

= 7 : 15 A.M. =

" 7 : 15 A.M. " is the tenth episode of the American fairy tale / drama television series *Once Upon a Time* . The series takes place in the fictional seaside town of Storybrooke , Maine , in which the residents are actually characters from various fairy tales that were transported to the " real world " town by a powerful curse . In this episode , Emma Swan (Jennifer Morrison) and Regina Mills (Lana Parrilla) become suspicious of the Stranger (Eion Bailey) and his visit to Storybrooke , while David (Josh Dallas) and Mary Margaret 's (Ginnifer Goodwin) feelings for each other grow , which parallels with Prince James ' (Dallas) search for Snow (Goodwin) after he falls for her .

The episode 's teleplay was written by executive story editor Daniel T. Thomsen , while co @-@ creators Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz wrote the story . Ralph Hemecker directed the installment . " 7 : 15 A.M. " was filmed in November 2011 in Vancouver and surrounding areas of British Columbia , where the crew endured difficult weather conditions . It featured the first full introductions of the Stranger and Red Riding Hood (Meghan Ory) .

" 7 : 15 A.M. " first aired in the United States on ABC on January 22 , 2012 to an estimated 9 @.@ 33 million viewers , placing second in its timeslot . Critical reception to the episode ranged from mixed to positive ; most critics positively focused on Snow and Charming 's storyline and praised Dallas and Goodwin for their performances and excellent chemistry . The episode was included in *Reawakened : A Once Upon a Time Tale ?* a novelization of the first season ? which was published by Hyperion Books in 2013 .

= = Plot = =

= = In the Opening Sequence = =

Snow White is seen in her thief cloak walking through the forest .

= = In the Characters ' Past = =

In the Enchanted Forest , Red Riding Hood (Meghan Ory) brings supplies and news to her friend , Snow White (Ginnifer Goodwin) . Prince Charming (Josh Dallas) is set to marry Abigail (Anastasia Griffith) in two days . Snow White wishes there were a way to get Charming out of her head as she is still in love with him . Red suggests she see Rumpelstiltskin (Robert Carlyle) and Snow takes her advice . Rumpelstiltskin takes some water and a piece of Snow 's hair to make a potion that will make her forget Charming . He warns that love is a powerful disease and the cure must be extreme .

At the palace , Charming struggles with his feelings for Snow . The King (Alan Dale) commands him to forget her because the marriage to Abigail is worth great wealth to the kingdom . Charming sends a letter by carrier pigeon to Snow begging her to come and see him so they can be together . The letter reaches her just before she can take the potion . Snow makes it to the palace but she is seized by the guards and thrown into the dungeon . There she meets a dwarf named Grumpy (Lee Arenberg) , who was falsely imprisoned for stealing a diamond that he wanted to give to his girlfriend . Another dwarf , Stealthy (Geoff Gustafson) , shows up to rescue Grumpy , who asks Stealthy to free Snow as well . The guards kill Stealthy as they try to escape and try to recapture Grumpy . Snow threatens to burn down the palace unless they let Grumpy go and take her in his place . The King tells Snow he will not let her interfere with the wedding . She must tell Charming she does not love him , or the King will kill him . Snow obeys because she loves Charming too much to let him die , but both are left heartbroken . Snow leaves and is soon joined by Grumpy and six other dwarfs , who offer her a place to stay . She considers the potion but Grumpy warns her that those feelings however painful , are part of her . Charming calls off the wedding to look for Snow and the dwarves hear about it from Red Riding Hood . Grumpy joyfully tells Snow the good news , but she has forgotten about Charming . The pain was too great to bear and she drank the potion .

= = = In Storybrooke = = =

In Storybrooke , Henry (Jared S. Gilmore) leaves for school and notices the Stranger (Eion Bailey) fixing his motorcycle . Henry asks him about why he was in town , but the Stranger only mentions that a storm is brewing . Regina (Lana Parrilla) notices the interaction so she asks Emma Swan (Jennifer Morrison) to find out about the Stranger . Emma catches up with him at Granny 's and asks him what he is doing in town , and what 's in his box . He agrees to tell , on the condition he can buy Emma a drink sometime . She agrees so the Stranger reveals a typewriter . He is a writer in town for inspiration . Emma inquires about the drink , and he reminds her she agreed to " sometime . "

The same day , Mary Margaret (Goodwin) rushes out the door and gives Emma an excuse that she has to make a volcano . In truth she has been going to Granny 's at 7 : 15 every morning to see David (Dallas) getting coffee for himself and Kathryn (Griffith) . Emma , who can always spot a lie , follows Mary Margaret to call out her stalking behavior and suggests she stop seeing him . Mary Margaret buys some chocolate to drown her woes and runs right into Kathryn , who is picking up a pregnancy test . Regina notices this , and warns Mary Margaret to stay away from David , and it was their personal life .

Later on in the day , Mary Margaret finds a dove in the forest trapped in some wire mesh . The town vet (Kwesi Ameyew) at the shelter where David works tells her the bird will be okay but only if she returns to her flock . David offers to help Mary Margaret return the dove but she declines . He follows her anyway and is able to save her from falling off a cliff . It starts to pour so the two take shelter in an empty cabin . David asks Mary Margaret what is wrong and she admits she still has feelings for him , and he is the reason she goes to Granny 's at 7 : 15 . David replies that he goes to Granny 's to see her . They nearly kiss but Mary Margaret stops it because she knows about Kathryn 's pregnancy test . David explains that his feelings for Kathryn are memories but his feelings for Mary Margaret are real . She says they have to forget each other . The next day Mary Margaret and David try to avoid seeing each other by going to Granny 's at 7 : 45 . Ultimately , they realize they cannot stay apart , and they kiss . Regina watches them from a distance .

= = Production = =

The episode 's teleplay was written by executive story editor Daniel T. Thomsen , while co @-@ creators Adam Horowitz and Edward Kitsis co @-@ wrote the story . Renegade veteran Ralph Hemecker , directed the installment in November 2011 . As with the rest of the first season , all exterior shots of the town of Storybrooke were filmed in the small town of Steveston , British Columbia . Interior shots were mainly shot on sound stages in their Vancouver studio , often with green screens . Goodwin stated in the episode 's DVD audio commentary that she preferred practical sets to green screens , as she found the former easier to act with . She also mentioned her hatred of her character 's short hair throughout the episode , variously describing it as boyish , a mullet , and a Jewfro .

According to Dallas , it rained on days that were supposed to be sunny , while other days of production lacked rain when they were supposed to be rainy . Goodwin added that the scene of Snow and Charming releasing the birds was freezing because of the heavy rain . Their scene in the cabin took place on the first day of the episode 's production . Her near @-@ death scene involved a real cliff , though the height was exaggerated later using CGI and a green screen ; a stunt double stood in for some of the shots .

" 7 : 15 A.M. " featured the first full introduction of Red Riding Hood (Meghan Ory) ? though she appears briefly in four earlier episodes ? as well as the first full appearance of the Stranger (Eion Bailey) . Bailey 's multi @-@ episode casting was first announced in October 2011 , and he appeared briefly during the conclusion of the previous episode . The episode was included in Reawakened : A Once Upon a Time Tale ? a novelization of the first season ? which was published by Hyperion Books in 2013 .

= = Cultural references = =

Producer Damon Lindelof had an uncredited voice cameo as the Storybrooke weatherman . Apollo bars from Lindelof 's series *Lost* were also featured in the episode . Mary Margaret is seen reading *The Mysterious Island* by Jules Verne , which is a book also featured in *TRON : Legacy* , a film written by Horowitz and Kitsis .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" 7 : 15 A.M. " first aired on January 22 , 2012 in the United States . An estimated 9 @. @ 30 million viewers watched the episode , placing second in its timeslot behind a NFC Championship Game between the New York Giants and the San Francisco 49ers . The episode earned a ratings share of 3 @. @ 2 / 7 among adults aged 18 to 49 and a 5 @. @ 4 / 8 score overall . The episode 's ratings and viewership made the series the number one non @- @ sports program among viewers and young adults on Sunday nights .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mixed to positive reviews from television critics .

Writing for IGN , Amy Ratcliffe gave " 7 : 15 A.M. " a score of 7 out of 10 , an indication of a " good " episode . She felt that Goodwin and Dallas had good chemistry , making the audience root for them despite David 's married status . Entertainment Weekly writer Hilary Busis praised Goodwin 's performance , especially when her character tells Charming she no longer loves him . Tor.com 's Teresa Jusino lauded the episode for containing a " beautifully @- @ written script that focuses on two of the most intriguing and endearing characters on the show , " effectively indicating to viewers " exactly why Mary Margaret and David (and Snow and James) are in love . " Jusino concluded that the episode provided " a great respite from the previous week 's lull , and provided not only a story that pulled viewers in , but one that provided some wonderful character detail . "

The Huffington Post 's Laura Prudom applauded the differences between the characters in Storybrooke and their fairytale counterparts ; she felt that this narrative device would help prevent viewers from getting frustrated if Snow and Charming grew further apart in one land but closer in the other . Prudom also enjoyed the writers ' decision to make David " indecisive and , as a result , also somewhat selfish , " while James is ready to leave his fiancée for Snow . Prudom concluded that the episode " expertly combined all the elements that make *Once Upon a Time* one of the most addictive and heartfelt new shows of the season , blending emotion , mystery and narrative thrust while giving us a deeper understanding of our favorite characters . I hope the next batch of episodes can keep up the momentum established this week . "

The Wall Street Journal 's Gwen Orel wrote that " maybe it 's the curse wearing off , but the use of parallel worlds and stories is better and better , sometimes even gesture to gesture . It 's about Snow and thwarted love this week , and that 's always compelling . " Oliver Sava of The A.V. Club was more critical of the episode and gave it a C + . He felt that it was " the strongest episode of the series since Rumpelstiltskin 's first " flashback in " Desperate Souls " because it did a better job handling the fairytale storyline . However , Sava faulted it for containing predictable elements , having many of the characters acting stupidly , and for being " painfully obvious while trying to be clever , aiming for poignancy but getting laughs instead . " Sava praised Griffiths ' performance for " min [ing] her wooden dialogue for some real emotional weight . "