The Pirate Who Saved Christmas

by LizaCameron

Summary

Killian shares a story with Emma and her family about one extraordinary Christmas past. Set after 4x11, as if Christmas was several weeks after those events.

Notes

This is a CS Secret Santa gift for Killiancaroling! It’s been so great getting to talk to you and incorporate some of your Christmas preferences into this story. I hope you have a wonderful holiday! Part two will be up by the 26th.
“This seems like a gratuitous amount of work for a celebration that lasts only one day,” Killian said as he helped Henry put the large tree into place. Once settled, it sat majestically in the corner of Emma’s new living room right next to a large window that overlooked the water.

Henry opened one of the many boxes that littered the floor and started rummaging through its contents and said, “You should have seen the decorating Mrs. Q used to do; she was our neighbor in New York. Her entire apartment was covered in colored lights and she had an entire Christmas village that wrapped around one wall. She had to put furniture into storage.”

“So,” Killian said with a grin, nudging Emma’s knee playfully with his own as he came to stand next to her. He gestured to the scene before them, where tangled lights and boxes of decorations had created Christmas chaos. “You’re giving her a run for her money, are you?”

“Nope,” Emma shook her head resolutely, “we’re doing white lights, not colored. I think I burnt my retinas looking at Mrs. Q’s display last year.”

“As long as you know where the line is,” Killian teased.

Emma wrinkled her nose at him and then surveyed the tree and felt an unexpected surge of delight. A Christmas tree, she had an actual, real Christmas tree and she was about to decorate it with her family. Decorating for the holidays was something she never really bothered with when she lived alone, back before Henry found her, and now here she was with boxes of bells and bows and balls. “Yeah, well, Christmases were not very merry when I was growing up and I plan to make up for that. We’ve all been through a lot and I just want to give Henry… and me… and you… and everyone a real holiday this year.”

Killian noticed that Emma had been fiddling with an object as she spoke. He reached over and gently opened her hand so he could examine it. It was a long chain with a bell on it. He felt his heart clench tightly in his chest as recognition hit him. He swallowed roughly and then looked up at Emma. “Memento?”

“Yes... I guess... I don’t know.” Emma knit her brows in concentration as she considered the mystery of the bell. “I think it must have been in that box, the one from my childhood. It’s a necklace that I had as a little girl... or similar to it. I liked bells. Bell ringers. Jingle bells. Listening to them... didn’t cost anything.” Her voice drifted off as her mind traveled back over many a lonely Christmas. “Anyway,” she shook her head as if to shake off the melancholy memories. “I hadn’t seen it in years and then last year it turned up.” She gripped the miniature yoke and rang it; a surprisingly big sound came from the tiny object. She scrunched her nose as she said, “See, it’s the oddest thing. I remember it being much flimsier than this.” Emma shrugged and said, “But we know my memories of that time have been messed with, this must be the same necklace.”

He took it from her and then spread the chain with both hook and hand so it would fit over her head. Emma huffed in mock annoyance, about to object to wearing a child’s novelty toy, but then a small smile crossed her face and she assented to his wordless request by bowing her head so he could place it around her neck. “Well, either way…” Killian said once it was in place, “It looks fetching on you.”

“You think everything looks fetching on me.” Emma replied without thinking and then immediately froze, startled by her own words. This thing they had was so new that sometimes the ease and intimacy of it took her by surprise. They’d technically only been together weeks, and a part of her was still scared by the intensity of it, the intensity of her own feelings, and definitely the
intensity of his. They hadn’t defined anything and even though, deep down, she knew how he felt about her, she’d been abandoned too many times to not feel wary when she started getting too comfortable with someone.

However, Killian not only showed no signs of retreat, his reaction was to simply grin widely at her. “I most assuredly do. So if this is the only thing you have from your childhood, where did the rest of this adornment come from?” He swept his arm around the room.

“All of this stuff,” she motioned to the boxes of decorations, “is either from last year or purchased when I went back to New York for our things. I figured we’d do Christmas up right this year. Speaking of…” she turned to Henry, “what do you want Santa Claus to bring you this year, kid?”

Henry looked at her incredulously as he walked over to the couch. “Come on, Mom. Santa? Really?”

“What? Last year… when we were in New York, you believed in Santa Claus.”

Henry smirked at her. “Mom, I was 12. I knew Santa Claus wasn’t real, but I liked the extra present. Besides it was our tradition…”

A bittersweet pang hit Emma in the heart so hard she thought she might keel over. She didn’t. She sat down instead and looked up into her son’s face. She was surprised by how high up her gaze had to travel, it seemed like he grew taller by the day. “It’s still a bit weird, isn’t it? The fake memories?”

Henry nodded in agreement, but seemed to shake it off more quickly than Emma. He shot her a mischievous grin, “So, mom, what’s Santa going to bring me this year?”

“Well I guess if the cat is out of the bag, there’s no need to pretend he exists.”

“No, wait, I can pretend if you want,” Henry replied eagerly. He looked over at Killian, “Santa gifts were always good. Last year ‘Santa,’” Henry used air quotes as he said his name, “brought me some books, collector’s editions.”

Emma knit her eyebrows in confusion, but before she could speak, Killian beat her to the punch. “Santa Claus? You mean this fellow right here?” he asked pointing to a stuffed Santa on the kitchen counter that Emma had purchased for her baby brother.

“Yup, that’s Santa Claus, Old Saint Nick, Kris Kringle.” Henry replied as he settled on to the floor and started to untangle strands of lights. “We didn’t do a very good job of putting these away last year, Mom.”

“You mean his existence is in question?” Killian interjected, not allowing the change in subject.

Emma looked at him oddly before she replied slowly, “Of course his existence is in question. He’s a guy in a red suit that travels via sleigh and reindeer to every child’s house and delivers presents in one night. How could he be real?”

Killian just raised an incredulous eyebrow at her.

Emma let out a soft laugh and rose from her place on the couch. “Says the woman who’s dating Captain Hook. Point taken.” At the suddenly pleased look that crossed Killian’s face, she rolled her eyes but on impulse leaned up and pressed a soft kiss to his lips. She couldn’t help but feel a tad giddy at his reaction; he was so ridiculously cute whenever she referred to them in tandem. Moments like this made her feel silly for ever feeling insecure about the status of their relationship.
Henry groaned. “I said I was okay with this, but we talked about displays of affection in front of me.” Killian reached over to ruffle his hair playfully, but Henry ducked out of the way.

“Nice evasive maneuver,” Killian said, sounding impressed. “You’ll do well when we finally start training you with a sword,”

Henry’s eyes lit up and he looked eager to set the date for training right away, but just then the front door burst open and Mary Margaret and David entered with baby Neal in tow. “Merry Christmas!” Mary Margaret called as she sat down Neal’s carrier. “It’s really coming down out there; and here I’d thought we’d be free of cold weather once our friends from Arendelle left.”

“It’s December. In Maine. The snow is not wholly unexpected,” David replied matter-of-factly, but his words were softened by the fact that he grinned at his wife as he said it. He turned to Emma. “We’re here to help decorate, put us to work.”

Emma couldn’t suppress the smile that spread across her face. It was happening and it was all so perfect it almost felt surreal. The kind of big family Christmas she’d always dreamed of, but never thought she could have. Her parents. Her son. Her brother. Her pirate. “We will, but first hot chocolate and then Hook is going to tell us about how Santa Claus is a real person.”

“Santa Claus?” Mary Margaret crinkled her nose in confusion as she checked on Neal one last time and then shrugged out of her coat.

“You mean you don’t know him either?” Hook asked, sounding almost offended. “I thought you knew everyone.”

“I know my fair share of people,” she said as she headed towards the kitchen. She glanced at Henry, “Want to help me make the hot chocolate?” As he joined her, she continued, “In our realm… or should I say our old realm, I’d heard of the North Pole, of course, but as far as I know it’s so cold it’s uninhabitable.”

David looked thoughtful. “I’d heard the same, but I guess we’ve since met people who can survive in very cold temperatures just fine. Elsa, for one.”

Emma turned from her mother to Killian and eyed him suspiciously, “If my mom and dad haven’t heard of him, why are you so sure he’s real?”

Killian shrugged nonchalantly. “Because I’ve met him.”

“What?” Emma stared at him in wonder.

“Mom, where do we keep the cinnamon in this new kitchen,” Henry said as he sat down the mugs he’d been gathering.

Still stunned by Hook’s proclamation, she didn’t answer. Killian crossed over to him, opened the pantry and handed Henry the cinnamon. David’s eyes went wide as he watched him and he was about to comment on Hook’s familiarity with Emma’s kitchen when Henry said, “Thanks. You’ve met him?” He glanced at the stuffed Santa pointedly and then looked at Killian. “That guy? Santa Claus?”

“Indeed,” Killian picked up the toy and examined him, “This is the likeness of the very fellow I met. Kris Kringle, he called himself.”

“Okay, back up and start from the beginning. I have to hear about this.” Emma said as she took a seat on the couch and looked expectantly over at Killian.
Killian gulped nervously, this was not a story he was anxious to tell. “Surely there can be no need to recount such a tedious tale, just take my word for it, he’s very real.”

“Oh, I see. Was this during your Captain Hook days?” David asked as his lip curled into something dangerously close to a sneer. He liked Killian, but he did not like how at home he appeared to be in his daughter’s new apartment. Especially since Henry had been spending most nights at Regina’s. “Did you board his sleigh and loot all the presents, ruining Christmas for countless boys and girls?”

“No,” Killian replied indignantly. “I’ll have you know I helped save Christmas!” The moment after the words escaped his mouth, his eyes went wide as he realized what he’d been goaded into revealing.

Everyone was silent for several beats as they all looked at him in awe. Finally Emma spoke, “Oh we’re going to have to hear this story now.” She glanced over at her mother, “I have a feeling I’m gonna need you to make mine an adult hot chocolate, the good stuff is in the cabinet over the stove.”

Mary Margaret laughed softly, but complied, spiking three of the five hot chocolates and then passed them out accordingly. Once settled around the room, Emma, her eyes twinkling with anticipation, motioned to Killian. “Go ahead; let’s hear the tale of how the pirate saved Christmas.”

Killian merely stared back at them, he’d hoped in the minute it had taken Mary Margaret to finish the drinks and for everyone to settle in they’d have moved on to something else. It’d been a pipe dream, he knew. Instead, he found four sets of expectant eyes trained on him. He never should have mentioned the blasted Santa fellow, telling this story to Emma in front of her boy and her parents was not ideal. For a second his eyes found the door and he contemplated escape. However, he didn’t leave, instead he shook his head and sighed resignedly; he’d have to tell them the tale.

“You all recall the year Pan’s curse sent us to the Enchanted Forest and Emma and Henry to New York?”

“Yes,” they all replied in unison, and then David added a wry, “of course.”

Killian grimaced at him. “There’s no ‘of course’ when it comes to memories in Storybrooke. For all I know you met a wood nymph on your way here that took them again. In any case, that year is where this story begins…”

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ONE YEAR PRIOR

“But sir…”

“What, Smee?” Hook replied as he took a final swig of rum from his glass and moved to push himself off of the bench where he’d been perched since they’d made landfall. It was always a different port city and a different tavern, but the bench was always the same. Which made everything feel the same. It was day after day of colorless monotony now, but he feared it would become year after year. It was as if he was in a tunnel with no light at the end.

“Nothing, sir.” Smee replied quickly, sensing his Captain was in a dark mood. It wasn’t hard to detect; he was often in a dark mood these days.

“Spit it out.”
“It’s just that you got her back, so why haven’t you…”

“How haven’t I what?” Hook narrowed his eyes as he studied his first mate. He had a menacing glint in his eye.

“Gone back to normal! You defeated Blackbeard, you got the Jolly Roger back. Why aren’t you happy?”

Hook felt his temper flare, but at the frightened look on his friend’s face, perhaps his only friend, his anger quickly abated. “I’m fine. Smee. It’s… I’m lousy company tonight, but you and the crew enjoy yourselves.”

Hook quickly left the tavern and made short work of the walk back to the ship. Not just any ship, his ship. The Jolly Roger. He’d gone to so much effort to get her back only to discover that she didn’t fill the void in his soul. It wasn’t his ship that he’d been missing, he knew that now. The ache in his heart was here to stay, he only hoped with time it would fade some, and some day, life would once again be bearable.

When he stepped onto the gangplank, the sight in front of him made him stop in his tracks. A strange man was aboard his ship. Hook was momentarily stunned into silence, but he quickly regained his composure and his voice. “Who the bloody hell are you?”

The man put one hand on his rotund stomach and bowed slightly. “The name is Kris, Kris Kringle, but watch your language, young man, talk like that will land you on the naughty list.”

“Great,” Hook rolled his eyes. “A demon with manners.”

“Demon?” The man laughed heartily.

“No?” Hook relaxed his stance.

“Then what are you and why are you on my ship?” He surveyed the man’s red furry suit, full white beard and shiny black boots. He’d seen some strange outfits in the Enchanted Forest and in Emma’s land, but nothing like what stood before him. Emma. Even the brief reminder of her sent a pang from his heart that reverberated through his soul.

“I’m here, Killian, because I need your help.”

That got the pirate’s attention. He narrowed his eyes and turned his hard glare on the mysterious man. “How do you know my name?”

“It’s part of my magic. I know people’s names. It comes in quite handy in my job.”

“Magic?” Hook grimaced. “You have magic. Well, unlucky for you, I’ve had quite enough of magic to last the next century, so if you wouldn’t mind seeing yourself off my ship, there’s a bottle of rum with my name on it in my quarters.”

“Yes, you do like to curse each other in the southern realms, don’t you?” The man asked with a disdainful shake of his head. “A shameful misuse of magic if ever I saw one. Although, to be fair, it’s not just the southern realms that abuse magic, why the realm closest to the North Pole has been frozen over for-” The man stopped himself mid-sentence with a jolly laugh. “Here you have me boring on about the misuse of magic. It’s one of my pet rants. If Mrs. Claus were here, she would be lecturing me to stay on task. So let’s turn our attention to the matter at hand. How you, Killian Jones, can help me.”

“Who’s Mrs. Claus?” Hook asked, ignoring the odd man’s attempt to turn the conversation to how Hook could be of service.
“My wife, of course.”

“I thought you said your last name was Kringle?”

“Yes, of course, I have many names; I would think you’d understand that, Captain Hook.”

“Touche,” Hook smirked at him, “But you’re wasting your time. I don’t have magic and for the record I would have done anything to stop that last curse, but alas there was nothing I could do and here we are.”

“I know you don’t have magic. But you do have something that can help me.”

“And what would that be?”

“A magic ship. Or should I say... an enchanted ship.”

Hook looked at him warily and assumed a defensive posture. “That... she is. However, I fail to see what that means to you and I warn you I don’t react kindly to people who try to part her from me.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it. I simply wish to borrow her for one night.”

“Borrow?”

“Yes, you see, for my job. I only work once a year and tonight is the night, but my regular mode of transportation is...” he sighed and couldn’t hide the exasperation that stole over his jolly countenance. “Out of commission.”

“What’s your regular mode of transport?”

“A sleigh and eight flying reindeer, nine in inclement weather.”

Hook nodded several times and then a grin split his face. “That sounds about right. Now I understand. My crew thinks I’ve been a bit morose lately and they hired you to give me a laugh, did they? Well, good job, you’ve succeeded.” He motioned to the gangplank. “Now be on your way.”

“I assure you, Killian, this is no joke. I’m here because I believe you can help me.”

Hook sighed and turned back. “If you have magic, light magic, then why are you on a pirate ship, seeking help from an evil, black-hearted soul like myself?”

“My magic gives me the ability to see into people’s hearts and know what truly lies within. You’ve done bad things, but you are no more evil or black-hearted than I am.”

“I know a mermaid who would disagree with you,” Killian murmured under his breath.

“Ariel? Yes, I can see why she would be angry, but it was a bit presumptuous of her to ask it of you, don’t you think?”

Hook’s eyes widened and his jaw dropped. “How did you-“

“I’ve been telling you, magic. It not only detects names, it detects naughtiness and a person’s true nature. Now shall we get down to business? The clock is ticking and we have a long night ahead of us.”
“We do?” Hook asked sardonically. “I think you’ve forgotten that I haven’t agreed to help you yet.”

“But you will,” the man replied with ever confident enthusiasm.

“Why’s that?”

“Because this night is a time for wishes and I believe I can grant yours.”

The way the man was looking at Killian, as if he could see all truths, made him extremely uncomfortable. “I don’t wish for anything, so if you wouldn’t mind being on your way.” Enough was enough, Hook brushed past the strange and disconcerting man and started for his quarters.

“Not even to see Emma again?”

Killian froze in his tracks, but he didn’t turn around. His voice was surprisingly quiet when he asked, “What do you know about Emma?”

“I know that of all things you wish to see her again. I can grant that wish. You see, one night a year, a night called Christmas Eve, I’m tasked with bringing a little magic to the land without magic.”

“The land without magic?” Hook whipped around to look at the man. He was breathless and hope flashed across his eyes. “You can travel there?”

“One night a year, yes, and that night is tonight.”

Hook studied the man, and then his eyes narrowed suspiciously. “If I hadn’t seen the Dark One perish with my own eyes, I’d think you were some manifestation of his, here to trick me.”

“I’m not a manifestation, this isn’t in jest and I mean you no harm. If you help me, I can grant your wish to see her. But I’m afraid that’s the caveat.”

“What’s the caveat?” Hook eyed him suspiciously.

“You will be able to see her, but that’s it. You won’t be able to talk to her and she won’t be able to see you.”

“What good does that do me?” Hook growled, the momentary hope he’d felt, fading completely away.

“You want to see her. You’ll be able to do that. You will sate the curiosity I know you have. You wonder what happened to her. You wonder if she’s okay. I’m offering you the chance to know.”

Hook considered this. The man was right; he desperately wanted to know what had happened to Emma, if she was happy and well. If she were, perhaps he too would eventually find some peace. “How does my ship help you? It’s true she’s enchanted and she’s flown, but I have no way of getting her airborne now.”

“You leave that to me. You’re going to love Rudolf.”

TBC...
Once again, I want to thank Danielle for being so much fun this holiday season. This is the final chapter of her CS Secret Santa gift. I hope you enjoy and happy holidays to all!

PRESENT DAY

“You’ve met Rudolf?” Henry interrupted Killian’s tale, sounding half-full of disdain and disbelief and half full of awe at the very notion of the famous reindeer being real.

“I have.” Killian tried not to let his irritation show. He’s just gotten into a groove in telling the story when Henry interjected.

“What was he like?”

“What do you mean, what’s he like? He’s a large, smelly mammal.”

“Did he talk?” Henry persisted.

“Talk?” Killian looked nonplused. “It was a reindeer. Are you feeling alright, lad, Reindeer can’t talk.”

Henry threw up his hands. “Well reindeer can’t fly either, but you say they can. Why not talking?” he shook his head and laughed. “Fine, they don’t talk. So, what happened, did you end up seeing us?”

“I did, I was just getting to that part when you started on about talking reindeer.” Killian replied with a teasing smile. He felt Emma’s gaze drilling through him. He turned to face her, unsure of what her reaction to this story might be. At times she was an open book, at others, usually when his heart was at stake, he found her harder to read. “Swan?”

She didn’t say anything and the room fell silent.

After the moment grew long enough to become awkward, David pushed himself up off the couch and broke the silence. “You know what, I think I need a refill. Anyone else?”

“I’ll help you.” Mary Margaret scrambled quickly to her feet as well. “Henry, why don’t you gather the mugs?”

As they all vacated the living room, Killian took a step towards the couch and gingerly sat down next to her. “Emma?”

Finally, she turned to him. “Sorry, I’m just... processing. Your greatest wish was to see me?”

He cocked his head to the side and studied her curiously for a second. Then with one fluid movement, he took her hand and laced their fingers. “Of course that was my wish. Does that surprise you?”
Involuntarily, she felt her stomach flutter. It was the same feeling she’d had when he’d admitted to trading his ship for her. She looked down at their entwined hands. “No, I guess not, it’s just that it always takes me by surprise when somebody rates me first. So to have a man who could see into your heart confirm that of all things the great pirate captain wanted, number one was to see me, it’s a little overwhelming.”

“It wasn’t number one.” At that, her eyes widened in embarrassment, she’d presumed and been burned once again. She immediately tried to drop his hand, but he didn’t allow it. Instead, he squeezed it gently. “Emma, it wasn’t number one, because it was the only thing on the list.”

Green eyes met blue and she felt her stomach flip. He was looking at her with such open affection it took her breath away. However, the determined clearing of a throat interrupted the moment. They looked up to see David, Mary Margaret and Henry carrying the mugs back from the kitchen, Mary Margaret and Henry smiling, David eyeing them suspiciously.

As he accepted a fresh mug from David, Killian asked her, “Would you like me to go on or save the rest of the story for another time?”

“No, of course I want to hear it. Continue,” she squeezed his hand, “please.”

xXx

ONE YEAR EARLIER

“New York City is difficult. Many people, not many fireplaces. It forces me to get a little creative,” Kringle said as the Jolly Roger effortlessly lifted off the roof of a mid-sized building in Manhattan and once again took flight. Much to Killian’s consternation, the man had shrunk the ship until it was a fraction of its normal size. He had assured Killian it was only temporary and the Jolly Roger would return to normal when their mission was complete. “The roof of every building in this city is different, the suburbs are much easier.”

Hook ignored the man’s rambling; he was too busy taking in the sights of the bustling city below. “Emma is here? New York?”

“She is,” was the only reply Kringle offered.

“When do we see her?”

“Patience is a virtue,” replied the man.

“I have few virtues,” Hook rejoined under his breath. “But patience happens to be one of them. So,” Killian resigned himself to a long night and motioned to the team of flying Reindeer that were leading his ship. “Your flying Reindeer appear to be fine, what happened to this sleigh of yours that you had to borrow my ship?”

Kringle shook his head in annoyance. “My sleigh is made of enchanted wood just like the Jolly Roger.” He paused for a moment and then laughed heartily. “I can’t stay mad at them. You see my helpers, the elves, well they got a little out of control at the workshop end-of-season celebration this afternoon, too much of Mrs. Claus’s Famous Christmas Rum Punch. One thing led to another and they ended up crashing the sleigh while using it as a bobsled. It’s going to take months for the enchanted trees to mature and produce the wood necessary to repair it. You’re truly saving Christmas, Killian. This will go on your permanent record, might even erase some of those dark spots on your heart.”

“I don’t even know what this Christmas is, but if rum is involved I’m sure I could adapt.” Hook said, ignoring the rotund man’s mention of his heart. It wasn’t something on which he liked to
dwell. “I assume it’s something Emma celebrates?”

“Up until now ‘celebrate’ would have been a strong word to describe Emma and Christmas. Here in the land without magic there are many belief systems, it’s complicated, but all you need to know is that this time of year magic and miracles are possible and I help deliver them.”

Killian motioned to a large bag that the man carried with him; he’d already witnessed him pulling out an abundance of toys and other wrapped items. “Presents?”

“Yes, but it’s not always material goods. Sometimes something less tangible is called for. Growing up, your Emma, for instance, had problems that a toy necklace couldn’t solve. You do the best you can, but sometimes it’s even out of my hands.” He turned and surveyed the pirate. “Are you ready?”

“We’re here?” Killian looked nervous as they pulled up next to a building. “This is where we find Emma?”

“It is.”

xXx

Oh the weather outside is frightful
But the fire is so delightful
Since we’ve no place to go
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow

Hook could hear the music playing through the window, he wasn’t familiar with it but it sounded nice, happy. Kringle had brought the Jolly Roger flush with a window on the side of the building that afforded a decent view. His eyes anxiously scanned the room looking for her. He didn’t see her, or anyone, but what he did see made him relax. Her living quarters were nice. Spacious and well appointed. A small, lighted tree stood in the corner of the room with a few wrapped presents underneath. Whatever this life was that she now had, she looked to be living well. It seemed Regina had kept her promise.

“Where is she?” Hook asked, his voice coming out breathless and a bit hoarse. The man was about to answer when it became unnecessary. “Emma,” Hook whispered when he saw her emerge from the hall. He brought his palm flat against the window and his face was so close to the glass his nose touched it.

She was wearing plaid flannel pajamas, and her long blonde hair was loose and flowing down her back; Hook was sure she’d never looked more beautiful. His heart clenched in his chest, he could feel the blood rushing through his veins and there seemed to be an almost buzzing sound in his ears. It felt like an out of body experience, seeing Emma again. He never dreamed it possible.

“Henry!” He heard her call down the hall. “The hot chocolate’s ready. Have you picked a movie?”

Hook watched her every move, enthralled. She was so close, yet so far. She pulled several mugs out of a cabinet and started pouring the velvety liquid. “She loves hot chocolate,” Hook whispered to himself.

“Indeed, she does,” Kringle answered. “But we must turn our attention to gifts. Henry. He asked me for a gaming-system, but it seems his mom already got that for him. Do you know what he might like?”

“She looks happy. Is she happy?” Hook ignored the question and posed his own, his eyes never
leaving Emma.

Kringle nodded his head. “Yes, or as happy as a person can be when a part of them is missing.”

“Aye,” Hook whispered, realizing the truth of that statement.

“Back to Henry. Do you have any thoughts about a gift?”

Hook shrugged and was steadfast in his refusal to take his eyes off the scene through the window. “I barely know the lad.”

“Very well, we’ll pull something from my magic bag.” Kringle replied affably.

“Wait,” Hook said, finally tearing his gaze from the window. “From what I understand in the land without magic… we… I… I mean all of us from the Enchanted Forrest appear in stories. Perhaps… there is something we could give him that connects him with his origins.”

Kris smiled benevolently. “An excellent idea.” He reached into his capacious bag and pulled out a stack of books including Peter Pan, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and Grimm’s Fairy Tales. “I think these might answer the purpose nicely.”

Hook looked at them in wonder, and then huffed in slight irritation as he turned back to the window where Emma and Henry were now settling on the couch getting ready to watch a movie. “I can’t believe I’m being complicit in spreading propaganda that paints Pan as anything but evil. But if it’s for the lad…” Hook trailed off as he watched Emma laugh at something Henry had said.

Kringle gave him a minute and then asked softly, “What about, Emma?”

“Emma? I thought you only brought gifts to children?” Hook asked as he heard the song that had been playing earlier fade away and sounds from the television replace it.

“I think, in this case, we can make an exception.”

“Really?” Hook once again turned to face him. Hope lit his face. “Could you… Could we give her something of mine?”

“Possibly…” the man replied, “What did you have in mind?”

Hook looked around frantically and then his eyes landed on his hand. Yes! He held it up. “One of my rings?” He’d kicked himself a dozen times for not giving her one at the town line, a material piece of him to keep with her even though she wouldn’t remember what it was or where she’d gotten it.

Kringle shook his head and then said gently, “With adults you have to be careful, you can’t have them asking too many questions. Perhaps it would be best if we assisted her in finding something she’d lost, anything that won’t make her question. I’m afraid one of those,” he pointed to the ornate jewelry, “would be hard to explain.”

Hook’s heart fell as he turned back to the window. For a moment he’d felt light at the idea of Emma having something of his.

“I have an idea if you’re okay with parting with something from your ship.” Kringle suggested with a twinkle in his eye.

“Anything.” Hook replied without missing a beat.
“The ship’s bell?”
“Would you be willing to part with it for Emma?”
“Of course, but I don’t see how if a small ring would upset the balance, that giant bell will go unnoticed.”
“Indeed, but we’ll alter it some. Once when Emma was about eight, I gave her a necklace with a bell on it. She was always running away and I thought she might be easier to find with a bell around her neck. I believe she quite liked it. I can take your ship’s bell, shrink it down and recreate that necklace with it. She’ll think she’s finding her old belonging, but in reality it will be a piece of you.”

Hook stared at the man for several long seconds and then a smile spread across his face.

xXx

PRESENT DAY

“...then the gifts were placed in your apartment and he said it was time to leave. I rode along as he finished his rounds. You see the hoax is that while he’s working, time stands still. It took a bloody eternity,”

All eyes were on Killian as he finished the story. Finally, Emma looked at him with slightly glassy eyes and tugged gently on the necklace, “So you gave this to me? This is from you?”

“Well, I guess it’s technically from the Santa fellow.”

“It was from your ship,” she said simply, her gaze drilling through him.

He nodded several times, his heart beating wildly and his eyes never leaving hers.

Henry had run to his room as Killian finished and was now walking back in carrying a stack of books. “So you brought me these books and mom thought she was giving me the PlayStation from Santa?”

“Again it was Mr. Kringle who brought the books.” Killian protested as he tore his gaze from Emma. “I just loaned my ship to the cause.”

“But Santa is real and you both came to see us?” Henry asked, still trying to wrap his head around the idea of Santa Claus as an actual person.

Killian shrugged and looked incredibly uncomfortable. “I wanted to know that you both were okay.” He turned back to Emma. “It’s how I knew where to find you in New York.”

David stood and walked over to him. With one hand, he clapped him on the back. “Well, then, Hook, I owe you an apology. You did save Christmas and helped give a special one to my daughter and grandson when we couldn’t be there. Well done.”

At Killian’s embarrassed cough, David took pity on him and changed the subject. “Now, shouldn’t we get to decorating?” he asked as he gestured at the half open boxes that littered the room. “Otherwise we’re going to be here all night.”

xXx
They all stood around surveying their handy work. The tree, with its white lights and shiny glass balls and ornaments glowed in the dark room. “Pretty good, but I think we can take it up a notch,” Emma said as she lifted her hand and made a small swish. Suddenly the tree was engulfed in what looked like iridescent glitter that hovered around it, reflecting the light at a thousand different angles. It sparkled like no Christmas tree any of them had ever seen. “Top that Mrs. Q,” Emma said with a satisfied smile as the rest of them appropriately ooo’d and awww’d.

“Emma,” Mary Margaret said as she handed Neal’s carrier to David and reached up to hug her daughter. “This is amazing. You’ve made a wonderful home here.”

“Thanks, Mom,” Emma said, slightly taken aback by Mary Margaret’s heartfelt declaration.

David nodded in agreement as he added, “I wasn’t so sure about you moving out, but this is very nice.”

Emma smirked at that, but moved to give him a hug as well. Next in line was Henry, as he hugged her he said, “It’s great. I love it.” He hesitated a moment and then asked, “Are you okay with me going to mom’s tonight? It’s just that she’s all alone...”

“Yeah, kid. I’m fine. You’re a very good son. How about if we invite Regina over for Christmas dinner next week? Would you like that?”

“Yeah that’d be great!” Henry looked so pleased that Emma felt bad that she’d instantly regretted the idea as soon as she said it. It was too late now, however anything that made her son this happy was worth it.

“I suppose, I should say my farewell, too.” Killian said quietly as he moved so he was standing beside her in front of the tree.

Emma put her hand on his arm, she didn’t look at him, but she uttered a soft, “Stay.” It was all the invitation he needed.

She turned to head towards the entryway to see everyone out, only to realize that they had all shrugged quickly into their coats and were already halfway out the door. “See you tomorrow,” Mary Margaret called and before Emma could protest, they were gone. Her heart feeling very full, she turned slowly back to her tree and her pirate.

Killian lifted his arm at her in tentative invitation. She hesitated only a second before she slid her arm around his back and melted into his side, resting her head on his shoulder. They stood like that for several long moments, looking at the tree.

“It’s beautiful, Swan,” he finally murmured.

“Yes, but to be fair, I have no recollection of what your tree looked like last year. During my all-too-brief brief visit, I only had eyes for you and even if I did remember it, I’m going to be biased towards this beast right here since you allowed me to help you select it, carry it around town for you, and hang these fragile baubles on it.”

When she didn’t react to his teasing he turned so his lips met her forehead and then murmured against her skin, “Hey, what’s wrong?”

“It’s just... now that we’re together; I hate to think of you during that year, alone, with your memories while I was in blissful ignorance of what I’d been ripped away from.” She reached down and touched the bell that still hung around her neck.

He squeezed her tighter to him, ignoring her melancholy reflections and focusing on the one word
she’d said that made his heart sing. “Together?”

“What?”

“You’d use that word to describe us? Together?”

She felt her heart clench in her chest, this was the closest they’d come to defining what they were.

“Yeah, wouldn’t you?”

He didn’t answer. Instead, he turned towards her bringing his other arm around her waist in one fluid motion and then as if she was as light as a feather he picked her up and twirled her around.

Wholly taken off guard, she immediately let out a very un-Emma like squeal in surprise. “Put me down,” she said breathlessly as she whapped his shoulder lightly, but her protest was half-hearted because she was also laughing in delight. He stopped after about five rotations and as soon as they came to a standstill, the vertigo set in and they fell back onto the couch, both woozy and breathless.

“What was that?” she asked trying to catch her breath, their limbs tangled together.

“A demonstration,” he replied, shifting over her and bringing his hand up to brush her hair out of her eyes.

“What kind of demonstration?”

“This.” He motioned to their current condition. “Is what I feel like when you say we’re together. Giddy. Dizzy. Happy.”

“Yeah?”

“Aye.” He nodded and then despite how tangled they’d just been, her arms snaked around his neck and she pressed her lips to his in a slow and tantalizingly sweet kiss. He sighed and shifted slightly, changing the angle and deepening the kiss. After several minutes of their lips working together in a tender rhythm, both pouring everything they felt into each individual kiss, Emma pulled back and looked at him.

“You saved Christmas. It should be a movie, ‘The Pirate Who Saved Christmas.’”

He shook his head resolutely. “No, you saved Christmas. My heart may not be black, but I did it only for you.”

She smiled brilliantly at him. “You know earlier when I asked you to stay?”

He nodded almost imperceptively, as he held his breath waiting for what she was going to say. “I meant I want you to stay,” she said emphasizing the last word.

“I thought we were talking it slow,” he asked as he traced the line of her jaw with one finger.

“And we’ve done that. Now I want you to stay, will you?”

“The night?” he asked, feeling on tenterhooks as he waited for the answer.

“For starters,” she replied with a mischievous twinkle.

“At last,” he all but shouted and then with a quick movement, he wrapped his arms around her back and rolled them off the couch and onto the floor. Emma let out a surprised laugh as they landed with an oomph.
Killian and Emma proceeded to christen both the new apartment and the area underneath the magical Christmas tree in a very enjoyable way.

The End.

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