Falling Hard (for those we love)

by onepageatatime

Summary

Takes place in the middle of S5. Canon divergence: Hook doesn't come back after he defeats Hades ~yet~
A flu sweeps through Storybooke just after Robin has died and Hook is left in the underworld. Emma is trying to cope with her loss, but how will she respond to her parent's persistent affections when she gets sick on top of everything else?
Lots of fluff, lots of emotions, reference to past abuse in the foster care system.

Notes

Chapter 1 of many (I am done with this fic but I will post chapters overtime). I hope you enjoy! Critique if you want, be as harsh as you want to; it just helps me improve! :)
Chapter 1

Emma Swan never liked being sick. Not that most people do. When she was younger she didn’t mind it quite as much because none of the foster parent’s she had had ever cared about her enough to make a fuss. She would shoplift some DayQuil or Pepto Bismol from whatever convenience store was close to the foster parent or group home she was staying in at the time and keep it quiet. It was never very hard.
But, since coming to Storybrooke and acquiring a slew of people who actually did care about her she did everything she could to keep the attention off of herself. Emma had gotten a lot better at bringing her walls down and accepting help when she needed it, unhappily, but letting people help all the same. It was still so hard for her to let people in. But when it came to being sick, to being vulnerable, she still kept her walls up 10 fold. Especially when it came to her parents.
Since baby Neal’s birth it had been easier for her to fly under the radar, but that didn’t mean her parents stopped keeping an eye on their eldest daughter, who always seemed to have something she was hiding from them.

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Emma sighed as she sat up in bed that morning. Everything hurt. Her head pounded like the bass line of speakers that were turned up to crank at a party and her nose felt like sandpaper, burning with every breath.
“Son of a bitch,” she said, blowing her nose dramatically, “I don’t have time for this.”
Having just gotten back from Hades purgatory, there was a lot of paperwork to be done at the station. There was no way her dad would let her work if he knew she was in this condition, but she had to work. She was the savior. She may not have been able to save Killian…but she could at least keep her mind off her own heartbreak while trying to help the people of Storybrooke. Gripping the headboard for support Emma stood up. Her legs wobbled as she became perpendicular to the ground, but she held her balance. She struggled to get into her work clothes, eventually managing to get into some loose jeans and a comfy shirt and pulled on her red leather jacket over the top. It was still a little wet from the night before. Her chest protested loudly at the movements she made as she reached for the jacket and her breathing became rapid. Pain came with every breath, causing her to double over coughing and again grab the frame of her bed for support. She had not felt this sick in years and was seriously regretting walking home last night in the freezing rain…without an umbrella…or a raincoat.

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Her mother had needed Emma’s car yesterday to take Neal to an appointment, so Emma caught a ride to work with her dad. She didn’t mind and did anything to help her mother out, so she didn’t think it was a big deal.
She could count the times on one hand she had fought with her father. And even then It was mostly because she did something stupid and rash. But this time it was different. She had told her parents, and Henry, and Regina, and basically everyone else she knew not to mention what happened with Killian. Not to bring it up or even hint to it. They had been home one day and her father already broken her rule.
They were sitting at their desks, the sun already set and the skies crying with a deep passion from above. Emma had already felt like crap that day. Her head ached from the moment she woke up, her nose was runny and her chest tight. She had sneezed about a dozen times on the way over. When her dad had asked her if she was okay after about the 5th consecutive sneeze, she’d just said she had allergies. She didn’t really have any allergies but her parents didn’t know that, so he seemed to
accept this explanation. Emma had figured she’d probably just picked something up in the underworld or quite possibly from her son; she knew what kind of germs kids in school were exposed to these days. Needless to say, her temper was not the best.

So, when they got to the station and her dad decided to get all fatherly and check in on his daughter, he got an earful.

“I’m not talking about this right now, dad. I’m not talking about him,” she had said, her eyes determined to keep staring at the sheet of paper she held in front of her.

“Please Emma, please just talk to us. Talk to me. Your mother and I just want to be able to help you, but we can’t unless you tell us how you’re feeling…what you’re thinking,” David pushed.

“Fuck, dad just let it be!” Emma yelled, slamming down the file she was holding and standing up. “I am dealing with a lot right now and I am not ready to talk about this. I just lost someone extremely close to me, someone I was just beginning to open up to. I asked you not to bring it up and I really thought you could respect that.”

“Emma Marie Swan,” David started, his voice more stern than Emma had ever heard before and his eyes wide with anger, “I do not care how old you are, or what you are going through; you do not speak that way to your father. Ever.”

If looks could kill, the look Emma received from her dad would have shot her dead. She had immediately realized her mistake when the word came out of her mouth but at that moment she did not care. That was not the issue here, and he knew it. Instead of maybe saying he had made a mistake in bringing Hook up so soon he decided to get her for one slip up? Really?

Now her head felt as though it was actually about to burst from the pressure. She could feel her anger rising and knew if she didn’t get out of that room she would either pass out or do something with her magic she really didn’t mean to do.

“Go to hell,” she said to her dad, grabbing her bag and sprinting out the door, slamming it hard behind her. She knew this time she was the one who had been too harsh; but Emma had tried to say the one thing that would make her dad not follow her. Afterall, they’d just been to hell, or close enough to it for any of their liking.

Emma’s heart pounded as she felt the tears start to flow shamelessly out of her eyes. Pure anger, sadness and guilt from what she had just said to her father shook through her body. As her face met the cool air and rain she felt it calm her almost instantly. She’d always felt at home in the rain. Somehow it always seemed to settle her down. Maybe it was because she felt as if the sky understood some of her pain. That somewhere out there, there was someone, or something, that felt for her. Something that couldn’t talk back.

Home was a 20-minute walk, tops. Emma did not feel like seeing her father again that night and certainly did not want to share a car with him, giving him the chance of a follow-up discussion. So she started walking; the rain already drenching her leather jacket and weighing down her golden hair. Suddenly she heard a slam behind her. She looked back at the station to see her dad opening the door and walking out under the awning.

“Emma, come inside!” David ordered, “You can’t go anywhere in this weather. Please, just come inside, let’s talk.” He finished, softer this time and very much willing his daughter to come in from the rain and the cold.

The tears kept streaming down her face as she tried to take a deep breath. Her chest, however, did not allow this and it quickly turned into a loud bout of coughing instead. Regaining her breath, Emma looked at her dad through blurred vision. She could tell he heard her coughing and now looked even more concerned. Great.

“I can’t talk about this right now dad. I just told you that,” she said through clenched teeth, “Please just leave me alone.” And with that she turned on her heels and continued to walk towards home.
“Emma!” David had shouted, now pleading for Emma to turn around. “Emma come back!” But Emma kept walking, through town, past Grannies’, past Regina’s office. It was only when her red jacket was soaked through and her teeth chattered from the cold did she realize her umbrella was still tucked in the first drawer of her desk, along with her raincoat.

Before entering the apartment, Emma squeezed the water from her hair in an attempt to hide just how soaked through she was from her mother, who always over-worried about these things. It was fall and just beginning to get dark earlier in the day. Even though it was barely 8 o’clock, it looked as though it were midnight. Not seeing a ton of light coming from under the apartment door Emma figured her brother and possibly even her mother were already asleep. Mary Margaret had been so overwhelmed with joy to be reunited with her son, she’d been trying to do everything with a baby in her arms. Much like when Neal was first born. So the idea of her already asleep before 9 was not that unrealistic. She opened the door slowly, not seeing any signs of movement inside. Stepping in as quietly as she could, she closed the door behind her and made her way to the stairs. Her foot was just about to reach the first step when she heard her mother gasping softly behind her. Dammit.

“Emma…” she started quietly, not wanting to not wake the baby in her arms, “Why are you so wet? What happened? Where’s your father?” The questions started flowing out of her mother's mouth.

Not even turning around to meet her mother's gaze as tears threatened to leave her eyes once more, Emma responded.

“He’s at the station, why don’t you ask him why I’m soaking wet.” She snapped and continued up the stairs to her room, coughing all the way up.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Emma is desperate to avoid a conversation with her parent's about what was said the night before. All she wants is some breakfast and a cup of coffee, but David and Mary Margaret are adamant about finding out what's gotten into their daughter.

When Emma finally regained her breath, it was almost 8 o’clock in the morning. She usually got to work around 9 am. This gave her an excuse to make her appearance in the kitchen brief and hopefully avoid the whole “what happened” conversation with her parents for the time being. She reached into her bedside table drawer and pulled out the ibuprofen she kept there. She swallowed 4 tablets dry, which was twice the recommended dosage. That should kick in in time for work. She thought to herself, only to be interrupted by a sneeze so violent that made her drop the bottle of ibuprofen, as though her body was saying it had other ideas. She bent down to pick it up, her head pounding as she did so. Throwing the bottle back into the drawer, she pulled herself up and stretched her aching muscles as best she could. Not able to avoid the inevitable any longer, Emma made her way out of her room and down the steep narrow steps that led into the kitchen, having to grab the railing much tighter than usual to keep herself upright.

As she expected, both of her parents sat at the kitchen counter awaiting her arrival. David was stirring his coffee intently and did not look up when he heard Emma coming down the stairs. Mary Margaret, on the other hand, looked right up as soon as she heard Emma and gave her a sad expression she couldn’t quite read.

“Good morning Emma,” Mary Margaret said, putting her hand on her husband’s shoulder. As her daughter came closer, she became increasingly aware of how horrible Emma looked. There were huge bags under her eyes, she was even paler than usual and her nose was bright bright red. Immediately, Mary Margaret knew this was more than just fatigue and depression from the loss of Hook.

“Sweetheart…” she started, her motherly instincts kicking in, “are you alright?” She walked over to Emma and helped her sit down on the couch.

“‘alright’ wouldn’t be the word I’d use,” Emma retorted, internally groaning that they were not just going to let her eat and go to work, and completely unaware her mother was referring to her physical health.

“What’s wrong honey?” Mary Margaret said, fixing to move a strand of Emma’s blonde hair out of her face. Emma flinched away at the contact. Having someone fawn over her was still a pretty new and very uncomfortable experience for her, and even more so when she was not feeling her best. Mary Margaret withdrew her hand from Emma and sighed deeply, settling for placing a hand on her daughter’s shoulder instead.

“Well, for starters,” Emma said in a loud voice, “my boyfriend is gone, and this time we know he’s not coming back. So there’s that.” She wondered why her mother was asking such a stupid question. Of course she knew what was wrong. She was there when they found out Killian couldn’t come back wasn’t she?

“Well...yes.” Mary Margaret responded, perplexed, “but I was referring more to the fact that you don’t look like you feel too well sweetheart.” Emma understood now.

Her attempts to control her breathing and trying to hide the intense urges to cough had not been
enough to completely disguise her health. Her mother was onto her, and looking over to the counter for the first time to see her dad looking at her from behind his coffee mug, she guessed that he was mentally examining her as well.

Not wanting any more attention from her parents right now and not quite ready to give in to their concerns, Emma gave it one more shot.

Trying to gain enough breath to talk without running out of air mid sentence, she sat up a little straighter. If there was one thing Emma was good at it was fooling people.

“What are you talking about?” She chuckled forcibly, unraveling herself from her mother’s hands and standing up, with only slight difficulty, “I’m fine.” She looked at both of them with a small smile.

Her mother had a huge frown plastered on her face as she stood up to join Emma on her feet. “Well, we can talk about that later,” she said giving a meaningful glance towards David. She had heard her daughter coughing last night, and had heard from him that Emma had been sniffling and sneezing all day at work as well. Right now they had bigger things to discuss.

“Your father and I want to talk to you about last night.”

Emma’s heart sank, she was really hoping this would wait until after work. She was too fatigued to deal with her guilt right now, much less talk to her dad about it. She’d regretted saying those things to him all night. But he had to realize he was in the wrong too and honestly they both had things to apologize for.

David finally set down his mug on the counter, still half full, and walked over to the couch where Emma and Mary Margaret stood. He sat down next to Emma so she was between both her parents. She wasn’t ready to have this conversation just yet… why couldn’t her parents see that? All Emma wanted to do was get to the office with all her heart. It was Friday, her dad’s day off (she had Mondays off), so she wouldn’t have to hide her coughs there.

She just wanted a bowl of cereal and some coffee. Not a session of Dr. Phil. Was that too much to ask?

Emma felt the gentle hand of her mother pushing her down on the couch again and she begrudgingly complied.

“Emma, we know these past few days have been very hard for you,” her mother started, barely resisting the urge to take her daughter's hand. “And I know it’s weird to have us on your case all the time seeing we are so close in age... but you have to remember we are still your parents. We will always be your parents, and no matter how old you get you need to give us some respect.” She nodded to David, encouraging him to say his piece. Emma’s eyes stayed lowered to the couch, her already feverishly flushed cheeks becoming redder by the second.

I can’t do this right now. Her brain said over and over. I Can’t Do This Right Now.

David cleared his throat.

“Emma, I’m so sorry if I overstepped a boundary with you last night. The last thing I wanted to do was make you upset.” Emma felt a tickle in her nose, she closed her eyes to try and avoid the sneeze but she knew it was just a matter of time before she would have to give in. “We just want to help you,” her father continued, noticing the strange expression on Emma’s face. “We know that loss is hard, but now that Hades is gone we have time, we all have time to mourn. But instead of pushing people away, why don't you try letting us in, talking about him, let us help. We are a family and the best way that this family get’s through things, is together. As far as your lang--” David speech was cut off by 3 gigantic sneezes coming from his daughter, that shook the entire couch up and down, this was followed by a coughing fit resulting from when she had tried to catch her breath.

At the same moment he and Mary Margaret shared a knowing look. Mary Margaret rubbed her daughter’s back while Emma continued to cough and gasp for air, bent over the couch with her head on her knees. Emma’s coughs were deep and wet and her parents could tell each one pained her more than the last.

“Shh.. it’s okay Emma. Just focus on breathing.” Mary Margaret said, her eyes full of worry.

After quite a few more concerningly deep coughs Emma finally began to breathe more normally again. Mary Margaret helped her sit back and gain support from the back of the couch.
“Oh Emma...” David said, taking her hands in his, “this is why we don’t walk in the freezing rain.” He chuckled slightly as a small but concerned smile appeared on his face, “Especially when you were already fighting off something,” his wife added. Emma looked at her mother with a conjured look of ignorance, trying to convince her mother that she had no idea what she was talking about. Mary Margaret’s hand gently pressed against Emma’s forehead. Emma knew pulling away would make her look like she was trying to hide her illness even more, so she stayed put. She closed her eyes and sighed. Her mother's cooling hand was nice against her hot skin, not that she would ever admit it.

“David...” she heard her mother say, “she’s burning up.”

Ughhh Emma thought to herself, why hasn’t the ibuprofen kicked in already? This is exactly what she didn’t want to happen.

“Guys,” she said, again pushing off all the hands currently on her, “It’s just a cold I’m fine.”

Her parents exchanged another look and as if they were having a mental conversation. Her father got up and headed towards the bathroom, coming back seconds later with a thermometer in hand.

“If you had a cold, you wouldn’t have a temperature,” her mother said taking it quickly from her husband, worry still in her eyes.

“I don’t need a thermometer,” Emma repeated.

“Mom must have cold hands or something. I have to get to work anyways,” Emma said looking at her dad hopefully and trying to stand up. This time both of her parents’ hands catching her before she could.

“Sit,” her mother said firmly, pushing her back down. “Emma Marie you are not going anywhere, now open your mouth,” she commanded. Emma sighed, complying sadly.

“Now don’t you dare open until it beeps” her mother said, fixedly staring at her daughter until the thermometer signaled it had made its calculations. She knew her all too well.

Before Emma could so much as react, her mother had taken the thermometer from her mouth and looked at it expectantly.

“99.8” she read, looking at Emma.

“Hah!” Emma replied with a little sass in her voice, “it’s under 100 degrees, so it’s not a real fever.” She smiled at her parents, about to get up. “I’ll be in the kitchen making some cerea-ah-choo!” Her sentence yet again cut off by a loud sneeze.

“Emma,” her mother said, trying to conceal a laugh, “a low grade fever is still a fever, and I did not like the sound of that cough either. I’m sorry sweetheart but I don’t think you are going anywhere today.” Standing up as she spoke, Mary Margaret went to their kitchen medicine cabinet and took out some Aspirin. Seeing what she was doing David got a glass of water. They both brought these back over to where Emma sat pouting and rolling her eyes at what she perceived as their usual overreactions.

“Take this” David said, handing her the water, which she gladly took. Her throat did not feel the best after those last coughs. But when her mother tried handing her two aspirin she declined.

“I’m okay, really.” She said, gently pushing away her mother's hand, “And I hate to say it, especially with what happened last night, but as an adult, I can still go to work without my parent’s permission, respectfully, of course.” She added, turning towards her father.

Frowning, her mother still held out the medicine.

“I can’t” Emma said quietly to her mom's outstretched hand.

“And why not?” her mother asked, raising an eyebrow.

“I- um... already took some ibuprofen...” Emma admitted in what this time was almost a whisper.

“How long ago?”

“Umm... 10 minutes?” Emma lied, it had really been more like 30.

Sighing, her mother turned to her father.

“What do you think, David?”

Emma’s father took a minute to think, looking from her, to Emma, to the door.

“I think Emma and I still have a lot to talk about” he said, running his hands through his hair. “But, she is an adult and since her fever is so low-grade... I think it should be her choice whether or not she goes to work.” He looked back at his daughter, a tight smile on his face. “But this conversation,”
he added, “is not over.”
Mary Margaret’s brows furrowed. That is obviously not what she wanted to hear out of her husband. She knew her daughter, and knew just how much she took after herself, and she knew Emma was withholding something from them. And she did not want to let her go anywhere until she knew what.
“Fine,” she grumbled, “but there are conditions.”
“Sure,” Emma said, just wanting to speed the conversation along.
“You will keep your phone on you and switched on all day,” she started, receiving an eye roll from her daughter but ignoring it for now, “You will not be seeing Henry for lunch today nor will you be doing any high speed chases. If there is an emergency, you call your father and you do not get involved.”
Emma nodded stiffly. At this point she would agree to anything just to get out of this apartment.
“And lastly, make sure you eat something too okay?” her mother said, the look of worry returning to her eyes.
“Yep,” Emma replied curtly. And with that she stood up and slowly walked to the kitchen, popping some bread in the toaster and getting some milk for cereal from the fridge.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Emma fully intended to listen to her mother’s rules when she agreed to let her daughter go to work, but when Henry calls with an emergency, she makes an exception that puts her life in danger.

Her seat squeaked as Emma plopped down at her desk at the Sheriff’s Station of Storybrooke, the papers she had left unfinished last night staring back at her. This was going to be a very long day. She cleared her throat and picked up the top page. It was a case file on Grumpy’s missing computer. It had disappeared while Emma and her family were gone, and Grumpy had made it very clear he thought this case was of the utmost importance.

Emma chuckled, he was a funny guy, grumpy or not. She looked back at her desk, hundreds of similar cases sat taking up the remaining space at her once organized desk. She did not feel like going out and investigating them, but what else was she going to do today? Certainly not sit here and do paperwork.

Sighing, she picked up Grumpy’s file again and read it over. She found the contact phone number and was about to dial it on her desk phone when her cell phone rang, it was Henry’s ring tone. Emma immediately dropped the phone and file and fumbled for her cell in her pocket. She coughed loudly to clear her throat before answering, not wanting her son to hear the hoarseness in her voice.

“Hey kid, What’s up?” she asked with a twinge of concern, knowing he didn’t normally call her during school hours.

“Mom? Mom you have to come quick…there’s something wrong with my mom…I mean, Regina,” he corrected quickly. It was always so confusing for him having two people he called mom.

“What’s going on?” Emma asked, standing up too quickly and having to grab her desk to remain upright.

“She wasn’t getting out of bed this morning…she said she was just having a hard time because of Robin but when I told her I needed a ride to school she tried to get up and just collapsed,” Henry said, holding back sobs.

“Henry, I need you to stay calm okay, can you do that for me?”

“Yeah…I think so…”

“I’m going to send an ambulance to your house, I need you to go unlock the front door, but before you do that I need you to check to make sure Regina’s still breathing.”

“She is…” He responded as Emma heard some shuffling over the phone. “She’s making really small moaning sounds. Mom, it sounds like she’s in pain…please, hurry.”

“I am, Henry I am going as fast as I can. I’m gonna put you on speaker okay?”

With the push of a button she put her son on speaker and called the paramedics, giving them the location and hanging up.

“You still there kid?” Emma said, picking the phone back up.

“Yeah, Mom please hurry…she looks like she’s getting worse… I don’t know what to do..”

“Henry, I am on my way right now, okay. I will be there in 2 minutes. Just hang on.” Emma hung up the phone and headed for the door. She blew her nose into a tissue from her pocket and tossed it into the trash as she threw open the door and ran to her car.

Once reaching her car she regretted her speed choice and bent over coughing again. No, she told her body. Not now. Henry needs me. Regina needs me.

Continuing to cough she got in the car and started it. As she was about to pull out into the street she
remembered her promise to her mother.
Call your father if there’s an emergency.
Her father was still the last person she wanted to talk to, but she promised, and she didn’t take her promises lightly.
She hit number 3 on her speed dial and the phone started to ring, 2 times before she heard the familiar sound of her father's voice on the other end.
“Emma? Everything okay?”
“No, Regina collapsed, I called an ambulance but I’m heading over to make sure everything is okay. Meet me at her house in 5.”
“Emma, no, let me handle this one. I’ll come get you with Henry after we get Regina to the hospital.”
“No dad, it’s Henry, I needa be there for him.”
“Emma I—”
“Dad- I will see you there in 5.” Emma said, hanging up the phone to not give him a chance to argue with her.
She pulled out into the street and sped towards the Mayor's house, willing the tires to go faster and faster down the small streets.

Emma pulled into Regina’s driveway just before the ambulance did. Two EMTs jumped out with a stretcher. She recognized them as some nice friends of her parents, from back home in the enchanted forest.
Sniffling into her sleeve, Emma got out of her car and very carefully walked towards the door as to not upset her lungs again. The EMTs were already inside. She heard them scrambling up the steps to Regina's room.
“Henry?” Emma called, struggling up the front steps of the white colonial style house. She didn’t hear a thing from inside. “Henry!” she repeated, more urgently this time.
Henry’s figure appeared in the hall, clearly out of breath. He seemed smaller, more childlike, than he had been in a long time. The color gone from his cheeks and a slight shake taking over his body. “Mom,” Henry said, running into Emma’s arms as he broke into sobs.
“Henry, it’s going to be alright,” she said pushing him out to face her and taking his shoulders in her hands. “I promise you, your mom is going to be just fine.” And just for a moment, Emma did not know to which of Henry’s moms she was referring.
They heard voices coming down the stairs, and saw the EMTs carrying Regina on the stretcher. Henry hid himself in Emma’s embrace.
“I can’t see her again, not like this,” he whispered, “We can’t lose her too.” Emma hugged him even tighter and pulled him closer to her chest. She understood.
They wheeled Regina past the two of them, Emma’s eyes following her out the door. She was still moaning softly, clearly in pain, and her eyes were beginning to open. She looked even more awful than Emma did, which was saying something. As they brought Regina to the ambulance David came rushing inside, completely out of breath.
“Emma, Henry, are you guys okay?” he panted, looking at both of them with worry. Henry, who was still clutched to his mother’s chest, shook his head slowly, and the look in Emma’s eyes answered for her.
“Emma, why did you blatantly disobey me and not let me take care of this?” David asked, his tone once again turning cold as Henry reluctantly let go of her.
“Dad, not right now.” Emma said, motioning to Henry, pleading with him not to start.
“Not right now what?” Henry questioned, looking from one of them to the other. “What’s going on?”
“Nothings going on Henry, everything is fin-ah-choo!” Emma sneezed out, aiming away from her son who still refused to let go of her waist. “Every-th-thing is fine,” she said again, panting slightly and trying to regain her breath.

Henry took a step back from his mother, getting a good look at her for the first time that day. She was so pale, but her cheeks were rosier than his grandmother’s, rosier than Snow Whites. That can’t be good, he thought to himself. The bags under her eyes were bigger and darker than he’d ever seen them and now as he looked even closer, he could see her shivering slightly as well. Not the shiver you get when you are scared or cold, but the subtle one that appears when you’re body can’t maintain a normal temperature.

“Mom, you- you’re sick,” Henry said, looking directly into Emma’s green eyes that were so much duller than the sharp ones he knew so well.

“Don’t worry Henry, it’s just a cold,” Emma said dismissively, “Now let’s get you to the hospital to see Regina and figure out what’s going on okay kid?” She took Henry’s hand in her own and was about to start walking towards the door when the booming on her father’s voice stopped her before she could.

“Emma!” David shouted, demanding her attention, “ goddammit wIll you just listen to me!” Emma stopped and looked up at him, shocked by the tone behind his words.

“Emma?” He repeated, this time concern in his voice as his daughter began to shake even harder, now taking a few unbalanced steps backwards. She let the tears fall down her face and felt the sobs get stuck in her throat. She had never liked being yelled at. It reminded her of the times she was beaten by foster parents who were just in it for the monthly checks. The only time she had ever been yelled at by her parents was by her mother when she had lost control of her powers and nearly killed her father. Although Mary Margaret had apologized profusely for that, Emma had never forgotten it. And never wanted to have it happen again. She tried to swallow the ever growing lump in her throat but she couldn’t, and began to cough harder than ever.

Her father just did not understand how it felt to be unloved for so many years. How it felt to be so suddenly surrounded by people who loved her and wanted the best for her, when the only person looking out for her for almost 30 years...was herself. But when she came here, and started to let people in, let people take care of her, she kept losing them. Just like she always did. She didn’t want that to happen with them too.

She couldn’t lose her parent’s. She just needed space to figure everything out, and she did not want to hurt them. She did not want them to think she did not want them in her life or their help and advice. She just didn’t know how to tell them that she needed them to back off a little. So she had pushed them away instead, putting her armor back on and shutting them out.

She gasped and gasped for air that never came. She felt someone grab her hands, saw her son’s face screaming her name. She tried to find any wisp of breath that would allow her to stop choking but it never came. Then, with a drawn-out pause, she began to see darkness.

She didn’t fight it.
“When can she go home?” her father’s voice asked, sounding as if it was a mile away. Emma felt herself lying in bed tucked in tightly with stiff sheets and a cotton blanket. Her eyes felt too heavy to open, but she already knew exactly where she was. She felt constrained by the several wires attached to her fingers and arms, and the tension from a wire connected to her nose pulling on her hair. The unmistakable sting of a needle in her left arm caused her to wince slightly as she became aware of it’s presence. She had always hated IVs.

Yep. There was no mistaking it, she was in the hospital.

“Well, she hit her head when she fell and has a minor concussion,” a deep voice stated, “She also has a pretty severe case of the flu and the beginnings of what looks to be bronchitis. Right now we are just waiting to see what she feels like when she wakes up. Then we can make a plan for her recovery. My guess is she will at least have to stay the night.”

“Oh, thank you Dr. Whale,” she heard her mother say, sniffing softly, undoubtedly crying.

“Of course. Now if you excuse me I am going to go check up on Regina. She has a pretty nasty case of the flu herself.”

Emma heard what she presumed to be Whale’s footsteps receding from her room, she heard a loud sniff and felt her parents congregate around her bed.

“I knew we should have never let her go to work. If she hadn’t gone out this never would have happened.” She heard her mother say in a harsh whisper.

“Don’t you think I know that? If I hadn’t yelled at her and let her walk home last night in the rain she never would have gotten so bad in the first place.” her father avowed, sitting down on the bed. “But she kept pushing us away when we tried to parent her so strictly… I just thought, try a different approach, you know?”

Emma’s heart sank. With way more effort than it should have taken she searched for her father’s hands on the bed, wanting to comfort him, and found them quickly. It wasn’t his fault, she needed him to know that.

“’S o-okay dad,” Emma slurred, trying once again to lift her heavy eyelids but still unable to hold them open for more than a few seconds.

“Oh…” her mom exclaimed with relief, taking her daughter’s other hand in hers. “It’s okay sweetheart, just take it slow.” She soothed, watching her daughter’s eyelids flicker open and shut.

Emma managed to lift them enough to see both her parents looking back at her with expressions of
relief on their faces. She could tell her mother had been crying for some time, and could see tears building in her father’s eyes as well.

“Oh thank god,” David croaked as Emma felt his lips press against her cheek. “I thought we lost you kiddo.” She saw a tear stream down his cheek.

“What happened?” Emma asked in confusion and trying to push herself up. However, the minute she attempted to, her arms gave out beneath her and she collapsed back down onto the bed.

“Shh… take it easy Emma; you had quite the fall,” her mother said, stroking her daughter’s flushed cheek.

“Fall?” Emma questioned, “What fall?”

“Emma…” David said, “How much do you remember?”

“Well… I remember going to Regina’s house.” Emma murmured, still fighting to keep her eyelids open, “She- she was hurt…” She squinted, trying to remember.

“Yes,” David confirmed, “she fell, she’s here too…she’s going to be fine. Just a nasty case of the flu” He said as he saw Emma’s eyes widen, “But Emma,” he continued, “you passed out honey. You were coughing so hard you couldn’t breathe. Do you remember that?”

“I.. I don’t think so,” Emma admitted, still so confused, “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t apologize, it’s not your fault honey,” Mary Margaret assured her.

Looking from one parent to another, she furrowed her brow.

“Where’s Henry? Is h-he okay?” she shivered, remembering something about her son being at Regina’s too and still so cold under the several layers of blankets she had tucked around her.

“He’s fine,” Mary Margaret said comfortingly. “He’s with Regina.”

Emma nodded, letting her head relax further against her pillow. She frowned, looking down at all the wires attached to her body and then at the machines they were connected to. Was all of this really necessary? She thought to herself. She’d just lost her breath and fallen, they were treating this like she was on her deathbed.

“So, when are we going home?” Emma asked, looking expectantly at her mother. She had heard Whale say at least tomorrow but there was no way she was spending a second longer in this place than she had to.

“When the doctor says you can,” Mary Margaret responded, very matter of factly.

“But I’m fine now… I feel fine…” Emma insisted, her voice getting louder.

“Sweetheart, you are not fine. You have been out of breath since the moment you woke up, you are still shaking head to toe and you passed out because you couldn’t stop coughing.” Her mother berated, her voice also clearly conveying how full of worry she was at her daughter’s lack of self-awareness. “Emma… we love you, and we never want to see you get hurt, or sick. But when you do, you need to let yourself be taken care of. You could have been seriously hurt today if your father and Henry had not been there to help. We want to take care of you, that’s what we’re here for, but
we can’t do that to the best of our ability unless you let us. But let me be clear Emma, you will be staying here until Doctor Whale says you can go home, that is not an option.”

Emma’s eyes darted around the room, her mouth clenched tightly shut. She sighed, looking down at her bed sheets with defeat. She’d been spending so much time pushing her parents away, fighting the shower of affections that she was getting, that maybe she had not really accepted just how sick she was.

If what her father had said were true, that she had lost consciousness, had hit her head from coughing so hard, maybe it was time she stopped ignoring it. She sniffed, her nose still ridiculously congested, and spoke softly.

“Okay,” she whimpered. A tear hitting the blanket, falling directly from her eye. David and Mary Margaret looked at one another with surprise. Had their daughter, their stubborn and depressed daughter who had been pushing them away from the moment she had lost Hook, just agreed with them?

“I’ll do whatever you say,” Emma sobbed, letting her shakes take control of her body. “I don’t feel okay, I haven’t felt well for days, but i’ll stop fighting it, just please let me go home. I’m not so sick I need to be in here,” Her breathing became heavier as she kept talking through the sobs. “I lied about feeling fine this morning. I lied about a lot of things, and I’m sorry I’ve been pushing you both away. Especially you, dad. But please, I promise I won’t lie again, just don’t make me stay here.”

“Oh Emma, why don’t you want to stay here baby? These people are gonna help you feel better,” David attempted to soothe his daughter, looking at her with utter confusion.

“I just can’t, too much has happened,” she continued to sob, coughing into her elbow as her breath got away from her again. But before she could open her mouth to continue, she heard a loud knock on the open door.

Whale.

“Emma,” he said, stepping into the room, “glad to see you’re awake.” Emma nodded at him anxiously, realizing this was the moment her parents were going to understand just how much she’d been hiding from them. “So,” he continued, taking a small light from his pocket and walking over to her bed, “how do you feel?”

Looking at the expression on both of her parents’ faces; she doubted she could get away with saying she felt “fine.”

“Well…my head hurts a little I guess..” she admitted, suddenly very aware of a dull pain on the right side of her forehead. That’s where I fell I guess, she thought.

Dr. Whale turned on the small light and shone it in both of her eyes. “Pupils dilated slightly unequal” he muttered to himself before turning off the light and standing up straight again. “Well,” he chuckled in response, “I’m not surprised. You have a minor concussion from that fall of yours.” He continued, while taking a blocky thermometer from the drawer to the right of the bed, and pressing it against her forehead, “And you have a pretty significant case of the flu as well.”

Running the thermometer over her forehead and behind her ear, he held the monitor close to his eyes, his face tightening as he read it.

“Yeah, I still don’t remember any fall,” Emma admitted as Whale’s expression got even tighter.

“Some memory loss of the accident is normal,” He assured her, “You have a fever of 103.4. That’s a
very high temperature Miss Swan.”

Emma sank into the covers, trying to hide her cheeks as they grew more red by the second.

*Shit.* She thought. *I guess the Ibuprofen wore off.* That was certainly not going to help her go home any sooner.

“That’s impossible… Emma did not even have a fever above 100 degrees less than 4 hours ago..” Her mother cut in, looking from Whale to Emma with a puzzled expression.

“Well…” Emma croaked, sinking down under the covers even more before she continued, “I *may* have possibly taken a decent amount of ibuprofen before you took my temperature,” she admitted.

“Yes, but that was only a few minutes before, it wouldn’t have had time to lower your temperature that significantly?” Mary Margaret questioned.

“Well… *It may* have been slightly over a few minutes and it may have been slightly over the normal dosage.” Emma confessed further, her cheeks flushing and a small apologetic smile on her face.

“Emma,” David said, shaking his head, “That was very unwise.”

“I know. I’m sorry,” she apologized

“Well, as touching as this is, I do need to finish my examination.” Whale cut in, and continued to perform several further tests such as looking down her throat, in her ears, and listening to her heart and breathing. Emma had almost lost consciousness again when he was testing her breathing, and her oxygen levels became increasingly low. Once he finished and turned up the amount of oxygen she was receiving through the nasal cannula, he wrapped his stethoscope over his neck, walked to the end of her bed and picked up her chart, making small marks with his pen as he read.

Emma and her parents looked at him expectantly, waiting for his diagnosis. Whale cleared his throat. “Emma, as I suspected, you do also have a pretty severe case of bronchitis along with the flu and a concussion. We will start you on some IV antibiotics for your bronchitis, which should help with your cough and breathing ability, however I do want you to keep receiving supplemental oxygen for the time being. If your temperature goes down and your breathing has improved I am confident you will be able to go home by tomorrow. But you will have to continue taking several medications at home.” Emma frowned, she hated medication with a passion, and knew it would give her parents another reason to worry about her ability to care for herself. “The meds we are going to give you tonight are strong, so we cannot give you anything besides some advil to help with your head or flu symptoms. You also must limit what you do for some time. With a concussion and bronchitis you really should not be up and about for at least a couple weeks,” Whale concluded.

That was a lot of information to take in. Emma had noticed her mother jotting down notes in a small notebook while he talked, so she was sure she could ask her for clarification on a few things later. However, the only thing Emma could think about at the moment was the fact that she would be spending the entire night in the hospital, and that just made her shake in her bed even harder.
Chapter 5

It had been about an hour since Whale left and Emma had started IV antibiotics for her bronchitis, but she had not felt any differences so far. But then again, Emma knew she was kind of an impatient woman. She lay in bed under the watchful eyes of both her parents with only the occasional sniffle, cough or sneeze. Each one guaranteeing at least one concerned look from her parents.

Whale had advised her not to talk too much until she felt the medication start to kick in, so her parents did most of the talking.

But Emma wasn’t in the mood to listen, she just wanted to get out of this room, out of this place. There were things that her parents did not know about her past, things she didn’t want them to know, but they were increasingly becoming aware of Emma’s lack of comfort with where she was and she knew the questions were bound to come.

Emma’s mood took a turn for the better however, when Henry and Regina entered the room with a soft knock.

Henry held Regina’s hand and led her into the room. She still wore her pajamas from that morning and it was strange for Emma to see her in ‘normal’ clothes. David got up and offered her his chair as Henry ran to Emma’s bed and gave her a gentle yet big hug.

“Careful kid, I don’t want to get you sick too.” She chuckled before turning away to sneeze into her elbow.

“I’m bound to anyways,” He said softly, a sad smile on his face, “with both of my mom’s sick and all.” While this was quite possible, Emma did not want to increase his chances, and after weakly returning her son’s embrace she gently pushed him away from the bed.

“Let’s not push it okay? I would feel way too horrible if you had to deal with this too.”

Henry stared at Emma a small frown on his face, but did not argue with his mother.

“I hate seeing you like this, both of you.” He said looking back at Regina as he spoke, clearly concerned.

“It’s okay kid, I’ll be out of here soon,” She said, placing her non sneezed-on hand on his cheek and smiling at him comfortably.

Emma then turned her attention to Regina, she looked a thousand times better than she had the last time Emma had seen her, but definitely did not look like her usual poised self.

“How are you feeling?” Emma asked her hoarsely, Regina’s eyes meeting hers.

“Honestly? Like death. But if it weren’t for you and Henry.” She paused, taking a deep, congested breath. “I’d probably be a lot worse.”

Regina took Henry’s hand in hers and pulled him close, “Thank you Swan.”

Emma smiled slightly, letting Regina know she appreciated her thanks.

“You’re very welc-ah-choo!” Emma sneezed down into the air, not having enough warning to cover her nose. She rubbed her head as the wires that attached to the nasal cannula pulled on her hair from
the jerking motion.

David cleared his throat and ran his hands through his hair.

“I should probably get you guys home,” He said, “Emma and Regina both need to get some rest.” Exchanging a glance with Mary Margaret, he motioned towards the door, “I’ll be back soon okay?”

“What?” Emma said, furrowing her brow in confusion.

“I’m driving Regina and Henry home tonight” Her dad said, fumbling for his keys in his pocket.

“Wow. You’re so lucky you get to go home already.” Emma said, trying to hide the jealousy in her voice that Regina did not have to spend the night in this horrible place.

“I think all I need is my own bed and a week or two of rest,” Regina chuckled sadly. Emma knew she was still not the slightest bit over Robin’s death and rest was just the beginning of what she needed. But with Henry and Zelena by her side, and now the fact that she would be bedridden for at least a week, Emma knew she would be alright. “But you,” Regina continued, looking Emma over in bed; with the dozens of wires she had attached to her and the supplemental oxygen keeping her stable, “you need to take care of yourself, okay Swan? We can’t have Storybrooke’s savior off of her feet for too long. Especially with Gold up to his old tricks.”

Henry helped get Regina back on her feet and let his grandpa take over from there. Right before he disappeared from the room, he stopped, turning back to look at Emma. “I love you mom, I’ll be back tomorrow to see you, I promise. Feel better.”

“Thanks kid. I love you too.” Emma smiled back weakly.

Henry smiled and followed David and Regina out, closing the door softly behind him.

Exhalling, Emma again let her head relax against the pillow and closed her eyes. The tubes in her nose were suddenly becoming very uncomfortable and she could not help herself from scratching at them.

“Is this contraption seriously necessary?” She asked, trying to readjust it on her nose so it would stop itching so horribly and causing the machine it was connected to to start beeping at a ridiculous volume. She felt her mother’s hands take her wrists and pull them away from her nose.

“Yes Emma,” Mary Margaret sighed, readjusting the oxygen on her nose and pressing several buttons on the machine until it stopped making dreadful noises, “We need to make sure your lungs are getting enough oxygen.”

Emma pursed her lips, clearly exasperated. She knew arguing with her mother was futile, but this thing in her nose was making her feel even more closed in at this dreadful hospital. She groaned, she was so done with this horrible day.

“I know sweetheart,” her mother said softly, finally leaving the machines alone and sitting down next to her daughter, “but this is all to help you, even if it doesn’t feel like it right now.” She smiled sadly, her eyes trying to soothe Emma.

Emma’s stomach suddenly lurched, and she suddenly felt quite upset.

“Mom…” she said quietly, her eyes fixated on her blanket again, an odd expression on her face, “I… I think… can you… hand me that trash can? I think I’m gonna be sick…” Her mother began to see a slight green tint in her daughter’s face and lunged for the trash next to the cabinet, getting it back to
the bed just in time. Emma had not eaten much that day, but what she had was being hurled into the small bin Emma now clutched in her hands. When she was done, Mary Margaret took the can from her and set it on the ground. She hit the button to signal she needed a nurse, and began to rub her daughters back.

“I’m really glad Henry left before that.” Emma panted, sweat appearing in beads on her forehead, “I guess it’s the stomach flu.” Emma choked out, her eyes and nose running profusely from the trauma that had just occurred in her stomach.

“I don’t think so Emma.” Mary Margaret said, peering at her daughter, “You would have gotten sick by now if it was.” She suddenly narrowed her eyes, “you haven’t been throwing up at all Emma, have you?” She asked, suspicious that her daughter had been withholding more than just her fever.

“I haven’t,” Emma said, “I swear to god.” She tried to raise her hands in surrender, forgetting she was tied down by her IV and several other monitors. “Ow!” she yelped as the wires grew taut and tugged at the needle in her arm, setting off another machine that began to screech.

Just then a nurse knocked and walked in, one of Mother Superior’s fellow fairies.

“You rang?” she said sweetly, “what’s going on?” She looked at Emma who was gripping her arm and then to her IV pole which was the source of all the noise. She quickly walked over and pressed several buttons, making the monitor stop its yammering at once.

Emma was about to open her mouth to respond, but her mother beat her to it.

“I think Emma is starting to feel the effects of her fall, and I think she accidentally pulled her IV out too,” she said, turning away from her daughter and speaking softly.

“Is there something you can give her to ease the nausea?”

Emma rolled her eyes. She was right there you know, and she did have ears.

“Well, with the heavy IV antibiotics she is getting for the bronchitis the most I can give her is some Tums.”

“Well I suppose that’s better than nothing.” Mary Margaret said, a slight snappiness to her voice.

“I’ll go grab some, and while I am here, why don’t we check your vitals as well,” the nurse suggested, looking at Emma and nodding.

Emma shrugged. The faster this night went the better.

The nurse strode out of the room, her heels clicking as she went.

Emma coughed slightly, the taste of vomit still invading her mouth.

“Mom, do you have a mint or something?” She asked, seeing her mother turn as she massaged her temples. “Are you okay?” Emma said, concern on her face.

“Yeah,” Her mother smiled, “Yeah of course I am. Look at you worrying about me while you’re the one in bed at the hospital.” Laughing to herself, she began to pace the room.

“Hey,” Emma started, her stomach still making it hard for her to move from the back of the frame and face her mom, “If this is about Neal.. you can go home. You don’t have to stay here with me. I know you’re probably worried about him.” She knew her mother had struggled with being away
from Neal in the past and was struggling with it again after being away from him for so long. In all honesty she had no desire to stay in the hospital alone, especially given her past experiences in them.

“Emma,” Her mother said softly, in that tone of voice she used when she feared Emma was trying to push her away. She was so upset she had given her daughter the idea that she didn’t want to be with her. She had just been frustrated that nothing seemed to make her daughter feel better.

“You know Ella is watching Neal tonight. He’s safe, he’s happy.” She continued, sitting down next to her daughter, “I’m sure she’s spoiling him rotten.” She chuckled, and a small smile appeared on Emma’s face as well. “Your father and I are staying with you, we’re not going to leave you here sweetheart. We love you, and we will always be here to support you from defeating Hades to catching the flu, we will always be by your side.” Mary Margaret looked into her daughter’s dulled green eyes as they stared back at her, she could tell Emma was afraid, she just wished she would tell them what it was that was making her so uncomfortable.

Emma quickly wiped a tear from her eye as her nurse came back with a cup containing some Tums. She cringed. The thought of eating anything right now made her want to throw up again, but she knew it would make her feel better eventually. She took the cup from the nurse and popped all three into her mouth, chewing and swallowing quickly.

Mary Margaret smiled, happy her daughter was finally making an active effort to help her body feel better.

“Great. Hopefully that will kick in soon.” Her nurse smiled, “let’s see what your vitals are.”

Emma sat patiently as the nurse took her blood pressure, temperature and again checked her heart rate and breathing. Her temperature had increased slightly from before but her breathing and oxygen levels had improved dramatically. David returned just as the nurse was finishing up with the stethoscope, which had been under Emma’s shirt.

“Oh, god, I’m sorry” He said, covering his eyes. Emma laughed softly, as to not aggravate her stomach any further.

“Dad, it’s okay. It’s not like I have my shirt off or anything.”

David blushed, removing his hand from his eyes, running it through his hair, and slowly walking towards the lot of them.

“So,” He said, clearing his throat, “How’s our patient?” He looked expectantly at the nurse, wanting to change the subject.

“She’s doing better in some ways and worse in others.”

“In other words,” Emma interjected, “coughing and breathing is better, everything else is worse.”

Her mother frowned at her, “Emma, stop. Negative thinking won’t help anything.”

“Well It’s true!” Emma retorted, looking around at all the people in the room. “My chest feels so much better, but I still feel like absolute shit in every other way. I thought I had a bad headache this morning, but my head hurts so much now I haven’t been able to see clearly since I woke up here!”

“Emma, please, calm down. You don’t need to make it any harder on your lungs right now,” David reasoned, looking at his wife and Emma’s nurse for support.
Seeing a twinkle in the nurse’s eye, David let her take it from there, he knew fairies had a knack for negotiation.

“Tell you what Emma, your oxygen numbers are so much better I think that if you promise not to get worked up, we can take a little break from the supplemental oxygen?”

Emma’s eyes grew brighter than they had been all day, and she nodded in agreement.

“Great. I promise, whatever it takes to get this thing off of my face.” The nurse came over and gently removed the contraption from Emma’s nose, and just in time too, because seconds later she erupted into several hard sneezes. Emma’s bed began to rise off the ground with each sneeze taking it further up, other objects in the room starting to leave the ground as well.

“Um… Emma…” David said, watching the white rays of Emma’s magic shoot out of her hands with each sneeze.


“Look down.” And Emma did, sniffing loudly as she saw what she had done.

“What the hell! What’s happening?” Emma yelled out over the rush of her magic taking over the room.

“I am so glad I carry these with me everywhere these days.” David said jumping on the frame of the bed and springing himself up next to Emma. He slapped a no-magic cuff on her wrist and the bed and surrounding objects slammed down to the ground, several breaking upon landing.

David went flying off the bed and Emma fell back against the bed frame, narrowly escaping a second hit to the head.

“Emma, are you okay?” he asked, brushing himself off from the fall.

“David are you okay?” His wife asked, seeing the cut on his cheek already beginning to bleed.

“Yeah I’m fine,” he said, more concerned about his daughter at the moment. “Emma I promise the minute you are better I will take the cuff off, but it’s just safer for you right now sweetheart.”

Emma nodded, she understood. She did not want her magic exploding everywhere more than anyone else wanted it to be, and with her lack of control over her body right now, it had finally translated into lack of control over her magic.

“It’s fine,” she said softly, a shiver rippling through her body as her chills reappeared with a vengeance. The magic had taken a lot out of her.

Her mother walked up to the bed and re-tucked the covers tightly around her daughter, kissing her forehead, which was still drenched in sweat.

Emma’s nurse walked over to finally examine her arm, now completely detached from the IV and bleeding steadily.

“We will need to find a different vein I’m afraid.” She said placing a piece of cotton and a bandaid on the needle mark and seeing the look of horror on Emma’s face as she spoke.

“Yeah i’m not really a needle person..” Emma began, interrupted by her mother.

“Emma..” she warned, giving her daughter a stern look.
“I’m serious, I … Ow!” Emma yelped as she felt a sharp pain above her hand. She looked down to see a needle penetrating her skin and taping itself down with light blue magic light.

“It’s a lot easier with magic,” the nurse laughed. “Takes half the time. And I’m sorry about putting it above your hand, it’s your next best vein and I want to make sure you get your meds as quickly as possible.”

“You should get some rest love,” Her mother whispered, as Emma realized she was grasping her arm tightly, probably a reflex from when she felt the prick of the needle. She quickly let go of it and began to blush.

“Sorry..”

“It’s okay Emma, that’s what we are here for,” her mom said reassuringly.

Suddenly a heavy fatigue fell over her, she did not have the energy to speak, so she simply nodded in response, closing her eyes gratefully. The quicker she fell asleep, the quicker it would be morning, and then she would get to go home.

David came over and kissed the top of her head.

“We love you Emma, sleep well.” he said squeezing her shoulder gently.

“Mmmhmm” she responded, finally giving into the sleep her body so clearly needed.
“So, what did I miss?” David asked his wife as they stepped out into the the hospital hall, their daughter already fast asleep in her room. Her nurse stood in Emma’s room, updating her chart and setting all of the machines to a quieter volume, just in case.

“Well, she threw up,” Mary Margaret started, receiving a worried look from her husband.

“She did?”

“Yeah, it’s probably just from her concussion. Do you remember when I hit my head in the Enchanted Forest? I was throwing up for a week straight I was so dizzy. And we were stuck in that stupid hut in the woods!” Mary Margaret laughed, thinking nostalgically about her days in her old home.

“Yeah, I remember, I was the one looking after you.” He gave his wife a snarky smile. They both laughed for a moment before their expressions turned serious again.

“But other than that and a higher fever, she’s about the same. How’s Regina?” Mary Margaret asked, changing the subject.

“She’s okay. She tried to get Henry to stay with Zelena for the night but he refused to leave her side.”

Mary Margaret nodded sympathetically.

“It must be hard to have both of your mothers so sick,” she responded.

Just then the nurse came out of Emma’s room, shutting the door quietly.

“She’s asleep,” she informed them, a tired smile on her face.

“Good,” Mary Margaret replied, taking a deep breath. She looked at her watch, it was only 5 o’clock, but to her it felt so much later. “I just realized I never asked your name!” she said, apologetic for her rudeness.

“That’s quite alright,” the nurse laughed, “I know it’s been a very stressful day for all of you. My name is Jane.”

“Well Jane, thank you for everything you are doing for Emma.”

“Yes,” David chimed in his eyes grateful, “Thank you. So what’s the game plan from here?” he asked inquisitively.

“Well, tonight we just want to keep her stable,” Jane began in a business-like manner. “She will receive IV antibiotics and fluids slowly throughout the night, and we will monitor her vitals closely. A nurse will make rounds about every four hours. Dr. Whale’s biggest concern is the bronchitis, so if we get that under control, which it looks like we mostly have, you should be able to take her home tomorrow. For now, the concussion is the least of our concerns. If she keeps throwing up we will look into it more, but for now she just needs rest and limited screen and reading access.”

Mary Margaret took David’s hand in hers, nodding at Jane as she finished speaking.

“Okay. Thank you Jane.”
“Of course. My shift is over but we have several nurses who will be checking on Emma during the night. If her oxygen levels do drop overnight, the machine will go off to notify the nurses. Her numbers look much better though so I doubt that will be an issue.”

David sighed, looking into the room where Emma lay fast asleep. He was just starting to accept how sick his daughter really was.

“Have a good night, Charmings. I hope Emma has a speedy recovery,” Jane said, taking her leave down the hall.

“Well, you take care of our girl and let me know if you need anything,” Jane said, and left. Mary Margaret gave her a small smile and a nod, and Jane walked away. When the sound of her heels began to fade, she turned to her husband and wrapped her in a gentle hug.

“It’s just like our daughter to get everything at once,” David said, kissing the top of his wife’s head. “But she’s tough, she’ll get through it. We just need to make sure she stays off her feet.”

“Yeah, ’cause that will be so easy,” Mary Margaret teased, releasing him from the hug and looking into his eyes, “come on David,” She took his hand and lead him towards the door, “I promised her we wouldn’t leave her alone.”

*****

It was about 9 pm when things again began to get interesting in Storybrooke General Hospital. Mary Margaret and David sat in chairs pulled next to Emma’s bed, close enough to lean on each other while they slept. Well, while Mary Margaret slept anyways. David sat awake, his daughter’s hand in his.

He heard her chest rattle evenly with each exhaling breath and couldn’t help but feel partially responsible for it. He had not meant to push Emma away, he just wanted his daughter to talk to him. If he hadn’t been so adamant about it maybe she would only have a mild case of the flu instead of the flu, bronchitis, and a concussion. And she probably wouldn’t be in here, where for some reason she had not felt safe from the moment she arrived.

His thoughts were interrupted by a sudden wheezing coming from the bed, Emma’s breaths were getting faster, more shallow as she began to toss and turn. She was having a nightmare, David was sure of it. He had seen her have many before, their apartment was small and practically everything could be heard. She would toss and turn, and scream in her sleep and it had taken everything in his and Mary Margaret’s power not to go run and comfort her. The one time they had Emma had been so embarrassed she hadn’t spoken to them for weeks.

He listened attentively as Emma’s breathing got louder, harder. The machine at the side of her bed began to go off again, indicating her oxygen levels had dropped. She was beginning to have trouble breathing. David snapped into action, his wife’s head sliding off his shoulder and snapping her awake.

“David?” Mary Margaret mumbled, still not fully cognizant, “What’s wrong?”

He was already standing over Emma’s bed and gently shaking her, trying to wake her up.

“She’s having a nightmare, it’s making her have trouble breathing again.” He stroked her cheek, still trying to wake her up, “Emma, Emma it’s okay, you’re just dreaming, you need to wake up now.”
Emma didn’t wake and her breath was catching in her throat, she was beginning to cough and choke. “Emma!” David shouted, shaking her harder now.

Mary Margaret jumped to her feet and pressed the ‘call nurse’ button on the remote. Emma finally awoke the third time that David screamed her name, jolting forward with a hard inhale causing her to erupt into several more painful coughs. Mary Margaret kept pressing the nurse button profusely, as David continued to attempt to sooth his daughter.

“Emma it’s okay, you’re here with us, you’re fine, just breathe…”

“I...cant…” she choked out between coughs.

Four nurses came rushing through the door and David reluctantly moved aside as they began to work, snapping an oxygen mask on her as she continued to struggle for air.

“She’s panicked,” one of them said, looking into Emma’s wide, dilated green eyes with a light.

“She just woke up from a nightmare,” Mary Margaret said, joining her husband at the edge of Emma’s bed and grasping his hand tightly.

“She won’t be able to regain her breath if she doesn’t calm down,” another nurse said, grabbing a vial of Valium and getting a needle ready to administer it.

“What are you doing?” Mary Margaret asked protectively.

“It’s just a mild sedative, it will calm her down and allow for her breathing to return to normal.”

Emma tried to speak, but with the mask on her face it only sounded like gibberish. She tried to pull it off but someone grabbed her hands and held her down. She shook her head violently, clearly relaying to her parents she did not want another needle in her arm.

Mary Margaret took her daughter’s head in her hands, speaking directly to her.

“Emma look at me, just at me okay baby, you’re fine.” Mary Margaret’s heart broke as she saw the look of pure terror on her daughter's face, doing everything she could to calm her down. While Emma was distracted a nurse quickly stuck Emma with the needle and pushed the medication into her bloodstream. Emma shrieked and closed her eyes at her second surprise stick that day, glaring at the nurse who was responsible.

However, slowly, her breathing evened out and her coughing turned to gentle wheezes. Her head slumping against the headboard as the medication took effect. She could finally breathe again, but now she felt pinned to her bed, she felt stuck, unsafe. Her mother continued to stroke her sweaty hair back from her face as a tear ran down her face.

“There, see you’re okay,” her mother soothed, wiping the tear from Emma’s cheek and trying to hold back some of her own, “deep breaths honey.”

Emma nodded, attempting to breathe as deeply as she could, stifling sobs as they came. She couldn’t make out the other faces around her besides her parents, but she felt them taking her vitals as she continued to focus on her breath, just wanting to get this mask off her face.

“Temperature is 101.2”

“BP is 140 over 95.”

“Heart rate still slightly elevated.”
Emma began to shake under the covers as the numbers kept coming. She closed her eyes and waited for the pounding voices around her to stop. David grabbed an extra blanket from beside the bed and laid it over the bed, hoping it would help Emma stop shaking so violently. It only helped the slightest bit. Emma pulled the extra blanket up over her body and continued to keep her eyes closed tight.

Thinking their daughter had fallen back asleep, Mary Margaret withdrew her hands from her and clasped them together.

“Her blood pressure is a little high, but her fever has gone down quite a bit and all her other vitals are normal,” Emma heard a man’s voice say through the other voices in the room.

“She will need supplemental oxygen for the rest of the night, we can’t have her having another episode like that. This has already set back her treatment.”

“Can we switch it back to nasal cannula instead? Emma can get pretty claustrophobic... “ she heard her dad’s voice say. She was surprised he knew what the oxygen supplement feeder thingy was called, but then again he’d been in the hospital for a very long time before he had woken up, before the ~first~ curse was broken.

“Sure, her oxygen levels are almost back to normal,” a female nurse said, “but if she drops again we will have to keep her in it for the night.”

“Of course,” Mary Margaret said appreciatively “thank you all, really.”

Emma felt a hand lift her head gently, removing her mask and replacing it with the familiar wires around and in her nose.

“She should continue to get some rest, her body is fighting very hard right now,” One of the nurses voices whisper to her parents.

She heard a number of acknowledgements and goodbyes from her nurses and then the sound of their receding footsteps. After she heard the door close and her parents sighing, she finally opened her eyes.

“Emma, it’s okay sweetheart, you can go back to sleep.” Her mother said, still standing right beside her bed.

“I never was asleep,” she said, her mouth dry, “and I’m not tired. I just didn’t want to listen to everyone, okay.”

David, who was pacing around the room, walked back over to his daughter and wife.

“Are you feeling any better honey?” he asked, placing his hand on Emma’s forehead, still more heat than he would like radiating off of it.

“Still pretty shitty,” Emma replied, still not able to lift her head from the pillow.

“Are you still nauseous?” her mother asked her adjusting Emma’s oxygen tube on her face.

“Not as much, just have a killer headache.”

“You probably will have headaches for a while I’m afraid,” Mary Margaret informed her. “The more you rest the quicker you’ll feel better,” she sing-songed, attempting to convince her stubborn daughter to rest her eyes.
“Nice try,” Emma sniffed, continuing to shiver under her covers.

“Emma, why are you still shaking? Are you still cold?” Her mother asked, handing her daughter a bottle of water she had gotten from one of the many vending machines in the hospital. “Well, yeah... but... I guess I’m also kinda... scared,” she admitted.

“Scared of what Emma? You’re gonna be fine sweetheart.”

“I know..” She shook, harder now, taking a grateful sip of water that soothed her throat and chapped lips, “not of that, scared of … here...”

“Why? Why are you scared of here?” David asked.

Emma sniffed, tears forming in her eyes for about the billionth time that day.

“It’s okay Emma, you can tell us anything,” her mother soothed, carefully sitting down next to her on the bed.

Emma had debated telling her parents since the moment she woke up in the hospital, maybe then they would have taken her home by now. But she had decided not to because she could not face getting that look from them. The ‘I am so sorry we sent you away because this never would have happened’ look.

Well, if her parents wanted to know everything, she would tell them everything. They wanted to be a part of her life, part of every part of her life, so she guessed they had a right to know her past too.

“Oh kay,” she said, handing the bottle, now almost out of water, back to her mother and grabbing the sheets into fists to try and center her shaking before she spoke. “When I was 12, I was in a really bad foster home.” David sat down in the chair closest to her and looked at her intently as she continued to speak, finally opening up to them. “It was a couple. The guy, well, he had a violence problem. The woman was alright, I don’t really know why she stayed with him, but she never stood up for us either. He came home one day and he was mad. I guess he got into trouble in work or something. The other boy in the home was usually his punching bag, but he had soccer practice.” Emma’s tear-filled eyes let one escape at remembering the pain of her childhood, “He pushed me down the front steps when I came home from school that day just because I was happy when I came home because I had actually made a friend that wasn’t afraid of the new foster kid. I broke 2 ribs and my wrist.”

Emma felt her mother take her hand as the shivers began to take over her entire body, “I got knocked out,” She said softly, pausing and looking at her mother before continuing, “and when I woke up in the hospital no one was there. Not even the social worker. I spent the entire night in hospital by myself and when I went back to the house, he punched me in the face for having to go to the ER. He didn’t want to lose his government checks for fostering me.”

Emma saw both of her parents staring at her in shock and disbelief. Just the look Emma wanted to avoid.

“How could anyone like that ever be allowed to take care of you?” Her mother asked in disgust. “He managed to convince my social worker that he really cared about us and was taking good care of us. He told me he’d shut me up for good if I told what really happened, so I just said I fell. That wasn’t even my worst home.” Emma scoffed.

“No wonder you don’t feel safe here,” Mary Margaret said softly, her sad eyes looking straight into Emma’s.

“Did he ever touch you?” David asked, anger rising in his voice.
“Yes, that’s what I just said dad. He broke my ribs and hand.” Emma said, looking up at him with confusion.

“No, but did he ever touch you?” he nearly shouted, standing up and clenching his fists, uncontrollable anger pulsing through him.

“That one? No...he didn’t. Dad, I don’t want to talk about this anymore, okay?” Emma sniffed quietly, looking back down at her bed.

He nodded, not failing to notice that she had let slip that someone had indeed touched her in the system, even if it wasn’t this man specifically. Taking a deep breath to calm himself, remembering that Emma needed to stay calm and control her breathing, he let the conversation end and turned around to pace the room.

Just then, her mother’s phone went off and all three of them jumped.

“It’s Ella, I will be right back Emma.” Mary Margaret said, squeezing her daughter's hand and standing up. Emma could tell it was very hard for her mother to take the call, and walk away after what she’d just told them. “Ella? Everything okay?” Emma heard her say as she walked to the door.”

David cleared his throat, closing the door behind his wife and walking over to sit back down beside Emma.

Emma looked up at him, his hand trembled slightly as he reached up to stroke her cheek, telling her that he was still upset about what she had told them.

“Dad..” Emma said softly, suddenly remembering she still had yet to talk to him about their blow out and wanting to take his mind off of what just happened, “I still need to apologize for yesterday.”

“Emma, It’s okay, I kn-” He started, only to be cut off by Emma.

“No dad, it’s not okay. I should never have said those things to you or treated you like i did, no matter how mad I was. I know I push people away, and I’m trying really hard to be better about that. I just wanted to be left alone, you know I don’t like being coddled. Especially when the one person who would have been all over this no longer has a beating heart.”

David paused, seeing the pain in his daughter's expression. He knew all too well what it was like to lose someone he loved, but unlike Emma, he had gotten his love back.

“I know Emma, I’m sorry I pushed you, I’m sorry you felt like you had to walk home in the rain...And I’m sorry you ended up here because of my stupidity.”

“It’s not your fault,” Emma insisted, “I should have come back inside. Walking away from your problems doesn’t solve them, they just make them worse, and in this case,” She said looking at her current surroundings and all the wires she had attached to her, “A lot worse. I know that now. I love you dad, and I promise I'll try my best not to push you or mom away, no matter how much I’m hurting.” Emma said, suddenly fighting to keep her eyes open. The sedatives were doing their job, fully now.

“I love you too Emma, and I will try not to push you for answers when you’re not ready to give them. Loss is hard and you have had more of it than anyone ever should in their lifetime. And I promise you, as long as your mother and I are here, no one will ever hurt you like that man did ever again.”

Her shivers were starting to slow, but she let her tears flow freely now which shook her body on
their own accord.

“D-don’t l-leave m-me,” she sobbed, reaching for her father’s hand and gripping tight, “I c-can’t b-be alone in h-here again.”

“Never,” he said, kissing her forehead as she pulled him down until David was pulled into a hug. “Never Emma, you will never be alone again.”

She continued to cry as she let her eyes close, giving in to all the Valium in her system. Even so, she never let go of her father’s hand, and he certainly was not about to let go of hers either.
“Is this really necessary?” Emma asked, laughing softly as her father carried her up the stairs to their apartment.

“You need to save your strength Emma,” her mother insisted, with only the slightest twinge of overprotectiveness in her voice, as they reached the top step. “Remember if it weren’t for your father you’d still be sitting in that hospital bed.”

“This is true,” she smiled gratefully at her dad, who had somehow convinced Doctor Whale that she would recover more quickly at home, despite the many complications the night before. Mary Margaret turned the key in the lock and pushed the door open with her foot, having carried all of their luggage up herself.

“Now get her in there before you drop her,” Mary Margaret teased, giving her husband a light peck on the cheek.

“Hey, if I can carry you through the woods I can certainly carry our daughter up a few stairs,” he said winking at her,

“No, of course not, everyone puts on a few pounds after they have a kid,” he smiled playfully.

“When you carried me through the woods Emma was not even an idea let alone Neal!” Mary Margaret retorted, throwing a playful smile back at her husband’s joke. David simply laughed and carried his daughter to the couch, setting her down gently.

“Thanks,” Emma said, still giggling at her parent’s adorable relationship.

“Of course sweetheart.”

“Hey there!” a familiar voice echoed from the stairwell above. “Welcome home mom!” She looked up to see her son running down the stairs of the loft.

“Kid?” Emma said, surprised to see her son here in the middle of the day. He plopped down next to her on the couch and smiled at her. “What are you doing here? I told you I don’t want to get you sick.”

“I could either be here with you or at home with my other mom who’s just as sick, and she is spending the day with Zelena. They said they had to ‘catch up,’” he said, using his hands to quote the end of this sentence. Emma gave him a skeptical look. “What?” he asked innocently, “why can’t we just sit around and watch movies or something?”

Emma frowned, looking at her parents for approval. As much as she would love her son to stay, she didn’t want to get him sick too. Her fever had dropped significantly since last night, but she was still experiencing other flu symptoms and the last thing Emma wanted was for Henry to catch this devil plague.

“Henry I don’t know if you shou-”

“You can stay Henry, but don’t get too close, okay?” Mary Margaret interrupted before Emma could finish, smiling and putting her bag down on the kitchen counter. Emma was surprised at her mother's sudden and uncharacteristic lack of overprotectiveness.
“Fine,” Emma said, sneezing into her arm, “but you have to stay on the other side of the couch.”

“Deal, but not before I do this.” he said, jumping up and grabbing Emma’s favorite blanket from the basket they kept near the TV. He walked back over the couch and placed it gently over her, tucking the edges in around her. It was a white-knit replica of her baby blanket with her name stitched in purple. Her parent's had gotten it for her birthday a few months ago.

“Thanks kid,” Emma smiled gratefully, she was a little cold. He smiled back, sitting down on the couch and leaning against the opposite arm. David came over with two glasses of water and a bottle of her prescription pills balanced on his wrists. Henry reached for the glasses, taking them both and handing one to Emma. She reached her hand out, it was still shaking slightly.

“Take this,” David said, handing her two round pink pills from the bottle. She popped them in her mouth and took a tiny sip of water to wash them down.

“Thanks dad,” Emma said smiling up at him. She had to admit, he was pretty good at taking care of her, especially now that Emma wasn’t fighting it quite as much.

“So,” Henry asked, beaming at his mother’s acceptance of help from her father, “what are we watching?”

“Actually,” David said, stepping in front of the TV, “you’re not watching anything.”

“I have a concussion,” Emma sniffed, turning towards Henry, “so I shouldn’t watch any TV or read any books or anything like that for a while,” she said apologetically. She knew how much Henry liked to read with her and watch TV. “Sorry kid.”

“It’s okay, I have a better idea,” Henry said, his eyes twinkling. He bounced back up from the couch and ran up the stairs before Emma could do so much as blink.

She and her father looked at each other in confusion.

“What is he-”

“No clue,” Emma responded, cut off by a small bout of coughs. Her dad looked at her with concern that Emma picked up on almost instantly. “Dad it’s okay, it feels better today,” she reassured and motioned to her throat.

“Got it!” Henry shouted from upstairs, distracting David from his worry as they heard cluttering objects scatter on the floor.

“What are you doing up there Henry?” Mary Margaret yelled from the kitchen. Emma could smell cookies in the oven already, so typical.

“You’ll see!” he said, his footsteps getting louder as he came running back down the stairs. He was holding Monopoly in his hands.

“A board game?” Emma said with a small laugh.

“Yes, a board game,” he stated, placing it down on the coffee table, “for once, we are going to be a normal family and pretend a normal life.” He sat down and took the top off of the game. Emma sat up slowly, her head only throbbing slightly at the change in position. She smiled, some normalcy around here sounded great right about now.

As Henry and David set about setting up the game, Mary Margaret removed fresh cookies from the
oven and placed them on a plate, walking over and setting them down next to Henry and Emma. They were the one’s who liked the sugar after all. She rubbed the top of Henry’s head, only to be brushed off by the pre-teen.

“Gramma stop it, I’m meeting Violet later,” He complained, trying to return his hair to it’s former position.

Mary Margaret laughed at her grandson, who was growing up way too fast for her liking, and sat down next to Emma. Wrapping her arm around her daughter’s shoulder, she pulled her close; kissing the side of her head. She was processing what Emma had revealed to them last night in the hospital, but was relieved her daughter did not seem to be pushing them away now that they knew. Infact, Emma had been more accepting of her parent’s than she had been in a long time and Mary Margaret hoped this would continue as they kept moving forward and continued to mourn the loss of two great men. “I think,” She said, looking around the room at all the people she loved, “a board game sounds like a lovely idea.”
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Here's the last chapter! I hope you all enjoyed and that you like the ending! More OUAT sickfics to come!

“Bless you,” Emma said, furrowing her brow as her son sneezed for the 8th time since she had woken him up just minutes earlier.

“Mom, this is ridiculous,” Henry complained, sneezing again and blowing his nose into a tissue, “I’m just a little sick. There’s no reason to overreact.” He fidgeted, trying to get comfortable while cocooned in Emma’s bed and wrapped in about 5 layers of warm blankets she had placed around him.

Emma had let him sleep in her room after he had passed out at about 9 o’clock the previous night. They had been sharing their nightly cup of hot cocoa, complete with cinnamon, and curled up with a movie. They had made a habit of it since she had come home from the hospital, and she stayed away from anything that would upset her head earlier in the day so she could spend this quality time with her son. He had been a little off all day, not even wanting to hang out with Violet after school; but Emma had known something was seriously wrong when he fell asleep less than halfway through a movie. Henry always waited to hear the end of a story.

She had tucked him in, felt his forehead to check if he had a fever, and feeling no heat from it, had shrugged it off as fatigue and crawled into bed next to him. It wasn’t until she had woken up to him sweating and shivering under the covers next to her that morning that she had taken immediate action, and possibly slightly overdoing it.

No one could blame her though, she’d never taken care of anyone else while they were sick before. She’d never had anyone to take care of.

Emma pulled out a thermometer from her pocket and popped off the cap.

“I am not overreacting, I am simply a worried mother,” she said softly, “Now stop being so much like me and open your mouth.” Holding the thermometer to Henry’s mouth, a small smile spread over her face; Henry was just as stubborn as she was.

He frowned in response, but did not argue the fact further. He snatched the thermometer from Emma’s hand and placed it in his mouth.

“I can take my temperature myself,” He mumbled with the thermometer protruding from his mouth.

“Don’t talk Henry,” Emma nagged, trying her hardest to sound strict, but only managing to receive an eye roll from her son.

The thermometer beeped and before Henry could grab it first, she went for it.

“Uh-huh, just as I suspected,” she said, tapping her thermometer in her hand as she read the numbers,
“you’re sick.”

“I told you I would get sick either way,” Henry groaned, sitting up on Emma’s bed and sniffing loudly. Emma raised her eyebrows, giving him a look of warning. It was true he had spent just about the same amount of time with Regina as he had with her this week, but that did not make her feel any less bad that her son was sick.

Henry moved the hair out of his eyes and stared back at his mother, she was still paler than she should have been. While she had mostly gotten over her flu, her cough and breathing problems persisted and she had been unable to do much of anything without getting a headache from the concussion. This meant she’d been stuck in the house, unable to work, or do much of anything. Henry had been over almost every day to play board games, talk, and of course, drink hot chocolate, but he knew his mother was beginning to go stir crazy.

“It’s fine,” Henry sighed, swinging his legs over the bed frame and pushing the insurmountable number of blankets off of him, “it’s just the flu.” Emma put her hand out to stop him.

“Not so fast kid,” She said, pushing him back against the bed and placing his feet back on the mattress, “you need to stay in bed.” Her phone buzzed in her pocket.

She gave Henry a ‘this conversation isn’t over look’ and reached into her pocket for her phone. It was her dad.

_Heading home from Grannies, do we need anything?_ the message read.

_Just some more DayQuil and NyQuil, Henry finally caught the plague._ She typed back, hitting send and putting the phone back in her pocket. Her son looked at her with an expression of annoyance.

“Why do I have to stay in bed? I don’t even feel that sick,” he argued softly.

“Because I said so, I want you to beat this as quickly as you can.” She snapped, a sudden sneeze rippling through her own body.

“But you’re still sick too,” Henry protested, looking at her and watching her chest rise and fall abnormally, “why aren’t you in bed?” he retorted, crossing his arms and giving her a typical teenage boy look.

“Because I’ve been on antibiotics for 10 days, and I don’t have a fever.”

“Fine, can I at least go downstairs where I can watch some TV?” he asked, exasperated.

“Fine,” Emma gave in, “let’s go.” She motioned to the door. Henry tried to get to his feet, only to lose his balance and almost fall to the ground.

“Easy there kid,” Emma said, catching him before he hit the ground, “let’s just take it slow okay?” She helped her son back to his feet, and they carefully made their way to the door.

“This sucks.” he said, rubbing his nose on his sleeve.

“Trust me kid, I know.”

She steadied him as they went down the stairs, she could see the kitchen was bright with sunlight from the warm Tuesday, but strangely absent from the normal delicious smells of her mother’s
cooking.

“Alright,” Emma grunted, practically carrying her son down the last few steps and the rest of the way to the couch. “There,” She sighed, helping him lie down and tucking him in with the same blanket he had put around her just over a week ago.

“Thanks,” he sniffed, grabbing the remote to turn on the TV as Emma began to cough and wheeze from the strain of carrying Henry only a short distance.

“No problem kid, what do you want for breakfast?” She wheezed, regaining her breath a lot quicker than she had been able to a few days ago. Everyone knew Emma was not the best cook, but she’d be damned if she couldn’t even manage to make her sick son some breakfast.

“Pancakes?” he asked, flipping through the guide for some morning cartoons.

“You have an appetite,” Emma said, nodding approvingly, “that’s a good sign.”

“I’m guessing it’s not a good enough one to let me go see Violet?” Henry asked hopefully.

“Nice try kid, now text Regina and let her know that you’re staying here today.”

“Fine,” he grumbled, pulling out his iPhone. Emma made her way to the kitchen when she heard shuffling from behind her.

“Emma? Emm-ah-choo!” She heard her mother’s voice coming from her parents’ bedroom.

“Mom?” Emma asked, seeing Mary Margaret stumbling towards her in a bathrobe and pajamas, “not you too?”

“Oh yeah,” Mary Margaret said, her voice congested.

“Sorry,” Emma apologized, helping her mother to the couch and sitting her down next to Henry, “seems like I’m getting everyone sick today.”

Her mom looked over at Henry as he coughed hard into the air.

“Henry, cover your mouth.” Mary Margaret said, still adamant to correct him, even in her sickly state.

“Mom, are you hungry?” Emma asked, tossing her another blanket from the basket.

“Not really, but I could possibly get down some toast?” She replied, placing the blanket over her lap.

“Okay, toast and pancakes coming right up,” Emma said walking back towards the kitchen, “oh and mom, there’s a clean thermometer in the other bathroom if you haven’t taken it already.”

“101.3 Emma, I got it,” Mary Margaret said, smiling at her daughter’s sly attempt to make sure she was taken care of too, “Has Henry taken any medicine yet? There’s still some advil in the cabinet.”

“I was waiting for dad to get home with some DayQuil, can he have both?” Emma asked, not familiar with medication protocols; she usually just overdid one instead of mixing them together.

“Should be able to, yeah, just give him one tablet for now.”
Emma filled a cup with water and grabbed the Advil from the upper cabinet.

“Mom? Can I have juice instead of water?” Henry called over the sound of the TV.

“Sure Henry,” Emma said, wiping sweat from her brow and setting down the bottle of meds. It was a lot of work taking care of people.

After pouring Henry a cup of juice she took a pill from the bottle and walked over to the couch.

“Drink it all.” she told him, handing the juice and pill to her son. He nodded, more interested in what Spider Man was doing to whatever villain he was fighting in this episode than his mother’s instructions. “I mean it Henry, you need to stay hyd-” Her sentence was cut off by a familiar sensation of breath catching in her throat, and she began to cough, grabbing the couch as she attempted to control the spasms in her throat.

This immediately turned Henry’s attention from the TV to his mother.

“Mom?”

“I’m f-uh-fine, Henry,” Emma gasped, trying to regain her breath and seeing both him and her mother’s worried expressions. She’d still been struggling to do much without running out of breath.

“Emma, have you taken your meds today?” Her mother questioned.

“No, not yet,” she wheezed out, “was takin’ care of Henry.”

“Okay,” her mother said, throwing the blanket off of her and getting up from the couch.

“Mom, sit down,” She said as her mother wobbled towards the bathroom.

“No Emma, you sit down,” Mary Margaret instructed, “I may have a fever but at least I can still breathe.”

Emma sighed, she didn’t sit down, but she didn’t try to follow or make any further attempt to stop her mother on her quest to the medicine cabinet either.

“Mom it’s okay, I can go back to Regina’s for the day, I don’t want to hurt you by taking care of me,” Henry said softly, taking Emma’s hand.

“Henry it’s fine, I haven’t stopped coughing since I got sick. The bronchitis is just kicking my ass that’s all.” She soothed, ruffling his hair.

“That is because you refuse to rest. Now sit down Emma before you fall down,” her mother insisted, walking back over from the bathroom with her daughters prescription bottle in hand.

“Fine,” Emma whined, making her way around the couch and sitting down with a dramatic thud, “but who’s gonna make breakfast?”

“Your father will be back soon, we can wait 15 minutes,” her mom said as she sat down next to Emma, handing her the bottle.

Emma took it from her mother, popping two pills in her mouth and swallowing.

“Well looks like we’re all out of commision,” Emma teased, only half kidding, and putting her feet up on the coffee table. She wasn’t fully out of commision these past few days, but if she pushed it too much then she knew she actually would be for a long time. “So, what are we watching?” She
asked, pushing her thoughts aside and putting her arm around Henry.

“Well Spiderman just ended, so now we’re watching The Incredibles,” Henry said, blowing his nose into a tissue and throwing it lazily onto the coffee table.

“Henry, ew,” Emma said, a look of disgust on her face as she looked from him to the tissue.

“Sorry..,” He said absentmindedly, reaching to get it and throwing it to the trashcan across the room.

“Nice shot,” Margaret Mary said, leaning back against the couch, “but put another used tissue on my coffee table and I won’t be so supportive,” She warned, only slightly serious. Henry laughed, turning his attention back to the screen.

“One movie,” Emma said, looking at her mother, changing the subject, “and if dad isn’t back i’m getting back up. I’m not supposed to watch that much TV anyway and you two need to eat.”

“Fine, but please bring a chair to the kitchen if you do,” Her mother compromised, looking at Emma as she spoke.

“Deal,” Her daughter smiled back.

Mary Margaret’s phone rang, vibrating the coffee table and making all three heads turn towards it.

“Is that dad?” Emma asked, focusing back on the screen. She wondered if The Incredibles would ever show up in Storybrooke, almost sure they would eventually, since every other Disney character she could think of had made their way to the town one way or another.

“Yeah,” her mother said, picking up the phone and answering it. “David? You almost back? What? Yeah Emma and Henry are right here.” She answered, looking at them in confusion as she talked to her husband, “They’re both fine, a little grumpy but fine. What’s going on? You’re scaring me. Oh, okay... well we’ll be here.” She hung up the phone, a strange expression on her face. “That was weird... well you’re dad’s home.” She said looking at Emma, “He said you have to promise not to get up, or get too excited?” She looked at Emma and shrugged.

“Okay…” Emma said, perplexed, “why?”

“I haven’t the faintest idea, he wouldn’t tell me,” Her mother breathed out, just as confused as her daughter seemed to be.

They could suddenly hear voices in the stairwell, more than just one.

“Probably just Regina coming to check on Henry or something?” Emma suggested as they all exchanged a glance.

“I didn’t get a text,” Henry said, checking his phone.

The door opened slowly and David’s head poked in.

“Emma,” He said smiling, his face happier than she’d seen it in a very long time.

“Hi dad… what’s going on?” Emma asked skeptically, wondering what her father was up to this time.

“She’s had her meds today, right?” David asked his wife intently.

“’’She’’ is sitting right here,” Emma interjected, pausing the movie and turning back to her father,
“and yes, I have taken my meds. Now, will you please tell me what the hell is going on?”

Sitting up a little straighter now, she wondered just what her dad had up his sleeve now. David’s smile grew wider, he pushed open the door all the way, revealing something Emma never expected to see.

Her eyes grew wide, her body jolting up and beginning to shake. She couldn’t believe what she was seeing.

“Killian?” She whispered, her voice suddenly gone from her body, “Oh my god … Killian!” She cried, her voice cracking as it came back to full volume. She jumped up from the couch, her head and her chest were protesting the sudden movement but she didn’t care.

Hook stood in the doorway a smile spreading across his face and looking better than ever.

“Swan.”

Emma ran into his arms, throwing her arms around him and pressing her lips against his as tears ran down both of their cheeks. Their reunion embrace only lasted for a few seconds, however, as Emma suddenly withdrew, her chest finally catching up to the rest of her body, and erupting into yet another fit of coughs.

“Come on,” Hook said gently, sweeping her off her feet and carrying her back to the couch as she continued to cough in his arms.

“This is why I said you had to stay sitting Emma,” David laughed, handing her a bottle of cold water.

Emma gave her father an unamused look, like he would have stayed sitting if Snow White had turned up out of nowhere when he thought she was lost forever.

“It’s okay, I’m fine,” She wheezed, taking a gulp of the water bottle David offered her and handing it back, her eyes never leaving Hooks. “You,” she said, taking her love’s head in hers as he sat down next to her while David helped his wife to her feet, “how are you here? You promised me you’d move on…”

“I did, Love. Zeus must have sent me back as a thank you for helping defeat Hades. One minute I was there with him and the next I was in the Storybrooke graveyard, looking at my own damn gravestone,” he explained, looking around the room at the amazed faces around him. “But how are you so sick, love? You were fine yesterday…”

“Yesterday?” Emma inquired, “Killian it’s been over a week since we defeated Hades..”

“That’s impossible, I just left the underworld,” he insisted, his brows furrowing in confusion.

“Time runs differently here Hook. We were gone much longer than it felt like down there, Granny said it was almost a month. It probably just feels shorter to you,” Mary Margaret proposed, leaning against her husband for support and closing her eyes, obviously feeling the effects of her fever.

“So you’re back?” Henry added smiling. He’d been so quiet Emma had almost forgotten about her sick charge, “For good?”

“It would seem so lad, I’ll try not to ruin this body as quickly this time,” Hook joked and put his hooked arm around Emma as she continued to search for breath, and beaming back at Emma’s son, who proceeded to sneeze into his elbow several times.
“Bless you, kid,” Emma turned around at Henry, who was blowing his nose into another tissue. “Dad did you grab the meds from the store?” Emma asked her father expectantly as she felt Henry’s forehead, “I think he’s getting worse.”

“I hope you got extra,” Mary Margaret added, coughing softly as her husband handed Emma the bottle of DayQuil. He looked back at her, just noticing the redness around her eyes and nose and pale cheeks.

“I see Henry isn’t the only one who caught the plague,” David sighed, leading his wife to a chair on the other side of the couch and helping her sit down.

“What the bloody hell’s been happening around here?” Hook asked, looking from one sick Charming to another. “You’re without me for one week and everyone’s close to death!” He grinned, his cheek just as effective as ever.

“You have no idea,” Emma gazed into her pirate's eyes, still hoping, praying that this wasn’t a lucid dream from a returned fever, “it’s been quite a week Killian,” Emma chuckled, taking Hook’s hand in hers as she leaned into his chest, grateful for the warmth he provided her still shaking body. “And trust me, you don’t want to know.” She closed her eyes, feeling his weight shift slightly under her as he retrieved the blanket from the ground that had fallen when she had jumped up, wrapping it around both of them and resting his chin on Emma’s soft blonde hair. He laughed softly and she could feel the cheeky grin on his face.

“Try me.”