Shards

by Chroniclerofthelosttales

Summary

Post Season 3

Everything is starting to seem what passes for normal; for Storybrooke that is, until strange things start to happen. It's always snowing, people go missing, and the evil that lurks somewhere in the frost is untouchable. Can Emma stop it? Or will she freeze in the face of evil?

Notes

Just like on the show, time jumps back and forth in this fic, so don’t get confused!
The door closed after Regina as she swiftly made her way out of the diner, digging her nails into the palm of her hand and bowing her head so no one could see the tears streaming down her face as she discreetly wiped them away.

Emma felt the cold wake the queen left behind her in her flight of despair- or perhaps it was just cold outside- but she stood fixed in the same place, frozen with dismay and horror as she realized what she had just done. The cold feeling of dread started to creep its way into her chest, making her fists clench and legs tense as they prepared to spring away, only to be stopped when a warm arm came up around her, allowing her to release a shuddery breath she didn't know she had been holding.

"You were right." She whispered in defeat, leaning into his comforting touch as she continued her thought, "I shouldn't have done anything. I should have left her there, none of this was meant to happen and I.. I screwed up."

"No, love, it was the right thing to do. You saved that woman's life. And as the savior, well, I suppose that's part of the job description."

"But Regina-"

"Regina will be fine, love, in time. Eventually everything will right itself, just as it did when we meddled in the past."

"Are you sure?" Emma asked doubtfully, her voice smaller then intended.

"Aye, love. I wouldn't say it if I wasn't certain." Hook turned to look at her, smiling softly in reassurance before his eyes darted toward her lips, making her eyes flutter.

"Hey, Emma. " a voice effectively interrupted the moment. "It's getting late and your mother and I were just leaving and- Is something wrong?" David asked in concern, noting his daughters distraught expression as he came up to join them. They had been oblivious to confrontation that had taken place moments before and needed an explanation.

"I don't know. I think I just majorly screwed something up. " Emma started with a sigh, not noticing that her father's attention had been drawn the arm draped across her shoulder, narrowing his eyes and trailing it until he found himself glaring at Hook.

"That girl we brought back was-"

"What do you think you're doing?" David demanded, crossing his arms and assuming his overprotective father stance.

"Excuse me, mate?" Hook asked , realizing he was at the receiving end of the Prince's glares.

"You heard me. What are you doing with your arm around my daughter?" he said again, drawing himself up to his full height so he could look down his nose at the pirate with as much princely authority as he could muster in a diner covered in baby decorations.
"Oh bugger off mate and go read the book! It might do your memory some good."

"What's that supposed to-"

"What's going on here?" Mary-Margaret warily asked as she walked up, carrying the now sleeping baby in her arms.

"Nothing! Nothing is going on here!" Emma huffed in frustration.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course, love. Nothing life threatening at least. Or so I hope." Hook mumbled, his eyes sliding to where David still stood threateningly.

At that moment that Henry chose to waddle over, struggling to hold the diaper bag, book, and forgotten baby bottle in his hands, asking a question Emma really did not want to answer right now.

"Hey, where's my mom? I swear I just saw her."

"She...left." Emma hesitated, dreading the moment she would have to explain.

"What? Why? She just got here." Henry looked back and forth between the adults in confusion, sensing that something was wrong.

"It's a long story- It's complicated- Either way I really don't want to talk about it right now." Emma rushed, shaking her head and forcing herself to keep her eyes forward as she noticed Robin gather his family and leave the diner from her peripheral vision.

"Oh, alright. We can talk about it in the morning." Mary Margaret assured her, reaching out for Emma's hand. "In the meantime, why don't we head back home? I'm sure we could all use a well deserved rest."

Emma opened her mouth to protest, shutting it again as she realized how childish and desperate she would sound if a whiny "but mom" escaped her lips. She settled with a surprised "Oh," taking a second to glance back at Killian who waited expectantly beside her, all troubles momentarily forgotten as she met his warm gaze.

"Okay, I'll just, uh, grab a hot chocolate to-go and meet you outside." She said, motioning to Ruby who nodded in understanding and started on her order.

"Okay." her mother said trustingly and walked towards the door, immediately followed by her husband who threw a suspicious look over his shoulder as he left.

Emma folded her arms and waited until the door had closed before turning around, a smile on her lips. "Well, looks like I bought us a few minuets." She said, looking up at Killian through fluttering lashes.

"Aye, It seems you have." He said, tucking a stray strand of her hair into its proper place.

"Yeah, who would've thought I'd have a curfew huh?" she laughed.

"Hmmm, you almost sound disappointed, love. Hadn't been planning to stay out longer, were you?" He smirked, raising an eyebrow and inching as close as he could without drawing too much attention from curious eyes.
"Maybe." Emma supposed, mirroring his movements and allowing her eyes to flicker to his lips. "I might have considered staying out to do some more enjoyable activities, but a good nights sleep doesn't sound too bad either." She said softly, trying to hold a laugh as Killian's cheeks flushed and he ran his hand through the hair behind his ear.

"Come now Swan, don't tease. I don't believe that's quite fair."

"I thought pirates didn't play fair." she countered, and Killian chuckled, shaking his head in mock disapproval.

"Order up!" Ruby sounded from across the counter, sliding tall steaming cup over the counter and disrupting their banter.

"I guess that's my cue to go." Emma sighed, grabbing the beverage. "See you tomorrow?" She asked, almost shyly.

"Aye, love, that you will." Killian nodded, doing his best to hide his disappointment at her leaving.

"Breakfast? At...eight thirty?" she said in the same tone, batting her eyes.

"I'll be waiting. But until then." He locked onto her eyes, taking her hand and bowing over it as he softly planted a kiss on her knuckles. "I bid you a goodnight, m'lady." He winked.

Emma rolled her eyes at his dramatics but couldn't help the giggle that passed her lips. "Night, Killian." She said, before reluctantly backing away, glancing over her shoulder before the door swung shut to catch one last glimpse of his wistful smile.

Outside, Emma searched around for David's truck, scrunching her nose as a cold wind suddenly blew, whipping her hair around her face and dusting her hair with a few snowflakes. The wind died just as quickly as it appeared, and Emma spotted the truck down the street a ways.

"Hey, sister." Leroy walked past her, obviously leaving from where he had been talking to her parents. "Hi?" Emma did a double take. Something seemed off about the dwarf. He was smiling, almost giddy, and he patted her arm as he passed by to enter the diner. He was supposed to be grumpy, not jovial. Shrugging, Emma decided he probably just had too much to drink.

"Hey, ready to go?" David called from beside the car door.

"Yup." Emma answered, smiling. "I've got my hot coco and I'm all set!"

"Hmmm." Was all he said, sharing a glance with Mary-Margret who sat in the car with baby Neal in her lap.

"What?" Emma demanded, noticing their exchange.

"Nothing!" Snow feigned innocence, "It's just, why are you smiling so much?"

"I am not smiling." Emma said, hiding her upturned mouth behind her cup as she pretended to take a sip.

Mary-Margret gave her a knowing look, about to make another comment when another strong gust of wind ripped the door from David's grip on the handle and slammed it shut, causing everyone to jump and forget the previous conversation.
"Whoa, looks like there's going to be a storm." David noted, looking up towards the sky, watching the large flurries of snow flakes whip violently in the air above their heads. "Better get going."

Emma opened the door and squeezed in, snug between her parents with Henry up against the far door.

It wasn't a comfortable trip, however short, and Emma sighed in relief as she exited the confines of the truck and made her way to the loft.

"We really need to get a bigger car." Henry commented as they swung open the door.

Emma glanced around the room, noting how the excessive amount of baby belongings strewn across the floor had really made the loft look a lot smaller. "And a bigger house." She added, "The five of us can't all live here. The crib is practically in the kitchen, you two don't have a real room and there's no room for our stuff from New York!"

"I'm glad you brought that up." Henry said, grabbing a paper from the littered table. "Here, I already circled a few places."

Emma glanced hesitantly at her parents from where they stood behind the kitchen counter, only able to give her a shrug as she took the paper Henry handed her.

"Look's like you put a lot of work into this kid." she said, reading the notes by his circled ads. Because it has a view, one read, and the corners of her mouth started to pull upwards.

"Yeah," Henry said with a yawn. "I wanted everything to be perfect."

"And it will be. Now go to bed." Emma said, hugging him before gently pushing him towards the stairs.

She waited until she heard his door close before turning around, only to see that her parents had moved behind her with their arms crossed across their chests and something that might have been an amused expression on their faces.

"So, you and Hook huh?" David spoke first.

Emma's shoulders tensed with her mouth agape as she stood frozen like a deer in the headlights at the accusation. "What? No!" She finally managed to sputter, shaking her head fervently.

"Emma, It's ok. You don't have to hide it from us." Her mother tried to soothe her, gently stroking her arm as a gesture of comfort.

"I know. I'm not hiding anything I mean."

"Really?" The amusement and sarcasm her father radiated was surely a bad sign. "Because by the looks of this little video it looks like you two are getting pretty cozy on the veranda."

Emma's eyes widened in horror as she snatched David's outdated phone from his hands, replaying the video and wishing she could disappear when she saw that he wasn't joking. Unfortunately she hadn't learned that magic trick yet.

"How'd you get this?" She finally found the courage to ask, shyly handing the phone back.
David couldn't hide his pride at one upping his daughter as he gave the answer "We have our resources."

"Leroy. Of course." The pieces clicked when Emma remembered the dwarf's to-cheery attitude as he passed her on his way to the diner. Tattle-tale. It vaguely registered that this wasn't just an instance of the dwarf running his mouth, but was a calculated form of mini revenge at Killian for "borrowing" his boat one to many times and at her for allowing it. The darn dwarf was trying to get her grounded!

"Emma." Her mother held her hand, pulling her away from her thoughts and watching her with concern.

"Ok. Let's say that Hook and I are a... Thing." she said hesitantly. "You guys would be okay with that."

"If it makes you happy." Mary-Margaret was quick to answer, nodding reassuringly all the while.

Emma turned to David and she found that she was nervous about his reply. Her father took his time to answer, thoughtfully tapping his chin as he gathered his thoughts. "You know," He started, staring off into the distance as if remembering something, speaking as if he were about to start a long tale only to instead shake his head and chuckle softly. "I think I may have given him my approval already. About thirty years ago in fact."

"Thirty years? You mean when- Oh." She nodded, understanding what he was referring too.

"Yeah," Her father sighed. "Normally I wouldn't approve of my daughter, uh, dating a pirate, but Prince Charles? I guess he'll do. And they say you only get one first impression." He adds with a grin.

"Glad you feel that way." Emma smiled, hoping that this conversation is now over. Of course, things never go her way.

"So when you going to see him again?" Snow asks girlishly, sounding more like her old friend then her mother.

Emma hesitated and swayed nervously back and forth on her heels, sighing in resignation when she realized that she couldn't resist giving into her mother's question, especially when she seemed so giddy and looked at her that way, with the big eyes and wide grin.

"Tomorrow. For breakfast at Granny's" She answered, trying to sound casual.

"And you didn't invite us?" Charming asked in a mock-offended tone. "I mean, we have to officially welcome him into our family!"

"Oh no you don't!" Emma wagged her finger at her father, "Just because you missed out on my teenage years doesn't mean you get to make up for being the embarrassing parents now. If you want, you can do that to Henry when the time comes."

"Fine." They sighed, evoking a small smile from her lips. They didn't know how much she had really missed them.

"Now go to bed Emma." Snow said with what she had adopted as her motherly voice, "You have a big day tomorrow and you need to rest."
"Alright mom." Emma laughed, trudging her way up the stairs and shaking her head at their nonsense.

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Her first realization of awareness was when her hand brushed against the rough bark of a broken tree branch that dug into her side. Slowly, Elsa cracked open her eyes, only to find that she was surrounded in darkness. The only lights were those of the sky, stars twinkling in what she hoped was a friendly greeting.

The moon dimly illuminated the frosty ground, and Elsa struggled to sit up to view her surroundings, only to cringe when a sharp sting pulsed through her skull. It was a fleeting pain, and once the sensation dulled to a throb she once again opened her eyes.

She was in a forest. The trees around her were bent outward as if blown over by a strong wind. Branches littered the snowy floor of the clearing she found herself in, and she figured the one closest to her head was accountable for knocking her out cold. If she could feel cold.

Elsa shivered, but not because of the ice she sat on or the howling wind blowing through the broken trees. She was afraid. Another glance at the sky confirmed what she feared; these weren't her stars, her faithful friends. She wasn't in the Enchanted forest, and she had no memory of how she got here.

The last things she remembered were a flash of gold accompanied by a dreadful laugh, and more distant memory of red red braids turning white with the ever increasing amount of ice that filled her memories. She was consumed by it.

"I did this." She whispered, hardly loud enough to hear herself.

Elsa stood on shaky limbs, looking down the path of destruction she had left in her wake, leading to the clearing in which she now stood. "I did this." She whispered again, with more conviction.

_I'm a monster._ She thought, still horrified by the devastated forest that surrounded her. _Monster_, the word echoed in her mind. _Monster._

"No!" she shouted into the empty world. "I didn't mean to do this!" _Monster._ "It was an accident!" _Monster._ "Someone, please! Please help me!" She cried, her heart hammering against her chest as she was engulfed by her own panic. "Please." She managed to plea once more, collapsing to her knees and covering her face, catching one last glimpse of swirling stars before her vision went black.
Chapter Notes

Whoops! Sorry I haven't updated in a while but, you know, life. It gets in the way. Also, my computer is the only one that works and everybody seems to need it all the time. Anyways, here you go!
(P.S. I'll try to finish my other fic soon too, its been a while but its close to making a wrap!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Enchanted Forest (A Long Time Ago)

The Snow Queen angrily slammed her hands against the icy railing of the balcony, her knuckles turning white with their vice like grip as her gaze raked across the vast expanse of frozen tundra that was her kingdom.

The world was covered in snow as far as her eye could see. Her palace of ice stood on a perpetually frozen lake, surrounded on all sides by white, jagged mountains that served as a wall, meant for keeping people in as much as out. If the treacherous mountains were not enough to deter anyone from wandering to close, there were always the raging and blistering storms that constantly blew across the ice, capable of flaying the skin off any human when at it's worst.

The odd's were certainly against wanderers venturing into the land of the Ice Trolls, although apparently they couldn't dissuade everyone.

The Queen instantly found what she had been searching for. A red sleigh -her sleigh- steadily racing across the ice, drawn by none other than her prized white reindeer. Her eyes narrowed with hatred and her nose wrinkled in a feral snarl as she spotted the brown head of that girl, the one with the purple eyes and dress of the moon.

It was she that had ruined everything, stealing her prince from right under her nose, humiliating her in front of her subjects- and during her own wedding no less!

The Queen hit the railing again, causing it to crack and splinter as she struck out in anger, with absolute hate.

She should have killed the whelp when she had the chance.

"He was to be mine!" She yelled, in the garbled language of trolls. "The conditions were met, Father! You promised he would be mine!" The Queen turned, shouting at a small painting of the late King. "I waited, followed your rules, and now he's gone!"

She screeched, high and loud. Her piercing sound causing the walls and the very ground she stood on to shake. The creaking sound of splintering ice that resounded through her large room, accompanied by the cracks that raced their way up her walls and out into the corridor were lost on her as she continued to rant.
"He was mine!" She shouted again, turning towards the open window, pausing when she caught her reflection in the large mirror.

Although a troll, it couldn't be said that the Snow Queen wasn't beautiful. Her rough, rocky skin was white as powder, and her fair hair fell down to her waist in a graceful wave. She held her head high with pride, and all who saw her bowed out of fear and respect.

But as she looked upon herself in the mirror she shook with rage, her fists clenching tightly at her skirts, causing the fabric to rip.

She didn't see the powerful and respected Queen she knew she was. All she saw was the single tear that ran down her face, catching in the rocky surface of her skin until it dripped down her chin and onto her wedding dress.

It was then that she knew she was broken- she wasn't supposed to cry, she never has. The human peasant had broken her. Stole her power, her dignity, her love. And now she would pay for it- with her life.

The Queen screeched, shoving the blasphemous mirror so that it shattered across the floor before seeking her target still riding across the frozen tundra.

The sled was a distant figure, hardly visible against the shadow of the mountain, but she wouldn't let the distance hinder this one shot at revenge.

The queen raised her arms, throwing them outwards, controlling the ice and willing it to splinter, intending to create a chasm that would swallow up her quarry. She didn't care that her prince would die along with the girl. He had betrayed her when he chose the whelp.

A crack loud as thunder split the air and the Queen grinned at the prospect of the foolish girl falling into an endless chasm. But her merriment was fleeting. Her smile vanished as she felt the floor heave beneath her in a violent rocking motion. The walls began to shake and a great chandelier swung back and forth before it came crashing to the ground.

The screams of servants and guests could be heard everywhere; echoing through the halls and wafting up from the village below.

The Queen stumbled on unsteady feet to the balcony, steadying herself against the shattered rails as she fought for balance.

Down below she could see her people running about like ants, fleeing the castle and their houses as they tried to make their way to the city's gates where they could find safety over the frozen wasteland.

It was a slaughter. Those who were not crushed by collapsing houses or chunks of the castle's walls were trampled upon by other trolls, who violently shoved their way through or pulled another down as they raced their way through the crowds, desperate to be the one who found a safe haven, even if it meant sacrificing the life of a neighbor.

The Queen looked down in horror. *This wasn't supposed to happen.*

The fissure she had created to kill the girl had not followed her intended path, but instead ricocheted back to the heavier weight on the ice. Her castle, her home. It was collapsing.

As the realization dawned upon the Queen, her ceiling began to crack, just moments away from collapsing in on itself above her.
This is it. She thought, *Death will take me.* Only the Queen wasn't ready for death. She hadn't gotten her revenge, and if she couldn't have her prince, she would at least make the girl pay for what she had done to her and the last great kingdom of Ice trolls.

Her will resolved, the Queen's hand slid over a shard of glass from the broken mirror. This would be her salvation.

She focused on it, stared at her reflection and willed herself to become something else. In the second the ceiling and floor collapsed she had already vanished, and the shard of glass had been cast out into the world.

The great city of ice fell that day, never to be rebuilt again. Nothing and no one was left alive among the ruins, save for a single shard of mirror that skittered along the cracked surface of the frozen lake.

For years the wind blew and howled, taking the shard where it would, and it was in there that the Queen resided. And there she would wait until the time was ripe.

She saw the world from her glass prison; her enemy and her prince started a new life, grew old and died happy. Their predecessors carried on, continuing the cycle of life for several generations, and although the Queen had missed her preferred target, she still waited patiently. For if she could not kill her, *Rose*, then she could at least destroy her legacy, as she had done to the trolls.

She waited, the wind and the earth had now taken her to the edge of a forest and she willed the melting ice carry her down a river. Here she stayed. Someone would be coming soon. A daughter of Rose's line, she was certain. Her time had come.

**Present**

Emma woke to the sound of a howling wind blowing across the window.

She hummed sleepily, turning to her side with a slight smile as her recollection of pleasant dreams slowly faded away from her memory, leaving her with a cozy feeling as she buried herself deeper into the blankets.

She laid there a moment longer before taking notice of the whirring sound and she cracked open her eyes, looking towards the snow rimmed window.

It was winter, so Emma thought nothing of it and deciding it wasn't worth her attention she thought to fall back asleep. At least until her eyes involuntarily flickered to the clock on her nightstand as the time changed.

It was eight.

"Crap," Emma hissed, throwing off the covers and scrambling to her closet. She dressed in a hurry, glad that it didn't matter what she wore because she would need a coat in this weather anyways.

She was down in ten minuets, startling her parents as she nearly tripped her way down the
"Where's the fire?" David asked, calmly stirring coffee from behind the kitchen counter.

"I'm late." She said in way of a reply, struggling to wrap a scarf around her neck with one hand as her other snatched a beanie from the top of the coat rack.

"Oh, that's right. Emma's got a date." Snow teased, sipping at her tea.

"It's not a date." Emma huffed "It's just... breakfast."

Snow rolled her eyes at her daughters stubbornness, muttering something unintelligible into her cup.

"You know, Emma." Her father said, "It looks like the weather is getting pretty bad outside. Maybe you shouldn't go- for safety reasons of course. I'm sure Hook will understand." He said hoping his light and innocent words would dissuade his daughter from going on a (dare he even think it) date with the pirate- or at least delay the inevitable until he had come to terms with it.

"Nice try." Emma grinned, "But I think I can take care of myself in a little bit of snow."

David opened his mouth to protest, only to swallow his words when an unsteady Henry came fumbling down the stairs.

"Mom?" He asked in a groggy voice, rubbing his still sleep-filled eyes "Are we going somewhere?" He asked, stifling a yawn. "Apartment hunting?"

"Nope. Got somewhere to go kid. Maybe later?" Emma suggested, fondly ruffling her son's unruly head.

"That'd be great." He murmured, his eyes half closed.

"Good. Cuz now I'm late. See you later kid." She quickly kissed the top of his head and made for the door.

"Wait, where is she going?" She heard her son ask, confused by her abrupt farewell.

"She's got a date." Her mother snickered.

"Oh... Tell Killian I said hi!" Henry shouted through the doorway just as she was making her way down the steps. Emma groaned- at the label and Henry's accurate guess. Was she that easy to read?

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Emma never would have admitted that her father was right, but it was cold outside. The chilly air bit at her nose and froze her cheeks. Oncoming snow was forced her to squint, obscuring her vision as she trod along the snow covered sidewalk.

It was deep; the mounds and heaps of snow created barriers at the entrances of doorways, also disguising the odd and forgotten newspaper under its white layers.
She would have driven and saved herself the trouble of treading through the cold, but neither of the cars would start and shrugging, she decided just to endure the short walk to the diner. Aside from the fact that she might arrive with a frostbitten face, she really didn't mind the challenge.

When she arrived at the front entrance of Granny's, Leroy was already busy at work with a shovel, clearing a path down the center of the yard from sidewalk to door and whistling all the while.

"Morning Sister." He called as she passed, and Emma noticed that the dwarf smiled a little more widely than was usual, especially for him.

"Watch it buddy, you're on my list." She threatened with a well deserved glare, earning a chuckle and exaggerated expression of terror from him as she brushed past.

He was definitely asking for it.

Her numb fingers reached for the door handle and as she stepped inside she immediately felt a pleasant warmth rise to her cheeks.

Although it was significantly warmer in Granny's than it was outside, she suspected that most of her sudden warmth was due to man sitting at the far booth, idly playing with the rings on his fingers and jogging his leg as he waited.

It was a foreign feeling, having someone wait for her. The thought coaxed a small smile from Emma's lips as the door drifted close behind her and she made her way towards the booth-but more importantly the pirate- at the opposite end of the dinner.

He hadn't noticed her yet, lost in thought perhaps, and Emma took a moment to appreciate everything that he was, etching an image of his studious form in her mind before he looked up, as if her presence had called to him.

Emma felt her cheeks grow from warm to hot as he caught her eye, his face lighting up with a brilliant smile, the same lips mouthing the word 'Swan' like it was a miracle as it rolled off his tongue.

It took Emma less than a second to decide she liked him like this- bright, smiling, unburdened, happy.

It was such a simple word, seemingly insignificant and unequal to the weight it carried but it was true to all that it meant, and it was a good look on him besides.

"Killian." She breathed warmly in way of greeting, sliding into the booth across from him.

They shared a small moment of awkward silence and hopeful smiles (they still didn't quite know what they were, even if everybody else did) before Killian filled in the beat of silence.

"I hope you don't mind, Swan, but I took the liberty of ordering for you." His fingers ran through his hair in a nervous, almost shy gesture.

"Let me guess, two orders of fries with a side of loaded dice?" Emma asked, almost giggling at the pirate's startled expression. "Henry told me."

"Tattle-Tale." Killian muttered under his breath with a roll of his eyes before turning back to Emma, the familiar hints of mischief returning to his demeanor as he smirked at her. "In any case, you guess wrong."
As always, Ruby's perfect timing had her setting down their plates just as the words left his mouth.

"Enjoy." The brunette said, cheerful as always, nearly skipping her way back into the kitchen but not before giving Emma a not-so-subtle wink; an action she purposefully ignored.

Emma studied the contents of her plate: scrambled eggs, a grilled cheese sandwich, two slices of bacon, complete with hot cocoa topped with whipped cream and a dash of cinnamon. It was exactly what she would have ordered.

"Stalker!" she accused playfully, grinning despite her attempt to look serious.

"Observant." Killian quipped.

Before Emma could respond the front door flew open and the silhouetted figure paused only for a moment before it came rushing towards them.

"Emma! Oh thank goodness I found you." The newcomer sighed in relief.

"Blue? Is something wrong?" Emma asked, taking in the fairy's hunched shoulders and pinched face.

"One of the children from the orphanage has gone missing." The fairy blurted unceremoniously, her usually calm and cool manner forgotten in her distress.

"Seriously? Not even one day!" Emma complained to the ceiling, missing Hook quirk his eyebrow in amusement.

"Here's her file." Blue said, practically throwing the folder she had clutched to her chest at Emma.

Emma sighed in resignation, flipping through the papers and reading anything that seemed important.

"Anna. Just Anna? No last name? No family? No one found her after the curse?"

"Her family is all dead. At least that's what we thought until last night." The fairy said, having apparently calmed down now that Emma was looking into the situation.

"Last night? What happened last night.?" Emma questioned.

The fairy looked at her with a distraught expression. "It began to snow."

Chapter End Notes

Think of the Queen's ice shard as something like Sauron's ring, with the whole living on thing and influencing a persons will. Only id doesn't turn you invisible. :P
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Sorry it took so long to post this, but apparently I'm busier in the summer than during school and there is also no Wifi when you go on vacation so I'm quickly posting this at a McDonald's stop....but hey, here you go!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Enchanted Forest (Not as Long Ago)

Elsa sat in the carriage. Her posture was perfect of course. Head high, shoulders back- the very picture of regality, but with a warmth in her eyes that diffused any sense of haughtiness she might have otherwise emanated with such a look.

Her bare hands rested in her lap, fiddling with a kerchief she had brought- it was her only sign of nervousness.

Apparently Anna didn't share her apprehension. Elsa watched her younger sister as she sat with her head out the window, pointing at anything interesting and exclaiming in excitement when she had discovered something new.

"Anna, please, come back inside." She asked as her sister reached out to grab at a flower hanging from an overgrown bush.

"Isn't this wonderful?" Anna asked, inhaling the rose's sweet scent. I've never been so far outside the castle! It's like a dream come true."

"I suppose so, but Anna, please, you might fall out."

"Oh, you're such a worry-wart!" Anna teased, reaching right back out to snatch at more flowers.

"Ow!" She exclaimed, quickly withdrawing from the window, clutching at her bleeding hand where she had been cut by a large thorn.

"Hold still Anna!" Elsa commanded, shifting closer to her younger sister to hold her bleeding palm between her hands.

Elsa took a breath and squeezed her eyes shut in concentration. She hadn't used her magic often; she was still unsure of how to use it, as unpredictable as it was. She wasn't a powerful mage by all means. Only small magic, such as moving objects and this, healing her sister's wounds. Something she had done often because of Anna's clumsy, energetic, and reckless ways. Not that she minded. Small magic never hurt anyone, of course. It was just big magic she feared. Big magic and the price of using it- so she was content in learning the minimum.

"There." Elsa stated, drawing back to her seat and leaving her sister to marvel at her restored palm.
"Thank you Elsa, I'll try not to hurt myself again. And I really mean it this time!"
"That's what you always say." Elsa mumbled, smiling to herself.

If Anna heard, she ignored the comment, and both sisters lapsed into a comfortable silence.

After a while, Elsa abandoned her proper posture and rested her face on her palm, staring out into the forest as she lost herself in thought.

She and her sister were on a diplomatic mission to Weselton, Arendelle's nearest trade partner, where they would barter over the next year's shipment of wool. (It was exquisite; sheered off of sheep that were bred to withstand Arendelle's harsh winters.)

"It's time to do this on your own." Her mother had said, "One day, Elsa, you will be Queen, and the fate of the kingdom will be decided by your actions. You must learn how to make wise decisions and not be influenced by others- they will try to cheat you, remember that. The Duke of Weselton is crafty. Do not trust him, and follow your instincts. Now go on. Make us proud."

So now here she was, sitting in a carriage on a bumpy road, heading to a place she had never been to before to take care of business a messenger could have sent to do- and with her sister as company.

It wasn't that she minded doing the task herself, it was just that she didn't have the same confidence in her judgment as everybody else seemed to have, and confidence was key.

Elsa forced herself to stop wringing the handkerchief out of nervousness, deciding that it was okay to feel it as long as she concealed her doubts in front of the Duke.

"Oh boy, I'm hungry!" Anna said, stretching, pulling Elsa out of her thoughts. "Think we could stop for a bit?" She asked, but the girl was already waving down the driver and hopping out before Elsa could answer.

"If you insist." She said belatedly, taking her time to step out of the carriage.

It didn't take long for the driver and royal guard to tie the horses and prepare a meal for themselves and the princesses, but by the time it was ready Anna had already disappeared into the forest.

"Oh, Anna." Elsa groaned, scanning through the trees for her sister. Luckily, she hadn't gone far, and Elsa could just see the tell-tale red hair and colorful cloak of her sister just beyond some bushes.

"Anna!" She called, picking her way over fallen branches, holding her skirts so they couldn't snag against thorns or pick up dirt. "Anna!" she shouted again, but still her sister didn't answer. Elsa felt a twinge of worry at the girl's lack of response. Usually the red head was always fidgety, restless, moving- but now she stood stock still, as if in a trance, staring down into a pool that was being fed by a small stream coming from the mountains.

"Anna?" Elsa hesitantly touched her shoulder, startling her out of whatever spell she had been under.

"Oh, sorry, what? Did you say something?" Anna shook herself.

"Um, yes... Lunch is ready." Elsa said cautiously, studying her sisters face.

"Great guess I'll head over." She began to walk away, still seeming as if she were in some
sort of daze.

"Anna, is everything ok?"

"Yeah, yeah, its great. I was just, uh, distracted. Uh, pretty pond." She rushed, before crashing back to the carriages.

Elsa didn't move. She could tell that something was off about her sister, and she would get to the bottom of it. Turning around, Elsa peered into the depths of the pool. Surely there was a reason for- There!

Something shiny caught Elsa's eye. It looked to be a piece of metal, or perhaps glass, and as trivial as it was, somehow it felt- *intriguing*.

She had to have it.

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The Snow Queen was beginning to feel the sordid itch of impatience.

When Queen Rose had died through the sweet release of old age, she had felt insatiably angry, causing a small storm even from the confines of her glass prison. In time, she had curbed her anger, resolving to destroy Rose's line, her legacy, her kingdom, just as she had done to her and the last great kingdom of trolls.

And as the red-headed child approached her resting place in the pond, her impatience nearly got the best of her.

She toyed with the girl's will, exercising what power she had over her.

Had she snared the will of the red-haired princess she might have been powerless, but the elder sister had come just in time.

Yes, this one would do.

She had magic; small and unpracticed yes, but through her, the Snow Queen could amplify her own strength and bring the kingdom to its knees.

So now she would test her will. The elder princess was easier to persuade. Her mind already clouded, full of anxiety and fear where her sister's was clear and untamed.

So easily was she influenced, already within the Snow Queen's clutches.

Yes, she would be an excellent puppet.

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Elsa didn't realize when she had stepped closer to the pond, or that she had kneeled down and rolled up her sleeves to reach into the chilly water to grab the shiny thing, as if pulled to do so by an outside force.

All she knew was that a curious shard of glass- a mirror- lay in the palm of her hand. Curious in that it was almost a burning cold to the touch and frosted over so that she could not see
A horse's whiney brought her back to her senses. Looking back she saw that her sister had joined the guards and was munching merrily on a sandwich, looking as if nothing had gone wrong.

Quickly, Elsa pulled out her handkerchief and wrapped the shard of mirror within the cloth, safely hiding it underneath her skirts.

She didn't know why she felt compelled to keep such a useless thing, but now it was hers, and she would treasure it.

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Present

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"So... what? She ran away to build a snowman family?" Emma huffed in frustration, throwing up her arms to emphasize that fact.

"No, it's not that." Blue sighed, "She came to me after the storm started. She said it was her sister."

"The storm is her sister?" Hook asked skeptically, leaning back in his seat with his arms across his chest.

"No, no, that's not what I meant." Blue shook her head. "Somehow she is controlling the storm, and Anna is convinced she can find her sister and bring her back to Storybrooke. Only it's dangerous out there, and I'm not so sure that she's going to find her sister the way she expects her to be."

Emma scrunched up her nose as she processed the information. If Blue was worried then this was obviously a big problem. Because she certainly hasn't had enough problems to deal with the last few days. Lives could be at stake here, and this was something she couldn't do alone.

Instinctively she glanced up at Killian, meeting his ocean blue eyes as he gave a slight nod - the only reassurance she needed.

"Alright. I'll get David and start a search party. I'll call you if we find anything."

"Thank you, Emma." Blue dipped her head and took her leave. Emma watched the fairy go before turning back to Killian, already out of the booth and by her side.

"Well, Swan, looks like there will be no rest for the weary." He grinned in encouragement, offering her his hand as she made to stand.

Emma couldn't help but smile back despite her exasperation at having to tackle another problem, and taking his hand, she allowed him to haul her up- and suddenly they stood just inches away.

They were close. So close, and she could feel the heat of his skin, the warm breath that
danced against her cheeks, the combination of scents that was just so Killian Jones.

His presence was intoxicating, and she was vaguely aware of how her eyes fluttered towards his lips and cheeks flushed when he inched forward at the invitation, their noses almost brushing.

The clatter of dishes broke the spell, and Emma instinctively pulled her fingers from his grasp, shaking her head to clear her fuzzy mind. Perhaps they were too close- for a public setting.

"Well, uh, I guess we should be going." She said, gesturing to the back entrance as an excuse to take a step back from his overwhelming presence.

"I suppose so." He agreed, hints of disappointment etched in his voice, acutely aware of the distance between them the feeling of incompleteness without the warmth of her hand in his. "Lead the way, Swan." He waved to the hallway.

Emma obliged, still slightly flustered from what almost transpired.

It wasn't that she didn't want to kiss him, but doing so in front of Granny's customers would make things real, and this was something she wanted to figure out between them first before... going public.

Once in the security of the hallway, she took a moment to glance back at the pirate behind her.

Killian studied the ground, opening and closing his mouth as if he meant to say something but couldn't find the words. He was confused- and nervous- she realized, noticing the tell-tale action of scratching behind his ear. It was her fault- she knew, all the mixed signals she was giving him. It wasn't fair, and maybe it was time to change that.

"Hey," She said coming to a halt. "I forgot something."

"I'll go get it for you then, shall I?" He asked, turning back towards the diner, but Emma quickly reached for the lapels on his coat, pulling him back to her and brushing a quick, burning kiss against his lips before pulling back.

"Swan." he breathed, and she was pleased by his startled and wistful expression as he instinctively tried to follow her lips with his. "What was..."

"I never got to give you a kiss goodnight." She said in response to his whispered question, her hands still gripping his coat as she blinked coyly up at him.

"Oh?" he asked, a smirk appearing as he tightened an arm around her waist, his hand coming up to brush stray golden locks from her face. "And what about a kiss good morning?"

"I think that can be arrang-" he cut her short, kissing her sweetly, tenderly, lovingly. Pulling her closer as they swayed gently back and forth in this dance of theirs.

"I think I like these better." She breathed, reluctantly ending the kiss.

"Get used to them, love." It was a promise.
"Guys, we have a problem." Emma stated, unceremoniously throwing open the door to the loft and marching in, Killian close behind her in a more relaxed manner.

David glanced up from where he sat eating cereal, a spoon in one hand and Henry's marked up edition of the *Daily Mirror* in the other.

"Already?" He asked thoughtfully through a mouthful of cereal, the beginnings of a smile at some private joke already turning up the corners of his mouth. "But you've only been in a relationship for about half an hour."

"He's right." Snow said from the fridge, turning in time to see confusion cross her daughter's face. "We expected at least a whole day before you two started having problems with each other."

"I said they were wrong!" Henry's voice rang from up the stairs.

"What?" Emma asked, becoming defensive. "No, guys, that's not- what I meant was- What do you mean? Were not even in a rela!-" Emma tripped over her words, stopping her last thought midway when she saw the beginnings of a disappointed frown from Killian.

"Ok, maybe we are... *something*." She amended, "But that's not the point. We have a missing persons case and possibly some kind of threat."

"Wait. What?" David asked, crossing his arms as he stepped into his serious mode. "Explain."

"Alright, short version." Emma started, copying her father's stance. "Blue asked me to find a runaway girl who is looking for her sister who she thinks is responsible for the weird snow-weather that started last night and we have to find her before she finds her potentially dangerous sister."

"Alright, let's go." David said, reaching for a jacket.

"Whoa, wait! That's it?" Emma held up her hand to halt his progress to the door.

"Uh, yeah, why?" Her father asked shrugging on his coat.

"Um, I don't know, I expected questions? A longer explanation?"

"Can I go?" Henry piped up, fulfilling her expectations as he jumped down the stairs, joining the adults in their discussion.

"Sorry kid." Emma smiled warmly at her son, ruffling his tousled hair "Police and pirates only."

"Killian taught me how to cheat at dice and tie knots. Does that count?"

"No. It doesn't." Emma glared at the pirate behind her as he started chuckling at the boy's statement, giving a conspiring wink of approval. "And give me those dice. Neither of you are getting these back."

"Did you have a plan in mind?" David asked, getting back to the task at hand.

"I thought maybe we should give Gold a call." She shrugged, "By the sound of it we
might need some magical back up."

"Good idea." David said pulling out his phone. "We should probably call Regina too, while were at it."

"No, not Regina!" Emma said a little too quickly, her voice raised a little to high to play anything off coolly.

"Emma, what do you mean 'not Regina'?' Mary Margaret came closer to her daughter, trying to put pieces together. "Does this have something to do with last night?"

Emma met the questioning looks of her family, tempted to lie and say that nothing was wrong, but looking at her son, she knew she couldn't. She had lied to him enough.

"Best to get it all out in the open now, love." a comforting hand rested on the small of her back, and she nodded, leaning into his touch. "Alright," she sighed, as if preparing to plunge in to deep water. "I guess I'll spill the... magical beans."

"As it turns out, the woman I brought back from the Enchanted forest was- is- Maid Marion. Robin Hood's long lost wife. So naturally..."

"Regina hates you?" her mother asked.

"Most likely." Emma affirmed. "Which means we should all be watching our backs."

"No. She wouldn't do anything!" Henry argued, earning the attention of the adults. "She's changed." he added as if it settled the case.

"Henry," Emma came to her son, smiling sadly as she took his hands in hers. "Regina would never do anything to hurt you. We know that. But right now, she's hurt and unpredictable. I'm just not sure she will consider us as... friends."

"Mom, I get it." Henry articulated. "But, maybe things will be better if I can just talk to her. She needs someone to tell her that this is just part of finding your happy ending. Things always get worse before it gets better, and, I mean, true love always wins out in the end. Right?"

Emma was at loss for words. She didn't share her son's optimism about well, anything, so she looked pleadingly towards her parents for the answers.

"Henry," Mary Margret spoke up, resting her hand on his shoulder, "I think that's a great idea. I'm sure she will listen to anything you have to say."

"Well that's good and all, but I cant take him right now, I have a case!" Emma said in reply to her mother's cheerful response.

"Don't worry about it, I'll take him."

"But you have a baby!" Emma argued.

"That's right, I have a baby but I'm not helpless!" Snow retorted, "Besides, I have nothing else to do while you three are out saving Storybrooke."

"Fine! I get it!" Emma said, holding up her hands in defeat. "You can take Henry, and we'll find our missing person. Ready?" She asked the two men.

"I'm always ready for you, love." Killian grinned, bravely taking her hand under her
father's reproachful glare.

Emma smiled and squeezed his hand before giving David a meaningful *not now* look. "Alright, let's go." She said, pulling Killian after her through the door.

Chapter End Notes

Comments, suggestions, and reviews are always appreciated!

Random Notes:
1: Hmm, I always wondered what a fringe/OUAT crossover would be like. Didn't expect it to be in the form of Etta Playing Elsa. (I also thougt a SHIELD crossover would be cool if anyone wanted to tackle that)
2: Anyone else going to Comic-Con and willing to hang? I'm currently going solo, but would like to meet any of you other fans and CS shippers!
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Usually I have the Enchanted Forest, and Storybrooke part in the same chapter, but this one got kinda long so they are getting separate chapters this time, but it divides well so its okay! And Muahaha! Most of my chest pieces are now in place, and the game will soon begin :-) 
Oh, and also, just as a reminder: My AU version of Elsa is an accumulation of 3 diff snow queens (Disney, original, and East versions) and I think The One Ring snuck its way in there too.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Enchanted Forest

Anna was worried. Elsa had been acting strange lately. Ever since they had returned from their diplomatic mission in Weselton (which had not gone as well as it could have due to Elsa's angry and almost violent outburst at the Duke's dishonest conduct) the princess had wandered around the halls of the castle, at times her normal, proper self, but recently, and with ever increasing frequency, she would seem as if a different person.

In those moments she would become reclusive, distant. A flicker of confusion would pass behind her eyes as she glanced at a person, tapestry, heirloom- anything that she should be familiar with- and look at it without recognition.

"I don't know what's going on with her." Anna humped for the tenth time, crossing her arms as she precariously sat on the railing of Sven's stall. "She just holes herself up in her room all day and shuts me out. I haven't even done anything wrong! She's such a stinker."

Kristoff looked up from where he was brushing out the reindeer's coat, frowning as he thoughtfully munched on a half eaten carrot he was sharing with the animal.

"Have you, I don't know, tried asking her about it?" He asked, giving the redhead his full attention, not realizing that the carrot had been stolen by his four legged companion.

Anna looked at her friend with wide eyes, blinking, as if the thought had never occurred to her.

"Hey, you're right!" She exclaimed, jumping off the fence. "I am going to have a talk with my sister!" Anna bolted out of the stall, almost slipping in her haste.

Kristoff allowed himself a fond smile as the princess raced off with determination before turning back to his task, shaking his head at the whole situation.

Here he was, just a poor orphan, given a job as a stable boy by the generous king and somehow, against all odds, he had become sole confidant and friend to the spunky princess.

"Oh, and Kristoff?" She reappeared, startling him from his thoughts, "Thank you."
lightly kissed him on the cheek and was off before she could see the rosy blush that spread across his cheeks and the way he nervously shook his hair, too distracted to take notice of Sven's bellowing and nudging for another carrot.

"What?" Elsa blinked, confused. She stood at the bottom of the stairwell in the main hall, although she had no recollection of how she got there, and Anna stood in front of her, throwing her hands in the air in obvious frustration.

"Ah! You see? This is exactly what I'm talking about!" Anna tugged at her braids as she finished her rant and stalked off, grumbling something unintelligible on her way.

Oh no. Elsa thought, wringing her hands together in a nervous habit. It's happened again.

She'd been feeling strange lately. Distant was an understatement. At times she would forget hours of her day, as if she had been in a dreamless sleep and awoken in some other place. Not twenty minutes ago she had been pacing back and forth within her room, worrying about her parents departure that evening to another kingdom and leaving her in charge of Arendelle. It was a great responsibility that she was far from ready to take on.

What if she did something wrong? What if she somehow caused a war, or traded away all their food, or fell to lies of rank climbing diplomats?

It was all nonsense, she knew. It was only three short weeks, and she would have the help of an appointed steward to govern the kingdom. Yet her irrational fears could not be stilled by her sensible reasoning.

Elsa paced at the bottom of the steps, her hands twisting in the fabric of her skirts as she lost herself in her worries, her hand brushing against the shard of mirror she had taken to carrying on her person, and just as her stress reached its peak, she fell into blackness.

The Snow Queen was frustrated. While she had been able to influence the girl's will, she still lacked the complete control she desired. She longed to see, to feel, to smell, to touch the world again, and instead she was limited to moving the ignorant princess around the halls like a dead-eyed chess piece, and then only when the girl let her emotions get the best of her, allowing the queen to invade her mind.

She needed more control then her influence from the shard piece gave her, or else her plan would fail. And it was a delicious plan - the way she would destroy their house and line forever. And luckily the problem of her control was a problem that could be remedied.

All she needed was a few short hours.

The Queen smiled maliciously. Just a few short hours, then she could begin. She would
have full control of her puppet, just in time for the King and Queen's departure.

And demise.

Anna made her way back to the stables, petting the noses of the white reindeer and sturdy horses as she passed by, cooing to each one as she made her way to a particular stall.

"Hey Sven." She reached over the door and scratched behind the scruffy reindeer's ears, and the silly creature nuzzled her arm, liking the attention.

He wasn't as large, noble or the same brilliant white as the other reindeer, but he was Anna's favorite all the same. Not that he belonged to her. He belonged to Kristoff, through and through. They were inseparable, having been each other's only companion before they came to live in the castle. But now he was her friend, just as loyal to her as he was to his person.

"Where is Kristoff, Sven?" She asked, as if he would understand.

Sven pricked his ears at the name of his person, giving a soft bellow before trotting to the farther end of the stall where a figure lay amongst the hay with a beanie draped over his face, fast asleep.

Anna smiled. She'd only been gone two hours and he had already fallen prey to boredom. So typical of Kristoff.

She had come for more advice- and company- not sure what to do about her sister and her strange behavior after she had given her the cold shoulder and ignored everything she had to say. Now she was conflicted at whether or not to wake Kristoff and burden him with her troubles when he seemed to be sleeping so peacefully.

He would gladly listen to her troubles, she knew, and would only pretend to be irritated and grumpy, but it would be selfish to take advantage of such a friend and deprive him of sleep.

So instead she shrugged, whispering goodbye to Sven with another pat on his head, and headed off the kitchens to find some chocolate-bargaining or chips to get her sister talking.

It took some persuading. The cooks knew the princesses' obsession of chocolate and had been given direct orders to limit their intake. They even went as far as hiding it in the servants' quarters so that the princesses couldn't sneak any out during the cover of knight, as they had done when they were children.

But the servant's loved their princesses, and with a few pleas and the fluttering of eyelashes Anna walked out of the kitchen with chocolate wrapped in a napkin - the perfect tool of persuasion to ease her sister into talking about what had been bothering her the last few weeks.

She felt lighter, practically skipping and twirling down the hallways until she reached her sister's room, directly across from hers. With a flourish of her wrist, Anna knocked on her sister's door, bouncing on the balls of her feet as she waited.

"Elsa?" she called after a long moment without reply. "Can I come in?"
She could hear the rustle of skirts and what sounded like soft chanting from the other side of the door, so her sister was definitely in there, yet still she didn't answer.

"Hello?" she called, cracking the door open just enough to peek in.

Immediately, her body stiffened, and she could do nothing but look on in horror at the sight that greeted her eyes, the chocolate long forgotten as it fell to the floor.

This wasn't her sister. Not the one she knew.

Elsa stood in front of a long mirror, her eyes large and black as she stared blankly at her reflection. Her body shook as with the cold, and her hands were outstretched before her, something shiny and almost familiar held between her cupped hands. As she watched, Elsa drew the object ever closer to her chest, but Anna saw the hesitation, the conflict as her sister's arms shook with effort to keep it away from her body.

"Elsa!" She cried, taking a step into the room, desperate to help.

The shout jarred something within the elder sister, calling her back to reality just long enough to see Anna approaching in the mirror.

For a brief moment Anna saw recognition, fear, and a warning within her sister's eyes. A soft and terrified "run" escaped her lips before they once again darkened, but Anna couldn't move, not when Elsa needed her help. But powerless, she could do nothing as she witnessed Elsa plunge the object -a shard of mirror- into her chest, burying it deep within her heart.

Anna shrieked, thinking her sister dead. But still Elsa stood. Her eyes remained black yet her expression was no longer vacant, instead she brimmed with dark triumph.

"Elsa?" Anna called again, hugging her arms as her voice trembled with terror and unshed tears.

Her sister's head whipped around to face her, and she flinched as she was met with a feral snarl.

"Imbock iche gordal lun!" She yelled, her voice harsh and deep like rocks falling against each other as she pointed threateningly towards the little princess.

Anna took a step backwards. That wasn't her sister's voice. And whoever it was that stood before her wasn't her sister.

Ice began to crawl out from the stranger's feet, inching its way up walls and over the mirror until it frosted, creeping it's way over to Anna even as she stepped away.

The stranger took a step forward smiling malevolently at the terrified girl.

"I said run." It was in Elsa's voice. "Run while you still can little princess." She laughed, high and fanatical. A blast of ice left her palm, but Anna had already run out the door and shut it fast behind her. Still, she was not quick enough to escape the jarring effect of the ice against the door and she fell against the opposite wall, quickly picking herself up and stumbling down the hallway as fast as she could.

She needed to find help.
The Snow Queen was enjoying her newfound power immensely. She twirled in front of the mirror, basking in the freedom to move, to stretch out and touch something with her own two hands.

With wonder she pinched her arm, marveling at the texture of the softskin's pelt, so different from her own rough skin.

A giggle escaped the Queen's lips as she thought about the excellent timing of the dimwitted sister. Without the distraction pulling away at Elsa's consciousness, she might have never taken full control over her puppet.

It was only once she had tried to convince the princess to pierce her heart with the shard that Elsa's mind distinguished the mind of intruder from her own, and they began an internal battle for control. The struggle lasted longer than the Queen would have liked, but she had underestimated the power of the love the princess had for her family.

The Queen tisked. Love. Such a disgusting waste of time. No matter, its power was something she could overcome.

But for now, it was time to redecorate.

There was once a time, in her youth, when she thought the land of warmth and color and smells- the land ruled by humans- was beautiful. But now she looked at it with distain. It was revolting. Now, she longed for the purity and comfort of white.

The tingle of magic filled her limbs, and her hands began to glow with its power as she began her task. The small patches of ice that already resided in the room began to grow, spreading along the rest of the walls and any exposed surface. The temperature dropped significantly- enough for the Queen to see her breath hang in the air when she laughed with glee.

Task complete, she turned again to the mirror, her smile dimming slightly as she looked herself over.

She was drenched in colors -too many colors. This would never do. She was the Snow Queen after all, and the Snow Queen must look the part of an Icy monarch.

But she couldn't wear white. No. Never again would she don a white gown. That part of her life was over and done with, never to be revisited. Instead she would wear blue- bright and glittering like the reflection of the sky on the frozen lake her palace once stood upon. And as she imagined it, it began to take form as crystals of ice clustered itself upon her, taking shape of the gown she desired. It was chilly to the touch, but she didn't mind. She was it's master after all.

Satisfied with her new self, the queen turned to the door, her eyes narrow and calculating with ill intent.

It was time.
Anna stumbled onto the docks behind the castle, frantically searching for the ship her parents were to depart on.

They had said their farewells already- earlier in the day in a rare moment when Elsa was herself- just in case there would be no time later.

And now there was definitely no time. They couldn't leave- not when Elsa was like this, not now that Anna needed them.

Loud cheering sprang up from somewhere along the docks, effectively stopping Anna in her tracks as she tried to pin down the source. Her blue eyes darted back and forth, scanning all the boats in the harbor until she found what she was looking for.

There! Closer to the end of the harbor she saw sails being raised on one of their ships. The colors flew high and proud, the flag snapping eagerly in the warm summer breeze as the ship readied to cast off.

A crowd had gathered to see the ship take its leave, and they cheered again, excited as the winds grabbed at the sails, pulling it away from the docks as it began its maiden voyage.

Anna gasped, taking off in an instant, desperate to reach the ship and call it back before it was too late. Her feet pounded against the solid planks, and she silently cursed her slippers for not providing her with more traction against the worn boards.

"Wait!" She called, waving her arms with fervor. She could see them -her parents they stood at the aft, calmly waving back to the crowd with gentle smiles across their faces.

"Wait! Come back!" She called again, jumping to catch their attention.

They saw her. She knew because their smiles lit up, growing brighter as they waved more enthusiastically. Her mother even blew her a kiss, a last 'I love you' before they were too far out of sight to wave farewells.

"No! Come back!" Anna shouted, her voice faltering.

Folks from the crowed smiled sadly at their little princess, touching her shoulder in comfort, thinking her distress was simply made up of not wanting to leave her parent's sides.

Tears pricked at her eyes as the distance grew between the ship and the shore. What was she to do now?

Looking around she spotted a dinghy, neglected and wedged between two larger vessels. But it floated, it had oars and it would serve her purpose.

Without a second thought she jumped in, quickly untying the ropes and letting the ends fall back into the water with a splash. She snatched up the oars, pushing them against the other vessels to propel her small craft out into the open water.

Voices called, loud and desperate, begging the princess to come back to shore. But Anna looked back only once at the worried faces of her people. This was something she had to do. It was for them too.

She ignored the guards spilling out the castle gates, and she paid no mind to the small sail ships being hastily readied for her rescue. Instead, she looked out to the sea. The ship was still in sight, just inside the fjord. So as she sat on the boat, rising and falling with the rolling waves, and picked up her oars- hoping that she could row fast enough to catch them even as she fought
against the opposing current.

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Elsa, The Snow Queen, dragged her hand along the walls, walking arrogantly down the corridors as her new heels clicked along the path of ice that grew with each step. Behind her, the walls frosted over with ice, and she glanced back, admiring the view. Soon this would look like home.

A large window came into sight, affording a view of the sea behind the castle. The queen glanced out, a satisfied smirk playing across her lips. This spot would serve well.

She rested her palm against the glass, and soon it was cold to the touch. Cracks appeared on the surface, and the window shattered allowing a warm breeze to come billowing in.

The Queen leaned out of the window, stretching her neck back to look at the sky. It was blue. Not a cloud in sight to block out the constant and harsh beating of the sun. Not that it mattered. She was about to change that anyways.

The girl that was once Elsa held her hands before her, eyes squeezed shut in concentration. What she was about to do would take all the magic, energy and hatred she had stored throughout the years, and she would unleash it unto Arendelle all at once.

It was a strenuous task: her ears buzzed, arms shook and knees buckled with the strain of holding that much power between her palms. The blue ball of energy grew, in both size and brilliance until it had reached its peak. It was ready.

The queen threw open her arms with a shout, releasing the power into the sky in the form of an icy blast that reined over all the visible sky.

She collapsed onto her hands and knees, panting with exhaustion but smiling none the less. Victory was near.

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"Stupid waves!" Anna panted, paddling as fast as she could.

She took a moment to wipe her brow with the skirt of her dress, not realizing that she had let go of one of her oars.

"No, no, no, no!" She yelled, making a grab for it as it began to slide, plopping into the ocean and disappearing into the depths.

"Well this isn't good." She frowned, peering down and holding her fists to her face.

A loud blast sounded above her, and she looked up in time to see a blue ring spread across the sky. It began to grow dark. Heavy grey clouds blocked out the sun, and snow began to fall, growing heavier by the second.

"This is definitely not good." Her teeth began to chatter and she yelped as the waves suddenly began to rise several feet beneath her, becoming haggard and rougher.
"Help?" she called, glancing in the direction of her parent's ship with an outstretched arm. It was hardly visible now, hardly the size of her thumbnail against the horizon.

"Help!" She called out louder, just as the waves beneath her heaved, and threatened to tip her over.

"Princess Anna!" She heard voices and turned around to see that one of the rescue ships had closed much distance with the storm's winds.

"I'm here!" She shouted back, waving her arms until they were close enough to throw a rope down to her.

With trembling fingers, Anna grabbed the rope and tied it around her waist, holding on tightly as she was hauled onto the sail ship.

"We have to get them. We have to get them back!" She was shouting, before her feet had even touched the deck.

"I'm sorry, Princess," A sailor said, steadying her as she stumbled on the floor, "But there is a blizzard brewing. It's too dangerous. We're heading back to shore."

"No! We can't!" She said, running to the bow.

From there she could still see her parent's vessel, long out of the shelter of the fjord. And the sailor was right, there was a storm, and it was concentrated above her parents.

There the waves were high, towering over the large ship and making it look like a toy in it's wake.

"No!" She gasped to herself, unaware of the commotion behind her.

The fjord had began to freeze, racing its way from the foot of the castle out into open waters.

Anna found herself jerking to a halt as her ship was frozen in its path at the peak of another tall wave. She rolled partially down the deck with many crew members but immediately picked herself up and jumped down to the solid ice.

She ran across the frozen sea, thinking she could save her parents, but it was too late. Even as she watched a great wave capsized the ship, and it vanished under the surface. Almost instantly, the entire area was sealed by ice, becoming a frozen tomb.

"NO!" Anna shouted, her voice the only sound echoing across the frozen expanse as she fell to her knees and sobbed into her hands.

She was alone. Her parents were gone, her sister was lost, and now she was alone.

Eventually horses were brought, and Anna was carried inconsolable, back into the castle.

She said not a word to anyone, not until Kristoff cautiously wrapped his arms around her.

"I'm sorry, Anna." He whispered, and she buried her face in his shoulder doing her best to stifle her cries.

"Elsa." She said, wiping her eyes and stepping back slightly.

"What? You want me to get her for you?" Kristoff asked, confused.
"No. Elsa." Anna sniffed, "We have to do something about Elsa."

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The Snow Queen glanced over the ice, frowning slightly. Perhaps she did make too quick work of destroying the King and Queen. It certainly wasn’t as fulfilling as she expected it to be.

But with the Princess, it would be different, she thought. The girl would die slow and painful, of that she was certain, and she would relish every moment of it.

Chapter End Notes

Oh, and.... I did cry at comic-con, I did, I really did.... but it wasn’t in a corner...
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait! But here you go! Not sure how I feel about this chapter though... it's very setty-uppy.... that's a new word by the way.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Present

- 

Hot, angry tears ran down Regina's cheeks as she looked at the image in the mirror: the Savior and the Pirate, kissing in the hallway that she and Robin used to meet in for their own secret dalliance.

Emma had stolen that too- because taking away her one last chance at happiness wasn't enough, she also had to mar even the memories of her short moments of bliss.

Now she had nothing but herself and her sorrow, wallowing alone in self pity while they stood, smiling at each other like two idiots and-

Speaking of two idiots...

She waved her hand and the image in the mirror rippled, coming into focus again to reveal the un-Charmings, cooing softly with goofy smiles at what she assumed was the newest addition to the worthless lot.

It wasn't fair.

A childish statement, she knew, but it was the easiest way to sum up her life.

They had all made mistakes, the "heroes". They had their faults and their wrongdoings. What made them any different than her? Why did they get happy endings while she was left to be constantly pushed down and beaten by the rest of the world- alone?

But even as Regina glared at the mirror and cursed the couples' likeness, she couldn't help but wish that she could be one of them for once: an idiot in love.

She wanted to see him, Robin. Thinking that seeing him would help mend the cracks of her heart, fill in the empty void only he could fill. But she couldn't bring herself to look in on him, she was too afraid of what she might find.

What if she found that he was happier this way? Or that she was already long forgotten? Cast out like yesterday's refuse?

The images disappeared with the wave of her hand and Regina was faced with her own reflection. Red, swollen and tear-filled eyes glanced back at her, taking in the trembling lips, disheveled hair, and smudgy, tear stained cheeks. She was a rightful mess.

Not that it mattered to her. Nothing mattered anymore. Not while the man she loved was
with another woman- his *wife*- a title that made her completely insignificant, even if she was the Queen. *The Evil Queen*, a traitorous voice rattled inside her head-and now there was no room for her in his life- and there never would be.

Regina was suddenly overtaken by sobs, and she sank into the nearest sofa where she muffled her cries with a pillow, clenching it tightly to her chest like a lifeline as she succumbed to her pain and the dark thoughts that came with it.

She had tried to be good, but now, in moments of weakness, it was easier to fall back into darkness. She *was* the Evil Queen after all, she shouldn't be crying like the weak and disillusioned child she used to be. No. She had to make someone pay for this- nobody made her crumble to her knees in a pathetic show of weakness without getting scorched in return. And she knew whose fault it was, who it would be to pay the price of the magic that ruined her future: Emma Swan.

"Mom?" She heard a distant voice, as if out of a fog, then the more distinct sound of a key hitting tumblers in the lock followed by creaking as the front door was cautiously opened.

Startled, Regina glanced at a clock. Nearly an hour had past since she had lost herself in dark reverie.

Quickly, she sat up and smoothed down her skirt, hoping she looked somewhat presentable as she headed to the door.

"Henry!" She sniffed, a fake smile plastered on her face as she wiped at her irritated eyes, hoping to be discreet enough not to capture her son's attention. "What are you doing here?"

"Mom told us what happened." The boy said, running up to hug his mother tightly.

"Oh, you know then." she stated, her voice falling flat, devoid of the false cheer it had a moment ago.

"Yeah, and she's really sorry." He continued, "She didn't mean for that to happen and I just know she will find a way to fix this."

"Henry-" Regina sighed, struggling to hold back the tears that threatened to spill.

"I know she will." He insisted, "And then you can have your happy ending."

"Henry, its not as simple as that."

"I know, I know. True love is never easy- but that's how you know that's what this is!"

"What?" Regina rested her hands on her son's shoulders as she studied his earnest expression, confused by his bold claim. "Henry, what makes you think this is tru-"

"I know all about Tink and the pixie dust, mom." Regina shifted nervously and looked at the floor at the reminder. It was wrong anyway and not worth mentioning.

"And true love always wins out, no matter how long it takes. It's fate, all you have to do is just hold out a little longer, and everything will fall into place."

"Oh, Henry," Regina sniffed, a tear trailing down her cheek, but she smiled at her son, ruffling his hair before she kissed the top of his head.

"I just don't think that's gonna happen. Robin... he has his wife back, his family. Why would he leave that for me? I'm the *Evil Queen.*" she said, her voice wavering.
"We all know you are more than that. Robin knows you're more than that. You're a hero Mom. You just have to believe in that, and then you will see that everything will just turn out right."

Regina shook her head, more in disbelief at her son's overwhelming faith in true love and fate than in her disagreement with his claim.

"Alright Henry, I'll try to believe. Now, have you eaten breakfast?" She asked straightening up and changing the subject before she had the chance to cry again.

"Kinda. I ate cereal." He said,shrugging with practiced casualty of every teenager.

"Well why don't you go wash up and I'll make us some pancakes?" Regina asked, guiding them out of the hallway.

"Sure! That would be great!" Henry scampered off, and Regina smiled, surprised that she felt slightly lighter, relieved of much of her earlier sorrow.

Unlike Henry, she couldn't see the bright side to this situation, and she certainly didn't believe that any natural circumstance would bring Robin back too her. Fate had always dealt her the wrong cards, why should this be any different? Bottom line was she didn't trust her life to the hands of fate- or pixie dust. Anything good in life she had to take for herself; through manipulation, force, and trickery.

This would be no different. She couldn't wait for or believe in fate.

Regina grinned, a hint of darkness swirling in her eyes. Henry thought she was a hero, but she knew better. No matter what had happened, she was still the Evil Queen. No amount of good deeds could get rid of that. And if she wanted to get Robin back, maybe she just had to slip back into her old ways. Maybe all she had to do was get rid of the problem.

Marion - and anyone else that was a threat to her happy ending.

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Emma shifted impatiently on her feet as she waited for Gold to answer the door. She had already knocked several times, each round louder and more urgent than the last.

And now it was getting colder. Snow had begun to fall steadily, drifting into Emma's hair and numbing her nose, turning it pink with the cold. Soon she might even be able to rival Rudolf in the bright nose department, she thought wryly, becoming even more irritated at this waiting game.

"Open the door Gold!" She shouted, opting to pound at the door with her fist once more-just for good measure.

She was about ready to shoot it down when it was violently yanked open by the person of interest, and all Emma could do was gape at the sight that awaited her.

She had never seen Mr. Gold in anything but his crisp, well-fitted suits, and the sight of him in a wrinkled white t-shirt, plaid pajama pants and slippers had left her in a state of minor shock.
"What is it you want so early in the morning Miss Swan?" He demanded, "If you haven't noticed, this isn't my shop, and we are certainly not open today, so farewell!"

The door began its swift arc of decent, sure to slam on Emma's still shell-shocked face if David had not noticed the immobility of his daughter and caught the door's progress with his shoe.

"Thanks for inviting us in." He said smoothly, shoving his way through the door and setting his heavy and ever-present sword down on the nearest table.

"Oh, by all means, just make yourself at home!" Gold growled sarcastically, wondering if he should just turn the lot into frogs for their rude disturbance.

"Thanks," David replied, half sitting on the table, "To early for tea? I could use some Earl Grey if it's not to much trouble."

Gold curled his fist into a tight ball, pointing a menacing finger at the Prince, fully intending to send him running out the door when Belle popped her head from around the corner with a bright smile. "Oh! David, Emma!" she paused, nodding to the pirate, with a tight smile. "Hook." She added somewhat reluctantly, to which he gave a small wave in much the same manner.

"It's good to see you!" She continued on cheerily to the former persons, "What brings you over?"

"Oh, Belle!" Emma shook her head, startled into movement from where she still stood behind the threshold, stepping into the house with Killian close behind.

"Actually we have a bit of a problem," She started slowly, focus darting back and forth between the woman and wizard with hints of confusion and suspicion speckled across her features, (because since when had Belle been living here?) "We're going to need Gold's help to figure it all out...and, um...I'm sorry, but is that a wedding ring?" Emma blurted, gesturing to Belle's hand, no longer able to contain her curiosity.

"Yes, Ms. Swan, you're a regular Sherlock Holmes" Gold muttered under his breath, although he made no real effort to conceal his sarcastic remark.

"We got Married yesterday." Belle explained with a large grin, moving up to hug her husband's arm and rest her cheek against his shoulder as a red blush spread across her cheeks.

"Oh! That's great!...Wonderful..." Emma exclaimed, at first enthusiastic at the thought of these two people finding happiness until it reminded her of another couple, who's potential happy ending she destroyed with a careless mistake. Her expression was momentarily guilt ridden and troubled until she schooled it with a smile, and luckily her blunder went unnoticed as the others began to speak.

"I suppose congratulations are in order." Hook spoke, giving a small nod and a slight, surprisingly un-sarcastic bow.

"I couldn't agree more" David chimed in with a wide grin, patting Belle on the shoulder in congratulations.

The brunette smiled all the more and glanced gleefully up at her husband, eliciting a small smile and absolving him of some of his sour mood. "Thank you. Were very happy." she was practically beaming.
Emma let them bask in their moment of delight a bit longer, but shifted impatiently on her heels, needing to get back to the reason they came here for. "Anyway, we have a problem." She finally piped up. "There's a girl missing-

"No, Ms. Swan." Gold rudely interjected. "If you, your father, and your little mascot here-" he rolled his eyes at the pirate, who glared right back with an indignant "hey!", "want to go prancing about Storybrooke looking for a little lost girl then that's fine with me, but I will not be dragged into your little operation to-

"But-" Emma tried to interrupt.

"No," he cut her off, looking stern and determined.

"Rumple." Belle looked up at him with pleading eyes, nodding towards the other room and gently pulling on his arm to guide him there. "Can we talk?" She asked with large pleading eyes. The Dark One only hesitated for a moment before sighing in defeat and following his beloved with a nod of affirmation.

Emma watched the exchange with amusement and surprise, glancing at her father and Killian, who both seemed to share her thoughts on the strange couple.

Then, unable to help herself, Emma snickered at the ordeal, momentarily breaking their silence.

"What is it Swan?" Killian asked with a smile, arching a brow in anticipation of whatever it was she might say.

"Mr. Gold." She giggled, gesturing to the other room "He just went so easily like a trained puppy! And I just can't take him seriously in what he's wearing. He actually looks like he can be Henry's grandfather and not the "Dark One". I mean, the guy is wearing fuzzy slippers!"

"Oh, Swan." Killian smirked, nudging her with his shoulder ,"you never do fail to amuse me." He decided not to tell her that he too would follow her like a "trained puppy." She just wouldn't be able to handle that much power.

"Shut up." she shoved him back, and the two grinned at each other with matching mischief.

"Ugh, get a room." David muttered, wincing when he realized what he had just said and to whom.

"Is that permission?" Killian quipped back with a smirk, "I knew you'd warm up to me. And in that case-

"Please- just don't finish whatever it is you were gonna say." the Prince waved him off and squeezed his eyes shut. Emma shook her head and smacked Killian in the arm, halfheartedly glaring at him when he winked right back.

It didn't take long for the newlyweds to return, Belle with a triumphant smile and Gold grumbling to himself.

"Fine, Ms. Swan, I'll assist you in your little search. How may I be of service?" His voice lacked enthusiasm, but Emma didn't care and jumped right into explaining.

"Great, well last night a girl ran away from the orphanage, which we normally wouldn't need your help for, but Blue said she is looking for her sister who she thinks is responsible for the
snow storm, so we were thinking—"

"Wait." Gold held up his hand for silence and Emma obliged, startled by the sudden interest he began to take. "The girl, the one who went missing, does she have red hair? Is her name Anna?"

"Yes." Emma responded cautiously, unnerved by the urgency in his voice.

"And you said there was a storm?" He walked over towards a window and drew back the curtains to peek outside.

"It started last night." David answered, his brow furrowed in confusion. "Gold are you gonna tell us what's going on?" He asked, hands on his hips as he took a step forward threateningly.

"All in due time, dearie." He murmured thoughtfully, then seeming as if he had come to a decision, he opened the front door and began to usher them out, "We'll meet back at Grannies' in half an hour." He explained, "And bring Henry's book with you Ms. Swan. I have a feeling we'll need it."

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A hot cup of cocoa sat on the table, wisps of steam rolling up in grey swirls as it sat untouched where David had sat it down in front of his daughter before pulling up a chair to join the group.

Emma nodded her thanks but sat anxiously at the edge of her seat, tapping her fingers impatiently as Mr. Gold flipped through Henry's book, concerned only with the pages that depicted the end of her journey to Enchanted Forest.

The anticipation of waiting for a verdict was gnawing away at Emma's nerves, and watching the troubled expressions that creased the brow of the Dark One as he read was not doing her any good.

"Well?" she asked, unable to contain the burning question any longer.

Mr. Gold shut the book with a less-than-encouraging sigh and rubbed a hand over his face, looking more weary than she had ever seen him.

"It's just as I thought." He said, his voice becoming distant and troubled.

"Care to expand on that notion, mate?" Killian huffed, not caring to hide his irritation at having to console with his adversary.

"Well, pirate," Gold spat, "it would seem that my investigation revealed what you two amateurs failed to notice at your return from your little expedition to the past."

"What do you mean?" Emma asked defensively, bristling at the man's hostility at what she new not.

"What I'm saying Ms. Swan," he practically growled at her, "Is that you two idiots brought back a stowaway!"
So that was it? Marion? Emma shook with fury. She knew she messed up, and yes, she felt terrible and wanted to find a way to fix that little problem before things got too out of hand— but she didn’t need him of all people telling her the rights and wrongs of her decisions. And what did such a simple woman have to do with the problem at hand?

"Hey! I know I messed up with Marion." She started to snap back, but Gold cut her off.

"Not the forest rat! Here! Recognize this?" He roughly shoved the book towards her, opened to the last page depicting the open vortex that brought them home. But Gold was pointing at an object, small and almost unnoticeable to untrained eyes, blending against swirling rings of the vortex.

Emma felt Killian looking over her shoulder, close enough to feel him stiffen as he too recognized the urn that seemed to have followed them. The urn that supposedly housed something dark and evil enough to convince Rumpelstiltskin that dealing with it was not in his best interests.

"About thirty years ago, this little trinket disappeared from my vault without a trace. Needless to say, many thieves died in my search for it, any yet it was never found, and why do you think that is?" the Crocodile hissed.

A moment of tense silence passed around the table as no one had a reply to the Dark Ones insinuation. Emma instead glared at her clenched hands and Killian guiltily fingered the flask of rum he still carried underneath his leather coat.

But David shifted in his chair, his finger thoughtfully tapping his chin as he digested this new information. "Wait a minuet." He leaned forward, "What does any of this have to do with the missing girl? Did you just bring us down here to complain about missing property?"

"Not at all shepherd boy, this has everything to do with it." Gold snapped, continuing before anybody else could ask another ridiculous question. "You said that this girl, "Anna," had a long lost sister, capable of creating snow storms? And now she is miraculously recently returned out of the blue. And coincidentally, my portable prison has also found it's way back into my loving arms all on the same day."

The cogs turned together in Emma's head as she pieced the words together like a puzzle. It made sense now. The urn served as a prison, which meant-

"You imprisoned a child in a container?" Killian beat her to the accusation, his voice rising in disbelief at the monstrosity of such an act. Surely, even he had to have limits?

"It was a necessary evil." Gold offhandedly defended himself.

"Or maybe you're just evil." Hook snarkily replied, earning a slap on his arm from Emma before she turned back to face Gold.

"Why do I have the feeling that certain doom is upon us?" She asked, her features hard and steely as she braced herself for a fight.

"Because it is, Ms. Swan. You can call off the search, because your little lost girl is probably long dead by now. And soon the rest of Storybrooke will follow, stuck in a frozen wasteland unless we act fast."

Determination set in Emma's features. She would never call off the search, not while there was still hope, but she knew that to save the girl and the town she now called home, she would have to rely on the dark wizard in front of her, no matter how reluctant she was to do so. So she
asked the question she might later come to regret: "What did you have in mind?"

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The Troll Queen stood at the edge of the forest, gazing down onto a little town that was certainly not Arendelle.

All her patience and persistence, her prize and spoils of war, her triumph in revenge- it meant nothing now. It was gone, taken from her in the blink of an eye. Oh how cruel the world was.

The Queen shook with furry, causing snow to billow around her in a mass of white, but the wall of snow drifted back to the frozen ground almost as soon as it began.

It was no matter, she reasoned with herself, forcing her hands to unclench and shoulders to relax. Here she could start anew- forget the wretchedness of her past and take this- the pathetic town that was given to her- and build a new kingdom of ice an snow. Here she would rule, sole monarch to a whole new world to replace the ones she had lost.

There was only one problem. She could sense him, the one who had been able to imprison her. He could stop her. He could take away this one last chance to take her rightful throne. He-

"Elsa!" A high voice mingled with the howling wind.

Make that two problems.

"Elsa!" The voice called again, but this time the Queen could see the red hair of a girl bouncing along as she climbed over the snowy ridge, getting closer and closer.

Perhaps things were not as bad a she thought, the Queen mused, smiling at the girl who unwittingly walked closer towards her doom. This was a problem she would rather enjoy dealing with. After all, she did think an ice sculpture would look lovely in a throne room.

Chapter End Notes

I think I need an editor. Anyone interested?
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

weeeell. Sorry I've been gone so long, but you know, school. I really should have been writing my research paper that is due on Wednesday, but I just didn't feel like it. Anyway, here's the latest chapter. It's another really long "Enchanted Forest" sequence just to get it mostly out there. Heeeere you go!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Enchanted Forest

The Troll Queen could hear the girl's whimpering voice floating up the staircase and bouncing off the icy walls, causing her head to snap around so she could better hear the sweet sound of the tortured sobs that called to her like a beacon.

It was such a melodious sound- like trumpets signifying her victory, or the applaud for an encore of her devastating powers- and taking one last glance out the large window onto the frozen landscape, she decided to comply to the demand for more.

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"Anna, what do you mean we have to do something about Elsa?!" Kristoff was frantic, still holding onto the crying girl, unsure of what was happening and of his position in this crisis.

"It's her, but its not her!" Anna cried into his shoulder.

"Your not making any sense!"

"There's something- it's using her!" she sobbed, "Kristoff, there was this mirror, and she stabbed herself in her heart, and her eyes were black and voice like rocks and cold as death and there was white everywhere but it wasn't her!"

"Anna, I don't understand." Kristoff repeated, irritated at himself for having to put Anna through the process of explaining while she was going through a tragedy.

She sniffed and wiped away at her cold tears, breathing deeply to steady herself before she began to explain the events that had led to the disaster at the fjord.

Anna restarted her tale, choking on her words with horrible sobs as she struggled through it, and so engrossed were the two in their exchange, that they didn't notice the resolute figure making its way down the stairs.
Shouting. Frantic and angry shouting was all Elsa could hear over the rush of blood pounding through her ears. She groaned, attempting to pick herself off the floor where she lay sprawled unevenly across the stairs, only to send a jolt of pain racing up her side.

Where am I?

Elsa opened her eyes to a world of blurs and indiscernible shapes, blinking and shaking her head until her vision began to clear up. She gasped.

Kristoff kneeled on the ground, gently cradling the still form of Anna, begging her to wake up with desperate cries.

"Anna?" Elsa called feebly, still uncertain of what was happening. She couldn't remember how these things came to be.

"Kristoff? What happened?" She grimaced, doing her best to crawl down the last few steps of the stairs.

Kristoff seemed to stiffen as she approached, his voice hardly audible when he answered, "You happened."

It was Elsa's turn to still, terrified by his answer, what it meant she had done. "Kristoff, what do you mean? I didn't - I couldn't-"

"I know, it wasn't you - not really." he pardoned her, although there was still the underlying growl to his voice. "There's something inside of you." Elsa knew what he meant, already she could feel the cold turning inside of her and the thick, black fog starting to creep over her mind.

"I've got to get her help." Kristoff started, easily lifting Anna as if she weighed nothing more than a sack of flour.

A white strand of hair fell across Anna's pale face, and Elsa smoothed it away, worried by its appearance.

"What did I do to her? She's not- I didn't-?"

"No, Elsa, you didn't kill her. I think you saved her." he looked at the Princess -Queen now- softening his angered expression. She was confused, worried, terrified- and he knew it wasn't her fault. Looking at her distraught face, he decided to ease some of her guilt. "Look Elsa, whatever it is that is inside of you, it could have easily killed her. I mean, just look at what it did to the fjord! But you fought against it, and luckily the only bad thing to happen was that Anna's hair turned white."

"What happened to the fjord?" Elsa asked, feeling cold dread flush though her system as images of a frozen expanse, shrieking crowds and crying babes flashed in her mind's eye. It felt like a memory.

Kristoff shook his head, "Uh, I'm not sure I should tell you. I don't think- Elsa?"

The girl started to sway, black spots clouded her vision and the cold began to intensify, overruling her senses and thoughts. It was happening again.
"Elsa?" Kristoff called again, taking a step back as he saw the struggle of mind and body overcome the Princess.

"Go!" She spat, shaking as she tried to control whatever it was that invaded her "Save my sister! Quick, before it comes back!"

Kristoff was unable to tear himself away from the scene before him, frozen like a rabbit until she looked at him with black eyes, snarling like a wolf.

"I said go!" She growled with a rocky voice, ice erupting from her hand and striking the ground at his feet, sending splinters of ice flying everywhere.

Kristoff reeled backwards, and regaining his balance, he ran- still holding tightly to the limp bundle in his arms.

*The stables.* He had to reach the stables. It was no longer safe in Arendelle.

"Sven!" he shouted, reaching the stall. "We gotta go Sven." He let the deer out, knowing he wouldn't wander off.

Kristoff worked in a hurry. Sven couldn't carry the both of them, but with Anna being unconscious she couldn't ride by herself, so he quickly tied her to one of the white reindeer, Tuki, knowing she would be safe on the great beast.

He tied the last knot and sat astride his mount, still holding onto the lead rein of the other deer. "Alright Sven, let's go." He could see his breath fog out in front of him. A bad sign that hinted at the proximity of the Queen, but Sven had already dashed from the stable and disappeared by the time the door splintered over with ice.

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The Troll Queen was furious. The little princess had gotten away, not that it mattered too much. She would be back- for her sister, her kingdom, and because of the ice that was now flowing through her veins. She felt pride in that; a little spell that would slowly kill her from the inside out, *and one that would soon turn her into a lovely sculpture for the foyer*, she thought haughtily.

Then she frowned. *The Foyer.* Her entrance and application of the spell hadn't gone as planned, and it was troubling her. She had meant to walk down the steps, a vision of grandeur and power and smirk at the fear she would undoubtedly see in those wretched children's eyes. She would speak, fill their hearts with pain and anguish and sheer cold terror before she had delivered the final strike. It would have been a beautiful moment, but as she had taken those first steps toward the mourning imbeciles, her vision started to fade and her mind shrieked in protest.

The magic she had unleashed out onto the fjord had left her drained and weak, and feeling her intentions, the consciousness buried beneath her own began to rebel, finding strength in the love for her sister and fought her for control. She was losing it, slipping out of power, but in the last moments before she had completely vanished she managed to hurl her deadly magic at the Princess, but her aim was off, due to the pesky sister that was regaining control, causing it to hit her arm and send her sprawling to the floor, banging her head against the tiled surface.

The Queen flexed her fingers into a fist at the memory. It didn't matter now. The effects would be the same, and ever so slowly, her power was returning, and soon this land would be
Anna woke, bouncing and tossing across the back of a reindeer. A grey and brown blur raced across the frozen earth at her side, and she felt instantly relieved at the sight of her companions. "K-Kristoff?" She asked through her chattering teeth.

"Anna!" he grinned at her, relief crossing his face when he saw she was awake. "I'm glad you're okay. Just hold on tight."

"Cold." she replied, feeling her eyelids start to droop.

"No worries, I'll build a fire as soon as we find a safe place to stop. We have to get as far away from here as possible while we still- Whoa!"

They had come to a bridge, slick with the snow that had began to cover it. They were halfway across when three dark shapes swung out from underneath the bridge, blocking the path and causing the reindeer to rear up and bellow in fright.

Kristoff fell from Sven with a huff, but Anna was securely tied and wrapped her arms around Tuki's neck and stayed aloft.

Quickly, Kristoff stood and grabbed the dangling reins, frantically pulling the white deer the way they had come, shoving Sven to follow suit. "Trolls!" he shouted. "It had to be a troll bridge!"

Before they could get much more distance between the first trolls, three more climbed from under the bridge and blocked their exit. They were trapped.

"Kristoff." Anna shivered, gripping his hand as the six monsters came closer.

"Don't worry Anna, We'll get out of here...Somehow." He added uncertainly, backing up as the creatures approached, snickering and talking amongst themselves in low grumbling voices.

"There is a fee that must be paid for crossing our bridge boy." The leader hissed, coming right into Kristoff's face. He could see the moss growing between the rocky cracks of his skin from this close up.

"That's good to know." He backed up, bumping into Sven, "But were Kinda short on money right now. Do you take I. O. U's ?"

The trolls laughed. It was a horrible sound, like that of a rock slide. "We were thinking of payment more in the category of...meat."

"Well, what d'ya know? I seem to have left it all, uh, somewhere else." Kristoff lied. "So I guess we'll just be going and next time we'll come back with interest."

"No need for that." The troll grinned wolfishly, "you'll do just fine."

Kristoff yelped just as the troll made to lunge at him, but another held up it's hand and pulled the other back. "Look Fidnar," she said "Look."

The troll, Rijid, had been staring at the girl curiously. There was something about her,
something magical, something familiar... something deadly. "Her hair, Fidnar, see her hair." They inched closer, grabbing at the white lock on Anna's head even as she flinched away. "I feel it. Troll magic." she hissed. "Our Queen has returned."

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Anna and Kristoff were led down a rocky path, slick with freezing ice, that took them underneath the bridge. Trolls herded them on either side to prevent their escape as much as to keep them safe while they scaled down the perilous face of the ravine's wall.

After much discussion the trolls had decided to hold them captive, at least until they consulted their leader.

"This way." one of the trolls growled at them, pulling Anna's arm and guiding them through a crack in the wall. It was a tight squeeze, but soon it opened up into a large cavern. Anna gasped.

While the wind outside had grown cold and bitter, it was quite opposite in the cave, even offering a comforting warmth. Moss grew off the ceiling, moist with dew and hanging down like long lavish drapes. The ground was spongy underfoot, and every wall was covered in small blue mushrooms, softly glowing like hundreds of stars and throwing a faint glow all about the cavern.

"Oh, It's beautiful Kristoff." Anna murmured, lightly touching his arm.

"Follow." Fidnar said, brushing aside one of the mossy curtains, followed closely by Rijid. The troll walked until he had come to a small pool, fed by a small stream that trickled down the wall and glowed with the mushrooms that grew underneath its surface. Fidnar sank to his knees and touched his head to the ground in a sign of respect, mumbling something in his language before regaining his footing. "We have news, Grand Pabbie." Rijid added afterwards.

Anna and Kristoff exchanged confused glances as a long silence followed Rijid's declaration, not knowing what she was speaking too. Water continued to trickle, remaining to be the only sound in the room until a large, mossy boulder that lay beside the pond began to split, creaking until it had fully unraveled. The round mass turned to reveal the round face of a troll. His skin was smoother than that of the others', weathered and beaten down by hundreds of years against the elements. The moss fell down his back like a cape, and a glowing jewel hung around his neck. He blinked at them with kind eyes, and when he spoke, his voice was softer, smooth like a polished stone.

"And what news would that be, dear one?" He asked warmly, shuffling closer and listening attentively.

Rijid hesitated, twisting her rocky hands around until Fidnar spoke up instead. "We found these two softskins on the bridge, Grand Pabbie. One of them has been touched by strange magic. And we believe-" he hesitated, glancing at the others, "we believe it came from her."

Pabbie's eyes widened at the unexpected news and raked over their guests with an expert eye. "Come here child." he motioned to Anna, and she hesitantly stepped forward. She had been silent the whole time, shivering in her damp clothes while trying to keep up with the troll's conversation, but it was hard to follow their coarse and harsh voices. But the one they called Pabbie seemed different- kind and understanding- someone she could trust- maybe- so she slipped Kristoff's hand from her shoulder and found herself face to face with the ancient troll.
He studied her expertly, touching her cold cheek and twisting the odd strand of hair in his hands. He grumbled to himself in a language Anna didn't understand and let the hair fall back down with a dejected sigh, causing the other trolls to stiffen.

"It is as I feared." he said with a tired voice letting his eyes fall closed as he lost himself in thought.

"What is?" Kristoff asked, stepping closer, worry written on his face.

"There is magic about you." Pabbie spoke to Anna. "Not the good kind, and it will surely kill you. I am sorry."

"What?! Kill me? Pshh! It can kill me, nothing is gonna kill me, I feel f-i-i-i-ne." Anna waved him off with nervous laughter, finishing of with chattering teeth.

"But you feel it." The troll said in his deep voice. "You feel the cold, deep within your bones, expanding outwards and spreading the chill. You can't escape it, young Princess. It is now a part of you just as you are of it."

"What do you mean? What happened to me?" Anna's eyes widened in fear, and she looked to Kristoff, who had taken off his hat and sweater due to the heat of the cavern.

"Anna," he hesitated, kneeling beside her. "When Elsa was...that thing.. she hit you with a blast of ice. I didn't think it was anything this bad but- I'm sorry, Anna I should have done something else." She patted his hand as if to say it wasn't his fault and looked towards the troll for answers.

"What you thought was your sister is something else entirely." He said, and moved towards the pool, waving a hand over it so that an image appeared on it's surface.

It was a castle, large and it highest towers proudly soared into the sky, glistening in the sunlight like a diamond. It was made of ice, and all that surrounded it was white and frozen.

"A long time ago," Pabbie started in his tired voice. "we had a Queen, beautiful and powerful, but young and naive. Her name was Imrah, and she fell in love with a human. She stole him from the Greenlands, but it was against the rules, and in his anger, her father, the King, turned the boy- a Prince- into a white bear, doomed to walk the earth until he could find a maiden to break his curse. He did, and once again human, the Queen took him to her palace and they were to be wed, but she underestimated the love between the White bear and the maiden."

Anna and Kristoff had been watching the images in the pool, amazed by what they saw there, flitting before their eyes.

"She rescued him and they ran away." Pabbie continued "In her anger and heartbreak the Queen destroyed the Ice Palace, and within it, including her subjects. Our last great Kingdom fell." He said, and in the pool, Anna could see as the spires fell, crushing buildings and trolls alike under its weight. She could hear the desperate and terrified screams of trolls before the image faded out, and she was once again staring at a peaceful pool. "They all died that day, aside from us few that were gone. And now it seems that after all this time, our Queen has returned, using your sister as a host, and its not for the best."

"You don't want your Queen back? Whoa, wait, is she a ghost?" Kristoff asked, confused by the situation.

Pabbie chuckled a little, his eyes crinkling as he looked at the two humans. "No boy, she never died, but found a way to preserve her soul, if not her physical form. But no, having out
queen back would mean death for the last of the trolls."

"What do you mean?"

"After our kingdom fell, we spent years struggling to survive in the land of humans, and after hundreds of years we have finally adapted." Pabbie explained, motioning to the earthy moss that surrounded them, "Imrah will cover this land in ever increasing amounts of ice, and she alone will be the soul survivor."

"Well can't you stop her?" Kristoff shouted, "And, and Anna. You need to help her. You have magic too!"

"Oh, no, m'boy. My magic is no where near that strong. Only the royals ever had that sort of power, and the Queen herself was an outstanding protégé. I'm sorry, but I can do nothing."

Kristoff looked down and folded his arms, feeling helpless.

Pabbie looked at the downcast faces of the young people before him, wishing there was a way he could help them, when a thought crossed his mind. "But I do believe I have heard of someone who can help you." He said, watching as their heads snapped up in urgency. "In the south, there is a very powerful sorcerer. It's a three day journey from here, so you will have to move quickly."

"We can do this." Kristoff nodded in affirmation.

"Fidnar will give you a map. Good luck" Pabbie motioned towards the younger trolls and they took their leave, Kristoff following close behind. But Anna lingered, looking to the pool and back at the old troll

"The maiden," Anna said, "The one with the purple eyes. She looked like my mother."

"She would." Pabbie sighed "She's a great grandmother of yours."

Anna blinked in surprise, her mouth turning up into a round "o".

Seeing that the girl wanted to know more he continued on. "Her name was Rose, and I fear that it is because of our former Queen's hatred for her that you are now in danger. For that, I am sorry." He seemed to brood on a thought for a moment. "She was good to my grandson."

Anna didn't know how to respond to that- the sad musings of an old rocky troll, so instead she asked a question that had been burning in her mind for a long time. "How old are you Grand Pabbie?"

The troll chuckled, "Long enough to watch the mountains grow!" he replied. "Now go child, you'll need all the time you can get."

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Kristoff struggled to read the map in the dim light of the sun as it sank behind the horizon and distant hills. He twisted both parchment and his head in different directions, trying to get a better read on it.

"Ok, we're officially lost." he huffed, letting the map wrinkle in his lap as he looked up to the darkening sky in exasperation.
"Oh, don't be so down." Anna waved him off, "we just need to keep heading South, which is... hold on." She held her arms out in a "T" shape to her side. Kristoff watched, amused, as she muttered under her breath, "Ok, sun sets in west... or is it east? No, west. Which means South is... wait,... Never. Eat. Soggy... Walrus."

"Walrus?" Kristoff scrunched his nose.

"Hey, I'm thinking here!" she squeezed her eyes, taking a moment more to think. "This way, south is this way!" She said, pointing parallel to the coast.

"You know I have a compass right?" Kristoff asked, taking the item out of his pocket.

Anna scowled, "Yeah? Well I- brrrr" she cut off, suddenly shivering violently.

"Anna!" Kristoff jumped off Sven and caught the Princess just as she was about to fall off her own steed.

"Anna, you're getting colder. We should stop here for the night, I'll build a fire." "Oh, no, don't worry about me-e-e-e, I'm fine. Let's keep g-g-g--oing." the girl shivered, wrapping her cloak tighter around her, but Kristoff refused and soon enough they were sitting on logs, huddled around a campfire with the deer waiting nearby.

"At least here Elsa- er- the Queen person can't reach us with snow out here... yet." Anna said, glancing up to Kristoff who seemed to be nodding off.

"Huh? Oh, yeah, right." He said absentmindedly, and Anna gave him a curious look until he continued sleepily, "Hey Anna, we should get some sleep. Sven will wake us up if anything happens."

"Oh, yeah, that's probably a good idea. Gotta keep our strength up!" She said, then snuggled into her cloak and nestled closer to the fire.

Sleep was almost instant.

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It seemed as if only a moment had passed when Anna woke, startled by a gloved hand that had covered her mouth. Panicked, Anna flailed her arms and punched out at the dark shadowy figure that stood with their back to they dying flame.

"Ouch!" she heard a familiar voice yelp.

"Oh, Kristoff, I'm so sorry! I just-"

"Shh!" He covered her mouth again, using his other hand to rub his nose. "Listen."

The two deer grunted and snorted nervously, pawing at the ground as they itched to flee. The last of the fire crackled and a soft wind rustled the leaves of the pine trees. But beneath that, there were more sinister noises- the soft padding of paws and snapping twigs, of bodies brushing stealthily through the foliage and a low growling.

"Wolves?" Anna whispered, her eyes growing wide when Kristoff nodded in affirmation. "We can take them. They're just a bunch of big dogs. Bet I can turn them with my winning personalit-t-t-t-y." She started shivering again "Then again, you never know," she said with a shrug, grabbing a burning stick from their fire.
"Anna, what are you doing?"

"It's for fighting. What are you doing?" She whispered back fiercely, taking a battle stance although her knees trembled beneath her.

"We're not fighting Anna, get on the deer."

"But-"

"Get on the deer!" his whisper was urgent, and she dropped the stick and scrambled on the back of her steed.

As soon as she moved, the bushes burst with life, and the great beasts burst from under the brush, snarling with their large teeth bared.

"Go, go, go!" Kristoff shouted, quickly mounting Sven and galloping off.

Frantic hooves beat against the soft ground, kicking up pine needles and moist dirt. Anna gripped handfuls of fur, clinging on for dear life and hoping she wouldn't be tossed off and left as a snack for the wolves. Risking a backward glance, she could see that Kristoff was not far behind, just a few paces in her wake. Still, the wolves were catching up, and she realized with horror just how huge they really were. These weren't the normal timber wolves that hunted at the base of the North Mountain, these were the mythical beasts of the Enchanted Forest: nearly the size of Sven and hungry for human flesh- and if the tales were true, they were once men and women as ordinary as herself.

A whirring sound split the air, followed by a heavy thud. As Anna watched, one of the great wolves fell with a yelp, a long shafted arrow piercing its side. The thunder of horses' hooves sounded through the air and a mounted guard rose over the crest of a hill, pouring through the trees with longbows held at the ready, taking aim at the dire beasts.

The wolves halted, quickly assessing the situation, reluctantly dashing away with one final farewell to their fallen comrade.

"M'lady." One of the mounted men gracefully dismounted his horse and bowed to Anna in a smooth manner. He was dressed in a crisp white, unlike the other men who still sat on their horses in full armor. "Prince Hans, of the Southern Isles." He introduced himself with a kindly smile. "Here, may I help you off your...steed?" He asked, offering his hand.

"No, no, no, no. I can do that." Kristoff interrupted, nearly falling off of Sven as he rushed to Anna's side and lifted her off the deer. "Kristoff, Official Ice Master and Deliverer of Arendelle." He said, placing himself in front of Anna.

"Uh hu." The prince said with disinterest, "And who might you be M'lady?" he asked Anna, who had been silent this whole time, her eyes wide and mouth partly agape.

"I'm uh, Anna, just Anna, Princess Anna actually, but you can call me Anna, everybody else does. Can I touch your hair?" She blurted, wincing when she had finished.

Prince Hans chuckled, "It's a pleasure to meet you, Princess Anna." He said, raising his hand to his lips much to Kristoff's displeasure, especially when she giggled.

"Why Princess!" he exclaimed, "You are so cold."

"Yes," Kristoff snatched an extra blanket from Sven and wrapped it around her shoulders, "and if you don't mind, we really need to be going so we can find out how to fix this problem."
He ushered her back to Tuki, intent on ignoring the prince behind him.

"You wouldn't be happening to be looking for someone called Rumpelstiltskin, would you?" he asked, a dark undertone to his voice.

"Yes! Do you know how to find him?" Anna exclaimed, recognizing the name and shoving Kristoff out of the way to better talk to the Prince.

"Of course I do. As a matter of fact, we just came from there, and we'd be happy to escort you to his Castle m'lady." his eyes gleamed darkly.

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They had been riding with the Prince and his guard for a few hours and Kristoff did not like it. Not. At. All.

In front of him, Anna was talking amiably to Hans, riding at her side. She was bundled in blankets because of her affliction, but her eyes still shone bright, most noticeably when she glanced at the Prince.

That was his place, next to Anna. It was his job to make her laugh and give reassuring words, but now he was forgotten, sitting alone in the back as he watched them laughing with each other like no one else mattered.

Sven snorted. Ok, maybe not as alone as he thought. "No, Sven, I'm not jealous." He crossed his arms and sulked. The reindeer seemed to give a disbelieving sigh. "I just don't think we should trust this guy." Sven shook his head. "Really, that's the only reason. Not because she's looking at him with those big perfect eyes of hers like that or anything." Sven grunted again. "Whatever. Just keep walking. The sooner we get there the better." He pulled his cap over his eyes and tried to doze as they rode. It was hard with Anna's merry voice drifting back to him.

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It took two day's to get to Rumpelstiltskin's castle, and by that time, Anna was pretty sure she was in love with Prince Hans. Not that it mattered. She was here for her sister which meant everything else held no significance. Almost. She was still planning a wedding in her head. And there was that little fact that her arm had turned completely to ice. It wasn't ideal, and she was more than a little terrified, but that was part of the reason she was here. Rumpelstiltskin would be able to fix it. Hopefully.

They had rode up to the castle's front entrance. It was beautiful and grand- as should be expected- but the front door was foreboding and Anna hesitated as she stood before it, scared to knock but knowing she had to. To save her sister. To save herself. "Go ahead Anna. I'll be right beside you." Kristoff nodded encouragingly. Anna gave a weak smile and raised her good arm, hesitating only one moment more before knocking.

The three solid thumps seemed to resound against the wood before the great door decided to swing open, only a crack, and Anna pushed her way in, blinking as her eyes adjusted to the darkness of the large hall. A few candles were lit, marking a trail towards her destination. She followed hesitantly, feeling exposed as she gingerly tip-toed down the corridors with the Prince and Kristoff trailing behind. The candles stopped in front of a large room, again with great tall doors, only these were open, inviting, as if they were eagerly awaiting her arrival. Anna's breath
caught in her throat with fear and apprehension. This was it. If this didn't work, nothing would.

"Come on in Dearie." A voice sounded from the room, startling Anna a bit. "I knew you would come to me, sooner or later. Come on, I haven't got all day!"

Anna glanced at her companions, who nodded reassuringly, giving her the courage to turn the corner and peek through the doors.

"Are you....are you Rumpelstiltskin?" She asked, stepping closer once she saw the figure at the end of a large table in the even larger room.

The figure waved its arms and laughed, high and amused. "Yes, that's my name, don't wear it out. And you," he rose from his seat and approached "are the young Princess Anna of Arendelle." he finished with a flourish of his hands.

"How did you-"

"Ah, Prince Hans," the imp interrupted and focused on the person behind her. "I see you've come to finish our deal."

"Affirmative. Is everything in order?"

"It will be," he sneered, "First I will hear out the little Princess. I'll get back to you later."

"Of course." he nodded as the Dark one turned back to Anna.

"Now tell me dearie, what is it you came to me for?" he asked, tapping his fingertips together with a knowing smile.

"It's my sister, she's frozen our Kingdom, only it's not her, I know it's not. It's something inside. And if we don't fix it soon, she'll destroy everything and I don't know what will happen to her."

"Simple. She will be forever lost inside the dear Queen Imrah's mind. Although, If she's strong enough, she might be able to provide the Queen with some sort of a conscience. Much better than a grasshopper."

"Can you do anything to save her? And my kingdom?"

"Well of course I can! That is, if your willing to pay the price." he grinned slyly.

"Of course! I'll do anything, give you whatever you want! Just name it!" She shouted.

"Anna." Kristoff warned with a hand on her shoulder. He had been having a bad feeling ever since the Prince had his little chat with the sorcerer. He didn't trust them. And it wasn't because he was jealous.

"No, Kristoff, I've got to do this. What do you want?" She turned back to the Dark one, expecting him to ask for money, her castle, her hand in marriage-

"Your reindeer." he giggled, anticipating their confused expressions. He wasn't disappointed.

"Huh?"

"You can't have Sven!"
Rumpelstiltskin wrinkled his nose at Kristoff's outburst. "Why would I want that pathetic fleabag? No. I want, the white one."

Anna was still confused, "Why do you want a reindeer at all? I thought you'd ask for something... more... expensive?"

"Well there's a lot of use for a white reindeer dearie. They're high in demand." he explained. "For example, you let one lose, start spreading rumors around that there is a rare white stag that will grant you any wish in your funny little head if you catch it, and people will start coming to you, beg you for help, turn against their neighbors- I can start wars! It's a window of opportunity!"

"That's horrible!"

"It's none of your concern. Just an example, I've no need for a war. But I can save you and your kingdom. Do we have a deal?"

Anna scrunched up her nose, glancing up at the scaly face before dropping her eyes back to the floor.

"Can you fix this too?" She asked quietly, uncovering her arm that had turned to ice.

The Dark One tilted his head, considering. "I'll add that to the deal. A full recovery. What do you say?" he flicked his wrists, out of which fell a long scroll and dark feather.

Anna reached out her hand and hesitantly took hold of the quill, slowly bending to the spot meant for her name. The tip of the pen hovered over the paper, and it just felt...wrong. But it was something she had to do. For her kingdom, her sister, her parents- and maybe a little for herself. Squeezing her eyes shut, Anna held her breath and scribbled her name on the parchment.

Both the scroll and feather disappeared the moment Anna finished her scrawling, and a self satisfied smile crossed the Dark One's face.

"Our deal?" Anna asked when it looked like he was turning away.

"Oh don't worry, dearie." he headed to a cabinet at the end of the room "We'll get on with that straight away, but first" the cabinet doors flew open with a simple wave "I just need a little trinket."

From the top shelf the Dark One retrieved an urn and a pair of gloves, holding them gingerly between his scaly hands. Prince Hans stood behind Anna and Kristoff, a dark smile crossing his face when he saw the vessel. The same one the wizard had shown him during his last visit.

"Well know, everything is in order. And now we're off!" The Dark One said with a self-satisfied grin, flicking his wrist and engulfing them in a dark cloud of magic.

Anna landed with an audible "oof", teetering with flailing limbs before she was steadied by Kristoff's grip on her shoulders. "I did not expect that." she huffed with laughter, smoothing down her skirt before scoping her surroundings. What she saw made tears prick at her eyes, but she quickly blinked them away before they froze to her eyelashes.
They were in the castle, her castle. It had been covered with ice before, but now everything looked particularly deadly. Stalagmites protruded from the ground and walls, creating mazes that had made large room in which they had landed nearly unrecognizable. But Anna still knew where she was. It was the throne room, and the air was heavy with the silent cold, seeping through her clothes and through her very bones, making the ice that had started on her arm form even faster.

"I suggest you lead the way to your sister dearie, otherwise it will soon be to late for you" The Dark One said, his voice laden with disinterest.

"The exit is this way." Anna said, loosing her usual optimism in the face of what had once been her home. She picked her way around the stalagmites, ducking under some and pulling herself over others, the rest of her company silently following. The ground was slick, and at one point Anna slipped, reaching out for the nearest thing to save herself from a painful fall that would probably shatter the side that had become like ice.

"Anna, you alright?" She heard Kristoff ask from behind.

"Yeah. Yeah, I'm good." She laughed nervously, embarrassed that she had tripped in front of Hans who seemed to gracefully glide over the ice. Righting herself, Anna gasped, finding herself nose to nose with what she had grabbed in her hasty flail. It was the cook, frozen, the look of fear and horror and pain evident upon her features.

"Mandy!" Anna squeaked, quickly drawing her hand back and covering her mouth as she began to cry.

"Isn't it lovely?" A rocky voice asked from the right, "Soon, you can become one of my pretty statues too."

Anna flinched at the sound of the voice, coming from where her parent's thrones once sat. They were toppled over, the royal portrait mutilated, and in their place reigned a grand throne of ice, and from it spoke the imposter, a tall crown of icicles now resting upon her head.

"How could you have done this?" Anna yelled in dismay, attempting to stomp her way closer to the dais. "Give me my sister back!"

"Sister?" A cruel smile twists her lips. "I'm the only one here, sweet."

"No, you're- you're in her mind. And I demand you get out! Right now!"

The Queen simply laughed, "I'm afraid that's no longer an option, we're one and the same now. All that's left for me to do is enjoy watching you die, and soon I'll be sole ruler of this land."

"Is that so, Dearie?" Rumple spoke, appearing at her side, "I beg to differ." He sneered in her ear.

"You?" She growled back, flinching away from the beast. The look of contempt sat on her brow as she glared at him, but Rumple didn't miss the spark of fear hidden deep within her eyes. "You cannot stop me. Even you do not have the power." she hissed in defense, and he knew, she was unsure.

"Don't I?" Rumple tapped his fingers together. "Would you like to make a bet?" he giggled.
The Troll Queen gave him a hard stare, looking away once she had met his eyes and attempting to recapture her air of regality. "Troll magic is one of the forces that bound your power to the dagger, and with it, a curse. You cannot harm me." She punctuated the words, holding her head high to persuade him of her certainty.

Rumple circled her throne like a bird of prey, shaking his head in mock disappointment at the Queen's reasoning. "I really thought you would be smarter that this my dear. True, my magic can't harm you." He said with annoyance, "But luckily I have other methods. Remember this?" He drew out the urn, the runes on its surface glowing as it sensed the presence of the Queen, laughing malignly as she recoiled in fear. "You're about to get very well acquainted."

Chapter End Notes

Also, thanks to an-internet-friend for pointing out my mistakes!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!