The Beach House

by flslp87

Summary

When fate is involved, can Emma and Killian change their destiny, so their love transcends time and space to give them their happy ending?

Notes

A few years ago I watched a movie that recently my muse grabbed on to as the perfect Captain Swan story. I hope you find it as interesting to read as I have found it to write.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

When fate is involved, can Emma and Killian change their destiny so their love transcends time and space to give them their happy ending?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

---

Emma

Emma rolled over in bed and glanced across the room at the clock whose dial was glowing in the still dark room. Almost time to see the magic she thought. Bunching her pillow up, she crossed her arms and rested her chin on them while she stared out the window. As it was dark there was not much she could see but she knew in just a few minutes the sky would become a cornucopia of colors. Slowly the horizon lightened from black to gray and then she could see the first tint of color peeking over the water. Gradually the reds gave way to orange which gave way to yellows. The sun gracefully following to sit idly on the water welcoming a new day. Beautiful couldn't even describe the view.

Smiling serenely, she sat up on the side of the bed and hearing the clicking of Rumple's nails on the tile turned her head toward the sound. "Good morning to you, handsome. Ready to face the day?" Rumple sat down next to her legs and laid his chin on her knee. Reaching down to scratch his head she mentally went through the last few things she needed to do before they were ready to leave. "That's enough for now," she said. Rumple lifted his head and barked. "Ok boy, come on". Leading the way down the hall she opened the door and let him out. Leaving it propped opened so he could come back in when he was ready, she went to have a cup of coffee and the last of the donuts she had bought yesterday.

Carrying the pastry and coffee, she strolled over to an oversized chair next to the window, sinking down into it, and curling her legs under her, she got lost in the view outside. The ebb and flow of the waves were truly hypnotic and while she knew she would miss it she realized being closer to the hospital made so much more sense. She had only been back in South Florida for a few months but was happy for the time spent here, in this beach house, to rejuvenate her soul before starting a position at Bayside General. After the slower pace of the hospital where she had completed her residency, she knew working in a large medical center might take some adjusting but she felt ready. Family was one reason she came back to the Miami area and Mary Margaret and her new beau, David were all the family she had left so being close to them was very important. And since moving to this house, it seemed she had gained one more family member as an eerily perceptive mutt had adopted her.

Looking back toward the door, she saw Rumple coming into the house and quickly got up to feed him and give him some fresh water. Watching him eat she thought about the day he had shown up here. It happened to be the day that the movers were bringing all of her furniture in and she had been
pointing out the rooms for placement and once they were all done and gone, there he was, laying in
front of the fireplace, as if he belonged. She had asked the local vet as well as the local supermarket
but no one claimed him nor had they seen him before. It was as if he had just appeared. But now
the black and white border collie mix was hers and she had no desire for that to change.

Noting the time, Emma scurried around taping the remaining boxes closed and putting aside the ones
she planned on taking in her bug. She jumped in the shower and was just finishing dressing when
she heard the moving truck drive up. Rumple barked to alert her of their arrival and opening the
door, she ushered the men in and they started to work. Before much time had passed, all her
belongings were packed up and heading to Miami and her new apartment. “Well, boy are you
ready?” she asked Rumple. He cocked his head to one side as if contemplating what she had said
but remained silent. Emma carried the last box out to the bug and loaded it, then with a last look at
the home she had so felt at peace in, she whistled for Rumple. He trotted out toward her and then sat
down at the end of the walk. “Come on boy, in the car,” she said. Finally, with a last look back
toward the house, he scampered into the back seat and was ready to go. After leaving a letter in the
mailbox for the new tenant, Emma was ready to leave.

Driving north toward Miami, Emma felt a sense of excitement. She was moving into a new
apartment, in the same building as her sister in every way but by blood, Mary Margaret and in a few
days starting a new position at one of the most prestigious hospitals in South Florida. Rumple sat
behind her, ears and eyes alert, trying to figure out where he was being taken and every few minutes
he would lay his chin on her shoulder and whimper. Emma was able to calm him down by
scratching him on the head a few times and then he would resume looking out the window.

As the buildings got taller and the roads busier, she had to keep both hands available for driving and
thankfully Rumple seemed to find something in the backseat entertaining for a while. Arriving at her
new apartment building, Ocean View Luxury Apartments, Emma drove into the parking garage,
located her spot and parked. Since there was a strict leash law, much to his displeasure, she secured
Rumple's leash and after picking up the few boxes she had, rode the elevator up to the ninth floor.
Her apartment was located at the end of the hall, which didn't make it so easy for moving, but for the
great view, of both water and city, she was willing to deal with a bit inconvenience.

Once in front of her door, she set the boxes on the floor, dug out her new key and let herself in.
Emma picked up the boxes and led Rumple in, letting the door shut behind them. The place wasn't
large but had two bedrooms, a small kitchen, dining room and living room and the best part was the
screened balcony off the living room that looked out over the Bay. And while Rumple wouldn't
have a yard to run around in, like he had at the beach, she or Mary Margaret could easily take him
regularly to the dog park that was close by. She was close enough to walk to work, could jump on
the People Mover, a train that just traveled in the downtown area, or if necessary the drive would be
easy.

Walking out onto the patio, Emma could smell the sea and hear the waves, even nine floors up in the
air. And the view was amazing. Looking to her right she could see up the beach, sand, sea goers,
brightly colored umbrellas, and people walking, and looking to her right, there was the hospital
where she would work and Bayside Marketplace and the docks with small and large ships, even
noticing one that could have been featured in pirate movies.

Moving back inside Emma started unpacking a box of kitchen dishes since Mary Margaret and
David were supposed to stop by with food, for which she was glad. Just as her stomach growled in
protest there was a knock at the door. Rumple barked, ran to the door and jumped up, knocking his
paw against the lever like doorknob, opening it to the company. "Rumple, no!" Emma ran and
grabbed his collar to keep him from jumping up, "Come on boy, back up." He looked at her and
barked once, to which in a much sterner voice, Emma repeated, "Rumple, quit talking back." Finally
getting the hint, he turned around and pranced into the room expecting that the company would follow along.

"Emma!" Mary Margaret, or as she was affectionately known, M&M squealed, and pulled her into a hug, "You look great. Relaxed and a little color in your cheeks."

Emma smirked at her sister, "Ugh, thanks. So what you're saying is I looked like crap the last time you saw me?"

M&M rolled her eyes, "We brought pizza and beer. Hungry?"

Emma's stomach growled again, "Starving, come in. We just got here."

David followed M&M in smelling of garlic and cheese and lightly buzzed Emma on the cheek as he walked past her, "Emma," he said in greeting.

Emma was glad to get to spend some time with her sister and David so she could get a bit more aquatinted. Shutting the door, she followed them into the kitchen, passing out plates and napkins and they all sat down to eat the delicious smelling pizza.

Mary Margaret talked about her job at the University of Miami, where she was a professor of English literature, a love she had shared with her father, and how hectic things were at the beginning of a new semester. After finishing a particularly funny story, she looked down and laughed louder. Emma assumed she was still laughing about the story so just kept eating her pizza until M&M said, "Emma?"

Emma looked up, "Hmm?" Her mouth was still full.

She was pointing to her lap, "Shouldn't you introduce me to your friend since he already has his head on my thigh?"

"Oh is he giving you the sad eyes too?"

M&M looked up at her, "How did you know?"

Emma just shook her head. "Meet Rumple. He looks like a dog but is actually half human, half magician. His guilt trip is quite effective." Snapping her fingers to get his attention, she reached behind her and gave him a bone she had been saving. "Sometimes a pain in the ass, most of the time a lot of company. And I'm hoping your new best friend since you did say you'd walk him when I'm at work. You didn't forget, right?" Then she gave M&M her best puppy dog impression.

Her sister just shook her head, "Stop. You look just like you did when we were ten! Of course, we'll be friends. I'll take David and he can help with poop patrol."

David held up his hand, "Hey don't bring me into this, sounds like a sibling thing," and promptly went back to his pizza.

With Rumple entertaining himself on his bone, the conversation moved from topic to topic with David talking about Bayside General where he also worked and M&M filling Emma in about several friends from high school that still lived in the area. Once dinner was done and Emma was caught up, they left her and her faithful friend behind and she got busy unpacking the boxes. She had a couple of days to get settled and then it would be time for the next chapter in her life to begin.
As Killian drove south toward Key Largo, he was paying attention to his surroundings but also thinking about all that had changed in his world over the past eight months. From making the life altering decision to relocate back to the States to be close to his brother and to try to make amends with his father, to selling his business in the U.K. and buying a business here in Florida. A business that had been on the verge of bankruptcy. And once the paperwork had gone through, the many decisions that had been made to change the name and move all of the ships from their berth in the Tampa Bay, on the west coast of Florida, to the Biscayne Bay on the southeast coast of Florida. He was pleased with the progress so far. His existing four ships were all slowly making a steady climb with their monthly bookings and he was looking to add a new ship that was just for sightseeing tours up and down the coast between Fort Lauderdale and Bayside docks. He hoped with a simple tour that didn’t include serving alcohol, he could hire local kids, but for now, he would have to contend himself with knowing that he was able to help kids from the local University. At least it was something.

He turned into the drive leading to the house that he had not seen in many years. The driveway was sandy so he kept his speed steady and followed the tracks that had been left by others at some point in the past. Making a mental note that the sand needed to be smoothed out, he continued on until the trees cleared and the house and the blue Atlantic Ocean spread out before him. Stopping his SUV, Killian caught his breath at the view of the sea. His love for it had begun when he had been a lad and his father had taken him and Liam out on a small sailboat on the English Channel. That had also been the summer they spent at a cottage in Milford on Sea, a beautiful seaside town, before moving to the States and everything slowly falling apart.

Once his mother had left his father and she had taken him back to England with her, they had settled in Lymington, Hampshire and it took him some time to realize that there was no going back to what things were. After that realization, he made it his mission to see as many smiles on his mother’s face as possible. Quickly learning that doing well in school was a sure way to get a smile, he excelled. And as he moved from school year to school year and then on to attend the university, graduating with the highest honors, sometimes it seemed, that she was her old self. He discovered her love for classical literature and read Crime and Punishment, Persuasion, Wuthering Heights and The Count of Monte Cristo as well as others and they would discuss them for hours. She was his mother, his friend, his champion and his sounding board. And then she got sick and died.

Afterward, he spent time communing with a bottle of rum, blaming his father and planning his revenge until one day he came across a letter his mother had written to him shortly before she passed. The letter became his motivation to clean up his act and work to become a better man, the man his mother would have been proud of. Not a drunken sot who was thirsty for revenge. He picked up the letter that was on the seat next to him and read it for what felt like the millionth time;

My darling son Killian,

If you’re reading this my life has come to an end but, son, your life has just begun. I know you, and I know you are going to be angry and hurt and lost and will be looking for someone to blame. I also know that while you’ve worked very hard not to let me see it, you will end up blaming your father and waste precious time plotting. Don’t be like Edmond Dantes, in The Count of Monte Cristo, and waste your life on revenge. A mother’s wish for her child is not for them to spend their life looking back but to move forward.
Your father and I made peace with each other many years ago. I was Penelope to his Odysseus and we both thought we would have time. But fate was not kind to us. Fate chose a different path for us and now it is time for you to follow yours. Killian, find your path. Make it one of love and light and happiness. Find that special woman to love and when you find her, hold on to her with all you have. Love is precious and you, my son, have such an immense capacity for it that when you find her, you will know. That is my wish for you. When you're ready the Beach House is waiting for you. Fill it with love. I will be watching over you, my son, as you grow to be the very best man you can be.

Your loving mother

It took him but a few days to sober up and make plans. He took a position with a gent who owned several vessels, both small and large, and learned to Captain each boat. The vessels were used as ferries, taxis and charters and when the man decided to retire, he allowed Killian to purchase his business for a good price. Killian in turned took the business and made it larger and more productive until a year ago when he finally felt healed enough that he could come back to the States after so many years away, forgive his father and renew his close relationship with his brother Liam. Oh, his father had sent Liam to England to spend the summers with his mum and him and Killian had fond memories of them, but the last few years their relationship had felt strained and Killian was unable to pinpoint exactly where things went wrong. He remembered all the times Liam would come visit. They would get up early and take their small sailboat out on the water, drifting peacefully and talking about all of the things they had missed out on while apart during the year. And since they had so many friends who looked forward to the boys being together they joined in huge games of British Bulldog and Rounders. It was always sad when summer was over and they had to be separated again. Anna had always been blue for a while after Liam was gone but then with the invention of skype, they kept in touch, which was nice. And making plans for the next summer always started as soon as a new year begun.

Thinking about Liam and his summer visits always brought a smile to his face. Especially as Liam got older and more immersed in the American culture and slang that didn't always transfer when in Britain. One incident in particular never failed to make him laugh out loud and even to this day bring a hint of red to his brother’s cheeks. It was a warm spring day and the boys had gone out with friends sailing and then were walking through town, being loud and obnoxious, as only teen boys can be, and Liam was explaining about his new leather fanny pack that he had gotten from some girl back in Florida when they walked by some ladies from a local church. At the end of the day when Liam and Killian walked into the house, their mother was hanging up the phone and turned to them with a very surprised look on her face. The boys looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders, then back at their mom, "What?" they said in unison.

Anna had looked at each of them, separately, "Really boys, couldn't you have stayed out of trouble for at least one day?"

Liam frowned at their mother, "We didn't do anything mum. And if someone told you we did, they were liars. And we know how much you hate liars."

"Yes Liam I do hate liars, but I am talking about," and then his mother got a hint of pink in her cheeks and paused, as if looking for the right word, "lady parts," she finally settled on, "in front of the ladies from our church, well," and then she stopped again as if truly scandalized.

After she stopped talking, all of a sudden it was as if a light went off in Killian's head and he starting laughing really hard. His laughter triggered his mother's laughter and Liam just stood there, like "what?" Finally, their mother took pity on him and explained that "fanny" in the UK refers to 'lady’ front parts.' Liam got really red in the face before finally allowing himself to laugh too.
As the memory washed over him, Killian couldn't help himself and started laughing. When he finally got himself under control, he looked around to make sure that he was still alone because if he wasn't, he was sure people would be looking at him as if he were a loon.

Of course, as brothers will do, especially his brother Liam, there came a time when the situations were reversed. Looking back on it as an adult, Killian could see the humor in the situation but as a young teen lad, he had been mortified. It had been a holiday from school and he had gone to Miami to visit, and since it was cold at home, he made Liam spend a lot of time outdoors. Their father was having a few business acquaintances over for a simple celebration and had told the boys to entertain themselves. They were in the back swimming in the pool with a couple of Liam's friends when one of the boys, John, he remembers, was messing around by the pool and slipped and fell into the pool upside down. When he came up his face was bloody and Killian, without thinking, had run into the house yelling that John had fallen 'arse over tits' into the pool, to his embarrassment his father had been standing in the middle of the great room, surrounded by several women who looked at him in shock. Needless to say, his face got quite red, his father was unhappy and Liam still held it over his head whenever possible.

Their father was no longer the young man he once was and the last correspondence he'd had with him; Liam had intimated that Brennan wasn't in as good of health as he let on to the public. Liam believed that his father's heart was heavy from all the years he had missed with his Anna and youngest son. Killian wasn’t convinced but as it was his mother’s wish, he would ‘man-up’ and extend an olive branch. But right now, he had a house waiting for him. Putting his truck into gear, he drove the rest of the way up the drive and parked.

The house sat in front of him, an irregular shaped polygon with glass on three sides. On stilts, it soared ten feet above the beach, the only access to it a single door with a walk leading to the ground not far from where he was sitting in his parked vehicle. The grounds were riotous with color from many hibiscus bushes, frangipani trees, and azaleas, as well as an assortment of palm trees and just to his right, barely hanging onto the bluff, sat a huge old Banyan tree. The same tree that housed a tree fort for him and Liam as well as a tire swing. Killian smiled to himself as the thoughts that were going through his head, were thoughts that he had not had in years. Rubbing his hand over his face, and giving himself a mental shake, he opened the door and stepped to the ground. All he had to do now, was walk in. The furniture should have been delivered already and the cabinets stocked. Shutting the truck door, taking a soothing breath of sea air and he was ready. Walking by the old postbox, he noticed the flag was up, so out of curiosity he opened it. Inside he found a single letter, which he took with him as he made his way into his new residence.

Opening the door, he felt a strong sense of déjà vu. Taking off his leather jacket he tossed it over a chair and ran his fingers along the pine table and chairs that reminded him of meals with his family. The oversize sofa with the blue stripes, flanked by blue captain’s chairs sat in front of a fireplace which was flanked by large windows overlooking the water. A table resting behind the sofa held pictures of when he was young as well as jars of seashells that had been gathered at various times. The furniture appeared as if it had been waiting for him all of these years and now, he was finally home. Trying to shake the dismal feeling he opened a nearby cabinet and poured himself a generous amount of rum. Sitting the glass on an end table, he took the letter he had gotten from the postbox and sat down to read.

**Dear New Tenant,**

*Welcome to your new home. As a previous tenant, I'd like to say I hope you like living here as much as I did. I filed a change of address with the post office but*
you know what a crapshoot that can be so if anything slips through will you please do me a favor and forward my mail, I'd appreciate it. My new address is below. Thanks in advance.

200 Biscayne Bay Blvd, Miami, FL

Emma Swan

P.S. Sorry about the paw prints by the front door they were there when I moved in. Same with the box in the attic.

Killian furrowed his brow, thinking about the letter. He hadn’t remembered seeing any paw prints outside the front door but just to double check he got up and walked outside. Nothing there, just a pathway bordered by a railing with peeling paint. His next stop was the attic to check on the box up there. Peering through the hole in the floor to the small attic, he didn’t see anything except a few piles of dust. Not sure what to think, he climbed down, tossed the letter on the kitchen table and sat back down to enjoy his glass of rum and stare out and watch the waves over the ocean as night rolled in.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for starting this journey with me. Let me know what you think.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Emma settles into her new job at Bayside General and one of her cases in the ER is quite entertaining. And Killian learns the origin of those mysterious paw prints that Emma mentioned in the letter she left for him when she moved out of the Beach House.

Chapter Notes

In Chapter 1 you learned that Emma had been living in the Beach House for several months before moving to a condo in Miami to begin a new position at a local hospital. She left a note for the new tenant, Killian, who was left scratching his head over several things she mentioned.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Emma

Emma arrived at Bayside General bright and early for her first day of work. She reported to Human Resources and was given a pile of paperwork to complete, some forms in duplicate and triplicate, and once she had finished those she gave them, as well as copies of her medical school diplomas, medical license and malpractice insurance to Chip the human resources director. He had several other individuals who were also starting that day and a new group of medical students arriving, so he appeared a bit frazzled. Looking over the forms carefully, he asked her to sign in a couple of places she missed and then passed her along to Ariel.

Ariel led her to the doctor’s lounge where she changed into scrubs, and then taking her lab coat and stethoscope with her she left her bag and street clothes behind. They then entered another office where she had her hospital ID made and instructions were quickly given of how and where she would be required to use it.

By the time she had finished, her head was spinning and she had no idea where she was and so when Ariel asked, "Did you get all of that?" What else could she say but, "I think so?" Knowing that there was really no way she was going to remember all, or even half of what she was told.

Seeing the alarm on Emma's face, Ariel took pity on her, "Hey don't worry about it. You'll be fine. It's a huge hospital with a lot of nice people working here so if you aren't sure, just ask. And my office is always open. Ok?"

Emma smiled at her, "Ok. It's just the places where I did my residencies were much smaller so all of this is a little overwhelming. Is there a road map?"

Ariel laughed, " You'd think so wouldn't you? But no, nothing really specific, just this," and she pulled out two pieces of paper, one that had all the floors labeled, such as ICU, maternity, surgery, etc and a second that showed the exit route in case of emergencies. "You've got your phone, right?"
Emma nodded her head and pulled it out of her lab coat pocket.

“Here’s my number, if you have any questions, just send me a text. "Anything else?"

Emma thought about it for a few minutes, “I think I'm good. Just direct me to where I can find Dr Hopper and I'll be on my way.”

As Ariel was giving Emma instructions on how to find the ER, they walked past a sitting area that had a sofa and several large over-sized chairs all looking out at a set of large windows that overlooked the Bay. She could see boats of all sizes and because it was a clear day, she could see up and down the shoreline. "It's beautiful, isn't it?” asked Ariel.

Emma looked at her new friend and grinned, "It is. How did you get so lucky to have such a great view?"

Ariel laughed, "Oh, believe me, those of us who work in human resources ask ourselves that every day. Normally the HR is set in the depths of the hospital, many times in the basements but since Florida is too close to sea level to have basements, we got lucky."

Emma hummed in agreement, "So if it's an extra crazy day and I need some peace and quiet, you'll find me here," she quipped.

As they arrived at the elevators, Ariel patted her on the back. "That's why they're there. We want our doctors to have a place to center themselves should they need it. Let me know if you need anything."

Only feeling a slight bit of trepidation, Emma rode the elevator down to the bottom floor, destination Emergency Room, and when the doors opened to chaos, after taking a deep breath she stepped off of the elevator and walked up to the nurses’ station. Sitting behind the desk with several clipboards of paperwork in front of her sat her old friend Ruby Lucas. When Ruby looked up and saw who was standing there, she quickly dropped what she was doing, hopped up, ran around the desk and hugged her, after squealing, "Emma Swan, as I live and breathe.

Emma had never gotten used to Ruby's demonstrative behavior so it took her a few seconds before she started hugging her back. "Ruby Lucas. I almost didn't recognize you looking so respectable in your nurse's uniform."

Ruby smirked at her as she walked back around to take her seat again, "I know," she said in a petulant voice. "I did so enjoy hanging out in my bikini and short shorts." And then she flipped her hair back over her shoulder, looked up at Emma and they started giggling like they were still in high school.

"Ok, Rubs, enough acting like kids for a little while at least. I'm to meet Dr. Hopper down here." and she looked around to see several patients sitting in chairs, others on stretchers, and staff running in all directions.

Ruby's eyes got big. "Emma does that mean you're going to be working here? For real?"

Emma rolled her eyes, "For real. Dr. Hopper?"

Ruby looked past Emma just then, "Looks like you're in luck. There he is now."

Emma turned just as her mentor, Dr. Hopper walked up carrying an armful of files. "Oh Dr. Swan. Just in time." And he handed her the files, "Follow me. You'll be handling these eight patients today plus anyone new who comes in." As they walked by an older gentleman laying on a gurney in the hallway, he said. "Oh dear, this man is supposed to be down having a CT scan. I suspect intracranial
hemorrhage and he needs to be seen right away. I’ve already ordered complete bloodwork on him, and those results were to be sent to radiology” and then he caught someone by the arm as they were walking by. “Why is this man not down having his test?”

The nurse made brief eye contact with Emma and then lifted her shoulder toward Dr. Hopper, “Sorry Doctor, transport said it could be a couple hours.”

“That's too long. Dr. Swan, please take Mr. French here to radiology and then give Neuro a call to consult. Ask for Dr. August Booth. I've got new medical students arriving any minute now” and with those instructions, he took off.

Emma was left standing there with an armful of charts, a sick man who needed radiology and no clue where she could find either. Thankfully the nurse took pity on her, "Sorry about that. I'm Ashley. First day?"

Emma wrinkled her nose, "How did you know?"

"I'm pretty sure it was the deer in headlights look,” she giggled. "Here, let me help. I'll take these charts down and leave them with Ruby until you get back from taking Mr. French down to radiology.” Pointing down the hall where there were a set of double doors, she said, "Go straight through the doors, hang a right then a left and a left, got that?"

"Got it, straight, right and two lefts, thanks" and placing Mr. French's chart under the gurney mattress, she started pushing him down the hall, stopping to use her ID on the set of doors, then taking a right, and a couple of lefts, she made it to radiology in no time. Leaving the patient with them she went back to find Ruby and ask her how to locate Dr. Booth.

Ruby was just hanging up the phone when Emma got back and when she heard who Emma was supposed to contact, she whistled, "Well, look at you girly, you get to meet Bayside G's Dr. McDreamy” and she fluttered her eyelashes.

"Oh you, give me," and she held out her hand palm up and wiggled her fingers.

"Oh poo, you're no fun," picking up the phone, she punched in the extension and handed it to Emma.

Emma waited for an answer on the Neuro Floor and then gave the nurse all the details she had on the patient and that he was currently in radiology. Once that was completed she picked up the charts that she had been given earlier, looked through the first few and started working her way through them. After eight hours of watching her stack of files continuously replenish, she was shocked when she came out of the last room and discovered her pile of files had disappeared and it was quiet. Looking around for a place to sit so she could take off her shoes for a minute or two, she noticed that Ruby was no longer at the desk. "Change of shift?” She said to the woman standing with her back to Emma.

The new shift supervisor turned and smiled at her, "Look at you, doc, all grown up!"

Emma felt her eyes get really big and her mouth drop open, "Granny? Wow, keeping it all in the family?” Ruby's grandmother, the Widow Lucas, as she was known by some, but most called her Granny, smiled really big, stood up and walked over to Emma, gave her a quick hug hello and then guided her into a charting room, "Here sit down and rest your feet a minute. Chances are this lull won't last and I'm sure you've been here a long time.”

Emma glanced at her watch, "15 hours or so, I think" and she plopped down on a chair and pulled
off her shoes and groaned in ecstasy, "Oh that feels good. I need food. I've only had some stale crackers I found in my lab coat pocket since early this morning. Any bear-claws around?"

Granny just shook her head, "You need something healthier than that. I'll be back." And she bustled out of the room and disappeared around a corner.

While she was gone, Emma pulled her phone out of her pocket and saw that she had gotten a few texts, one from Mary Margaret and one from Ruby. She then scanned emails and her Facebook but saw nothing pressing. She sent a quick response to M&M that she was fine, just tired and after reading Ruby's text slipped the phone back in her pocket, saying a silent "Oh no."

Granny walked in just as she had put away her phone and based on the look on her face, she inquired about the message, "Bad news?" and then handed her a turkey and cheese sandwich and a container of yogurt.

Emma thanked her and started eating. Between bites, she looked at Granny and said, "I'm not sure if you remember Belle French from high school? Well earlier today I wheeled a gentleman down to radiology for a CT for a possible brain bleed and it turns out that's her dad."

Granny clucked sympathetically and looked out the door, "It's still quiet, why don't you run up and see if you can find Belle. She might need a shoulder. I'll text you if we need you."

"Thanks that would be great." She quickly slipped back into her shoes, tossed the trash and went to find Belle.

It turned out that Belle was in the OR waiting room pacing back and forth, and when she saw Emma, she flew across the waiting room, "Anything?"

"Sorry Belle, no. I just checked and was told that things are going as expected. How long has he been in there?"

Belle glanced at the clock on the wall, "Only about an hour," she said and then grabbed hold of Emma's arm as her knees gave out.

Emma caught her and guided her over to sit down, "Have you eaten anything?"

Belle shook her head, "No I was too nervous to eat." And then she squeezed Emma's arm. "I was sorry to hear about your dad."

Emma smiled at her, "Yea it's been a tough few months. I actually just got back into town. I've been renting a house on the beach in Key Largo but decided that a place closer to the hospital made more sense." As she said that her phone buzzed and glancing at it she looked up at Belle, "Duty calls. I'll check on you later if I can." Squeezing Belle's fingers, she got up to see what awaited her in ER.

Hurrying back, Emma wondered what was in store for her. She had treated the flu, coughs, sprains, sent a couple of broken bones to orthopedics, several car accident victims to surgery and she still had another ten or so hours to go. With any luck, this next case would be a simple but interesting one. Once inside the department, after reading the chart, she looked at Granny and raised her eyebrows, "Really?"

Granny's blue eyes twinkled as she looked up at Emma, "Nurse Blue will assist you, "He's in room 3"

Emma looked at the woman that Granny had indicated was Nurse Blue, a rather austere looking lady who was standing there in her straight white dress, support stockings and sensible shoes, "Lead the
way." Following her down the hall, they entered room 3 to the smell of booze to see a portly man lying on a table on his stomach, bum in the air, the only thing preserving his dignity, a sheet covering his lower half. "Mr. Smee, I'm Dr. Swan. I understand you had a bit of an accident."

Mr. Smee giggled, "Igottahookinmyass," he said in slurred voice.

Emma looked at Nurse Blue as she slid on her latex gloves, and then slowly lifted the side of the sheet to reveal Mr. Smee's hairy behind with a wicked looking fishing hook embedded into his left cheek. Picking up a small syringe filled with lidocaine, she injected a small amount in several places around the wound. Then using some forceps, she carefully extracted the hook and dropped it into a shallow bowl. Blue applied gauze squares covered in betadine and applied a bit of pressure. Now that the hook had been removed she needed to get a better look, as she was sure a few stitches would be needed.

Through all of this Mr. Smee had lain quietly but once the gauze was pressed on the wound he started moving around. Emma put her hand on his arm, "Sir, you have to lay still. We aren't done back here." while he calmed a bit, he was still pretty anxious but with all the alcohol in his system, she didn't want to give him any sedation. She was hoping the alcohol would cause him to relax, so far she hadn't been so lucky. "Mr. Smee, what's your friend's name? Maybe he can help me out."

"Namess ughGrumpy" he hiccupped.

Quietly so as not to get him excited, she asked Blue to go get Grumpy. As Blue slipped out, Emma shook her head at what she was thinking, but then asked anyway, "so Mr. Smee, how exactly did this happen?"

Feeling pretty good, he giggled again and then took a deep breath and began his tale. "Well," he started, "it was a beautiful day and me and Grumpy wanted to catch some fish. So we got our poles and some bait and some By Hook or By Crook beer," and he giggled again.

By this time Emma wanted him to get to the part where he told her how he hooked his ass but let him talk.

"Lots of By Hook or By Crook beer, and we headed to the pier. We'd been fishin and drinkin and well, the last time I went to cast my line it got stuck, so I pulled and that's when I knew, it was stuck in my ass," and then he giggled again.

As he was finishing his story, the door opened and Blue and Mr. Smee's friend Grumpy came in the room bringing with him the scent of outdoors as well as the scent of beer.

Emma wished for better ventilation but since that wasn't possible, her plan was to get done and move them out as quickly as possible. "Mr. Uh Grumpy," she began and was then interrupted by said man.

"No Mr., doc, just Grumpy."

"Ok, Grumpy, I need you to help us keep Mr. Smee here," was all she could manage to get out this time before he interrupted her yet again.

"Just Smee doc, ain't no Mr. for him either."

Taking a deep breath, she looked at Grumpy with raised eyebrows silently asking if he had more to say, "Smee here," she continued, "as still as possible while we work on his wound. Can you do that?"

Grumpy looked at her like she had two heads, "You want me in here, while you're working on his
ass?" He replied in a rather loud voice. "Are you nuts sister?"

"I might be but right now, you're needed." And then she moved a chair over close to Smee's head so Grumpy could sit down, pulled out a new set of gloves, moved the sheet aside and looked over at Blue, "Ready?"

"As I'll ever be doctor." She dead panned a hint of mischief in her tone. Blue picked up a razor but the minute she placed it next to the wound Smee started laughing again. "Sir, you need, to be still."

Smee glanced over his shoulder giving her a sheepish look, "it tickles."

Keeping a straight face was getting to be more difficult but somehow she managed, "Be still," she yelled feeling as though she was dealing with a little child and not a grown man.

He looked at Grumpy, "She's tickling my ass and we haven't even been on a date,"

Then they both cracked up until Grumpy saw the look on Emma's face and quickly sobered up. Thankfully after that they were both relatively cooperative and Blue was able to shave the area so Emma could take a few stitches and then bandage it. And because it was prepared, she picked up another syringe and gave him a tetanus shot. "You will need to keep this area clean, and take an antibiotic, but the stitches are dissolvable and should start dissolving after a week or ten days. Any questions?" He shook his head to indicate none. "Good, I'll have your prescription as well as a copy of care instructions waiting for you once you're dressed, just in case your memory isn't too clear in the morning."

Leaving Blue in the room to help him if needed, she opened the door and stepped into the hall taking a deep breath of clean air. After scribbling a note in the chart and writing a script, she handed the chart off to Granny, who handed her one for a new patient, and seeing the look on Emma's face, said, "Relax, this one isn't nearly as exciting.

Days turned into weeks and weeks and before she knew it February started and she had been employed for over a month. Daily she met more of the staff, including Victor Whale, who worked in the ER opposite her and was dating her friend Ruby. She rediscovered a closeness with her female friends that had been missing the past few years while in med school and completing her residencies and was happy to be back home.

After long shifts at the hospital, and wanting nothing more than to go home and crash she was glad she had moved into an apartment next door to her sister as M&M was able to walk and spend time with, Rumple. Interestingly enough one of the people she spent quality time with at the hospital was David Nolan, head of security, who just happened to be dating her sister. They had started dating while she was away and not knowing him well, she was happy to learn that he seemed to be a good guy. Emma was happy. She had her family close, a job she liked, good friends and her dog, Rumple. Life was safe, just like she liked.

Killian

Killian rolled over and glanced at the clock. He then bunched his pillow up, propped his chin on his hands and stared out the window waiting for the sun to rise over the horizon. That sight had been something he missed when his mum had taken him back to the UK. They had always been the early risers, often waking at the same time to walk down to the beach in early light and then stand and stare out at the water as the sun slowly painted their world. When they came back up to the house they would make breakfast together and slowly Liam and father would trickle into the kitchen as the odor of bacon, sausage, eggs and fried bread filled the cottage. Father he thought, so formal. But that's what he was, Brennan Jones was father. Not papa or dad, but father. Very formal as he held
himself aloof, a true reserved Englishman, whereas his mum, had been very soft, caring and loving. Sometimes at night he would step outside and he would smell jasmine. Oh how she loved that smell.

Killian was happy being at the house on the beach and being close to his brother and father but he couldn't help but wish he could find someone to love. He knew what kind of woman he wanted, someone who had some of the traits that he so admired in his mum. He wanted a woman who was strong, but also wasn't afraid to ask for help if she needed it. One who was able to take care of herself but let him take care of her sometimes. One who challenged him mentally but also wasn't afraid to admit if she didn't know. He could picture her spirit but her looks remained elusive. He hoped she was here in the states as he had been a bit of a player while at the university and then more so after his mother passed. But he had reached an age where he was tired of meaningless sex. He knew what he wanted, the difficulty came with finding her. He hoped the fates would be kind to him.

Rolling out of bed he showered, dressed in old clothes and had a light breakfast. He had an idea of what he wanted to accomplish around the cottage before going into the office for a few hours. Basic repairs were mindless and letting his thoughts go, they bobbed all over. He was able to take care of the leaky faucet down by the beach and wash off the side of the house where mold had gathered after the rainy season. He carted in some wood for the fireplace that, while was needed infrequently in South Florida, did prove useful during the winter months along the shore.

The last job he planned on taking care of before he left was painting the spindles and the railing along the walk leading from the drive area to the front door. Time had not been kind to them and they had rusted completely. Thankfully before he moved back in, the caretaker had had the walk refinished a light peach color to match the house, so he was painting the railings Cobalt Blue, according to the label on the paint can, but his mum would say it perfectly matched his eyes. He wasn't sure about that but he did like the idea of thinking she would be happy with a color he picked out.

He had already sanded and primed so he just needed to place a tarp on the ground, pour the paint and he was ready to start. Deciding he needed a bit of music he went in, turned on his stereo and leaving the door open, set the speaker by it. Enjoying the warm day and the music, Killian had completed one side and was half way though the other when he noticed movement out of the corner of his eye. Looking toward the drive, he saw a black and white dog just sitting there, looking at him. Killian assumed the dog was coming closer to be pet so was totally surprised when the dog walked right past him, but not before stepping in and out of the paint tray, tracking footsteps up the walk to the door. After recovering from the shock, Killian jumped up and tried to stop the dog, yelling, "Stop! Stop!" But as the dog reached the front door, he didn't stop. He just looked over his shoulder and then trotted right into the house.

Killian started to follow the dog into the house and realized he was still holding a paintbrush so dropping it back into the paint tray he went looking for his new friend. His friend was making himself comfortable on the sofa when Killian found him, tongue hanging out and what looked like a smile on his face. "Come on, off the sofa," Killian patted his thigh, to try to get the dog to obey. The dog just ignored him and laid his head on the cushion as if to settle in for a nap. "Come on, you bloody critter, I need to leave." He walked toward the dog with the intention of removing him from the sofa but the dog had other ideas and the closer Killian got to him, the louder the dogs’ growl became. "Bloody hell. You just stay there then."
Having never had a dog before, Killian wasn’t sure what the next step should be so he went back out to finish painting. Then he cleaned his mess, showered and got ready to leave to meet Tink on the Schwan as she wanted his help on something, he wasn’t sure what, but was willing to pitch in if needed. After showering he was surprised the dog hadn't been waiting outside the bath door and when he checked on him the little thing was curled up, fast asleep. Shaking his head, mostly at himself, Killian, pointed at that dog, "You win, this time." As he was picking up his keys to leave, he saw the letter and thought about the coincidence of her mentioning the paw prints, only to have a dog walk right through his paint today. “Coincidence, right?”

Tink and several others were already in the middle of tying ribbons, laying out assorted flower arrangements and setting up chairs when Killian arrived. "Ok, I'm here. What exactly are we doing?"

Tink sighed loudly, "Killian, I've explained this a couple of times, don't you ever listen?"

He reached up and scratched behind his ear, "Well," he started.

"Oh never mind. It's a wedding. This is February and a lot of people get married in February, so we are decorating."

Frowning slightly, he looked up at her, "But we are not booked to sail tonight or did I forget that too?"

"No, you didn't forget. The ship will stay anchored. They just want to get married here, as they met at a party on the ship a couple of years ago. Now get busy."

Killian gave her a long suffering sigh and started working the helium tank blowing up balloons for the women to work into several different decorations around the deck. He finished with the balloons and as he was turning to put the tank back in place he knocked a cutting tool off of a shelf. As it hit the deck, a piece of wood flew, hitting him in his right cheek. Assuming that it was nothing, he reached up to brush off his cheek and realized, not only was it not nothing but it had embedded itself in the fleshy part of his cheek. He opened his mouth, "Oh, sh... sugar."

Tink was walking by and heard him, and laughed, "Sugar? That the best you can do?"

Killian nodded his head toward the dock where a family was standing admiring the ship, and then moved his hand away from his face, "Little problem here, can you help?"

She saw the cute little kids looking up at the ship and smiled, but then noticed the blood on Killian's hand and face. "What happened? Let me grab the first aid kit." Opening the kit, she quickly took the tweezers out and opened a package of gauze pads. Pulling the small piece out and covering the wound with the pad, "It looks like there are some splinters in there. Let's run to the Emergency room and get them to clean it out."

She drove them to Bayside General located just up the street from where the Schwan was docked and dropped Killian off at the Emergency Room door. Holding the pad in place, Killian could feel the blood seeping through and hurriedly walked up to the nurse's station to check in. A woman with long red hair and a flirtatious smile on her face took one look at him and summoned someone to take him into a room. Sitting there waiting for the doctor to arrive, Killian tapped his fingers impatiently. As the door opened and the doctor walked in, he smiled.

Thanks for reading. I hope you enjoyed Chapter 2. Let me know what you think.
Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed learning a bit more about Emma and Killian's backgrounds as well as their everyday lives. I hope you also enjoyed Emma's entertaining ER case as well as the origin of the mysterious paw prints.

Let me know your thoughts.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Mary Margaret and Emma have a quiet talk when a moment changes things forever. And Killian and Liam reconnect.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Emma

Emma and Mary Margaret were sitting on a bench in front of Bayside Marketplace enjoying a quiet lunch. They tried to meet several times during the week as the hospital she worked in, Bayside General was very close to the University where her sister taught. Where they met depended on several things but today they both wanted to enjoy the sunshine so Bayside was the perfect place to sit. They could sit on a bench and if they faced west they could watch people scurrying here and there as well as watch the cars and buses zip past. They could also turn and face east where they could see the many colorful boats and yachts out on the Bay. Opening their lunches and starting to eat, Emma held her face up to the sun, “Hmm,” she hummed, “70 degrees on Valentine’s Day. Living in Florida is a beautiful thing.”

Mary Margaret smiled slyly, “Yes it is. We are sitting here in the sun and most of the country is buried under several feet of snow. I’d say that deserves a toast.” And she picked up her bottle of water and tapped it against Emma’s.

Emma took a drink of the cold water and a bite of her sandwich, “So, where is David taking you for dinner?”

Mary Margaret smiled, a dreamy look on her face, “The Peacock Café. It was rated as one of the most romantic restaurants in Miami.” And she stopped and took another bite of her sandwich, “There are supposed to be lovely gardens to eat in if it isn’t too cool outside but they also have inside dining. I’m excited. What about you? Do you have plans?”

“I have to work,” Emma responded, “But that’s ok. It’s not like I have a hot date for Valentine’s Day anyway.”

“Emma when are you going to let yourself love again? How long has it been since Graham, a couple of years at least?”

“No, not that long, it’s only been a year or so but you know why I pushed him away?”

“I know what you told me, but was that the only reason?”

Emma sighed, “Graham is a good guy. I just didn’t feel those butterflies. And …”

Mary Margaret rolled her eyes, “But…”
Emma put her hand on her sister’s arm to stop the interruption, “No, don’t tell me those butterflies aren’t real because I see them in your eyes every time you talk about David. I want that. I want what mom and dad had,” and then she stopped and swallowed the lump in her throat.

“I know sis, I miss him too,” Mary Margaret said quietly.

Both sisters got lost in their thoughts for several minutes. Emma and Mary Margaret weren’t sisters by birth but in every way that counted, they were. They had been together for almost as long as they could remember. Emma’s parents, strangely enough named David and Mary, had been best friends with Mary Margaret’s parents, Leo and Ava. Their fathers’ had met at the University where Leo taught English and where David taught Biology. Forming a close friendship, they introduced their wives, who also worked together at the local hospital, and all quickly became fast friends. The couples tried for many years to have children but neither were so lucky and had just about given up when both women discovered they were pregnant within days of each other. Before Emma had officially moved in with the Blanchard’s she had felt just as at home there as she did at her home. Sadly, when the girls were four, Emma’s parents had been asked to go on a medical mission trip to a small country in Africa, as there had been an outbreak of malaria, and both were killed instantly after the small plane they were flying in crashed. There was no question that Emma would become a part of the Blanchard family, and she was welcomed into and treated just like Mary Margaret. She couldn’t have asked for a better set of adoptive parents then to be raised by Leo and Ava. They gave her love and Leo taught her to appreciate classic literature and Ava helped her learn to love science and the rewards of medicine. And while she loved Leo and Ava, she always felt that she was holding a part of herself back, as if she was afraid they would also leave her.

Since Mary Margaret was named after Emma’s birth mother and because her name was a mouthful she became lovingly known as M&M just a few years after the death of Emma’s parents. As the girls graduated from high school and moved on to college it was very ironic that Emma decided to follow their mothers into medicine and M&M became the teacher, just like their fathers. Tragedy struck again just after Emma finished medical school and was starting her first rotation when Ava passed suddenly in her sleep and just this past year Leo had succumbed too, many said from a broken heart. Now all the girls had was each other which was why when a position had opened up at Bayside General, they were so happy that they could finally live close to each other once again.

Shaking her head to dismiss the melancholy thoughts, Emma glanced down into M&M’s large canvas bag and saw her tattered copy of Crime and Punishment. “I see you are punishing your students with Dostoyevsky again.”

“Oh hush, you know you love that book as much as I do,” M&M scolded. “It’s just so interesting to see what each new class of young minds will come up with during discussions. There’s murder and theft and lust and greed, all moral dilemmas and you would be surprised at the variety of opinions that arise. It’s quite fascinating really.”

Emma looked at M&M closely, “And what’s the real reason you use dad’s copy?”

Mary Margaret shrugged, “Well, it makes me feel closer to him when I’m reading the pages and realize that at one time he read the same pages, you know?”

Smiling sadly, Emma answer, “I know exactly how you feel. In fact, I feel the same way when I read,” and her sentence was halted by a loud crash occurring directly in front of them.

Looking toward the street Emma saw that a small car had been hit by a bus and a pedestrian had been caught in the middle. Grabbing her phone and dialing 911, she ran toward the accident, “This is Dr. Emma Swan, there’s been an accident at 401 Biscayne Blvd, in front of the Bayside
Marketplace. Pedestrian down. Send an ambulance quickly,” and tossing her phone on the street she bent over the man who was laying on his stomach in front of the bus. She could hear the bus driver crying softly behind her as well as the driver of the small car, but she tried to tune them out as the man in front of her needed her “A” game.

Her training kicking into gear she assessed the man’s condition as best she could. He was laying on his stomach with arms and legs splayed out. His head was turned away from her and she could see that his eyes were closed. Upon further investigation she didn’t notice any obvious blood, however she knew that if he had internal injuries, she wouldn’t see any. She put her fingers against the side of his neck looking for a pulse by feeling his carotid artery. “It’s barely there,” she muttered to herself. Next she put her hand under his nose to see if he was still breathing and felt air but just barely. Pulling her stethoscope out of her pocket and unfurling it, she laid it against his back to check for any heart beat abnormalities as well as to listen for a collapsed lung. What she heard as well as didn’t hear caused her to look up and let out a sigh of relief as she saw the paramedics, one of which she knew, rushing toward her, carrying their trauma kit.

Walter, or Sneezy, as he was affectionately known for his bad case of allergies, was in the lead, “Whatcha got Emma?”

“White male, hit by a bus just a few minutes ago. Has been unconscious since I reached him. No outward signs of injury but heart rate is in afib and I suspect a pneumothorax.”

“Oh, doc, let us take a look.” Sneezy and the other paramedic, she only knew by site, quickly got to work on John Doe. He was placed on a spinal board and hooked up to an IV and prepared for transmit. “Want to ride with us?”

Quickly making up her mind, Emma stood up and followed the paramedics and the patient to the ambulance and climbed in the back with Walter. He got to work hanging the IV bag and she began taking his vitals. On the way to the hospital, the patient coded twice but both times they were lucky and able to restart his heart with the defibrillator machine. Pulling up to the emergency room doors, the rear of the ambulance was thrown open and they helped move the man toward the hospital.

Emma looked up as Victor walked up and gave him a run down on what was going on. He patted her on the arm, “Glad you were close by, we’ve got it from here,” and he quickly followed the gurney behind a curtain.

As she heard the wheels take the injured man away, Emma realized that since she had been so focused on keeping him alive, she hadn’t really looked closely him. With a moment to think and take a deep breath, she had a vague impression that he was around her age, had dark hair and she suddenly felt a sense of déjà vu but wasn’t sure why. While this was not her first pedestrian accident, for some reason she felt it more deeply. And as the sound of the gurney grew quieter, she wanted to chase after it again, just to check on him one more time. She had the feeling that she was missing something important and she couldn’t shake it off. But as it was time for her get back to work she tucked it away and headed toward the locker room pulling her phone out of her pocket as she walked. A couple of texts back and forth with her sister assured her that her lunch trash was taken care of and that they would see each other later. Just as she was about to put the phone back into her pocket, there was a vibration indicating another text had arrived. Glancing down at it as she was waiting for the elevator she couldn’t believe what she read. It was from Victor, “Emma, just thought you might want to know. The John Doe you rode to the emergency room with went into cardiac arrest and died. His internal injuries too severe for us to revive him. I’m sorry.”

Sorrow was the first feeling she felt. A vibrant young man was dead. She was a physician and knew that people died every day but this man’s death hit her hard. Pushing open the door to the locker room she sank down on a bench and crossed her arms over her stomach, bending over as if in pain.
Why does it feel like I just lost someone special to me, she wondered? She was unsure how long she sat there until she felt a hand on her shoulder, “Emma, I heard about Bayside,”, she heard Dr. Hopper say, “the EMT’s said you did everything you could for him,” and he sat down on the bench next to her.

Emma shrugged, “I did what I could,” she responded in a weary voice.

Dr. Hopper went on, “Emma, I’m going to tell you what I tell all my young doctors and hope that you are the first one who listens. On your day off get as far away from this place as you can and go someplace where you feel most like you.” Then he patted her on the back and stood up, “Think about it,” he said as he left the room.

Killian

Killian was sitting at his desk, in his office that offered a beautiful view of Bayside Park and Marketplace and the bay waters where all of his ships were housed, looking over the day’s activities. Several ships in his fleet were booked for private parties, his largest was on a special Valentine’s Day overnight cruise to the Bahamas and the Schwan, a bloody fine vessel, was scheduled for a sunset cruise, the ship will be captained by none other than Captain Hook. The cruise would also have an endless supply of Rum punch and romantic music for dancing. Thinking that’s all he needed was a bunch of tipsy octogenarians on his ship made him shake his head. "They bloody well better not fall off my ship,” he said quietly to himself just as Tink walked into the room.

“Who bloody well better not fall off your ship,” Tink responded laughingly. “What are you so worried about Killian? We’ve had plenty of older individuals on the ship and not lost any yet.”

Killian raised both eyebrows and wiped his hand over his face, “True but there’s always a first time.” He said. “Ready to go?”

Tink looked down at the clip board she was holding and proceeded to check things off of her list. “I think so. I ordered extra rum, just in case,” she smirked at him “And we have Sprite, orange and pineapple juice and grenadine. I even ordered some of those cute little umbrellas that the ladies seem to like in their drinks.”

Killian nodded his head, “Sounds like you thought of everything. I’ll be out in a bit.”

Tink left the room and he moved things around on his desk looking for the letter that had been left in the postbox of the beach house. Footprints on the walk he thought, not for the first time, could they be the same ones were his last thought before picking up his long leather Captain Hook jacket and heading toward the ship hoping that there were no loose cannons aboard on his watch.

Arriving at the Schwan, Killian was happy to see that Tink had indeed thought of everything so all he had to do was don his long coat and get into position to greet the party goers. When they had first entertained the idea of offering cruises that fit the origins of the design of the Schwan, Killian immediately thought of Captain Hook. And not the Disney version of Captain Hook with waxed mustaches and perms, but the one that he always pictured in his mind when his mum read, Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie to him as a lad. Since Barrie's Hook had black hair and blue eyes, a handsome countenance and elegant diction, his mum used to tease him with, "Just add a mustache and a few curls and that could be you.” His usual response to her had been to give her a little smirk but say "I do believe I'm handsome enough without, thank you very much,” and she would laugh, like he had just told her the funniest thing in the world. After all these years he still missed her laugh.
Using both of their ideas, and Tina's knowledge of the area, the Swashbuckling Good Time Cruise had been born, and was swiftly becoming one of their bestselling trips. They offered Rum Punch, and music that catered to the youth of the specific generation they were hosting, a small repast, and dancing if they so desired. Today's group was from one of the many retirement neighborhoods in South Florida and the music featured was from 1940 through 1960 with the idea of bringing them all back to their youth, just like Peter Pan was meant to do.

Killian had chosen his costume and was quite proud of it, as were all the women he had welcomed onto his ship, if their behavior was any indication. Some of the ladies tried to get a bit free with their hands after they imbibed on the punch, but if that's all he had to worry about then he was happy. It was when they had had a bit too much of the rum punch and wanted to grab the rigging and try to fly, that he became concerned, fortunately that had only happened once. He wore leather breeches, which had taken a bit of getting used to, white silk shirts with voluminous sleeves unbuttoned to mid chest, a vest, tonight's was red, and a long leather jacket that swung around his legs as he walked. The piece de resistance was a hook that he could wear just by inserting his left hand into a cuff, so if he needed both hands for guiding the ship, he could easily remove it.

Standing on the deck near the top of the gangway, Killian hooked his left arm, as if he had looped his thumb, if it were there, into his belt, assumed his most dashing smile, and prepared to greet his guests for the evening. Fifty to sixty individuals, primarily female, between the ages of seventy and eighty-five, got off of a charter bus and greeted Tink. She was standing at the entryway to the berth where the Schwan was docked and lead them all to the gangway, and they slowly made their way toward him. His job as Captain, devilishly handsome Hook, was to make each one feel welcomed. As was his specialty, he flirted with them as they came across the gangway, and each woman’s hand received a kiss, a wink and her very own "Milady," with a courtly bow. So far he had never failed to get a little giggle out of them, and if all he had to worry about were chapped lips for making these ladies feel special, so be it. He knew his mum would have approved.

Tonight's group seemed to be in an exceptionally exuberant mood, even before touching the punch, which caused him to wonder if they had already started in on the celebration. Thankfully they all made it across the parking lot, up the gangway and onto the ship, with no mishaps. Holding his breath that it would continue as such, Killian was ready to set sail.

Edward Thatch, his first mate and who dressed up like Blackbeard helped him cast off and Wendy Darling, who dressed up as Peter Pan, helped Tink get everyone seated at the tables they had strategically placed around the deck. As they were moving out of the Bay, into the open water of the Atlantic Ocean, a general safety speech was given, as well as the layout of the ship, including the heads located both toward the bow and the stern. Then the music was started and the light meal was served.

Once out of the Bay, the motor was turned off and the sails were hoisted, allowing the Schwan to glide across the sea. Killian loved this part of the trips as he was unassisted on the bridge, tending the boat's wheel and enjoying his solitary thoughts. While Swashbuckling Good Time Cruises could be scheduled at any time during the day, he enjoyed the sunset cruises best. As they started midafternoon and ended just as the sun had set, allowing the party goer to sail out of the Bay while the sun was high in the sky but by the time the ship was returning to dock, the lights both on the ship as well as the docks and the skyline of Miami lit their way. It was a beautiful sight to behold. Someday he thought, I want to share this with my very own swan. Lost in his thoughts Killian didn't notice he had company until he felt someone put their arms around his waist and scoot really close to him, "Well howdy Captain, fancy meeting you up here." The woman said, her speech already sounding rather slurred, "Care to hook up with me?" And then she giggled.

Thankful he had taken his hook off of his left hand, he kept it on the wheel, and gently dislodged her
arms from around his waist, "Oh, fair maiden. What brings you to see the Captain while your friends are dancing the night away? Shouldn't such a lovely lass as yourself be in the midst of all the fun?"

"But Captain it is you I want. I can be your fair maiden." And this time she had moved around in front of him and tried to grab hold of his chains.

Killian had become very adept at side stepping unwanted advances and neatly moved so that she was on the other side of the Captain's chair, so when it was turned, she neatly found herself sitting. "See, isn't that better?" Thankfully just like the other times, his trick worked, and as soon as she sat, she relaxed, and became absorbed in the view, and her interest in him faded, which gave him an opportunity to page Eddie to come and relieve him of his guest. Once she had been taken back to her friends, it was time to start the journey back to the docks.

On the way back to the Bay, Killian headed into the wind and let the ship glide across the waves. The music had gotten quieter and the guests had become mellow and relaxed. His thoughts again wandered, skittering from topic to topic, but always coming back to the letter left by, interesting enough, a woman whose last name was Swan. Most importantly about the paw prints that she mentioned in her letter that were not there, UNTIL, recently when a stray dog, happened to appear at just the time he was painting and just happened to step in paint, and track prints in the very spot she mentioned. What to make of this, he wasn't sure.

Pulling his mind to the task at hand he gave the orders to take down the sails, started the motor and expertly guided the ship close to the dock where Eddie was able to jump over the starboard side, and tie her up. As he turned off the motor, he noticed that the gangway was already in place and the cruisers were strolling toward their bus. Some could be heard singing, others laughing, but all appeared to be happy.

Cleaning up after a cruise had become somewhat of a routine for Killian and his small crew so much so that within an hour after they had docked, Eddie, Tink and Wendy were saying goodnight and leaving him alone to put his Schwan to bed. Often he stayed the night in the Captain's cabin but tonight he needed to go home. He had an uninvited guest that he needed to decide how to handle. But first he was meeting his brother Liam for a drink.

Liam and Killian had been as close as possible for brothers to be and then when his mother had taken him back to the U.K. and left his father and Liam behind, he had been devastated. But for all the bad feelings that he had toward his father while he was growing up, he was also grateful that his father had never done anything to keep Liam to himself and had sent him every summer to stay with their mother. As such the boys had remained close and with the improvements in technology, they had been able to communicate daily. However, it had been a few years since they had seen each other and Liam hadn't even known that Killian was moving back to the States, had purchased a business and was living quite close. Needing to prove himself to his father felt necessary. He just hoped Liam understood.

They were meeting at the Lilt Lounge, a bar not far from the Bayside Docks, and Killian knew not far from the offices where Liam and their father worked. It's a testament to how many people come and go in this area, that they hadn't run into each other at least once. Realizing he was going to be late if he didn't get a move on, he changed out of his pirate leathers, put his ship to bed and went to meet his brother.

Walking into the bar he looked around and spotted Liam sitting at a table nursing a drink and looking off into space. Needing a moment, Killian ordered a rum at the bar, took a small drink for courage and walked toward the table. Liam had been so lost in thought he didn't even notice him until he had set his glass on the table, "Hello brother."
Liam looked up at Killian, smiled and jumped up to hug him, "Little brother, it's so nice to finally see you. I've missed your guff. " And then a concerned look came over his face, "What happened to your mug?"

"That's younger brother, and I've missed you too." Breaking apart the brothers sat down, picked up their drinks and looked across the table at each other. "My face? Small accident at work but the doctor I saw at Bayside General said I would be good as new, just a tiny scar. I’m sure I'll still be devilishly handsome." And both laughed at the way they had gone right back into their usual banter.

Liam looked at his brother and rolled his eyes, "Still as vain as ever, I see. Bayside General? I know a few people who work there, who did you see?"

Killian grabbed a handful of nuts that were sitting on the table, "Oh some bloke named, Whale, I think. Enough about me. How have things been Liam?"

Liam looked at him, and before he answered took a deep breath, like he was weighing what he wanted to say, "Busy, but there's something going on that you should know, it's about dad's health."

Killian had just taken another sip of his drink and after swallowing, looked up at Liam under his eyebrows, "Aye?"

"Aye, Killian. I literally just found out, but there was a reason Dad didn't come back for mum's service, he was in the hospital."

"In the hospital?" Killian exclaimed, "For what?"

Liam rubbed his hand over his mouth as if talking about it left a bad taste, "He won't go into specifics but from what I know, he had a routine test that showed there was blockage in one of the arteries close to his heart. They put him in the hospital and did a procedure, leaving a stent behind, which helps keep the artery opened."

"But Liam, that's been years. Why are you just finding out?"

"I actually found out quite by accident. I was going to ask father something and I didn't know his doctor was in with him, and I overheard them talking. When I confronted him, he finally admitted everything. He still carries the guilt over not being there to say goodbye to mum as well as not being there for you."

Killian mulled over what he had just learned and how that information fit with the letters he had found in his mother's things. "Is he alright now?"

Liam shrugged his shoulder, "This is father, you know he's not good at sharing, so I don't know. But Killian, you need to make peace with him. You never know." And he left it up in the air and moved on to other topics.

Killian had just started to relax when Liam asked the question that he had been dreading, that is when did he get back into town. Scratching behind his ear, he gave his brother a sheepish look, "Last August."

Liam sat there for a second with a stunned look on his face before he exploded, "August! That was seven bloody months ago, you big git! And I'm just now seeing you?" And then realizing he had gotten a bit loud, quietened, took a long drink and waited for an answer. "And why are you bloody smiling at me, you're an arse and I'm brasses off! Oh bugger it!"

Killian couldn't help the smile on his face because even as long as Liam had been living in the States,
when angry, his accent became more pronounced and he reverted back into British slang, like when
they were lads. "Stop being a prat, Liam, I had my reasons," and he stopped as he looked up to see
his brother raising an eyebrow at him, and threw his hands up in surrender, "I was wrong, there, I
said it. You happy?"

Liam just shook his head, as if he couldn't decide if he was finished sulking, but went on with the
conversation, "So what have you been doing for the past seven," emphasized quite a bit, "months?"

"I bought what used to be Adventure Tours that was located over in Tampa, changed the name to
NeverLand Adventures and moved it all over here, hired someone who knows the market in this area
and is a people person and have been trying to clean up what had been a rundown business. I have a
fleet of four ships, the Cisne and Cigno are superyahts, and the Schwan and Zwaan are megayahts,
one is actually a replica of the ship, The Lady Washington that reminds me of an old pirate ship. And
we recently started offering what we are calling The Swashbuckling Good Time Cruises," and
before Liam could say anything he pointed his finger at him, "don't say a word," and then he
laughed, "It's been slow but things seem to be sorted out now."

“Nice going little brother. Sounds like for being such a wanker, you might have a head for business.
Were they all named by you?"

Killian laughed. "No and before you ask I have not a clue as to the origins of their names. I suspect it
has to do with how they glide across the water."

"Any human, female swans in your life, Killian?"

Killian thought about the signature of the person on his mystery letter but then smirked at his brother,
"Who has time for that now, Liam. How about you?"

Liam shook his head, "Guess both of the Jones boys are single, look out Miami," and clicking his
glass against Killian's with a "Cheers brother," finished his drink.

Kilian and Liam talked a while longer and made plans to meet up soon. Liam also guilted Killian into
promising that he would make a point of going to visit their father soon. Driving back to Key Largo
that night Killian mentally composed what he should say to his very own swan. Once he was back
home, his plan was in place.

Thanks for reading. I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Let me know what you think.

Chapter End Notes

The name of all the Killian's ships mean Swan in several different languages.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Emma takes a walk on the beach to calm her thoughts and then goes back to work to treat a really adorable new patient. Killian has dinner with his father and his brother and then goes by Emma's apartment building where he is met with a surprise. And then a letter from Emma opens up the possibility of the improbable being possible.

Chapter Notes

If you haven't see the gif set on my tumblr page (flslp87) or the 'video' preview on the Captain Swan Forever page, take a look. They are good and give you a nice picture of this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Emma

The next morning, she packed up Rumple and drove to the one place that felt like home, the Beach House. Thankfully it was late enough that she hoped to avoid too much of the rush hour traffic and as she was able to smoothly transition from the I-395 to the turnpike with no difficulties she was feeling confident. However once the turnpike gave way to the US 1 that was another story. There was road construction just after she got off of the turnpike, which always slows things down, and then a slight rain shower, that was thankfully quick. “I’m thankful the Beach House is in Key Largo,” Emma told Rumple, who was sitting in the back of her bug with his ears perked up like he knew exactly where their destination would lead. “Just a little longer boy,” she said and reached up to scratch his ears. He leaned into her hand and gave a little whine. Emma pushed the gas pedal a bit harder, ready to get out of the car and stretch her legs but also worrying that the house was still sitting empty and she wouldn’t have to explain to the new tenants why she was there.

Arching her back to stretch the kinks out, she decided something to drink would be wonderful. Spotting a drive through of a fast food chain, on her right, she quickly pulled off the road and ordered a large soft drink and grilled cheese for her and a burger, plain and a bottle of water for Rumple. After receiving the food, she pulled into a parking place in the shade and opened her grilled cheese, sat it on her lap and then opened Rumple’s burger and held it out to him. He delicately sniffed it, then gave her a look and raised his eyebrows, “What is that look for?” she asked him. He did it again but this time Emma looked at the burger closely. “Oh, it has a pickle and some onions on it?” She picked up an extra napkin, opened the burger and took off the parts he wouldn’t eat. “Spoiled a bit are we? Sorry boy, I told them plain. Here,” and she held the burger out to him while he daintily took bites of it, one at a time. Using her left hand, she ate her grilled cheese and drank her soft drink. Once Rumple was done, she gathered the trash and deposited it in the bin that thankfully was on the way out of the parking lot.

Merging easily on US 1, Emma continued to head south to Key Largo, noticing that the further she drove away from the hustle and bustle of Miami, the more relaxed she felt, the smaller the buildings
became, and there were fewer chain stores and restaurants. Seeing a sign that read Welcome to Key Largo, made her smile and she immediately started looking on her right for the two large Royal Palm Trees, surrounded by smaller True Date Palms. Turning slowly onto the drive she noticed that no one had paved the driveway as it was still mostly sand for about a half mile before the seashells that had been there for years allowed for better traction. The drive was still lined with Coconut Palms, some leaning over the drive, creating nice shade, others standing tall and majestic and full of coconuts. Noticing no cars parked in front of the house, Emma pulled her bug in, put it in park and turned it off. It’s so peaceful here, she thought.

She opened the car door and pulled up the seat so Rumple could jump out. He immediately found a tree and relieved himself and then started sniffing everything in his way. She moved down the path toward the beach noting that nothing looked as if it had been disturbed from when she moved out last month. Sea grass, small palm trees and various other plants lined the path, almost covering it entirely in a place or two so she had to step over them, but the view was unimpeded. The ocean spread out as far as she could see with gentle waves lapping against the stilts that were holding the house up. The beach was lined with rocks of various sizes but not a soul was present. It was as if she were here alone. Whistling for Rumple, she moved down onto the beach and bent over to take off her shoes. Digging her toes in the cool sand, she was glad that she had thought to bring a sweatshirt and untied it from around her waist to pull it over her head. The sea breeze felt good on her face and the sun was pleasantly warm. Heading down to the water, she turned right and slowly started walking.

Periodically she would stop to pick up an interesting looking seashell, putting some in a pocket, or tossing them back into the water. Rumple spent his time chasing after seagulls and little birds called sanderlings that raced toward the water and then as the waves came in raced just as quickly away from it. Periodically he would bring a stick for her to throw and Emma would throw it up the beach away from the water as she didn’t want to have to ride back to Miami with the smell of wet dog in the car. All the sand was going to be bad enough.

After about an hour of walking and clearing her mind, she turned around to go back the way she came. She passed by a couple of large beach homes, generally over 5000 square feet, but was lucky that she didn’t see anyone and the only sounds she heard were the ebb and flow of the ocean, the wind and the wildlife. “This is paradise.” she told Rumple “No other words can describe it.” Rumple apparently agreed for he barked and then took off down the beach as if to race her back.

Coming upon the back of the beach house, Emma stood to admire its design. Made mostly of glass with solar panels on the roof, standing on stilts to keep it above the water’s edge, even during high tide, it sparkled just like diamonds. Rotating her head to loosen up her neck, she picked up her shoes and moved to the outdoor faucet that had been set up to wash the sand off. Once her feet were clean and shoes back in place she wandered back up the beach path and walked with Rumple to the walk that lead to the front door. She smiled seeing the paw prints still lining the walk. Turning from the path she noticed the flag on the mailbox was up, and since she had left her letter in it, she was curious if it was still the letter she had left a month ago. Strangely nervous, she opened the box and peered inside. Laying there was a single envelope, sealed, and on one side, her name and address. Taking the envelope with her, she called for Rumple, and headed for the car. Once inside she read;

February 2012

Dear Miss Swan,

I got your note and I’m afraid there seems to be a misunderstanding. As far as I know the Beach House has been empty for several years. Maybe your note was meant for the Gold cottage that’s just down the beach. But I am curious about the paw prints you mentioned.
Sincerely,

Killian Jones

Emma reread the letter a couple of times, pondering over each word. She got out of the car and walked back up to the front walk and looked around, still not noticing anything that made her think someone was living there. And why would they want to talk to me about paw prints on a walk, after, I already told them that they were there when I moved in? Shaking her head, she reached into the car, grabbed some paper and penned a response and put it in the mailbox before heading back to Miami.

Killian

Killian slammed the door of his truck shut, picked up the box of supplies he had just purchased with one hand and the cans of paint with the other and as he was walking by the postbox on his way to the front door, he noticed that the flag was down, so he opened the box and grabbed the letter. He was met at the door by his new friend, who passed him quickly, obviously on his way to visit a tree or two. Once inside he dropped everything on the table and put away the food and the dog supplies he had purchased at the market. He started to unpack the box of tools but the letter was laying there in front of him and he was curious what it said. After picking it up, he carried it to his favorite chair and sat down. Sliding his finger under the flap, he opened it and pulled out a single piece of paper. It read;

Dear Mr. Jones,

I’m very familiar with the Gold Cottage and I never lived there. Call me old fashioned but I don’t think a cottage should be over 5000 square feet. So, let me try this again. I used to live in the Beach House. Then I moved. I now live at 200 Biscayne Blvd Way, Miami. I would appreciate it if you would forward my mail if you get any. Oh and by the way the year is 2014, it has been all year. Ask anyone.

Emma Swan

Killian laid the letter down on the table next to his chair and slowly got up. “2014,” he said to the room, “2014?” he said a bit louder. “Am I daft?” Picking up his cell phone he pulled up the calendar and checked the date. “February 2012, exactly like I thought.” He then walked over to the newspaper he had procured while at the store and checked the date on it. ‘Yes, February 2012. Ok, I’m not the one who’s dim, that’s for sure,” he said to himself. Putting it out of his mind, he took a notebook and went outside to decide what he wanted his next project to be in order to bring the house back to its once beautiful self.

Deciding the most pressing piece of business was to cut back the plants that were over running the path that led down to the beach, he took a large pair of clippers and snipped his way through them until nothing was left to impede one’s walk. The dog tagged along, sniffing at every plant several times until they reached open sand and then he stopped and cocked his head as if he were listening for someone or something. Noticing that the tide was receding, Killian walked down to the beach and stood on the hard, packed wet sand just above the water line, and as the waves lapped over his toes he looked up and down the coast wondering what could have been getting the dog’s attention. The dog put his nose into the breeze, standing still, sniffing and then while continuing to sniff meandered along the beach, as if on the trail of something specific.

Staring off into the distance with his hands in his pockets, and the wind blowing his hair over his forehead, Killian allowed the melancholy feeling and the memories to wash over him. His father and
mother watching he and his brother running in and out of the waves, he and his brother gathering shells and showing them to his mother, her exclaiming over every one and choosing her favorite two or three to take in the house and put in a jar sitting on the table behind the sofa. Memories of nights making small fires on the beach and sitting around it, laughing with Liam. Eventually the memories of his mother becoming sad and times spent with her and his brother and his father never being around. Wondering as a child why things had to change. Why they couldn’t stay the same. And remembering when he was a child wondering if he could have done anything differently, but now as an adult realizing that none of it was his fault.

His parents had split up when he was eight and Liam was sixteen and his mother took him back to England and Liam had stayed in the States with their father, the great Brennan Jones. And now, he thought to himself, we’re all that’s left. Sadness for his mother filled his soul as he thought over her last days. When she found out she was sick, she didn’t want him to tell his father and brother but he had gone against her wishes and told them anyway. His brother of course had rushed to be with her at the end but not his father. At the time Liam had thought that it was work but Killian hadn’t believed him. And now after having drinks with Liam, he finally knew the truth. His father had a heart procedure and had been in the hospital. Killian wondered why his father kept this to himself but he could understand why he might feel guilt. Especially in light of what he had discovered about his parents. However, since he couldn’t ask his mum and he really didn’t want to get his father upset, he needed to come up with a diplomatic way to discuss it with him. And sooner rather than later it seemed.

Whistling for the dog to follow him, he walked to the outdoor faucet to wash any sand off of his feet. The faucet was old and rusted but he was able to finally get it to turn. Water sprayed everywhere but with a little ingenuity, he was able to clean his feet and get the water turned off, however he did pull the paper out and make note of what he needed to purchase to repair the problem. Putting away the clippers, Killian and his four legged friend walked back into the house just as the last vestiges of light faded. The letter was sitting in the same place and after reading it over again, he decided it was a problem he would handle better in the light of day. Turning the lights out, he and his pet called it a night.

While they had never had a dog growing up, it turned out much easier than he thought it would. He and his friend settled into somewhat of a pattern with some days the dog staying at home in the beach house and other days the dog was at the door, ready to leave before Killian was. It was quite eerie really how astute the dog was with not only knowing his schedule but with knowing exactly which days it wouldn’t be proper to take him to the office. It was a Friday in March, a day that for as long as the dog had been living with him, was typically a work day, but for some reason, today, the dog was not interested. Even calling to him a few times, his only response had been a slight lift of his head and then he had lowered it and gone back to sleep. Picking up his keys, Killian left without him.

He hadn't driven far when his phone rang with his brother's ring tone. Pushing the hand's free button, he answered, "Let me guess, you missed me?"

"Wanker, not sure why you think I'd miss you but we've been summoned. Tonight dinner with father."

Without giving it much thought Killian opened his mouth, "I believe I am rather busy tonight."

"Killian." In just the right tone immediately set his guilt meter going but also made him think of their mum.

"I swear Liam, you sound exactly like mum when you said that. How did you manage that?"

Liam laughed, somewhat diabolically Killian thought, "Tis a gift. Now tonight. 7 at Shula's." And
then just like that he hung up.

"Bugger it" Killian responded to what ended up being dead air. "A summons for dinner, guess it's a good thing I don't have the dog." He muttered, "And there's no way to skive off now."

Work went well and it seemed like no time before it was time to leave for the restaurant. Traffic was heavy and it took a while to get there, so much so that when he arrived he went ahead and left the truck with the valet. Brushing his hair back off of his forehead, he entered the building and had to admit that if the food tasted like it smelled than it was pukka. Liam was waiting for him looking quite fit in his dress wear, "Ready?" he asked, "Father's at the table," and he started walking.

Killian didn't have any options but to follow, "Ready for grub and a pint, mate," he answered.

"Keep your pecker up Killian," Liam shot back just as they walked by a table where several beautiful women were sitting, who stopped talking to watch the men walk by.

"I'm here Liam."

Liam stopped and turned back to him, "Yes you're here but for someone who is interested in making amends you're doing a piss poor job. Now stop being so sullen, and smile."

Killian knew Liam was right, even though it pained him to admit it. "Quit being a sod," he said to himself silently and stepped forward to greet Brennan.

Brennan held out his hand to Killian and they shook and all sat down at the table. Before they even had their napkins placed in their laps, the waiter was upon them taking their drink order. Killian and Liam ordered the same as their father, since he gave it a good recommendation, and each picked up their menu. Brennan made a few suggestions and when the waiter brought them a pint, he took their orders. Taking a sip, Killian looked around the room, and tried to think of something innocuous to say, "Dine here often, father?"

"It's served its purpose for a few meetings over the years. But enough about me, since my livelihood hasn't changed. Liam said you have a fleet of Swans. Please fill me in."

Conversation flowed easily from there with Killian talking about the ships, the types of tours they offered and they laughed about some of the funnier incidences that occurred over the past few months.

Brennan and Liam discussed different building projects their business was involved in but all stayed away from any topics which may have been considered controversial. Once dinner was over and the check was taken care of, the men parted company.

Killian waited for the valet to bring his truck around and after getting in noticed the letter from his mysterious Swan, sitting in the front seat. Reading it again;

Dear Mr. Jones,

I’m very familiar with the Gold Cottage and I never lived there. Call me old fashioned but I don’t think a cottage should be over 5000 square feet. So, let me try this again. I used to live in the beach house. Then I moved. I now live at 200 Biscayne Blvd Way, Miami. I would appreciate it if you would forward my mail if you get any. Oh and by the way the year is 2014, it has been all year. Ask anyone.

Emma Swan
He resolved to solve the problem and entering the address into his GPS, he hit go.

Emma

Emma had settled into her new job fairly easily, and while some days were really long, some days longer than others, she enjoyed all aspects of it that she had encountered so far. She saw a wide variety of cases in the ER and usually worked a few days a week with Ruby, who always knew all the gossip there was, and around a hospital, there was plenty. For her part, Emma tried to stay away from being a part of the gossip but she loved Ruby and gossip and Ruby came hand in hand.

This Friday the ER had been busy, not only with the usual Friday happenings but it was spring break in many parts of the country and as such there were extra college students hanging out on South Beach. Their injuries or illnesses were usually minor but it made for extra traffic and the waiting room was full of half-dressed individuals and the place smelled like coconut.

Walking into exam room two, Emma expected to see another half-dressed spring breaker who had too much sun but instead was greeted by the biggest pair of red rimmed brown eyes she had ever seen, on a head topped with dark curls, with a large bloody rag being held over his mouth. Emma smiled slowly at the little boy who looked about five or six "Well hello handsome," she said to him, and then made eye contact with his father, who had a very concerned look on his face. "I'm Dr. Swan," she said as she picked up a pair of gloves to snap on, "What happened?"

"Good afternoon Dr., I'm Robin and this little guy is Roland. "It seems he was playing football, I mean soccer and the ball and mouth made contact.

Picking up some gauze and dampening it, Emma leaned toward Roland, "May I?" His big brown eyes met her green ones and he must have seen something that he trusted as after a few seconds he nodded his head yes. Robin moved the rag he had been holding against Roland's mouth and Emma gently wiped the blood away from his lips, picking up more pieces of dampened gauze as needed. Seeing no obvious place for the blood to be coming from, she used her left hand to gently lift up his top lip and immediately seeing one noticeable reason for some of the blood smiled. Looking at Robin she said, "Looks like the impact dislodged his upper top two teeth. Were they loose?"

Robin smiled gently at his son, "Yes, both were just starting to get loose and he wiggled them constantly in hopes they would fall out."

Emma looked at Roland, "You got your wish, no more top teeth. Now let's see if there is any other reason for the blood." As she was examining the rest of the soft tissue on the insides of his lips, the door to the exam room burst open.

If possible Roland's eyes got even bigger and tears appeared once again and then Emma heard, "Robin, I just got your message, what happened?" and looked over her shoulder to see none other than Regina Mills, the Chief Hospital Administrator of Bayside General, come rushing into the room.

Robin looked up and smiled crookedly at Regina, "I'm glad you got it, just a little problem with a ball meeting his mouth."

Regina walked around the table and put one hand on Robin's shoulder as she leaned her cheek against Roland's, "You ok?" She asked Robin quietly.

He picked up her hand and kissed it gently, "Better now."

Emma felt a bit like a voyeur at the evident closeness between the two, but quickly finished her examination of little Roland. "Good news is it looks like all the blood was caused from having both
of his front teeth knocked out at the same time, plus there were some small cuts along the inside of his mouth. Those seemed to have stopped bleeding though so I don't believe stitches are necessary, but his mouth will probably be a little sore and swollen for a few days. Just have him swish with warm salt water to speed up the healing." Finishing her instructions, she removed her gloves and washed her hands, and noticed that Roland looked more upset than before. "Roland, what's up buddy?"

He looked at her with a frown on his face, "My teeth fell out and I swallowed them. What am I going to leave for the tooth fairy?"

The adults in the room all looked at each other and while she could tell that Robin really wanted to laugh by the twinkle in his eyes, he kept a sober face. Thinking fast, Emma smiled at Roland, "Well I think you probably aren't the first child who's swallowed their teeth, maybe your dad or mom, can help you write the tooth fairy a letter for under your pillow."

As she was talking his little face lit up, and he starting nodding his head yes, and looked over his shoulder at Regina, "Help me mom?"

Emma had to blink back the tears watching such a sweet scene, as Regina swallowed several times trying to dislodge the lump in her throat, before answering him, "Definitely! Thank you Dr. Swan."

Smiling at the family, Emma handed a small lollipop to Roland, "My pleasure," she said before exiting the room to complete her shift. As she was finishing up that evening, the thought of driving down to the beach house, just because, entered her mind and couldn't be dislodged.

Killian

Arriving on Biscayne Bay Blvd, Killian started following the numbers looking for the right one. He found 240 but 200, was a construction site. Pulling into the construction site yard, he got out of his truck and looked at the letter again. "Yes, 200 Biscayne Bay Blvd. I'm in the right place but this makes no sense." He shut his door and walked around the corner of what was eventually going to be a rather large apartment complex. Attached to the side of the frame was a large sign advertising the building that read; OCEAN VIEW LUXURY APARTMENTS, Available Summer 2013. "Summer 2013," Killian read again. "That's a year plus from now. How can this be?" Shaking his head at how utterly confused he felt, he got back in the truck and drove home to the beach and his dog who had been stuck inside all day. Having decided to write Swan another letter, he set to work formulating it in his mind as he drove. Once he arrived home he sat down with some paper and wrote the letter, took it out to the postbox and closed it inside. There, he thought. I've taken care of that.

Emma

Early Saturday, Emma loaded Rumple and drove south hoping for some answer to the strange correspondence that she had been engaging in. Making good time, they arrived and as before, no cars were parked, nor were any lights on in the house. Prolonging the strange anticipation, she felt, she took Rumple for a nice walk on the beach, throwing sticks for him to chase and enjoying the music from the sea. After an hour, Rumple's tongue was hanging out and she couldn't stand the suspense any longer. Walking back to the car she kept telling herself that there wouldn't be anything there and so when she opened the mailbox to discover another letter, she was both pleased and a bit hesitant as this was 'weird' for lack of a better word. Herding the dog back into the bug, she read;

**Dear Ms. Swan,**

*I drove by 200 Biscayne Bay Blvd and it's not there, it's just a construction site. From the pictures, it*
looks nice but not for another 18 months so. What am I missing here? Maybe you got the address wrong because I noticed that you got the date wrong too.

Killian Jones

Stranger still she thought, as her apartment building was brand new, only being completed July 2013, when Mary Margaret had first moved into them. Thinking back to her mystery man's dates, something sat there on the edge of her memory that made that time significant. Resigning herself to get to the bottom of it, she drove back home to look through some photos from that time to see if she could figure out what significant memory was sitting there just out of reach.

Arriving back at her apartment she took her laptop out onto the patio and pulled up her pictures folder. Scrolling through her pictures from March, two years previous, she found an album with some pictures of her, M&M and Leo at Disney World and a description of the trip. "That's it!" she told Rumple, "Well mystery man, if you are in the year 2012, be forewarned," and closing her computer got busy on an answer to her pen pal, and before thinking hopped back in the car for the ride to Key Largo.

Killian

Saturday donned bright and sunny and after a walk on the beach with the dog, Killian decided to get to work on the landscaping. When they had lived here before, his mother had been meticulous with having the trees groomed, but since then it had been haphazard at best. He'd thought about hiring someone to it done but liked the idea of working with his hands and bringing back the beauty of something his mum had planted. However, it was hot outside and the higher the sun rose, the more humid it became. He'd also noticed his dog friend, panting rather heavily, but the few time he'd tried to get the mutt to go in, he'd refused. So as the sun reached its zenith, he took a break inside where it was cool. On his way into the house, while the flag was still raised, he checked anyway to see if his letter had been taken. The dog watched him, cocking his head from one side to the other, then pranced up the walk to the door. "Ok, mate, I can take a hint."

Working indoors until late afternoon, Killian was able to accomplish some of the smaller, more monotonous tasks that he had been hesitant to start. Realizing that time was getting away from him, he went back out to work on the landscaping. As he walked out of the house, the dog ran past him toward the postbox barking. Killian then noticed that the flag on it was no longer up, but had been put down. Looking in the box, he also saw that it was empty and his dog, who needed a name, was sniffing the air and the ground around the box as if trying to get a trail of some unseen prey. "No one's here, uh, Spot, how would you like that name?" 'Spot' tilted his head to one side as if trying to decide, then growled, and moved off into the shade. "Ok, guess Spot doesn't work," Killian muttered, before picking up the cutting tool he had been using and got back to work.

It wasn't long before he had again worked up a sweat, and pulling his shirt over his head, wiped his face and then leaned up to wet his head with the garden hose. While bent over enjoying the coolness of the water, he heard the dog bark and looked up to see him run toward the postbox. Turning off the faucet and dropping the hose, he walked toward where the dog was barking just as the flag on the box went back up. "What the," and opening the box he pulled out a letter and a small package. Opening the letter, he caught a whiff of vanilla with some underlying sweet smell, and imagined that she had just put lotion on her hands as she put the letter in the envelope, unfolding it he read;

*Ok my mysterious correspondent, I get it, just in case you really are where and when you think you are, you’ll need these. There was a severe thunderstorm that weekend and a freak lightning strike hit the main transformer that supplies power to the Upper Keys and you will be in the dark for three days. Stay dry.*
Thunderstorm, he thought looking up at the blue sky, she's obviously a loon. Curious about what was in the box, he opened it and found some candles and matches and a small card that read "For when the lights go out." Shaking his head at the situation, he put away his tools and went inside to make something to eat. While his soup was heating he heard thunder and looking out the window could see lightening off in the distance. Thinking nothing of it, he finished preparing his meal, and sat down ready to eat just as another loud clap of thunder sounded, followed by a bright flash and pop and then the room plunged into darkness, "Bloody hell," he muttered as he lit one of the candles and using it reread the letter.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! So now you've been let in on the big secret and that is that Killian is living in a year two years earlier than Emma. Stay tuned for their big 'meet' in Chapter 5 and the journey of their love story. Drop me a line or two to let me know what you think.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Killian and Emma have their first ‘real time’ conversation or at least as real time as they can have when they live two years apart. After the exchange of several letters, Killian has a very special question to ask Emma.

Chapter Notes

In this chapter since their conversation happens in 'real time’ I have not separated the sections between Killian and Emma but remember when you are reading it that he is living in the year 2012 and Emma is living in 2014.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Just as Emma Swan had said in her last letter, power in the Upper Keys came back on after three days. Killian had sent a quick text to Liam and his father letting them know that he was safe, but decided to stay in the house by the beach instead of moving back to his ship. He told himself it was because he didn't want to leave the house without any electricity and protection but whom was he really fooling? He knew the ship was no place he could keep the dog and he was waiting for the flag to go down on the postbox.

If he were honest with himself, and he was really trying to be, he was waiting for Emma Swan. She had mysteriously come into his life and after growing up listening to his mother talk about fate, he had to wonder just exactly how fate was involved in this. Even after the difficulties his mother faced in her life, at the hand of his father and with her health, she still believed that her life had been her destiny. The life that she was meant to live and that had been created for her. After reading the letters he found in his mother's things, he had to wonder if people's destiny's weren't somehow intertwined. If maybe fate landed you somewhere but like Ebenezer Scrooge, in Charles Dickens' Classic, A Christmas Carol, you chose your own destiny, from several presented in front of you. He tended to think the latter and that while fate had put his parents together, that for whatever reason, once together their destinies had diverged, and never crossed again. Another tragic love story but this time not a piece of classic literature, but reality. "Stop being maudlin, Jones," he muttered, just as the dog came around the corner to see what he was missing. Killian stopped his musing and looked over at him, "What? Never known anyone who talks to himself?" The response he got, on a person would have been an eye roll, before turning around and trotting back into the bedroom. Shaking his head at the dog's antics, he got up to go check the flag on the postbox again.

The box had played a large part in his activities over the past few days. It had started the morning after the power went out and he had written a simple question and after sealing it in an envelope, had put it in the box and lifted the flag. Then as he worked around the house, several times a day, he would stop whatever he was doing and go see if the flag had been lowered. He called himself every name he could think of when he felt disappointment that it was still up, so when he looked and it was down, he couldn't quite believe what he was seeing. Rubbing his eyes, to make sure his vision was clear, he tried again, and just as before, the flag was down. Mentally giving himself a fist bump, he
opened the door, and was almost bowled over by the dog who raced past him barking wildly, as he ran straight to the postbox and then sat down, just to the left of it, as if waiting for something.

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

After leaving the letter and box of candles for her mystery correspondent, Emma and Rumple had gotten in the car and driven back to Miami. She took him down to the beach and they walked a while and then once he was tired, as they headed home, she picked up some orange chicken and lo mien at a little Wok & Go for dinner. Once back home she fed Rumple and gave him some fresh water and then took her meal out onto the balcony, not surprised in the least when as soon as she sat, there was a black and white head in her lap. Emma looked down at him, "Really? Yours is in there" and she pointed with her thumb to his bowls. He just lifted his eyebrows at her but didn't move his head. Trying her best to ignore him, she started eating.

As she ate her meal she thought about this person, this Killian Jones. She wondered if he had needed her candles, and then giggled thinking of the look on his face when he opened the box. She couldn't quite put her finger on why she wanted this person to be real. Was it the name? Was it the house where she had felt safe and relaxed? Was it the anonymity, which made him safe? Was it a combination? She wasn't sure but she knew that she found the whole idea exciting, even though it required a lot of believing. And if there was one thing that she knew about herself, it was that believing in this felt a little like believing in magic. And everyone knew magic didn't exist.

Of course when she thought about magic, she thought about love and how elusive that feeling had been to her. She knew there was love in the world. She had felt it as a child with her parents and knew that M&M's parents loved her even before she lived with them. She loved M&M and was quickly coming to love David and she saw the love that they shared. But for herself, while Graham had said he loved her, there had been something missing. She wanted that spark. She wanted the heart racing and while she couldn't explain why, she felt excitement at the thought of a new letter from Killian. Butterflies some might say. "Imaginative thoughts Emma. Must be time for bed." Cleaning up, she closed down for the night.

The next few days passed by quickly as she caught up on a few things around the house and worked. There were still a few boxes, mostly books that she had not unpacked and every time David and Mary Margaret came over they teased her mercilessly. Vowing to end the teasing she bought a small bookcase and put it together. Taking a walk down memory lane she pulled out the tattered copies of her books one by one and put them away. Looking over her own copy of Crime and Punishment and Persuasion, she smiled at the memory of the discussions that Leo used to try to engage her and M&M in and more often than not, she ended up shaking her head at the two of them and their endless debate over seemingly harmless statements. No wonder M&M followed in her father's footsteps, she thought. With nothing else left to do, she allowed herself to realize it had been more than three days. Patting her leg for Rumple, she clipped on his leash and took the elevator to the parking garage to see if by some chance there was a letter waiting.

Traffic was light and they made good time and soon they were exiting the interstate onto US 1 and looking for the driveway. Turning between the palms, Emma felt the same sense of home she always felt arriving here and this time the feeling was accompanied by butterflies. "Emma, really?" Giving herself a good talking to, she pulled up to her usual parking space and turned the key.

As soon as the car stopped, Rumple started whimpering to be let out. Emma opened her door and pushed up the seat and he took off toward the mailbox at a sprint, barking wildly. Looking around, she didn't see any reason for the barking and making her way to where he was sitting, on the right side of the box looking up at the flag, goosebumps ran up and down her arms. "The flag is up," she said to Rumple. "Do you think he liked our gift?" He barked once, stood up, turned around, barked
again and sat back down. Emma opened the box. Inside was an envelope with her name on it. She removed it, shut the door and put the flag down and with as much self-control as possible, opened the envelope and pulled out a single sheet of paper. He had written:

How did you know?

Running back to the car, she grabbed her day planner, wrote an answer, and ran back to the mailbox. Rumple was still sitting in exactly the same spot, on the right side of it, following her every move. She opened and closed the box, with the letter inside and put up the flag. She had taken but a few steps back toward her car, when Rumple barked once and the flag went back down. Looking around, she saw no one, but felt as if she weren't alone. Not moving, she waited, for what she wasn't sure.

----------

When he was almost in front of the box, the flag suddenly went back up. She's here, was his first thought and smiling he opened the box and pulled out the piece of paper that was inside. It read:

I would say magic but I don't believe in that. You're asking, how did I know about the power going off? The time frame tickled a memory and I looked it up to see why. That's all.

Killian rubbed his hand over his face trying to decide what to ask next. Finally, he settled for something simple and quickly wrote it out. Putting his response into the box, he lifted the flag and waited.

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

Looking at Rumple, who continued to sit unusually still during all of this, Emma wondered what he was thinking. He would look at the mailbox at exactly the same time the flag would go up or down, as if he were watching whoever was on the receiving end of her letters. Thinking maybe it was time to leave, she turned to go when the flag suddenly went back up. She pulled open the lid and lowered the flag. His letter read:

You don't believe in magic?

Shaking her head at the strangeness of this entire conversational exchange, Emma smirked and this time just wrote on the envelope and hurriedly put it back in the box and lifted the flag once again.

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

Killian stood there, feeling like an arse, and watched the odd behavior of the dog, who maintained his position to the left of the mailbox. "What do you see mate?" Killian whispered to his friend. "Do you see someone, hear someone, sense someone?" The dog tilted his head as if listening carefully to the words that Killian had uttered and then, whimpered softly just as the flag was once again lifted. "Bloody hell" he exclaimed pushing the flag down and reading what she wrote.

Can this be happening?

Quickly answering on the same envelope, he pushed it back in and lifted the flag. Hoping that she would respond again, he walked back into the house to pick up a notepad for which to write his responses. The dog stayed in his guard position, next to the mailbox, eerily still.

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

When the flag went down this time, Emma wasn't as surprised but still a bit weirded out. She was
standing next to a mailbox, watching its flag mysteriously go up and down, and when it went down a new comment was inside waiting for her. She wanted to get in her car and drive back home and pretend this wasn't happening, yet she found she couldn't leave. Couldn't leave as even when she wasn't standing here next to this crazy mailbox, she couldn't get it and these strange happenings out of her mind. Things like this happened to her, oh like, never, and now it had happened multiple times in the span of just a few minutes. Throwing her hands up in exasperation, and preparing to continue her inner tirade until all thoughts were halted with the magical lifting of a flag with a letter inside saying:

   Why not? Don't you believe in fate?

Deciding to be practical to see if she could get to the bottom of whoever was obviously playing a joke on her, she opened her day planner, responded, and ripped out the paper to stuff back into the box. Stepping back to wait, she was startled when Rumple barked at her. Looking down at him expecting to see him staring back she was surprised when instead he was focused on the box. Checking to see what could be so interesting, she was amazed with what she saw, "thanks boy," and she flipped the flag back up.

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

Coming back out of the house with a notepad full of clean paper, Killian wasn't surprised to see the dog had remained in the same position, but he was to see the flag was down, and just as he returned to his watchful position, right next to the dog, it went back up. Inside was a piece of paper and as he picked it up, he read:

   Where are you?

"I see you Swan, answering a question about fate, with a much simpler one. Must be a practical lass." Answering her question and pushing the flag back up he waited.

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

Emma had been expecting it so as soon as the flag went up, she recovered the letter, and laughed at the response;

   The beach house, you?

   Throwing her hands up, this time in frustration, she remarked, "The beach house? The beach HOUSE? I'M AT THE BEACH!" getting more excited with each word, and then because her scientific, practical mind needed to process all of this information, she practically stomped to her car, and tugged open the door. Rumple still sat patiently in place until Emma called to him several times, and then with apparent reluctance, he trotted to the car, jumped into the back seat, and stared forlornly out the window. Throwing the day planner and the notes she had exchanged in the passenger seat, she left the beach house and its mystery behind.

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

After the flag went down, Killian thought, Emma would answer straight away and so when the dog walked away from the postbox toward his SUV, he was surprised. He watched him sniff around, bark a few times and then walk back into the house, tail down. Double checking the box to make sure he hadn't missed anything, he followed the dog back inside. "Why so sad boy? It's me she didn't answer." Thinking to move on, he went to get ready to go into the office.

------------------
All the way back to Miami, Emma thought about the notes that had been exchanged. Glancing at the passenger side and seeing them sitting there haphazardly spread across the seat, she repeated out loud, "Those aren't fake, they are real, but a parallel time?" Well, wrapping her mind around that concept was a little too much to handle. Forming and testing a hypothesis on that might be a stretch for even the strongest scientific theorist. Deciding to put it out of her mind she drove rest of the way home.

The sun was setting as she drove into the parking garage and noticing a strangely dejected look on Rumple’s face, she decided to take him down to the dog park so he could run with other dogs. Clipping his leash on and gathering up her day planner, she crammed the notes inside and walked to the park. Once inside the fence, she unclipped his leash and he took off like a flash. Running circles around benches on one end and then looping back around the benches on the other, all that she could see was a black and white streak. Several other dogs joined and since he was otherwise occupied, Emma sat down and pulled out the notes.

How did you know?         You don't believe in magic?         Why not? Don't you believe in fate?

So does he think it's magic or fate or is it all a big joke?" She asked herself. But as improbable as the possibility was, a part of her really wanted it to be probable. Wanted some man who left letters, real hand written letters in a mailbox to be real. Because as much as she found the talk of fate or magic scary, she couldn't deny those indefinable butterflies for being present. Deciding that it might be wise to introduce herself the next time, she promised to write an introductory letter and take it back the first break she had from work, which wouldn't be for a few days but that gave her plenty time to think, and not jumping into things was something in which Emma Swan excelled.

-----------

Killian walked into his office and tossed his keys on his desk. Tink looked up from the forms that she was filling out, saw the disgruntled look on his face and promptly looked back down. Rolling his eyes at her, he fell into his chair making as much noise as was humanly possible for one person to make. Finally, deciding that she had had enough, Tink put down her pen, folded her hands on top of the papers and looked over at her boss.

Several long minutes went by until finally, unable to stand it any longer, he said, "What?"

Reaching into her drawer, Tink picked up a set of keys and held them out toward him, "She's free."

“That's bloody marvelous,” he answered as he took the keys and drove to the docks. Setting sail on the “Schwan” for several hours allowing the sea breeze to clear his head and for the next several days he was able to push Emma Swan out of his mind, for some of the time anyway.

Arriving home after an overnight trip as the Captain of his Bahamas cruise, Killian turned off the SUV and stepped out and stretched his arms over his head, to drive the kinks out of his back. He was having second thoughts about not stopping to pick up his friend, that he had been calling Bob, but when the usual Captain for the overnight trip came down with the flu, he'd had no option but to leave him with Tink. He didn't think the passengers would have appreciated a dog that was a bit barmy at times. Walking by the postbox on the way inside, he noticed the flag was up. He couldn't help himself but a smile lit his face. "Miss me, Swan?" He couldn't help but quip. Taking the letter inside, he got comfortable and read.

I'm not good at this but maybe I can get better. I think it's time we had a proper introduction. My name is Emma Swan. I'm a doctor. I love being a doctor because I like to see them get better. So as a
doctor, I study science.

As for believing in magic?. Do you? You said in an earlier correspondence that you were curious about the paw prints. I checked and they are still by the door. I don’t know what more I can tell you except they were there when I moved in. The blue looks like it matches the railings if that helps.

I do have a dog that showed up the day I moved in to the beach house. He's black and white and I call him Rumple. He's interesting.

Emma

After finishing the letter, Killian brought it close to his nose and sniffed, “Cookies,” he murmured the first thing that came to mind. Humming approvingly, he answered her right away.

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

It had been several days since she had driven to the beach to drop off her introduction letter for Killian and Emma was curious if he had responded, but work had been crazy and after long shifts she had wanted nothing but her warm bed. Even her time enjoying walks on the beach with Rumple had been limited and since getting engaged on Valentine's Day, M&M had been after her to go wedding dress shopping so her first weekend off in June they set out.

Of course shopping with Mary Margaret wasn't as easy as one might think. And wedding dress shopping added a whole spin on top of that but after eight wedding dress shops and trying on more dresses than Emma could count, she was hopeful by the look on her face that this was it. Looking at her sister, who was standing in front of the mirror staring at herself, Emma felt a lump forming in her throat, "That's it, isn't it?" She asked quietly.

Mary Margaret looked at her through the mirror, "Oh Emma, yes, this is IT!" And then she ran her hands over the silk skirt, and turning each direction looked at herself from all directions. "I think David would approve."

Nodding her head, Emma agreed, "Now that's settled, can we please go eat? That pastry we ate hours ago is gone."

M&M dimpled at the long suffering tone coming from Emma's mouth, but had to agree, food did sound good, "Sure, but just wait until you get married. You'll see, the dress has to be perfect."

Rolling her eyes at her sister as she guided her into the dressing room to change, Emma quipped, "I'm getting married on the beach M&M, so a fancy dress won't be my priority, now the negligée for the wedding night, that's another story," and then she winked at the embarrassed look on M&M's face, "Get dressed," and she shut the door and went to let the salesperson know what M&M had decided.

After leaving the bridal shop, the girls stopped at “Coconuts” to eat. Waiting for their food, M&M filled Emma in on a few other wedding arrangements that she had made, and they talked about her vacation with David to meet his parents, who lived in a small town in New England, quaintly called Storybrooke. It was a relaxing meal after a busy day but once home, Emma wanted nothing more than a hot bath, a glass of wine and her bed.
Up early the next day, she walked with Rumple down to the beach and picked up a bear claw and a cup of coffee. Once done, she loaded him in the car for the trip south. Feeling anxious, she had to watch her speed but driving up to the house, the butterflies became a full swarm, especially after seeing that the flag was up and waiting for her. Her hands shook as she opened the box and pulled out the letter, and the opening line caused her to snort, but as she read, she couldn't keep her smile away.

Emma, a lovely name for a lovely lass. My name is Killian Jones. I am from the UK and have been in the states for only a few months. I am the Captain of several yachts that are docked here in South Florida.

I've been thinking about the paw prints, and especially after reading your letter, I think we have the same dog, as difficult as that is to comprehend. Mine is also black and white and is eerily perceptive. He often goes to work with me but seems to always know which days he has to stay home. It's as if he can read my mind, which sounds fanciful I know. But you said his name is Rumple, from the fairy tale, Rumpelstiltskin? And I thought you said you didn't believe in magic? But aren't fairy tales often about believing in magic? Dare I dream that a little glimmer of hope continues to reside inside you Swan?

As for how the paw prints came to be, that's an interesting story and happened on the day he showed up here. I was painting and right through the tray he walked, tracking the prints all the way up to the front door.

So my lady, you're the only connection I have with the future. Are things different? I was pleased when I received your last note. I trust I will have the pleasure of receiving another.

Your man from the past,

Killian

Emma reread the letter from Killian several times over the next week as she went about her life. Carrying a notebook in her pocket she found herself writing silly little things about her week, wishing not for the first time, that they could text but excited to share with someone else. She was frustrated that by the time she was able to get back to the beach, several weeks had passed but as she put the letter in the mailbox and raised its flag, hope took flight.

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

Killian walked into the “Irish Fado Pub”, in downtown Miami to meet Liam for a quick nightcap before heading home to Rumple. It was already the third week of June and he hadn't seen him for a few weeks and after running late had almost cancelled, but was glad he was here. Although from the looks he was getting as he strolled through the bar, he was afraid he was never going to hear the end of this from his older brother.

As he approached the corner where the hostess had directed him to Liam, he put a little extra swagger in his step, and winked at several lovely lasses that were eyeing him as he passed by their tables. Seeing Liam's head on the other side of a half wall he started to say something clever, but stopped himself when he realized it was his father sitting to his brother's left. "Father, I'm delighted you could join this nit and I for a bevvy." And with a flourish he swept the tail of his long leather coat aside, and straddled a chair.

Liam looked over at him with a glint in his eye, "Captain, delighted you joined this lowly deckhand
and his father this evening," and then burst out laughing.

Meanwhile Brennan was looking back and forth between the boys, as if they’d gone mad, and when the laughter died down, asked Killian, "Is there something you’ve failed to mention?"

Picking out a peanut that was in a bowl on the table, he cracked it, and side eyed Liam, "Nothing as nefarious as your tone seems to indicate father," and then he went on to explain about the cruises his company offered. Conversation flowed with relative ease after that until Kilian made mention that he needed to get home to let Rumple out and then both Liam and Brennan turned and gave him the oddest looks, "What, I didn't tell you about Rumple?"

Liam raised both eyebrows, "Rumple? No I believe I would have remembered that story."

Giving them the short version, which they both found amusing, closed out the evening and when he drove up to the house and saw a raised flag on the postbox, he felt that tonight it seemed, his stars were aligned perfectly. Emma's letter just happened to add to an already bang-up night.

Dear Man from the Past,

I am sorry I haven't been in touch for a few weeks but my shifts at the hospital have been long and when I go home I only feel like crashing. Poor Rumple has even suffered but thankfully my sister is able to take him out on days when I am working.

Things are not much different in the future, except gas and food prices are higher, technology continues to improve and they recently started filming the latest Star Wars movie. Why I know that, I'm not sure, I think I must have heard it being spoken of at the hospital.

So I'm gathering you're asking why I named the dog Rumpelstiltskin and that’s simple. In the fairy tale, he was clever, yet sneaky, and form some reason those two words perfectly described my black and white dog. And from your comments it sounds like you too have discovered this.

And yes, you caught me, fairy tales were a large part of my youth, so maybe at one time, the belief that magic existed was a large part of who I was, but people change which is a story for another time. I will say though that somehow these past few months, my hope seems to have been ignited once again.

Do you believe in fairy tales Killian?

Closing for now,

Emma Swan

Killian finished the letter and read it through a second and even a third time, "Am I a part of your hope being reignited Swan?" He said quietly, thinking that for someone he's never met, he spent quite a large portion of his free time thinking of her. Rumple had lifted his head when he heard Killian's voice and detecting a sadness, walked over and placed his chin on his owner's knee. Killian absentmindedly scratched him between the ears, "What do you think Rumple, do I believe in fairy tales? I believe I do, Swan, and you are my princess."

It took him a few days to pen just the right letter to her, but finally it was complete. Closing it in the
postbox and raising the flag, he hoped she said yes.

Emma spent the week after leaving the letter for Killian, working long hours and spending free time with her dog. Summer was in full swing and as the temperatures rose so did the number of sunburns, drunken brawls and jellyfish stings. The annual Fourth of July celebrations were just around the corner and Emma knew with that often came firework burns. Life in South Florida at its finest. After seven days she couldn't stand it any longer and even though she had worked all night, she packed Rumple in the car, and drove down to check the mail.

And even though she was totally exhausted and knew it was risky and she needed rest, she felt a strange sense of urgency to read the letter now. So settling against the hood of the bug, she opened the envelope and pulled out a single sheet of paper. Killian had written;

Swan,

You asked if I believed in fairy tales and I haven’t always, but lately, magic feels like it’s all around me. I think that maybe the fates have dropped another path in front of me. And some things are meant to be fought for, and this magic that brought us together, Swan, this magic feels real. This magic I want to fight for.

The second Saturday in July, I'm hoping you will save for me. Will you Emma? Will you do me the honor of spending the day with me?

Yours,

Killian

Hugging the letter to herself, Emma reached into the bug and ripped a page from her day planner. Writing an answer to Killian's letter, she used his envelope and left it in the mailbox for him. The last thing she did before leaving for home was to lift the flag.

--------

Killian had been routinely checking the postbox in hopes that Emma had been by to answer his letter but after a week, he was still waiting. Needing to clear his head, he took Rumple and they walked along the beach, allowing the waves and the warm summer winds to blow his troubles away. Once back up on the beach, Killian fed Rumple and watched as a summer storm blew onto the beach. Just as the rain dried and the last vestiges of light were leaving the beach, he felt that Emma had been there. Almost slipping on the walk still wet from the rain, Killian ran to read her response. Once opened, he couldn't stop his smile. She had written only four words;

Of course, Killian. Where?

Sleep was elusive that night as Killian thought about the many ways they could spend a Saturday in July. Once all was decided, he set out to make the day perfect.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading. I hope you are enjoying their journey and are intrigued to find out how they will be spending their day 'together.'
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Killian has a special day planned for Emma.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Emma 2014

Emma had picked up the letter from Killian that explained her Saturday instructions a few days previously and so when the day had arrived she woke early and excited about spending the day with him. She got out of bed, dressed carefully and drove to the Art Deco district, Killian’s letter in hand. Having not been to this area of Miami before, she was anxious to see it as most of the buildings in South Florida were newer ones. If a building had some age on it, more often than not, it seemed they were torn down instead of remodeled. While she knew this had to do with making sure the buildings met the current hurricane codes, she couldn’t help but wish for a way to bridge the old with the new and was happy that it seemed Killian might have had similar thoughts. The Art Deco District, a small area of land that included over 800 structures of historical significance, built between 1923 and 1943, was located along Miami Beach and situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Biscayne Bay. Parking her car and grabbing her bag, Emma was ready to go.

--------

Good morning Swan,

Today I want to show you a piece of my family, for my father, Brennan Jones had a hand in the rejuvenation of this area. Follow these instructions and I’ll be there with you all along your journey.
Yours, Killian

--------

Once you’ve parked your car, start at 5th street, which dead-ends at Ocean Drive. Head north and notice the porthole windows, metal rails and flags, just like the many Ocean Liners that used to dock at the Port of Miami in the 1930’s. The first hotel I want you to take a look at is the Park Central. It is most famous for stars such as Clark Gable and Rita Hayworth staying there.

--------

Emma slowly walked down the street taking in everything around her. The buildings were old Florida, very grand in style. There were colors everywhere. So many things to see and with the sea breeze blowing softly she tried to take it all in. People were milling about, some looked to be dressed for the beach, others like they just stepped out of the theater, even this early in the morning. Shaking her head, she kept walking noting that the Beacon Hotel looked a bit like a wedding cake with its design and color, white with lacy trim. Glancing through the doors as she passed she noted the marble flooring. She smiled to herself thinking about Killian walking in this same area and enjoying the old windows, flags and metal railings, which made him feel close to the sea, while on land and that didn’t even take into account that his father was responsible for the rejuvenation of many of
these buildings. Moving into an area close to the Colony Hotel, she read her next set of instructions,

---

*When you reach 7th street, cross and take some time to wander through Lummus Park. You will be able to smell the salt and feel the breeze blowing off of the ocean as hear all of the many musicians who are always singing and playing instruments, like the guitar and the bongos. There’s a man who plays his guitar and always seems to be standing in the same place, every time I happen upon the park. He plays the guitar and sings music that haunts me. Listen for him and imagine that I am standing there with you. If he’s still there, you’ll know him by the red beanie, that he always wears, no matter the weather. Look for him Emma and know that I am with you.*

---

She took a minute to absorb what she had just read. I feel his presence she thought to herself. How can that be? How can someone whom I can’t even touch be so real to me. Fate he says, but I’m a doctor, a woman of science, how can fate have such a strong impact on me? At that moment she didn’t know and didn’t really care, she just wanted to enjoy being in the here and now. She stepped away from the building and walked to the corner to cross over to the park. It was beautiful. People skating and biking and jogging. She could smell the coconut scent from the suntan lotion and see nets for volleyball, most of them occupied. Bright umbrellas here and there lined the beach and people could be seen floating in the water, laying on chairs or on colorful towels in the warm sand or standing around talking to others or walking along the shore looking for shells.

And music, everywhere she looked she could hear music playing. Wondering if the musician that Killian enjoyed could possibly still be there, she entered the park and began to walk slowly. She saw a person with a red hat on but he was playing the bongos so she kept walking. Suddenly she heard a melody that resonated chord in her brain as it reminded her of Killian and their talk of fate and magic. The song the man was playing was *Over the Rainbow*, a song of dreams possibly coming true. Turning she spotted a man that had to be the one Killian had mentioned in his letter. He was standing off the beaten track just a bit, on his own, playing his guitar and wearing a red beanie. He didn’t fit the stereotypical street musician and she wondered what his story was but the closer she got to him, the less she cared as his ability to convey the feeling behind the music was wondrous. Emma felt her blood soar and when she looked down at his guitar case her heart stopped for leaning against the case was a small sign. And on that sign was Emma Swan? For all to see. She was shocked but slowly reached down and picked up the sign, turned to the man, who by this time had stopped playing, “I’m Emma Swan,” she said quietly, “Where did you get this?”

He smiled at her, “I’ve been waiting for you, Emma. A man with dark hair gave me this sign and asked me to wait for you. He said when you came to give you this,” and he pulled a tattered envelope out of his pocket and handed it to her. “He made me promise which I always try to keep and he asked me to play this for you.” He then closed his eyes and started strumming the strings of his guitar.

Emma immediately felt tears well up in her eyes, for not only was the music he was playing incredibly beautiful but he was playing *Unchained Melody*, the haunting tune played during the movie Ghost. It was a very warm day, yet she felt chilled and goosebumps appeared on her arms and then, it was as if someone was standing behind her and had their arms wrapped tightly around her. She looked over her shoulder to make sure she was still alone but no one was there, still she couldn’t shake the feeling she wasn’t alone. Realizing she hadn’t opened the envelope in her hand, she did so and pulled out a single piece of paper with Kilian’s hand writing on it:

---
Do you feel my arms around you Emma? I’m right here.

Emma allowed the tears to fall down her cheeks as she wrapped her arms around her waist and listened to the remainder of the song. When he had finished playing she wiped the tears off of her cheeks with the back of her hands and reached to pull some money out of her purse to leave for the musician. When he saw what she was going to do, he stopped her, “No, Emma, the gentleman took care of it.” O Emma smiled at him, “Thank you for the beautiful music and for keeping your promise to my friend,” and then she walked away with a heart that felt lighter. O Finding a bench in the park, she sat down and pulled the letter with the directions for their walk out of her bag. Opening it up she read:

I trust that you were able to find the musician and to listen to his music. Now it’s time for the next part of our journey. Go out of the park and head north on Ocean Drive. Admire the Waldorf Towers with its rounded glass towers that look like a lighthouse and if you have time stop by the welcome center. The Clevelander isn’t too far from the welcome center but the building with the really interesting history is the Casa Casaurina. This mansion was once the home of Gianni Versace, who was shot to death on its steps. His killer then later committed suicide on a houseboat docked off shore. It seems Versace owed the Mafia a bit of money and he paid the ultimate price. It has also been said that there is a 54 foot pool in the center of the mansion lined with 24 carat gold but I’ve not been privy to see that.

She tucked the letter away and walked north on Ocean Drive. There were people of all shapes, sizes and color out and about. Many strolling slowly just as she was and others who appeared to have a specific place to be in a specific amount of time. A melting pot of people she thought as she took in the sites around her. Going into the Welcome Center she browsed through the books and brochures and picked up a couple to read later. She also noticed several signs advertising guided walking tours but was happy that she had her own personal guide, even if he wasn’t right there holding her hand, she still felt as if they were together.

Leaving the Welcome Center, she passed by the Clevelander, a very sleek looking hotel with a lot going on inside. She could see people sitting on terraces eating and knew also there was a bar by the pool, a sports bar and that live entertainment was offered every day.

Another block up was the infamous Casa Casaurina that Versace had owned. What a magnificent estate she thought. Imposing gates kept her from seeing into the lobby but if the interior was anything like the exterior then she could imagine it was ultra-posh, but maybe not worth the rumored price of around $1200.00 a night. Shaking her head at that thought she found her way out of the crowd anxious to see what came next.

Continuing north, you will pass by several more hotels, some with porthole windows and an almost plain exterior with simple designs, to more complex buildings that have brain coral embedded in the railing and columns. The Cardoza hotel is owned by the singer, Gloria Estefan and her husband, Emilio and is the home of many entertainment events in the Miami area. The hotel is said to be very posh and have ethnically themed rooms. You will also pass by the Leslie Hotel which is lemon colored and one description says it has eyebrows wrapped around its front. I’m not sure I can see these Swan, can you?
Emma once again tucked the letter into her bag and started walking. She was impressed by the many differences in the buildings around her but yet all of them gave off the same impression, one of great wealth. She marveled at the fact that these building had been built nearly a century ago when modern machines were not readily available. And upon close inspection of the columns outside the Cardoza Hotel, she spied a piece of brain coral or two. Settling into a table at a little place on the porch of a hotel, ironically named Front Porch Café, she ordered a hot chocolate and a bear claw and pulled out her letter to see what came next.

---

If you want to treat your sweet tooth to a delicious pastry and something to drink, stop at the Front Porch Café. What will it be Swan, possibly hot chocolate and a bear claw? I’m having the pancakes. I trust you’ve enjoyed what we’ve seen so far. Only a few more sites are left. At 15th street you’ll need to turn left and then take a right at Collins Avenue. The National Hotel has a pool in the back that is 205-feet-long. No, it’s not from the same time period as the building but impressive nonetheless. Several other taller hotels in this area are the Delano and the Sagamore. You should also check out the Raleigh Hotel where many flicks from the 40’s and 50’s were filmed. You might even smell pizza as there is a wood- burning pizza oven in the back next to the pool. Once you’ve enjoyed these sites, double back and head west at 17th street and then go across Washington Avenue. There is a pedestrian only, outdoor mall for you to spend time looking in the boutiques and shops. To close our day together I am hoping you will join me for a late lunch at the Icebox Café, which is on Lincoln Road. See you there at 2:00 Swan.

---

Reading over that last part of the letter she was trying to figure out how Killian knew she liked hot chocolate and bear claws, as she couldn’t remember them sharing that information. Yet another item to add to the many other ‘strange’ items about this ‘relationship’ she thought. Maybe it was a lucky guess that I would order the hot chocolate instead of coffee, or order a bear claw of all thing, small facts about herself that men she was in the actual company of, might not even remember. Choosing not to question these mysteries too much she finished her treat, paid and once again began walking. She was so caught up in what was around her that she almost missed her turn and actually ended up having to double back a block. Looking at the National Hotel, while the hotel itself was not the most impressive, the pool though was something else. It was lined on both sides by huge palm trees and appeared to go on forever, making her wish for some time to lounge under the sun. Wanting to have a better look, she casually strolled to the deck and wandered in and out of the palm trees and then glancing around to make sure no one was watching she took off her sandal and dipped her toes in the water. Perfect temperature but in this decadent environment she would expect nothing less.

Wanting to be assured of having enough time to peruse the shops at the Lincoln Mall, she quickly walked by the other places that Killian had mentioned and then doubled back to 17th street. Lincoln Mall was a cornucopia of things. High end fashion and eating to a chain pharmacy store as well as a simple taco stand, something for all and since no cars were allowed you could easily cross from one side to the other with no difficulty. In one store she bought Mary Margaret a new scarf and David a pair of socks with tacos on them. Thinking she might need something to read she happened upon a store aptly names Books and Magazines, and scanned the contents of several aisles and displays. Curiously while looking over the displays of biographies she saw a book titled “Brennan Jones’ Life Works” and on it was a picture of the house where she had stayed for those glorious few months. The picture had simple title, The Beach House, which while appropriate, didn’t seems as magical a name as it was becoming in her mind. She picked up a copy of the book and flipped through a couple of pages of it and telling herself it was for her to look over at a later time, because
anything else would be ludicrous, she bought one. Leaving the book store she noted it was almost
time to go to the Icebox Café and walking out of the mall, she proceeded on her way.

What first caught her eye as she walked up to the café were the windows lining the entire front of
the building. They were large and open and she was sure allowed for a beautiful view in the mornings
as the sun rose over the Atlantic Ocean, and even at 2:00 there was plenty of sun to give the place a
warm atmosphere. She gave them her name and they quickly sat her at a table that allowed her to
look out toward the beach and observe the people. Just after she sat down an elegant looking woman
came up and introduced herself as Cora Mills. “I’m the manager of the Icebox Café and I’m so
happy to have you here.” Then she held out her hand to shake Emma’s, as if they knew each other.

Emma reached out and shook the woman’s hand but was quite curious as to why the manager of
such a place would be introducing herself. “Uh, thank you, but excuse me, do I know you?”

Cora smiled gently, “No dear, I’m sorry to say you don’t know me but I’ve been waiting for you to
arrive as I have something very special for you,” and with a flourish she pulled out and envelope and
handed it to her. It was just like all the other letters that she had received from Killian so she knew
immediately that somehow this woman had been holding on to it for two years. And with an “Enjoy
your meal, my dear,” Cora left.

Smiling, she held the letter close to her heart with both hands. Was he sitting here when he wrote this
she wondered, and thought maybe he had been. Sitting not only here in the Icebox Café but here, at
this very table where she was sitting. While she had no idea what color his hair, nor his eyes were, in
her mind’s eye, he was gorgeous, not just to look at, but his spirit, his gentleness, his passion and the
care he had shown her, someone he had never met. Frustratingly enough, the story of her life as he
was the one man whom she felt she could give her whole heart to yet he was the man she could not
have. With a sad sigh she opened the letter and began to read.

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

Emma,

Thank you for spending your Saturday with me, even though we are separated by time. My wish is
for you to know that I would give anything to be by your side, saying these words to you instead of
your having to read them. Fate can be a fickle woman but this time I thank her that somehow she
brought you into my life. Remember that neither time nor space can separate two hearts that are
meant to be together. I feel that what is meant to be will be and Emma Swan, I don’t know how,
where or when but I feel we are meant to be. But those thoughts are for another day. For now, I
wish you to enjoy your meal and believe I am sitting right there too.

Yours, Killian

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

Wiping a couple of tears off of her cheeks, she folded the letter and put it away. Her lunch had
arrived as she was reading and picking up her fork she began to eat, while thinking about what he
had written. Wondering why there was a mailbox that appeared to allow letters to travel through time
and space and how it’s possible for two people to meet when where one is, the other has already
experienced. For her it was July 2014, but today wouldn’t happen for Killian for two years, what
would she be doing in two years, would they be together? Shaking her head at her musings, she
made up her mind that she would take a page from Scarlet O’Hara’s book and think about them later
since “tomorrow was another day.” Living in the ‘here and now she whispered quietly, “Thank you
fate,” and finished her meal. O Once done she knew there was no way she could end such a great
day without writing out her thoughts on paper and leaving a little something for Killian in the
mailbox before she went home. Her letter ended up not being long but she felt that it held some
sentiment and she hoped he enjoyed his gift.

Killian (2012)

Killian was pleasantly surprised when just a few days after his day with Emma a letter and a small
gift was waiting for him in the postbox. Gathering them both, he carried them in the house, and let
Rumple out to take care of his business. Pouring himself a small drink, he picked up his treasures and
carried them to his chair so he could look out at the surf. Opening his gift first he was touched to see
what she had purchased for him. It was a magnet, like you would attach to your refrigerator that read;
**We don’t meet people by accident. They are meant to cross our paths for a reason.** Killian read
the words out loud. “Very true, Swan. Now let’s see what you have to say about our day.”

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

**Killian,**

*First I want to thank you for going to so much trouble, writing all of those instructions, leaving
me notes, arranging for music to be played. I feel touched and while you weren’t standing there
next to me, I felt your presence.*

*In your letter you speak of magic and fairy tales. Tell me Killian, are you trying to ‘charm’ me into
believing you’re my Prince Charming?*

*My father used to quote a Chinese Proverb to my sister and I When were teenagers, he said “Fate
brings people together no matter how far apart they may be.” When he quoted that, it usually had
to do with when we had broken hearts but in this situation maybe it’s true. If it’s meant to be, it
will be.*

*Thank you again Killian. I had a wonderful day.*

Emma

---------

While Killian had been reading the latest letter, Rumple had come in and sat beside the chair, putting
his chin on Killian’s knee, “What do you think boy.” He asked the dog affectionately, “Am I a
Prince Charming?” Rumple growled low in his throat and Killian laughed, “No, I didn’t think so
either. I’m a pirate who’s out to capture a princess. Think I can succeed?” The dog lifted his head up
and tilted his head one way and then the other, as if thinking about the answer, and then with a low
whine, turned and trotted in the other room. Killian watched him go, “What’s with that?” he yelled
after him. “Shall I take that as a negative or a positive answer?”

The next day still feeling good about his time he had ‘spent’ with Emma, Killian decided that he
needed to make plans to speak with his father. Knowing that the best option would be weekend, he
checked his calendar for the following Saturday, saw that it was pretty open and for the rest of the
week kept busy planning the details. Waking early on Saturday he was feeling positive and after
showering and letting Rumple out for a quick run, he was ready to leave. It was a sunny morning
and Killian hoped to have a real, grown up conversation with his father. While they had had dinner
and drinks a few times since he had been back in town, Liam had always been there and they hadn't
discussed anything specific, such as the box of letters he had found in his mother's belongings.
Letters his father had written to his mother, letters talking about regrets of times that he had missed
and chances to make amends. Also letters of promises that never happened, but after talking to Liam
made sense, however forgiveness wasn't something that came easily to Killian. It was something he wanted to change though, hopefully starting today.

His plan to get his father to open up started with coffee, warm croissants, honey butter and catching him home early on Saturday, when hopefully he would be reading the morning paper and not leaving for a meeting. He'd thought about asking Liam to check his father’s schedule but decided that he no longer wanted Liam to feel as if were in the middle. If he wanted to be the man his mum would have been proud of then he needed to start by making peace with the great Brennan Jones. And hopefully, his father would meet him half way.

Standing on the front step to Brennan's home, he took a moment to appreciate its architecture style as it represented everything you would want to see in a Florida home. Pale peach stucco walls with terra cotta tile roof. Routed archways and windows. Tile driveway, sidewalks and patio and he knew in the back was a large screen covered pool and hot tub, with a deck, built in BBQ, fans, and surround sound. As boys, he and Liam had spent several afternoons racing each other from one end of the pool and back and as Liam had gotten older, and brought girls around, Killian had created waves, literally, soaking everyone within close range. He loved it when the girls got angry because they would leave and Liam would have to pay attention to him, of course he would never tell that to Liam. Shaking his head at himself and what a prat he had been, he knocked on the door.

The door was opened and he came face to face with his father. He had always thought his father such a large and imposing figure and so when the door was opened and he saw him standing there in his sleeping pants and a t-shirt, hair a bit untidy and showing some gray, he was a bit taken aback. Brennan had a surprised look on his face that quickly turned to joy, "Killian, lad, what brings you by this early on a Saturday morning?" And then noticing the bag in his hand, "Do I smell croissants?"

Killian smirked at his father, "Croissants and honey butter from that little bakery you used to take Liam and I to, when I would come to visit."

Brennan smiled warmly, "You remembered," he said quietly. "Come in, come in. Let's see what you brought."

Killian entered the foyer and looked out toward the backyard and was immediately mesmerized by the view. Large windows and sliding doors ran the back of the house and beyond them he could see the glistening water of the pool and hear the tinkling of a fountain just out of sight. The covered patio had several paddle fans that were lazily stirring the air and comfortable tables and chairs were scattered around. Killian could see one of the tables had papers spread over it as if his father had been doing some paperwork and he had interrupted. "I'm not interfering, am I?"

Brennan put his hand on Killian's shoulder as they walked toward the patio, "Son, you aren't interfering. I'm glad you stopped by. It's time we talked. Come let's sit and see if those croissants taste as good as they smell."

They moved on to the patio where Killian noticed the fountain was actually tiered flat stones on one end of the pool and it appeared that above they encased a hot tub and that water bubbled up and then formed a waterfall over into the pool. There were flowering trees and shrubs, a veritable oasis for relaxation. He looked at his father, "Redo the patio?"

Brennan led them to a table, taking a couple of plates off a serving tray as he walked by and they set down. He looked up at Killian, "I see your brother didn't tell you."

Killian started pulling the croissants, butter, some packets of honey and a couple plastic knives out of the bags, "Tell me what?"
"He is expanding into landscaping architecture so this is what you get. Be careful, he'll be after you to let him change the landscaping at the beach house before long."

Killian shook his head and smirked, "He can try but I'm kind of partial to the plants that are there." After that the conversation veered off into several directions, with both talking about their feelings which hadn't always been such an easy thing. Laughing together over a memory from living at the beach house, Killian found himself relaxing thinking maybe he could forgive his father and they could all move forward as a family. "When I was going through mum's things I found something." He picked up an extra bag that he had carried in, but that had been hidden by the food. "I thought you might wish to have them." And he sat the bag in front of Brennan.

Brennan knew what they were before he even looked in the bag, had been prepared for it really, but now that it had happened, wasn't sure what to say, "I wondered if you had. I'm sure you have questions."

Looking up at his father, Killian couldn't remember everything that he had wanted to say and the first thing that popped into his head was, "Why? Why did you say you were ready to give up all this and move back to be with mum and then not follow through?"

Brennan took a deep breath, "It seems it's time to tell you the sad story of my beginnings." He went on to tell Killian about his mum who had been promised to marry a man she didn't know at a very young age. He had been older and had children by another woman who had died, years before. His mum didn't have any options so she had decided she would make the most of it. The man hadn't been kind to her, and his children even less so and shortly after Brennan's fourth birthday, he died, his children took everything and he and his mum had been turned out. They had lived from day to day, since his mum had no skills, but cleaning, and those positions were almost impossible to find. When he was six she had died and he had been put into the system, finally running away at sixteen.

During his story he had been staring off as if watching a movie of his life but after that last comment he looked back at Killian. "I swore to myself that I would provide for any family I may be lucky enough to have, and never treat them like I had been treated. And while I didn't die, nor did you and Liam end up in the system, my misguided desires caused you to be lost boys anyway. It just took me a while to come to terms with the realization that treasures aren't always what you think they are. I loved your mother but it wasn't meant to be," and Killian could see his father's eyes glass over, "Our fates were forever destined to be apart."

Killian wanted to be angry at his father, mother, and even the fates, but found that he had changed his way of thinking since Emma had come into his life. Maybe bringing her into his life was the fates' way of allowing him to change the destiny of one of the Jones' men. And because of Liam, he knew why his father hadn't made it to England before his mom had passed. "Thanks for telling me all this. I'd like to process it all and talk about something less heavy, if that's alright."

Brennan smiled at his son, thinking what an amazing job Anna had done with him, "I think I'd like that. So tell me, any special woman in your life?"

Killian quipped "With me charming self, you have to ask?" But then relented after his father gave him a side eye look. "There is someone but it's kind of long distance." And before any more questions about Emma were asked, he started cleaning up, "I need to be off, as I have a few things to take care of at the office."

Once up, Killian walked back toward the doors, and happened to glance down at the papers sitting on the other table, "What's this?" He picked up pages that looked like they belonged in a book.

Brennan looked at his son, "Oh didn't I tell you? I'm working on my memoirs. You want to be in
Killian lifted an eyebrow, "Memoirs? No I didn't know." And without giving or waiting for any more comments, he was in the house and out the door with only a quick, "It's been nice. Let's do it again," hanging in the air between the them.

Over the next week Killian thought about what he had learned about his father, not only about his father’s beginnings but about his father writing his memoirs. Was it possible that his father was writing his memoir and planning on leaving his business behind and settling down again with his mother? His thoughts were all tangled up in the hurt and anger he had felt for so many years that he really needed to talk to Liam, but he didn’t want to be the one to share secrets that his father might not be ready to share. His hope was that now that he had spoken to his father, as well as his father having shared with him, that the bridge to mend their family was being constructed.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading. Let me know what you thought and stay tuned for Chapter 7, which is a really special one.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Emma looks over some new letters from Killian and finds out what he thought of her gift that she left after their walk. She has some news for Regina and Robin and Killian and Liam talk about their parents.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Emma (2014)

July bled into August and Killian and Emma's letter exchange became a routine of such, as only a routine can be with individuals who live two years apart. Since Emma's schedule was less routine than Killian's, she tried to leave her letters for him as close to Saturday and Wednesday as possible and he always made sure there was one waiting for her. Emma loved all the little exchanges between them, but the answer she had gotten from him in response to her letter after the trip, had to be the one that caused her to wonder what in the heck she was thinking, writing to this stranger. He had written,

*Fair Princess Emma,*

*You wounded me by asking if I was trying to charm you into thinking I was your Prince Charming, for I am not a prince at all. I am a Pirate. A very dashing one too, I might add. And as a pirate, I do not plan to charm your heart. I do not plan to steal your heart. I, my precious princess, plan to win your heart. And Emma, when I do win your heart, it won't be with any trickery, it'll be because you want me.*

And then she remembered how he had signed it with a flourish, *Captain Hook.*

Through all the flowery prose, she had been feeling pretty good but then his comparison of himself to Captain Hook had taken her back to the times she had read or seen Peter Pan movies and Captain Hook, well, he caused her to shudder a bit, and if she was honest waxed mustaches and perms were so passé.

But then another letter he had made a reference to the *Dread Pirate Roberts,* which reminded her of Westley, the pirate who had won Buttercup's heart in *The Princess Bride* and answered another question with “*as you wish*” but still signed it Captain Hook.

And in another letter in response to her telling him he was such a tease with his answers to questions she had been asking him, which kept getting more and more off track, he had said, "*well you just like me because I'm a scoundrel, and there aren't enough scoundrels in your life, love,*" reminded her of Han Solo.

And then she had asked him who Killian Jones was really, he answered, *I'm a pirate Swan. But a pirate who's a bit of a dashing rapscallion as well as a scoundrel.*

Every time a new letter arrived, Emma learned a new piece of information. She found it interesting as she felt she knew him better than she knew several individuals she spoke with daily. Archaic
communication some might say but each letter she wrote; each letter she received allowed a little piece of their souls to be shared. Hearing a knock on the door, Emma shook off her pensive mood, and surprisingly beat Rumple to the door.

Expecting it to be her sister, she was surprised when it was a florist with a bouquet of pretty flowers. Thanking the delivery person, Emma took the flowers, and burying her nose in them enjoyed their fragrance, while carrying them into the kitchen to add water to the vase. Rumple was following closely at her heels, whether to protect her from attacking flowers or because he was nosy, she wasn't sure, but as soon as she sat them on the table and pulled out the card, he sat down at attention. "You're a strange dog Rumple," she told him. He barked once and tilted his head as if to say, "Get on with it.". Curiosity got the best of her as she couldn't imagine the flowers were from Killian, but maybe, pulling out the card she read, Pretty flowers for a pretty lady. Join me for dinner in a week. Bayside dock, slip 6. See you at 7. Emma read the note again, "No, couldn't be, could it?" she asked Rumple. He whined softly and then curled up by the window, in the sun to take a nap.

**Killian (2012)**

Killian was feeling a bit unsettled after his talk with his father, and as much as he wanted to believe that hurts could be swept back into the bag of the 'unknown' he knew that wasn't possible. He had also been wondering if his father had read any of the letters he had returned to him, as he had not heard from Liam and he really hoped that his father had shared their talk with his brother. Taking Rumple down for a beach walk, who ran until he was tired, Killian had gotten lost in his thoughts watching the waves race back and forth. It was mesmerizing.

He still had a hard time imagining his father giving up everything, retiring early and moving to England, but why hadn't his mum sent that last letter? He knew it was a few months before she got sick but, then again, maybe she had known earlier, and chosen not to share. Chosen to suffer in silence, more likely, knowing her, "Oh mum, why," he asked the few seagulls that were brave enough to get close with his watchful guard dog present.

Rumple started barking and when Killian turned to see who he was barking at, was surprised to see Liam walking toward him with his pant legs rolled up, so as not to be covered in sand or seawater. Killian waited for him at the shoreline, curious as to what brought him down here, especially on a work day. "All right Liam? What brings you to my corner?"

Liam took a few minutes to look over his little brother, and seeing the questions behind his eyes, commented, "Don't be cheeky, Killian. I know you paid a visit to dad weeks ago and I've tried to be patient, but so far neither of you have been very forthcoming about the visit, so fess up."

Killian reached up, scratched behind his ear, looking up at his brother he finally said, "It's father's story to tell Liam."

Liam snorted, "Bugger that Killian! So was father's heart condition and you can see how far that got us. Just tell me."

Killian thought back on his life and how feelings just weren't discussed. He thought about how much he and Liam had missed because of some misguided sense of responsibility that both of his parents had carried with them their entire lives and how he really wanted to change that. Opening and closing his mouth several times, he finally relented, "Alright. When I was cleaning out mum's things I found a box in her closet that contained a lot of old letters from father."

Liam rolled his eyes, "And?"

"Not just any old letters, brother." He clinched his jaw and took a deep breath." Love letters. There
were dozens of them. He wanted mum back and since I didn't have her side of them, I'm not sure what happened but his last letter, he told her he was giving up everything here, to move back to the England. She wrote him back but never sent it, so I don't know, but if she hadn't died, I think that they would be together. You're telling me you didn't suspect anything?"

Liam cocked his head in thought, "No, none. And he's not even said anything else about his heart condition."

The brothers spent a few more minutes talking about Killian's visit, Brennan's health and revisiting memories from when they lived in the beach house. Finally, Rumple ran up the beach barking, then back to where they were standing, back and forth a few times, and Killian finally got the hint, "I think someone's peckish. Time for a bite?"

Rumple fed and dinner completed, the brothers took drinks out onto the patio so Killian could remind Liam what he was missing by not living in the beach house. "You like it here, don't you Killian?"

Staring at the moon shining on the dark water, Killian replied with a pensive tone to his voice, “Aye, I can sit here all night and look at this stunning view of the sea. “There’s no sight quite like the full moon on the waves.”

“And what about a woman, Killian? “Is there someone you love too?”

And once again Killian answered, "Aye, but that complicated story is for another day."

Emma (2014)

August was ending and colleges and universities were starting up again all over the country indicating summer was coming to an end and as the temperatures lowered across the upper part of the states, retired individuals began descending into Florida, taking advantage of the warmer temperatures. Trying to get a little peace after a chaotic morning, Emma had ascended to the administrative floor and was buried in one of the chairs that Ariel had shown her on that day so long ago, staring out over the ocean. She took her day planner out of her pocket and opened it to read her latest letter and just as she opened it, she heard, “Dr. Swan?” before turning around to see none other than her boss, Regina Mills walking toward her. "Emma please, Ms. Mills."

Regina nodded her head slightly, "Alright, and I'm Regina." And then she sat down on a chair across from her.

Emma returned the nod, "Regina. How's little Roland?"

Regina's face transformed from the high powered professional to a woman proud and blessed to have a beautiful, healthy child instantly, "He's a marvel, that one. As soon as we got home, he sat down and wrote out a long letter to the tooth fairy about what happened. I was quite impressed, with not only his composition but with your quick thinking. That was amazing."

Emma smiled at the memory of little Roland and how he had gone from sad to excited in the span of just a few seconds. "Well, I can't take all the responsibility for that I'm afraid. My mom was a doctor and helping me write a letter to the tooth fairy was one of the last things I remember about her. I'm glad I could help."

"Oh I'm sorry for your loss. How old were you?"

"I was four, and thank you." And because she knew the follow up questions, she went ahead and explained about being raised by her best friend’s parents and how she had been fortunate to have two sets of loving parents. Regina sat and listened a look of empathy on her face for the orphaned little
girl, making appropriate comments here and there. Finishing her story with "Sadly they too are gone and it's just my sister and I, who just happens to be engaged to David Nolan, your head of security."

As soon as David's name was mentioned, Regina smiled, "So that's who has Prince Charming wrapped around her finger. I met her once, a company picnic last summer I believe. Lovely girl."

"Back up here," Emma laughed, "You can't just toss out Prince Charming and not explain that one."

Regina looked up at the ceiling, "Oh, he's going to kill me, but I don't care," and she giggled, totally uncharacteristically, and then went on with her story. "About four or five years ago, we were having a large party to welcome some new staff members and since it was late October, we decided to make it a costume party, but the theme was Fairy Tales, and you had to dress up like your favorite fairy tale character. Well David came dressed as the Prince, outfit complete with a billowing red velvet cape, white satin shirt, black high boots, sword, everything but pants!" and then she giggled again. "Seems when he picked up the costume, he was mistakenly given the one meant for a ballet dancer who was performing Snow White at a local theater, and well," and she trailed off.

Emma's eyes got rather large and she covered her mouth, snickering behind her hand, "He didn't?"

Regina nodded her head, "He did! He made a very debonair Prince Charming resplendent in tights," and then she winked.

Emma couldn't help herself, the thought of David in tights, especially not realizing that the outfit wasn't meant for him, cracked her up. "Oh, I am so going to use this. Any pictures around that you know of?"

Regina hummed in thought, "Maybe. I'll have my secretary see if she can locate them." And then looking at her watch she quietly groaned. "I have a meeting but just wanted to thank you again for your treatment of Roland. Let me know if you ever need anything." As she stood up, she lost her balance and would have fallen if she hadn't clutched the back of the nearest chair.

Emma stood up, putting her hand on Regina's arm, "Regina, you ok? You look a little pale. Here sit back down for a minute."

Regina gingerly sat on the edge of the chair and put her head in her hands, "I'm fine. Just busy at work and then a rambunctious five-year-old at home."

Emma laughed softly as she was sure Regina had meant for her to, "What other symptoms have you had?"

"Just fatigue and a little dizziness, nothing much." And then her name was paged over the intercom system, "Now I really need to go, I'm meeting with a potential big money donor."

Concern on her face for her friend, Emma said, "I'll let you go but come to the ER later and let's draw some blood. You might just be anemic and with a simple vitamin you'll be good as new.

Regina looked like she was about to decline but then finally relented, "Fine, I'll see what I can do. Now I must go. It's been nice seeing you again." As she was walking down the hall, Emma saw her touch the wall a couple of times to steady herself. She really hoped Regina followed her advice and came down to see her later.

Killian (2012)

A new addition had been added to the NeverLand Adventure's fleet, this one a small 26-foot sailboat that Killian had picked up for a steal at a local auction. He wasn't sure what he planned to use it for
in the long run, and although he had a few ideas, he was doing well enough financially that he didn't have to rush. Currently he was allowing it to be chartered for romantic evening and overnight trips, or friends would take it out if it was available. He had even stuck with the 'swan' theme for the naming and had recently christened it "Svan." Now if he had his Swan to take out on a romantic cruise, that would be something to treasure. Maybe someday.

As he set about putting the ship to rights, preparing the perfect romantic rendezvous spot, he thought about a comment, Emma had written in her last letter. She had mentioned that from several things he had written, he reminded her sometime of Han Solo, yet other time he reminded her of Westley from A Princess Bride. She had written,

So tell me Killian, are you a pirate, a dashing Rapscallion or a scoundrel? I'm really curious to know.

Wondering which one she thought fit him best, after reading his answer, he almost didn’t hear his name being called, until he heard footsteps and looked to see who it was.

"Killian, everything ready?" Tink called as she walked into the docking area.

Looking around at the deck of the boat, he shrugged, "Well, I could say yes, and you would double check. I could say no and you would double check, so why don't you just check?"

Tink quipped, “Thanks, I don't mind if I do," and she scurried around, first checking the cushions placed in comfortable, colorful clusters close to the stern, with a bottle of champagne in a bucket close by. She then looked in the galley and saw that the table had been set with linen table attire, gleaming silver ready for a meal and candles spread strategically around the room, ready to be lit. Lastly she checked the captain's quarters, as she wanted it to be perfect. Opening the door, she looked around and smiled. The bed was covered in a white cotton spread, sprinkled with red rose petals. Sitting on a table off to the side, more petals were strategically placed so two small bowls could sit in the center of them, one bowl filled with strawberries, the other filled with whipped cream, and again lots of candles. Everything ready, waiting for a lucky lady.

Coming back up the stairs, Tink saw Killian staring up the dock like he was waiting for someone, "Are you expecting someone?"

He slowly pulled his gaze toward her, a sad look in his eyes, before, like a switch was flipped, his face lit up, and there was extra sass behind the words, he responded, "Aye lass. I'm waiting for my very own Swan, to appear so I can sweep her in my arms and enjoy a few of the accommodations the "Svan" has to offer," and then he winked at her.

Killian hadn't said anything specific about a new romance but Tink had a feeling something was different, and when he completed his sassy comment, she was pretty sure there was more that he really wanted to say, but didn't. "I'm sure she will Killian, someday." She said patting him on the shoulder as she left the boat. "Things look great, tonight should be a huge success."

"Thanks for your help Tink. I hope you're right and tonight is perfect." And completing what he was doing, he was ready to go.

Emma (2014)

The day arrived for Emma to meet her mystery date at the dock. While it was still warm, even in September, she wore slacks and carried a light sweater, as the sea breeze often felt cool that close to the water. Parking her car, she made her way toward slip 6, seeing a small sailboat docked there, lights decorating the sails and soft music emanating from some invisible speakers. Wondering what
was in store for her, she slowly walked up to the boat and saw someone standing in the shadows. As he moved, she held her breath, thinking maybe, and then she saw his face, "How did you get here?"

"A car? How do you think I got here?" And he slowly advanced closer to her.

When she could touch him, she pushed his chest, "Really?" And she rolled her eyes at him, "You know exactly what I mean."

He laughed at her, "Emma, you're so easy to tease."

"I know Graham, and you know I don't like it."

Graham pulled her close to him for a hug. "Sorry for the subterfuge, but I wasn't sure you'd come."

"Graham I said I didn't want to date you, never that I didn't want to be your friend."

Giving her a long suffering look he took her hand and pulled her onto the boat. "Come, let's eat. No strings."

Dinner was pleasant and they caught up on each other's lives. Graham told her he was only in town for a few days for business and had hoped that maybe she had missed him as he had missed her. Once she let him down gently regarding her feelings for him, and that they could only be friends, he seemed to relax and conversation flowed easily from one topic to another. After dinner was over, she opted out of a moonlight cruise, and strolled back to the Bayside Parking Garage, where he kissed her goodbye and she drove back home.

The next day she had been at work for several hours when Ariel pushed a wheelchair into the ER, and in it sat Regina. Emma had just come out of a room so her hands were full of charts, but she quickly set them on the counter and hurried over to see what was wrong. "Ariel, Regina, what happened?"

Ariel, who was dressed for dinner, jumped in before Regina could, "It's my anniversary, of sorts, and when I came out of the bathroom after changing clothes, Regina was slumped over the secretary's station, saying she was really dizzy. I directed her to this chair and here we are."

In the meantime, Regina was trying to tell them she was fine, just hadn't eaten any lunch, she had things to do, most excuses Emma had heard before when someone didn't want to take time to go to the doctor.

"Thanks Ariel, can you take her to room 4 and I'll be right in." Ariel pushed the chair down the hall and Emma filled the nurse in on the patients she had just completed. Walking into room 4, Regina was sitting in the chair still with her head in her hands, "Regina you were supposed to come see me a few weeks ago." She scolded gently. "Here move up on the table so I can take your vitals. I'm also going to draw some blood and run a few tests."

Once Regina was situated Emma efficiently went about her business of taking Regina's vital signs, drawing blood and then sending her into the bathroom for a urine specimen. While she was in the bathroom, she chatted a bit with Ariel and learned what her 'almost' anniversary meant. They were celebrating the fact that it had been two years ago that Eric had proposed in a very romantic way. He had charted a small sailboat and they had eaten dinner then and after he had sailed the boat out into the Bay, where they had lain among lots of pillows and drank champagne and gazed at stars. The mention of boats reminded her of Killian but before she could ask any further questions, Regina came back out of the bathroom, looking very pale, and it took both her and Ariel to help her onto the bed.
Just as Emma was going to leave to ask the nurse to take the blood work to the lab, the door opened and she walked in. "Blue, will you please take these to the lab stat?" She handed her the vials of blood, a script with what she wanted and instructions where to find the urine sample. After Blue was dispatched to take care of the job, Ariel went ahead and left for her date. And then while Regina was nibbling on crackers and sipping on a sports drink, they talked about why a visit to see her had taken so long.

Turned out to be fear as Robin's first wife had died of some kind of rare blood cancer and she hadn't wanted to burden him so she had just put it off assuming it was stress and it would go away, except it hadn't, it had gotten worse. "Regina, Robin loves you. I saw that when you were here with Roland. He would want to know,"

"You're damn right I would want to know," Robin interrupted as he burst into the room and went right to his wife and enveloped her in both of his arms.

"I'll leave you two alone while I go check the lab for those results." And patting Robin on the back, she left the room.

While waiting for the lab to get back to her with the test results, she finished up her charting and had a part of a sandwich she had brought from home. When she was handed an envelope, she pulled out the results, looked them over and went to talk to Regina and Robin.

As she opened the door, she saw them break apart and Regina surreptitiously wipe her eyes. Deciding to just get it out there, she looked at both, "Well good news or bad news first?"

Robin wrapped his arm around Regina's shoulders a little tighter, "Just tell us, please."

The bad news is that you're anemic and your electro lights are abnormal, but the good news somewhat explains a few things." And she stopped a moment, "Congratulations Regina, you're pregnant."

Silence. She was greeted with silence, which was not what she expected. "Do you have any questions?" She asked the stunned couple.

Regina looked at her, a small pucker between her brows, "Pregnant? How?"

Raising her eyebrows at her questions, Emma smirked, "Surely, I don't need to explain the birds and the bees to you, do I?"

Looking at Robin, Regina leaned her head down on his shoulder, then taking a deep breath, she explained to Emma that she had endometriosis and had always been told that pregnancy might be impossible, and so hearing this news, while she really wanted it to be true, it was terrifying to believe. They were given the name, Elsa Arende, an obstetrician who specialized in high risk pregnancies, another congratulations and Emma left them alone to finish her shift.

**Killian (2012)**

One day in late September, Killian sat at his desk, holding a piece of paper in his hand, waiting for Tink to get off of the phone. As she hung up, he turned to her, holding the paper so she could see it, "Really? We don't do children's birthday parties."

Tink looked over at Killian, a look that could be interpreted as slightly pleading, "I know, but it's a favor for a friend. His little boy is turning 3 and he loves Captain Hook and when I mentioned the Swashbuckling Good Times Cruises, he asked about parties, and well."
"And you jumped on the idea for a party, for not only your friend’s child but also as another idea for helping expand NeverLand Adventures,” he finished for her.

Tink sat there for a minute, a thoughtful look on her face, "The idea about helping my friend, yes, but that idea about offering themed birthday parties to children is all on you Captain. Well done, mate.” And she winked at him and went right back to work on the paperwork in front of her.

Killian thought about having birthday parties on board the Schwan, and cringed. The idea of all those miniature people running around his ship, spilling sticky punch on the deck, cake frosting on the rails, chocolate hand prints on the sails and what if they tried to swing from the rigging and either tightened or loosened the sails? That wouldn't be tidy and if there was one thing he couldn't tolerate, it was a ship that wasn't kept tidy. A lass as fine as his lady deserved to be handled gently. Her sails trimmed expertly and her jib smoothed lovingly. After all that was good form on the handling of a lovely vessel, such as his “Schwan.”

It wasn't that he had anything against children, really. It was just that he could probably count the number of times on one hand that he had been around them. To him they had always been a vague ‘maybe’ at some time in the indeterminate future. Thinking of a recent letter he had received from Emma, made him want something he wasn't sure was even possible. She had written;

**Killian,**

Do you ever think about the future and what you want it to look like? Do you ever picture your family and what that may look like? Things you may share? I know those comments may be coming out of nowhere but some cases I've treated this past month have awakened feelings I never realized resided within me. Feelings that surprised me in their intensity.

I treated an adorable little boy who had these really big dark chocolate eyes and the deepest dimples I have ever seen. All topped with a curly mop of dark hair and a sweet disposition, who was more concerned about what he was going to tell the tooth dairy about his missing teeth than he was about how sore his mouth was going to be. And a case that could have been a dismal life for some beautiful blonde, blue eyed infant girl who was found wrapped in a blanket, on the side of the road, apparently abandoned, only to be found and adopted by a beautiful loving couple. I was so touched, it made me wonder what if? You know?

"Oh Swan, I do know," Killian murmured quietly. Since he had read her letter the first time, he could see a family. A family he had never been able to picture. His family. He could see them standing on the beach, him beside his Swan watching a small lad and lass run in and out of the waves. He saw a wee lad with his dark hair and blue eyes but his lass' hair and eyes were in shadow, as was his Swan's. How can a feeling this strong develop without a face or a voice to match? How can love develop without a face or voice? While the thought of children had been a what if, now he knew that a family was what he wanted but the family he wanted was with his Swan, his Emma and she was two years ahead of him, how he wondered could they ever be?

Bringing himself back to the present with a mental shake, Killian thought about the possibility of having parties for children on the ship and knew of only one way he would enjoy them, but he also knew parents wouldn't go for it, hell, Tink wouldn't go for it. Bouncing his pencil up and down between his fingers he tried to come up with a way to make his party idea come true but after a half hour he still hadn’t come up with anything. Deciding to get it over with, he turned to Tink with a long-suffering sigh, "Ok, give it to me, what do I need to do?"

Tink looked up at him, and raised her eyebrows, "Well, nothing much different, that is except," and
she looked everywhere but directly at him,

Killian saw the instant she decided to grant him his wish, but knew that he couldn't let on that he was happy, so while she was trying to come up with a way to ask him, he rolled his bottom lip over his bottom teeth, bit down on it with his top teeth and waited.

"Killian you can say no, if you don't want to, but I was thinking that maybe you and Eddie,"

Here she goes, thought Killian, and inside he was doing flips, bouncing up and down, outside however, he was the picture of calm, cool and collected.”

"Would, maybe sword fight.” She finished, “You know, as Captain Hook and Blackbeard.”

Inside there were loud squeals, louder he was sure than many girls, and pogo stick type jumping. Oh yea, this I could enjoy. Taking a deep calming breath, he asked, "So if we did this, could we maybe tie up the birthday child?" There, he thought, that didn't sound too excited.

Tink looked at him, "You'll do it?"

Killian ran his finger along his lower lip as if contemplating his answer, "Maybe we can try it this once." He said while on the inside he was giving himself high fives and giggling like a loon. "I should speak to the parent though, just to make sure, before Eddie and I plan anything."

"Ok that sounds fine, here let me write down the parent’s contact information and you can call and ask if it’s ok if you tie up his son. He’s a cutie, his name’s Roland, and the father is Robin." And she wrote the number on a piece of paper and handed it over.

Killian picked up the paper and looked at the name, "Seriously, his name is Robin Locksley? As in Robin Hood?"

Tink shrugged, "Whom do you think I got the name Tinkerbelle from?"

Killian nodded and picked up his cell to go out and call Eddie. As soon as the door had shut behind him he did a little jig, complete with the requisite heel click and added a fist pump for good measure. Unfortunately, their sourpuss neighbor who reminded him of Cruella De Vil happened to step outside her office at the same time. "Milady" he said as he turned and walked the other way.

Killian and Eddie spent a few hours working out exactly what they planned to do during their sword fight. They spoke to Robin and got his approval and decided that Blackbeard would grab Roland and tie him to the mast. He, dressed as Hook and Eddie would fight around the deck, using their long coats to twirl around, adding a bit of flair, and then Hook would be the victor rescuing little Roland.

The afternoon of the party which was the first Saturday in October, arrived and there were around 20 children and assorted parents on board the "Schwan" for the celebration. Killian set sail with his ship full of party goers, dropping anchor only a mile off shore, and they were ready. He gave "Blackbeard" the nod and he swooped in, capturing their "prisoner" and tying him to the mast. "Hook" then swung into action by grabbing the rigging and sliding a few feet to land in Blackbeard’s path. All was going well until a little girl, who was about three, came running toward him, and stepped right in between Hook and Blackbeard, "Stop" she yelled.

Eddie had been in the middle of a turn so hadn't seen her until he was completely back around but stopped in time and raised his eyebrows at Killian. Shrugging his shoulders to let him know that he had no idea what was happening, he laid down his sword and picked up the little princess. "Aren't you a bonnie lass? How can I be of service to you?"
He couldn't stop himself from smiling at her as she had a pixie face with blonde curls and beautiful green eyes. She put her little hands on each side of his face, "No more fighting pirate? Your face is too pretty to hurt. She said in her little girl voice. And right then he was enamored. He wanted a little lass, like her for his very own.

"Ok, princess, we're all done for now. Would you like to help me rescue Roland?" She bobbed her head up and down causing her curls to move along too.

"Yes, please mister pirate." Setting her down, he took her hand and let her lead him to Roland, where he was untied and "rescued". The party was a success and as long as the lasses and lads behaved like Roland Locksley's party goers, then he could probably handle a few Captain Hook themed birthday parties. He couldn't wait to tell Swan. He was already thinking about what he planned to say before the party was even over.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed Chapter 7 and were able to catch all of the parallels in their lives. Chapter 8 is the chapter you have been waiting for as Emma and Killian actually 'meet'. Let me know what you thought.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Emma celebrates her birthday in a very surprising way.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Killian (2012)

Killian arrived at the docks earlier than usual one morning in October to see what kind of mess his ship had procured from the little demon whose birthday they had been privy to host the day before. Walking across the gangplank, he could already see problems and once he was actually standing on the deck, he was sorely tempted to turn around and hire someone to clean the untidiness that was visible. There was chocolate frosting, at least he hoped it was chocolate frosting, smeared on the railing, and on the rigging. Noticing that Rumple was licking something off of the deck, Killian leaned over for a better look and realized it was vanilla cake crumbs ground in between the tightly placed planks, but that wasn't the worst damage. No, that was left to the sail, the spinnaker to be exact. Someone had spilled a drink, a red drink, on his pristine white cloth! "Bloody hell, how do I get that clean?"

Pulling out his smartphone and googling "how to clean red dye out of sails" the search gave him a list of items needed. A bucket and brush were no problem but he required vinegar and something called Woolite. Googling Woolite, solved that mystery, and he was ready to go shopping, but then remembered he had the dog, and stores and Rumple, were not a good mix. "Well boy, you're going to have to stay here and guard the ship." Thinking that was settled, he locked up and walked up the dock, hoping he could purchase his items at the small market close to the Bayside Marketplace. Finding the vinegar proved to be much easier than finding the Woolite and by the time he found a market that carried it, he had been gone almost two hours. Feeling pretty good about his finds he walked onto the ship, expecting to see only the problems that were there before he left and not the disaster that he faced. Before he even got back on board he saw the anchor sitting on the dock, the mainsail was unfurled and flapping in the wind and once he stepped back on the ship, well a maze of rope ran from bow to stern and in the middle sat Rumple. He was wagging his tail with his mouth hanging open, tongue hanging out, and a very pleased look on his face. Killian put his hands on his hips, and looked at the dog, "Rumple, bad form, mate. Very bad form."

Once he got closer to him, he saw the real reason that he was so happy to welcome his master back and it wasn't to show off his decorations, it was that he had managed to wind the rope around himself so many times, he couldn't break free. Killian crouched down close to him and started undoing the knots. As the knots were loosened, Rumple's excitement became more apparent and he could no longer contain himself from showing his gratitude to his master with well-placed kisses all over Killian's face. "Rumple! Stop! Keep your tongue to yourself." He couldn't be calmed though and doing his best to keep his face away from the dog, Killian was finally able to get him free, and begin the chore of tidying.

After Rumple's issues were taken care of, Killian made the mixture and concentrated on removing the red dye from his sail. Thinking the mixture was a bloody magic potion, the sails were quickly set
to rights and drying in the warm winds. Before long the railings were wiped down and sparkled in
the sun and he was just left with the remains of the cake in the tight space between the boards of the
deck. Not having any success with the broom, he ended up having to use a small brush, and from a
position on his knees, slowly, sweep the pieces into a pan. "Bloody demons! Barbarians! Hellions!
Little devils! Miscreants!" On and on his tirade continued until he heard, a voice calling his name.

"Little brother, is there a reason your anchor is sitting on the dock?"

Killian rolled his eyes at the interruption as well as his brother's ability to annoy him with just two
words and standing, walked over to the starboard side to see Liam looking at the anchor laying on
the dock, “that's younger brother and you can blame Rumple. Seems he was a bit disgruntled that I
left him behind earlier."

Shaking his head over the anchor, Liam walked onto the ship and looked around at how neat the
area was, "Is there an inspection?"

"Stop being an arse, Liam, you know there is no such thing."

Liam smirked but before he could answer, they heard someone coming up the dock and when he
saw who it was, he whistled under his breath. "Down boy, she's off limits."

"Oh?"

"Sighing at what an annoyance Liam could be, Killian responded, "Before you ask, it's nothing like
that. I just have to work with her when you break her heart."

Tink came hurrying up the dock and quickly crossed the gangplank, however as soon as she saw
Killian standing there with another man, she stopped and almost forgot what she was going to say.
Taking a deep breath and swallowing hard, she eyed Killian, then tapped her watch. “Killian, you're
late again,” she exclaimed rather loudly,” keeping her eyes on him and not on his guest. "Come on,
we're going to be late!" Walking up to him, she took hold of his arm to drag him by the sleeve off of
the ship. Rumple decided to take offense that someone was manhandling his master and jumped up
on her, scaring her to death.

"Rumple, down boy. She's not hurting me.” He said patting his leg to get the dog’s attention.
Rumple whined and then trotted over to Killian's side wagging his tail. He reached down and
scratched his ears. "Alright Tink. Sorry about that, love, he's just rather protective.” Then hearing his
brother clear his throat he looked over at him with a raised eyebrow, but minded his manners as his
mum had taught. “Tink, allow me to introduce you to my rather boorish older brother, Liam.” “And
Liam,” he turned to his brother, "this is my right hand assistant, Tina Belle. Tink, what brings you
down to the docks this morning? Did I forget an appointment?""

Tink rolled her eyes at the way the dog had Killian wrapped around his furry paws, and sighed
loudly, but happy Killian had called him off. "Please tell me you didn’t forget?" She exclaimed
haughtily. "Remember, we have that meeting with Robert Gold. He's the CEO for Bacardi. He wants
to talk to you about using the NeverLand Adventures for Corporate Functions. His company
offices are in Coral Gables and well, you probably should have left Rumple at home. He does have a
reputation of being a bit of a stickler." And as she finished that last statement a low, menacing growl
could be heard from the aforementioned animal.

"She's not serious boy. You can go but you must be on your best behavior, unlike earlier today.
Well, Liam, did you want anything specific or did you just come down here to be bothersome?"

Liam looked over at Tink, “See the grief I get?” Looking a bit guiltily at Killian, he shrugged, “To be
bothersome of course. I’ll let you get to your meeting.” And then turning to Tink, he bowed slightly, “And it was lovely meeting you Ms. Belle,” He said before turning to walk off the ship and towards the parking lot. After he was gone, Killian put all of his cleaning supplies away and all three loaded into his SUV for the trip to Coral Gables.

Coral Gables wasn’t far from Miami Beach, but with its Mediterranean style homes and The University of Miami it’s one of the more interesting places to reside. Neighborhoods are often gated and the houses have large yards, which is not very prevalent in South Florida. Driving down Ponce de Leon looking at all the majestic homes, Killian could see the beauty of them and thought maybe someday, however currently he couldn't imagine living anywhere but at his beach house. He had the sunrise to wake him every day and the rhythmic sounds of the waves at night to soothe him to sleep, now all he needed to make it perfect was his Swan by his side.

Turning on to Le Jeune Road and locating the Bacardi headquarters, he checked in at the security gate and parked in the parking lot. Once the truck was stopped, Killian looked at Rumple, "Boy, you must be on your best behavior" and then he, Tink and Rumple got out of the truck and walked inside. Killian was impressed by the sleek modern lobby that they had walked into and he and Tink only had to wait briefly before being guided into meet with Mr. Gold. Killian introduced him to Rumple and was surprised by the rather disgruntled look that crossed the man’s face, as if he had just eaten something distasteful. Sitting across from Gold, he and Tink listened to him outline his plans for the company as well as discuss various ways that an agreement could benefit both organizations. Killian wasn’t sure if he concurred, but shook Gold’s hand and agreed to meet with him again in a few weeks and then he, Rumple, and Tink, walked back outside. Before they could all load into the SUV, Rumple put his nose into the air and sniffed several times. Then he barked, turned in circles, barked again and then took off running. After he had gone fifty feet or so, he looked back over his shoulder and barked again and with a joyous skip in his step, turned back and the race was on. A dog being chased by a man being chased by a woman though the downtown streets of Coral Gables.

Rumple led them up one busy street, around a corner and down another. He eventually crossed from the main town of Coral Gables into an older neighborhood with homes that were several stories high made of stucco with tile roofs that often peaked over several columns and housed large curved windows and archways. After running down the block, Rumple ran up the driveway of the last home and proceeded to jump in the front seat of a sports car that was sitting in front of the house, driver’s door and trunk open. Once inside the car, Rumple sat down and looked at Killian and Tink as they ran up after him. About that time a tall, lanky, sandy haired gent with a bit of a scruff came from behind the car carrying a couple of cases of soft drinks and a case of beer and looked in at Rumple sitting there and then at Killian and Tink, “Yours I presume?”

Killian just shook his head at seeing his dog sitting in another person’s car, “Aye, sorry about that mate. He’s usually well behaved.” And then he scratched behind his ear.

“Oh, no harm done,” said the guy. “Names, Graham, by the way. Graham Hunter. I’d shake but well,” and he lifted the boxes of drinks a bit. “New to the area?”

“Here, let me help you carry some of that,” answered Killian and he took the case of beer from Graham and went around to the trunk to see what else he needed to carry. Picking up a couple of Publix bags, holding assorted snacks, “Ready. Lead the way. And in answer to your question. I am fairly new to this area. I own a beach house not too far away. My name’s Killian Jones.” Then hearing a throat being cleared, he remembered that Tink had been with him, he quickly amended the introduction to “And this is Tina Bell. We had some business at the Bacardi headquarters and for some reason Rumple took off when it was time to leave. I’m not sure why.”

Killian looked at Tink and noticed she had that glint in her eyes that she often had when they were
talking to someone she deemed ‘dreamy’ and arched a brow when she purred, “Pleased to meet
you,” and practically drooled on the bloke. Thankfully Graham took no offense and led the way into
the interior of the house where they put everything on the counters in the kitchen. “In case you’re
wondering, this isn’t all for me. I’m having a surprise birthday party for my girlfriend tonight. You
guys are welcome to come if you’re interested in meeting new people.”

Killian made a noncommittal sound as he finished leaning the bags against each other so they
wouldn’t spill their contents all over the floor.

After Graham had deposited everything, he said, “A beach house you said? Nice, might be looking
for one of those once my girlfriend finishes her residency up in the panhandle. She’s a doctor.”

At the mention of the panhandle and doctor together, Killian’s ears grew alert. “That’s nice,” Hoping
for more info without coming right out and asking. Graham took the bait. “Yes, she’s finishing up
her residency to be an intern and is in town for the weekend so I’m surprising her for her birthday.
Emma, her name’s Emma.”

Killian couldn’t believe what fate had handed him. An opportunity to be in the same place as Emma,
his Emma. Thinking quickly, “Lovely name. Well, we’d better take our leave and let you prepare for
the party.”

Graham followed them out of the house and helped them curtail Rumple, “Thanks for the help and
do drop by tonight. The party’s at 8:00.” As he, Tink and Rumple were walking away from the
house and back to the SUV, Tink gave him a very strange look. Killian just looked at her and raised
an eyebrow, “It’s Emma’s birthday,” He said, like that covered everything.

Emma (2014)

It had been a very busy day at the hospital and Emma was happy to be leaving. It was her birthday
and as such she was choosing to spend it in the best way possible. Meeting her sister and a few
friends for a drink or two and then spending a quiet evening catching up with them over dinner. She
wasn’t one for surprises and shuddered just thinking about the party that Graham had thrown for her
a couple of years ago. It’s no wonder we aren’t together any longer, she thought as he had no idea
what truly made me happy. And remembering the silly party that Graham had surprised her with
reminded her of the connection she had made with some guy in the garden. There was something
there, she recalled, if I could ever find him again, I’d marry him. Wondering, not for the first time,
about the feeling of panic she had felt that night, she shook her head to clear it and left for the Lilt
Lounge and a night out with her friends.

Arriving first, Emma took a seat at the bar and ordered a whiskey and got lost in her thoughts. After
a couple of sips a box marked Sweetcakes Cupcakes was set in front of her and Mary Margaret slid
onto the seat next to her, “Don’t you know, drinking alone isn’t proper for a lady?”

Emma smirked at her sister, “You know I’m only a lady some days and today, sister, isn’t one of
those days. What did you bring me?” She reached over and pulled the box closer, opened it and
peered inside, “Oh, that looks decadent. Can I eat it first?”

Mary Margaret swatted Emma’s hands out of the way and closed the box. “I should have never
given it to you, before you ate dinner. You have the diet of a 15-year-old.”

“What can I say? I have to keep up my energy to work at the hospital. I must walk miles every day.”
Just then the rest of the impromptu party showed up, which included Belle French, a librarian at the
nearby Coconut Grove Library, and Ruby and Ashley, both nurses at the hospital where she worked
and wanted to know what they were missing. Emma looked over at her sister, “You just missed
sisterly abuse,” she quipped. “ Drinks or dinner?”

(2012)

Killian had second and third thoughts about going to the birthday party. But the chance to see Emma, to be in the same room as her and talk to her and possibly touch her, well that opportunity, he wasn’t strong enough to resist. Once he had showered and dressed he picked up his keys and leather jacket and was ready to go. Rumple assumed, as he always did, that he was going along and tried to push his way out the door. ”Not this time, old boy. This is one party that I don’t think you should be included in. Don’t wait up.” Locking the door behind him, he jumped in the car and pointed it toward Emma, wondering how he was going to keep from saying something that maybe should be left unsaid.

Picking up Tink, he drove to the party and they parked on the street behind Graham’s house and walked through the back gate. Once inside the house Graham introduced them to a few people and told them to help themselves to the bar and then he disappeared into the crowd. Killian grabbed a couple of beers and handed one to Tink. Shortly after that, they met one of the vendors that often worked with them and watching the flirt game between he and Tink got quite uncomfortable. Finally, after several minutes of feeling like a third wheel, he started looking around for somewhere else to stand so he could keep a close eye out for Emma as she had yet to make it to the party.

Suddenly a hush came upon the room and as the door opened and Emma walked in, everyone shouted “SURPRISE!” He could immediately read Emma’s body language which screamed, “Get me out of here right now!”, but outwardly she appeared relaxed and confident as Graham took her from group to group making introductions. His first look at her, had very nearly taken him to his knees, she was so beautiful. Her golden hair flowed around her shoulders and her cheeks gleamed with just a hint of color. When she got close enough her eyes captivated him, as he could see that they were green, like moss that suddenly materializes on the sides of trees. As Graham led her closer, and she was observed speaking with others he saw her laugh and noticed dimples on each side of her very kissable lips that were tinted a pale pink. “She’s bleeding beautiful,” he whispered.

Gobsmacked, I am, he thought as he shook his head at his reaction and moved further away from her to try to gather his thoughts. Can’t have her boyfriend see that I fancy her, as I’m not a blundering idiot.

As he listened to the words floating around him, he continued to watch her from the corner of his eye as Graham lead her from group to group. He found it odd that it was her birthday party, yet she was being introduced to just about everyone in the room as if they were a stranger to her. Her body language, although to the most casual viewer might appear to be relaxed, he could see that periodically, she would tighten her fists, and twist her head as if attempting to loosen up neck muscles that were too tight. The short amount of time that he had spoken to Graham, he had seemed to be a good bloke, but maybe one who didn’t know his girl as well as he thought.

Thinking that he heard his name, he looked away for a brief moment and when he looked back at where she had been standing, she was gone. Without being too obvious, he scanned the room, catching sight of the back of her just as she slipped out a door that led to what he assumed was the backyard. Seeing that his assistant was engrossed in conversation he didn’t feel too bad leaving her and moving around the room with the intention of following Emma. While he had told himself he would be careful with what he said to her, he couldn’t resist the allure of having her to himself for just a small moment in time.

Stepping out onto the veranda, he shut the door behind him. Letting his eyes adjust he saw a well landscaped yard, patio and pool with white string lights hanging in trees. He also noticed there was another set of doors off to the right and as he could hear music they must have been opened or
covered with mesh. Emma was sitting on a nearby step with her head hanging down as if the weight of the world were on her shoulders and she were taking a moment to hide from something or from someone. Moving slowly so as not to startle her, he leaned against a railing not far from her and looking out over the yard to her left, took a deep breath, "Happy Birthday, Emma."

She sighed quietly then said "Ugh, thanks."

_Walls_, thought Killian. _Ok, I'll try this, "Nice party."_

"I guess," she answered, hoping he would get the hint and leave. It had been a long day and she had been fighting a headache ever since she had walked into the house and all of these people she didn’t know yelled surprise. Sneaking into the backyard for some much needed quiet had been necessary and now, a guest was out here annoying her. When he asked a question, she had answered without even looking up, to see who it was, but had heard a melodious British accent.

Killian knew that she probably was wishing he'd leave her alone but he wanted to talk to her so he came back with a comment that he thought might get her attention. "You ever read _Persuasion_?"

And he sat down on the step next to her, but not too close.

Emma whipped her head to the left to look at him, "What?" and she had a vague impression of dark hair that fell over his forehead and a slight scruff on his face but she couldn't see what color his eyes were nor could she make out any more specifics.

He kept his gaze direct but didn't move any closer, "You know, _Persuasion_ by Jane Austen"

"Yes, I know, the book. It's one of my favorites. Why would you bring that up?" She asked with a hint of suspicion in her voice.

He just looked at her for a minute before answering, "No reason, just a friend recently mentioned it to me and I wondered what it was about and if it was any good."

She gazed in his direction as if trying to decide if she could trust him, but then realizing that for some reason she didn't feel the need to get up and run. When he had first come out and she had given her usual one and two word answers, with her goal of putting him off, he hadn't taken the hint. He had come back at her with a different question, which strangely enough had actually drawn her in, made her feel she could trust him, which made no sense. Emma Swan was not a person who trusted easily, but this man, whom she was mysteriously drawn to, she felt she could trust.

Finally deciding to answer, she responded, "It's about waiting. These two people meet and almost fall in love but then their timing isn't right and they have to part. Years later they have another chance but wonder if too much time has passed or if they've waited too long to make it work" and then her voice faded to nothing.

Killian sat there for a bit and thought about what to say, "And you like that?" Apparently the incredulous tone of his voice touched something in her as she started laughing.

Emma couldn't believe she was laughing but she realized that the laughter had settled her, "Yea, it does seem sad doesn't it? But it's kind of beautiful too, if you think about it."

Killian hummed in agreement, "To believe that you've met the one you're meant to be with before, but the timing wasn't right," he murmured almost to himself. Realizing that when she had laughed at his comment it had relaxed her, he asked "Feeling better now?"

"What do you mean?"
"Nothing really. Just when I first came out you seemed vexed."

"Oh," she said looking away again, "I'm fine."

Killian mentally berated himself as he could see the walls going back up. "Have you ever met someone whom you thought was your person?"

It took her a minute to realize he was referring to Captain Frederick Wentworth, the male character in the book, "Yea, when I was 16 I thought I had met him," and then she laughed thinking about the story.

"Fess up love. That laugh tells me it's a good story."

"Oh, not really. Just a story of teenage angst. The older boy, teen girl and a dad."

"Oh this gets better and better. Please go on"

"His name was Neal and I was 16 and he was a lifeguard at the beach where my sister and I spent just about every day that summer. He was older, maybe early 20's, I can't remember, but I hung around one night after the beach closed when many of the lifeguards built fires and hung out. Some played guitars, others sang, and the alcohol was plentiful. I told Neal I was 18 and he kept giving me beers and got a little free with his hands until my dad showed up."

"I'm sure your dad was not happy with you."

When Emma continued a melancholy tone was in her voice, "You're right about that. I was grounded for the rest of the summer and sicker than a dog from too much alcohol and too much sun. Needless to say, I've not touched beer since. Never did find out how my dad knew."

"You never asked him?"

"No, I was too embarrassed about it, so I never asked, and then it was too late."

Killian thought about asking but since he already knew the story from their letter exchanges and that it made her sad he decided to forgo that line of questioning. "Thank you for sharing a bit of your beginnings, Swan. I feel honored." And because he really wanted to take her in his arms but knew he couldn't he didn't say anything else.

While not totally uncomfortable Emma didn't know how long they sat there but had moved her feet and was getting ready to go back in the house when she heard him say, "Care to dance?"

He had hoped that she would have felt comfortable enough to continue talking but he noticed that she was preparing to leave, so instead of searching for something else to say he heard music. He recognized the song playing as I Can't Seem to Make You Mine by The Clientele, a band he had heard back home. Fitting, he thought and asked her to dance. While waiting he stood up and held out his hand to her.

Emma hadn't even realized there was music playing until he asked her dance, "I don't know how to dance."

"Well, milady, there's only one rule. Pick a partner who knows what he's doing."

"And I suppose you're going to tell me you know what you're doing?"

He smiled even though he knew she couldn't see much except for maybe the white of his teeth, "I'll
let you be the judge of that." And then he took her hand and pulled her to her feet and they walked further into the shadows. He wrapped his other arm around her and holding her close they began to sway to the music.

Emma couldn't believe she was dancing this intimately with a man whom she didn't even know his name, and was enjoying it. He smelled heavenly and her head fit perfectly in the crease between his neck and shoulder and above all she felt safe in his arms. Allowing herself to relax and listen to the music, she let him lead her around their make shift dance floor.

Killian couldn't believe his luck but he had Emma, his Emma in his arms. Oh, she didn't know his name but there was a connection there. He could feel it and he knew that she was feeling it too by the way she had gradually relaxed in his arms. While the song was still playing he moved a bit closer and folded their hands close to their bodies so that they were touching in many points. As the music faded away she moved back just a little and looked up at him. “Who are you?” she whispered. His response was to do the one thing he had been wanting to do all night, he kissed her.

When her mystery man placed his lips on hers, Emma felt a spark and without conscious thought she opened up to him. Wrapping her arms around his neck, she opened her mouth and allowed his tongue to enter. He took the hint immediately and their tongues danced and slid sensuously together.

Killian brought his hands up to cup her cheeks, changing the angle of the kiss slightly, but maintaining control with his tongue and lips. Moving back, and then forward again to suck at her top lip, then her bottom lip until her lips were chasing his for more. Needing no more encouragement, he obliged until they broke apart, both panting lightly and staring at each other.

Emma felt the panic overwhelming her, for she had never been kissed like that and had never experienced that type of connection so fast and so strongly, and she did the only thing she knew to do in that situation, she ran.

Killian tried to grab her hand to stop her as she turned around but she was too fast and even calling out her name didn't slow her down, if anything she moved quicker. After a short time, he went back in the house to see if he could find her only to discover she was nowhere around. It seemed not only had she run from him, she had run from everyone and he was only left with the memory of her kiss on his lips.

Emma (2014)

Dinner was done and the ladies were all sitting around the table talking to Mary Margaret about her wedding plans for her wedding to David the next Valentine’s Day. They were planning a small, quiet candlelit ceremony in a church close by. Emma was feeling relaxed after a long day at the hospital, a few drinks and a good meal and somewhat tuned out the chatter when she heard her name, "Ugh, sorry, I missed what you said. Long day," she said to Ruby.

Since Ruby not only worked at the hospital but was dating one of the ER doctors that she worked with, Emma knew that she understood long days, "No problem, Em, I was just asking what happened to that gorgeous man whom you used to date, what was his name again?"

Emma smiled at her, "Graham wasn't bad to look at was he? But he had our life planned out, including marriage and babies by our third date. I just wasn't there and then he ended up moving to New York for work so it was the perfect time to go our separate ways."

There were nods of agreements from the ladies who while all were currently attached had kissed their share of frogs before finding their princes. Before anyone else could ask Mary Margaret popped in with "Isn't there a new guy in your life? Seems I’ve noticed something different about you.
What’s his name?"

Emma gave her an I'm so going to get you for this look before saying to the table at large, "Killian. His name’s Killian."

"Oh Emma," cooed Ashley, a petite blonde who was a few years younger than the rest, "He sounds dreamy. What does he look like?"

Emma shrugged her shoulders, "Honestly, I'm not really sure. We've never met, except through letters."

Ashley gave her a look like, are you joking, "Letters, like hand writing and envelopes and stamp type letters?"

Emma didn’t explain the no stamp issue but smiled softly, "Yes, those kind of letters. And just the way she said that had all of her friends, lean in and sigh in unison.

Ruby, the most outspoken of the bunch was the first to pipe up, "You like him, don't you?"

Emma looked down at the table and drew circles on the cloth with her index finger, "Yea," she said sadly. "I do but it's just my luck. The one man who wanted to marry me, I pushed away. And the one man I could give my whole heart to, I can never have. On that note I need to run. I have early shift tomorrow. Thanks for spending my birthday with me." Taking her cupcake for later, Emma headed home to Rumple and her otherwise solitary life.

She hadn’t gotten far before she heard heels behind her and knew without even turning around that it was her meddlesome sister. Just as M&M caught up to her, Emma huffed, "Did you have to do that, really? And in front of Ruby? I love Ruby but she isn’t exactly known for keeping secrets?"

They walked in silence for a minute while M&M decided what she wanted to say, "Emma, I love you. You know that, but getting information from you is like trying to take candy away from a small child. You're impossible."

"M&M, I know you want me to be more open like you are but you know that’s hard for me to do, right? You also know it’s nothing against you, or at least I hope you know that. As to why I haven’t mentioned Killian, well, it’s very complicated."

“Complicated? You like him, he likes you. How can that be complicated?"

“Oh, if only it were that easy.” And then she sighed, “For lack of a better word, it’s a really long distance relationship. I’m just not sure that it’s written in the stars that we’ll ever meet.”

M&M looked over at the sad look on her sister’s face. “Emma remember when dad used to quote different sayings to us all of the time?”

Laughing slightly, Emma responded, “Yes, I do. It was always a running joke on which one of us could get him to quote the most quotes that week.”

“I don’t think I ever told you this,” Mary Margaret began, “but one time when I thought my heart was breaking, he came into my room, sat on my bed and took my hand, and in his big booming voice said ‘M&M, listen and listen well. No matter how long it takes; true love is worth the wait. And never wait for a prince. Wait for the one who thinks you are his princess.

He knew what he was talking about Emma because I’ve finally found the man who treats me like his princess, and I know he’s my prince. Your prince will come. Just wait.”
Emma felt a tear slip down her cheek and reaching up brushed it away before looping arms with M&M. “Thanks for the pep talk sis, I hope your right, but at this point in time, my prince seems to be very far away.” As they continued their walk, Emma thought about what M&M said about the possibility of meeting Killian and dating Killian, but with those thoughts came fear, of what she wasn’t sure. Mainly she just told herself that right now she was living a beautiful dream and her fantasy man, met all of her expectations. She wasn’t ready to take the chance that she was wrong about him, maybe someday, but not today.

Chapter End Notes

I hope that you have enjoyed the meeting between Emma and Killian. I'm betting it wasn't exactly what you expected. Let me know what you thought and stay tuned for Chapter 9. The preview will be up on tumblr on Sunday.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Emma deals with tragedy at the hospital. And Killian must put aside his thoughts about Emma and handle some problems in his own family.

Chapter Notes

This chapter was a rather difficult chapter for me to write emotionally. I think you'll understand once you're reading it. So grab a tissue and dig in and if you might even shed a tear or two.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Killian (2012)

It was a beautiful fall morning and Killian was still feeling brilliant about the fact that he had actually 'met' Emma. His Emma. And even though she didn't know who he was, hadn't even heard of him, he knew she felt the pull between them. Just being close to her, smelling her skin and feeling her silky blonde hair was a little slice of heaven. He had wanted to bury his nose in her hair but knew she would have run faster than she did anyway. Her reticence to engage in conversation, holding those walls in front of her like a barrier. Emma liked to hold those walls up and thought they were off-putting but for him, they presented a challenge. A challenge to see if he could tear them down, even if for a moment. And he had. When her lips had touched his, he had wanted to pull her into a dark corner and kiss her and never let her go. He had wanted to put her into the car with him and drive away from everyone and everything that prevented her from being his. Thankfully, however, he had retained a bit of sanity knowing that any major change in her behavior during his time, that had not occurred during her time, would likely change her path.

He needed to remember that as difficult as it was to think about, changing her path, even a small amount might not allow her to be where she needs to be in her year, 2014. That place that caused her to write the letter, that started the journey that led her to him. And her journey was allowing him to finally fulfill the destiny of discovering the love that his mother had mentioned in her letter. What was it that brought her to him? Had it truly been fate, like he had thought many times in the past eight months? The improbable had become probable. But why?

He heard the clicking of Rumple's nails on the tile before he saw him. As if sensing the rather pensive mood of his new master, Rumple decided it was time to play. Killian looked at the dog who had his arse in the air, tail waving madly, front legs splayed, chin between them, flat on the floor, and laughed. "Want to run, do you?"

As if he knew exactly what was being said to him, Rumple jumped up, galloping to the door excitedly. As soon as it was opened, off he ran. Sprinting down the walk, around Killian's truck, back to the walk, and then around the truck the other direction. All that could be seen was the black
and white flash racing in circles in front of him.

Leading the way down the path to the beach, Killian left his shoes behind, and started walking. Rumple was busy sniffing everything in sight and periodically bringing pieces of driftwood to be thrown for him to chase. Killian enjoyed the gentle breeze blowing his hair, but after almost an hour, he'd had enough and the weary Rumple was walking along next to him, with his tongue hanging out panting, a good indication that maybe he needed a rest too.

Killian felt his pocket for his cell phone, to check to see if he missed any calls and realized he had left it on the counter. Jogging back up the beach path, he washed off his feet, and dog and man raced to the front walk of the house, both breathing heavily. "You win boy." Rumple wagged his tail and with his tongue lolling out of his mouth, looked as if he was smiling and feeling quite proud of that fact.

On the way to the shower, Killian glanced at his cell and noticed he had a few missed calls from Liam. Deciding to clean up first, he showered, changed and continued with his happy Emma thoughts while he made himself a cup of hot cocoa, but without his Swan's cinnamon. He wasn't sure where she had picked up that habit but he would leave it for her.

Flipping through his contacts he put a call through to Liam and waited for him to answer. Thinking it was going to go straight to voice mail, he almost hung up when he heard his brother answer, his voice sounding frantic.

"Killian, finally. Where have you been?" But before waiting for an answer, Liam continued, "It's dad. He had a heart attack and is in the hospital."

Killian almost dropped the phone but then recovered, "Heart attack? When?"

Liam answered, "I'm not sure. All I know is he was able to dial emergency and they came straight away. He's awaiting a room at Bayside General. Can you come?"

As Liam was talking Killian had been putting on his shoes, grabbing his keys and jacket and was out the door before even asked. He tried to keep his mind on the road as traffic was heavy but with a huge sigh of relief, finally turned into the hospital parking lot. Once parked he entered the hospital to see Liam waiting for him. Together they got into the elevator and pushed the button for the seventh floor.

Emma (2014)

Sitting in front of the windows that overlooked the Bay, a place that had quickly become a sanctuary of sorts, Emma thought back over the past few hours. Loss. Death. Sorrow. Regrets. All of these often a part of what she saw daily working in an emergency room, but several so close together had taken a toll on her emotions and regrouping was in order. The first case had been a 90-year-old male who had pulled out in front of oncoming traffic and been hit on the driver's side and then his car had spun around before crashing head first into a light pole. While his car had airbags and they had opened, he had been pinned against the center console. Walter, the paramedic told her that the Jaws of Life had been used to extract him, which had taken no more than 10-15 minutes. And the trip to Bayside General had been relatively smooth, but during the ride, it had been touch and go, with the gentleman’s heart rate and blood pressure steadily dropping. Once in the ER and transferred to a treatment table, his heart had finally ceased to beat. He had been pronounced dead at 8:45a.m.

A family forever changed as he had been someone's father, grandfather, great grandfather and as
miraculous as it seemed, someone's husband of almost seventy years. Emma had heard that he had been going to the store to pick up something for his wife, who had been feeling ill, and fate had stepped in, changing their lives forever, and not only the lives of his family but also of the man's who had hit him, who while alive, had sustained such severe injuries, he was currently in ICU.

But as sad as that case had been, it had been the case that had arrived 30 minutes later, that made her question her desire to be a physician. That made her question life and decisions and fate and destiny. She remembered a quote, Leo had used often; *One change in thought leads to a change in your destiny*, and in this case, that was certainly true. Thinking about the tearful scene she had left behind in the ER gave her the chills. Leaning her elbows on her legs and burying her face in her hands, she sat there taking deep breaths, managing to keep the tears at bay, until she felt a hand on her shoulder. Looking up into the face of someone who knew her, who cared about her, and understood the depth of loss in her life was what broke her.

Feeling strong arms surround her, she allowed herself to be pulled against his muscular chest, and as she wept, he sat silently, running his hand up and down her back, comforting her as only someone who really knows you can. When she had run out of tears, she lifted up her head and looked at his shirt, where wet spots showed up on the dark chambray material, "Seems I got you a bit wet."

He smiled his gentle smile as he handed her a cloth handkerchief to wipe away the tears, and responded, "It will dry. Tell me, Emma, what happened? This isn't like you."

Thinking that maybe he could help her understand she opened her mouth to explain, but then realized she was still holding the handkerchief he had given her, and said instead, "How about I tell you about my morning, if you tell me why you are carrying this?" And she held the cloth up between them.

He laughed softly and his cheeks got a little color, "Oh that's easy. I started carrying one of those after I started dating your sister. She's an "any reason" tear shedder and to keep my shirts dry it became necessary." And then he pointed his finger at her, "And if you tell her I said that, I'll deny it till my dying breath."

She had gotten herself under control until the last few words and then she shuddered and her eyes welled up again, "Sorry, it's been an emotional day. I know I'm a doctor and as such not supposed to have feelings but sometimes a case really hits me hard, you know?"

David leaned back on the sofa, pulling Emma with him and against his left side, "Let me play detective here. You lost a patient, right?"

Nodding her head, yes, she composed herself as much as possible, and started her story, with as little emotion as possible. She told him that there had been basketball game at a local high school the night before and after the game there had been a party. Sadly, though the party hadn't been at a restaurant, nor had it been at a classmate's home, but out in the Everglades. The teens had built a bonfire, which surprisingly hadn't spread, and had gotten drunk. As the party broke up, and everyone left, still hoping to make curfew, four girls decided to stay a little longer, and party some more.

The sheriff had told her that what they had pieced together was that as the girls were driving home, they were driving too fast. The roads out there were very dark and as the driver was rounding a corner, she lost control, tried to over correct but that had caused the car to flip over and over several times, before landing upside down, off to the side of the road. Because the girls were impaired, none of them were wearing seatbelts and two of the girls had been ejected from the car, their broken bodies lying on the road. The other two girls had sustained massive head injuries from hitting possibly, the front windshield as well as the ceiling once the car had landed. And then on top of that,
they had lied to their parents about where they were all spending the night, so no one was reported missing until early this morning. One of the girls hadn’t shown up to watch her siblings while her parents went to work, which started frantic phone calls and the whole sad story was pieced together.

"David, I’ve lost patients before. I’ve seen families grieve but this is the first time I’ve had to look mothers in their eyes and tell them their 16-year-old daughters will never come home again. Never get to help them choose prom dresses, see them wear cap and gowns or watch them get married. Four families who will never be the same. They were juniors in high school and their classmates will never be the same. I close my eyes and I can't get the horrible sound of these girl’s parents out of my head."

David leaned his head back on the sofa and looked at the ceiling for a few minutes, trying to come up with a word or two of wisdom to share with her, and finally just settled for the truth.

"Emma, it sucks, it really does. I'm not going to tell you that it will get easier to talk to families who have lost loved ones, nor am I going to tell you that you will ever understand, but those qualities are what make you shine as a doctor. Your empathy makes you unique. Don't ever change being who you are or feeling sad when someone dies."

Taking a few deep breaths, she smiled at her almost brother, "Thanks David, you sure you aren't a twin?"

David smirked at her, "Not that I know of but next time I talk to my mom, I'll ask. Who knows I might have a brother out there."

"Oh really? So what would his name be? Josh?"

"Josh? What kind of pansy name is that? Probably James, it's much more manly."

Emma snorted and rolled her eyes, "My hero."

Speaking of heroes, M&M said you had someone new in your life, "Should I go into my protective dad mode?"

Shaking her head before he even finished, she told him, "You've done enough for one day. I'll be alright. I am going to sit here for a few more minutes then go finish my shift. Thanks for the shoulder and the handkerchief."

"Any time Emma." And with a fatherly kiss on her head he left her staring out the window at the waves.

After David left, Emma realized she had been gone longer than she had planned so stopping by the lounge she washed her face and repaired her makeup. Needing to get back to the ER, she stepped into the elevator and pressed the button for her floor but just as the door was about to close, she heard "Hold the door please!" and was lucky enough to stop it. Without a word of thanks, a woman walked on, a cloud of strong perfume surrounding her, and after looking to make sure the button for the bottom floor was pushed, buried her nose in her phone screen.

Emma kept having to rub her nose since the perfume smell was so overpowering and she kept feeling like she was going to sneeze. While she didn't get a good look at the woman's face she did notice long curly hair, a short tight skirt, short tight crop top that fit a few pounds ago, too many gold bangles to count on one arm, a diamond on her left hand, that was so large it was gaudy and skin that was brown enough to be leather. Obviously a sun worshiper, thought Emma. Plenty of those down here in Florida. And then she rolled her eyes at herself for sounding just like Ruby.
The elevator reached her floor and as the doors opened, Emma couldn't hold it in any longer and let out a big sneeze. The woman, whose perfume, was really the culprit for causing her to sneeze, looked over her shoulder with disgust and marched out the door. Emma looked up to see Ruby watching the woman with a frown on her face as if she was trying to figure something out. Shaking her head Emma washed her hands and went back to work.

Several hours later, the waiting room was empty and Emma was completing the last of her chart notes before her replacement arrived.

"Hey Ems," Ruby called from just outside the door, "Who was that lady that got off the elevator in front of you?"

For a moment Emma had no idea who she was talking about but then it donned on her, she was talking about Ms. Tight Skirt who wore an entire bottle of perfume, and not just a spritz, shrugging her shoulder, "I don't know, but my head hurt for quite a while afterward, why?"

Ruby looked around to make sure they were alone, "I'm not sure exactly but there's just something about her that's..." and before she could finish her sentence, a flurry of activity was centered around the doors as the paramedics wheeled in an obviously pregnant woman, in pain. Pushing the chart, she had been working on toward Ruby, she rushed after the paramedics to take care of the new mom.

**Killian (2012)**

Getting off on the 7th floor Liam led the way to their father's room. Killian was shocked to see his vibrant father looking so pale and hooked up to so many wires and needles. He was being given some medicine through an IV in one arm, his heart rate was being monitored and EKG leads were attached to his chest and an oxygen mask was also present. Killian's first thought was that the beeping of the machine, while probably supposed to be comforting was rather loud and disturbing, which made him want to turn and run, but he knew he couldn't. He needed to be here for Liam, and yes, for his father also. There was so much that had been missed while he was growing up and he was determined to make the most of every moment he was given these days. They walked in to the room but hesitated to get too close to the bed, both behaving as if the machines were walls and not just small inconveniences that could be moved.

Liam spoke softly, "Killian, Dr. Hopper, said he would be by shortly to let us know the results of the tests they've run on him." As he finished that sentence, the door opened and the red headed, bespectacled man with the kind face, walked in.

"I'm glad you're both here. I'll get straight to the point. Brennan suffered a mild heart attack earlier today and after running tests we're going to keep him in the hospital for a few days and use blood thinners to break up some blood clots we've discovered. This will prevent the clots from blocking veins, which could lead to a much larger heart attack or stroke.

Liam and Killian looked at each other, concern evident on both of their faces, "What are the risks? Do the benefits outweigh them?"

Dr. Hopper looked down at Brennan's chart, that he was holding, taking a moment to flip through the many pages, "As with any procedure there are risks, and that's true with blood thinners. But the cardiologist and I discussed our options and your father is young and he was quick about dialing 911, which allowed him to get help quickly. I think all those are positives, but there is also the possibility that there could be some bleeding, which is why we are keeping him in the hospital so we can monitor him closely"
As he finished speaking, he checked the numbers on the EKG machine and logged them in to the chart. "I'll be back to check on him later. Let me know if you need anything."

"Thanks Dr. Hopper," both Liam and Killian murmured.

"Why the long face's lads? Your father's not dead yet," quipped Brennan from his place on the bed. Liam was startled to hear their father's voice, and moved closer so he could be next to the bed. Brennan held his hand up and Liam gently took it between his larger ones before asking, "How are you feeling? Dr. Hopper said you're going to be in here for a few days so you can get better."

Brennan looked up at Liam, "Better now my son. I'm glad you boys are here. There's so much that needs to be said, so many regrets." Killian took a step forward, and clasped his hands around Liam's and his father's, "We'll discuss whatever you want to discuss dad, but not tonight. Tonight can we just be a family?"

Smiling at his sons Brennan nodded, "I think we can do that. Your mother would be proud of the men you've both become."

The next few hours passed pleasurably. For the first time in their lives, Brennan opened up to Liam and Killian and talked about the early years of his career. Talked about meeting and falling in love with Anna and how happy they were when they found out she was pregnant. As the day wore on and he got tired, they let him nap and walked to the cafeteria to get something to eat, before settling back in for another visit. As visiting hours ended and the nurses started motioning for all visitors to leave, Liam and Killian left Brennan and went their separate ways.

As Killian drove home, he thought about everything that had transpired, and how fate had once again stepped in. Thinking about the saying *everything happens for a reason*, he had to wonder about the truth to it. He hated that Brennan was having health problems but he was thankful that something had stepped in and allowed there to be talk without words being said that may not be able to be taken back. Now he just needed to believe what Will Shakespeare had meant when he said *it's not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves.*

Once he reached the beach house, he had never been happier to see a new letter from Emma had been arrived. Needing to feel that connection that her letters always brought he carried it into the house. Pouring himself a splash of rum, he sat in his easy chair, and while scratching Rumple’s head that was on his thigh and read. Her letter caused his heart to hurt. He had known for a while that even without knowing what she looked like or sounded like that he loved her. But after meeting her at her birthday party, talking to her, and even better, holding her and kissing her, he knew that he was 'in love' with her. Remembering an old Chinese Proverb, he had once read that said, *fate brings people together no matter how far apart they may be* was going to be his motto. Sitting down to write, he shared a little piece of his past.

**Emma (2014)**

Emma was lounging on her balcony idly flipping through the pages of the latest medical journals, seeing if anything caught her attention enough to read. The week following the teens' death had been difficult as it was all the staff spoke about as well as on the news, and now that she had a day off, she was more interested in which movie stars were having affairs, than she was in the latest medical finding. A day of doing nothing sounded pretty good. Thinking that she might have another cup of cocoa, she was disappointed when there was a knock on the door. Looking down at herself, she guessed she didn't look too bad in a pair of yoga pants and a long t-shirt and padded in to
open the door. M&M stood there, bright smile on her face, bag in her hand from Emma's favorite donut stop, and barging in, pushed Emma aside. Looking her up and down, she handed her the bag and pushed her toward her bedroom, "Get dressed sister mine, we've got a busy day."

Emma had opened and closed her mouth several times, trying to figure out where to start, when her phone chimed. Looking at the screen she saw it was a text from David, "Don't argue. Just do as she says."

Feeling a pucker form between her brows, she looked up at M&M, "Is this David Nolan's idea of therapy? Sending my sister after me?"

M&M had the decency to blush, but didn't let Emma's off putting behavior deter her, "No. He told me what happened, and I'm so sorry that it did, but this is my idea of therapy. We have a full day. We're meeting Ruby, and Belle at the salon in an hour, then we are having lunch at a new place I've wanted to try and then it's to Adventura Mall for some retail therapy. Now go!" Deciding that she wasn't going to win, she went to get dressed, preparing to make a dent in her checkbook.

Getting ready for work the next day, Emma had to admit to herself, she had enjoyed her time with the girls. They had gotten manicures, pedicures, facials and massages and had a quiet lunch at a new deli. Afterward, they had hit the mall and she had spent money on new lingerie. Wondering if Killian was a boob, butt or legs man made her giggle, because how could it ever be, but letting him go wasn't an option she was ready to accept. Leaving that thought for later, which she realized she did quite often with thoughts about him, she bid Rumple farewell and left for work.

As November was in full swing, the snowbirds, or as the retired individuals who lived north of Florida and wintered there, were called, arrived in full force and the ER seemed busier than usual. Having learned that there was an ebb and flow of the traffic through ER, she had learned to take time to chart when she could instead of leaving it for the end of her shift. As she was finishing up the last of the morning charts, Ruby popped her head in the room, "Emma, remember that woman you rode down the elevator with a week or so ago, who had the really strong perfume?"

Thinking back on that day, Emma had a vague impression of the individual, "I think so," she responded, "Why do you ask?"

Looking behind her to make sure no one was listening, Ruby whispered, "I found out who she was. She was here visiting her husband, a man by the name of Gold, I think. I can't remember her name, it was unusual though, Lily, Milli, Lila, Milah, something like that, but that's not really the news," And then she stopped to take a breath and make sure they were still alone, "Rumor has it that Gold caught his wife "doing it" with the pool boy in their bed and that's why he had a heart attack."

Emma looked up at Ruby and slowly shook her head, "You know Ruby, if you ever get tired of being a nurse, I bet you could go to work for one of the rag mags." She laughed. "Ugh, thanks for the information, I guess. I'm not sure how I could have lived without it."

The sarcasm going right over Ruby's head, she preened at the compliment, "You're welcome, Em. Any time." Turning around to see who the paramedics were pushing through the door she called, "You're up Dr. Swan." Emma took the chart and swung into action.

Jay Hyde, and his wife were out for a drive when they had been side swiped after Mr. Hyde had attempted a left turn from the center lane. He didn't seem to have any injuries but since he was slow to respond the paramedics had brought him in, just to be sure. Emma took his vitals and asked him a few questions. He just looked at her, a blank look on his face, but always watching her mouth. Finally, after repeated tries, and not being successful, she turned to his wife, "Mrs. Hyde, does your husband wear hearing aids. He doesn't seem to be able to hear me."
"Oh dearie, he's deaf as a post, but stopped wearing his hearing aids because he said the horns were too loud."

Emma looked at the woman a little longer than necessary, "Really?" Shaking her head at the idiosyncrasies of people, she went back to finish up her check of Mr. Hyde.

Feeling a need to drive down to the beach house after her shift, to see if Killian had left her a response, Emma loaded up Rumple and they took off. As always arriving at the beach house, felt like coming home and seeing the flag on the mailbox up, was just the icing on the cake. Wanting to prolong the anticipation, she took the letter, drove back home and after feeding her dog, laid down on her bed to read.

Killian had written more than he had ever written before. She learned about his father building the beach house for his mother and how they had lived there as a family before his mother took him back to England where he grew up. He told her about some of the family times and how when they were separated how he had really missed his brother and father but had resented his father, blaming him for the distance between them. When she came to the last paragraph, she sat up, and took hold of the paper with both hands. Killian had written,

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
My father had a mild heart attack at the beginning of November. Originally they told us it would just be a few days of blood thinners and we would be able to take him home, but it was a tough first week. He had a set back and angioplasty had been performed, placing a stent in the other coronary artery and then the blood thinners were continued for a few days. Afterward he required physical therapy to strengthen his muscles but I'm to pick him up from Bayside General this week.

Finally, Swan, things are looking up. I wish you were here with me.

And then he closed his letter Love, Killian. Emma sighed and read back over the letter again, and checked the date. “I wonder when he was discharged” she murmured, "It could have been about now". Glancing at the clock and noting the time, she knew her curiosity would keep her from relaxing. Picking up her keys she drove back to the hospital, wondering if she would be able to check old files in medical records. The time was 4:30 p.m.

Killian (2012)

Killian had been feeling guilty about leaving Rumple cooped up in the house so much so he took him for a walk. It was Tuesday, finally the day when Dr. Hopper, had said they could take his father home. The medication seemed to have taken care of the clots and he had had all medications stopped and was no longer wearing the EKG leads, 24-hours a day. His heart beat was regular and steady and Brennan was anxious to return home. Finally, the call came from the hospital and he was told he could pick up his father at 5:30 pm. Checking the time he noted it was only 4:30 pm. Making plans to leave in less than an hour, Killian went to clean up.

Emma (2014)

Arriving at Bayside at 4:55, Emma was hoping to get in and out without running into anyone she knew but as with most times when you are in a hurry, luck was not on her side. Thinking it would be quicker she took the stairs to medical records and as she came out of the stairwell door, almost ran into Regina. “Regina, I’m so sorry, I didn’t see you.”

Regina smiled, and waved her hand, holding her cell phone, in the air, “Partly my fault. I was reading a text from Robin and wasn’t paying any attention to where I was going. You see, Roland
has a t-ball game tonight, and daddy is a bit anxious.”

“T-ball? That’s terrific. Let’s hope he doesn’t lose any more teeth.”

Regina groaned. “Oh, please don’t put that thought into my head. I’ll be worrying the entire time he’s out there.”

“It will be fine mama bear. Boys and girls have played t-ball for years and survived. But changing the subject, look at you! You look terrific. Were you able to get an appointment with Dr. Arende? I definitely detect that baby glow.”

Rubbing her hand along her baby bump, Regina smiled serenely, “Yes, I’ve seen her several times. Since I’m considered high risk, I go in more often as well as have more ultra sounds and there is still a possibility that I’m going to have to go on bedrest so I’m trying to lessen my work load, although that has proven difficult.”

Rolling her eyes, Emma nodded her head, “Yes, I can imagine that. Do you know what you’re having?”

“So far no. We’ve had a few ultrasounds but baby Hood, is hiding its parts, but we don’t care as long as he, or she, is healthy. And now so I don’t make my 6-year-old mad at me I better run. Let’s talk soon.” And she was off.

Walking into the medical records office, Emma filled out a slip of paper to request a file and waited. As she handed the slip to the clerk, she noticed it was 5:10. “

The clerk finally came rushing around the corner of some large shelves, “I’m so sorry Dr. Swan but the record was misfiled so it took me a few minutes to locate it. Here you go, Brennan Jones, from November 2012.’

For some unknown reason, Emma felt anxious, but took a deep breath and opened the file to read through the records. Closing it, she pushed it back across the counter and ran out the door. It was 5:15pm.

**Killian (2012)**

At 5:00 Killian jumped in his SUV and started the drive north to Miami and Bayside General to pick up his father and take him home. Brennan had been in the hospital for almost two weeks and Killian guessed stopping for some ‘decent’ food would be the first order of business, as hospital food was deemed ‘rubbish.’ Turning into the hospital parking lot and finding a close place to park proved a tough task, so he just pulled into the first spot available. Turning off the car, he opened his door just as his phone rang. Noticing the exchange, he assumed it was his dad, asking where he was, and answered. It was 5:20 pm.

“Killian, this is Dr. Hopper. I’m calling with some difficult news?”

Killian assumed that his father was complaining about something, which had been pretty typical over the past week, so he responded with, “Is my dad complaining about the food again, Dr. Hopper?”

Killian could hear the doctor sigh into the phone, “I’m sorry to bring you this news but, Killian, your father was pronounced dead 5 minutes ago, at 5:15p.m.”

Killian dropped his phone and sat there in shock. When it rang again, he jumped, and after looking
around on the floor located it so he could answer. It was Liam, who had just received the call from Dr. Hopper and was on his way to the hospital. Once Liam arrived the men went in together to meet with the doctor and figure out what the next step was. It was an exhausting ordeal and after making plans with a local funeral home, they went to their perspective homes.

Arriving back at the beach house, Killian noticed that the postbox flag was up and opening it found, not just a letter but a parcel. Taking it inside he ripped open the paper, and found a book with a picture of a beach house, his beach house actually on the cover. The book’s title was “My Life’s Works by Brennan Jones. Opening Emma’s letter, he read;

~~~~~~~~

Killian,

I’m so sorry. I wish that some way I could be there for you. We could walk together on the beach we both love and I could be a shoulder for you to lean on, in your time of need. If I could do one thing for you. One thing from the future that could help you, it is this. Even though it won’t be published for a couple of years, I want you to have it today. I hope this helps you know how much you were loved. When you are ready to talk Killian, I’ll be here waiting.

Emma

~~~~~

Killian opened the book to see a picture of the beach house and in the picture in front of the house stood his father with him on one side and Liam on the other. He looked to be about 5. Flipping through the pages, he saw buildings his father had designed, many of them from the days when he and his mother lived here, in this house with him. There were pictures of them as a family too, some he never remembered taking. And in all of the pictures, his father was wearing a look of love, especially when he was captured looking at his mum. He loved her, Killian thought, all those years, he loved her.

Killian flipped back to the front and as he was closing it, his name caught his eye. In small print, was written:

This book is dedicated to my family, Anna, Liam and Killian.

I wanted to be a better man for you three, in the end, did I succeed? You all brought me great joy. While Anna and I were not fortunate enough for our destinies to remain intertwined forever, I treasured each and every moment we shared. Once I’m gone, I know our souls will be together again, as one without the other is incomplete.

Liam and Killian, if I can say one thing to you two, please remember this, even though we don’t have the power to choose where we came from, we always have the power to choose where we go from here. Remember it’s your life, and you control your destiny. Find that path my sons and hold on with everything you have inside.

It was signed, Your loving father, Brennan.

Killian closed the book and pulling it closely against his chest, wept.
Chapter End Notes

So did I succeed? If you didn't feel a tear or two well up, then I must not have done my job.

If you enjoyed it, drop me a line or two or three ;-) and let me know what you enjoyed about the chapter.

Stay tuned for Chapter 10. There might be some surprises.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Killian and Liam say goodbye to their father in England. Emma learns some exciting news from Regina. Emma and Killian have another 'date' and Killian then surprises Emma with a special Christmas gift.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for staying with me through Killian and Emma's journey. I hope you are continuing to find it intriguing as well as romantic.

This chapter has 'real time' exchanges so please read carefully. Just to remind you, Emma's handwriting will always be shown as italics/bold and Killian's is italics only.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Killian (2012)

The next few days were a maelstrom of activity as the men made plans for their father's body to be transported to England. In addition to handling their father's affairs, both had to make sure that their own businesses were taken care of and Killian was never happier for the efficiency of Tink. She helped him transfer the cruises he was supposed to cover, as well as rearrange others. Before he knew it, he and Liam boarded a plane, that would be one of several, taking them to Lymington, where their father would be laid to rest next to their mother.

As Anna had gotten sicker, she had taken Killian aside and told him that she had made burial arrangements for when it was her time. Of course, she hadn't told him that the plot had also included a resting place for Brennan, but after finding instructions in Brennan's personal papers, several pieces of information that had come up, now made more sense. They arrived in Lymington in the early evening and after checking into a local Bed & Breakfast, had a small meal and retired as both knew the next day would take a toll on their emotions.

Brennan was buried on a Tuesday, a week after his death, on a cloudy, damp day. A small service had been held in Miami just before they left as both Liam and Killian knew their father no longer had connections, in this small town. Knowing that he might need extra layers of clothing after being in the warm climate for so long, he had chosen black slacks, a dark gray wool sweater layered over a black henley, low black boots and his black leather jacket. Pulling it on for the first time in a while since it was worn so infrequently in Florida, the leather still having some of the stiffness from when he had purchased it several years previous.

As he opened the door to leave the room, expecting to have to stop by Liam's room, he was pleasantly surprised, to see him waiting for him in the hallway. Walking down the stairs speaking in soft tones, the men were unaware of several pairs of eyes following them out the door. A car was waiting to drive them to the cemetery, and climbing in, they sat back for the short trip. Arriving they walked toward the plot where Brennan's casket was waiting. After a local clergyman said a few
words and as the casket was lowered, Killian felt goose pimples rise on his arms and he noticed two spots of air around them appeared to glow, come together and then fade upwards. As they disappeared, Killian looked around to see if they were still alone, as he thought for a moment that he had smelled his mum's perfume. Glancing over at Liam, he noticed a similarly befuddled look. Liam raised his eyebrows in question, but since the clergyman didn't seem to be aware of anything remiss, they turned back to the casket to see that it had reached its final resting place. Shaking the hands of the attendant, they walked together out of the cemetery and after dismissing the car, ambled toward town both lost in their own memories.

Killian was the first to break the silence, "Did you feel their presence back there?"

"I felt something Killian, and to be quite honest, I like to think that they reunited and moved on."

"I like that idea also Liam. I hope they find peace. It seems now we're the lost boys that dad always considered himself to be."

"Except little brother, I have you, which keeps me from being completely lost."

Since it was such a solemn moment, Killian decided to let the 'little' comment pass, "Aye, and I have you."

**Emma (2014)**

After leaving Killian the package containing his father's book, Emma had waited until the flag had been put down before driving back to Miami. Her thoughts bounced back and forth between, maybe she shouldn't have given Killian the book, to she was really happy she had given Killian the book. Wishing she could have been there for him became a constant ache, so much so that she started watching movies about being able to travel back or forward in time. Winter's Tale, Kate and Leopold, and Somewhere in Time quickly became her favorites. She also watched Ghost because it reminded her of her date with Killian in the Art Deco district.

Work and movies helped but they didn't answer the question of how Killian was feeling, which is why five days after she had left the book for him she drove back to the beach house, because there she felt his presence. Seeing the mailbox flag in the up position, made her so unnecessarily happy that the car was barely stopped before she was out the door and running. Once there she put down the flag and hugging the letter to her, slowly walked back to her car.

Pulling out a single sheet of paper with his beautiful handwriting brought tears to her eyes,

*Emma,*

*Words can never express the depth of my gratitude to you. It gave me such pleasure to be able to view my father's works and to be able to read his words of love, words that were sorely missing for a while in our relationship. I was also touched that he had included pictures of my family that I had never seen before, and the look of love on his face was one I'll not quickly forget.*

*We are flying to England soon as my father's wish was to be laid to rest next to my mother. Not a day will go by that I won't think of you. I'll be back soon.*

*Killian*

Using the back of her hand, she wiped the tears off her face and picked up a tissue to wipe her nose. She then pulled out her ever present notebook and wrote out a quick response, that would be waiting for him when he returned home.
Killian (2012)

Arriving back in Miami, Killian dropped Liam off at home, stopped by Tink's to pick up Rumple and drove south, heading to the beach. He wondered if Emma had come by to pick up the letter he had left before going to England, and selfishly hoped so, and that she had written back. Her letters helped keep the loneliness at bay, but he knew after her birthday that having letters, and only every few days were not going to continue to satisfy him. He wanted more, he just wasn't sure how, but right now sleep was the first thing on the agenda.

Driving up the lane, the house was in shadows as the sun had already gone down, and Rumple sat up and started barking. Opening the door for him, Killian wasn't surprised when he immediately ran to the postbox, sat down and waited for him to retrieve the letter that had been left behind by the lady Swan.

"What do you see boy? Do you see something or just sense something? And how is it that you appear to be living in both times?" Questions for another time as his head was hurting and he was quickly reaching a point where his thinking was muddled. Carrying the letter, his luggage and whistling for the dog, he went inside.

Dropping his bag by the door, he made his way to his room, brushed his teeth, stripped off his clothes and climbed between the cool, crisp sheets. Opening the letter, he read;

**Killian,**

*I'm happy my gift made your heart lighter, even if it was just a small amount. I care for you and the thought of you hurting, hurts me too.*

*I'm here when you need to talk, just drop me a line ;-)*

*Love, Emma*

Killian put the letter near his nose, imagining that he could smell her perfume or lotion. Thinking it might help him feel a little closer, he tucked the letter under his pillow and drifted to sleep.

Emma (2014)

After a particularly difficult few days at the hospital, Emma wanted nothing more than to curl up with some food, her dog, a good movie and relax. She picked up a sandwich at a deli and after dropping the bag on a counter, clipped Rumple's leash on and took him for a walk. Nodding her head as she passed by other dog owners she thought how ironic it was that if she walked by Killian or his brother, she wouldn't even realize it, as she didn't know what he looked like. Based on the pictures, that she had seen in his dad's book of him as a little boy, he had dark hair, but other than that, she didn't know. She wanted to, oh she really wanted to but time traveling, while it played well on the movies, in real life, not so much.

Back in the apartment she fed both herself and the dog, and then taking a glass of wine ran herself a bubble bath. Feeling fatigue seep into her muscles, but thinking her mind was still too busy to allow sleep, she climbed out, dried off, put on some old boxer shorts and a tank and settled on the sofa with some pillows and the dog.

"So, boy, what shall it be tonight? *Ghost*?" Rumple lifted his head and looked at her, then lowered it back onto a pillow.

"Ok, not *Ghost*, huh? Not in the mood for something sad?" This time she didn't even get eye contact
but just a pitiful whine.

"How about Kate & Leopold then? The ending is so romantic." This time Rumple lifted his head and then cocked it just slightly, as if he were thinking, and she could have sworn, he gave her a little nod, before relaxing once again. Deciding she spent way too much talking to a four legged creature, she cued the movie and pressed play.

Watching the scene where Leopold sets up a rooftop date so there are twinkling lights, romantic music and a candlelit dinner, made her wish for the impossible, a date with Killian. To be in the same place at the same time, what could be better, she wondered, as she turned back to the screen.

Hearing a knock on the door, Emma looked down at herself to see if she was decent, and deciding she'd do, got up to answer. Since it was so late she assumed it was M&M anyway and didn't even bother to take her hair down from the sloppy bun she had pulled it back into when getting in the bath. Not even looking through the peep hole, she yanked the door open and upon seeing a tall dark haired man, who was drop dead gorgeous, her mouth dropped open and she almost swallowed her tongue.

"Swan, I found you"

Emma tried to swallow so she could speak but her mouth was dry, "Do I know you?"

"Emma you know me, you just don't know that you know me, if that makes any sense." And then he had the audacity to wink at her.

"Listen mister, I'm going to call the cops if you don't tell me who you are" she demanded.

He grinned at her, and held up his hand, "Alright, I'm sorry, it's me, it's Killian."

"Killian, but how?" Then she took his hand and brought him into the apartment, "How did you get here?"

He took both of her hands in his and pulled her close to him, "Really Swan, that's the best you can come with?"

He kissed her with lips that were all consuming and opening her mouth, his tongue swept in and sensuously dueled with hers. She wrapped her arms around his neck and he pulled her closer, rubbing his hands up and down her back, pulling her hips closer, until finally both needed air and their lips slowly parted.

"Killian, not that I'm not happy to see you, I am. In fact, I'm over the moon, but?"

He leaned over and kissed her nose, and then he progressively moved from one cheek, to the other, to her chin, her forehead, her neck, each kiss, getting progressively wetter. Emma reached up to wipe at an extremely wet place, and then another, but the kisses just kept coming. Finally thinking this is too weird, she put up both hands to push him away and instead of a hard man's chest and cotton, she felt soft fur and paws, and opening her eyes, looked up into the brown eyes of Rumple who had been showering her with doggy kisses.

"Ugh, Rumple, seriously?!" He just grinned and sat back on his haunches.

Shaking her head to clear it, she realized she had fallen asleep and her dog had notified her the movie was over. Quickly shutting off the television, she washed her face and called it a night, hoping she could recapture what had turned out to be a dream, but a really good dream.
Killian (2012)

Getting back into a routine after all the time that he had taken with his father proved a fairly easy feat and before he knew it, December was upon them and the holiday season was in full swing. Not only the holiday season but the “season” when the population increased greatly, as well as the average age, but since this was good for business, he didn’t complain much. Good for the monetary side of things, not so good for his personal life when he had things, like changing his destiny, on his mind. Thinking about his father, while it made him sad, he was happy that he had spent some quality time with him over the past few months. And if he were honest with himself, if he would have known his father’s days were numbered, he would have made more of an effort to mend all the fences, but his father’s motto had been that ‘life is made up of moments and that making the most of those moments is what’s important,’ and he was happy that he had at least gotten reacquainted with the Brennan Jones he remembered for his early days.

Remembering his mother’s words about him finding someone and not letting them go, also was ever present on his mind and he knew without a doubt that Emma was his someone. As impossible as it was, fate had intervened and they had met. While at her birthday party, they had made a physical connection, he also felt that he knew her from the exchange of letters. In writing back and forth all these months, she might not admit it but she was an open book to him. He knew that she had a tough exterior but a soft interior. He learned she loved her job as a doctor, not just for what she could do for the patients she treated each day but also for what they did for her. Her patients gave her a sense of purpose and grounded her. He knew that she was the one he wanted to have in his arms every day. The one he wanted to see at night when he turned out the lights and whose face he wanted to see first thing every morning.

He had reached a point where he felt that his hopes, dreams and future were somehow being built around a woman he had held in his arms for two minutes. Killian sighed, feeling the weight of the unknown on his shoulders. His father’s death had shown him that the moments are important and when you can, you must seize them. Pacing back and forth in front of the fireplace, he came up with a plan. Writing it all out on a piece of paper, he placed it in the postbox, lifted the flag and counted the days until Saturday.

Emma (2014) and Killian (2012)

Looking over the letter from Killian, where he had carefully planned the playlist that they would be listening to while on their date,” she read;

*Good Morning Beautiful,*

*Tik Tok, Are You Gonna Be My Girl? More than A Thousand Miles may separate us but I Can’t Get a you out Of My Head. I may be Foolish but That's the Way It Is. Let's Sail Away and Make Some Memories. Put me out of my Misery, Babe. I'll Be There For You, Over and Over again. Slow Down because You Belong With Me and then tell me You'll a Think of Me.*

*I'm yours*

Killian

PS, Download *Unchained Melody* last.

Feeling a little silly, Emma packed her dog, a fresh notebook and pen, a beach chair and her favorite deli meal, and set out for her date with Killian. Driving up to the house, framed by tropical landscaping and the blue ocean beyond, she felt those butterflies take flight. Wondering if he was
waiting for her, she carried her belongings and set them up next to her date spot, the mailbox. Checking the time, she sat down and feeling like an idiot said,

"I'm here." And the flag went up.

~~~~~~

Killian had felt like a foolhardy lad all day as he went about preparing to sit out by the postbox for his date with his real life Swan. At just before 5:00 p.m, the time he told her to arrive, he was sitting in front of the postbox, notepad in hand, hoagie to eat and a dog chasing after anything that moved. Noting the time, he wrote a quick note, put it in the box and waited.

~~~~~~

No matter how many times she experienced the flag magically moving, it still unnerved her when she actually witnessed it. When she opened the door, there sat a perfect long stem red rose bud and a single sheet of paper. Putting the flag down, she pulled out the rose and the piece of paper and read;

For you Swan. Thank you for coming round.

~~~~~~

Emma brought the rose up and inhaled the sweet aroma. He's a romantic man, a gentleman some might say. Trying to figure out how to take some of the strangeness out of the entire situation, she made up her mind to treat the letters as if they were texts. So as the flag went up, it indicated that a message was waiting, similar to a ping notification when a new text arrives. And as the flag went down, it was like the three typing dots as if someone was replying. With that in mind, she opened her notebook.

~~~~~~

Killian put the flag down and read what she had written,

"Wow, such a romantic gentleman."

"Why Swan, you wound me. I'm always a gentleman."

"Always?"

"I hope someday you get to find out Emma"

Emma sat there for a minute wondering if that was even a possibility, and while a part of her wanted to go down that conversational lane, the rest of her wasn’t ready, so she wrote,

"Does this feel as strange to you as it does to me?"

When Killian read that he thought, so I got too close huh? Strange? Yes? Do I care? No. And then wrote.

"How about this, what do you see?"

"I see the blue ocean with gently rolling waves. I see a quaint cottage, and lush landscaping all around."

"Very good. And smell. What do you smell Swan?"
"I smell the sea air that is blowing in my face and the vegetation surrounding me."

"And hear. What do you hear?"

"The waves as they crash against the shore, the rhythm as old as time."

"Those are the things I see, smell and hear Swan, so you aren't alone. Did you remember to download the music onto a device, either your phone or IPod?"

"Of course I did. How could I resist after all the work you went to creating that letter?!"

Killian chuckled at the sass behind the words she wrote and answered with.

"Now imagine that the one sitting next to you is a devilishly handsome man and press play."

Emma really was curious about his looks but fear prevented her from asking. The temperatures during the day had been in the upper 60's, and as the sun lowered, the wind off of the water felt cooler. Thankful she had brought a jacket, she pulled it on, and settled back in the chair with her sandwich. Nibbling on the sandwich, listening to the music and 'chatting' back and forth with Killian might not have been a traditional date, but she actually 'felt' like she was on one.

"Devilishly handsome you say? Would that be because of the perm and waxed mustache?"

Killian had been munching on potato chips when the flag was suddenly raised after a few minutes. Licking the salt off of his fingers, he read the note and laughed out loud at her comeback.

"I see you finally asked about the Captain Hook signature, but alas I'm afraid I have to disappoint you. No waxed mustache or perm for me."

"I'm happy to hear that pirate. I think I much prefer Barrie's Captain Hook anyway."

"Good to know, Swan. I forgot to ask, did you bring Rumple with you?"

Emma looked around for him and spotted him running around in circles as if he was involved in a rousing game of chase.

"Of course I brought Rumple. He seems to know when I'm driving down here and if I try to sneak out, he barks incessantly until I feel bad."

"My Rumple does the same thing. Must be a trait that no matter the version of him you see, he's still a might spoiled. Where is your Rumple now?"

"He's over by the Jasmine bushes, either chasing or being chased by something only he can see."

"I gather they can sense each other as that is the same place my Rumple is right now. Were the Jasmine in bloom when you lived here?"

Emma thought back to the six months she had lived here, "Yes, I loved stepping outside at night and smelling them. So fragrant, but not too strong either."

"My mum planted them many years ago. I love their smell as they remind me of her. How about you? Do you have a smell that reminds you of your mum?"

Thinking back to when she was four, Emma had only a few real memories of her parents but one fragrance always took her back to that time,
"Magnolias. We had a tree in our front yard and when it bloomed my mom would put the flowers in bowls of water and scatter them though out the house."

"That's a lovely memory. I'm glad you shared some of your beginnings with me."

They continued to exchanges notes back and forth a bit longer until Emma read, "Dance with me?"

"You obviously have me mistaken for someone who can dance."

"Come on Swan, there's only one rule, pick a partner who knows what they're doing."

When Emma read that, a memory was tickled in the back of her mind, but unable to come up with where she had heard it, she responded with,

"And I suppose you're that partner?"

"Now Swan...just start the Unchained Melody track, close your eyes and pretend my arms are wrapped around you and we are swaying together."

“Go with it Emma, what have you got to lose”, she muttered, “Besides it’s not like you're being held in anyone's arm and having to worry about stepping on toes.” Turning on the haunting melody, she leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes. She was immediately drawn back to the day she had taken Killian's tour of the Art Deco district. As the music built on the word mine, she felt goosebumps break out on her arms and then all of a sudden felt as if she had been wrapped in a big blanket. As the song faded to nothing, it felt as if someone had gently kissed her cheek. Opening her eyes, she looked around to see if Rumple had been licking her face again but he wasn't even close to her, but was over under the Jasmine trees.

"Killian what was that?" O

"That's powerful magic. I felt it too."

Deciding it was time to go, she wrote, "I need to go as I have the early shift tomorrow. Thank you for tonight."

"No, thank you. The moments you've given me tonight are moments I'll not soon forget. Drive safe."

Emma folded up her chair and loaded her things in the bug. Patting her leg and calling Rumple's name several times, finally got results, albeit slowly. Walking toward the car he had the most pitiful look on his face, she had ever seen. As he came closer his ears, tail and eyes dropped even more.

"It's ok boy, we'll come back soon."

As if he understood what she said, as soon as she mentioned coming back, his ears perked up and he hopped in the back seat.

"I'm not sure what to think about you, Rumple. You're definitely a unique character."

**Killian (2012)**

The next few days after his date with Emma, work was busy and he didn't have a lot of time to implement the next part of his plan. Finally getting a free moment he rang Liam to enlist his help, not only in the planting but also, in finding the best place to purchase such a product. The Saturday before Christmas arrived sunny but with a bit of chill in the air, at least chill for South Florida, but dry. Just as Killian pulled a shovel out of storage, Liam drove up looking like he had just rolled out
of bed.

Killian looked him over carefully, humming loudly about what he was seeing, before finally exclaiming,

"You look awful ole man."

"Bugger off Killian. Who gets up at the bloody crack of dawn on the weekend?"

Killian just grinned as some things never change.

"Still can't get up early, eh? And it's not the bloody crack of dawn, it's 10a.m. Too bad for you as, times a-wasting."

He pushed the shovel into Liam's chest, who had no choice but to grab the handle.

"What's this for?"

"You're so tired, you can't see it's a spade?" Then he reached into the storage area and pulled out a second one and some work gloves.

Liam huffed at his brother, "You nit, of course I know it's a spade, but what do you plan for me to do with said spade?"

"Follow me and quit your grousing".

Then he led him to the perfect spot, and they began scooping the soil, creating a hole perfect for what he had in mind. Rumple sat through the entire procedure, watching quietly, as if supervising the whole chore. Once the hole was the approximate size he would need, Killian locked the dog in the house, much to the dog’s displeasure, and he and Liam went shopping.

Returning home a few hours later with his prize and some steaks to throw on the grill when done, they got to work. It took the strength of both of them to lift the huge pot out of the back of his truck and then they were able to roll it across the ground. Breaking the pot, they rolled the roots into the hole and then both men needed a rest. Killian went inside to let Rumple out, picking up a couple bottles of water.

Liam was leaning against his car and had stripped down to his wife beater when Killian returned. Adopting the same relaxed stance, sans his over shirt, he passed Liam a water bottle and settling into a quiet moment, both got lost in memories from long ago.

After a few minutes, Killian asked "Big date last night?"

Liam, who had been in the middle of taking another drink, stopped, bottle half way to his mouth, "Why do you ask?"

Looking at his brother's carefully held neutral expression, "Well, it could have been the fact you looked like you were up all night or it could be the way you are answering a question with a question."

"Wanker," Liam muttered, "Since you're being such a girl, I did have a date. She’s very pretty, blonde, and a doctor. And before you ask, I had a good time and will probably be seeing her again."

His description could have been Emma but Killian knew in his time she hadn't been in South Florida, "Name?"
Before responding, Liam finished his water and started walking back toward the tree, "Elsa. You happy?" Let's finish so we can eat."

Killian lifted his brows at his brother's behavior, but then dismissed it for fatigue, and they went back to work, separating the roots to spread out in the hole, covering them with loose soil and putting away the gardening tools. As they were tossing the last few bit of dirt back into the hole, Rumple had tried to make a game of it by barking at the rocks that went flying, but once they stopped he had proceeded to mark it as his. Shaking their heads at his antics, Liam pulled a duffel with a change of clothes out of his truck, and whistling for the dog, they all trudged inside.

They took turns cleaning and after their meal was finished had settled down with glasses of rum on the patio to watch the last vestiges of light fade from the day. Since Rumple had shown his ability to bring even grown men to their knees while they were eating, they had tossed him a steak bone and he was happily gnawing on it in a corner.

Liam took a sip of his rum and promptly gagged, "How do you stomach this? It tastes vile."

Killian quipped, "It's an acquired taste for the most discerning palate," and then he took another sip. "See nary a cough."

Liam responded in a droll tone, "Or a palate that's anesthetized from too much rum." And then he took another drink, this one more carefully. "Are you going to tell me why we really planted that tree?"

Killian rubbed his hand on the back of his neck before responding, "Someone mentioned they liked them. But don't ask any more questions now, it's complicated."

As the night grew darker, Liam stood up to leave, and Killian walked with him to the door. When it was opened, Rumple ran past with his bone, disappearing into the night.

"Oh no," he groaned.

Liam looked at him in question. "What?"

"He's going to go bury his bone and come back with black paws and a black nose."

Laughing, as they walked toward his truck, Liam commented, "Surely not."

But before they had even reached the truck, Rumple appeared from the direction where the new tree had been planted, front paws muddy as well as his snout. Killian looked at his brother, "You were saying?"

"Guess you've got some cleaning to do little brother." Before Killian could correct him with younger, he was in the truck and driving down the lane. Giving his dog a disgruntled look, Killian turned back to the house, and once inside he proceeded to bathe his dirty dog before shutting down for the night.

Emma (2014)

Earlier in the day a woman had come into the ER ready to give birth and she had sent her straight to labor and delivery. Now that she had a few minutes, she wanted to come and see the new addition for herself. Standing in front of the nursery window she watched several infants, all swaddled in white blankets, the only thing distinguishing them as girl or boy was the color of their knitted hats, sleeping peacefully. One however, a boy based on the color of the hat, was being fussed over by one of the nurses, and he did not look happy. He must be the one who belongs to the woman who just came up from ER, she thought. So small and helpless.
Turning to go back downstairs, she noticed Regina standing outside of one of the offices, not moving.

"Regina, are you feeling alright? Need to sit down?"

Regina gazed at her, an almost panick'd look on her face. Slowly she lifted one hand and gave Emma a picture. Emma took it from her and glanced down,

"Oh, Regina. Is this yours? Look how amazing this ultrasound picture is? Is everything ok?"

Once again Regina handed Emma a picture. "Yes, Regina. It's you and Robin's baby. The ultrasound pictures of Baby Hood are amazing. You two must be ecstatic."

Then Regina handed her a third picture. Looking at it, Emma's eyes got large and a huge smile broke out on her face, "Twins! You're having twins! Congratulations!"

As she said that Regina reached out and caught herself on the wall. Emma directed her to a chair close by and after she had sat down, went and got her some water. Once she handed her the water, she sat down in a chair adjacent,

"Regina, this is happy news. Scary, yes, but happy. This isn't like you to freak out."

Lifting her eyes to Emma, she asked, "How am I supposed to handle two infants? I've never even had one, much less two, and at the same time!"

Emma smiled at her friend, "I'm not going to say it's going to be easy, because it won't be. But you have Robin and a lot of friends to help. You'll do it, together. Double the pleasure so to speak."

Regina took a deep breath, and her eyes filled with tears, "I'm terrified. I run a huge hospital with countless employees and I'm terrified that I'm going to be a disaster as a mom."

"I've not had the privilege of being a mom yet, but I have a feeling all women feel that way. And pregnant with twins, well," and she left that thought hanging.

"Thanks Emma. I'm going to go see if I can catch Robin before he goes to work. I need to share the shock."

"Ok, let me know if I can help. Where is it that he works?"

"He works for the Miami Police Department. In fact, he used to work with David."

Emma smiled, "One big happy family. I'll let you go. Take care."

As she walked down the stairs toward the ER, she thought about how it would feel to be carrying a baby that belonged to the man you loved. Fanciful thoughts, Swan, she thought, the man you could love is out of reach. Thinking that a trip to the beach house was in order she vowed to do that the next day.

Bright and early the next morning, she opened her eyes, to find herself staring into the big brown eyes of Rumple. He stood by the side of the bed, chin resting on the mattress, wagging his tail.

"Good morning boy, ready for a walk?"

He barked his answer and as she was getting dressed, followed closely at her heels, as if she might forget him. Once back from their walk, she fed them both, showered and was getting ready to leave when she remembered she had promised M&M she would go Christmas shopping with her.
"Guess our trip to the beach will have to wait till later." Rumple's ears, eyes and tail dropped and he jumped on the sofa and went to sleep. Shaking her head at his ability to always make her feel guilty when he wasn't being included, she finished getting ready and then went to meet M&M.

Several hours later, she arrived back, arms laden with gifts, and plopped onto the sofa. Rumple sat close in front of her, following her every move, until she gave in, "Ok, I get it. Let's go".

Driving south, they listened to Christmas music and it wasn't long before she was turning on to the lane and driving toward the house. Noticing a new tree off to the side, her first thought was that she had the wrong house. Her next thought was that someone new had moved in and redone the landscaping but, no lights were on and nothing else had changed. Parking, she got out and walked to the mailbox and found a letter waiting for her.

Emma,

Merry Christmas. The magnolia tree is my gift to you. When you see the tree and smell the flowers, I want you to not only remember your mother's love, but know that out there is a smoldering pirate who's thinking of you.

Love, Killian

P.s. Look at the trunk of the tree.

Emma rolled her eyes at the smoldering pirate comment but walked over to the tree, and using the little light on her key chain, checked the trunk. She found a heart carved at about eye level and inside was K+E.

"Oh, Killian. " she whispered, “What have you done? You planted a tree, for me?”

Emma walked around the trunk, running her fingers over the bark, feeling the ridges of the heart and of their initials. Reaching up she took a leaf and pulled it free from the branch. It was smooth and while the blossoms wouldn’t be present until late spring or summer, she could imagine, their smell.

“You did it, Killlian. You must really be a pirate, as you’ve managed to steal a little piece of my heart.”

Pressing her lips against the spot where their initials lay, she imagined, it was his heart she was touching, just as he had touched hers. Wiping the tears that had fallen, she knew what she needed to do. O Leaving him a note in the mailbox, she turned to get back in the car, but Rumple was digging in the dirt under the Magnolia tree.

"Rumple, no! Come, let's go."

A few minutes later he picked something up and trotted happily to the car. Emma noticed his nose had a little dirt on it but in his mouth he was carrying a bone.

Reaching to take it away, he growled a warning, "Fine, take the old dirty thing with you."

Looking back at the house, she wondered where it had come from and how long it had been buried under the tree.

Chapter End Notes
Be sure and drop a line and let me know what you thought. And yes I have twins and shock is a really good description of what you feel when you find out.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Join Emma and Killian for the holidays.

Chapter Notes

This chapter starts to build toward the climax of the story. Hold on for a wild ride.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Killian (2012)

Killian felt the bed dip and opened his eyes to see dark green ones framed by long dark lashes staring into his. Reaching up with his right hand, he cupped her face, "You found me."

She leaned in until their foreheads barely touched, "Did you doubt I would?"

"Never. I knew some way, someday you would find your way to me."

"How could you have been so sure with all the obstacles between us?"

"It's called trust, Darling. If you hadn't found me, I would have lost my happy ending."

"You've found your happy ending? What is it?" she asked him quietly.

"Don't you know, Emma, it's you."

As a single tear escaped from the corner of her eye, he gently wiped it off with his thumb and kissed her. Their lips moved slowly against each other, opened slightly and melding together as if they belonged together.

Needing to catch her breath, Emma leaned back, to look at him. "I like that I'm your happy ending Killian. And you are mine."

She leaned in to kiss him again, sucking gently on his full bottom lip, then moving to his top one. Killian took control of the kiss, and moving his hand to her chin changed the angle, and closed his lips over hers, while running his tongue along her bottom one. She opened her mouth to let him in, and their tongues mated the sensuous language of lovers.

Rolling her over onto her back, and supporting himself over her with his left elbow, he broke the kiss, to just look at her. The light gave her cheeks an ethereal glow and tenderly he placed a kiss on
one cheek, "So beautiful," and then he moved to the other cheek and kissed it, "So lovely," and then he kissed her nose, "gorgeous."

Emma opened her eyes and smiled at the man looking down at her, such love in his eyes, "You're not so bad yourself." She quipped.

He smirked, "I know."

Then he kissed her, rolling them onto their sides so he could wrap both arms around her. Pulling her body flush to his, running his hand up and down her back in what was meant to be a soothing stroke but was causing him to start thinking about where this was leading and how to get them there, made him slow down and pull back slightly.

Emma moved her hand to the back of his head and combing her fingers through his hair, tried to pull his lips back to hers.

"More."

Killian nuzzled her nose with his, "Emma, I'm trying to be strong, to be a gentleman, but you're making it very hard," and then biting his bottom lip, his eyes glinting, he waited.

Emma giggled, "I hope so," and then she wiggled her hips against his, "I think it appears to be working."

Growling deep in his throat, he kissed her again, hard.

"Minx."

Sitting up he pulled his shirt over his head and tossed it on the floor. "Come here, you." And he reached for her, "Emma? And he reached for her again, "Emma, help me."

She was holding out her arms toward him, but their hands kept missing each other, "Killian!"

"Emma, fight. Stretch Emma," but no matter how much he tried he couldn't reach her outstretched fingers and she drifted out of sight. Feeling the tears gathering behind his eyes, he yelled again, hoping that she would hear him, "EMMA!"

He repeated again, this time so loudly, he woke up with her name on his lips. Looking around wildly, he realized it had all been a dream. He wiped his hand over his face and realized his tears though, had been real, "Bloody hell," he groaned, and swung his legs off the bed to go take a shower, a very cold shower.

After his shower, he made a cup of coffee and carrying it and a beach towel, went outside. Rumple was following close at his heels as they walked by the postbox and there was a new letter waiting for him. Taking his loot down to the beach, he tossed the towel onto the sand and sank down carefully so as not to spill his coffee. Taking a few sips, he savored the flavor and then opened the letter from his lady.

Killian,

I'm not sure words can express how much I love your gift. You've touched a piece of me that has never been captured before. I'm starting to believe that you are every bit the pirate you claim to be. Remember the gift I gave you from my walk in the Art Deco District? It said "We don't meet
people by accident. They are meant to cross our path for a reason."

There is a reason we met, that our paths have crossed. If we can change destiny, then perhaps maybe it's time to try. Call me on Christmas Day. I'll be waiting.

Love, Emma

Feeling like he had just climbed to the top of the Emma Swan wall, Killian wanted to shout his joy, but settled for a sharp whistle to get Rumple’s attention, who had been chasing birds down the beach. Christmas Day, he thought, I can wait until then.

Emma (2014)

Since leaving the beach and seeing her gift from Killian, Emma couldn't resist getting lost in playing the "what if" game with herself. "What if" he called and they made plans to meet. "What if" he came by and they made plans to meet. And on and on it went until some days, she was tempted to jump in the car and drive to the beach and just sit and wait. But sadly, she couldn't do that as she was an adult with a life and had to be responsible. Work leading up to the holidays was busy with not only the usual accidents but also holiday accidents, like cooking mishaps, or burns caused by fires from Christmas lights, or individuals needing stitches because they cut themselves on broken ornaments, and the list went on.

She had split the holiday shift with Victor Whale and since he was working Christmas Day, she was on for Christmas Eve. When she arrived and noticed Granny wasn't there, she was a little concerned as Granny was the glue that held the ER together when it got particularly rowdy and as it was an evening when alcohol was involved, well you never know. Thankfully, the shift had started slowly as she got to spend time talking with Lilly, who was a new nurse at Bayside General. Gaining confidence in Lilly's abilities with each patient she handled, Emma felt comfortable running to the cafeteria to get a quick bite to eat, and promising to bring a candy bar back, she snuck away.

She'd been sitting for five minutes when she was paged back to the ER. Shoving her sandwich and Lilly's candy in her pocket, she took the stairs and coming around the corner, she could hear the noise before she could see it. Loud, boisterous, obnoxious, just a few words that described what was waiting for her. Recognizing Robin standing next to a large man who was holding a bloody towel around his arm and they were standing over two other men, who had multiple cuts on their faces, along with bloody noses, she wandered into the fray. Letting out a whistle to get their attention, she waited for quiet and then addressing, Robin, the only one unharmed, said, "What happened?"

Robin smiled that smile that makes his dimples deeper at her and rolled his eyes, "Dr. Swan, so lovely to see you."

Pointing to the two smaller men, he said, "Will Scarlett here and his neighbor, Tucker, got into an argument over who had the best display of Christmas lights and both had been drinking and things got out of hand. One of the neighbors called us and here we are."

Emma handed charts to a nurse who separated the men and took them each to a room. After they had walked away, she turned to the much larger man, "And you are?"

The large man had a sheepish look on his face, "Beggin your pardon ma'am. Name's John Little, but most folks call me, Little John, cause of my size."

Emma thought he was the furthest thing from little, but went with it, "Ok, Little John, let's get you into an exam room and get you cleaned up. Robin, you need anything?"
"No, I'm good. Little John just tried to get in the middle of Tucker and Will and his arm is a bit banged up. I'm going to see if those blokes have calmed down enough to give me the whole story." He then walked off toward the exam rooms.

Emma led Little John to an empty room and cleaned his wound. "Looks like you got lucky this time and won't need stitches. I'm going to use some of this liquid bandage, so make sure you keep it clean for the next few days. What did you get cut with?"

Little John had looked away when she had started cleaning his wound as if the site of blood wasn't his favorite, so her words brought his attention back to her, "It was glass. Tucker had a vodka bottle that he had been drinking from, waving it around and it must have shattered on something, as the next thing I knew, I was bleeding." And then he looked down at the clean white bandage against his tanned arm, and smirked, "Maybe my wife will give me a bit of sympathy."

Emma rolled her eyes at him, "Good luck with that one." And laughing she left him to clean up and moved on to the next patient.

Tucker was waiting for her in the next room and after looking over his face, she pulled on a pair of gloves and cleaned the blood off of his upper lip. Noting the blood was still seeping, she checked but didn't feel anything broken so she packed his nose with some gauze strips and instructed him to use an ice pack.

"Oh and be prepared for a black eye, or two in your holiday pictures."

Tucker groaned, "My wife is going to kill me," he muttered.

Emma looked at him, looked at the wall, and then with a lopsided grin remarked, "If you were my husband, I would. Maybe next year you'll rethink your arguments." Then taking off her gloves, she washed her hands and went to check on victim number three.

Will Scarlett looked the worst of the three. He was laying back on the exam bed with his arm folded over his forehead, and his eyes closed, groaning in pain, "Will, are you in pain?"

"Me 'ead hurts." He slurred in a thick cockney voice.

Emma wasn't sure if his head hurt because of the alcohol he had consumed or a head injury, but after cleaning his face, it appeared that his only injury was a small cut over one eyebrow. A little glue and a butterfly Band-Aid and he was good to go. "Will, your injuries are minor. How much did you drink?"

He groaned again, "I don’t bloody remember but I am guess’n enough to get me pissed and landed in this sodding place."

"Take some aspirin and drink plenty of water. You should feel better sometime tomorrow but your Christmas is going to be uncomfortable one."

Once outside the door, she saw Robin standing near the desk talking to Little John. Walking up to them Robin, turned to her with a smile, "They ok?"

Emma shook her head, "Physically, they are both fine, but are going to have serious hangovers tomorrow."
Robin smirked, "Serves them right. We'd better go see if any charges are going to be pressed."

"Better you than me, Robin." And she laughed. "By the way, daddy. How's Regina doing? Are you over the shock?"

Robin's smile got even bigger, "She's beautiful, but already uncomfortable, even with three more months to go. And no, the shock hasn't worn off. I'm not sure it ever will."

"Tell her I said Merry Christmas, and Roland too. Take care."

As Robin went to finish his questioning, she took their charts behind the desk and wrote her notes. Thankfully the rest of her Christmas Eve shift passed without incidence.

Christmas Day arrived bright and sunny and Emma scurried around finishing her last minute wrapping of gifts and baking. She had made some cookies and picked up a pie at the bakery and was going to M&M's apartment where the main cooking would be done. Once the gifts and food was packed, she went to change and then she and her guest were ready to leave.

Arriving at M&M's, she put the desserts on the counter and worked with her sister and David to make lunch. After they ate, complete with a black and white furry face on their laps, they gathered around the tree to unwrap their gifts. David offered to clean the kitchen while she and M&M talked and had their dessert and after gathering her gifts and her dog they went back to her apartment.

Back at home, she put away her things, fixed a cup of cocoa, with whipped cream and cinnamon, and sat down to watch *A Christmas Carol* when Ebenezer Scrooge, was shown that he could choose a different path and change his destiny. She really hoped one path led straight to Killian. Engrossed in the movie, time passed quickly and when the phone rang, she almost jumped out of her skin, picking up the phone, she answered, "Hello."

**Killian (2012)**

The holidays this year were some of the best that Killian could remember in a long while. He was spending it with his brother for the first time in several years, he had a business that he loved that was doing well and sometime in his future he would have Emma. Sadly, he knew he had to wait two years but she had made the first move, for him to call her, and he was a patient man, about some things that is. This Christmas he was going to celebrate it all.

Killian loaded the car and drove toward Liam's. He lived in a small home in an older, but nice neighborhood, in North Miami Beach that he had completely remodeled recently. And the best part was that he had volunteered to host the rag tag group of orphans at his house for Christmas Day dinner. When he pulled up in the drive he noted that he was the last to arrive but since dinner wasn't for a while, he had an idea of what he'd find when he walked in the door.

Waiting patiently on the porch, he let Rumple finish marking all the new spots, then opened the door to a noisy environment. Rounding the corner into the TV room, he saw Liam and the other three members of the ragtag group, which happened to be his staff also, Tink, Eddie and Wendy, engaged in a rousing game of Wii, Mario Kart. "I should have known I'd find all four here. Who's winning?"

"Who do you think's winning?!", Tink shouted. "Your snake of a brother of course!"
“Liam that's bad form brother. You're to let the guests win ”

“Oh, like you let them win when we play at your place?”

"Wanker."

"Nit."

"Boys, boys!" exclaimed Tink, "Calm down."

She had been around Killian and Liam enough that she treated them like siblings, whereas Eddie and Wendy were sitting quietly, concentrating on the game. King Boo, Donkey Kong, Baby Peach and Koopa Troopa going in and out a mall, and around a track.

Once the race was over and Liam had won the first place trophy, the Wii was put away until later and all went into the kitchen to pull together the meal. Liam's kitchen was large and open enough so the five of them were able to cut, chop and stir without stepping all over each other. With their excellent team work, the table was set and it was time to eat.

Conversation flowed easily, with everyone interrupting everyone. Rumple made his rounds during the meal, trying to see who would give him the most sympathy and share a bite or two. Laughing at his antics, Wendy commented, "Does he behave this way, every time you eat?"

"Aye. I've learned to ignore him most of the time but periodically, I'll admit, he sucks me in, however that guy," and he pointed to Liam, "Is the worst."

Liam laughed, "What do you expect me to do when I'm faced with that pitiful look?"

Killian lifted an eyebrow, "Exactly, he knows a sucker when he sees one."

"Oh bugger off, Killian. Anyone ready for dessert?"

Noticing how neatly he changed the subject, Killian smirked at him, but stood up to help clear the table. "So Liam, I'm surprised Elsa isn't here today."

As soon as he mentioned Elsa's name, Tink perked up, and whipped her head around to look at Liam, who was standing there with an 'I'm so going to get you look', "Elsa, who's Elsa? Where did you meet her? How many times have you gone out with her and why is this the first time I'm hearing anything about her?" Questions flying out of her mouth, before any could even be answered.

Liam just looked at her, "She's a doctor. At the gym. A few and because it's none of your business." And then he took his dessert and went outside on the patio.

Tink looked over at Killian, who raised an eyebrow at her. She just shrugged her shoulders and handed him a plate with her famous chocolate cake on it. "This looks bloody decadent, Tink, thank you!" And taking it, he followed his brother outside.

"Liam, alright?"

Liam looked at him and rolled his eyes, "Of course it is, but do you want me to bring up the mystery woman?"
"Point taken."

He changed the topic so that when the rest of the party joined them, they were laughing about some silly pranks they had been involved in as children."

The party eventually wound down and only Killian and Liam were left. "I'm glad you were here this year, Killian."

"Aye, as am I. It was nice to be able to reconnect with father, even for a little bit, before he passed."

"He missed you, Killian. You know father was a pretty stoic man, prideful, I suppose, but sometimes I would see him staring at pictures of us when we lived in the house on the beach and he would have the saddest look on his face. I felt sad for him, even though I had no idea that he could fix the problem. I'm sure the regrets must have weighed heavily on his mind."

"Aye, he told me as much." Killian remarked. "And then he would say," and adopting his father's speech cadence said, "Killian my lad, we must not look at what we've not done, but look forward at what we can do,'" and then he recounted, "And I agree, Liam. We have to move forward and make our future what we want it to be."

"And are you doing that little brother?"

Killian lifted his eyebrow, "I believe that's, younger brother, and I'm doing my bloody best. I can only hope it's good enough."

"Care to explain?"

"Not tonight. I need to get Rumple and head home. We'll get together in a few days."

He gathered Rumple and the extra piece of cake Tink had left him and drove back to the beach. He planned to work from home for a few days as he knew that Emma hadn't realized what she had omitted from her last letter. Knowing her, she was regretting a few things and he needed to make sure she regretted nothing. His Swan was skittish and he wanted nothing but to love her. The showing her was proving difficult but love was worth fighting for, and fight for her was what he planned to do.

Emma (2014)

Since Christmas fell in the middle of the week, Emma had to wait a few days before going to see Killian. After his not calling on Christmas Day she wasn't sure what to think. Wasn't sure if it was worth it. But she did want to find out what happened and why he hadn't called. She had felt so confident that after he had planted that tree for her that he would have been anxious to see if they could have changed their destiny and merged their paths, but it hadn't worked. Would it ever?

Driving up she noticed the flag was up, which meant that Killian had left her a new letter. She didn't want to be but she was happy, scared and excited to see what he had to say. Parking the car, she rushed to the mailbox, opened the door and put the flag down. Pulling the letter out she read;

Emma,

Imagine my delight in seeing your letter and reading that I've touched a piece of you and that you
wish for me to call you on Christmas Day. But Swan, imagine my sorrow when I realized that for you Christmas Day has passed and you did not hear from me. For Swan, look what you forgot.

He had left the letter that she wrote him asking him to contact her on Christmas Day. The moment she realized what she had forgotten, she put her hand over her mouth, thought every swear word she had ever heard, and then quickly wrote out a response to Killian. Putting it in the mailbox she waited in hopes that he was watching and they could have another 'text' like conversation.

Killian (2012)

Killian had been watching for the flag to go down and as soon as it did, he picked up his pad of paper and ran out to the postbox with Rumple racing ahead. Standing there waiting for a response, he was slightly concerned she would see his letter, decide it wasn't worth it and run, and so when the flag went back up, he couldn't help the gleeful chuckle that escaped. His Swan had answered. Maybe she was a bit tougher than he gave her credit for.

"Killian, I feel like an idiot for not leaving my number. Forgive me?"

"Swan, nothing for me to forgive. Do you forgive me for not calling?"

"We're a pair aren't we?"

"That we are Swan, that we are. Can we try again?"

"You want my phone number?"

"I want more than your phone number, Emma. I want you."

"Me? But?"

"The future’s nothing to be scared of Emma. You just have to trust me."

"Ok. Let's try. What did you have in mind?"

"Dinner?"

"Dinner? Seriously?"

"Yes, seriously. I want a real date with you. Will you?"

"I will. When?"

"How about New Year's Eve? We'll have dinner and if all goes well, we'll ring in the New Year together."

"That sounds lovely Killian."

"Thank you, Emma. I'll see you at the Prime 112 on December 31 at 7:00. That work?"

"Perfect."
"Be my girl?" When Emma read that the smile on her face grew almost impossibly large.

"Maybe?"

"Cheeky, Emma?"

"Always, Killian."

"This is for you to remember me by. Wear it and know you're my girl. I'll see you New Year's Eve. Night Swan."

Emma pulled a long chain out of the mailbox and on it was a gold ring. The ring had an oval ruby, with braided gold spanning from the stone around the band. It was gorgeous.

"Killian, it's beautiful, but I can't take this."

"Wear it for me love. I will be waiting."

"Will you at least tell me something about it?"

"It belonged to my mother. I will tell you the rest when we are together."

"And you really want me to keep it."

"Yes, Emma. I want you to keep it safe for me. Alright?"

"For you."

"Thank you Swan. I'll see you soon."

Emma put the chain over her head and looked closely at the ring. It looked old and a part of her wanted to take it but a part of her wanted to give it back. Right now, though, she needed to drive home, as she was afraid Rumple would be very disgruntled that she hadn't taken him with her. I just hope he left my shoes alone she thought as she drove toward home.

Killian (2012)

The next day, he resolved to put his plan into place. He picked up his jacket and drove to Miami. His destination was the Prime 112, which was an elegant steakhouse in Miami Beach. They might find it a bit unorthodox for someone to make reservations for a time two years in the future, but well, he’d handle that if it was needed. Arriving at the restaurant, he parked and walked up to the hostess, whose name tag said Rori. “Good afternoon, sir. How can I be of service?”

Killian gave her his best smile, the one that he had been known to use a time or two when he needed a female to do something for him, “Good afternoon, love. I’d like to make a reservation.”

She blushed, and stammered a bit when she spoke, “C C Certainly sir, ugh, when may I schedule your dinner?”

Killian moved a bit closer and leaned his left elbow on her podium, “Well, Rori,” and he lowered the
pitch of his voice, just a little bit, “I’d like to make a reservation for New Year’s Eve, 2014”

She opened the reservation program on her computer, “Ok, that was New Year’s Eve, 2014?

Killian reached up and scratched behind his ear. “Yes, exactly. New Year’s Eve, 2014. A bit unusual, but for a very special lady.

“Let me get this straight. You want to make a reservation for a date two years from now?”

“That is correct. New Year’s Eve, 2014 at 7:00pm, party of two. Name is Jones”

“Ok sir, I have you down. We will see you in,” and then she hesitated a bit, “two years.”

“Thank you Rori. Now, let me tell you a few things that I want on that night.” And he discussed in great detail the champagne and flowers he wanted delivered to the table for their celebration.

With an extra spring in his step, he returned to his truck and drove back home to work on the second part of his plan.

His father had found the architecture plans to the beach house in his office and had put them aside as a gift to Killian. Now that he had them, Killian planned to turn them into a drawing that could be framed and hung on the wall of the house, with any luck, some day, their house. Spreading out the large sheet of paper, he picked up his pencil and got to work. He couldn’t keep his mind from wandering. It seemed that no matter what he was doing, she was never far from his thoughts.

**Emma (2014)**

Emma asked herself for the hundredth time if she was crazy. Then she would tell herself that she was crazy. THIS was crazy. The fact that she had been corresponding with someone who lived in a time, two years behind her was crazy. How can that be? She didn’t know, really didn’t care, as it had brought Killian into her life. Thoughts of him filled her mind. She felt she knew him better than she had known any other person outside of Mary Margaret and David, ever. Tonight was the night. The night that she had secretly been hoping for, for months, but never thinking it was possible. Glancing at the clock, she realized it was time to get dressed.

A few months ago, she had gone shopping with Mary Margaret and because she had been feeling a bit low, she had picked out a black dress that she hadn’t been able to leave behind. It had put a small dent in her checking account but tonight she hoped that it was worth it because she had to admit, she looked good in it. “Pair that with my black heels and bag and watch out Jones, you won’t know what hit you,” she giggled as Rumple gave her his ‘put upon’ look.

She took a hot shower and spread her favorite lotion all over. Opening her dresser drawer, she pulled out a new black satin bra and panties set she had saved for a special occasion and then slipped into her new dress. Next her black heels and unpinning her hair, allowing it to fall in gentle waves down her back. After one last look, she was ready. “Don’t wait up,” she told Rumple as she opened the door and then locked it behind her but not before hearing his answering bark, as she walked toward the elevator.

Traffic was surprisingly light for New Year’s Eve so she didn’t encounter many problems. Arriving at the restaurant, she splurged for valet parking and as she got out of the car, enjoyed the way the valet stared at her legs. Managing to stand without showing off too much she tossed him the keys and walked into the restaurant. The receptionist smiled at her, “Dinner for one?”

Emma looked up, “No, I’m meeting someone here. I’m not sure if the reservation is under Swan or Jones.”
The girl looked down at her list and her eyes got quite large, “Oh Miss. Swan,” she gushed, “My name is Rori and I happened to take this reservation for the gentleman. I couldn’t believe he was making one for such a long time in advance. And may I add, he was very nice to look at. Even after all this time, I can still remember his dreamy blue eyes,” and she sighed audibly. “It’s so romantic.”

Emma smirked at the young girl who was gushing over Killian, turning toward the dining room, “Come, let me show you to your table.” She led Emma to a table that was partially sheltered from the other patrons, “Here you go, Miss. Swan. Enjoy your evening.”

Emma took her phone out of her handbag to check the time. 7:00 exactly she noted, he should be here any minute. In order to try to calm her nerves, she pulled the ring he had given out of her handbag and held it tightly in her hands. Taking a deep breath she sat and waited.

Chapter End Notes

So will you be holding on to your chair until next week’s upload? As always your words are like a party to my muse. Let me have ’em.
Chapter 12

Emma is to meet Killian for dinner to ring in 2015 together. Will he show up?

Killian (2012)

Over the next few days Killian spent time at the office and on board the Schwan. He captained a few cruises where he was hit on by a few of the women but for the most part, he stayed close to the beach house. He wasn't sure why, but he felt like something momentous was about to happen and staying close to home was important.

Looking over what he had completed of the drawing, he was pleased and knew that not only would she love the drawing itself, but she would also appreciate the time he took to create it for her. He found it interesting how different he saw himself when it came to Emma. He had always been a man who took what was offered without much thought of any repercussions. Oh, he had a code that he lived by, and always made sure that the woman he was with wanted the same good time that he did, but beyond that, he hadn't thought about their desires outside of the bedroom. He had one goal and as long as everyone was happy, so was he. Emma had captured his imagination with a simple letter. And the more he got to know about her through her letters, the more he wanted to know. So much so that he could say, she owned his heart and if he had anything to say or do about it, he was going to own hers.

Rumple had been sleeping quietly in a corner while he was drawing, but as soon as he realized Killian was no longer busy, he had walked over and stood next to the table wagging his tail, with what looked like a smile on his face. "Ready for a walk, boy?" If possible, the tail wagged even faster. "Ok, then, let's go." Taking him outside, they walked down to the beach. The day was slightly overcast and cool and he suspected rain before nightfall. "Wet roads and drunk drivers, glad I'm staying in for New Year's Eve." They walked until Rumple seemed to tire and then went back inside to pass the time until 2013.

Emma (2014)

Emma had been sitting for just a few minutes when her waiter walked up, “Good evening, I will be your waiter tonight. My name’s Henry.”

He reached into the ice bucket sitting on the cart he had pushed over, pulled a bottle of champagne out and proceeded to open it. As he opened it, he explained, “Your companion left word that you
were to have one of our very best champagne’s, *Krug Grande Cuvee*. Each bottle is a unique blend of 120 different wines from ten or more years and takes over twenty years to craft.” Picking up a crystal flute, he poured a small amount and handed it to her, “Let me know what you think of this.”

Emma took the glass from him and took a small drink. The flavor burst on her tongue, rich with hints of toasted almond and smoked brioche, “It’s perfect, Henry. Thank you.”

He poured her some more and put the bottle back into the bucket. Reaching back onto the cart he picked up a single long stem red rose, just like the one Killian had given to her on their *date*. Handing it to her, he said “For you.”

Emma took the rose and smiled, “Thank you. It’s lovely.”

“Someone wanted to make sure your evening was very special, I believe. Would you like to order now, or would you like to wait for the other party?”

Emma smiled up at Henry and thought he looked familiar, but didn’t ask why, “I’ll wait Henry, thank you.”

She picked up her champagne flute and took another sip. Henry bowed slightly, gave her a small smile and left her alone with her thoughts. She pulled her phone from her bag and looked at the time, “7:05, it appears he is late,” she murmured softly.

She sat there looking around at the other tables. All around her were couples or groups of people, none sitting alone as she. She tried to pace herself with the champagne, not taking huge sips or gulping down the entire glass like she wished to do. But when 7:30 became 8:00 and he still hadn’t shown, she wasn’t sure what to think. She thought back over the last few months. Of the conversations that went on via letters, of what she had learned about him. Of how he seemed so perfect and how she had tried to keep her walls up but that for some reason, he had known the right things to say and had slowly chipped away at those walls. His Christmas gift to her of the Magnolia tree had succeeded in tearing down another layer and as much as she hadn’t wanted to admit it, he had taken a piece of her heart. And now sitting in this beautiful restaurant, where she was supposed to be meeting the man of her dreams and ringing in the New Year, she was left feeling foolish for building him up in her fantasies instead of remaining grounded in reality like normal. It was all wishful thinking. Just a cruel trick played on her by the gods of fate.

She picked up the rose and buried her nose in the fragrant bloom. *Why did he go to the trouble of having a rose given to me, if he had no intention of showing up, she wondered not for the first time?* Looking at her phone again, she saw that she had been sitting there for two hours, *why doesn’t he just text me*, but then realized he probably didn’t have her number, even after they had made plans for the second time, she had gotten so excited about the prospect of the date, that she had forgotten. Looking down she realized she had pulled a few petals off of the rose. She picked up the bottle of champagne to pour another glass but had second thoughts since she was driving. “*How would it look for a doctor to be pulled over drunk?*” she wondered aloud, just as Henry walked back by the table.

“Is there anything I can get you?” he asked her quietly.

“No, thank you, just the check.” She said as she pulled her wallet out of her bag.

“Everything has been taken care of already. Would you like a cup of coffee?”

Emma shook her head no, “I only had two glasses. I should be fine.”
“Happy 2015, Miss. Swan. Drive safely.” And then he hesitated as if he wanted to say more but decided at the last minute against it, and with another small bow, walked away.

Emma tossed a few bills on to the table, and with down cast eyes, picked up her flower and walked toward the door.

She saw Rori watching her walking toward the door and as she started to say something, Emma held up her hand and shook her head no. She didn’t think she could stay strong if anyone else was nice to her. Holding it together, just barely, she gave the valet her slip and waited for her car.

**Killian (2013)**

2013 dawned cool and dreary and Killian wondered what today would bring. He took Rumple for a walk and then called Liam, who was spending the day with Elsa, to wish him Happy New Year. He then settled on the sofa to watch the show *Doctor Who*, about a man who was able to travel through time using a blue police box. He wished it was that bloody easy. That he could just get in the post box and when he came out, it would be 2015 and he would be beside Emma. Now he didn't know. He hoped his future self was with her, but if that was the case, wouldn't his present self, feel differently? Questions that he couldn't ask anyone without sounding like a loon. Turning back to the television, he once again got lost in the series.

When he hadn't heard from her for a few days, he took this as a good sign. He imagined that he had arrived at the restaurant, and they had talked all evening, and then rung in the New Year with a passionate kiss. There is no other way he could imagine the evening going, they were together, they had to be. Once he had decided the outcome though, it felt bittersweet, as that meant she would have no need to continue to write him letters, which meant this version of himself would be alone. "Don't go there, Jones," he scolded himself. But it was difficult not to brood. And he missed her. They say that what you don't know, can't hurt you, but in this case the unknown was causing him a lot pain.

The only time he found he was truly happy was out on the open water, sailing, either just to get away or on one of the Swashbuckling Cruises. Those were the times he could forget about his cares and concerns and just be. Tink asked about his mood, as did Liam, but he didn't feel the explanation was worth the grief that might be worse, so he sailed and spent his days with Rumple. After a week of not hearing, he decided to write a quick note and leave it in the box. At least this way he would know if she came by. Writing a few words, he left it in the post box for her, and as best as he could, tried to go on with his life.

**Emma (2015)**

Emma barely made it to her car before the tears started gathering in her eyes. She had to continuously wipe her eyes with the back of her hand to keep her vision clear enough to drive. The entire way home she kept asking herself the same question over and over again.

“Why? Why? Killian, why?” Feeling almost like she was having an out of body experience, she drove home, calm on the outside, but on the inside, feeling as if she were shattering into a million pieces.

Arriving back home, her prayers were answered when she made it back to her apartment without seeing anyone. Once inside the door, she crumpled to the floor and let the floodgates of tears free. Sitting on the floor, knees bent, head buried on her knees and huge wracking sobs escaping. Rumple crept closely, and whimpered softly before pressing against her side and laying his snout against her chest. Emma wasn't sure how long she sat there but she cried until she couldn't cry any more. Until
she felt the gentle nuzzle of Rumple's nose as he pressed his face close to hers and licked the salt from her cheeks. "You'll never leave me, will you?"

Eventually the floor became uncomfortable and standing, she pulled off her shoes. Padding barefoot into the bedroom, she tore off her dress and new lingerie and tossed it all into the garbage. Clothes that just a few hours ago had given her such pleasure and anticipation to wear, now only added to her heartache. Hearing something drop as she tossed the pile away, she looked down, saw the ring and started crying all over again. Pulling an old shirt over her head, she climbed between the sheets and fell asleep, allowing her to escape the pain for a few hours at least.

She called in sick for the rest of the week, claiming she had the flu. As she hadn't missed any work, since that fateful day, last Valentine's Day, no one questioned her illness and since she didn't speak to M&M on a daily basis, she was allowed a few days to grieve without having to talk to anyone. She didn't answer her door, she didn't answer her phone, and leaving only to take Rumple out and doing so when she was fairly sure no one was around. Finally, after five days of self-imprisonment, she was laying on her back staring up at the ceiling, holding his ring between her hands when the door opened and her sister stormed into the apartment.

One look at M&M's face and Emma shattered all over again. She felt her sister, sit down beside her and pull her into her arms, and as she cried tears that she didn't realize she still had, she felt M&M running her hand up and down her back in a soothing fashion, over and over again.

As her sobs decreased to gentle hiccups, she heard Mary murmur, "Don't you think it's time you filled me in?"

Emma sighed, "You wouldn't believe me if I did."

"Emma, I'm your sister. You're also my best friend. We've known each other our entire lives and I've never seen you this upset, not even when mom and dad passed and I know you loved them. Talk to me. Tell me. Let me decide what I do and do not believe."

Realizing she really needed to talk to someone, Emma finally opened up and told M&M everything. From the first letter, to the dates and the gifts and the tree to the New Year's Eve fiasco. Mary sat quietly through it all, not saying a word. Emma looked at her and saw, not pity, but sympathy in her sister's eyes. Pulling a tissue from the box close by, she handed it to Emma, "Dry your eyes."

Like an obedient child, Emma dried her eyes and wiped her nose. "I know this sounds like I'm nuts."

M&M silently gazed at her, as she sat quietly on the sofa. "Emma I've never known you to have an active imagination. You've always had difficulty believing in fairy tales, why would you, all of a sudden, be making up stories about people living in a parallel time?"

"Thank you, sis." She then opened her hand, and the ring was sitting in it.

M&M picked up the ring and looked it over carefully. "It's beautiful, Emma. Is this the man you mentioned at your birthday meal? The one you said you could give your whole heart to?" and not getting an answer immediately asked, "Did you Emma? Did you give him your heart?"

Emma looked up at the ceiling, then everywhere but at her sister, "I didn't think I had. I thought he only owned a piece of it, but this hurts. I just don't know if it's worth it." M&M put her hand on her arm, "Don't say that, Emma. Love is worth it. You are worth it."

She laid the ring back in her sister’s hand, "Have you been back to the beach house to see if you can contact him?"
Emma shook her head no. "You need to go. You deserve it and so does he, even if it's just to say goodbye. Will you at least think about it?"

Touched that her sister had come looking for her, then had listened without judgment, she answered, "Thanks sis. I'll think about it."

M&M stood up and they walked together toward the door. "Let me know, if you need me, ok?"

"I will. Thanks for rescuing me."

Shutting the door behind Mary Margaret, she went and took a shower and then took Rumple for a long walk on the beach. She thought about all the letters that she had exchanged with Killian as well as the two attempts that had been made to try to change their future. She thought about not only what she wanted, but more importantly what she could have. Making her way back home, she decided that the next Sunday, she would drive south to the beach house with its magical mailbox that had brought her Killian. Her decision hadn’t by any means been easy, but it was the only thing to do, the right thing to do. She just had to figure out how to get the strength to do it.

Killian (2013)

Killian woke early feeling anticipation scatter along his skin for the first time in a long while. Today he was going out with a mate of his and Liam's from long ago, John Silver, who taught scuba diving up in Fort Lauderdale. He had been talking to Tink about adding more excursions and as she researched scuba instructors in the area, he’d been happy to see that a friend of his was interested in possibly working together. John had always been a lady’s man with his long wavy dark hair, muscular build and ‘chiseled chin’ as Tink called it, and since he had a reputation, he really hoped that he didn’t have to worry about his friend. He would hate to have to hurt one of his mates for playing with his assistant’s feelings. Today John would show them a few sites along The Keys that were good for diving. And just because he was a nice guy he was allowing the rag tag group, Eddie, Wendy and Tink to tag along. And because he was a terrific younger brother, Liam would be there also.

Rumple followed closely on his heels as he got dressed and when he was ready to walk out the door, and told the dog no, there was quite a bit of barking. "Sorry mate, I’m pretty sure you don’t have your sea legs for this type of journey. Maybe next time." The way Rumple's tail dropped and he turned and walked back toward the living area, you would have thought that he was being punished severely but Killian didn’t let the guilt trip sway him, and so without the dog, he jumped into his truck and drove to the docks where everyone was to meet.

As he was driving, he thought back on how he and Liam had learned to love to scuba. In England as young lads they had loved the sea and her many mysteries, however once they had relocated to Florida, their love for it had only grown. And then father had built for them the beach house so they watched the boats sailing up and down the coastline quite often. And since the house was located closely to a state park which had many beautiful sites, their mother took them to snorkel and just skimming along the top of the water had not been enough for the sea loving Jones’ boys. Scuba diving lessons had been a Christmas gift one year after his parents had split up, and surprisingly their father had taken lessons with them. Thinking back over that time, Killian, felt melancholy and an ache settled in his chest for, yet again, another opportunity that had been so promising, yet failed to live up to his dreams. Probably one reason why it wasn't so easy for him to believe in dreams and their ability to come true, especially for him.

Once at the docks, he met up with the others and noticed that Tink and John were already looking
quite cozy and they hadn’t even left the dock yet. Making a note to say something if the opportunity arose, they boarded the \textit{Schwan} for their day of sailing. Looking over what they would need for diving he realized there were only enough tanks for four, "Who's not diving today?"

Tink and Wendy both raised their hands. "Do you know how cold it is in that water in January, Captain?"

Killian looked over at John who was standing close by, "I don’t know, maybe high 70’s?"

John nodded in agreement., "Probably closer to low 70 and as the water is deeper, well,"

And Tink finished his sentence, "It’s in the 50 or 60’s. Too cold for this girl. I like my water to be bath water warm!"

Wendy chimed in, "Here, here."

Liam and Eddie came up from below deck where they had dropped off food supplies for the day, just as Wendy had responded, and looking at her with a confused look, Eddie asked, "What are you agreeing to? Anything important?"

Killian looked at Eddie, "She was just agreeing that the girls are chicken to get in the water today, because of a little cool water."

Looking over at Wendy, Eddie opened his mouth to say something, but then she gave him a look, and he must have thought better of it, as he shut his mouth again. Killian looked over at Tink and raised an eyebrow. She shook her head and didn't answer but had a very interested look on her face as she gazed back and forth between them.

Changing the subject, Killian assigned tasks to help with launching the ship, and left to go to the bridge. Eddie untied the lines and as Killian started the motor and guided them away from the docks, the group enjoyed the beauty of the day. Once far enough out, Liam helped Eddie unfurl the sails and they let the wind lead them along. The \textit{Schwan} was living up to her namesake and before long it felt as if they were gliding along the top of the sea heading south. Their first destination \textbf{The Christ of the Abyss}, located a few hours south of Bayside.

Arriving just off the Dry Rocks, a location in John Pennekamp State Park, they dropped anchor and the divers readied themselves. While he had kept his scuba certification up to date, he hadn't been diving for a while and was anxious to get down under the sea. Pulling on the skintight suit made of neoprene, he looked out over the horizon and for the first time today allowed thoughts of Emma and wondered what she could be doing enter his mind. He liked to think that she was with his future self, loving life, anything else, was not an option.

Before his thoughts traveled too far, Liam walked up, suit on, fins and mask hanging from one hand. Together they walked over to the tanks and after strapping on, all four men were ready to jump. Stepping onto the platform, looking down into the deep blue ocean, Killian instantly felt peace. One by one they jumped in and after adjusting their masks, sunk beneath the calm, clear waters. This time of year, there were very few divers out so the water was exceptionally clear and with the sun out, they could see down, 10 feet or more. Slowly, they descended, closer to the tall, imposing statue made of bronze. John had told him, it was 8.5 feet tall and the depth of diving ranged from 25 to 60 feet. The men took their time lazily examining the statue and then swimming along the sandy floor, observing various species of fish. After 30 to 40 minutes, they ascended back to the surface, and climbed back on board the ship.

Undoing their gear and leaving them on the deck, they all picked up beach towels and unzipping the
suits, and leaving them hanging from the waist down, dried off. Tink and Wendy could be heard at
the bow of the ship talking quietly and Eddie and John wandered up to see them. Liam hung back
and after looking at his brother for several long minutes, finally asked, "Woman trouble?"

Killian took a few extra minutes to towel dry his hair before answering, "What makes you ask that?"

Liam looked at him and cocked an eyebrow, "Do I really need to answer that?"

Killian reached up and scratched behind his ear, "Trouble? I'm not sure yet."

"Killian, I've not seen you dating?"

"It's more of a long distance thing. We met once but she doesn't remember."

"Why don't you tell her?"

Killian looked over at his brother and shrugged his shoulders, "I don't know exactly. I just feel it’s
important that she remembers me on her own. No more, alright?"

"Alright, but if you need me, I'm here."

"Thanks brother." And then he clapped Liam on the shoulder as he went to the bow to ask the gang
if they wanted to pull anchor to head to the next part of their destination. All were in agreement and
before much time they were on their way to, Molasses Reef which was a few miles farther south.

Molasses Reef seemed to be a good possibility for what they had in mind as there appeared to be
places for both snorkeling as well as scuba diving. There were caves, a sunken ship, coral
formations with many different types of coral and fish, lobsters, eels and small sharks.

Arriving at the reef, once again, the men suited up and jumped into the blue water. They enjoyed the
reef adorned with both hard and soft corals as well as saw eels, crabs, lobsters and assorted types of
fish. They all took time to investigate a freighter that had run aground there and were happy that
John had thought to bring his underwater camera when a 6-foot nurse shark swam right under Eddie
causing a comical look to cross his face. Once all were on board the men dried off, stowed their gear
and went below deck to have some of the sandwiches, chips, fruit and desserts and break into the ice
chest full of beer that Liam had brought as payment for being allowed along.

Conversation flowed easily and talks about possibilities of future endeavors were soon brought into
the discussion. Killian sat back and observed the conversation all around him. Before he knew
Eddie, Wendy, Tink and John were making plans about different cruise packages and he and Liam,
got up top to pull anchor and start the trip back to Bayside. They talked quietly and once the ship
was docked and cleaned, they all went to one of the restaurants located at Bayside Marketplace for
dinner before each going their separate ways.

Emma (2015)

As Emma drove south she was nervous about everything. She didn’t know if he would even
remember that Sundays were a day she normally dropped off a letter. Or if he would be around to
notice the flag going up and while she had a general idea of what she wanted to say, just the thought
of saying goodbye made her heart hurt.

Traffic was heavy for part of the trip which required focusing on driving, but once she was on the
US 1, she lost most of the traffic and was able to let her thoughts run free. She found herself yet
again imagining the impossible. That while she had been sitting at Prime 112, Killian had walked
into the restaurant, taken one look at her and swept her into his arms. She wanted him to hold her,
with both arms so tightly that he wouldn’t let her go. Couldn’t let her go because she was a piece of him, just as he was a part of her. She wanted him to feel like she was his entire world. Blinking her eyes rapidly to clear the tears, she felt them spill over and run down her face. Picking up a tissue, which had been ever present lately, she wiped the last trace of wetness and resolved that as difficult as this might feel, it was necessary. Life was not meant to be observed from a distance, but meant to be lived. As Leo used to say to her and M&M, “surrender to what is, let go of what was, and have faith in what will be.” Words she needed to think about to get through the day.

With trepidation, she pulled into the drive leading to the beach house. Sitting in her car for a few minutes, she attempted to gather her thoughts before getting out and walking over to the mailbox. As she got closer, she noticed that the flag, while not completely up, was not completely down either. Opening the box, she saw a letter inside. Wondering if maybe he had left an explanation, she tentatively opened the letter and read;

“I’ve missed you Swan. How was dinner?”

Realizing he didn’t know, made her wish again that things were different, but wishing didn’t change facts. Opening her notebook, she wrote a quick answer and putting it in the mailbox, crossed her fingers he was there to see the flag going up.

Killian (2013)

Killian had risen early, taken Rumple for a run on the beach and was standing staring out the window, drinking a bottle of water when he heard the dog barking. As he had thought he was sleeping, it was quite a surprise to not only realize the dog had opened the front door, by jumping up on the handle, but was sitting beside the post box barking at the flag as it went up. “What is it boy? Is Emma here?” Running out to the post box expecting to read that they had a grand time over dinner, he was surprised to see what she had written.

“You weren’t there. You didn’t show up.”

“What do you mean, I wasn’t there?”

“Just that. You didn’t come.”

“Something must have happened. I wouldn’t have just not come.”

“I don’t know what to tell you Killian.”

“Are you sure you were there on the right night?”

“Of course I’m sure. I sat there for hours with everyone giving me looks of pity. I can’t do this any longer.”

“Emma, don’t give up. We can try again.”

“Killian, I can’t. I can’t keep getting lost in this beautiful fantasy.”

“I don’t want to lose you.”

As Emma read what he wrote her heart broke a little more. Writing him back was one of the hardest things that she had ever had to do and when she put it in the mailbox for him, the tears were falling so hard and fast that she couldn’t stop them. Sinking to the ground, she sat there waiting.
Killian paced back and forth in front of the post box waiting for an answer from Emma in response to his remark. He was afraid that he had scared her off and so when the flag finally went up to show that a new letter from her had arrived, he was quite delighted, that is until he read what she had written.

_I don’t want to lose you either. But, I never told you what brought me to the beach house last February. It was Valentine’s Day and I was having lunch with my sister at Bayside Marketplace. While we were eating a man was hit by a car and killed right in front of me. I did everything I could to save him, but he died anyway. I never understood why, but I felt a connection to him and after I learned he was gone, I kept thinking, it can’t end just like that on Valentine’s Day. I thought about all of the people at home who love him and who will never see him again. And then I thought, what if there is no one. What if you live your whole life and no one is waiting for you at home? My mentor suggested I get away to a place where I could be myself and the beach house was that place. I drove down here looking for something, and I found you. You filled a void that I didn’t know needed to be filled and I got lost in this beautiful fantasy where time stood still, but it’s not real Killian. We’re not real. I need to learn to live the life that I’ve got._

“How can you give up on us?”

“I can’t take the chance that I’m wrong Killian. It hurts too badly.”

Emma (2015)

“But what if you’re wrong Emma? What if what we share is worth it? You know, you never told me how you ended up moving into the beach house? Shouldn’t the fact that you did, tell you something?”

That pain kept getting stronger but she knew what she needed to do. She wrote her thoughts on a piece of paper and kissing it, gently put it inside the box. Feeling the chain with the ring hanging around her neck, she knew that it didn’t belong to her, but to a woman who could give Killian a future, and sadly, that woman wasn’t her. Pulling the long chain over her head, she laid it on top of the letter and shut the door.

Touching the box softly, she whispered “Goodbye” and quickly walked to her car and climbed inside. Tears were running down her face, and no matter how often she rubbed the back of her hands over her cheeks, they spilled over. After driving a few minutes, she found that she couldn’t see well enough to continue. Pulling into a small business, she leaned over the steering wheel and wept for the missed chances and the unfairness in life. Hearing doors slam, she noticed the parking lot had suddenly gotten busy and as she didn’t want to speak to anyone, she composed herself enough to drive home.

Once she was back home, she curled up in her favorite chair, her trusty friend sitting at her feet. As she sat in the dark she stared out the window, and when it started to rain a short time later, she thought it only fitting. Reaching down next to the chair she picked up the basket she had been keeping all of Killian’s letters in and sorted them by date. Then one by one she read them over. Periodically she had to wipe her cheeks to keep the tears from dripping on to the paper, but finally she finished.

Taking the letters, she packaged them all together into a box. Feeling raw she also picked up the rose that had been given to her at the restaurant and put it in the pages of the first book that she pulled off of her bookshelf. Looking down, she thought it ironic that the book she unwittingly grabbed was none other than a book about waiting, Jane Austin’s _Persuasion_. Taking the book with the flower
pressed inside, she put them in the box and after sealing it, placed it in the back of her closet. After taking Rumple for a walk, she took a hot shower and resolved to focus on moments in her life that she could control, such as work, spending time with her dog and M&M’s bachelorette party, which she needed to plan. With a new determination, she went to bed.

Killian (2013)

As soon as he opened the box and saw not only the letter but the ring and chain laying on top of it, he knew it was going to be bad. Preparing himself for the worst, he opened the letter and as he was reading it, he sunk slowly to the ground.

I didn’t tell you how I ended up at the house? I rented it from Key Largo Rentals, a woman, named Marion, I believe. But Killian, I can’t do this any longer. Please don’t write me anymore. Don’t try to find me. I need you to let me go. I need you, to let me, let you go. Goodbye Killian. Thank you for the beautiful memories. The most important thing for me is that you find someone to love. Find someone to share your life, Killian. My wish is for you to be happy.

Dropping his arms, he wanted to hit something, to yell at someone, but he did nothing. He sat and mourned for what could have been but will never be. For what he wanted but could not have. He sat in the same place long into the night, watching as darkness descended around him, feeling the loss and embracing the pain. He sat there until he noticed a wet nose pressing into his side, encouraging him to stand up. Finally, with some persuasion, he slowly stood up and walked into the house and for the first time in a long time, numbed the pain with rum.

The next morning, he woke hoping the day before had been a dream but then seeing the letter again he realized that it had all been true. Wondering why he hadn’t shown up. What he could do to change what happened and writing her a letter explaining asking her to give them another chance. Once he was finished he put it in the post box and hoping it would help him feel human again, took a shower and tried to get on with his life without Emma.

Chapter End Notes

Well? Thoughts? Shed any tears? Stay tuned for Chapter 13 to see what’s in store for these two. Their journey is not over by any means. Let me know what you think. I love reading your words, even if you yell at me a little this week;/-
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Emma and Killian attempt to deal with the loss of each other and fate is a funny thing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Emma (2015)

Taking her new resolution to heart, to focus on things she could control, Emma put her emotions over Killian in a box and vowed to keep it closed. She also dove into preparations for M&M's bachelorette party as well as helping her with the last minute preparations for her wedding, which was happening on Valentine's Day. "Flowers, cake, dresses, candles, guests, clergyman, I think that's everything M&M. Now get over here to your bachelorette party. It's bad form for the guest of honor to be the last to arrive." Hanging up the phone she turned to the rest of the group, "She said she'd be over in a few minutes."

"Good, I'm starving," quipped Regina.

"You're always hungry these days, Regina." commented Ariel.

"What do you expect, Ariel, I'm eating for three these days."

Ruby and Belle, hummed in agreement, "She's got you there, Ariel.

Before Ariel could say anything else, there was a knock on the door and Rumple ran to answer it by jumping up on the handle so that the door popped open. Thankfully, it was the guest of honor and Emma ran and pulled her into the noisy room. "It's about time you got here."

Ruby took M&M's hand and led her to the sofa, where Ariel stood with a glass of whiskey. "Here, thought you might need this."

Taking the glass, M&M downed it in one shot, "Thanks, I'm a bit scattered aren't I?"

The women all laughed and several murmurs of that's putting it lightly could be heard. Emma had called a friend who catered small parties and there was a smorgasbord of treats waiting for them to try. Everyone filled their plates and sitting around caught up on the happenings in each person's life. M&M smiled over her plate at Regina, who had eaten only a small amount but was sitting back massaging her stomach, just under her ribs, "Are you feeling ok, Regina."

Regina grimaced and then laughed softly, "I'd be feeling fine if the babies didn't take up so much space! I find that I can't eat very much at one time and right now baby A, has its little feet tucked under my ribs and it hurts!"

Everyone groaned in sympathy and smiling Ariel announced, "So I guess this is a good time to tell you all that I'm pregnant too! But don't worry, it's only one!"

There were congratulations all around and Ariel and Regina got involved in a conversation about
morning sickness, that apparently can happen at any time or all the time, having to go to the bathroom at all hours and fatigue. The others made the appropriate overtures but all knew that since they had never been pregnant they truly would not be able to understand.

When everyone was finished eating, Ruby gave M&M a couple of packages, "Here, a little something for the bride to be. The flat box is from all of us and the bag," she paused dramatically, "is from yours truly," then she giggled.

Emma looked at her sister, "Oh, dear sis. Sounds like that might be something David will enjoy." Ruby was nodding affirmatively the entire time.

M&M picked up the gift from Ruby, I think I'll open this one first." Peeling aside tissue paper, she peered inside the bag, "Ok, I know what to do with these," and she pulled out a pair of pink fuzzy hand cuffs. "Just David's color too." Sorting through the rest of the bag, she pulled out several bottles of massage oils. Turning them over, she read the labels, "Edible?" And then she looked over at Ruby, who nodded and winked. Also included were matching G-strings, that got a "These look uncomfortable" comment and something that vibrates, which she refused to take out of the bag. Standing up she hugged Ruby, "Thank you Rubs. David will appreciate these."

"Who do you think suggested I buy them?" She said with a sly smile.

M&M's mouth dropped open, "Really?"

Ruby smirked, "No, but I'm sure he would have if he'd thought of it. You'll thank me when you get back from your honeymoon. And by the way, the strawberry is best and the chocolate, while tasty, makes a mess!"

The entire time she was talking M&M sat there in shock, "Well, that's good to know," she finally answered. Then she looked around the room at Ariel, Belle and Regina, who all sat with twinkling eyes and lips twitching from fighting to keep from breaking into smiles. "Oh, you guys."

Realizing that her sister was a little embarrassed, Emma picked up the long gift and handed it to her. "See what this one is. It's from all of us but Belle picked it out."

"Now what do we have here?" she whispered before unwrapping the beautiful box. Pulling back the tissue paper, there were lots of oohs and ahs when she held up a white satin lingerie set. The gown was fitted at the bodice with double spaghetti straps and a high waist that ended in a long flowing skirt. The accompanying robe had long gossamer sleeves, that closed with a single rosette at the waist. "This is gorgeous. Thank you so much," she gushed.

Everyone was quick to feel of the soft fabric and comment on Belle's excellent taste. The rest of the evening progressed uneventfully with a delicious chocolate layer cake, champagne and a slide show presentation that Regina had put together. It was beautifully done with pictures she had gathered from David's early days on the police force, combined with pictures Emma had shared of M&M. The pictures progressed until finally the one Emma had been waiting for of David in his tights.

"Wow, look sis. Now you have a gown worthy of Snow White to go with David's Prince Charming outfit," which of course was met with laughter.

The ending was beautiful as it showed their engagement pictures and all set to the song, Can't Help Falling in Love with You. At last it was time to say goodnight, with promises of being there early for the wedding to provide moral support to the nervous bride to be.

Killian (2013)
It had been almost six weeks since the fateful day that Emma had walked out of his life and Killian still felt her absence. He was currently sitting at his desk in the NeverLand Adventures offices organizing the many papers he had haphazardly tossed there over the past few weeks while he felt like his life was slowly falling apart. It had become habit to toss them there because he was out of sorts and didn't feel like muddling through any mundane tasks, all over a beautiful blonde princess who lived in some other realm and could never be his.

He was not looking forward to having Tink come bounding in here all happy over her new romance with one of his best mates. He found it ironic that over the past year that out of his tag group of friends, he had felt settled into something special while he was pursuing the lady Swan and now he was the odd man out. Liam was happy with Elsa, Wendy and Eddie had become a couple and Tink and John had been making eyes at each other since their initial meeting back in January. Looking down at the pile after pile of papers on his desk, he felt the ire at the situation rise up inside him, and finally swept his hand across his desk knocking the papers all over the room. His timing couldn’t have been worse as it happened just as the door opened and in walked Tink.

Standing there with her mouth agape, Tink looked at him and then down at the floor where the forms were settling.

"Finally!" Sitting down on an extra chair, she crossed her arms over her chest. "Talk, now!"

Killian just looked at her, “There's bloody nothing to talk about.”

“Oh come on, Killian, stop being a horse's arse. You've listened to me talk about my relationships, or lack thereof, over the last 18 months, it's only fitting that I listen to you. You've been an arse to work with and we're all tired of it.”

Killian reached up and scratched behind his ear, "Sorry luv, it's nothing,” and then he winked, thinking a little charm might save him a lecture.

Tink blew air through her lips and stared at him. “Please, you've lost weight. You're looking pale and gaunt. Your hair is too long and your facial hair has gone past scruff straight to beard. And let's not talk about the fact that you're drinking way too much rum.”

Killian tried to pull off a cocky smile as he said, "Gaunt? I'll have you know I am still devilishly handsome.”

Groaning in frustration, Tink threw her hands up in the air. "I give up, but you need to talk to someone and if it's not me, talk to Liam.”

She picked up a pile of the forms off of the floor and tossed them on the desk. "Just remember all of the decisions for the new excursions need to be made soon, spring break is coming and well…. " And leaving that hanging between them, she walked out of the office and shut the door a bit harder than necessary.

Sitting there for a minute, Killian looked around and then leaned over to pull open the bottom drawer and grab his emergency flask. As he started to take a drink he thought about what Tink had said. He also thought about his mum and father and slowly put the lid back on, tossed it in the drawer and slammed it. "Bugger that!” He needed speed!

Pushing back his chair so hard that it bounced off the wall, he stormed through the door and on the way out took the keys that Tink had held up. Looking down at them, he shook his head. “Not the Schwan, Tink, the Eala.” And he was out the door before she could ask any questions.
The *Eala*, a 28-foot powerboat, was NeverLand's newest acquisition, which was to be used for another new excursion that was planned for during the spring break season, that of parasailing. The art of being attached to a parachute with a harness and pulled by a boat so that you are flying above the water. Once the ride is completed, the person lands safely in the warm ocean. The *Eala* was a fast little boat that could top out at 80 to 90 knots, and while Killian might not risk that speed on a normal basis, speed was what he required now. He was hoping the speed would blow his frustrations away, at least for a little while. Hopping on board, he untied the lines, and started the engine. Once he was out of the Bay, he pushed the throttle wide open and flew over the waves as if the very hounds of hell themselves were on his heels.

**Emma (2015)**

The morning of the wedding arrived and Emma was happy to see sun shining through her windows. She hadn't wanted anything to mar the day that her sister was marrying her true love. Rousing herself from the warmth of her bed, she jumped in the shower and took Rumple outside for a brief morning walk. Her hair in curlers, she picked up her garment bag containing her dress and shoes and leaving the apartment walked next door. Mary Margaret was running around the apartment as if she were the energizer bunny without her head but with a little redirection, Emma had her and all of her necessary garments packed up and they were on their way to the church with a few minutes to spare.

The church was a small one room chapel up on Fort Lauderdale Beach that was built of grey stones, with a center steeple and stained glass windows, that allowed the sun to shine through creating a romantic atmosphere of many colors. Pews made of mahogany, lined both sides of a center aisle leading up to a set of stairs that directed one to a podium. M&M and Emma stood just inside the rear doors and looked around at the beautiful decorations. Fan shaped candelabras lined the front of the church where they ended in heart shaped ones at an arch in the center where M&M and David would be married.

Pedestals of red flowers sat in bunches on each end of the candelabras tied with large white bows. The flowers were woven around the archway and the bows were tied to every other pew. "Emma, look. It's beautiful."

Emma took her sister's hand and squeezing lightly agreed, "It is. Ready to get married?"

"Let's do it." They walked together down the center aisle to the bridal dressing room where a woman was waiting to do their makeup and hair.

Sending M&M to put on her dress, Emma quickly slipped on hers and admired the simple lines of the long red chiffon dress, with the scooped neckline and zippered back. Taking her curlers out, she combed her fingers through her hair until loose waves fell down her back. Once she was satisfied, she put one side back in a clip with small flowers that matched her dress perfectly. As she was clipping on her earrings with the matching bracelet and a gold necklace, M&M stepped out from behind the dressing area.

As she stepped out the door opened and Ruby and Ariel walked in, "Oh M&M, you look beautiful," Ruby remarked. "Do you have everything?"

M&M went through her list, "Something new, my dress. Something old, these pearls, something borrowed, this bracelet from Emma. What am I forgetting?"

Ruby and Ariel proclaimed, "Something blue," and held up a blue garter before giving it to her to slide onto her leg. "Now you're ready."
Mary Margaret and Emma stood in front of a long mirror and looked at their reflections while memories of their parents played out in their minds. Smiling at each other, they communicated without speaking, and then heard the music start. Picking up their bouquets they moved toward the aisle to begin the walk toward where David waited for his bride.

After the wedding there was a reception at a hall not far away. Everyone sat down to a nice meal and the champagne flowed freely. Emma met people from M&M’s work, David's days on the police force as well as all the people they worked with at the hospital. There was even a friend of David's from his childhood, who was a scuba instructor nearby. Mary Margaret got her dream wedding and even though Emma was happy for her sister, and proud of herself for not dwelling on things that weren’t possible, she couldn't help but think about ‘what if’ things had been different. Once David and her sister left on their honeymoon, Emma stayed a while longer and then went home to her empty apartment and Rumple.

**Killian (2013)**

Over the course of the next few months, Killian tried to make sense out of what he felt. He went to work, went home, spent time with the dog and sometimes with his friends but he never felt that he was whole. Even when the new excursions were added to his business and it grew exponentially, he still found himself looking for answers to questions that he knew could never be answered. As one month ended and another had begun, he continued to pour out his feelings of love and frustration in letters and leaving them in the post box, always hoping that Emma would change her mind and one day the flag would be down and his world would be right again. That didn’t happen and as time went on his post box became full of unanswered letters. Finally, in June, he remembered that Emma would be looking for a rental property soon, and he made up his mind about what he needed to do. He took the letters that had gone unopened out of the post box and along with all the ones that she had written him before, he packed them in to a cardboard box, sealed it and placed it in the back of the small attic. Since his father had left him his house, Killian had his furniture packed and sent to storage. Remembering what Emma had told him about how she ended up in the beach house, he took the keys to the Key Largo Rental Agency and gave them to Marion, obtaining her promise that she would rent the house to no one but Emma Swan. After that was over he drove back to the beach for a last walk through and waited down on the beach for Liam.

Liam found Killian exactly where he expected to, standing on the sand, Rumple at his side, looking out over the water. "What are you thinking about brother?"

Killian turned toward Liam, the wind blowing his longer hair, across his forehead, "Too many thoughts to put them into words." Then he looked closely at Liam, "What happened?"

Liam squinted his eyes, "What do you mean, what happened?" Not saying a thing, Killian just lifted a brow until Liam opened his mouth again, "Elsa and I won't be seeing each other for a while, that's all."

"That's all? What did you do?"

"What did I do? Why do you assume it was me?" Groused Liam, "And it's not permanent, it's just for a year. She's going to Europe to take a specialization course or something like that. Once she said she was leaving in a few weeks, I," then he hesitated and rubbed the back of his neck, "checked out, I guess you could say."

Taking a deep breath, Killian remarked, "Sorry to hear that. I know you care about her, but at least you can stay in touch, which is more than I have."

"Come on Killian, I bared my soul, it's your turn. What's been going on with you? You've been a
"bigger arse than usual."

"So Tink told me in no uncertain terms a while back, but if I tell you, you might feel the need to send me away."

He stopped and looked back out over the water, and after sighing with all weight of his unhappiness weighing on his shoulders, answered, "Maybe if I show you instead. Come with me." He then led Liam up the beach to the path and into the house.

Walking inside a basically empty home, Liam looked around at the boxes that they would be loading, and then looked back at his brother questioningly.

Killian went straight to one of the boxes left open and pulled out a hardback book. "Read this, then I'll try to explain." And handing him the book, he walked back to the windows that looked out over the water.

Taking the book, Liam looked at the title, *My Life's Works by Brennan Jones*. “This is the book you were telling me about? But how did you get it?” And then he looked inside and saw, *published June 2014*, “Killian? You need to explain.”

Killian turned back to look at Liam.” I'm not sure I can explain, but I'll try.”

He told Liam about Emma and how when he received her first letter, it had mentioned the paw prints that weren't there until Rumple appeared and walked through the paint. He explained about meeting her at her birthday party and how he fell in love with her. He also explained that they had made plans to have dinner together at a specific point in her time. But for some reason he hadn't shown up and now she had given up and asked him not to contact her again.

Taking a deep breath, he then went on to explain how she had given him the book, after their father had died, as somehow she had known how he had felt. How he had felt that he never lived up to his father's expectations, but knew that the book would give him some peace.

"But now Liam, she's gone and I have to respect her wishes and try to move on." Then quickly changing the subject he suggested they finish loading the truck so he could leave the beach house behind.

Liam took a few minutes to absorb what Killian had said, but seeing how difficult the situation was for his brother to talk about, he followed his wishes, and putting the book back into the box, carried it and several others to the truck.

“I'm sorry it didn't work out Killian, but fate is a funny thing so you never know.”

"We're a pair aren't we Liam?” He said as he walked by with another load. “Now quit your meddling and get your arse in gear and help me get the boxes loaded.

Working together they were able to load up both trucks. Killian sent Liam on ahead, telling him, he wanted to make sure they had gotten everything. While that was partially true, it wasn't the entire truth. He did walk through the house, that he loved so much, but he also took one last look inside the postbox and touched the initials he had lovingly carved in the trunk of the magnolia tree.

"Can one's fate be changed Swan? I didn't think so until you. I thought you had changed mine, or maybe I just wished it were so."

As he drove away from the house for the last time, Rumple stared out the window, appearing to be deep in thought.
Days passed in a blur as Emma tried to stay as busy as possible. She found working herself to exhaustion, going home and taking Rumple out and pushing him to run farther each day were the only way she made it through without holding a 'pity party' as M&M called them. She hadn't touched the box with the letters from Killian, but she knew they were there. A few times she had even gone as far as standing in the door of her closet, before finding the strength to push the temptation aside. Eventually as one month turned into the next, she developed a routine where life was bearable.

Regina had finally delivered her twins, via emergency C-section, a few weeks ago and today was the day that she and M&M were going to meet the new babies. Hearing a knock at the door, Emma went to let her sister in before Rumple could beat her. "It's about time," she scolded her sister. "I thought you were supposed to be here an hour ago. What have you been doing?"

M&M didn't say anything, but looked a bit embarrassed, "Well."

"Ah, I see. So the question is not what, but who?" Then she giggled. "Let's go."

Rumple made to follow them out the door and when he was told no, tucked his tail and went to lay down.

M&M laughed at him, "Boy, he's an expert with the guilt, isn't he?"

They chatted on the way to Regina and Robin's and Mary Margaret broke the news that she and David were going to start looking for a house. Emma wasn't surprised as David had moved next door with M&M, and it was a tight fit.

Arriving at the Mills-Hood residence, they discovered they would have some time alone to visit with the new additions for which they were thankful. A baby for each was the way they looked at it. Robin opened the door looking tired and ushered them inside to where Regina was sitting, propped in a recliner, two bassinetts close by. As Regina looked up to welcome them, Roland came barreling around the corner, "Dr. Emma! Dr. Emma! Come see my new babies." He took her by the hand and pulled her further into the room.

M&M handed Regina the gifts they had brought as Emma followed Roland. The first bassinet they came to had pink ruffles everywhere, "See Dr. Emma, this is my baby, Rosie." Emma looked down at the sleeping baby, and saw pink chubby cheeks just begging to be pinched and a full head of dark hair. Her little bow mouth was moving in her sleep, as if she were having a dream.

Once she had made the appropriate amount of comments about baby Rosie, he pulled her over to the other bassinet, which appropriately enough was covered in blue lace. Roland pointed inside. "And this is Robby. He's a boy, like me" and he pointed his little finger at his chest.

Emma looked down inside the bed at little Robby, "Thank you for introducing me, Roland. They are very cute. Do you like your new brother and sister?"

Roland stood there for a few minutes, tapping his finger on his chin as if he was trying to come up with just the perfect answer, "Well, most of the time, they sleep so that is ok but then sometimes they can get very noisy."

The adults made the appropriate comments and Emma gave him a gift bag with some small Lego kits that they had brought. He shouted thank you and took off with his loot, ostensibly to put them together. Emma looked over at M&M, who was already picking up baby Rosie and glad she didn't have to wait any longer, picked up Robby. The ladies spent an enjoyable hour loving on the sweet
smelling infants and hearing about the every two to three hour feeding schedule, before they passed a baby to each parent, and said their goodbyes with promises of future visits.

Driving back to the apartment complex, Emma kept up a steady stream of conversation because she didn’t want to give her sister a chance to ask any questions that she wasn’t prepared to answer. Several times M&M gave her a questioning look, because she knew exactly what was happening, but the conversation stayed away from anything too serious. Once back home, they took advantage of the warm temperatures and no work and put on their bikinis for a little sun time. Music, the smell of coconut and cold lemonade, helped the day drift along.

Killian (2014)

Summer sped into fall, then winter and before he realized it, 2014 was upon them. He had been living in his father's, now his, home for over six months and it had been a year since he had heard anything from Emma. It was late January and he was waiting for Liam to get his arse over as they were going to go through the letters, his parents had written each other. Emotionally he knew it might be a difficult day but he wasn’t sure he would ever truly be ready as every time he had tried in the past, the feelings of pure sadness had been too much to bear.

Liam arrived looking happy and rested from his vacation abroad to visit the lovely Elsa and after a few brotherly bantering moments they settled in to read the letters. Once they actually had them separated by date, it appeared that his father had written the first letter to Anna, not long after she had left him to go back to England and she had answered. Killian looked up from the letter that he was reading, "Can you believe all this?"

Liam looked up to answer, "I know. They wasted so much time. If Elsa decided that she wanted to stay in Europe and practice I'd move heaven and earth to be with her."

Killian smirked, "Like that is it?"

Liam looked at his brother, "Yes it is. When she comes back to the States in July, I'm going to beg her to marry me"

"That's bloody amazing Liam. I just wish it was that easy."

"Killian, I've always believed that a man unwilling to fight for what he wants, deserves what he gets. Think about that, will you?"

Killian nodded his head in agreement before he pulled one of the letters from the pile, “Here’s the letter dad wrote to mum that you were telling me about.”

My dearest Anna,

I love you, I always have. Being separated from you and Killian has been one of my life's greatest regrets. I've always felt that there would be time to do all that I wanted but, while it has taken me a while, I am finally realizing that life doesn't work like that. Sometimes you just have to take the moments and hope all else falls into place.

You always said you were my Penelope and would wait for me to finish what I needed to finish but Anna, I'm tired of there being an ocean between us. It's taken me too long to realize that home is not what you own but what owns you. And Anna, you own me. You own my heart, my body and my soul. You Anna, are my home. I'll be there soon. Wait for me Anna.

All my love,
After Liam finished reading the letter, Killian sat quietly thinking about his father’s words of love for his mother. “I never would have thought he was capable of that much feeling, without reading it with my own eyes.” he said quietly.

Killian then picked up a letter that had been sitting in front of him, “Listen to this, Liam. It’s mom’s letter to him, in response, I believe, but it was never mailed. Based on the date, I think it must have been right when she discovered she was ill.”

Dear Brennan,

Your letter filled my heart with such joy. I have waited years for you to feel that I am enough, that our boys are enough, it's truly an amazing feeling. We have wasted so much time that we can never get back, but we are still young and I look forward to spending the rest of my days with you by my side.

I've been feeling tired lately but your letter rejuvenated my soul. There is so much I want to share, about me, about Killian and Liam. Now we can, we can finally be the family we were meant to be. I will be here Brennan. Your Penelope will be here.

Yours,

Anna

After they completed reading all of the letters, Killian wasn’t sure what to do with them, but hoping Liam might have an idea, he asked, "Any ideas for what to do with these letters?"

"I don't know. Pack them back up for now I guess. Maybe someday we'll have another idea.”

They kept the letters in chronological order, just in case they wanted to read them again and put them in a few boxes. Leaving them sitting on the dining room table, Killian thought back on the letters he had exchanged with his Swan, but before his thoughts became too melancholy, he pushed them away, and went with Liam to have a bite to eat. They walked into a sports bar that was very loud as the local basketball team, the Miami Heat were playing the New York Knicks. Killian and Liam sat in the back, away from the crowd, and enjoyed their meal.

Emma (2016)

Emma's days looked the same. Work, home, and spending time with friends. Same old routine, every day, day in and day out. She wasn't miserable really, but she wasn't truly happy either. She described herself as existing, or alright, or even ok, which of course wasn't an appropriate way to be, at least according to the friends she surrounded herself with on a daily basis. Especially newly engaged Ruby, who thought everyone should be as happy as she was. She had even taken it upon herself to set her up on a blind date with one of Victor's friends. She had spent the evening wishing she were at home in her sweats hanging with her dog. In fact, thinking back on the experience, she couldn't remember his first name. All she really remembered about him was that his last name was Walsh, and he reminded her of a monkey for some reason, maybe the shaggy brown hair, she wasn't sure.

Reflecting back over the past year, she realized it had been a busy one for her friends. Her sister and David had gotten married, moved into a house they were remodeling and in another six months or so she was going to be an aunt. Regina and Robin had Roland, Rosie and Robby and surprisingly
Regina had even cut back on her time at the hospital, even though she had, Colette, her full time nanny. Eric and Ariel had their baby girl to keep them busy and Ashley was happy with Thomas.

And she couldn't forget Belle, who had just recently taken over M&M's lease now that they were no longer living there, and whom she hoped to get to walk Rumple for her on the days she worked late. Belle, who had lost her father a while back, was dating August Booth. And while she hadn't seen them together yet, Ruby said he was treating their friend well and they looked “just adorable” together and Emma had to agree, he had always seemed to be a really nice guy and was quite pleasing to the eyes. Asking about such a favor is why she found herself knocking on Belle's door late one evening in early February, Rumple sitting nicely at her side.

Belle opened the door, phone in hand and a huge smile on her face. She motioned Emma and Rumple inside and from the conversation Emma gathered that Belle was thanking August, for a huge bouquet of flowers that had been delivered to the library that day. Hanging up, she greeted Emma but then before they could continue with any civilized conversation, she had to bend over to properly greet Rumple. He had been standing next to her, tail wagging madly, and what looked like a huge smile on his face, waiting for a little rub. As Belle was making him so happy, he had fallen on the ground and was letting her scratch his belly. Shaking her head, Emma thought, oh, the life of a dog, a little scratch and rub and life was good.

"Emma, so nice to see you and your dashing friend here. Excuse the mess."

"Thank you so much for doing this for me, Belle. Some days get really long at the hospital and knowing he doesn't have to hold it, if you know what I mean, is a big relief"

"No problem. He's a sweetheart so I don't mind picking up his messes." And then she scratched his ears which he loved so much, the look on his face almost euphoric.

Emma told Belle about Rumple's little idiosyncrasies when out with him and then they walked back home and she showed Belle where his leash, food, treats and pooper scooper and bags were kept. With another pat goodbye, Belle left them and Emma sat down to her solitary meal, once again.

Killian (2014)

Over the next few days, every time Killian walked by the open box of letters, he would bring one or more out and read over the words. The love between his parents, jumped off of the page and made him rethink fate and destiny and whether or not it could be changed. He also spent time thinking about everything that Liam had said to him, especially the comment ‘a man unwilling to fight for what he wants, deserves what he gets' and then he thought about what his mother had said in her letter to him.

“……….. Fate chose a different path for us and now it is time for you to follow yours. Killian, find your path. Make it one of love and light and happiness. Find that special woman to love and when you find her, hold on to her with all you have. Love is precious and you, my son, have such an immense capacity for it. My wish is that when you find her, you will know. ”

Killian knew what he wanted but he just didn’t know how to get it. Feeling like he needed to talk to Liam, he picked up his cell and hit Liam’s name. As he waited for his brother to answer, he thought maybe they could get together for dinner, and see if his older brother had any words of wisdom for him. Disappointed that he didn’t answer, he left a message, and then sent a quick text as well and then took his cup of coffee to the patio to think.
Emma was sitting with Mary Margaret in the architectural firm of *Innovative Designs* waiting for their early appointment. Looking over at her sister she smiled, "You nervous?"

M&M glanced at her out of the side of her eyes, "Not nervous, really. Just anxious, I guess. I really hope this architect has the same vision for the house that I do."

"Well, it is your house and if he doesn't then you can always go elsewhere. Tell me again, how you selected this architect?"

"He’s a friend of David’s from when they were kids. They ran into each other a few weeks back and here we are," M&M responded. "You forget dear sister that we don’t have all the time in the world. In six months or so there will be someone taking up my time” and she stopped to rub her hand back and forth over her still flat stomach, “And I don’t want to be dealing with a new baby and remodeling a house at the same time. Is it too much to ask that everything be done before the baby comes?"

"No of course not sis. You’ll get there. Have some faith." And she reached over and gave her sister’s hand a squeeze.

Squeezing Emma's hand back, she said, "Thanks Em, I'm so glad you took the job at Bayside a couple years ago."

"Me too," said Emma, and just for a minute she had the strangest feeling. Like today was important, more so than just being Valentine’s Day. "So what are you and David doing this Valentine’s Day? It seems that there’s always something momentous happening. In 2014 he proposed. In 2015, you got married in a romantic candlelight ceremony. What will 2016’s momentous occasion be?"

M&M just looked at her, a sweet smile on her face, "He's taking me on a sunset cruise. Didn’t Graham take you on one of those a few years ago?"

Emma shook her head, "Yes, he had me meet him on a boat for dinner a while back. I’m sure it will be very romantic."

Mary Margaret turned to Emma, "So are you doing anything special tonight?"

Emma smirked, "Let’s see. I bought Rumple a bone that is shaped like a heart. I thought we’d take a nice walk by the water and settle down to a good movie after that.”

Mary Margaret rolled her eyes, "Are you ever going to move on?"

Emma looked at her sister and thought carefully about what she wanted to say. "When I’m ready….. maybe. I just keep thinking it’s not the right time."

Then she paused for a minute, “I don’t know why I feel that way, but something holds me back every time I think of moving on.”

Mary Margaret noticed a faraway look in Emma's eyes. "What is it? Is Killian still in your heart?"

Emma lifted her lips in a semblance of a smile "I think a part of my heart will always belong to Killian, but that wasn’t meant to be and” but before she could say anymore the receptionist came and told them Liam was ready for them.

Walking next to Mary Margaret, they entered a conference room, where they were met by a man,
who was not altogether unattractive. "Mary," he said pulling her in for a hug, "It's so nice to see you again. Where's David?"

Mary Margaret returned his hug, "Thanks for making time for me today. David had a meeting so I brought my sister, Emma. Emma this is Liam. Liam, my sister Emma."

Shaking his hand, Emma murmured, "It’s nice to meet you." Then as she let his hand go felt something like a shiver pass across her skin. Wondering where that came from, she gave herself a gentle shake and quickly moved aside to one of the chairs around the table.

Liam quickly took control of the meeting, pulling out chairs for the women and then moving around the table to take a seat across from them. He unfurled the plans that he had drawn up for the changes that M&M wanted and started pointing them out to her. It was obvious to Emma that he was giving M&M everything she wanted as the smile on her face got wider and wider with each uncovered secret. Emma found herself lost in her thoughts, barely paying attention until she heard M&M say, "Emma, can you think of anything that I forgot to ask?"

Pulling herself out of the fog she was in, she shook her head, "No, I think you covered everything you told me you wanted to cover," not really knowing if that were true since she hadn't been listening and from the glint in Liam's eye she thought he knew she hadn't been listening as when she looked up at him as she finished her sentence, he winked. Emma felt herself blush and looked down to gather her belongings. Standing, she got her first look around the room and what she saw caused her heart rate to race inside her chest. As if in a trance she moved closer to it until she was able to reach up and touch the frame, "It can't be," she said softly. But there was no denying it, in front of her was a hand drawn picture of the house that she would forever consider ‘their’ house.

"This picture," she whispered as she turned to Liam, "Who drew it?"

**Killian (2014)**

Watching Rumple run through the grass while he was sitting on the patio enjoying coffee, Killian let himself think back over the letter exchanges he had with Emma and how real that relationship had seemed to him. As he took a sip, his phone vibrated and he looked down to see that Liam had responded. Hoping he now had a dinner companion, he was disappointed to read; *Wanker, it’s Valentine’s Day and I plan to be spending the evening with my lady, even though she’s in another country. Sorry.* Muttering to himself about what a sorry lot his life had become for him to be sitting at home alone on a day meant for lovers, he stopped a minute, "Today is Valentine’s Day 2014. Something happened today, in Emma’s time, that brought her to me. Can I, instead, go to her? Can I choose my destiny?" Knowing that he had to try to picked up the keys, and ran out to the SUV, before Rumple knew what was happening.

**Emma (2016)**

Liam moved to stand behind her, "My brother, Killian drew this picture."

Hearing Killian’s name from his brother’s lips caused her breath to catch in her throat. *Talk about fate*, Emma thought as she reached out to run her finger along the outline of the mailbox, as if she were trying to hold onto something before it slipped away. Turning toward him, "Do you know how I can get in touch with him?" she asked before her eyes were drawn back to the picture.

She heard him sigh softly, "Oh, you don't know?"

There was such sadness in his voice, that her eyes were pulled back to his face, and fear caused her stomach to clench, but she asked anyway, “Don’t know what?”
His face showed great sorrow at the news he had to share, and opening his mouth he said, "I'm so sorry to have to tell you," and then he stopped, and looked away a moment clenching his jaw, before bringing his gaze back to her and continuing, "Killian died."

Emma felt her knees go weak and found herself taking hold of Liam’s arm to remain upright.

"Killian," and then she hesitated for a brief moment, "is dead?" while inside she was shattering to pieces, "When?"

Liam placed his hand on top of hers, "An accident on Biscayne Blvd, two years ago today actually. He was crossing the street when he was hit by a bus. He never regained consciousness."

Emma’s mind raced as she connected the dots of why she had felt such loss for the John Doe and how fate had chosen to link her with Killian. "It was him." She whispered.

“I’m sorry, did you know Killian?"

Looking up at Liam, she repeated, "It was him," and then turning to Mary Margaret, she took her hand and squeezed it as she said, "I’ll call you later," while running out of the office. Taking the stairs down as quickly as possible, she jumped in the bug, pointing it toward the beach house, hoping and praying that she would not be too late to change fate.

Killian (2014)

Traffic was light making the drive fairly easy, allowing his memories to play over and over again. From the very first letter and then of getting to know her, of hearing about her day and seeing the city with her even though they weren’t truly together. Everything with Emma Swan had been more real than any time he had spent with other women, ever. Emma was the woman he wanted and he couldn’t believe that there wasn’t a way for them to be together. When he had 'met' her in 2012, at her party, he had been scared to make his move. Scared that by telling her what was happening, she would think he was nuts and walk away. She kissed him and the connection had been real, but then, she slipped through his fingers anyway. This time, he was going to take what fate had given him, and change his destiny. He was going to make his move. This time Emma Swan would be his.

Emma (2016)

The traffic was sparse which was unusual for this time of day but she didn’t complain, and said a silent thanks to whoever was watching over her. She was sailing right along until just as the road ended at US 1 and traffic stopped. The cars were bumper to bumper for as far as she could see, and she couldn’t see any reason, nor could she hear any sirens signaling a wreck. She was tempted to drive on the shoulder but was afraid the bug wouldn’t make it or she would get stuck behind whatever was causing the delay. After a few minutes, she found herself repeating, “come on, come on,” over and over again. She was worried that she would be too late, that she had missed him. Finally, after repeating the same few words what seemed like hundreds of times, the traffic started to move, slowly at first and then picking up speed and after passing a horrible traffic accident, she was driving the speed limit. Seeing the accident reminded her of the urgency of her journey and her new mantra became, “please let me get there in time, please, please,” over and over until finally she saw the palm trees and whipped the bug onto the sandy driveway causing the back end to slide precariously close to the trees lining the entrance. Pulling past the box, she stopped with such desperation, she popped the clutch and the car came to a startling halt, almost causing her to hit her head on the steering wheel. Gripping her notebook and pen she wrote;

Killian,
I met Liam and he had to tell me the awful news that you had died but his news connected so many dots that I pray this letter is not too late. I know why you missed our dinner on New Year’s Eve. It was you at Bayside that day two years ago. I knew I had felt a connection to that person, but I never knew why, and now I do. It was you.

Fate has given us an opportunity. Please don’t come to Bayside. Wait for me. It’s taken me too long to admit this but, I love you. Don’t try to find me. If you still care for me, Killian, then wait for me. Wait with me. Wait for me two years and then come to the beach house. I will be here waiting.

Emma

Once she finished the letter, she sprinted to the mailbox, put it inside, pushed up the flag and prayed.

Killian (2014)

Turning onto the drive to the beach house was bittersweet. Throwing the SUV into park, he hopped out and ran into the house. Not bothering to turn on any lights, as the sun was filtering through the windows, he walked directly to the attic, pulled down the ladder and climbed up. Taking the box with him into the kitchen he sat it on the counter and opened it. He could still smell her, or at least what he imagined was her and rifling through the letters he found the one he wanted. Pulling it out he skimmed it until he found the part he wanted,

…I and I was having lunch with my sister at Bayside Marketplace. While we were eating a man was hit by a car and killed right in front of me. I did everything I could to save him, but he died anyway. I never understood why, but I felt a connection to him and after I learned he was gone, I kept thinking, it can’t end just like that on Valentine’s Day. I thought about all of the people at home who love him and who will never see him again. And then I thought, what if there is no one.

“Bayside Marketplace,” he repeated to himself. “She's at Bayside Marketplace right now having lunch with her sister. I am going to find her and make her listen.” Killian ran toward his truck and took off for Miami. She hadn’t said what time she had witnessed the person being hit by the bus but he knew it was lunch time which meant that he had an opportunity of catching her. He hoped the traffic gods were smiling on him.

Killian parked his truck and hurried along the sidewalk on busy Biscayne Blvd. Across the street he could see people sitting on benches, but he couldn’t find Emma. The street was busy, cars, trucks and buses speeding along in both directions, and pedestrians everywhere. Feeling relief, he spotted two women sitting on a bench, one of them blonde, and he knew it was her. He could feel something about her reaching out to him. His sense of urgency increasing to get to her with every step he took, caused him to walk quicker, moving around slower walkers, trying not to knock them down in his haste. Realizing it was going to take too long to get all the way to the corner, he opted to cross to the median, directly across from her. Waiting for the traffic to thin, he prepared to step off the curb when he was jostled from behind, and heard, “sorry sir but you dropped this” and was handed the letter he had crammed in his back pocket. His destiny was his to change and the time was now.
So now you have all of the pieces to the story. Do you think destiny can be changed? Leave me your thoughts. Thanks for reading. Oh and come find me on tumblr if you have't already. I'm the flslp87 there too.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Will destiny be changed? Find out.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 14

Emma wasn’t sure how long she stood there hoping, praying and wishing for the flag to go down. She knew the chances of changing fate were slim but she also knew she had to try. Her heart was breaking as she reflected over how many times she had thought of him over the past year and wondering if there was something they could have done differently so they were in the same place at the same time. But they hadn’t. They had waited for the right time and place instead of learning from the mistakes made by his parents, that even though married and with children, their time to be together never came. Emma wanted to believe she was the Anne to Killian’s Frederick Wentworth from Persuasion, but hopes and wishes can’t keep you warm at night.

Feeling numb, she bowed her head, covered her face with both hands and sank down onto her knees. It was February and the weather felt cool, especially this close to the ocean. A steady breeze blew but since she was on the bluff it wasn’t too strong. Eventually she felt the cold seeping into the knees of her slacks as she had been kneeling there a while hoping to see the flag go down. Hoping that she hadn’t been too late, that he had gotten her letter and hadn’t gone to Bayside on that fateful day. Looking up she saw that the flag was still up, the letter was still there.

Emma wanted to scream and to cry. She felt the need to question fate, God and whoever else people believed controlled the universe. She knew she was trying to change the way things had been, but could that be the reason why they had been given this opportunity? To change his fate so he wasn’t in an accident. So he hadn’t died. To allow them to meet so he could capture her heart and teach her to dream. To teach her that life didn’t need to be so serious but that life was often made up of mysteries that required belief. To allow them to be each other’s family, each other’s future?

Standing slowly, she made her way to the beach path. It was overrun with branches and sea grass but she didn’t care. Pushing aside the long strands of grass, she stepped over and around and made her way down to the beach. As she moved toward the water, and the sound of the waves surrounded her, she pulled her hair up in a messy ponytail, and turned to walk down the beach. Away from the house that seemed to have magic. That had somehow been instrumental in bringing her letter to Killian on that day, so many years ago. Could fate be so cruel? Would fate be so cruel?

Emma knew that she had been standing and staring off into the horizon what felt like hours by the waning light. She knew that as the sun moved from the east toward the west, the sky would slowly lose its blue color and become many shades of gray before, without the building lights, pitch black. She felt lost and sad and heartbroken. Finally giving into the despair she was feeling, she broke down and sobbed. Sinking down onto the cold, hard sand she cried great wracking sobs, her heart full of pain.
She remained like that until the sobs became hiccups and slowly she was able to get herself under control. As she was wiping her hands across her face she thought she felt something or someone gently touch her shoulder. Lifting her head, she stood up and looked around. Nothing. Turning completely around in the other direction, again no one, nothing. And then she thought she heard her name, being carried by the wind, "EEEMMMMAAA SSWWAANN!"

"Just my imagination," she told herself, "My imagination or a hallucination."

But then she heard it again. "EEEMMMMAAA SSWWAANN!" She looked up the beach in the direction of the path and saw a silhouette. It was too dark to make out any features but someone was moving down the path, and she heard it again "EEEMMMMAAA SSWWAANN!" and her feet started moving, slowly at first until she was running toward the figure, knowing without a doubt it was him. Her feet were flying across the sand until she came in contact with a warm body and she felt strong arms wrap around her, holding her close and she was hearing, "I've got you, Swan, I've got you Swan," repeated, reverently over and over in her ear as she wept in his arms.

Pulling back, just a little, just enough to be able to take her lips in a kiss, a kiss meant to calm, meant to soothe, Killian poured everything he was feeling into it. He kissed her top lip, then sucked on her bottom one until she sighed softly, giving him the opening his tongue needed to sweep into her mouth. She was shaking in his arms and he held her tighter, trying to instill some of his warmth into her. Trying to assure her that he was real and holding her. Real and he never planned on letting her go.

Emma allowed herself to feel and enjoy the kiss for a few minutes and then she brought her hands to his shoulders and pushed him back, away from her, "You're real. I can touch you." Her voice shook with emotion as she ran her hands down his chest and then back up toward his shoulders, "I can feel you." Her hands ran up his shoulders, to his neck. Cupping his face, she looked up into his blue eyes, "How? How can this be?"

"You saved me, Emma," he whispered, "You saved me."

And after kissing her once more, he let her go and reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a wrinkled piece of paper. Holding it up so she could see it, he repeated his words from just a moment ago, "You saved me."

"I saved you? Oh Killian, you're here. Am I dreaming?"

Reaching up she touched his face again and said his name reverently, "Killian" and because he couldn't help himself he tightened his arms around her and leaned down to gently kiss her again. Killian smiled at her and because he didn't want to let her go, he wrapped his right arm around her and pulled her close to his body. With his left hand he held the letter up and read…

*It was you at Bayside that day two years ago. I knew I had felt a connection to that person, but I never knew why, and now I do. It was you. Fate has given us an opportunity. Please don't come to Bayside. Wait for me.*

As he was reading, Emma wrapped her left arm around his back, under his coat, leaned her head against his shoulder, burrowed her nose against his warm neck and ran her right hand up and down the planes of his chest.

When he was done, he said her name, "Emma?"

She lifted her head, looking up at him and smiling gently answered, "Killian?"
He cupped her face with his left hand, rubbing his thumb along her cheekbone and then down to the
dimple in her chin, and holding it, he said, "I love you Emma Swan. I love you so much." And then
he kissed her once more.

It was a kiss that could rival any romantic movie she had ever seen, surpass any fantasy she had ever
had, and something she knew would never become tiring. His lips moved over hers, sucking,
sipping and when she opened her mouth, he deepened the kiss, and her heart picked up speed, until
she felt that her knees were no longer going to hold her upright. She could hear Killian’s breath
come quicker and louder, just as hers was, and still they kissed. Their hands moving and touching,
cheeks, shoulders, necks and waists, until the need to breathe won out and they finally separated and
a memory of another kiss several years ago on her birthday came back to her. Lips that felt familiar
and arms holding her that made her feel as if she were home.

"It was you that I kissed at my birthday party all those years ago, wasn’t it?” And gazing into his
eyes, she knew it to be true, “Why didn’t you say something?”

"And have you think I was crazy? A part of me wishes I had but, I thought I was pushing it by even
coming that night. But when Rumple ran off and I ended up meeting Graham and finding out about
your party, I couldn't resist. I don't know what I was thinking, I just knew that I would have given
anything to have just a moment with you, and then to have had so many moments. To be able to talk
to you, hold you in my arms, and kiss you was more than I would have ever have hoped for. It’s
kept me going, Emma.”

“Why didn’t you say anything to me in my letters?”

“Liam asked me the same thing and the only answer I have is that I really wanted you to remember
me on your own. And you did. Our kiss all those years ago stayed with you as it stayed with me.”

And then he breathed her name, “Emma” before kissing her again, pulling her body tightly against
his, shutting out all sounds except the sound of their breaths in the air. Breaking apart, Emma smiled
up at him, "I wish you had. We've wasted so much time. But tell me about getting my letter, I
waited by the mailbox but never saw the flag go down."

Killian reached up and scratched behind his ear, "Sorry about that, love, that's partly my fault. But
you're shivering you're so cold, let's get you inside and warm and I promise, we can talk as much,
"and then he kissed her lips sweetly, "or as little as you want." And he led the way up the beach to
the path, holding her as close to his side as was possible.

They walked toward the path that would take them back up to the bluff and the house, bodies
pressed tightly together, both overjoyed that distance nor time no longer separated them. That finally
their destinies had merged and they could go forward, together. Their steps in sync as they walked
slowly, stopping often to kiss, as if not quite believing they were together.

Halting their progress, Emma looked up into Killian's beautiful blue eyes. Her breath caught in her
throat at the love that she could see staring back at her. "Killian?"

"Yes, love?" He wrapped both arms around her, bringing their bodies flush from the chest down.

Feeling a little anxious, she leaned her head against his chest, finding that she fit perfectly in the
curve where his neck met his shoulder. Taking a breath, she inhaled his scent, a combination of his
body wash, his unique smell and a hint of sweat. Was the sweat from fear of worrying that I
wouldn’t be here, she wondered. Relaxing into his embrace she reached out with the very tip of her
tongue and licked his neck. He shivered in response which gave her the courage to lean back and
look up at him. Hesitating for just a second, she stared at him. He gave her a smile of
encouragement, cocking his left brow, not rushing her, but giving her all the time she needed.

"I need to say something, Killian. I don't want you to have any doubts. I love you. I think I loved you before you gifted me with the tree, but I wasn't ready to admit it, you know?"

He gently kissed her lips, "Aye Swan, I do know."

Then he took her lips in a kiss that made her feel as if she was going to melt into a puddle right at their feet it was so hot. His lips covered hers with a light suction, pulling at her top lip, until she opened slightly and then he moved to her bottom lip. Running his tongue along her bottom lip, she slid her tongue up to meet his and taking advantage, he deepened the kiss. It went on until the need to breathe won out and a gentle shiver, spread throughout her body.

Leaning his forehead against hers, Killian whispered, "And I love you Swan. Now can we get in out of the bloody cold air before you catch a flu."

Emma couldn't help it, she giggled at his suggestion, and gave him a sassy smile, "Race you." And before he had time to register what she had said, she was off. Running through the sand, to the path, through the long strands of sea grass, past the mailbox to the walk, she ran. She could hear his steps behind her, but kept running, expecting him to catch her any moment, anticipating it actually.

~~~~~~~~

Killian watch Emma run away from him, but instead of feeling panic, as he had in the few dreams he had of her in his arms, this time he was feeling glee. Her long blonde hair trailing behind her and her giggle ringing in the air. He let her get several steps ahead before he took off after her. As they came to the path leading to the front door, he reached for her, wrapping her in both arms and tugging her back against his chest.

"Thought you could get away from me, did you?" Then he planted, small butterfly kisses from just behind her right earlobe down toward her shoulder. Feeling her shiver slightly, he lightly blew warm air into her ear. "Liked that, did you?"

~~~~~~~~

Emma felt like she had been enveloped by a large blanket, so warm was Killian surrounding her. A smile found its way to her lips, "Maybe, but why don't you try it again on the other side, just so I can decide?" Then she tilted her head to the right giving him full access to her left ear.

Killian hummed against her neck, "As you wish." Then he repeated the process on the left, leaving a trail of butterfly kisses from just below her left earlobe down toward her shoulder. Again she shivered. "Ready to go in?"

Turning in his arms, she wrapped hers around his neck, "After this."

He stood there silently looking down at her with that left eyebrow cocked. Slowly she leaned in until her lips met his. Their lips collided together in a cataclysmic rush until both were breathing heavily. Killian's left arm was wrapped around her back but she could feel his right hand moving up and down, from her shoulders then down to her hips, before pulling her hips closer still to his, leaving no question that he was just as affected as she was by their kisses. Pulling back slowly, she opened her eyes to see him gazing adoringly at her. Laying her right hand against his jaw she opened her mouth and …….sneezed.

"Oh, I’m so sorry."
Killian laughed lightly, "Let's get you inside out of this chilled air."

He turned her around and led her inside the house. Sitting her on the sofa, he unfolded a throw that had been laying along the back and wrapped it around her and then gently pulled off her shoes so she could tuck her legs under. Leaning over her with one hand on the back of the sofa and the other on the arm, he said, "I'm going to light a fire and then make you some hot chocolate." Emma opened her mouth to say something, but before she could get anything out, he finished, "I know, whipped cream and cinnamon."

She cupped his cheek, "You know me so well."

Staring deeply into her eyes, he whispered, "I do, but I plan to know you better." and he leaned down and kissed her lightly on the lips. Then reluctantly he turned away to add more logs to the grate to get a fire started to make sure his lady was warm and then he planned on giving her his undivided attention.

Emma watched Killian moving around the room, his movements fluid and at ease. She realized she felt perfect peace for the first time in a long while. While seeing him move around the room she couldn't believe her good fortune that he had waited for her and now she was here, with him. And the emotion in his eyes when their glances happened to meet was enough to make her heart flutter madly in her chest.

As he bent over tending the fire she couldn't help but admire how his trim backside filled out those black denim jeans, and how the light from the flames highlighted the auburn tint in his facial scruff. She noticed how the cotton from his shirt pulled taunt around his shoulders as he stretched to reach for a log and a sliver of skin showed between his shirt and his jeans. When he finished with the fire and turned, catching her staring, he winked as he walked into the kitchen, giving Emma an opportunity to appraise his assets from the front as he passed her by.

Carrying her mug into the living room, he stopped a moment to appreciate her beauty. The light from the fire cast a glow over her face, giving her cheeks a healthy color. Her hair created a golden halo around her face and her lips, pink and kissable. As he stood there admiring her, she turned toward him and raised her eyebrows in question.

"You're beautiful Emma. " He said walking towards the sofa where she sat.

"You're not so bad yourself."

When he reached her, he sat the cocoa on a side table and knelt down in front of her and gave her a roughish grin.

"I know." And she couldn't help but giggle. Taking her hand in his, he kissed her fingertips, "Thank you."

She frowned slightly, "For?"

"For saving me."

Emma leaned up and kissed him softly and leaned her forehead against his, "Thank you for waiting. For being my Frederick.

He reached for her lips and cupping the back of her head, kissed her with all the emotions he was feeling. He wasn't sure how much more he could handle but keeping his good intentions in mind, he broke the kiss and backed up. Reaching for the cocoa he noticed the whipped cream was starting to melt and handing it to her, commented, "I hope it's not cold."
She took a sip getting some of the white confection on her upper lip and before she could say anything he kissed it off. She dimpled, "What was that for?"

He did it again, "Do I need a reason?" And she shook her head no. "Good, because I plan on doing it, quite often, however that first one was to taste the cocoa you had on your lip. The second one and this one," he said kissing her again, "Are because I can. Problem with that?"

She kissed him, "Definitely" and she kissed him again, "Not. Do you?"

Killian climbed behind her on the sofa and pulling her back against his front, settled the throw around them. Her head fit perfectly against his shoulder so as he breathed, his breath ruffled her hair, "So tell me, how you figured it out.

Emma took a deep breath, "I went with M&M to meet with the architect who was redesigning her new home and I saw the picture you drew of the house on the wall. " All of a sudden she stopped. "M&M, oh no! Where's my phone?" Pushing herself up, she muttered, "She's probably freaking and she's pregnant Killian, you have to help me find my phone and we can talk, I promise." Getting up and looking for the phone, with no luck, she finally realized she had left it in her car when she had jumped out to leave the letter, "It's in my car." She got up and headed outside to her car. So worried about her sister, Emma was almost manic in her rush to locate her phone. Killian stood there and watched her a moment until he realized she was opening the door to go outside and she had no shoes on, "Emma wait" and then he scooped her up in his arms. "Killian, I need to go to my car,"

"I know love. Let me help. I'd hate for you to get sick."

"Killian," she tried again but this time he kissed her.

Once he released her lips, he let go of her legs and when they touched the ground, pulled her body close to his. "Emma, it's damp out there, let me go look, alright?"

"I'm perfectly capable of walking out there to look for my phone, you know that right?"

"Of course, please?"

Not used to having people do things for her, Emma looked at him a minute, and finally decided she didn't really relish the idea of running through the cold, wet, dark night to get her phone, put the keys in his hand. "Thank you. I probably tossed it in the passenger seat."

With another small kiss, Killian took the keys and went out to Emma's bright yellow bug to look for the phone. It was just where she said it would be and once back inside, took it and after glancing at the screen, groaned. "Oh no, numerous text messages, and missed calls, and even 4 voice mails. I hope things are fine."

"I'm sure she's just concerned, but once she hears your voice, all will be forgiven. Now let's go sit back down and you can make your call, while I hold you. Alright?"

Putting her hand in his outstretched one, Emma followed him back to the sofa and settled once again between his legs, her back to his chest. Once seated, he tossed the throw over them and she dialed her sister, ending up leaving a voice mail that she was well, had found Killian and would explain it all the following day. Emma then sent a quick text to Belle asking her if she would take care of Rumple. Once those tasks were completed, she put her phone on the table behind the sofa and relaxed back against Killian. Needing to assure herself he was real, she turned her head allowing her nose to rub against his jaw. She felt his facial muscles move into a smile before he tilted his head.
down and captured her lips.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Killian reached up with his left hand and cupped her cheek, taking control of the kiss. His hand trembled slightly with what he was feeling, that after so long, they were together. Slowly, ending the kiss, he opened his eyes to see her looking back at him, her eyes several shades of green and her pupils blown wide. Wrapping his arms around her he hugged her tightly against his chest, feeling her bury her head into his neck. "Swan, do you know how I'm feeling?"

Nodding her head yes, Emma hummed her response, before saying, "If it's anything like how I'm feeling, it's pretty overwhelming, isn't it?"

"Aye Swan, very overwhelming. I could sit here and hold you all night. Are you ready to talk now?"

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Emma told him about being with M&M in Liam's office and when they were leaving seeing his drawing hanging on the wall. "I was drawn to it and couldn't believe how beautiful it was. And the sadness in Liam's voice when he told me you had died, oh Killian, I never want to have to go through that again."

"Emma, are you talking about that picture?" And then he pointed at the wall a bit behind the sofa.

"Oh my" and sitting up she turned to get a better look at the picture. With the exception of the frame, it was the exact picture she had seen at Liam's office. "You drew it?"

"Aye, love. I drew it for you. I was going to give it to you the night I had planned to meet you. I'm so sorry, you had to sit there alone."

Leaning toward him she calmed his thoughts with a gentle kiss. "Now, is what's important. So how about you? What happened to allow us to be here?"

Killian told her about reading his parent's letters and about Liam's comment about fighting for what you want. "I remembered you telling me about what brought you to the beach house so I came to read through the letters. As I was leaving to drive to find you, I noticed the flag was up, and just grabbed the letter and stuck it in my back pocket, not reading it." And giving her a sheepish smile and another kiss, continued, "And then as I was stepping off the curb, a woman tapped me on the shoulder and handed me your letter," and getting lost in his thoughts for a moment, remembered thinking the woman had smelled like his mum, "And after reading what you had written, with every fiber of my being, I wanted to say bugger it and run across that street and take you in my arms, but I didn't. I went home and for the past two years I've read those words you wrote more times than I can count. But if it brings me to where we are right now, I would do it again."

Emma opened her mouth to say something about him waiting, but what came out was, "What about your Rumple? What happened to him?"

Killian's face sobered, "I don't know how to explain this but, he disappeared as quickly as he appeared."

"Oh Killian, I'm sorry. When?"

She had been sitting up since she moved to look at the drawing, and deciding he wanted her closer, Killian pulled her back into his arms, "It happened on the day I saw you on Biscayne Blvd. I came
home after seeing you sitting there, and he was gone. I'm sure I looked like a loon, looking for him, but I asked the neighbors and no one had seen him. It was very lonely. How about your Rumple?"

"My Rumple is currently at my apartment waiting for us. Belle is taking care of him so we can go see him tomorrow. Is that alright with you?"

“Indeed it is.” He said rubbing his chin against the top of her head. “Do you have any more questions for me Swan?”

Emma thought a minute, and then asked hesitantly, “Killian why weren’t you here when I arrived?”

Killian sighed, “Oh, Swan. I really am sorry I wasn’t. I was working on a few plans, that you will find out about soon, and then I got stuck behind a wreck on the way back down. I hate that I caused you pain.” He gently kissed her cheek. “Do you want to know when I moved back down to the beach house?” Emma made affirmative noises. “I moved down here shortly after Rumple left. I felt closer to you.”

Rubbing her hands up and down his arms that circled her body, she said “I think we need to look forward instead of back. Will that work for you?”

"I agree wholeheartedly. Now come here, I've got other plans for this mouth," Then turning them so they were laying side by side on the small sofa, he covered her lips with his. Killian expertly, controlled the kiss, using his hand to angle her head just so, and then moving from her lips along her cheek. Paying special attention to each area he kissed, as if he were claiming it for his own.

Emma's heart was beating a staccato rhythm and she felt goosebumps break out, each new place he kissed. Reaching a point that she couldn't keep her hands still, she brought her hands around his back kneading from his back, down to his muscular behind. Hearing Killian growl, encouraged her to bring her hand up to cup his jaw, carding her fingers through his hair, then following his hairline up over his ear, down to the nape of his neck.

Killian felt like he could go on kissing, caressing and loving on Emma forever. She tasted and smelled better than he could have ever imagined, but with her lithe body wiggling against his, and her skilled physician's hands moving over his body, his good intentions were quickly becoming less and less important. His breath coming in quick puffs and his heart speeding, he pulled away, burying his face in her neck and holding her tightly against him.

"Killian, what's wrong?"

"I'm trying to be strong here Swan, and you're making it very hard."

Emma smirked, "I hope so. Why is that a problem?"

"Emma love, I'm trying to be a gentleman here." He rubbed his finger along her petal soft cheek, "No pillaging and plundering until after the first date." And then backing up so he could look in her eyes, "Will you go out with me tomorrow night?"

Emma answered by kissing him once, "I" and then she kissed him again, "would" and after another kiss, "love to. Where?"

"It's a surprise, but will you stay with me tonight and let me hold you?"
Running her hand down his back until she reached his derrière, she grabbed a handful of his right cheek, "Just holding me? Are you sure that's all you want?"

Killian laughed a low sexy laugh, "Oh, it's far from all I want, but tonight, it's all I'm going to take." Then standing up, he pulled her up and shutting off the lights, they walked to the bedroom, to prepare for bed. Pulling one of his shirts out of the closet, he handed it to her. "Here, you can have the bathroom first."

~~~~~~~~~

Emma couldn't believe she was going to spend the night with Killian, and he wanted to just sleep, which was very sweet, but she wasn't sure they'd make it through the night without, a 'little taste'. Washing up, she put on his shirt, and then used his toothbrush. Walking back into the bedroom she wasn't prepared for the scene she walked in on. ~~~~~~~~~~

After handing Emma his shirt, Killian watched her walk into the bathroom, and shut the door. Smiling at his good fortune, he emptied his pockets and sat on the bed to remove his shoes and socks. As she still hadn't come out, he pulled on his sleep pants. He had just taken off his shirt when he heard the bathroom door open. ~~~~~~

As if in a daze, Emma walked toward Killian. He was standing next to the bed in his sleep pants, and nothing else and she had to touch. He stood unmoving as she approached, laying both hands on his pecs and then following his light furrowing of chest hair down over his hard abs to where his sleep pants hung low on his slim hips. She could hear Killian's breath catch, the further down she ran her hands, and at the waist of his pants, he finally reached for her hands, bringing them together, and kissing them, before turning away.

"You're a siren, love. I beg you to not tempt me much farther tonight. Come" He reached and pulled the blankets back, and encouraged her to climb between the sheets. "I shall return shortly." Once he reached the bathroom, he leaned over the sink and splashed cold water on his face, wondering how in the bloody hell he was going to make it through the night.

After Killian disappeared, Emma snuggled into the fluffy pillow and burrowed under the comforter. The blankets smelled like him and she found herself drifting along, until the bed dipped, and he pulled her against his hard body. Tilting her chin back just a little, she kissed along the underside of his chin, until he angled his head to capture her lips in a heated kiss, that was full of passion and promise.

Killian could feel himself quickly reaching the promise of a painful night, so he pulled back, turned her around, pulling her back to his front, and started reciting the multiplication tables in his head. His Swan was behaving like a devil, for as soon as she settled, she gave a little twist of her hips that came close to being his undoing. Taking soothing breathes he once again was able to settle, "Sleep love. We have forever." And he followed her into slumber.

K&E

Killian came awake slowly, as if he were afraid everything that had happened had been a dream. Opening his eyes and turning onto his side, he was greeted with a sight that he wanted to wake up to, every day for the rest of his life, the face of the woman he loved on a pillow next to his. He was tempted to reach out and run his finger down her cheek to that sexy dimple in her chin, but didn't want to risk disturbing her sleep. He was also tempted to kiss her awake and see where that led, good intentions be damned, but instead, quietly got out of bed and left the room to make her
Emma woke to the sound of the shower, reassuring her yesterday hadn’t been a dream. That her fantasy man, was here, with her. And currently he was in the shower and wet. Would he like it if she joined him? Did she have the nerve to join him? She sat up intending to find out and noticed breakfast on the bedside table. There sat a tray, a vase holding a perfect red rosebud, a covered plate, a mug and a carafe. Lifting the cover, she found the most decadent looking cinnamon bear claw pastry she had ever seen and a tiny bowl of frosting. Hearing the bathroom door open, she turned just as she stuck her finger in her mouth to taste the sticky concoction. Her jaw dropped at what she saw, for Killian was leaning against the door jam, wearing nothing but a towel.

The sight before him took his breath away. Emma was standing next to the bed, backlit by the rising sun, which showed him the outline of her slender figure in his shirt, as she dipped her finger into the sugary treat. And when she turned to see him standing in the doorway and was sucking on her finger, well, he’d be lying if his thoughts hadn’t taken a southerly direction. Sauntering toward her, he watched as she lowered her hand and pulled her bottom lip between her teeth. Stopping in front of her, he leaned in and kissed her lightly on the lips. "Good morning, love. How was your sleep?"

"My sleep was fine. How was yours?" Her lips still tingling from the tiny taste.

He took the opportunity to put his hands on her waist and pull her tightly against him. "Oh mine, was better than fine, and then he preceded to give her a real good morning kiss. Backing up while he was still able, "Shower's yours, I need to get dressed."

Emma smirked at him, "Are you sure you really need to get dressed?" She watched as his ears became tinted with just a hint of pink, and he clenched his hands open and closed. He smelled clean and she wanted to lean in and bury her nose in his neck.

"Emma," and he looked at the ceiling as if praying for divine intervention, and then deciding that he was tired fighting his feelings for her, he turned back and pulled her against him and kissed her. Backing her up until the back of her legs hit the side of the bed, he followed her down, never releasing her lips.

Emma felt that her heart was going to beat out of her chest. When Killian had pulled her to him, his pupils were blown wide in excitement. His lips were soft and his kiss was sensuous, and hotter than any kiss she had ever received. Wrapping her arms around his neck, she let him carry her along wherever he wanted her to go. His kiss wrapped her in a sensual haze, that she never wanted to end.

Killian slowly ended the kiss by easing their lips apart and looked down into her face, "You are a temptress."

Looking up into his wonderful blue eyes, Emma could see, the love she felt for him reflecting back at her. Bringing her right hand up, she cupped his jaw, and slowly rubbed her thumb back and forth along his cheek.

"I love you Killian. And if you want to wait to make love until after our date tonight, that is fine."

Leaning his forehead against hers, he whispered, "Then we shall." Pushing himself back up, he turned to go get dressed, not realizing the towel was caught under Emma, and almost walked right out it, catching it just before it showed off the goods. Turning to her, he winked, "Waiting for a show, milady?" Then just as he rounded the corner into the closet, he dropped the towel so all she saw was his bare behind.

Emma covered her eyes with her hand and took several deep, cleansing breaths. Once she felt under
control, she locked herself in the bathroom and took a long, calming shower.

The rest of the morning passed easily with breakfast and quiet talks. Needing to go explain everything to M&M, Emma finished her hot chocolate and Killian walked her out to her car. "You're sure I can't come with you?"

Squeezing his fingers, she looked up at him, "I don't want to leave either, but this is something I should do alone. You understand, right?"

"Aye, I understand. I will pick you up at six, alright? And Emma?"

Thinking that he was worried that she wouldn't be there, she frowned slightly, "What is it Killian? Six is perfect."

He smiled at her in a flirtatious manner, and holding up his cell phone said, "Think, I can have your phone number now?"

Rolling her eyes, she plucked it out of his hand, "As you wish" she answered as she dialed her number. Hearing her phone ring, she handed his back, and picked up hers, adding him to her contacts. She then moved next to him and took a picture of the two of them. "Proof, in case my sister thinks I've gone loco," she smirked.

Shaking his head at her, he saved her contact information, and kissing her one last time, before opening the car door. "I'll see you at six, Swan." Then closing the door, he backed up so she could turn around. As she drove back home, she reflected on how different the ride home was and wondered how long it would take her to calm her sister down before she could prepare for her evening out.

K&E

Emma knew an emotional outburst would greet her when she opened the door so she decided a best defense started with a good offense. Once opened, she saw, as expected Mary Margaret sitting next to Rumple on the sofa, behaving as parents waiting for their truant daughter who was home late from a date. Shaking her head at how ridiculous the scene before her was, she quipped "I'm not sixteen. I can stay out overnight you know?"

Rumple jumped down to greet her, tail wagging and sniffing around her shoes and pant legs as if he were trying to uncover the secret of where she had been.

Mary Margaret shook her head at Emma's comment, "You sure? The way you came in the door and your remarks are exactly the way you would have done it at sixteen."

Groaning at her sister, Emma plopped down next to her, and pushed off her shoes. Rumple settled his head on her knee and as she filled M&M in on everything that had transpired over the last 24 hours, she lazily scratched him on the head. From seeing the picture on Liam's wall to finding out that it had been him, who died in front of them two years ago, to writing him a letter to wait for her and meet her at the beach house.

"I swear M&M, as I stood there and waited and the flag never went down, I felt like I had failed for some reason. That my happy ending was lost and that I had missed out on the greatest love of my life. And then I heard my name, and turned to see him standing there, and my heart just stopped. I ran to him, and he put his arms around me and everything that was wrong became right. I felt whole for the first time in a long time. And then he kissed me," and she reached up and ran her finger along her bottom lip, "And it was as if we had been kissing forever." And then she turned to her
sister, who had silent tears running down her face, "And you know what I discovered?"

M&M sniffed and rubbed the tears off her face with the back of her hand, "The butterflies?"

Laughing at her answer, Emma nodded, "Oh, yea, lots of butterflies. But something else, even more amazing. Remember that awful surprise party Graham threw me several years ago?" M&M made the appropriate noises, "What I didn't tell you was that a guy at the party followed me outside, and while I was really annoyed and hoped he would leave me alone, he didn't. He kept coming back with different topics of conversation, almost as if he could read my mind, and then just as I was getting ready to run, he asked me to dance."

M&M snorted, "But you don't dance."

Emma agreed, "I know and he told me it was because I hadn't picked the right partner, and you know sis, as we moved around that patch of grass, I actually felt like I could dance. And as the dance was coming to an end, he kissed me, and that kiss gave me chills. I've often wondered if that kiss was why I never found myself ready to completely let Graham or any guy in, but yesterday, I discovered the real reason." Then she hesitated and a small smile played around her lips, "It's because I was waiting for him to find me."

They continued to talk with Emma answering any question that M&M threw at her. Emma even was able to pull up the picture that she had taken of him, "See I'm not nuts."

After she had answered all of M&M's questions, she waited for the one question that she truly had no answer for, "So if Killian "waited" for you for two years, but you were only there for a few hours, how exactly does that work?"

"I have no clue and I’ve decided I don't care. What matters is the here and now, and for whatever reason, fate has chosen him for me. And do you know how that makes me feel? I feel like every wish I've ever wished has come true," and then she glanced at the clock, "And he's picking me up in just a few hours, care to go shopping?"

"You don't have to ask me twice, let's go." And much to Rumple's dismay, they left him behind and went to find the perfect dress for Emma to wear on her date with Killian.

K&E

After Emma had driven away, Killian was tempted to jump in his truck and follow her, as a part of him was worried that she would disappear. But the more logical side of him, said that's impossible, as people don't just disappear out of thin air. Of course, fate doesn't always give people second chances like it apparently gave him, so he was left balancing precariously somewhere in the middle. He did have the picture of his Swan and wanting to show her off, he drew a heart around them and quickly sent it to Liam, with the text, "My Swan has finally landed."

The past two years had been difficult but when he wanted something bad enough, Killian Jones could be a very patient man. Liam had pretty much thought he was crazy when he tried to explain everything to him, but he had told Killian that it was enough that he wanted him to be happy, and he would be there to support him, no matter what. Killian was glad that Liam never discouraged him at least and now that patience had paid off. The rest of the afternoon, he spent time following up on all of the plans he had been making while preparing for this evening. He never wanted Emma to feel alone again. He loved her and his mission tonight would only be complete if she really understood just how much.

K&E
Emma had chosen to go ultra-feminine for her date with Killian. Her dress was a soft pink with a fitted bodice. The neck line was a wide deep V with small cap sleeves. The skirt was full and swirled around her legs as she walked. She wore strappy low heeled sandals and as her legs slid together, they were satiny smooth after a stop at the spa after shopping. She pulled her hair back into a ponytail, allowing the ends to curl up. A little blush, mascara and lip gloss and she was ready. She was nervous, but excited at the same time. Spritzing herself one last time, there was a knock at the door, and before she could answer heard Killian greeting Rumple, like a long lost friend.

Rounding the corner to the living area, the scene in front of her eyes almost brought tears.

K&E

Killian whistled as he took the elevator to Emma's apartment, knowing he was going to be early, but unable to stay away from her any longer. He could feel the anticipation sizzling along in his veins. Not only was he going to get to hold his Swan again but he was going to get to see Rumple, and he had to admit, he had missed that quirky dog. Rumple had shown up and given him someone else to care for, to talk to and who, strangely enough, had become a 'mate' of sorts. He remembered when he came home after he had seen Emma sitting at Bayside, but had chosen to wait for her, and Rumple had been gone. It had been lonely. He had been lonely.

Knocking on the door, he was prepared for it to be opened by Swan, not to have it opened by a furry, four-legged, animal, who barreled into him, with such exuberance. Crouching down, Killian tilted his head up and allowed the dog to slather his neck with doggy kisses. Once he had calmed down enough, Killian scratched his ears crooning, "I missed you boy. Did you miss me" over and over.

Emma stood quietly and observed the reunion between her man and her dog. Rumple's entire body was shaking, he was so excited, and Killian was going to have white dog fur all over his black pants, she thought, shaking her head at them. As they didn't notice her, she took a minute to appreciate how good her date looked. Black tight pants, black shirt unbuttoned just enough to show off that delicious chest and was that a black vest he had on? How very elegant he looked was her last thought before he opened his eyes and met hers. The way they lit up with appreciation when he spotted her, made her tingle in places that had been dormant for a long while, and made her wonder exactly what it was that he had in mind for tonight.

Killian didn't know how long, she had been standing there, but when he looked up and saw her, his heart had stopped and he had forgotten to breathe. She was a vision in her dress and her smile might very well be the death of him, "Swan, you look,"

Giving him a flirty little smile, she replied, "I know. And you look," and then she hesitated knowing exactly what he would say...

"Devilishly handsome, I know." And he winked at her. Standing back up, he looked down at his black denims and saw all the little white hairs adhering to them, and then shrugging his shoulders, started brushing them off.

Emma, who was used to white fur sticking to everywhere, had picked up a sticky roller on her way toward him, "Here, let me." And she knelt down in front of him and rolled the sticky tape down the front of his left leg.

When she bent down at his feet and put her hand on his leg, Kilian felt beads of sweat break out on his forehead. The need for her was so great that the temptation to pull her up, push her against the door and have his way with her was almost overwhelming. but since he said he was going to be a gentleman, by gods he would be, or he would die trying. Trying to clear his mind of thoughts of what other activities she could be involved in while on her knees, in front of him, he started reciting a
list of supplies that needed to be ordered for the Schwan. As she neared the bottom of his pants' leg, he thought he was in the clear, until she started coming back up, this time on the inside of his leg. Bugger that! he thought, "Emma?"

While rolling the sticky roller along Killian's pants' leg, Emma was thinking about how nice he smelled and how soft the denim was that she was cleaning, but she noticed he kept getting stiffer and stiffer, almost so much that she was afraid, she was going to hurt his leg with the roller because it no longer would give as she moved the roller over it. Coming from the bottom, moving up on the inside, she heard him say her name, his voice, low and sexy. "Yes, Killian?"

"What are you doing darling?" And then he arched a brow at her.

"I'm getting fur off your," Then she realized exactly what she had been doing, in addition, to getting fur off of him. Her left hand was holding onto his right leg, her hand basically on his taunt behind, and her face was in the proximity of his zipper, playing havoc with the snugness of his denims. "Oh," she said, blowing air out forcefully, onto such zipper placket. Her cheeks tinting pink, she ducked her head, which caused the top of her head to rub against him and looking up to say she was sorry, the words died in her throat.

When she looked up at him, after her head had come into contact with certain parts of his anatomy, he broke. Putting a hand under each armpit, he pulled her up, and turning her, followed her against the door, his lips on hers before they had even completed the turn. The kiss was hot and out of control, and neither knew where one stopped and the other began. Wrapping his arms around her, he pulled her tightly against his body leaving her no questions as to the affect she had on him. One of them groaned, which served to bring some semblance of rationality to his otherwise irrational brain, allowing him to slow down, and slowly pull their lips apart. Leaning his forehead against her, they breathed each other's air, each coming back to self slowly. Opening his eyes to gaze into hers, he gently kissed her once more, "Ready to go?"

Emma felt as if she were processing information in slow motion, her thoughts slightly disjointed after that mind shattering kiss, so it took her a few minutes to realize he still planned on going out, "Go?" She said with a slight frown between her brows.

Moving away from her, he took the sticky roller from her hand and finished the task. "Aye, love. We have reservations. I promise, I'll make it up to you later." And winking once more, he walked into the kitchen to wash up while Emma, went to her room to tidy herself.

As they started to walk out the door, Rumple protested loudly, almost pushing his way into the hallway. His behavior was so pitiful, causing both to second guess leaving him behind so soon after reuniting with Killian, that if it hadn't been for Belle's timely arrival, their plans may have changed. After quick introductions, Emma took Killian's hand leading him to the elevator before too many questions could be asked. The last thing Emma saw as they hurried into the elevator was Belle shaking her finger in an 'I'm so going to get you,' motion.
Chapter End Notes

Destiny was changed. Did you doubt it would be? I hope you enjoyed their reunion. Stay tuned to see how Emma and Killian mesh their lives.
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

The journey to forever begins for Emma and Killian.

Chapter Notes

Things may get a bit 'hot' for Emma and Killian but I've managed to keep it to a T+. I'm thinking you might be surprised.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 15

The elevator doors hadn't even closed before he had her pinned to the wall and was kissing her. His hands rested on her hips, long fingers digging into the sides of her behind, as he tugged her closer to him. She could feel that the proximity of their bodies was exciting to him as his mouth plundered the depths of hers. She slid her hands up under his vest in the back where she could feel the heat of his body through his thin cotton shirt, and was tempted to pull his shirt free so she could touch bare skin. Gathering a handful of cloth to untuck, she had just started to tug upward, when the elevator bell rang indicating the doors were opening. Killian quickly moved next to her, tucking her against him to partially cover his front, and took deep calming breaths just as the doors opened and a large group of people got on. Realizing she didn't know anyone, allowed her to relax and as soon as the elevator arrived in the lobby, they got off to walk to the car.

He had parked in the back of the parking lot, and as they walked, he interlaced their fingers. When they reached the SUV, he opened the door, and laying on the seat, was a beautiful yellow flower. Smiling up at Killian, she asked, "For me?"

He smiled shyly and picked it up. "This is a Forsythia, which means anticipation in the language of flowers. I have anticipated this evening so much Emma," then he ran it along her bottom lip, "longer than you can even know. I hope it meets all of your expectations." Handing it to her he kissed her once again.

Emma dimpled up at him and sighed, "Killian. You are so sweet. I too have been most anxious to spend time with you." and treating him to another light kiss she quipped, "But you know, I'm a sure thing tonight " And winking, climbed in to the SUV. As he shut her door and walked around, she put the flower up to her nose to smell, feeling happier than she thought possible.

As he climbed in and started the car, she surreptitiously watched how he handled the huge vehicle and marveled at his ease. Once they were on their way he reached over picking up her hand and laced their fingers together before laying them on the center console. Glancing sideways, he caught her stare, and ducking her head, she quickly glanced away.

Killian noticed that Emma kept staring at him, almost as if she was afraid he was going to disappear. When she ducked her head and glanced away he was miffed they weren't where they were going so
he could pull her into his arms and assure her he was here to stay. Squeezing her fingers, he spoke softly, "Love, don't be shy, if our places were switched, I too, would be staring at your lovely face." He then kissed her hand.

"I don't mean to be so flustered but being here with you is just so…” and she hesitated, for the feelings she had were just too overwhelming for her to even put into words.

"I want you to know, I feel the same way. And I want you to trust me with your heart, for I don't ever want you to feel uneasy."

"And you Killian, are you also trusting me with your heart?"

"But of course my Swan."

Smiling shyly at him, she put their joined hands against her cheek. "I'm glad."

He agreed with a smile and as they were driving by the area where all of his ships were docked, he told about his business. "You know, you're not my first Swan?" He said with a flirty little smile.

"Oh?" She responded with a pout.

But then when he explained how the four yachts he had purchased were all named swan, but in other languages, and he had added to his fleet and named them swans, also, she was even more fascinated.

"What are the odds, do you think?"

Killian laughed at her question, "I’m not sure about odds, I was thinking someone was trying really hard to get my attention. I'm glad I listened."

The restaurant was up ahead and pulling into its parking lot, he stopped the car. "Here we are."

Emma looked up at the sign advertising Prime 112, the place she was to meet him in December 2015, just over a year ago. A place that had made her heart ache every time she had driven past. "Why here?"

He knew she would be hesitant about entering into this place again, but he wanted her to give ALL of herself to him, no holding back. Reaching under the seat, he picked up a delicate white flower and held it out to her, "This is a Freesia, and it's meaning is trust. Can you trust me, Emma, to take all the pain away?"

Taking the flower from him, Emma felt tears gather in the corners of her eyes. "I will."

Looking deeply into her eyes, he responded, "I hope to hear that from you again someday. Ready?" She nodded her head yes, and jumping down, he walked around to open her door. Taking her hand and tucking it through his elbow, he escorted her into the place as if she were a princess, more importantly, his princess.

Killian was feeling pleased with how the evening had gone so far. Yes, it had been very hard, forgive the pun, he thought silently, to stop the progression of their lovemaking in her apartment, but he wanted her to feel like a princess and if he had to endure tighter pants for another few hours, so be it. She was worth it.

As they walked to the door, he could see the employees standing around holding the flowers, just like he had asked them to do. Walking through the doorway, Emma was being handed pansies, of all
different colors, and with each person that handed her a new one, he could see the confusion on her face grow.

Rori, the same hostess that had made his reservation the last time, was waiting for them and led them to a table, the same table that Emma had sat at, on that fateful December night. It was a curved bench with seating on one side of the table, so Emma slid in with Killian following. As had happened when they walked into the restaurant, any time they passed a waiter or a waitress, they handed Emma a pansy.

Rori placed their menus in front of them, "Henry will be your waiter tonight. Enjoy your meal," she said as she left them alone.

As soon as she was gone, Emma turned to Killian and held up the bunch of pansies she had been given along the way, "Pansies? What do they tell me?"

"Pansies tell you that you are in someone's thoughts. And look around you, what do you see?"

Emma took a moment to look all around the room. Every shelf, every counter and every table had vases of pansies.

"I see pansies, lots and lots of pansies." She whispered as she brought the pansies to her nose to smell.

Leaning closer, Killian waited until she was looking at him before saying, "I wanted you to know that for every petal on every flower here tonight, that's only a small fraction of how often I've thought of you since that first letter."

Emma leaned in until she was close enough for their lips to meet, and just before they touched, said quietly, "I feel so loved," before closing the distance between them. The kiss was tender, an affirmation of how special he was making her feel, and while she felt it down to her toes, they didn't allow it to escalate beyond that. Pulling back slightly, she nuzzled his nose with hers, and only stopped when she heard a serving cart settling in front of their table. Turning her head, she saw her waiter from that fateful night, Henry, but whom she recently found out was Regina's adopted brother.

"Hi Henry. How are Rosie and Robby?"

Henry grinned at Emma's question, "According to my sister and Robin, they are perfect and much advanced for almost one-year-olds, however according to Roland, they are the scourge of the seven seas, worse even than Captain Hook." And he smirked at Killian.

Emma frowned at Killian, "You know Henry?"

Killian reached up and scratched behind his ear before giving her a rather sheepish smile.

"Aye, love, it's a rather convoluted tale, that is not meant to be discussed tonight, right lad?"

Henry nodded his head at Killian, "If you say so Captain" and turning, he picked up a bouquet of various types of flowers and handed them to him, "I believe these are yours. Shall I pour you some champagne while you look over the menu?" Killian nodded his head and Henry poured the champagne and then left them alone.

"These flowers symbolize a love that is deep and abiding," he said as he handed her an iris, a red rose, a red tulip, a yellow tulip and an orange blossom.
“And this” he handed her more flowers, “is honeysuckle. These flowers mean not only love, but a
happiness beyond anything I've ever imagined.”

"And this,” he handed her one more, “It’s a Forget-Me-Not. And Emma, I hope this is a night you
will never forget." As he handed her each flower, Emma had fallen more and more under his spell.
His talk of anticipation and the flower of trust already there, as if he knew exactly how she was
going to react to seeing this place. And then walking into a room and being handed flowers that
showed he had been thinking about her, as if that wasn’t evident by the work that he had already put
into their evening, and now, flowers of love, for her. Looking down she could see goosebumps
running up and down her arms, so emotionally overwhelmed was she by this man. But when she
looked back up at him she could see the love shining in his eyes, her fears flew and she felt that
every wish she had ever made had come true.

"You know,” she said as she cupped his jaw with her right hand, “growing up Leo always quoted
sayings to M&M and I, as if they were able to explain life and it's many meanings. As teens we
thought he was crazy, but one saying he often quoted to me fits this moment so perfectly, he said,
'Meeting you was fate, becoming your friend was a choice, but falling in love with you was beyond
my control. I love you," and as she leaned in to kiss him, she wasn't sure if the wetness she felt
were from her tears or his.

Killian's heart felt like it was preparing to take wings and fly away. Opening his eyes, he used his
thumb and gently brushed the wetness off of her face.

"Thank you Swan. Shall we eat?"

The rest of the meal went well and Henry was the perfect waiter. Emma finally got Killian to tell her
what happened with Henry. It seemed when he had come in to make the plans for dinner, Henry had
recognized him from a themed birthday party for Roland a few years back. Unfortunately, then it had
come out that Killian had been the one to not show up to meet her and Henry had defended her
honor. The only way Killian had gotten Henry to believe that he was sincere was to promise another
party for Roland. As they sat finishing the last of their after dinner drinks, Emma heard music and
looked up to see that they were alone. Realizing exactly what the music was, caused tears to once
again threaten.

"You remembered." "How could I not? Dance with me Swan?"

He stood up and taking her hand, helped her up. Wrapping his arms around her, he pulled her tightly
against his body, and they danced to the same tune they had danced to on her birthday, 'I Can't Seem
to Make You Mine.' As the song ended, Killian leaned in and kissed her with so much passion he
took her breath before he whispered in her ear.

"I think we've waited long enough Swan. Can I make you mine?"

"Definitely!" Taking his hand, they hurried from the Prime 112, anxious for the night to end in a
much more intimate fashion.

K&E

The tension between them had been palpable on the ride back from dinner and during the ride up the
elevator. Killian knew that Emma was feeling it too as each time she glanced his way her pupils were
more dilated and her skin tinted just a bit pinker. He kept taking deep calming breaths as he hadn't
been with a woman since he had met Swan, and he didn't want the evening to be over before the
horse got out of the door. Destiny had played a part in allowing them to even have a first time and by
gods he planned to make the most of it, for both himself and Emma. Her body was a sight more
alluring then his hand, and nothing better get in their way, or bloody hell, they would have to answer to him.

As they walked down the hall toward her apartment, he had been holding her hand, thinking about the moment when they walked inside, and he could pick her up in his arms and carry her to bed. As they reached her door and she pulled out her keys, he turned her so she was leaning against the door, and leaned in and kissed her. Only touching at the lips, he opened his mouth over hers, and poured every ounce of passion possible into that kiss. When he finally pulled away, her lips chased after his, and unable to resist he dove back in for another taste. She tasted like wine and heaven and hearing her slight groan weakened his knees. Releasing her lips, he sighed against hers.

"Invite me in Swan."

Emma's heartbeat had been super charged since they had left the restaurant, knowing what was going to happen. She had been anticipating this moment for longer than she was ready to admit and now that the time was here, she was nervous. Afraid that she wouldn't live up to what he wanted or what he needed. When she heard him ask her to invite him in and she looked in his eyes and saw exactly what he was feeling staring back at her, she relaxed, giving herself over into his hands to do with whatever he desired. She was his, but decided to be a little coy with him.

"Killian, do you want to come in for coffee?" She asked with a raised eyebrow.

Lifting one corner of his mouth, "Emma, we both know if I come in, it will be for more than coffee."

He murmured before running his fingers along her cheek, giving her a gentle peck.

Bringing both hands up to cup his face, and looking him directly in the eye, so he would understand what she was saying, she whispered.

"I know. In fact, I'm counting on it."

She smiled at him and turned around to unlock the door, but had barely gotten it opened when it was pushed all the way by a black nose, followed by a black and white furry body. Hearing Killian mutter, "Bloody hell" behind her, she groaned.

"We forgot Rumple."

His pants had been getting tighter and tighter from just a few kisses and as soon as she had unlocked the door, his plan had been to sweep her up into his arms and carry her down the hallway, that is until a four legged busy body had almost swept her off her feet first. When she had turned to tell him that they had forgotten Rumple, he had done the only thing that needed to be done. He swept Rumple up into his arms, and flipped him over like a baby, and just stood there, not moving. What was even more surprising was the fact that Rumple, who was always very exuberant in his greetings, just lay in his arms, like a docile child.

Emma saw Killian pick up Rumple and thought oh no, the dog will go nuts, wiggling to be put down, and white fur, will fly everywhere. And then she got a look at how docile he was behaving while being held like a child and her jaw dropped.

"Wha," and stopping to swallow, tried again. "How" and waving her hand at the display in front of her, "did you learn to do that?"

Looking down at the dog whose tongue was hanging out of his mouth, but otherwise was laying still, he shook his head.

"I don't even know really. One time he was going a bit nuts and I happened to pick him up like this
and he immediately relaxed. Now what do we need to do before I can DO you." He smirked.

Emma couldn't help herself, she was so happy, she giggled, then she rolled her eyes.

"He needs to go out, and then he should go to bed. Let me get his leash and I'll show you where he goes."

Putting Rumple down, Killian pulled her against him.

"I will take him out. You can take care of whatever you need to take care of up here, alright?"

Nodding her head yes, she showed him where Rumple's treats, pooper scoop and bags and leash were and he took his friend out to take care of business. While he was gone, she took the flowers and put them in a vase before setting them on the table. Turning all the lights off, except for one, she went into the bedroom and pulled her hair out of the ponytail and brushed it out.

She found herself flitting around the room, looking for things to do so she closed the blinds, lit a few candles, and then folded back the bedding. After looking around the room one last time, she locked up the apartment, and when her boys came back, gave Rumple his bedtime treat.

"You hungry? I could make some tac …,” she started to ask, but before she could finish the word, he had bent down, wrapped one arm around her back and the other under her legs and picked her up off the ground.

"I am hungry alright," he said as he started moving down the hall as quickly as he could. Once inside her bedroom, he dropped her legs so she slid slowly down his body. Pulling her tightly against him, he cupped the back of her head with his left hand and palmed her behind with his right, pushing her hips into his, leaving no doubt what he was truly hungry for.

"I want you Swan." He whispered before his lips covered hers, moving smoothly, sliding along hers slowly.

Sipping, teasing, their breathing escalating, filling the silence of the room. Deeper still the kisses grew, until hands join in and caress wherever they can reach. Moans eventually penetrated the silence, filling each with a deeper need to see and be seen. As the kisses continued to deepen, Killian reached for the zipper in the back of her dress and slid it down, slowly, allowing his finger to trail along her petal soft skin, that was being exposed.

Emma shivered at his touch and finally with the need to breath, their lips parted, she buried her nose in his neck, taking the opportunity to place gentle kisses just under his left earlobe. She felt his hands reach up to take hold of each side of her dress, pulling it off her shoulders and down her arms, until it fell in a pile of pale pink material at their feet. Encouraging her to step out of the circle, Killian guided her backwards, and gently pushed her into a sitting position on the bed, before kneeling at her feet. He picked up her left foot and after unbuckling her sandal, slid it off and tossed it aside. Taking her foot between his hands, he rubbed his thumbs into the ball of it. Emma had never had anyone massage her foot before and almost purred in contentment.

Kneeling below her, he took a minute to appreciate her beauty as she sat before him in her satin pale pink bra and panty set, her excitement for the way he was touching her evident for him to see. He watched her as he rubbed her foot, her face a study in sensuality, and her body becoming more flushed, the more aroused she became. Pulling her foot up to his lips, Killian nibbled along her instep until she curled her toes and then he gently lowered it and repeated the process with her other leg.

Once he put her right foot down, he put his hands on each side of her hips and leaned in, placing his lips against hers. She opened for him as he slowly walked his hands backward, meaning to follow
Emma couldn't believe how sexy it was to have someone remove your shoes and kiss your feet, but she would gladly allow Killian to do it again. As he started to lower her to the bed, while kissing her senseless, she put her hand against his chest, halting him.

"Hey, my turn."

He gazed up at her, "Love, I haven't really gotten started."

"You have too many clothes on, love," she quipped trying to mimic his accent.

"Here, let me help."

Scooting over, she moved him next to her on the bed, and slowly unbuttoned his vest, pushing it off his shoulders. His shirt buttons were next and each button undone, revealed a piece of chest that she needed to kiss. Thinking she wanted to be a little closer, she pushed him down on his back, pulled the tail of his shirt from his pants and straddled him, settling over the evidence of his arousal. Continuing her journey, she unbuttoned each button, kissing her way down, nuzzling aside tufts of hair to kiss bare skin, down his pectoral muscles, along his lean stomach until she reached his belly button, where she swirled the tip of tongue, causing him to twitch.

"You're ticklish?"

Looking up at her perched above him, he thought he had never seen anything more beautiful.

"Impatient is what I am." He tapped his bottom lip.

"I want you here."

Emma leaned over and kissed him lightly, but before she could sit back up, he took control of the kiss. He pulled himself back into a sitting position so he was above her while running his hands up and down her side, allowing his thumbs to hook in the band of her bra and panties as it moved past.

Emma's fingers were busy playing along the waistband of his pants which made him realize how tight they had become. He kissed the tip of her nose and asked.

"You want me out of them?"

Shaking her head yes, she let her fingers roam a bit more, "Definitely."

When her hand hit a particularly sensitive spot, he growled in appreciation, and pushed himself up, "Me too."

As he got off the bed, Emma appreciated the view of his lean shoulders and back, some muscle definition but not overly so, leading down to a narrow waist and a taunt behind. When he turned to look at her after removing his jeans, her breathing halted at how sexy he looked in the candlelight. Defined pecs and a tight set of abs topped a nicely wrapped package filling out a set of navy boxer briefs.

Licking her lips, she followed the line of chest hair up from the band of his boxers, along his abs, up his sternum to where it spread over both pecs, making her fingers knead the bedding so strong was her need to touch. The shadows played around his neck and face, the auburn in his scruff glinting in the candlelight, up to his sensuous lips, high cheekbones, and eyes that were almost black in the low light. His hair fell rakishly over his forehead, artfully mussed from her marauding fingers, and framed
elfin ears.

Gorgeous, hers and she wanted him now, was her main thought. Curling her finger in a "come here" motion, she patted the bed next to her and waited.

Killian caught her looking and dimpled as he tucked his thumbs into the waistband of his briefs as if undecided about their removal, and raised an eyebrow in question. Emma sat up and crawled toward the side of the bed where he stood. She went up on her knees and wrapped her arms around his waist, kissing him several times at mid chest. Hooking her thumbs in his boxers, she pulled them down over his hips, and lifted them over his arousal before pushing them lower so he could step out.

Putting a knee on the bed, Killian settled down onto the pillow. With his arms wrapped around her, his lips met hers in a fiery kiss, nipping, sucking, soothing, while their hands familiarized themselves with newly uncovered territory. Reaching around behind her, he unfastened the hooks to her bra and slid it off of her shoulder, using his lips and tongue, to kiss, lick and suck, on each new piece of skin.

Not sure how much longer he could hold out, but wanting to taste and touch each new delicate offering, he ran his hands lightly along her side, and around her stomach and up, feeling her shiver under his ministrations. She was a delicacy he had no intentions of rushing through, wanting to peel away each layer with both hands and mouth, until he had filled his need.

Reaching the point where his body was crying for release, he pulled her over him where she fit them together, as if they were puzzle pieces meant to be connected. The feeling was so great, he put his hands on either side of her hips, holding her still, allowing his body a moment to relish the feeling of being a part of hers. Looking into her eyes, her pupils wide with need, he felt his heart would burst, so great was its speed. Killian reached up, pulling her down to where their lips met and the rhythm of their bodies slowly matched, singing a tune that only the other knew.

Emma couldn't believe when Killian pulled her on top but took advantage and joined their bodies slowly, producing groans of contentment from both. Once he was fully seated, she looked into his eyes, allowing him to see what was in her heart and what she needed from him right then. Understanding her need, he set a rhythm meant to excite, using his body to make hers sing, as if he was the bow and her body the violin. Adding a delicious twist to his hips and hitting just the right spot, caused stars to appear before her eyes before they reached the peak that went on and on, causing her heart to race in her chest. Pinpricks of emotion undulated in waves out from where they were joined, each bigger than the previous until settling and she collapsed onto his chest, their breathing labored, but their bodies temporarily sated.

Feeling the tears leak from her eyes, Emma rolled off of Killian and snuggled against his side. As her breathing calmed, she leaned back to look up at him, "That was nice." And then she smirked at his raised eyebrow, "Ok, maybe better than nice, terrific?"

Killian brought his hand up to caress her face.

"If you think that was just fine or terrific, give me a few minutes, and we'll go for earth shattering or out of this world." Then pulling her close, he soothed his hand over her back until he felt her relax.

"Are you alright, love?"

"I'm more than alright, why do you ask?"

He wiped his thumb across an errant tear, and held it up, "Tears?"
Emma pulled his fingers to her mouth and kissed them, "Tears of happiness. For so long I never thought I would have this, we would have this, that sometimes the feelings just bubble over."

Looking up at him, she could see that he was just as affected by the feelings between them as she was.

"Are you alright?"

"Perfect" he said popping his 't', before getting out of bed to blow out the last remaining candle. Back in bed, he lay back and pulled her to his side, wrapping her close. She propped her chin on his chest and with her index finger drew circles in the soft hairs, sending small tremors throughout his body. As her circles got bigger, reaching lower, her hand got bolder, until any thought of sleep completely flew from Killian's mind.

"Love, you keep that up,..." His body jumped as her hand hit its mark. Continuing her hand movements, Emma glanced up at him under her eyelashes and quipped.

"That's the operative word, isn’t it?" Then her lips followed her hands, which led to other activities, delaying sleep for both long into the night

K&E

Emma woke wrapped in warm arms and looking into the eyes of Rumple, who's head was laying on the mattress, right at her head. When she saw him, she couldn't help it and started giggling, which woke Killian up.

"Morning love, what's so funny?" Leaning up, he saw the dog and joined her.

"Guess he's ready for a walk, eh?"

Deciding to both take him for a walk on the beach, they dressed, clipped on his leash and left. The day was beautiful for February and as it was early enough in the morning, the sand was relatively empty. With their hands clasped, they meandered along, speaking softly of a variety of topics, and realizing they both had to go back to work the next day invoked a small amount of anxiety.

Killian could tell his Swan was feeling anxious as the grip of her hand became tighter and her answers to questions more clipped. Knowing what must be done, he stopped, turned her towards him and looped his arms around her hips, pulling her close. With Rumple sitting at their feet, he leaned in for a kiss and then standing there on the sand, in the early morning light gazed into her eyes.

“Emma, the future's nothing to be frightened of. I want it all with you, and by all, I mean a wedding and our babies, but until you are ready, I will be here, next to you as often as you will allow me.”

She glanced up at him and noticed that his eyes were full of love and concern for her.

“I want you with me always, Killian. That's what is frightening me.”

Hugging her tightly, he thought about what he should say.

"Let's take it one day at a time, alright? I am ready, but you let me know when you are.”

Standing on her tip toes, she kissed him slowly.

"I will. Ready for the next step in us?"

He cocked a brow, "I thought we had taken the next step, but I'm willing to go another round."
Shaking her head at his playfulness, they resumed their walk.

"I'm talking about meeting my family. My sister has issued a lunch ultimatum, not an invitation, for later. You ready?"

Reaching up to scratch behind his ear, he glanced at her and laughed.

"I'm ready if you are as I got the same ultimatum from Liam and his wife, Elsa for dinner."

"Wait, Elsa? As in Arende, the OB specialist?"

"Aye, the very one."

"That's so strange as I've sent patients to her but have only spoken to her on the phone once or twice. Our lives have truly been intertwined."

"Fate my darling." He kissed her hard and they continued their walk, taking home some bear claws and coffee to enjoy on the balcony.

The morning was spent just being together. They moved from the balcony to the sofa to the bed, talking, laughing and loving. Hoping she would let him stay, Killian had brought along several changes of clothing, and they were able to shower and dress for their lunch with M&M and David without having to drive to the beach or without having to be separated, which to them was the most important.

Killian drove, and noticing that Emma was wringing her hands together asked, "Nervous love?"

Smiling at him, she shook her head.

"Not so much nervous, just anxious about what they are going to ask you."

"It will be fine, relax."

Then to get her mind on something else, he went on to talk about his schedule for the next few weeks and that in March, water activity increased as did his business.

"I want you to go with me on some of the trips, if your hospital schedule allows. You can protect me from those other women." He winked.

As he hoped she snickered and went on to talk about the hospital and the people she worked with on a daily basis. Some names he recognized from Liam and Elsa and he hadn't said anything yet but he suspected that he knew her brother in law, David, from when he was a lad. She had been his destiny but, it had just taken them a while to find each other.

M&M opened the door to their knock and hugged her sister, whispering, “not bad,” in her ear. She then led them to the patio where David, who was tending the grill, turned to say hello but what came out instead was, "Killy?"

Killian gave Emma a sheepish smile before looking back at David.

"Aye. Charming?"

Then they moved toward each other laughing and hugged, as if they were long lost friends.

Emma and M&M stood there with their mouth's hanging open, as their men treated each other like long lost friends. When the men finally broke apart, they explained to the women that David had, in
fact, gone to school with Killian's brother, Liam, who was helping with some of the designs on their new home.


"And Charming?" Emma asked, looking at both David and Killian.

David blushed, "It was nothing really."

Killian laughed, "Oh, don't be modest Dave, Liam filled me in. It seems that Dave, here, had a way with the girls in high school, so he was coined Charming. There was one, in particular, Abigail wasn't it?"

Walking over David hugged Emma hello and then suggested she and M&M, bring the rest of the lunch out to the table and he and Killian would tend to the grill.

Killian squeezed Emma's fingers when she glanced at him, and then leaned in and kissed her cheek, before whispering, "I'll be fine, go."

Once the ladies were out of sight, David handed Killian a cold drink and then went to check on the grill.

"So, should I ask what your intentions are toward my wife's sister?"

Rolling his eyes at his long lost mate, Killian answered him with a serious tone of voice.

"Whatever they are, they are as much up to her as they are to me. But if it makes you feel better," he said looking longingly toward where she had gone into the house, "I would marry her tomorrow if she would have me."

David clapped him on the back.

"Be patient with her."

Looking back at David, Killian nodded.

"Aye, I've all the time in the world."

K&E

As soon as the door was behind them, M&M and Emma, stopped and looked at each other, with amazement.

"Emma, can you believe what we just learned?"

Pulling her sister into the kitchen to gather the lunch supplies, Emma responded to her question.

"What, that they've known each other forever or that David' nickname is Charming and Killian's is Killy?"

Shaking her head at the strangeness that was her life, Emma answered her sister's questions about her date the night before, as well as filling her in on what she had learned about him. She was happy though when it was announced the meat was ready, since there were some things, she just didn't think her sister needed to know.

Picking up the plates and silverware, she carried those out to the table and then went back in for the
salad. M&M brought out the bread and napkins and lunch turned out to be a mixture of stories from when the men were young, to discussions about Emma and Killian. Once the meal was completed and the table was cleaned, Emma deemed it time to go home so they could take Rumple for a walk, before they made their second appearance of the day at Liam's house. With promises of getting together again soon, the door was shut behind them.

As they walked to the car they wrapped their arms around each other and Emma looked up at him.

"Killy?" She giggled.

He growled and kissed her, but her only answer was the redness on the tips of his ears.

K&E

They arrived back to the apartment in record time and took Rumple for a walk on the beach and for a run in the dog park. Killian wrapped his arm around Emma and pulled her close as they walked back home, not only because he wanted her close but it had gotten cooler, and he liked keeping her warm. Once on the elevator, Rumple settled in close as he could to Killian's leg, and waited patiently for them to reach their floor.

Emma was feeling a bit chilled, and taking advantage of the fact the elevator was empty, snuggled close and wrapped her arms around Killian's waist. Turning she nudged his chin with her nose until he tilted his head and kissed her. It was an open mouth kiss that consumed her, and when he reached up and cupped her cheek, to get closer, her heart sped up thinking about all the time they had spent loving each other before going to M&M and David's house. Wanting to meet Killian's family, as he had met hers but, also wanting to spend the evening alone with him, exploring each other, again and again. The elevator doors opened on their floor and after a few nudges from Rumple they broke apart to walk off.

Killian was glad they didn't see anyone after they got off the elevator as that kiss had given him some carnal thoughts which affected the fit of his pants. He really wanted to take his Swan, and show her a thing or two that he had been thinking about over the past couple of years, but bloody hell, Liam was being an old sod and had demanded their presence. So he would wait until after dinner when they were alone, and then, he would make up for lost time. Unlocking the door to the apartment, Emma unclipped Rumple's leash and put it away. Because of the hot kiss in the elevator, she needed to cool off, and what better way than on the balcony, several stories up. She had been leaning on the railing, looking over the ocean waves, when she heard Killian come out and wrap his arms around her. Turning she looped her arms around his neck and ran her fingers through his thick hair.

"What time should we leave for dinner?"

Kissing her, Killian pulled her tightly against him.

"Liam just called and Elsa was pulled out on an emergency, so we are off the hook, so to speak. Can you think of any way we can occupy our time?" "We're free tonight?"

Emma asked moving a little closer, and kissing the side of his neck. "Oh, I think I might need to do some laundry," then she kissed the other side of his neck, "Or clean the bathroom." Then she kissed his lips.

Killian pinned her against the railing and quickly took control of the kiss, showing her with his mouth and tongue exactly what he wanted to do with his body. They almost forgot they were out on a balcony, alone, but not really alone, and when one of them moaned and Emma pushed her hands inside his back pockets to squeeze his backside he knew what needed to be done. Turning them, but
never releasing her mouth, he walked them back inside the apartment, and made an attempt at shutting the door. Releasing her lips, he waited until she had opened her eyes, "Hold on." Before picking her up and putting her over his shoulder in a fireman’s hold and walking down the hall to the bedroom, where he showed her several creative uses for their hands, lips and other body parts.

K&E

As February became March, Emma and Killian spent more and more time together. While she wasn’t ready for a ‘formal’ verbal commitment, she knew in her heart that she loved him and that she wanted to be with him always, but the actual step was something that she wanted to take a bit slowly. Thinking back over their strange relationship, she couldn’t believe that it had been just over two years ago when she had visited the beach house for the first time, and somehow her letter had reached through time and space to connect her with Killian. She had fallen in love with a man through his letters, thought she had lost him to time, thought she had lost him to death, only to discover that he had, indeed, waited for her. That now her family not only consisted of M&M, David and her future niece or nephew, but Killian, and his brother and wife, and of course Rumple. The eerie, strangely perceptive dog who somehow seemed to have a hand in whatever magical means had brought them together. Whatever, or whoever it was, she didn’t really know and didn’t really care. They were together and life was good.

Emma was finishing up her rounds one day in late March and ready to call it a night. She hadn’t seen much of Killian for a few days as she had been working long shifts at the hospital and he had been booked on nightly cruises and she was anxious to get home to her boys. Since they had found each other in February, they had spent every night together, but depending on their work schedules, the place varied between her apartment or the beach house. Pulling out her phone she sent a quick text to Killian;

E: Hey babe. Where are we tonight?

K: Rumple and I are at the beach house waiting for you.

E: Perfect. I hope to leave in an hour.

K: We’ll be waiting. A walk on the beach?

E: You read my mind. Followed by?

K: Netflix and maybe a bath?

E: Heaven.

K: Heaven is anywhere with you.

E: I love you

K: Love you too. Drive safely

Emma reread his last text and smiled at his kiss emoji at the end. Picking up the pile of charts she sat down in the charting room and got to work. Working steadily, she had just finished when she heard her name and looked up to see Ruby standing in the door.

“Ruby, hi, how are things?”

Ruby smiled at her before answering, “The question is, how ARE you? Since Mr. Tall, Dark and Hunky came into your life, we haven’t seen much of each other. “
“Things are good Ruby.”

Then she noticed the little smirk on Ruby’s face.

“Ok, things are more than good, fantastic, even. I’m so happy,” and she hesitated a second, “that I’m scared he’s going to disappear.”

Ruby’s look became one of gentle concern, “Em, he’s the one you met through letters right? You never explained how you met anyway.”

Emma thought about the discussion that she had had with Killian about this very thing. About how to explain ‘how’ they had met because everyone would think they were nuts, which when you thought too hard about it, it did sound like they were nuts. She ended up telling her the story they had come up with, which stretched the truth, yet still allowed some of the romanticism to shine through.

“Yes, we were pen pals, I guess you could say. And then after thinking we were never going to be together, fate stepped in and here we are.”

Shrugging her shoulders, at the irony that a woman of science had left her love life up to fate, well, it was very ironic.

Ruby nearly swooned, “It’s so romantic.”

Emma thought to herself, well, if she knew the real story, she would totally swoon.

“Yes it is. And he and Rumple are waiting at home for a walk on the beach.” Finishing the charts in record time, she headed for home.

K&E

Killian looked over at Rumple who was sitting by the front door waiting for Emma.

“She’ll be here soon, boy.”

Rumple wagged his tail but didn’t move, even when Killian pulled out the treat bag trying to entice him away from the door. Twenty minutes later, Rumple jumped up on the door handle, opening it and took off down the walk toward the yellow bug that was just pulling up to park.

Shaking his head at the dog’s uncanny abilities, Killian muttered, “Someone needs to teach that dog how to close the bloody door.”

Killian stood waiting for Emma to finish greeting Rumple so she could greet him. Rumple’s tail was wagging and he kept jumping up on her but she just scratched his ears and talked to him like he was a four-year-old. While he thought it was nice that they loved each other so much, the fact that he was playing second fiddle to such creature, hadn’t escaped his notice. However, when Swan turned his way and bestowed on him the most beatific smile and then ran into him arms and kissed him senseless, he let it slide.

Keeping her close, they entered the house and he sent her to change into something more comfortable while he set out their dinner. When she returned, she looked much more comfortable in shorts and a tank and pulling out her chair, she sat down to eat. Talking about their day was something that Killian never got tired of as she lit up with such joy and often became so animated that he felt like he was right there with her. His only issues came when she came home after losing a patient and wondered if she had done everything possible. Those times he could do nothing but hold
her and let her work through her grief on her own.

Dinner was done, the dishes cleaned up and the sun was on its way down creating shadows along the beach.

“Ready for that walk love?”

Emma, who had been wiping down the counters, turned to him with a grin, “Ready. Do you think we should take Rumple?”

Kilian looked over where the dog was sleeping, and raised both of his brows, “You really think he would let us leave without him?”

Laughing at the dog’s antics to always want to be included, Emma agreed and all three went down to walk along the beach. Emma and Killian, fingers linked, walked slowly along, talking quietly and watched the movements of the dog, who would chase something into the tall grass every few minutes. Finally, Emma couldn’t stand it any longer and went to see what he was doing but couldn’t see anything out of the ordinary.

“Kilian, what IS he doing?” she asked him since he wasn’t paying any attention to the dog’s behavior.

“Oh, don’t mind him. He’s chasing a crocodile.” And kept on walking like it was not any big deal.

Emma shook her head at him, “Did you just say he’s chasing a crocodile? There aren’t crocodiles in Florida. We have alligators.”

“No Swan, not a big crocodile. One of those little brown or green crocodiles that are always in the garden.”

When she finally figured out what he was talking about, she laughed.

“Babe, those are lizards. We don’t have crocodiles in Florida.”

Kilian looked at her out of the side of his eye.

“If you say so Swan, but in my line of work, you meet crocodiles every day.” He said as he laughed with her and hugged her close to his side.

Once back home they chose something to watch on Netflix and cuddled up on the sofa. After the movie was over, Killian could tell that Emma was getting tired and asked, “Shall I run you a bath?”

Emma looked over her shoulder at him, “That depends. Are you joining me?” His smirk was all the answer she needed.

If you haven’t listened to the music that Killian and Emma have danced to a couple of times, it can be heard here. I love this music. It was the first song in the movie and now is on my current playlist. Also if you aren’t on tumblr and haven’t enjoyed the gifs that I put together to give you a nice visual for this chapter. Check those out here.
Chapter End Notes

So did I succeed in giving you a nice, visual picture of what was happening? Only one more chapter and an epilogue for Emma and Killian. Let me know what you are thinking.
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Emma and Killian continue to mesh their lives together.

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry that this is late but I got caught up in working on the Once Upon a Captain Swan Story Book. If you haven't seen it, then let me know. It turned out amazing.

And as for Emma and Killian in the Beach House. This is the final full chapter and then only the epilogue is left. I am open to possible one shots and have had a few suggestions so you might see them again.

And for now, sit back and happy reading.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 16

As one month passed into the next, Emma continued to enjoy her time at the hospital but had to admit that the long hours could be difficult, especially when it kept her and Killian apart. When she heard talk of one of the private medical groups looking for a physician to buy into the practice, she found herself surprisingly interested. In fact, just today August, who was the neurologist in the practice, had approached her about it and she found she was giving it serious consideration. The thought of seeing patients in an office and having regular business hours was very appealing. So lost in thought was she that it took her several seconds to realize her name was being called, and when she realized who it was, she inwardly groaned. Killian's assistant, Tink, as he called her, was protective of him and hadn't completely accepted her into his life.

"Tink, I’m so sorry. I was lost in thought. How have you been?"

“Good.” Then she got right to the point. “Emma, it's no secret that Killian, and his brother, Liam, are like family to me and I’m sure you’ve noticed that I’ve been wary of your relationship with him.”

Emma smirked, “Really?”

Tink had the grace to look a little sheepish, “Sorry about that but I knew that he had been hung up on someone for a while and I didn’t want him to get hurt.”

“And I appreciate that someone has had Killian’s back. But I'm not going to hurt him. I love him.” Emma responded.

Tink acknowledged that with a slight tilt of her head, “And I can tell he loves you which is where my idea might make both of you very happy. With your schedule and his often conflicting, Killian’s mind is not completely in the moment during some of our theme cruises. I thought of an idea, if
you’re interested that is, of a way for you to become a part of our team.”

Emma looked at her a moment before responding, "Do I want to know? That gleam in your eye is kind of scary."

Tink’s smile got larger. “Oh, trust me, if I know Killian, he will be so happy, I might even get a raise out of this idea.”

Grinning a little at Tink, Emma answered, “I may live to regret this, especially by the tone of your voice, but for him, my discomfort is a cross I’m willing to bear.

K&E

There was a different excitement in the air as they went about setting up for the evening’s Swashbuckling Cruise. Killian hadn’t been able to put his finger on what, but not only had there been whispering going on between the crew members, but Tink was missing. And while Tink was usually the one to meet the charter buses when they arrived at the docks, tonight's crowd was different. They were not only a younger group, but also larger, and for something new, it was surprising for her to be absent. Deciding to put it out of his mind, he busied himself with making sure the ship was ready to sail, something he could do by rote, and still think of his Swan. Wondering if she was home from the hospital yet, he pulled out his phone and sent her a quick text.

K: Good evening love. Are you home yet?

Smiling when she quickly answered, he read:

E: Not yet.
K: Busy?
E: No. Changing.
K: Into what?
E: Wouldn't you like to know?
K: Perhaps I would
E: You will see it later.
K: Good.
E: ;-).
K: I miss you. See you soon.
E: Yes, you will

Before he could ask her what she meant by that, Eddie needed help with moving some of the tables for the guests and then it was time to get into his Captain Hook wear for the evening’s festivities.

K&E

Emma finished her last message and after putting her phone away, turned to Tink, "Let me put this on and I'll be ready to go."
Slipping behind the dressing area, she separated the parts of the costume and put them on. "And you're sure I need to wear the corset?" She grunted as she pulled it on, and tightened it.

Tink laughed, "Sorry, part of the look. Trust me, Killian will appreciate the view."

Emma pulled the dress over her head and tied the strings covering the bodice. Walking out from the dressing area, she remarked "If it was any lower cut, you could see my navel."

Tink handed her a cape to wrap around her shoulders, "Here, this will keep you covered until the unveiling." As they walked out of the office, heading to meet the charter buses, Tink filled Emma in on her part for tonight.

K&E

Stepping back on deck in his Captain Hook wear, Killian caught up with Eddie and they went over the plan for the evening. He, as Hook, would choose a lady from the 'group' and at some point, Eddie, as Blackbeard, would 'take' her, and tie her up. Then there would be a sword fight and Hook would rescue the damsel. Thinking if the damsel was Swan, then maybe… which was a thought left dangling before Wendy walked by dressed as Peter Pan.

"Wendy, where has Tink been?"

Wendy looked at him with such fear on her face, he felt he had asked her to reveal a major secret instead of the whereabouts of his bloody employee.

She was quiet for so long, he wasn't sure she was going to answer, before she stuttered out "She's, she's, ugh with the new girl." Then she scurried away just like a rat, who's being chased by a cat.

Wondering what part of the picture he was missing, he turned to go ask Eddie, but was halted by the arrival of the charter buses. Pulling his Captain Hook character around himself like armor, he went to his place at the top of the gangplank, and waited for his guests to cross.

K&E

Emma had never been involved in drama in school, but as a child, she often felt the need to pretend to be someone else. Her thought was that if she were someone else, she wouldn't have to be, Emma Swan, orphan. She was Emma, sister to M&M. Emma, daughter to Leo and Ava, not Emma Swan, orphan. As she got older, she didn't mind being Emma Swan, orphan, because she knew that Ava and Leo and M&M loved her as if she were a Blanchard, but there were other ways for her to pretend, other ways to view herself. She was Emma Swan, a doctor, a sister, a student, rarely would she allow herself to be, Emma Swan, a woman, until Killian came into her life. Killian had slowly chipped down those walls, allowing her to see the softer side of herself, and now, she was proud and happy of who she was with him. She was Emma Swan, a woman in love and tonight, she was a bar wench, who was going to be spending the evening with Captain Hook and his rag tag crew.

As the buses rolled to a stop, Tink looked over at Emma, "You ready? Remember get behind the group of girls and boys, I pointed out to you and then, they will move aside so you can put your hand in Killian's before he even sees you."

"I know Tink. I'm good." And before Tink could get too far away, she called, "Thanks. I owe you one."

Tink walked back to where she was standing, "It is I who owe you."

Emma furrowed her brow at her, "Me? What did I do?"
"You love my friend, that's what. As his friend, I've never seen him so happy. And as his employee, when he's not grumpy, the business is a happier place."

Noticing that the students were getting antsy, Tink stood up and gave last minute instructions, as well as answered a few questions. She was excited about this group as they were freshman college students on a field trip with their dorm who all wanted to relax before taking final exams. She knew the girls would all swoon over Captain Hook and with Emma around, maybe they would keep their hands to themselves, but if not, she was sure Emma could take care of it. Leading them off the bus, they walked toward the gangplank, where they would be met by Peter Pan, Blackbeard, and the Captain himself. Tink couldn't wait to see Killian's look of shock, when he got a look at Emma and her bar wench ensemble.

K&E

Killian saw all the college students, led by Tink, heading his way. Assuming his Hook stance, pulling himself up tall, shoulders back, hips cocked, and a little swag in his movements, he waited for the ladies. As always, he buzzed the back of their hand, winked and called them milady, but these girls were a bit different than his older set. A little pushier, more secure in their sensuality, especially some of them, and he found it a bit off-putting. The girls were pushing ahead, flirting, and he found it necessary to 'step back' from the situation. For the first time in a long while, he was performing without thinking until he took hold of a hand and got a whiff of his Swan's unique smell, vanilla and sugar. Thinking he had surely gone daft, he bent over the hand that he was holding, but the smell was stronger and reminded him so much of her, he looked up only to have his eyes stop at the sexy décolletage of the woman he loved. Continuing on up to her eyes, he raised an eyebrow.

"Like what you see Captain?"

Killian didn't think, just reacted by tugging her hand so that she fell into his arms, and then plundered her mouth before swooping her down into a dip. He felt Emma wrap her arms around his neck, kissing him back as if it had been months since they had seen each other instead of hours. He was content to just stand here with his Swan in his arms until he heard giggling around him, and slowly released her lips, but kept her bent over his arm.

"Swan, you didn't tell me you were going to be here." He whispered before bending over to give her another quick kiss.

Emma stared into the lust filled eyes of her Captain, "I told you that you would see me later." She responded with a little laughter in her voice. Reaching up she laid her hand along his jaw, caressing along his scruff with her thumb, "Shouldn't you let me up so you can finish welcoming your passengers on board?"

Killian slanted a look at the gaggle of girls staring at them, "Bloody hell." He exclaimed bringing Emma upright, but keeping her in the circle of his arms. Tempted to toss her over his shoulder and carry her to the cabin, he pulled every ounce of his self-restraint out, to complete the business at hand.

Turning to Blackbeard, who was standing there watching him with a smirk on his face, Killian jutted his chin in Emma's direction to stake his claim, "This one," he said before giving her a hard kiss, "is mine. Keep your hands off!" Then turned back to the last few girls and welcomed them aboard.

Blackbeard tossed his red duster aside, showing off the hilt of his sword, "We shall see about that!" he exclaimed before turning and stalking off.

Killian smirked at Tinkerbelle who had just walked up, "Remind me to give you a raise." Turning
back to Emma, Killian took his finger and traced around the low neckline of her gown, growling a little as he reached the center, where he dipped his finger, inside the bodice, "I like this outfit whole lot. Come to the bridge with me?"

She picked up his finger and kissed the tip. "I told Tink I'd help serve. Later?"

Nodding his head alright, he gave her one last kiss before she followed Tink to the galley to serve the hungry college students and he went up to the bridge to set sail.

K&E

Killian guided the ship away from the dock and sailed out into the Bay toward the Atlantic Ocean, while periodically keeping an eye on the happenings down on the deck. He enjoyed watching his Swan as she moved effortlessly around the deck as easily as her namesake moved along the water. He couldn't believe she was here, in his world, dressed as a bar wench, for him. When he had read his mother's letter and she had written.

…..Find that special woman to love and when you find her, hold on to her with all you have. Love is precious and you, my son, have such an immense capacity for it that when you find her, you will know.

He had imagined finding love someday but never the way it actually happened. It had not even been three months since they had physically found each other, yet she was such an ingrained part of his very soul that if he lost her, he wasn't sure what he would do. In the distance he caught sight of a shooting star, its tail leaving trails of sparks in its wake.

"Thanks mum," he whispered before turning his attention back to watching Emma and Blackbeard and waiting for his cue to slide down the rigging to rescue his damsel from the cutthroat pirate.

K&E

Emma followed Tink down to the galley where she helped pull out the trays to serve the guests. It was mindless work and as she went from table to table, setting down plates and refilling cups, she listened to the chatter going on around her. Most of it had to do with final exams and the student's plans for the summer, but at one table there was a lively discussion about a man's package and the fit of his clothing and how it allowed for the appreciation of such package. It took her a few minutes to realize the package they were talking about, happened to belong to her man, which essentially made it her package. Trying to decide if she wished to say anything or not, she looked up at her Pirate Captain standing on the bridge and was taken aback by what she saw.

He was standing behind the wheel, the breeze blowing his dark hair over his forehead. She had noticed his clothing when she had first boarded the ship, but hadn't had time to appreciate it before he swooped in with that kiss that was so hot she felt like she needed a dip in the sea to cool off. He was wearing all black tonight, complete with eyeliner, which served to highlight the blue of his eyes and made her feel they were piercing to her very soul, even across the distance of the deck. His shirt was black silk with voluminous sleeves, unbuttoned to mid chest. Over that he was wearing a black leather vest with gold braided fasteners and these topped black leather pants that hugged his body in such a way that should be outlawed. And while earlier he had been wearing his black leather duster, he had tossed it aside in deference to the warm South Florida night. Unconsciously she licked her lips as she stood admiring him, but when she noticed a slight widening of his eyes and a devilish grin cross his face, causing his dimples to pop out, she knew she had given herself away. Fanning herself with the extra napkins she had been carrying, she blew him a kiss and walked back to the table that had been discussing her sexy pirate.
As she walked up to the table, Emma heard the girls giggling, and then one said "He looks like a man who knows what to do with a woman." And all around the table the girls were humming in agreement.

Biting her tongue to refrain from saying anything too nasty that wouldn't be good for his business, she continued with her tasks. Moving to the next table, she could still hear the girls discussing Killian, and then she heard her name brought into the conversation. The majority of the talk seemed to come from two of the girls, as one said. "Was that woman he kissed his girlfriend? What's so special about her?

Then laughed to herself when another girl said, "Well she's pretty enough, I guess."

High praise, Emma thought. Until the mouthier of the two said, "I bet I could handle him just fine." And snickered.

Walking up behind the girl, Emma bent down so there would be no misunderstanding as to whom she was talking to.

"Oh I handle him just fine. Sometimes several times a day."

Then with a devilish grin on her face, she picked up an empty tray and escaped to the galley to clear her head.

K&E

Feeling good about what she had said to the girls, she checked on a few other tables and had just set down a pitcher of water, when she felt someone grab her around the waist. Knowing it wasn't Killian, her fighting instinct kicked in and she turned and without any warning to her attacker, hit him on the chin with a hard right cross. The look of surprise on his face as he was knocked to the ground equaled what she was feeling when she realized, his grabbing her must have been part of the act. Just as she was going to make sure he was ok, there was a commotion behind her and she turned to see Killian landing on the deck after sliding down from the bridge, using the ropes. "Oh" was all she got out before being pushed aside by Wendy, who was coming to check on her beau, Eddie and by Killian, who arrived resplendent in his full costume.

"Swan, you just deprived me of a dashing rescue." He said as he cocked that damn eyebrow.

"Sorry? You should have warned me."

This time it was his turn to look sheepish, "Bloody hell. You showed up looking like that." he waved his hand toward her dress, "and well, I guess I wasn't thinking." Then he sauntered a bit closer invading her space.

"Thinking with the right head, you mean ?"

"With those," he glanced down, "on display did you think I would be thinking clearly?" he said quietly taking another step closer. "Does the fact that I didn't 'rescue' you mean I don't get a kiss?"

Emma looked around her, and while their conversation had been mostly quiet, all eyes were focused their way, "I'd hate to deprive you of that, Captain." Stepping closer, she ran her finger around the 'V' that was present from the opened buttons of his shirt, then, taking hold of his jacket lapels with both hands, she tugged him forward, their lips meeting in a fiery kiss. He let her lead, only gently placing his hands in her hair, and taking advantage, she controlled the kiss, sucking his bottom lip into her mouth, before opening wider and allowing the kiss to deepen. She could feel herself getting lost in the sensuous haze that always surrounded her, when Killian was near, until he broke the kiss
and buried his face in her neck. His breathing, once again under control, he murmured for only her to hear, "Thank gods for long jackets." Then leaning back smirked at her.

Emma smirked right back, "Oh, and why thank gods?"

Rubbing his nose lightly against her, he whispered, "You know."

"Hmm, yes Captain, I do," then licking her lips, "I'll take care of THAT later." And winked before sashaying away.

Thankfully, Eddie hadn't been hurt and with a little TLC from Wendy was as good as new. Once she had taken care of all the tables and the guests were listening to music, Emma went up to the bridge to be with Killian. He pulled her in front of him, and then surrounded her with his hands on the wheel. Leaning back against him, she enjoyed the feel of the sea breeze and the soothing undulations of the ship beneath her feet.

K&E

Killian loved that Emma had come to him and having her in front of him, relaxing back against him was like a little slice of heaven.

"Penny for your thoughts Swan."

Turning her head, she nuzzled his jaw, "I was just thinking how peaceful it is up here and beautiful" "Aye, love it is. But it doesn't hold a candle to you." Bending his head, he pulled her right earlobe into his mouth, giving it a small nip.

Emma giggled at his smooth talk, "Hoping to get lucky later?"

He had moved to her other ear and was nibbling on its rim, and growled low in his throat, "Is it working?"

"Well, Captain, we might be able to work something out."

"Something out? Nah, I am thinking more the opposite." And taking one hand off of the wheel, he hugged her to him tightly.

For the trip back to the dock, Emma sat in the captain's chair, watching as the lights of the city got brighter, the closer to the dock they were. She watched the crew working together as a team and while couldn't help but feel a little jealousy at the time they had had with Killian, was very happy that she now had become a part of their group. Rubbing her hands along his back, assuring herself that he was real, she appreciated the easy way he handled the large ship. Stroking, loving his other Swan, as easily as he handled her. Happiness settled around her as the ship glided along the waves.

K&E

After they had docked and the ship was tied up, the gangplank was put in place and the co-eds were back on the bus the cleaning commenced. Emma helped fold up tables, chairs and anything else that needed to be done, thinking the quicker they were done, the quicker she had her pirate all to herself. As she moved from one area of the deck, she couldn't help but notice just how sexy Killian looked in his black clothing. He moved around carrying the tables and chairs at ease with his tasks, and as he had apparently gotten too warm, he had unfastened his leather vest, leaving it hanging open. He had also opened a few more buttons on his shirt, so now it fell open almost to his stomach, leaving his spectacular chest available for viewing. And those girls were right about his pants. Not only did
they draw the eyes to the front, but when he bent over to pick up things, they looked just as good from the back.

"Mama Mia," she murmured under her breath, wondering how she was going to behave until they were home.

Hearing his voice, she looked up just as he was pushing the last cart of chairs under the tarp, and telling Eddie he was going to his cabin to change and they would finish up as soon as he returned. Looking around to make sure that no one was paying any attention to her, she slipped after him, arriving just a few minutes after the door had been shut. Quietly opening the door, she slipped inside. Having already removed his vest as it was tossed on the bed, he had one hand under the left suspender when he turned toward her.

Emma took a minute to scan him from his stem to his stern, then posed a question, "Need some help, Captain?"

Killian sauntered a little closer, then bending at the waist, he leaned in, "Well, lass, that all depends. Are you offering?" And standing up straight waited for her response.

Emma wrapped her fingers around his suspender straps and tugged him closer, "I'd be happy," then she slid the right suspender off his shoulder, "To help." There were only a few buttons still closed, and slowly she unbuttoned them, one by one. Sliding her thumb and forefinger back and forth across the silky fabric, she glanced up, "I bet this feels amazing against your skin."

Killian reached out with his right arm and wrapped her in his embrace, pulling her tightly against his body. She fit so perfectly in his arms, he wanted nothing but to lose himself in her soft body, but this wasn't the time.

"Emma love, you are making this very hard" was all he got out before she interrupted him.

"I can feel that babe." She smirked, "but isn’t that the idea?"

Completing the circle, she slid her hands through his chest hair and up around his neck. She pulled his head down and standing on her tip toes their lips met in an open mouth kiss meant to elicit more than one carnal desire. The kiss went on and on, both breathing hard, with both of their hands traveling from one body part to another. Emma felt the laces on her bodice give way as she tugged at the laces on his leathers finally freeing them allowing her access to other treasures. Pushing his shirt off his shoulders, she felt it fall to the floor before she reached around and pushed his pants down, allowing them to also fall to the floor.

Killian released her lips long enough, to murmur, "Gods Emma, what you make me feel." Before sliding his hands under her full skirt and picking her up. He balanced her against the door and as she wrapped her legs around his waist she fit their bodies together as one. He captured her lips with his setting a rhythm with his tongue and body that she had no trouble catching up to and they raced together until they shattered as one on the other side. His heart was racing, his breath coming faster and he had bloody hell just about set fire to his ship he had been in such a hurry. He tightened his hold on her, allowing them both to take deep breaths, until he felt he could formulate a coherent sentence.

"You alright Swan?"

Emma hummed deep in her throat, the pleasure she was feeling all too evident in the almost purring tone of her voice. She leaned her head back against the door so she could see his face.
"Perfect. You?"

He laughed, a low husky sound, "Perfect. Think my crew knows what we've been doing?"

Emma slid off of Killian and readjusted her skirts then giggled, "Probably. You ok with that?

While she waited for his answer she unfastened her dress and pulled it over her head, giving him an eyeful of woman. Picking up the silky black shirt, she dropped the uncomfortable corset on the bed and slid the cool, soft material on and buttoned it up. She pulled some old jeans out of a drawer and slid into those before looking for some flip flops that she remembered leaving onboard the last time they had spent the day at sea. Once dressed, she brushed her hair and turned to see Killian standing there staring at her.

"What?"

He gave her a shy, but radiant smile, "I love you." He told her before kissing her once quickly and then hurriedly dressing. They walked up the steps together, wrapped in each other's arms to discover that the crew had locked up and left them alone. Crossing the gangplank, they locked the dock gate and drove home, where they had several repeat performances of their nightly activities.

K&E

Early one Saturday in June, Emma sat on the patio looking out at the water thinking she had never been happier. She fell in love with Killian a little more every day, even when she didn't think that was possible and in just over a month her new niece or nephew was going to be born. Which was why she was up freaking early on a Saturday, instead of in bed! Even Rumple had opened one eye, before promptly shutting it and going back to doggy dreamland, couldn't be enticed to keep her company in the kitchen.

Having put off the food preparations as long as possible, Emma started pulling all the ingredients for all the finger foods that she had decided to make for her sister's baby shower. Not only were all the ladies going to be there, but also spouses and children. What had she been thinking? Not thinking, obviously. Since she wasn't going fancy, it was mainly just a lot of cutting, sorting and stacking, but David loved his pigs-n-blankets, so those would need to cook. Once everything was out, she turned on some music and started cutting.

The pigs-n-blanket were done and in a warming pan, a few cheese and cracker creations were done and she was in the middle of putting together some small sandwich platters when she felt arms come around her waist and a scruffy cheek next to hers as he rested his chin on her shoulder. Popping a piece of turkey into his mouth, she asked, "I didn't wake you did I?"

As he finished chewing, he kissed her on the cheek and then moved next to her to lean against the counter, "You’re not being next to me is what woke me. Do you need help?"

"You're going to help?" She squinted her eyes at him, "Really? Or do you just want to sample the food?"

The tips of his ears got pink, and tucking his chin, dimpled at her, "Caught me. But really, do you need help? Maybe setting up outside?"

Looking up from what she was doing, "You would work out in the hot sun on your day off, for me?"

Raising an eyebrow at her, he leaned in, "You didn't think I would?"
Putting down what she had been working on and moving closer to him, she leaned against his chest. He wrapped her in his secure embrace, and waited patiently for what she had to say.

"I'm sorry. When Graham and I dated, he was more wrapped up in what he wanted when it came to parties, than what I wanted, as I'm sure you noticed at my birthday party." "Aye, love, I did notice. I wanted you to sail away with me that night." Kissing him on the jaw, she moved out of his arms, back to what she had been working on.

"It would be great if you could set up the outdoors, thank you." She told him smiling shyly.

On his way out the door, he pecked her on the cheek, "Oh, I'm sure I'll think of some worthwhile payment." After giving her a little love tap on her behind, he took Rumple and went outside.

She worked for a while finishing her sandwich and vegetable trays and dip. Once those were completed, she wrapped them and put them back in the refrigerator to keep cool, while she mixed the batter for the cupcakes she was making. Once those were baking, she looked out the window, watching Killian and Rumple down on the beach. They looked like they were having such a good time down there, she wished she could join them for a nice swim but duty called her to wrap the cute little gifts they had bought for the baby. After taking the cupcakes out of the oven, she took cold drinks down to the beach for her boys.

"Cold drinks?" she called as she walked down the path. Both stopped and looked back at her before Rumple took off running in her direction, Killian not far behind. Setting the shallow bowl, she had brought for Rumple, on the sand, she looked back up as Killian pulled off his shirt, and handed him the cold bottle of water.

"Thanks love" he said as he removed the cap and tilting his head back drank half the bottle before pouring the other half over his head. With the water droplets dripping, he stalked towards her, causing her to squeal and run inside, with his words reverberating in her head.

"You can't hide Swan. I will find you, I will always find you."

Once back inside, Emma completed the rest of the preparations for the party. The last thing on her list was to put chocolate frosting onto the cupcakes, and not wanting to mix it from scratch, she had purchased a couple of ready-made containers. Getting them out of the pantry, she delicately added frosting to each mini cake and then when that was done, sprinkled blue and pink decorations on the top. Covering those, she cleaned up the mess but couldn't help dipping her finger in the chocolate confection and sucking it off. It tasted so good, she did it again and again, groaning at the heavenly taste.

~~~

Killian had come in the front door after working outside and was on his way to the shower when he heard a sensuous moan coming from the kitchen. Curious as to what she was doing he walked down the hall to see, and the site before him caused his blood to burn hotter than it had been while he was working outdoors. Emma was dipping her finger into the chocolate and sucking it off. Gods she was beautiful. Thinking maybe he wanted a lick too, he started toward her, just as she opened her eyes.

~~

After five or six licks, she had just about decided that was enough when she opened her eyes to see shirtless Killian staring at her, face flushed, pupils wide, tongue in the corner of mouth. What else could she do but dip her finger back in and swirl it around, before lifting it toward her tongue, which she stuck out and wrapped around her finger that was coated with the chocolate frosting. She
watched as his breathing became shallower, and he licked his lips, as if he were gazing at something he would die, if he couldn't taste.

~~~

The little tease knew exactly how hot she was making him but he didn’t care, he wanted a taste now. When he was within touching distance, he reached out and took her hand, putting her finger in his mouth, treating it to a sensuous demonstration of some of the talents of his tongue.

Once the confection was removed, he popped his lips, "You know, darling, I can think of quite a few places we could put that frosting and," he stopped and dipped his finger in the container, smearing it on her neck, just under her earlobe, "lick it off," he finished before doing just that to her neck. "Care to dine with me?"

When he had taken her finger and sucked on it, swirling his tongue around it, her knees had almost buckled, but when he had licked the frosting off her neck, she definitely had to clutch onto the counter or she would have been a puddle on the floor.

"Killian, what you do to me." She said before picking up the can to follow, when her phone rang, and not just any ring, but her sister's. With a disappointed tone, she moaned, "Sorry, rain check?"
"Definitely Swan, most definitely."

K&E

Killian stood talking to Liam, watching his Swan move from group to group, making sure everyone was taken care of. He couldn't believe how amazing she was, with putting together this party, after working all week. He also couldn't believe his piss poor luck with that phone call interrupting them, because damn, she made him hot. He caught her eye, as she knelt down to speak to Roland, and blew her a kiss, smirking when she got a little flustered.

"Down boy, there are children present." Liam remarked.

"Bloody hell, Liam. I'm not sixteen."

Liam laughed. "Of that I am well aware. When are you going to marry that girl?"

Giving his brother a look out of the side of his eyes, he quipped. "When she asks."

Liam popped him in the stomach with the back of his hand, before he was ready causing his breath to escape.

Rubbing his stomach, "Wanker, what was that for?"

"Oh bugger that, mum brought you up to be a romantic soul and you're waiting for her to propose?.

Killian looked toward Emma, then back at his brother and said quietly, "I would have married her months ago, but she wasn't ready. I told her to let me know. I can be patient," Liam snorted, "When I have to be. She's worth it. Besides you waited for Elsa."

Liam looked for his wife, who was talking to Regina and holding little Rosie, "Aye little brother, that I did, and it was worth it. In fact, I think I am going to steal my wife for a short walk on the beach."

Letting the little brother comment go, Killian responded, "Is that ALL you're going to do on the walk, Liam?"
Liam winked as he walked away, "Hardly" he smirked.

Shaking his head at his brother’s response, his eyes once again sought out his Swan and found her sitting next to her sister. Going into the house he picked up one of the cupcakes and stood where he was in her line of sight. Once he knew she was looking, he took his finger and ran it through the frosting, before sucking it off. Then walking over to her, he leaned in for a kiss, making sure he left a little chocolate behind. When he looked back, he was happy that he had gotten the response he had wanted, "Payback's a bitch, right Swan?"

~~~

Emma had to make a concentrated effort not to look at Killian since the party had started, as every time she did, she was immediately taken back to the kitchen. Thinking about what she could do with that chocolate was causing her to burn, and not because they were outside either. And then he dipped that finger in his cupcake frosting and used that oh so talented tongue to remove it, before kissing her senseless, well her lady parts were standing up, cheering loudly, and she had completely lost her train of thought. Fanning herself with the front of her shirt, trying to regroup, it took several tries before she heard M&M call her name.

"Emma, still?"

Looking at her sister a confused look in her face, "Still?"

M&M smiled, "Yes, still. Still butterflies. Still makes you hot. Still want to jump him whenever you're near him."

"Sis!" She whispered, and then giggled and answered in a sheepish way. "Guilty. Now can we please change the subject before I embarrass myself and pull him inside for a quickie?"

M&M rolled her eyes, "Sure, but when are you going to put that poor man out of his misery and marry him."

"I love him, but I guess I'm a little old fashioned enough to wait for him to ask me."

"Wait a minute, didn't you tell me months ago, he was waiting for you to ask?"

Emma shrugged her shoulders, "Yes, but…"

Rolling her eyes, she responded. "Emma that man looks at you, as if you are his sun, moon and stars. If you haven't asked by August 1, then I'm asking him on your behalf."

"Geez, you can stop practicing your mom skills on me. August 1, got it."

They kept their distance from each other for the rest of the party and when it was time to go, Killian helped David load all of their loot as he termed it, and then stood with his arm wrapped around her, holding her snug against his side. As the last guest drove off, Killian turned them as one and they walked inside.

"I seem to remember some plans that were interrupted before the party. Care to continue them now?"

He covered her lips, in a kiss meant to leave no questions as to where this would end up. Running his hand up her silky leg, he could hear her breathing escalate, and feel her fingers dig in to his behind. As the kissing continued he picked her up and moving down the hall, sat her on the bar where he pulled her shirt off and tossed it over his shoulder. This action offered up new treasures for
him to touch and kiss, only stopping when she pushed his shirt up and over his head. Reaching around behind her for the can of frosting, he popped the top and scooped out some with his finger and rubbed it on her neck.

“Shall I?” he asked before leaning in and nibbling his way along the sugary coating, humming his appreciation of both the chocolate and then woman.

Climbing up next to her on the bar, he scooped out more frosting and ran his finger from the notch in her neck, down, following the path with his lips.

“More Swan?”

“Oh, definitely more.” She got out before he rubbed frosting along her lips and was sucking it off.

Sitting up, Killian climbed down off the bar and picking her up, carried her to their room. They experimented with the chocolate confection and dined on each other before showering together. It definitely turned out to be a wonderful way to end the evening.

K&E

The call they were waiting for came in the middle of the night, in the middle of July that M&M was in labor and they were on their way to the hospital. Emma jumped up with a shout and ran to get her clothes on. When she came out of the closet dressed, Killian was still lying in bed in such a way that she was really tempted to jump back in and have her way with him, but they would have time for that later, her niece or nephew would only be born once.

Leaning over and licking along the shell of his ear, she saw him open one eye, “I’m leaving in ten. Are you coming or not?”.

Then before he could snake his arm out and pull her back into bed, she scampered away. Killian tossed aside the blanket giving her an eyeful of his assets, before winking and going to get dressed.

Walking into Bayside General, they made their way to labor and delivery and M&M’s room. She was sitting up in bed hooked up to an IV, blood pressure monitor and a fetal monitor, with a disgruntled look on her face and David was standing over by the window, arms crossed. Emma looked at Killian to see if he had any idea, but he just shrugged his shoulders.

Walking up to her sister’s bedside, out of habit she checked the monitors, then said, "Are we interrupting?"

M&M looked over at David, "No, your brother in law’s just being stubborn. He still is insisting if it's a boy we should name it Sherlock, which is an awful name to pin to a baby.

"Hey" remarked David, "He was a great detective."

"Fictional" M&M chimed in.

"You want to name the baby Emily if it's a girl, after a writer," he said with a sneer.

"She was one of the greatest literary writers of her time," she got out before she grabbed Emma’s hand to breathe through a contraction.

David switched places with Emma once the contraction had passed and the couples talked about the nursery, which Kilian had helped David paint, until the doctor came in to give M&M her epidural.
Emma had never realized how uncomfortable the seats were in a hospital waiting room until she was actually waiting, but somehow Killian looked completely relaxed on the sofa. Leaning back, arm along the edge, one leg crossed over the other knee, and dark hair looking like he had just rolled out of bed, made her think of the last scene of him in their bed this morning, making her long to be back there. The early morning, combined with long days of work in the past week, were catching up, which was why she was moving. Stop, and she knew she'd fall asleep.

Sitting in the waiting room with Emma, Killian couldn't help but think about the possibility of Emma being the one in that bed, about to give birth to their child. He didn't want to rush her, but seeing how maternal she had been with her sister, made him long to experience that with her. Periodically, their eyes would meet across the room and he could feel her tension, continually amazed at how in tuned they were with each other, and he wondered if she had changed her mind about marriage.

Currently though, he needed to get his Swan to sit down before she fell down. Standing, he walked to her and took her in his arms. She immediately snuggled into his chest, allowing him to take some of her weight.

"Come love, let me hold you."

Sitting back down, he brought her onto his lap, and pulled her head onto his shoulder.

"Sleep. I've got you."

Emma tucked her head into her spot, the bend between Killian's shoulder and neck, and nuzzled his jaw.

"I love you, you know that right?"

Leaning his head into hers and tightening his arms around her, Killian hummed in agreement, "Aye, Swan. I know, and I love you. Now sleep". Feeling her relax into sleep, he allowed his eyes to close for a brief moment, savoring the feeling of having the woman he loved in his arms.

David woke Killian three hours later to announce that Emily Ruth had arrived and would be available for visitors shortly. Killian woke Emma and as they walked down the hall, kept his arm wrapped around her, holding her close. When they walked into the room, M&M was sitting in bed looking tired but happy, holding a small bundle with a little pink hat on her head.

Someday, he thought, as Emma stepped away from him to go to her sister's side.

Looking down at the tiny scrunched up face, Emma was in awe of the beauty of the creation of life. She reached out and ran her finger lightly along the downy soft cheek. Looking up at her sister, both their eyes swimming in tears.

"Congratulations, mama. You did good." She grinned.

"Thanks sis, would you like to meet your new niece," she asked holding the baby out toward Emma.

Smiling Emma reached for the baby, "Thought you'd never ask."
Taking the small bundle, she tucked her close and looked for a place to sit. Killian, sitting in the chair closet to the bed, had the most tender look in his eyes, which drew her to him. He sat up straight and she settled on his lap, bundle still snug in her arms. Together they leaned in, examining the newborn, even moving aside the blanket, to count the little toes and fingers. Whether from the cooler air or recognizing she wasn't being held by the same person, Emily opened her eyes and looked up at her and the first thing that Emma thought was, I want this. Turning her head to look at Killian, their eyes met and it was as if they were alone in the room. No other sounds could be heard but his breathing and it was as if she could hear what he was thinking. Yes, I will. Ask me.

~~~

Killian watched Emma take the baby and turn to look his way and his heart practically turned over in his chest. Their eyes met and he waited, hoped she would come to him. When she sat on his knee and together they explored the little human with her petal soft skin, her little pink cheeks and her bow shape mouth, he had to swallow several time to remove the giant lump in his throat. And then when Emily opened her eyes and looked up at his Swan, and then Emma's eyes met his, time stood still.

You are my future, will you marry me, he thought, will you take the next step with me?

Then as if she had opened her mouth and answered out loud, he heard her response, his heart took flight. Gently so as not to disturb the sleeping cherub, he kissed his true love, and then followed her as she settled the baby back with the new parents. After kissing M&M on the cheek and shaking David's hand, he took his Swan home to bed.

No words were spoken as they walked into the house and immediately turned toward their bedroom. Killian stopped her at the door, taking her lips in a heated kiss, his hands busy touching and caressing everywhere he could reach. Releasing her lips, he pulled her shirt off and followed her to the bed, where she lay down on her side watching him. Toeing off his shoes, he followed her down, capturing her lips with his, loving her with all of his body, as he loved her with all of his heart.

K&E

Emma had been working long days and spending time with her sister and baby Emily, and hadn't seen much of Killian or Rumple lately, which was why she was in a hurry to get inside. Opening the door to the house, she expected to hear the clicking of Rumple's nails as he greeted, but there was no dog to greet her. She dropped her things on a table as she walked into the kitchen and called out Killian's name but there was no answer. His truck was parked out front so she knew he was home and probably down on the beach. Emma went into their room and changed out of her scrubs into shorts and a tank and walked down toward the path the led to the beach.

Rumple was waiting for her, half way down, and when she tried to walk around him he refused to move. Patting her leg, she called, “Come on boy, let's go,” but still he sat still.

That's curious, she thought. Bending closer to make sure he was ok, he lifted his paw, like he did when shaking for a treat, and when she reached down she saw a piece of paper attached.

"What the…?"

Emma smiled to herself wondering what Killian was using courier Rumple for that he couldn’t send in a text or tell her. She removed the paper and opened it. What she read made her heart race and tears form in her eyes. His letter said;
"I love you. Marry me?"

"Yes!" she shouted out loud. Then as her feet took off the rest of the way, she continued to chant "yes, yes, yes" over and over again, until she saw him standing by a group of cushions next to a low table. Hesitating just a split second, she watched the smile cross his face and taking off again, she ran right into his arms, and showered kisses all over his beautiful face, repeating her answer until his smile was so large, the tiny lines at the sides of his eyes crinkled.

~~~~~~~~

Killian saw her running and readied to catch her, laughing at the way she was kissing anywhere she could reach, while chanting the only answer he had wanted to hear. "Yes, you'll marry me?"

"Did you have any doubt?"

Tugging at his ear, he replied. "Well, Swan, I did tell you, I would let you set the pace. But then I saw you with Emily and I just knew it was time. I love you."

He leaned in and gave her another kiss before he asked, "How long are you going to make me wait? Next week?" he said a hopeful tone in his voice.

Emma giggled at his eagerness, "That would work for me but I don’t think M&M would be happy."

She pulled her phone out of her back pocket and looked at the calendar.

"How about Sept 25, here, on the beach?"

Pretending to think about it, he didn’t say anything, until she pinched his stomach. Then he smiled down at her, "I'll be here." And picking her up, his lips covered hers in a kiss that went on and on.

Chapter End Notes

So how did you enjoy their continued journey? Stay tuned for their epilogue - and you know Rumple will have a special part in it....
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

A Happy Ending is only the beginning

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for traveling this journey with me. Here's the epilogue which includes a lot of fluff.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Their wedding day arrived bright and sunny and as Emma sat in front of the mirror, while M&M fussed with her hair, she couldn't help but reflect over how much her life up had changed in the last few years. Over how much she had changed. From someone who didn't let others get close, except her family, to someone who had many close friends and a man who owned her whole heart. She couldn't imagine anything else that could add to her happiness, that is until she heard the gurgling from the portable crib set up close by. Now one of those, she thought, would be special. Taking M&M's hand in hers, their eyes met in the mirror.

"Thanks for helping today, sis."

Mary Margaret squeezed her fingers, "And where else would I be? You were there for my big day, of course I'm here for yours."

"I know, but Emily is so little and, you know?" She said shrugging her shoulders.

M&M hugged her from behind, "Emma, you've got a family, you've got lots of friends and you have a man who loves you so much, it can be embarrassing to watch sometimes. When are you going to realize that?"

Emma was saved from having to answer by a cry from the baby. M&M finished pinning the flower wreath on Emma's head and went to tend to her daughter.

"Are you hungry little one?" The baby gurgled in response and M&M picked her up, putting her on her shoulder. Picking up the diaper bag, she turned to Emma, "I'm going to go in to the guest room and feed her and then she should sleep throughout the ceremony. Do you need anything else before I go?"

When she left the room, Emma stood up and walked to the window to look down over the wedding decorations. She was so happy with how the beach looked, better than she could have thought possible when they decided they wanted a "period wedding' to match the location of their reception, the Schwan. Knowing that Killian loved that ship, had made the decision easier than most thought, and now that the day was here, she was anxious to see, not only all the finery that her guests would wear, as they too were dressing in period costumes, but the decorations on the beach and onboard the ship.
And the beach looked beautiful as they had gone with decorations that were simple, yet elegant. White chairs flanked both sides of a single white runner that would serve as the center aisle. The end chairs had white ornate ribbons and in the front were baskets of calla lilies and pink roses where Killian would be waiting for her under a gold arch decorated with flowers. What she was most excited about was the staircase that had been constructed for her to walk down before reaching him making her feel like a real princess.

She loved her dress which added to the princess feel in its simple, yet elegant design. The bodice was fitted with a scooped neckline and closed in the back with an intricate lacing system. The sleeves were long and fitted, flaring at the ends. The skirt was long with a small train, which flowed behind her as she walked. And while she loved the design of the dress, it was the material with which it was made, that added to its romance. Off white with delicate lace designs throughout, giving it a romantic aura and making her truly feel she's a princess who is on her way down to meet her prince.

Glancing out at the water, sparkling bright blue under the sun, with gentle waves rolling in to softly lick the shore she saw a speck on the horizon that was gradually growing larger. As it got closer she could see that it was one of Killian's yachts brought down to help tender the guests back and forth to the Schwan, where they were holding their reception. And judging by the way it was bouncing along the waves, it was being driven by Killian's friend, John Silver who was a daredevil on the water. Looking farther north, she caught sight of the majestic white sails of the Schwan billowing in the wind as she flew across the water next to the Cigno.

"Boys, she whispered shaking her head, "never can miss an opportunity to one up each other."

Emma turned as the door opened to see M&M and Emily enter, "It's time Emma. You ready?" asked her sister, who put Emily in her portable crib and set up the monitor.

Emma stood next to her, and smiled softly at her sister, "Thanks again for being here, sis." Biting her lip to still the tremor of her chin.

With one last hug, M&M whispered, "Let's go before we ruin our make-up" which thankfully relieved some of the tension. Picking up their bouquets, they moved toward the door and waited for their music cue to begin.

K&E

Standing in front of their guests in his period finery, Killian felt every bit the prince who was waiting for the appearance of his princess. Wearing black leather breeches, black satin shirt with a red vest and covered with a dark gray, long quilted duster, he waited for Emma. As the music started and she appeared at the top of the staircase they had fashioned for this day, his heart stopped, she was so beautiful. Her dress outlined her sexy figure, but it was her face that drew his gaze over and over again. The radiance of her smile almost brought him to his knees and the way she was backlit by the sun gave her an ethereal glow. Gods he loved her, he thought, as she neared the end where he waited. When she reached the end of the aisle, he stepped forward and took her small hand in his, letting her see what he was feeling in his eyes.

"You look beautiful, Swan."

She smiled that little smile that she reserved for him and together they turned to face the minister. So lost in the deep green of her eyes, Killian didn't hear much of what was said until it was his turn to say his vows.

Taking a deep breath, he started. "Emma, we have spoken many times about the fact that there is
a we because of something magical, "and then looking down at Rumple who sat quietly at their feet, "mystical even. But there is a quote that says Important encounters are planned by the souls long before the bodies see each other. I believe that on that fateful day at Bayside, that you were chosen for me, and that somehow I was given a "do over." You saved me, Emma, when I didn't even realize I needed to be saved. Thank you for being you. You are my family and," before he could continue there was a bark from below, "And Rumple of course," he continued, "are my family. I love you." And he kissed her softly on the lips.

Emma rubbed the back of Killian's hand against her cheek, and then kissed his fingertips before she began speaking. "Killian, I've had love and I've lost love, but I always found myself holding part of myself back, waiting for something that had always remained elusive. Then one night at a party for my birthday, that I didn't even want, I danced with a stranger and in his arms I found what that something was. But that girl was too scared and ran away. And then fate stepped in, and I found you. And through our letter exchange, you showed me a love that I had never known before. That day on the beach when you found me and you put your arms around me, I realized, that the elusive feeling was home. Killian, you are my home. I love you. It's that simple. Thank you for being my Frederick and waiting.

Killian whispered "Anytime Swan. I love you." Then he gently thumbed away the single tear that had escaped and was rolling down her cheek.

The minister asked them if they had rings to exchange. Killian turned to Rumple and bent over. Rumple lifted his paw and Killian gently untied the rings and patted the dog on the head before murmuring, "Good job boy."

Picking up her hand, he slid the ring on to her finger. "Swan, this ring was given to me by my mother. She said it would lead me to my one true love and maybe she was right. For you see, on that fateful day, I had uncovered it while unpacking and slipped the chain over my head and it found you. It was waiting for you Swan. I was waiting for you."

Emma took the ring that Killian had chosen, a simple platinum band with their initials and wedding date carved inside, and slid it onto his finger pledging her love and faithfulness.

The minister began his speech pronouncing them man and wife but before he could finish, Killian had tugged her toward him, wrapping his arms around her waist at the same time his lips captured hers in a scorching open mouth kiss. Feeling Emma reach up to wrap her arms around his neck, he pulled her body even tighter against his and as she sighed into his mouth, he plundered her lips conveying everything he was feeling, yet trying to maintain some decorum in front of their guests.

He couldn't believe the feelings that were overwhelming him as he kissed Emma in front of their friends and family. Different, stronger it seemed now that they had pledged their lives to each other. His heart was racing as he held her in his arms and she enveloped all of his senses. Slowly, their lips parted and as she stared into his eyes, he lifted his hands to cup her face.

"I love you Mrs. Jones," he whispered. Then gently wiping the tears from her cheeks, he pulled her tightly against him. Once her trembling had subsided, they turned as one to be introduced for the first time, as husband and wife. As they walked back up the aisle, they were greeted by a shower of bubbles blown toward them by their guests. The most fun was had by Rumple, who gave chase to each and every one.

K&E

Emma stood wrapped in Killian's arms gently swaying to the music. As the song ended she leaned back and looked around them, before looking up at her new husband, "Where did everyone go?"
He leaned in for a leisurely kiss before answering, "They all left."

She raised her eyebrows, "Did you arrange that?"

Frowning at her with mock horror, he inquired, "Would I do that?"

Before she could make another comment, he leaned in and took a little nip of her neck, which he immediately soothed with his tongue. He continued his ministrations moving toward her shoulder, until he heard her moan with pleasure. Preparing to move over to the other side, he was halted by the sound of a motor.

"Bloody hell, I forgot about them!"

Emma hummed in frustration when he stopped attending to her neck, and opened her eyes, "Whom did you forget about?"

Watching the yacht as it came closer to the Schwan, Killian responded, "Tink and John."

Emma frowned, "I thought we were leaving for our honeymoon from here."

As the yacht came closer, he hugged her close, "Swan, I'm hurt. You sound like you don't trust me to plan our honeymoon?"

She looked down at his chest, then back up at him and rolled her eyes, "Of course, I trust you. But I thought the fun was just getting started."

Pulling her tightly against him, he kissed the side of her head, "Don't worry. I remember exactly where I left off." Then he nipped at the side of her neck again. "And to answer your question, Tink is here to supervise the caterers cleaning up after our reception and John is taking us back to the beach house to change. Alright?"

Emma kissed him on the throat, "Change? Well now that you mention it, I would like to get out of this dress. Are you going to help?" she asked as she leaned in to place a kiss in the open vee of his shirt.

He raised a brow, "What do you think?" Before he kissed her forcibly, separating only when the Sven pulled up alongside. Killian helped Tink onboard the Schwan and then he and Emma took her place on the Sven and sat back as John drove them back to the house.

~~~~~~~~

Emma wondered what Killian had planned for their honeymoon. All he had told her was they were taking the Schwan, bring her bikini, something to wear to dinner and they would be gone two weeks. She knew one thing though, she was ready. Between her demanding career and his growing business, their time together was precious and for him to take the Schwan out of commission for a few weeks, couldn't have been good for business. Forgoing anymore thought, she leaned against him and enjoyed the ride as the powerful boat bounced across the waves going home.

~~~~~~~~

At the dock, Killian jumped off and tied up before helping Emma out. Once they reached the sand, he picked her up and carried her toward the path.

Laughing at him, Emma remarked, "Killian, I can walk."
"I know love, but isn't it tradition for the groom to carry the bride over the threshold?"

Shaking her head at him, she wrapped her arms around his neck, "The threshold, yes. Across the sand, up the path and then the threshold, no."

"You don't like?" He stopped and let go of her legs, allowing her body to slowly slide down his. His hands spanned her waist, while his thumbs moved back and forth along her bottom rib, just below her breasts, causing her to shiver with desire.

Emma wrapped her arms around his neck, "Oh my husband, I like a great deal."

Smiling at him, she leaned in for a kiss, opening her lips over his to suck in his lower lip before moving to his top lip, and then he took control and deepened the kiss. She wasn't sure how long they stood there, lost in each other, but when their mouths parted, her body hummed with need. Killian's eyes were dark with desire which she could feel, even through the thick layers of her skirt.

He leaned his forehead against her, and slowly opened his eyes, "Husband, I like that. And you are my wife."

She hummed in contentment, "That I am."

Standing there on the beach, the sun warming her skin she got lost in the blue of his eyes, feeling a silly grin play along her lips.

Giving her a wolfish grin, he picked her up and ran up the beach, in to the house, not stopping until they both fell on the bed. Breathing heavily, he cupped her head in his hands and gazed into her beautiful face while waiting for his breathing to get under control.

"Come on lazy, we've got things to do." He told her as he pushed himself upright. "You lay there like that too long and I may get ideas."

Emma quirked her eyebrow at him. "And what's wrong with that? We are on our honeymoon."

Killian turned his head to look out the window, "Love, they should be finishing up on the ship, which means the sooner we are changed and get back, the sooner we are completely alone for two" he leaned down, to kiss her while balancing his weight on his arms, "long" giving her another kiss, "weeks" before he pushed himself back up and taking both of her hands and pulling her up in front of him.

Emma looked up at him, a pouty expression on her face, and lifted her right hand, holding her index finger and thumb apart, "not even a little something to tide me over until later?" she asked before sliding her arms around his neck.

Killian felt himself weakening, and hummed his appreciation at having her so close. He reached around and undid the laces of her gown until the neck fell open and off her shoulders.

Emma dropped her arms from around his neck allowing the beautiful gown to pool at her feet. Stepping out of it, she turned to pick it up and as she walked to the closet with an extra sway in her hips she gave him a nice view of her new lingerie. Just as she hung the dress in the closet, she felt Killian come up behind her and whisper.

"Bloody hell woman!" Then he spun her around, picked her up and tossed her over his shoulder as he headed to the bathroom shower. Once they were undressed and in the shower, her little something she had wanted, turned into a lot of something before they were dressed, packed and on their way to the Schwan to begin their romantic honeymoon.
Emma helped Killian pull anchor and set sail and as the Schwan picked up speed, she pulled her shorts and tank off and lay down on a lounge to soak up a few sun rays. Since she had kept her sunglasses on, she was able to feast her eyes on Killian as he stood up on the bridge. And what a glorious sight he was with his brightly colored board-shorts that hung low on his hips and no shirt allowing her full view of his sexy chest.

Wondering how much longer it would be before she had his undivided attention, she decided she would test out his restraint with her new bikini, one so minuscule she would only wear it when it was just the two of them. Stretching her legs out, she picked up the bottle of sunscreen and poured a small amount in her hand and smoothed it over each leg, making sure to rub it in carefully, catching all the creases. Once her legs were done, she continued with her arms, then her stomach and chest, covering every visible part of her torso. Leaning back in the chair she glanced up toward the bridge and noticed that she had his attention. She shivered thinking that even in his shorts, and no shirt, but with his long, dark hair billowing in the breeze, he still looked like a pirate who was making plans to take what he desired.

"Bloody hell, the little minx knows exactly what she is doing to me," Killian muttered to himself, while up on the bridge steering the Schwan toward, Key West, their first destination. He had been watching her move around the deck, feeling quite proud of his Swan and her ease at helping him sail the ship. She had learned a lot in the past few months, which allowed them these two weeks alone. When she laid down on the lounge and stripped to show off those scraps of material, he'd about choked on the drink of water he'd taken. And it had gotten harder, definitely harder he smirked, when she had gotten the lotion out and began spreading it over her luscious body. Gripping the wheel tighter, he really wished he could drop anchor, but resigned himself to another half hour before he could feast, however two can play the game, he thought. Taking his glasses off, he gave her his patented pirate glare, the one she called smoldering, and made her feel she was the loot he was getting ready plunder. Keeping his eye on her as they sailed south, he could tell she was getting relaxed and noticed the minute she drifted to sleep.

He dropped anchor and tied up the sails and went to check on his sleeping beauty. She had rolled over on her side, but otherwise the lack of motion from the ship had not disturbed her. Kneeling next to the lounge, he lightly ran his finger up the side of her leg, then tracking along her bikini bottoms around to her spine, moved up toward her shoulder blades. As he reached the ties of her top, she moved, rolling onto her back, and when he moved his hand, the ties came with it, loosening her top.

"Convenient" he murmured. Before bending over and placing gentle kisses along the center of her stomach and then slowly moving upward until he reached the loose scraps of material, she was calling a top, which he moved aside completely with his tongue.

Killian readjusted himself and bent over to continue his exploration, however just before his lips came into contact with woman, he felt her hands grab handfuls of hair pulling him up for a hard kiss, then lifting his head back up.

"We're here?"

She asked as she ran her fingers through his hair before clasping her hands behind his neck.

Killian nuzzled his nose against hers, "Yes, love, we’re here. Are you hungry?"

Emma grinned up at him, a flirty little smile playing along her lips, "Depends on what you have in
Climbing on the lounge with her, he pulled her close to his body, and captured her lips, while moving his hands sensuously over every part he could reach. The sounds of the waves breaking against the sides of the ship and an occasional seagull, the only sounds heard, except for their heavy breathing.

Growling low in his throat, Killian buried his face in her neck where he used his lips to suck gently, before soothing the sting with his tongue.

"Shall we go straight to dessert?"

He asked as he stood up and held out his hand to her. Putting her hand in his, Emma got off the chair and whispered in his ear.

"What's a good dessert without a little chocolate?" Then took off for their cabin.

"My thoughts exactly," he whispered before following her down to the Captain’s Quarters, where dessert lasted well into the night.

_The End_

Chapter End Notes

I've got a couple of one shots planned for sometime over the season to go with some prompts that I've been given. I've also got an idea rolling around in my head for a summer hiatus MC so we'll see. Next up this week is my last Double Feature Capt Charm one shot and our prompt is David and Killian give Henry 'the talk'. It will pop up on Friday on tumblr....
Chapter Summary

Join Emma and Killian as they spend their first Christmas together. Part 1 is December Moments and just to warn you this goes into M territory.

December Moments

Kittens

Killian opened his eyes, not to the sparkling green ones of his wife, but to the dark brown ones of Rumple, who was wagging his tail excitedly. "Rumple, mate. Why are you sharing my bed?"

Killian's answer came in the form of a wet tongue licking up his chin, "Bloody hell, Rump! Your breath is nasty." Reaching over, he scratched Rumple's belly, hoping Emma would come through the door any minute and crawl back into bed. "Where's our girl, Boy?"

Rumple jumped off the bed and sat down, presenting his left paw for Killian's examination.

Noticing the slip of paper attached, Killian gave the dog a few scratches between his ears and removed the note from his lady. The sound of the shower starting, answered the question of where she was; now to answer the question of what she had in mind. Opening the note, he read:

_Tick tock my love, today we are going shopping for the Christmas tree and all new decorations for our first Christmas together. I have an idea of how I would like to start the day. I'm in the shower if you would care to join me. Your loving wife._

_P.S. Rumple has not been out._

"You're on your own this morning boy. I've got plans." Tossing the blankets aside, he padded to the front door and opening it, let Rumple out to take care of his business. After that, he walked back down the hall toward the running shower and was greeted there by steam and a sexy image standing under the spray. Pulling open the shower door he wrapped his arms around Emma's lithe wet body and pulled her tightly against his nude frame, letting her know he was up for whatever she had in mind.

"What took you so long?" she mumbled before pulling his lips down to meet hers. She was slick and wet in more places than one and as their kisses became more passionate, he lifted her up, pressing her against the wall, and joined their bodies together.

The ride was quick, which took the edge off, but once they had reached the peak and he had lowered her feet to the ground, she slid down his body, using her talented mouth and hands to bring him round all over again.

By the time the water began to run cool, his body had been sated several times and turning off the shower he stepped out, wrapping a large towel around his waist. Unfolding another large towel, he took Emma's hand and helped her from the shower, "Let me dry you, love."
Enveloping her in the softness of the towel, he slowly rubbed up and down over both shoulders, down her arms and back up again. Taking a corner in each hand, he circled around her breasts, down under her arms and around to cup her firm behind, pulling her close against his towel clad body.

Secure in his arms, Emma gave him a quick kiss before a concerned look came over her face, "Killian, I hear Rumple. I think he sounds distressed."

Once she mentioned it, Killian heard him too, and dropping his towel pulled on a pair of old sweats that had been cut off, tying them loosely, before striding to the front door. Pulling it further open, he could see the dog in the distance, milling around the postbox and sniffing at something on the ground.

As he got further down the walk, closer to the postbox, he could see something black and orange at Rumple's feet. Stopping close to them, he finally had a look at the small balls of fur that had captured the dog's attention. Hearing Emma coming up behind him, he turned and saw that she appeared to be just as enamored with the scene as Rumple was.

"Oh Killian, look! Rumple found kittens!"

"Let's see what you have there, boy." He reached and picked up a little ball of orange fur, gently lifting her tail, before cradling it against his chest. "See here, Swan. We have ourselves a little lass." The kitten started purring and butting her face into his chest. "And here we have a little lad. It appears that our family just increased in size."

"You want to keep them?" Emma asked with a surprised voice.

"Aye, they were found beside the postbox, he said, cuddling the kitten close to his chest. "Someone probably just dumped them and we can't just leave the wee things out here alone.""

Emma looked at her husband a long minute to see if he was serious before responding, "Killian, someone had to have left them."

Bending over he gave her a quick kiss, before directing them back to the house, "After everything, Swan?" he asked, that brow quirked, "I think fate was quite good to us, don't you?"

"You're right," both his brows went up, "but don't push it," she said quickly. Giving him another kiss, she moved past him to pull a couple bowls down for water and milk for the new members of the Jones' home. "It seems we're going to have to make a pet store run."

Setting the bowls on the floor, they watched the kittens as they inspected the bowls of liquid. Both used their little paws to bat at the milk, and jumped when it splashed up, then repeated the process over again. Rumple sat close by and watched over their behavior for a short time before sniffing at his breakfast and then going to take a nap, as if bored. Emma looked up at Killian and they burst into laughter at his antics, "Poor Rumple. He may second guess bringing home strays next time."

Putting an arm on each side of Emma, Killian leaned into her space, "I'm going to make a pet store run. Then it's whatever your heart desires," he smirked.

Using her fingers, she walked from the band of his shorts, up across his nicely defined chest muscles to loop her arms around his neck, "Whatever?"

"Whatever," he smirked and wagged his eyebrows.

"I want," she grinned and hesitated a moment, "a big tree, lots of lights, and pretty decorations."
"That's it?"

She giggled, "Well if you insist, a kiss would be nice."

"Not nice, Swan," he turned to walk away.

Grabbing the waistband of his shorts, she tugged him back, earning her a nice view of her commando man, and when he wrapped her in his arms and kissed the living daylights out of her, she had to admit a swoon or two. Watching him as he walked down the hall toward the bedroom, she couldn't help but notice his jaunty walk and just before he turned the corner, the loose strings holding his shorts up lost, and his naked right butt cheek left her replaying their morning shower activities.

**Pet Store Findings**

Hearing Killian return home from his shopping expedition, she rounded the corner to see Rumple opening the door for him, and that he had so many packages in his arms he looked like Santa Claus.

"Shouldn't you be saying, 'Ho Ho Ho,' with all the packages?" she grinned at him. "Need some help?"

Killian winked at her, "Ha ha. Grab the bakery bag before Rumple gets it first."

Emma took the bag and peered inside, "Oh a bearclaw. Where's yours?"

"I thought I would share yours."

Setting the bag down on the counter, she looked up at him to see if he was serious, but spotting the twinkle in his eye, shook her head at him, and popped it in the microwave to warm.

Killian set the bags down and started unloading. "Alright, I have kitten food, both wet and dry, bowls, a litter box, litter, toys, treats and a bed." He pulled it out with a relish.

"Babe, have you ever had cats? They don't need all these things. They are fine with string, empty bags and boxes," she teased. When he didn't say anything for a minute, she looked up at him to see an almost hurt look on his face. "Are you ok?"

His smile was sad, "My mum loved cats and fed strays all the time, but we never had any as pets."

His smile then changed from sad to sheepish, "Think this is too much?"

Emma could tell it meant a lot to him and when he met her eyes again grinned, "You really are a big softy, aren't you?"

He cocked his brow before responding, "You didn't complain about my softness this morning, Swan."

She giggled and just shook her head at him, "Need some help putting your purchases away?"

"No, go eat your bearclaw, I've got this."

Taking her pastry she sat down and watched as he carefully measured out food, filled water bowls and showed the tiny kittens where their litter box would be kept. They took to him just like every other creature she had seen him mesmerize with his magic. Her man was truly special, and feeling blessed, she finished her meal and they left the house together.

**Tree Shopping**
Walking into Tree Town, the fourth Christmas tree lot they had visited, Killian felt like he was a man on a mission. He remembered a few Christmases with the whole family and how his mum, had made it her mission in life to uncover the perfect tree, while he, his father and his brother had given her a hard time. But he had to admit that she always found the perfect tree, and once all the decorations and lights were added, it had been beautiful. He had tried to curb his tree shopping perfectionism, but he wanted this Christmas to be perfect for Emma.

Killian grinned at Emma's muttering behind him and after hearing her say, "What was wrong with the last place we looked?" his grin turned into a full-fledged chuckle. He hooked his arm around her neck and turned them toward the first aisle of trees. "Let me teach you the science behind a great Christmas tree."

Emma snorted and raised her brows. "Seriously?"

"Aye, love, it's a serious business."

"Bullsh.."

Killian laid his lips on hers in a hard kiss to stop the word. Lifting his head, he smirked at her, "Careful Swan, there are ears," he nodded to the tree next to them where an adorable little girl was staring at them while her parents were deciding on a tree.

As they walked up and down each row of trees, Killian began his tutorial of what made the perfect tree. He discussed the merits of what type, from Fraser Fir to Blue Spruce, from the height of the tree to needle length. He also talked about fullness and how long it would last in the Florida weather. "So, Swan, would you like to have a go at choosing our first tree?"

"So the fullness and the lasting ability are important with Christmas trees? I know something else those descriptive words fit."

Killian's ears pinked up, "Swan, we aren't talking about MY abilities," he quipped.

Emma smirked, "What can I say? Your professorness gets me hot."

Killian kissed her quickly and opened his mouth to make a dirty comment but saw the same little girl and her family come around the corner. "A tree first, then we'll check out my lasting ability later, alright, Swan?" he lifted his brow.

"You've got yourself a deal, Captain. If I get it right, do I get a little extra something?"

"Are you sure you can handle it?" he told her popping his T.

Emma didn't respond but moved through the trees like a woman on a mission. After going up and down each aisle and waffling between two, the decision was made.

"Nice job, Swan. Now let's see what other things we need to do today."

Decorating the Tree

Arriving back home, while Killian was untying the tree, Emma carried all the bags into the house. She was met at the door by Rumple, who promptly headed outside, and by the kittens who followed her inside. As she walked toward the front room, they pounced on each other, batted at each other's tails, and chased each other around furniture. Emma shook her head at their silliness and as she was removing the boxes of lights and bulbs from the bags, they were more help than she really needed.
Killian carried the tree in and after he placed it in the stand, they removed the netting and allowed the branches to spread out. "You picked a nice tree here, Swan."

"Only nice?" she remarked lifting her brows. "It's tall, very full, no holes and should last through Christmas. You did say stamina was important after all, didn't you?"

Capturing her lips in a quick, but heated kiss, he agreed, and together they wound lights around the tree, carefully stepping around their four-legged helpers. "Bloody hell, Swan. How many lights did you buy?"

Emma rolled her eyes and shrugged her shoulders, "What can I say? I like lots of lights. Remember, patience brings its own rewards."

Killian glanced at her sideways, but when she wasn't paying him any mind, he abstained for comment. Shaking his head, he went back to plugging in the last few light strands and they sat back to admire their work. "It's looking good. What's next?"

Pulling the boxes of colorful ornaments out of the bags, she handed one to Killian and using the little hooks, they hung them on the tree. Hearing some crinkling behind them, they looked over to see one kitten hiding in a bag, and the other peering inside, only to have its nose batted at by a tiny paw. After a few assaults, the kittens would trade places and the game would begin all over again. Rumple, who was used to being the center of attention, sat and watched the chaos with a slightly disgruntled look on his face. When he noticed, his humans paying attention to the new kittens, he barked once and disappeared to take a nap.

Once all the ornaments from the boxes were placed on the tree, Killian handed Emma a small box that was gift wrapped, "Open it, love."

"Shouldn't I wait until Christmas Day?"

"Open it now, you'll see why."

Ripping off the paper, Emma opened the box to see a special gift made just for them. Inside was an ornament that had 'Our First Christmas' with their names and wedding date. Turning to Killian, she could tell he was anxious about what she thought. Gently placing it back in the box, she jumped in arms, kissing wherever she could reach all over his face.

When she had launched herself at him, he hadn't been prepared to catch her and they ended up on the floor. Having her in his arms was always a plus, so holding her tight with one hand, he used the other to take hold of her ponytail and direct her lips to his.

The kiss quickly became heated and their hands began a busy exploration of parts untouched for a few hours. The kisses went on until they forgot their surroundings, and gave into feeling, hearing, and sensing only each other. Moving Emma onto her back so that he hovered over, Killian leaned down for another kiss, when something landed on his head, "Bugger that!"

Emma frowned up at him, "What?"

He looked around to see what it was and realized that one of the colored balls had fallen. Picking it up, he showed her, "How come this fell?" Just as he finished his question, from the corner of his eye, he saw a black flash run from the back of the tree, jump and bat off a ball with his tiny paw, and hit it across the floor as if he were playing soccer. "Well, that explains it."

Pulling Emma up, they piled all the boxes in larger bins and Killian took them into another room for storage. Stopping in the doorway of the kitchen, he put up his little surprise and called, "Swan, can
you come in here for a moment?"

As she walked around the corner and through the doorway, Killian gathered her in his arms and covered her lips with his, reminding her of the activity that had been kitten interrupted. As their lips slowly parted, their foreheads remaining in contact, Emma smiled at her pirate, "Not that I'm complaining, but what did I do to deserve that?"

He leaned back and pointed up, "It appears there might be some mistletoe above us."

Emma looked up and could see several other door frames and all were adorned with mistletoe. "You've been busy."

"Aye, and I plan to do a lot of collecting over the next month."

"Oh, believe me, I'm not complaining." To prove her point, she grabbed a handful of his shirt and pulled his lips down to hers." Kissing him was a favorite pastime and she planned to spend a lot of time exploring his lips.

The clicking of Rumple's nails on the tile floor broke the spell and after letting Rumple out to take care of business, they turned off all the lights except for the tree, and lay in each other's arms whispering, kissing and other things long into the night.

**Holiday Boat Parade**

Emma crossed the gangplank onto the deck of the *Schwan* and shielding her eyes from the bright sun, watched Killian working up on the bridge. When he finally turned, and saw her standing there, he winked and grabbing hold of some rigging, neatly swung down, pulling her into his arms as he landed. Placing a kiss on her lips, he met her eyes, "You alright, Swan?"

Emma snuggled against his chest, kissing the underside of his chin, "Can't a wife come see her husband for no reason?"

He spread his legs, and palmed her behind underneath her lab coat, fitting their torsos more firmly together, "No reason?" he inquired, quirking that brow of his.

Emma giggled, "I don't have time for that! Now kiss me."

"As you wish."

Her eye roll at his use of a movie line was lost in a groan of pleasure at how hot the kiss he gave her quickly became. His lips slid sensuously across hers while his hands subtly moved up and down under her lab coat. So, lost in the taste and feel of each other, they almost forgot where they were until a sharp whistle sounded, followed by, "Get a room!" caused Killian to lift his head and look toward the docks.

Seeing his brother and Elsa walking toward them, he tucked Emma against his side. "Wanker, bugger off!"

"Don't be a git, brother," Liam tossed back at him with a laugh.

Elsa and Emma looked at the brothers and shook their heads at their antics, "Think they'll ever grow up?" Elsa asked.

"I doubt it," Emma responded, smiling up at her husband.
The four talked about little of nothing and Killian showed off the Schwan's decorations for the Holiday boat parade. He and Eddie had lined each sail with strands of white lights as well as placing them around the railing of the ship.

They had just completed their tour of the decorated Schwan when both Emma and Elsa's phones went off at the same time, calling them back to the hospital. "Oh no," they groaned in unison.

Liam tugged Elsa away from Emma and as they descended the stairs, tossed her over his shoulder. "I need to say goodbye to my woman in private." Elsa's face had registered surprise but as silence quickly arrived, it was obvious they were of one accord.

Killian sauntered closer to Emma, and taking hold of her jacked pulled her close, "You will be back in time for the parade, right, Swan?"

Putting her arms around his neck, she toyed with the hair at the nape of his neck and kissed him lightly, "I will. Wait for me if I'm running late?"

"Always, love." As Elsa and Liam came back into view he kissed her again fast, but firmly. "Off with you, or else I might find other ways to keep you occupied," he waggled his eyebrows.

"Later?"

"As you wish," he repeated again and winked.

Shaking her head at him, she looped arms with her sister-in-law and they wound their way back along the boardwalk to Bayside General.

After their departure, Killian had little difficulty convincing Liam to help him finish decorating the ship for the parade. The boat parade started at 7:00 p.m. with other festivities starting at noon, and the brothers were hopeful that their physician spouses wouldn't be gone too long.

**Back to Work**

Emma walked into the hospital the Wednesday after the boat parade, feeling a mix of melancholy and elation. This place had been her home for the past few years and she had grown, both as a physician and a person. She was going to miss working closely with so many of her friends, but was ready for a new chapter of her career to begin.

Dropping her things in her locker, she pushed through the doors to the ER to see Ruby sitting behind the nurse's station calmly filing her nails. "Morning Ruby, anything new?"

Ruby dropped her nail file, and scooted her chair closer to the counter and whispered, "Shh, don't jinx our last day in chaos. It's been relatively quiet for mid-December, but you never know."

Smiling at her friend, Emma agreed and changed the topic, "So, how are the wedding plans coming along? You have less than a month left as a single woman."

Ruby looked at her and pulled a face, "Why did I say I wanted a big wedding?" Not expecting an answer, she continued, "I'm almost there, but really happy I took off a few weeks before the wedding so I can give it my entire focus." And then her thoughts quickly jumped to another topic. "By the way, how are things with our new office?"

Back in the summer, Emma had been asked about the possibility of joining a large medical practice that included not only several other internists, but also other disciplines as well. Ruby was leaving the ER to become Emma's nurse in the practice. "Good, I think. Last I checked, the painting and carpet
were completed, so we should be ready for patients in January. I'm really looking forward to a regular schedule for a while," she sighed before continuing, "Some weeks my schedule is the exact opposite of Killian's."

"Speaking of your hunky husband, how is he?"

Emma got the dreamy smile on her face that always appeared when she was thinking of her husband, "Good. He didn't make it home last night as he had to captain the Bahamas cruise, making it the longest we've been apart since the wedding. I'm hoping he makes it back for our farewell party."

Before Ruby could comment, two ambulances arrived and chaos arrived in the ER, providing a steady stream of patients to keep the staff busy for several hours.

Emma had just finished assuring a new mother that the baldness on the back of her baby's head was perfectly normal and he would eventually grow brand new hair when her phone buzzed.

K: Almost home

Emma couldn't keep the big smile off her face.

E: Good

K: Miss me?

E: Maybe

K: Maybe? Don't tease a man, Swan. My bed in the Captain's quarters was lonely last night. I needed my bar wench.

E: Oh? And if she had been there, what would you have done to her?

K: Why pillage and plunder, of course.

E: Starting with?

K: Well, I'd pull down her shirt until her sweet little nipples popped out and then I'd cover them with my lips.

Emma had just finished reading the sexy text when she heard, "Emma, how are things with you?" and looked up into the eyes of Dr. Hopper. "Are you feeling alright?" he continued, a concerned tone in his voice, "You look a little flushed."

Emma crammed her phone back into the pocket of her lab coat and willed the heat she could feel in her cheeks to subside, "I'm fine, Dr. Hopper, just a lot of rushing around. You know how busy the ER can get."

Nodding his head, he continued, "You are right. Well, take care. I will see you at the party later, right?"

"Oh yes, I will be there. Regina is having Dr. Sven come in to cover the last part of my shift, so there should be no problem."

"That's marvelous to hear, Emma. See you later."

Watching him hurry off down the hall, she waited until he had rounded the corner before pulling her phone back out of her pocket.
E: You almost got me in trouble!

K: Me? What do you mean? I'm not even there.

She just knew that his damn eyebrow had popped up as he was typing that message.

E: What would you do if I brought up certain body parts while you were working?

K: Well love, which body part would you like to bring up?

As she read his message, she could hear him popping his /p/ and then he probably pulled that bottom lip under nibbling on it with his top teeth while waiting for her to answer. Standing there she tried to come up with a sexy rebuttal, but before she could formulate the perfect one, the ER doors swung open and she was pulled back to duty. She sent a quick message;

E: Back to work. See you at the party?

She went back to work but felt her phone buzz shortly after putting it in her pocket, however, it was a while later before she read his response.

K: Yes, and I'll be waiting for an answer.

She smirked thinking maybe her pirate would be 'up' for showing her how much he missed her. Now she needed to come up with a plan that could be executed covertly.

**The Party**

Killian sauntered into the conference room later than he had anticipated, and the party was in full swing. Standing just inside the door, he could observe his wife without her knowing he was there. She was moving from group to group, obviously well acquainted with many. He felt a smile light his face as he watched her. She had on a form fitting white top with a full red skirt, sexy red shoes and her hair was flowing loosely around her head. Pulling out his phone, he sent her a quick message.

K: Have you given my question some thought?

Slipping his phone back in his pocket, he had just decided to go after her when he heard his name. Turning, he saw Regina winding her way toward him. "Regina, how are things with you and the family?"

Her face lit up as it always did when she was thinking of her family. "They are wonderful and the kids can't wait for Santa. How did your gift go? Did she figure it out?"

Killian scratched behind his ear, a sheepish look on his face, and glanced around to make sure Emma wasn't in earshot. "No, I told her the fates had been good to us, so we shouldn't question it. Tell Robin thanks."

"Who discovered them? Was it you?"

Feeling the tips of his ears burn, Killian remembered why he hadn't been the one to find the kittens, and quipped, "No, that was Rumple. But now he thinks they are his kittens and is busy herding them in an attempt to keep them in line."

Regina smirked, "From everything Emma has told me about that dog of yours, I'm not surprised."

Killian felt a tug on his jacket pocket and caught a whiff of Emma's unique scent before feeling her arm wrap around him, snuggling close, "Not surprised about what?" she asked them both.
He gave Regina a startled look trying to remember exactly what she could have heard before answering, "Not surprised that I was able to come to your party, love. I wouldn't miss it for the world." Putting his arm around her, he pulled her closer to his side, leaning in for a much too short kiss. "Hello, Swan. You look beautiful."

Regina squeezed Emma's arm, "I'll see you later. I'm going to go say hello to Ruby."

When she walked away, Emma ran her hand over Killian's flat stomach, circling his body with both arms. "Did you just get here?"

Cupping her cheek, his thumb running along her jaw, he kissed her once again lightly, "I've not been here long. Can I steal you away for a proper kiss?"

Emma hummed and leaned her head against his shoulder, "I wish, but in just a few minutes they are going to present plaques to Ruby and me, however after that, I might be persuaded," leaving the possibility hanging in the air between them.

"I'll be waiting, love. Shall I get something for us to drink?"

"A glass of bubbly sounds wonderful."

He wandered toward the bar, ordered the drinks and reached into his pocket for a couple bills for a tip, but what he pulled out was a red satiny ball sending his brows sky high. Shoving it back in his pocket, out of sight, "She wants to play, does she?" he murmured. Pulling his phone out, he sent her a message.

K: You wore red. You know what that does to the fit of my trousers.

Delivering Emma's drink to her, he whispered a dirty suggestion in her ear before moving around the room talking to friends and finally settling into a spot against the back wall where he could watch his wife work the room, and where David happened to find him. They had been discussing plans for New Year's Eve when he felt his phone vibrate.

E: I'm in room 114. I need you now!

Biting his lip to keep the excitement off his face, "Mate, something's come up that I need to check on."

David gave him a concerned look, "Things ok?"

Killian's "Couldn't be better" was said as he set his glass on a table and left to find Room 114.

**The Storage Closet**

Emma ducked out of the party and making sure no one saw her, snuck into the storage closet. With the door shut, she could barely see the outline of the shelves lining the walls and knew that there wouldn't be much room to maneuver, but didn't want to wait until they returned home. Listening for footsteps, she held the door barely open and waited.

Hearing his approach, she felt him pull on the door, and pushing it out, grabbed his hand and yanked him inside shutting the door behind him. Wrapping her hands in his jacket she crashed her lips to his. His lips were firm and demanding and he gave her what she wanted and, wrapping his arms around her, pinned her against a shelf.

The insistence of his tongue separating her lips had her heart racing and her core throbbing. She had
missed him and she let him know that, and weaving her fingers through the soft hair at the nape of
his neck, met him kiss for kiss. Feeling his body shake with need for her filled her with power and
recklessness, and she opened herself to whatever he offered.

Cupping her head with his hand, Killian held her still and moved his lips across her cheek, and down
to nip at her earlobe before moving her sweater aside to kiss her neck. Moving closer, he pressed his
erection fully against her, fitting himself in the notch of her legs, and as he ground himself against her
softness, he forced her legs further apart. Moving to the other side of her neck, he eased her onto his
upper thigh and, giving into the frustration he had experienced without her the night before, he
moved harder into her, rubbing his stiff cock over her, unabashedly teasing her and making her ride
his leg.

Killian ran his hand up her silky bare thigh, feeling the heat of her core reaching out to him. Tugging
up her skirt, he ran his hand over her ass, allowing his fingertips to graze the cleft between until his
fingers reached her wetness. Dipping into her, he rubbed her clit causing her hips to jerk before
palming her and pushing her to ride him harder.

Capturing her lips again, he nipped her bottom lip, before running his tongue over it to soothe, and
then methodically began to suck and kiss her mouth one thrust at a time. Feeling her body tremble,
he knew she was near and felt that he was in jeopardy of losing control before he was inside of her.

Emma’s body was strung taunt and feeling her lungs about to burst, she tore her lips from his, and
reached down to pop the button on his tight black jeans. As she lifted the tab and started moving the
zipper down over his hard shaft, he hissed, "Watch it, Swan." Palming him over his boxer briefs, she
moved them down and stroked Killian's cock, feeling the wetness start to seep out of the engorged
head.

Pushing his jeans down, he released his cock, "Put your legs around me, Swan." With one hand, he
held her against the shelf, and guided his shaft through her folds, stopping at her opening. Feeling her
heat cover the sensitive head, he groaned, bringing forth a shudder in both. Pressing the crown
against her core, he let go as she moved downward, sheathing him in her tight warm body. Pleasure
burst forth in all directions as she clenchc rounded around him.

Rocking back and forth, each time angling his cock to plunge deeper, bringing forth sighs, their
breathing rasped loud in the small room. Beads of perspiration formed on his brow and he could feel
her body start to tighten around his, and his balls curl up close to the bottom of his shaft. Another
pump and she came, her body squeezing his until he shattered, feeling wave after wave roll over him,
and capturing her lips, he swallowed the sweet noises she made.

Resting his forehead against hers while their bodies returned to normal, she suddenly tensed. Killian
frowned at what could be wrong and opened his mouth to ask when he heard voices outside the
door.

~~~
"David," Ruby called, "Have you seen Emma? Regina wants to take some pictures."

"No, maybe the ladies room?"

"How about Killian? Have you seen him?"

"He got a call and said something had come up, and then he disappeared."

Ruby snickered, "Same with Emma. You don't think…?"
"Don't go there Ruby, she's like a sister to me. Let's see if we missed them."

~~~~
Thinking they had moved on, Killian lifted her off his body. Taking a step backward, he lowered her to the ground and as she dropped one leg, she knocked against the shelf, causing a box to fall on the floor. They stilled and held their breath, easing farther apart, and as he tucked himself back in his pants and zipped, he heard David and Ruby's voices drift away.

"Come love, we need to get you cleaned up and back in there."

Emma could feel the remnants of their lovemaking seep from her body, "There's a lady's room right next door. Will you be ok?"

Kissing her firmly on the lips, he smirked, "I'll wear you with pride."

Sneaking out of the room, she left Killian in the hallway and disappeared through the next door. Lost in replaying the last few minutes over again in his mind, Killian didn't realize someone was approaching until he heard the tapping of heels and looked up to see Ruby advancing on him.

"Emma?" she asked with a smirk on her face and a twinkle in her eye.

Killian inclined his head toward the door where his Swan had vanished but returned Ruby's smirk.

As Ruby pushed through the door to the lady's room Killian muttered, "Forgive me, Swan," because knowing Ruby, it wouldn't be pretty.

~~~~
When Ruby pushed open the door, Emma had cleaned up and was straightening her skirt. Blushing slightly at how she had spent the last half hour, she noticed the slight scruff burn on her neck and that her lips, devoid of lipstick, had obviously been thoroughly kissed. "Hey, Rubes. Looking for me?"

Ruby smirked at her and sauntered closer, before pretending to sniff the air, "You just had sex!"

Feeling her face flame, Emma opened and closed her mouth a few times, "Ruby!"

She rolled her eyes, "Relax, Ems. I'm just kidding, but I need to collect my money from Regina," she laughed wickedly.

Emma frowned, "Wait, what? You bet Regina that I was," but she couldn't finish the sentence.

Ruby took pity on her, "Hey, it's no big deal. It's not like Victor and I haven't snuck away a few times." Looking over Emma, she opened her purse and handed her a compact. "Here you can use this to cover the scruff burns, then we need to go have our picture taken."

Using the compact, Emma powdered her face, and, except for her sparkling eyes and just kissed lips, thought she looked close to normal. "How's that?"

Steering them out of the lady's room, Ruby led her back to the ballroom, allowing her to grab Killian's hand along the way. Once back inside, she left him with David and followed Ruby into the melee of goodbyes and good wishes. Later that night she got to show her pirate captain how much she missed him all over again.
It's a special Christmas for Emma and Killian. Again this moves into M territory. Hope you enjoy.

Christmas Morning

Awakening early on Christmas morning, Killian pulled Emma close and watched the sun climb up over the water, painting the sky beautiful shades of orange and yellow. As he was climbing out of bed, Emma opened her eyes and reached out toward him, "We have a few hours babe. Come back to bed."

Kissing her lightly on the cheek, he whispered, "Sleep love, I'll not be long."

Leaving the room, he let the dog out, took care of the kittens and started breakfast. Feeling arms wrap around his middle, he covered her hands with one of his while he flipped the pancakes with the other. "You were supposed to stay in bed so I could bring you breakfast."

Emma laid her cheek on his warm bare back, "The bed was lonely." She kissed him between his shoulder blades before leaning against the counter to watch the smooth efficiency with which he handled the cooking utensil, which was nothing compared to the way he handled her body. Wayward thoughts, Swan, she thought, eyeing his body proudly showcased in front of her, covered only in denim.

Killian smirked at her watching him, feeling her eyes following his every move as he poured batter onto the griddle, then flipped the pancakes so both sides turned out golden brown. "Love, you keep staring at my nether regions like that, you might get more than you bargained for so early in the morning."

Emma raised a brow, "Who says?" she quipped licking her lips seductively.

Placing the last pancake on a plate, and moving in front of her he pulled her close, "It's like that, is it?"

She cupped his face and rubbed her nose against his, "Always my love. But this morning pancakes win."

They sat down and enjoyed breakfast while watching the newest family members attack each other, empty bags, ribbon, and whatever else they encountered as they flew around the room. As Emma was finishing her last bite, Killian took her hand and tugged her into his lap, "Here, open this one first." He handed her a small, brightly wrapped box.

Smiling shyly, Emma took the gift, removed the wrapping and when she opened the box discovered a silver charm bracelet, nestled among the black velvet. As she looked through the charms, she realized that they told a story all on their own, as they were meaningful to their relationship. A ship, a
mailbox, a swan, a magnolia, a dog and on and on, ending with a locket that held a small picture from their wedding day. "Killian," she whispered his name reverently, "I don't know what to say. Thank you, doesn't seem enough."

He remained quiet but tapped his bottom lip and raised a brow, telling her exactly what she could do to express her thanks. Relaxing her body against his, she kissed him lightly before diving back in, locking their lips together in a kiss that was both hot and sweet at the same time. Their lips meshed as if they had been made for each other. He tasted of sweet maple syrup and something that was uniquely Killian, which Emma knew she could never get enough. Savoring the moment, they exchanged kisses, some long, some short, until a yelp was heard and looking up they discovered that Rumple had come back inside, and both kittens had pounced on him.

After attending to Rumple, Emma went to the tree and picked up the gift she wanted Killian to open. As she walked back toward him the intense look in his eyes caused her to shiver with awareness and when she handed him the gift, and their fingers touched, electricity zipped along her skin. Unsure about his reaction, she stood in front of him, nibbling her thumbnail as he opened it.

Killian watched her standing in front of him, noting her nervousness, while he undid the paper. Opening the box, he pulled out a long chain with a silver swan, entwined with a silver hook, hanging from it. Looking up at Emma, he raised his eyebrow in question.

Leaning over Emma took the chain and slipped it over his neck and tried to keep a straight face, "I trust you, but for those cruises, I'm not able to make, I just wanted you to have something to remind your passengers, that Captain Freakin Hook belongs to a swan," then she ruined the delivery by giggling.

Killian picked her up, tossed her over his shoulder and carried her down the hall, "I belong to you, you say?" He swatted her on the butt and then rubbed the cheek to take the burn away, "come show me," he whispered as he followed her down onto the bed and they spent a delicious hour before it was time to go have Christmas dinner with the rest of their family.

Lunch with Family

Killian, Emma, and Rumple arrived at M&M and David's house at the same time as Liam and Elsa and as the men carried in the packages, the women took Rumple to meet up with his newest friend, Wilby. A collie whom David had found wandering around the hospital grounds and when the dog's owner hadn't been located, he had promptly adopted.

As soon as the door was opened, Wilby and Rumple took off running in circles, playing a game that only they understood. Leaving them to their antics the adults moved into the house where M&M and David's mother, Ruth were setting the table and David's dad, Robert was watching a basketball game while entertaining the baby.

Killian and Liam placed all the packages under the tree and Emma and Elsa immediately jumped in to help M&M and Ruth. Setting the dessert dish on the counter, Emma asked what she could do to help.

Mary Margaret walked by and after peaking in at the dessert, grinned at Emma, "Chocolate. How did I know?"

Feeling her face heat, Emma assumed a nonchalant stance, "What?"

Her sister dimpled, "Ok, we'll play it that way. Here," she handed her a large bowl full of the makings of a salad. "You can make this, then all we need are the drinks."
Working together the meal was complete and everyone sat down to eat. M&M and Ruth had outdone themselves as the food smelled amazing and looking around the table, Emma couldn't believe how much her life had changed in the last year. Feeling Killian squeeze her thigh, she met his loving gaze and allowed herself to get lost in the joy of the day.

After the meal was completed the men volunteered for clean-up duty. Emma kissed Killian, told him to have fun and moved to the bouncy seat set off to the side and picked up her niece. Burying her face in Emily's soft neck, she inhaled that sweet baby smell. "Hi, sweet girl. I bet you're loving all the attention today.

Carrying her over to the rocking chair, she sat and laid Emily on her lap. Smiling down at the baby, she tickled her tummy and pretended to nibble on her toes. Emily giggled, blew raspberries and babbled nonsense as the adults around her made fools of themselves trying to keep her entertained.

Elsa sat down next to them and as Emily waved her hand toward her, she let the baby hold on to her finger, "Are you ready for one of these, Emma?"

Emma looked down into the sweet face, who with her fair hair and blue eyes resembled her father, and wondered if she was ready for the life change that a baby would bring them, "Not yet, but maybe soon. How about you and Liam?"

Elsa got a secretive smile on her face, "Well," and she left the answer hanging.

Emma grinned at her sister in law and reached out to squeeze her arm, "You have that cat that ate the canary look. What gives?"

Glancing up to make sure they were still alone Elsa leaned closer and whispered, "Yes. I took a home pregnancy test earlier today and surprised Liam with the news before we left the house."

Elsa's news caused Emma's breath to catch, "Congratulations. You will be a wonderful mom. How are you feeling?"

Elsa looked toward where Liam was wiping off the table, "I could do without this constant nauseous feeling, but other than that, I'm excited and terrified."

Emma made sympathetic noises but before she could comment, Liam sauntered over and pulled his wife to her feet, "Honey, do you feel like a little walk?" As he was leading her to the door Wilby and Rumple followed closely at their heels, inviting themselves along. With a good-natured laugh at their antics, the dog's leashes were clipped on and out the door they went.

Emma felt more than saw Killian come around the corner and jumped a bit when he leaned over the rocking chair, caging her in, "Looks like you've found a little princess, Swan."

"Hi babe," she dimpled up at him, "Isn't she adorable today? Look at her little black shoes."

Killian bent over and kissed the baby on her nose. She squealed in delight and grabbed handfuls of his hair, kicking her little chubby legs up in the air. "Help a man out here, love. The little lass has a tight hold."

Emma helped Killian get free and when he stood up asked, "Would you like to hold her?" Handing Emily to her husband, she watched him bouncing the baby on his hip singing along with the music that was playing in the background. It didn't surprise her that Emily was besotted with her Uncle Killian, just like every other female that came in contact her handsome husband. And from the look on his face, he was just as besotted with their niece.
Killian looked over at Emma as she watched him and Emily dancing around the room. She had a tender smile on her face and the look of love just about took him to his knees. Pulling her into the circle of his arms, he crooned to her and the baby until Emily laid her little head on his shoulder and fell asleep. "Are you ready for one of these, love?"

Reaching up she rubbed her hands along his scruff, "Ask me in 6 months when I get my new practice up and running. What about you?"

Hugging her tightly, he tucked her against his chest, "Whenever you're ready, just let me know." His lips covered hers in a kiss that caused her knees to go weak, "Until then, I've heard practice makes perfect."

"Hmm, works for me." Kissing him again she took the baby and laid her in her crib before returning to a room full of conversation and dessert.

**Home**

On the drive home, Emma was unusually quiet, and try as he might, Killian couldn't pinpoint any one specific reason that would have brought on such melancholy. Opening his mouth to ask her if all was well, he noticed a secretive smile had taken up residence on her beautiful face. Reaching across the console, he squeezed her thigh, "Penny for your thoughts love. You look like you have a secret."

Turning in her seat, which caused his hand to inch higher, Emma sighed, "I'm sorry, babe. I'm ok. I was reliving the wonderful memories we've made together this past year. It's a little scary to be this happy, you know?"

Killian kissed her finger tips, "The future's nothing to be afraid of love.

Emma looked over her shoulder at Rumple asleep on the back seat after spending all day with Wilby. "Rumple wore himself out. Think he'll have the energy to take care of his kittens?"

Letting out a laugh, Killian glanced in the rearview mirror at the tired dog, "I'm sure he'll manage. Speaking of said kittens, we should name them."

Wrinkling her nose, Emma leaned her head back against the headrest, "What about Linus and Lucy?"

Killian gave her a funny look, "Linus and Lucy? The characters from that show with a dog the same color as Rumple?"

Emma giggled at him. "Yes, that's the one. Watching Charlie Brown Christmas was a tradition when M&M and I were kids. Leo loved that show for some reason," her voice trailed off.

"Whatever you decide," Killian smiled at her.

"Good answer. I like it when you agree with me," Emma smirked. "Linus and Lucy it is."

They drove a few more miles listening to the holiday music before Killian asked, "Did Elsa share the news with you?"

Emma squeezed his fingers, "She did and shared with me that she's both excited and scared."

"Liam said he's scared too, but very excited. I wish mum could have been around for this. She would have loved having a grandchild to spoil," he remarked with a touch of sadness in his voice.
"Killian, we've talked about how our story parallels your parent's story and that they helped lead us to each other. I have to believe that somehow she will also be a part of the next generation."

"Aye love, you're right," he said as they turned off US 1 onto their drive. Glancing at Emma as they drove up to the house, Killian could see the way her whole body relaxed whenever the beach house came into view.

Rounding the front of the truck, he helped her out and picked up the bags with their gifts from the others. Rumple jumped down and ran off to take care of business, and the sounds of the night surrounded them both. The rolling waves, flying insects, and birds and the sound of the wind blowing through the trees, brought forth the smell of the night Jasmine reminding him of Christmases with his mother. Good times those, but these days, he thought, were the best days of his life.

Pushing open the door, he stepped aside to allow his Swan to precede him. Tossing his keys on a table and placing the bags on the floor, he pulled his heart close. Wrapping her in both arms, he ran his hands up and down her back, feeling her muscles relax a little more with each caress, "Emma love, go change into more comfortable clothes while I take care of Rumple and the kittens and then meet me in front of the tree."

She lifted her head off his shoulder, "Are you sure you can handle them?"

"You doubt me Swan?" he asked with a look of mock indignation "I'll be waiting."

Cupping his face she kissed him gently, "I love you, you know?"

"Aye, and I love you," he kissed her again, "Now go, so I can unwrap my gifts."

"Gifts?" she asked him a curious tone in her voice.

He smirked at her and raised his brow, "Gifts, love. The one under the tree and you." He tapped her chin, and ran his finger down her chest, between her breasts, to the button on her pants, which he efficiently popped. "Hurry."

**Exchanging Gifts**

Once she had turned the corner into their room, he went to take care of the pets. The kittens wound themselves around his legs, tugging at his shoe laces, tackling each other, and attaching their claws to his pant legs, until he put bowls of fresh food and water down and then he moved into the living room. Turning on the tree lights, he tossed a few pillows on the floor and had just settled when looking up he noticed Emma coming around the corner. "Come sit."

Curling up on the cushions, she tucked herself against his side, and kissed his neck, just under his ear where those sexy freckles resided. "This is nice." Almost feeling the need to purr like a cat, she rubbed her cheek against his chest, "Now about those gifts you were so anxious to unwrap...," she remarked leaving the sentence hanging so he could decide which one he wished to unwrap first.

Killian turned her chin toward him and kissed her, allowing some of the heat he had been feeling all evening seep into the kiss. Breaking apart, he touched his forehead to hers, allowing his breath to settle, "Shall we unwrap the ones under the tree first or each other?"

Slowly opening her eyes she gazed into the midnight blue ones of the man who held her heart and came to mean more to her every day. Running her hand down over his firm chest and stomach to lightly graze her fingers over the prominent bulge behind his zipper, she whispered, "You tell me."

When her hand started moving down, his body hardened even further and he wanted nothing more
than to push his hips against her hand, allowing pressure where he wanted it the most. Gathering his inner strength, he willed his body to remain still and pushed away from the sofa to pull the gift he had been saving for her from under the tree. "I hope you like it," was all he said as he laid it in her lap.

After laying the box in her lap, he met her eyes, allowing her to see how vulnerable he felt by exposing this piece of his life. His hope was to give her some insight into his life while he had been waiting for her.

Emma kissed him lightly, "You sure?"

"Aye, love, very sure. I love you." Kissing her again he sat back and watched carefully as she removed the ribbon and pulled off tape so that she could peel back the paper. As she lifted the lid and looked inside to see the book he had made for her, his heart beat a little faster.

Emma looked at the inscription on the front of the book and immediately felt the tears well up. Not only had he used the words that he had quoted on their wedding day, but had added another quote, 'You wanna know who I'm in love with? Read the first word again.' She lifted the book out of the box and opening it, became immersed in the words that greeted her. "Oh, Killian," was all that she was able to get past the lump in her throat as she turned page after page of words written by her husband. Words written to her, about her, and how he couldn't wait to share his life with her. Goosebumps rose throughout her body at the amount of tenderness that was exposed within the prose.

Setting the book aside, she turned and wrapped her arms around his neck, allowing the tears to flow freely. "Thank you for sharing with me. I love it and I love you."

Killian hugged her, "Let me help," gently tugging on her hair until she looked at him, he cupped her face and using his thumb wiped away her tears before following their tracks with his lips.

Emma closed her eyes and relished the love and care being given to her completely letting herself follow his lead. When his lips covered hers, she opened for him and was swept along in the sensual haze that was created whenever they were together.

Feeling the world tilt, she followed Killian down as he lay back on the cushions, aligning their bodies, so his hardness hit in just the right spot causing her to shiver with need after every thrust of his hips. The sensations built until pinpricks were felt all along her legs and rolling to the side, she moved Killian on top. His lips moved along her jaw, sucking and kissing, while his hips created the perfect friction between her jeans and her core, allowing that climb to continue and causing her to wish they had on fewer clothes. Killian's movements become more erratic and faster, until she heard, "Bloody hell!"

So abruptly had the haze been broken, it took her a moment to open her eyes to see what was happening, and there sat her husband, in the middle of the kittens, who were pouncing on his pants and each other with needle sharp claws. "Better than a cold shower," she told the little black kitten as she picked him up and cuddled him to her chest.

Killian was holding the orange tabby, and stroking her soft fur, "What shall we do with these two kittens, Swan?" His sentence was barely finished before he saw Rumple come prancing around the corner. "Hey boy, did you lose your kittens?" Rumple stopped and cocked his head as if he was listening, "Can you take them please?"

Promptly moving into herding mode, Rumple neatly manipulated the kittens back to bed and then positioned himself right in front of their bed so they had to go over him if they wanted out. After a
few tries, and being on the receiving end of a few growls, they curled up next to him and promptly fell asleep.

Emma and Killian had been watching from across the room and as soon as the kittens settled down for the night, Rumple opened his eyes and gave them a look that could only be interpreted as "It's about time," before he too, closed his eyes and succumbed to slumber. They looked at each other and shook their heads.

Pushing her blonde locks off her shoulder, Killian nuzzled Emma's neck, "Now where were we before we were so rudely interrupted?"

Leaning into him, she stroked his jaw and giggled, "You were just getting ready to open your gift from the tree, then you can unwrap me."

After one last nip of her earlobe, he sat up and took the box she was holding. She had wrapped it in green wrapping paper with red toy boats on it. Smiling he pointed at one of them. "Look Swan, the Eala," his eyes lighting up.

Taking the box, she turned it over and pointed to another, "The Cisne and the Cigno too."

He kissed her nose, "You thought of everything, didn't you?"

"I want to make your dreams come true, Killian." He started to set the box down and reach for her, but with a smirk and a hand on his chest to hold him off, she commented, "Unwrap first, kiss later."

He quirked his brow, "As you wish," and winked. Giving her another quick kiss he proceeded to open his gift. Once the box was opened, he looked down at the cover of the book and saw the picture of them on their wedding day and above the picture read, "Our Courtship." Running his hand over the cover, he smiled, "That day was one of the happiest days of my life."

Rubbing her cheek on his shoulder, Emma hummed in agreement.

Killian flipped open the cover and read Emma's inscription, *Every love story is beautiful, but ours is my favorite*, before moving from page to page. She had thought of everything, from their first exchange, meet, date, every note, and letter with pictures and dates. Putting the book back in the box, he pulled Emma onto his lap, "Have you ever heard the saying "You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams?"

Shaking her head in the negative, she responded, "But it's beautiful."

"That is how I feel every day. I love you Emma Swan Jones. Now come here as I have other plans for that mouth."

Emma started to give him some sass, but he covered her lips with his and didn't give her a chance. Sliding her fingers through his hair she let the kiss deepen as his hands moved up her back bringing her sweater with them.

Releasing her lips, Killian tugged it over her head and tossed it behind them. The blinking lights from the tree cast colorful shadows across her torso giving her satin bra an incandescent glow. Placing a kiss over her breastbone, he felt her shiver slightly, "Cold?"

"Hmm, no."

"Good." Another kiss, another shiver. Using his thumbs, he stroked lightly back and forth over her nipples, while continuing to place light kisses, licks, and nips, between her breasts, until he reached
the center clasp. Popping it open with one hand, he moved the cup aside and sucked her rosy nipple into his mouth, flicking his tongue back and forth quickly, until she groaned. Moving to the other side, he pushed the garment off her shoulder, allowing it to drop to the floor and licked the pert nipple before sucking it into his mouth, causing her back to arch.

Emma squirmed in his lap, straddling him, feeling his erection, heavy against his jeans, driving her crazy with need. Pulling her tighter against his shaft, he held her hips, encouraging her to move, where she rose and fell against the heavy ridge, grinding her core against him, creating delicious friction just where she needed it most.

Releasing her nipple, he moved back to her mouth, and slanting his lips over hers, laid her down on the cushions. Holding her head with one hand, he moved his mouth, licking, sucking and seducing her with long drugging kisses until his body sang for more and he ground his cock against her core, feeling her shiver with each contact. Needing to feel all of her, he slipped his hand inside her leggings and cupping her wetness slid his fingers along her slit, before inserting a single digit and rubbing her clit with his thumb.

Both groaned as Emma yanked the back of his shirt up, and he released her to tug it over his head, bringing their bare torsos together. The hairs on his chest, brushed her nipples, causing them to pebble harder and pushing his hand back under the elastic of her pants, he parted her, swirling his finger over and around her clit, feeling her body shiver with need.

"Killian," Emma moaned, "I need you."

"Patience love. I like to savor my gifts." Sitting up he removed her pants and cupping her ass, kissed his way down over her abdomen. Anticipation sizzled through his system as he inhaled her musky scent and spreading her legs, bared her to him completely. Swiping his tongue through her drenched folds, he blew gently on her clit before sucking it between his lips.

When he sucked it between his lips, she released a high-pitched gasp, that served to ratchet up his excitement even more. As his tongue and lips alternated between flicks and sucks, he reached up with one hand, to tweak her nipple. Feeling her body start to bow, and her thighs start to tremble, he sucked harder until her core tightened and she let go.

Emma hadn't wanted to climax without him, but his talented tongue and lips had felt too good. As her body relaxed, she felt his scruff rubbing softly against her lower belly. Using his hair, she gently yanked his lips back to hers, tasting herself, feeling her desire start to spiral again. Rotating them, she rose above him and dragging the fingers of one hand over his erection, elicited a hissed reaction.

Scooting further back on his thighs, she palmed him again, squeezing his cock before flicking the button of his pants open. Easing the zipper over his hard flesh, she lightly scored her nails over his length through the cotton of his boxer briefs.

Bucking up into her hand, he moaned, "Hurry Swan."

Looping her hands in the waistband of his pants, she slowly slid them down his long legs, allowing the hard points of her breasts to lightly graze the silky hairs on his legs. Once those were removed, she moved back up his body, and lifting the elastic, freed his cock from the tight confines of the cotton briefs. As she moved those down, she flipped her hair providing a sensuous curtain that played peek a boo with where he most wanted her mouth. Allowing her lips and tongue to trail along his inner thigh, she laughed low in her throat when he couldn't stay still.

Tangling his fingers in her hair, he growled in a hoarse whisper, "Minx."
Finally removing his last barrier, Emma moved back up his body and her lips found his male nipples and as she ran the tip of her tongue around them, she felt his body tighten even more. One hand was buried in her hair and the other stroked up and down her back, over the swell of her hip, holding her close to him.

Easing her lips lower, she caressed the broad expanse of his chest before following the line of silky soft hair down the center of his belly. As the kisses led to another part of his body, but not the part he wanted, the hand in her hair tightened, subtly encouraging her head lower.

Gripping his lean hips, Emma glanced up at him and using the tip of her tongue licked slowly around the broad crest awaiting her attention. Opening her mouth, she sucked him in using her tongue to cradle his cock.

She took him nearly to the back, allowing the tip to slide against the soft part of her throat and giving him a sultry look hummed gently causing his hands to tighten even more in her hair. Her tongue flitted back and forth and desire swelled, her clit throbbing with need.

When his cock sunk into the hot cavern of her mouth, he almost lost control. So, warm and wet, his shaft forcing the rest of him along for the ride. Feeling like the top of his head was going to blow, he hooked his hands under her arms pulling her hips up to align with his and with a surge pushed her down onto his erection.

Emma straightened her legs, bringing her clit into contact with his body, so every undulation of her met each upward thrust of him, sending tingling sensations throughout.

One thrust came right after the other, faster and faster until he didn't think he could stave off the moment any longer. Tighter to her hips he held until he reached the point of no return. The base of his spine tingled and his balls tightened. Thankfully Emma was with him, gripping him tightly with her body, milking him with hard pulses, peppering kisses across his face and neck. One last thrust, he felt her lose control and releasing his body to hers let her carry him along on the sensuous wave that was her.

Emma felt boneless as she lay on Killian, and after a while felt him tuck her against his side, holding her tight. Their hearts racing in time against each other soon slowed and their breathing evened out. Feeling Killian move, Emma roused herself enough to ask, "Where are you going?"

"I'm just moving us to our bed, love. I don't believe either of us would wish for sharp kitten claws to rouse us in the morning." Turning off the lights, he picked up his sleeping princess and carried her to bed. Tucking her under the covers, he crawled in beside her and pulled her close to his heart. "Goodnight Swan. Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas to you Killian. I love you."

"And I you." He felt her relax into slumber before the entire sentence had left his mouth.

As he drifted to sleep, he thought about the letter from his mum those many months ago, that had led him to where he was today. He had read the letter so many times, he knew it by heart. She had written,

…..Fate chose a different path for us and now it is time for you to follow yours. Killian, find your path. Make it one of love and light and happiness. Find that special woman to love and when you find her, hold on to her with all you have. Love is precious and you, my son, have such an immense capacity for it that when you find her, you will know. That is my wish for you. …
Whispering softly, "You were right, mum. I did know."

Turning onto his side, he wrapped himself around Emma, with the words, "Merry Christmas my son. You've chosen well," drifting through his subconscious.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you thought and if you have any suggestions for this Killian and Emma.
Hurricane Irma

Chapter Summary

Captain Swan have to evacuate their home in Key Largo during Hurricane Irma.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hurricane Irma

A Beach House Story

Wednesday

As soon as he sailed into the Bay, Killian checked the weather alert that had popped up on his phone and frowned at what he saw. He had been in Florida for a little over three years now and had been fortunate when it came to hurricanes. But as someone who spent a great deal of time on the sea, he had a healthy respect for the power one could wield and worried this one could be trouble.

He and his team worked side by side, docking the Schwan, helping the passengers disembark and as soon as they were alone, he called them together. "Have you seen the weather?" He asked them worriedly.

"Killian," Tink looked concerned, "What's going on?" She made eye contact with both Wendy and Eddie and who shrugged their shoulders.

"We've got a serious situation coming our way," Killian looked at the three of them. "There's a Category 5 hurricane in the Caribbean and many of the tracks show a strong possibility she will be heading our direction. We need to take care of the ships and then take care of our homes."

"What do we need to do?" Wendy asked as she grabbed hold of Eddie's hand. "I've never been in a hurricane before but after seeing what happened in Texas, I'm scared."

Killian frowned down at his phone, trying to piece together what all needed to be done for both the business and for his home. He also needed to hear his wife's voice just to make sure she was alright. She was a Floridian and had experienced hurricanes before, but having been a small child when Hurricane Andrew paid a visit to her home state, they made her nervous. He needed to ascertain for himself she was fine and then he could take care of everything else.

"Wendy and Tink, you two go back to the offices and reschedule all the bookings for the next several days. Eddie and I will move all the ships into storage."

"Will do," Tink called already gathering her bag while waiting for Wendy to say goodbye to her beau.

"I'm going to change out of this," Killian shrugged out of his heavy duster and disappeared into his cabin. Once he had changed into a pair of old jeans and a t-shirt, he pulled out his phone and sent Emma a message.
K: Are you with a patient?

E: Not right this minute, why?

Killian quickly pushed the Emma button and waited for the call to go through. When he heard her voice, it immediately soothed his fears but not wanting to take too much of her time, he got right to the point, "Swan, have you seen the latest weather report?"

"Not since this morning," she answered him, "I had patients most of the day, why?"

"Remember hurricane Irma?" He tried to keep the worry out of his voice.

"I remember, Killian. Is she coming our way?" She sounded resigned to the possibility as if she had expected the reprieve they’d had from hurricanes the last few years to run out soon.

"Aye love, she is, and she's a monster too." He ran his hand through his hair and paced in the small confines of his cabin. "Eddie and I are taking the ships to storage and then we can protect our home. Shall I pick you up so you can leave your car in the parking garage?"

She sighed sounding tired, "That's a good idea, babe. Then do you want to stop by the store on the way home?"

Mentally, checking off the 'to do' items on his list, they made plans for him to arrive at an approximate time. "I love you," he whispered just before he hung up and headed back up on deck to begin the task of moving his flock of swans to higher ground.

Leaving the Schwan for last, he sent Eddie to meet him at the storage facility in the truck and climbed onboard the Cigno ready to fly. Feeling his phone buzz, the message from Emma added fuel for his flight.

E: I love you too ;-) 

~~~~~~~~

As soon as she had seen the last patient, completed the last note and sent all her staff home to prepare for Irma, she dropped down in her chair and reached in her drawer for a package of crackers. She had just taken a bite when Ruby entered the office. Emma frowned at her friend, "What are you still doing here?"

"Victor is picking me up," she grinned at her friend, "Is Killian picking you up too?" Emma's mouth was full so she just shook her head as she continued to eat her crackers. "Look at us," Ruby giggled, "Two old married women. Who would have ever thought?"

"Feels good, doesn't it?" Emma's eyes twinkled.

"Yes, it does," Ruby agreed. "Do you need anything before I leave?"

"I don't think so. Be safe." After Ruby left, Emma finished her snack and called to check on M&M. Unable to reach her sister, she left a message and packed up her office, finishing just as she received a message from Killian he was on his way. Deciding to wait for him outside, she took one last look around and shut the door leaving work behind.

~~~~~~~~
After Killian picked up Emma, with their condo protected, they drove toward Key Largo anticipating higher than normal traffic. With preparations underway, all visitors were being told to leave and individuals were shopping for last minute supplies. Deciding it would be most prudent to divide and conquer, once home, Killian started work on storm preparations around the house and Emma took inventory on food and light sources before leaving to make a grocery store run.

As he worked, Killian thought back over his conversation with Liam and how they were boarding up their home and he was taking Elsa and their newborn son, Brennan, north a couple of counties to stay with Elsa's sister and husband. A good plan, he thought, however with the way Irma kept changing course, not one where you could be confident the storm would miss you. "We do what we have to do to protect those we love, right Rumple?" He crooned to the dog who insisted on inspecting everything that was being done.

Killian looked over their property, trying to decide where to start and ended up removing all the furniture from the outside area and storing it wherever he could find a place. Then he started on the shutters, something which would take a while since their home had so many windows. He wondered how Emma was faring at the supermarket, assuming it was packed.

~~~~~~~~

Emma bypassed the first grocery store she came to, driving farther to one that was a little bigger and she hoped better stocked. With a full parking lot, she had to drive around a few times before she was able to snag a parking place and then the real fun started.

The inside of the store was just as packed as the outside and many shelves were already bare. Emma grabbed some apples and bananas but none of the other fruits looked very good to her. The next aisle she grabbed the last case of water and a few bottles of juice that wouldn't taste too bad if they were warm before turning onto the bread aisle. One loaf, a few boxes of chocolate donuts, some peanut butter and applesauce were all that caught her eye before moving on to get some extra cat and dog food and getting lucky when she uncovered a package of 'D' batteries.

She moved on tossing some paper products and then stocked up on salty snacks that she knew Killian enjoyed. There were only a few aisles left where she added a box of bandages, some antibiotic cream, a box of ibuprofen and some gauze and tape. All done she thought, turning to work her way to the check-out counters when she spotted something she knew Killian would enjoy. Tossing two in, just in case, she took her place in line.

Arriving home where she was greeted by Rumple, she carried the bags inside and as Linus and Lucy wound around her legs, she searched for Killian's gift and tried to decide when best to give it to him. Nervous about the storm, she took the boxes and hid them in her 'to go' bag, thinking that when the time was right, she would know.

Saturday

When word came that they had to evacuate, Emma had been expecting it but still couldn't stop the tears from filling her eyes. She needed time to pull out the memories and play them over again. This wasn't how she wanted to spend the weekend.

"Emma, love," Killian called as he came in the front door, Rumple hard on his heels. "Our suitcases are in the car. What..." As soon as he was able to get a good look at her face, he stopped talking and wrapped her in his arms. "I know, babe. I feel it too," he whispered softly.

She circled her arms around his trim waist, "I know, but this place," she sniffed, "it's magical."
Killian separated them just enough to tilt her chin up, "It's magic brought us together, but our love keeps us together. Have faith." He kissed her, showing her that the magic wasn't in a place but in their hearts.

"But what if..." She started to say before he kissed her again not letting her finish the statement.

"If Irma touches our house, we can fix it, alright?" When she nodded her head, he gave her one last kiss before pointing to a waterproof container he had brought in. "Would you like to bring our picture books, love?"

The somber tone of his voice was so unlike him that it Emma's heart broke all over again. She loved their beach house but she had only lived in it a short time. It had been a part of Killian's life for as long as he could remember. It wasn't fair, it just wasn't fair. "Why don't you get the ones from the other rooms and I'll get the ones out here?" She thought he might like a few minutes alone to say goodbye.

He nodded his head and picking up the second box disappeared down the hall. Emma took her box and after taking the books off the shelves set them in the box. Every book had a special memory and as she flipped through the pages, she kept having to wipe the tears off her face. The last book she placed inside the box was the one that she had made for him for the past Christmas. It said, 'Our Courtship.' She remembered exactly what he said to her and how she had felt that night. And afterward he had taken her in his arms and they made love. She had felt wanted and cherished and so very loved.

Killian hadn't closed the shutters to the sliding doors yet and as she looked out onto the sand, the memories crashed into her head just like the large waves were already crashing onto their dock. If she looked up the beach, she could find the exact spot where Killian had found her after she had left him that last letter. She had been feeling broken hearted, thinking she had lost him without ever having him and had heard her name in the wind.

But then she heard it again. "EEEMMMMMAAA SSWWAANN!" She looked up the beach in the direction of the path and saw a silhouette. It was too dark to make out any features but someone was moving down the path, and she heard it again "EEEMMMMMAAA SSWWAANN!" and her feet started moving, slowly at first until she was running toward the figure, knowing without a doubt it was him. Her feet were flying across the sand until she came in contact with a warm body and she felt strong arms wrap around her, holding her close and she was hearing, "I've got you, Swan, I've got you, Swan," repeated, reverently over and over in her ear as she wept in his arms.

That moment would be forever etched in her mind, as one of the best moments of her life.

Following the beach closer to their house, she could point to the exact spot where Rumple had greeted her on the day that Killian had proposed.

Rumple was waiting for her, half way down, and when she tried to walk around him he refused to move. Patting her leg, she called, "Come on boy, let's go," but still he sat.

That's curious, she thought. Bending closer to make sure he was ok, he lifted his paw, like he did when shaking for a treat, and when she reached down she saw a piece of paper attached.

"What the…?"

Emma smiled to herself wondering what Killian was using courier Rumple for that he couldn't send in a text or tell her. She removed the paper and opened it. What she read made her heart race and tears form in her eyes. His letter said;
"I love you. Marry me?"

"Yes!" she shouted out loud. Then as her feet took off the rest of the way, she continued to chant "yes, yes, yes" over and over again, until she saw him standing by a group of cushions next to a low table. Hesitating just a split second, she watched the smile cross his face and taking off again, she ran right into his arms, and showered kisses all over his beautiful face, repeating her answer until his smile was so large, the tiny lines at the sides of his eyes crinkled.

And then just a few months later, her dream wedding had occurred directly behind their home, right on the sand.

The minister asked them if they had rings to exchange. Killian turned to Rumple and bent over. Rumple lifted his paw and Killian gently untied the rings and patted the dog on the head before murmuring, "Good job boy."

Picking up her hand, he slid the ring onto her finger. "Swan, this ring was given to me by my mother. She said it would lead me to my one true love and maybe she was right. For you see, on that fateful day, I had uncovered it while unpacking and slipped the chain over my head and it found you. It was waiting for you, Swan. I was waiting for you."

Emma took the ring that Killian had chosen, a simple platinum band with their initials and wedding date carved inside, and slid it onto his finger pledging her love and faithfulness.

The minister began his speech pronouncing them man and wife but before he could finish, Killian had tugged her toward him, wrapping his arms around her waist at the same time his lips captured hers in a scorching open mouth kiss. Feeling Emma reach up to wrap her arms around his neck, he pulled her body even tighter against his and as she sighed into his mouth, he plundered her lips conveying everything he was feeling, yet trying to maintain some decorum in front of their guests.

How could she say goodbye to so many memories knowing that when they returned their beach would never be the same?

~~~~~~~~

Killian carried the box into the room and taking pictures off the wall gently wrapped them in towels before placing them inside. He prayed that when they were allowed to return, their house would still be standing here waiting for them. He wanted more time with Emma and, he hoped, time to fill it with their children.

As he skimmed the pictures scattered across the dresser, his eyes kept coming back to one taken not long after the house had been completed. It was of him, his parents and Liam and they were sitting on the beach. As he looked at it, he could hear the waves rolling in and smell the sea and hear his mother's musical laugh. "I wish you were here, mum. You would have loved Emma." He whispered to her image as he wrapped up the picture and included it with the others.

Once that room was empty, he moved into the second bedroom, which functioned as an office and laughed at the first picture he noticed. There sat Rumple on the walkway, with a large smile on his face showing off his pawprints. Killian looked down at Rumple, who hadn't let him far from his sight since he had started the hurricane preparations. "Don't worry, mate. You, Linus and Lucy are going with us too." Shaking his head at the way Rumple just blinked at him as if to say, "But of course," he moved on.

He had already sanded and primed so he just needed to place a tarp on the ground, pour the paint and he was ready to start. Deciding he needed a bit of music he went in, turned on his stereo and
leaving the door open, set the speaker by it. Enjoying the warm day and the music, Killian had completed one side and was half way through the other when he noticed movement out of the corner of his eye. Looking towards the drive, he saw a black and white dog just sitting there, looking at him. Killian looked around to see if the dog came with an owner, but seeing no one, looked back at the dog. "Well, hello there. Are you lost?"

The dog tilted his head as if to contemplate his answer, stood up and headed down the walk. Killian assumed the dog was coming closer to be pet so was totally surprised when the dog walked right past him, but not before stepping in and out of the paint tray, tracking footsteps up the walk to the door. After recovering from the shock, Killian jumped up and tried to stop the dog, yelling, "Stop! Stop!" but as the dog reached the front door, he didn't stop. He just looked over his shoulder and then trotted right into the house.

And that he thought, was one of the best days of his life. Rumple had quickly become someone whom he could share his thoughts with and was never judged. He had talked to him about his frustrations about being able to be with Emma and when he had disappeared his heart had broken all over again. After all three of them had been reunited, life had once again been complete.

The last picture Killian packed was one taken just last Christmas when the newest members of their family had arrived. Linus and Lucy, two kittens that Liam had found abandoned at a construction site and with a little help from his mate, Robin, they had magically appeared next to their mailbox. A perfect addition to their family.

As he got further down the walk, closer to the postbox, he could see something black and orange at Rumple's feet. Stopping close to them, he finally had a look at the small balls of fur that had captured the dog's attention. Hearing Emma coming up behind him, he turned and saw that she appeared to be just as enamored with the scene as Rumple was.

"Oh Killian, look! Rumple found kittens!"

"Let's see what you have there, boy." He reached and picked up a little ball of orange fur, gently lifting her tail, before cradling it against his chest. "See here, Swan. We have ourselves a little lass." The kitten started purring and butting her face into his chest. Handing her to Emma, he bent over, picking up the fuzzy black kitten, and after checking turned to Emma. "And here we have a little lad. It appears that our family just increased in size.

One last look and he carried the box out to the SUV before walking back in to find Emma. She was standing in front of the glass doors staring out at sea and he could only imagine the memories running through her mind. "Emma," he wrapped his arms around her, pulling her tightly against him, "we need to go. The winds are picking up and I'm sure the traffic on US 1 will be bad."

"I know. I'm as ready as I'll ever be." They closed and locked the shutters and door and after taking one last look around began their journey to M&M and David's house where they would all ride out the storm.

~~~~~~~~

M&M and David's house, located in Coral Gables, close to the University of Miami where she worked, was a sprawling Mediterranean style with plenty of room. David had almost finished with the shutters and after carrying their suitcases inside, Killian went to help him while Emma and her sister put together a quick lunch.

The first few hours after the outer bands of the hurricane started arriving, the atmosphere was almost party like. They contacted friends to check on their whereabouts, finding out that several of them had
ended up back at Bayside General Hospital ready to lend a hand when the injuries inevitably started happening. Robin, a police officer, was on duty and so Regina had taken Roland, Robby, and Rosie to the hospital where her mother, Cora, was keeping them company.

Since Victor was in charge of the Emergency Room, Ruby had decided to stay at the hospital to help if she was needed. Ashley too had taken both Sean and Alexandra to work with her, where she could be available, yet not separated from her family. Emma hadn't been able to get hold of Belle, but since she and August had become almost inseparable, assumed she was probably with him. All their friends accounted for, Emma leaned her head against Killian's shoulder, listening to the winds as they howled outside of the house.

After hours of listening to the creaking of the house every time a strong gust swirled around, or the moans of the winds as they snuck between the vents in the shutters, her anxiety was running high. Looking over at her sister, she wished she could as easily fall asleep on her husband's lap, but she didn't have that luxury. She was too busy worrying about their house and what they might go back to, or not go back to. The house, their things, possessions that can be replaced, yes, but so many memories too. And Killian's gift to her, given when they still had never met, but somehow it had survived and thrived, still standing tall today. Would it still be there after the destruction of Irma?

"Oh, Killian," she whispered, "What have you done? You planted a tree, for me?" Emma walked around the trunk, running her fingers over the bark, feeling the ridges of the heart and of their initials. Reaching up she took a leaf and pulled it free from the branch. It was smooth and while the blossoms wouldn't be present until late spring or summer, she could imagine their smell.

"You did it, Killian. You must really be a pirate, as you've managed to steal a little piece of my heart." Pressing her lips against the spot where their initials lay, she imagined, it was his heart she was touching, just as he had touched hers. Wiping the tears that had fallen, she knew what she needed to do.

Leaving him a note in the mailbox, she turned to get back in the car, but Rumple was digging in the dirt under the Magnolia tree.

"Rumple, no! Come, let's go." A few minutes later he picked something up and trotted happily to the car. Emma noticed his nose had a little dirt on it but in his mouth, he was carrying a bone. Reaching to take it away, he growled a warning, "Fine, take the old dirty thing with you." Looking back at the house, she wondered where it had come from and how long it had been buried under the tree.

When a particularly strong gust made the house feel like it was shaking and then a sharp crack was heard, Emma jumped.

Killian tightened his hold on her, leaning closer to nuzzle her neck, "Hold on to me." He whispered in her ear his hot breath giving her ideas best not to have when they weren't alone. "If we were alone, I would find other ways to distract you."

Tucking her feet underneath her, she leaned closer, "And I would let you," she whispered back, feeling herself relax under the hot, mesmerizing stare of her husband. *He always knows exactly what I need,* she thought, which made her think of the precious gift that he had given her, of which he had no knowledge. Should she take advantage of this quiet time and use one of the surprises she had purchased when she had gone to the store? It had only been three months since they had been trying, but when he had asked if she were ready, exactly six months after she started her practice, he had been nothing if not diligent in his goal to succeed. Finding out that they had been successful would make him happy and because she found herself unable to keep it to herself any longer, whispered for his ears only, "Remember what we started working on a few months ago?"
She felt his body tense and knew the minute it registered what she was saying, before he turned his head, locking eyes with hers trying to read her mind. "Swan, do you know for sure?" His voice just as quiet as hers but a glance at David told her he had leaned his head back closing his eyes.

"Well, I'm not exactly sure, but yea, I think so." She finally got out knowing that didn't give him much more information than before.

"We need a test." He declared.

"Well, it just so happens, I bought some at the store and th-" -here," he interrupted her excitedly.

She nodded her head, starting to feel a little bit excited about finding out.

He didn't say anything, just gave her a huge smile, and stood up swinging her into his arms, carrying her down the hall.

"Behave you two," David called as they passed by before he was shushed by his wife.

~~~~~~~~

Kilian dropped her legs, allowing her to stand on her own two feet. Pulling her flush to his body, he kissed her with all the pent-up excitement that he was feeling over the possibility that she might be carrying their child. Releasing her lips, he smiled at her, "So what do you have to do?"

Emma went to her suitcase and after rummaging around a few minutes pulled out a box holding the answers. He watched her slowly open it and read the instructions before giving him a shy smile. "I'll be right back."

"You don't need my help," he called, anxious as to what it might say.

"I'm good," were the last words he heard before she shut herself in the bathroom and he was left with nothing to do but pace.

While she was gone, the winds seemed to increase causing the lights to flicker. Realizing that it would be only a matter of minutes before they were without power, Killian ran to the front of the house, grabbed a lantern and ran back, hoping they stayed on until she was done. Just as he returned, the bathroom door opened and after one last flicker, they were plunged into blackness.

Emma's quick inhalation alerted him as to where she was standing and with a flick of the switch, the blackness was replaced by the soft glow of light from the lantern.

Her eyes met his across the room, "Are you ready?"

Killian set the lantern on the dresser and made his way to where she was standing. Taking her hand in his, he brought their hands up so they could read the test together, "Pregnant," he whispered.

Emma dropped the test and jumped into his arms, laughing and crying at the same time, "We did it, Killian. We're going to have a baby."

"We certainly practiced enough," he quipped before swinging her around in a circle. After a gentle kiss, he placed a hand on her still flat stomach. "If it's a lass we can name her Irma."

Emma rolled her eyes, "I have a feeling you'll be calling her that no matter what we name her."
'Most likely," he gave her a cheeky grin and a kiss before they left the room to share the news with their family.

**Wednesday**

It was three days after the storm had passed before they were allowed to take US 1, the only road in or out of the Keys, to check on their house. Driving was slow and the closer they got to Key Largo, the more Emma's stomach tied itself in knots. "Oh, Killian." She looked around and as far as the eyes could see there were cars, both on the road and deserted off the road. Boats normally in the water had blown up onto land and several streets that normally would have homes, were now just piles of twisted metal and wood.

The roads were littered with debris, buildings were flattened, signs were twisted, and yet Killian could see signs that clean-up had already begun. "Swan, I've never experienced anything like this."

"It changes a person, I think." Emma whispered as Killian turned off the highway onto their drive.

Unable to go more than the length of the car, Killian parked and went around to help Emma down. Glad they had left Rumple and his kittens behind, they stepped over and around the fallen branches, holding their breath as they rounded a curve and their house came into view.

Emma breathed a sigh of relief that it was still standing as was their magic mailbox. Holding Killian's hand, they walked by the magnolia tree noticing that one of its large branches had been twisted around as if it were a small twig. Taking a steadying breath, Killian unlocked the door and they walked inside to a too warm, too silent and musty smelling house.

They considered themselves fortunate when after a cursory examination of the inside revealed only a few small leaks that were creating spots on their ceiling. Their shutters had all held firm but with no power, no water and limited supplies for daily living, they realized they couldn't stay there. Emma stayed inside to pack up the food in the kitchen as well as whatever else she felt they might need for the next few months.

~~~~~~

Killian went outside to move limbs, and other fallen debris so he could move the SUV closer to the door for easy loading. Once he had moved the vehicle closer, he surveyed the overall damage realizing that although they had lost much of their landscaping, the jasmine that his mum had planted all those years ago had survived. A sliver of sunshine to cover the gloom, he thought.

With nothing else that he could do, he went inside to collect the boxes Emma had packed and then shutting the door one last time, their steps carried them toward the driveway. When the last box was loaded, Killian turned Emma back toward the house, "What do you see, Swan?"

She leaned back against him, gazing up at their house, and while a part of her thought it looked sad and alone, with its broken plants and covered windows, she couldn't help but smile at the set of pawprints that covered the walk. "Rumple's pawprints."

"Aye," he led her toward the beach path, "he'll be there to bring us back home."

Down on the beach they discovered their dock would have to be rebuilt and that their deck and the support posts to the house would need to be strengthened. They had damage but their house still stood, which was more than their neighbors could say. Looking at the carnage around her, Emma couldn't stand it any longer and burying her head against Killian's chest, wept.

When her tears had slowed, she sniffed, "I'm sorry. Stupid pregnancy hormones." But looking up at
Killian, he too had tears in his eyes.

"These," he waved his arm around them, "are just things that can be replaced." He tender voice continued, "what we have between us, and the life we've created," his hand covered her stomach, "are the most important and powerful magic of all." Their lips met in a kiss that conveyed understanding, tenderness, sweetness and above all love for even without their beach house, they knew that they were living their happy beginning.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading. It was fun revisiting Captain Swan from the Beach House verse.

End Notes

I hope you enjoyed Chapter 1. A new chapter will be posted each Wednesday through the hiatus. I'd love to hear what your thoughts are about the story.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!