Echoes and Memories

by NoDecaff4Me

Summary

Felicity and Oliver are back in Star City after the events in Central City and have spent two blissful days alone like the newlyweds they are… But no matter how happy and joy-filled their days are the nights prove to be a whole different story...

Oliver finally decides to tell Felicity about that moment he saw her Earth-X alter ego and the nightmares he had been having since they came back home.

Notes

Happy belated Christmas everyone! I hope all of you got to spend a relaxing time with your families and loved ones (that is if you celebrated).

This one is for Nat (@mitsopoulaki on Twitter) who gently (not so much) encouraged me (yelled at me) to write this...
And a special Thank you to Lexi for taking the time to calm down my nerves by beta reading this. <3

See the end of the work for more notes

“Felicity?!” Oliver woke up to his own raspy voice calling out his girlfriend’s name. His wife’s name… It was the second night after their return from Central City and the second night Oliver
woke up to a nightmare only to find the place in bed beside him empty.

They had spent those two days holed up in the loft together talking and laughing, cooking and eating, kissing and making love… It felt like a little honeymoon only the two of them and Diggle knew about. And since they had already planned to stay a in Central City a little longer after the wedding, William was still with his grandparents for three more days.

There was nowhere to be, nothing to do and no obligations waiting for them. It was only the two of them, just like that time they left Star City together on an adventure of their own after they had defeated Ra’s - it only felt so much better.

Maybe it was because he could really appreciate it this time around. Love had never been the problem. Felicity was the love of his life and he knew she felt the same way about him. He knew that, he always had… but unlike the last time around, he was finally able to trust it.

Maybe it was also because they weren’t running away from reality anymore, unlike the last time. As much as he cherished the months they had spent in Ivy Town, he also knew it hadn’t been real, because that life was never for them. It hadn’t been them and it would never be. Their home was Star City with every ugly side and all the craziness it entailed, but he knew no matter what that they would be happy here. All three of them and he couldn’t wait to tell William the big news.

He knew Felicity was a little anxious about it, but he already knew that his son was crazy about her. William genuinely liked spending time with her and it was the same the other way around.

Felicity had an instant connection to William, that went beyond schoolbook knowledge. They had just clicked from the start. It was something Oliver felt a little envious about, but not in a bad way. He was glad to have someone beside him who had a calming impact on his son when he couldn’t find the right words.

But as carefree and happy as the days had been, the nights seem to tell a whole different story. The moment Oliver fell asleep, he saw her. Felicity.

He saw her face. He heard her voice echo through his mind and soul, through his whole being. He heard those rasped words. Words rough from what he could only imagine were years of physical and emotional torture and yet still so strong. They kept repeating on an endless loop in his dreams while he looked into her eyes as he pointed a gun to her head as her eyes pierced through him right into his heart.

“They children were starving.”

They resonated with him when she flinched at his touch. He heard them when he looked into her terror filled eyes the moment he approached her. Afraid of him. Scared of his presence, of the monster - the devil incarnate - he was on that earth… And it nearly tore his heart apart.

To see those familiar eyes looking at him like this was something out of his worst nightmares and there he was… Trapped in one of his worst fears. That the woman he loved more than his own life seeing him for the monster, as something unrecognizable, he sometimes still felt he was.

Oliver turned on one of the bedside lights and moved out of bed. There was no way he would be able to go back to sleep after his dream. Especially with Felicity not being there.

It wasn’t unusual for her to wake up in the middle of the night and going to work on an idea her brilliant mind came up with in her sleep. But she usually made herself comfortable in bed beside
him, knowing fair well she didn’t have to leave their bedroom to work. He might have been a light sleeper but her late night working in bed habits never woke him. Her presence beside him always seemed to be enough for him to have a good night sleep. It always had been her absence that woke him. Just like yesterday. Just like now.

But he knew Felicity wasn’t up the night before because of some brilliant idea she had. He had woken up from her trashing beside him and found her three hours later slumped over the keyboard at her workstation downstairs.

It only took one look for him to know that’s not where she was that night though. Instead the two fireplaces were on, bathing the whole lower segment of the loft in a warm deep red light and it only took one more look for him to spot her as he took a few steps down the stairs.

She was curled up on the sofa, asleep with what looked like a book hanging from one of her hands. Only it wasn’t a book, Oliver noticed as he moved over to where she lay. It was a photo album.

He sat down next to Felicity sofa as he took it out of her hand to have a look at the pictures. They were photos of a family through the years. Some of them still in black and white and slightly yellowed while the others were in color.

One of the first pictures he looked at was a black and white photo with a handwritten date of April 1938 in the lower left corner. It showed a very young and happy couple at what he assumed was their wedding day. Oliver couldn’t help but notice the resemblance between that young woman and Felicity. They shared the same smile and the same gentle eyes.

Eyes he knew, when he looked at Felicity, had shed tears before he came down to find her. The trails still visible on Felicity’s cheeks as Oliver traced them with his fingers, wishing he was there to prevent them in the first place.

He laid down on the sofa behind her as he watched her face distort in her sleep. Tears were forming in her eyes again as she mumbled the same incoherent words over and over again.

They hadn’t really talked about what had happened in those hours they were separated from each other on two separate earths. They were too busy being happy and in love in their newlyweds’ bliss, so he could only imagine what must have been going through her mind in that moment.

She had waived him off when he had asked her about what kept her from sleeping the last night he carried her back to bed. He had accepted it. Trusting she would tell him when she was ready. But in this moment - seeing her like this - he really wanted to know… No. He needed to know. He needed to know what had happened those hours he wasn’t there with her.

He instinctively curled up against her and pressed his face into the crook of her neck in an attempt to create a safe cocoon around the both of them as he let her scent and the warmth of her body take control over his senses and let her calming down heartbeat and slowing breathes soothe him.

“Felicity, you need to wake up.” Oliver hushed against her ear as he gently rocked her body. “You’re safe, honey. We are home and safe…”

“Oliver?” Felicity rasped as she blinked her eyes open, listening to Oliver’s hushed words warm against her skin. She turned around in his arms to look at him.

“Hey.” Her forehead crinkled in concern as she saw the sad look on his face “What’s wrong?” she whispered, as her fingers ghosted over his jaw.
He gently took her hand in his and pressed a kiss to the pulsepoint on her wrist. “I couldn’t find you when I woke up.”

“I just…” she bit her lip. Just the way she always did when she was contemplating what to say next… Oliver took his queue, knowing he couldn’t go to sleep again before he told Felicity about… well - Felicity…

“When ever I close my eyes I see myself pointing an arrow at you.”

“That wasn’t you, Oliver.” Felicity shook her head as she looked into his eyes. Her voice firm.

“But it was me… Just like it was you.” He pressed his forehead against hers. He needed her to understand. He needed to tell her, needed for her to know what he had seen and done while he was away on that dark earth and he could only hope she would understand.

“Those children were starving…”

Oliver sat up as those four words still rang in his ears and those fear filled blue eyes of hers, however clouded from all that time in captivity, still dared to look right back into his as his fingers curled around the trigger stung like burning hot metal on his skin.

“I don’t understand.” Felicity looked at him, confused, as she sat up beside him and reached for his hands. She laid them in her lap while he still tried to find the right words to explain what had happened in those minutes that kept haunting his dreams.

“I can still hear her voice, her words, every time I fall asleep.” Oliver swallowed hard as he looked at her. “It’s your voice, Felicity… I saw you on Earth X.”

“Oh.” Felicity began to understand in that moment. She didn’t say anything but just answered with a sympathetic smile and a tug on his hand, encouraging him to continue with his story.

“We were infiltrating their headquarters in an attempt to get back home…” Oliver took a deep breath. He really did not want to talk about that place any more than he had to, about what he saw… “I was in that room and they brought her in. They wanted me to shoot you, her…” Oliver fought hard against the tears forming in his eyes, but lost the battle. “She had done nothing wrong… she’d just given away her food to starving children.”

The logical side of his brain knew that the woman he had held a gun to the head wasn’t ‘his’ Felicity. Yet every time he closed his eyes, he couldn’t help but to think of her. About that woman who he knew wasn’t her, and yet still was … How couldn’t he. They not only shared the same eyes and the same voice and face. They also shared the same unmatched compassion and courage and he knew he would never be able to forget the image of that woman.

And so Oliver told Felicity the whole story. Where they’d found themselves back on Earth X, how they were rescued by Leonard Snart - sorry, Leo - how they found their way back with the help of the Resistance and how he ended up in that control room with a gun in his hand pointed at that poor woman’s head.

“I will never forget the look in her eyes when I pointed the gun at her... God, she was so scared of me… And I know… The rational part of me knows that it wasn’t you… But I swear there was so much of you I could see in her. Her strength, her bravery... her unwillingness to give up on people... It reminded me so much of you and I can’t help but to see you looking at me like this. It...”

“Hey.” Felicity hushed and moved closer to him, wrapping her arms around his neck as she
watched him struggle. “She was not scared of you. She was afraid of that other man and what he represented,” she said with a conviction. Because if there was one thing Felicity knew with a bone deep certainty it was that on no earth, under any circumstances this man she loved with all her heart would ever give her any reason to fear him.

“You,” she gently poked at his chest, “Have one of the kindest hearts I know, Oliver. It’s one of the many reasons I fell in love with you. Why I love you… That other man? He had nothing in common with you other than your shared looks. I couldn’t see anything of you in him.”

“I hope not,” Oliver responded weakly.

“Oh, Oliver… Me not being able to sleep has nothing to do with you or that other version of you.” Felicity then reached for the photo album he had put on the table and showed him the picture he had already wondered about.

“These are my grandparents, my mom’s parents…” she handed him the album for him to look at it. “They were both only 19 when they met and married a bit more than a year later. That was only one year before Germany attacked Poland.”

“They look really happy…”

“They were. Even when things got worse.” Felicity said as tears started to form in her eyes.

“What happened to them?”

“They somehow managed to escape from the Warsaw ghetto… They left everything and everyone they knew behind that day and fled. In August 1946, they came to the US.” She smiled sadly when as she turned the pages of the album. “They never really talked about that time and I can’t blame them for wanting to forget.”

“I couldn’t help but to think of them… Just thinking about that small chance of the same thing happening again.” She broke off there and Oliver pulled her into his arms and she lay her head on his shoulder as she both looked through the family pictures.

“I wish you could have met them. My bubbe would have loved you.” Felicity cocked her head to and looked into Oliver’s eyes. “She always said, ‘Lissy, find yourself a kind man that knows how to handle that big brain of yours and respects and loves you for it’. I say I pretty much nailed that one.”

“I wish I could have met them too, to tell them what a brilliant and amazing woman their granddaughter become and how much I love her,” Oliver replied, and pressed a feather light kiss to the tip of her nose.

“You’re a sap, Oliver Queen,” Felicity yawned and cuddled against his side.

Oliver huffed out a chuckle. “How about we continue this conversation in bed?”

“How about we do that after a few hours of sleep?” Felicity asked tiredly as he pulled her off the couch with both hands and guided her upstairs again.

“I think that’s a great plan,” Oliver said as they both crawled back under the covers and he pulled Felicity into his side until her body was flush against his side and her head rested against his chest.

He followed Felicity into sleep only a minute later, both of them finally getting the first hours of restful sleep the first time since they returned - safe in each other’s arms and their shared echoes
and memories.

End Notes

So, what did you think? Let me know and leave a little feedback (and Kudos of course…) Also you can find me on Twitter @NoDecaff4Me. Come say hi! Drop me a note - I’d love to hear from you.

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