to get her to the doctor."

"Mom will fight you. She is very stubborn."
Regina nodded. "She sure is. What do you know about labor and babies?"

"Mom, they taught us that in Health Class."

"What are you doing up so early? There is no school today with Miner's Days."

"I told Granny that I would help her set up the stand for the weekend."

"Then come downstairs and have a good breakfast first."

They walked quietly past the closed bedroom door and downstairs to the kitchen.

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Main street was closed off to regular traffic to allow the trucks carrying the stands for the town's vendors and games to go through without problems. Once the stands were in place, additional trucks would bring in food, games and merchandise for the fair before the five o'clock opening ceremonies. Regina walked through the fairgrounds and handed out the permits. She stopped to talk to everyone for a short time before moving to the next stand. Across the road in the empty field, rides were set up and being tested. Her brown eyes rested on the Ferris Wheel. Regina smiled as she remembered the fair she and Emma had attended during the Summer.

"That is quite a shit eating smile you are sporting, Regina." Ruby said.

"That sounds disgusting Ruby." Regina answered.

"Sorry, I forgot you are not up on all the slang. It means you are happy. Like the cat that ate the canary type sort of happy look. You know that self satisfied look?"

"Oh okay. I was just remembering the fair Emma and I went to last Summer. She was so happy."

"Kid in a candy store sort of happy?"

"Most definitely. We rode the Ferris Wheel there. I bribed the operator to keep us at the top for as long as he could."

"Did you put the time to good use?"

"What do you think?"

"I think that smile was proof that you did. Good for you Regina."

"Is there anything I can do for you?" Regina asked.

"No, I just wanted to let you know that Owen was captured around three this morning. Milah's tip led us right to him.""

"That is fantastic news. With all the Shades recaptured, we can all relax and enjoy the festival."

"I thought I would see Emma here today with you."

"She had a bad night and I let her sleep this morning. Hopefully she is still sleeping."

"Are you both coming tonight?"

"If I could get her to stay home tonight, I would, but she loves the Miner's Day dance. We will be
"here for a short time."

"I will see you then. I am heading home to get some sleep. I'm totally wiped."

"Where is that wolf stamina?"

"After forty eight straight hours, my tank is empty."

"Ruby that is obscene. You need to take better care of yourself." Regina scolded her friend.

"Granny has said the same thing. Dorothy, I hope understands a little. Talk to you later, Regina."

Regina laughed again and continued to hand out the permits in order to head home to Emma.

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Regina walked into the mansion. Hanging her coat in the closet, she headed into the kitchen where Zelena was trying to get Robin to eat her lunch. The little girl held her arms out to Regina.

"Gigi." She called out.

"Hi there little one. Are you giving your mama a hard time?"

"No." Robin said and crossed her arms in a pout.

"Don't believe her sis. It was the same at breakfast. I think she is missing Neal."

"It could be. Has Emma come down at all?"

"No. I heard her use the bathroom around eight, but nothing since then."

"I had better check on her. Be back shortly."

Zelena handed her a cup of coffee. "This may help."

Emma was still holding Regina's pillow even though her position had changed. Regina sat on the edge of the bed, brushed the blonde hair from Emma's face. She marveled at how young Emma looked when she was asleep.

Regina leaned over and talked softly into Emma's ear. "Sweetheart, it is time to wake up."

"Time zit." Emma mumbled.

"It is almost one in the afternoon."

"Really?"

"I brought you a coffee."

"Real stuff? You are a goddess." Emma said as she turned over and pushed herself into a semi seated position. She blew on the beverage before she savored the first sip of the rich beverage. The caffeine jolt jump started her brain. "That tastes great. Hey I thought you had to work today."

"Been there done that, handed out all the permits. It was a half day and now I am home with you." Regina said with a smile. "How are you feeling?"

"My back is not hurting anymore."
"That is good to hear. Emma I have a couple suggestions and I don't believe you will like either one."

"Then don't suggest either."

"I have to ask. I love you too much not to ask."

"Sweet talker. Ask away. I promise I won't get mad."

"Okay. I would like you to see Doctor Chrystal just to make sure that back ache was just that and nothing more."

"Babe it was just a back ache. That is a no on the doctor. What is the next suggestion?"

"How about we skip the festivities tonight. The Deputy Mayor can handle the opening ceremonies. Neither of us got much sleep last night. We could sit in the living room and watch old movies. You could even pig out on junk food. I won't say anything."

"No Gina, we can't. You are the Mayor, you have to be there. Plus we both love the dance. We don't have to stay long. Just a couple dances and maybe a ride. I heard there was a Ferris Wheel."

"It is not as high as the one in Bangor, but it is a decent size one."

"I also told Milah and Henry that I would introduce them tonight."

"Okay. I will take back that suggestion. We will go but only for a short time. With the condition that if you start feeling even the slightest twinge you tell me immediately and we come home or head to the hospital. Agreed?"

"Agreed. Shall we shake on it?" Emma joked. "Or maybe a kiss to seal the bargain." Regina leaned over and gently brushed her lips against Emma's before she pulled back. "That's it?"

"You my darling wife are incorrigible."

"Yep I am, but you love me anyway."

"Madly and with every fiber of my being. Finish your coffee and take a shower. I will go downstairs and fix you something to eat."

"Want to join me in the shower?"

Regina stood up. "Behave yourself Princess."

"As you wish, your Majesty."

Regina left, leaving Emma to finish waking up. Emma drank her coffee, stretched a long, satisfying, wake up stretch and felt the baby kick. She rubbed her stomach and yawned. "How about we come to an agreement also peanut. You see I really love dancing with your mama, so please stay in there a cook for a little longer. At least for tonight. There are a couple things I need to do that are really important. That is not to say that you aren't important. You are very important to us. This is the only chance your big brother Henry will get to meet his other grandmother. Can you behave and do that for him?" The baby gave another kick. "I will take that as a yes."

Regina lingered outside the partially opened door to make sure Emma didn't go back to sleep. She smiled when she heard Emma talking to their baby. It also made her tear up. She wiped a stray tear from her cheek. She left once she heard the shower turn on.
Regina stood on the ladder by the entrance to the fair. People gathered around waiting for her to open the festivities. Emma stood near the ladder with Henry, Zelena and Robin. She noticed Snow standing on the other side with Neal. Snow smiled at her, but Emma turned away. Regina waited until the clock chimed six. As the last chime faded away, she started.

"Ladies and Gentlemen of all ages, it is my pleasure to open the thirty fifth annual Miner's Days fair. While this is no longer the main fundraiser for the convent, the proceeds all go to worthy causes."

The crowd cheered as the make shift gate opened. Emma held her hand up to help Regina down the ladder. Leroy hurried to remove the ladder to stop any of the rambunctious children from climbing it and getting hurt.

"Did you see her?" Emma asked.

"Snow? Yes I saw her. Do you want to go talk to her?"

"Nope. Tonight is all about having fun. That means she is not a part of my plans."

"Good plan. What do you want to do first?"

"There." Emma pointed to the Ferris Wheel. "This time I get to bribe the operator for extra time at the top."

Regina laughed as she took Emma's hand for the short walk across the road to the rides. There was a short line for the Ferris wheel as it was still too light for the teenage couples to want to hide their actions from prying eyes.

"What time did you tell Milah and Henry to meet you?"

"Seven. It should be dark enough by then."

"How is she able to come and go like that without the woman falling into a coma?"

"I asked Gabrielle that. She said that the woman allowed Milah to use her body and left every night. That is how Milah was able to tell us where the other Shades were hiding. She roamed every night finding the Shades. There was some dizziness when she left the woman's body, but nothing like what the others are going through. They were taken over by force and the Shades didn't leave. So now they are unconscious."

Emma leaned over to the attendant and placed a twenty into his hand. "Could you give us a few extra minutes at the top?"

"Certainly. Anything for the Savior and Mayor." He helped them both into the bucket and made sure the bar was locked into position before starting the ride. They slowly made their way up. The ride stopped as he let more people on.

"Damn it." Emma cursed. "I just had a thought."

"That could prove to be dangerous." Regina said.

"Ha ha. I could have saved myself twenty bucks and just froze everyone for a few minutes when we got to the top."

"There is no law that says you can't still do that."
Then I think I will." Emma waved her hand after they were at the top freezing everyone in the area. She pulled Regina close and kissed her. Their tongues danced as Emma's hand slowly snaked down Regina's side to where the shapely legs parted. Emma rubbed her through the pants. She felt Regina shiver under her touch. They sat like that until they had to stop to calm that ragged breathing.

"Wow." they said together.

"Gina I love you." Emma whispered.

"I love you back my beautiful Swan." They kissed again. "I think you had better unfreeze everyone before we do something we might regret later."

"I will never regret loving you."

"I mean this chair is not exactly conducive to that sort of activity."

"I am up for the challenge." Emma said suggestively.

"So am I but our bodies will remind us of this tomorrow and not in a good way."

"You have a point." They kissed again before Emma waved her hand and unfroze everyone. The wheel started moving again. They went around several times before the ride slowed and they got off. Emma gave the attendant a thumbs up as they walked down the ramp.

"Want something to eat before we meet up with Milah and Henry?"

"Nah, I am not hungry right now."

"Are you all right? You never turn down food. Especially food of the artery clogging persuasion."

"I'm fine, Gina. It's just a little indigestion right now. Come on, I want to win you a bear to keep mine company." They walked to one of the booths that had rows of balloons tacked up on the back board. "How many do I have to break to win one of the big bears?" Emma asked.

"For all the both of you have done for this town, you can have it for free."

"Nope, it won't be the same. I have to win it for my lady."

"Okay Emma. You break twelve balloons and you get your choice."

"Twelve out of how many darts?" Emma asked.

"Fifteen darts and no magic."

"Deal no magic." Emma picked up the first dart, aimed and threw it. A green balloon popped. The second dart quickly followed with a red one going down next. The next to break was a blue balloon followed quickly by a yellow one. She continued until she had broken eleven balloons and had four darts left. She picked up the dart, took aim and as she released the dart, the baby gave a kick and the dart missed it's mark. Emma took a couple deep breaths. Regina placed her hand on Emma's arm.

"Hey?"

"I'm okay. the baby decided to kick at the wrong time."
"Uh huh."

Emma picked up one of the last three darts, took a deep breath and threw. It missed.

"The offer still stands Emma. You can quit now and still get the choice of a big bear."

"Take him up on his offer, sweetheart." Regina said.

"Losing confidence in me babe?"

"Never happen."

Emma smiled, picked up a dart, put one hand over their baby, took a deep breath and threw the dart. The balloon popped. "Pick your prize babe." Emma said.
CHAPTER 43

Regina carried the large bear around the fair for a short time before she snapped her fingers and the bear disappeared. Emma paced as they waited for Henry and Milah to show up. The colorful lights of the fair surrounded them and rivaled the stars of the clear Autumn night.

"Will you relax." Regina said. "They will be here."

"I know, Gina. They both promised they..."

"Moms." Henry yelled as he and Violet ran up to them. "Am I late? Is she here yet?"

"Not yet, but she should be here soon. Oh wait there she is."

Milah walked slowly towards them. She was nervous and it showed. Emma went to meet her.

"You look scared and nervous?"

"I am."

"Relax, Henry is looking forward to finally meet you. Before we do that, did you get the chance to talk to Xena?"

"I did. I can't believe it I will be able to be with Baelfire again."

"Believe it. Give him our love."

"I will. Emma he was your past. He came into your life when you needed him. Regina is your present and future don't let anything come between you."

"We won't."

"I may have already been dead when we first met, but I am happy we did meet."

"So am I. Come on time to meet your grandson and his girlfriend." Emma took Milah's arm and led her over to Henry. "Milah this is your grandson Henry. Henry this is Milah, your grandmother."

Milah held her hand out to Henry to shake. Emma looked at Regina who nodded. She pushed Milah as Regina gave Henry a push towards them until they hugged.

"Can I call you grandma?" Henry asked.

Milah laughed. "I hoped you feel comfortable enough to do just that, Henry." They moved apart. "You look a lot like your father when he was younger."

"I didn't know him for very long before he died."

"The length of time you know someone doesn't matter. It's the quality of the time you spent together that does matter."

"Um grandma I would like you to meet my girlfriend Violet. Violet this is my grandma, Milah."

"It is a pleasure to meet you ma'am." Violet said.
"And I you, Violet." They shook hands.

"Would you like to come with us to enjoy the fair?" Violet asked.

"I would like that very much, but the last thing a young courting couple needs is a chaperone, especially a grandmother."

"Not at all. Please join us. I know Henry would really like to spend some time with you. And there is a dance tonight."

Milah looked at Emma and Regina who both nodded. "I would like that very much. I do remember loving to dance when, well, when I was alive."

Regina pulled Henry aside and slipped him extra money. "Show Milah a good time." She sent him off with "Not to late."

"I won't." He kissed both his mothers and held both Violet's and Milah's hands as they walked off.

Emma leaned against the light pole as she felt the slight cramping she felt earlier. She kept her breathing as normal as possible to not alert Regina. Regina would insist on calling the doctor or even going so far as to poof them to the hospital if her knew.

"That went better than I expected." Regina said as she watched the three walk off happily chatting.

"Yeah, I'm glad Violet invited Milah to go with them." Emma replied when the cramping eased.

Regina turned when she heard the strained sound of Emma's voice. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, babe. How about getting something to eat?" Regina looked closely at her. "Oh shit." Emma swore as she noticed Snow storming towards them.

"Who is that woman with Henry?" Snow demanded.

"I don't see how that is any of your business Snow, but that is Henry's grandmother."

"I am his grandmother." Snow complained.

"Careful Snow, your jealousy is showing." Regina said.

"Newsflash for you Snow, a person can have more than one grandmother." Emma stated angrily. "Where is Neal? Did you get tired of him and stick him in a tree somewhere?"

"How long is she staying?"

"That is also none of your business. Come on Gina, let's get some food." Emma took Regina's hand and they walked away, leaving an angry Snow behind.

Snow hurried off to find Blue, talking to herself. "Blue will know what to do to bring Emma back to my side. She will be able to fix this problem."

Blue was making the rounds of all the stand making sure they had everything they needed to make the fair a success. Snow ran up to her. "I need to talk to you." She said.

"Certainly Snow. I am busy right now. Can it wait until Monday?"

"No it cannot wait until Monday. I need your help now." Snow demanded.
“Snow not everything in this realm revolves around you. I have told you before that here you are not the pampered spoiled princess. No one is going to crawl across broken glass to please you. I will have time on Monday, after the festival is over to talk to you. Take it or leave it.” Blue said angrily and walked away from Snow.

Emma sat down at one of the tables set up for the fair goers to sit and relax while they sampled the food and drinks the fair had to offer. The crowd had swelled since the fair opened at six. Older couples strolled through while the younger ones played one of the many games or lined up for the rides. This was the first time rides had been added to the fair. Regina conjured the rides after remembering how busy the rides were at the large fair they had attended in Bangor. They had enjoyed those rides and now so did the people of Storybrooke. Emma admired the thought and detail that Regina went through for the town.

She felt another pain start and tensed hoping it would end before Regina returned. She would freak if she knew about the pains. Emma wanted at least one dance before they left. She rubbed the baby. "Hang on just a little while longer peanut."

"Here is your milkshake, extra thick just like you wanted." Regina said as she placed the cup in front of Emma. She had another for herself. "Are you sure you don't want something more than a milkshake?"

"Maybe later."

Regina looked at the tenseness in Emma. "Are you certain everything is alright?"

"Yeah she is just kicking a lot right now. I am going to be bruised inside."

"I thought Zelena said that babies quieted down right before birth."

"All babies are different. Gina, we created this little bit, so there is no way she will be quiet and demure."

"I will have you know princess, that I was once very quiet and demure."

"Oh yeah? When was that your majesty? When you were six?"

Regina laughed. "No, more like three or four. What about you?"

"Never. I was trouble from the get go. Ask any of my old foster parents. They will tell you that. Hell even my parents threw me away minutes after being born."

"Emma sweetheart, you are not trouble. You are a work in progress and quite a challenge at time, but never trouble." Regina said. "While I was waiting for our milkshakes, I saw Milah with Henry and Violet. They were laughing and talking. It looks like they are having a good time."

"I'm happy they are getting this chance."

"I'm surprised you didn't want to go with them."

"This is Henry's chance to bond with his grandmother. He will not get another chance to do that and he didn't need his mothers around."

"That is true."

"There was an added bonus to that. It royally pissed off Snow."

"Do we have to?"

"I also saw her talking to Blue. Neither of them looked happy. In fact Blue looked really mad at Snow."

"Points to Blue."

"Be careful sweetheart. I have seen that look on Snow's face before. She is up to something."

"Then we will deal with her together."

"You have that right my darling," Regina answered. "How is your shake?"

"Oh um," Emma took a pull on the straw. "It's good. What did you get?"

"Chocolate of course."

"We will never agree on which flavor of milkshake is better."

"If that is the only thing we disagree on we are lucky."

"Oh wait, there will be plenty of things we will disagree on when the peanut arrives. Is it too hot? Too cold? Can she have sweets like I want or only on special occasions like you want?"

"You will be the fun mother while I end up the strict mother?"

"Yeah that is what I was thinking. One thing we have to be careful of is her playing one of us against the other."

"What do you mean?"

"Say she wants to go somewhere and you say no because of course you are the strict mother. So then she comes to me, the fun mother and asks the same thing hoping for a different answer."

"Then we just have to tell her that she has to wait until we discuss it. But I don't think we will have to worry about that for several years."

"I know, but,"

"No buts sweetheart. Before we start making all these rule she will have to follow, two very important things have to happen."

"What are those?"

"First she has to be born and secondly she will need a name. We can't call her peanut or goober or little bit or hey you."

"That would be cruel, Gina. How about this, we have a couple dances then go home and decide on a name tonight. We don't sleep until we make that decision."

"Okay, we have a plan." Regina said. Emma took a sharp breath. Regina watched her closely. When Emma relaxed, Regina smiled. "So what is the reason or excuse this time? Heartburn? The baby kicking? Or is there another reason I don't know about?"
"How long have you known?"

"Since the Ferris wheel. Why Emma?"

"Because you said that one twinge and we would leave and I really wanted to enjoy the fair a little, and have a couple dances with you."

"In the last two hours, you have had three maybe four labor pains?" Emma nodded. "That puts the pains thirty to forty minutes apart. You have some time before we have to disrupt Doctor Chrystal's fair time."

"Why do you put up with me?"

"I love you."

"That's it? Because you love me?"

"I could say that you are my penance for all those years of being the Evil Queen, but you would know that I was lying. So yes, dear heart. That is all there is to it. I love you."

"You had me worried babe. I love you too."

Regina looked past Emma to see Snow coming their way. "Damn it. Snow is heading this way and she looks angry."

"Tell you what, I will grab our shakes and you poof us away from her."

"Deal." Emma grabbed their drinks. Regina waved a hand and they disappeared. Snow got angrier and stormed off to look for them again.

They reappeared near the street where the dancing would take place. Ruby and Dorothy sat at one of the large tables and waved them over. "How did you manage to get tonight off Rubes?" Emma asked.

"I appealed to Granny's romantic side."

"She has a romantic side?"

"She does, but it is going to cost me. I have to work the booth all day tomorrow. We both are." Ruby answered. "I gotta tell you Regina, she was not happy about the short notice you gave everyone about the fair. she understands but is not happy. Speaking of not happy, we saw snow about fifteen minutes ago. She looked like someone pissed in her cornflakes."

"She actually prefers oatmeal. But the answer is I did."

"Good for you." Ruby said. "What happened?"

"I told her to butt out of my life. Add that to her seeing Henry with Milah and she got jealous."

"Watch your self Emma. She is up to something."

"When isn't she. Snow cannot stand not being first in everyone's heart and life." Regina said.

"I don't understand. I thought Snow was your friend?" Dorothy asked.

"She is my friend. That doesn't mean I don't see her faults or know what she is capable of. What
Regina said is true. Snow hates not being the pampered princess anymore. She hates not being loved by every person in her kingdom. That place has been taken over by you Emma and she is jealous."

"I never asked for or wanted that crap." Emma complained. She tensed and took a sharp breath as another pain started.

"That was thirty two minutes since the last one." Regina said checking her watch.

"Last one? What last one?"

"Labor pains."

"You should be at the hospital. I saw Doctor Chrystal over by Granny's stand. I will go find her." Ruby stood up.

"Ruby stop. We have a long way to go yet." Regina said grabbing Ruby before she left. "My girl want a couple of dances first. So as long as the pains don't get below fifteen minutes apart, she will get those dances."

"Have you picked out a name yet?" Dorothy asked.

"Would you believe us if we said no?"

"You are kind of running out of time here."

"Well we can tell you with absolute certainty she will not be called Cora or Snow."

"That will not make Snow happy. She was saying last week that she hoped you would name the baby after her so that there would be another Princess Snow."

"Then she can name her next baby that cus we certainly aint." Emma said.

"We saw Gabrielle earlier. They seem to be enjoying themselves." Dorothy said. "Do you know how long they will be staying?"

"Gabrielle said they would stay until after the baby is born."

"Maybe they will come back for a visit."

"Anything is possible. They can sorta come and go as they please." Emma replied.

"EMMA." Snow's voice carried over the crowd.

"Damn it what do you want?" Emma snapped.

"How long is that woman going to be here?"

"Let me ask you one question first. Where is Neal?"

"He is at the play area the Fairies have set up. Now answer mine."

Emma turned and whispered to Regina who nodded and waved her hand. Snow disappeared and reappeared at the town line.

Snow looked around. "God damn it." She shouted when she saw the Welcome to Storeybrook sign.
She started to walk the three miles back to town. She pulled out her phone as she walked.

Emma’s phone rang in her pocket. She pulled the phone out, looked at the display and hit the end call button to let it go to voice mail. Regina’s phone rang and she saw the caller ID and did the same as Emma. They looked at each other and laughed.

"Snow is going to be so pissed at you." Ruby joked.

"Let her." Regina said.

"Going to be pissed?" Emma said at the same time. They all laughed.

Their table filled when Zelena, Henry, Violet, Milah, Xena and Gabrielle joined them. The juke boxes lit up and were enchanted to play. As Mayor and Savior, they started the dancing and for a short time were the only couple on the road dancing. Soon the whole area set aside for dancing was filled.

"Do you remember the first time we opened the Miner's Day Dance?" Emma asked.

"I sure do. It was the year after you broke the first curse."

"You were well on the road to redemption."

"You looked so scared."

"I wasn't scared."

"Yes you were my darling. Admit it."

"Okay I admit it. I was scared but not for the reason you are thinking. I was scared that you would feel or hear how fast and hard my heart was pounding. Then you would know that what I felt for you was more than just friendship." Emma said and stiffened as another pain started.

Regina checked her watch. "Twenty five minutes, Emma. Do you want to sit down?" Emma shook her head no. "You are stubborn my darling wife."

"Yeah, but you love me anyway." Emma said as the pain ended. "I want to stay right here in your arms and dance as long as I can."

"Hey moms." Henry called out as he danced over to them with Milah.

"It looks like you are both having a good time."

"Henry has been showing me the sights through the eyes of a native. I have been trying all sorts of fair food. It has been great.. I will have so much to tell Bae when I see him. He will be happy that we got this chance to spend time together. I do feel guilty that Henry is dancing with me and not his girlfriend."

"It was Violet's idea. There is enough of me to dance with both of you. Maybe even my moms later."

Emma laughed and gasped when she felt the rush of wetness.

"What is it Emma?" Regina asked.

"Um I think you had better call Doctor Chrystal. My water just broke."
"Some one see if they can find Doctor Chrystal," Regina ordered.

"I will find her." Ruby said and ran off. Regina and Henry helped Emma off the dance floor, with Milah and Dorothy close behind. They were soon followed by Gabrielle who pulled Xena towards Emma.

"Mom do you want me to find grandma Snow?" Henry asked.

"No." Emma answered quickly through clenched teeth as the pain hit it's apex. She had a tight grip on Regina's hand.

"We do not want her told yet Henry. She will only be a nuisance. Something you mom does not need at this point."

"Okay. Is there anything I can do?"

"Nothing right this minute, Henry. Nature has to run it's course now."

"Come here, kid." Emma said holding out her hand to their son. He sat next to Emma. "This is a part of life and loving someone. What you can do for me, for both of us, is try not to worry. Women have been having babies since the dawn of time. I have your mom and a really good doctor to help bring your little sister into the world."

"Can I come to the hospital with you?"

"There is no sense Henry. You will not be allowed in my room for at least an hour as there are all sorts of things the doctor and nurses have to do to get us ready. You know how uncomfortable the chairs are in the waiting room. I..." She stopped talking as the next pain started. Emma held tight to Regina's hand and breathed through the contraction. When the pain ended she was able to talk again. She released Regina's hand. Regina flexed her fingers to restore the circulation cut off by Emma's death grip.

"I see my streak is still going strong." Doctor Chrystal said with a smile.

"Sorry to interrupt your night Doc." Emma said. The baby had other ideas tonight.

"Not to worry, Emma. I only stopped by for an hour for some dinner before I returned to the hospital. I am on call tonight. How far apart are the pains?"

"She had one just before her water broke, and another about two minutes ago. So I think fifteen minutes apart." Regina answered.

"Then it is time to head to the hospital. Do you have your car close by, or would you rather go by ambulance?"

"We have a much quicker way." Regina said handing her car keys to Henry. "It's at the school. Drive carefully."

"Will do mom." Henry went and kissed both his mothers. "I will stop by later."
"Hey kid, you can do something for me. My suitcase is in the downstairs hall closet all packed and ready to go. Would you stop home and get it for me? It has everything we need."

"I will pick it up. Love you both."

"We love you too." Regina said. "Ready sweetheart?"

"Wait for me." Gabrielle said running to them. "There is no way I am going to miss the birth of this child."

Gabrielle took Emma's hand as the three disappeared.

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Emma walked around her hospital room with one hand holding the I.V. pole and held Regina's with the other. When the pain started she held onto the bed rail and tried her practice breathing. It really didn't help all that much. Regina rubbed her back.

"This, is, so, much, better," She stopped when the pain hit it's peak. "Than, when, I, had, Henry."

"How is that, sweetheart?"

"Here I can walk around. There I was handcuffed to the bed and could do nothing but lay there and hurt. I had no one there who really cared, only the doctor, nurse and prison guard. Here I have family that loves and supports me."

"That you most certainly do, my darling. I only wish there was more I could do."

"You rub my back, babe. I had back labor with Henry also. No one offered or was even willing to do that then."

"How are you doing Emma?" Doctor Chrystal asked as she walked into the room. She had changed into scrubs when she returned to the hospital.

"Just peachy Doc. Walking helps and Gina has been taking really good care of me."

The doctor went to the machines and watched all the readouts. "Your contractions are ten minutes apart and last about a minute."

"Is that all? They seem to go on forever."

"That is natural, Emma. Now comes the part you hate. I need you to lay down so that I can check your progress."

"That is my cue to leave." Gabrielle said as she left the room.

Regina helped Emma to the bed. She held Emma's hand as the doctor donned a latex glove for the exam.

"You know the drill Emma, just breathe normally. This will not take long."

"Yeah Doc. Been there, done that, many times and I still don't like it."

"I will tell you what I have told all my expectant mothers. It all depends on whose hand is doing the probing." She said with a smile. "You have quite a group of family and friends in the waiting room. Its funny they all seem to be ignoring Snow. Is there something I show know about, or have to alert Security over?"
"Snow pulled a lot of crap that is coming back to bite her now." Regina said.

"You are doing good Emma. You are about seven centimeters dilated." Doctor Chrystal said as she removed the glove. "Do you feel up to a few visitors?"

"I guess as long as one of them isn't Snow. We are expecting Henry with my suitcase."

"He is there with your case. I will allow two at a time for five minutes each. You will not want a steady line of visitors shortly. As far as Snow goes, I will ask her to leave the hospital willingly or call Security to escort her out."

"Thank you Doctor." Regina said.

"Emma when you start to feel the urge to push, I want you back in bed. Until then you can be up and about." She left. Within minutes, Henry and Zelena walked in with Gabrielle. A pain hit as they entered the room.

Henry's face paled as he dropped the suitcase when he watched Emma grab the rail while Regina rubbed her back. "Holy shit." He said. Regina gave him a dirty look for swearing. "Sorry mom." He mumbled as he bent down to pick up the case he dropped.

"Thanks for bring my case, kid." Emma said.

"I won't ask how you are doing. I saw that when I came in. Man what they teach us in school is nothing compared to the real thing."

"Yeah. Just imagine trying to push a watermelon through a straw. Not easy to do."

"We can only stay for a couple minutes. I just want to warn you that Snow is royally pissed that you zapped her to the town line."

"She was lucky it was Gina who zapped her. If it was me I would have sent her over the line." Emma said.

"There is more to this than her just being pregnant isn't there?" Zelena asked.

"Yeah, there is so much more." Emma said.

"We will tell you everything after the baby is born." Regina said.

"Okay. We'll leave for now, but we'll be back later." Zelena said.

"Good We want to hear how everything went with Milah." Regina stated.

"It went great mom. She would like to see you but will wait until after the baby is born." Henry said. He kissed both his mothers and left with Zelena following closely. She blew them a kiss before she shut the door.

No sooner had the door close, it opened again with Ruby and Xena entered. Both were angry.

"Snow has disappeared. Doctor Chrystal told Snow she had to leave willingly or Security would escort her out." Xena said.

"She gave in too easily. Asked the doctor if she could use the bathroom first. Said she was sick to her stomach. Being pregnant, the doctor told her okay. Ten minutes went by and she didn't come out. She must have snuck out when we weren't looking. I have been trying to follow her scent, but
with all the hospital smells, I lost it. I'm sorry. But I got Guardians searching for her."

"Not your fault Ruby." Emma said and gasped as the pain started. "Damn, this, is, the, strongest, one, yet." She gasped. "Get, the, doctor. I, feel, like. pushing."

"Damn Em, it was only five minutes since the last one. Time to get you back into bed sweetheart." Regina ordered. Ruby left to find the doctor as Regina helped Emma into bed.

Xena motioned for Gabrielle to come into the hall. "Gabrielle, I need you to stay with Emma until Snow is found."

"Do you think she will try to hurt the baby?"

"I am not about to take that chance. She is mad enough to do something stupid."

"Is there any chance she was taken over by a Shade that we don't know about?"

"No, Emma would have noticed right away." Xena answered. "This is the real Snow we are seeing. She is not able to hide her jealously any longer."

"I will stay with Emma."

"You be careful my bard."

"That goes both ways, Xena."

Xena kissed the top of her head. "Love you Gabrielle."

"Love you too, Xe." Xena left searching for Snow.

Doctor Chrystal hurried into the room while Gabrielle waited in the hall. "Emma do not push until I check how things are developing."

"Okay but hurry doc. The urge to push is strong."

"I will. You relax and breathe normally." Emma closed her eyes as she waited for the doctor to finish. "Emma on the next contraction you can push. You are fully dilated and ready to go. Regina there is a set of scrubs for you in that cabinet if you plan on being here for the birth. If your friend plans on being here, she needs to put on scrubs also."

"I most certainly will be here doctor. She is my child also." Regina said. She handed Gabrielle a set of scrubs. "You can use the bathroom, I have a quicker way." Regina waved her hand and she was changed.

"Show off." Gabrielle laughed.

"Emma after the next pain, I need you to scoot down to the foot of the bed. Regina you sit behind Emma to help her push."

"What do you think, Gina," she stopped as the pain started."

"Go ahead and push Emma." Doctor Chrystal said.

Emma took a deep breath. Holding the bed rails she sat up. With her teeth clenched and her eyes closed she pushed and felt the movement inside her. When the pain ended, she lay back against the raise bed panting.
"Good job Emma. As soon as you catch your breath, move down to give Regina room to sit behind you."

Emma moved down allowing Regina to get behind her. Regina's legs were next to Emma's. She lay back against Regina and held the tanned strong hands.

"You started to ask me something?" Regina said.

"Yeah, what do you think of the names Regan or Taylor?"

"They are both good names. What about her middle name?"

"We could used yours."

"Which one? I have several. Royals never have just one middle name. My unofficial name is Regina Grace Katherine Beatrice Mills."

"Wow I only knew the first one. We can't use mine cus I don't have one. The only reason my name is Emma is cus that was the name on the blanket I was wrapped in."

"That is so unlike Princess Snow." Doctor Chrystal said.

"I was born, and thrown away naked. They couldn't even take the time to put clothes on me. Just wrapped me in a blanket and threw me away, Doc."

"I didn't know you had such strong feelings about that Emma. I apologize."

"That's okay. Can we just not mention Snow any more. This is a happy time for Gina and I. Her name just makes me angry."

Emma felt another pain start. She grabbed Regina's hands and pushed.

"You are doing great, Emma." The doctor said from her place at the foot of the bed. Emma lay back against Regina panting. "She right sweetheart you are doing..."

"Please don't say great. I sure don't feel great."

"No I don't suppose you do, but it is almost over. In a few minutes we will have a beautiful daughter in our arms."

"Which of your middle names do you like the best?"

Regina laughed. "You are asking that now? This is one hell of a time to ask that."

"Takes my mind off, oh shit." She stopped as another pain started.

"Push Emma push." Doctor Chrystal ordered. I can see the top of her head. Okay Emma, relax, take a deep breath and let it out slowly."

"Are you sure you want to go through this Gina?"

"I can't let you have all the fun, sweetheart."

"Fun? You have a warped sense of fun babe."

"Well I am the Evil Queen."
"Former Evil Queen. Shit shit shit."

"Deep breath and push Emma. That's it. Fantastic. A few more like that and your daughter will be here."

"I don't know if I can. I am so tired. Gina?"

"I know my darling. That is why I am here. Lean on me. Use my strength and we will get there together."

Their clasped hands glowed as Regina sent Emma the strength she needed to deliver their child.

"I can feel it Gina. Ahh." Emma panted as another pain started. She pushed with their combined strength.

"Emma stop pushing." The doctor ordered. "On the next contraction, keep your eyes open and on the mirror behind me if you want to see your baby born. One more big push and she will be out. Okay Emma, big push. That's it. Keep going. Big push. Just a little more. Stop pushing. Let the contraction finish pushing her out." They watched the mirror and witnessed the birth of their daughter. The sound of crying filled the small room as she voiced her displeasure at leaving her warm home to come into the cold air. "Needless to say you have a beautiful and very loud daughter. Regina would you like to do the honors and cut the cord?" The doctor asked as she lay the baby on Emma's hips after applying the clamps. Regina climbed off the bed and walked to where the doctor waited. The Nurse handed Regina the scissors. "Take a deep breath and cut between the clamps." Regina brought the scissors to the cord with shaky hands. "That's it. One snip. Perfect." The cord was cut and their daughter was on her own. The nurse took the baby to clean her up and take he vitals.

"I want to hold her." Emma said in protest.

"You will when Jane is finished with her. You have a couple more minutes of work to do, then we will get you cleaned up and she will be all yours."

"Gina is she all right. Really all right?"

"Don't you trust me to tell you the truth Emma?" Doctor Chrystal joked.

"Yeah, but you are looking at her as a doctor and not through the eyes of a mother."

"She is beautiful Emma." Gabrielle said from her spot near the changing table the baby lay on.

"Gina?"

"She is incredible, All her fingers and toes and has a head full of dark hair."

"How can that be? Gabrielle said all her descendants are blondes with green eyes."

"I also said that there were two exceptions to that. Henry and this child."

"Here is your daughter Emma." Nurse Jane said as she handed the baby to Regina who placed the child in Emma's arms. "She is seven pounds one ounce and twenty inches long."

Emma looked at the baby. "You were right, she is beautiful." She said with tears flowing from her eyes. "When Henry was born, I didn't dare hold him. I knew if I held him, I would love him too much to do the right thing and let him go. I knew I would not be able to take care of him. Giving
him up was one of the hardest things I had ever done. Oh we need to call Blue. She needs to perform the binding spell."

"I will call her. I know you gave Henry up so that he could have his best chance in life. Henry knows that too. Why are you thinking about that now?"

Emma shrugged. "Can we just chalk it up to hormones?"

"Certainly. No regrets about the past, Emma. Not today."

Doctor Chrystal watched them and noticed the wet areas on Regina's shirt. She whispered to the nurse who left and returned with a clean top and a box. "Regina your milk has come in. I need you to use this pump so that I can test it. Here is a clean top for you to put on after you finished. You can used the bathroom while Emma rests. Then we will take the baby to the nursery."

"You said she could stay here with us?" Emma protested.

"She will. We just need to run a few tests and bring her back to you."

"Tests? What tests?"

"Just routine tests that we need to run on all newborns. She will get a very detailed physical to make sure there are no hidden problems, and a bath, then will be back with you in a couple of hours No new mother wants to watch the physical."

"Can I ask a favor?"

"Sure I will do it if I can."

"Until they find Snow, I would like someone to watch over her. I don't trust Snow not to do something to hurt her. Can it be done?"

"It can."

"Someone of my choice?"

"Yes. We have no way of knowing who is loyal to Snow, so it will be your choice."

"Thank you. Gabrielle will you watch over our daughter?"

"It will be my pleasure and honor Emma."

Emma kissed the baby's dark head before she handed her to Regina who did the same before laying her in the bassinette. Nurse Jane rolled the bassinette out of the room with Gabrielle following closely.
Chapter 45

CHAPTER 45

Emma was asleep when they brought the baby back to her room, with Gabrielle close behind. Regina sat next to the bed holding Emma's hand. She looked up at them as the nurse wheeled the crib in. Her eyes were bloodshot from the lack of sleep.

"You should go home and get some sleep, Regina." Gabrielle whispered.

"I can't. My place is here by Emma's and our baby's sides. I have to watch over them."

"I will stay here."

"No thank you Gabrielle. With Snow out there somewhere, I am not leaving them alone and unprotected. I know you can handle yourself in a fight. But you don't have a vested interest in their well being, I do. It is my job to keep them safe."

"You have magic to send Snow to the town line and I don't. I understand."

"That's part of it Gabrielle. I promised Emma that I would stay. She refused to rest in case Snow showed up. Neither of us trust her."

"What did you find out when you visited your friends that caused this change towards her?"

"I won't go into the details, as there are more we have to find out, but I will say this. Snow is not the pure, selfless, and kind person she wants everyone to think she is. She is very selfish woman who can and will put her desires above what is good for others."

"That is no surprise. We see a great deal from The Fields. What surprised me was that you forgave her for what she did to you. I would not have been able to do that."

"I did it for Emma. She wanted a relationship with her parents and one with me. In order to do that we could not have been at each other's throats like rabid dogs. So I forgave Snow."

"Did she ask you to do that?"

"No, it was my choice to drop the vendetta against Snow. Snow never did. She is just very underhanded and sneaky in how she operates."

"She's a bitch." Emma said groggily.

"Hey sweetheart, how are you feeling?"

"Like I was run over by a bus and twenty pounds lighter."

"Twenty pounds from a seven pound baby? That is quite a feat."

"Did they bring her back yet?"

"They did and no you cannot hold her. She is sleeping. When she wakes up, then yes, but not until then."

"Did they find Snow?"
"Security said the have her on tape leaving the hospital. Ruby has Guardians keeping an eye on her at all times."

"Can I have some water, please?"

"Of course." Regina poured water into a cup, added a straw and handed it to Emma. Emma sucked greedily at the straw until half the cup was empty. "Hey, hey, hey, take it easy. There is more if you want it and can keep it down."

"Has the doctor come back."

"Not yet, but it is almost five in the morning, she is probably sleeping. If there were any problems she would have been here to tell us." Regina said. "While you were sleeping, I did some thinking about baby names. I like Taylor better than Regan."

"So do I."

"Taylor it is. What about her middle name?"

"We could use yours. Taylor Katherine Swan Mills."

"I like that. Oh Gabrielle, her name is a secret until the official naming ceremony."

"I will keep your secret." Gabrielle said.

"Gina were you serious about royal babies having more than one middle name?"

"It is not a hard and fast rule. If you want her to have just one than that is what we will do."

"I had a thought." She motioned for Regina to come closer so that she could whisper in her ear. Regina smiled. "I think that is a fantastic idea. Pretentious I like it."

"Coming fror someone with six middle names." Emma joked.

"Four, Princess, I have four official middle names."

"What about unofficially?"

"Then yes, there are six. The two I don't ever mention are because they are my mother's and grandmother's names."

"We can forget them and just stay will the official names."

"Thank you."

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Snow left the hospital after she heard the baby had been born. She couldn't get close to Emma's room and only got a tiny glimpse of the baby as they wheeled her to the nursery. There were Guardians and Security walking the halls that cemented her decision to leave. On her way to her car she remembered hearing stories of the old woman who lived in the woods that dabbled in potions. "Perhaps she can give me a potion to make Emma forget she was mad at me and come back to my side."

The tower clock struck three when Snow started her car and drove home. The large wolf followed
her all the way to her home, where he kept watch.

With Neil at Ashley's and David still unconscious in the hospital, the house was empty. She walked into the house snapping all the lights on as she walked through the quiet house. She went directly to the liquor cabinet and pulled out a bottle of David's whiskey. She poured a generous amount into a glass and took the bottle to the couch. Putting the bottle on the coffee table she took a healthy swallow of the amber liquid and choked on the strong burn as it made it way down to her empty stomach. Gasping she waited until the burn faded before taking another drink. Finishing the first she poured another.

The Guardian watched from the yard as Snow drank herself into a stupor. He regained his human form and called Ruby.

Regina gave into the sleep that had been pulling at her for hours. She slept with one hand on Emma and the other on their daughter. Xena walked in and watched as Gabrielle placed a blanket over Regina. She bent over to look at the sleeping baby.

"She has Regina's hair and Emma's eyes just like the prophecy said." Gabrielle whispered to not wake up the three sleeping people.

"How are you doing my bard?"

"I wouldn't say no to a few hours sleep."

"There is a car waiting to take you back to Granny's. I will stay here."

"Do you expect trouble from Snow?"

"Not for the present time. At the last report, she was drinking herself unconscious so they will have a few hours peace." Xena said. "Have they come up with a name yet?"

"They did but I am sworn to secrecy. Apparently Royal keep the baby's name a secret until a special naming ceremony."

"How is it you know then?"

"I was here when they decided."

Xena sent her off with a kiss and sat in the chair the bard had vacated. The blinds were closed against the dawn's coming light. She watched silently as a nurse entered, checked all the machine's readouts before going to the window to open the blinds.

"Do you have to do that?" Xena asked.

"I hate to wake her, but breakfast will be here in thirty minutes. She might want to wash up before it arrives. And I have to bring the baby back to the Nursery for a bath and change of clothes. I don't want them to wake up and find her gone." Xena nodded. The Nurse gently shook Emma's shoulder. "Emma?"

"Too early." Emma mumbled.

"I know, but breakfast will be here shortly. You might want to wash our face and hands in order to wake up."
"The baby?"

"She is fine. We are taking her for a bath and change of clothes. After breakfast if you feel up to it you can have a shower. Have you gone to the bathroom since your baby was born?"

"Not yet."

"You may want to try. They will not discharge you until the water works start."

"Okay, I will give it a try."

She lowered the bed rail which woke Regina. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing is wrong, babe. I'm sorry I woke you. They want to make sure my body functions are working so that I can go home."

"I will help her Nurse Jayne." Regina said.

"All right, but you have to be truthful. If she doesn't go, she can't be discharged. It is important for her health and well being."

"I am right here, people." Emma protested.

"Yes you are. And my darling you are famous for ignoring medical advise and your own health. That is not going to happen any more."

Emma smirked and shrugged her shoulders. The Nurse handed her a cup.

"We need a urine sample if you are successful."

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Emma lay on their bed as Regina and Henry brought the white bassinette into their bedroom. Robin sat next to Emma and watched them. Zelena held the baby and smiled.

"I bet you are happy that is all over, Emma."

"I had hoped that she would have the full nine months to marinate but yeah not having her kick my bladder every five minutes is great. That bassinette from Xena and Gabrielle is a nice surprise."

"You have a few more surprises yet if you feel up to it."

"I am."

"Mom what did the doctor say?"

"She gave the baby a clean bill of health." Regina answered.

"What about mom?"

"I am good too, Henry."

"Not quite, Princess." Regina scolded. "She said you are to take it easy for at least a week."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, all the doctors say the same thing. Rest, food and plenty of fluids are the universal prescription no matter what."

Regina rolled her eyes and sighed. "Advice you will listen to, right?" Regina said with her patented
"Um sure babe."

"So if you are up to it, Henry and I would like to give you a surprise."

Emma stood up and took Regina's arm for support as they followed Zelena out the door. Henry carried Robin as they walked across the hall. Zelena handed the baby to Emma, waved her hands and removed the magical protection she placed on the door. The air wavered. She unlocked the door and pushed it open. Zelena stepped aside to allowed Emma and Regina to enter. Inside the room was a fully stocked nursery. The walls were painted a light purple with a pale yellow on the moldings. There were paintings of puppies playing and kittens sleeping in the sun, with baby animals in fields. Cartoon characters lined the top of the walls near the ceiling. The furniture was the same white as the bassinette and included a crib, dressing table, with shelves for clothes, diapers and blankets, and a three drawer dresser. A well cushioned rocking chair sat near the window and a colorful mobile hung above the crib. A shelving unit held powder, wash cloths, soap and towels.

"Zelena, Henry this is fantastic. That you both." Regina said.

"Yeah, thank you. You guys did a great job. How did you know this is the furniture we were thinking of getting?"

"We have our ways." Zelena said.

"We love it. So this is what you were doing that day you kicked me out of the house."

"Guilty as charged. With everything that has happened since you came back from your honeymoon, and the pregnancy being sped up, I knew that outfitting a nursery was the last thing on our minds. So we did it for you. Now you can concentrate on coming up with a fitting name for my niece."

"We chose a name, sis."

"Really? What it is?"

"It will be revealed at the naming ceremony on Monday at Granny's." Regina said.

"What? We have to wait until Monday? That is so not fair Moms."

"Sorry Henry, blame it on royal protocol." Emma said.

"It is only for a couple days, Henry."

The baby started fussing with signaled she needed food and changing.

"Saved by the hungry baby. You take care of her while we get dinner started."

Emma carried the baby to the changing table. She unwrapped the blanket, undid the snaps at the bottom of the sleeper before removing the soiled diaper. Taking the wipes she cleaned her bottom, and put on a new diaper. Redoing the snaps, and wrapping the blanket securely around her, Emma carried the baby to the rocking chair where she sat down. Undoing her blouse and bra she offered her breast to the baby. Her tiny mouth latched on and suckled. While she nursed, Regina used the pump to express her milk. Later they would change places with Regina nursing and Emma using the pump. Before they left the hospital, Doctor Chrystal delivered the good news that Regina's milk
was safe for the baby to drink.

Emma hummed a song while she rocked with the baby.

"That song sound familiar? What is the name of it?"

"It's from the movie, Dumbo. The cartoon version that I saw when I was five or six in a group home. It's the lullaby Dumbo's mother sings to him when she is locked up." The baby cried when Emma switched breasts. After she stopped again, Emma brought her up to a shoulder where she gently patted the small back until a delicate burp sounded. "Good girl." Emma said as she used one hand to adjust her bra and shirt. Dimly they heard the doorbell ring. Emma rocked with the baby while Regina finished up with the pump. Regina poured the milk into a container that would go into the freezer for emergencies. Once the pump was cleaned it was returned to the shelf for the next use.

"Do you want to leave the bassinette here and use the baby monitor or do you want it downstairs with us?"

"I want her to be where we are for now." Emma answered.

"Downstairs it is." Regina waved her hands. "I put it in the dining room."

They could hear the sound of raised voices through the closed nursery door. Snow's shrill voice could be heard. "I will be right back." Regina said.

"I demand to see my daughter and granddaughter."

"Demand all you want, Snow. It won't make it happen." Zelena answered.

"I have the right to see them."

"No you do not have any rights here. You barge into our home and make demands. This is not your kingdom and you are not the spoiled pampered little princess here." Regina snapped. "Especially not after the bullshit you have pulled and what we have discovered. Emma and the baby are resting and are not to be disturbed. You are no longer welcomed in our home. Until such a time if any, Emma chooses to forgive you it will remain that way. Which at this point I will advise you to not hold your breath waiting for it to happen. Unless you want to be poofed back to the town line again, I suggest you leave now."

"When do you think I will be able to see the Emma and baby?"

"When she is ready and not one single second before then."

"You finally have your revenge don't you Regina. You have turned my daughter against me."

"No I, Snow. You did that all by yourself. Leave our home now."

They stared at each other for several heartbeats. "You will regret coming between my daughter and I Regina." Snow shouted, turned and slammed out of the house. The pictures on the wall rattled from the force.

"That went well." Zelena joked.

Regina looked at here as she felt the laughter bubble up and she doubled over in laughter. "Damn sis, I really needed that." She said once she stopped laughing.
"Is she gone?" Emma asked from the top of the stairs.

"You couldn't tell from the slamming door?" Zelena asked.

"I just wanted to make sure."

"It is safe to come down dear." Regina said as she walked up stairs to help Emma down.

"I can walk by myself, babe." Emma protested as Regina took her arm.

"I know you can, but you don't have to. Especially not after giving birth less than twenty four hours ago. I don't know why the doctor didn't keep you for at least a couple days."

"Would you have come home to sleep if she did?"

"Probably not."

"There you have it then."

"Have what?"

"One of the reasons why I am home." Emma said. "I am joking Gina. This isn't the Enchanted Forest. Here if there is a uncomplicated birth, mother and child are sent home hours after giving birth. There women probably are kept on bed rest for days afterwards right?"

"Days? Maybe for regular people, they were up and about after a few days. Pampered royals were on bed rest for nothing less than two weeks." Regina laughed.

"I bet they even had one of those, what are the called? Someone who nurses a baby for another?"

"A wet nurse?"

"Yeah that's it. Did they?"

"Oh yes. Heaven forbid a royal should have to actually nurse their own children."

"Yet you took herbs to be able to do just that. Why?"

"I may have been born a princess, but I only wanted to be a regular person. I never wanted to be a Queen."

"You did it so that you could be a regular person and because you love us."

"Give that woman a ten pound box of chocolates. This way neither of us are exhausted taking care of her. Let's get you fed before she wakes up demanding attention again."

They walked into the dining room where the baby was placed in the basinette.
This is it friends, the last chapter of this story. I know I left a few holes and dangling plot lines. That is the set up for the next story. Many thanks for those who have stuck by me for the journey. Your words of encouragement and comments have been a boost to my ego. Thank you again.

CHAPTER 46

The sign on Granny's Diner read:

CLOSED FOR PRIVATE FUNCTION.

ENTRANCE BY INVITATION ONLY.

WE WILL REOPEN AT OUR REGULAR TIME TOMORROW.

Streamers were draped around the windows, and counter. Little twinkling lights chased around the room. Signs were hung around the room that read CONGRATULATIONS SWAN-MILLS FAMILY, WELCOME LITTLE ONE, AND WELCOME TO THE NEW PRINCESS.

The counter was filled with platters of food as the invited guests all brought their favorites. The diner quickly filled with their friends. Zelena carried her daughter, while Henry escorted his mothers and little sister inside. The guests cheered and clapped, startling the baby in Regina's arms. She started to cry. Regina moved the baby to her shoulder and gently rubbed her back. The baby quieted and fell back to sleep.

"Like mother, like daughter." She said with a smile.

Henry walked them to their usual table. Friends walked over to offer congratulations and get their first look at the child. Ruby and Granny brought them each a plate of food and a cup of coffee.

"Don't worry it's unleaded. It won't affect your nursing." Ruby said with a wink.

"Unleaded?" Regina asked.

"That means it is decaffeinated." Emma said.

"Oh okay."

"Eat up you two. You will both need your strength to properly care for this little one." Granny ordered.
"Then you can make your announcement." Ruby leaned in and whispered to them. "Before Snow finds out and crashes the party."

"What?"

"She has been sniffing around for information. I overheard her trying to bribe people to get her a picture of the baby."

"That bitch." Emma swore. "Did any one take her up on her offer?"

"Nope, not a one. That I know of anyway. I know Snow pulled a lot of crap in the Enchanted Forest. Is there something else that I don't know about?"

"Yeah Rubes, there is a whole lot of somethings that you don't know about. Things that are still coming to light." Emma said.

"Ruby we don't know everything Snow did. We are still finding out some of her machinations. We will tell you once everything calms down a little." Regina added.

"Good then we can compare notes.” Ruby left them to eat.

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The food had been eaten, drinks flowed freely. The guests glanced at their table hoping to spur them into announcing the baby's name. The longer they sat the more glances they received. Xena and Gabrielle sat at their table and noticed the glances.

"I think the natives are getting restless, babe." Emma said.

Regina looked at their friends. "I think you are right." Regina said as she stood up and held out her hand to help Emma stand. "Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming tonight for the naming ceremony. I wish we could say that we thought long and hard about choosing just the right name for our daughter. But that would be a lie. Emma's lie detector would be pinging off the walls and maybe putting someone's eye out.” Their guests laughed. "Honestly we thought we had several more months to choose, but curses and magic had other thoughts on that matter." Regina said.

Emma took over. "The name we chose has some family ties as is the custom. But we also wanted a name that was unique. Our daughter is loved and will be loved and will grow up in this town where she will hopefully continue to work towards the betterment of all it's citizens."

"So without further speeches Emma and I would like to introduce Storybrook's newest resident. Her official name is Princess Taylor Katherine Gabrielle Xenia Swan Mills."

"No." Came the shout as Snow stormed into the dining room from the back hall. "You cannot name my granddaughter after two strangers you met two weeks ago. That is not how royals name their children. Those two will be gone in a couple days and will never see her again. I am her grandmother and should carry my name." She stomped over to Emma.

"Snow this is a private, by invitation only function." Granny said angrily. "Produce your invitation or you will have to leave before I have you arrested for trespassing."

Zelena, Ruby, Henry, Xena and Gabrielle moved to stand by Regina and Emma. "After all the shit you have pulled, you were not invited Snow." Emma said. "Please leave or you will find yourself at the town line again."
"I will not leave until I see my granddaughter."

"So be it." Regina said and waved her hands. Snow disappeared. "The walk will cool her off." Regina said with a smile. "Now for our second announcement. Emma and I would like to ask Zelena and Ruby to be Taylor's god mothers and Henry to be her god father."

" Heck yeah, moms." Henry said and hugged Regina.

"What Henry said, sis." Zelena said.

"It would be my honor." Ruby stated.

"Now that the official business is finished, it is finished, right?" Regina nodded. "Then let's get back to the party." Granny ordered. Now that the intruder had been taken care off. they sat back down as the party continued.

Blue came to the table and sat down across from them. She leaned over so that they would not be overheard. "We need to talk."

"Sure. What's up Blue?" Emma asked.

"Not here. Will you be free tomorrow evening after our friends leave?"

"We are. That sounds serious." Regina said.

"It is. Will seven be a good time?"

"That will be fine."

"Be careful around Snow or any of her followers. There are rumors flying..." she paused. "No I will tell you tomorrow." Blue left them. Xena and Gabrielle took her place.

"We want to thank you for including us when naming your daughter."

"There was no question in our minds. You are her great, great, one hundred times or something like that great grandmothers."

"It may be more than that Emma." Gabrielle said as she reached out to touch the baby.

"Would you like to hold her?" Emma asked.

"May I?" Emma nodded and stood up to hand the baby to Gabrielle.

"Blue said you were leaving tomorrow?" Regina said.

"Why so soon?" Emma asked.

"Yes we have to leave tomorrow." Xena said. "We have to get the Shades in the urns to where they belong and will never be able to escape again."

"Our time is growing short. We can feel the pull of The Fields. It gets stronger with each day." Gabrielle said.

"We have enough Ambrosia for one more day."

"You will still be taking Milah with you?" Emma asked.
"Yes. What I told you was the truth. She is coming with us and will be reunited with her son."

"Thank you. Xena I know at times I gave you and Gabrielle a hard time."

"Hard time?" Xena asked. "Emma at times you were a royal pain in the ass. You are stubborn with more courage than is good for you. Much like my bard here."

"Hey my stubbornness kept your ass in one piece many times Warrior Princess."

"That you certainly did." Xena pulled her in close and kissed the top of her head.

The late afternoon sun was headed to the horizon leaving the forest darkening in the rapidly dimming light. The clearing around the protective dome contained several Fairies and Guardians when Regina and Emma arrived. Xena and Gabrielle walked in with them. The baby was bundled against the chill of November. They waited for Blue to arrive with Autolycus and containers that held the Shades. Henry walked in with Milah and Ruby. There was an air of sadness as they prepared to say goodbye to their new friends.

"Will we ever see you again?" Emma asked.

"It can happen, Emma. We are not held by the same rules that dictate other souls. We can petition the powers that be to come back because we have a family connection. Or sent out to help as we were this time. I know Gabrielle will want to keep an eye of this little one." Xena answered.

"Just Gabrielle?" Regina asked.

Xena shrugged and smiled. "Where she goes, I go. We both want to watch her grow up. And keep an eye on you all. Watch out for Snow. I have been hearing a lot of grumblings from her. Watch your backs. Snow is more like my father that I thought."

"What do you mean?"

"That the only persons who matter to them are themselves. They have to be first and the best although I regularly beat him many times."

Zelena walked into the clearing with Blue and Autolycus. Several Fairies carried the bags that held the containers.

"Autolycus how did you manage this? You are a Shade and it is still light out."

"Not anymore." Zelena said. "I went to the Convent to do that takeover thing we did the first time. I ended up getting knocked on my ass. He is no longer a Shade."

"I have finally earned my way out of the Shadow Realm after centuries of punishment. I have finally paid my debt."

"Congratulations, Autolycus. Now just keep your ego under control and don't let any god talk you into stealing from other gods."

"If you are all ready, we will take the barrier down." Blue said.

"It's time to go back to The Fields." Gabrielle said as she hugged Emma and Regina and kissed the baby. Xena did the same. Milah walked over with Henry. "Thank you for giving me the chance to meet my grandson. Henry, I will pass along everything you asked me to. Maybe some day we will
"Meet again."

"Milah, thank you for your help with the Shades and even for your help in the Underworld. I never got the chance to say that." Emma said.

"We are grateful for all your help." Regina added.

"You are both welcome."

"Tell Neil, Baelfire, that we think of him."

"Remember what I said Emma. He was your past. Regina, Henry and Taylor are your present and future. Never lose the love you have for each other. Fight hard to keep that love alive, strong and growing."

"We will, Milah."

She gave one last hug then turned to join the others at the barrier. Blue pointed her wand at the dome and began to speak softly in words that only the Fairies understood. As she spoke the Fairies raised their wands and multicolored jets of lights came from the tips. After several minutes, a break in the dome appeared and rapidly expanded to become an opening large enough for them to walk through. The bags of urns were put through first. When the last sack disappeared, Milah went to the opening, turned, smiled and waved and walked through.

Xena and Gabrielle stepped up to the opening, and like Milah, stopped, turned, smiled and gave a final wave before they too disappeared. The hole in the ground closed.

"I am going to miss them."

"Even after all the times you yelled and fought with them?"

"Yeah well can we just chalk that up to pregnancy hormones? Besides I couldn't argue with you without my insides twisting into a very painful knot. Who else could I yell at?"

"Let's go home sweetheart so we can take care of Taylor before Blue arrives."

Emma nodded. They left with Henry as the Fairies finished sealing the hole in the ground.

He sat on the boulder looking out at the never ending field of wild flowers. The colors so bright they almost hurt his eyes. The sun was warm on his back and the slight breeze ruffled his brown hair.

The three women approached slowly.

"What if he still hates me or hasn't forgiven me for leaving his father?"

"Standing here will not give you the answers you seek. Milah this is what you worked for. Go and talk to him." Xena said as she gave Milah a small push.

Milah took a deep breath and walked slowly towards her son. She turned once to look at Xena and Gabrielle who both nodded. She squared her shoulders and walked closer.

"Baelfire?" Said said softly.
He turned to look at her. "Mama?" He said as he walked towards her. One slow step at a time until he stood in front of her. "Mama?" He said again and opened his arms to pull her tightly in for a hug. "Mama." He said for a third time and cried."

"Bae, my son." Milah whispered.

Xena and Gabrielle watched them hold each other before they turned walked away.

THE END

(for now)

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