# 2 + 2 Equals a Family

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# 2 + 2 Equals a Family

by **mogirl97**

## Summary

When Oliver Queen and Felicity Smoak both reach for the last Lego Batman set on the shelf at the same time one December night while holiday present shopping for their kids, they have no idea that their chance encounter is going to change their lives.

## Notes

Hey friends! If you've been reading my fics for a while now and have been anticipating my this one, or this is your first one by me that you've stumbled upon, I just want to say thank you so much for giving this story a click! (If you're just coming off of Keep it Professional, you will be happy to know that this one is not quite as tortuously slow burn) I have wanted to do a single parents AU for a while now and I have had so much fun writing this so far so I hope that you enjoy this new twist on Olicity I've created. A few quick notes before you jump into the story...

*I want to thank Nelly (@smoakqueenz on tumblr) for creating the super adorable cover art*
for this fic and Aubrey and Manon and Jo for being the best ever beta readers/cheerleaders :D

**If you followed my Christmas countdown last year, some parts of this prologue are going to seem familiar because I'm basing this AU off of a one-shot I wrote for the countdown. I did change/add some stuff though, so make sure you don't just skim over it thinking it's the same thing you already read :)**

Okay now that we've got that covered, happy reading!!

See the end of the work for more notes.
There it was.

After over an hour of scouring multiple stores, he finally spotted the Batcave Lego set that was going to make him Dad of the Year. And his timing was perfect because it was the very last one on the shelf.

Just as he was reaching for the box, another hand shot out and grabbed it at the same time. Turning his head, he saw a woman looking just about as frazzled as he was with her glasses a little askew and her blonde ponytail a mess.

While her head barely came up to his chin, she didn’t look the least bit threatened by his looming presence. She just rested her hands on her hips and glared up at him. “I was here first.”

Crossing his arms over his chest, he shot back, “I’m pretty sure I was.”

“You don’t understand, tomorrow night is the first night of Hanukkah and my daughter has been leaving me not-so-subtle hints about how this Lego set will make her entire year, but I haven’t had time to do my shopping until now and it’s sold out literally everywhere.”

“Well tomorrow is also Christmas Eve and it’s the only day this week that I get to have my son so I need this set too. I’m pretty sure there’s more than one night of Hanukkah for you to figure something else out.”

“Umm, nope. I was here first, I’m taking the set,” she concluded.

The problem was that they had both made the fatal error of removing their hands from the box, and when she went to grab it again, it was gone. Taken right under their noses by some other ninja-like parent on a mission.

At this realization, her shoulders slumped and she was decidedly less intimidating looking as she muttered, “This cannot be happening.”

He sighed and shoved his hands into his pockets, “I’m sorry. I should have just let you have it; you were probably here first.”

“You know what? It’s okay. We’re getting that Lego set, for both of our kids. Because there’s got to be two more of them somewhere out there.” She pulled out her phone and he looked at her skeptically as she tapped away on the screen.

“I’ve already been to every store in the city that could possibly have it, if that’s what you’re checking,” he commented after a minute of silence, broken only by the soft tapping of her fingers on the screen.

She held up a finger to signal “one moment” and walked away, talking to someone on the phone. While she was standing a bit away from him, he took a moment to observe her beyond his initial assessment of “short, angry blonde”. She looked a little younger than him, but, despite her disheveled state, she gave off the appearance of someone who had their life together. He took note of the fact that the left hand she was currently waving around expressively as she talked on the phone was bare.

Finally, she hung up and turned back towards him.
“So, how badly do you want this Lego set?”

He raised an eyebrow. “Uhhh… am I going to have to do anything illegal?”

“Oh!” She laughed, “No, no, no, I didn’t mean it like that. It’s just that there are two Lego Batcaves being held for us until closing at 10pm at the Hub City Target, if you’re up for a little drive tonight.”

He looked at his watch. It was 5:30 now, which meant that they would be pushing it… wait, they?

“You want to drive together?” he asked.

“Well it seems like a waste of gas for us both to drive all the way out to the same place. And since it’s your fault that I have to go out there in the first place, I think it’s only fair for you to drive.” She tilted her head as if daring him to say no to her-- and he realized that there was no way that he could.

“Fine,” he grumbled, trying to hide his amusement. “We better get on the road now though. Hub City is almost 4 hours away.”

She smiled brightly before leading him out of the store.

“Umm… so I just realized that I don’t even know your name,” he pointed out as they were walking through the parking lot.

She paused, “Oh you’re right. We kind of skipped that part I guess. I’m Felicity, Felicity Smoak.”

“Oliver Queen,” he replied.

She huffed in amusement and continued walking, “I know who you are, Mr. Mayor Handsome.” Even in the dim lighting he could see her turn red before hastily adding, “Which is what you’re called by the press, that’s not my personal assessment. I didn’t vote for you for your… handsomeness.”

He hid a smirk as he caught her giving him a sidelong glance, and turned down the row he was parked in. Once into his car, she pulled her phone out again and he heard her side of the conversation.

“Hey Mom, long story but I’m not going to be home until super late tonight so I’m going to need you to be in charge of Allie…..”

Shit.

He waited for her to hang up before hastily attempting to keep his attention on the road and dig his phone out of his pocket to make the call that hers reminded him he needed to make.

“Thea?”

“Hey what’s up?”

“Samantha is going to be at the loft with William at 7 and I need you to please be there when she does….”

After talking to his sister for a few minutes, he hung up and plugged the Hub City Target into his GPS. He was right about it being an almost four-hour drive, but he had a feeling his present company would make the time go quickly.

“So… Allie?” he prompted, glancing over at her, trying to start conversation.
She nodded, “Short for Allison. She’s seven.”

*Huh.* She seemed young to have a seven-year-old.

Then again, a lot of people considered him young to have a ten-year-old, and here he was.

“And she’s a Batman fan.”

She laughed, “Yeah, we’ve been watching the Justice League animated series together on the weekends and he’s her favorite. She’s mentioned this Lego set to me no less than fifty times in the past two weeks and I’m really regretting not just taking five minutes to order it online.”

“Ah, well, then you would be missing out on this adventure.”

“Very true,” she remarked and he could hear the smile in her voice. “What about your son?”

“William, he’s ten.”

“So, fourth grade?”

“Yeah.”

“Allie skipped second, so she’s in third. The guidance counselors are advising me to have her skip another grade though. So, who knows? They might end up in the same class at some point…”

Shaking his head, he replied, “William goes to school in Central City. I only get him every other weekend and a few special days for holidays.”

“Oh… I’m so sorry.”

He shrugged, “It took a lot to convince his mother that I was responsible enough to be in his life at all, so I’m grateful for the time I do have with him. What’s your situation?”

“My situation?”

He wasn’t sure how to phrase this without coming off as too intrusive into her personal life seeing as they were basically strangers.

“Do you…” he began. “Umm… are you and Allie’s father… that situation.”

She exhaled, “He was my boyfriend in college. And now he’s in prison, indefinitely. So, we’re not together, and I have sole custody, obviously.”

“Oh.”

That’s not what he was expecting her to say.

“Yeah. My whole life I told myself I wasn’t going to be my mother, but I’m her daughter through and through apparently,” she muttered. “Not that I regret having Allie,” she added hastily. “She was the bright ray of sunshine that pulled me out of a dark time in my life. It was just really hard on me growing up with an MIA dad, and I wish that she could have better than I did… And I don’t know why I’m telling you all this.”

He wanted to reach across the console and take her hand comfortingly, but he realized that it would be awkward considering their relationship of an entire hour and twelve minutes. Instead, he decided to attempt to make things lighthearted again, “Luckily she has a pretty awesome mom who’s willing
to fight the Mayor over a Lego set.”

Glancing over at her, he was pleased to see her smile return when she replied, “Not even Mayor Handsome can stop a mom on a mission.”

He huffed in amusement. Normally he didn’t like the moniker, but from her it didn’t sound like the insult it was intended to be. Hoping to steer the conversation to something that she would be more comfortable talking about, he asked, “So where do you work?”

“I’m the newly appointed CEO of Palmer Tech. Which, fun fact, that makes me the youngest female CEO of a fortune 500 company.”

So yeah, he was right with his assessment that she seemed to have her life together.

“Wow. That’s amazing.” A part of that sentence rang a bell in his head. “Wait, you said *Palmer Tech*….”

“Yeah, the company that bought out your family’s,” she acknowledged sheepishly.

“You don’t have to feel bad about that,” he assured her hastily. “Selling QC and giving our family name a chance for a fresh start, instead of trying to rehab the image of the company, has really been the best for my family.” It had been four years since the Undertaking. Four years since his father had asked him to right his wrongs before being arrested and killed in a prison transport accident. Oliver had never believed that the accident that killed his father was really an accident however, but rather retribution for outing Malcolm Merlyn as the mastermind behind the destruction. Regardless of why it had happened, his father’s death, and the realization that he hadn’t been the man he thought he was, had been sobering. It was the catalyst that sent his life in an entirely new direction-- and he had changed a lot in those four years. Now that he was the mayor, he finally felt like he had found the right way for him to honor his father’s request to heal the city from the wounds he had left. “It seems like the place is in good hands now anyway,” he added.

She sighed, “I’m doing my best. It wasn’t that long ago that I was just a really young, recent college graduate, working in QC’s IT department, grateful for the fact that they offered free childcare for employees.”

“That was my mom’s idea,” he interjected. “She badgered my father about it for weeks before he finally agreed with her that it would be a good thing for the company.”

“Well, you can tell your mom thank you, because it was a lifesaver.”

“I will.” *Not.* He hadn’t spoken to his mother in almost a year. Not since he found out about William. Despite her numerous attempts to reach out, and Thea’s insistence that he needed to go see her, he was still too hurt over her deception and he just wasn’t sure how things could ever go back to the way they used to be with her.

“When Dr. Palmer bought the company, I guess he had done his research on me, knew my qualifications were above my job title, and he offered me a position as his VP,” Felicity continued, pulling his attention back to her. “I had gotten comfortable in the IT department but he was… very persistent. The whole CEO thing came as a bit of a shock though, when he unexpectedly decided that he wanted to hand over the reins to spend more time on personal projects. It’s an honor to have been given the promotion, but it’s also why I’m scrambling to shop for presents this last minute. For the past month I’ve been spending almost every hour of the day helping the company through the transition process. I’m grateful that my mom lives with us so she’s able to help with Allie, but truthfully, I’m ready to… not have her live with us. She means well, but she’s always getting on me
for working too much and having a non-existent love life, and I don’t know how she doesn’t realize that I’m just following the example she set. I work hard for Allie, just like she worked hard for me.” She sighed, “And we’re back to stuff you clearly did not ask about. Sorry, I know you didn’t sign up to hear my whole life story. You should talk about yourself now, or whatever you want to talk about. Or we can… not talk.”

“It’s okay. Believe me, I understand complicated situations.”

“So what’s the deal with you and William’s mother? If you’re okay with sharing.”

Her candidness made it easy for him to want to be open with her as well, so he took a deep breath and began with, “Well, we were never actually together, it was a one-time thing, and, long story short, my mom paid her off to tell me that she had a miscarriage and then go raise our son somewhere else.”

“Oh. Well then, that certainly is complicated.”

“Yeah. Only recently did I find all this out and, after proving to Samantha that I’m not the same guy I was all those years ago, we’ve come to our current agreement. I’ve been trying to make up for the years that I missed, but it’s hard when I only get four days a month with him.”

“Trust me, coming from someone whose father abandoned her, four days a month is better than nothing. Him knowing that you love him, that you’re proud of him, that goes a really long way.”

He glanced over at her, “Thank you.”

They spent the next few hours of the drive swapping stories and, by the time they made it to Hub City, he was really glad that someone had taken that last Lego set from them, because she was funny and smart and offered a lot of good parenting advice. He was almost a little disappointed at their arrival since it meant their time together was halfway over.

After successfully obtaining their Batcaves and loading back into the car for the drive back to Star City, she quickly fell asleep and he had a feeling that the drive back was going to seem a lot longer without her chatter. Talking with her about their kids had made him realize how much he wanted someone he could always talk to about this kind of stuff. Thea did her best to be there for him, but it just wasn’t the same as it was with Felicity.

Felicity.

In the silence, he was surprised by where his mind wandered. Places that didn’t make sense with how long he had known her, but somehow felt right. Maybe those feelings were just because he had been trying to do everything on his own for too long, and he was ready to put himself out there to meet someone who could possibly be that person he talked to at night. But he didn’t really want to meet anyone else. He wanted to know her better.

When he pulled into the parking lot of the store back in Star City where everything had started, he noticed that she was still sound asleep.

“She startled. “Wha— who— oh, right. Hi.”

He smiled in amusement, “Hi. Sorry for scaring you.”

She sat up straighter in her seat, “Sorry for falling asleep on you. That had to have been a long four
hours. Or maybe you prefer the quiet to my babbling, you definitely wouldn’t be the first—”

“Felicity,” he interrupted her. “I liked talking to you. A lot.”

Relaxing, she smiled at him, “I liked talking to you too. Thanks for driving.”

“I didn’t really think I had a choice,” he teased.

She shrugged, “All I have to say is that we deserve the ‘parents of the year’ award. Eight hours for a Lego set, Allie better think it’s the greatest thing she’s ever owned.”

“Tell me about it, same with William.” He glanced at the clock and saw that it was already 2am. “Well I should probably get home so I can get this wrapped and under the tree. Let me walk you over to your car.”

“Oh you don’t have to do that; it’s only a few rows over, I think…” Felicity said as she waved her hand dismissively. Oliver gave her a look. “Okay,” she conceded.

Once they found her car, she hesitated to get in and he took the opportunity to ask, “Would you like to get coffee or something together sometime?”

“Trying to get to know your constituents better, Mayor Handsome?”

In the dim lighting of the parking lot he could see the teasing glint in her eyes, but also a little bit of a reluctance to believe that he had any other reason for wanting to spend more time with her.

“Something like that.” He rested a hand on her shoulder and her eyes flicked to it as he added, “I’m particularly interested in this one constituent who had the audacity to pick a fight with me in public.”

When she looked up at him again, he immediately noticed the change in her countenance. The openness was gone and her eyes didn’t quite meet his.

“I umm… No.”

“No?” he echoed in confusion.

“I don’t think we should do that. See each other again. I’m sorry, I just—” Shaking her head, she started to turn towards her car door and added with fake cheeriness over her shoulder, “Happy Holidays!”

He stood frozen in place as he watched her drive away.

What just happened?

Things had been going so well all night and then she had suddenly just… completely shut him down. He knew he had let his imagination run wild a little bit, but he had thought there was at least some connection between them.

Sighing, he headed back to his car, trying to shrug off the disappointment of her rejection, and just focus on his plans to make his day with his son perfect.

When she arrived home, she turned the engine off in her car and slumped forward, resting her forehead against the steering wheel.

What were you thinking?
She didn’t just open up to people like that. But he had caught her so off guard with how comfortable he made her, that everything had just started spilling out and she had completely overshared.

And then he had asked her out.

And for a second she had almost said yes.

She had wanted to say yes.

Exhaling, her breath a white cloud in the car that was already losing heat to the icy cold of the night, she straightened up and unfastened her seatbelt to head inside the quiet house.

Her mom had left a light on in the kitchen for her and she pushed aside a stack of bridal magazines and catering menus to set down the Lego set on the counter before heading for one of the storage closets to find some wrapping paper. Once the present was neatly wrapped in gold and pink polka dot paper, she set it somewhere out of sight and trudged upstairs, exhaustion hitting her despite her nap in the car.

When she peeked her head into her daughter’s bedroom, she smiled at the sight of her mom and Allie curled up together, asleep. Taking a step inside, she slipped off her shoes and moved towards the bed to join them. As soon as she crawled onto the mattress, her mom stirred.

“They changed the menu,” she muttered sleepily, her eyes still closed. “The wedding is in less than a week and they told me they want to change the entire menu. The caterer is going to throw a fit.”

Rubbing her mom’s back, she whispered encouragingly, “It’ll be fine. You’ll work your magic with the caterer and everything will be perfect. It always is.”

“Yeah,” she sighed. “Did you get it?”

“I did.”

“You’re a good mom.”

“I learned from the best.”

She was met with nothing but a soft snore and she smiled before settling down and pulling the covers over the three of them. Suddenly, she regretted complaining about her mom to Oliver.

This, the three of them, was perfect. It was safe from getting hurt again, because happy endings just didn’t seem to happen when the Smoak women fell in love. She wouldn’t jeopardize the stability she had given her daughter by getting involved with someone and risking having both their hearts broken… no matter how nice the company had been for a few hours.
Can't Keep You Off My Mind

Chapter Notes

Hi friends! Thank you so much for all of your encouraging comments on the prologue last week. I'm happy to hear that y'all are excited for this new story :D Enjoy this week's chapter and, as always, I would love to hear what you think!

APRIL

“I’m sorry, did you get a lobotomy that I didn’t know about?”

He looked up from the text message from Samantha that he was reading to find Thea waiting for him in his office, leaning against his desk with her arms crossed over her chest.

His brow furrowed, “What?”

“Susan Williams, Oliver? Really?” Laurel asked, walking into his office behind him.

“I was just about to get on him about that,” Thea remarked, disgust clearly painted across her face. “I mean seriously, we’re glad that you’re putting yourself out there and looking for companionship and all, but can you please look somewhere other than a pit of vipers?”

Laurel coughed to a stifle a laugh and he gave them both a reprimanding look.

“I thought you didn’t even like her?” Laurel asked gently. “She’s never had a single good thing to say about your administration.”

“She’s just doing her job,” he justified halfheartedly.

Thea rolled her eyes, “She’s a bit—“

“The last time I checked,” he interrupted her, “commenting on the mayor’s love life wasn’t part of the job description for the chief of staff or the DA.”

“It’s not. This is coming from your sister and your friend,” Laurel pointed out.

“You can do so much better than her Ollie,” Thea added, resting a hand on his shoulder.

“Well, if you two had given me a chance to get more than a few words in, I would’ve told you that it was a terrible date and nothing will be happening with her again.” He brushed past them to walk around his desk and settle down into his chair. “Happy now?”

Over the past few months he had gone on a string of dates, searching for someone that made him feel the way he had on that night in December. His efforts had been disappointingly unsuccessful.

They both looked apologetic and a little embarrassed. Laurel gave some vague explanation for somewhere she needed to be and ducked out of the office. Thea nudged a file that was sitting on his desk closer towards him to change the subject, “This is Palmer Tech’s proposal for a new clean energy plan for the city. Someone from the company is coming in later today to talk to you.”
He straightened up in his chair, immediately attentive, “The CEO?”

Thea pursed her lips thoughtfully, “No. I don’t think so. Why, do you know the CEO?”

Slumping back down, he answered dismissively, “No. Not really.”

It was probably for the best that she wasn’t the one coming to see him. The last thing he needed was to start thinking about her again. For a few weeks after Christmas, he had hoped that maybe she would change her mind and reach out to him. It wasn’t like he was a hard man to find these days. After a while though, he had come to terms with the fact that she really hadn’t been interested in him because he didn’t see or hear from her again. If it wasn’t for the Lego set sitting on the floor of his living room, he might have convinced himself that the entire evening with her had been a dream.

“Mayor Queen’s office reports plans to—“

She flicked off the television and turned her attention to gathering up her things to leave the office for the day.

“Ms. Smoak?”

Looking up, she saw Curtis walking into her office, “Curtis, how many times have I told you? Please call me Felicity. Ms. Smoak is my mother.”

“Right. Sorry, Felicity.”

“How did things go at City Hall?” she asked, knowing what he was coming in to talk about and wanting to speed things along so she could leave.

“Mayor Queen was really impressed with your proposal. You should’ve been the one to present it to him.”

She waved a hand dismissively, “Ah I had a lot going on today, and you contributed to it anyways, so thanks for representing us.”

“Of course.” Curtis sighed, “He’s even more attractive when you’re sitting right across from him. I mean, I’m married and he’s straight but… Mayor Handsome is an appropriate title.”

She resisted the urge to show any outward signs of agreement and instead brushed past him to leave her office, “I’ll see you on Monday Curtis. Have a good weekend, tell Paul I said hi.”

“You have a good weekend too, Felicity!” He called after her.

Getting into her car, she checked her phone and saw a notification on the screen.

**REMINDER: SNACK DUTY FOR SOFTBALL TOMORROW**

She turned the key in the ignition and started to drive towards the grocery store. Traffic in the city was atrocious and, after barely inching along for almost fifteen minutes, she pulled her phone back out to call a friend and distract herself from getting more exasperated with the situation.

“Hey Felicity, what’s up?”

She wished more than anything that she and Lena Luthor had crossed paths at their shared alma mater, but it wasn’t until a few years ago that they had met at a conference for work when she had first been promoted to Ray’s VP. She could have used a friend like her during her senior year when
she was pregnant and feeling completely alone after she got out of her isolating, toxic relationship with her ex.

“I’m stuck in a traffic jam and calling you so I don’t roll down my window and start yelling at innocent people who are just as frustrated as I am.”

Lena laughed, “Got a hot date that you’re eager to get to?”

She rolled her eyes. “Ha ha no. I’m just trying to get to the grocery store because I’m on post-game snack duty for Allie’s team tomorrow afternoon.”

They spent some time catching up on what was going on with their companies and personal lives (not much excitement for either of them on that front it seemed) and before she knew it, she had arrived at the grocery store. Pushing her cart through the aisles in search of granola bars and juice boxes, she continued to chat with Lena.

“So my mom is currently working with a bride who is—“ She froze as she spotted someone in the aisle she was just about to turn down. Backing her cart up swiftly, she positioned herself behind a nearby display of fruit to avoid being seen.

“A bride who is… Felicity? Where’d you go?”

“The mayor is here,” she whispered frantically into the phone. “In the grocery store.”

“Why do you sound so nervous? Did you do something illegal recently—“ Lena began to tease. “Oh! The mayor that you had a sort of date with.”

Lena was the only person with whom she had disclosed the full details of her little adventure with Oliver. She certainly hadn’t been about to send her mother into a tizzy over it and she hadn’t felt like recounting the evening to all of her friends. If she had talked about it too much she might have run the risk of not being able to (sort of) forget about it and move past her unwelcome feelings for him.

“It was definitely not a date,” she protested.

“Okay, so… an evening with romantic subtext? You talked about it like it was a date.”

“I did not. It was an entirely platonic encounter months ago, and that’s as far as things ever went.”

“Because you turned down his offer for a second date.”

Because a second date could turn into a third. And a fourth. And falling in love. And getting hurt. Again.

And this time around, she had a daughter who could get hurt too if she invited someone into their life.

“You know why I—oh, he’s coming this way. Do you think he saw me?”

“Felicity I’m not there, how am I supposed to have insight on what’s going on? If nothing happened between you it shouldn’t be awkward to just say hi. It’ll be weirder if it looks like you’re hiding from him.”

She groaned and hung up before making it look like she was intently inspecting some apples when she felt his presence beside her.

“Felicity?”
Putting on her best surprised face, she turned to look up at him, “Mayor Queen. Hi.”

All her plans to not have to see him today were for nothing now.

“Hi. It’s uh— it’s good to see you.”

She didn’t want to admit to him, or to herself, how good it was to see him. Taking a quick peek at the basket he was holding, she saw it was filled with an assortment of junk food. She wondered if this was one of his weekends with his son because he looked like the kind of guy who was more conscious of what he put in his body.

Not that she was noticing anything about his body or wanting him to pivot just a little bit so that she could get a better view of his butt in his well-tailored dress slacks.

*Focus, Felicity. Focus.*

“Curtis said that you liked my—Palmer Tech’s proposal for the clean energy plan.”

*Avoid personal topics. Get out of here as quickly and cleanly as possible.*

She couldn’t let herself get caught up in conversation with him again. Caught up in thinking she wanted things that weren’t what was best for her and Allie.

An unreadable expression flickered across his face but he quickly put on a smile, “Yeah, it was brilliant. I have to talk to the city council, but I’d like to immediately implement as much of it as is realistic. There’s a lot of areas in the Glades that still don’t have access to reliable power after the earthquake and that’s unacceptable. I think this plan could be a great step forward towards fixing that.”

“Oh good. I’m glad.” She bit her lip and tried to decide how to exit this encounter gracefully.

“How’s your daughter?” he asked. “Allie, right?”

*Avoid. Personal. Topics.*

Nodding in affirmation, she answered, “She’s good. I’m actually picking up some stuff for her softball team, so I should—“ She gestured at her shopping cart. “—get back to that.”

“Oh yeah, sorry.” He looked flustered. “I didn’t mean to hold you up. I just thought I’d say hi since I hadn’t seen you since…”

“Yes.” She started to turn her cart towards the aisle she had been headed towards before she had spotted him and then felt guilty for being so brusque with him. “Oliver?” she inquired in a friendlier tone, twisting around to look back at him. At her voice, his countenance brightened and his shoulders straightened and she tried to ignore the way her heart started to beat a little faster with the smile that he gave her. “Was William excited about his Lego set?”

“Oh yes. Definitely worth the extra effort to get it. Allie?”

“Shrieks of joy upon opening.” His grin widened and she thought she might collapse of a heart attack right in the middle of the produce section if she didn’t get herself out of there. Dipping her head, she bid him goodbye again before he could attempt to continue the conversation.

While she stared at shelves of juice boxes and tried to figure out what brand was going to get her in the least amount of trouble with the health freak moms of some of Allie’s teammates, she took a few
deep breaths and tried to shake off the effect he had on her.

Felicity finished combing through Allie’s soft curls before splitting her hair into sections to start giving her two french braids.

“I wish I had blonde hair like you and grandma,” Allie lamented with a pout as she braided.

She huffed in amusement. “Can I let you in on a secret?” Allie nodded eagerly and she bent down to whisper in her ear, “I dye my hair. It’s really brown like yours.”

Allie straightened up in her seat excitedly, “Can I dye my hair?”

“Maybe when you’re older,” she answered noncommittally. “You ready for your game today?”

“I guess,” she sighed. “I’m not as good as the other girls.”

None of them were very good. It was coach-pitch softball with a bunch of adorably clumsy seven- and eight-year-olds. Watching the games alternated between tediously boring and incredibly amusing.

“You just have to be more aggressive baby girl. Don’t be so afraid of the ball.”

“What if it hits me in the face? I don’t want to get hurt.”

“Nobody does,” she muttered under her breath. In her twenty-six years, she had been through far too many experiences that hurt more than a softball to the face. Lies. Abandonment. Loneliness. Heartbreak. If she could protect her daughter from any of it, she would. Tugging on one of her finished braids, she added at a normal volume, “But what if you hit the ball instead? You’ll never know if you don’t swing, so you just have to take a chance.”

Ironic advice, coming from her.

*You still talking about a softball game, Smoak?*

Allie set a determined expression on her face, “I’m going to hit a homerun today.”

She squeezed her shoulders, “That’s the spirit.”

Once her hair was finished and she had smudged on her eye-black, they gathered up their things to head for the softball field.

“Why isn’t grandma coming to my game?”

She looked up in the rearview mirror, “Grandma has a wedding today, remember?”

“Oh yeah.”

When her mother had left Las Vegas to come move in with her she had, at first, found a job waitressing just like she had been doing back home. It wasn’t long after that though that she helped one of the women she worked with plan her daughter’s wedding and she realized she had a knack for it. Starting her own wedding planning business from nothing, she quickly became the wedding planner for Star City’s most elite clients and had also started to draw recognition in the surrounding cities.

She was pretty sure her mom’s greatest fear was that she would plan everyone’s daughter’s
weddings but her own.

Although she would never admit it to anyone, she used to sometimes flip through one of the many bridal magazines scattered throughout the house longingly on the rare occasions she was home alone. She liked to imagine a winter wedding. Nowadays though, she tried to avoid tempting herself with such unrealistic fantasies. She was pretty certain that she had missed her chance for her fairytale, and it was easier to accept that when she wasn’t dreaming about what sort of dress she would wear as she walked down the aisle.

They arrived at the field and Felicity set up her folding chair along the side as Allie ran off to join her teammates. It was around halfway through the second inning when her eyes drifted away from the game and to the other spectators. More often than not, her mom was at the games with her, but without her today, it was hard not to feel as though everyone but her was in sets of twos. She knew it wasn’t true, there were other people there by themselves too, but all she could focus on were the couples. The couples holding hands and sharing smiles and cheering on their daughters together.

She suddenly felt loneliness hit her square in the chest.

If it wasn’t for the fact that her daughter came up to bat just then, she thought she might have burst into tears.

*What is wrong with you lately?*

Allie looked over to her and she pasted on an encouraging smile, giving her two thumbs up.

Leaning forwards in her seat, she watched as the coach released the pitch and the ball flew towards the plate. Allie swung with fierce determination, and to both of their surprise, her efforts were rewarded with the sound of the bat making contact with the ball in a satisfying crack.

“Allie, run!” She yelled enthusiastically when her daughter just stood frozen to the plate, spellbound. At her exclamation, Allie began to run and made it to first base before the play was called.

Allie looked over to give her the biggest grin and her sadness from the moment before dissipated as it was replaced with guilt that she had felt for even a second that there was anything missing from her life.

“Dinah!” Allie called across the parking lot, waving excitedly as they spotted their friend getting out of her car. “Dinah, I scored a homerun!”

Dinah made her way over to them and crouched down to give her a high five. “Nice!”

When Dinah stood back up to her eye level and arched a brow, Felicity whispered, “She made contact with the ball for the first time. For her, that’s a home run.”

She smiled and looked down at Allie again, “Well, I was just about to go for a run around the park. But I think that this calls for a trip to Big Belly Burger for celebratory milkshakes instead.”

Allie looked up to her pleadingly for confirmation, her eye-black now spread all across her freckled cheeks, and she nodded, “Sound like a good plan to me.”

Braids flying, she started to skip happily the rest of the way to the car and Dinah turned to head back towards her own car, calling over her shoulder, “I’ll meet you guys there.”

Arriving Big Belly Burger, Felicity was about to open the door when it suddenly swung open. She
took a staggering step backwards, eliciting a startled yelp from Allie.

“Will, buddy, you’ve got to watch where you’re going…” the familiar voice trailed off as he stepped out onto the sidewalk and caught sight of her.

“Sorry dad,” the young boy, who strongly resembled his father, remarked sheepishly. Without much pause, he apologized to her as well, before continuing to walk out into the parking lot. Oliver trailed seemingly reluctantly behind him, after stealing another glance back at her.

“It’s okay.” She formed the delayed response in her head but she didn’t hear any audible words come out. She had gone months without seeing him and now it was like he was everywhere, constantly making her question why she hadn’t wanted to see him again.

Allie, presumably confused by why she was standing frozen on the sidewalk staring at a pair of strangers walking to their car, reached for her hand and tugged her into the restaurant. “Can I get fries to dip into my milkshake?”

“Oliver.” Sara waved a hand in front of his face. “Oliver, were you listening to anything I was just saying to you?”

Startling, he blinked a few times and a sheepish look spread across his face as he realized that he had zoned out at some point and was thinking about a different blonde than the one talking to him.

Sara shook her head in amusement, “That’s what I thought. Are you okay? You’ve been acting a little off all night…”

They were at Laurel and Tommy’s house for dinner and Sara had been telling him, or at least had been trying to tell him, about a patient she had seen that day. A recent graduate from medical school, she was doing her residency at the health clinic in the Glades along with Tommy, who was just a few years ahead of her in his. Tommy’s mother had been the one to originally sponsor the clinic. It was to honor her legacy that he had gotten his life together—long before Oliver did—working like crazy to make up for his less than stellar academic track record in order to get into med school. Although the original building had been destroyed in the quake, it had since been rebuilt, and Tommy was making his peace with his father’s horrific actions through working there.

Just as he was now trying to atone for his own father’s sins from his position at City Hall.

To answer Sara’s question about why he had been acting a little off, he would have to go back all the way to December, because he hadn’t told anyone about Felicity. He hadn’t seen the point then, when she had declined his proposition to go out again, and he didn’t see the point now since clearly nothing had changed. His unexpected recent encounters with her had been awkwardly cordial at best.

And yet he couldn’t stop thinking about her.

On one hand, she was basically a stranger. On the other, she had been so honest in sharing things about herself with him during their evening together that he felt like she was a long lost friend he would give anything to talk to again.

“Sorry, just—I’ve got a lot on my mind,” he responded vaguely.

She frowned, placing a hand on his forearm, “Well, you know that I’m here for you if you need to talk to someone, right?”
He offered her a small smile, “I know.” Sighing, he asked abruptly, “When you first met Nyssa, did you feel, like, some instant connection with her?”

Sara tilted her head in surprise at his question before stealing a glance over at her girlfriend. Her girlfriend who was currently occupied in a conversation with his son. Nyssa was a tough-as-nails personal trainer that Sara had met while she was in med school... what she and his ten-year-old son could possibly have to talk about, he had no idea. But while Nyssa had taken a while to warm up to their crew when Sara first started bringing her around, she had always had a soft spot for William.

“Sort of? I mean I guess some part of me felt like she was someone I could be vulnerable with,” Sara answered a moment later. “I remember the night we met I was homesick and frustrated because I had done poorly on a test so I was at the gym taking it all out on a punching bag, even though I had no idea what I was doing. I didn’t even notice her approaching because she’s basically a ninja, but all of a sudden someone was quietly asking me if I wanted some help with my form. And I took one look at her kind face and just burst into tears and started blabbering on about why I was upset. She looked completely shell shocked when I finally shut up but then she just put her hands on my waist gently, adjusted my stance, and told me that a strong foundation equaled a stronger punch.”

“Oh.”

His first impression of Nyssa had not been “look at this kind face” but he supposed that was why Sara was the one who was in love with her and not him.

“Why do you ask?”

Out of the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of Tommy and Laurel in the kitchen washing the dishes together and he stifled a sigh. His younger self would be embarrassed by how much he wanted such simple domestic bliss with someone. “No reason. Just curious.”

“I just feel guilty. Like, why suddenly are the way things have always been not enough for me? Why do I feel like there’s something missing?” she asked Iris, after admitting to her how she had been feeling earlier that day at Allie’s game.

A quiet voice whispered in the back of her mind that it probably had something to do with a certain mayor she was having trouble avoiding lately, but she ignored it as she shifted her phone against her shoulder to pour herself a bowl of cereal for a bedtime snack.

“Felicity, you have been doing an amazing job raising Allie all by yourself—“ Suddenly she heard the sounds of yelling in the background and Iris’ voice became distant, “Hey! No! Please stop hitting each other! Barrrrrry! Babe, I’m going to need an assist here!”

“Oh I do not miss having a toddler,” she muttered as she heard crying children in the background and Barry trying to calm them down.

Iris sighed and returned to their conversation, “Sorry about that. They get a little wild at bedtime and start taking their exhaustion crankiness out on each other. Sometimes I don’t know how you do it all by yourself—”

“Well, to be fair, I don’t have twins. And my mom lives with me,” she interjected.

“Details, details. You’re basically superwoman and I aspire to still have as much of my sanity left when my kids are seven. But back to what I was trying to say before, you shouldn’t feel guilty for feeling lonely lately. I mean, I love my babies but they don’t take me on dates, and surprise me with flowers and love notes on my desk at work, and ask me about my day while we’re cuddled in bed at
night. That would be my sweet husband. So, I think you’re just realizing now how much you want someone who can be that person for you. That’s why it feels like something is missing. It doesn’t mean that you love Allie any less.”

She let out a long exhale. “I’m just afraid of bringing someone into our life, because she gets attached to people so quickly. If things don’t work out… I don’t want her to get hurt.”

“Felicity, you can at least say yes to going on a date without getting Allie involved right away and you know that. I think you’ve got to admit to yourself that this is more about you not wanting to get hurt again. You’re afraid of letting someone in again because of Cooper, but that selfish asshole doesn’t deserve to still have that kind of power over you. There is someone out there for you, someone who will love you and your daughter the way you deserve.”

He heard the approaching sound of heels clicking on the floor and he began to ask, “Thea, where are we with arranging that meeting with Councilwoman Ha—“ Looking up, he realized that he wasn’t talking to Thea. “Oh. Hi.”

She was the last person that he expected to be standing in his office. For the third time in less than a week, after months of not seeing her, he found himself looking into her blue eyes. At the moment they were brimming with what he thought was uncertainty.

“Hi.” She bit her lip and his gaze zeroed in on her mouth. Full, soft looking lips painted a bright pink. “I umm… I told the people at the front desk that I was here to talk about the energy plan.”

He met her eyes and arched an eyebrow, “But you’re not?”

“No. I—“ She laughed nervously, looking down to study her hands as she clasped and unclasped them. “I was wondering if maybe that offer to get coffee sometime was still good?” Her inquiry came as a complete surprise and it felt like the wind was knocked out of him. He forgot how to speak for a second and his silence sent her into a ramble. “I mean, I know it was months ago and things might have changed a lot since then and you might not be interested anymore but after running into you again over the weekend I just started thinking and—”

“Felicity,” he cut her off and she looked up at him with a tentative expression. He gave her a warm smile, “The offer is still good.”

In fact, forget coffee. He wanted to take her to dinner and invite her back to his place for homemade dessert and talk to her for hours and forget about all of the bad dates he had gone on with women he just didn’t feel the same connection with.

But he didn’t want to push his luck and freak her out, so coffee was great.

A shy smile blossomed on her face. “Okay. Great. Umm—“ She dug in her purse and pulled out a business card to slide across his desk. “I have to get back to the office, but you should call me.”

“I will,” he assured her and she gave him a more confident smile before turning to exit his office. As he watched her slip out the door, a part of him was afraid that she would disappear again for months. Running his finger over her name embossed on the card in front of him, he pulled out his phone to dial her cell number. He heard her phone ring out in the hallway, once, twice, before she picked it up.

“Hello?”

“Are you sure you have to go back to work right now?”
There was a pause, presumably as she registered the identity of her caller and what he was asking. And then, a soft laugh. “I guess not…”
Cautious and Slow

Chapter Notes

Hey friends! Thank you so so much for all of your feedback on this fic so far! It makes me happy to know that y'all are enjoying it :D Unfortunately, I'm going to have to take a week off from updating next Sunday because of some school stuff, but I'll be posting a scene from the chapter on my tumblr so keep an eye out for that. We should be back to regularly scheduled updates after this short break :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Are you sure you have to go back to work right now?”

When it clicked in her head what he was asking, she laughed softly at the eagerness in his voice as it bolstered her confidence. After her conversation with Iris the other night she had been angry with herself, because she knew that she was right about her still letting Cooper have some control over her. Nearly eight years and thousands of miles between them and she was still afraid of letting someone get close to her like that again. And so, as terrifying as it was, she took the advice she had given Allie and taken a chance. A chance on Oliver.

While she had every intention to take things slowly and cautiously with him, coffee was a safe place to start, and going now didn’t allow her any time to rethink her decision.

“I guess not…” she responded to his question.

A second later she heard the sound of footsteps quickly approaching and she lowered her phone as he came around the corner.

He gave her a grin that felt like sunshine warming her from head to toe. “Good. Because I was just thinking I could go for some coffee. Let me drive?”

“Yes. I don’t think you’ll fit very well into my Mini Coop anyway with your…” Where was she going with this? “Muscly-ness.” She shook her head in embarrassment before recollecting herself. “I have one condition though,” she continued seriously and wariness flickered across his face for a fraction of a second. “You have to ask me at least one question about the energy plan so that I can justify this to myself as a work meeting.” He frowned and she added hastily, “Not that I don’t want to consider it a date if you were intending this to be a date, I just—because I’m supposed to be at work I— this is a date, right?”

“Do you want it to be a date?” he asked hopefully.

“Yes?” She wasn’t sure why she phrased it as a question. Obviously, she wanted this to be a date.

“Because if you just want to be friends, I understand—“

“No. I mean, yes I want to be your friend but like the kind of friend that— what I’m trying to say is that I definitely want this to be a date.” She pushed her glasses up her nose and hoped that he didn’t think she was crazy for speaking in sentence fragments. When she had rehearsed how this was all going to go in her head on the drive over she hadn’t accounted for her suddenly being unable to form
a complete thought. She hadn’t been nervous at all when she had orchestrated their expedition to Hub City. Of course the difference was that, that night, she had been single-mindedly focused on obtaining the Lego set and wasn’t tangled up in her emotions.

“Okay, then I think we’re on the same page,” he concluded, his smile returning as he gestured for her to continue down the hallway, and she felt herself start to relax again. “Although, if you don’t mind me asking, I am curious… why now?”

“Umm.” She released an exhale. “It’s complicated.”

“It’s fine, you don’t owe me an answer. But I want to make sure I don’t unintentionally push you away again.”

“Oh no, you didn’t do anything wrong,” she shook her head insistently. “When you asked me out in December, a part of me wanted to say yes. I honestly did enjoy spending that time with you, but I didn’t think then that a relationship would be a good thing for me, so I was afraid of saying yes to the potential for something more than just one date. If that makes sense? So, that’s why I sort of panicked and disappeared for months. But when I saw you again the other day it got me thinking about some things and well, here we are.”

She still wasn’t entirely sure if she was ready for anything more than one date, for the possibility of falling in love again, but she had come to the realization that it was something she wanted. And she wanted to give things a try with the person who had unknowingly tapped on the walls around her heart, making her feel emotions she had long buried deep inside of her. Maybe he was the one for her, maybe he wasn’t. But, from what she could tell, he was a good man and someone who wasn’t deterred by the fact that she came as a package deal with her daughter, and that was already more than she could say for her ex.

His knuckles brushed against hers and she wasn’t sure if it was by accident or if he had contemplated taking her hand and then decided not to. “Here we are,” he echoed, a smile in his voice.

“There you are—” They both paused and turned around at the sound of an approaching person’s voice. The young woman narrowed her eyes at them and she shifted on her feet uncomfortably under her scrutinizing stare. “Who’s this?”

Oliver didn’t seem flustered as he took a little step forward and made introductions, “Thea this is Felicity. Felicity this is Thea, my sister and chief of staff.”

Little sister. Well that was a reasonable explanation for why she was sizing her up so intently.

“Thea.” She inclined her head. “Likewise.”

For some reason she felt like she needed to provide an explanation for why she was with Oliver and she began with, “I’m here to meet with Mayor Queen about——”

“We’re going on a date,” Oliver interrupted her. “My schedule is clear for the next two hours, but you know how to reach me should a crisis arise. And, by the way, you’ll be happy to know that I found her in a Target, not a pit of vipers.”

What?

Apparently her confusion was evident on her face because Thea shook her head in amusement and offered by way of explanation, “Oliver’s taste in women recently has been a little questionable, but
you seem nice.”

What was she supposed to say to that, other than, “Oh.”

“Okay we’re going now,” Oliver remarked, shooting a glare at his sister before turning to continue his walk down the hallway. She hurried to catch up with him and he apologized, “I’m sorry. She’s protective of me and doesn’t refrain from speaking her mind.”

“It’s alright. Dealing with the Palmer Tech board of directors has toughened me up to blunt disapproval.”

“They don’t like you?”

She laughed dryly, “Uh no. I’m pretty sure they all thought Dr. Palmer was on drugs when he decided to put me in charge. Even though, in the five months that I’ve been CEO, the company has increased its stock and profits, they can’t get over the fact that I’m a 26-year-old blonde woman with a track record of teen pregnancy and…” Her voice trailed off as she lowered it to a volume only slightly above a whisper, “Well, it’s probably a good thing that they don’t know about all the illegal stuff I’ve done.”

Out of the corner of her eye she caught him almost trip over his feet. “What?”

“Not recently,” she clarified. “Umm it’s probably best that we avoid opening that Pandora’s box on our first—second, I guess, if you count the car ride to Hub City—date. Let’s just say that college was not exactly my best years. But anyway, as I was saying, the board openly disdains me, so I can take a little scrutiny from your little sister.” She stole a glance over at him as they were approaching the exit to city hall. “If you’ve started having second thoughts about going out with me, I would not blame you.”

He took her hand then and she felt warmth spread from her fingertips up her arm. She considered for a second how nicely her hand fit in his before he remarked, “Why would I be having second thoughts?”

“But that’s one of the things I like about you.” She slowed her walk to look up at him skeptically and he elaborated, “Over the past few years I found out that my parents were keeping these huge secrets from me, and when the truth all came out, I felt like I didn’t even know who they were anymore. But with you, I mean we were complete strangers when we got into my car back in December, and yet you were so open and honest about yourself. You don’t try to pretend to be someone you’re not. I guess I was drawn to that.”

“Oh.”

“And in case you weren’t completely aware, my life has been kind of a mess up until recent years too, so I’m not exactly in a position to judge you for the things in your past.”

“At least we’ve mostly pulled ourselves together, right?” she asked lightheartedly. Goodness. This was a first date, they should be talking about their favorite ice cream flavors and movies. Although, at the same time, she wasn’t looking for someone to take her to prom. She didn’t have the time or emotional energy to date around for the sake of just fun when she was a point in her life where, if she was going to take the risk of putting herself out there, she wanted it to be for something serious and
stable. And with that as her intention, she figured some transparency was necessary from the get go.

It would be better for him to have all the details he needed to realize that he couldn’t love her before she went and fell in love with him.

He huffed in amusement, “Yeah.”

“What’s your favorite ice cream flavor?”

If he was caught off guard by her abrupt change of subject, he didn’t miss a beat as he answered, “Pistachio.”

“Seriously?” she reacted in disgust. “Now I’m having second thoughts.”

Chuckling, he asked, “What’s wrong with pistachio ice cream?”

“I’m allergic to nuts so I’ve never actually had it, but I’m going to assume that it’s gross. Like honestly, out of all the flavors out there, that’s the one that you think is the best?”

“Yes. I’m sticking to my guns on this one, pistachio is delicious.” He squeezed her hand gently, “But I can learn to love another flavor that you’re not allergic to.”

“Well you wouldn’t necessarily have to. I mean technically you could eat it around me, it would only be a problem if you were planning on kissing me.” Out of the corner of her eye she saw him glance down at her with interest and she blushed. “Hypothetically. At some point. Maybe.”

“Okay, so what’s your favorite then?”

“The superior green ice cream flavor, Mint Chip.”

“Noted.”

Out in the parking lot they encountered Laurel who was headed for her car as well and she paused to greet them.

“Hey Oliver… and friend…?”

“Felicity. Felicity Smoak,” his companion introduced herself.

“Laurel. Laurel Lance—“ She held up her left hand to display her engagement ring, “Soon to be Merlyn.”

“Merlyn? As in—“ Laurel’s smile tightened and Oliver had a feeling she was probably worried Felicity was going to bring up Malcom. Anyone living in the city during the Undertaking and subsequent highly publicized trials was well acquainted with the name. “The Rebecca Merlyn Memorial clinic?”

Laurel visibly relaxed and nodded, “Yes. Rebecca is my fiancé Tommy’s late mother.”

“My company, Palmer Tech, is one of the donors. Dr. Palmer was extremely impressed with the clinic when he was looking into where to direct his philanthropic efforts,” Felicity explained animatedly. “It’s been my honor to continue that partnership with a place that is doing so much good for the city.”

Laurel glanced over at him with an approving look before responding to Felicity, “I’m happy to hear
that, and it was so nice to meet you. I’m afraid I’m going to have to get going now though, because I promised Tommy and my sister that I would bring them lunch and I am already running late.”

“Court go long this morning?” he asked.

She pressed her fingertips to her temple, “Yeah. Indecisive jury on what should have been a clear conviction.”

He squeezed her shoulder encouragingly, “Enjoy your break, and say hi to Tommy and Sara for me.”

“Will do!”

They bid her goodbye and continued making their way to his car where he opened the passenger side door for Felicity. As he was walking around to the driver’s side, his phone buzzed in his pocket and he pulled it out to read a text from Laurel.

**LAUREL:** I like her. You’re def allowed to invite her as your + 1 ;)

He exhaled, remembering that the wedding was in only a little over a month now and, as of today, he was still going solo. His best man duties would keep him busy though, so he hadn’t been too upset that none of his recent dates were panning out as plus-one candidates. But, as he slid into the car and looked over at the woman beside him, he had a pretty strong feeling that this one would be worth inviting.

“Did you have a good weekend with William?” she asked after he had pulled out of his parking space. A glance in the rearview mirror indicated that his security detail was following behind in a black sedan and he briefly lamented the lack of privacy that came with public servitude. He had managed to convince them to let him occasionally drive himself places when it for wasn’t official business, but they still shadowed him. The only upside was that he had been able to request John Diggle as one of the members of his team. His parents had hired the ex-army man to be his bodyguard a few years back when things were getting messy with the culmination of the Undertaking and, while he had originally resented his presence, the two had formed a solid friendship. He appreciated his wisdom and advice, especially after being suddenly thrust into the unexpected role of fatherhood.

“I did. It always goes by too fast though. I talk to him almost every night on the phone, but it’s not the same as having him around in person.”

“Have you ever suggested to his mom that she move here?”

“Once or twice, yes, but I don’t want to push the issue with her— Samantha. She has a life in Central City and a lot of her family is there. Meanwhile I’m not anything to her but someone she has to share her kid with so…”

“Yeah, I can understand how she probably feels. Really, she’s a lot better person than I am because if Allie’s father showed up out of the blue one day and said that he wanted to be a part of her life I would slam the door in his face and make sure he stayed far away from us. I certainly wouldn’t want to relocate my whole life to accommodate him. I mean, that’s not going to ever happen because he’s serving a life sentence for screwing up the Department of Education. Even if he did somehow get pardoned, the last person he would care about seeing is the daughter he didn’t want. But you’re not like him so… she might warm up to the idea of moving here. You never know.”

He could sense that she didn’t like talking about her ex and he quickly veered the subject somewhere
else, “So, I noticed when we ran into you at Big Belly Burger that Allie had a softball jersey on…”

“Yeah!” To his relief, she brightened at the change of topic. “At her game that day she hit the ball for
her first time ever, so we were getting celebratory milkshakes.”

“Did you play softball growing up?”

“Oh no. I was not a sports girl. Partially because my mom worked ridiculous hours so it wasn’t
realistic, but also because I was always more comfortable behind a computer than on a field. Allie
begged me to let her play though after she found out that a couple of her friends from school were. I
had no reason to say no, and she’s pretty darn cute to watch. Does William play any sports?”

“Yeah he plays Little League baseball, so I try to get out to Central City for as many of his games as
possible.”

He wondered for a second how William would feel about a little sister, before shaking away the
mental image of taking the two of them to a Star City Rocket’s game.

*Getting a little ahead of ourselves, don’t you think?*

There was just something about the woman in his passenger seat that made him see a future for
himself so clearly.

When he pulled into the coffee shop closest to City Hall, he was happy to see that it was so busy
they would probably go unnoticed. He didn’t want her to feel uncomfortable because of the attention
he often attracted when he went out in public.

At least now it was because constituents wanted to share their two cents with him and not because he
was peeing on a cop.

The relief that he hadn’t met Felicity until after he had cleaned up his act, was real.

Heading inside, they went straight for the counter and he took note of Felicity’s order, a nonfat latte
with extra sugar, before putting in his for a black coffee.

The barista batted her eyelashes at him when she handed over his cup that she had scribbled “Mayor
Handsome” onto and he resisted the urge to roll his eyes before following Felicity to a table tucked
away in the corner. It was a cozy situation, their knees bumped against each other a few times until
they shifted into a position with their legs side by side and he tried to avoid thinking too much about
her thigh pressed up against his.

He asked his one obligatory question about the clean energy plan but then they actually ended up
talking more about it and some of the other projects she was heading up at Palmer Tech. It was clear
that her work was something she was passionate about and that a desire to make their city a better
place was another commonality of theirs.

They were completely caught up in their conversation until he saw her eyes widen in surprise when
she glanced up at the clock on the wall behind him.

“Oh frack.” She reached for her purse and the cup containing the remaining sips of her drink. “I
didn’t realize how long we’ve been here. I need to get back to the office before my assistant starts to
freak out.”

Twisting around, he winced at the realization that his two-hour free window was coming to an end in
three minutes and he was going to be late for his briefing with Thea and Quentin. They would just
have to forgive him though because he had no regrets at not ending his time with Felicity sooner. He was certain he could have sat there for the rest of the day talking to her and been perfectly content.

He shot a quick text to Thea to give her a heads up that he was on his way back to City Hall before walking with Felicity out to his car.

When they arrived back at City Hall she was reluctant to get out of the passenger seat of Oliver’s car because then it would be time for them to go their separate ways for the day. As she had that night in December, she had greatly enjoyed their time together. The only difference was that that fact didn’t scare her quite so much now.

*Cautious and slow. Cautious and slow.* She repeated in her head like a mantra.

Except that he brought her guard down. Despite her deeply ingrained instincts not to, she trusted him.

He walked her back to her car and before she opened the door, he took both of her hands in his.

“Dare I ask to see you again?” he asked, a teasing glint in his eyes.

A shy smile turned up the corners of her mouth, “If you did, I would say yes.”

Brushing his thumbs over her knuckles, he looked at her intently and she resisted the urge to shrink under his gaze. It had been a long time since someone looked at her like that.

*Scratch that. I’m pretty sure no one has ever looked at you like that.*

“I guess I should let you get back to your office, but I’ll call you this evening,” he finally said.

“So soon? I think you’re supposed to leave a girl waiting a little longer than that,” she replied jokingly, not wanting him to know how eagerly she would be awaiting that call because—

*That’s not who you are. You don’t pine.*

He shook his head, “I’ve played enough of those games in my life, but we’re both adults, right? I don’t want to waste your time toying with your emotions and being unclear about my intentions.”

She drew a sharp breath before responding softly, “Oh. I appreciate that.”

The moment was broken by the sound of a phone ringing and a look of irritation flickered across his face as he reached into his pocket.

“Yes Thea?” “Yes, I’m back. I’ll be right up.” “Okay, bye.”

When he hung up he looked at her apologetically, “I’m sorry about that.”

“It’s okay,” she waved a hand dismissively. “I don’t want to keep you from your job any longer than I already have.”

“Mmm… I think we talked about the city enough that I don’t feel guilty.” He leaned in and she felt her heart rate accelerate before he pressed a light kiss to her cheek and added, “A good mix of business and pleasure, if you ask me.”
“Yeah,” she breathed out with an affectionate smile on her face when he pulled back.

“I’ll call you later,” he promised again over his shoulder as he turned to head back into the building and she gave him a little wave before slipping into her car to drive back to Palmer Tech.

“Where have you been?” Curtis asked her when she encountered him in the elevator upon arriving. “I was up at your office a minute ago to drop off my progress reports on my projects and your assistant said you’ve been out for hours.”

“She’s being dramatic, I haven’t been gone that long. I was at a meeting,” she offered in vague explanation. Curtis was very talkative and she wasn’t ready yet to broadcast to the whole world that she was sort of dating (?) the mayor now.

It had taken several ounces of courage to walk into Oliver’s office and, after the way their date had gone, she was thankful that she had managed to make those terrifying steps forward. What she had felt between them in December couldn’t simply be chalked up to holiday magic because it had been there again as they sat in that coffee shop and talked easily about the things they had going on in their lives.

For the rest of the afternoon she did her best to focus on the work that she needed to get done without getting caught up in daydreams, but she was almost certain that a giddy smile was permanently fixed on her face the entire time.

_Cautious and slow._ She attempted to remind herself even as the realization hit her that she had already started falling for Oliver. All she could do was trust that she wasn’t making a terrible mistake in doing so.

When she pulled up to her house after work, she noticed a car parked outside that she thought looked a little familiar. She figured it was one of her mom’s brides and that’s why she had seen it before because there was almost always a constant stream of them in their living room.

Opening the door and walking into the kitchen, she heard the voice of the visitor and recognized immediately why the car had looked familiar.

“Donna thank you so much for everything. Work has been crazy lately with a bunch of important trials and I’ve barely had time to think about the wedding. Knowing you have all the details under control is a huge relief.”

She stepped into the living room and Laurel’s face brightened, “Felicity! When you introduced yourself, I have no idea how I didn’t make the connection that it’s your mom who is the one who has been planning my wedding. My mind was clearly all over the place.”

Clearly she didn’t pay that close of attention to the identity of her mom’s clients, because she hadn’t recognized Laurel as anyone other than the District Attorney she occasionally saw on the news. She had been working so much the past few months though that she often hadn’t been home while her mom was meeting with brides.

Donna looked between the two of them, “Oh, so you two have met?”

“Just today actually,” Laurel answered. “She was at City Hall—“

“Weeting with Mayor Queen about the clean energy plan that we’ve been developing at Palmer Tech,” she finished before Laurel could potentially say something else. She and Oliver had been holding hands when they encountered her in the parking lot and so she might have gotten the idea that it wasn’t a purely professional meeting. Which was true, but she didn’t want her mom to know
“Well it must have been a good meeting, because Oliver was pretty happy when I went to see him in his office after he had gotten back,” Laurel remarked casually. She saw her mom’s eyebrows lift but Laurel didn’t give her time to comment before she asked, “Can you show me the options for the table settings again?”

She shuffled out of the room while her mom was distracted by place cards and napkins and headed for her bedroom to change out of her work clothes. Allie was still at school where she stayed late a few days a week for some advanced learning enrichment and she had a few minutes before she had to leave to pick her up.

As she pulled on a pair of light wash jeans and a soft t-shirt, she wondered when Oliver would call her.

Stop.

Don’t pine.

When she finished fixing her ponytail and headed out of her room, Laurel was still there talking with her mom and she gave them both a little wave before leaving to drive over to Allie’s school.

She got there a few minutes early and took a second to reply to a few texts from her friends in the car before walking in and getting buzzed through the front office. The familiar receptionist greeted her with a friendly smile and wave that she returned as she walked past.

At the classroom where the after-school learning program was held, she peered in the narrow window in the door to watch her daughter talking animatedly about something to the rest of the kids gathered around her and she smiled fondly. It made her proud that Allie shared her intelligence, as well as her natural curiosity and love for learning, and she hoped she would never feel embarrassed about being the smartest girl in the room.

While she was standing there, the school guidance counselor walked down the hallway and paused to talk to her.

“Ms. Smoak, I’m glad I ran into you. Have you put any more thought into having Allison advance to the fifth-grade next school year?”

She sighed, “I have, but I’m not sure if it’s the best decision to keep pushing her ahead of her peers. I graduated college a few months shy of my twentieth birthday, and while everything has worked out okay for me now, I don’t want her to follow in my footsteps and grow up too fast.”

When she was in college she was so young and naïve in many ways. It had been too easy for her to fall into Cooper’s arms and get caught up in his ideas. She liked to think that maybe if she was older and more sure of herself and who she wanted to be, that she wouldn’t have made the same mistakes. It wasn’t that she wanted to hold her daughter back from achieving everything she was capable of, she merely wanted to protect her from ending up in a similar situation as her.

“I understand that, you have to do what you think is best for her. I would obviously recommend that she continue her after-school programs though so that she doesn’t get bored.”

“Of course,” she nodded in understanding. “She loves this.”

The door swung open then and she took a step back as her daughter barreled into her excitedly for a hug.
“Hey baby girl,” she greeted her with an amused laugh.

“I was telling everyone about my computer we’re going to build, can we go to Tech Village and pick out some more of my parts tonight after I eat dinner because I’m really hungry pretty, pretty please?” Came out in a rush before she sucked in a deep breath and looked up at her with pleading eyes.

Just as she had at seven, Allie wanted to build her first computer. And to avoid getting parts of her own computers stolen like she had thieved from her father, she had offered her help in obtaining what she needed. This weekend there was no softball game on the schedule so they were going to spend a few hours together on Saturday assembling everything.

“I think we can make that happen,” she promised her as they headed out of the school.

“Did your date go well?” Thea asked from where she was sitting on a barstool at the counter watching him make them dinner. She had been all business when he got back to City Hall, but he had been waiting for her curiosity to rear its head.

“It did.” He looked up from his chopping. “And it’s hopefully going to be a repeating occurrence, so maybe you could be a little less hostile next time you see her?”

Even though Felicity had assured him she hadn’t been phased by Thea’s brusqueness, he valued his sister’s opinion and wanted her to like Felicity if he was going to pursue a relationship with her.

“I’m sorry,” she apologized genuinely. “I was caught off guard and still annoyed with you for going out with Susan and I overreacted.”

“Well Felicity doesn’t make her living off of criticizing me and my administration so that should earn her some approval points from you,” he joked.

On the contrary, she had been rather encouraging as he had shared with her his ideas for improving the city, including the project he wanted to start of restoring the bay area to make the beach safe and clean for the public to use in the upcoming summer months.

Thea gave him a small smile before commenting, “You’ve been happier today than I’ve seen you in weeks, and if that’s due to her, then she definitely has my approval.”

A shy smile turned up the corners of his mouth at how apparent her effect on him was. “I’m confident you’ll like her once you get to know her.”

“How’d you even meet her? I’ve never seen her or heard you mention her before today…”

“It’s quite the story. I actually met her months ago, back in December…” He proceeded to tell Thea the details he had kept to himself about his evening with Felicity when they were both on the hunt for the same Lego set, and how she hadn’t made a reappearance into his life until their two brief encounters the previous weekend, before concluding with, “And then she showed up in my office today and it was like all those months hadn’t even gone by and we easily picked up where we had left off.”

“Did she explain why she hadn’t been interested before and now she suddenly was?” Thea asked curiously.

“From what I’ve gathered, her relationship with her daughter’s father was not a positive experience and I think she was afraid of going through something like that again.”
“But then she decided you were worth the risk?”

He paused for a second as her words sank in. *Was he worth the risk?* In the past, he had been careless with many hearts, but he meant what he said to Felicity earlier about not wanting to play games with her. He wanted to prove to himself that he truly had changed, that he wasn’t the same guy he had been a few years ago, by proving himself to her as someone she could trust.

“I guess?”

Thea frowned, “I wasn’t trying to make you doubt yourself Ollie.” Reaching across the counter she covered one of his hands with hers. “You’ve got a big heart and I know that you can make someone happy. You deserve a chance like this.”

He took a deep breath and then smiled. “Thank you.”

Only a few seconds after they had gotten into the house after pizza and computer part shopping, her phone started to ring and she scrambled for it in her purse with an embarrassing amount of excitement.

“[I’ll be right back sweetheart. Why don’t you go tell grandma about your day?]”

When Allie nodded and skipped into the living room, she speed walked into her bedroom and shut herself into her bathroom. She was hoping that by putting a few walls in between her and her mom, she could hopefully avoid drawing her attention with her flirtaceous voice when she answered the call with, “Hey Mayor Handsome…”

“I’m sorry what?” Iris’ voice greeted her with a mix of confusion and amusement.

“Well this is embarrassing.” She was regretting not checking the caller ID in her hasty assumption that the call was from Oliver.

“Felicity, were you expecting a booty call?” Iris teased.

Her phone buzzed then to show that Oliver was now the one attempting to call her and she quickly answered Iris with, “Not exactly. I promise I’ll give you the details asap, but right now I have to hang up on you, okay? Love you, bye!”

“What! No! You can’t leave me in suspense like that—“

Despite Iris’ protests, she ended the call and accepted the one from Oliver.

“Hey,” she greeted him, foregoing her attempt at being flirty after she wasted it on Iris.

“Hey.”

A smile spread across her face at the sound of his voice.

“You called.”

A soft laugh that made her heart suddenly feel too big for her chest filtered through the speaker. “I told you I would.”
Just a reminder, in case you missed it in the note at the beginning, that there won't be an update next weekend. Keep an eye on my tumblr/twitter for that sneak peek at the chapter though :D
The Sweetest Kiss

Chapter Notes

We made it!! Thank you for being patient with me as I took a week off from posting to focus on some stuff for school, we should be back to uninterrupted weekly updates for a while now :D This chapter (imo) is a fun one, so enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“No! You need to wear that dress!” Iris exclaimed as Felicity started to reach behind herself to unzip her dress, in a maneuver that could only be accomplished thanks to all the yoga classes Dinah had somehow talked her into attending lately.

“I don’t know, I think I should play it a bit safer and go with the pink one. This one is definitely… umm…” she bit her lip and did a quarter turn to assess herself in her mirror as her friend watched via their video call. It had been a total spur of the moment purchase from that afternoon when she had stopped at the mall in search of some possibilities for her date with Oliver. While her closet was full to the brim with stylish professional items, she had realized that it was a little lacking in the date-night-outfits department, since she hadn’t had much use for them in… well, never. Cooper definitely hadn’t been the type of boyfriend who took her out for a nice dinner, and she didn’t have any clothes left from that era anyway. Although she did have some outfits for when she was going out with friends that could work for the occasion, if she was starting a new chapter in her life, she figured she needed a new dress to go along with it.

She had been planning on wearing the slightly more reserved one she had bought first, but Iris had insisted she try on all of her purchases for her -- and now she wasn’t letting her out of this dress.

“This one is the dress that you’re going to wear, because you look amazing in it,” Iris finished for her.

“Are you sure?” she asked, smoothing her hands over the navy blue fabric that was cut close to her body.

“You’re going on a date. As moms, date night is when we get to wear stuff that would otherwise be impractical.” Iris tilted her head, “Well… Allie is old enough to know not to use your clothes as a napkin, but you get my point. This is your chance to wear something fun and sexy that doesn’t work for your normal day-to-day life. I mean, I would definitely wear that to go out with Barry.”

“Wear what?” she heard Barry ask from off screen.

Iris waved a hand at him, “Come tell Felicity she should wear this dress on her date.”

“Uhh…” Barry appeared in the frame then and she bit back a laugh at how pink his ears were. “Yeah. You should… you should wear that.” He looked down at Iris, “Do you own that dress?”

“Unfortunately, no.”

“I can have it to Central City in time for a date night next week,” she offered. She and Iris probably single handedly supported FedEx with their frequent swapping of clothes back and forth.
“Hmm…” Iris looked up at her husband, “Make dinner reservations somewhere nice and that dress might end up on our bedroom floor.”

Barry’s ears turned even pinker and he avoided looking back into the camera as he ducked out of view.

Once he disappeared, Iris waggled her eyebrows and she shook her head in amusement.

There used to be a part of her that was jealous of her friends’ relationship because she didn’t think she could ever have something like that for herself.

But now, there was suddenly a possibility that she could, and she didn’t feel that same pang of envy as she watched them interact.

“Alright. I’ll wear the dress.”

Iris gave her a triumphant smile, “Yes!”

“But it’s a little cool here tonight, so I’m going to have to wear something over it.”

“Okay. Leather jacket…” Iris tapped her chin thoughtfully, “…and those black, suede, over the knee boots that you got when we went shopping together last time you were here for a visit.”

“I don’t think I’ve worn those once since you talked me into buying them,” she muttered as she walked off to rummage through her closet and procure the two items to put them on so she could model the whole outfit for her friend.

“Perfect.” Iris clapped her hands together. “Damn girl, I kind of want to go out with you.”

{Check out Felicity's outfit here}

She blew her a kiss and winked, before noticing the time in the corner of her screen and drawing a short breath. “He’s going to be here soon, so I need to finish getting ready, but thank you for your styling help and I will call you tomorrow with details.”

“You better.”

“I promise.”

“Good. Have fun!”

The video feed cut out and she rushed around to finish freshening up her hair and makeup. Nervous butterflies flitted about in her stomach as she pinned back a stray curl and debated whether to wear her glasses or contacts.

It was only a few days ago that she was working up the courage to drive over to City Hall and overcome her fear of giving things a try with the guy she couldn’t seem to get out of her mind. That night when he called her, they had talked for almost an hour on the phone, ending their conversation with promises of seeing each other again when Allie came looking for her and she had to say goodnight.

Since then, they had gotten into a routine of meeting up for coffee and talking on the phone at night before she either hung up with tired eyes and a smile on her face, or fell asleep mid-sentence. That morning, however, he had called her on her way to work with a different invitation… and now here she was, getting ready to be taken out for dinner.
There was a definite possibility for kissing.

She would have no objection to kissing.

*Just* kissing, though.

She was still insistent on taking things slow… and she hadn’t exactly been planning on telling her mom or Allie about her thing with Oliver yet, so it wasn’t like she was going to invite him into the house or be gone all night at his.

Once she was pleased with her appearance (she decided on wearing her glasses), she wandered out into the living room hesitantly. Her mom was sitting on the floor, surrounded by several of her wedding binders with an intensely focused expression on her face.

“Hey mom…”

“Oh huh.” She didn’t look up at her but kept flipping through the pages of the binder in front of her.

“I’m going out with a friend tonight, so can you be in charge of dinner and bedtime?”

“Of course. Have fun. Tell Dinah I said hi.”

Dinah… *right.*

She wasn’t going to correct her on that.

“Thanks!”

She walked over to Allie’s bedroom door and cracked it open slightly to see her daughter propped up in her bed with a book. Light brown curls had fallen from her ponytail and her glasses were slipping down her nose as she read intently.

“Hey baby,” she spoke up to get her attention.

“Hey…” her daughter looked up from her book and her eyes widened. “Wow. Mom, you look so pretty!”

Breathing a sigh of relief that her daughter hadn’t given her the “what are you wearing” look that she had frequently given her own mother at that age (and older), she moved to perch on the edge of her bed, “Thank you.”

“I really like the boots. They look like shoes Iris would wear.”

She laughed, “Well, she *did* pick them out. I will be sure to tell her that you approved of her accessorizing. I’m going out with a friend, so you get to hang out with grandma tonight, okay?” Allie nodded in understanding and she continued, “What are you reading?”

Flipping the book up so she could see the cover, she explained, “It’s about Marie Curie. I’m doing a research project on women in science for school.”

“Oooh, sounds interesting.”

Sometimes, she was convinced that she had somehow managed to clone herself.

Her phone buzzed then, and she read the text that popped up on the screen.
OLIVER: I’m here. Should I come to the door?

FELICITY: NO

FELICITY: please don’t

FELICITY: !!!!!

Leaning forward, she kissed Allie’s forehead, “I have to go now, but enjoy your book. I’m probably going to be out late and it’s a school night, so lights out when grandma tells you, okay?”

“Oh okay…” she agreed reluctantly and Felicity knew with certainty that she was going to be striking a bargain with her mother for some extra time.

She slid off the bed and headed for the door, tossing over her shoulder, “I’ll see you in the morning, love you!”

“Love you too!”

At the front door, she grabbed a few things out of her purse to stuff in her clutch and then slipped out. Oliver had obeyed her instructions not to come to the door and was instead waiting for her out on the street, leaning against his car.

When she saw the look on his face, she was glad she let Iris talk her into the dress.

---

Wow.

He had found her attractive from the first time he saw her, but seeing her dressed up like this, knowing she had purposefully chosen this outfit to wear for her night out with him… he stood there silently with his mouth probably hanging wide open as all the words he knew flew out of his brain at once. Her dress skimmed over her curves, leading his eyes down to the exposed skin between the short hemline and the top of her boots that his fingers itched to trace.

*Keep it under control, Queen.*

“Hello? Oliver?” She gave him a little wave as she walked towards him and he didn’t miss the amusement in her voice.

“Hi,” he finally managed to get out when she was standing in front of him. “You look incredible.”

In the dim streetlight he could see her blush then as she smoothed her hands down the skirt of her dress. “Thank you.”

“So, is there like a bomb that goes off if a male approaches your front door?” he joked, finding his voice again as he opened the passenger door for her.

Her face screwed up in confusion, “What?”

“You were pretty insistent that I not come to the door…”

“Oh! Uhhh…” She slid into the car and looked at her hands in her lap, muttering, “I kind of didn’t tell anyone the whole truth about where I was going tonight, so I didn’t want my mom to answer the door and find out…”

“Huh. It’s been a while since I’ve been involved in a girl sneaking out of her house.”
She looked up at him with an exasperated expression and he laughed as he shut the door carefully and made his way over to the driver’s side.

As soon as he got in she launched into an explanation, “I’m just not ready for her to know yet because she’ll freak out, in a good way, but she’ll freak out, and then Allie will know something’s going on and she’ll have a million questions about you and us and I—“

He reached over to take a hold of one of her hands, “Hey. It’s okay, I understand.” He would never introduce William to someone unless things were getting serious and, while he liked Felicity very much and hoped things could work out for them the way he envisioned, they had been seeing each other for less than a week. It wasn’t a bad idea for them to spend more time getting to know each other first, before they got their kids involved. “But I want to make sure you know that I’m completely aware that having you in my life means having Allie too, and I’m more than okay with that. I’m excited to meet her, and for you to meet William --when we’re ready.”

“So this isn’t like a *Parent Trap* situation where you’re only into me for my money and you’re going to pressure me into sending my daughter away to boarding school so you don’t have to deal with her?”

By her tone of voice, he was pretty sure she was making a joke, but the reference was lost on him.

“What?”

“Okay… you obviously haven’t seen that movie, so… never mind.” She shifted her hand to intertwine her fingers with his. “Thank you.” When he glanced over at her, she gave him a shy smile that he returned.

He had barely gotten anything accomplished the entire day he had been so giddy with excitement over the prospect of this date with her. Their midday coffee dates the past three days always had to end before he was ready because they had to return to work, and talking on the phone wasn’t quite the same experience as being in her presence -- so he was looking forward to the long evening that stretched ahead of them.

When they pulled up to Star City’s newest five-star restaurant, he heard a soft gasp from beside him.

“How—? You can’t even get reservations for like weeks in advance at this place. I know because I tried to get a table for my mom’s birthday *three weeks* ahead and no matter how much money I offered to throw at them, it was a total no go.”

He glanced over at her and tried to contain a smirk, “Well, there are some perks to being the mayor.”

As soon as the words came out, he winced at how much he sounded like his old self. In the past, he had often thrown money around to impress girls, but that was to get them to ignore the fact that he didn’t want to give them anything emotionally. He hoped she didn’t think that he was doing that with her. From what he had gathered from the off-hand comments she had made about her ex during their conversations, he had come to the conclusion that he hadn’t exactly been the romantic type. So yeah, he was showing off a bit with pulling the mayor card to get a last-minute table for two at a completely booked out restaurant, but he wanted to show her that he thought she deserved the best. Even after his conversation with Thea the other night, he still had doubts that he was good enough for her... but he was determined to try.

To his relief, she made an impressed sound before remarking, “And perks to dating him, apparently.”
When they had finished eating their *well-worth-the-hype* dinner, she skimmed the dessert menu but nothing caught her eye.

Looking up at him, she remarked, “You know what? I have a better idea for dessert.” He arched an eyebrow and before he could say anything she added, “That was not a euphemism Mayor Handsome. I know a place that makes really good pie. You up for a little adventure?”

“I think you already know that I’m unable to turn down an adventure with you,” he returned and she smiled to herself at the memory of coercing him into driving her to Hub City in pursuit of Legos.

After he waved the waiter over and paid the check, they made their way back to his car and she gave him an address.

He wove his way through the city traffic, and when they pulled up to the place where her mom had once waitressed, the old retro style building’s neon sign flashing, *Louise’s 24 Hour Diner*, he remarked, “I’ve lived in this city my entire life and I’ve never even heard of this place before.”

“Well it’s not exactly a hot spot for trust fund babies,” she teased. “You’ll notice that you’re the only Porsche in the parking lot.”

“Point taken. I’ll have you know though that I’m not as rich as I once was, so if you’re only into me for my money, I would get out now,” he bantered back, knowing full well that she was quite wealthy herself, thanks to the executive level positions she’d held for the past few years. Having been dirt poor for almost her entire life though, she didn’t feel the need to live extravagantly now simply because she could. However, she did love being able to provide for her family so that her mom had the chance to pursue her dream job and she wouldn’t have to worry about seeing the look on her daughter’s face when she told her that even all the extra shifts she had picked up weren’t going to be enough to write the check for space camp.

She reached over and patted his cheek, “Lucky for you, you have so many other attractive qualities.”

When they walked inside she was immediately recognized by Louise who was standing behind the counter talking to one of her waitresses.

“Felicity!” she greeted her with a wave and a friendly smile on her wrinkled face. “And who is this you’ve brou—Oh! Mayor Queen.” Louise hurried around the corner, smoothing back her silvery gray ponytail, and extended a hand to him. “It is an honor to meet you.”

Oliver blushed at the attention that he drew as a bunch of patrons turned to look at him upon the announcement of his presence. She was too distracted by how adorable he was, to get flustered by the fact that they were all looking at her, too.

She nudged him with her shoulder, “I thought the Mayor should know where to get the best homemade pie in the city.”

Louise’s face brightened, “Excellent timing! I threw a few fresh ones in the oven a little bit ago for the nighttime crowd. Find yourself a place to sit and I’ll bring you a sampling when they come out.”

“This is where my mom worked before she started her wedding planning business,” she explained when they took a seat at a quiet booth tucked away in the corner of the diner. They sat on the same side and he slung an arm across her shoulders to pull her in snugly against him. She enjoyed the feeling of his solid frame pressed against her body and had to reign herself in before her thoughts drifted to them being this close but in a more horizontal position. “I’m a disaster in the kitchen, so Allie and I would come visit her almost every day at dinnertime. I’m hoping Allie can break the
curse of Smoak women being terrible cooks, but the chances are not looking so good. Sadly, our IQ points have not translated to cooking skills. The other morning, I woke up to the smoke alarm and her screaming because she had practically set the toaster on fire trying to make herself freezer waffles.”

Oliver chuckled at the image, “So I guess you’re not like an Alton Brown type.”

Her brow furrowed in confusion, “Who?”

“He’s this chef who’s really into the science side of cooking and—uh, I watch a lot of Food Network.”

She raised an eyebrow, “Do you cook?”

“I know my way around a kitchen,” he admitted with a hint of smugness. “Thea and I did some traveling after the chaos of the Undertaking trials and my father’s death. We needed a break from the city, from the people constantly asking us questions we didn’t know how to answer. While we were abroad we took some cooking classes. Thea ended up being more a fan of tasting what I made than actually cooking anything herself though. Next time we’ll skip the restaurant and I’ll cook for you.”

“Next time? You’re overly confident. You must think tonight is going well.”

He stiffened beside her, “I—“

“Oliver.” She slid her hand along his thigh to rest on his knee, catching the sharp intake of breath from him at the touch. “Relax. I’m just messing with you. I’m obviously enjoying myself. I brought you here because I wanted to make tonight last longer.”

*Without going back to one of our places where things could get out of hand.*

His smile returned before Louise arriving with the promised slices of fresh-from-the-oven pie interrupted their conversation, and they both offered their thanks before she walked away to check in on another table.

“Alright Mayor Handsome, you ready for this?”

“I have high expectations.”

“Oh, they will be exceeded. Start with the blueberry, it’s my favorite.” For a fraction of a second she debated feeding him before opting to hand him her fork that held a bite with the perfect ratio of flaky crust and filling. He accepted it and she waited for his reaction.

Swallowing and licking his lips, he nodded in concession. “That’s pretty good.”

“Pretty good!” She echoed, offended by his choice of adjective. “It’s amazing! The crust is buttery, flaky, perfection and the filling is sweet but not too sweet and—“ The next thing she knew he was kissing her, his fingers finding their way into her hair to angle her head as he took the words right out of her mouth. She was too surprised to kiss him back and he realized she wasn’t reciprocating before her brain could catch up with what was going on.

“Sorry,” he breathed out when he pulled away. “I shouldn’t have—“

“What are you apologizing for?” she asked, her head a little hazy. He was looking at her guiltily so she kissed his bottom lip that was stained a little bit blue from the pie. “Not properly appreciating my favorite dessert? Eh, you made up for that with the best tasting first kiss I’ve ever had.”
He laughed softly and caressed her flushed cheek with his thumb. There was something in his eyes that looked a little bit like adoration, though she couldn’t be sure, but it made her heart skip a beat anyway. While he was leaning in for another kiss, they were startled by the sound of the high school baseball team rambunctiously flooding into the diner for a post-game celebration.

Remembering that they were in public, they put a little bit of distance between each other as they finished trying all of the flavors of pie. He made up for his lackluster assessment of the blueberry pie by determining that the Boston Crème was his favorite and giving Louise a glowing review that made her beam with pride.

It was nearing midnight when they pulled up to her house. Even though she knew the later they stayed out, the sleepier she was going to be when her alarm went off the next morning for work, she had been reluctant to leave him for the night and they had taken the long way around the city and back to her neighborhood. She had always assumed that her tendency to talk non-stop was unattractive, but Oliver couldn’t seem to get enough of listening to her. It made her feel at ease with him and quieted some of her fears that if he got to know her better he would realize that she wasn’t what he wanted.

“Can I walk you to your door or…”

She looked up at the darkened house, “Yes.”

He got out and walked around to open the car door for her, taking her hand as they walked at a snail’s pace the short distance up to her front porch.

“Thank you for tonight,” she whispered.

Pressing her against one of the columns, his hands slipping under her jacket to find the exposed skin along her sides, he tipped his head down to kiss her. In the quiet moonlight, they resumed what they had put the pause on at the diner. It felt like electricity was running through her, waking up all her senses, as her hands roamed his chest and back, feeling the hard planes of muscle through his shirt.

“When can I see you again?” he muttered against her lips in between kisses.

“Soon. Tomorrow,” she breathed out. Out of the corner of her eye, her attention was caught by a light in the house flicking on and she knew they needed to wrap this up before her mom came out to investigate. Giving him one last chaste kiss, she nudged him towards the porch steps and, getting the message, he jogged towards his car, stealing one last glance back at her with a grin on his face before he got in and drove away.

She touched her fingers to her lips where the lipstick she had applied earlier was nothing but a faded memory replaced by the feeling of his kisses. Ducking into the house, she hurried upstairs to her bedroom and flopped down on her bed, her chest rising and falling heavily as her whole body thrummed with happiness. She couldn’t remember the last time she had felt like this. Even the best days with Cooper…

_Don’t think about him._

It was because of him that it had taken her this long to be ready to go on a date again, and she didn’t want bad memories to sour the bliss that had surrounded her all evening. She pushed her thoughts back to Oliver’s warm smile and his fingers tangled with hers.

“Felicity?” her mom whispered at the door. “Did you have a nice night?”
“Yeah…” It came out like a sigh and she cleared her throat before repeating more strongly, “Yeah. It was good.”

She waited for her mom to make any additional comments on what she may or may not have seen happening on the front porch, but they didn’t come. Instead, she bid her goodnight and shuffled away from the door.

**OLIVER:** in my old age have I lost my touch at sneaking around?

She covered her mouth to muffle her burst of laughter before she typed her reply.

**FELICITY:** I think we’re safe old man :P

**FELICITY:** sorry for pushing you off the porch

**OLIVER:** at least it wasn’t your bedroom window

**FELICITY:** …

**FELICITY:** do you have some experience with that?

**OLIVER:** no comment

When Felicity walked into work the next morning there was a beautiful, colorful bouquet of flowers on her desk. A smile spread across her face and she didn’t even have to read the card to know who the sender was. Still, she slipped it out and laughed softly at the message it contained.

_Felicity_

_Thanks for showing me the best place in Star City to get homemade pie!_

_-Oliver_

It was a simple gesture but every time she looked at the blooms brightening up her workspace, it made her chest swell with affection for him. When lunch rolled around, she decided to make good on the promise she had made last night and switch things up from their usual afternoon coffee routine.

Arriving at his office in City Hall, one of the members of his security detail recognized her.

“Good afternoon Miss Smoak.”

“Good afternoon…?” She tilted her head curiously, hoping he would fill in the blank for her.

“John Diggle,” he introduced himself. “Head of Mayor Queen’s security staff.”

“Nice to meet you John,” she remarked.

“Likewise. Will we be seeing you around often?” he asked with a knowing smile slightly turning up the corners of his mouth.

“I hope so,” she replied simply and his smile widened as he opened the door for her to walk past him into the mayor’s office.

Oliver’s face lit up when he saw her, “This is a nice surprise.”
“So were the flowers on my desk this morning.”

He shrugged, a teasing glint in his eyes, “I did pick up some stuff about how to properly romance a woman from all the chick flicks my mom and sister would drag me into watching with them while my dad was working late at the office.”

She shook her head in amusement before holding up a bag of Thai take-out that she had picked up on the way over. “I brought lunch.”

“You must have read my mind, because I was just about to call you and ask if you were free to get something to eat.”

He stood up from his chair and she set the food down on his desk so that she could walk into his embrace. Even in the tall heels she was wearing, she fit perfectly under his chin and she rested her head against his chest as he looped his arms around her. As he held her against his body, she felt vulnerable and safe all at the same time. Like maybe letting someone get close to her in this way again wasn’t as scary as she thought it would be.

“You okay?” he asked a moment later when she had made no move to back away.

“Yeah. I’m thinking about how you give great hugs.” She could feel the laughter in his chest before he kissed the top of her head.

When she finally reluctantly pulled away from him, they settled down onto the couch in his office to eat lunch and fell into a conversation about their respective plans for the weekend. While she was to spend it with Allie assembling her computer, he would be in Central City to watch William play in a baseball tournament.

“On Monday I have a board meeting, but maybe we can—“

The sound of footsteps entering the office was accompanied by, “I thought I heard a rumour that my stepson was dating Felicity Smoak….”

Felicity looked up at the distinctly familiar accent and beamed, “Mr. Steele.”

“Now, you don’t work for me anymore, I think it’s alright for you to call me Walter,” he corrected her as she stood up to shake his hand.

“Walter,” she amended. “It’s so good to see you.”

“You two know each other?” Oliver asked, standing up as well to greet his stepfather. “And where exactly did you hear this rumour?”

“Thea was over for dinner last night. And, of course I know Felicity. She was my go to girl in the IT department when I was still at Queen Consolidated.”

Walter was the CFO at QC until he left the company to work for Starling National Bank following the emergence of details concerning the Undertaking. He was also one of the first friendly faces she had encountered in her new city, and she would forever be grateful for the way he had made her feel valued and appreciated in her job.

“I always knew she would have a desk on the executive floor someday,” Walter added with a fond smile. “How is your sweet Allison?”

“Well, she’s a lot bigger than you remember from when I would bring her into the office daycare.”
She reached for her bag to get her phone out to show him some recent pictures of Allie.

The spent a few minutes catching up before Walter checked his watch and remarked, “I suppose I should get to the reason for my stopping in. Oliver, in case you’ve forgotten, next Sunday is your mother’s birthday. Your sister is coming over for brunch, and it would mean a lot to your mother for you to be there too.”

“That’s my weekend with William,” Oliver answered stiffly.

“Of course he is invited as well. I’m sure she would love to see her grandson.”

“Really? The grandson she didn’t want?”

At the tone of his voice, she could sense Oliver was getting upset and she took a little step closer to him to slide her hand into his comfortingly.

Walter sighed. “I understand your reasons for being upset with your mother, but you have to know how much you are hurting her by cutting her out of your life. Please at least consider joining us.”

Oliver was silent for a moment before muttering, “I’ll think about it.”

“Thank you.” Walter tipped his head to her, “It was a pleasure to see you again Felicity. Have a good day, both of you.”

He left the office and she turned to face Oliver, trying to get a read off the stony expression on his face. “Do you want to talk about it?” she asked, running her hands down his arms. Although they hadn’t been together long, she wanted to be there for him. Wanted him to know that he could confide in her about the things that were weighing on him.

“I haven’t talked to my mother in over a year now. Not since I found out about William. About what she did. We used to be so close, and now I don’t know what to even say to her. It’s her fault that my son didn’t know who I was—didn’t have a father, for the first ten years of his life. I missed his first word, his first steps—I missed so much because of her.” He lowered down onto the couch and she joined him, rubbing his back as he slouched forward and rested his face in his hands.

“Oliver, I’m so sorry. I can only imagine how hard all of this has been for you.”

She couldn’t put herself in his shoes in regards to missing out on a huge part of her child’s life. The longest she had ever spent apart from Allie since the day she came into her world was a week.

On the other hand, she could understand what it was like to have a strained relationship with a mother.

Even though it wasn’t due to a life changing secret, she had gone through her own phase where she didn’t want to have anything to do with her mom. It wasn’t until she had been lying on a hospital bed in Star, then Starling, City a few weeks after her college graduation and giving birth to her daughter that she realized how much she needed to let her back into her life. The nurse who had let her latch bone-crushingly tight onto her hand the entire delivery had been kind, but it wasn’t the same as having family there to support her, to share in her joy when her baby was placed in her arms. Things had been a little rocky at first when they were suddenly living under the same roof again, but now she was grateful for the relationship they had built over the years since then.

“Will you go with me?” he asked quietly.

His request surprised her. “To brunch?”
He kept his gaze glued on his feet as he began to answer with, “I know we just started seeing each other and this is a lot to ask of you, so you have no obligation to say yes, but I—“

“Oliver,” she cut him off, her fingers playing with the short hairs at the nape of his neck. “It’s not a lot to ask. You don’t have to do this alone.”

He lifted his head to look at her, “You’re sure?”

Are you sure?

Involving yourself in his family drama is probably not something you do when you want to take things cautious and slow.

“Positive,” she replied with a definitive nod. She couldn’t help herself. She liked to feel needed. “If you think it will help make this easier for you, I’ll be there.”

Relief washed over his face, “Thank you.” He straightened up and cradled her face with his hands, studying her intently for a few seconds before remarking, “I haven’t kissed you yet today.”

“You should fix that right now.”

“Planning on it,” he whispered as he brought his lips to meet hers.

Chapter End Notes

As always, I would love to hear what y'all think :D
Hey friends! Thank you so so much for all of your feedback on the last chapter! I have loved reading your reactions to this story so far and it makes me happy to hear that y'all are enjoying this au twist on Olicity :D This chapter was an emotional one for me to write so I hope you enjoy!

“I cannot get over the mental picture of the two of you sneaking around like teenagers,” Dinah remarked with a laugh after Felicity had caught her up to speed about what had happened the past week with Oliver. It was Saturday morning and the two of them were currently eating breakfast at the café next to the yoga studio where they had been bending and balancing in a class an hour ago.

She smiled at the memories and shrugged, “I never had a boyfriend in high school, so it was kind of fun. I know I need to eventually tell my mom about us, but… you know how she is.”

“Oh yes. I wouldn’t be surprised if she starts assembling your binder the moment you tell her you’re seeing someone.”

“Which is precisely why I’m not telling her yet. I need to take this at my pace, not hers.”

Although, admittedly, her pace seemed to have somehow rapidly sped up since her initial intention to take things slow.

“So, when are you going to see him again?”

“He’s in Central City this weekend, but I’m hoping that we can maybe squeeze in a quick lunch together on Monday before I have to go to my own personal hell, aka the monthly board meeting.” She took a sip of her coffee before continuing, “Except for our date on Thursday night, it’s been a little tricky to spend more than a rushed-feeling hour together. Our jobs keep us so busy and I don’t want to start taking away from my time with Allie in the evenings too much. We’ve talked on the phone basically every night this week after she’s gone to bed, which is nice, but it’s not quite the same as being face to face. I’m trying to figure out how to balance everything.”

“You could always do stuff with the three of you,” Dinah suggested. “I mean, he knew going into this that you have a daughter and that’s obviously not an issue for him.”

“I know. But I’m not ready to introduce him to her yet. I’m still kind of compartmentalizing him, keeping him separate from the rest of my life until I’m more sure that getting involved with him is a good idea.”

Keeping him separate from the rest of her life made it almost possible for her to believe that she was someone else. Someone who didn’t have the same reservations about falling in love. Whenever they were together, it was easy to get caught up in her feelings for him. But it wasn’t long after she said goodbye to him that all of her doubts would come creeping back in.

Dinah peered at her over her mug. “Why would this not be a good idea? Everything you’ve said to me makes it seem like you had the best week you’ve had in awhile….”
“I’m just being cautious,” she replied vaguely before changing the subject by asking Dinah about her plans for the weekend.

Her friend looked reluctant to let up on the topic of her new sort of, maybe, *it was probably too early to say*, boyfriend, but she obliged her, “Painting my apartment. I finally got sick of the hospital white walls and impulsively bought some paint yesterday.”

She could attest to the awfulness of the standard paint color in Dinah’s apartment building because she had resided there as well when she first moved to the city. Ray making her his VP, and therefore making it possible for them to afford to move into the more expansive townhouse they lived in now, had probably saved the three Smoak girls from killing each other in that tiny space best suited for one. She did not miss that apartment and its ugly walls, but she did miss having Dinah as a next-door neighbor.

“You want some help?” she offered. “Allie and I are building her computer when I get home, but that won’t take us the whole day. We can come over later this afternoon…”

“I would love that. I’ve got to take advantage of your man being away before I don’t see you again for a week,” Dinah teased.

She blushed and gave her a guilty smile. “Sorry.”

“So… you know what I was thinking?” she remarked while she watched him put homemade pizzas into the oven. It was Thursday night and, so far, they had seen each other every day since he had returned from Central City on Sunday, even if they could only manage a quick meet up for coffee in between their busy schedules. After each time she sat across from him and got to know him better, she became more certain of her feelings for him. It was a little scary, knowing she was giving him more and more power to hurt her, but she was trying so hard to not let her past get in the way of what she wanted for her future. Something was still holding her back from telling her mom or Allie about him though. “If I’m going with you to your mom’s birthday, that means you’re going to have to explain me to William. I’m fine if you want to tell him I’m just a friend, but then we have to make sure the rest of your family doesn’t say anything contrary to that.”

[See Felicity's outfit here]

He paused for a second, considering her words, before he shook his head, “No. That’s way too complicated and completely unnecessary. Maybe you can come over a little earlier than we should leave and I can introduce you to him then? As my girlfriend… if you’re okay with that?”

*Girlfriend.*

It was the first time she had heard him refer to her as such. She let the word roll around in her head for a second and a smile spread across her face before it was marred by her feelings of uncertainty.

“Oh, yeah. Of course. That’s no problem.” She bit her lip, “Are you sure though?”

Involving the kids was a big step. She hadn’t thought she was ready to introduce him to Allie yet, but if he was comfortable with her meeting William…

He reached across the counter and took her hands in his, “Felicity, I promised after our first date that I wasn’t going to waste your time. I wouldn’t have kept seeing you if I wasn’t serious about you.” Brushing his thumbs over her knuckles, he continued, “Every time we’re together it’s more obvious to me how much I want you to be a part of my life, and that includes knowing my son. But if I’m moving too fast for you, please tell me and we can take a step back. I don’t want you to be
uncomfortable.”

For a moment she was silent as she let his words sink in. Every instinct that she had developed to protect her heart was telling her that she should take that step back, be more cautious, take things slow like she had originally vowed she would.

But another voice in her head was speaking up.

“You’re afraid of letting someone in again because of Cooper, but that selfish asshole doesn’t deserve to still have that kind of power over you.”

Iris’ words had been what pushed her towards taking a chance with Oliver in the first place.

“You are one of the most lovable people I know and there is someone out there for you, someone who will love you and your daughter the way you deserve.”

She wanted to believe that was true, and to believe that maybe he was that someone.

She shook her head, “No. You’re not moving too fast.” Biting her lip, she admitted, “I feel the same way about you. And I want to meet William.”

His face broke out in a grin and he brought her hands up to his mouth to press a kiss to her knuckles.

“I want to introduce you to Allie too,” she continued. “I do. But first I need to make sure you understand why inviting you into our life is significant and isn’t the easiest thing for me because… well, the reason I’m so protective of her…uh…” She fumbled to find the right words for what she wanted to say.

“Felicity.” His voice was soft and reassuring. “Talk to me.”

In prior conversations, she had alluded to her history with Cooper. If she was going to let go the ways that her past experiences were holding her back from moving forward with Oliver though, she probably needed to tell him exactly what happened her senior year at MIT. Which, compounded with her abandonment issues from her dad—

*Although we’re definitely not going to get into all of that tonight too. One painful memory at a time.*

—had caused her to put up the defenses that he had been trying to chip away at.

“Maybe we should go sit down on the couch.” She tilted her head towards the living room area in the loft and he nodded in understanding.

They settled in next to each other and she clasped her hands together nervously on her lap.

“Okay. So…”

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**MIT // SEPTEMBER 2008**

It was with great hesitation that she opened her eyes and looked down at the stick in her hand, confirming with its two little lines what she had already known deep down to be true.
Sinking down to sit on her bathroom floor she let the tears that she had been holding
back stream down her cheeks as her emotions hit her like a tsunami and she choked on
sobs.

She wasn’t sure how long she sat there.

When the crying stopped, she felt numb all over, unable to fully process how much her
life was about to change.

Her roommate knocked on the door to check on her at one point and walked away a
few seconds later when she didn’t respond. They had met briefly on move-in day a
week ago, and it was already clear that they weren’t going to be friends. She didn’t have
anything to say to her.

After a while she came to the realization that she couldn’t keep sitting on the
questionably clean bathroom floor forever, so she wiped her eyes with the back of her
hand and stood up to assess herself in the mirror. Her heavy black eyeliner and mascara
was a smudged mess all over her face and she took the time to remove every scrap of
her make-up, leaving a very young looking girl blinking back at her with uncertainty in
her eyes. Underneath the eyeliner and the attitude, her reflection revealed an insecure
girl who wanted desperately to know that someone loved her.

“You’re pregnant,” she whispered to her reflection in the mirror. “But it’s okay. You’re
not going to end up like your mom. Cooper loves you. He’s going to take care of you.”

She repeated those words a few times to make sure that she believed them.

Slipping out of the bathroom, she was relieved to see that her roommate wasn’t there
anymore. She changed into some comfortable clothes and took a few deep breaths
before walking down the hall to her boyfriend’s room.

It’s okay. Cooper loves you. He’s going to take care of you.

Knocking on his door with her mantra running through her head, she waited for him to
answer.

“Hey babe,” he greeted her in a flurry, his mind clearly occupied by something other
than her.

When she stepped in the room, his roommate Myron looked up at her and must have
actually noticed her red rimmed eyes and nervously clasped hands because a question
flashed across his face.

Are you okay?

She gave him a tight-lipped smile, because yes, she was okay. Everything was going to
be okay.

“Cooper, there’s something we need to talk about,” she began.

“Yeah. The DOE hack. I’m so close to finding us an exploitable node. Is your super
virus ready?”

“Yes, but—“
“Great.” He surged towards her and instinctively she wrapped her arms around her stomach protectively. “Babe. Relax. I’m trying to give you a hug.” He unfurled her arms and pressed his body against hers and she tried to do as he said and relax. Everything was going to be okay. As he kissed her neck she closed her eyes and melted into him until he whispered, “Tonight, we go from hackers to heroes…”

“What?” She was suddenly uneasy and she pushed on his chest to put some distance between them. “What are you talking about?”

“Have you ever heard of hacktivism? Once we’re in, we’re going to erase the student loan records. I mean, what’s the point of stopping at taking a screenshot to post to a forum when we can do some real good in this world?”

“Uhh… because they’ll know it’s not a glitch? Cooper, we can’t do dumb stuff like this anymore,” she asserted firmly.

He narrowed his eyes in confusion, “You’re the one who wanted to hack the DOE, I’m just improving on the plan.”

She shook her head insistently, “We can’t. They’ll track us down and we’ll spend the rest of our lives in prison.”

Cooper shrugged, “No, we won’t. We’re too good. We’ve never gotten caught before.”

“We’ve never attempted anything like this!”

*Just tell him.*

*Why aren’t you telling him?*

*He’ll understand why you can’t do this if you tell him.*

“Look, I don’t know why you’re acting so weird right now, but—“

“I’m pregnant!” she blurted out and the room fell silent except for the soft hum of the computers.

Myron pretended to be suddenly occupied by something on his screen while Cooper stared at her with an unreadable expression.

“What?” he finally inquired after what felt like hours, even though she knew it was only a matter of seconds.

“I’m pregnant,” she repeated herself. “So we can’t take risks like this—“

“I thought you were on the pill,” he interrupted her, his voice hard.

The voice in her head that was repeating “It’s okay. Cooper loves you. He’s going to take care of you.” wavered.

“Well I am… but…” She looked down at her feet and muttered, “It’s possible that I forgot to take it once or twice…”

To avoid having to deal with her mother, she had stayed in Massachusetts with Cooper over the summer break and their late night activities had established her as the notorious Ghost Fox Goddess in the dark corners of the internet.
And also gotten her pregnant.

She could see Cooper’s hands ball into fists at his sides. “How could you be so careless?”

*Oh, that's rich, coming from you.*

It irked her that he wasn’t considering his responsibility in this situation, but she didn’t want to set him off. While he had never lashed out at her physically, she had seen his temper flare before and she didn’t want to be on the receiving end of his ire tonight.

“I’m sorry.” She looked back up at him. “But it’s not the end of the world, right? I mean, we’re seniors and, based on my calculations, I’m not due until a week or two after graduation, so we’ll have some time to get settled somewhere and—”

He laughed dryly and the sound scraped across her skin like sandpaper. “You think we’re going to be a happy little family in a house with a white picket fence in some suburban neighborhood? Is that what you were picturing?”

“No, I just—“

“Felicity. I didn’t ask for this. I don’t want this,” he gestured at her stomach and she covered it with her hands. “I’ve already got plans for my life, and I wanted them to involve you. So I can’t have you running scared because you’re suddenly feeling some motherly instincts. No offense babe, but you can’t possibly think that you know how to be a mom. You don’t even talk to yours. If you go get this taken care of tonight, it can be like it never even happened.”

Her feet were frozen in place as her heart sank.

He didn’t want her to have this baby.

It had been stupid and naïve to think that she could rely on him to take care of her.

Right now, she was questioning how much he even loved her since he was being so cold.

Taking a deep breath, she crossed her arms over her chest. “Can’t we at least talk about this? I know it seems crazy to you, but I think I really want this baby.”

His doubt that she was capable of being a mother had only made her determined to prove him wrong.

“Then I guess you have a choice to make about what you want more, because I’m not getting dragged into this,” he replied dismissively, annoyance flashing in his eyes.

Anger flared up inside of her, “Well thank you for making it an easy one. We’re done.” She took a USB drive out of her pocket that contained her coding for her algorithm and flung it at him. “Do the hack. Ruin your life. I don’t care. Just leave me alone.”

Blinking back tears, she stormed out of his room before he could say anything else.

“At first there was a part of me that hoped Cooper would change his mind, but a week later he was facing a life sentence in prison for his attempts to erase the DOE records and I knew for sure he
would never be a part of my life again. I believe he really did love me, but it was a version of me that I couldn’t be for him anymore. He didn’t know how to love the girl standing in front of him that night that I walked out. I was crushed by how he had dismissed me so easily, like I hadn’t meant anything to him, while my whole world had practically revolved around him.” She sat up a little straighter on the couch. “But I knew I couldn’t resign myself to sitting in my room and letting myself fade away while I cried over a boy who broke my heart. I had to prove to myself that I didn’t need him, that I was capable of being strong for myself and my baby. I dyed my hair blonde and ditched my old clothes, erased every trace of the girl that had been his. And then, after graduation, I moved here for a fresh start before Allie was born. In hindsight, I’m able to see that breaking up with him was a good thing. Our relationship was quite toxic. He was controlling, his anger at the world was contagious, and he kept me isolated from other people. All that doesn’t change how hurt I was by the way things ended though. If he didn’t want Allie and I, why should I think that anyone else ever would? For the past few years, I’ve tried to convince myself that I didn’t want a relationship, because that was easier than admitting that, honestly, I was afraid. Afraid of opening my heart again. But then I met you…”

Taking a deep breath, she looked over at Oliver to gauge his reaction to everything she had told him, details she had only confided in her mother and closest friends with.

*I guess you really do trust him.*

Her voice came out in a whisper, “Being with you makes me want to be brave.”

He cradled her face in his hands then, his touch warm and comforting, and she resisted the urge to close her eyes because she wanted to see the emotions playing across his face. She didn’t find the pity there that she was expecting, but rather something that she thought looked a little like admiration. “Thank you, for sharing all of that with me. I know it can’t be easy to talk about them, but those experiences clearly helped shape you into the person you are today, and I’m incredibly lucky to have met her.”

She felt a smile turn up the corners of her mouth as he brushed away a few tears that had escaped with soft strokes of his thumbs. “Yeah?”

In answer, he kissed her earnestly, his tongue seeking entrance to her mouth that she obliged without hesitation.

She was nearly in his lap when they suddenly became aware of a timer going off and broke apart in a confused haze.

“What is that?” Oliver asked, before hopping up from the couch in realization of the answer to his own question. “The pizza.”

A laugh bubbled up in her chest as she watched him scramble towards the kitchen to save their dinner from being burnt. He returned to the couch a minute later with two plates, a tray of pizza, and wine. While he set everything out on the coffee table, she assessed his handiwork; the (only slightly) charred crust covered with sauce that she knew he had made himself, fresh mozzarella, and thin slices of sweet pineapple. Her mouth watered at the delicious aroma that had filled the loft.

“It’s a relief to know that we’re on the same side of the pineapple on pizza debate,” she commented as he poured her a glass of wine. “Cooper didn’t like pineapple on pizza. I guess that should have been a sign we weren’t going to make it,” she attempted to joke.

“You don’t have to be funny for me,” he returned, gently calling her out on what she knew was one of her defense mechanisms when she was feeling vulnerable.
“Sorry.” She pushed her glasses up self-consciously. “Force of habit.” Taking a bite of her pizza, she closed her eyes and hummed in approval. “Oh wow, this is possibly the best slice of pizza I’ve ever tasted.”

His dimples appeared with his grin. “Thank you.”

They had already had one other dinner that week where he had made her chicken cordon bleu and she would be perfectly content to never bother with going out to a restaurant again if he was happy to cook for them.

“I needed to pick up some new hobbies after I gave up on getting wasted with models and punching out paparazzi,” he added self-deprecatingly and she patted his thigh and gave him a reassuringly non-judgmental smile.

Having worked at his family’s company, she had certainly been aware of the reputation he had a few years ago. But she couldn’t bring herself to be bothered by it now, when the man sitting next to her was obviously not the same guy her co-workers had gossiped about back when she was removing viruses in the IT department.

They continued to eat their dinner in comfortable silence until he spoke up again, “Oh, I almost forgot, I wanted to ask you tonight if you wanted to go to Laurel and Tommy’s wedding with me? Laurel was getting on me this afternoon about confirming my RSVP….”

“Of course, I would love to go with you.” She had been wondering if this invitation would come around. “Small world, my mom is actually the one planning it.”

“Really?”

“Yep.”

_I guess you’re going to have to come clean about your relationship with Oliver before she sees you dancing with him._

_Or maybe not dancing…_

“I need to know ahead of time if you’re going to dance with me, so that I can be prepared with proper shoes,” she pointed out faux-seriously and he raised a questioning eyebrow. “I’m kidding. I inherited my mom’s ability to do anything in heels that are impractical for mere mortals.”

Shaking his head in amusement, he remarked, “I can’t remember the last time I danced with someone, my abilities might be a little questionable.”

“Everyone is at least capable of swaying.” She hopped up from the couch and reached for his hands, “C’mon, I’ll prove it to you.”

Obliging her, he stood up and she slipped her phone out of her pocket to turn on some soft music before looping her arms around his neck. His hands splayed out across her lower back to hold her close as they moved with the melody filling the loft. Being held by him like this was comforting and she closed her eyes as she reveled in the feeling of his embrace, the steady beat of his heart in time with hers. It was reassuring that upon being vulnerable with him about one of the most difficult moments of her life, she was met with open arms and a readiness to soothe the wounds she had ripped open. After a minute or two, he took a hold of her wrists and repositioned her hands to lead her in a classic waltz, complete with a twirl.

When he returned her to his arms, her eyes narrowed and he grinned, “I didn’t say I don’t know how
to dance, just that it’s been a while. I grew up in high society, my mom forced me to learn all kinds of seemingly useless things against my will. You’re a better partner than Tommy, but don’t tell him I said that.”

She hadn’t met Oliver’s best friend yet, but she knew from what he had told her that they had been practically raised like brothers, and the mental picture of two young boys begrudgingly being taught how to dance was an amusing one.

Tilting her chin up in a silent request for a kiss, he dropped her hands to wrap his arms around her waist again and dipped his head down to meet her lips.

After he reluctantly bid Felicity goodbye because she wanted to get home before it got too late to spend some time with her daughter, he started to clean up the kitchen and everything they had talked about circled around in his mind. He hoped he had been able to assure her of his sincerity about wanting her and Allie in his life, but he could understand why she was so hesitant to believe that when even the father of her daughter had so easily walked away from them.

It certainly gave him a new perspective to think about how things had gone down with Samantha.

He liked to think that if his mom hadn’t stepped in, he would have been supportive of her. But he also knew that he was rather self-centered back then and probably not ready to be the kind of father she and Will deserved, so maybe his mom had spared him from being a jerk to her himself. Had he said careless things and hurt her, he might not have even gotten this chance he had now to know his son. And yet that thought didn’t change how much it frustrated him that his say in the matter had been taken away from him and he never had the choice to be involved in his son’s life from the start.

While he was contemplating those hypotheticals, Thea arrived home and it suddenly occurred to him that she hadn’t crashed his dinner with Felicity, even though he had forgotten to tell her that he needed the loft to himself that evening.

“Where have you been?” he asked curiously.

“Uhhh…” she dipped her head shyly. “I was at City Hall and Rene was there working late too on some stuff for Quentin so we got take-out and ended up talking for a while.”

His eyebrows rose, “Oh?”

It hadn’t escaped his notice that his deputy mayor’s assistant had a certain fondness for his sister, but he hadn’t thought it was mutual since she had brushed off all of his attempts to flirt with her.

“And it’s possible that his company is not terrible,” she responded simply before turning on her heel to head upstairs to her room.

He laughed as he watched her retreat before resuming washing dishes. When he finished, he grabbed his phone to call Laurel and let her know that he was going to have a plus-one for the wedding.

Tommy picked up her phone for her and answered in a whisper, “Hey Oliver, what’s up?”

“Where’s Laurel?”

“She just fell asleep.”

He glanced at the clock that read 8:30pm. “Already?”
“Your ACU has been keeping her busy this week. She’s been working some long hours and pretty much fell into bed the moment she walked through the door.”

“Is she holding up okay?”

“Oh yeah, this is what she lives for. She’s loving it. But between both of our hectic work schedules, I’ve only spoken about five words to her since Monday. I miss my fiancé, so I need the criminals in this city to stop getting themselves caught.”

“Would you like me to arrange a press conference so that you can announce that?”

“Yeah, that would be great.”

He rolled his eyes but he knew how Tommy felt. He and Felicity had only been together for a tiny fraction of the amount of time that Tommy and Laurel had been and he already didn’t like to go a day without hearing her voice.

“The reason I was calling is because I wanted to let Laurel know that I’m bringing Felicity to the wedding.”

“Nice. I’ll pass the message along. Which means I’ll probably have to write her a note and stick it on her purse.” Tommy sighed, “I’m ready for my honeymoon.”

“You’re almost there buddy,” Oliver reminded him. “You’ll be in Italy before you know it.”

“Yeah. But enough of my pity party… how are you?”

He let out an exhale. “I’m having brunch at the mansion this weekend for my mom’s birthday. Not sure how I’m supposed to feel about that yet.”

“Is it just going to be you, Thea, Walter, and your mom?”

“And William and Felicity.”

“Oh? So things are getting serious with her?”

He was pretty certain that he was serious about her from the first night he met her.

“I want it to be serious with her. I mean, it hasn’t even been two weeks yet since we started spending time together, but she’s amazing. As cheesy as it sounds, I can already picture her being in my life forever.”

It helped that he had months in between his first meeting with her in December and her showing up in his office, during which his mind had drifted to her often. She had been the one to truly awaken his desire for someone to share his life with. Despite his efforts to find someone else after she initially turned him down, he always saw her in his dreams for the future and no one had felt as right as being with her did.

“I get it. It didn’t take me long to feel that way about Laurel. When it’s the right person, I guess you just know.” Tommy huffed in amusement, “Remember when we thought commitment was lame? What was wrong with us? I’m happy for you man.”

They talked for a few more minutes before starting to wrap up their conversation and Oliver asked, “One last question, have you figured out by now how to do the guy part for your first dance?”

“If you recall our Senior Prom, when I won our bet on who could steal the most girls away from
their dates, you know I did. But I still resent always having to be the girl when we had our lessons.”

He chuckled and bid his friend goodnight before hanging up.

When she got home she walked into the kitchen to find her mom and daughter sitting at the table working on a project.

“Hey Mom,” Allie looked up at her with an excited smile. “Grandma has been helping me finish my women in science project.”

She walked around the table to get a better look at the poster that was adorned with pictures and the mini biographies Allie had written of the different women she chose to feature. And glitter. Obviously, since her mother was involved.

Marie Curie. Rosalind Franklin. Dr. Mae Jemison. Dr. Christina McGee. Lena Luthor. Dr. Caitlin Snow.

She made a mental note to snap a picture of the poster to send to her friends who would be tickled pink to see that Allie had chosen to include them, and then her eyes widened in surprise and her smile grew when she noticed...

Felicity Smoak

MIT Class of ’09

Master’s Degree in Cyber Security and Computer Sciences

Current CEO of Palmer Technologies (and my mom!)

…accompanied by a picture of her holding a press conference and another one that her mom had taken of them building Allie’s computer the previous weekend.

“What do you think?” Allie asked.

She kissed the top of her head, “It looks great! I would give you an A+” Looking over at her mom she added, “Thanks for helping her with this. You’re much better at crafty stuff than I am.”

“You’re welcome. We had fun.”

She brushed some glitter out of Allie’s hair, “It sure looks like it.”

“Where were you?” her daughter asked curiously.

“Uhhh… at a friend’s house. Well he’s more than a friend. We should talk about this, actually.”

Here goes nothing, I guess.

“Oh, thank you!” Her mom exclaimed dramatically. “I was starting to get worried that things hadn’t ended up working out.”

She sunk down into one of the chairs and eyed her mom suspiciously, “What are you talking about? What do you think you know?”
“I know about you and Oliver,” her mom answered matter-of-factly. “Louise called me the other night while you were out to gossip about you and your man, and of course I was like, ‘what are you talking about Louise?’ Felicity isn’t seeing anyone.’ And she’s like, ‘Well you should see what I’m seeing happening in one of my booths right now.’”

Felicity groaned. She should have known that taking Oliver to the diner posed a risk.

“Why didn’t you say anything when I got home?”

Her mom shrugged, “I figured you would tell me if it was something serious. But you must know, it was killing me to not say anything.”

She was incredibly impressed with and appreciative of her self-control. If she had steam-rolled her with her enthusiasm before she was ready to talk about Oliver, she probably would have panicked and ended things.

“I don’t understand what’s going on,” Allie interjected, looking back and forth between the two of them.

“Your mom is dating the mayor!” Donna exclaimed before clutching a hand to her chest and sighing. “What a power couple.”

“You have a boyfriend?” Allie asked, straightening up in her chair.

“Sort of. Yes.” She bit her lip. “Is that okay with you?”

Allie narrowed her eyes, “Is he nice to you?”

“Very nice,” she assured her, even though nice didn’t even scratch the surface of the way that he treated her.

Her daughter shrugged, “Then it’s okay with me.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yeah. Rachel’s mom has a boyfriend and he takes her to get ice cream after our games sometimes.” She tilted her head questioningly, “Will your boyfriend take me for ice cream?”

Relief flooded her at how well this news was being received and she laughed, “I’m sure Oliver would love to do that.”

While they were getting ready for bed, Allie had about a million and three questions about Oliver.

“What’s his favorite color?”

“Uhhh… I don’t know. I’ll be sure to ask and get back to you on that.”

“How did you meet him?”

“I got into a fight with him at Target.”

“You got into a fight with the Mayor?!”

“Well, it was more of an argument than a fight… It’s a long story.”

“What’s his favorite ice cream flavor?”
“Pistachio.”

“Yuck.”

“I know, right? Everyone has flaws though.”

“Does he have any brothers or sisters?”

“A little sister.”

“I wish I had a sister.”

She hesitated for a second before asking, “What about a brother?”

“I guess that would be pretty cool too.”

Lying in bed once she had finally said goodnight to Allie, after promising her that they could talk about Oliver more tomorrow, she reached over to grab her phone off of her nightstand.

**FELICITY:** very important question

**FELICITY:** what’s your favorite color?

**OLIVER:** whichever one you’re wearing

She rolled her eyes even as she felt a blush rising in her cheeks and she bit her lip.

**FELICITY:** I’m serious. Allie needs to know.

**OLIVER:** green

**OLIVER:** is that an acceptable answer?

**FELICITY:** yes

**FELICITY:** but you should consider making it blue

**FELICITY:** you look good in blue

**OLIVER:** noted

**FELICITY:** ❤

**OLIVER:** ❤
Hey friends!! Don't have much to say today except for thank you as always for your support of this story and I hope you enjoy this chapter! :D

“Why can’t I go to the birthday party?” Allie asked from where she was sitting on Felicity’s bathroom counter watching her do her makeup.

“It’s not going to be like… a fun party,” she attempted to explain. Brunch at the Queen family home was bound to be filled with some tension. Oliver had already called her that morning because he was debating not going and, while he managed to talk himself back into it without her saying much, he still sounded on edge when they had hung up. “It’s not really even a party. You’ll have way more fun hanging out with grandma, trust me.”

Her mom poked her head into the bathroom then. “That’s right. I need my best assistant to help me out today. I have a few appointments with bakeries in Hub City.”

“Are we going to get to eat cake?”

“Of course. We have to narrow down the best places to use for my new clients there, and that involves taste testing.”

Allie no longer looked the slightest bit disappointed that she was missing out on accompanying her to Moira Queen’s birthday brunch and she was relieved. It wasn’t the best setting for introducing Allie into the mix. Especially considering her daughter shared her lack of brain to mouth filter and, while she liked to think she had gotten some control over her own tendency to blurt out the first thing that came to her mind, it was a total gamble on what Allie might say in an awkward situation. And this morning was guaranteed to have its share of awkwardness.

Her daughter hopped down from the counter enthusiastically, “Are we leaving now?”

“In a few minutes. I have to finish doing my hair,” her mom announced before ducking back out of the room.

“It’s a long car ride, so maybe you should take your Kindle along so you can read,” she advised, stepping back from the mirror.

At least she thought it was a long car ride. Her perception of time passing had been a little bit skewed when she had gone to Hub City because she was entrenched in a conversation that had made the time fly.

And then she had slept the entire way home, completely unaware that that conversation would result in, months later, her getting ready to go to brunch at the Queen mansion with her new boyfriend.

Allie skipped out of her room and she slipped off her robe to change into her dress. There had been a long deliberation earlier on what was the best thing to wear for such an occasion, since she had never done the whole “meet the parents” thing before. She had ended up choosing a simple, orange dress that was a little bit classic but still showed off her personality.
She wasn’t overly concerned about Walter, since she had earned his approval long before she met Oliver, but Moira was a whole other matter. If his sister’s initial reaction was any indication to how girlfriends were received by the women in his life… she was steeling herself to not be affected by a cold shoulder. At least to not be affected too much. She wanted the Queen matriarch to approve of her. Before the whole William fiasco, she and Oliver had apparently been quite close, so Moira’s opinion held a lot of weight to her. Even if Oliver could care less about his mother’s feelings at the moment.

And then of course there was William, the other person she wanted to win over today. His opinion would undoubtedly be important to Oliver, and she chewed on her bottom lip nervously as she thought about meeting him for the first time that morning.

What if she was terrible with kids?

*Wait. You have a kid.*

Okay, so she at least wasn’t terrible with her kid, but this was completely different.

Oliver had promised her that he was going to talk to William the night before so that he would be warmed up to the idea of her before she walked through the door. Although, when they had talked briefly on the phone that morning, he hadn’t said anything about William, so she wasn’t sure if the warming had been effective or not.

Once she was dressed, she gave herself one last glance in the mirror to make sure she was putting her best foot forward (a Giuseppe Zanotti—aka a major splurge after her first CEO paycheck, clad foot to be specific), before heading down to the living room to say goodbye.

She kissed the top of Allie’s head and straightened her ponytail for her. “You two have fun.”

Turning to her mom, she added, “Try not to let her get away with eating her body weight in cake.”

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Rolling up the sleeves of his dress shirt, he checked the time and saw that Felicity would be arriving in a few minutes. Some of the tension that he was feeling dissolved as he remembered the reassuring words she had spoken to him on the phone that morning when he had called her to tell her he was having second thoughts. He had no intention of making a scene on his mother’s birthday, but he knew that seeing her was going to churn up the anger he was harboring against her for her manipulative behavior and it was going to be an effort to keep it bottled up.

His son came into his room then with his button-down shirt untucked and the sleeves hanging a little long. “I need help.”

Once he had helped him tuck his shirt smoothly and roll the sleeves, he placed his hands on his shoulders, “Are you okay? You’ve been a little quiet this morning…”

Will shrugged dismissively but then looked down at his feet and whispered, “What if she doesn’t like me?”

“Who?”

There were going to be a lot of first interactions occurring today, with him bringing along his son and his new girlfriend, and he could only hope that everything went smoothly.

“Grandma,” he answered hesitantly, like he was a little unsure about using that title for her.
He frowned at his son’s fear, before reassuring him, “Don’t worry about that. She’s very excited to see you.”

Samantha had not been completely on board with the idea of bringing Moira into William’s life, and he couldn’t exactly blame her. However, as much as he had been pushing his mother away, he wasn’t going to stand in her way if she wanted to try to make it up to her grandson now for the past ten years of absence from his life. She owed that to him after what she did.

In that regard, he was going today more so for his son’s sake than his own. Samantha had reluctantly agreed to it after they had asked Will what he wanted and he expressed a shy interest in meeting his other grandmother.

They didn’t get a chance to continue their conversation because the doorbell rang then, signaling Felicity’s arrival.

“What if she doesn’t like me?” William asked. Last night over dinner he had talked to him about Felicity so he wouldn’t be blindsided when she walked through the door. While his son hadn’t said much, he had seemed okay with the idea of her, albeit a little nervous about the impending meeting.

He was admittedly a little nervous too. Kids added a new, unfamiliar element to the whole dating thing. Yeah, Felicity liked him, but what if she decided that she didn’t want to have to also like another woman’s child?

Shaking those thoughts away, he reminded himself how eager she had been to meet William. How their kids had been what brought them together in the first place. She had chosen to be with him, knowing from the beginning that he had a son.

He squeezed his son’s shoulder, “She’s going to like you.”

Downstairs, he opened the door for her and William hung back shyly.

“Hi,” she greeted him, and he thought he could feel some nervousness radiating off of her. She looked beautiful in a bright orange dress that made her blue eyes sparkle behind her glasses, but he could see the telltale little crinkle between her eyebrows that he had learned meant something was not quite right.

“Hi.” He ran his hands along her bared shoulders and down her arms. “You okay?”

Shaking her head, she answered dismissively, “Oh yeah, sorry. I was just… overthinking stuff on the drive here. You look handsome.” Pressing her palm to his chest, she commented, “I told you, blue is your color.” He had purposefully chosen the pale blue shirt after receiving her texts the other night and a faint blush crept up his cheeks at her making note of it. She looked past him then and a small smile turned up the corners of her mouth, “Hi William.”

“You can call me Will,” his son blurted out, almost instantaneously, and he turned around to see him looking a little spellbound. Apparently, Felicity had an effect on more than just one Queen boy, and it made him grin.

Her smile grew as she took a step towards the ten-year old. “Will. It’s very nice to finally meet you, your father talks about you a lot.”

“He talks about you a lot too.” A skeptical expression settled on his face, “Is it actually true that you’re the smartest person in the whole city?”

In reaction to that inquiry, her laugh seemed to fill the whole loft. It was a sound that he wanted to be
able to hear forever, even as he felt a prick of embarrassment at his son outing him for gushing over her brilliance. “I might be. But I don’t think there’s any way to know for sure, unless we rounded everyone up for testing and that’s a little dystopic.”

Will’s face screwed up, “Dystopic?”

“Like… The Hunger Games?” Felicity attempted to clarify.

“I’ve never read those books.” He looked up at him, “Maybe we can read those next?”

“Maybe. We’ve still got a ways to go with Percy though.”

“Dad’s reading me the Percy Jackson series right now,” Will explained to Felicity.

“When I call him in the evenings, I always read a few chapters,” he added. It was one of the highlights of his day. Being separated from his son most of the time was difficult, so having that daily ritual of calling to talk about his day at school and whatever else he had going on, before diving back into their story until he had to start getting ready for bed, made the distance between them feel smaller.

William proceeded to launch into an explanation of what was currently happening in *The Sea of Monsters* as they headed out to the car. Watching as Felicity listened attentively, he breathed a silent sigh of relief that the first introduction of the day had gone off without a hitch.

On the drive over to his childhood home, Felicity held one of her hands in his lap and ran her fingers along the inside of his wrist, calming his racing pulse as his nerves started to build the closer they got.

“You ready for this?” she asked softly when they pulled up the driveway of the mansion.

“What do I say to her?”

“*Happy Birthday,*’ is probably a good option,” she pointed out.

“Right. Okay.” He unbuckled his seatbelt. “Let’s do this.”

While he stood at the front door debating if he could walk right in or if he should knock, Felicity pushed the doorbell and Walter invited them in.

“Felicity,” Walter greeted her. “This is a lovely surprise.”

“You didn’t know I was—“ She turned her head to look at him, “You didn’t tell them I was coming?”

He gave her a sheepish look, “I thought I did…”

In all honesty, he had changed his mind so many times on coming that it didn’t surprise him that he had forgot to inform his step-father that he would be bringing her along.

“It’s no trouble,” Walter assured her. “I’ll have the staff set out another table setting. We’re happy to have you Felicity. All three of you. Moira is in the living room on a phone call with her sister, so if you’ll just follow me…”

They crossed the short distance from the foyer into the living room, where his mother was perched on one of the couches absorbed in her conversation. At their arrival, she looked up and met his eyes, an array of emotions playing across her face.
Rising from the couch, she hurriedly ended her call. When she came to stand in front of him, Felicity squeezed his hand reassuringly and he held fast to hers so she wouldn’t let go. He didn’t want her or Will to see him angry and their presence on either side of him helped his resolve to stay calm.

“Hi Mom,” he greeted her a little stiffly. His hand that wasn’t clasped with Felicity’s fell softly onto Will’s shoulder so there was nothing for her to reach for. “Happy Birthday.”

“My beautiful boy.” She took him in, her eyes suddenly wet with unshed tears. “Seeing you is the best present I could’ve asked for. Thank you for coming today.”

In response, he gave her a small, only slightly forced, smile before introducing her to the two people with him. “This is my son, William, and my girlfriend, Felicity.”

Moira eyed up Will first and a fond smile blossomed on her face, “It’s good to meet you William.” She sighed, “My, you look so much like your father at that age.”

His son’s shoulders relaxed a little and he returned his grandmother’s smile, “It’s nice to meet you too…” He hesitated for a second before adding, “Grandma. Happy Birthday.”

She beamed before turning her attention to his other guest with a scrutinizing expression on her face. He braced himself for her reaction to the new woman in his life, releasing Felicity’s hand so that he could press his to her lower back supportively.

“And you’re Oliver’s girlfriend?”

“Uh, yes. Felicity.” She held out a hand. “Felicity Smoak.”

Much to his surprise, and if Felicity’s face was any indication, her surprise as well, Moira took her hand warmly, “It’s nice to meet you Felicity.” Oliver was inclined to believe that even if his mother didn’t want to like Felicity, she wouldn’t give even the slightest indication of her true feelings at the risk of ruining her chances of seeing him again. A life spent in high society had taught her how to be charming to even her worst enemy if necessary, but he hoped that she was being sincere. “I’ve heard things from my husband and daughter about you, but I didn’t expect to get to meet you.” Which he knew loosely translated as, *my son does not have a history of being the type to keep a woman around for long enough to bring her home to the family. Unless he’s gotten her pregnant.* “You’re running things at Palmer Technologies now, correct?”

A flicker of distaste passed over her face at having to refer to the company by its new owner’s name but he thought she did a decent job at recovering her pleasant smile.

Felicity nodded, “I am. Dr. Palmer made me VP when he first took things over, and I’ve been CEO now for a few months.”

“Hmm. You know, I always thought my son would be in that role someday…”

He bristled and Felicity’s smile wavered, “Oh. Well—“

“But I guess he has found a better place for himself,” his mother continued and they both relaxed. Thea walked in then, and she tossed her daughter a fond look. “I’m incredibly proud of both of my children and their dedication to this city. It is thanks to them that the Queen family name can be trusted again.”

Warmth filled his chest at her praise and a little bit of his anger at her dissipated. Maybe they would be able to fix things between them if she no longer saw him as the reckless boy who couldn’t handle responsibility. The conversations that they would need to have to work through everything weren’t
for today though.

Raisa appeared in the doorway to announce that the meal was ready to be served and his mom ushered them towards the dining room.

Once they had taken their seats at the long table, Felicity turned to him to whisper, “Okay… so that went well. Right?”

He took a deep breath and rested a hand on her thigh under the table, skimming the bare skin below the hemline with his fingertips. “I think so.”

“It was at least better than my first encounter with your sister,” she joked softly, as Thea sat down across from them.

His sister must have overheard her because she flashed her a sheepish look. “Which I wholeheartedly apologize for. It’s really good to see you again Felicity.”

His sister liked to tease him about the way he apparently never shut up about his new girlfriend, but he knew that she was happy Felicity had found her way into his life.

Things started out smoothly during the meal, albeit a little stilted. Walter and Thea maintained the conversation with his mother, so he was spared of having to say much. Felicity was quiet except for when she politely answered one of Walter or Thea’s questions. He appreciated their efforts at making her feel included, but he could tell she was being guarded. It bothered him to think that she was nervous about being her usual vibrant self around his family, but seeing as he was a ball of tension himself, he probably wasn’t helping her to feel relaxed. He just kept waiting for his mother to say something that would shatter the precarious calm.

Meanwhile Will was oblivious to anything occurring around the table because he was busy gorging himself on Raisa’s delicious food.

When she came out to refill his plate, she winked at him and mouthed “Like father, like son.”

They just might have made it through the meal without a hitch if Felicity’s phone hadn’t rung.

It sounded like it might be a movie or tv soundtrack, but he couldn’t place it.

Profuse apologies tumbled out of her mouth as a blush rose on her cheeks and she scrambled for the source of the sound in her purse that she had sat on the empty seat next to her. “So sorry. I thought I silenced this.” Her brow crinkled when she glanced at her phone screen and then she looked around the table awkwardly. “Umm… I’m sorry. This is someone from work and he’s been sending me a lot of SOS text messages, so I think I need to take it.”

“By all means,” his mother gestured at the door and she practically jumped out of her seat.

Before she was out of earshot, he could faintly hear her greeting her caller. “Curtis, I swear, this emergency better be you literally being held at gunpoint for you to call me on a Sunday morning. Because if not, I will kill you…”

“Nice girl,” his mother muttered under her breath and he gripped his fork tightly at the faint hint of sarcasm in her voice. He knew the kind of relationship that Felicity had with her right-hand man at the company and that there was no real malice in her words. On one occasion that he had stopped by her office to see her, he had spoken to a few people in the lobby and discovered what he could have easily guessed himself. She was well loved by her employees for her strong and compassionate leadership. If his mother would give her a fair chance, he knew she would come to respect her as
they did. “Well, at least you know this one’s not after your money, since she already has it.”

“Mom,” he admonished. Apparently after a few mimosas, she wasn’t able to maintain her pleasantries from earlier. “Samantha wasn’t after my money. She never even cashed that check from you. She wanted nothing to do with our family after what you did, and I don’t blame her.” Will whipped his head up from his plate at the mention of his mother and he winced, but was unable to rein himself back in now. “And, if you’ll recall, we all agreed to selling the company to Dr. Palmer, so don’t act like Felicity stole something from us because she’s now the CEO. The amazing CEO, by the way, with brilliant ideas to take the company places that it never would’ve gone under my leadership had we attempted to salvage things. Last time I checked, you still have enough money to maintain your lifestyle. Sorry if there’s not quite enough for you to be able to write away all your ‘inconveniences’ with a check.”

He had told himself he wasn’t going to bring up the elephant in the room with her on her birthday, but she had brought this on herself by taking a dig at Felicity when she wasn’t even there to defend herself.

The room was so quiet you could hear the kitchen staff’s murmured conversation through the walls as they remained completely oblivious to the metaphorical bomb that had just gone off in the dining room.

His mother looked like she had been slapped across the face and she opened her mouth a few times wordlessly before attempting, “Oliver, I—“

“No. I’m done.” He cut her off. “I’ve already said more to you than I wanted to have to, so please refrain from digging yourself into an even deeper hole.” Her eyes conveyed remorse and he felt a tiny sting of regret for being so brusque with her, but she just had to go and remind him all over again why they hadn’t spoken for over a year. All he wanted from her was a sincere apology, not the comments that he knew were attempts at justifying what she had done.

Thea’s eyes were firmly affixed to her plate. Walter was staring at the wall in front of him with an uncomfortable expression. Will looked like he might burst into tears, and Oliver had a feeling that if he did, he honestly might follow suit.

But before any tears could be shed, Felicity returned with an apologetic smile on her face that quickly faded when she noticed the state of the room.

She tapped her phone against the palm of her hand awkwardly. “Uhh… what did I miss?”

“Nothing,” he growled, and her eyes widened with confusion and hurt that he never, ever wanted to see on her face again. Pushing back from the table and grabbing her purse for her, he softened his voice and hoped she would understand that his anger wasn’t directed at her. “It’s time for us to leave.”

William looked relieved to hop up from his chair, even as he gave one last wistful look at his unfinished second helping of food, and Felicity nodded with a whispered, “Okay.”

Oliver was silent on the car ride back to his loft. She didn’t ask any questions about what had happened in the five minutes she had missed during her phone call with Curtis, because she could tell by his agitated demeanor that he was not ready to discuss it. Discuss it calmly, at least.

In the silence though, she couldn’t help but start to worry that whatever had caused things to go nuclear at brunch was somehow her fault. To distract herself from that line of thinking she attempted
It had been to her great delight and relief that morning to discover that she got along quite well with the young boy, despite her fears that she wouldn’t. He had several interests in common with Allie, so she had a feeling the two of them would get along.

Thinking about the four of them hanging out like they were some sort of family made her chest feel tight with longing that she was worried she shouldn’t feel yet. Seeing Oliver with William had reaffirmed to her that he wasn’t anything like her ex in regards to his feelings about fatherhood, but —

*You’re moving too fast.* An insistent voice whispered in her mind and she begrudgingly agreed with it. It was a day shy of two weeks since their first coffee date, the day she had repeated the mantra *cautious and slow* to herself. Instead, she was already in so far over her head with her emotions. Things had felt almost dreamlike between them—

*And dreams are something you wake up from.*

She hated that she was feeling utter panic at the thought of losing him after only *two weeks*. William was trying to tell her about something, but she couldn’t even pretend to still be paying attention because she was spiraling and probably hyperventilating, even though she knew she was probably being a little irrational. This was what taking things slow was supposed to protect her from and now —

“Felicity.” Oliver’s hand found her thigh to still her leg that had been bouncing restlessly and she realized they were parked at his building in the space next to her car. “Do you need to go home now or could you stay for a bit?”

“Allie and my mom are in Hub City today, I can stay,” she managed to get out and the way that his mood visibly lifted at her words helped her to relax.

“I was worried you were going to need some space after that fiasco,” he admitted quietly as they entered the loft, Will retreating to some of his toys in the corner of the living room.

Shaking her head, she voiced her concern. “I was worried you were upset with me.”

“What?” He turned fully to her and rested his hands on her shoulders. “Why?”

Dropping her eyes to her lavender painted toes, she stammered, “I did something— it’s just, you wanted me to be there to help, but I made things worse—I mean, everything was fine until—“

“Felicity, look at me.” She tipped her chin up and was faced with him looking at her guiltily. “You did nothing wrong. It was my fault that we had to leave so abruptly. I promised myself I would keep my issues with my mom off the table today, but she made a comment that set me off. I’m sorry.”

She could sense that might be all the details she was going to get from him and she wasn’t going to pry unless he wanted to elaborate. “You don’t have to apologize to me.”

“Yes, I do. I’m sorry for making you feel like I was upset with you.”

Looping her arms around her waist, she rested her chin on his chest to look up at him. “You know you can talk to me, right?”

“I do. I think that in this particular instance though, you’d prefer to remain oblivious to what happened.”
Cringing, she asked, “Did your mom say something about me?”

He hesitated before answering. “Sort of. But it doesn’t matter, because her opinion has no effect on us. She doesn’t have any control over my life anymore.”

“Ok that’s great, but I don’t want to make your relationship with your mother worse!” She buried her face against her chest and he splayed his hands out across her back to calm her.

“I miss not being angry at my mom, but I don’t know what it’s going to take for things to be okay again. I thought I needed space, time, but today... the wounds still feel fresh.” When she lifted her head to look back up at him, he closed his eyes and sighed. “I don’t think she’s ever really said sorry. I’m not even sure she regrets what she did.”

“Oliver.” She loosed her arms from his waist to run her hands up and down his arms in comforting strokes. “I don’t know how anyone could see you with your son and not have remorse for withholding that relationship from you for years. Your mom is proud of the mayor that you are because she’s able to see that public side of you, but by pushing her away, you’ve kept her from seeing the father that you’ve become. I’m not saying that excuses her from not apologizing to you, but maybe that would help her to better understand how what she did hurt you. Better than you just giving her the silent treatment has.”

He took a slow breath before consenting, “Maybe. Maybe I haven’t actually given her a chance to apologize.” His eyes flickered open. “How do you do that?”

“Do what?”

“Know exactly what to say.”

She shrugged. “I say a lot of stuff, some of it is bound to come out sounding insightful.”

He shook his head at her self-deprecation before hugging her tightly to him. “Was everything okay at work?”

“What?” she mumbled into his chest.

“The call you got during brunch...”

“Oh.” She pulled back to answer him. “Well it was actually sort of an emergency regarding the status of this patent we’re trying to get for one of our R&D projects, so I feel bad for snapping at Curtis, but we got everything straightened out.”

“Good.” Amusement lit up his face, “And your ringtone?”

She groaned at the memory of it going off obnoxiously at the table. “It’s the Game of Thrones theme. Probably not the most professional to have themed ring tones for all my executives, but it spares me the effort of checking caller ID to know whether or not a call is important enough to answer on the weekends. I watch the show with Curtis and his husband, so that’s why it’s my ringtone for him. Apparently, his ringtone for me is the Imperial March. I don’t know what that’s supposed to say about me as a boss.” He looked confused and she clarified, “Darth Vader’s theme? Star Wars?”

“Ohh...” He laughed. “Maybe you should be a little worried about that.”

“Hey.” Smacking his chest lightly, she pouted, “I’m a good boss.”

“I know you are,” he replied fondly. “Maybe when my stint as Mayor is over I can come work for
you and then my mom won’t be as grumpy that the company isn’t in the family anymore.”

“Oh you could just marry me,” she blurted out.

*What were we just saying about how things are moving too fast?*

“Kidding,” she added hastily. “Sort of. I mean, it’s obviously way too soon to even think about—“ Her mouth didn’t quite want to form the word marriage, so she settled for, “—that.”

A delighted smile had appeared on his face while she was babbling and he dipped his head down to whisper, “I’ll keep that option in mind,” in her ear before pressing a kiss to her cheek and causing her to blush.

Will reappeared then and asked if they would play a game with him, creating a welcome diversion from the turn their conversation had taken.

Taking it slow certainly did not involve letting herself start dreaming about a hypothetical wedding. But the fact that Oliver hadn’t looked like he wanted to bolt at the idea of being stuck with her ‘til death do part reminded her why she was opening her heart to him. He was not Cooper, or her father.

She knew she needed to stop letting the self-doubts planted by the men in her past sabotage this chance she had now for a future she had once thought wasn’t in the cards for her.

*Something easier said than done.*

After three rounds of Clue, (she won all of them, to the dismay of two adorably disgruntled Queen boys) she got a text from her mom with a picture of Allie with a giant grin and frosting on her face as she sat in front of an array of various flavored cake slices.

She turned her phone to Oliver so he could see and the affectionate look on his face made her heart melt. “Well, she’s definitely your mini-me.”

“Dessert is one way to a Smoak girl’s heart,” she replied teasingly.

For as rough as the day had started out, it ended up being one that he never wanted to end. After Felicity had soundly defeated them in Clue three times, he suggested they marathon the original Star Wars trilogy, an idea sparked by her Darth Vader comment earlier, and she and Will had enthusiastically agreed.

It was sometime during *The Empire Strikes Back* that he had noticed she was tugging at her dress from brunch to keep it from riding up while she lounged on the couch and he offered her some of his clothes to change into. Seeing her walk out of his bedroom in his sweatpants and t-shirt, her curls pulled up into a messy ponytail, was a sight to behold, and her shy smile had made his breath catch. If his son hadn’t been standing in the hallway waiting for them, he’s not entirely sure what he would have done, but it probably wouldn’t have involved finishing their movie.

The credits rolling on Return of the Jedi had been accompanied by the sound of rumbling stomachs. He threw some burgers on the grill for them to eat dinner before it was time for Felicity to go home because her mom and daughter had returned from their day trip and he and Will needed to get ready to take him back to Central City.

As Oliver walked Felicity out to her car, he remarked gratefully, “Thank you for today. For being there to support me this morning, and then for making me forget how awful it was.”

Her small hand slipped into his, “You’re welcome. It was my pleasure to spend the day with you and
Will. You have a wonderful son, Oliver.”

Hearing her say that made him fall for her even more, and he was struck once again with how fortunate he was to have met someone who could fit so perfectly into his life.

When they arrived at her car, he gave her a reluctant goodbye kiss before remembering he wanted to ask, “If you’re not ready, I completely understand and respect that, but do you think that maybe I could spend some time this week with you and Allie?”

She was silent for a moment before nodding. “I would like that. She would like that. Ever since I told her I had a boyfriend, she’s been like a little Nancy Drew trying to get as much information out of me about you.” He laughed and pushed a piece of hair behind her ear that had fallen loose from her ponytail as she continued. “Monday nights are always a little hectic so not tomorrow but… Tuesday night?”

He frowned, “I have City Council on Tuesday night. Wednesday?”

Shaking her head, she answered apologetically, “I have to work late on Wednesday to help supervise the preparations for an investor presentation on Thursday…."

“Thursday night?”

Her face lit up. “That should work! Allie has softball practice until 6pm, but we can do something afterwards. If you really want to win her over, you could take us out for ice cream,” she suggested.

“Ice cream with the Smoak girls on Thursday night.” He nodded. “Putting it on my calendar. We’re still good for lunch tomorrow though, right?”

“Yes. For sure.”

“Good. Can I have one more kiss before you leave?”

She smiled and gripped his shirt to pull him in close. “Absolutely.”
The Definition of Home

Chapter Notes

Hey friends!! Thank you for all of your lovely comments on last week’s chapter. I apologize for not having time to reply to all of you individually but I assure you I did read and appreciate each and every one :D Unfortunately I have some big assignments for school I have to work on right now so there will be no new chapter next Sunday :( I will post a scene from the next chapter though to help tide you over, so keep an eye out on tumblr/twitter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Felicity?” Her EA peeked her head into her office. “There’s someone here to see you, are you busy?”

By now, Oliver had pretty much free reign to enter her office without her EA needing to give him clearance, so she knew it wasn’t him yet, bringing lunch. She wondered who her surprise visitor might be.

“No, no. Send them in.”

It turned out to be the very last person she expected to walk into her office that Monday morning: the Queen matriarch.

“Mrs. Queen… Steele? Queen-Steele?”

There was a faint hint of amusement on her face as she replied, “Just Moira is fine.”

“Oh…” The whole first-name-basis concept made her feel a little uncomfortable since she wasn’t sure what her relationship with Moira Queen was supposed to be. Oliver had alluded to his mother saying some less than complimentary things about her when she had been out of the room at brunch, so a little wariness inflected her voice when she asked, “What can I do for you?”

“My son is not answering any of my calls and I don’t think I will be received very well if I show up at his office at City Hall, and my daughter is sick of being in the middle of this.”

And… my question remains unanswered.

“Umm…”

She felt awkward interjecting herself into the situation before Oliver had a chance to take her advice from the day before regarding his mother.

Before she could say anything though, Moira pressed on.

“So, I was hoping that maybe you could pass along a message for me? Could you tell him that I’m sorry? That I’m sorry for making a decision for him that should have been his alone to make? That I tried to justify my actions to him when he found out what I had done, instead of just apologizing straight away? I’m sorry for taking years with his son away from him, that I can never give him back, no matter how much I wish I could. And I’m sorry for making things worse the other day at brunch.”
Moira covered her mouth with her hand as she blinked back tears for a second before continuing. “I miss my son so much, Felicity. Will you please tell him all of that for me?”

Felicity looked beyond Moira’s shoulder, and met the gaze of the intended recipient of the message. Oliver stood frozen in the entryway, where he had been standing ever since Moira had begun her list of apologies. “I can. But I think it was better coming from you.”

Moira turned on her heel in surprise, coming face to face with her son. Felicity watched as Oliver sat down the bag of take-out he had brought with him to gather his mom into his arms for a hug, burying his face in the crook of her neck.

Feeling like she was invading their privacy, she turned away and occupied herself with her phone until she heard Oliver speak up, his voice thick with emotion.

“Felicity?”

“Yeah…” She pivoted on her heels to face them.

“Would it be okay if I—” He glanced over at his mom. “If we—“

“Of course,” she answered, knowing what he was going to ask and not wanting him to feel guilty for skipping out on their plans. He and his mom obviously had a lot they needed to talk about, and she had just gotten to spend the entirety of the previous day with him. “Have a nice lunch. It was good to see you again Mrs.— Moira.”

“Thank you,” Oliver mouthed at her as he led his mother out of her office, leaving her to debate whether or not she was hungry enough to eat all the Chinese take-out that he brought by herself, or if she should share it with her assistant.

Allie practically had her face pressed to the front window in anticipation as she watched for Oliver to arrive to pick them up early Thursday evening.

“Do you have all of your stuff for practice in your bag?” Felicity asked, tugging gently on one of her braids.

“I do!” Allie twisted around to look at her, “When is he going to be here?”

Pointing at the window, she answered, “I think right now.”

“Yay!” Allie shouted in excitement and grabbed her small duffle bag before bounding towards the door.

After she grabbed her purse, Felicity followed Allie outside to where she had run to meet Oliver at his car.

“Hi, my name is Allison Paige Smoak, but you can call me Allie,” her daughter was saying when she approached them.

An amused smile lit up his face, “Hi, my name is Mayor Oliver Jonas Queen, but you can call me Oliver.”

“It’s nice to meet you Oliver,” Allie replied as she rocked back and forth on the balls of her feet with excited energy.
“It’s nice to meet you, too.” Oliver looked over at Felicity then, holding out a hand to pull her into his side and give her a chaste kiss on the cheek.

The entire way to the park, Allie talked non-stop to Oliver, only pausing when she asked him a question and waited expectantly for his answer. Felicity kept stealing sidelong glances at him throughout their conversation to see the smile on his face, and happiness bubbled up in her chest. She had heard him say numerous times that her having a daughter didn’t deter his interest in her at all, but the words really sunk in as she saw him interact with Allie.

She did her best to ignore the voice of the fear that had been holding her back from letting this introduction take place. If she messed this up with Oliver, Allie would have someone to lose now, too.

Someone who was currently making her giggle uncontrollably with a story about his childhood dog who destroyed half their living room when they first brought him home as a puppy.

Once they dropped Allie off at the field for practice, they headed towards the walking path to take a leisurely stroll around the park.

“Everything go well with that meeting you had with investors today?” he asked, sliding his hand down her forearm to catch her hand.

“Yes!” She tugged on his arm enthusiastically. “I’m so proud of the team that Curtis has helped me put together to start our new branch of R&D that’s going to focus on cutting edge medical technology. Stuff that’s not just going to improve people’s lives, but maybe even save them.”

“That’s awesome, babe.”

“Thank you. It’s a direction I’ve dreamed about taking the company in since even before I was given my promotion to CEO. It’s been quite the process to get us to this point, especially since the board has zero faith in me, but I’m pretty confident that we got a lot of investors interested in the vision we presented.”

“The board needs to get their heads checked if they can’t acknowledge what an incredible job you’re doing.”

She sighed, “I’m sure they’ll come around eventually. Hey, how have things been with your mom? We’ve both been so busy I haven’t gotten a chance to ask you about it since you went out for lunch with her on Monday…”

“We still have a ways to go, but it feels good to be on speaking terms with her again. Her apology in your office made it easier for us to begin the process of reconciling over everything that happened, because I felt like she finally understood why I was upset with her. More than I realized, I was hurting too by not having her in my life, and it was nice to just talk with her without getting angry. Thank you for being okay with me skipping out on our lunch plans.”

She squeezed his hand reassuringly, “Of course. Talking to your mom was important. I take up plenty of your time.”

Intertwining their fingers, he remarked, “I wish you took up more of my time. What are my chances on taking you out to dinner sometime in the near future?”

“Hmmm… what about Saturday night? Allie and I are having a movie night at my friend Dinah’s house tomorrow.”
“Saturday night is Tommy’s bachelor party.”

“Oh? And what kind of wild and crazy night do you have planned?” she asked jokingly. “Although, if there’s going to be like… strippers, I think I’d rather not know.”

He laughed, “Yeah, no. Our teenage selves would be appalled by the lack of strippers, but I think we kind of outgrew wild and crazy nights. Not to mention the fact that we have real jobs now, and it’s best that we avoid causing a scandal. We’re just going to a baseball game with some friends. Tommy and I have a lot of good memories of going to games together when we were growing up, so we’re going to use the City Hall box suite at the stadium.”

“That sounds fun.”

“It should be. And then Sunday night, if you’re free, I’m all yours.”

“I am free Sunday night,” she confirmed.

“Perfect. I will make us reservations.”

After a few laps around the park, they found their way back to the softball field to retrieve Allie. While they waited, she noticed a few of the other moms looking at her with interest. Or more accurately, looking back and forth between her and the man whose hand she was holding, with interest. She knew that dating the Mayor meant that there would eventually be some public spectacle to their relationship. However, up until this point, their sightings together had been explained away by the announcement that Palmer Tech was working closely with City Hall on some improvement projects. She tried not to listen to her self-doubts whispering that was because no one thought she was someone Oliver Queen would ever be involved with romantically. Remembering her mom’s remark about them being a power couple, she straightened her shoulders and put on a confident smile as Allie bounded over to them.

Her pants were completely covered in red dirt and there was a little smudged on her face too as she reported, “We practiced sliding today!”

Oliver chuckled and Felicity’s eyebrows lifted, “I see that.” Turning to Oliver, she apologized in a hushed whisper, “I’m so sorry, she’s going to get your back seat all dirty.”

Shaking his head, he assured her, “It’s not a big deal. Let’s go get that ice cream.”

Allie looked up at him as they waited in line at the ice cream parlor near the park, “Mom says your favorite flavor is pistachio. That’s disgusting.”

He laughed at her frankness that was so like her mother before replying, “Well, actually, these days I’m more of a mint chip guy.” Felicity hummed in amusement beside him and he tossed her a wink.

*****

**EARLIER THAT WEEK**

“I swung by the grocery store on my way home and picked up the stuff that was on your list on the fridge,” Thea announced, walking into the loft and juggling bags of food.

He hopped up from the couch to assist her, “Thank you.”
“No problem. It was on my way, and…” She reached into one of the bags and pulled out two pints of ice cream, “I was in the mood for some ice cream.”

“Oh. I don’t eat pistachio ice cream—“

“Since when?” Thea interrupted him, her brow crinkling in confusion.

“I don’t eat pistachio much anymore, because the past couple times I’ve had ice cream it’s been with Felicity and she’s very allergic to nuts,” he finished. “I like to leave her breathless, but not like that.”

Wrinkling up her face in disgust, his sister turned away from him to open the freezer.

“Okay, too much information Ollie.”

The tips of his ears turned bright red and he hastily moved on, grabbing some more groceries to put away. “Anyway, she has converted me to mint chocolate chip—“ A smile turned up the corners of his mouth as he echoed Felicity’s words, “The superior green ice cream flavor.”

Thea paused to give him an assessing look, “You really like her.”

It wasn’t a question, just a statement of the obvious. He wasn’t unhappy before Felicity, he just hadn’t realized how happy he could be. He couldn’t help it if it was apparent to the people around him that having her in his life was making him feel like the luckiest man on earth.

He rubbed the back of his neck shyly, “I do.”

She patted his chest, “Well, you guys did meet in like, the most rom com way possible. I would say that bodes well for a happy ending, after some conflict and maybe a plot twist. Don’t be surprised if a dog is somehow involved.”

Shaking his head in amusement, he resumed putting the food away as she moved on to talking about an upcoming meeting he had.

Turning his attention back to Allie, he asked, “What’s your favorite flavor?”

“Strawberry.”

“Oh? That’s my son’s favorite flavor too.” As soon as the words were out, he shot a glance over at Felicity because he wasn’t sure if she had brought up Will with Allie yet.

“But does he put marshmallow on top?” Allie asked, seemingly unfazed by the mention.

Oliver shook his head, “No, I don’t think he’s ever tried that.”

“Well, he is missing out,” she remarked, hands on her hips.

Felicity curled her hand around his arm and addressed her daughter, “You’ll have to let Will in on your secret sometime.”

Allie looked over to him, “Can he come with us next time?”

“Maybe,” he answered vaguely. The next weekend he was going to have Will with him was Tommy and Laurel’s wedding, so there wasn’t going to be much spare time for ice cream outings. He tried
not to get frustrated by his custody situation. He was grateful for what he was able to have after years of no relationship, but that didn’t change the fact that he wanted his son to be getting ice cream with the three of them at the moment, instead of being miles away in Central City.

Once they were seated at a picnic table outside with their ice cream, Allie forced him to try some of her strawberry and marshmallow confection combination. In a manner that gave him flashbacks to Felicity and the blueberry pie at the diner, she got mad at him for not thinking it was the most delicious thing he had ever tasted. At this point he should have learned to just agree wholeheartedly with their opinions on food.

“Obviously, he has terrible taste,” Felicity remarked teasingly and her daughter nodded seriously in agreement.

“Hey! Offended.” He reached under the table to squeeze his girlfriend’s knee and she laughed, leaning over to give him a kiss.

After they had finished eating he drove them home, where Felicity’s mother was sitting out on the porch flipping through a magazine. As she rose to wave at him while he opened the car doors for Felicity and Allie, Oliver got his first glimpse at the Donna Smoak that Felicity had told him so much about. She had confided in him that her relationship with her mom could be complicated at times, something he certainly understood, but that she was grateful for it.

“I understand her better now. I understand why things were the way they were when I was younger, because, despite all my intentions otherwise, I’m in her shoes in a lot of ways. We’ve definitely gotten a lot closer than we ever were before I left for MIT, and I don’t know how I could balance being a mother and a CEO without her help. She’s an incredible grandmother,” she had told them the other day when they were on one of their afternoon coffee dates.

Allie ran up to the porch right away to talk to her about her practice, leaving him with a minute alone with Felicity.

“So… we haven’t scared you away, have we?” she asked. Her tone was joking but he could tell by her body language that she was actually a little worried.

He ran his hands down her arms, her skin soft and warm from driving with the top of the Porsche down, at Allie’s request, in the spring sunshine that was starting to dip below the horizon.

“Of course not. I’m really glad I got to spend some time with the both of you. It was fun.”

While he thought things between he and Felicity were going well, sometimes it still felt like she was protecting herself from him and so he was grateful for being entrusted with this chance to meet the person he knew she held closest to her heart. The youngest Smoak had claimed his affections as quickly as her mother had.

“Thank you… for being so sweet to her.” Resting her hands on his chest, she added, “Not that I was worried you wouldn’t be I just—you know.”

He smiled in understanding and tucked an errant strand of hair behind her ear, “She’s important to you, so she’s important to me.”

Tears welled up in her eyes at his words and he pulled her in against his body for a hug, her fingers still gripping the fabric of his t-shirt. When they parted, he reached up to brush her tears away before kissing her cheeks. Out of the corner of his vision he noticed Donna watching them in a way that she probably thought was inconspicuous.
“I should probably get going so I can call Will.”

She nodded and rolled up on her toes to give him a quick kiss. “I’ll see you on Sunday.”

MAY

“You should come inside,” she breathed out as he lavished her neck with kisses. They were standing on her front porch after returning from their date and he had her pressed against the door with her legs wrapped around his waist. The skirt of her dress was riding up rather indecently and if any of her neighbors drove by and illuminated them with their headlights, they would get quite a show. A scenario she wanted to avoid.

[See Felicity's outfit]

He paused, “Are you sure?”

“Definitely. No wait, maybe. Give me a second.” She tightened her legs around his waist to keep herself from slipping while she dug into her purse for her phone.

Dialing her mom’s number, she did her best to even out her breathing while she waited for her to pick up. It was a little difficult though, what with Oliver’s desire for her very apparent thanks to the bulge in his pants she could feel pressing against her, and the look in his eyes that indicated she was about to be devoured in the best way possible. She shut her eyes to focus on her call as her mom picked up.

“Hi sweetheart. Wha—“

“Is Allie asleep?” she cut her off abruptly.

“Oh, umm…she should be. We did bedtime over an hour ago and she was very sleepy.”

“Okay great. Where are you?”

“I’m in my room watching 4 Weddings. Do you want to watch it with me? I think I can remember how you showed me to pause and rewind—“

“No, no. I’m fine.” Just trying to get laid here. “You enjoy your episode. Love you!”

“Love you too…”

Hanging up, she reopened her eyes and gave Oliver a tiny nod, “We’re in the clear. Upstairs, first door on the right.”

While they resumed their kissing, he let go of one of her thighs to reach behind her and open the door, walking them inside. In the dark, they somehow managed to avoid knocking over any lamps or tripping on the staircase, successfully navigating into her room before he set her back down on her feet.

“The walls are not the thickest in here,” she commented as she untucked his shirt and fumbled eagerly at undoing the buttons. “And there are questions I don’t want Allie to ask in the morning.” Pressing a finger to his lips, which were already a little swollen from her biting and kissing them, she cautioned, “So we have to be quiet.”

He nodded mutely and shrugged his shirt off of his shoulders before spinning her around to set to work on her dress. Starting with the buttons holding the top together, he unfastened them and trailed
kisses down her spine until he reached the zipper. A self-satisfied smile appeared on her face when he tugged it down and cursed under his breath at the discovery she wasn’t wearing anything underneath.

*What? Every pair of underwear I own shows in this dress. I was definitely not purposefully thinking about his reaction if he ended up taking the dress off…*

“This entire time, you—“ he attempted to speak as she let her dress drop around her ankles, leaving her naked in front of him. Despite her boldness, there was still a part of her that had been nervous at the thought of being intimate with him. He had a well-documented past with an array of gorgeous woman and her insecurities had left her worrying that he would be disappointed by her in comparison. “You weren’t—“

She pivoted on her heels to face him again and the look on his face erased any lingering doubts that she was not everything that he desired. Cutting off his stammering with a kiss, she ran her fingers across his chest and down over his sculpted torso to reach for his belt buckle. Once she had his belt removed, she unfastened his pants and pushed them down over his hips, letting them fall to the floor and leaving him in just his tight black briefs. As he lifted her up again to carry her over to her bed, it briefly occurred to her that she should slow things down to savor the moment, but her brain was in too much of a fog and her body was intent on seeking what it needed.

Laying her down on the mattress, he came to hover over her and skimmed his fingers reverently across the tattoo on her ribcage, illuminated by the soft moonlight streaming in through the cracked window blinds. Their hasty movements temporarily stilled as he silently requested an explanation for the unfamiliar script.

“It’s Hebrew,” she whispered. “Allie’s birthday.”

A day that changed her life completely, forever immortalized on her skin.

“It’s beautiful.” His eyes roamed her entire body and he added, “You’re beautiful.”

“You’re not so terrible looking yourself,” she remarked, eliciting a smile from him that fell open into a gasp as she reached up and traced the contour of muscles leading down to his underwear where she dragged her nails down the front seams lightly. Hooking her fingers inside the waistband, she tugged him down closer to her to settle in between her legs.

Sighing, she dug her fingers into his back as gripped her hips and pressed himself against her, relieving some of the aching need but simultaneously fueling her desire. More, she needed more.

“Not to be impatient, but I need you to be naked.” She sucked in a deep breath as he nipped at her pulse point. “Now.”

He huffed out a laugh against her skin and rolled off of her to oblige her request, tossing the last scrap of his clothing onto the floor.

“Better?” he asked, when she propped herself up to look at him appreciatively. Oliver was an upgrade from Cooper in more ways than just from a physical standpoint, but that particular merit was the one that was glaringly apparent at the moment. She allowed herself a second to stare openly at his gloriously naked body, her teeth sinking into her bottom lip.

“Much better,” she confirmed when she reached over to touch him, his eyes closing and a soft groan escaping him at her ministrations.

He took a hold of her wrist to stop her, “If you keep that up, this isn’t going to last very long.”
Retracting her hand, she settled back down comfortably against the mattress. As he positioned himself over top of her, a thought popped into her head.

“You should know that I’m very fastidious about my birth control now, in case you were worried about my previous track record with that.”

“Okay. I really wasn’t worried about that, but good to know,” he replied with a trace of amusement in his voice that made her cover her eyes with her forearm shyly.

Gently, he took a hold of her hands and intertwined his fingers with hers, pressing them into the pillow on either side of her head.

Looking into her eyes, he asked, “You ready?”

“Mhmm.”

At her consent, he dipped his head to kiss her, muffling both of their appreciative moans as he entered her. He shifted to find the right angle and she gripped his hands tightly in approval, her legs falling open wider when his hips started rocking against hers.

“Oh. This is nice,” she mumbled against his lips, arching her back to bring herself closer to him.

“Just nice?” he breathed out in exasperation.

“Remember when you told me my favorite pie was just pretty good? ” she replied, biting his bottom lip teasingly.

In retribution, he let go of one of her hands to free his fingers up to make things even better for her and she slammed her eyes shut as a wave of pleasure coursed through her.

“Oh,” she panted, her legs starting to shake. “Fine. Point taken.”

It wasn’t long before she could tell she was about to come undone and, if Oliver’s quickening pace was any indication, he was right there with her.

“Are you…?”

“Yeah,” she sighed, digging her heels into his back.

“Open your eyes,” he requested. “Please.”

Her eyes fluttered open to look into his and the emotions she saw there tipped her over the edge. Urgently, she reached for the back of his neck and pulled him in close, crashing her lips against his to keep herself from crying out as she hit her climax. He followed soon after, collapsing onto her and she reveled in the feel of his weight pressing her sated body into the mattress for a moment. When he gathered himself again and rolled off of her, she groaned at the loss of contact and reached out for him.

“Don’t leave,” she whispered.

“Wasn’t planning on it,” he assured her, tugging her against him. He kissed her forehead and then trailed his hands up and down her back until she drifted off to sleep.

The sound of her alarm clock jolted her awake and she rolled over to shut it off. As the sleepy fog in her head started to clear, memories from the night before resurfaced and, sitting her phone back
down on her nightstand, she glanced over her shoulder.

Contentment settled over her at the sight of her boyfriend lying under the sheets in the space next to her, his eyes still closed and his hair a little rumpled with sex and sleep. He was a mixture of devilishly handsome and adorable in this state and she couldn’t help but stare.

*I could get used to this.*

A smile curled up the corners of his mouth and she bit her lip at the realization that she must have spoken those words aloud and he wasn’t as asleep as she thought. His eyes blinked open and he rolled over, tucking her underneath him and propping himself up on his forearms on either side of her.

“Good morning,” he whispered, pressing gentle kisses across her cheeks before meeting her lips.

“Good morning.” she echoed when he pulled away, her hands running along the muscular planes of his shoulders and back. He started to dip his head back down to kiss her again and she stopped him, “Wait. As happy as it would make me to stay here with you all day, it’s a weekday and we have places we need to be. And I have a daughter who will come investigating if I’m not downstairs to take her to school. So, we should probably get up before we let ourselves get carried away.”

“Valid points,” he consented, giving her one last kiss on the forehead before climbing off of her. She enjoyed the view as he gathered up his clothes from the night before that had been discarded on the floor before getting dressed. “I should also probably run back to my place to get a shower and some fresh clothes.”

“Maybe I should let you have a drawer here,” she joked, immediately wishing she could take those words back. Despite her saying waking up with him was something she could get used to, she wasn’t sure she was ready yet to make a regular occurrence. The more time he spent here, the more it would become the new normal, for her, for Allie, and she didn’t want them to get used to it, only for it to be so much harder for things to go back to the way they were before if they broke up.

There must have been an expression on her face that discouraged him from responding to her remark and he instead changed the subject, “We still good to meet up before you have to go pick Allie up from her after school program?”

She nodded, finding her smile again, “Of course.”

“Okay, see you then. Have a good day at work.”

“You too!” she called at his retreating back as he left her room before slumping back down onto the mattress, a mixed bag of emotions. She didn’t know why it was still so hard for her to trust that he wanted to be in this for the long haul, that drawing him closer wasn’t going to make him leave.

*“Because you have a history of being abandoned when you needed someone the most,”* the unwanted voice in her head reminded her.

Crawling out of bed, she headed for her bathroom to grab a quick shower and get herself ready for work. A quick glance in the mirror made her realize that she was going to have to wear something with a high neckline and leave her hair down, because Oliver had left his mark along her collarbones and neck. She was not interested in fielding questions from her staff—*aka mostly Curtis*—about what she had been up to the night before.

After she put on a bright pink dress that fit the bill, she headed downstairs… where she found Oliver standing in her kitchen.
“I thought you were leaving?” she asked, a little more bluntly than she intended.

Oliver stole a glance at her daughter who was sitting on one of the barstools at the counter, “Is she kicking me out?”

Allie twisted in her chair to look at her, “Don’t make him leave. He’s cooking me breakfast!”

“He is?”

Oliver shrugged, a sheepish look on his face. “When I got down here, she was looking for something to eat and I offered to make her breakfast. She said she wanted pancakes.”

“Do we have the stuff to make pancakes?”

Gesturing at the stove, she noticed he already had a batch cooking in a pan that she didn’t even realize she owned, “I managed to find everything.”

“Oh. You just made yourself at home, didn’t you?” she remarked.

He was in the process of flipping the pancakes and he paused, his shoulders stiffening, “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t’ve—“

She walked up behind him and wrapped her arms around his waist, feeling him relax again in her embrace. It hadn’t been her intention to make him feel unwelcome because she was caught off guard by how perfectly right it looked for him to be standing in her kitchen making breakfast in the morning. This was exactly what she was afraid of, him becoming part of her definition of home.

*This relationship is never going to work in the long run if you spend the entire time keeping him at arm’s length because you’re afraid of him leaving.*

She thought about all the time she had spent with him so far. Recounted all the things she had opened up to him about, even though she usually held back because she was afraid of being seen as unlovable if someone saw all of her. *And yet he hadn’t left.*

He was in her kitchen making breakfast for her daughter like there was nothing he would rather be doing more.

“I’m sorry, I can be a bit of a grump in the morning before I’ve had coffee. Thank you for making her breakfast, but aren’t you going to be late for work now?” she asked.

He shrugged. “I let Thea know I was going to be running a little late. There’s nothing on my agenda right away this morning.”

“Still, for future convenience, maybe we should discuss that drawer if this is going to become a regular occurrence,” she rolled up on her toes to whisper in his ear, before pressing a kiss to his cheek and backing away.

With the perfectly golden brown pancakes added to a growing stack on a plate next to the stove, he reached for her and pulled her flush against his chest.

“If what’s going to become a regular occurrence? Breakfast, or what happened last night?” he asked softly, his warm breath tickling her ear.

She bit her lip as she recalled the feeling of his hands on her body, his hungry kisses, the toe-curling pleasure he had brought her. “Both.”
And more.

She wanted him lying on the couch watching movies with her and Allie and William, sitting at the kitchen table eating dinner with them, standing at the sink brushing his teeth next to her.

She wanted so badly for him to become part of her definition of home.

But she didn’t know how to express all of that yet, so she settled for pulling him down to her for a kiss, feeling the smile on his lips as his hands roamed her back, sliding lower and lower to—

“Umm hello. There’s a kid here,” Allie’s voice brought them back to reality and when they stepped apart, she almost burst out laughing at the disgusted look on her daughter’s face.

“I’m sorry,” Oliver apologized, the tops of his ears turning bright red as he served her a plate.

“I like you.” Allie stabbed her fork into her pancakes. “Just don’t touch my mom’s butt in front of me.”

She stifled a giggle as she headed for the coffee maker.

“I should probably go before I get into more trouble,” Oliver remarked, kissing the top of her head. “There’s plenty of pancakes for you and your mom to have some too. I’ll see you later. Love you!”

Her eyes widened in surprise to approximately the size of pancakes. By the time she remembered how to move or speak, he was already gone, probably not even aware of what he had said.

“Did you make pancakes?” her mom asked, walking into the kitchen then in her bathrobe. “When and why did we buy this pan?”

She blinked. “Oliver just told me he loved me.”

“What?!” Her mom rested her hands on her shoulders, excitement pulsating off of her. “Wait, back up a second… Oliver was here? He spent the night? He told you he loved you?!! For the first time? What did you say back?”

“I—I didn’t say anything.”

Her mom’s smile turned into something more like a grimace. “He told you he loved you and you didn’t say anything?”

“It happened so fast… He didn’t really give me an opportunity to say anything before he was out the door. I don’t think he even realized he said it.”

“Awwww…” she sighed. “That’s how you know they mean it. When it just slips out like it’s the most natural thing in the world to say.”

A skeptical expression settled on her face. “I don’t know if that’s true…”

She was convinced that it had been an accidental addendum. That there was no meaning to those words casually tacked onto the end of his goodbye. It was too soon for him to feel that way.

Right?

“Oh honey. I watched you two the other day for less than five minutes and I can tell that he loves you. That man looks at you like you hung the moon.”
“I agree,” Allie piped up. “He looooves you.”

“Do you love him?” her mom asked, helping herself to some pancakes.

“Well, I—uh—umm,” she stammered, looking down into her coffee mug. The thought of being in love with him, the realization that those feelings she didn’t know how to express with words probably all boiled down to I love you, was exhilarating and terrifying all at the same time. Saying those three words out loud would only further cement their reality. “I think… maybe I do?”

Chapter End Notes

In case you missed it at the beginning of the chapter, no new chapter next week but watch twitter/tumblr for a sneak peek at one of the scenes from the next chapter :D
Hi friends!! I have good news for you :D I’m finished my two hardest classes of the semester which means this story should be back on track for regular updates again and I should finally have time to reply to comments again (if you asked a question in your comment on the last chapter I apologize for not getting to it :( the past two weeks have just been really crazy for me) Also... there was more that I wanted to add to this chapter (specifically more of Felicity’s POV) but it got really long so I think I’m going to do a bonus scene.... check for that around Wednesday :D Anyways I’ll stop my rambling now so you can enjoy the chapter!

“Is it crazy that I already think I’m in love with him?” Felicity asked, cradling her phone against her shoulder so that she could press the button for the elevator without dropping the stack of files from HR she was juggling precariously with her purse. “We’ve been together for like… a month. Isn’t there some rule about how long you have to know someone before you can feel that way?”

Barry laughed, “If there is, I certainly didn’t follow it. I was a goner from the first moment I saw Iris in the hallway at school. I loved her before I even knew what it meant to love someone.”

She waved a hand dismissively, almost hitting the person who had joined her in the elevator and tossing them an apologetic look. “Yeah well, you guys are like an anomaly. Not everyone meets their soulmate before they’ve lost their first tooth.”

Before Barry could respond, she heard Iris start talking to him in the background and then she came back onto the phone, “Sorry about that, Nora’s missing shoe has been found, crisis averted. What were you trying to tell me before I handed you off to Barry?”

She turned away from the small crowd that had started to gather in the elevator and lowered her voice, “I think I’m in love with Oliver.”

“You think you are, or you are?”

“I don’t know? I have a lot of feelings but—“ She exhaled, “Love. That’s a big one. That I don’t have the best history with.”

“Because the last guy you dated was trash, and didn’t deserve your love. We’ve already been over this, remember?”

Stepping out of the elevator and heading for her office, she replied, “I know, I know. I’m just afraid that all of this is happening too fast.”

“I get that, but here’s the thing… Yeah, the love that I have for the Barry who is my husband and the father of my children is different now than it was before, but it doesn’t mean that what I felt for him when we were young wasn’t love too. Love grows with time. If Oliver has shown you his heart, and you like what you’ve seen so far, I don’t think you have to be completely certain of everything to have already started falling in love with him.”
She was quiet for a second as she mulled over her words before remarking, “Huh. You know, I think you missed your calling to become a therapist.”

“If I’m not editor in chief at CCPN by the time Barry and I have to put twins through college at the same time, I might consider it as a side gig,” she joked. “But seriously Felicity, being in love with someone who loves you back is a good thing. Don’t talk yourself out of it.”

“Okay.” She sighed, “You’re right. Change of subject, but did you get your invitation for Allie’s birthday party?”

“Yes.” There was amusement in her friend’s voice when she added, “We’re somehow still finding little specks of pink glitter all over the house from it.”

Dropping her files on her desk she face-palmed, “Oh, I am so sorry. My mom is in charge of the party planning obviously, so glitter is inevitable.”

Iris laughed, “It’s all good, and we will definitely be coming. Bar and I have been talking about taking a family trip to Star City for a while now to see you and Allie. I can’t believe she’s turning eight already.”

“Tell me about it. She’ll be thrilled to see you guys. The guest room is currently filled with various wedding paraphernalia that companies have sent to my mom, so we’re going to have to get that cleaned up…”

They chatted for a few more minutes before Iris arrived at daycare and had to take the twins inside, and she had to prepare for her first meeting of the day.

“Okay, so you have a meeting with Councilman Waters—“ Thea reached for his arm. “Oh, there’s one of the elementary school classes that’s here on a field trip, so smile and wave…”

He obeyed her, turning on his charisma for the herd of children following their teacher through the lobby before turning his attention back to his sister.

“Does Councilman Waters like me or—“

“Oliver!” He looked up to see a girl breaking away from the field trip group and barreling into him for a hug.

A grin spread across his face at the realization of her identity and he smoothed a hand over her soft curls before she released her tight grip on his suit jacket.

“Allie? Do you know Mayor Queen?” her teacher inquired, leading the rest of her classmates over to them.

“Yeah! He made me pancakes for breakfast this morning and they were delicious!” She looked up at him in confusion, “Wait, why were you at my house? Did you have a sleepover with my mom?”

There was a buzz of chatter ignited by her words, her voice having resonated loudly through the lobby, and he looked up at the people who were standing around him.

“I—Uh… Have you guys gotten to see the mayor’s office yet?” he asked Allie’s teacher and class, eager to change the subject. Felicity was going to kill him when she heard about this. “Would you like me to give you a tour?” Turning to Thea he checked, “We have time for this right?”
There was an amused expression on her face from the events of the last few minutes and she nodded, “I think we have time for that.”

“Allie’s mother and I are dating,” he quietly explained to her teacher as they brought up the rear of the brigade of third graders making their way up the stairs.

“Oh, I didn’t think you were into that sort of thing,” she replied offhandedly, catching him by surprise.

“What?”

“We went to college together, Ollie. But of course, you don’t remember me because you attended several colleges and I was just a random girl at one of them that you slept with and then never spoke to again,” she muttered under her breath and he winced.

He didn’t recognize her at all, let alone remember her name, and he felt a fresh wave of disgust with himself for having once been that guy. Thea had begun to take charge of the kids, talking to them about the people who worked behind various doors along the hallway to his office, and he took advantage of the chance to apologize.

“I’m sorry…”

“Jordyn,” she filled in for him before shrugging. “It’s okay. I truly don’t care anymore about being jilted by some guy in college. But I do care about Allie. For her sake, I hope all of this isn’t a show and you really have changed since then.”

“I—“ She didn’t give him a chance to say anything else though because she quickened her pace to rejoin her students.

Rubbing the back of his neck, he sighed in frustration.

“Oliver?” He almost jumped in surprise at the sound of John’s voice from behind him as he placed a hand on his shoulder. “Take it from someone who has stood behind you and beside you for the last couple of years, you’re not the guy I first met when your parents hired me. Don’t start to doubt that.”

He dipped his head in gratitude, “Thanks.”

“She’s a cute kid,” John commented and he followed his gaze to where Allie was glancing back at him and waving for him to catch up with her class. “Father in the picture at all?”

Shaking his head, he answered, “No, never wanted to be.”

Not for the first time did the thought that Felicity’s ex was an idiot cross through his mind. That guy had the chance to wake up every morning with the most amazing woman beside him. The chance to get surprise attack hugs from her sweet, spunky mini-me. The chance for so much happiness.

His mistake, my gain.

He stepped into his office where Thea had the kids pressed up against the wall of windows looking out over the city and his eyes zeroed in on the one in the bright pink dress.

So don’t screw this up.

“Everything okay?” he asked after they had settled into their chairs at their usual table at the coffee shop. She had been unusually quiet since she picked him up at City Hall and he was worried that—
She looked up from her mug of coffee that she was staring intently at. “I love you.”

A mixture of surprise and relief flooded him. He had worried that this morning had been too much for her, that she wanted to take a step back from the rapid pace that their relationship had been progressing. Because for him, the only thing that would have made it even more perfect would have been William sitting at the counter next to Allie.

He reached across the table for her hands, “I love you too.”

“Yeah?” The doubt in her voice caught him off guard and she continued in explanation, “Because you said you loved me for the first time this morning but it happened so quickly and I didn’t get a chance to say anything back and I wasn’t even sure if you realized that you had said it and if you meant it or not…”

In all honesty, he hadn’t realized that the sentiment had slipped out, but that didn’t change the fact that he knew it was true. There had been several moments already where he was struck with the realization that he felt something for her that he had never felt for anyone else before. He just hadn’t put words to those emotions until that morning.

“Felicity. I meant it this morning and I meant it now. I love you.” The more he said those three words the more it felt right to being saying them to her. Her face was lit up with happiness and he decided it was best to fill her in on what had happened that morning while she was in a good mood. “Also, Allie might have announced to everyone in the lobby at City Hall this morning that we’re sleeping together.”

“Oh yeah. I signed a permission slip for that a few days ago.”

“Yeah… so she saw me and made a comment about breakfast.”

“And…”

“And the fact that I had been at her house that morning making pancakes for her because I had spent the night. With you.”

“Oh.” She sighed, “Oh well. It’s not like we’re trying to keep it a secret or anything that we’re together.”

“You are… a lot less bothered by this than I thought you would be.”

“Oh honey. It could’ve been so much worse. Trust me. William is a little bit older, so maybe you haven’t had to experience him making awkward comments in public, but I’m surprised she didn’t continue to tell everyone that you were getting handsy and she had to break things up—she didn’t do that, right?”

He shook his head in amusement, “No. She just informed everyone that I made her delicious pancakes.”

“Well hey, you might get a boost on your approval rating for that.”
Laughing, he lifted her hands up to kiss her knuckles before asking, “Before I forget, you’re still good to go with me to Tommy and Laurel’s wedding on Saturday?”

“Oh, of course. I’m looking forward to it. It’s being held at your family’s place right? I thought I heard my mom mention that…”

“Yeah. Laurel wanted an outdoor wedding and Tommy practically lived at our house growing up, so it made perfect sense for them to use the backyard gardens,” he explained.

“My mom does incredible stuff for outdoor venues, so I can’t wait to see it. She’ll probably be there at like 6am to help supervise the set-up team and keep everyone on schedule even though the ceremony isn’t until the late afternoon.”

“Well, we don’t have to be there quite that early, but it’s still going to be a long day since Will and I are both part of the wedding party. I’m pretty sure the official schedule Laurel sent me had us at the mansion at 10am. You can meet me there later for the ceremony if you don’t want to be hanging around all day…”

“I’ll probably do that, because I was planning on taking Allie over to Dinah’s at—” Her phone dinged and she looked down at the screen before remarking, “Well, that didn’t take long.”

His brow furrowed. “What didn’t take long?”

Holding her phone up so that he could see the news alert that had popped up, he read the headline to an article that supposedly contained new and emerging details on his love life.

She unlocked her phone to open up the article and he watched the reflection in her glasses as she skimmed over it.

“There must have been someone from the press there this morning who overheard Allie and finally put two and two together about the fact that all of our recent sightings together were not just platonic business meetings.”

“That’s what people thought?”

They hadn’t come out and said anything about their relationship to anyone outside their friends and family, but as she had said, it wasn’t like they were trying to keep it a secret either with the way they interacted with each other in public. In the past, all he had to do was be spotted once with a woman and suddenly every trashy news outlet in the city was speculating about the romantic—or more accurately sexual, details of their “relationship.”

She arched an eyebrow, “Do you not keep tabs on what is being said about you in the media?”

“No…” he confessed. “Thea keeps me posted on anything relevant to City Hall, but I mostly just ignore the gossip. People have rarely had very flattering things to say about me over the years.”

“Oh. Well, most of the blurbs about us floating around in Star City’s media outlets have chalked our frequent meetings up to the fact that you’re the mayor and I’m the CEO of the company that’s working close with your office on city-wide infrastructure improvements. Which I guess is understandable, I mean, you and I, talk about unthinkable, right?”

What?

He didn’t have time to contemplate what she was implying by that before she continued on.
“Although, I guess not that unthinkable since—“ she gestured between them with a little smile “—here we are. But anyway, considering this one article has now multiplied into five in the time it took me to read it, we can probably expect to have to deal with exhaustive commentary on our not-so-platonic relationship.”

He couldn’t argue with her on that, because he knew it was true, so he just sighed as she continued, “It’s not like I’m never mentioned in the news, thanks to my position at PT I’ve learned how to navigate public relations, but I’m not really looking forward to everyone and their mother having an opinion on me as the mayor’s new girlfriend.” She shot him an apologetic look. “No offense. I’m really happy that I’m your girlfriend. It’s just that I don’t want to get reduced to that title and have every other thing about me suddenly not matter.” Tapping at her phone, she added in a mutter, “Including the fact that I’m a mother who doesn’t want her family’s privacy being invaded for the sake of someone’s gossip blog.”

“Hey.” He reached a hand over to still her anxious fingers, intertwining them with his and brushing his thumb across her knuckles. “I’ll have Thea work up an official press release for us so that we can get ahead of this and have some control over what’s being said. If we can give them enough details to satisfy people’s curiosity they’ll hopefully be discouraged from making things up or digging for information on their own. I don’t want your privacy being invaded, and I especially don’t want the kids getting dragged into a media circus.”

“Oh.” Her shoulders relaxed a little, “Thank you. I don’t know how you’ve dealt with attention like this your entire life.”

The memory of him punching a member of the paparazzi flashed in his mind and he cringed, “Historically, not well.”

If paparazzi ever harassed Will, Allie, or Felicity, it would be a challenge for him to restrain his temper, but an altercation of that sort would go over even worse now that he was the Mayor. He was just going to have to hope that the newfound respect the city had for him would extend to respecting the privacy of his family.

Family.

Respecting the privacy of the people he cared about, he amended, reminding himself that they weren’t a family.

But maybe someday…

“How’s the bridezilla doing?” Oliver asked Sara teasingly when he, Thea, and Will arrived at the mansion the morning of the wedding.

“I heard that Ollie!” Laurel called, peeking her head over the balcony from upstairs.

He grinned up at her and she rolled her eyes before disappearing again.

“She’s actually being very oddly calm and passive. I think she’s too worn out from arguing all day at her job to put up much of a fight on anything.” Sara pressed her palms together, “Bless the ACU for keeping her busy lately.”

“I’ll be sure to include that remark in Ollie’s notes for his briefing with them next week,” Thea joked before following Sara to where the bridesmaids were getting ready while he and Will went in search of Tommy.
Pushing open the door of the guest room he had spent many nights staying in when they were growing up, they found him lying on the bed in his boxers and socks, staring up at the ceiling. “How you doing man?”

“I’m getting married.”

“Yep.”

“I’m getting married to Laurel.”

“Last time I checked, yep.”

“Am I ready for this?”

“Uhh…”

“It’s a little too late to change your mind without making a lot of people angry at you,” Will pointed out, plopping down on the bed with him.

Tommy propped himself up on his forearms, “I haven’t changed my mind little man. But I’ve been stressing all morning about all the ways that I could possibly mess up this ceremony. Drop her ring. Stumble on my vows.” He fell back down against the mattress and raked a hand down his face. “Why did I let her talk me into us writing our own vows? I’m going to be so distracted by her I’m not going to be capable of saying anything other than ‘I do.’ I think I’m still a little bit in shock that she actually agreed to marrying me…”

He continued to mutter to himself and Will looked over at Oliver, “Are you going to act like this too?”

He blinked at his son in confusion and Tommy lifted his head back up to ask teasingly, “Is he getting married sometime soon?”

“Well… no.” Will shrugged, “But someday, right?”

It was an echo of his own thoughts the day before but their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the rest of Tommy’s groomsmen and he didn’t have time to dwell on the image of Felicity in a wedding dress.

“What do you think, hair up or down?” Felicity asked her daughter, who was perched on top of her bathroom counter watching her get ready.

“Up.”

“Okay… can you hand me some bobby pins?” Allie gave her one and she twisted and pinned a section of her hair, before holding her hand out for another. “Do you need help packing your bag for Dinah’s?”

“I have everything packed already.”

“Your pajamas?”

“Yes.”

“Your clothes for tomorrow?”
“Yes.”

“Your toothbrush?”

A momentary pause, and then, “Nope.”

She hopped down from the counter and skipped off to add that necessity to her backpack while Felicity finished doing her hair. Despite her mom’s profession, it had been some time since she had been to a wedding. The last one she had attended being her friend Caitlin’s, two years ago.

She remembered vividly standing on the edge of the gaggle of women attempting to catch the bouquet at the reception. While she was pretending to be as enthusiastic about the prospect of it landing in her clutches as everyone else, she was internally steeling herself against getting caught up in the fantasy that being the beholder implied. It had been a relief when the flowers came nowhere near her. She didn’t want to hear the comments and teasing about how she was fated to be the next one to get married, because she had been at the point in her life where she had resigned herself to believing that being alone was the best thing for her.

It was nothing but a silly wedding tradition, but it made her think about how different things were now than they had been then. How different her frame of mind was.

Marriage was a concept that still scared her a bit, her parents hadn’t exactly modeled a healthy one to her growing up and she still had insecurities because of being abandoned, but she no longer wanted her past to hold her back from embracing a future with someone by her side.

Hair and make-up done, she got changed into her flowy, floral dress that her friends had all deemed perfect for a backyard wedding when she sent them pictures, before slipping into her shoes and heading downstairs to find Allie.

“Ready to go?”

“Yep!”

When they arrived at their old apartment complex, they made their way to Dinah’s studio and were welcomed inside.

Allie jumped on their friend for an enthusiastic koala-bear-esque hug and Felicity remarked in amusement, “I guess I shouldn’t be too offended that she doesn’t even pretend to be sad anymore when I drop her off places.”

“I’ll miss you a little bit, mommy,” Allie promised, giving her a hug when Dinah set her down.

“Okay…” She gave her a little squeeze before releasing her. “Have fun. Don’t keep Dinah up all night.” Kissing the top of her head, she added, “I’ll see you tomorrow. Love you.”

“Love you too!”

On the drive out to the mansion, she thought about how quickly the years had gone by. It seemed like just yesterday that she was rocking her newborn daughter to sleep and now she was getting RSVPs for her eighth birthday party.

*And you thought I wasn’t cut out to be a mother Coop. Just look at how far we’ve made it.*
At the Queen family home, she found William waiting for her outside on the front porch, already dressed in his button down and bow-tie.

“Hey Mr. Ringbearer,” she greeted him and was pleasantly surprised when he gave her a shy hug. They had hit it off well the first day they had spent time together but it had been two weeks since then and she hadn’t known what to expect from him.

“Hi Felicity. Dad said he wanted to see you before the ceremony, so I’m supposed to show you where he is.”

She tipped her head, “Lead the way.”

As he navigated her through the mansion, she asked him how school was going and he told her about his end of the year science fair he was working on a project for. She offered a few ideas for improvements before they made it to the hallway where a few members of the wedding party who had already finished getting ready were lingering before heading outside. Will went to retrieve Oliver from where he was with Tommy and she did an awkward pivot on her heels, looking around at the group of strangers and wondering what she should do while she waited for him to return.

Thankfully, she spotted Thea, who was leaning against the wall and attempting to carefully eat a plate of food without getting anything on her pale pink bridesmaid dress.

She gave her a little wave that was returned, “Hey Felicity.”

Wandering over to stand next to her, she relaxed as Thea engaged her in conversation, pointing out the other bridesmaids, Laurel’s sister Sara and best friend Joanna, who were popping in and out of the room where the bride was finishing getting ready. They moved on to talking about the press release Thea was drafting about she and Oliver’s relationship, until she spotted her boyfriend emerging from one of the rooms and she excused herself.

When she walked over to him, he was shaking his head, “Don’t you know that you’re not supposed to outshine the bride?”

She blushed and shushed him, pushing him into a quiet corner, “I think you’re a little biased.”

“Fair enough,” he consented, resting his hands on her hips and squeezing gently. “But you do look beautiful.”

Hooking her fingers inside his suspenders, she pulled him in for a kiss before replying, “Thank you. You look very handsome. Everything gone smoothly so far?”

He nodded, “I think so. Your mom is a little scary, especially when she’s ordering people around, but she’s kept us on schedule.”

Her eyebrow quirked, “My mom? Scary?”

“Yes,” he insisted.

“Oliver, I don’t believe we’ve gotten the chance to officially meet yet.” Donna Smoak held out a hand to him upon his arrival at the mansion, where she was currently
running the show, and he shook it warmly.

“Nice to meet you Donna.”

Her fingers dug into his hand tightly and she lowered her voice, “Nothing is more important to me than my daughter and granddaughter, so if you make either of them cry you will have me to deal with. I might look like all hairspray and heels but don’t let appearances fool you.”

It was clear that she was as fiercely protective as his own mother, even though at first glance they seemed as different as night and day.

Swallowing, he nodded mutely in understanding before starting to reply with, “Of course. I mean, I know about what happened with her ex and—”

“She told you about Cooper?” she cut him off in surprise.

He hesitated for a second, “…yes?”

Donna’s eyes widened, “Wow. She doesn’t open up very easily about what happened with him. She can be like a little pistachio with her emotions.”

“I didn’t push her to tell me anything,” he hastily assured her.

“No, no, I wasn’t accusing you of that. You must make her feel safe, I’m thankful for that.” Her friendly smile returned as she pulled him in for a hug. “My girls deserve so much love, take good care of them and they’ll take care of you. You’re a lucky man to have them in your life, so don’t take them for granted,” she added in a final warning before releasing him.

Shaking her head in amusement, she gave him another little tug on his suspenders and then took a step back. “I’m going to go grab a seat. Any advice on who to sit with?”

“Nyssa said you could sit with her…”

“And Nyssa is… Sara’s girlfriend?” she guessed, trying to recount what he had told her. This was going to be her first introduction to some of his friends and family members she hadn’t gotten a chance to meet yet, and she was doing her best to keep everyone straight in her head.

“Yes. She’s also sitting by herself since Sara is Laurel’s maid of honor. Will can point her out to you.”

“Okay. See you later.” Giving him a quick peck on the cheek, she reached up to wipe the traces of her lipstick away before following Will outside.

It was a perfect spring day, with a soft, warm breeze tickling her skin as they walked towards the part of the grounds that had been set up for the ceremony. Her mom had outdone herself, having transformed an empty lawn into something out of a fairytale with flowers and candle filled lanterns. A ways away from the ceremony area, she spotted a dance floor that had been erected with twinkle lights strung overhead and a grouping of tables surrounding it for the reception.

{Check out a mood board I made for the wedding here}
Will introduced her to Nyssa and they talked for a few minutes before the sound of instrumental music filled the yard and the bridesmaids begun to float down the aisle in their pink dresses.

After the ceremony, the wedding party was whisked away for capturing pictures in the golden hour and, in their absence during the cocktail hour, she found herself in a conversation with a few random guests about their respective occupations.

“So how do you know the bride or groom?” someone, who had introduced herself as one of Tommy and Sara’s coworkers at the clinic, asked her after she shared about her position at Palmer Tech.

“I actually don’t really know either of them.” Her interactions with Laurel had been brief and she had yet to meet Tommy. She had been invited to their house for dinner the other week but sadly had to decline due to a prior commitment. Getting to know each other’s friends was important with their relationship becoming more serious, but with how hectic their lives were, it was hard enough sometimes to see each other for more than a brief afternoon date. “I’m the best-man’s plus one,” she explained.

“How did Oliver Queen manage to con a smart, successful girl like you into being his plus-one?” another guy asked.

“Uh—well I’m his girlfriend so…”

“Wow. Things have definitely changed around here since I moved away. I went to high school with Tommy and Oliver, and it’s hard enough for me to believe that Merlyn just got married… but Ollie Queen dating someone for her brains and not her—“ He snapped his mouth shut and a sheepish expression appeared on his face, indicating to her that he probably realized what he was about to say was going to come across as insulting. She noticed Nyssa shoot him a dark look over her champagne glass. Fiddling with her glasses awkwardly, she resisted the urge to fix her face with a similar expression. She didn’t take offense so much as get irritated that there were still people who assumed Oliver was the same shallow guy who couldn’t possibly be interested in someone unless they were a leggy supermodel.

*Although, news flash pal, amongst my other traits that he appreciates, he also finds me very attractive thank you very much.*

Her salvation from that suddenly uncomfortable situation came unexpectedly in the form of Moira Queen.

“Felicity?” Oliver’s mother appeared at her side before she had to conjure up a response to the guy. “Might I have a word with you?”

She hadn’t encountered the Queen matriarch since she showed up in her office almost two weeks ago to pass along her apology for Oliver that he had ended up overhearing. Although she was a little nervous about what that “word” might be, she excused herself from the group to step aside with her.

“I should have done this the other week, but I must confess I was more concerned with rectifying things with my son, and I didn’t take the opportunity to apologize to you as well for the way I conducted myself at brunch. In truth, I was jealous of the way my son trusted you to be part of his life, when I was not granted that.” She was surprised at the admission from the proud woman, and did her best to keep her jaw from dropping as Moira continued, “Which, of course, was my own fault and it was unfair for me to direct my frustrations with myself towards you. I don’t know what my son disclosed to you about our fight that morning, but I hope you might forgive me for certain unflattering remarks I made in your absence.”
“I— uhh—”

Are you seriously stammering right now? Oh sweet heavens, the last thing you need to do is make her think you’re an idiot.

“I see the way you look at him.” Moira gave her a small, knowing smile. “And the way he looks at you. It’s evident that it would be a mistake for me to be dismissive of the woman my son holds in such high regard. All I’m asking for is a second chance to make the right impression.”

She cleared her throat and finally managed a response, “Consider anything that happened prior to now forgotten. So um—It’s nice to meet you Mrs.—” Moira lifted an eyebrow ever so slightly and she corrected herself, “Moira. It’s nice to meet you Moira.”

Her smile grew a bit more as she replied with, “It’s nice to meet you Felicity. Oliver tells me you have a daughter?”

Nodding, she began to tell her about Allie and then their conversation progressed into some of her current projects at Palmer Tech. Pride filled her chest at the impressed look on Moira’s face as she outlined their new foray into medical technology. They spoke until the wedding party started to return from the photography session. When Oliver’s eyes fell on her, he made a beeline for where they were standing, wariness settling onto his face as he noticed her companion.

“Hey…” His eyes darted back and forth between her and his mother.

She rested a reassuring hand on his arm, “Hey.”

“Well, I should go find my husband,” Moira remarked. “It was nice speaking with you Felicity.”

“Likewise,” she acknowledged before they watched her walk away. Looking up at Oliver, she answered the question on his face, “I think I might have just earned your mom’s respect.”

“Not an easy task. But I had complete confidence in you,” he added before dipping his head down to kiss her cheek.

Just so you know, a couple of my cousins have definitely been checking Felicity out, so you may have some competition for that garter,” Tommy warned him with a teasing grin while he watched Felicity hold the bouquet over her head triumphantly. Sweeping his eyes across the crowd, he noticed some eager stares from the aforementioned cousins at the generous amount of leg exposed by the slit in her dress. Apparently, the fact that she was here with a date was not going to deter them.

Not to go all caveman, but over my dead body are they getting their hands on her.

He grunted in response and took his place amongst the group of unmarried men, waiting for Tommy to do the garter toss.

It’s possible, that he might have used his large physical presence to his advantage—

Felicity would later comment with amusement sparkling in her eyes that she thought someone was going to end up with a broken nose in their attempt to wrest that garter away from him.

--in order to find himself kneeling in front of his girlfriend, who was blushing profusely as he took his time caressing her skin and sliding that scrap of lace up her leg to find it’s home around her thigh. Mentally he plotted his desired course of action for removing it later as his fingers skirted the edge of propriety and he bit back a smug smile at the way her breath hitched before he pulled his hand away.
There were a few hoots and hollers from the crowd, but it all faded into a faint hum of background noise when he looked up at her. When their eyes met, he was startled by the way his brain immediately flashed to the thought of someday kneeling in front of her to ask her to spend the rest of her life with him.

The person he had met by the most random of chance and yet, in just a little over a month and a million shared moments, had somehow become someone he didn’t want to picture his life without.

He hoped she felt the same way. There were moments where he was confident she did… but other times she could be so guarded and he wasn’t as sure.

The only thing he could do was make certain that he was a man worthy of getting to spend a life with her.

Rising to his feet, he helped her up from the chair and pulled her in for a kiss, not caring that they had an audience. In that moment, all he wanted to focus on was her.

The band started playing again and people started to spill onto the dance floor around them, so he repositioned his hands to start to sway to the music with her, their foreheads pressed together to preserve the close intimacy they were wrapped up in.

“Thanks for being my plus-one today,” he whispered.

She rubbed her nose against his, “Anytime.”

When she rested her head against his shoulder his eyes caught on his son and sister dancing together behind them and he grinned at the sight. For having been thrust into the role of “aunt” as abruptly as he had found himself a father, Thea had probably handled her new title with more grace from the start than he had. She had taken charge of decorating Will’s room in their loft and made him feel at home from the first weekend he had stayed with them.

With another turn, he found himself looking across the dance floor at his mother who was watching him and his girlfriend with a soft smile on her face. She was perceptive. He knew it hadn’t slipped her notice that Felicity wasn’t like any of his past dalliances. In contrast to her quick misjudgment upon the first introduction, he could sense her approval now for the woman in his arms and it was a welcome relief.

After they danced for a while, he walked Felicity over to where Laurel and Tommy were sitting to properly introduce her to his best friend.

“Tommy, Felicity. Felicity, Tommy.”

Tommy hopped up from his seat to take her hand, “It’s nice to finally meet you Felicity.”

“Likewise. I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“All good things I’m sure. About how charming and handsome I am. About how lucky Oliver is to have me as a best friend, etc. etc.”

Felicity’s eyes sparkled with humor, “And I’m sure Oliver has told you all about how gorgeous and funny I am. How lucky he is to have such a perfect girlfriend.”

 Pretty much.

Tommy shot him a teasing grin before turning his attention back to Felicity. “Basically, yes.”
Laurel nodded in amused agreement and, even in the dim light cast by the sun that had almost completely disappeared under the horizon, he could see a blush spread across Felicity’s cheeks.

They were interrupted by the sound of heels clicking out a hasty staccato as Donna Smoak approached them in all business mode. “Oliver. Felicity,” she acknowledged them before addressing Tommy and Laurel. “Are you two ready for the cake cutting?”

The newlyweds followed her away, leaving Oliver and Felicity alone.

“I’m not perfect,” Felicity whispered, fiddling with the fabric of her dress. “I can’t promise I’ll always be a perfect girlfriend.”

He reached over to brush his knuckles across her bare shoulder tenderly, “I don’t need you to promise that. You don’t have to be perfect for me to think that you’re the perfect person for me.”

Looping her hands around his neck she pulled him down to crash her mouth against his for a kiss that tasted like champagne. When they broke apart she was smiling and she bit her bottom lip in that way that always made him want to go back in for more. He obliged himself another chaste peck before taking her hand and guiding her over to watch Laurel and Tommy smash cake into each other’s faces.

The rest of the reception flew by in a blur and before he knew it they were sending Tommy and Laurel off in a limo to the Starling Grand for the night.

“So… what are my chances at getting you to spend the night at my place?” Oliver asked, pushing a stray lock of Felicity’s hair behind her ear.

“I would say… pretty good.” His suit jacket had long been discarded to drape over her shivering shoulders and she reached up to loosen his tie. “Allie is at Dinah’s and my mom is going to go home and fall fast asleep once she comes off her wedding high, so I don’t think anyone will miss me. You’re okay with me crashing your last night with Will before he heads back to Central City?”

“He is actually spending the night here, so…”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. We had a family dinner last night…. I felt like we needed it. Will and I had gotten a chance to talk about everything that was said at brunch, and I didn’t want him to feel uncomfortable around Mom and Walter because of how tense things had been. Anyway, Mom asked if Will could have a sleepover with them tonight and I left it up to him. I think his decision was partially influenced by the fact that this place seems like a castle to him.”

“I think this place seems like a castle to anyone who didn’t list it as their home address growing up,” she pointed out.

His chest shook with a laugh, “Fair enough. So anyway…” Thea sat down nearby and he raised his voice a bit, “—all we have to do is get rid of Thea and then we can have the place to ourselves to—“

Thea held up a hand, her face disgusted, “Say no more. I’m staying the night here too.”

Chapter End Notes
As always I would love to hear what you thought and don't forget to check back later in the week for that bonus scene :D
When they arrived at the loft, Oliver took Felicity by the hand to lead her upstairs to his bedroom straightaway. It was her second time in his room, the first time being when she had changed into some of his clothes on the day she spent with him and Will. She remembered feeling a little self-conscious while he rifled through his dresser drawers. Her eyes quickly darting about the simply decorated room. Deliberately not letting them linger on the bed for too long.

The bed where she now sat on the edge as he stepped between her legs and removed her glasses, setting them aside carefully, before reaching behind her to methodically pull the bobby pins from her hair one-by-one. His fingers massaged her scalp as her curls fell around her shoulders and she closed her eyes with a content sigh. The domesticity of the gesture made her heart ache in the best way.

Being at a wedding had inevitably caused her mind to wander to the quiet dreams that had begun to collect cobwebs in the corner of her mind where she hid them from even herself for so long. Dreams she had for so long thought she shouldn’t have, because they were impossible and would only leave her feeling discontent. Dreams of one day walking down an aisle in a white dress herself. Towards a future with someone who she loved, someone who loved her. Someone to share her life with, her family with.

Someone who could walk out the door one day and never come back—the voice she was trying to stifle whispered warningly. But that thought was pushed away by a kiss pressed tenderly to her forehead, almost as though he could read her troubled thoughts.

When the last pin was extracted, he moved in to helping her remove his suit jacket that she had been wearing since the temperatures took a dip at the wedding. He trailed his fingers up and down her arms, tracing random patterns and spreading warmth across her skin.

“I didn’t expect such self-control from you tonight,” she remarked as he continued his restrained exploration of her exposed skin, gently applying pressure to the spots on her shoulders where she held tension from hunching over a computer. Opening her eyes, she moved the fabric of her dress aside to bare her thigh to him and teased, “I thought someone was going to end up with a broken nose for attempting to wrest this from you.”

She hadn’t exactly gone into the reception with catching the bouquet as her game plan, but when it had come her way she hadn’t shied away from plucking it from the air triumphantly. It had been rather amusing to watch the gaggle of guys jostle each other for the privilege of sliding the garter onto her leg.

A flush creeped up his face, tinging his ears pink. He gave her a shy, sheepish smile as his fingers skimmed over her leg. “I didn’t mean to seem possessive, I just—“

“Oliver,” she cut him off, hooking her fingers into his suspenders and giving a gentle tug. “I’m just messing with you. I would have been mildly offended if you didn’t make an effort.” She removed his
tie before starting to work on the buttons of his shirt. “Besides... you’re allowed to be a little possessive.” Hooking her legs around his waist she looked up at him with a suggestive smile, “I certainly am.”

His eyebrows lifted and he swallowed before dipping his head down to barely brush his lips against hers. “Good. I’m all yours,” he whispered and captured her mouth. He tasted like champagne and chocolate cake and she eagerly returned his kisses.

Using his suspenders for leverage she lowered herself back down onto the mattress and pulled him on top of her.

“Did I mention I’m a fan of the suspenders?” she muttered against his lips when they paused momentarily for a breath.

He huffed out a laugh and rubbed his nose against hers. “I figured.”

When he shifted to kiss her neck, she reached down between them to attempt to rid him of his clothes. Unsuccessfully. He thwarted her efforts by grabbing a hold of her hands and pinning them down at her sides.

“Wha—“

He pressed a chaste kiss to her pout. “Patience, babe. We don’t have to worry about being interrupted tonight, and I have plans.”

“What kind of—“ She sucked in a sharp inhale as he slid down her body to settle in between her legs and bring his mouth to her inner thigh, gently nipping just below where the garter was positioned before soothing over the spot with his tongue. “Oh. That kind of plans.”

She could feel him smile against her skin before dragging the garter off of her leg with his teeth. Anticipation thrummed through her body and she expected him to return to where she had a growing need for him, but he insisted on making her wait while he stood at the edge of the bed and took his time removing her shoes, caressing her ankles and calves. Leaving little teasing kisses on the inside of her knees. Finally, he dropped to his knees and gently tugged her towards him. The skirt of her dress had fallen completely open at the slit and he quickly ridded her of her underwear before slinging her legs over his shoulders. He rubbed his stubble against the sensitive skin of her inner thighs and she gripped the fabric of the bedspread as the sensation rippled through her.

When he brought his mouth to the apex of her thighs and began to ignite the sparks of pleasure that had been lit by his delicate touches and kisses, she moved her hands to tangle her fingers in his hair that had gotten a little long as of late. She sunk her teeth into her bottom lip to stifle a moan before remembering that there was no one in the other bedrooms to overhear them. She took advantage of the opportunity to be vocal about her appreciation of his attentiveness to her and her legs began to shake as he responded eagerly to her encouragement.

It wasn’t long before an intense rush of pleasure coursed through her body and she came with a shout of his name. He continued his ministrations through her orgasm, sending little aftershocks through her body, and when he finally pulled away and carefully lowered her legs off of his shoulders, she sunk down into the mattress with a satisfied sigh.

“Wow. Thanks.”

He grinned down at her, his hair a mess from her pulling at it and she returned his smile affectionately when he stroked her cheek with his thumb.
While she shifted back towards the headboard to be completely on the bed, he removed his clothes, dropping them to a pile on the floor. Joining her on the bed, he undid the ties at the waist of her dress to rid her of it.

“You’re so beautiful,” he whispered reverently, tracing her collarbones with a delicate touch before his hands drifted downwards to her breasts.

“On your back,” she directed, after she had given him a few moments to caress the curves of her body as if he was trying to memorize every inch of her. Their first time together the other night, while amazing, had been a little rushed, and he was clearly planning on taking his time now. But she had plans of her own that she wanted to get to.

“Hmm?”

“On your back,” she repeated, pressing against his chest.

He obliged her, rolling away to settle onto the mattress and look over at her expectantly. Despite his insistence on attending to her first, he was very clearly ready for her. Positioning herself over top of him, her legs straddling his hips, she lowered herself down to bring them together. His eyes slammed shut as she rolled her hips lazily and she dipped her head down to press delicate kisses to his eyelids before tracing the planes of his face with her fingertips. His strong cheekbones and jawline, his nose that was dotted with tiny freckles.

So handsome.

Her exploration migrated downwards to the muscled grooves of his torso and she lightly scratched with her nails, feeling him flex underneath her touch. She could tell he was trying to maintain some semblance of control, let her set the pace, but his body started to move of its own volition. Taking a hold of his hands, she positioned them on her hips, and when he opened his eyes she gave him a little nod. His grip tightened on her as he guided her movements, lifting his own hips rhythmically to go deeper as their pace picked up. Her hands were braced on his shoulders and she dug her fingertips in as she felt herself getting closer and closer to her release.

“Oliver. I—“ her words died on her lips with a gasp as he rolled them over so that she was underneath him.

One more thrust at this new angle was all it took for her to come undone and she held onto him tightly as waves of pleasure crashed over her. He came a few seconds later with his face pressed into the crook of her neck, and he left a few kisses there before rolling off of her with a satisfied groan.

She reached over and took his hand, intertwining their fingers and just enjoying a moment of stillness, before he asked, “Do you want to take a shower?”

“Together?”

He huffed in amusement, “I mean we can, but then it’s going to be a lot longer before we get to sleep.” In response, she yawned and he squeezed her hand, “Go ahead. I’ll use one of the other bathrooms.”

Reluctantly, she climbed out of bed, blushing at the low whistle from behind her as he watched her retreat towards the bathroom.

She glanced over her shoulder and raised an eyebrow, “Enjoying the view?”

He winked. “Always.”
Rolling her eyes, she chastised him with a shake of her head…. but it’s possible that she added a little more sway to her hips as she made the last few steps into the bathroom before closing the door behind her.

In the shower, she lathered herself up with Oliver’s soap, inhaling the now familiar smell. It had become one of those scents that made her feel at home. Like her favorite blend of coffee or her daughter’s strawberry and cream shampoo or her mom’s perfume that hadn’t changed since before she left for college.

Once she was finished, she made her way back out into the bedroom where Oliver was freshly showered as well and waiting for her. He offered her one of his henleys to wear and she accepted it gratefully, the room now feeling a little cool.

The temperature quickly became a non-issue though when she was cuddled up beside her own personal human heater. A comfortable silence settled over them and he traced lazy patterns on her shoulder where her skin was exposed from his large shirt slipping off of her. It was impossible for her not to feel content when he was holding her in his arms. It was impossible not to want to feel that way every night for the rest of her life.

When she had first made the decision to dip her toe into the water of dating again by taking a chance on him, she had considered the possibility that, while he had been the one to stir up those desires in her for a partner, he might not be the one for her.

That notion seemed utterly ridiculous to her now. She couldn’t imagine there being another person out there who was more right for her than him. Despite her trepidation, it hadn’t taken long for her to give her heart over to him because he had proven himself more than worthy of being entrusted with it.

“Love you,” she murmured and faintly heard him echo her words as her eyelids fell heavily and she sunk into a deep sleep in his warm embrace.

Chapter End Notes

See y’all on Sunday for the next full chapter :D
“Oh, this is so embarrassing,” Felicity bemoaned, clutching a photograph to her chest.

It was late Thursday evening and she was sitting with Oliver on the floor of her living room, going through old pictures to pick a few out to display at Allie’s birthday party that weekend. She had just opened up an envelope that was buried at the bottom of one of the boxes. It contained the few photos she had from her years at MIT, forcing her to confront a girl she barely even recognized anymore.

Oliver leaned in towards her, “Why?”

“Don’t laugh.” Screwing her eyes shut, she flipped the picture around so he could get a look at her at the height of her goth phase. Black and purple hair, heavy eye liner, and an abundance of leather... it was a sharp contrast to her current look of soft blond waves, robin’s egg blue nail polish, and bright, floral print pajamas.

The only reason she was glad she still had evidence of that time in her life was so that she could remind herself of how far she had come since then. That girl was angry, and bitter, and broken. If only she could go back and tell her what her life was going to look like in just a few years... Tell her how much things were going to change because of a baby girl she wasn’t even pregnant with yet. Tell her that she was going to have the most amazing job, one she couldn’t even dream of then. Tell her that she was going to meet a man who didn’t just say he loved her with empty words.

“That’s… wow,” he breathed out after a moment of silence, and when she opened her eyes back up she could tell that he was trying to hold back a laugh.

“Don’t look at me like that.”

“I’m sorry.”

She pouted, “You don’t seem very sorry.”

He took the picture from her and peered at it more closely, “I’m just trying to imagine what my reaction would be if I had met you in college.”

Scoffing, she nudged his leg with her toes and replied with, “I avoided frat guys like the plague, so you would not have had the privilege of meeting me in college.”

Unable to contain himself any longer, he snorted in amusement before pulling out another picture.

“Who’s this?” he asked and she sucked in a sharp inhale when she leaned into him and caught a
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, FALL 2008

Upon leaving the dorm room that was covered by her scholarship in order to move into her own small, slightly dingy, but peacefully quiet, apartment off campus, she found herself in need of rent money. She got a job working as a barista at a coffee shop that was nearby Boston's Children Hospital, figuring if she could handle complex computer coding, she could handle people's coffee orders.

On her first day working the counter, a young girl with a radiant smile and a bright pink beanie covering her bald head walked up to place her order with her exhausted looking dad.

“One hot chocolate with extra whipped cream, chocolate sauce, and a pump of caramel please.”

“Oh…,” She grabbed a cup and uncapped her marker. “And your name?”

“Allison.”

Scribbling it on, she then took the dad’s order for a large black coffee before making their drinks.

“You’re new here, aren’t you?” Allison asked when she handed over her hot chocolate. “I’ve never seen you before and we come here every day. Unless I’m feeling really sick, but don’t worry, I’m getting better now.”

She tried not to notice the less than optimistic expression that flickered across Allison’s father’s face as she nodded in confirmation, “Yes, today is my first day.”

Allison took a sip of her drink and smiled that beautiful smile of hers with a whipped cream mustache. “Well, you did a good job!” Her eyes focused in on her nametag. “Thanks Felicity!”

Felicity opened the door to Allie’s bedroom the next morning, with Oliver and her mom following behind, as they all exclaimed, “Happy Birthday!”

Her daughter’s head shot up from her pillow immediately, an excited grin blooming on her face as she took in the sight of them gathering around the foot of her bed. Felicity crawled onto the mattress to smother her not quite so little anymore, little girl in kisses, tickling her sides while she giggled and squirmed. A few tears started to well up in Felicity’s eyes and she blinked them away. The two of them had both done a lot of growing up together the past eight years, and birthdays always made her extra emotional.

She moved away so that Oliver could present Allie with a tray of breakfast, including whipped-cream-topped pancakes of different shapes that he had made from funfetti cake batter. She had teased him for being a total Pinterest mom the entire time he was cooking, while internally trying to keep her heart from doing cartwheels at how sweet it was.

Her daughter’s eyes widened in delight. “Thank you!”

“Only the best birthday breakfast for my favorite eight-year-old,” he replied, pressing a kiss to the top
Felicity wished she had a photographic memory to hold onto that image with. It was almost hard for her now to remember why she had been so apprehensive about introducing the two of them. Allie already adored Oliver, and it was evident that the feeling was mutual.

He had been over to their house a lot that week, to make them dinner, to watch movies, to throw a softball in the backyard with Allie. At some point it had occurred to her that she no longer felt the pinpricks of panic that the two of them shouldn’t be getting used to his presence. It was finally sinking in that this was what he wanted.

They were wanted.

Allie’s nose scrunched up in amusement, “How many eight-year-olds do you know Oliver?”

“That…” He exhaled a laugh, “Is irrelevant.”

By the end of her first month working at the coffee shop, Felicity looked forward to her new friend’s visits for hot chocolate. Some days she asked for caramel, other days peppermint, sometimes she just wanted classic cocoa. Felicity tried not to notice that she was getting thinner as she swirled on extra, extra whipped cream.

When Allison accepted the steaming cup, wearing a dark maroon beanie that day, her eyes widened as she noticed the way her apron had started to tent over her growing stomach.

“You’re having a baby!” she squealed in excitement, setting her cocoa back down on the counter to reach out for her stomach. Her motion was halted by her father placing a cautionary hand on her shoulder and she retracted her arm. “I’m sorry.”

“No, no. It’s okay.” She smiled warmly at her enthusiasm, something she hadn’t experienced from anyone yet. “It’s a little too soon to feel a kick, but I’ll keep you posted.”

Bouncing on her toes, she nodded, “Okay!”

After they had finished doting on Allie, Oliver and Felicity headed downstairs since he had to get going because of an early meeting at City Hall.

Before he left, she turned to him and asked, “My friends Iris and Barry, and their twins, are getting in from Central City this afternoon, and I was hoping you would join us for dinner tonight? But don’t feel obligated. I mean, you slept over last night and there’s the birthday party tomorrow, so maybe you want a quiet night at home or—“

“Felicity,” he interrupted her, placing his hands on her shoulders. He didn’t understand how she could possibly think he would ever choose to be at home alone when she was inviting him into hers. “I will come over for dinner, on one condition.”

Biting her lip, she asked, “What?”

“You let me cook.”

She perked up at his request, “Oh, would you?”
“Of course. What were you planning on doing?”

“Big Belly Burger,” she admitted with a shrug.

“After work today, I’ll pick up some stuff to throw on the grill.” She gave him a look and he added, “And I’ll bring my charcoal grill over because, obviously, you don’t own a grill.”

“Obviously. Between my mother and I, this neighborhood would be reduced to ash if we owned and operated a grill.”

He laughed at that before leaning in to give her a kiss. “I love you. Have a good day at work.”

“Mmm, love you too.”

“Do you know if it’s a boy or a girl yet?” Allison asked as they sat at one of the tables by the window and watched snow fall and create a fluffy white blanket over the city. Her new routine was to come just before it was time for her break so that she would make her drink—

“No one else makes it as good as you!”

—and then be able to sit and talk with her while she drank it. She had learned a lot about the young girl during their daily chats. Like that her mom was a nurse in the cancer wing at the hospital and her dad was an English professor who was taking a sabbatical to spend more time with her while she was sick. When she wasn’t staying in the hospital, they lived in a townhouse just down the street with their German Shepard named Lucy and an aquarium full of fish. She could play almost any instrument, but her favorite was the violin and she wanted to perform with a professional symphony one day.

Shaking her head at the question, she answered, “No, but I have an appointment in a few days and the doctors said they should be able to tell on the ultrasound.”

“If it’s a girl, you should name her Hermione,” Allison suggested, tugging her lavender beanie down over her ears as she shivered when the door to the café opened and a burst of cold air flew in.

She quirked an eyebrow in amusement, “Harry Potter fan?”

“I’m on my third time listening to the series on audiobook. They make the time pass quickly during my chemo treatments.”

She took a deep breath to clear the tight feeling in her chest she got every time she was reminded that her friend was sick, and put her smile back on. “So, if it’s a boy, should I name him Harry? Or Ronald?”

Allison wrinkled her nose, “No. I’ll think of some boy names for you, but I don’t think you’re going to have to use them. I think it’s going to be a girl.”

“And you think I should name her Hermione.”

She threw her hands up defensively, “It’s just a suggestion.”
After Oliver left, she walked into the kitchen where Allie was sitting at the counter, FaceTiming Lena while her grandmother was in the process of braiding her hair into a crown around her head.

“I’m sorry I can’t make it to your birthday party,” Lena was apologizing when Felicity slid into the barstool next to her daughter to join the conversation with her friend.

“It’s okay. Mom said we can come to National City to see you soon. Right?” Allie looked over at her, eliciting a protest from Donna, who turned her head back straight forward to continue wrangling her curls.

“Yes, once you’re off from school for the summer we’ll plan a trip,” she confirmed with a nod.

“Good. I want to take you to the new space museum that just opened here,” Lena remarked.

“And we can bring Oliver with us so you can meet him!” Allie added.

“Oh yes, I’m very interested in getting to meet this Oliver I’ve heard so much about,” her friend directed at her. She had been keeping her up to date about everything that had been going on with her romantic endeavors since that day she abruptly ended their phone call when she ran into Oliver at the grocery store.

Here’s to hoping we’re even still together by the summer to make that introduction.

She shook her head inconspicuously.

We’re not thinking like that anymore, remember?

Trying not to think like that at least.

Allie was telling Lena about the birthday breakfast Oliver had made her when she mentally returned to their conversation.

“So, I guess you approve of your mom dating him?” Lena asked Allie teasingly.

“Yes,” her daughter nodded enthusiastically, eliciting a frustrated huff from her grandmother who was trying to finish bobby pinning her braids into place. “He’s really nice and has a convertible and makes the best breakfasts.”

Lena’s eyes sparkled with amusement, “Those are obviously all very important things.”

“And he loves mom,” Allie added. “That’s most important.”

And he loves you, which is the most important to me.

“Definitely. Well, I have to get into the office, but I hope you have a wonderful birthday. There should be a package on its way from National City to your front porch,” Lena signed off with a wink.

After powering down her tablet, she reached over and patted her daughter’s thigh, “We better get going or you’re going to be late for school.”

She tried not to notice that Allison’s smile was a little less bright when she came in one afternoon in February.

“What’ll it be today?” she asked cheerily, grabbing a cup and starting to write her name.
“Caramel? Peppermint?”

“Nothing for me today,” she answered, her voice tired. “I’m not feeling so good, but I didn’t want you to worry about me if I didn’t show up.”

“Oh.” Her chest constricted and she blew out a steadying breath. She knew there were good days and bad days with cancer and one bad day didn’t have to mean anything. “I’m sorry you’re not feeling well.”

“It’s okay.” Some of her usual demeanor started to return as she explained, “The doctors are trying a new treatment with me. I get to be a science experiment!”

She couldn’t help but think that wasn’t a good sign and a glance at the pained expression on Allison’s father’s face confirmed her fear.

“Can I feel baby Hermione?” Allison asked as she took off her apron and walked around the counter to start her break.

“You know I’m not completely sold on the name yet…” she remarked as she placed Allison’s hands over her stomach and watched her eyes light up as her daughter greeted her with a kick.

“Well, you still have a few months to come around.”

“They’re here! They’re here!” Allie announced excitedly, running through the house to find Felicity, who was finishing making up the bed in the guest room.

She laughed at her daughter’s enthusiasm, “So why don’t you go let them in then, instead of leaving them standing out on the porch.”

“Oh. Right!” Allie darted back downstairs and Felicity followed close behind to welcome her friends into their home. It had been a few months since she had seen Barry and Iris in person and, even if she wasn’t quite as loud about it, she was just as excited as Allie to see them and their two-year-old twins.

Her mom had beat them to the door and was already taking a very sleepy Nora out of Iris’ arms, allowing her friend to give her a warm hug.

“It’s so good to see you!” Iris remarked when they stepped apart.

“It’s good to see you too. It’s been way too long since we’ve had a conversation not through a screen.”

Allie wedged herself in between them to give Iris a hug then and she turned to greet Barry.

“Did you guys have a good trip?”

“We did. The kids slept almost the entire train ride, which is why they’re still a little out of it now,” he replied with an amused smile. Joey blinked at her with big brown eyes in confirmation of his father’s statement and she reached to take him from Barry.

Joey snuggled into her shoulder and she smiled, rubbing his back. “We have the guest room all set up for you if you want to get yourselves settled. Oliver probably won’t be here for another hour to get dinner started, he had an unexpected meeting come up today. If you want a snack though, help
yourself to anything in the kitchen. There’s leftover pancakes from this morning.”

“They’re birthday cake pancakes,” Allie clarified in between making funny faces at a giggling Nora. “Oliver made them for me.”

“I think I read somewhere that Mayor Queen makes pretty delicious pancakes, so I would be remiss not to try them.” Iris tossed Felicity a wink and she blushed.

One of the more humorously slanted articles that had been written about Allie’s outburst in City Hall had gone viral on twitter, because of course it had.

“I can’t reach my own toes very well anymore, so I appreciate the pedicure services.”

“Your belly is getting really big,” Allison remarked, looking up at her from where she was crouched on the floor painting her toenails a bright bubble gum pink. Her parents were out on a much-needed dinner date they had planned after she offered to spend an evening hanging out with her. The two of them had gotten close over the past few months and she honestly considered the ten-year-old to be her best friend. Her only friend at the moment, really. At school, she just quietly attended her classes and ignored the whispers as best as she could. Since she got to MIT, she had spent almost all of her time hanging out with Cooper and hadn’t made any other friends. Now she was the pregnant girl whose baby daddy had been publicly dragged off of campus by the FBI. Not exactly anyone’s first choice for a best friend.

Except Allie’s, she supposed. But dying girls probably weren’t many people’s first choice for a best friend, either.

“So how did you meet Felicity?” Oliver asked Barry as they stood at the grill and watched Allie drag a delighted Joey and Nora around the backyard in a wagon. He had sensed when he and Felicity first started dating that he was being held at arm’s length, a defense mechanism he completely understood after everything she had been through, so it made him happy that she was welcoming him into her life even more by introducing him to some of her closest friends. He had taken a quick liking to the Allen family after arriving at Felicity’s house earlier.

“Iris met her a couple years ago when she was here working on a story about the uh—“ Barry paused and shot him a sheepish look before muttering, “The Undertaking.”

“Oh.”

It wasn’t quite the sensitive subject that it used to be, but he understood how awkward it probably was for people to mention the mass murder, that his father played a role in orchestrating, in his presence.

“Yeah… but anyway, I guess they hit it off pretty well. They’ve been friends ever since. I got to meet her for the first time when she was in Central City for Iris’ bachelorette party and I had to pick the two of them up from the park because one of my friends from CCPD found them lying in the grass looking at the stars.” Oliver’s eyebrows lifted in surprise and Barry grinned at the memory, “Felicity really likes to talk about space when she’s drunk.”

“Barry!” Felicity groaned, walking out of the sliding glass door from the kitchen with Iris and catching the conclusion to his story. “You’re not supposed to tell anyone about that.”

“It was almost four years ago, you’ve recovered your dignity.”
“Felicity?”

It was an unusually warm April day but her blood ran cold and her heart dropped when she saw Allison’s father approach the counter, his eyes rimmed with red and his shoulders hunched.

No.

Tears sprung to her eyes.

No.

No.

No.

No...

“Where is she?” she whispered faintly, even though she knew.

“Allie wanted me to make sure you knew she—last night she…” The man took a deep breath before continuing, “Seeing you was one of the best parts of her day. Her mother and I are grateful to you for being a bright spot in the last few months of her life.”

She was full on sobbing then as the realization that she would never again see the sweet girl, with a smile like sunshine and knit hats in every color of the rainbow, hit her like a freight train.

Struggling to find the right thing to say, she finally settled on, “Your daughter was a wonderful person with a beautiful heart. I was so privileged to have gotten the chance to be a part of her world.” She sniffled, “I’m sorry for your loss.”

“We’re going to have a memorial service this weekend, if you’re able to—”

“I’ll be there,” she promised, wiping her tears away with her sleeve.

The rest of her shift passed by in a numb blur, and that night in her apartment she cried for hours. When she thought she might drown in her loneliness, her daughter gave her a hard kick.

A small smile broke through her grief and she rubbed her belly, whispering, “I know, baby girl. I know I have you.”

She had a little over a month left until her due date and she was getting incredibly impatient for that day to arrive. Graduation was slightly more rapidly approaching though, so she had begun to outline her plans for after she was handed her diploma and could get out of dodge. Working on that would be a welcome distraction from her grief.

Wiping away her tears with the sleeve of her sweater, she reached for her laptop and opened a webpage she had bookmarked.
Felicity smiled to herself as she looked around at the people gathered around her table for dinner and listening to Allie tell Barry about her new microscope - her gift from Lena which had arrived that afternoon.

Times like these made it hard to remember the days when she had felt utterly alone in the world and her heart swelled with happiness.

Oliver glanced over at her and she reached for his arm to slide her fingers down his muscled forearm to catch his hand in hers.

“Love you,” he mouthed.

“Love you too.”

The night before when she had finished telling him about her daughter’s namesake he had held her while she cried from digging up those memories. She had never really talked with anyone about Allison though, so it had been good to open up about and let go of some of the grief she had repressed for a long time.

“I always seem to lose the people who are important to me when I need them the most,” she had sniffled into his chest.

“Hey.” He had lifted her chin to look up at him, into his eyes that held a promise. “You’re not going to lose me.”

She believed him, even as she knew that there were always things that were out of his control. Allison hadn’t chosen to leave her. Just a few days before she passed she had been serenading her with her violin, because—

“Your baby is already going to be a super genius, but classical music will make her even smarter!”

Loss was inescapable sometimes, but she trusted Oliver enough now to believe he wouldn’t leave her of his own volition.

Later, after the kids had all been put to bed and her mom retired to her craft room to put the finishing touches on some things for Allie’s party the next day, they gathered in the living room where Felicity pulled out Trivial Pursuit to the excitement of Barry and a groan of protest from Iris.

“I thought you loved Trivial Pursuit, babe?” Barry situated Iris’ legs to drape over his lap.

“I used to love this game, until I kept getting brutally owned by my husband and best friend. It’s impossible for me to win against you nerds.”

Felicity flipped open the game board lid to show where they had been keeping a tally of games won over the past few years. “That’s not true. You’ve won twice.”

Iris gave her an exasperated look.

“How about we play teams?” Oliver offered. “Felicity and I, against you two?”

That had never been an option before. She bit her lip to hide a stupid grin at the reminder that she was no longer third wheeling and settled for reaching over to intertwine her fingers with his. Oliver
might be a college—**multiple** colleges—drop-out, but he wasn’t the idiot people pegged him for when they reduced him to *Mayor Handsome*. She had learned that he had a sharp memory and absorbed information like a sponge.

“No.” Iris shook her head.

She tilted her head in confusion, “Why not? I think that’s a good idea—“

“Teams, yes. But we’re playing boys versus girls.” Iris patted Barry’s cheek fondly, “No offense babe, but check the box. Felicity has won more games than you.”

Felicity smirked and Barry placed a hand over his heart, “I’m wounded.”

“I’m only stating the facts.”

“I’m game for boys versus girls,” Felicity agreed with a shrug.

They all shifted positions to be seated with their teammate as Felicity got the board set up on the coffee table. Two hours later they were creating a new section on their game box lid scorecard for team play and Iris smugly put a tally underneath her and Felicity’s name.

“I suddenly like this game again,” she remarked, giving Felicity a high-five as the boys were given the task of cleaning up the board.

“Let the record stand that it was close and there will definitely be a rematch tomorrow night,” Barry grumbled.

“Of course. I look forward to another tally going under team Iris and Felicity,” Felicity returned teasingly.

Oliver shook his head in amusement, “We’ll see about that.”

Not that she had expected otherwise, but he had hit it off really well with her friends that evening. It gave her even more peace about bringing him into her life.

The four of them talked for another hour or so until the clock surpassed midnight, and Iris was the first one to yawn.

Resting her chin against Barry’s shoulder to look up at him, she inquired “You ready to call it a night?”

“Yes ma’am.”

While they retreated into the guest room, Felicity found herself feeling very sleepy as well. But as she started to nuzzle into Oliver’s side, he shifted to stand up from the couch. “Well, I guess I should head home and let you get to bed too since tomorrow is going to be a busy day.”

*Umm… what?*

Disgruntled, she reached up for his hand, “What? No, just stay.” Sinking her teeth into her bottom lip, she added shyly, “I mean, if you want.”

“Of course I do. I just—I didn’t want to overstay my invitation…”

“Overstay your invitation? Babe. I let you have a drawer for a reason,” she remarked pointedly as he helped her to her feet.
Giving birth was the most terrifying and exhilarating experience of her life. Despite the research she had done on the entire process to keep her mind occupied from stressing out, she was entirely unprepared for the pain and emotions that took over during her eight long hours of labor. She regretted not reaching out to her mom because she wanted nothing more than to have her hand to hold during the long night in the hospital.

“Do you have a name picked out?” one of the nurses asked as she laid her tiny daughter on her chest.

If there had been any part of her that still doubted if she made the right choice that night in September when Cooper had given her his ultimatum, it all disappeared when she looked down at the most perfectly adorable little face she had ever seen.


Okay so it wasn’t Hermione, but she hoped her guardian angel wouldn’t complain too much. She never wanted to forget her sweet friend who had lifted her out of her loneliness and brought her so much joy for the few short months she had known her. Back in April at the memorial service she had asked her parents if they would be okay with using the name for her own daughter, and they had been honored.

After the frenzy of delivery had settled down and the room had quieted, she asked the nurse if she could make a phone call.

Taking a deep breath, she dialed a number that she still remembered by heart, despite having avoided using for years, and waited. Hoped that she hadn’t changed her number.

“Mom?”

“Felicity?” Her mom’s voice was filled with surprise that she could hear even over the loud sounds of a casino behind her.

“Is this a bad time?”

“No baby, no. I’m on a break. It’s so good to hear your voice. Is everything alright? Are you—“

“You’re a grandma.”

Okay, I guess we’re not beating around the bush here.

“I—what?”

“I should have called before now, I’m so sorry mom. I just— I didn’t know how to tell you about this. I know I hurt you so much with the way I left things between us but—I really miss you.” I really need you. She looked down at Allie, fast asleep against her chest. “And I want you to meet your granddaughter.”

“My granddaughter,” her mom echoed.

“Surprise,” she remarked sheepishly. “I uhh— sort of just gave birth. Well not, sort of. It definitely happened. And oh wow… it was painful, but also completely worth it. You have the cutest granddaughter, mom. And yeah, I’m probably a little biased, but the nurses confirmed that she’s very cute.”
“Oh.” She could practically hear the wheels spinning in her mom’s head as she processed this information before she shrieked excitedly, “I’m a grandma!”

She heard the dim cheers of people around her who were probably drunk and completely unaware of what they were celebrating.

Allie stirred at the noise and she pressed a gentle kiss to her head before asking her mom, “How soon do you think you can make it to Starling City? I can help you arrange a flight—”

“Starling City? Where even is that? And what in heavens are you doing there? I thought you were in Massachusetts? Or was it Minnesota?” Donna mused.

“I was in Massachusetts. But I graduated already and… I needed to get far away from there. It’s, umm, it’s a long story. One I don’t really want to share over the phone.”

“Of course. Oh baby, I’ll be on the next flight out.”

FOUR MONTHS LATER

“You’re in luck Ms. Smoak,” the gray-haired HR representative gave her a warm smile when she apologized for being a few minutes late. Her babysitter had fallen through last minute and she didn’t want to skip out on her interview, so she had to run Allie to the diner on her way to the Queen Consolidated building. For the past few months she had been living off of savings and her mom’s income because she wasn’t ready to be separated from Allie, but she knew it was time to start working again. “Queen Consolidated has recently taken initiative to become one of the best companies in Starling City for working moms.” She slid an information packet across the table, “Should you be employed, free on-site childcare would be available to you and you wouldn’t have to stress about that again.”

She had known this when she put her application in, it was what had drawn her to apply at Queen Consolidated in the first place, but she still worried that they would dismiss her at first glance. Think she was a more qualified candidate for the next season of Teen Mom than the IT department.

*Please just take a chance on me,” she begged silently.*

“Your credentials are impressive Miss Smoak.” The IT department supervisor tapped her resume. “I’m not entirely sure why you’re applying for a low-level IT position in the first place. You could do so much more with your skillset.”

*Yeah, like design an algorithm that put the father of my child in jail. Hard pass.*

“I’m just looking for something stable,” she explained vaguely. “A successful company like QC is always going to need good tech support.”

He assessed her for a moment before nodding, “Okay. Then I would like to formally make a job offer to you for the opening in our department.”

Her eyebrows shot up. “Seriously? Just like that?”

“You graduated top of your class from MIT with a master’s degree in computer sciences and cyber security,” he remarked with an amused smile at her incredulity. “To be
honest, you're more qualified for this position than I am. I would be a fool not to hire you.”

She did her best to rein in tears of joy as she started to fill out the stack of paperwork the woman from HR handed her. Nineteen had been a rough—to say the least—year for her, but twenty was already off to a good start. She had a beautiful daughter, she was rebuilding her relationship with her mom, she had developed a much-needed friendship with her next-door neighbor, and now she had just secured a job that wasn’t exactly her dream, but was still a good opportunity for someone in her situation. What else could she possibly ask for?

“Two nights in a row,” Oliver remarked as he came up behind her standing at the bathroom sink after she finished taking her makeup off. Wrapping his arms around her waist, he pressed a kiss to her cheek. “I must be doing something right.”

She knew he was teasing, but the truth was that he was doing a lot of things right, not just the things he was implying.

“I like when you’re here,” she admitted quietly, leaning her head back against his solid chest. “It’s just—it’s too soon to make it permanent. Especially for the kids.”

Despite the fact that there was now a toothbrush next to hers and a drawer of her dresser filled with his clothes, they needed to at least take some things slow in this relationship. Will and Allie hadn’t even met yet, they definitely weren’t ready to be throwing their families together under one roof.

“Yeah… of course…”

He wasn’t very good at convincing her that he actually agreed, but he let the subject drop as he tugged her towards the bed where they made love before they fell asleep, curled up in each other’s arms.

The next morning, the house was a flurry of activity as they prepared for the swarm of seven- to ten-year-old girls that were going to be descending upon the house that afternoon for Allie’s party. Her mom put Oliver and Barry on snack-making duty in the kitchen, while she and Iris helped decorate the entire living room and dining room.

“What exactly is the theme of this party?” Iris asked as she stood on a chair, hanging a garland of gold stars.

“Astronaut princess. Duh,” Allie answered, hands on her hips and wearing a spacesuit topped off by a sparkly, star crown slipped into her curls instead of a helmet.

Iris shook her head in amusement, “Of course. How could I have been confused.”

By noon, the townhouse had been transformed into outer space (a version of outer space with a castle on the moon for their resident astronaut princess) and Dinah arrived with the cake they had ordered from one of Donna’s favorite bakeries in the city.

“I still remember her first birthday,” Dinah remarked when she sat the box down on the kitchen counter. “Wasn’t that just yesterday?”

“Right? I keep asking myself the same question. We have some pictures, come look…” Felicity led her friend over to where they had strung up the pictures she and Oliver had picked out the other night. There were a few from Allie’s first birthday party, a much smaller affair than this one for sure,
including one of her covered almost head to toe in cake frosting with a laughing Dinah in the background.

Dinah smiled at the memory. “I’m still not sure any of that cake actually made it into her mouth.”

“Oh, there’s no way.”

Chapter End Notes

I made my betas cry with this one. My apologies if it had the same affect on you.
Hi friends! 2 quick things before I let you hop into the story...

1) So sorry about skipping an update last week! I had every intention of finishing the chapter to post but real life got in the way :( 

2) The last chapter was hard for me to write as it hit very close to home for me, so it was encouraging to read that I was able to write it in a way that so many of you emotionally connected to the story of Allie's namesake and I really appreciate all of your comments. So sorry I didn't have time to reply to everyone, the response was overwhelming!

Ok without further ado... enjoy the chapter! :D

JUNE

“What’s got you looking so happy?” Felicity asked when she entered Oliver’s office at City Hall for their Wednesday lunch date.

He stood up from his desk to approach her, “Besides the fact that you just walked in?”

She rolled her eyes at his sappiness before tilting her chin up for a kiss, sliding her hands up his chest to rest on his shoulders.

“Thea just informed me that she’s arranged for me to throw the first pitch at the Rocket’s game this weekend,” he answered her with a giddy smile on his face when they broke apart.

“Babe! That’s so exciting.” Squeezing his bicep, she added with a wink, “It’s about time Mayor Handsome got to show off his skills for the city.”

One of her favorite things was watching him in the backyard with Allie as he threw hundreds of balls to help her work on her hitting, or just tossed a ball back and forth with her for hours until she had to call an end to things for bedtime. There were a lot of things that she could offer her daughter, but softball pointers were not one of them. It melted her heart to watch Oliver make an effort to bond with Allie in that way.

Oliver looked down shyly at her praise. “You and Allie will come to the game, right?”

“Of course! We’ve never gotten to watch one from the City Hall box suite. It’s about time I started cashing in on the privileges of being the Mayor’s girlfriend.”

He gave her an amused smile, running his hands up and down her arms. “It’s my weekend with Will, and I was thinking that this would be a great opportunity for the kids to finally meet.”

She nodded, “I agree.”

It had been almost two months now since they had their first coffee date, and, despite all of her initial fears about opening her heart and her family to someone new, she became more confident with each
passing day that she had made the right decision. With their relationship rapidly getting more serious, and it being highly probable that their future involved their families becoming one, it was beyond time that the four of them started hanging out together.

Oliver was awoken by the sound of his phone ringing and he rolled over to hit the decline button before noticing the picture on the screen. One of the few people he would accept a request to FaceTime with at the moment.

“Hey baby, what’s up?” he greeted her with a sleepy grin at the way her hair was a mess of golden bedhead.

“Oh, it’s umm… it’s stupid. I thought you’d already be awake, I’m sorry for—”

“You didn’t—“

“Oh honey, you definitely had an ‘I just woke up’ look on your face when you picked up,” she teased.

“I have no complaints.” He tipped his head, “Except that you’re not here.”

With Will being in town for the weekend, he hadn’t been able to spend the night at her house and she had shut him down pretty quickly when he suggested she and Allie stay over at the loft. He knew she had a good point about that being too much for the kids when they hadn’t even met yet, but he still wished he was waking up to her soft, warm skin pressed against him and her sleepy good morning kisses instead of talking to her through a screen. The past week or so he had spent far more nights in her bed than his own and he much preferred the ones with her.

“Everything okay?” he inquired, drawing her back to her original reason for calling.

“Yeah. Yeah. Like I said, it’s stupid. I guess umm… I’ve gotten so used to you being here and when I woke up by myself I—“ She bit her lip shyly, “I just wanted to say good morning.”

A smile spread across his face at her admission of being just as discontent as he was with their current separation. “Good morning,” he echoed. “You should come over for breakfast.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. You, and Allie, obviously.”

“I don’t want to disrupt your morning.”

“I don’t want to wait until tonight to see you.”

“You’re seeing me right now,” she pointed out teasingly and a low growl escaped him that made her laugh. “Can we come over in our pajamas?”

“Of course.”

“Okay. I’m going to see if Allie’s up yet. We’ll be over as soon as possible.”

After she hung up, he made his way downstairs to get some things together for breakfast. Doing a scan of his pantry and fridge, he decided on a cinnamon and brown sugar baked French Toast casserole that he thought would go over well with his whole—

*Family.*
That he thought would go over well with everyone who would be gathered around the table that morning, he amended.

He knew it was what he and Felicity both wanted eventually, having agreed that they would have gone their separate ways before getting the kids involved if they didn’t see a future together, but he wasn’t sure if he was taking things too fast to already consider the four of them a family.

Well, the four of them plus Thea, who wandered downstairs as he was putting the pan in the oven and greeted him with a good morning that was mumbled mid-yawn. “Whatcha making?”

“Baked French toast. Felicity and Allie are coming over.”

“Oh, that’s nice.” She walked over to start making some coffee and asked over her shoulder, “Will and Allie haven’t met yet, have they?”

“No. So, I’m really excited for them to finally meet. I mean, if things keep going the way they are—the way I’m hoping with Felicity…”

“Somewhere down the line the two of them would end up being step-siblings,” Thea filled in for him.

“Right… I’m detecting a little caution in your tone. Why?”

She turned to face him and put a hand on his shoulder. “I know that Will has already met Felicity and has accepted that you’re dating someone who isn’t his mom, but I want you to be prepared that this whole ‘new family’ thing could be a little overwhelming for him.”

“What?”

“Well, you know, trying to figure out how he fits into the dynamics and—“

His brow furrowed in confusion. “He’s my son. That’s how he fits in…”

“Right. But he’s not here all the time… not like—“

Their conversation was abruptly cut off by Will arriving in the kitchen and taking a seat at the counter with his nose in a book as he greeted them with, “G’morning dad. Aunt Thea.”

He remembered vividly the first time Will had called him Dad. It was last Christmas, after they had spent almost an entire year tackling the confusion and resentment Will had been feeling over him being MIA for his entire life up until that point. Will had opened the Lego Batman set that had been well worth every penny he had spent on it, a hundred times over considering everything he had gained from that night, and his unconscious reaction had been, “Thanks Dad!”

He had shed a few tears. Fatherhood was making him soft.

Will lifted his head. “What smells so good?”

“Breakfast is in the oven. And hey, we need to talk about something really quick.”

Will gave him a wary look “Okay…”

“You’re not in trouble,” he assured him and his son visibly relaxed. “I just wanted to remind you that Felicity and her daughter are going to be hanging out with us today.”

Will nodded, “I remember.”
“I know the plan was originally to meet them at the baseball game later, but I thought it would be nice to have them over for breakfast.” He didn’t understand why Thea was concerned. Will had taken to Felicity almost immediately and Allie was practically just the 8-year-old version of her. Plus, she and Will had a lot of shared interests that he could already see them bonding over. “I think you’re really going to like Allie.”

His son shrugged, “Okay.”

Okay.

Today was important. He wanted Felicity to see that their families could fit together perfectly. Wanted her to see the future that he could picture for them.

When there were still a few minutes left on the oven timer, he opened the door to Felicity and Allie clad in matching pajama pants.

The sight brought a grin to his face. “That was fast.” Felicity pulled him down to her level for a kiss and he muttered against her lips, “Not that I’m complaining.”

Laughing softly, she caressed his face. He closed his eyes at her touch as she bid him, “Good morning.”

“Good morning.”

“Okay. Time to stop being lovey-dovey,” Allie insisted, drawing their attention down to her, standing with her hands on her hips.

“I’m sorry.” He scooped her up and she started to giggle when he kissed her nose. “Did you want a good morning kiss too?”

The timer went off on the oven then and he turned towards the kitchen to find Thea and Will watching him, the latter quickly turning his attention back to his book when he glanced his way. Thea’s expression was unreadable.

Setting Allie down, he walked over to the kitchen with the Smoak girls in tow to pull out the pan of French Toast.

“Good morning Will,” Felicity greeted his son, squeezing his shoulder gently, before acknowledging Thea. “Hi Thea.”

“Hi Felicity. Can I get you some coffee?”

“That would be amazing. Thank you so much.”

Thea brushed by him on her way to the coffee maker, “Remember what I said. Overwhelming.”

He still wasn’t entirely sure what she meant by that. Shrugging it off, he started to plate slices of baked French Toast for everyone while making introductions.

“Allie, this is my son Will. Will, this is my—Felicity’s daughter, Allie.”

“Hi Will!” Allie greeted him enthusiastically, hopping up onto the barstool next to him. “Whatchya reading?”

“It’s a book for school,” he answered dismissively.
Allie went on a tangent about the book that she was reading for school while they all settled in around the counter to eat.

After breakfast, Thea noticed Will sitting off by himself on the bottom step of the stairwell with a dejected expression on his face and she made her way over to him.

“You okay?”

He looked up at her, “It’s not fair.”

“What’s not fair?” Thea asked, sitting down on the step next to him.

“She gets to see him all the time because Dad loves her mom, not mine.”

She followed her nephew’s gaze to where Allie was sitting on the counter talking to Oliver while he and Felicity washed the dishes and understanding dawned on her. This was exactly what she had been trying to communicate to her brother earlier.

“Oh, buddy—"

“I don’t want him to break up with Felicity.” Will added hastily. “She’s really cool. And I know he and my mom are never going to be together. It’s just that sometimes I wish I didn’t have to feel like I want to be in two places at once. Does he even miss me when I’m not here?”

Slinging an arm around his shoulder, she pulled him into her side, “Of course he misses you. He calls you every night, doesn’t he?”

Will nodded in response.

“And he counts down the days until he gets to see you again. I know it might take some getting used to having to share him a little, but you’re never going to be replaced, okay? You’re his son and you’re impossible to replace.”

“Thanks Aunt Thea,” he mumbled.

“You’re welcome. And, if you ask me, little sisters can be pretty awesome,” she added with a teasing nudge. “Just saying.”

He looked at her thoughtfully for a moment before hopping up from the step, and she watched as he walked over to Allie and asked shyly, “You want to check out my Legos?”

Oliver watched as Will led Allie upstairs to his bedroom. Thea, who was sitting on the bottom step, gave him an encouraging smile as they passed.

Thea walked over to him then and patted his arm, “You’re welcome.”

Lifting an eyebrow, he asked, “For what?”

“Will was feeling a little jealous and uncertain about how he fits into—‘ She gestured with her hands, “—all of this, like I predicted.”

Felicity paled, “I am so sorry. Maybe it wasn’t a good idea for us to come over, we should’ve just—“

Thea covered her hand with hers reassuringly, “Felicity. It’s okay. I talked to him about it and I think
he just needs some time to get used to this new normal. You and Allie keeping your distance whenever he’s here isn’t going to help him adjust.”

She smiled, “You’re a good aunt.”

“She is,” Oliver chimed in. “Thank you. I’ll be sure to talk to him later, but it seems like you said the right things.”

“One other word of advice: I think it might be a good idea for you to talk to Samantha about making some changes to your custody arrangement once school is out for the summer. Being here more often might help him to feel more like he’s a part of your life, your family.”

“I—“

“I know you don’t want to push things with her, but your relationship with her is better than it was over a year ago when you first set up this arrangement. She trusts you more. Not to mention that your relationship with Will is so different now too. She might not be open to it, but I don’t think you’ve got anything to lose by talking to her about it.”

He glanced at Felicity, who nodded in agreement, “Your sister is right. It’s perfectly fair for you to ask for more time with your son.”

He sighed, “Okay. I’ll talk to her when I take him back tomorrow night.”

“Good.” Thea took her leave, heading upstairs to take her shower and get ready for the day, leaving he and Felicity alone.

Taking her hand, he led her over to the couch and she settled onto his lap, looping her arms around his neck.

She rested her forehead against his, “Thanks for breakfast.”

“Anytime.”

Her mouth tasted like cinnamon and maple syrup when she parted her lips for him to take advantage of their moment of solitude.

“You think the kids are doing okay up there?” she whispered in between kisses.

“I think they’re fine.” He shifted her to straddle him, groaning when she gave him an involuntary roll of her hips in response to his repositioning.

“This is some risky behavior,” she teased, lightly scratching the back of his head and running her fingers through his hair.

His hands slid down her back to the top of her ass and he pressed her in closer to him, his fingers playing with the waistband of her pajama pants. “I have a reputation for that.”

“You’re going to get in trouble with Allie if she walks in and sees you touching my butt.”

He gave her a firm squeeze at that comment and she leaned in to kiss him with a smile on her lips.

They wandered upstairs an hour later, quietly approaching the door of Will’s room and eavesdropping on the conversation going on inside.
“Where does your dad live? Do you stay with him sometimes?” Will was asking and she inhaled sharply, waiting for Allie’s answer. The subject of Cooper was not an easy one and she was waiting for Allie to start the conversation with her when she was ready to ask questions about her dad. Oliver pressed a hand to her lower back comfortably.

“Oh, I don’t have a dad. Just a mom. And my grandma,” her daughter answered casually.

“Oh.” Will went quiet and she peered in through the crack in the door to see them lying on the floor putting together a Lego set.

“How are things going in here?” she asked, stepping inside the room before Will had a chance to press the subject.

Allie looked up at her with a giddy smile. “Will and I are building the Millennium Falcon!”

She sat down on the floor, leaning against Will’s bed and Oliver joined her, taking her hand in his and intertwining their fingers.

“That’s nice of you to let her work on it with you,” Oliver commented. “I know you’ve been looking forward to putting that set together.”

Will shrugged, “It has over 7500 pieces. I wouldn’t be able to finish it myself before I have to go home without her help.”

They hung out in Will’s room for a while, watching the kids work together. It brought a smile to her face to watch him slowly warm up to her daughter, as she understood completely his hesitation towards Allie earlier that morning.

For so long she had been comfortable with the way things were. Not as happy as she now knew she could be, but comfortable. Safe. The thought of shaking everything up, bringing new people into her life that would redefine her family, had been scary. It was still scary sometimes.

For Will to have this new dynamic thrust on him suddenly because of not being around much while Oliver had been getting closer to her and Allie—it made perfect sense for him to be feeling uncomfortable with the way things had changed.

When the kids finally needed a break from sorting through thousands of tiny gray Legos, Thea rejoined them for a lunch, courtesy of chef Oliver. After eating, their afternoon turned into a fiercely competitive Mario Kart tournament between the five of them that made the time pass quickly.

Before they got ready to leave for the game, Thea gathered them around the dining room table and opened a cardboard box to start pulling out Star City Rocket’s jerseys for each of them.

“Someone from the team’s PR department sent these over for all of us since there’s going to be press and photographers down on the field.”

“Wait, what?” Felicity asked, running her fingers along the letters stitched onto the back of the jersey spelling out “Smoak.”

“When Oliver throws out the pitch, the plan was for us all to be down on the field so the news outlets can get pictures and stuff. This is your first big public outing since releasing a statement on your relationship so—” Thea laughed at whatever expression was on her face. “You don’t have to look so terrified.”

“I didn’t realize…“
Oliver ran his fingers along the inside of her forearm and caught her hand. “You don’t have to come down onto the field if you don’t want to.”

“I just thought it would be a good way for you to give the media some nice pictures without them staking out your house,” Thea explained. “Plus… there are still people in this city who can’t shake their old perception of Ollie Queen, seeing him with you and the kids is good for his image as Mayor.”

“Oh, I see, so we’re just a political ploy,” she teased.

Oliver shot his sister a look before turning to her, “Absolutely not. Don’t feel—”

“Honey, I know,” she cut him off, squeezing his hand. “I was joking. And your sister’s right. If we want to stay in control of the press coverage of our relationship, we have to give them something every once in a while.”

So far Thea’s judgement on how to handle things with the media had been working in their favor. Felicity had been pleasantly surprised that up until this point there hadn’t been reporters hiding out in her bushes or staking out Allie’s school or any of the other things she had been worried were going to come along with being the Mayor’s girlfriend. If they were all going to be at the game anyway, they might as well step into the spotlight for a moment to satisfy the nosier citizens of Star City’s curiosity.

When they got to the stadium, they were met by Oliver’s security detail, including John who had his family with him.

“John,” Felicity greeted him warmly. “Good to see you have a life outside of standing in front of Oliver’s office door.”

His friend and bodyguard laughed and introduced her to Lyla and Sara before turning to him, “I figured it would be okay if they tagged along for the game today?”

“Oh course.” Addressing Lyla, he added, “It’s good to see you.”

They all made their way up to the City Hall box suite where some stadium employees were waiting to escort him down to the field, along with Felicity, Will, Allie, and Thea.

“After you throw out your pitch, there’s going to be some press down on the field to get some pictures of you with your family,” one of the women explained as the entered an elevator and he nodded in understanding, since Thea had already prepared them for that.

“And us too,” Allie added and he looked down at her in confusion. She gestured to Thea, “She said Mom and I are going to be in the pictures too. Right?”

“Yes, sweetheart,” Felicity answered her while he was trying to understand what had prompted her question.

“But the lady said—” Allie tilted her head like something clicked in her mind. “Oh. Are we a part of Oliver’s family?”

Felicity met his eyes over her daughter’s head with a deer in the headlights expression and he took that as his cue that this was his question to answer. Even though earlier he had questioned if it was too soon to think of them as a family, he knew for certain that there really wasn’t any other way to describe how important she and Felicity were to him. They were his family in all the ways that
“Of course you are. I don’t let just anyone come over to my house in their pajamas for breakfast.”

Allie seemed satisfied with that response and reached up to grab a hold of his hand as they exited the elevator.

Stepping out onto the field took him back to a day when he was around his son’s age. His father had thrown out the first pitch on behalf of the pre-scandal Queen Consolidated, one of the team sponsors that summer. The stadium had undergone renovations since then but the memories still flooded back from a time when his view of his father had yet to be tainted. He watched as Will and Allie’s eyes widened much like his had at the experience of being under the lights.

While they stood by the dugout waiting for the players to finish warming up, some of them came by to shake his hand and give the kids high fives. A few appreciative eyebrows were raised in Felicity’s direction and he held back an eye roll as he slipped an arm around her waist. Aware of his intentions, she shot him an amused look but rolled up on her toes to press a kiss to his cheek.

When it was time to get the pre-game festivities started, Allie tugged on his hand to get his attention, “Make sure the ball gets to the plate. That would be really embarrassing if it didn’t.”

Out of the corner of his eye he caught Will trying to stifle a laugh. “It’s a good thing you’ve been helping me practice,” he replied, tossing her a wink before being ushered out towards the pitcher’s mound.

After he threw out his pitch—which made it right across the plate and into the catcher’s mitt to his relief—he said a few words to the crowd before heading back to the sidelines where a swarm of photographers were waiting.

Once they were satisfied with the shots they had gotten, they were able to make their way back up to the box suite to watch the game. Felicity made an instant beeline for where Lyla was sitting to request the chance to hold Sara and he smiled at the way her eyes lit up when she was handed the toddler.

“It’s been a long time since my little munchkin fit this well in my lap,” she remarked as he sat down next to her and he followed her gaze towards Allie, who had made her way to the railing with Will to look out over the field.

“Samantha showed me photos of Will when he was younger. It’s not the same as having memories of my own, but it still helps to be able to picture some parts of the years that I missed.”

She threaded her free hand through the crook of his elbow, causing his frown to fade. One thing he had learned about her was that she was very tactile with her affections. If they were waiting in a line at the coffee shop, she loved to nuzzle her face against his shoulder. When they woke up together, she would trace random patterns across his chest with her fingertips. She loved holding hands at any possible opportunity. Her touch was soothing and comforting and reassuring and intoxicating.

Around the fourth inning he was sent to concessions in search of ice cream at the request of Will and Allie.

“Two strawberry ice cream cones,” he announced upon returning from his errand, handing them over to the kids. “Allie, I’m sorry that they did not have marshmallow.”

She looked at her ice cream cone sadly for a moment before shrugging and getting to work on
devouring it.

“Marshmallow?” Will asked curiously.

Allie paused and glanced over at him with a pink ice cream mustache, “It’s the best topping. You gotta try it dude.”

He gave her an amused look before taking a bite out of his own ice cream and Oliver hoped that just maybe some of his apprehension towards her had been chipped away over the course of the day.

“Are you guys enjoying the game?”

“Yeah! Will is showing me how to keep score in the book,” Allie explained, pointing at the program in his son’s lap. He had been the one to teach Will how to keep score at a game last summer and it had been one of the first moments that he felt a breakthrough in his relationship with his son.

He met Will’s eyes, giving him an approving smile, and he responded with a shrug before dipping his head shyly.

When they pulled up to Felicity’s house, he looked back in the rearview mirror to see all three of his backseat passengers fast asleep. Will and Allie were leaning their heads on Thea’s shoulders who was snoring softly. He nudged Felicity and she turned to look back at them before giving him a smile.

“It’s been a long day,” she whispered.

Reaching over, he took his hand in hers. “A good day though.”

“Yeah.” She glanced over at him shyly, “I could get used to days like this.”

He smiled and brought her hand up to his mouth to brush a kiss over her knuckles. “Me too.”

Their attention was drawn by stirring in the backseat and he looked back to see Allie blinking her eyes sleepily as she straightened up. “Are we home?” she mumbled.

Felicity reached back and squeezed her knee gently, “Yes sweetheart.”

With a yawn, she asked, “Can you carry me inside?”

Felicity shot him a look, “I think that’s a job for you. She’s getting a little too tall for me to lug around.”

Chuckling quietly, he unbuckled himself and got out of the car to retrieve Allie and carry her up to the front porch with Felicity leading the way. Inside, Donna was sitting at the kitchen counter and greeted them as they passed by on their way upstairs.

Once Allie was settled in her bed, he lingered in the hallway for a moment with Felicity.

She looped her arms around his waist and rested her chin on his chest to look up at him. “Have a good day with Will tomorrow, and good luck with Samantha. I guess I’ll see you on Monday?”

He nodded, “Are you going to be free to do lunch?”

“Yeah… and maybe you could come over for dinner too… and spend the night….” She shrugged, her fingers pressing into his back. “Just a suggestion.”
Grinning, he tipped his head down to meet her mouth with his, his hands trailing up and down her back as she demanded more from him, parting her lips so he could deepen the kiss.

“Thea and Will are still in the car,” he muttered against her lips.

“I should let you go.”

He pressed one final chaste kiss to her bottom lip before she released her hold on him.

“Love you.”

“Love you too.”

Back at the loft, he followed his son up to his room and sat down on the edge of his bed to talk to him like he had promised Thea that morning.

“Did you have a good day?”

“Mhmm.”

“Thea mentioned that this morning you were feeling a little left out of things and I just wanted to make sure you know that, no matter what, I—“

Will cut him off, “She doesn’t know who her dad is.” He fiddled with the sleeve of his sweatshirt. “I know what that feels like… so she’s lucky to have you.”

Slinging an arm across Will’s shoulder, he added what he had been trying to say before he was interrupted, “I do love my girls, but they could never replace you—my family could never be complete without you, okay?”

“Promise?”

“Promise.”

“Then… I think I could get used to sharing you with her.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.” Will shrugged, “She talks a lot, but I like her.”

He let out a quiet laugh at his son’s evaluation of Allie. “I had a feeling you would. After all, it’s thanks to the two of you wanting the same Lego set that I met Felicity in the first place.”

Will arched an eyebrow at him curiously—an expression that Thea claimed made his son look even more like his spitting image—and he realized he never told him about how he had met Felicity, so he gave him an abbreviated version.

An incredulous look was on Will’s face when he finished. “You drove eight hours in one night to get me a Christmas present?”

He shrugged, “It was what you wanted. It was worth the drive.”

“I’m sure it also helped that a pretty girl said she’d go with you,” his son teased him.

“Worth it in more ways than one,” he amended with a sheepish smile.
Felicity made herself a cup of tea and joined her mom at the kitchen counter.

“Did you have a good day?” her mom asked.

“Yeah.” She was quiet for a moment before sighing. “I told myself I was going to take things slow but nothing about the past two months with him has been slow. I mean, if he asked me to marry him tomorrow, I’m pretty sure I would say yes without even hesitating—“

“It’s hard to slow down once you’ve started falling for someone—”

“And I guess there’s a part of me that’s still afraid we’re rapidly approaching the crash at the bottom,” she concluded.

Her mom covered one of her hands with her own. “Who says there has to be a crash? If it’s the right person, then you just keep falling more in love with them for the rest of your life.”

Tilting her head, she pondered that thought. “Huh. That’s very poetic.”

“I deal with stressed out brides for a living, you build a good repertoire of reassuring words in this line of work. I used that line last week during a cake tasting emotional breakdown and it worked pretty well then, so I was hoping it would be effective with you too.”

She shook her head in amusement. “I see.”

“But seriously honey, thanks to your father, I have developed a pretty good bullshit detector and I can tell you that, from what I’ve seen, what you have with Oliver is the real deal. Maybe you shouldn’t marry him tomorrow or anything, but I don’t think you should worry about things going too fast when it’s probably just because the timing is right and both of you want the same things.”

Taking a sip of her tea, she nodded in agreement. “Yeah.”

“You’ve spent too much of your life lonely, you deserve a good love story.”

She wanted to believe that. And she was starting to believe that—even after years of thinking that happy endings didn’t happen when Smoak women fall in love.

Leaning her head against her mom’s shoulder, she smiled. “Thanks mama.”

Thea walked into his office on Monday morning holding something behind her back.

“How’d things go last night with Samantha?” she asked. “I tried to stay up until you got back but I obviously didn’t make it.”

“The train was behind schedule so I got in a lot later than usual,” he explained. “And… things went really well.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. School for him gets out in about a week and a half, and then we’re going to switch up our arrangement so I get him every other week until school starts up again.”

Her eyes widened in surprise, “Seriously?”

“I know, I was surprised too that she was willing to let me have an equal amount of time as her, but I
guess Will has been putting in a good word for me. Thank you for encouraging me to talk to her.”

“You’re welcome. I’m so excited for you, you deserve it. You deserve this.” With a flourish, she presented him with the item she had been hiding behind her back, a picture frame. “I got a hold of some of the pictures from Saturday that didn’t make the paper.”

He took the frame from her to look at the photo she had placed inside and a smile spread across his face. By the photographer, it might have been considered an “outtake,” but he favored the image over the more posed one that had accompanied the picture of him throwing his pitch in the sports section yesterday morning. He wasn’t looking at the camera, but rather down at Felicity, and his adoration for her was plainly evident in his expression. Allie was making a funny face (she had quickly tired of putting on her “pretty smile” for the insistent photographer) and Will was laughing at her.

They looked like… a family.

If someone had asked him five years ago what his life was going to look like now, this would have been the furthest thing from his mind, and yet it was everything he never knew how much he wanted.
Hi friends! Sorry this chapter is going up a little late today. I changed my mind on some things that take place in this chapter and that turned into me ripping it apart and rewriting a lot of it... hence it just now being finished. Happy reading!

Oliver could tell that Felicity’s mind was a million miles away from their lunch date, as her responses were monosyllabic and she had been picking up and putting down her burger without actually taking a bite for the entire time since she had unwrapped it from the foil.

Reaching over, he placed a hand on her thigh to get her attention, “Babe.” She startled out of her dazed stare out the window behind him and he asked, “Is something wrong?”

“It’s stupid,” she dismissed immediately and he frowned.

“It’s probably not.”

Sighing, she explained, “There’s this big tech conference in New York next weekend. Professionals in programming, medicine, and everything in between, since technology has basically permeated every field, network and present at it. It’s incredibly inspiring and I hope one day to have the opportunity to give a keynote there myself. Anyway, I went to this conference with Ray for the first time four years ago, back when I started as his VP and I met some of my now best friends there. Since then, we’ve made it into kind of an annual girl’s trip.” He gave her an amused smile and she laughed, “A little nerdy, I know, but have you met me?”

“It sounds like your kind of heaven,” he acknowledged fondly. “Let me guess, girl’s weekend isn’t happening this year?”

She deflated against the couch, “It is, but I’m not going to be in attendance.”

“Why not?”

“There was a mix-up with my mom and I’s calendars and she’s going to be in Costa Rica for a destination wedding and Dinah is going to be out of town too so I don’t know what to do about Allie and—“

“Felicity,” he interrupted her. It stung a little bit that it seemed she hadn’t even considered asking him for help. Did she think he couldn’t be trusted with this? That he wouldn’t want to? He wanted nothing more than to be the person her ex had failed to be for the both of them. “Ask me if Allie can stay with me over the weekend so you can go on your trip.”

Her mouth dropped open into a little “o” and she shook her head, “Oh no, I can’t ask you to—“ He fixed her with a look and she looked up at him a little doubtfully, “Seriously? You would be okay with that?”

“If I wasn’t happily willing to spend the weekend with your daughter I think that would be grounds for dumping me,” he deadpanned and she practically jumped into his lap to pepper his face with kisses.
“You. Are. The. Best.” Still cozied up to him, she reached for her phone and he watched as she excitedly texted her friends the news that she was back on for girl’s weekend before kissing him again. “Thank you so much. I owe you big time.”

Running his hands down her arms he assured her, “No you don’t. I love spending time with Allie and I want you to know you can rely on me.”

She nodded in understanding and gave him a small smile, “Okay. Sorry. I guess I’m still getting used to being in a healthy relationship.”

“He too,” he admitted with a shrug. He couldn’t even consider his past flings relationships, let alone healthy ones. Not to mention, although they had put on a united front for the sake of he and Thea, he knew his parents had had their share of problems behind closed doors up until his father’s death. He wasn’t interested in emulating their marriage.

“Well… I think you’ve been a pretty amazing boyfriend so far,” she remarked, sliding her fingers up and down his tie. He was going to have to fix it before returning to City Hall but he didn’t mind her habit to fiddle with his clothes in the slightest.

“Do you think Allie will be comfortable staying with me?” he asked, vocalizing one of his fears. While he had spent plenty of time with her, so far it had always been with Felicity around too.

“Oh, definitely. She’s going to be thrilled.” She patted his chest, “You know she loves you.”

A smile turned up the corners of his mouth. “I love her too. She can stay in Will’s room since it’ll be his week with Samantha. I’ll make sure to stock up the kitchen with stuff to make her favorite meals and—”

Felicity interrupted him with a laugh. “She might not want to come back to live with me.”

Shaking his head in amusement, he brushed a piece of her hair away from her face and tipped her chin up for a kiss to prevent himself from making a comment about moving in together. It always got awkward when the topic came up and he didn’t understand why she was so dismissive of the idea since she asked him to stay over practically every night anyway. But he didn’t want to be pushy. They had only been together for three months. With her past experiences, he would understand if there was a part of her that was still feeling insecure in their relationship. And if she still questioned whether he was completely committed to having a future with her, she wouldn’t want to move into a new home—move Allie into a new home yet.

“So, tell me more about this conference…” he prompted when they broke apart, sending her into an excited ramble about parties and panels and presentations that made him smile.

Felicity walked into the house that evening after work to find her mom and daughter sitting at the kitchen counter eating leftovers from when Oliver had been over earlier in the week.

“You couldn’t wait for me?” she asked teasingly, pressing a kiss to Allie’s head.

“Sorry! We were hungry and you’re late,” her daughter pointed out.

“I know, I know.” She set down her purse and made up her own plate of food to pop in the microwave. “I had a meeting with our medical tech team and we lost track of time. They’re working on some seriously incredible stuff. Curtis has got this idea for a bio implant that would help paraplegics walk again. It’s still in the really early developmental stages, but it could change so many people’s lives if he’s successful.”
“I’m glad this meeting lifted your mood honey,” her mom began. “I know how upset you were this morning about the New York trip, and I’m really sorry about—“

“Oh, well about that actually…” She leaned across the counter to address Allie. “How would you feel about spending a weekend at Oliver and Thea’s house?”

Allie’s eyes widened, “Is that happening?”

“Yep. Oliver said you could stay with them while I’m in New York.”

She bounced up and down in her seat excitedly, “Yes!”

Felicity smiled at her daughter’s enthusiasm, a reaction that she wouldn’t have had back in April. She had been terrified then at the thought of Allie getting attached to someone who she was convinced would leave after he had enough time to come to the same conclusion as her father and Cooper had. That she wasn’t worth sticking around for, worth fighting for. Wasn’t loveable enough. Those fears sometimes still whispered in her head, but they had been growing quieter and quieter as the days had passed. Like she had told Oliver earlier, she supposed she was still getting used to being in a relationship with someone she could rely on to be there for her, and that’s why it hadn’t even crossed her mind to ask him. But she was glad he had pressed her on what was bothering her, because his willingness to help had reminded her once again that he was not the boy who had broken her heart.

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JULY

“Did you get the email I sent you?” Felicity asked Oliver when she stepped into the loft with Allie in tow.

“Well hello to you too, my love,” Oliver greeted her teasingly, pulling her in for a kiss.

“Sorry. Hello,” she muttered against his mouth before he released her.

“Sorry. Hello,” she muttered against his mouth before he released her.

“Yes, I got your email. In case of emergencies, her epi-pen is in her backpack and there’s a back-up in the case in her duffel bag. She has a Skype call with her summer tutor at 3pm on Friday. Her last softball game of the year is on Saturday morning, be at the park by 10am. If I need to contact—”

“Okay, okay,” she interrupted him. “I know I don’t have to worry. It’s a force of habit.”

“Don’t worry about us mom, we’ll be fine,” Allie assured her.

“That’s right,” Oliver chimed in, taking Allie’s suitcase from her. “So you can just enjoy your weekend with your friends.”

She sighed, “I will.” Smoothing her hand across his chest, she fiddled with the fabric of his shirt. “I trust you.”

“Thank you.”

“Thank you.”

“Don’t you have a flight to catch?” Allie asked impatiently.

She looked down at her daughter, who was clearly ready to have Oliver’s attention to herself for the weekend, with amusement. “Ok Little Miss Sassy Pants. Yes, I do. But since it’s my jet, it waits for me to do this—“ Wrapping her hands around the back of Oliver’s neck she pulled him down to her
to get one last kiss. She smiled against his mouth when she heard Allie grumble in disgust and run off in search of Thea.

He cradled her face in his hands and, in between pressing a few more chaste kisses to her lips, asked her to give him a call when she landed.

“Of course—Have fun—But don’t let her manipulate you.”

An eyebrow lifted and he paused his kisses. “What do you mean by that?”

“We both have this same look—” She gave him her puppy dog eyes and pout that usually accompanied a request. “—that you have a really hard time saying no to.”

Dropping his hands, a sheepish smile appeared on his face, and he shrugged, “Guilty as charged.”

“Stay strong,” she commanded, faux-seriously.

“I’ll do my best.”

“Okay…” Reluctantly, she took a little step back from him. “I really should get going now.”

“Yeah.” He took a hold of one of her hands and brushed his thumb over her knuckles. “I love you.”

“Love you too.”

Felicity stepped into the hotel lobby in New York and was instantly greeted by Lena, Caitlin, and Iris, who had arrived ahead of her.

“Felicity!” “Oh, I’m so glad you could make it!” “It wouldn’t be the same without you,” all came out in a jumble as they exchanged hugs.

“I’m so glad I could make it too. I was really bummed thinking I was going to miss out on this.”

Iris rested a hand on her shoulder, “We would not have let that happen. If push came to shove, we could’ve gotten Allie to Central City to hang out with Barry and the twins for the weekend. Nothing gets in the way of girl’s weekend. My editor almost tried to reassign coverage of this to another jounro and I shut that down quickly.”

Felicity shook her head in amusement as they headed towards the elevators. The first thing on their agenda that weekend was a cocktail party, where she’d most likely be bombarded by journalists asking about her first year as CEO at Palmer Tech, since the promotion had come right after last year’s conference.

Which was why she had picked a dress that made her feel powerful.

Iris zipped up the back for her and patted her on the shoulder, “You look amazing. Oliver is going to be disappointed he’s missing out on this dress.”

When her friend left the room she took a few selfies in front of the floor length mirror and sent them to Oliver before she could feel self-conscious about it and change her mind.

The text she got back from her boyfriend made her blush from head to toe.

At the party, she was approached by a number of journalists, as per her expectations. In the past, she had often struggled with tripping over her words, so she was relieved when she made it through her
interviews without any hiccups. There were a few sexist questions, but she managed to turn them around on them. Everything was going smoothly until…

“Felicity?”

It was a voice she hadn’t heard in years.

Pivoting on her heels, she took a deep breath. “Myron.”

“You know, I wasn’t a fan of the blonde when you first did it, but it suits you.”

“Uhh… thanks?”

“How’ve you been?”

“Good. Really good, actually.”

She didn’t want to talk to him any longer. She had put the lid firmly on her college years and the last thing she wanted was to dig those memories back up again so she could reminisce with her ex’s ex-roommate.

“And the baby…”

“Is the best thing that ever happened to me. Look, I should go—my friends…” She started to walk away but he caught her arm with a solemn look on his face.

“Wha—“

“Felicity… you didn’t hear what happened, did you?”

Her brow furrowed in confusion, “I—I don’t think so?”

“Can I talk to Will too?” Allie asked, settling into his lap in her pajamas as he was about to make his nightly call to his son.

“Of course.” Putting the call on speaker, he quickly found himself to not be a necessary participant in the conversation. He listened as Allie asked Will about his week and he held her about the science camp he had been at while Samantha was at work. They made plans for the Lego City they had started constructing in Will’s bedroom when he was in town last week, and he made her promise not to work on the hospital without him. Finally, he had to cut things off so they could get in a chapter of The Battle of the Labyrinth before he had to hang up for the night. Allie insisted on sticking around even though they were in the middle of the book and she had no idea what was going on. It ended up not mattering though, because he only got a few sentences in before she had fallen asleep on him.

Finishing up the chapter, he talked quietly to Will for a few minutes before letting him go for the night. Allie was still curled up against his chest and he carefully stood up with her in his arms to carry her upstairs.

When he settled her into Will’s bed, she stirred a little, her eyes blinking sleepily to look up at him.

“Can we have a book too?” she asked. “That you read to me…”

He nodded, “Yeah, if you’d like that, we can pick one out tomorrow.”
“Tomorrow. Okay. Good,” she murmured as her eyes closed again. “I like to pretend that you’re my dad,” came out as barely even a faint whisper before she started to snore softly and his heart tightened in his chest.

Pressing a kiss to her forehead, he pulled the covers up over her and backed out of the room quietly.

Thea was standing in the doorway where she had been watching the exchange, “If you have any doubts—“

“I don’t,” he assured her abruptly.

“Okay good.” She patted his chest, “Because you’re in way too deep now to not cause some serious damage if you get scared.”

“I know, but I’m not scared. This is what I want.”

Thea gave him a soft smile, “I’m proud of you. Dad would be so proud of the man you’ve become since he— since we lost him.”

He pulled his sister in for a comforting hug. Despite his father’s faults, he had been good to them and there were still days where he missed him. Wished he could ask him for advice. Wished he could see him as a grandfather. But if he hadn’t gone through the experience of losing his father, of feeling his old, comfortable life crumble beneath his feet with the Glades, he wasn’t sure that he would be the man he was now. The man who could handle the responsibility of a family.

“I don’t even know why I’m crying…” Felicity mumbled as she attempted to fix the mascara that was running down her face while Iris held her other hand and Lena rubbed her back. “He hasn’t meant anything to me in a long time.”

“But you did love him once, and he’s the father of your child,” Caitlin pointed out.

She scoffed, “That’s a stretch, seeing as the only thing he ever gave her was some DNA.”

Iris squeezed her hand, “Still, you’re allowed to feel some grief.”

Fresh tears started to fall down her face as she was struck with the realization of what she was really feeling. “It’s not grief, it’s guilt. If I hadn’t given him my algorithm—”

Lena cut her off, “Okay, now what you’re not going to do, is start blaming yourself for decisions that he made. You didn’t force him to hack the DOE and it’s not your fault that he killed himself.”

“Yeah,” Iris chimed in. “You can’t put that on yourself.”

Her make-up was beyond salvaging and she crumpled the tissue in her hand. “How am I going to explain all of this to Allie someday?”

Her friends fell silent.

“It’s not going to be easy,” Iris finally said. “But you’re right, the only thing Cooper gave her was some DNA. So maybe she won’t care about hearing all the details. Maybe what’s more important than the father who didn’t want her… is the one who does.”

A small smile turned up the corners of her mouth as the memories she had carefully tucked away of Oliver and Allie interacting played like a movie in her mind. “Yeah.”
In the mirror, she saw her friends exchange a look before Iris tugged on her hand, “C’mon, let’s sneak you out of here without attracting the attention of any of the photographers. I think what you need is a glass of wine and a bath in the amazing jacuzzi tub back at the hotel.”

She let them usher her out of the bathroom, remarking with a sniffle, “That tub did look amazing…”

“Hey Boss, Zoe’s nanny called in sick last minute and I was wonder—“ Rene’s sentence dropped off when he walked into Oliver’s office Friday morning and noticed Allie sitting on the floor coloring at the coffee table. “—wondering if it would be okay if she hung out in my office today. But apparently I missed the memo that it was bring your kid to work day.”

Oliver leaned back in his chair. “It’s not. But Felicity’s out of town, so I have Allie for the weekend. Zoe is more than welcome to hang out.”

“She can color with me,” Allie piped up from on the floor, holding up her coloring book to display the intricate design she had been meticulously filling in.

Rene smiled at her. “Okay, I will see what she wants to do.”

A minute later he returned with Zoe trailing shyly behind.

“She’s cute,” Rene commented as he and Oliver watched Allie engage Zoe in conversation, quickly bringing a smile to her face.

“Yeah,” he agreed fondly.

Rene gave him a knowing look. “She got you wrapped around her finger already?”

“Yep.”

He thought about his phone call with Felicity the night before, not long after Allie had gone to bed, when she had told him what she had learned about her ex-boyfriend.

“Felicity… I’m so sorry.”

“You don’t need to be sorry. I lost him a long time ago.”

“I know, but he was still the father of your child.”

“Not really. I mean, sure, he gave her some chromosomes, but he never made her a special birthday breakfast, or cheered for her at any of her softball games, or told her he loved her. He never even knew her name—she’s never going to think of him as her father…”

“I like to pretend that you’re my dad.” Allie’s words echoed in his head as Felicity spoke.

“…so I’m not sad for her, or for me. Just sad for him—that he walked down a path that led to this ending,” she concluded. “And… I guess I feel a little guilty over the part that I played.”

“Girl… what did we tell you about that?” He heard Iris’ voice in the background and
he shook his head in amusement.

“You should listen to your friends,” he advised.

“I know… they are pretty smart,” she consented with a sigh. “Literally, like there’s a lot of IQ points between the three of them. But anyway… hopefully your evening was a little less dramatic than mine?”

“Yeah… the most dramatic thing that happened was the heart attack I almost had when you sent me those pictures of you in that dress that you’re definitely going to have to wear again when I can appreciate it in person,” he reported, eliciting a laugh from her that he was happy to hear after how sad and tired she had sounded when he first picked up the phone.

“Well then Mr. Queen, I guess you’ll have to ask me out on a date sometime…”

He had made reservations for next Friday at La Mesa as soon as they hung up.

Both of his girls had him wrapped around their finger.

Later that afternoon while Allie was on her Skype call with her tutor, Laurel stopped by the office to ask if he wanted to come over for dinner.

“The clinic had a staff luncheon today and Tommy called to let me know he somehow got picked to take home all the leftovers. That we definitely do not have room in our fridge for. I’ve already roped Sara, Nyssa, Thea, and my Dad in, so please come help.”

He tilted his head over to Allie, “Am I allowed a plus-one?”

Laurel glanced over at her. “Of course. Thea mentioned you two had a special guest this weekend. 6:30?”

He nodded in confirmation, “We’ll be there.”

He wanted Allie to get to know his friends like Will had, and this was a good chance for that.

At dinner, he found himself sitting next to Sara and asked her about her plans for the weekend.

“Nyssa and I are going to be helping my friend Amaya with her adopt-a-thon.”

His brow furrowed in confusion, “Her what?”

“Adopt-a-thon,” Sara repeated. “She works as a vet at the animal shelter downtown and they’re having an event tomorrow to try and find new owners for a bunch of rescue dogs that they’ve been rehabilitating. It might be nice for the Mayor to make an appearance…”

“Ooooh can we go?” Allie asked from where she was sitting on the other side of him, pulling on his arm. “Please?”

He shrugged, “I suppose we could make a stop in the afternoon after your softball game.”

“Yes! Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

“Oliver…” Allie came walking into the kitchen Saturday morning with her softball uniform on and her hair slightly resembling a lion’s mane. He had learned that Felicity’s natural hair was pretty close
to her daughter’s and he loved running his hands through those soft curls when she let it air dry. “I need you to do my braids.”

“Your what?”

She held up two hair elastics, “My braids. Mom always French braids my hair for my games.”

“Oh.” He eyed her hair and took a deep breath. This was definitely outside his area of expertise. “Uhhh…. Thea?!”

His sister peeked her head down over the edge of the loft railing, “Yeah?”

“I need your help.”

She made her way downstairs and asked, “With what?”

Gesturing at Allie, he explained, “She needs her hair French braided. You know how to do that, right?”

“Do you not know how to braid?”

“When would I have learned that particular skill? Can’t you just do it?”

Thea crossed her arms over her chest, “No.”

“No?”

“No.”

“No?”

“Please?"

“No, I’m not doing this for you. If you’re going to have a daughter, you need to figure this stuff out.”

“I—“ Closing his mouth, he let his argument die. That was a valid point. He looked down at Allie who was still waiting expectantly for him and took the hair elastics from her. “Ok. How hard can this be?”

Two YouTube tutorials, and a lot of biting his tongue to avoid cursing, later, he was actually pretty pleased with the result of his efforts. Thea, who had been taking pictures while he worked because she claimed it was adorable and Felicity would appreciate seeing them, assessed his work.

“I’m impressed. And see? You didn’t even need me.”

“Are you going to come to my game Thea?” Allie asked.

Thea frowned, “I’m sorry, I already had plans with my mom.”

“It’s okay.”

“But… when we’re both home tonight we can do manicures and pedicures. Sound like a plan?”

Allie nodded enthusiastically, “Sounds like a plan.”

His sister turned back to him, “I’ll see you later.”

“Okay. Tell mom I said hi.”
“I will. Don’t yell at the refs,” she returned. “Again.”

“I never—“

Thea smirked, “Felicity and I text each other, you know that, right?”

“Busted,” Allie chimed in with a smirk of her own.

“They made a bad call,” he replied defensively at being double-teamed and Thea laughed before heading upstairs to get dressed.

He was making dinner when Felicity called and he put the phone on speaker so he could continue cooking while they talked.

“So today we—Do I hear a dog barking?”

“What?”

“A dog. I thought you were at home? Why do I hear a dog?”

“Well…” Bruce barked again and he let out a long exhale. “I was not strong.”

“What do you mean?”

“Allie and I went to the adopt-a-thon at the animal shelter today and we came home with a dog,” he confessed. “She wanted one so badly and she gave me the look and—” Felicity was laughing and he stopped talking while she pulled herself together.

“What kind of dog?” she asked.

“A black lab. She named him Bruce.”

“For Batman, of course.”

“You’re not mad, are you?”

“Why would I be mad?”

“Well I didn’t ask you if it would be okay if we got a dog—“

“We. If we got a dog. Are we at the point in our relationship where “we” get a dog? Like if you get a dog it’s really “us” getting a dog, because I—“

“Felicity. I think you’re overthinking this.”

“Right.” She sighed. “Wow, Allie really is not going to want to come back home now. We might have to move in together.”

“Really?” “Just kidding.” They spoke at the same time before falling silent.

“Kidding,” she echoed weakly. “Umm… so the last panel is until 1 tomorrow and then I’m flying home after that, so I’ll be by to pick Allie up around 9:30.”

He did his best to keep his disappointment at the topic of them moving in together being brushed off again from being apparent to her, but his voice sounded a little flat when he responded with, “Okay.”
“Okay. Umm… can I talk to Allie?”

“Yeah. Let me go find her, I think she and Thea are painting their toenails.”

After Allie spoke with her for a few minutes, the phone was handed back to him and the tension from before was gone as she told him about the Women in STEM panel she had gone to that day that she was trying to get a spot on for next year’s conference.

“Allie! Your mom’s here,” he announced as he made his way to meet Felicity at the door of the loft Sunday night.

Allie came bounding down the stairs with Bruce on her heels, who beat him to getting the first kiss from his girlfriend.

“Oooof,” Felicity startled as the dog greeted her enthusiastically. “Well aren’t you friendly,” she remarked when he finally settled down, scratching him behind his ears.

“I think Bruce can tell that you’re my mom, that’s why he likes you already,” Allie mused, reaching up to her mom for a hug. “Did you have fun in New York?”

“Yes, I did.” Felicity squeezed her tightly, “But I missed you.”

“I missed you too. But only a little bit, because I was having a lot of fun with Oliver and Thea.”

Felicity laughed at her confession before releasing her and turning her attention to him. Wrapping her arms around him, she tilted her head up for a kiss that he happily obliged.

“Thank you for taking good care of her.”

“Anytime.” He brushed his nose against hers. “And if it makes you feel better, I missed you more than just a little bit.”

She smiled and pressed another kiss to his lips before sighing, “Well… it’s late, so we should probably head home…”

Allie made a noise of protest and he shook his head, “You should stay the night.”

“Oh, I don’t know—I’m really tired from traveling and—”

“And you could get to sleep sooner if you walked upstairs to my room instead of driving all the way home,” he pointed out, knowing full well that she was just messing with him and there was no way she was planning on going home. “Please?”

She narrowed her eyes teasingly, “Are you giving me the look right now?”

“Is it working?”

“You know…” She tapped out a pattern across his chest. “You pull off the puppy dog eyes pretty successfully Mayor Handsome.”

“So is that a yes?”

“Yes, we’ll stay the night. Obviously.”

Grinning at her answer, he tugged on her hand to lead her upstairs. After they got Allie settled into
Will’s bed with Bruce curled up at her feet, they made their way down the hall to his room.

He sat down on the edge of his bed and beckoned for her to join him. Holding up a finger to signal for him to wait, she shed her dress before straddling his lap. His hands wrapped around her back and he dragged his lips across her collarbones as his fingers traced along the lines of her undergarments before pausing at the clasp of her bra.

He looked up at her, “You said you were tired, so…”

She yawned in response. “Yeah. Sorry. I thought I might catch a second wind but, this is going to have to wait until after I get some sleep.”

“It’s okay. I personally think that morning sex is underrated.”

She laughed softly and climbed off of him so that he could stand up and pull the covers back on the bed for her to crawl in. Once he had quickly shed his shirt and pants, he joined her. Settling in behind her, her back against his chest with their legs tangling together, his hand found her hip to draw circles there across her skin.

In his philandering days, he did not appreciate spooning enough.

“You know, it’s not that I don’t want to move in with you. I don’t want you to think that,” she whispered abruptly as he started to feel himself falling asleep.

Suddenly he was wide awake. “What do you want me to think?”

Turning around in his arms to face him, she sighed, “I don’t think you’re thinking all of this through. It’s not as simple as just what we want. Selfishly, yes, I want to move in with you now. I don’t want to have to ask you to stay the night because we just go home together to our home that we share. But what about the other people we currently live with? My mom, Thea, the kids? Neither of our current houses could really accommodate a permanent situation for us and I don’t think it’s fair to shuffle everyone’s lives around. I’m not ready to shuffle my life around. Not yet.”

If he was being honest, he hadn’t really thought through all the logistics but what she was saying made complete sense. She had lived with her mom for the past eight years, and he and Thea had lived together at the loft for almost five. A lot would change by them moving in together, and it was understandable that she felt they should prolong that.

“Felicity…”

“I’m sorry.” She closed her eyes. “Please don’t be mad at me.”

“I’m not mad at you.”

“I hate feeling like I’m disappointing you.”

“You’re not.”

Her eyes fluttered open again, “But—“

“You’re right. This is a big step and involves other people’s living arrangements. We shouldn’t rush into it without taking that into consideration. I’m just glad we finally, actually talked about this.”

“Me too. I should’ve told you why I was having reservations sooner, instead of brushing you off
every time you brought it up. I’m sorry if I made you think I was having second thoughts about us, because I promise I’m not.”

“No, that wasn’t—“ He let out a long exhale, “I wasn’t worried about that. I was worried that you were afraid to take this step because you were still doubting that the future I want involves you and Allie.” Caressing her face, he assured her, “But I’ve never been more sure of anything. The past three months have been the happiest time of my life and I can’t imagine ever going back to the way things were before you walked into my office.”

She held his gaze silently for a moment before whispering, “That’s good. Because I can’t either.”

They exchanged a long, lingering kiss and then she turned back around so he could pull her flush against his body again, their fingers tangling together over her stomach as they drifted off to sleep.
Hi friends! Sorry this chapter is up a little late again. I was traveling back to school today after Thanksgiving break and didn't get a chance to post the chapter before I left... on the bright side, I added 1.5k to it while I was in the car lol. Next week there won't be a new update because this is a really busy time for me with school and I need some extra time to get the next chapter written BUT... my countdown to Christmas starts next weekend on December 1st so there will still be some stuff from me to read next weekend and I'll be back to a new chapter of this fic on December 9th :D Enjoy this week's chapter!

“Hey babe, just confirming that we’re still good for lunch today?”

Felicity stifled a groan at the thought of eating anything and cleared her throat, “Ummm yeah, about that…. I totally forgot about lunch, but I’m going to have to cancel on you because Allie and I are home sick with what I’m pretty sure is the flu.” Exhaling as another wave of nausea hit her, she muttered, “Who gets the flu in July? How does that happen?”

“There’s been a couple people out sick from City Hall, so it must be going around. I’m sorry to hear you’re not feeling well. Is your mom sick too?”

“No. And she’s venue scouting with a bride today, so, lucky her, she’s getting to avoid the germs here.”

“Wait, so you and Allie are home all alone?” His voice was laced with concern and she didn’t want him to be worrying about them all day at work when he had more important things to be thinking about.

“We’re fine Oliver. All we’re going to do today is be lazy bums and hope that it passes through our systems quickly.”

Belatedly, she realized that he had hung up before giving her the chance to make her reassurances, and she sighed in resignation as she settled back against the couch.

Less than fifteen minutes passed before she heard a soft knock on the door and she briefly debated ignoring him so he would hopefully just go back to work. She was looking all kinds of awful and, she didn’t care how good things were between them, it was way too early in their relationship for him to see her like this.

He was nothing if not determined though and she finally dragged herself to her feet to plod over to the front door and unlock it.

“How many laws did you break to get here this quickly, Mr. Fast and Furious?” she asked as he stepped inside.

He blinked innocently, “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” His eyes trailed down her body
and she tried not to feel self-conscious about her disheveled appearance. She was wearing one of his sweatshirts, the ultra-soft gray fabric wrapping her up in a cocoon, and her hair was in its wildly curly state, haphazardly pulled back in what could barely pass as a ponytail anymore. Her glasses only magnified the dark circles underneath her eyes.

Looking down at her feet clad in fuzzy socks, she fiddled with the sweatshirt zipper, “Sorry for getting my germs on this.”

“I don’t care.” He opened up his arms and pulled her towards him for a hug.

She protested at first, “I don’t want to get you sick.”

“I have a superior immune system, I’ll be fine.”

Rolling her eyes, she let herself relax against him as his hands came up to rub her back.

“I appreciate you coming to check in on us, but you should really go back to work,” she muttered against his chest.

“Thea, Quentin, and Rene have things handled. There’s nothing on the agenda today more important than taking care of my girls.”

She felt the exhaustion of being up all night with a sick eight-year-old hit her like a train and she had to admit the idea of having him around to take care of them was becoming more and more appealing.

“Okay,” she sighed in resignation.

“Where’s Allie?” he asked.

“Asleep. Poor thing was up almost all night getting sick and she finally crashed when she had nothing left in her stomach.”

“What can I do for you?”

“Can you make me some peppermint tea? There should be some on the top shelf of the pantry.”

“Of course.” He pressed a kiss to her forehead. “Go make yourself comfortable.”

Returning to the couch, she crawled back under her pile of quilts and waited for Oliver.

MOM: how are things going there honey?

FELICITY: A is finally getting some sleep

FELICITY: Oliver is here now so we’ll be well taken care of

MOM: oh good. just let me know if I can bring anything home for you. love you

FELICITY: love you too

Tossing her phone to the side, she gratefully accepted the steaming mug of tea from Oliver.

“Thank you.”

He squeezed her shoulder, “You’re welcome. I’m going to go upstairs and change. Do you need anything from your room?”
She shook her head “no” and took a sip of her tea while he retreated for the stairs. When he returned a few minutes later in sweatpants and a t-shirt from the supply of clothes he kept in the top drawer of her dresser, he situated them on the couch so that her head was resting on his lap. His fingers gently massaged her scalp and stroked her hair and she closed her eyes at his soothing ministrations.

“I was going to ask you at lunch what you thought about going on a vacation before the summer is over. You, me, and the kids.”

She smiled up at him. “That would be nice. Where were you thinking?”

“My family owns a lake house that hasn’t gotten much use over the past couple of years, but I have good memories there from when Thea and I were growing up.”

“I think that would be really fun.” She groaned as he stomach turned. “Although right now I can’t even think about leaving this couch.”

They made it through several episodes of Dr. Who (he was at the least pretending to be invested for her sake) before she had to excuse herself to get sick.

“Don’t follow me,” she directed him as she made a beeline for the bathroom.

But, as previously demonstrated, he was not in a listening mood that day. The moment her knees hit the floor, he was behind her holding her hair and rubbing her back. As embarrassed as she was that he was seeing her like this, the thought that it would have been nice to have him around when this was her morning routine during her first trimester with Allie briefly flashed through her mind.

“I am so sorry,” she breathed out when her stomach finally stopped doing somersaults. “You did not sign up for this.”

“It’s okay.” He continued to rub her back, “I told you I was here to take care of you. And uhh… trust me, this is not the first time I’ve seen a girl get sick. I’m just glad it wasn’t all over my lap in the back of a limo.”

“Blegh.”

“Yeah… I never called her back. But I wasn’t really into second dates back then anyway.”

This coming from the guy who didn’t even wait 24 hours to call her after their first date to ask about a second. If she wasn’t sick and sitting on the floor of the bathroom she would feel pretty good about herself.

She wiped her mouth with the back of her hand and sighed in disgust, “I feel really gross right now and like all the energy has been sucked out of my body. I think I’m going to go upstairs and take a bath.”

Before she could protest, he was scooping her up off of the floor and cradling her in his arms to carry her upstairs as easily as if she was Allie.

“Show off,” she mumbled against his shoulder, feeling his chest shake with laughter.

Once he sat her down in her bathroom, she caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror and winced at her appearance.

“Well, now I know you really do love me if you weren’t put off by this—“ She gestured at herself.
“What are you talking about?”

“I look like a train wreck.”

“No you don’t—“ She fixed him with a look and he shut his mouth, turning away to start running her bath while she shed her clothes.

Settling into the water, she sighed as the warmth relaxed her aching body and Oliver started to massage her shoulders. “For the record, even sick with the flu and— okay not looking your best, I still think you’re beautiful.”

She rolled her eyes. “You’re just saying that to get boyfriend points, and it’s working, but—”

“I’m being serious Felicity. Every day I ask myself how I got so lucky to get to be with someone as beautiful as you. On the inside and out.”

“Oh.”

**Marry. Me.**

He dipped his head down to kiss her cheek. “That’s the plan.”

She didn’t have a chance to get flustered over accidentally voicing her thoughts aloud, and the fact that he didn’t even skip a beat in responding, because they heard a soft knock at the bathroom door.

“Mommy?”

He gave her shoulders one last squeeze, “I’ve got her.”

Opening the door, he was met by Allie’s outstretched arms and when he picked her up she clung to him like a koala.

“Oliver my tummy hurts.”

“I’m sorry baby girl. I wish I could make it feel better.”

“Can you read to me?”

“Of course.” He turned to look back at Felicity soaking in the tub. “Are you going to be okay in here?”

She nodded. “Yeah. You guys can just make yourselves comfortable in my bed. I’ll be out in a little bit.”

Leaving the bathroom, he set Allie down so she could grab her Kindle from her room before rejoining him in Felicity’s bedroom and cuddling up next to him.

They had made it through a few chapters of the Nancy Drew mystery she picked out when he glanced up to see Felicity wrapped up in her robe and standing in the doorframe of the bathroom watching them with a soft smile on her face.

“Aren’t you going to join us?” Allie asked her mom when she realized what had diverted his attention.

“Yep.”
He continued to read while Felicity moved to put on some clean clothes before joining them and he shifted his arm so that he could pull her in close to him.

After reading for a while, they switched over to a movie and both Allie and Felicity were asleep, curled up on either side of him, when Donna peeked her head into the room a few hours later. She gave him an appreciative smile and came to sit on the edge of the bed. “Thank you for taking care of them today.”

He tried to brush it off. “It’s no big deal—“

“But it is.” She rested a hand on Felicity’s thigh. “Especially to this girl who has spent most of her life having to look out for herself. I’ve always wanted her to find someone who could take some of that weight off of her shoulders. I know she’s still learning how to let you do that, but she has come a long way from the girl who had resigned herself to having to be alone.”

“I don’t want her to ever be alone again. I love her very much.” He tilted his head towards Allie. “Both of them.”

Donna reached out to pat his cheek, “I know.”

“Felicity, honey? We’re here. Are you guys ready?” she heard Oliver call from downstairs.

“Yeah! We’ll be right down.”

She surveyed the contents of her suitcase one last time to make sure she had everything she wanted packed before zipping it up. After she and Allie had recovered from their bout with the flu, she and Oliver had made their plans for a trip to the Queen lake house with the kids… and Bruce, of course. She was looking forward to a few days away with some of her favorite people in the whole world, and she knew Allie was excited too because she had not stopped talking about it since she told her about the trip.

When she got downstairs, Oliver gave her a kiss before grabbing their luggage to get packed up in his truck. She followed him outside to see her that her daughter was already out at the driveway receiving an enthusiastic greeting from Bruce.

Once Allie was situated in the back seat with Will and Bruce and the kids were set up with a movie on her tablet, Felicity climbed into the passenger seat and they took off for the Queen family lake house.

Two hours later Oliver pulled down a driveway and Felicity’s eyes widened when she got her first glimpse at the destination.

“Oliver. What the fu—“ She remembered the kids in the backseat. “—frack is this?”

“My family’s lake house?”

“Oh no honey. This is not a house.”

“I don’t understand—”

“When you said, ‘my family has a lake house,’ I was totally picturing some cozy little cabin—which I realize now is ridiculous, considering your family’s regular house is an actual castle, but this… wow. This is like a lake resort.”
She knew that, even with having sold Queen Consolidated, the Queen/Steele family was still super rich from other investments and Walter’s high profile job at the bank. But Oliver had distanced himself a bit from his old lavish lifestyle, so sometimes she forgot exactly how wealthy they were.

Laughing softly, Oliver brought the hand that he had been holding on the drive up to his mouth to kiss her knuckles.

“Not that I’m complaining,” she added.

Oliver parked the truck and they all clambered out, stretching their legs and breathing in the fresh--pine tree scented--air. She had lived in cities her whole life, she didn’t exactly consider herself an outdoorsy girl, but she had to admit that this was a nice change of scenery. It was a brilliantly sunny day, perfect for spending out on the lake. Reaching for Oliver’s hand, she let him lead her into the house.

“So… this is the master suite.” Oliver pushed open the double doors and smiled at Felicity’s gasp. The kids had foregone his official tour for exploring the place themselves, but he had been showing her around and they finally made it upstairs to the suite that was once upon a time used by his parents.

“Whoa. You know, if it wasn’t two hours outside of the city, I would suggest we all just move into this place together.” She stepped over to the glass doors that led out to the private deck overlooking the lake. “Because there’s certainly plenty of space, and I could definitely get used to this.”

Coming up behind her, he wrapped his arms around her waist and pressed a kiss to her cheek. “We can come here whenever you want.”

She turned around to kiss him, her fingers gripping the fabric of his shirt to pull him in close.

“Dad?” “Mom?”

She scrunched up her face at the interruption and leaned her head against his chest while he addressed the kids.

“Yes?”

“Can we go swimming now?” Will asked.

“Of course. Get changed and we’ll meet you downstairs.”

After they ran off, Felicity looked up at him, “We’re not going to get a lot of alone time on this trip, are we?”

“Probably not.”

Except on the day that Thea was driving up to be on Aunt duty so he could surprise Felicity with an outing he had planned for just the two of them. But he wasn’t going to spoil that yet.

He cradled her face in his hands to give her a lingering kiss before she stepped away reluctantly so that they could get ready for an afternoon out on the lake.

His eyebrow lifted appreciatively when she pulled a tiny bikini out of her suitcase and started to change into it.

{Check out Felicity’s swimsuit here}
“I guess this is your reward for not dumping me after seeing how dreadful I look when I’m ill,” she remarked teasingly when she caught sight of his expression and he shook his head to clear away the thoughts that would definitely not lead to them meeting the kids downstairs any time in the near future.

Outside on the beach, after Felicity had coated Allie’s freckled skin from head to toe with sunscreen and sent her running after Will to jump off the dock into the lake, she handed him the bottle.

“Can you do my back please?”

“Of course.”

Brushing her hair aside, he took his time with the task—her skin soft and warm from the sun. She returned the favor and then he found some tubes from the storage shed so he and Felicity could go out on the water and keep an eye on the kids.

“Does your family own a boat too?” Felicity asked as they watched a speed boat zip by a hundred yards or so from where they were floating.

“No,” he answered resolutely.

“I’m sensing a story…”

“We used to have a speed boat like that one,” he gestured to the boat they had seen before returning his hand to her legs that were slung across his lap to keep them from floating apart. “But my senior year of high school, Sara and I were out on it and I was trying to show off. We took a turn too tight and too fast and flipped the boat.”

“Yikes.”

“It could’ve been a lot worse, but it was still scary. Dad sold the boat after that to avoid any repeats of that incident.”

“You don’t talk about your Dad a lot,” she commented.

“Neither do you,” he returned, regretting it the instant the words came out of his mouth and pain flashed in her eyes before she visibly withdrew her emotions inside of herself. The only thing she had ever mentioned about her dad was that he had been MIA when she was growing up, but she hadn’t offered any more information. It was clear that it was something she was not ready to talk about with him yet. Running his hand along her legs, he apologized, “I’m sorry. You don’t have to talk about anything you don’t want to.”

“It’s not that—“ She sighed, “To be honest, there’s not a lot to talk about. All I have is a bunch of questions that will probably never be answered because I can’t ask him them. In college, I tried to look for him—track his whereabouts on the dark web. I don’t even know what I would have said if I’d been able to make contact, but a few months of searching turned up nothing and then I found out I was pregnant and... my priorities shifted.” A small smile turned up the corners of her mouth as she looked out over his shoulder. “And now I just want to enjoy how perfect the present moment is, not dig up the past.”

Turning his head, he followed her gaze over to the kids standing on the dock and taking turns throwing a tennis ball into the lake for Bruce to fetch. With his new custody arrangement for the summer, and Will being around more, the two of them had really started to bond. He had almost forgotten his son’s initial reservations towards her.
He nodded in agreement. “This is pretty perfect.”

It was easy to picture a whole future of spending summer weekends like this. Maybe someday with more kids—

Taking advantage of his diverted attention, she splashed him and he whipped his head back around at her laughter to retaliate by abandoning his tube and dragging her into the water with him.

“Oh, ok, truce,” she breathed out when they broke the surface, his hand slung around her waist to help hold her up as they tred water.

“Don’t start something you don’t intend to finish,” he teased.

“Oh I intend on finishing later,” she tossed back. “So I don’t want you wasting your energy.”

He laughed at her attempt at winking that was always more of a blink and they grabbed a hold of their tubes to paddle back to the beach.

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After they made sure the kids were asleep, which hadn’t taken long since they were both exhausted from playing in the water for hours, he and Felicity headed for their room.

She had changed into a sundress for dinner and she made quick work of turning it into a pile on the floor as soon as he had closed the door behind them. Stepping in close to her, he ran his hands across her sun kissed shoulders and down her arms to catch her hands and bring them up to loop around his neck. He gripped her waist and pulled her flush against him and up onto her tiptoes to meet her mouth with his.

The night back in April when he had kissed her in the diner, he had known that he wanted it to be his last first kiss. And now, almost five months and many more kisses later, he was even more certain of that desire. Nothing had ever felt more right than being with her did.

Tugging on her bottom lip, he slid his hands down and she caught the hint to hop up and wrap her legs around his waist. He walked them forward to press her against the wall and move his lips to her neck while she tangled her fingers in his hair.

After he had left a trail of open mouthed kisses up and down her neck, she started to tug at the fabric of his shirt impatiently. “Clothes. Off. Please.”

“Well since you asked so nicely…” He took a step back from the wall, setting her down in the process, and her hands instantly came to the hemline of his shirt. Lifting his arms, he helped her remove it and she dropped it on top of her dress. His pants quickly joined the pile before she pushed him towards the bed.

When he sat down on the edge, she straddled his lap and placed a hand on his chest to guide him down onto the mattress. Pulling her down with him, he brought a hand around to her ass and the other to the clasp on her bra as they kissed. He got it unfastened and she sat up again to remove it.

“One hand. Impressive,” she remarked, tossing it to the side before taking a moment to trace his abs with her fingertips.

“You wear that bra a lot, I’ve had practice.”

She shook her head in amusement—dipping her head back down to continue kissing him, and he groaned as her bare chest pressed against his.
Holding tight to her, he flipped them to hover over top of her and slid a hand down her stomach to dip his fingers beneath the waistband of her underwear. Her breath caught when he dragged them through the wet arousal between her legs and she rocked her hips eagerly.

Another thing he was well practiced at was what she needed to come apart under his touch, but she only let him tease her for a minute before reaching down for his wrist.

“I—I want you to come with me,” she panted, her cheeks flushed. He was glad they hadn’t bothered to turn the lights off because she looked radiant with her hair fanned out around her head and constellations of fresh freckles across her skin from a day out in the sun.

He pulled his hand away and quickly shed his underwear to oblige her request.

When she was curled up beside him afterwards, lazily tracing patterns on his chest, he whispered her name.

“Hmm?” she hummed.

He waited for her to meet his eyes. “I love you.”

He would never tire of seeing the way her face lit up when he said those three words. The way the corners of her mouth would turn up into a smile she reserved just for him.

Before her, he had slept with a lot of women. But it wasn’t until being with her that he understood what it meant to make love. To want to know every freckle and ticklish spot and favorite place to be kissed. To feel satisfied in a way that was more than just physical because he had been connected with the other half of his heart. To revel in the afterglow because it wasn’t going to be followed by rushed goodbyes and promises to call that would never be fulfilled.

She caressed his face and he closed his eyes at her touch. “I love you too.”

Oliver slid out of bed the next morning quietly, so as not to wake his still sleeping girlfriend, and got dressed before wandering downstairs to find that Will was already awake too.

“You want to help me make breakfast for the girls?” he asked.

Will nodded eagerly and followed him into the kitchen. After they came in from the beach yesterday he had run out to the nearby grocery store and picked up some food for their stay, including ingredients for pancakes.

Cooking together was something he and his son had gotten into that summer during his longer stays in Star City, and Will shared his aptitude and love for it. They had made many a meal together for Thea or his mom and Walter or the Smoaks.

He split up the tasks for making homemade buttermilk pancakes and it wasn’t long after they had the first batch on the griddle and the delicious aroma was filling the air, that Allie and Felicity wandered downstairs to investigate.

“Oooh something smells good,” Felicity remarked, coming around behind him and wrapping her arms around his waist while he supervised Will flipping the pancakes.

He covered her hands with his, “I hope you’re hungry. There’s going to be a lot.”

Allie’s stomach growled in response and he looked over to where she was sitting on the counter with
her hand in the bag of chocolate chips and a guilty look on her face at being caught. Felicity released him so he could go over and pick her up.

“I got those to make some chocolate chip ones just for you.”

“That’s my favorite kind of pancakes.”

“I know.” He tickled her side, “So you can’t eat them all before they make it into the pancakes.”

She giggled and he sat her back down, pouring out a few chips for her to eat and tossing her a wink before returning to the stove to help Will.

Bruce was sitting under his feet, hoping some breakfast would land on the floor. He grabbed one of the finished pancakes from the first batch that had been made sans chocolate to feed to him, patting his head as he enthusiastically gobbled it up.

Felicity sat down at one of the barstools after pouring herself a cup of coffee and he handed her a plate along with the bottle of syrup. “Thank you. Looks like the weather might not be so great for being outside today.”

He looked towards the windows and noticed that she was right. Dark gray clouds had moved in over the water and wind was rustling the trees.

Allie pouted. “What are we going to do?”

“I bet it’ll be a quick storm and we’ll get to go outside later in the afternoon. But this morning we can watch a movie,” he suggested.

That turned into the four of them (five if you count Bruce) all curled up in the king sized bed in the master suite after breakfast watching Wonder Woman, per Allie’s request, as it poured down rain outside the windows. He reached for Felicity’s hand, intertwining their fingers, and she leaned her head against his shoulder. With all of them gathered around him, he couldn’t remember a time when he had ever been more content.

“Thea?” Felicity was surprised to see Oliver’s sister getting out of her car when they returned to the house from a hike the next day. Allie and Will both rushed ahead to give her hugs. “I didn’t know you were coming up…”

“Surprise. I’m here to hang out with the kids. I think my brother has plans for you this afternoon.”

“That’s right,” Oliver confirmed, as they all headed into the house.

“Oh?” Felicity raised a curious eyebrow.

“I’m not giving you any hints, I want you to be surprised.”

“Mom hates surprises,” Allie piped up.

“I know. But I think she’ll like this one.”

Upstairs, while Oliver was in the shower and she was supposed to be getting dressed, she instead started to pace their room as her mind spun. Grabbing her phone, she dialed Iris’ number and forced herself to take deep breaths while she waited for her to pick up.

“Hey Felicity… aren’t you on vacation?”
“I think Oliver’s going to propose,” she blurted out.

“What?! Back it up here…”

“He has surprise plans for us today and the other day he made a comment about how his plan was to marry me and-- I don’t know, it wouldn’t be completely out of left field and I just feel like--”

“He’s gonna pop the question,” Iris finished for her.

“You think?”

“It seems like that’s what you think. So, hypothetically, if he does--”

“I would say yes. Right? Why would I say no?”

“I don’t think you would’ve called me unless you weren’t freaking out a little bit about what to do.”

“Well…” She sunk her teeth into her bottom lip. She honestly didn’t know why she was freaking out. Hadn’t she told her mom weeks ago that she could already picture herself getting engaged? And yet, confronted with the actual possibility, butterflies were taking flight in her stomach. “Isn’t it maybe a little too soon? We’ve only been together for four— I guess now almost five months.”

“It’s only too soon if you’re not sure that he’s the one. Why waste time if it’s inevitable?”

“Because…”

She came up empty handed.

She knew her friend was right. It was basically the same thing her mom had said. She wouldn’t have let things get this far with Oliver, wouldn’t have let Allie get this close to him, if she didn’t want to spend the rest of her life with him. If she didn’t trust his sincerity when he said that she was a part of the future he wanted.

“You still with me?” Iris asked.

“Yeah, yeah. Just thinking.” She smiled as calm settled over her. “He’s the one. I’m sure.”

“Well then you have no reason to panic if he gets down on one knee.”

“I--” She heard the water turn off in the shower and knew she had to wrap things up. “I have to go.”

“You better keep me updated with what happens!”

“I will,” she promised before hanging up.

Oliver stepped out of the bathroom with his towel slung low around his hips and she briefly considered trying to convince him to forego going out in favor of spending the rest of the day in their suite. Naked.

But she also didn’t want to interfere with any plans that possibly involved putting a ring on her finger. She did her best to keep a giddy grin off of her face so he wouldn’t guess that she suspected anything.

Lifting one of her dresses out of her suitcase, she asked, “Is this okay to wear for what you have planned?”
He nodded in approval and started to get dressed himself. She opted to keep her hair down—he had expressed a few times how much he liked her natural curls—and applied a little bit of make-up before slipping her feet into her sandals.

“You ready?” he asked, leaning against the door frame and watching her.

When he held out his hand for her, she slipped hers inside, “I’m ready.”

Felicity was uncharacteristically quiet from the passenger seat and when he glanced over at her, he could practically see the wheels in her head spinning.

He squeezed her hand, “Everything okay?”

She startled and looked over at him, “Yeah, why?”

“You haven’t said a single word since we started driving. That’s usually an indication that something is wrong.”

Shaking her head, she covered their interlocked hands with her other hand. “Everything is more than okay. I was just thinking.”

“About what?”

She hesitated for a second before answering, “Your surprise. Can’t you at least give me a hint?”

“Yeah. Look out the window.”

Understanding dawned on her face as she realized what was along either side of the road they had turned on. Rows and rows of grapes, nearly ready for harvesting.

“A family friend owns this vineyard and winery. I told her we were going to be up at the lake for a few days and she invited me to come for a visit.”

They pulled up to the winery where his parents’ old friend, Grace, was standing out on the porch waiting for them.

“Oliver,” she pulled him in for a hug when they approached her. “It’s so good to see you. It’s been far too long since I’ve gotten to see you or your sister.” She patted his cheek, “I’m glad to see you’ve cut your hair, you look very handsome and grown up with it shorter. How is your mother?”

“She’s doing well.” He placed a hand on the small of Felicity’s back—she was wearing an amused smile at Grace’s remarks about his hair—and introduced her. “Grace. This is my girlfriend Felicity.”

“Right, you mentioned on the phone that you were seeing someone.” She shook Felicity’s hand. “It’s nice to meet you dear. You’re a lucky girl.”

He dipped his head shyly as Felicity looked up at him affectionately and wrapped an arm around his waist. “It’s nice to meet you too. Your vineyard is beautiful. Do you ever do weddings here?”

Grace shot him a questioning look before answering her. “We do. Are you…?”

“Oh no, no, no.” Felicity shook her head. “That’s not—My mom is a wedding planner, and she’s always looking for new venues,” she explained.
“Ah. Well, I will be sure to send you home with a brochure.” She gestured towards the door of the winery, “Shall we begin the tour?”

They fell in step behind her as she led them through the expansive building, explaining the wine making process. After taking a stroll through some of the sun drenched rows of grapes, Grace finished their tour with a stop in the wine cellar to help them pick out a few bottles to taste.

While they stood out on the back porch looking out at the sun setting over the vineyard, after eating a delicious dinner courtesy of Grace’s private chef, he reached over to cover Felicity’s hand that was resting on the railing with his.

Something had seemed off about her all afternoon. When he made the plans to surprise her with the outing to the vineyard, he had thought she would really enjoy it, but she seemed… distracted.

“Felicity?”

“Yes?”

“Can I ask you something?”

Her face brightened and she looked up at him expectantly, “Of course.”

“You know you can talk to me about anything, right?”

Confusion flickered across her face. “Yes…”

“It just seemed like you had something on your mind all day…” Something occurred to him then. “Were you worried about Allie? I should’ve asked you first if you would be okay with Thea—“

“Oh. No,” she cut him off. “I wasn’t worried about that at all. I wasn’t worried about anything.”

“Okay…”

She set her wine down and turned towards him, looping her arms around his waist, “If it seemed like I had something on my mind..I just—“ She shook her head, “Nevermind. Today was a very nice surprise and I had a great time being here with you.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. You really can’t go wrong with surprising me with wine. Wine and pie.”

He chuckled and dipped his head down to kiss her. “I’m sorry that today was lacking in pie. I would suggest we stop somewhere and pick one up on the way back to the house, but you’re kind of a pie snob.”

“No one makes pie like Louise. Not even you.”

“I’ll try not to be offended.”

“You’re can’t be the best at everything .”

A smirk turned up the corners of his mouth. “So am I the best at almost everything then?”

Rolling her eyes, she reached up behind his neck to pull him down to kiss his cocky smile right off.

“You are the best kisser. I’ll give you that,” she consented when they broke apart.
He brushed a kiss to her cheek. “I’m going to work on the pie thing. I think with a little practice I can win you over.”

When she was sure Oliver was asleep, she rolled over and grabbed her phone from the nightstand.

FELICITY: so… false alarm

IRIS: sorry babe :(  

FELICITY: it's ok

FELICITY: it was still a really good day

FELICITY: it’s not like he dumped me

IRIS: and now you know you’re ready to say yes

FELICITY: yeah

The fact that she was feeling a little disappointed, not relief, that he hadn’t asked, only confirmed that for her.

IRIS: barry says hi

IRIS: he also says to stop texting me because he’s trying to seduce me

FELICITY: lol

FELICITY: bye

Chapter End Notes

Just as a reminder... there will be no new chapter next week, but make sure you're subscribed to me as an author and not just subscribed to this fic (or you follow me on twitter @mogirl97) if you want to be notified when I post for my countdown to Christmas :D
I'm back! I have an extra long chapter this week that I'm posting a few days early since I made you wait so long for the next chapter. Thanks for your patience during the holidays while I worked on my countdown and wrapped up my semester of college. I promise I never intended to abandon this story and I have all of the remaining chapters plotted out so after this we *fingers crossed* should be back to semi-regular Sunday updates :D

“It looks like you had an amazing time,” Dinah remarked when Felicity had finished showing her some pictures from their long weekend at the lake.

“We did. And it was so great for Allie and Will. The two of them have gotten really close this summer and it makes me happy to see, especially since Will was a little hesitant about her at first.” She set down her phone. “But what’s new with you? I feel like I’ve barely seen you all summer…”

“Well, I’m under consideration for promotion to lieutenant, so that’s exciting.”

“That is exciting! Congratulations! I’m sure you’ll get it, but I can ask Oliver to put in a good word for you with the Chief.”

“I actually already mentioned it to him when he called the other day.”

Felicity’s curiosity was piqued, “What was he calling you about?”

An expression passed across her friend’s face like she had said something she shouldn’t have and she scrambled to recover with, “I umm… I had a question, for a case. Something he was looking into for me.”

For someone who had spent time working undercover, it was incredibly amusing how obvious it was that she was lying.

“Oh.”

“So do you have any plans for your birthday?” Dinah changed topics.

She shrugged, “You know me, I don’t need to make a big deal out of it. But I think Oliver is making me dinner.”

“What are you getting all this stuff for again?” Tommy asked as they stood in the baking aisle of the grocery store.

“Felicity’s birthday is on Friday and I’m trying to make her the perfect pie. Will, Thea, Allie and I have consumed large amounts of pie and I’ve gone through a lot of sugar and flour this week testing recipes.”
“And you didn’t invite me over to help with the taste testing?”

“You’ve been busy, man. That’s why we’re grocery shopping together like we’re some married couple just so I could spend time with you.”

“I know, I know. Things are hectic at the clinic right now. We’re understaffed, but it’s hard to find good doctors and nurses who will work for less than they’d make at Starling General.” Tommy placed his hand over his chest. “Of course I don’t have to worry about that because I have a sugar mama.”

Tommy’s father had cut him off when he chose to go to med school instead of working at the family company—a decision he definitely didn’t regret when his father was exposed for his crimes involving The Undertaking and he was a long ways away in Chicago studying for exams.

Oliver shook his head in amusement and grabbed a bag of flour. “I’m pretty sure Felicity makes more than me too. Considering she sits in my father’s old office.”

“Is that weird for you?”

“Nah. She’s made some nice changes to the place. New furniture. Very different leadership style.” He smiled as he thought of the all the times he had gotten to be a fly on the wall while she spoke with an employee who stopped in to see her while he was visiting. She had told him once that the number one thing that prepared her for being a CEO was being a mother. From the janitor who swept her office to her highest level executives, she made everyone feel valued. She was patient and kind and supportive, while still demanding respect with the way she commanded a room. A petite blonde woman she may be, it was never in question who was in charge. He knew it wouldn’t be long before she had conquered her sole nemesis: the board.

“You get this really dumb look on your face when you talk about her,” Tommy commented with a smirk.

“You sir,” he pointed at him. “Have no room to talk.”

Tommy shrugged, “I know. Which is how I also know that it won’t be long until you’re crying big manly tears as she walks down an aisle towards you. You thinking about a ring yet?”

“All the time,” he answered instantaneously. “She the one—I’ve never been more certain of anything. But we haven’t even been together for four whole months yet. I don’t want to spring something on her that she’s not ready for and freak her out.”

“Why don’t you think she’s ready? I thought things have gotten pretty serious with you two…”

“I don’t know… she’s just always making comments about how fast we’re taking things. I think she’d prefer a little more time to consider her feelings on the prospect of being stuck with me for the rest of her life before I pop that question.”

Tommy clapped him on the shoulder, “If she’s as smart as I’ve heard, she knows she’d be lucky to be stuck with you for the rest of her life.”

“Thanks man.” Feeling his phone vibrating in his pocket, he pulled it out to see that Dinah was calling him. “Hey. I gave my recommendation to the Chief today—“

“So it’s possible that Felicity is worried that you’re cheating on her with me,” Dinah cut him off.

“What?”
He had only spoken to his girlfriend’s best friend a few times—at Felicity’s and around City Hall for SCPD business. He liked her, and he was able to give a genuine recommendation for her to the Chief but… what?

“We were having lunch and I slipped up and almost spoiled the surprise for Friday and when I backpedaled, my cover story was… well, by the look on her face, she wasn’t buying it.”

“Weren’t you an undercover cop?”

She groaned, “I know, it’s terrible. But we’ve been friends for so long she can read me too well. Have you ever tried lying to her? It’s near impossible. Her bullshit detector is top of the line.”

“So now it’s possible she thinks I’m cheating on her with her best friend.” He winced at the thought. Especially since it was definitely something he wouldn’t have put past his younger self. “Me aside, do you really think that she thinks you would be capable of doing that to her?”

“I would never.”

“I know that, so I’m sure she does too. I mean, the first time she introduced us you threatened me with violent retribution if I hurt her. Between you and her mom, I’d be a dead man if I so much as thought about cheating on her.”

“I know, but you know how she is. She has insecurities and abandonment issues she’s still working past and I don’t want her spiraling over what kind of secrets we’re keeping from her. She was pretty quiet for the rest of lunch. I’m sorry, I should’ve just said you called about something for her birthday and left it at that but I panicked. She never lets anyone do something like this for her, I didn’t want to ruin the surprise.”

He scrubbed a hand down his face. “It’s okay. I’ll talk to her. You still good for 6:30?”

“Yep, and I’m bringing wine.”

“Perfect, see you then.”

“See ya,” she echoed. “And thanks again for the recommendation.”

When she hung up, he glanced over at Tommy who lifted his eyebrows, “Sounds like you better make her the best damn pie she’s ever tasted.”

He shook his head and grabbed another bag of sugar before his phone rang again.

“Hi honey,” he answered Felicity’s call.

“Hey babe, I have to ask you something—“

“I’m not sleeping with Dinah,” he blurted out.

“What? That is… so not what I was going to ask you. Why would you even…?”

“Because I just got off the phone with Dinah who was worried that you might think that. I called her the other day to ask her a question about something for your birthday, not because I’m sleeping with her. I promise.”

“I know both of you too well to ever jump to a conclusion as ridiculous as that,” she replied, laughing at the notion.
He breathed a sigh of relief, “Yeah?”

“Yes. Although now I’m curious as to what you two are up to regarding my birthday…”

“Hmmm… I guess you’ll just have to wait and see.”

“I don’t even get a hint?”

“Nope. Now what were you actually going to ask me?”

“Can you pick Allie up at her friend’s house for me? She was having a playdate today and I’m going to be stuck at work a little later than I was expecting and my mom is in a consultation with a bride.”

Her request brought a smile to his face. He loved when she let him help her with Allie—they had come such a long way from when she held him at arms distance from her family.

“Of course. Just text me the address.”

“I will. Thank you so much.”

“You’re welcome. Love you.”

“Love you too. Glad you’re not sleeping with my best friend,” she added teasingly before hanging up.

The mom of Allie’s friend looked a little flustered when she opened the door to him standing on her porch. “Mayor Queen, I wasn’t expecting you.”

“Oh Oliver’s kinda like my dad Mrs. Hallowell, so it’s okay for him to pick me up,” Allie assured the woman, appearing in the doorway next to her. He was pretty sure that wasn’t why Mrs. Hallowell was blushing furiously—according to Felicity, the Mayor Handsome moniker had really taken off with the soccer moms of Star City, something she loved to tease him about—but Allie’s words brought a grin to his face nonetheless. “I have to get my backpack.”

She ran off and he explained to Mrs. Hallowell, “Felicity had to work late, so she asked me to get Allie.”

“Well I’m glad she has another person now to make it even easier for her to neglect being a mother,” she muttered under her breath.

His hand flexed at his side and he felt anger rising up inside of him at her ignorant comment, “I’m sorry, what?”

Mrs. Hallowell sighed, “She had Allie when she was young, so I feel pity for her, but she has to accept the consequences of her mistake and take responsibility for raising her daughter instead of prioritizing climbing the corporate ladder.”

He was torn between laughing at the ridiculousness of what she had said or giving her a piece of his mind when Allie reappeared with her friend and reached for his hand, “Okay I’m ready to go.”

It was probably for the best that he didn’t have a chance to go with either option.

Her friend waved, “See ya later Allie.”

“Bye Rachel. Bye Mrs. Hollowell, thanks for having me over.”
Out at the car while he was waiting for Allie to get settled and buckled in, he shot Felicity a text.

OLIVER: you could’ve warned me I was going to the house of Satan

FELICITY: LOL

FELICITY: sorry

FELICITY: she was probably so happy to have someone new to go on her usual tirade about my failure as a mother to. you didn't punch her did you?

OLIVER: no

OLIVER: but i was tempted to say something mean

FELICITY: i only put up with her and her disdain for me because Rachel is somehow an absolute sweetheart and Allie loves hanging out with her

FELICITY: and I’m a good mom who prioritizes her child’s happiness ;)

OLIVER: you’re an amazing mom and I’m always happy to help you so you can be an amazing CEO too ❤

He knew that Allie was her whole world and if she had to choose she would always choose her daughter over anything else, but there was no reason for her to have to give up any part of her when she had the ability to fill more than one role.

FELICITY: ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

OLIVER: how much later do you think you’ll be? Allie and I can bring you dinner…

FELICITY: I WOULD LOVE THAT

FELICITY: I’M STARVING

FELICITY: and I need a kiss

When Felicity blinked her eyes open drowsily on Friday morning, she was in her customary little spoon position, Oliver’s warm body enveloping her from behind. She knew he was already awake because his hand had found its way underneath his T-shirt that she had thrown on last night when they had curled up together after a round—two rounds, to be precise—of lovemaking. His fingers teased her stomach, her rib cage—tracing over the spot where he knew her tattoo was. In their many nights together over the last four months, he had mapped her body. With his fingertips, his mouth. Just as she had done with his. She had never felt so known by another person, even Cooper, as he had been a little lacking in the attentiveness department. It might’ve given her pause to be self-conscious, if it wasn’t for the fact that Oliver was very obvious in his appreciation for her body.

Her breath caught when his hand reached one of her breasts and palmed the curve of her flesh, sending little currents of electricity across her skin and causing her to squeeze her thighs together.

“Mmm,” she hummed, still half-asleep and unable to form words yet, but wanting to encourage him
to continue. She felt him press a kiss into her hair before circling his thumb around her hardening nipple and she arched her back at the pleasurable sensation. As she started to feel more awake, she moved one of her hands to cover his to guide it down her body and in between her legs. Shifting her hips, she sought friction against his hand to relieve some of the aching desire brought about by his ministrations.

He understood exactly what she needed and pulled his hand away only for a moment to lift her top leg and settle it over his, shifting to open her up more to him. A soft moan escaped her mouth when he began to stroke her folds while simultaneously kissing her neck. Nipping at her delicate skin behind her ear, he soothed over the spot with his tongue before slipping a finger inside of her.

“Oliver,” she panted, definitely awake now. Her breathing sped up as she rocked against him and the heel of his hand pressed against her clit. A groan rumbled in his throat when she grinded her ass against him and felt how hard he was through the thin fabric of his boxers. “Do you——"

“No,” he murmured against her shoulder where he had been lavishing her skin with kisses. Adding a second finger, he twisted them inside of her. “This is about you.”

She knew she was close, her body was moving in rhythm with him of its own violation and she could feel herself reaching her climax. A few more seconds was all it took to have her moaning an incoherent string of nonsense as she tumbled over the edge and he eased her through her orgasm.

When she regained her ability to move, she rolled over to face him and returned his sleepy, content smile. He drew her in closer to him with a hand on her hip and kissed her tenderly while their legs tangled together.

“Happy Birthday, babe.”

“Thank you.” She traced his jaw with her fingertips. “I have this feeling that 27 is going to be a good year for me.”

“I hope it is.” He kissed her again before shifting away from her to get out of bed. When she reached for him in protest, he explained, “I’m going to get your breakfast started while you take a shower.”

“Okay,” she consented with a sigh. She was starting to regret not talking him into the two of them taking the day off of work for her birthday.

When she got out of the shower her phone was ringing and she picked it up to see that the call was from William.

“Hey, what’s up?”

“Uhh—I just wanted to say happy birthday and that I hope you have a good day.”

“Thank you. I’ll miss having you here for my birthday dinner, but I get to see you in a few days, right?”

“Yeah, and we can rematch my dad and Allie in Double Dash.”

Oliver had found an old, slightly broken GameCube on Ebay and she had rewired it last weekend so that he could introduce the kids to a favorite video game of his and Tommy’s when they were in high school. Allie’s small hands could barely hold the controller but she and Oliver had somehow still beat them.

She laughed, “You got it partner. They just got lucky last time.”
Putting Will on speaker, she talked to him for a little longer while she got dressed and ready for work.

As she was getting ready to head downstairs, he ended their conversation. “Mom says I have to go because it’s time to leave for Grandma and Grandpa’s so she can get to work. See ya Felicity.”

“See ya buddy.”

She had yet to meet Samantha, and she wondered how the woman felt about her. According to Oliver, the only part of their lives the two of them shared was William, but she obviously knew that her son had two new people in his life.

When she got downstairs, Allie sprung on her to give her a hug. “Happy Birthday Mommy!”

She squeezed her tight. “Thank you baby girl.”

Walking into the kitchen together, where Oliver was standing over the stove, Allie grabbed two cards from off the kitchen counter to present to her.

“This one is from me,” she handed her one. “And this one is from Will,” she handed her the other.

Felicity smiled as she read the sweet notes inside the homemade cards that definitely had her mother’s creative influence on them.

She slipped them into her tote bag to take to work and hang in her office before grabbing a seat at the counter. Oliver handed her a mug of coffee and an omelette with toast before fixing up a plate of scrambled eggs for Allie.

Her mother entered the kitchen next and passed by her to press a kiss into her hair, “Happy Birthday sweetheart.”

“Thanks Mom.”

“Can I get you something for breakfast Donna?” Oliver asked, serving her some coffee.

“Oh yes, I would love an omelette.” Her mom beamed at him, “Thank you honey.” When he returned to the stove, she nudged her in the side and whispered, “Don’t let him go, okay? You’re never going to find another man who will make such a good son-in-law for me.”

Rolling her eyes, she took a bite of her toast and refrained from commenting.

When she got to work, her office was filled with flowers and balloons and an array of her staff who burst into “Happy Birthday,” upon her arrival.

Curtis was the first to come forward and give her a hug, followed by her assistant, and, what felt like five minutes later, she had received hugs from everyone in the room.

“Thank you, so much everyone.” She smiled at the “World’s Best Boss Mug.” sitting on her desk with a gift bow stuck to it. “It’s really my privilege to work with all of you.”

“You’re late.” Thea was sitting on the edge of his desk when he strode into his office with her arms crossed over her chest.

“A Queen is never late, everyone else is simply early,” he remarked, brushing past her. By the time he had finished making breakfast for the three Smoaks, he had been in a bit of a rush to get to City
Hall, but he didn’t regret lingering in bed a little too long with Felicity.

“What?”

“Does that not apply to this kind of Queen?” He unbuttoned his jacket to sit down in his chair and she turned around to face him with her brow furrowed in confusion. “It’s a line from the Princess Diaries 2. Allie and I watched both movies the other night while Felicity was at a board meeting,” he explained and Thea rolled her eyes in amusement. If becoming a dad had changed him, becoming the father figure to an eight year old girl had taken that change to a whole other level. And he would never want to go back to the way things were before.

“Yeah, you’re definitely late. Luckily, you didn’t have anything until,” she checked her watch. “Three minutes from now. Councilman Smith is coming in to meet with you.” She started to walk out of his office, before adding over her shoulder, “Oh, and I made plans to stay at Sara and Nyssa’s tonight after the party, so you can have the loft to yourself.”

By party, his sister was referring to the surprise party he was throwing at the loft for Felicity that evening. Keeping things a secret from her was tough, but even with Dinah’s slip up the other day, he was pretty sure she still had no clue. She thought that she and Allie were just coming over for dinner, but Allie had helped him compile an invite list and a bunch of her friends were coming into town to help celebrate.

“Thanks.”

“You don’t have to thank me, it’s for my own sanity.” Thea leaned in the doorway, “Sara also said that I’m free to move into their spare bedroom whenever you and Felicity decide to get a house together, so don’t worry about me being out on the street.”

“Good to know.”

As she left the office he heard her mutter, “The Princess Diaries. He’s quoting the Princess Diaries now John,” eliciting a chuckle from his head of security.

It was a slow day at work. After everyone left her office she became aware that she didn’t have much on her schedule and she really could’ve taken a day off. Which meant there was nothing to distract her when the texts from Oliver started coming and she was given a vivid description of his plans for that evening. As she read, her skin started to feel hot and she shifted her thighs against each other.

After the first few she crossed her legs and set her phone aside, determined to ignore him. Her resolve lasted for about five very long minutes as she organized her inbox and attempted to tune out the sound of her text notification going off.

Reaching for her phone, she sunk her teeth into her bottom lip as she read on. The messages just kept coming and finally she was so aroused she couldn’t take it anymore and she tapped her screen to call him.

“Oliver Queen,” she practically growled when he picked up.

“What?” he inquired, feigning innocence.

“You are the Mayor, surely there is something more pressing for you to do than sexually frustrate your girlfriend.”
“Actually, I only had one meeting this morning and now my schedule is pretty wide open until later this afternoon, so I have plenty of time to think about my plans for the evening. Would you prefer that I not keep you up to date on those plans?”

His teasing only made things worse. It was her birthday, she shouldn’t have to suffer through the rest of the day.

“Well, according to my schedule, you have a meeting at Palmer Tech in fifteen minutes to deal with a very pressing matter,” she announced before hanging up the phone.

Oliver arrived in ten and she notified her assistant that no one was to be permitted into her office for the next half hour. She took one look at the two of them and promptly slipped her headphones in before returning to her work.

“They decorated your office,” Oliver remarked casually, looking around at the flowers and balloons while she hit the button that darkened the glass wall of her office to give them privacy. “That was nice of them.”

She didn’t understand how he could sound so unaffected by the texts he had been sending while she was about ready to rip all of his clothes off.

He turned to face her, lifting a hand to run his fingers through blonde waves she had left down that day, “You’re so beautiful.”

It was something she had rarely heard before being with him. Growing up, her mother’s compliments had always been undercut with suggestions for improvement.

“You have such nice __________, if only you __________.”

By the time she had gotten with Cooper she had grown calloused to assessments of her appearance and thought it better that he never said such stupid, shallow things like, “You look beautiful.”

But coming from Oliver it didn’t sound stupid or shallow. When he told her she was beautiful it was reverent and came without clause. It made her feel as though when he looked at her he saw everything he could ever desire and, for someone who had spent a good portion of her life feeling pretty undesirable, it was something she hadn’t realized how badly she had wanted to hear.

She tilted her chin up in invitation for a kiss and he dipped his head to meet her lips with his.

“Take a seat,” he directed when they broke apart, gesturing at one of her couches.

Obliging him, she watched as he knelt in front of her and once again a pang of longing for him to do that in a different context hit her square in the chest. It wasn’t that she wasn’t happy with the way things were, because she was—and she knew that he was head over heels in love with her, the insecure part of her just wanted him to erase any lingering doubts she still had that she was the person he wanted to spend the rest of his life with.

He tugged her forward to the edge of the couch, stroking her skin up her calves and behind her knees before trailing his fingers up her thighs. When he got to her panties and discovered how damp they were he looked up at her with a smug grin and dragged the scrap of fabric down her legs to remove them.

Moving closer to her he pushed the skirt of her dress up to lift one of her legs over his shoulder and she gripped the edge of the couch in anticipation.
The slow torture was apparently not over yet though as he proceeded to press delicate kisses to the inside of her thigh, lightly biting at the sensitive skin before soothing it over with his tongue. After taking his time with her other leg as well, his hands slid up under her skirt to rest on her hips, holding her in place as he finally brought his mouth to where she needed him.

Threading her fingers through his hair, she held him to her as her eyes fell shut and she moaned appreciatively. It didn’t take long for her to come apart, she was already so wound up from reading the texts he had sent, and he eased her through her orgasm until she sunk heavily into the couch cushions—feeling sated and content.

“This is the best birthday ever,” she muttered a little breathlessly when he moved to join her on the couch and he huffed in amusement. Reaching over to his lap where his arousal was evident, she rubbed him lightly through his pants, “Let me return the favor?”

“I have to get back—“

“I’ll make it quick.”

When she increased the pressure of her hand, he groaned, “Okay, yes. Please.”

Sliding off the couch with a smirk, she knelt in front of him to undo his belt and the button on his pants, before slowly dragging the zipper down, keeping her gaze locked on his as he watched her with dark eyes. Normally she enjoyed teasing him and drawing out his pleasure, but she also knew exactly what he liked best and would get him off the fastest if he was insistent on getting back to work.

Once his needs were attended to, they cleaned up and she reluctantly had to let him go back to City Hall so he could prepare for his meeting and she could at least try to get some work done and justify coming into the office.

“No more dirty texts, okay?” she patted his chest. “Save it for later.”

“Okay,” he consented with a grin that she rolled up on her toes to kiss away. He wrapped an arm around her waist to hold her close, “I love you. Did I tell you that yet today?”

“Yes, before you left my house this morning.”

“Right. Good.” He pressed a kiss to her forehead. “Don’t want you to start to forget.”

“You make it pretty hard to forget.” Straightening his tie, she added, “But it is nice to hear it.”

“I love you,” he repeated with a soft smile.

“I love you too.”

“Felicity?” they heard her assistant tap on the glass. “It’s uhh—it’s been a half hour and a Ms. Luthor is here for you.”

Taking a step back from Oliver, she flung open the door and squealed with excitement at the sight of her friend.

“Surprise!” Lena opened her arms for a hug and squeezed her tightly, “Happy Birthday!”

“I didn’t know you were coming—“

“Hence the ‘surprise!’” she teased. “Are you going to introduce me…”
“Oh!” Felicity reached for Oliver’s arm. “Oliver, this is Lena. Lena, this is Oliver.”

“Nice to finally meet you Lena,” Oliver extended a hand to her.

“Likewise. You’re an incredibly lucky guy, you know that right?”

Oliver glanced at her with a smile before answering Lena, “Absolutely.”

“Good. Well, I hope you don’t mind if I steal her away for some lunch.”

“Go for it, I was just heading back to work.” He squeezed her hand, “I’ll see you later.”

“Dinner at seven right?”

“Right,” he confirmed, kissing her cheek.

When he left for the elevators, Lena reached up to smooth down her hair for her and a sheepish look passed over her face. They must not have been completely thorough in making sure their appearances didn’t give away what they had been up to in her office.

“I—uhh…”

Her friend held up her hands, “No judgements… I just couldn’t let you go out in public with sex hair.”

“Thanks for looking out for me.”

Lena winked, “Always. I’m really happy for you. I mean, the way he looks at you—you deserve to have someone in your life who is as so obviously crazy about you as he is.”

She dipped her head shyly, “Thank you. It’s so embarrassing to think that a few months ago I was hiding from him at the grocery store.”

Her friend laughed, “It’s a good thing he found you.”

In more ways than one.

He hadn’t just literally found her in the produce section that day, he had found her in the mindset she had been hiding in for years to try and protect herself after being hurt too many times.

Sometimes she thought about how different things would be for her now if she and Oliver’s paths had never recrossed after their night together in December. She would probably still be as happy as she had always been, but her life would be nowhere near as full as it was with Oliver and everything he had brought into it.

Grabbing her purse, the two of them headed out for lunch at a new restaurant down the street.

“Our big focuses right now are overhauling the city with alternative energy solutions to get power back to areas in the Glades that are still recovering, and launching our new branch of med tech,” Felicity, remarked as they caught up over lunch. “Between those two projects and developing the next update for the Smart Wearables, it’s just constant busyness.”

“But you love it.”

“I do. Being the boss lady is pretty awesome.”
“Yes it is,” Lena agreed. “Challenging sometimes, but awesome. Do you ever see Ray anymore since he took his leave?”

“He stops in every once in a while to check on things, but he got married over the summer and he’s pretty happy just traveling and working on whatever he’s interested in at the moment instead of being tied down at the company.”

“And he left it in the most capable of hands so that he doesn’t have to worry,” Lena added and she smiled at the compliment.

“Speaking of companies, I heard a rumor that L Corp is poised to buy out Catco…”

“That is not a rumor, that’s a done deal.”

“Really?”

“Yes. It’s a good investment.”

Felicity lifted an eyebrow teasingly, “So it has nothing to do with the reporter you were telling us about when we were in New York?”

“Okay fine, there was a mixture of professional and personal motivations,” Lena admitted. “With Cat Grant moving on to new things, Kara didn’t want to see it fall into the wrong hands and neither did I.”

“You still checking the box for ‘its complicated’ with her?”

She frowned, “Yep.”

“Well, in a surprising turn of events, I’ve become a bit of a hopeless romantic since falling in love again, so I’m optimistic that things will work out for you too. And then she can be your plus-one to my wedding.”

Lena laughed, “How long do I have to uncomplicate things?”

She held up her ringless left hand and sighed, “That’s obviously still TBD.”

Lena shook her head in amusement, “I never thought I’d see the day where you were eager to tie the knot.”

“I was afraid of getting married because my parents’ marriage was such a disaster and Cooper hurt me, but I’ve finally gotten to a place in my life where I’m working on letting the stuff in my past go. Oliver is not the people who have hurt me and it wouldn’t be fair to either of us to let them keep us from having the future together that we want.”

“Wow. Now that you’ve gotten your shit together, I feel like the pressure is really on for me. I don’t want to be the only one left in the ‘my love life is a mess because my mother emotionally stunted me’ club,” she joked, but Felicity could see the pain she was hiding because she had worn that same mask for most of her life. She never thought she would get to the point where she would able to dole out the advice so many of her friends had given her.

Reaching across the table, she took her hand comfortingly, “The right person will help you feel safe enough to let that stuff go. Trust me.”

“Oliver?” Felicity was confused when she let herself into the loft and it was dark. He had said seven
Allie followed behind her as she stepped inside and fumbled around for the lights. Maybe he had gotten called in to City Hall for an emergency and hadn’t gotten a chance to tell her.

Before she could reach the light switch, the lights flipped on and she startled at the shouts of, “Surprise!”

“Wha—“ Looking around the living room she saw a group of her friends gathered along with Oliver and her mom. Caitlin, Ronnie, Iris, and Barry, who had made it in from Central City, along with Dinah, Lena, Curtis, and Thea.

Allie tugged on her hand, “Did we surprise you?”

In the busyness of the past couple of days she had completely forgotten that Oliver and Dinah had been scheming over something involving her birthday, so yes, this was quite the surprise.

She looked down at her daughter, “You were in on this?”

“Yep,” she beamed proudly. “I helped Oliver.”

Her daughter was terrible at keeping secrets and pretty much always said whatever was on her mind—the fact that she had managed to keep this under wraps was a miracle.

Stepping forward, she gave her boyfriend a quick kiss before making the rounds to greet all her friends.

“Where are the twins?” Felicity asked, giving Iris and Barry hugs.

“Staying the weekend with my Dad and Cecile,” Iris answered. “I’m getting dragged to some TEDtalk at SCU by these nerds tomorrow.”

“Grandma and I are taking Mommy to the spa for her birthday,” Allie piped up. “You should come with us.”

Iris lowered her voice to a whisper, “I might take you up on that.”

Turning to Caitlin, she gave her a careful hug. “How are you feeling?”

She sighed, “Ready to be done with the first trimester.”

Her friend had found out she was pregnant not long after they got back from their trip to New York. She had sent a video of her surprising Ronnie with the news and Felicity couldn’t help but feel a pang of envy, similar to the one she had felt when Iris and Barry had announced their pregnancy a few years ago, at the excitement from the fathers of their children. The antithesis of what she had experienced with Cooper. Before, she hadn’t even considered the possibility of having another baby, but now that she was with Oliver it had crossed her mind a few times.

“I can certainly empathize, but I promise it does get better.” She glanced over at Allie who was talking animatedly to Thea. “And of course it’s all worth it in the end.”

She sought Dinah out next and shook her head in amusement at her before giving her a hug. “I can’t believe you thought I could possibly think you were sleeping with my boyfriend. How paranoid do you think I am?”

Dinah pulled back from their hug, “Sorry.”
“It’s okay, I got a good laugh out of it—which was honestly a good indication to me of how much better of a headspace I’m in now than I was a few months ago when we started dating and I constantly worried he would hurt me. But even back then, I never would have thought you would do something like that. So I take it this party was actually the secret you two were trying to keep from me?”

“Yep.”

“Darn. I was kind of hoping he told you he was going to propose,” she whispered.

She lifted an eyebrow in surprise, “You’re ready for that?”

Nodding, she answered, “Yeah. It’s not like I need more time to date other people first. He’s everything I could possibly want in the person I’m going to spend the rest of my life with.”

“Does he know that you’re already open to taking that big of a step forward? Because only a few months ago you were all about being cautious and taking things slow…”

“I—”

Before she could respond, Oliver sidled up next to her and she wondered if he overheard their conversation, but he just announced that dinner was ready and they re-joined the rest of the group in moving towards the dining area. The table was full of delicious looking dishes. Oliver’s afternoon “meeting,” she discovered, was actually with his kitchen.

“Is this a good surprise?” he asked softly, pulling out a chair for her at the head of the table.

Sitting down, she looked around at all the people who were gathered at the table before glancing back up at him, “It’s perfect, thank you.”

He squeezed her shoulder affectionately and sat down next to her.

As they ate, her friends shared stories—including some embarrassing childhood ones courtesy of her mom—and favorite memories of her and she very nearly cried as she thought back to a birthday she remembered quite vividly. It was the first one after her dad left and her mom was working every shift she could pick up which meant there was no party, no cake, no present, no acknowledgement from anyone that she had turned nine that day. This party—the fact that she had people in her life who wanted to make a big deal out of her birthday—was another reminder of how much things had changed for her over the last few years.

She tuned back into the conversation when she heard Oliver speak up with, “I must admit how jealous I am of all of you. You’ve gotten the privilege of knowing Felicity for a lot longer than I have.” He intertwined his fingers with hers. “But in the time that I have had with her she has already made my life so much better than I ever thought it could be. I hope this is only the first of many birthdays I’ll get to help her celebrate.” Looking over at her with a fond smile, he lifted their hands to his lips to kiss her knuckles.

The tears she had been holding back sprung to her eyes then, but before she could say anything she startled at the sound of the oven timer going off and Allie announcing gleefully, “The pie!”

Oliver pulled the two blueberry pies out of the oven with a self-satisfied smile. He had finally managed to perfect a recipe that he thought tasted identical to the one they had eaten at Louise’s on their first date. He had called the woman to request some help with his efforts, but she had refused to disclose any pointers.
“You’ll just have to figure it out yourself if you want to dethrone me as the person who makes Felicity’s favorite pie,” she had teased him.

“According to Felicity, the only thing I’m not good at is making pie,” he remarked to the group, carrying out a slice for her.

“I didn’t say that,” she protested. “I said that you weren’t the best at making pie.”

“That’s Louise,” Donna piped up and Felicity nodded in agreement.

He scowled at his girlfriend, eliciting a teasing smile from her as she mouthed “Love you.”

“Well, I was willing to take on the challenge,” he returned before feeding Felicity a bite of pie and waiting on pins and needles for her verdict.

Licking her lips, she moaned softly, “Oh this is amazing.”

He lifted an eyebrow, “You’re not just saying that to preserve my feelings?”

“No I’m serious, this is the best pie I’ve ever eaten. Give me another bite.”

With a grin he obliged her, before setting down the plate so he could serve everyone else with Allie’s help.

When just the two of them were in the kitchen, she gave him a high five, remarking, “I knew you could do it.”

“Couldn’t have done it without help from an expert taste tester,” he replied with a wink, handing her two plates.

“We should save a slice for Will. He’s coming home on Sunday, right?”

He shook his head. “It’s his mom’s birthday on Tuesday and she wanted to spend it with him, so he won’t be back until Wednesday this time. We’ll just make another pie then.”

“Oh. Okay.”

Following her back out to the dining table, they served the pie and everyone lingered for another hour or so until it got late and people started to part ways for the evening.

Allie gave him a sleepy hug before leaving with Donna and then he retreated to the kitchen to start cleaning up while Felicity said goodbye to her friends.

“Can I help?” Felicity asked, joining him a few minutes later.

“You shouldn’t have to help clean up from your own birthday party,” he argued, carrying more dishes over to the sink.

Sauntering over to him, she untucked his shirt and undid a few of the top buttons to press a kiss to his throat before resting her chin on his chest and looking up at him. “Yeah... but if I help it’ll go faster and we’ll be able to get to your plans for the evening a lot sooner.”

“You make a very good point.” He tucked a lock of her hair behind her ear. “It’s almost like you’re a genius or something.”

They took care of putting away the leftover food and washing the dishes together, teasing each other
the entire time with flirtatious touches and chaste kisses. The happiness he felt at the domesticity of it all was enhanced by the words he had overheard her say earlier in the evening.

“He’s everything I could possibly want in the person I’m going to spend the rest of my life with.”

Every bit of hesitation he had been feeling had dissolved.

It was time to get a ring.

______________________________________________________________

After Felicity wrapped up her Monday morning meeting to discuss the goals of the week and dismissed her staff, she grabbed her phone to turn “Do not disturb” off and noticed she had missed a call from Oliver.

Tapping the screen to listen to the voicemail he left, her heart leapt into her throat at the panic in his voice. He was saying something about an accident—having to leave for Central City—see her in a few days?

What?

When his phone went straight to voicemail she dialed Thea’s number and bounced on her toes impatiently while she waited for her to pick up.

“Thea?”

“Felicity, are you with Oliver? Do you know what happened?”

“No—I was hoping you did. He just left me this voicemail, but he sounds so frantic I can’t make sense of what he’s saying.”

“All I know is that he got a call a little over an hour ago and then he bolted from the office saying that something happened and he needed to get to Central City. I couldn’t get him to calm down and explain before he was out the door, and now he’s not answering my calls.”

She had begun to pave her office, trying to gather her thoughts so she could decide what she should do.

“Okay… I umm—I’m going to try and figure out what’s going on. If you get through to him—just keep me posted if you find out anything. Please?”

“Of course.”
Hi friends! I had a little extra time this week so I thought I'd write up a little bonus scene for y'all :D Timeline-wise, this takes place BEFORE the last chapter... enjoy!

Oliver looked down at the almost full five gallon bucket of blueberries and raked a hand down his face in amusement. It was his week with Will and Felicity had a dinner to attend after work, so he also had Allie all afternoon and evening while Donna was out with a bride. When he had made the plans to take the kids to pick blueberries for Felicity’s birthday pie, he hadn’t anticipated they would be so… efficient. But they had turned it into a competition of who could pick the most and had been hard at work for the past two hours, weaving their way through the bushes at the pick-your-own farm outside the city.

“Will! Allie!” he called for them. “Time’s up!”

Even with the amount of test pies he anticipated making, they were going to be eating blueberries for months on end at this rate. He wondered how hard it would be to make homemade jam and made a mental note to google it later.

Running back to him, they showed him their baskets. They had been tied up until this point with number of baskets filled, so this was going to be the decider.

“Mine is more full,” Allie argued.

“No it’s not,” Will protested.

Their competitiveness reminded him of when he and Thea were younger and would race to see who could eat candy canes the fastest.

He took a basket in either hand to test their weight and declared Allie the victor.

“Ha! You got beat by a girl…” she teased in a singsong voice and Will glowered at her.

“You both were hard workers, and as a team probably set some kind of record for the most they’ve ever seen picked here at one time,” he remarked, dumping their baskets into the bucket before lifting it. If Thea was with them she probably would have made fun of him for that conflict resolution attempt being one of his most dad moments to date.

Allie lifted her hand for a hi-five that Will begrudgingly obliged her, and Oliver knew he wouldn’t be grumpy with her for long.

“Time to go home and make some pie,” he announced, leading them back to the farmhouse so he could pay for their blueberries.
“This is good, but I still don’t think it’s quite right,” Allie assessed after taking a bite of his third pie attempt for the evening. He had been trying different variations of the crust, slightly altering the ingredients and technique each time.

“I don’t know why you’re so picky,” Will mumbled around a mouthful of pie. “There’s nothing wrong with this or any of the other ones.”

Bruce was lying underneath their stools, happily jumping up to eat up any crumbs that fell to the floor.

Thea, who had joined in their taste testing efforts, served herself another sliver, “Ditto.”

He took a bite himself and agreed with Allie. It was good, but if it was going to stand up to Louise’s recipe that Felicity had deemed the standard for perfection, he still had some work to do.

He glanced at the clock—

*Just not tonight.*

His girlfriend’s birthday was a week away, there was still time to bake more pies… and definitely more than enough blueberries.

“Alright crew, Felicity is going to be back from her dinner soon to pick up Allie, so we have to get things cleaned up in here. And remember, this is part of her birthday surprise so—”

“Our lips are sealed,” Allie vowed, her and Will both making the motion to zip their lips.

He nodded, “Good.”

They worked together to get the kitchen back in order and were filling a container of blueberries to send home with the Smoaks when he heard the click of heels on the hardwood floor.

“Oh it smells so good in here, what have you guys been up to?” Felicity asked when he met her in the entryway.

“Nothing,” he answered, wrapping an arm around her waist and kissing away her inquisitive expression. She looked gorgeous all done up for dinner. He wished she was spending the night so he could unpin her hair to run his finger through her soft curls as they fell onto her shoulders and mess up that perfect red lipstick with his kisses. The zipper up the side of her dress was just begging to be slowly dragged down while he followed it with a trail of kisses. He replaced that mental image with something less sexy so that he could ask, “How was dinner?”

She slid her hands up his chest to wrap them around the back of his neck. “It was good, thanks for watching Allie.”

He pressed another light kiss to her lips, “My privilege.”

“Mommy we went blueberry picking!” Allie exclaimed, walking over from the kitchen with the container of blueberries and Will and Bruce on her heels.

Felicity twisted in his arms to smile at her, “I can tell by all of your lips that you’ve been eating berries. Did you have fun?”

“Yeah! Will and I picked a huge bucketful. This is only just a little bit of them,” she informed her, holding up the container, before yawning.
“Looks like all that hard work has worn you out.” Felicity started to untangle herself from him and he reluctantly released her. “We better get you home so you can get to bed. We’re going to the beach tomorrow, remember?”

“Oh yeah!” Allie handed her mom the blueberries so she could give him a hug and he scooped her up in his arms. He wasn’t sure how much longer she would let him pick her up and he wanted to take as many opportunities he had left before she no longer clung to him like a little koala bear when she was sleepy.

“Goodnight.” He kissed her cheek. “Have fun at the beach.”

She pouted, “I wish you and Will could come too.”

“I have to take Will back to Central City or else we would.”

From behind him, he heard his son sigh. He knew Will was getting tired of traveling back and forth all the time, but he just didn’t see a way around it. At least the every other week schedule they had been on for the summer didn’t make his visits to Star City feel as rushed.

“Oh, okay.”

When he set Allie down, she said goodbye to Will before getting some slobbery kisses from Bruce, who was always sad to see her go. Oliver didn’t know who would be happier when they eventually—hopefully—moved in together, him or the dog.

Felicity rolled up on her toes to give him one last lingering kiss, “Spend the night at our house tomorrow?”

“You know I’ll never say no to that.”

She smirked, “Good. See you then.”

Chapter End Notes

If you have any requests for other bonus scenes you’d like to see, be sure and let me know :D
Chapter Notes

Hi friends! Sorry for that cliffhanger last week... but your wait is over now :D enjoy the chapter!

ps: this chapter is about as accurate as an episode of greys anatomy. i have little to no knowledge of how situations like this are actually handled in a real hospital and google will only get you so far lol but hopefully i did ok

She called Oliver a few more times throughout the morning with no success. It went straight to his voicemail every time and she felt her anxiety over the situation increasing. When she tried Thea again, she learned she had been getting nothing but radio silence as well.

Striding out to her assistant’s desk, she asked for her to summon Curtis and Alena before making arrangements for her to use the helicopter.

“Is everything okay?” her assistant asked, her brow furrowed in concern.

Tears that she had been trying to hold in all morning sprang to her eyes, “I don’t know. I don’t know what’s going on. I just know something is wrong and I don’t know what I’m supposed to do but not doing anything is driving me crazy.”

Her assistant hopped up from her chair and came around her desk to give her a hug before pulling back abruptly, “I’m sorry, that was probably crossing some professional boundary.”

Felicity shook her head, “I don’t care.” Sniffling, she added, “I needed a hug.”

“I’ll take care of your requests right away,” she assured her, placing a comforting hand on her arm.

“Thank you.”

Returning to her office, she attempted to accomplish something other than pacing around. It was a few minutes later, around noon, when she finally got word from Oliver.

OLIVER: Will and Samantha were in a bad car accident. at the hospital in CC. not sure of either of their conditions yet.

FELICITY: ok I’ll be there as soon as possible

OLIVER: but there’s nothing you can do for them

She rolled her eyes.

No duh captain obvious.

FELICITY: someone has to take care of you babe

She might not have an MD, but that didn’t render her entirely useless.
From the way he had sounded on the voicemail he had left her earlier, he shouldn’t be alone. And he needn’t be. Now that she had a better idea of what was going on, she felt a calm clarity come over her. Of course she was still concerned for Will and Samantha—her stomach felt like it was tied up in a million knots—but at least now she could make a plan of action and keep herself distracted from imagining worst case scenarios. Oliver needed her to be reassuring and comforting—not add on to his worries by being a basket case.

Curtis and Alena arrived then and she ushered them into her office. The two of them had worked closest with her since she was promoted to CEO and knew the ins and outs of almost all the day to day operations. With no clue as to how bad of shape Will and Samantha were in, she couldn’t predict how long she might have to be in Central City with Oliver.

“Everything okay boss?” Alena asked at the sight of her tear stained face.

She clasped her hands together to steady herself. “There’s been an emergency and I have to go to Central City. I have no idea how long I’ll be gone. It could be a few hours, it could be a few days. You two are in charge while I’m gone. If I’m not back in time for the Smart Watch 4.0 launch on Wednesday…”

“We’ve got it under control,” Curtis assured her.

“Yeah. Don’t worry about things here,” Alena added.

She offered them a small smile, “I won’t worry, I know I can trust you two.”

Dismissing them, she gathered up her things to leave the office. She needed to run home and pack some things while the pilot was preparing the helicopter for her.

When she entered the townhouse, Allie and her mom were playing a game of UNO at the kitchen counter and looked up at her in surprise.

“Mommy what’s wrong? Why are you home so early?”

“Nothing is wrong,” she lied. She knew her daughter wasn’t stupid, and there was no way she had erased all traces of her crying, but the last thing they needed to add to the equation was a distraught eight-year-old. “I umm… I just need to talk to grandma really quick.” She addressed her mom, “Can you come upstairs with me?”

Up in her bedroom, she started to throw a few changes of clothes for both her and Oliver into an overnight bag. “Samantha and Will have been in a car accident.” Her mom gasped and she continued, “I don’t know any other details, except that it was apparently a pretty bad wreck, so I’m going to Central City to be with Oliver at the hospital.”

“Of course, of course. He’ll need you. What should I tell Allie?”

“Nothing. Not right now, not until I have more details. I don’t want her freaking out.” She zipped up her bag. “I’ll just tell her it’s a last minute work thing.”

When she got to Central City General Hospital, she scanned the waiting room for Oliver and found him standing by the window looking out. His shoulders were slumped and she could tell his arms were crossed over his chest like he was trying to hold himself together.

“Oliver?” she approached him tentatively.
He turned to face her and took a shuttered breath as tears started to well up in his eyes. It was like the shock of the situation had been keeping him numb from processing his emotions but it wore off when he saw her. She set her bag down and pulled him into her for a hug. Burying his face in the crook of her neck, she felt a sob shake him and she rubbed his back soothingly. She had never seen him like this before and she was terrified to ask any questions, so she just held him. Held him like he had done many times for her when she opened up about the things that had hurt her. She hoped he could draw strength from her the same way that she had from him.

When he had steadied himself a bit, he mumbled against her shoulder, “You didn’t have to come.”

“Oliver—“

“But I’m really glad you did.”

He pulled away from her just enough to look at her and she reached up to wipe some of his tears away.

“If the roles were reversed—if I was at the hospital with Allie—would you have been able to stay away?” He shook his head “no” and she resumed rubbing his back, “There’s no reason for you to go through something like this alone when you have me. Do you know anymore about what happened?”

“Samantha is going to be fine. She has some nasty cuts and bruises, and a fractured wrist that needed to be set in a cast, but she's probably about to be discharged any minute. The impact was on William’s side—” He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. “The doctors haven’t told me anything except that he’s in critical condition. He’s been in surgery since I got here.”

She swallowed and nodded in understanding, “Okay. Do you want to take a seat?”

When he didn’t put up any protest, she grabbed her bag and led him to a couch in a quiet corner of the waiting room. He wrapped an arm around her waist and leaned his head on her shoulder while she stroked his hair.

A few minutes later, a woman entered the waiting room who had a freshly stitched gash on her face and a cast on her arm. She recognized her from pictures Will had in his room at the loft.

“Oliver..” she nudged him to get his attention.

Will’s mom looked uncomfortable for a second at the sight of them before making her approach, “Hi.”

Oliver started to introduce her, “Samantha, this is my girlfriend—”

“Felicity,” Samantha finished for him. She offered her a small smile, “I’ve heard a lot about you.”

Felicity returned her smile, “It’s nice to finally meet you.” Her smile fell. “Although I wish it wasn’t under such circumstances.”

Samantha closed her eyes and let out a long exhale, “Agreed. Have you gotten updates on William?”

“Just that he’s still in surgery,” Oliver answered. “Are you okay?”

“I’ll be better when I know my son is okay.” She started to cry, “I should be the one in there, not
him. It’s not fair I barely got a scratch and he’s--” Her voice wavered and she started to cry, “Oliver, it was horrible. I blacked out almost immediately after we got hit, so I don’t remember much from before I woke up in the ambulance, but I can still hear the sound of the back of the car being crushed in and…”

“Hey, you don’t have to talk about it,” Oliver assured her. “Why don’t you have a seat…”

She reached up an arm to wipe away her tears before remembering her cast and lifting the other hand to perform the task. “I have to call my parents and then go talk to the cops, but I’ll be right back.”

When she walked away, Felicity asked Oliver, “Have you called your sister?”

“No.”

“You should do that. She’s worried.” She patted his arm, “I’m going to call my mom.”

Will’s surgeries lasted for what felt like forever and it was early evening when he was finally moved out of the operating room and they were given a report from one of the surgeons.

“We removed the fragments of metal from the car that punctured his body cavity and repaired the damage as best as we could.”

“As best as we could?” Oliver echoed, feeling unsettled by the tone of voice with which she had delivered the phrase.

The surgeon sighed, “We’re going to attempt a second procedure on the spinal cord once his body has had a few hours to rest from the trauma, but if I’m being completely honest, I’m not entirely optimistic that he’ll regain function of his legs.”

He heard a sob from Samantha and wrapped an arm around her shoulder to tuck her into his side.

“So he won’t be able to walk?” he asked, convinced that he must have heard her wrong.

“As I said, we won’t know for certain until after the second surgery, I just want you to be prepared for the likely outcome. I’m very sorry Mr. Queen. All things considered though, your son was very fortunate. The scans of his head all revealed he merely has a concussion, not the severe brain damage we often see in this kind of accident victim that could’ve caused him to wake up an entirely different person. It’s a miracle really.”

“A miracle? That he’s paralyzed?” he snapped. Samantha was soaking his shirt with tears and on his other side Felicity curled her fingers around his forearm to calm him.

He wasn’t sure what kind of relationship dynamic a stranger might ascertain the three of them had if they were watching them at the moment. At first the doctors hadn’t wanted to let Felicity in the room, since she wasn’t a family member. She wasn’t going to put up a fight and was just going to return to the waiting room, but he didn’t want her to leave his side and something about the look on his face when they tried to enforce the rule must have convinced them not to argue it further.

“Oliver,” his girlfriend whispered, her voice soothing.

“I’m sorry,” he apologized to the surgeon.

“It’s alright.” She gave him a tired smile. “You wouldn’t be the first parent who’s lost their temper with me.”
“So what happens next?” Felicity asked.

“Now we wait. He’s stable and his pain is being managed so he can sleep without being in excruciating pain while his body recovers. It will probably be a few hours before he wakes and then we can evaluate him to see if he’s ready for the spinal procedure.”

When the surgeon excused herself from the room, he led Samantha over to the chairs near Will’s bed and they sunk down into them. He felt the exhaustion of the day finally hit him like a truck and he closed his eyes with a sigh. Felicity said something about needing to make a phone call and excused herself from the room, but he barely heard her.

Walking out into the hallway, she pulled out her phone to make a call. As soon as the doctor had given her prognosis for Will’s spinal cord, the wheels in her brain had started to turn.

“Curtis, where are you at with the spinal implant chip?” she asked without any preamble when he picked up.

“The prototype is ready, we just need a willing candidate to test it on. Why?”

“Potential risk factors?”

“Uhh… getting your hopes up and it not working?”

“That’s it?”

“I mean, I’m pretty sure—“

“Curtis. The patient I want to test this on is Oliver's son; I need you to be more than pretty sure.”

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the phone before he responded with, “We would need a willing and capable neurosurgeon.”

“A friend of mine, Dr. Caitlin Snow, could do it. She has the setup for an operation like this at STAR Labs and she’s done experimental procedures before.”

She had mentioned the chip to Caitlin when they were in New York and she had been interested. She had a feeling her friend wouldn’t say no to an opportunity to help and possibly be a part of a medical breakthrough.

“Felicity, what happened?” he pressed.

She briefly explained the accident since she hadn’t had any details to share with him when she left the office earlier, before concluding with, “I need to talk to Oliver and Samantha first, see what they want to do. I’ll keep you posted.”

He hung up and she made a quick call to Caitlin, confirming what she already figured about her willingness to perform the operation.

“And you’re sure you’ll be feeling up for it?”

“Felicity, I’m pregnant, not dying. You should know from personal experience that it’s possible to multitask and do one’s job while growing a little human at the same time.” She cracked a smile at that as Caitlin continued, “Usually the nausea abates by the afternoon, so as long as we don’t do the procedure right when I wake up in the morning, I’ll be perfectly fine.”
“Okay. Thanks Cait. I’ll let you know what they decide to do.”

Slipping back into the room, her eyes swept around the space. Samantha was leaning against Oliver’s shoulder. They both looked emotionally and physically drained as they watched William’s chest rise and fall to the cadence that was displayed on the monitor next to his bed. And Will… she thought she had cried every last drop of tears in her body but more somehow seemed to slip down her cheeks at the sight of him sleeping there with no idea of the situation he was going to wake up to. Even Curtis’ chip was a gamble. Her heart broke for him like he was her own child and yet she knew it could only be a fraction of the pain that his parents were feeling for him.

After she wiped her tears, she cleared her throat to get their attention and Samantha straightened up abruptly to put space between herself and Oliver, guilt passing over her face as she stiffened in her chair. Felicity gave her an understanding smile and she relaxed a little. Now was certainly not the time to be unnecessarily territorial when the poor woman was going through a mother’s nightmare and didn’t have anyone else to lean on. Literally and figuratively.

“I umm… my company has been working on a spinal implant that might help bridge the neural connections damaged in the accident,” she announced.

They both looked at him blankly.

“It might help William walk,” she explained more simply. “Might. It’s a prototype and we haven’t tested it out yet on anyone, so he would be our first trial.”

“No,” Samantha shook her head emphatically. “I won’t have my son be used as a lab rat.”

Oliver laid a hand over her knee, “Samantha…”

“Why don’t you two take some time away from the hospital to discuss it?” she suggested. “The doctors said it’ll be a while until Will wakes up, there’s no point in all of us sitting here staring at him for a few hours. It’s already been a long day, you both could probably use a hot shower, a nap, some food.”

Samantha frowned, “My house is almost thirty minutes away… I don’t want to be that far from the hospital.”

She took her phone out and swiped across the screen. “I made reservations earlier for a room at the hotel across the street. I’ll stay here so he’s not alone and you’ll only be two minutes away. Oliver, I just sent the check in details to you. You two should go, rest for a bit. Order room service—whatever you need is on me. Your son needs you to be strong for him when he wakes up. You can’t do that if you’re tired and hungry.” Walking over to where she had set her bag, she pulled out some of the clean clothes she had packed. “Samantha, you look like you’re about my size. Take these. Oliver, I brought you some things too. I will call you immediately if anything happens with Will, okay?”

She could remember quite clearly one night back in Massachusetts when she had sat with Allison through the night. The experimental treatment the doctors were trying on her had some adverse effects and subsequently her parents hadn’t left her hospital room for almost a week. A nurse had given Allison’s parents similar instructions to the ones she had just given to Samantha and Oliver, and it had seemed to bring them relief to have someone tell them what to do after sitting around feeling helpless.

She hoped that she wasn’t overstepping by employing the same tactic in this scenario. The last thing she wanted was for them to resent her for coming in and taking charge when she wasn’t even technically family, as the doctors had so pointedly reminded her.
Rising to their feet, they took the clothes wordlessly. She reached up to caress Oliver’s jaw and he closed his eyes, leaning into her touch.

His voice was ragged and thick with emotion, “Thank you.”

“I love you.” She stroked her thumb across his cheekbone, “Go get some rest.”

Dropping her hand, she turned to Samantha. “I promise I would never put Will at risk senselessly. This isn’t about using him as a lab rat, I truly believe this procedure could work and I want to give him the best chance at being able to walk again.”

“Oh. I just need some time to think about it,” she responded, her voice worn thin from crying. With her uninjured arm, she reached for her hand and took it in her own, “Thank you… for everything.”

“You’re welcome. I won’t leave his side and I’ll let you know immediately if something happens, I promise.”

Once they departed from the room, she took their place watching vigil over Will’s bed. Her phone buzzed and she pulled it out to see a text from Iris.

**IRIS:** dad said he saw you at the hospital today when he was reporting on an accident. everything ok???

Tapping the screen to call her friend, she quietly explained the events of the day.

“Oh Felicity, I’m so sorry. If there’s anything Bar and I can do, just let us know. Do you have somewhere to stay?”

“Yeah, I got us a room at the hotel across the street. Oliver and Samantha--William’s mom--are on their way right now.”

“And you’re all alone at the hospital?”

“Well William’s here obviously, but he’s asleep so…”

“Do you want someone to come sit with you? You know we’re not far from the hospital, I could be there in a few minutes.”

She was going to say no, but the room suddenly felt too quiet, even with the beeps of the monitors William was hooked up to. Memories of being in the hospital with Allison, of how that all ended, started to play in her mind. If she sat there for too long by herself, she could see herself spiraling into a panic. She had been able to hold herself together when she needed to be strong for Oliver and Samantha, but now that they were gone, she could feel herself crumbling.

“Would you?”

“Of course. Let me just make sure Barry and the twins are okay, and I’ll be right there.”

They were both staring up at the ceiling with a generous foot of space between them when Samantha muttered, “Never thought I’d find myself in bed with you again.”

Under normal circumstances, he probably would’ve laughed at her dry remark. Although he couldn’t imagine what sort of normal situation would find them in bed together.
They had eaten dinner and showered per his girlfriend’s instructions and he had to admit he was feeling slightly better. Even though the tasks she had prescribed had nothing to do with helping his son, it still felt good to have something practical to do while they waited for him to wake up other than pace his room anxiously and yell at doctors.

He propped himself up on his forearm to look at Samantha. She had on the clothes that Felicity had given her at the hospital, including one of his girlfriend’s favorite old sweatshirts to wear on lazy days around the house, which made things even more weird.

“Do you regret it?” he asked abruptly.

Prior to her lying to him about the miscarriage, he knew she had wanted to keep their baby, but that was how she had felt before she spent almost ten years as a young, single mother. Her life could’ve been very different if she had never slept with him and he wondered if she ever wished to undo what had happened between them.

She turned her head towards him, “Regret what?”

“What umm… what happened that night?”

Other than the necessary discussion when their paths first crossed again about why she had kept his son from him—that had led to his falling out with his mom—they had avoided the topic of how exactly they had come to have a child together beyond making it clear that neither of them had any desire to try to make something more out of one careless night a decade ago.

“I’ve asked myself that a few times over the years. Asked myself if I could go back and decide not to follow you upstairs at that party, if I would do it.” She sighed, “I don’t think I would. And not because the sex was great because—no offense—I honestly don’t even remember, but because my life wouldn’t be the same without William.” Her voice broke and she started crying again, “I don’t know who I am if I’m not his mom. It’s who I’ve been for so long now. He’s all I have, and I almost lost him today.”

He was quiet for a moment while he considered her words. He couldn’t even imagine a life without his son now that he had been given the chance to know him. Losing Will in the accident would’ve broken him. But even though a piece of his family would always be missing, he would’ve had Felicity and Allie to help put him back together again after he had had time to grieve. She didn’t have that. It was just her and Will.

He wondered if she was content with the way things were or if she was lonely and wanted a partner like he had found in Felicity.

“What are we going to do about the spinal implant?” she asked before he could say anything in response to her previous comments.

“I trust Felicity, if she thinks it’s safe and there’s a chance for him to be able to walk, I think we should take that chance.” He didn’t want to see Will lose things he loved, like playing baseball and running around at the park with Allie and Bruce, if he didn’t have to. “She loves Will, she would never propose something that she thought might make things worse for him just to test a prototype.”

Samantha sighed, “William trusts her too. If he were conscious I’m sure he’d go right along with whatever she suggested. I see why now, why he loves her. She seems like a pretty amazing person.”

“She is. I’m going to marry her,” he confided. He hadn’t said those words aloud to anyone yet since he had come to the realization at her birthday party that the time was right to propose. “At least I
He wanted to do it right. Give her a romantic evening that ended with him down on one knee. She deserved that.

“I’m sure she’ll say yes.” She turned her head towards him, “I mean, I’ve only been around you two for less than a day—and under horrible circumstances nonetheless—and it’s been enough for me to see how much she loves you. And William.” Sighing she reached for the lamp on her bedside table to turn it off, “I’m going to try and get some sleep.”

He set an alarm on his phone so they wouldn’t oversleep and attempted to follow suit.

Oliver and Samantha returned to the hospital a few hours later looking slightly better than they had when she took charge and sent them away. Iris had left not that long ago and Samantha took the seat next to her by William’s bed that she had been occupying.

When her lip started to quiver and Felicity could tell she was going to start crying again, she felt a surge of empathy for her. In many ways, they had a similar story. Unexpectedly pregnant way too young, to a boy who wasn’t ready to be a father. She had an immense amount of respect for her because she knew what it was like to be in her shoes. And while Allie had never been in this exact same predicament, she had still been through plenty of her own terrifying experiences with her.

“When Allie—my daughter—was four, I hadn’t had her tested for allergies yet. I never fed her nuts because I’m severely allergic myself, so we just never had them in the house. One night, she was at the diner where my mom worked because I had to stay late at the office to deal with an attack on the server. One of the waitresses gave her a cookie, they were just trying to make her happy, but—“ She closed her eyes at the memory of that night. “I remember how scared I was when I got the call from my mom. My baby girl couldn’t breathe and there was nothing I could do for her.” Looking over at Samantha, she continued, “In my own way, I know how you’re feeling right now. I know what it’s like to see your child in a hospital bed and feel completely helpless. To wish you could take on their pain, but instead you just have to accept that you can’t fight every battle for them. I know how hard it is, but I also know that you raised a strong kid and if anyone can pull through this, it’s him.”

Samantha reached up to stroke his hair, “We’re going to leave the decision up to him, about the spinal implant. He’s old enough to make that choice.”

“Okay. Obviously we should wait and see what happens after his next surgery, but then we can talk to him about it.”

Oliver came up behind her and started to massage her shoulders, “How are you holding up?”

“I’m okay. Iris came by to sit with me—” She glanced over at Samantha and explained, “One of my best friends. I hope you don’t mind.”

“It’s fine,” she assured her. “I really appreciate you being here. You’ve been—”

“Mom?”

They all turned their attention back to Will, whose voice sounded groggy and weak, as he blinked his eyes open in confusion.

“I’m here baby,” Samantha assured him.

“What happened?” His eyes darted around the room, taking in his surroundings. “Why are we in a
hospital?"

“Do you remember anything from today?”

“You were taking me to Grandma and Grandpa’s and then--” Realization passed across his face.
“Oh. We got hit.”

“We did. But you’re okay. Everything is going to be okay.”

His brow furrowed, “Why can’t I feel my legs?”

Felicity didn’t think it was possible for any more color to drain out of Samantha’s face, but she paled and opened and closed her mouth wordlessly.

“You still have to have one more surgery tonight,” Oliver explained, jumping in for her.

Will looked up at his father hopefully, “And it’s going to fix my legs?”

They were prevented from having to answer by the doctors arriving to examine him to see if he had stabilized enough for the operation.

When he came out of surgery, the doctors informed them that it went the way they had been expecting.

“I am truly sorry. We did everything we could.”

“So what now?” Felicity asked.

"I suggest you all go home and get some sleep. It’s late. When he wakes up in the morning, we’ll have to give him the news.”

She left the room and Felicity followed her out into the hallway.

“Dr. Peterson, we have a friend at STAR Labs who is interested in trying an experimental procedure on William. To try and reverse the paralysis.”

The doctor’s eyebrow lifted, “Dr. Snow?”

“Yes. You know her?”

“Our paths crossed a few times in medical school. I know she does some fascinating things, but I’m not sure what could possibly be done for William.”

“It involves a new piece of technology that my company is developing. We’ve never tested it before, but the scientist who created it is confident in it’s potential,” she disclosed. “I was wondering when you thought it might be safe to move William, so we could take him to STAR Labs.”

She knew they still had to ask Will what he wanted to do about the spinal implant, but she figured it wouldn’t hurt to start getting the details ironed out.

“His body has been through a lot today. I probably won’t be able to sign off on discharging him for another week.”

“I understand.”

Before she left her, Dr. Peterson remarked, “Ms. Smoak, if this particular piece of technology works-
you could change a lot of people’s lives.”

A smile turned up the corners of her mouth, “That’s the dream.”

She had always wanted to be a part of something that would change the world. When she was in college, she had gotten swept up in Cooper’s idea for how to do that, but now she knew that she could do so much more than she ever would’ve achieved as Ghost Fox Goddess. If the chip worked, and they could find a way to make it available to the masses, it would only be the start of her vision for the company she had been entrusted with.

Felicity and Oliver left the hospital at a little past midnight, with Samantha opting to stay behind with William.

“Call if something happens,” Oliver requested. “Don’t worry about waking us.”

When they crossed the street to the hotel, she and Oliver got settled into their room and she changed out of her dress and heels she had still been wearing from work that morning into one of the outfits she had brought.

As they settled into bed and she massaged his shoulders and back in an attempt to ease some of the tension he had been holding onto all day, she relayed her conversation with the doctor. “Dr. Peterson said that William will probably have to be at the hospital for about a week before she can discharge him and we can take him to STAR Labs. If he decides he wants to try the spinal implant.”

“Do you really think it’ll work?”

“Curtis is one of the smartest people I know. Almost as many IQ points as me.” She pressed a kiss to his shoulder blade. “If anyone can make Will walk again, it’s him. But if we’re staying another week, I’m going to have to have my mom bring some more clothes.”

“You don’t have to stay all week. Not that I haven’t appreciated having you here. Any sense of sanity that Samantha and I held onto today was thanks to you. But I don’t want you to feel obligated to stay.”

“But--”

He turned around to face her, “I’m not going to tell you that you can’t stay. I’m just saying you don’t have to. It seems like it’s going to be a lot of just waiting around and you have that launch party this week for the new Smart Wearables that you were telling me about.”

She knew that a lot of the stuff she told him about involving her work went straight over his head, as she could often get into long passionate rambles involving a lot of technical lingo, but he always made an effort to listen carefully to her. It was one of the many things she appreciated about him. If something was important to her, he made it important to him.

She considered his point for a moment before sighing, “Okay. You’re right. And besides, I’m not a family member. I’ll just be crowding the room if I stay. I’ll leave tomorrow after we talk to him about the chip. And then maybe I can come back in a few days with Allie?”

When she had called earlier, she had granted her mom permission to give Allie vague information about what was going on with William. She had texted a few hours ago to share with her that they were in the process of making get-well cards to distract her from worrying too much, but that she kept asking when she could see him.
“I think that sounds like a good plan.” He kissed her tenderly, “But also, you’re most definitely family.”

She smiled and kissed him back before letting him snuggle in close to her so she could wrap her body around him as much as possible to offer comfort and support.

AUGUST

“Will!” Allie charged his hospital bed upon entering the room with her mother and Oliver had to reach out to stop her before she jumped on him or something.

“Careful,” he cautioned. “He’s still healing.”

She looked up at him sheepishly, “Sorry.”

Approaching him more slowly, she handed him the giant card she was carrying, “I made this for you.”

Will gave her a tired smile, “Thanks Allie.”

“How are you feeling?” she asked curiously.

“Sore. And it’s weird that I can’t feel my legs…”

While the two of them chatted, he joined Felicity and Samantha who were having their own conversation.

“...so they’re all ready for him at STAR Labs as soon as he’s able to be discharged,” Felicity was saying when he wrapped an arm around her waist and pressed a kiss to her cheek in greeting.

He had missed her over the past four days while she was in Star City, but he was glad she had gone home and back to work instead of sitting around restlessly in the hospital room as he had. During their nightly calls, after reading to Allie as they had gotten into a routine of doing over the summer, he kept her updated on Will.

“Which should hopefully be any day now.” Samantha glanced over at Will, who had an amused smile on his face at whatever Allie was saying. “He’s made a lot of progress.”

Just as they had predicted, Will had instantly agreed to Felicity’s proposal to test the spinal implant on him. While Felicity had stressed that it wasn’t a guarantee he would be able to walk again, his son shared his mindset that any chance was better than no chance regarding the situation. Samantha had slowly warmed up more to the idea as the days had passed and they were all feeling more optimistic than they had been the night of the accident.

Once William was stable enough to be moved from the hospital, they set up a transfer to STAR Labs and Felicity brought Curtis along with her to aid Caitlin with the mechanics of the procedure.

Curtis went into an explanation of how the spinal implant chip was supposed to work—most of it going entirely over the heads of his audience if their facial expressions were any indication—before concluding with, “He’ll more than likely need extensive physical therapy even after the chip is implanted in his spine. My husband is an excellent PT, and he has a basic understanding of the
mechanics of the chip, so he would be able to put together the best rehabilitation plan.”

“Oh. Thank you for the recommendation, but we live in Central City, so we’ll have to find someone a little closer,” Samantha remarked.

“Or we could move to Star City, like I’ve asked you a million times,” William grumbled from his bed.

“We’re not discussing this now,” Samantha chastised him.

“That’s what you always say. But I’m tired of having to live in two different cities and I don’t want to go back to only seeing dad and Felicity and Allie two weekends a month once school starts again. I want to move,” he repeated.

Samantha was quiet and Felicity could see by her body language and the look on her face that she was not taking her son’s words well.

“Cait? We should clear the room to give you space to prep him for surgery, right?” she piped up.

Her friend caught on and nodded, “Yes, that would be great. Thank you.”

Samantha leaned over and pressed a kiss to Will’s forehead before slipping from the room and Felicity approached his bed to take one of his hands.

“Hey. Be nice to your mom, she’s had a rough couple of days.”

“I’m sorry,” he dipped his head in embarrassment. “I just don’t understand why she won’t let us move.”

“Moving is a big deal. She would have to find a new job, a new house. She’d be farther away from her family. And change is scary. Remember how you used to feel about sharing Oliver with Allie and I? She probably feels a little bit like that with having to share you with us.”

“Oh.”

She squeezed his hand gently, “Just something to consider.”

William’s eyes shifted over to where Caitlin was talking to Curtis and the nurse who was going to be assisting with the surgery. She could see fear flash across his face.

“You’re in very capable hands with them,” she assured him. “But you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to. Whatever happens, whether you can walk or not when all of this is over, you’re still you. We’re all going to support you no matter what.”

He looked back at her with a determined expression, “I want to do this.”

“Okay. I’ll see you when you wake up.” She gave him a kiss on the forehead as well before joining Samantha and Oliver out in the hallway, slipping her hand into Oliver’s to give it a reassuring squeeze.
Chapter Notes

Thank you so so much for all of your feedback on the last chapter! I'm sorry that I did not have time to reply to everyone individually, but I read all of your comments and I was happy to see that y'all liked the twist that I put on the events from the show for this fic :D One of the things that I really wanted to do with this AU is explore what the dynamic would be with Oliver, Samantha, and Felicity if that storyline had been done a little differently. (There's also another storyline coming up in a few chapters that is my take on one from the show that I wish had been handled a little differently, so you'll have to wait and see what that is) This chapter is obviously up a little early but it's because I'm going away this weekend and not taking my laptop with me, so I didn't want to have to worry about posting on Sunday.... I figured there would be no complaints about getting a chapter a few days earlier than usual ;) LOTS of stuff happens in this one and it really sets up the final arc of the story (there's probably about 6-ish more full length chapters left + bonus scenes) so enjoy!!

2 weeks after William's spinal implant surgery…

“You did great today,” Oliver assured his son when they got out of his physical therapy session, crouching to be at his level in his wheelchair.

Will frowned, “Not really. What if it doesn’t work? What if I never walk again?”

He ruffled his hair, “Don’t give up yet. They said it could take some time. You just have to be patient and keep working hard with Mr. Paul.”

He helped his son into the car to take him back to the loft. Samantha had been able to get paid leave from her job for a few weeks due to her own injuries and Will’s. Because of that, she agreed that they could stay in Star City until school started up again so that Will could do physical therapy with Curtis’ husband. She was staying in Thea’s old room, since his sister had decided to officially move in with Sara and Nyssa.

“Before I get kicked out,” she had told him jokingly when he found her packing up her things after he had told her his plans for asking Felicity to marry him once things had settled more with Will.

“Today’s the day you’re going to pick it out, isn’t it?” Will asked him as he navigated them through the city traffic.

“Yep. You want to come along?”

His son sighed, “I’m really tired. I just want a nap.”

“It’s okay.” He started to reached over to pat his knee, before remembering that would be futile and withdrawing his hand. “Don’t be hard on yourself buddy. The accident was only three weeks ago. No one is expecting you to feel back to normal already.”

“I just thought I’d be walking by now,” he muttered under his breath dejectedly.
“One thing at a time. You had a lot of injuries that needed to heal and you’ve made a lot of progress.”

Once he had gotten Will back to the loft and settled into his room to rest with Bruce curled up beside him, Samantha pulled him aside out in the hallway.

“Do you know any realtors?”

“What?”

“I’ve been doing a lot of thinking and talking to William since we’ve been here and I’ve gotten to see you with him more, and meet everyone who’s come to visit and support him. I understand why he wants to move and I think it would be selfish of me to want to stay in Central City and keep him away from everyone he loves here. This is home for him, the only thing that’s missing is me.”

There had been an almost unending stream of visitors to the loft over the past two weeks. Laurel and Tommy. John. His mom and Walter. Thea. Sara and Nyssa. All three of the Smoak girls. William’s room was filled with balloons and cards and stuffed animals.

“I—seriously?” He had been savoring all the time he had been having with his son while he was recovering, because it wouldn’t be long before school would be back in session and he figured they’d have to return to their old custody arrangement.

“Yeah. I talked to someone from my company and they actually have a branch here they could transfer me too… my whole life for the past almost eleven years now has pretty much revolved around William, it’s not like I’d be leaving much behind in Central City.” She held up a hand and added hastily, “Not that I’m going to encroach on your life, our relationship won’t change in any way, even if I live closer. Especially with you getting married, you don’t need your baby mama hanging around. Trust me, I get it.”

“Felicity likes you,” he assured her.

“And I appreciate that she loves William and isn’t resentful towards me for always having to be a part of your life in some context. Not everyone in her position might be so gracious, and I do hope things can remain friendly between us, but I think it would still be weird for me to be around more than necessary.” He nodded in understanding and she continued, “So we could keep our alternating week arrangement we had over the summer, and then if there’s a special occasion, we can easily make an exception because we’re not hundreds of miles apart.” She looked down at the floor shyly, “Also… seeing the way Felicity’s been by your side through this whole thing made me realize that I’d like to have a relationship like that. So maybe if I’m here and I can let you help more with William, I can actually have time to meet someone.”

After he got Samantha set up with the number for the realtor that had helped him find the loft, he went to pick Thea up to take with him to the jewelers’ for moral support. Sara was home and wanted to tag along on the outing as well because, after a week of working triple shifts, the clinic had forced her to leave to get some rest. She was apparently bored to death.

“So do I get to be your best man?” Sara asked, while they scanned the cases of engagement rings in quest of the perfect one.

He laughed, “You’d have to fight Tommy for that.”

“Are we talking like actual combat?” She flexed an arm, “Because I would definitely win.”

“It’s true,” Thea muttered. “I came home the other night to her and Nyssa having a sword fight in our
living room. I didn’t realize moving in with them would be a threat to my safety.”

“Not swords, bo staffs. Nyssa’s been training me. It really helps to relieve stress after long shifts at the clinic,” she explained.

“I hear yoga works for that too and has less risk of bruising,” he remarked, gesturing to a black and blue mark on her shoulder. Felicity was constantly trying to get him to go to a yoga class with her and Dinah. He knew eventually he would cave, but he was still trying to avoid looking like a complete idiot in front of them.

Sara patted his chest, “Yeah, but it’s not as fun.”

“Whatever. But you’re going to have to settle for just being a groomswoman. Tommy and I have had dibs on being each other’s best man since at least the fifth grade, and he held up his end of the bargain.”

“I know that, I was just kidding. Although I will gladly be a groomswoman. Do I get to wear a tux?”

“You’ll have to talk to Donna. I have a feeling I will have basically zero control over this wedding.”

“You’re talking like she’s already said yes,” Thea pointed out and the tips of his ears reddened.

“Well I—”

“She’s going to say yes Ollie,” Sara interrupted him. “You know we just like messing with you. Now what exactly are we looking for here? What style do you think she’d like?”

He shrugged, “I’m not sure. I’m hoping I’ll know when I see it.”

“We’re going to be here all day,” Thea muttered.

“We should’ve brought snacks,” Sara added.

The jeweler, who had known the Queen family for a long time, finished with the customer he had been helping when they came in and walked up behind him, “Can I help you—” Oliver turned and recognition flashed across his face, “Oh! Mr. Queen. Mayor Queen. What brings you here today?”

He noticed which displays they were standing by, “Ah, I see.”

Oliver grinned shyly, “Yeah.”

“And are you the lucky woman, Miss Lance?” he addressed Sara, recognizing her most likely from one of the many Queen family hosted functions over the years.

Sara clutched Oliver’s arm dramatically, “Only in my high school self’s dreams.”

When the jeweler tilted his head in confusion, Oliver rolled his eyes in amusement before saying, “She’s not. My girlfriend’s not here with us today. I want it to be a surprise.”

“As it should be.” He tapped the edge of his glasses, “I remember now, reading in the paper that you were seeing a CEO...Miss Smoak?”

“Yes, Felicity.” Oliver pulled his phone out and showed the jeweler the picture he had on the lockscreen—a selfie she had taken of them at the vineyard from earlier in the summer.

The jeweler beamed, “Such a beautiful couple. I already have some ideas of what might suit her. Why don’t you three have a seat and I’ll bring them out.”
They did as they were told and he returned a few minutes later with a tray of rings.

Thea and Sara had opposing opinions on which one they liked best but Oliver knew immediately which one was the right one and he had to take a deep breath as he imagined slipping it onto Felicity’s finger.

“This is it.” He picked up the diamond encrusted band that was set with a teardrop shaped stone as the focal. It was a little unique and not too flashy, but it would definitely still sparkle when she waved her hands around as she often did when she talked. He smiled at the mental image as he set it back down in the tray.

[See the ring here]

“What was the point of bringing us along if you weren’t going to listen to either of us?” Thea teased. “But you’re right, I think she’ll love that one.”

“How long will it take to get it made for her?” Oliver asked the jeweler.

“Typically two to three weeks, but for you I think we can have that process expedited,” he answered with a wink. “Do you know her size?”

“Yes.” He had gotten that information from Donna when he had approached her with his intentions. He was glad he had done so when Felicity wasn't home because she had shrieked so loudly with excitement he was certain the whole neighborhood had heard her. To have earned her seal of approval meant a lot to him and it bolstered his confidence that he was actually worthy of marrying someone as remarkable as Felicity.

“Alright then, let’s get the order written up so we can get you down on one knee as soon as possible Mayor Queen.”

Later that day, while Samantha was out having dinner with an old friend from before she moved to Central City, he and Will settled onto the couch to watch a movie. With Will and Samantha staying at his place, he had been sleeping most nights at the Smoak’s. But even then, he still spent the evening at the loft to be with his son and didn’t go over to their house until after he had gone to sleep. Halfway through Lego Batman, his phone rang with a call from his mom and he excused himself from the living room.

“Hi Mom…”

“I got a call from Richard earlier, who mentioned you had stopped in to see him this afternoon. For an engagement ring.”

“Yeah.”

*News travels fast apparently.*

“Don’t you think this is all a little too soon?” his mother implored.

He wasn’t surprised by her question. It was the kind of question that mothers as protective as his ask. If he and Felicity had been dating for five years, he still would’ve expected her to ask it.

So he wasn’t surprised and he didn’t have to hesitate with his answer.

“No.”
“No?”

“I’ve known from our first date that she was the one for me mom.” *Maybe even before that.* If he was being honest, she had laid claim to his heart that night in December. After that he hadn’t been able to let her go, no matter how hard he had tried. “I finally knew for certain what I wanted my future to look like when I pictured her in it. Maybe things have happened fast for us, but we both went into this relationship looking for something serious.” He had told her on their first date that he wasn’t going to waste her time. To prolong proposing when he knew that she was ready to get married, and he was more than ready, felt like breaking that promise. “Every step forward we’ve taken has been when we felt we were ready and buying her a ring today…it felt right. We want to build a life together. I know you didn’t like her at first but—“

“I was regrettably rude towards her at first because I was jealous of her for having a place in your life when I was no longer afforded one, that’s all,” she dismissed him. “I was always of the opinion that she’s a wonderful young woman and I’ve seen how deeply she cares for you. However, I also know you’ve made decisions in the past without thinking them through entirely and I felt obliged to make sure you weren’t being impulsive.”

“If I was being impulsive, I would’ve asked her to marry me weeks ago. I’ve had more than enough time to think about this.”

The past few weeks, with everything that had happened with William, had only been more confirmation for him. She had been his anchor through it all, and, no matter what else life threw at them, she was the one he wanted by his side on the good days and the bad ones.

His mom was quiet for a moment before saying, “Okay. I trust you.”

Hearing those words from the woman who had spent almost his entire life making decisions for him meant a lot.

“And I’m very happy for you,” she added. “I have no doubt that she will say yes. Might I talk to my grandson?”

“Thanks Mom. And of course.”

SEPTEMBER

“Can I take Allie out to dinner sometime this week?”

It was a Saturday afternoon and they were walking through the park, getting some fresh air while soaking up one of the last warm days of the year before fall swept in. One hand held onto Bruce’s leash, keeping him from chasing after every squirrel they encountered and the other was intertwined with his girlfriend’s. The kids were a little ahead of them, Allie throwing every ounce of her little body’s strength into pushing Will’s wheelchair up a tiny incline in the path, despite his insistence that he didn’t need her help.

Felicity had made the decision to let Allie skip another grade so that she and Will would both be in fifth grade, as they thought it would make his transition to a new school easier to already have a friend. And, since Allie attended the private school that he and Thea had, his mother had called and reminded the administration of all the generous donations the Queen family had made throughout the years, “*so of course it should be no trouble to ensure that my grandson and Miss Smoak are placed in the same class.*”

Together, they had both made it through the first week of the new school year… with only one
Felicity found Samantha already waiting outside the principal’s office, fiddling with her hands nervously.

“The last time I got called to the principal's office was when I was in seventh grade and disrespected a teacher by arguing with him over an answer on one of our tests.” She sat down next to her and handed her a coffee. “Upon further inspection, I was right, of course. But I still got a lecture about being an insufferable know-it-all.”

Samantha laughed and thanked her for the coffee before asking, “Did Oliver say if he was going to be able to be here? The school said they weren’t able to get in touch with him when they called me....”

“He’s in a press conference right now, so it’s just you and me. Oh the joys of motherhood, right?”

They clinked their coffee cups together in solidarity and Samantha remarked, “I can’t believe they got into a fight. I mean, William’s still getting the hang of just moving around in his wheelchair... how much violence is he capable of?”

“Yeah, I have no idea. And Allie has never been aggressive before. I couldn’t believe it when they told me she punched a kid.”

They fell silent as the mom of the kid William and Allie had supposedly gotten into the fight with walked out of the office with her son, who was sporting a black eye.

“He has to be at least a foot taller than her. I know it’s wrong, but I’m actually a little impressed,” Felicity muttered, and the mom shot her a dark look before quickening her pace and pushing her son along.

Beside her, Samantha was trying to stifle a laugh but they both put on their serious faces when the office receptionist called for them to come in. Allie and Will were both sitting in there already, looking down at their laps and avoiding making eye contact.

When she and Samantha took their seats, the principal explained the situation in a little more detail than she had over the phone.

“Mom and Oliver said I was supposed to look out for Will,” Allie grumbled with an ounce or two of sass when the principal finished her account of the incident.

Felicity twisted in her seat to face her daughter, “I don’t remember us telling you to start fights.”

“I didn’t start it! They’ve been making fun of us since the first day because he’s new and in a wheelchair, and I’m ‘not old enough to be in fifth grade’.” Allie made quotation marks with her fingers before crossing her arms over her chest. “Nyssa and Sara said I have to assert my dominance or the mean boys will walk over me all year because I’m little. So I punched him, since he’s the leader,” she explained oh-so-matter-of-factly and Felicity did her best to keep a straight face for the sake of being the mature parent.

She had been in a dire situation for childcare the night before with all of her usual options tied up in other obligations, so Allie had ended up hanging out with Thea. And
apparently her roommates had gotten a chance to offer some advice on the bullying situation at school.

“We’re aware that she was not the instigator and we’re doing our best to deal with the kids who were bullying them,” the principal spoke up. “Allie has always been a sweet girl, we’re certain it won’t happen again, we just had to follow the standard procedure for dealing with incidents like this. We can’t allow violence to be perceived as a solution.”

“Well I’m pretty sure it worked, because they all seemed pretty scared of her after she made him cry. It was awesome,” Will piped up for the first time since their arrival and Samantha dropped her head into her hands with an exasperated sigh.

“You want to take just Allie out to dinner?” Felicity asked curiously.

“Yeah… like as a ‘congratulations for surviving your first week as an eight-year-old in the fifth grade’ kind of thing,” he lied, not wanting to give away his real motive.

“You do remember that she punched a kid? We’re not rewarding that.” She added in a mutter, “Even if a small part of me is proud of her for standing up for herself and Will.”

Oliver laughed, “So dinner? Please?”

“Yes, of course. That’s very sweet of you and I’m sure she’ll love to. How about tomorrow night? This week is pretty hectic with meetings and after-school activities starting up again, but we don’t have anything going on tomorrow.”

“Perfect. I have to drop Will off at Samantha’s for the week, but then I’ll swing by to pick her up around six?”

“I’ll put it in her calendar,” she replied jokingly.

They walked in silence for a few moments, just watching the kids, before he spoke up again “I’m a little worried about him,” he confessed. “He’s been withdrawn and down on himself for the past few weeks. The optimism he had in his first few therapy sessions is gone. I knew it was a gamble with this chip, but I feel like we got his hopes up—possibly for nothing—and he didn’t properly process the reality of his paralysis because he thought it wasn’t going to last long. You haven’t given up hope yet that the chip will work, have you?”

“No.” She squeezed his hand. “And neither has Curtis. He fully expected it to take time for Will’s nervous system to integrate with the biostimulus tech. I see how frustrating it’s been for him to go to all those PT sessions and feel like he’s not progressing anywhere, and the bullying at school can’t help either, so we just have to keep his spirits up. And if it doesn’t ever work… we’ll all help him permanently adjust to his new reality. Curtis and I will design him the coolest wheelchair ever.”

He drew their intertwined hands up to press a kiss to her knuckles, “I don’t know what we would do without you.”

She gave him a soft smile. “You don’t have to find out.”

If he had the ring with him he would drop to one knee right then and there, but it wasn’t quite finished yet.

And besides, there was still one more thing he had to do before he could ask her.
Felicity watched as her mom braided Allie’s hair into a crown around her head, while simultaneously trying to get her to sit still and stop fidgeting excitedly. She had mastered the two french braids, but her mom was still the queen of getting Allie’s curls into more intricate styles.

“Where do you think he’s taking me?” Allie asked.

She shrugged, “I don’t know, he just said somewhere fancy. You know how he likes to keep things a surprise.”

Once her hair was finished, Allie hopped down from the stool and spun around in her bright fuschia dress, “Do I look fancy enough?”

“You look beautiful,” Oliver remarked, striding into the kitchen, and Allie beamed.

“I didn’t even hear you come in,” Felicity remarked, greeting him with a kiss.

He winked, “I’m stealthy like that.” Turning to Allie, he asked, “You ready to go Miss Smoak?”

“Yes!”

Felicity crouched down to her daughter’s eye level, “Have fun. I know you’ll be on your best behavior.” Allie nodded and she stood up to say to Oliver, “It’s a school night, so don’t have her out too late.”

“Yes ma’am.”

She rolled her eyes before fiddling with his tie flirtatiously. “Since I don’t get date night, I at least get a sleepover, right?”

“Yes.” He squeezed her hip and kissed her cheek, whispering, “Don’t worry. I’ll save room for dessert.”

“Well then, I guess I won’t be too jealous that I wasn’t invited for dinner.”

When they had left, she turned to her mom, “So what are we supposed to eat?”

After an unsuccessful survey of the contents of the fridge, they ordered pizza and invited Dinah and Thea to come over and watch a rom-com with them.

“My dad used to take me out for fancy dinners too when I was younger,” Thea reminisced as they all settled into the couches with pizza and wine. “He wasn’t a perfect dad, but he did treat me like a princess.”

Felicity sat down next to her. “It’s adorable, she was so excited getting ready to go out with him. She had a little bit of a rough week at school, with her being so much younger than her classmates.”

“I heard she punched a kid. I feel partially responsible since that advice was given out on my watch,” Thea interjected sheepishly.

“It’s okay. I mean violence is never the answer and all that, but I don’t think those boys are going to bother her again anytime soon. I told her not to worry too much if kids tease her though because I got made fun of in school too and now I run a multi-billion dollar company and have a hot boyfriend. Being the weird, nerdy girl worked out perfectly fine for me.” She shrugged, “You just gotta own
“I thought you weren’t going to let her skip another grade,” Dinah remarked, taking a sip of her wine.

“I wasn’t. But when I thought about it more, I knew she would be bored without the extra challenge. And with Will transferring here, Oliver, Samantha, and I thought it would be easier on him if he had someone in his class that he knew.”

“Is it awkward with the three of you now that she’s living here too?”

She shook her head, “No, not really. I was a little nervous about meeting her for the first time, but that ended up happening during a crisis situation when there wasn’t time for things to be awkward. And now… I mean, it’s not like we’re in some love triangle, she’s not even really his ex. It’s honestly not all that different from when she was living in Central City. She has her own life, she’s been reconnecting with people she was friends with before she got pregnant and moved. I don’t see her that often, but when I do—like when we end up in the principal’s office together because my daughter has taken it upon herself to be her son’s bodyguard—we get along just fine.” She hit play on Legally Blonde and while the opening scene played in the background, she asked Dinah, “How was your first week as lieutenant?”

“Good, but challenging. The SCPD is still a little bit of an old boys club and I think it’s going to take a while for some of them to get used to taking orders from a woman.”

“I have complete faith in your ability to put them all in their place in no time,” her mom piped up. “I mean this in the best way possible, you’re one of the most intimidating people I know.”

Dinah laughed, “Thanks Mama Smoak.”

Arriving at Corrado, one of his favorite Italian restaurants in the city, they approached the maitre'd.

“Queen, party of two.”

“Right this way Mayor Queen.”

Allie clutched tightly to his hand as they were led through the dining room to their table. He pulled her chair out for her and she took her seat, looking around the restaurant in awe.

“I’ve never been anywhere this fancy before. I feel like I’m at one of Mommy’s important business meeting dinners, so this can be practice for when I’m a CEO. Do they have just plain spaghetti here?”

He chuckled as he sat across from her, “Yes, they do.”

“Okay, good.”

After they ordered, she launched into a recap of her entire first week of school—only pausing to eat her spaghetti as delicately as she could manage, which was entertaining—and he listened attentively. She missed some of her friends who she had left behind with skipping ahead another grade, but she liked her teacher and having Will in her class.

“...But I promise I won’t punch anyone else again,” she vowed, concluding her story of the day she had given a kid a black eye that he had already heard versions of from Will and Felicity.

“Good. I don’t think your mom wants to be called to the principal’s office again because you were
“Well yeah, but also it kinda hurt my hand.” She inspected her knuckles with a disgruntled expression and he took a bite of his food to keep a smile off his face. “The nurse had to give me an ice pack.”

As their dinner was winding down, he knew he needed to get to the reason for taking her out that evening.

He cleared his throat, “Allie, I have an important question for you.”

She looked up at him with wide eyes and a serious expression, “Okay.”

He suddenly felt extremely nervous, even more so than when he had talked to Donna. While asking permission to propose was maybe a little old fashioned, it was important to him to have their blessing if he was going to marry into their close knit family.

“You know I love your mom very much.” She nodded and he continued, “So I was wondering if it would be okay with you if I asked her to marry me?”

Allie grinned and instantly responded with, “Oh, I think she would like that.”

“And you would too?”

“Yes!” A crinkle formed between her eyebrows, setting her face in an expression that so resembled her mother. “Well actually, I have some questions for you first. Before I give you my permission.”

Amusement turned up the corners of his mouth and he raised a curious eyebrow, “Ask away…”

“Will you always think she’s the most beautiful girl in the world, even when she’s old and wrinkly?”

His smile widened at the thought of getting to grow old with Felicity, of falling more and more in love with her as the years passed.

“I will.”

“And do you promise you won’t ever leave her?” She looked down at the napkin she was fiddling with and added softly, “And me?”

“I promise.”

He had already spent too much of his life running away from responsibilities. He wanted to be the man now who stayed.

Looking back up at him, her smile returned. “Okay. Then you can ask her to marry you.”

“That’s your only criteria? That I think she’s beautiful and I don’t ever leave?”

Although, since most of his parents’ issues had stemmed from his father finding other women more enticing than his wife and Felicity’s greatest fear was being abandoned again, she was wisely—albeit probably unknowingly—trying to ensure history wouldn’t be repeated with those two questions.

She shrugged, “I’m eight years old, I might be a genius, but I don’t know what all is important for being married.” He stifled a laugh as she continued. “But I know you’re nice to her and you make her smile a lot and if she says yes then she must think you’ll be a good person to be married to.”
“Okay.” He dipped his head in gratitude, “Thank you for your permission.”

Allie narrowed her eyes at him, “What if I had said no?”

“Uhhh…”

She giggled, “I’m kidding, I would never say no. But only because I love you lots. You’re the only person I would ever let marry her, so consider yourself lucky mister.”

He was pretty sure he was going to cry.

He swallowed and willed the tears not to well up in his eyes, “I love you lots. You can keep this a secret, right? Because I’m not going to ask her until our date next weekend.”

Hopefully he could make it that long. He didn’t want to impatiently propose to her before the perfect moment he had planned.

“Did I keep her birthday party a secret? Yes. Don’t worry.” She reached over the table to pat his hand, “You can trust me. My lips are sealed.”

Felicity was putting the leftover slices of pizza away in the fridge when Oliver and Allie got home.

“Did you guys have a nice time?”

“Yep!” Allie wrapped her arms around her waist to give her a hug.

“Where’d you go?”

“Corrado’s,” Oliver supplied, setting a box on the counter.

Allie looked up at her, “I had the best spaghetti ever.”

“Corrado’s, now I’m really jealous that you got to be his date tonight,” she teased her daughter. She and Oliver had gone to the Italian bistro on numerous occasions and the tiramisu was to die for.

Oliver tapped the box, “Brought you home some tiramisu.”

“Mmmm… you’re the best. Just take that right up to my room and I’ll meet you there after I get this munchkin tucked into bed.”

Up in Allie’s room, after pajamas were on and teeth were brushed, Felicity sat on the edge of her bed as she got snuggled in under her covers.

“Mommy?”

“Yeah baby?”

“If you and Oliver get married, will that make him my dad?”

“Umm… sort of, yes.”

Step-dad seemed like an unnecessary and confusing distinction for someone who’d never known any other father figure.

“What about my real dad?” She picked at a loose thread on her comforter. “Will he be mad that I have a new dad?”
She paused to gather her thoughts. She knew this conversation had been on the horizon for a while now, but she was still unprepared.

“Don’t worry, he won’t be mad.” Because he never wanted to be your dad in the first place and, also, he’s dead.

“Okay, that’s good.” She closed her eyes and Felicity was relieved that she didn’t want to go any further with the topic yet. Her eyes flicked back open and she hastily added, “I’m just thinking about it for later if you and Oliver get married. I know that’s probably not happening soon or anything.”

She sighed, “Yeah.”

Unfortunately.

She had been dropping subtle hints to him lately, but with everything that had happened with Will, she understood that his mind was probably elsewhere.

“But you want to get married to him?”

“I do.”

“Ok. Goodnight.” Allie turned away from her to lay on her side, but not before she caught the smile on her face. She was glad that her daughter was on board with having Oliver potentially be around for the long run. No matter how much she loved him, she didn’t think she could say yes to marrying him if for some reason Allie didn’t want her to. Although she couldn’t imagine what that reason would possibly be.

Turning off the lights and leaving the room, she walked down the hall to her room where Oliver was waiting for her. He had already changed out of his suit and was in the soft sweatpants and T-shirt combo that was only rivaled by nakedness for best for cuddling.

Climbing in bed and crawling over to him, she kissed him, scratching lightly at the rough stubble along his jaw. When she pulled away and curled up next to him, he reached for the box of tiramisu and proceeded to feed her the delicacy in between taking bites himself.

Allie’s talk of them getting married combined with his actions had her thoughts floating to feeding each other wedding cake at a reception. Someday. Hopefully.

“Thanks for letting me take Allie out tonight.”

“Thank you.” She traced patterns across his chest, feeling his muscles flex reflexively under the fabric at her touch. “You made her feel so special, and that means a lot to me.”

Setting the box aside, he dipped his head down to kiss her and she tilted her chin up to meet his lips. As their kisses turned from slow and sweet to more heated, she slipped a hand under the waistband of his sweatpants and discovered that he wasn’t wearing anything underneath. He groaned into her mouth when she brushed her fingers against his hardening length.

“When you said you’d save room for dessert, I guess you weren’t just talking about tiramisu,” she teased as she began to stroke him.

“You knew exactly what I meant,” he bit out, his breathing speeding up and his hips starting to lift off the mattress in response to her ministrations.

She smirked, “Yeah…” Dipping her head down, she brushed her lips against his, “The tiramisu was
a nice surprise though."

“Where are we going?” Felicity asked, peering out the window and trying to figure out where Oliver was driving them. It was a Saturday night date night and the two of them had been at the loft finishing up a delicious dinner that he had made, when he said he wanted to take her somewhere.

{ See Felicity's outfit here }

“It’s a surprise.”

“You’re just full of surprises lately.”

The trip to the vineyard… her birthday party… the wheels in her head had been spinning trying to think of the perfect romantic gesture to surprise him with.

He reached over for her hand, “I think you’re really going to like this one.”

She ran her fingertips along this inside of his wrist and up his forearm, “I’ve liked all your surprises.”

A few minutes later they pulled into the parking lot of the Star City Observatory and she gasped in excitement. The place wasn’t typically open to the public so he must’ve--

“I pulled a few mayoral strings to get us into the main telescope room tonight,” he remarked, reading her mind.

“I bet you never thought you’d be planning such nerdy dates.”

He glanced over at her with a fond expression, “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“Mayor Queen,” the scientist on duty acknowledged him with a tip of his head when they entered the building.

Oliver shook his hand, “Thank you again for letting us use the telescope.”

“Our privilege. Would you like a brief tutorial?”

Oliver looked down at her for confirmation and she nodded. She felt like a kid in a candy store—or more accurately, the little girl who had wanted so badly to go to space camp—when she stepped up onto the platform and the scientist showed her how to locate different landmarks in the night sky.

“It looks like you’ve got a handle on it, so I’ll leave you two be. If you need anything else, I’ll be in the other observation room.”

While she looked up at the stars, she was in her own little world. She knew Allie would love to experience it too and she wondered if Oliver’s connections could get them in again.

“Oliver! You have got to see this—” She pulled away from the telescope and her eyes widened when she turned towards him and saw that he was down on one knee. “Oh. Wow.” Her heart started beating rapidly in her chest. “Umm… so this is… this is actually happening?”

He grinned and flipped open the ring box to display a stunning diamond, “Yeah. Thea told me if I made any references to you being more beautiful than the stars or some other corny space related shit I deserved to be turned down.” She covered her mouth to stifle a laugh and he continued, “So instead I’m just going to say… Felicity, the moment you stepped into my life, I knew it would never be the same--I knew I would never be the same. I love you so, so much. You have made me incredibly
happy, and the only thing that could possibly make me happier is if you said yes to spending the rest of our lives together. Felicity Megan Smoak, will you marry me?"

It was the moment she had been waiting weeks for and yet she couldn’t have possibly been prepared for the emotions that threatened to knock her off her feet.

Less than a year ago she was still the woman who believed she was better off alone. The woman who feared if she opened her heart to him it would result in her having to watch another man she loved walk out of her life.

But now here she was, with him down on one knee for her, telling her that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her—that nothing would make him happier—and she could believe him. Because he had torn down the walls she had put up around her heart and helped her realize that she did deserve the love story she had long stopped dreaming of. She wasn’t afraid anymore.

Tears were running down her face and she was glad she had worn waterproof mascara as she nodded emphatically, “Yes. Yes. Yes.”

He sprung to his feet and slipped the ring on her finger before caressing her face and tilting her head to meet his lips to hers. She did her best to communicate every ounce of love and gratitude she felt for him as she returned his kiss.

When they finally broke apart for air, he wrapped his arms around her waist to keep her close to him and she whispered in his ear, “You should take me home. I need to make love to my fiancé.”

Just saying the word fiancé brought a giddy smile to her face and the corners of her mouth were turned upwards as she pressed a kiss to his jaw.

“He’s a lucky guy.” Oliver’s voice was husky when he spoke and it sent warmth spreading across her skin. For a moment she contemplated foregoing attempting to make it home and just having her with him right then and there, but her bedroom was so much more appealing than the concrete floors and possibility of being walked in on.

She took a little step back from him and slid her hands down his chest to hook her fingers in the belt loops of his jeans. “Don’t break any laws trying to get us home quickly, okay Mr. Mayor?”

“The look on your face is really contradicting your words babe.”

Rolling up on her toes, she gave him a quick, chaste kiss to wipe the smirk off his face before turning to descend from the telescope platform.

At the townhouse, he and Felicity attempted to sneak right up to her bedroom, but that plan was instantly foiled.

In hindsight, they should’ve gone back to the empty loft.

“I want to see it!” her mom shrieked excitedly, running in from the living room as soon as they closed the front door behind them.

“Mom!” she whispered. “Shhh… Isn’t Allie asleep?”

“Oh yes, yes, sorry.” Her mom also lowered her voice to a whisper, albeit a slightly louder one. “Can I see it? You said yes, right? Of course you said yes, you’ve been wanting him to ask you for like two months now.”
He raised an eyebrow in surprise. He hadn’t been aware she had been waiting that long.

Felicity extended her hand and Donna lifted a hand to cover her mouth as she gasped, “Oh that is gorgeous.”

She turned to him and placed a hand on each of his cheeks, squishing his face, “You did so good honey. Oh I’m so happy for you two. I just know you’re going to be one of those couples that everyone wishes they were like and—”

Felicity coughed and gave her mom a pointed look.

“—and you probably want to be upstairs celebrating.” Donna released his face to pat his chest and the tips of his ears turned pink when she winked at him. “Mazel Tov, lovebirds.”

Felicity reached for his hand and he let her tug him towards the stairs and up to her bedroom.

As soon as she had shut the door behind them, she stepped out of her boots and started fumbling eagerly with the buttons of his shirt. Successfully undoing them, she rid him of his flannel and he helped her tug the t-shirt he had been wearing underneath over his head before adding it to the pile on the floor.

“Mmm,” she hummed appreciatively, running her hands over his bare chest and down his abs. “Someone’s been hitting the gym extra hard lately.”

The stress of everything that had been going on the past month with Will had him pushing himself harder in his workouts, but he had a feeling bringing that up would kill the mood.

For now he just wanted to enjoy the feeling of her touch as she traced the planes of his muscles with her fingertips and scratched lightly with her nails, teasing him as she traced the seams of his jeans and dipped her fingers beneath the waistband. Even in the dim light of the room, her ring sparkled as her hands trailed across his skin to wrap around the back of his neck and pull him down to kiss her.

“You’re wearing too much clothing,” he muttered.

“What are you going to do about it?” she challenged, biting his bottom lip.

Taking a step back from her, he first removed her glasses and reached over to carefully set them on top of her dresser. Then he pushed her jacket off of her shoulders before prompting her to lift her arms so he could remove her t-shirt, revealing the lacy navy blue bra underneath.

“This is new,” he remarked, tracing the top edge of the cups and watching her body respond to his touch.

Tilting her head, she lifted an eyebrow, “Oh, so you have all my undergarments memorized, do you?”

“Considering I take them off most nights, and I’ve helped you put away laundry numerous times, I would say that I do.”

She laughed, “Fair enough. Yes, it is new.” Taking his hands, she rested them on her hips, “And it’s part of a set…”

He took her cue and made quick work of removing her pants as well as his before lifting her up and carrying her over to the bed to lay her down on the mattress.
Hovering over her, he took a second to drink in the sight of her, before lowering his head to kiss her neck. She ran her fingers through his hair like he loved while he nipped and sucked at her skin, leaving his mark on her in satisfying retribution for the hickies she had sent him to work with the other day.

Thea had rolled her eyes and made a comment under her breath that he couldn’t quite make out except for the words, ‘like horny teenagers,’ before promptly whipping out some makeup to make him look presentable for an interview he had.

Felicity didn’t seem to mind though, as she made no effort to protest. Instead his name fell from her lips like a sigh and she hooked a leg around his hips to encourage him to grind down on her. Leaving one last delicate kiss below her ear, he moved back to her mouth as their bodies moved together, seeking friction while their kisses grew more heated.

“We’re getting married,” she breathed out with a blissful smile when they broke apart momentarily to catch their breath.

He returned her smile, “Yeah.”

It was still sinking in.

She reached up to caress his jaw, “I love you.”

Turning his head to press a kiss to her palm, he echoed her words. “I love you too.”
Chapter Notes

Hi friends! Thank you so much for all of your comments on the last chapter.... I'm just as excited as you that these two are finally engaged :D Without further ado, enjoy the chapter!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Felicity woke up the next morning the first thing she did was lift her left hand to make sure that the night before hadn’t been a dream. The corners of her mouth turned up in a sleepy smile when she confirmed that the ring was actually there on her finger. Content with that confirmation, she snuggled even closer to Oliver’s side and closed her eyes again.

“Do you like it?”

She popped her head up, “What?”

“The ring.”

“It’s beautiful. My favorite thing about it is that it means I’m getting married to you.” She pressed a kiss to his cheek to punctuate her words. The bling was nice, but all she really cared about was being with him. He slung an arm across her waist, resting his head on her chest, and she ran her fingers through his hair. She loved slow mornings with him when they could linger in bed for a little longer than usual, wrapped up in quiet intimacy. “I don’t understand how you used to have a reputation for being a playboy.”

“Because I was a narcissistic idiot who frequently engaged in one night stands with girls I had no intention of ever speaking to again,” he mumbled sleepily, his tone laced with self deprecation.

“I know, I just have a hard time picturing how that worked out for you since you require cuddling and affection before you’ll get out of bed. Doesn’t really seem to fit the M.O.”

She felt his chest shake with a laugh, “I’ve discovered I’m much better suited to being a one woman man.”

“Mmm, I see.” She continued to stroke his hair, scratching lightly at the shorter hairs along his neck. He always had crazy bedhead when he woke up and her tendency to play with his hair only enhanced the mess that added to the equal parts sexy and adorable look he had going on in the mornings. Waking up to him would never get old. “You should move in.”

“Yeah?” She could hear the smile in his voice.

Her fingers trailed down to his back and shoulder, “Yeah. I miss you on the weeks you have Will and you’re at the loft. We can convert the guest room for him. It’s not a permanent solution, there’s not really room to grow here—” His hand that was stroking her hip stilled at what she was insinuating, but he didn’t make any comments, so she continued, “—and I’d prefer that we have a bedroom that’s not right next door to my mother’s, but for now it’s at least a better option than not being together every other week.”
“You won’t get any complaints from me. Maybe later today we can go over and start packing some stuff up. I think almost all of my possessions are here at this point anyway, so it would be mostly Will’s things.”

“Does he know about this?” she asked, fiddling with her ring. “Us getting engaged.”

“Of course.”

“And he’s okay with it?”

He picked his head up to look at her, “More than okay.”

“Okay, good. So is Allie.”

“I know, I asked her permission when we were out for dinner last weekend.”

A soft smile spread across her face, “You asked her permission to marry me?”

“Yeah.” He dipped his head shyly, “I thought it was the right thing to do.”

“Did she interrogate you?”

“A little bit. But I could handle it.”

She leaned in to kiss him but as things started to get more heated, they were interrupted by a soft knock at the door.

“Mommy?”

Oliver rolled off of her so she could answer.

She took a steadying breath first and then, “Yes baby?”

“Uhh… Is it time for breakfast yet?”

“In a couple minutes, why don’t you go downstairs and watch something on Netflix? We’ll be down soon.”

There was an excited gasp. “Is Oliver here?”

“Yep,” he answered, already getting out of bed and putting clothes on.

She was going to propose a quickie, but apparently that wasn’t happening.

“Okay. I’ll be downstairs.” They heard her retreating footsteps running down the hall.

Reluctantly she got out of bed too and pulled on a pair of leggings and a sweatshirt. As they stood side by side in the mirror brushing their teeth, she smiled at their reflections.

This was going to be her forever.

She had thought that a ‘face shining with happiness’ was just an expression, but he was practically the sun. It made her heart swell to know that she was responsible for such a demeanor that morning.

Tilting her head, she caught sight of the marks he had left on her neck and she pinched his side.

“You know, I have gone through a historic amount of concealer since I started dating you.”
He wrapped his arms around her waist and pressed a chaste kiss to her neck before mumbling entirely unapologetically, “Sorry.”

She rolled her eyes. “Mhmm. It’s a good thing you’re cute.”

He nuzzled her neck, “And that you love it.”

Well… yeah.

Also she had definitely sent him to work covered in hickeys before, so she couldn’t exactly claim innocence.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.” He turned her around in his arms and caressed her face. “I love you so much.”

Nudging her backwards a little until she was perched on the edge of the counter, he tipped her face upwards to kiss her. As she returned his kisses she slid her hands up underneath his t-shirt and stroked his warm, bare skin along his lower back.

She ended up getting her quickie after all.

Stepping out of the bathroom a few minutes later, they made the bed together before finally making their way downstairs.

“Okay Allie, what can I make for you?” Oliver asked, entering the kitchen where she was sitting at the counter, watching Netflix on her tablet.

He kissed the top of her head and she looked up at him with a smile, “Pancakes please.”

While Oliver set to work mixing up batter, Felicity made some coffee and went to stand across the counter from Allie. She purposefully positioned her hands around her mug to make her ring obvious and waited to see how long it was until her daughter noticed. Since she hadn’t said anything yet, she figured her mom hadn’t gotten a chance to tell her.

“So Oliver took me to the observatory last night…”

Allie looked up, “Did you get to look through the big telescope?”

“Yes. It was pretty cool.”

She took a sip of her coffee and watched Allie’s eyes widen, “Your ring! He asked last night and you said yes!”

Smiling, she set her mug down and extended her hand to her so she could get a closer look. “Of course I said yes.”

“Oh I knew you would,” Allie sighed happily, resting her chin on her fist. “So when will the wedding be? Next week?”

From the stove, they heard Oliver say, “I wish,” and she laughed, “Next week is probably a little soon. But knowing your grandma, she probably had the entire thing planned within a month of finding out that we were dating. So maybe after the holidays… like January or February. A winter wedding sounds nice.”

“Who will your bridesmaids be?”
“Probably Dinah as my maid of honor and then Iris and Lena. For Caitlin it will depend on how close it ends up falling to her due date.” She looked over her shoulder to ask Oliver, “Who do you want to have as your groomsmen babe?”

“Tommy as my best man, William—Sara and Thea want to be groomswomen.” He served Allie her plate of pancakes. “John got ordained to do his brother’s ceremony. I was thinking of asking him to do ours, to make it more personal…”

“I would love that.” She curled her fingers around his forearm. “But you’re going to have to seriously suck up to my mom because she’s going to have an aneurysm when we tell her he’s not a Jewish Rabbi.”

“Oh. If that’s important to you than obviously we can—“

“What’s important to me is that our wedding is meaningful to both of us,” she cut him off. “Knowing my mom, we’re probably not going to have a say in much of anything, but if you want John to be the officiant, I’ll back you up on it. We can always threaten to elope and then she’ll have to fold to our demands.”

As if on cue, her mom walked in with an enormous three ring binder with ‘Felicity and Oliver’ written on the front in her fanciful script with gold metallic sharpie. She looked like she hadn’t slept a wink but was running on sheer wedding planning energy. When she plunked the binder down on the counter, a cloud of glitter flew out of it and into the air.

“Maybe we actually should elope,” Felicity muttered under her breath, tightening her grip on her fiancé. She knew this was the moment her mom had waited practically her entire life for, but for that reason she was a little afraid that what she wanted was not going to be taken into consideration. She had a feeling the pages of that binder didn’t contain a small, intimate affair with just close friends and family.

“So I think, best case scenario, we have everything together for a late February wedding,” her mom began, cracking open the binder and dispersing more glitter into the air. “When Oliver told me he was going to propose I made some calls and got some tentative dates reserved with a few of my favorite venues…”

“Mom,” she interrupted her gently. “We haven’t even told anyone we’re engaged yet. Maybe we can put the pause on debriefing every detail of the wedding for at least twenty-four hours?”

“Of course, of course.” Her mom waved her hand dismissively, “And really, you two don’t have to concern yourself with anything except for walking down the aisle. I’ll have everything taken care of.”

“Okay, well, I would like a say in some things. Just not at 8:30am, the morning after we got engaged.” She took a sip of her coffee and then remembered Oliver’s request. Best to rip that bandaid off right away. “Although we did already decide that Oliver and I’s friend is going to officiate the ceremony,” she remarked casually.

Her mom looked up from a page of flower arrangements, “Is he a Jewish Rabbi?”

“No…”

“I don’t want to step on any toes—“ Oliver started to say, and she smacked him lightly across the chest.

“Oliver gets this one thing. John can marry us under a Chuppah, we can break the glass—we can
still incorporate Jewish traditions, but this wedding is going to be about both of us, okay?”

Oliver sat breakfast in front of her tentatively as she eyed both of them, clearly debating how stubborn she wanted to be, before stabbing her fork into her stack of pancakes, “Fine. I suppose that’s a reasonable compromise.”

“Thank you mom.” She opened up her laptop to FaceTime. “And now I’m going to call Iris, so prepare yourselves for shrieking.”

When her friend picked up, she was still in bed and she mumbled sleepily, “G’morning ‘Licity.”

“Why aren’t you up yet?”

“It’s Sunday… And also the twins and Barry were all up sick all night. I’m dead.”

“Ugh, I’m sorry. Tell Barry I hope he feels better.”

Iris turned her head, “Babe. Felicity says feel better.”

Barry peeked his head into the corner of the screen and said groggily, “Thanks.”

“Well I had some exciting news, but I guess I can call back when—“

“Show me the ring!” Iris yelled, suddenly very awake. In the background, Felicity heard Barry groan at her sudden exclamation.

“How do you—?”

“I could just tell by the look on your face. I am a detective’s daughter after all. And a reporter. I know what exciting news is.” Felicity laughed and held up her hand and Iris beamed, “Oh I’m so happy for you.”

“Thank you.”

Oliver came up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist, resting his chin on her shoulder to be in view of the camera. “Hey Iris.”

“Congratulations,” Iris bid him. “She’s the best, but obviously you know that.”

Oliver grinned and pressed a kiss to her cheek, “Obviously.”

“Will you be one of my bridesmaids?” she asked.

“Of course!”

“We don’t have a set date yet, but it’s looking like it’ll be February. I’ll keep you posted.”

They talked for a few more minutes before hanging up so she could go check on the twins and Felicity sat down to eat her breakfast.

When she was finished with her stack of pancakes she FaceTimed Lena next to deliver the news and then Dinah.

“We’re looking at February for our wedding and I was hoping that you’d be my maid of honor…”

“As long as you can promise you won’t put me in a hideous dress.”
“Dinah Drake, I am offended that you would think that I would let anything about my daughter’s wedding be ugly,” her mom poked her head into the corner of the screen and Dinah chuckled.

“Okay fair point. And of course I’ll be your maid of honor. I’m so happy for you.” Her phone started ringing and she looked down at it. “This is work. Being lieutenant meant that days off are just an illusion, but I’ll talk to you more later. You still good for yoga this week?”

“Wouldn’t miss it.”

Dinah offered her congratulations one last time before hanging up to take her call.

Oliver sat down next to her and reached for her hand to hold while he ate because apparently that was the kind of ridiculously sappy mood he was in that morning. “I think I’ll join you two for yoga this week. If that’s okay…”

She squeezed his hand, “Of course it is. We’ve been asking you to come try a class for weeks—mostly because Dinah wants to see you fall on your face attempting bakasana but…” He shot her a glare and she laughed, “But I’m sure you’ll be able to nail it on your first try because you’re perfect like that.”

“I’m not perfect.”

“Close enough.” She leaned her head against his shoulder and added, “Fair warning, I definitely will laugh at you if you fall on your face.”

He huffed in amusement, “I wouldn’t expect anything else.”

OCTOBER

“Here to see your fiancé?” John asked when she got up to Oliver’s office in City Hall. He gave her a hug, “Congratulations by the way, I don’t think I’ve seen you since you two got engaged.”

“Thank you. Things have been crazy busy the past two weeks, but when are they not?”

They were getting so close to being able to being able to hold an official press conference announcing their new MedTech division of the company and everyone involved was scrambling around frantically. While they had been hoping that the spinal implant chip would be their crown jewel, her team still had developed a bunch of other exciting, working, prototypes that they would hopefully be ready to present to an array of journalists and medical professionals at the beginning of the new year. She had been working through all of her lunches, so meeting Oliver at City Hall hadn’t happened for a while. Thankfully they were living together now, so at least she got to come home to him every evening and wake up to him every morning.

“Well Oliver is currently in a meeting, but he should be--”

“I’m actually here to see you,” she cut him off.

“Oh?”

“I’m working on a little surprise for Oliver, so I need you to kidnap him this afternoon slash evening. Go to the gym, go grab beers, whatever. Just keep him distracted while the kids and I are out on a mission.”

John crossed his arms over his chest and lifted an eyebrow, “Do I get to be in on the surprise?”
“I’m buying us a house,” she grinned excitedly. “We’re going to look at two options with my realtor after the kids get out of school.”

She wanted to do something big for Oliver, the king of romantic gestures, and she couldn’t think of anything better than surprising him with the perfect house for them to live in as a family.

They heard the sound of Oliver’s voice approaching from down the hallway and she made the gesture of zipping her lips, which John acknowledged with a nod.

Oliver and Laurel walked around the corner and his face brightened when he saw her, “Speak of the devil.”

“Oh, I’m the devil now?” she inquired as he kissed her cheek.

“Oliver was just telling me about the fundraising gala you’re helping organize for the clinic,” Laurel said.

“That’s giving me too much credit. Moira is organizing it. I’m just writing a big check on behalf of Palmer Tech and saying a few words.”

Even with the Queen family’s fall from grace after the Undertaking, Oliver’s mom had managed to regain some of her social status in the years since. She had the right connections with the one percenter families who could make generously charitable contributions to the clinic.

Oliver shook his head, “She’s being modest. The whole thing was her idea in the first place.”

Laurel smiled at her, “Tommy is really grateful for you and your company’s support of his mother’s legacy, and so am I. New donors will hopefully mean they can bring on new doctors and I might actually see my husband more than a few hours a week.” She tipped her head at her hand that was wrapped around Oliver’s arm, “Speaking of husbands, congratulations on your engagement.”

“Thank you.”

Laurel’s phone buzzed and she glanced at the screen. “Well I better be getting off to my next meeting, but it was nice running into you. Oliver, I’ll have those files on your desk as soon as possible.”

She turned to walk down the hall and Oliver led Felicity into his office.

When he leaned against the edge of his desk, she walked in between his legs to rest her left hand on his chest and he looked down at it with a smile before covering it with his own. He looked especially handsome in the light blue dress shirt that she had picked out for him that morning because she loved it on him. It made his eyes look even more intensely blue.

“To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?”

“I can’t stay long. I was just passing by on my way to a luncheon and wanted to remind you that the kids are staying late at an afterschool program today and I have a meeting, so you’ll be all by your lonesome tonight,” she lied. “Maybe you could hang out with John?”

“I don’t remember the kids having anything…” He started to reach inside his pocket for his phone, “I usually put that stuff in my calendar…”

“Oh, well maybe I forgot to relay the memo. Sorry. But no worries, I’ll be able to pick them up when my meeting is over. So… you should enjoy some guy time.”
Putting his phone back, he scrutinized her for a second like he was trying to decide if and why she would be lying to him before calling for his bodyguard, “Hey John? Are you free later?”

John peeked his head into the office, “I am. You want to hit the gym?”

Felicity winked at him and gave him an inconspicuous thumbs up.

Felicity rolled down the window as she pulled up to the curb outside the school, “Alright kiddos, you ready to go house shopping?”

Will and Allie nodded enthusiastically and she got out of the car to assist Will with getting in. The Mini Coop was not the most handicap accessible vehicle and she had a feeling their next mission was going to be finding her a new car. Frustration was clearly evident on his face that what was once such a simple task was now a struggle.

Once they were all settled and on their way out of the city, she asked how their day went and they proceeded to tell her about what they had learned in math and who they ate lunch with and what they had worked on in art class. After a rough start, the two of them had started to make friends and the teasing had seemed to have died down. She wasn’t sure how much of that could be attributed to the fact that Allie had “asserted her dominance,” but she was just glad that her daughter didn’t have any more reason to be punching kids.

The first house that they were looking at was just outside the city, not too far from City Hall, Palmer Tech, and the kids’ school. In comparison to the Queen Mansion, it was small, but it was still at least three times the size of the townhouse. Growing up in the tiny apartment she had shared with her mom, she never could’ve dreamed that one day she would be able to afford such a grand house for her family.

She heard Allie gasp from the backseat as they made it to the end of the long driveway and pulled up in view of the house. “Is this where we’re going to live?”

“Maybe… we’re going to look at two houses today. And then we can decide if we want to see more or we like one of them.”

“I think I’m going to like this one a lot,” Allie sighed dreamily.

She laughed softly and parked the car.

“Felicity!” her realtor waved from the front porch.

Observing the two small stairs that led up to it, she realized how much work was probably going to have to be done to the place to make it accessible for Will. When she had picked out the houses that she wanted to see, she had been of the mindset that he would be back on his feet by the time they moved in.

Oliver told her that he reported feeling an occasional sensation in his legs, but it wasn’t translating to any progress in physical therapy. Curtis was trying to reformulate the design of the chip, but he couldn’t figure out what had gone wrong the first time since he had been so confident that it would work.

She carefully lifted the front wheels of Will’s wheelchair to help him up onto the porch, bending down to whisper, “Don’t worry, we can turn this into a ramp.”

“I’m sorry.”
Squeezing his shoulder, she assured him, “You have nothing to apologize for buddy.”

_I’m sorry that you trusted me when I said I believed you would walk again and I was wrong._

Inside the foyer, she balked at the staircase that led to the second floor of the house. At the townhouse, Oliver just carried Will up to his room at night, but she wanted a permanent home for them that he could feel as independent as possible in. She still held out a bit of hope that he would walk again, but it was best to plan for a future where that wasn’t the case.

“Remember, there is a bedroom suite on the first floor that could be William’s,” her realtor said, noticing her reaction.

“Right. Okay.”

According to what she had already seen online, the first floor suite had a bedroom, full bath and a small adjoined living room or office. When she had originally picked out the house to tour she had thought it would be perfect for her mom, to be living with them but still have her own separate space since they still relied on her so much for help with watching the kids. But of course now it made the most sense to be Will’s room.

“Why don’t we check out the kitchen first…”

She led them into an absolutely enormous kitchen with an island that looked out on a spacious dining room. The table could seat a large group and she could picture all their family and friends around it for birthdays and holidays and Sunday brunches.

“So as you can see, the kitchen has been recently remodeled with top of the line appliances.”

Felicity exchanged a look with the kids. Oliver would be in heaven in a kitchen like this.

_One point for house #1._

From the kitchen and dining room they moved on to the living room and then the rest of the first floor. After that they went out back to see the yard, complete with a beautiful heated swimming pool.

“They’re getting ready to close the pool for the season, but they kept it open so that you could see it.”

Allie skipped around the edge, rambling on about having a pool party for her next birthday.

“I’ve always wanted to have a pool,” Will said, wheeling himself over to the edge and looking into the still, clear water. “I like doing my aqua therapy. It makes me feel less trapped.”

_Two points for house #2._

When they all went back inside, the realtor turned to her, “Felicity, I can take you upstairs now.”

“Okay. Uhh… Allie why don’t you stay down here with Will. We’ll be quick.”

Upstairs, she was shown the multiple bedrooms that lined the main hallway. One was set up by the current owners as a nursery and she sucked in a deep breath as she pictured herself sitting in the rocking chair by the window holding a baby. If someone had asked her a few years ago if she would ever have more children, the answer would’ve been a definitive no. Not that she didn’t love being a mom, but because she couldn’t even imagine what it would be like to tell someone she was having their baby and have it not go the way it did for her before. That night had been deeply etched in her
mind and on her heart. And so she had been actively protecting herself from going through that again by keeping her heart closed off to the idea of her family being any more than it already was.

But now… now she had let people in. Now she could picture Oliver standing in that nursery with a baby in his arms and a smile on his face. Now, looking at houses with extra bedrooms to someday be filled, made perfect sense to her.

They made it to the end of the hallway where it turned to lead down to the master suite. The massive master suite.

There was a lot that she could picture going on in there.

As she was examining the bathroom she heard Will call out for Allie, followed by indiscernible shrieking from both of them, and she went running downstairs in search of them.

“Kids?!”

Finding them in the living room, her jaw dropped to see Will standing away from his wheelchair and clutching Allie’s arm. “What happened?”

They both started talking excitedly over each other and she lifted a hand to quiet them, “One at a time.”

Allie looked up at Will and he spoke, “Allie tripped and next thing I knew I was standing and taking a step forward to grab her arm.” He lifted a foot tentatively and laughed, “I can feel my toes.”

The realtor found them all a minute later in various states of laughter and tears, “I’m guessing we need to postpone seeing the other house?”

“Yeah, we should really call his mom and dad. But honestly, I think this one is exactly what we’re looking for.”

She looked to the kids and they voiced their agreement.

“And now Will can go upstairs!” Allie added excitedly.

After so many weeks of waiting and losing hope, Felicity almost still couldn’t believe what she was seeing. She expected him to collapse any second. But although he was a little shaky, and holding onto Allie for support, he could feel his legs, his feet. And with some more physical therapy, he would hopefully be steady on them again.

Fumbling in her purse for her phone, she pulled it out to call Oliver.

As she waited for her fiance to pick up, she whispered to the kids, “Don’t forget, the house is a surprise. So for now we have to be vague on the details, okay?”

They nodded and she put it on speaker as Oliver greeted her.

“Hey honey, what’s up?”

Allie giggled, “Will.”

“What?”

“I’m standing dad,” Will chimed in.

The kids looked at her to take the lead and she just answered with, “Call Samantha and let’s all meet at home. We’ll pick up pizza for dinner on our way.”

“But I--okay, that sounds good.” She could hear his excitement through the phone and her smile grew. “John! Will’s up on his feet…”

His voice became distant as he started to talk to his friend, so she said, “Okay... I’m hanging up now... See you in a few minutes... Love you...”

Stuck in traffic, Oliver tapped the steering wheel impatiently and huffed in frustration.

“I’m standing dad.”

He almost couldn’t believe it. He needed to see for himself.

Samantha had been beside herself with excitement when he called to relay the news and he wondered if she was stuck in the same traffic or if she had already made it to the townhouse.

Finally, the cars got moving again and, with as much self control as he could muster not to speed or barrel through red lights, he was able to get home. Taking the porch steps two at a time, he walked through the door and was instantly greeted with a hug.

“Dad!”

Tears welled up in his eyes as he held his son tightly. He had made his peace with the paralysis being permanent and was prepared to help Will adjust to his new life, but he also knew how badly he had wanted to walk again and he was ecstatic for him.

There was a knock at the door and he released him to turn and let Samantha into the house. She burst into tears at the sight of Will on his feet and pulled him to her for a hug.

Felicity and Allie walked into the foyer and he reached for his fiance, “Thank you.”

She shrugged, “Thank Curtis.”

“It was your idea to try it on Will. You believed it would work.”

“I’m sorry it took so long.”

He shook his head, “Don’t. Don’t discount this.”

“Thank you Felicity,” Samantha chimed in. “I know I was hesitant to trust you with this but… I’m really grateful that you were willing to invest something so expensive into him.”

“How… how expensive was the chip?” Will asked, a guilty look on his face.

Felicity addressed him, “Don’t even worry about it. We had to try it on someone to see if it would work, might as well have been you. Not many kids can say that they have billions of dollars worth of tech implanted in their spine. You’re basically Iron Man.”

He grinned, “Awesome.”

“How… how expensive was the chip?” Will asked, a guilty look on his face.

Felicity addressed him, “Don’t even worry about it. We had to try it on someone to see if it would work, might as well have been you. Not many kids can say that they have billions of dollars worth of tech implanted in their spine. You’re basically Iron Man.”

He grinned, “Awesome.”

“Of course the challenge now that we know it works is figuring out how to make it for people who
don’t have billions of dollars, but—” Allie’s stomach growled loudly and she laughed, “But right now I think we should probably eat dinner.”

“Congratulations Felicity, the place is officially yours,” her realtor announced as she signed the final paperwork.

“Thank you. I’m very excited to show it to my fiance. I was hoping we’d be able to be moved in by Thanksgiving, so I’m glad everything went through quickly. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome. It’s what I do. And, I have some clients who are very interested in looking at the townhouse, so I should have that off your hands in a week or two.”

“Perfect.”

Once she had been given the keys to the house, she drove over to City Hall where Oliver had been working late that evening. John let her into his office and she took a second to stare at him, looking handsome but tired with his tie loosened and his hair raked through as he peered at his computer screen, before clearing her throat and making her presence known.

“Honey?”

Oliver looked up at her, “Oh hey babe. Sorry I didn’t notice you come in, I was a little distracted.”

She approached his desk and he rolled his chair out so she could sit on his lap, “Everything okay?”

“Yeah. Just trying to get some more funding directed towards Phase 2 of your clean energy overhaul.”

“Ahhh…” She gestured at his disheveled appearance, “And I take it it hasn’t been going well?”

He sighed, “It’s been a long day in general.”

“Well, I have something for you that might make it better.”

Pulling a small wrapped box out of the pocket of her coat, she handed it to him and he eyed it suspiciously, “What’s this?”

“A present.”

“It’s not my birthday. Or any holiday…”

She rolled her eyes, “Just open it.”

He did as he was told and his brow furrowed when he pulled the key out. “I don’t understand, I already have a key to your house.”

“This is the key to our home,” she explained.

“Our home?”

“Yeah.” She looped her arms around his neck. “I bought us a house. The kids and I picked it out. Sorry you didn’t get a say, but I wanted it to be a surprise.”

“I’m sure it’s perfect.”
“Oh, it is.”

He kissed away her teasing smile before resting his forehead on hers, “Can we go see it now?”

“Of course.” She climbed off of him so he could tidy up his desk and shut down his computer. He said goodnight to Thea and Quentin and Rene before leading them out to his car.

“We can swing back for your car later or I can take you to work in the morning.” he said as he opened the driver’s seat door for her.

“You’re letting me drive the Porsche?”

“Well I don’t fit very comfortably in your car so…”

“True.” She slid into the car and he shut the door before getting in on the passenger’s side. “How long until we cave and buy a more sensible vehicle for parents?”

Between Oliver’s Porsche and truck, and her Mini Coop, Will and Allie were constantly being cramped into tiny backseats.

“I assure you, I’m confident enough in my masculinity to drive a minivan when we do.”

The mental picture of Oliver Queen, former billionaire bachelor playboy, driving a minivan brought a smile to her face.

“Oh I don’t think we have to go that extreme. I was thinking more midsize SUV. Something sporty.”

“Are you saying you’re too cool for a minivan?”

“I am definitely too cool for a minivan.”

He laughed, leaning over to kiss her cheek, and then they fell into a comfortable silence as she drove them out of the city.

“Whoa,” he breathed out as she pulled down the driveway and the house came into view. “Sometimes I forget how rich you are.”

She snorted and parked the car, “Glad to know you’re not marrying me for my money.”

“No. Just your body,” he joked and she smacked his arm.

They walked up to the front porch and she let him unlock the door with the key she had given him. After pushing open the door, he scooped her up bridal style and she yelped in surprise.

“I know we’re not married yet, but I really wanted to do this.”

She smiled up at him, looping her arms around his neck, and he carried her inside. Setting her back on her feet, he took her face in his hands and dipped his head down for a kiss.

“Welcome home,” she whispered against his lips.

“This is a really good surprise.”

“I couldn’t let you have the monopoly on surprises.”

Taking his hand, she gave him a tour of the first floor. The previous owners had taken their furniture
out when they moved, but she described how all the rooms would be set up when they moved in.

As expected, he was like a kid in a candy store when she led him into the kitchen. She sat on the counter of the island and watched in amusement as he checked out all the new appliances.

He gestured to the stovetop. “Do you know what this is?”

“A stove?”

“This is a Capital Culinarian.”

“That means nothing to me, but I am so glad that it makes you happy.”

He strode over to her and stepped between her legs to kiss her soundly. “It’s the stovetop they use on Chopped, babe. On Chopped.”

Oh…

The giddy smile on his face was too irresistible. She wrapped her legs around his waist to keep him close as she reached up to placed a hand on the back of his neck and pull him down for another kiss.

“Maybe we should finish the tour?” she asked a little breathlessly when they paused for air a minute later. “And then we can properly christen the place.”

She wouldn’t complain about getting naked right there on the kitchen counter but the shower really deserved to be used first.

He nodded and helped her down from the counter. She showed him the rest of the first floor and then when they went upstairs, she watched his face for his reaction to all the bedrooms. Even with Will and Allie having their own rooms, and one designated for guests, there were still two extra rooms. While she had made passing comments about having children together, they had never talked directly about it before. She didn’t want to assume they both wanted the same things as far as having more kids was concerned, and it wasn’t a dealbreaker, but she hoped he felt the same way as her. The thought of Oliver with a baby, their baby, made her heart melt.

“Lots of space,” he remarked casually when they made it to the end of the hallway. “That’s good.”

She decided to test the waters. “You planning on knocking me up, Mayor Handsome?”

He turned to face her, “I don’t want you to feel pressured if that’s not what you want. We already have two kids that I love very much and—”

“And I bought us this house because I wanted us to have room to grow our family when we’re ready for that,” she finished for him, smoothing her hands across his chest.

A hopeful smile turned up the corners of his mouth, “Yeah?”

“Yes. I love you so much. And I love how incredible of a father you are, so I want you to have the chance to experience all the things you missed out on with Will.”

He pressed a kiss to her forehead, “I want you to experience what it’s like to have someone by your side through it all.”

She hugged him tightly, glad that they finally had that conversation and were on the same page.

“So what’s next on the grand tour?” he asked when she pulled away.
“Next, my love, is the grand finale…” She threw open the doors to the master suite dramatically and stepped inside. “Doesn’t look like much now, but picture it with a king sized bed and some reading chairs by the window and a dresser here…” She walked around the room and painted a picture of the layout she has envisioned for their space. “It’ll be perfect. And it’s super soundproofed. I tested it out. I had music playing on full blast in here, and from the kids rooms, you couldn’t hear anything.” Oliver chuckled and she shrugged flirtatiously, “What can I say? I love a good science experiment.”

“I love you.”

She smiled and rolled up on her toes to give him a quick kiss before ushering him into the bathroom, “Check out this shower. It’s enormous. It was clearly designed for two people to shower together. One of the many eco friendly features of the house.”

His eyes lit up with amusement, “And no more bruised elbows.”

“No more bruised elbows,” she confirmed. Her shower at the townhouse was a little snug for the two of them, but they still insisted on having sex in there, resulting in the occasional bruise from the closely confining walls. “But we should test it out to be sure. For science.”

She shed her coat and he took a step in closer to her. Keeping his eyes fixed on hers as they turned a darker shade of blue, he reached around to unzip her dress and echoed, “For science.”

Chapter End Notes

Next weekend there will be no update to this fic because this week is my first back at school and I need to focus on getting into a new routine for this semester BUT I will be posting a little something for one of my other AUs sometime in the next couple of days so if you haven't read Crazy for You (or it's been a while) I would suggest giving that a read this week *wink, wink*
okay soooo.... it's been a while. and if you don't follow me on twitter or tumblr the short explanation for why is that i'm in my junior year of college and this semester has forced me to make writing less of a priority. but i still love this story!! and it's definitely going to be completed, but updates might be a little more sporadic for the next couple of months. thank y'all for your patience and continued support of this fic and i hope that you enjoy this chapter :D

Felicity was abruptly removed from a dream she was having about her Oliver taking the kids to Disney World by the sound of her shrill alarm announcing that it was time to return to reality. Her fiancé reached across her to fumble for her phone and turn it off before settling himself on top of her to press his lips to hers.

“Good morning.”

“'morning,” she mumbled in response, still unwilling to open her eyes. The night before had been a late one with them rearranging furniture in the downstairs level and clearing out the last of the moving boxes. They were having a housewarming party that weekend, and in hindsight they probably should’ve given themselves longer than a week to get settled in to their new house before hosting guests, but they managed to get things looking presentable. “Kiss me some more.”

She could feel the smile on his lips as he peppered her face with kisses and she finally opened her eyes to look up at him with her own smile, “That’s a much better wake-up than that horrible alarm.”

He shook his head in amusement, dipping back down to press a kiss to her lips, and she kissed him back eagerly.

When he flipped them so she could be on top of him, he overshot a little and they both rolled onto the floor with yelps of surprise.

Once she got over the shock of their tumble, she buried her face in his chest in a fit of laughter.

“Sorry,” he said, propping himself up on his forearms and pushing her disheveled hair behind her ears. “I guess it’s a good thing our bed is just a mattress on the floor right now.”

“Yeah.” She trailed her fingers across his chest. “Remind me why we’re spending so much money on some fancy California King with custom headboard that keeps getting put on back order? The mattress has been working just fine, and it’s safer.” She had left her old bedroom set at the townhouse for the new owners, since their spacious new room required much larger furniture. She thought she had ordered everything in plenty of advance, but certain items were taking longer to arrive than expected. He chuckled and she leaned in for a kiss before pulling back and patting his cheek, “This has been fun, but we’ve really got to get up. With my mom out of town, one of us has to take the kids to school before work.”

“I have an early meeting with the SCPD captain, but if you need me to—“
“No, no, it’s okay. I’ve got it. Can you pick them up though? Curtis, Alena, and I have to wine and dine some investors tonight.” He nodded and she continued, “Thank you. Also don’t forget to stop at the store on your way home and pick up whatever you still need for what you’re making for the party tomorrow…” She climbed off of him and made her way to the bathroom to hop into the shower, adding over her shoulder, “You coming?”

He grinned and picked himself up off the floor, “Have I mentioned how much I love our new house?”

“Once or twice.”

While Felicity was still upstairs finishing getting ready, and he was setting out breakfast for everyone, Allie approached him with her comb and hair ties. “I’m having a bad hair day. Can you braid it?”

“You sure you want me to do it? Your mom will be downstairs in a few minutes…”

“You’re not as good as her or Grandma, but with a little practice, I think you could be.”

“Alright…” he gestured for her to sit on one of the stools at the counter and tried to remember how he had accomplished the task back when she stayed with him a few months ago. “One or two?”

“One please.”

Separating the top of her hair into three sections, he started to french braid as neatly as possible. It had been a while since he had done her hair for her but he was pleased to see that he hadn’t forgotten how.

Felicity walked into the kitchen as he was finishing off the last inch of hair and her face softened when she saw them. She strode over to inspect his work and clicked her tongue, “I’m impressed.”

“Well, you know I am pretty good with my hands,” he replied innocently.

“Mmm.” She kissed his cheek before walking over the the Keurig to make herself some coffee. Leaning against the counter, he took a second to watch her with fondness, until he remembered that the bowl of eggs he had cracked before he was interrupted to attend to Allie’s bad hair day crisis was still waiting for him to scramble up.

Will came downstairs next with Bruce on his heels and he let him out the sliding glass door to run around in the backyard. After living in a loft and, then briefly the townhouse, their dog was loving all the space he had at their new home.

Returning to the kitchen, Will plunked his backpack down on the counter to pull out a folder, “Felicity. Can you check my homework for me?”

“Of course. The math worksheet? Allie showed me hers last night…” She walked over to retrieve the paper from him and Oliver watched as her eyes skimmed over it quickly. It would have taken him a solid 45 minutes and Google to figure out if his son’s work was correct. On the other hand though, if she tried to make them all breakfast, the fire department would more than likely need to be summoned. They made a good team. “This is perfect.” Felicity smoothed over Will’s slightly rumpled bedhead. “You’re both geniuses.”

“Can you believe he’s my kid?” Oliver joked, sliding plates of scrambled eggs and toast across the counter to the kids.
“Of course. Because Samantha is a very intelligent woman,” she teased, earning her a disgruntled look. “Kidding, kidding.” She adjusted his tie. “You’re very smart too. I’m convinced you would’ve been good in school if you applied yourself to learning instead of flirting.”

The tips of his ears turned red. “I didn’t—okay yeah, that’s what my mom said too.”

“Speaking of your mother, I’m having lunch with her today.”

“You are?”

“Yes. It’s to discuss the RMMC gala… and I know we’ve been emailing a lot, but it’s the first time we’ve been together in person since, ya know—” She lifted up her left hand to display her ring, “--this. I’m worried she’s going to take this opportunity to tell me exactly how she feels about it.”

Seeing the apprehension on her face, he leaned in to kiss her forehead. “You know she likes you. She was happy when I told her I was proposing.”

After she got over the quick timing of it.

Details.

“I know she’s been nice to me since we talked at Tommy and Laurel’s wedding, but she’s very intimidating and I’m still a little bit afraid of her.”

“Don’t be, you’re basically the same person.”

She wrinkled her nose, “Should I be disturbed that you think you’re basically marrying your mother?”

He winced, “That came out wrong. But seriously, don’t worry. I know she seems intimidating, but she respects you. And you’re going to officially be a part of the family now, so she would do anything for you.” He lowered his voice to a whisper to prevent the kids from overhearing and added, “If you ever murder someone, my mom is the person you ask to help you hide the body.”

“You’re not making me less scared.”

“Dad is right Felicity,” Will chimed in. “I used to worry that she didn’t like me either, but Grandma is actually really nice.”

His mom had been going over the top to be the world’s best grandma over the past few months after they had reconciled and he had allowed her to have a place in Will’s life. And from their first introduction, Allie had gotten the same treatment. His mom absolutely adored her, said she reminded her of Thea at that age.

“Almost can’t believe there’s no Queen blood in her.”

Sometimes he forgot she wasn’t biologically his too. Especially since she had come into his life not that long after his son had.

Checking the time, he realized that he needed to go and he gave Felicity one last kiss before kissing the tops of Allie and Will’s heads on his way out of the kitchen.

“Have a good day at school.”

“Bye dad,” Will tossed over his shoulder.
“Bye dad,” Allie echoed, not skipping a beat as she continued eating her breakfast.

For a second he thought he had hallucinated the whole thing.

Felicity glanced over at him questioningly and he just shrugged, a small smile turning up the corners of his mouth, before walking out.

“Hi, I umm... I’m here for lunch with Moira Queen, but I’m a little bit late so...”

The hostess smiled warmly, “Right this way Ms. Smoak.”

Felicity took a deep breath and smoothed out the imaginary wrinkles in her dress before following her into the dining room of the Star City Country Club. Arriving late was not a good start to her meeting with her future mother-in-law, but she had gotten hung up on a conference call for longer than expected.

Something about walking through that room of wealthy, lunching ladies made her feel less like the CEO in a designer dress who just bought a multi-million dollar house for her family and more like the little girl who wore hand me downs from one of her mom’s waitress friend’s daughters and had to worry about the lights in her room not turning on because her mom had been late on paying their electric bill again. Insecurity crawled up her skin and made her feel like she was in a room she shouldn’t be in, except for maybe as one of the waitresses.

*You’re a smart, successful woman. You’re a smart, successful woman. You’re a smart successful woman*—She repeated in her head until her shoulders straightened and she walked like she believed it.

As soon as she arrived at the table where Moira was seated, she felt some of her confidence falter and apologies started to tumble from her lips for her tardiness.

Moira calmly raised a hand. “I’ve been married to CEOs for over half my life. This is not the first time I have been kept waiting at a meal due to urgent business.”

“Oh. Right.” She lowered herself into the seat across from her with an amount of poise that she hoped was acceptable. “Still, I’m sorry.”

Moira’s gaze flicked to her left hand when she reached for her glass of water and as she took a sip, she braced herself.

Walter had been away for work at the time that Oliver had proposed, but had phoned her as soon as he heard the news to tell her in his charmingly polished way that there was no one else he could possibly be so honored to have as a daughter-in-law.

She could only hope that Oliver was right about the Queen matriarch sharing that sentiment, despite having not yet expressed it to her.

“Suppose I have yet to personally offer you my congratulations,” she remarked.

Felicity wasn’t sure what the appropriate response to that statement was, so she settled on trying, “Thank you?”

The waitress arrived at that moment to take their orders and when she walked away their conversation turned to the business at hand. By the time they finalized the details for the gala and she had nervously picked at half of her salad, Felicity was still unsure if Moira was happy that she was
marrying her son or had merely resigned herself to the circumstances.

When she finally couldn’t restrain herself further, she blurted out, “Are you okay with me marrying Oliver? Because you haven’t really said much about it so I can’t help but--”

“Felicity, dear.” Moira reached across the table for her hand. “The concept of being a mother-in-law is new territory for me, I did not have any sort of relationship with my own, so I apologize for being unclear about my feelings regarding the matter of your engagement to my son. I assumed he had expressed them to you and that that was sufficient.” Her expression softened as she continued, “I may be very protective of him, and I’ll admit to having been too controlling at times, but I would be a fool not to be pleased that he has found such an intelligent, kind, strong woman to share his life with.”

“Oh.” Relief flooded her and she smiled, “Thank you. I consider myself very lucky and I promise I’ll take good care of him.”

Moira released her hand, “That’s all I ask.”

Standing up from the table, they exited the country club together and Felicity said, “Thank you again for all your help with this gala.”

“My privilege. My children should not bear the sole responsibility of making it so that the Queen name is associated with something other than mass murder. It feels good to have something productive to do.” Before parting ways, Moira asked, “How is Allison?”

“She’s doing well. Thank you again for the clothes. She loves them.”

Moira and Walter had spent a few days in France for their anniversary and returned with a plethora of souvenirs for Will and Allie. If there was one thing that she hadn’t been worried about, it was that Allie would not be treated like any other grandchild, because she was already spoiled rotten.

“You’re welcome. It’s been a long time since I’ve had a little girl to shop for. I rather missed it.”

As they walked down the aisle of the grocery store, Will told him about their upcoming field trip to the planetarium while they kept an eye on Allie. A little bit ahead of them, she was reading off the list she had snatched from him upon arrival and running things back to the cart. She liked to be his helper in the grocery store, since so far his efforts to teach her how to assist him in the kitchen had only confirmed what Felicity said about all Smoaks being cooking disasters. Masterchef Junior was not in her near future.

“Oliver… I can’t find the—“ She paused to assess the word again, “Phyllo dough…?”

She hadn’t called him ‘dad’ again after that morning in the kitchen, making him think that she had just been echoing Will without thinking about what she was saying. It was a little disappointing, but he also accepted that he wasn’t entitled to the designation. She may never refer to him as her dad but that didn’t make their relationship any less meaningful. Neither was it going to stop him from showing her the love she deserved from a father.

He took a few strides to catch up to where she was peering into the refrigerated case.

“That’s because it’s a little too high up for you.” He pointed at the shelf and her eyes shifted up.

“Oh…” She stepped out of the way so that he could open the case and get down two boxes. “What are you going to make with that?”
“I’m going to wrap it around the Brie cheese we got with some raspberry preserves and then bake it.” She gave him a skeptical look and he added, “It’s going to be delicious.”

“We’ll see about that…”

He chuckled and they started to walk back to where Will was waiting with the cart, “What do we still have left on the list?”

“That’s it.” She gestured to the boxes in his hand. “We’re all done.”

“Alright. Nice work sous chef Smoak.”

“I’m not a chef,” she sighed. “I burn everything like Mommy.”

“Ah, but one of the very important jobs of a sous chef is making sure that the kitchen is stocked with all the right ingredients to prepare the meals.”

“Oh.” She smiled up at him and reached for his hand. “Well I am good at that.”

“Yes you are.”

Arriving home from her dinner with the investors, Felicity peeked her head into their bedroom to find her family all lying on the mattress on the floor while Oliver read from The Sorcerer’s Stone. Allie and Will were on either side of him, completely absorbed in the story, and they didn’t notice her. She slipped her phone out of her clutch to snap a picture of the three of them and sent it to Iris.

**FELICITY:** came home to this cuteness *heart eyes emoji*

**FELICITY:** how did this become my life???

It hadn’t even been a year since she had first met Oliver, but in that time her family had doubled in size and she had found a level of happiness she didn’t even know existed. Things had happened so fast for them, but she was fully convinced it was because she had found her soulmate. From the first moment she had met him on that fateful December night, her heart had felt an inexplicable tug towards him. When she finally stopped digging in her heels, everything started to fall into place to bring them to the point they were at now. In love and on the brink of spending forever together. Sometimes she still had to pinch herself to convince herself it wasn’t a dream that she might wake from any minute to find herself still in that place where she had been afraid of opening her heart to love again. In that place where she thought letting herself love again would only bring her and her daughter pain.

Allie giggled at Oliver’s best attempt at a Hermione voice and her heart swelled in her chest. Just as she had predicted, Allie had gotten attached to him as quickly as she had. But now she could see that as the good thing that it was. Now she could see that her daughter was going to get to know what it was like to have a dad who stuck around. And every time she felt a flicker of fear that she was being too trusting, too naive to think like that, she would be reminded in some way of how Oliver was different from the men who had abandoned her. She believed in him, believed in their love, and it tampered down the fears and doubts that occasionally still wanted to creep in.

Her phone buzzed and she looked down at Iris’ reply.

**IRIS:** SO CUTE

**IRIS:** also... is your bed still on backorder or have you just decided to screw it and sleep on the
FELICITY: lol yes it's still on backorder

FELICITY: when are you going to come visit and see the new house?

IRIS: SOON!!! I miss you so much

IRIS: B and I have both been swamped at work but fingers crossed we can hopefully plan to spend a few days in star city over the holidays

IRIS: but when are you going dress shopping? you better facetime me in for that…

Dress shopping.

According to her mom’s official timeline she had posted on the bulletin board in her office downstairs, that needed to happen ASAP. Since getting engaged, she had started to daydream about what sort of dress she wanted. The thought of trying on white, lacy gowns to find the perfect one to walk down the aisle in made everything feel even more real. It was no longer an unrealistic fantasy that she didn’t let herself think about. She was getting married.

Stealing another glance at her husband-to-be, she exhaled a sigh of contentment. The wedding was going to be magical, her mom wasn’t capable of anything but. What was even more of a fairytale though, was that after that one day there was going to be thousands more spent with him.

FELICITY: my mom’s fave bridal boutique is in CC… maybe we’ll take a weekend trip and you can be there in person…

IRIS: umm yes please

As the kids climbed off of the mattress to depart from the room, Oliver looked up to see Felicity in the doorway giving them goodnight hugs. When they had run down the hall to their rooms, she walked in and approached the mattress to straddle his lap. She had changed since that morning into a different dress for her dinner with the investors and her lipstick was a shade darker. He slid his hands up under the fabric to stroke the soft skin of her thighs while she tipped her head down to leave some traces of magenta on his lips.

“How was your day?” she asked when she pulled back from their kiss.

He started to say that it was okay before remembering that she was the person he was supposed to always be able to be honest with, “A little frustrating.”

Her face crinkled with sympathy and she stroked his jaw with her fingers, “What happened?”

“There’s just still people who can’t see me as anything other than the boy I used to be. I know it wasn’t that long ago, I just—I have ideas, good ones, but if the people I need to get on board with making those ideas happen can’t take me seriously…” His shoulders slumped and he leaned into her touch. Running for Mayor had started out as a way to right his father’s wrongs, but since being in office it had become more than that. He wanted to see his city become the best it could be—not just because of some vendetta, but because it was what the resilient people who called it home deserved.

“Believe me, I understand how that feels. When Ray plucked me out of the IT department and made me his VP, people thought he was crazy, or that I was sleeping with him, or both. And now, being
CEO, I often have to sit in meetings with people who aren’t willing to see past how young I am and my lack of MBA to listen to what I’m able to bring to the table.”

“They’re stupid; you’re amazing at your job.”

She smoothed her hands across his chest. “And so are you. It sucks that we have to work extra hard to get people to see past their initial perception of us, but--” She shrugged, “I’m up for the challenge.”

He smiled at her confidence in herself and him and drew her in for another kiss before asking, “So how was your dinner tonight?”

“I think it went well, they seemed pretty sold on buying in to what we’re doing. In all honesty, I think Curtis and Alena could’ve maybe handled it alone.” She pouted, “I would’ve much rather been out on a date with you.”

“Next weekend?” he inquired.

She pulled out her phone and he watched as she tapped at the screen. “I’m free Friday night after work. My mom’s away next weekend too but I’m sure we can find somewhere for Allie to have a sleepover and then we can have the house to ourselves.”

“It’s a date. I’ll make dinner reservations for seven.”

“Perfect.” She climbed off of him and started to get undressed. “You ready for tomorrow?”

“I think so. The kids and I picked up the last couple things we needed from the grocery store and Will helped me with some prep work this evening. What time are you going to pick your mom up from the airport?”

She pulled one of his old long sleeved t-shirts that she had claimed for sleeping in over her head, the stretched out neckline slipping over one of her shoulders and the frayed hem revealing a generous amount of bare thigh. He took a second to appreciate one of his favorite looks on her before answering, “1:00. And I think we told people they could start arriving at 4, right?”

“Yes.”

“Okay. I think everyone we invited said they could stop in for at least a little bit….” her voice trailed off as she disappeared into the bathroom and he hopped up from the mattress to follow her in.

Taking a seat on the edge of the counter, he watched as she unpinned her hair and took her makeup off. He had realized when he started living with her that he had rarely, if ever, witnessed this part of someone’s day. The women he had slept with before her hadn’t exactly taken the time to remove their eyeliner before he removed their clothes. It would have made things too domestic, too real for a one night stand. It was a kind of intimacy to be able to watch someone go through their routine of stripping away the image that they presented to the rest of the world that day.

“You’ve got your thinking face on. What are you thinking about?” Felicity asked, breaking him out of his thoughts.

He reached out to caress her cheek with the back of his knuckles, “How much I love your freckles.”

A small smile turned up the corners of her mouth as she squeezed out some toothpaste. When she was finished getting ready for bed, they settled down onto their mattress and he pulled the covers over top of them.
She snuggled in close to him and whispered, “Your Emma Watson impression was spot on by the way.”

He breathed out a laugh, “They like when I do the character voices.”

“I love it.” Tipping her chin up to press a kiss to his jaw, she added, “I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“It smells amazing down here babe,” Felicity remarked as she entered the kitchen. Oliver had been cooking all day to prepare for their guests arriving that evening and when she got back from picking her mom up at the airport a few hours ago, the house had been filling with heavenly aromas. “Can you zip me?”

Oliver gestured for her to come to him and he performed the task before pressing a kiss to her cheek. “You look beautiful.” He brushed his fingers over the skin that was exposed by a cut-out over her back. “I like this.”

“Thank you.” She pivoted around to face him and smoothed her hands down the red fabric of her jumpsuit. “It’s new. I ordered it online, which is always a gamble, so I’m glad it looks as good on me as the model in the picture.”

“Probably better.”

She rolled up on her toes to give him a quick kiss, “You’re biased, but I will still gladly take the compliment.” Looking down at her bare feet, toes freshly manicured with a shade that coordinated with her outfit, she asked, “Do you think I can get away with going barefoot?”

He chuckled, “It’s your house, I think you can do whatever you want.”

“Oh good, because I wore new heels to dinner last night and now my feet hate me.” Walking around the island, she picked up a few things the kids had left lying around since they had cleaned up for company. “Do you need help with anything?”

“I think I’m good. Where are the kids?”

“Good question…” She stepped over to the sliding glass door and looked out into the backyard where Allie and Will were running around with Bruce.

It was amazing how far Will had come in just a few short weeks. When he first regained function of his legs, he was very unsteady and tired quickly when walking. But now it was barely evident that he had ever experienced a spinal injury.

John and Lyla had recommended an old friend from the military as a candidate for the second prototype of the chip that Curtis had re-designed with a few improvements. It had worked even faster than Will’s and now the team was working on a third version that was just as effective, but would also be more economical. The board was being as stubborn as always, but Ray had Skyped in to the last meeting to back her up, so they had reluctantly agreed to greenlight continuing the project. Everyone was feeling the pressure of the end of the year and the deadlines they had set approaching rapidly.

Despite her reservations about their conflicting visions for the event, she was grateful that her mom was taking care of the wedding planning so she didn't have to balance that on top of her long hours at the office. She was ready to have her first major press conference as CEO successfully under her
belt so she could just focus on getting married. When she had a few moments to spare at work, she would find herself browsing potential honeymoon locations. The idea of spending a week doing nothing but relaxing with her husband was getting more and more enticing by the day.

“What time are people supposed to start getting here?” she heard her mom yell from her room.

“Like... five minutes…” she hollered back before sliding open the door to call the kids inside.

Allie’s hair was a mess and she had dirt smudged on her clothes—which got blamed on the dog of course since he couldn’t defend himself—so she was sent upstairs to quickly get herself looking presentable again.

She heard the doorbell ring and sent Will to let the first arrivals in.

Tommy approached him in the kitchen as he was getting the food set out and let out a low, impressed whistle, “This is some house. Your son just gave us the official tour.”

He nodded in agreement, “I’m certainly not going to complain that Felicity decided this is where we’re living.”

It had been a huge surprise—they had only mentioned casually that they would eventually need something that was a better fit for them than the townhouse—but he hadn’t expected that something to be anything like the extravagant house Felicity had handed him the key to. It bore some similarities to his childhood home, but without the formal stuffiness that pervaded the atmosphere at the Queen mansion.

Even after having only been there for a little over a week, it already felt like home. A home with summer vacation pictures on the fireplace mantle and A+ tests proudly displayed on the fridge. A home that suited their life and the future they wanted to build together as a family.

John and Lyla filtered in next with their Sara, followed by his mom and Walter, and then Curtis and Paul. Will and Allie took turns being officially tour guides as more waves of their friends and family arrived.

Oliver encouraged Allie to try some of the Brie cheese with raspberry preserves that she had turned her nose up at while they were grocery shopping and she reluctantly agreed that it wasn’t too terrible (he caught her getting a second helping later on).

Upon Dinah’s arrival, Felicity showed her into the kitchen to grab some food where she asked Oliver, “You going to join us for another yoga class sometime?”

Her fiance glanced over at her with an amused expression and she narrowed her eyes into a perturbed glare. With the move and the busyness of their schedules, it hadn’t worked out for him to accompany them to another class since the first one he attended with them a few weeks ago…

“So do you like to go in the front row, or the back, or…” Oliver inquired as they walked into the yoga studio with Dinah following behind them. It was already filling with people. Soccer moms, older men who were trying to stay flexible for golf, and girls with
perfect abs who Felicity was pretty sure Instagrammed for a living. Eyes shifted in their
direction at the sound of the familiar voice they had heard on the television or at city
events.

Felicity curled her fingers around his forearm and steered him away from a group of the
soccer mom clan who were openly ogling at him. “I think the back would probably be
best.”

The yoga teacher, her name was Carrie, approached them, “Felicity, Dinah… you
brought a guest…”

Straightening up, Felicity remarked, “Yes. This is my fiancé, Oliver.”

There was no way Carrie didn’t know who the Mayor of the city was. While she often
came across as a little out of touch with reality, she didn’t live under a rock.
Additionally, their engagement had been heavily covered by Star City’s various news
outlets—including one mildly awkward interview with a journalist Oliver has apparently
gone on an unsuccessful date with only a few days before they started dating. However,
something about the way Carrie was eyeing him up made Felicity feel like it beared
repeating that he was her fiancé.

“Nice to meet you Oliver,” Carrie remarked, tucking a strand of her artificially red hair
behind her ear. “Is this your first time attending a class?”

Oliver tipped his head in acknowledgment, “Yes. I’m a little nervous.”

“There’s no need to be nervous. Yoga is intuitive, all you have to do is listen to my
voice and feel your breath guiding you into a deeper awareness of your body as you
move.”

Carrie reached out to lightly graze his chest with her fingertips and Felicity took a deep
yogi breath to keep herself from shooting lasers out of her eyes. She was used to Oliver
getting stared at when they were out in public—she couldn’t exactly blame people—but
it ignited a spark of possessiveness inside of her that Carrie was so blatantly trying to
flirt with him. Right in front of her.

Out of the corner of her eye she could see Dinah attempting to stifle a laugh as she
stretched out on her mat and observed the interaction.

Mercifully, Carrie was called away by another person entering the studio and Felicity
felt her blood pressure return to its normal levels.

“I don’t think I’m prepared for this,” Oliver muttered, raking his hand through his hair.
“Was I supposed to understand any of that?”

She rolled up onto her toes to press a kiss to his cheek, “Don’t let her scare you. You’re
going to do great.”

During the class, Felicity frequently noticed Carrie hovering around Oliver. It was
normal for her, like all the other teachers whose classes they attended, to take a hands on
approach and adjust people while they were in the poses, but she was definitely
spending a disproportionate amount of time with her hands on him. At one point when
they were in downward dog, Felicity turned her head to see Carrie grounding him with
her hands on his hips. It was one of her favorite adjustments to receive—she just didn’t
remember it ever requiring so much butt touching when it was done to her. She resisted the urge to roll her eyes because she knew Carrie was a very physical teacher, so maybe she was just being paranoid. Her intentions could be entirely innocent. Oliver was a newbie, so of course he would require more adjusting.

Sure. Just keep telling yourself that.

By the time they made it to savasana, Felicity had zenned out enough to be unbothered —until she cracked open an eye and noticed that Carrie was crouched at Oliver’s head, massaging the tension out of his shoulders as she spoke her affirmations she always closed her classes with, and the desire to mark her territory returned.

She slid her hand out to the side and fit it into Oliver’s upturned palm. A satisfied smile turned up the corners of her mouth when he instinctively intertwined his fingers with hers and Carrie’s words faltered briefly.

They finished out savasana hand in hand and then while they were rolling up their mats, she tentatively asked Oliver what he thought of the experience.

“It was a great workout—but is it always so…” His brow furrowed as he searched for words, “…touchy-feely?”

Dinah finally let out the laugh she has been trying to hold in from the moment they arrived.

Felicity fiddled with the fabric of his shirt, “Umm yes and no. I mean, the teachers always adjust us, but I’m pretty positive she was trying to put the moves on you.”

“I didn’t like that.”

She smacked his chest lightly, “Well I would certainly hope not.”

He grinned and dipped his head down to kiss her, making a show of it by wrapping his arms around her and swaying them side to side a little. While Oliver was affectionate, he didn’t usually initiate big public displays of it, so she knew he was doing it for her sake.

“Oh, okay we get it, you’re getting married, no one else has a shot at being Mrs Queen,” Dinah said, her feigned annoyance betrayed by the amusement in her voice. “Now can we go get breakfast? I’m starving.”

“We can take him to Lucy’s class,” Felicity decided. “She has a wife.”

“And her classes are more advanced.” Jerking her thumb at Oliver, Dinah added, “I still want to see him attempt bakasana.”

When she was finished eating, Dinah got pulled away by a slightly pink cheeked Will who wanted to give her the tour of the house (Oliver and Felicity were starting to suspect that he had a little bit of a crush on her) and Felicity wandered into the living room where she overheard Allie and Sara talking.

“I was over at my dad’s house earlier and he sent me home with a box of random stuff that had gotten left there, including some old pictures. I bet there’s a couple that have Oliver in them.” Sara reached into her jacket pocket and pulled out an envelope. “You want to see what he looked like when he was younger?” she asked Allie.
Allie nodded enthusiastically and Felicity joined them on the couch, shifting her daughter into her lap so that she could see the pictures too. The first few that Sara flipped through were just of the Lance sisters at various ages, but then she got to one of Oliver, Tommy, Laurel, Thea, and her at what looked like the Queen’s lake house.

“I think this is from the summer we flipped the boat. Did he tell you that story?” Sara asked, handing it to her so she could get a closer look.

“Yeah, he did.”

In the photograph Sara was standing next to Oliver, whose hair was a little longer and it fell in his freckled face. He was holding a very young Thea with pigtails and a bright red polka dotted bathing suit. Tommy had his arm slung over Laurel’s shoulder and she looked like she couldn’t decide if she was annoyed or pleased by that. Oliver had told her back when they attended their wedding that the two of them had a ‘will they won’t they’ since middle school. It wasn’t until Tommy was in medical school and Laurel was in law school that distance made the heart grow fonder and they finally realized they had been in love with each other for years.

“My dad already didn’t like Oliver, that definitely didn't help. Laurel was pissed because we weren’t allowed to go to the lake for the rest of the summer and we had to beg him to let us go the next year.”

“Isn’t your dad his Deputy Mayor?”

“Oh yeah, he loves Oliver now. He just wasn’t a fan when he was the one his baby girl was frequently getting into trouble with.”

Sara flipped to the next picture and brushed her fingers over the image of she and Oliver in formal wear. “My senior prom. My date bailed on me for another girl the day before so I wasn’t going to go. When Oliver found out he drove four hours from whatever college he was attending at the time to show up at my doorstep in a tux with flowers and a limo.” She held up the picture and laughed, “I don’t know what I was thinking with that dress…”

“I think you looked pretty Sara,” Allie piped up.

“Thank you. I guess I’m just not really a pink girl anymore.”

Felicity glanced over at her, “So… you and Oliver…”

“Were never a thing,” Sara finished for her. “At least not officially. Growing up, we were really close. I always hung out with him and Tommy and Laurel, and I had a huge crush on him—“

“I thought you liked girls, not boys,” Allie interjected curiously.

“I like both.”

“Oh. I didn’t know you could do that.”

Sara patted her knee, “You can like whoever you want.”

“Except that you’re eight years old and too young for a boyfriend or a girlfriend so don’t get any ideas,” Felicity interjected.

“I know that,” she sighed in exasperation before the doorbell rang and she hopped off her lap to go see who it was.
Sara continued, “We might have been something, but he wasn’t ready for an actual relationship back then. He didn't see himself the way I saw him, didn’t think he deserved more than a never ending string of one night stands. He didn’t really know how to commit to anything or anyone. I knew I wanted to be a doctor and he didn’t know what he wanted, so I left for college and got too busy studying to pine for a boy back home. I don’t know, I guess the timing was just never right for us.”

Felicity fiddled with her engagement ring awkwardly, “I’m sorry.”

“What? No, don’t apologize. I didn’t mean to make it seem like you somehow got in the way of me being with him. I let him go, I fell in love with Nyssa.” She gestured to her girlfriend, who was currently holding Sara Diggle while she conversed with Lyla. “I will always care about Oliver, and he’s one of my best friends, but loving him now means being so happy that he’s found the person who is perfect for him.” Sara smiled at her, “And that’s you. You bring out the best in him. You helped him see the life he wanted, and made him believe he actually deserved it, in a way I wasn’t ever able to.”

Felicity returned her smile, “Thank you.”

When the last of the guests said their goodbyes for the night, Felicity collapsed on the couch next to Oliver and he pulled her legs across his lap.

“I would say that was a success.”

She looped her arms around his neck and leaned her head against him, “Agreed. It was nice to have a reason to get to see everyone.”

Just as she was about to close her eyes for a moment, the doorbell rang and she straightened up in confusion.

“Who…?”

“Samantha,” Oliver reminded her before raising his voice. “Will! Buddy, your mom’s here to pick you up.”

She shifted her legs of off of him so that he could go let Samantha in while she walked towards the bottom of the staircase to make sure Will was on his way down.

“Why do you have to go?” Allie was whining as she followed him down the stairs. Her daughter never liked seeing Will leave for his week at Samantha’s and a busy day of playing hostess clearly had made her tired and consequently more grumpy and irrational than usual. “Why can’t you just stay here all the time?”

Will paused to turn and face her, “I miss my mom when I’m here.”

Allie threw up her hands, “Well then she can just live here. We have plenty of rooms.”

Will glanced over his shoulder at her, silently imploring her help in explaining why that wasn’t a possible solution.

“Allie, honey. Samantha likes having her own house. You’ll see Will on Monday at school,” Felicity pointed out. “It’s time to say goodbye.”

Allie sighed, “Okay.” Wrapping her arms around his waist, she gave him a tight hug. “See you on Monday.”
When goodbyes were said and they made it out to the foyer, Oliver was talking to Samantha and Will rushed towards her for a hug. He tilted his head up to look up at her, “Can I show you my new room before we leave?”

Samantha looked at them hesitantly, “Is that okay?”

“Of course,” Felicity answered, gesturing welcomingly towards the hallway that led to the stairs.

They returned a few minutes later and Samantha joked, “Now I’m surprised he even wants to come home with me. This is... a very nice house.”

“I like your house too mom,” Will reassured her, bringing a smile to her face as he slung his backpack over his shoulder and headed for the door.

“See you guys next week,” she addressed them before following him out.

After they left, Allie yawned and reached up for Oliver to pick her up and carry her upstairs to her bedroom. Felicity heard her mutter, “Can you please have your next kid with my mom so I have a brother or sister who can live here all the time…” as they walked away and she covered her mouth with her hand to stifle a laugh.
hi friends! thank you so much for all of your kind comments on the last chapter and for supporting this story even while the updates have become more sporadic. lots of fun stuff happening in this chapter, so enjoy! :D

November

“Felicity… honey…”

“Just five more minutes,” she mumbled.

“Felicity,” Oliver repeated, ignoring her request.

Lifting her head, it dawned on her that she was in her office on the top floor of Palmer Tech and not their bedroom.

“Wha—“

“It’s 8:00 babe. 8:00pm.”

Her brain woke up and the relevance of that piece of information registered in her consciousness. She was supposed to have met him at Table Salt for their date an hour ago.

“Oh!” She straightened her glasses. “I totally stood you up. I’m so sorry.”

“It’s okay.” He rubbed her back reassuringly. “I’m just glad I found you here and not Starling General, which was going to be my next stop since you weren’t answering your phone.”

When she tapped her phone, she discovered that, sure enough, she had slept through several texts and calls from him.

She groaned apologetically, “I’m a horrible fiancé.”

“Don’t be ridiculous.” He took her hands and tugged her to her feet. “You’ve just had a busy week.”

She nibbled on her bottom lip and ran her fingers down his tie, “Every week is busy. I don’t want to make you feel like you’re less important to me than my job.”

“I don’t feel that way.” He kissed her forehead. “I’m incredibly proud of you.”

“Well…” The corners of her mouth turned up into an affectionate smile. “Thank you, but I still feel bad about missing dinner.”

“The night is still young. Forget the fancy restaurant. Let’s pick up sushi instead and go home instead,” he suggested. “There’s a Chopped marathon on tonight. I think we have some ice cream in the freezer too.”

And they would have the house to themselves. It was Will’s week at Samantha’s, her mom was
away for work and Allie was having a sleepover with Thea, Sara, and Nyssa.

When Oliver had come into their lives, they had ended up gaining more than just him as he had brought with him so many other people that they had grown closer with over the months. With many of her close friends living hours away in other cities, she was thankful for the new ones she (and Allie) had made through her relationship with fiance.

“That sounds amazing,” she sighed blissfully before laughing. ”Oh wow. We’ve reached maximum level domesticity, haven’t we?”

“I hope not. We still have a long time ahead of us.”

She linked her hands with his and smiled, “A whole lifetime.”

At the sushi restaurant they stood waiting for their order to be ready when he heard, “Well would you look at that… Oliver Queen—sorry, I guess it’s Mayor Queen now.”

Oliver winced at the sound of the mocking voice and, when the man stepped into view, he subconsciously inched closer to Felicity as he set his face in a grim smile.

“Max. It’s been a while…”

The last time being after Oliver slept with the would’ve been Mrs. Fuller in lieu of the dessert course at the rehearsal dinner. It was nearing seven years ago that the incident occurred, but as someone who now had a better understanding of how it felt to be so in love with someone that you wanted to marry them, he fully expected that Max still harbored unresolved anger towards him.

He braced himself to receive a fist to the face.

“Saw on the news that you were engaged…” The way he looked Felicity up and down like she was a piece of meat was worse than being punched. “Better keep a close eye on her at the rehearsal dinner. Wouldn’t want karma to finally catch up to you Queen.”

Oliver’s hand tightened around her hip reflexively. By the way she was quietly watching the interaction play out he could tell she probably had a million questions and was debating which one to ask first.

“Her name is Felicity,” she spoke up. “And you are?”

“Max. Max Fuller.” He offered a hand that she ignored and the corners of Oliver’s mouth turned up in a barely restrained smug smile. “Your fiancé and I go way back.”

Felicity’s eyes narrowed skeptically, “He’s never mentioned you before—“

“Probably because he doesn’t want you to know what kind of guy he really is.”

Oliver stiffened. He knew that they had agreed from their very first date to keep their pasts in the past, but being confronted with something he had done that he wasn’t proud of still had a way of rocking his confidence that he deserved a future with her.

Felicity glanced over at him before addressing Max, “I have no idea what went down between you two, or what you think is going to happen at our rehearsal dinner, but I do know exactly what kind of guy Oliver is.” She held up her left hand, “And, clearly, I think he’s the kind of guy you spend the rest of your life with.”
Max looked like he had something else to say but decided to keep it to himself and instead just walked away after shooting him a dark look.

When he was out of earshot, Felicity turned to him and inquired with a quiet voice to avoid drawing any more attention from the other people lingering around the restaurant, “Okay you have to tell me what you did to that guy…”

“Seven years ago I slept with his fiancé at the rehearsal dinner.”

Her eyebrows ascended. “I’m surprised he didn’t punch you.”

“That makes two of us. He moved to Coast City right after his wedding obviously ended up not happening, so our paths haven’t crossed again since, but I heard he was back in town to open a new nightclub.” He dipped his head in embarrassment, “It wasn’t even about her, it was about me feeling entitled to anything and anyone just because I came from an important family and had a lot of money. I don’t want you to think that deep down I’m still that same guy who treated women like a game.”

“Oliver, there’s not even a small part of me that thinks that. I meant what I said to him.” She rested her hand over his heart and he covered it with one of his, “I know exactly who you are, I wouldn’t have agreed to marry you if I didn’t. I’m not going to start worrying about you cheating on me just because of a comment from some random guy who hasn’t known you in seven years.”

He felt a weight lift off of his shoulders as his insecurities retreated again at her words.

“I would never cheat on you,” he emphasized. It was unthinkable. To hurt her--to lose her trust, her heart, would crush him.

“Of course you won’t.” She gestured to her body with her other hand and gave a little shimmy of her hips before winking, “Because this is as good as it gets. You’ve peaked babe.”

She was teasing him, but he agreed entirely and he leaned in to kiss her cheek, “Don’t I know it.”

Their order was called and she slipped her hand in his as they walked out to the car with their food, “You know, now that I think about it, with that karma comment he actually wasn’t even insinuating that you would cheat on me, but that I would cheat on you… which is also ridiculous and now I’m insulted.”

Oliver chuckled, “You want to go back and punch him?”

“Tempting, but no. I should probably avoid adding assault to my rap sheet since I’m marrying a public official.”

Not long after they had gotten home and had settled onto the couches in the living room with shoes kicked off and ties loosened and sushi set out on the coffee table, Felicity heard her phone ding with a news alert. She kept tabs on anytime anyone in the family was mentioned online—mostly so she could make sure that any photos of the kids promptly “mysteriously disappeared.” Reaching for her phone, she saw that someone had apparently taken photos of them at the sushi restaurant and they ended up on a blog that she supposed was technically considered a “news outlet.” If two people getting take-out was considered news.

“What’s up?” Oliver asked, leaning in to get a look at her phone screen.

“Mayor Queen and Fiancé Felicity Smoak show some PDA while picking up sushi—“ Felicity
started to read the article before commenting, “You know, we look so cute in these pictures, I’m going to choose not to be too mad about the invasion of privacy.”

There were two with the article, one of her with her hand on Oliver’s heart and the other with him leaning down to kiss her cheek. She knew that Oliver always looked at her with the biggest heart eyes, but it was clearly written all over her face too how enamored she was. Even if she didn’t know the people in the pictures—if it wasn’t them—she would know for certain that it was two people who were very much in love.

Oliver chuckled, “I definitely prefer this being what pops up when someone googles my name over the less than flattering paparazzi shots from my younger days.”

Setting her phone aside, she grabbed her chopsticks and attended to her stomach that had been protesting its emptiness since Oliver woke her up at her office. Her fiancé flipped on the tv and they became engrossed in an episode of Chopped, engaging in their usual spirited competition of guessing who would be eliminated each round.

In moments such as this, it was easy to forget the loneliness that had occupied her heart before he came into her life. She could almost forget how she had been feeling when she called Iris back in the spring and confessed that she felt like there was something missing. Her friend had been right. Oliver was the partner, the person to come home with, that she had been looking for.

They finished eating as an episode ended and she threaded her arm through his before leaning her head against his shoulder. She was tired from the long day but oh so content.

“I’ve been looking at options for our honeymoon,” she spoke up after a minute or two of quiet.

“Oh?”

He had rolled the sleeves of his dress shirt up and she trailed her fingers down his forearm. “Definitely somewhere warm… there’s this resort in Aruba that looks promising. Do you have any opinions?”

“I’d go anywhere with you.” He pressed a kiss to the top of her head. “But if want me to have an opinion about a specific destination, Aruba sounds perfect.”

Untangling herself from him, she shifted to straddle his lap and loop her arms around his neck. “Maybe we could take a two week honeymoon. Can you get that much vacation time when you’re in charge of an entire city?”

“I could probably manage it. Thea and Quentin can keep things under control. What about you?”

“Hmmmm, I don’t know. I’d have to check in with the boss.” His face lit up with amusement as she tilted her head up thoughtfully before looking back to him. “She says that’s fine. In fact…” She started to unbutton his shirt, “She thinks that having two weeks with nothing to do but be husband and wife will be well deserved after months of putting in long hours at the office…”

His hands gripped her hips and he brushed a kiss against her jaw, “I like the way she thinks.”

Oliver blinked his eyes open sleepily and smiled at the sight of his fiance rolled up in their quilt like a burrito. They had fallen asleep curled up together but sometime in the night she must’ve rolled away from him and stolen all the covers in the process. There was a sharp contrast in the way she looked sleeping now than when he had found her hunched over her desk the night before. She looked relaxed, the tension gone from her shoulders and the crinkle between her forehead erased.
He meant what he said, he was incredibly proud of her and the way she poured herself into her work, but he hoped she wasn’t pushing herself too hard because she felt like she still had to prove herself worthy of the role she had been given. She deserved some validation from someone who wasn’t on her payroll or she could just shrug off with, “you’re my fiance, of course you think I’m doing a good job as the CEO.”

Easing himself out of bed carefully to avoid waking her, he pulled on some sweatpants and padded downstairs to start making her some coffee and breakfast. The house was unusually quiet without the presence of Will and Allie, who on Saturday mornings usually would be in the living room watching cartoons or playing Double Dash on the old GameCube he had gotten to introduce the kids to Tommy and his favorite games.

In the kitchen, he got Felicity’s coffee started before walking over to the fridge to investigate breakfast options. Hung with magnets on the door were an assortment of pictures, including a few recent ones from Halloween. Will and Allie had dressed up like Superman and Supergirl. They had gone trick-or-treating with the Diggle family, so there was a picture of them with Sara too, who had on a matching, toddler-sized version of Allie’s Supergirl costume. Between the three of them, a staggering amount of candy had be procured.

Opening the freezer, he noticed that they (unsurprisingly) still had blueberries from their harvesting efforts back in August. He decided on making blueberry pancakes and the first batch was on the griddle when his phone buzzed with a text from Thea.

THEA: what time were you planning on picking up A?

OLIVER: you trying to get rid of her?

THEA: Nyssa’s gym has a crossfit kids class at 10 and she wants to go

OLIVER: Felicity is still asleep but I’m sure that’s fine

OLIVER: make sure she eats a good breakfast

THEA: what kind of incompetent aunt do you think i am?

The message was accompanied by a picture of her and Allie eating bowls of Lucky Charms.

OLIVER: by good I was thinking something with nutrients

THEA: the box says whole grains are the first ingredient

He rolled his eyes, but only half-heartedly since it made him happy that his sister had jumped as readily into the role of aunt with Allie as she had with Will, and set his phone down to plate up the pancakes. Grabbing a tray to take up to Felicity, he added her mug of coffee, the bottle of syrup, and some turkey bacon.

Upstairs, he wasn’t sure if he would find her still sleeping or not, but she was propped up and on her tablet talking to Iris.

“Why don’t you bring Oliver and Will with you too? They can hang out with Barry and the twins while we look at dresses…” Iris was suggesting.

Felicity looked up over her screen at him, “Do you want to come to Central City with us next weekend?”
He sat the tray down next to her on the mattress, “I would love to.”

She returned her attention to her screen, “Okay. I guess we’ll see you guys soon then.” When she hung up, she pulled the tray into her lap eagerly, “Thank you.”

He dipped his head down to kiss her good morning before she dug into her breakfast, “You’re welcome. Did you sleep well?”

“I did. I was a little grumpy to wake up alone but then I smelled pancakes and all was forgiven,” she teased, reaching out a hand to pull him back into bed next to her.

“Thea texted and said they’re taking Allie to a Crossfit Kids class at Nyssa’s gym,” he informed her, intertwining his fingers with hers.

She laughed, “Oooh the other girls in the little league better watch out. If they get her hooked on Crossfit, she’s going to be smashing home runs next season.”

One Week Later

They entered the bridal boutique in Central City and were immediately greeted by a petite older woman with chin length lavender-gray hair and stylish tortoise shell glasses who gave Felicity’s mother a warm hug, “Donna! Oh, I was so excited when I heard you were bringing your daughter in to see us. I never thought we’d see the day.”

Felicity glanced over at Iris with an eye roll before putting on a friendly smile while her mom introduced her friend and the owner of the boutique, Jennifer, to her.

“So nice to finally meet you Felicity. Who have you brought with you today?”

Dinah was swamped with work thanks to a major player in a new Vertigo outbreak having been apprehended, Lena couldn’t make the trip either, and Caitlin was in the middle of an important research study and couldn’t take the afternoon off. She would have liked the chance to spend time with all of her bridesmaids together, but that would have to wait a little longer until her bachelorette party. Caitlin had been quick to remind everyone in the group chat that she would be almost nine months pregnant then, which had resulted in plans for a relaxing spa weekend instead of the Vegas weekend that had been initially proposed. Which was fine with her, considering she wasn’t entirely sure she had recovered yet from Iris’ bachelorette party… four years ago. Seeing as she was a CEO now and marrying the mayor, two things that brought her a lot more publicity, it was probably best that they avoided ending up drunk in a park this time around.

“My mom, obviously, and then this is my daughter, Allie, and one of my bridesmaids, Iris.”

“Wonderful. Always good to have a few opinions, but not too many.”

She had caught enough snippets from Say Yes to The Dress that seemed to almost always be playing in rotation with Four Weddings at their house to be well aware of that.

They were led over to the private room that had been reserved for them and were offered flutes of champagne (pink lemonade for the member of their party that was eight) and tiny cupcakes while Jennifer asked her questions about what sort of dress she was hoping for.

“I was thinking something with sleeves since it’s going to be February… maybe lace? But not too much lace… and not a ballgown, something sleeker.”
Jennifer nodded thoughtfully as she tossed out her requests. “I have a few ideas.”

She returned a few minutes later with a few dresses and ushered her into the adjacent dressing room.

“So how long have you and your Oliver been together?” Jennifer asked while she was lacing up the corset top of the first dress.

Felicity smiled at “your Oliver” and did the math in her head before replying, “About eight months.”

“Oh my.” There was a brief pause and then her nimble fingers continued their task. “Well, I suppose that’s longer than a season of the Bachelor.”

Felicity shrugged, “When you know, you know.”

And, unlike the contestants of a reality tv show, they hadn’t fallen in love under unrealistic circumstances. What had made her so confident in accepting his offer of marriage after only a few months of being together was how effortlessly he had fit into her life, the everyday moments—and made them better. He was the one she wanted to wake up to good morning kisses from, brush her teeth next to, and talk about her day with for the rest of her life. Her fears of being abandoned had faded and she believed in them, in their love. She didn't need any more time to be more certain of that before walking down an aisle.

Jennifer hummed in agreement before stepping back from her and gesturing for her to walk out to where her entourage was gathered.

Allie gasped, her mom blinked back tears, and Iris narrowed her eyes and pursed her lips thoughtfully.

Felicity did a little turn to get her first look at herself in the mirror and had a reaction that was a combination of all three. She agreed with Iris’ silently conveyed opinion. It wasn’t the dress, but it was still something to see herself swathed in the white fabric.

“This isn’t the one,” Jennifer observed.

Felicity glanced over at her with a raised eyebrow, “Are you a mind reader?”

She laughed warmly, “No, I’ve just been doing this long enough to know what the reaction to the perfect dress looks like.”

“What does it look like?” Allie piped up curiously, pink frosting dotted on the tip of her nose from one of the cupcakes.

Iris handed her a napkin and she cleaned up her face as Jennifer answered her, “Hopefully you’ll see.”

Two dresses later, Felicity stepped in front of the mirror and her audience watched as her reflection lit up. Lace, but not too much lace, that gave way to tulle. A sleek, elegant silhouette.

It was perfect.

“Oh, so this is the dress,” Allie remarked with an understanding grin.

Twisting around to face them, she nodded, tears springing to her eyes even as she beamed excitedly, “I think this is the dress.”

She had never been one of those little girls growing up who dreamed about her wedding or had a
“My first wedding was actually in elementary school,” Iris had told her when they were shopping for her wedding dress a few years back. “I used to always drag Barry into my games of make believe and one day I decided that we were going to pretend to get married because I wanted to get dressed up as a bride.”

“Yeah no, I was not that girl.”

—but the part of her that had been drawn into the fantasy of her mom’s line of work and used to flip through her bridal magazines before realizing she shouldn’t dwell on something that was “never going to happen for her” had to admit that it was pretty fun to start to see her wedding take shape. For the past few weeks it had mostly just been pictures and ideas in her mom’s massive binder, but the dress was the first tangible thing and it filled her with an unexpected giddiness to see herself in it.

She was getting married. Someone wanted to spend the rest of their life with her.

Iris nodded with an approving smile, “You look gorgeous. We’ll have to get pictures to send to the rest of the crew, but I think they’re going to be in agreement.”

“Mom?” Felicity inquired, as her mother had yet to offer up her opinion.

Donna sniffled and dabbed at her eyes with a tissue, being careful not to ruin her smokey eye. “You’re glowing baby girl. I’ve never seen a more beautiful bride-to-be. And I’ve seen a lot of brides.”

“And just imagine on the actual day when she’s all done up…” Jennifer bustled about, grabbing options for jeweled headpieces to pin into updos and earrings and whatnot to complete the look. “... she’s going to be a vision.”

{You’re going to have to wait to see the dress when Oliver does, but there’s a little sneak peek on the outfit collage for this chapter ;)

After picking out accessories, posing for pictures to send to her bridesmaids, getting her measurements taken, and setting a date for her fitting, Felicity thanked Jennifer for her help.

“My privilege dear. I’m glad we were able to find you the perfect dress. Congratulations on finding the perfect person.”

When they got back to the Allen home, delicious aromas were coming from the kitchen and they wandered in to find Oliver and Barry cooking. Will was sitting at the counter reading a book and the twins abandoned their miniature play kitchen to greet their mom.

“What happened to, ‘we don’t have much food in the house so we’ll probably just order some pizzas for dinner’?” Iris inquired after attending to her son and daughter’s needs for hugs and kisses.

Barry paused his chopping to turn his head so she could roll up onto her tiptoes to kiss him before answering, “We decided to go to the grocery store instead.”

“A woman in the baking aisle told us we were a cute couple,” Oliver added, looking up from what looked like a cake batter he was mixing.

Felicity shook her head in amusement and walked up behind him to wrap her arms around his waist. She rested her chin on his shoulder to peer over it and determine that it was in fact his chocolate cake batter in the bowl.
Setting down his spoon, he turned around in her arms and raised a curious eyebrow, “A successful day?”

She smiled shyly as her fingers fiddled with the fabric of his shirt at his lower back, “Yep.”

Allie bounced on her toes excitedly (and a little strung out on sugar from the cupcakes at the boutique), “Oh just wait until you see her in the dress Oliver, she looks like a princess!”

“One might even say a Queen,” Felicity amended with a wink.

His dimples appeared and she felt his smile as he dipped his head to press a kiss to her lips.

“Where’s your mom?”

“She’s multitasking this weekend and having a consultation with a prospective bride this evening. She’s just going to meet us back at the hotel later.”

“What time are Cait and Ronnie getting here?” Barry asked Iris.

“Cait was supposed to be finished running her test at 4:00, so she said, accounting for it taking longer than expected, which is expected, they should be able to get here around 6:30.”

Caitlin and Ronnie arrived at 6:32, just as Barry and Oliver were pulling pans of lasagna and garlic bread out of the oven.

“Dr. Snow!” Will greeted her, excited to show her how far he had come in the months since she performed his spinal implant operation.

“Amazing.” Caitlin glanced over at Felicity, “If you can figure out how to make this technology accessible…”

Oliver slung an arm across her shoulder, “If anyone can figure it out, it’s her.”

She patted his chest affectionately and addressed Caitlin, “I think we’re getting close. Mine, and my team’s, dream is to someday see treating injuries to the nervous system with implants be a routine procedure, like repairing a broken bone or suturing a wound.”

“That would be incredible.”

After they ate dinner, they set up the kids with a movie before returning to the dining room for chocolate cake and a Trivial Pursuit rematch that the guys were determined to win.

They lost.

Next they played a couples round and Oliver and Felicity won.

“Since I’m the common denominator here, I think that makes me the ultimate Trivial Pursuit master,” Felicity teased.

“I think it makes you the ultimate nerd,” Iris fired back.

She shrugged nonchalantly, “I can wear that title with pride.”

The rest of the weekend passed in a blur, the next week bringing with it the night of the charity gala for the Rebecca Merlyn Memorial Clinic. Felicity stood in front of the mirror assessing her
appearance and contemplating which of the three lipsticks she had sitting out on the counter paired best with her dress. Her off-the-shoulder, floor length gown was made from a dark navy fabric that hugged her curves and made her feel regal.

She finally decided on a dark magenta shade and when she had finished applying it, Oliver came up behind her, looking handsome in his tuxedo. He brushed her hair aside to drag her zipper up for her before brushing a kiss to her bare shoulder and commenting, “You’re missing something.”

She wiggled her bare toes, “Yeah I know, I haven’t put my shoes on yet.”

Sans heels she looked even tinier next to him and could tuck perfectly under his chin.

Amusement flashed across his face, “Okay yeah, but also I was thinking something more like this.”

He reached around her to lay a strand of diamonds across her collarbones before fastening the necklace in the back, and her eyes widened as her fingers came up to touch the cool stones. While she didn’t typically consider herself much of a bling girl, she had to admit that the simple elegance of it was stunning.

“Oh wow,” she breathed out. “I don’t think anyone would even notice now if I didn’t have shoes on.”

“It’s a family piece, belonged to my Grandma Dearden. My mom was going through our vault for items to contribute to tonight’s silent auction and she thought this could be your “something old” for the wedding. Except that when I saw you in this dress, I couldn’t wait any longer to give it to you.”

[See Felicity’s outfit here]

“It’s beautiful, thank you.” Her brow furrowed as she was reminded of a thought that had been brewing in the back of her mind all throughout the planning profession for the gala. “Is it ridiculous that we’re wearing expensive clothes and diamonds and about to go eat fancy expensive food in order to raise money…”

“It is.” He caressed her arm with the backs of his knuckles. “But growing up I learned that’s how these people work. I’ve attended countless events like this one, even more since becoming mayor. They’ll probably never step foot inside the clinic so you have to step into their world if you want to invoke their generosity.”

She supposed that made sense. It wasn’t much different from her taking potential investors out to fancy restaurants in order to have the opportunity to share with them how her team was developing technology to better the lives of people who would probably never be able to afford to eat there. Whether it was fair or not, it was the way the world worked at the moment.

Sighing, she remarked, “I guess I shouldn’t judge, since I’m technically in the same tax bracket as a lot of the invitees now.”

And yet she didn’t feel like one of them, like she was a part of their world. None of her friends were. Up until buying their new home she had yet to make any truly extravagant purchases and had been putting most of her income into a savings account for Allie. Her Mini Coop wasn’t exactly a luxury vehicle. She had millions of dollars in the bank but it didn’t change the fact that she hadn’t been groomed since birth to be a member of Star City’s high society. The out-of-place feeling she had experienced at the country club the other day served as a reminder of that.

“But you’re definitely not like the people I grew up around,” Oliver confirmed, as though he was reading her thoughts. “Don’t worry, I’ll let you know if you ever become an insufferable rich
person,” he teased, pressing a delicate kiss to the top of her head so as not to mess up her hair.

“Like you were?” she teased back, tilting her head to look up at him.

He wrinkled up his face in distaste, “Mmm. I like to think I’m not as insufferable as I once was though.”

She pivoted to face him and patted his cheek, “I suppose for a former trust fund baby, you’re not so bad. I might even consider marrying you.”

His face softened and he was quiet for a moment as he looked at her intently before he captured her left hand in his and lifted it to his lips to press a kiss to her knuckles. “I can’t wait to marry you. To be your husband. I would marry you tonight if—“

“Oliver! Felicity!” The sound of her mom calling for them from downstairs broke them out of their own little bubble and returned them to reality. “Mr. Diggle is here!”

“If she wouldn’t kill us?” Felicity finished for him.

He nodded and leaned in to kiss her before reluctantly letting her go so she could slip into her shoes and grab her clutch before joining him downstairs. John was driving them to the gala and they were reportedly going to be followed by another discreet black vehicle filled with the rest of her fiancé’s detail. She often forgot about their presence whenever she and Oliver were out, and often it was just John quietly shadowing them anyway. But with the gala being a highly publicized event, the SCPD had wanted him to have maximum security.

In the living room, she bid goodnight to Allie and her mom, who had opted to stay home since she had an early flight out the next morning for a destination wedding.

“Why can’t I come to the gala?” Allie pouted, turning her puppy dog eyes onto Oliver. Her daughter had quickly figured out how much more effective they were on him than on her.

Oliver crouched down to her level, “It’s going to be a really boring party with a lot of boring people.”

She crossed her arms over her chest, “That’s not true.”

“Okay so some of the people going are cool, but it’s still not going to be very much fun.”

“Then why are you going?”

“Because when you’re a grown up, you sometimes have to do boring things. You’re lucky you get to stay home and hang out with your grandma.”

“Well… maybe we can do something fun tomorrow night then?”

“Anything you want.”

A challenging smile turned up the corners of her mouth, “What if I want to go to the moon?”

Oliver faltered, “Uhh…”

“Just kidding. I want to go ice skating.”

“We can definitely go ice skating.”
“Okay.” Placated, Allie wrapped her arms around his neck for a hug. “Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.”

He released her to stand and Allie turned to her, “Do you want to go ice skating with Oliver and I?”

She feigned shock, “Oh, I’m invited?”

“Of course you are.”

Grinning, she reached down to pull her in for a hug, “Sounds like a plan. Goodnight baby girl. Don’t keep grandma up too late, she has to be up early for her flight and you have school tomorrow.”

“I won’t,” Allie vowed. “Have fun at your boring party.”

“Who’s that?” Felicity asked, pointing out a man who had attracted a circle of attention. Dinner had ended, Tommy had given a heartwarming speech about his mother and the mission of her clinic, and now they were all milling about as the waitstaff brought around trays of tiny desserts and champagne and people bid in the silent auction and pledged donations. From what she could tell, the evening was turning out to be quite the success for the future of the clinic.

“That’s Carter Bowen… Laurel went to homecoming with him her freshman year of highschool and I think Tommy still hates him,” Sara commented.

“He’s also a pretentious ass,” Thea added, taking a sip of her champagne.

“Shhh… he’s a rich pretentious ass and we want his money,” Laurel chimed in. “So we have to play nice. Someone distract my husband while I go talk to him.”

Felicity shook her head in amusement as Laurel made a determined beeline for Carter. She started to make her way across the room to find where Oliver had wandered off to, when she was intercepted by Ray.

“Hey…” She accepted his hug. “I’m so glad you were able to make it. I know you said you weren’t sure if you were going to be back from Europe yet. Is Anna here too?”

“She is,” he gestured across the room to his wife, who was talking to another guest. His unmistakably very pregnant wife.

Felicity gasped in surprise and smacked his arm, “Mazel Tov! Why didn’t you tell me?”

He grinned sheepishly, “Sorry. We were keeping the news to ourselves for a while, but obviously it’s pretty hard to hide now.”

“I’m so happy for you.”

“Thank you.” He looked down, “I’m excited but I must admit that as her due date gets closer I’m getting more nervous. My dad was never in the picture so I didn’t exactly have an example of how to do this…”

“Don’t let that worry you. The qualities that made you a great person to work for, are going to make you a great dad,” she assured him.

He gave her a grateful smile before remarking, “Speaking of work…”
Her curiosity was piqued as he pulled an official looking document out of an envelope he retrieved from inside his jacket and set it on the table near them.

“Am I being fired?” she asked, equal parts joking and nervous.

“What? No, quite the contrary.” He gestured at the paperwork and she leaned in to see the words: *Transfer of Ownership.*

Her eyes widened in surprise and she struggled to find the right words to say, “Oh. Umm…”

“It’s become evident to me that under your leadership this past year, my vision for Palmer Tech has been fulfilled and even exceeded. I don’t want you to be held back from making your plans a reality by people who refuse to see in you what I do. You won’t need me to speak on your behalf to the board anymore, the company is yours, you’re the majority owner—or at least you will be after you sign this.”

Her jaw was on the floor, she was certain of that. When she had been promoted to CEO there had been a part of her that had always assumed it would be temporary. It was still Ray’s company, surely he would eventually want to come back and take the lead again after he had taken his time off.

She tapped the paper with a manicured finger, “Are you sure this is what you want? I mean, what are you going to do?”

“I’m sure. Anna and I have talked about it a lot and we’ve come to the agreement that this is the right decision. I’m ready for something different, a new challenge. Since I’ve taken my leave from the company, I’ve been offered numerous positions at prestigious research universities and I’ve narrowed it down to two that I’m still deciding between. At either, I wouldn’t begin until next school year, which allows me a few months to spend at home helping Anna with the baby. There’s no one I trust more to take what I started here into a new era than you.”

She had worked so hard the over past year since her unexpected promotion to prove that she was worthy for the job and there were some days when she wondered if all the late nights and meetings and dinners were worth it. To have the validation now that it had been, brought tears to her eyes that she struggled to blink back.

“Wow. I don’t–I don’t know what to say. Thank you doesn’t seem enough but, thank you so much For believing in me.” She gestured towards him, “You’re going to make a great dad and professor. Hopefully you won’t have to deal with anyone like me in your classes. I was notorious for making a point that I was the smartest person in the room.”

Ray laughed, “I could only hope to have students as driven and passionate as you.”

Anna walked over then and, placed a hand over the small of her back, Ray looked down at her with a doting smile to ask, “You ready to head out?”

She nodded, “Yeah.” Addressing Felicity, she added, “It’s been a lovely evening, thank you for inviting us.”

“Of course. It was Ray who established the partnership between the company and the clinic in the first place. I’m happy to be continuing it.”

In addition to their regular financial contributions, Felicity had already promised Tommy that the clinic would be gifted several new pieces of equipment that their MedTech department had been developing once production officially launched at the start of the new year.
Ray slipped a pin out of his pocket and handed it over to her, “Just need your signature, and then we’ll be on our way.”

Anna gave her an approving smile as she accepted the pen from him and took a deep breath before signing the paperwork.

Handing the pen back to him she offered her congratulations again on their pregnancy and good luck with their future ventures. She squeezed Ray’s arm, “Don’t be a stranger.”

“Never. We’ll be sure to visit during the summers when I have off to see family and friends, and check in on how things are doing at your company.”

*Her company.* She was the owner of a Fortune 500 company.

Her college self never saw this one coming.

As soon as they left she practically ran (as much as “running” could be accomplished in a floor length gown and heels) in search of her fiancé. She found him in conversation with his mother and they both turned their heads at her rapid approach.

“Ray just gave me the company,” she blurted out.

“What?” they inquired simultaneously

“Up until a few minutes ago, he was still the majority owner of the company but he just signed enough of his shares over to me to make me the majority owner so now I’m really, truly the boss.” She took a deep breath and reigned in some of her excitement to compose herself.

Oliver’s face lit up with understanding and he pulled her in for a hug, pressing a kiss to her temple, “Congratulations honey, you deserve it.”

She fiddled with his tie, glancing over at Moira to gauge her reaction, and she offered her a smile, “Certainly not how I ever anticipated this all playing out when we made the decision to sell those shares to Dr. Palmer. Congratulations dear.”

Tommy approached them then and asked, “Have you guys seen Laurel?”

Felicity stifled a smile, “Hmmm no. No I haven’t.”

Oliver pointed across the room, “I think I see her over there talking to… Carter Bowen.”

*Well Laurel, I tried.*

“Oh, Carter Bowen. What an accomplished young man,” Moira remarked. “I heard from his mother that he’s working on writing his second book and has even been offered a television deal. I can’t imagine how he has time for all of that since he’s such a sought after neurosurgeon.”

Felicity watched in amusement as Oliver and Tommy exchanged a look.

“I should go say hello,” Moira continued. “Oliver, Felicity, if I don’t catch you again before you leave, I look forward to seeing you on Thursday for Thanksgiving. Don’t forget, Raisa’s planning on serving dinner at 5:00.”

“We’ll be there,” Oliver promised. After she walked away, he asked, “Do you think her perfect son, Carter Bowen, will be at Thanksgiving dinner too?”
Felicity swatted his chest, “Are you really jealous of that guy? From what I’ve heard, he’s a little too full of himself.”

“He is,” Tommy chimed in in agreement.

Laurel walked over to them, Moira having released her from her conversation with Carter, and, with her face painted with disgust, said, “I just had a brief moment where I imagined being married to him and it was horrifying thought.”

Tommy pulled her into his side and kissed her cheek, “Dodged a bullet there babe.”

“Ugh, I have no idea what freshman year me saw in him. On the brightside, he wrote a massive check for the clinic, so mission accomplished.”

Felicity looked around at the crowd and the number of people with their checkbooks out and nodded in agreement, “Mission accomplished.”
January

The sounds of celebration filled the room as the clock struck midnight and the new year began. Oliver leaned in to kiss her, wrapping an arm around her waist and sweeping her up off her feet. They were at City Hall for a New Year’s Eve party for all of the public officials, but as they kissed, it felt like the world was just them for a few perfect seconds. So much had changed in the last year. So, so much. And it had all started with a late-night drive to Hub City.

A few days earlier...

“December 23rd. I can’t believe the year is almost over,” Alena remarked as she walked into her office that morning for a meeting.

Felicity looked up, “Wait, it’s December 23rd?” She checked the date in the bottom of her computer screen and confirmed that it was indeed, the twenty third day of the twelfth month of the year.

“Yeah…” Alena sat down across from her with a stack of folders. “What? Is it like your grandma’s birthday and you forgot to mail her a card?”

“Oh, no. But it is a… date with significance.” She clicked over to her calendar to check if she would be free at lunch before asking, “Has marketing given you any updates on the rebranding?”

“That…” Alena opened one of the folders and laid it in front of her. “Is what I was coming in to show you.”
Ray had given her his blessing to change the name now that the company was hers. She traced her fingertips over the logo options that marketing had designed for *Queen Industries*.

“They said if you want everything ready in time for your press conference, you need to make a decision by the end of the day,” Alena continued.

“Okay. Thanks for bringing these up.” Felicity closed the folder and tucked it into her tote bag before getting to the purpose for their meeting, “So where is the programming department at on finishing up the coding for the new app…”

At lunchtime, she made a stop at the Thai place down the street for take-out before heading for City Hall. Oliver had still been asleep when she left that morning because he had gotten in late from a mayoral trip to Coast City the night before and she hadn’t wanted to wake him, so they had yet to acknowledge the meaning that the day held for them.

John let her into Oliver’s office and he smiled at her arrival, standing up to greet her with a kiss.

“Good morning honey.”

“Oliver, it’s 1pm.”

“Well, that was to make up for the fact that you didn’t get a good morning kiss.” He pressed his lips to hers again. “And that was because I’m happy to see you now. To what do I owe this surprise?”

She set the bag of take-out on his desk. “I couldn’t let such a momentous day go unacknowledged.” Confusion passed across his face and she patted his chest, “Let me jog your memory… “ Putting on a glare and resting her hands on her hip she said, “I was here first so I don’t care that your kid wants these Legos too or that you’re the mayor. I will fight you.”

The confusion faded into a dimpled smile. “Today’s the day we met. How could I forget?”

She shrugged, “I don’t know, because you usually remember everything.”

“I probably tried to block out that memory since you left me broken hearted in a parking lot.”

Rolling her eyes, she started to set out the Thai food, “I couldn’t have broken your heart, you knew me for all of a few hours.”

He squeezed her shoulder and kissed the top of her head, “I was yours from the first moment you threatened me.”

They settled down onto the couch in his office to eat their lunch and when they were finishing up, she pulled out the folder from marketing.

“I have something to show you.”

Taking the folder, he surveyed the contents silently before glancing up at her, “You don’t have to do this.”
“What?”

“This company is yours, you shouldn’t-- you don’t have to--”

“Oliver,” she interrupted him. “I may be the boss right now, but it’s not just mine.” Reaching out, she took his hand, “I wouldn’t have been able to accomplish everything I have over the past few months without the people who have stood behind me and supported me.” Her natural tendency was often to work obsessively, disregarding her personal wellbeing and driving herself to burnout. It was moments such as Oliver bringing the kids and pizza to the office when she was pulling a late night so she wouldn’t miss out on family dinner that grounded her. “It’s *our* family’s company now. Something that will hopefully be the case for generations to come.”

Oliver smiled at that and she continued, “Allie’s already informed me how she plans on redecorating my office once she retires from being an astronaut and takes over my job. Soft serve machine, tropical fish aquarium, glow star constellations on the ceiling—the works. The name was actually her idea--or wait, no…..” She tilted her head and recalled the memory of eating ice cream and brainstorming with the kids one evening a few weeks ago when Oliver was at City Hall late. “No, it was Will’s. Allie wanted me to go with Queen Enterprises, but I told her that would require one of us becoming a masked vigilante to really commit to the Batman aesthetic and she didn’t want either of us jumping off of buildings so… Queen Industries won out.”

Oliver laughed before his demeanor became serious again, “So you’re not just doing this to appease my mother?”

She shook her head insistently, “No. That’s the last thing on my mind. This is about the future--our future, not the past. It’s about our family building a new legacy.”

“And you’re sure this isn’t going to cause the company’s stock prices to plummet?” he pressed. “Because it wasn’t that long ago that the company nearly went bankrupt because people didn’t want to have any connection to the Queen name...”

The board had raised that concern as well, even those who had been around since the Queen Consolidated days and were fond of the family. Which was why she had taken the necessary measures to reassure them.

“Don’t worry, I had marketing “focus-group” it, and, it turns out that mass murder isn’t the first thing people associate the Queen family with anymore. It helps a lot that you and your sister are the ones most in the public eye now, and you’ve used your platform as Mayor to address the corruption in the city and restore the Glades.” Oliver looked like he was about to say something contradictory and she cut him off, “Ah, you don’t let me trash talk myself, you’re not allowed to either.” She squeezed his hand reassuringly, “I know you feel like you haven’t accomplished enough, but you’re doing an amazing job. And I’m not the only one who feels that way.”

He smiled shyly at her, “Thank you.”

She leaned in to kiss him, “You’re welcome, Mayor Handsome.”

“What are you going to call me when I’m no longer Mayor?”

“How..…” She tapped her chin thoughtfully and her eyes flashed teasingly, “*Trophy Husband of the Queen Industries CEO* doesn’t roll off the tongue quite as well but...”
“Trophy Husband, huh?” He arched an eyebrow. “Do I get an official business card for that?”

She winked, “I’ll see what I can do.”

Oliver released her, but only enough for them to catch their breath, their foreheads pressed together as they exchanged smiles. Flash bulbs went off brightly around them and she knew that within an hour her phone would be buzzing with notifications as pictures of them ringing in the New Year popped up on the internet.

Despite her initial apprehension that she would be reduced to “the mayor’s girlfriend” when they went public with their relationship (or more accurately, when Allie announced their relationship to everyone in the lobby of City Hall), she had been pleasantly surprised that, a few headlines aside, that hadn’t been the case. Thanks to her increasing reputation with the city due to her CEO position, and in part to Thea’s PR savvy, they had become Star City’s beloved power couple, not just the Mayor and his nameless blonde.

“I love you,” he whispered, brushing his nose against hers.

“Love you too.”

They walked over to the window to watch fireworks exploding over the bay and she leaned her head against his shoulder.

“What were you doing last year on New Year’s Eve?” Oliver asked.

“Trying to keep Allie awake to watch the ball drop because she had never lasted until midnight before and she would always be grumpy when she woke up the next morning and realize she had missed it.”

“Did she make it last year?”

“Yep. Thanks to a grande iced coffee with extra whipped cream and chocolate syrup from Jitters, I’m pretty sure she was up for a solid 24 hours without slowing down.” Straightening up, she glanced around the room, “Speaking of Allie…”

Oliver pointed to where Allie and Will were standing with their faces pressed close against the glass to get their own look at the fireworks. Noticing that her mom was close by keeping a watchful eye on them, she relaxed again. She had been a little nervous about bringing Allie along to such a big—and potentially overwhelming—party, but she had been handling it like a champ and even charmed several city council members that Oliver said he had never seen smile before.

“I need to bring her with me to my meetings, maybe more of my proposals would be considered if she was the one presenting them.”

Once the last of the fireworks flickered in the sky, they returned to circling the room and ran into Laurel, Tommy, and Thea.

“Are you guys still good to come over tomorrow?” Felicity asked. “Or... later today I guess.”

Laurel nodded in confirmation, “Yeah, do you need us to bring anything?”

Oliver shook his head, “Don’t worry about it, we still have a ton of leftover food in the freezer from the holidays that I was planning on defrosting.”
Thea gripped his arm, “Please tell me you have some more of that chocolate bread cake stuff that I can’t remember the actual name for…”

“Babka?” Felicity inquired with amusement. “Yeah no, we ate all of that.”

Oliver, determined to have a part in the celebration, had prepared traditional Jewish meals for every night of Hanukkah. And he might have gone a little overboard, resulting in the leftovers filling their freezer. However, between the five of them living at the house (plus Thea when she stopped by to help Oliver and Will decorate their Christmas tree) they had managed to eat their way through the abundance of delicious desserts coming out of the kitchen during the month of December.

If her wedding dress didn’t fit when she went for her final fitting in a week, the copious amounts of fried dough she consumed during Hanukkah was definitely to blame.

Thea pouted in disappointment before confirming that she would be able to come over around 4:00 and excusing herself to say goodnight to some of the guests.

“Mayor Queen, Ms. Smoak…” They turned to see a pair approaching them with press passes and a camera. “Would it be possible for us to get a photo of your family for the Star City Tribune?”

Oliver glanced down at her and, at her slight nod of approval, answered them, “Of course.”

Tommy and Laurel bid them goodbye and Felicity waved the kids over from across the room, straightening Will’s tie and smoothing down Allie’s hair. As they posed for photos it took her back to their first outing together, the baseball game where Oliver had thrown out the first pitch. She had hesitated then, with how to answer Allie’s question of whether they were part of Oliver’s family. Now, after all the time the four of them had spent together since—on vacations and in hospital rooms and all the moments in between—they were unquestionably a family.

“Anything you can share about your upcoming wedding?” the journalist asked when her photographer was finished.

“We’re very excited,” Felicity answered vaguely. They were trying to keep the details of their wedding under wraps as much as possible to avoid being bombarded by paparazzi. Date, time, venue—anyone not on the invite list wasn’t supposed to know the specifics. Wrapping a hand around Oliver’s arm, she added, “For the wedding, but also for our future together.”

The journalist took the hint that that was all she was going to get and dropped her phone to her side. “Well then, Mazel Tov. And have a happy New Year.”

When they had left, Allie yawned widely and it set off a ripple effect with Will and Felicity following in her lead.

“It looks like we need to—“ Oliver yawned himself. “—call it a night.”

By the time they had said all their goodbyes and made it back to the house, it was a little past 2:30am. Oliver glanced in the rear view mirror to see both the kids and their grandma fast asleep in the back. He had gotten Felicity the red seven-seater SUV they drove now for Hanukkah, since they had come to the conclusion that between the two of them they owned zero family friendly vehicles (and she adamantly refused to drive a minivan).

One look at his fiancé and he knew she wasn’t awake either, so he took a second in the quiet to reflect on how different January 1st had begun than it had the previous year.
He had been flying solo at the City Hall party, a little distracted. His thoughts on the almost stranger who had been in his passenger seat a few days prior. The almost stranger who had made him realize that he was lonely. As the couples around him kissed at the stroke of midnight, he had resolved himself to trying to meet someone else who could make him feel the way she had. And he tried, without any luck—any spark of connection.

But this January 1st, that almost stranger had been the one kissing him at midnight. That almost stranger had occupied the space in his heart that had been lonely and was now going to be his wife in a few week’s time. If he had been a little distracted at the party that evening it was only because it was hard to keep his eyes off of her.

“Felicity…” he trailed the back of his knuckles down her arm gently, causing her to stir. “We’re home.”

Inside they were greeted enthusiastically by Bruce and once they had made sure the kids brushed their teeth and changed into pajamas before collapsing into their beds, he followed Felicity down the hall to their room.

Her power nap in the car must’ve been enough to re-energize her because she didn’t appear to be eager to crawl in bed and go back to sleep. As soon as he closed the door behind them, she was stepping out of her heels and reaching up to loosen his tie. Concentrating on her task, she sunk her teeth into her full bottom lip and he couldn’t resist tipping her chin up to steal a quick kiss before letting her resume.

Once she had tossed his tie to the floor, he shrugged off his suit jacket while she untucked his shirt and started undoing the buttons. Undressing each other had become a well rehearsed routine, but one he was certain he would never tire of. With just the lightest touch of her fingers on his bare chest, she made his heart pound with anticipation, sending his blood coursing through his body and flooding him with warmth. His shirt tossed on the floor, he carefully removed her glasses and set them aside before spinning her around. He brushed her hair to the side to drop a kiss to her bare shoulder as his fingers found the zipper on her dress and dragged it down to rid her of the black fabric hugging her body.

His breath caught when she turned around in his arms.

**Definitely never tiring of this.**

“You’re so beautiful,” he muttered reverently, sliding his hands down her thighs and lifting her up so she could wrap her legs around his waist. While he slowly walked them backwards to their bed, she looped her arms around his neck and continued to kiss him.

Sitting down on the edge of the mattress with her straddling his lap, he broke away from her mouth to trail kisses up her neck. Her soft moans filled the room and he reveled in the sound of his name on her lips.

“Oliver…”

He hummed in response against her collarbone and she threaded her fingers through his hair.

Leaning backwards, he attempted to lower them down together gracefully but instead they collapsed into a tangled heap with her elbow jutting painfully into his side and their faces pressed together in a very unsexy manner. The spell surrounding them was broken for a moment as she burst out in a fit of giggles.
“Your core strength has finally failed us old man.”

A scowl crinkled his face, and he flipped them over so she was underneath him with a move he felt made up for his first attempt, “Who are you calling old?”

She grinned up at him and he brushed some hair away from her face before she captured his hand and intertwined it with hers. Pressing a kiss to the back of his hand, she said, “Don’t worry, I think you’re going to be a fine-as-hell old man.”

His face shifted to amusement, “Oh yeah?”

“Mhmm.” She closed her eyes. “I can picture it.” When she re-opened her eyes there was a teasing glint in them, “I wouldn’t have agreed to grow old with you if I didn’t think you were going to age like a fine wine.”

He pulled back from her so he could remove his belt and pants and bantered back, “Hopefully I live up to your expectations so you don’t decide to trade me in for a new trophy husband in ten years.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it. I’m glue baby, you’re stuck with me.” His helplessly-in-love smile turned into a yawn and she groaned, “Oh no, don’t go falling asleep on me though or the old man jokes will not cease. I still need—“

Returning to her, he cut her off with a kiss and pressed his very awake body against hers. “Still need what?” he asked.

She snickered, “To start the new year off with a bang.”

_The love of my life ladies and gentlemen._

Rolling his eyes, he asked, “How long have you been waiting to use that one?”

“It just came to me in the moment actually.” She hooked a leg around his waist, encouraging him to grind down on her. “Didn’t realize you were marrying a comedian, did you?”

He huffed in amusement, “Maybe don’t quit your day job babe.” In response, she pouted and he kissed it away before adding, “But I find your ridiculous puns sexy, so you at least have that going for you.”

Cradling his face and smiling up at him, she pulled him down to meet her mouth again, muttering against his lips, “Good enough for me.”

Felicity woke up later than she had in a long time—it was nearing 11:30 by the time her eyes opened and she turned her head to squint at the clock on her bedside table. Oliver was still sound asleep beside her with his arm slung across her waist and she closed her eyes again to enjoy a few more minutes of peace and quiet, curled up with him. With it being Will’s week at their house, the kids were likely hanging out together—if they were even awake yet after their late night—and Allie wouldn’t be knocking on their door wanting attention and breakfast.

Her peace was interrupted by the sound of her phone ringing loudly… somewhere. She couldn’t remember where she had dropped her clutch before starting to undress her fiancé the night before.

“Ignore it,” Oliver muttered, tightening his grip on her when she started to attempt to wriggle away.

“What if it’s an emergency?”
“It’s a holiday, no one is working.”

“Okay…” She attempted to settle back in comfortably but she couldn’t shake the itch to check her phone. With the press conference unveiling Queen Industries and the MedTech division in less than a week, her mind was spinning with all of the details that were still being ironed out. Any number of people in any number of departments could be trying to contact her with something urgent, holiday or not.

“If it’s bothering you that much, just go check it,” Oliver relented, sensing her restlessness and lifting his arm.

Sliding out of bed, she found her clutch on the chair by the door where she had tossed it on her way into the room and extracted her phone. There was a flurry of news alerts from their appearance at the party the night before and she skimmed them quickly to make sure the only pictures of the kids were ones that had been consented to. When she moved on and checked the missed call, she saw that it was from an unknown number and no voicemail had been left.

“You were right, not an emergency. Looks like just a wrong number call.” She tossed her phone aside and headed for the bathroom to wash of the remnants of her makeup from the party and brush her teeth.

―

“Laurel, Thea, I have something for you…” Felicity dug through her work tote and pulled out two black boxes before returning to where they had gathered in the living room. “These aren’t on the market quite yet, but…” She handed them each one and took a seat on the couch. “This is our latest model of smart wearables, the ‘Felicity’ watch.”

Aptly named since she had personally designed the new interface and made improvements to the circuitry. And made it super stylish.

“Ooooh, thank you!” Laurel opened her box and slipped on the tech, Thea following suit.

“Why don’t I get any presents?” Tommy asked with feigned offense.

She raised an eyebrow, “Does the new software I coded to streamline all of the patient medical records at the clinic not count as a present?”

“Fair enough. The old system was a complicated mess, the nurses especially are eternally grateful to you.”

Laurel shook her head in amazement, “How do you find time to work on all this stuff?”

Thea called to Oliver in the kitchen, “Does your fiancé ever sleep?”

He walked over to them carrying a tray of snacks, answering, “Occasionally.”

Felicity nudged Thea’s knee with her own, “When Oliver’s term is over, you should come work with me.”

Thea looked skeptical, “I’m not exactly a tech genius…”

“So? You have business savvy and PR skills that would be a huge asset. And I would love to get to work together.”

Oliver squeezed her shoulder teasingly, “Are you trying to poach my chief of staff?”
She tilted her head back to look up at him, “I said after she’s done working with you.” Turning her attention back to Thea, she continued, “No pressure, but know there’s definitely an office on the executive floor that could have your name on it.”

“Thank you. It would be fun to work together, so I will certainly keep that in mind. Although I might not be out of a job at City Hall for a few more years yet. If Oliver’s approval ratings stay consistent, re-election will be in the bag next year.”

“You going to run for re-election?” Tommy asked.

Oliver set down his tray and sat down beside her, slinging an arm across her shoulder and answering his friend, “I think so. And then after that Felicity said she’ll be my sugar mama so I can just be a stay at home dad, right babe?”

Allie looked up from the game of Sorry she and Will were playing on the floor. “What’s a sugar mama?”

Felicity chastised Oliver with a smack to the chest, “Nothing, Oliver is just being silly.” To her friends, she added, “What we have talked about is starting a foundation through the company that Oliver could oversee when he’s done serving his second term, and then he would have the flexibility to primarily work from home.”

“And be the soccer mom he was destined to be,” Thea joked.

“We’re a softball/baseball family actually,” Oliver corrected, earning him an amused eye roll from both his fiance and sister.

Felicity came into work on the day of her press conference to find several flower arrangements in her office. Looking at the cards, she saw that they were from Oliver, her mom, Walter and Moira, Ray, and Lena.

“Felicity, your 8am is here,” her assistant peeked her head into her office to announce.

_Speaking of..._

She stood up from her desk to greet her friend, “Send them in.”

Lena walked in accompanied by another woman who Felicity presumed was a CatCo reporter. The magazine was doing a feature on her for their February issue and Lena had requested an exclusive interview before the press conference.

The two friends exchanged a hug before Lena introduced her companion.

“This is Kara Danvers.”

Ah, so it wasn't just a reporter. It was _the_ reporter.

Felicity shook her hand, “It’s nice to finally meet you Kara. Lena speaks very highly of you.”

“Oh.” Kara glanced over at Lena before fiddling with her glasses, a faint blush rising in her cheeks. “I didn’t realize she—you—it’s umm... it’s nice to meet you too. My mom was really excited when I told her I was going to be interviewing you.”

Felicity’s eyes widened as she made a mental connection, “Wait, is your mom Eliza Danvers?” Kara nodded and she continued, “I went to her keynote talk at a conference three years ago. She’s...
amazing. I had no idea she even knew who I was.”

“Oh yeah, she’s really interested in hearing about the work you’ve been doing here with neural implants. She would love to talk to you about it. Remind me to give you her number when we’re finished…”

Felicity felt like an excited fangirl as she nodded enthusiastically before gesturing for them to take a seat on her couches.

Her assistant brought in coffee, and Kara set her phone on the table to record, beginning her interview with, “So let’s start with the timeline of your career so far, how did you end up where you are now?”

“After graduating from MIT at 19 with my masters in computer sciences and cyber security, I got my start in this very building--when it was Queen Consolidated--in the IT department. It wasn’t exactly my dream job, but I had been through a lot in college, so a part of me liked how mundane it was. Plus, I was a twenty-year-old single mother, so I was drawn to the fact that the company offered free childcare just a few floors down from where I would be working. I liked being able to go see my daughter during my lunch break.”

“Do you still offer childcare here?” Kara asked.

“Yes,” she nodded. “That’s something that’s so personally important to me—that the company retains its reputation for being a good place for working moms to be employed—and dads too. Which is why we offer some of the best maternity and paternity leave out of the companies in our sector, as well as the amazing free daycare on the premises. I don’t want people who work here, who are parents, to feel like they have to completely disconnect from that role while they’re here in order to be a good employee. I know how much of an inspiration our children can be.”

She gestured to the picture placed on the table next to the chair she was seated in of her and Allie with matching freckled faces that Oliver had taken when they were at the lake over the summer. “My biggest motivation when I come to work is knowing that I’m one of my daughter’s heroes, and wanting to be worthy of that. Being her mom has taught me so much that business school never could. I strive to be the kind of leader who makes everyone working in this building feel valued and cared for as a person. It establishes the rapport necessary for me to push my teams to not be satisfied with anything less than the best work being accomplished.”

“I love that.” Kara jotted a few things down in her notebook, “And if the massive success of the company since your succession to CEO is any indication, that strategy is working. You seem like a really wonderful person to work for.”

“Thank you.”

“Umm… you’re not allowed to leave me, so don’t get any ideas,” Lena interjected with a teasing nudge to her shoulder, and Kara flashed her a smile. Felicity set a mental reminder to ask Lena for a relationship status update as her friend continued with, “Don’t let her fool you. She can be a real, Cat-Grant-style, hardcore boss lady sometimes.”

Felicity shrugged, “I’m a petite blonde woman too, so sometimes that’s necessary with certain people if I’m to be taken seriously. Particularly old men who drop in once a month for a board meeting and think they know more about how to run my company than I do.” Kara nodded in understanding and she hastily added, “Maybe don’t include that in the article. The board is just now finally starting to warm up to me.”
Kara laughed, “Consider it off the record. Okay so… let’s back up a little bit with your story. How did you end up going from an employee in the IT department to the Vice President when the Palmer Tech buyout happened?”

“Well…” She glanced over at Lena, who had an amused expression on her face. Lena was one of the people she had often called to vent about gossip she had overheard about which of her skills she used to encourage Ray to promote her. “As you can imagine, there were a lot of theories going around at the time that were far more scandalous than the truth. When Dr. Palmer bought the company, Walter Steele at National Starling Bank handled some of the financial details and he mentioned my name to him. I worked on a few special requests for Mr. Steele when he was still CFO at Queen Consolidated, so he knew that I could offer more to the company than what I was doing in the IT department. Ray did some research on me and next thing I knew he was in my cubicle offering me an executive position.” She took a sip of her coffee and continued, “I said no.”

Kara’s brow furrowed, “You said no?”

She shrugged, “I felt safe in the IT department. I was bored and unfulfilled and honestly, more competent than my supervisor, but I was able to provide for myself and my daughter and that was my only real priority then.”

She could still remember the fear that had once gripped her. Fear that if she stepped out of her hiding place, where hardly anyone even took notice of her, her past life—her exploits as GhostFoxGoddess—would catch up to her and she would end up in jail with Cooper, their daughter left without a parent in her life. It was an irrational fear—she had covered all the tracks from her old life following her break from her ex—but nevertheless it was one that had taken time to shake.

“But Ray was persistent,” she continued. “And eventually I couldn’t ignore the part of me that wanted to be so much more than an IT girl. I accepted his offer and we worked together for about two years, until he took a leave of absence and the role of CEO was handed over to me.”

“And now…”

“Ray has decided to move on permanently. He found a position at a university where he’ll be able to share his passions and work on his personal research, so he very generously gifted the company to me. It’s a whole other level of responsibility to be the CEO and owner. And lot of pressure to carry on the legacy of the people who have had a hand in building this company—the Queen family, Ray—but I’m grateful to have been entrusted with the opportunity, and excited for what the future holds.”

“What advice would you give yourself when you were starting out, knowing everything that you know now?”

She tilted her head thoughtfully, conjuring up the image of herself at twenty, walking through the doors of Queen Consolidated with Allie in her arms and a million defenses built up around herself. What did she want to tell that girl?

“I guess... don’t be afraid to go after what you really want. And don’t be afraid to let people support you while you go after it. It’s not a sign of weakness. There’s going to be people you can trust to be there for you when you need them.”

It was a lesson she was still learning, but she had certainly come a long way.

They wrapped up the interview with a few filler questions and then Kara excused herself to take a call related to another article she was working on.
“I have to show you something…” Lena pulled out her phone and swiped to a picture. “My bridesmaid dress came back from alterations.”

Felicity took her phone to see and gasped. “Oh. Gorgeous. I’m so glad we went with this color, it looks amazing on all four of you… and it will look even better in the snow that we’re definitely going to have for the pictures,” she added optimistically, crossing her fingers.

She didn’t have many requests for her wedding, except for the one thing her mom couldn’t guarantee: a fresh snowfall the night before. On the cover of the December issue of one of the bridal magazines that landed in their mailbox monthly, there had been a breathtaking picture of a couple posed with a snowy backdrop. She had gotten her heart set on recreating it in the beautiful scenery surrounding the Queen’s friend Grace’s winery where the wedding was going to be held.

She still remembered the first snowfall she experienced at MIT her freshman year. It had snowed a few times in Vegas growing up, but it was nothing compared to a Massachusetts snow. Spinning around in the flurry of white she had allowed herself a moment to not be the cynical, angry girl she had hardened herself into. It was the moment that she had been fully struck with the realization that she had made it out of Vegas, and what that meant for her future. That her life wasn’t on a one way track to being a cocktail waitress.

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Snow was a sign of new beginnings for her.

Lena shook her head, “You’re lucky I love you, because we’re going to freeze taking pictures outside.”

Her sleeveless dress wearing bridesmaids were a little less than enthusiastic about the idea of pictures in the snow…but they were coming around to it.

Felicity dropped her voice and tilted her head inconspicuously at Kara who was still talking on the phone. “So how is operation, ‘make Kara your plus-one’ going?”

Lena blushed, a rare sight, and Felicity raised her eyebrows in prompting.

“IT’s… going.”

“So you haven’t asked her yet.”

“I didn’t say that.” Felicity narrowed her eyes and Lena sighed, “I haven’t asked her yet.”

“Lena! You have had months. Not to be a bridezilla, but there are seating charts to be finalized, so I’m going to need you to get on this.”

Maybe she was being a little too pushy with her friend, but if she hadn’t had Iris to encourage her to take a chance with Oliver, she might still be hiding from him in grocery stores instead of marrying him in a few weeks. She felt obliged to pass on the tough love.

Lena looked down at her clasped hands, “She is my best friend, so I guess I could just ask her to come with me… platonically.”

Felicity resisted the urge to facepalm. “Oh honey there is nothing platonic about the flirty-flirt that you two have going on and it’s almost cute that you can’t—“

“Felicity?” Her assistant stepped into the office. “It’s time for you to head down to the lobby…”

“Yes, thank you. I’ll meet you at the elevators.” Turning back to Lena, she finished her statement,
“It’s almost cute that you can’t see how totally into you she is. One of you needs to woman up here and make the first move.”

The lobby of Queen Industries was bustling with people when Oliver arrived. At the sight of the new signage with the “Q” logo over the reception desk he felt like he had stepped back in time to when his father would bring him to work and tell him how it would be his responsibility one day to take his place. Even though he had always resented having his whole future planned out with little input from him, he had still carried for a while the weight of how disappointed his father would’ve been if he had been alive to see them sell the company that was supposed to be their family’s legacy.

Now he just felt relief that he had gotten to choose his own path, instead of being handed a title he didn’t want and had done nothing to earn, and that Felicity was in a role she had worked hard for and more than deserved. It wasn’t what his dad had envisioned but, Felicity was right, it was time for them to start thinking about the legacy that they wanted for their family instead of staying fixated on the past.

John helped him form a buffer between the kids and clamoring reporters who were trying to get his attention as they found their way to where his mother and Walter were already seated behind the swarm of press.

“Mom, Walter,” he greeted them, giving his mom a hug. “Thank you for coming. I know it means a lot to Felicity to have your support today.”

Walter smiled, “Of course, we’re very proud of her.”

Taking a seat he scanned the room, seeking out his fiancé, and found her off to the side of the platform that had been set up for the occasion, getting her appearance fussed over by her mother. He caught her eye and offered her an encouraging smile that she returned with an adorable scrunch of her nose before escaping her mother so she could step up to the podium to address the crowd.

“Thank you all for coming today.” The chatter died down as people turned their attention to her. “Wow, umm—” He watched as she took a deep breath and straightened her shoulders confidently. “I must admit, when I first stepped through the doors of this building a little over eight years ago, no part of me imagined that I would one day be standing here. So I’m incredibly thankful for the people who believed that I could be, and I hope that I am able to make them proud as I take this company into a new era. It is with great excitement that I am able to unveil what my team has been working tirelessly on for the past few months.”

Oliver beamed with pride as he listened attentively to her talk about the future of the company. He had already heard the entire presentation when she practiced for him the night before but he didn’t mind sitting through it again. Her passion was infectious and the way she came alive when she spoke about her work was one of his favorite things about her.

“It’s my dream to make Queen Industries a beacon of hope, not just for Star City, but for people all over the world. And our new MedTech division—the technology that we’re developing that can give people hope for a better prognosis—is just the beginning,” she concluded half an hour later. When the applause faded, she added, “I’ll now be opening up the floor for questions…”

“She’s quite remarkable,” the man sitting next to him commented quietly as Felicity answered a journalist’s question about the neural implant chips.

His smile widened, “You have no idea.”
“I was hoping for a chance to speak with her afterwards. I’ve been following her work with interest for years now.”

“I can make an introduction.” Oliver stole a glance at Felicity before returning his attention to the man and adding proudly, “She’s my fiancé.”

At that addendum the man sized him up appraisingly, “So I’ve heard.”

Something about his scrutinizing look made Oliver shift uncomfortably in his seat and he asked, “Who did you say you were again?”

Before he got an answer, his attention was drawn by Allie tugging on his sleeve from his other side. She whispered, “Can we get ice cream after this?”

“Sounds like a good idea to me.”

A few minutes later Felicity wrapped up her answer to the last question she was going to take and thanked everyone again for coming. After stepping down from the platform, she navigated her way back to them where she was given hugs and showered with praise from everyone.

Oliver leaned in for a quick kiss, “Amazing job babe. I’m so proud of you.”

She beamed up at him, “Thank you.”

Out of the corner of his eye he noticed the man he had been sitting with during the presentation and remembered that he had requested an introduction.

“Oh and hey, before you get swamped by press again, there’s someone here who wants to meet you…” He gestured for the man to come over.


This man wasn’t a stranger to her.

Oh my g--

“Dad?”

Chapter End Notes

sorry for the cliffhanger!! but this launches one of the storylines i was most excited to do for this fic because i felt like it got glossed over on the show and there will definitely be an update next week so you don't have to wait too long to see what happens :D
20 years ago...

“Felicity…?”

She froze as she heard her father approaching the door of her bedroom. In a second she would be caught red handed.

She didn’t think he was supposed to be home yet from his business trip. Or super secret spy mission. She wasn’t exactly sure what he did when he went away for work, but he always brought her back presents and took her out for ice cream when he got home.

She wondered if he would still take her out for a scoop of mint chip when he discovered what she’d been up to while he was gone.

The door opened and she blinked up at him innocently, even as she sat at her desk that was covered in parts she had “borrowed” from him, half reassembled into a new computer. It had been her intention to put his back together before he got home but...

“Hi Dad.”

The corner of his mouth turned up into an amused smile. “Hi Felicity.”

“How was your trip?”

A shadow crossed over his face for the briefest of moments before his smile returned, “I see you kept yourself busy while I was gone.”

She didn’t notice that he didn’t answer her question, too caught up in needing to defend herself, “I--uhh…”

He walked over to examine her handiwork in the meticulous way of his, and she held her breath, waiting for him to say something.

There was awe in his voice when he asked, “You did this all on your own?” He shook his head and quickly answered his own question in a mutter, “Of course you did. It’s not as though your mother has suddenly developed an affinity for circuit boards.”

“I’m sorry.”
He crouched down to meet her eye level. “Do you think just any seven year old could build this?”

She shrugged dismissively.

“Don’t apologize. Never apologize for your brilliance. You’re going to do great things with that beautiful brain of yours.”

She beamed at his praise.

“But as for dissembling my computer…” He kissed her forehead. “Apology accepted. You want to go get some ice cream?”

Felicity was trying to be cold and detached. As her father sat across from her in her office and showered her with praise over her presentation she fought not to revert back to the little girl she had been before he abandoned her.

She was failing.

Get a grip on yourself.

“Why are you here?” she asked abruptly, cutting him off. “Why now, after all this time, did you finally decide to remember you had a daughter? Why did you even know I was holding a press conference today?”

“It was public knowledge…”

She exhaled in exasperation, “That’s not what I meant.”

He took a deep breath, clasping and unclasping his hands. “Felicity, there are many things that I have done in my life that I cannot be proud of. But there hasn’t been one moment that I was not proud to be your father. I always knew you were going to do great things, but my dear, you have far exceeded my hopes for you.”

She closed her eyes. “I don’t--I don’t understand.”

“Ever since your mother took off with you, I’ve kept tabs on what you were up to. Your success at the National Information Technology Competition. That beauty of an algorithm you wrote while you were at MIT. And now your foray into the business world--”

Her eyes flashed open. “Whoa, whoa wait. Back it up.” There were multiple things in that sentence that she had questions about, but the most pressing one was, “What did you mean by saying that mom ‘took off with me’? You were the one who left us…”

Right?

He looked off towards the window, his face clouded with remembrance. “I came back, like I always did. I remember, I had gotten you a set of those Nancy Drew books that you liked to read.” Turning back to her, he continued, “Before I left, your mother and I had gotten into a fight. She made threats. I believed they were as empty as always. For someone with a genius level IQ, it was a very foolish assumption to make. I came back to an empty house and a note warning me to stay the hell away.”

Felicity felt numb. Everything that she had believed for the past twenty years of her life was crumbling around her and her brain scrambled to make sense of what he was telling her.
“She told me you abandoned us.”

“She told me you abandoned us.”

“Good. It was better for you to resent me instead of her. Your mother was right, I wasn’t the father you deserved. I had been living a double life, it made your life dangerous as long as I was a part of it and she was stronger than I was to do what was necessary to protect you.” He smiled sadly at her, his shoulders crumpled, “I missed you terribly. There were so many times over the years where I almost reached out to you. I came to your college graduation. I was going to talk to you… but then I saw that you were pregnant and it was a jolt of reality. It reminded me why I had to stay away. I couldn’t put my grandchild at risk too.”

She didn’t know if she could believe anything that he was saying.

She also didn’t know what he could possibly gain by lying to her now.

“So why now? You think we’re just going to have some happy father daughter reunion?” Her eyes narrowed, “Are you putting my family in danger by being here?”

He shook his head, “No. I’ve gotten out of that life. I’ve done my time with the people I had gotten involved with, paid my debts. I’m here now because I’m free to make the choice I should’ve made twenty years ago. I know I don’t deserve your forgiveness for the things I’ve done, but I wanted to at least make sure you knew how proud I was of the woman you’ve become.”

She crossed her arms over her chest, “No thanks to you.”

He tipped his head in acknowledgement before standing up from the chair. “I understand that this is a lot to process. I’m staying in town for the next week. If I don’t hear from you I will assume that you would prefer that we continue on as we have been.” He slipped a card out of his jacket pocket and set it on her desk, “But Felicity, I hope that is not the case.”

After he departed, she reached out and took the card. It was her intention to drop it straight into the trash can, but instead she tucked it into her desk drawer.

A lot to process.

*Understatement of the century, Dad.*

Felicity drove home from her office silently, the wheels in her head spinning rapidly and tears running down her face. She still remembered vividly the day her mother told her that her father was never coming back, that he had abandoned them. Still remembered the hurt and confusion she had felt. She had tried so hard to understand what she did wrong, why he didn’t want to be her dad anymore.

“There has not been one moment that I was not proud to be your father.”

She choked on a sob. It was everything she had needed to hear for years, but now the words just felt like a bruise.

When she got home, Oliver’s car was gone. He had offered to take Allie and Will out for ice cream while she spoke with her dad and she was relieved that they were still out. She needed to confront her mom and she didn’t want them around if things got ugly.

“Mom?” she called out as she stepped inside.

“Sweetheart, you were amazing—” Her mom faltered when she came into view and noticed that she
had been crying. “Honey, what’s wrong?”

“I was just talking to Dad.”

Her voice was ice and her mom paled.

“What? How--”

“I need you to tell me the truth about what happened the summer we moved to Vegas. I think I deserve it by now.”

“Felicity…”

The look on her mom’s face told her everything she needed to know.

“He was telling the truth,” she whispered bitterly. “You ripped your family apart, not him.”

Anger flashed briefly in her mom’s eyes, “He’s a criminal, honey, I had to leave him. I couldn’t put up with his bullshit any longer.” Her shoulders crumpled, “But you were so close with him. When I look at you, all I see is what he gave you. By the time you turned six I had all but given up on trying to keep up with you two. It’s like you spoke your own language that I could never hope to understand.” She swiped at her tears, smudging makeup around her eyes. “I was afraid of losing you. Afraid you would choose him over me if you thought you could. I might not have been a perfect mother, but don’t think for one second that your life would’ve been any better with him.”

“That’s not even the point! The point is that you let me believe a lie—“ Her voice cracked with emotion, “A lie that you knew was hurting me—and yet you still let me believe it, for twenty years. How could you be so selfish?” She wiped away a few tears that had fallen onto her cheeks and her voice turned cold again, “I need you to leave right now.”

Her mom startled, “What?”

“Get out of my house,” she emphasized. “You were afraid of losing me if I knew the truth? Well congratulations, you were right. You can have time to pack some things, and then I want you out.”

Tears were freely flowing down her face and she whimpered, “Forever? Where am I supposed to go? You’re my home baby girl.”

At the remorse in her mom’s voice, she faltered momentarily, but her anger was still coiled too tightly around her heart for her to feel enough pity to change her decision.

“I don’t know. I don’t know how we’re supposed to move on from this.” She pressed a hand to her forehead to try and dampen the ache that was pounding inside her head. “I just know that I need some space, and this is my house, so you need to leave.”

Her mom opened her mouth to say something more, but decided against it and ducked her head to brush past her towards her rooms.

She collapsed onto the couch and rested her head in her hands. The day had turned into more of an emotional rollercoaster than she had been prepared for and she was exhausted. Her headache grew worse and she suddenly became acutely aware of the fact that she hadn’t eaten anything since her rushed breakfast that morning. Bruce must’ve sensed her sadness because he padded over to her and attempted to lick up her tears. She scratched him behind the ears in return before nuzzling her face against his soft fur.
“Felicity?” Looking up, she saw Oliver hovering over her, concern etched in his face. “What happened? Your mom was crying and carrying out a suitcase when we were coming in…”

She glanced over at Allie and Will who were watching her curiously and waved a hand dismissively. “She umm…she got some sad news from a friend and is going to see her.” Under her breath, she added to Oliver, “Later. We’ll talk about it later.”

“We brought you home a sundae,” Allie offered cheerfully, holding out a to-go ice cream container.

“Thank you baby.” She stood up and followed her into the kitchen to retrieve a spoon where her phone buzzed with a text.

DINAH: sorry I couldn’t make it to your press conference today :( got held up at the station but I caught a snippet on the news and it looks like you killed it!! we still on for yoga this weekend?

FELICITY: thank you <3 and yes! definitely going to need yoga this weekend, LOTS to catch up on

Oliver raised his eyebrows in surprise, “So you kicked her out?”

She had just finished explaining to him everything that had gone down with her parents that evening and she bristled at the hint of judgement in his voice.

“Yes. Do you have a problem with that?”

“No. I mean, I don’t know. Don’t you think that was a little harsh? It sounds like she was just trying to—“

She scoffed and took a step back from him, “I can’t believe you’re taking her side right now. I’m your fiancé, you’re supposed to be on my side.”

“Honey, I am on your side, which is why—“

“Which is why you need to understand why I’m reacting this way! Can’t you remember how it felt when you found out your mom had let you believe a lie about your son? Why was it okay for you to be mad at her, to cut her out of your life, but it’s not okay for me to be mad at my mom?”

He reached out for her, “Felicity—“

She held up a hand and took another step back, “No. Just— just stop. I can’t do this with you right now.”

Quickly turning on her heel, she ignored his plea for her to come back and left the room. She was mad at herself for walking away, for reverting to old defense mechanisms, but she didn’t want to fight with him and let things get worse. Didn’t want him to have the chance to walk away from her first. Stalking down the hallway, she stopped at Allie’s room where she cracked open the door quietly and tiptoed inside, making her way over to the bed.

When she laid down next to her daughter, she heard a soft whisper, “Are you mad at Oliver?”

“No.”

“Then why are you in here?”
Despite the heaviness in her heart, she felt a laugh bubble up in her chest and she brushed aside some tears, “Can’t I just want to have a sleepover? Like we used to?”

“Oh okay.” Allie snuggled into her side. “Yeah that’s good. I was just worried you and Oliver were having a fight.”

The soundproofing in the bedrooms apparently was as good as she thought.

They were quiet for a few minutes and Felicity thought her daughter had fallen asleep as she stroked her hair, but then she spoke up again, “Mommy?”

“Yes.”

“Is my dad going to come back someday, like yours did?”

Felicity wasn’t entirely caught off guard by the question since Allie had heard her call Noah, ‘dad,’ at the press conference. She wasn’t surprised that the sudden reappearance of her father would prompt Allie to think about her own again, just as Oliver’s proposal had.

Rubbing her daughter’s back soothingly, she answered truthfully, “No.”

Allie sniffled, “Because he doesn’t want to see me?”

“No, sweetheart…” She took a deep breath to gather herself, “Cooper, your father, isn’t alive anymore.”

“Oh.”

Felicity could feel tears staining her pajama top and she started crying again herself. She pressed a kiss to the top of Allie’s head. “I’m sorry baby.”

“Did he die before I was born? Is that why I don’t remember him?”

She hesitated. After the way she had lashed out at her mom earlier for letting her believe a lie for years, it would be hypocritical for her to do the same thing with her own daughter.

Right?

Except that in Allie’s case, it would be more painful to have to live with the truth.

Right?

After a moment of mentally debating with herself, she decided on a half truth, a half answer.

“He never got a chance to meet you, but I know he would’ve loved you if he did.”

_How could he have not?_

She genuinely believed some part of the boy she had fallen in love with, had he had the chance to hold his daughter—to see her smile, would’ve had his heart softened by her. Maybe it still wouldn’t have been enough to change his mind about being a dad, but enough for her to feel like she hadn’t just completely lied.

Allie lifted up her head and wiped some tears with the back of her hand, “Do I look like him?”

“A little. You know this mole you have by the corner of your mouth…” She tapped it lightly with
her fingertip. “He had the same one. But mostly you look like me.”

Allie touched her mole with a thoughtful expression on her face, like she was trying to picture a dad with the same one, before asking, “Was he smart?”

“Yes, but not as smart as me.”

“Of course, no one is as smart as you.”

“True. But one day you probably will be.”

“Yeah.” Her smile faltered, “Did you love him?”

“I did.”

“Do you miss him?”

“Not anymore. Not for a long time.”

“That’s good. I think Oliver would be jealous if you did.”

Felicity laughed softly, “Oliver has no reason to be jealous.” They were quiet for a few seconds before she asked, “So... do you—do you have any other questions about Coop—your father?”

Allie thought for a moment, picking at a loose thread on her bedspread. “Ummm... no, not really.”

“You don’t?”

It was so unlike her to not have a million questions.

“I don’t know.” She sighed, “I used to just imagine that he was a prince and my other grandma was going to come tell me I was going to be the future Queen of Genovia.” Giggling, she added in her best Mia Thermopolis impersonation, “And I would say... ‘shut up, shut up, shut up!’”

Felicity smiled. No wonder she loved those movies so much.

“Well, I’m sorry to say that he definitely wasn’t a prince of any real or imaginary countries...”

“Oh that’s okay. Because Oliver’s going to be my dad now, and I think he’s even better than a prince.” Allie cuddled in closer to her and closed her eyes with a smile. “And I still get to be a Queen.”

“...maybe she won’t care about hearing all the details. Maybe what’s more important than the father who didn’t want her... is the one who does.”

Iris was right, as usual, with the assessment she had given of the situation, back when they had first learned of Cooper’s death.

And in talking about him now, Felicity realized that she hadn’t thought about him in months. Allowing herself to love again, to trust again, had brought her to the point where she finally felt free from him.

Letting her eyes fall shut, she listened to Allie’s soft snores and eventually her mind quieted enough to follow her daughter into slumber.
When Felicity woke up early the next morning, she carefully untangled herself from Allie and padded down the hall to her bedroom. Stepping inside, she saw Oliver curled up on her side of the bed and she joined him, spooning him from behind. He was tense, like he had been holding on to the stress of their fight even as he slept, but she felt him relax a little when she nuzzled her face against his shoulder blades.

“I’m not mad at you,” she whispered. “And I’m sorry about last night. I was upset and you were the closest target for me to aim my frustrations at after I kicked my mom out. I shouldn’t have walked out on you but—” She worried her bottom lip with her teeth, “I just didn’t want to fight.”

He rolled over to face her, “I’m sorry for making you think I didn’t understand why you were upset. I wanted to help you mend things with your mom, like you did when I was still on the outs with my mom, but you were right. It took me over a year before I was ready to talk to her again after finding out about Will, so I shouldn’t have made you feel guilty for needing the same space I did. Whatever support you need from me, you’ve got it.”

“Thank you.” She closed her eyes and sighed, “Our wedding is in just a little over a month. I can’t wait a year to talk to her.”

“We can always just elope.”

“If we elope, we’re taking the cake with us.”

They had gone for their cake tasting a few days ago and decided on a chocolate fudge cake that was quite possibly the best thing she had ever tasted. There was no way they were wasting it.

Oliver laughed and pulled her into his side, pressing a kiss to her hair. Tracing patterns along his chest, she was relieved that the tension between them had eased. She needed to learn that she could trust him enough to be able to have disagreements that didn’t end with someone leaving, unless she wanted to spend their entire married life feeling like she was walking on eggshells.

They were quiet for a few minutes before she spoke up again, “Allie asked about Cooper, if he was going to show up out of the blue someday like my dad did.”

He raised a curious eyebrow, “And…”

“And I told her the truth. Sort of.” She sighed. “Which I know makes me sound just like my mom, but it’s not the same situation. It’s just not. My dad was my hero—my favorite person—when I was little, that’s why it hurt so much when I lost him. But Cooper is nothing to her. She doesn’t need anything from him. I don’t have to worry about her growing up thinking that her dad doesn’t love her.” She caressed his face. “She knows you do.”

Oliver smiled and turned his head to press a kiss to her palm.

“So I don’t see a reason for me to complicate things for her by telling her all the details she didn’t ask for.” She closed her eyes and grimaced, “And if someday she gets curious and I have to tell her the truth, hopefully she’ll be more understanding than I was with my mom. I’m just trying to protect her from becoming like me.”

He stroked her cheek, “An incredibly strong, smart, successful woman?”

“Who has spent years carrying around a lot of emotional baggage and has abandonment issues and—”

“Hey,” he interrupted her softly. “You don’t have to justify your decision to me. If you think it’s best
for her not to know, then I agree with you.”

She offered him a small smile, “Thank you.”

“And I’m willing to do whatever it takes to make sure that you and Allie never feel unwanted. I may not be a genius, but I am smart enough to know that my life is better with the two of you in it. What would Will and I do without our girls?”

Her smile grew at his proclamation and she rolled on top of him to pepper his face with affectionate kisses before pulling back with a groan. “I just remembered it’s a Tuesday. We have to get up and get ready for work.”

Undeterred, his hands started finding their way under her shirt, “Call in sick.”

“And the kids have school... and I kicked out my mom who was going to pick them up because they have a half day today.”

*Probably should’ve thought through that decision a little bit more.*

“What even is the point of a half day of school? Let’s just all stay home.”

“Don’t you have a meeting with City Council today?”

Oliver’s hands stilled. “Shit. I can’t miss that.”

“No, you can’t. And I have an important conference call.”

“And the kids have a science test,” Oliver finished, accepting their fate. “They were quizzing each other while we were at the ice cream parlor last night.”

“Wow, such nerds.”

“This is coming from the three time mathletics champion.” He sighed faux dramatically, “I am the only cool person in this family.”

She dissolved into laughter and he started to tickle her, which led to kissing and well...

Twenty minutes later they managed to get themselves out of bed to start getting ready for the day.

Her emotions were still a little all over the place, and she knew she needed to talk to both her mom and her dad sooner versus later, but much like he always did, Oliver had managed to cheer her up. Being reminded that she didn’t have to deal with the situation alone felt like having a weight of bricks lifted from her chest.

Having lingered in bed a little too long, they were in a rush to pull themselves together for the day, so she was relieved that when they went downstairs they found the kids already up and ready for school.

Allie looked up from a plate of eggs and toast when they walked into the kitchen, “Good morning.”

She pointed her fork at her food, “Will made me breakfast.”

Felicity kissed the top of her head, “Well that was very nice of him.”

“I’m getting better at cracking the eggs dad. No shells,” Will announced proudly from his position at the stove.
Oliver squeezed his shoulder, “Masterchef Junior, here you come.”

“Felicity, would you like some eggs too?”

“Yes please.”

While she was waiting for her coffee to be ready, her phone buzzed.

LENA: SOS

LENA: Kara and I kissed

FELICITY: ????

FELICITY: details please

FELICITY: when?? did you talk about it??? is she coming to the wedding????

LENA: after your press conference we went out to dinner

LENA: and after a few glasses of wine I was feeling brave and romantic

LENA: so I kissed her when we got back to our hotel

FELICITY: AND?

LENA: well she’s in my bathroom right now taking a shower

FELICITY: ooooh congratulations miss luthor

LENA: oh no wait that was misleading

LENA: the shower in her room just wasn’t getting hot water or something

LENA: she got all flustered after the kiss and we haven’t made direct eye contact since

FELICITY: you’re stressing me out

FELICITY: you know that right?

LENA: now you know what it was like to be on the other end of the phone while you were behind a fruit stand hiding from your dream man

FELICITY: fair point

LENA: she agreed to come to the wedding though

LENA: before I kissed her

FELICITY: ok! no take backs! she’s going on the seating chart!

LENA: I just heard the water shut off

FELICITY: keep me posted!!!!
Her friend’s quandary was a nice distraction from her current worries.

“When is grandma going to come back from visiting her friend?” Allie asked.

Felicity looked up from her phone, her brow furrowed in confusion, before remembering her cover story from the night before, “Oh ummm… it might be a few days.” She still needed some time to process everything before she spoke to her mom or else she was probably just going to blow up on her again. To Oliver, she added, “Can you see if maybe your mom can pick them up from school?”

Oliver set down his toast and slipped his phone out of his pocket, “On it.”

Felicity wrapped up her conference call and opened up her desk drawer in search of the granola bar she was pretty sure she had stashed there. Her eyes landed on the card her dad had given her the day before and she drew a deep breath. A part of her wished he had never shown up. Another part of her was apparently still emotionally seven years old. She knew she was going to call that number. Eventually, but not yet.

Closing the drawer after failing to locate a snack, she picked up her phone to text Oliver and ask him when he was planning on taking his lunch and if he wanted to make it a date.

❤️ FIANCÉ❤️ : absolutely yes
❤️ FIANCÉ❤️ : still in meeting, but should be wrapping up soon
❤️ FIANCÉ❤️ : hopefully

Felicity stopped by the DA’s office on her way up to Oliver’s and arrived at the same time as Laurel and Thea were returning together from Jitters with coffee in hand.

“Hey Felicity, you should’ve mentioned you were stopping by,” Laurel greeted her. “We could’ve gotten you something.”

“It’s okay. Oliver and I are going out for lunch. But while I’m waiting for him to get out of his meeting, I wanted to come see if you could help me handle a legal matter before the wedding...”

Hesitance flashed across Laurel’s face, “Oh, I don’t really feel comfortable doing your prenup...”

“No. Oh no. That wasn’t what I was asking.” She bit her lip nervously. “Do you think we need a prenup?”

Having an exit strategy in place just didn’t seem like the best way to start off a marriage that she really was hoping would last a lifetime.

“No,” Thea answered for her. “I mean, let’s be honest, you’re the one with most of the money and the title to the house anyway. And I can tell you right now that Oliver isn’t leaving you until they bury him in his grave. So unless you’re planning on divorcing him and taking off with his Porsche and whatever is left of his trust fund, I don’t think there’s any point. I wouldn’t even mention the word prenup around him or he’s going to start having an internal crisis that you’re having second thoughts about the whole thing.”

There was the same edge of protectiveness in her voice that she had upon their first meeting, but Felicity’s heart lifted at the reassurance of Oliver’s commitment to her from someone who knew him better than almost anyone.
She smiled at her future sister in law, “No second thoughts.” Glancing back over at Laurel, she said, “But as for this other thing…”

A few days later, Felicity was doing some online shopping for honeymoon swimsuits when she heard the doorbell ring. Opening the door, she discovered that her unexpected visitors were Sara and Nyssa.

“How?…?”

“Put on some gym clothes,” Nyssa directed abruptly.

“Wha--”

“Oliver mentioned that you could probably benefit from hitting something,” Sara offered up as more of an explanation. When Felicity frowned, she added hastily, ‘Don’t worry, he didn’t give us any specifics, and you don’t have to tell us what’s going on. We’re just going to help you get some frustration out.”

Felicity was a little apprehensive, but she took a step back to let them into the house while she went to go get changed. Allie was at the kitchen counter working on homework and when she heard the familiar voices, she rushed into the living room excitedly.

“Sara! Nyssa!” she greeted them with attack hugs.

Felicity slipped upstairs and changed out of the dress she had worn to work and into a pair of leggings and a tank top. Zipping up a hoodie on top, and grabbing her sneakers, she went back downstairs.

[See Felicity’s outfit here]

“Where are you guys going? Can I come with you?” Allie was asking.

“We’re taking your mom to the gym. We’ll take you to CrossFit Kids on Saturday, okay?” Sara promised.

“Actually, we have to take her with us. Oliver is out with Will because he’s getting diagnostics run on his chip tonight, and I kicked my--” Catching herself, she said, “My mom isn’t here.” She wasn’t about to go into all of that. To Allie, she said, “Run upstairs and get changed quick.”

Allie fist pumped triumphantly and scurried upstairs to change out of her school uniform.

“I hope that’s okay?” she asked them.

Sara tipped her head in understanding, “Of course.”

When Allie returned in her gym clothes, the four of them piled into Sara’s car to head into the city.

Forty-five minutes after arriving at the gym, she was dripping in sweat and breathing heavily, but admittedly feeling better. Nyssa had set her up with a punching bag and given her a few pointers before letting her have at it.

“My dad showed up on Monday after being absent from my life for twenty years and I found out my mom had basically been lying to me for that entire time.” She took a deep breath. “That’s what happened.”
She didn’t know why she was telling her this--not that she didn’t like Nyssa, she just wasn’t someone she ever pictured herself having a heart-to-heart with--but it felt like the necessary final punch was to vocalize the source of her frustration.

Nyssa tipped her head in acknowledgement, “I see.” Crossing her arms over her chest, she added, “My dad was a terrible person--cruel, very controlling. I wish he would’ve left me.”

Felicity wiped sweat from her brow and sighed, “My dad might not have been morally upstanding, but he was good to me. When he was still in my life, I never thought he was a bad person. It wasn’t until I was older and found out more about him that I realized how much I had been shielded from.” She glanced over at where Sara was holding a giggling Allie up into a handstand before throwing another punch at the bag. “Like I get why my mom did what she did, I really do, I just wish she would have been truthful with me.”


When they got home, she thanked Sara and Nyssa for getting her out of the house and helping her clear her head.

Sara smiled at her in the rearview mirror, “Anytime. Allie, we’ll see you on Saturday morning…”

Inside, they found that Oliver and Will had returned from their meeting with Curtis and were in the living room watching ESPN.

Her fiance hopped up from the couch to greet her and she placed a hand on his chest to keep him at a distance, “I’m disgustingly sweaty.”

“You know I don’t care.” Removing her hand, he intertwined their fingers and used his other hand on her waist to pull her in close for a kiss. When he pulled back, his brow furrowed, “I hope I didn’t overstep by talking to Sara, I just--”

She cut him off with another chaste kiss, “I know. It’s okay. It was very therapeutic, so thank you for looking out for me.”

“Oliver!” Allie called for his attention. “Sara was helping me with my handstand, do you want to see?”

“Of course I do.”

He released her and she patted his arm, “I’m going to go hop in the shower while you watch the circus…”

Oliver came downstairs after reading a chapter of *The Order of the Phoenix* to Will and Allie and bidding them goodnight to find Felicity still sitting at the kitchen counter staring at her phone as she had been half an hour ago when she asked him to keep the kids occupied.

She glanced up at his approach and offered him a sheepish smile, “This is pathetic, I know.”

Walking up behind her, he smoothed his hands over her shoulders and pressed a kiss to the top of her head. “It’s not pathetic. You don’t have to call either of them tonight if you’re not ready. This all just blew up on you a few days ago.”

She sighed, “I know. It’s just, I don’t want my family drama casting a shadow over our wedding.”
He took a step back and swiveled her stool around so she was facing him. Resting his hands on her shoulders, he reassured her, “Nothing could possibly ruin how happy I’m going to be on our wedding day as long as you’re standing across from me, but if this is going to make things less than perfect for you, we could always postpone until you’re ready to—“

“No,” she cut him off emphatically. “We’re not postponing. Absolutely not. My parents have ruined all sorts of things for me, they’re not going to get in the way of us moving forward as planned.” Taking off her glasses, she pressed her fingers to her temples the way she often did when she had a headache. “Yes, I am a tangled mess of confusing emotions right now, but one thing I’m not uncertain about is how ready I am to be your wife.”

The corners of his mouth turned up into a smile, “Okay.”

Her chest rose and fell in a deep breath and then she reached behind her for her phone. Once she had dialed a number, she took a hold of his hand to keep him at her side. As if he had any intention of going anywhere.

“Dad?”

He brushed his thumb across her knuckles soothingly as she spoke to him.

“You said you were in town this whole week?” She nodded at something he said in response. “So… I don’t know how to do a normal father, daughter relationship with us. I don’t know if that’s possible, or if I even want that, after so many years of not having you in my life. But umm--but if everything you said to me yesterday is true, and you want a chance to prove to me that you’ve really changed, then…” She paused for a second to glance up at him and squeezed his hand before continuing to her dad, “Then I want you to meet my family.”

After setting a time for dinner that Saturday, she wrapped up the call and let out a long exhale. “I hope that’s okay, roping you into this? I just can’t meet with him one on one again, it’s too overwhelming. And also I was kind of hoping you would cook…”

He pressed a kiss to her forehead, “Of course it’s okay.”

She had gone to brunch to act as a buffer between him and his mother not even a full month into their relationship, he more than owed her the same support now that they were a few weeks from being husband and wife.

“Thank you.” She sighed and swiped open her phone again, “Time for mom now.”

“You sure?”

“Yeah. She shouldn’t have lied to me about what really happened. Especially when I got older, I deserved a chance to make my own decisions about having a relationship with my dad. I can’t pretend that I’m not mad at her, but I also understand that she did the best she could with a crappy situation. I was thinking earlier about what it would have been like if Cooper and I had gotten married and tried to raise Allie together, but he still insisted on doing stuff that put a target on his back. I would’ve eventually had to make the exact same choice as my mom did.” Her eyebrow lifted in amusement and she asked, “What’s that look for?”

“Huh?”

“The look of disgust on your face.”

His expression became sheepish, “I don’t like thinking about you being married to him.”
She patted his chest, “So don’t.” He watched as she tapped her mom’s contact info and waited for her to pick up. “Mom? Wait, wait, stop. You can say whatever you want to say when you’re home.” She nodded, “Yes, I want you to come home…”

“So you’re having your dad over for dinner tonight?” Dinah whispered, the two of them in downward dog at the back of their yoga class on Saturday morning.

“Yeah.”

They followed the teacher’s cues to flow to Warrior 2 before continuing, “Are you nervous for that or…?”

She blew out a deep breath, “I don’t know how I’m supposed to feel. I just--”

They got shushed by the lady in front of them and fell quiet, picking up their conversation after Savasana.

“I was finally feeling like my past didn’t have a hold on me anymore, but now that he’s shown up it’s been like scraping over old wounds that never really healed properly.” She crouched to roll up her mat, “Even if I decide I never want to see him again, I think I need this opportunity for actual closure.”

“What does your mom think?”

She shrugged, “She thinks people don’t change no matter how much we want them to and that I shouldn’t get my hopes up, but she’s leaving it up to me to decide what I want to do, so that’s progress.”

Felicity heard the doorbell ring and started to make her way to the foyer to greet her dad.

“Hi! Welcome to our house. I’m Allison, but everyone calls me Allie.”

She slowed her steps. Her daughter had beat her to the door.

“Nice to meet you Allie.”

“Do you like tacos? Oliver and Will made tacos. Do you know who Oliver and Will are? Did mom tell you about us?”

She stepped into the foyer, “Hi Dad.”

He looked to her, “Hi sweetheart.”

Unsure of what to say, she echoed Allie’s question, “So… do you like tacos?”

Amusement flashed across his face. “I do.”

Allie led the way to the dining room and her dad whispered to her, “She looks exactly like you did at that age. It was a little startling when she opened the door.”

“She’s eight and a half. You didn’t know me at that age,” she retorted bitterly before shaking her head. “Sorry. I promised myself I would give you a fair chance tonight.”

William was setting the table and Oliver was arranging taco fillings on the island counter between the
kitchen and dining room when they walked in.

“Oliver, Will, this is my father, Noah.”

Will looked up from his task, “Hi Mr…."

His eyes darted to hers for help and she realized she probably didn’t adequately prepare the poor kid for this dinner, because she herself wasn’t sure what to expect of it. At least he was used to fathers who randomly showed up after years of absence. Add it to the list of things they could bond over.

“Kuttler, Noah Kuttler,” her father introduced himself.

Oliver stepped out of the kitchen and wrapped a protective arm around her waist before extending a hand, “I’m Oliver.”

“Right.” Noah took his hand. “The fiancé. When is the wedding?”

“All February sixteenth!” Allie answered enthusiastically. “Are you coming? You have to walk mom down the aisle, right?”

Her father looked at her with uncertainty painted on his face and she jumped in to answer, “We’ll talk about the wedding later.”

As in, not tonight, later.

She was definitely not at the point yet where she could make a decision about if and how she wanted her long lost father involved in her wedding.

Oliver chimed in to help, “We should eat now, before the food gets cold.”

After assembling their tacos, they gathered around the table and she sat quietly while her dad asked questions of Allie and Will about school and their hobbies. When Allie mentioned the computer she had built, he glanced over at her with a reminiscing smile that she couldn’t help but return.

He proceeded to tell them the story of when she had stolen parts of his computer to build her own, before recalling a slew of memories from her childhood with a fondness that made her chest hurt. She wished she could rewrite all the years in between, the years he didn’t have memories for because he wasn’t there. She wished he could’ve just been her father and not the alter-ego that took him away from her. Wished it was normal to have him at the dinner table instead of foreign and uncomfortable. She realized it was probably easier for him to talk to Allie then her because Allie was a lot like the Felicity he knew how to be a dad to.

Oliver held her hand under the table in silent support.

Once their meal was finished, she dipped her head to his to whisper, “Can you give me a minute to talk to my dad?”

He nodded. “Will, Allie, you want to help me with dish duty?”

The kids hopped up and helped clear everyone’s plates before retreating into the kitchen with Oliver, leaving her alone at the table with her dad.

“Thank you for inviting me over tonight.”

Her reply was stilted, “You’re welcome.” She drummed her fingers on the table. “I have to ask, why did you choose the life you did? Why did you get involved with cyber crime when you could’ve
used your talent for a million other things?"

*Things that wouldn’t have kept you from being my dad.*

“Why did you?”

She bit her lip at him turning the question back on her.

“I told you, I’ve been keeping tabs on you for your entire life, my *GhostFoxGoddess*. You and I really aren’t all that different.”

She tipped her chin up definitely, “That was different… that was…” She realized she was about to repeat some line Cooper had fed her about it being heroic and she faltered. “I-- I’m long done with that.”

“And I told you I’m done too. Doesn’t change what we did.”

“Yeah, but I chose my daughter before it was too late. So actually, we are nothing alike.”

He sighed, “I *am* sorry Felicity. I really am. I’m not claiming innocence for the ways that I failed you. But I promise, I’m not here to hurt you again.”

She was about to say something in response when her mother walked in, returning from a dinner out with friends.

“Oh,” she startled, taking a step back at the sight of them. “I thought you would be gone by now.”

“Sorry to disappoint,” her father clipped. Pushing his chair away from the table to stand, he added, “I’m on my way out.”

When he started to walk away, Felicity stood up as well. “Wait. I’ll umm… I’ll see you out.”

In the foyer, she shuffled her feet awkwardly while he slipped on his coat.

“Oh,” she startled, taking a step back at the sight of them. “I thought you would be gone by now.”

“Sorry to disappoint,” her father clipped. Pushing his chair away from the table to stand, he added, “I’m on my way out.”

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In the foyer, she shuffled her feet awkwardly while he slipped on his coat.

“The number I gave you… If you need me, you know how to reach me.”

Offering him the barest of smiles, she replied, “Okay.”

She opened the door for him and he added on his way out, “You have a wonderful family Felicity. Thank you for letting me meet them.”

After seeing her dad out, she found her mom in her office, flipping absentmindedly through a wedding binder.

Sitting down on her couch, she remarked, “I know you think that I’m just like dad, and that you didn’t give me anything, but that’s not true at all. My strength, my resilience, I got that from you. You worked really hard to make the most of a situation you never expected to be in, and I was never grateful enough for everything you did for me.” She looked down at her hands, “I’m sorry for accusing you of ripping our family apart. That wasn’t fair.”

Her mother came over to sit next to her and took her hand in her own, “I’m sorry for letting you think that his absence from your life meant that he didn’t love you. For all of his faults, I can’t remember seeing him happier than when he was spending time with you. I didn’t want you to have to grow up without a father. I tried to give him second chance after second chance for your sake, but-..”
“But the most important thing was to make sure that I was safe,” she finished for her.

With a squeeze of her hand, her mom whispered, “Yeah.”

“But I’m not a little girl anymore, and I can protect myself now.” She released a long exhale, “I think I’m going to invite him to the wedding.”

She wasn’t sure at what point during the evening she had decided that was what she wanted, but there had been so many big moments in her life that he hadn’t been there for. The part of her that was still the girl who wished she could’ve shown him her science fair project or her acceptance letter to MIT, wanted him there.

“It’s your day, I want it to be everything you want it to be, even if that means I have to play nice with my ex-husband,” her mom conceded. “Don’t let me sleep with him.”

Felicity’s eyebrows skyrocketed, “What? Why would you--”

She shrugged sheepishly, “As much as I hate to admit it, your father is very good--”

Felicity clapped a hand over her mom’s mouth, “Don’t finish that sentence. I swear, if I have to hear that you and dad had hate sex on my wedding night, I will never speak to either of you again. That’s a promise and a threat.” Cringing, she stood up and shook her head, “Blegh.”
“There’s our bride!” Iris greeted Felicity when she and Dinah arrived at the airport to meet Iris and Caitlin. Her friend gave her a hug before enthusiastically draping her with a sash that bore the title “Bride to Be” and positioning a sparkly pink tiara on her head.

Her bridal party was meeting to fly to Tucson for her bachelorette party, where they were spending the weekend at a spa called Miraval. One of her mom’s clients had recommended the place and, after a quick skim of the website, she was sold. Massages, facials, pedicures, aerial yoga classes and more awaited them and she looked forward to having some time to relax after the stress of the past few weeks. Between taking over ownership of the company, dealing with her dad’s reappearance and the subsequent fallout with her mom, and then taking care of Oliver and Allie while they came down with a bout of strep throat (Will was fortunate enough to be at his mom’s during that week), she was running on fumes. This weekend was what she needed to tide her over until her two weeks in Aruba with her husband.

_Husband._

One week and a few days until she would be a wife, with a husband. It was a concept she was still wrapping her brain around.

Felicity turned to Caitlin and gave her a hug as well, or at least as much of a hug as she could manage with her friend’s very pregnant figure. “It’s so good to see you. How are you feeling?”

“Like I might give birth any second now.” Caitlin patted her belly. “But don’t worry, I’ve already told her she’s not allowed to crash your bachelorette party.”

Felicity laughed, “It would certainly make for a memorable occasion if she did.”

Caitlin shook her head, “For all of our sakes, let’s hope she holds out until her due date, after the wedding.”

They headed for the hanger and Iris asked, “What’s Oliver doing this weekend?”

“He and Will, and his groomsmen slash groomswomen are on a flight right now to Chicago. Apparently one of Tommy’s friends from med school’s family has a super nice executive suite at the United Center that they were invited to use for the game tomorrow night.” Felicity shrugged, “I told Thea and Sara they were welcome to join us if they would rather get pedicures, but they were down for hockey. Plus, Oliver put together a whole list of restaurants in the city that he wants to try, so I think the food might have also been a big pull for them. They have the Queen Industries jet, which is why we’re taking Lena’s.”
Dinah huffed in amusement, “She says casually, as if it’s totally normal that we have more than one private jet at our disposal.”

“I don’t know about you, but obviously I’m only friends with them for their money,” Iris joked and Felicity rolled her eyes as she continued, “Otherwise, I would have to sell an organ on the black market to spend a weekend at this place.”

Being able to treat the people who meant the world to her to extravagant things was her favorite perk of being a billionaire. Her bachelorette weekend was about her of course, but it was also about showing her love and appreciation for her friends. She honestly wasn’t sure she’d even be getting married if they hadn’t all helped her to see how deserving of love she was.

“Keep all your organs inside of you please.”

They turned at the sound of Lena’s voice and greeted her with hugs when she reached them.

“They need about twenty minutes to top off the fuel and then we’ll be good to go,” she announced.

On the jet, Caitin picked up a copy of CatCo magazine that was sitting out, “Hey, who’s this pretty lady?”

“Oh just the cover star of our highest selling issue since I bought the company,” Lena answered. “You might’ve heard of her, Felicity Smoak? Queen of Tech?”

Felicity shook her head in amusement, a faint blush on her cheeks from their flattery, “Is it really your top selling issue?”

“Why wouldn’t it be?” Iris held up another copy. “Who wouldn’t want to buy a magazine with this beautiful face on the cover?”

Lena had sent her a copy when it first came to press and her mom had immediately bought up a few extra copies so she could have the cover and article framed for her office. Seeing how proud her mom was meant a lot, because growing up she never felt like her achievements were noticed.

In addition to the professional photograph on the cover and the ones accompanying the article, they had also gotten some personal pictures from her—“since how you balance your work with your family is such a big part of your story,” including one of her and Allie trying on the astronaut suits at the space museum in National City from their visit over the summer.

“We’re getting so much positive feedback from your feature.” Lena sat down and reached for her tablet. “I got some of the ‘Letters to the Editor’ forwarded to me so that I could send them to you.”

As they all got seated for take-off, Lena read one of the letters.

“Thank you so much for your featuring Felicity Smoak in this month’s issue! Her story is incredibly inspiring and encouraging as a woman in STEM and a single mom. I got pregnant in high school and everyone told me that my was over, which only made me more determined to prove them wrong. This spring I’ll be graduating from Stanford with my undergrad in engineering and I plan to go on to get my doctorate. Even though it hasn’t always been easy to manage being a student and a mom, my son is my whole world and I couldn’t imagine my life without him. I don’t have any regrets and it meant a lot to be reassured from someone who has been in my shoes that I didn’t have to choose between being a mom and chasing my dream like everyone in my life had tried to convince me I did. I hope one day I can be as empowering and inspiring.”

Felicity brushed away some tears that she hadn’t even noticed had started to fall while Lena read.
When she was pregnant and trying to focus on finishing her thesis, *sans caffeine* (and in between spells of falling down a black hole of articles on the internet she hoped would help her figure out how not to completely fail at being a mom), she never could’ve imagined someone someday using the words empowering and inspiring to describe her. “Is there a way for me to get in contact with her?”

“Sure, we have the email she sent her message from.” Lena swiped across her tablet, “I’ll forward all of these to you and then you can read the rest.”

“Kara Danvers…” Iris read off from the copy she was flipping through, “Hey, isn’t that the writer you said you had a thing for when we were in New York last summer?”

“Yeah,” Lena confirmed, biting her lip. “And... you’re actually going to get to meet her because she’s coming to the wedding as my plus one.”

Felicity had already gotten the full scoop (no pun intended) about what happened after the awkwardness from their unexpected kiss at the hotel dissipated. It turned out, Kara had been under the same assumption as Lena, that her feelings were one-sided, and that’s why she had been so caught off guard by the kiss.

“I’m not going to say I told you so, but I definitely told you so.”

“It only took her *eighty seven years* to finally ask her out,” Felicity added teasingly, earning her an exasperated look.

“It was complicated, okay.” Lena wrinkled up her nose, “And she was seeing this guy for a while so… the timing just wasn’t right until now. We’re trying to keep it low-key since I am kind of her boss, but things are good. *Really* good.”

Iris sat the magazine down. “Well I’m happy for you, and very excited to meet her.”

Everyone chimed in in agreement before pressing Lena for more details that occupied their conversation for the remainder of the flight.

“Whoa.”

Oliver smiled at Will’s reaction upon boarding the Queen Industries jet, “Pretty cool, huh?”

His son settled down into one of the spacious seats and looked around in awe, “I’ve never even been on a regular plane before.”

“Seriously?”

Will shrugged, “Mom and I used to take road trips for our summer vacation, or take the train somewhere, we never flew anywhere.”

Thea settled into the seat across from him, “Well let me tell you buddy, after this, you’re never going to want to fly on a regular plane.” She stretched out her legs and sighed happily, “Oh how I’ve missed this.”

“It was cool of Felicity to let us use her jet,” Tommy remarked, ducking into the cabin.

“She and her friends are using one of her bridesmaid’s planes for the weekend.” Oliver looked to Thea, “I’m surprised you turned down her invitation to Arizona…”
“What sort of groomswomen would we be if we ditched the bachelor party?” Sara teased, nudging his shoulder on her way into the cabin before sitting down next to Thea. She leaned in to stage whisper to his sister, “Is that his subtle way of telling us he didn’t want us crashing his guys weekend?”

Oliver rolled his eyes, “I’m glad you two are coming along.”

John was the last one to arrive, hurrying in with an apology, “Sorry I’m late. Lyla doesn’t get back from her work trip until tomorrow and there was a miscommunication with the nanny.”

“Did you get everything figured out?”

His friend clapped him on the shoulder, “Yeah, she’s at your house actually. I was out of ideas so I called Donna and she said she could spend the night with her and Allie.”

“Why do you have her number?”

“The real question is how did she get my number? She’s called me at least half a dozen times to discuss what I’m going to say for the ceremony. You would think I’m giving a presidential address or something with how intense she is.”

“I would trust you to run our country John,” Sara piped up as she poured champagne for her and Thea.

Digg glanced over at her with an amused look, “Thank you. Don’t plan on ever running for president, but glad to know I would have your support.”

When he turned his attention back to him, Oliver reassured him, “Don’t let Donna intimidate you. Felicity and I are going to be happy with whatever you say.”

“Because they’ll be too distracted with staring lovingly into each other’s eyes to even notice what you’re saying,” Tommy interjected with a laugh. “I remember almost nothing from my wedding except how Laurel looked.”

Oliver had a feeling his experience would be similar. He got easily distracted by watching Felicity on normal days. Watching her mouth as she chewed on pens while she looked over Will and Allie’s homework assignments. Watching the hemline of his t-shirt she stole to wear to bed shift along her thighs as she rifled through her closet in search of whatever dress she was going to wear for work. Watching her fingers fly across her keyboard in a flurry of bright nail polish, his mind wandering to the way those fingers tangled in his hair and traced patterns across his skin. Whenever she caught him staring, he would be rewarded with one of her signature attempts at a wink, that was actually a blink, which always made his heart feel too big for his chest.

Thea nudged Tommy, “Do we take bets now on how long it will take before Ollie starts crying? Because I’m predicting the tears start before she even steps into view.”

He shot a look at his sister and she smiled innocently at him. “Felicity has turned you into a giant sap and you know it, don’t pretend you’re not going to weep.”

He didn’t deny it, just took his seat next to Will as the pilot announced that he was readying for take-off.

Lingering at the table, too full to move after a delicious brunch, Felicity and her bridesmaids looked through the brochures that had been given to them, detailing the amenities that were available for
them to partake in.

After arriving the evening before, they had gotten settled into their suite, “The Gratitude,” which was even more amazing than the pictures on the website had made it look. With a private chef that prepared them dinner, a few bottles of wine, and the patio that looked out on a gorgeous panorama of the surrounding mountains, they hadn’t needed to venture out to the rest of the facilities until that morning.

{Check out info about the spa here}

As Felicity skimmed the list of services for the spa, she made a mental list of which ones she wanted to schedule in. Abhyanga, manicure and pedicure, her roots needed a touch up before the wedding--

“We should do the challenge course.” Dinah’s voice jolted her out of her serene mood.

What?

“Are you serious?”

“Yeah… it looks really cool.”

Felicity plucked the brochure out of her hand and balked at the picture of the woman standing on the top of what appeared to be an incredibly high pole with nothing but a rope keeping her from plummeting to her death. “You know I’m afraid of heights. Terrified.”

“It’s your weekend, we’re obviously not going to make you do anything you don’t want to do, but it could make for an entertaining bonding experience. And you are in the conquering your fears era of your life,” Iris chimed in. “You’re getting married. A couple months ago that would’ve terrified you.”

“I still am a little terrified,” Felicity muttered under her breath, taking herself by surprise with the admission. She thought she was ready, thought she had put her past behind her and was ready for her future with Oliver. Hadn’t she told Lena that finding the right person had made it all seem less scary? Maybe it was her dad coming back, a fresh reminder of her parents failed marriage that suddenly had her wondering all over again if it just wasn’t in her genes to have a healthy, lasting one.

Her friends looked at her with concern and she pasted on a smile that she hoped looked genuine. She knew they would give her the perfect pep talk but she was frustrated with herself for even needing one. Holding up the brochure, she announced, “You know what, you’re right. This is my conquering my fears era, we’re doing this.”

“Not that this needs to even be said, but I’ll be keeping my feet on the ground for this one,” Caitlin remarked. “So I’ll take pictures.”

“I wish I could play the pregnant card,” Felicity grumbled.

Lena nudged her shoulder with her own, “You don’t have to play any cards. If you don’t want to do this, you don’t have to.”

Iris leaned in excitedly, “Okay but also, for real, are you and Oliver going to have more kids?”

“I think so. We’ve talked about it a little bit and I think we’re on the same page about what we want. There are things that both of us missed out on experiencing with Will and Allie. I never got to share in the excitement with a partner who wants to go to ultrasounds with me and help me assemble Ikea cribs more complicated than any computer I’ve ever built--”
“Hey, I think I was very helpful,” Dinah interjected in mock offense, having been the one who spent over two hours with her deciphering the instructions for Allie’s nursery furniture before staying for brownies that never made it into the oven because they were impatient and hungry (hangry) and settled for eating the batter.

“You were a lifesaver,” she agreed before continuing. “And Oliver missed nearly a decade of moments with Will. First words, first steps, so many firsts. Obviously it doesn’t make our kids somehow less special to us because the situations weren’t textbook *what to expect when you’re expecting,* but we’re also happy to have the chance now to grow our family and have all those moments together.”

Iris stabbed at her stack of pancakes, “Ugh, you’re going to get all cute and pregnant and it’s going to make me have baby fever again. I haven’t even gotten past potty training the twins yet.”

Felicity laughed, “Well we’re not planning on trying for a honeymoon baby or anything, so you have some time.”

Finishing up their mimosas, Felicity announced on the way out of the dining room, “If we’re doing the ropes course, we’re definitely hitting up the spa afterwards. I already know I’m going to need a massage to recover from this.”

“This better be the best doughnut I’ve ever eaten,” Thea grumbled as they got into line at Doughnut Vault to wait for the bakery to open. “It’s a crime to be up this early on a Saturday.”

Tommy glanced at the time, “It’s almost 9am…”

She arched an eyebrow and shivered, cradling her hotel coffee close, “Your point?”

Oliver shook his head in amusement. A few years ago he would’ve shared his sister’s opinion, but he had become more of a morning person in recent years. Not spending all hours of the night blackout drunk in clubs anymore probably helped.

Irresponsibility wasn’t the cause for his sister’s reluctance to be up early though. Thea was often the first person to City Hall in the morning, making sure she was on top of everything and organized for the day ahead. Her dedication to her job, and the way it made his job easier, was something he was eternally grateful for. The weekends were her chance to catch up on some well deserved sleep.

He tucked Thea against his side to help warm her up, “I think it’ll be worth it. According to the reviews I read, there’s a reason they sell out for the day within a few hours after opening.”

“Sara and I were looking at their Instagram last night,” Will chimed in.

“Yeah, and if the doughnuts taste half as good as the pictures make them look, I’ll be happy,” Sara added, bouncing on the balls of her feet to stay warm.

It was a cold morning, very different than the weather that Felicity was experiencing down in Arizona. When she had landed the night before and called to let him know she had gotten in safe, she had reported the temperature to be a balmy seventy degrees.

“Rub it in, why don’t you?”

“You’re the one who decided to go even farther north, babe.”

Fair enough. Still, he was looking forward to the warm sunny beaches of Aruba.
After successfully obtaining their doughnuts, filling a box with the flavors offered that day: buttermilk old fashioneds, an assortment of glazes, cookies and cream old-fashioneds, apple fritters, and strawberry jelly filled, they headed back to the hotel to get out of the cold and dig into the sugary treats.

“Okay, this was definitely worth getting up and waiting in the cold for,” Thea decided, licking powdered sugar off of her lips.

Oliver snapped a picture of Will holding a doughnut in each hand to send to Samantha before texting Felicity.

**OLIVER:** I have discovered the BEST doughnuts

❤ **FELICITY:** even better than the cronoughts from jitters???

**OLIVER:** yes

He sent her a picture of the only remaining doughnut and a half left in the box after the six of them had demolished the rest.

❤ **FELICITY:** omg

❤ **FELICITY:** now i’m craving doughnuts

**OLIVER:** last one could be yours

**FELICITY:** hopping on the jet now! be right there! don’t let tommy eat it

Oliver grinned, responding with a kissing emoji and a message to have a good day before tucking his phone away.

“Hey. Don’t look down. Look at me.”

She lifted her eyes to meet Dinah’s reassuring ones. They were currently doing a pairs tightrope walk, pressing their hands against each other for support as they shuffled sideways along the line. Her stomach had been doing flips since they got up into the air and she was fighting hard to keep her overactive imagination from picturing herself sprawled on the desert floor with every bone in her body shattered.

*Conquering your fears,* she repeated in her head like a mantra.

“Lean into me a little bit more,” Dinah guided. “You’ve got this. Breathe.”

She followed her friend’s instructions and they started to move again. Slow, careful steps across the line as they adjusted their support of each other. Lena and Iris were waiting for them on the platform at the end, having already made it across. She made them go first so she could put off her turn as long as possible and they had made it look a lot easier than it really was to accomplish the task.

“How did they do it so fast?” she muttered under her breath.

“Probably because they actually trusted their harness to catch them if they misstepped.”

She sighed, “There’s a metaphor in there, isn’t there?”
“Yeah, I think that’s the whole purpose of these courses. One giant life metaphor. A more adventurous version of therapy. But don’t ask me to be eloquent about it. You know I’m not the relationship expert in the group.”

“You’re the longest standing relationship I’ve ever had,” she pointed out. Before knocking on the apartment door next to hers for help hauling Ikea boxes and being greeted by Dinah, she had never had any meaningful friendships that lasted very long. “We should’ve just gotten married years ago.”

Dinah laughed and they wobbled a little, but when Felicity shifted her foot to the side she made contact with the platform. While they had been talking they had made it all the way to the end of the line without her even realizing.

Iris helped her onto the platform and she breathed a sigh of relief at the feeling of standing on something a little more stable than a tightrope.

The staff member who was helping them navigate the course offered her a high five, “Not so bad, right?”

“Uhhhh… no, it was pretty much as terrifying as I anticipated it would be.”

“But not so terrifying when you focused on your partner instead of the ground, when you trusted her to support you,” she replied with a tone of voice that made Felicity think she was quoting from a script.

She met Dinah’s eyes and her friend mouthed, “relationship metaphor.”

“Sure. Now can we get down?”

“You don’t want to do any of the other activities.”

“Not particularly.”

“Oh. Okay, well the fastest way down is the zipline...”

Despite her stomach’s initial reaction to the thought of ziplining to the ground, a threat to expel everything she had eaten at brunch earlier, she actually found herself enjoying the view of the surrounding desert as she descended. It felt a little bit like flying and she decided that maybe it was worth the scary parts.

...Relationship metaphor.

Oliver felt his phone buzzing in his coat pocket and slipped it out to answer Felicity’s call, “Hey babe, we’re just getting out of the hockey game. How was your day?”

“Other than the fact that my bridesmaids tried to kill me--”

In the background he heard one of her friends, he was pretty sure it was Dinah, say, “Oh stop being such a drama queen,” and he laughed, “What happened?”

“When I planned this spa weekend for my bachelorette party I had envisioned us laughing and sipping champagne while we got pedicures, but instead they bullied me into doing this challenge course that was the exact opposite of relaxing.” She lowered her voice, “Actually I did enjoy the ziplining part, but I’m not giving them the satisfaction of knowing that.”

“Did you at least still get your pedicure?”
“Yes, we spent the rest of the day at the spa and it was very nice.”

“Good.”

“And now we just finished the most amazing dinner and we’re going to watch a movie. Probably Bridesmaids, seems appropo. Beyond your obnoxiously delicious looking breakfast, how has your day been?”

He proceeded to tell her about what they had been up to since he had texted her about the doughnuts. Tommy had shown them around some of his favorite places in the city he had discovered while living there for med school, including a pizza shop where they had the requisite Chicago deep dish experience. Sara and Thea had wanted pictures with The Bean and then they made the trek up to Wrigley Field at Will’s request.

“We’ll definitely have to do a family trip in the summer so we can see a baseball game.”

“And get some of those doughnuts,” Felicity added.

“And get doughnuts.”

There were muffled voices and laughter in the background and then she came back on the line, “I have to go. They’re threatening to confiscate my phone, because apparently talking to the fiance is frowned upon during bachelorette weekend. So enjoy the rest of your trip, and I’ll see you when we’re back home, okay? Love you.”

“Love you. See you at home.”

~THE WEDDING WEEKEND~

LAUREL: hey I have all the paperwork ready. will bring to dinner tonight :)

FELICITY: yay! thank you so much!!

LAUREL: you're welcome! he’s going to be thrilled. Tommy and I can’t wait to see the look on his face

Felicity looked up from her phone and her eyes widened in awe as her mom led her into the room in the winery that was being used for the wedding ceremony. People were still milling about getting the finishing touches ready for the next day, but she was still able to get a sense of how it was all going to look. She had managed to convince her mom to tone down her original vision a little bit and the result was wintry fairytale without being over the top.

“Mom… this is gorgeous,” she breathed out.

“Oh this is nothing,” her mom waved a hand dismissively. “Just wait until you see it tomorrow with all the flowers and lighting in place.”

Her phone continued to buzz with texts from people letting her know that they were on their way over for the impending rehearsal dinner. The Queen family’s lake house, and a few of the neighboring houses that had been rented out for the weekend, had been turned into basically a wedding party compound so that everyone involved could stay near the winery.
Once everyone arrived, under her mom’s guidance, they started to run through the ceremony and get all the logistics of the blended traditions squared away.

Standing at the back, Felicity smiled as she watched Allie attempt to keep Nora and Sara walking down the aisle instead of getting distracted or running towards one of their parents already assembled around the chuppah. If anything was going to go awry when they did this for real the following day, it was going to be a flower girl incident. But she wouldn’t trade a ceremony that felt true to them, for a “perfect” one.

For most of her childhood, her family was just her and her mom. Loneliness was an emotion she had gotten well acquainted with. Looking down the aisle at all the people gathered around, waiting for her to make her way to her groom, she saw the family that she had found for herself over the years. Her heart was so full of love for all of them.

Her mom set down her clipboard and looped her arm through hers. Even though her dad was going to be in attendance, even though she was giving him a second chance, her mom was the one who had been by her side all along and was the one who deserved to walk her down the aisle. She hadn’t wavered on that decision for even a moment.

“I told myself I wasn’t going to cry until tomorrow,” her mom sniffled beside her as they approached the end of the aisle. “I’m used to being the one with tissues for the moms and dads. I’m just so happy for you.”

She kissed her mom on the cheek before taking Oliver’s hand to stand opposite of him. He smiled at her and she grinned back and he kissed the tip of her nose and for a moment she contemplated asking John to just make it official right then and there.

But then her mom broke the spell between them when she shifted back into wedding planner mode and spoke up, “Okay, so then John will say his bit and Oliver and Felicity will exchange vows and rings, kiss, break the glass… and then we’ll all have to file out of here in an orderly fashion. So let’s practice that quickly, and then we can go eat dinner.”

After finishing up the rehearsal of the ceremony, they all gathered for dinner in the room where the reception was going to be held the following day. Throughout the meal, Oliver kept stealing glances at his fiance. She was wearing a simple white dress for the occasion and looked stunning, he could only imagine how captivating she would be in her actual wedding dress.

[See Felicity's outfit here]

Before dessert was served, Dinah and Tommy gave their maid of honor and best man toasts (full of stories, some sweet, some slightly embarrassing, from years of friendship) and then the next thing Oliver knew, Allie was standing up on their table and clinking a champagne glass to recapture everyone’s attention.

“Don’t worry, I’m not going to drink this,” she assured everyone, eliciting laughs from the crowd.

Laurel took the glass from her and handed her a large envelope in exchange with a wink and Oliver shifted forward in his seat, his curiosity piqued. Underneath the table, Felicity took his hand as Allie began to speak.

“I’m really glad that my mom met Oliver. He makes her so happy, and that makes me happy, because she’s my favorite person in the whole world.” There was a resounding “awwwww” from their friends and family, and then Allie continued. “Also he makes the most delicious pancakes ever and is
the best teammate in Mario Kart Double Dash and he cheers me up when I’m sad and—” She took a deep breath, stopping her babbling. “And I didn’t know what it was like to have a dad before, but I do now.” Turning to face him, she glanced down at the envelope in her hands, “So... I have something I want to give you.”

Allie handed him the envelope and looked at him expectantly. He took the cue and opened it up, sliding out the paperwork inside.

*Petition for Adoption*

It took him a second to process what he was holding before his chest grew tight with emotion and tears started to well up in his eyes. Despite the close bond that had developed between them, it still took him by surprise to read those words.

When he had found himself thrown into fatherhood a little over two years ago with the revelation that he had a son, he had wanted so badly to prove to everyone in his life that he had become the kind of man who could handle the responsibility. He never could’ve anticipated anyone ever choosing him to be their dad.

“Will you be my dad, for real?” Allie asked shyly when he looked back up at her.

Blinking back tears, he grinned and nodded, “Of course. I would be honored.”

Her smile matched his and he stood to gather her up in a hug.

“Thank you,” she whispered to him as their audience cheered and clapped.

“I love you so much.”

“I love you too.” She paused for a moment before adding with a smile in her voice, “Dad.”

Not, “*kinda like my dad*”, not an accidental slip, not an assumption that she didn’t bother to correct….

“Good morning sunshine,” Oliver greeted a sleep ruffled Allie as she climbed onto one of the barstools at the kitchen island. Will was at Samantha’s for the weekend and Felicity and Donna were in Central City for the final fitting of Felicity’s wedding dress, so it was just the two of them at home.

The “hi” she replied to him with was flat and when she didn’t immediately dive into the stack of chocolate chip pancakes that he set in front of her like she normally did, his brow furrowed in concern.

“You okay?” he asked.

She hesitated for a second before mumbling, “Not really.”

He leaned across the counter. “What’s wrong?”

“Today is Kelsey Peterson’s eleventh birthday party and she invited all the girls in our class except for me.”

He felt his *protective dad mode* activate and had to remind himself that calling Kelsey Peterson’s parents to tell them their kid was a bully was probably not how Felicity
would want him to handle the situation.

“Well it can’t be that cool of a party if she didn’t invite the coolest girl.”

Allie looked up at him and sighed in exasperation. “They don’t think I’m cool. They think I’m a little girl who should still be in third grade.”

Beyond the incident at the beginning of the school year that had landed both her and Will in the principal’s office, he hadn’t heard Allie say anything about struggling to fit in with her classmates who were older than her. He knew Felicity had been worrying about pushing her through school too fast, but she had seemed to be handling it well. Apparently she could be just like her mother though when it came to holding her feelings inside.

“Who do you hang out with at school?”

“Will.” She shrugged, “Sometimes I see Rachel and my other friends from last year, but not so much anymore now that we’re in different grades.”

He remembered two things from the time that he had gone to pick her up from Rachel’s house. One, Rachel’s mom had a lot of opinions about Felicity’s life choices. And two, it had been the occasion where Allie had referred to him as “kinda like” her dad, making him ridiculously happy.

“Do you want to invite some of your friends over today? You can have our own party.”

Allie brightened a little, sitting up taller, “A pizza party?”

“*Homemade* pizza party.”

She arched an eyebrow, “And ice cream sundaes?”

“What ever you want. It’s your party.”

And that’s how he ended up on the living room floor that evening watching Flynn and Rapunzel serenading each other in a boat and eating ice cream with a bunch of Allie’s friends after helping them all make their own personal homemade pizzas.

“Your dad is so nice,” he had overheard one of the girls say to Allie while he was getting the movie set up. “You’re so lucky.”

He waited for her to correct her friend, to say that he wasn’t actually her dad, but instead she just replied with, “Yeah, I am.”

Much as when Will had called him dad for the first time, he couldn’t hold back the tears over her officially bestowing the title upon him.

When they drew apart from their hug, he wiped away his tears and helped her down from the table. She gave him one last beaming smile before returning to her seat further down the table next to Thea, where he watched them exchange a secret handshake so complex he could only imagine how long they had been working on it. It made him happy that his baby sister had so readily accepted his new family as her own. Catching his mom’s eye across the room and seeing the proud look on her face was the icing on the cake.

“I hope that was okay,” Felicity whispered when he sat back down. “I know we didn’t exactly talk
about it beforehand, but we thought it would be a good surprise and--”

“And you know me too well to doubt that I would say yes,” he finished for her, taking her hand again.

“Yeah.”

“I’ve known since our first date that you were a package deal.” He lifted their hands to kiss her engagement ring, “I’m committing to you, it’s only fitting that I commit to her too.”

“Thank you. It means so much to me and you have no idea how excited she was when I brought up the option for adoption. Step-dad just didn’t make sense to her, when you’re the one who’s actually been a dad to her; when you’re the one who’s going to be in her life, in her memories. And we did talk to Will, so he wouldn’t be blindsided tonight. He is one hundred percent on board with her becoming his sister, officially.”

He looked over to where the aforementioned had migrated to the desert table and were piling their plates with cupcakes. They had come a long way since tentative acceptance of being a part of each other’s lives.

“I’m glad. Thank you for considering him in this.”

“Of course.” She squeezed his hand, “I’ve always loved that you’re a package deal too.”

Back at the lake house after the rehearsal dinner wrapped up, Felicity and Oliver were cuddled together in their bed talking when her mom walked in on them and announced, “Okay Mr. Groom, time for you to say goodnight and get out of here. Find yourself a bed in one of the zillion other rooms in this house.”

“But mom…” Felicity whined, eliciting a chuckle from Oliver.

Donna clicked her tongue, “You know the rules. Bride and Groom sleep apart the night before the wedding.”

“That’s a stupid tradition.”

“Do you want to be cursed?”

“We’re not going to be cursed.”

She gave Oliver a look.

*Back me up here babe.*

He said nothing and her mom ignored her, “Do you remember what happened to Nick and Jess?”

It took her a second to realize that her mom was referencing the New Girl episode they had watched together the other night. Rolling her eyes, she muttered, “I think you missed the point of that episode…”

“Next thing you know, you’ll be wearing an eyepatch and getting married in a hospital,” her mom continued. “You already have the very pregnant friend, you’re one mis-step away from being a pirate bride. I can’t allow that to happen.”

Felicity proceeded to grumble but Oliver stood up and pressed a kiss to her temple, whispering, “It’s
okay.”

“Fine,” she sighed, knowing he was smart not to try and argue this further with her mom. She would probably refuse to leave them alone until they conceded. Besides, they had the rest of their lives together, one night apart wasn’t going to kill them. “See you tomorrow. I’ll be the one in the white dress.”

He grinned and gave her one last parting kiss. “I’ll be sure to keep an eye out for you.”

When he left, her mom laid down beside her and sighed, “I think this is the part where I’m supposed to pass on some wisdom. Seeing as my marriage was mostly a disaster though, I’m not sure I’m the best person to be advising you on that.”

Felicity propped herself up on her elbow, “I don’t think that disqualifies you. At the very least, you know a lot of what not to do. Which in my experience is oftentimes more valuable.”

“Well for starters, don’t marry someone who’s wanted by the FBI.”

Her mind flickered for a second to Cooper, how close she had come to history repeating itself. “Did you know that about Dad when you got married?”

“No. I was too blinded by love to see what I was getting myself into. Have you done a full background check on Oliver yet? It’s not too late…”

Felicity laughed, “I don’t think that’s necessary. I trust him.”

Her mom gave her a soft smile, “Me too. He’s a good man. A good father. I have no doubts he’ll be a good husband.”

She nibbled on her bottom lip and voiced her lingering fear, “But will I be a good wife? I’ve been on my own for so long…”

“That’s not a bad thing honey. I married your father when I was so young and unsure of myself. It was easy to lose myself in him. After I ended our relationship, I suddenly had to figure out who I even was without him.”

“That’s how it felt with Cooper,” she admitted. “I hadn’t realized how much of myself I had let him define until our relationship was over.”

Her mom tipped her head in acknowledgement, “But I have watched you become so confident and sure of yourself since being with him. You know who you are now. So you don’t have to be afraid that finding new parts of yourself in your relationship with Oliver will mean losing what makes you, you. You’re loyal, supportive, compassionate, and you’re going to be an amazing wife. I know it. Oliver definitely knows it. I think that boy has been ready to wife you up since day one.”

Felicity shook her head, a shy smile blossoming on her face, “And you thought you didn’t have anything helpful to say.”

“I guess I am a little wise,” she conceded. Closing her eyes, she added, “Which is why I know you’re planning on sneaking out of here to be with Oliver as soon as I fall asleep.”

Felicity scoffed innocently. “I am not.”
She said, like a liar.

“Mhmm...”
Well this is it! The final chapter :D There's still going to be a bonus scene and an epilogue though, so I'll spare you my sappy "thanks for supporting this story" author note until then ;) Enjoy!!

“Mom. Mommy! Mom!”

Felicity blinked her eyes open sleepily at Allie’s wake up call and mumbled something incoherent. Rolling over, she reached out for Oliver before remembering that her mom had separated them the night before. Her mom, who was now also absent from the bed and probably already at the winery with clipboard in hand.

When she eased herself up onto her elbows, her daughter bounced on the end of the bed excitedly, “Mommy you got your wish!”

Her brain was still a little foggy from sleep and she blinked in confusion, “My wish?”

Allie hopped off the bed and flung open the curtains, letting in a burst of blindingly white light, and declared, “It’s snowing!”

Sitting up, she squinted out the window and a sleepy smile turned up the corners of her mouth at the sight of softly falling snowflakes. It felt like a good sign to start off the day.

She patted the spot on the mattress next to her and Allie crawled over, letting her pull her in for a hug. She pressed a kiss to her head, her soft curls tickling her nose, smelling like her strawberry and cream shampoo. While Oliver and Will had undoubtedly already become part of their family without the vows that would be exchanged that afternoon, there was still a feeling that she and her daughter were experiencing the last morning of the chapter in their lives that had been the two of them against the world. She wanted to hold onto it for just a moment longer.

When she got downstairs to the kitchen after a quick shower, a still hot cup of coffee was out on the counter for her with a note beside it.

*Heard you awake upstairs and didn’t want to curse us, so Will and I went over to the house. See you soon…. Love you!*

She smiled and took a sip of the coffee, perfectly made with the right amount of sugar and creamer. Oliver and his friends were getting ready at one of the other houses they had rented, while her bridesmaids would all be descending upon casa del Queen soon.

Opening the fridge, she poked around for something to eat and found the leftover pie they had brought home from the rehearsal dinner. Louise, absolutely thrilled to be involved, had made blueberry and Boston Creme pies for the occasion, reminiscent of their first date.

“When I saw you two together at the diner that night I just knew you were already falling in love. The way you looked at each other… it’s something special what you have.”
Probably not the most energizing breakfast for the long day ahead, but she helped herself to a large slice of each.

“We can eat pie for breakfast?” Allie asked, watching her in shock.

She pulled out another plate to serve her a slice and pressed a finger to her lips, “Don’t tell Oliv-- your dad.”

Oliver’s reaction to the adoption papers had been even better than she imagined. The complete surprise on his face that turned to joy had made her fall in love with him all over again. Thinking back to how she had originally run from a relationship with him because she thought it would only result in her daughter’s heart getting broken--if only she could go back and tell herself not to waste all those months on that fear.

Allie grinned and made the motion of zipping her lips before climbing up onto one of the barstools.

They were almost finished with their pie when her mom returned from the winery, snowflakes caught in her ponytail.

“Allie grinned and made the motion of zipping her lips before climbing up onto one of the barstools.

“Everything looking good over there?” Felicity asked, licking some chocolate off of her fork.

An incredulous expression passed across her mom’s face, due to the question or their breakfast choices (or both), she wasn’t sure. “Everything looks amazing. But this snow better slow down or we’re all going to be snowed in there until they plow the roads, and I don’t think that’s how you and Oliver want to spend your first night as newlyweds.”

She cringed at the thought. All she wanted was enough snow for a picturesque background, not a blizzard.

{See a mood board I made for the wedding [here](#)}

“Hair and make-up will be here in twenty,” her mom continued, checking her phone. “When are your friends coming over?”

“I told them nine-thirty.” She glanced at the clock, “So any minute now.”

Half an hour later, the kitchen and dining room had been transformed into a salon with the counters littered with curling irons and hairspray and eyeshadow palettes. Conversations and laughter filled the air as they were given the star treatment by the hair stylists and make-up artists that her mom had hired.

“Of course you can, but it’s more fun to have someone else do it for you while you drink a mimosa.”

Now that she was in the moment, nerves and excitement filling her with the jitters, she was glad for her mom’s insistence that she was not the one attempting to do her own eyeliner. Allie was loving the experience too, looking all grown up as she got her hair pinned up into a half updo.

Her own hair was being curled to tuck up into an effortlessly messy bun (that in reality took a great deal of effort to make appear elegant and not “I just woke up”) with the jeweled headpiece she had picked out when she got her dress.

“Sorry we’re late,” Lena apologized as she swept into the kitchen with the garment bag containing
her dress.

Kara followed behind her and added, “It’s my fault. I had to take a call for a story and held us up. I told her to just leave without me…”

Felicity waved a hand dismissively, “It’s okay. It’s good to see you again Kara. Lena, you’ll be up after Cait.”

Lena introduced Kara to everyone else, leaving her to talk with journalism with Iris while she settled into the chair that Caitlin vacated to start getting her hair done.

“So… how are you feeling?” Lena asked Felicity. “Nervous? Excited?”

“All of the above,” she answered, tipping back the rest of her drink.

“Oliver it’s the morning of your wedding, why are you cooking?”

He looked up from the baked french toast he was assembling to see Sara walking into the kitchen, rubbing her eyes sleepily.

He shrugged, “We have to eat breakfast. Most important meal of the day.”

She sat down next to Will on one of the barstools at the counter, “Are you stress cooking? Is this stress cooking?”

Will answered for him, “Yes.”

He pointed his spoon at his son defensively, “Hey! I am not. Why would I be stressed? I’m marrying my dream girl today.”

Nyssa wandered into the kitchen next and Sara extended a hand to beckon her over, “Speaking of dream girls…”

“Is that french toast?” Nyssa asked, peering over the counter at his baking dish.

“Oliver’s stress cooking us breakfast,” Sara explained before giving her a kiss.

“I’m not—“ He sighed and returned to sprinkling cinnamon when he realized they were no longer paying him any attention. Maybe he did seem like he was stressed, but it was more of an impatient energy. He wanted to see Felicity. He needed something to do to keep the time he had to wait until they went over to the winery from stretching on forever. “Will, do you want to make some eggs?”

When he pulled the baked french toast out of the oven, Tommy and Laurel came downstairs in search of what smelled like “the Cinnabon stand at the old Starling Mall.”

He served them each a plate, Will contributing some of his scrambled eggs, and they gathered around the dining room table.

“Where’s Thea?” Sara asked.

“She was still asleep when Will and I left. I’m sure she’ll be over soon.”

As if on cue, his sister walked in, “Speak of the devil and she appears. ‘Morning everyone.”

“Do you want some breakfast Auntie Thea?” Will asked, already pushing his chair back from the
table to stand up and get her a plate.

“Yes please. But not too much. Allie and Felicity were eating pie and I had some of that before I came over.” She sunk into the chair next to Oliver’s and nudged his shoulder, “You ready for this big bro?”

“Ready as I’ll ever be.” He went to take a sip of coffee before lifting an eyebrow, “Wait, what were they eating?”

Thea waved her hand dismissively, “You heard nothing. I didn’t say anything…”

He crossed his arms, “How did I get the reputation for being the breakfast police?”

Sara patted his shoulder, “Your love language is cooking for people, so you get a little offended when they eat garbage.”

*Fair enough.*

“Well… Louise’s pie is not garbage. So I don’t care.” Thea gave him a skeptical look and he couldn’t resist adding, “But they are going to be hungry in like an hour without any protein…”

Tommy clapped his hands together and remarked with a teasing grin, “There’s the breakfast police we know and love.”

Later on, as they were getting ready, his mother stopped by the house with Walter on their way to the winery.

“Hey mom,” Thea greeted her first while he finished helping Will with his tie.

While he had been no stranger to formal wear at his son’s age (much to his ire), the experience of visiting the family’s old tailor with him and Tommy had been a foreign one for Will. It had been a fun afternoon, but he was also glad to not be raising his children under the same pressures of high society that he had grown up with.

His mother approached him next, giving him a hug and a kiss on the cheek before smoothing the lapels of his jacket and straightening his tie. And taking him back to his senior prom. Except he knew she didn’t see him as that irresponsible boy anymore, so he didn’t resent her fussing over him.

“My beautiful boy…. You look so handsome. I’m very happy for you.” A sad smile turned up the corners of her mouth, “I just wish Robert was here.”

He dipped his head, “Me too.”

Everything he had done since his father’s passing had been to fulfil the promise he made to him to become a better man. The kind of man who could right the wrongs that had been done to the city. The kind of man who could make the kind of promise he was going to be making to Felicity that afternoon.

“He would be proud,” Walter chimed in. “I know I am.”

He turned to his step-father, “Thank you.”

When he had first come home from his time away with Thea after the Undertaking to discover that his mother was engaged to Walter, he was bitter towards the both of them for moving on from his father so quickly. Over the years though he had softened towards his step-father and was glad that
their shared grief had brought them together.

“Hate to interrupt the family moment, but we should probably get going,” Thea spoke up. “According to the official schedule that Mama Smoak gave me, we have to be at the winery in twenty minutes.”

He raised an eyebrow at his sister, “You call her Mama Smoak now?”

Thea shrugged, “She insisted.”

When they arrived at the winery, Dinah pulled her aside to an empty room to help adjust the skirt of her dress after the car ride.

“Oliver is going to lose his mind. You look amazing.”

{See Felicity's dress [here]}

“Thank y--”

“Felicity? Someone’s here to see you.”

At the sound of her mom’s voice, she glanced over her shoulder to see her standing in the doorway with her dad and offered him a small smile.

“Hey dad.”

“Hey sweetheart.”

Dinah slipped out with her mom and her gaze dropped down to her hands. “I wasn’t sure if you were going to come…”

“I said I was--” She looked back up at him pointedly and he dipped his head in understanding, “But my word doesn’t carry much weight with you.”

She gave him a shrug, unable to deny it.

“I’ve missed too much. I--” He shook his head to stop himself from saying more. They had already said what had needed to be said on that subject, it was time to move forward. “Anyway I just… I just wanted to say hello before the ceremony. Let you know I was here.”

Outstretching her arms, she offered him a tentative hug that he gratefully accepted.

She wasn’t the little girl who thought she was broken anymore. The power he had to hurt her had been diminished. She knew now the kind of love that she was deserving of, and that made her feel safe enough to give him the second chance he wanted. If he let her down, she was surrounded by people who wouldn’t let her blame herself again.

When she released him, her mom reappeared and announced that she needed to get into position for the start of the ceremony.

“I didn’t think he would show,” her mom admitted once her dad had walked off to find his seat.

She shrugged, “I was cautiously optimistic. He is trying.”

Her mom sighed, “I remember our wedding. Did I ever tell you about our wedding? We had a Tom
Jones impersonating Rabbi.”

“What?”

“ Weird, right?”

“Uh yeah... a little bit.”

“You dad loves Tom Jones. Or did. I think. There were so many lies, sometimes I wonder if anything I knew about him was true.” She shook her head, “Sorry. It’s not the time for this.” Holding out her arm, she smiled, “Let’s go get you married.”

As they waited for the flower girls and bridesmaids to finish their procession down the aisle, Felicity whispered, “Oliver likes Taylor Swift. I know that’s true. He’s not just pretending for Allie.”

And she teased him for it.

Her mom looked over at her, “And he loves you. I know that’s true. Without a doubt.”

A smile spread across her face as the bridal chorus began to play, signaling it was time for her entrance. “Me too.”

Oliver thought he was prepared for the “here comes the bride” moment, but the wave of emotions that overcame him when she first stepped into view felt like it might knock him off his feet. Tears started to well up in his eyes and his brain couldn’t even think of the right word to describe how beautiful she looked. Off to the side of him, he heard his son whisper a “wow,” and he decided that summed it up pretty well.

Wow.

When she got a little closer to him, she gave him one of her blink-winks and he grinned.

This was really happening.

He didn’t know what he had done to deserve her. But she had given him a blank slate, a chance to be someone other than the foolish, careless boy who didn’t know how to commit. Loving her had already made him into the best version of himself, and he couldn’t wait to see who they would become with years and years together.

She reached the end of the aisle and Donna released her so she could take his hand after passing off her bouquet to Dinah.

“I love you,” she mouthed once she had gotten into position across from him.

He took her other hand in his so he was holding both and brushed his thumbs over her knuckles, “Love you. You look so beautiful.”

John called for the crowd to be seated before beginning to speak, “I have known Oliver for almost six years now. When I was first hired to babysit him, I thought he was just going to be another job. Another rich kid. I didn’t know then that I would be gaining a brother. And now, over the past year, I’ve gotten the privilege to know Felicity, and I can’t imagine a more perfect partner for Oliver than this incredible woman. I’m honored to get to make things official between them today.”

John smiled at them both and continued, “So... this is the part where I’m supposed to say something poignant about marriage. And as someone who’s been married twice, to the same woman, I think I
Oliver glanced out at Lyla, seated in the pews and shaking her head in amusement, before returning his attention to Felicity as they listened to their friend. “I couldn’t just leave things the way they were when our marriage ended the first time because I realized she’s the one I’d do whatever it takes to make things right with. When I look at you two, I see the same kind of love that Lyla and I have. So you’re going to have a lot of really good days, where marriage seems easy. You’re also going to have some days where things get hard, but a fight is not the end if it’s with the person you’re willing to always fight for.”

Oliver brushed his thumb across Felicity’s knuckles. He knew things had been relatively easy for them so far, they hadn’t had many fights. And a part of him used to worry that they were going to find out one day that their relationship couldn’t stand up to conflict and everything was going to crumble. But John’s words reassured him because he also knew that she was the person he was willing to do anything to make things right with, come what may.

They had chosen to do their own vows in lieu of any traditional ones and John prompted Felicity to share hers.

“Oliver.... I never believed in love at first sight... and I still don’t. Because when I first saw you, I hated you and your stupid, handsome face for getting in between me and the thing that was going to make my daughter happy.” Felicity shook her head in amusement, tears sliding down her cheeks. He released one of her hands to brush away her tears before she continued, “It’s ironic to think about now, since you’ve made her so much happier than any Lego set ever could. Made me happier than I ever knew was possible.” Her smile widened, “So no, I don’t believe in love at first sight, which is why I’m glad I couldn’t help but take a second look. You opened up my heart and showed me a kind of love I didn’t have to be afraid of. A kind of love I could trust. Today I’m promising that same love to you for the rest of our lives, on the good days and the bad days. I promise to support you and challenge you to be the best version of yourself. To laugh with you, to cry with you. To be your partner in parenthood and saving the world and every other adventure we take on together.” A laugh bubbled up in his chest and she squeezed his hands, “I love you so much Oliver, and I can’t wait to spend forever by your side.”

Letting go of his hands, she took the ring that John was holding out to her. The boy he had been, who ran as fast as he could from commitment and responsibility, would never have been able to understand how right it felt when she slipped that metal band onto his finger.

“Felicity, before I met you I had an idea of what I thought my life was going to be like. And in one night you completely flipped that upside down. When you looked at me, you didn’t see all my past mistakes and--” He took a deep breath, his chest feeling tight with emotion. “And you gave me the freedom to finally let them go. To stop being defined by who I was and be the man that I want to be now. The man who will stand by your side. Who won’t walk away. Ever.” He squeezed her hands to emphasize his words. Fresh tears started to fall down her face at that promise even as the corners of her mouth turned up in a smile. He wanted to kiss her so badly but he knew he needed to get through the rest of his vows. “You’re my always. I promise to always love you and our family with everything I am. To always keep a pint of mint chip in the freezer. To never tire of hearing you talk, even when it’s about stuff I’m not smart enough to understand.” She let out a soft laugh as he continued, “Felicity Megan Smoak, you are kind, compassionate, generous, brilliant, funny, and a million other things that I could spend forever listing, except that I’m impatient to get to the part where I get to kiss you.” She scrunched up her nose affectionately and he concluded with, “I love you so much, and I could not be happier that you have chosen me to be the one you spend your life with.”

John handed him Felicity’s wedding band, one that interlocked with her engagement ring, and he slid it on her finger. She wiggled her fingers excitedly, light reflecting off the diamonds, before looking
back up at him with a beaming smile.

Vows and rings exchanged, John clapped his hands together, “And with that, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss your bride.”

Cradling Felicity’s face in his hands, he drew her in for a kiss. Soft and sweet, with a promise of more when they no longer had an audience. When they broke apart, he gathered her up in his arms for a hug, his hands splayed out across her back and his head dipped to press his cheek against hers. The sounds of their friends and family cheering in celebration were but a distant hum, his whole world narrowed down to his wife. *His wife.*

“Okay, so explain this glass breaking thing to me…” Oliver prompted, trailing his fingers across her shoulder blades before beginning to work out the knot of tension at the base of her neck. There were only a few days left before her big press conference and she had been putting in long hours at the office—resulting in her needing a little extra care that he was happy to provide.

She hummed in appreciation for his ministrations before responding, “It’s a must. Like, mom will let the no rabbi thing slide, but this is one element of the ceremony we can’t throw out.”

“I don’t want to throw it out. I just want to know what it means to you.” He pressed a kiss to her shoulder and explained, “Google provided at least five different interpretations so…”

“Doing some research, were you?”

“I’ve been reading a lot of Jewish wedding blogs in my spare time,” he confessed.

She turned around in his lap and took his face in her hands, caressing his jaw in the way that always turned him to mush. He couldn’t resist his eyes falling shut as a sigh of contentment escaped him.

“I guess for me, my favorite meaning behind it is that just like the glass shattering is permanent…irrevocable, so is our promise to each other. No going back. I mean you could technically put the glass back together if you melted down all the shards and—”

He reopened his eyes and looked into hers, saw the vulnerability there. Leaning in he kissed her once, twice.

“I love that,” he replied sincerely, leaning his forehead against hers.

Lifting her foot, she raised a challenging eyebrow at him, “No going back?”

“No going back,” he echoed with a grin before joining her in smashing the glasses.

After the photographer was finished taking the winter wonderland photos of Felicity’s dreams, first with their friends and families before taking the shots of just her and Oliver, they went back inside to join the reception. On their way, Oliver suddenly tugged her inside an alcove and pressed his mouth to hers. Her initial surprise passed quickly and she smiled, reaching up to thread her fingers through his hair as she kissed him back.

“I needed you to myself for a second,” he mumbled in between kisses, nipping gently at her bottom lip as his hands tightened their grip on her hips.
“Mmmmm. Your face is so warm.” She nuzzled her nose against his. “I thought I was going to get frost bite out there.”

He moved to kiss her neck, “You were the one who wanted to take pictures in the snow.”

“I know,” she sighed. “And they’re going to be so beautiful. I love snow.” She slid her hands down to squeeze his ass, “But I’m glad it stopped, I was worried about us spending our wedding night snowed in here with all our friends and family.”

He pulled away to look at her with a horrified expression on his face at the possibility.

“Speaking of friends and family, we should go join them before my mom comes hunting us down…”

He reluctantly took a step away from her so they could continue down the hallway hand in hand.

“Wait.” She tugged on his hand to stop him and reached up to rub away the lipstick that had ended up smudged around his mouth. His hair was looking rather rumpled and she did her best to smooth it back down. “Okay, now you’re presentable.”

When they arrived at the reception, greeted by celebratory cheers, Oliver guided her onto the dance floor as the opening notes of the song they had picked for their first dance began to play. Looping her arms around his neck, she rested her chin on his chest and looked up at him with a smile as they swayed to the music, his hands finding a home on her lower back.

“Pick song for first dance,” Felicity read off of the list of tasks her mom had given them. Although her mom had taken almost all of the planning off of their hands, there were still a few things they needed to take care of. The fun stuff, like cake tasting and gift registries. And apparently music.

She was lying with her head resting against Oliver’s chest and she tilted her head back to look up at him. “Any ideas?”

He shrugged and she tapped her chin thoughtfully. “Alright, we’ll come back to this one. Listen to some songs this week and see if anything jumps out at you.”

Reaching for her phone, she opened Safari and searched for ‘first dance wedding song.’ Pages of blog posts popped up and she texted the links to a few to Oliver for him to look through.

“Moving on… we need to find gifts for our wedding party…”

Later that week, Felicity was combing through some coding that her MedTech team had worked up to try and resolve an issue with the insulin pumps they were developing to sync with their Smart Wearables. Her Spotify was playing softly in the background, her recommended playlist churning out love songs due to the fact that she had been on the hunt for her and Oliver’s first dance song.

So far she hadn’t had much luck.

Sure, the romantic classics and popular songs for the year that had been included on the blog posts she found had made those lists for a reason, but none of them seemed like quite the right fit. If all else failed, she supposed they could just go with “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran… like literally hundreds of other brides since the song released.
“I’ve been to five weddings in the past four months and four of the couples used ‘Perfect.’ No offense to Ed Sheeran, but I never want to hear that song again.” Alena had remarked when they were talking about her song dilemma during a lunch meeting the other day.

“Five weddings?” Felicity’s eyebrows raised and she fished around in her take-out container with her chopsticks for a piece of chicken. As much as she had enjoyed celebrating with all of her friends, she was glad they had gotten married over a span of a few years instead of one after the other. She did not share her mother’s passion for weekly weddings.

Alena exhaled in a huff, “It’s too many. After yours I’m going to need a long break from buffets, and painful shoes, and cousins of the groom ignoring the fact that I’m there with my girlfriend and trying to hook up with me.”

Felicity winced, “Has that happened more than once?”

“Tragically yes.”

“Ew.”

Alena closed her eyes like she was trying to purge the memories, “Mhm.”

“Well Oliver doesn’t have any cousins, and I won’t judge you if you want to attend in your Converse, so that should at least make our wedding slightly more bearable.”

Finding a snag in a string of code, she began to fix it when her ears perked up at a lyric. She clicked over to her Spotify and took note of the song that was playing, sharing it with Oliver.

**FELICITY: first dance song????**

A few minutes later he replied back that it was perfect and she hit replay on the song, humming along to the melody as she returned to her project.

“Well, I'm gonna love you, forever I do. Well, I'm gonna spend all my days with you. Will carry your burdens and be the wind at your back. Well, I'm gonna spend my forever, forever like that.”

As the song ended it faded into “Let’s Get It On,” (which she was pretty sure was her mother’s pick) and a chair was brought out to the center of the dance floor for her to take a seat on for the removal of her garter.

“Keep it PG Ollie, remember there are children here.” Thea called from the crowd and Felicity shook her head in amusement at the smirk that appeared on his face as he knelt in front of her.

Lifting her ankle, he kept eye contact with her as he pressed an innocent kiss to the delicate skin there before setting her foot back down. Slowly, softly caressing her leg, he slid his hands up under the fabric of her dress in search of the garter she wore around her thigh. He was taking his good sweet time and she sunk her teeth into her bottom lip to keep her facial expression schooled at his touch. When he finally reached the piece of lace that matched her dress, he slipped his fingers under the elastic and gave a gentle tug to remove it.

He stood up, extending his hands to her to help her up from the chair and pulled her in for a kiss.

“ Took you awhile. Did you get lost down there?” she teased, running her fingers down his tie.
“Oh I knew exactly what I was doing.”

She was handed her bouquet to toss and it very nearly hit a startled Lena in the head before she reflexively threw up her hands at the last second to intercept it (much to the chagrin of Felicity’s mother, who had put forth much more of an effort to attempt to catch it). At the SOS look from her friend at the realization of what she had gotten herself into by catching the bouquet, Felicity started to release her from the potentially awkward situation by saying, “You don’t have to--”

She didn’t miss the glance that Lena sent Kara before cutting her off with a shrug and walking over to the chair at the center of the dance floor that she had just vacated, “Tradition is tradition.”

Felicity leaned into Oliver to whisper something into his ear and he bypassed tossing the garter in favor of presenting it to a very flustered looking Kara.

She watched as Kara knelt in front of Lena and lifted the hem of her dress. Teasing, flirty expressions had replaced their initial reluctant ones as they put on quite the entertaining display.

It brought a smile to her face and took her back to being in the same position with Oliver at Tommy and Laurel’s wedding. Their relationship had been so new but Oliver had confided months later that even then he had already started to think about their future together.

Garter in place, Kara stood up and extended her hands to help Lena stand up as people started to migrate to their tables for dinner.

After they ate and the dancing began Lena sought her out and swatted her on the shoulder, “You orchestrated that, didn’t you?”

“Girl, you’ve seen me throw in those Girls Inc. charity softball games. I am occasionally capable of stellar aim, and it is always purely accidental.”

Oliver’s eyebrows lifted and she knew he was going to have questions later about her “brief and illustrious softball career.”

_**Emphasis on the air quotes. Lots of air quotes around every word in that phrase.**_

Lena laughed, “Valid.”

Kara nudged her girlfriend teasingly, “You can’t judge. Someone needs to work on her catching skills before my sister’s wedding next month.”

Lena crossed her arms, “Umm excuse me, my reflexes were like lightning.”

“These flowers were this close to taking one of your beautiful eyes out.” Kara addressed Oliver, “Thanks for not making me fight for the garter—“ She looked back at Lena affectionately and added, “Even though I would’ve gladly thrown elbows for you babe.”

They continued to flirt and she and Oliver slipped off to join the dancing. Leaning her head on his chest, she looked around with a smile. Thea was dancing with Will and it looked like Allie was encouraging a shy Zoe Ramirez to step away from her dad and join them. John was sitting off to the side talking to Barry, their daughters fast asleep in their laps. They had purposefully picked an earlier time for the wedding for the sake of the kids involved, but the excitement of their flower girl duties must’ve wiped them out.

Scanning the room as they turned, she made eye contact with Caitlin, who had started having contractions she swore were Braxton Hicks while they were taking pictures earlier.
“You better hope you’re right. I checked for you and the nearest hospital is an hour away. We’re kind of out in the middle of nowhere.”

“I haven’t delivered a baby since medical school but between Tommy and I, I think we could pull it off if necessary,” Sara chimed in. “Right in the middle of the dance floor.”

Felicity raised a questioning eyebrow that was responded to with a reassuring shake of her head.

“I’m good,” her friend mouthed and she breathed a sigh of relief.

She saw Moira and Walter dancing… and her parents shooting each other looks from across the room that had her rolling her eyes. Whatever was going on there was best just ignored for her sanity.

Noticing that Alena had taken her suggestion to wear sneakers, her tired feet felt jealous.

When Moira requested a dance with Oliver, she danced a song with Walter, then her mom, William, John, before ending up doing the Macarena with her bridesmaids. Barefoot.

On her way to get a drink after excusing herself for a break, she encountered the two guests who had probably traveled the furthest to be there.

“Mr. and Mrs. Everly!” Felicity greeted them with a warm hug. “I’m so glad you could make it.” She waved Oliver over to introduce him to the couple, “Babe, this is Allison’s parents.”

Following the death of her sweet friend and daughter’s namesake, she had kept in contact over the years with her parents, even after moving across the country. They always sent Allie birthday cards and enjoyed seeing pictures of her on Facebook. When she had been making the guest list for the wedding, she knew she wanted to include them even if they would have to decline the invitation due to the distance. She was pleasantly surprised when she received their affirmative RSVP.

Oliver shook Mr. Everly’s hand, “It’s nice to meet you.” When he extended a hand to Mrs. Everly, he was drawn in for a hug and Felicity heard her say, “She has the biggest heart, you are a lucky man.”

“I know,” he replied with a smile, releasing the woman and resting a hand on Felicity’s lower back. “My wife has told me a lot about your daughter, I know it’s been a few years now, but I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Thank you.” Mrs. Everly sighed and gave her a sad smile, “She would’ve loved to be here. Time heals, but special days like this make us miss her a little extra.”

Felicity leaned into Oliver’s touch, knowing that was the case for him in regards to his father.

“Well, we won’t keep you from the rest of your guests, but it was so good to see you dear. Mazel Tov.”

When they walked away, she and Oliver were approached by her mom, “It’s time for the cake.”

“Mmmm this is good. Maybe we should’ve gone with this one.”

Oliver fed her another bite of the raspberry and cream cake before taking a bite himself. The bakery they had their cake tasting at had sent them home with leftovers and they were in bed watching a Travel Channel special on Aruba and second guessing their decision.
“Maybe…”

“Hmmm. Give me some more of the chocolate fudge.”

He obliged her and she sighed blissfully as the rich chocolate frosting hit her taste buds, “Oh no, we definitely knew what we were doing when we picked this.”

“We’re on our game with this wedding planning. Basically professionals.” She laughed and he asked, “Tomorrow’s our meeting with the caterer, right?”

“Yep.” She groaned, “By the time we’re done planning this wedding I’m not going to fit into anything I bought the other day to wear on our honeymoon.”

“Oh? Are you going to show me this stuff you bought?”

“Nope.” She tapped his chest playfully, “Not until we’re in Aruba. I’ve got to have some surprises for you.”

Setting aside the cake box, he leaned in for a kiss that tasted like chocolate and raspberries and him.

She had made Oliver promise that he would not smash cake all over her face but she did not make any promises herself. Extending a bite to feed him, she made sure to make a mess of it.

He glared and she laughed, leaning in to kiss the corner of his mouth and sweep chocolate frosting up with her tongue.

“Sorry,” she whispered unapologetically before kissing him again.

Cake signaled a winding down of the festivities and they each sought out a few people they hadn’t gotten a chance to talk to yet before it would be time to make their grand exit.

“Are you two going to be okay being in charge for the next two weeks?” Felicity asked Alena and Curtis.

“Yes boss.” Alena gave her a hug, “Just relax and have fun, we’ve got everything under control.”

“If you try to call us, we will ignore you,” Curtis added. “Don’t even send an email. You’ve been working your ass off for months, you deserve a total break from the office.”

“O-kay.” She smiled appreciatively, “Thank you.”

They walked off to rejoin their dates and she looked around for Oliver, finding him with Allie and Will.

“Will you bring me back a souvenir from Aruba?” Allie asked, clinging to Oliver sleepily.

She had been going strong all evening on the dance floor but Felicity could tell that she was going to be falling fast asleep as soon as she got in the car to go to Moira and Walter’s. Her in-laws were watching the kids for the first week of their honeymoon before Will went to Samantha’s and Allie came home to stay with Donna for the second week.

“One of those "someone who loves me went to Aruba and all I got was this stupid shirt” t-shirts?”

The exasperated look on Allie’s face was like looking in a mirror. The older her daughter got, the more she resembled her in, not just her looks, but her mannerisms too.
“Noooo, something cool. Like a big seashell.”

Oliver laughed, “Okay sunshine. I’ll look for a cool seashell for you.”

Allie squeezed him tightly and Felicity heard her say, “Thanks daddy. Have fun. Don’t get sunburned.”

For someone who had spent her entire eight and a half years of life without someone to affix the title to, she had already slipped so easily into the habit of referring to him as her dad. Of course there were still proceedings that needed to be taken care of when they got home from their honeymoon to make it legally official, but hearing him say yes to being her dad was all she had needed.

He kissed her cheek before setting her down and turning to Will to give him a goodbye hug.

Meanwhile, Allie noticed her and came over to ask, “Did you love your wedding?”

“I did. It was pretty perfect, don’t you think?”

“Yeah. Grandma did a good job.”

Felicity nodded in agreement, “She did.”

“Are you going to miss me while you’re in Aruba?”

“Only just a little bit,” she teased. “Are going to miss me?”

“Only just a little bit,” she echoed. “Grandma said Raisa is going to make homemade cinnamon rolls for us for breakfast tomorrow.”

“It sounds like you’re going to be very well taken care of. Have fun with your grandparents, but make sure you keep up with all your homework too.”

“I will,” she promised and Felicity bent down to give her a hug goodbye.

Two weeks was longer than she had ever been separated from her, but she knew she was leaving her in good hands.

Releasing her daughter, she pressed a kiss to the top of her head before letting her go to join Will in finding Moira and Walter.

Oliver came over and looped an arm around her waist, “You ready to go? I think everyone’s waiting for us outside now and it’s pretty cold so…”

“So we should definitely go before someone gets hypothermia,” she finished with a nod. “If this was Four Weddings, that would probably lose us some points.”

He laughed and slipped his jacket off for her to wear. Hand in hand, they made their way to the entrance to the winery that their getaway car was parked outside of and stepped out into a glittering display of light. She assumed their photographers were standing somewhere at the end of the walkway surrounded by their guests holding sparklers in order to capture what her mom had declared were her favorite kinds of pictures.

It was cold. Bitterly cold. So while they did their best to make sure they weren’t going too fast for shutter speed, they did kind of hustle to the car. Oliver’s Porsche had been emblazoned with “Just Married” across the back windshield in glow in the dark window paint so it was visible even under the starry night sky. He opened the door for her and she gave one last wave before gathering up her
dress and ducking into the passenger seat.

Oliver slipped into the driver’s seat and reached for her hand, drawing it up to press a kiss to her knuckles.

“This is how it all started. You and me, in these seats,” he reminisced as he shifted the car into gear and started to drive away. He took a hold of her hand again, intertwining their fingers. “Except now I can hold your hand without freaking you out.”

She definitely would’ve freaked out if he had tried to hold her hand then. Now she never wanted him to let go.

“You want to go to the Hub City Target, Mayor Handsome? Take a little trip down memory lane?”

He huffed in amusement, “No. I’ve got other plans for tonight.”
hi everyone!! sorry this took me a lot longer to get up than I was anticipating but I realized pretty quickly that wrapping up this story in a short epilogue was just not going to happen so I needed some more time to write. so you can get right into it I saved my long A/N for the end. enjoy!!

One Year Later // February

Felicity stood in her office’s private bathroom and took a deep breath as she snuck a peek at the test in her hand.

Two lines.

Despite the fact that two lines was what she and Oliver had been—uhh… working on, for the past two months--and she had been almost 98% certain she was pregnant even before she picked up the test on her way into work--her knee jerk reaction was panic, brought on by the memories of the last time she found herself holding a positive pregnancy test.

But then she looked up in the mirror and saw, not the scared girl who had stared back at her in that dorm bathroom, but the woman she had become since then. The woman who knew she was strong enough to be a single mother—but also the woman who had found someone she knew wouldn’t leave her a single mother. She didn’t have to convince herself of that in order to build up the courage to tell him the news.

A smile spread across her face and she whispered to her reflection, “You’re pregnant.”

Leaving the bathroom, she checked her schedule with her assistant to make sure she didn’t have anything to attend to in the next hour before heading for the garage to drive over to City Hall. She didn’t know what Oliver’s schedule was that morning but she didn’t want to wait until later when they had both gotten home to tell him, so she hoped he wouldn’t be in a meeting when she arrived.

While she was driving over she got a call from Caitlin and she pressed the button to accept it through her car’s Bluetooth system.

“Hey Cait.”

“Hi Felicity. I was just calling to check and see if you were going to have Will with us next week for Danielle’s birthday party. I’m trying to get the final count for cake…”

“Yes, it’s his week with us so all four of us will be there.”

Five of us.

“Okay, great! We’re looking forward to seeing everyone.”

Caitlin continued on about how she couldn’t believe her baby girl was already turning one, and how
big she was getting. Unconsciously one of Felicity’s hands slipped from the steering wheel to rest on her stomach. Holding in the news was hard, but she knew it was too soon to tell anyone but Oliver. They’d get to tell all of their friends before long.

The receptionist for the mayoral offices was on the phone when she arrived and glanced up at her just long enough to wave her through without formality. Her heart started to pound as she approached Oliver’s doors. John was absent from his usual post but she could hear that he was inside talking to Oliver, meaning her husband thankfully wasn’t tied up in official business at the moment.

She knocked lightly before stepping inside and the two men turned to face her.

“Hey honey,” Oliver walked over to press a kiss to her temple and hug her to his side. “This is a nice surprise…”

“And I’m about to top it,” she muttered under her breath, running her fingers down the lapel of his suit jacket. “John, could you give us a moment alone?”

After he had dismissed himself, she looked up at Oliver, “I have something to tell you and I didn’t want to do it over the phone.”

She felt him tense expectantly, “Okay…”

“I’m pregnant.”

“You’re pregnant,” he echoed.

A grin spread across his face as the surprise faded and the meaning of those words registered in his brain. In a few months he would be holding a baby, a new member of their family. Excitedly, he swept her up in his arms to spin her around. When he set her back down on her feet, tears were running down her face and he retracted his hands guiltily.

“I’m sorry, did I hurt you or—“

“No, no, no,” she assured him, shaking her head. Swiping at her tears, she clarified, “You’re just—you’re excited and that’s a new experience for me so…” She gestured at her face, “Happy tears.”

His smile returned and he cupped her face, “I am so excited.”

She rolled up onto her toes to kiss him and he could feel her lips turned up into a smile. Later he might start to freak out over his lack of experience with being the father of a baby, a toddler, a kindergartner…. but for now he could only share in her joy. He was determined to make up for everything her ex failed to be for her during her first pregnancy.

She reached up to curl her fingers around his wrists, framing them into their own little bubble, “We have to keep this between us for now, okay? It’s still really early.”

His heart clenched at the reason behind her caution and he remembered the grief he had experienced when he thought Samantha had lost their baby--despite his complicated emotions over the situation. The thought of going through that again--

“Hey,” Felicity’s soft voice pulled him out of his memories. “I’m sure everything is going to be perfectly fine. I didn’t have any complications with Allie. Don’t stress yourself out. I just know how you are about things that you’re excited for, you’re going to want to tell everyone. And I think we should hold off on that for a little bit.”
“Okay.” He pressed his forehead against hers, “Our secret.”

March

When Felicity got home from work she noticed an Amazon package sitting on the front porch and brought it inside. She didn’t remember ordering anything, so she figured it must’ve been Oliver. Sitting the box on the kitchen counter, she found a knife to open it up and pulled out a stack of various books about pregnancy and taking care of babies. She had long since accepted defeat in her efforts to get him on the Kindle train.

She was flipping absentmindedly through, “What to Expect When You’re Expecting,” when Oliver arrived with the kids after picking them up from their after-school program.

“Did you guys have a good day?” she asked Allie and Will as they headed immediately for the pantry in search of snacks.

“Yep!” they replied in unison.

“They’re hungry. I’m sure you’ll get more elaboration later,” Oliver remarked, pulling her towards him for a kiss.

“You do remember that I’ve done this before, right?” she asked when they broke apart. She gestured at the stack of books, “I know what to expect.”

He rested his hands on her shoulders, “I know you do. But I don’t.” Dipping his head, he added, “I don’t want to feel useless.”

“Well, the bar for being my baby daddy has been set extremely low so…” She laughed dryly and when he frowned, she felt bad for being so flippant. “So I appreciate you. Very much.”

His thumbs rubbed circles on her upper arms, “I want to take good care of you.”

She gave him a flirty smile and a little sway of her hips, “You always take good care of me.”

In a lot of really un-sexy situations too. She was relieved that having to hold her hair up and rub her back every morning while she puked her guts out for the past few weeks hadn’t been a turn off for him yet. Morning sickness was her nemesis.

The kids returned from the pantry after successfully obtaining snacks and she put the books back in the box before they were able to catch a glimpse. She and Oliver had decided on making the announcement to their friends and family after her first ultrasound, which was in less than two weeks now, and she was practically bursting with anticipation to let them in on their secret.

April

“Felicity?”

Oliver looked up at his wife’s name being called and Felicity squeezed his hand excitedly. They
stood up to follow the nurse back to the room for her appointment and as she was being prepped, he bounced his knee with nervous anticipation. Everything he had been reading indicated how important this first appointment was. They should hopefully get to hear their baby’s heartbeat and have confirmation that things were progressing normally.

Felicity reached for his hand again once she was settled on the table and her doctor began the ultrasound.

“You hear that?” the doctor asked after a minute or two, during which he wasn’t sure he took a single breath.

Felicity grinned, relief evident on her face, “The heartbeat.”

“Yes.” She nodded. “Everything sounds good to me.”

He pressed a kiss to the back of Felicity’s hand. Hearing the heartbeat of their baby made everything feel even more real, which had the surprising effect of actually making him feel more calm than he had been during the past few weeks.

“I remember my first appointment with Allie,” Felicity reminisced as the doctor continued the ultrasound.

“Did you go by yourself?”

It was a stupid question and he regretted asking it as soon as the words were out.

“Of course. At that point the only person who knew I was pregnant was in prison.” Out of the corner of his eye he caught the doctor’s eyebrows lift in surprise, but she kept her focus on the screen in front of her and didn’t comment. “Well, I guess Myron knew too but… yeah. I went by myself.”

He stroked her hand with his thumb, “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. It’s not like it was your fault, and I actually ended up meeting a really sweet lady in the waiting room who gave me the encouragement I really needed to hear.”

“You here all by yourself honey?”

She looked up from her nervous clasping and unclasping of her hands to the woman who had spoken to her. Her face was warm and friendly, and she was clearly a lot further along in her pregnancy than she was.

Hormones were making her weepy all the time as of late and she felt tears prickling her eyes as she nodded, “Yes.”

The woman looked to the vacant seat next to her, “Mind if I take this seat?”

She shook her head and the woman eased herself down before introducing herself, “I’m Macy. Like the department store.”

She sniffled, “Felicity.”

“Nice to meet you Felicity.”

Macy possessed a maternal and comforting presence that settled Felicity’s nervous energy as they made small talk. It was nice not to be sitting alone in the waiting room
watching the seconds tick by slowly. She had arrived for her appointment far too early but she had been worried about missing the bus and being late.

“Do you think I’m crazy?” Felicity asked, after giving Macy the abbreviated version of how she ended up in the waiting room. She glossed over the more painful parts, but it took a little bit of the weight off of her chest to let someone else in on her secret. “For wanting to believe that I can handle this?”

Macy patted her round belly, “This is my eighth. A lot of people think *I’m* crazy. I know because after the sixth they started telling me to my face. People love to have opinions about everyone else’s lives. I don’t think you’re crazy, but even if I did, that doesn’t mean you have to let me make you doubt what you want.”

Felicity was still a little hung up on, “Eight?”

She was still in the throws of her morning sickness and she could not imagine repeating the experience seven more times.

“Yep. My husband and I were both only children with parents who worked a lot. We had grown tired of quiet homes. Maybe we’re crazy, but we’ve got a lot of love in our family. A lot of fun.” Macy took her hand and squeezed it reassuringly, “You might not be feeling strong right now because your whole life is changing, and that’s scary, but it took a lot of strength to choose what you wanted without anyone supporting you. I think you’re going to be able to handle all this just fine.”

His eyes widened, “Eight kids?”

“Yeah. Don’t get any ideas. We’re not that crazy.”

Felicity took a sip of her water before looking around at her family gathered around the dinner table. She reached for Oliver’s hand, intertwining their fingers and starting with, “So, I have an announcement to make—”

Her mom let out a high pitched scream that startled Allie into throwing her fork. Bruce started barking at all the commotion and Will called for him to sit.

“I’m going to have another grandbaby!” her mom squealed.

Felicity shot her a look, “Is that the only news that a woman can have?”

“Well… no.” Her mom clapped her hands together excitedly and bounced in her seat, “But I have a mother’s intuition, so I just know. This explains so much of your odd behavior lately…”

Rolling her eyes at her mom, she addressed Allie and Will, who were looking at their grandmother like she had lost her mind, “Your grandma’s intuition is right. You’re going to have a new little brother or sister.”

Allie perked up, “When?”

“October.”

She pouted, “That’s a long time to wait.”
Oliver chuckled, “October will be here before you know it.”

Maybe for them. She remembered how time had seemed to somehow pass simultaneously lightning quick and at a snail’s pace when she was pregnant before, and how impatient she was by the time Allie’s due date rolled around.

Noticing that Will had yet to comment, she looked to her step-son and inquired tentatively, “Will…?”

He tilted his head thoughtfully, “I think that the room next to mine would be good for the nursery.”

Oliver squeezed her hand and a smile spread across her face, “I think you’re right.”

After dinner she shot a text to her friends to let them in on the news and her phone quickly lit up with a flurry of responses.

**IRIS:** aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

**IRIS:** I’M SO EXCITED FOR YOU BABE!!!

**LENA:** OMG

**DINAH:** Congratulations!!!!

**LENA:** I love you I’m so happy for you

**DINAH:** lol I guess this explains why you ran out of sunrise yoga to puke the other weekend

**FELICITY:** HEY! That was not supposed to make it into the group text

**DINAH:** love youuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu

**LENA:** Kara says congrats too!

**CAITLIN:** YAY!!! So excited!!!

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**May**

“Your requested snacks m’lady,” Oliver announced, sitting on the edge of their bed and handing her a pint of mint chip ice cream and a bag of Cool Ranch Doritos. She had been hit with the munchies while they were in bed watching The Great British Bake Off and he’d been happy to run out to the store for her despite the late hour. “Although, you know, I read that a healthy diet during pregnancy-”

She glared at him and he wisely shut up.

“My junk food cravings didn’t mess up my first kid. And I do drink those superfood smoothies you make me for breakfast so…”

He frowned, “What’s wrong with my smoothies?”

“Nothing. They’re delicious.” She fed him a bite of ice cream. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” He watched her as she crushed Doritos and sprinkled them on top of her ice cream. “But that is gross.”
She licked Dorito dust off of her fingertips, “Don’t knock it until you try it.”

He wrinkled up his nose in disgust before lifting her shirt and pressing a kiss to her stomach where she was just starting to show.

“You’re ruining your mom’s taste buds,” he whispered and she shook her head in fond amusement.

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**July**

“So what color do you think we should go with?” Oliver asked Will.

The two of them were at the home improvement store looking at an overwhelming array of paint chips. Felicity was in New York with her friends for their annual trip to the tech conference and he wanted to surprise her with the nursery being painted when she got back. Allie was having a sleepover at a friend’s house, but he had enlisted Will to help him with the project.

“Yellow,” his son answered.

“Yeah?”

Will reached for a card that was a pale buttery sunshine yellow, “This one. It’s a happy color. I think Felicity will like it.”

“I agree. Good pick.”

When they got home, they taped off the walls in the bedroom that had been designated for the nursery and got started on their task.

“Dad?” Will spoke up after a few minutes of silent focus.

“Yeah bud?”

“Umm… I was just thinking that uhh—never mind.”

Oliver paused his painting, “You sure?”

Will absentmindedly brushed paint across the wall and muttered quietly, “Are you going to love the new baby more because Felicity’s the mom?”

“Of course not,” he answered without hesitation. His son didn’t look entirely convinced so Oliver set down his roller and placed his hands on his shoulders, “Do you remember what I said after you first met Allie?”

Will looked down at his toes and shook his head no.

“This family isn’t complete without you,” he reminded him. “Just because things weren’t meant to be between your mom and I, doesn’t mean I love you less or I’m trying to replace you with new kids. Do you…” He knew Will had been on board with the adoption, but he was worried that his question had come from already feeling second rate to Allie. “Do you feel like I love your sister more than you?”

Will shrugged and kept his eyes glued to the ground, “No. I guess it was a stupid question.”

“It’s not stupid if it’s something that was bothering you. You can talk to me about anything, you
know that right?"

Will finally looked back up at him and nodded, “Yeah.”

He smiled and squeezed his shoulder, “Good. Now c’mon, let’s finish this first coat of paint and then we’ll see if Tommy wants to hit up Big Belly for lunch with us.”

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**August**

Felicity assessed her reflection in the mirror, trying to decide if she was feeling confident enough to wear the bikini she had picked out. The majority of her pregnancy with Allie had occurred during the dead of winter, when she could drown herself in oversized sweaters. Iris said she was the cutest pregnant woman ever, but she wasn’t entirely sure of the merit of the statement.

Oliver stepped up behind her and brushed her blonde waves off of her shoulder to trail kisses down her neck before resting his hands on her growing bump, his thumbs stroking her bare skin. “You ready to go down to the beach?”

They were at the lake house for a long weekend with the Diggle clan, including an also pregnant Lyla. Their friend had found out she was pregnant with their second not long after she had.

She fiddled with the strap of her suit, “Maybe?”

Reading her mind, he dropped a kiss to her shoulder and hummed against her skin, “You look gorgeous.”

“Okay but that’s only because your brain has been wired by evolution to be ultra attracted to me when I’m pregnant so you’ll want to get me pregnant again and our species will continue to multiply.”

He looked up at their reflections in amusement at her comment and then pressed a kiss to her cheek. “Whatever you say babe.”

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**September**

Oliver walked into Felicity’s office with Chinese take-out to find her frowning at her computer screen with her feet propped up on an extra chair she had dragged over to her desk. Her shoes had been discarded, revealing her toes that he had painted with hot pink polish the night before. She kept too busy a schedule to make appointments at a salon but still liked to keep a revolving array of colors freshly painted on her fingernails and toenails. Once she had stopped being able to reach her own feet, Allie had given him some pointers and he had taken over giving his wife pedicures.

“Everything okay?” he asked, getting her attention.

She looked up at him and her frown instantly turned to a smile, “It is now.”

Easing herself up from her desk, she walked over to him and he set their lunch down so he could lean in for a kiss. An gesture that was getting harder and harder the closer it got to her due date with her belly putting more and more space between them.

“I’m barefoot, pregnant, and coding a new facial recognition software program for the SCPD. That’s how you men like us women, right?” Felicity teased when they broke apart, running her fingers
down the length of his tie.

Oliver shook his head in amusement, “Swollen feet aside, how are you feeling?”

“I’m fine.” She waved a hand dismissively. “I worked as a barista when I was pregnant with Allie, remember? This job is nothing compared to dealing with the morning coffee rush. I was just getting stuck on a little snag, so your timing is perfect for a break.”

He sat down on one of her couches and she joined him, swinging her feet into his lap and sighing blissfully when he started to massage them. She rested her hands on her stomach and he watched her eyes light up.

“She’s kicking.”

They had decided to keep the gender a surprise, so he raised an eyebrow, “She?”

“It’s going to be a girl,” she asserted. “I know what a girl feels like.”

Reaching for his wrist, she positioned his hand over the spot where he could feel their baby moving around.

He grinned, “You’re right. She kicks like you do in your sleep.”

That earned him a glare and he patted her stomach affectionately before dutifully resuming her foot rub.

She closed her eyes in contentment before remarking, “We need to start narrowing down our list of names…”

They had a list on the fridge at home, with contributions from various family members and friends whenever they stopped by, that had gotten a little out of control. Although some could be easily eliminated--

“Sara, I love you, but we’re not naming the baby after you. Between you and Sara Diggle, we already have enough confusion, we can’t have three.”

“Saffron? Kale? Did this accidentally get mistaken for a grocery list at some point?”

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October

On any other night she would be thrilled to be attending a fundraising gala for the Star City Public Science Museum. It was one of the few fundraising events she could get excited about. However, the littlest Miss Queen had become quite the womb gymnast during the past week and she was wishing she was at home instead of at a fancy dinner. Oliver wouldn’t have gone without her though and he needed to get out of the house. He was nesting even harder than she was and she could not watch him rearrange the entire nursery again. So she had put on a pretty dress and mustered up the energy to make an appearance. The event organizers had sent extra tickets to the mayoral office and they had talked Dinah, Thea, and Tommy into coming with them. Tommy being the easiest to convince.

“Laurel’s away speaking at her Alma Mater so it’s either stay home and eat take-out sushi alone or have some free steak. I’m in.”

As was the usual with the various fundraising events they attended, Oliver was asked to say a few words.
“I’d ask my wife to come up and join me, she’d have something far more intelligent to say about the importance of science education, but she’s already informed me that she’s not leaving her chair.”

She shot him a look for exposing her. Out of the corner of her eye she noticed her friends at the table exchange their own looks before taking a long drink from their glasses and she raised an eyebrow in confusion.

“What was that for?” she whispered as Oliver went on with his speech.

They all looked at her in what was obviously feigned confusion.

“What are you talking about?” Thea whispered back.

“Why’d you guys all look at each other like that?”

“We didn’t look at each other,” Dinah claimed.

She gave them a skeptical look before turning her attention back to her husband who was still addressing the crowd. “Felicity was telling me the other day….”

Her tablemates all took another sip of their drinks with amused smiles on their faces and she let out an exasperated huff.

“Will someone please let me in on the secret?” she demanded, a little too loudly.

Someone at the table next to them shushed her and she tossed the woman an, ‘I’m the Mayor’s very pregnant wife, do you really think it’s a good idea to shush me?’ look.

“We have a drinking game,” Tommy finally cracked, earning him a slap on either shoulder from both Dinah and Thea.

“What kind of drinking game?” she narrowed her eyes at him.

“The kind that makes all these fundraising events we have to go to more bearable,” Dinah muttered.

“You don’t have to go to them,” she pointed out. “It’s just nice to not make Oliver go alone and the food is always good. Now explain the drinking game.”

“Why? You want in?” Thea teased, reaching over and laying a hand on her bump. “Because for the sake of my future niece or nephew, I’m going to have to bar you from participating.”

“I don’t want in, I just want to know what the rules are,” she insisted.

They all exchanged a look before Thea explained sheepishly, “Whenever Oliver mentions you in one of his speeches—or if we just overhear him talking about you to someone anytime during the night—we drink. Extra if he specifically refers to you as, ‘my wife.’ It’s a surefire way to get buzzed.”

“Or totally plastered,” Dinah added. “Let’s not forget the firefighters gala right after they announced to everyone they were pregnant and she had just had her first feature in Wired.” They all winced simultaneously at the memory. “You were away on business or else you definitely would have caught on to us that night.”

She rolled her eyes, “You guys are so ridiculous, there’s no way he talks about me that much.”

The three of them looked at her incredulously and she blushed as the sound of clapping filled the
room at the conclusion of Oliver’s speech that she had barely heard any of.

When Oliver returned to his seat, she turned to him, “They have a drinking game.”

“What?”

“They have a drinking game they play at fundraising events. Tommy, Thea, Dinah. They drink when you talk about me. You’re going to destroy their livers.”

He slung an arm across her shoulders and addressed their tablemates, “My apologies that I am my wife’s biggest fan and I love to talk about her and her accomplishments.”

Felicity beamed and they all took a drink.

Felicity peeked over the back of the couch at Oliver, “Oh by the way, while you are at your meeting tonight, Dinah and I are taking the kids to go play laser tag.”

Concern etched his face, “Are you allowed to do that while you’re pregnant? What if it makes you go into labor?”

“Oh it better.” She patted her swollen belly. “Because I am done being pregnant.”

He walked over to her and rested a hand on her shoulder, “Honey…. I understand, but--”

Raising an eyebrow and covering his hand with one of hers, she interrupted him, “Oh you do? You understand what it’s like to be almost 42 weeks pregnant?”

She knew he was just looking out for her and the baby, and she loved him for it, but she still couldn’t resist messing with him.


“Never,” she vowed.

“--and please call me immediately if this plan of yours ends up being successful. I’ll have my phone on.”

“Of course.” She tilted her head up and he leaned down to give her a kiss. “You have fun at your meeting,” she teased as he walked out of the room, laughing when she heard him mutter under his breath in response, “please go into labor.”

Dinah arrived fifteen minutes later and they all loaded up in the car to head into the city. Before pulling out of the garage, she double checked that her bag for the hospital had everything she was going to want. The bag had been packed for over a week in anticipation and she was feeling good about the chances of it finally being needed.

They arrived at LaserQuest and she drew lots of stares as they played, but this method of inducing labor was definitely more fun than the walking up and down her apartment building’s stairs method she had used with Allie.

After a few games, she was exhausted and starting to think that tonight wasn’t going to be the night after all. She was having contractions, but they were irregular and not very strong.

“Alright team. What do you say we head to Big Belly for milkshakes and fries before calling it a
night?"

“It didn’t work?” Allie asked, her shoulders slumping in disappointment. “You’re not going to have the baby tonight?”

She shook her head, “I don’t think so. Your brother or sister is being rather stubborn.” Tapping her nose affectionately, she added, “Like someone else I know.”

Out in the parking lot however, Felicity stopped abruptly and reached for Dinah to stop herself from doubling over in pain.

“Mommy!” Allie cried out, her voice panicked.

“It’s okay, I’m okay,” she managed to hiss through her teeth as she weathered the contraction. Much stronger than any of the previous ones. To Dinah, she started to add, “I need you to--” before groaning and gripping her arm even tighter.

“Will, call your dad,” Dinah instructed, handing him her phone before helping her the rest of the way across the parking lot to the car.

When she got settled into her seat, she rested her head back on the readrest and took slow, deep breaths, enjoying the reprieve between contractions since she had a feeling it was going to be brief. Her labor had went from zero to one hundred with Allie and baby number two seemed to want to follow the same procedure. Hearing Will talking to Oliver and Dinah reassuring Allie that she was going to be alright brought a smile to her face. Dinah had been on duty the night she went into labor with Allie and she remembered how alone and scared she had felt, so she was grateful for her friend’s calm presence the second time around. Now she just needed her husband.

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When he felt his phone buzz in his pocket he almost jumped out of his seat. Slipping it out inconspicuously to see that the caller was Dinah, he leaned into Quentin to whisper, “I’m going to need you to handle the rest of this. I think Felicity’s going into labor.”

“Something to share Mr. Mayor?” Councilman Waters asked, clearly annoyed that something had drawn his attention from the man's thrilling presentation.

He couldn’t resist the grin that spread across his face, “My wife is having a baby.” Even if that wasn’t the reason for Dinah’s call, it was certainly something that required his attention more. He shoved away the dark thoughts that she was calling because something was wrong. Standing up from his chair and reflexively buttoning his suit jacket, he informed them, “So if you’ll excuse me, I need to get to Starling General. Quentin will report back to me the details of what I missed.”

Not waiting for their approval--that he didn’t need anyway--he hit accept on Dinah’s call and ducked out of the conference room.

“Dinah?”

“No, it’s me,” his son answered. “Dinah is helping Felicity.”

His heart picked up it’s pace, “Is she okay?”

“Uhh yeah. I think so. She said she was.” There were muffled voices in the background that he couldn’t make out and then Will was saying, “She wants to talk to you.”

He heard Felicity’s voice come over the line, “Hey baby. How’s your meeting going?”
Rolling his eyes, he ignored her question, “I’m on my way out to the car right now. Am I going to the hospital?”

“Yeah. It’s time.” She took a sharp intake of breath. “It’s definitely time.”

When he got out to his car with John in tow, his friend extended a hand, “Keys.”

“What?”

“Give me your keys, I’m driving.”

“Why?”

“Because I remember how crazy I was the night Sara was born and you getting into a car accident is not what Felicity needs right now.”

Unable to provide a reasonable argument, he tossed him the keys and tried not to get mad when he had the audacity to actually stop at red lights and not exceed ten miles above the speed limit. They ended up arriving at the hospital at the same time as Dinah. He recognized Felicity’s red SUV that she was driving pulling up to the front entrance.

As soon as John had pulled to a complete stop (possibly a millisecond before) he hopped out of the car and jogged toward them.

After being reassured three times by Felicity that she was fine, he addressed the kids to remind them of the plan, “Okay, Dinah is going to take you and Allie home and then—”

“What? No, I’m not leaving Felicity,” Will protested, shooting a concerned glance at his step-mom as she was being helped into a wheelchair by a nurse.

“Buddy, I don’t think she wants an audience for this. You will get to see her and the baby tomorrow morning after you and your sister get some sleep.”

He reluctantly agreed and after Allie gave her mom a kiss on the cheek, they loaded back up into the SUV to go with Dinah.

“Keep me posted,” she requested.

“Of course.” He gave her a hug. “Thanks for your help tonight.”

Sliding into the driver’s seat, she smiled at him, “Anytime. Good luck!”

Following Felicity into the hospital, he tried to be the calm presence he knew she needed to be even though internally he could feel his nerves ratcheting up. They made it up to one of the labor and delivery rooms and he paced as she was attended to by the nurses.

“Your doctor will be here any minute now to check and see how far along you are,” he heard one of them say and he stopped his pacing to come stand by his wife’s bedside.

Felicity nodded before smiling up at her, “You probably don’t remember but, nine years ago, you were here when I gave birth to my daughter.”

Recognition passed across the nurse’s face, “I actually do remember. Probably because you nearly broke my hand.” The nurse glanced over at him, “She has a strong grip, I hope you’re ready for this.”
Oliver reached out his hand so Felicity could take a hold of it, “I’m ready.”

Three hours, twenty-two minutes, and ten seconds later, Olivia Megan Queen was officially born and he felt his heart expand in his chest at the sight of her. Though he would’ve been happy with any outcome, he had been secretly hoping for a girl the entire time. Her name was one that he and Felicity had arrived at a few days ago, a nod to both of them.

After cutting the umbilical cord, and while the nurses attended to their tiny daughter, he reached out to brush some of Felicity’s sweaty hair out of her face as she leaned back against the pillows in exhausted relief. “You were amazing babe.”

“Thanks,” she sighed, the corners of her mouth turning up into a smile as one of the nurses laid Olivia on her chest and covered them with a blanket. “Oh she’s perfect.”

“As if we’re capable of making anything less than,” he teased, dipping his head down to give her a kiss.

Felicity settled in to feed Olivia and he started to text their friends and family to let them know that everything had gone smoothly and mom and baby were doing well.

**OLIVER: your niece has finally made her grand arrival**

**OLIVER: I already thought my wife was a total badass but I have a whole new respect for her after that**

**THEA: lol**

**THEA: I’m at mom’s. should we just wait until morning to come in and see them?**

Oliver glanced over at his wife and daughter, wrapped up in a peaceful moment of bonding with each other and replied to his sister that it was probably best for her to wait. He finished sending off the last of his texts and returned his attention to his girls.

Felicity looked up at him, “Do you want to hold her now?” Uncertainty must’ve passed across his face, because she laughed softly. “Don’t be scared. Come here.”

Walking closer to the bed, he held out his arms and Felicity shook her head. “Take your shirt off first. She’ll want to feel your skin.”

He tugged his shirt over his head and she carefully handed Olivia over to him. Cradling her to his chest, he was struck all over again with how tiny she was. He pressed a featherlight kiss to the top of her head and released a sigh of relief when she didn’t immediately burst into tears. Maybe it was because Will had, understandably so, taken a while to warm up to him, there had been a part of him that was afraid she wasn’t going to like him.

“Thank you,” he whispered to Felicity.

“For what?”

“For giving me the chance to experience this.”

“You’re welcome.” She gave him a sleepy smile, her eyes lit up teasingly, “And thank you. You’ve been an excellent teammate these past nine months. Definitely would let you knock me up again.” Closing her eyes, she sighed, “Just not anytime soon.”
Hi Felicity,” John greeted her when she got up to Oliver’s office. He looked into Olivia’s car seat that she was carrying and spoke to her in an entertainingly pitched voice, “Hi Olivia.”

She gave him the awkward one armed hug that she could manage while juggling the car seat and diaper bag. “How are you doing? How’s Lyla?”

“She’s envious of you. Ready to be not pregnant. But she’s hanging in there.”

“Good. Tell her I said hi.” She tilted her head towards Oliver’s door. “Is he occupied?”

“Nope, head on in. He’ll be happy to see you.”

Going back to work had been hard on Oliver. He liked being at home taking care of her and Olivia, but eventually she had pushed him to go back. The city needed him too. She was still working from home, easing herself back into her responsibilities at the company, and for the most part she was enjoying it, but some days she needed to get out of the house. Like today.

John opened the door for her and Oliver’s face lit up when he looked up from some paperwork he was reading to see her.

“Hey.”

“Hey.” She took a step forward and set Olivia’s car seat onto the couch to get her unbuckled. “Mama needed to get out of the house, so we thought we’d come pay you a visit. Is this a bad time?”

Standing up from his desk, he came behind her and pressed a kiss to the top of her head, “Never.”

While he picked up Olivia, she pulled the sling they used to hold her out of her diaper bag and handed it over to him. When Allie was born it had taken her a million tries, various YouTube tutorials, and some help from Dinah to get the fabric wrapped correctly, but Oliver had somehow managed to master it on his first try. Much to her annoyance. That quickly faded when she saw how absolutely adorable it was to watch him walk around the house with their daughter cuddled up to his chest.

“Your shirt is going to get wrinkled,” she remarked belatedly, after he already had their daughter snug against him.

“I could not care less,” he said, more to Olivia than to her based on his tone of voice.

Shaking her head in amusement at how wrapped around her fingers he was, she pulled her laptop out. “Okay well if you’ve got her, I’m going to catch up on some emails. Just let me know if you need to actually get some work done and I’ll take her back.” He opened his mouth to protest and she reminded him with a teasing smile, “You’re not as good at multitasking as I am babe.”

Not that it was a bad thing. His single minded focus whenever he was with the kids was one of her favorite things about him. But it also meant he probably wasn’t going to be successfully conducting conference calls while feeding Olivia like she had done the day before.

“I will,” he consented with a sigh and she squeezed his bicep affectionately before settling down on his couch to get to work.

Looking up from her computer screen a little later, she saw Oliver standing at the window, talking to
Olivia in a low, soft voice. She couldn’t hear what he was saying, but it made her heart swell. Inconspicuously, she slipped out her phone to snap a picture before returning to her overflowing inbox.

The rest of the office must’ve caught word that baby Queen was in the building because Thea, Laurel, Rene, and Quentin all stopped by to dote at some point during the afternoon and she realized she probably would’ve gotten a lot more work done if she had just stayed at home. It was good to see all of them though.

When she finally got her unread emails down to zero, she stood up and walked into the conference room where Oliver and Thea were having a meeting, Olivia sleeping contently in her dad’s arms.

Rapping her knuckles lightly on the doorframe to get their attention, she announced, “I have to leave now to go pick Allie and Will up from school.” Oliver stood up reluctantly and carefully transferred Olivia into her arms to keep from waking her. “We’ll see you at home soon.”

“Okay. I shouldn’t be much longer here, and then I’m going to make a quick stop at the grocery store.” He gave her a parting kiss and she returned to the office to put Olivia in her carseat and gather up the rest of her things.

On her way past Oliver’s desk she paused to look at the array of framed pictures he had displayed. There was still the candid that had been taken when they attended their first baseball game together and he had thrown the first pitch. It was joined now by a big group photo from their wedding, a selfie of them in snorkeling gear they had taken during their honeymoon, and pictures of Allie and Will holding Olivia at the hospital.

The corners of her mouth turned up in a smile. A whole new life built together---and it was just getting started...

All because of some Legos.

Chapter End Notes

YES I know I glossed over a lot of stuff and there's a lot that could be written in those nine months but I wasn't trying to turn this epilogue into a full sequel lol. I still hope you enjoyed this little glimpse into where this family's life is headed and I thank you so so so much for your continued support as I wrote this story. This is my longest work yet and it was a big undertaking with everything I had going on in my personal life so I appreciate your patience as I was not as consistent with updating as I have been with other fics in the past. Before you ask, yes, there will be more from this 'verse. I love it and want to do a whole collection of bonus scenes. I need a break though first which is why I'll be moving on to my next AU which you can check my twitter for the synopsis of ;) @mo_writes

Thank you again for all of your comments, kudos, and tweets about this story over the past year. Y’all are an amazing fandom to write for :D

End Notes
Reviews literally make my day, I love to hear what you guys think! Also feel free to come chat with me over on tumblr mogirl97.tumblr.com or twitter @mo_writes :) I'll be updating this story once a week, on Sundays.

~Morgan

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