Staring Down the Sun

by InitialA

Summary

Collection of SFW fic prompts about Emma and Killian.
"Papa?"

Killian looked up from his book; Elizabeth was standing in the doorway, her ink-black curls mussed from sleep, clutching her stuffed frog tight. “Sweetheart, you’re supposed to be in bed,” he told her, closing his book and opening his arms to her.

The five-year old hurried over to him, climbing into his lap. Killian grunted as her knee hit tender places; she was all angles and knees, his little girl, and wild with them she was. “Had a bad dream,” she mumbled into his chest, her arms around his neck tight.

(He didn’t think he’d ever forgive the dwarf for the incident, but it did help that the dwarf would likely never forgive himself for it either)

He shifted Mr. Frog away to breathe better. “Dreams are just that, my own sweet lass. They’re the movies in your mind.”

"It was about Mama."

Killian shifted her against him. She grabbed her frog, and pressed herself against him hard enough that he thought she might be trying to disappear into him. He brushed the hair from her face, her eyes—Emma’s eyes—tired and fearful. “Do you want to tell me about it?” He asked.

Elizabeth was quiet for several long moments. Then, she shook her head fiercely. “Where’s Mama?” She asked instead.

(He’d always have her. He’d made that promise the moment Emma had told him, wide-eyed and fearful, that she was pregnant. And he’d vowed it again the moment he’d held his squalling little girl-child in his arms, coming out kicking and screaming first into the world, a fighter after his own heart)

She shook her head. “No. Want to see Mama.”

He sighed inwardly. Elizabeth, (and her brother, come to think of it), had inherited Emma’s stubborn streak and his perseverance. The combination could one day be deadly, but for now it was merely a chore to keep up with. “It could be a long time until Mama comes home. She’s working more because your Grandpa has to take care of your Uncle Neal.”
"Oh."

Killian opened his mouth to continue, but a yell from down the hall made him leap to his feet, holding Elizabeth tight against him as he strode down to the twins’ room. “PAPA!”

(His son, reserved where his sister wanted to climb every tree in the forest, already reading ahead of his age level. So different, and yet if you’d cut her hair, you’d swear they were identical. Not to mention they operated on their own level of twin-brewed mischief, completing the other’s thoughts and sentences and actions)

"If it’s not one it’s the other," he muttered, kneeling down next to David’s bed. He moved the covers back from his son’s face just enough to see him. “You had a bad dream too?”

David nodded. Killian held out his hand, and hauled up his boy into his arms as well. David clutched a stuffed dog tight.

Carefully, he went back to the master bedroom, balancing his children in both arms. “How about you two lay with me in the big bed, and we’ll watch a movie until you fall asleep, aye?”

(This was more or less why Emma wanted them to talk to Hopper. She knew kids were supposed to want to climb into bed with their parents when they had bad dreams, but four nights in seven was getting excessive. And things were worse when she had to work nights)

(It wasn’t as if he didn’t agree. It just hurt a little to think his children might open up to someone other than him)

David nodded against him. Elizabeth mumbled an affirmative. Killian set them on the bed, where they promptly destroyed the nicely-made bedding in favor of pillows on the floor and blankets down so they could crawl under them. As they did this, Killian went into the bathroom to put on his sleeping clothes—it wasn’t all that late, a little past eleven, but he might as well be comfortable. Coming back into the bedroom, he saw that they’d left a space for him between them. “The usual?” He asked.

David nodded. (He was the quieter of the two; Emma often said Elizabeth talked for both of their children. “I have no idea where she gets that from,” she’d tell him. He would scoff and deny knowledge of what she was talking about)

(If looking at her didn’t tell everyone that Elizabeth was his, her mannerisms definitely did, and he was quite proud of that)

Killian’s relief was palpable the day the twins had decided that Snow White was their favorite movie. They’d giggled when “Papa’s movie” had been shown to them, but he was damned if they’d learn to love it. Captain Hook, a cowardly peacock, terrified of a clock-filled crocodile… No, they could watch the story of their grandparents again and again, and they were welcome to it.

(Even if he was getting a little tired of having “Hi-Ho” stuck in his head)

He popped the disk in, and climbed into bed between his children, who promptly turned him into a pillow as the movie started. Half an hour passed, and Elizabeth and David were fast asleep against him. Fifteen minutes later, Killian joined them in a dreamless sleep.

He woke suddenly when the noise of the movie was gone. It was after midnight; Emma was home and shutting everything down for bed. “Hey,” she whispered, voice barely audible. “Bad night?”

"Usual, love," he told her, voice at the same level. "Her, then him."
"Killian, this is getting out of hand," she said, slipping out of her clothes and into her pajamas.

"I know. Just… another week. I think Elizabeth’s getting close," he said.

Emma looked at him in that way she did when she wanted to believe him but was afraid to. “One more week,” she told him. “Then off to Archie.”

"Aye," he agreed.

She kissed David’s forehead, and then Elizabeth’s, and then kissed him. “I love you,” she said, settling on the other side of Elizabeth.

He extracted his arm from around his daughter, and it went around Emma, bringing her close to the fold. “I love you too.”

( Maybe he’d mean it when he agreed this time. He did miss getting to hold his wife at night)
There were blessedly few hours in which she could spend time doing absolutely nothing. This was mostly due to the fact that Emma hated sitting still for more than a few moments at a time, but also because she didn’t always have a choice in the matter: life was not a restful one when you were a prophesized Savior. So every few weeks, she would take those few hours and treat herself to enough relaxing that her DNA threatened to unwind. This week’s relaxation treatment had already seen a hot bath, and now Emma was determined to lie in her enormous, comfortable bed, and either read that book she’d been meaning to get to for the last four or five years, or fall asleep during it, whichever came first.

Before she did, she sent a text to Henry, letting him know where to find her if he got back before she woke up. Phone tossed aside, Emma settled into the pillows, and began to read. She managed to make it through a whole chapter before she closed her eyes for just a moment… and was rudely awakened by her book falling forward out of her limp hands and smacking her in the face. She muttered a curse, and marked her page before setting it aside and rolling over onto her stomach, hugging the pillow to her head. She sighed heavily, a light smile gracing her face, the peaceful blanket of sleep settling over her…

The door to the apartment opened and shut.

Emma squeezed her eyes shut tighter, and stuck her head under her pillow. Maybe she could recall that blanket of sleep if she pretended she was an ostrich.

The heavy footsteps signaled that it was Killian who had arrived home earlier than expected. Try as she might to stop it, her awareness always heightened when he was near. She heard him walk from the living room to the kitchen, cupboard doors rattling a bit, and then back to the living room, and then down the hall to the bathroom—seriously, by the way, what was wrong with removing his boots? They were loud! They tracked mud all over! They were really loud!—and finally stopping outside the door to their bedroom. “Swan?” He asked softly.

“Heard you,” she protested.

He heard him chuckle, and walk across the room, and then the bed dipped on his side of it. “Boots off,” she told him.

“I’m getting to it, love.”

Two thunks and a whump—his coat—on the floor later, and he lay sprawled out next to her. Without thinking, she emerged from under the pillow, wiggled over towards him, his arm automatically encircling her, settling into his embrace. He kissed her forehead. “Sleep,” Emma
said. "Relaxation day."

His breathy laugh gusted across her forehead, and she tucked herself against him. She drifted in a half-sleep, vaguely aware of Killian’s hand rubbing soothing circles on her back. "Why aren't you sleeping?" she mumbled after a while.

"I'm not tired," he said quietly. "But I like being here with you."

Emma opened her eyes. Killian brushed his nose against hers. She chuckled, and then smiled ruefully. "I think that nap's gone."

"Aye, but it's still relaxation day."

"And what are you suggesting?"

He tilted her chin up, thumbing it gently, and captured her mouth in a sweet kiss. She sighed into him, her body molding against his, their lips caressing, his fingers moving to cup her cheek. She grabbed his shirt and cupped his neck, keeping him close as he nibbled her bottom lip. He wound his fingers in her hair, tugging ever so slightly, making her warm from top to toes. He did love her hair, and she loved what it did to her.

Killian groaned as she hooked a leg around him, entwining their bodies further. Their kisses became hungrier, more frantic. Emma started to push Killian's shirt off of him, when the front door slammed open and closed. "Mom?"

She was slow to come out of the lusty haze, and the quick footsteps got to the door. "Hey, Mom, I--oh God, gross!"

Killian pulled away from her. Emma propped herself up on one arm, using the other to tug her shirt back down--when had that happened? Henry had turned around and was babbling, "Oh my God. Isn't there some rule about this, what do they do in college? There's something on the door right, you should have done the thing with the door--"

"Henry."

"You know I'm probably going to need therapy for this, right?"

Emma rolled her eyes. "Yeah, you had that already, don't act like you don't have a mental Rolodex of psych tricks to cope with finding your mom and stepdad making out."

"That was not making out."

"How would you know?" She asked the fifteen-year old incredulously.

Killian covered a chuckle with a cough. Emma glared at him. Henry shuffled nervously. "I mean, we have cable..."

"Henry..." She warned.

"Nevermind. Sorry I walked in on you, I'm going to Ava and Nicholas'!" Henry said, hurrying down the hall.

"Are you dating someone without telling me, Henry?" Emma called after him.

"BYE MOM!" Henry's tone said the conversation was clearly over.

Emma huffed, and leaned back as the door slammed closed again. "Oh I'll find out..." she
muttered.

Killian settled his hand on her stomach. "Love, the lad will come clean eventually."

She ran her fingers through her mussed hair. "Yeah, yeah..."

He leaned over her, forcing her down. "Now, I believe we were getting somewhere..."

Emma snorted. "Seriously? You're in the mood after that?" At his look, she started to laugh. "You're gonna have to work at getting me back there."

Killian shrugged. "I'm not a man afraid of hard word, Swan."

She laughed as he came back to her, attacking her relentlessly with kisses.
Pilot Rewrite: Killian in Boston

Chapter Summary

One in my inbox for AGES, but this was a request to do a bit of a rewrite of the pilot where Killian was already Emma's boyfriend.

This took forever mainly because I have lots of mental hurdles to jump over when messing with established events, but it still worked out.

The scent of sulfur assaulted her nose as she lit the star-shaped candle—it was her birthday, she could indulge if she wanted to. Emma squeezed her eyes tight, made her wish, and blew the candle out. The marble felt cool against her cheek as she watched the wisps of smoke float away from the wick. *I wish...*

The doorbell rang.

Heart hammering against her chest, Emma tried not to run to the door. She hoped her disappointment didn’t show when she opened it and found a boy standing there, looking hopeful. A child, in fact. She flipped through her mental Rolodex of faces and names and appointments and deliveries and found absolutely no reason why this kid should be standing here at her doorstep. “Can I help you?”

"Are you Emma Swan?"

She hesitated. There were a lot of people who would like to have her head on a plate, and a most of them had no problem using a kid as a foil. She was about to tell him to buzz off when she noticed his eyes, wide not with fear but with cautious hope, and the slight tremor in his stance, as if he was holding himself back from something. "Yeah, who are you?"

The boy’s eyes widened a fraction more, a grin starting to form on his face. “My name’s Henry. I’m your son.”

To say she was floored by this statement would be the greatest understatement of the decade. And apparently her hesitation to slam the door in his face and run for the big bottle of wine in the fridge was just enough for the kid take advantage of and come right in. Emma came back to herself, calling after him, afraid to touch him, afraid that this might be some kind of dream—maybe she was finally cracking, it took long enough—when he asked her point blank if she’d given a baby up for adoption.

Her blood ran cold. No one knew about that. Not even…

"Give me a minute," she muttered, and fled to the safety of the bathroom.

She figured he could take care of himself—he was ten, had obviously traveled a long way on his own to get here—*oh God, he was totally her kid*—he could absolutely figure out a kitchen. Emma braced herself against the sink, trying to calm herself down.

The doorbell rang again.
"Should I get that?" Henry called.

Emma swallowed her panic as she unlatched the bathroom door and went to the front. Twenty minutes ago, seeing her boyfriend standing on her doorstep, on her birthday (when he’d been scheduled overtime, she had checked), with no presents but a single white rose for her would have made her weak at the knees.

She still had weak knees, but damn if they weren’t for other reasons.

"Killian," she began, and the boy came up behind her.

"Who’s this?" Killian and Henry asked at the same time.

She needed to sit down.

There's a long silence following the very strange introductions, broken only by Henry periodically kicking the island or the chair as he swings his feet. "So..." he said finally, dragging the vowel out, "you're not my dad?"

"Oh, God, no," Emma burst out, and Killian shot her a bewildered (hurt?) look. "Sorry," she apologized, then looked back at Henry. "No. He's not."

"Oh. That's okay," Henry shrugged. His eye lingered on Killian's prosthetic hand for longer than Emma anticipated--but hey, maybe he'd never seen one before. He was ten. "Anyway, we'd better get going."

"Going where?" Emma asked incredulously.

"I want you to come home with me. Both of you, actually, I think he could help."

Her eyebrows almost flew off her face with how quickly they rose. "Go home with you? Kid, the first thing we're doing in the morning is putting you on a bus right back to... Where is home, anyway?"

"Maine. Storybrooke, Maine."

Seriously? "Right."

Henry hopped off the stool. "Please, come home with me," he begged, looking up at her with pleading eyes. If she hadn't already thrust her hands behind herself, she was pretty sure the kid would have grabbed them.

Killian touched her arm gently. "Swan, there's no harm to dropping the boy home," he said softly. "It's what, a few hours in the car? We can manage it and be home by breakfast."

She looked at him, her lips pursed as she thought. He smiled, his expression clearly reading that he'd make it worth her while. Between that, and the puppy eyes the kid was giving her, how was a girl supposed to say no? "Alright then. I guess we're going to Storybrooke."

Henry grinned, and Killian kissed her cheek. Emma went to change, and only sighed when the door was safely shut behind her. What had she gotten herself into?

Something told her to have an overnight bag, just in case the Bug decided it didn't want to drive the full eight or ten hours (whatever it was going to be) and they'd need to crash for the night.
When she emerged from her room, more comfortable in her jeans and red leather jacket than she'd been in her "date" dress, Killian was digging in the fridge and Henry was reading a very large, very old book. "You steal that from the library, kid?" Emma asked.

"No. Miss Blanchard gave it to me," Henry responded, not looking up.

She dropped her bag on the counter, peering over his shoulder. The pictures in the book were highly stylized--probably to give kids an idea of what the stories were supposed to look like, but letting their imaginations fill in the rest--but something about it looked familiar. The caption read: "Neverland!" Her eyes drifted across to the page Henry was so absorbed in: the words "Captain Hook" found her, and she put it together with the vicious grin and the silver gleam on the other page. "Grimm fairy tales..." she murmured, pleased at her own pun.

"What's that, Swan?" Killian asked, tossing her an orange with his good hand, another and a bottle of water tucked against him with the other.

"Nothing. Come on, we'd better get going if I have to drive the whole way," she said, picking up her bag.

"I can drive!" Killian protested, tucking his snack into his pockets.

She held up his prosthetic. "I drive a stick, doofus."

He raised an eyebrow at the juvenile taunt, and she glanced quickly over at Henry. The kid was glancing surreptitiously from his book to Killian and back again. Emma frowned, and shook her head, dropping Killian's arm. "Come on kid. Sooner we get going, sooner we get there."

"Now we're talking," Henry said, sliding off the chair and tucking his book into his backpack.

*What an odd kid,* Emma thought as she closed the door behind them.
"I love you."

The phrase slips out as he’s leaving—he’s brought her lunch, always worried when she forgets to eat because she’s caught up in some Savior business.

(She had plans about how to say it. Moments, grand gestures—things that absolutely weren’t her, but for him, and she wanted him to know she meant it because she thought so much about it.)

She realizes what’s been said the moment he does—her blood runs cold just as he trips over his own feet, shoes screeching against the floor as he stumbles. She whirls—a doe caught in the headlights, fright written all over her face in every possible way—and he looks back at her with the same look of perplexion he wore when she’d asked him out.

(Oh, God. How did this even happen?)

"It just—slipped out," she stammers, every muscle in her body tensed and ready to fling herself out the windows—he’s blocking the exit and she really needs to run away and hide. Now.

Now he’s walking towards her, the look on his face changing—she can’t read the expression, and her instinct is to run far and fast and now. More words are coming out of her mouth—why can’t she stop talking—while she’s tripping over her own feet going backwards in her brilliant escape, because today of all days her brain decides it’s done doing the stoic, bottled-up-feelings thing, “I thought you knew—I mean, you’re pretty good at reading me and I just—I don’t know why I said—”

And now his lips are on hers, and his hand is cupping her face gently, his rings cool against her skin. She’s backed against her desk, out of places to run, but now her emotions are shifting without the clutch. She relaxes into the kiss, her heart racing for other reasons. He rests his forehead against hers—she can feel his heart racing, too, under her hand.

(She always makes sure, more than a year later. She knows the difference now. Once was more than enough.)

"Aye, I knew, Swan," he tells her, his voice hoarse. "But a man likes to hear the words too."

"Oh."

(Her brain is apparently done spewing words now.)

"I love you too, Emma."

"I knew that," she says faintly.

Killian makes an annoyed noise, and she starts to laugh. His resolve breaks a moment later. “Say it
again,” he asks of her, when the laughter dissolves out.

She meets his eyes squarely this time. The words are there in his eyes, have been since perhaps the moment they met—before, even, if their trip to the past counted—and she’s only slightly less terrified when she says them with purpose and conscious effort: “I love you, Killian.”
Also not a prompt. I have a lot of thoughts about Killian and illnesses (like... how’s his immune system holding up in our world when he wasn’t brought over by either of the curses? I’m sure that both curses changed everyone’s bodies into being immunized from most modern maladies) so this manifested and squeezed at my heartstrings.

She never slows down. She never seems to get tired, relentless in her drive to do her job, to protect everyone.

Perhaps falling ill wasn’t the most surprising thing to happen.

It happens slowly.

She pales first. She complains of a headache, that she aches. Then her breathing becomes labored. She takes medicine tablets and complains they don’t work.

(“I don’t get sick.” “Swan, please. Your mother said this would help.” “It doesn’t.” “For me, then, love.”)

(Shes glares at him and does it anyway, and two hours later he finds her woozy and struggling to catch her breath after a chase. She glares at him again, and he helps her home.)

It’s the coughing that truly worries him. They’re quiet, and she grumbles about feeling like she’s suffocating.

His senses seem to be attuned to her normally, but now he’s even more hyper-aware of her presence and actions. The first few coughs have him on edge, but the wracking ones that cause tears to stream down her face put him on the verge of panic.

Then she collapses.

(He’s never been so terrified in his entire life, not when she nearly drowned, not when they fell through the portal, not when she nearly froze, not when his heart was about to be crushed while she watched. She was running next to him one moment, and on the ground, unresponsive, the next.)

She’s burning up, mumbling nonsense in her sleep after they confine her to her bed in the loft. She wakes up to cough (she’s set up on a mountain of pillows, can’t breathe when she’s laying flat) and Mary Margaret tries to get her to take medicine or broth before her daughter falls back into fitful sleep.

Killian finally dredges up the reason why hearing Emma cough sends spikes of terror into his heart: memories of the sickness that took his mother’s life, the blood on her handkerchiefs, nothing a mere boy could know how to cure.

He sits up with Emma, dozing in the uncomfortable chair. He ignores Mary Margaret’s insistence that he rest and let her take over.
(“She has the flu. You need to rest, or you’ll catch it next.” “Thank you, milady, but no.”)

(What if he leaves and she gets worse? If he’s not there…)

(He misses the tender look the princess gives him before she leaves.)

Her fever breaks in the middle of the night. She calls for him, startling him into awareness.

(“I’m cold.” “You kicked me when I tried to fix your blankets, love.” “…sorry…”)

She rests easier. The cough is still there, but it’s better. She’s cool to the touch, and after another day in bed she snaps at him, at her mother, at everyone for hovering over her.

(“God, you’re all acting like I’m dying of TB or something, get out! Go! I’m sweaty and gross!”)

He knows she’ll be fine.

Then his throat feels scratchy, and when he coughs one too many times, Mary Margaret gives him a knowing look, and sends him to the couch.
Chapter Summary

Daddy!Charming feels turned into Daddy!Killian feels and I'm not responsible for my actions.

She’d shared only one dance with her father—her wedding day, when no one had mentioned the tears he was shedding, when they’d finished with him literally sweeping her off her feet, when he’d cupped her face gently and kissed her brow before going to dance with her mother.

She cherished the memory more than any other.

But this moment—a complete accident, a private moment she would never have witnessed had she not forgotten her phone and come back to retrieve it—it threatened to take that top spot.

Unseen, she watched through the gap in the kitchen door as her husband hummed a vaguely familiar waltz, gently swaying and stepping around the kitchen with their daughter, just shy of a year old.

Elizabeth giggled, her chubby cheeks rosy, and reached for her father’s black diamond earring with her free hand. “Oh, trying her hand at piracy already,” Emma heard Killian murmur as he gently freed himself. “Bad form, my love, to rob a man in the midst of wooing a lady.”

Emma rested her head against the doorframe, watching them dance. Elizabeth grabbed at Killian’s nose and then his mouth, giggling as he playfully nibbled her fingers. As he leaned forward and kissed her, one of the cats barged through Emma’s legs and pushed the door open wider, revealing her to her audience. As he turned, Killian’s grin could light the night sky. “Look, Libby, Mama’s home.”

Emma smiled. “What’s wrong, love?” Killian asked softly as she came up to nuzzle her daughter.

Her eyes stung. She combed his hair with her fingers, bringing him down the scant inches that separated them to rest their foreheads together. “Nothing,” she said with a happy sigh. “Absolutely nothing.”
Valentine's Day

Chapter Summary

Valentine's Day fluff. I was inspired after going out to eat tonight and the restaurant was covered in decorations.

"Don't tell me," Killian started, "This is another one of your bloody holidays."

The diner was festooned with red, pink, and white hearts and streamers and glitter--thank you, Ruby, for that--and it would be almost nauseating if it weren't for the tenderness he also felt flowing in the air. Couples seemed closer than usual, sweeter on one another--and that was saying something, in the town where 'happily ever after' was taken to extremes.

Henry glanced up from his mathematics. "Yeah, something like that. It's called Valentine's Day. You give gifts to people you like, go on dates and stuff. Mushy love stuff."

Killian grinned. He recalled a time--so very, very long ago--when he was Henry's age and he largely felt the same about the fairer sex and anything to do with them. Henry, though he was the son of a product of true love, seemed not to be entirely immune to the same sort of feelings about romance. "Indeed. So you won't be presenting gifts to that charming girl I saw you talking to the other day?"

Henry's ears turned bright red. "She's not my girlfriend," he muttered to his notebook, and then cleared his throat and said louder, "But you're taking my mom out tonight, right?"

Killian raised an eyebrow, shifting in the booth to lay an arm across the back of his seat. "When I only learned of the thing today? I suppose I might, but given your mother's general aversion to 'mushy love stuff', as you so eloquently put it, I'm doubting she'll be expecting anything."

"Who isn't expecting anything?" Mary Margaret asked, with David and her toddler son in tow.

"Mom for Valentine's Day, apparently," Henry answered before Killian could open his mouth.

To Killian, Mary Margaret comes across as the quintessential mother he's glad he never had: the look she gave him now was such a perfect combination of horrified disappointment and disbelief would have had him begging for forgiveness if he were not a centuries-old mutineer. As it was, he fought the urge to squirm under her gaze, perhaps shifting a bit more than necessary. "You're not doing anything for Valentine's Day?" Mary Margaret hissed, looking around the diner quickly to make sure no one was listening.

"I only found out about the bloody holiday fiv--ow, bloody hell! Ow!" Killian yelped, flinching away as Mary Margaret smacked his arm several times. Henry and David tried not to laugh.

"Killian Jones, you get out there and you do something nice for my daughter for Valentine's Day, or so help me I will... I will..." She seemed at a bit of a loss as to what she would do in retribution for a moment, and then a self-satisfied smile bloomed on her face. She shifted Neal in her arms. "I will tell Granny you're passing off fake gold coins for your room."

Killian scoffed. For the mayor, she really didn't have much of an imagination for punishment.
"Milady, you take me for a fool, no pirate worth his salt trades false gold. A realm that bleeds boodle is no realm worth looting at all."

With surprising strength, Mary Margaret hauled him up by the back of his jacked and shoved him towards the door. "Oh, just go do it already!" She snarled.

Finding the rabbit hole to Wonderland would have been easier than the search he went on to find a last-minute reservation at any of the town's finer eating establishments. As it was, he was laughed out of several of them, and given pitying looks in the rest. He supposed it was for the best; Emma was working all day, and she didn't like going through the trouble of getting ready for an evening out after a long day.

As it was, he supposed he should do something to mark the occasion, and stopped in the florist's shop for the handful of red roses Moe had left.

All vehicles were present when he came up to the station, and Emma was bent over her desk writing reports when he rapped on the door with his hook. She glanced up, and laughed in dismay when he presented her with the half-dozen bouquet. "Oh no, who told you?"

Killian cocked his head to the side slightly. "Henry, why?"

Emma smiled, the one that brought out her dimples and made her face light up like the moon, as she bent to smell the blossoms. "Because I knew you'd try to go all out for it, and it's not really a real holiday, and I didn't want you to go to any trouble."

He hummed in amusement as he perched himself on the corner of her desk. He knew his Swan. "Your mother may have had something to do with it as well, darling. Seemed to think she would have me evicted from my quarters if I didn't do anything."

Emma narrowed her eyes in the general direction of Granny's, and shook her head again. "Well, they're nice flowers anyway."

She tilted her head up and he obliged her with a kiss. Though they were the only souls near, it remained chaste--she preferred to maintain some sort of professionalism in the office, saving all of her energy for after-hours (which he thoroughly appreciated). "Did you know, Swan, that every single eating establishment in town is booked for the night?" he asked as she got up to find something to put the roses in.

"Can't imagine why," she said dryly. "Anyway, not all of them, and I was going to invite you over tonight anyway."

"Oh really?" Killian asked, keeping his voice light. He rested his chin on his hand, watching her innocently.

She shot him a knowing look over her shoulder. "Keep your pants on, tiger. Henry will be home until around nine, and then he's spending the night at Nicky and Ava's house."

"And after that?"

She raised an eyebrow and he grinned. She dropped the flowers into an emptied pencil holder. "Just come over around seven, I have plans for you."

"I'll be there with bells on, love."
When he knocked on the door to the small apartment Emma and Henry shared, he heard Emma call, "It's open!"

"Love, what if I were a mass murderer, you can't just tell someone to come in," Killian told her, closing the door behind him.

Emma snorted from her position on the couch. He was interested to see she wore only an old shirt and pajama pants with some 'cartoon' character he couldn't remember the name of. "If you were a mass murderer, you wouldn't have knocked. It's Chinese-and-comfy-clothes night, go get changed," she informed him.

"If I were a polite mass murderer," he muttered, mostly to himself, but Henry chuckled as he passed on his way to the living room with a soda.

There was a drawer with some of his things in her bedroom—or rather, the drawer contained things Emma had bought him, like pajamas and what she called "hanging-around-the-house-all-day-and-doing-nothing clothes". He selected a shirt and pants, and changed with haste, rejoining Emma and Henry in the living room. Emma slapped the seat next to her. "Got your favorite. Sit down, movie's about to start."

After the initial struggle of figuring out how to hold the container of takeout with his hook (catch it between the wire handle and the box, it's a snug fit and it works like a charm), the next challenge was figuring out how to eat with the wooden sticks (Emma and Henry insisted it's the only proper way to eat Chinese--there were many scandalized cries when he first went after his moo goo gai pan with a fork), but he could get the majority of his meal in his mouth now if he concentrated. Emma, (unable to sit on a couch properly if her life depended on it), laid her head on his leg, her feet up on the back of the couch. That did nothing to help his concentration of eating, and she noticed. She caught his eye with a knowing smirk, and he mumbled something about minxes and improper clothing for men.

Henry's phone went off when the Muppets failed to meet their telethon goal. "Mr. Tillman is here," he said, getting up and running to his room.

Emma sat up, leaving Killian's leg cold. "Okay. You got everything?"

Henry came back, shouldering a bag. "Yeah. I can walk home in the morning, it's okay."

"I'll come by and grab you, it's ok, kid," Emma told him.

Henry threw them a cheeky grin on his way out the door. "No, it's fine. I'll walk. You kids have fun."

"Henry!" Emma called after the slamming door and then she sat back with a sigh. "Damn kid is too smart for his own good."

She settled back down against Killian as the movie rolled to credits. "And why would you say that?" he asked, running his fingers through her hair.

Her expression was pure mischief. "Well, if he hadn't been here, this was going to be no-clothes-Chinese night, but with a minor--whose life I am in charge of and don't want to scar forever--present... we had to censor."

He began to see where the evening was going to go from here. "I see. A shame, really, that seems like the kind of night I would be in favor of."

Emma rolled, lifting herself up on her forearm. "Well," she said softly, her face nearing his. "We
can always do no-clothes-leftover-Chinese night."

"Indeed," Killian murmured, their lips hovering close.

"We should probably work up an appetite first..."

"An excellent idea, Swan," he said.

He leaned in for a brief kiss, and then she squealed, laughing as he lifted her up and over his shoulder, and carried her into the bedroom.

They never did get around to the leftover Chinese food.
Emma's Time of the Month

Chapter Summary

Prompt was "Could you write one where Emma is on her period and Hook comforts her? Thanks :)

Fuck.

Fuck fuck fuck fuck.

Usually she was like clockwork. She was positive it hadn't been twenty-eight days. There's no freaking way she lost track of that much time. Okay, everything with Gold and these queens of the night-people and the author had been getting a little time-consuming. But losing track of an entire month?

Mary Margaret wasn't helping. "Emma, sweetheart, I used to get cramps like this too, it must run in our family," she'd said earlier, rearranging the heating pad and smoothing Emma's sweaty hair out of her face. "It got better after I had you, though."

"Yeah, funny thing, Mom, I've been pregnant?" Emma had grunted, curling in further on herself as her entire lower body seized up. "Didn't do jack shit."

Mary Margaret hadn't said anything else, only giving her a sympathetic look, and went to send David for extra-strength Midol.

Normally she had a handle on these things. Clockwork. Take some medicine the day Mother Nature decided to come calling and somehow it headed off the worst of her cramps. Forgetting meant her current state: nausea, pain shooting up her back and down her legs, staying in bed in her rattiest pajamas all day, and making sure everyone else kept out or else they'd have their heads bitten off. (It was a good thing Emma didn't have a handle on fire like Regina did.)

A knock at her door signaled her salvation: the promised medicine. "Leave it and leave me alone," she called grumpily. Maybe if she smothered herself with her pillow she'd stop hurting.

"Love?"

Fuck.

"Killian, go away, go away fast, go away now," Emma mumbled into her pillow.

The mattress sank as he sat on it and if she had any emotions besides anger left she might feel a bit embarrassed that she's on her knees, hugging a heating pad to her stomach with her face buried in her pillow, and her ass sticking up in the air. Whatever, it made everything hurt less. Kind of. She heard the bottle of pills shake. "I come bearing medicine. I inquired after the Jell-o as well, but your mother says you can't keep food in your stomach," Killian said. His voice was calm and soothing and made her want to kick him for being so nice to her when she felt so rotten.

"No. Pills now, you leave."
"Swan."

"Killian, I mean it."

"It's your back, isn't it?"

She muttered curses and grumblings about nosy pirates under her breath as she flopped onto her side, still tucked in a ball. She made a grab for the pill bottle and the water on the nightstand. "It's my everything. If you don't want to hate me, I suggest you go," she said after downing what was probably one or two more than the doctor-recommended dosage, but whatever. Midol wouldn't kill her and she hurt, dammit.

He cocked an eyebrow at her and Emma really wanted to slap it off his face but moving hurt too much. "Sweetheart, you may be the Savior and full of magic, but you forget I lived with a pirate queen for almost a decade. If her threatening to gut me and turn me to chum for the sharks every month didn't do me in, you won't."

Emma concentrated really hard on making a fireball, but nothing happened. Maybe big fire was outside the abilities of light magic. She whimpered, curling in on herself again as another cramp hit. Killian's voice softened. "Emma, roll onto your stomach."

"No," she said and it came out like a whine.

"This will help. I promise," he said patiently.

She opened her eyes and tried to glare at him; it came out more like a pout, and he gave her that stupidly cute sympathetic smile of his and that's what made her uncurl herself and shift onto her stomach. He untangled the blankets and pulled them down; she tried not to think about if she'd bled through anything. 'He's a pirate, he's seen blood, whatever,' she told herself, but her face still burned — apparently she still had some humiliation left in her after all.

He didn't touch her skin, instead opting to press into her sore back over her shirt. Emma bit her lip, her toes curling as pain flared up her spine. "Relax," he murmured.

"Hurts," she whimpered.

She tried to unclench as he swirled his hand in soothing motions across the curve in her back, but with every feeling of relief, the hurt came back tenfold a moment later. She whimpered when he pressed a little too hard and he pulled away. "Not helping?"

She shifted so she could look at him. "No… yes. A little. Just… it's something I've gotta ride out." Killian was giving her that look again, the one that said he cared about her and was sorry he couldn't do more. He repositioned the blankets around her, leaned down to kiss her forehead, and stood up to go, but she reached out and grabbed his hook before he could take a step. "Wait, just… stay, please. I'm sorry. I'm a bitch when I'm like this, I'm sorry." He relaxed, looking back at her, and she smiled weakly. "I feel like shit, I look like shit, but just… stay. You don't make me feel as shitty as I did before."

His laugh warmed her and made her hurt fade a little. "Well, thank the gods for small favors," Killian teased her, and toed off his shoes.

"You know what I mean," Emma grumbled as he climbed into bed behind her.

He didn't get under the blankets, which made her feel marginally better, only wrapped his arm around her, burying his face in her hair. She grimaced. "I'm all gross, don't do that."
"Swan, trust me. You're as lovely as a field of daisies," Killian mumbled, kissing her neck.

She snorted at that, but snuggled a little more into his embrace. When the Midol finally kicked in, he's already dozed off and she doesn't feel the least bit sorry for dozing off too.
Killian and Emma's Boobs

Chapter Summary

Prompt was "Can you write one about Killian and and Emma's boobs?"

He's not sure which gods he needed to make offerings of thanks to but he figured he should find out soon. It never hurt to try and ensure that Emma didn't return to her more… conservative shirts.

It started not long after their most recent bout of peace began. He'd met her for coffee as they'd done every morning for almost two months – sliding together and walking in sync like they'd been doing it every morning since forever. Instead of walking him to the library like usual, she'd asked him to stop by the sheriff's station to pick up something to return to Belle. There was a book of spells, she'd said, that she'd been practicing with during her lunch breaks and she'd gleaned everything she could from it.

Emma had shucked her coat the moment they'd gotten inside, and that moment was when all of the air had left Killian's body. Really, her clothes were fine. No different than what she normally wore: long sleeves, jeans, boots. It was the quality of the fabric that had him struggling for air like a fish on land. Her gray shirt was almost sheer, the dark color of her strange corset clearly visible through it. He'd only realized he was openly staring when she'd cleared her throat loudly, a knowing smirk on her lips as she handed him the book. She'd kissed him chastely, wished him a good day, and gone to work.

The minx knew exactly what she was doing.

This trend only continued as time went on. Skimpy shirts that left her freckled arms bare, plunging necklines that didn't bother to hide the top of her breasts, more and more sheer fabrics that left little to the imagination. His eyes were drawn to her almost constantly. She knew it too, looking at him mischievously when others were in the room, often leaning across a table to point something out.

He was a fan of every part of her, but he'd be lying if he said he didn't put favor on particular areas.

(They'd agreed to wait – make this matter, make them matter – but they'd also agreed that just because they were waiting didn't mean everything was off the table.)

She'd been spending more and more time on his ship lately, enticing him into his own bed with her flimsy shirts. His quarters were small, but he relished in the chance to spend the cool nights wrapped in her, learning more about her. He'd mapped the scars and freckles on her chest and arms, committing them to memory and weaving her stories of the pictures he saw there. (She teased him about how they all managed to be about a princess and a pirate falling in love. He claimed to have no idea what she was talking about.) He'd traced the curves of her body with his hand and found some of the spots that made her writhe and gasp and laugh under him. (The Savior was ticklish.) He'd figured out how to remove the damned strange corset from her body. (She'd needed to help him with that one the first few times.) He'd discovered that the most wonderful feeling in the world was feeling her naked chest pressed against his. (He was secretly very glad they were waiting. He wasn't ready to replace that feeling with anything else.)

But most of all, he discovered that his new favorite way of waking in the morning was in her
arms, his head bowed between her breasts.

That morning, Emma's arms curled around his head to trap him in place against her, and he couldn't find it in him to complain. She was soft and warm, the steady thrumming of her heart soothing to his ears. When he cracked open his eyes, he had the perfect view of her breast rising and falling with her deep, rhythmic breathing.

He gently nosed the side of her breast, enjoying how even in sleep her breathing quickened. The soft, pliable mound gave under his gentle touch, jiggling slightly in the most delightful way. His lips ghosted along the gentle slope, not catching its peak in his mouth just yet, enjoying the chance to familiarize himself again with the terrain of her body.

Emma mumbled something sleepily and his arm tightened around her. He'd never woken her in this way before, lavishing attention on her chest, but perhaps it was time to see how she'd react.

Killian lightly dragged his tongue along her skin, swirling around her nipple and bringing it to a hard peak. He shifted a little to give the same attention to her other breast, lingering on it a bit longer to draw her nipple into his mouth and suckle. Her arms tightened around him as her body shifted. She'd be awake soon, he knew, so he upped the ante. She gasped as he sucked harder and he hummed his amusement, lapping at her nipple to soothe any hurt. "What are you doing?" she mumbled, not quite awake as he shifted again.

"Wishing you a good morning, darling," he said, taking her nipple in his mouth.

She gasped and sighed as he sucked hard and soothed her with his tongue again. "It's gonna bruise," she said sleepily, raking her fingers through his hair.

He leaned into her touch. "Hardly visible, love," he breathed against her skin. "Though if you keep wearing those damn see-through shirts, it might present a problem."

She giggled as he nipped at her skin. "Didn't know you were complaining," she said.

"Believe me, love, I'm not," he told her.

He proved that statement again and again, continuing to lavish affection onto her breasts until she whimpered she wasn't going to be able to go to work without thinking about him all day. "I should go," she said with some regret. "I need to shower, I need…" She let the sentence hang. He knew what she needed. They just weren't ready quite yet.

She kissed him thoroughly before she climbed out of bed, hopping from one foot to the other on the cold wood floors as she located her socks, corset, and shirt. He watched with interest as she bounced on one foot, trying to balance and put her sock back on – she'd not yet replaced her corset and her breasts bouncing with every movement made for a delightful show. She glared at him playfully when she realized what he was doing.

"I'll meet you in an hour for coffee?" Emma asked hopefully, hooking her corset on and donning her shirt.

He got up with a grunt and padded over to her, gripping her hips and kissing her. "I'll be waiting," he said.

She grinned and climbed up the ladder out onto the deck. Killian ran his fingers through his hair as her footsteps faded. Someday, maybe soon and maybe not, he hoped she'd permit him to fill all her needs.

Maybe someday they'd leave for breakfast together.
Emma and Killian's Ass

Chapter Summary

Prompt was "loved the prompt about hook and emma's boobs. can you write one about emma and killian's ass?"

That goddamn leather duster had been her only her salvation, who the hell did he think he was not wearing it anymore?

The entire beanstalk trip had been a test of her willpower, following Captain freaking Hook to a giant's castle and spending a couple of hours looking up at how well he fit those stupid leather pants of his. He had good legs, long and limber, but he had a fantastic ass. And he had the gall to wear like, two extra belts – she was pretty sure they were for the pirate sword he didn't carry – and both of them happened to lovingly hug that delicious curve...

Most of the times she'd seen him since, he'd been wearing his coat, the blessedly long one that brushed against his calves and fanned around him dramatically when he walked. She loved that coat. It looked good on him, made him look dangerous. (The hook was a given, but that high collar did things to her.)

It also covered up his ass. Which was absolutely, one-hundred-percent necessary if she was going to get anything accomplished with her day that wasn't "stare at Hook's backside like it's a piece of meat Emma wants to bite into".

As Hook slowly became Killian, so too did the coat and leather pants change from long and tight to… well, short and tighter.

God. Damn. Him.

No wonder she'd been rendered speechless at the sight of him in the doorway to her parents' place. The full implications of short-coat Killian crashed down on her with zero warning. The only thing running through her mind had been 'Oh God, who do I have to thank for introducing him to slim fit jeans?'

Her only saving grace had been the vest. The vest that stayed his usual mantra of 'I got bored halfway through buttoning my shirt'. The vest that only revealed three inches of chest hair instead of six. God bless the vest or she would have had him against a wall with his hand up her skirt in an alley faster than one could say Jiminey Cricket.

Then they were dating, actually dating, and she could take a moment to stare at his perfectly curved ass all she wanted, whenever she wanted. Which she did. Often. And when he caught her, she could only smirk at him with approval.

Killian had mentioned something once about going out walking, how it was a standard courtship practice back in the Enchanted Forest. So they'd started an almost nightly practice: going out on long walks together, just talking and unwinding. Emma liked that he was 'courting' her in a normal way. She knew that if she'd grown up as a princess in the Enchanted Forest her standard courtships would have been much different – and probably wouldn't have included him.
(Though she's started to wonder if they, like her parents before them, would have found each other eventually anyway.)

These walks also gave her ample opportunities for groping. Just a little, here and there. He'd have his arm around her shoulders and her arm would be slung around his waist, gripping his hip. And maybe occasionally her hand slipped a little as they walked. (Limbs moved when jostled, and walking counted as jostling!) Eventually, her hand might rest on that tight swell and out of the corner of her eye, Emma would see Killian start to grin.

Sometimes she was more upfront about it, just slipping her hand directly into his back pocket. Those times were better, because she could move her fingers a bit more and watch his response. He'd raise his eyebrow at her when she just stroked him through his jeans. But every time she squeezed – and it was no joke trying to squeeze an ass that has three hundred years of toned muscle in it – he'd suck in a little breath. Every time he'd let that breath out slowly and his eyes would darken just a little as they turned to her in a silent challenge.

They weren't sleeping together. Yet. She'd be willing to bet they'd break furniture when it finally happened.

And frankly, as long as she could finally sink her teeth into that tight little ass of his, she couldn't care less about anything else.
Anonymous asked: "Killian seeing gay couple and reacting to them (positive?) and Emma asking him what would he feel if his child was gay. Please"

This one hurt my heart a little. It felt very personal. I did my best not to be preachy about it. You are loved by so many and so much and by none more than me.

One time her Bug broke down just outside of this small, ramshackle town in the desert. She’d been trying to get the hell out of Phoenix and to Florida, and forgot to fill up on gas. She’d walked two miles into town to get a tow – from a truck that looked to be maybe seventy thousand years old – and then fill up. Not the best of circumstances when you’ve got like, no cash and are freshly sprung from jail, but she didn’t have much of a choice. After, she’d kind of sat in the desert sun for a while, trying to figure out what the hell she was doing with her life. She’d spent a lot of that time staring at this lizard, sleeping away on a rock in the sun.

She felt a lot like that lizard recently.

Weeks of darkness had left her feeling cold almost constantly. She woke up gasping, dreaming of slimy darkness filling her eyes and lungs and suffocating her, dragging her back down into the deep-dark. She slept under layers of quilts to ward off the chill.

It mostly worked.

During the day, she spent most of her time outside. Summer was finally upon them, bringing warmth and sunshine. Emma could often be found doing paperwork on the front steps of the sheriff’s station, or sitting outside at Granny’s with her hot cocoa. She basked in the sunlight, reveling in the warmth it brought to her skin.

Sunlight was her element. She was a freaking lizard in the desert. Amazing.

Today she sat outside at Granny’s, playing with Killian’s fingers under the table while they waited for lunch. More than once she’d contemplated bringing him into her bed to ward off the night terrors, but something always held her back. Maybe it was her parents – they were more reluctant than ever to the idea of her moving out now – or maybe it was her own hesitation at taking the next step in their relationship, she wasn’t sure. His fingers twined around hers, squeezing a little, and Emma looked up to see him watching her with kindness and worry in his eyes. “You seemed very far away, love,” he said.

“I love you, Emma Swan.”

“A little sun drunk,” she admitted. “Sorry, what were you saying?”

His lips quirked up in a smile. “Just that I’ve noticed Princess Aurora spending more time with Mulan. The princess seems quite pleased you brought Mulan back from the Enchanted Forest.”

Emma blames the heat in her cheeks on the sun. “Yeah, well… I don’t think Mulan meant to get stuck in Camelot doing petty work for King Arthur.”
Her time as the Dark One had taken her across half a dozen different realms and kingdoms in search of answers – while she’d been surprised to find Mulan in Camelot, Mulan had been just as surprised as everyone else when Emma had shown up, determined to face Merlin and get some answers for her condition.

Their food arrived and Emma reluctantly let go of Killian’s hand so he could eat. He toyed with a fry before saying, “Those two seemed quite close the last time we saw them.”

Emma raised her eyebrow. “What are you implying, Killian?”

“That the princess is married and has a child, yet she spends much of her time with another woman.”

The other eyebrow rose. She knew he was an old-fashioned guy, but his tone still bothered her – like it or not, it was the twenty-first century and the times were a-changin’. “You think Aurora is cheating on Philip with Mulan?”

Killian ducked his head, glowering. “It’s bad form. If her heart leads her towards another, she should do the honorable thing and end her relations with the prince,” he grumbled. Emma found herself relaxing, and held back a sigh of relief. He eyed her suspiciously. “What did you think I meant, Swan?”

She shrugged, feeling a little uncomfortable – and not only because there was a cloud covering the sun. “Well… some people don’t… approve of relationships like Mulan and Aurora,” she mumbled.

It was Killian’s eyebrow that rose this time. “Swan, you do realize that I have been a sailor for centuries, yes?”

“What does that have to do with anything?” Emma grumbled, taking a bite of her sandwich.

When she glanced at him, he was smirking. “Long nights at sea for months at a time? People find comfort and companionship where they will.”

“Oh.” She’d never thought of it that way before. Maybe that’s why the military had had all those rules and laws. Her eyes widened with a sudden realization. “Wait, have you –?”

He laughed and refused to answer – which was kind of like answering – and Emma could only sit back and process this new information while he ate. The sun came back, warming her while she thought it over. She thought about that lizard she’d watched all those years ago, and then about some of the women she’d seen in jail together. And before that, the kids out on the streets. Killian reached over and took her hand again. “Emma, if something’s the matter you need to tell me.”

She shook her head. “Nothing, just… remembering stuff. I knew a lot of kids when I was on my own who were seen as different. They were like me, runaways from bad homes. Or some of them got kicked out. I guess I just never thought about gay people in the Enchanted Forest, but it’s pretty much like here. Just with like, dragons and magic and stuff.”

He breathed a laugh. “Aye. And more than a few of my fellow street urchins were the same,” Killian said, a dark look in his eye. She looked at him, surprised. He’d never told her he spent time on the streets too. He gave her a half-smile. “Like you, darling, it’s not something I’m fond of recalling. But there are barbarians everywhere, I suppose. It is rather unsettling to hear that a world as advanced as this one also has such prejudices.”

Emma’s mouth twisted as she raised her eyebrows in agreement. Not knowing what else to say,
she grabbed a fry and said, “Open.”

He opened his mouth obligingly. As Emma fed him the fry, she noticed Aurora walking down the street, carrying baby Philip. Aurora’s face broke into a grin and she lifted little Philip’s hand in a wave. Emma started to wave back, a little bemused, but then Mulan and Philip walked up from the other direction, behind where she and Killian were sitting. Emma’s eyebrows rose when she saw Mulan and Philip holding hands. Killian looked over his shoulder just in time to see Aurora kiss Philip hello. “Oh,” Emma said.

Mulan squeezed Aurora’s hand before the trio, and little Philip, went inside the diner. “Well,” Killian said. “That certainly explains more than it doesn’t.”
Killian Gets Stuck

Chapter Summary

dark--swan requested: Killian puts on a hoodie for the first time but he gets stuck and he yells for Emma like a desperate puppy and she has to help him out.

The late winter storm had been pounding Storybrooke for hours. What had started as snow now just fell as rain, but that made conditions outside no less miserable or freezing. Emma had tried to tell Killian to stay where he was (the Jolly had weathered worse, he claimed, but she felt better when he was at Granny’s this time of year) but he insisted on keeping their dinner date at her apartment.

He’d walked over to her new apartment without an umbrella – moron, she’d berated him for five minutes about getting himself sick. His leather jacket was probably ruined too: she didn’t know any magic drying spells. After appraising his soaked hair and damp clothes – and yes, the way his skinny jeans clung to him even more (as if such a thing were possible) – she’d promptly sent him to take a hot shower before dinner. A sick Killian Jones was not a fun Killian Jones to be around – he didn’t whine like many others did, he just got crotchety and tired.

Emma found some pajama pants and an oversized hoodie that would probably fit him and swapped those out for his damp clothes in the bathroom. She at least could take care of those with a regular dryer.

When she heard the water turn off, Emma went to reheat dinner. It wasn’t bad as it was, but on a freezing night like this one she’d take what she could get to stay warm.

(And since there was no chance she was letting her boyfriend out again tonight to get himself sick again, well… She’d take what warmth she could get from him as well.)

After a few minutes she could hear Killian calling for her. “Swan!”

Curious, Emma went to the bathroom to see what he could possibly need. She hadn’t left anything out that might prompt questions – or dirty ideas – so what on Earth could he…

Upon opening the door, Emma promptly slapped her hand over her mouth to stop herself from giggling. Killian had managed to get his good arm through the sleeve, but the same couldn’t be said of his head or his hooked arm. “Don’t stand about having a bloody laugh,” he grumbled, fruitlessly trying to right himself in the sweatshirt.

She went over to him, pulling the sweatshirt mostly off of him and taking advantage of the moment to run her fingers along his broad shoulders appreciatively. “Dummy,” she scolded, unscrewing his hook from his brace. “No wonder you got caught.”

“My other shirts go on over the hook just fine,” he grumbled, lips very close to a pout that Emma wanted nothing more than to kiss.

She busied herself with getting his bad arm through the other sleeve instead. “Your other shirts have buttons on the cuffs,” she retorted. “These just stretch. You have to dress in a different order.”
She helped him get it over his head, shoving the hood back and running her fingers through his damp hair when she was done. He leaned forward slightly and she obliged the silent invitation for a kiss, moaning happily when his hand slid around her waist. “We should probably eat first,” she said a little breathlessly, pulling back with some regret.

“Dessert tastes better,” Killian rumbled, surging forward to catch her lips with his again.

Emma sucked in a breath, feeling the kiss all the way down in her toes, before some of her wits came back as he pulled away. “I don’t know if that’s a dig at my cooking or some kind of dirty talk,” she said, glaring at him playfully.

“Well, Swan, perhaps we can feast together first, and then I’ll feast on you,” he said, grinning salaciously. “And afterwards I can tell you which it was.”

Emma swatted at him, but led him out to the kitchen. “Don’t make promises you don’t intend to keep, Jones,” she taunted.

“I never do, love.”

She flushed at the thought, thinking happily of their warm bed later. He was, after all, a man of his word.
Tattoos and Memories

Chapter Summary

dark--swan asked for: "Would you please write a fic where Killian is upset and Emma decides to explain her tattoo and then urges him to explain his tattoo but is completely accepting of his old feelings for Milah?"

"Thought I'd find you down here," she says, startling him from his thoughts, her footsteps echoing in the chilly night.

He glances up. Under the warmth of the rum and the chill of guilt blooms the lightness born of his love for her - and no small amount of amusement at how she's bundled against the cold. Her hair spills in waves from under one of her ridiculous hats, a scarf wound around her lovely neck, her coat looking puffy and warm; the entire effect makes her look much younger and it's entirely endearing. "Wasn't trying to hide, love," he says, taking another swig from his flask. "Just needed to clear my head."

She takes a seat next to him, dangling her feet over the pier. "Wanna talk about that?" she asks, staring across the harbor into the inky horizon.

He closes his eyes, holding back a sigh. He may have caused a bit of a ruckus at the Rabbit Hole earlier in the evening. One of the dwarves getting a little personal after a few too many pints and Killian hadn't been the most sober at the time. No one had been harmed (physically) and he'd left before the barkeep had a mind to toss him out on his ear, but apparently word had gotten around to the sheriff regardless.

Small towns. They're the same in any realm.

Emma plucks his flask from his hand and takes a swig, capping it and tucking it in her coat after. Killian lifts a corner of his mouth in a smirk. "People 'round here have yet to accept that I'm a man of many secrets," he says finally. "Present company excepted."

"Funny, when most of the time I hear how you're telling all kinds of tall tales to anyone who will listen."

He breathes a laugh at that. Telling tales of daring and death-defying adventure is one thing. Asking for the tale of how he earned his moniker is another. "This was a bit different, love," he says, almost to himself.

The silence hovering around them isn't uncomfortable, broken up by the gentle lapping of the water against the boats and the piers around them; she's not waiting for him to confess, he's not waiting for her to ask. After a little while she reaches over and wraps her fingers around his hook, her gloved thumb sliding along what he expects is cold metal; it never ceases to astonish him, the way she accepts this part of him, doesn't treat it - or him - any differently. She's holding the hook like she would his hand, and perhaps she's guessed (or was told) the reason for tonight's altercation with the dwarves.

She's astute, his Swan.
"Remember that tape I showed you?" she asks.

"You and your friend, when you were girls," he supplies. He doesn't know if he'd ever forget that: seeing his Swan as a little duckling, immortalized in a happy and silly moment (possibly one of the few she can remember).

"She had a birthmark," Emma says. "Or... still has. Probably. On her wrist, shaped like a star. She said it made her feel special, like she was different than everyone else. She drew a star on my wrist to match. I... well, you know the rest. About her dad. I rubbed the star off when I left, I was so mad at her."

Killian waits for her to calm again, her feathers ruffled at the memory of betrayal. He slides a bit closer to her, their shoulders bumping together as he presses against her, hip to knee. She releases his hook and pushes up the sleeve on her left arm. "Neal stole some liquor one night. I was drunk and feeling nostalgic, but I didn't want a star. I wanted to feel special, but I didn't want to be her, you know? I remember picking this because it looked nice. Hurt like hell though, no alcohol can stop that kind of pain."

He's watching her with a knowing smile; he suspects tattoos haven't changed, no matter what realm or time they're in. Marking one's body permanently comes with a price, and that price is pain. Emma looks up at him, smiling. "But you know what I found out?"

"What's that, love?"

"This exact flower was on Dad's coat of arms, or King George's coat of arms that Dad got when he was coerced into the family." Her smile turns wry. "Sometimes I wonder if anything in my life has been my own choice, or if it's all been fate."

Killian brings his arm up and around her, much in the same way he had when they'd watched the video from her childhood. He's careful of his hook, not wanting to tear her warm clothes, and she leans her head against him. He wants to tell her that he hopes with all his crooked heart that she's chosen him, that this impossible thing they're carefully tending between them is choice and not fate.

But sometimes he lays awake, trying to dredge further details from faint memories of a woman with blonde hair and a wicked smile in a bar thirty years ago. He wonders at his impossibly long life, the circumstances that have led him to the happiest he's ever been. To her. To this impossible thing that he's almost afraid to believe could lead to something villains don't get.

Fate's a funny thing.

"I wanna know how you got the hook." She'd said that, all those years ago; of all the things they'd probably discussed over all the rum they'd (he'd) consumed, that's the only thing he can remember.

He's told her bits and pieces and he suspects she's put together more of the story than he's voiced aloud. But there's more to it than just the hook - another physical reminder, one that Emma will have to look at for as long as she'll have him.

She's opened up to him. She deserves the same respect.

So he tells her the story of Milah, the full story - without the bedroom gossip, but Emma already knew who Milah was to him. Emma listens as he struggles with long-dormant memories of the woman who had stolen him away to see the world. Details slip out - her deft hand with charcoal and parchment, the way her voice could carry a song to the ears of the gods themselves, the way she could drink his hardest crewman under the table and walk away under her own power - and
all Emma does is smile softly.

She knows who Milah was to him, just as he knows who Baelfire was to her.

"I can see how you might spend a couple hundred years on revenge," she says when he's run out of words. There's a hint of sadness to her tone, but if it's for the hand fate dealt him or some sort of misplaced jealousy he's not sure. She lets go of his hook and reaches for his other arm, palming the wrist with the tattoo that bears Milah's name. "I think she and I would have liked each other."

Killian's head starts to ache at the thought that, if many, many things had gone differently, Emma and Milah might very well have known each other as mother- and daughter-in-law. There's not enough rum in the world to handle the inbreeding of this land. "I seem to be in the habit of fa -" Horrified, he breaks off before he says the forbidden words (falling in love with) and quickly amends it to, "- finding myself in the company of extraordinary women. I shudder to think of the chaos the two of you could have wreaked."

She chuckles at that. "Thank you for telling me," she says, nudging him a little.

He presses a kiss onto the ridiculous hat that covers her head. "Come on, Swan, let's get you inside before you freeze to death."

"Me?" she asks, incredulous, as she obliges him anyway. "You're the one out here in nothing but a leather coat and jeans, Mr. I'm-too-cool-to-be-seen-in-fleece."

He grins and filches the flash from inside her coat. "I have a very good friend to keep me warm," he insists.

She looks as if she might like to kick him, but instead chooses to wrap both arms around one of his, resting her head on his shoulder as they began the trek back to her parents' loft.

She makes a face after he kisses her goodnight outside the door. "Your nose is cold," Emma tells him.

She takes her ridiculous hat off and shoves it over his head, giggling a little as he pushes it back up to his forehead so he can see. "Keep it," she tells him, turning to open the door. "I've got others. Goodnight Killian."

Warmth that has nothing to do with the rum he's drank heats him from the inside from top to toes. Her smile is a little sultry, but mostly affectionate. "Goodnight Emma," he manages as she slips inside and closes the door behind her.

The ridiculous hat does keep him warmer on the walk back to the inn, though he's damned if he can say it's the hat itself or the intentions behind it.

Perhaps it's both.
HIMYM AU (happy ending)

Chapter Summary

I'm celebrating a follower milestone on Tumblr and asked for prompts. This one was a "happy ending of HIMYM with CS".

Looking back, it’s a wonder at all that they haven’t met properly before now. There’s a lot of “Wait, you were there?” and “That was you?!” while they stand on the platform in the rain, the petrichor mixing with her fruity perfume in an entirely intoxicating way.

The train ride back to the city is a blur of nonstop conversation. After they traced the unintentional trading of his (her) yellow umbrella, she tells him why she learned to play the bass (out of spite for some ex); he tells her about his fears for moving to Chicago (Lake Michigan isn’t the Atlantic, his friends are here); she tells him about her son Henry (he’s ten and precocious as hell) and how the father is no longer in the picture; he tells her about the boating accident that cost him his hand.

If he’s not already in love with her after the story of the umbrella, he falls head over heels when she trumps him in Star Wars trivia. A smile plays on her lips when he explains why he’s moving halfway across the country, her gaze lingering on his mouth every so often.

He’s reconsidering that move now.

Neither seem to want to leave the other’s company when they make it back to New York, so he suggests they go to his favorite diner that happens to be around the corner. She starts to laugh when they come into view of Granny’s – Ruby, heiress to the establishment and currently Henry’s babysitter, turns out to be Emma’s best friend.

As the night grows later and turns to early morning, he tells her of his jealousy of his best friend Dave and his wife Mary Margaret, how everything seemed to fall into place for them perfectly. She tells him about Henry’s father and the end of her childhood.

He tells her about Milah leaving him at the alter. She doesn’t laugh about The Wedding Bride.

She asks him on a date as the morning sun begins to drench the streets of the city that never sleeps.

He cancels any and all plans to move to Chicago.

(Their daughter, born two years later and as much out of wedlock as her older brother, is named Leia. They fix up that house he bought upstate. David and Mary Margaret never do get that house on the beach, but the porch that Killian builds on his and Emma’s place makes an excellent spot to play bridge when they do, eventually, turn old and gray.)
Killian After the Dentist

Chapter Summary

Lord, I watched "Gavin After Dentist" on YouTube and someone was like "imagine your OTP" AND WELL, THIS HAPPENED.

Takes place during the six weeks because why the hell not?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

She's not a huge medical advocate.

Maybe it's because she had years and years of shitty doctors and dentists and ophthalmologists while growing up and didn't even get a taste of what decent care could be like until prison. Maybe it's because she had better things to spend her money and time on than endless appointments to fix whatever had gotten fucked up in the past.

But that's her. It's different for everyone else.

In her false memories, Emma knows that she was the type to drag Henry to the doctor for sniffles. In their year in New York, Emma remembers stubbornly working through a bad cold, but making Henry stay in bed for a week when he caught it. She'd brushed off food poisoning as nothing (damn Walsh and his damn raw foods-slash-vegan-slash-gluten-free restaurants), but took Henry to urgent care when she thought he had appendicitis (which turned out to just be a bad stomachache).

She should have expected this would extend to her boyfriend.

She brushed it off the first time Killian made a face while drinking. He's a bit of a snob when it comes to his rum - Granny's is too "floral" apparently - so Emma believed it to be a not-so-subtle remark on the quality.

However, the yelping and the cussing and the spitting blood into a napkin? Not much chance for brushing that off. Turns out that despite technically being hundreds of years old, Killian's biologically in his early thirties and his wisdom teeth are impacted.

(It's a mark of how used to Storybrooke she is that Emma's questioning why the Tooth Fairy isn't a nun like the other fairies rather than questioning why the Tooth Fairy now works in private practice.)

(Her name is Dr. Pearl White. Seriously.)

It also turns out that despite the numerous scars - not to mention the missing appendage - Killian Jones is nervous about having surgery. "She's a bloody fairy, shouldn't she just be able to magic them out?" he whines the night before.

"Doesn't work that way, apparently," Emma says, handing him the muscle relaxer pills.

"Can't you magic them out?" he asks, pouting for a moment before wincing.
Emma gives him a sympathetic smile. "I'm glad you have that much faith in me, but you'd probably wind up with shark teeth or missing the lower half of your face. And I like your smile the way it is."

It's a mark of just how nervous he is that he doesn't have a comeback for her. Instead, his lips twitch up in a brief smile before he takes the medicine.

Getting a dozy, half-limp Killian to the dentist isn't fun the next morning, but between her and David they manage it. The entire thing is over in less than an hour and getting him back to Granny's is another adventure entirely. Even when she saw him piss-drunk back in the Enchanted Forest Killian was much more coordinated than a Killian that is heavily sedated and suffering from the after-effects of anesthesia.

"Oww," he mumbles through all the gauze after David leaves.

"I know it hurts," Emma agrees, switching the ice pack to his other cheek.

"Cold."

He looks so thoroughly miserable that she should feel bad for smiling, but she's never heard him this whiny or out of it before and it's kind of funny. "It'll hurt worse if I take the cold away," she explains, bringing the blanket up higher around him.

Apparently that's enough to sate him for now, because he nods slightly and closes his eyes. "Where did they go?" he mumbles.

"Where did what go?"

"The rabbits," Killian sighs, rolling over a little towards her.

Emma stifles a laugh. "What rabbits, Killian?"

He opens one eye to glare blearily at her. "The rabbits what stole my teeth. You don't steal from a pirate."

She covers her mouth to hide the grin, giggling. She really wants to record this, but at the same time she likes that drugged-out Killian just something for her to witness. He fumbles for her arm. "No, don't do that, you're pretty."

She smiles softly and drops her hand, taking hold of his hand lacing their fingers together. "And you're still devilishly handsome, chipmunk cheeks and all. She can say that without blushing only with the knowledge that he won't remember a damn thing tomorrow, high as he is right now.

"Knew we'd agree some day," Killian slurs, trying to smile and making a distressed incoherent noise instead. "Smiling hurts."

She swaps sides with the ice pack, letting it rest between his head and the pillow. She combs his hair back with her fingers. "Why don't you try to sleep? It won't hurt if you sleep."

He shakes his head a little, mumbling something unintelligible. His eyes are a little unfocused as he gazes around. "You're my favorite and I like you, Swan," he mumbles as she continues combing his hair back.

Her pulse speeds up; she's definitely blushing now. She clears her throat a little. "I guess it's a good thing I like you too," Emma tells him, scratching lightly behind his ear in the way he likes.
He slurs something else she can't understand; she thinks it might be a different language mixed with gibberish. "Can I stay with you?" he asks, closing his eyes.

"I'm not going anywhere, Killian."

"Forever?"

Her heart catches in her throat, her hand stilling in his hair. She knows he's high as a kite but there's a level of honesty that comes out of mind-altering drugs. His walls, as thick and heavily fortified as her own, are nonexistent right now. This is as honest a question he's ever asked her, out of all of the cutting and point blank questions he's laid before her, heavy even in all it's simplicity.

It's terrifying.

A light snore breaks through her thoughts and Emma has to smile a little at the way his head tilts at an awkward angle, mouth dropped open a little. She can see all that bloody gauze; it makes her laugh a little to realize that she's completely unruffled at the idea of changing that out for him, but him asking her if he can stay with her forever sends her mentally running for the hills.

Baby steps, she tells herself, and combs his hair back one last time before pressing a kiss to his forehead. "I'm gonna try really, really hard," she whispers.

It's a start - even if it's just for herself.

Chapter End Notes

If anyone is wondering, the next chapter of Dark Horse is coming, just very slowly. Life is a little hectic for the foreseeable future, so it'll be out whenever it's done.
Chapter Summary

This was for flirtyhook’s birthday. She wanted bedsharing and awkward boners. As a result, this is a hard T, mostly thanks to someone's filthy mouth.

"You've got to be kidding me," Emma says flatly, dropping her bag next to the door. "What happened to the trundle?"

She's been coming to this quaint little bed and breakfast by the sea with Ingrid every year since the adoption was finalized, almost eight years now. They reserved the same room every year: two small bedrooms attached with a jack-and-jill bathroom, perfect for a single mom with a teenager who liked her privacy. Sometimes Emma brought a friend - usually Lily or Ingrid's niece Elsa. It worked out because her room had a daybed with a trundle underneath.

Or at least it did. Emma's not even sure the chair-and-a-half has a hide-a-bed in it, or if one of them is going to have to stretch out across the chair and the other takes the floor.

"It'll be fine, darling," Killian murmurs, his hands coming to rest on her shoulders.

"Mom's going to freak," she says with a sigh, leaning back against him.

Ingrid had agreed to allow Emma's boyfriend come along this year - two beds, five feet between the two rooms? Sure, they could try to misbehave, but Emma likes the trust she's built up with her mom. "Want to toss for who gets the floor?" she asks.

"Emma, I'm not letting you sleep on the floor."

Emma turns, wrapping her arms loosely around his neck. "I wanted this weekend to be nice," she says, trying not to pout.

His grin says she's failing miserably. "And it will be. I'm not afraid of a bit of carpet, love."

"I just... this weekend is important to me," she says with another sigh, resting her forehead against his chest. "You and Mom don't know each other that well, I wanted this to go really well so you'd like each other. This just... it doesn't really bode well."

He tips her chin up so he can look at her. "We'll sort it out. And I promise not to be a grouch with your mother if I wake up with knots in me back, yeah?" he asks, kissing her forehead.

She closes her eyes in content when his lips linger against her skin. "Okay," she whispers.

A knock on the bathroom door brings them out of their little bubble and Ingrid pops her head in as they put some space between them. "All set in here - oh, no what happened to the daybed?"

Emma sighs again. "We were just talking about that."

Ingrid's lips twitch up in a small smile. "You could always share with me, Emma, leave Killian to take the chair here."
Emma's eyes widen in horror. "Mom."

"I know, I know. You sure you'll be alright on the floor, Killian?"

He tucks his hands in his pockets. "I've been in less desirable conditions, Ms. Fisher, I can manage fine."

She arches an eyebrow at him, giving him the look Emma knows as the 'I can see right through your bullshit' look. "I think we can move past that, Killian. You can call me Ingrid."

They spend the afternoon exploring the little seaside town, delighting in dragging Killian into every shop they come across - Killian, to his credit, bears it well. His hand fits in hers perfectly, it always does, and Emma doesn't even blush at the knowing look her mother gives her every time she glances at their entwined hands.

She's happy and that's all that matters.

There's some fumbling over the bathroom that night - Ingrid and Emma are used to just each other, or Emma's friends, and a man throws them a bit off-kilter. But Emma just sets up the hide-a-bed while Killian's in the bathroom and lays out the cushions on the floor as a poor substitute for him. She sits with a sigh; she really doesn't want this to make a bad impression on him. They've been dating a while, so she knows he's probably not going to be scared off by her, but this weekend is important to her. It's her thing with her mom, something she wants to keep doing for a long time. She doesn't want to put Killian off of it.

Just in case, y'know?

He's a good sport about it, even goads her into poorly recreating the upside-down Spider-man kiss - he's such a dork, honestly - before she shuts off the lights and settles into bed.

Sleep evades her.

He's restless, she can hear him tossing and turning, trying to get comfortable. Guilt pinches her; he's not going to say a damn thing about it, either, he'd sleep maybe an hour and act like everything's fine in the morning.

Just to make her happy, make a good impression to her mother.

Those good impressions are going to fly right out the window if she goes through with this, but she can't force the floor and the measly cushions on him. She can't. Even this stupid thin mattress that she can feel all the metal rods and springs through is better. "Killian, get up here," she whispers, wriggling further over.

"Emma -"

"Just do it," she whispers harshly. "I'll deal with my mom, just - just get up here and hold me."

Her heart melts a little at his muttered "As you wish," and the bedding behind her dips a little as he sits and slides under the covers. She leans into his warmth with a happy sigh; it's a tight fit on a bed hardly qualified as twin-sized. They're pressed together from top to toes, his arm draped over her stomach. She laces their fingers together and clutches his arm to her chest tight. "Much better," Emma declares, feeling him kiss the back of her head.

They both sleep much better after that.
He wakes her with kisses on the side of her neck, nibbling the curve of her ear; she can feel his erection pressing against her ass and she can't help but torment him by wiggling against him. "What time is it?" she mumbles, giggling as his scruffy beard tickles her.

"Little after eight. You look lovely in the morning light," he murmurs in her ear. "Your hair is like sunshine," he presses a kiss to the back of her neck, "you look like an angel when you sleep," he kisses her cheek, "and you make me want to ravish every inch of you," he tilts her head to slant his mouth against hers.

God, she could get used to waking up like this.

"I wanted to wake you with my head between your thighs, tonguing your sweetness," he murmurs in her ear. "You taste divine, love; I wanted to see you come, see if you look as beautiful here in the morning as you do at night in my room. I wanted to hear you gasping my name, trying not to wake your mother, cursing me to hell and back."

Heat pools between her legs and Emma aches to slip her panties down her legs and just let him take her like this, pressing into her from behind and whispering filthy things in her ear. Holy fuck this was a terrible idea, but she wants it. "Killian," she whimpers as he bites on the juncture of her neck.

"I want you so much, darling," he murmurs, his fingers gliding down her stomach to toy with the hem of her panties.

She's close to telling him just to rip them off and take her when Ingrid knocks on the bathroom door. They both freeze. Killian's hands stop their wandering and move to more respectable places. Emma hears the door open and Ingrid says, "We have breakfast in half an hour."

"Okay, Mom," Emma says, hoping the roughness in her voice comes across more as 'I just woke up' and not 'my boyfriend is an absolute bastard and I'm horny as fuck and this is the worst situation anyone could be in'.

"I was thinking we could walk down to the marina this morning," Ingrid continues and Emma knows from the tone of her voice that they are so busted. She's going to keep talking and make this as uncomfortable as possible and delight in every second of it. "There's a new bike trail that winds around the dunes, it's supposed to be pretty. You could bring your camera, get some shots for that photography class you signed up for in the fall. Maybe we can see about renting a boat too. A nice afternoon on the water, just the three of us, sounds lovely, don't you think?"

"Yeah, Mom, sounds great," Emma says patiently, and she can feel Killian trembling - blue balls? Laughter? Asshole.

"I'll meet you downstairs in fifteen minutes, all right?"

"Yup."

The door closes and after another moment they hear the main door to Ingrid's side of the room open and close. Killian bursts out laughing. Emma reaches back and slaps his thigh. "It's not funny!"

"Love, you said you'd handle your mother," he wheezes.

"Yeah but I didn't think I'd have to after she interrupted you turning me the hell on," she hisses. Killian turns her over onto her back, positioning himself on top of her; she can feel his cock
pressing against where she needs him most and bites her lip - this is absolute torture. "You love it," he says simply, and kisses her soundly.

It leaves her a bit breathless; it takes a moment for her to get her bearings. "Maybe," she says finally.

He grins at her, all cheek and she wants to smack him for finding so much humor in all of this. He leans down and whispers in her ear, "Think we have time for a quickie?"

This is a terrible idea... Somehow she manages to flip them around, straddling him and grinding down on his cock. "Depends on how fast you are, tiger."

He grins up at her, challenge accepted.
White

Chapter Summary

There was a post that kind of ruined my life, so I decided to make it even worse and ruin everyone else. So.

Her joints don't ache anymore.

There's a damp, sweet-smelling breeze pulling at her hair. She's reminded of spring and growing things but the only thing she can focus on is that the myriad of aches and pains that have plagued her for decades now are gone.

"You must be Emma."

She opens her eyes.

Her glasses are gone. She can see without anything framing her vision for the first time in years and she's fairly sure that by now the panic should be setting in - what is going on? - but there's a man standing in front of her and he's smiling in a way that's familiar and comforting. There's laugh lines framing eyes that she knows in an instant belong on someone else's face. The close-cropped brown curls are different, but they have the same nose and Emma's voice sounds so much younger when she asks, "Liam?"

The familiar blue eyes twinkle as he bows, taking her hand in his and pressing a kiss to her knuckles. "You have no idea how much I've looked forward to our eventual meeting, Emma."

She smiles, realizing her hands are no longer gnarled and wrinkled but smooth and strong once more. "I can't say the same, but I'm starting to understand the sentiment," she admits.

"It must be a bit of a shock, I understand. I wasn't prepared myself when I passed," Liam says.

She shrugs, unsure of what to say. It's not as if she was expecting to live to a hundred - a couple dozen villains over the years sure tried to ensure that - but she had a good run. Eighty-eight and some change, officially retired from the mantle of the Savior for about fifteen years (with the occasional un-retirement when some young evil thing wanted to start shit) with a devoted husband, three great kids, five grandkids, more family than any orphan knew what to do with...

"Actually, seeing you makes this whole thing less terrifying," Emma says, sliding her hands into her back pockets as she realizes she's wearing her red leather jacket again. The damn thing had gotten charred to a crisp about forty years ago when she'd had a bad run-in with a fire elemental gone astray.

The sentimental part of her wonders if the stupid jacket has been waiting for her all these years.

"Friendly faces help," Liam says. "My mother met me here all those years ago."

She smiles, hoping she'll get to meet the first Mrs. Jones too. Any panic she'd been feeling or fighting off melts away as she realizes the opportunities before her, that dying wasn't actually that bad. "And I can not worry about my kids, my family. Killian's there with them. They all have each other. I'll see them again."
Liam offers his arm. "You will indeed, sister dear."

Her smile widens at the affectionate term. She takes his arm. "He never stopped missing you, you know."

"I do," Liam says, his tone wistful. "I feel guilty at the actions that resulted from my death, but I do realize that without them he never would have met you. He needed you. You brought him back to the light."

Emma looks down as they begin to walk - where? "And I needed him. Even if I was too stubborn to see it at first."

"Aye, well, you weren't the only bull-headed one. Your children are the same, I expect?"

Emma laughs, feeling lighter and freer than she has in a very, very long time. As she begins to tell him about the niece and nephews he'd never met, there's a sound behind them that brings Liam to a halt. They turn and Emma's mouth drops open. "No," she whispers, her heart somehow swelling and breaking all at once.

He's gray-haired and hunched under the weight of the long leather coat she knows is gathering dust in their closet at home. Liam drops her arm as Killian rushes towards them, the years falling away with every step. His hair darkens and his skin smooths, his eyes never changing in their intensity as he and Liam grab one another in a bear-hug. "Brother." She's not sure which of them says it, each voice so choked with emotion. When they pull back, Killian is younger than she's ever seen him, his fringe flopping over his forehead carelessly, the rest of his hair tied back in a short ponytail. He and Liam match in uniform and she knows this must be what he looked like the last time he'd seen Liam.

(Shel'll tease him about the ponytail when she stops being so angry with him.)

"Emma," he whispers, the ponytail and uniform gone and the pirate leathers she knew so well taking their place as he moves to embrace her.

She shoves at him, angry tears stinging her eyes. "What are you doing here?" she asks fiercely, even as she leans into his embrace. His chest and arms are hard with muscle she'd only had memories of, her rock in the crazy storm of their lives. "We just went to the doctor, he said you were healthy as a goddamn horse."

"I am - was - a very old man, my love, whatever any doctor might say. You were gone," he says, as if that should explain everything, make everything okay. "Has anything stopped me from getting to you before?"

"I'd think death might," she counters. Her heart hurts. "Killian, what about Henry and Liam and Elizabeth and the kids? They need you."

He shakes his head, pulling away slightly to cup her face in his hands - yes, hands, because in death Killian Jones is what he always wanted to be in life, what he hated himself for being unable to be for her: a whole man. No matter how many times she'd shown him it didn't matter to her, it had always been a sore point for him. "Emma, my light and love, our children are grown with families of their own. This is the natural way of things in life. They will mourn us, yes, but I hope they will be happy we're together still."

She wants to be angry still, weep for their children and the broken hearts they must be nursing or will be soon; she wants to ask how, make him actually answer instead of avoid the question, but she feels whole with him by her side. Her hands cup his face in return and he rests his forehead
against hers. "I missed you," he whispers.

"I was gone for an hour. You can't miss me for an hour," she whispers back.

He shakes his head and she thinks she knows what he means: he can when he doesn't know when or if he'd ever see her again. "I love you," he says instead.

"I love you too."

Liam clears his throat and she realizes they've been effectively ignoring him for the last ten minutes. "I was only told to meet someone I knew here, not escort a raiding party to the afterlife," he says sternly, but when Emma looks up she sees a teasing glint in his eye that reminds her of Killian.

Killian snorts and as they begin to walk she notices his clothes are different again, the more modern look he'd adopted so many years ago. "Sod off, brother, unless there's treasure to be had there's no need to plunder anything here. I've a feeling they don't give many second chances."

She squeezes his hand at the word *plunder* and he glances at her with a raised brow. "Your mother might have a thing or two to say about that too," she says lightly, though her expression is just as devious.

"Mother's here?"

Liam cuffs his ear lightly and the brothers get into a bickering match that has Emma laughing until tears stream down her face. Her lingering anger with her husband slowly evaporates; the how's and why's of him being here don't matter, not really. He's right, their children will be fine. They've earned their rest. He's here at her side, just as it should be.

Killian turns his head and grins at her, that same devilishly handsome pirate she'd fallen in love with so many years ago. Emma smiles back, leaning against him as the world around them goes white.
College AU

Chapter Summary

Pining college AU fluff while I'm trying to remember how to write.

Killian glanced up at the knock on his open door. "Swan, you know you don't have to knock," he told her, unable to stop the grin that always seemed to appear when she was around.

Emma scowled, holding out her laptop. "Yeah, but I feel like barging in here and demanding you fix my computer again is some kind of friendship abuse. I don't know what's wrong with it."

He gestured to the futon. "Set it up, let's have a look."

He marked his page while she made herself comfortable; he tried not to focus on her ratty old Gryffindor pajama pants and the thick socks she wore because the heater in her room was on the fritz, or the too-large gray t-shirt sliding off one shoulder, or the way her hair was tied up in a messy bun with strands of hair falling out of it every which way. He definitely didn't want to push her glasses back up on the bridge of her nose and he absolutely didn't smile when she pulled the duvet down off his bunk and wrapped herself in it. "It's cold," she said defensively as she settled in her usual corner of the futon.

"Aye, well, that's why they invented sweatshirts," Killian said.

He didn't mind. The duvet always smelled a little like her when she left.

"It's giving me a blue screen," she told him when he sat down to have a look.

"Did you try starting in safe mode?"

"Yes."

"Disk repair?"

"Yes."

He'd taught her a lot how to do this on her own - she was fairly hopeless at computers, but she'd insisted after the fourth time she'd gotten a virus. (That one wasn't her fault, the campus computer labs had all been infected and the bugger had put itself onto her jumpdrive. The others... well, he'd gotten a pillow to the face when he'd told her to stop downloading porn from shady websites.) If she was coming to him, it was bad.

Emma settled in with his copy of *The Titan's Curse* while he got to work writing down error codes and started Googling. "You just come to me because I have your favorite books," Killian commented.

"That's only like, sixty-four percent of the reason," Emma retorted.

"You know they do have this thing called an ebook and you can have all your books with you at once, right?"
She glared at him from over the top of the page. "Ebooks are not the same and you know it, Jones."

He did.

Naturally, whatever she'd done to her laptop this time was going to eat up the rest of the evening - happily, even though finals were looming, he'd had no other plans other than more reviewing or perhaps chipping away at his papers. Killian grinned when she wriggled her feet under his leg. "You can't possibly be that cold, love," he said.

"Maybe I just like annoying you," she muttered, her eyes studiously on the book.

"Maybe you'll have to try harder," he countered, then laughed when she wiggled her toes under him.

It was sometime around hour three that she finally closed the book and turned on the TV. This was a normal routine for them, had been for the last two years. Emma invaded his dorm room, read all his books, made him watch ridiculous trashy TV marathons, and all the while he'd be doing schoolwork or fixing her computer. It was a comfortable routine, one he didn't want to screw up by admitting he had a ridiculous crush on her.

She was his best friend.

"Really, Kardashians again?" Killian asked, giving her a long-suffering look.

"What else is on on a Saturday night?" Emma asked, curling up on her side to see better.

"Swan, I would rather watch that ridiculous Property Brothers nonsense than suffer through another moment of high society woes."

"Says the man who makes me watch Downton Abbey religiously."

"I'll lose my citizenship if I don't."

Emma snorted, but she was grinning and that's what counted. She graciously obliged him though, arguing with the TV through all sorts of house-flipping shows until she dozed off around midnight.

He didn't finish with the computer until after two in the morning. His eyes stung from staring at screens for too long and staying up far later than he usually did. He managed to pry the remote from Emma's hand and turn off the TV; she grumbled in her sleep and burrowed down deeper into her duvet nest. Killian smiled. He stood and took one of his pillows off his bunk. "Up you get, Swan, just a bit," he said softly, raising her up enough to slide the pillow under her head and set her glasses on her computer.

She sighed, mumbling something that sounded suspiciously like his name. His heart squeezed in his chest, daring to hope she might be dreaming about him. He tugged the duvet down around her feet, hesitating for a moment when she shifted again. He didn't want to be that guy, though the urge to press a kiss to her brow was strong. Instead he just moved a strand of hair out of her face and whispered, "Goodnight, Swan."

Killian closed the door and turned off the light, sighing in consternation when he realized that all he had was a thin sheet and one pillow to sleep with. Damn her, he thought ruefully as he climbed up to the bed.

He didn't want to entertain any daydreams of the two of them trying to squeeze into the narrow
twin-sized bunk, but hearing her soft breathing somewhere below him didn't help keep such thoughts away. He clutched his pillow tight, falling asleep to hopes of someday, maybe, he'd fall asleep holding her instead.
Chapter Summary

After 5x07 I realized that with as many Nimlin parallels we had to CS, the one I wanted least would be a parallel to when Merlin was screaming as Nimue died.

So naturally I had to write it.

"All magic comes with a price. And it's time to pay up."

She needs to get the ring off her neck - needs to restore the magic that he'd passed to her instead - but it's stuck, it's tangled in her hair, it's -

"Protection magic is selfless, Miss Swan," the gentleman in the suit tells her calmly, his hand still outstretched towards Killian. "It must be given willingly, the core desire entirely altruistic."

"He gave it to me to remind me to come home," Emma snaps, fighting with the chain that won't release her.

"Yet your home is more than a former pirate," the gentleman says calmly. "He knew that. He's always known that, hasn't he? The one to always guide you home."

She tries to break the chain instead - it's a simple bead chain, should snap easily, but it holds fast. She tries not to dwell on the gentleman's words; Killian's always brought her home (the compass, the bean, his ship, her anchor in the darkness) but home isn't home without him. Not anymore, not for a long time.

How is she supposed to find her way without him?

"A life for a life. A fair price," the gentleman says, snapping his fingers.

Killian falls, almost in slow motion, as a white mist leaves his body. Emma moves, feeling like she's fighting her way through molasses to get to him before he hits the ground. There's someone screaming in the distance but Emma can't stop, can't look and see what new perils are raining down on Storybrooke now because nothing in the world is more important than this. If she can just get to him, just grab hold of him, he'll be alright. He has to be alright -

She falls to her knees as he hits the ground. The screaming changes and she realizes it's her, she's screaming "No" over and over again, the sound breaking as her voice pitches higher and higher until it gives out. "Killian," Emma whispers, crawling the rest of the way and lifting him up into her arms.

"I'm - sorry," he manages, that cocky grin she knows so well marred by the pain of his soul leaving his body.

There's words falling from her lips and some of them might make sense - you don't get to be sorry, you don't get to break your promise - but her eyes burn and her knuckles are almost white from how tight she's gripping him. She glows with magic as she tries to undo the theft of his soul, but even magic has its limits.
She can see the color drain from his face, his hair - even the blue of his eyes turns gray as the
gentleman takes all that Killian has to offer - all of what makes him Killian. "I love you," he
breathes as even his strength is sapped away to join the rest.

"Killian," she whispers, disbelieving even as his eyes flutter closed.

"Killian." Her voice finds footing as his hand slips to the ground.

"Killian!" His body is cooling far more quickly than it should, bypassing rigor mortis and sagging
heavy in her arms.

"Killian!"

Her scream echoes down an empty street, the gentleman in the dark pinstripe suit having vanished
into the darkness to leave the Savior alone to mourn her dead.
The Stars that Stay

Chapter Summary

bookstoreromantic asked for "Captain Swan late night secret sharing of the small/silly variety, either canon or high school au or something else that floats your boat.", which turned a little more feelsy than silly because I wrote it after 5.08.

She's pretty efficient at climbing out of windows and not making a lot of noise – or breaking her legs – at this point in her life.

Emma's not sure she's ever snuck out before. Run away? Plenty of times. But that was before Ingrid. This time, at least, she's planning on coming back.

She lands a little harder than she meant to, right in a pile of leaves, and winces at the noise. To her, it sounds like the whole school orchestra started warming up at once. She waits, still as a gargoyle, waiting for any sound that Ingrid's awake and looking for her. Five minutes pass and Emma breathes a sigh of relief; she starts jogging down the street to where she knows he's waiting.

She never expected to have a best friend before, let alone a boy, and never thinking he might be her dweeby lab partner. (She's been in six high schools in two and a half years, she never expects to form any relationships at all, never finding anywhere that feels like home.) But she likes Killian, color-organized notes and study sheets and all. And dweeb he might be – seriously, his brother couldn't afford to buy Killian new glasses, so they were held together with Scotch tape – but their school is small enough that there aren't too many cliques. It's not like other schools she's been in, big schools where you have your lane and you stay in it or else. There weren't really lanes here, just lots of kids trying to fill out their extracurriculars for their college apps so they can all get out of this tiny Minnesotan town. For instance, Killian's on the swim team and debate club and student council, because if anyone is an overachiever its Killian Jones.

It's all his fault she's on the indoor track team and registered for the English Festival and on the yearbook staff. It helped that she'd been placed with Ingrid in the summer, so she was there when school started and clubs were forming.

It's Killian's fault she feels like she might belong somewhere.

But they both have a little rebellious streak too, which is why they're meeting on the soccer field after midnight. Because there's a meteor shower and Killian promised to bring hot chocolate spiked with Bailey's.

He's got a blanket laid out on the grass and a big, thick quilt to wrap themselves in and a thermos full of the promised hot cocoa. She teases him about the lack of telescope but he scoffs. "They're too quick to bother," he tells her as she sits next to him and they huddle under the quilt.

The problem with meteor showers is that when there aren't actual meteors, it's pretty boring. And it's November so it's cold. And they get through the spiked cocoa pretty fast.

"Two truths and a lie," Emma says after they decided to lay down, the quilt cocooning them from most of the chill.
Killian sighs, but she knows he's not annoyed. "I didn't learn to swim until I was ten years old. I'm afraid of moths. I'm afraid I won't get into Northern."

Emma turns her head so she can look at him. "You aren't afraid of moths."

He chuckles. "Oh aye, Swan, I am indeed. It's like an evil butterfly."

"Killian, be serious."

"I am."

She blinks at him and he glances at her. Her eyes have adjusted and she can make his face out quite well in the moon- and starlight. "Killian, how are you afraid of getting into Northern?" she asks quietly. "You're going to be valedictorian next year."

"You're supposed to pick the lie."

"You're on the swim team, there's no way you learned to swim so late."

"If you knew that was false why did you picked the moths first?"

Emma rolls over on her side, propping herself up on her elbow. "You're avoiding. How are you afraid you won't get in your first choice?"

Killian sighs, staring at the sky. "There's a lot of valedictorians applying. I'm not the only one. Someone always has a higher GPA, more extracurriculars, more service time, better reference letters. And what if I can't get the scholarships I need? Liam… Liam can only help out so much. I just… I want to prove that I can do it, that I can get out of here and see a bit of the world. And I want Liam to be proud that I'm his brother."

Emma's chest tightens. She knows how much he hates living in this little town, this little speck on a map that no one cares about outside its borders.

She knows and it hurts to know that he can get out while he still can.

Because she's going to get stuck. Maybe not here, but somewhere. No one ever let Emma Swan believe she'd ever amount to anything.

"I want a tattoo. I hate flying. I'm afraid of being trapped," she says softly.

Killian looks up at her, his glasses slid down his nose and making him look a lot older than sixteen. "You told me you've never been on a plane. Who says you're going to be trapped?" he asks quietly.

Emma looks away, towards the tree line on the other side of the field. It's going to start frosting at night soon, the evergreens are going to look pretty with the white tips. "What if Ingrid sends me away? And I age out of the system and I have… nothing? No one. Just me and some stupid waitressing job for the rest of my life."

"Emma." He sounds so serious that she can't help but look at him again. "Ingrid won't send you away. She loves you like her own child, you have to know that. And even if she did, I'd come find you. I wouldn't let you face it alone."

Her eyes widen. "Killian."

He grins, his teeth white in the moonlight. "What do you say, Swan? You and me against the
world?"

*He means it too, bastard,* she thinks, unable to think of anything to say in response. He's right, she knows: Ingrid does love her and if Emma said she wanted to go to community college or even U of M, Ingrid would do everything she could to make sure Emma finished school.

Old habits, old ways of thinking, they're hard to drop.

Instead of answering, Emma scoots closer to him on the blanket and moves his arm away from his chest. She leans on his shoulder, tucking her body next to his, angling herself so she could see the stars. She can feel him hesitate before his arm wraps around her, holding her close. "Tell me about Orion," she says softly, the three stars of his belt catching her eye.

"Swan?"

"While we wait for more falling stars," she says. "Tell me about the ones that stay."

His voice is soft and she giggles when he forgets names and has to look them up on his phone, the light of his screen blinding them and making it harder to make out the smaller meteors. But he's a good storyteller. And he's warm.

And Emma starts to feel a little more at home.
So this one is a bit odd. It's a continuation of three connected smut chapters (16, 20, 24) that are in *Ecstasy is All You Need*. **There is no smut in this** it's just the fluffy afterglow. No previous reading required.

Anonymous wanted: "Umm we need a continuation of the cuddling and her parents come home. We gotta know what they were thinking!!"

She is warm.

Killian is pressed against her back, his arms around her in a protective embrace. His nose is in her hair and one of his legs is hooked around hers, tangling them together. She likes this. As much as she likes her space and the freedom to roll around in bed if she wants, she likes waking up tangled with him. And as much as she would love sinking further under the covers, sleeping the rest of the day away in her boyfriend’s arms, she knows there’s cleanup to be done.

No rest for the Savior.

Carefully, Emma rolls over. She traces some of the scars on his chest, forcing herself to remain calm when she looks up and sees his closed eyes. Seeing him die, that’s not something that’s going to leave her for a while. She can feel his heart beating steady and strong under her fingers, feel him breathing slow and deep.

He’s here. He’s alive. And that’s all that matters.

Emma presses kisses to his collarbones, lips skimming over the bruises she’d marked him with. “Killian,” she says softly.

There’s a noise that might be a question; she giggles and scoots up to kiss his chin, his cheeks, his lips. “Killian, time to wake up,” she whispers.

He makes another noise, this one definitely *nuh-uh*, and he rolls over -- taking her with him and pinning her under him. Emma giggles again, squirming and trying to free her arms to poke him. “Hey, sleepyhead, come on,” she says louder this time.

“I have a Swan-pillow, ‘m not getting up,” he mumbles, burying his face in her chest and squeezing her around the middle.

“We have to get up eventually,” Emma says, wriggling one arm free to play with his hair. He sighs in content, turning his head to the side and nuzzling her breast. “Killian, this is how we got here in the first place.”

“Hmmm, I seem to recall a different story,” he mumbles. “A certain devious princess pounced on her pure and perfectly virtuous pirate.”

“Nice alliteration, we still have to get up.” He sighs and rolls off of her, laying on his side to face her. She rolls to her side as well, hooking one leg over his. “I don’t want to,” Emma admits. “I’d
rather just stay in bed with you all day.”

“Hmm, I like that idea,” Killian murmurs, leaning over for a kiss.

She hums, her skin buzzing with magic and happiness -- magic from happiness? She pulls back a little, nuzzling his nose with hers. “But,” she says softly, “I think we have a wayward author to take care of.”

Killian mutters something she doesn’t understand -- quite the omniglot, her pirate -- but it doesn’t sound like any kind of blessing. “Five minutes, love,” he says instead. “I think we’ve earned that.”

She smiles wryly. Two orgasms apiece and an afternoon nap is probably more than they’ve earned, but the bed is warm and he’s smiling at her like he loves her and she finds it hard to put up much of a fight. “Okay,” she tells him, scooting in closer and sliding her arm up and around his side. “Five minutes.”

Five minutes turn into ten while Emma catches him up on what happened in the book. She’s not blushing at all when she tells him about how she almost broke Isaac’s nose when he refused to bring Killian back. He’s practically glowing with pride when she details how she managed to hold her own against Gold for a good while before he stabbed Regina. “Knew all that practice would pay off,” Killian tells her, sealing it with a kiss.

“I had a good teacher,” she breathes against his lips.

“Your boy said the same thing to me when we made off with the Jolly Roger,” Killian murmurs.

Emma’s heart swells, remembering Henry telling her below deck about how he’d found Killian, the plan they’d concocted to rescue her; she recalls the panic when she’d come back to the loft and found Killian missing, only to discover he’d gone looking for Henry.

They’ve come a long way, her boys.

She doesn’t answer, instead moving to kiss him again. Those ten minutes turn into fifteen with a lazy makeout session. There’s wandering hands and laughter and Emma shrieks with laughter at one point when Killian hauls her up on top of him and nibbles on her neck.

They must have missed the door during all of this, because there’s footsteps on the stairs and Mary Margaret’s voice saying, “Emma, we found Isaac, he was trying to -- oh!”

Emma and Killian freeze; she looks over her shoulder, shoving her hair out of her face. Her mother is standing as if frozen at the top of the stairs, mouth agape, her cheeks dark pink. Emma is instantly taken back to more than a year ago when she and Henry had walked in on her parents in a similar compromising situation. “Hi Mom,” Emma says, trying not to grin.

Payback’s a bitch after all.

“Um.”

“Emma?”

Oh no, Emma thinks, just as David comes up the stairs two at a time to stand behind his wife. Where her mother turned red, her father pales at the sight of his only daughter, naked, practically astride her equally naked boyfriend. “Oh, for --”

Emma does them both a favor and slides off of Killian, who promptly props his knee up to create a larger tent to hide the problem Emma had just been about to solve for him before her parents had
interrupted. “You were saying something about Isaac?” she asks, tucking the comforter around her chest.

Mary Margaret blinks and gives her head a little shake as if to snap herself out of it. “Right, we uh, we caught up with Isaac, he was trying to leave town? But he’s sitting in a cell at the station, he can’t get anywhere.”

“Everyone else seems to be back?” Emma asks, biting the inside of her lip as Killian stretches a bit and tucks his arms behind his head. He doesn’t seem too bothered with covering himself from the waist up, something both her parents take notice of.

“Yeah, everything seems fine. We’re going to Granny’s to celebrate. Your presence, both of your presences, are required,” David says, and promptly goes back downstairs.

Emma does grin this time. David likes playing the stern, overprotective dad, but it’s always interesting when he’s reminded that they’re about the same age. Mary Margaret has the decency to look a bit apologetic. “I’ll let you just... get ready then...” she says, awkwardly gesturing towards the pile of clothes on the floor, then she too flees.

Emma has to bury her face in her pillow to keep from laughing too hard or from anyone hearing it. Killian’s grinning when she catches her breath; she’s red-faced and feeling happy for the first time in what feels like years. “Think they’ll get over it?” he asks in a conspiratorial whisper.

“Dad already stabbed you in the back once today, I think you’re safe from another,” she says. It feels better to joke about it, better when his grin turns devious.

“Aye, though believe me, darling, I never intend to let him live that down.”

She kisses him once more before extracting herself from the bed. She really wouldn’t put it past David to do something drastic if they didn’t go downstairs soon.

Still, she doesn’t feel any shame whatsoever when she takes a few extra seconds when putting on her socks to admire her boyfriend’s ass before he covers it with his jeans. It’s a particularly nice ass -- and he seems to know it, given the way that he winks at her when he catches her staring.

Maybe she’ll tell him she loves him tonight.
Like Father, Like Son

Chapter Summary

clockadile prompted me ages ago with CS + Star Wars. I think it was originally supposed to be fluffy, but my brain returned from whatever vacation it's been on for the last week with a suitcase full of feels so now you get to reap the benefits of that.

"There's an order," she tells him. "It's gonna look weird. Don't question it, just watch."

It takes a little over a week to watch six movies – between jobs and magical spats and a teenaged son whose dearest wish seems to be seeing his stepfather's reactions. It gives him time to digest, time to ponder the story.

He knows enough of this world and it's scientific fantasies to not be caught much off-guard by the space exploration and energy weapons. It allows him to get caught up in the story of the farm boy, the fiery princess-commander (he grins when he learns her name – Emma just elbows him), and the space pirate. Henry wants to know if he likes this Han Solo character – dashing smuggler, fastest ship in the galaxy, rare hand with a blaster.

Killian doesn't know.

He sees where the boy might think it an apt comparison. Certainly before – before the Underworld, before Regina trying to use his past to make him see reason, before memories long buried under regret and drink resurfaced – he might have even agreed.

But that was before.

As the story progresses, he finds himself becoming invested in the farm boy. The innocent, hardened by loss and by war – yet somehow never falling prey to the darkness. The Dark Side.

Yes, Killian finds an uncomfortable comparison of himself and Luke Skywalker, how he might have turned out had he not lost so much. Luke has friends, comrades to help fight back against an ultimate evil. Killian had men under his command, ready to follow his word as he raged and wept over the unfair hand life had dealt him.

Luke Skywalker has hope where Killian Jones had none.

Luke Skywalker loses his hand trying to save his friends. Killian Jones lost his while trying to save his love.

Luke Skywalker discovers his father, refuses power and prestige for the sake of honor and the Light. Killian Jones discovered his father, refused to help him and his replacement son in a fit of jealous rage, and tumbled further into the Darkness by murdering Brennan in cold blood.

There's two days between Empire and Phantom – Henry has a book report due and his other mother wishes to spend time with him. Killian spends those two days in a brooding mood, pondering what might happen next, how many new parallels he can draw for himself and make himself more miserable. Emma tries her best to tease him back into good cheer, bless her, but even she can recognize when it's a lose cause.
"Should we stop?" she asks the second night, tucked under his arm and one hand splayed across his chest.

He's lifted from his thoughts, eyes sliding from her fingers playing with his necklace to her worried face. "Stop what, darling?"

"You've been acting strange since we started watching Star Wars. We don't have to finish if you don't like them," Emma tells him.

An out. She's giving him an out and part of him wants to take it – yet part of him wants to see this through until the end. Henry had described it as a 'space fairy tale', alluding to similarities between the world in which he and Emma were born and elements of the movies. "Tell me one thing," Killian says. She nods. "Do they get a happy ending?"

An interesting side effect of sharing a heart: he feels her emotions so strongly. She hasn't mentioned if she feels his in return, but he supposes that since it's her heart that resides in both of their chests it's only natural he would feel her feelings. And right now he can feel a swelling in his chest, the bloom of happiness that only comes from knowing something wonderful. "They do," she says, her voice full of promise.

He presses a kiss against her forehead. "Aye, we'll finish the movies."

It gets worse as he discovers Anakin Skywalker – the boy who was once a slave, freed yet separated from his family, losing his mother to a violent death. Anakin Skywalker, who lost his arm at the start of a war. Anakin, the man who would risk everything and give up all that he knew to be with the woman he loved.

Anakin, who ultimately fell into the darkness to save his beloved wife from death – only to be the ultimate cause of it.

Again there is an extra day between Sith and Jedi. Emma's too tired when she returns from work and Henry's engrossed in a new book from the library. They promise the buildup is worth it, the payoff is grand.

Killian spends a lot of time with the telescope in the dining room.

For all he saw shades of himself in Luke, he sees himself in living color in Anakin – or a shiny black suit. The slaughter of men, women and children in a rage – he's seen one too many villages razed to the ground in a kingdom he once served proudly. The tempting of power, of ultimate protection for those he loves, Killian knows the lure too well. He knows the taste of that particular blend of darkness, had it bite him in return when he tried to blackmail the Dark One for his hand. The fall from grace.

How many nightmares has he had? How many times has he seen Emma lost to darkness or death? How many times has she slipped from his fingers?

How many times has he proven he would pay whatever price to ensure she stay alive and well?

(Half her heart beats in his chest, a reminder of that very thing. A reminder that she would go to any lengths for him in return.)

He can't sleep that night, uncomfortably reminded of the movie in this act as well – Anakin plagued by prophetic dreams, Killian kept awake by his own troubled thoughts. Emma is exhausted, her body pressed firmly against his as she slumbers. Killian remains awake, content to
hold her and ensure her safety even in the privacy of their bedroom. He doubts she'd let him move if he tried – her arm is tucked around him almost possessively.

(She's been touchy like this of late, always a hand on him somewhere, never leaving him for long. He can't say he minds it in the least, though he sees the watchful, wistful look in her eye when she thinks he isn't paying attention.

She's ensuring he's still here, still real, still alive. In this wordless way, Emma Swan reminds him how much she does indeed love him.)

Emma sighs something that sounds like his name, her nose squishing against his chest as she nuzzles him. Killian feels himself relax slightly; he rests his lips on the crown of her head. "I love you," he murmurs.

Like Anakin, Killian's had dreams of Emma weeping for him – memories, really, flashes of what the devil Hades had shown him moments after Killian's death. Emma in hysterics over his corpse, Emma broken, Emma crushed, Emma defeated.

Like Anakin, Killian never wishes to see such a sight again. His brave, beautiful Swan cannot let something like his death defeat her.

Like Anakin, Killian would do anything to save his wife.

He's already proven himself a villain twice over – of his own accord and then his own inability to overcome the Darkness. Given the chance, would he, too, fall so far as to be unsalvageable?

It's with no small amount of trepidation that they venture into the final movie. Emma seems to sense his unease, tucking herself against him and occasionally running a soothing hand over his chest or thigh. The action of the movie is few and far between – though the emotional tension certainly runs very high. Killian winces when Luke cuts his father's hand off – the entire duel has a very final feel to it and it sits badly in the pit of his stomach. His stomach churns as he realizes Luke's temptation off the path of Light, that Luke is about to kill his own father –

But then Luke resists.

He declares his choice: he chooses the Light.

The Emperor punishes his choice, but Luke's father – Anakin can see the Light as well. Vader becomes Anakin once more, taking on all of the punishment to save his son, defeating the Emperor.

Even in the depths of the Dark Side, there is still hope. There is still Light.

Emma's turned her face away; he can hear her quiet sniffling as Anakin finds his redemption, becomes a hero again before dying. Killian's arm tightens around her, her heart pained in his chest; he wishes to have spared her such a thing, but there hadn't been time for choices. He'd taken an action, done what was necessary, taken on all of the punishment to save his wife and defeat the Darkness.

He had died a hero, too.

"There's still, like, a war to clean up," Henry says as the credits roll. "They won a big battle and they're celebrating that, but they go back to work the next day. Just because you cut off the officer's head –"

"–doesn't mean all of the soldiers are stupid," Killian finishes. "Good lad, paying attention to
military history. War is far more complicated than people let you believe."

Henry nods. "Anyway, there's like a million books that continue their story, and Han and Leia have a bunch of kids and Luke restarts the Jedi Academy, and there's still all this adventure –"

Emma laughs wetly, finally lifting her head and wiping her nose. "Kid, let him digest this before you start throwing the entire extended universe at him. So, what'd you think?" she asks.

Killian reaches over and wipes away a missed tear with his thumb. She smiles a little, though it's tinged with sadness. "I liked that even the most fearsome man in the entire galaxy could still find his way home in the end," he says softly.

She meets his eyes squarely, still smiling. "It helps when you've got people believing in you – when you know there's always hope."

_Hope._

Perhaps, like Luke, Killian can find the strength to resist darkness, should it ever tempt him again. And perhaps, like Anakin, he can always find his way back to the Light.
Chapter Summary

There was some fanart that gave me feels so I wrote the fic for it.

There's orchids in her hands and the smell of sulfur in the air. Emma had never been one to imagine her wedding day, but she's certain that the few times it came up never involved actual, literal Hell.

Her mom and her son stand to the side of the Under Well, (dammit, now she's renaming everything too, thanks to Henry and his Underbooke comments), with Liam front and center and a very nervous Killian at the right. David escorts Emma through the trees - one milestone in her life he can claim to have been part of - and she's promised herself she won't tease him about the tears in his eyes.

(A year ago she would have convinced herself it was because of the sulfur. Now, if she lets herself think about it too much she'll be in tears as well. She has a family.)

Killian takes her hand when they reach the well and she's not sure which of them is trembling more. "Lass, are you certain you wish to go through with this?"

Emma side-eyes Liam, who has enough grace to grin. She hasn't known her future brother-in-law all that long, but she got his measure pretty quick. "It's a little more elaborate than Vegas, but it'll do," she quips; only her family laughs, leaving the Jones brothers slightly confused.

"She does that," Killian assures Liam.

"Perhaps I should ask if you're certain, little brother."

Killian's fingers flex under hers and she's pretty sure that if his hand were free he'd have cuffed Liam around the ear for it. She gives his hand a squeeze and Killian's attention returns to her. He smiles briefly. "Shall we?"

It's short, she'll give it that. Not that she's been to many weddings on Earth (or any, come to think of it), but she's heard some can go on for hours. Liam simply gives a brief speech about love that is strong and true. Emma's eyes never leave Killian's face; she hears Mary Margaret sniffling behind her and she doesn't need to look to know that David has probably given up all pretense by now.

Liam produces a scarf when he finishes. "In our kingdom, marriage was signified by binding the hands," he explains. He brings their right hands, still clasped together, to chest height. "It's a symbol of your unity, a promise that you will stand by one another's side in good times and bad - though, as exemplified by our current situation, I hardly think such a promise is necessary."

Killian chuckles at that and Emma just smiles. Liam drapes the cloth over their hands. "Now, brother, do you promise to take this woman as your wife, and love her for all eternity?"

Emma sees his Adam's apple bob as he swallows. "I do."
"As you bloody well should," Liam mutters, wrapping one end of the scarf around their hands. "And you, Emma, if you have not come to your senses -"

"Liam."

"-do you promise to take this man as your husband, and love him for all eternity?" Liam finishes, undeterred by his brother's warning tone.

There's apprehension on Killian's face again as he searches her eyes. It hurts to think that even now - after following him into actual, literal Hell - he might have doubts of her feelings for him. She smiles and sees him relax a bit. "I do," she says with conviction. "Not even death can keep us apart."

Liam doesn't have a quip this time as he brings the other end of the scarf around and ties both ends together - tying the knot, Emma realizes with a smile. "In the traditions of our people, I now declare you bonded for life - and hereafter, I suppose, if my new sister's determination is to be believed. Now, brother, you may -"

But Killian is already pulling her towards him, their bound hands crushed between them as their lips meet. They steadfastly ignore Liam's grumbling ("Oh for pity's sake, Killian, at least wait for me to finish."). Killian's lips working methodically over hers as if he wishes to devour her.

(She might let him. Later, when their family isn't around to watch, but it's seriously tempting right now.)

When they come up for air - after David's pointed coughs are no longer muffled by the enthusiastic clapping from Mary Margaret and Henry - Liam's holding out the ring. The ring that kept her grounded, kept her steady, kept her hoping. "Killian says in your land, rings are a customary exchange."

Emma glances at her husband - husband - with a wry smile. "Killian seems to know a lot about something we never really discussed."

"It's customary for women to wear rings in our land, too, Emma," Mary Margaret says from behind her. "Men can choose to or not."

She doesn't have to look to know her mother is fiddling with her own ring.

Liam unties their hands and Killian takes the ring from him. It's a little loose on her left hand, but Emma has a grasp on her magic now. It just takes a little flick of her fingers, a little puff of silvery-white smoke, and the ring sits as snugly as any custom jewelry should. "It's perfect," she says, and Killian returns her grin.

There's a round of hugs from everyone and Emma's certain that Liam's is a little less solid than it should be. She raises an eyebrow when they pull away and he quirks his lips into a smile that's very familiar - Killian's smile on someone else's face. Liam leans in on the pretense of kissing her cheek, whispering, "This is the in-between lands, sister mine. Only those with unfinished business may dwell here."

Then he does kiss her cheek and steps back, leaving Emma to put the pieces together.

They still have to put on a united front to Hades, prove that they're willing to do whatever it takes to bring Killian back to the surface. Perhaps that's what Liam's been waiting for all these years, what's been holding him back.

Perhaps he's just been waiting for Killian to find his way home.
timeless-love-story sent a prompt that said "You're afraid that you'll lose me in big crowds so you always hold my hand, but now you just hold my hand when there's only, like, five people around and I'm getting very suspicious" and it spiraled a bit whoops.

"Oh for God's sake -"

It was a common sentence when they went out. Emma was a woman on a mission when it came to shopping, and Killian was... easily distracted. He was easy pickings for the pop-up kiosks, the not-even-seen-on-TV stands, and every Girl Scout Cookie sale in the mall.

(Emma was still finding boxes of Thin Mints in his freezer from two years ago.)

(Not that she was there often, digging around in his freezer. Just when she felt like she had to cook for him to pay him back for being, well... Killian.)

(Because Killian had a car and Emma had a growing son and they lived close enough to an outlet mall in Pennsylvania where they didn't have sales tax on clothes, and Killian insisted it was never any trouble to haul his neighbor and her kid across state lines -)

But she was going to kill him one of these days. She already had one kid, she didn't need to look after two.

Henry also had a tendency to get distracted, but he was becoming a teenager and too cool for it, ("Ma," he'd scoff, ducking out of range), but Killian was just clueless enough to let Emma grab his hand and drag him away from whatever sparkly new, cheap piece of shit some high school kid was hawking in the center aisle. Henry just got a warning shot, a quick tug on the arm that meant Mom has zero trouble with destroying your coolness image if you don't get a move on.

So that's how it went every couple of months, dragging her neighbor around the Eastern seaboard by the hand to keep her kid from tearing all his seams from how fast he was growing. Thank God for exchange stores.

Though sometimes she caught herself being a little too handsy, when he came over to their side of the duplex for dinner or she invited herself over when Henry was out with his friends and was feeling a little lonely. An arm touch here, a ruffle of hair there, the occasional shoulder-nudge. She tried not to notice when he would look a little forlorn when she stopped.

Things came to a head the day they took a trip down to the Container Store near Philadelphia for some of Henry's college things. (because there was no way they were paying to go into New York City, let alone maneuvering through traffic or dealing with parking for all of this) Emma and Henry had done quite a bit of dorm shopping on their own, but there were some last-minute big items and Killian was keen to get a few new drawer organizers himself.

(He was a neat freak. The man had an impeccably clean and tastefully organized home, she was willing to bet he'd somehow managed to alphabetize his sock drawer.)
"Swans, is there a reason we've chosen the inferior American option to Ikea?" Killian asked as they got out of his car.

"No meatballs," Henry and Emma said automatically, then grinned at each other. Emma reached up to ruffle Henry's hair - at eighteen, he was a little less abrasive as he ducked away, actually letting her get a second or two of affection in.

"Less for you two to get distracted by. I don't want to hear another argument about umlauts ever again," Emma continued, grabbing Killian's hand without thinking. "And there's no couches for either of you to take naps on."

Henry had his own ideas about what he wanted to get, so Emma mostly let him take control of the cart - she'd stop the ridiculous items from going in ("Why the hell would you need a TV stand? You're not bringing the TV and you sure as hell aren't buying one with your refund money, buster.") but she and Killian were content to let him take the lead. She picked up a new filing cabinet for her office (to be refunded by the station, but hell if they were going to buy it for her first) and Killian got his drawer organizers.

It was around the closet organizing section that another wave of empty nest syndrome crashed over her.

She came to a stop, Killian being yanked back only because she was still holding his hand - when had that happened? Henry kept going, eyeing hangers and shoe organizers and jewelry boxes, unaware that his mom and their next-door neighbor weren't following. "Emma?" Killian asked, his voice soft as he immediately noticed the tears that had welled up. "Emma, what's wrong?"

She shook her head, wiping away a stray tear and taking a few deep breaths to calm down. "Nothing just - it's hitting me weird and at awkward times," she mumbled. "Henry's going off to school in a few weeks and it's just...

Killian has hugged her before, but it never felt like this one before. He was gentle, pulling her in and cradling her head against his chest, his other hand rubbing soothing circles against her back. He didn't say anything as Emma let herself have a moment and got a few spots of wetness on his shirt. "I'm going to miss him too," he said finally. "No one to knock out Morse code on the walls with late at night, no need to pester you to have him turn his music down if I can't stand listening to one more Mumford or his sons."

His lips rested against her hair and even as she laughed Emma was suddenly so very aware of how much she wanted to kiss him at that moment.

She's always felt a thing between them, a thing she was never very keen to act upon. Killian hadn't made moves either, not past this ever-present subtle flirtation, this easy friendship with a little something more sprinkled on top. She was fine with it, mostly - working and keeping up with her teenage son kept her busy as it was, but even she had noticed that neither she nor Killian had dated anyone very seriously since he'd moved in next door eight years ago.

Still, it probably wasn't the best idea to have their first kiss in the Container Store.

Killian pulled an honest-to-God handkerchief out of his pocket and dabbed at her cheeks with it. "You're such an old man," Emma grumbled, pulling out her compact to make sure her mascara wasn't running.

"Have you a Kleenex then?" Killian asked, chuckling as she swiped the handkerchief from him anyway to fix her raccoon eyes.
She made a face at him and he cupped her face in both hands. He kissed her forehead before plucking the cloth back from her. "We'll all get through this, Swan," he said, tucking it away. "One day at a time."

She knew he was right. She just didn't like thinking about it. So instead she just laced their fingers together and went off in search of her wayward son.

They ended up stopping at a few more stores before heading out in search of dinner. Henry didn't care where they ate and Killian didn't care where they ate and Emma was sure she was going to murder one of them for their indecisive natures and become a cannibal if they didn't eat something soon so they wound up at a Cracker Barrel about twenty minutes up the interstate.

Emma wound up eating half the fries off of Killian's plate after Killian stole four of her fried apples. Henry spent most of the time rolling his eyes at them, but she got him back in the gift shop by sling a screaming stuffed monkey at the back of his head while Killian paid (he'd insisted and Emma couldn't talk him out of it.)

(That earned her another scorn-filled "Ma", but she'd seen the brief grin on his face as he turned around to scold her.)

(She had to get her Embarrassing Mom shots in while she could.)

About an hour into the drive home, Henry's phone screen stopped lighting up the backseat, which could only mean that he was asleep or possibly dead, but the mild buzzing that was his snore meant the former. Emma turned in the passenger seat to see her gangly eighteen-year old - seriously, when had that happened? - with the side of his face pressed against the window, mouth agape. She turned ahead again with a smile, leaning back in her own seat. "Thanks for today," she said softly.

"Always, Swan," Killian said, flashing her a grin. "You know you only have to ask."

"I know, but... You've always been there for us and I can't tell you how much I appreciate it. And I'm kinda gonna miss it," she mumbled the last part.

There was a hitch in his breathing, but then he was reaching over the center console and untangling her fingers from each other to hold her hand. "Emma, if you think that just because Henry's going off to school means I won't expect you to be dragging me hither and yon every third weekend, you have another think coming."

Emma's mouth drops open and she maneuvers their hands to smack him on the chest. "It was not that often!" she protests softly.

Killian's grin was lit by his dashboard lights. "Love, I could hear Henry's seams straining for a few years there. It certainly felt as such. Truly, though, I am ever your servant."

Well, she didn't know what to say to that - nothing she could do while he was driving or her son was snoring in the backseat, anyway - so she just squeezed his hand a little and let the matter drop.

However, after the three trips from the car to to bring in all of their purchases, Emma let Henry go inside without her. She stopped Killian with a hand on his arm as her door shut. She took one of his hands in both of hers - that's how it started, this easy bit between them, with her taking his hand because she wanted to lead him somewhere.

She just hoped she was brave enough to see where this new trip could lead.

There were cricket songs in the air as she closed the space between them, rising up hesitantly on
her toes to press her lips against his. She felt his whole body still and rejection sliced through her when he didn't respond. But just as she was about to pull away, his hands were in her hair and on her waist and she felt the world shift under her feet as he did something that should absolutely be illegal with his tongue on hers-

"Oh my God, it's about freaking time," Henry's voice called down from his window.

Emma and Killian didn't jump away from each other - she was thirty-five years old, she was allowed to make out with her attractive neighbor when he was a perfectly willing partner if she wanted to - but there was some muttered swearing as she glared up at her son's silhouette. "Remind me to teach you about something called tact before you leave, kid," she called.

"You already did!"

Killian laughed as Emma dropped her head against his chest. Her freaking kid, all right.

After he stopped laughing and they heard Henry's window shut again, Killian tilted her chin up so she could look at him properly. "To be continued, sweetheart," he said, his voice low and full of promise.

Their second kiss was sweeter, light and innocent with teasing touches that had her dizzy with anticipation. She wanted to say to hell with it to to be continued and just carry on at his place, but she had a wiseass college kid in her house and no desire to put up with a morning after from him.

Suddenly, there were a few things to look forward to in the coming weeks. Empty nest syndrome might not be so bad after all.
Prime

Chapter Summary

Have some Swan-Jones family feels, courtesy of Henry.

His life is, admittedly, super weird.

He's accepted that for the most part. His first real crush was a girl from Camelot; he went to the Underworld and met his grandma who's been dead for like, over a century; his great-grandfather was Peter Pan and tried to pull an Invasion of the Body Snatchers.

(Don't tell his moms he's seen that; Avery's mom was out one night - back when he and Mom lived in New York - and they'd downloaded a ton of old horror movies.)

But yeah, all that before high school is a little intense. So it shouldn't be too strange when he suddenly gets all these younger siblings - kind of. Robin and Mom aren't married but they act like it. Like, way act like it. Like, worse than Grandma and Grandpa sometimes - though to be fair, he hasn't walked in on Mom and Robin having sex.

Yet.

Roland's cool, though. He likes books, like Henry does, so Henry's been teaching him how to read. And Henry likes Nyssa, too, even if she does have colic and cries a lot and no one's getting much sleep.

Sometimes he crashes with Mom and Killian in the new house just to catch up on sleep, but usually he and Liam are up late playing video games, so that's a wash.

That should be weirder than it is, too, Killian's half-brother living with them - Killian even having another brother. Henry remembers seeing Liam around school, knows he was in class with him once, but didn't know much about him. Liam wasn't in the book like Hansel and Gretel, so Henry couldn't have had Emma fix his happy ending.

Even if he didn't really have one, until now.

Liam hadn't taken to the new house very well at first. Henry doesn't know why, Mom says it's Killian and Liam's story to tell. But Mom's the reason why Liam stuck around. She'd talk to him. She'd sit out the brooding shit both Joneses were prone to, make them talk to each other when she'd had enough of it. She'd sit on the porch at night, catching Liam every time he'd try to sneak out. "You can't trick a trickster, kid," she'd say.

It took a lot of long nights of talking, but eventually Liam decided to stay.

So now Henry has another brother. Kind of. Two brothers, one sister. And he's got two moms with two boyfriends that were probably (definitely) sticking around. Grandparents, and Belle. Granny.

Mom had been right: he really did have more family than he knew what to do with.
Well, almost.

Henry and Liam usually take care of the dishes after dinner. Mom tends to hang around the kitchen and tidy up, pretending like she's not hovering but totally hovering and making sure they're doing it right. Killian always calls Mom out on it and she always rolls her eyes and gives him that look that says he's in trouble, but she's trying not to smile and Henry always thinks it's totally gross.

(What is it about True Love that makes adults all mushy all the time? He's kind of glad things didn't work out with Violet if that's how True Love worked.)

So really, it's a perfect opportunity to nudge Liam along on their new operation.

Liam yelps when Henry kicks him into action, but quickly covers it up with a "It's not fair!"

"What's not fair, kid?" Mom asks.

Henry glances over his shoulder as he scrubs the inside of a pot; she looks kinda worried. She always worries over Liam. Henry thinks it's because he's like she was when she was a kid: no family, strange new houses all the time, new people in charge.

It's kind of why Henry had put Liam in charge of this part.

He sees Liam glance up at him for a second, then looks back at Mom. "Henry gets to have a brother and a sister. That's not fair."

Henry looks back at Mom and she's glancing between him and Liam; her eyes are narrowing in that way that says she's onto their shit, but it's Killian who talks next. "Technically, lad, you have two brothers. And if your next complaint is that Henry has two mothers, well I'm afraid Emma won't take too kindly -"

He's cut off when Mom smacks his shoulder. "He's got two dads too, you wanna push your luck?"

Henry ducks his head, grinning as he rinses the pot and hands it to Liam to dry. Liam's into it now, though. "Okay, but why can't I have a little sister too?"

This time when Henry looks back, Mom's looking right at him, clearly exasperated from the way her mouth is set and how one eyebrow is raised. "Henry, why do I have the feeling this is another Operation Lizard-of-the-Month?" she asks.

"King Cobra," he supplies, keeping his voice light and hoping the cheeriness waves off her impending lecture.

No such luck. Mom crosses her arms - she's not budging now. "What, produce the next heir to whatever invisible throne there is here? Sorry, kid, I think that's you - and there's more than enough kids running around here to fill in the roster for succession."

Henry rolls his eyes, pulling the plug in the sink to let it drain. "No, it's like the biggest cobra. The ultimate cobra - the Savior's happy ending."

Mom's face softens a little; he can see her arms uncross a little. "Kid - kids, it's not - this isn't something we're talking about right now. Me and Killian."

Liam tosses Henry the towel. "Why not? Henry's book says that's how all the other happy endings went."
"Yeah, well, in the Enchanted Forest I'd be one foot in the grave right now and wouldn't have had any other choice but to pop out a bunch of kids," Mom grumbles.

Killian makes a noise that's like a stifled laugh. "Lads, let's leave off this particular line of thought, aye?" he asks. "Liam, if you want a sister bad enough, I'm sure Henry and Roland are more than willing to share Nyssa with you."

Mom smiles a little. "Trust me, guys, if anything ever changes and you get your wish, you two will be the first to know."

Later that night, Liam's kicking his ass at Mario Kart when he brings up Operation King Cobra. "You think they'll ever have a kid?"

Henry shrugs, firing off a red shell. "Dunno. I mean, they've got us already. And Mom's pretty busy keeping everyone from dying or getting sucked down portals, and Killian's pretty busy making sure she's not doing anything stupid, so maybe they're just waiting for things to calm down."

Then he gets a lightning bolt power-up and Liam uses a few swear words Henry knows he must have learned from Killian, because Henry learned those from Killian too.

(It takes another two years, but eventually Operation King Cobra does come to fruition and Henry's the eldest of his four siblings: two brothers and two sisters.)
She doesn't want to cry.

She tries not to, tries to smile when he nods, tries to hold it in as his back straightens and he tries to face death with dignity and bravado –

But she can see it. She can see the fear in his eyes, the flicker of doubt and the urge to run. She can see the war in so many tiny emotions playing across his face – die a hero, live a coward and in power.

Killian Jones is not a coward.

So she tries not to cry. Because Emma Swan is not a coward either.

But then he's crying out in pain and she's in his arms, the quivering blade run clean through him and all Emma can do is sob. She can feel it, feel his life slipping away, feel his hand trembling as he tries to comfort her – and absurdly, she wants to laugh, because of course Killian is trying to comfort her about his own goddamn death.

She tries not to cry, tries not to let the last thing he sees is her broken face and tears streaming down her cheeks.

But she can't.

Because Killian Jones is dead in her arms, and the world doesn't make sense anymore, and all Emma can think to do is cry.
Balance

Chapter Summary

**is-that-what-it-is** posted a story on Tumblr called *Breathless* that I highly recommend. It inspired this story, as I've always wondered about how deeply this heart-sharing thing runs. She got the ball rolling with the light and fluffy stuff, so I decided to go... Well, into the harder stuff. Enjoy.

There’s lightness to sharing a heart.

There’s an inexplicable swell in his chest on Tuesdays at three in the afternoon, her happiness at the anticipation of the coffee and snack he brings her on his day off.

It’s hearing him growl -- and feeling the surge of lust -- from all the way downstairs when she’s unwilling to start the day, teasing herself and hoping it lures him back up to bed.

It’s sensing where the other is at all times, wondering what the little shifts in mood mean throughout the day, getting distracted when one is working through lunch and it affects the other.

But as ever, even with the Savior’s heart in question, the light must be balanced with the dark.

Emma doesn’t notice it at first; Henry’s the first to point it out, actually. “Mom, did you hurt your arm?” he asks when they’re carrying groceries in one afternoon.

“What’s that?” she asks distractedly, trying to open the front door and hold three bags at once.

Henry reaches around her and opens the door for her. “You haven’t used your left hand all day,” he explains, carrying his load into the kitchen.

Emma starts to reply that of course she has, he just wasn’t paying attention earlier, but looks down at her hands anyway. The left one is curled into a loose fist and she’s startled when her joints protest as she flexes -- clearly they’ve been like that for a while. “I must have,” she muses, perplexed as she follows him in. “No Xbox until the groceries are away, go get a second load.”

“Aye-aye, captain,” Henry says cheekily; Emma swats at him as he passes -- with her left hand.

She starts paying attention after that; there’s no pain, but when she’s not thinking about it she does tend to do more with her right hand than her left. It’s not that unusual, she’s right-handed, but with some tasks she finds herself doing them with one hand rather than two. She makes a conscious effort to multi-task after that, but it’s still weird that she has to think about it now. Maybe Henry’s just messing with her head.

Her hand starts to feel strange. Her *left* hand.

The day that happens, Killian comes home in a particularly foul mood. She’s felt it all day, the blackness in her chest that she associates with his simmering temper. (Sorting through their
emotional connection has been an adventure all on its own. She feels Killian in colors: black in his worst moods, the ones when he’s just cold and cutting, furious but past the point of physically lashing out; purple is when he particularly loves her, a relaxing sensation that turns her limbs to jelly; blue is when he just wakes up, his own calm in the morning that makes her less willing to get up; red is when he’s in a rage, hot and making her blood spike with adrenaline.

His temper is the most intense to feel. Killian spikes quickly and then settles. He’s said that hers just runs hot for what feels like hours, burning under his skin and making him itch with the urge to punch someone. Often they tend to trigger the other into a worse temper than before, their emotions almost feeding back into each other like the circuits on that potato-light-bulb science project Henry was doing.

They’re a goddamn electrical current.)

So she knows he’s not in a good place, but the door slamming off its hinges seals the deal. She’s in the den paying bills but she can hear him slamming things in the kitchen -- the microwave is going to be a bit worse for the wear if he keeps that up. She gives it a few minutes before trying to push a wave of calm down their connection, signaling that she’s on her way.

He doesn’t send any new emotions back, so she assumes he’s alright with her coming to talk.

Emma’s surprised when she does enter the kitchen; his jacket’s slung across the back of one of the chairs, his brace and hook tossed onto the table, his blunted arm wrapped in what’s probably a hot towel (her arm feels warm) with the shirtsleeve pushed up over his elbow. “Hey,” she says softly.

She feels the blackness lighten slightly, the tension in her chest that’s from his tightly-wound state easing. Emma takes that as a good sign, taking a few steps towards him. “Damn phantom pains,” he mutters when she’s standing in front of him.

She rolls his sleeve so it won’t threaten to slide down any more. “Can I do anything for you?” she asks.

He shakes his head and she feels the tension ease further. Emma shakes out her aching left hand, rolling it on the wrist, before rubbing his arm soothingly. “Are you hurting too, love?”

She shrugs, continuing her exploration up and along his shoulder, fingers grazing the side of his neck before settling at the back. She smiles when she gently massages the nape of his neck, feeling the pressure release in her own neck as his head tilts back slightly. “Felt weird all day, but nothing big. Remember Regina and I dueled last night, she must have hit me when I wasn’t paying attention.”

They let the matter drop on Killian’s insistence; he’s used to managing his pains, though one hasn’t been this bad in almost fifty years. It’s not until that night, when he’s massaging lotion onto his scars, that her own strange pains start to ease.

She frowns, wondering if she’s been feeling his phantom pains all day, but ultimately chalks it up to another oddity in their new connection. She knows what it’s like to receive a massage from Killian, she’s just feeling the effects of that.

The worst of it happens when a new villain comes to town, a witch doctor known as Dr. Facilier and someone who happens to have close connections with Gold.

Of course.
Anyway, Emma finds herself fighting shadows and it’s driving her up a wall, but the worst of it happens when one merges with Killian’s shadow.

She thought they’d had the worst of it with Pan’s Shadow, but being possessed by black magic -- and yes, she’s learning there’s a huge difference between dark magic and black magic, as well as light magic and white magic -- is on a whole other level. Second-hand possession is even stranger, with her body coming in and out of her own control at random. She barely avoids being killed, barely avoids having her magic used to kill others.

It takes a white-magic charm from Tiana and a very gutsy prince-turned-frog to restore control to both Emma and Killian and their respective bodies.

And it only takes that before Emma seeks Regina’s help in figuring out this connection she shares with Killian.

“Your parents are the only ones I know of who share the same heart,” Regina says as they descend into the vault. “I don’t believe I’ve ever come across such magic before.”

“There has to be something,” Emma grumbles, coughing as she lug a stack of books out of storage. She wonders when the last time Regina had the vault dusted, because there’s far too much stuff in her lungs and not enough breathable air. “Even you can’t have memorized all these yet.”

That earns her a glare, but she doesn’t care. She wants to fix this before something else happens.

However, on her third book-retrieval trip, she feels a stab of fear in her heart -- Killian. She hardly has time to react to that before a sharp pain blooms across her chest. Emma doesn’t even get a chance to cry out before her eyes roll up and she crumples to the floor.

For all her exploits since becoming the Savior Emma’s pretty proud to say that she hasn’t wound up in the hospital before now.

And this isn’t even because of anything she did.

When she opens her eyes she feels cloudy, like someone’s put everything on mute -- even the colors. She struggles to sit up but it feels like her everything has weights tied to them. She can hear someone talking but it sounds like the teacher from Charlie Brown -- less trombone-y, same concept. “The hell happened...” she croaks, her throat feeling like that desert her Bug broke down in when she was driving out of Arizona: dry and brittle.

There’s a straw at her lips and she drinks the water down gratefully. Very slowly, the volume turns up and she feels a little lighter. Her mother’s there, hovering with a worried look on her face; Regina’s nearby too, peering at Emma like she’s a puzzle she’s determined to solve. “I had to put dampeners on you,” Regina says by way of explanation.

“That fuck does that mean?” Emma asks, exhaustion in every word, then winces as she notices
Henry lingering near the wall.

There’s a groan to her left and she turns her head. Killian’s in another bed, looking ashen and awful and her heart leaps into her throat. “What happened?” Emma asks louder, panic clawing its way through her chest as she tries to sit up, tries to get out of the bed and make sure he’s okay, and then it hits her -- *why can't she feel if he’s okay?*

Mary Margaret’s hands push her back down. “Rest, Emma. He’s fine, or he will be. There was an accident at the docks with some of the fishing lines, the big cables. Killian got hit across the chest when one of them snapped, he’s lucky it didn’t --”

The words get stuck in her throat and her mother is *the worst liar* because her face says just how close they came to losing Killian *again*.

If this damn ring wasn’t practically glued to Emma’s finger, she’d string it around his neck again in a heartbeat.

“Your connection nearly killed you as well,” Regina says in her dry way. Emma recognizes the tone, the one when Regina doesn’t want to let on just how worried she actually was. “I laid on as many magical dampeners as I could, trying to lessen it enough that it wouldn’t kill you both, but the extent of your shared heart isn’t something we know a lot about.”

“So it could happen again,” Emma says, her head feeling fuzzy as she tries to wrap her mind around this new concept.

Regina shrugs. “It’s a thought I’ve had since I had to split your mother’s heart.”

Mary Margaret looks wounded. “I didn’t realize... Could it happen to David and me?”

Another shrug. “What Emma and the captain have said about their connection isn’t dissimilar to yours and Charming’s. Theirs is admittedly more intense, but what I originally chalked up to as puppy love might actually be Emma’s magic at work.”

“But if something happened to David or I, it might happen to the other,” Mary Margaret says.

“Perhaps. It stands to reason that if one half of a heart stops beating, then the other should as well. We brought the pirate back under the assumption that we wouldn’t trade a life for a life, we would just split one life force between two people.”

Emma feels cold, looking over to Killian’s bed. She’s saved him, but damned him at the same time. Neither of them can be too risky again -- God, they haven’t even talked about it, but what if she got pregnant?

It’s one thing to trade your own life in as a final act of the Savior. It’s another to damn another to the same fate, not even of their own choosing.

*He made his choice when he finally agreed to sharing a heart,* her reasonable self argues.

*He didn’t know about this!* her panicky side says.

*Neither did anyone else.*

It’s still a tough pill to swallow. Reasonably, she knows that -- before all of this -- the only way she’d die in battle is if Killian had already died protecting her. But this is something else.

She hates that he’s still unconscious, that they can’t discuss this together.
And she hates the dampeners. It had taken a few weeks to adjust to feeling his emotions as well as her own, but now that it’s muted so much she misses it more than she’d thought.

The world is duller without him to share it with.

It takes time.

They each learn how to be less reckless in the heat of the moment. In a way, their connection helps in a fight: having different vantage points allows them to signal the other, giving a split-second advantage. They still feel every bruise and cut and pain after, but in time it gets better.

Regina teaches Emma how to lessen the connection -- no, that’s the wrong way to put it. Emma tries to think of it as turning off a faucet: at full blast, you get everything gushing through unchecked. But if you turn the handle, it slows to a dribble.

Sometimes she wants the gush. Sometimes they need the dribble.

She learns to let him know when she turns the handle down on their connection. She sends him reassurance. She tries not to do it when they’re fighting or when they’re in bad moods -- they’ve both been hurt enough in the past to have learned that they benefit from feeling each other’s moods during an argument. (Having the assurance that under all the anger there’s still love helps them mend later. Knowing immediately when something hurts or someone feels guilt goes a long way in helping trust that they’re going to be okay later -- after they cool down.)

It takes time.

There’s lightness in sharing a heart. There’s feeling bubbly laughter boiling in someone’s chest before it comes out. There’s a dual feeling of relaxation seeping into the marrow of their bones on a lazy, rainy Sunday spent in bed. There’s happiness humming in their veins when their family is all crowded into their house for dinner.

But with light comes the dark. But they balance each other out.

Finding a balance takes time.

They’ve got all the time in the world, as long as it’s together.
The dog’s outside, tail thumping against the ground and making the earth shake. Her parents and Henry are keeping Cerberus busy, finding and scratching all the spots that make three-headed monsters the happiest three-headed monsters in any realm. Even this far down the stone stairwell Emma can feel the earth tremble, little clumps of dirt falling from the ceiling and smacking her in the head as she practically sprints the last couple of yards to the bottom.

There’s a corridor made entirely of stone, evenly spaced with iron doors. Some doors hang off their hinges; some are rusted; others have gouges dug into them and dark spots stained against the metal.

She tries not to think about what -- who -- made those gouges, what those spots once were.

He’s here, she thinks, clutching at the ring. The chain bites into the skin of her neck but it keeps her focused; just like the scrapes on her knuckles from punching those little minions throb and bleed, just like the scratch on her cheek stings, just like the bruises purpling all over her body ache.

She’s been through hell and damn it all if she’s not bringing Killian back from it.

His cell is the last on the right, the door in better shape than most of the others. It takes some work before she can finally wrench it open and see --

For one heart-stopping second she forgets where she is, forgets that this is already the land of the dead and the dead cannot die, because any living mortal would be hard-pressed to come back from such a beating. Killian’s slumped on the floor, blood caked to his skin and shredded clothes. His jacket is singed, his hook gone, his blackened eye swollen shut.

Even still, he flinches when she touches him. “Can’t a man... pay his penance... in peace?” he mumbles and the words sound like he can hardly draw breath to say them.

“Killian,” she whispers, falling to her knees and ignoring their protests. “Killian, it’s me. It’s Emma, I -- I came to save you, I --”

“Please,” he whispers with a wheeze. “Please, just leave me be... no more visions, no more hope - -”

“Hey,” Emma says, her voice cracking. Did they taunt him? Did they show him her image? “I’m not -- It’s me, Killian. Look, I have your ring, I have Liam’s ring. It led me to you, I’m here to save you!”

He flinches again when she presses her fingers to his cheek. “No -- bloody demon, just stop your tricks!” he shouts, wincing and clutching his chest. Emma wonders how many ribs are broken. “She wouldn’t be here, she has her family --”

“They’re here, they’re all upstairs keeping the way clear so we can leave. Killian, please.” She
doesn’t know what she can say to convince him that this is real, that he’s truly being rescued. She reaches for his hand, bloodied and broken as her own; he tries to pull away but she grips his wrist with her other hand to keep him there. If he just listens, she thinks, tears stinging her eyes. “Gold lied. He lied and it wasn’t fair and I just wanted to fix it. He lied and got all the darkness back and he gets to live and it’s not fair that he always gets to win like this.”

Emma swallows past the lump in her throat. “But -- but I need you to come home with me. It’s not just that he lied. It’s not just that I want crocodile skin boots and a handbag to match, because I want that too, but... Killian, I need you to come because I don’t think I can leave here without you, and I don’t think you’d ever forgive me if I stayed. I can’t -- I can’t go back to that big empty house and think about everything you wanted for us.

“I can’t walk past the library and not think about how Belle taught you to use a computer and that time you found a porn site and panicked because you thought I’d think you were cheating on me. I can’t walk down to the docks and see the Jolly Roger parked at the dock and know she’s never going to sail again. I can’t sit at our corner table at Granny’s without thinking you should be next to me drinking beer and complaining about how weak it is. I can’t --”

“Berth,” he mumbles, and Emma’s pulse quickens when she feels his fingers weakly grip hers. “She’s not... parked at a dock, Swan... She’s berthed at dock.”

She laughs a sob and for the first time he lifts his head, his good eye trained on her and a weak smile on his lips. “I can’t go back without you,” she whispers. “Who’s gonna tell me I’m wrong about ships?”

“You make a compelling argument, love,” he whispers. “But I’m so tired.”

“Then we’ll just sleep for a week,” she promises. She lets go of his wrist, reaching up to cup his cheek. He leans into her touch, his eye closing. “We’ll close the curtains and lock the doors. We have a brand new bed and I can’t remember the last time I actually slept.”

“Bloody stubborn woman,” Killian mumbles.

“Your bloody stubborn woman.”

Finally, he nods once. It takes some effort to get him to his feet but they manage it; she keeps one arm around his waist while she slings his arm around her shoulders, letting him use her as a human crutch.

It’s slow going down the hall, but the stairs are almost torture. It’s an agonizing pace, one stair every few seconds, and Emma doesn’t know whether to be comforted or worried about the fact that Cerberus’ tail is no longer causing the earth to move above them.

Killian’s voice breaks through her thoughts. “You’re hurt,” he observes quietly.

She glances at him; his head’s lolling down and he’s looking at the hand she’s got placed firmly on his waist. “Some scratches and cuts and bruises,” she agrees. “Had to get a little fighty to make it this far.”

“Sweetheart --”

“Killian, I am literally hauling your dead weight up a flight of stairs because someone tortured you so much you can’t move on your own,” Emma says. “I’m fine.”

He chuckles a little and they don’t speak another word until they’re at the top of the stairs.
Everyone’s still there; Cerberus apparently is taking a nap. David and Robin immediately take charge of Killian. “Alright there, mate,” Robin says, taking one side. “Good lad, we’ll get out of here yet. Let’s just get back to --”

“My dad’s room’s empty,” Henry supplies. “We can do the heart thing there and figure out how to get a boat home.”

He’s safe. They’ve got him and everyone’s still here to bring him home. Emma lurches forward, stumbling over her own feet, unsure if the tears burning in her eyes are from exhaustion or just because he’s here, he’s safe, he’s coming home.

Mary Margaret’s at Emma’s side in an instant, Regina on her other. Her mother puts her arm around Emma’s shoulders while Regina holds onto Emma’s arm. They don’t half-carry her like the men are with Killian, but Emma appreciates their nearness and their touch anyway. She’s exhausted, she’s in pain, and it’s nice to have the assurance that if her legs decided to give out, they’d be there to catch her.

They’re not quite out of hell, but they have Killian. Step one, find Killian, complete. Emma leans against her mother as they walk. She’ll figure out step two, get Killian home, when they get back to the bed and breakfast.

Even if she has to punch out a blue-haired god to do it.
Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Chapter Summary

5.15 promo spec fic. I'm so fragile, no one fucking touch me.

"Why bring me back if I should just move on?"

She steps back as if he's slapped her. It pains him to speak the words out loud and the metaphorical knife in his guts twists further as a single tear slips down her cheek. Her gaze drops and he isn't sure if he's more surprised or glad that she doesn't have words for him, that she's not ready to fight back.

He almost wants her to fight back. He almost wants to have it out, bare their souls and lay it all out for consideration.

If he's to move on, he wants to move on without any doubts or hanging threads left between them.

Emma pushes her way through him and Liam, a stifled sob slipping out as her arm brushes his and if he weren't already dead it would kill him to be in this position.

Choosing between Emma and Liam?

His true loves?

His Swan and his brother?

Liam touches his arm after Emma's footsteps have faded into the woods. "You deserve to be happy, little brother," he says softly. "Who knows how long she might damn you to this place? The headstones bind her here, she might never break out of Hades' grasp."

The words are at the tip of Killian's tongue, you're wrong, if anyone can beat that devil it's her, but where the words came so easily to hurt Emma, they remain stuck in his throat for Liam.

And what does that say about him?

You deserve to be happy.

How could anyone be happy with this sort of choice to make?
"So Hook's..."
"...a cat."

Emma sighs. She's not sure when her parents started this habit of finishing one another's sentences, but of all the leftovers from this forgotten year she supposes it's the least annoying. Or worrisome. Or pregnant.

Said cat - jet black, three legs, thinks he can get away with doing this thing where he's butting his head against her breasts just because he's a cat now - smugly curls himself up on her lap, purring away. Emma's not going to pet him, no matter how cute he thinks he is. "Zelena did this for... some reason."

She's not going to mention Zelena's threats, or something about refusing to help her enact a curse. She doesn't want to stress Mary Margaret out more, worrying about another curse - especially when Emma's sure Zelena meant a curse having to do with Emma herself. One that only Hook could enact.

She really doesn't want to think about why.

"And he's... staying with you?" Mary Margaret asks, her voice pitching high on the question.

Emma shrugs. "If Granny doesn't mind. I mean, he's got three legs. Some stray would beat the tar out of him in a second. And he'd starve." Hook makes the most disgruntled noise she's ever heard a cat make. She glares down at him. "Don't give me that, I'm being nice."

Her dad makes a noise that sounds suspiciously like an aborted laugh. Emma sighs again. She really hopes she can figure out how to undo this soon.

Henry's asleep by the time Emma gets back to the room, which is just fine with her; for once, budding teenage sleep hormones are on her side. She doesn't feel like explaining why she's suddenly become Friend of the Animals - usually that's him, trying to feed the pigeons on the fire escape and collect the neighborhood strays back in New York.

No, instead she drops Hook on the bed and sighs again, propping her hands on her hips. "Seriously, what am I supposed to do about you?" she asks quietly.

It's too much to hope that Zelena had left him the ability to talk - her life's fucking weird as it is, might as well make Hook the Salem to her Sabrina the Teenage Witch. Instead, Hook just flops over, rolling onto his back and meowing at her. Shaking her head, she sits on the edge of the bed and gives in a little, rubbing his ears. He leans into it, purring louder than a lawnmower. "You're shameless enough as a man, you don't need to ham it up as a cat," Emma mutters.
Hook headbutts her hand when she stops, and she breathes a laugh despite herself. She gives his ears one last rub before getting up. Really, the whole situation is aggravating. She's glad that whatever Zelena had against him hadn't worked, that he'd stuck to his guns - or hook and sword, whatever - and hadn't given in to her wishes on whatever curse she wanted him to enact. But Emma's pissed. Zelena shouldn't have used Hook to get to her, shouldn't have taken advantage of how he felt - he shouldn't have felt - Emma growls, cutting off that line of thought as she stalks to the dresser, making sure to grab a more decent shirt to sleep in than she usually would. Just because he's a cat doesn't mean she'll give him an extra excuse to paw at her -

Emma winces. Great, now she's making puns about it.

She ducks into the bathroom to change - God help her but the first time Hook sees her naked (not that she's planning on that, nope) will not be when he's a goddamn cat - and when she emerges, he's curled up at the foot of her bed. Emma eyes him cautiously as she gets under the covers. "No funny business," she warns him. Hook meows, sounding almost offended. Emma chuckles. "Alright, sorry."

She rolls onto her side, hugging the pillow close. After a moment, she feels Hook get up, and in another moment he's flopping down next to her chest. "Hook, we are not cuddling," Emma says softly.

He sighs and gets up again. This time he walks up above her head, and lays across the top of her pillow. Emma rolls her eyes, but doesn't say anything about it. Instead, she shifts a little, muttering "goodnight" and definitely not feeling ridiculous saying that to a cat - regardless of his normal human existence - and just before she falls asleep she hears Hook start to purr again.

_Maybe he's not so bad..._
Chapter Summary

Just... remember that this is canon-divergent and I am really awful at remembering 3b. ;)

By very popular demand, part 2.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It's lonely and it's not.

He annoys the hell out of her, but she *likes* Hook. Genuinely, as a friend. (She always ignores the part of her that says she likes him as more than a friend. It's terrifying to think that this man - pirate, cat, *person* - who she chained to the top of a beanstalk and had a swordfight with a year ago has started to mean something more than 'casual annoyance'.

And she's going back to New York as soon as she gets rid of Zelena, so. She can't like Hook as more than a friend.)

He's still here. It's been nearly two weeks, but he's still here. Every morning since Zelena cast her spell, Emma wakes up to Hook stretched out over the top of her pillow. Sometimes there's a tail in her face, one time she knew he was having a bad dream because his claws got stuck in her hair (did cats have bad dreams? How much of Hook is he right now?). Every night he tries to curl up next to her, and acts all mopey and disappointed when she tells him to move.

(It's just... it's weird. She doesn't want their first cuddle - not that she's thinking about that - to be when he's a cat. She doesn't want it to be while he's all small and fuzzy and purring to calm her down and lull her to sleep; if she *was* thinking about it, which she isn't, she'd want it to be with his arm around her waist, him solidly against her back, his voice soft in her ear while they talked and unwound from their day.)

Henry had asked only once why they'd taken a cat into their room, but Emma had stumbled through enough of an answer that he bought it. Sort of.

(She swore Hook had snickered at her explanation - seriously, was having the ability to detect lies countered by being complete shit at telling them? - but she didn't know if cats could laugh or not.)

He's still here, but it's lonely. With her parents busy getting ready for the baby and trying to find new ways of keeping Henry occupied and out of the way while she did her job, Emma doesn't really have anyone to talk to. Hook follows her around, gamely keeping up as usual even with three legs, but over the last few days Emma has started carrying him. Maybe out of pity, or maybe because she doesn't want to lose track of him, she's not entirely sure. Sometimes he rides on her shoulders, his tail curled around her neck; when she finds another dead-end on finding Zelena's new hiding place he's taken to butting his head against hers, meowing and making other noises that are probably supposed to be reassuring.

She kinda likes it when they're in the library, poring over books until her eyes hurt; when he purrs
on her shoulders, she can feel the vibrations down to her shoulderblades and up the back of her neck. Other times he just curls up in her lap and takes a nap.

She's started petting him more often, dammit.

And she's started talking to him regularly, too. Just as if he were here as a human.

She really, really needs to figure out how to turn him back.

Regina has tried to break the spell on Hook, but something always blocks her. When they're not hunting for Zelena or deciphering the stupid new clues the witch keeps taunting Regina with, Regina's trying to teach Emma how to do the spells herself. "You need to get better at magic anyway. If you want your boyfriend back, stop complaining and get to work."

Emma doesn't know how many times she's insisted Hook isn't her boyfriend, but Regina clearly isn't buying it.

With no sign of Zelena for so long - aside from her weird taunts - Regina has offered to take Henry for the day. She'd asked for this time quietly, so sincerely that Emma had no second thoughts about it - even if Henry can't remember her right now, Regina's still his mom. Emma can't imagine what she must feel like right now.

The free time alone lets Emma practice her magic in the quiet of their room at the inn; Regina had lent her a few spellbooks for the practice. Hook seems content to doze on the floor in the middle of a sunbeam - maybe he's less Hook and more cat after all. He doesn't so much as twitch as Emma mutters incantations under her breath, practicing wrist flicks and wishing really hard that she could find that place inside where she was able to vanish her hot cocoa across the room.

There's a feeling. She'd had it, just a little bit, when she'd been teleporting the cocoa and Hook's hook, but she can't find it again. There's a calm feeling, like she's completely at ease and in sync with everything, like her magic is contained in some kind of glass and doesn't make her skin itch. She can call on it at will. But now? Now it's like her magic is swarming all through her body and every time she tries to grip it to use it, it scatters. She gets a small piece, maybe enough for the smallest spark, but not enough to change her friend back to his true form.

Or light this candle.

Or do anything useful at all.

Frustration peaks when she fails to light the candle for what feels like the millionth time; Emma's temper flares and she throws the spellbook across the room with a yell, then is abruptly thrown out of her seat and across the room. Her body slams against the wall and she slumps to the ground, winded and her entire body screaming at her for being a dumbass with magical artifacts.

She must have blacked out for a few minutes, because the next thing she hears is frantic meowing and feels something fuzzy nudging her forehead. And is that - is he -

"I'm - conscious," Emma mumbles, though her head is pounding and she'd like nothing more than to pass right back out. "No licking, Hook."

There's the disgruntled growl she's used to hearing at this point - usually when she warns him for being too affectionate - but he backs off. Emma winces. "God, remind me not to do that again," she mutters, trying to get up. Her body protests this movement viciously, so she stops, laying back down with a sigh. "Okay, floor it is."

Hook meows again, nudging her hand, and Emma cracks one eye open. "Seriously? You want
me to pet you *now*?"

His tail flicks, something she's noticed he does when he's annoyed, but he glances down and she follows his gaze.

Her phone.

"You got that over here by yourself," Emma says, slightly awed as she reaches for it. She could call her dad, have him check to make sure she isn't concussed or hasn't broken anything. Right now she just hurts all over, can't tell what's superficial and what isn't.

When she ends the call - David'll be over as fast as he can manage - Emma does reach up and rub one of Hook's ears. He leans into it, blue eyes closing contentedly. "Thank you," she says softly.

He makes a little chirping sound, then - completely out of spite - licks the side of her thumb. Emma chuckles. "Asshole," she says affectionately.

As Mary Margaret's due date comes and goes, security around her is up tenfold. Emma - no concussion from her incident a few days ago, just her pride and her back bruised - grows more worried by the day, particularly after a flying monkey incident that resulted in Regina breaking the curse and bringing Henry's - everyone's - memory back.

Oh, and the flying monkey had been carrying something to try and steal Emma's magic, but so far the only one who seemed to remember that was Emma herself.

Now that they know Zelena wants the baby to complete a time-traveling spell, Emma rarely leaves her mother's side for long, which means Hook is usually stalking around the loft, hiding under newspapers and batting at David's shoelaces. "You haven't figured out how to turn him back?" Mary Margaret asks one afternoon.

She's trying to teach Emma how to knit, something they'd attempted during the first curse but got set aside when everything went haywire. All of this mother-daughter time - and undoubtedly an enormous amount of pregnancy hormones - has Mary Margaret all aflutter with bonding projects.

If knitting a lumpy washcloth can be called a mother-daughter bonding project.

"No," Emma says, wondering how the hell she missed a stitch in the middle of a row. "I was working on it before I decided to piss off the books, and since then things around here have been a little..."

"Strained," Mary Margaret supplies.

Emma smiles a little. "I was going to say busy, but sure.."

She doesn't want to mention how worried she is that she can't fix this. She doesn't want to think about what would have happened to Hook if her magic had been stolen. Her mom has enough to worry about right now, she doesn't need the extra concern over Emma's complete inability to cast any spell bigger than "annoy Hook", or some plan that had fallen through. And it's not like Mary Margaret has magic, or can offer any sound advice over it.

But where Emma can't talk to her mom, she can still talk to Hook.

Henry's staying with Regina - with his memories back, he's trying to make up lost time (and Emma knows he's safe under Regina's protection) - so Emma is free to keep watch at the loft while her parents are asleep. Well, she's pretty sure her mom's asleep. David might not be, but at
least he's good at pretending like he can't hear his daughter talking to a pirate-turned-cat like a
crazy person.

"What if I can't change you back?" Emma asks softly, staring out the window into the night.

The worry claws at her heart like... well, like his claws. She misses him, the stupid swagger and
his goddamn eyebrow; she even misses the way her stomach turns over at the way his accent
makes her name sound like some kind of delicious treat. She's so afraid that she'll never get good
enough at magic to fix this, or (almost worse) if Regina can figure out what's blocking her from
fixing this first.

The only reason Hook's still here is because of Emma. She knows this. He helped save Henry, he
came back for her in New York, woke her up from the memory spell, took the shot meant for her
from Zelena. So she feels like it's her responsibility to fix this.

And she knows he trusts her to take care of him.

Hook hops up into her lap, nudging her arm with his hand. Emma smiles a little. "I know, you
believe I can fix it. But it's one thing for you to believe, and another for me to." Her smile fades
and her voice drops even lower. "And I keep thinking about that - that thing the monkey had. If it
had taken my magic... I don't want you to get stuck like this. It's not fair to you." He meows at her
and she chuckles ruefully. "You know, I could really use one of your pep talks right about now.
You're pretty good at a pick-me-up."

His response is to hop up on her shoulder. Emma winces as the claws sink in a little, but he
stretches out around her neck, tail curled around the front of her neck, and starts purring. She
smiles again, a little wider this time, reaching up and rubbing under his chin. "I guess that'll work
in a pinch."

It's funny how he has near as many whiskers now as he does when he forgets to shave.

Mary Margaret is in labor and Emma's panicking and her cat - Hook - is missing and she doesn't
know where to start doing anything.

Regina has the ward on magical lockdown, so Emma makes the decision to leave her in charge
there while she looks for Hook. Find the cat, go protect her mom - though if Mary Margaret's
labor is anything like Emma's was with Henry, it'll be a while.

Good. She'll take all the time she can get.

Emma wishes desperately for a locator spell, or the ability to cast one, but she has to rely on what
she knows about Hook. Which is, admittedly, a lot, but since he's been a cat he's stayed pretty
regularly by her side. There's no reason for him to have strayed like this. He's the most un-catlike
cat, he doesn't even bother to chase the mice that live under the floorboards in the library. She
checks the Jolly Roger to no avail, asks every townsperson she sees if they've seen a three-legged
black cat and comes up with nothing. She checks their rooms, the loft, the diner, nothing.

She's halfway to the sheriff's station when a plume of green smoke appears in front of her.
"Looking for this?" Zelena asks, holding up Hook by the scruff of his neck.

He's not even fighting it, he looks - he looks - Emma's heart leaps into her throat or it fails to keep
beating or something because the sight of him hanging limp like that - "Give him back," she
croaks.

She hates the way Zelena laughs, hates the stupid sneer on her face and the constant, stupid angle
of her hats. "Goodness, you act as if you care about the little beast. Which, of course, we know isn't true because if you did then he wouldn't be stuck as this poor little pussy cat anymore. Pity, knowing how much he cares for you."

Emma's stomach turns. *Open your eyes, come on, Hook, let me know you're okay,* she thinks, shifting her stance and flexing her fingers. Her magic buzzes under her skin and she's absolutely not qualified for a witch fight against someone as powerful as Zelena, but she is so sick of her strutting around here and acting like she owns the place.

Emma raises her hands, ready to just blast raw power, but then Zelena tosses Hook towards her. Emma lunges, barely catching him before he hit the ground. "You should really remember to collar and tag your pets, sheriff, it's illegal to let an animal run around unregistered. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to fulfill my duties as midwife," Zelena says, vanishing in another plume of smoke.

Emma stares at the spot where she vanished, her thoughts running a mile a minute. *What the hell is she talking about?* She sits up on her knees, cradling Hook to her chest. She looks down, gently prodding him and trying to figure out if there are any broken bones - God this would be easier if he were awake, he'd probably try to claw her eyes out for poking a sore spot - and wishing she knew more about animal injuries. Then the sun glints off of a pendant around his neck.

"Son of a bitch," Emma mutters, realizing what Zelena had been talking about.

She'd put a collar on him, with a pendant that looked an awful lot like the ugly thing she wore around her own neck. Emma would bet her Bug that the damn thing was spelled to keep him asleep (could sleeping curses even work on animals?). She's kind of glad it's just a pendant and not the real thing - she's not kissing a cat.

Not that it would work.

At least, she thinks it wouldn't work.

Emma reaches for the pendant and the only warning she gets is her magic buzzing angrily under her skin before the pendant zaps her. It takes every ounce of her willpower not to storm back to the hospital and slap Zelena silly; really, on top of everything else, she has to make it shock her before Emma can remove it?

She tries again, gripping the pendant tight and hanging on as electricity charges up her arm and numbs her fingers. But it doesn't let up, doesn't lessen, doesn't even let her try and pull it off; it only numbs her arm further until she finally lets go. "Fuck," Emma mutters, shaking out her hand. "Hook, wake up. Come on, Hook, wake up..."

He doesn't stir; if she wasn't holding him and couldn't feel his chest expanding, she would really think he was - well, she's not going to think about that, because he's not... that.

If she can't yank it off, there has to be another way.

And if Zelena wants her magic gone, then Emma bets that the only way to really remove the pendant is magically.

It fizzes under her skin, warming and irritating her, but Emma remembers what Regina said about emotions and magic.

And Emma is pissed.

Her magic rolls into her palm, sparking and deflecting the electric magic coming from the pendant.
Emma has the strangest sensation, almost like the pendant is sucking in her magic. But the more it takes in, the less electricity coursing around her fist.

Emma's mouth twists into a grim smile. If that's how Zelena wants to play ball, then Emma's more than willing to step up to bat.

She has a grip on her magic now, somewhere to channel it, so she shoves her magic out, doing her best to overload the pendant until it can't take any more. Her arm starts to shake, her hand aches, and she breaks out into a cold sweat as her head aches and makes her feel feverish.

No wonder people are so cautious about their magic. Losing it kind of sucks.

When the shakes turn into a burning pain, Emma rallies for one last push, shoving every last ounce of her magic out with a yell, and the pendant explodes in a blinding flash.

She feels dizzy, a little out of touch with reality; the concrete digs hard into her knees and there's a buzzing in her ears. And Hook suddenly feels very, very heavy.

Emma opens her eyes with much more difficulty than strictly necessary and looks down.

He's back.

He's still out, his head lolling against her chest. Emma's arms feel like they weight ten thousand pounds, but she manages to touch his cheek, tapping his scruff weakly in an attempt to wake him up. "Hey," she says and her voice is hardly more than a croak, like she hasn't had anything to drink in days. "Hook, wake up. Killian!" Her heart races, panic settling in as she realizes he's not waking up. What if it didn't work, what if there's still something else?! Emma shakes him, desperation creeping into her voice. "Come back! Killian, come back to me!"

Fear almost paralyzes her. Her magic's gone, she can't fix this - she can't wake him up. He's back, but he's - "Son of a bitch," Emma whispers, staving off the panic from losing another person from her life.

Her grip loosens, but he just leans further against her. Emma blinks, then inhales sharply when he mumbles something unintelligible under his breath. "Hook?" she breathes.

"You... you used my name," he murmurs, his head turning slightly and his nose brushing the side of her breast.

As the panic and fear fades, another emotion sparks under her breast: annoyance. "Alright, enough of that, I didn't let you get away with it as a cat," she grumbles.

He snorts, but there's a tired smile on his lips. "On the contrary, Swan. You allowed many things that I may be loathe to give up now that you've restored me to my devilishly handsome self. Your lap, for instance, is a lovely place upon which to rest my head."

If she wasn't so goddamn tired she would shove him off of said lap, but when he opens his eyes and wearily raises that stupid eyebrow at her, her irritation fades. The words I missed you get stuck somewhere in the back of her throat, but the overwhelming joy at the fact that he was back makes it okay. It's probably written all over her face, anyway. "You're ridiculous," is all she can manage to say.

He closes his eyes again, exhaling heavily. "You gave up your magic," he says quietly.

"It was the only thing I could do. I couldn't - I couldn't let her hurt you anymore."
Hook opens his eyes again and lock with hers for a long moment. She wonders what he sees there - all the things she keeps hidden, tries to shield from the world, they always seem to be on display to him. He opens his mouth, but yelling from down the street draws their attention. "Emma! Emma, she's gone, she took the baby!"

There could only be one she. Emma sighs and Hook grunts as he sits up fully. Neither of them are in any shape to face down Zelena, but there's no rest for the Savior. She and Hook get to their feet as David and Regina slow to a jog and then stop in front of them. "Long story," Emma says, waving Regina's impending question off. She checks her holster to make sure she's still got her gun; she may be out of magic, but Zelena's still human.

She hopes.

"Aye," Hook says, resting his hand on the sword at his hip. "Tis quite the tale, but I believe we have a witch to burn."

They nod, and Emma's legs protest every step as she jogs after her father and Regina, Hook gamely keeping up at her side.

Chapter End Notes

I kind of headcanon that Emma's magic was just all shot out of her body in 3b, and it just took a long time for it to build back up. Weak magical reserves for a new magic-user and all.
ahookedhero prompted: Letter found in an old notebook.

Cleaning helps get her mind off of it.

She’s spent two days hardly moving or eating. She just lay huddled on the couch, alternating between a fitful sleep or just staring at their wedding photo hanging on the wall across the room. It wouldn’t be so bad if she’d somehow managed to stop crying, but luck is not on her side.

So on day three, after forcing down a sandwich that tasted like sawdust and went down like a brick, Emma drags several Hefty bags and some cleaning supplies up to the attic.

This is such a bad idea.

The problem with two lost kids coming together and staying together is that neither are very willing to throw anything out. Not in a *Hoarders* kind of way, but little things that held sentimental value but got broken along the way. There’s boxes of things they hadn’t unpacked since moving into the house last year, but there’s also that rocking chair Killian had never gotten around to fixing – the hand-me-down from Ruth in the eventual hope that Emma could use it with her own children. The bar stools that didn’t fit anywhere else in the house but were the first pieces of real, new furniture they’d managed to buy for their first apartment.

These were little footprints from their journey together. Proof that they existed, that they mattered, that they lived and loved.

Emma’s not sure if it’s the dust or the overwhelming nostalgia and sadness that make her eyes well up again and her nose run. Maybe both.

She opens the small windows under the eaves of the roof, trying to air the dust out and maybe bring in some fresh air. She clears out the cobwebs, dusts where she can, tries not to feel regret when she has to throw out that broken ship-in-a-bottle Liam had given them as a gag gift four Christmases ago.

She tells herself the tears streaming down her face are from the dust. She’s good at lying to herself.

There’s clothes she hasn’t seen since high school, dusty and musty and eaten by moths. She bags those up for the trash. She throws away Killian’s broken model of the first ship he’d served on, cracked in half at some point during one of their many moves around the world. They tried not to keep so much stuff at first, knowing the pains of storage when his next assignment would take them overseas, but somehow – between Liam’s generosity with his basement and David insisting on helping pay for a storage unit, and their own sentimentality – they just have… so much *stuff*.

So many memories.

In a way, not bad for two kids who’d started out with almost nothing.

Emma knocks over a box at one point, a box that turns out to be filled with some of Killian’s
things from high school. A few papers she doesn’t have the energy to reorganize, a few swimming medals and ribbons, that German project he’d been so excited to ace, a few watercolors from that art class they’d taken. The collage she’d made for him to celebrate qualifying for the state finals.

The spiral-bound notebook he’d used to write notes to her during class.

Emma stacks it all back into the box, but the notebook taunts her. There’s still paper in it, surprisingly – they hadn’t passed notes so much as written letters to each other, discretely swapping in the hallway between classes. But she knew that notebook anywhere. The number of times she’d seen him – scrawny and baby-faced, his hair sticking all over the place from morning practices, his glasses falling down his nose – hunched over this notebook during lunch or their few shared classes…

There’s still paper in it.

This is such a bad idea.

But Emma Swan-Jones is a glutton for punishment.

November 12

Swan, you won’t believe what we’re doing in chem today. Kruger brought out this mad thing called a bell jar – perhaps related to that book you started reading? – and shrank a Twinkie. Then he reversed it and the bloody thing actually exploded!
Perhaps don’t eat one at lunch – they’re awful for you anyway, I keep telling you – but don’t worry I’ll remind you. It’s a shame we don’t have chem together, you’d be the loveliest lab partner a lad could wish for–

There’s a few scribbled out words next (because Killian always, always used a pen) and Emma has to smile at his words. He’d confessed his feelings for her after graduation, but here was the proof that he’d held a flame for her for so long.

There are a few edges after, meaning he must have passed her the next few pages as notes, but the next one isn’t dated long after the first.

November 17

Swan, I can’t believe you missed school today. Well, I can, you knew we were playing dodgeball in gym and you’re rubbish at it.

School’s very lonely without you, Swan.

You know, I halfway expected you to show up after lunch. Cutting school to miss gym seems your style. But you’re still not here and Frau Liebowitz is droning on about Deutsche Grammatik because you are Heide who takes Französisch.

I miss you today, Swan.

Part of me is afraid they sent you away. You talk about it so much that I forget that the Nolans would never get rid of you. They love you – Dave would fight child services if they tried to take you, I know he would. I would too. And I’m afraid that you got sent away and neither of us could fight for you to stay.

More scribbles after that, but Emma knows this was never meant to be seen by her anyway.
Many of their notes were like this, making fun of their teachers or classes, but also idle thoughts. Emma had occasionally fancied herself as a girl in a Jane Austen novel, exchanging letters with a suitor – never mind that she’d been too shy to admit she had a massive crush on the swim team captain, her best friend, the nerd who made fun of her in German for taking French.

She misses him.

December 16

I wanted to ask you to the winter formal but I thought Dave might beat me up for it. Don’t laugh at me, Swan, football players are bigger than swimmers. He’d kill me if he knew –

January 5

This is rubbish. School is rubbish and you are a bloody distraction, love. You look particularly lovely in that sweater Ruth bought you for Christmas and it’s bloody distracting how your hair –

March 23

I hate that Cassidy asked you to prom. I hate that you accepted. I hate that look on your face when you told me, like you were afraid of my reaction.

You deserve kindness, Swan. I may be a bloody git for not having the nerve to ask you first, but I could never be angry with you. I’m in love –

May 5

I’m going to tell you after graduation. Give you time to heal after Cassidy was such a bloody prick to you. If it makes you feel better, I offered to hold while Dave punched, but Dave insisted that you’d want to do the punching yourself. I’ll still hold while you let loose on the bastard.

The few pages that are left are blank and Emma hugs the notebook to her chest. She buries her face in her knees and lets herself cry. She misses him.

The notebook sits in her bedside drawer. Emma’s curled up in the middle of their enormous bed, her own pillow behind her and clutching Killian’s pillow to her chest. She’s wearing one of his Navy PT shirts, the worn fabric loose on her, and a pair of his boxers that he’d left behind; she’s staying away from the news apps tonight on her iPad, not wanting to read any more speculation or false leads. Liam and David had both checked in on her earlier, after she’d gotten out of the shower. David had tried to get her to talk, but Emma didn’t want to talk about it.

Thankfully, Liam understood that. He didn’t really want to talk either.

No, tonight she’s playing one of those puzzle-swap games until she falls asleep and her iPad smacks her in the face, or until she runs out of lives. She’s going to distract herself as much as she can, keep her thoughts away from the accident and the amount of unknowns surrounding it.

Such as whether or not her husband is alive.

Sleep seems to be winning out, so Emma closes the app and moves to set it on the night stand. She turns out the light and settles under the covers, hugging Killian’s pillow and burying her nose in it, hoping that after three months of deployment there’s still something of his scent left.
It’s faint, but it’s there.

She’s not going to cry over his stupid pillow, dammit.

And then the FaceTime ringer starts up.

Emma has no idea who would be calling her at this hour, but she turns the lights back on; she doesn’t recognize the number, but something tells her to accept the call.

And when the call connects, her heart feels like it might burst out of her chest. “Killian.”

“Emma.”

Luck still isn’t on her side when it comes to crying, but she doesn’t care. Because Killian is alive – and he’s crying too.
Rebel Heart

Chapter Summary

Written for CS AU Week - Another Time Period. Set during the Revolutionary War, when Emma and her family are sympathizers to the American independence cause while posing as Tories and Killian is one of General Washington's spies.

Chapter Notes

I mostly just wanted to write a fic where Killian gets the shit kicked out of him (or in this case, whipped out of him) and Emma has to take care of him. I've been reading the Outlander series, so blame that.

Emma stared down the young officer at her doorstep. It really was astounding how much older the officer wigs made the men look, but she supposed that was the point. Still, the lieutenant was a face she knew well, a young man of three-and-twenty in her father-in-law’s regiment who she’s seen at parties up at the grand house. She hardly had to glare at him to have him shaking in his boots: it wasn’t a pleasant task, interrogating the recently widowed daughter-in-law of General Gold about harboring a rebel spy. “As I said, lieutenant,” Emma said, shifting her hands so that the black band marking her widowed status showed clearly. “The house has been quiet since my son retired to bed -- as unwillingly as that retirement went. You’re free to search the house from attic to cellar, but you’ll find no rebels here. Doubtless they’ve scurried off into their rat holes with the other vermin for the night.”

The lieutenant swallowed hard at her tone. “Yes, Mrs. Gold,” he said and she had to give him credit for the steady tone of his voice. “Apologies for disturbing you at this late hour. Have a good evening, ma’am.”

He gave her a stiff salute, and she hardly waited before he’d turned around before shutting the door on him.

Emma slumped against the door with a shaky sigh. Her nerves got the better of her, her fingers trembling as she reached up to tuck a stray hair behind her ear. She listened to the house settle and found that her words were true: her parents’ home was quiet. Whatever reactions to the treatment that Mother may be applying to Killian’s back was completely muffled by the secret room under the cellar.

She may have given permission for His Majesty’s army to search her home, but that didn’t mean she wanted them to actually find their quarry.

With a quick glance outside, masked by the pretense of fixing the curtains in the front windows, she determined that there would be no more visitors in the night. The only possibility would be one of Papa’s men, sending more correspondence for Killian to take to General Washington, but with Killian in the state that he was... Emma could only hope that Papa kept his men back at camp.
And hopefully if any other visitors came to call unexpectedly, Johanna could keep them occupied until Emma or Mother could send them away.

Emma dimmed the lamps in the front parlor and then took one oil lantern to the cellar door. She gathered her skirts in her free hand and carefully walked down the stairs. At the bottom, she set the lamp on an old barrel and rapped hard on the trap door that hid the secret room. After a moment, Aunt Ruby pushed the door open and beckoned Emma down.

Mother was bent over Killian, who lay stretched out on his stomach on a wide wooden bench. Emma bit her lip, her eyes raking over the angry red welts and bleeding gashes on his back. “Oh, Killian,” she murmured.

When last she’d been here, he’d still worn the tattered remains of his shirt, covered by his long jacket. He turned his head towards her and she bit the inside of her lip to see his face so bruised. Whatever he’d done to the redcoat, obviously they thought he’d learn a lesson from this.

The redcoats obviously didn’t know Killian Jones.

“Hey, beautiful,” Killian said, wincing as his lip split again.

Emma knelt at his side, digging her handkerchief out of her bodice and mopping up the thin trickle of blood. “Whatever shall we do with you, Killian Jones?" she asked. “Losing a hand to General Gold wasn’t enough for you?”

He chuckled weakly, wincing in pain when she brushed a gentle finger across his puffy eye. “Captain Walsh,” Killian explained. “Buggering tit thought I looked at him the wrong way, roughed me up and gave me fifty lashes.”

“You call this roughed up?" Emma asked. Mother caught her eye and Emma nodded at the sight of the bucket of water. She picked up the leather strap. “It’s this or poppy,” she told Killian. “Truthfully, poppy might help more, knock you out so we can work in peace,” she added teasingly.

Killian tried to make a face, but he was too bruised and swollen. “Strap,” he said. “Don’t want to be out of commission if the redcoats come calling.”

She slipped it between his teeth. Then, she took his hand in both of hers, smoothing the hair on his skin down and enjoying the contrast between the calluses on his fingers and the softness of his skin on the back of his hand. “Squeeze as hard as you like,” she told him. “Don’t be a hero, Killian.”

One corner of his mouth twitched upward, and then Emma nodded to Mother.

It was a painful process, cleansing and cleaning out the aftermath of a whipping. Emma knew that Killian had faced the last more than a few times in his life -- his back was already mostly scar and she expected this one had taken care of much of the rest of his skin. She held his hand and tried not to show any discomfort when he squeezed too hard -- he’d stop for fear of hurting her, she knew -- and desperately hoping that no agony showed on her face at the sound of his muffled screams.

She wondered how he’d come to cross paths with Captain Walsh. Killian was one of the American rebellion’s best spies, keeping his nose clean as much as he was able. He’d only emigrated a year or so ago, and she knew his brother had served in His Majesty’s navy until the ship went down on a return from India, near the southern tip of Africa. Killian’s speech and his connections to the military made him a most excellent spy for General Washington, just as
Emma’s father’s position in the British army did.

For Killian to receive such a beating and then a British officer at her parents’ door not hours after they’d smuggled Killian into the secret room, she wondered if there was a traitor in their midst.

Killian cried out again as Mother sponged the wounds on his lower back as gently as she could. Emma made crooning noises and pushed his sweaty, matted hair away from his forehead, thankful for the opportunity that playing nurse’s aide gave her to be so open to touch him.

She’d been introduced to him not long after Killian’s arrival in the colonies, some party or other at her in-law’s estate. She’d been taken with him almost instantly, charmed by the direct way he spoke to her, seemingly caring not a whit about the gold band on her finger or the fact that Emma was the wife of General Gold’s son. (In truth, she cared very little for her husband, marrying him only for the advantages it gave the rebellion; but she’d still wept at the news of his death in battle, though more for their fatherless son than her new status as a widow.)

They’d carried on in that way, Killian flirting brazenly and Emma brushing him off with the flutter of a fan or a wry look. She hadn’t spoken to him about her dissatisfaction in her marriage and he hardly looked at her during the reporting sessions he would have to Emma’s father and Emma herself -- Mother couldn’t be near when Killian received instructions: she was horrible with secrets.

(Emma just loved secrets. It also was to her advantage to know who was in and out of her in-law’s home; the funny thing about men, Emma had discovered, was that they’d say almost anything to a woman with a pretty face and an attentive ear -- even military secrets.)

After Neal had died, Emma shut herself away in her childhood room in her parents’ home. She’d only come out once or twice at her son’s insistence, but it had been Killian who had eventually lured her out for good.

With the rebellion advancing into a full-on war now, there was precious little time for flirting, let alone courtship, and at any rate Emma was too well-placed in the world to spring from widowhood right into another marriage. The gossip in Massachusetts could be every bit as bad as it was in New York. And it would put Killian’s life in further risk to be publicly courting the widow of his greatest enemy’s son.

Mother was spreading a medicinal salve across Killian’s back. Killian himself was breathing hard, sweating like a beast as his jaw worked against the leather strap. Aunt Ruby handed Emma a cool, damp cloth, and she gently cleaned his face as best she could. “Almost done,” she promised him. “Almost done and then we’ll let you rest.”

“Fully done,” Mother corrected, standing back and admiring her handiwork. It would be a little more time before they could wrap his wounds, but for now the salve would have to do its work.

Killian spat the strap out, cursing every god from Jerusalem to Bombay. Mother sighed. “And here I was about to congratulate you on holding your tongue, Mr. Jones.”

Emma cut off whatever retort he’d been about to say. “Now might you take some poppy?” she asked. “You’ll actually rest, for one. You won’t sleep much otherwise.”

But Killian shook his head. “No, love, I’ll muddle through. Perhaps give me a good slap and I’ll just faint from the pain.”

Emma rolled her eyes. “What have I said about being a hero?”

He didn’t respond and he didn’t need to. He’d only go out and do it again, just as he always did as
soon as he could walk under his own power without staining his clothes red.

Instead, Mother and Aunt Ruby gathered their medicines and climbed the ladder to the cellar, leaving Emma and Killian alone for the moment. She mopped his face with the cloth again, squeezing his hand reassuringly. “We’ll keep you safe,” she promised.

“There was already a man at the door for me, Emma,” Killian murmured. Emma bit the inside of her lip; she hadn’t known Mother or Aunt Ruby told him where she’d been. “You can’t keep me locked away safe forever.”

“Well, I’ll just have to do my best with what time I have,” she said, instead of the blistering lecture about his safety that she wanted to deliver.

He’d do anything for the rebellion, just as she would. She knew that. It didn’t mean she had to like it.

Killian chuckled weakly. “I’ve yet to see you fail. But perhaps you should head up to the house, love. Can’t have your mother thinking I’ve sullied your virtue.”

Emma had a five-year old son. Her virtue was long forgotten at this point in her life, but it had been a long-running joke between them. She smiled and pressed a kiss to Killian’s forehead anyway. She knew he just wanted to suffer his pain in solitude for a time, so she’d grant him that small bit of dignity. “All right. I’ll bring you something to eat later, if you can stomach it. Rest, Killian.”

He bid her goodnight and she climbed the ladder, closing the trap door behind her. She gathered her oil lamp and marched up the stairs, long-suppressed fury boiling just under her skin as she thought about Captain Walsh and his false senses of propriety.

She might not be able to do much for the war effort. She was only a woman, and a widowed mother at that. But she had connections. She could get her revenge on Captain Walsh with just a few well-worded phrases in her mother-in-law’s ear...

Well, the British Army might have to make do with one less captain.
I'm supposed to be working on projects for finals.

Instead, I'm having an overwhelming amount of feelings about 5b.

“Don’t let me be your unfinished business.”

He hesitates in the grand hall, the echo of his footsteps fading as he glances back towards the Underworld -- towards Emma.

It happens in an instant, the flash of unfinished business that he might have, a series of what-ifs and perhapses and what-could-have-beens. His gaze drops as the regret slices through him, the sorrow for leaving her, the shame for being the cause of yet another in a long line of promises made to her that have been broken.

Lazy mornings in their beautiful house, the first stationary place he can truly call home in centuries. His mouth on her bare shoulder, his hand finding the curve of her hip, her sighs music in his ears and her skin like silk under his fingers.

Days filled with the routines build between two people who share a life. Learning each other’s minute quirks, learning how to work around annoyances, learning how to fight and rebuild.

Days spent at sea, laughing and holding one another close as Henry scales the rigging, teaching them both the skills a sailor lives and breathes.

Watching her brother grow, watching her family knit itself back together.

Asking her to be his wife.

Watching her belly grow round, watching their children grow.

The peace of knowing that, after so many long years of rage and sorrow and loneliness, they have found each other and they will grow old together. Knowing they will bicker and love and fight and heal, that they are kindred spirits and they want this strange, impossible, magical connection between them, this true love, to grow and last until their dying breaths -- and after.

Emma is not his unfinished business.

The life they might have had, the life they both wanted... that is his unfinished business. The what-ifs and the perhapses and the what-may-have-beens. The life of her son and the life of the children she might have borne him, the role he may have played in their lives.

But a life is the business of the living and he is surely dead. He could wait for her, stay in an Underworld that has been rid of its bitter master, until the day she walks down the street and calls his name.

But they cannot have the life they might have had in the land of the living, not in the land where only the dead and the lost are sent to dwell.
And she would surely hate him for waiting for her.

Another broken promise in the long line of them that litter her life.

Killian glances up, towards the light which should hurt but doesn’t -- it’s peaceful and unblinding.

“*It’s time to take you where you belong.*”

Emma.

He belongs with Emma.

But he cannot have her, not anymore.

If this should be his just rewards, he can only pray that someday -- someday far in the future after she’s lived a long and happy life -- she’ll find her way to him. For any afterlife that does not include Emma Swan would be a poor substitution for the heaven that was life with her at his side.

“*You ... brought hope to the Underworld.*”

Aye, perhaps he did. Hope that Emma had known the truth of his sacrifice, hope that she would live and defeat the Crocodile in his stead, that she would someday be happy.

And it is with hope in his heart that he takes that first step towards that bright, unblinding light -- hope that someday, far into the future, he will see his Swan again.
Prophecy Fulfilled

Chapter Summary

6x01 spoilers and angst ahoy.

It happened just as she said it would.

She'd told him one night after the tremor in her hand caused her to break her favorite mug, confessing the secret she'd been hiding amidst tears and broken ceramic on the floor, and he'd been at a loss for words. He'd held her and soothed her, his mind blank and his gaze vacant as he let the implications of prophecy sink in, letting her cry into his shirt until he realized she was apologizing.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I'm taking away your happy ending."

She'd kept a secret from him - after all they'd been through - but she'd kept it to protect him.

He's had many happy endings taken from him in his life - Liam, Milah - but this one. While cupping her face with his hand and thumbing away her tears, this one he vowed to her that he would protect. They'd been tried and tested a hundred times over, and emerged victorious every time. He would not allow anyone to hurt her, to take her from him, to sap her strength and her will until she was stripped bare and left to rot.

Yet it happened just as she said it would.

They'd been separated, another trap, and he prayed to every god he could name as they ran to find Emma that they would make it in time.

They arrived in time to see her knocked flat, a sword stuck deep in her belly. Her eyes found his, her mouth wide with shock - he knew such wounds well, she likely felt nothing more than a dull ache as the heat of battle coursed through her veins.

Her eyes found his and all he found in return were a thousand apologies there.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry I'm not your happy ending.

I'm sorry I hurt you.

I'm sorry I lied.

I'm sorry I wasn't good enough.

I'm sorry I couldn't stay.

I'm sorry you had to watch someone else you love die.

I'm so sorry, Killian.
And then she was falling and he moved before he could think, the cloaked and hooded figure vanishing in a cloud of red-purple smoke. Killian fell to his knees, holding her as he pulled the sword from her body.

Her shirt was black. It hid the dark stain of blood, but he could see the light from the street lamps glinting off it regardless.

She gripped his hand, the tremors returning tenfold, and he saw her mouth open but no sound came out - he knew what she wished to say, felt it in his bones and his blood and as sure as he knew his love was for her he did not wish to hear her say those dreaded words on her deathbed.

_I love you._

He'd heard those words far too many times as someone he loved lay dying on his arms, far more than anyone ever should, and he'll be damned if it ever happens again before he's well and truly ready to leave these mortal realms.

It happened just as she said it would, but it didn't mean she had to die.

He brought his hand to her face, warm and flushed from battle, and bent over her, pouring every ounce of love he felt for her into this one kiss. He kissed her and thought of those he'd lost before - Liam, Milah - and cursed every god he could name for daring to take Emma away from him too. He thought of those he'd lost before and the woman he could never bear to lose again.

He kissed her, and he felt the magic ripple through him, pushing out and sending leaves scratching along the street.

Emma breathed deep through her nose and the tremors slowed until they finally, finally stopped.

"I made a vow, did I not?" he whispered hoarsely against her lips.

Her chuckle sounded weary. "Yeah, you did. I could have done without the knife in my gut, though."

He chuckled despite himself, his own body trembling as the shock wore off and the weight of what had happened started to sink in. "I'll endeavor to do better next time."

Emma's hand reached up, her nails scratching lightly through his scruff; he leaned into her touch, taking a shuddering breath while trying desperately not to focus on how near he'd come to losing her. "I've got a better idea," she said. "Let's not let there be a next time."

"Aye, love," Killian said. "I think I'd much rather prefer that."

And he sealed it with a kiss.
Autumn

Chapter Summary

And some mindless autumn fluff to celebrate the hiatus being over!

Summer was reluctant to leave that year, lingering long past the equinox and almost into October. The leaves were hardly changing and the lack of autumn rain meant the grass just dried up and turned greenish-brown a few months early. The heat lingered and made everyone grouchy, but the lack of humidity meant that as warm as it got during the day, the temperatures plummeted once the sun went down.

It was, Emma decided, the worst time of year.

She'd throw on a sweater in the mornings, her feet cold on the floorboards, but by eleven she'd be sweating and stripping it off and draping it over the back of her chair at the station. But around five, when she left to meet her family for dinner, the sweater would slowly move from being held, to her arms in the sleeves, and then the whole damn thing back on by the time she reached Granny's. It was too warm in the day to think about leaving the windows closed but it was too cold at night to leave them open – and with winter right around the corner Emma felt it was a sin to turn on the heat, even overnight, when it wasn't even October yet.

So they made do, closing the windows or leaving them open a crack, and Emma counted herself very lucky to have herself a human space heater in her bed.

She came home late one night – very late, some of the newcomers refused to abide by the Rabbit Hole's last call and Emma not only had to clear everyone out but lock a few up in the drunk tank overnight when they got handsy – and was surprised to see the house dark. Normally Killian waited up for her, though it was nearly four in the morning.

She grimaced at that. She hoped he wasn't worried, she didn't have time or free hands to text him and let him know what was up.

She hung up her jacket and left her boots near the door, the floorboards feeling cool even under her socks. It was near freezing tonight – no calls for frost in the morning, but it would be a near thing – and Emma was sure Killian had left more than a few windows open a bit downstairs to let the air circulate. She was looking forward to warm pajamas and a warmer pirate, but the prospect of getting naked first and then putting on pajamas was not one she looked forward to.

Their bedroom was dark as well, with a large, Killian-shaped lump under the covers and the mild buzzing sound that was his snore drifting on the air. Emma smiled to herself as she hurriedly changed and the chilly air sent goosebumps all over her body. Whatever he did today, he must be tired, she thought as she ducked into the bathroom to brush her teeth and take out her contacts.

Usually if she had a late night, she'd come up to find him reading in bed or playing with her tablet – he liked poker apps, though he'd been disappointed to learn that the millions he was winning was, in fact, fake money. So to find him fast asleep meant he'd worked hard; she tried to remember if he'd mentioned his plans for the day and came up with nothing. I'll ask in the morning.
Her side of the bed was cool, but Emma slid right in and molded herself against Killian, tucking her cold feet under his legs and giggling to herself when he made a sleepy sound of acknowledgement. His hand groped for her and found her waist, pulling her tight against him. Emma kissed his forehead as he went still again, soaking in his warmth and the comforting weight of his arm around her, and decided that maybe this wasn’t the worst time of year after all.

She fell asleep with a smile, lulled by the light buzz of his snores.
Emma tries not to laugh when they come to pack up Killian's things for the house. Belle's definitely added a woman's touch to the captain's cabin - she can't be jealous of the fact, Belle's actually living there and she deserves flowers and a million baby books scattered around if she wants them. But Killian picking through gauzy fabrics for his treasures and telling Emma where he's moved things into storage just reaffirms the fact that this is a good thing. Belle deserves her own space and Killian -

Killian deserves as much of a happy ending, as much of a future, as she can give him.

But when they pull up to the house with the back seat of the Bug filled with crates and knicknacks, Killian's almost shy as they start unloading and bringing things inside. "I'll, ah, I'll set up in here shall I?" he asks as they top the stairs and he indicates the spare room just to the left.

Emma raises an eyebrow, a bemused smile on her face. "Killian. When I said move in with me, I meant move in with me."

And he grins and he follows her into the master bedroom.

He picks a side of the room, though she expects things will start to mix together soon enough. The crates empty out of the back of the Bug and pile up in the corner. Her clothes move over in the closet to make room for his. She's already bought him a new toothbrush for the bathroom and he puts out a silver, seashell-shaped dish for his rings on the bedside stand.

Emma stands in the bedroom, their bedroom, and looks around at the beginning of their future with an uneasy breath. She hears him coming up the stairs with the last crate and takes another breath to calm her nerves before he can see her shaking again.

She's going to give him a future. As much of a future as she's able, she's going to give him a future.

She turns as he walks into the room, hefting the crate up as proof that he's done. "Ship shape, love," he says, setting it down next to its kin. "Now for the fun part: finding a place for everything."

Emma smiles as she steps into his space, running her hands up his vest. "Everything will find a home somewhere," she promises. "We have a whole house."

"Aye," Killian says, a slow, shy grin on his lips. "Our house."

Her nose brushes his. "Thank you," she whispers.

"For what, love?"

She takes a breath. "For moving in with me. For finding a beautiful house for us to live in. For
being kind to Belle and teaching Henry how to fight with sticks."

Killian glances away as his ears turn pink and Emma closes the small space between them to catch his lips with hers. When they part, he breathes a laugh and starts to say something, but then changes his mind. He tilts her head to the side, kissing her more deeply this time as his hand tangles itself through her ponytail. She feels calmer than she has in days, letting the feel of his slightly chapped lips on hers and the scrape of his beard on her chin ground her in reality, in the here and now.

The slam of the front door downstairs makes them jump; it takes Emma a second to realize it's Henry, probably with his own duffel bag of stuff for the room down the hall that's his. "Rain check," she whispers, scratching through the hair on the nape of Killian's neck.

"All the time in the world, Swan," he murmurs with a wicked smile on his face.

She refuses to let her happy bubble pop at those words; she doesn't have all the time in the world, she knows that. She just doesn't know when.

Henry passes them on the way to his room, rolling his eyes good-naturedly when he sees how close they are. "Don't let me interrupt," he calls just before he closes his bedroom door.

Emma scowls. "Remind me to make him cut the grass later."

"With what, scissors?" Killian asks and it reminds her of two things. The first is that it's not a joke to him.

"Also remind me to buy a lawnmower."

With Henry home, it's better to start putting Killian's things away instead of doing something more fun - like breaking in the bed or the shower or even the rug covering the hardwood floor - and they move in tandem to put away clothes and books and literal treasures. The mostly empty bookcase starts to fill up with his ancient tomes and Emma pauses over one book. "We grabbed this one by mistake," she says, holding up Belle's copy of What to Expect When You're Expecting. She leafs through it briefly. "Wish I'd had this when I had Henry..."

Killian glances at her, but Emma catches the wistful look before he glances away. "Fascinating, the tomes available to parents here," he murmurs.

"Yeah, well, Belle was like me - no mom to ask what the hell is going on, no internet, no one really there to help me through it. I get what it's like," Emma says, trying not to sound bitter. "But some people come by it more naturally than others."

"Aye?"

Their eyes meet and she smiles faintly. "You were pretty good with Alexandra."

Killian scoffs. "I was charged with her for less than five minutes."

"Yeah, well, five minutes can mean a lot to a mom of a toddler." Not that she knows that, but her false memories can attest. "Not bad for your first babysitting gig, captain."

It's way too soon to think about it, way too soon to discuss it at all, but she wants to give him a future.

She doesn't know when her visions will come to pass. She doesn't know how long she has left. But she wants to give Killian a happy ending - maybe it's not with her, but with their family.
She hadn't seen Regina with her family in her visions, but she hadn't seen her brother either. Maybe her brother was tucked away somewhere safe with his niece or nephew.

They let the subject drop as Emma sets the baby book aside to give back to Belle. If he notices her hand lingering on it, he doesn't say anything, but he does smile when she brings over an armful of his shirts to hang in the closet. "I'll hang these up," she says, "if you go ask Henry if he wants pizza for dinner tonight."

Killian kisses her cheek as he goes to do as she asked. Emma's hands gently graze across his shirts as she hangs them up, her heart feeling very full as she took in the sight of his clothes in next to hers.

Henry yells something about pepperoni and sausage as he heads downstairs, taking them two at a time from the sound of the hard landings, and Emma adds 'reinforce stairs' to her ever-growing list of household fixer-uppers to tackle on the weekends.

It'll be nice, she decides. Whatever future, whatever happy ending they can get will be nice. Weekend projects and Henry and his friends running around the house. Trying for a baby. Saving the town.

It'll be nice to go out without regrets. Face death with dignity.

Emma nods, mostly to herself, and heads downstairs to join her family. Her happy ending’s days might be numbered, but she'll make the most of all of them.
Emma’s head felt a bit woozy: she wasn’t used to Apparating so much, instead relying on her own legs or the ever-expanding lines of New York public transportation like every other New Yorker. Easier to spot meddling No-Majs or lawbreaking wizards when you were out and about with the crowd. She sat with her back against the wall and her eyes closed against the bright lights illuminating the advertisement twenty feet above her head; the hard brick dug into her back, a welcome reminder that they’d made it out of the MAGUSA prisons and breathed fresh – if not really free – air.

And truthfully, she really didn’t think her legs would hold up any longer. She’d had some close calls in her life – serving in the war and Auror work did that to a gal – but that one was probably the closest.

She felt someone sit next to her, and as she knew Mary Margaret was tending to David on the other side of the billboard posts, she supposed it had to be Killian. At least she hoped so. She wasn’t up for another fight for her life just yet.

“D’you mind if I ask a rather personal question?” Killian asked softly.

She heard his fingers tapping against the leather of his suitcase, a nervous habit she’d picked up on. Emma drew in a breath and opened her eyes. “Trade you,” she said, noticing again how flat her voice sounded compared to his.

“That woman – the New Salemist or whatever they call themselves. She was preaching on a street corner, but she was different in the –”

“The death potion,” Emma muttered. “It’s a trick, they gaslight you with something that looks like a Pensieve and then shove you in while you’re reliving a happier moment since the Killing Curse is also punishable by death.”

She saw Killian nod from the corner of her eye. “I saw your face when the memory changed, love. There wasn’t just pity for the boy.”

He didn’t ask it, but she knew where this led. Yes, the witch-hating No-Maj felt an awful lot like some of the orphanages she’d grown up in, the ones she’d lived in and gotten brief reprieves from upon acceptance to Ilvermorny. Yes, she still had nightmares about it, about trying to repress her magic and be a normal kid, about being consumed by an Obscurus herself.

Actually seeing what an Obscurus could do to someone wouldn’t help her nightmares now.

“I used to wear a pair of shoes a lot like his, Mr. Jones,” she said flatly. “I attacked her, publicly, not just for that bullshit she spreads but because of how she treats all of those kids. Stripped of my Auror license, regulated to wand visas. Happy now?”
Killian covered her hand with his and she almost jerked away. He was too warm, too real, too close, but a small part of her made her relax and note how calloused his palms and fingers were from all of the work he did with his beasts. “Far from it, Miss Swan. Apologies for prying.”

“Wouldn’t have answered if you were,” she muttered. “Now you – Gold said you fought in the war.”

This time she looked directly at him and his expression was closed off. “Everyone fought in the war,” he said. “Every able hand, some hands that weren’t so able.”

“And your Minister said something about your brother, Liam.”

Killian looked away.

He’d said he fought on the eastern front, fought with dragons of all things – surely the Germans hadn’t stuck it out for so long with dragons against them? And why hadn’t they sent dragons to France, that dreadful stalemate… She shook off her own bad memories (bedpans and blood-stained bandages and why can’t I just magic his leg back, I took the Healer exams, this way is barbaric and learning how to shoot a No-Maj weapon on the ground when the Army gunner guarding the field hospital had been sniped) and watched him. “He died,” Killian said finally. “The Somme. He saved a hundred men, including his commanding officer, with carefully cast protection spells and shields. Bloody git never thought to shield himself, too busy trading off Muggle weapons with his wand to blow up the German artillery. He was awarded all sorts of bloody medals and honors, posthumously, but none of that could bring my brother back.”

“I’m sorry,” Emma said, meaning it. The Somme was too early for her, before the US entered the war, but the older nurses in the French field hospitals spoke of it often.

“Aye,” Killian said and withdrew his hand from hers. “But that’s why I have these fellows, or part of it.” He tapped the suitcase again, causing one of the latches to pop. He closed it with a grimace. “Liam and I always talked of how we could better the magical world by studying magical creatures. Too many wizards just kill them for whatever uses their feathers or fur give, not bothering to learn about the creatures themselves.”

Emma raised an eyebrow. “And you think you can find this Obscurial, take them in and fix them?”

Killian tapped the briefcase again. “I tried one way. There’s dozens more I’m sure could work, given the time.”

The billboard lights flickered, and Emma heard Mary Margaret’s voice, “Is that it? The Obscurus?”

Killian got to his feet, his scarf swinging wildly as he turned to scope the city. “Not sure – wands at the ready, though. Remember, we don’t want to hurt it. There’s a child in there, after all.”
The Teddy Bears have Their Picnic

Chapter Summary

Belle and Killian organize a library program. There are children and stuffed animals involved and Emma has some feelings.

Chapter Notes

Someday I'll stop lifting personal experiences and putting them directly into fic. That day is not today.

Alexandra regarded him with wide and wary eyes, clutching Mr. Spots as if Killian might take him from her at any moment. “Come on, Alex, Mr. Killian said he’d take special care of Mr. Spots,” Ashley said, crouching down to meet her daughter’s eyes.

“He’ll have lots of fun with the other animals,” Belle added.

Alexandra looked at her mother. “But what if the bad lady takes him?”

The Evil Queen had been gone for several months now, but her lasting impact had apparently left its mark on the toddler. Killian stepped out from behind the desk and hunkered down as well. “Miss Belle would never let anything happen to your doggy, nobody would dare get on her bad side. She scares me sometimes.”

“Killian.”

He shared a conspiratorial grin with Alexandra. “Now, you already told Mr. Spots he’d be staying here overnight, yes?” She nodded. “And wouldn’t it hurt his feelings if you suddenly said no?” Her lower lip stuck out and her brow furrowed as she considered that, then she shoved her stuffed dog at Killian before throwing her arms around Ashley and burying her face in her mother’s shoulder. Ashley looked at Killian apologetically and he shrugged. “I promise we’ll take excellent care of Mr. Spots, Lady Alexandra. Ask your mother to show you on the talking phone.”

“He means Facebook,” Belle added.

“He哪种能 be accessed on the talking phone.”

Ashley stood, hefting Alexandra up with her. “We’ll be back in the morning, try not to let the kids get too out of control,” she said, winking before heading out.

Killian grinned as he added Mr. Spots to the growing pile of stuffed animals behind the circulation desk. He had to admit that the idea of toys ‘sleeping over’ at the town library originally struck him as ridiculous; but Belle’s enthusiasm about the planning and then (most of) the children’s excitement about what magical mischief their toys might get up to in Belle’s magical library had been infectious. It was still a bit silly, but not many citizen patroned the library on a Friday afternoon and staging their production would give he and Belle plenty to do to wile away the
Emma’s phone chirped several times in rapid succession; Killian was getting better at texting, but sometimes had difficulty with spaces and accidentally sent one message in the form of seven. Or twelve. They were working on the voice to text thing, but he got too annoyed at the misspellings to use it often. (“Of course the word color has a u in it, Swan, am I a barbarian?”) Emma smiled as she opened her messages, putting together that the Stuffie Sleepover was well underway at the library and that she should follow along on ‘the Facebook’ if she so wished.

Judging by the twenty or so creatures perched on the windowsills, the program was off to a good start. “Missing Mommies and Daddies” was the caption. The next few photos were of stuffed animals climbing the bookshelves and scattering tomes across the floor. Emma grinned outright at the next one -- Killian in a chair, holding a children’s book and absolutely covered in small fuzzy creatures (she enjoyed the little touch of the stuffed snake wrapped around Killian’s neck), captioned “The Captain’s story time”.

That was the last of them for now. Emma sent Killian a brief message about how it was cute, then went back to typing up reports.

Not too much later, her phone rang. “Hey,” she said, holding the phone between her ear and her shoulder to type uninhibited.

“Swan, you actually answered!”

She smiled wryly. “It’s been known to happen. What’s up?”

“Belle’s had a marvelous idea, we need you to come to the library as soon as it’s convenient.”

Which was how she found herself walking through the front doors an hour later, stopping short at the sight of Killian taking a photo of Belle at the reference desk, surrounded by stuffed animals. “New hires?” Emma asked, letting the door close behind her.

Belle smiled. “Hello, Emma. As a matter of fact, yes, that’s exactly it. Though they’re going to be getting in trouble soon, so we decided Sheriff Swan needed to come and ask everyone to behave.”

“So put on your best scowl, love, we need to strike fear into their furry little hearts.”

Emma cut her eyes at her boyfriend. “You’re just lucky I didn’t bring my handcuffs.”

Killian looked scandalized as he picked up a teddy bear and covered its ears. “Swan, please, not in front of the animals.”

“You’re ridiculous.”

Belle put a placating hand on Emma’s arm. “Come on, we’ll show you what we’ve got in mind.”

Emma wound up in a series of photos, helping Belle stop the animals from dancing on the copier, raiding the snacks in the Belle’s office, and even one elaborately staged plot from the more mischievous critters where Emma wound up tangled in yarn on the floor in the children’s book section. Her last photoshoot -- giving everyone a lecture on behaving by way of reading some books about police -- was interrupted when Belle called for Killian to take a phone call. “It’s Alexandra,” she said with a knowing sort of smile.
Emma raised an eyebrow as Belle and Killian switched places. “Why is Cinderella’s toddler calling Captain Hook?” Emma asked quietly, taking up her book again for Belle to take the picture.

“She said she had to tell Mr. Killian a question,” Belle said, likely quoting Alexandra directly. “She was very reluctant to leave Mr. Spots this afternoon, so she’s probably calling to make sure he’s okay.”

As if on cue, Killian jogged over and took the stuffed dog, saying, “She wants to talk to him,” by way of explanation.

Emma’s heart melted a bit at that, watching as Killian picked up the phone and told Alex that he was going to put the dog on the phone now and to shout his name when she was finished, then put the phone next to the toy’s head. Any other person on the planet would have just let the phone sit on dead air, but Killian just smiled to himself as Alexandra’s tinny babbling at her beloved toy could be heard even where Emma sat.

Her hand drifted unconsciously towards her stomach, still flat, still secret, still terrifying.

“Emma?”

Belle’s eyes were wide and she clearly struggled to keep herself in check. Emma made a cutting motion with her hand, looking pointedly at Killian and giving a tiny shake of her head. Belle nodded, allowing herself one little jig of excitement before directing the rest of the photoshoot.

The next morning saw Emma standing watch inside the library as a dozen and a half kids and their parents came to claim their wayward charges and feast on muffins and applesauce for breakfast. David had the desk back at the station, needing some quiet after Neal had been crying all night (he was teething), and Emma quietly relished the sight of Storybrooke’s children pestering “Mr. Killian” for another story. Apparently he read the books the best.

Belle sidled up next to her and Emma hid an exasperated smile, knowing exactly what the conversation was going to be about -- Belle could be very sly when she wanted to, and using the cover of a chaotic library program provided an easy way to interrogate her about her unannounced pregnancy. “So he doesn’t know?” Belle asked, her voice hardly audible over the chatter.

“But you’re sure?”

“I’m about eleven weeks.”

“Oh, Emma,” Belle said, clearly excited but Emma saw some sadness in her face. That was no surprise, given how things with Gideon had gone. “I’m so happy for the both of you.”

“Thanks,” Emma said, smiling softly. “I just hope he’s excited. We haven’t exactly discussed this and I guess I’m just... I’ve always been responsible about it, you know? After Henry, I didn’t want to go through that again, even if it was for the best in the end. And an unplanned pregnancy in your thirties with a stable job is way different than when you’re a teenage high school dropout in prison. So I’m excited, I’m just...”

“It’s normal to be scared, I think,” Belle said. “I mean, I was scared. I know my pregnancy ended
differently and the circumstances surrounding my pregnancy were different, but you have a lot to balance too. But Killian? He’s going to be thrilled, I know it. And he’s going to be a wonderful father. Just look at him.”

Emma smiled, watching Killian patiently read another book -- with Alexandra sat on his lap, Mr. Spots held firmly against her chest -- to a crowd of captivated children and stuffed animals hanging on to his every (dramatic) word. “Who knew Captain Hook had a soft spot for kids?” she asked.

Belle nudged her, smiling. “Scary together is better than scary alone, and this is more happy than scary. After everything the two of you have been through, you could benefit from more happiness.”

Emma’s hand drifted to her stomach again, her fingers tapping a rhythm on her sweater for a moment before she looped her thumb through her belt loop. Killian glanced up, catching her watching him, and gave her that smile she loved -- she loved all his smiles, but this one, the boyish rogue free of any of his worries or fears, was her favorite. She couldn’t help but smile back before he glanced back at the page at Alexandra’s demand.

She’d tell him tonight.
Irish Summer

Chapter Summary

This was written back in February as a gift for fairytal.esandtimetravel for the Captain Swan Secret Valentine.

It's been a busy semester. OTL

“Doesn’t this country know it’s summer?” Emma grumbled as she pulled her beanie more snugly around her ears.

Her new beanie, made with genuine Irish wool (dyed green, since Mary Margaret said it matched Emma’s eyes), because it was the end of June and Emma had foolishly believed that she could wear summer clothes on this trip around the British Isles.

But apparently Ireland hadn’t received the message that the summer solstice had passed two days before; the rolling green hills were capped with low-hanging gray clouds, blocking any sunshine from warming the air. Everyone had bought out the gift shop’s supply of wool sweaters and scarves the night before, after the news report that the next few days were sure to be more of the same. As she dubiously eyed the path up to the castle, Emma had yet to decide if there was a constant drizzle or if it was just that foggy, but either way the weather was chilly and damp.

And the most infuriating thing of all? The island still managed to be one of the most beautiful places she’d ever been to.

She followed David and Mary Margaret up to Blarney Castle, their last touristy stop of the day before heading back into Cork. The streams around the castle grounds flowed noisily along, the water swollen up and over the banks. Full and green trees hung low, heavy with wet, their leaves trailing in water and giving Emma plenty of exercise as she ducked under branches and away from Mary Margaret’s ever-snapping camera. “Newsflash, cameras do not steal your soul,” Mary Margaret commented as Emma slipped away yet again from another photo.

“Thanks for the update, still not gonna risk it,” Emma replied.

“It’s like you don’t want people to know you’re on vacation with us,” David said, holding a branch up for Mary Margaret to walk under.

Emma didn’t reply; in truth, it felt a little awkward to be the third wheel, especially knowing that David was about four seconds from throwing his carefully-made plans out the window and proposing to Mary Margaret on the first windswept, sheep-speckled hillside he could find (of which there were many). Not wanting to sound like a sad sack or leave an open invitation for Mary Margaret’s matchmaking to make an appearance, it was just easier to stay silent.

There were relatively few people when they entered the run-down castle, which turned out to be a blessing: the damp made the stone stairs fairly treacherous. Emma made her way through the crumbling castle, pausing here and there to read the signs about how the inside had originally been laid out. She heard Mary Margaret’s camera going a million miles a minute somewhere behind her and resisted the urge to flip the camera off: she’d just get guilted half to death and Emma knew Mary Margaret only meant well.
Oh hell, she felt guilty just thinking about it.

Emma knew she was in pretty good shape, but the castle stairs were steep and she was a little winded as they came up to the top. On a clear day, the view would be spectacular; she leaned out of a crenel and watched the clouds scuttle low in the sky, the misty air obscuring most of the land past a half mile away or so. “Please don’t tumble out of a castle tower, I really don’t want to explain that to your boss,” David said, gripping the back of her leather jacket for good measure.

“You’re my boss, David.”

“Okay, the insurance company then.”

“Spoilsport.”

“Children,” Mary Margaret said, snapping a picture of the two of them with a mischievous smile on her face. “Let’s go kiss the Blarney Stone so this nice young man can go home out of the wet. And so we can get some of the stew that one pub was advertising.”

Emma looked over to where Mary Margaret’s ‘nice young man’ stood. In reality, he looked to be about their age, possibly a few years older; she couldn’t tell what color his eyes were from here but he watched them with interest. The wind-tousled hair and the smirk on his face didn’t match her description either -- oh no, nice was absolutely not the word Emma would use to describe this guy. “Have you even looked at him?” she hissed.

Mary Margaret looked properly appalled, smacking her on the arm discretely. “Emma!”

“He looks neither nice nor young!”

“He looks like he’s David’s age and, well, okay, he looks a bit… impish, but I call you nice even when you’re being all… you,” Mary Margaret hissed back.

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“You know what it’s supposed to mean, Miss Prickly Pear! You know what I think?” Mary Margaret asked as they let David lead the way. “I think you definitely looked at him and that’s why you’re being this way.”

“What way?” Emma hissed, but Mary Margaret didn’t respond as the man began talking.

Okay, maybe she knew what way. Up close, the guy was hot. He had a musical kind of lilt to his voice as he talked about the legends behind the Blarney Stone, weaving in little jokes as he went, and Emma caught him looking at her appreciatively more than once. “Now, it’s a bit of a drop to get to it,” he was saying, “but I promise I haven’t lost anyone yet.”

Emma’s gaze snapped to where David was about to lay on a mat on the stone walkway. “Wait, what?”

“Aye,” the guide said, setting up the souvenir camera. “Stone’s down there, love, built into the battlements. What’s the fun without a bit of danger?”

David grinned at her as Emma watched, transfixed and feeling slightly green around the gills; the guide had him lay on his back, grip some metal poles bolted into the stone walls, and bend himself halfway down the wall as the guide held David’s waist. A photo was snapped, and then David was getting back up, looking a bit red from all the blood rushing to his head but still grinning. “I am not doing that,” Emma stated flatly.
“Says the woman leaning out of the tower earlier?” David asked.

“I was barely poking my head over the side!”

“Oh, come on Emma,” Mary Margaret said, slipping her own beanie off her head and shoving it in her pocket. She too managed the feat and got a photo to prove it.

But Emma dug her heels in, crossing her arms over her chest defiantly as the guide waited her out.

“It’s alright, lass.”

“It’s slippery.”

“I’ll hold on to you.”

“Then we’ll both fall to our deaths.”

“Someone’s been listening to too many Holmes dramas,” the guide said with a small sigh. He waved her over, holding out his hand. “Come here, Emma, it’s perfectly safe.”

She started to ask how he knew her name, but remembered Mary Margaret’s goading. Feeling churlish, she went to kneel next to him. He stuck out his hand and she took it, cautiously. “Name’s Killian,” he said, grinning at her. “There, now we know each other. Better to fall to your death with a friend than a stranger, aye?”

“You really need to work on your bedside manner.”

Killian laughed, then canted his head down to where the stone lay embedded in the wall. “It’s that one there, right at the end. And see past that? There’s a safety catch. So no deaths today, not on my watch. Just a quick dip, then you’re back on your feet. I’ll hold on the whole time.”

Emma glanced down at the stone and then back up at Killian. There must have been something in her eyes because he gave her a small, reassuring smile. “Try something new, darling. It’s called trust.”

She wasn’t one to trust people easily. And even with the safety bars below, this still felt like something unnecessarily risky -- like cliff-diving in the Philippines or some other dangerous touristy thing. But she found herself nodding and laying back. Killian’s hands held her hips firmly and he gave her another smile, and she had a bizarre, fleeting thought about what this might feel like in an entirely different situation: one with less cold, wet stone under her back. “Down you get, love,” Killian said. “And no pretending either, don’t be afraid to really get into it.”

Emma scoffed, then pulled herself down and back. She saw a fleeting glimpse of that beautiful countryside before she firmly shut her eyes and pressed her lips to the cold, wet Blarney Stone.

As Killian helped her back up -- her actual back was protesting the exercise -- Mary Margaret and David were applauding her, and Emma was pretty sure it was only a little bit sarcastic. Killian helped her to her feet as well, clapping her on the shoulder with yet another grin. “Good show. Now, if you want your photos, those will be down at the booth as you’re leaving the grounds. It looks like we’re going to get more rain in a bit, so I suggest you three hustle if you’re going to escape most of the wet.”

David and Mary Margaret nodded and started back down the castle. Emma started to go after them, then glanced over her shoulder. “Hey, Killian?” He looked up, with an oddly hopeful look on his face. She smiled a bit, then lifted her hand in farewell. “Thanks.”

“Anytime, love. Have a good day.”
Emma bought her souvenir photo.

After they got back to the hostel and all traded turns in the shower, Emma couldn’t decide if she wanted to lay down on her bed and never get back up, or if she should feed her rumbling stomach. Her legs hurt from all the climbing that day, but she knew she’d only be grouchy and get a headache if she didn’t eat. So she popped a few Tylenol and followed her friends down the street to the pub they’d discussed earlier.

It was warm and cozy inside, dim lighting and old, dark wood breathing a sense of history into the place. The stew was excellent, as were the beers -- though Emma still had some trouble adjusting to this warm beer thing -- and they decided to stay and listen for a while as a local band was getting ready to play their set.

Emma was absorbed in going over tomorrow’s plans with David when she heard a familiar voice over the microphone announce the band and then count off to the first song. She looked up and realized with a shock that it was Killian on the guitar and singing. A man with curly hair was on the fiddle, and there was another man and a woman -- one on a hand-drum and the other with a pipe; there were a few other instruments at their feet and occasionally they’d swap out. Apparently they were regulars, because as the evening wore on folks started to call out favorite requests and Killian would banter with them, to much laughter.

She was up at the bar getting refills when Killian announced a short break. She felt someone come up to the bar next to her and heard Killian say, “Couple of waters, cheers lad.”

Emma totally wanted to blame the alcohol for what happened next, but she knew deep down that she’d somehow hoped she could see him again. Or maybe the Blarney Stone magic was starting to work. “Hey,” she said, turning to look at him. “You guys aren’t half bad.”

The look on his face was priceless, shock and a bit of awe as well. “Emma.”

Her smile faltered a bit, worried that this would be a bad thing. After all, he wasn’t being paid to calm down the crazy girl at the top of a castle here, he was performing. And it had only been for a few minutes earlier that day, it wasn’t like they’d shared this magical moment and birds would start singing anytime they were near -- oh, God, she was spending too much time with Mary Margaret on this trip. “Yeah,” she said, as the bartender came up with her tray of drinks and a few glasses of water for Killian. “Sorry, I just thought -- your band’s good. We’ve been enjoying it. I’ll, uh, let you get back to your break--”

“No, love.” Killian’s hand shot out and stopped her from moving. “Apologies, I was just stunned to see you here. You must have been tucked away in some corner, I would have noticed otherwise.”

Emma was grateful for the dark, it hid her rising blush. “Oh. Well, yeah, we have a table near the back.”

“I see. And I’m keeping you from your friends now.”

She shook her head at the sad sound of his voice. “No, I was just getting refills. I needed to get up and move anyway, David’s a planner and Mary Margaret has all the Lonely Planets out and it’s starting to get on my nerves a bit.”

“Like a bit of spontaneity, do you?” Killian asked.
The glint in his eye made her warmer. “Kinda,” Emma admitted. “Sometimes you just need to fall off the beaten track for a while, you know? Stuff happens and that’s where the story comes from.”

“A life of adventure.”

She nodded. Killian glanced back at the platform where his band mates were, then back to her. “Listen, I need to get these over to the lads and I’m sure your friends would appreciate their drinks. But pop back up here in a mo’?”

Emma considered him, then decided to take her own advice. Fall off the beaten track for a bit. “Okay.”

She dropped off David and Mary Margaret’s drinks with a hurried explanation, then brought her pint back up to the front of the pub, where Killian waited for her. He gave her a grin that promised mischief, then plucked her glass from her hand. “Do you know how to jig, love?”

Emma looked at him as if he’d grown another head. “Do I know how to what?”

The man with the curly hair and the fiddle stepped up to the mic. “Lads, I’ve had a request -- seems my little brother doesn’t get enough exercise climbing up and down the hills all day and wants to show off for this lovely lass.” Emma’s face was definitely, noticeably red this time, glaring at this guy who claimed to be Killian’s older brother. “So dust off your dancing shoes and get ready to burn off Mrs. O’Malley’s stew.”

“I have no idea what to do!” Emma hissed as Killian took her hands and the band started up a jaunty tune.

“Then it’s a good thing you’ve picked a partner who knows what he’s doing,” Killian told her with a wink. “Follow my lead.”

There was a lot of bouncing involved, but as Killian whirled her around the pub floor with the other people dancing -- David and Mary Margaret included, after the first song -- Emma would later swear she’d never had so much fun or laughed so hard in her life. He took her through four songs before Liam -- his older brother -- and the rest of the pub teased him back into finishing the night’s set.

Emma caught her breath at their table in the back, watching Killian play as she nursed her drink. He caught her eye a few time as he sang, winking once, and when they finished their set for the night he gave her a subtle look to follow him.

As planned out as the trip had been -- chilly weather and new wool sweaters aside -- Emma was pretty sure that no one, least of all her, would have planned on her making out with an Irish pub musician behind the very pub he’d been playing at.

And really, that’s kind of how she preferred it.
Anonymous wanted "How about Emma tries to explain birth control, but he misunderstands and thinks Emma is infertile, and he tries to come to terms with the fact that there will be no Swan-Jones children."

I tweaked it a bit. Angst ahoy.

His throat no longer burned (a sure sign he was well and stinking drunk) but, heedless of the state of his sobriety, more of the numbing liquid spilled over the lip of his flask and down his gullet.

It was a still night: no crickets stirred, not a breeze ruffled their garden, their street devoid of cars or dogs.

*Their*, his and hers and Henry’s, no more and never less.

He took another swig of rum.

“It’s okay,” she'd whispered, her grin making her eyes sparkle and her skin flushed from pleasure. Her hand stilled his own from reaching for the box of protective sheaths in the drawer. “We don’t need it.”

“Emma?”

*They hadn’t discussed this at all. His heart nearly burst, so overwhelmed with love for this incredible woman, this goddess willing to take his seed and bear his child.*

*But night after night (sometimes multiple occasions per night) of spilling himself within her womb had proved fruitless. When he’d asked why she’d insisted they forgo the condoms, ears burning and words tripping out of his mouth, Emma had smiled and touched his arm. “Those were for STIs, and we got those results back weeks ago, remember?” He vaguely recalled a trip to the hospital. She shrugged, continuing, “I dunno, I guess I just… forgot we could go without.”*

Something in the equation felt wrong, but he merely nodded. He liked the way Emma explained the mysteries of her world to him, but sometimes he feared she might think him a fool if he asked questions too often. He could puzzle together most of the complexities, and this felt simple enough, so he just needed time. And perhaps the library.

Killian drained the flask and tossed it aside; the dull clatter on the porch only served to disturb the peaceful night, but peace be damned.

*Infertile.*

He could only be glad that Belle had given him his own key to the library weeks ago; perusing the human physiology section under her keen and curious eye would have brought too many questions.

*“The use of condoms in conjunction with spermicides and other forms of vaginal barriers or*
prescription contraceptives are generally the most effective form of birth control, outside of outright abstinence.”

He’d researched these barriers and contraceptives; there were such things in the Enchanted Forest, of course, but all of them magic-based. The ones here seemed more medicinal. Emma only took a daily capsule for allergies and the occasional migraine, so daily pills were out. He felt nothing when his fingers were inside of her, and normally they were too hurried to fall back into bed for her to do any sort of preparation that these barriers and foams and creams required.

Which meant that, unless he was very much mistaken, one of them was infertile.

And if Henry was anything to go on, it wasn’t Emma.

“Killian?”

He heard her foot clip the flask, her steps light as she approached him. She settled next to him. “Hey, why are you drinking out here alone?” Emma sniffed. “Drinking like a fish out here, what’s wrong?”

He shook his head and it was a mistake – truly, he was out of practice if such a simple thing could make the world spin. “It’s no matter, love.”

“Your overworked liver says otherwise.” She fell silent for a moment, slipping her hand into his. He felt those wary green eyes on him and felt worse, knowing that his silence could only do more harm to her. When she spoke next, it was soft, almost timid, “Come on, no secrets, remember?”

He wished he could keep the words inside, let them eat his own heart and save her this pain. But theirs was a house without secrets that harmed others, and if Emma wanted a child by him and he was unable to fulfill his husbandly duties, then she deserved the truth.

“I… I don’t think I can have children,” he said finally.

If he expected any relief from the words leaving his mouth, he was sorely mistaken.

“What?”

She sounded more confused than anything and he couldn’t bear to look at her – his wife the open book, wearing her heart on her sleeve more and more with every passing day. And here he was, a monster who couldn’t even father offspring, destined to only bring her more pain than she ever deserved. He would destroy her, force her back behind those walls that had been so carefully dismantled over the past years, and he would have no one to blame but himself.

“I suppose I should have seen it years ago,” he said, his tongue feeling thick and clumsy in his mouth. “I’ve hardly been a monk, yet ’s far as I know I’ve fathered no children. ’S not as if we had many ports to choose from, I saw the same doxies again and again. And the means to guard from such expectancies were expensive.”

“Killian you’re drunk.” Emma sounded more amused than anything at this point and his shame only grew; he wanted her to know that this wasn’t sprung of drunken self-pity, that he’d had these thoughts before dunking his head in a barrel of rum.

“Listen to me, Emma. I can’t give you a child! Again and again these last weeks together, none of your modern protections and you’re not pregnant! You’ve had Henry, so you’re not the problem here – as per usual, I’m the one mucking up the good in your life!”

“And waking the neighbors by shouting,” Emma said sternly. Killian bristled a moment, but
calmed as her hands moved; one held his arm and the other stroking the back of his neck. “First, you’re not infertile. Well, I’m pretty sure you aren’t, but there’s like, a whole bunch of shit that people go through first before any doctors will even consider that option. So chill out. Second, you really need to come talk to me about these things before jumping straight from ‘we’ve had sex without condoms for two weeks and you’re not pregnant’ to ‘I must be infertile’. And third, we’ve been using protection.”

Killian’s head was starting to swim at this point, everything she said making sense and not all at once. “No we haven’t,” he said. “I read about all of them – you don’t take any little pills with estrogen and progestin, you don’t have any creams or jellies or barriers to place over your cervix –”

But now Emma was laughing. “Did you read the whole library? I mean, it hasn’t really been updated since the eighties, so it’s a little behind – Killian, there’s a lot more options now. C’mere, give me your hand.”

She shrugged out of her jacket and took his hand, running his fingers along the underside of her upper arm. There was a long, thin bump, like a scar. “I’ve never noticed this before,” Killian said, his words really starting to slur together now.

“It’s an implant. It’s birth control. And I’m going to have to explain this all again after we fix your hangover in the morning, aren’t I?”

She looked so pretty, smiling at him in that way that meant she thought he was ridiculous but loved him regardless. “Aye,” he said, slumping forward to rest his head on her shoulder. “So… we aren’t trying to conceive.”

“No, not yet. I mean, I’m glad I know your feelings about it now, but I kind of wanted to enjoy the honeymoon phase a little longer. I promise, when the time comes that’s a conversation we’re going to have together. With explicit words.”

“Like ‘linea nigra’ and ‘engorged vaginal tissue’ and ‘Fallopian tube’,,” Killian mumbled, making Emma laugh.

Alright, sailor, we’ll review all the things you learned later, but I think we should get you to bed. Regular bed, not sexy bed.”

“But I like sexy bed,” he complained as she helped him to his feet.

“Yeah, well, I like it when you don’t have whiskey dick. Or whatever the rum-soaked equivalent is.”

He had a wicked hangover come morning, one that Emma thankfully did not tease him mercilessly about. She kindly brought him coffee and toast, allowing him the chance to settle his stomach before reviewing the finer points of their conversation last night.

“Next time you get worried about something this, please come talk to me first? Piss-drunk Killian snores a lot,” Emma said, tucking her feet right up against his shins.

He snorted. “Like tequila-night Emma doesn’t snore.”

“I do not! And you’re avoiding.”
Killian sighed, and reached over to stroke her arm. “Apologies. I’ll try to get better about coming to you with such things.”

“Good.” She leaned in and they sealed it with a kiss. “Now,” she said, a wicked twinkle in her eye, “just because we aren’t trying doesn’t mean we can’t practice, right?”

Killian lay back with a groan, covering his face with his own pillow. Emma laughed. “Alright, when your hangover is gone.”
Baby talk

Chapter Summary

Straight up talkin' 'bout babies.

Also some Captain Charming needling.

“There, that wasn’t so bad now was it?”

Emma’s ringing ears say otherwise, but she’s not her dad. Maybe this tantrum isn’t as bad as the others, but if it’s not she (thankfully) doesn’t have to be here all the time while Neal’s teething. David leaves Neal to the frozen banana and sits at the table with her. “Why not numb him up with a bit of whiskey?” Killian asks, still perched near Neal’s playpen.

Emma catches the scandalized look on her dad’s face and tries not to laugh as he says, “I’m not giving my child alcohol just because he’s upset!”

“Dad—”

“Look, mate, you don’t dose him with it,” Killian explains, all too patiently. “Just dab it on with a finger, he loses the pain and sleeps like a–well, like a baby, you and the wife get some rest, and everyone’s much more cheerful come morning.”

David looks to her for help and Emma just shrugs. “I’ve seen foster parents do a lot worse.”

“You aren’t helping.”

But he’s sleep deprived, she knows (like her mom, who has been granted a free night to do what she wants while Emma and Killian help David keep the house under control), so she’ll forgive him for not listening to reason. Instead, she just shoos him off to take a shower while she and her husband clean up after dinner and Neal. “Where’d you learn the whiskey thing?” she asks as they load up the sink.

Killian shrugs, cheeks pink. “We didn’t spend a lot of time off-ship in port, but sometimes my captain would dump Liam and I on a lady friend of his, usually when he knew he’d be sailing into ports less welcoming to slave-owners. She usually had a little one about.”

Emma smiles, ribbing him a bit, then they get to work sharing the dish load.

After the dishes are cleaned and dried and stacked away, Emma tries not to make a face as she sees Neal now covered in banana mush. “Well, that was an idea that lasted all of ten minutes.”

But Killian approaches the task of cleaning up with gusto; he’s not at all squeamish as he picks Neal up, gooey banana fingers and all, and brings him over to the sink to be washed off as well. “Now, lad, that’s no way to win a lady over,” he chides as Emma picks up the washcloth. “Ladies prefer gentlemen who don’t dump half their dinner down their front.”

Neal fusses during cleanup and Emma tries not to giggle at Killian offering all sorts of advice that falls on ears too young to understand. “For someone who was pretty jittery around my pregnant
mom, you’re not bad with him,” she says, fighting to keep her brother’s arm still so she can get all the mush off.

“A woman in delicate condition is no woman to be trifled with, love.”

“Mom would be the last person I’d consider delicate.”

“You know what I mean.” Killian considers Neal for a moment, then says, “We wouldn’t do too badly by one, would we?”

Emma glances up, eyebrow raised. “Do too badly by what?”

“A child.”

Her other eyebrow shoots up. Her gut feeling wants to ask “Seriously?” or “Has being exposed to my baby brother too much inspired paternalistic instincts?” but this is something that needs a little more finesse than she normally operates on. “Is this something you’ve been thinking about for a while?”

He doesn’t want to meet her gaze, which means that, yes, he has. She thinks on that for a bit while she wipes the last of the banana mush from Neal’s face and then watches Killian carry him back to the playpen. It’s not like she hasn’t thought about it herself, but she was hoping to have him all to herself for a little while longer first. They haven’t been married long; it might be more common for marriage and babies to happen almost simultaneously in the Enchanted Forest, but Emma prefers the freedom of choice here.

She walks over to where Killian’s ‘helping’ Neal with a wooden puzzle block, sitting next to him. “Is it wrong that I want to be selfish and keep you for myself?” she asks.

He chuckles, offering a star-shaped wood piece to Neal, who promptly sticks it in his mouth. “Far be it from me to deny you any selfishness.”

“But later…” She nudges him, urging him to look at her and hope he reads her expression like he always does.

“Later… we might discuss it again?”

There’s so much cautious hope in his eyes that it squeezes her heart. “Later we can definitely discuss it again,” she tells him, covering his brace with her hand.

He leans in and she meets him halfway in a soft kiss; there’s a sound behind them, an annoyed cough, and Emma pulls back first, looking around to see her dad standing there with his arms crossed. “No PDA in front of the baby,” David says and Emma rolls her eyes.

Killian, however, decides to bait her father. ‘Oi, that’s hardly PDA. Now, if you’d truly like us to scandalize the lad we could always–’

“Not in this house, pirate.”
“Aw, Swan, do you find me handsome?” Killian asks, grinning at the mug.

Emma does her best not to roll her eyes, going back to the counter to clean up the spilled coffee grounds. She almost regrets buying the mug on a whim (if it made her smile, it definitely would make him smile), but she does, on occasion, like stroking his ego – especially when it usually means he strokes something in return. “I married you, didn’t I?” she retorts, sweeping the mess into the sink and rinsing it down the drain.

He sounds amused, his voice muffled slightly by its proximity to the mug. “The truth comes out, you only love me for my looks.”

She scoffs, turning on her heel and giving his ear a tweak as she passes him. He makes a noise of complaint and she appeases him by pressing a kiss on the crown of his head before heading into the laundry room. It’s Killian’s day to do it, but he always forgets to take her bras out before swapping things into the dryer and while he denies purposely destroying her lingerie so she doesn’t have any to wear, she doesn’t want to take the risk. There’s also a few other delicates that need air drying, so she takes care of that too, leaving the rest for him to take care of later while she’s at work.

Emma’s turning, with her arms full of bras and lace-back shirts, when her husband swoops down and kisses the living daylights out of her. She drops the clothes in favor of throwing her arms around his neck and he lifts her off her feet. There’s words between kisses, she thinks, she’s a little too dazed to recognize more than “perfect” “woman” “bloody” and “marvelous” and much too interested in this new turn of events to try and piece together what he could mean.

Killian sets her on top of the washing machine and a wicked thought crosses her mind, but before she can make any suggestions, he’s cupping her face with his hand and looking at her like she’s put the damn moon in the sky. “Wow,” she breathes. “Good morning to you, too.”

“You are a tricky little minx, my love, but the coffee mug was perfect.”

Emma giggles, giddy from his burst of affection and the loving way he’s tucking her hair behind her ear. “Man, I should make you coffee more often if this is how you’ll react.”

One eyebrow twitches. “I’d hope it’s not more than once a year, love, we do need to make sure you rest.”

She opens her mouth to respond, then closes it as it dawns on her that she has no idea what he’s talking about. “Killian?”

“I actually don’t believe it’s possible, though there are twins of course, but I’m more than happy to give you all the children you could possibly want–Swan?”

Thoroughly puzzled now, Emma gently pushes him aside so she can slide down off the washer.
and goes back to the kitchen. His new mug sits empty on the table and she picks it up, examining it much more closely than she had in the store.

‘You’re going to be a daddy.’

Her eyes close and her heart seizes. “Oh, Killian…”

I didn’t know.

“You didn’t know.”

He’s right behind her and he sounds so disappointed and she can’t stand that note in his voice, the neglected one that whispers of lost hopes and bitter dreams. “I wouldn’t have bought it if I did. I’m so…”

Killian presses a kiss to her forehead, shushing softly. “Don’t apologize, darling. I should have guessed it wasn’t your intention, you’re much more blunt and to the point about these sorts of things. You did practically scent out your engagement ring and demand I propose to you, after all.”

“I did not,” she says, but she’s laughing a little. “I’m still sorry I got your hopes up.”

He kisses her again and she tucks herself into his embrace. “I’m sorry too,” he says, and that’s how she knows this hurts him more than he lets on.

Emma tilts her head up, considering him. “Well… we’ve been trying, haven’t we?” she asks. At Killian’s inquiring look, she dares a small smile. “No reason we can’t try again now, right?”

He smiles and she hopes it won’t be long before he loses the wistful air about him. She does hate to disappoint.

The next time she uses the mug in the morning, she puts a sticky note on the outside, “Seriously this time, I promise”, and sits right on the edge of the bed to watch as the words sink in for her sleep-addled pirate.

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