

## Becoming Regina - Part 2

For EB18

By TheSpiralledEye

*Unsure how to fix the broken necklace and unfuse her friends, Gabby decides to turn to the only other powerful witch she knows; her mother.*

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“I can fix it, I can fix it.” Gabby whispered frantically.

She had been saying that for over ten minutes now as she paced back and forth along the short hallway to the bathrooms. The necklace was in hand and she occasionally muttered a strange word or incantation only to swear and try something else. She was staring at the necklace so intently Regina was surprised it didn't melt.

*‘What should we do? She’s freaking out.’* Gina

*‘I’m freaking out!’* Reggie replied.

*‘So am I but Gabby needs us more right now.’*

*‘You’re right, she needs Regina.’*

The two of them effortlessly melted into their shared persona; it was simple as breathing. Especially considering Gabby needed them. Regina reached out to stop the frantic pacing and Gabby looked at them with wide, terrified eyes.

“I-I’m so sorry I’ll figure this out! The spell shouldn’t...It wasn’t supposed to...I...”

“Hey, deep breaths.” Regina soothed, “Don’t go having a panic attack on me.”

She was only half joking but Gabby gave a nervous little laugh.

“I swear, I didn’t do this on purpose.” She stressed, “I promise.”

Regina raised an eyebrow.

“I know that, why on Earth would I think otherwise?”

Gabby swallowed.

“Because...well, we’ve been doing this back and forth. I was worried you might think I broke the spell on purpose to make you stay this way.”

Regina couldn’t help it, they laughed.

“Gabby, I know you’re not a monster, you’d never do that.”

Gabby’s face relaxed slightly but she still looked awfully guilty. It was so like her to blame herself for a simple accident. After a few minutes of deep breathing they finally left the diner and returned to the car but there was a haze of awkwardness descending over them. The unasked question of ‘what now’ hung heavy in the air.

“Maybe there is somebody else magical who can help?” Regina suggested after a while, placing the broken necklace around her neck.

Gabby’s hands tightened around the steering wheel.

“There is...one person I know.”

“Yeah?”

“My mother.” Gabby said with venom in her voice. “We haven’t talked in a long time, but she’s more powerful than me. She’s the only person I can think of who would be able to help.”

Reggie knew Gabby’s father, he’d met the man a few times over the years and Gabby and he seemed to get along well. It only just struck him how odd it was that she never talked about her mother.

“She lives not too far from the concert, if we take a day or so detour, we can make a visit.”

Gabby sounded like she'd rather stick pins in her eyes than do what she was suggesting, Regina was almost tempted to tell her to forget it. But they knew they couldn't stay like this, how would they explain it to Gina and Reggie's families? They reached out and placed a firm hand on Gabby's shoulders.

“Hey, I don't know what your history is with your mom, but no matter what, I am here for you, all three of me.”

Gabby snorted and the two of them burst into giggles as all the nervous energy in the car finally dissolved into slightly manic laughter. Gabby wiped a tear from her eyes and sighed, shoving the keys into the ignition and turning them harshly.

“Alright, what the hell. Let's go meet Ma.”

~

Gabby spent the next day artfully dodging any questions Regina had about her upbringing or mother. She danced around the questions more and more brusquely until finally they arrived at what looked like a normal, if somewhat large, house in the suburbs. Gabby was looking at it like the front door was the gates to hell.

“My Ma can be...a lot.” Gabby warned, “she loves getting under people's skin so try not to let her get to you.”

“I'm more worried about her getting under your skin.” Regina admitted, “You're shaking.”

Gabby looked down at her trembling hands on the steering wheel and sighed.

“Gabby...your mother never hurt you or anything did she? Because we don't have to do this if you really don't want to.”

“No, it's nothing like that.” Gabby smiled sadly, “It's just that to my Ma, magic is everything. She uses it to get her way all the time. It was why my dad left her in the first

place and...for a while I was a lot like her. Following in her footsteps, using my magic to change people to suit my whims but then..."

She paused.

"I don't know, I just looked in the mirror one day and asked myself, is this who I want to be? A brat who uses my rare abilities to bend the world to my whim? Never struggling or putting in any effort? I decided then and there not to use magic flippantly and my Ma didn't take it too well. She said it was such a waste of my abilities and then we started to argue all the time and eventually I just...left."

Regina remembered when she had first formed, how Gabby had mentioned not wanting to do this sort of thing anymore. She had no idea there was so much baggage attached to it. They felt a stab of retroactive guilt; Reggie and Gina's squabbling must have been really starting to grate on Gabby to push her to break that promise to herself. They reached over and gave Gabby's hand a squeeze.

"Together?"

Gabby smiled.

"Together."

They stepped out of the car and walked up to the house and Regina was once again in awe of her friend; if she hadn't just witnessed Gabby's little breakdown in the car you never would have guessed she was nervous. As always she was the picture of confidence and grace, perhaps there was some merit to that old adage of fake it till you make it.

Gabby rang the bell and they waited, Regina wondered what they would do if her mother wasn't home but a second later the door swung open to reveal...an older Gabby. It was remarkable really; the woman in front of them had the same dark eyes and hair, the same super smooth complexion and high cheekbones.

She really did look like Gabby but aged up twenty years. Though there was something unsettlingly cold in her gaze and her skin seemed just that little a bit too tight for somebody of her age. It took Regina a moment to realise what was making her uncomfortable; Gabby's mother didn't have a single wrinkle or laugh line. It made her look botoxed and plastic, uncanny almost. Regina was immediately reminded of Cher and repressed a shiver.

The woman's face split into a wide smile but there was no warmth in her eyes, in fact she looked downright vindictive.

"Gabby! Darling!" She cooed, sweeping her daughter in a hug that had all the warmth of a constrictor python. "How lovely to see you! You didn't say you were coming!"

"Yes, well, it wasn't exactly planned." Gabby said bitterly, stepping back and then adding through gritted teeth. "I need your help."

"Help with what?" Her mother asked, eyes turning to Regina, "Oh! I see, your little friend here smells of magic, come in, come in."

Before either of them could protest they were ushered inside the house and Regina felt her jaw drop. The place looked like a mix between a second hand shop and an antique store; mismatched furniture, vases of flowers, paintings, strange bric-a-brac that she couldn't begin to describe lined the shelves. There was a cabinet full of crystals and another full of bottles and plants right next to a modern television and gaming console, one of the controllers being held in what appeared to be a suspended vine.

"Admiring the decor?" Gabby's mother smiled, "I never can quite make up my mind about what I like, so I just take everything, wonderful isn't it? I think it gives the place character, now, where are my manners, Raquel."

She held out her hand and Regina took it out of inertia more than anything.

"I'm Gabby's mother, obviously, I am sure she's told you all about my fabulous self." She preened, "but I am at a loss, who are you little chickadee?"

"Regina." They replied without thinking before stupidly adding. "Sort of."

Raquel raised an eyebrow.

"Sort of?"

Her quizzical look lasted only a second before an expression of utter glee spread across her face; Regina swore she could see herself reflected in the woman's sharp, white teeth. It reminded her of a cat that had cornered a bird and planned on playing with its meal.

“Oh darling!” She cooed, turning to Gabby as she flinched. “Did somebody make a boo boo with her magic?”

“I’m not five, Ma.” Gabby hissed, “but...yeah.”

Raquel laughed and patted her daughter on the back.

“Sweetie it’s fine, this stuff happens all the time, now; what did you do?” Raquel addressed the question to Regina instead and they blinked. “Before I fix whatever this mess is I want to know what it is you did to my darling daughter to make her break her little vow not to transform people anymore. It must have been terrible, maybe you deserve it. Were you some thuggish man who she decided to give a taste of her own medicine? I do enjoy those, did you make him a bimbo darling? That’s a classic.”

Gabby looked ready to scream.

“No, Ma. It’s nothing like that and I would *never* stoop that low.” She replied before whispering under her breath. “Unlike *some* people.”

“I’m actually two people.” Regina spoke up, doing their best to get a handle on the situation. “Gina and Reggie, one girl, one guy. We are friends and sometimes we like to share a body, that’s all.”

They conveniently skipped over the part where they used to hate one another and Gabby forced them into this situation; something told them that Raquel would find that far too delicious and the last thing this woman needed was more ammunition. She was doing enough damage as it was.

“Oh.” Raquel seemed disappointed and Regina had to hold back a small smile. “So what’s the issue then?”

“The necklace.” Gabby explained, going over in detail how the spell worked and how now they were stuck. Raquel flopped back on one of her chaise lounges (who owns more than one chaise lounge?) and listened carefully.

“Hmmm, it could be a couple of things.” She mused, “Magic is finicky sometimes, has a mind of its own almost. I’ll have to run some tests. If I decide to help, that is.”

Gabby pressed her lips into a thin line and Raquel rolled her eyes.

“Well darling, I’m hurt! It’s been years and now you’re only here because you want something, not because you’ve come to apologise or even because you love me. It’s downright insulting really.” To her credit, Raquel did sound legitimately upset but after the dramatic way she had been carrying on since they arrived Regina wasn’t sure.

Regina watched as Gabby swallowed her pride.

“Ma...please. For Reggie and Gina’s sake?”

Raquel smiled.

“Well since you asked so nicely.” She cooed, “and no matter what you think of me darling, I am still your mother and I love you. I’ve missed you.”

That actually did sound sincere.

“Alright then, let’s run some tests!”

It was like the strangest doctor visit Regina had ever experienced, well technically they had never gone to the doctor as themselves but still. Raquel sat them down and waved all manner of strange objects around them and the necklace; rocks that glowed, plants that bloomed and withered in an instant, even a stick that had to be a wand. Regina had no idea what reactions were good or bad and seemingly neither did Gabby.

She hovered over her mother’s shoulder nervously, occasionally asking a question only to be bitten back with comments like “well if you had stayed and finished your training you would know, darling”. Gabby stayed quiet after that.

Eventually Raquel placed down all the strange items and observed them, taking in the strange glow and vibrations with morbid curiosity. Regina waited, twiddling their thumbs in silence until finally the elder witch sighed.

“It’ll take some time. I ran a number of tests, but we won’t know for sure what went wrong with the spell for at least a day or so.”

“A day?” Gabby blanched, looking stricken at the idea of staying that long. “But we’re going to a concert soon.”

“By all means go.” Raquel replied flippantly, “But what if the cure for this little magical misfortune requires quick attention to fix? We would need to act as soon as we know what’s wrong.”

“Can’t you just take your best guess?” Gabby pleaded and Raquel pulled a face of mock shock.

“And risk harming your friend, my my, you have become cold these last few years.”

Gabby opened her mouth to say something before biting her lip and Raquel smiled victoriously. Regina felt her blood boiling; this woman was insufferable; she clearly loved having the last word.

“Gabby, why don’t you show me around your hometown?”

“Oh that sounds fun-” Raquel started.

“Just the two of us, after all since your mother so graciously is helping us out we should give her room to concentrate don’t you think?”

Gabby looked stricken for a moment, as if she were scared her mother would do something but to both their surprise Raquel simply shrugged and waved them off.

“Very well then.” She sighed, “I’ll stay here. All alone, as always. But I expect you back for dinner, six o clock sharp.”

“I don’t need a curfew.” Gabby whispered but her mother struck her with a withering look and she nodded. “Alright.”

Regina couldn’t take much more of this, the tension in the room was building to frankly fatal levels so she grabbed Gabby by the hand and practically ran for the front door. It was only when they were a full block away in the middle of the suburbs that she felt like she could breathe again.



“I did warn you.” Gabby said quietly, “Ma is...used to getting her own way and when she doesn't she often ‘punishes’ people with her magic.”

“What was all that talk of turning people into bimbos?”

“Trust me you don't want to know.” Gabby groaned as she covered her face. “It's so embarrassing...”

“You can't help what your mother is like.” Regina pointed out and Gabby's ears went pink.

“But I almost ended up just like her and she's right, I did go back on my word when I made you, Regina. How are you feeling anyway about being you?”

Regina blinked, they hadn't even considered it, the last day had been such a surprise and they had been so focused on helping Gabby cope with her guilt they'd not taken the time to think about it.

“Fine honestly.” They admitted, “Gina and Reggie are so used to being me that it's like breathing.”

Gabby pouted.

“I'm not sure that's a good thing, maybe making you was a mistake...”

“Hey now.”

Regina stepped in front of Gabby so she was forced to stop walking and grabbed both her hands in their own and held them.

“No matter what happens with this mess I want you to get one thing through that beautiful skull of yours; I am glad I got to be Regina.” They said seriously, “if it weren't for Regina, Reggie and Gina would still hate each other's guts, you'd be stressed and neither of them would have grown at all. Plus, they are good friends now in their own right.”

“Really?” Gabby whispered.

“Oh yeah,” Said Reggie, asserting himself for the first time since the diner. “Gina gives me fashion advice all the time and we swap music, we’re like, friends now.”

“Even if he is a stubborn little mule sometimes, the number of graphic tees I had to make him before he accepted mine were better than those weeby anime ones he had stuffed in his cupboard...”

Gabby laughed.

“God it’s so weird to see you switch back and forth like that. Sometimes I can almost forget Regina isn’t the two of you at once.”

“Us too!” Regina grinned as the two personalities mixed once more. “Now, there is the smile I love.”

Gabby blushed.

“Love?”

Regina felt their ears go pink.

“Y’know, cause it’s cute and all and hey is that a mall?”

They pointed across the street to a small covered over area with a strip of shops, an outdoor shopping centre, complete with little stone garden beds and water fountains that looked like they hadn’t worked in a decade. It looked like the least interesting thing in the world but anything to quickly end this conversation before things got too...heated. Gabby gasped and got a wistful look in her eyes.

“Oh that’s sad, this little mini mall used to be so busy too, now look at it. It’s a ghost town.”

“Show me around.” Regina asked, “let’s get away from talking about your mom for a bit, eh?”

Without looking Gabby threaded her fingers through Regina's and nodded. Regina felt a heat beginning to form in her core; similar to what she felt in the diner bathroom and all those other times she and Gabby had fallen into bed together but also...more. Inside their mind Reggie and Gina felt shaken, they recognised the feeling all too well; love.

It was something both of them had for Gabby already, it was only natural their combined selves would feel the same way but that was the last thing they needed right now. Another complication. They pushed it to the back of their minds and tried to focus on what Gabby was saying as they walked along the sad little line of shops. Half of them were empty.

"Remember mall culture, what a time." Gabby sighed, "I used to come here all the time when I was a tween...I'd use magic to get into movies for free."

She added that last part with a small amount of shame. Regina's smile faltered; they were supposed to be trying to cheer her up, not remind her more of the past she obviously wanted to forget.

"Looks like the movie theatre is still open." They noted, "Let's go see something and you're paying full price for tickets and popcorn."

Gabby grinned.

"Deal."

"Oh and those little sour balls if they have them." Regina added, they were Reggie's favourite.

"Of course." Gabby smiled and they made their way hand in hand toward the theatre.

As they walked Regina frowned at the dry little garden beds filled with plants struggling to survive despite the fact they clearly hadn't been watered in weeks. While the empty storefronts made the place look decrepit it was those dying garden beds that really sealed the deal.

"Can you make them bloom?" They asked quietly.

"What, with magic?" Gabby blinked and Regina nodded. "I guess..."

“You feel bad about using magic for selfish reasons, how about doing something to make this place a little nicer?”

Gabby thought for a moment and then quickly glanced around to make sure none of the few people walking through were looking their way. Then with a quick flick of her fingers and a few quick muttered words the plants began to grow.

Brown stems turned green and the petals regained their vibrancy until every garden bed in the area was full of life and colour. Giving the deal shopping centre some much needed life. Regina gasped happily, plucking a small pansy from the nearest garden bed and smiling warmly down at the little white and purple flower.

“Well done Gabby, it’s beautiful!”

“Yeah.” Gabby said softly, gently taking the flower and placing it behind Regina’s ear. “Beautiful.”

Regina swallowed, there was that warm feeling again. This time though, it was Gabby who broke the tension, grabbing their hand and leading them toward the aged cinema.

*‘This feels like a date.’ Reggie noted.*

*‘We have literally fucked in this body and the idea of a date is making you flustered.’*

*‘It’s different and you know it!’*

*‘Yeah well...shuush. Don’t ruin a good thing.’*

The movie theatre was old, so old in fact that only one showing was happening at any given time meaning their choices were limited.

“I guess we are seeing The Revenge Three.” Gabby raised an eyebrow.

“With a name like that you know it’s got to be good.” Regina deadpanned, looking at the poster with its stereotypical terrified woman shrieking at something sneaking up behind her.

One of the fun things about becoming a fully formed person as an adult was discovering things about yourself and as Gabby stepped up the counter to purchase the tickets Regina realised something new about themselves.

They were shit pants terrified of scary movies. Especially scary movies with a big, black R rating on the poster with warnings for gore. They swallowed; this had been their idea they couldn't back out now!

“ID.”

Regina blinked; what?

“You have got to be joking.” Gabby huffed, “We're clearly of age.”

“Gotta check everybody.” Said the bored man sitting behind the desk, “So ID or no tickets.”

Regina did their best not to sigh in relief; she had no ID, obviously. Perhaps this was her little loophole to get out of seeing the scary movie. Gabby looked crushed though and bit her lip before reaching into her wallet and presenting her drivers licence.

“Here you go.” She smiled, the man got an odd glazed look in his eyes and handed over the tickets before waving them through and Regina opened and closed their mouth in shock.

“A small spell.” Gabby said, looking slightly uncomfortable. “I just made him think we had two IDs, not one.”

“I thought you weren't going to use magic for selfish reasons.” Regina replied before mentally smacking herself in the forehead as Gabby flinched.

“Well, I know you wanted to see a movie and it's not like we are actually sneaking in underage. Besides, it's my fault you're stuck like this, if you were Gina and Reggie right now you'd have ID.”

“Sorry I didn't mean it like that.” Regina replied guiltily, “you just took me by surprise.”

Gabby gave their arm a squeeze and they walked into the theatre after filling up their boxes with popcorn at the tiny stand by the door. Regina swallowed as the opening credits began to roll and they took their seats. It was just a scary movie; what could possibly go wrong?