Strange Bedfellows

by MurderouslyAdorkable

Summary

Emma Swan is in the business of buying and selling secrets. And after about 15 years in the game she has finally reached the pinnacle of her career. People have started taking notice. The wrong people. The kind of people that would want Emma dead. As an information broker, she wouldn’t be too good at her job if she didn’t already know about the active hit on her life. A life that keeps getting more and more complicated by the minute. Enter Regina Mills, aka the Evil Queen, a professional hitman… hitperson who has been hired to kill Emma Swan. What happens when more than just bullets fly between them?

Smut in Chapters 3, 5, 6, 10, & 20, Slight TWs for Mentions of a past abusive relationship (Ch. 4), Bullying (Ch. 5), Mentions of Past Stalking (Ch. 7), Torture (Ch. 13)

Notes
A/N: Alright so awhile back my best friend and sister from another mister, Lady Fogg wrote an awesome little story called Slip of the Hand. The fict was so well received she penned a sequel and even based a character in said sequel off of me. Once it was done, the plan was for me to write another sequel but from my character’s POV. Well, when I sat down to do just that I couldn’t write it. So I tried a different approach. I made it a SwanQueen fic. And guess what? The story practically wrote itself. You can find links to Slip of the Hand and Partners in Crime by searching for Lady Fogg here on AO3. Thank so much for the read and I hope you like this as much as I love writing it. For those of you following my Between the Shadow & the Soul Fic, I’m still working on it. This move from NY to TX totally kicked my butt. And I’ve been in a slump writing-wise. Hopefully this will help me out of my funk.

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The Honeypot

Chapter Summary

Honeypot (n.) - In espionage terminology, "honeypot" is one of several ways to refer to a recruitment that involves sexual seduction.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.
“Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows.”
— Trinculo, Act Two, Scene Two of The Tempest, by William Shakespeare

Emma’s phone buzzes in the early hours of the morning, like a heart beating in her hand. She looks down and notices the text notification.
RUBY: We just hit the city limits.

She grins, her spirit filling with elation, and replies quickly.

EMMA: If the kid’s up, get him some waffles. And hot coco. He loves that stuff.

The response is immediate.

RUBY: With cinnamon and whip-cream. Yeah. We’ve met. But why are you staling? Do you have someone over?

She shakes her head. As much as she tries to play it off, she’s an easy read. Everyone who’s ever met her knows that.

EMMA: Maybe.

RUBY: Seriously? Are you sure that’s a good idea? You know given your current predicament.

EMMA: I’m chasing a lead.

RUBY: Is that what we’re calling it?

EMMA: Shut up. And gimme about 20 minutes. But be ready in case this shit goes sideways.

RUBY: I’ve got the kid with me.

She grimaces at the phone. Having the kid with her now is another complication that Emma hasn’t quite yet figured out. While she doesn’t want him to see this side of her world, she knows that sooner or later, he’ll be exposed the darker aspects of her life.

EMMA: I know. But I wouldn’t be asking if I didn’t think this was solid.

RUBY: What are you going to do?


RUBY: Emma… With you that could literally be anything.

EMMA: I’m not that good.

RUBY: That’s what I keep trying to tell you.

Rolling her eyes, she huffs a big puff of hot air and cigarette smoke. Ruby is her best friend next to Lily. But even she doesn’t understand the method to Emma’s madness sometimes. No one
EMMA: Rubes… Just be ready if I need you.
RUBY: How will I know?
EMMA: If I don’t text you in ten minutes something’s up.
RUBY: I don’t like this.
EMMA: Neither do I.

Ruby’s scared for her. She has every right to be. Someone is trying to kill her, after all.

Now, while that isn’t exactly unusual, given her occupation, what makes it weird is that anyone who wants to kill her should think she is already dead. One of the fringe benefits of faking your own death, is that people tend to not hire hit… people to try to kill you again. If there’s one thing criminal masterminds hate to do is spend money on a job that’s already done. It’s why she faked her death in the first place.

(Actually more like the opportunity presented itself a few months ago and she always wanted to know what her own funeral would be like and now she does.)

But it still doesn’t help her rest easy at night. Which is probably why she isn’t sleeping too much these days. Burying herself in her work doesn’t help either. It only makes things worse. That’s why she went out last night. Because she needed a distraction. Nevermind that said distraction takes the form of a breathtaking raven haired beauty currently occupying one side of her bed. A distraction is a distraction. And this is truly an amazing one.

However, this doesn’t cure her stricken bout of insomnia, as her mind is filled with the endless possibilities of dying at the hands of person or persons unknown. And she doesn’t know which is worse: the death threat or the fact that a new player has entered the game right under her nose. The latter might not have bothered her as much if isn’t for the fact that she deals in the information business. She’s The Information Broker of the New York Criminal Underground. It is literally her job to know these things.

She’d put out some feelers later on today. But for now she just wants to enjoy watching the sunrise from her balcony, with a cigarette in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other.

The early light of dawn breaks over the skyline of New York City and the sky explodes in sea of purples, oranges, reds, blues, and yellows. The streets below are quiet. People haven’t even left their homes to start their day. In the silence of the early morning, she feels unburdened.

Until her phone buzzes, again.

With a heavy sigh, and a softly muttered curse, she fishes it out from her jeans pocket. The irritation fades and a soft smile blesses her features when she sees who it’s from.

Lily.

LILY: So you faked your death? And you were going to let me know, when exactly?
She bites back a chuckle as she types out her response:

**EMMA:** Hey, I didn't want to upset you with you being preggers and all.

The reply comes quickly as her phone buzzes again.

**LILY:** I hate you so much.

She laughs and taps her reply.

**EMMA:** I love you too, Lilypad.

Her phone buzzes once more.

**LILY:** I told you to stop calling me that.

She smiles, delighting in the mild annoyance she's inspiring. But before she can say more she gets another text.

**LILY:** Just be careful... please, Emma.
**EMMA:** For you... Maybe.
**LILY:** I hate you.
**EMMA:** Tell your hubby I said, “What's up.” I'll call you later.

Lily texts back a sarcastic response and tells her again to watch her back. She promises she'll try because that's the best she can offer. With the active hit out on her that's all she can give her best friend.

Story of my fucking life, she thinks before stamping out her cigarette and finishing her coffee so she can head back inside. The cool temperature of her condo is a shock to her system from the hot humidity atmosphere outside. New York is in the middle of a heat wave. Not unusual for this time of year. But nonetheless, getting anything done in this heat is going to be next to impossible.

With a heavy sigh, she reminds herself that she can worry about the weather later. Right now she wants nothing more than to take a moment to appreciate the finer things in life. Like the woman in her bed, for example.
Replaying the events of last night, Emma still can’t believe how she managed this one. It’s not just that the woman is arguably the most beautiful thing she’s laid her eyes on in a very, very long time. Because honestly, these days and in this city, beautiful women are a dime a dozen and it takes a lot more than a pretty face to get her motor running. Besides, she has already spent the better part of last night admiring this woman’s features. Her light olive complexion, her jet black hair, the fullness of her lips, her burnt honey colored eyes. This woman was straight up perfect. Everywhere. Emma has spent the last few hours going over every inch of this woman and has yet to find a singular flaw, save for the tiny scar on her top lip. But even that tiny imperfection doesn’t mar her beauty, it only amplifies it.

However, that isn’t what piqued her interest last night. It’s how the other woman carried herself. Dark, mysterious, but with the kind of swagger that was as intimidating as it was alluring. The moment Emma saw her, she knew that was it. She was caught; hook, line, and sinker.

“Come here often?... My apologies, that sounded like a line.”
“IT’s fine. But just so you know if you ask me if I’m an angel next I’m bailing.”
“I will try to refrain.”
“See that you do. I’d hate to cut this conversation short.”
“What I was trying to say was, I haven’t seen you here before. And this place makes the best apple cider. So I was wondering if I could buy you a glass.”
“I’m actually looking for something a little stronger than apple cider tonight.”
“Scotch?”
“The sponsored drink of supervillains and old billionaires? I guess, I could live a little. I’m Emma, by the way.”
“Regina.”
“Pleasure to meet you, Regina. So do you make it a habit approaching women sitting alone at bars.”
“Only the ones I find intriguing.”

Intriguing. Emma has been called a lot of things, but intriguing isn’t one that comes up often. Insufferable? Yes. Stubborn? All of the time. But not intriguing. That’s how that one scotch, turned into three, and Emma decided to take Regina home.

Sunlight creeps into the bedroom and caresses Regina’s form. Emma moves through the bedroom and sits on the bed. The movement causes Regina to stir but she doesn’t wake up until Emma brushes some hair out of her face.

“What times is it?” Regina asks, her voice thick with sleep.

“Time for round two?” Emma suggests, her eyebrows wiggling, playfully.

The brunette chuckles. “You’re insatiable.”

“You like it.”

Their lips meet in a soft and sensuous kiss. Slow and lazy, as they begin their exploration of each other all over again. Regina’s arms coil around Emma’s neck, as the blonde climbs into bed,
slotting her body between Regina’s thighs. There’s a thin cotton sheet that separates Emma’s hands from Regina’s bare skin as they trail up her sides, tracing the slopes and plains of her body as she swallows the tiny gasps and whimpers that escape Regina. The sounds this woman makes set her blood on fire and before she can stop herself, her hips are canting forward, desperate for the feel of Regina’s body against hers.

It’s that movement that has Regina arching into her, mewing her encouragement. “I was hoping last night wouldn’t be the end of this.”

Chills run down Emma’s spine at her words. “I’m nowhere near done with you.”

Before Regina can retort, Emma takes her wrists and pins them over her head, rolling her body into her she does it. A victorious smirk plays across her features when Regina moans, her eyes darkening with need.

“Fuck,” Emma breathes. “I want to taste you.”

Regina’s thighs tighten around her waist as she lets out a groan. “What’s stopping you?”

“Well…” Emma trails off.

The sound of metal ratcheting against metal, stops them both. Regina’s eyes widen in surprise but before she can react, the sound echoes and she’s finds herself trapped, handcuffed to Emma’s headboard.

“The fuck…” Regina struggles against the handcuffs in vain, finally falling back onto the bed with a deep sigh. “Is this really necessary?”

“Just a precaution,” Emma informs her.

“Against…?” Regina fishes.

Her eyes narrow. “I think you know.”

But Emma doesn’t let her finish her thought before she rolls over her. “Cut the shit, your Majesty. I knew who you were and what you had come to do the second I laid eyes on you last night.”

Regina doesn’t bother to deny any of it. She just casts an incredulous look Emma’s way. “So I suppose there’s no longer any point to go on pretending.”

Emma shrugs. “You’re the one handcuffed to a bed. So you tell me.”

Regina’s eyes narrow. “Do you make it a habit of knowingly sleeping with people who are trying to kill you?”

She thinks about it for a moment before she nods. “Actually, I do. Some people call it a character flaw.”

Emma pretends she doesn’t see the subtle smirk Regina has in response. Just as she pretends that she’s still not attracted to the woman currently naked and handcuffed to her bed.

“Are you going to tell me how you knew?” Regina asks.

“Depends,” Emma replies. “Are you going to tell me who hired you?” When the other woman says nothing, she chuckles. “I know this is a bit of a cliche but I have ways of loosening tight
A cold laugh billows out of the brunette. “There may be a slight problem with your plan.”

Emma scoffs. “I can’t see how when you’re-”

Two quick clicks and Regina’s out of the handcuffs, springing into action. Emma barely has time to mutter, “Oh shit,” before she’s hit in the face. Regina’s on her, landing a series of furious blows, each connecting with deadly precision, rattling the blonde’s brain. Emma is knocked off the bed from the force of the hits. But that doesn’t stop her from scrambling for a weapon, guessing that Regina’s doing the same. When she pops back up, Emma finds that her hunch is dead on, because they are both armed, pointing their guns at the other one with the bed being their only barrier.


Emma doesn’t doubt it. This close, she’s dead to rights. They both are. Even if Emma ditches the gun there’s still a good chance she’ll catch a bullet. So why is she grinning? It could be her confident streak has finally crossed the line into idiotic hubris. Or it could be the fact she’s got a full view of Regina’s form in all of it’s naked splendor.

“Are you as turned on as I am right now?” she has to ask. Call it another character flaw.

Regina’s eyes regard her quizzically. “You are either incredibly stupid or clinically insane.”

Emma scoffs. “Pfft… I can be both.”

It just takes a moment. Regina lets her guard down for just a second and that’s when Emma springs into action. Sh drops her gun and vaults over the bed, colliding with Regina. The brunette yelps in surprise though that doesn’t impede her defensive efforts with skill winning out in the end over the element of surprise. And Emma finds herself pinned, unarmed, with the barrel of a gun pressed under her chin.

“How much?” she asks, suddenly.

“That’s what you want know?” Regina replies.

“I’m curious,” she tells her.

“Twice my normal rate.”

Emma’s lips quirk into an amused smile. “Really? Well that is something.”

The other woman locks eyes with her and she just stares back, pushing slightly against the gun to her throat. When it gives, Emma reaches up, her hand cupping the back of Regina’s neck pulling her down to her level.

Their lips connect in a heated exchange. Kissing Regina is like drinking liquid fire. It burns, but in an oh-so-good kind of way. Emma groans, feeling Regina rock into her.

Then the brunette pulls away to whisper. “I’m sorry.”

CLICK.

Emma chuckles smugly before she flips Regina onto her back, pinning her there. “The thing about guns is that they kinda need bullets to work.”
“You found my gun.”

It’s not a question but Emma answers it. “I found your gun.”

“When did you…?”

Before Regina can ask her question, the door to Emma’s bedroom swings open and a lanky dark haired woman storms in, pistol at the ready.

“Emma, I came as soon as--” the newcomer takes one look at the pair of tangled bodies and sighs. “You have got to be fucking kidding me.”

“Hey, Ruby,” Emma greets, sheepishly, heat creeping up her face. “I wish I could say that this isn’t what it looks like… But to tell you the truth I thought I would’ve had this part wrapped up before you got here.”

Ruby rolls her eyes turns on her heels and walk right out of the room, throwing over her shoulder. “You should probably handle this quick. The kid was coming up the stairs right behind me.”

“Shit…” Emma curses.

Regina arches an eyebrow. “The kid?”

“My kid…” the blonde confesses.

“You have a child?”

“It’s a recent development.” Emma eases away from Regina for a moment but remains on top of her. “Look, I get you have a job to do. But this is my kid… um… sort of. So cool it for a second maybe? You can try to kill me later.”

Regina chuckles at the breeziness of her words. “That’s not exactly how it works.”

“Fair point,” Emma replies, adding, “I’ll triple what you’re collecting on me.”

“What?”

“Your fee? Someone offered to double it? I’ll triple the offer.”

“You’ll triple my normal fee so I don’t kill you in front of your child?” Regina asks in utter disbelief.

“Wrong on both accounts,” Emma tells her. “I’ll triple what they’re giving you. So your normal fee times six if you don’t kill me at all.”

“You are insane.”

“We’ve already covered that, your Majesty. So what’s your answer? Will you let me make you a very rich woman? Or will my son be orphaned twice?” Emma looks at her and the mask falls. She’s real. Exposed. Regina has her heart in her hands. Having the power over her life, she thinks the metaphor is appropriate.

“Let me up, Miss Swan,” Regina grumbles, no doubt kicking herself for relenting on this. After all in her line of work, just like in Emma’s, reputation is everything. And if word got out she flipped sides then it would be bad for business.

“Miss Swan?”

“Hm?”

“Are you going to get off of me or continue to lay there on top of me all day?”

“There are options?”

Regina’s voice becomes firmer. “Get off of me, Miss Swan.”

Emma rises up, offering her a mockingly dejected, “Fine.”

The first thing Emma does when she gets up is collect the guns. Just because Regina’s gun is empty doesn’t mean she isn’t dangerous. A gun is a heavy chunk of metal. And being pistol-whip? Not as fun as it sounds.

She tucks the guns into her jeans at the small of her back and pulls a hoodie over her torso and then heads for the door. “There’s a shower in here. You can clean up. We’ll talk business once we’re away from the kid. Sound good?”

Regina nods. “I’m amenable to those terms. But we can’t leave together. I can’t be seen with a target.”

“Former target,” Emma corrects.

“I haven’t agreed to anything, yet,” Regina tells her. “However, I have certain rules. And one of those is I won’t terminate a target in the presence of their children. I will meet with you at a secure location. And I’ll hear your proposal then. Agreed?”

“Agreed,” Emma says. “I’d give you my cell number but I’m assuming you know it.”

“I’m very good at my job, Miss Swan.”

Emma’s eyes light up. “I don’t doubt that. It’s why I’m looking forward to working with you, Regina.”

The brunette tries to remind her that she hasn’t accepted Emma’s offer but she closes the door on her before she can say any more.

“Jesus Christ,” the blonde whispers to herself, running a hand through her flaxen waves. “What the fuck have you gotten yourself into?”

Chapter End Notes

Thoughts? Concerns? Questions? Just wanna say hi? Leave a review. You can follow me on my new Tumblr (MurderouslyAdorkable) or Twitter (MurderouslyCute)
The Obvious Trap

Chapter Summary

Trap (n.) - a situation in which people lie in wait to make a surprise attack.

The Obvious Trap (n.) - a meeting with an assassin that has already tried to kill you once before.

Chapter Notes

Still with me? Alright. Time for part two. Also thanks to my beta, Wolf Stevens and a big thank you to those of you following story, giving kudos/favoriting my fict, and leaving comments/reviews.

Warnings: Non-Magical AU, Criminal AU, So much Belligerent Sexual Tension that it could be called Trope Abuse, Mild Self-Love Scene in this chapter

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

“There are two rules in life: 1. never give out all the information.”
— Internet Meme

“MOM!”

He leaps into her arms with the force of a freight train, climbing on her like a tiny spider monkey, and she’s his favorite jungle gym. The kid is seven but small for his age, appearing to be just starting school this fall, instead of waiting for the beginning of his Second Grade Year. Which is the only reason she can even let him do this. Though if Emma's honest with herself, she'd let him do this even if it broke her back every time. Because he seems to need this kind of affection, especially now. She didn’t understand it at first. And given her own history, physical contact is understandably not one of her strong suits. It only took him a few weeks to break down her defenses, however. Now she gets it. Now she relishes it in, delighted to just hear him laugh, as if the sound is her most treasured possession.

“Ah, kid-sneak-attack!” she yelps, as he positions himself on her back. “How was your trip?”

“So awesome!” he squeals. “Ruby and me had so much fun! And Granny said that she’s mad at you for not coming with. Only she didn’t use those words.”

“What she say?” Emma asks, looking at Ruby, who’s watching their interaction like it’s an alien thing; something to be dissected and experimented on.
“That you’re on her shit list. And it’s your ass if you bail on the next trip,” Ruby tells her.

“Yeah, that sounds like her…” Emma laughs, bouncing a bit to get the kid’s attention. “So kid, I’m thinking arcade this afternoon. Then pizza and movies tonight?”

“Yes!” the kid cheers. “Ruby, are you coming too?”

“I dunno…”

“Please… Ruby,” he implores. “It’ll be fun.”

Emma grins. “Yeah, Rubes. Come on. It’ll be soooo fun.”

Ruby rolls her eyes and relents. “Fine. But you’re buying, Emma.”

“Don’t I always?” She untangles herself from the kid and musses up his hair. Because his reaction is hilarious and it tickles her to see him so put out by such a small thing. “Go upstairs and play some video games, kid. Auntie Ruby and me, we gotta talk about some stuff. One of us’ll come and get you when we’re done.”

“Okay!” She doesn’t have to tell him twice. At the mention of video games he’s clopping up the stairs like a wild animal.

“Kid!” she calls to him. “Ease up. We have neighbors.”

“Sorry!” his little voice travels down the stairs into the kitchen where Emma and Ruby stand, drinking coffee.

Ruby’s giving her a displeased look and Emma knows what’s coming the second they hear the door to the kid’s room shut.

3… 2… 1… Go.

“Emma, you have done some stupid things but this…?”

She waves her off. “I know. I know.”

“Do you?” Ruby asks, trying to keep her voice down. “Because it didn’t look like it when I walked in. It looked like the same old Emma, up to her same old bullshit.”

“Hey, I was trying to figure out who’s wants me dead,” Emma fires back. “And guess what? I did.”

Ruby glares at her. “She told you who hired her?”

Emma opens her mouth to answer Ruby in the affirmative but thinks better of it. “Not exactly.”

“You are going to get yourself killed,” Ruby whispers, harshly. “And that was fine when you were 20. But you are 30-fucking-years-old, Emma. And you’ve got Henry, now. You can’t keep doing this shit.”

“Am I interrupting something?”

Emma snaps to attention, her eyes widening before she remembers herself. She relaxes a bit before she turns around. Regina stands by her bedroom door, freshly showered but in the same clothes she wore last night. Her hair is still a little damp and with the makeup wiped away, she looks almost human. Like someone Emma could have approached at a coffee shop and not a badass
assassin that was hired to kill her. But just because the cover doesn’t match the book, doesn’t mean there isn’t something to this. She knows nothing about Regina save for her name and occupation but it’s clear she is a complicated and layered person of unknown depths.

“No,” Emma answers her. “Ruby was just telling me I’m being stupid and crazy again.”

Regina arches an eyebrow. “A conversation you two have often.”

“Oh, you don’t even know the half of it, sister,” Ruby says, before she turns to Emma with a, “I’ll go keep the kid company.”

Emma nods, calling after her as she heads upstairs. “Thank youoo… Looovvve youuu…” When she turns back around, Regina’s staring at her like she’s grown two heads. “Best friend. One of them. Only I didn’t fuck this one. So the dynamic is a bit different.”

“Miss Swan, when I want to know something personal about your life, I’ll ask,” Regina replies, curtly.

“Ohhh,” Emma draws out. “Somebody’s cranky. Coffee? I’d offer to turn that frown upside down in a less traditional method but gosh-darnit we already tried that. Not that I wouldn’t give it the ol’ college try again. But I’ve got the kid upstairs, you understand.”

Regina stares daggers at Emma and she notices how the ends of her lips twitch. Either she’s a smoker, or she’s trying not to smile. Both are a possibility. However, if Emma was a betting person (and she isn’t) then she’d put her life savings on it being the latter and not the former.

“Miss Swan…”

“Emma.”

It’s her turn to hold back a smile when Regina lets out an exasperated sigh. She doesn’t know why, but she enjoys getting under her skin. It’s Emma’s new favorite game. But it wouldn’t be nearly as fun, if Regina didn’t make it so easy.

“Miss. Swan.” Yeah, she’s angry. Well, maybe not angry. Perturbed? Vexed, maybe? “We have business to discuss.”

“Right, so we’ll skip the steamy bits. For now. And just get right to the boring parts. Because we’re professionals and stuff,” Emma replies, grinning like the cat that got the cream.

Regina ignores her puerile antics. “You can meet me at the Four Seasons on 57th. I’ll be in the Queen’s Suite. Meet me there in two hours. Don’t be late.”

“Two hours? So you need time to what? Slip into something sexy?” Emma teases. “I’m flattered, Regina. But it’s not necessary.”

“Two hours, Miss Swan,” Regina stresses, heading for the door. “Keep me waiting and I’ll consider your offer null and void.”

Emma regards her with amusement. “Better not be late then.”

“Good day, Miss Swan,” Regina tells her.

“Emma.”

“Miss Swan.” Then the door slams shut and Emma is left with her own thoughts.
She refills her mug and contemplates stepping out for a cigarette. Emma needs a moment to collect herself and work out her next move. Obviously, she’s going to have meet with Regina. Yes, it’s a terrible idea, but she doesn’t have another card to play. She could send someone to take care of Regina. However, it’s not something she wants to do. If Regina dies, so does her only lead.

Emma reaches into her pocket and retrieves her phone. It rings twice before a perky voice answers.

“You’ve reached Belle, keeper of all things knowable, and seeker of all things unknowable, at your service.”

Her Australian accent comes through thick, even through the phone.

“Hey, Gorgeous,” Emma says with a smile. “I need you to do me a favor.”

“Is it really a favor if you’re my boss and you pay me?” she teases.

“You got me there, beautiful,” Emma replies. “I need this ASAP. Get me everything we have on a Regina Mills, aka the Evil Queen.”

“The assassin? Is she the one that’s been hired to kill you?” Belle sounds shocked.

“Yup, that’d be her,” Emma confirms.

“Wow… that’s… wow…” Belle says. “Whoever hired her must really want you dead.”

“That’s comforting.”

“Sorry, Emma,” Belle gives a nervous giggle. “I’ll dig up what I can and call you back soon.”

“Thanks.”

“Of course. It’s literally what you pay me to do.”

Emma ends the call and sighs. It’s going to be a long day.

“MOM!” Henry’s little feet clamor down the steps. “I beat it! I beat the game!”

At the sound of his voice she shakes off whatever doubts she might have about Regina and wills herself to stop worrying so much. She’s been in worse dilemmas before. No examples come to mind right now. But she’s almost 70% sure that she’s been in sticker situations than this.

“You did?” she asks when he comes into view. Her voice is light and breezy, almost carefree, even. “That’s awesome, Kid.”

He smiles, proudly. “I’m pretty awesome, Mom.”

She mussels his hair again to keep him humble. “I know, kid. I know.”

“Can we go to the arcade now?” he asks, bouncing on the balls of his feet.

“It’s not open yet,” she tells him, much to Henry’s disappointment. “And I have a work thing. But afterwards… We’ll shut the the whole place down.”

“Promise?”

She nods. “Pinky swear, kid.”
They lock pinkies and shake on it. And that’s good enough for Henry. She hasn’t let him down yet, so he has no reason to doubt her. Henry even handles her work stuff with ease. He doesn’t know what she does. Not entirely, anyway. And god willing, he’ll never find out. Considering who his dad was, Emma wants to keep him as far away from this life as possible. This life is no place for a kid. And she knows that. Eventually, she’ll have to turn her back on all of this. The only question that remains (besides the obvious one) is does she want to? Because this is all she’s known. And hardships aside, this isn’t an easy thing to walk away from. It’s a part of her.

“Do we have any juice?” Henry asks, already heading for the frig.

“Yeah. Even got the kind that you like,” Emma tells him.

The smile he flashes reminds her of why she agreed to take him in. And it’s not just because of his father. Although that helped. It’s Henry. He’s a good kid. And if Emma has anything to say about it, he’ll stay that way. He’s better than his father. And he’s definitely better than her.

“Em’?” Ruby calls for her as she descends the staircase.

“In the kitchen, Rubes,” Emma shouts.

Ruby makes reappears with an annoyed expression etched on her features. “Is she gone?”

“Yeah, she wants to meet me in two hours at the Four Seasons,” Emma replies.

“And you’re gonna go.” It isn’t a question. “Jesus Christ, Emma.”

“Yeah, I know. I’m dumb. But will you-”

Ruby finishes her request. “Watch Henry until you get back? Of course. Just because you’re an idiot doesn't mean I'll leave him to his own devices. Will you at least promise to be careful?”

The smirk she flashes her says it all. “You're looking for the answer yes… Then yes.”

“For Henry's sake I hope so.”

The funny thing is, so does Emma. Henry's already lost so much, so young and she doesn't want to add herself to the long list of casualties that haunt him. However, the person or persons that want her dead won't take his mental well-being into consideration. They’ll just kill her and be done with it.

Criminals can be dicks that way.

After getting the kid settled, Emma retreats into her bedroom to get ready for her - well - meeting. That’s what she tells Henry anyway. Ruby shoots her a disapproving grimace, knowing that whatever Emma is walking into is something that could scarcely be called anything remotely like a “work meeting.” But if she can't call it that then what can she call it? And more importantly how is she going to manage getting out of this alive?

That’s the question that plagues her when she steps under the warm stream of water coming from her showerhead. As she washes up, her attempts to think about something else other than her impending doom, and the deadly brunette that had occupied this very shower not fifteen minutes ago, end in failure. The harder she tries to forget, the more her mind is bombarded with the memory of last night.

She wonders if the Money is aware of her weakness for dangerous women. She ponders the possibility that this is all a part of the plan. And she comes to the conclusion that she's probably
walking into a trap.

Despite the very real danger she's in, Emma's mind replays the event of yesterday in lurid detail. She remembers the way Regina felt pressed against her, the sounds this woman made when she was coming undone under Emma’s touch, the way she breathed her name as she did. And hell, as good as Regina took it, it was nothing compared to the how well she returned the favor. In fact during the course of last night, Emma thought death by orgasmic overdose had been a very real possibility.

Sex with Regina is as intoxicating and addictive as heroin. She's only gotten a small taste of her new favorite drug. And now Emma’s racking her brain, trying to figure out a way to get her next fix.

Emma’s hand traverses her body as if it has a mind of it’s own. The tension that she’s built up from the fight has coiled tightly within her, ready to snap at any moment. It needs release. She needs release.

With her bottom lip locked between her teeth, Emma treats this like a race, bringing herself to completion, speedily. As if there’s a prize for coming in first. There’s no poetry to it. No rhyme or reason. At this point it’s purely for the purposes of maintaining some kind of functionality and hopefully a way that she can finally be rid of the image of being with Regina.

Her climax comes swift and unceremoniously. As Emma sighs the last bit of tension leaves her shoulders. And while she can say that on some level she needed that, it still bothers her that Regina’s at the forefront of her mind.

When her breathing regulates, Emma steps out of the shower, feeling refreshed but also uneasy. She's nervous. Looking over the contents of her closet with mild annoyance. A business meeting with an assassin is a first for her. And she's having trouble picking an outfit. Does she go for professional? A nice, tailored suit. Or maybe business casual? Like slacks and a sweater.

“Fuck it,” she sighs, picking out a pair of jeans and a tank top. It's too hot for boots and a leather jacket but she doesn't care and puts them on too to complete the outfit.

Once dressed, Emma inspects the finished product in a mirror. She supposes she could have done something more with her flaxen curls, instead of just pulling it back into a high ponytail. But she tells herself there just isn't time.

Besides it isn't like she's getting ready for some hot date. It's just a meeting with Regina… who is a hit...person… who has also been hired to kill her.

So definitely not a date.

She exchanges goodbyes with Henry and Ruby before she makes her way to the front door.

“Mom?” Henry's voice sounds.

“Yeah, kid?”

“Bring me back something?”

She takes one glance at his puppy dog look and knows there's no point in fighting it. She'd give the kid the sun, the moon, and all of the stars in the sky if it meant she'd get to see him happy.

“New video game? Or a toy?”
His smile brightens. “Video game, please. Maybe like the next *Five Nights at Freddy’s*?”

“We'll see. I know you beat the first three but that was before I knew it was an the things that nightmares are made from.”

He pouts. “But Mom…”

“Just tell Henry you'll get the game,” Ruby cuts in. “We all know you will anyway.”

“The kid doesn't know that,” she offers.

But Henry scoffs. “Yeah, I do. You never say no to me.”

“When'd you get to be such the Emma expert, kid?” she asks.

He laughs. “It's not like it's hard. You make it so easy.”

“Well maybe today is the day I finally tell you no.”

Henry rolls his eyes. “Yeah right. You're not going to do that.”

“He has you there, Em,” Ruby adds.

Emma frowns at them both. “You two can bite me. How ‘bout that?”

“Goodbye, Emma,” Ruby says, shaking her head in disbelief.

“Have fun with your meeting, Mom. See ya later, gator,” Henry tells her.

“In a while, crocodile.” She tosses him a wink before she steps out and closes the door behind her.

It's only a 20 minutes drive to the Four Seasons. 40 minutes if there's traffic. Of course there's traffic. In this city? That's just a given. Her only solace is that she has at least has some music for the drive into the city.

On a warm summer day like this, there’s nothing like driving into the city with the top down on her yellow VW Beetle. She got it because it reminds her of the first car she ever stole, only newer and not held together with duct tape. She loved that car. It reminds her of a simpler time. It reminds her of Lily.

When she first started out in this business, Emma had nothing but her wits and that ratty old VW Bug. That’s when she met Lily. The only person, besides Henry and Ruby (who don’t count, at least in this way) that saw her; the real Emma, and loved her anyway. Her and Lily were toxic for each other and destined to crash and burn like a magnificent trainwreck but there’s a piece of Emma that longs for someone like that again. A partner in all things. Someone that loves her broken parts. Someone that makes her feel like she belongs.

“Same bed but it feels just a little bit bigger now…” the radio speakers blare as she drives down the expressway, cringing because this song reminds her of Lily. “*Our song on the radio but it don't sound the same… When our friends talk about you, all it does is just tear me down… 'Cause my heart breaks a little when I hear your name…*”

Her knuckles turn white from gripping the steering wheel too tightly. The stuff with Lily is ancient history. At least now it is. But it doesn’t mean it doesn’t still hurt. It doesn’t mean she doesn’t miss her every single day. But Lily’s moved on. She’s happy now. And Emma… she has her work. And she has Henry. However, there will probably always a Lily-shaped hole in her heart. And
Emma’s not sure if she wants to get over that pain. It means that once upon a time there was someone out there crazy enough to love her.

“It all just sounds like oooooh… Mmm, too young, too dumb to realize… That I should've bought you flowers, and held your hand… Should've gave you all my hours, when I had the chance… Take you to every party 'cause all you wanted to do was dance… Now my baby's dancing, but she's dancing with another man…”

She skips the song, quickly. Her life is difficult enough without falling into some feelings.

“Detonat-, Detonator… Baby, oh, you blow my mind… You'll, tell me wait, wait on ya… But baby I can't wait all night… I go through pictures, ya send my phone… Won't stop tempting me. You know what I want… Wanna make, wanna make love… Girl, I can’t lie-ie-ie-ie…

“I'm just a sucker… For a cold hearted lover… You make me s-uh-uh-uh-uh-ffer… You make me s-uh-uh-uh-uh-ffer… Don't keep me waiting… You should come over… Don't make me s-uh-uh-uh-uh-ffer… Don't make me s-uh-uh-uh-uh-ffer…”

This song is even worse as it stirs up feelings she thought she let wash down her shower drain this morning. She fights the urge, but Emma can’t stop herself from thinking about Regina; admonishing herself for not focusing on the task at hand. Instead, her mind drifts, conjuring the memories of the night before. And she wrings her hands on the steering wheel again but for completely different reasons.

“So here we go, go again… It's like I'm caught under your spell… You're, wearing black, black magic… Well baby, don't wear nothing else… When I open up this door, don't you play… Ain't no other man gon' make you feel the same… I wanna make, wanna make lo-”

“Nope,” Emma says, quickly hitting skip. She smiles when a melodic acoustic guitar riff fades in. Bobby Womack is someone she can always listen to regardless of her mood. And she starts singing along, tapping her fingers to the music.

“All the leaves… are brown… And the sky is gray… I went for a walk… On such a winter’s day…”

That brings her back to herself. Or at least it takes her out of her head enough to just enjoy the ride, despite the smell. Because New York smells. It stinks like pigeon shit and smog. But it’s home. And it’s beautiful, so long as she doesn’t breathe in too deeply.

“Cali-for-nia dreamin’… On such a winter’s day…”

Her phone rings then and she has to turn the music down before she answers it.

“Talk to me, Beautiful,” Emma greets.


“Poison? Seriously?” It makes that business with the gun surprising.

“Yeah. Hand-crafted. And highly-lethal.” Belle pauses. “So… did you really sleep with the Evil Queen?”

Emma frowns. “Ruby called you.”
“Of course she did. It's Ruby,” Belle pauses. “Emma, I sent what I found to your phone. Look over it so you know what kind of person you're dealing with.”

“I know exactly the kind of person I'm dealing with,” Emma says quietly.

“Is that a sex thing?”


“Sorry… is there anything else you need?”

“See if you can find some kind of money trail. Whoever wants me dead is willing to shell some serious coin. That kind of transfer isn't invisible. We find the money, I can neutralize the threat at its source.”

“Ok. I'm on it. Be careful, Emma.”

“I'll try.”

Emma’s given herself enough time to get to the hotel with just enough to spare to pick up a little goodness at a Starbucks close by. Which she does. Getting a mocha latte with extra whip fit herself. And a black coffee for her would-be murderer. Her version of extending an olive branch.

The front desk clerk tells her that her arrival has been expected and hands her a card key, pointing in the direction of the elevators that lead to the Queen’s Suite, which is on the 50th floor with a view of the Empire State building and the Brooklyn Bridge. Or so the clerk informs you. Emma smiles and offers her gratitude before heading Regina's way.

Her stomach is fluttering. Her palms are sweaty. She feels like she's heading off to Prom or something else equally juvenile. She hasn't felt this kind of nervousness in a long time. And while a part of her absolutely hates it, there's another part of her that is actually excited at the prospect of seeing Regina again.

There’s something wrong with me.

After a long elevator ride and a seemingly equally long walk she arrives at the Queen’s Suite and uses the key card at the door, not bothering to knock because she's hoping to catch the other woman off guard. But what she finds instead is a seemingly empty room.

“Regina?” she calls out softly, looking around for any sign she’s here. But there isn’t even any indication that someone is staying in the room. No bags in sight. No lingering evidence of an occupant. Only the low hum of the AC, as she travels further inside.

Then she hears it. The subtle but all so noticeable click of a gun being cocked. Emma knows better than to whip around quickly and opts for a slow turn. Regina's standing by the partition to the suite's sleeping area, pistol at the ready and aimed right at Emma’s heart.

“Miss Swan,” she husks, her lips curled into a sinister grin. “You're a little underdressed for your own funeral.”

Chapter End Notes
What do you guys think? Reviews are writing fuel. You can follow me on my new Tumblr (MurderouslyAdorkable) or Twitter (MurderouslyCute). You can also listen to a playlist I've made just for this fict on Spotify. It's under the User "fuzzycheese Productions" and the playlist is called Strange Bedfellows. If you want to give that a follow. It just something I put up and will be adding to as the story comes along.

To hold you over a bit here's a sneak peek for chapter three...

"You're out of your mind," Regina says, slightly irritated tone.

"Probably," Emma replies, drawing closer with measured steps. "But so you are if you think pointing a gun at my chest is enough to scare me off. You're going to have to do better than that. So either shoot me or hear me out. Because you don't know who I am or where I've been and, sister, you have no idea what I'm capable of." She stops just inches from Regina's face, ignoring the gun in her hands. "Your move."
Aggressive Negotiations

Chapter Summary

*Negotiation* (n.) - a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement.

*Aggressive Negotiations* (n.) - Negotiations with a lightsaber.

Chapter Notes

A/N: A lot of stuff happens in this chapter. I hope y’all are still following along. And again, I’m sorry for my absence but between work and other… things, I just can’t write as much as I want to. Also, this chapter is over 7K words in length and there’s sex in this chapter. So… I’m sorry but here’s some smut? I dunno. And one more thing, I know Albert's last name is Spencer in the show but since he's actually David's bio-dad I switched the surnames. And Nolan is Irish in origin so I thought it fit better than Spencer.

Warnings: NSFW, Smut, Violence, Minor Character Death

Disclaimer: I do not own any of these characters, universes or situations. They belong to Disney, ABC etc, etc. I claim no rights to copyrighted material and this story is purely for entertainment purposes.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

> “Willingness to meet halfway works well only if we are able to judge distance accurately.”

— Faisal Khosa

**“What? No pithy one-liner? No snappy comeback?”**

She doesn’t say anything at first. Emma’s somewhat shocked, but to say she’s surprised would be a bit of an exaggeration. She’s dealing with an assassin; a hitperson for hire. So on some level she saw this coming. But she had hoped Regina would at least hear her out before she tried to kill her again.

Emma huffs, rolling her eyes as she brings her coffee cup to her lips. She takes a drink, her taste buds coming to life as the latte coats her tongue. Then she puts Regina’s cup of coffee down on a table near her before she reaches into her coat. Regina tenses but she just shakes her head.

> “Relax, I’m not armed,” Emma tells her.

Regina cocks an eyebrow at that. “Stupid move on your part.”

Emma lets out a bitter laugh, setting her coffee down beside Regina’s. “Yeah, I’m getting that.”
Pulling out her pack of smokes, she takes her time lighting up, indulging in the taste of the toxic smoke. It fills her lungs, the nicotine raging in her veins, relaxing her somewhat. She chances a glance at Regina who’s silently fuming. Apparently, she’s not a smoker. Too bad. She can’t try to kill Emma and then turn her nose up at her bad habits.

After a few long drags from the cancer stick, Emma dares to speak once more. “So,” she begins, exhaling a long line of white smoke. “You normally dress like that for an assassination? Or am I just special?”

Regina’s standing there in a charcoal gray wrap dress that hugs her body, snugly. The low neckline gives Emma a good view of Regina’s cleavage and she grins.

“Not that I’m complaining,” she tells her. “I, for one, am enjoying the scenery.”

“There is something wrong with you,” Regina replies, her arms slightly trembling from holding the gun in the ready position for a few minutes now.

Emma’s smile brightens. “So they tell me.” She leans back against the wall behind her, arms folded over her chest as she unwaveringly meets Regina’s gaze. Whether she’s scared or not, her face doesn’t show it. She’s sporting a cocky grin, her eyes taking in Regina’s form like she knows exactly what’s under that dress. “Are you going shoot me or can I make my proposal?”

Regina doesn’t respond, her readjusting the grip on her gun, as she studies her. Emma suspects she’s wondering if there’s truly something wrong with her. The blonde chuckles, pleased with herself.

“Put the gun down, Regina,” Emma finally says. “Drink the rapidly cooling coffee I got for us and just hear me out. You still want to shoot me in the face, fine. But don’t go back out on what we agreed on.”

“I never agreed to anything,” Regina fires back, her arms quaking with a slight tremor. The movies make it look so easy but the truth is even the most trained individuals can’t hold a heavy hunk of metal and death at the ready position for too long without some drift. Add the adrenaline no doubt coursing through her veins and a little shaking is more than understandable.

Emma, however is steady. Her movements are slow and deliberate. She’s been in the game for what feels like lifetimes. This isn’t the first time someone’s held a gun to her. This isn’t the first time she’s walked into a trap. So she takes her time, bringing the cigarette to her mouth as if she was painting the air with smoke and ash. Her lips hold the butt between her lips and rolls her jacket off her shoulders, letting it fall to the floor. She eases back against the wall near the door, and takes another long pull from her cigarette. Her watery aquamarine eyes boring into dark amber one, almost daring Regina make a move.

But all she offers is a warning. “Don’t underestimate me, Miss Swan. You have no idea what I’m capable of.”

Emma scoffs in response, kicking off her boots.

Regina’s eyes widen. “What the hell are you doing?”

“I’m making myself comfortable,” Emma says, plucking the cigarette from her mouth and rolling it between her fingers. She’s almost smoked it down to the filter. Time’s up. With a shrug she throws the butt into her coffee cup. The two seconds she has her back to Regina are intense. But when she doesn’t get a bullet to the back, Emma can’t fight the grin that curls in the ends of her lips as she turns around to find that the other woman has yet to lower her weapon.
“You’re out of your mind,” Regina says, slightly irritated tone.

“Probably,” Emma replies, drawing closer with measured steps. “But so you are if you think pointing a gun at my chest is enough to scare me off. You're going to have to do better than that. So either shoot me or hear me out. Because you don’t know who I am or where I’ve been and, sister, you have no idea what I’m capable of.” She stops just inches from Regina’s face, ignoring the the gun in her hands. “Your move.”

The other woman’s eyes flash with an emotion that Emma can’t quite name. She watches her gaze dip, her lips quirking into an amused but predatory smirk that looks more like a snarl. Then Regina pounces, the gun dropping to her side, and with her free hand, cups the back of Emma’s neck, pulling their bodies together.

Regina kisses her like she wants to devour Emma from the mouth down. Their lips meet with an equal but opposing force. Like a whirlwind of desire. Then suddenly and without warning Regina rips herself away, leaving Emma dizzy with need.

“We should… we…” Regina says between big gulps of air. She swallows thickly before she tries again. “I'll hear your proposal now, Miss Swan.”

“After…” Emma tells her stepping in close again.

But Regina stops her with a flat palm to the center of her chest. “Before.”

With a wolfish grin, Emma leans in, her head dipping to ghost her lips over Regina’s exposed clavicle. “During?”

She feels fingers dig into the back of her neck, forcing Emma’s gaze up, where she's greeted by dark, lust-blown eyes.

“Agreed,” Regina pants.

Emma's free hand traces tiny circles down Regina's bare arm, watching goosebumps raise on her exposed skin. Emma’s fingers slide over Regina's hand and carefully she takes the gun from her grasp.

“What are you doing?” Regina asks.

With the gun in her hand, Emma steps away. “Disarming you.” She places the gun a nightstand near the hotel bed with a self-satisfied grin on her face. “I could give it back to you. If it'll make you feel safer.”

Regina shakes her head. “No, negotiations work better if there are no guns involve.”

With a soft chuckle Emma stands in front of the other woman and hooks a finger around Regina's thin, metallic belt, and pulls their bodies together. “Couldn't agree with you more.” She undoes the clasp to the belt and it falls with a soft thud. “The question now is where to begin.”

Regina’s arms hook around Emma's neck, her lips ghosting across the blonde's. “Miss Swan, I hope that's not your only question.”

Emma's finger twist in the string at Regina's hip and begins to pull ever so slowly. “No, it isn't. But it's a good neutral point to start our negotiations.”

The bow gives and the dress falls loose. Emma runs her fingers along Regina's collarbone, her hand snaking around her neck as she closes the distance between them. Their mouths come
together in a silent and subtle battle for dominance. Regina's hands are clasped around Emma's neck, as she takes her bottom lip between her teeth, and gently pulls away, her chin tilted up. A shudder runs through Emma as she lays a trail of kisses along Regina's jawline, her lips latching onto the soft patch of skin just below her ear, and she almost falters when her hand slips into Regina's dress to find her without a stitch of clothing underneath.

Emma groans at the discovery. “You're killing me, Regina.”

The other woman lets out a deep rolling laugh. “That had been the plan.”

Pulling away Emma catches her eyes, backing them toward the nearest wall, despite the bed being closer. She palms her breasts, the action opening the dress, exposing the other woman's form to her darkened eyes. “And now?”

Regina's breath hitches in her throat. “I could be persuaded to terminate my current contract and seek other employment opportunities.” She arches into Emma's touch. “If given the proper incentive. And I assure you it won't be an easy sell.”

Emma chuckles, rolling one of her nipples between her fingers. “Well, allow me to state my case, then.”

Regina gasps. “Yes...”

Whether it's trepidation or adoration, Emma sets a pace that is excruciatingly slow. Her lips brush Regina's tentatively, barely touching. Each time Regina attempts to deepen their kiss, Emma pulls away until a soft whimper from the other woman has her dipping back in. Every pass giving Regina just a little more but never enough. And when she practically growls her frustration, all Emma does is chuckle, her lips grazing the other woman’s jawline as she tracing a path to her earlobe. She draws it between her teeth and bites down with blunted teeth. Fingers dig into her back as Regina steadies herself, crying out, arching into Emma.

“Easy Regina, don't want to seem too eager,” Emma purrs. “I might lowball you an offer. And we wouldn't want that, would we?”

Regina licks her lips before she responds with a, “I expect nothing less than what I deserve, Miss Swan.”

Emma slips a hand between them, cupping the other woman's sex, pulling a surprise gasp from Regina. “I don't have plans to cheat you. That's not how I'd like this to work.”

The heat this woman is giving off is maddening. It's hard to think when Emma's fingers already slick with Regina's arousal. She almost missed the uncertainty that flashes across her face when she asks, “How would you like this to work?”

“I deal in information, Regina,” Emma says. “I propose a trade. Information for information. You ask a question. I give you an honest answer. And in exchange I get to ask a question of my own.” When Regina's brow furrow with worry she reassures her. “I don't want to know your deep dark secrets. Everything I ask will be work related.”

Regina nods but there's a playful glint to her darkening gaze. “And what if I want to know your deep dark secrets?”

Emma runs teasing fingers along Regina's slit, her lips capturing the other woman's, and swallowing a breathy moan. “Is that an official question, Regina?”

She shakes her head. “No. How did you make me last night?”
“It's not all you. I caught wind of big money changing hands a few weeks ago. I couldn't find the source through conventional means. And the unconventional methods take time,” Emma confesses, her fingertips swiping along the tiny bundle of nerves she has ignored until now, and bites back a groan as it hardens at her touch and Regina moans. “Fuck… So hot…

“Where was I? I got it. When I found out someone had paid an independent contractor for some - let's say - ‘renovations,’ I didn't realize I was the target until about a week later.”

Regina leans forward, her breath caressing Emma's lips. “That doesn't explain how you knew I had taken the contract.”

Emma's rebuttal comes in the form of adding just a little more pressure to Regina's clit until she cried out. “I'm getting to that. Patience. It's a story. I'm telling a story here. Anyway. Then it was a matter of eliminating the big players and funneling the information to the interested parties.”

“You're saying that you planned this?” Regina asks.

“With such a surprised tone…” Emma teases. “But no. Not exactly. It was like between you and two other people. And based on a particular well-documented weakness of mine, it put the odds strongly in your favor. Then it was just a matter of leaving myself exposed enough to initiate a cold approach but not a long distance kill.”

“You offered yourself up as bait?”

“Yes. But I didn't think you'd run a honeypot on me,” Emma says. “Nearly had a damn heart attack the first I saw you naked.”

Regina lets out a throaty chuckle, capturing Emma’s lips in a brief kiss. “That would have made my life easier.”

“But not nearly as interesting,” Emma whispers. “To your credit I didn’t know I who I was dealing with until you pushed the cider. At first I thought I hit the fucking lottery. Shoulda known my luck wasn’t that good.”

“I don’t know, Miss Swan, I would say you’ve gotten plenty lucky.”

It’s Emma’s turn to let out a chuckle. “Was that an innuendo? Regina, I’m impressed.”

She flashes a warm smile for a moment it’s almost like they’re civilians and this is nothing more than just two people connecting with each other. No hidden agendas. No double speak. Just Emma. Just Regina. Simple. Breezy. Unbelievably fun. The gun on the nightstand tells a different tale. However, it’s easy to fall into the fantasy. Even it’s only for a little while.

Still, Emma reminds herself to get back to business. This is after all a business meeting. “Now, by my count that was like three questions. Which means, I get three questions.” Before Regina could raise a protest, she silences her with kiss, pulling away far enough that she could see the other woman’s face clearly. “I’ll keep them simple. Don’t worry. One: Do you really find me intriguing?”

Regina rolls her eyes. “Disagreeable, vexatious… And despite that, or perhaps because of it, I do find myself intrigued by you.”

She beams, rewarding the assassin (and let's be honest herself) with a teasing stroke through silken folds. Regina bites her bottom lip, head sinking to Emma's shoulder, and lets out a muted whimper.

“Was sleeping with me last night a part of the plan?”

Regina lifts her head to catch Emma’s gaze. “A happy accident.”

“Just couldn't help yourself,” Emma says smugly. “I get it. Now last question for this round.” She brushes her lips against Regina’s. “Do you want me to fuck you?”

Her response is immediate. Hands clasp around her neck, pulling their bodies together. She almost rips Emma’s head clear off, lips crashing together so hard it hurts; Regina’s tongue demanding entrance into Emma’s mouth, which she happily grants. The kiss is heated, ablaze with an explosive passion that is quickly becoming routine for them. It’s the kind of fire would burn them both. Because this kind of flame either fizzles out or goes off like a pile of plastic explosive and takes out a city block, leaving only chaos and destruction in it’s wake. And if past is prologue, it'll be the latter and not the former.

When they break apart, they’re both gasping, exchanging heated breaths just a few inches from each other.

“So is that a yes or…?” Emma teases.

Regina offers a silent rebuttal with a not so gentle push on her shoulders and guides her to her knees. Emma's eyes are dark green pools, fixed on the other woman's glistening sex. For a moment she does nothing but wordlessly appreciate the work of art laid bare before her. Then she feels Regina's leg hook over her shoulder and draw her closer. The heady scent of her arousal is almost a shock to Emma's system. She can't think past the idea of tasting her again. Her mouth practically waters at thought.

“So you need a written invitation, Miss Swan?” Regina asks impatiently.

“What?” Emma says looking up, barely registering that the other woman has spoken. “No…” Her lips brush Regina's exposed inner thigh. “I got a little distracted… I don't know if you've realized but your flavor of sexy is a little overwhelming.”

Regina lets out a husky laugh that ends in a breathy moan when Emma sucks the flesh over her pulse point on her inner thigh. “Are you saying you're not capable of giving me what you promised?”

Emma smirks. “Not even in the slightest. I was just sorta hoping you might have asked me nicely to get on my knees.”

“I don't beg,” Regina says, plainly. “And most certainly don't do nice.”

“Duly noted.”

Emma silences Regina's would be retort with a teasing swipe of her tongue over the other woman’s most intimate parts. A hand grips her ponytail holding her in place, and hips roll to greet her eager mouth. She has plans to only tease and taunt, to make Regina, despite her previous claims to the contrary, beg for release. But all of that goes out the window with the first taste of her hot, viscous essence on her tongue. Her hands slid over the rise of Regina’s ass, humming her encouragement as the woman above her rides the flat of her tongue.

On her knees, face buried between her thighs, Emma loses herself in Regina. She forgets her plan,
her desire to vex and provoke. Now all she wants is make her peak over and over again. She wants Regina's orgasm more than anything.

A sharp heel digs painfully into her back but she ignores it, relishing in the sounds she can pull from Regina only using her tongue. A litany of soft gasps, and deep moans spur Emma on to her goal. Her thumbs slip through warm, wet lips to give her better access to Regina. When her lips catch the other woman's clit, Regina bucks so hard and unexpectedly that it doesn't come as a shock to Emma when she tastes a tinge of copper.

She can't help but smirk. It's not her first “war wound.” And judging by the now stinging pain at her back where Regina's heel scrapes along her skin it won't be her last. Emma doesn't stop, she doesn't pull away, she doesn’t deviate from her course; too close to her goal to stop now.

The hand twisted in her hair tightens, holds her in place. She cuts her eyes at the offending party and Regina only offers her a breathy, but somehow still stern, “Don't. Get. Cocky.”

The grin Emma wears only widens, dark hooded eyes glint with a playfulness, and Emma eases a single finger inside the other woman before she can snark her any further. Regina’s sharp, hitching breaths, and quiet cursing is music to her ears. Emma rolls her eyes up her gaze roaming over the smooth slopes and valleys of her body, needing to see her face. Regina’s eyes are screwed shut, head thrown back, bottom lip caught between her teeth, with one hand still tight in her hair, the other trying to find purchase on something solid, fingers clawing the wall she leans against.

“Fuck…” Emma groans against her skin, a finger once again sliding into slick heat.

“More…” Regina breathes.

And Emma’s more than happy to oblige, adding a second finger and then, when the time is right, a third. She lathes Regina's clit with attention as she eases in and out of the other woman. Regina meets her ministrations with an eager roll of her hips, her inner walls clenching around Emma as she dives deeper. Like she's looking for some place inside of the other woman that's just out of reach.

“Ah… nhn… fuck!” Regina grinds out against clenched teeth. “Harder…”

Emma almost picks up her head to tease Regina and call her a bossy bottom but she can't pull away. Everything about this woman draws her in, holds her attention, makes her forget herself just enough to get lost. So instead of drawing away, she drives her fingers hard into Regina’s core.

The other woman lets out a sound that can't be called a moan or a shout but somehow is a bit of both. “Yes!”

They fall into a steady rhythm, Regina's hips and Emma's hands and tongue. It's like they're making music, caught in a primal dance. After a while Emma feels the fatigue in her wrist, her elbow, her fucking jaw. It doesn't matter, Regina's close. And Emma wants to watch her tumble over that edge. She's already rendered the woman a trembling mess of quaking thighs, heaving breathes, and barely formed words that don't sound like any language known to man. And yet Emma understands every broken word.

“Oh God… I'm… nuh… I'm… Fuck!”

She knows. She can feel it around her fingers. Hear it with the steady rise of her moans. Taste it on her tongue like a coming storm. And when Regina falls over the edge it's like the crashing of a tidal wave. Her nails dig into Emma’s shoulder trying to anchor her to something solid, her back arching off the wall, as she lets out this keening wail that to Emma sounds like victory.
She rides it out with her, sure and steady until Regina settles and Emma can stand without worrying about her falling. She withdraws her hand, tensing when sharp nails cut into her shoulder. She ignores her body's protests, though; the way her muscles strain against her efforts, and stands anyway.

Her lips curl in a satisfied smirk when she sees Regina; hair tousled, the beginnings of a lazy smile playing on her features as she tries to regulate her breathing. There's a swell of pride deep in Emma's chest. She can't help think, *Yeah, I did that*, taking her fingers into her mouth. She hums at the taste of this woman on her digits.

Regina's dark eyes are burning into her. Watching her like Emma is her prey and she's about to go in for kill. And she does. Grabbing Emma's tank top, she pulls Emma against in her, drawing their lips together into a searing kiss. And that possibility that this fire between them would burn them both, jumps to a certainty. But Emma doesn't care. So long as Regina keeps touching her, the rest of it doesn’t matter. She could leave her a smoldering pile of ash, and it'd be worth it.

However it isn’t just Emma’s heart on the line anymore. She’s got the kid now. And Emma’s starting to realize that when she got hurt, so did he. And the days, where doing stuff like this is the norm, are quickly becoming relics of the past. All for Henry’s sake. But she shakes her head at the thought. She can’t have Henry on the brain right now.

Wrapped in her own thoughts she’s caught off guard when Regina pushes her down on the bed. Because she honestly doesn’t remember walking over it. And that’s a problem.

There is just one other person that made her feel love-drunk like this. And if past is prologue there is only one way this could end; with someone getting their heart broken and/or stabbed in the back. She shudders at the thought. Whatever happens now, it’s squarely in her court. And she knows that it’s probably her turn for either scenario.

“Miss Swan, you’re overdressed for the second half of these…” Regina pauses, her eyes focusing on Emma’s center.

“Negotiations?” the blonde offers. She nods and Emma chuckles. “A half hour ago, you said I was underdressed.”

The other woman arches an eyebrow. “A half hour ago, I was going to shoot you.”

Emma eyes her for a moment. “You weren’t going to shoot me.”

“And you’re sure about that?”

“Yes.”

“Miss Swan?”

“Hmm?”

“Don’t make me tell you again. You’re overdressed.”

Emma chuckles. “And you’re bossy. Has anyone ever told you that you’re bossy?”

“Yes,” Regina replies. “Has anyone ever told you’re obstreperous?”

“No, people mostly accuse me of being cantankerous, truculent, and intransigent.” The other woman’s look of surprise is enough to have Emma’s shine with laughter. “Not just a pretty face.”
“Miss Swan?”

“Yes?”

“Take off your fucking pants before I shoot you.”

“See, bossy.”

But her hands fall to the clasp of her jeans anyway. Slowly, she peels them off, her eyes never leaving Regina's. There's something there, under the dark smoldering gaze. Something that can't be named, that shouldn't be named. It's dangerous but enticing. They should both walk away but they won't. They are already in too deep.

“The shirt and bra as well,” Regina orders, inching toward her. She slides a knee on her bed between her thighs, hand on her bare leg for balance. The rich timber of her voice would have had her doing anything she asked. So of course Emma reaches for the bottom hem of her shirt and pulls it over her head, before she reaches behind her to unclasp her bra.

“...The ridiculous ponytail...can go too, Miss Swan.”

With a mock pout, Emma lets her hair down, trying to ignore how her nipples are almost painfully hard now. “I liked it.”

“It made you look like a teenager.”

“I thought you'd be down for a little roleplay. You, the sexy librarian. Me, the hapless student that needs help researching a paper on Georgia O'Keefe.” Off of Regina's look she chuckles. “No? Too much?”

“You're an idiot.”

“Yes.”

The other woman doesn’t speak after that. Her eyes slowly drifting over Emma’s form as she lays almost bare before her, in just red panties. She swears she sees Regina smirk as she takes her in. But the snarky quips dies in her throat unspoken when the dark haired assassin cups her heated sex. Emma’s head lolls backward, eyes screwed shut as she takes a deep, but shaking breath.

“So this partnership of ours…” Regina begins, her fingers lightly hovering over Emma’s cotton clad center. “How is this supposed to work?”

“You just have to give me the name of the money,” Emma pants. “I… I’ll take care of the rest.” The brunette’s finger hooks inside the leg of her underwear; a teasing stroke of her hand against soft folds has Emma seeing stars. “Fuck me.”

“All in good time, Miss Swan,” Regina purrs, withdrawing herself completely. “But first, business.” She leans in, draping herself over Emma. This close the blonde catches her scent. It fills her nostrils, making her head swim, and her vision foggy. She smells the soft floral scent of her perfume, the faint salty musk that was Regina, and of course, like an undertone, Emma can almost taste her arousal hanging in the air. She goes to touch her, almost desperate to feel the other woman on her tongue again. But Regina shakes her head. “Easy, Miss Swan, we don’t want to seem too eager. I might feel inclined to ask for more than what I’m due.”

Emma smirks. “You wouldn’t cheat me.”

“Are you certain of that?” Regina asks, her lips brushing Emma’s.
The blonde nods. “I’m in the business of reading people. I know who I’m dealing with. Why do you think I chose you?”

Their lips come together in a soft, unhurried kiss. Gone is that sense of urgency. It’s almost like they have all the time in the world. Emma hooks a leg around Regina’s waist, fingers threading through raven locks as she pulls her closer. Regina’s heat waifs off her in waves and Emma can feel her slick against her thigh. She groans, hips arching into Regina. With that little movement, the kiss intensifies. And lips and teeth, and heated breaths exchanged as they battle for dominance.

As time slips away from them, Emma can feel the anticipation of her release coil within her. She pulls away to breathe and soon discovers that is the wrong move as the other woman latches onto her pulse point capturing the patch of skin between her lips.

“Oh, God,” Emma moans, rutting against the other woman like she’s in heat.

“I prefer to be called Regina,” the brunette teases, her fingers drawing warm lines down her chest, skating over bare stomach before she dips under the band of her panties.

But then she stops, her hand torturously still, and pressed against the blonde's most sensitive parts. “Regina, I swear to God…”

“Patience, Miss Swan,” the assassin whispers. “We’re not done discussing the terms of her partnership. What do you need from me?”

Emma bites back a frustrated whimper. “I’ve already told you. All I need is a name.”

Regina shakes her head, loosening Emma’s grip. “I can’t do that. We work through third parties. No one meets face to face.”

Emma’s eyes are shut, focusing on regulating her breathing so she can speak. Otherwise she might have caught the way the other woman hid her eyes when she talked, or how her breathing changed.

“An account number would be just as good,” Emma says, swallowing thickly.

Regina lets out a sigh and the blonde mistakes it for contentment and not relief. “I can provide that information.”

“Good.” Emma coaxes her body against hers and captures her lips in a gentle kiss. She pulls away only to ask, “Regina, what’s your exit plan?”

The other woman rears back to look Emma more squarely in the eyes, frowning quizzically at the blonde. “Exit plan?”

Emma huffs, trying to get a hold on her thoughts. “I mean, if you could walk away from this, say you have enough capital to leave this all behind, would you?” When the brunette hesitates, Emma reminds her. “Be honest with me, Regina.”

After a long moment the other woman finally nods, affirming the gesture with a barely audible, “Yes, I would.”

Brushing the hair out of her face, Emma searches her eyes for any signs of subterfuge. When she doesn’t see anything, she smiles softly. “Then that’s my offer, Regina. You tell me how much it’ll take and I’ll set you up for retirement, if you help me track down the dick that wants me dead. Deal?”
“Deal,” Regina agrees. “Now, I suppose there’s only one thing left to do.”

“What?” Emma asks, unable to come up with the obvious answer.

Regina’s reply is a finger gliding through slick, wet heat, groaning as she settles inside the blonde; who can do nothing but moan, her hips raising to her touch without another word, save for half-spoken swears, moans, and shaking breaths as her body acclimates to this welcomed intrusion. Her heart stops when Regina’s hand flexes, her digit slowly sinking deeper until Emma’s breath catches, before pulling out, only to repeat the process, over and over again.

It’s slow between them at first. Regina’s finger working in and out of her until Emma’s a trembling mess, begging for more. But for all of her whimpering, the other woman denies her anything more than this gentle pace. Her lips ghost across Emma’s, warm breath raising her skin in goosebumps. She wants more. She needs more.

“Regina, please,” she pleads, her hips bucking under the other woman’s touch.

“I like seeing this side of you, Miss Swan,” Regina whispers, her lips falling to the patch of skin just behind her ear. Her words vibrate against Emma’s neck causing the blonde to clench, holding the back of Regina’s neck to keep her there. “Warm, wet, wanting… It’s my guess that you’re used to getting what you want, when you want it. But you like when I tease you, don’t you?”

“Jesus fuck, Regina…” is all she can get out.

Her hand stills. “The truth, Miss Swan.”

Emma licks her lips before she nods. “Yes…”

Her hand moves slightly and Emma bites back a curse, as Regina smirks. “Yes, what?”

“Fuck…”

“I need you to say it.” Regina whispers in her ear. “Say it, I’ll consider giving you what you want.”

She tries to form the sentence but all that comes out in a pleading sob. “Regina…”

“Not good enough,” the other woman says, her thumb swiping lightly over the sensitive bundle of nerves. “Tell me, Miss Swan.”

“I like…” Emma huffs. “I like it… when… fuck! I like it when you tease me, Regina. But please… Please, no more; just fuck me.”

“Is that what you really want?” Regina asks, her tone darker than her light and teasing words.

Emma arches into her touch with a groan. “Fuck, yes.”

She thinks the other woman might make her beg, wind her up until she snaps, but Regina doesn’t. Instead, with a self-satisfied chuckle, she adds another finger, pulling a surprised, but pleased gasp from the blonde, who eagerly raises her hips to meet Regina’s ministrations. They find a steady pace between them, like falling in step to music. Only there was no rhythm or rhyme; no melody other than the sounds Regina pulls from Emma.

“Holy…” the blonde breathes, her hips canting against the other woman’s hand. “Fuck. How do you- How are you… You’re good at this. Too good.”
An amused hum escapes the brunette as she snares Emma’s bottom lip between her teeth. She pulls away, steadily applying pressure until Emma’s body clenches around her fingers. “You say that like it’s a bad thing.”

It’s not a bad thing. Or maybe it is. It all depends on perspective. Too much of a good thing never ends well. It was like that with Lily. And Emma can’t help but see the similarities this time around. However, there are some differences too. And it’s these little things; how guarded Regina is, the deep-rooted sadness she sometimes sees in her eyes, that has Emma intrigued. Lily had been an open book (at least in the beginning). Regina is an utter mystery.

“Not…It's not…” Emma’s words fail her and she can’t take it anymore. “Regina…”

“Yes?”

“I need… I need…”

“Tell me.”

She can’t. She wants to. But she’s close, walking that fine line between sweet torture, and wondrous release, like she’s balancing on a razor’s edge. Emma wants to tell Regina exactly what she needs, how much she needs it. However, with her eyes unfocused, and her lips quivering, the assassin’s unrelenting touch, her heated breath on her skin, and the warmth of her body against her own, renders Emma a wordless mess of clipped noises, and trembling limbs.

“I… Pl-… I…”

The other woman tries the usual tricks, change of speed, alternating between light and shallow, and hard and deep. Her thumb swirls over Emma’s clit and although that is crazy amazing, it’s still not what she needs.

“Are you close?” Regina asks. All the blonde can do is nod. “What do you need?”

Since the speech center of Emma’s brain is misfiring, she decides that action is best in this case. Her hand trails down the other woman’s slender body. She doesn’t have time to do this properly, to take her time, to make this count. It’s not like it was last night. This is just means to an end. An unorthodox contract negotiation to seal an unconventional alliance.

Maybe when this is over… Maybe in another life…

Her fingers slide through slick, wet heat and she groans. “Can I?”

“Yes…” Regina hisses. “Is that what you need?” A simple nod brings a smile to her face and Emma almost burns up right on the spot when the brunette tells her, “Then touch me…”

The second she feels Regina clenching around her fingers, Emma goes rigid, and with a loud, keening moan she tips over the edge. Her own hand stills as she rides her climax out, watching Regina as she tries to draw out every bit her orgasm. After what seems like lifetimes but couldn’t be more than a few moments, Emma goes still and she laughs just a little.

“So,” Emma draws out. “That happened.”

Regina lets out a throaty laugh. “Yes, it did.” With a playful glint in her russet brown eyes, she slowly withdraws herself, watching Emma bite her lip with a muted whimper. “Any regrets?”

It’s Emma’s turn to chuckle, fingers sliding away from Regina. She brings them up to her lips and draws them into her mouth. The two women moan in stereo; Emma relishing in this woman’s taste
and Regina captivated by the sight of her licking her fingers clean. “My only regret,” Emma says, kissing her collarbone. “… is that I can’t stay.”

“You can’t?”

Emma shakes her head. “I promised the kid that I’d take him to the arcade and a movie tonight. But if you want, I could meet up after I put him to bed.”

Regina rolls her eyes and breaks away from her, straightening out her dress and re-ties it. “Miss Swan, you can drop the act. Nothing in your file indicated you having a child. If you have other plans just say so, there’s no need for this charade.”

Emma frowns. It’s hard to be angry in the middle of post-orgasmal bliss, especially in just her underwear, but she manages it. She puts on her pants, replaces her bra and short, finds her jacket, and takes her phone out of one of it’s pockets. After a few swipes with her thumb she stops and hands Regina the phone. “His name is Henry. His parents, were Mary and David Nolan and they knew me before… all of this. After they both died, I was all the kid had. So don’t you dare question my integrity. I told you I wouldn't lie to you. And I haven’t.”

Regina blinks at her, bristling at her words. Then she pauses and looks at Emma like she's put something together. “David Nolan? Any relation to Albert Nolan?”

Emma sighs. “Yes, that's David’s father.”

“So you're telling that Henry’s grandfather of the head of the Irish Mob in Boston?”

“Albert doesn't know about him. He never made the effort. As far as he knows David died childless just like his twin brother did.” Emma notices the neutral mask that Regina's face has become. “What? What is it?” Still she doesn't say anything. “Regina, is there something I need to know?”

Before she could say anything there was a knock on the door. “Room service.”

Emma glances at Regina. The obvious question lies unspoken in her eyes to which Regina shakes her head in response, so Emma signals her to get back as she goes for the gun.

Armed, she creeps toward the door. Her heart is racing, a rapid hammering in her chest, her lungs burn with each breath, and her nerves humming with an electric current she can feel just beneath her skin. This isn’t her bag. Guns, fire fights, that was Lily’s thing and while Emma happily went along for the ride, she couldn’t keep up. Bullets make her nervous, and although she knows her way around a gun, knives are more her style. Something about being up close and personal just works for her.

If you couldn’t stand to watch the light fade from someone’s eyes, then maybe this isn’t the life for you. It’s been a minute since she’s sent a person away with the Hard Goodbye. She’s praying that she doesn’t have to here. She’s hoping that it’s just her being paranoid.

But as she used to tell Lily back in the day when the occasional job went south and they were laying low, “Just because you’re paranoid, doesn’t mean someone doesn’t want you dead.” And in Emma’s case, that couldn’t have been truer.

“You can leave it by the door,” she calls. “I’m actually about to take a shower. I completely forget I ordered room service.”

There is a complete minute where Emma can’t even breathe passed the silence. She won’t shoot someone through the door but fuck, if it’s not the least bit tempting. But before she can truly
entertain that thought, there’s a muffled voice on the other end of the door.


“Allright. I’ll just leave the trolley by the door, ma’am.”

“Thank you.”

Emma eases away from the door, gun at the stand by position. At Regina's quizzical look, she brings a finger to her lips, and nods to the bathroom. The other woman catches on quickly and heads there with Emma close behind.

Once in the bathroom, she eases Regina away from the door, and tucks her against a corner. Emma reaches into the shower stall and turns the hot water all the way up. As the bathroom starts to fog, she rejoins the assassin and waits. If this isn't just her hypervigilance playing tricks then this is the perfect place to stage an ambush.

Emma relaxes her shoulders and sighs. Maybe she is just being a touch reactionary.

*Click.*

The suite door opens. Heavy, booted footsteps draw closer. Her breath catches in the back of her throat and she readjusts her grip on the gun.

The bathroom is steamy and warm like a sauna. So when the door opens, Emma is certain that this person can't see the empty shower.

He points his weapon at the glass stall and pumps three rounds into the shower. The silencer suppressing the gunshots with a deadly whisper. She feels Regina flinch with every shot. And that's when Emma realizes something the other woman apparently already figured out.

This hitman isn't here for Emma.

The revelation hits her like a punch to the gut and fills her with a familiar kind of ire. She is going to kill this man.

Emma lashes out like a zap of lightning. She brings her elbow down on his arm and kicks the gun out of his hands. Before he can recover she slams her elbow into his nose. Emma feels the break more than hears it. The man groans and staggers back. And Emma is on him. But the hitman’s survival instincts have kicked and he spears her into the wall. The impact knocks the air out of her lungs and the gun slips from her hand.

She beats on his back, and when that doesn't get him off of her she drives her knee into his gut. The man fumbles, loosening his hold. Emma thinks she's won some small victory until he rears back and punches her in the face. Her ears ring with the force of the blow. It rocks her head back, stunning her. She's in a daze when he spins her around and throws her to the floor.

Okay. This is it. Emma sighs. If only she had time for one last cigarette. Oddly, her concern for Henry is nonexistent. Ruby would take him in. And he'd be safe with her and her G-Ma.

“You're not the Evil Queen…” the hitman says.

“Nope.” Emma replies. “Just a fan of hers.”

He cocks his head to the side like a confused puppy and goes to speak but instead goes rigid and drops to his knees. It's only after he slumps to the ground that Emma registers the warm, wet spray
of blood that hit her face seconds before.

She looks up and sees Regina still holding the gun in the ready position. Her arms are shaking, her lips are quivering as her eyes widen with shock, well with tears.

“Regina…” Emma whispers. “Regina, look at me…” She slowly, and cautiously gets up and crosses over to the other woman. “Regina, put the gun down. He's dead. OK? You can give me the gun now.”

The other woman blinks as if her eyes are trying to focus. The tension eases from her shoulders and she finally lowers her gun.

“We can't stay here,” Regina says. “We have to… I can't… “

Emma nods. “It's okay. I know a place you'll be safe.”

“What about your son?” Regina asks. “What about Henry?”

“He's fine,” she tells her. “This hitter was for you. Not for me or Henry.”

“Emma…” Regina sighs her name. It's the first time she's said it outside of their bedroom antics. “That man was Graham Humbert. He works for Albert Nolan. Who is the person that hired me to kill you.”

At first, Emma can't speak. Albert shouldn't know she's alive. He shouldn't know about Henry either. It just can't be possible. But looking at the anguished and guilty on Regina’s face, she knows that it's true.

Shit.

“Miss Swan?”

That’s all it takes; just the sound of her voice. (How could she have been so fucking stupid? How could she not have seen it?) Her blood boils and Emma lashes out, slamming Regina next to the nearest wall. She’s yelling, demanding that the other woman tell her the truth - the whole truth. It isn’t until she hears Regina wheeze that Emma realizes she has her hands wrapped around her throat. She pushes away from Regina so fast that she stumbles but she catches herself, spinning away from the other woman as she tries to get a hold on her feelings. Because even though every nerve ending is screaming to finish what she started, Emma needs Regina… For now.

“Miss Swan?”

“Were you ever going to tell me?” Emma asks, her voice barely above a whisper. “The truth, Regina. You owe me that.”

“No. I was not. I couldn’t.” She can hear the hesitation in her voice as Regina asks her the obvious question: “So what now?”

“Grab what you need and let's go. We're leaving in five minutes.”

Chapter End Notes
Alright, a little throwback to season one. You know with Regina killing Graham and the "Your Move" line. Anyway, that was chapter three. Thanks for reading. And as always, you can find me on my new tumblr "MurderouslyAdorkable" and twitter @MurderouslyCute. Again, thank you so much commenting, giving kudos, bookmarking my fict. It means a lot that there are people that like how I string sentences together. So yeah. You guys are the best. Keep it up with the comments. I try to reply to all of them. :D

Here's a little bit of Chapter Four to hold you over:

Once they are gone it's Merida that speaks up. “Ok, I'm confused.”

“If you're wondering why I'm still alive that's between your employer and I,” Regina replies.

The Scottish lass shakes her head. “No. Actually... I was wonderin'...” Merida turns to Emma and shouts, “WHAT THE FUCKIN' HELL IS SHE DOIN' HERE?! DIDN'T THIS SHE-DEVIL TRY TO KILL YOU?”
Foreseeable Consequences

Chapter Summary

**Consequence** - (n.) a result or effect of an action or condition.

**Foreseeable Consequence** - (n.) a result that can reasonably be assumed that it will cause a certain effect i.e. some shit you should have seen coming.

Chapter Notes

Thanks to the everyone still sticking with the story. I really appreciate and adore everyone for reading it. There’s are two references to Firefly if you squint your eyes. And any fans of early 90s R&B will get the Bel Biv DeVoe reference. Anyway, there’s also an homage to another one of my favorite SwanQueen moments. I’m not going to say what, but you’ll notice it when you read it. I cheered the first time I saw it on TV. Just awesomeness. Also, I would like to thank my beta, Wolfstevens who puts up with my ridiculousness without complaint and edits my story even when she doesn’t feel like it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.”

— Sun Tzu, ‘The War of War’

They don’t speak as they make their hasty exit from the hotel. Save for when Regina took one look at her car and said, “This rolling tin can is what you’ve planned to make our grand escape in, Miss Swan?” The way Emma cuts her eyes at the other woman answers her question without uttering a word. And Regina doesn’t push the argument. Not even to ask where she is being taken. It doesn’t rebuild what little trust they had to begin with but it’s a step in the right the direction.

Besides, at this point Emma doesn’t know if she can’t keep herself from choking the air out of Regina if she opens her mouth to question her one more time.

Something broke in the hotel suite. Something she can't quite articulate. All she knows is that Henry might be in danger and it's all hands on deck.

She quickly pulls out her phone and dials the last person she talked to.

“You've reached the Offices of Belle French, Oracle of the Information Superhighway, how may I direct your call?”

“I have a problem only you can solve, Beautiful,” Emma says as calmly as she can manage into her cell phone. “Now, listen to me very carefully. Because I need a lot of things from you and I need it all done perfectly. Are you ready?”

Belle’s voice squeaks on the other end. “No… but go ahead.”
“That’s my girl.” Emma details the plan; the situation she’s in and what she needs Belle to do.
“Okay, I need a deep cleaning at the Four Seasons on 57th. Me, plus one.”

“Who?”

“EQ.”

“Seriously?”

Emma sighs. “I’ll explain later. But you have a face for the plus one right?”

“Yes.”

Good. One less thing Emma has to account for. “I need one more thing from you. I need you to get pull up everything we have on Al Nolan and forward it to the safe house.”

“I’ll start with the last thing. It’s easiest,” Belle informs her. “The other stuff’ll be done before Homicide arrives.” There’s a pregnant pause before she continues. “You did kill someone again, right?”

“Hey,” Emma says. “I haven’t killed someone in a very long time. That being said, someone has died and I can’t let it be traced to me. Can you manage it?”

Belle scoffs. “I’m offended you would even ask. Anyway, sending you a blacked out route to the safehouse, where all of the CCTV cams are all down some crazy how. I’m already here but send me a text when you get to the safehouse. I’ll make sure Ruby knows to take Henry and meet you here. Mulan’s on watch but shall I rally the rest of the troops too?”

“My gut says yes but let Ruby make that call,” Emma tells her. “It’s probably best I don’t make any major decisions for a spell.”

“You’re putting yourself on time-out?” Belle asks, astonished. “That’s a first.”

“I’m hanging up now, Belle. Do your job. Pretty please. KTHXBYE.”

She hangs up and sighs heavily. A cigarette would be amazing but there’s work to be done. Places to go, people to murder. It’s just like old times. With a few noticeable differences. It’s like life kept moving forward while she had been standing still. Now she is in the same situation she has been in so many times before. However somehow in the middle of all of this, she had turned 30 and decided to raise a kid.

Why does that bother her? It never bothered her before. Now it’s gnawing at her insides and it’s all she can think about it.

“Miss Swan…”

“What?” Her tone makes Regina flinch and Emma softens. “Sorry…”

Regina gives her that same quizzical look that Ruby does when she does something uncharacteristic of her. The brunette had not been expecting her apology. And it shows.

“May I have one of your cigarettes?” she asks.

Emma nods. “Yeah…”

After fishing for her cigarettes she hands Regina her pack, taking one for herself as well. She
passes the other woman her Zippo and activates the car’s cigarette lighter. A moment later the heated coil of metal pops out and Emma uses that light her own cancer stick. And for a few moments they smoke in silence.

“I haven't had one of these in almost ten years,” Regina says, staring out the passenger side window. “It still tastes how I remember.”

“I quit a while back,” Emma admits, taking a drag. “It didn’t stick.”

“What made you start again?”

She lets out a bitter laugh. “What else? A woman.”

Emma leaves it at that. There's no need to mention Lily. Or her husband, August Booth. Or how when she got the news that Lily has left the States with said new husband, Emma dropped everything she had going in Florida to reestablish herself in New York again. The whole experience had her picking up a few old bad habits. The cigarettes being one of the things Emma couldn't shake after she walked out of her life for the second time.

To this day, Lily doesn't know that Henry had been the catalyst for their inevitable downfall. When she got the news of his impending arrival, Emma realized that she'd move heaven and hell for this kid. No matter the cost to her own happiness. Nearly eight years later and nothing has changed. She is ready to go to war with Al Nolan, the Irish Mob, and anyone else, just to keep him away from the torment his father had endured at the hands of his father.

Emma glances at Regina for a moment and shakes her head. Knowing Albert had hired her to take Emma out of the picture, makes her wonder if Nolan knows how fiercely she's ready to defend this kid and if he cares.

“Henry isn't your son,” Regina says, exhaling a long line of white smoke. She quickly amends with, “Biologically, I mean.”

“Godson,” Emma replies. “They don't tell you what happens when the both parents kick the bucket. Or rather you don't think what being a Godparent may mean until you get the phone call.”

They don't say anything more until Emma pulls into the underground parking at the base of the safe house. It is an old theater in Harlem.

“In the 20s this place was a Speakeasy,” Emma supplies. “Before that it was a burlesque house. A staple of the Red Light District.”

After a pin code is entered and Emma's thumb is scanned, the pair piles into an elevator. It’s a short ride. Just two floors. The doors swing open to reveal a furnished loft. Quaint but sparsely decorated. There are little personal touches everywhere; pictures here and there, a T.V., a couch, even a small bar in the corner.

“Do you need to change?” Emma asks as she heads right for the alcohol..

Regina blinks at her. “Pardon?”

“My kid's coming over,” she clarifies, pouring herself a shot of tequila. “As much as I love that dress, you're not exactly wearing anything underneath it. I don't want to scar the kid.”

“Right. Is there—”

Emma nods to the hallway. “Last door on your right. That one’s mine, so help yourself.”
Regina glances at her bloodied tank top. “What about you?”

“I'll change out here,” Emma says. “I've got a dresser of clothes in the coat closet.”

“Ok.”

Emma nervously scratched the back of her neck, her mind working hard to come up with something to say about what happened before. “Regina? I — er... um... I'm sor—”

But the other woman dismisses her just as awkwardly. “I... If it had been me... I... You don't have to apologize, Miss Swan.”

“I feel like I should.”

Regina her head. “Don't... I'll be back shortly.”

“Ok.”

After she disappears, Emma downs her shot. It's just a little after eleven in the morning, which is why she hasn't reached for a second drink. One drink before noon is for nerves. Two means you might be an alcoholic.

With the tiny amount of alcohol buzz through her system, Emma heads for the small closet in the sitting room. She sheds her jacket and blood stained tank top. She then replaces it with a simple black button up, which she rolls the sleeves up to the elbow, careful to hide her blood stained garments after she’s presentable again.

“You got a lotta muthafuckin’ nerve, Snowflake…”

The sound of that voice behind her freezes Emma in her tracks. Just the tone is enough to make her cringe. The right amount of Mama Bear and/or Big Sister. She doesn't know what she did but she knows she's grounded.

“T, I can explain…” Emma fishes the cigarettes out of her pocket and lights one. “This girl is like stupid hot.” When she turns to face the newcomer, Emma’s smirking, a teasing shine to her watery green eyes when she laughs. “Tiana, I thought Mulan was on watch.”

“She is, Snowflake. I'm just here because Ruby called us all in and I was already in the neighborhood.” She nods to the empty glass on the bar. “That bad? I've only seen you day drink once. And that was when—”

Emma waves her off. “Yes, it is that bad. But not because of Regina… Not entirely anyway. She was just doing a job.”

“Emma Swan, you sound like you've been booty blinded.”

“No. I don't get... that way.”

“Snowflake, you can lie to everybody else up in here but you can't lie to me. You're booty blind. You've been blinded by the almighty booty. You know this. I know this. Matter of fact what do I always tell you?”

She doesn't like where this is heading but answers anyway. “Never trust a big butt and a smile.”

“And what do you always do?”
Emma’s frown deepens. “Trust a big butt and a smile.”

“Exactly. You need to admit to yourself that this girl is poison and she's dangerous.”

Emma sighs and studies her compatriot, searching for any judgement in her expression. All she finds is genuine concern in burnt honey brown eyes, and a caring smile curling the ends of dark, full lips. But Tiana is tall and slender like Ruby so even though she isn’t talking down to her Emma still feels like she is looming over her. But that’s her own mental issues playing tricks. Tiana is a good person. And she's only looking out for her. It has been like that since they were kids, and now that Tiana has her little boy, her maternal instincts have gone into overdrive.

“Ruby called you?” Emma asks, attempting to change the subject.

Tiana sighs, dropping the beginnings of her argument. “Yes. Called ten minutes ago. Merida and Belle are meeting Ruby at your place. They'll ride in with her and the little man.”

Emma puts out the cigarette and nods. “I’m gonna check on Her Majesty, then.”

“Good luck,” Tiana calls after. And as Emma heads further down the hall, she swears she hears Tiana add, “You're gonna need it. Telling people you ain’t motherfuckin’ booty blind. Like I don’t motherfuckin’ know you. You can run that game on everybody else, Snowflake. But not on me.”

Opening the door to the bedroom, Emma eases her way in. She searches the dimly lit room, finding no signs of the other woman, save for her dress crumpled on the floor, and a few small suitcases.

“Regina?” Emma calls.

Nothing.

Then she hears it; the sound of someone sobbing in the tiny bathroom attached to the master bedroom. Light peeks out from the bottom of the door, and Emma can see movement on the other side. She knocks, but there’s no response, so she opens the door. What Emma finds - well - It’s like she almost can’t believe her eyes. Regina’s sitting on the toilet seat with her head in hands, elbows resting on on her knees as she cries, softly.

Emma doesn’t know what to say or to do. If it had been Henry, she’d go to him, hug him, reassure him that she is here. Maybe that’s what Regina needs, but the blonde doesn’t know if she should be the one to cross that line.

However, Emma knows she can’t just stand there and stare, so she closes the distance between them and places a hand on her shoulder. Regina’s shoulders tense but when the blonde tries to pull away and a trembling hand catches her by the wrist.

“That was your first,” Emma says. When the brunette shoots her a glare, she clarifies. “With a pistol. Up close like that.”

The fire in Regina’s eyes dies down and she shakes her head. “I haven’t shot someone in very long time.” She lifts her head, her gaze catching Emma’s. “I was going to shoot you. If you hadn’t, I was going to-”

“But you didn’t.” Emma’s words have a hint of levity to them. “And that’s what counts.”

“How can you be so glib about this?” Regina asks, letting go of Emma’s hand.

Her words conjure memories of several conversations about this exact thing. She couldn’t explain
it then, and she can’t explain it now. Emma had been born to this life in a manner of speaking. A lost girl with no family. So when she started down this path her death never scared her. Emma thought about dying right before every job. Lily would say she was tempting fate. That eventually she’d get spooked and slip up. But Emma’s own death just never concerned her. Being abandoned, being forgotten, being alone, those were the things that kept her up at night. Not dying, but dying without having left her mark.

She sacrificed her one shot at being happy to ensure that Henry would never lack for anything in life. And she didn’t - no - doesn’t regret it for a single second.

“This is the job, Regina,” Emma finally replies. “Sometimes people have to be put down. Sometimes there isn’t an ‘Option B.’ It was him or me and possibly you. You made a call. A guy is dead, and we’re not. That’s it.”

“If it’s so simple,” the other woman fires back, her words dripping with vitriol, as she stands to be eye level with Emma, "then why is you haven’t killed someone in a quote-unquote very long time? Do you pay someone like me to do your dirty work for you just like Nolan?”

“Hey!” Emma spits. “I get my hands dirty plenty. If you recall, I fucked you, didn’t I? Been feeling pretty gross ever since.”

Regina fire dies in an instance. She goes from boiling to absolute zero as soon as the words leave Emma’s mouth. For a moment, she thinks Regina might kill her. And maybe she would have deserved it. But that’s not what the other woman does. She takes a moment to consider what Emma’s assertion. Then she smirks, eyes cold but full of so much hatred. It’s the kind of grin that’s ice water down the blonde’s back.

A slap in the face is what Emma has been expecting. A slap in the face she could have handled with a modicum of composure. However, Regina’s anything but predictable. And it is not a slap to the face that Emma receives for her crass and possibly uncalled for remark.

It’s a punch to the face.

The force of the blow rocks her head back, knocks her off balance, and she goes twisting toward the tiled wall. She catches herself before she goes tumbling into the bathtub, and takes a breath; a failed, halfhearted attempt to calm herself. However her blood is boiling now. And when Emma turns around, she plants her feet, cocks her arm back, and returns the blow with a vengeance. But it doesn’t even phase Regina, who has had time to brace for it. She just looks at Emma, a small derisive laugh escaping her, as she carefully wipes the blood trickling from the corner of her mouth.

It only serves to set Emma off even more. She’s all fire now, and Regina - well, it seems her rage can run cold. But put them together and it is like adding nitroglycerin to an oil fire. So Emma surges forward, hands shoving at Regina’s shoulders until she’s literally backed into a wall, forearm braced against the other woman’s body. Emma raises her fist. Unlike in the suite, she doesn’t want to kill Regina. Because this isn’t about betrayal. It’s about… Well, Emma isn't quite sure. But she can’t shake the feeling that she has been in this exact situation before. The flaring tempers, the bloodied lips, the fiery looks of contempt, and grappling with yet another woman she didn’t know if she wanted to fight or fuck until they are both a boneless pile on the floor.

This is exactly how things used to play out with her and Lily. They had been a volatile mix too. And Emma is falling back into the same pattern with Regina. However, at least Lily had been on the same crew. They had worked together. There was a level of trust there until Emma shitted all over it. There is nothing like that between her and Regina. She had been hired to kill Emma, she left out information vital to their partnership, and on top of it all Regina dared to compare her to...
Henry’s biological grandfather. Emma might be a lot of things (reckless, arrogant, tactless) but she is no Albert Nolan.

The coward doesn’t even have the guts to pull the trigger himself. At least when killing was a big part of the business Emma conducted, she never outsourced it. If someone needed to die, she’d do it herself. Less chance of things going sideways that way. But that isn’t the point though and Emma knows it. Just like she knows she can’t keep falling into the same pattern yet again only this time with a woman that hasn’t earned her trust yet. She won’t do that to herself. Especially, now that she has Henry.

She can’t do that to him either.

“Lost your nerve, Miss Swan?” Regina asks with a self-satisfied smirk that Emma fights not to smack off of her face.

“No,” she replies, flatly, as she eases away from her. “Just realized it’s not worth it.”

Regina bristles at her words at first, then straightens herself up. “What happens next?”

“We get cleaned up,” Emma answers. “Then I go out there and pretend like my son's grandfather isn’t trying to kill us.”

Regina's look of mute astonishment seems like a small victory as Emma washes the dried blood from her knuckles. Her lip is busted, there's a small cut on her cheek, and she can see a bruise blooming to the service underneath it. She can't do anything about that now. If the kid asks she'll say she was mugged. Which isn't far from the truth.

She runs a washcloth under warm water for a minutes, rings it out, and then hands Regina before she retrieves the first aid kit from the medicine cabinet. Emma dabs disinfectant on her cuts and slaps a band aid on her cheek.

“What about Albert Nolan?” Regina has an expression on her face that Emma can't read.

“That's my problem.”

The other woman frowns. “What about our deal?”

“You'll get your money, your Majesty,” Emma retorts. “I've got someone who can scrub your identity. You can be on your way to wherever by tonight.”

“That wasn't our arrangement,” Regina shoots back.

“I'm keeping my end of it,” is Emma's response. She wants to leave it at that. Having Regina around will only complicate things. She'll become yet another insurmountable problem in her life. It's better if Emma cuts her losses and let's her go.

“Unacceptable.”

Emma's brow furrows in confusion. “Excuse me?”

“We have a deal, Miss Swan,” Regina tells her. “And I will not allow you to compromise my professional integrity because you're too bullheaded to accept my help.”

“Regina…”

She shakes her head. “Nolan went after me as well. If you think I'll-”

She watches Regina's lips quirk, fighting a smile. “On second thought…”

“Cute, your Majesty,” Emma says with a chuckle. “Real fucking adorable.”

Regina shrugs. “I aim to please, Miss Swan.”

“Yeah, right. Sure.” She throws a pointed look Regina’s way. “You ready for this?”

The other woman’s eyebrow raises at the remark. “Are you?”

“Mom!”

When the kid sees her, Emma has less than a second before he's leaping into her arms. The muscles in her arms, shoulders, and back burn with the strain of holding the seven year-old. But she doesn't let on that she's hurting.

“Hey, kid,” she greets as they embrace.

“Did you get into a fight?” he asks, his tiny hands on either side of her face.

“What makes you say that?”

“'Cause your face…”

She gasps. “What's wrong with my face?”

“Mm-om!,” Henry groans, dropping his arms to his side. “I'm serious.”

Emma nudges his cheek with her nose and without preamble she licks the side of his face. He shrieks and squirms in her arms until she puts him down. His face contorts with disgust as he frantically swats at his cheek. Emma just laughs and Henry frowns with an angry huff.

“What are you like 12?” Ruby asks, rolling her eyes.

Emma nods. “Yeah. Sure. On a scale of one to ten.”

There is a soft but rich chuckle from the master bedroom door and everyone turns to see Regina, leaning on the door frame, shaking her head at Emma's antics. To everyone's credit, they're all silent, slowly turning to their boss to demand an answer to the obvious question.

“Everyone, this is Regina.” That isn't the answer they're looking for. “Regina, this is everyone.”

“Hi, Miss Regina. I'm Henry!” the kid greets, excited, waving at her.

“So this is the Henry I've heard all about…” Regina coos. “Your mother can't stop talking about you.”

“She's so embarrassing.” The kid grins; cheeks in all their dimpled glory. When he sees the shape Regina's face is in the smile fades. “Did you and my mom get into a fight?”

Emma jumps in before anyone can say anything. “Remember when I said I had that meeting, kid?
Well, I was meeting Regina. And we got mugged — well... they tried to at least. Almost got the best of me but luckily Regina had my back.”

Henry studies Regina for a moment and then grins. “Cool.” Then without missing a beat, he turns to Emma. “Mom, can I go play on video games in Aunt Belle’s workshop?”

“Well... only if she comes with you.”

Henry turns his charm on the Aussie. “Please say yes, Auntie Belle. Pretty please?”

Belle crumbles under the weight of his adorableness. “Oh, who can resist that face. Come on, then you little ankle bitter. We’ll play a little Smash Brothers. It’ll be fun.”

Once they are gone, well gone, it's Merida that speaks up. The Scottish lass, pushing her thick, red curls out of her face. “Okay, I'm confused.”

“If you're wondering why I'm still alive that's between your employer and I,” Regina replies.

Merida shakes her head. “No. Actually... I was wonderin;...” Merida turns to Emma and shouts, “WHAT THE FUCKIN’ HELL IS SHE DOIN’ HERE?! DIDN’T THIS SHE-DEVIL TRY TO KILL YOU?”

Regina rolls her eyes. “Please, it’s not like I succeeded.”

Merida glances at Emma. “Remind me again why we’re not killing her?”

Emma shrugs. “We don’t do that anymore.”

“Tell that to the poor asshole one of you killed,” Ruby says.

“I killed him,” Regina confesses.

The redhead goes to the bar and pulls out a beer. “Oh, this is goin’ end real well for everyone involved. I can see why you’re choosin’ to work with this one, boss.”

Tiana adds, “Booty blind, that’s all I’m saying.”

With a deep sigh, Emma gets to the meat of things without indulging her people in another debate about her less than favorable decisions. “So Albert Nolan. He's in the city and he knows about me. And chances are he knows about the kid.”

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“What’s the plan?” Mulan asks, who hasn’t said a word until now.

“We take him out before he takes me out,” Emma tells the troops.

Tiana cuts her a look. “Girl, are you out of your ever-loving mind? Al Nolan is the head of the Winter Hill Gang. How do you suggest we get close enough to kill him?”

“I'm not suggesting I go to him,” Emma begins, with a side look Regina's way. “I'm saying we make him come to me.”

“How?” This is from Ruby who hasn't even glanced in Regina's direction.

“We freeze him out,” Emma lays out the details. “It’ll take him a day or two to trace it back to us. Knowing Al, he’ll want a face-to-face. That’s when we make our move.”

“And then we’re all gunned down in a hailstorm of gunfire,” Ruby snarks. “Brilliant.”
“Okay, Rubes, at this point I’m calling sarcasm abuse,” Emma quips. “I’m not talking about a direct attack. I’m talking about indirect hit.”

Tiana cocks an eyebrow. “What’s going on in that head of yours, Snowflake?”

“We poison Albert Nolan,” Emma replies, matter-of-factly. She glances at Regina. “Is there something that is fast acting but not immediate?”

Regina thinks for a moment. “Ricin.”

“Perfect.”

“Are we seriously talking about Heisenberg-ing Albert Nolan?” Ruby asks.

Emma nods. “It’s the only play that we have that’ll keep the body count down and Henry safe. Unless anyone has a better idea… No? Okay, then we go with my plan.”

“What are we going to do for the next day or so?” This is from Mulan.

“I want you all to go about your business like nothing is wrong,” Emma tells the group. “Albert sent a hitter after Regina, without confirming she completed her contract. I don’t know what he’s playing it at but it seems to me he’s…”

Ruby scoffs. “Fucker’s using my move. That was my thing. He can’t steal my thing.”

Off of Regina’s perplexed look, Emma explains, “Back in the day, when Rubes was in your line of work, she’d get a contract and hire another hit… person and then killed said hitter once the job was done. Because…”

“…Less risk, same reward. Yes, I understand,” Regina nods, and then studies Ruby as if this is the first time she’s seen her. “You say you were in my line of work?”

“I was known as the Red Wolf,” Ruby admits proudly. “But that’s supposed to be a secret.”

“Speakin’ of secrets,” Merida calls over to Emma, pausing to take a swig of her beer. “What are you gon’ do ‘bout everyone knowin’ the news of your untimely demise bein’ just a fancy rumor?”

Emma expression darkens. “There’s only one person outside of this building besides Lily and her husband, August Booth: Perfect Human.”

“Riiight,” Ruby adds. “Tells us all again how you’re not bitter, Em’?”

“I’m not bitter. Me and Booth worked our shit out. He got the girl. I got the city. Seems fair to me. Anyway, the only person that knows I’m not dead is Jefferson,” Emma says. “Which means I gotta pay him a visit first thing. Ruby, could you-?”

“Take the kid in the morning? Yeah,” Emma’s second in command replies. “We’ll post up here. Mulan and Belle’ll be with me. I’ll load the little guy up with sugar so he’ll be ready to bounce off of the walls by the time you come back.”

Emma knows Ruby isn’t joking. “Thanks for that.”

“You’re welcome.”

The blonde sighs. “Okay, which brings me to my next order of business. I’m taking the kid to the movies and the arcade.”
“Seriously?” Tiana asks. “I mean…”

“It doesn’t matter what’s going on, I promised David that Henry wouldn’t grow up like we did. So that means occasionally taking my son out to the movies and the arcade (both crowded and public places) and having some fun,” Emma says in a way that makes it clear this isn’t up for decision. “But Merida and Mulan, I need you to watch our backs.”

“Consider it dun, Boss,” Merida confirms.

“Great…” Emma beams before turning to Ruby. “Rubes…?”

“No,” the lanky brunette says.

“But I didn’t even ask my question yet.”

“I know. But the answer is still no.”

“Why?”

“Because none of us want to fuck with Gold.”

“Why not?”

“Because he shot you.”

“Yeah, he did a bit,” Emma says, dismissively. “I mean that was a long time ago and it was due to a perfectly reasonable conflict of interest. I’m not holding a grudge. Plus he thinks I’m dead. Please Ruby. I wouldn’t be asking if it wasn’t life or death.”

With a heavy sigh, Ruby relents. “Three passports?”

Emma nods. “Yeah. And adoption papers. Two sets. Just in case.”

“I’ll get on it,” Ruby says. “Emma, be careful.”

“You too,” Emma urges. “Don’t go in there without backup.”

“I’ll go with her,” Tiana volunteers.

“Good, I’ll see you tomorrow morning. But call me the second it’s done.” Emma turns to Merida and Mulan. “We’ll be leaving in 30 minutes.”

Once everyone has their jobs the group disperses and Emma leaves to find her son, only stopping when Regina calls after her.

“Miss Swan, what I am supposed to be doing this whole time?”

“You’ll be with me,” Emma answers and resumes walking toward Belle’s office. “That way I can keep an eye on you.”

“You can’t possibly be serious, Miss Swan,” Regina begins. “I mean, your son and…”

“Oh, no. That’s not how this is gonna work, your Majesty,” Emma tells her. “Right now, I can accept that we have to work together. But that doesn’t mean I trust you. Besides…” she pauses by door that seems to have been decorated by an angsty teenager. “I sorta like having you around.”

Before Regina can respond, Emma opens the door and finds Henry and Belle engaged in what
appears to be the most intense game of Super Smash Bros. in history. Belle’s leaning forward in her chair, elbows resting on her thighs, as she bites her bottom lip, in deep concentration. Henry’s standing, jerking his whole body in whatever way he needs his avatar to go. He’s yelling and shouting, throwing his little body around the room. And then the impossible happens; both Belle and Henry land a stunning blow at the same time, and it knocks their characters off of the floating platforms and into the abyss. Belle’s character dies first, which Henry seems to take as a victory.

“Yes!” he cheers. “I’m still the champ!”

“That was a draw,” Belle argues.

“No, because you fell first,” reasons Henry.

Belle gapes at the kid and then notices Emma and Regina in the door. “How?… What just happened?”

“You got outwitted by tiny human logic,” Emma teases. “It happens to the best of us.”

Henry beams, proudly up at Emma and she can’t help by smile back. There isn’t anything else to it; just a moment between mother and son. Belle’s left out whatever inside joke they’re are sharing and she just shakes her head.

“Alright,” the Aussie sighs. “Well, I’ll leave you two - er - three to it. I assume you have some work for me, yeah?”

Emma nods. “Yes. I’ll text you the details. It’ll sound like a lot, but for you it should be a breeze.”

Belle blushes under the praise. “Aw… Boss… That was almost sweet of you to say.”

And then she’s gone.

“So…” Emma says, looking right at Henry. “Movies and the arcade?”

“Yes!” Henry cheers. “Is Miss Regina coming too?”

“Yup,” Emma says at the same time Regina replies with a resounding, “No.”

Henry looks between the two women quizzically. “Mom?”

Emma joins him, kneeling by his side. “Miss Regina doesn’t like to have fun. But I bet if we give her the saddest, biggest puppy dog eyes she’ll cave.”

The kid smirks. “No one can resist the puppy dog eyes.”

“Exactly, kid.”

Regina frowns. “I don’t want to be the source of disappointment…” The pair begins to pout, their eyes twinkling in the soft light of Belle’s office. “It won’t work.” Somehow their eyes widen and they tilt their heads to the side just as a sad, confused dogs do. “It won’t. I am serious.”

Chapter End Notes

We all know Regina's gonna cave. So what do you think? I had to add Tiana.
“Regina…” No response. “Regina…” Still nothing. “Regina, tell me you've seen Star Wars…” Emma just can’t believe it. Everyone, everywhere, at any time after the early 80s had seen the Holy Trilogy. “Regina, did you seriously never watch Star Wars?”

“I've seen the first three,” the other woman finally replies.

Emma lets out a breath she doesn’t realize she was holding until now. “Ok. The Original Trilogy is the best. I mean it's not cinematic gold. But hey Ewoks are adorably badass, right? And Princess Leia and the Golden Bikini? I mean, the first time I saw that I was like, ‘Yup, I'm gay, now.’ I think Empire is my favorite, though. Which isn’t the most popular opinion. But it’s Han Solo heavy. And Han Solo is basically who I want to be when I grow up. I mean, that scene at the end of Empire, right when he’s about to be frozen in carbonite. And Leia looks at him and tells him that she loves him and in typical Han fashion says, ‘I know.’ Genius.”

Normally, this stuff goes over well. But Regina's not having the same response that most do when Emma starts on her Star Wars rant. And then it clicks. “When you say the first three, you mean the Prequels, don’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Somehow that's even worse,” Emma replies. “Why would you do that to yourself?”
Deep Cover

Chapter Summary

_Cover - (n.) _a persona, profession, purpose, activity, and/or fictitious image maintained by an undercover operative._

_Deep Cover - (n.) _a permanent cover._

Chapter Notes

**Warnings:** Non-Magical AU, Criminal AU, NSFW, Violence, Smutty Goodness, Emma’s Geek is showing, Mild Trigger Warning for Bullying

**Disclaimer:** I do not own any of these characters, universes or whatever the hell else. They belong to Disney, ABC etc, etc. I claim no rights to copyrighted material and this story is purely for entertainment purposes.

**A/N:** I may or may have not recently watched Dogma and then Deadpool for the millionth time, hence the Skee Ball.

The Star Wars conversation is based on an episode of How I Met Your Mother and it's dedicated to anyone who has ever had a similar conversation with anyone. Whether you've never seen Star Wars or you can't believe someone's never seen Star Wars, this is for you.

A special thanks to my beta, @wolfstevens , who blew through Star Wars (having never seen them before now) and basically spent the next week annoying me with her critiques of one of my favorite films series of all time. That's fucking friendship right there. Some of our back and forth actually made its way into the fict because it made me laugh and I have a rule about my stories; that is if it's funny it goes into the writing. I hope y'all enjoy it…

Whoa did I just use y'all? Fucking Texas. It's already happening. I'm talking like them. I guess that means I'm ready for my cowboy hat.

Also, I've been a bit down, lately. I had to start a new tumblr. And that had made me a sad panda, hence why this update has been delayed. Anyway, enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Love is like war: easy to begin but very hard to stop.”

— H.L. Mencken

“I hate you…”

Emma won’t dare say this out loud but Regina is a little adorable when she's upset. The blonde
tries not to laugh. But her lips curl, and her eyes shine, and pretty soon she’s chuckling as Regina’s eyes narrow. Emma’s so caught up in admiring the look of sheer annoyance on the other woman’s face that she almost doesn’t notice the man clearly in their path as they walk toward the restrooms where Henry already ran off to.

“Excuse us,” Emma says, with a polite bob of her head, careful not to drop any of the leftover snacks she’s holding for the kid, and keeps moving. “What? Star Wars not your thing?” she finally asks Regina as they wait for Henry. “I mean, you’ve seen the other ones, right?”

The other woman doesn’t say anything and Emma can’t help but eye her curiously, like she’s isn’t from this planet.

“Regina…” No response. “Regina…” Still nothing. “Regina, tell me you've seen Star Wars…” Emma just can't believe it. Everyone, everywhere, at any time after the early 80s has seen the Holy Trilogy. “Regina, did you seriously never watch Star Wars?”

“I've seen the first three,” the other woman finally replies.

Emma lets out a breath she doesn’t realize she was holding until now. “Ok. The Original Trilogy is the best. I mean it's not cinematic gold. But hey Ewoks are adorably badass, right? And Princess Leia and the Gold Bikini? I mean, the first time I saw that I was like, ‘Yup, I'm gay.’ I think Empire is my favorite, though. Which isn’t the most popular opinion, I know. But it’s Han Solo heavy. And Han Solo is basically who I want to be when I grow up. I mean, that scene at the end of Empire, right when he’s about to be frozen in carbonite; and Leia looks at him, tells Han that she loves him, and in typical Han fashion, he says, ‘I know.’ Genius.”

Normally, this stuff goes over well. But Regina's not having the same response that most do when Emma starts on her Star Wars rant. And then it clicks. “When you say the first three, you mean the Prequels, don't you?”

“Yes.”

“Somehow that's even worse,” Emma replies. “Why would you do that to yourself?”

“I didn't know there was a right way to watch Star Wars,” Regina snarks.

“Well, there is,” Emma says, matter of factly. “You watch New Hope, Empire, and Return, first and in that order. Then get the Prequels and throw them into the trash. Because that's where you put garbage. And then watch Force Awakens. And then Rogue One. Because, yes.”

“Then why would they make One through Three?” Regina asks with such earnest sincerity that Emma smiles and for a moment forgets to tease her.

“Because they gave George Lucas too much money,” is Emma’s reply.

Regina turns her nose up at her assertion. “In order to have the full story you should know the backstory.”

“And that is usually true,” Emma agrees. “Just not in the case of Star Wars. You don't need to know about Anakin and Padme and the bad writing that is bad.”

“Well I'm sorry that I prefer some form of order and choose to follow them numerically, Miss Swan,” the assassin fires back.

“My bad, your Majesty,” Emma says with a slight chuckle. “I thought you wanted to have an enjoyable cinematic experience.”
“Well, I never got the point of the movies anyway,” Regina tells her. “They're scientifically and militaristically horrendous.”

Emma gasps. “Blasphemy!”

“The Storm Troopers, for example, can’t hit water if they were standing on a boat,” Regina states her case. “And dodging ‘laser bullets’ is physically impossible.”

The blonde scoffs. “Not if you have the Force on your side.”

Regina rolls her eyes. “I will admit C3P0 was quite... humorous”

“Do you like him because you're a gay robot too and you feel like you have something in common with him?” Emma asks.

The brunette’s eyes flash before she swats at Emma’s arm. “I like puns. Sue me.”

“And you’re a gay robot.”

Regina cuts her eyes at Emma. “I just don’t see what the hype is over the movies.”

“Laser Swords, Magic Powers, and Space Pirates,” Emma says as if that should be the end of it.

“I fail to see how those things make it worth my time, Miss Swan.”

“Mom!” Henry comes barreling out of the restrooms, with a bright, and happy smile, wearing his Darth Vader shirt and his Star Wars shoes that light up with every step.

“Hey, kid,” Emma greets, ruffling his hair. “So what if I told you this was Regina's first time seeing Star Wars?”

He frowned. “Like the first time she's seen the new one?”

Emma shakes her head. “No, kid. First time, ever.”

Regina rolls her eyes and huffs, “I’ve seen the Prequels.”

Henry sticks his tongue out in disgust. “Those don’t count. That’s not Star Wars.”

“See,” Emma adds, smugly. But she soon deflates when she notices she’s holding an empty box of candy and looks pointedly at Henry because she knows even before she asks, “Hey, who ate all of the Red Vines?”

Henry eyes dart, guiltily. “Um… The Spanish Inquisition?”

Emma opens her mouth and then closes it before she just shakes her head. “Ok, I wasn’t expecting that.”

“NO ONE EXPECTS THE SPANISH INQUISITION!” he exclaims with fervor.

Emma chuckles. “No more Flying Circus for you, kid. It’s messing with your brain.”

Henry shrugs. “I’m ok with my brain being a little messed up, Mom. You know, so we match.”

Emma’s head snaps over to Regina who’s face is reddening. She frowns at the other woman who is trying so hard not to break. “Don’t do it, Regina. I’m serious. Don’t you flippin’ laugh.”
But it’s too late, Regina’s laughing at Henry’s jab. Now so is Henry, who always enjoys when someone is genuinely having a good time. And Emma frowns because this good time is at her expense.

“But of you, bite me,” she snaps before softening as she asks, “Arcade?”

“Yes!” Henry shouts.

Emma catches Regina’s look out of the corner of her eye. “Don’t worry, Regina. You’ll love it. Who knows you might even enjoy yourself.”

“Skee ball?”

“Don’t tell me, you’ve never played Skee Ball, either,” Emma says, flatly. After finding out she’s never seen Star Wars, the blonde won’t be surprised by Regina never having a bit of fun in her life until now. “What, is it not refined enough for you? I’m sorry they don’t have Baccarat tables here, your Majesty.”

Regina rolls her eyes and picks up a ball, ignoring the Baccarat comment. “Skee Ball requires zero skill and the payoff isn’t enough.” To demonstrate her point, she sends a ball down the lane and pops it into the 100 point slot which only yields a payout of five tickets. “See? Too much work for so little a prize.”

“That’s because you’re doing it all wrong,” is Emma’s response before she over-hands the skee ball into 100,000 points slot. She smiles at the tickets that pour out of the machine. “See.”

Regina’s frowning at her. “That’s cheating.”

Emma shrugs and then tosses another with the same outcome. “I’m okay with that. It works for me.”

“HEY! STOP!”

Both women freeze at the sound of Henry’s voice and search for the little boy. Emma spots him first, standing in front of the Time Crisis arcade, squaring off with two kids that were at least a head taller than him. Regina takes a step forward but Emma stops her.

“Let’s see how the kid handles himself.”

They get closer to get within earshot but stay out of sight. Emma can feel Regina’s tension waft off of her. Or perhaps it’s just her own. She has to admit, even if it’s just to herself, that she’s nervous, scared for Henry. She wants nothing more than to run to his rescue and fight his battles for him. But Emma knows she can’t be everywhere, all of the time for the kid. This is as much as an exercise in showing restraint for Emma as it is a lesson for Henry. A teaching moment for them both.

“I’m not done with it,” Henry tells the older boys.

“Too bad,” one of the boys shoots back, giving him a little shove. “We want to play.”

Henry stands his ground. “You can play with me. Or you can wait until I’m done.”

“We’re telling you, you’re done,” the other boy says.
“I’m telling you, I’m not,” Henry informs them, coolly.

Emma can’t help but beam. That’s her boy. Yes, there are things that remind her of both of his birth parents. He’s got Mary Margaret’s kindness. He’s got David’s sense of loyalty. But this, this cool resoluteness, he gets from her.

“I’m not going to tell you again, give up the game or-”

Henry stomps on one of the boy’s feet with the heel of his shoe as hard as he can. And before the other one can react, her son punches him right between the legs. The boy goes down like a sack of potatoes just as his friend regains his bearings back and rears back.

That’s when Emma and Regina charge in. Emma, going right for the two boys. Regina, making sure that Henry is alright. The blonde stares both of the boys down as they collect themselves, their eyes wide with real fear as she leans in.

“There’s a special kind of hell reserved for bullies. You should go before I send you there,” she threatens with a harsh whisper and the boys can’t get away fast enough. She takes a moment to charge gears, to make sure that Henry never sees her at her worst. So when she turns to face him, she’s all bright and shining, with an amused smirk curling her lips.

“You did good, kid,” she tells him.

“I did?” he asks. “I thought you’d be mad.”

Regina wordlessly gives them some space as Emma kneels down and gets on her son’s level.

“Why would you think I’d be mad?”

“Well, because you’re always telling me to use my words. But I tried. And… Well, you saw,” he replies.

“You saw?” she asks.

He sighs, rolling his eyes. “Mom, I know you were watching me from behind Area 51 and Tekken.”

Emma chuckles. “That’s my boy. And hey, listen; I’m not mad. You’re right. I saw most of it. And from where I was standing you were outnumbered and outmatched, but you stood your ground. You used your words and when that didn’t work, you showed them that you were willing to fight for what was right. Where’d you learn to fight like that by the way?”

“Merida teaches me sometimes when I do good with school and stuff,” he confesses. “She’s says ‘cause I’m little people are going to think I’m weak. But I’m not weak.”

“No, kid,” Emma agrees. “You’re not weak. But is a game really worth that ass-kicking you were going to get if I hadn’t been here?”

“It’s a good game, Mom,” he tells her. “It’s Time Crisis, come on. Do you even hear yourself right now?”

“My mistake. I didn’t realize,” she replies. “I’m proud of you, kid.”

Regina catches her eyes as Emma stands and just her expression tells the blonde it’s serious. Emma gives Henry a few dollars and tells him to play the video game for a bit. Then she joins Regina as they watch him. Emma tenses for a moment when she feels Regina slip her hand into
hers, and rests her head on her shoulder. There’s a flutter in her stomach and her skin hums at their points of contact. And then she relaxes when Regina picks up her head and whispers carefully to her.

“That man from the theater followed us in here,” she informs her.

“Yeah,” Emma breathes, her hand closing around the other woman’s. “I can see a few familiar tattoos on him. He’s probably one of Nolan’s.”

“What’s the plan?” Regina asks.

Emma flashes playful grin. “Watch the kid. If I’m not back in ten minutes… Well, I’m probably dead. If not, ice cream?” She doesn’t wait for Regina to answer and instead kisses her on the cheek. “Okay, you’re the best. See ya in a bit.” Then she calls to Henry. “Kid, I’m going to cash these out. And then I’m thinkin’ ice cream?”

He nods. “Yes! But see if you have enough to get Kylo Ren’s lightsaber.”

“Not Luke’s?”

Henry sticks out his tongue in disgust. “Blech. No.”

Emma ruffles his hair again. “That’s my boy. Stay with Miss Regina, I’ll be right back.”

And then she’s gone.

The next few minutes are tense. Truth be told, she doesn’t know what type of hitter this is. Some of them have codes, like Regina. Whether it’s personal honor or making the job more challenging, they have a set of rules they live by. But some? Some of them are in it for the kill. They just want to hurt someone. And they don’t care if there’s collateral damage. The fact that he hasn’t opened fire means she’s probably dealing with someone that doesn’t want to get caught. Which means he’ll strike when he thinks she’s vulnerable and alone.

Alright, she can play the hapless victim.

Emma lights up a cigarette and makes like she’s headed for the parking lot surrounding the mall. She pulls out her phone and shoots a text to Mulan and Merida to give them an update, even though she knows they’re watching. Even if she doesn’t see them, she can count on them being there for her.

She stops briefly to put her headphones in and heads for her car. It’s tucked away in dimly lit corner of the parking lot. She only hopes it’s enough light for Merida to do what she does best.

Emma bobs her head to music that isn’t playing, flicking away her cigarette, listening to heavy booted steps following her. She hates that she’s unarmed. She hates that she’s away from Henry. She hates that she still has to take these kinds of risks after all of these years. The whole point of the being the Boss is supposed to be not dealing with this stuff. But it’s not like Nolan's given her much of a choice.

She pulls out her keys and stops at the driver side door, taking a deep breath. Then a strong grip digs into her shoulder, and Emma just reacts. She jumps up, and pushes off with both feet against her car, denting the door. Her and her attacker slam into the car next hers, and she plants both feet before she throws an elbow into his gut. Emma scrambles away from the man out in the open, and drops into a relaxed fighting stance.

“You’re really goin’ make this hard, aren’t ya, lassie?”
Emma cocks her head to the side, confused, and narrows her eyes. “Did you just call me a dog?”

The man sighs, pulling out a gun. “Americans…”

Emma holds up her hands in surrender. “Whoa now. We can talk about this, can’t we?”

He takes a step closer to her and then another until she’s within arms reach of the pistol. She fights the urge to grin because she doesn’t want to give it away. But it’s almost laughable how many criminals don’t understand something very basic about guns; if someone is close enough to touch your gun, they’re close enough to take it.

The man inches toward her, and Emma grabs his wrist, holding the gun away from her body, and shoves the heel of her palm into his face. He rears back, howling in pain as his nose oozes with blood, and wretches his gun hand away from her grip, smacking her across the face with the barrel. Emma’s ears ring with the force of the blow, and then she feels more than sees him throw a punch to her stomach. She doubles over, and he brings a knee up into her chest, causing her to sink to the ground on all fours. The man takes advantage of her vulnerability and kicks her, once, twice, three times in the ribs before she flips over on her back. Then he stands over her, gun pointed at her head as he smiles down at her.

“Normally, I don’t like killing women. No sport in it,” he states. “But lassie, I’m going to enjoy putting one between your eyes. Any last words?”

“Yeah,” Emma struggles, groaning more speaking. “Have a nice dirt nap.”

“What?”

The bullet is a whisper in the night, and the man doesn’t even know what hit him before he falls to the ground with a hole right between the eyes.

“Merida, you beautiful bitch,” Emma breathes as she lays on the ground and lights up. “I could fucking kiss you.”

A car screeches to a halt feet from her, and she hears the door open and close, rushed footstep drawing closer to her. Then she sees Mulan standing over her; a worried expression etched on her face. She offers her hand, and Emma happily accepts it, groaning as Mulan pulls her to her feet.

“Are you okay?” she asks.

“I’ll be fine,” Emma replies through clenched teeth. It hurts to breath. The man did a number of her ribs. “You need help loading him up?”

Mulan nods, and Emma pushes through the sharp pain in her side to assist her with the body. They load it up into the trunk and slam it shut.

“I’ve got it from here,” Mulan tells her.

Emma nods. “Okay. Good. Let’s promise to not do this again.”

At that Mulan offers a soft smile. “Agreed.”

“Hey,” Emma greets, holding a lightsaber box in her hand. “Made it back. So shall we?”
Regina rushes over to her, relief spreading over her features when she sees Emma’s relatively okay. “Miss Swan?”

“It’s taken care of,” Emma whispers before Henry notices what she has in her hand.

“Mom! You got it? You had enough?” Henry can’t believe it and he’s so excited, he doesn’t even notice the bruise blooming on her face.

She hands him the box. “I did not have enough, actually. But I gave the counter guy a hundred bucks and poof, lightsaber.”

“Thanks, Mom,” Henry says, giving her a hug and she tries not to wince as a sharp pain that shoots up her side.

“You’re welcome, kid,” Emma replies. “Listen, we’re gonna go back to the office apartment tonight ‘cause I got work to do in the morning. We’ll pick up ice cream on the way back, and then we’ll show Regina the real Star Wars before your bedtime.”

Henry glances over to Regina and then smiles. “Yeah. Is Miss Regina spending the night?”

Emma’s face reddens, and she glances at the other woman who’s trying to slowly back away from this conversation. “I… Well… Yeah, she is. Miss Regina’s a friend. And she’s only in town for a little while. I told her she could stay with us because I didn’t like the idea of her being in a hotel.”

“And because we look out for our friends,” Henry states.

Emma nods, smiling at his words. “Exactly, kid.”

“Okay,” Henry says. “Miss Regina, do you like Cookie Dough?”

The brunette nods. “It happens to be my favorite.”

The drive back is less eventful. Henry spends most of it telling Regina little fun facts about the Star Wars Saga. She humors him, hanging on his every word with feigned interest.

Once they’re back at the safe house, comfortably watching The Original Trilogy, Henry passes out just before the climax of The Empire Strikes Back, when Luke fights Darth Vader for the first time. Which is too bad because it’s the kid’s favorite part of the movie (They may or may not have acted out that iconic fight a few… hundred times).

Emma excuses herself and tries to pick Henry up but it’s too much on her ribs right now so she has to put him back down.

“Let me,” Regina whispers, which surprised her.

Emma shakes her head. “It’s okay. I’ll get him.”

“Miss Swan…” the other woman chides. But her words are gentle this time, and not said with her usual sharpness.

It’s the only reason that the blonde relents with a sigh. “Yeah, okay… And um, thank you.”

Emma watches how gentle Regina is with Henry. Like he’s the most precious thing in the world. She doesn’t even know him, and she treats Henry as if she knows exactly what he means to Emma. They walk in silence to his bedroom, and Regina carefully places him down on the mattress after Emma pulls the blankets away. Then she does something that surprises Emma.
Regina brushes the hair from his forehead, tenderly, and bids him a good night.

“Sweet dreams, Little Prince,” she whispers before she leaves and Emma tucks Henry in.

Once she’s out of earshot, the blonde looks down at her sleeping son’s form and kisses his forehead. “I love you, Henry.”

Emma walks back to the living room and sees Regina turning off the T.V. Oh no. This won’t do at all.

“What are you doing?” she asks, startling Regina, which only makes Emma smile.

“With Henry asleep-”

“You thought your education on the Star Wars Universe was over just because the kid is down for the count?” Emma says with a shake of her head. “Oh, no, your Majesty. You’re not using the kid as an excuse.”

“You do all of the time,” Regina shoots back.

At that Emma shrugs. “He’s my kid. I'm allowed.” She turns the T.V. back on and settles down at the couch. “Now, sit woman, and prepare to be amazed.”

With a roll of her eyes, Regina flops down beside Emma as the movies unpauses with Vader monologuing at Luke. “Amazed? Are we watching the same movies? The swordsmanship in the older films is pathetic. A three year-old could do better.”

“Shh… The best part is coming up,” Emma says, pointing to the flat screen, just as Vader reveals that he’s Luke’s father.

“Why is this played so dramatically?” Regina blurts out. “We already know that Vader is Anakin Skywalker.”

Emma sighs. “And you only feel that way because you watched the movies in the wrong order.”

“I am not very impressed with The Original Trilogy,” Regina comments. “I personally wouldn’t deliberately watch these films over and over, repeatedly.”

“I don’t even know if I should show you the last one now,” Emma grumbles.

“Maybe you shouldn’t.”

Emma thinks about it for a moment, then says “Naw, we’re watching it,” before she changes the Blu-ray disc, and rejoins Regina on the couch. “And now, for the final installment to the only movies to matter in The Star Wars Saga… And then when it’s over we’ll watch Episode VII.” Off of the death glare she receives from the brunette, Emma chuckles, despite the pain. “I’m kidding. Now, shh, or you’ll miss the Opening Crawl.”

They watch the first act, mostly in silence. And Emma’s surprised that Regina hasn’t started laying into it. Out of the three films, Return of the Jedi is the cheesiest. Han blindly kills Boba Fett, the greatest bounty hunter in the galaxy, on accident. The emperor’s a major creeper. And an entire garrison of soldiers is overrun by killer teddy bears that can’t operate heavy machinery. It’s not the best of the three films. But it’s still leaps and bounds better than any of the Prequels.

“Okay,” Regina finally speaks. “I will admit I like Leia.”
“You only like the gold bikini.”

“Guilty as charged,” Regina teases. “You have that costume somewhere hidden in a closet, don't you?”

Emma’s cheek flush at the question. Well, perhaps the memories that it conjures up. Memories of Lily, a gold bikini that Emma stole from a costume shop, and taking said bikini off of Lily, almost exclusively with just her teeth. Her temperature rises as she pictures the same scenario, only with one minor tweak; Regina in the infamous gold bikini.

“How...” Emma croaks. “Can’t say that I do.”

“Hm... A pity,” Regina says, dismissively before focusing on the movie. After a while she speaks up again. “Why must we watch these abysmal films? I already know in this one Luke and Leia learn they’re siblings and that Vader redeems himself.”

“But we haven’t even gotten to the part where Han sneaks into a military installation by tapping a guard on the shoulder and running the other way. Which happens to be Han Solo at the top of his game,” Emma replies with a pout. “You really don’t like these movies, do you? I think it’s because the Force is not strong with you.”

“Perhaps not,” Regina says, leaning against Emma. The brunette turns, her breath ghosting across the blonde’s neck. She hums her appreciation when Emma has the appropriate response, shivering at the sensation. “I am adept at other things however.”

Emma knows what she’s doing. Lily used this one on her... well every time they ever got into a fight and Lily was losing. And Emma, being herself, always gave in. It doesn’t matter how hard she fights, when sex is dangled in front of her, it is hard to resist. But with Regina she tries. Because she feels like she owes it to *Star Wars*.

When her first attempt fails, Regina tries again, her hand dropping to Emma’s leg, fingers stroking her inner thigh in soft circles.

“Why are you making me watch the end of this, Miss Swan?” she husks, her lips grazing her earlobe. “Simply to annoy me?”

The blonde lets out a staking sigh, her resolve waning, and her voice coming out more breathy than she intends. “No, that’s just a wonderful byproduct.”

“Miss Swan...” Regina’s hand inches up Emma’s thigh, and for a moment the blonde forgets how breathing works. “Need I remind you I do know how to kill you without leaving a trace of evidence...?”

Emma gulps, audibly, her tongue darting out to moisten suddenly dry lips. “Promises, promises, I think you’re all talk, your Majesty.”

As Regina leans in, she puts pressure on Emma’s injured side and the blonde winces, groaning as the movement pains her. The brunette pulls away with concern. “You should allow me to look at your ribs, Miss Swan.”

“Regina, if you wanted to get me topless...” The joke doesn’t go over well, which for Emma makes it even more comedic, but the strain from trying not to laugh hurts her too, and that deep sharpness is digging into her side. Before Emma can stop herself, she’s holding her ribs and groaning again as the ache ripples through her body. She waves off Regina’s rebuke with an, “Alright, so about you looking at my ribs?”
With a heavy sigh the brunette shakes her head. “How have you survived this long?”

“I’ve always depended on the kindness of strangers,” Emma replies in a fake Southern accent. She catches the tiny bit of surprise in Regina’s eyes as she regards her in a new light. “I’ve seen a play; try not to faint.”

“It’s just—”

“Yes. Once that’s over, Ruby gets the keys to the kingdom, and I get to retire and raise Henry in
peace,” Emma admits, and for the first time since she took the kid in, it doesn’t feel like a lie. “That had been the plan when I faked my death. We had been in transition for the last few months. But then we found out someone was trying to kill me. So that sort of put things on hold.”

They don’t say anything else as Regina wraps Emma’s ribs with some elastic bandages. It’s snug but she can still breathe. Then the brunette straightens up and sighs. “Miss Swan, for what I said earlier—”

“It’s okay, Regina,” Emma says, dismissively, trying to ignore the pull this woman has on her, and knowing it’s a losing battle. “I fucked up tonight. I get that. I had been too focused on trying to give the kid a normal night, that I might have forgotten normal’s not too safe in my line of work right now. But by tomorrow, Henry’ll be tucked away somewhere outside the city, safe. And if everything else goes according to plan this will all be over in a few days and we’ll finally get to be regular people.”

“What are you going to do after this is all done?” Regina whispers as they both close the small distance between them.

Emma chuckles, softly, her arms finding purchase around Regina’s hips. “Besides sleep for a week? I don’t know, maybe take a vacation. Someplace warm. Where the kid can play in the water, and I won’t have to worry about him getting a flesh eating virus.”

At her words, Regina smiles, warmly. “You really love him, don’t you? Like he’s your son.”

“He is my son.”

“You know what I mean.”

“I didn’t give birth to him,” Emma says. “But he’s mine. And God help anyone that tries to come between us.”

Regina hums her acknowledgement, her fingers absentmindedly playing across one of Emma’s many scars. “Knife?” she asks.

And Emma nods. “Yeah. In all fairness, she was just getting me back. I did stab her first.”

“The same woman that made you start smoking again?” Regina inquires as her touch teases along Emma’s collarbone, smiling when she coaxes a trembling sigh from the blonde’s lips.

“Lily… One and the same,” Emma admits, her own fingers drawing small circles on the small of the other woman’s back.

“She’s the one that got away.” This time there’s no question.

But Emma replies anyway. “Got away? More like I stabbed her in the back and she married someone else.”

“Miss Swan?”

“Hmm?”

“Why are we still talking?”

“No idea.”

The assassin’s slender arms coil around Emma’s neck, as their bodies are drawn together. She
raises on her toes, lips brushing against the blonde’s. And it takes everything Emma has to pull away.

“You don't have to do this,” she says, licking her lips. “I mean, it's not necessary. I mean… You don't have to do for my benefit.”

There it is, Regina's out. She can stop this before it starts. She can stop this before they both set themselves up for a whole world of pain and heartache.

But that's not what happens.

Regina traces Emma's bottom lip with the pad of her thumb. “But I want to.”

_Fuck. Seriously? Fuck… Fuck!_

Just the raw need in the other woman’s voice has Emma wanting to give in, and let go. But she can't.

“Regina,” she pleads, her voice just above a hoarse whisper. “We shouldn't do this.”

“You're right, we shouldn't,” Regina replies, but shows no motion to pull away. Instead she leans in and ghosts her lips against the side of Emma's neck. And the blonde sighs at the contact. Her body betrays her; nipples hardening at that light touch.

"You're not making this easy,” she comments, her words having a breathy quality to them.

"Never said I was, Miss Swan." Fingers trail down to one breast, thumb ghosting over taut nipple before palming the breast. The action pulls a pleased gasp from Emma, who arches into that welcomed hand.

“Please…” But even as she says it, she knows she's isn't asking the other woman to stop.

“Why…” Regina's lips press against her pulse point. “…is it…” Kisses trail across Emma's neck. “…that I can’t…” Lips glide up along her skin to the other side to her ear “…resist you?”

She nips at Emma's earlobe, rendering the speech center of her brain into soupy mush.

The blonde tries twice before she finds her voice, albeit thick with desire. “I could ask you the same thing, your Majesty.”

Regina hums, trailing kisses back down to her shoulder, one hand trailing down to Emma's ass, and gently squeezes.

That's it. Whatever resolve Emma has is gone, burned up under Regina's touch.

“Fuck…” she curses. “Not…” Emma licks her lips before she tries again. “Not here.” A smirk adoms the lips attached to her shoulder and Emma sighs. “Now who's getting cocky?”

Regina pulls back, and cocks an eyebrow before her gaze flashes with understanding, remembering their business meeting earlier today. She chuckles. “It's not cockiness, Miss Swan. It's confidence. As in I'm confident you'll enjoy yourself.” Her lips fall back to Emma's neck, teeth grazing her skin. “But be that as it may. I was just thinking this was no place for whatever... this is, either.”

The hand still on her breast gives a light squeeze, and another curse falls from Emma's lips as she regards Regina with dark, hooded eyes. “I swear to God, Regina…”
“What?” Lips brush against Emma’s before pulling back. “You swear to God what, Em-ma?”

Maybe it’s the way Regina says her name, the sound voice her voice, the way her lips move as she speaks. Maybe it’s the scent of her perfume, this undescrivable smell, that draws her in. Maybe there is some unseen force, like gravity, that is keeping the two of them in each other’s orbit. Whatever it is, Emma’s diving in, lips crashing into Regina’s, with a low growl deep in her chest.

When their lips meet, the other woman lets loose a deep moan, and both of her hands shoot up to thread through blonde waves, pulling her closer. The kiss deepens as their need thums through their veins, Emma’s coiling within her as she backs them to the nearest wall, and pins the assassin; caught between the wall and the warmth of Emma’s body.

A loud cough sounds from Henry’s bedroom, and both women freeze, pulling away from one another. For a few moments, they stand there, inches apart, their chests heaving as their breathing regulates.

Emma breaks the tension with a quiet laugh, resting her forehead against Regina’s.

“Bedroom?” the blonde asks, brushing her lips against the assassin’s.

“Probably best,” Regina sighs into the kiss. “Will he sleep through the night?”

At that Emma chuckles. “He’s seven,” she replies. “Not a newborn. He’ll sleep until doomsday if I let him.”

Regina rolls her eyes, and with a gentle push she puts some space between her and the blonde. “You’re an idiot.”

With a wolfish grin, Emma nods offering her hand. “Yup.”

To her surprise, Regina smiles back, her hand slipping into Emma’s. The blonde leads them to the master bedroom, stopping within the doorframe. She turns, and pulls Regina to her, their bodies flush.

“Last chance, your Majesty,” Emma whispers. “Come to your senses, yet?”

Regina raises up on her toes, her eyes dark pools as she traces pale lips with her thumb and whispers, “Have you?”

“There are people that would tell you I didn't have much in the way of sense to begin with,” Emma confesses, her voice low, and raspy. Short of stopping this all together she’s doing her best to be as “gentlemanly” here as possible. It’s not that she doesn’t want to do this. She does. But because Emma knows the second this starts, there’s going to be no stopping it.

She doesn't know who closes the small distance between them, and she doesn't care. The moment their lips touch, she’s done, caught, lost in Regina. Somewhere in that, they move into the bedroom; Emma blindly fumbling for the door until Regina eases her against it. The blonde groans when she feels the other woman’s warmth surround her.

“Did I hurt you?”

Emma chuckles low in her chest. “Not yet.”

“I’ll be gentle,” Regina teases. And Emma curses herself for playing bait tonight. (Think of the fun they could have had if she was 100%.) Regina’s hands slide down her neck, fingers play
along her collarbone, and Emma’s breath hitches in her throat.

“You’re not playing fair…”

This time it’s Regina who laughs. “I said I’d be gentle. I said nothing about playing fair.”

She begins to loosen the bandage around Emma's ribs, leaning forward, her lips skimming along her skin as she unravels the elastic wrap. Emma’s hands are in Regina’s hair, threaded through raven locks, keeping Regina close as she makes her descent.

“Fuck me…”

Regina settles on her knees, undoing Emma’s pants. “I don’t know, Miss Swan. With your injury I’m not sure if you could handle it.”

“Please tell me we’re going to try…”

The other woman helps Emma out of her jeans. “I’d prefer not to break you permanently.”

“Please…” The scoff escapes the blonde can't be helped. “Like you could.” Her head falls back against the door when the assassin’s touch glides up her legs, inching closer to the apex of her thighs. She feels Regina's breath ghost across her stomach, dangerously close to the waistband of her panties and another curse falls from Emma's lips. “Fucking Christ! You're trying to kill me…” The assassin shoots her a look, and Emma sheepishly offers, “Poor choice of words.”

“I've come to expect that from you,” Regina replies. “It's a part of your charm.”

Emma grins. “You think I'm charming.”

The other woman pulls away from her with a frown. “I didn't say that.”

“Yes, you did.”

Regina stands and gives Emma a pointed look. “No, I did not.”

“You said my lack of tact was a part of my charm. Inferring I have charm to begin with and/or you find me charming. Either way, I win.”

The assassin’s eyes narrow. “I take it back. You're insufferable.”

Emma’s smile brightens. “You can't take it back. There's no take-backs.”

“Idiot…” Regina murmurs before claiming her lips in passionate kiss. After that it’s a blur of clothes and skin. Teeth and lips. Need and trembling limbs. Only when her back hits the bed does the world come crashing around Emma. Her eyes are dark pools of desire as she drinks in the dark-haired goddess hovering above her. Regina’s smirking, as her hands map the slopes and plains of the blonde’s body, her touch leaving scorching trails along Emma’s skin.

“Fuck…” the blonde breathes, her eyes snapping shut.

Then Regina whispers her name, a quiet supplication, like a soft plea, coaxing her back, gently willing her to open her eyes. But Emma doesn't know of she can. Because if she does… It won't end well.

“I need you,” the assassin says.

Emma's eyes snap open, a hand cupping the back of Regina's neck as she pulls their bodies
together, lips connecting in a fiery kiss. When they pull away, their foreheads touching, taking big, heaving breaths, Emma slides her hand from Regina's neck to her cheek and whispers, “I'm right here.”

“Good…” The other woman's lips brush along Emma's like a promise, gently settling against her body, both moaning at the sensation of skin on skin, legs slotting together as their kiss deepens.

It's slow and sensuous, with no real goal in mind. Their other encounters have been almost purely transactional; a means to an end. This time there's no subterfuge to this, no ulterior motives. This time they can take a moment to truly enjoy each other. But of course as the kiss continues and their arousal builds, their bodies begin to move against one another.

Emma's hands glide over Regina's shoulders, down her back. Fingers playing along the grooves of her spine, before her hands settle; one on the other woman's upper thigh, the other slides over her ass, pulling her close. Regina gasps, head thrown back, as she grinds down on Emma's thigh. The blonde groans at the sensation of slick heat against her; fingers digging into Regina’s skin.

“You’re wet…” Emma says in quiet revelation.

“You sound surprised.” Regina chuckles, and dips back down, capturing Emma’s lips. The kiss is slow, like before, but intense, always with the promise that this is more, that there will be more. The assassin lays claim to her, lips tracing her jaw, finding that little patch of skin just below Emma's ear, and latching on. Emma bucks, biting her lip to stifle the moan that wants so desperately to be ripped from her throat. She can feel Regina’s deep laugh vibrate through her before she pulls back slightly, her hips canting forward with just a little more pressure than before only to whisper, “It’s what you do to me.”

Emma feels her desire coil within her, growing warmer and wetter with each passing moment. And Regina is with her, even as she makes her descent; her lips and hands leaving searing trails down her body as Emma offers her encouragement.

“Oh God, yes!” the blonde hisses when the assassin takes a nipple into her mouth, her free hand rolling the other one between her finger and thumb, to only switch, adding the slight pressure of blunted teeth on sensitive skin. Emma's arching into her, her hand shooting up, fingers threading through her hair, keeping her there.

Somewhere in the back of her mind, Emma knows she should slow this down. They're moving too fast and it's almost too much. She feels like a candle being burned at both ends. To someone that values her autonomy, wanting anyone as badly as she wants Regina to take her right now is a terrifying notion.

“Regina…” she whines, wordless whimpering when the assassin abandons her breasts to sink lower, settling between legs that Emma's all too eager to spread for her.

“I wanted so badly to end our meeting this way,” the assassin confesses, relishing in the scent of her arousal with a pleased hum. “I wanted you coming on my tongue. Just like last night. Over and over.”

“Please,” is Emma's whispered plea. “Please, Regina. I need… Fuck… please…”

“With pleasure…”

Buzzing with anticipation Emma can feel herself slicken; Regina's so close she can feel the other woman's breath on her most intimate parts. The blonde squirms, raising her hips, silently pleading for the assassin to close the small distance between them. Regina's watching her; her eyes dark
and her gaze heavy.

“Emma,” she whispers her name, her hands hooking around her thighs as she pulls her close. “May I?”

The blonde nods before she finds her voice, low and gravelly. “Yes. God, yes.”

The first touch, just a tentative open-mouthed kiss on her pussy, pulls a gasp from her. Her hips rock, her hands slide into the other woman's hair, anything to keep that mouth against her. Regina’s content hum vibrates through her and she shudders when the kiss turns to full, slow strokes with the flat of the other woman’s tongue. Regina explores every inch of her, like she’s charting a map of the blonde’s center.

“Oh… Nhn! Yes… God, yes! Fuck! So good… So fucking good…” Emma pants when lips close around her clit, a tongue flicking the hardened bundle of nerves. Her hips rise and fall in time with Regina’s ministrations, both of them working toward the same goal.

Hooded eyes are watching Emma, every sigh, every moan, every gasp, every shaky, breathy plea, caught in beautiful dark orbs. Emma meets her gaze, eyes fixed on Regina, watching as her mouth works to bring her over the edge. And fuck, if she doesn’t want to surrender to this woman. Her legs are shaking as the promise of her release coils within her.

“Yes… yes… oh God, yes! Just like that,” the blonde chants when the assassin swirls her tongue around her clit. Regina's hands slid from around Emma's thighs, her fingers slipping through her wet folds to spread her open before the other woman drives her tongue into her opening, and pulls a strangled “Fuck” from pale lips. Her hips cant forward, her back arches off the bed, and pulls sharply at her injury. But Emma ignores it. She doesn't care so long as this continues. Her grip on Regina's hair is no doubt bordering on painful, however the assassin hasn't complained. And Emma’s focused on her, watching her as the other woman works her tongue in and out of her.

“I love the way you taste,” Regina whispers as she pulls away. Her fingers tease along the blonde’s opening, silently asking for entrance.

“Please…”

The assassin chuckles, easing into Emma. “I should have teased you until you begged.”

“There's always next time, your Majesty,” the blonde says with a content sigh.

“Next time?” the assassin asks, pumping her finger in and out at torturously slow pace. “Why wait when I could do it now?”

Emma smirks at the challenge. “Do your worst. I can take it.”

“We'll see.” Regina’s low, sultry laugh sends the blonde’s spiralling desire to a new level. She squirms under the assassin’s touch but Regina’s gaze pins her to the bed. “Ready to beg, dear? Hmm?” Emma whimpers but she doesn't say a word and the deadly brunette stays her hand. “Not yet? I'll have to try harder then.” She settles between the blonde’s legs, her lips ghosting over Emma's soft folds. The action pulls a pleading, helpless noise from Emma, who's so close to giving in, she's shaking with need. “Almost, yet that's not quite what I want to hear…” Her finger curls within the blonde, stroking that sensitive patch inside of her. “Beg for me, Em-ma… then I'll give you exactly want you want.”

The blonde wants to tell her in no uncertain terms that she doesn't beg. However when she opens her mouth what comes out is a soft whimper, “Please, Regina. I need you.”
“There it is…” the assassin purrs, closing the small distance between. Her lips latch onto her clit and the other woman sucks as she adds a second finger, steadily pumping in and out of Emma as she struggles to keep quiet. They fall into a rhythm, Regina's fingers, lips, and tongue working in counterpoint with Emma's hips. The blonde’s hands find purchase in raven locks and the other woman gives her a satisfied hum, driving her fingers deeper, faster, harder, as her tongue swirls around and flicks Emma's sensitive nub.

“Yes!” Emma gasps, her grip on Regina's hair tightening, her inner walls clenching the other woman’s questing fingers, as she meets each advance with fervor.

It's almost so good it hurts. Regina's fire is filling her up, burning her from the inside out. Somewhere in the back of her mind she wonders what this all means. She silently castigates herself for letting the assassin to have this effect on her, to make her this needy, this hungry for Regina. Emma can't think straight when she's near. It's like the heady effects of a drug, like she can feel Regina thrumming through her veins.

“Getting close,” Emma announces with a moan, her body falling out of sync with Regina the closer she gets to her release. She turns her head to bite the pillow under her, as she doesn't think she'll be able to keep quiet. Not with how Regina is touching her, her fingers curling inside her at the end of each thrust like the punctuation at the end of a declarative sentence. Her tongue lightly stroking her clit, offering the right combination of sensation to drive the blonde over the tipping point. But Emma holds on, balancing herself on the edge, moaning around the pillow in her mouth, until she hears Regina husk her name.

“Let me know how good this feels,” the assassin whispers. “Come for me.”

And she does, arching her back off the bed, too far gone to feel the tightness on her side, as she screaming her climax into the pillow. Regina eases her through her release, her fingers working steadily in and out as her orgasm ebbs away.

Emma loses time between the moment her orgasm hits to the moment she feels Regina's body settle on top of her. It could have been mere seconds or minutes. She doesn't know. She doesn't care. A soft smile graces the blonde’s features and she lazily wraps her arms around the assassin's waist.

“You're breathtaking when you come hard like that,” Regina murmurs before she kisses her, sweetly. And Emma groans at the taste of her release on Regina's lips.

They stay that way for who knows how long, lips barely touching, exchanging shaking breaths, and heady sighs. Then fire starts to build between them once again and their kiss deepens, her touches finding purpose. Emma cups Regina's cheek, her other hand gliding toward the other woman’s ass. When Regina draws back to gasp, Emma trails kisses along her jawline, finding that patch of skin just behind her ear.

“Yes…” Regina sighs as she rocks her hips into Emma's body. The blonde flips their positions. The move causes her to grunt and hiss in pain but she doesn't pull away until Regina gently coaxes them apart to ask, “Are you alright?”

“I'll be fine,” Emma replies and before the other woman can raise protest, she kisses her. “I'm ok. More than ok. Trust me.”

Regina nods. “I trust you.”

“Good…”
Again, it starts out slow and careful. Their lips barely touching as they move languidly against one another, losing themselves for a bit before Emma remembers the endgame. She wants Regina writhing under her touch. She wants her struggling to keep from crying out. She wants Regina coming spectacularly underneath her. Emma wants her. Just her. Only her.

Her hands wander, teasing along the other woman's body. Emma lingers on any area that draws the kind of sounds that she comes to expect from her time with Regina. Every deep moan, every breathy gasp, the subtle sway of her hips, the way her hands convulse and dig into Emma's skin, spurs the blonde on. She kisses a trail along Regina's jawline, down her neck, her hands palming the other woman's breasts. She kisses down the valley between them, attempting to travel lower when Regina stops her.

“Stay with me,” she says when Emma looks at her questioningly.

The blonde nods, understanding the true meaning of her words, and rises up to capture dark lips with her own. They kiss with a newfound sense of purpose, needy and lustful; each pass coming with the promise of so much more. And Emma's hand travels south, fingers dancing along Regina's skin, stopping just above the patch of dark curls at the apex of her thighs as if waiting for permission. Regina's hand locks around her wrist and guides her the rest of the way.

“Fuck,” Emma groans at the discovery of just how aroused Regina is. Her fingers slide through slick folds with ease. She strokes every inch of the other woman's slit, gather what wetness she can before she pays special attention to the hard, velvety cluster of nerve endings at the top of the other woman's sex.

Regina moans against her lips. One hand is threaded through Emma’s hair, the other is at her back, fingers digging into her skin, as she rocks onto the blonde’s persistent ministrations.

“Inside,” Regina gasps, eventually. “I need you inside me.”

With a growl deep in her chest Emma enters her slowly with a single finger. She hisses when sharp nails sink into her back, painfully.

“Sorry…” Regina whispers.

“Don't be,” Emma replies, adding a second digit, as she sinks into the other woman, driving deeper this time, seemingly throwing her whole body into each thrust. Regina's nails sting at her shoulder again and she smirks. “I'm tougher than I look.”

“I…” Regina's breath hitches in her throat, her hips rising to meet Emma's fingers. “…know.”

“God, I love how you feel,” Emma groans, moving in and out of the other woman's center at a steady pace. “Love the way you clench around my fingers. So warm. So fucking wet.” Legs coil around Emma's waist as her lips fall to Regina's neck, the blonde’s teeth grazing along her pulse point. “So good,” Emma pants. “So fucking good.”

“Faster…” Regina breathes. “Ah, God… yes… love… I love… your fingers.”

They're losing their rhythm now the closer Regina gets. Her breathing changes, moans growing louder, her nails dig deeper into Emma's back.

“Regina, you've got to be quiet.”

“I can't…”

“You have to.”
“Can't…” Regina's lips crash into Emma's, both hands in her hair, nails scraping along her scalp. “So close. Please don't stop.”

“Never…” Emma swears. She swallows Regina's moan, sliding into her faster, and deeper, her fingers curling at the end of each thrust. She relishes in the feeling of trembling legs around her waist, inner walls clenching around her fingers, and the taste of Regina's lips.

“Close…”

“I know…”

“Don't stop.”

“I won't.”

“So close…”

“I know... Let go, baby.”

Then it happens. Regina's body goes rigid and announces her climax with a keening moan, muffled by pale lips. Emma draws out the other woman's orgasm with long, slow thrusts, until she feels Regina relax against her.

“Hey…” Emma says after a moment, with a goofy, lopsided grin.

Regina chuckles, lazily. “Hello.”

“So that happened… again…”

“Have to run again, dear?”

The blonde scoffs. “What? And miss round two this time? That's just plain crazy talk.”

Regina cocks an eyebrow at her. “What's crazy is that you called me ‘baby.’”

“Didn't like that, did we?” Emma teases.

“No, we did not.”

“Oh, baby don't be like that.”

“Idiot.”

“Yup.”

The night air is crisp and Emma shivers as the wind rolls over her bare skin. She had left Regina resting comfortably in her bed to check on Henry. Once she finds him sleeping soundly, Emma ventures outside through the roof access to smoke.

The first drag of the cigarette is always the best. Addictively sweet. And as weird as it may seem, Emma feels like she can breathe easier. The tension fades from her body, starting at the shoulders, traveling down. But there's something eating at her, and she knows if she lets it take root, the uneasiness will return.
What happened with Regina tonight… It can't happen again. Not because it wasn't enjoyable. But because it's too good. She knows it tugging on her heartstrings and if she falls for Regina, she'll fall hard. Just like she did with Lily. And eventually, Regina will leave for whatever reason. Because they always do. And it will break Emma. Because she does.

Slender arms encircle her waist and pull Emma from her thoughts as she sinks into the warmth at her back.

“I woke up,” the assassin whispers. “And you were gone.”

“Needed to check on the kid.”

“Why didn't you come back to bed?” Regina asks.

“Needed a smoke,” Emma replies.

The other woman holds her hand out. “May I?”

“Of course,” Emma says, passing the cancer stick.

Regina takes a drag and exhales with a sigh, expelling the toxic, white smoke. She passes the cigarette back and as Emma smokes, her lips ghost across her shoulder. “Emma,” she purrs. “Come back to bed.”

Emma flicks the butt away. If she had any resolve to resist the assassin, then she wouldn’t slept with her last night… or this morning… or hours ago. Whatever is happening between them, Emma has a choice: either run, or see how deep this particular rabbit hole goes.

She turns in Regina's embrace and smiles, softly, before she leans in and kisses the assassin. *Guess we're going with the Red Pill then,* she thinks as the kiss deepens. Her heart flutters. Her stomach is doing backflips. And to Emma it feels a lot like falling.

Chapter End Notes

I'm MurderouslyAdorkable on tumblr. Give me a follow. I post updates about the ficts I'm working on and show more meaty sneak peaks (or at least that's the plan). I'm also on twitter Murderouslycute. Thanks for reading and lemme know what you think in the comments if you feel so inclined.

A little sneak peak for chapter six:

“Miss Regina!” Henry exclaims. “Mom made pancakes.”

“Did she now?” Regina asks in that slightly surprised tone.

He nods. “She did. And bacon too. And we were eating. And then I asked my mom if she was going to marry you. But she didn't say.” And without missing a beat Henry asks Regina, “Do you want to marry my Mom?”

The assassin turns an adorable shade of red as she stumbles over her words. “Ah… well…” she meets Emma's amused gaze. “A little help?”
“No,” the blonde says. “You’re doing great.”

Regina’s eyes narrow. “You’re insufferable.”

“I’m charming,” Emma replies.

Henry looks between them. “You guys are so weird.”

“Eat your pancakes, kid.”
Naked

Chapter Summary

_Naked_ - (n.) a operative working without cover or backup.

Chapter Notes

Archer Reference for the Win!

This chapter is 40% Smut, 8% Feels, 50% Fluff, and about 2% Plot. I hope you enjoy it. :D

For anyone following my other fict, Between the Shadow and the Soul, I plan to continue it, I promise. But Strange Bedfellows is picking up and I have to stick with it to keep the pace going. Since the other fict is more High Fantasy, I don’t want to rush and I feel like I will if I work on both at the same time. But thank you for the read. Also, my beta, Wolf Stevens is currently on the longest road trip ever (Safe travels, Kitten.) so this chapter is un-beta’ed; any and all mistakes are mine.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“A spy, like a writer, lives outside the mainstream population. He steals his experience through bribes and reconstructs it.”
—John le Carré

It's in the early hours of the morning, just as the sun begins to peek through the blinds when Emma stirs. One eye pops open, and in the early morning delirium brought on by lack of sleep, persistent pain, and God knows what else, Emma has to take a few seconds to figure out where she is and how she got there.

She smiles to herself, perhaps a little too hard, when she pieces everything together.

_Awesome_…

Regina’s pressed into her front, their hands clasped together resting against her chest, her body is molded to Emma's like the missing piece of a jigsaw puzzle. They just fit. There is no point in fighting this anymore. And if there's no point in fighting this…

“Regina…” Emma whispers, her tongue grazing the other woman's earlobe. She moans at the light touch, grinding her ass against Emma's center, but does nothing else, still caught in the halfway point between sleep and the world of the living.
“Regina…” Emma purrs, kissing down her neck.

“Mmm…” Her hand clenches around Emma's and she moves more deliberately against the blonde.

*This woman is a fucking goddess*, Emma thinks, her body moving in counterpoint to Regina's. She can feel her desire building as the woman in her arms rouses from her slumber under Emma's ministrations. Lips at Regina's pulse-point cause her breath to hitch. Fingers dancing along the valley of her breasts pull a helpless whimper from her. But it isn't until Emma palms one of the soft mounds of flesh that Regina lets out a throaty moan, arching into her touch.

“Yes…” the assassin husks, her head turning to capture pale lips.

Their lips come together sloppily, their movements slow and sleep-laden. Last night, while enjoyable, left them both exhausted, and when paired with Emma's injuries settling in, it's a miracle they're both moving at all. It's like they're driven by an ever present desire to have the other in every conceivable way, to have them close and hold them there. If Emma is honest, she missed this; waking up warm and needy, to want and be wanted in return.

*Maybe when this is all over…*

No. Emma can't concern herself with the future. Not with everything that is going on. And even if Albert Nolan isn't a concern… They all deserve some peace and quiet. And Emma can't and won't stand in the way of Regina's.

“Please…” Regina pulls away with a gasp. “I need you.”

Those words bring back memories of their activities last night, when one of them roused the other with a heated caress and those exact words. And Emma smiles as she slides her hand down to cup the other woman's sex, only to find her warm and wet.

“Dreaming about me, your Majesty?” Emma asks, lightly stroking her.

“Mmm…” Regina moans. “Is this the part where I'm supposed to say yes?”

“Only if it's true.” She knows it isn't but God, does it feel that way. The way Regina warms to the touch, softening, melting into her embrace, Emma actually wonders what she was dreaming of. Or perhaps it's some kind of sense memory, her body recalling how Emma could make her feel. Whatever it is, it's exhilarating; to have someone react to her in such a way, to know she can affect someone like that. And just like last night, every second that passes has Emma yearning for more.

Regina runs her fingers along Emma’s bottom lip before the blonde take them into her mouth, delighting in the shuttering breath the other woman takes when she does. Emma’s fingers slip pass slicken, soft folds, teasing along the other woman’s opening. Her plan is to work Regina up into a frenzy and take her slowly before they had to start their day. But the plan is summarily dismissed when the other woman's fingers, wet with Emma’s saliva, join hers, rubbing her clit as Emma sinks into her.

“Yes,” the blonde husks. “Love it when we play together.”

The assassin responds by pressing her lips against Emma's to muffle the moan that falls from her mouth; the pair working together toward Regina’s release. Emma’s fingers moving along with Regina’s as she rolls her hips to meet her ministrations, until they get to that point where they begin to lose all sense of rhythm and time slows to a crawl; that perfect moment just before Regina tips over the edge, when everything else floats away, when it’s just them, and nothing else matters.
“Close…” Regina whispers.

“I know…” is Emma’s reply.

“Nhn… Oh, God… Please… I need… Please, make me come…”

The blonde groans deep in her chest, spurred on by Regina’s clipped words, driving in and out of her until the other woman’s body goes taut in her arms, leaving Emma to swallowing the keening moan that announces Regina’s climax. They stay locked in this carnal embrace for what feels like lifetimes, but is probably only a minute or maybe two before they settle again, like the gentle calm after a storm, and Emma withdraws herself as the other woman whimpers at the loss.

“What time is it?” Regina finally asks, her voice thick with fatigue.

Emma lays a gentle kiss on her temple, and whispers, “It's a little after seven.” When the assassin groans, she laughs. Apparently, her Majesty is not a morning person. “Go back to sleep.”

“But you…”

“Regina, if you think I didn't enjoy myself, then you've never seen yourself come before,” Emma husks into the other woman's ear. “Sleep a little longer. I'll get breakfast ready for you and the kid.”

“For the record, I don't consider donuts and coffee breakfast,” Regina states with a yawn.

“Neither do I,” Emma tells her.

“You're going to cook?”

“Again with the surprised tone… And yes. So rest. I'll have some tasty for you when you get up.” Emma pauses, fights against making the obvious joke, and fails. “The food’ll be good too, I guess.”

With an annoyed groan, Regina moves away from her and Emma slips out of bed, chuckling to herself. She heads straight for the master bathroom and turns on the shower as she brushes her teeth.

It’s going to be a long day. First speaking with Jefferson. Then dropping the kid off. Then it’s back to the the city to see what kind of progress Belle’s made in Operation Albert Nolan Can Choke On a Giant Bag of Dicks. Emma knows that she has an official name for the Op but for the life of her can’t remember it.

I swear to God I had something for this.

It honestly doesn’t matter. Once the ball gets rolling Emma is confidence that everything else will fall into place. Because regardless if freezing him out works, Emma’ll have her sit down with Nolan one way or another.

She hops into the shower and is done five minutes later. There’s some extra pep in her step after she gets out, grinning when she finds Regina fast asleep in her bed. For a moment she debates joining her but that would make the shower a pointless waste of her time. So Emma lets her sleep and heads for the small kitchen, closing the door behind her.

After poking her head into Henry’s room to find him resting soundly, Emma with a soft smile proceeds to the kitchen. Tiana makes sure this place is stocked. And Emma’s grateful for someone...
like her when she opens the refrigerator and finds everything she’ll need and more.

Emma, self-admittedly isn’t a cook. But if she can do anything, it’s put together an amazing breakfast. Dinner? Forget about it unless it involved a grill. Lunch? Same thing, she could only put together a good sandwiches. But breakfast? That is her bread and butter.

*Pun totally intended.*

The whole thing, once she’s had a cup of coffee (because she’s awake, so naturally that means coffee) takes all of a half hour to put together. Peanut Butter Banana Pancakes are a favorite of her and Henry’s. Emma likes the bananas mashed into the batter, but the kid wants to know he’s eating bananas, so she slices them and adds them at the end. Once that’s done it’s just a matter of scrambling some eggs, frying a little (okay, a lot) of bacon because… well, either a person likes bacon or they’re wrong. There is no middle ground.

Bacon is basically the *Game of Thrones* of breakfast meats. It’s also magical, as it has the power to raise people from the dead. Well, that is the theory. Emma’s never actually proved it but Henry believes her when she tells him it’s fact. And it’s smell usually wakes the kid up but for some reason his room is still quiet and the little guy has yet to grace her with his presence.

Regina’s, unsurprisingly, not awake yet either which leaves Emma with a few minutes to herself and after checking the time and factoring in the time-zone difference, she figures it a perfect time to make a long distance call. Now that almost everything is out in the open, Lily and Emma keep in touch, a weekly phone call, the occasional text. Nothing major. Just something that friends do. Lily was her rock. And it is nice, having that back even in this small way.

Emma’s cell rings a few times before she is greeted with a cheerful, “Hello!”

Lily sounds happy. That’s good. That's all Emma ever wanted for her. To be happy and loved. To have the life Emma is certain she couldn’t have given her. Now Lily's married, with a baby on the way, and she sounds settled for the first time since they've known each other.

“Hey, so, here’s the thing,” Emma begins, imagining Lily’s eyes rolling at her teasing tone. “Totally get you not wanting to name the baby after me if its a girl. But, have you considered that I did save both of you?”

“Emma, for the last time, no,” Lily tells her with the kind of exasperation that makes her chuckle. “Alright, worth a shot,” Emma says. “How are things?”

“Good, really good,” Lily replies and it sounds like the truth. “What about you?”

Emma smiles thinking about the last 24 hours. “Stopped an assassination attempt on myself, so that’s a plus. Clearly people don’t like me cleaning up New York. That’s too damn bad because I’m going to do it anyways. The chick they hired was actually pretty hot though.”

“Emma, don’t do it,” Lily warns.

She casts a look toward her bedroom and smirks. “Too late.”

The heavy sigh on the other end says it all. “I’m going to hang up on you now.”

“Hey, you’re in no position to judge,” Emma says, pointedly. “You were banging August while working for Arthur.”

“Yeah, but he wasn’t hired to kill me,” Lily tells her. And Emma has to admit she's got a point.
“You were hired to get info on him though.” Just not out loud. “Same thing really when you think about it.”

“Goodbye, Emma,” she says, sharply. “I’ll talk to you later.”

“Bye.”

And then they hang up.

“Mom…”

His little voice cracks when he speaks and the sound is like a vice around her heart. He's so young, too young to know this kind of hurt. And yet when Emma turns she finds her son, standing get from her, an emotional wreck. His eyes are puffy and watery, his bottom lip is quivering, his nose is a little runny, and his face red and stained with fresh tracks of tears. The sight breaks her, fractures her, shatters her into a million little shards. So Emma goes to him, lifts him into her arms despite the pain, and gently rocks back and forth, as Henry rests his head on her shoulders.

“What's wrong?” she asks.

“I woke up,” he begins. “And I missed my dad.”

“I miss him, too.” Emma sways with him still wrapped tightly in her embrace, gently rubbing his back. She lays a soothing kiss on his forehead. It shouldn't be like this. His dad should be here for him. His mom, too. Henry deserves his parents. He shouldn't have to bear this burden this young. It isn't right. It isn't fair. And it's not something Emma would wish upon her worst enemy. “I miss your folks every time I look at you, kid. You have your mom's eyes and your dad's smile. You laugh with your whole body like he did. But you love with your whole heart and that's something you got from your mom. I wish they were here. And I get sad too when I think about how they're not. But don't ever doubt that they loved you more than anything.”

Henry doesn't say a word at first and then he whispers, “Do you?”

Emma's brow furrows. “Do I what, kiddo?”

“Do you love me more than anything?” he asks.

And her heart just breaks. “From the second your folks told me you were on the way. I love you, Henry. More than anything times infinity to the infinite power. And I always will.”

“I love you too, Mom.” He lifts his head and sniffs at the air. “Did you make bacon?”

“Maple and pepper bacon, scrambled eggs with cheese, and peanut butter-banana pancakes,” Emma informs him.

“Rounds or funny shapes?”

“Funny shapes. What kind of operation you think I'm running here, kid?”

“You're the best, Mom.”

She sets him down and makes his plate. They go back and forth about how many slices of bacon he gets and what's the appropriate amount of syrup for his pancakes. And it’s normal. It feels natural. And Emma is put at ease by the whole thing. It's how all their days should begin.
“Mom?” Henry says between mouthfuls. “Can I tell you something?”

“Always.”

“I want to marry Rey.”

Emma frowns. “What happened to Selena Gomez?”

He rolls his eyes. “She can't use the Force and she's never flown the Millennium Falcon, Mom.”

“Alright…” They bump fists as Emma beams. “Respect, kid. I approve of the switch. But no getting married until you're done with college.”

He smiles and she thinks that's the end of it until he asks, “Mom, are you going to marry, Miss Regina?”

Emma chokes on her coffee. “Wh- wha- why would I do that?”

“Because I saw you hold hands last night and you always look at her like you want to kiss her,” Henry explains.

She flushes. “Ah… well… I don't look at her like that… every time.”


Just before Emma can give her retort they're greeted by a cheerful, “Good morning” from Regina.

“Miss Regina!” Henry exclaims. “Mom made pancakes.”

“Did she now?” Regina asks in that slightly surprised tone.

He nods. “She did. And bacon too. And we were eating. And then I asked my mom if she was going to marry you. But she didn't say.” And without missing a beat Henry asks Regina, “Do you want to marry my Mom?”

The assassin turns an adorable shade of red as she stumbles over her words. “Ah… well…” she meets Emma's amused gaze. “A little help?”

“No,” the blonde says. “You're doing great.”

Regina's eyes narrow. “You're insufferable.”

“I'm charming,” Emma replies.

Henry looks between them. “You guys are so weird.”

“Eat your pancakes, kid.”

And he does, happily devouring the food on the plate. It’s almost like watching a National Geographic documentary on predators. Watch as the young wild dog tears into his prey. Emma smiles and Regina comes to join her. As Henry eats, the pair fall into a routine that’s strangely idyllic and oddly domestic. Emma and Regina slip their coffee while Henry talks to them about everything and nothing at all. They laugh, sneaking the occasional feathered touch, or pointed look. It’s simple, and peaceful. And what’s more is that it doesn’t seemed forced either.

“You know you can get your own bacon,” Emma says after Regina steals yet another slice.
“I could,” the assassin teases. “But this works for me.”

Henry looks at them in awe. “Wow,” he comments. “Mom only shares her bacon with me.”

“Yeah, the operative word there being ‘share,’” Emma says. “This was grand theft bacon.”

Regina rolls her eyes. “May I please have another piece of bacon, dear?”

Emma sighs and wordlessly slides her plate to the other woman just a buzzer sounds. When Regina looks questioningly at her, Emma informs her that Ruby and the others have just arrived. Which is why she had cooked so much food in the first place.

“Where are my pancakes, bitches?” Ruby asks when she comes up the stairs, with Mulan, Merida, and Belle in tow.

“Bacon, pancakes, coffee,” Emma replies, pointing them out. “You can scramble your own eggs.”

With a pout Belle whines, “You cooked eggs for them.”

“I cooked eggs for my son and…” Emma can’t finish the statement.

Which is fine because Ruby does it for her, “Your latest in a long line of poor choices?”

Emma’s eyes narrow. “My very good friend who I think I like more than any of you asshats.”

“Thank you, dear,” Regina says.

“You’re welcome,” is the blonde’s reply.

“I would like to point out that I have yet to remark on any of this,” Merida tells them. “And I don’t appreciate being lumped into the same category as this lot. And I don’t like you doing the same to my bonnie lass.”

Mulan turns a deep shade of red and wordlessly drinks her coffee.

“Merida, are you and Mulan getting married?” Henry asked.

Everyone freezes before Emma explains. “He’s been on this marriage kick, lately. I dunno why.”

“’Cause that’s what two people who love each do, Mom,” Henry explains. “They get married. Have kids. Maybe get a dog.”

“You want a dog, don’t you?” Emma asks. “That’s why you brought this up. First comes love, then comes marriage, then kids, then Henry gets a dog.”

“Yes,” her son confesses. “And you skipped some steps, Mom.”

“So when you think about it, the little guy is just trying to be helpful,” Belle adds.

“He does have a point,” Ruby says. “I mean you have the kid. Now all that’s missing is the love, and the marriage, and the dog.”

“Or we could skip a few more steps, and just get a dog,” Emma suggests.

“Really?”

“Yes.” If it’ll get Henry off of this marriage thing, then yes, she’ll get him a dog. She’ll get him all
of the dogs. “So, we’ll put a pin in the dog talks for now and let’s discuss today. Henry’s with you guys until I get back. Then we’re headed up to Granny’s.”

Henry frowns. “I just got back from Granny’s.”

“Yeah, but she’s Granny and when she tells us to do something…?”

“We do it, because she’s old and we were raised right,” he grumbles.

“Exactly, kid. Don’t worry. I’m coming too,” Emma tells him, ruffling his hair. “I’ll be back in a few hours.”

“With my new video game?” he asks.

“Maybe. It depends on how you act between now and then,” Emma explains. And he understands immediately, silencing himself. She supposes that he really does what that game and files that away for later, turning to her crew. “Ok I cooked so you guys have clean up duty.”

“Fine,” Ruby replies. “But I’m telling Granny you called her old.”

Emma scoffs. “Go ahead. She knows she’s old.” She glances at Regina and grins. “You coming?”

Regina nods and the two head down the hall toward Emma’s bedroom after saying their goodbyes to Henry. They’re just about at the door before Belle runs up behind them.

“Wait, boss,” she says, trying to keep her voice low.

“What is it?” Emma asks.

“I did what you wanted me to,” Belle informs her. “I closed most of his major accounts. Not his personal accounts. Not all of them anyway. Just a large portion. And any money coming in and out of his organization has been blocked.”

The blonde frowns. “I’m sensing a but.”

Belle laughs nervously. “You’d be right. There’s a but. And it’s a big one. When I was going over Nolan’s financials I found a steady stream of payouts to staff doctors and orderlies at Creedmoor.”

“Shit.”

“What is it?” Regina asks.

“I know how Nolan figured out I was alive,” Emma explains. “And we’re probably walking into a trap if we go see Jefferson today.”

The assassin sighs. “We’re going to see him anyway, aren’t we?”

Emma smiles. “Your tone says you disapprove. But it’ll be fun.”

“You know most people don’t consider walking into a trap entertainment,” Regina comments.

The blonde shrugs. “I’m not most people. Are you still going to back me up?”

“I suppose,” Regina replies. “Someone has to keep you alive.”

Emma laughs. “Kinda ironic that it’s gonna be you.”
“It’s been interesting 24 hours. Shall we?”

“After you, your Majesty.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading. Please lemme know what you think in the comments. Thanks for leaving kudos as well. And if you like my stuff, come and follow me at my new and slowly improving tumblr (MurderouslyAdorkable). Thanks again, and here's a little sneak peek for Chapter Seven:

“What?” Emma asks, when she notices Regina's frown.

“You look like you're in law enforcement,” she replies.

“F.B.I., actually,” Emma corrects, with a grin as she flashes a badge. “Same as you.” The blonde tosses a perplexed Regina another badge. “I'm with the Organized Crime Unit. You're Behavioral Analysis. And we're here to transfer a material witness into WITSEC, if anyone asks. I'd like to stay off the radar as long as possible. If we're made things are going to get interesting.”

Regina arches a suspicious eyebrow. “Define 'Interesting.'”

“Oh God, oh God, we're all gonna die?” Emma offers, sheepishly.

“Delicate as always, dear.”
Exfiltration Operation

Chapter Summary

Exfiltration Operation - (n.) A clandestine rescue operation designed to bring a defector, refugee, or an operative and his or her family out of harm's way.

Chapter Notes

I'm still not as comfortable with writing fight scenes. Forgive me if it seems clunky. And if you're wondering yes the shirt Emma is wearing in this chapter exists. I own this shirt which is wear I got the idea. Another Firefly and Archer reference because I can't help myself. (It's like a disease!) And a nod to Batwoman because Batwoman. Also special thank to my beta, who is awesome. And thank you to all who are reading and giving kudos and commenting. I love the Swen Nation. You guys are magic and you make my day.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Fucking trunk!” Emma exclaims as she emerges from the backseat of the car. “Goddammit!”

The assassin’s laughing at her. Of course she is. Emma, no doubt looks ridiculous. The “fresh outta the trunk” look has never looked good on her. Her hair is a frizzy mess. Her clothes are wrinkled and vaguely smell of gasoline or motor oil.

Regina is dressed causally (well, causally for her) in slate gray pleated pants, and a black silk button up. Her hair is loose, the ends curled, kissing the tops of her shoulders. Her makeup is striking, and she she wears it like war paint, like it's her armor and she's ready for battle.

Emma, however, needs a moment. She's in jeans and t-shirt that reads “I love mermaids” with a picture of a fish with human legs. The leather jacket's in the front seat because she doesn't want it damaged. She sort of loves it because it's the first thing she bought when she tried to step out of her former persona to become the Man Behind the Curtain, so to speak. She changes quickly, discarding the comical shirt for a cotton button-up and tie. After hiding a few knives in some creative places, she completes the outfit with the jacket and a pair of aviators glasses.

“What?” Emma asks, when she notices Regina's frown.

“You look like you're in law enforcement,” she replies.

“F.B.I., actually,” Emma corrects, with a grin as she flashes a badge. “Same as you.” The blonde tosses a perplexed Regina another badge. “I'm with the Organized Crime Unit. You're Behavioral Analysis. And we're here to transfer a material witness into WITSEC, if anyone asks. I'd like to stay off the radar as long as possible. If we're made things are going to get interesting.”

Regina arches a suspicious eyebrow. “Define 'Interesting.'”

“Oh God, oh God, we're gonna die?” Emma offers, sheepishly.
“Delicate as always, dear,” Regina deadpans with an eye roll.

They could have gone through the front entrance. But with Nolan watching the place, they won’t be able to get in without being made. So that’s out. Instead, Emma leads the assassin to a secluded spot near a side entrance and waits until someone comes out for a smoke break.

“It’s usually someone with keys,” the blonde explains. “And they sneak a cig away from the cameras because it’s against hospital policy to smoke on the grounds.”

“So someone comes out and smokes and then what?” the assassin asks.

Emma hands her a cigarette. “You ask them for a light.”

Regina gives her a hard look. “That’s it?”

“Yes,” the blonde replies. “I’ll take care of the rest.”

Regina seems like she wants to question her. And Emma doesn’t blame her. When she first explained the move to Lily she had the same reaction. Until she saw the kind of results Emma can get with this little trick.

They both wait for what feels like hours but it’s actually only 30 seconds. Emma’s just impatient and antsy, so her perception of time is off by a factor of a lot. So when a custodian exits the hospital and lights up it’s a relief.

“Showtime, your Majesty,” Emma whispers and Regina with a roll of her eyes walks over to the man.

“Excuse me,” she says placing the cigarette between her lips. “Do you have a light?”

It takes the man a full five seconds to register that Regina is speaking to him. And Emma gets where he’s coming from. She hadn’t been lying when she told the assassin that her flavor of sexy is a little overwhelming.

“Uh… Um… Yeah, sure.”

As the man fumbles for his lighter, Emma move, fast and silently, positioning herself right behind him as he lights Regina’s cigarette and knock him out cold with a handle of one of her knives. As he falls to the ground, Emma plucks the cigarette from the assassin’s lips and grins.

“And you thought it wasn’t going to work…” she teases.

Regina rolls her eyes. “I never said it.”

Emma moves to open the door. “No, but you were thinking it.”

“I think a great many things, dear,” the assassin says, walking past the blonde and inside. “Chiefly among them is why you would walk into a mental institution. Aren’t you afraid they’ll mistake you for a patient?”

Flicking the cigarette away, Emma follows Regina. “Her Majesty cracked a joke. Did it hurt? Are you okay? Do you need to see a doctor?”

“Idiot.”

“Yup.”
Surprisingly, no one stops you two on the way to Jefferson’ room, except for one doctor that Regina choked out and stashed him in a supply closet. But other than that, they find Jefferson’ room with no problem. Emma debated on knocking or not, then thinks that the element of surprise will work best.

“Hello, Jefferson. Miss me?”

His eyes widen with fear and he calls her by her birth name. Well more like her first alias. The name given to her by people she never knew; people that gave her up, abandoning her. They were just the first in a long line of many (well maybe not many, but enough). Jefferson is one of only a handful of people who knows that name. The sound of it on his tongue doesn't sit well with Emma, almost like it's a secret he doesn't deserve to know.

“What are you doing here?” Jefferson asks as Regina locks the door behind them.

“That's a good question, Jefferson,” Emma says, coolly. “A fucking great question actually. Because, you see, if I would have killed you, like I wanted to six months ago, I wouldn't be in the fucking mess I am right now. But Lily didn't want you dead. Even after what you did, she wouldn't let me kill you. I thought I should kill you anyway after she left, but she'd never forgive me. And I only just got her back. I'm not going to lose her again because of you. Even if you sold me out... Twice.

“What did he promise you, Jefferson? What was your fucking price?”

“What do I get if I talk?” he asks, like he has the upper hand.

Emma wants to smack around a bit just to show him that that's not the case, and she fights the urge to say that he gets to live if he spills the beans. Because she's not trying to get violent. Jefferson is sick. She has to remind herself that Jefferson is just sick and he can't help it. “What do you want?”

“I want to talk to her.”

It takes everything she has not to rip him apart with her bare hands. Emma reminds herself that she's not supposed to kill him. But if he has done anything to jeopardize Lily and August's island sanctuary, she's just going to have to break another promise to her best friend, sick man or not.

“We're done here,” she tells Regina and heads for the door.

But Jefferson stops her. “Wait. I'll tell you.”

“I'm listening.”

“He said that if I helped him, he would bring her to me. And we would be together.”

Emma doesn't recall making the decision to cross the room. She doesn't remember pulling out a knife and pressing it so hard into his skin that she draws blood. All she knows is that one second she's by the door. And then the next, she has Jefferson pinned to the far wall, holding a knife to his throat.

“Lemme make something abundantly clear to you, Jefferson,” Emma grinds out. “Just because Lily doesn't want want me to kill you, doesn't mean I won't.”

“She'll hate you for it.”

“Yes, she will. But if I had to choose between her and you...” There's no question. She'd choose Lily every time.
That apparently triggers him because he fires back with, “DON'T ACT LIKE YOU LOVE HER! YOU NEVER LOVED HER! IF YOU DID--”

“If I did, what?” the blonde cuts him off, adding just little more pressure until she has his undivided attention. “I wouldn't have let her go? I would have killed her hubby? I would have betrayed the trust of my friends? I wouldn't have hooked up with a beautiful assassin? What, Jefferson?”

“If you really loved her...” he squeaks.

“I'm going to explain something to you,” Emma begins, slowly. “Let you in on a little secret. It doesn't matter if I love Lily, or if she loves me. Because at the end of the day, she will always love him more. Always. And there's not a damn thing either of us can do about that. Period.”

His eyes water, his lips quivers, and when she eases the blade from his throat, he collapses into her arms. “I'm sorry,” he weeps. “I'm so sorry.”

“I know.”

“I just love her. I love her so much,” Jefferson confesses. “Why won't she love me?”

Emma sighs. “Because she can't. And you can't force her to.”

“I'm sorry.”

She backs away from him with a frown. “You said that already, Jefferson.”

He grabs her arm and his eyes go wild for a moment and at first Emma thinks he's going to try to attack her until he speaks. “You have to kill me,” he whispers. “It's the only way Lily'll be safe.”

It's tempting. And he's not too far off. If Jefferson is taken out of the equation, then everyone can rest a little easier at night. But her promise to Lily stays her hand, if only to restore some of Lily's faith in promises, and if Emma is honest, she wants to restore some of her faith in her.

“I'm not going to kill you,” Emma finally says. “But I can't have you putting anyone else I care about in danger either.”

He studies her for a moment. “You're not just talking about Lily anymore.”

“I've got a lot of personnel that depend on me, Jefferson,” she replies. “I want them all safe.”

“Like your godson, Henry.”

She doesn't ask the obvious question. Because she already knows how cunning Jefferson can be. “Henry is my kid. Of course I want him safe.”

“His grandfather doesn't seem to think so,” he reminds her.

“I couldn't give a flying sugary fuck about what Albert Nolan thinks,” she replies. “Are you ready? 'Cause we have to sneak out of this place and I don't need you or your crazy cocking this up.”

Jefferson nods. “I'm good. Let's go.”

Emma looks at Regina who's been silent this whole time. She nods without uttering a word, and Emma reaches into her jacket for her phone and earpiece. She dials Belle's number and it rings
Once before she answers.

“Thank you for calling your friendly neighborhood grey hat hacker, how can I let you do that, Dave?”

Emma smiles. “Hey Beautiful, are you in the system?”

“Who are you talking to?” she asks. “Of course, I am and... uh-oh.”

Emma’s stomach sinks. “What?”

“Two black SUVs just pulled up,” Belle informs her. “And Boss, they are all armed.”

“Shit.”

Regina joins you. “What is it?”

“Remember when I told what would happen if things got interesting?” Emma asks and Regina nods. “Well, things just got interesting.”

“Shit.”

The blonde grins. “You’re so fucking sexy when you cuss.”

Regina rolls her eyes. “Not now when people are currently trying to kill us, dear.”

“After?” Emma asks, her tone hopeful.

The assassin's devilish smile says it all. “After.”

“Are you done being gross?” Belle asks.

“Um, for now?” Emma offers.

She hears Belle's heavy sigh on the other end. “Close enough. Now wait by the door and leave on my mark.” Footsteps pass the door and then fade away. Belle waits a moment before she tells her, “Mark! Or... um... Go... or whatever...”

“How did they find us?” Regina asks, as they slip away.

“Belle, my beautiful friend, any ideas on how they found us?” Emma asks her pet hacker.

It takes Belle a few seconds before she responds. “Someone else has hacked into the security feed. I'm going to see if I can lock them out. Going dark for a tick. Call you back when everything is finished on my end. They won't be able to see you. But that means I can't see you either.”

“Thanks, Belle.”


“You first,” the blonde tells her. “And have Ruby take the kid out of the city. We'll be there tonight.”

“Sure thing. Belle out.”

“We’ve got to make it to the stairwell,” Emma tells Regina. “Go back the way we came.”
“Why not take the elevators?” Jefferson asks.

“Because it’s a moving metal coffin with no windows and we have no control over where, when, or how many times it stops,” Regina replies, bluntly.

Emma jabs a thumb in the other woman’s direction and adds, “What she said.” Then she moves quickly and quietly to the stairwell access. Emma knows if she was standing still, she’d be shaking with all of the adrenaline pumping through her veins. She’s always been like this. Before every heist, every shootout, she practically bounces off the walls. A part of her know it’s fear. Another part of Emma thinks this is the most fun she’s had since this morning.

“Hey, hold on a second!”

Fuck!

Just once…

Just one time…

Just one fucking time Emma would like to get in and get out without all hell breaking loose or having to punch a security guard.

The blonde is all smiles when she turns and addresses the rent-a-cop with a slow southern drawl, which is really the only accent Emma can do without sounding like a complete asshole. “Yes, sir. How can I help you?”

“Who are you? And where are you taking this man?” the guard asks.

“I’m Special Agent Katherine Kane and this is Supervisory Special Agent Margaret Sawyer. We’re here to remand this patient into federal custody,” Emma explains flashing her badge. When he leans in to examine it, she throws a mean right hook, and he goes down, knocked out cold.

“Try not to stay unconscious for too long,” she tells the guard as she with help from Regina, and Jefferson shove the guard into an empty room. “Because it is like really bad for you.”

“What kind of name is ‘Margaret Sawyer?’” Regina finally asks as Emma shuts the door and makes for the stairwell again.

“If I tell you,” the blonde begins. “… you’re not going to like it.”

“Tell me,” the assassin demands.

“She’s Batwoman’s girlfriend.”

“Of course, she is. And Katherine Kane?”

“Batwoman,” Emma replies.

“Of course,” Regina says, shaking her head.

Then Emma’s phone buzzes and she answers it quickly. “Talk to me, Gorgeous.”

“I shut the other guy out,” Belle boasts. “Fucking noob. Anyway, I count six guys with pistols, all of them have suppressors.”

“Great,” Emma replies, flatly. “Is there street access from the basement?”
“No.” Emma’s heart drops at the news. “Oh!” Belle exclaims. “There is access through the
morgue.”

“Perfect,” Emma comments. “We’ll just take the stairwell.”

“No, don’t do that!” Belle warns before it’s already too late.

Emma feels more than sees the bullet whizz past her and she’s knocked back, or at least that’s
what it feels like. She doesn’t even register Regina’s body against hers until the assassin reaches
into her jacket, takes one of her knives, and flings it toward their attackers. It hits one of them
square in the chest and they go down, but Regina pushes away from the blonde. And once more
Emma doesn’t notice the assassin taking another one of her knives until it’s sticking out of another
person’s chest.

And then… silence.

“Oh my God,” Emma breathes. “Have my babies.”

Regina flashes a grin, heat creeping up her face as she still manages to roll her eyes. “That’s
scientifically impossible, dear.”

“You only say that because no one’s ever done it before. Maybe we could make history. All we
have to do is try,” the blonde teases, adding suggestively. “Over, and over again.”

“You do realize I can’t unhear any of this, right?” Belle’s voice sounds in her earpiece.

“Oh, have we offended your delicate sensibilities?”

“No,” Belle insists. “It's just you. And you're gross.”

“I am not gross,” Emma fires back.

“You are gross,” Jefferson and Belle sound off at the same time. Emma snaps her head toward her
former assistant and his gaze falls to the floor. “Sorry, it's just hard to watch.”

“Boss,” Belle begins before Emma has a chance to say anything. “You have ten minutes probably
less, until someone notices the doctor you knocked out and they go into lockdown.”

“Is the stairwell clear?” Emma asks.

“It is now, yes,” Belle replies. “Just be careful.”

Emma collects the two pistols and hands one to Regina before they make the trip to the morgue
without saying another word. There’s an nervous energy around them and the blonde knows that
there are still four people in this building that want them dead. She hasn’t killed someone in a
while. A few years or so, when she started to look at Henry and wonder how many of the people
she killed had had families. However it isn’t like some deep seated code of honor that kept her
from killing all those years. She’s not above dropping a few bodies to live to fight another die.
She’s just hoping that murder is a lot like riding a bike.

“Why are we stopping?” Jefferson asks.

“Because they’re still following us,” Emma replies, positioning him in the corner nearest the exit
and then takes her place yards from the stairwell access.

“60 seconds, Boss,” Belle warns.
“Your Majesty?”

Regina nods, settling near the stairwell access. And Emma smiles, dropping the magazine in the pistol to check it. Two shy of a full mag, not terrible. The blonde replaces the magazine and raises her gun chest level. *It’s just like riding a bike,* she tells herself. *Just like riding a bike...*

“30 seconds,” Belle’s voice sounds before the line goes quiet again and Emma wordlessly relays the message to Regina, who nods.

The seconds tick away and Emma fights to control her breathing. The last seconds before a fight are always the worse. Heart thumping in her throat, sweat beading on her brow. She can feel the adrenaline like the hum of an electric current. It’s buzzing all around her.

“10 seconds…” And the line goes dead. Belle must have muted her phone.

The door swings open and Emma fires, once, twice… three times. All center of mass. The shots aren’t clustered neatly together. One in the chest. Two in the gut. At least that’s what she thinks because she ducks behind some cover after she takes the shots, as Regina sets up for the next kill. Just a quick double tap to the head of the second poor bastard through the door before she comes running toward Emma, and dives behind the same metal autopsy table the blonde is using as she lays down some cover fire.

“Pretty good third date, huh?” Emma calls to Regina.

“Dear,” the assassin begins. “Next time, a nice dinner would be fine.”

Emma smiles. “You got it, your Majesty.”

Regina shakes her head at her and then opens fire, hitting the third man in the chest as she sets herself up to take out the fourth guy. But her timing is off and the it looks like the final man is going to get the drop on the assassin. Emma has to act fast or else Regina’s taking a bullet. And she won’t let that happen. She can’t.

Springing to her feet, Emma calls to the last guy standing, whistling to get his attention. He fires and the bullet scrapes past her, burning into her arm as it does. Emma doesn’t react to the pain and instead produces a knife in her hand plucks it as if she plucked it out of thin air and chucks it down range. It plants itself in his neck just above his collarbone and he’s gone.

“We’re good, Belle,” Emma says and she can almost swear she hears someone says ‘oh thank God,’ on the other end. The blonde looks around and finds Jefferson where she left him, tucked away in a corner. “Jefferson,” Emma calls to him, offering a hand up. “You okay?”

He looks at her hand like it’s the first time he’s seen a hand. “This is how it happened. I thought I was going to die. But then she saved me.” His voice is so raw and quiet. He even looks smaller. “I thought...”

“It wasn’t real, Jefferson,” Emma tells him as gently as she can when she helps him to his feet. “Lily saved everyone that night. That’s how she was. That how she’s always been. She would have done it for anyone. I wanted to leave you. We even fought about it. But I went along with it because there was no way in hell I was going to let her go in alone. ‘Sides Lily is hot when she’s kicking ass and taking names. So we saved the day. I did it to get laid. She did it because it was the thing to do. There’s nothing more to it.”

“I’ll never know what she saw in you,” Jefferson says. It would have been an insult, if the ends of his lips didn’t curl as he speaks.
“Yeah, me neither.”

“Emma...” Regina calls as she comes to the blonde’s side, her tone full of concern. “You're bleeding.”

“It's just a graze,” is Emma’s attempt to reassure her.

However, it doesn't work because Regina's on her, examining her arm. “You shouldn’t have risked yourself like that. I had the situation handled.”

“That fucking asshat was going to shoot you,” Emma counters. “And I like you. And I like the people I like to be bullet-free if I can help it.”

Regina’s lips twitch as she fights off a smile. “Don't be charming when I'm mad at you.”

Emma chuckles. “So you admit you think I'm charming?”

Belle groans in her ear. “I'm going to go now. I've got a lot of work to do since, you know, you guys KILLED SIX PEOPLE!”

“Bye, Belle.” Then Emma hangs up. “So everyone, time to go.”

She's through the door first with Jefferson and Regina right behind her. And who she sees, leaning against a black Lincoln Continental, stops her dead in her tracks. It's a face she thought she'd never see again. Mr. Rupert Gold, loan shark, and money launderer, is a slight man, short and slender. He has dark features, his hair graying at his temples, and his eyes are black little beads that feel like they can peer into her soul. And when he smiles, his gold-capped teeth gleam.

“Hello, Miss Swan,” he greets with a nod.

“Mr. Gold.”

“I think the rumors of your untimely demises have been greatly exaggerated,” he says.

“Since I started the rumors,” Emma begins, moving in front of Regina and Jefferson to further shield them. “I know they are.”

“Such hostility,” he observes. “Now is that any way to greet an old friend?”

“If they shot me before? Then yes.”

He laughs and the sound is like ice water down her back. “Get in the car, Miss Swan. I'm afraid we don’t have too much time.”

Just as Mr. Gold speaks Emma can hear sirens in the distance. The local P.D. is on their way and once they see what happened in the hospital, it's only a matter of time before the Feds show up too. Between herself, Regina, and Jefferson, there’s no way any of them are getting out of here once the cops show up.

“Well, Miss Swan?”

“Gold if you shoot me again, I swear to God...” she pauses as she hasn’t thought of a good threat. “I don’t know what I’ll do, but you will not like it.”

“Just get in the damn car, Miss Swan.”

Gold jumps into the driver seat, and Jefferson into the passenger seat. Regina doesn’t make a
move until she asks, “Can we trust him?”

“Nope,” Emma replies. “But we don’t have much of a choice, do we?”

“No, dear, we don’t.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to all who are reading and giving kudos and commenting. I love the Swen Nation. You guys are magic and you make my day. Please lemme know what you think in the comments. And if you like my stuff, come and follow me at my new and slowly improving tumblr (MurderouslyAdorkable) or even on Twitter @MurderouslyCute.

Thanks again, and here's a little sneak peek for Chapter Eight:

“Thank you for finally gracing me with your presence, Miss Swan,” Gold greeted, tapping out the spent contents of his tobacco pipe in an ashtray on his desk. “You’re looking a little worse for wear.”

Emma shrugs. “Still look pretty good for a dead person.”

“True,” he agrees. “Well, Miss Swan it seems you have gotten yourself into quite the predicament. Going to war with Albert Nolan. It’s a dangerous game you’re playing. And you’ve dragged that poor woman into this.” Gold clicks his tongue, shaking his head. “You’re getting more reckless… if that is even possible.”

Her eyes narrow. “Is there something you want or...?”

“Always cutting to the heart of the matter, Miss Swan.”

Again, Emma shrugs. “What can I say, I’m prickly.”
“How is it?” Regina’s stitching Emma up in the back of a dingy pawn shop. The assassin’s careful, her hand steady as she threads the needle through the blonde’s open wound. It hurts, of course. The needle stinging with each pass through her skin. But Regina is skilled and it doesn’t hurt as much as Emma knows it could.

“It’s fine,” the blond says with a clenched jaw. “It would’ve been worse if I didn’t have you there to back me up.”

“Flatterer,” the assassin teases and finishes the suture. She grabs the antiseptic, and catches Emma’s gaze. “This is going to hurt.”

“Not when you do it.” It’s a lie and Regina knows it. But she smiles anyway, dabbing the gauze in her hand with the antiseptic and holds it against the wound. Emma bites back a hiss and asks, “Where’d you learn to do all of this?”

“I was a medical assistant in the Royal Navy,” Regina replies, bandaging her arm. “Your Navy’s equivalent to a corpsman, or medic.”

Emma laughs. “I keep forgetting you’re a Brit. Your American accent is good. Can’t even tell.”
She smiles as she examines her work. “Thank you.”

“So becoming an assassin is a big leap,” Emma comments. “What made you make the switch?” Regina’s dips and she takes a long shaking breath so the blonde adds, “It’s okay. You don’t have to tell me.”

“Thank you,” Regina whispers, stepping in between Emma's legs. “So what’s our next step?”

“With Gold,” Emma begins. “His help always comes at a price. So I’ll go see what it is, I’ll make a few phone calls, and then we’ll see Jefferson off. After that we’ll get out of the city for a day or two while Nolan’s stews for a bit.” She wraps her arms around Regina's waist and pulls the assassin against her. “How are you doing with all of this?”

Regina leans back and covers Emma up. “I have to admit, I’m out of my element. But so long as you don’t do anything too idiotic, I’ll be fine.”

“Too idiotic?” the blonde asks with a goofy but sheepish grin. “Like getting myself shot?”

Regina buttons up Emma's shirt and nods. “As a start, my dear.” She brushes her bottom lip with the pad of her thumb. “I’ve grown rather fond of you.”

Emma closes the small distance between her and the assassin and captures her red lips in a soft kiss. The tension in her shoulders fades just as soon as their lips meet. Kissing Regina feels like coming home. The assassin sighs, her fingers threading through blonde hair as Emma’s hands dip past the small of her back. But just as the other woman slips her tongue past the blonde’s lips to deepen their kiss, someone makes a show of clearing their throat.

“Miss Swan…”

Emma will always find that smug, superior tone of his grating. “Yes, Gold?”

“A moment of your time, if I may, once you’ve concluded your…” He searches for the word. “…business here, we have some business of our own to discuss.”

The blonde cringes. “No offense, but you’re not my type.”

Gold chuckles. “None taken. You’re not mine, either.”

Then he leaves without another word. And she’s left to wonder, “What the fuck was that?”

“No idea,” Regina replies. “But perhaps you should go and find out. I can check on Jefferson.”

Emma shakes her head at the thought. “No. I don’t want you in the same room as him alone.”

“Why?”

The blonde takes a breath and lets it out slowly. This isn’t an easy story to tell as she feels responsible for it all. “Six months ago… Jefferson, he tried to hurt two people I care about, because of something crazy in his head. He’s unstable,” Emma tells the other woman, cupping her cheek. “I don’t want you alone with him. Not because I don’t think you can handle yourself but because if he tries to hurt you, I’ll kill him… if you don’t first.”

The assassin smiles, softly. “Fair point.”

The blonde leans in and gives her a chaste kiss. “I’ll be right back.”
“Thank you for finally gracing me with your presence, Miss Swan,” Gold greeted, tapping out the spent contents of his tobacco pipe in an ashtray on his desk. “You’re looking a little worse for wear.”

Emma shrugs. “Still look pretty good for a dead person.”

“True,” he agrees. “Well, Miss Swan it seems you have gotten yourself into quite the predicament. Going to war with Albert Nolan. It’s a dangerous game you’re playing, and you’ve dragged that poor woman into this.” Gold clicks his tongue, shaking his head. “You’re getting more reckless… if that is even possible.”

Her eyes narrow. “Is there something you want or…?”

“Always cutting to the heart of the matter, Miss Swan.”

Again, Emma shrugs. “What can I say, I’m prickly.”

“Indeed,” Gold says. “What I want, Miss Swan is simple, I helped you… twice, so I would like to cut a deal with you. I want insider information on the occasional business dealing. And in exchange, I’ll let you know of any big plays around the city. Whaddaya say, do we have an agreement, Miss Swan?”

The blonde’s caught between a rock and hard place, and Gold knows it. “I’ll have to speak with my people before I agree to anything,” she replies.

“Of course, Miss Swan,” he says, smugly. “Of course.”

“I’m going to need something from you in the meantime, and this I’ll pay cash for,” Emma tells him.

“Yes?”

“I need Hook’s number,” she says, plainly, though she delights in the way his eye twitches at the sound of the name. “I know you have it. I also know you know where his chop shop is. Because if you could you’d go to war with him for stealing your wife, you would.”

The way Gold’s jaw sets Emma knows she has him. She’s been tracking Hook’s movements all over the city. But he moves his operation so often she can’t pin him down. However, Emma knows Gold, and his pride won’t allow him to just let his wife go. Not without knowing everything and anything about the person that stole her from him.

“Five thousand,” he finally says.

“Two,” Emma counters.

“Four,” Gold fires back.

“Three,” she offers.

“Deal.”

They shake on it. Gold writes down a number with an address and hands it to the blonde. And she leans in, her voice dropping an octave. “Gold, if your future war with Hook spills out into the streets…”

He waves off her threat. “I’m a businessman, Miss Swan. And war is bad for business, contrary to
popular belief. Something you’d do well to remember.”

“I’m not going to war, Gold,” Emma begins, lighting a cigarette. “Just protecting my people.”

“Your people?” he asks. “Or your son?”

“Both.” There’s no point in lying about the kid. Gold forged the papers. And he isn’t stupid. He can do the math. “Look, I made a promise to David. And I’ll kill Albert Nolan to keep it.” When he laughs, she frowns. “What?”

“It’s nothing, Miss Swan,” Gold replies. “It just seems you and I aren’t so different.”

“How do you figure?” Emma asks, taking a slow drag from her cigarette.

“We’ll do anything for our people,” he tells her. “Which is why I’d be remiss not to tell you that you should let that woman be on her way.”

Emma studies him for a moment. Who in the hell is he talking about? Regina? The blonde frowns. “Right… So we’re done here? Yup, we’re done.”

“Hardly, Miss Swan,” Gold scoffs. “You’re going to get her killed. And I can’t allow that to happen.”

“Gold, we’ve known each other a few years. You shot me. I shot around you… because my feelings were hurt. But never in the time that we’ve occupied the same city have you ever stuck your neck out for someone unless there was something in it for you,” Emma says as she puffs away on her cigarette. “So who is she to you? Because Regina doesn’t know you. How do you know her?”

“What makes you think--”

This time Emma waves him off. “Because I trust her and she would have told me if she knew you. So I’ll ask again, how do you know her?”

Gold sighs. “I don’t know her.”

“You’re lying.”

The loan shark laughs. “Sometimes. Just not in this case. I know the Queen of Hearts.”

Emma chuckles. “The assassin that trained her? What? You guys old bridge partners?”

“Something like that,” he tells her. “And in the interest of our potential partnership, I’ll tell you everything.

“The Queen of Hearts contacted me when she discovered Regina was in the city and had run afoul with Albert Nolan. She wanted me to track her down, so I did. I didn't know you were involved until I saw you with Regina. But it does make sense.

“If the Evil Queen is anything like the Queen of Hearts she wouldn't have gotten caught up in this. However, Miss Swan this is right up your alley, isn't it?”

“Fuck you, Gold,” Emma spits.

“I'm afraid, I'll have to decline,” he replies, sardonically. “You're going to get her killed.”

“Whether Regina stays or goes, it's her choice.”
“Miss Swan, don't let your feelings for a complete stranger cloud your judgement.”

“I’m not,” the blonde insists. “And what’s between Regina and me is no one’s fucking business but ours.”

“Eloquent as always, dear…”

Gold and Emma freeze at the sound of that voice. And the blonde turns to find Regina leaning against the doorframe of Gold’s office. Her arms folded over her chest, her expression cold and neutral. Emma thinks she might have overstepped herself until the assassin speaks again, this time her words are expressly for the loan shark.

“Mr. Gold, was it?” she asks, moving past Emma, stopping only to take the cigarette from her. “I walked away from the Queen of Hearts for a reason. And I’m not interested in her brand of help. Or yours.” Regina snuffs the cigarette out in his ashtray and looks at him pointedly. “Be sure to tell her that.” And then she walks out of the office without another word.

Gold looks up, meeting Emma’s perplexed gaze. “You might want to see to that, Miss Swan. And try not to upset the Queen of Hearts. You might be able to handle Albert Nolan, but the Queen of Hearts is someone you don’t want to make an enemy of.”

Emma raises an eyebrow. “I’ll take my chances.”

“What it do, Snowflake?”

Emma’s happy to hear Tiana’s voice. And she’s relieved her friend picked up her phone on the first ring.

“Hey, have you left for Granny’s yet?” Emma asks.

“Naw. Sent my husband and baby up with Ruby and your boy,” Tiana replies. “Mulan and Merida are with Belle. So that leaves me as your backup. So what do you need, Snowflake?”


“How’d you manage that?” Tiana asks but as soon as she speaks she’s already figure it out. “Gold.”

“Yup.”

“How did he find you?”

“Long story.”

Tiana sighs. “It always is with you, Snowflake. But alright, I’m on my way.”

“See you soon. Be careful.”

“You first, Snowflake.”

They hang up and Emma makes another phone call.

“Mom!”

She smiles at the sound of his voice, it’s bright and light and happy. “Hey, kid. How’s the drive?”
“So awesome! We’re playing 20 questions,” he says, excitedly. “And I’m winning!”

“That’s because he’s cheating!” Ruby’s voice sounds in the background.

“Am not!” the kid fires back. “I’m just really good at this game.”

The blonde chuckles. “I’m glad you’re having fun, kid. Tell your Auntie Ruby to call me when you get to Granny’s and I’ll see you soon, okay?”

“Okay, Mom.”

“I love you, kiddo. Be safe.”

“You first. I love you too. Bye, mom.”

The call ends. And Emma takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly before she makes one last phone call.

“Emma?”

“August!” she exclaims. “So how are you? How’s the wife? How’s my baby?”

August sighs heavily on the other end. “First, not your child. Second, I’m fine. Retirement agrees with me.”

“Sounds like,” Emma says with a chuckle. “What about fatherhood? How are you doing with that?”

He laughs. It’s a happy sound and she’s happy for him. “I can’t wait to meet the little guy.”

“Or girl.”

His laugh grows louder. “You sound like Lily now.”

“Don’t tell her that,” Emma warns. “Because then she’ll get mad, leave you, and come back to me. And I don’t want to play daddy monkey.”

“Frightening thought,” he comment.

“I know, right?” Emma changes the subject, quickly. “Is our better half awake?”

“Yeah, hang on.”

It only takes a few moments. She listens to muffled voices and the exchange of loving words. Then Lily comes on the line. “Emma? What’s wrong?”

“Why would something be wrong?” the blonde asks, feigning innocence.

But Lily sees through her bullshit. “Because it’s you,” she replies. “And you never call me twice in one day (even when we were together) unless something’s wrong. So what is it?”

“Nothing I can’t handle,” Emma assures her. “I just had a question, something that’s been eating at me, and when you tell this to August, tell him I was just curious. No hidden agenda. I just want to know… Where we ever happy? I mean before I stabbed you… Did you picture a future with me?”

“Emma…”
“Hey, you don’t have to answer. I don’t want to fuck up what you have. I don’t even want you to feel like I might want to,” Emma explains, quickly.

“Yes,” she says after a moment.

“Yes, what?”

“Yes, we were happy. We were terrible for each other. But there were times…” Lily trails off, her statement left unfinished.

However, Emma understands and doesn’t need her to say the words. “Thank you.”

“Emma, you’re starting to scare me,” Lily confesses. “What’s going on? The truth.”

“I can’t tell you yet,” the blonde replies, sincerely. “But when I do and you get mad at me, just remember I’m a dumbass.”

Lily laughs. “Done.”

“I’ve got to go for now,” Emma tells her. “But I’ll call you when I’ve put this whole thing to rest.”

“Okay. Stay safe.”

“You first.”

“Bitch.”

“Twat.”

Then the line goes dead. And she’s left alone with her thoughts. Emma doesn’t know what to do with half of the information that has been dumped on her in the last half hour. Her mind is running a million miles a minute and she’s having a hard time focusing on what to do right now in the moment. A part of her wants to go to Regina and see if she’s okay. But another part of her, a less secure part of herself, is saying she should give the assassin some space.

However, before you even realize it, you’re walking into the back room of the pawn shop to find Victoria sitting at a table, with a pensive look in her dark eyes.

“Hey…”

The assassin looks up at her, and she see it, the wariness in behind the other woman’s dark brown gaze. Regina is tired. Tired of this life. Tired of everything that comes along with it. Emma doesn’t blame her. This life has a way of eating away a person’s best parts until there’s nothing but the hard bits left. The parts of yourself that you never wanted anyone to see the light of day, this world will peel back the layers and expose your inner darkness.

“I’m s-…” Regina’s cracks.

“Come here,” Emma says, offering her hand. Regina takes it, fingers tentatively sliding over her palm as she stands. And the blonde pulls her in close. Her arms encircle the other woman’s waist as she rests her head on Emma’s shoulder. They stay like this for a moment maybe two, saying nothing. Emma doesn’t know what to say; she doesn’t know if she should speak anyway.

“If you need to go,” the blonde finally says. “I’d understand.”

The assassin pulls away but doesn’t break contact. She studies her, and whatever she sees makes
her shake her head. “I’m not going to leave you to handle this on our own. Stop trying to back out of our deal.”

“But…”

“No buts. We have work to do, dear.”

“Alright, let’s get to work then, your Majesty.”

“But first…” Regina raises up on her toes, lips brushing against Emma’s.

The kiss starts out chaste, but as soon as the assassin draws a pale lip between her teeth and lightly bites down, the energy between them shifts and the blonde begins to kiss her as if she wants to drink the other woman down.

“Snowflake…” A voice sounds and Regina eases away from the blonde, both woman working to catch their breath.

Emma turns her head and finds Tiana standing by the door, shaking her head at the blonde with the sheepish grin plastered on her face. “Hey, T.”

“You ready? Or do you need a minute?”

“There are options?”

“Don’t you sass-mouth me, Snowflake. I will roll your ass up like a pretzel. Now, let’s go.” Tiana doesn’t give Emma a chance to say anything else. She just turns and walks away, muttering to herself (and possibly to Emma as well, the blonde can never tell), “Booty-blinded. Acting like I don’t know her. Like we’ve never met. She must got me twisted. Because I see you, bitch. I know what you’re about.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to all who are reading, bookmarking, giving kudos and leaving comments. Please lemme know what you think with a comment. I try to respond to all of them. And if you like my stuff, come and follow me at my new and slowly improving tumblr (MurderouslyAdorkable) or even on Twitter MurderouslyCute.

Just so everyone knows, chapter Nine and quite possibility Chapter Ten will be long. I'm Chapter Nine is drafted, I just need to flesh it out some. And I'm writing Ten right now.

Thanks again, and here's a little sneak peek for Chapter Nine:

"I know you," Milah says, her attention falling back on the blonde. "But weren't you…?"

"Dead?" Emma offers. "Naw. Just a little rumor to keep things interesting."

"Oh I doubt you have much trouble keeping things interesting," Milah says, playfully. Then she looks at the blonde pointedly. "You know my ex-husband."
"Yes but I'm not here because of him," Emma replies. "I'm here because your boyfriend, Captain Asshat owes me."

"Captain Asshat?" the woman looks confused for a moment before she laughs quietly to herself. "You and she appear to have a history, lover."

Hook grins, rocking on his heels, as he wriggles his eyebrows suggestively. "Yes, love. We do have a history."

Emma's eyes narrow. She doesn't like the way Hook says history. Hell, it sounds wrong coming from his lady, too. She doesn't remotely appreciate what either of them are implying.

Because she would never...

She has never...

And she won't...

Look, Hook is a disgusting human. No one, absolutely no one in their right mind would willingly have him in any capacity. Especially, but certainly not limited to the mutually naked variety. A sane person would have to be drunk. Like very nearly dead drunk to...

Her eyes widen when a long forgotten memory invades her thoughts. And she groans. "We kissed. Once. And I only did it because I was fucking in the middle of a blackout and he wouldn't shut up about being able to turn me straight with just a kiss."

Milah chuckles. "How was he?"

The blonde shrugs. "Still gay. So..."
Forced Disappearance

Chapter Summary

*Forced Disappearance* - (n.) when a person is secretly abducted or imprisoned by a state or political organization or by a third party with the authorization, support, or acquiescence of a state or political organization, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the person's fate and whereabouts, with the intent of placing the victim outside the protection of the law.

Chapter Notes

A/N: This chapter is not very Hook-Positive. So if you like Hook and don't read this chapter, I guess. I don't know. There's two references to *A Long Kiss Goodnight* and one reference to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. If you can tell me which episode, you're my new best friend. Anyway enjoy. This chapter is mostly unbetaed. So any and all mistakes are mine. If anyone is interested in betaing, let me know.

**Chapter Rating:** M/R (For Violence, Strong Language, Adult Themes)

**Warnings:** Non-Magical AU, Criminal AU, Violence

**Disclaimer:** See Chapter One

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"It ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward."
— Rocky Balboa

"I got hot sauce in my bag swag..."

The song cuts out with the press of a button, the only noise now being the idling of a car engine. Tiana is in the driver seat, knuckles whitening as she wrings the steering wheel, nervously. "This doesn't sit right with me. I don't like it Snowflake."

Truth be told, it doesn't sit right with Emma either. Her relationship with Hook is shaky at best. He's one of the few people that she had to convince to see things her way when it came to the criminal dealings in the city. And by convince, she means violently threatened into submission. Something that even months after her supposed death, he's still butt-hurt about.

*Well sucks to be him.*

"It's not like we have a choice," the blonde pipes up from the backseat. "Hook owes me a chit. It's times to cash in."

"You need me as backup?" Tiana asks.

Emma shakes her head and glances at the assassin with a knowing smile. "I've got backup."
Tiana chuckles. "Then I'll chill out here and wait for y'all. I'll keep the engine running, because I know you, bitch, and I know how you get down. So just be careful."

"You first," you reply. "And since you've met me before…"

"Already done."

"Thanks, you're the best."

Tiana shrugs. "It's what I do, Snowflake."

The auto shop Hook is held up in has seen some better days. Or Hook's crew thrashed it. Emma's willing to be it is a little bit of both as she leads Jefferson and Regina in the garage.

"We're closed," one of the bikers tells her until they get a good look at the blonde's face. Then his eyes widen, the color drains from his face, and he calls for Hook.

"Smee, what the bloody hell! I was-…" The words stop when Emma catches the gaze of a man, who somehow always manages to make her skin crawl.

It's not his looks. He's attractive enough; dark hair, crystalline blue eyes, a symmetrical face. So although her preferences lean a different way, Emma, in theory, understands his physical appeal. He's pretty. She gets it.

It's the way he leers at her, like she's a slab of meat there simply for his consumption that makes her stomach heave whenever he's in the room.

It's gross. He's gross. The end.

"Hello there, my lovely," he greets, sauntering over, this smarmy grin splitting his features.

Emma nods. "Captain Asshat."

The sleazy biker chuckles, moving closer just a sliver. "Knew you weren't dead. You're too stubborn to die."

"Not for your lack of trying, Captain Asshat," she tells him, pointedly.

"Which is why I suspect you're here, love," Hook replies. "To cash in that favor I owe you."

"Among other things," she adds.

Of course he feigns ignorance, like he couldn't possibly know what Emma's hinting at. "What other things?" He doesn't wait for her to answer before his gaze descends upon Regina, his eyes darkening as he takes in her form. "And who is this lovely creature?"

With a deep breath, Emma silently reminds herself she's not here to hurt Hook, and she points between the assassin and the biker. "Regina, Captain Asshat," she says. "Captain Asshat, this is Regina…" Emma searches for the right term.

"Her partner," the assassin supplies.

Hook sneers. "Don't know why you're running with this one, pet. I doubt she knows what to do with a woman like you."

Regina arches an eyebrow. "Ironic, as I was just thinking the same thing but about you."
"Oh, she's feisty," he coos. "I like a woman with fire."

"The kind of fire I possess is likely to burn you to a crisp," the assassin shoots back.

The thoroughly amused laugh that escapes Emma can't be helped. Regina's not giving Hook an inch. As a lot of his personality centers around being God's gift to the quote-unquote fairer sex, it's starting to get to him, because he's done the math and by now she should be fawning all over him like some lovestruck schoolgirl. His lip twitches but he hides it beneath with a curl of his mouth into a baleful smirk.

It's supposed to be menacing. The kind of smile a predator might have. All it does is make the blonde want to punch him. She wants to walk right over there and beat him until he's broken and bleeding. But she refrains because if Regina needed your help, she'd ask.

"Not gonna defend your lady's honor, Swan?" He's trying to bait her, turning to the assassin again. "If you were mine, pet…"

"Okay!" Emma snaps. "Business. Here to do some business. We still do that, right? Just because we're on the aberrant side of this doesn't mean we can't conduct ourselves with at least a modicum of professionalism."

"Aberrant?"

The blonde's scowl breaks apart at Regina's teasing tone to reveal a playful smile underneath. "Always with a tone of surprise."

"Now who's being unprofessional, Swan?" Hook asks.

"Still you, Captain Asshat," she replies. "Still you."

Hook, of course chooses to ignore the blonde and sets his sights on Jefferson. "And look what we have here. Still following her around, eh? Well when you've had enough taking orders from a bloody woman, lemme know."

With a show of incredible willpower, Emma does not walk over there and beat him within an inch of his life, despite her palms itching with desire to smack a bitch.

Someone reaches into her jacket pocket then and she tenses until she realizes it's only Regina teaching for her cigarettes. The other woman fishes one out, placing it between her lips as she lights it. Emma watches her, she studies the way the other woman's cheeks pucker when she draws the toxic smoke into her lungs. The blonde forgets about Hook and his special brand of asshatry, momentarily, enthralled by the woman at her side.

When she catches Emma staring, Regina rolls her eyes as she shakes her head, passing the cigarette to the blonde. Emma sheepishly whispers thanks before taking a drag from the cancer stick with a deep but satisfied sigh.

Someone emerges from the same door Hook had earlier. She's older. 40… something. Pale skin with dark features and luminous grey eyes that seem to light up when they set upon Emma. She smiles, exuding sex with every subtle sway of her hips as she joins Captain Asshat. Or the blonde may just be imagining that.

Hook pulls the newcomer against him, nuzzling her neck and she sinks into his embrace with a laugh.
Emma fights the urge to gag. Not because of some aversion to overt displays of heteronormativity, but because she doesn't understand how someone would willingly take Hook as a lover. He's a fucking repugnant - well - asshat.

However, she doesn't say anything. The blonde just puffs away on her cigarette and wonder how Hook does it. He's not rich. He's probably the selfish type in the bedroom. Is it really just because he's pretty? Is that really all it takes? Because barring Hook having a magical penis that's the only explanation.

"You didn't tell me we had guests, lover," the woman comments.

"Didn't know they were here until I came out, Milah, my love," Hook replies.

_Fucking seriously? Seriously?!_ Emma rolls her eyes and flicks the butt of her cancer stick away.

This… Caught-in-Romantic-Bliss Hook is more unnerving than regular Sleeze-Bucket Hook.

"I know you," Milah says, her attention falling back on the blonde. "But weren't you…?"

"Dead?" Emma offers. "Naw. Just a little rumor to keep things interesting."

"Oh I doubt you have much trouble keeping things interesting," Milah says, playfully. Then she looks at the blonde pointedly. "You know my ex-husband, Gold."

"Yes but I'm not here because of him," Emma replies. "I'm here because your boyfriend, Captain Asshat owes me."

"Captain Asshat?" the woman looks confused for a moment before she laughs quietly to herself. "You and she appear to have a history, lover."

Hook grins, rocking on his heels, as he wriggles his eyebrows suggestively. "Yes, love. We do have a history."

Emma's eyes narrow. She doesn't like the way Hook says history. Hell, it sounds wrong coming from his lady, too. She doesn't remotely appreciate what either of them are implying.

Because she would never...

She has never...

And she won't...

Look, Hook is a disgusting human. No one, absolutely no one in their right mind, would willingly have him in any capacity. Especially, but certainly not limited to, the mutually naked variety. A sane person would have to be drunk. Like very nearly dead drunk to...

Her eyes widen when a long forgotten memory invades her thoughts. And she groans. "We kissed. Once. And I only did it because I was fucking in the middle of a blackout drunken stupor and you wouldn't shut up about being able to turn me straight with just a kiss."

Milah chuckles. "How was he?"

The blonde shrugs. "Still gay. So...

Some of Hook's boys laugh and Captain Asshat frowns, his ego bruised. And if Emma actually gave a shit, that might have bothered her. But as it stands she can't be made to give a fuck. Especially, about Hook and his oh-so-fragile masculinity.
"Let's cut through it, Swan," Hook finally says. "You have business with me. Let's conclude it so you can be on your way. What do you want?"


"Your city?" he scoffs. "You sell information.

The blonde flashes her best professional smile. "Knowledge is power, Captain Asshat. And I've gathered a lot of info in that last decade or so. I've made friends. Some of them in high places. Some cops, a few judges, even a senator. Some of them are in some very low places, the kind of people you don't want to meet in a dark alley on a cold night. Now some of these friends owe me, like you owe me. And all of them don't like you. So think again before you refuse my very reasonable request. Because most of my friends wouldn't mind sending you off with the hard goodbye."

"Now, Swan, I wish you hadn't said that; challenged me in front of my men," he tells her taking off his leather jacket and hands it to his lady. "I'm afraid I'm gonna have to make an example out of you."

Emma sighs, exasperatedly and shrugs off her jacket. She's entirely too injured for this. But it isn't like she has a choice. Some people just need a good face punching. Others still may need to be repeatedly punched in the face.

Hook is the latter of the two.

The blonde is seconds from slipping out of her jacket and letting it fall to the floor when Regina catches her by the wrist, and takes it from her, the other woman's eyes boring into Emma's with a questioning gaze.

"I didn't want to assume," Emma confess.

"You could have asked, dear," Regina replies.

The blonde smiles. "Your Majesty, would you do me the immense honor of holding my coat so I can teach Captain Asshat a lesson in manners?"

"Of course, dear."

Emma leans in and kisses Regina's cheek, whispering "Thank you" before turning to the skeevy biker. "You really want to do this? Like seriously?"

"Count on it, love," Hook says as they both draw closer to the other. "Last few years you've been playing at being Kingpin, thinking you can bring order to the chaos. The last honorable rogue in a den of thieves and murderers. But your type is bad for business. And I was actually relieved when they said you were dead, saved me the trouble of having to kill you myself." He draws a knife from his waist. "Now shall we?"

He's got a kabur in his right hand. 5 inches. Military issue. Honestly it surprises Emma. Not that he pulled a knife on her, that's right up his alley. But she figured that his insecurity would have him pulling out a machete on her.

"Do we really need weapons for this?" Emma asks.

"No," Hook replies, running his hand down the length of his torso. "They just make me feel all manly."
The blonde's cheeks redden. They can beat her to a pulp, stab her, shoot her, but she draws the fucking line at anyone making an obscure geek reference. That's her thing.

Reaching into her back pocket, the blonde draws a butterfly knife.

"A little small, Swan," Hook comments.

"What it lacks in size, I make up for with natural skill, technique, and stamina," she replies, nodding to his knife. "You're one to talk. 5 inches? That's disappointing."

"Don't worry, love," he rolls out. "When I stick you, you'll feel me."

"If you stick me, you mean."

"I like her," Milah purrs.

Hook chuckles. "I knew you would, my love."

"Oh my god!" Emma groans. "Are you going to kill me or continue to assault my ear hole? Because honestly, gut me, torture me, lick my face to death... But if this innuendo shit keeps going, I'm just going to have to kill myself."

Milah laughs even louder. "I really like her."

The blonde pinches the bridge of her nose and takes a deep breath. "Are we gonna fight or is Mrs. Robinson gonna keep trying to get me into a threeway? Because - and I can't stress this enough, Hook - I wouldn't fuck her with your dick."

He flashes her a smirk. "I have choices?"

"Also," Milah's quick to add. "If it'll make you feel more comfortable you can bring your own accessories."

Emma catches Regina's gaze. "Is this what talking to me is like?"

She smiles, warmly but still tells her, "Often times, yes."

"I am so sorry." The blonde rolls her neck, which doesn't nothing to alleviate the tension that settles deep in her shoulders. She steps forward, matching Hook, meeting him halfway. He's grinning like a kid in a candy store. Clearly this is more than just business for him. For Emma this is just means to an end. Whether it's hers or his will depend how well the next minute or so goes.

Contrary to popular belief, knife fights are quick, and deadly; usually over right after they begin. And they're messy. Humans are basically blood bags. Some wounds may bleed more than others, but the point is all wounds bleed. And even the most skilled with a knife, will get cut. It's not like in a gunfight where there's only a chance. With knives, it's a certainty.

Hook is bigger than the blonde but not by much. Still, he's physically stronger and as this is just a deadlier form of boxing, it surprises her when he flips the knife into a reverse grip, and drops into a defensive stance. Maybe he thinks he can afford to draw this out. Maybe he wants to goad her into making a mistake. Either way Emma has no choice but to be the aggressor and end this quickly. She can take a slash or two. But she doubts Hook can handle a few stabs. Her knife is 3 - maybe 3 ½ inches. It won't kill him unless she hits something vital. But it will end the fight before she takes too much damage. If Emma can get close enough.

Everything else fades away. The cheering of the crowd is drowned out by the sound of her blood
rushing through her ears. Emma's heartbeat is hammering in her chest. Her skin hums, hairs standing on end, as a flood of adrenaline courses through her.

The blonde lunges forward and he backs away, slashing down. But she manages to block the blow, and slams her shoulder into his sternum. But the move opens her up, and Hook's knee comes at her hard into her ribs. A stabbing pain in Emma's side staggers her, with each breath, like inhaling fire and glass. And Hook advances, slashing at the blonde again. She brings her arm up to block and the blade glides across her skin. It doesn't hurt - not at first. Then as the blood wells, the first hint of pain seeps in. Which is good. Means the cut isn't deep. Emma would be more worried if the pain never came at all.

Stepping in and to the side, she brings her knife up and sticks him twice in rapid succession. His eyes widen, and he punches her in the face. The taste of cooper explodes across her tongue as Emma pushes away from him. But the ground is slick with oil and blood, and she slips. The impact knocks the wind out of her, and he's on you before she can recover.

"Well-played," Hook tells her. "You got me."

"Twice," Emma reminds him. She catches Regina taking a step forward and she shakes her head. She's got this.

Probably.

Maybe.

"Yeah, but it all comes down to how you finish, Swan."

"You're right," Emma begins, before tripping him up. When he stumbles she lock her legs and roll her body which gives her enough leverage to send him to the ground. Then the blonde pounces, somehow kneeling him in the face in her scramble to pin him to the floor. With her knife now pressed against his neck, all Emma has to do is add a little pressure and he freezes as her lips curl into a victorious grin. "How's that for a finish Captain Asshat?"

"You better end it, love," Hook spits, his words dripping with vitriol. "Because if you don't there's not a place you'll be able to hide."

A dark chuckle bubbles in the blonde's throat. "That's actually not how these things work, Hook. Not in New York. Not anymore. See it's a brand new day and you've pissed off enough people that just about everyone is tired of your shit. A few years ago we would have taken you out for a long walk off a short pier. But you see that's not good for business either." There's a faint wail of police sirens in the distance. "We found a better way of dealing with asshats like yourself." Emma calls out to his crew. "Your boss is getting locked up today. You can decide if you're going away with him. I'd say you've got about a minute maybe two to decide. Don't worry, I'll wait."

His crew scrambles out the second she finishes speaking. The only person lingering, Milah, who looks at Hook longingly.

"Go, baby," he tells her. "I figure a way out of this."

"I love you."

He nods. "Love you too."

And then she's gone, following his men out. And Emma watches Hook as the moment he realizes it's over washes over him. He sighs, offering his knife to her, handle-first.
"Well, you beat me."

"Hey, I gave you an out."

Hook nods. "You did."

Regina calls to the blonde then and she lifts her head up. "Slip out the back. T should be waiting," Emma says. "I've got this covered."

"And me?" Jefferson finally pipes up.

"You stay," the blonde orders. "Your ride's coming in a second."

"So we have a minute then, huh? Because there's something I want to ask," Hook asks, suggestively. "Between the two of you, who's the man and who's the woman?"

Emma's response is punching him in the face, once… twice… three times, when he has the nerve to look at her with this dumb, slack jawed expression on his stupid face between the second and third jabs.

He groans but still manages to throw out, "I have to admit, I like this side of you, Swan. In charge, on top."

She hits him in the face again and splits his lip. "And you're done," Emma warns. "Say one more word and I'll stab you… again… The point is shut the fuck up."

Regina chuckles and the blonde blushes, flashing a goofy, lopsided grin her way. "Put pressure on the wound," the assassin instructs. "So he doesn't bleed out."

Emma nods. "Right."

"And dear?"

"Yes, your Majesty?"

Regina kisses her soundly on the lips, cupping the blonde's face in her hands. "Be careful."

"You first."

"Lemme see if I got this right…" The tiny, gruff man speaks with just a tinge of doubt. It's almost like he doesn't trust Emma's word "You came in here and just happened to find Hook, a wanted criminal, on the ground, stabbed twice and beaten up?"

She nods. "Yes."

"How did you cut your arm?"

She shrugs. "Tripped."

"Right," he pauses and then starts to lay into her. "Listen, sister if you think I'm buying what you're selling you got another thing coming. Don't piss in my hair and tell me it's raining."

Emma's face contorts into a grimace at his choice of words. "Peeing on people is actually not one of my kinks so you don't have to worry about that, officer."

"I should haul your ass in you-"
"Leroy!"

A smile graces her features at the sound of that voice; her angel has arrived. Her angel is a tall, slender woman, with a dark tan complexion, true brown eyes, and dark curly hair pulled back in a ponytail. She's wearing a midnight blue pant suit with black flats and a pair of sunglasses rest on top of her head. She takes one look at Emma and shakes her head.

"Marian," the blonde greets. "How goes it?"

"From the looks of it," the detective begins. "I'm having a better day than you are."

"What makes you say that?" Emma asks.

"You look like you got hit by a truck."

"It's been a weird day and a half."

"Any of that weirdness have anything to do with the murder at the Four Seasons on 57th this morning? Or the six bodies in Queens?"

The blonde grins knowingly but feigns ignorance. "Why detective, I have no clue what you're referring to."

Marian turns to Leroy. "I've got it from here."

"Whatever you say," the other cop mutters and then shuffles away.

"He's grumpy," Emma observes.

"Gee, I wonder why that is." Before she can explain herself, Marian cuts her off. "No, the less I actually know, the better. So this guy, Jefferson, what do you want me to do with him?"

Emma hands Marian a card. "Call that number and ask for the name on the back. It'll connect to you my Interpol contact. Give them my name and Jefferson will be off of your hands in an hour."


"You first." Emma nods toward Jefferson. "Can I have a word?"

"Make it quick," Marian orders. "You're not supposed to be here, remember?"

"Yeah, and thanks."

"Don't mention it… Seriously, don't."

Emma grins. "I won't."

She makes her way over to Jefferson and notices he's in cuffs. Probably just a precaution. He won't be booked. She knows that much. But still, seeing him like this, it shouldn't be this way. Even with what happened between them. Maybe Lily and August are rubbing off on her, but she sees him as the sick little puppy he might very well be when she sits down next to him.

"The detective is going to take you in," Emma informs Jefferson. "But you won't be booked. In a few hours, you'll be on a plane."

"Where am I going?" he asks.
"Somewhere you can get the help you need," she replies. "Somewhere far away from temptation."

"Why do are you doing this? Because of Lily?"

"That's part of it," Emma admits. "But I also want to be able to look at myself in the mirror and not hate myself. If I kill you... I'd be losing more than just her, I'd be losing a bit of me too."

"Five years ago, you would have killed me."


He smiles and places his cuffed hands on hers. "Goodbye, Emma."

"Catch you around, Jefferson."

"Emma, don't take this the wrong way, but I really hope we never see each other again."

"Fair enough."

"Idiot..."

Emma hisses the second the antiseptic makes contact with the long, angry gash on her forearm. "Yup."

"It doesn't appear that you'll need stitches this time," Regina informs the blonde as she starts to bandage her arms. "I'd tell you to be more careful in the future. But I have met you."

"Hey," Emma interjects, ready to lay out a logical rebuttal. Then she really thinks about it and all that she can offer is an honest concession. "That's actually fair."

"If you could let me in on your plan next time that would be appreciated," the assassin states, finishing up her work on the blonde's latest wound. She notice the way Regina inspects the scars adorning her arms, searching for the story behind every blemish. Most people who notice her scars recoil from Emma, whether out of fear or pity; it doesn't matter. But not Regina. What fills her dark eyes is a simple understanding. And the pure honesty of it makes the blonde want to run for the nearest exit.

"Where's the fun in that?" she asks. And when the assassin shoots her an incredulous glare, Emma holds her hands up in a mock surrender. "Please don't hurt me..." Pale lips curl into a playful smirk. "Unless there's a safe word involved."

Regina rolls her eyes but still leans in when Emma's arms encircle her waist as the blonde pull the other woman against her. Regina cups her face, thumbs brushing along her cheeks. "You are by far the most insufferable human being I have ever met."

"Probably," Emma agrees.

The assassin sighs, her breath ghosting across pale lips. "But I suppose that's a part of your charm."

The blonde grin brightens. "I knew it. I knew you found me charming."

"Idiot."

"Yup."
Their lips meet softly. A content sigh escapes Emma as she leans in. It's innocent at first. Just a gentle greeting between lovers. But then Regina's fingers are threading through blonde curls, her nails scratching against the blonde's scalp as she deepens the kiss. And Emma responds in kind. The assassin's hand drops to her shoulder, fingers dancing along her collarbone. Regina draws Emma's bottom lip between her teeth and bites down, gently at first, but with increasing pressure until the blonde whimers. And then, Emma feels the bandage at her shoulder being ripped from her skin, taking the upper layers of her epidermis with it.

"Ah, fucking fuck!" Emma exclaims, pulling back, checking her newly exposed wound. "A little warning next time maybe?"

The assassin chuckles, ignoring the blonde for a moment to examine her stitches. "If I had warned you, you would have tensed, and it would have hurt worse."

"So kissing me like that...?"

"A simple distraction technique," Regina tells Emma. "The same principle applies to deflowering virgins."

The blonde laughs. "Oh? Got a lot of experience in that department, your Majesty?"

"Perhaps."

Emma pulls the other woman against her again and capture dark lips with pale ones. Her mind is dazed by the assassin's scent as she breathe her in, tasting Regina as if it's the first time. It's chaste, with no ulterior motive, that Emma's aware of. Still the blonde loses herself, too preoccupied with Regina that she doesn't hear the door open behind them.

"Urgh, get a room." Emma hears Belle groan.

"We did," the blonde tells her. "You're the one that came in here without knocking."

"I tried to tell her," Tiana says from another room.

"Anyway," Belle rolls on. "My work here is done so should I head home or...?"

Emma shake her head. "Nope, you're going the be with of us tonight. I don't want to take any chances. So pack up and head out with the girls. We'll take a different route and meet you all there."


The blonde nods. "You first, Beautiful."

The hacker closes the door behind her when she leaves. And Emma drops the brave face and finally cringes as she slides off of the table. Everything hurts. She's been beaten, stabbed, shot, and a vacation is sounding like a better idea with each passing second.

"You're in pain," Regina observes with a frown.

"So much pain, yes," Emma affirms.

"Do you have any pain medication?" the assassin asks.

"Yes, but I'm not going to take them," the blonde replies.
"Why not?"

"I dunno…" Emma shrugs. "Because?... You're going to make me take the pills, aren't you?"

"I'm not going to make you do anything, dear," the assassin assures her. "Strongly suggest until you eventually bend to my will? Perhaps."

With a sigh, the blonde holds out her hand. "Give me the damn pills."

"Good choice, dear."

"I hate you."

Chapter End Notes

Aw. Aren't they so cute. Thanks for reading. Please leave a comment. I'd love to hear what you guys think of this chapter. I still don't think I do fight scenes well.

Preview for Chapter Ten: Safehouse

"Hey..." Emma whispers, not trusting herself to speak any louder.

"You should have eaten something," Regina says, handing the blonde a bottle of vitamin water.

Emma begrudgingly accepts it and slowly straighten herself up. "Thanks."

"Slow sips," the assassin instructs. "You'll make yourself sick again."

For once, the blonde doesn't argue and do as she's told. The effects of the opiates are starting to wear off and her body feels like one giant bruise, like she's been ran over by a fleet of Volkswagen Beetles. Even lifting the water bottle to her lips seems like a herculean feat of strength as every muscle in her body protests the tiny movement.

"Pills never sit well with me," Emma confess, between sips. "Especially when I don't eat."

"Why did you take them then?"

The blonde shrugs. "I knew I needed to sleep."

"Why Miss Swan that's the least idiotic thing you've said to me since we've met," Regina teases.

"Pfft," Emma scoffs. "I've said things. Smart things. Things that allude to a certain kind of intellectual prowess, because I'm smart... Kind of... I have my moments." She fishes her cigarettes out of her jacket and lights one of them, only noticing then how her hands are shaking. Just a mild tremor, a slight twitch, that tells her she's on the verge of having a panic attack. "None really come to mind right now, but..."

"Are you always this self-deprecating?"
"Only when I'm nervous... or upset... or in pain... It's complicated," Emma says, hoping it'll end there.

It doesn't.

"It's my guess that it's all of the above."
Safehouse

Chapter Summary

Safehouse - (n.) a dwelling place or hideout unknown to the adversary where an operative can hide.

Chapter Notes

A/N: I am almost positive most of you are going to hate me because of this chapter. Shout-outs to FallingStar134 for giving me the idea for the Brothers 13 and then promptly forgot that he gave me the idea. Wolf Stevens for looking over this chapter. And Pipex-Vauseman who gave me a shout-out on their tumblr. Love you! I hope you don't hate me forever.

Warnings: Non-Magical AU, Criminal AU, Mentions of predatory behavior, NSFW, Violence, Character Death

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing."
— Helen Keller

Emma doesn't remember falling asleep. But she must have because when she picks up her head the scenery has changed dramatically.

The sprawling, noisy, chaotic metropolis has been traded for the quiet serenity of dense forests awash in the colors of summer. It is peaceful. It's supposed to be peaceful. But the cold sinking feeling in her stomach tells a different a story.

The blonde focuses on her breathing: deep intakes of air through her nose, exhaling slowly through her mouth. But the back of Emma's throat tenses as she feels bile bubbling up.

"Snowflake," Tiana calls from the driver seat. "You okay?"

Emma shakes her head. "Pull over."

"But we're like-"

"Now."

There's no further conversation as Tiana pulls off the road. As soon as the car stops, Emma jumps out of the car, putting some distance between herself and the two people calling her name. The blonde's pride won't allow her to let someone see her vulnerable like this. So she dashes away and when she's confident that no one can hear her, Emma finally doubles over, and begins dry heaving.
Pain pulls on an empty stomach, not her brightest idea. But it also isn't the dumbest thing Emma's done in the last day and a half. That thought doesn't make her feel any better, as her stomach continues to contract and expand in an attempt to expel meds her body has long since metabolized. And relief doesn't come with the empty heaves of her gut, but with a warm, soothing hand on her back.

"Hey…" Emma whispers, not trusting herself to speak any louder.

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"Slow sips," the assassin instructs. "You'll make yourself sick again."

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"Are you always this self-deprecating?"

"Only when I'm nervous… or upset… or in pain… It's complicated," Emma says, hoping it'll end there.

It doesn't.

"It's my guess that it's all of the above."

Taking a drag from her cigarette, the blonde offers a small nod. "I didn't exactly leave New York on a good note the last time I was here. Me and Granny - uh - Virginia had a disagreement about it."

"But she takes Henry."

"Oh yeah, she loves the kid. That's not going to change. Even if I am a giant sack of shit."

"You're not a…" Regina frowns, taking the cigarette and stamps it out. "… giant sack of shit. But you are stalling, dear. It's time to pull off the bandaid, Miss Swan."

Emma smirks. "Are you going employ anymore of for your distraction techniques, your Majesty?"

The assassin rolls her eyes. "No. At least not until you brush your teeth."
The blonde chuckles. "Then I guess we better get going."

The cabin is actually a large colonial style home that sits one about an acre of land. There was once a small farm here but it's been torn down and parts of the plot sold off. All that remains is the original house and the huge oak tree out front.

"You ready for this, Snowflake?" Tiana asks as everyone piles out of the car.

"No."

Tiana shakes her head at the blonde. "It can't be as bad as you think it'll be."

"You're right," Emma agrees, adding, "it could be worse."

Tiana looks down at her phone and smiles down at her screen. "Come on, Snowflake. Our favorite boys are are around back."

Emma's lips curl into a grin. She can't admit it out loud just yet, but she's missed the kid. She can't wait to see his little face light up when he sees her, or him squeal "Mom!" before he rushes over for a hug. And she realizes the longer she has him, the harder it'll become to pull herself away from him for business.

Sensing tension buzzing at her side, the blonde turns and sees Regina worrying her bottom lips between her teeth, a hand pressed against her stomach, fingers splayed as if that was the only thing keeping her anxiety from bleeding out.

Emma smiles at the nervous glint in the assassin's eyes, and offer her hand. "Come on, your Majesty, don't tell me you're scared," the blonde says, cheekily.

Regina blinks like speaking brought you into focus and she's seeing the blonde for the first time. She processes Emma's words a moment later, and rolls her eyes, swatting the blonde's hand away.

"I'm not scared," Regina states.

Emma chuckles. "Then why are you stalling?"

"I'm not stalling," the assassin insists. "I'm delaying venturing forward for your benefit."

"Well, then. I appreciate your help, your Majesty," the blonde says, offering her hand again. "But I think I've st- delayed long enough."

Regina's lips twitch, fighting a smile, Emma supposes. However, the assassin takes her hand anyway and Emma leads her to the back of the house as Emma follows behind Tiana. And every time the blonde feel a twinge of hesitation from the assassin, she gives Regina's hand a reassuring squeeze, until they round the corner, finding Emma's aforementioned favorite boys.

Henry is being spun around by a tall, but stocky man with dark skin, striking hazel-green eyes, and black hair buzzed short to his head. He's laughing with Emma's son and the sight makes the blonde's stomach twist in knots. Because David and Mary should be here. Henry deserves that.

"Mom!" Henry calls out when he notices Emma. "Put me down, Uncle Billy!"

"Okay, little man," Billy says putting her boy down.

As soon as his feet touch the ground, Henry's running toward Emma at full speed and latches onto
her legs.

The kid starts talking a mile a minute going on and on about what the last few hours were like for him. Somewhere in the middle of it he realizes Regina is with Emma and he greets her enthusiastically, before barreling forward with his story. The blonde listens to him, handing on his every word; even if it's not as exciting as her last few hours, Emma gives him her undivided attention.

"Sounds like you've been having fun, kid," she comments.

"Yeah, I did," he replies. "And Mom! Uncle Billy surprised us!"

Emma catches the big man's gaze. "I can see that. But speaking of surprises…"

The kid's eyes light up. "You didn't!"

"I did, kiddo," the blonde tells him, producing the video game he's been pestering her about for weeks.

"YES!" he yells. "YES! Mom, can I…?"

"Yes, but no running in the house and you got an hour. Then you wash up for dinner." Emma glances at Billy, questioningly. "Granny's cooking, right?"

The big man nods. "Course."

"Alright, kid," the blonde begins, looking at her phone. "Your hour starts now."

Henry hugs her, quickly and then Regina, whose eyes widen in surprise. Truth be told, Emma didn't expect the kid to warm up to her this quickly. Though it doesn't come as a shock. Henry's a loving kid; he's got a big heart. Regina, however is jaded just like everyone else in the game, so it does surprise the blonde that she smiles and returns his embrace.

"Have fun, Little Prince," she tells the kid before he runs off.

"You spoil that boy," Billy observes watching him go.

With a grin, Emma nods. "He's earned it. So, I didn't think you were coming back for another day and a half."

"I wasn't," he replies. "But got a call that said you had gotten into some trouble."

Tiana barks out laughter and points to the assassin. "Yeah, Billy meet Trouble."

The blonde shoots her a glare. "Her name is Regina, actually. And the trouble is Albert Nolan."

"He knows you're alive?" Billy asks and when Emma answers in the affirmative he shakes his head. "Shit…"

"Yeah."

Shoving that to the side, for now, Billy offers a hand to the assassin. "Hello, Regina. I'm Billy or Mouse. Whichever you prefer."

She arches an eyebrow at that. "Mouse?"

The big man chuckles. "Childhood nickname that I haven't been able to shake. Like Snowflake."
Did she tell you that story yet?"

Emma's eyes widen in abject horror. "No! No, we are not telling that story. Ever. I'm fucking serious. No."

Regina grins. "Well now I'd really like to know."

"Find us later," Tiana tells her. "We'll give you all of the dirt on Snowflake."

"F*ck each and every one of you," Emma deadpans, then quickly nods to Billy. "Where's Ruby?"

"In the house," he tells her. "With Dorothy, I think."

"Do my eyes deceive me?" Someone called out to them from the back door, before a man of average height but above and beyond average beauty comes out. "I must be seeing things. This can't be our little Snowflake."

Emma blushes, rolling her eyes. "Yeah, Naveen it's me in the flesh... the slightly bruised flesh."

"Too bruised for a hug?"

The blonde shakes her head. "No, but you better hug your wife first."

"That's our Snowflake, always making sure I don't wind up in divorce court," Naveen says, pulling Tiana into an embrace.

And she chuckles, falling into his arms but still manages to threaten him with, "Divorce court? Too expensive. I'd just kill you. Much easier."

Naveen throws his head back and laughs. "I find myself falling more and more in love with you with each passing day."

"I love you too," Tiana says, kissing his cheek. "But I'm serious. I will kill you."

"Oh, I know," he replies unphased, brushing his lips against her forehead. "I wouldn't it have it anyother way."

The happy couple detaches themselves from the other and that's when Naveen turns to Emma and the assassin. "And this would be...?"

"Naveen, this Regina. She's helping out with Operation: Albert-Nolan-Can-Eat-A- Giant-Bag-Of-Dicks."

He notes her hand in yours. "Seems she's doing more than that." Tiana swats his chest and he offers everyone a sheepish, "Sorry."

The blonde sighs. "Regina, this is Naveen. Tiana's lesser half."

The assassin extends a hand toward him. "Pleasure to meet you, Naveen."

They shake and Naveen replies with a, "Charmed, Regina."

Pleasantries are exchanged. Everyone starts making small talk. Emma hates small talk. But the focus seems to be on Regina. Everyone trying figure out how she and Emma happened. The blonde would have been annoyed by it however this is how they've always acted like her romantic life. When it was her and Lily; it was a constant interrogation. Everyone wanting to know about a woman that Emma had refused to bring into this side of her life. And if she and Regina had met
under different circumstances, she doesn't have to wonder, she knows it would have been the same with her.

Emma's never believed that the two halves of her life could coexist peacefully. But with the way Regina is carrying on with her people, she wonders if August had been right; is it just as simple as making a choice and asking a question: Could she ever have what he and Lily have? Could she have that with Regina when this was all over?

As much as she told herself not to think about the future, she is. And she wonders if she asked, would the assassin stay, would she choose Emma, too? Because as much as the blonde lies to herself and says that she doesn't want it; the idea of a future, one with her, the kid, and the dark-haired assassin is getting more and more appealing. So what if Regina doesn't like Star Wars.

_We can make it work._

"Dear?"

Shit. Emma must have been staring. Hopefully, she didn't have some stupid goofy, lovestruck grin on her face. "Hmm?"

"Nothing, it's just…"

"You had this dopey smile and we were all wondering what the hell that was about, Snowflake."

_Thanks, Tiana. Good looking out._

"I… um… well…"

"Look who's awake."

_Perfect timing Ruby._

Emma's best friend comes out with a toddler in her arms. If Emma didn't think Henry had been the cutest baby to ever be born, this little guy would have come in a close second. He's got dark tan skin, a light umber complexion, with a head of soft curls that are a rich nut brown. His eyes are a brilliant amber. The middle ground between his parents, the blonde supposes.

"He was asking for his mama," Ruby says, before she passes him to Tiana.

"It seems I was poor substitute, amore," Naveen adds.

Tiana nuzzles her groggy son. "Of course. He knows who's his favorite is."

Naveen nods to Derek. "Just you wait. When you finally have a kid, they'll love Ruby more than you."

Derek chuckles and pulls Ruby close him. "That won't be us."

Emma's best friend shakes her head and puts her arms around the big man. "Nope. But I wouldn't mind putting in some practice tonight. Because I've missed you."

"I ain't going anywhere, anytime soon," he whispers before they kiss, sweetly.

"Hey so where's Merida and Mulan?" Emma asks, noticing that two of her people are absent.

"They're _taking a nap,_" Ruby replies. "Merida said she had a headache and she was going to rest for a bit before dinner. I'm assuming that headache is lesbian for horny. Right, Emma?"

"My best friend everyone," the blonde snarks. "I hate your face."
"I think you mean to say that you love my face, bitch. Because I bring literal magic into your world," Ruby shoots back. "You're welcome."

Emma laughs. "If by literal magic, you mean an ever flowing source of grief, then yes."

"Hey, don't talk about your girl like that, Emma," Ruby says. "She's standing right there." Emma opens her mouth to say something but she cuts her off, detaching from her husband. "Come on, she's been asking about you."

Emma feigns ignorance. "Who?"

Her best friend's eyes narrow. "Who do you think, dumbass?"

Shaking her head, the blonde turn to the assassin. "Regina, why don't you-"

But Ruby cuts her off. "No, Granny said bring her with you."

"Oh, good," Emma quips. "And I thought this was going to be awkward."

When they move inside the blonde is hit with the distinct smell of burning marijuana. There's only one that smells like that. And that's weed. And sometimes skunks. But that's a whole other tragic joke that nature has played on the world.

Ruby smells it too because as they move into the house, she sniffs at the air and then sighs. "Baby, what did I tell you about smoking in my granny's house?"

A tall, stocky woman with an athletic build meets them into the dining room, with wavy brown hair and a sun kissed complexion. She had a joint hanging from her mouth and she smiles when her gaze sets on Emma's best friend.

"Don't forget to give your grandmother some," she replies.

"And don't start without me," Ruby adds.

She laughs. "I'm sorry. I forgot."

"160 I.Q. Cal Tech graduate, and you're telling me you forgot? Is that how you want to play it?" Ruby asks.

"No?" The woman takes a hit of the joint, holds it, and waves Ruby over. "Come here."

With a sigh Ruby closes the distances between them and she presses her lips against Ruby's, blowing smoke into her mouth as she inhales. When they part, Ruby puffs out a tiny cloud of white smoke.

"Why do you always do that?" Ruby asks.

She shrugs. "I just like to. You don't like it."

"Baby, if that's what you're into you know I'm game," Ruby replies.

Emma catches Regina's expression - it's one of complete and utter perplexment, and she laughs. When the assassin's eyes narrow, the blonde's laughter grows louder, so loud in fact that Ruby and the other woman breakaway from the each other to give Emma a look.

"Regina, this is Dorothy," the information broker says, a little too pleased with the situation.
"Ruby's other spouse."

Ruby rolls her eyes. "You're such a child."

Dorothy ignores Emma and offers her hand to the assassin. "Good to meet you, Regina."

"Likewise, Dorothy," Regina says as they shake hands. She looks like she has so many questions.

And Dot sees it. "It's a group marriage. Ruby isn't my sister-wife. She's my wife, and Billy is my husband."

"Oh, I didn't-"

Ruby cuts her off. "It's fine. We're used to way worse." Then she looks at you. "You need me to go with?"

"No," Emma replies. "But if you hear gunshots, don't let the kid see my dead body."

"Got it." Her best friend nods, and then passes the blonde the joint. "For Granny."

Emma shakes her head and walks toward the kitchen with Regina behind her. It's been years since she's been in this house but it's just like she remembers. Every detail down to the plastic coverings on the all of the furniture. The blonde smiles, despite everything that's happened, it's good to be back.

When Emma and Regina enter the kitchen Granny's pulling what looks and smells to be pies out of the oven. The blonde's stomach growls audibly which draws the old woman's attention to her. Granny's just as intimidating as she has always been. Even grey-haired, even in a shawl she probably crocheted herself, wearing thick glasses, her gaze pins Emma to the floor.

"Hey, Granny."

"Mm-Hmm…"

"Thanks for taking the kid. He loves it up here."

"Mm-Hmm…"

"You still mad at me for I did eight years ago?"

"Mm-Hmm…"

"Um…" you pause, taking a breath. "Can I still hug you?"

"Mm-Hmm…"

Emma walks over to her with a big smile, wrap her arms around the old woman, and mutter, "I missed you, Granny."

"Welcome home, child," she whispers, then steps away from Emma, studying her features for a moment before she smacks the blonde on the side of her head and takes the joints from her hand. "That's for calling me old."

"Ow!" Emma exclaims. "But you are old."

"Who raised you?"
"You did!"

"Well I didn't do a good job, then!"

"That's what I keep saying!" The look Granny gives Emma is enough to make the blonde cower, albeit mockingly. "Please don't hurt me."

Granny frowns and relights the joints. "Mm-Hmm…" She pauses finally taking in Regina's presence. "Well, step forward, child. Lemme get a look at you."

The assassin's hand seizes around Emma's as she steps forward. And the blonde supposes this wouldn't be as awkward if Regina wasn't A: an killer for money, and B: the first person she's ever brought home to effectively "meet the folks" so to speak. And Granny isn't making this any easier with the way she's "inspecting" the other woman, like she doesn't quite believe she's real.

"Your name?" the old woman asks.

"Regina," the assassin supplies, nervously.

"Hmm…" Granny pauses. "And you're a hired gun by trade?"

"I kill people for a living if that's what you're asking," Regina replies. "There's rarely a gun involved." She casts a knowing grin Emma's way. "Unless I'm forced to improvise."

The older woman barks out a laugh. "I like her."

"Hooray?" the blonde offers, sarcastically.

Granny swats her arm. "Don't be shitty."

"Fine," Emma sighs, heavily, immediately perking up. "You need any help?"

"Actually, yes," the old woman replies. "You can help me in here. And if you can manage to separate yourselves for a few, your girlfriend can open up a bottle of wine and set the table."

"She not…" Emma stammers. "We're… Yeah, it's… we're not…"

"Ah," Granny puts her out of her misery, or so the blonde thinks. "You two are just screwing then. That takes me back. I didn't know that was still going on. I thought the free-love-sleep-with-someone-who-tried-to-kill-you bit was only something we did in the 60s and 70s. Well, good for you guys."

"Yup…" Emma says with a firm nod. "That was the most horrific thing you could have said."

"Oh, hush up and put the cornbread in the oven," Granny orders, before she points to Regina. "And you, you gonna keep gawking at me, or are you gonna open that bottle of wine, like I asked?"

Food is up an hour later and an hour after that almost everyone is staring at an empty plate, hating themselves for eating so much. And Emma can't admit it out loud but she's missed days like these. Having a crew again. Sundays with Granny. It wasn't something she could share with Lily. And not because Emma ever thought she wouldn't accept this part of her, but more so that the blonde feared being this exposed. She still does. Only a select handful of people know both sides of her. A most of them are sitting around this table. A few others are dead or elsewhere.
Emma's never been one to trust easily. And that has always been one of her greatest strengths and also greatest weaknesses. As she looks into the assassin's eyes, watching her as her lips curl when she catches the blonde staring, she wonders - truly wonders - if Regina has her trust like the rest of Emma's crew does. The blonde wants to say without a doubt, yes, she has her trust. However the honest answer is, Emma just doesn't know. But, she wants to trust her. God, does she want to.

"Seconds?" Granny asks the crew.

And everyone gives a resounding and emphatic no, save for the kid who only wants to know if he can have a second helping of dessert.

"Yeah, no way, kiddo," Emma says.

But Granny trumps her. "'Course you can. Never you mind what your mom is talking about. You want more pie, you get more pie, child."

"You're paying for his dental bills, then," the blonde tells her, knowing she's not going to win this one.

But again all the old woman does is scoff at Emma's assertion. "With all of the money you've got? No. 'Sides just doing my job. Or am I not supposed to spoil my grandbabies rotten?"

The blonde chuckles. "Count yourself lucky, kid."

Henry grins. "I do, because I get more pie."

"Sound logic," she agrees.

And then Billy raising his glass. "I think a toast is in order."

"Or we could go around and share our favorite Emma stories," Naveen suggests.

"No reason we can't do both," Ruby adds.

Merida joins in. "To the whole crew being at the table and to embarrassing the boss. Because you know that never gets old."

Emma frowns when the whole table toasts with Billy and she has to grudgingly do the same. "If anyone says a single word about JV me, I will murder you."

Ruby meets the blonde's gaze, grinning at her warning before she turns to Regina. "Did you know that once upon a time Emma wanted to be a rapper?"

Everyone starts laughing, even the assassin who can scarcely believe it. "You're joking."

"Often times, yes," Ruby admits, proudly. "But not about this. She wasn't any good at writing lyrics. But she did have Will Smith's entire discography memorized."

Emma stands, and start stacking empty plates. "Everyone done? Great. Time for bed. See ya in the morning."

"I'm sorry," Regina says. "I'm just having a hard time picturing it."

"Watch…" Ruby instructs. "Tiana… if you'd be so kind."

"I'd be delighted," Tiana says and starts humming the melody to "Wild, Wild West." Then Naveen joins in, with his baby boy on his lap as he beat boxes. Emma fights the urge to join in.
But it's hard. Everyone has their guilty pleasures and this is one of hers. And her crew knows it. They're slowly pulling Emma in, Ruby joining in singing backup; even Billy, and the kid, too. And then there's Regina, who's looking at her, her dark brown eyes alit with silent laughter, hoping for a show. So with a heavy sigh Emma relents and throws herself into it with reckless abandon.

"Wild, wild west. Jim West: desperado. Roughrider; no you don't want nada. None of this. Six-Gunin' this. Brotha runnin' this; Buffalo Soldier. Look, it's like I told ya."

"Any damsel that's in distress, be outta of that dress when she meet Jim West." The blonde throws a wink the assassin's way. "Roughneck; so go check the law and abide. Watch your step with flex and get a hold of your side."

"Swallow your pride; don't like your lip react. You don't wanna see my hand where my hip be at." Emma draws her hand and mock-fires at Henry, who plays dead. She goes on, clamping on Ruby's shoulder maybe a little too hard. But she made the blonde do this so she'll have deal with the consequences.

"With Artemus, from the start of this; running the game. James West, taming the West, so remember the name!

Emma points to Billy. "Now, who you gonna call?"

And he replies, "Not the GBs!"

The blonde points to Belle. "Now, who you gonna call?"

She answers, "D-Double-E, G."

"If you have a riff with people that wanna bust, breakout, before you get bumrushed!" Emma ends, strongly. "And that's how it's done, people. Mic drop. Emma out." Regina's eyes are shining with laughter and the blonde grin. "I know. I'm just that good. Try keep your admiration for me under control, your Majesty."

The assassin rolls her eyes and Emma knows what's coming next. "Idiot."

The blonde nods. "Yup."

To clear the table and put the leftovers away is a group effort. But after about a half hour, the kitchen is looking pristine and the telltale whirl of a dishwasher that was almost as old as Granny, meant that their work was done. And with the kidlets yawning and rubbing their eyes, sleepily, it's good timing.

"Alright my boys. Time for bed," Naveen announces, picking up his son and musses up Henry's hair. When the kids whine he adds. "Come on. The sooner you both are in bed and asleep, the sooner you'll wake up and we'll have some real fun, tomorrow."

"Fine," Emma's boy huffs. "But mom? Will you tuck me in?"

"Sure thing, kid," the blonde says with a nod. "Just get washed up and ready for bed. I'll be up in a minute."

"Ok. 'Night, Miss Regina. 'Night, Granny. 'Night, everyone else." the kid says, having only given the assassin and the old woman hugs, before he's rushing up the stairs, holding Naveen's free hand pulling him along.
"It looks like the boy has found himself a new favorite person," Merida says, nodding toward Regina. "You jealous, Boss?"

"Maybe a little... " Emma replies. "Well, gotta do the mom thing." She glances at the assassin. "Don't go far. And don't believe a single thing these asshats says about me. It's all lies."

"Don't worry, child," Granny says. "I'll just show her my photo albums. A picture is worth a thousand words, right?" When Emma didn't move, she urged her on. "Well, go on and parent and stop acting like I'm going to skin the poor child alive when you leave the room."

"Mom?"

"Yeah, kiddo?"

"I'm scared…"

Emma just about has him tucked in when he lays that bomb on her. Her chest tightens. She's never wanted him to know the kind of fear she did as kid. But at the same time, him being afraid in general is something she's tried to avoid.

"Nightmares?" Emma asks.

And he nods. "I dream about…"

She already knows. "Me too. But I've got something special I use when the nightmares get too bad."

"You do?"

"Yup," Emma tells him, shrugging off her jacket and wrapping him in it. "This jacket kid, is my special armor. It stops all of the bad things that we can't see from hurting me. I'm going to let you borrow it tonight. See if it works okay? If it doesn't, you probably just need some special armor of your own. And I'll get you a jacket like this one. But for now, use mine."

"Won't you need it?" he asks.

Again she shrugs. "I can handle a bad dream or two for a night, kiddo. Now do you want me to read you a story?"

"Yes, please."

And fifteen minutes later Emma is reading the last lines of the book to a snoozing seven year old.

"I'll love you forever, I'll like you for always, as long as I'm living, my baby you'll be," she recites as she closes the book and places a soft kiss on Henry's forehead. "Good night, kid. Sweet dreams."

The climb back down the stairs is quiet, save for the soft murmurs of two women.

"And that was her in middle school," Granny says. "During that first year after I took her in."

"She was an orphan?"

"She didn't tell you?"
"Miss Swan… Emma… We don't share those parts of our past with each other."

"Oh… well that's a damn shame."

"Pardon?"

"I was just hoping she would have softened enough to let someone in. She's a good person. She's got a big heart. I just wished she'd show that side of herself more often."

There is a pause before Regina says, "Yes, me too."

Emma's footsteps grow heavier as she makes her presence known. It works as it has the desired effect of the two women stopping their conversation before she enters the den.

"The boys are turned in for the night," the blonde reports. "So is Tiana and Naveen. Belle, Merida and Mulan, too. But where's Ruby, Billy, and Dorothy?"

"In the basement," Granny replies. "Doing Lord only knows what."

Emma smiles knowingly but still manages to offer, "They're probably sleeping."

"The old woman shrugs. "Which is what I should be doing. You're going to check the perimeter?"

The blonde nods. "Yes, ma'am."

"Thank you. Now, good night, children." Granny then disappears upstairs to her room.

Leaving Emma alone with Regina.

"Walk with me?" the blonde asks.

"I suppose I could."

It's quiet.

Their walk around the grounds proves that everything is in order. Emma checks Granny's gates and then arms the perimeter security system. Which cause Regina to ask about the old woman's past, to which the blonde just smiles.

"Granny taught most of us here everything we know."

To give the other woman any more than that wouldn't be right. Granny doesn't like to talk about her past. And Emma wouldn't do anything to betray the trust she has in her. Regina seems to understand.

"Ok," she replies. "What's that?"

Emma follows her gaze to the large treehouse built between two apple trees that had grown close enough together that their branches intertwined. The branches are barren as apple harvest wouldn't be until October. But it is still a beautiful picture.

"Oh, um it's something that me, Tiana, Ruby, and… Mary - Henry's biological mother - built when we were kids," Emma reveals.

"Really?"
The blonde chuckles, shaking her head. "Always with a tone of surprise." And then offers her hand to the other woman. "Come on, I'll show you."

"I don't know," Regina says. "I mean-"

"Do you trust me?" Emma interjects.

She holds the blonde's gaze for a moment, what she's thinking Emma hasn't a clue, but she looks so… caught for lack of a better word. Maybe Regina doesn't trust her. She's known Emma for two days. Maybe the assassin isn't some idiot that falls as quickly as she does.

"I trust you," Regina confesses, easing the blonde's doubts somewhat.

It's not a high climb. Only about 15 feet. And it appears that most of the wood has been replaced over the last decade or so. Emma used to be the one to keep up with this but when she left, she just assumed no one cared enough about this to take care of it. She was wrong. Someone took the time to keep it up structurally sound. Which is good. Because Henry comes here often enough that it's good this isn't a big scary deathtrap made of black mold and tetanus.

Emma opens the hatch at the floor of the treehouse and climbs inside, holding out her hand when it's time for Regina do the same. She helps the other woman to her feet and kicks the hatch close.

"You built this?" Regina asks.

"Yeah. I was like 15 or so. Granny told us that it'd bring us closer," Emma confesses. "Spent a whole summer putting it together. But when it was done… It made us sisters."

Green eyes light up when she remembers something and pulls out her zippo and ignites it. "Check this out." The blonde points out little carvings in one of only the original wooden beams. "That's all of our initials. And the year we finished it."

Regina joins Emma by the wall and studies the carvings. She reaches out and traces the E.S. in the wood. "You?"

"Yeah," the blonde breaths, suddenly feeling so exposed for reasons she can't explain. "Um… Granny took me in when I was 13. Before that I bounced around in the System. Because… Well…"

The assassin silences Emma with a finger to her lips. "She told me you were an orphan."

"Yeah, but what she didn't say was that I was left at a fire station when I was about a week old, and was in the System until she found me," the blonde confesses. "Just a snot-nosed kid that had run away from every home that I ever went to. Then I got to Granny. And the first thing she said to me was, 'Listen here, child. I don't care where you came from. Until you're 18, you run away from me there ain't a place you can go where I won't be able to find your little bony ass.'"

Regina chuckles and Emma smiles, remembering those days fondly.

"She was the first person," the blonde continues. "The only person, really, that believed I could be something more than just an orphan. She taught me how to be more than just a bagman or a thief."

"You're saying she trained you?" the assassin asks.

Emma shrugs. "More or less. But it was more than that. She gave me a purpose. If that makes any sense."
"I think I understand," Regina says. "People like us often feel lost. Without the proper guidance we usually get ourselves killed early on."

"Yeah," the blonde agrees, fishing into her pocket to pull out her pack of cigarettes. She lights one, taking a drag before she continues. "Granny made sure I lived to see 30."

Regina nods to the carving again. "You don't really talk about Mary. Henry's birth mother. I've heard you speak about his father, David. But not Mary. And yet it sounds like you grew up with her."

Emma can feel her throat close. Talking about David is hard enough. And that's still fresh. But losing Henry's birth mother? That will always be impossibly hard on her. "Mary was an orphan like me," she explains, smoking her cigarette. "But Granny picked her up early. So she wasn't in the System long. A year, maybe two. People use to say that we looked like sisters. We used to pretend that we were sometimes. Like our parents were in trouble and had to make sure we were safe so they gave us up.

"Anyway, she met David our senior year. And even though he was older and his dad was a gangster… You'll never meet two people more perfect for each other. And David loved her with all of his heart, there was no doubt. They were meant to be. By 20 she was pregnant and they were looking for a way out. Away from this life but especially from David's father. Because as much as I hate that man, David despised him. He wanted nothing to do with him. But he knew that his father wouldn't let him walk away now that his other son had been killed.

"Back then, if it had been David that asked me for help I would have told him to go fuck himself. But he didn't ask. Mary did. She didn't beg either. Mary was too proud for that. But she was teary eyed when she asked me for the cash and quickly. For her son." Emma blink away tears, with a sad smile. "That's how she told me she was having a boy."

"What happened to her?" Regina asked.

"She died…" the blonde whispered, flicking the cigarette out of the treehouse window. "An Amniotic Fluid Embolism. Henry was a difficult birth. She stayed alive long enough to name him. And then she was just gone."

The assassin's hand closed around Emma's as another tear rolls down her cheek. "I'm sorry."

"She would have been a good mom," the blonde says, her lips trembling. "Better than me."

With the pad of her thumb Regina wipes the tracks of tears from Emma's cheeks, and cups her face. "You're a good mother."

"The last 36 hours has given me some reasons to doubt that," the blonde replies.

The assassin almost smiles at that. "The last 36 hours for me has more than proven my assertion a dozen times over. And Henry loves you. More importantly, you love him. Are you a perfect parent? No. But you're loving parent. And I'd say that has to account for something."

"But-

"No. Stop doubting yourself. You're all he has now."

When the woman was right… Damn.

Emma nods. "Fair point, your Majesty."
"Thank you for seeing things my way, dear." Regina leans in and brushes her lips against the blonde's. "You've never brought anyone up here have you?"

Emma chuckle. "No."

"No stories about your wild and rebellious youth where you broke little girls' hearts all summer?" Regina asks.

And again the blonde laughs. "As someone who wasn't there for my wild and rebellious youth, you're making me sound way more awesome than I actually was."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Not a lot people were coming around for a little bit of JV Emma. That was only a thing in my imagination."

The assassin raises an eyebrow. "Oh? And what exactly would happen in your imagination, dear?"

The blonde grins, playfully. "It'd be better if I showed you. What do you say, your Majesty? Will you allow me to paint you a picture with my imagination brush?"

"As long as you never call it that again."

"Deal."

Emma's arms encircle the brunette's hips and she presses pale lips to to wine color ones. It's slow and sensual. She has time to truly relish this. And drown in a sea of sensation as the ardour builds between them. Regina's hands are warm against the blonde's cheeks. Her lips are soft and wet; Emma swipes her tongue along them just to hear the assassin gasp. She don't dare to say it but she loves the way Regina tastes. She loves the way her body feels pressed against the blonde's. The other woman moans when Emma's hands dip and squeeze her ass. The information broker is already dizzy on her scent. And she fights with herself, torn from keeping this pace and speeding things up.

The assassin (of course) decides for her.

Regina's nails scrape along her scalp, up the base of her skull, hands fisting in blonde curls, as she pulls, gently. The move exposes Emma's neck to insistent lips. The playful nips along the sensitive planes of skin, draws needy sounds from the back of her throat. Then the blonde's earlobe is drawn between the brunette's teeth, and she bites down which causes Emma to become a little unsteady on her feet.

"Don't tease me, Miss Swan…" the assassin purrs.

"Emma…" she corrects, her voice hoarse, her mind struggling to form coherent thought. She manages to add, "We've passed the point the causal business partners, don't you think, your Majesty?"

Regina chuckles, and it is pure sex. It raises the hairs on the back of Emma's neck; her nipples harden, and she clutches her legs together as the sound of the assassin's laugh shoots straight to the blonde's core.

"I suppose you're right… Em-ma…"

The information broker grins wolfishly. Something about the way the other woman says her name
will always get to her. "Did you just admit I was right?"

"We could always stop…"

Emma shakes her head. "No. No. It's cool. I'll be good."

"I hope not." Regina locks her arms around the blonde's neck and raises up on her tiptoes, her breath ghosting across pale lips. "I prefer your wicked side."

Closing the small distance between them, Emma kisses her softly. Her hand snakes up the other woman's body, as Regina's tongue slips past her lips. The blonde moans, her fingers threading through raven hair, slowly balling her hand into a fist. The action pulls the other woman's head back and Emma mirrors her move from earlier, taking the assassin's earlobe into her mouth.

"Well then…" the blonde whispers, pulling away, to trail her lips along the cords of Regina's neck. "Let's be bad."

"Yes," the brunette hisses, as Emma backs her toward the nearest wall, where her leg slots between Regina's.

The assassin's hands are working to undo Emma's shirt buttons, and hers, are sliding under the other woman's skirt, only to discover there's no barrier between the blonde's touch and Regina's softness.

"Fuck…" Emma breathes. "You're going to give me a heart attack. Did you just forget to pack panties or…?"

The assassin cups the blonde's breasts, running her thumbs over Emma's bra cladded nipples, causing her breath to hitch. "I took them off while you checked the gate." Regina reaches into her jacket pocket and pulls out a pair of black silk panties. "See."

"Seriously, it's like I legit made you in a computer," Emma jests and then notices her frown. "What?"

"If I'm Kelly LeBrock, then who are you?"

The blonde grins. "I'm Ilan Mitchell-Smith, obviously. And how is it you've seen Weird Science but not Star Wars?"

"I used have a thing about John Hughes movies," Regina confesses. "I even wanted to take a trip to the States so I could visit Shermer, Illinois. But I discovered…"

"There's no Shermer, Illinois." Emma says her fingers gliding along hot, slick folds. "Yes!" Regina gasps, gripping the blonde's shoulders tightly to steady herself.

Emma's touch is still feather light, fingertips brushing against warm, soft skin, like she's trying to commit everything to memory. Every frustrated whimper, the way the other woman's skin dampens to the touch. Emma's mesmerized by her. Captivated. Regina's a goddamn goddess.

"Your Majesty…" Emma whispers, her fingers, reverently circling the other woman's opening. "Can I, please…?"

The assassin response is to grab the blonde's wrist, and sink Regina's wet heat onto her fingers with a content sigh. Emma's watching her as her hips begin to move, while finding a rhythm that works for them. The brunette's hands grip her shirt by the collar, as there assassin pants and
moans, moving in counterpoint to Emma's ministrations. And Regina captures pale lips in a searing kiss, grinding against the blonde's hand.

Emma can feel Regina grow wetter, softer, warmer (if that is even possible) as she drives her fingers in and out of the assassin. And the brunette's moans, and pleas for more grow louder and more insistent.

"Fuck! Nhn… Shit!… Oh my!… Fuck! Faster, please… Harder… Fuck me…"

A low growl escapes Emma, as she adds her other hand, fingers rubbing around the assassin's hardened nub. Regina shouts wordlessly before she captures the blonde's lips in a sloppy open-mouthed kiss. The position is awkward. And Emma's fingers are starting to cramp. She almost stops to change angles but the assassin tightens her grip on her collar, and breaks away.

"Stop and I'll kill you!"

So the blonde doesn't stop. Not even when the cramps in her wrist border on painful. Regina's close, her inner walls clenching around Emma's fingers, her breathing, broken and ragged, on the edge, ready to fall. And God, does the blonde want to see her let go.

"Rub… directly…" Emma can only guess that she wants more direct attention on her clit so she begins to rub it in tight circles. "YES! Fuck! Don't… Close…"

The blonde nips at her lips as Regina makes little helpless sounds. Emma keeps driving her fingers into the brunette, curling them ever so often, until the assassin throws her head back. The blonde latches onto her exposed neck. And when her cries reach a crescendo Emma sinks blunted teeth into the flesh just above her collarbone, where her neck meets her shoulder. That's what does it, and the assassin comes with a throaty cry.

"Emma!"

The blonde slows her thrusts, riding out Regina's orgasm as it ebbs away.

"Fuck…" Emma breathes, kissing her sweetly. "You're incredible."

The assassin easing away with a sharp inhale. "I think that's supposed to be my line, dear."

The blonde smiles, bringing her fingers to her lips. "You can say it back if I earned it, but it doesn't make what I said any less true." She hum at the taste, licking the arousal from her digits. "You're fucking incredible, your Majesty."

The other woman chuckles as she pulls Emma into a slow, languid kiss. And the blonde opens herself up to Regina, her tongue sliding against the brunette's. She's warm to the touch, soft; she's smells… amazing. And Emma gets lost again. Which is why she's cut off guard when the assassin spins her around.

Emma laughs, try to close the distance between them but Regina shoves her into the wall. The blonde takes another step but again the assassin pushes her back and holds her there.

Brown eyes blaze in the moonlight, fiery, and mischievous.

"Wha-" Emma's question is muffled by silk being shoved into her mouth. It tastes like the assassin, sweet, and spicy, and she groan, her eyes practically rolling back into her skull when her knees buckle.

The other woman takes hold of Emma's chin, her gaze boring into her.
"Unbutton your pants…"

The order makes the blonde's core slicken and her clit throb, arching to be touched. But her defiant streak has her hesitating with the button of her jeans.

Regina knows what she's playing at, and the brunette starts to undress, opening her shirt, one button at a time. Green eyes are fixed on every inch of newly exposed skin. However, after the second button Regina stops.

"The pants or I get dressed."

Fuck… the thought comes out as a muffled groan and Emma does as she is told.

"Push them down to your mid thighs, dear," Regina purrs. And then the blonde feels a slight tickle on her neck, traveling along her collarbone. The assassin jumps back and points. "Spider."

Emma lets out a shout and swats at her shoulder like she on fire.

The spider, just a tiny wolf spider, hits the far wall with a soft thud. And Emma can breathe, well once the panties fall from her mouth with a sheepish chuckle.

"If that wasn't a mood killer, maybe we should go back inside," she suggests.

The assassin laughs. "Yes that's probably best. Wouldn't want you to be nearly eaten by another, big scary spider."

Emma frowns. "That was giant. I could have been killed."

Regina rolls her eyes. "Idiot."

"Yup."

There's a trail of clothes leading from the door to the bed. Shoes, shirts, pants, and undergarments litter the bedroom floor in their rush to remove every barrier between them, until Emma's back hits the mattress and soft heated skin slides against hers. It's intoxicating to the assassin moving above the blonde, straddling her waist. The information broker can feel how wet she is every time she rocks her hips and Emma bites back a moan as they've had to be quiet. Despite being given every reason not to be.

"Next time," the assassin whispers, against pale lips. "We get a hotel suite. I want to hear you."

"Next time…" Emma promises, lightly kissing the woman above her. One hand in her hair. The other gripping her hips and she grinds down on the blonde, making small breathy sounds as she does. "Just us…"

Regina nips at Emma's lips, humming her approval. "Just us…"

The blonde likes the sound of that. Just the two of them. Somewhere quiet, peaceful. Somewhere safe. She wouldn't mind more nights like this. More mornings being curled around this woman. More pancake breakfasts. More Regina. More of this.

They kiss like it's the end of the world, both of them, hungry and needy. Their movements growing more persistent, unrelenting, and demanding. No matter how hard they both try, neither of them are the type of people that take half-steps. If Emma throws herself into something, it's with everything she has. It's like that with work. And with sex. After Lily, Emma never thought she'd
find someone that could keep up. However it seems she's found a like minded partner in the beautiful assassin.

"Come away with me," Emma says suddenly. The blonde's not even sure she's spoken out loud until Regina's pulling away from her with a quizzical look.

"We just got here, dear," the brunette teases.


The assassin cups her face in her hands and searches Emma's expression for any sign of subterfuge. But she's being sincere. She wants more moments like this without the looming threat of violence. And once Albert Nolan is out of the way, Emma can have that. If Regina will have her.

"A vacation?" the assassin finally asks. "You want to take a trip with me?"

"Always with the tone of surprise," the blonde jests. "But yes. Is that so hard to believe?"

"No," Regina replies. "I suppose not. But I'm curious what would we do on this vacation of ours?"

"Whatever the fuck we want…" Emma tells her as she flips their positions. The assassin grasps underneath her when the blonde settle on top of the brunette, rolling her hips to meet the information brokers. "I'd get to wake up with you next to me." The blonde presses her lips to Regina's and she kisses Emma back, her hands threading through flaxen waves. "Make you come before breakfast." Emma peppers kisses and playful love bites along the other woman's jaw. And the assassin's legs wrap around her waist as she moans. "Then we'll in enjoy the day. Sunbathing." Emma smirks, latching on the small patch of sensitive skin just below the other woman's ear. "I mentioned the drinks with tiny umbrellas right?"

"Yes…" the assassin pants. "It's come up before…"

"Good…" Emma murmurs against her skin. "'Cause I love those things…" She runs her palm over the brunette's breast causing her gasp and undulate her hips against Emma's. "And then at night when it's just you and me…"

"Long walk on the beach?"

The blonde chuckles, her hand snaking between them, fingers flutter over glistening folds. "I was thinking of a long… slow… *fuck*, your Majesty."

The assassin smirks. "You're insatiable, my dear."

"So are you…"

The brunette hums her agreement as she pulls the blonde in for another heated kiss. And Emma wants to savor this, Regina's taste, her scent, the little breathy sounds she makes. She feels so good against her; warm, wet. The blonde doesn't want this to end. She wants to take her time. But the moment the other woman's tongue slips past her lips and kiss deepens, Emma finds herself ravenous for the assassin.

Reverently, the information broker makes her descent down the other woman's body, her touch lingering on any part of the assassin that draws out the sounds she's come to love. Like she's
making music with Regina's gasps and moans. The blonde worships the assassin's breasts, sucking, licking, rolling the sensitive nubs between her teeth. Pale lips map the olive slopes and plains of the other woman's body. The blonde favors the hollows of her hips. The skin is soft there and responsive to her touch. The closer she get to the brunette's sex, the stronger the smell of her arousal becomes. It fills Emma's nostrils with her heady scent. And the blonde wants nothing more than to taste her. Her mouth waters at thought, settling between Regina's thighs watching the assassin with hooded eyes. The brunet's hands are still in Emma's hair, pulling sometimes, or holding her against Regina's body other times. But just as the information broker is about to claim her gift, the other woman stops her.

"Wait…" Regina pants.

Emma stops, her dark gaze watching the brunette as she hovers so close to her center.

"Get…" the assassin licks her lips before she tries again. "Get on your back."

Normally, the blonde would fight, or question, or vex, but the way Regina's dark, lust blown eyes fall on her, she complies without a second thought. So Emma rolls onto her back in the center of the bed, scooting up so her feet doesn't hang off the mattress. And the assassin rises to her knees and straddles the blonde's head. Emma smirks, running her hands up and down the other woman's thighs.

Above the blonde, the assassin cups her cheek. "Are you ready for me?"

Emma kiss Regina's inner thigh. "Always."

The assassin lowers her slick warmth on pale lips and the blonde groans at the first taste of her arousal on her tongue. Regina moves in counterpoint to Emma's mouth, as the blonde licks and sucks every inch of her pussy.

"Fuck…" the assassin moans when the information broker's tongue enters her. "Yes…"

Regina's shaking, her thighs quivering as they clench Emma's head. Her hands is in the blonde's hair, holding her mouth to the assassin's sex, as she moves against the information broker's lips and tongue.

"God, yes…" the assassin pants. "I love… love your… fuck! Your tongue…"

Emma loves it when Regina gets like this. The prim and proper assassin had an impressively dirty streak. The blonde loves the way she moves, she moans, the way the brunette tells her to pleasure her. Emma can feel her own arousal building as the woman above her spurs her on.

"Yes! Fuck! Don't… don't you fucking stop!"

The blonde wouldn't dream of it. And she doesn't think she could stop even if she wanted to. And she doesn't. Emma wants Regina coming on her lips. Repeatedly. Until neither of them could go on, only to do it all over again.

The assassin is shaking above Emma, trembling with her coming release, that's only just out of reach. So the blonde lathes her clit with attention, drawing tight circles around it with her tongue. And the assassin let's out a noise that sounds like the half step between a moan and a shout, grinding her hips down on pale lips. And Emma knows she's getting close.

The information broker brings a hand to her center, pulling away just far enough to watch her fingers entering the assassin. Regina's practically dipping, coating Emma's fingers in her wet heat, as she lets out a deep moan.
"Yes…” Regina sighs above the blonde as she close her lips around that hardened, throbbing bundle of nerves, alternating between flicking the assassin’s clit with her tongue, and her ministrations.

It's the combination of sensation that sends the assassin tumbling over the edge, Emma's name escaping her with a breathy sigh, while the blonde eases through her release with slow, cleansing strokes with her tongue.

When the assassin finally stills, she moves away to lay beside the blonde. Regina drapes a leg over Emma's stomach, her hand lying between the information broker's breasts. It's a possessive move; the assassin has staked her claim. Emma runs her hand along the other woman's thigh, trying to ignore her own need thrumming through her. A difficult feat considering the heat the assassin is giving off is downright maddening. The blonde wants nothing more to flip Regina onto her back and start again.

"Did we enjoy ourselves, your Majesty?"

The assassin lets out a throaty chuckle and picks up her head to kiss the blonde. "Yes, we did…” She hums, running her tongue over pale lips. "I love the way I taste on you."

Emma groans, her hand sliding over the other woman's ass. "It's quickly becoming one of my favorite things, too."

Regina smirks. "You distracted me though."

The information broker cock an eyebrow at her assertion. "Did I?"

The assassin nods. "You did. You do that a lot. I came back here with every intention of making you scream my name. But you turned the tables on me. You tried to do the same thing in the treehouse." When Emma doesn't reply she presses on. "Why do you do that?"

"I find that it's hard for people to leave if their legs don't work." It's meant to be a joke. But the way the blonde's voice drops at the confession, the honesty of her words is hard to ignore.

"You think I'm going to leave?"

Emma shrugs. "Everyone always does."

It's not far from the truth. There hasn't been a person that's seen all of Emma and stayed. They've all left or she's made them leave. Needless to say, the result is the same. She's left alone at the end of it.

The assassin cups her cheek and gently forces Emma to meet her gaze. "I won't leave."

The blonde wants to believe her. But if past is prologue…

"I'm not going to leave," Regina promises, her breath ghosting across pale lips.

The blonde fingers slip through her hair, and pull her in for a chaste kiss. That's all it is supposed to be; a way to end the conversation. Because it's too much. Emma can't deal. All she wants is to lose herself in Regina and not think about the future. But the way she meets Emma's lips, passionate and needy, the information broker can't think of anything but that.

"I won't leave," the assassin whispers, breaking away to lay a trail of kisses along Emma's jaw, down the column of her neck. "I won't leave…” she murmurs against the blonde's skin, taking one
of her nipples into her mouth, making Emma bite her lip to keep from crying out. Then the
assassin switches breasts and the blonde's grip on her head tightens, keeping her mouth there but
Regina lifts her head to once more to vow, "I won't leave…"

When the brunette starts to move down Emma's body she stops her. "Stay…" the blonde gasps.
"Please… stay…"

And Regina does, kissing Emma like she can't think of anything else to do, like there is nowhere
else she'd rather be. The blonde whimpers as the assassin shifts her weight, straddling one of her
thighs. The brunette's hand dips between them, fingers brushes along Emma's sex.

"Please…" the information broker pleads, eyes fluttering shut. "Please… I need you…"

"I'm right here," the assassin whispers, her touch circling around Emma's opening. "Look at me." When the blonde meets her dark, burnt honey eyes, Regina enters her slowly, watching her body react to the brunette's touch. "I won't leave."

"Fuck…" the blonde gasp, her hips rising to meet Regina's fingers. "Pl… please…"

The assassin's hand flexes and she starts off with a steady pace, two fingers slipping in and out of the blonde. "You're so wet…" she observes. "So wet… so ready for me… I think you might need me to fuck you… Is that what you want? Would you like me to fuck you, dear?"

With a moan, Emma nods almost emphatically. "Yes! Yes… please."

Regina kisses her softly. "You have to be quiet or I have to stop, dear. And I don't want to stop. Especially when your pussy is begging to be fucked."

The way the assassin's talking to the blonde in combination with her fingers moving in and out of Emma's center has her so embarrassingly close. Emma closes her eyes, trying to focus on her breathing, instead of the waves of pleasure rolling over her. But it's impossible, especially when Regina presses the heel of her palm on her clit.

The information broker cries out but the assassin kisses her, swallowing her moans as she drives her fingers into the blonde. As Emma's forthcoming release coils within her, she moves her hips to meet Regina's thrusts, and she can feel the other woman sicken against her thigh. Emma's hands grip the brunettes hips, pulling her against her, and she's rewarded with a breathy moan.

"Don't distract me…" Regina warns.

"You can… fuck!"

"Thank you, dear…" The assassin cheated, drilling into the blonde when she tried to speak. She does it again, curling her fingers at the apex of her stroke, and a loud keening moan escapes Emma. "Shh… you wouldn't want anyone to hear us - well, you."

The growl the blonde let out would have surprised her if she could think about anything but the warmth building within her.

"Are you close?" Regina asks, and Emma nods, not trusting her voice. "Then come for me."

The blonde shakes her head. "Not yet."

"Oh?" The assassin's pace quickens. "But don't you want me to know how good this feels? That you like the way I make you feel? That you love how I fuck you dear?"
"Yes," Emma whimpers.

"Then come for me…” Regina pumps her fingers into the blonde and it's almost like she's about to rip apart at the seams. "Come for me…”

All it takes is a sweet whisper of Emma's name and she finally lets go, her body snaps taut, and she arches her back. The only thing that keeps the blonde quiet is the assassin's lips pressed to hers, as Regina guides her through her orgasm. But as Emma's body stills, the brunette doesn't let up, moving down her body without stopping.

"What are you doing?" Emma asks, as the other woman settles between her legs.

Regina's hooded eyes are locked onto the blonde's center as she lowers herself. "I need to taste you."

The protest catches in Emma's throat the moment her mouth makes contact your arching sex.

"Oh… God… yes…” the blonde hisses, her hands reaching down to fist themselves in raven locks, as she moves to meet the assassin's eager tongue. "Yes… fuck… yes… don't… fuck! Don't stop."

The brunette doesn't stop, showering Emma's center with attention, as eyes darkened with a lusty hunger watch the blonde as she draws closer and closer to an explosive conclusion. It's almost too much, too intimate. The emotions Regina fills her with overwhelms her already over stimulated senses. And it isn't until Emma's coming does she realize she's been speaking. Mostly broken words and sounds that couldn't be called a language, but just at the crescendo of her climax, she hears herself speak, two words, too quiet to be called a whisper.

"Love you…”

Whether the other woman hears Emma, she doesn't know. Regina doesn't say anything as she curls beside her as the blonde's breathing regulates. The assassin nuzzles her neck and lays a kiss on her pulse point.

"When you can manage it," she tells the blonde. "Go have your cigarette. But come right back. I'm nowhere near done with you, tonight."

Emma chuckles, quietly. "As you wish, your Majesty."

The cigarette smoke that fills Emma's lungs is a welcomed relief. The night air is cooler, less humid from the heat of the last few days. It's nice. Tranquil. She can get used to this; wondering briefly if that's why Lily walked away from this, for this kind of serenity. Emma hopes that once the dust settles, she and the kid can find a little patch of peace all their own.

"What are you doing up?"

The abruptness of Granny's voice startles her. "Jesus fucking Christ. You trying to kill me, you old bat?"

She cuts her eyes at Emma. "I'm getting tired of you calling me old, child. I ain't too old that I can't still break my foot off in your ass. So watch it."

The blonde smile and offer her a cigarette. "Alright. I'll stop."

"You couldn't sleep?" the old woman asks, as Emma lights her cancer stick for her.
"Something like that," she replies. The truth is, while she is tired - exhausted in fact, she's also restless. She can't shake it, like a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach. And it's got her worried.

"Penny for your thoughts?"

"Just antsy. And that's never happened to me before."

"You've never had anything to lose before," Granny says like that supposed to make sense. "You've got earthy ties to this world. A little boy that expects you to come home every night and tuck him in. And now, maybe even someone to share your life with."

Heat flushes Emma's cheeks. "I don't know. Regina… I'm not going to hold her back. If she wants to go-

"If I wasn't so tired I'd smack you."

Confusion furrows Emma's brow. "What?"

"You're doing the same thing you did with that girl - what was her name?"

"Lily."

"Yes, her. You convinced yourself that you didn't deserve a partner. Someone that knows all of you and loves all of you. So you pushed her away. And when that didn't work, you stabbed that poor child," Granny explained.

"I had good reasons for doing that," Emma shoots back, taking an angry drag from her cigarette.

"I know what you tell yourself," the old woman says. "But if you think for one second that Lily wouldn't have accepted what you had to become for Henry… Then maybe you are as dumb as you look. And that assassin… The way the two of you carry on; child, if that's not love, I don't know what is."

Emma shuffles nervously on her feet. "Granny… I got Henry now, I've got to-

"It'll be easier if you had a partner that loves like you do, with all her heart," Granny tells her. "That's all I've ever wanted for you.

"Ruby's like her mother was. She's oddly suited to this life. Same for Merida and Mulan. But you, Tiana, and Mary, always wanted a peaceful home and a loving family. Tiana's got hers. Mary died before she got her chance. What are you waiting for, Emma?"

The blonde smiles softly and looks away for a moment, tears pricking her green eyes. And it's then she sees it in the distance: just a flicker of moonlight catching glass. But she knows exactly what it is. It's a scope. And Emma has less than a second to react, pulling Granny down to the ground just as bullets fly overhead.

The bullets hit the ground around them. Automatic weapons. Kind of overkill if anyone asked Emma. But seeing as people are shooting at her, no one's going to stop and ask for her opinion on the matter.

"Friends of yours?" Granny asks.

"Something like that…" she replies.

The front door to the house swings open and Emma hears Ruby shout, "Heads up," before a gun
is tossed within her reach. Cover fire is coming from the house and the blonde's able to move. Her top priority is getting Granny in the house, once she sees Billy grab her and pull her inside, Emma's up on her feet, shooting out toward the incoming gunfire. There's enough of a gap between enemy gunfire that she's able to move into the house with Billy and Ruby laying down some cover fire for her.

Emma dives into the house and kicks the door shut.

"Nolan's people?" the big man asks.

The blonde nods. "Probably. No one else really wants me dead."

"They're after my grandbaby?" Granny inquires.

"Yeah. I won't let that happen though," Emma replies.

"We won't let that happen, child," Granny corrects.

"Lets fuck some shit up!" Ruby agrees.

"I've got something that might help with that." Emma hears Dorothy before she comes into view, holding a shotgun. Ruby's wife passes to Granny, who smiles like she was just handed a newborn.

"Did you miss me?" she asks the gun. "It's been a long time since we took some poor fools to task, huh?"

"You still know how to use that cannon?" Emma asks.

The old woman shoots the blonde a look. "Child, please. I've been killing folks since before you were swimming in your daddy's balls." The group collectively lets out a disgusted groan and Granny, just pumps the shotgun with a shake of her head. "Just stay out of my way."

There's a crash behind them. Someone or someones are coming in through the back. Emma's on her feet without a thought, knowing her people have the front covered. She slides into one of the hallways where the bedrooms are, just in time to see Mulan take one of the intruders to task. She's using a telescopic baton. The man she's fighting, an ugly brute of a man can't get an attack in. And Mulan is going after his vulnerable spots; eyes, ears, throat, stomach, knees, and finally groin. The stunning blow brings the man to his knees and Emma doesn't even see the knife in Mulan's off hand until she notices the blood seeping from the wound at the man's neck. He claws at his throat, trying to stop the blood. But it's too late and the cut is too deep. The man slumps to the ground, choking to death on his own blood.

"Behind you!" Emma shouts just as she sees another assailant appear, reaching out to grab Mulan.

But Merida comes out of nowhere, shoulder checking the attacker into a wall. He grabs the redhead and throws her away from him. But Mulan is on him stabbing him in the back just as Merida recovers to finish him off. She stabs him in the chest, twisting the knife until he goes limp.

"Never a dull moment, eh, boss?" Merida jests. A gunshot echoes in the small hallway and the Scot lets out a yell before Emma notices blood seeping from Merida's right leg. Mulan helps her to the ground as the blonde looks for the shooter.

Emma doesn't have to search long as he jumps through the window, rolling to his feet. She opens fire but he manages to duck into one of the open rooms and returns fire. Emma drops to her knees and hugs the wall, aiming for the door so when he pops out she's ready for him. And when he pokes his head out, Emma lets off a round and it's like playing a game of whack a mole; his head
jerks back as the bullet zips through his skull, and blows out the back, bringing bone bits, and brain matter with it.

He's dead before he hits the ground.


She exposes one of the dead men's shoulder and you see a big black 13 tattooed on his skin.

"The Brothers 13?" Emma curses. "The fuck? No wonder this has gone tits up."

"I got shot by one of the Brothers 13?" Merida groans. "I'll never be able to live this one down."

"You okay?" the blonde asks Merida.

"Oh, yeah, sure," the Scot replies, as Mulan wraps her wound with a piece of her shirt. "Just took a bullet to me leg. But other than that, I'm right as rain."

"Get her out of here," Emma orders Mulan. But as soon as the words leave her mouth another bedroom door, flies open and she sees Belle being held at gunpoint by another big man.

"Boss lady?" her voice is high and panicked.

"It's okay," Emma assures Belle. "Just keep your eyes on me."

"Where's the kid?" the man asks.

"What kid?" Emma replies.

"Don't play with me, bitch."

The blonde make a face. "Ew."

"Where's the kid? I won't ask again."

"Boss!"

"Belle, just look at me, Gorgeous. No one else."

"DOWN!" Ruby's voice booms over them in the small hallway and Emma shouts at Belle to hit the floor. She goes limp and sinks to the ground just as Ruby lets off two shoots. The first one hits the man in the shoulder, the second one hits him in the head, right between the eyes. Emma glances back as her best friend lowers her two .45's.

"Holy shit...." the blonde breathe, amazed. It doesn't matter how many times she's seen Ruby's handiwork, it's true artistry and Emma's always been awestruck by her best friend's skills.

Ruby throws Emma a wink. "It's just like riding a bike."

"It's the Brothers 13," the blonde inform her.

And her best friend lets out a string of swear words. "Christ in heels! What the fuck? Those fuckers? I take this as a personal affront. Artless bitches."

They hear more gunshots coming from the front rooms and Emma shouts for the Belle and Mulan to get Merida to the cars. Even if her crew is able to put down the Brothers 13, none of them can stay here. The first rule of war: "If your enemies know where you are, don't be there." So the cars
are the rendezvous point regardless of how this ends.

Ruby's in the living room first, joining Billy and Dorothy by one of the windows. Granny's by the door behind a sofa. Bullets are coming from all sides. Which is why Emma doesn't notice the windows breaking, until she hears the heavied booted steps of more hitmen.

"It's the Brothers 13!" Ruby yells.

"Seriously?" Emma hears Billy's reply.

Then a shot rings out and a bullet hits Dorothy in the shoulder. Ruby yells her name moving toward her wife before she waves Emma's best friend off. "It's a through and through. I'm fine."

Dorothy's taken one in the shoulder but it doesn't look serious. Nonetheless, Ruby's on her feet, firing at the two men near the far wall. The two men manage to get off a shot or two. But Ruby's at a dead run and they are too close to recover and fire again. And since they missed her, Emma knows they're seconds from death. Ruby launches herself at them. And the blonde can't quite describe what happens next. Her best friend runs or jumps onto one of the men's shoulders and fires point blank at the second man, shooting him in the head. She then swings around, using her momentum to flip the first man onto the ground. She kicks him in the face and then fires, his brains splattering on the floor.

The boom of the shotgun brings Emma's attention back to Granny who's fired off a shell at another man rushing toward Billy. He goes down but the last man catches Ruby's husband and they wrestle to the floor. Billy has his gun in one hand so he isn't able to give it his all, trying instead to get a shot off. The two men struggle as Emma tries to take aim. But she can't take the shot though, not without risking Billy. So she doesn't. She waits. And then the gun goes off and everyone stops. Emma doesn't know who was shot until she sees a pool of blood well around Billy as he lays on the floor. When his attacker eases away from him, Emma notices the bullet wound in his chest.

Ruby lets out a painful wail and empties her guns into the shooter. She tosses them away and rushes to Billy's side just as the blonde slides toward them.

"No, no, no, baby," Ruby pleads. "Don't try to talk. We're going to get you fixed up. I promise."

Billy reaches for her, gasping for air. "Baby..." his says through labored breaths. "I love..."

"No, baby... Please... Don't try to talk..."

"Love... you..."

His grip loosens around Ruby's bloodied hand. And Ruby shakes him. "Baby!? Baby, no! No! Please, no!"

Dorothy's next to her and she checks her husband's pulse. "He's gone."

Granny brings her shotgun up. "We're gonna make them pay."

Ruby just nods, tears rolling down her cheeks. Emma can feel the murderous ire raging within her. And she knows that Granny's promise will ring true. They'll make them pay. But not before they make them suffer.

Shots ring out upstairs and Granny tears off for the stairs. For an old bat, she's spry, taking the steps two at a time, while Emma glances between Ruby and Dorothy.
"Go," Ruby orders and the blonde nods, following Granny up the stairs.

A gunshot lifts Emma's gaze to the second floor just as the old woman fires her shotgun.

"Fucker!" Granny curses as she leans against the wall. She's been shot. Blood seeping out of a hole in her chest. Her breathing is shallow, her gaze is already unfocused.

"No..." Emma's throat tightens as she comes to the old woman's side and helps her to the ground. "Granny..."

"Child..." she sighs. "My sweet..."

"Shh... It's okay... We're gonna... we're gonna..."

But Granny puts bloody fingers to Emma's lips. "Don't lie to me, child. I ain't getting up off this floor." Another gunman shows his face, and the old woman even bleeding from her chest lets off a shot and the man falls to the ground with a big gaping hole in his stomach. "Bitch..."

"You should've waited for me..." Tears well in Emma's eyes, as she tries to put pressure on Granny's wound. "Why didn't you wait?"

"Where's... the fun..." The old woman takes a deep breath and coughs. "...in that?"

"You crazy old woman..."

"Hey... what did I tell..." She lets out a deep breath, the tension leaves her body, and that's it. She's gone.

Emma closes Granny's eyes, staining her face with her own blood. Rising to her feet with her gun at her side, the blonde survey the hallway. There's a dead body out front of the first bedroom door where Tiana and her family should be, besides the two that Granny killed. Emma wipes the tears from her cheeks and slowly opens the door.

"It's me," she whispers, keeping away from the door frame just in case her people didn't hear her. When Emma gets no response, she pokes her head inside and finds Tiana holding her baby boy in her arms, with Naveen's dead body next to her. She's armed but her gaze is more focused on her husband's corpse.

"Snowflake?"

"T? Are you hurt?"

She shakes her head. "No. They... I didn't hear them at first. And Naveen..."

"I'm going to get these motherfuckers," Emma vows. "I promise you."

"I got him..." Tiana tells her. "I got the motherfucker that took him from me."

"And I'm going to make the bastard that ordered this hurt for this..."

Tiana nods. "They're after your boy. I heard them asking about Henry. They want to know where is. I didn't... Naveen didn't give them a thing."

"Go back downstairs. Get to the cars..."

"But Naveen..."
"I won't leave him behind. I won't leave anyone behind."

"Who else?" Tiana asks.

Emma averts her gaze when she replies. "Mouse… and Granny."

"No…"

"I'm going to kill them all."

"Save me a piece."

The blonde nods. "Of course. Now go. I got this."

After Emma makes sure that Tiana and her kid get down the stairs, she heads back down the hallway and check her room. Her heart is in her throat when she pushes open the door. She don't see anyone at first and then she sees feet behind the bed. Emma leaps over the mattress and finds a dead man with one of her knives sticking out of his neck. But Regina isn't here. Which means… Emma actually doesn't know what it means. It could be anything.

There's only one room to check. One one more of the Brothers 13 left. The blonde inches toward the kid's room, gun at the ready. She kneels near the door and opens it, keeping herself low and out of the doorway.

Nothing.

Not even a sound.

"Shit…"

Emma makes her way inside and the first thing she notices is Regina lying unconscious in the middle of the room near Henry's bed. At least Emma thinks she's been knocked out. The blonde checks the assassin's pulse just to be sure. It's steady. And Regina doesn't look like she's bleeding, save for a cut on her head. Emma breath a sigh of relief. She's lost too many people today. She couldn't lose Regina too. It'd be too much.

"You came to protect my kid…"

And then crack! Emma catches a boot to the side of her head. The blow scrambles her brain, knocks her to the floor, just as she's kicked again. She groans as she rises to her hands and feet, just as another kick finds her ribs. This time she hears a loud crack and feels sharp pain shoot up her side. Whoever this is, they just broke a few of Emma's ribs. The blonde sits up, her eyes tracking the shadowy figure as he comes into focus.

The man has chestnut brown hair and ridiculous sideburns. His pale green eyes shine as they set upon Emma as he smiles.

"MOM!" Henry's in his arms, struggling to break free. "MOM!"

"Miss Swan… Oh, Miss Swan… Didn't think we'd ever cross paths again…"

"Who…"

"I'm the man who's going to kill you."

Emma doesn't see the gun until the muzzle flash. There's a loud bang. And then another. And then one more.
She doesn't feel anything but cold. Her body is going into shock.

That's never a good sign.

"MOM!" the kid screams after the man fires. "MOM! GET UP!"

She can't. She wants to. But her body isn't cooperating. She can't move. Breathing's becoming a problem. She feels heavy. So impossibly heavy. Her eyes flutter shut, everything fades away, and the whole world goes black.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so I normally put a sneak peek for the next chapter, but since I left it on a cliffhanger and the next chapter doesn't answer any questions you might have, I decided to leave the sneak peek out of this one. Chapter 11 will be up as soon as I've drafted Chapter 12. I hope you don't hate me forever. But it had to be done. You can follow me on tumblr where I am MurderouslyAdorkable and/or twitter MurderouslyCute.
Doublespeak

Chapter Summary

*Doublespeak* - (n.) language used to disguise actual meaning, used by the military and government agencies i.e. “enhanced interrogation” instead of torture, “neutralize” instead of kill, “preemptive war” instead of illegal invasion, “terrorist” instead of freedom fighter, etc.

Chapter Notes

A/N: I am almost positive most of you are going to continue to hate me because of this chapter. You’ll find out everyone else’s fate in chapter 12. I’m also sorry for my absence. I’m doing a double post to make up for that. :D

**Chapter Rating:** T/PG-13 (For Mild Violence)

**Warnings:** Non-Magical AU, Criminal AU, POV Change

**Disclaimer:** I do not own any of these characters, universes or whatever the hell else. They belong to Disney, ABC etc, etc. I claim no rights to copyrighted material and this story is purely for entertainment purposes.

“He who is prudent and lies in wait for an enemy who is not, will be victorious.”

— Sun Tzu, The Art of War

The kid wakes up in an unfamiliar room. The walls are painted in various shades of blue with posters of superheroes and famous athletes on them. There are toys all around the room, various action figures strewn about, even a Playstation 4, and an XBox One, hooked up to a TV bigger than the two he had at home, combine.

*Is this room for me?* he thinks as he slips out of bed, and scrambles to the nearest window. He is on the second story. He could climb down but the windows is covered with wrought iron bars. It strikes him as odd because it’s something he’s seen on the tenement building in the city. Not on a country house.

He isn’t near Granny’s house. The trees look different here. Evergreens and Maple, not like the Apple and Oak trees he’s familiar with.

Tears well in his eyes. Henry wants his mother. He hopes she’s ok. He hopes that Emma’s looking for him right now. He hopes she’s still alive. But she wasn’t wearing her special jacket. It meant that his mother could get hurt. And the time he saw her - it didn’t look good. Emma had given him
the jacket so he would be feel safe. And he still has it on. It smells like his mother, like premium tobacco and the cologne she likes. But the kid would much rather have Emma with him than her jacket.

She’s not dead… he tells himself. His mother wouldn’t leave him too. She promised him after his father’s car accident that she’d never leave him. She swore that she’d be his mother for real this time.

“You and me against the world, kid,” Emma had told him. “Partners in crime.”

“Partners in crime, Mom,” he whispers. “Please come and find me.”

The sound of the bedroom door opening has him jumping out of his skin with a scared yelp. Henry grabs the nearest heavy object he can find; the nightstand lamp next to the best, and wedges himself in the corner of the room.

“Easy, Henry…” the man says when he enters the bedroom and sees the kid readying himself for a fight. “I’m not going to hurt you.”

The man looks beat up. Busted lips, black eyes, and his arms are bandaged up. He knows who this man is. He’s the guy that hurt Miss Regina when she came to his rescue. He’s the man that shot his mother.

“Who are you?” Henry asks.

“I work for your grandda’,” the man replies.

The kid frowns. “My grandpa is dead. My dad told me.”

“Sorry to have to be the one to tell you this but your grandda’ is alive. Your da’ lied to you, boyo.”

“My dad wouldn’t do that,” Henry shouts.

“Parents aren’t perfect,” the man says. “David lied about your grandda’ just like he lied when he said Emma was your ma’. Your real ma’.”

“She is my real mom.”

“Mary was your mom.”

The kid nods. “I know that. So is Emma. I can have two moms.”

“Is that what she told you, boyo? That she’s every bit your ma’?” the man asks.

“No, I tell her that,” Henry replies. And it’s true. Emma has never been able to commit to being his mother. She’s always been too afraid to tell him that he’s her kid. Emma tells other people to try it out and see how it fits. But she never told him as such, until she saw him that day in the hospital when they both lost David.

Before that, the kid would called Emma mom and she’d just make a joke and dismiss it. Then David died and she needed to step up. And so she did.

“You’re just confused, Henry,” the man says. “Emma was filling your head with lies. But don’t you worry. I got some breakfast for you. And after you’re done, I’ll take you to see your grandda’.”
“I’m not hungry.” As soon as the kid speaks, his stomach growls.

“See, I think that you are, boyo,” the man tells him, putting the tray on the desk in the room. “Eat up. It’s good.”

Henry eyes the man, cautiously. He doesn’t want to eat but he has to. He’s just so hungry. When the man backs away, the kid sits and pokes at his food. It’s not pancakes like his mom makes. Or even French Toast. It is a plate of baked beans, sausage, bacon, eggs, and hash. There also this circular black disk that look like the corpse of a hockey puck. But he’s not touching that at all.

It smells funny.

As he eats the man watches him, inching closer as Henry quietly eats. The kid tracks him in his peripheral. He still doesn’t trust this man. He hurt Miss Regina. He hurt his. He is a bad man. And the kid knows it.

“It’s okay,” Henry replies., taking a bite of eggs. “It’s not pancakes. But the eggs are good.”

The man kneels down near the desk. “What are you talking about?”

The kid responds by grabbing the lamp and hitting the bad man with it hard. As the man drops, Henry hits him again and again.

“YOU HURT MY MOM!” he shouts, throwing the lamp at the man’s head while he was on the ground.

Henry runs out of the room, down the hall, jumping rather than running down the stairs. He has to get out of here. He has to get back to his mom. He doesn’t know where Emma is, or even where he is. But he vows that he’ll find his mother. Because she’s his family. For better or for worse. And he wants nothing more than to get back to her. By any means necessary.

As soon as he reaches for the door he hears the man call for him. “Henry!” he yells. “Where are you little piece of shite?!?”

Henry doesn’t wait for him to find him and opens the door, rushing outside. The heat hits him in the face, the hot air making it hard to breath. But he keeps running. Toward a road. He has to find the road. Then he’ll be able to find Emma. He just needs to get the road.

The kid hears cars far away and he runs toward the sound. He’s almost there when he hears the man yell that he’s run off. “THE KID IS GONE! FIND HIM!”

Henry knows that he can’t let them catch him. If they get him, they’ll bring him back. He doesn’t want that. He just needs to leave. The cars are getting louder. He knows he’s getting close.

Almost there… he thinks, rushing toward the road. Almost there...

Truth be told, Henry doesn’t know what he’s going to do once he gets to the road. Maybe flag down a car? Ask to use their cell phone? He knows Emma’s emergency number by heart. She made him memorize it just in case he ever got separated. Her regular phone in the jacket. But he knows Emma has another cell just for him. So he can start there.

If he can reach the road.

He just needs reach the road.
Strong hands grab his shoulders and lift him off the ground. Henry kicks, and scratches trying to break free. But the grip on him is too tight and he’s so little.

“Get off of me!” the kid screams. “Let me go!”

“Easy, there boyo…” the man whispers. “I got you.”

“Lemme go!”

“Hans!” Someone else calls to the man. “Put the boy down.”

The man does as he has been told. Henry hits the ground and tries to punch Hans. Not one hit lands and he stops when he hears laughter. The kid turns and sees a very severe looking man with white hair cropped close to his head. He’s wearing a dark blue three piece suit, with a light blue silk tie. The older man is studying Henry, his expression pensive. Then he smiles.

“Don’t see so much of your da’ in you, boyo,” the older man says.

“Who are you?” Henry asks.

“I’m your grandda’,” he replies. “Name’s Albert Nolan. David was my son.”
Burn Notice

Chapter Summary

Burn Notice - (n.) or Blown Notice, the discovery of an agent's true identity or a clandestine activity's real purpose.

Chapter Notes

A/N: Okay. I know. I was terrible for the last two chapters. And now we find out the fates of our "heroes."

Chapter Rating: (For M/R for Violence, Language)

Warnings: Non-Magical AU, Criminal AU, POV Change

Disclaimer: See Chapter One

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“There are so many fragile things, after all. People break so easily, and so do dreams and hearts.”
— Neil Gaiman, Fragile Things: Short Fictions and Wonders

People are talking. But Emma can’t make out the words. Not at first. Because everything hurts. And it’s hard to focus when every nerve ending in her body is screaming. The pain is so overwhelming that the signals are getting crossed in her brain. What should feel like a dull and achy pain, burns. She feels like she’s on fire. Like every layer of Emma’s being is being burned away.

“Don’t move… Try not to move…”

“But it hurts,” she says. Emma doesn’t realize that she’s yelling, tears welling in her sea green eyes. “It hurts so much.”

“I know… But you have to try.”

“I can’t. It hurts.”

Someone takes her hand. “Yes, you can. You have to.”

She blackouts again some time after that.

It’s like that for hours. Days. A week. Emma doesn't know. Any sense of time slips away from her in the moments fading in and out of consciousness. And when she wakes up again; the pain having subsided to a dull but ever present roar, the only thing she registers is that it's dark.
Emma manages, somehow, to sit up, scans the empty room, carefully pulls out the IV in her arm, and slips out of bed. She feels steady enough on her feet and takes two steps to the door before she drops to the floor unconscious… again.

Somewhere in the hazy in between awake and sleep she hears a voice whisper to her, “Idiot.” Emma can only hum in agreement. That was stupid. She was being stupid. This is whole thing is stupid. And Emma Swan is a colossal idiot.

When her eyes flutter open again, moving is difficult and it’s only after a while (longer than she’s too proud to admit) that she realizes she’s been cuffed to a cot.

With a heavy, exasperated sigh, Emma groans, “Was this really necessary?”

“I don’t know, dear. Are you going to try and pull out your I.V. again?”

“Did they take my son? Is he still out there somewhere?”

“Yes.”

“Then there’s your answer. Now get this off of me.”

“No.”

Now they’re in a fight. Emma doesn’t want to do this. But she knows that she needs to get out of this bed. She has to get out of this bed. Because her boy has been taken by a craziest asshat of all crazy asshats. And she has to get him back.

“No?” the blonde almost can’t believe. “I need to go save the kid. Get me the fuck out of this fucking bed goddammit!”

“You almost died!” The sudden outburst throws Emma and she expects there to be more yelling to come but Regina doesn’t, surprising Emma again. “When we brought you in here, you were bleeding and almost unresponsive. Until we started to try and remove the bullets... You screamed until you passed out from the pain. Then we lost your heartbeat. Twice. Do you understand how close you came to dying?”

“I understand that I’m not fucking dead. So I don’t give a rat’s fucking ass how close I came to dying. I want to get the fuck out of here and save my son. That’s what the fuck I care about right now!”

Silence. The tension builds as the blonde watch the assassin's face become a mask of beautiful neutrality.

“Fine,” Regina tosses Emma the keys.

And just like that, like a needle to a balloon the tension pops and dissipates. The blonde frowns, instantly suspicious. “You’re going to let me rampage?”

“No,” the assassin replies. “You want to have this argument so we’re going to have this argument but I won’t do it with you cuffed to a bed.”

Emma quickly uncuffs herself still eyeing her. “What’s the catch?”

“There’s no catch. You want to fight, stand up and state your case, Miss Swan.”

“So we’re back to that again, Regina?”
“If you’re going to be reckless with your life then I don’t think this partnership of ours is going to work out, so yes.”

Emma stands up. Yeah, she’s a little shaky. She feels like she’s been shot repeatedly. Perhaps because she has. Her stomach is stiff. It hurts to move so she tries to stay as still as possible.

“Great. So much for promising not to leave.”

“I haven’t walked out yet.”

“We also haven’t had this fight yet. So we’ll see.”

“I suppose we will.”

Emma’s fists clench and her head is swimming as the rage within her reaches it’s boiling point.

“No one is going to keep me from my son,” the blonde tells Regina.

“You can barely stand,” the assassin shoots back.

“I’ll manage.”

“You’re shaking.”

“Like I said, I’ll manage.”

She won’t. Emma knows that. Sweat beads on her forehead as the exertion of simply standing becomes too much. The trembling worsens. She starts to feel lightheaded. And before the blonde understands what's happening, the assassin is guiding her back down onto the cot.

Sea green eyes well with tears and Emma chokes back a sob. “He's out there. And he's scared and alone… And…”

Regina smooths the hair back out of Emma’s face and kisses her forehead. “And we'll get him back.”

“So it's we again.”

“It never stopped being us, Emma. We're partners. We'll get your son back.”

The assassin holds her, Regina’s embrace firm but comforting. And Emma clings to her like a lifeline. The kid is the only constant in her life. Without him she feels like she's drowning. But being held by Regina helps.

Water wells in her eyes and she blinks away tears. Her body heaves, fighting every urge to start sobbing again. The assassin pulls away and studies her face. On instinct Emma goes to wipe the tears from her face but Regina stops her. And with the pad of her thumb, she wipes them from pale cheeks, and then kisses the drying tracks.

A kiss on each cheek, before her lips ghost over Emma’s. The blonde leans forward and breathes her in, kissing her like the assassin is her last refuge, her only refuge. When Regina tries to breakaway, Emma whimpers.

“Please… I need you.”

Her lips meet the other woman’s with a new kind of hunger. A hunger that has very little to do
with lust and everything to do with seeking security and safety.

“I thought I was going to lose you…” the assassin whispers against pale lips.

“I'm sorry…”

“All hell breaks loose and you're here sucking face with the bitch that brought this unholy mess on us…”

Ruby’s voice is like ice water down Emma’s back. It chills her to the bone. She’s seen her anger but this, this is different. It feels different. Then again, thing have changed between them.

“She’s not the reason this happened,” Emma replies.

“I wasn’t talking about her,” Ruby says.

Emma could say that is a surprise but it’s not. Because she’s feeling the same way. This is her fault. Granny, Billy, Naveen… Their deaths are on her.

“You don’t have anything to say?” Ruby charges into the room. “No little quip? No snarky joke?”

“Ruby, I’m-”

“If you say that you’re sorry, I swear to God I will rip you apart with my bare-fucking-hands.” The bass in Ruby’s voice makes the assassin move to shield Emma. But that only serves to fan the flames of her rage. “Move aside. This doesn’t concern you.”

“Like hell,” Regina says, meeting her gaze without flinching.

The blonde puts a hand on the assassin’s shoulder. “It’s okay.” When she turns her gaze on you, you whisper. “Please…”

The second Regina steps aside, Ruby’s on Emma, hands at her throat backing her against the wall. Emma’s head hits with a wet thwack and her world is hazy and white. The blonde’s hands grip Ruby’s wrist but she’s tired and there's the whole being shot thing - which is turning out to be just a whole lot of not fun right in the face; it's safe to say Emma’s not feeling so great. Definitely not well enough to put up a fight.

“It should have been you…” Ruby words are chilling. But Emma can't help butree with her.

“Yes…” is all the blonde is able to get out before Ruby’s hands champ down on her windpipe.

“No! You don't get to speak!” Ruby knocks her head back into the wall again and surprisingly enough, this time Emma doesn’t say anything else.

But then there's the unmistakable sound of a gun cocking. And she knows there's no way this is going to end well. Especially when Regina's voice holds the same icy rage that Ruby’s does.

“Let. Her. Go.”

“Bitch, you’re going to have to shoot me.”

“Oh I'm well aware. I just wasn't certain if you were.” The assassin takes aim. “Now that that's settled…”

“Oh, no. I don't think so…” Tiana is standing in the doorway holding Granny’s shotgun. “This motherfucking shit ends right now. You hear me?”
“Granny is dead, my husband is dead…”

Tiana just looked at her. “My husband is dead too. Snowflake's boy is gone.”

“And that's on her,” Ruby insists.

“No, that's on the motherfuckers that came into our home to hurt our family. Now let her go, Ruby,” Tiana says. “We’ve got shit to do.”

“T… don't do this…” Ruby warns. “Don't make me choose.”

“You kill Snowflake and then what?” Tiana asks. “Snowflake's dead, Henry is still gone. And Granny's still buried alongside your husband and mine. You think killing her is gonna make you feel better but it's not. So let Snowflake go. Because I don't want to bury anymore of my family today, do you?”

Ruby relents, her grip loosening enough for Emma to draw a full breath. Her lungs burns with the exertion, but it's a welcomed sting. She’s still here. And all she has to do now is just keep moving forward.

The assassin is at her side in a split second. “Are you alright?” All Emma can do is nod. “Sit.” The blonde doesn’t put up a fight and does as she’s told. “What’s our next step?”

Ruby sighs and walks away; she doesn’t even look at Emma. Just moves out of the room without a word. Tiana doesn’t stop her. Neither does the Information Broker. They’ve grown up together. And Emma know when to leave Ruby be. Besides, Dorothy will keep her from going off the deep end… again. At least until they can sort their shit out.

“I need Belle,” Emma finally rasps.

“Why?” Tiana asks.

“Because, the kid has my jacket. The jacket has my cell in it.”

The assassin understands. “You want to trace the signal.”

The blonde nods. “If it’s still on, Belle can find him.”

“That’s a big gamble, Snowflake,” Tiana says.

“It's my kid…”

That Tiana understands. “When are we rolling out?”

“You're not coming T,” Emma replies, plainly. It's not up for discussion.

And yet Tiana fights her on it. “Snowflake, I'm not letting you go against Nolan without me.”

“And if something happens to you? What am I supposed to tell your son? I already got his father killed. You're all he has now.” Emma's tone makes her stance clear; she's not budging on this. Tiana has been talking about leaving the Game behind for years. This is her out. And Emma's wake up call.

Regina is right; this is no life for a child to be exposed to. As soon as Henry became a part of her world, she should’ve walked away. Seven years ago. Before all of this. If Emma had made that choice then, a lot of people would still be alive.
“Snowflake, I don’t like this,” T says.

“I don’t like it either. But from here on out I can’t ask anyone else to follow.”


The blonde almost smiles. “I’ll try.”

That’s not good enough. “No, Snowflake, you got a son too. And you’re the only thing he has. This isn’t something you jump into and hope for the best.”

A frown sets into Emma’s features. “I know that.”

“Do you?” Tiana asks. “Because you’ve been shot, and stabbed trying to pretend like all of this is business as usual. Goddamnit, Snowflake, Henry needs you alive. You hear me?”

Emma doesn’t respond at first, her eyes are glassy as she fights back tears. Then she takes a breath and nods. “I hear you.”

“I love you,” Tiana says. “Even when I’m mad at you.”

“I love you, too,” is her reply, soft, and unsure, like she doesn’t think she deserves that, and maybe she doesn’t. But maybe that doesn’t matter. “I’ve got to make a call but I can have you and your son on your way to some place safe in a few hours.”

“Lily?” Tiana asks.

Emma nods. “Yeah. Lily.”

Her friend knows what’s up. “Alright, I’ll go get Belle. You make your phone call.”

When she leaves the assassin speaks. “Should I go?”

“No,” Emma says, quickly. “I need you here.”

The phone rings once before she hears Lily’s voice on the other end.

“What the fuck did you do?”

Emma figured she’d be upset. “I didn’t do anything. Stuff happened to me.”

“It always does with you, Emma,” she replies. “Ever think that maybe it’s you?”

“All of the damn time. But that’s not the point.”

“How do you figure?”

“Because it is me and us arguing about something we agree on is gonna waste time I don’t have.”

Lily is silent for what feels like a lifetime. “Ok, that was level-headed and logical. What the fuck is going on?”

Emma tells her everything. Every dirty little secret, every skeleton in her closet. She tells Lily everything that fear kept her from doing seven years ago. Then the blonde lays out her problem, how Henry’s grandfather has him, and that she’s going to get him back.

“Goddammit, Emma,” Lily says once she’s done. “I’m sending my crew.”
“No,” Emma replies. “I can't risk them. Not anyone else, anymore. This is just on me. And Regina.”

“Who?”

“The Evil Queen…”

“That's the assassin that tried to kill you?”

Emma glances at Regina and nods. “Yeah.”

Lily lets out an exasperated sigh. “If you weren't in mortal danger I'd kick your ass right now.”

If she wasn't riddled with bullet holes Emma might have laughed. “I know.”

“I'm still sending my crew…”

“No. Don't.”

“Emma…” Lily says her name in an admonishing tone.

“No, Lily… I'm serious. Don't,” Emma tells her. “Besides, I need a different kind of favor from you.”

She sighs. “What is it?”

“I need a safe place to stash someone until this thing blows over.”

“Who?”

“T… and her son.”

“What about Naveen?”

“I lost three people last night… He was one of them.”

The line goes silent. All Emma hears is Lily's measured breaths. For a moment she thinks her ex might say no. It isn't like she's given Lily any reason to trust her. Then the blonde hears another voice and even though she can't make out the words, she knows it's August.

“Are you sure?” Lily asks him. After he replies, she gives Emma her answer. “Give Tiana my number. I'll tell her what she has to do.”

“Thank you.”

“Don't make it weird…” Lily teases. “Just be safe.”

“You first.”

“Bitch.”

“Twat.”

They both end the call without saying goodbye. Because this isn't goodbye. Emma will see her again. One way or another. If she believed in that sort of stuff. Because well, if there is a God you just hope that She's on Emma's side because frankly it is going to take a miracle to get her out of
this one alive.

“That was Lily…” the assassin breaks the silence, squeezing her hand.

“Yeah, that was Lily.”

“You still love her…” It isn't a question but Emma answers anyway.

“It's more complicated than that. I love her and I'm pretty sure she loves me. But that doesn't mean I want to be with her. And I know she's happier with August.” Emma kisses the back of her hand. “It's still just us.”

Regina smiles and pulls the blonde in for a soft kiss. “Just us.”

“Oh…” a voice sounds from the doorway. Emma looks up and to see a doe-eyed dark-haired woman standing by the door, staring at the two women as if she has just walked in on something more than just a simple kiss.

“Sister Azura, hey…” the information broker greets, going to stand but she stops her.

“No, don't get up…” Azura’s voice is soft and unassuming. She smiles, her crystal blue eyes glossing over with happy tears. “It's so good to see you in a better condition than when they brought you in.”

“Thank you, Sister,” Emma says, glancing between the two other people in the room. “Ah… This is Regina, Sister. She is my… um… partner in crime, so to speak. And your Majesty, this is Sister Azura. She is the mother superior of this convent.”

“We met briefly when we brought you here,” Regina reveals. She turns to Azura. “I'm sorry for how I behaved when we first arrived.”

“It's alright. I thought I'd have to give Emma her Last Rites. Your behavior was understandable given the circumstances,” the nun says.

Emma grins, smugly. “Really, your Majesty? You being scary on account of me?”

The assassin cuts her eyes at her. “You have the emotional maturity of wet sand.”

“That's not giving wet sand enough credit.”

“Idiot.”

“Yup.”

Azure chuckles. “Well, Tiana told me to come and get you. Belle found something.”

Emma frowns and looks at the assassin, who arches a quizzical eyebrow back at her. “Really? Because I just sent T to go get her.”

“Yes, well, Tiana couldn't pry Belle from her computer,” the nun replies, dismissively. “You know. Millennials and their electronics.”

Everyone has a different tell. Some people look up and to the left. Others might say “um” a lot as a stalling tactic. Even the best liar will betrayed be by a micro expression. In Emma’s line of work, spotting a liar with relative accuracy could mean the difference between life and death. Azura is good. But not good enough.
“Ok, just give us a second,” Emma tells her. “I'm still a little wobbly on my feet.”

That's not what Azura wants to hear. “Oh, are you sure? I can wait with you.”

Emma stands up, moving to shield Regina as a reflex. She feels tension at her back, the constant buzzing that raises the hair on the back of her neck. Emma plays it off. After all, she did almost die. So a little shaking is normal, and the goosebumps on her arms are just her body still having trouble regulating her internal temperature.

“No, it’s alright, Sister…” At least her voice is steady. Points to Emma.

But Azura doesn’t buy it. “When did you stop believing me?”

The information broker sighs. “When you said that Belle wouldn’t pull herself away. Belle always makes time for me.”

Regina moves to her side, gun at the ready fire position. However the nun is calm and she looks at the two women with a cool indifference. “I wouldn’t pull that trigger.”

“I don’t see why I shouldn’t,” the assassin says.

“Because if you kill me, she’ll never see her son again,” she held up her wrist and what looked like one of those android watches, was a small trigger. “If I press this, Nolan is alerted and he takes Henry out of the country.”

“If you press that button you don’t walk out of here,” Emma warns, as the picture becomes clearer. “You fucking sold me out. You told them where Granny was.”

“You don’t understand,” the nun insists.

“Oh I think I get it,” Emma replies, her voice, low and icy. Her whole body shakes with the desire to rip the nun apart with her bare hands. “The money was too good and you got greedy.”

“More like stupid,” the assassin sneers.

“How is what I did any different than what you did?” Azura asks. “You think because you’re sleeping with her that you’re on the moral high ground here?”

“No one is on the moral high ground here.” Emma stresses each word to articulate her point. “You're a goddamn traitor. Regina kills people for money. And I'm a fucking cunt of epic proportions who dabbles in all manners of whimsically asshole-ish fuckery. So let's not throw stones here when we're all standing in the same glass house.”

Azura sighed, her hand over the panic button. “Emma, anyone ever tell you that you talk too fucking much?”

The blow to the back of her head came so fast Emma barely catches it. One second, the nun is about to bring all sorts of terribleness upon Emma and her people. The next, she's a puddle of unconscious human, and Ruby is standing behind her, guns causally at her sides.

“I tell her that all of the time but she still won’t fucking shut up,” Ruby deadpans.

Emma frowns. “What took you so long?”

“I was planning my grand entrance.” Ruby looks down at Azura. “So what are we going to do with Sister Judas?”
“We need to find out what she knows,” Emma replies.

Her best friend’s lips press into a tight line. “Torture?”

She nods. “Torture.”

Ruby sighs. “Ok, I’d make a call to our usual guy. But he’s out of the country still.”

“Fuck…” Emma breathes. “None of us know how to properly torture someone. We could just as easily kill her before she talks.”

Regina catches Emma’s gaze. “I may know someone who could help.”

Ruby cocks an eyebrow at that statement. “How would you know someone? Don’t see a lot of assassins rolling with torture experts.”

“I was medic before all of this,” the assassin confesses. “And those that know how to mend, often know how to harm.”

Ruby chuckles. “Ok, well Snowflake, I’m liking your girlfriend more and more as time goes on.”

“She’s not my girlfriend.”

“Wifey, whatever.”

“I hate you. I hate your face.”

“I love you too. But I’m still kicking your ass when this is all over and done with.”

Emma shrugs. “Fine. But wait until I’m healed at least.”

“Fine.”

Chapter End Notes

Alright that's it for the double chapter post. I am now currently two chapters ahead in the drafting process so, Chapter 13 will be post in one week. :D You can follow on Tumblr where I am MurderouslyAdorkable or on Twitter MurderouslyCute. I would also like to thank my beta. You’re awesome, girl, thanks for everything you do for me. And as always reviews are welcomed.

So now that I'm back and stuff here's a sneak peek for Chapter 13:

*She was a platinum blonde who meets Emma's gaze with cold blue eyes that are devoid of any emotion. Her hair is pulled back into a tight, professional bun that matches the ash gray blazer and pencil skirt outfit. She looks at the information broker without any real consideration, her gaze instead falling on Emma's partner, Regina. They exchange pleasantries, ask each other how they've been of since the last time they crossed paths. And the stepford blonde says something that catches Emma's attention.***
"The Dragon sends her regards."

Someone else might have missed it. *The Capital D in 'Dragon,'* the way *The* is emphasized. Which means the Dragon has to be unbelievably scary. And Regina knows them.

"Tell the Dragon that this favor won't be forgotten, Elsa," the assassin says.

"The Dragon says that this one is on the house this time so there's no need to commit it to anyone's memories.."

Emma wants to say something but Regina catches her gaze and the other woman's expression reads plainly that she can't be her usually diplomatic self. So Emma remains silent until the assassin introduces her.

"Emma, this is Ms. Elsa Frost. Ms. Frost, this is my partner, Emma."

"Just Emma?"

The information broker shrugs. "For now."

Elsa doesn't offer her hand. And Emma doesn't offer hers. Which makes the situation more tense than it should be. But there's something about this woman that didn't sit right with the information broker. It's probably the coldness in Elsa's gaze, the indifference in which she regards everyone including Regina. It's like there is no thawing this ice queen.

*Bitch is colder than Antarctica.*

"Show me the patient."
Enhanced Interrogation Techniques

Chapter Summary

Enhanced Interrogation Techniques - (n.) a pretty euphemism for torture.

Chapter Notes

Okay. I know. It’s been awhile. I’m sorry. I’m making it up to everyone with a three chapter update.

"Of pain you could wish only one thing: that it should stop. Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain. In the face of pain there are no heroes."
— George Orwell, 1984

They put her in an open grave, digging feet below to hide her resting place underneath whatever dead person that would be laid to rest in the next few days. Billy, Naveen… they're in similar plots. But nothing weighs on Emma more than knowing Granny is laying in a wooden box in a grave marked, "Martin Welch." None of them deserved this but that goes doubly so for the woman who raised her. Emma had owed her more than this. She had owed them all more than this. And the Information Broker can't help but doubt her abilities to set things right this time.

"You know…" someone calls out without any prompting. "In certain ancient cultures that valued military strength, it was believed that a person could only enter paradise if they had fallen in battle," Off of your look she hangs her head. "Sorry. It's a coping mechanism."

"Dorothy," Emma stops her before she can get started. "I get it. You're good. We're good. I hope we're good."

She affirms the assertion with a nod. "We're good. Emotional situations make me nervous, that's all. And facts help me focus."

Her words resonate with Emma in a meaningful way. Because Henry has a little bit of that too. "It's okay. I get it."

It's quiet for a long time. That helps. Emma doesn't feel judged. She doesn't think Dorothy's going to start in with a lecture. That's not her style. That's not who she is. She's awkward and one of the smartest people that Emma knows. And she's telling the truth when she says that emotions aren't her strong suit. It's a nice change.

But there's just one question that hangs in the air.

"She doesn't hate you," Dorothy finally says.

"She should." And Emma means that.
"But she doesn't. Ruby is mad, but you're still family."

"I got her family killed," Emma insists.

"Nolan did that," Dorothy explains. "Azura sold us out. So as idiotic as your choice to sleep with an assassin hired to kill you was, it's the only choice so far that's yielded mostly positive results."

Emma's eyebrow slowly rises at that as she fights back a smile. After a few moments, Dorothy notices and shakes her head. "Go ahead before you rupture a vessel."

"Is 'mostly positive results' a euphemism for orgasms?" the Information Broker asks, sea green eyes lighting up as she speaks.

Dorothy shakes her head. "If orgasms are only mostly positive for you, then you're doing something wrong, Boss."

Emma shrugs. "In my personal experience, orgasms are a mixed bag."

"I suppose that's fair," Dorothy agrees. "You did stab your last serious girlfriend."

"Yeah, but things worked themselves out," Emma replies, dismissively.

However Dorothy doesn't let up. "True, but you didn't get the girl in the end either."

Emma smiles, softly. "I never do."

"It's time…" a voice sounds, pulling their attention away from the open grave.

"Thanks, Mulan," Emma greets, turning to face her. "How's Merida?"

"Angry," she tells her, plainly. "But she wanted to tell me to tell you that she's ready to help any way that she can."

Emma shakes her head. "No. This isn't anyone's fight but mine. I'm not asking any of you to come with me."

"She thought you might say that so she asked me to relay a message," Mulan informs her, pulling out at a folded piece of paper from her jacket pocket.

"She prepared an official statement for you to read? Seriously?" the Information Broker asks, sardonically.

"She thought that I would and I quote, 'Get it's all sideways so it'll lessen the emotional impact of my message while also losing some of it's intrinsic meaning,'" Mulan tells her.

Emma looks at her for a moment and then asks what she thinks is the obvious question. "She's like a demon in the sack, isn't she?"

Mulan doesn't answer but the way her face reddens tells her everything she needs to know.

"'Boss, I know right now you're thinkin' this is all your fault,'" Mulan recites. "'And maybe it is. I'm not a priest, I don't know if any of your sins led us here or not. But what I do know is that Henry is our family too. And if it was anyone else you'd never bat an eye to all of us mounting up like the Black Riders and storming the bloody castle to rescue one of our own. So get your head out of your ass and lets us help you. Because that's only way you're going to live long enough to raise that poor lad into a decent man. Sincerely, Merida. P.S. I got shot in my leg by one of the 13, I need to kill something if I'm going to ever feel better about myself.'"
Silence. But this one isn't filled with untapped emotions. And just one looming question.

"She does know that the Black Riders were the bad guys right?" Emma asks. "If anything we're the hobbits."

Mulan looks at her. "I think you missed the point."

"She understood it... She was just being purposely obtuse."

"Your Majesty," Emma says as she greets the dark haired assassin with a grin. "Stop giving away my trade secrets."

Regina smiles, though if she rolls her eyes any harder at Emma, she worry the Assassin might pull something eventually. "We've set up inside."

"What would you like us to do?" Mulan asks.

"Keep watch," is Emma's order. "I don't know if Nolan is sending someone up here. So we have to assume anyone that finds us here is trying to - well, murder our faces off of our faces."

The Assassin chuckles. "Forever the wordsmith, dear."

"Hey," the Information Broker says, feigning offense. "I think I do words good."

To see the look on Regina's face makes it worth it. "Idiot."

"Yup."

She was a platinum blonde who meets Emma's gaze with cold blue eyes that are devoid of any emotion. Her hair is pulled back into a tight, professional bun that matches the ash gray blazer and pencil skirt outfit. She looks at the Information Broker without any real consideration, her gaze instead falling on Emma's partner, Regina. They exchange pleasantries, ask each other how they've been of since the last time they crossed paths. And the the Stepford Blonde says something that catches Emma's attention.

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"Emma, this is Ms. Elsa Frost. Ms. Frost, this is my partner, Emma."

"Just Emma?"

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Elsa doesn't offer her hand. And Emma doesn't offer hers. Which makes the situation more tense
than it should be. But there's something about this woman that didn't sit right with the Information Broker. It's probably the coldness in Elsa's gaze, the indifference in which she regards everyone including Regina. It's like there is no thawing this ice queen.

Bitch is colder than Antarctica.

"Show me the patient."


Azura might be the worst kind of person on the planet. But she is still a person. And she should be regarded as such. This is why Emma likes her regular guy. He doesn't mince words. He doesn't use euphemisms. It's not interrogation, it's torture. It's not a patient, it's a victim. He isn't insane. He's just an honest torturer.

It's kind of refreshing. Go figure.

"This way, Ms. Frost."

Emma looks at Regina and the Information Broker can see the question in her eyes as she stares back. Four simple words. 'Do you trust me?' A simple nod on Emma's end is all the other woman needs. And Emma's rewarded with the single most radiant smile she has ever seen in her life. She melts a little, a goofy grin on her face. She'd follow this woman through hell and back.

They have Azura tied down to a cot. Legs and arms bound to the bedposts. Elsa has also restricted her head movement with two two thick leather straps. And there are three large buckets of water at the foot of the cot. Elsa circles the nun, her heels rhythmically tapping on the wooden floor with each step. Finally after what seems like hours but is only less than five minutes, she looks at Emma and Regina.

"Shall we begin?" she asks.

"Yeah, time is of the essence," Emma tells her.

The torturer nods. "Azura, my name is Elsa. I am here to interrogate you. Well I'm here to help at least. Emma will ask you a question, depending upon how you answer it will dictate whether or not I have to persuade you to be more truthful. Am I clear?"

"Fuck you," the nun spits.

To her credit, Elsa keeps her cool and just reaches for a small hand towel. She quickly stuffs it into Azura's mouth and pours water into her nose and mouth. The nun's feet begin to kick violently, and she struggles against her restraints. The whole process takes about thirty seconds. But it must be the most terrifying thirty seconds of a person's life. Because waterboarding makes the victim's body think it's drowning.

And it's torture.

Literally.

When she's done, Elsa backs off, and meets the nun's wild gaze. "Am I clear?"

Coughing up water, Azura nods. But something goes wrong. She seizes up and starts to convulse. Water comes out of her nose and then she vomits. But they don't get to her in time and she chokes.
"Untie her!" Regina shouts. "Now!"

And they do, they manage to get the nun off the bed and turn her on her side but it was too late, Regina informs Emma, Azura is dead. However, Emma won't believe it. She shoves Elsa and Regina out of her way and begins CPR. She can't lose Azura. If she dies, so does her chance at saving her son.

"Emma…" A gentle hand is on her shoulder.

Emma's still trying to save her, hands still pumping on Azura's chest with steady compressions.

"She's gone…"

Emma ignores her and keeps going. She can't lose her. She's their only lead. She's the only way Emma can get her boy back. She can't be gone. She can't be gone. If she's dead, Emma's lost him. She can't be dead.

Tears burn in her eyes.

Azura can't be dead.

"Emma… She's dead."

She doesn't stop trying. "But the kid…"

"We'll find another way."

Her hands slow to a stop and when she finally dares to make the Assassin's gaze she looks like a woman drowning. "Promise?"

"Promise." She offers Emma a her hand and when the Information Broker takes it, she is lifted to her feet. Regina puts her arms around her carefully and they stay there, gently swaying in each other's arms. The Assassin strokes her hair, whispers softly to her, "I swear to you we will get Henry back."

"These things happen, Miss Swan. Enhanced interrogation isn't an exact science. It's just best to let it go."

And Emma was doing so well. But Elsa speaks and everything goes out of the window. She's launching herself toward the frosty torturer before Emma realizes it. Although she's surprised, it's obvious that Elsa has real training because she gains her bearings quickly and before Emma knows what's happening she's flat on her back with a heeled shoe on her throat.

The gang busts in guns drawn but Regina is already moving, knife out and pressed into Elsa's throat.

"Let. Her. Go."

The threat it punctuated with every word as she presses the blade to Elsa's neck. The ice bitch to her credit doesn't move. She doesn't let up either. Which, you know, hooray.

"She attacked me, Regina," Elsa explains.

"She is emotionally compromised because someone has her son," the Assassin told her. "Some irrationality is understandable. Plus she's sort of generally vexing."

"That is true," Dorothy agrees.
"Oh, aye," Merida tosses out. "But I still will blow your fucking head off."

"She's an ass," Ruby says. "But she's kinda ours and we kinda like her so…"

If Emma is capable of thinking past the her inability to draw air that might have touched her in a deeply profound way.

"I won't ask you again, let her go," Regina tells Elsa.

"Regina, before I make a move will you allow me one question?"

"Fine."

"Is she really worth it the price you'll pay if I don't comply?" Elsa asks.

There's zero hesitation before the Assassin replies with a simple, "Yes."

But Emma knows it's more than that and so does Elsa, who eases away from her. So she can draw her first full breath in minutes. Regina kneels next to her.

"Are you alright?" she asks.

Emma nods. "Yeah. Peachy."

"Hey you guys…? -Nah! Oh, my god she is dead?" Belle announces her presence with a shout of pure alarm in the form of a question. Which she repeats it a second later in case no one heard her screech it like a howler monkey the first fucking time. "Is she dead? You guys please tell me we didn't kill another person."

"She's dead," Merida says, plainly.

"Way dead," Ruby agrees.

Emma nods. "Super dead."

"Why?" She stomps her foot like a puerile child. "Why don't you ever warn me?"

"Because your face is hilarious right now," Ruby deadpans.

Belle frowns. "I hate you all."

"What do have for us, Belle?" Emma asks, trying to rub the fatigue from her expression to no avail. "Anything on the phone."

"No. I don't know what's going on. It last pinged just outside of the city. And then nothing. But it wasn't turned off. Jammed, maybe? But I don't know. However, that's the bad news. The good news is I think I have a lead," she replies. "That hacker. The noob from the hospital yesterday. He piggybacked on my signal and ran a trace. It's how they found us. And since I designed Granny's security system…"

Dorothy finished his statement. "They bypassed the system and were able slip in through your remote connection."

"I'm so sorry," Belle tells the group. "If I hadn't had come…"

But Ruby stops her. "They would've murdered you. And it wouldn't have been quick."
"Ok… I've got a location for the hacker. I know it's not much…"

Emma nods. "It's something."

Just as soon as the Information Broker smiles, hopeful for the first time in since they took Henry, someone starts firing on the church, dumping bullets from sort of assault rifle. A few them actually.

"You've got to be fucking kidding me!"
Secure Communication

Chapter Summary

**Secure Communication** - (v.), *when two entities are communicating and do not want a third party to listen in. For that they need to communicate in a way not susceptible to eavesdropping or interception.*

"Revenge is not in my plans. You'll fuck yourself on your own."
— The Internet

"So…"

"So…"

The kid doesn't give an inch. If Emma had been there, she might have been proud. Henry sits there silently and stares down the most powerful man in the Irish Mob with a neutral expression (neutral for a seven year old), hands folded on the table. His little legs swinging under him. He is calm. Though there's a little glint for fear behind his eyes. Because although the kid might be brave, he isn't stupid. Just like any good Slytherin would.

Albert stares back, a discerning eye scrutinizing the kid. He would hated Henry's mother, Mary. She would have been "too soft" for one of George's sons. The old man had barely tolerated Henry's father, who he had deemed too delicate to be his heir. And yeah, David had been a kind man with a gentle disposition. But he had been loyal, he had fought for what was right and he had loved his wife, and he had loved the little boy that had his mother's eyes and her dimples.

It is more than anyone can say about David's father.

"Your name is Henry."

He nodded. "And you're Albert."

"I'm your grandda'."

The kid scrunches up his face like someone just told him to eat his vegetables and shakes his head. "You're a stranger."

Albert's face reddens and he blusters. "That's not my fault, your da'-"

"My dad ran away from you," the kid fires back. "Hello? He didn't want you to know about me. Because he thought you were a bad man. Duh."

"Oh, is that what your da' said now?" Albert asked.

The kid shakes his head. "No, I read his journals."

The old man frowns with confusion. "How old are you, boyo?"

"Seven and one quarter," Henry answers, proudly.
"You can't begin to understand…"

"I understand you had people hurt my family. So I don't give a sugary flying fuck if you are my grandfather."

He gets this mouth from Emma. But he is doing some pretty advanced swearing. And that would have made his mother smile. She often says that children swearing is her kryptonite. And he likes when he makes her laugh. It might not be appropriate but Emma didn't teach him to be appropriate. She tries to show him how a person can be a hero in a sea of villains. She teaches him how to stare down monsters. She imparts the knowledge that all dragons can be slayed. And that not all saviors wear capes. She might not show him how to be a respectful little boy but that's because she's busy showing him more important things. Like how to be a good person, how to stand up for what's right, and that while the early bird may get the worm, it's always the second mouse that gets the cheese. Just like any good Slytherin Den Mother would.

"If you had been raised by me-"

"My mom says there are no bad words only bad intentions. She also says honesty is more important than being polite."

"That fucking cunt isn't your mother."

"Is too."

"No, she isn't."

"Yes, she is."

"I'm not going to argue with you, boyo."

"Good, 'cause you'd lose."

This kid… If it isn't for the whole gay thing and you know — biology does not quite work that way, Emma would have had her doubts about who Henry's real parents were. Mary and Emma could have passed for sister, so that smug smirk, those little dimples, the way his eyes glint with a joke only he knows the punchline to, and Henry could have easily been hers. But that's not how it worked out. Alas this is only a side effect of Emma's poor parenting skills, and the kid's stubborn streak.

Albert eyes Henry again, studying him before his gaze falls to the kid's plate of food in front of him. His lip twitches with controlled anger but he doesn't raise his voice. "You're not eating."

"No," the kid replies, shaking his head. "I'm not."

"It's corn beef and hash," the old man explains. "It's your culture, boyo."

"Culture is a social construct," Henry tells him. "Culture is also weird. And this food tastes bad. So, no thank you."

Alber shakes his head, muttering himself. "I should've come and gotten you sooner — when you was a wee babe." He sighed, rubbing his face. "You've got to eat it, lad."

See, Emma's already gone through this. Henry is and had always been a picky eater. He doesn't like the food on his plate to touch. Anything that looks like mush is out, unless it is mashed potatoes. For the first month she had him all he ate was mac and cheese and pepperoni pizza,
because he wouldn't eat anything else. See, Henry is like a horse; you can lead him to water but unless the water is to his exact specifications, you can't make him drink.

"I am not eating that."

"Well, you're not getting anything else, then."

"Ok. Then I'm not eating."

"You have to eat."

"The only things I have to do is be awesome and my homework."

See, definitely Emma's child. And Albert is losing his patience so he finally puts a little bass in his voice. "You will eat this food, young man. And you will bloody like it."

"No, I won't. And you can't make me."

"We'll see."

"Yeah, we will."

"Tony's Pizza. What do you need?"

Hans shoves the phone in Henry's hands with a glare. The look on his face saying plainly that if the kid gives up his situation there will be hell to pay.

"He-Hello, Tony?" Henry asks.

"HENRY!" the man on the other end exclaims with so much mirth that the kid, despite his circumstances smiles at. "Ah, Henry, it's been a long time since you've called. I was beginning to think you didn't like us anymore."


"Oh, this kid… This kid… Such a little angel. Your mother does right by you. You should thank her."

The kid's bottom lip quivers but he keeps it together. He doesn't cry. "I will."

"So you and your mother's usual, right?" Tony asks.

Henry has to think quickly. Besides the phone in his pocket, this might be his only chance at getting out the S.O.S. to his mother, to Emma. But he doesn't believe she can be dead. He saw what happened. He knows that people don't get up after taking three shots to stomach. But his mother is a superhero. And she's survived worst. Plus, she has to get back to him. She promised she'd never leave him.

"No, Tony it's just me. My mom is doing something business related, I guess," the kid says, playing it off with feigned disinterest. "She stuck me with new babysitters too."

"Not Mulan and Merida?" Tony asks surprised. "Or Ruby?"

Tony chuckles on the other end. "Then he won't be sticking around long."

The kid looks up at Hans and smiles. "No, he won't."

"See, then don't you worry. I'll size him up when I see him," Tony assures him. "So, one Henry special coming right up."

"Thanks, Tony," he says. "You're the best."

"Aw, kid from you, I almost believe it."

They exchange pleasant goodbyes and the kid feels good about his odds. Because Tony is right, his mother does right by him. Even if she doesn't believe it. Henry knows how hard she tries. She might think she's one of the bad guys because of the bad things she has to do sometimes. But she's like Wolverine. Or the Ghost Rider. Or Spawn. Or Deadpool. - Okay maybe not Deadpool. But she's definitely Han Solo or Malcolm Reynolds. She's a hero. She's his hero. And she'll make it back to him.

"So, it's done?" Hans demands, taking the phone back.


"Good. Why we're going to all of this trouble for a brat like you, I'll never know."

Henry's eyes narrows. "You respect my grandfather right?"

Hans scoffs. "Of course."

"And he's like a king in this place, right? Like he's the ruler of you guys?" the boy asks.

Captain Sideburns nods. "Yeah, I suppose that's true."

"And since I'm his grandson, I'm like a prince, then."

Again, Hans nods. "Yeah. I guess."

"Then what do you think will happen to you when I tell the king what a butthole you've been to the prince?" Henry asks, knowing he has him. And when Hans sputters, the kid adds. "And when you're out, don't forget the parm and red peppers. I can't enjoy my food without those things. Thanks."

"There's somethin' 'bout a boy and his first dog," the Old Man says as he throw a ball from the porch of his safehouse. "Your da' got his first dog when he was yer age. Just about, I reckon."

Henry can smell the manipulation wafting off of his biological grandfather. Sure he wants a dog. What seven year old boy doesn't? But he can't be bought. He loves his mother. She's not perfect but she's his. And her job makes life complicated sometimes but Emma tries and she shows up when she says she's going to. She isn't a stranger, she knows him, she loves him. And a dog isn't going to change that.

No matter how cute the dog is.

The spotted dog runs back to the porch and Henry smiles. It's the first time he feels remotely in control Hans is leaving to get his food. And if Tony is as smart as he claims he is, he's going to know something is up. Emma has specific instructions when people go to Tony's. And alas
someone neglected to mention that to Buttface McSideburns.

"Go, on," Albert encourages. "He's a good pup, Pongo. Had him for a good while now. He won't bite ya, boyo. Go on."

Henry can read the dog as friendly. He isn't like his owner. But he also knows that he can't scare the poor guy either. So he crouches down and reaches out, showing Pongo the back of his hand. The dog tentative sniffs at him and Henry keeps himself calm, and steady. He doesn't pet him until Pongo nudges his hand with his nose.

"You're a good dog," the boy coos. "You're a good dog."

When Pongo starts wagging his tail, happily Henry knows at least he has the dog on his side.

"Why did my dad run from you if you're not a bad person?" the boy asks as he picks up Pongo's ball and throws it.

"Yer da' didn't like the family business," Albert says truthfully. "It never sat right with him. Too much of his mu'der in him, I suppose. Ruth never liked my work ei'der. But she didn't run from me. After we lost James, your da' knew what I was goin' to ask of him. For him to be like his bro'der. I should've known he'd run. Especially, after he meet yer ma'. I didn't know her. But they tell me she was a good woman. And she loved yer da'."

"I'm not like my dad," Henry says.

"No, you don't look like him ei'der. More of your ma' in ya, I reckon. But it's alright, son. I'm not trying to make you into your uncle. I just believe family sticks together," the old man says.

"Yeah, which is why you should let me get back to Emma," Henry counters.

"She's not yer ma'. She's a fuckin' nightmare. And she's going to get ya hurt," Albert tells him.

"She was doing fine at keeping me safe," Henry fires back. "Even after you showed up. My mom is going to come from me, Mr. Nolan."

"How can ya be sure, boyo?" he asks. "Emma's not one for sentimentality. She stabbed one of her lovers."

"To protect her," Henry replies. "The knife barely touched Aunt Lily."

"Have you even met her before?"

The boy shakes his head. "No, but my mom talks about her a lot. She gets sad about it. She didn't tell me about her stabbing her either. I found that out because they always think that just because I'm in my room and the lights are off that I'm sleeping."

He finds out a lot of his father and Emma's past just by listening when no one is watching him.

Albert smiles. "Yer da' was the same way. I had to tell James who I really was. But David always knew. Clever lad."

"Thanks…. I guess."

"You'll come around eventually, Henry," Albert says. "A boy belongs with his family."

He turns his back to the old man and throws the ball Pongo had just retrieved, as he whispers, "I was with my family."
was with my family.
Blowback

Chapter Summary

Blowback - (n.) a term originating from within the American Intelligence community, denoting the unintended consequences, unwanted side-effects, or suffered repercussions of a covert operation that fall back on those responsible for the aforementioned operations.

Chapter Notes

Alright so this is the last of the three chapter update. I'll have another one ready in two weeks hopefully.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Everything happens."
— Penny. Dr. Horrible's Sing Along Blog

"Friends our yours, Em'?" Ruby asks.
"Since when do my friends shoot at us?" Emma replied.

Her best friend gave a very pointed look toward Regina. "Seriously?"

"For the record, she only wanted to poison me, not shoot me."

"Actually, dear…"

Emma glanced at Regina. "Really?"

"I had a gun pointed at you, Emma. What did you think I was going to do with?"

"Besides she make me all hot with your badassasary?" Emma shrugged. "I'm at a loss, your Majesty."

Ruby scoffed. "Urgh, I want to shoot you now."

Regina glared at Emma. "Get in line."

Emma smiled and then said, wistfully, "And they say romance is dead."

"Idiot," the Assassin mutters. But her eyes light up when she speaks and she smiles when she meets Emma's gaze. Even with death raining down on them, Regina looks at the Information Brokers like they are the only two people on the planet.

And the Blonde grins back; a goofy half smile that she usually only reserves for her kid.
"You love it, your Majesty," Emma teases. "You think this idiot is the most adorable of all the idiots."

Regina rolls her eyes. "Perhaps."

They lean in but just before their lips touch the fiery Scot pipes up. "Oy! Boss! As much as I'd hate to break up the verbal foreplay, I have to apparently remind you of the FUCKING CUNTS ACTIVELY TRYING TO FUCKING MURDER US!"

"Then get on the roof and shoot 'em," Emma ordered. "What the fuck do I pay you for, bitch?"

"Besides looking dead sexy?" Merida asked. "Shooting gobshites in the fucking dome, Boss."

"Mulan…" Emma calls. "Make sure your worst half doesn't kill herself going up those stairs."

The taciturn wetworker just nods but she doesn't make a move. People are shooting and that's not likely to stop. Not unless they have some kind of distraction.

"Dottie?" Emma says, glancing at her best friend's wife.

"Yes?" she replies.

"So… did you pack some grenades?" Emma asks.

Dorothy glances at Ruby. "She told me not to."

The Information Broker shakes her head. "Not what I'm asking, Dot. Did you bring them? Yes or no."

Ruby groans. "She brought them" And when her partner gives her a stunned expression, she rolls her eyes. "Please, I've met you before, Kansas."

The curly haired woman glances at her spouse hopefully. "So, I'm not in trouble?"

"Oh, no, you're in fucking trouble. It doesn't matter we actually need the grenades, I told you not to bring them. Fucking seriously, baby, we've been over this."

Regina leans in a whispers. "We don't sound like this."

"No, we're way hotter than them when we squabble," Emma assures her.

"So are we using the bombs or…?" Belle. Bless her heart. And at that Dot grabs her go bag and pulls out a grenade for Emma and herself. To which Belle takes great offense to. "You kept that bag under my seat the whole time!?"

Dorothy pulls the pin. And Emma follows suit. "We can talk about this later, Belle."

The Aussie glares at Dot. "Oh you bet we will."

Dorothy nods and then looks at the Blonde. "It's on a five second delay. So pull the, release, slowly count to three, and then throw."

"And three shall be the number!" Emma quotes. "Not four. Five is right out."

Ruby's eyes narrows as they fall on her best friend. "You are the biggest fucking dork in the world."
"If you mean idiot," Regina adds. "Then I agree."

"Hey now," Emma huffs. "I'm about to save everyone's collective asses."

"Which you and your poon houndry put in danger in the first fucking place," Ruby says.

Emma lets out a fake laugh, dripping with sarcasm. "I'm sorry, what I think you mean is, 'Thank you.'"

"You're welcome," Ruby quips.

With a groan Emma nods to Dot who throws her grenade just as the blond tosses hers. The bullets stop as two booms go off one right after the other. And Ruby pops up sending bullets at their attackers. She can't see them so it's not about hitting them. It's about keeping them occupied.

"Go!" Emma orders Mulan and Merida.

They are gone without another word as Ruby lays out coverfire. Regina does the same. Emma watches the Assassin in the tactical stance, squeezing off round after round. Maybe it's the massive loss of blood, or the emotional trauma, or maybe there's just always something that's been wrong with her, but this is arguably the hottest thing she's seen in awhile. Since — well, since Lily. However, as sexy as this is (and it is sexy) Emma doesn't want this anymore. She wants lazy mornings with her son, with a family of her own. She wants a normal life. She wants someone that she can come home to. She wants someone she doesn't have to hide herself from. Someone that could accept her past, her everything and still want to make a life with her.

Someone who's ass looks amazing standing in the tactical firing stance, would be considered a happy bonus.

"Emma, maybe now is not the best time to stare at my ass," Regina says.

"Every time is the best time, your Majesty."

"I should have shot you," the Assassins replies with a shake of her head.

"Oh, we're back on this again?" Emma asks. "Because you remember what happened the last time you threatened to shoot me."

"No one wants to hear about that," Ruby cuts in. "Seriously. Stop talking."

"When is Merida going to… you know?" Belle asks.

"Kill people?" Is Emma's response. "Wait for it… One… Two…"

Just as the Blonde points to the window there's the blast of Merida's rifle. Emma counts off again, points, and again it's followed by the sound of the curly haired Scot's rifle. It happens like that once more before they get the all clear. Slowly Emma gets to her feet and looks around at the church.

"We've got maybe four minutes before the cops are all over this place," the Information Broker says.

Belle nods. "I can reroute the emergency calls but that's only going to buy you another ten minutes at the most."

Emma sighs. "Just once I'd like to have a normal day."
"You know how you do that?" Ruby asks. "When you meet a hot girl, who's into you, and it's
looks like it might be too good to be true… maybe don't fuck her."

The Blonde frowns. "Yeah, I didn't understand any of those words." Her frown deepens when
she notices someone is missing. "Where's the Stepford Torturer?"

Regina arches an eyebrow at that. "She probably left when we were distracted. Elsa works for the
Dragon. The Dragon is notoriously neutral. She says out of these sort of things. She left so her
employer couldn't connected to this."

That makes sense. Even to Emma who still doesn't like the idea there's someone like the Dragon
in her city and she doesn't know about her. That's another reason she can't wait to hang up the
grey hat of a criminal entrepreneur. She is tired of fearing shadows. It's time to get the fuck out.

"Fair enough," Emma grumbles. "Let's go see who wanted us dead. Or me dead. Whatever.
Ruby, take Dot and Belle and pack up. When Mer' and Mulan come back down, get them to clear
out too. We're go just as soon as everyone is ready."

"Sounds good, Em," Ruby says before she clears out with others.

Regina holsters her weapon and studies Emma. It's just a second. Just the briefest of moments but
when she smiles and offers her hand, the Blonde feels like she's cherished - loved maybe.

"Why are you staring at me?" the Assassin asks.

The Information Broker's grin widens. "You're really pretty."

"Idiot."

"Yeah."

"The grenades might have been too much…"

Emma can feel Regina's eyes boring into her. She fights the urge to crack a smile. Though not
normally a fan of explosives, the grenades bit were fun. And she wonders if Dot would ever let
her fire that rocket launcher she knows her best friend's wife has in their basement. Or is the attic?
It doesn't matter.

"You're never doing this again," Regina finally says. "I hope you savored it."

Emma frowns at her. "Since when did you become the boss of me?"

"Are you saying that I'm not dear?" the Assassin asks.

The Information Broker shakes her head. "No, I'm literally asking you when did it happen.
Because I want to agree with you. What's up with that, your Majesty?"

Regina chuckles. "I can be incredibly persuasive."

"Yes," Emma agrees, definitively. "You are."

"No arguments? That's so unlike you."

"Regina, I gave you an eight figure payout after I saw you naked one time," the Blonde replies. "I
know when I've been defeated."
They fall silent after that. Emma surveys the scene, assuming this is just another one of Albert Nolan's failed attempts on her life. But there is something off about this whole scene. First, after the 13, Albert couldn't have mobilized another hit team this quickly. And Azura couldn't have tipped him off in any real way. And then there is the fact that Emma counted the body of a woman among the dead. One couldn't tell by looking at her head, on account of the fact that she doesn't have a face but the fleshy mounds on her chest are a dead giveaway. Albert doesn't hire women for this kind of work. He thinks they are too delicate for the task. So why the change of heart now?

Unless…

"This wasn't Nolan," Regina says as she examines one of the corpses.

"How can you be sure?" Emma asks.

"Hello, Regina…" a voice sounds. "It's been too long."

The newcomer doesn't make a grand entrance and he doesn't draw out his reveal either. He just steps out from behind a row of cars, walking toward them with a neutral expression. He's a tall man, in his late 20s, lithe and willowy with golden brown hair. He is wearing a grey suit and long dark grey Burberry trench coat. He glances at between Regina and Emma, his cool grey eyes taking the pair in.

"Edmond?" Regina breathes, looking like she's seen a ghost.

"All grown up," he confirms with a nod. "I'm sorry we have to reunite under these circumstances."

"You don't have to do this," the Assassin tells him. "You can always walk away. You don't have to tell her that you found me. Or lie and tell her I was killed. But don't do this, Edmond."

The young man shakes his head. "I'm afraid that's not possible, Regina. Cora wants you to come back into the fold. And she's charged me with the task of bringing you in."

"I feel like I'm missing something here," Emma finally pipes up.

Edmond's gaze falls on her and he nods. "Emma Swan, hello. My name is Edmond Dantès. And I am here to collect Regina and take her home."

The Information Broker sighs. "Yeah, I get that. But it also seem like she doesn't want to go with you so…"

"She doesn't have a choice," he replies.

Emma scoffs. "There's always a choice, Eddie."

"Edmond," he corrects.

The Blonde shrugs. "I like Eddie."

"Emma…" Regina says putting her hand on her partner's shoulder. "Please…"

Without saying anything more, the Information Broker understands. This is Regina's fight. And while it doesn't sit well with her that Regina's asking her to back down, she won't fight her on this. The Assassin is more than capable of fighting her own battles and Emma's not exactly at 100%, with the whole multiple bullets to the gut situation she's rocking. However, even if she was
healthy, Emma knows this isn't her war. So unless Regina gives her the go ahead, she's just a supportive spectator.

"I'm not going back, Edmond," Regina states. "I won't be used as one of her pawns anymore."

"That's not for you to decide, Regina," Edmond replies. "You know the rules. There's only one way out once you join the Family."

"But I never wanted to join," the Assassin counters. "I was forced to."

"Cora saved your life," he says. "You owe it to her."

"She saved my life at the price of my soul," Regina fires back. "And I stopped owing her anything the moment she took Daniel from me."

"Daniel betrayed the Family," the young man explains. "He knew the consequences."

"He was a good man who didn't deserve what she did to him." Regina's voice cracking as she speaks. Whoever Daniel was, he meant a great deal to the Assassin once. And she speaks about him the way Emma speaks about Lily. The pain of loss colors each of Regina's words. But in this case, it doesn't sound like Daniel is away with another person on his own private island kind of happy.

"Regina," Edmond warns. "Don't force my hand. You were the closest thing I had to a sister in that place. I don't want to hurt you. But I will not go against the Queen of Hearts."

The Assassin draws her gun but doesn't level it at the young man. His pale eyes dart to the weapon and then to Regina. It only takes a second but he pulls his firearm too. And the tension between the three of them is so thick, it's almost hard to breathe.

"I won't go back," the Assassin says and to her credit she sounds calm, collected. But Emma can read her. She can see the strain in her shoulders, the subtle trembling in her dominant hand. She doesn't want to shoot this kid. However, she won't let him take her back. "Don't make me do this."

"Regina, you have to come back," he reasons. "Even if I let you go she'll send someone else."

"And I'll give them the same choice I'm giving you," she says, coolly.

"Gina…"

Her eyes narrow and she aims at him. "Do. Not. Call. Me. That."

He nods his apology and corrects himself. "Regina, it'll be easier if you just come with me. Then no one else has to get hurt. Not you, not me, not Miss Swan here."

"I won't let you hurt Emma."

"I don't want to," he says, softly. "But I will if I have to."

"Hey now," the Blonde pipes up. "Hold right the hell on, since when did I become a part of this?"

Edmond chuckles. "Regina has always had a soft spot in her heart for strays. You profile as her type, Miss Swan. It's no wonder she couldn't kill you." He glanced at the Assassin. "I told you that poison was too personal, Regina. And running the Honeypot on a target? That's something I would expect from Zelena, but not you. Cora trained us both better than that."
"Edmond, I will only ask you this once," Regina says, slowly. "Please leave and hope that we never cross paths again."

"I can't do that, Regina."

Time slows. And it's like Emma can see everything playing out right in front of her. Edmond raises his gun. And for a moment she thinks he's going to shoot her and take Regina away. Which as scenarios go, isn't ideal. Emma still would ever much like to rescue her son from the asshole mobster that stole him from her. And she can't very well do that if she is riddled with bullets. Anymore than she already is. However Edmond's weapon is trained on Regina. And it's not to wound, either; he means to kill her. Emma can't explain how she knows, but she does. He's going to kill her. That must have been his orders. Capture or kill. And Regina won't catch in time. Even with her weapon trained on him, she's not a shooter. She's not someone that can just pull the trigger. Not unless she has the proper incentive. And Regina's like Emma, the danger of her own death is not enough of a motivation.

Someone else's however, someone that they care about - well, that tends to give people like them that edge. So while Regina won't be quick enough, Emma has the right push that makes her just a tenth of a second quicker than Edmond. She won't lose Regina. She won't lose her too. She won't let her go without a fight. Not when...

That doesn't matter, Emma supposes. All that matters is that she won't let Regina die here like that. So she raises her own gun. The move opens up one (probably more than one) of her stitches. She feels a hot, burning in her gut, which could only mean she's bleeding again. But that doesn't matter; Emma barely registers it before she squeezes off two rounds.

The first hits him in the shoulder and staggers him. The second him hits him in the chest. Right in the ten-ring. And it's a kill shot. Edmond sinks to his knees and in a show of compassion that surprised Emma, Regina rushes over to him, catching him before he falls forward.

"No. No. No. No. No." The Assassin whispers as she rocks him in her arms. "I didn't want this. I didn't want this Edmond. I'm sorry."

"Me... too..."

Then tension just leaves his body in one final exhale and he's gone. It's quick. And the Assassin doesn't have time see to him properly. Only to guide his body to the ground, close his eyes, and take his wallet; anything that could be used to identify him. And then Regina reaches into his inner coat pocket and pulls out something that Emma can't quite see.

"Regina..." she grinds out, as the pain is beginning to flare up. "We have to go."

As soon as the words leave Emma's mouth a black panel van pulls up with Mulan behind the wheel, and Dot sitting right next to her. The side door slide opens and Ruby sticks her head out.

"We need to GTFO... like... now," she informs both women, before she notices Emma and with a sigh gets out to help Regina with the reinjured information broker. "What are we going to do with you, Em?"

"Fire me as boss when this is all over," she replies.

Ruby smiles. "That was always the plan. Because you fucking suck at this, bitch."

"Hey, I... do my best."
"Did I ever say that you're good at this?" Emma asks as Regina sees to her wounds.

The Assassin's hand is steady, despite the way Mulan is driving. Seriously it feels like she purposely hitting every pothole and bump on the road. However, Regina never misses a stitch.

"It's come up once or twice."

She's focused, and Emma understands that but she feels like she still needs to say this anyway. "Regina, I'm sorry. About Eddie."

"You did what you felt like you had to," the dark haired assassin tells her.

"I did it to protect you, Regina," the Information Broker confesses. "I know he meant something to you. But I'm not sorry that he's dead and you're not. Only that it came to that."

Regina finishes the stitch before she replies. "I know, Emma. It's why I'm not mad."

"Thank you."

"Why are you thanking me?" Regina asks.

"Because the last time one of us killed for the other we got into a fist fight and I don't want to be hit in the face again by you again," Emma replies.

The Assassin smiles. "I'm not going to hit you."

The Blonde mirrors her. "Good. 'Cause that sucked."

Regina leans in, her hands cupping Emma's face, the pads of her thumbs lovely stroking her cheeks and rests her forehead against the Blonde's. They stay like that for… Emma doesn't rightly know how long. But it doesn't matter. They both need this, this closeness. She can hear it in Regina's slow, but stuttering breaths. She is trying to hold it together. They both are.

"He was just a boy when I left," the Assassin finally reveals. "She sent him because she thought I wouldn't kill him. Because I loved him like a brother. And she knew that. 'Love is weakness,' she used to tell me. It's why she killed Daniel. He didn't betrayed anyone. His only crime was loving me."

Emma softly presses her lips to Regina's. It's not a declaration of love in the strictest sense. Because she doesn't want to scare the other woman off. But it's a vow, a promise that she wouldn't scare so easily. That she is here and she isn't going to go anywhere.

"Let's get your son back," Regina whispers.

"And then we'll go some place she can't find you," Emma swears. "Just us."


"And those drinks with the tiny umbrellas."

"Of course that goes without saying, dear. You love those."

Emma smiles, her cheeks puffing out in a big goofy grin. "I do. I really fucking do."

Chapter End Notes
OK so that was the final of the three part update. I hope you guys enjoyed it. I'm sorry I haven't been updating. Life and writer's block can be a bitch. Reviews, and comments always help. So please, pretty please keep those up. For those of you who aren't following me on Tumblr I'm MurderouslyAdorkable and I'm on Twitter where I am MurderouslyCute. Please please give me a follow. If more people follow me on Twitter I shall use it. Go team.
Infiltration

Chapter Summary

Infiltration - (n.) The secret movement of an operative into a target area with the intent that his or her presence will go undetected

Chapter Notes

Okay long time no see and I’ve got good news: I’ve finished drafting this whole thing. So there will be an update everyday until we reach the end of this. Cheers. And thanks for sticking with this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.”
— Sun Tzu

“This is this guy’s secret hideout?” Emma asks, placing a cigarette between her lips. “A fucking coffee shop?”

They parked in front of a cyber cafe in the financial district. And Emma just can’t believe it. Then again despite going digital herself, the Information Broker is still a throwback to a different time. A simpler one. Which is why she has Belle, her internet dragoman to guide her through these situations.

“Black hats sometimes hide in plain sight, Boss,” the Aussie explains. “I don’t understand but some of them like to stick to the Man any way they can.”

Regina nods, taking the cigarette out of Emma’s mouth. “It makes a certain kind of sense. Living in hiding becomes impossible over time. The paranoia gets to you.”

Emma puts another cigarette in her mouth. “Fine, so what’s the plan?” The Assassin again takes it. “Okay, seriously what’s with you and my cigarettes?”

“You’ve taken multiple gunshots to your stomach and you’re asking me why I’m taking your cigarettes?”

“Yeah.”

“You’re an idiot.”

“I’m your idiot.”
Regina shakes her head. “You’re my problem.”

Emma shrugs. “As long as I’m yours…”

“That's real adorable and all,” Merida begins. “But I reckon we'll need an infil and exfil plan.”

Ruby rolls her eyes. “We don't. Snowflake, here is going through the front door.”

Everyone's attention falls onto Emma who just smiles. Of course she's going through the front door.

“Oh, don't look so surprised. You guys have met me,” the Information Broker says.

“So that’s it?” Regina asks. “You’re simply going to go through the front door and hope for the best.”

Emma shrugs. “Yeah.”

Belle rolls her eyes. “Or you could ask me, your tech specialist, and maybe I have a better plan.”

“Do you?” Dorothy asks.

“No,” Belle replies. “But you could all act like I do for a change.”

Emma pulls the hacker in for a half hug. “You are smart. You are kind. And you are important.”

The Aussie groans. “You’re a fucking cunt, boss.”

The Blonde smiles. “I wear it well.”

“Moving on,” Ruby cuts in with an exasperated sigh. “Anyone have an idea that doesn’t involve all of us getting shot at?”

Before Emma could say something sarcastic, Dorothy raises her hand. “I might have something.”

It is simple. Ruby and Dorothy would sneak around the back and shut down his security system. Well, Dot would. Rubes would be the “fucking sexy as hell lookout”. And Dorothy wasn’t so much disabling it as turning off the mechanism that would alert this guy that someone has hacked his system or broken into his cafe. And that’s where Belle comes in who’s supposed to shut down his internet access. But the only way to do that is to shut down the internet for 100 yard radius. It’s to ensure he isn’t piggybacking off of someone’s signal and or use his mobile phone to create a wifi hotspot. Mulan and Merida cover the back when this guy’s runs, because asshats like this guy always run. Which leaves, Emma and Regina to walk through the front door.

“You want us to simply walk through the front door?” the Assassin asks. “You do realize one us looks like they are nearly dead, don’t you?”

“Hey! I’m not dead yet,” Emma reasons.

“You were shot.”

“Yes.”

“Three times.”

“I did count the bullet holes.”
“In the stomach.”

“At least I didn’t poke them.”

“Only after I stopped you.”

“Still counts.”

Ruby whistles to get their attention. “Ok, a few things. One, we’re all ready to go. Two, you two are more married than me and Kansas. And we’re actually married.”

Silence fills the van for a moment before Emma asks the obvious question. “What’s the third thing?”

“Hmm?” Ruby shakes her head. “I don’t have a third thing. Oh, no, I do. Are you two done? There that’s three.”

Emma frowns. “I don’t know, the third thing was more a question when the first two were more statements…”

“Oh, my god, can I please shoot her?” Ruby groans, putting her hand on one of her pistols.

Regina stops her with a. “After we get Henry.”

“Aw, see wifey gets it,” Emma beams.

“Don’t ever call me that again.” Regina sighs. “You’re going to call me nothing but that aren’t you?”

“Aw… wifey still gets it.”

“I take it back,” the Assassin proclaims. “Ruby, you may shoot her.”

Ruby takes out her gun with a gleeful, “Finally!”

“Hey! Hey, now!” Emma warns. “I have been shot so many times already. Do we really need to add to it?”

Regina gives her a pointed look. “Will you be good?”

“I will be good.”

“Are you lying?”

“Are you going to let Ruby shoot me if I say yes?”

“Yes.”

“Then no.”

Ruby hosts her weapon and lets out a disappointed, “Awww…”

“Apparently, I’m in the wrong business,” Emma comments as they look around the cafe.
There isn’t a single computer empty. Each chair is occupied. Upon a quick scan, Emma guesses that about 70% are wearing glasses. 50% probably don’t see sunlight much. And the average age is maybe 17. Maybe. With them spending their parents’ hard earned dollars at —

“Holy shit, 7 dollars an hour?” Emma breathes. “I’m definitely in the wrong business.”

“Are you done?” Regina asks looking at the Information Broker with a stern expression.

“You’re looking for the answer yes so…” Just as the sarcastic remark rolls off of her tongue a young man with dark hair and pale features glances up from behind the counter. And as soon as he lays eyes on Emma, he panics and bolts for the back room. “Oh, there he goes.”

“Don’t sound so enthusiastic, dear,” the Assassin replies. “People might get in the impression you actually enjoy this line of work.”

“Only because I do,” Emma confesses before she starts off toward the back with Regina falling into step beside her.

They don’t run. They don’t have to. If everything goes to plan they’d walk into the alley behind the cafe and find Ruby standing over this hacker with her boot to his throat, trying not to shot him. After all he had been the reason Ruby’s grandmother and husband were dead. She owes him at least a bullet.

Emma’s eyes went wide with the realization and she turned to Regina who was already taking off in a dead run when —

BANG!

The gunshot was deafening. Just a single one. No more. Not overkill. Just one shot.

Emma opened the back exit and already knew what she was going to see.

Gaston’s body is on the ground, blood pooling underneath him. It’s a headshot, his face contorted in fear of seeing the bullet that killed him coming. But it isn’t Ruby standing over the hacker.

It’s Belle. Cold, expressionless look on her face; the gun casually at her side. Before Emma can even form the question, Dot is already holding her hand up and the others are moving in between them.

“He didn’t talk but—”

Emma takes a step forward. “You don’t even know where they have my son?”

“I can explain, Boss,” Belle says.

“I didn’t think she’d shoot him,” Dorothy adds. “I thought that giving her Ruby’s guns it would prevent…”

“This exact thing?” Emma asks.

Dot nods. “I’m sorry.”

“I can explain everything,” Belle says. “Just lemme explain.”

The Information Broker chuckles. But it’s not a happy sound. It’s an angry one. It’s the kind of sound a person makes right before they go on a killing spree. It’s the sound of someone snapping.
Emma takes another step forward but Regina catches her by the arm. “Let me go.”

“Give me your gun first,” the Assassin says.

“I need my gun,” the Blonde insists. “Because I’m going to shoot her.”

“And that’s precisely why you need to give me your weapon.”

“Regina—”

“Boss, this the guy…” Belle begins cutting Emma off. “We were in school together and he… he…” Her voice cracks. “I couldn’t stop myself, Emma. It was like someone else was making the decision for me and I couldn’t… Boss, I couldn’t stop myself.”

_I see a bad moon a-rising… I see trouble on the way… I see earthquakes and lightnin’… I see bad times today… Don’t go ‘round tonight… It’s bound to take your life… There’s a bad moon on the rise._


“Who is it?”


Emma gets it immediately and puts the phone to her ear, wasting no time “How long ago did he leave? And what’s he’s driving?”

Normally, one of Emma’s friends might be sarcastic. But Tony must have picked up on the urgency in her voice because he only gives her what she needed to know. “He just left in a black and silver mustang. The license plate was something weird. Just a number.”

“Was it 13?” Emma asks.

“Yeah. That’s it,” Tony exclaims before his tone turns serious again. “Everything ok, Emma?”

“Nothing I can’t handle, Tony,” she tells him.

“Be careful,” he says.

“You first,” she replies before they exchange farewells and hang up. Emma looks at Belle. “Black and Silver mustang. License plate is just 13. And if you help me track it down, good news, I’ll consider this settled.”

Belle’s eyes widen. “Really?”

“Really.”

The Information Broker doesn’t say anything more and starts for their vehicle. Emma just wants her son back. And she wants to walk away from this. If there was an ounce of doubt beforehand, the last two days was enough to wash it all away. Emma didn’t want this life anymore. If ever. And it is getting very clear why. She is getting tired. Of the danger, of the constant micromanaging she has to do. If Emma really thinks about it, she hates just about everything that comes with being a criminal.

Every single thing.
Almost every single thing.

She doesn’t wait to see if anyone is behind her when she gets into the SUV. But one by one the others climb inside, starting with Regina who wordlessly slips in beside Emma and offers her hand to the Blonde which she happily accepts. Then Ruby, Dot, and Merida. And then Mulan. And finally Belle.

“He’s heading north,” the Aussie says without prompting. “Two minutes from here.” She looks down at her tablet. “Turn right at the light.”

Mulan glances at Emma through the rearview mirror, silently asking for permission which the Information Broker grants. It’s only then that she start the car engine and drive off.

It isn’t long before they’re right behind the aforementioned Mustang. Emma instructs Mulan to pull up beside him. Her door is already unlocked. Her gun is in her lap. She has to make this quick. If she gives him a chance to react, everything will go south and with a quickness.

Well, more south than things have already gone.

Mulan stops the car right beside him. And Emma hops out, opens the passenger side door, to find a bewildered Hans.

“Would it have killed you to leave 20%?” she asks, just as the back doors of his car open and Regina and Ruby slip in.

“It might actually kill you,” Ruby adds, pointing a gun into the back of his seat. “Seriously, what kind of dick doesn’t tip?”

“I don’t believe in tipping alright,” Hans replies.

“Please tell me I get to shoot him,” Ruby says.

“After we find Henry,” Emma orders.

The last of the 13 grins. “So you’re saying that you can’t kill me. Well, it seems Miss Sw—”

Emma slams his face into the steering wheel. Once, twice, three times. Hans is a fucking asshole. He deserves it.

“You fucking bitch!” Hans spits.

So Ruby presses the barrel to her other pistol into his temple. “Manners, fucker.”

Emma groaned, doubling over. “Fuck!”

“You ripped your stitch didn’t you?” Regina asks.

“No…” Emma croaks.

“You’re an idiot.”

“Yes.”
They patch Emma up and make it to the exterior perimeter of Nolan’s safehouse. It’s an old French Colonial on far from the sprawling city. Apparently all of the old gangsters love to move to the suburbs.

Emma studies the driver. He looks familiar to her but she can’t place him. But that dark reddish brown hair and those sideburns… she’s seen him before, even before he shot her. He knows her.

“You don’t remember me do you, Emma?” he asks, finally.

“No, not really. But these might have gotten scrambled when you fucking shot me,” she replies.

Hans laughs. “That’s fair. But you do remember Lily Page. Or is it Booth now?”

“It’s actually ‘shut the fuck up before I let Ruby shoot your sorry Irish ass,” Emma tells him. Then it clicks. “You were with Jefferson… that night I saved your lives.”

Sideburns nods. “Yes. Regretting that choice, yet?”

Emma scoffs. “Only a lot.”

“They are going to kill you before you can get to that kid,” Hans warns. He starting to sound a little wheezy and stuffed up like he has a cold. But really, they had just broken his nose and he’s having a hard time breathing.

Despite his words and her own fears, Emma shrugs. “At least I’ll still be pretty.”

“Debatable,” Ruby chimes in from the back seat.

Green eyes shoot daggers and her response is immediate. “Fuck you, hooker.”

“You’re not my type, Em’,” Ruby fires back. “You’re too high maintenance.”

The Information Broker blinks her surprise. “Are you fucking kidding me? I’m fucking high maintenance?”

Her best friend nods. “Yup. That’s what I said.”

Just as Emma opens her mouth she sees the gates so she doesn’t say anything more. They just need to get through the gates. The others aren’t far behind and if things go according to plan, everyone would be safe after this. All they need is to get through the gates.

“How do you want to play this?” Hans asks.

“You tip them off and you’re dead,” Ruby replies.

He scoffs. “You’ll be dead, too.”

“Like I said before at least we’ll die pretty,” Emma adds with a shrug. Ruby makes a questioning noise. And the Blonde snaps. “Fuck you, bitch. I’m pretty.” She pauses, thinking about it. “I’m ok.” After another pause, she amends her statement again. “I have my moments.”

“You’re nervous, aren’t you?” Regina asks.

“Oh, I’m fucking terrified,” is Emma’s honest response. “But this is the kid. No going back.”

Hans stops just outside the security gate and it’s a tense few moments. The gate guards are
understandably concerned about Han’s physical state. And he, surprisingly spins a tale, weaving enough truth into the lie that it’s believable.

“You were able to shake them?” one of the guards asks.

Hans nods. “Yeah. It wasn’t easy, mind you. That bitch is like a fucking dog with a bone.”

“Fucking women…” says another, adding to the three women in the car. “No offense.”

“None taken,” Emma tells them. “He’s not wrong. That fucking Information Broker is no joke.”

“I heard she was a Grade A cunt,” says the first guard.

Ruby snickers. “You’re not wrong.”

They all have a laugh at that and after that they’re waved through. It is almost too easy. Too simple. Emma can feel it. Maybe it is paranoia or maybe there really is something wrong.

“So what now?” Hans asks as he pulls up to the main house.

Emma gets out of the car, offering her hand to Regina, who takes it. Ruby’s the last out, her gun, causally at her side. She smirks but there’s no light in her eyes. All Emma has to do is nod and Ruby takes aim.

“You killed my granny,” she tells him.

Two shots. Ruby doesn’t even give him a chance for any final words. Just a double tap and Hans is an epitaph. Just a red stain in his car, slumped back in the driver’s seat.

At the sound of the gunshots the compound springs to life. Flood lights turn on and wash them out in bright light. People are moving toward them. And Ruby’s gone before anyone can get a clear shot on her, she’s a shadow, a ghost. Out of sight. Besides, Emma is the main threat.

“Let's hope this plan of yours works,” Regina comments.

“When has a plan of mine not worked, your Majesty?”

The Assassin’s eyes narrow. “You’re an idiot if you think I’m going dignify that with a response.”

Emma frowns. “I thought we set it up a long time ago I was an idiot.”

Regina opens her mouth but her retort is interrupted by someone calling out to them. “Well, I didn’t think either of ya would make it this far.”

“That’s what you get for underestimating us, Albert,” Emma quips.

He doesn’t rise to the bait. “Lets finish this, shall we?”

The Information Broker nods. “Yes. Lets.”

Chapter End Notes

As always if you like what you read you can follow me on Tumblr
(MurderouslyAdorkable) or Twitter (MurderouslyCute). Thank for the read and I'll be back tomorrow with an update.
Decoy

Chapter Summary

*Decoy* - (n.) person used to distract, confuse the adversary.

Chapter Notes

This will be the last of the Henry POV chapters. Hope you like it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Kids shouldn’t have to sacrifice So you can have the life you want
You make sacrifices so they can have the life they deserve.”
— Internet Meme

Henry watches his biological grandfather pace the length of the room, practically making permanent indentations of his footprints in the carpet. He is high-strung; a ball nervous energy. And he’s irritable, snapping at his maid, as well as his men. Emma does the same thing when work gets to be too much. But where his mother is aware of her occasional dickery, Grandpa Nolan isn’t. He doesn’t even realize he’s been chain-smoking in front of Henry for the last hour.

The kid knows why.

Sideburns hasn’t come back yet.

And that’s just too bad. But there is hope in that detail. Sure, Hans could just be delayed by traffic. But that is unlikely. It’s very unlikely, given that fact that it’s been hours. So that means Henry’s mom got to him. And if she got to him…

Then she’s coming for him right now.

And Nolan knows that.

Henry isn’t saying a word. He just quietly sits in the den and pets Pongo, listening, watching, taking notes. His mother is going to save him. Just like she knew she would. Because Emma promised. It was just them from now on. Just them. Just the two of them. And she would never abandon him.

“I want more men on the parameter. And set up the floodlights,” the old man barks. “I want to be able to see a man scratching his nuts for 15 meters all around.”

“That’s not going to help,” Henry finally says. “No matter what you do, my mom is going to come for me.”
“For the last time she’s not yer mum, boyo!”

“And for the last time, I can have two moms. Emma is one of them. Don’t be a dick.”

Albert fumed. “Don’t talk to me like that. I’m yer grandda’.”

“You’re a stranger. A stranger that wants to hurt my family. That did hurt my family. So I don’t care if you’re my dad’s dad. You’re still just some asshole to me.”

Albert snatches him up by the collar of his shirt and Henry’s eyes go wide with shock. Emma yells but she doesn’t do it often; apparently she doesn’t like to hear her voice like that. She winces when she hears herself, having a flashback of some dark childhood memory probably. So when she does get stern with him, Emma tries not to be the people who raised her in her early years. And putting her hands on him… Emma would never do that. Ever.

“You don’t put your hands on the people you love,” she would say.

And Henry would agree. If you love someone, you wouldn’t hurt them. But the old man doesn’t love him. He doesn’t even know him. It’s easy to hurt a stranger. It’s easier when they don’t look like you too. And Henry favors his mother’s side of the family. He looks less like David and more like Mary, and therefore, he looks a little like Emma. He has darker hair, but they have the same grin, the same sea green eyes. She could be mistaken for his biological mother to someone who doesn’t know the truth.

And if she was here, she’d kill the old man for this.

“Now you listen here, boyo,” Albert ordered, menacingly. “If ya want to act the maggot, I'll stomp ya like one, ya hear me?”

“Yeah…”

“When ya speak to me ya will say ‘yes, sir,’” Albert told him. Or ‘no, sir.’” Do ya follow me, Henry?”

“Yeah-” His grandfather’s grip tightened and so he amended. “Yes, sir.”

Albert let him go. “Good lad.”

“She going to kill you,” Henry whispered.

“What was that?” Albert asked.

“My mom… my real family… they’re coming for me. And when they do, she's going to kill you.”

As soon as he says it, two gunshots ring out. Pongo barks but Henry soothes him into silence. Some attack dog, right? But it works to Henry’s advantage here. He doesn’t want Emma and the others to get hurt. Not because of him. So he waits, petting the dog to keep him calm. And also to help himself. Because Henry can feel his own heart beating against his rib cage. Just like Pongo’s. And this small thing helps.

I wish I had a dog… the young boy laments, silently.

Then his grandfather walks out, leaving him with other strangers. And so he cases the room he’s in. Two guards. Or goons. Whatever. They’re more concerned with what’s going on outside than with him. Henry could sneak away. Maybe make it out the back. Knowing his mom, she has someone there waiting for him. This could be his only chance. He has to take it. But he can’t leave
Pongo here. The dog isn’t his. But he was Henry’s only ally in this place. And his mom, always says, “We don’t abandon our friends.”

Quickly, he ushers the dog out of the room when the goons have their backs to him. He looks down at the dog and smiles.

“We have to be quiet,” he whispers to which Pongo just happily wags his tail and follows besides him.

Henry knows there’s a backdoor in the kitchen that leads outside. So he chooses to use that. He just needs to get there. He hears voices in the foyer but he ignores them. Besides he can’t make out what’s being said. For all he knows, his grandfather is speaking with his people trying to work out the best ways to hurt Henry’s mom and Emma’s people; his aunts so to speak, who have done nothing but love and care for him. He won’t let that happen if he has the chance. But there isn’t a lot he can do inside this house.

He wants to help however he knows that being in this house when his mother clearly doesn’t want him here, will only distract her. It’s why she never told him about her job; her real job. It is why she’s retiring. For him. Because she loves him more than she loves her work. Also because she can’t focus when she’s worrying about him. When his dad was alive it was easy, Henry supposes. His mom could focus on giving him the life she and David never had. But with his dad gone, Emma can be the world’s greatest crime lord or she can be the world’s greatest parent. She cannot do both. And Henry knows that. So he has the choice, he wants his mom. He’s just worried that Emma doesn’t want that.

*You’re being a dope, Henry* thinks to himself. *She’s your mom… Doofus.*

The young mastermind sighs and heads for the kitchen with Pongo trotting almost silently beside him. The voices are getting louder; footsteps drawing closer. Henry could feel the tension in the house rise making the air thick and heavy. He doesn't know if it's nerves or if it's the air but it’s hard to breath. He might be hyperventilating. Who knows?

Little hands reach for the door handle and turn it. With caution he turns the doorknob and slowly opens the door.

“You didna have ta kill him.” That is his grandfather’s voice.

“I didn't kill him… and before you say anything, neither did she.”

That voice stops him dead in his tracks. It's Emma. Emma came for him. Henry knew that she would. She is his mother; she's family. And you don't give up on family.

He can see her. And she looks like she's gone through hell and back. Bruised and blooded. Her shirt is a giant red stain. And he hopes that's not all her blood. But he knows his mother. She leads from the front and would throw herself in front of any obstacle to protect her crew. So he knows that blood is mostly hers.

Emma sees him. He knows it. She looks right at him; a relieved smile on her face. And she mouths something. Something like ‘I love you.’

“M-” Henry almost gets it out but a soft but firm hand claps over his mouth just as an arm circles his waist and pulls him back. He fights, kicking and flailing but the arms around him only get tighter. And then he hears a soothing and familiar voice whisper to him.

“Easy, tiny human… your mom has this… you just have to trust her.” It's Ruby, so Henry relaxes and when he does she pulls him to safety. “You good Hen?”
He nods.

Ruby puts him down. “We need to get you to safety. If your mom thinks you're still in danger…” She lets the thought die. “She needs to have her head in the game. You understand?”

“Yeah.”

“You sure?”

He nods again. “I'm just worried about her. She's…”

“I know. But your mom is tougher and smarter than she looks. She has a plan.”

“Is it a good one?”

Ruby hesitates. “It's… a plan.”

He frowns. Yes, that's what he is afraid of.

Chapter End Notes

I know this was kinda of a slow chapter. I needed to get Henry to safety. Chapters 18 and 19 are action packed. So just bear with me. It's gonna get better.

If you like Strange Bedfellows you can follow me on Tumblr where I'm MurderouslyAdorkable and Twitter @MurderouslyCute.
The kid is safe. That’s all that matters. It's all Emma wants. Henry deserves a life away from all of this. And now he would have one. Because it doesn’t matter what happens to her. Henry is safe, he’s with her people and they will take care of him.

Now there is just one more thing to do to. One last loophole to close. And if Emma’s lucky, she might see the other side of this. She doubts it. Standing among three armed goons in an old colonial house surrounded by even more armed goons, there’s just no way Emma is walking out of here. Period. She almost feels bad about that, however she’s more upset that Regina’s with her. But if everything goes to plan, she’ll be fine.

Emma can only hope that’s true.

They stand there for a moment in silence. Nolan standing in front of them, before he nods at them leading the pair deeper into the home. The goons covering him block their exit. Their guns are holstered which is probably a big mistake on their part. One that Emma desperately wants to capitalize on. But Regina stays her hand with a simple look. Now is not the time.

“You’re no seriously fun today, your Majesty,” Emma whispers.

Regina shakes her head. “You’ll have your fun soon enough.”

“Fine…” Emma nods to Nolan. “Lemme see the kid. Then we can start this.” Nolan stops and studies her for a moment. So she continues, “What? I’m going to die, right? So I want to say goodbye. You owe me that much.”

Nolan sees the logic in that and orders one of his men to find Henry. And then there were two, Emma thinks as they move into the dining room. Nolan takes the sit at the head of the table pointing to the two chairs to his right.

“Have a sit, lass,” he says. “Then we’ll settle this. You can tell me how you flipped my assassin.”

Emma moves to one of the chairs and pulls it out for Regina. “Well, your first mistake was thinking Regina belonged to you in any way.”

The assassin smiles softly as she sits down. “Thank you, dear.”
“I paid her,” Nolan cuts in.

“I paid her more…” Emma fires back. “Plus, I threw a bonus in just for the lulz. I mean, I am prettier than you.”

Nolan glances at Regina. “I didn’t know you could be bought.”

“It wasn’t the money,” she tells him. “Emma gave me something you couldn’t.” She cuts her eyes at Emma. “Don’t even think it, Miss Swan.”

Emma’s eyes shine with humor. Because, she is thinking it. Regina can’t be the thought police. And although the obvious joke is that Emma gave her a bunch of orgasms, the Information Broker knows that Regina is referring to offering her a way out, a fresh start, a chance at a new beginning.

“And what was it?” Nolan asks.

“I never wanted this,” Regina explains. “I was forced into this life and due to being more than proficient with my work, I survived this long. Emma offered me the means to walk away. And so I took it.”

“Is that so?”

Regina nods. “Yes.”

“Well, then… that is something. The Evil Queen has lost her taste for the work,” he replies.

“If that’s how you need to see it, Mr. Nolan…”

He scoffs in response and looks at Emma. “Don’t look at me,” the Blonde says. “I don’t know where she gets this sass mouth from.”

“Same thing I said when I finally met me grandson,” Nolan tells her.

Emma shrugs. “Maybe your side of the family.”

“If he was raised by me…”

She doesn’t want to hear anything about that. “If he was raised by you, he’d have been as bad as James. David didn’t want that. So I made sure that didn’t happen. Because that’s what you do when a friend dies. You honor their wishes. Isn’t what you taught David?”

“I taught him to honor his family,” Nolan replies.

“And he did. You were never his family, Nolan,” Emma explains. “I was his family. So was Mary. And Henry is my family.”

“Henry is me grandson,” Nolan insists. “You stole him from me…”

Emma laughs, sitting across from David’s father at a large table. She glances at Regina whose expression is neutral; giving nothing away, and then Albert Nolan who looks like he might pop a blood vessel in his brain. So the Information Broker shrugs. “Ok. Sure, Jan. Keep telling yourself that. I bet you it’s what you say to yourself to make you feel better about taking my son from me.”

“He’s not yours,” Albert replies.
She leans in, the humor gone from her eyes. “Let me make this abundantly fucking clear to you: Henry is my son. Mine. I changed his diapers, I was there when he was teething. I soothed every fever. I slept on the floor of his bedroom every night for weeks after his dad died. I’m his mother. You’re just a fucking stranger.”

“Listen here you fucking slag—”

Emma punches him in the face, rising her hands when two guns are drawn on her. “What? What I do?”

Regina pitches the bridge of her nose, eyes closed as she shakes her head. And Emma swears she hears the Assassin whisper, “Idiot,” to which the Blonde just chuckles.

Albert’s mouth explodes, oozing with blood. But to his credit, he keeps his cool and simply cleans the blood from his face with a handkerchief. With a nod, his goon squad holsters their guns. Emma relaxes with a smug grin and fishes her pack of cigarettes out of her pocket and lights the one that’s flipped, filter down; it’s her lucky. Usually one would smoke it to finish the pack off. But Emma’s surrounded by people that want her dead. She could use a bit of luck.

“Regina if you put out this cigarette, we are going to have a problem,” she warns.

“We are sitting in a den of enemies but me taking your cigarettes that’s the problem,”

Emma frowns in confusion. “Yes?”

“You are insane,” Regina tells her.

“Yeah, probably. But I wear it well,” Emma says. “Now, Nolan… where’s my kid?”

“He’s not—”

“Nolan…” Emma puts her hand up to stop him. “We’ve been over this. I’m his mom. I’m the only mom he’s known. And nothing you can say or do will change that. You can kill me and that wouldn’t change how he feels about me. But if you do kill me, you’ll lose Henry. Because let’s say you shoot me and try to raise that boy as if he means something to you, you wouldn’t be raising an heir, you’d be raising your murderer. Because there’s no way Henry will let you live if you kill me. And if you don’t think so, take a moment and remember who his fucking mother is. I might have kept him from our world, but I didn’t raise someone that would let that kind of fuckery slide.”

Nolan shakes his head. “We’ll see then, won’t we?”

“One of us might,” Emma replies. “The other won’t be so lucky.”

“Are you threatening me?” he asks.

Emma takes a long slow drag from her cigarette and leans in again. “No, just making a prediction. Because I know the kind of people we are. We’re killers. We’re criminals. We’re the black hats in those old westerns. There’s only one way this can end, with one of us in the ground. You won’t get let me and Henry live in peace away from you. And I won’t be able to rest easy knowing you’re still around trying to take my son from me. I’m sure you’ve played it all out in your head, Gramps. You know one of us has to die.”

“You’ve thought all of this out, haven’t ya lass?”

She nods. “Not just another pretty face, Albert.”
"You’ve seen better days,” he observes.

"Well, someone’s been trying to kill me for the last two days. So, I’m not at my best,” Emma replies, sardonically.

"Don’t act the maggot, Swan,” he tells her. “It doesn’t suit ya.”

“And the day I give a flying fuck about what suits me and what doesn’t is the day I’m putting a pistol in my mouth and pulling the fucking trigger,” Emma says, still puffing away on her cigarette. She has a smug smile plastered on her face as she smokes, knowing she’s getting under his skin. Nolan is old world. He is used to things being a certain way. “Look, Al, I get it, we don’t like each other. You’re old school. I’m new school, and a woman, and a lesbian. But let’s put that aside.”

“And why should I?” he asks. “I could just kill you where you sit, lass.”

The men move closer, the tension in their shoulders visible to those who knew how to look. One man drew his gun, the other, the one closer to Emma, screws a silencer on the end. A sane person might panic. But the sane train left the station a lot time ago for her. So all that left is something crazy.

“You could,” Emma says, leaning forward to snuff her cigarette. “You could shoot me here and now. But you will lose that kid. So why don’t we cut a deal?”

“What did ya have in mind?” Albert replies, his eyes shifting to his guards as he asks the question.

“Well…” Emma draws it out, taking a deep breath. She only has one shot at this. Just one shot. Quickly she moves, standing up and flipping the table, which knocks Nolan to the floor (and rips the stitches in her stomach… Again). Despite the white hot pain in her gut, she throws her weight into the guard with the silencer, grabbing his gun and shoots the other guy. It’s not exactly a silent shot but it’s muted, and that guy goes down in a heap of lifeless body mass. Then she headbutts the other, while she points the gun down and out. The gun goes off again, louder this time. But the bullet goes through the guard’s foot and he yelps in pain, his grip on the gun loosening enough for Emma to take it and with one well placed shot, silences him for good. Then and only then does she walk around the table to find Nolan scrambling to his feet and aims the gun at him, stopping him in his tracks.

“This is the deal,” she says. “You leave, you don’t come back, you don’t try to find the kid again, and I don’t kill you.”

He smiles up at her. And the expression confuses her. “Ya might have a wee bit of a problem with that, lassie.”

“I’ve got you dead to rights, what problem would I-” The sound of a slide lock stops her. And then she feels Regina at her back and Emma already knows what’s happening.

Nolan slowly gets to his feet and holds his hands out for the gun, which Emma hands over. “I’ll be taking your smokes too, Swan.”

“Seriously?”

“I could use a cigarette after today.”

Emma can’t argue with that so she hand the pack over. “So she never stopped working for you.”

It isn’t a question. But Nolan answers her. “Oh, aye. She’s a professional, Swan. Which is more
than I can say for you.”

The Information Broker shrugs. “Nobody’s perfect.”

“I’m sorry, Miss Swan,” she hears from behind her.

But Emma scoffs. “Fuck you, your Majesty. You just orphaned my son… again.”

Nolan chuckles as he lights a cigarette. When he takes that first drag relief washes over him, the tension leaving his body. “Now, Swan. You ready to hear my proposal?”

Chapter End Notes

Yup, I'm a terrible person. Sorry?

Anyway, if you don't hate me forever, give me a follow on Tumblr as MurderouslyAdorkable and/or on Twitter where I am MurderouslyCute
Double Agent

Chapter Summary

**Double Agent** - (n.) Someone who pretends to be working against one organization but who in fact working for that organization’s opponent; often a conduit for disinformation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#).

“You were busy playing Chess while I was playing Go.”
— My Friend Kelly

“Where's the boy?” Nolan asks, cigarette hanging from his lips.

Emma grins. “You lost him already? And they say I'm a crap parent.”

He hits her. Hard. Her eyes water, head lolls back. It would have hurt but Emma is already hurt; her stitches ripped again, blood seeping from the bullet wounds in her torso. But the kid is safe so it doesn’t matter what happens to her. Nolan could torture her to death, or he could shoot her point blank. So long as Henry is ok, away from him, Emma wins.

She’s strapped to a chair, hands bound to the armrests. They have moved her to a large shed outside. There are few guards posted on the door. A handful more patrolling the grounds. Or that is Emma’s guess. Why? Because that’s what she would do. And then there is Regina, leaning against the far wall, arms folded. It’s not an aggressive stance. Her shoulders are hunched, like she’s hugging herself, and she hasn’t looked at her since Emma was dragged in, bruised, bloody, and broken.

“One more time,” Nolan says, taking a long slow drag from his cigarette. His brow is shiny with sweat, his face blotchy and pale. “Where’s me grandson?”

“Which one?” Emma quips. “‘Cause you know James got ar-”

He hits her again but this time it’s not as strong. Like he’s pulling back at the last second. “I’m not fucking playing with ya, lass. I want me family.”

“And people in hell want fucking ice water,” Emma fires back. “You don’t hear them bitching about it. Mainly because hell isn’t real. Also, they’re all dead.”

Nolan takes a drag of his cigarette and it must have gone down the wrong tube because he hacks up half a lung before he turns his attention back to her. “Swan, you’re going to die tonight. And we’ve already been at this for hours, lass. Just tell me where to find me grandson, and I promise I’ll make it quick.”

“No,” Emma replies. “In fact, hell no.”
Nolan laughs until he coughs. It’s a wet hacking cough, like the kind old smokers have. It’s a sickening sound. Enough to make Emma cringe, her nose crinkling in disgust. *I’ve gotta quit smoking,* she thinks, quietly watching him recover. She can hear him wheezing, slow and steady as he tries to take deep breaths. In- *wheeze* -and-out- *wheeze*. Over and over again until the coughing fit stops and Albert stands up straight.

“Slow it is, then,” he says, leaning in close. His breathe smells like he swallow a dead body or rancid wet garbage. His nose is slowly dripping — well, oozing with clear mucus. Emma has been doing this a long time. And it’s not the first time she’s smelled death in the room. But it’s not something one gets used to. Blood has a coppery smell to it, like you can almost taste the metal in the air. Too much blood just smells like old, spoiling meat. She’s got a good poker face when it comes to that. However, when a person kills someone, blood isn’t the only thing they have to deal with. Everything relaxes when a person dies. Every. Thing. And bodily fluids... They make Emma’s stomach turn every time.

Her mouth waters and not in a good way. It feels like there’s something hanging from her uvula. Her throat tightens and her gut heaves at the scent. She feels gross and not just from the blood loss. It’s like she’s surrounded by spoiled food and slate cigarettes. But the odd thing is Albert looks as green as she feels. His shirt is soaked with sweat, and he loosens his tie, looking at her with unfocused eyes.

And then he jabs his thumb into one of her bullet wounds, digging his digit in until she cries out. “I’ll make ya talk, lass. Making people talk is what I do best.”

This hurts. This pain blows everything else all out of the water. It’s like that moment right after getting shot. It’s a hot, throbbing pain that burns through her. It twists her gut in knots and she has to turn her head not to empty the contents of her stomach all over herself. She heaves until there’s nothing left, until the act leaves her with the beginnings of a migraine pounding behind her eyes. But she still won’t give up Henry.

“Ready to give me what I asked for?” he asks, flicking his cigarette butt away.

“Not even close, gramps,” Emma spits at him. “So go ahead: torture me until there’s nothing left. I’ll die before I tell you where my son is. And if you find out, god help you then. Because you’ll be already dead. Once you kill me, you’ll have signed your death warrant.”

Albert scoffs. “Oh, the big bad Red Wolf going to come after me, eh?”

“Worse than Rubes, Old Man,” Emma confesses. “She says she doesn’t kill anymore but for me, she’ll make an exception. For me she always makes an exception.”

“Who?” he inquires, swaying as he stands.

“Come on, Old Man, don’t tell me you haven’t already figured it out,” the Information Broker teases. “It’s so obvious. It’s the reason you sent her Majesty after me.”

Then it hit him. “That girl of yours.”

“She was never mine,” Emma corrects. “And she also married someone else.”

Albert nods knowingly. “Oh, aye. I know that tale all too well, lass. The love of your life. The one ya stabbed in the back.”

Sea green eyes drift over to Regina. “A lot of that going around.”

At that Nolan chuckles, shaking his head, though the laugh ends in another wet hacking fit. “She’s
been playing ya from the beginning. From the very beginning. She made contact after ya killed Graham. Told me that she’d keep an eye on ya for me. I wanted her to give up the old woman’s safehouse but she couldn’t work miracles. Lucky for me, I had a hacker worth their weight in salt. But she offered up the boy when the time came. Promised to lead ya to me. And ya actually thought she loved ya.”

“Loves me,” Emma tells him. “Present tense. And yeah, there’s just some things you can’t fake. She might not wear her heart on her sleeve like I do, but I know love when I see it. And your assassin loves me. I don’t know if you know, but I’m really lovable. Ask anyone.”

Regina looks up, meeting Emma’s gaze with an expression twisted by guilt. The Blonde just smiles. Her own expression soft and at peace. There is nothing greater in this world than to love and be loved. And the assassin might be a backstabbing ass bitch, but she loves Emma, truly. It’s real. It’s probably the only real thing between them.

No one could convince Emma otherwise.

Well, that and the sex. You can’t fake that either. No one gets that wet if they are faking it. And that’s just science.

“I’d rather ask me grandson,” Nolan replies.

“Well, you can’t do that so you better make do with what you got.”

Albert jabs his thumb into her wound again, harder this time and the effect is similar. The pain is white hot and nearly unbearable. Her gut tightens and the migraine worsens.

“Talk, lass,” he says. “And I’ll just put a bullet between your eyes.”

Once Emma recovers she manages to croak, “When you put it that way — no.”

Nolan raises his hand like he’s going to strike her but Regina’s booming voice halts him. “Enough,” she bellows. “We’re getting nowhere.”

“If you think ya can do better,” her employer says.

“I can,” Regina affirms. “And I will. Step aside.”

The assassin strides towards her as Albert steps to the side, lighting another one of Emma’s cigarettes as he leaning against the wall.

Emma rolls her eyes. “Oh, this should be good.”

“Shut up,” Regina orders.

“Make me, bitch,” Emma fires back. And for her troubles she’s backhanded. “I thought hitting me doesn’t work.”

“Torture won’t work to get you to talk,” the assassin explains. “However it could get you to close your mouth for five minutes.”

The Information Broker scoffs. “It’s like you don’t know me at all.”

“I know you well enough, Miss Swan,” she says.

“We’re back to Miss Swan again,” Emma snarks. “And here I thought I meant something to you.”
“I’m an assassin, Em— Miss Swan,” Regina tells her. “What did you think this was?”

“I don’t know,” Emma replies. “Love maybe. Call me crazy.”

“You’re crazy,” Regina complies, quickly.

The Information Broker winces. “I walked right into that one.”

“Yes,” the Assassin agrees. “You did.”

“Fuck you, Regina.”

“You were a target, Miss Swan.” Regina says, unphased. “I am meant to kill you. So I don’t what you want from me.”

Emma studies her for a moment, looking right into her eyes. She doesn’t know what she’s looking for. But whatever she sees isn’t something she likes. “How about the truth, your Majesty.”

“The truth?” Regina asks. “The truth is you’re going to die tonight. And in the weeks to come so well everyone else you’ve ever loved. Ruby. Belle. Merida. Mulan. Then I’ll track down Lily and her family. And I’ll kill them too. I’ll murder Tiana. Anything I need to do in order to complete my contract.”

“Who fucking hurt you?” Emma wonders out loud. “What made you like this? Was it this Queen of Hearts? Was it Daniel’s death? What made the Evil Queen such an unfeeling bitch?”

Again Regina slaps her. “You don’t get to speak me this way. And don’t you dare act like you know me, Miss Swan. You’re in this mess because you trust too easily. You love too easily. And as I learned a long time ago, love makes a person weak and therefore exploitable. All I had to do was bat my eyes, feed you a sob story about my tragic past and I had you wrapped around my finger. It was simple really. You practically handed me the means to your demise on a silver platter, Miss Swan.”

Emma doesn’t say anything at first. She just stares into Regina’s eyes. “Bullshit.”

The assassin is taken aback by her retort. “Pardon me?”

“Bullshit, you love me,” Emma tells her. “Not at first. You were good enough to keep your emotions in check. But last night in my room when you were with me… Like I said, you can fake a lot of things. But you can’t fake what happened between us. I saw it in your eyes that night.”

“You were projecting,” Regina insists.

Emma shakes her head. “See, here’s the thing: I think that’s what you’ll tell yourself. That you were just playing a part. That it wasn’t real. Whatever you have to do so you can sleep restfully at night. It won’t work. You’re going to dream about me. I’ll never be too far from your thoughts. And you’ll always wonder ‘what if.’ It’ll eat away at you. And sometimes you’ll regret killing me. Because I could have given you something that you assumed you could never have again. Because you feel like you don’t deserve it. Which is true, Regina. You don’t. You’re a murderer, an assassin. If we all got what we deserved, we’d be dead. But that’s the thing about love, it’s not about if you deserve it, it’s about needing it. You need love. Just like the rest of us.”

“Are you done?” Regina deadpans.

“You’re going to hate yourself for this,” Emma replies. “There. Now I’m done.”
The assassin looks back at the old mob boss. “You’re not going to get the information you need. However, I’ll be able to find your grandson. He trusts me. When I find him, he’ll more than likely come with me without incident. Of course my price just doubled.”

Nolan sighs. “Fine. I’ll pay your fee. So kill her then and let’s be done with it.”

Regina holds her hand out until the mob boss hands over his gun and like a pro she checks the magazine and pulls on the slide lock.

“I thought it’s been awhile,” Emma remarks.

“It’s just like riding a bike, Miss Swan.”

Fair enough. “Then do what you have to do.”

Regina takes a step back and raises the gun. She meets Emma’s eyes and her expression softens. Remorse hidden behind those beautiful brown eyes. Her lip trembles slightly, almost imperceptible. But Emma knows what to look for.

“I do love you,” the assassin whispers.

And the Information Broker smiles weakly. “I know.”

And then, boom!

Nolan collapses and Emma breathes a sigh of relief. The old man tries to get to his feet but he can’t. He doesn’t have the strength.

“Not feeling too hot, are we Gramps?” Emma calls out to him.

“What— What… What did ya do to me?” he asks, slurring his words.

Emma beams. “Anyone ever tell you that smoking kills, Nolan?”

“But you—”

“Smoked the one cigarette that wasn’t poisoned,” Emma says. “Yes, yes I did.”

“How?” he asks.

“I’m not the poison expert,” she replies. “Why are you asking me for?”

His gaze falls to Regina. “You…”

Regina nods. “Me. Yes. It’s ricin, Mr. Nolan. There’s no known cure. And judging by how quickly your symptoms have manifested, you have hours. Perhaps a day. Perhaps two. But you will die drowning in your own fluids.”

“Ya fucking slag…” he curses. “Ya’ll never make it out of here alive.”

“Yeah, about that…” Just as Emma utters the words, shots ring out. Bang!... Bang!.. They can hear voices, loud and panicked, some of them having their lives snuffed out before they get a chance to call out. It takes minutes for the shooting to die down and calm to settle all around them. Regina helps Emma out of her restraints and gets her to her feet.

“I was wrong about you,” the assassin comments as she begins to help Emma to the exit. “You’re not an idiot.”
“Oh?” the Information Broker asks.

“You’re insane,” Regina replies. “This? This was insane.”

“It worked out,” Emma says. “I’d call it a win.”

They’re almost at the door. “Barely. I was actually worried you might have smoked one of the ricin laced cigarettes.”

Emma shrugs. “I didn’t. I was careful, like you said.”

Regina chuckles. “You listened to me for once. Well, I’m impressed, dear.”

She laughs too, groaning when it pains her but still she manages to say, “Always with a tone of surprise.”

The assassin shakes her head. “Idiot.”

“Yup.”

The sound of a pistol cocking stops them as they reach the door to the shed. They look back and see Nolan managed to get to his feet. He’s wobbly but it doesn’t mean he’s not dangerous. It’s a gun after all. And dying or not, he’s not dead yet, and therefore still a threat.

“None of us are making it out of here alive, lass,” Nolan says taking aim. “If I’m dead, I’m taking ya fucking cunts with me.”

Emma cringes. “Okay, I can see why people hate that word now.”

“Everything is always a fucking joke with ya,” he spits with vitriol.

“No, just most things.”

“Emma…” Regina warns. “This wasn’t part of the plan.”

“No,” the Blonde agrees. “But we can improvise.”

“How?”

At Regina’s question, a shadowy figure drops from the rafters, right behind the old mobster. They spring up behind him, one hand covering his mouth. The other bringing a knife across his throat. Nolan falls to the ground like a sack of meat, revealing Mulan dressed in all black.

“Were you up there the whole fucking time?” Emma asks in disbelief. Mulan nods, wordlessly. And her boss just chuckles. “Seriously, on a scale of one to ten how crazy is the sex with you and Merida?”

“Emma,” Regina chides.

“What?”

“I can still kill you.”

“Are we really back on that again? Because I’m going to have to point out that you said that you loved me like not less than five minutes ago, your Majesty.”
“Regina,” the assassin corrects. “We’ve been through too much.”

At that Emma grins, brightly. “That’s right. We have.”

“And you said that you loved me first,” Regina adds.

“When did I say that?” Emma asks.

“Last night,” Regina tells her.

Emma cringes. “You heard that?”

Regina nods as she opens the door. “I did.”

They walk outside and there’s bodies everywhere. But no sign of any of her people and then Emma hears a dog barking in the distance and she turns towards the sound, to see her kid running full speed right to her.

“Whoa… Kid… No. Wait.”

But it’s too late, he’s jumping into her arms before she can stop him, opening her wound even further. It hurts, Emma’s whole body is screaming to drop the kid and then get herself to a hospital, but he’s holding onto her so tightly that she can barely breath.

“Mom,” he whispers in her arms. “I love you.”

She smiles. “I love you too, Henry. So, so very much.”

Emma can feel him grinning into her shoulder. “I knew you’d come for me.”

“Of course, kid,” she agrees. “It’s you and me against the world.”

“And Miss Regina?” Henry asks.

The Information Broker glances at Regina as she steadies Emma on her feet. “Only if she wants to.” The dog barks happily as she trots over to them and she pulls away to look at Henry. “Hey, should we keep the dog?”

Henry nods excitedly and hugs her tightly again. “His name is Pongo… And I’m so happy you’re ok, mom.”

“Not as happy as I am that you’re safe,” Emma breathes.

An SUV comes barreling in, stopping feet away from them and when the door opens, it’s Ruby in the passenger seat. “Hop in, bitches. We’re going to the mall.”

“Actually,” Emma begins. “I think we should go to the hospital because I am really hurt.”

“Pussy,” Ruby scoffs.

“Hey,” Emma retorts. “I got shot.” She points to the wounds. “Right here.”

Regina smacks her hand away. “Don’t poke your bullet wounds.”

“I wasn’t going to,” Emma insists.

But Regina doesn’t believe her. “Idiot.”
She grins at that. “Yup.”

Henry shakes his head. “You guys are weird.”

Emma puts him down. “Get your dog and get into the car, kid. I’m gonna be gross with Miss Regina.”

Regina’s face twists in disgust. “Not until you brush your teeth.”

“Seriously?” Emma asks. “I don’t even get a kiss?”

“You will… after we get you to a doctor that doesn’t ask too many questions. And you’ve taken a shower. Because you stink.”

Emma can’t argue. She does smell like blood and vomit. “Fine. But when I’m better and clean…”

Regina takes her hand as she helps Emma inside the car. “Then you’ll get exactly what you want.”

“Awesome.”

Henry sticks out his tongue. “Adults are gross.”

“Mind your business, kid.”

Chapter End Notes

Shoutout to the person who hit me with a Chekhov's Gun in the comments. You were dead on. Gold star for you, you literary genius. I’m posting two chapters. Plus a sneak peak for the sequel to this. :D One more chapter.
A New Legend

Chapter Summary

Legend - (n.) An operative’s claimed background or biography, usually supported by documents and memorized details.

Chapter Notes

Tiny smut scene in the beginning. Also warning, feels ahead.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I'm no good at being noble, but it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world. Someday you'll understand that.”
— Rick Blaine, Casablanca

A Month Later…

The warm shower feels like a baptism. It’s not only cleansing but therapeutic. The warm water washing away the last few years, making Emma a brand new person. At first she didn’t know who she would be without her glorious but tumultuous life of crime. Who was she if she wasn’t an Information Broker? The answer she finds is simple, she’s Henry’s mother. And so Emma throws herself into that, finally taking her son away from the chaos that was her former life. Ruby has the keys to the kingdom now and she’s having a good go at. Especially, now that one of the big players was permanently taken off the board. In fact everyone’s lives have improved since they killed Albert Nolan.

Henry’s especially.

He is adjusting nicely, helping Emma in ways he’d never understand. Every time she doubts if it was worth it, all she has to do is look at his smiling face, so bright, so happy and she knows that she has made the right choice.

Henry’s safety and well-being at been the point of it all. And now she doesn’t have to worry about either. Everyone that wanted her dead is dead and gone. Or they think she is. And of those, they never knew what she looks like, by Emma’s design.

And for the first time in a long time, Emma can say that she’s truly content. So content that she’s singing in the shower.

“Oh, oh, oh… Ain’t nobody, loves me better; makes me happy, makes me feel this way. Ain’t nobody, loves me better than you… At first you put your arms around me, then you put your charms around me. We stare into each others eyes, and what we see is no surprise. Got a feeling most with treasure, and a love so deep we cannot measure.”
She’s so wrapped up in her singing that she doesn’t hear the bathroom door open. No one is after her, so she’s dropped a bit of her hyper vigilance. She’s not focused on the threat behind every door, because there isn’t one anymore. And she’s lost in a tiny world of her own creation, so she doesn’t notice anything until the shower door slides open.

“Singing in the shower, Emma? Really?”

“Gah-ah!” is her response. “Regina, don’t do that.”

“Eavesdrop on you? Or make so much noise entering the bathroom that it can scarcely be called sneaking up on you?” the assassin — former assassin asks.

Emma frowns. “Either.”

“Did you use up all of the hot water?” Regina inquires.

She shakes her head at the other woman. “No, not yet.”

“Good,” Regina says, letting her robe slide off of her shoulders pooling around her feet. “Move over.”

The former Information Broker smiles. “Couldn’t wait for me?”

Regina rolls her eyes as she steps into the shower. “You were taking too long.”


“No wonder you take so long.”

The Blonde scoffs, snaking her arms around Regina’s bare waist and pulling her against her. “Ha-ha. You’ve got jokes this morning, your Majesty.”

Regina puts a hand against Emma’s chest with a sly grin. “I have my moments.”

She seems so relaxed and unburdened, like the weight of the world has been lifted from her shoulders. It’s a good look on her. Not that every look isn’t a good look for arguably the most beautiful woman Emma has had the privilege of seeing naked. But this is Emma’s favorite.

The former assassin’s touch is feather light, fingers dancing along her skin, making Emma shiver despite being under the warm stream of water. Regina brushes the scars on her body, lingering on the old bullet wounds on her stomach.

“Any pain?” Regina asks, her eyes focused on the scars, seemingly ignoring the way her touch makes Emma’s breath hitch in her throat.

She shakes her head at the question, eyes darkening as she watches the other woman. “No. No pain at all.”

“Are you sure?” Regina presses. “You’re shivering.”

Emma swallows thickly. “It’s not because of the pain.”

Which is non existent. The scars itch sometimes, the way scar tissue does on occasion but that’s it.

“Oh?” Regina says, teasingly, her touch dipping lower. “Then what has you shaking like this?”
“I’ll give you three guesses.”

The former assassin shakes her head, her fingers drifting closer and closer to where Emma is throbbing, waiting for her touch. “That’s not how this is going to work. I’ll ask a question, and if you give me an honest answer, I’ll reward you.”

Emma arches an eyebrow. “Seriously? This again?”

Regina smirks. “Yes. Because I know how much you like these games. Now, why are you shaking?”

Emma wouldn’t call it shaking, more like trembling, her whole body vibrating with a need she’s only felt once before. But that’s another lifetime. Emma is a different person now. So is Lily. They’ve both moved on.

Regina leans in, her lips ghosting over Emma’s. “You haven’t answered the question.”

“I’m a little distracted,” Emma confesses.

“Oh? Why is that?”

“You’re very naked, and you’re touching me.”

A low chuckle escapes Regina as she kisses Emma. It’s slow and soft at first. The last month has just been them getting acquainted with their new selves. Emma the retired criminal. And Regina the retired hitman... hitperson. The days have been filled with laughter, watching Henry just being a kid. The nights are a bit like this, same with the early mornings. Emma never wants to leave, she doesn’t want this to end. And maybe it won’t have to. Maybe this is how they’ll spend the rest of their lives; in a world of their own creation.

Their passion for each other runs deep and burns hot. So as always a chaste kiss grows into something more. And Emma, as her eyes close and she falls into her lover’s embrace, she feels Regina guide her back. She gasps at the coolness of the tile against her warm skin, and Regina’s hand glides over her center.

“Fuck me...” she whispers.

“Soon...” is the quiet promise that falls from the other woman's lips as her touch becomes more deliberate, fingers sliding through slick folds with ease. There’s a certain reverence in the way she caresses her. In the first few days after Emma was released from the hospital, she thought it was because Regina thought she was fragile. But it isn’t that. Regina doesn’t think she’s breakable. She cherishes Emma. She loves her.

“So wet...” the former assassin hum as she kisses along Emma’s jaw, nipping at her neck, and then sucking on her pulse point.

“Fuck...” Emma groans, slipping her thigh in between Regina’s as she pulls her close, and palms her ass. The other woman rolls her hips against with a moan and Emma grins.

“Cheater,” Regina admonishes her.

“Guilty, your Majesty.”

“Regina. I’m not the Evil Queen anymore.”

Emma shrugs. “Maybe not. But you’ll always be a queen to me.”
“Smooth…” Regina says as she breaks away. “Turn around.”

“What?”

“Don’t make me repeat myself, Emma.”

The tone of her voice sends shivers down her back and she complies without a second thought. Even though she wants to turn around to face Regina especially after the pleased chuckle that escapes the other woman, Emma stays how she is, the anticipation of the act making her slick and ready. She feels Regina sweep her hair to one side, her body pressed against Emma’s back. Even slightly under the stream of the hot shower, Emma feels her temperature rise and Regina’s warm breath on her neck. The former assassin’s hands are everywhere, teasing her nipples, drawing light circles over her bare skin. One of her hands falls away from Emma’s body and the Blonde whimpers at the loss.

“Patience…” Regina tells her as she leans back, her other hand still rolling one of Emma’s nipples between her finger and thumb. She’s enjoying this; the way she makes Emma want — no, need her. The assassin formerly known as the Evil Queen is well aware of the effect she has on the retired criminal and Emma knows that Regina relishes in it. Her fingers trace Emma’s spine, drawing small almost helpless sounds from her as she trembles under her touch. “Patience, dear…”

She cups Emma’s center from behind and the Blonde goes weak in the knees, her hips moving against the hand between her legs.

“Please, Regina…”

“Please, what?”

“I need…” Emma breathes. “Regina… Please…”

“Be specific,” the other woman tells her.

Emma licks her lips before she tries again. “Regina… your fingers…”

To that the former assassin caresses her slit, humming in appreciation. “Yes, dear?”

“I want…” Emma moans. “I need your fingers inside me… Please, Regina.”

“Is that what you really want?” she asks, her voice low, her words rumbling in her chest.

Emma nods. “Yes. God, yes.”

Her candor is rewarded with Regina slowly entering her with a single finger. Emma bites her lip to keep from getting too loud, her head falling forward, resting on the tile and she moves against, desperate for more. But Regina set a pace that so slow it’s almost painful and all Emma can do is whimper and wordlessly plea for something she can scarcely put words to. She works her up with that single finger, the warmth of her body against Emma’s, and her other hand teasing her clit as she whispers all sorts of concupiscent things in Emma’s ear. And she loses herself in Regina’s touch, in her voice, in the way she feels against her.

The whole world falls away until everything is Regina and Regina is everything. This bliss only interrupted — or rather heightened when the former assassin slips another finger inside, her other hand working more deliberately on the small bundle of nerves at the apex of her center. It sends Emma into a tailspin of sensation, and an all too familiar feeling beings to build. Her body quakes and she tries to dig her fingers into the tile wall; anything to anchor her. It doesn’t work. She’s
falling, spiraling into what feels like an earth shattering ending.

It’s not explosive, though with Regina that’s always a possibility. And God knows Emma’s been the beneficiary of such an ending. But that’s not what this is. Her climax builds, like pouring hot water into a bottomless cup, until she’s impossibly full and warm. Her body vibrates with the need to be given that last drop, that indescribable thing that makes her proverbial cup run over. She’s filled the brim. All she needs is just a little more.

“You’re close,” Regina whispers to her. More of an observation than a question.

But Emma answers with an almost pained, “Yes. So good.”

“Come for me.”

“Not yet.”

“Em-ma … please…”

The former criminal can count on one hand the number of times she’s heard Regina sincerely say please. Usually only when the roles are reversed. And there’s just something in the way Regina speaks to her, the way she touches her… Emma’s been holding it back. But that gets more difficult as Regina continues driving in and out of her, faster, and harder until Emma spills over the edge, her climax rumbling through her. Regina is with her the whole time, guiding her through it with laugiously strokes until she settles, slumping forward and breathing heavy.

“Emma?”

“Can’t talk…” she replies. “I died. You killed me.”

Her sultry laugh makes Emma grin lazily. “You’re telling me it’s that easy?”

The former Information Broker turns around. “Not even some.” She pulls Regina against her. “Come here.”

“Emma…” Regina pushes at her. “We have to finish showering.”

“Says who?”

Just as she speaks, there’s a subtle knock at the door. “Mom?”

Regina just gives her a pointed look and Emma can only laugh.

But again the little voice sounds. “Mom, you said that we’d have breakfast.”

“Yeah, kid,” Emma calls to him. “We — ah… I’ll be out in a minute. Wait… Go to your room. I’ll come and get you.”

“Okay…”

She waits until she hears the sound of the door to their adjoining room closes before she speaks. “Don’t even say anything.”

“I haven’t said a word.”

“No, but you were thinking things.”

Regina arches an eyebrow. “Oh, is that a crime now?”
“No, but us leaving this shower before I get a chance to fuck you would be criminal.”

“Emma, we don’t have time.”

“Regina, I’ll make time.”

The former assassin shakes her head. “You’re a terrible parent.”

“It’s what I keep trying to tell you,” Emma says and then kisses her soundly.

“Idiot.”

“Yup.”

Breakfast turns into a late brunch overlooking the beach. Henry’s out by the water, playing fetch with Pongo. He’s laughing, running back and forth on the sand. He looks…. Lighter, more like a kid, more like himself.

“You did that.”

Emma turns her head quickly. “Hmm?”

“You gave him a normal life,” Regina tells her. “He won’t grow up like we did.”

She smiles. “No. He won’t.” Emma meets her gaze, staring into chocolate brown eyes. “I never thanked you. You gave up everything to help me protect my son. If it wasn’t for you… We wouldn’t be here today.” She places her hand on Regina’s. “Thank you.”

Regina fidgets at the show of gratitude. No doubt not used to it. “You’re welcome, Emma.” They exchange smiles but the light doesn’t quite reach Emma’s sea green eyes. And Regina catches that immediately. “What’s wrong?”

Emma takes a sip of her coffee before she speaks. “Remember I asked if you wanted to walk away what would it take?”

Regina nods. “And then you offered my an eight figure payout to go do that when this was all over.”

“I did,” Emma confirms. “And I just heard back from Belle. The last wire transfer has gone through. You’re free to do whatever it is you want Regina.” She passes her a small envelope. “There’s a clean passport. And a plane ticket.”

Regina frowns at her. “Emma, what are you saying?”

“I’m saying it’s time to find your happy ending, Regina,” she confesses. “Even if it’s not with me. I have Henry. Being his mom, really being there for my son, that’s my happy ending. And I know that you’ll regret it if you don’t at least strike out on your own. Find what makes you truly happy. That’s all I want for you.”

“But what if I want to stay? What if I want to be with you?” Regina asks. “What if you and Henry are my happy ending?”

“Then you know where I’ll be. And if I’m not there, you’ll know how to find me,” Emma replies.
“I’ll wait for you if I have to. You’re the love of my life.”

“What about—”

“Lily? She’s one of my best friends. And there was a time where I thought she was the one for me,” Emma tells her. “So I let her go. Because that’s what you do if you love someone. Truly love them. Maybe they’ll come back. Maybe they won’t. And if they don’t, they’re not yours. But you can’t cling to something just because you’re afraid of losing it.

“Regina, you’ve been doing this for a long time. And now that’s over. You can be your own person. But first you have to find out who you are again.”

Regina’s eyes well with tears. “Henry…”

“He’ll understand… eventually.”

“Emma, I don’t want to do this. I don’t want to leave you and your son.”

Emma’s eyes well with tears too. “I know. But it’s not about what we want sometimes. It’s about what we need. And you need this, Regina. I don’t want you to go. But I won’t stand in the way of your happiness. I love you too much.”

Regina looks at Emma for a long time. Studying her, almost like she’s trying to memorize everything about her. Emma can only guess because she’s doing the same thing. Her mind making snapshots of this woman, this woman that came into her life like a whirlwind. Emma’s a better person for it. Even if she’s losing her in the end. Just loving her is enough.

“I’ll have to pack,” the former assassin finally says.

“Already done, your Majesty,” Emma informs her, pointing just behind her. When Regina turns around, she sees Merida holding a pint glass as she leaning against a car. “Mulan is with her. They’ll take you to the airport.”

Before Regina can say anymore she notices the others. Tiana, Ruby, Dorothy and Belle. They’re all there, holding up glasses in a toast.

“The spy’s farewell,” Regina says.

Emma nods. “I thought it was fitting.”

The former assassin smiles, though she can’t keep the sadness from her expression, and raises her glass to them. “It is.” She glances at Emma. “I love you, Emma Swan.”

“I love you too, Regina Mills.”

“I’m coming back for you,” Regina promises, before she puts her glass down and kisses Emma. This kiss, it’s like nothing she’s ever felt. It’s like Regina is pouring every ounce of love she feels for her into it. And Emma does the same. This might be goodbye forever. It might not. But Emma’s biggest regret is not letting Lily know what she meant to her before she forced her to leave. She had been the second most important person in her world. But that’s in the past. Regina is her present and along with Henry, hopefully she’ll be her future too. There’s no way, Emma’s letting her leave without Regina knowing exactly what she means to her.

“You better,” Emma tells her as they break away from each other and she kisses the back of her hand. “Don’t look back, your Majesty. It’ll just make it harder.”
“You’re not the boss of me, Miss Swan. That’s not how this works between us.” Regina stands up, kissing Emma on the cheek. “Goodbye, Emma.”

“Goodbye, Regina.”

Emma watches her go. And true to their relationship, Regina looks back after she gets into the car. Her eyes are watery, just like Emma’s. But neither of them are crying. Not yet. Emma doesn’t want to make this harder for Regina and she suspects that the former assassin has a similar thought. However, Emma knows that this is for the best. She loves her. She’ll always love her. But she’ll never stand in the way of Regina’s happiness, whatever that may be.

“Mom?”

Emma wipes her eyes as the car pulls away and turns to Henry. “Yeah, kid? What’s up?”

“Where’s Miss Regina?”

“She… She had to get back to her life.”

“Will she be back?”

“Maybe, kid. But for now it’s just us.”

“Against the world?”

“Yup. You and me against the world kid. Always.”

He hugs her. “I love you, mom.”

“I love you too, kiddo.”

EPILOGUE

A giant vat of coffee and a vaporizing pen. The only way to spend one’s mornings. At least for Emma. At least now. The vaping making Emma feel ridiculous but if it’ll help her quit, she’s all about it. She sends the kid to school and then takes her seat on the balcony with a smoke, a mug, and the newspaper.

It’s been a week since she watched Regina go.

And it still hurts like it just happened. Emma tells herself that it’s for the best. Regina is… well, she’s not even Regina anymore. Probably traded in that passport Emma got her for something new. New name. New life. A new beginning. And Emma tells herself that she made the right choice. Even if it hurts more than she lets on.

She’s not sleeping like she used to. Her bed seems empty without Regina next to her. Because she never slept so soundly than when that woman was in her arms. Her mornings are a little less brighter, without Regina stealing her coffee cup and reading the newspaper before she had a chance to. The only thing that makes the sacrifice worth it, is the fact that Henry is happy. Even if she’s not, even if she feels like there’s something missing, Henry’s happiness makes it worth the price.

“It’s just going to be me and you for awhile,” she tells the vaporizer. Emma takes a few drags before
her peace is interrupted by a persistent, heavy handed knock at the door. She ignores it for a few moments, not wanting to interrupt the flow of her morning routine. But the knocking continues and with a groan Emma finishes off her coffee before she heads back inside.

“Keep your fucking shirt on,” she calls, and then grumbles to herself. “Knocking on my door like the fucking police. What’s wrong with you?” She turns the doorknob and yanks it open. “What?” Who she sees stops her in tracks and all Emma can say is, “August?”

He stands there, holding a baby with his eyes and Lily’s coloring. “Hey, Em’. You look like shit.”

“I feel like shit,” Emma replies. “What brings you to my neck of the woods? I thought you and your better half were living it up on that island of yours.”

“We were…” He quickly corrects himself. “We are. But… Emma, I have to tell you something.”

“What?”

“I’m sorry,” he confesses.

Emma frowns in confusion. “Sorry for what?”

“For this,” he replies stepping to the side.

Before Emma can even register what’s going, she’s knocked in the face by a mean right jab. It rocks her head back and she sees stars, her eyes welling from the force of the blow. She tries to recover but her attacker is on her tackling her to the ground before Emma knows what hit her.

“A kid?” her attacker rages. “You have a fucking kid and you didn’t tell me?!”

Lily.

Emma should have known this day would come. “Lily…”

But she punches her in the face, rattling her brain before she can saying more. “A fucking kid, Emma! Are you fucking crazy?”

“Lily…”

Whap! She hits Emma again. “No, you don’t get to talk. Why didn’t you tell me you had a kid?”

She rears back to no doubt punch Emma once more but the former criminal blocks the hit and manages to roll them both so their positions are reversed and Emma is on top.

“You can either keep hitting me. Or you can let me answer your questions. But you can’t have it both ways,” Emma explains, adding, “I know how that might be difficult for you to understand.”

Lily glares at her. “A bisexual joke? Really?”

“I couldn’t help myself.” Emma doesn’t take her eyes off of Lily but she does call to her husband. “Booth! You can come in. I think your wife is done hitting me in the face.”

He doesn’t move at first. “Lily?”

“Yes, I’m done,” she replies. “For now.”

Emma stands and offers Lily a hand up. “Good. Anyone up for some coffee?”
Lily gets to her feet with Emma’s help. “I could use a cup.”

“Me too,” August says. “Long flight with an infant.”

“Say no more,” Emma tells them and gestures them to follow her to the kitchen where she freshens her cup and pours two more for her guests. “Still take cream and sugar?”

Lily nods. “You remembered.”

“I did. I don’t know how husband takes it though.”

“Black,” August reveals. “As god intended it”

Emma just gives him a look. “I’m not touching that one.” She passes off the cups. “So you want to know about the kid.”

It’s not a question but Lily answers. “Yes. You owe me that much.”

“I owe you a lot more,” Emma confesses. “But I’ll tell you everything. From the beginning.”

And she does. She tells them both everything. Emma knows that with Lily and August there’s no secrets between them so she’s comfortable letting him know this side of her. And she’s also relieved that they both finally know the whole story.

“I’m sorry that I didn’t tell you about Henry, Lily. I was trying to do what I thought was right.”

“I know,” Lily says. “But you could’ve trusted me. I would have kept your secret safe.”

“You would have made me get out of the game,” Emma corrects her. “Don’t argue. We both know that’s true. Just like we both know I couldn’t walk away. I was addicted to the life. I wasn’t ready to give it up. Not for you, not even for Henry. “

“But you did,” August cuts in.

“And that’s what counts,” Lily adds.

“I know.”

Lily frowns seeing the subtle anguish in her eyes. “Emma? What happened to that assassin?”

“She’s gone.”

Silence befalls them for a moment before her former lover speaks. “You loved her.”

“I did…” Emma whispers. “I do love her. But we both know, I’m not meant to get the girl, Lily.”

Chapter End Notes

This is it. And it's been a fun ride. I'm sorry for the Casablanca ending. It's just how I saw this story coming to a close from the beginning. There will be a sequel, the preview will be in the next part. If you want to read it, please do. If not thank you for reading this. It's been awhile since I finished something this long. I really hoped you enjoyed it.
Anyway, if you don't want to be spoiled, you can follow me on tumblr (MurderouslyAdorkable) or twitter (MurderouslyCute). Again, thank you for reading. Cheers.
No Rest for the Wicked Teaser

Chapter Summary

This is a little teaser for the sequel to this fict, No Rest for the Wicked.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Five Years Later…

The years pass and Emma learns to live with the hole in her heart. But there isn’t day in the last five years where she hasn’t thought about the assassin. Former assassin. Regina’s never far from her thoughts at all times. She once thought that moving to Granny’s old house would help heal her heart. But the silence only makes it worse. So she finds other ways to cope. Carpentry. Old cars. Sometimes she takes the dog out for long runs. Nothing helps. Or rather it’s only a bandaid. Because when she’s in bed, after making the kid go to sleep, Emma feels the weight of that loneliness pressing down on her chest.

She just has to accept that Regina is gone. And she isn’t coming back.

Some days that hollow feeling is manageable. Like today, Emma finds contentment watching Henry get on the bus for his first day of middle school. Her little boy, growing up into a gangly teenager, all torso and long limbs. He’s almost as tall as she is. Another summer or two and she’ll be looking up at him.

“Where did the time go?” she asks herself watching the bus drive away. Emma gets to her morning routine, calling the dog inside to feed him before she makes a light breakfast for her and forces herself to eat it.

However, Pongo starts barking just as she gets started and someone knocks on her door.

“Pongo…. Indoor voice,” she tells the dog and he quiets down as she walks toward the door.

“Lily, if you came here to punch me in the face again….”

She hears someone shift on their feet before calling back to her. “It’s not Lily.”

“Regina?” Emma can’t open the door fast enough. And there she is, standing right there. Her hair shorter, curlier than before. “You changed your hair…. It looks good. You look good.”

“That’s all you have to say to me, Emma?” Regina asks. “After five years?”

“Well… yeah, that,” she replies before she closes the distance between them. “And this…”

Emma kisses her like no times has passed. Like there hasn’t been five years between them. And Regina deepens it just like old times.

“Can I come in?” the former assassin asks.

“You fucking better, your Majesty.”
“Well...” Emma begins after she catches her breath. “That happened.”

“Twice...” Regina adds with a lazy grin.

Emma props herself on one elbow to peer at Regina. “Oh, really?”

“Yes,” the other woman replies. “I’m surprised you didn’t catch on.”

“I didn’t want to overanalyze anything. I just really needed to touch you.”

Regina chuckles before she leans in and brushes her lips against Emma. “I’ve missed so much, Emma.”

“I can’t believe you’re here,” Emma says. “A part of me thinks I’m dreaming.”

“You dream about me often, dear?”

Emma shakes her head. “Not as often as I want.”

She takes Regina’s hand into hers and squeezes it. It’s not a dream. She’s here.

“I’m real, Emma,” the other woman says as if she can read her mind.

“Just making sure.” Emma chuckles. But Regina’s quiet, her brow furrowing with concern. She sees it immediately. “What’s wrong?”

“There’s something I have to tell you…”

Just as she speaks, there’s a knock on the door and Regina tenses.

“Expecting someone?” Emma asks, slipping away from the other woman to reach for a pistol in the nightstand next to her bed.

“Yes,” Regina replies, touching Emma’s arm. “My friend, Kathryn. And my son.”

“You have a son?”

“It’s a recent development.”

Chapter End Notes

Alright that was the end of the first part of this series. When it’s eventually posted I probably going to change this a bit, expanding in a few places and of course add some smut... because of reasons. It will be a wild ride. So look for it.

As always I'm MurderouslyAdorkable on tumble and MurderouslyCute on twitter. Thanks you guys. Cheers. And Viva La SwanQueen.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!