Where Do We Go from Here?

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Summary

A set of 44 different stories using the themes from 10 Settings (http://10settings.livejournal.com/2726.html). Each set of chapters will take on a different theme set, so while themes may be out of order, sets will stay consistent. The stories themselves will be in chronological order.

Spoilers up through season 3. Not connected to other ficlet sets.
A long, drawn out sigh escaped her lips as Emma rested her arms on the steering wheel. Absolutely too much had happened tonight, and a lot of it was her fault, and now that she had some time to process everything, she just wanted to crawl into a hole. Of course she was just trying to do the right thing, and of course it backfired and slapped her in the face. Each and every time. She really was her mother's daughter, wasn't she?

She rested her forehead on her arms and sat there, another sigh escaping as her eyes closed. What was she going to do to fix this? How could she possibly make it up to Regina?

Emma was so distraught that she didn't even lift her head when the door opened and the seat creaked under the weight of whomever got into the car with her. She just stayed like that, forehead on arms, face hidden.

"Emma." It was Killian. Oh. Good. At least it was someone who wouldn't make her feel worse than she already did. "You didn't know."

She turned her head a little and looked at him, a strained smile coming to her lips. There were tears in her eyes, she could feel them, and they threatened to fall when she saw the sympathetic look on his face. "I just wanted to do something good."

"I know." He looked at her and nodded once. "And you could not have possibly known how that would have impacted anything."

"I should have listened to you." She sighed and rested her forehead on her arms again. "But I just couldn't let her die." "Of course not. You would not be you if you did." She heard his weight shift and she felt his hook come down gently on her shoulder. She turned her head again to look at him, and he half-smiled. "Besides, you may have done something good for Regina as well."

"Eh? How? She's utterly devastated."

"She was the one who would have executed the woman in the first place. I do believe if Robin found out that his wife died at his new girlfriend's hand, even he would not necessarily be so supportive, hm?"

"Maybe." She looked at him. "I know you're trying to make me feel better. Thank you."

"It is perfectly fine for you to be upset. You've been through a lot in the past day." He lifted his hook and moved some of her hair with it. "You've been under a tremendous amount of pressure, but you do not have to go through this alone."

She managed a little smile. "Because you'll be here for me like you have been." She sat up a bit when he nodded. "Thank you, Killian."

"Of course, lass."
Emma could hear the voices through the door of the bathroom. Regina stopped by to pick up Henry, and she could hear her talking to her parents. She wasn't sure what they were saying, but she knew it had to do with last night's incident at the diner. At this point, it would be too awkward to walk out and join them, especially if Regina was still angry with her. At the same time, though, it was worse if she just hid in the bathroom and Regina found out.

But what else could she do? She sighed and sat on the lip of the bathtub, watching the shadows move on the other side of the door.

She heard Henry's voice, and then Regina's seemed a little less sad, so that was something. She could practically feel her mother's smile from in here, and her father's encouraging tone made her feel a little better, even if she knew they weren't talking to her.

The door opened, and there were footsteps, so she stood and walked towards the bathroom door to wait for some assurance that Regina and Henry left, but the new voice squashed that. Killian was here. There was some discussion, and Emma slowly backed to the tub again, running her hand over her face and frowning. It wasn't that she was unhappy that he was here, but one could sit in a bathroom for so long without getting bored. And really, she felt stupid for deciding to hide in here until Regina left because dealing with that right now was just not a good idea.

A sound at the door caused her to jump, and she looked up in time to see a dark shadow in front of the door. The doorknob turned and it opened just a crack. "Thanks, Mate."

Killian shut the door behind him and looked at Emma. He lifted his finger to his lips and shook his head before he walked to the sink and turned the water on.

She wanted to ask why he was here, but he simply looked at her, wet his hand, dried it off on a towel, and slipped out of the bathroom again. He left the door open a crack, but Emma didn't move. She almost stopped breathing. She could see Killian standing in front of the cracked door, and she knew. He was letting her hear more so she knew when it was okay to leave, but he was standing in the way so he could keep anyone else from entering.

There was a short series of goodbyes, and the door to the apartment opened again. After it closed, Killian nudged the bathroom door open with his foot. "Well, that certainly was awkward." He said. "How long were you two going to let Emma hide in the bathroom like that?"

"Is that where she was?" David asked. "I had no idea."

"She must have heard Regina's voice and stayed in there." Killian muttered, turning and pushing open the door open all the way, and holding his hand out to Emma. "Come, lass, let's go somewhere you won't be stuck in a small cramped room for who knows how long."

Emma shook her head a little and took his hand. "I'm okay. I've been in worse." She managed a little smile. "Thank you."
"Why did you bring me here?" Killian sat in one of the chairs as Emma moved around the station, seemingly checking everything.

She stopped rummaging through a pile of papers and looked at him, shaking her head slightly. "If I'm staying, I should get used to doing my job again, right?" She looked back down at the papers and shrugged. "Now's as good a time as any."

"Really? We could go out together, but instead you wish to work?"

"Don't sound so annoyed, Killian." She looked at him again. "This is normal for me. Besides, with the baby here, David's going to be too busy to do two people's jobs." She straightened herself up and walked towards the jail cell that once held Zelena and frowned. "Besides, David told me about what happened when we were in the Enchanted Forest, and something about it doesn't sit right with me."

"Ah, so our first date is you solving the mystery of the Wicked Witch?" Killian tsked a bit. "How lovely."

"Hm." Emma rested her hand on one of the bars and shook her head, looking into the cell for a moment before she looked over her shoulder at him. "Pouting?"

"A bit." Killian pouted.

"This won't take long." She walked over to him and rested her hand on his shoulder, squeezing it a bit before walking into her office. "Just need to put in an order."

"For what?"

"Better security."

"Isn't that somewhat ironic, considering that this is an establishment of law?"

"Very funny. David seems to think someone tampered with the tapes, so we're going to blow the budget and make sure it doesn't happen again."

"I'm not entirely sure what that means, but if you're going to blow anything, I am happy to volunteer."

Emma rolled her eyes. "You're such a pervert."

"And still a little jealous that you kissed the past me with such fervor."

She smiled a little. "Well, keep up the pervert talk and you won't get to feel what that's like."

"Yes, m'lady."
"I hope you realize this is quite ridiculous."

Emma laughed softly and watched Killian shift in his seat. "Is it ridiculous? You had no problem with clothes like this when you pretended to be a prince." She rested her hand on his arm and grinned.

"This is the second time you've lured me out to do something work related, though, Emma." Killian looked at her with a slight pout on his lips. "When are we going to go on an actual date that isn't after some strange event."

"After this. Besides, this was David's idea."

"Was it?" He sank back in the seat a little. "If he wasn't your father, I would say many impolite things about him right now."

"Oh? Don't let my relation to him stop you from being an ass." Emma shook her head and nudged him a little. "Besides, when we told him about what happened, he was rightly impressed with the way you handled everything."

"Everything? Then I suppose you didn't tell him about the tavern, or the ship, or the way I kept looking at your—" He stopped when David walked over to them. "Ah. Hello Mate." He grinned.

"You look more miserable than Grumpy." David chuckled. "Relax. This is just going to be a quick ceremony."

"For what?" Killian looked between him and Emma. "You just told me I had to wear this to look less devious for the meeting?"

Emma looked at him innocently. "Did I? I forgot to tell you that my parents wanted to do something nice for the pirate captain turned prince?"

"That was just a ruse! No one even knew it was us because of the crocodile's spell."

"You definitely look better like this." Snow giggled as she passed them. "But seriously..." She sat down in another chair and held Neal close. "If it wasn't for you, Emma and Neal would never have been born, and we'd all be leading drastically different lives."

Emma smiled a little, her hand tightening on Killian's arm just slightly. "I would rather not think about that. That was a rough time for me...It's not easy feeling like you might disappear at any moment."

"Of course." Snow nodded once, but then she smiled. "But what's important is that you didn't disappear, and that you're staying with your family."

Killian glanced between the two women. "Well, let's not talk about what happened long ago hm?"

"You'd prefer that wouldn't you?" David smiled a little. "Since we're about to make this meeting about you."
Killian grinned a little. "Caught me, Mate."

"It'll be fine. It's just a quick little thing." Emma patted his arm and smiled a little. "We couldn't really think of what to do for you though, since you're already a captain."

"Ah. A captain without a ship." Killian smiled a little thinly.

Emma squeezed his arm again and looked at him before she shook her head. "Well, the only thing we could think of was a graduation."

"A what?"

"A promotion of sorts. What's higher than a captain? An admiral right?" She smiled and looked at David. He brought over a pin and handed it to Killian. "And an admiral doesn't need his own ship because he can control a fleet."

Killian blinked, looking down at the pin David placed in his palm. "A fleet?"

"Storybrooke doesn't have a navy..." Snow shook her head a little. "That would be ridiculous. And we're not going to ship you off to join the official one." She smiled. "But we discussed it with Regina, and she did say that it would be helpful to have someone in control of the harbor."

"Isn't there already a dock master?" Killian's brows furrowed a bit. "I mean, the boat...I use now...I had to check in with some stout fellow."

"Yes, but..." Emma glanced at David, then back at Killian. "Remember the other day when I talked about increased security? I wasn't just talking about the station. We have a pretty good force on land, but we have no one to keep the waters safe."

"Eh?"

"So, Admiral Hook." David chuckled. "How would you feel about being in charge of our new water-safety unit?"

"What?" Killian's eyes widened.

"Ugh. Don't actually call him Admiral Hook." Emma groaned. "It's a formality, not a real title."

"You want me to work with you?" Killian looked at Emma. "Even though I'm a pirate?"

"You already told me you tried to go back to that and couldn't. Besides, you get bored don't you?" Emma stood when Killian nodded. "It's settled then."

"I'll go tell Regina." David nodded. "Unless you want to do it."

"You know she's not going to listen to me right now. She's still mad at me..." Emma shook her head and sighed.

"All right." David patted her shoulder before helping Snow up and smiling. "We should have dinner later to celebrate."

"Granny's?" Emma arched a brow. "Really?"

"No. Let's go somewhere nicer." Snow smiled.

"All right." Emma watched them leave before turning to Killian. "Are you going to be all right? You look like someone just punched you in the face."
"I'm a bit overwhelmed and a lot stunned." Killian looked at her. "You all trust me enough to do something this important? Do you know what that means?"

She reached down and took his hand, careful not to press into the pin he was holding. "I think at this point, it would be more shocking if I didn't trust you, wouldn't it? After everything you've done for me." She smiled. "Even with Henry, you sucked at the way you went about it, but you really were trying to save him for me." She bent down and kissed him, smiling a little against his lips when his eyes widened. "So you shouldn't be so stunned."

"And your parents?"

"I'm pretty sure they saw us that night at Granny's, but they're not saying anything about it. David seems to think it'd be easier to keep an eye on you if you work for me." She smiled a little. "Not that I'm keeping anything a secret. They just don't seem to want to ask directly."

"They saw us?"

"I believe so."

"And he hasn't punched me?" Killian grinned. "Then your father must approve him?"

Emma smiled. "Maybe he does."

Chapter End Notes

I honestly wasn't sure how I was going to work "graduation" in as a setting, so I made some stuff up. :D The power of AU. ;)

"You know, Emma..." Killian was looking at her as she parked the car. She knew this was probably heading somewhere it absolutely shouldn't when they were about to meet her parents for dinner, but she also knew that if he didn't get whatever it was he wanted to get out now, he'd say something worse inside. "If you keep wearing things like that, I might have a problem." He continued, and she turned to look at him.

Well, that was a lot milder than she was expecting. What was she expecting anyway? Some comment about returning to his ship with him so she could call him admiral? "What?"

"Your skirt. It's much too short for a bloke to be comfortable around you." He lifted it a bit with his hook, staring down at her legs.

She should have swatted him away, but the action made a flush come to her cheeks. She grabbed his wrist instead and shook her head. "Be careful where you put that thing, Captain."

"Admiral." He corrected with a grin and slid the metal down along her leg as he pulled his arm back. "Though if you call me either in the throes of passion. I would be satisfied." He grinned.

There it was. Emma coughed a little and patted her cheeks to clear the blush before she leaned in and dropped her voice to a sultry little whisper. "Perhaps you should behave if you want me to call you anything in the throes of passion." She slid a finger over his lips and slid away from him and out of the car.

It took him a minute to collect himself and come to her side. He looked her over as he had been since she picked him up at the docks, so she smiled a little at him. He didn't seem so interested the first time he saw her in such a short skirt, but maybe he was just being polite at the time. Now that he knew his interest was reciprocated, he didn't seem to mind making his gaze obvious.

"Hey." She poked his chest lightly. "If you ogle me that much in front of my parents they will hurt you."

"That's why I'm getting it all out of the way now." He stepped a bit closer, his hand coming up to toy with one side of her open jacket. "Seriously, love. How am I supposed feel knowing other men will be ogling you just as much as I am?"

"Jealous?"

"Possessive."

"Well, you don't have to worry about that." She shook her head and stepped just an inch closer. "You're the only one allowed to do more than look." She smiled a little, although it was more like a smirk, and she stepped away from the car, taking calculated steps towards the restaurant. She knew he was watching again, and she smirked a bit at the strangled groan that she heard before his footsteps sounded behind her.

Killian took her arm and shook his head. "Don't go without me."

"Wouldn't dream of it." She pushed open the door and scanned the room. It looked like her parents weren't there yet. Good. She took Killian's hand and pulled him to the hostess, following the girl to their seats. She glanced at Killian before she took a seat and waited for him to sit beside her.
"Well, this is much nicer than the last time." He drummed his fingers on the table.

Emma blinked and turned her head to look at him. It took her a minute to realize what he meant, but she shook her head and rested her hand over his. "Well, at least this time you're not crashing my date."

He grumbled a bit. "With that monkey."

She laughed a little. "Your jealousy is pretty cute, you know."

"Not cute."

"Totally cute. Besides, I thought you were happy about everything that happened?"

"Happy about it ending, yes. Happy about you opening your heart absolutely, but I wasn't happy that it wasn't me." He looked at her.

"Well, now you don't have to worry about that."

She patted his hand and sat back in her chair a bit, glancing around the restaurant and sighing. "You know, aside from that year in New York, I've never really been good at coming to places like this. The last time was the night I came to Storybrooke. A blind date for a job." She smoothed her skirt a little and looked at him. "My only nice dress was ruined."

"What kind of cad ruins a lady's dress? Unless..."

"With wine, Killian." Emma pulled her hand back from his and straightened up. "You need to get your mind out of the gutter."

"Hm. It bothers you, then?"

Was he challenging her? Did it bother her? If she said yes, he'd feel bad, but she'd also be lying. If she said no, he'd take it as encouragement. "Just don't do it so publicly."

"So it doesn't bother you?" He grinned. "Do you like it?"

"That is not something we should be talking about here. Especially since my parents just walked in the door."

Killian laughed and straightened up a little. "After dinner, then."

"If you behave."
Emma leaned against Killian's side as they walked down the street after a somewhat awkward dinner with her parents. She should have known the subject of the other night would come up, but she hoped it wouldn't. She hugged his arm a little closer and looked up at him. "Are you okay?"

"I am." He glanced at her. "Are you? You didn't seem to want to say much."

"Well, what was I going to say? It's not like they needed any details about what happened, and I wasn't going to deny it when they saw us." She shook her head a little. "Besides, I'd like to keep what happened in the Enchanted Forest between us, for the most part."

"Why is that?" He grinned a little. "I mean, I punched myself out, so it's not like I remember it."

"Well, there's that, and it's not like you saw how flirty I was, but I wasn't talking about that part."

"Then what were you talking about? I would think that would be the most private or embarrassing? Given how enthusiastic my past self was."

Emma's cheeks darkened, but she quickly shook her head. "The part where you held me when I thought my mother died. When you wiped away my tears when she didn't." She looked a little sheepish and turned her head a bit, so he couldn't see the blush darken.

"Ah." Killian chuckled a little before he turned his head enough to kiss the top of hers. "Emma, love. You can cry on me any time, and I will always be happy to wipe your tears away."

"Don't be so sweet or I won't know what to do." She shook her head a little and stopped, her brows knitting a bit. "When did that open?"

"What?" Killian looked in the direction she was pointing. They had stopped in front of an alley, and at the other side, a menacing looking man stood with his arms crossed in front of a large door. Bright lights flashed and lit up the alley.

"I thought The Rabbit Hole was the only dive in town?" She shook her head. Of course, now she had to check it out, right? If not because it was new, then at least because she was the sheriff. So she started to tug Killian down the alley.

"Love, do you think it's a good idea to go to an establishment called 'The Cave of Wonders'?"

"As long as it's not a strip club, I'm sure you'll be fine." Emma glanced at him. "Besides, I need to check it out."

"You need to?" There was a bit of doubt in his voice, but Emma shook it off and stopped in front of the man at the door.

He looked at her, and she looked back up at him. There was a moment when neither of them said anything, but the man stepped aside. "Sheriff." He pushed the door open. "Captain."

Killian looked at the man with one raised brow, but Emma was already tugging him into the building. "Who was that?"
"No idea, but he knows us." Emma shook her head, grinning a little to herself. "I haven't really read Arabian Nights, so I couldn't tell you."

"What?"

"Nothing, never mind." Emma kept a hold of his hand as she looked around the club. It was a bit dark, but that was to be expected. The whole place seemed to follow the cave theme. Bluish and purplish walls and ceilings. The lights were shaped like stalactites, glowing just enough to keep the place from being pitch black. On one side, the bar was nestled into the wall. Tables and stools looked like stalagmites, and the little lights on each one looked like their own glowing rock formations.

"Huh..." She started to walk to one of the tables so she could observe better. Killian clutched at her hand and followed closely behind her.

"I have been in that tavern before..." He said, frowning. "And while people played...some racket on the music box there, it was nothing like this. This thumping and noise level is ridiculous. How do people come to these places?"

Emma laughed a little and slipped onto a stool, looking in the direction of the dance floor. "People like to have fun."

"And having a headache is fun?" He pulled a stool close to her side and rested his hook against her back.

"Drinking and dancing is fun." She nodded to the people on the dance floor. "Though I really want to know when this started. No one mentioned it to me."

"That's because it's new." A woman set down some napkins on the table and smiled. "Would you like anything to drink?"

Emma looked at her and arched a brow. The woman wore some gauzy looking thing like she would have expected to see in some harem movie. "Not yet, thank you. How new is it?"

"About a week new." The woman shrugged. "If you need anything, just wave me over." She moved away as silently as she had come.

"Well..." Emma rested her hand on Killian's thigh and looked at him. "Are you okay?"

"I am now that you're touching me." He grinned, but even she could see it was strained. "Though marginally."

"Oh? Well, you could always distract yourself from the bass." She leaned in a little. "You know that right?"

"Are you trying to seduce me, Swan?"

She laughed a little and nuzzled his jaw just a bit. "Do I have to try?"

"No, of course not. Not with your hand there and your lips doing what they're doing." Killian murmured. "But are you going to tease me? I won't have a future version of myself to punch me out when I get too touchy?"

"I won't tease you." Emma remained close, her hand sliding down his thigh to his knee and staying there. "And I won't need anyone to punch you when you get too touchy. You can't do much in a public place anyway."
"So you are teasing me?"

"Hm." She sat back and looked at him. "Do you have somewhere you can take me? I'm still crashing with my parents while I wait for the final approval on that apartment Henry found by the water, and you're sharing a boat with Smee aren't you?"

Killian cussed a little. "Bloody Smee. He should have continued his rodent impression."

"I guess it has to wait then." She smiled and dropped her hand.

Chapter End Notes

I don't even know. D:
Emma sat in the chair and stared at the bed in front of her. A frown settled on her lips. She shouldn't be mad at Killian for what happened, but she was. What kind of idiot puts himself in danger like that? Did he not understand her the other night when she told him no one rescues her but herself?

Clearly not, since he was laying unconscious in the hospital bed.

"Idiot." She muttered and stood, pacing back and forth a bit before she stepped out into the hallway and sighed. Luckily it was nothing too serious, and it was just a mild concussion from a particularly hard blow to the head, but everything else was okay. At least he wasn't shot.

"Do you plan on yelling at him when he wakes up?" One of the nurses asked as she slipped past her to check on Killian. Emma glanced over her shoulder and shook his head. "I haven't decided yet."

"Well, don't yell too much. It was a brave thing he did." The woman smiled as she slipped back out of the room and down the hallway again.

Emma rolled her eyes and went back into the room. She was about to sit back in the chair when she heard Killian groan a little, so she leaned over the bed and looked down at him.

"Swan." He smiled a little. "Déjà vu?"

"Sure." She smiled a thin-lipped smile at him. "At least this time you weren't hit by a lunatic's car. You were still an idiot though."

"No restraints this time?" He shifted, but she rested her hand on his chest and kept him from getting up.

"You keep hitting your head and you'll do some serious brain damage." She sighed and leaned closer. "Don't do reckless things like that. I had my gun in my purse. I would have been fine."

"I didn't want you to get hurt."

"I wasn't hurt, but you were." She sighed and kissed him, whispering against his lips. "Think about how you would feel if it was me lying in that bed and you had to bring me in here?"

"Point taken. Still, I'd rather it be me than you."

"And I'd rather shoot someone than have it be any of us." She shook her head. "And since I shot him in the leg anyway, you're really hurt for no reason." She reached up and pushed a lock of his hair off his forehead. "Whale says you should be fine, but they need to keep you overnight at least to make sure you really didn't damage anything."

"I've taken plenty of hits in my time, love. A knock to the head isn't going to damage such a thick skull." He grinned.

"True, you are pretty bad at listening."

"But I'm pretty good at other things."

"Yes, like getting hit in the head." She stepped back and shook her head. "I'll tell the nurse you
woke up." She started to step away from the bed when he grabbed her hand. "Hm?"

"You'll come back won't you?"

"Of course. I'm just going to get the nurse."

"And none of that jiggly stuff?"

She laughed a little. "I can't tell them not to bring you jello, Killian."

"Ugh." He let go of her and closed his eyes. "Fine."
"Killian, we can't do this here. You just got discharged." Emma hissed out a whisper between kisses. She was quite stuck with the way he had her pressed back against the wall, the handle of a mop pressing against the back of her thigh. Of course, it seemed that Killian's solution was to kiss her again and pull her legs up around his waist.

One of her hands clutched at the hair at the back of his neck as he kept kissing her, and she kept kissing him back, despite the hushed pleading that slipped through her lips.

"What if someone sees us?"

"No one will see us. I shut the door." He grinned and kissed her again.

"And what if someone opens that door?" She whimpered when she felt him press against her in just the right way. She should have worn jeans today, not leggings, but who would have thought that Killian would start grinding up against her in the custodian's closet right after signing the papers to leave?

"Then I'll block the door." He whispered and kissed her jaw. "Unless you want someone to catch us?"

"No!" Her eyes widened at how loud her own voice was, and she bit her lip. Her cheeks flushed, and she looked at him rather helplessly. "Killian...please."

He lifted his head to look at her, and she could have sworn that she saw his lips curved into some sadistic little grin, that his eyes were that much darker, but he kissed her again and set her down on her feet, pulling her away from the wall. "You know, love, it's really sexy when you beg."

Emma felt a wave of relief wash over her when her feet were firmly on the floor, but she could still feel the heat in her cheeks, and her chest heaved as she tried to catch her breath. "Is...that so...?" She managed, looking at him.

"Mmm." He kissed her again, grinning against her lips. "But next time I'll make sure you do it when we're in a more comfortable place."

Emma looked at him, eyes wide for a moment before she shook her head and rested her hand on his chest. The kiss she gave him started off innocently enough, but she pushed him back against the other wall and slid her hand lower, her fingers dancing until they reached his belt.

He whimpered against her lips, his eyes narrowed a bit as he leaned in to kiss her back. "Emma...please..."

"You know, Captain..." She whispered, licking at his lower lip. "It's really sexy when you beg, but next time, start this when no one else can catch us." She grinned that same grin he had used on her only moments ago, stepping back from him and yanking open the closet door, fanning herself a little before she stepped out into the empty hallway and waited for him to compose himself enough to follow.
"I thought Regina was taking Henry today?" Snow sat on the bench next to Emma and watched Killian and Henry stand in front of the giraffe pen, both staring at the animals in awe.

"She was, but she called me this morning and said she had some important town business to take care of. She originally asked if you could watch him, but I figured she'd rather work with David and not me right now." Emma shook her head and sighed a little. "It was strange though. She seemed rather unsure, even for her."

"Any idea what's wrong?"

"Something about the water main by Gold's shop freezing for no reason. There's a crew out there now." Emma shrugged. "He probably messed around with something and that's the result. It can't be that complicated."

"Maybe." Snow shifted and looked down at her son as he slept in the stroller. "Well, whatever it is, your father can handle at least that much. You have to watch your two boys after all."

Emma smiled just a little. "Well, I don't think I have to do much if they're both that impressed by all of the animals."

"Though you'd think Henry would have come here at least once when he was littler, right? And what about your year in New York? Did he never go to the zoo there?"

"Not in the year he was there, no. And I didn't even know Storybrooke had a zoo until I came back." Emma shook her head. "This town keeps surprising me."

"To be honest, I don't ever remember having a zoo either. Didn't you say there was a new club or something that had opened recently too? Do you think this has to do with the curse your father and I enacted...?" Snow's lips pursed a little and she sighed. "I don't regret it because I have your brother, and Regina helped save your father, but..."

Emma rested her hand on Snow's arm and shook her head. "Don't worry about that. Worry about how this town suddenly got big enough to have a zoo."

"Or worry that your boyfriend's never seen any of these animals?" Snow smiled a little. Henry and Killian were now standing in front of the elephant pen, both with that same awestruck expression they had when looking at the giraffe. "What are we going to do if he ever goes to an aquarium? We had whales and sea monsters, but..." She laughed a bit.

"I'm actually more concerned about convincing him to wear something else, actually." Emma smiled and shrugged. "I guess he's warm enough, but it would have been nice to see him wear something else when we went to that restaurant with you."

"Good luck with that." Snow smiled a little. "Oh. It looks like they're finally done staring. Shall we go?"

Emma stood and nodded. She tucked her hands into her pockets and watched Killian as he and Henry walked over to them. "Have fun?"
"It was just as fun watching Killian's reactions as it was seeing the animals." Henry grinned. "Hey, did you know the guy who runs the zoo is named Mowgli? Isn't that interesting? I wonder if the animals all have the same names?"

"Then why didn't you look at the information plates?" Emma smiled a little. "Or would that ruin the illusion for you?"

"It's possible isn't it?" Henry looked at her. "This is like the Jungle Book?"

"Sure, kid. In this town, I'd be surprised if it wasn't." Emma ruffled his hair and grinned. "But we've been here all day. Let's go back and get something to eat so your grandmother can put your uncle to bed, hm?"

Henry nodded and walked ahead a little. Emma smiled and glanced at Killian. "And did you have fun?"

"If these are the sorts of land creatures you're used to seeing, I'm not sure I want to see what you have in your seas." He took her hand and grinned at her.

"Hm?" Emma grinned a little and glanced at Snow before looking back at him. "Then we should go to the aquarium sometime soon."

Chapter End Notes

Because there's no reason why Storybrooke shouldn't have a Jungle Book zoo!
"Swan, isn't it a bit too cold to be out here playing at the water?"

Emma turned enough to look over her shoulder at Killian. "We're not here to play. This is for work."

"What?"

"Did I tell you why we went to the zoo yesterday?" She turned back to watch the waves lap at the shore. Killian was right. It was definitely too cold to go in the water, but that didn't mean she couldn't try something.

"That thing about Regina working because of water on the street? What does that have to do with water at the shore?"

"Nothing." Emma shook her head and pulled a small plastic jar out of her pocket. "It has to do with this." In the jar was a small blue shard of something. She could feel the cold through the plastic. Regina said she had it in glass, but it was too cold to handle like that. She held the little jar up and narrowed her eyes a little. "We're going to try something."

"What is that?"

"I don't know. Regina found it at Gold's." She popped open the top of the jar, but kept it at arm's length. Regina warned her not to touch it directly. Her gloves froze solid when she picked it up. So she tossed the jar into the water.

And just as she suspected. As soon as the water entered the jar and touched the shard, it froze. Tendrils of ice spread out all around the jar, freezing a significant section of the water. Luckily, the shard was small, so it didn't all freeze.

"What in the bloody hell was that?" Killian stepped up to her side and frowned. "That shard did that?"

"It froze the water main and caused it to burst." Emma nodded and stepped towards the ice. "Look at this though, Killian." She walked out a few feet and stomped on it. It should have been thin enough to break, but it didn't even crack. "I mean, a frozen shard of whatever isn't normal, but the ice it creates isn't normal either." She stomped again, and when it still didn't budge, she walked back to the shore. "I'd shoot at it, but I doubt the bullet will dent it, and I'd rather not deal with a ricochet." She shrugged and looked at him. "We should tell Regina and Gold..."

"Are they going to believe it?"

Emma pulled out her phone and took a few pictures. "Go out there and jump on it."

"What? Are you crazy?"

"I just did it."

"And you're lighter than me." Killian groaned.

"If you're going to be stubborn, I'll make you do it as your boss. Go. I need a video."

Killian grumbled, but he complied, walking out to the same distance Emma had just been at, and
stomping. His eyes widened for a moment, but then he looked a bit relieved to see there wasn’t even a crack. "This is definitely one of the strangest things I’ve ever seen. I’ve seen lots of ice, but nothing this thick and resilient." He walked back to Emma’s side and shook his head.

"Well, it's definitely magic." Emma put her phone away and turned. "Let's go. We should show them this as soon as we can."
"Hold on, Belle. Slow down." Emma tapped the top of a pen against her cheek as she listened to the librarian's frantic explanation of something that didn't quite make sense. She shifted the phone against her shoulder as she reached for a pad and scribbled down whatever she could catch. "One thing at a time. Ok. Ok. I'll be there in a few minutes. Have you told anyone else? Ok. Don't go down there again."

She hung up the phone and groaned as she pushed away from her desk. "I'm going to the library. You're both coming with me." She glanced at Killian and her father, a frown set on her lips. If she was understanding Belle correctly, it would be best to have more people there.

"What?" David blinked and scrambled after Emma. "Why? What happened?"

Emma pulled her jacket on and shrugged. While her father seemed mostly surprised by this, despite the lack of information Emma provided, Killian was completely calm and composed. Of course, Killian had seen the ice shard freeze the water. David had only seen the video of him stomping on the ice and promptly freaked out about it.

"You'll see when we get there." Emma slid into the car and waited for Killian to get into the passenger's seat. She glanced in the rearview mirror to make sure David was ready before heading out.

"Something wrong? You seem slightly disturbed." Killian glanced at her. He shifted a bit in his seat, and Emma wondered if he was uncomfortable going to the library after what happened the last time he was there.

"Not disturbed, as much as annoyed, maybe." Emma shook her head and looked at him once the car was parked again. "What about you? Didn't you have a problem last time you were here?"

"Ah, well. About that."

"As long as our feisty librarian doesn't push a bookshelf over onto me, or Cora doesn't somehow come back from the dead to harass me, I should be fine."

Emma couldn't help the slight smirk that came to her lips, but she made sure to put her business face on when opened the door to the library and stepped inside. Belle was standing by the counter, hugging herself and looking more than upset, though Emma supposed it was good that she wasn't alone. Gold stood by her side, frowning. "Why did you go into the basement? There's nothing down there anymore, right?"

"Well..." Belle shook her head. "$I just got an uneasy feeling, so I went down to check, and..." She shivered a little. "You need to see it for yourself. I don't think words can do it any justice."

"Great." Emma muttered and walked to the elevator. She could feel herself tensing up. Whatever happened down there couldn't have been any worse than everything she had been dealing with since coming to this town. It's not like there was another dragon, or any ogres. Cora was dead. Pan was dead, and Zelena apparently was as well. She pushed the button and glanced over at Killian and David, who had come in behind her, but had remained silent. "$Someone should wait up here." She said.

The two men looked at each other, but David shrugged. "$It would be better for me to stay here, then, all things considering." He gave Killian a pointed look before walking back over to the others.
The maybe two minutes it took to wait for the elevator and get down to the basement stretched into an eternity of apprehension. Emma glanced at Killian when the elevator stopped, and she felt her stomach tightening. Whatever bad feeling Belle had before coming down here, Emma understood. She felt it creep through her like some sort of persistent chill, and she shivered.

Killian took her hand as the doors opened, and he stepped out with her, only to stop mere inches from the opening. "What the bloody hell?"

Emma stepped beside him and stared. Those caverns that had once housed a dragon were now completely frozen over. It wasn't a sense of dread that filled her. It was the cold. She sighed a bit and watched her breath come out as a puff of steam. "Again? What the hell is happening?" She let go of Killian's hands and took a few steps forward. "This couldn't be something Zelena did, so what the hell is happening to this town?"

Killian crouched and hit the frozen ground with his hook. "It's just as solid as the ice from that shard." He looked up at her. "Definitely magic."

"Definitely trouble." Emma sighed. "Come on. We better go set the town into another panic."
"Henry told me I might find you two here." Emma said from the door that led to Regina's backyard, though she kept the rest of her thought unvoiced. She certainly didn't think Regina would be holding Neal, looking quite peaceful as she did it.

"Oh." Regina looked up and that peaceful look faded. She frowned, but she looked less angry than she had been the past few days. "What is it?"

"Something happened at the library today, and I thought you both should know." Emma waited a moment before she slowly walked towards them. She glanced around and shook her head. "Isn't it a little cold to be out here?"

"We just came out. Besides, we have the fire pit keeping us extra warm." Snow smiled. Sure enough there was a small fire crackling next to them. "But something is wrong isn't it? You wouldn't come here to tell us anything if it wasn't bad."

Emma wished she could deny that, so all she did was shrug. "The caves beneath the library are completely frozen. Just like the pipes. Just like the water I threw the shard into. It's all solid ice."

Regina handed Neal back to Snow and stood. "Of course. Ever since you came here, nothing's gone smoothly in this town." She muttered, but the bitterness Emma would have expected wasn't there. "Any idea?"

"Well, for starters, I think it would be a good idea to stay inside as much as possible. If things are freezing, staying in warm places would be best." Emma glanced at Snow before looking at Regina again. "Though the ice seems to be isolated. When we were down there, it was freezing, but the elevator was much warmer, and the library itself was normal temperature."

"Strange." Snow stood and held Neal close, wrapping a blanket around them both for a little extra heat. She looked at Regina, who simply nodded and doused the fire with a wave of her hand. "Well, then let's go talk about this inside."

Emma followed the other women inside, keeping quiet as she watched them. Snow settled down in a chair and held Neal as he slept in her arms. Regina silently made some tea, her back to the two of them, not that Emma could blame her. This was a pretty tense situation.

"Regina." Snow sighed. "You only brought over the people you wanted to bring, but what about the second time? I didn't particularly specify anyone when I wished to come back here so we could find Emma again. Do you think I could have brought something back that would do this?"

"Doubtful." Regina put the mugs down on the table and sat. She looked at Emma and shook her head. "What about you? Did you bring anything or anyone else back with you?"

Emma sighed. "Just..." She shook her head. "If anything else came through. I didn't see it, and I'm not aware of it." She sat in the chair and rested her elbow on the table, turning her head to look back out into the backyard. "I mean, it's pretty obvious it's magic, but I don't know who would be doing it."

"I don't know of anyone from the Enchanted Forest who had this kind of power." Snow sighed.
"Neither do I." Regina frowned and held her mug, staring down into it. "And Jefferson's hat is destroyed, so it's not like someone could have come through from another realm that way. No beans. Just that portal you came through."

"But that was at Rumplestiltskin's castle, so it would have been something from the Enchanted Forest."

"Then it doesn't make any sense." Regina looked up. "Then again, Rumple does have a lot of objects from other lands in there, doesn't he? Where were you?"

Emma blinked, but her eyes widened. "We were in some room where he put things even he didn't want around. There were all sorts of trinkets and things in there."

"And you didn't take any?" Regina arched a brow at her. "What about your pirate boyfriend?"

Snow snorted a little, obviously trying to hold back a laugh, but her expression was somewhat serious. "Did Killian take anything?"

"He would have said something if he did." Emma frowned. "But I didn't see him take anything."

"Maybe you should ask him." Regina muttered. "No sense in guessing."

"Ask me what?" Killian leaned in the doorway. He grinned a little at the glares he received from both Regina and Emma, but he shrugged. "It was boring waiting in the car, and cold."

"Did you take anything from Rumplestiltskin's castle when we came back here?" Emma frowned.

"No, of course not." Killian shook his head. "But there is a more pressing matter at hand." He pointed out the window. "When I said it was cold, I wasn't saying it to complain. Look."

The women turned and looked out the window. Snow let out a frightened gasp. Swirls that looked like they could have been made of snow and ice started to fill the yard. Anything they touched froze.

"This is ridiculous." Regina hissed and opened the door, a ball of fire leaving her palm and blowing right through the swirl. It hit a frozen tree, but did nothing to melt the ice that was now spreading to the ground.

"What direction was it coming from?" Emma practically jumped from her chair. "It didn't hit the house, did it?"

"No. It actually completely avoided your vehicle, though it froze the ground around it, and when it came close to the house, it curved and went into the back." Killian shook his head. "It's very strange."

"Who's that?" Snow backed a bit away from the window. "There's a girl out there."

Emma groaned and grabbed her gun from the holster, stepping past Regina and holding it up to the woman that now wandered through Regina's backyard. "Hey! Stop!"

The woman stopped and turned. For a moment she said nothing, but her eyes were wide. The white swirls seemed to be coming from her fingertips, but when she spoke, they faded. "Oh! You!"

Emma blinked. "What?" But she held her gun up.
The woman smiled. "You're the one who used the powerful magic and got out of that room." The woman stepped forward, but stopped and looked down at the ground. Ice had formed where she stepped. She said something softly to herself, like some sort of mantra, and the ice that had been forming at her feet faded. She looked back up again and took another step forward, this time the ice didn't follow her.

"You did bring someone else with you." Regina groaned a little, standing at Emma's side. "I knew it!"

"I didn't!" Emma lowered her gun and looked over her shoulder at Killian. "Right?"

Killian took a step forward, eyes narrowing a little. "You didn't. I've never seen that lass before."

"You too!" The woman pointed at him. "You're the one who helped me get here."

"I told you he took something." Regina rolled her eyes and crossed her arms. "The two of you cause nothing but problems."

"I didn't bring anything." Killian frowned at Regina. "And it wasn't our fault we got sucked into that weird time portal. It was your sister who started that mess."

"And she's dead," Regina snapped. "So she couldn't have done this." She motioned to the yard. "Now could she?"

The woman shook her head. "No one carried me here, if that is what you mean." She took another step forward. "I was sealed away, but the vessel was somehow pulled through."

Killian's eyes widened. "You were in that urn?"

The woman nodded. "So I am free now, thanks to both of you." She shook her head.

"So you thank them by freezing my town?" Regina frowned. "Some thanks."

"That's not on purpose." She lifted her hands and some ice formed between them. "It takes a long time to get used to these powers. I only just started using them freely, but my control is..." She shook her head. "I don't mean to freeze everything. I've never seen many of the things that are in this realm, and my fear is getting the best of me."

Emma watched the woman carefully. "She's not lying." She holstered her gun and stepped out of the house, walking up to her. "Well, if you're from the Enchanted Forest..."

"I'm not." The woman sighed and looked down again. "I'm from Arendelle."

"Then how were you in Rumplestiltskin's castle?" Emma blinked, glancing back at the others.

"I've never even heard of Arendelle." Regina shrugged.

"But there are many realms." Killian shrugged. "You sent me to Wonderland all those years ago, when I came back from Neverland. And Zelena was from Oz, was it?"

"Doctor Whale came from another realm as well." Snow piped up.

The woman's eyes widened. "So many realms...I won't be able to get to them all." She sank to the ground, her hands resting on the grass. Ice began to spread from them again.

"Woah! Hold on!" Emma crouched in front of her and rested her hand on the woman's arm. "Why do you need to get to other realms?"
"I need to find my sister..."

Chapter End Notes

Hey, why not? :) Woo AU. I don't know what Elsa will be like, so that kind of kills any canon at this point. ;)

Emma stood at the counter, her fingers tapping against the wood surface as she waited for the order. She had somehow managed to calm the woman, she said her name was Elsa, enough to not freeze anything in her vicinity. So Killian was sitting with her at a table in the corner, talking lowly about something or other. When Elsa smiled a little at whatever he said, Emma relaxed just a little. The calmer this woman was, the better.

When the order was up, she grabbed the tray and brought it to the table. "I didn't know what would be good for you, so I got you some hot cider. I hope that's okay." She handed the cup to Elsa and smiled a little. "Coffee here is pretty strong, so..."

Elsa took the cup and held it up, breathing in the steam and relaxing. "It smells wonderful, thank you Emma."

Emma nodded and handed Killian a cup before she took her own and sipped from it. "So...when we're done here, we can see about getting you a room at Granny's, or something." She shrugged. "And tomorrow, we can start searching for your sister."

"But...what if she's hurt or in danger?"

"It's important for you to rest and stay calm, right?" Emma slouched a bit in her chair and glanced around the cafe. "This town is bigger than I last remember it being, so I'd like to have a lot of time to cover a lot of distance."

Elsa sighed and nodded. Killian looked at Emma before he looked at Elsa and grinned. "Emma is probably the most important and influential person in this town, lass. She'll deny it, and she will get mad at me for saying this, but she's saved everyone here before, so having her on your side is the best thing."

"Yes, but..." Elsa looked up at him. "I don't even know if Anna is even here, and..."

Emma rested her hand on Elsa's arm and shook her head. "I know I'm going to regret saying this, because he's going to rub it in my face, but Killian's right. I am going to do my best to help you. I lived without my family for so long, and now that I have them, I don't want to lose them. I know how scary it is to be alone, and I know you're struggling, but I will help you."

Elsa nodded a little. "Thank you." She smiled at her. "You remind me of Anna a little. Though she smiles a lot more, and she is definitely more...excitable?"

Killian chuckled. "Emma can be excitable. It's quite cute."

"Shut up, Killian." Emma turned and made a face at him. "Don't start talking about things that will embarrass you."

"How could calling you cute possibly embarrass me?"

"I was in tears the one time I let you see me excitable. So you think crying is cute?" Emma arched a brow at him.

"Well, you were happy at that point." Killian shifted a little in his chair. "I mean...you're always beautiful, but..."

Elsa let out a soft little laugh. "You two must have a very good relationship."
Emma's cheeks flushed a little and she shook her head. "He's just persistent."

"And you like me." Killian grinned.

Emma shrugged a little and turned back to Elsa. "So you came back with us...and you were held by Rumplestiltskin...You've been to his shop then? Have you seen him or spoken to him?"

Elsa shook her head a little. "I went outside, and I thought I heard his voice, and I just got scared he would seal me again. I didn't mean to freeze anything." She looked down at her cup. "Same thing happened in that cave. I somehow found my way in there, and I was curious about those strange buttons on the wall, but I heard voices and panicked."

"Well, we won't let him hurt you." Emma touched her arm again. "He's a much different person than he was when you would have dealt with him."

"I still wouldn't trust him..." Killian muttered, but then he shook his head. "But I definitely have a much different issue with him. You certainly don't have to trust him, or like him, but perhaps Emma and I can deal with him so you don't have to."

"Perhaps?" Emma glanced at him. "You? No. I think I can handle that with my dad. With you he'll just get sarcastic and nasty." She grinned just a little. "Just because David's so excited to have a friend he didn't meet through my mother doesn't mean you're instantly on good terms with the whole town."

Killian grinned a little. "Well, the men are just jealous of my devilishly handsome looks, and the women are mad that I only have eyes for you."

Elsa let out a little laugh again. "Not every woman considers you her type."

Emma laughed. "See? He's too conceited." She drank some of her coffee and glanced at Killian. "Should I be concerned that you want all the women to want you? Should I regret kissing you?"

"No." Killian shook his head quickly and grinned. "Absolutely do not regret it."

"I regret letting you talk right now." Emma shook her head and looked back to Elsa. "Anyway. While you're resting tonight, I'll go to the hospital and talk to Doctor Whale. He'll let me know if anyone new has come through. If he says no, it might be safe to assume she wasn't hurt."

"Really?" Elsa leaned in a little. "Is that possible?"

"The thing about this world," Killian sat back and shrugged, "is that everything seems much more complicated than other realms, but they always seem to know when people need help."

"Well, people call 911 when someone's hurt." Emma shrugged. "So if your sister's in this town, and she was hurt, I'm sure someone would have called it in. So I'll check tonight and let you know first thing in the morning."

"I don't understand what that means, but thank you." Elsa smiled.
"Unless you have a better idea, stop looking at me like I'm doing something stupid." Emma crossed her arms and frowned at Killian.

"I'm not looking at you that way." He shook his head. "I just don't know what good this will do. You and I both know that they would have already called you or Dave if someone new came through."

"Even so, it can't hurt to ask, hm?" Emma shrugged a little and leaned against the wall. Her eyes locked on the double doors in front of her. She knew she couldn't just walk in there, especially since there seemed to be an operation in progress.

"Seems a bit hectic here doesn't it?"

Emma turned her head to the side at the new voice, and her eyes widened a bit. "What are you doing here?"

David held his hands up. "Got a call from one of the guys about someone being rushed to the ER. I tried calling you on my way over, but I guess now I know why your cell is off." He shook his head a little. "I assume that's what's going on in there?" He nodded to the doors.

"I don't know what's going on in there. We just got here to talk to Whale about something important. They were in there when we arrived." Emma frowned. "What happened?"

"Apparently someone found a jogger out in the woods...Unresponsive and very very cold. Almost like he was frozen from the inside."

Emma exchanged a glance with Killian before looking back at David. "Well that poses a problem."

"Snow said you met some woman who could freeze things?" David frowned. "It was her wasn't it?"

"That depends, mate." Killian shook his head. "if it was within the last, what, three or four hours? It's not possible, since she was with us since finding her at Regina's."

"And right now she's at Granny's with Ruby." Emma frowned. "We'll have to get that information from Whale, too."

David looked between the two of them, sighed, and shrugged. "Then we wait." He sat on the bench next to Killian and watched the doors.

"David..." Emma sighed. "Can you go call Ruby and tell her to stay with Elsa, please? I have a bad feeling about this, and I really don't want that poor woman to get blamed for something she may not have done. And if she did do it, which I doubt, I don't want her out of anyone's sight."

"Sure." He got up and left, pulling his phone out of his pocket as he walked.

"You don't think it was her, then?" Killian watched her.

"No, do you?"

"Don't think she has it in her to freeze a person." He shrugged. "But could it have to do with one
of those strange shards? Maybe the frozen man picked one up?"

"Perhaps." Emma sighed, but her head snapped up when the doors opened and Whale came out. "How is he?"

"Alive." Whale sighed. "I've never seen anything like it. His heart was practically a block of ice." He looked at her and frowned. "You didn't come here to ask about him did you?"

"No. We just found out about that from David maybe two minutes ago. When do you think it happened?" Emma pushed off the wall.

"He was brought in about an hour ago, but he couldn't have been in that state much longer than that. One of the officers was here, but I guess he called David to handle it instead." He shook his head. "Some of those guys have weak stomachs when it comes to magic don't they?"

"Can you blame them?" Killian frowned. "So it's definitely magic?"

"Oh absolutely. We pulled a shard out of his chest. Froze the tweezers and almost froze my hands through the gloves. As soon as we removed it, he thawed out as if nothing was wrong in the first place, but he had some internal damage to repair."

"I want to see that shard." Emma frowned.

"You can have it." Whale shrugged. "So if you didn't come here for that, what did you come here for. Sheriff?"

"Have you seen anyone new come through here lately? A young woman perhaps? We're looking for a missing person."

"No. This is the first time we've had someone rushed in here like this in a while. Otherwise it's all been routine. Or it's involved your family."

"I see." Emma sighed. "Thank you."

"Let me get that shard for you." Whale disappeared through the doors again, and when he came back, he was holding a small cooler. "This is the only thing we could put it in without freezing through."

Emma slid a glove on and took it from him, nodding a little. "Thank you, Doctor. When David comes back in, he'll handle everything regarding that patient's interview." She glanced at Killian. He stood and took the cooler from her with his hook, walking alongside her as they left the hospital. "I assume we're heading back to Granny's?"

"Yeah."
Emma crouched, poking at some leaves with a stick. She hadn't intended to come here right after speaking with Elsa, but something just didn't feel right. There was no way Elsa was the one who had attacked the jogger, and even though she said she froze the ground in front of Gold's shop, it didn't seem to be the cause of the frozen water main.

After all, Elsa insisted she that shard wasn't something she could do, and Emma knew she wasn't lying.

So here she was, trudging through the forest, looking for any clues she could find that would explain this whole mess, but she was coming up with a whole lot of nothing. That was just perfect, wasn't it? Now there was some new problem. This town clearly couldn't go a week without something happening, and it was getting frustrating. All she wanted was some time to relax and maybe start unpacking the boxes in the apartment. Or maybe she could actually go on a date with Killian so they could work out whatever it was they wanted, or how to move forward from where they were.

She stood and shoved her hands into her coat pockets, looking around at the tall trunks that, at this point in the evening, looked like they stretched into and became one with the sky. The last hints of light were filtering through, but were quickly fading.

With a sigh, Emma headed back to the car, stopping when she heard footsteps that weren't hers, coming from the direction she was heading. She frowned and looked up, tensing for a moment before she recognized the shape in front of her. "Damnit Killian, are you trying to scare me?"

He chuckled and shook his head, holding a flashlight out to her. "It was getting late, so I wanted to make sure you weren't alone in the dark."

She took the flashlight and clicked it on, aiming the beam at the ground. "Oh, thank you." She looked at him before stepping past him and heading back to the car.

He followed, and he was quiet for a while, which was a little unusual, but just before they reached the car, he took her free hand in his and stopped her. "Emma, are you okay?"

"What?" She turned to look at him. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"You're frustrated by this whole thing. That much is obvious from the way you left the diner earlier."

"Yeah, I guess I am." She sighed. "Well, I know I am. This whole thing is annoying. The only time I was able to relax and enjoy myself in the last year, I wasn't even really myself, and it was built on lies."

"And you want to be like that again."

"Wouldn't you? You know that was my issue with coming back. Up until last week, I wanted to take Henry and go back. I don't want to leave anymore, but I don't want to have one hectic thing happen after another."

Killian squeezed her hand and stepped closer. "Well, something good has come from all this. You have me." He grinned slightly, but it faded into a genuine smile. "You don't have to go through any of this alone, Emma. You have your parents, Henry, and me."
Emma looked at him. Normally she would have wanted to make some sort of snarky response, but all she did was nod a little. "Thank you."
Emma rested her chin in her hands as she watched Killian talk to the bartender. Henry was spending the night at Regina's, and even though it was dark, it was too early to head back to her apartment. Ruby was going to keep an eye on Elsa, and they weren't going to go meet her again until sometime tomorrow morning, so they decided to stop into The Rabbit Hole. Emma needed something to drink, so why not? They certainly weren't going to go back to that club after the incident the other night.

So Emma watched him, though she couldn't really enjoy much with his coat hanging over him the way it did. Maybe she could get him into something more appropriate for the times. She smiled a little at the thought of him wearing something easier to deal with and a lot less likely to chafe. But that smile dropped when he started to turn, and she straightened herself up so he wouldn't think she was staring at him the whole time.

He put her drink down in front of her before putting his own drink down, and she marveled a little at just how able he was with one hand, though centuries of practice would make that possible. Before her mind wandered, she offered him a little smile and a soft thanks. It wouldn't do any good to start thinking about those things now, so she remained quiet and focused on her drink.

Maybe she was too quiet. She could feel his eyes studying her, and when she looked up at him, he didn't even make any attempt to cover what he was doing. "Hm? What's wrong?"

"You seem tired." He said with a shrug.

"Well, it's been a long day." She rested her elbow on the table and rested her chin on her hand again. "I'm okay."

"Hm." He sat back a bit, still watching her. "Maybe I should have insisted on taking you home."

"You can take me home after this." Emma glanced at him, and maybe her look contained more meaning than was against better judgment, but she smiled a little at his reaction. He perked up a bit, his cheeks seemed to flush just enough to give them color, and the concern he showed just moments ago melted into surprise and maybe even a little anticipation.

"Emma?"

"What? You want to take me home, so I'm going to let you take me home." Her finger moved around the rim of her glass as she kept watching him. "Or should I go home alone?"

"You absolutely should not go home alone." Killian seemed to recover and he leaned forward a bit, hook pushing a strand of her hair off her shoulder. "You should never go home alone, darling."

"Well, I guess that can be arranged. I mean, Henry will be home on most weeknights." She grinned just a little at him. "Weekends are a different story. So are you offering to come home with me every night my son isn't home? Isn't that a little forward of you, Captain?"

"I would be more than happy to take you home every night." He grinned. "Isn't that more forward?"

She straightened up a little and shook her head, a soft chuckle escaping as she did. "Then take me home, Killian."
"Now?"

"Now."
Emma pulled the blanket a little closer as she looked up at the sky. It was a nice little perk of having a window that overlooked part of the roof. She came out here to think whenever she couldn't sleep, which was pretty often since she only just moved in a few days ago. She had a lot to think about, so it worked out well.

Of course, it probably wasn't such a good idea tonight, since it was a little colder, and she wasn't wearing as much as she usually did. However, the cool air felt good on her cheeks, and it made thinking a little easier.

She glanced back over her shoulder, looking into the window, watching Killian sleep for a few minutes before turning back out. She hugged her knees to her chest and pulled the blanket a bit tighter, and she didn't move until she felt arms come around her.

"It's too cold for you to be out here." Killian murmured into the back of her ear as he nuzzled it a little. "What's wrong?"

"Wrong? Nothing." She closed her eyes and let herself sink back into his chest, looking down at the arms that were around her. At least he had the good sense to put his coat on before coming out here, since he trapped the blanket against her, so she couldn't share it with him.

"Then why are you out here in the cold?" He pulled her closer, and Emma almost felt like she was sinking into him.

She shrugged a little. "You could have stayed in bed, I didn't mean to wake you."

"I woke up the moment you got up."

"Sorry."

"Don't be. It's a good feeling." He nuzzled her hair a little. "All of it."

Emma turned a little in his arms and studied his face. Of course he meant that. Why wouldn't he? And she knew that after such an explosively passionate moment, her little venture on the roof probably made him feel a little insecure about it, so she let one hand slide out from the blanket and she put it against his cheek. "Yeah..."

He blinked, but he smiled and turned his head to kiss the center of her palm. "The cold won't be a good feeling if you become ill. Let's go inside."

She nodded and let him help her back into the room, though she shut and locked the window once inside, the blanket sinking from her shoulders.

"Oh, you absolutely shouldn't have gone out in as little as that." Killian took her hand and pulled her towards the bed. "Now I must make sure you're warm enough."

"And how are you going to do that?"

"Same way I heated you enough to make you need to cool down, if you'd like. If not, I can share my heat with you."

Emma smiled a little and watched him shrug off the coat, leaving it haphazardly on the floor. Her eyes widened a little once it fell, and she realized he was wearing even less under his coat than she
was wearing under the jacket. "And you were worried about me getting sick?"

He took her hand and put it on his chest. "See, I am still quite warm."

"That's true, but I'm a bit cold." Her hand slid down a little, and she watched the way her fingers danced against his skin, and the way his stomach pulled in when her chilled touch reached it. "Are you sure you can warm me?"

"I am quite confident, yes." He grinned and pulled her close, taking her mouth in a heated kiss before nudging her onto the bed. "You know I'm not lying."

"Hm. That's true." Emma lifted her arms and wrapped them around him, pulling him down for another kiss. "So warm me."
It wasn't that Emma minded Ruby coming along on their excursion to the lake, or that she was happily chatting away with Elsa in the back seat while Emma drove and Killian remained utterly silent in the passenger's seat. It wasn't even that she could feel Ruby's eyes on the back of her head more often than not. It was that every time she glanced in the rearview, the woman was smirking that same knowing smirk she gave her when they walked into the diner this morning.

"So why are we going to the lake?" Ruby broke off her excited chatter and leaned between the seats, somehow not crushing Elsa in the process.

"I want to show Elsa how that shard works. Killian and I already used one at the beach, and we thought it would be helpful to know what we're dealing with, since she's obviously not the problem."

Elsa leaned forward too, her eyes wide. "So this is why I get to ride in this magic carriage?"

"It's safe." Killian murmured and looked out the window. "At least, it will be as long as our pretty little wolf stops distracting Emma while she drives."

Ruby laughed and sat back, pulling Elsa back too. "Sorry."

Emma rolled her eyes a little and parked the car, getting out and waiting for the others. Ruby stood right up against her side and once again grinned that smug little grin. "So two...no, three times last night hm?"

"Don't make me push you in the lake before we freeze it." Emma glanced at her. "And whatever you do, don't tell anyone."

"Too late for that." Ruby's grin faded, but she was still smiling.

"What?" Emma turned and stared at her. "You already...who?"

"Victor. Don't worry. He won't tell anyone." Ruby nudged her a little. "I had to. We had a bet."

"You what?"

"I won. Now he has to take me on a date." The other woman winked. "Besides, there are some of us who understand this a little more than others. Victor and I get it. We're a bit more modern and accepting than say, Snow and David."

"Oh god. You have to promise you won't tell them." Emma ran a hand over her face. "I'll never hear the end of it."

"Tell who what?" Killian arched a brow at them before glancing at Elsa.

"Nothing!" Emma stomped her foot once and walked towards the edge of the lake. She heard Ruby chuckle behind her, but thankfully nothing more was said on that topic. The last thing she really wanted to do right now was talk about her personal life when they had a serious problem in town.

"So..." Elsa stood next to her and held her hand over the water. "This is what happens when I do it." Ice formed on the surface and spread. It took a few seconds for things to freeze, and while it was quick, it looked more natural. crystals formed before merging. After a moment, Elsa took a
deep breath and closed her eyes and the ice melted away, leaving the surface of the water as it was before.

Emma pulled the shard out of the insulated container she stored it in, and this time, rather than throw it into the water, she crouched and dropped it close to the edge of the lake. It froze instantly, as did the ground right to the side of the lake, but not enough to catch them too. "This obviously isn't the same."

"No. That's strange." Elsa crouched and reached out to touch the shard. Emma grabbed her hand to stop her, but she shook her head and smiled. "I'll be okay." Once Emma pulled her hand back, she reached out again and picked the shard up. The ice vanished just as instantly as it formed. "It doesn't even delay." She lifted it and looked at it. "Strange..."

"So you've never dealt with anything like this?"

"No. Not even when I accidentally froze my kingdom. I didn't freeze any people. But..." She bit her lower lip and let the shard drop into her palm. "When I was a child, I accidentally hit Anna in the head with my magic, but some trolls helped heal her. Not too long ago, we got in an argument and I hit her again, but in the heart. She didn't freeze instantly, but..." She looked at Emma. "You said this was found in a person?"

"Yes, and he was frozen from the inside."

"Anna froze completely...but she turned into solid ice. This man didn't?"

"Not from my understanding."

Elsa sighed and held the shard back out to Emma. "You'll probably want to keep this away from people. Is there anywhere safe?"

Emma sighed and glanced at Ruby and Killian. "It would be a really bad idea to give this to Gold for safekeeping, wouldn't it?"

"Absolutely, love. Worst possible idea." Killian shook his head. "What about Regina?"

"And if she gets angry and decides to use it against someone?" Ruby frowned.

"I don't think Regina'd do that, but we shouldn't risk it." Emma looked down at the shard once it was sealed in the container. "Here." She handed it to Elsa. "It doesn't hurt you, and you won't use it against anyone, right?"

Elsa blinked and shook her head. "No. I just want to find my sister and go home."

"Then take it."
In the Rain (D4)

With a bit of an exasperated sigh, Emma hung up her cell phone and put it down on the table. They had just gotten back to Granny's after the excursion to the lake, and now there were more problems. She rubbed her forehead slightly and looked at Ruby. "I'm going to need this to go, sorry." She motioned to the coffee in front of her.

Ruby shrugged and took the mug. "Work?"

"Yeah. Another burst pipe, and it looks like it's going to rain." She groaned and stood.

"At least it's not cold enough to snow." Ruby handed her the travel cup and smiled a little.

"Cold rain isn't much better." Emma shrugged. "Thanks." She pushed her way out the door, glancing behind her, and sure enough, Killian was sliding out of his seat to follow her. She couldn't help the slight smile that came to her lips, but she shook it off before he could see it. Instead, she walked a bit briskly to the car. "Don't be so slow."

"You didn't say anything."

"I figured I didn't have to. Looks like I was right."

Silence stretched between them as Emma drove, which was fine with her. There wasn't much she wanted to talk about at the moment anyway. But once the first raindrops hit the windshield, Killian spoke.

"Are we going to talk about it?" He asked. Emma risked a glance in his direction, and he was staring at her, just as she suspected.

"Talk about what?"

"The fact that, despite what that wolf-lass says, everyone is going to know about our tryst by nightfall?"

Emma slammed on the brakes and winced a little as everything lurched forward. "What?"

"Bloody hell, Swan. Are you trying to kill me? Was it that bad?" Killian groaned and rubbed his chest where the seatbelt must have rubbed too much against his skin.

"Well, wear a normal shirt and that won't be a problem." Emma shook her head and composed herself enough to drive again. "Why do you think everyone will know?"

"Because your mother's grumpy little friend was sitting at the counter when we walked in this morning."

"It's not like we talked about it."

"No, but she did say she told the doctor, didn't she?"

"You heard that?" Emma groaned a little.

"So did Elsa." Killian shrugged a bit and rubbed his chest again, hissing a bit. "But he was watching us pretty closely when we left for the lake."
Another groan escaped Emma's lips and she parked the car, leaning forward and watching the rain splatter against the glass. "And you think he'll tell everyone?"

"Not really everyone, but..." Killian nodded at the group standing under the umbrellas, watching the men that were attempting to fix the pipe even in the rain. "I would guess your mother does, since your father seems to."

Emma glanced beyond the rain hitting the windshield to see David walking towards the car, his eyes slightly narrowed. "Oh...Crap." She sighed and looked at Killian. "Let me handle it."

"I would much rather he punch me than yell at you."

Emma opened her mouth to retort, but David's knock on the window caused her to jump. She turned her head and looked up at him before rolling the window down just a bit. With the umbrella over her father's head, the rain wouldn't get in, but she didn't want to open it enough for him to reach in. "What? We were just about to get out."

"Don't bother. There's another one." David frowned a bit. "Down by the docks. You two should go there."

"Oh. All right." She looked up at him. "You look like you want to say something else." She shook her head a little. "Just spit it out. Mom told you didn't she?"

"Yes. I'm not going to say anything about it really. That's your business, and you're an adult. Besides, it could be worse."

"Then what is it?" Emma didn't want to know what he considered 'worse' than a pirate, but then again, David did seem to approve of Killian more after learning about his role in the past.

"Well, aside from the fact that I'm going to give Leroy a stern talking to for the way he pounded on the door screaming something about thinks he presumed Hook did to you..." He grimaced at the thought and shook his head. "We found another one of those shards. I suspect you'll find one in the other pipe as well. I sent a man out there to turn the water off, but you're going to want to tell everyone to either deal with no water tonight or to consider finding another place to spend the night."

Emma sighed a little and sat back in her seat. "Thank you."

"Oh, and Killian?"

"Let me guess, if I hurt her you'll kill me?"

"Well, yes, but that isn't what I was going to say." David paused. "Just use protection hm?"

"Eh?"

"Oooookay. That's more than enough advice dad." Emma started to roll up the window.

"Just remember it!" David half-yelled as the window blocked out some of the sound.

"What did he mean by that?"

Emma shook her head and reached over to pat his let. "Don't worry about it right now. We have work to do."

"If you say so."
"What did you do to this town?" Emma groaned, though it was muffled by her arms as she put her head down at the table at Granny's. "First that nightclub where Killian got knocked out, then the zoo with the animals from the Jungle Book, and now a museum run by some Indiana Jones wannabe?"

"Emma, Mister Porter is a very nice old man. He's not nearly as conceited as Indiana Jones is in those films." Snow's voice carried a slight scolding tone to it, but Emma just kept her face hidden in her arms.

"I don't think that's what she means." Killian's hand rubbed Emma's back lightly as he spoke. "You have to admit, there is a lot more going on than usual. The ice problem is bad enough, but with all of these new people and locations, it's a lot for Emma to handle."

"Yes, I know." Snow sighed and rested her hand on Emma's elbow. "Emma, I didn't mean to upset you. I thought it would just be best to let you know Regina and I found it yesterday while you were working down at the docks."

"I know you're trying to help." Emma lifted her head and looked at her. "I'm just completely stressed out."

"I know." Snow smiled. "At least you won't have to worry about the rumors." She turned her head and gave a rather pointed look to the group of dwarves sitting at the counter. Most of them tried to look oblivious, but Grumpy shrank a little in his seat and looked away quickly.

"Good. Now can you work on David's sense of timing?" Emma shook her head.

"Why? What happened?" Snow blinked. "What did your father do this time?"

"Ah. About that." Killian cleared his throat. "Rather than threaten me the way men usually do, you know, taking a swing at me or trying to challenge me to a duel or something of that nature, Dave, well, said something very specific abou—"

Emma sat up and covered his mouth before he finished his sentence, shaking her head. "It's embarrassing enough being told that by your father, you don't need to blab it to my mother, too." She frowned, but pulled her hand back when Killian nodded.

"Oh he didn't." Snow sat back and groaned. "I specifically told him not to say anything. Was he at least a bit more tactful than throwing a box of condoms at you?"

Emma stared at Snow for a long moment. She could feel the heat rise to her cheeks.

"Oh no..."

"He didn't!" Killian said quickly. "He mentioned it but didn't throw anything at me."

Snow seemed to relax. "Oh good. I was worried he would make it awkward, well, more awkward. I told him to let it go, but...He's never been good at that." She turned a little and gently rocked the carrier as Neal somehow slept through this whole exchange.

"What has happened to my life that it's turned into this?" Emma ran a hand over her face, mostly in an attempt to calm the blushing that still stained her cheeks. "Thank you for telling me about the museum."
"Oh, and..." Snow bit her lip.

"And...? What else?"

"The amusement park..." Snow smiled a bit, though it seemed strained. "I don't know...how it happened. I don't think I had anything to do with any of it. All of these things seemed to pop up when that portal opened."

"What?"

"Well, we didn't notice you were gone, right? Since we were all here. And then even coming back, the only thing that changed was Marion." Snow shifted in her seat, and Emma wondered just what else she was hiding. "But...Even if you disappeared and came back just as quickly, that portal was still open for a short window of time, so..."

"So you think these people somehow came through when the portal opened? Like some sort of weird shift?" Emma sighed. "I don't think that makes sense, but it could explain some things."

"You mean like our new friend's missing sister?" Killian rubbed his cheek a bit with his hook.

"Yes. If we accidentally brought Elsa back with us, and her sister was already missing..." Emma looked at Snow. "Where did you say the museum was again?"

"Two blocks away from the school."

Emma nodded and slid out of her seat. "I want to go check something." She looked at Killian. "Are you coming?" Of course he was coming. She said as much to him yesterday when she had to leave.

Snow smiled. "Have a nice date." She did that to embarrass Emma again, didn't she? Not that it was difficult given recent events.

"So why do you want to go to this place?" Killian asked once he caught up and was at Emma's side.

"Just a hunch." Emma shrugged a little. She was really hoping her hunch was just her lack of sleep the night before, but as she stepped in front of the stairs leading up to the museum, she realized her hunch was all too correct. She felt an odd pressure surround her as she took a step closer. "I guess we should get this over with."

"What is it?" Killian grabbed her hand. "This feels ominous."

"Yeah. It does." Emma looked at him before continuing up the stairs. She steeled herself as she opened the door, but stopped when a blast of cold air hit her. "This can't be good." She glanced over her shoulder at Killian before stepping inside.

There was ice on the floor, similar to the ice that formed when Elsa walked in Regina's yard, but there was something that just felt different about it. The ice path went to the front desk, which was also frozen, before it continued out of the main room and up the stairs.

Emma drew her gun and started to follow the path when she heard a soft yelp at her left. She turned her head enough to look out of the corner of her eye, but there was Killian, grabbing some old man by the collar. "Woah!"

"Let me go!" The man yelped again, dusting himself off once Killian let him go. "Such a brute."
Killian rolled his eyes. "He was behind that." He pointed at what looked to be a sales counter for the gift shop.

Emma sighed and looked at the man. "Are you Mister Porter?" When he nodded, she lowered her gun when she walked over to them. "My name is Emma Swan. I'm the sheriff here. This is Killian Jones, one of my men."

"He looks more like a pirate than a respectable policeman."

"That's because I am a pirate." Killian grinned at him until Emma elbowed him.

"What happened here?" Emma sighed. "Why were you hiding in the gift shop?"

"I was checking the inventory before opening and some strange woman came in here, yelling about something or other and I just didn't know what to do."

"What did she look like?"

"Oh she was really scary." The old man shivered a little and hugged himself. "She was tall, with blonde hair and these horrible...horrible eyes. They..." He hugged himself more and shook his head. "White like snow. She wore all white, and look! Things froze when she touched them! Thank goodness I was alone, or someone could have gotten hurt!"

Killian glanced at Emma. "That couldn't have been Elsa."

"Oh! That's one of the things the woman was shouting. Let's see." The man tapped his forehead and his glasses slid down his nose. "Ah! She never left!" He grabbed both of them and dove behind the counter again.

"What the hell?" Emma hissed and rubbed her arm after it hit the floor particularly hard, but Killian's hand came over her mouth and he shook his head. She heard it then, and her eyes widened. Slow, steady footsteps sounded along the iced floor, and the ice cracked under whatever pressure was applied.

The steps stopped close to the counter they hid behind, but they started again. Emma waited until she heard the door open and she carefully peeked around the side of the counter. She saw the woman just as she left the building and she frowned. Not only was Porter's description spot on, there was just this feeling that filled her when she saw the woman. It never felt like this even when dealing with Regina at her worst.

The door swung shut and the feeling faded. "If...She's looking for Elsa, we need to get her somewhere else." She looked at the others. "Killian, why don't you go back to the station and tell my dad what just happened. Mister Porter, if you have any family, make sure they're okay. I'm not sure why some weird woman would come to a museum to look for someone, but..."

"Of course. I will investigate and give you a report!" The old man saluted Emma before he scrambled away, following the ice path up the stairs.

Killian dusted his pants off and nodded. "I'll meet you, where?"

"David will let you know."

"Aye."
Emma sat cross-legged on a bench in the museum. They had decided that this might be the best place for Elsa to hide now that the white-ice woman had already looked here. Mister Porter was talking excitedly while pointing to all sorts of parts of this mountain room.

"He's a bit overwhelming sometimes isn't he?" Emma turned and blinked at the woman who sat down next to her, setting a small boy down to run around the room. "Oh. Sorry. Jane." She held out her hand.

Emma shook it and nodded. "Emma." She looked back at the others. The little boy started tugging on Porter's arm, so the old man picked him up and set him on his shoulders. How such a small old man was able to hold a child like that was beyond her, but Elsa smiled and laughed a little, so Emma supposed all was well. "At least he loves his job."

"Oh he absolutely adores it. My father has always loved exploring new lands, and when we just showed up here in this building, his eyes lit up and he furiously studied everything about this place that he could find."

"And you're from...?"

"Well, England originally." Jane smiled. "Then Africa, though as my father has discovered, our journey seems to have moved us through time. It's quite fascinating." She seemed to be as excitable as her father, but despite the bright smile as she watched the others, she fiddled with a ring on her finger. Emma knew better than to ask, so she didn't. Not that Jane would have let her, as she started talking almost immediately after stopping. "We always knew America was strange, but this is something else." She looked at Emma again. "Is it true that your partner is actually Captain Hook?"

"Eh? Killian?" Emma looked over at him as he poked various displays with his hook. "Your reaction is much different than mine was."

"So it is true! I went to see Peter Pan when I was a girl." Jane laughed. "Though the Captain Hook there is much more eccentric."

"Yeah, well, Peter was also a good guy in that, and he wasn't. He was the worst of the worst." Emma rested her hands in her lap and looked down at them. "It's a good idea not to get attached to the characters from the books. These people are all real. It takes a lot to get used to, but their stories are just stories."

"Clearly. Your Captain is much more attractive than the play leads anyone to believe." Jane smiled a little. "I suppose, then, everyone here is from another place?"

"Aside from my son Henry and my brother Neal, everyone here was born somewhere else.""Hm." Jane looked at her. "Do you know everyone in this town, Emma? Father said you're the sheriff."

"Yeah, I am, but there are a lot of new people who came here like you did." Emma shrugged a little. "Why, is there someone you're looking for?"
"Hm. Yes. My husband. He didn't wake up here with us..." Jane sighed. "I worry that something horrible happened to him."

"You're husband?" Emma's eyes widened a little when it all seemed to click. "Oh my god. You're Jane Porter."

"Yes." Jane blinked.

"You're married to Tarzan, right? The guy that swings on all the vines?"

"Oh! Have you seen my husband?" Jane clapped her hands together. "Is he okay?"

"No no. That's not what I mean. I mean you're from a story I know, too." Emma groaned. "This is just great. First Aladdin, then The Jungle Book, now Tarzan? What the hell is going to happen next?"

"The Lion King, maybe? Or what about Hercules? Maybe Treasure Planet or Atlantis?" Henry stopped right in front of Emma and held out a cup. "You look a little stressed. Grandpa asked me to bring over some coffee, so here."

"Hercules? Let's hope not." Emma looked up and smiled. "Thanks, Henry." She took the cup and uncrossed her legs, standing and motioning to the bench. "Sit for a bit okay? Jane, this is my son Henry. Henry, this is Jane Porter."

"Oh! From Tarzan!" Henry beamed, just as he always did.

Emma ruffled his hair. "Maybe you can help think of places Jane might find her husband hm? You're much better at that than I am. I'm going to go talk to Killian okay?"

"Sure." Henry turned to Jane, and Emma relaxed a little as she walked away from them. She drank a little of the coffee and frowned. This whole situation was getting to be absurd. Not that Storybrooke wasn't already completely absurd, but to deal with new and missing people as well as all of this ice? It was too much.

"Oh! Emma!" Elsa smiled. "Mister Porter is so kind!" She took Emma's hand and pulled her to one of the inset dioramas. "See this house?" She opened the door. "It leads into these back rooms! He said I could stay in here while we look for Anna."

"Oh?" Emma looked inside. Sure enough, the display house opened into a small room with another door. "Did anyone check it first to make sure it's safe?"

"Mister Porter says he has rooms for living, and he stays there with his daughter and grandson."

Elsa nodded.

Emma opened the second door and stepped inside. She flicked on one of the lights and looked around. Funny how the front end of the museum looked so exotic and interesting, but behind all of the walls was just an ordinary building with boring hallways and plain rooms. "I suppose this would be best. If that woman's already been here, she may not come back, but you need to be cautious."

"Oh. Yes." Elsa nodded. "Miss Jane said she will help me wear the kinds of clothes like the people of this land."

"Oh? Well, that's good." Emma rested her hand on Elsa's shoulder. "Elsa. It's really important that you do your best to stay hidden. Aside from the people already here, no one else can know."
"What about Miss Ruby?"

"I will come up with something. Ruby's not exactly good at keeping secrets."

"Oh, like the one about you and Killian affirming your love?"

Emma's face reddened. "Damnit!" She groaned. "Yes. Like that."

"I think it's nice." Elsa smiled a little, but her eyes seemed a bit distant. "Killian really cares for you. He usually doesn't stop talking about you. At first you reminded me a lot of my sister because you're so nice, and you were the first person who genuinely wanted to help me, but maybe you're more like me." She took Emma's hand again. "I feel like you'd understand me more than anyone else here."

"Why is that?" Emma looked at her, and she was a bit startled by Elsa's words. "I don't know what Killian told you..."

"Oh." Elsa smiled. "He told me about his adventures with you. The day you met, and everything up until now. Well, everything that he said other people knew. He said there were private things that should stay private." She shook her head slightly. "But he said I remind him of you a little. You have a lot of magic too, right?"

"Oh. Well, I did." Emma shook her head. "I lost it."

"You couldn't have. You opened that portal here." Elsa smiled. "But you're scared of it aren't you? Just like I'm scared of mine. But fear is dangerous Emma."

Emma blinked a little, but she nodded once. "I guess. But that doesn't matter right now. What matters now is that we keep you safe and we find your sister."

"Yes, thank you." Elsa nodded a little and let go of her hand. "Emma, I've never had a friend before, so if I say something wrong, I'm sorry."

"You're fine." Emma smiled a little. "I promise." She opened the door again and looked at her. "I'm going to go see if anything else strange has happened today okay?"

"Thank you."

Emma nodded and stepped out of the display house, looking at the others. Jane and Henry were chatting away on the bench while Killian stood there with his arms crossed. Mister Porter was playing with his grandchild and laughing. Normally such a scene would relax her, but she couldn't help but feel a little uneasy. She couldn't pinpoint it, and it definitely wasn't the same feeling she got when she came into the museum the first time. "Let's go."

"Of course." Killian nodded and uncrossed his arms, tapping Henry on the shoulder with his hook. "Come lad. We better get you home hm?"

"Yup." Henry hopped up. "Remember, check the zoo!" He smiled as he started walking with Killian.

Emma lagged a little behind and looked at Jane. "Thank you for helping. If we see your husband, we'll bring him here."

"Thank you."
I don't even know. haha
"You don't think Jefferson did this, do you?" Emma stared up at the giant "Wonderland" sign above the entrance to the new amusement part. New because it just appeared. Just like the nightclub, the zoo, and the museum.

"From what little I know of the bloke, it's possible, but didn't you say he spent all his time looking for his daughter?" Killian shook his head. "And why would he want to recreate the place he hated? That's what you told me hm?"

"True." Emma got out of the car and frowned. "So who could have done this? Do you think it could be Alice?"

"Who?" Killian asked as he closed the door behind him.

"I suppose I should have you watch the movies at least." Emma waved a hand at him and walked along the path. Everything was blindingly bright, colors and shapes everywhere. It was almost like her kindergarten classroom vomited all over the place. She hated it. "Don't touch anything."

"I wasn't planning on it." Killian looked around. "What are we hoping to find here?"

"Nothing. We're hoping to find nothing." Emma shoved her hands in her pockets as they walked along the path. "No strange new people. No nasty ice woman. Nothing."

"Do you think we'll be that lucky?"

"No. That's why I have my gun and why I gave you one." Emma stopped when the path passed through a rather large hedge. Of course she didn't trust this. Large hedges usually hid something unpleasant. "You went to Wonderland once, right?"

"Yes. And this representation is every bit as colorful and pain-inducing as I remember."

"You met Cora there?"

"Yes, she was the Queen of Hearts."

"Right, and she's dead, so that's one less possibility to worry about." Emma stepped through the opening in the hedge. She expected to find some sort of twisted maze, but beyond the greenery was just a town square, filled with shops and food stands, and it was completely empty. "Huh."

"This looks promising." Killian took a few steps toward a stand with a little sign that said 'Tea Time!'

"Don't hurt me!" A small voice seemed to come from the stand. "I'll tell you everything you need to know!"
Killian glanced back at Emma. She frowned and nodded, pulling out her gun and slowly walking towards the stand. "Who's there?"

There was a yelp and a whimper. Emma rolled her eyes came to the stand, leaning over it and blinking. "Are you kidding me?"

The white rabbit looked up at her, spectacles sliding down his little nose. "Don't hurt me!"

"I'm not going to hurt you." Emma ran a hand over her forehead. "How long have you been in there?" She watched him climb up to the counter, ears twitching as he dusted off his little suit. "I've been hiding in here for days. I tried opening a hole home, but I can't seem to do it."

Emma glanced at Killian. "You know where you are?"

"This is inside Storybrooke isn't it? I came here once to get the Knave, and once with Alice and Cyrus." The rabbit blinked at her. "The first day I was here, when I realized I couldn't dig, I walked out of this wretched place, but some woman in white was freezing things, so I ran back here to hide."

"You saw her too?" Killian frowned. "What do we do?"

"Well, we get him out of here." Emma glanced at the rabbit. "Do you have a name, or does everyone just call you Rabbit?"

"Percy." The rabbit bowed.

"Well, Percy, I'm Emma. This is Killian, and you're the umpteenth new person we've found in the past few days." She shook her head. "I guess we could take you to Jefferson, you know him don't you?"

"Who?"

"Oh, I guess you would know him as the Mad Hatter." Emma shrugged as she turned.

"I'd rather hide here than see that man."

Emma stopped and shook her head, looking over her shoulder at him. "Although the people in Storybrooke are from different realms, very few of them have seen talking animals." She frowned a little. "Unless anyone else from Wonderland came with you?"

The rabbit took off his hat and rubbed his head a little. "Not that I can tell. The last time I saw many people was at the wedding..." He hopped down. "Is the Hatter still mad?"

"I don't think so. He has his daughter back."

Killian stepped ahead of them and looked through the opening in the hedge. "Is it such a good idea, love? The child wouldn't have seen a talking animal."

Emma shrugged. "What's the worst that can happen? Jefferson says no? We can't exactly put him up at Granny's with Ruby there."

Killian chuckled. "I would think a little rabbit like him would be too gamey for that lass."

"Eh?" The rabbit stopped. "Who's going to eat me?" He trembled and took a step back.

"No one." Emma stopped and looked at him. "I guess if worse comes to worse, you can stay with Killian on his boat."
"Hey. A boat is no place for a rabbit."

"Well, do you have a better suggestion? And don't say my apartment. Can you imagine how loud and excited Henry would get? He's already determined to find Jane's husband. I don't need him thinking he needs to find Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, or the Cheshire Cat or anything."

"Oh. Well, one of the Tweedles lost a head because of Jafar, and that Cat is not a creature any child should come near, not anymore."

"Wait, what?" Emma turned back to the rabbit. "Jafar?"

"Oh yes. Terrible man. He's a genie now, though."

Emma groaned. "I guess that's why no one from the club ever heard of him. Well, that's one less thing I have to worry about now."

"Um. Emma." Killian stepped back from the hedge. "We may have more to worry about." He pointed at the very far end of the path, out where the car was. Ice was slowly creeping along the ground. "I think hiding would be in order."

Emma's eyes widened and she looked around.

"This way." The rabbit started to run down an alley between two of the stores. "It seems like the Mallow Marsh is back here. Not the real one, but when I was looking around, there seemed to be some good places to hide in there."

"Then we shouldn't linger." Killian grabbed Emma's hand and pulled her after the rabbit.

Chapter End Notes

I don't plan on doing anything else with Wonderland characters, so there's that. :o
As it turned out, the Mallow Marsh was exactly what she was expecting. A small pond, if you could call it that, filled with what was probably supposed to represent marshmallows, but ended up just being a large ball pit. Emma supposed this was supposed to be the 'kiddie' section of the park. Trees formed into snack stands, most of them having signs for marshmallowy treats. Off to the side were swings and other 'safer' amusements for smaller kids. But the rabbit was right. There were a lot of places to hide in here.

Emma was currently sitting up in a tree, not an actual tree, as this one seemed to have white leaves to match the theme of the ball pit. She leaned against the trunk and watched the direction they had come from. At the very least, this was tucked away into the corner of the park, so if that woman did come here, they'd all see them coming.

Killian was sitting a branch above her, spyglass out. Why he had that on him today of all days was beyond her, but he did. Percy was standing on his leg, whispering things into his ear. She couldn't hear him, but she supposed that was the point.

Emma rolled her eyes a little and went back to watching the path. That feeling of dread that came over her at the museum was present here, too. She felt it reach out for her, but it never quite made it. Something warm prevented her from succumbing to it, and Emma wondered if Elsa was right. Maybe her magic wasn't gone, but she was too afraid to use it.

She glanced up at Killian again, remembering the way he refused to act on the curse Zelena put on him, and how the witch essentially forced her hand. She also remembered the slight tingle that passed through her when she brought him back. It was similar to that wave she felt when she kissed Henry's forehead after he had eaten that poison turnover.

Wait. That was true love's kiss wasn't it? Her eyes widened and she turned away from looking at Killian, her hand coming to her lips, which trembled a little as her fingers touched them. Was that possible? Didn't you need to be aware of love for that to happen? She knew she loved Henry. She knew Henry loved her. That's why that kiss worked. When Killian wasn't breathing, that wasn't a kiss, that was a lifesaving thing, right? She knew the curse took effect. She felt the magic drain from her.

But the fact of the matter was that she was able to open that portal in Rumplestiltskin's castle. And she knew she had something with Killian, but was it love? Maybe for him, but did she feel that way about him? She did feel this inescapable connection to him, like everything between them happened for a reason, but that didn't mean true love, did it?

"Emma." Killian's voice snapped her out of her thoughts and she looked up at him. He looked back at her, looking more than perplexed, but that probably had to do with the way her cheeks flushed and her mouth dropped open. "Are you feeling well?"

"I'm...okay." She shook her head. "What is it?"

"That woman seems to be gone." He shrugged. "I was following her, but she went to an area with these large contraptions before walking back out through that hedge.

"Oh." He was right. Emma could no longer feel that dark presence. "Then we should get out of here while we can." She hopped down from the tree and looked up. "Unless you two want to stay up there?"
"No no." Killian scrambled down with the rabbit in tow. "The sooner we leave, the better."
"And then what happened?" Snow asked as she cut up some vegetables.

"We left." Emma sat at the table and watched her, one hand holding a mug of hot chocolate.

"So you ran from the ice woman, hid in a tree, realized you might be in love with Killian, and just left?" The chopping stopped as Snow turned and looked at Emma with one of those 'you're joking, right?' looks she had gotten so good at. "That was it?"

"Yes? We brought the rabbit to Jefferson, and went home." Emma shifted a bit uncomfortably in her seat. She should have known not to tell her mother about it, but she hadn't slept much all night, and she was feeling uneasy.

"And where's Killian now? Is he coming to dinner like your father asked?"

"Yes. He's picking Henry up for me because I said I was coming here early to help."

"So you asked if I needed help because you wanted to avoid him as much as possible?"

"No." Emma shook her head a little and sighed. "Maybe." She let go of the mug and rested both of her arms on the table, burying her face in them and groaning. "I don't know what to do anymore. Everything is so confusing."

"I suppose you're not used to it." Snow sighed a little before continuing. "That's okay though, isn't it?"

"What do you mean?" Emma lifted her head enough to look at the other woman. "Being confused is okay?"

"Isn't it?" Snow smiled a little. "And if it makes you uneasy, since everyone knows how much you hate losing control of the situation, think about what you do know." She looked back down at the vegetables and continued to cut. "You know you love Henry, your father, your baby brother, and me. You know you loved Neal once. You know the love you felt then for him and the love you feel now for your family is different."

"That much is obvious..." Emma sighed. "What are you getting at?"

"You know that at the very least you like Killian. If you didn't, you wouldn't have grown so close to him in Neverland. You also wouldn't have given him the look you did when he told you his secret in that cave. For a moment, Emma thought Snow looked a little pained, but she shook her head and smiled as she put the knife down. "And you absolutely wouldn't have given him the smile you did when you left with Henry."

"Ok, so I like him. That doesn't explain much."

"It explains a lot." Snow looked at her. "You can handle like because like doesn't have to be permanent. You're comfortable with like because it doesn't mean anything."

Emma looked at her and frowned a little. It was weird hearing Snow say things she knew but hated admitting. "And if I only like him, I can pull back..."

"But you don't want to pull back. I saw the way you relied on him, back when you two looked like other people. You don't like relying on people, but you let him comfort you."
"So?" Emma shook her head. She didn't like it when Snow beat around the bush like this. If she was going to say something, why couldn't she just say it?

"So you let him see you vulnerable enough to need comfort." Snow shrugged and smiled. "And now you think you might be in love with him. That's huge, Emma."

"But what if I'm not?"

"And what if you are?" Snow shrugged. "You're scared of getting hurt again, but you know that what happened when you were a teenager won't happen again this time. You just don't know how to believe it."

She was right. Emma didn't want to get hurt again. Who did? But she also knew Killian wouldn't do what Neal did. He had already proven that with the way he changed, the way he tried to help her, and the way he gave up his ship. "Am I being overcautious?"

"No, I don't think so. You've opened up a lot more, and you've definitely let him in." Snow looked at her and grinned just slightly, laughing when Emma's cheeks darkened. "But I'm sure he doesn't even blame you. After all, he is the most ruthless of pirates, hm?"

"I don't think that's it. He doesn't blame me because he's the same." Emma looked down at her mug again and a little smile came to her lips. "We seem to understand that much about each other even when we don't talk about it."

"Maybe you should."

"Maybe we will once all of this crazy stuff stops happening."

"Who will do what when crazy stuff stops happening?" Henry's voice echoed in the hallway. How much had he heard? And if Henry was here, then Killian was too, wasn't he?

"Nothing. When did you get here?"

"Just now." Henry sat in the chair next to Emma and grinned a little.

"And where's Killian? Didn't he pick you up?"

"I'm here." Killian came out from the hallway and blinked. "Something wrong?"

"No." Emma stood and brought her mug to the sink to wash it out, though she only had a few sips before her conversation with her mother. "I was just wondering." She glanced at him before quickly dropping her gaze back to the mug.

"Hm." Killian sat at the table and grinned. "Were you, now? Anything else you were wondering?"

Emma kept from looking at him as she shook her head. "No."
"So it was like this when you came in?" Emma held her notepad and listened to the lifeguard talk, and boy could he talk. But she supposed she couldn't blame him. The pool was solid ice, with the exception of a section by steps that looked like someone had cut out blocks of it. She wrote down a bit more before dismissing the man and crouching at the pool's edge.

"Do you think that woman came here?" Killian crouched next to her. "I mean this is pretty solid." He knocked his hook on the top of the ice and it barely chipped.

"I don't know. I don't see any of those shards here, and it's only the pool. Plus..." She slid a finger along the smooth cut in the ice. "That ice couldn't be cut like this ice."

"But then how did this form?"

"It could still be that woman, I just don't think she left a shard here." She shrugged. "But this missing ice is strange. Well, the pool freezing is strange, too, since it'd have to be really cold, but why cut ice out of it? What could you do with it? It's not like you can drink it."

"You can ask this guy." David's voice came from the doorway, so Emma turned and saw him pushing a young man forward. He had a fuzzy hat on his head, and a large coat. His face was partially obscured by a scarf, but David yanked it down. "He was pulling blocks of ice on a little sled."

"Do they fit?" Emma walked over and frowned. She looked at the man and rested a hand on her hip as she tried to gauge him. "Killian, go help David get the ice to see if it fits into those missing holes."

"And what about this guy?" David asked, still holding the man's arm.

"If he tries to run, I'll shoot him." She shrugged her shoulders a bit, but otherwise said nothing until the other two were gone. Once they were, she sighed and looked at him. "What's your name?"

"Kristoff, Ma'am." He said softly, bowing his head. "I didn't mean to cause any trouble, but I don't have any money, and selling ice is all I know."

"Selling ice? You cut the ice out of the pool to sell? For what?" She shook her head. "You have no idea what kinds of things are in that water, do you?"

"Why would there be anything in the water?" Kristoff blinked and Emma smiled at how genuinely confused he looked.

"So which kingdom are you from?" She asked and flipped open her notebook again. "Not the Enchanted Forest, so where?"

"Excuse me?" He took a step back, but then seemed to think better of it, so he stood his ground. "Arendelle."

"Kristoff from Arendelle." Emma looked him over and frowned. "So you know Elsa?"

"Elsa? She's here?" His eyes lit up and he leaned forward a little. Too close for Emma's liking, but he absolutely didn't have a threatening thing about him. Not with those cheeks and that super-wide grin. "Does that mean Anna's here too? I've been looking for her since falling into the trees."
"Hold on there iceman." Emma shook her head and lifted her hand. "First of all, I should be taking you in for stealing, and at the very least trespassing."

"Taking me in where?"

"Wait a second would you?" She rubbed her forehead a little. "I promised Elsa I would keep her safe, so be honest with me and tell me how you know her."

"Anna's my..." He stopped before finishing. His cheeks turned red and he lifted his hand behind his head, laughing a little nervously. "So I guess Elsa would be my...sister in law?"

"I see. Well, at least you're not lying." Emma shrugged and was about to say more, but the door opened and David and Killian returned with the sled of ice. "If those fit, just leave them. We're not going to charge this guy with anything."

"Are you sure?" David arched a brow. "Not even trespassing?"

"It would feel unfair. Besides, he seems to have come over like the others."

"Another one?" Killian groaned. "Where is he from? Not Wonderland or anything equally as strange, I hope?"

"The same place our newest friend is from." Emma smiled. "So while you two finish up here, I'm going to bring him to see her."

"Is that wise?" Killian asked.

"Not much choice right now." She shrugged. "I'll bring him there, and figure out what to do. I'll call you..." She shifted a little, and pretended not to notice the way the heat rose to her cheeks as she looked at Killian. She also pretended not to notice the way Kristoff kept looking between the two of them with wide eyes.

"What about Henry?" David was pushing one of the blocks of ice into place. "Do you want me to pick him up and bring him with us or bring him to Regina?"

"Leave that up to him. He hasn't been over there in a few days, so he may want to see her." Emma smiled. "Thanks." She turned to Kristoff and poked his arm. "All right, iceman, let's go see your sister."
How did it get to this? First the ice incident at the pool, and now she was sitting inside the principal's office, listening to him go on and on about how Henry has become a rebellious kid, and how it's all because of the way he's being influenced by the adults around him. She rubbed her forehead in an attempt to ward off the oncoming headache, but she could feel it wasn't working.

And as the irate man went on and on, Henry's face twisted into an anger Emma had never seen. Not that she blamed him. Here was this man blaming Regina for being a bad mother, blaming Emma for not being around and for bringing bad influences around. She supposed that meant Killian, and that idea only angered her a little more.

But it was Henry who let the anger out first. "Stop talking. Stop saying such nasty things about my moms. You have no idea what you're talking about." He snapped.

"See? Such insubordination." The principal frowned. "I cannot justify his being able to participate in any of the upcoming events when he behaves like this."

"Hold on a minute." Emma looked at the man. "You're going to take away my son's privileges when you still haven't given me a reason why I was called in here in the first place?" She frowned and lifted her hand to cut off the man when he tried to speak. "Don't. Don't you dare tell me Henry is insubordinate and rude when all I've heard out of your mouth is how horrible his two mothers are. I don't know who you were before, and I don't particularly care, but I really doubt you actually have the qualifications to do what you're doing, even if the curse gave you a piece of paper that says so."

"Miss Swan." The man started, but backed down at the glare Emma shot him.

"You are really lucky I'm the one sitting here right now because if Regina heard any of the things you said you'd be regretting it. If my son has gotten insubordinate, I am sure it's because of the bile coming out of your mouth every time you speak. You have no right to judge either Regina or I as mothers. Henry is fine. He's not being swung to the dark side. Regina isn't turning him into some little minion, and I'm not exposing him to theft and piracy just because my boyfriend used to be a pirate."

"Miss Swan..." He tried again. "Henry's increasingly obstinate."

"So you're going to take his privileges away because he's an adolescent boy?" Emma turned to Henry. "Why were you called in here today?"

Henry frowned. "I asked the secretary if I could make a phone call to your work to see if I could go to mom's today."

"And?"

"When she said no, I went back to lunch."

"Students aren't allowed to just leave lunch, Miss Swan."

"So he can't leave lunch to call someone, but if he said he had a stomachache he could go to the nurse? What about the bathroom? Or do you make students wet themselves?"

"Well, it's no wonder he has no regard for our rules." The principal muttered.
"Excuse me?" Emma stood. "Come on, Henry. I'll bring you to Regina's, and while we're there, I'll make sure we stop by the Superintendent's office and tell her all about what happened here."

The principal paled a little, but Emma scowled at him and led Henry out of the room, slamming the door behind her.

Killian stood from the chair he was sitting in, looking a little concerned. "Are you all right?"

"No." Emma muttered and walked to the secretary's desk. The woman looked up at her, rather helplessly and apologetic. Emma handed her a note and stepped out of the office, waiting for the other two.

"Emma..." Killian reached out and touched her hand. She tensed a little, but she let him take it. "Come love, let's get Henry to Regina hm?"

She nodded a little, glancing at him before looking at Henry. "Are you all right?"

"Yup." He smiled a bit.
Emma was probably holding Killian's hand a bit too tightly as she slumped in the seat in the theater. She was still somewhat angry from this afternoon, but that was to be expected. Telling Regina made it worse, since the woman was just as irate as she was, but at the same time, it seemed to relieve some of the tension between them. It also made the conversation with the superintendent much easier. When Emma wasn't explaining what happened, Regina was demanding it be handled. But despite that resolution, she was still angry.

Why? The man insulted Killian, and while she had gotten over that for the most part, she was angry that the man thought it was okay to take such a pot shot. Yes, Killian was a pirate. Yes, he did bad things, but he also did so many good things. Why couldn't people beyond her social circle see that? Did they think so lowly of her that they just assumed she would be with someone horrible?

She sighed a little and glanced at him, trying not to make it obvious, but he was watching her and not the screen, so she let go of his hand. He pulled it back and moved his fingers a bit, opening and closing his fist before grinning at her. "Thank you for letting me keep it."

"Sorry." She managed a little smile before she shifted and leaned against his arm, resting her head against his shoulder and looking back at the screen. She didn't even know what movie they decided to see, but the theater was pretty empty, so that was fine with her.

They sat like that for the rest of the movie. It seemed like it was supposed to be a comedy, but neither of them really laughed, and when it was over and the lights came back up, Emma slowly broke away and looked at Killian. "Hey..."

"Hey yourself, gorgeous." He smiled a little. "Are you feeling any better?"

"Yes, thank you. Sorry about crushing your hand." She touched the back of it. "I didn't cut off too much circulation, did I?"

"No. I've had much worse." He lifted the fake hand a little and chuckled. "I can handle you squeezing a little too tightly once in a while."

"Still." She stood and looked down at him, taking a step back when he stood to give him enough room, but once he did, she took his hand again. This time, she held it gently.

"It's really all right. The fact that you could do that just proves how lucky I am to have such a strong woman by my side." He leaned in a little. "Do not apologize for your feelings, ever. You feel what you feel, and you don't owe anyone an apology for that."

She looked at him and smiled. "You always know what to say, don't you?"

"No, but if I don't, I fake it pretty well." He grinned. "But I don't fake many things, so don't worry."

"Ugh. You would make a joke about that wouldn't you?" Emma tugged him a little as she started to walk out of the theater. "Thank you."

"For?"

"Making me feel better."
"Well, that's one of the reasons I'm here." He chuckled. "I'd say more, but you'd probably scold me about more distasteful jokes."

"Maybe. Or maybe I'll suggest you act on it." Emma glanced at him with a sly little smile. "But maybe I won't."

"Well, I suppose it's worth the gamble."
"Even if I startled you, you didn't have to hit me in the face with the pan." Kristoff muttered before he put the bag of ice back on his cheek.

"I know. I'm sorry! You startled me. I wasn't expecting it." Elsa sighed and looked down at the carpeted floor of the waiting room.

Emma watched them from the counter. She was waiting for the woman behind the counter to finish imputing the information she wrote down for her. Who knew this was going to be how she started her morning? Though at least it was a huge improvement form yesterday.

"Well, lad, you might want to stop talking if your jaw hurts that much. The doctor here will tell you if you did too much damage." Killian was sitting next to him, arms crossed.

"One of my teeth fell out! How is that not damage!" Kristoff hissed, then winced.

"Seriously, stop talking." Killian rolled his eyes. "You're going to make the poor girl feel worse than she already does."

Elsa sighed again and looked up at Emma, tears shining in her eyes and threatening to fall at any moment. "I really didn't mean it."

"I know. He knows, too. He's apparently just a whiner." Emma offered her a smile in hopes that it would calm her a little before she turned back to the woman behind the counter.

"The doctor will see him now."

"Thank you." Emma sat down next to Elsa and rested her hand on the other woman's shoulder as the dentist came out to lead Kristoff into the examination room. "It'll be fine. If it was just the one tooth, they can make a fake one for him. You won't even notice."

"Really? They can do that?" Elsa's eyes widened. "This place is magical isn't it? I was so worried. If Kristoff is here, then Anna must be, too, and she'd be so angry with me if she knew I broke his face."

Killian laughed a little. "Luckily it seems like the rest of his face was just fine if he could complain that much."

"Oh please, you would have complained too if I hadn't knocked you out that time at the lake." Emma smirked.

"Lucky hit, that was." Killian winked at her. "I may not have complained, though I certainly would have insisted on you kissing it better."

"Well, I am not kissing Kristoff better!" Elsa shook her head. "No way."

Emma laughed a little.
A little late and a lot short. I totally lost track of time. Whoops.
"So you're telling me the powder in this box becomes that vile wobbly mass I had to eat when I was in the hospital?" Killian held up a box of Jell-o and looked at Emma, his eyebrows raised. "With just water?"

"Yes. Put it in the basket. That should be something Kristoff can eat."

"As a fellow man, I refuse to allow him to eat this."

Emma gave him a stern look and grabbed the box out of his hand. "It's not so bad. You just never had it before." She tossed the box into the basket and stepped passed him, grabbing a few more flavors. "And it's not like I hit you in the face with a frying pan, so you don't have to eat it."

"Would you hit me in the face with a frying pan?" Killian grinned. "I'm too handsome for that."

"Then don't push your luck. I at least know how to hit your face without knocking any teeth out."

Emma pushed his shoulder lightly and continued down the aisle. She didn't really want to think about what happened this morning, though it was a nice, easily manageable distraction from the current situation. At least with this, it's just Kristoff missing a tooth and Mister Porter sad about the dents in one of his replicas. Then again, who makes a replica pan that heavy? So grocery shopping to find some easy-to-eat foods for their new charge was a lot better than hunting down some ice woman.

And the less she worried about that right now, the better. There hadn't been an incident with her since the day at the amusement park, and Emma secretly hoped the woman walked over the town line and lost her magic.

She glanced at Killian as he walked next to her, peering at different items on the shelves. She smiled a little at the faces he made. The way his brows lifted if something looked delicious, or the way his face scrunched up if it didn't. "Do you want anything?"

"Hm?" He looked at her and shook his head. "I'm afraid I don't understand what a lot of this is, and how anyone could possibly eat it."

She smiled a little. "I guess it is strange hm?" With a shake of her head, she continued on, placing items in the basket and occasionally glancing at him again. "Then again, you eat at Granny's enough to have some of the worst of it."

"It is a bit heavy, but nothing like the food I had to eat on the ship."

"I guess hamburgers are better than gruel."

"Some pirates can be good cooks, love. I was just stuck for three centuries with one that wasn't."

He chuckled a bit.

"Poor you." Emma unloaded the groceries onto the belt. "Well, we have one more stop before heading back to the museum, and then we can go back to the station to see if David found anything."

"Oh? All right."
Chapter End Notes

Hoping to have the energy to write something longer tomorrow.
"What he bloody hell?" Killian stared from the passenger's seat, and Emma swatted at him.

"Be quiet. I need to order." She hissed before she leaned closer to the window and spoke into the speaker. Normally she would have avoided coming to this place, since there wasn't actually one in Storybrooke, but the extra trip out of town to pick up some flat cheeseburgers, thin fries, and huge milkshakes would have been worth it. Or, at the very least, it would be worth it to see the looks on the others faces when she gave them this as food.

She smirked a little as she pulled away from the speaker and waited in line with the other cars. The last time she had McDonalds was in New York, and while it wasn't that long ago, and it wasn't the healthiest choice, she did miss it a little. Finding one not so far out of Storybrooke was great. And even though Granny's had good burgers, there was still something about these flat little cheeseburgers that did the trick.

"This is strange." Killian was turned, looking mostly out of her side window. "You talked into that thing and now what?"

Emma laughed a little and pointed ahead. "I'll pay, then we'll get the food."

"What sorcery is this?"

"It's not sorcery, it's a drive-thru. I could have stopped on our way back from New York, but we had other things to deal with." Emma pulled up to the first window and handed the cashier her money.

"So why did we come all this way?"

"I wanted it." She shrugged. "It's been hectic and stressful lately."

Killian's brows furrowed and he sat back in his seat. Emma figured he was probably brooding over her being stressed and not being able to help her, so she patted his thigh gently as she pulled up to the next window.

"Here." She handed him the tray of milkshakes. "Hold this while I drive hm?" She then handed him the bag before he could protest.

"How much did you buy?" His eyes widened, but he held the tray on his lap and used his hook to open the bag to peek in.

"Enough for five of us."

"Emma, if you're that stressed, there are better ways to work it out."


"And that will help you with your stress?"

"Hm. It will." She grinned. "You'll see why when we eat."
Killian looked at her a bit skeptically, but she simply grinned at him.

Chapter End Notes

Ok I lied. There was no way I was going to get this one long enough. ;)


Deserted Island (C7)

Emma had barely passed out the food when the call came: Ice in the harbor, fishing boats stuck, but no one seemed to be hurt. She groaned a little and stood, resting her hand on Killian's shoulder. "We have to go. Henry, stay at Regina's tonight all right?"

"Yeah, okay. I'll call her when we're done eating."

Emma smiled at him a little, handing the bag to Killian and grabbing the last two shakes. "We eat on the way." She said before she turned and left the backroom that had become Elsa and now Kristoff's hiding place.

"What happened?" Killian scrambled to catch up to her, though keeping up with her half-run didn't seem to be a problem.

"More ice at the harbor." She said as she shoved through the museum's front door and quickly descended the stairs. "Some of the boats are frozen, including yours, but no one was hurt."

"Brilliant." Killian muttered as he sat in the passenger's seat and handed Emma one of the cheeseburgers.

They didn't talk as she drove, mostly because she was eating, though she was careful not to choke at Killian's confused, but not totally disgusted reaction to his burger and fries. And as much as she wanted to laugh at the way he groaned at the brain freeze from his shake, she just couldn't. Not when something serious was happening again. Not when she felt stupid for letting herself relax.

When they arrived at the harbor, she walked to where some officers were interviewing the workers and residents. "Everyone's okay?"

"Just barely, Sheriff." One of the officers nodded, looking at Killian before looking back at her. "This one almost got iced, though." He nodded to the pudgy man in the red cap. "Smee, is it?"

Killian groaned. "I see your reflexes haven't improved any, Mister Smee?"

"Sorry Captain." Smee bowed his head. "I didn't have much time to react. I was inside when I heard things creaking, and I just barely got outside in time to watch the ice take over everything."

"Did you see anything else?" Emma asked.

"No Ma'am." Smee shook his head quickly.

"No one saw anything." The officer said.

Emma nodded once. "All right. If no one has anything else to say, you can send them home. Smee, you'll probably want to stay at Granny's tonight."

"All right. What about..." He stopped when he looked at Killian, and his eyes widened. Emma arched a brow at him, but he just turned and walked away rather quickly.

"He's such an idiot." Killian muttered and walked towards the ice. "So it just all froze?"

"Doubtful." Emma followed him. "And it doesn't look like the whole harbor is frozen, just this area."
"And that." Killian used his hook to point to a path of ice that led away from the harbor and towards a cluster of small islands. "Look."

Emma groaned and looked at him. "Well, let's go on an adventure." The sarcasm was thick, but she was already stepping out onto the ice. It wasn't all that slippery, surprisingly enough, and she found she could just scoot forward without losing her balance.

"Are you daft?" Killian called after her, but she heard his boots scraping along the ice behind her.

"We've climbed a beanstalk, gone to Neverland, and gone back in time, and you're worried about a little ice?" Emma called, but didn't turn. She needed to focus on the path in front of her.

"And if it melts and we're stuck on an island?"

"Officer Cole saw us come out on the ice. Now be quiet. I'm trying to focus here." It didn't take too long to reach the island, though it was rather small. From where she stood on the frozen beach, she could see where the shore curled around. So if that woman had escaped here, she hadn't gotten far.

Once Killian was beside her, she took slow steps, following the path of ice, but just off to the side so she could use some of the trees for cover. As the trees thinned, she saw a small clearing. It looked like the remnants of a campfire still smoldered, but just beyond the circle of rocks and pile of wood was a rocky mound, open to the clearing, but surrounded by trees on all other sides.

"I don't like the look of this." Killian whispered, grabbing Emma's arm. "We should go back and get the others."

"And by then whoever went inside there," she motioned to the hole in the rock. "will have gotten away."

"I don't think going into a mysterious cavern on an empty island is a good idea."

"You're more than welcome to stay out here and keep watch, then." Emma moved towards the cave. "I'm going in with or without you."
"How deep is this cave?" Killian grumbled from behind Emma, and she rolled her eyes a little. "This is a worse idea than when it was just a bad one."

"As you've said five or six times by now." She shook her head and stopped, causing him to bump into her back, but she didn't turn around. "You saying it doesn't make it any different. So far the only thing that's happened is that it got darker." She held up her phone a little and allowed the flashlight to shine deeper into the cave. "Otherwise that's it."

"That's true, but it feels like we've been walking for hours." He hissed a little.

"Don't be so over dramatic. It's barely been ten minutes." Emma started to walk again, carefully stepping over smaller stones and around larger rocks. She shined the light a little further and stopped again. In about ten feet was a wider part, kind of like a room. She lifted her hand to stop Killian before she strained to hear anything. There was a faint rustling, but it was faint.

She took a few steps forward and listened again. The rustling was more pronounced now, almost frantic. She glanced back at Killian before she rested her hand over her holster and took a few more steps, shining the light into the wider opening.

"Hold this." Emma shoved the phone into Killian's hand and rushed forward, almost falling to the ground as she reached a girl, tied up and struggling to get out of the ropes. She lifted her hand and pulled the gag out of the girl's mouth. "It's okay, I'll get you out of this."

"She'll come back soon." The girl half whispered once the gag was out of her mouth, but she stopped struggling.

"She?" Killian stepped forward and held the light so Emma could undo the ropes, but when they wouldn't budge, she pulled a knife out of her boot and started cutting them.

"The Snow Queen." The girl whimpered and rubbed her wrists once the ropes were free. "Thank you." She tried to stand, but yelped and fell back to the ground.

Emma looked over at Killian before looking back at the girl. "We didn't see her when we came here." "She just left not too long ago." The girl tried to stand again, so Emma moved quickly to help her support her weight.

"All right." Emma nodded and started to move.

"Um...Love, this may be a bit more serious than we thought." Killian shone the light around the cave. "What is all of this?"

"Holy crap." It was all Emma could manage before she heard something from the cave they had just come from. "Is there anywhere to hide?" She whispered to the girl.

"Yes..." The girl managed to pull away and she walked to an uneven portion of the wall. "She doesn't know this is here." She slipped inside a crack that Emma hadn't even seen.

Emma glanced at Killian before following the girl, only feeling slightly comforted when she heard him cuss and follow her.
The three of them remained huddled in the crevice, staying silent as they listened to the crashes of class and the thud of what must have been a table being pushed over. "How did she escape?" As if the whole Snow Queen thing wasn't enough, the woman's voice was sharp, icy. Emma frowned and braced herself, eyes narrowing a little as she focused on the sounds.

A few more crashes, a frustrated scream, and footsteps back up the cavern until they couldn't be heard anymore. Emma let out her breath and slowly slid from the crevice when it had been silent long enough.

"We need to leave before she comes back." She whispered and waited for the others to follow. "She probably thinks you left when she made the ice bridge from the harbor. We can use that to our advantage." She glanced at the girl, who just nodded.

Emma carefully moved about the trashed lab, if that's what this was, frowning a bit as she stepped over broken glass. Luckily, it looked like everything had gone unused for as long as it was here, so there was at least no risk of weird potions or anything. And while that thought made her feel a little better, she really wanted to know why there was something like this in the first place. It couldn't have been Victor's, right? He did his work in the hospital, and David told her about how he used those facilities to revive Regina's dead fiancé when she was stuck in the Enchanted Forest.

So whose was it? Why was it here? It had to come over in the second curse, right? So what other famous scientist would be brought here after her parents brought them back?

"We need to go, love." Killian murmured and snapped her out of her thoughts.

Leaving the cave seemed to take a lot less time than going in, but Emma figured that was just their sense of urgency. When she reached the opening, she looked around before slowly stepping out. "Hurry." She whispered and started into the line of trees closest to them. If the woman was looking for that girl, then going back the way they came was out of the question.

"And how will we get back?" Killian whispered as they ducked between trees. "We came over on that thing. If she gets rid of it, we're stuck."

"Unless she has a boat somewhere, she's going to keep freezing the water to get back and forth. So we can either run, or wait until she comes back and run."

"There is a boat. She used it to bring me here." The girl whispered. "It's on the side away from the town." She started picking through the brush. "This way."

Emma started after her, but grabbed her arm and held her back. "Do you feel that?" The air was a bit colder. That woman had to be around here somewhere, but even with the cover of the trees, there wasn't much they could do.

"What about up there? We've done that once before." Killian pointed to a cluster of pine trees a few yards away.

Emma nodded and moved, careful not to step on any twigs. She pushed aside some of the branches and slipped inside. She climbed, making a bit of a face at how sticky some of the branches were, but within a few minutes, she was a decent way up. The girl wasn't far behind her, and Killian was crouched at the bottom, watching before he too started to ascend.
"After this, no more trees." Emma whispered and pulled out her phone. She sighed a bit with relief when she saw two bars. At the very least, she could try to warn the others, so she turned the sound off and started typing.

The girl was staring at her, eyes wide. Emma glanced at her and shook her head as if to signal that they could talk later. The girl nodded and pressed closer to the trunk of the tree.

Just in time, too.
The ice spread over the dirt and rocks just beyond their hiding place in the tree. Slow tendrils of white creeping and solidifying anything that wasn't dirt or rocks. Emma held her breath and focused on keeping perfectly still. She heard footsteps, but they sounded like they weren't right directly next to the tree. She glanced at the others, and while Killian looked fine, the poor girl looked like she was about to faint.

The footsteps stopped, and Emma waited for them to start again. When they did, she felt some of the tension in her shoulders release. The steps got further away, and the ice started to recede. She turned her head a little and listened for crunches and steps until she couldn't hear anything anymore.

She wasn't sure she trusted it. It could be a trap if the woman was trying to stake them out, but the air felt warm and clear. She slowly descended and peered out between some of the needles. When she saw no one, she nodded to the others and stepped out.

"Clear?" Killian whispered when he stepped behind her, way closer than she thought he had been. She felt his hook slide across her back, and she turned her head to look at him.

"I think so. We should go."

He nodded and helped support the girl again as they made their way to the shore. Sure enough, there was a boat there, so Emma got in it first and helped the girl sit before Killian got in and grabbed the oar.

"You want me to do that?" Emma arched a brow and looked at his hook.

He grinned. "It'll take us longer, but we should be fine. Besides, you make a pretty good pillow." He nodded to the girl, who attached herself to Emma's arm.

Emma shook her head a little and lifted her hand, gently resting it on the girl's head. "It's okay now, hm?"

"Thank you."
"So, everything seems to be in order with Anna. Aside from stress and the rope burn on her wrists, she checks out." Whale said as he came out of the room, shrugging. "It would be best if she rested."

"What did you say?" Emma's eyes widened.

"She just needs rest."

"No, her name is Anna?"

Whale looked at her, one brow raised. "You brought her here without even knowing that? You're losing your touch, Sheriff. Maybe New York got to you too much?"

Emma shook her head. "A lot of things happened, so it hadn't come up. I thought the most important thing was to make sure she wasn't hurt."

"She's not, so you can take her wherever you're going to take her." He shrugged and walked away.

Emma groaned a little and opened the door to the room. "So your name is Anna?"

"Yes." The girl looked at her and smiled a little. Emma wondered how she hadn't noticed it before. This girl looked very much like the description Elsa gave her earlier. The braids, the smile, the eyes. She should have known. "You seem surprised, miss."

"Emma." She stuffed her hands into her jacket pockets and looked at her. "You're very calm for someone who's lost their sister and their fiancé."

Anna's eyes widened. "How...do you know about that?" She paled a little and scooted back on the examination bed.

"I'm the Sheriff. It's my job to know. Besides..." Emma rocked back on her heels a bit. "Killian and I have been talking to Elsa for a few days now, and we just found Kristoff. Though..."

Anna looked at her, leaning forward a little. "Though..."

"Kristoff may be a little more banged up than he was the last time you saw him."

"Banged up?" Her eyes widened. "Did the Snow Queen hurt him?"

"No no." Emma shook her head. "Come on. Since the doctor said you seem to be okay, I'll take you to where they're staying."

"They're safe? I can trust you, right? Well of course I can trust you, you saved my life." Anna nodded and stood, linking her hands behind her back and smiling a little. "Thank you, Emma. This means a lot to me."

Emma opened the door and smiled just a bit. "I think it will mean a lot to them, too. They've been very worried about you, with good reason, too." She stepped out of the room and nodded her head towards Killian, who had been leaning against the wall with his arms crossed. "We're going to take Anna to her sister."
"Oh?" Killian grinned. "What a lucky coincidence then, hm?"

Emma nodded and looked at him. "Now let's hope it's a coincidence and not a problem, hm?"
After yesterday, with the island and the cave, with the excitement of that reunion, Emma really just wanted to take a break. She knew she couldn't, but she definitely needed one.

But instead, she was sitting cross-legged on the floor in one of the basement rooms in the hospital. Whale said he hadn't gone down there since the incident with Regina's fiancé last year. It was pretty obvious with the amount of dust she had to blow off some of the items in here.

Regina was poking around on some of the shelves while Killian stood at the door.

"And none of this looks like what you found in that cave yesterday?" Regina turned, holding up two different sized containers. "This is all pretty modern, all things considered."

"The things in that cave seemed much older." Emma shook her head. "Not like anything I've seen in school or on TV or anything." She flipped through Whale's notes. "I don't think anyone used it, but why would it be there?"

"I certainly didn't bring anything like that over, and I doubt your parents would have, at least not on purpose." Regina shrugged.

"Do you think it came here when the others did?" Killian watched them both, frowning a bit. "Maybe someone else came with it?"

"Anna said no one else had been in there except for the Snow Queen."

"I wonder if she chose such an unoriginal name for herself, or if the people in her land were as stupid as the people in mine." Regina scoffed a bit.

"To be fair, you were quite evil, lass." Killian smirked at her, just narrowly dodging the plastic tubing she threw at him.

"Anyway." Emma's voice raised a little. "It's not anyone we know." She closed the folder of notes and stood. "And with items that old, I really can't think of anything or anyone who'd use it, so maybe it was just there before Storybrooke."

"Is it that easy?" Killian arched a brow.

"Why not? No one questions anything else that was here first. The trees, the shape of the land...all of it was like this before the town appeared, wasn't it?"

"It was." Regina nodded a little and pushed past Killian to open the door. "As for that woman, I think it's best if we talk to Rumple, don't you?"

"It depends on what you want to tell him. I'd rather not tell him that the girl he trapped in an urn is here. I don't know why he trapped her, but I don't want him to do it again." Emma shook her head. "If you just want to talk about the other woman, that's fine."

Killian groaned. "I'd rather not talk to him at all."

"You could always sit this one out instead of following Emma around like a lovesick puppy." Regina snapped.

Killian chuckled a little. "Oh. Looks like the Queen is a little bitter hm?" He leaned in a little
closer to her. "Shall we find someone to ease your tension, your highness?"

"Stop it. Both of you." Emma pushed between them and stepped out of the room. "You can fight like children later."
"Do you think it'll be that easy?" Emma sat on the edge of Killian's desk, leaning back on her hands and swinging her legs a bit. She looked over at Regina, who stood with her back against the bars of one of the holding cells, arms crossed. Rumplestiltskin stood between them, both hands resting on the top of his cane as he shrugged a little.

"It can't really be that difficult. I've sealed others before." He shrugged a little. "But I have nowhere safe enough to keep her once I seal her. My vault isn't here."

Emma made a bit of a face and looked over her shoulder at Killian. He looked at her and nodded a little. "Well, what other option do we have?" She turned back to Rumple. "We can't exactly open a portal back there."

"The town line." Regina frowned a little. "We can push her over it, and she'll lose her magic, won't she?"

"She'll lose her memories too." Emma frowned. "I'm not sure that's the best solution."

"If she's as dangerous as you seem to think she is, it's the best solution." Regina muttered.

"If we were going to push all of the dangerous people over the line," Killian rolled his eyes. "You two would be the first to go, wouldn't you?"

"It doesn't work on me, I cast the curse." Regina smirked.

"No, dearie. You cast the first curse. This is Snow White's curse." Rumple grinned at her. "Do you want to test it?"

"No one's testing anything." Emma shook her head and slid off the desk. "There has to be another way."

"Then come up with something else." Regina snapped.

"I've dealt with an ice-witch before." Rumple started, his head shaking a little. "But this woman sounds much worse. Especially if she's the source of those shards."

Emma went tight-lipped at Rumple's mention of Elsa. She glanced back at Killian again. "What do you think?"

Killian looked between the three of them and shook his head. "It doesn't matter what I think. It matters what you think."

"I just don't like the idea of forcing someone over the line." Emma sighed and rubbed the back of her neck a bit. "I mean, that seems unnecessarily cruel." She glanced at Rumple. "Belle's father tried to do that to her, didn't he?"

"Yes." Rumple grunted a little. "I see your point, Miss Swan."

"Don't be ridiculous. It's not like she's just going to agree to stop freezing the town." Regina's frown was a full-blown scowl. "And what if she starts freezing more people? Didn't she freeze a jogger?"

"Yes, but..." Emma sighed. "We don't know why she's here or why she's doing what she's doing.
If we could somehow talk to her."

"Are you volunteering then?" Regina arched a brow. "I'm certainly not going to talk to her. Are you?" She glanced at Rumple.

"No." He shook his head and looked at Emma. "That leaves you. So if you're so opposed to the town line idea, then you find her, and talk to her if you can even get that far."

Killian muttered something under his breath, and Emma sighed again. "Fine. I'll do it."

"If she freezes you, we're pushing her over the line."

"Fine."
Emma watched Killian from the door to the bathroom. He was sitting on the bed, fumbling a little with the edge of his sleeve. She shook her head a little and came out, sliding onto the bed behind him and wrapping her arms around him, resting her cheek on the back of his shoulder. "Are you okay?"

"Are you?" He asked as rested his hand on hers. "I'll be fine if you are."

Emma closed her eyes and kept herself close to his back. "I am I guess. I just don't know how we're going to lure that woman out in order to talk to her. I don't want to put anyone else in any danger."

"Well, it didn't look like she was staying on that island, so she probably stays somewhere in town." He moved his hand and rubbed her wrist a little. "We can ask around, hm?"

"Yeah I guess." Emma nodded as best she could with her cheek pressed against him like that. "I'm just tired of this sort of thing, I guess."

"Yes, well anyone in your position would be."

"I guess. I never thought I'd would wish my life was more boring, but here I am, hoping that things get incredibly boring once all of this is over."

"Your life won't be boring if I have my way with you, love." Killian chuckled a little.

Emma laughed a little and unwrapped her arms from around him, but she remained behind him, and she moved so that her legs were on either side of his. "And how entertaining do you think you'll be?" She slid her hands down his back.

"As entertaining as you want me to be." Killian rested his hand on her leg and rubbed a little.

"Oh? That's quite the promise." She pulled his shirt up enough to slide her hands up under it, letting them move up his back. She smirked when he shivered a bit.

"Damn, your hands are cold." He hissed a little, but he pulled his hand back and all but tore his shirt off, looking over his shoulder at her.

"Then I guess you'll just have to warm me up. Though if you keep taking your clothes off, you won't be very warm." Emma smiled a bit playfully as her hands moved over his shoulders and rubbed there a bit. "Though this is okay. You've been doing a lot for me lately, so I don't mind doing something for you."

"And what do you plan on doing for me?" He arched a brow.

"That's a secret for now." She kept that smile on her lips as she continued to rub his shoulders. "You should probably relax, though."

"If you keep rubbing me like that, relaxing won't be the only thing I do."
So many super short ones. Haha. I need more time and less work-related stress.
"I still don't understand why you call this noise music." Killian half-yelled to Emma as they walked through the park, the loud guitar and thudding bass making it a little difficult to communicate.

Emma looked at him and shrugged, pushing past a small crowded of people who had come to see the concert. If being in a band, or coming to the park and watching your friends play in a band kept the high school kids out of trouble, she had no complaints. As long as they behaved and didn't start trashing the park, that is.

"Why are we here anyway?" Killian bumped into Emma's back when she stopped suddenly.

"Got a call." Emma glanced over her shoulder at him. "One of the off-duty guys thinks he saw that woman here." She frowned. "I would have dragged David here, but you were already at my place with me, so it was easier."

"Ah. So you drag me around for your convenience?"

"Complaining?"

"Not at all." He chuckled a little and rested his hand on her back. "This noise is still awful though."

"Well, I can't expect someone who sings sea shanties to be used to hard rock, now can I?" Emma shook her head.

"I am pretty used to hard things you know." He chuckled again.

"That makes it sound like you have had a lot of hard things come at you." Emma smirked a little at him before she started walking again. "Over here." She walked towards the little cart selling beer. One of the officers was standing by as hired security for the night.

She listened as the man spoke, nodding occasionally as he described the woman. Plain clothed and all. Interesting. She looked over at Killian before thanking the man and walking back to him. "She blends in pretty well. I guess she's looking for the others." She sighed. "He said she came in from that direction." She pointed. "So we should start there."

"Is this such a good idea?" Killian asked, but Emma was already walking. "What if she already left?"

"If she did, it wasn't this way. He's been watching the whole time for me."

"And what will you do when we find her?"

"I'll think of that if we find her." Emma walked a little faster towards the park entrance. She could see people starting to leave, and for a moment, she thought she saw the woman mingling with the exiting crowd. "Damnit." She broke into a run, but she was too late. By the time she made it, the crowd was gone, and so was the woman.
Chapter End Notes

Five more chapters. I suppose I should figure out what I'm going to do next. ;)

"Here?" David pulled up in front of the old, worn down house. He glanced over at Emma, who sat in the passenger's seat and stared at the building. "Are you sure?"

"If you can call my hunch the same thing as being sure, then yes." Emma opened the door and hopped out, turning to look at her father. "Do you want to stay out here or come with me?"

"Isn't he going with you?" He pointed behind him to where Killian was sitting in the back of the truck. Emma glanced at the pirate and shook her head. "Your driving seems to have made him sick."

"What? No." David turned in his seat, eyes wide.

Killian grinned and hopped out of the back to the ground. "I'm totally fine. If I got sick from that kind of movement, I would never have lasted so long at sea."

"You tricked me?" David pouted.

"A little. You don't have to drive like we're in some cop show. It's fine." Emma shook her head and turned back to the house. It was old, that was obvious from the start. Brown wood siding that was completely faded and even rotten in some places. Black shutters that barely hung on if they hadn't already fallen off. Overgrown ivy curling around everything it could. "Anyway. I'm going in."

She walked along the weed-infested stone walkway, her hands clenching a bit at her sides as she got closer to the crooked porch.

"I heard this place is haunted." David said from behind her. Apparently he decided to join them, though she was sure the commentary wasn't helpful. "But that's ridiculous, right?"

"Is it. Your wife saw Cora's ghost didn't she?" Killian asked, and Emma was pretty sure he was smirking, since David huffed and went quiet.

"Yes yes. You are both such good friends that you like teasing each other." Emma muttered and stepped up to the door, knocking once and waiting. The knock echoed on the porch a bit, and boards creaked although no one stood on them. There was movement in the house, or at least it sounded like there was. Emma peeked through the window next to the door, but she couldn't see any.

Footsteps echoed on the floorboards inside, and the door slowly opened. A woman stood there. The same one they were looking for.

Emma wasn't sure if she was angry or relieved that it finally came to this.

"May I help you?" The woman said, her voice sending a chill down Emma's spine, but she held her composure and lifted her badge. "I'm the Sheriff. I am here to ask you some questions about some recent events around town."

The woman looked at her for a long moment, as if she was trying to decide whether to lash out or not. Emma knew that look well, so she just stared right back until the woman sighed and nodded, opening the door to let them in. "I guess you already know if you're here, hm?"

"That depends on what you think I know." Emma followed her inside, only glancing over her
shoulder long enough to see that David and Killian were following her.

"The ice." The woman shook her head. "Would you like anything to drink, Sheriff?"

"No. Just tell me what you're doing here and why you're freezing places and people."

The woman sat in a chair and looked them over, again as if she were gauging them, but she shook her head. "You're talking about that person in the woods? I already knew you had figured out my power, so I knew it would be fine."

"It wasn't fine. I wasn't the one who dealt with it. You're very lucky Doctor Whale was able to handle it, or I'd be here with an arrest warrant for murder." Emma crossed her arms. "So do you want to make this easy or difficult?"

"It will be easier if I show you. I don't think I have the energy to relay the whole story." The woman stood again and walked through the kitchen. "Follow me."

Emma glanced at the others. David shook his head and frowned, but Killian stepped closer to her. "I'll go with you." He said.

She nodded and followed the woman out the back door.
The woman led them through her backyard, through some trees and to a wide stream that passed through the woods. Off to the left was a rocky outcrop, water streaming down it at several points in little waterfalls. It would have been nice to appreciate such a scene, but Emma was too concerned about what this woman might do to really appreciate it.

"Here." The woman stopped in front of the stream and glanced over at them. She held her hand out to the water and froze it enough to walk over it. Standing on the other side of the stream, she looked at them.

Emma's hands came to her hips and she just stood there, watching the woman. Was she supposed to follow her? Was she going to attack them? "What?" She tried to keep herself from sounding annoyed, but it was pretty difficult.

"This." She crouched and moved a rock and pulled a tin container out. She walked back over the stream and held it out to Emma.

Emma took the container and slowly opened it. Inside was a small notebook, so she took it out and flipped through it, frowning as she read the pages. "So...you're messing with everyone for this?"

"I was hoping to get her attention. She's here isn't she?" The woman frowned a little, but there was something in her eyes that made Emma almost feel bad for her, but then she remembered how they found Anna in that cave.

"Who?" Killian frowned. "Who is she talking about?"

Emma turned and tossed the notebook to Killian. He caught it and held it out to David so they could both flip through it. While they did that, she turned back to the woman and frowned. "I have no reason to trust you, you know that right?"

"I won't hurt anyone. All I can do is say it." The woman sighed. "It's really important that I find Elsa. Her parents should have sent her to me to help her control her powers, but instead they locked her away."

Emma frowned a little. "And you think you can help her now? Why? Why should I let that happen? Don't you think she's beyond that?"

"She still can't control it well." The woman frowned. "She could accidentally hurt someone else she cares for."

"So." David frowned. "You want us to let you help someone not hurt people after you purposely hurt people? How does that make any sense?"
"It doesn't, mate." Killian frowned. "And I don't trust her."

"That's pretty bad, coming from you." David smirked and clapped him on the shoulder.

"All right." Emma shook her head. "I'll consider it on one condition."

"What?" The woman perked up a little.

"If anyone else agrees, it'll happen at the town line. If you hurt anyone, we push you over and you lose your magic." Emma frowned.

"Emma! You can't be serious." David stepped forward. "This isn't..."

Emma held her hand up and shook her head. "One, others have to agree. Two, she has to hurt someone. If she's serious about helping, it won't be an issue."

The woman looked between them and nodded. "I accept."
Emma drove, occasionally glancing in the rear-view at Elsa and Anna as they sat in the back, looking through the notebook the woman had given her the day before. Of course, Elsa had objected to coming out here to meet her, and Emma couldn't blame her, but Anna convinced her to at least read the notebook.

Killian sat in the passenger's seat, looking out the window, but with the way his shoulders hunched up, Emma knew he was still a little unhappy with her solution, but at the same time, he had to understand, right? He always understood her, and if he didn't believe in her now, when she seemed to act unlike herself, when could she trust him to believe in her?

"I can't believe this." Elsa said with a sigh. "This woman is really...?" She shook her head and frowned. "How do we know she isn't going to trick us and hurt someone?"

"We don't." Emma said. "But I believe she won't."

"That's only because you threatened her." Killian muttered.

Emma's hands gripped the steering wheel a bit tighter and she sighed. "I only said that because I didn't think she'd make it necessary."

"Threatened her with what?" Anna seemed more horrified by the notion, which only enhanced Emma's impression that Anna was perpetually optimistic, even after everything she had been through.

"Pushing her over the town line." Emma sighed and pulled the car off the side, close to the sign that indicated the edge of Storybrooke. "Anyone who crosses the line loses their magic and their memories, and only remembers their Storybrooke personality."

"That's...pretty bad isn't it?" Anna gasped.

"It is." Killian grumbled and opened his door, storming out of the car faster than Emma could stop him.

She sighed and rested her forehead on her arm. Elsa reached up from the back seat and rested her hand on Emma's shoulder. "Perhaps he's just worried because you making that kind of threat seems so unlike you?"

"But if she doesn't think it will come to that, is it really a threat?" Anna sighed.

Emma steeled herself and got out of the car. "Stay in here if you don't want to see her, but if you decide you do, wait until Killian or I signal that it's okay."

The girls nodded, and Emma shut the door. She walked around the front of the bug and leaned against the hood, crossing her arms and glancing at Killian. "How long are you going to be pissed at me?"

His reply was a bit of a grunt, and Emma rolled her eyes a little and turned enough to see the road, but keep him just in the corner of her vision.

She knew that woman would be here soon, and she assumed Killian wouldn't talk to her until then, or after then, or for who knows how long. She didn't want to admit how much that thought bothered her, but it did. It bothered her more than she thought it would. She didn't think she had
done anything too wrong. She had a hunch that if she gave that woman some sort of ultimatum, it would be fine. She never thought someone who was trying so desperately to help someone would purposely hurt that person, even if she did use underhanded methods to try to lure that person out.

She thought Killian would understand that it wasn't a threat so much as a safety. If the woman hurt someone, if she hurt Elsa, she would be more devastated than anyone, wouldn't she? But Killian didn't trust her. He didn't understand her. And that was hard for her to swallow. She wanted so desperately to believe that even if they argued, or fought, it wouldn't ever be because he couldn't see her intent. The idea of him not trusting her when he was the only one who was really there for her hurt more than she could have ever expected.

"Maybe we should break up." Emma winced a little as soon as the words came out of her mouth.

"What?" She heard the surprise in his voice, even in just one simple word. "What the bloody hell are you going on about Emma?"

She refused to turn to look at him, her arms crossed over her chest as she curled in a bit defensively. End things before it hurt too much. That was always the way with her wasn't it? Push people away. Shut yourself in. Refuse to let anyone see just what you feel, and she felt horrible and low. But she had no real answer to his question beyond what she said, so she remained quiet.

"Emma..." Footsteps as he walked around the front of the bug and grabbed her shoulder, pulling her enough to look at him, and he balked. Tears slid down her cheeks when she looked at him, and he just stared at her, as if unsure what to do.

She just looked at him, still curled a little into herself as if she could shrink into her shirt and disappear.

They stood like that for a short moment before Killian let go of her shoulder and lifted his hand to her cheek, brushing away some of her tears as he had in the Enchanted Forest. "Look at you, crying and being sad over something you suggested, but don't even want."

"Why?" She managed, whispering through trembling lips.

"Why what?" Killian continued to wipe her tears, moving closer to her and resting his hook on her side. It was a comforting gesture, though somewhat awkward with the way she sat on the bug's hood.

"Why do you know me well enough to understand that, but you don't believe in me about the other thing?" She sighed and bowed her head forward, allowing her forehead to rest against his chest. "You always understand me...but you don't believe me..."

"About the threat you made?" Killian's hand rested on the back of her head, his fingers threading into her hair. "Because I've done that. I pushed Belle over, and I regret it, so I was a little angry that you'd actually take that option seriously when you know it's not a good thing."

"I know you're mad..." She whispered and sighed, lifting her head to look at him again, her arms uncrossing and she gripped at his coat a little. "And I know it looked really bad for me to say that, but I just..." She shook her head. "I'm not like Regina and Rumplestiltskin, right?"

"No, you're not, which is why I was angry." Killian sighed and leaned down enough to rest his forehead against hers. "But not angry enough to want to part with you. I just don't want you doing something you'll regret."

"Because it took you so long to find your way out of that darkness, right?" Emma sighed. "I just got scared. You're the only one who really seems to know me, and for a minute I doubted you,
and I shouldn't have."

He shook his head a little. "I doubted you first, hm?" He touched her cheek again and smiled a little. "We'll both work on that?"

She nodded a little and let go of his coat only to curl her arms around him, though she didn't react when she heard the squeals of delight that came from the car. For a moment, she forgot that Elsa and Anna were in there, and they had just seen all of that.

Killian chuckled a little held her against his chest.
Emma stood on the town line, showing the woman where it was. "Stepping this way," she said as she took a step back, "will take you out of Storybrooke, and everything will change."

"But you don't change?"

"I wasn't brought here by a curse or magic means. Neither was he." She nodded to Killian as he stood by the car, watching them. "So the curse doesn't affect us. But it will affect you. You'll lose your magic for sure. I'm not sure you'll lose any memories, though others have lost theirs, because everyone remembers now."

"And you think she'll come talk to me?"

"I don't know. She might. She might not."

The woman sighed a little and nodded. "I understand."

"I'll talk to her."

Emma turned and looked at Elsa. She had gotten out of the car with Anna, who was firmly latched onto her sister's arm. "Are you sure?"

Elsa nodded. "If she does anything else, I'll push her over myself, so you don't have to be burdened by that."

"If I do anything, I'll step over so no one has to be burdened." The woman shook her head and looked at the girls.

Emma stood there for a moment before she walked past Elsa, resting her hand on her shoulder. "Killian and I will be over there okay? This is a private matter, and you three don't need us eavesdropping."

"Thank you, Emma." Elsa smiled a little and turned back to the woman.

Emma walked back to the bug and sat on the hood, looking at Killian. "It will be all right, won't it?"

"We can hope." He moved to stand closer to her, leaning back against the bug and shrugging. "But it's out of our hands now isn't it?" He was watching the others, though they couldn't hear what they were saying.

Elsa did look angry though, so Emma assumed she was laying into the woman for kidnapping Anna, or something. Either way, it was a private matter, and as long as they didn't get hurt, she wasn't going to interfere.

Though it looked like she didn't have to. Anna was walking over to them with a huge smile. "It worked out!" She said, clapping her hands together once. "This is so good!"

"It worked out? How so?" Emma blinked and leaned a little against Killian. "It looked like Elsa was yelling at her."

"Oh she did, about me." Anna nodded once, but she was still smiling. "But Elsa's going to learn more, so she doesn't get scared and accidentally hurt anyone, and Aunty is going to stop being so
reckless."

"Aunty?" Killian arched a brow.

Anna shrugged. "It's better than calling her Snow Queen isn't it?"
"So this is it?" Killian whispered into Emma's ear after looking around the church. "This is why you made me wear something strange like this?" His hand fiddled with the tie at his neck.

Emma glanced at him and shrugged a little, resting her hand on his leg and patting it once. "You look fine, and you might think you're uncomfortable now, but if you just wore a shirt normally once in a while, it wouldn't be an issue. You'll get over it."

"So harsh." He grinned. "Though I can't say I mind seeing you in this." He let go of his tie and dropped his hand, fingers sliding over and a little under the hem of her skirt. At least until she whacked his hand away.

"Killian, we're in a church. You need to behave." But her cheeks flushed slightly, so she turned enough to look around. It was a small group, to be sure, but what could be expected from such a sudden event, especially when no one really knew the people who were involved?

Henry had somehow convinced Regina to come with him, so they sat with Snow in the pew behind Emma and Killian. The five of them made up the "bride's" side. On the other side were the Porters. All four of them. Apparently Henry's advice to Jane had work, and she sat leaning against her husband's side, their child squirming a bit in his little suit. Of course his father seemed to be squirming almost as much.

Kristoff stood, pouting. He had been like that ever since he was told that no, a reindeer could not be a best man. David stood with him instead, apparently trying to cheer him up and failing. At least the pouting stopped when the ceremony started. Kristoff stared as Anna came down the aisle with Elsa.

Emma was all smiles, and she unconsciously took Killian's hand, holding it throughout the entire ceremony. She glanced over at him every so often, and he seemed to be watching almost too intently. But when he caught her looking at him, he grinned, and she quickly looked back at the others.

It was short and sweet, and when it was over, Emma stood, still holding Killian's hand. He didn't seem to mind, though, as he squeezed hers when he stood.

"You know, love." He whispered into her ear, "if this is something you enjoy...then..."

"Don't push your luck, Captain." Emma let go of his hand as she turned, poking his chest. "Too much too soon."

"Admiral." He grinned. "And I wasn't going to suggest what you may be thinking." He stepped closer to her and his grin widened. "I meant this." He gestured to his outfit with his artificial hand, since Emma insisted he leave the hook at home.

She slid her fingers along his tie, toying with the bottom of it when she got there. "This? I can't say I mind it, and you do look good."

"Oh stop flirting in church." Snow piped up from behind them, causing Emma to jump a little. "We're going to head back to Regina's for the reception, so don't be too late or everyone will notice. "She motioned to the others.
"Of course." Killian winked, and Emma rolled her eyes and pushed him lightly. "We're going. Relax."

"Hm. Okay." Snow shrugged, her tone indicating that she really didn't believe them. "Just don't show up after it ends okay?"

"Mom..." Emma groaned and grabbed Killian's hand again, pulling him along. "I said we're going, so we're going."

"Mhm." She heard Snow's sarcasm even as she pushed through the doors to exit the church.

"Well, I suppose we shouldn't dally hm? Your mother will clearly be upset if we're late." Killian smirked. "Though she never said anything about leaving early."

"No, she didn't." Emma turned, grabbing his tie with her other hand and pulling him in for a kiss. "And we might just have to do that." She smirked just a little before she let go of him and walked to the car.

Killian stood there for a moment before he scrambled to catch up with her.

Chapter End Notes

I'm going to take a little break from daily posting to work on some other stories I have in mind. I have some longer multi-chapter fic ideas I want to try to work on. :)

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