Operation Electric Reindeer

by A Magiluna Stormwriter (ariestess)

Summary

"I will not agree to something with ugly sweater in the name, Emma Swan, so you can just get that thought right out of your head."

Notes

Pairing: Regina/Emma
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Prompt: Holidays are complicated... Regina and Emma have to figure out how to split the holidays with Cora and the Charmings or if they try to force them together
Summary: "I will not agree to something with ugly sweater in the name, Emma Swan, so you can just get that thought right out of your head."
Spoilers: This is an AU where the final events of ep 02x16 "The Miller's Daughter" don't happen, so anything up to that point is up for grabs. Past that point, it's a little different now.
Warnings: No standard warnings apply.
Website: ShatterStorm Productions – Doggie Duo
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Feedback: Constructive criticism is always welcome.
"Oh come on, Regina! Please?"

My eyes narrow as she turns those disgusting puppy dog eyes on me. It was cute when Henry did it as a little boy. Okay, it's still kind of cute when Henry does it because he doesn't do it much any longer. But when Emma does it, she looks too much like her mother.

"I will not agree to something with ugly sweater in the name, Emma Swan, so you can just get that thought right out of your head." Balling up the kitschy invitation from her mother, I toss it at her. "Besides, why would Snow want to host an event that she's won every single day of the twenty-eight years before you broke my beautiful curse?"

"Regina!"

I shrug and chuckle darkly. "What? You lived with her for an entire year, Emma. You saw what she wore--"

"Because you cursed her to do it."

"I cursed her to living as mousy, pathetic Mary Margaret Blanchard. I don't recall including her wardrobe in that personality change."

"Damn it, Regina! That's not funny."

She gets up and heads over to the counter, refilling her cup of coffee, including a healthy shot of Bailey's in place of her usual creamer. Ah... It's going to be one of those nights, is it? I am not going to give in on this one. I curiously meet her gaze when a matching mug, heavily scented with the creamy alcohol, is set in front of me.

"Look, Gina, I don't want to fight, okay? This is our first Christmas--"

"Winter Solstice."

"Whatever! It's our first one as a real family, Regina, and I want to do all the traditional things that I never really got to do when I was growing up. I want to make new traditions with you and
"I've never even heard of this ugly sweater thing before, so I don't understand the appeal. Why would one want to intentionally look bad? How is that celebrating Winter Solstice and the coming return of the sun's power?"

She kisses my cheek and settles in her chair again, sitting to the left of my place at the head of the table. Without hesitation, she grabs the invitation and tries to smooth it out. Her eyes move back and forth between the glittery disaster and the desk-sized day planner I've been perusing while determining our holiday plans. Less than a month away and I'll be starting a new one. This time, the year will start with Emma's appointments and important events listed in it, rather than adding her in partway through. In the new year, I won't be startled to see her sloppy, angular scrawl and random coffee stains on the otherwise neat, pristine pages.

"Look, all I'm asking for is one night, just a few hours with my family. Why can't you give me that? I intentionally don't include you in like ninety-nine percent of the Charming family events because I know how much it bothers you to be around Mary Margaret's eternal optimism and David's total lovesick puppy adoration of her. Honestly, it makes me want to gag most of the time, but it really just makes me miss you more. I hate the idea of you alone in this big, empty house while Henry and I are doing things all three of us should be doing together. Why can't you understand that?"

Okay, I wasn't expecting that. In fact, her words cause a bone-deep ache in my chest. I despise the nights she and Henry visit with the Charmings or anyone else of that particular extended family. They want nothing to do with me and everything to do with Emma and Henry as the progeny of the beloved Snow White and her Prince Charming. As much as I hate being away from my little family, I can't deny them the opportunity to spend time with the rest of theirs.

"If it was just your parents, Emma, I would put up with Snow and David for you and Henry. But the invitation makes it clear that this is for the greater Storybrooke family that are loyal to the two of them. You know what happens whenever I 'crash' their parties. Even when I'm invited, someone inevitably implies that I've only come to cause trouble. I don't want that for our first Winter Solstice as a family." I let out a soft sigh and rub my forehead. "Besides, you know that Snow wouldn't even consider inviting Mother, and I won't let her be here alone when she's coming specifically to spend the holidays with us."

Emma nods then, chewing her bottom lip, eyes moving back and forth between planner and invitation for several minutes as her brows furrow in concentration. "Okay, wait," she finally says, the hint of a smile curling her lips up. "Mary Margaret said that she could move the date of the party if necessary. What if I talk to her about moving her party to sometime in the week before Winter Solstice? Your mom isn't coming in until two days before Solstice and I think you said she's leaving on Christmas Eve, right?"

Nodding, I shift my chair closer to study the planner with her. The fact that she's willing to make adjustments so that I'm not spending any of the holidays alone is more than worth relaxing my own rigid need for control. Isn't it? "Right, so if everyone really wants me at the party, I would prefer it happening before Mother gets here. I'm not pleased about the ugly sweater thing--"

"I'll make sure Mary Margaret understands that it needs to be optional. But that means you'll have to give in on the white elephant exchange." There's suddenly a shift in the air around us, in her posture, and I can practically feel the silent laughter she's holding back. "And no using magic to determine what gift is best to keep it. That's cheating, Regina."

"I'd do no such thing!" When she turns to quirk an eyebrow at me, I roll my eyes and huff out a breath. "Okay, so maybe I considered it, but I wouldn't actually do it."
She leans over to press a gentle kiss to my lips, one I gladly surrender to as my arms wind around her neck to hold her close. We spend the next several moments lost in the haze of slow, lazy kisses; of fingers carding through hair; of hands holding each other impossibly close. No matter how long I live, I will never get over the sweet intensity of our kisses, our devotion to each other that took so very long for me to figure out.

Finally pulling back to rest her forehead against mine, Emma whispers, "So are we good now? Can I call my mother and begin the next phase of Operation Mills-Swan First Christmas?"

"Operation Mills-Swan First Christmas?" My smile is as easy and lazy as the kisses we just shared. "That sounds like something Henry would say."

"Nah, he'd have a better name for it. Operation Electric Reindeer or something like that."

That makes me laugh, and I kiss her again briefly. "That he would. Now, call your mother. I'm tired and I'd like to take you to bed soon."

"Yes, ma'am," she says, reaching for her phone.

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