Operation Albatross (or something like that)

by perfection_located

Summary

The Chamings think they’ve found Emma's true love, but refuse to tell her who it is until the ball for her 30th birthday.

Emma, in a desperate attempt to get them off her back, convinces Regina to enter into a fake relationship with her.

Regina, who has long since realized what her feelings for Emma truly are, agrees despite the part of her that knows this will bring nothing but pain.

Henry and Ruby have been working on Operation Albatross for months now and are sure this will be the tipping point.

Nothing, however, is anything like it seems.

Shenanigans of Storybrooke. Post season 3, but no second curse. SwanQueen, obviously.

Notes

Hey everyone! This is my first SwanQueen fic, so let me know if I screw up. Also, I know MM seems a little OOC at the beginning but I swear it's all explained.
Please R&R!
"C'mon Regina," Emma coaxed.

Regina considered her situation. Emma had asked to meet in the town park and sprung an absolutely insane idea on her. Snow and Charming, it seemed, were planning a godforsaken ball for Emma's 30th birthday. They also, as Emma had overheard, were planning on getting Emma engaged to one of the men she was to meet at the ball. When she had confronted them, they had refused to tell her who.

Hook and Emma were broken up; they had done so amicably weeks ago. However, the Charmings continued to suffer under the deluded notion that Emma's 'True Love' was out there waiting to be found. They even thought they had found 'him'.

In an attempt to get her parents to back off, Emma had asked that Regina go as her date to the ball and, to ensure they had everyone convinced, be seen on dates in the two weeks before and after the ball.

It did have its merits, Regina mused. The utter and complete humiliation of Snow White, the shock factor, and 'dating' Emma (at least for a while) were all good incentives.

"Regina?" Emma asked tentatively. Regina realized she had been silent for several moments.

"Just thinking, dear."

"Dear?"

"Well, I've got to have some sort of pet name if we're to be courting," Regina smirked.

"You'll do it?"

"I have four conditions, of course."

Emma nodded, eyes narrowing suspiciously. Of course there were conditions. This was, after all, Regina.

"Firstly, we tell Henry the truth. I can't lie to him."

"Yeah, of course," Emma agreed. "The kid deserves to know the truth and I'd never make you lie to him."

"Secondly," Regina continued, "I get final say on all of your outfits."

"My what?!" Emma exclaimed. "You want to dress me?"

"Indeed."
"I guess that's okay," Emma conceded, "but I have to look like myself."

"Rest assured, Miss Swan, your flannel is safe." This summoned an eye roll from Emma before Regina continued. "Thirdly, our breakup. It has to be amicable."

At this, Emma perked up. "Oh, I have that planned already. A couple of weeks after the ball, we tell everyone we were faking the relationship."

"And pray tell, what good would that do?" Regina raised a questioning eyebrow.

"Everyone will have to realize that if I'd rather date the Evil Queen than marry some guy, he must not be my true love," Emma explained, satisfied with her plans. Then she froze.

"Wait, what's your fourth condition?"

"That you be honest, Miss Swan, and tell me why you chose me of all people as your comrade in arms." While the tone implied regality, Regina's eyes revealed that she truly did want to know why Emma had chosen her.

Emma stopped to think before replying. "Well, it's like I said; if I'd rather date the Evil Queen than marry this guy-"

Regina cut her off. "I mean the real reason. The one you're so reluctant to tell me." The frantic look in Emma's eyes revealed that Regina had read the bitten lips and tensed shoulders correctly.

"I, well, um, imayhavementionedtomarymargaretthat-," expelled Emma in a rush of air.

Regina cut her off sharply. "Emma, slow down."

"Sorry, sorry. It's just that Mary Margaret said some pretty homophobic stuff when I mentioned that I like women and men and I want to get back at her."

Regina took a moment before she burst out laughing.

"Stop laughing!" Emma demanded. "This isn't funny!"

"Oh but it is, Miss Swan," Regina replied, after catching her breath. "It seems your mother hasn't changed a bit."

"Huh?"

"I had more than my share of female… companions after Leopold died and it made your mother quite indignant," Regina smirked. "This will make your insane plan all the more satisfying."

Regina stood, brushing nonexistent dust off of her black pencil skirt. "I'll pick you up at precisely 8 o'clock Miss Swan. Do try to dress nicely."

She was gone in a cloud of purple smoke.

* * *

"Nicely?" Emma muttered while staring at her closet. "What the hell does she mean by nicely? Casual? Fancy?"

And then she remembered Regina's second condition. Smiling triumphantly, she pulled on a pair of form-fitting jeans, a white t-shirt, and her red leather jacket, just because she knew Regina hated it.
She took extra time styling her hair and doing her makeup. Only because the date had to look legitimate, of course. At least, that's what Emma told herself. By the time 7:55pm rolled around, she looked as though she spent more effort in her appearance than normal, but not like she was trying too hard.

Emma was on her way out the door when Snow's call stopped her. "Emma!"

"Yes?" Emma asked warily, turning to face her mother.

"Have you given any more thought to your ball gown?" Snow inquired kindly.

"Actually, Mom, I've got a date. Can we talk later?" Emma asked, trying to sound as casual as possible.

"A date?" Mary Margaret perked up. "With who? Killian?"

"Regina, actually," Emma called over her shoulder, halfway out the door and moving quickly. "I've gotta go, or I'll be late."

"Re-Regina?" Snow repeated, sure she had heard wrong. But Emma was already gone.

* * *

Regina was waiting outside, wearing a royal purple version of a little black dress and tapping her 5-inch fuck-me heels impatiently. "You're late."

"I got held up." Emma tried not to stare at the perfectly coiffed woman in front of her and found it extremely difficult.

"Is that what you call dressed up?" Regina looked over Emma's outfit with disdain.

"You said you'd dress me," reminded Emma, triumphant smile returning.

Regina rolled her eyes but waved her hand anyways, engulfing Emma in a cloud of purple smoke. Emma shivered at the tingle of magic that danced across her skin. When the smoke cleared, Emma was wearing a pair of black slacks, a white silk blouse, and a red blazer. Her boots remained untouched, if a bit cleaner.

"Much better," Regina preened, proud of her handiwork. She missed the form fitting aspect of Emma's jeans, but she wasn't about to admit it. "Now get in. We have a reservation."  

* * *

"Everyone's staring," Emma whispered, leaning forward. They were in a relatively secluded corner of the restaurant, but since their arrival they had attracted many a glance.

"That's rather the point, dear," Regina murmured while placing her hand on Emma's, which was resting on the table between them.

A young waiter came up to their table just then. "Can I get you ladies any dessert?" he asked kindly. He'd been their server that night and had done a wonderful job in not giving one singular fuck who he was serving, Evil Queen or not.

Regina looked over at Emma in asking. They'd been there most of the night, exchanging carefully planned and executed maneuvers of affection, discussing mainly work and Henry. Regina began drawing absent circles on the back of Emma's hand as she studied the woman.
Emma glanced at the dessert menu and her eyes lit up. "A slice of key lime pie?" she asked Regina hopefully. Regina thought for a second before sighing affectionately.

"I suppose," she acquiesced, glancing at the waiter. "Just one." The young man nodded, jotted it down and left with a smile.

"This was," Emma began, biting her lip when she paused, "a surprisingly good fake date."

"I suppose it was," Regina admitted, reaching up to brush a stray hair back behind Emma's ear. Emma glanced down at the table and blushed, reminding herself that none of this meant anything. Regina quickly drew her hand back and licked her lips nervously. That particular gesture of affection had been less planned than the rest.

They sat in awkward silence for a few minutes while Emma got her blush under control and Regina berated herself, yet both women were reluctant to break the contact of their hands resting between them.

The waiter brought the pie over, however, and they drew their hands back and both sat up straighter. Emma smiled in delight at the slice of key lime and Regina watched, smiling at Emma's antics. "Go on," she prompted, "I'm quite full, go ahead and eat it."

Emma smiled at Regina and began eating with gusto, albeit with smaller bites than usual. Regina watched the younger woman and mulled over the situation she was in. She'd developed feelings for the Savior sometime before or during the Neverland debacle, but had only come to terms with them after everything had calmed down once they had returned from Pan’s cursed island.

When Emma had asked her to help by ‘fake dating’, Regina had decided that if she couldn't have Emma forever, perhaps she could have her for a few weeks. She was regretting it now, because now that she had had the chance to show her true feelings for Emma, even if just for an hour or so, she knew it was going to be nearly impossible to go back to hiding her feelings. She had to constantly remind herself that any affection on Emma's part was purely fabricated.

"Regina," Emma said kindly, breaking the woman from her trance. The blonde held a pie-laden fork in front of the Queen, clearly expecting her to eat it. Regina glared halfheartedly for a moment before wrapping her lips around the fork and taking the piece of pie. Sitting back, she took a moment to taste it before humming in contentment.

"This is quite good," she admitted after swallowing.

"Well, that was the last piece, so unless you want to order more…” Emma trailed off guiltily.

"Oh, no," Regina assured Emma, "I was telling the truth when I said I was full, dear."

"Well, in that case," Emma smiled, and raised her hand to call for the bill. Regina caught Emma's hand with her own and brought it to her lips for a gallant kiss before releasing it. Emma dropped her hand to the table and blushed profusely. The brunette felt a fluttering in her chest and quickly stomped it down.

"I've arranged for payment already, Miss Swan," she explained, returning to formalities as she prepared herself to go back to pretending she wasn't falling hopelessly head over heels for the Savior in a manner that appalled her.

Emma nodded, offering no argument. She could tell that any attempt to pay would crash and burn, so the blonde stood and offered her arm to Regina. Regina took it with a small smile and the pair left the restaurant, the thump of Emma's boots and the click of Regina's stilettos sounding in harmony.
Henry threw open the door when Regina and Emma approached, now with the usual distance between them and no affectionate glances as Henry was the only one around to see them after all. He was utterly capable of staying home by himself and, as such, there was no babysitter to be seen. "Moms! You're both here!" There was a tone of questioning in his voice. The pair of women brushed past Henry one at a time, each stopping to ruffle his hair and press a kiss to his forehead.

"Henry, come along," Regina commanded kindly, following Emma into the sitting room. "Your mother and I have something we'd like to discuss with you."

Henry, now apprehensive, followed his mothers and sat across from them in an armchair. They sat on opposite sides of the couch, Regina trying to look relaxed and Emma leaning forward.

"Moms?" Henry asked, wary.

"So Henry, um, well, the thing is," Emma began.

"Oh do spit it out, Miss Swan," snapped Regina, annoyed now that she had to go back to pretending. "It was, after all, your idea." There was venom in her voice.

Emma glanced over at Regina, confused by her sudden change in attitude, but she turned back to Henry to try and continue her explanation. "Your Mom and I," she began again, "we are… well, we're fake dating."

"Fake dating?" Henry asked, puzzled. "Why?"

"So that your insipid grandparents cease their insufferable attempts to marry your mother off to a mild mannered peasant," Regina cut in. Her explanation only left Henry more confused.

"What your Mom is trying to say," Emma cast a glare at Regina, "is that my parents think that I should marry some guy. They won't tell me who he is but they think he's my true love." Henry scrunched his nose up in disgust. "Exactly, kid," Emma chuckled. "Your Mom is gonna help me by fake dating, just for a few weeks, until your grandparents realize that I won't marry the guy. Ever."

"Why don't you just tell them that?" Henry asked. Regina gave a cough and shot a pointed glance at Emma.

"Well, I tried that kid," Emma explained, "I even told Mary Margaret that I'm more into girls than guys now." Emma paused and Henry nodded in understanding. Emma had always been extremely open with him about her sexuality. "She reacted pretty badly and said a few homophobic things."

"So you decided to make a point?" Henry concluded. Emma nodded. "Okay, that makes sense. No offense, Mom," Henry cast a glance at his mother, "but Ma dating you, the Evil Queen and a woman, is gonna make a point. So yeah, that makes sense."

Emma and Regina glanced at each other, confused at the ease of the exchange.

"So I should act happy if people start asking me about you two? And not tell anyone?" Henry asked, standing.
"That would be ideal, Henry," Regina admitted.

"Alright, cool. I'm gonna go to bed, Mom. You should get Ma home." Henry pressed a kiss to each mother's forehead before bounding up the stairs.

Emma and Regina could only stare after his retreating form in confusion.

* * *

Henry, up in his room, sent a text to Ruby.

HM - Meet after school @ diner. Operation Albatross has changed

Despite the late hour, Ruby responded almost immediately.

RL - Roger that. Meeting set. Delete all communication.

Henry swiftly deleted the texts, shut off his phone, and began to get ready for bed, smiling brightly the entire time.

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Regina slowed the car to a stop in front of Emma's apartment complex. "Miss Swan, don't get out of the car," she commanded.

Emma froze, hand on the door latch. "Why?" she asked, suddenly on high alert.

"You'll see. Just let me come around and let you out."

Emma released the car door and sat back while Regina exited the car and came around to the curbside to let Emma out. Emma took Regina's offered hand and pulled herself out. As soon as the car door shut behind her, Regina pinned Emma to the side of the car, one hand on the blonde's waist and the other behind her head.

"Regina- what- what the hell?" spluttered Emma.

"Your mother is watching, Swan," Regina explained, pushing Emma further into the car with the own body. "We're going to give her a show."

Emma's eyes flickered up to the window she knew was the one belonging to Mary Margaret. Sure enough, the light was on, a shadow standing at the window. Emma took a deep breath before nodding and smiling her cocky grin. "Well, what did you have in mind, your majesty?" she challenged, bringing one hand to Regina's waist and the other to her neck.

"This," was all Regina said before moving in, kissing Emma languidly and slowly. Emma kissed back passionately, burying her hand in Regina's hair, pulling her closer by the waist. Regina chuckled and pulled back slightly. It took all of Emma's willpower not to groan at the lack of contact. "Oh, no, Miss Swan. If we're going to do this, you're going to follow my lead. I know just how to push your mother's buttons."

Emma nodded, resigned. "This is all to piss off Mary Margaret, so I suppose I should let you take the lead," she admitted. Regina felt a plunging sensation in her stomach when she realized that this was, indeed, all a show to Emma.

Determined not to let it show, Regina moved forward again and captured Emma's lips, slowly again. The kiss was slow and deep, and nothing like Emma had ever felt. Regina channeled every
bit of emotion she had into the kiss, trying to get Emma to understand how much she meant it. Hands, instead of wandering, ended up remaining where they were, buried in hair and resting on waists.

When they finally pulled apart, both women were breathless. "Regina, that was…" Emma began.

"Perfect," Regina finished, before realizing what she had said. Shit, she thought.

"What I mean is you'll find your mother suitably incensed when you enter your home," she explained, glad she could control her blushing. She moved away and allowed Emma to get off of the car, but remained close enough to convince Snow White of their affection. Emma nodded and moved away from the car.

"I should get inside," she murmured. Regina gave Emma another swift kiss, this one sweet and chaste, before releasing her.

"Yes, do go inside. You'll have to explain your mother's reaction to me tomorrow when you bring me lunch."

"I'm bringing you lunch?" Emma asked, beginning to move away.

"Indeed," Regina replied before opening her door and getting in. "Goodnight, Miss Swan."

"Goodnight, Regina," Emma said kindly, before turning and walking up the steps to the apartment complex. She heard Regina's car drive off and turned to watch it drive away.

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As soon as Regina got home she kicked off her shoes and moved swiftly to her bedroom. The moment the door was closed, she cast a soundproofing spell and collapsed on her bed, allowing frustrated tears to escape at last. "You idiot," she whispered to herself. "You fucking idiot. Look what you've done."
In Which Snow White Is Explained

Chapter Notes

Hey guys! I'm going to be updating every Wednesday from now on. I hope you enjoy it. Please R&R!
Thanks to my amazing beta. You can find her on tumblr as swanqueentfln. Follow me on tumblr at perfectionlocated

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Emma shouldered her way into Regina’s office with her usual grace - that was to say, none at all - and collapsed on one of the chairs surrounding Regina’s large table. A second and third thump followed the initial one as two takeout bags from Granny’s were dropped on the table.

Regina raised an eyebrow at the conduct, took off her glasses and folded them calmly. “Miss Swan, to what do I owe this honor?” she asked curtly.

“You know full well why I’m here, Madam Mayor,” Emma teased, leaning back in her chair so only two of its legs touched the ground and shooting Regina a playful glare. “You all but demanded I bring you lunch today. Didn’t ask, just presumed. And well, I wouldn’t want to disappoint my girlfriend, would I?”

Regina allowed a small smirk to play across her lips and Emma smiled brightly in response. Setting the chair back down on its four legs, Emma grabbed both bags in one hand and dragged the chair over to Regina’s desk, somehow managing to avoid the godforsaken screeching noise she knew Regina hated. One bag was set quickly down in front of Regina, and Emma reached into her own bag to pull out a grilled cheese sandwich wrapped in foil.

“I do hope that’s not what you brought me, Miss Swan,” Regina drawled, reaching into her bag. She was just a little bit surprised when, instead of a greasy excuse for a meal, she pulled out a caesar salad.

“Oh, c’mon Regina,” Emma mumbled around a mouthful of grilled cheese. “I’d like to think I know you at least a little bit.”

“I suppose you’ve proven your knowledge to be adequate,” conceded Regina, “in this instance.”

Emma smiled into her sandwich. Coming from Regina, that was the equivalent of a proper compliment and a flower to go with. She wanted to continue the playful banter, but she just had to get last night’s event off of her chest. “Alright, so are you ready to hear about last night?” she asked, polishing off her last bite of grilled cheese just as Regina began on her salad.

Regina glanced up with thinly veiled curiosity. “I suppose I am.”

Emma leaned forward, propped up her upper body with her arms, and began.

“Alright, so, after the whole extreme makeout session,” she started, trying so furiously not to blush that she didn’t notice how Regina’s pupils dilated or how her cheeks flushed, “I headed in and tried to be quiet, like I hadn’t noticed Mary Margaret at the window, right?”
Regina nodded, mindlessly piercing another piece of her salad and eating it.

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Flashback

Emma pushed open the door gently, and took her boots off as silently as possible before heading over to the staircase that led to the loft, trying her very hardest to ignore the black lump sitting in the darkness on the couch. As soon as her foot hit the first step, though, the single lamp next to the television flicked on. Emma whirled around and was faced with both Mary Margaret and David sitting on the couch, the former looking extremely disappointed and the latter just confused.

“Mom, Dad?” she asked. “What are you guys still doing up?”

Mary Margaret stood and walked towards Emma, who slowly lowered her foot from the first step. “Emma, we have to talk,” she began, but Emma cut her off.

“No, Mary Margaret, we don’t. I know you think you’ve found my true love,” Emma sneered at the last part, “but I really don’t believe that bullshit. I’m dating Regina now, and you just need to move on.”

Mary Margaret looked insulted when Emma said that she didn’t believe that her true love had been found, but the brunette’s expression quickly transitioned to shock and disgust when Emma confirmed that she was dating Regina.

“Emma... you-you can’t be dating the Evil Queen. Not only is she a woman,” Mary Margaret sounded scandalized, “but she’s tried to kill you! She’s tried to kill me!”

David had stood and now wrapped his arms around Mary Margaret’s waist, trying to calm her.

“She’s redeemed herself, Mary Margaret, you just can’t seem to realize!” Emma yelled, turning and walking up the stairs.

“She’s the same person she used to be, Emma! And don’t you dare walk away from me, young lady!” Mary Margaret called after the retreating blonde.

“Don’t pull that young lady fuckery, Snow White, you’re practically my age.” Emma’s door slammed, and David was left holding a shocked Snow White.

End Flashback

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“Your mother really said all that?” Regina asked, having long since polished off her salad.

“I was plenty surprised too, trust me,” Emma admitted, gathering her trash and surprising Regina by gathering the Mayor’s as well and stuffing it in one of the paper bags. “I didn’t think she hated you quite that much.”

“What happened in the morning?” Regina asked, allowing her curiosity to shine through for a moment.

“I left really early, before Mary Margaret even got up,” Emma explained, shrugging and leaning back. “David didn’t say anything at the station. He acted pretty normal, actually.”

Her eyes flicked up to the clock right after and she jumped from her seat like she’d been electrocuted. “Oh!”
Regina recoiled, shocked, before setting her face to vaguely interested with mild annoyance and speaking in a steady voice. “Miss Swan? What in the world was that?”

Emma glanced back down at Regina. “Oh, Regina, sorry, I just realized what time it was. I have to go let Ruby off her shift at the station so she can go get ready for—” she cut off, blushing. “Look, I just have to go let Ruby off.”

Regina, feeling merciful, allowed Emma’s slip to pass by. Sort of. “Well, do give Miss Lucas my regards, and the best of luck on whatever it is she’s doing tonight.”

“You realize she’s never gonna believe you said anything remotely that nice, right?” Emma asked, halfway out the door.

“That’s the point, Miss Swan,” Regina smirked. “Oh, and come over for dinner tonight, Henry would like to have, and I quote, ‘a family dinner’.”

“Will do, Regina,” Emma called over her shoulder, before the door snicked closed.

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Henry plopped down into one of the booths and Ruby was on her way over to him before he could lift a hand.

“What can I get ya, kid?”

“The usual coco,” Henry shrugged, pulling out his notebook and a pencil. His order was actually a code for when he had something serious to talk about, not that Ruby didn’t already know - the text from last night had been pretty telling.

“I’ll be out in a minute, kid. You’re lucky, I was just about to take my break when you walked in.” Another code, to which Henry replied effortlessly.

“Oh, really? Why don’t you get yourself a coco and come sit with me?”

Ruby shrugged and smiled. “Eh, why not, kid.” Then she was off to go fetch two hot chocolates and tell Granny she was taking the 15 minute break she’d been saving the whole day.

Henry smiled at Ruby’s retreating back. They’d used that particular act many a time to justify Ruby sitting with Henry, in case there were any onlookers or eavesdroppers. Now, all he had to do was wait.

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“I’d heard plenty of rumors, sure, but they actually went on a date last night?” Ruby asked, leaning over her hot chocolate to whisper to Henry.

“Yeah, but here’s the thing,” Henry whispered back, “they’re not actually dating.”

Ruby nearly shouted, but quieted at the last minute and her words came out as a hiss instead. “What?! You’re not serious, are you?”

“I am,” swore Henry. “They’re fake dating, to get Mary Margaret and David off Emma’s back.”

“You mean that whole ‘True Love’ crap they keep spouting?” Ruby asked, glancing at her phone to check how much time she had left.

Henry nodded vigorously and took another sip of his hot chocolate. “They’re gonna do it for a
Henry nodded vigorously and took another sip of his hot chocolate. “They’re gonna do it for a while to make a point, then break it off and act like nothing happened.”

“How did Emma get your mom to agree to any of that? We both know it’s gonna be hell for her when they break it off.”

“I think she just wanted a taste of it,” Henry admitted. “She thinks she’ll never get the chance again.”

“You know, this is actually perfect,” Ruby mused. “I don’t think Emma has quite realized her feelings yet, and this could help.”

“That’s what I was thinking!” Henry said excitedly. “I think we should back off, just for a while, and let them figure it out on their own.”

Ruby scrunched up her nose. “But the teasing, that’s still a go, right?”

“Of course. You just keep needling Ma about their relationship, and I’ll do the whole confused 12 year old bit.”

Before Ruby could reply, Granny called out across the diner. “Ruby, get back in here. It’s been almost 20 minutes.”

“Coming!” Ruby yelled, standing and grabbing the two empty mugs.

“The drink is on the house, kid. We’ll talk later.” Ruby winked and walked back to the counter.

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“Henry, have you done your homework yet?” Regina asked, calling from the kitchen to the living room, where Henry sat, playing a video game on the giant flat screen.

“Of course, Mom,” Henry replied, pausing his game. “Hey, when is Emma getting here?”

“10 minutes, provided Miss Swan isn’t terribly late,” Regina said, pulling the lasagna out of the oven and casting a spell on it to keep it warm.

"Cool," Henry called. "Hey, do I have to pretend that this is a date?" he asked, purposefully bringing up the relationship. "Like, should I say that Emma stayed really late?"

Regina had a sudden coughing fit so intense one would think Henry had suggested Emma stay the night, rather than just 'really late'.

"I suppose, dear," she called back, once she could breathe normally. "I'll ask Miss Swan what she thinks is best. This is, after all, all her idea." Regina was glad Henry was in the other room just then, because she couldn't hide the grimace that crossed her face when she forced herself to remember that this whole thing was an elaborate farce.

Fifteen minutes later, the doorbell rang. Regina went to answer the door, calling to Henry to go wash up, and found herself presented a rose by a grinning blonde. Taking the flower delicately, as not to prick herself, Regina desperately avoided deeply inhaling the scent of the rose and simply let her hand drop to her side. “To what do I owe this, Miss Swan?” Regina asked, smiling ever so slightly.

Emma just winked and pecked Regina on the cheek before entering the house and pulling Regina in after her. Only when the door was closed did she release the brunette. Regina, who had frozen at the kiss, said nothing.
“Your neighbors across the street are surprisingly nosey, Regina,” Emma said, in explanation. “I decided a rose and a quick peck would satisfy their curiosity well enough.”

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“You’re not serious, are you?” Emma asked, halfway through her second piece of lasagna. She did, Regina noticed, manage to swallow before speaking.

“As a heart attack, Miss Swan,” Regina replied, raising an amused eyebrow.

Emma froze, fork halfway to her mouth. “Did you just make a joke, Madam Mayor? A proper joke?”

“I believe I did, Miss Swan. Now if you would be so kind as to stop interrupting me, I would like to finish my tale.”

Emma shoved a bite of lasagna in her mouth and gestured for Regina to continue. “Now, as I was saying, your mother deemed it necessary to write me a formal letter concerning my relationship with you and pass it on to me through Henry. She also interrogated Henry, but I’ll let him tell that tale.”

Henry smiled, and spoke after swallowing. “Go on, Mom, read the letter. It’s hilarious.”

Regina waved her hand and a letter appeared in front of her. Unfolding it, she cleared her throat dramatically. “Now, I won’t read it all, it’s simply too painful to go over a second time, but here are a few key points.” Affecting Mary Margaret’s voice, she began. “Regina, your relationship with my daughter is simply unnatural and must stop. Women are meant to be with men, not women with women or men with men.” Oh, this one is particularly hilarious. “I don’t make a habit of threatening people, but if you continue your immoral conquest’ - she actually wrote conquest - ‘of my daughter, I will be forced to make threats of the most horrible kind.” Regina had to stop and bite her lip to keep from laughing.

“I’ll be forced to make threats?” Emma asked, giggling slightly. Henry was in his chair simply dying of silent amusement. “She’s threatening to make threats?”

“Indeed,” Regina said, getting control of herself, but still unable to wipe the small smile off her face. “I do believe you mother has reached new lows.”

“Oh, but it gets better,” Henry said, setting his fork down and leaning forward. “She was passive aggressively asking me questions about you two all day. She asked if Mom was in a relationship - I think she wanted you guys to be hiding it from me - and so of course I said you two were in a relationship and she just sort of stared at me funny all day.”

Emma chuckled along with Regina and Henry and the three spent the rest of the night sharing random stories and giggling at childish mistakes.

It was the best dinner Emma had ever had.

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That same afternoon, Snow, Ruby, David, and Hook had all sat in the back corner of a library, trying to draw as little attention as possible.

“It’s working, then?” Killian asked.

“Oh, definitely,” confirmed Snow. “I interrogated Henry today and gave him that stupid letter for
Regina.” Shaking her head, she muttered, “I can’t believe I went soft and sappy enough as Mary Margaret to have them think I could actually write something like that and be serious.”

David rubbed Snow’s back comfortingly. “It’s okay though, that’s helping us now.”

Snow just shrugged and Ruby spoke up.

“Enough about that. Look, Henry put a pause on Operation Albatross while this whole thing plays out, which is good. Obviously Emma and Regina told him the truth, and he thinks this will be the thing that gets them together for good,” Ruby explained. “I’m thinking of bringing him in on this. He knows Regina better than anyone and there’s only so much information I can pump him for under Albatross.”

The other occupants of the table nodded along slowly, processing the information. “That’s not a horrible idea, love,” Killian said.

“What’s not?” a voice from behind asked suddenly. All four jumped and turned, only to find Belle grinning at them mischievously. “You’ve been meeting in here for the past month, you know. I’ve gone and noticed, and I really think it’s in your best interests to tell me what you’re all talking about.” The subtle threat in her voice was enough for the original four to cast each other glances, nod, and wordlessly make room between Ruby and Killian for Belle to pull up a chair.

“Sit down, Belle, this is a gonna take a while,” David said.

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“You’ve all given this quite a bit of thought, haven’t you?” Belle asked, looking around. It had been nearly three-quarters of an hour since she had taken a seat.

“Oh, yeah,” Ruby said, nodding. “Hook came up with it,” she admitted, “but we’ve all put a lot of work in.”

“Snow, you do realize Emma might not forgive you at the end of all this, right?” Belle asked, tilting her head in a concerned fashion.

Snow smiled sadly. “I do, actually, but just seeing Emma happy is enough for me.”

Belle’s brows contracted and she looked frustrated. “You are part of her happiness, you idiot, so you need a way to let Emma know you care about her by the end of this,” she said. “Everyone, listen here. You’ve got a few holes in this plan of yours, and I’m going to fix them.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked it. My tumblr username is green-roses-red if you want to follow me. I'm a mostly SQ blog with the occasional cat
Regina took her usual seat at Granny’s the next afternoon. Emma had been called away to find Pongo again, and had texted that she couldn’t bring lunch. Ruby came up almost immediately. “What can I get you, Madam Mayor?” she asked.

“The usual,” Regina replied, casting a glance at Ruby but otherwise not sparing the waitress any of her attention. Ruby nodded and went back to get the order started; Regina’s behavior was common and considered normal.

As Regina waited for her food to come out, she mulled over the events of last night. Emma had agreed to ‘staying really late’ when Henry had suggested it, and after the young boy had been tucked in and kissed goodnight by both of his mothers, the two women went down to Regina’s living room to share a glass of cider. They’d discussed nothing of consequence but it had been pleasant nonetheless, and when one glass had become three, Regina insisted Emma stay the night in her guest bedroom.

“Can’t you just... poof me home?” Emma had asked, slightly tipsy.

“I fear I’d ‘poof you’ into a wall in my state,” Regina admitted, mocking Emma’s use of the word poof.

Emma considered the statement before nodding in agreement. “Alright, I’ll stay here. No funny business, Madam Mayor.”

Both were intoxicated enough at the moment to just laugh it off and head towards the stairs, but thinking about it now, Regina blushed a bit while recalling Emma’s flirtatious tone. Her moment was interrupted when Killian slid into the seat across from her at the booth.

Mayoral mask slammed down, Regina looked the man up and down disdainfully. “What can I do for you, Mister Jones?”

“Regina, cut the crap. I’m here to talk to you about Emma,” Killian explained, tone serious but with no threat in his voice.

“What information, pray tell, do you have on Miss Swan that I simply must have?”

“Regina, drop the act for one bloody second and just listen!” Killian said, exasperated. Regina took in his body language, and tone of voice before nodding once to show that she would listen.
“Okay, look, I know I’m not actually Emma’s brother, but I know Charming won’t be saying anything to you about your relationship without Snow White there. So, here it is.” Killian took a deep breath. “I’m glad you two are dating. It’s only been what? Two days? And she already seems happier. Thank you for that. But if you hurt her in any way, I’ll bloody kill you, even if it costs me my life. Emma and I may not be involved romantically, but I love her a hell of a lot, and she’s the closest thing I have to family.”

Killian was up and gone before Regina could truly process the words, and by the time she came up with a reply (which was just the right combination of scathing remarks about his lack of a hand and genuine promise not to hurt Emma) the bell was jangling and the door to the diner was closed.

Ruby came over a few moments later with Regina’s salad and water, and as she set it down, she took a chance and asked, “What was that about?”

“I haven’t the faintest idea,” muttered Regina, before regaining her composure. “Bring me Miss Swan’s usual order, to go.”

Ruby nodded, understanding the dismissal, and Regina was soon left with only her food and her thoughts.

***

Henry felt his phone buzz in his pocket and raised his hand.

“Yes, Mister Mills?” asked the teacher.

“May I go to the bathroom, Miss Tiana?” Henry said.

“Of course,” said the woman, nodding kindly. Henry moved from the room quickly and pulled his phone out as soon as the bathroom door closed behind him.

RL - Library, after school. Belle is waiting for you. Play along

Henry tilted his head confused, but shot a quick text back before stowing his phone and going to the bathroom for real.

HM - Okay. Moms have work, should be free

***

Emma glanced at the clock as she plopped down in her spinning office chair. It read 3pm and Emma muttered a quiet curse. She’d gone out to look for Pongo shortly before noon. “That damn dog. You’d think a therapist would be better at training his pets.”

Emma spun around to her desk and found a paper bag with a note taped to it sitting next to her keyboard. Plucking the note off of the bag, she read it.

Sheriff Swan,

It appears that our resident cricket’s inability to keep his dog in line has left you unable to eat your usual meal. Seeing as it does no one any good to have the Sheriff starving, and I’m meant to be playing your girlfriend at the moment, I collected your usual order from Granny’s. I’ve taken the liberty of casting a basic warming spell, so your dreadful food should be positively toasty.

Enjoy,
Mayor Mills
P.S. I expect you at my door at 7 o’clock precisely. Dress nicely. I won’t be as accommodating as last time.

Emma stuck the note in a drawer on her desk before opening the bag. Inside was an order of fries and her usual grilled cheese, still warm. Smiling, Emma dug in. Despite Regina’s reasoning for bringing food, Emma knew the meal was her way of showing she cared, and her passive aggressive swipe at Emma’s food choices only made the blonde smile wider.

She saw David outside her office and stuck her head out. “Any calls?”

“Nope, nothing since Pongo.”

About to retreat back to her desk, Emma paused. “Hey, how long ago did Regina drop off the food?” she asked, curious.

“Couple of hours, I think” David shrugged. “It just poofed into existence on your desk.”

Narrowing her eyes at how nonchalant David was being about Regina’s use of magic, she shot off a quick thanks and closed her office door. Something wasn’t quite right about this whole thing.

David, however, had other plans and called out to her. She swung her door open again. “Yeah?”

“Where were you last night?” he asked.

Emma froze, settled her features, and replied. “Oh, Regina let me use her guest bedroom. We both had a little bit too much wine and I was totally not okay to drive.” Shrugging, Emma closed the door quickly, not wanting to endure being grilled.

***

Henry pushed open the door to the library and was immediately greeted by Belle.

“Oh, Henry, your mom mentioned you might be coming by for help on that school project,” she said brightly. “I’ve already got some books laid out in the back.”

Henry, remembering the text from earlier, just smiled. “That’s awesome! Thanks, Belle!”

“No problem. Do you want me to walk you back there? The library’s been rearranged quite a bit since you last came.”

“Oh, sure,” Henry agreed easily, aware that this was what he was supposed to say.

He followed the brunette to the very back of the library, in a secluded area. Only, instead of books for his nonexistent school project, he found Hook, Ruby, and his Grandmother waiting for him.


“It’s about Operation Albatross,” Snow said placatingly. “Sit down and we’ll explain.”

Henry took a seat at the table next to Ruby and Belle sat on the werewolf’s other side.

“Okay, start from the beginning,” he instructed, looking at Ruby.

“Okay, so I know we’ve had Operation Albatross going for a while, kid, but Killian got an idea into his head a few weeks ago and came to us about it.”
“Henry, did Emma ever tell you why we broke up?” Killian asked, taking over.

Henry shook his head. “She just said you guys decided it would be for the best.”

“The truth is, she didn’t want to end things,” Killian admitted. “But I could tell she was in love with someone else so I let her go.”

Henry’s eyes widened. “You knew she was in love with my Mom.”

“Aye, lad,” Killian said, smirking. “Before your Emma even knew it herself. So I hatched a plan a few weeks back.”

It was Snow’s turn to speak. “David and I are pretending to know who Emma’s true love is, and we do know, but she thinks it’s a man she doesn’t know and we haven’t bothered to correct her.”

Killian spoke again. “I’m the one who suggested that Emma ask Regina to pull off the whole fake dating thing, and I also gave our Evil Queen the ‘protective older brother’ speech.”

“David is going to support the relationship, and I’m going to slowly come to terms with it,” Snow explained. “I can’t be all for it, obviously, because right now Emma’s only doing it to make me mad.”

Henry took a moment to process the information. “What about you and Belle?” Henry asked Ruby. “What are you guys doing?”

“I’m the one who fixed this whole thing so it didn’t have plot holes the size of Pluto,” Belle said.

“And my only job is to tease Emma. A lot.” Ruby smirked.

“And what’s the endgame?”

“To show Regina how the whole town supports their relationship, and to show Emma that she’s the only one in the entire town who can’t tell she has a serious, massive lady crush on Regina.”

Henry leaned in. “So, what can I do to help?”

***

Emma considered wearing a dress, but ultimately decided against it. The only nice dress she owned was the red one she wore to catch her marks on dates, and, well, those weren’t exactly memories she liked to keep in mind.

Instead, she chose an emerald green blouse and her nicest pair of black jeans. They clung to her ass just the way she liked, but she found herself wondering why she wanted to impress Regina at all. Shrugging off the uncomfortable feeling, she went to get ready, trying her best to avoid Mary Margaret on the way to the bathroom.

Unfortunately, on her way out the door, the brunette caught her. “Emma?”

Emma sighed and turned around. “Yes?”

“Did you really stay at Regina’s last night?” Mary Margaret asked, tilting her head and narrowing her eyes.

“Yes, I did,” Emma replied forcefully, before walking out the door and refusing to listen to Mary Margaret anymore.
"Mo-om," Henry called impatiently up the stairs. "Just choose a dress. Emma'll think you're hot if you wear a garbage bag."

"Young man-" Regina began, about to scold him, but he was at her door before she could even demand his presence and she was quieted by the knowing look in his eyes.

"Look, Mom," Henry spoke while approaching Regina's closet. "I know Emma thinks this whole thing is fake," he rifled through her dresses and pulled out three, "but I see the way you look at her."

"You're going for a walk on the docks, right?" Henry asked, and Regina nodded silently. Henry made a sound of approval.

Regina could only stand in shock as her son held up a maroon dress, eyeing it, then shook his head. "I'm just about the only person who's noticed, don't worry," he commented, shaking his head again, this time at a royal blue dress.

Henry finally approached her with a scarlet red dress and handed it to her. She took it numbly. "Go get ready, Mom," Henry commanded. "And don't even bother trying to come find me and deny everything later. Just enjoy your date and try to show Ma how much you care. And wear something you can actually walk in, yeah?"

Henry was gone, then, and Regina fell onto her bed with a soft thump. She had accepted her feelings long ago, but hearing someone else say it... It cemented everything in reality. She had feelings for the Savior. Her son knew... and he didn't care.

Regina smiled at the realization. Henry didn't care, not that she was attracted to a woman, and certainly not that the woman was his other mother. The relief that flooded her body was wonderful, and she realized that if Henry accepted her she didn't give a flying fuck what anyone else thought.

Anyone but Emma, the voice inside her head whispered traitorously.

"Well, what the Savior doesn't know won't kill her," Regina reasoned, moving to her bathroom to prepare. "Especially if what she doesn't know is only a silly crush."

Regina could taste that lie on her tongue long after she brushed her teeth.

***

Emma knocked on Regina’s door at exactly 7pm and the door swung open to reveal Henry. “Hey, Ma,” he greeted brightly. “Come on in, Mom is upstairs getting ready but she should be down in a minute.”

Emma couldn’t help but roll her eyes. Of course Regina would demand she arrive exactly on time and then take her own sweet time getting ready.

When Regina descended the stairs five minutes later, however, Emma’s only thought was, Okay, the wait was totally worth it.

Regina was sheathed in a scarlet red dress that was tight until her waist then became looser as it fell to her knees. The neckline was high but wide, exposing plenty of collarbone up until the sleeves began at the edges of Regina’s shoulders. Her hair was wavy, which in addition to her dress made her seem more casual, but her knee high leather boots and dramatic makeup brought
back her flair in a spectacular fashion.

Regina reached the bottom of the stairs and quirked her dark red lips. “Savior. Are you quite ready?”

Emma, nearly in a trance, held out her arm which Regina took gracefully. “Where to, Your Majesty?”

“The docks,” Regina replied succinctly, silently pleased at the reaction she knew she was causing Emma. Both women glided out the door and Henry closed the door behind them, smiling brightly. It was working.

Chapter End Notes

SOrry again for the lateness but I hope you liked it
Please review and follow me on tumblr at perfectionlocated if you are so inclined
Thanks again to my amazing beta! You can find her on tumblr as swanqueentfln
The pair had stopped at a small cafe on the docks and engaged in meaningless yet pleasant conversation before taking a stroll. Regina had her arm hooked through Emma’s and they weren’t speaking, each content to walk in silence.

It was only when they had reached the small outlet of the dock that opened further into the ocean did Regina speak. “Miss Swan, I don’t think I ever asked how in the world you came up with your ridiculous plan,” Regina commented. There was a question in the statement.

“You mean the plan that seems to be working?”

“Yes, that one, Sheriff.”

“Well, Hook is actually the one who suggested it,” Emma admitted. “I went over to his ship to rant after Mary Margaret went all ‘gays are unnatural’ on my ass and he came up with this.”

“The pirate?” Regina asked, remembering the ‘talk’ that Killian had given her that afternoon.

“Yeah. Guy’s a bit of a genius, even if he’s drunk half of the time,” Emma shrugged, leading Regina over to a bench that overlooked the water.

Regina just hummed in response and sat, staring across the water. Something wasn’t quite right, and even though she didn’t think Emma had anything to do with it, she was still hesitant to share her observations. She kept silent.

The rest of the night was pleasant. Nothing spectacular, but the pair each enjoyed the opportunity to wind down and have someone to talk to. They discussed Henry’s upcoming school assignment and Regina carefully probed for more information about Hook’s plan but all Emma knew (or all she was admitting to knowing) was that Hook had just come up with it somehow.

Emma pecked Regina on the cheek when she dropped the Mayor off at 108 but shook her head when Regina asked her if she wanted to come in, citing an early start. It was Friday the next day and Emma always had the early morning patrol.

Emma fell asleep smiling that night, having avoided Mary Margaret beyond a reprimanding look.

Regina stayed up late running theories through her mind about what could possibly be going on.

Each dreamed of the other.

***

Regina began her investigation the very next day. She found Hook in the Rabbit Hole around
noon, watching him through the window, and tailed him to the library, where he had what seemed to be an extremely in depth conversation with Belle. When Regina entered loudly, announcing her presence, both fairy tale characters clammed up and Regina knew then that they had been talking about her. Citing a need to check out some books for Henry’s project, she tried to extract what the conversation prior to her arrival had been about, but was unable to get anything from the other brunette.

When Regina collapsed into bed that night, she realized she had learned exactly nothing all day, except for the fact that whatever Hook was doing, he wasn’t doing it alone.

***

Emma’s day turned out to be much more eventful. When she returned from her morning patrol, she found David waiting for her with a hot coffee and a bear claw like always. Flashing him a grateful smile, she plopped down in front of his desk and started eating.

“So how was your date?” David asked.

Emma nearly choked. “My date? With Regina? You actually want to know?”


“Oh, I don’t know, maybe because last week you were trying to set me up with some guy I’ve never met?” Emma asked, an edge to her voice.

David paused. “Look, I really do think I know who your true love is, Emma. Your mom doesn’t agree and thinks it’s someone else entirely but if Regina is part of your journey to true love I’m not going to try and stop you.”

“Wait,” Emma began, trying to process. “You don’t think the man Mom is trying to set me up with is my true love?”

“I don’t,” David admitted. “But I’ve learned not to fight your mother on things like this and I know you can handle yourself against her.”

Emma took a moment to intake the information she had been offered. “Okay. I get it. Wait, who do you think my true love is?” she asked, suddenly curious.

David just smiled. “That, Emma, would be telling.”

He refused to say anything else on the matter for the rest of the day.

***

As Emma mulled over her conversation with David, she realized something. David had seemed just as convinced as Mary Margaret when the couple had first confronted her about the ball for her birthday, but now David seemed to have done a complete about face and was supporting her. Something just felt... off, and combined with David’s nonchalant reaction to Regina’s use of magic on Tuesday, it was enough to make Emma suspicious.

So when David got off of his shift and went out for lunch, Emma followed. She trailed him to the library and used the back entrance that only she, Regina, and probably Belle knew about.

What she found would change everything

***
“Emma’s getting curious,” David said in hushed undertones. “I deflected pretty well but I think she can tell something is up.”

“Well, mate, then we’ve just gotta hope she realizes her feelings for the Queen soon,” Killian said.

“I mentioned that I was sure I knew who her true love was. I didn’t tell her it was Regina, obviously, but it should be enough to get her thinking.”

“What did you say about me?” Snow White asked.

“Just that I didn’t agree with you but I’d learned not to fight you at this point.”

Snow paused and thought. “Yeah, that sounds believable. I hope she doesn’t hate me by the end of this.”

Belle cut in. “If everything goes to plan, she won’t. You’ll come around to the idea of her and Regina and it’ll all work out.”

Emma, hiding in the shadows behind a bookcase, decided she finally had enough information and stepped out.

“What the fuck is going on here?” she demanded angrily. “You guys are faking this entire thing to try and, what? Set me up with Regina? You’re potentially ruining the only friendship Regina has because you think she actually loves me back?”

Emma clapped a hand over her mouth. She hadn’t meant to admit she loved Regina, but as soon as the possibility had been pointed out that she might love the woman, she realized that she did. She loved Regina Mills.

The whole room stared at her, before Mary Margaret started smiling brightly. “Oh my god,” Belle mumbled. “It worked.”

Emma couldn’t stop herself and slid to the floor with a thump, leaning against a bookshelf as she went down.

“You- you can’t tell her,” she whispered. “You can’t tell Regina. It’ll ruin everything.”

Mary Margaret moved to Emma’s side and sat beside her, wrapping an arm around her daughter. “Oh, honey. Emma, she loves you back. She loves you and she’s known it for a while now.”

Emma shook her head. “You’re wrong. She doesn’t feel like that. You can’t tell her about any of this. Just let it play out and I’ll move on and I’ll be happy with our friendship.”

Mary Margaret sat back and sighed. “Is that what you really want?”

“Yes. Just pretend I never found out. Keep acting like you hate me and Regina being together. Once the ball is over we’ll go back to being friends and you can all act like I made my point and forget about trying to set me up with my true love.”

The whole room exchanged glances before nodding at Mary Margaret. “Okay. We’ll back off,” she agreed, standing. They had all broken Emma’s trust with their scheme and they would respect her wishes. No more secret meetings. No more teasing, no more planning. They’d play their parts and move on.

One by one they filed out. Mary Margaret cast Emma one last sympathetic glance before leaving.
Emma didn’t cry. She wasn’t sad. She was in shock. She loved Regina. Really, honest to god loved her. That was possibly the scariest thing she had ever admitted to herself. She wanted to run. Run really, really far away.

But she couldn’t. She couldn’t leave Regina stranded with no explanation. She sat quietly, thinking for a while. Finally, she decided. She had to tell Regina. Not that she loved her, of course, but about the stupid plan Killian had made and about how they’d been played. It was for the best. She and Regina could laugh it off, they could move on. Emma would talk to her tomorrow. It was a Saturday and she knew that Regina stayed home Saturdays. As soon as Emma got off her shift she would go straight to 108 and tell Regina everything.

Regina had other plans. When she woke the next morning, she decided to go to Granny’s for breakfast. It was a rare occurrence but she was hoping to glean more information by eavesdropping on a conversation or two.

She sat herself down at the booth behind Mary Margaret and David. Both were facing away from her and didn’t notice her arrival. What she managed to overhear was, well, shocking, to say the least.

“... believe what happened with Emma,” David whispered.

“I know. It’s just,” A clatter from the kitchen obscured some of Mary Margaret’s words, “Regina” more noise, “knows her feelings,” someone entered, “Emma’s yanking her around.”

David began speaking. “When Hook came up with this I never thought,” Ruby yelled an order across the diner, “I mean obviously you’re not homophobic,” someone left, “there’s no true love-”

Regina had heard enough. She stood quickly and exited the diner, the door rattling as she slammed the door open and stormed out. She had some things to say to Emma Swan.

“Miss Swan,” Regina demanded imperiously, entering Emma’s office without preamble. “We have something we have to discuss.”

Emma turned sharply in her chair, smiling, but her smile quickly fell away at the enraged look on Regina’s face. “Okay, Regina. What’s wrong?” she asked tentatively.

“What’s wrong, Miss Swan, is that you thought you could play a prank on me and get away with it. You thought that you could toy with my feelings and use the fact that I love you to yank me around and make me look like a fool!” Regina had begun her sentence in a quiet rage but was now yelling.

Emma held up her hands in a placating manner. She could tell Regina had overheard something and was constructing a worst case scenario in her head. “Regina, please, whatever you think is going on-”

“I know exactly what’s going on, Miss Swan. You and your stupid pirate came up with a plan to humiliate me,” Regina accused. “You got your mother and father in on it, too. You decided that because the idea of me loving you was so amusing to you that you’d toy with my feelings for a few weeks, maybe confess mutual attraction, and then tell me it was all just a game!”
“Regina,” Emma tried again, but she was flung up against the wall behind her and Regina stormed out.

“I never want to see you again!” Regina yelled. Then she was gone.

Emma stared at her ceiling. Everything had gone so wrong. She didn’t know exactly what Regina thought had happened but she had a pretty good idea. Regina thought that Emma was setting her up to humiliate her because... Emma froze. Regina had said she loved Emma. Twice.

Regina loved her back. Emma sat up, ready to go tell Regina what her feelings were. But then she realized Regina would never believe her. It was too late.

So Emma did what she did best. She did what she’d been wanting to do since yesterday. She ran.

Regina didn’t ever want to see her again, after all.

Chapter End Notes

please don't hate me
it'll get better
maybe
Review if you feel so inclined, and you can follow me on tumblr at perfectionlocated
You can (and should) follow my lovely beta on tumblr at swanqueentfn
9 Days Later

Emma kicked her door closed and leaned against the wall to kick her heels off. The takeout bag in her hand was heavy, and she dropped it on her counter with a thump. She left the Chinese on the counter and pulled a small cardboard box out of her bag.

Emma pulled a cupcake out of the box, stuck a candle in it, and lit it. Leaning down, she closed her eyes and made a wish before blowing it out.

There were three sharp knocks at the door.

***

Nine Days Earlier

Regina stormed out of Emma’s office, tears threatening to escape her eyes. She jumped into her Benz and drove off down the road without looking back. She broke several traffic laws and made it to the cemetery in under five minutes, poofing into her crypt the moment her car shut off.

Collapsing onto the floor in front of her mirror, Regina curled around herself and let the tears fall. She was angry, certainly, but she was so hurt all she could feel was the sadness. The anger would manifest itself later. Sitting on the cold, hard floor of her crypt, Regina realized how much she truly loved Emma Swan.

She didn’t know how long she was there, only that she’d fallen asleep at some point, and was now laying down, still curled up, head at an uncomfortable angle. Cracking her neck, Regina sat up and tried to figure out what had woken her. After a moment, she became aware of someone pounding on her crypt door and yelling. Regina sneered. Snow.

“Regina, I know you’re in there! Open up!”

Regina stood. Now the anger was bubbling up. Displeased with her disheveled appearance, Regina magicked her hair back into place and hid her puffy eyes. She stalked slowly up her staircase and waved the door open, face full of rage and contempt.

“Regina, you-” Snow cut off when she saw Regina’s face.

“Snow White,” Regina snarled. “And her little Prince Charming too. Have you come to explain yourselves? Apologize? Simper and beg for forgiveness?” Regina’s voice became the kind one uses to talk to a child, only much, much more sinister.
Snow looked Regina in the eye and behind all of the anger, she saw sadness. That was enough for her to set her jaw and walk towards the Evil Queen. “Regina Mills,” she began, poking her finger into Regina’s chest to emphasize, “I don’t know what you thought had happened, but whatever it is, you are wrong. So you need to shut up, sit down, and listen to me. I don’t care what you have to say, because it’s my turn to talk, before you fuck things up even worse than they already are.”

With every jab, Regina backed down a step, until she was standing with her back pressed up against a cold stone wall. The petite woman was displaying a fierceness she hadn’t in a very long while and Regina was at a loss for how to respond. Her anger, instead of flaring, was now barely there, beat down by Snow White’s decisive words.

Snow stepped back. “So conjure up some chairs and sit.”

Regina had no idea what compelled her to comply, but she waved her hand and three wooden chairs appeared in a circle around them. Snow turned to David. “Honey, go wait outside. This is something Regina and I have to do.” David nodded and retreated up the stairs and out of the crypt.

Regina, having had a second to compose herself, was feeling the anger bubble up again. “Explain yourself. You barge into my crypt, insult me, order me around, and still haven’t told me what it is you want!”

“Oh, shut up, Regina,” Snow said, pushing Regina’s shoulders down until the older woman was in a chair and the pulling up her own. “Emma’s gone. She left.”

Regina sagged in her chair for a moment before sitting tall again. “Good. She did the right thing.” She was trying to convince herself just as much as she was trying to convince Snow.

Snow slapped Regina.

Regina sat there in shock, hand to her cheek.

“That was for being an idiot. You’re not glad she’s gone, and you have to admit it or we’ll never fix this.”

Regina tried for a glare but just looked weakly at Snow before asking in a quiet voice, “Why did she leave?”

Snow handed her a note, clearly written in Emma’s script.

I’m sorry, Mom, Dad

I was going to tell Regina what was going on today but somehow she found out about what we were doing. She got it all mixed up and I don’t know what she thinks happened, but whatever it is, it’s bad. She’ll never believe me if I tell her now.

I’m leaving Storybrooke. Tell Henry I’m sorry. I can’t stay in the same town as Regina anymore, not now that she hates me, not now that I can never tell her I love her. Please don’t try to find me. I need time to heal. I’ll contact you when I’m ready.

Love, Emma

Tell Regina she’ll never have to see me again

Regina stared down at the note, tears falling and blurring the ink. Emma loved her. She slowly slipped off of her chair and Snow came and helped her down to the floor, enveloping her in a strong hug.
“I-I kn-know why she l-left,” Regina sobbed out. “B-before I left her, I t-told her I never wan-wanted to see h-her ag-again. It’s all- it’s all my fault.”

Snow made small shushing noises and stroked Regina’s hair. “It’s not your fault, of course it’s not. We all messed up, Regina, but you did the least to make this happen.”

“But I s-still don’t know what was r-really going on,” Regina mumbled, still hiccuping but quieter now that she was calming slightly.

Snow sighed. “Regina, Emma didn’t mean for any of this to happen. None of this was her plan. Killian came up with it. David and I would pretend to be setting Emma up. Killian would suggest this to get out of it, and, maybe, hopefully, Emma would realize she loved you.

“Belle helped us change it once she found out. David became a lot more supportive, I’d slowly come around. We even found someone to pretend to be the man we thought Emma should marry. But then Emma got suspicious. She followed David to the library one day and found out all about it.

“She didn’t want us to say anything. She said we’d all go through with our plans like we didn’t know about the other one and then we could all go back to normal.” Snow turned Regina to face her and looked her straight in the eye. “Emma didn’t want to hurt you, Regina. She wanted to be friends with you. She even decided to tell you what was going on. Maybe she hoped you could laugh it off, move on. Emma never wanted to hurt you.”

Regina laughed a short, bitter laugh then. “I messed it all up. I’m an idiot.” As Snow explained what had happened, Regina realized that what she had thought was going on was so completely wrong.

Snow patted Regina’s hand. “It’s not your fault, Regina. Now, do you mind telling me what you think happened?”

Regina blinked rapidly in shock. She hadn’t expected that question, not now that she knew the truth. “What I thought was irrational and idiotic.”

“But you thought it was true, Regina, and you’re going to have to explain yourself to Emma. Try it on me first.”

Regina realized the truth in the words. “Alright. I was sitting behind your booth at Granny’s this morning and I didn’t hear your entire conversation, just bits and pieces. I assumed the worst, which was that Emma was setting me up for humiliation.”

“What did you hear, Regina?”

“Umm,” Regina swallowed. “I think it would be easier to show you.” Regina conjured a hand mirror and waved her hand over it. The conversation she had heard that morning played, background noise filtered out.

“...believe what happened with Emma,” sounded David’s voice clearly.

“I know, it’s just... Regina... knows her feelings... Emma’s yanking her around,” said Snow.

David, now, “When Hook came up with this I never thought... I mean obviously you’re not homophobic.... there’s no true love.”

Regina nodded and Snow White embraced her again. “Oh, Regina, I’m so sorry. I can’t blame you for thinking that Emma was setting you up somehow.”

Snow released the Queen and stood. “Now come on,” she said, holding out a hand for Regina to take. “You have a Savior to find.”

Regina stared at the offered hand for a long moment, before taking it and allowing a small smile of hope to flicker across her features.

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No one knew where Emma was. She’d left no evidence as to where she was going. All of her personal belongings were gone. So Regina looked. She looked and looked and looked and couldn’t find Emma anywhere.

Emma hadn’t moved back to Boston. None of her friends had seen her since she’d left for Maine with Henry. Her old bail bonds company hadn’t heard from her. She hadn’t applied for a job as a bail bondsperson at any company anywhere on the east coast. She was gone.

On the seventh day Regina realized that Emma had taken her phone. Her extremely trackable phone. Trying so very hard not to get hopeful, she called Emma’s service provider and asked about tracking Emma’s number, claiming she was Emma and that she’d misplaced her phone. Then the company told her the phone had been disconnected the day before, but had given her it’s last known location, an address in New York City.

On the eighth day, Regina drove to New York. She spent the night at a hotel a few blocks from the address and spent the rest of day eight and most of day nine confirming that a blonde going by the name Swan was staying at the address.

She waited outside what was apparently an apartment complex, in decent condition, for Emma to arrive home. When she saw the blonde enter the building, wearing a red dress and heels and carrying a takeout bag, she felt her heart speed up.

Regina got out of her car and walked to the doors, waiting for someone to leave the building before catching the door and walking in smoothly, as if she belonged. She had asked around and managed to find Emma’s apartment number, and after three flights of stairs and a nerve wracking walk down a very long hallway, she stood in front of 235. Emma’s apartment.

Regina took a deep breath, steeling herself. She patted her pocket to make sure her gift for Emma was still safe, pulled a black rose from her inside jacket pocket, and raised her fist to knock.

Her hand froze inches from the door. What if Emma rejected her? What if she wouldn’t forgive Regina? No, it didn’t matter. She had prepared herself for the possibility.

She knocked sharply three times.

Chapter End Notes

yeah, yeah, another cliffhanger. I know

Follow me on tumblr at perfectionlocated for updates and teasers and a crap ton of swanqueen in general
There were three sharp knocks at the door.

Emma slowly stood, sighing. Great, another birthday interrupted. Only this time she was sure it wasn’t going to be anything as insane as her son showing up to bring her to a place where fairy tales existed. No, it would most likely be the landlord coming to hedge on her about something she had nothing to do with. That would be just her luck.

Her door didn’t have a peephole, so she went for just yanking her door open and hoping she wasn’t about to get murdered. When she saw who stood there, her breath caught in her throat.

Regina stood there, a black rose in her hand, looking nervous and hopeful and innocent and Emma couldn’t breathe.

“Regina?” she finally managed, voice barely above a whisper.

“Hi,” Regina said sheepishly, looking down at Emma. The brunette held the rose out and Emma took it, shivering when her hand brushed Regina’s.

“Why are you here?” Emma asked. “How did you even find me?”

Regina licked her lips. “I came to apologize, Emma. Your mother explained everything to me. I’m sorry for what I said, and I’m sorry I didn’t give you a chance to explain anything. I just hope you can forgive me.” Regina nervously fingered the gift in her pocket and desperately hoped she’d get the chance to give it to the blonde.

Emma just stared. Regina was here. Regina had found her, somehow, and was here to apologize and ask for forgiveness. Taking a deep breath, she stepped to the side.

“Will you come in? I think we need to talk and, just, sort this all out.” Emma honestly had no idea how to respond to the situation in front of her, but she figured chinese takeout and maybe some alcohol would help her get things sorted.

Regina nodded and stepped in. She didn’t know what she had expected from Emma, other than a door in her face, but she guessed this was a good thing. While she took off her coat and shoes, heeding Emma’s remark that her landlord was an ass who wanted all shoes off at the door, she followed the other woman down the entry hall and into a small kitchen, where a takeout bag and a single cupcake rested.

“Take a seat and open up the takeout,” Emma suggested, setting the black rose she’d been given in a small glass of water and setting two plates on the counter. “I’ll get us some wine.”

The older woman busied herself with pulling out the chinese food and splitting the chow mein and orange chicken up equally onto both plates with the plastic silverware in the bag. She tried not to
look at Emma, feeling awkward enough already. Emma plopped herself down at the counter next to Regina after setting a glass of wine in front of each of their plates and turned to face the brunette.

“Okay. I need to ask you some questions. Is that okay?”

Regina faced Emma fully and nodded. “Of course, Emma.”

Emma took a deep breath. “What did you think was going on, when you went off on me like that?”

Regina had been prepared for that particular question and pulled a handheld recorder out of her purse, which rested on the counter. She hit play and let the same audio she’d shown Mary Margaret play through the air. While it played, she sipped the wine provided and hoped it would lend her some courage.

Emma listened intently and her face went from confusion to understanding.

Regina hit stop when the recording was over and started to speak. “I thought you’d found out about my... feelings for you and had decided you’d have a good laugh at my expense.” She held up a hand to stop Emma from speaking. “I understand that you’d never do something like that, but I was incapable of thinking straight at that particular moment and my mind went instantly to the worst case scenario. I hope you understand.”

“Of course I do,” Emma rushed to reassure Regina. As she’d listened, she’d realized exactly how Regina could get things mixed up so badly and why the woman had reacted the way she had. “You know what really happened, then?”

“I know what your mother knew,” Regina surmised succinctly, curious to hear Emma’s point of view on the whole situation. “There was an idiotic set up, you found out, I found out the wrong version, I blew up, you ran.”

“Regina, I was going to tell you,” Emma said, eyes pleading. “That afternoon, after I got off of my shift, I was going to tell you everything. I thought maybe we could laugh it off and go back to being friends and forget about it all. I never wanted to hurt you.”

“I believe you, Emma,” Regina said earnestly, taking Emma’s hand in her own and squeezing it. She had no idea what would happen next. She was trying to be open and honest but in the end it was she who had messed up and it was up to Emma how this meeting went.

Emma stared into Regina’s eyes and looked desperately for understanding. She found it and she knew that Regina trusted her, believed her. She only had one question left.

“Did you mean it?” she asked, looking straight into the brown pools of Regina’s eyes and trying so hard not to let the desperation show in her voice. “When you said you loved me. Did you mean it?”


Emma’s reply was to pull Regina her off of her stool, slipping off her own at the same time, and yank Regina towards her, crashing their lips together. Regina stood, shocked, before wrapping one hand around Emma’s waist and burying the other in long blonde hair and kissing Emma in earnest. They both kissed until they needed air and when they broke apart, they rested their foreheads together, each breathing heavily.
“Is that a yes?” Regina giggled, breathless and heady.

“It was a hundred yesses,” Emma replied, joy equally evident in her voice.

Regina pulled Emma in for a hug, nuzzling her face into the crook of Emma’s neck. “I have a present for you,” she murmured, vibrations sending a pleasing sensation tingling down Emma’s spine.

“You do?” Emma asked, pulling away from Regina just enough to look the woman in the eye.

Regina nodded. “It’s in my jacket pocket,” she said quietly. “Let me go get it.”

Emma smiled and released Regina, but not before pressing a quick kiss to Regina’s lips. Regina smiled back just as brightly and walked quickly down the hall to retrieve the small item from her jacket. It was a small, slim black box and she handed it over to Emma quickly.

Emma opened it tentatively. Laying on the white padding was a necklace, the charm a silhouette of a bird, wings outstretched, connected to a chain at the tip of each wing.

“It’s an albatross,” Regina explained gently. “I was talking to Henry and he told me that his original operation was called Operation Albatross.”

Emma smiled, eyes crinkling. “It’s perfect,” she murmured, pressing a kiss to Regina’s cheek. “Help me put it on?”

“Of course,” Regina replied. She gently took the box from Emma’s hand and went around behind the blonde, who pulled her hair out of the way. Regina expertly removed the necklace from its confinement, setting the box aside and stood on her tiptoes to wrap the necklace around Emma’s neck, clasping it while she whispered in Emma’s ear. “It looks beautiful on you.”

Emma flushed at the feeling of Regina’s breath on her face and as soon as Regina pulled her hands back she turned and pulled Regina into their third kiss. This one was gentler than the first, but equally sensual and left both women ready for more. Emma pulled Regina towards her bedroom.

“Do you want this?” she asked, not wanting to pressure Regina into anything.

“Yes, Emma. Yes,” Regina breathed, kissing the blonde again. “I-”

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“And do you, Emma Swan, take Regina Mills to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do you part?” asked Granny. She was officiating the ceremony between Emma and Regina.

“I do,” Emma said without hesitation.

“Then I pronounce you both Mrs. Swan-Mills,” Granny proclaimed.

Regina and Emma kissed sweetly and the whole crowd clapped. Mary Margaret was crying with David in the front row, Ruby and Belle were smiling like idiots as each woman’s bridesmaid, and Henry, the ring bearer, couldn’t stop beaming.
It had been a year and a half since Regina had returned to Storybrooke with Emma in tow, and it had been a happy year and a half. Emma and Regina had forgiven all of Operation Albatross’ operatives. Belle and Regina had grown surprisingly close due to their mutual love of books, and Emma and Ruby continued like they always had.

Emma had proposed on her birthday the next year, and six months later there they were married. Regina couldn’t stop looking at Emma, who was radiant in her knee length white dress, a veil framing her face perfectly. Emma was likewise unable to tear her eyes from Regina, who wore a floor length gown that hugged her every curve before becoming a light, flowy skirt at her hips.

The happy couple walked back down the aisle and disappeared to get ready for the reception, stopping to receive congratulations the whole way through. When the door finally closed behind them, Emma stopped to pull Regina into her arms.

“You were amazing, Gina,” Emma murmured. “You are amazing.”

“So are you, Emma,” Regina said gently, pulling away. “Now let’s get ready. The sooner we get this reception over with, the sooner I can show you exactly why I spent so much time in the lingerie section when we got our dresses.”

With a wink and a quick peck, Regina disappeared into her dressing room, leaving behind a shocked and pleasantly aroused Emma. Smiling in excitement, Emma went to get ready.

Chapter End Notes

whew
I finished my first SwanQueen fic
let me know what you think! I’ll be taking prompts through my tumblr,
perfectionlocated
Love you all, and thanks for your feedback!!

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