Sins of the past

by tanmaree

Summary

Felicity Smoak has met Oliver Queen before, had a whole relationship with him. He doesn't remember it. She wishes she could forget. Felicity turned back time to ensure her niece would live, survive and be protected. Anastasia Smoak became Thea Queen.

Notes

Disclaimer: I own nothing pertaining to Arrow or its spinoffs.

Note: This fic is au and is based at the start of Arrow's season one. I will be using some elements of season one but not all of it because rehashing season one in fic form would be boring.
Dreams of a past unlived

Felicity clutched the hoodie closer to her body, trying to hide the lines and curves of her body from prying eyes. The boy with Oliver Queen had dropped the hoodie around her shoulders as they’d ushered her out of the building. The boy had looked at her with something akin to kindness in his eyes. But eyes could be deceiving. Especially the eyes of someone who worked for the playboy-turned-Bratva-Captain.

Yes, she was leaving the house where her father had been keeping her but she felt deep in her bones that she was merely exchanging one evil for another.

Felicity had been at the house for two days, where her father had stripped her of her clothes and taken photos of her so his clients could see all she had to offer. He’d stripped her of her dignity.

She’d heard the lock in the door to the room she was kept in being turned and pressed herself as far into the corner as she could get. She was prepared to scratch the eyes out of anyone who tried to touch her.

She turned her head and dipped her chin down so her hair draped over half of her face as the door creaked open. She heard three sets of footsteps. Three male voices. Her father describing her assets. Bile rose up in her throat at her father explaining that she was spirited but he was sure the right man could break her of it. That’s what he thought.

A pair of tan boots appeared in her line of vision but she kept her head down, wrapping her arms around herself tightly. She flinched as a finger pushed her hair aside. A thumb and forefinger clasped her chin and gently turned her head up. Her eyes met the eyes of who she knew to be Oliver Queen. She’d only seen his picture in tabloids and magazines but those pictures didn’t do him justice. He was stunningly, unfairly handsome with the bluest eyes she’d ever seen. Eyes that roamed her face. Eyes that never left hers as he said; “I’ll take her.”

And just like that she’d been sold to Oliver Queen.

With a gasp, Felicity bolted upright in bed, clutching her sheets to her chest. She sucked in a breath. She had no idea why she was having these dreams, why she was dreaming of him. But they were becoming more and more frequent.

Pushing back the covers, she swung her legs out of the bed, shoved her glasses onto her face and
blearily wandered out to her kitchen.

With the tv playing in the background, Felicity set about to starting her weekend the right way: with the biggest mug of coffee she could find. Today’s mug was a massive panda shaped one that always made her smile. Standing on her tiptoes, she rifled through her cupboard with one hand while the mug hung on the finger of the other hand.

“Billionaire Oliver Queen has been found alive…..”

The mug slipped from her finger and met it’s end against her kitchen floor. Felicity pouted down at the broken pieces. Damn, she loved that mug almost as much as she loved her panda flats.

Well, that maybe, sort of, kind of explained the dreams.

Oliver was alive. He was coming back to Starling City. That was good. The first time around, he’d only been gone three years. He’d come back a Bratva Captain. This time he’d been gone five years.

Were the dreams, the length of time he’d been gone consequences? The thing about magic was that there were always consequences. And the spell they’d used to turn back time had been a biggie.

Oliver Queen was coming back. And he had no idea who she was. The thought made her heart clench. With him away on that damn island of his, she’d been able to forget, to push what he’d been to her to the very recesses of her mind and not think of him. She’d thought that by living her life over again, she’d exorcized herself of him. Just like that Celine Dion song, it was all coming back to her.

Leaning back against her kitchen cabinets, she closed her eyes and inhaled. She could perfectly conjure up the smell of him. She could feel the warmth of his fingers as he walked them up her naked back. She could feel the callouses on his fingers as he roughly gripped her thigh and pulled her leg up over his hip. She shivered as his voice, low and gravelly whispered things against her skin in a language she couldn’t comprehend.

Her eyes flew open and Felicity shook her head. It was no good getting caught up in a past that she had effectively erased, a past that for all intents and purposes had never even happened.
For her own sanity, she just needed to stay the hell away from Oliver Queen.

After spending all weekend virtually stalking Oliver with a bottle of wine and her tablet, Felicity had a stern little talk with herself. She needed to get back to what she called her post-Oliver reality. She needed to just shake it off. So, to help her shake it off, she had phoned in sick.

She loved her job at Queen Consolidated but she couldn’t deal with it if Oliver decided to visit the offices with his family. She couldn’t come face to face with the only man she’d ever truly loved. A man who had no idea of her existence. A man she’d known intimately but was now a stranger.

Instead, she’d walked through the glades to her favourite hideout, thinking spot. The building had been abandoned years before and was fenced off but she’d found a cut in the fencing where she could slip through. Ok, so maybe she was the one who’d cut it. Don’t judge.

With her tablet tucked into her purse and a giant cup of coffee, Felicity slipped into the abandoned Queen Foundry. She walked across the concrete floor, her heels clicking rhythmically, pulled off her jacket and placed it on the floor like a picnic blanket. Sitting cross-legged on the floor, her fingers swiping across her tablet, she let herself become immersed in her favourite past time: stalking Thea Queen. Though, in her head, she still called her Anastacia, the name Felicity’s older sister had bestowed the little dark haired beauty moments after she gave birth to her at the tender age of sixteen.

Thea Queen, was who all this was for. Like the memories of Oliver, the memories of clutching her bloodied niece to her as she stuttered her last breaths, were vivid. Felicity’s family could give Shakespeare a run for his money. Afterall, it was Felicity’s older brother who had killed Thea in their first lives. He was the reason Felicity had had to call on her family’s ancestral magic to cloak Thea’s blood, go back in time, hide her and give her away to the Queens, give her to Oliver. It was why she’d had to let her older sister die. Felicity squeezed her eyes shut as the memory flooded over her, unbidden.

“Don’t make me do this, Belle,” Felicity begged, tears sliding down her face and blurring her image of her older sister. Sobs wracked her body and made her shake with their force.

Belle clutched Felicity’s face in both hands, “You have to. I have to die, Felicity. To keep her safe,
“to keep her hidden. Oliver will look after her, like she’s his baby sister.”

Felicity held onto Belle’s wrists, shaking her head; “We can find another way.”

“There isn’t another way. I should have died that day, I should have died giving life to my baby. The only reason I didn’t is because little six year old you did some kind of spell to stop me from bleeding out.”

“I can’t let you die, Belle. You raised me, I need you. She needs you. She needs a mother.”

“She’ll have a mother.”

“It just won’t be you.”

“No, Felicity. It won’t be me.”

“What are you doing here?” The voice made Felicity’s eyes fly open. Déjà vu. It seemed Felicity was just destined to have Oliver Queen looming over her when she met him for the first time.

Clutching her tablet to her chest, she sat up straighter, lifted her chin defiantly and shot back; “What are you doing here?”

His eyes narrowed and she saw his jaw clench. She tilted her head and pursed his form with her gaze, trying to ferret out the differences from the man she’d known. He looked virtually the same. Except….

“I own the building.” He said it in a tone that suggested she should get up and hightail it.

She pointed a finger at him; “Right. Of course. Because you’re Mister Queen.”

He winced slightly. Only very slightly. If you blinked, you’d miss it. “No. Mister Queen was my father.”
Interesting. He – the other him, had quite liked it when she called him Mister Queen. Oh god, this was going to get confusing. She could feel the headache forming.

“Right but he’s dead – I mean, he drowned but you didn’t, which means you get to listen to me babble, which will end in three, two, one.”

Holy shitballs. His head had tilted sometime during her babble and he quirked a brow. It was kind of adorable in a dangerous kind of way. But then she’d always attracted danger. She watched him watching her. She needed to get the hell away from him and get back to the staying away from him plan. Yup. That was good.

Felicity got to her feet as gracefully as she could which meant it wasn’t very gracefully at all. But what could you do? Oliver was making her nervous and twitchy with the way he was still staring at her. Awkwardly, she started to walk around him, intending to make her exit.

“How did you get in here?”

And her quick escape wasn’t going to be so quick. She turned back to him and took a quick step back. He was right in front of her, when had that happened. Clearly, he didn’t believe in personal space. She shrugged, hoping for nonchalance. Except nonchalance had never really been her thing.

“What? Oh. I come here all the time. It’s kind of my thinking space. Except, I guess, it’s not anymore because trespassing is what I was doing. Anywho, you wanted to know the how. Well, there’s a hole in the fence.”

And were his lips quirking up every so slightly? She blinked. Nope. Still stotic. And why could she not keep her thoughts in her head.

“Where?”

“Where what?”

“Where’s the hole in the fence?”

“Oh.” She waved a hand in the air, “Down the side somewhere.” She said vaguely as she tried to
back away. She wanted to make a hasty retreat. His hand flew up and captured her wrist stopping any retreat she had planned. She prayed to all and any gods, the Christian ones, the pagan ones, the wiccan ones, that Oliver couldn’t feel the irratic fluttering of her pulse where his thumb pressed against her skin.

“Show me.” It wasn’t a request. It was a demand. Oliver Queen was used to getting his way. Tough.

“Sorry. Can’t. I’ve got to go, I’m actually late for something very important.”

She tried and failed to pull her wrist from his grip. He didn’t let up, if anything he only tightened his grip until it was just this side of being painful.

“You’re late? I doubt it. It’s a Monday and you’re sitting in an abandoned steel factory in the middle of the day. You clearly have nowhere to be.”

Oh, he was so, so judgy.

“Hey!” Felicity said, summoning all the indignation she possibly could, “I have a job. I’m just taking a mental health day. For your information, mister, I am gainfully employed. Actually, now that I think about it, technically you’re my boss.”

“You work at Queen Consolidated?” Surprise coated his tone and his brows had hiked up to almost his brow line as his gaze skimmed over her. So very judgy. She was not enjoying this version of Oliver. Her Oliver had looked at her with kindness, even in the beginning. This Oliver looked at her as if she was a target, a problem to be managed.

She poked him in the chest with her free hand and oh my, what a chest it was from the feel of it. “Hey, mister judgement, just because I am a woman, blonde, wear bright clothes and lipstick doesn’t mean I’m not smart. I’ll have you know, I am ridiculously smart, if you knew how smart I was, it would totally blow your mind. You know, in a completely non-sexual kind of way.”

And her colour of the day would be crimson.

“You’re smart. Great. Show me the hole in my fence.”
She rolled her eyes. It was clear he wasn’t going to let her go until she showed him the hole. She reached up and started peeling his fingers away from her wrist and shook her arm out once she’d finally freed it. “Fine. Follow me.”

Felicity led him out of the foundry and along the fence line until she came to the spot she used to get access in and out of her favourite thinking space. Guess she’d have to find a new place to contemplate the universe now that Oliver was claiming it for his own.

She pointed at the fence; “There. Now, may I be dismissed, Mister Queen?”

Not giving him an opportunity to reply, she ducked and climbed through the hole and smiled sweetly at him through the chain link fence. He narrowed his eyes at her as he inspected the fence.

“This looks like it’s been cut.” No shit, Sherlock.

Felicity shrugged, “That’s your problem, not mine.”

As she walked away from the enigma that was Oliver Queen, she realised she’d left her favourite jacket sitting on the Foundry floor. There was no way she was going to get it back now. And another one bites the dust.
“What are we watching?” Oliver asked as he sat down on the corner of the sofa keeping space between them. Felicity kept her gaze trained on the tv where the consulting Detective and his Doctor friend were puzzling out a case. She’d been the ‘property’ of Oliver Queen for three days and was yet to utter a word to him. The only thing she’d said to him was: ‘If you touch me, I’ll kill you.’ He’d merely smirked at her.

She pressed her lips together. It was the longest she’d ever gone without speaking. She loved talking. She truly did. But she refused to engage in conversation with a man who had bought her like she was cattle.

She bristled and pressed into her corner of the sofa as Oliver put his arm along the back of the sofa, his fingers inches from her shoulder. She didn’t know much about the infamous Oliver Queen, had never really paid him that much attention, she was too busy trying to avoid her father and delusional brother.

Her father was part of the mob – not the Russian one – and his expertise was human trafficking and selling girls as sex slaves. Simply put, he was not father of the year or a good man. The whole reason she was in this mess was because dear ole dad had walked into the diner Belle had opened and grabbed Felicity’s niece and told them it was time for them to pay him back for allowing them to live. Felicity had convinced him to take her instead. So, there she was.

This went on for nights. She’d sneak out the room she was assigned and down to the living room and put Sherlock on and a few minutes in, Oliver would appear. And she wouldn’t say a word to him. Sometimes he’d hand her a glass of whiskey that she’d never drink, other times he’d hand her a bowl of icecream. That took a lot more self control to not eat. She loved icecream.

That particular night, he’d appeared with a greasy bag from Big Belly Burger. The smell of the burger and fries was taunting her. Oliver was devouring his burger like his life depended on it. He was almost inhaling it. She kept sneaking looks at him from the corner of her eyes. He stuck a few fries into the remainder of his burger. She was hungry. So far she’d refused the meals that had been brought to her but now her stomach felt like it was eating her from the inside out.
“It’s the taxi driver.”

Her head swivelled towards Oliver and she looked at him wide-eyed. He gave her a small smile. It was the first time she’d ever looked at him directly; “The killer, it’s the taxi driver,” he said gesturing at the screen.

She continued to stare at him. He wiped his hands on a napkin and leaned in a little; “You know, Felicity, I’m not the enemy.”

She couldn’t stop the disbelieving snort that escaped her. “You paid money for me. A lot of money.” Her voice came out scratchy from disuse.

“True.” He conceded with a nod. “But don’t you want to ask me why?”

She pressed her lips together and just stared at him. Sighing, he picked up a thick file off the coffee table, she hadn’t even noticed it before, and handed it to her. She took it tentatively. It was a file full of girls.

“I go in and buy a girl and then set her up with a new identity and a new life.”

Ok, so that wasn’t so nefarious. As she looked at the file, she admitted to herself that she was a little impressed. These girls were given new identities, jobs, money, makeovers everything they needed to break free of a life of pain and misery. She looked over the top of the file to find Oliver’s eyes looking right back at her. He wasn’t the monster who mind wanted to make him.

“I don’t need a new life. I don’t need you to save me.”

He raised a brow; “Really? Because from where I’m sitting, it looks like you need saving. Your own father was selling you into the sex trade.”

“My sister will come for me. So, will my brother. Possibly even my father.”
He shrugged like it was no big deal; “Let them come.”

Slowly, Felicity placed the file on the coffee table, picked up a fry and munched on it thoughtfully while she watched him watching her. So, it seemed Oliver Queen had some kind of saviour complex.

“Mister Queen, you don’t want to get caught up in the Shakespearean drama that is my family. You won’t survive it.”

He tilted his head; “Will you?”

All she could give him in reply was a small shrug.

As the great philosopher, Mick Jagger, once said you can’t always get what you want but if you try sometimes you just might find what you need.

Story of Felicity’s life, it would seem.

Meeting a vampire in a vampire’s lair was not the best idea her genius mind had ever conjured but she needed the book to get her powers back and Jax was her best hope for that. To be fair she’d met Jax back in her Goth days in MIT and she was fairly certain that he liked her enough to not make a meal out of her but still.

She was a witch and all her witchy senses were telling her it was a bad idea. Add to the fact that his lair was a bar in the Glades and her senses were in overdrive. Felicity pulled her purple coat tighter around her as if that would give her any added armour against the creepy creepsters who lurked in the shadows. Speaking of lurkers….she looked up across the street and sure enough there was the hooded green figure walking along the roof tops. She couldn’t see his eyes but she felt his gaze on her as she walked.

It had started three nights ago, after her encounter with Oliver, she’d opened a bottle of wine and climbed through her bedroom window to sit and drink on her fire escape. Her spidey senses had alerted her to the fact that someone was watching her. She’d looked around frantically, trying to spot who was looking at her, when she’d spotted him standing on the roof opposite her building. He was an imposing figure with the bow and arrow, the hood and darkness obscuring his face and the way that leather fit him in all the right places.
She didn’t know how she knew but she didn’t get the vibe that he wanted to hurt her. Unless of course, he was just biding his time.

She reached the bar and briefly considered just turning around and walking herself home. Then she told herself to put her big girl panties on and pulled the door open but before she stepped over the threshold, she couldn’t resist the urge to look up and see if he was still there. He was. He was crouching on the roof, eyes on her, bow resting on his knee. He looked like a green clad avenging angel. That thought comforted her more than it probably should.

She sucked in a breath and summoned whatever courage she had residing deep within her and walked into the bar. If she got into trouble, would the vigilante help her?

The bar was dark and moody and something about it just radiated sex and danger. In that order. Felicity slid onto a bar stool and smiled at Jax as he worked behind the bar. Jax moved in front of her with the grace that only a supernatural creature could possess. He put his forearms on the bar and leaned in and smirked at her. He was beautiful in an unfair kind of way. Black hair, sharp, ice blue eyes, chiselled check bones and lithe body. In the past, she’d dabbled with all the pleasure that body could provide her. Jax was a flirt but he was also loyal, which is why she’d asked him to put some feelers out about her family’s book of spells.

“You’re looking good, Felicity, very edible.” He emphasised the statement with a swipe of his tongue across his lower lip. “Though, I think I was more partial to the goth look.”

“Of course you were,” she shot back dryly. “So, what did you find out?”

Jax raised a brow and pouted; “All business, huh? What? I don’t even get a how are you Jax? Or a you look good, Jax?”

Felicity rolled her eyes; “You know you look good.”

Jax chuckled; “Well, yeah, of course I do, baby doll, but it’s always nice to hear it.”

“Fine. How have you been, Jax?”
“Great. All the better for seeing you.”

“Don’t flirt with me. It won’t get you anywhere.”

“You’re no fun.” He straightened up and then all joking was pushed aside and he was all business. “The book you’re looking for have a red leather cover and stamped with a family crest? All spells handwritten?”

“Yes.”

Jax nodded; “I know where it is. But you’re not going to like it.”

“Just tell me.”

“A vampire has it. She lives in Central City. Name’s Donna,” He paused and levelled her with a look full of pity and sympathy; “Donna Smoak.”

Felicity froze and felt as if ice had replaced the blood in her veins. It wasn’t possible. Jax had got it wrong. She took the shot of whiskey he offered her and downed it in one go. She sat and listened numbly as Jax gave her all the details. Once he’d pushed a piece of paper into her hand, she stumbled off the bar stool and shoved the paper into her pocket. There were too many thoughts whirling around in her mind and she couldn’t grasp onto just one and she couldn’t silence them. Her chest restricted and she felt like she couldn’t breathe. She needed to breathe. Frantically, she pushed the door open and hungrily sucked in the cool night air. Tears pricked her eyes. She rounded the corner into the alley beside the bar and clutched onto the brick wall, her fingers digging into the grooves between the bricks.

She was straightening up when a hand wrapped around her neck and her back hit the bricks she’d been clutching seconds ago. And she was staring into eyes so like her own. She was face to face with Nate Smoak. Her big brother who was also trying to kill her. Fantastic.

“What the hell are you doing seeking out vampires?” He hissed at her. He gave her a look that told her he expected an answer. She wanted to point out that it was a little difficult to talk with his hand wrapped around her neck. Instead they had a brother sister stare off that lasted mere seconds but felt as if it lasted minutes, hours.
“Let her go.” Came a low, measured, menacing voice from behind Nate. She couldn’t see who it was because Nate was blocking her view but the voice told her whoever it was meant business. It also sounded vaguely familiar.

Nate smirked; “Relax, Robin Hood, I’m just having a little chat with your girl. Who also happens to be my baby sister.”

Nate released his grip on her and took a step back. Felicity could now see the vigilante’s immovable figure aiming an arrow at Nate. So, the vigilante would help her if he thought she was in trouble. Huh, good to know.

Nate ignored the vigilante and put his focus back on her; “You’re seeking out vampires and have the vigilante following you around. Are you trying to get yourself killed?”

“This coming from the guy who is actively trying to kill me.” She scoffed. Nate looked slightly hurt. Good.

“I don’t want you dead, Felicity,” Nate said softly, “But sacrificing Belle’s child and your death would mean that I could bring you back. I could bring you all back.”

Felicity pressed her back into the bricks behind her; “Yes. I’ve heard the story before. But that’s all it is: a story. You kill our niece and then me and chances are we’d just stay dead. That kind of magic is a myth.”

“Maybe,” Nate conceded; “But it’s not possible anyway, since the child is dead.”

Not dead. Just hidden. But to the world she was and that’s the way it had to stay.

“Mom’s a vampire.” Felicity blurted out to get the topic away from Nate’s delusions of putting the Smoak family back together. “Did you know?”

Nate tilted his head and looked at her with pity – not dissimilar to the way Jax had looked at her – “Felicity – “
“So, it’s true. She’s not dead. Like you told me. Like you all told me.”

Nate took a step towards her, stopped and looked back at the vigilante who had lowered his bow but was still watching the exchange intently; “Don’t shoot me with an arrow, but I’m going to approach my sister now.”

“Don’t.” Felicity stated in a flat voice, stopping Nate’s approach; “Don’t try to play the big brother you haven’t been in years.”

“I am your big brother, Felicity.” But it rang hollow.

“Really? Where were you when I was in foster care? When they made me pack all my things into black garbage bags? When the people who were supposed to look after me put their hands on me?”

“Felicity –“ He tried again.

“No. We’re not family. Not really. We’re just two people who share blood.”

Nate sighed and started backing away. That was one thing about him, he always knew when to give up. He’d never know how close he’d come to realising his messed up plan of killing them all to bring them back to life.

He was at the opening of the alley when he turned back and looked at her sadly; “You were three years old when Mom walked out on us. You were so little, innocent, happy, none of us wanted to take that away from you or tell you that Mom just didn’t love us enough to stay.”

She watched him walk away and then slid down the wall and sat on the ground not caring if her clothes were getting dirty. She sniffed back a sob, not able to stop the tears from falling. She was having an emotional breakdown in front of the city’s violent vigilante. Swiping at the tears angrily, she looked up at him where he was watching her from the other side of the alley.

“You know, if you want to shoot an arrow into Nate, you totally can. I won’t mind.”

He didn’t seem to appreciate her attempt at levity. Instead, he tilted his head and studied her; “Are you ok?”
She laughed bitterly; “Sure. I just sit in dank, dirty alleys for fun, it’s my preferred way to spend an evening, actually.”

“Your brother is trying to kill you.”

“Well, to be fair, he only wants to kill me a little bit. He wants to bring me back to life along with the rest of my siblings.”

The vigilante shook his head; “I don’t understand.”

Of course not. Why would he?

“Why have you been following me?” She blurted it out, not really sure she wanted the answer.

There was a pause, a very long pause and she thought he wasn’t going to answer but then he said quietly; “I was curious and then I was worried. Your brother’s right, you shouldn’t be walking around the glades by yourself at night.”

“But,” she pointed out; “If you’re following me, then I’m not really alone, am I?”

While he seemed to ponder that over, Felicity hauled herself to her feet, wanting nothing more than to crawl into her bed. She started the walk home and knew that he would be following.
Nightmares

Chapter Summary

Felicity has late night encounters with a vampire, a vigilante and Oliver Queen

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Once again, I own nothing that relates to Arrow or the CW or DC

“You want me to scare the living shit out of some kid who is selling drugs to Thea Queen?”

It was another night and Felicity had her back pressed to an alley in the glades, asking Jax to do her yet another favour. Instead of going for a little field trip to see the mother she hadn’t seen in twenty years, Felicity had stalked Thea and watched her buy drugs. And well, that had to stop and what better way to nip the bud on that than for the drug dealer to have a not so friendly encounter with a vampire?

Felicity nodded; “Yes.”

“No.”

“Please.”

“What do you care if Thea Queen becomes another spoilt brat who has to do a stint in rehab?”

That was the question of the day. How to explain this one.

“She’s just a kid. A kid who lost her father, her brother, then got her brother back.”

“Felicity, you can’t save everyone.”
“I don’t want to save everyone.” Just her.

When he still didn’t budge, Felicity tilted her head, pouted, grabbed the front of his shirt and pulled him closer, using all the feminine wiles she possessed but wasn’t necessarily comfortable with. Jax’s gaze drifted down to her mouth, to her neck and back up to her eyes.

“You don’t play fair. Fluttering your eyelashes at me like that. You know I can’t resist that pout,” he pushed out a breath he didn’t really need, “Fine. You win. I’ll scare the kid a little but I want something in return.”

“What?”

He leant into her just that little bit more and skimmed her body with his eyes, looking very much like the predator he was; “Dinner. You and me.”

“Dinner.”

“Yeah,” he stated, trailing a finger up her arm; “It will be like old times.”

“Fine. But just for the record, I am in no way on the menu.”

Jax smirked at her. “We’ll see, babydoll.” He shot her a wink and pushed away from her. Jax had just exited the alley and sauntered away when the vigilante landed in a crouch in the alley. Had he just jumped off the roof?

He straightened up, gripping his bow tightly and blocked her exit out of the alley. Fantastic. She marched right up to him and moved to walk around him but her moved with her and stopped her from leaving his spectacular company.

“What’s your interest in Thea Queen?” The vigilante practically growled the question at her like she was one of his criminals. Nope. Not happening.
Felicity crossed her arms; “That’s not really any of your business.”

“I think it is.” If possible, his voice got even more growly and she was sure that was the voice he used when telling people, they had failed the city.

She quirked a sceptical brow at him. “I’m sorry is that supposed to be your ‘grrr do as I say or I’ll put arrows in you’ voice? If it is, I’ve got to say, it could use some work.”

He took a menacing step towards her; “Grown men have nightmares about my voice.”

She tilted her head and continued to poke the proverbial bear. “Aw that’s cute. But you don’t feature in my nightmares. You’re not the scariest thing I’ve encountered. You don’t even make it into the top three.”

She patted his chest lightly and quickly moved to the right and around him; “You have a nice night.”

Felicity was about to put down a killer hand and completely wipe Oliver’s smug grin off his face when the door to the drawing room flew open. Belle in all her protective big sister glory came marching in, the gun in her hand trained on Oliver.

“Get the hell away from my sister.” Belle’s voice was perfectly calm. Scary calm. The kind of calm that made you know that a shit storm was coming. Oliver stood up slowly, hands raised and moved slightly in front of Felicity. Bad, bad move. Belle’s eyes flashed with barely contained fury. She pointed the gun at Oliver’s head; “I said get the hell away from my sister, you piece of shit.”

Yup. Full on big sister mode. Felicity slowly got to her feet and inched closer to her sister, she ran a soothing hand down Belle’s hair; “It’s ok. Let’s just go.”

“What did he do to you? Tell me, Felicity.”
“What? Nothing. He didn’t touch me.”

Belle squinted at Oliver as if she didn’t believe what Felicity was telling her. Belle grabbed Felicity’s arm and started backing her out of the room, gun still pointed at Oliver.

“Felicity.” Oliver took a step towards her.

“One more step, Mister Queen and I will shoot you.”

Felicity looked between the two of them as her sister and the Bratva captain had a very intense stare down. And then Oliver smirked and took a step toward them at the same time as Belle pulled the trigger. Felicity screamed and watched as Oliver jerked back. She took a step towards him but Belle clamped an arm around her waist and physically dragged her out of the room and made her run down the hallways of the Queen Mansion. Belle buckled Felicity into the car like she was a child and it was only then that her senses came back to her enough to ask; “How the hell did we get out of there so easily?”

Belle shrugged; “I drugged the two bodyguards.”

Felicity stared at Belle bug eyed; “You drugged Diggle and Roy?”

“It was easier than anticipated.”

“Oh my god. Belle. You shot Oliver. Oh my god. You shot Oliver Queen. Belle, you may have just started a war with the Bratva. Oh my god. Did you kill him?”

“Felicity, put your head between your knees, you’re getting hysterical.”

Then the dream changed until it was all death. Felicity was stuck in this dream. This one merged all the deaths she’d experienced into one moment. In one second she was begging Belle not to make her let her die, clutching at her sister and in the next she was being held back as Nate drew a knife across their niece’s throat at an agonisingly slow pace. She could hear herself begging Nate to let the girl live. Then she was holding the empty, lifeless body of her teenage niece, getting covered in her blood. A muscular arm wrapped around her waist and lifted her away from the body....
And that was when she woke up, bolting upright in her bed, shaking, sweating and trying and failing to really breathe. Felicity looked at the clock on the bedside table. One am. Her apartment was too hot, the walls felt like they were closing in. She had to get out. Grabbing her bag, slipping on her coat, shoes and grabbing her keys, she left her apartment. As she walked, the images assaulted her. Blood. There was just too much blood. She remembered scrubbing at her body as she’d tried to get her niece’s blood off her skin.

Felicity climbed through the hole in the fence, her coat snagging slightly which only served to make the tears fall faster. Swallowing them down, she picked the lock to the door she always used and walked into the Foundry. There was a massive, gapping hole in the middle of the floor but she only gave it a cursory glance. Her keys and bag slipped from her fingers and she watched them hit the floor in slow motion. She let out a sob and then she fell to the floor and let out a gut wrenching scream.

She couldn’t breathe any better here than she could in her apartment. The walls were closing in on her and she was taking big gulping breathes but her lungs felt like they were on fire. And the blood. It was on her skin. She wanted it to stop. She wanted the memories that only she had to stop haunting her. She was getting ready to just lie down on the dirty, cold concrete floor and just give up when warm hands landed on her face and pulled her face up.

“Hey. You’re ok. Breathe. No, just look at me. Focus on me.”

Oliver Queen was kneeling on the floor in front of her, completely calm, blue eyes focused on her own, his voice soothing as his thumbs wiped away her tears as they fell.

“Just breathe.”

“I…I can’t.”

“Yes. You can. Nice and steady. In through your nose. Out through your mouth.”

Felicity wrapped her hands around his wrists and eyes locked on his, mimicked his breathing. Slowly, slowly, she felt calmer. The tears were still coming but she could breathe. She dropped her hands from his wrists and scooted back from him forcing his hands to fall away from her face.

Oliver sat back and watched her; “Are you ok?”
Swallowing and swiping at her tears, “I’m cold. Which is ridiculous because I have my coat on.”

Slowly, Oliver shrugged out of his hoodie and approached her as if he were approaching a skittish animal, wrapping the hoodie around her shoulders. When he sat back again, she unbuttoned her coat, removed it, replacing it with the hoodie then put her coat on top. She was still shivering but felt warmer.

“Thank you.”

“What are you doing here, Felicity?”

She fiddled with the strings of his hoodie; “How do you know my name? I never told it to you.”

He lifted a shoulder in a shrug; “When you said you worked at QC, I looked you up.”

“Oh.”

“So, what are you doing here?”

“I told you. This is my happy place.”

“No, you said this was your thinking place.”

Damn him and his impeccable memory. “Can’t it be both?”

He shot her a look. It was all steely blue and clenched jaw and impatience. She licked her lips and scooted back until her back hit the wall and she’d put more space between them. She couldn’t think when he was so close.

Sighing, she admitted; “I had a bad dream.”
“Must have been one hell of a bad dream. You always have a panic attack after a bad dream?”

“Sometimes,” she paused and traced the cupcake pattern on her pajama bottoms. “Have you ever watched someone you care about die?”

She watched as he sucked in a breath at her question but on an exhale, he said softly; “Yes.”

“Me too. And sometimes – well, actually most nights I dream about it. Usually, I wake up and it’s over but….”

“Not tonight.”

“No.”

He shifted, frowning, “But why come here?”

Felicity shrugged; “I guess, I just always feel safe here. As weird as that is.” She tore her gaze away from him and looked at the hole in the middle of the floor; “So, why’d you smash a hole into the floor?”

“I’m turning the steel factory into a nightclub.”

“Oh. I guess I need to find another thinking spot then.”

His lips quirked up slightly, “You can still come, it will just be a lot louder and a lot more crowded.”

She let out a laugh that sounded false to her own ears; “I’m not really much of a club star. All those people crashing together and the grabby men with their grabby hands,” she shuddered; “No. Thank you. But I hope it will be very successful.”
He smiled at her, a real one she thought, his eyes twinkling before they dimmed again and the moment was over as quickly as it began. He leaned forward, his elbow on his knee; “Who did you watch die, Felicity?”

“Everyone I ever loved.”

He looked shocked and she knew she shouldn’t have told him, shouldn’t be engaging in conversation with him, should retreat but there was just something about him that made her want to tell him all her secrets.

“There’s no one left?”

Well, there’s you. It was on the tip of her tongue but she couldn’t say that to him, not if she didn’t want him to think she was crazy. Shaking off that thought, she stood up, shed her coat and held his hoodie out to him. He took it slowly, his fingers brushing against hers as he did. She stepped back quickly, bent and picked up her bag and keys, straightened up and looked down at him.

“Well, thank you for letting me have an emotional breakdown in your soon to be club but I really need to get to bed. Or back to bed. Anyway, goodnight.”

She turned, ready to scurry away when he called her back. He stood, hands shoved in his jeans pockets; “You need a ride home?”

She offered him a small smile; “No. I like walking.” She hurried out before he could argue. Besides she had a feeling she wouldn’t be alone on the streets for long. She’d walked one block when she heard what sounded like someone landing on a roof. She looked up and smiled when she saw the vigilante walking along the roof tops keeping pace with her.
Felicity muttered away to herself as she walked down the hallway of Queen Consolidated towards her cubicle. Janine had told her she looked a little tired. But she’d made it sound like Felicity looked haggard. Felicity wrinkled her nose; it wasn’t her fault that concealer didn’t cover her nightmare induced dark circles.

Felicity rounded the corner to her cubicle and nearly released a squeal of fright. Sitting in her chair was none other than Oliver Queen. She pressed a hand to her chest in an attempt to slow her heart rate. “Oliver, what are you doing here?”

“You’ve invaded my space. Twice. I thought it fair to return the favour.” He said it lightly, so she didn’t take offence. “Also, I wanted to see if you were ok.”

Aw. Well that’s nice. Or it was until her eyes landed on the bullet ridden laptop sitting on her desk. She quirked a brow at him; “You wanted to see if I was ok?”

“Yeah.”

“No.”

“No?” He looked adorably confused.

“No. You’ve brought me a laptop that has been physically assaulted and I’m guessing you want
information from it.”

He scratched at his eyebrow. “Well, ok, yeah. But I also wanted to make sure you were ok.”

“Hmmm. So. Where’d you get the laptop?” he opened his mouth and she held up a hand to stop him; “And Oliver, for the love of god, don’t lie to me.”

He pressed his mouth shut and just looked at her. She huffed a little since he was so clearly not going to tell her.

“Would you believe me if I said I spilled a latte on it?”

“Not a chance. But fine. Oliver, keep your secrets. But get out of my chair. And may God help you if you’ve changed the settings.”

He stood, pulled another chair over and sat beside her as she settled into her seat and plugged the laptop into her computer. Flexing her hands, she started typing away and clicking on icons aware of Oliver watching her every move. Finally, she opened the blue prints for the exchange building and they had a bit of back and forth about Shakespearean family drama, Hamlet and the fact that Oliver hadn’t studied Shakespeare at any of the four colleges he’d dropped out of. The four colleges. She knew that Oliver Queen was no fool but apparently his womanising ways were more important than an actual education. She would never understand the idle rich.

He stood up, put a warm hand on the space between her shoulder and collarbone and gave her that small smile that didn’t quite meet his eyes and thanked her in a way that was a clear dismissal. He reached out for the laptop and she pulled it back out of his reach, hugging it to her chest. He quirked an unimpressed brow and clenched his ridiculously chiselled jaw. It was obvious that he wasn’t used to throwing his playboy smile at women and not having them fall at his feet.

“Do you have any free time now or do you have to go straight to do whatever it is you are going to do with this violated laptop?”

His lips twitched as if he wanted to unleash a genuine smile but wouldn’t allow himself to.

“Violated laptop?”

Felicity rolled her eyes and tilted her head giving him an unamused look; “Just answer the
He sobered up and watched her curiously; “Yes. I have some time now.”

Nodding, she stood up, keeping the laptop close to her, grabbed her bag from the hook under her desk; “Good. I want to show you something. You’re going to have to follow me because there’s no way in hell that I’m getting on your motorbike.”

“How do you know I’ve got a motorbike?” He asked as he started to follow her out of the building. Shit. That was a slip. She wasn’t supposed to know that his preferred mode of transport was a sleek, black Ducati. She came to an abrupt stop and he almost walked straight into her back. She looked over her shoulder and had to suck in a breath at how close he was. He smelled just the way she remembered. Her eyes fluttered closed briefly before she pushed those thoughts away and met his gaze with a trembling smile.

“You just look like the kind of guy who’d have a motorbike.” Smooth. Well done, Felicity. Shaking her head, she continued down to the parking garage where her reliable little red mini was parked.

As she drove across town, she could see him and his damn motorbike in her wing mirror, weaving in and out of traffic. She led him to a quiet street in a more suburban area of the city and parked on the quiet street. Grabbing the laptop and her bag, she got out of her car and waited on the sidewalk for Oliver to pull up, kill his engine and pull off his helmet. Felicity turned her back to the street as he got off the bike and waited for him to come and stand beside her.

“You’ve led me to an overgrown vacant lot.” Oliver stated dryly, sounding just shy of irritated.

She knew what he saw. A lot that didn’t fit in with the Victorian houses lining the street. Overgrown foliage. That’s not what she saw. Without looking at him she said; “Not quite. Look harder. It helps if you squint.”

She left him on the sidewalk and walked up the garden path, up the steps and into the house. She smiled as she heard Oliver swear behind her and start walking up the path. She walked into the entry hall, her fingers running along the side table and then into the sitting room. It was exactly as she remembered. She was unbuttoning her coat when Oliver walked into the room a perplexed expression on his face.
“The house is cloaked by magic.” She began, placing the laptop on the sofa and walking over to the piano, she lifted the lid and touched a finger lightly to the middle C. The note rang out in the room. “It’s my family’s ancestral home.”

She turned back to Oliver to find him standing in the middle of the room, arms folded, eyes focused solely on her. She had his attention.

“My parents were young when they met. My mother had her first child at sixteen. Nate. You might remember him from the alley the other night. My parents popped out children pretty steadily after that. Next came Katerina. Then, there were the twins Cassandra and Tatiana, then Finn, then Belle and then ten years later, me.”

She paused. She’d never told him this much the first time around. But she needed him to know that she could help him.

“My mother died when I was three. Or well, I guess she left the family. After that my siblings took on most of the caregiving duties and my father got more involved with the mob and had less time for his children. This house is full of sadness. Bad mojo. Can you feel it, Oliver?”

He did little more than stare at her. Right, then. She walked past him and through the dining room, into the kitchen, she heard his footfalls behind her. She sat at the kitchen table and avoided his eye as he propped himself up in the doorway and looked around the room.

“It was a Sunday. I was eight. My brother, Finn had made me pancakes. In funny shapes. He let me eat them in his room while he watched tv. I’d only eaten two pancakes when we heard it.” She stopped talking.

“ Heard what?” Ah. So, he was listening and not just brooding.

“The guns. Semi-automatic. I think. Though, I’m not as well versed in weapons as you probably are. Five men in ski masks walked into the house and massacred my family.”

His eyes widened a fraction, he dropped his arms from where they were folded across his chest and he pushed away from the doorway. “How did you survive?”

Felicity shrugged; “I almost didn’t. I was shot in the chest. I flatlined twice on the way to the
hospital.

She heard rather than saw Oliver come over to the table and pull out a chair, the legs scrapping against the wooden floor. “Why are you telling me this, Felicity?”

“Because I figure I know your secret, you should know mine, it’s only fair.”

“And what secret of mine do you think you know?” There was danger in his tone. The type of danger that sent a shiver down her spine and should have had her running for the hills. Unfortunately, Felicity had never been very good at resisting Oliver Queen in all his dangerous glory.

Felicity looked up and levelled him with a look; “You’re the vigilante. It really wasn’t that difficult to put together. I mean, days after you’re resurrected, the hood turns up. Also, your voice. You really need to disguise it.” She reached into her bag that was still slung over her shoulder and pulled out a box and placed it on the table. “It’s a voice modulator. You just push the button and boom no one will know it’s Oliver Queen doing the arrowing.”

Looking inscrutable, Oliver picked up the box and looked it over before throwing it back on the table between them. “Say that I believe this story –“

“It’s not a story,” Felicity interjected, “It’s what happened.”

“There’s no such thing as magic and vampires, Felicity,” he said softly, looking at her with pity, like he thought she was damaged; “I know that when something traumatic has happened –“

She knew what he was doing. Even though he’d seen her cloaked house, he was explaining away what he didn’t understand.

“Don’t. Just don’t.”

It was unfair, considering he didn’t even really know her but she felt as if he’d betrayed her. Plus, there was the whole irony of him giving her a lecture about traumatic experiences. It must have shown in her face because he tried to take her hand but she pulled it away before he could touch her.
“Felicity.”

“Just get out, Oliver. Take your laptop and get the hell out.”

He gave her one last look, snatched up the voice modulator and strode out of the room. She bit her lip and didn’t let the tears fall until she heard the slamming of the front door ring out in the empty house. If nothing else, maybe now he’d stay the hell away from her since she seemed so incapable of staying away from him.
Central City was just a train ride away and since she’d had a shitty chat with Oliver the night before, she decided now was the perfect time to rip the bandage off and seek out the mother she didn’t really know.

According to Jax’s intel, Donna Smoak had offices in the middle of the city, she was a business woman it seemed. She ran a dating agency that only operated during evening hours. While the scenery outside the train window was flying by, Felicity hacked into the agency’s system and put herself in Donna’s calendar. Felicity couldn’t quite bring herself to call the woman ‘Mom’.

On the outside, the office building didn’t look too dissimilar to Queen Consolidated. When Felicity stepped off the elevator on the tenth floor, it was a whole other story. The office suite dedicated to Donna’s agency looked like something Elle Woods would whole heartedly approve of.

Felicity followed the assistant into Donna’s office and sat on the overstuffed hot pink sofa. She smoothed out the folds of her dress and looked around the room. The desk was long, wooden and looked antique, there was a poster of a cartoon panda on one wall. Was a love of cuddly panda bears genetic?

What really drew her attention was the large, almost full wall sized photo that was on the wall behind the desk. It was black and white and was of a woman with a toddler in her lap. She couldn’t take her eyes off it. Felicity stood up and slowly approached it, tilting her head and studied it. She felt like she’d seen it before but couldn’t put her finger on it.

“That’s you and me.” A voice said from behind her.

Felicity spun around and eyed the woman who stood before her. She was blonde, young and beautiful. But a stranger. Her pink painted lips smiled at Felicity; “The photo, it’s of you and me, Felicity.”
Felicity wanted to leave. Just walk out but something kept her rooted to the spot. Donna took a step towards Felicity, her mini dress clinging to her every curve in a way Felicity envied.

As a child, when she’d believed her mother was dead, Felicity had dreamed of this moment. Fantasied about it. She thought she’d feel something. Feel some kind of connection to the woman who had given her life. But all she felt was numb.

On the train, she’d come up with a whole speech, very well-worded, articulate and all business like about how she needed the book and nothing more. She wasn’t interested in bonding or anything that even came into the vicinity of being a mother/daughter chat. That perfectly designed speech floated away and what flew out of her mouth instead was nothing like what she wanted to say.

“You never came for me.”

Donna froze in her approach and the smile she’d worn slipped away; “What?”

“I was three when you left. They told me you were dead. Dad’s a bastard and I get why you left but in twenty years you never came for me.”

“Felicity – “

“Not even when a group of people came into our house and slaughtered your children. You never even tried to come for me.”

“I thought you were better off without me.”

Felicity laughed bitterly; “That’s what every disappointing parent in the history of time has said.” She shook her head and pushed away all feelings of abandonment; “But that’s not why I’m here. I’m not here for a reunion.”

Donna threw her hands up in the air; “Then why are you here, Felicity, if not to reconnect?”

“I need the book.” Donna opened her mouth and Felicity cut her off before she could utter a word; “And don’t try to pretend you don’t have it.”
Donna gave her a look that Felicity couldn’t quite decipher. She wasn’t sure if it were a motherly look or not, since motherly looks were not really something she’d ever experienced.

“She gave her a look that Felicity couldn’t quite decipher. She wasn’t sure if it were a motherly look or not, since motherly looks were not really something she’d ever experienced.

“Felicity, all that book ever brings is trouble.”

“Do you have it or not?”

Donna tilted her head and studied Felicity in a scrutinising way that made Felicity shift uncomfortably. She moved across the room to the panda poster and lifted it off the wall to expose a wall safe. With a punch of a few numbers the safe door swung open and Donna pulled out the book which was the same size as Felicity’s tablet but significantly thicker.

Donna walked over to Felicity, held the book out to her and holding her gaze Felicity took from her, putting it deep into her bag.

“Be careful, Felicity.”

Felicity didn’t acknowledge the warning, simply said thank and went to leave. With her hand on the doorknob she turned back to Donna; “Do you even care that they’re gone? Do you miss them? Think of them?”

In that moment, Felicity thought her mother looked impossibly young and vulnerable. She offered Felicity a small wistful smile; “Of course I do. I loved you all.”

“So,” Jax asked as he took a sip of his beer; “how did it go with the long-lost mommy dearest?”

Felicity shrugged and lifted herself up to sit on her kitchen counter to wait for her little potion to boil. She knew she was breaking all the rules about hanging out with a vampire. Rule number one being don’t invite them into your home but Jax had known her for a long time now and he’d never tried to bite her. Except that one time when she'd asked him to.
“About how you’d expect.”

“Right. So, you saw each other across a crowded room and then run into each other’s arms. In slow motion, of course – “

“Of course,” Felicity interjected dryly.

“And then she held your face in her hands and wiped away your tears while you said ‘mommy, I’ve missed you’. Yes?”

Felicity pulled a face and poked out her tongue; “No.”

“Shame.”

Felicity shrugged and thumbed through the book, the potion she was making was to get her powers back but she wanted to read the whole thing back to front, front to back in case she needed to know anything off by heart. She looked at Jax from over the top of the book; “What about you? Did you scare the pants off a certain drug dealer?”

“Oh, baby, you’d be so proud of me. The little shit nearly pissed his pants. I think I scared him straight.” He wagged his eyebrows which elicited a giggle from Felicity.

“You showed him the fangs, didn’t you?”

“Hell, yeah.”

“Thank you.”

“You know, when I said dinner, this wasn’t what I meant.” He indicated to the takeout containers sitting on the coffee table in front of the sofa.

“You said you wanted it to be like old times,” Felicity said with a shrug and a grin; “and back in the day, you would watch me eat takeout and then we’d watch tv. I’ve lived up to my end of the
Jax made a sound of acknowledgement, got up off the barstool and slunk around the kitchen island and peered into the pot on the stove; “So, this is going to give you back your powers? It doesn’t smell amazing.”

“Yup. If this family book is to be believed.”

“You drink and hello powers?”

“Well, I have to light it on fire first, let it cool, then drink it.”

Jax cringed; “Delightful.” He continued to peer at her potion. “And what is your power, again?”

“You ever watch that show Charmed?”

“Yeah.”

“Well my power is similar to the middle sister’s one.”

Jax looked at her with wide eyes and an expression which was a mixture of surprise and awe; “You can freeze time?”

“Yeah. Amongst other things.”

“What other things?”

Avoiding the question, Felicity nudged Jax in the side with her toe; “Hey, can you go get my lighter from my bedroom?”

Grumbling, Jax pushed her foot away and wandered into the bedroom. When he came back,
lighter in hand, he was smirking; “When did you invest in a big, bad vigilante?”

Felicity frowned at Jax over the top of her glasses, “What?”

“The hooded guy is lingering on your fire escape. Want me to go show him my fangs?”

Oliver. Of course. She grinned at the thought of Jax baring his fangs to Oliver. Oliver would probably shoot an arrow into him and then claim his fangs were the result of bad dentistry. Sighing, she pointed a finger at Jax; “You light my fire and I’ll go deal with tall, dark and brooding.”

Jax grinned at her salaciously, “Oh, honey, I’ll light your fire anytime.”

Felicity rolled her eyes, walked into her bedroom and sure enough, through the window she could just barely make out the figure of Oliver blending into the darkness. She walked over to the window, lifted it and climbed – very gracefully – out onto the fire escape and shot Oliver one hell of a glare.

“Seriously? Could you get anymore creepy? Hanging around on my fire escape? You should just go. I have a vampire in my house. An actual vampire, who for the record can hear every word we say. Also, we’re going to do some things you don’t believe in.” She winced at the way that sounded; “Not like, sex things. But in case you were wondering, I have had sex with Jax and let me tell you, vampire sex is no joke.”

And after that stunningly awkward speech? He just continued to stand and gawk at her. Felicity rolled her eyes, losing even more patience with him. She took a step forward until she was toe to toe with him and poked him in the chest; “And another thing, just because you don’t believe in something doesn’t mean it’s not true.”

She poked him again for good measure. “What? You’ve got nothing to say?” She huffed out a sigh. He exasperated her. He exasperated her a lot. She turned away from him, intending to leave him being a creep on her fire escape but he caught her hand in his, his fingers clasping hers. She swallowed. She was mad at him. She shouldn’t like the feel of him holding her hand. Except he wasn’t actually holding it.

“I need your help.” He pushed each word out as if it physically pained him. But at least he was using the voice modulator.
She quirked a brow; “Was there a ‘please’ somewhere in there?”


“Right.” Felicity nodded, “I’ll just pretend the ‘please’ was implied.”

Felicity pulled her hand away from his hold and started to climb back in her window. She looked back over her shoulder at where he still stood. She barely resisted the urge to roll her eyes at him.

“Don’t just stand there, come in.”

As she walked back into her living room, she felt Oliver close behind her. It was hard not to, he always ran hot. Temperature wise, of course.

Jax let out a low whistle as he eyed Oliver up and down; “Well, aren’t you just a big ole hunk of burning love?”

Felicity wrinkled her nose; “Don’t flirt with him.”

“Why? You think if I flirt with him, I won’t flirt with you?” Jax shook his head; “Never fear, sweets, I’m an excellent multitasker.”

Felicity couldn’t tell if Jax’s wink was aimed at her or Oliver. Jax frowned and sniffed the air in that creepy vampire way he sometimes did and winced.

“Oooohh, honey, maybe you shouldn’t have told him about all that vampire sex. He’s radiating repressed rage.”

Felicity looked back at Oliver where he stood stiffly in the middle of her living room. He looked tense like he had everything tensed. She shook her head; “That’s just his natural state of being, it’s got nothing to do with the vampire sex.”
“Stop saying vampire sex.” The vigilante in question growled.

Jax grinned smugly, “Uh huh.”

Felicity sighed and rubbed at her temples, she was starting to get a teeny, tiny headache and she felt like she was missing something in this conversation. Desperate to change the subject, she turned to Oliver; “What do you need my help for?”

“Peter Declan.” Oliver stated it as if it explained everything.

Felicity frowned; “Why do I know that name?”

“Killed his wife in his baby’s room.” Jax chimed in helpfully.

“Right. Creepy.”

“He might be innocent.” Oliver said simply.

“Ok. So, you need me for what?”

“To do your hacking thing – “

“Hacking is such an ugly word.”

“See what you can find out about his wife’s boss,” Oliver carried on pretending she hadn’t said anything. “I’ve got Laurel working on his defence.”

“Who’s Laurel?” Jax asked.

“Gorgeous Laurel. Lawyer Laurel,” Felicity said, pointing a finger at Oliver, “Love of his life.” She was proud of herself that she didn’t wince when she said that.
“Mmmm,” Jax tilted his head and studied Oliver even though he couldn’t see his face; “You sure about that?”

Felicity so did not want to touch that one. She shook her head; “I’ll see what I can dig up but Laurel’s probably your best bet with all her lawyery superpowers.”

Oliver nodded and then he promptly sat on her sofa, bow balanced on one knee. Felicity caught Jax’s eye who raised a brow. Felicity sighed; “So, I guess we’re doing this now.”

She went into her bedroom to get her tablet off her bedside table and grinned to herself as she heard Jax complimenting Oliver’s spectacular muscles. Jax’s words, not hers. Though, they were spectacular.

When she walked back into the living room, Oliver was still sitting on the sofa, head bowed, hood covering his face but she knew he’d be watching everything intently. Jax held out a tea cup to her.

“While the green giant’s assignment thing is important, so is the that little concoction you were cooking up before he got here.”

“It can wait.”

“Why? Why does everything that Felicity Smoak want to do for herself have to wait?,” Jax stepped closer and gave her one is his genuine smiles, not the flirty one or the teasing one but the one he reserved for when he was trying to look out for her; “Come on, Felicity, one little drink of this and you’ll have something you’ve wanted back for years.”

“What if it doesn’t work?” She whispered.

Jax shrugged, “Then, it’s just a little drink. No harm done.”

She took the cup from him and he smiled encouragingly; “Good girl.”
Tipping the cup back, she downed it in one go and shuddered as it went down; “That tastes even worse than it smelt.”

“What was it?”

Both Felicity and Jax ignored Oliver’s question. Jax squinted at Felicity; “Well, darling did it work?”

“I have no idea. I feel exactly the same.”

“Guess there’s only one way to find out,” Jax stated and before Felicity could even blink, Jax had plucked an arrow out of Oliver’s quiver and had thrown it at her. Instinctively, she threw her hands up in the air. The arrow stopped inches away from her, suspended in mid-air.

Oliver had got to his feet and had an arrow aimed at Jax. Well, that was nice.

“What the hell, Jax!”

“Looks like it worked.”

“What if it hadn’t?!” Felicity yelled at Jax then turned to Oliver, “Stand down, soldier, an arrow won’t kill him.”

Jax shrugged, walked over calm as anything and swiped the arrow out of the air, it clattered as it hit her hard wood floors.

“If it hadn’t worked, I guess you’d be dead – “

“You could have killed her!” And hello, growly voiced Oliver. It was even more menacing through the voice modulator. Felicity was sure that wasn’t what she should be focusing on in that moment.

“But, I didn’t. Don’t worry, Green Adonis, if she died, she wouldn’t stay dead long, I’d turn her into a vampire. She’d make a fabulous vampire.”
“Really?” She asked, “Because I always thought I’d make a terrible vampire, you know considering I’m not a fan of all that blood.”

Again, with the not focusing on the right thing. Oliver was clenching…well everything and looked like he was one step away from throwing Jax out her living room window. She couldn’t afford the clean up that would require. Felicity grabbed Jax by the arm and started pulling him towards the door. She was a hundred percent aware that he was very much allowing her to pull him along.

“Wow, look at the time. It’s getting late. Thank you so much for your help with the potion and the figuring out if it worked.” She pulled the door open, shoved Jax out into the hallway and ignored the smirk he was giving her; “Even if that part was potentially lethal. I’ll talk to you later, ok? Cool, great, see ya.”

She slammed the door on him and leaned back against it. And she was alone with Oliver.

“You have terrible taste in friends.” He stated grumpily.

Felicity rolled her eyes; “Take the hood down. There’s no one here to impress with your mysterious, hooded self.”

He pulled the hood down and she was treated to the full force of his unfairly blue eyes contrasted against the paint he wore around them. “You stopped that arrow mid-air.”

She smiled feeling a little smugly; “Yeah, I totally did, you doubter.”

He tilted his head in that way he did that she was just starting to figure out meant he was puzzling something out in his own mind; “That’s going to take some getting used to.”

She nodded; “Fair enough.” She went over to the sofa and sat down, setting up her tablet on her lap, she reached out and grabbed his hand and pulled him down to sit beside her; “Now, let’s see what we can find to help Peter Declan.”
The best laid plans

Chapter Summary

In the first time line, Felicity and Belle do a little stealing. In this timeline, Oliver is a bit of an ass but we still love him.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Don't own a single thing relating to Arrow, the CW or DC. I think I probably own Jax though.

This chapter is a little shorter, mainly because it is a bridge to getting to the next one which will have more Jax goodness, possibly including Jax enjoying Oliver's general Oliverness.

“Just tell me if he’s ok, Roy!” Felicity knew she was hysterical; knew she was practically screaming down the phone but it wasn’t every day that she saw her sister shoot a man.

“What do you care, blondie, you shot him.”

“I didn’t shoot him!”

Silence. She pulled the phone away from her ear to check if the call had dropped. It hadn’t. “Please,” she begged in a broken whisper, “Please, Roy.”

“He’s fine. Bullet hit him in the shoulder. We dug it out.” He finally said roughly. Then he hung up on her.

She threw her phone on the bed, stumbled to the bathroom, fell to her knees and promptly threw up the contents of her stomach. Tears streamed down her face. She couldn’t decide if they were from the force of throwing up or from the relief at knowing her sister hadn’t killed Oliver. Whatever it was, she cried it out. She cried until her throat was raw and her eyes were simply not capable of producing anymore tears.
“You want to blow up Dad’s house?”

“Don’t say it like that, like it’s a little cottage. It’s a house he uses to sell girls to creeps. He wanted to sell my daughter. He did sell you.”

Felicity wrapped her hands around her mug and tucked a leg under herself, turning slightly to look more fully at Belle; “Look, I’m not saying I’m not on board. I’m just saying maybe it’s not the best plan you’ve ever had.”

“It’s not the worst plan I’ve ever had.”

“True. But the logistics would be difficult. We’d have to make sure the house didn’t have any girls in it.”

Belle nodded; “And where would we get the explosives.”

“We could borrow them without permission.”

“Steal them.”

“Steal is such an ugly word but yes.”

“Where would we steal them from?”

It was an excellent question. A question that Felicity thought probably needed a whole lot more thought than they were putting into it. “You know, we could just light it on fire.”

“We could, but lighting a fire just seems to lack a sense of elegance.”

Felicity shot Belle a disbelieving look; “Because blowing stuff up just screams class?”
“You know how I said blowing up Dad’s human trafficking house wasn’t the best idea you’d ever had?” Felicity hissed to Belle as they hid behind a piece of shrubbery in the middle of the night.

“Yeah?”

“Well, this one is way worse.”

Belle quirked one of her perfectly shaped brows; “You agreed to it.”

“I was drunk!” Felicity whisper yelled, at this rate they were totally going to get caught. One hundred percent caught. If shooting Oliver Queen didn’t start a war with the Bratva, this sure as hell would. “You plied me with wine. You know I can’t resist red wine.”

Felicity couldn’t see in the darkness but she was fairly certain that Belle rolled her eyes at her. “Oliver Queen has a ton of motorbikes, we get in there, get two, roll them into the garage of the house, uncap the gas tank, make a gas trail, light trail and boom! Bye bye house.”

“There are so many things wrong with what you just said.”

“Plus, stealing Mister Queen’s prized possessions also works as revenge for buying my baby sister.”

“Really? See I thought putting a bullet into the man would do it. Say we get into there without security killing us, how do we start the bikes without a key?”

“Felicity, rich people always leave their keys in their vehicles.”

“No, they don’t.”
“Yes, they do.”

“Why?”

Belle shrugged, “Because they’re cocky.” Belle grabbed Felicity by the wrist, “Now, come on, let’s do this.”

They ran the short distance from the shrub to the Queen’s massive garage which was a whole separate entity from the main house. By some small miracle, nobody starting shooting at them. They pressed their backs against the wall of the garage and Felicity gaped at Belle as she picked the lock to the garage. Two questions sprung to Felicity’s mind: when the hell did Belle learn to pick a lock and why didn’t Oliver have better locks. Her second question was answered when they stepped foot into the garage and the alarm started blearing. Felicity pressed her hands to her ears. Belle gestured at the motorcycles and Felicity took that to mean she should pick one. She had no idea how to drive one but she was about to find out. Belle opened the garage door and Felicity saw three men running toward the garage. Oh god. Following her big sister's lead, Felicity swung a leg over the body of a bike and looked down and sure enough there was a key already in the ignition. The idle rich were morons. Belle threw her a helmet that she barely caught and she heard the men getting closer. She studied the bike figuring out how to put it into gear and where the brakes were then summoning all her courage turned it on.

Oliver, Diggle and Roy came into the garage, guns raised and aimed right at them. Belle winked at Felicity, put the visor of her helmet down and took off. Felicity turned her head and met Oliver’s eye. His eyes widened in recognition and a split second later he was lowering his gun. She smiled at him, pulled the helmet on, revved the engine and took off after Belle.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Felicity stalked into the police precinct like a woman on a mission. Which she kind of was. She walked past all the officers of the law, who she totally respected by the way, that she had frozen and flung the door open to the interrogation room. It turned out she’d been right and Laurel was the best person to help with the Peter Declan case. It seemed Laurel was better at everything than she was. But Felicity didn’t have time to dwell on that because the resident vigilante had gone and done something really stupid.

She should have known this day was coming. Oliver had been arrested for being the vigilante. Of course, he had. She seriously questioned the intelligence of those closest to him for not cottoning
onto it sooner. It wasn’t like he was a good liar. He was actually a spectacularly terrible liar. But she conceded that he did rely heavily on his playboy persona to deceive people. People were stupid. She firmly stood by that statement.

She spared Oliver’s frozen figure a glance, picked up his interrogation file and flicked through it. People were stupid, but Oliver Queen was the bigger idiot. Waving a hand, she unfroze just Oliver, leaving Detective Lance as still as an ice sculptor.

“What kind of idiot gets caught on camera?” she accused while he blinked at her like the fool she thought he was in that moment.

“Felicity,” he said slowly, enunciating her name in that slow drawl she’d always found alluring, “Did you do your voodoo thing on the police precinct?”

She pulled a face and gave him a teeny, tiny glare; “Ok, firstly, it’s not voodoo. Voodoo is a whole other thing and it’s roots are in –”

“Felicity.”

“Right. The point. You can’t go to prison, Oliver. You’re far too pretty. So, I’ll just toddle down to the evidence room and accidently on purpose make the video footage of you getting your hood gear out of a garbage can disappear.”

“Felicity.”

“But then that will still look suspicious. I’ll have to make it look like the evidence got destroyed some legitimate way – “

“Felicity!”

The volume at which he said her name made her jump. He got to his feet and closed the distance between them; “I don’t need your kind of help. I’ve got Laurel on the case.”

Of course he did. She couldn’t compare to his precious Laurel. But she could still help him. Wait
a minute. She quirked her head to the side and wrapped her arms around herself; “What do you mean;” she started softly; “You don’t need my kind of help?”

He just stared at her. He really was a magnificent bastard. *Should have stuck to your avoid Oliver Queen like the plague plan, Felicity,* she thought to herself. She swallowed, licked her lips and nodded; “Right.”

Sensing he’d said the wrong thing, Oliver took a step toward her and stopped when she took a step back. “Felicity.” There was an apology in his tone but she wasn’t going to buy into it.

“It’s fine. But next time you need info from a shot up laptop, don’t come to me.”

She liked to think she strutted out of there. She probably didn’t.
Beaming

Chapter Summary

This one's from Oliver's point of view. Jax and Oliver have a chat. Felicity sleeps.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Still don't own anything related to Arrow, DC or The CW

Oliver didn’t know how he’d ended up there. He’d gotten on his bike planning to go back to the foundry, change out of his hood gear and go visit Laurel. They needed to talk about that kiss and her seeing his scars. But it wasn’t Laurel’s apartment he’d ended up outside of. It was Felicity’s.

He couldn’t get the look she’d had on her face when he’d told her he didn’t need her help out of his head. The look was full of hurt. He shouldn’t have the power to hurt her, they barely knew each other. He didn’t know why it mattered that he’d hurt her, it shouldn’t. But there was something about her. She was sassy and smart and called him on his shit. He hadn’t invited her to his convict party but he’d expected her to show up and yell at him, rip him a new one but she didn’t. He couldn’t understand what it was that drew him to her but from the first time he’d seen her sitting on the floor of the foundry, he’d been intrigued.

When he’d been…away on the island, he’d had dreams about a blonde girl. He never saw her face, he only got flashes of her: painted red lips; fingers intertwined with his own; strawberry scented skin. For some reason, Felicity reminded him of her. Which was bullshit because how can a person remind you of a figment of your imagination?

He climbed the fire escape and lifted the window to her bedroom which was unlocked. She shouldn’t have her windows unlocked at night, anyone with sinister intent could crawl in. He’d talk to her about it. He kept his hood up. Even though she knew who he was. She was asleep. He could hear her soft breaths. He walked over to the bed and stood over her. She looked impossibly young in slumber. She also looked sad. That unsettled him.

He reached out to brush some hair away from her face when a low voice said; “Nope. Not happening.”

Oliver was reaching for an arrow when he turned and saw Felicity’s friend, Jax, sitting in the chair
in the corner. Who the hell sits in the corner in the dark and watches someone sleep? Oliver lowered his bow and arrow. Jax rose to his full height and tilted his head towards Felicity’s living room. Oliver took one last look at the sleeping girl and followed Jax out to the living room, clicking the bedroom door shut.

Oliver leaned back against the wall, head down, arms crossed and waited. Jax paced the room; “You, Mister Green, Dark and Delicious and I need to have a little chat.”

Oliver pushed the button on the voice modulator Felicity had given him; “What about?”

“Our girl in there. She said you were a bit of a dick to her. Actually, her words were ‘douche canoe’ but I can’t roll with that.”

Oliver huffed out a laugh but sobered when Jax glared at him. Jax paced closer to Oliver and pointed an accusatory finger at him; “You made her cry. That’s not cool.”

Oliver opened his mouth, then snapped it shut again, his jaw clenching. It shouldn’t matter. He’d made pretty girls cry plenty of times. Wait. When did he decide Felicity was a pretty girl? Jax came to a stop in front of him and studied him before sighing; “Look, you emerald popsicle, she’s had it tough and I don’t like seeing people upsetting her. Or taking advantage of her in a not fun way.”

“You’re very protective of her.”

“Someone has to be. She’s all alone in this world. Her mom bailed when she was three, her dad’s a criminal, her older sister died during childbirth along with the baby and the rest of her siblings – besides Nate who is a bit of a nutbar – were murdered when she was eight.”

“I know,” Oliver said quietly.

“Can you imagine what that must have been like? To be eight years old and have no one left to love or to love her? Felicity talks a lot but she never says much about her family or how she feels about any of it. She just keeps it all in. She also doesn’t let people in easily.”

“She seems to do fine with you.”
Jax smirked; “What Felicity and I have has taken years to cultivate. She works up to trusting someone slowly. Once she does, she’ll forgive them just like that;” he clicked his fingers to illustrate his point. “But for some reason she’s decided to trust you. And you keep fucking it up. Do better.”

“Why are you watching her sleep?” Speaking of trust. There was something about Jax that irked Oliver, something about him that made Oliver cautious, something Oliver didn’t trust. All of Oliver’s instincts were screaming at him to keep Jax away from Felicity. To protect her. Oliver shook off the feeling. Felicity wasn’t his to protect.

“Because she’s not slept properly for days. She has nightmares. I don’t want her to be alone.”

“That’s…..considerate.”

Jax flashed Oliver a lecherous grin; “She used to let me comfort her in a lot of very stimulating ways.” He punctuated it with a wink. Oliver clenched his fist around his bow and contemplated slamming it into the side of Jax’s head.

“You can go now.” Oliver drew out slowly not holding back any of the venom in his tone.

Jax chuckled and held his hands up in surrender; “Fine, fine. I know when I’m not wanted. Though, you could stand to be a little nicer to me.”

Oliver watched as Jax stalked to Felicity’s front door and then turned back to him; “All that girl is really looking for is to feel like she belongs. Oh and one more thing: even though I appreciate the way you wear that leather; if you hurt her, I’ll rip you apart until there’s not even a single piece of you left to identify.”

“Good to know.” Oliver replied. Once Jax had shut the door behind him, Oliver slid the chain on Felicity’s door across, pushed his hood back and looked around her apartment. It was bright, warm and full of personality. He smirked when his eyes landed on a framed Robin Hood poster. Oliver strode back into Felicity’s room and sat in the chair Jax had vacated and watched as Felicity shifted in her sleep. He sat up straight as her face scrunched up. She was having a nightmare. Propping his bow on his knee, he leaned forward and watched as her breathing sped up, she gasped and then she flew up in bed, her eyes snapping open and she looked around the room wildly. Her gaze landed on him and she clutched the blankets to her chest and squinted at him. She reached over, grabbed her glasses off the bedside table and shoved them onto her face, the landed a little
“You’re not Jax,” Felicity stated flatly, her voice hoarse from sleep.

“No. I’m not. I sent him away.”

Her brows flew up at that; “You sent him away?” she repeated sarcastically, “Like he’s one of your hired help?”

Oliver lifted a shoulder in a shrug. He kind of enjoyed pissing her off. She could be angry at him but he didn’t want to be the reason she was sad. Anger was better than sadness.

She glared at him and sat up straighter in the bed, all prim and proper. He was sure she was going to scold him. “You know,” she started as she straightened her glasses and pushed them a little up her nose; “You sneaking in here and watching me sleep is a whole lot creepy. I had a stalker in college and even he didn’t watch me sleep. I don’t think.”

“Jax was watching you sleep when I got here.”

“That’s different.”

“How?”

“He and I are friends. You and I are –“

“What?” He leaned forward genuinely interested in how she was going to categorize whatever they were. But she pressed her lips together trapping whatever words were forming back into her body.

She shook her head and sighed; “It doesn’t matter.” She traced a pattern out on her blanket, “So, I read that you avoided prison. The vigilante was seen out while you were on house arrest.”

“My associate put the suit on for the night and Laurel plead my case well.”
Felicity nodded and gave him a small smile that didn’t quite hit the mark, it was the saddest smile he’d ever seen; “Guess you really didn’t need me, huh?” He gripped his bow so tightly, he thought it would snap. She had a way of making him feel like more of a bastard than he already did, the only other person who made him feel that way was Thea. But Thea had nothing on Felicity. With great effort, he loosened his grip on his bow.

Felicity wrapped the blanket tighter around herself as if it was armour against him. “So, your… associate had a turn at playing vigilante? I didn’t figure you as someone who’d play well with others.”

She was already brushing away the sadness, already forgiving him before he’d even really worked for it. Her comment had a smile forming on his mouth, a genuine one, not one he produced when he had to be Oliver Queen, playboy, screw up and general disappointment.

“You want to meet him?” The question was out of his mouth before he could reconsider or shutdown the thought. It was so worth it because Felicity beamed at him as if he had singlehandedly hung the moon. She nodded enthusiastically.

“Then, you’ll meet him.” He promised her and found it was a promise he actually intended to keep.

She gave him that smile again as if he had just singlehandedly made all her hopes, dreams and wishes come true. It had been a while since someone had looked at him that way. He didn’t think anyone had ever looked at him like that before.

Felicity tilted her head and the t-shirt she was wearing slipped off her shoulder, his eyes zeroed in on the spot where her collarbone and shoulder met. He flicked his eyes back up to her face.

“You seem sad.” Did he? “I mean you’re always broody but this is different, this is sad vigilante.”

He sighed; “Someone close to me saw me in full on hood mode and they didn’t like what they saw. Said I have no remorse. Then that same person saw my scars and their reaction to them was…. unexpected.”

“Laurel?”
And melancholy Felicity was back. But like before she brushed it off. Pushing aside her blanket, she told him to stay where he was and left the room, when she came back, she handed him a bowl of ice-cream. She settled herself cross-legged on the end of her bed, picked up her bowl and pointed her spoon at him; “Don’t think, just eat. It makes everything seem less worrisome.”

Watching Felicity meet Diggle was an experience for Oliver. She met Oliver down in the Foundry wearing a black and white dress and red heels and kept smoothing out the skirt of the dress and asking Oliver if she looked ok. After the fifth time reassuring her she looked fine, he had to walk away and go hit something.

When Diggle arrived and Oliver made the appropriate introductions, Felicity smiled so brightly at Diggle, Oliver was worried she’d strain herself. She practically skipped right up to Diggle and Oliver thought she was about to wrap her arms around Diggle but she appeared to catch herself and shook his hand instead. Then she went to rearrange his computers, though he wasn’t sure what was wrong with his set up, while she muttered to herself about appropriate touching with people she was supposed to have only just met.

“She’s full of energy.” Diggle stated, his gaze still fixed on Felicity. Oliver made a small noise.
“Is it wise to involve that girl in all this, Oliver?”

“She knew who I was before you did, Dig.”

“She’s a civilian.”

“We’ll protect her. We have to.”

Diggle gave Oliver a look that was full of disapproval but said nothing. Oliver approached Felicity who was still beaming. She was like an over enthusiastic puppy. She crooked a finger at Oliver and he leaned in as if ready for her to tell him a secret.

“You didn’t tell him about,” she wiggled her fingers and twitched her nose. Oliver suppressed a smile and shrugged; “Not my secret to tell.”
Her smile grew even wider, if that were at all possible.
“I’ll have a burger with a side order of two motorbikes.” Oliver stated as he strode into the diner flanked by Roy and Diggle. Felicity froze where she was wiping down a table, turning slowly, she did a quick evaluation of Oliver’s wellbeing. He looked fine. You wouldn’t even know he’d been shot – unless of course you knew.

“You can have the burger;” she said slowly, carefully, “but the motorbikes are a no go.”

Oliver crossed the distance between them in a few quick strides and Felicity sucked in a breath as he slapped a hand down on either side of her on the table behind her, effectively boxing her in. He dipped his head so they were eye to eye; “I don’t give a shit what you thought you were doing, just give them back and I won’t press charges.”

“Please,” she scoffed and his gaze darkened; “if you were going to press charges, you would have done it by now.”

“Felicity.”

“Besides, I can’t give them back.”

Oliver looked very much like he was struggling to maintain his patience; “Why not?”
She winced and bit her lip; “We kind of, sort of, may have blown them up.”

“You blew them up.”

She measured a small space out between her finger and thumb; “Only a little.”

With a growl, he pushed away from her and started pacing in front of her like a caged lion desperate to get out and attack its prey. She was pretty sure in this scenario, she was the prey. That made her nervous and when she was nervous she had a tendency to babble.

“I mean, we didn’t steal them to blow them up themselves, they were more a tool to blow something else up. Something bigger. It was mostly Belle’s idea, she was pissed at you about the whole purchasing her little sister thing. I just kind of went along with it.”

Oliver continued to pace. There was a snort from the peanut gallery that was Diggle and Roy. Roy raised his brows; “If your sister said to jump off a bridge, would ya do it?”

He obviously didn’t have a big sister. Felicity shot Roy a ‘you’re so stupid’ look, tilted her head and said; “Well, yeah.”

And that right there pretty much summed up Felicity’s whole life.

Oliver came to a halting stop right in front of her. His brows drew together as he scowled at her, then he spun on his heel and stalked back out.

“So, how exactly do you two figure out who to target?” Felicity asked as she sat on her computer station in the lair and swung her legs. Oliver would argue that it was his computer station but he was oh so wrong about that one.

They were having a vigilante team meeting….a hood meeting….a secrets of the night meeting. She couldn’t decide what to call it. They really needed to come up with a group name. Maybe she’d put that on the agenda for the next meeting. She’d have to remember to note that down. She’d been down in the lair several times now – Oliver had even given her the secret code to the door, though she totally could have hacked it but it was nice he gave it to her willingly.
Diggle had brought Big Belly Burger and had even got her a chocolate mint shake. That was so nice of him. He was exactly as he’d been before and it comforted her. She was sure he and her were going to be the bestest of buddies.

Diggle pointed at Oliver with his drink; “He has a book.”

“A book?”

Oliver stood up, walked over to the desk and held out a small notebook to her. She flicked through it, recognising some of the names as people Oliver had targeted. Some names were crossed off.

“Ok but who wrote this list?”

“My father gave it to me before he died. Told me to right his wrongs to save the city.”

“So, you just go through this list crossing names off and ignore all the other crimes?”

“Excellent question, Miss Smoak,” Diggle smiled and crossed his arms, between him and Oliver it was like a gun show.

Oliver sighed; “I don’t ignore it, if I come across it, I stop it but I’m not the police, every petty crime in this city isn’t my concern.”

“It’s true. All he cares about is keeping his promise to his father.” Diggle said it dryly and Felicity got the impression the two men had already had this conversation…more than once. While Felicity completely understood and related to keeping promises to dead relatives, she thought Oliver was being a little narrowed sighted when it came to the best way to save the city.

“You know you could do some real good in this city, right, Oliver? Besides just targeting the one percenters.” She looked at him earnestly; “You’re better than this killing machine you’ve become.”

“I only kill when it’s absolutely necessarily,” Oliver said it with such conviction that Felicity was
willing to bet her whole collection of Sherlock on the fact that this was another argument Diggle and Oliver have had. “I have remorse.”

The look in his eyes was so haunted that she placed a hand on his arm and waited until he was looking directly at her; “I know you do,” she said softly. “But Oliver, there’s so much crime in this city, crime that needs stopping. You could help so many people.”

He shook his head and backed away, her hand falling away from his arm and she missed the contact; “I’m not interested in being anyone’s hero. I just want to honour my father’s dying wish and then I’m done.”

Now hold on just one hot minute. “I thought your father didn’t make it to the island. That he drowned.”

If she hadn’t been watching his expression as closely as she was, she would have missed the way he completely shut down. It was as if someone closed the shutters on the light in his eyes. If she thought he looked haunted before, he was even more so now. She looked in Diggle’s direction hoping for some clarity but Diggle just shook his head in the universal signal to let it go. Felicity had never been any good at letting things go. Oliver started to pace away from her, probably to go hit the living daylights out of something, she should have just let him go but she’d never been good at knowing when to keep her mouth shut.

“Oliver, I know what it’s like to make a promise to someone when they’re at the end of their life but not all deathbed promises should be kept.”

He spun around, his face a mask of fury and she knew she should develop a filter and maybe some more self-preservation.

“You and I are not the same!” He roared. Out of the corner of her eyes she saw Diggle jump to his feet and move closer until he subtly placed himself between Oliver and Felicity. She wanted to tell him not to worry about her. She wasn’t afraid of Oliver, she could handle him and she’d never needed anyone to protect her from Oliver. She didn’t say a word, just kept her eyes locked on Oliver. He took a step in her direction and Diggle moved more firmly between them, staring Oliver down.

Wow, look at all this manly tension.
It was scary how quickly Oliver’s rage turned to perfect calm. It was as if a switch were flicked. There’s always a calm before the storm. He turned, strode over to a table and flipped it over, papers flew into the air and fluttered to the ground, objects hit the floor with a crash. Ok. Then. 

Without so much as a glance in their direction, Oliver stalked over to his workout area and started arrowing tennis balls.

“That was fun,” she said brightly, in an attempt to alleviate some of the tension.

Diggle turned to her with a sigh. “Felicity, I need you to be more careful.”

She tilted her head; “What do you mean?” She was being purposely obtuse.

“Don’t provoke him like that. Don’t poke at the bear. What if next time I’m not here?”

Felicity laughed lightly; “You’re kidding, right?”

Another long suffering sigh from Diggle; “I don’t think he’d intentionally hurt you but, Felicity, he’s dangerous. And you never know what’s going to set him off.”

Felicity sobered, Diggle was genuinely concerned for her safety and while that filled her with all the warm and fuzzies, it baffled her that he could see Oliver as a threat to her safety. Diggle’s concern was unnecessary. She stepped closer and laid a hand on Diggle’s arm; “I appreciate the concern but I’m ok. Why don’t you go home for the night? I’ll tame the beast.” She winked at him.

Diggle hesitated so she gave him her best encouraging smile. He sighed again, realising he wasn’t going to win this one and reluctantly said good night and made his way up the stairs. Felicity waited until the door shut before walking over to the edge of the training area and plopped down on one of the training mats. Oliver didn’t look her way, just kept putting arrows into poor, innocent tennis balls. He didn’t miss a single one. It was impressive really. Scary impressive, she wouldn’t want to be on the pointy end of one of his arrows.

“Dig’s right. I am dangerous.” He didn’t even put the bow down or pause in shooting arrows. Impressive. And exasperating. So very exasperating.
Sighing, Felicity, raised her hands, resting her elbows on her knees, rubbed her fingers together and zeroing her gaze in on one particular tennis ball she said; “Incendia.”

She smirked as the ball promptly went up in flames. Oliver’s eyes widened and he paused, bow pulled back, arrow ready to be released. The ball bounced to the floor still on fire. When she stopped rubbing her fingers together the flame went out and all that was left behind was a chargrilled tennis ball and a gaping Oliver. Slowly, he lowered the bow and stared at her.

Felicity shrugged; “We’re all dangerous, Oliver.”

“You can set shit on fire.”

“Yup,” she grinned at him.

“Fuck. I can work with that.”

She nodded, figuring that was as close to an apology as she was ever going to really get. “Ok.”
Exhaustion and Warmth

Chapter Summary

Felicity gets a visit from big brother. Her actual big brother. And also from Oliver.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Don't own a single thing. Don't own Arrow, DC or The CW. Nate, however, is my very own fictional character

Italics = Felicity's memories.

Felicity loved her apartment, it was her sanctuary. It was the first place she’d truly felt at home in a long time. When you’re in the foster system, you learn to never really get attached to places or people or to be attached to material objects, you have to be prepared to move on at a moment’s notice. Perhaps because of that, she had become a collector of trinkets.

Tonight was all about enjoying her apartment and hoping for a dreamless sleep. Tonight was hood free, vampire free, family drama free. She’d made a playlist comprised of songs Belle had loved and Felicity closed her eyes and for a few mere moments she was back in the apartment Belle had raised her in in the previous life. She heard the music and Belle’s melodic laugh as she forced an awkward, nerdy little Felicity to dance around the apartment with her. Belle had always said some songs were just perfect for twirling and would hold Felicity’s hand and twirl her around and round until she got dizzy and fell to the floor full of unsuppressed giggles.

Felicity wasn’t much of a culinary expert but she could make one hell of a mac and cheese and she took comfort in the process of cooking pasta, draining it and dumping it into a sauce that was more cheese than sauce. Comfort food was the absolute best kind of food. The other great thing about her apartment and the fact that she lived alone was that she could perch on her kitchen counter and devour her mac and cheese right out of the bowl with no one there to judge her.

Once she’d had her fill of cheesy goodness – and how she was glad she did not have a dairy intolerance – she dumped her dishes in the sink. She’d worry about them later. Her playlist changed songs and she clapped her hands gleefully as one of her absolute favourite songs for an after dinner dance came on. No one made a guitar his bitch quite like Santana. Felicity went to the middle of her living room and closing her eyes started to sway to the beat that was *Put Your Lights On*. She could hear Belle’s voice telling her she needed to put her hips more into it. In the
middle of the rather epic guitar solo, a voice called out; “Hey.”

Felicity squealed, froze and her eyes flew open and landed on Oliver’s green-clad figure leaning against her bedroom doorframe, arms folded and looking about as amused as Oliver could while also simultaneously brooding. It was an art form, really.

“How long have you been standing there?” He opened his mouth but she cut him off; “No! Don’t answer that!” She fumbled with the remote, trying to turn her music down, finally she found the right button and red faced, she glared at Oliver; “What are you doing? You don’t just climb in someone’s window and watch them while they’re minding their own business. You make noise. Stomp a little. Otherwise, I will not make it to old age, your freaky stealthy self will scare me to death.”

His lips quirked up before he remembered that brooding was his default setting. He tilted his head and raked his gaze up and down her; “I’ve never seen your hair down.”

Self-consciously, she tucked some hair behind her ear; “Yeah, well, a person doesn’t have to try to look good and perfectly put together when they’re in their own home.”

“I didn’t say you looked bad. You look nice.” He snapped his mouth shut and shook his head as if he hadn’t meant to say that out loud.

Felicity sucked in a breath because holy shit balls, he might as well have just shot her with an arrow. Shake it off, Felicity. He meant nothing by it. But…..

She had her back pressed to a wall, Oliver pressed to her front, his lips trailing up and down her neck, one hand on her waist, the other clutching the exposed skin of her thigh.

“You look nice,” he muttered against the spot where her neck and shoulder met.

“I’m wearing your shirt.” She said on a shaky sigh.

She felt his smile against her skin; “I know.”
Felicity bit her bottom lip and scratched at her shoulder and then spun away from him. She couldn’t do this. This was supposed to be a vigilante free, care free night. And then here he was. Suddenly, she was irrationally irritated with him. She turned to face him again to find him watching her.

“What do you want, Oliver? You gave me the night off.”

“I know, but—“ He was cut off my a knock on her door. She held up a finger, telling Oliver to hold that thought. She went over to her door and peered through the peephole. And could she not catch a break?

Felicity rushed over to Oliver and gave him a shove. He didn’t even sway on his feet. Damn him. He frowned down at her. She pressed her hands to his chest and pushed him again; “You need to go. My brother’s here. Nate. So, go right now.”

“I need your help with something Felicity,” he said softly in that voice that made her insides turn all squishy.

“Fine,” she whispered; “Just wait in there and don’t come out until he leaves.”

She gave him another push and this time he stepped and she reached into the room, gripped the door handle and shut the door. She went back to her front door muttering to herself about infuriating vigilantes.

Pulling the door open, she glared at her brother, who frowned at her; “Who were you talking to?”

“What? No one. Myself.”

Nate smiled at her almost fondly. Creepy. “You used to always chatter to yourself when you were really little.”

She sighed, not wanting to take a stroll down memory lane with him; “What are you doing here, Nate?”
“Oh. Here.” He shoved a small potted cactus at her; “I know you don’t remember but our mother taught us to always bring a gift when visiting someone’s home.”

Tentatively, she took the cactus from him and studied it; “You’re right. I don’t remember. Why a cactus?”

Nate shoved his hands into his pockets and shrugged; “They’re really hard to kill. Our mother also taught us it wasn’t polite to leave guests standing on our doorstep.”

Rolling her eyes, Felicity held the door wider and allowed Nate entry. He smiled and walked in and looked around her apartment, picking up things and studying them.

“What are you doing here, Nate?” she asked again as she clicked the door closed.

“Can’t a big brother just pop by and visit his baby sister?”

“Not when it has been his mission in life to kill said baby sister.”

Nate flopped down on her sofa and plumped a pillow making a big show of getting comfortable. “I’ve told you, Felicity, I found a spell that would allow me to bring back our siblings but in order to come back, you have to die first.”

“Well, gee, let me just get my sharpest knife and we’ll get right on that.”

He levelled her with a look, not appreciating her sarcasm; “The spell won’t work without Belle’s baby who is dead and buried with her mother, so it’s a moot point.”

“Right. But let’s say hypothetically that it were possible, what would happen exactly?”

“You die. I bring you all back. But Felicity, we could choose what age you wanted to come back, you could do it all over again.”

Been there, done that, not so keen to repeat it for a third time, thank you very much. “And Belle’s
daughter, would she come back too.”

“No, had she lived, she would have been the sacrifice. She would have died and stayed dead, it would take all her blood to make the spell work.”

“But it’s a moot point.”

“Yes.”

“So, again, I ask: what are you doing here?”

Nate smiled at her, which in itself made her suspicious, and patted the spot on the sofa beside him. She didn’t want to sit and do some brother/sister bonding. She was aware of Oliver in her bedroom, snooping and listening to every word. She wanted to get Nate out of her apartment as fast as possible.

Nate gave her a knowing look; “Felicity, the sooner you sit, the sooner I’ll leave.”

She gave him a sceptical look but rounded the sofa and perched on the edge of it as far from Nate as possible. “Fine. I’m sitting. What do you want?”

“Since I can’t figure out another spell to bring them back, I want to find out who killed our siblings and make them pay.”

Well, colour her surprised. It was actually a semi-sane idea.

“And how would you make them pay?”

Nate smiled at her but it was a cold, calculated smile that filled her with dread; “I’ll kill them all.”

Huh. She found that she wasn’t one percent against it. Would did that say about her?

“Ok, say I’m willing to hope on the crazy train and actually agree to work with you, how would we
even find out who did it? It’s been fifteen years. They were careful, besides the bodies, they left no actual evidence, no fingerprints, no hair, no DNA, nothing. Zip. Nada.”

“True. But we have something the police don’t. Magic.”

“We don’t have our powers, Nate.” She wasn’t willing to let him know she had the book or that she’d used it to get her powers back. She couldn’t risk Nate getting his powers back, not if she wanted to protect Thea.

“No, but we’re still witches, we can still do spells and make potions. I know a witch who lets me use her grimoire. We can do this, Felicity. I know we can.”

While she didn’t entirely trust Nate, like at all, she did want to know who was responsible for her family’s demise. There was also a part of her that she tried to keep buried deep inside that was desperate for some kind of relationship with one of the two people who were blood related to her. And Thea wasn’t an option.

Nate sensed her hesitancy and slid closer to her on the sofa careful to not touch her, he looked at her with imploring eyes; “Let’s brainstorm. What do we know?”

“There were five of them. Black ski masks.”

“We also know at least one was reluctant to kill a kid.”

She frowned; “What do you mean?”

“Think about it, Felicity, each one of our siblings were shot in the head. You were shot in the chest.”

“And I almost died.” She pointed out.

“Yes but shooting you in the chest meant you had as much of a shot at living as dying.”
Felicity thought he was probably fudging the probability a little but she understood his logic, even if she doubted it.

“So, what do you say, sis, you want to team up and get justice for our siblings?”

She wasn’t sure what Nate wanted was really able to be considered justice but she wanted the truth as much as he did. This was a mystery that had been unsolved for far too long.

“I’ll think about it. But Nate, you don’t do anything until I’ve thought about it and given you my answer.”

He mimicked crossing his heart and swooped in and kissed her lightly on the cheek, it made her still, it was the closest thing to affection she’d received in a long time; “You got it, I’ll see you soon, baby sister.”

She remained sitting, stunned, as he got up, placed a hand softly on her head, walked to the door and let himself out, clicking the door closed behind himself. She stared blankly straight ahead, her thoughts in chaos.

Mere seconds after Nate had made his exit, her bedroom door creaked open and she heard Oliver’s boots against her hardwood floors as they crossed the space between her bedroom and her sofa. She felt him sit beside her, closer than Nate had been, his knee bumping lightly against hers.

“You want to talk about it?” He asked softly.

She blinked once, twice, three times. Oliver had heard everything. Of course he had. He now know nearly all of her secrets and she knew barely any of his. The scales were not balanced.

“No. Not really.” She whispered. She just needed a minute. He must have sensed that because he leaned back against her sofa and just waited her out. She could feel his warmth rolling off him in waves and she had to resist the urge to lean into him. Another blink.

She turned her head and found him watching her with concern etched into those bluer than blue eyes of his. “I’m good. What did you need?”

He watched her a beat longer before lifting his chin in acknowledgement; “There’s an archer
killing people off the list. People I’ve already confronted.”

“Another archer?”

“Yes.”

Her eyes widened as he produced a black arrow from his quiver and handed it to her; “It’s custom made. Can you find out where it came from?”

She looked over the arrow and saw the shaft’s composite was patented. Picking up her tablet from the side table, she swiped the screen and pulled up a search; “The patent is registered to a company called Sagittarius. Which is Latin for the archer.”

Which Oliver probably already knew.

“Felicity, can you find out where and when this arrow was purchased?”

She gave him a look that clearly stated that was a stupid question and went about finding that information. Grabbing the pad and pen she kept on the side table with her tablet, she scribbled down the address for where the arrow had been sent to. She ripped the sheet of paper off the pad and handed it to him. Their fingers brushed as he took it from her.

He tilted his head and gave her a sweet, tiny smile, “Felicity, you’re remarkable.”

She tried to make light of the comment, make a joke out of it; “Thank you for remarking on it;” but it came out flat. She was exhausted and it was catching up with her.

Oliver tucked the piece of paper into his jacket pocket, lifted his hood up and she realised he was preparing to make his exit. She’d wanted to be alone that night but she realised she didn’t want him to leave. She couldn’t tell him that. So, instead, she warily pushed herself to her feet and followed him through to her bedroom and propped herself against the wall by the window as he lifted the window. He swung one leg out the window and paused, straddling the window sill, one leg in, one out; “You ok?”
She tried to give him a smile but it fell short so she nodded instead; “I’ll be fine.”

He looked like he wanted to say something more but shook his head like he thought better of it and ducked his head and climbed out the window fully and disappeared into the night.
“He’s taking credit for it.” Belle stated as she propped her hip against the bathroom doorframe.

Felicity looked up and met Belle’s gaze in the mirror, “What?” she said around a mouthful of toothpaste.

Belle scrunched her nose up; “Spit. Then talk.”

Obediently, Felicity got rid of the toothpaste, turned off the facet, wiped her mouth and turned and perched on the edge of the bathtub; “Who’s taking credit for what?”

Belle rolled her eyes and sighed in exasperation as if Felicity should just know what she was talking about; “Oliver Queen and the Bratva are publicly taking credit for blowing up Dad’s house.”

Ok. That made absolutely no sense. “Why would he do that?”

Belle merely shrugged.

Felicity marched into Oliver’s office in the Queen manor and came to a stop in front of the desk glaring down at Oliver who was working through some paper.
“Have you lost your mind? Gone completely cuckoo? Are you actively looking to start a war between the Bratva and the Italian Mob? Because claiming our little go boom mission as your own will inevitably lead to a war. Is that what you were aiming for?”

“Maybe I was,” he said flatly not looking up at her.

“I told you not to get caught up in this thing between us and our father.”

He merely lifted a shoulder in a half shrug. It was official, he was the most infuriating man she’d ever met.

“My father won’t take this lightly, Oliver, he’ll demand revenge. He’ll kill you.”

Finally, he paused in his paperwork, his pen hovering and looked up at her; “Better he kill me than you.”

Well. Shit.

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Though her father was a hard man who committed violent acts against even his own children, he still demanded dinners with his remaining children. There was no schedule for these dinners; he’d demand them and they’d be summoned and escorted to them at gunpoint if necessary.

Felicity had once asked Belle why their father hated them so much. Belle had said it was because they reminded him too much of their mother and of the children he’d lost. She said she believed he couldn’t forgive them for surviving the massacre that had taken his most beloved daughters from him.

Dinner conversation that night consisted of tense, polite pleasantries and her father inquiring as to how Felicity had escaped the clutches of Oliver Queen. When Belle had flatly stated she had shot him, their father looked almost proud. It made Felicity want to throw up or stab her father with her fork.
Dessert had just appeared in front of her when she heard what sounded like a door being kicked open. Her father reached for his gun but before he could get to it, men came charging in guns raised. Felicity recognised the men as Bratva. She met Belle’s eye and realised her sister had had the same realisation.

Oliver strode into the room, wrapped a hand around Felicity’s arm and hauled her out of her seat, the chair clattered sideways onto the floor. Oliver pulled her close to his body and suddenly, she had the barrel of his gun pressed to her temple.

“Oliver?” she whispered.

The arm he had around her waist tightened. Her father looked at them calmly; “What are you doing, Queen?”

“Taking back what’s mine;” he growled. Um, what, now? Oliver started walking her backwards, gun pressed to her head, she could hear Belle calling after her. Oliver practically carried her out of the house and down the driveway toward his car.

Finally, he loosened his grip on her and she stumbled away from him. Wide-eyed she stared at him as he tucked his gun into the back of his jeans. “What the hell are you doing, Oliver? What was that about?”

He stepped forwards and grabbed her face in one hand, squeezing slightly; “You are mine.”

What the hell? She shoved him away and slapped him across the face. Hard. When she went for slap number two, he caught her wrist and hauled her to him. “That wasn’t a dinner, Felicity, that was your last meal. I have an informant who told me your father was planning to put a bullet in you tonight.”

“So, you came in for the daring rescue?”

“I protect what’s mine.”

“I am not yours.”

The sound of gunfire came from the house and wide-eyed Felicity turned back towards the house.
She took a step and Oliver caught her around the waist and started to try to force her into the car. She fought him the whole way, tears streaming down her face. He got her into the car and she wrapped her fist around the front of his shirt; “Please, Oliver, my sister’s still in there.”

Devoid of any expression, he said; “I know.” And slammed the car door.

“A witch, a warlock, a vampire and a vigilante walked into a bar…..or in this case an apartment.” Jax smirked at his own joke as he lifted her up onto her kitchen counter and eyed the other occupants of the room. Nate sat on her sofa, arms crossed and looking anything but at ease. Oliver was leaning against the wall of her living room, in full hood mode, head down, face covered by the hood and the dimmed lighting of the room. She hadn’t asked Oliver to be here for this, it was merely serendipitous that he’d crawled through her window armed with Chinese food and ice cream. He said Diggle had been worried about her when she hadn’t gone to QC for her day job or turned up in the foundry that night.

She’d been plagued with nightmares and had woken up shaking and barely able to function. She was a little delicate so she’d welled up when Oliver turned up bearing food and concern for her.

So when Jax had knocked on her door and Oliver had elected to stay for whatever reason, she couldn’t bring herself to kick him out, even though she knew she should. And then when Nate had turned up, Jax had refused to leave and there they were.

She couldn’t see his face from where she was standing in the kitchen but she was fairly certain Oliver was glaring at everyone. Jax had his head tilted and his gaze flitted between Oliver and Nate. And Nate was entirely focused on her.

All Felicity wanted to do was crawl into bed.

“What are you doing here, Nate?” She asked warily.

“What are they doing here? I don’t trust the vampire and I certainly don’t trust a man who wears a costume and puts arrows into people.”

“Well, no one here trusts you, so there’s a whole load of not trusting going on,” Jax piped up.
Thank you, Jax. Nate narrowed his eyes and then sighed. “It’s almost the holidays, Felicity, a time for family. You shouldn’t be alone.”

She shrugged; “I’ve spent many holidays alone, it’s nothing new.”

“She won’t be alone,” Jax interjected, “She’s got me.”

“That’s comforting.” Oliver’s disguised voice stated. Felicity sent a look his way.

Nate ignored them both, got to his feet, pulled his phone out of his pocket and plugged it into her sound system. Oh, Darling by the Beatles filled the room. Nate sang a couple of lines softly.

“Remember this song, Felicity? You probably don’t. I used to sing it to you when you were a baby and a toddler. It was one of the few things that would help you sleep.” He smiled sadly, as if trapped in the memory; “Oh! Darling, please believe me I'll never do you no harm.”

“Nate.” She was too tired to play this game.

“You know, you and me were close once, Felicity, before you decided that Finn was the brother who hung the moon.”

“Or maybe she just realised Finn was the more mentally stable brother,” Jax suggested. Felicity sighed. She felt rather than saw Oliver’s eyes on her. In that moment she wanted him to pull out an arrow, raise his bow and make them leave so she could go and tuck herself into her bed.

“What are doing here, Nate,” she asked once again.

Nate sighed, obviously disappointed that she wasn’t up for playing a round of ‘This is your life’. “What if we could walk through that day again?”

She didn’t have to ask what day he meant. “Nate, I don’t really want to experience that day again.”
“I know but what if we could follow the killers into the house and listen to them talk and really investigate the scene?”

“Time travel is always iffy, Nate and also I’m not really up for it.”

Nate shook his head; “Not time travel. What if we could go to the house and walk through it as if that day were happening, let the memories encased in the house take us to the moment we want to see.”

“That’s empath magic, Nate, neither you or I are empaths.”

“No, but,” he reached into his pocket and pulled out a piece of paper; “There’s a spell for a potion, we take the potion in the house and it acts like empath magic.”

“So, it’s like magical LSD?” Jax chimed in with and Felicity gave him a look that clearly told him to pipe down.

Ostensibly, it was a good idea, a good plan even but she was too wrecked to really make an informed decision. “I’ll think about it, Nate.”

The thing about Nate was he always knew when to walk away and let her think about something until she had weighed the options and the consequences equally. It was the one thing they had in common, they both thought things through rather than just jumping in head first. Nate noted; placed the folded up piece of paper onto her coffee table, unplugged his phone effectively killing the music and settling her living room in silence once more. “Let me know what you decide.” He paused at the door, giving her a smile full of sadness and wistfulness; “Happy holidays, Felicity.”

Then he was gone. Jax whistled; “Damn, he’s good.”

Felicity rounded the kitchen island and sat down heavily on her sofa, she saw Oliver push away from the wall out of the corner of her eye. She heard, rather than saw, Jax jump down off the counter and walk into the living room. He leaned down and picked up the piece of paper and unfolded it. He held up a small photo that had been tucked in with the spell. It was a photo of a three year old her and a fifteen year old Nate. Jax sat down on the coffee table in front of her; “You do realise, babydoll, that Nate is trying to manipulate you.”

She shrugged tiredly; “Isn’t everyone?” realising what she said, she winced and looked between Jax and Oliver; “I didn’t mean that.”
Jax just skipped right past it. “You and I both know empathic magic is tricky, even when you are an empath. Even more so when you aren’t.” He tilted his head and looked in Oliver’s direction; “What do you think, Mister Green and Growly, you want to weigh in?”

“It’s not my area of expertise.”

Jax snorted; “Of course, it’s not.”

“Finn was the empath,” Felicity whispered, then pressed her lips together. Jax frowned, reached out and cupped her chin in his hand.

“It’s ok to talk about your family, Felicity, to talk about those you loved.”

“Empathic magic is tricky;” she began and Jax sighed, releasing her chin; “but if it could be done, I wouldn’t be in any physical harm, not from the past moment.”

“What about the emotional harm?” Jax looked to Oliver again, obviously hoping for Oliver to come down on his side; “Come on, you green, chiselled, statue of a man, help me make our girl realise what a monumental mistake this is.”

“Ok, one: stop objectifying him. And two: I’ve already got a load of emotional baggage, what’s a little more?”

Jax threw his hands in the air; “I give up. At least if you’re going to do this, don’t do it alone. Take someone with you who can watch and make sure Nate doesn’t have something else planned for you while you’re under the influence of magical LSD.”

“I haven’t said I’m going to do it. I said I’d think about it. And I will.”

Jax huffed, rolling his eyes but eventually he gave her a slow smile, “You want me to tuck you into beddy bye,” he waggled his eyebrows so that there was no way she could miss what he was suggesting.
She let out something that could vaguely be called a laugh; “No. I’m good. I might watch something for a while before I head off to bed.”

“Oh, well, I’ll take off then. People to do, things to see, you know.” He cupped her face in his hands and pressed a kiss to her forehead, stood and pointed a finger at Oliver; “And you, be nice to her, or I’ll know.”

Felicity rolled her eyes; “Good night, Jax.”

“Night, baby,” he blew her a kiss, winked at Oliver and then exited her apartment in true Jax fashion. And that left her alone with Oliver. She didn’t think she had the energy to deal with him anymore tonight.

She got up off the sofa and walked into her bedroom and then into her bathroom, he followed her and lurked in the bathroom doorway while she wiped her face with a face wipe.

“This spell could help you find the killers?” he asked softly.

She shrugged; “Maybe, maybe not.”

“Is it dangerous?”

“All magic has consequences.” She turned and walked past him into her bedroom, pulling back the covers of her bed; “Look, Oliver, thank you for the food and for checking up on me but right now, I just want to go to bed.”

He nodded but instead of heading for the window to make his own dramatic exit into the night, he sat on the edge of the chair. He wasn’t relaxed, he looked like he was on high alert, sitting straight backed, his hands clenched on his knees.

She climbed into bed, sat up against the headboard and watched him watching her, she pulled the blankets up around her; “You’re going to sit and watch me try to sleep?”

“You’ve been having nightmares.” He stated it like it was the most simple thing in the world, she
had nightmares, so he’d sit there like a creepy-creeper.

“Oliver,” she said slowly; “You realise you can’t protect me from my nightmares? That you can shoot an arrow at what haunts me?”

“Just go to sleep, Felicity.”

Knowing she wasn’t going to win this one, she slid down in her bed and closed her eyes and slid into sleep knowing even just for that moment, she wasn’t alone.
Betrayal and the like

Chapter Summary

Laurel Lance makes a not so welcome appearance. Oliver messed up. Tommy also appears.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own anything to do with Arrow, DC or The CW.

Note: there is mention of attempted rape in this chapter, it is not graphic but it is mentioned. And rape or the attempt of rape or sexual violence is not something I take lightly at all, I try to represent it sensitively and hope not to offend anyone. If this is a trigger subject for you, please consider not reading this chapter.

Violence had never been her thing but on the drive to the Queen mansion, she unleashed everything she had onto Oliver. She slapped him, punched him, she cried on him, she thought some snot had probably made it into the mix as well.

When the car rolled to a stop, Oliver got out, came around to her side and opened the door for her. Felicity climbed out, refusing the hand he offered her and walked into the mansion. Rounding the corner into the sitting room, Felicity froze. There on the sofa, covered in blood, was Belle. Felicity choked back a sob and practically flew over to the sofa, throwing her arms around Belle. Belle hugged her back and whispered words of reassurance. Felicity pulled back, tilting her head in question. Belle looked past Felicity to the doorway, Felicity turned her head and followed her gaze to Oliver lurking in the doorway.

“They shot Dad,” Belle said softly and Felicity wondered if she was in shock.

“What? Is he….”

Belle nodded. “Anastasia. I don’t think she was at the house.”

Felicity stood up on shaky legs; “We’ll go back. We’ll search the whole place.”
“Felicity, what if she’s –“

“She’s not.” She couldn’t be.

Felicity walked up to Oliver and tried to look determined, look not as unhinged as she felt; “Take us back to the house.”

He shook his head; “There’s no one there.”

“We have to,” she cut off with a shaky breath and tears slid down her face; “We have to go back. Anastasia, my niece, she’s only seventeen. Our father took her to sell, I took her place but he kept her with him because he is…was a vindictive bastard. We have to find her.”

Oliver cupped her face in one hand and ran a thumb under an eye, catching the tears as they fell. “I’ll help you find her. I swear. But not tonight. Tonight, you eat and get some sleep.”

Felicity sat in the middle of the foundry floor. Or rather right in the middle of what would be the dance floor when the club was up and running. It was full of scaffolding and unfinished surfaces but she could see how it would all come together.

She’d woken up, gasping after a dream, to find Oliver gone and with no evidence that he’d ever been there to begin with.

She hadn’t intended to sit in the middle of the under-construction club but when she got there she couldn’t resist sitting in her usual thinking spot. She had some definite thinking to do. Would it be a mistake to trust Nate, at least provisionally? They could work together on one common goal and she could still be wary of him. She didn’t have to trust him to work with him. It would make it easier but it wasn’t necessary.

Empathic magic was tricky, Jax was right about that, even mimicking it could be tricky. After all, empathic magic relied heavily on what emotions were present in the atmosphere at the time. So, potentially, they could pick on other emotions lingering in their childhood home and see a moment
other than the one they wanted.

But say, it did work, could she really withstand watching her family be killed? What if Nate’s intentions really were less than pure and she was left vulnerable to him? Even if he didn’t have his powers, she couldn’t use hers on him.

Knowledge is power, right? But in Felicity’s experience, knowledge could also lead to a whole lot of pain. While mysteries bugged her and should be solved, sometimes it was better to not know. For her own sanity.

She sat up straighter, or as straight as her cross-legged position would allow as the door to the club opened and a stream of light filtered in. She heard voices, three to be precise. The click of heels walked across the space. She heard them talking about the club, how great it would look – them being Oliver, Tommy Merlyn and Laurel Lance. Fantastic. They stopped talking when they saw her sitting there. Felicity swiped underneath her eyes and ran a hand over her haphazard ponytail. She knew she looked a tired mess and there she was with Laurel looking at her. Laurel who had probably never had a bad hair day in her life, who looked like a freaking doll and who more than likely had birds help dress her in the morning like Cinderella.

Oliver, seeming to sense her discomfort, offered her the tiniest of smiles, strode over to her and offered her his hand to help pull herself up to standing. His thumb brushed across her wrist and she couldn’t decide if he’d done it on purpose or not. She licked her lips, she was being silly, of course it was an accident. She pulled her hand from his grasp and tried her best to offer up something resembling a smile.

Laurel narrowed her eyes and looked between Oliver and Felicity, her eyes landing on Felicity, “I’m sorry, who are you?”

Felicity hated condescension, especially when it was aimed at her. She saw Oliver stiffen and noticed he inched a little closer to her. Felicity shook her head; “I’m no one. I mean, I’m obviously someone and so are you. You’re Laurel. The Laurel.”

Dear God, Felicity shut up. Tommy was looking at her as if he were trying to puzzle her out.

“Laurel,” and why did Felicity hate the way Oliver said her name? Oh, yeah, because she’d heard that tone aimed specifically at her in another life. “This is – “ he paused and Felicity realised he was trying to figure out how to introduce her. Why she his IT girl? Someone who worked for his family’s company? “Felicity. She’s my friend.”
Oh. Well. That was nice. And unexpected and maybe not altogether true. But nice.

Tommy pointed a finger at her; “I know you from somewhere. Where do I know you from?”
Tommy clicked his fingers; “Have you ever been goth?”

“Yes.” From ages 15 to 18. “Though, I didn’t indulge in the whole goth lifestyle, it was more just a look for me. Very dark.”

Shut up. Stop the babble.

Tommy nodded and turned his look on Oliver expectantly; “When we got arrested, there was a girl —”

“Tommy,” Oliver said, humour lacing his tone; “We got arrested a lot.”

“Right. The time we broke into the community pool to host a party for those models.”

“You broke into the community pool?” Laurel asked.

“Not our finest hour.” Oliver stated.

“Right, right, misadventures of youth and all that;” Tommy put in, carrying on with his train of thought; “At the SCPD, they had us sitting there and this little goth girl came in, super young, her clothes were torn and she was holding her shirt together —”

“She had a bruise on her cheek and her eyebrow was split.” Oliver added quietly.

“Yes! And they sat her near us and it turned out the foster father she’d been placed with had tried to rape her. She’d fought back. She’d apparently kicked his ass —”

“You told her ‘good for you’.” Oliver said, his jaw clenching.
“Yes!” Tommy turned wide eyes on Felicity; “That was you. How old were you?”

All three looked to her. Laurel’s eyes full of pity. Felicity hated pity more than condescension. Oliver looked down at her, jaw clenched, eyes full of anger. They were all waiting for her to say something.

“Yes,” she conceded; “That was me. I was fifteen. Barely.”

“You were raped?” Laurel asked with all that damn pity. “In the foster system?”

“Well, we can’t all have lived charmed lives. No. ‘Tried’ was the operative word there. I fought back. Then I hit him with his son’s baseball bat. Though, Tommy’s description of me kicking his ass is a little generous. And yes it’s actually more common than you would think for foster children to be raped or sexually assaulted by those who are supposed to be keeping them safe.”

“Felicity.” She hated pity from Oliver most of all.

“I’m fine, Oliver.”

Laurel tilted her head and looked at Felicity in that analytical way only lawyers had; “Wait. Your name is Felicity, Felicity Smoak?”

“Yes,” Felicity said slowly, not sure where this was going.

Laurel turned to Oliver and the way he looked at her made Felicity want to throw up all over his club’s floor. Or that could have just been the Chinese he’d fed her the night before.

“This is the friend you were telling me about? The one whose siblings were gunned down in their home.”

Felicity froze. She felt herself get pale and she turned betrayed eyes on Oliver who still hadn’t torn his adoring gaze from Laurel. He’d told Laurel about her family.
“Oliver,” Felicity struggled to keep her voice even, “Can I talk to you for a minute please? Alone.”

He finally looked at her and nodded and excused himself from Laurel and Tommy and led her down to his super secret liar. He held the door for her and she walked down the stairs, her eyes already filling with tears. She walked to the middle of the room and waited for him to come to stand in front of her, his face blissfully unaware.

All that changed when she pulled back her arm and slapped him. Hard. The sound of her palm connecting with his cheek echoed off the concrete walls. He glared at her.

“What. The. Hell.” Scary Oliver voice. She wasn’t going to be deterred by his arrowing voice.

“I told you something deeply personal about myself and you went and blabbed it to your girlfriend!”

“She’s not my girlfriend.”

“That’s what you focus on?! That’s what you got from that?!” She backed away from him, needing some space and swiped angrily at the tears that slipped out; “I trusted you. I confided in you. I told you my secrets and you just went and whispered one of them in Laurel’s ear.”

“Like you don’t tell others my secrets!” He snapped and she reeled back as if he’d physically struck her.

“I don’t tell anyone your secrets, Oliver.” She whispered while he raged.

He scoffed; “Really? What about Jax?” He spit out bitterly; “I’ve seen the way he looks at me!”

“He looks at everyone like that!” She screamed at him; “He’s the biggest flirt in the world, he thinks that you wear the leather well, he likes your jawline, he just generally thinks you’re beautiful to look at. He has no clue who you are under all the green.”

Something in him softened minutely and he took a step toward her; “Felicity – “
Felicity shook her head and wrapped her arms around herself, letting the tears fall unchecked; “No. I trusted you. And you betrayed that. And it’s clear you don’t trust me at all.”

“Felicity.” It was an apology. A plea. It was nothing. They stared at each other and the door opened and steps hit the stairs. A concerned Diggle appeared and took in Oliver’s face and then hers.

“What’s going on?”

Felicity ignored Diggle focusing only on Oliver; “I thought you and I had an understanding. I thought we could help each other.” She smiled sadly, “I guess what I thought I saw in you was wrong. Maybe you’re not the person I thought you were.”

“Someone want to clue me in here?” Diggle asked and continued to be ignored. Poor Diggle.

She shook her head sadly. It was time to cut ties. Time to employ some self-preservation. “It’s my fault really. You could never live up to the expectations I had of you. I just thought anything we told each other would stay between us.” She sniffled and wiped her face. And steeling herself, she looked up into Oliver’s face; “But now, I’m done. We’re done.”

She turned to Diggle, gave him a shattered smile, rose up and pressed a kiss to his cheek; “I’ll see you, Dig.”

And then she was gone.
Emotions running high

Chapter Summary

This one is from Oliver's point of view. There's crying (not Oliver's). Lots of emotion.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Don't own Arrow, DC comics or The CW

I listened to the song Letting the Cables Sleep by Bush while writing this, if you haven't heard the song, I strongly suggest listening to it. Also, I have a playlist of songs I've been listening to while writing the fic as a whole. If anyone would be interested in hearing it, please let me know :)

Diggle folded his massive arms across his chest and levelled Oliver with a look; “Want to tell me what you did to that girl?”

Oliver honestly had no idea what had just happened, how had things escalated to him and Felicity screaming at each other? He’d told Laurel about Felicity’s family only to see if she could dig up the case files, perhaps find something to help Felicity. He didn’t consider it telling a secret and it wasn’t the same as someone telling his secret. Or the same as him telling someone about her magic, which was something he was still coming to terms with. That’s what he told himself to justify it.

“Oliver.” Dig demanded an answer. Oliver didn’t have one to give. Dig sighed; “You need to fix whatever this is about.”

Oliver nodded; “Right. In case she decides to go to Detective Lance with what she knows about the Vigilante.”

Dig dipped his chin and shot Oliver a look that stated he thought Oliver was an imbecile. Even Oliver picked up on what that look meant. Dig shook his head; “You really have no idea, do you?”

“About what?”
Another sigh; “Oliver that girl believes in you. Deep down in her bones believes in you. She looks at you as if you can solve any problem that comes along. Like you will step between her and any danger she encounters. She looks at you like she can rely on you to be there when she needs you the most.”

And just moments before she had looked at him as if he had broken her heart. She’d also looked at him as if she were saying goodbye to him. For good.

He wanted nothing more than to punish himself on the Salmon Ladder or with a gruelling sparring session with Diggle, but Laurel and Tommy were waiting for him upstairs. He headed back up the stairs but stopped mid-step because Diggle still had more to say; “Whatever it is fix it, Oliver. Even if she never sets foot down here again, make it right.”

Oliver gave an imperceptible nodded and carried on upstairs. Right now he had to be Oliver Queen. Not the hood. Not who he came back from the island as but the Oliver Queen who others saw him as.

“Where’s Felicity?” Tommy asked as Oliver approached.

“She had go.”

“Is she ok,” Laurel asked “Because she seemed upset.”

“She’s fine.”

“Ollie, if she’s a victim, there’s support – “

Oliver bristled at the pity dripping from Laurel’s tone, she saw Felicity as damaged. He clenched and unclenched his fist at his side; “She’s not a victim.”

“She could have any number of –“

“Laurel, she’s fine.”
“She could have PTSD. She – “

“Laurel! She’s not a victim!”

Laurel’s eyes widened at his tone, he’d never used that tone before. Not with her. He felt some instinct to protect Felicity, even from Laurel’s pity. If Laurel saw Felicity as damaged, then how would she see him?

Tommy patted Oliver’s back; “Of course she’s not.”

“I have to go.” Oliver ground out and spun on his heel and left them standing in the middle of his club. He punched in the code and raced back down the stairs, Diggle raised a brow as he strode past him and grabbed his quiver and bow and proceeded to shoot arrows into tennis balls.

He pictured Felicity sitting on the mat, setting tennis balls on fire with a mere look and telling him he wasn’t the only one who was dangerous. As if a tiny, blonde girl with glasses, painted lips and pandas on her shoes could ever compare to the type of threat he was. But she’d told him things, kept revealing things about herself as if he and her were the same.

As Oliver pinned another ball with an arrow, he knew he should be thinking about the dark archer, who he was and what he wanted instead of conjuring up images of chatty, blonde girls who had experienced almost as much trauma as he had. He should be thinking about how to take the archer down and not thinking about what to say to Felicity and he definitely shouldn’t be thinking about the way she might be one of the only people he could truly relate to. Especially not when he had spent five years staring at a picture of Laurel thinking she was his salvation.

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Oliver waited fifteen minutes after sundown to don his hood, grabbed his bow and quiver and strode to his Ducati, swung a leg over, revved the engine and took off. He parked his bike and walked around to the alley beside her building. He scaled the fire escape and crouched outside her bedroom window. The picture inside made him want to find some criminal to pound his fists into. Maybe he’d let the criminal get a couple of shots in too.

Felicity was sitting on the bed with her head on Jax’s shoulder, his arm around her and it was clear from the way her shoulders shook that she was crying. Because of him. Both figures on the bed
froze as Oliver lifted the window and climbed through. Jax was up from the bed and blocking
Oliver’s view of Felicity with unnatural speed, before Oliver had even risen to his full height.

Oliver heard a sniffle from the girl on the bed. Jax crossed his arms; “She doesn’t want to see
you.”

Really? Then why was her head peeking out from behind Jax, trying to catch a glimpse of him?
He could respect Jax’s attempt at trying to protect the girl he so obviously cared for, even if Oliver
didn’t entirely trust him.

“Jax?” She called, her voice clogged with tears. She’d been crying for a while, “It’s ok.”

Jax hesitated and then sighed, stepping aside but only going as far as to lean against the wall.
Oliver would have an audience for this conversation then.

She sat cross-legged in the middle of the bed wearing pajamas with bat signals on them. Her
blonde hair was still in its ponytail but some bits had fallen out around her face. Her nose was red
and her eyes shone with unshed tears. Oliver had never really thought women were beautiful when
they cried. But Felicity was. Even as she looked at him like he’d wrecked her world.

Slowly, so as not to spook her, he lowered himself into a crouch in front of her and studied her and
wondered how he had so much power over her emotions.

“Felicity,” he whispered.

She released a shuddering breath, bit her lip and crawled to the edge of the bed. She reached out
and wrapped a hand around the strap of his quiver and pulled him closer. He could see the tears
that clung to her lashes, waiting to fall. Without thinking, he reached up and cupped her cheek with
a gloved hand. She leaned into his hand and those tears fell, dripping onto his glove. With the
hand she didn’t have wrapped around his quiver, she pushed at his wrist causing his hand to fall
away from her cheek.

“I need you to do something for me.” She whispered

“What?”
Slowly, her lids lowered and then opened again; “Please, please leave me alone.”

He sucked in a breath as she abruptly let go of the strap of his quiver and retreated back on the bed, away from him. Slowly, he rose to his full height, turned and without looking back, climbed through the window. As he jumped off her fire escape, he could hear her sobs. He could still hear them when he landed a punch to the face of a mugger.
Felicity seeks more information about Nate's spell. Felicity saves Oliver's ass. That's about it.

The chapter title is from the Chris Issak song 'Wicked Games.' And I don't own it.

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC, The CW or any song written by Chris Issak :)

*Chris Issak’s version of I want you to want me bleared out of the diner as Felicity went out to the back alley and tossed the trash bags into dumpster. One of their father’s henchmen had disappeared with Anastasia but Oliver had kept his word and had found her relatively unharmed. And so with their father dead and Nate in the wind and Anastasia safe for the time being, life went on.*

*Life going on meant working at the diner and hanging out with her sister and niece. Very exciting stuff.*

*Felicity had just tossed the last bag into the dumpster when a low voice reached her; “I help you find your niece and then you just disappear, no thank you, no note, nothing. You just leave the mansion in the middle of the night and I don’t hear from you again?”*

*Felicity slowly turned and saw Oliver watching her. He looked unfairly good, his hands tucked in the pockets of his jeans, smiling at her.*

*She shrugged; “Well, you’ve found me. Though to be fair I wasn’t exactly hiding. You want a thank you? Thank you. I can get my sister to come out if you want her to thank you too.”*

*He took a slow step towards her, his gaze unwavering, “I don’t want to see your sister, Felicity.”*
Oh boy.

He took another step forwards and quirked a brow when she took one back, her back hitting the exposed brick wall. He stepped up to her so they were toe to toe and she had to tilt her head back a little to look into his face.

He dipped his head closer and she could see all the individual flecks in his eyes and count his lashes. She bit her lip and watched as his gaze dropped to her mouth.

“What do you want, Oliver?” She asked on a whisper as he brushed some of her hair behind her ear, his fingers trailing down her cheek making her shiver. He inched closer still.

“I want you to want me,” he said, his lips brushing hers as he spoke and then his mouth was on hers. She didn’t even have time to register he was quoting the song as he kissed her. She automatically kissed him back.

Her brain finally caught up to her body and she pushed him away. He didn’t go very far. He was still too close for comfort. He pressed both hands on the way behind her, one on either side of her head, caging her in as he watched her. He licked his bottom lip like he was still tasting her.

And goodbye self-control.

She fisted her hand in the front of this shirt and pulled him forward until their mouths roughly collided again. He ran his tongue over her bottom lip and she opened her mouth more to allow him access. His hands dropped from the wall and ran up and down her sides. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pushed herself up on her toes in a bid to get closer. It wasn’t enough.

His hands gripped her waist and he lifted her up and she took the hint and wrapped her legs around his waist. As his hands pushed her skirt up and she fumbled with his belt buckle she thought this was probably the worst idea she’d ever had.

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According to news reports, the Dark Archer was still tormenting the city, going after criminals Oliver had already confronted. According to Diggle, Oliver had nearly been blown to smithereens when he’d gone to the address where the arrows had been shipped to. Diggle also not so subtly told her that Oliver had been on a particularly violent streak lately and would she happen to have any idea why. She kept her mouth firmly shut on that one and gave him only silence over the phone. She ignored Diggle’s pleas to talk to Oliver so that Oliver’s barely contained control could return to more stable ground.

She wanted to ask Diggle when Oliver found time to pummel on criminals or look into the Dark Archer when he had gone back to lurking and creepily stalking her? She only just barely refrained from asking. It was very difficult.

When she was a crying mess, she’d clutched at Oliver and asked him to leave her alone. She was very slightly ashamed of how much of a mess she’d been. He was bad for her emotional and mental health and he didn’t even know it. She couldn’t see him lurking in the darkness but she could feel him. She knew he was out there somewhere watching her. Part of her wanted to scream out into the darkness that he should go watch Laurel, Laurel seemed to like the attention of the vigilante. Another part of her was ridiculously happy that a small part of him was thinking about her as much as she was thinking about him. That he had a small space spare for her in between his obsessing about Laurel. That train of thought was dangerous.

To be fair, she could see the allure of Laurel Lance. She was beautiful, intelligent, poised and besides her boyfriend cheating on her with her sister, she had had a fairly charmed life. She didn’t carry the boatload of emotional damage both Felicity and Oliver did.

But back to creepy, stalkerish Oliver. She’d felt his gaze on her when Jax had come to her apartment with a bottle of red wine and made her dance with him to *Oh, Pretty Woman* as he’d sung the words to her. She’d felt it when she made a late night pitstop to Big Belly Burger and ate all her feelings about stupid vigilantes. She felt his gaze on her as she made her way to Jax’s bar in the glades. It was a good thing Jax had a manager since he spent most of his nights hanging out with her and listening to the ways the vigilante had disappointed her.

Jax gave her a look as she slid onto a barstool. “What’s your poison, baby?”

She shrugged; “Just give me a shot of something, I need a little dutch courage.”

Jax poured her a shot of whiskey and placed it in front of her. She eyed the amber liquid, then glared at the jukebox.

“Hey! What did my jukebox ever do to you?”
“Urgh;” she groaned; “I hate this song with a fiery passion.”

Jax frowned at her; “Who hates I want you to want me?”

She shrugged grumpily; “I just hate it. It reminds me of something I can’t have.”

Jax placed his elbows on the bar and looked at her with sincerity shining through his crystalline eyes; “You can have anything your heart desires, Felicity."

It was a beautiful sentiment but she wasn’t naïve enough to believe that’s really how the world worked. In the words of Chris Issak: this world is only gonna break your heart. And it just kept breaking hers. Over and over again.

Picking up the shot, she threw it down and winced at the burn as it went down. She felt all warm all over. It was a nice change.

“So,” Jax drawled; “My melancholy baby, what’s got you seeking out a dose of liquid courage.”

She sat up straighter on the barstool and tried her best not to fidget; “I’m on my way to see Madame Therese.”

Jax’s brows flew up to his hairline; “You’re considering working with Nate.”

His tone told her everything she needed to know. He thought it was a colossally bad idea. He thought it would end badly for her. He probably wasn’t wrong. It could end in a world of hurt for her. She was already in a world of hurt.

“I just want to get Madame Therese to check out the spell he gave me to see if it’s legit and then I can make an informed decision.”

Jax tilted his head and studied her and she knew what he was seeing, she still looked a little emotionally unhinged but she’d put a little effort into her look. Well…..she’d put some lipstick on
and that was about it. She hadn’t even tried to cover up her dark circles or put foundation on. She’d thought she looked ok – not great, but ok – when she’d left the apartment. The way Jax was looking at her told her she was wrong.

“You want me to walk over with you?”

Shaking her head, she stood; “No. It’s not far from here. I’ll be fine. Might need another drink on the way home though.”

“Be careful!” Jax called after her as she exited the bar.

The wind blew and she wrapped her purple peacoat tighter around herself and looked up at the rooftops. She couldn’t see the figure of a man dressed in green and wielding a bow and arrow but she still felt like he was there. She couldn’t decide if she was happy about that or if it irritated her. Shaking her head, she started her walk. Madame Therese’s shop was only a few blocks over from the bar. On the outside it was merely a shop selling crystals and essential oils but in reality, it was stocked with all the herbs and ingredients a witch could need and was open late at night to service those needs. And Madame Therese was an expert on all things wiccan. Felicity had frequented her shop a lot over the years.

The bell tinkled over the door as Felicity entered the store. Madame Therese’s lined face smiled at her warmly. And seconds after she had stepped foot into the store, Felicity was enveloped in the warm arms of the older woman. Therese pulled back and looked her over and frowned at what she saw.

“Come, Felicity, I’ll make some tea.”

Felicity shook her head; “I don’t want my tea leaves read –“

“You don’t want them read but you need them read.”

Felicity knew better than to argue with the older woman and followed her through the beaded curtains into the back. The back room of the store smelt strongly of incense and tea and it comforted and relaxed Felicity. Felicity sat on the lumpy, old sofa as Therese prepared the tea.

“Now, drink.” Therese ordered gently, handing the tea cup to Felicity. Felicity drank the tea and
then swirled the remaining tea leaves in the cup as was required for a reading.

Therese took the cup from her and frowned down into it as she studied the leaves. “There is a heart but it’s not perfectly formed, indistinct, the lover is fickle.”

Felicity laughed bitterly; “That probably has something to do with the fact that there is no lover.”

Therese gave her a raised brow and a disbelieving look, then returned her gaze to the tea leaves. “There is a man, a protector, he wants to protect you but is unsure about why. There is an arrow pointing toward the bottom of the cup, caution is required. That’s all I see.”

Therese went over to the sink and dumped out the tea leaves then moved back over to the sofa and held her hand out; “Let me see your palm.”

“Therese…” Felicity sighed and reluctantly put her hand into Therese’s. Therese studied her palm with the same intensity that she’d studied the tea leaves.

“You’ve experienced deep personal betrayal in the past and more recently and some kind of trauma dictates your life choices,” Therese paused and met Felicity’s eye, she smiled kindly and patted Felicity’s palm; “You’re a good girl. Now, what did you come to see me for?”

Felicity cleared her throat and pulled her hand from Therese and pulled the spell Nate had given her out of her bag and handed it to Therese. Therese studied it and tilted her head as she looked at Felicity, concern etching her features; “This is a spell to mimic empathic magic.”

“Yes. I need you to tell me if it will work.”

“Oh, it will work. But if the memory you seek is traumatic or violent, you need someone there outside of the spell who can ground you, protect you or pull you out if you become panicked or distressed.”

Therese handed the spell back to Felicity. Felicity smiled and thanked her, it was all she needed to know. Felicity stood and embraced Therese before making her way to the door, she pulled it open and turned back to Therese to thank her again.
“You’re welcome, Felicity. But remember, memories are fickle things, they don’t always give you the answers you seek.”

Felicity nodded her understanding and left the store, the bell dinging again to signal her exit. She started walking back to the bar. After Therese’s readings, she really did need another drink.

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Felicity was pacing erratically across her hard wood floor, she had a decision to make. It was the night of the Queen’s Christmas party. Oliver had sent her an invitation. That wasn’t the decision she was trying to make. She’d declined to go to the party. No, what she was undecided about was whether or not she should go to the warehouse where the Dark Archer was holding hostages and threatening to kill one an hour until Oliver showed up.

And she had no doubt Oliver would show up. Of course he would. Which made him both heroic and an idiot. A huge, muscled, handsome idiot. The psychotic archer obviously wanted Oliver and not in the fun ‘I want to do naughty things with you’ kind of way but the ‘I want to kill you very, very dead way.’ And she knew Oliver would hand himself over like a beautifully wrapped gift.

And oh, hey look, there Oliver was on live tv ziplining onto the warehouse roof. Fabulous. Right. Then. She looked down at herself and nodded. If she was going to go and save Oliver from the crazy archer, she couldn’t very well do it in her puppy pjs. Sighing heavily, she went to her bedroom and changed into black jeans and a black long-sleeved top, pulled her blonde hair into a bun and covered it with a black beanie.

Oliver better put up one hell of a fight and still be alive when she got there or she’d kill him. Yes, she knew there was a lack of logic to that statement.

Locking her apartment, she raced down the stairs to where she’d parked her mini and drove to the area of the city where the warehouse was. She parked in an abandoned lot and run the rest of the way, she stopped and doubled over trying to catch her breath. She really needed to workout more. She huffed and puffed for a few moments, straightened up and regained her composure and walked onto the lot. Waving her hand, she froze the nice policemen, the shaken, recently rescued hostages and the rabid reporters and strolled right passed them. As she approached the building she could hear the sounds of fighting, arrows moving through the air and the roar of a man as an arrow or arrows ploughed into his flesh.

Please, please, please don’t let it be Oliver.
No one was listening to her pleas. She snuck into the warehouse in time to see the Dark Archer kicking Oliver when he was down. Quite literally. Felicity inched closer hiding behind a beam and as the archer raised his foot to kick Oliver once again, Felicity raised her hands and concentrated. She’d never been very good at telekinesis but she tried to remember what Belle had taught her. Breathe in and picture what you wanted to move, how fast you wanted to move it and where to. She wanted to move the archer, as far away from Oliver as possible, fast and she wanted it to hurt.

Mid-kick, the archer was lifted up in the air and flung violently to the far end of the warehouse. Felicity didn’t wait to see how hard he hit the wall, instead she rubbed her fingers together and whispered the words she need to create a wall of fire that prevented the archer from getting to them when or if he finally got back up.

She ran to Oliver, grabbed him by the arm and pulled him up. Ok, maybe he did some of the work. He slung his arm over her shoulder and they ran down a hallway, out a door and into the cold night air. He collapsed to the ground and nearly pulled her down with him. She landed on her hands and knees beside him and stared at the two black arrows protruding from his shoulder.

“Pull them out, Felicity,” he rasped and she could hear the pain he was trying to hide in his voice. She reached out and wrapped a hand around an arrow and hesitated. He turned his head; “You have to pull them out.”

“I’m sorry,” she whispered as she yanked one, then the second out and he roared with pain. He seemed to collapse further into the ground beneath him. She didn’t know what to do. There was no way she could get him to her car. Not as injured as he was. He seemed to sense her problem; “You need to go, Felicity.” Then he pressed something on his suit and whispered out Diggle’s name and begged for help. He was barely conscious.

“I can’t just leave you here, Oliver.”

“Have to. Can’t find you here.” He closed his eyes, then opened them briefly; “Dig’s on way. Go. Please.”

It was the ‘please’ that finally made her get up off the ground. It took everything in her to just leave him there.
Felicity lingered in the hospital hallways. Watched and waited and chewed on her nail as Oliver was admitted to hospital and taken to a room. She watched as Moira, Walter and Thea visited him. She waited while Thea spent a little extra time in the room with Oliver. She then held her breath as Thea walked right by her without even once looking her way. She then flicked through a magazine as she waited for Dig to finally leave Oliver’s room. It was well past visiting hours but she was determined to see him, to take in his bruised and battered body with her own eyes, to see that he was still breathing.

He was standing at the window looking out at the city he was so determined to defend when she sneaked into the room. She watched his back tense as he realised he was no longer alone in the room and he slowly turned to face her. She lingered by the door.

“Felicity,” he said on an exhale.

“Hey.” She offered him a small smile; “So, the media is saying Oliver Queen had a motorcycle accident.”

“Yeah, apparently I went up against a truck.”

She nodded; “Better a truck than a psychotic archer.”

He strode over to her and she didn’t miss the way he winced. He looked down at her; “You shouldn’t have come tonight, it was dangerous.”

Felicity shrugged; “Couldn’t let him kill you, no matter how mad I might be at you.”

He placed a hand on her shoulder and looked at her very seriously; “Thank you, Felicity.”

She nodded, took a step back ready to leave. She’d come, she’d seen he was still in the land of the living, now it was time to get away from him. But apparently he wasn’t ready to let her leave just yet and sat down on the edge of the bed; “So, you can set fire to things, freeze things and move things with your mind.”

Sighing, she sat down beside him; “I’m not that good at that last one, actually.”
“You seemed good at it tonight.”

“It takes a lot of concentration. And emotion. All of my powers are essentially tied to my emotions. The only reason I could do it so well tonight was because I was angry. I seriously wanted him to get the hell away from you.”

She pressed her lips together and looked down at her hands, she’d said too much. She didn’t want to give away too much. It made her vulnerable to him. Even more vulnerable than she already was.

“Felicity,” he started slowly, as if he were trying to find the right words; “I’m sorry that I told Laurel about your family.”

She looked back up at him. He did look sorry. It wasn’t just a line to get her on side; “Why did you?”

“I thought she could get the police file for you.”

He’d been trying to help in his own clumsy way. She nodded, she could accept that; “Ok. Just don’t do it again. Our secrets have to stay between us, Oliver.”

His lips quirked up into a small smile and dear god, he was going to be the death of her one way or another. He nudged her with his arm; “Deal.”
“Tell me more about this spell.” Oliver demanded as he poured her a glass of wine. They were in her apartment, he’d brought pizza. Ever since he’d gotten out of hospital – or rather discharged himself against medical advice – six weeks ago, he’d ended up on her doorstep when he was avoiding his mother and Thea. Both of whom, she was sure were concerned about him. Especially since, Walter had been kidnapped and no one had heard or seen from him since. She didn’t know Walter well but he’d always been nice to her.

So instead of spending time with his family who seemed to desperately need him or training to get back up to fighting weight to defeat the Dark Archer, he was eating take-out with her. He was using her as an excuse to avoid his responsibilities. And she was letting him. He always conveniently turned up when Jax wasn’t there or after he’d left. And he always turned up at her door as Oliver Queen, not the hood. Which made her think that he was avoiding putting the hood on again.

She wasn’t one hundred percent comfortable with him yet but she was starting to be able to look at him and not see him as the Oliver he’d been in her other life. They were so completely different and yet just the same.

Tucking her feet under her on the sofa, she turned to face Oliver and shrugged; “What do you want to know?”

He handed her a slice of pizza but took none for himself. He was always trying to feed her but ate so little himself. She never said a word about it. Before she’d turned back time, Oliver had loved food, three years on an island made him appreciate it more, he said. What a difference an extra two years made.

“How does it work?”
She sighed, took a sip of wine, a bite of pizza and mulled it over as she chewed. “It’s a potion, with a spell component. I’d make the potion, Nate was always terrible with potions. Basically, I’d put all the ingredients in a pot, let it boil, say the spell over it. Then we go to the family home, drink it and think of the memory we want to see the details of and it puts us into this kind of trance – “

“Like you’re hypnotised?”

“I guess, kind of. It’s tricky though because the house itself is steeped in magic it could influence the memory or if one of us thinks of another memory by mistake. And because it’s a traumatic memory we should have someone there, someone neutral to watch over us in case something happens.”

“What could happen?”

Felicity shrugged; “Well, in my case, I might have a panic attack, I have those sometimes.”

“I remember,” he stated softly.

“Right. So, it’s good to have someone there to pull me out if that happens. At least that’s what Madame Therese told me.”

“Madame Therese?”

“The crystal shop in the glades that you followed me to,” She said giving him a pointed look.

Oliver looked down into his wine glass; “You said to leave you alone. You didn’t say anything about watching over you when you didn’t know I was there.”

“But,” she pointed out; “I did know you were there.”

He didn’t say anything, just dipped his chin in acknowledgement. She smiled and nibbled happily on her pizza. She liked their late night dinner dates. Not that they were dates. She wasn’t that
delusional. She knew nothing would happen between them.

“I can be a neutral person.” Oliver said quietly. She looked at him from her pizza wide-eyed.

“What?”

He sat up straighter and looked at her steadily; “I can be a neutral person.”

She opened her mouth, shut it, opened it again, it was taking her a moment to comprehend what he was talking about; “You want to come and watch over me while I’m in a magic induced trance reliving my siblings murder?”

“Yes.”

Her first instinct was to just flat out say no. She knew Jax would do it. She knew she should ask him. She didn’t want to be that vulnerable in front of Oliver. She didn’t know what kind of breakdown she might have. She couldn’t say any of that to him.

“Felicity?”

“Hmm?” She looked up and met his eye, his expression was its usual impassive, stoicism but that was something in his eye that made her wonder if he was worried about her saying ‘no.’ “We’d have to do it at night. You’d have to bring your bow and be prepared to arrow Nate if he tried anything.”

He handed her another slice of pizza; “Tell when and I’ll be there. I promise.”

Felicity nodded and gave him her best smile.

“You were in that crystal store for a long time.” He stated out of the blue.

“A visit to Therese is not a short event. She likes to read my palm and my tea leaves.”
He raised his brows and his lips twitched like he was trying his very best not to smile, she pointed a finger at him; “Don’t judge what you don’t understand.”

He put his hands up in surrender; “Hey, no judgement. I just would have never pegged an IT girl as being superstitious.”

“Well, I was a witch before I was an IT girl. But enough about me. It’s your turn. When are you going to go home and stop avoiding your family?”

“Felicity.”

She scrunched her nose playfully, “Too hard? Ok, next question: when are you going to get back to the ‘grrr, you have failed this city’ stuff?”

He ran a hand down his face and he suddenly looked as exhausted as she perpetually felt; “I’m not ready. I haven’t been training.”

“Ok. So, start training.”

“It’s not that simple.”

“It could be. You want to do some push-ups while I sit on your back?”

That earned her the teeny-tiniest of broody smiles. She was counting it as a win. She nudged him lightly; “Come on, you and I both know you have been training. Diggle told me. So, stop fibbing. What’s the real problem here?”

He furrowed his brow and was silent for so long that she didn’t think he was going to answer her, then he said so quietly she had to strain to hear him; “The archer made me realise something.”

Oh no, he’d had a come to God, near death epiphany. Those were not necessarily good; “What?”
“I never feared death on the island. Sometimes I wished for my own death, just to make it all stop. On the island, I had nothing to lose. But in that moment, before you got there, when the archer almost killed me, I thought about all the people here who it would hurt if I died. And I was afraid.”

“You have something to live for now.”

“Yes.” He agreed with her but he was frowning as if he didn’t think that was a good thing, like it wasn’t what he wanted.

Felicity sat up on her knees, kneeling on the sofa beside him; “But Oliver, that’s a good thing. Having something to live for is better than having nothing to lose because it makes you fight just that little bit harder for your own life. For those who depend on you.”

He shocked her by letting out a small chuckle; “You sound like Diggle. He said almost the same thing.”

“Well,” she said and flipped the end of her ponytail over her shoulder; “Diggle and I are both very wise.”

“And both so modest too,” He said grinning at her and she smiled at him for making a small joke.

“That too.”

He watched her as she smiled at him and his own smile slowly slipped away and she knew whatever he was going to say next, she wasn’t going to like; “Felicity, do you have something to live for?”

Her own smile slipped away and she took a sip of her wine, choosing not to answer.

============================================================================

Felicity dressed in comfortable clothing: jeans, t-shirt and a hoodie, tucked her phone into her back pocket and shoved her keys and two vials of potion into a small purse and sat on the stoop of her
building to wait for Oliver. She’d talked to Nate and told him she’d do the spell with him but that she was bringing a friend. They’d arranged a time after nightfall to meet at the house. She and Oliver had agreed to meet outside her building an hour before the time she’d set with Nate. He’d assured her he’d be there, dressed as the hood with his bow and quiver.

She looked up and down the street looking and listening for his motorcycle. After ten minutes, she figured he was just late, after half an hour, she got worried so she called him on both his Oliver Queen phone and on his Hood one, they both went to voice mail. She called Diggle, who didn’t know where Oliver was. She sat on that stoop for another half an hour before she decided to track his phone. It was then that she finally admitted that he wasn’t coming. He was at the address that she knew was Laurel Lance’s apartment. He wasn’t coming and maybe he’d never had any intention to. And now she was late. She swiped a tear away and was angry at herself for believing he’d show. She was furious at herself for buying into the charm that was Oliver Queen.

She punched in Jax’s number. He picked up after two rings; “The vigilante didn’t show did he?”

“No.” She felt humiliated that Jax had expected Oliver to let her down and knew he had without her telling him. “Can you meet me at the house?”

“I’ll be there in ten.” And he promptly hung up on her.

Come on, Felicity, pull yourself together. She stood up and pulled her keys out of her pocket and went to her reliable little mini.

When she pulled up in front of where the house was shrouded in magic and climbed out of the car, Jax pushed away from where he was leaning against his car, looked at her and patted his chest with one hand; “Come ‘ere.”

She went into his arms and he wrapped them around her, he pressed a kiss to her head and she blinked away tears, it didn’t help. She knew he could smell them. He pulled back and held her arms and looked into her eyes; “He’s not worth your tears, baby doll.”

She bit her lip, brushed away the tears that escaped and nodded; “I’m just really sick of people letting me down.”

Jax hooked an arm around her neck and pulled her into his side. They walked up the path together and climbed the stairs. The door opened and Nate looked back at them; “You’re late.”
Felicity pulled away from Jax and brushed passed Nate; “I had some personal issues.”

“Want to talk about them, sis?”

“Not with you.” She shot back but it lacked any real punch. She pulled out the two vials and handed one off to Nate. “Let’s just do this.”

She pulled the lid off her vial and she felt Jax move in closer to her. She tipped her head back and downed the contents. She heard the vial slip from her grip and shatter on the floor. Jax called her name and he sounded far, far away. Everything looked a little hazy.

She felt like all her movements were slower than they should be. She could hear her own breathing in her ears and some kind of buzzing. She swatted her hand in the air thinking it might be a bug. But then the buzzing stopped and she heard voices.

She moved into the sitting room, slower than she would have liked and her breath caught at the sight she saw. Cassandra and Tatiana in all their blonde, beautiful, teenaged glory were sitting on the sofa, flicking through magazines and chatting to each other. Felicity inched closer to hear what they were saying.

“I need to find a boyfriend;” Cassandra said on a sigh, “Or I’m going to die a virgin.”

Tatiana rolled her eyes, “Don’t be so dramatic, you won’t be a virgin forever.”

“I bet Felicity has sex before I do and she’s eight.”

Felicity heard the gun go off before she really realised what was happening. Her beautiful, young, alive sisters now had a bullet each in their skulls and had flopped together. They looked like rag dolls. Felicity thought she screamed or gasped because she thought she heard Jax calling her name again.

She turned her head and saw two of the masked men discussing something. She needed to hear what they were saying. She inched closer until she could make out what was being said; “The hit was on Smoak and his offspring. Smoak isn’t here.”
The other one shrugged; “What does it matter, we’ll get paid either way.”

Felicity stumbled back. It was a hit. Someone had hired these men to kill her father and her siblings….and her. She put her hands on her knees and sucked in a breath. No. No. She couldn’t panic. Not now. She wondered where Nate was. What he was seeing.

She straightened back up and felt tears drip off her chin. When had she started crying?

Felicity slowly climbed the stairs to Finn’s room where she knew she’d been that day. Her plate of pancakes had crashed to the floor and she watched as one of the masked men stepped on it with his boot. The plate cracked right down the middle of the panda’s face.

She watched as Finn, her big brother who was all of eighteen years old, pushed her younger self behind him. Little her clung to his leg as he begged for her life. He didn’t beg for his own. His expression was resigned to his fate.

“Do what you want to me but let her go, she’s just a kid.”

The gunman lowered his gun a mere inch then in the blink of an eye raised it again and shot Finn point blank. She heard little her scream. She heard herself scream as well. The younger version of her screamed again as the gun was trained on her.

“Sorry, kid.” The gunman said and then pulled the trigger twice more. She watched little her stumbled back and landed close to Finn’s lifeless body. She heard the gunman’s heavy boots on the stairs as they made their exit, every sound echoing in the now lifeless house.

She sat on the edge of the bed and stared off into space as tears streamed down her face. She heard her name being called. The voice was getting closer and closer. Someone snapped their fingers in the front of her face.

She blinked and the scene cleared away and Jax and Nate were in front of her frowning in concern.

“You ok, babydoll?” Jax asked softly.
She opened her mouth but no words came out. She felt an arm go under her knees and another around her back and realised she was being picked up. “You two can compare notes later. I’m taking her home.”

She was vaguely aware of being carried down the stairs, out of the house and then being belted into her car. She pressed the side of her head against the window, closed her eyes and listened to the sound of the car’s engine. Tears slid down her face and she let them fall.
They were halfway home and she’d gotten some awareness back, she felt wrecked but she thought she could function. She lifted her head off the window and looked at Jax, long-legged Jax, driving her tiny car. “Hey,” her voice was hoarse from crying, “Can we make a stop before you take me home.”

“Felicity –“

“Please.”

He looked at her briefly then looked back at the road and nodded. She gave him the address and after a few minutes he pulled up outside the building. Felicity opened the car door and looked back at Jax, “I’ll just be a minute.” Her voice was breathy and sad and she hated it.

She walked into the building and pushed the button for the elevator. The doors dinged open right away and she went in and collapsed against the back. Her legs, hell her whole body felt like it would give out on her any minute now. The doors opened at the floor she wanted and holding onto the wall, she exited and made her way to the door at the end of the hallway. Holding onto the doorframe for dear life, she knocked on the door and waited.

While she waited, her legs finally gave way and she slid down to the floor. Oh no. The door swung open and she was looking up at Laurel Lance. Beautiful, gorgeous Laurel. Tears filled her eyes. She didn’t think her eyes could produce any more tears but apparently they could. Laurel looked down at her, eyes wide and expression full of that damn pity again. Felicity really needed to get up off the floor.
“Felicity? Oh my god, are you ok?” Concern from Laurel. Fantastic. She must be a mess. Two figures appeared behind Laurel. Oliver and Tommy. It was quite something to watch realisation strike Oliver. She hadn’t realised she was so forgettable. Who was she kidding? Yes she did. Oliver gently pushed Laurel aside and made a move to reach out and help Felicity up.

Felicity glared up at him; “Don’t touch me.”

It made her feel a little better that he looked slightly ashamed. Tommy cleared his throat and crouched down in front of Felicity. He offered her a dazzling smile. She liked it, it had a kindness to it. “Hello, milady, may I help you up?”

She couldn’t stop the tears. Tommy Merlyn reminded her just a little of Finn. She nodded at him and he moved to stand behind her, put his hands under her arms and pulled her up. He helped her steady herself on her feet and her nails dug into Laurel’s doorframe. Tommy let her go and she whispered a thank you to him. He gave her that smile again.

All three looked at her with concern, Laurel looked like she might have been considering calling an ambulance – or the mental hospital.

Felicity bit her bottom lip, “I’d just like a word with Oliver and then I swear you can have him back.”

She held onto the wall and moved back down the hallway away from the door and waited for him to follow. After a hushed conversation with Tommy and Laurel, he did, shutting the door behind him. He stopped in front of her and watched her and she hated the way he was looking at her.

“Don’t look at me like that.” She whispered. She couldn’t manage much more than a whisper. She was a mess. She was hurting and she was going to take it out on Oliver Queen whether he deserved it or not. She thought he deserved it a little bit.

He tipped his head to the side; “How am I looking at you, Felicity?”

“Like you pity me. Like I’m damaged.” She paused and pushed back a sob, she couldn’t handle that look, not from him; “Like you’re figuring out how to save me. I don’t want to be your project, Oliver.”
“What?”

She knew she wasn’t making sense to him. She knew it but she couldn’t stop herself. “Are you having a nice dinner?”

“Felicity –“

“What was it? Was there some emergency? Or did Laurel bat her Bambi eyes at you and you came running? Or did you just forget that you’d given me your word?”

“Laurel’s friend’s brother died. We’re organising a fundraising event for the fire station.”

Felicity nodded; “That’s truly sad and I’m sorry for Laurel’s friend but you gave me your word.”

He sighed; “This was important, Felicity, it may not have been an accident. If someone is murdering firemen –“

“This was important to me!” Her throat hurt from the effort to try to yell at him. She swayed on her feet and he reached out to steady her but she winced away from him.

“I’m sorry, Felicity.”

“That’s the thing, Oliver. Sorry’s just a word if there’s no meaning to it. I keep putting my trust in you and you keep disappointing me. And I should just walk away, cut my loses and just realise that you’re going to keep disappointing me because we’re not really friends –“

“We’re friends,” he insisted and any other day she would have been affected by how offended he sounded. But not in that moment.

“No, Oliver, we’re really not. You give me your word and then something happens or Laurel needs something and she trumps everything with you.” She looked up at him sadly; “If you want to be with Laurel, if she’s your one true love, the person who is your something to live for, then just be with her. And stop pretending that anyone or anything else matters to you. Life’s too short to not be with the person you want to be with.”
She let go of the wall and slid down the ground, letting out a sob as she did. Oliver looked down at her horrified; “Felicity, what happened tonight?”

She looked up at him and shook her head; “Nothing you need to worry about, Mister Queen. Now, would you please ask Tommy if he’d help a girl out to her car?”

Oliver looked down at her for a moment, fists clenching and unclenching, then spun on his heel and walked back into the apartment. She let her head hit back against the wall. A few seconds later Tommy strode over to her and crouched down in front of her. “I hear there’s a damsel in distress.”

She bit her lip and started crying in earnest. Tommy cursed and pulled her into his chest. She should have been embarrassed about crying all over a stranger but everything just hurt. After a few moments she pulled back and wiped her face and gave Tommy a shaky smile; “Sorry I cried all over your shirt.”

He shrugged; “This old thing? Don’t worry about it. Let’s get you up.”

Tommy helped her to her feet and offered her his arm to hold onto as he walked her to the elevator. Once inside he pushed the button and stood silently beside her, letting her use him for support. “So, you want to talk about it? I’ve been told I’m an excellent listener.”

She smiled her first genuine smile of the evening; “Not really.”

Tommy patted her hand where it sat in the crook of his elbow; “Well, any time you want to talk, you let me know.”

“Thank you.”

“Whatever he did, don’t forgive him too quickly, ok?”

Felicity sniffled; “Why are you being so nice to me? You must think I’m crazy.”

“Because you seem like a kindred spirit, plus, we’re all a little crazy. Besides, I know a girl whose
had her heartbroken by Oliver Queen when I see one.”

“I….we…..Oliver and I aren’t like that.”

“Maybe but there’s more than one way to break a heart.”

The elevator dinged and Tommy helped her out, guided her through the door and out into the night air where Jax was waiting. Tommy handed her over to Jax and pressed a light kiss to her cheek; “You take care, Felicity, and remember any time you want to talk, you come find me.”

Jax didn’t utter a single word as he helped her into the car and drove her home. She really, truly appreciated that. Jax practically carried her up to her apartment, helped her into a hot shower and into her most cuddly pyjamas. He made her drink down two large glasses of water and helped her into bed, tucking the blanket up around her. Jax sat in the chair in the corner of her room and started humming. She knew what he was doing, he was trying to lull her into sleep but she was reluctant to go off to sleep. She was sure she’d be having nightmares. But her eyes felt heavy and closed just as he started singing soft and low. She slipped off into the land of nod to Jax singing My Melancholy Baby.
He'd fucked up. He knew it. He'd really fucked up. He'd known it the moment he looked around Laurel and saw Felicity collapsed on the floor in the hallway. She’d looked like she was desperately trying to keep herself together. But something had destroyed her so thoroughly that she just couldn’t and he’d contributed to that. So, yeah, he’d fucked up. He felt like shit. His first instinct was to hunt down whoever had hurt her, had made her cry, had broken her heart and beat the shit out of them and put an arrow into them and watch them scream for mercy. That instinct only heightened as he’d stood in Laurel’s doorway and watched her cry into Tommy’s chest. Each of her sobs was like a punch to the gut. It also pissed him off, for a reason he couldn’t explain, that she’d flinched away from his touch but accepted Tommy’s so easily.

He’d forgotten he was supposed to meet Felicity to go do her spell, he’d gotten so caught up in investigating the death of the fire fighter and then dinner with Tommy and Laurel. It had been almost like before the island, they’d opened a bottle of wine, had good food and talked and laughed like they used to before he’d become a different person and awkwardness seeped into their friendship. He’d forgotten.

Except he hadn’t, not really. He’d set an alert on his phone so it would go off and he could excuse himself and go help Felicity. It hadn’t gone off. He stalked over to the table and snatched up his phone. The screen was black.

“That’s weird,” he muttered, “I only just charged it.”

Laurel lingered near him; “I turned it off while you were in the bathroom,” she said softly. At the look he gave her, she rushed on, “You’ve seemed so overwhelmed lately, worrying about Moira and Thea and I thought you needed a night off. A night to just be Ollie.”
He hadn’t been Ollie in a long time. Ollie had died somewhere on an island in the China sea.

“You turned it off,” he repeated, his hand clenching around his phone, his voice just this side of dangerous. “What if someone needed me? Someone did need me!” He growled and Laurel flinched. “I promised her I’d be there for her and you made me break that promise.”

He pressed the power button and his screen came to life and filled with alerts. Felicity had text him and phoned him. His phone also let him know she’d phoned the hood phone as well. He felt like his blood was boiling. He needed to hit something.

“It wouldn’t be the first promise you’ve broken to a girl. You broke promises to me all the time.”

He narrowed his eyes at Laurel. He hadn’t been this angry at her in a long time, not since he’d been back. Laurel was inherently a good person but she used to do things like this all the time, passive aggressively try to control, try to manipulate into doing what she wanted. It was shit like this that made him want to do something drastic to make their relationship implode.

Laurel inched closer to him and put her hand on his arm, her eyes flashed with hurt as he shook her hand off and turned away from her. Laurel sighed and he could hear the clatter of cutlery as she started to clear the table. “What is it about this girl that seems to attract you like a moth to the flame?”

Jealousy had never become Laurel. Before the island jealously fanned the flames of Laurel’s own insecurities which would push her to seek more commitment from Oliver than he felt comfortable giving. Which made him want to run for the hills.

He studied the small framed photo of Laurel, Sara and Detective Lance that sat on Laurel’s mantel and gave her an honest answer, after all this time, she deserved at least a little honesty from him; “I don’t know. But she doesn’t look at me like I’m damaged or like she expects me to be exactly like I was five years ago.”

“And I do?”

When did it become about Laurel? He did what he’d always done best in these situations with Laurel: avoided the question. He shook his head and headed for the door; “I’ve got to go.”
“To her? Please, Ollie help me see what this is about,” She caught his arm and stopped him from leaving, looking up at him with pleading eyes. He didn’t know what to tell her. He couldn’t explain whatever it was between him and Felicity because he didn’t understand it himself.

“We’re friends,” he said quietly, remembering Felicity slumped on the floor in the hallway telling him they weren’t really friends and how much that stung. The way she’d looked sitting there, tears clinging to her lashes for a split second before sliding down her cheeks, the way bits of her hair stuck to her cheeks, her dried tears acting as the glue. The way she looked like she’d just witnessed the worst possible tragedy and if he’d just turned up like he’d said he would, she wouldn’t have been so wrecked. He couldn’t say all of that to Laurel. So, he pulled his arm free of her grasp and walked away once more.

“I don’t think she’s good for you, Ollie, she seems a little unhinged – “

He rounded on her and towered over her, anger radiating off him and he was barely managing to rein it in; “She’s not unhinged,” he said slowly, precisely, so that there was no room for Laurel to misunderstand; “She’s been through more than you can imagine. And survived it. That doesn’t make her crazy.”

He turned to the door which opened and Tommy stood in the doorway looking between Oliver and Laurel. Oliver slipped past Tommy who put a hand on Oliver’s shoulder halting his exit; “Just a little tip, buddy, you shouldn’t forget a girl like Felicity quite so easily.”

Oliver nodded, not really hearing the words or understanding what Tommy was trying to tell him.

Felicity woke up slowly, everything aching, it was still dark outside and the glaring numbers on her clock told her she’d been asleep for a mere two hours. She’d not had the nightmares she’d expected but at one point she’d thought she’d felt a gloved finger run down her cheek.

There was a crash and the sound of glass breaking and she sat up in bed. She was wide awake. Slipping out of bed she tip-toed into the living room and stopped dead at what she saw. Oliver had his bow raised and arrow poised to be shot, aimed directly at Jax. He also had blood running down his neck. Jax was crouched on her kitchen island obviously getting ready to launch himself at Oliver, an arrow protruding form his chest. Oliver’s hood was still up.
They were having an a brawl. In her living room. While she attempted to sleep and recharge her metaphorical batteries. They were brawling. And destroying her living room. Someone had clearly been thrown done onto her coffee table that was now dead and gone and in pieces.

“Hey!” She yelled as loudly as she could considering her voice was almost gone. Both vigilante and vampire went still. It was impressive really. She tip-toed further into the room avoiding the broken lamp.

“Someone want to tell me what the hell is going on here?”

They ignored her and continued to glare at each other and she thought she heard Jax snarl. Sighing, she walked a little closer; “Look, I’m sure this wonderful display of manliness is super duper important to both your egos but I’ve had a very exhaustive evening. There isn’t a piece of my body that doesn’t hurt.”

She gingerly walked over to Oliver; “In case you two have forgotten, I just walked through the death of my siblings in technicolour, so lower your bow. Jax, retract your fangs and get the hell off my kitchen counter. Tables are for glasses, not asses.”

She heaved in a breath and feeling a little light-headed, grasped Oliver’s quiver to steady herself. And that was enough of that. Pushing away from Oliver, she turned to Jax who was now seated on a bar stool, elbows resting on the kitchen island and raised her brows; “Last I saw, you were singing me to sleep, what led to this?”

Jax shrugged sullenly; “He started it.”

She heard a soft snort from Oliver. Oh dear god. She started to walk over to Jax and felt Oliver following her, she turned and stopped him with her hand on his chest; “Nuh uh, archer, you stay in your corner.”

Jax sniggered and she turned her look onto him; “What are you giggling about?”

Jax looked insulted; “I do not giggle, I am not a five year old girl.”
Shaking her head, she approached him, put her hand on his shoulder and smiled up at him and without any warning, she pulled the arrow out of his chest and dropped it to the floor. He gave a roar of pain and glared down at her; “You don’t just pull something out of a man’s body, baby, you give him some warning first.”

Rolling her eyes, she turned back to Oliver who was standing exactly where she’d told him to, it looked like he hadn’t even blinked. “Why’d you shoot him?”

“He bit me.” Came the modulated reply.

“Why’d you bite him, Jax?” She held a hand up, “Don’t answer that, why were you two trying to kill each other?”

Jax scratched at his eyebrow; “He stood you up, then thought he could sneak in your window and everything would be ok. Was defending your honour, wasn’t I.”

Oh, dear God, she did not have the energy for this. Pointing a finger at each of them, she told them to stay while she went into her bathroom and retrieved her first aid kit. She was going to have to play nurse to a vampire and a vigilante. Fantastic.

Who to patch up first? Well, vampire had accelerated healing so vigilante it was. She pointed at Oliver; “You’re up, let’s go.”

She started to led him into her bathroom, she held the door open, waited for him to enter, shut the door. She said a little spell to seal the room, Oliver raised his brows and she shrugged; “What, you want the guy with super hearing to listen to every word we say?”

“No.”

“Then a little soundproof spell does no harm. Sit.”

He lifted the quiver over his head and placed it and his bow down on the closed toilet lid, then in one fluid move, he lifted himself up to perch on her bathroom counter. Ok, then. Clinical. This was one hundred percent clinical. And she was still annoyed with him.
She stepped closer and stood between his legs and sucked in a breath at the proximity. She set the first aid kit on the counter beside his thigh and opened it up. Reaching up, she tentatively pushed back the hood and exposed those eyes that were watching her intently.

She pressed some gauze to the wound, it wasn’t too bad, it was more a graze of fangs than a full on bite. Lifting the gauze, she poured some saline onto the wound, then without thinking, leaned forward and blew on the wound. She felt Oliver hold his breath. Move on quickly. She grabbed another piece of gauze and some tape and started to cover the wound. She pressed the last piece of tape into place and went to move back to put some distance between them but Oliver put his hands on her waist and held her where she was.

“Felicity, I’m sorry.”

She nodded; “I know.”

“It’s not enough though is it?”

She shrugged, she’d come to an epiphany about Oliver, he wasn’t hers to keep in this life. Not in any capacity. She’d never to be able to have realistic expectations of him, never stop expecting him to live up to a version of himself that simply did not exist. She’d never see him as a friend, not completely. And he didn’t know how to be her friend. Not while he was so focused on keeping a promise to his dead father, saving the city and indulging in his ongoing obsession with Laurel.

Felicity smiled sadly and took his hand in one of hers intending to move it away from her waist but he tangled his fingers with hers; “How about you do your thing and I’ll do my thing and if our things cross paths, then so be it.”

He sighed; “You want space.”

“Just retreat for a little bit.”

He held his breath for a moment and on an exhale said; “Ok.”

“Are you going to stop being a creepy, creepster and following me around when you’re not fighting criminals?”
He huffed out a laugh; “I don’t think I can retreat that far.”

Smiling, she pushed his chest with her free hand; “And I beg of you, don’t get into anymore fights with a vampire.”

He smirked and lifted a shoulder in a half-shrug; “I can take him.”

Rolling her eyes, she disentangled her fingers form his and reached behind his head and put his hood back up. She hadn’t been this close to him….well, she’d never been this close to him. Swallowing, she turned, pulled the door open and plastered a smile on her face; “Jaxy, it’s your turn. Take off your shirt.”

Jax smirked at her; “Babydoll, if you wanted to see me naked, all you had to do is ask.”

“Keep talking like that and I’ll put another arrow in you.” Oliver growled as he joined them in the living room. He posted himself up against the wall, bow clutched in one hand, an arrow in the other.

“You’re staying for this?” she asked as she waited for Jax to rid himself of his shirt; “Oh, goody.”

Jax throw his shirt on the counter and leaned back on his elbows; “See, now that’s not fair. He gets to watch you patch me up but I didn’t get to watch you patch him up.” He leered down at her; “Tell me, who has the better abs?”

She gave him a look; “It’s not a competition.”

“Of course it is!” Jax pouted; “You think his are better, don’t you? That’s why you won’t tell me.”

“Your abs are lovely, Jax,” she said dryly, placating him and placing a dressing over a wound that was already hearing.

“You’re just saying that.” He looked past her to where Oliver was no doubt glaring and brooding; “Does he have a tattoo? I bet he has a tattoo. Something delicious.”
“Don’t call him delicious straight after you’ve tried to pummel him, it’s weird. And, Jax, you have a tattoo.”

“I can find him delicious and still be royally pissed at him.” He leaned closer and faux whispered; “Come on, sweetness, you’re not particularly happy with him right now but don’t you find him dreamy?”

“Oh, yeah, he’s a regular dreamboat,” she said and heard Oliver make some kind of choking noise. “Now that we’re established that he’s dreamy and you have lovely abs, I’m going back to bed, I still feel a bit jittery.”

Jax straightened up, all joking and flirting pushed aside; “Jittery? Like fall down can’t get up jittery?”

“No, like achy all over, coming down from the worst high ever type of jittery. So, boys, as fun as this has been. Please, go home. Or you know, you don’t have to go home but you can’t stay here.”

“We made a bit of a mess of your living room,” Jax at least had the good grace to look guilty about that.

“Ok. I’m going to bed;” She pointed at Oliver; “You go where ever it is you go,” She pointed at Jax; “You clean this up then go home.” And then she left them to it and crawled back into her bed, closing her eyes and hoping for a peaceful sleep. The last thing she heard before sleep claimed her was Jax whining:

“Why do I have to clean up and the green giant doesn’t have to help?”
She was in shock. She had to be. Who the hell watched their niece get murdered by their brother and then concocted a plan to turn back time? They weren’t even sure it was going to work. After she made Felicity let go of Anastasia’s lifeless body, Belle had been freakishly functional. Telling Felicity what they were going to do and how they were going to do it. Felicity, caked in Anastasia’s blood, nodded along numbly. Belle’s plan was crazy. Absolutely nuts, there was no guarantee it would work, there was no guarantee that even if they could turn back time, leave Anastasia on the Queen’s doorstep, that they would take her, keep her. There was no guarantee they’d love her. Not like Belle and Felicity did. But Belle wouldn’t entrust her baby to just anyone. They were so in shock, they weren’t thinking clearly but they’d committed to this plan and now they were going to make it work before they lost their nerve.

Felicity shivered. Yup. Definitely in shock. Someone should probably make her a cup of tea. With ten sugars in it.

She pulled out the piece of paper with Belle’s hastily written spell on it. If she said this while she waited, as soon as he walked into the room, any promise he made to her would be bound by magic and he would subconsciously be forced to keep in the next life. She only needed to extract one promise from him.

She whispered the spell seconds before Oliver walked into the living room of the Queen mansion. He had his back to her and she took that moment to study him, he was wearing one of his business suits. He had the top buttons of the crisp white shirt unbuttoned and the tie loosened. It was one of her favourite looks of his. She was also partial to suspenders.

But not the point.
Slowly, she stood up. He turned to her and his eyes took in her appearance. She knew what he was seeing: her hair was matted with dried blood and her white t-shirt was splattered with blood and she was shivering. Worry etched his features and he took a step towards her. He frowned as she took a step back. He couldn’t touch her, if he touched her she wouldn’t be able to go through with it.

She shook her head; “It’s not mine. The blood. It's not mine.”

“Ok.” But his expression said it wasn't ok. Not even close. She knew he wanted to ask whose blood she was covered in but he didn’t say anything, just waited her out.

“I need you to do something for me.”

“Anything.” If she wasn't suffering from a major case of shock, she'd be a little worried about how easily he agreed.

“I need you to look after Anastasia for me.”

“Your niece? Ok.”

She bit her lip and nodded; “You have to look after her but more than that, you have to love her like she’s your own.” A tear slid down her cheek. This wasn't going the way she planned it in her head. The whole five minutes she’d been given to plan it.

Oliver took a step closer; “Felicity. What’s going on?”

“Promise me.” She insisted, looking up at him intently. He looked back, a million questions in his eyes but he finally nodded. He was placating her. That was fine as long as he said what she needed him to.

“Fine. I promise.”

Felicity turned her face away and wiped her eyes and then turned back to him. “Good.”
He closed the remaining distance between them and took her face in his hands; “Felicity, why do I feel like you’re saying goodbye to me?”

Damn him and his freakishly good instincts.

She sniffled and wrapped her hands around his wrists, pulling his hands away from her face; “Probably because I am.” There was no point in lying to him. If this all worked, he wouldn’t even remember her. He could pass her on the street and have no idea who she was.

“Felicity.” And why did he have to keep saying her name in that soft way? “Whatever it is, we’ll figure it out.”

She shook her head; “No.” She tried to say it firmly, adamantly but it wasn’t quite what she aimed for. She brushed past him and paced away from him to the window then turned back to face him; “You know what you should do? You should call up that girl, the one you were with before the island, what was her name?”

She was talking fast and she thought she was probably sounding a little deranged. In her defence, she was possibly not thinking straight. That’s what happens when you come up with a plan moments after a traumatic experience.

“Laurel.”

She pointed at him, nodding and trying her best not to cry. She’d cry her heart out later; “You should call her. Ask her out. Get back together with her.”

“I can’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“Because I love you.” He said it so simply, like he was merely stating an unchangeable fact, like he was saying his shoes were black or the sky was blue or the sun would rise again tomorrow. He said it with such certainty that she almost faltered. Almost but not quite.
“No, Oliver, you don’t.”

“Yes, I do.”

“You can’t!”

He gave her a very serious look; “Felicity, I promise you, there’s no way I’m going to stop loving you.”

She groaned; “Don’t promise!” She started crying and she was afraid she couldn’t stop.

“Felicity.”

“Promise me you’ll try to love Laurel and forget about me. Say it!”

He stared at her, trying to make sense of what was happening but then he sighed deeply; “Fine, I’ll try to love Laurel.”

She nodded and they watched each other from opposite sides of the room. He was probably wondering what had happened and was more than likely worried about her mental stability at that point. She was trying to take in every inch of him and commit it to memory, she was trying to take a mental photo of him that she’d be able to pull out later for moments when she missed him. And she knew she’d miss him.

She walked up to him and slowly rose up on her toes and pressed a kiss to his cheek, his stubble tickling her lips in that way she loved. “Goodbye, Oliver.”

At midnight, Felicity snuck into the hospital. At 12.15am, she slipped in Thea Queen’s room. Thea had been in a car accident, she’d also been high as a kite while driving, it had been all over the news. Thea was asleep when Felicity gently lowered herself into the chair beside the bed.
Felicity smiled, Thea looked so young, so innocent and so much like Belle. She reached over and brushed a piece of hair away from Thea’s face.

“Hey,” Felicity whispered; “it’s time for you and me to have one our aunt-niece chats.”

She watched the rise and fall of Thea’s chest and felt the sight of watching her breathe comforting.

“Honestly, I'm a little angry with you. You were supposed have a better life this time around. You weren’t supposed to be taking drugs and crashing expensive cars.”

Felicity stopped talking and stilled as Thea sighed in her sleep.

“I don’t know what’s got your teenage angst notched right up. But it stops right now. You understand? You don’t get to die. You don’t get to kill yourself just to spite whoever it is you’re pissed at.”

She knew Thea was probably still riding her high or zonked out on whatever painkillers they gave her but this was the closest she’d been to her niece and for some reason once she started talking to her, she couldn’t stop.

“Is it Oliver you’re so angry at? Because he’s not the same as you remember? Well, suck it up, kid. He lived through some things and changed because of them, so what?”

She pressed her lips together as Thea moved about, wriggled but didn’t wake.

“You know, I had a brother once, a brother who I adored. He’s gone now. But I would give anything to have him back. You’re so lucky, Thea because Oliver came back. So, do me a favour and cut him some slack.”

She heard footsteps down the corridor and knew she needed to wrap this up and get out of there. She stood and leaned down, pressing a kiss to Thea’s forehead; “I’ll see you, Thea.”
This was a bad idea. A straight up, low down bad idea. Possibly the worst idea she’d ever had and she’d turned back time for goodness sake. Ok, so maybe it wasn’t the worst idea she’d ever had but it was up there. Like, at least top three.

The building loomed over them in that gloomy way only a prison could. Felicity tried to give herself a pep talk that went something like: if Laurel Lance could walk into Iron Heights and survive, then so could she. Though, in all fairness, Laurel had Oliver there as the vigilante to protect her. Felicity only had Nate who may or may not have dubious intentions towards her. It was yet to be determined.

Maybe she should have done this at night so that at least she could have brought Jax with her. There was no way she was calling Oliver because that would kind of violate the whole ‘stay away from Oliver for her own emotional wellbeing’ plan. Except it would be comforting to have a man around who could beat a man down before you even blink.

Those were the things that ran through her mind as she followed Nate into the prison, signed her name in the visitor’s log and was escorted to a room where she would see and speak to her father for the first time in fourteen years. In this timeline. In this timeline, her father had been arrested for human trafficking, drug distribution, murder, kidnapping and a variety of other crimes by the time she was nine years old and was already in the foster system.

The evidence against him had been damning and had been given to the SCPD by an anonymous source. She could never ferret out who. In this timeline, her father had spent more than half her life in prison. And she’d never been to visit him. Not once. To say she was nervous was an understatement.

She sat beside Nate at the table and tapped her fingers against the table, tapping out a little tune. She stopped instantly when the door opened and a guard escorted a man in prison garb, who couldn’t be a day over 50, into the room. He was bulkier than she remembered. Instead of the slicked back salt and pepper she remembered, his head was shaved and his face was more hardened. Looking, right at her, he put his cuffed hands on the table and lowered himself onto the seat opposite them. He kept his gaze on her as he held his hands out to the officer to remove the cuffs.

“My Felicity, you’ve grown up well,” His voice was rougher than the refined timber she was used to, there was no doubting prison took its toll; “I wasn’t sure my youngest would survive the massacre but I can see you did.”

He smiled at her and she shifted uncomfortably. “And you’ve come with Nate. Have you two
come just to see your dear old Dad or was there another reason?"

Nate cleared his throat; “We recently discovered that the murder of our siblings was a contracted hit.”

Felicity pulled a face, Nate said it so clinically, so matter of fact.

Their father’s brows raised; “And you want to know if I’m the one who placed the hit? I’ve done a lot of terrible, unconscionable things but I’m not the one who wanted my children dead.” His voice had an edge to it as he directed the statement toward Nate. He turned his attention back to her; “Felicity, I’ve heard some things about you over the years and I have one piece of advise: be careful about the company you keep.”

Was it just her or did her father’s eyes flick briefly to Nate when he said that?

“The hit was against you and them;” Nate stated, “We want to know if you can tell us who would want you dead?”

Antonio Smoak laughed and laid his forearms on the table; “The triad, the Bratva, your mother… just to name a few.”

“It would be helpful if you could be more specific.” Nate said and Felicity detected barely concealed anger in his tone.

Antonio shrugged; “That’s about as specific as I get.” He turned to Felicity and smiled; “So, Felicity, tell me about your life.”

She shrugged, reluctant to tell him anything; “What do you want to know?”

He leaned a little closer across the table and winked at her; “Everything.”
Yelling and handholding

Chapter Summary

Jax and Oliver team up to give Felicity a stern talking to. Laurel and Oliver have a moment.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, The CW or DC

Oliver was surveying his now deeply under construction club and drinking a bottle of scotch and avoiding going home. His sister had been arrested for driving under the influence of drugs, was angry at the world and seemed hell bent on going to prison to spite their mother. She’d rejected the deal Laurel had come up with and his mother seemed far too happy for someone whose second husband had gone missing in mysterious circumstances. He’d filled the Count’s veins with vertigo and didn’t feel any better for it, that was after he’d had a taste of the stuff and felt like he had the worst hangover.

He let his eyes fall closed as he leaned against what would be the club’s bar and contemplated putting the hood on and going and sitting on Felicity’s fire escape. He’d considered asking for her help with the Count case but then remembered she’d asked him to retreat from her. He’d had to get the vertigo sample analysed and luckily Diggle knew a guy, Oliver didn’t ask.

His eyes flew open at the sound of high heels clicking across the floor. “Laurel.”

She smiled at him; “I convinced Thea to take the deal. She’s going to come work with me.”

“Thank you.” He said sincerely, he appreciated what she was doing for his sister.

Laurel tipped her head to the side, put a hand on his arm and blinked slowly at him in the way that used to leave him entranced by her beauty. He shook his head and pulled his arm from her grip. “Don’t.”

She looked hurt for a second but then she looked confused; “Ollie, you can’t still be angry with me
over that thing with the phone and that girl.”

“Felicity,” he said, softly; “Her name’s Felicity.”

Laurel blinked and waved a hand as if Felicity’s name was inconsequential to her; “The point is, you can’t still be holding onto your anger. You and I have had too much happen between us for something so small – “

“It wasn’t a small thing, Laurel. Not to Felicity. Not to me.”

And did Laurel roll her eyes? “Come on, Ollie. Is this because she’s annoyed with you? You’re used to disappointing women.” She was always pointing out what a disappointment he’d been to her when they were dating. “Besides, wasn’t it a little dramatic of her to turn up on my doorstep all swooning damsel in distress?”

Oliver picked up his glass and downed what was left of his scotch, welcoming the burn it brought with it; “Felicity is hardly a damsel in distress.”

He smiled a little remembering the way Felicity had sent the Dark Archer flying into a wall and made a wall of fire, effectively saving his ass, it was impressive and badass and not at all damsel in distress like.

Laurel narrowed her eyes slightly at his smile and crossed her arms; “I’m just saying, she seemed a little desperate for your attention. A little too desperate.”

Like Laurel was right then? He frowned; where the hell had that thought come from?

Laurel misinterpreted his frown and smiled softly at him; “You and I should have dinner sometime. Just us.”

“Aren’t you dating Tommy?”

“We’re casual. I have feelings for Tommy but you and I never really ended.”
His eyebrows rose; “So, you want to date us both?” That seemed very un-Laurel.

“Yes, like you dated both me and my sister.”

And here we go. “I didn’t date both you and Sara.”

“No. You dated me and screwed my sister on the side and then took her with you on the Gambit and led her to her death.” She said bitterly.

Oliver felt like they were constantly having the same conversation over and over again. She’d never really forgive him for Sara.

“We’re not doing that,” he stated; “You either date me or you date Tommy. But I’m not playing that game with you Laurel.”

“Don’t you want to figure out this thing between us?”

He shook his head; “Not at the expense of my friend.”

He was trying to be better than he was before. He was actively trying not to make the same mistakes.

Laurel’s expression softened and then she seemed to think about something and she straightened her back and looked at him accusingly; “Is this about Felicity?”

He opened his mouth to tell her it was about him when his vigilante phone started ringing in his pocket. He pulled it out, looked at the caller id and answered; “Felicity.”

Laurel shot him a look that was part anger, part betrayal, part disgust, it was a look he was accustomed to seeing from her.
He heard a deep, male chuckle come down the line; “Yeah, you wish don’t you, bow boy.”

Jax. Oliver’s mind went to the worst case scenario, imagining different ways Felicity might be injured; “What’s wrong?”

Jax clucked; “Such concern. It’s cute. You might want to get over here. Soon. Our girl did something monumentally stupid today. I want you to help me reprimand her and not in the fun way.”

“Get to the point.” Oliver ground out; “What happened?”

“She and big brother went to Iron Heights today. And well….you’ll see. Come over and you can help me yell at her.”

“I’ll be there.” Oliver hung up on Jax even as he was talking. He looked at Laurel who looked less than happy with him and a little curious about what the phone call had been about; “I have to go.”

“We’re not done talking.”

“Yes. Laurel, we are.”

He turned to go down to the basement but she called him back; “Seriously? That was Felicity, right? She calls and you go running?”

Her tone was indignant and full of all the things it used to be back when they were together, she was acting as if he was betraying her again. So, he gave her the same response as he’d given her back then: an unaffected shrug.

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There was no one in Felicity’s bedroom when Oliver crawled through her window. But he could hear voices coming from the living room so he made his way in there.
Felicity was sitting cross-legged on the sofa, holding an ice pack to her neck. Jax was pacing in front of the sofa, berating her for whatever she’d done. Felicity leaned sideways, spotted him and groaned, shooting Jax a betrayed look; “You called him? That’s why you wanted my phone? Why, why, why did you call him?”

Jax stopped pacing and grabbed Felicity’s face in one hand and leaned closer to her; “Because you have lost your ever loving mind and I’m hoping he can talk some common sense into you.”

Felicity poked her tongue out at him; “You do realise that you generally talk sense into someone before they do something stupid? Not that I did anything stupid.”

Jax growled at her, let her face go and turned his look on Oliver; “I give up. You talk to her.”

Oliver approached the sofa, sat on the coffee table and reaching out peeled her hand away from her neck taking the icepack with it. He sucked in a breath. He had to close his eyes and breathe for a few seconds to rein in the rage that was bubbling to the surface. “What happened?”

“Oooohhh, extra growly voice. He’s as pissed at you as I am, babydoll.”

Oliver didn’t say anything, he was too busy examining the bruises on her neck from where someone had wrapped their hand around her neck and dug their fingers into her delicate skin. He was plotting how he would get into Iron Heights, find whoever did this and was contemplating all the different ways he’d hurt them.

“Nate and I went to talk to my Dad in Iron Heights today. We asked him if he knew who paid someone to kill my family.”

“Tell him what happened next.”

Oliver watched as Felicity’s gaze skittered away from him and landed on Jax, her eyes narrowing; “You shouldn’t have called him, Jax, I’m fine.”

Jax snorted; “Oh yeah, you’re just peachy. Your father slammed you into a wall and wrapped a hand around your neck and squeezed and your dope of a brother just stood there and let it happen.”
Oliver filed that information away for later. He ran the tip of a finger over one of the bruises forming on her neck, just above her collarbone. At his touch, her gaze snapped back to him.

“To be fair,” she kept her eyes on him as she spoke, “I don’t think my father really meant to hurt me.”

“Really,” Jax stated sarcastically, “Because the bruises on your neck tell a completely different story.” He paused and when he spoke again, his voice was softer; “I can smell the blood pooling near the surface, Felicity.”

That was….unnerving.

Felicity shook her head; “I think he wanted to tell me something without Nate hearing. He maybe, sort of implied I shouldn’t trust Nate.”

“I could have told you that for free. But I’m not convinced you can trust your father either.”

She sighed; “Jax.” She winced and frowned at Oliver as he pressed his thumb a little too firmly into her skin. She linked her pinkie with his and pulled his hand away from her neck.

Jax let out a long suffering sigh and Oliver heard him take up his pacing again; “Fine. Tell us what the father of the year had to say for himself.”

“Where’s Katerina.”

There was a pause. The silence stretched on and Oliver felt like he was missing something.

“That’s it? ‘Where’s Katerina’ and that’s it?”

“Who’s Katerina?” Oliver asked

“Felicity’s murdered sister. She has more than one. It’s confusing, I know. I’ll make you a cheat sheet.” Jax said dryly and sat down on the sofa beside Felicity; “Sweetness, Katerina is dead and
buried, your father is messing with you. She’s in her grave.”

Felicity unlinked her finger from Oliver’s and turned to face Jax, sweeping her hair over one shoulder, giving Oliver a view of her injured neck from another angle. He was thinking with one of his arrows he could make it look like a prison shanking. Or he could gut Felicity’s father from sternum to belly button.

“But what if she isn’t? Jax, Katerina wasn’t there when I did the walk through spell.”

“Yes, because empathic spells are so reliable.”

Felicity tipped her head to the side, pressed her lips together and looked at Jax wide-eyed. Oliver thought it was one hell of a look designed to get twist the vampire around her finger. Jax shook his head; “No. No. No. Do not give me that look. That’s the look that always gets us in trouble.”

“Jax….”

“That’s the look that says you want to do something even stupider than visiting daddy.”

“Jax.”

“Oh god. Don’t pout. I can’t take it when you pout.” Jax turned to Oliver; “This is all your fault, you hooded god, you were supposed to come here and tell her off in your growly voice, maybe put her to bed but nooooo you touch her bruises and hold her hand. Some help you are.”

Felicity blushed quite prettily at that, Oliver thought, but continued to give Jax that look. Jax sighed; “Fine. I’ll get the shovel. But Mr vigilante has to come too. If I’m digging up the dead, I need something pretty to look at while I do it. And while you usually do the job, babydoll, I can’t look at you with those bruises without thinking about ripping someone apart with my teeth.”

Oliver clenched his fist around his bow. For once he knew exactly how Jax felt.
A little digging

Chapter Summary

A vampire, a witch and vigilante go on a filed trip

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I still don't own Arrow, The CW or DC

Felicity watched astounded as Jax pulled out a bottle of whiskey and took a swig. She glanced at Oliver who made quite the impressive figure, covered in all that leather, sitting with his back against a headstone, his knees pulled up, hood up, head tilted down so she couldn’t see his expression. His right arm rested on his knee while he held his bow in his left hand. He looked relaxed but she knew he was alert and ready to climb to his feet at any moment. Sitting in the darkness of a cemetery, he looked like the very definition of danger.

“You brought alcohol to a cemetery?” The question was aimed at Jax but she didn’t tear her gaze away from Oliver.

“Of course I brought alcohol to a cemetery! If we’re doing this, I’m sure as hell doing it while half drunk.” Jax sounded extremely put out by what they were about to do.

Not really listening to his whining, Felicity pulled her phone out of her back pocket and snapped off a photo of Oliver. Oliver lifted his chin ever so slightly and she knew he was looking directly at her.

Jax gaped at her and pointed a finger; “You just took a photo of him! Doesn’t that break all the rules of being on semi-friendly terms with a vigilante?” Jax sidled up to her; “But let me see.”

Felicity held her phone up at brought up the photo, Jax squinted at it; “Oooohhh, I think you’ve captured Mr Broody Mcbroodster perfectly. Very dangerous. I wouldn’t want to be cornered by him in a dark alley.” He waggled his eyebrows, “Actually, I totally would. He’s totally going to make you delete it. One of those ‘no one can have an image of me’ type things.”
She pouted because she knew Jax was right. She heard a sigh come from the vigilante in question. She had a feeling that she and Jax exasperated him….actually more Jax than her but whatever.

“Let me see it.” Oliver intoned softly.

Felicity lowered herself to the grass beside him and handed him her phone. She watched as he looked at the photo. She wondered what he saw when he saw an image of himself. The photo didn’t give away his identity at all but it showed the world exactly who he was. He was like an avenging angel. And ok, maybe she was biased.

“You can keep it,” he said as he handed her back the phone. Turning her head, resting her chin on her shoulder, she gave him her very best smile. He didn’t smile back, instead he ran a gloved finger over her bruised neck, like he’d done at her apartment and the action turned her brain to mush, any thought she’d had just evaporated until Jax cleared his throat loudly. Oliver dropped his hand from her and she was little disappointed. Shaking it off, she stood up and made a beckoning signal with her hand at Jax; “Let me have some of that.”

Jax passed her the bottle and she wrapped her hand around its neck and took a large swig. She cringed and made a face. “Ok, let’s do this.”

Jax made the sign of the cross on himself.

“You’re religious?” Oliver asked from where he was perching on the grass.

“He’s a vampire;” Felicity stated, taking another tiny sip of whiskey; “Religion and him don’t really mix.”

She placed the bottle on the top of a headstone and caught Jax rolling his eyes at her; “Babe, you really need to stop getting all your vampire mythology from The Vampire Diaries.”

“Hey!” She said, slightly offended; “that show has never steered me wrong. Not once.”

She thought Oliver huffed out a laugh but it was so soft that she couldn’t be sure. Jax handed her a shovel and then stabbed the ground with his one but didn’t go any further than that. He looked at her, all joking put aside for the moment; “What are we hoping for here, Felicity? Are we hoping to find Miss Katerina Smoak safely tucked up in her coffin? Or are we hoping to find her coffin
It was an excellent question, one that she did not have solid answer to so she merely shrugged.

While Jax started digging, Felicity went over to where Oliver sat and crouched in front of him; “You going to help or just sit there and brood?”

“Are you going to tell me what cell your father is in at Iron Heights?” He shot back.

“Sit and brood, it is.”

Felicity and Jax dug for over an hour until they were standing at an open grave, staring down at the top of a casket. They both stood and stared at it, neither one moving. At some point, Oliver got to his feet and stood beside Felicity.

“You know, as fun as this is, one of us is actually going to jump down there and take a little peek.” Jax pointed out. Felicity looked up at him, wide-eyed and terrified; “Ok, Felicity’s out. Rock, paper, scissors, broody?”

Felicity didn’t see it but she was sure Oliver shot Jax a look because Jax sighed; “Fine. I’ll do it.” He jumped down into the grave in a fluid move that Felicity envied. He went to open the casket and at the last moment Felicity turned away not wanting to see.

She closed her eyes and said a silent apology to her sister. The silence seemed to drag on.

Oliver leaned down and said softly into her ear; “It’s empty.”

She spun around and peered into the casket, her eyes roaming up and down the length of it. It was empty. Completely, empty. As if it had never had anything in it to start with. Felicity took out her phone and took a couple of photos as Jax jumped out of the grave, picked up the shovel and started filling it in again. Her camera roll was going to be full of empty caskets and vigilantes. If anyone saw it, they would think she had some questionable hobbies.

“So, the question of the day truly is;” Jax said as he threw dirt into the grave; “where is Katerina?
Is she dead or alive?"

Felicity had no answer, so they filled in the grave in silence. Once they were done they sat on the grass and passed the whiskey between them. Even Oliver had a couple of sips. Though he’d refused at first until she gave him a look.

“Someone wanted us to think Katerina died with Tatiana, Cassandra and Finn.” She stated after a long stretch of silence.

“Or, it was Katerina who faked her death;” Jax said, handing her back the bottle; “She might not be an innocent lamb in all this.”

Felicity looked around at the graves of her siblings; “What if she’s not the only one who survived?”

Jax sat up from where he was lounging in the grass and gave her a sad look; “Felicity, you saw them die.”

“Just because you watch someone die doesn’t mean they actually did die.” Oliver said, finally chiming in on the conversation. Felicity nodded enthusiastically. There was a small chance she’d had too much whiskey.

Jax frowned and stuck out his bottom lip; “You, Mr Mint Leaf, are supposed to be on my side. You’re supposed to be helping me keep her from doing stupid things or just plain dangerous things but you keep holding her hand, talking all soft and low to her or smiling at her and it’s not helping!”

Felicity burst out laughing; “Mr Mint Leaf?”

Jax threw a clump of grass at her; “Shut up, it’s the best I could do, I’m running out of green related things to call him. And that was not my point at all.”

Felicity continued her giggle fit and Jax got up and brushed himself off with all the dignity he could muster. Felicity leant over, tried to grab the bottom of his jeans and stop him from making his dramatic exit; “No. Don’t leave. I’m sorry.”
Jax just ignored her and she called out to him; “Hey! You can’t just leave, you’re my ride home! I mean I could walk but it’s so far and I’m injured.”

“You’ve got bruises on your neck,” He called back over his shoulder; “Your legs aren’t broken.”

“Felicity,” Oliver stated, with just a hint of a smile; “I’ll take you home.”

Felicity grinned; “You hear that, Jax? He’s going to take me home. Which means I’m going to have to get on his motorcycle. And you just know he doesn’t drive to the conditions and has a total disregard for any and all speed limits.”

“Great.” Jax tossed back; “Make sure you wear a helmet.”

“Jaaaaxxxx;” Felicity whined; “If you don’t take me home, you can’t sit on my bathroom counter while I brush my teeth, drinking wine while you lecture me about all the reckless things I’ve ever done or might do.”

Jax stopped. “Damn it.” He strode back to their corner of the cemetery and flopped down beside Oliver, who he grinned at; “Did I ever tell you about the time she made a super virus?”

Felicity sat at the table in the room that seemed to have more windows than walls and waited. She fidgeted nervously. When she told Oliver and Jax what had happened with her father, she’d neglected to tell them on small detail. When he’d slammed her against the wall and whispered in her ear about Katerina, he’d also told her to come back again and to come back alone.

She was trying to reconcile who her father was in her head. In the first timeline, he’d been a monster who’d been willing to sell his own children for a profit. In this timeline, he was still a monster but he seemed more willing to help her. Madame Therese had once said that the problem with hypothetical turning back of time is that you can change one small thing and you don’t know what other changes that could set off. For Felicity, there wasn’t one small change. Belle died giving birth. Felicity had left a baby on the doorstep of the Queen Mansion. Her father was arrested and spent most of her life in prison. Katerina didn’t die with their other siblings.

Her father came into the room, like he had before, sat down, waited for the handcuffs to be removed then smiled at her as if he were actually happy to see her.
“Felicity. You came back. And alone, this time. That’s good.”

“Katerina’s not in her grave.” She blurted it out and then inwardly cursed herself. That was not what she wanted to lead with. Her father’s eyebrows flew up and he leaned back, crossed his arms and smiled at her.

“You’ve been listening. Good girl. You were always my smart girl.”

“Where is she?”

He lifted one shoulder in a lazy shrug; “I have no idea. My children don’t tend to visit me.”

“But she’s alive.”

“She was fifteen years ago when I helped her fake her death and made it look like she died with the others.”

“Why did she want to fake her death?”

“Ah, now, Felicity, can’t give you all the answers, you have to figure some things out for yourself. Or ask her.”

Felicity scowled at him. She wasn’t sure he wasn’t playing her. She wasn’t sure of anything. She tried a different tact; “Who wanted you dead?”

“You work for Queen Consolidated, don’t you?”

“Yes.”

He nodded; “It’s a good company. Did you know when Nate was in college, he interned at both Merlyn Global and Queen Consolidated? He became quite chummy with the CEOs.”
“Dad;” She tried on a sigh but he was on a tangent.

“Have you ever met Moira Queen? Now, she was a beautiful woman.”

“What does this have to do with anything?” She was afraid he was talking in circle, not really telling her anything. The guard came back in to say their time was up and her father stood up and looked down at her; “There was a girl, a girl Nate was….fond of. She was one of my girls. He tried to get her out.”

“So, Nate liked a girl?”

“She was very sweet. He got her a job at Queen Consolidated as an assistant. Nina Bennett. That was her name.”

The guard started ushering him and Felicity felt like the visit was wasted. Her father sent her a piercing look and said one last thing before he was taken away; “Remember the things we do for love, Felicity.”
Dreams

Chapter Summary

Felicity and Oliver have a late night chat. That's about it.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I own nothing. Not Arrow, not DC and not The CW.

*Remember the things we do for love, Felicity.* What exactly did that mean? Did her father do something for love? Did Nate? And he’d said she had to figure some things out for herself. She needed more to go on. Everything her father said to her all came back to Nate but then everything Nate said came back to their father. So who to believe? Who to trust?

Did anything her father had said actually mean anything? Or was it all one big deception? Was he just messing with her? And then Katerina. She was a mystery too. Who the hell was Nina Bennett and why was she relevant? Maybe she wasn’t.

These were the things that were going round and round in her mind as she stared at ceiling of her bedroom. She tucked the blankets up to her neck and told herself she needed to sleep. She squeezed her eyes shut and tried to think happy thoughts. *Remember the things we do for love, Felicity.* Was love a motivating factor in the murders? She groaned in frustration and rolled over and closed her eyes again.

*Tatiana and Cassandra sitting on the sofa chatting about boys.....blood spilling from a bullet wound at their temple, their bodies lifeless, their wide vacant eyes staring at nothing.*

Felicity rolled over again and stared into the darkness.

*Finn begging for the life of his baby sister and then nothing. A gun pointed at her and then excruciating pain.*

And that was it. Sleep was not going to be her friend. Pushing the covers aside, Felicity got up, picked up a pair of jeans from the floor, wriggled into them, found an old hoodie and put that on.
over her long-sleeved sleep top. Sitting on the bed she pulled her shoes on and shoved a beanie over her unbrushed, bed hair.

Sleep was evading her so she’d evade it. She left her apartment and drove to the foundry and for old time’s sake crept through her hole in the fence. She was expecting the club to be empty, for Oliver to either be down in the basement or out checking off names on his list.

What she didn’t expect was to walk into the still under construction club and find Oliver sitting on the floor, an electrical light, the only illumination in the club, his legs stretched out in front of him. As she walked closer, she could hear music coming from his phone which was placed on the floor beside him as he sipped on a bottle of beer. Her breathe hitched as she realised what song was playing: Chris Isaak’s version of *I want you to want me*. God, she hated that song.

She saw him tense and knew that he knew that she was there. She walked over to him and sat down near him. She sat cross-legged and smiled; “Hey.”

“Hey. What are you doing here?”

She shrugged; “Couldn’t sleep.”

“Nightmares?” He asked as he handed her a bottle of beer. So, she guessed she was his drinking buddy for the night.

“Memories. Which are sometimes worse.”

“Yeah. Want to talk about it?”

She shook her head; “Not really.” She scrunched her nose up as he reached over and restarted the song on his phone; “You got an earworm?”

He frowned adorably; “An earworm?”

“Yeah, you know, a song that gets stuck in your head and you just can’t get it out.”
“Ah. Then, yes. I guess so. I had this dream.”

Felicity held her breath, then shakily released it; “What kind of dream?”

“The details are hazy. But this song was playing and there was an alley and…..that’s it.”

Not good. Not good. She took a sip of beer, swallowed it and bit her lip. Damnity. Damn. “Have you ever;” she started trying to sound oh so casual, “had dreams like that before?”

He narrowed his eyes and got this faraway look on his face; “On the island I had a few weird dreams about a blonde girl.” Well, fuck a duck. And then he was back in the present and his gaze shuttered, she picked up the vibe that he very much did not want to talk about this anymore. “Anyway, where’s Jax tonight? Usually, he’s following you around like a puppy.”

“He does own a bar, you know and though he has a manager sometimes he has to make an appearance. You know, maybe you could get some tips about running a business from him.”

He cringed; “I’ll pass, thanks. He’s very…protective of you, I didn’t think he ever left you alone.”

“He leaves me alone plenty.”

“Mmmm.”

They sat in silence, both sipping their beer. The silence was both awkward and comfortable at the same time.

“So, what’s got you sitting in your closed club drinking?”

“Laurel.”

Oh, goody. Felicity would rather have a sleep deprived night, take her chances with her nightmares than have to listen to Oliver wax lyrical about the luminous Laurel Lance.
“Oh. Are you two back together?”

“No.”

“Oh, so what’s the problem?” She couldn’t believe she was about to play agony aunt to Oliver.

He frowned; “She wants to date both Tommy and I.” He stated, flatly.

“Huh.”

“Yeah.”

“So, you’re brooding because you don’t want to share her? Or because you don’t want to date her at all?”

“I don’t know.”

Of course he didn’t. Which meant she was actually going to have to give him some solid advice.

“You want to know what I think?”

He didn’t say anything so she took his silence as permission to just plough right ahead with her thoughts; “Maybe you should spend some time with her casually, have a lunch or something and see if you want to date her or if you’re just holding onto what you had before.”

He took another sip of beer, didn’t say a word but he seemed to be mulling over what she’d suggested so she took that as a good sign.

He made a move to replay the song yet again and she pointed a finger at him; “Don’t you dare play that song again.”
“What have you got against that song?”

“Nothing,” she said shaking her head; “Just bad memories.”

“Ah,” he said, tilting his head; “It’s about a guy.”

“I’m an independent woman, Oliver, not everything is about a guy.”

Oliver planted a hand on the floor and leaned closer to her, looking her directly in the eye and it took everything she had not to squirm at his proximity; “Felicity, did some guy break your heart?”

Oh, you know only a little bit. Though, if you wanted to get technical about it, she broke her own heart. It hurt her head to even think about it.

He watched her intently and she wanted to put a hand to his chest and push him back, force him to give her some space; “Tell me who he is, Felicity, and I’ll pay him a visit. Threaten him a little.”

“That’s sweet, Oliver but I don’t need you to fight my battles for me. Besides, there’s no guy. Besides, Jax, I’m all alone.”

He frowned a little at that and tugged on the end of her hair lightly; “You shouldn’t be alone, Felicity.”

And there he went again, saying that things to her that he really shouldn’t say and making her feel all warm and fuzzy and he needed to back the hell up.

Scrambling to backward, she crawled around him and swiped up his phone, settling herself on the other side of him, with just a little bit more space between them. He sat back and watched her as she swiped through spotify on his phone. “There are so many better songs to listen to, Oliver;” she pressed play on one; “Like this one.”

The beat started up and Oliver tipped his head back and groaned; “Oh, Pretty Woman? That’s only
the cheesiest song in history.”

“It’s not cheesy. It’s the best song! My sister and I used to dance to it all the time.”

“Yeah? Which sister?”

Shit. Shitty. Shit. Because in this timeline, her and Belle had never danced around their apartment in their socks while her niece slept in the other room.

“Anyway,” She rushed on, ignoring his question; “It has the best beat for dancing and you know also that scene in the movie with Julia Roberts.”

He chuckled lightly; “Ok. You like dancing?”

“Yes,” she enthused; “If I thought I could, I’d make you dance with me.”

“Felicity,” he said very seriously; “I’d dance with you.”

Ok, and see, that just messed with her head. She felt herself blush and wished she’d just stayed at home in her bed.

Luckily, she didn’t have to find something to say to fill the silence that ensued. He did that for her.

“What was that song Jax sang to you?”

“He has a couple he rotates through. But he calls me his Melancholy Baby sometimes;” she said and pressed play on his phone. They sat in silence, the song playing softly, the notes wrapping around them.

“It’s sad;” Oliver said once the song finished. “Why does he call you that?”
She pulled her knees up to her chest and rested her chin on her knees; “Back when I first met him, I wore a lot of black, did the goth thing – “

“Like Tommy remembered.”

“Yeah, I was…subdued I guess. I was sad a lot of the time. That’s part of the reason he’s always so flirty and making little jokes, he’s made it his mission in life to make me smile.”

“Are you sad now?”

“Now in general or now as in right now?”

“Both.”

“In general?,” she shrugged and said; “sometimes.”

“And right now?”

“I’m good.” And the smile he gave her was the best one yet.
Dance it out

Chapter Summary

Laurel and Oliver have a dinner date

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Arrow, The CW or DC. I also don't own the song You and I by Lady Gaga which is quoted in the text. Don't own it and don't claim to either.

Oliver nodded along numbly and took a sip of wine as Laurel continued the story she’d been telling for the past….he subtly checked his watch…..six and a half minutes. He had no idea what she was actually saying, he’d tuned out, it was something he used to do all the time and would only tune back in when it related to him. He didn’t tune Felicity out. Everything she said was infinitely interesting. And sometimes amusing. He enjoyed watching her and Jax banter, though he wouldn’t admit it out loud. He also wouldn’t admit that he’d even enjoyed the night they’d sat in the graveyard, drank and dug up her sister. He still wanted to pay her father a visit but he sidelined that for now.

While Laurel chatted away about God knows what, Oliver thought about the way Felicity beamed at him when she was pleased with something he’d done, the way she didn’t try to push him into revealing any information about the island but how she kept confiding her secrets to him. He also thought about the way she always looked so heartbroken when he disappointed her. Laurel always claimed that he’d broken her heart and he knew he’d hurt her, but she’d never looked so deeply destroyed like Felicity did. He wondered if he’d ever had that kind of power over Laurel’s emotion.

Laurel, whose picture he’d kept and stared at like it was a picture of some saint. Laurel who’d been his first love but who now alternated between trying to reel him back in and acting like she couldn’t stand him. Laurel who so often looked at him as if he’d come back wrong. Laurel who tried to coax him into being the Ollie she remembered.

Then, Oliver’s mind wandered to Felicity and her meeting with her father at Iron Heights. He thought about ways he could get more information on her father for her.

“Hmmm,” Laurel hummed; “This Crème Brûlée is amazing, you have to try it, Ollie.” She held the spoon out to him.
He shook his head; “No.” At the crestfallen look on her face, he tried to explain, “I don’t eat as much as I used to. Especially sweet food. My appetite changed.”

“Oh the island.” Laurel stated. She tipped her head to the side and licked the spoon in an act that he thought was supposed to be seductive and alluring. It had been in the past.

He thought maybe he could break into the SCPD and steal the files from Felicity’s father’s trial and arrest. Or would they be in Iron Heights?

“What was it like there?”

“Where?”

“The island.”

No. Laurel wanted his attention and now she had it completely. “You don’t want to know, Laurel.”

“Yes,” she insisted, dropping the spoon down onto the plate with an audible clink; “I really do, Ollie, I want to know what happened there to make you so –”

His fist clenched on the table cloth; “So, what? Broken? Damaged?” He asked bitterly. Laurel recoiled at his tone. “Laurel, why do you want to know what happened there?”

She reached out to take his hand but he pulled it out of reach. Laurel looked wounded and sighed; “Ollie, you’re so different now, I’m just trying to understand you. I’m trying to related to you.”

“You shouldn’t have to try so hard,” He stated softly. He didn’t mean it as an affront but Laurel clearly took it as one. She bristled like she did when she was hurt. Usually, it was him who was hurting her.

“But Felicity,” she spat the name out, “doesn’t have to try does she?”
“What the hell does that mean?”

They were arguing with each other in a restaurant, hissing accusations and pointed words back and forth.

“It means that your free time isn’t spent with Moira or Thea or Tommy or me. It’s spent with her. It’s like she has some hold over you.”

“That’s ridiculous;” he ground out. Felicity had no hold over him. He couldn’t deny he couldn’t seem to leave her alone but she didn’t try to draw him to herself, he went willingly.

“No, Oliver, it’s not. She’s the only person besides your bodyguard that you seem to actively want to spend any time with.”

That was because Felicity didn’t expect anything of him except for him to be there when he said he’d be there. It was like Diggle had said a few months ago, when you come home everybody wants to get you: get you to open up, get you to be someone you aren’t sure you are anymore. He didn’t know how to be that person anymore.

He sighed tiredly; “What do you want from me, Laurel?”

“I want to know that the guy I loved, the guy who was my friend first, is still in there somewhere, that that island didn’t change you completely. That maybe you and I still have a chance.”

“That guy is dead, Laurel, he died on the island. And I meant it when I said that if you knew all the things that happened to me there, all the things I did just to survive. You’d see me as damaged. You’d judge me.”

Laurel shook her head, her eyes brimming with tears. His first instinct used to be to pull her into his arms and try to make it better. That instinct wasn’t forcing its way to the surface. “I would never judge you for whatever you had to do to survive, Ollie.”

“You already are. And the island did change me, Laurel. That change is irreversible.”
“Just tell me something. Anything about the island.”

“It was cold.” It was the same bullshit answer he’d given Thea when she’d asked what it had been like.

Laurel sighed, exasperated and Oliver wished she’d just give up but she was nothing if not persistent. “Don’t do that. Tell me something real.”

“Why?” He said, keeping his voice low, conscious of the fact they were in public; “So you can try to fix me?”

Laurel tipped her head to the side, eyes large and sad; “Do you need fixing, Ollie?”

That was what did it. He scraped his chair back, got to his feet, threw some cash down on the table to cover the bill and looked down at the girl he had been so desperate to get back to for five years; “I’m not a mistreated dog, Laurel. You should figure out how you feel about Tommy and if you want to be with him, then be with him because this thing between us isn’t happening.”

He left her at the table, gaping after him.

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Oliver went back to the Foundry, sparred with Diggle, put the hood on intending to go threaten some drug dealers but when he got on his motorcycle, he somehow ended up on Felicity’s street. He sat on the ducati and watched her living room window. Her curtains were wide open and he could see her and Jax laughing at something. He thought they were dancing, Jax took Felicity by the hand, twirled her, pulled close and dipped her as she laughed. Oliver found he desperately wanted to be part of the scene.

Felicity and Jax disappeared from his view and his hood phone rang in his jacket pocket. Keeping his gaze on Felicity’s window, he answered it; “What?”

“Wow,” Felicity’s voice said in his ear; “Super growly. Stop being a lurky lurker.”
He saw her walk right up to her window and she wriggled her fingers at him. He smiled. He felt lighter already.

“We’re having a dance party, come join us. We might be getting a little tipsy.”

“I don’t dance.”

“You said you’d dance with me,” he could hear the pout in her voice.

His smile widened so it was a full on grin; “Oliver Queen would dance with you. The Hood doesn’t dance.”

“Ok, that’s just creepy. Either you come up here or I’m coming down to get you and I should warn you, I’m not above crying to get my way.”

He hung up on her, parked his bike and scaled her fire escape. He could hear her and Jax singing a little off-key to the music that was turned up so loud it was highly likely the neighbours were going to place a noise complaint. He wandered into the living room where he was greeted to the sight of Jax trying to Tango with Felicity who was giggling so much she kept tripping over her own feet.

Oliver hoisted himself onto the kitchen counter, undid his quiver and placed it and his bow on the counter beside him. He leaned back on his elbows and waited for them to finally notice him.

Jax saw him first and smirked; “Our favourite vigilante is here.”

Felicity turned toward him and smiled brightly, skipped over to him, then pouted; “You hung up on me. Rude.”

Oliver reached out and plucked a feather that was tangled in Felicity’s hair and held it up questionably.

Felicity shrugged; “We had a pillow fight.” She said as if that explained everything.
He raised a brow at that and asked; “How much have you had to drink?”

She put her hands on his knees and smiled up at him; “Just enough,” she crooked a finger at him and he was compelled to lean in closer; “It’s Jax’s birthday. We’re celebrating.”

Jax rolled his eyes; “Felicity is the only one who wants to celebrate my birthday. I’d rather pass it by considering I was born over a hundred years ago.”

“Jax, it’s important to celebrate things sometimes otherwise we’ll all be as grouchy as this guy,” she emphasised it with a pat to Oliver’s knee. She smiled at him again before turning her attention onto Jax. One smile and Oliver felt the weight of the night lift and he felt lighter somehow.

Jax crossed his arms and gave Felicity a look; “This coming from the girl who was emo for the better part of her teen years.”

“I wasn’t emo, I was goth and it was a look. A look I rocked by the way.”

Jax smirked; “I didn’t say you didn’t rock it. It was delicious. Now, let’s find something to dance to.”

Felicity pushed herself away from Oliver, using her hands on his knees as leverage. She went over to where a phone was plugged into the sound system and with a grin aimed at him, she pressed play on a song. The opening bars of *Oh, Pretty Woman* come out of the speakers.

“The vigilante currently perching on my counter doesn’t like this song.”

Jax gasped dramatically and winked at Oliver; “Nooooo. Really? It’s a classic and it’s such a good song to shake your groove thing to.”

Jax crooked a finger at Felicity and she came willing. They started dancing around the room singing the lyrics to each other. Jax hooked an arm around Felicity’s neck and growled; “Mercy.” Causing her to break into fits of laughter.
Oliver watched and chuckled lightly as Felicity tried and failed to teach Jax the Macarena. It ended with Jax wondering out loud why he needed to know how to do that shit.

As they danced around to *Ring of Fire*, Felicity sashayed over to Oliver, grabbed one of his leather clad hands and lifted it up in the air and ducked under it in a kind twirl. She held onto his fingers for moment after she finished her twirl. He gave her a small grin and she clicked her fingers in time to the beat and sang the chorus. “See, you’re dancing with me.” She said, obviously proud of herself.

“I’m not dancing with you, Felicity, you’re dancing near me.”

She pouted at him; “Don’t be such a kill joy.”

She danced away from him and he cursed himself for arguing with her.

The song changed and one minute he was watching Felicity dance around her living room with her friend, the next he blinked and he was in his bedroom at the mansion. Felicity was wearing one of his button up shirts, dancing while he watched, singing the song just for him. “You taste like whiskey when you kiss me.” She hummed a few lines; “and my lipstick on your face.”

He blinked and he was back in Felicity’s living room. What the hell was that? Felicity had never been in his bedroom. She had certainly never worn one of his shirts. He shook his head and ran a hand over his face. He must have been more tired than he realised.

Jax came over and leaned against the counter; “Fuck, I hate my birthday.”

“Why let her celebrate it then?”

Jax shrugged; “Because it makes her happy. For one night all she does is dance and forgets about the shit storm that is her life.”

Jax was letting Felicity use his birthday as an excuse to forget her troubles. It was as simple as that.
Felicity knows she’s dreaming but it’s not a connected dream of one particular moment, it’s snapshots of moments. Moments with **him**.

Oliver watched her as she applied her makeup, leaning against the wall, one of his legs bent at the knee, his foot flat against the wall. He pushed away from the wall, wrapped his hand around her bicep, spun her around, pressed her against the bathroom counter and kissed her. It was a kiss so fiercely intense that it left her breathless. When he was finished, her lipstick was on him and she looked thoroughly debauched.

Snap. Next.

He had her pressed up against the bedroom wall, kissing the spot where her shoulder and collarbone met. She shivered as he nipped at her skin, then soothed the spot with his tongue. His hand ran down her side, lingering on her curves before moving on, he slipped a hand up under her skirt which was bunched so far up, it might as well have been off already. He clutched the flesh of her thigh and dragged her leg up over his hip. She fumbled with the buttons of his shirt. He made her concentration turn to shit. Finally, she got his shirt off, she pushed it off his shoulders and it had fluttered to the floor, forgotten. Tired of balancing on one foot, she did a little hop and with a hand under her butt, Oliver helped her wrap her other leg around his waist.

Snap. Next.

Oliver wrapped an arm around her from behind and pulled her into him. He swept her hair aside and with his stubble scratching lightly in the most delicious way, he whispered Russian words against her skin, smirking as it made her shiver.
Felicity had learned at a young age to never truly surrender herself to slumber. Going off to the land of nod made you vulnerable. And being vulnerable was bad when there was the possibility of someone sneaking into your room with less than honourable intentions. Since having her own apartment, she’d succumbed to and allowed herself to be that vulnerable in sleep. She still kept a pair of scissors in her bedside table drawer, just in case. What she thought she’d do with them, she had no idea. But nevertheless, they were there.

She’d been having nightmares and weird dreams for months, ever since Oliver came back to the land of the living so when she heard voices chattering away, she rolled over and buried her face deeper into her pillow.

“Maybe we should just let her sleep.” A deep, altered voice said quietly.

“She’s always awake when you pay her a visit at this time of night;” Another voice chimed in.

She felt her mattress shift as someone sat on it. That someone lay down beside her and draped an arm across her body and started whisper singing *I want you to want me* in her ear. Groaning, Felicity, pulled her hand out from where it was tangled in her blankets and pushed the person off the bed. They landed with a very satisfying thud. She wasn’t dreaming. She opened her eyes, sat up and rubbed her eyes to find Oliver sitting, leaning forwards, elbows on knees and hands clutched, watching her from beneath his hood.

She peered over the edge of her bed and found Jax sitting on the floor, pouting.

“I was asleep,” she whined, pointing out the obvious. “What do you two want?”

Jax pulled himself up to standing and smirked; “I don’t want anything, sweets, I was getting ready to head out for the night when Mister lurky jerky climbed through the window and decided to notch up the stalker behaviour by watching you sleep.”

“You were leaving? So, leave,” she grumbled and Jax chuckled, bent and pressed a kiss to her temple. He sketched her out a little salute, pointed at Oliver and grinned; “Don’t keep her up too late.”
Felicity picked up her pillow and threw it at Jax’s back, but because she was a terrible, rotten aim, Oliver caught it instead and placed it on the edge of her bed. She heard her front door click shut and the lock turning signally Jax’s exit and him locking up for her since Oliver would do that thing where he’d climb through her window and jump off her fire escape without breaking a single bone in his body.

Leaning back against her headboard, she pulled her knees up and rested her chin on them as she studied Oliver’s figure. She had to squint in the darkness to really see him. His green suit was so dark, he must blend in with the inky night. He watched her watching him and didn’t move an inch. If she didn’t know that he was flesh and bone, she might think he was one of those renaissance statues made out of marble, all sinewy muscle and perfectly chiselled definition.

She shoved her bed covers back, swung her legs over the side of the bed and stood up. She walked up to him and stood as close as she dared without touching him, between his legs and felt the warmth that rolled off him in waves. She was too close. She needed to back up. For just a moment, her sleep addled brain had made her forget that this wasn’t her Oliver. She swallowed and took a step back trying to find her much needed equilibrium.

That one step wasn’t far enough. Oliver climbed to his feet and he was suddenly crowding in on her space. It would be so easy for her to rise up on her toes and press her lips to his. She blinked rapidly, trying to push those type of thoughts away and spun away from him.

“How hot chocolate. Let’s go make some of that.” She muttered and scurried away into the kitchen. What the hell was wrong with her? She started clattering away in the kitchen, pulling out what she needed to make hot chocolate and heard the scraping back of a bar stool and knew that Oliver would be silently settling himself in one of them. And sure enough, when she turned clutching a whisk and pan against her chest like they were some kind of armour that could protect her heart from him, he was sitting, leaning toward her, forearms resting on her kitchen island. His bow and quiver also rested on the kitchen island along with what looked to be some files.

His hood was still up.

She waved the whisk in the air; “Want a hot chocolate?” She was nothing, if not a good hostess.

“Sure.”

She couldn’t see his eyes. His hood was far too effective at hiding his face, she wished he’d push it back, she wanted to see his eyes. And there she went again. Shaking off all thoughts of Oliver’s eyes and the way they used to roam over her body in a way that was, at times, more effective than
any physical touch; she set about making hot chocolate for two. She hadn’t had the opportunity to make it for more than one person in a long time, Jax wasn’t a particular fan of it unless it was heavily laced with some kind of liqueur.

Felicity set a mug in front of Oliver and then retreated to lean back against the counter, she needed the kitchen island and the space of the kitchen between them. Wrapping her hands around her mug, she took a tiny sip and let the warmth combined with the chocolate calm her nerves.

“You know,” she began, “I have a slice of caramel mudcake in my fridge. I’ll share it with you if you like.”

He tilted his head and from what she could see of his face, it looked like he was mulling it over. What was to mull? You either liked cake or you didn’t. There was no in between.

“Felicity,” he said slowly and deliberately as if he were accepting an academy award rather than an offer of half a slice of cake; “I’d love to share some cake with you.”

She went over to her fridge, pulled out the plate with the cake on it, grabbed two forks and went back over to the kitchen island and unloaded her arms. She placed the cake between them, her mug off to the side and handed Oliver a fork.

“I should warn you; this cake is diabetes on a plate;” she pointed her fork at him; “and if you tell Jax I shared it with you and didn’t save him any, I’ll gouge out your eyeballs with a pencil.”

A slow smile tugged at his lips; “That’s a very vivid, creative threat.”

“Well,” she said, digging into a piece of cake; “Not all us know how to shoot a bow and arrow and have to rely on idle threats.”

“You don’t need a bow and arrow, Felicity, you’re magic.”

The fork froze halfway to her mouth and she gaped at him, blinked then shoved the cake into her mouth so she wouldn’t utter something ridiculously stupid. He didn’t mean it like that. He meant you have magic, Felicity, not that you are literal magic.
What a pair they must make. If someone could see them, they’d see the Starling City vigilante and a girl in Snoopy pjs on opposite sides of a kitchen island going halfsies in a slice of cake. Ok, fine. She had eaten nearly three quarters of the caramel delight, while he’d barely nibbled on his side. But so not the point.

Oliver pointed his fork and the almost demolished cake; “That is good cake.”

Felicity beamed; “Thank you.”

“You made this?” Surprise coloured Oliver’s tone.

“Don’t sound so surprised. I always make Jax a birthday cake. It’s the one thing I can bake with any kind of success.”

Oliver’s expression shifted and he looked like his usual broody self with a side helping of sad added in for good measure.

She waved her fork at his face; “What’s with the kicked puppy look?”

“Nothing….just no one’s ever made me a cake.”

“Ever?” Now that was just too sad. “What about on your birthday?”

“We always had the best chef create the very best.”

Oh, what different lives the rich led. A billionaire playboy was sad that he’d had to suffer through a catered cake rather than one that was homemade.

“Tell you what, when your birthday comes around, I’ll make you your very own cake. But only if you promise to let me help eat it.”

He didn’t hesitate for even a second; “Deal.”
She licked the icing off her fork and thought about birthday cakes and how even badly made ones were still amazing because they meant someone loved you enough to measure out ingredients, shove the thing in the oven and then smother it with lumpy frosting. It was more about the effort that went into it than the cake itself.

“For my eighth birthday,” she began with a little smile; “a few months before….well, before.” Oliver tipped his head slightly and she took it as a sign that he was really listening to her; “I decided I wanted this really intricate cake with all these different layers. Tatiana and Cassandra couldn’t really cook or bake, they were more interested in chasing boys than an eight year old’s birthday. Katerina said she’d buy me any cake I wanted and Belle agreed. But Finn,” she paused, remembering the big brother she’d always hero worshipped; “Finn, he said that he’d make me my cake. He stayed up all night baking.”

“How’d it turn out?”

Felicity laughed lightly, “It was an eye sore. All lopsided and the frosting was this odd colour. But I loved it. I made Finn promise he’d make me my cakes every year from then on.”

It was the last cake anyone had ever made for her. In both timelines. Belle wasn’t much of a baker.

“I bet he agreed.”

“Yeah, he did. And then he died. After that, I didn’t want to celebrate my birthday. It was a bit of a non-event. In the foster system, no one cared if it was birthday, so it passed with little to no fanfare.”

“But you celebrate Jax’s birthday.”

“I met Jax on my seventeenth birthday. I walked into his bar, all black hair, black lipstick, nose ring and angry and sat in front of him and ordered a shot of vodka. He gave it me and I downed it in one go. He asked me what I was celebrating or trying to forget. I told him it was my birthday. As I drank the second shot I ordered, he disappeared.”

“Where’d he go?”
She shrugged; “He came back with a cupcake with pink icing and a lit birthday candle stuck in it. He sang me happy birthday and I burst into tears. I bawled all over his perfectly polished bar top. We’ve been friends ever since.”

Felicity finished her story and swiped up the last bit of cake since Oliver had put his fork down sometime during her little speech. He looked like he was having an internal debate with himself.

“There were no birthdays on the island,” he began slowly, his voice quiet; “I didn’t even know what day my birthday was, all the days bleed together and even if I’d known, there was no time to celebrate, it was more important to just try to survive.”

“Well, then,” she told him gently; “I guess we both have some birthdays to make up for.”

He didn’t say anything. Silence was golden anyway. Felicity pushed away from the kitchen island and took the mugs and plate to the sink, washed them and set them on the drying rack. She turned back around just in time to see Oliver pushing back his hood. Finally, she could see his eyes. They were startling against the paint he smudged around them. They were the most tortured eyes she’d ever seen. But they were still the most beautiful. Even more so when he raised his head and aimed them right at her.

“It’s not your birthday,” he said, reaching for the files under his bow; “But I did get you a present.”

He handed her the files and she opened them as he continued talking; “Your father’s arrest and interrogation files.”

“How did you get these, Oliver?” He ducked his head down and she got it, “Ah, Laurel. Right.”

His gaze flew up to her; “No. Laurel had nothing to do with it. I got them. For you. From SCPD.”

“You broke into SCPD to get these?”

“Yes.” He said it like it was the simplest thing. Like he’d just taken a stroll down the street. She felt herself well up and felt the urge to give him the most bone bruising hug he’d ever received.
She gripped the kitchen island tightly to help her resist that urge.

“Thank you, Oliver.” She gave him a watery smile and blinked back tears but he didn’t seem to mind. He smiles at her, this smile that completely transforms his face and reaches his eyes and she thinks that just for a moment, whatever it is that haunted him through his days had been chased away.
This was so not the way she thought her evening would go. She never in a billion years would have imagined she’d have to run up flights of stairs – in heels- while a sniper fired off shots. She also never imagined she’d be holding up an IV line while Oliver siphoned blood from Tommy Merlyn into Malcolm Merlyn.

When Tommy Merlyn had strolled into her office at QC, she’d known her day was about to get interesting. He’d given her that brilliant, charming billionaire smile that she was sure they taught at an early age and flopped down into the chair she had for visitors. Her visitors weren’t usually playboy billionaires but what could you do.

She’d been looking through the files Oliver had given her when Tommy had appeared. He leaned forward and winked at her; “What’s cookin’ good lookin’?”

Felicity smiled at Tommy, she couldn’t help it, there was just something infectious about his humour and his kindness that drew her to him, that and she got the vibe that Tommy Merlyn saw a lot more than people realised.

“What are you doing here?” She blurted it out and he gasped and pressed a hand to his chest in mock offense.

“Is that any way to greet a visitor?”

“I’m sorry. I just didn’t think I’d see you again after I cried all over you. It wasn’t the best first impression.”
Tommy shrugged; “Eh, it was nothing, I’ve got experience with girls having floor breakdowns over Oliver Queen. And yours wasn’t the worst I’ve ever seen, believe me.”

“It wasn’t totally about Oliver,” she grumbled, trying to maintain some of her dignity.

“Of course, it wasn’t.”

Once again, she asked; “What are you doing here?”

He gave her that grin again and his eyes twinkled and she bet a lot of panties had dropped at the mere sight of that grin. She also bet a lot of hearts were broken as a result of that grin. “I think you and I, Miss Smoak, should be friends.”

She laughed at that; “You do? Why?”

“Because we have a lot in common.”

“Like what?” To say that she was sceptical was a great big understatement.

He gave her a softer smile, one full of sympathy and understanding; “Like we’re both in love with someone who is half in love with someone else.”

“I’m not in love with Laurel.” She stated with a grin, trying to add some levity to the heaviness that had suddenly settled around them. He wasn’t buying what she was selling.

“Felicity.”

She sighed; “I’m not in love with –“ She cut off and looked away at the look he was giving her. Tommy Merlyn definitely saw far too much.

He clapped his hands together; “So, I have a proposition for you –“
“You’re not my type, Tommy.” She interjected cheekily.

“No, you like them much more broody, more scruffier, more emotionally –“

“OK,” she held up a hand to stop his rant; “That’s enough. What do you want?”

“My dad is being honoured at some humanitarian award shindig and I need a beautiful woman on my arm as my date and I figured you’ll do.”

And wasn’t that just the most flattering invitation she’d ever received. “Can’t you just take Laurel?”

Laurel Lance was practically created for those type of events. Felicity watched as Tommy’s good humour slipped away and he sobered and the poor little rich boy looked downright downtrodden.

“Laurel and I are taking a break while she sorts out her feelings.”

Her feelings about Oliver. That was what Tommy didn’t say. Tommy shook off his sadness and leaned forward and gave her that panty melting, playboy grin once more; “So, what do you say? Want to be my hot date for the evening?”

So, that was how she ended up crouching beside Malcolm Merlyn as he lay shot and unconscious. How did she get herself in these situations? While she was pondering how the hell she always managed to get herself right, smack dab in the middle of the fray, Oliver had made his dramatic entrance.

He came crashing through the window of the Merlyn penthouse.

“Well, you took your sweet time,” Tommy drawled as he applied pressure to his father’s wound.

Felicity stood up and walked over to Oliver, standing toe to toe with him so that she could see his eyes as they ran up and down her body. The first thing out of his mouth was: “What are you
wearing?"

She took a step back and looked down at herself, suddenly feeling insecure. She’d actually put a lot of effort into her look for the evening. She was wearing a hot pink mini dress that was all lace cut and had a cut out in the back that showed off a large portion of her back. She knew she didn’t have super toned legs that went on for miles but the black high heels she donned made her legs look a little longer. Sure they weren’t Louboutins but they were nice. And she’d spent hours on her hair, she’d done this super intricate fishtail braided up-do. She’d youtubed it for god’s sake. And her makeup was perfectly applied. She’d nearly poked her eye out trying to insert her contacts.

“Ignore him, Felicity,” Tommy said firmly, “He’s a big dummy. You look divine, exquisite, completely edible.”

Tommy Merlyn. So good for a girl’s ego.

Oliver was still looking at her with a frown, like he didn’t like what he was seeing. He was such a stupid, big dummy.

Shake it off, Felicity. You can cry later about the fact that Oliver Queen doesn’t think you’re pretty enough. Maybe call up Jax and cry on him.

“When you’ve finished looking at her like you’ve never seen a beautiful girl before, maybe you can help me save my father, Oliver.”

Hold on one damn hot minute. Did Tommy say ‘Oliver’? If Felicity wasn’t standing so close to Oliver, she’d have missed the way his eyes widened. He turned off the voice modulator, pushed the hood back and looked past her at Tommy with tortured eyes.

“You know?”

Tommy gave him a ‘well, duh’ look; “Of course I know. I knew the minute you killed those guys who kidnapped us. I’m not a fan of the killing – which we will be having a conversation about, Mister – but you’re my best friend, I’m just happy you’re back even if you are using the city’s criminals as your own personal pin cushions.”
Well. Damn. Anyone who underestimated Tommy Merlyn’s powers of perception was a fool. Oliver stared at him for a moment as if he didn’t recognise his best friend, then he brushed passed her and dropped to his knees on the floor beside Tommy and Malcolm.

He started jibber jabbering about poisoned bullets and blood transfusions. She wondered when he’d had time to learn about blood transfusions while he was on that island of his. She watched as Oliver rigged up a transfusion, tapping Tommy’s vein before pushing the needle in and then doing the same on the elder Merlyn. She wasn’t too proud to admit that she felt the urge to throw up when she saw the blood going from Tommy, into the tube and then into Malcolm. Blood was just not her thing. Especially not when it came straight from the vein.

She could hear sirens in the distance and knew that official help was on the way. Oliver rose to his feet as if to leave but he lingered, seeming to be reluctant to leave Tommy. Tommy was too busy having blood siphoned from him and watching his father with glassy eyes to notice the internal struggle his best friend was having. Quietly, Felicity got to her feet, teetering a little on her heels and grabbing the strap of Oliver’s quiver, she tugged at him. She knew there was no way to move him if he didn’t want to go.

“Oliver,” she said softly, “You have to go, they can’t find you here.”

Finally, he looked down at her, “What about you?”

He still wasn’t moving so she tugged a little harder. It was like that one time in her life she’d gone horse riding and they’d been required to get the horse to walk forward a little before they got on it. She’d pulled on the clip lead, made the noises she’d been taught but that horse stubbornly hadn’t moved an inch. Oliver was like that damn horse. He wouldn’t move until he was good and ready.

“What about me?”

“What are you doing here?”

The sirens were getting closer and he wanted to talk about why she was at the award ceremony. Really? That couldn’t wait? He quirked a brow. Clearly, it couldn’t wait.

“Tommy asked me to come.” She said it in a rush and tugged once more on his quiver. Dear god, the man was stubborn.
“As a date?”

“Not a date date but as a friend date, I guess. Even though we don’t really know each other we’re still friendly. Friendish.” She was babbling but she couldn’t stop. She needed him to get out of there before the paramedics busted in and became fully aware of the identity of the vigilante.

His gaze cut away from her and landed on Tommy. Tommy sighed, clearly hearing every word they were saying; “Oliver, I’m not moving in on Felicity. I’ve got enough women drama without adding to it. No offence, Felicity.”

She shook her head; “None taken.”

She used her grip on Oliver’s quiver and pulled herself up on her toes so she could whisper in his ear, or more accurately near his ear; “Oliver, you have to go. I’m about five seconds from giving you a not so gentle shove with my powers.” She dropped back down and gave him a meaningful look. He threw another look at Tommy and she thought she was going to have to make good on her threat. But when she tugged again, he moved with her towards the window he came crashing through. And how did he do that Tarzan thing without getting any glass in his skin, without getting cut? It was just ridiculous.

She pulled him to the window and gave him a little push; “Go, Oliver.”

He climbed up onto the window ledge, looked over his shoulder at her and pulled his hood up over his head. If this were a movie, this would have been the moment where he would have leaned down and kissed her and it would have been the start of a really epic romance. Because this was actual life, he just stepped off the ledge and disappeared into the night. She didn’t peer over the ledge to check that he’d made it and hadn’t splattered like a pancake.

No less than a minute after Oliver had made his dramatic exit into the night, the paramedics and SCPD burst in. Felicity hung back as the paramedics tended to Malcolm and loaded him onto a stretcher. They disconnected Tommy from the transfusion and shaken, he was escorted out with his father. That left Felicity alone with the SCPD. Fabulous.

They wanted to know what she’d seen and heard, if she knew who’d fired the shots, what she was doing there. But most of all they wanted to know about the vigilante. One Detective, was particularly eager to hear everything she might know. They fired the questions at her so quickly she found it difficult to keep up and she was getting a little headache. What did the vigilante say to her? Did she see under the hood? Was there anything that stood out about him? And her personal favourite – did he scare her? Hell, yes he did, just not in the way they meant.
She answered all their questions and made it very clear that she had no idea who the vigilante was under that hood and that she knew nothing that would lead them to his identity. Then, she tiredly walked down the stairs and out into the cool night air where the ambulance was still parked and Tommy was looking exhausted. She walked up to him and offered him a tired smile; “Well, Tommy, I’d thank you for a lovely evening but it kind of went down hill when I watched you give your father a homemade transfusion.”

He gave her a weary grin and shrugged; “At least it was memorable.”

She gave him another smile and a nod and turned to go find a taxi and make her way home.

“How long have you known?” He called after her and she turned back toward him, he walked forward, closing the distance. He didn’t need to elaborate on his question, they both knew what he was referring too.

Felicity sighed; “A while.”

“How did you find out? Did he tell you?” She heard the question he was avoiding asking: why did he tell you and not me?

“He didn’t tell me. I guessed.”

Tommy nodded and the paramedic called to him and with one last smile, he left her to get her taxi. She hailed a taxi and once she gave the driver her address, she sank back in the seat and watched the city fly by out the window.

The taxi pulled up outside her building and she paid the driver, got out and went in, pushed the button to call the elevator. Thankfully, it came right away and she got in, pushed the button to her floor and leaned against the wall and took off her shoes. They just weren’t worth the pain they inflicted.

Shoving her key in her door with more force than was strictly necessary, she entered her apartment and kicked the door shut. She dropped her heels and flicked on the lights and froze. Something wasn’t right. Her witchy instincts told her someone had been in her apartment.

Slowly, she inched further into her apartment and started looking around for signs of who had
violated her safe place. Everything was perfectly in its place, no obvious sign of disturbance. And yet.

Slowly, Felicity tiptoed her way into her bedroom, opened her closet, checked under her bed and when she found nothing, she decided she must have been imagining things. Her witchy senses must be malfunctioning. But they’d never let her down before. Shaking her head and telling herself she was being silly, she went into her bathroom, turned on the facet, wet a washcloth and wiped off her makeup.

She’d just turned off the facet and looked at her reflection in the mirror when a figure appeared in the mirror behind her. A dark haired, porcelain skinned woman dressed in all black leather stood behind her. Felicity made a small sound of surprise and started to spin around, she was almost fully facing the woman when a hand wrapped around her throat and her back was pressed painfully into the counter behind her. Felicity clutched onto the counter to maintain her balance. The hand wrapped around her neck merely held her in place, it did not squeeze but still made the healing bruises left by her father tingle.

The woman titled her head, her painted blood red lips pursed and eyes that were the same blue as her own studied her. Madame Therese once told her blood recognised blood and something in Felicity twinged in recognition. But….it couldn’t be.

“Katerina?” Felicity whispered; “Kat?”

Felicity had been eight years old the last time she saw Katerina and Katerina had been blonde then, she looked the most like Felicity but it had been fifteen years. People changed. Katerina’s thumb brushed Felicity’s collarbone and Felicity shivered not knowing if this older version of the sister she’d once known wanted to do her harm.

Katerina’s pouty mouth quirked up in a lopsided smile; “Dad did say our little Felicity was starting to wise up a bit. He also said you showed up at the prison with Nate,” she paused and tsked at Felicity; “Shouldn’t trust big brother.”

“I don’t. Not entirely.”

“That’s good. You were always smarter than anyone gave you credit for. Dad also said you need to figure things out for yourself, so I’ve left you a little gift under your pillow. It’s a little something I stole from the office of the acting CEO of Queen Consolidated.”
“Moira Queen?”

“Uh huh.”

“What is it?”

Katerina looked Felicity up and down, appraising her in a way only a big sister could; “Look at you, all grown up. Love the dress,” she reached up and with her free hand started to slowly pull the pins out of Felicity’s hair; “Let me help you. You always loved braids. Do you remember? I used to do them for you.”

Felicity swallowed against Katerina’s hand and nodded. Felicity’s eyes widened as she spotted Oliver moving into the bathroom, bow raised, arrow pointed at Katerina. When had he gotten there?

“Let her go,” he ground out.

Katerina smirked and looked over her shoulder at Oliver, but did not do as he ordered; “The vigilante? Baby sister, you do attract the bad boys, don’t you? Good for you, he’s delicious.”

Completely disregarding the threat that was Oliver, Katerina smiled at Felicity; “I’ll be seeing you, Felicity.”

She squeezed her fingers around Felicity’s neck for a split second, leaned in and brushed a kiss against Felicity’s cheek bone, released her and sauntered away.

Letting out a long breath, Felicity lightly touched a hand to her neck and felt tears prickle her eyes. She felt like she was a wreck: no makeup and her hair half pinned up, half down. Oh, and she’d had a confrontation with the sister she’d thought was dead.

Oliver lowered his bow and unnotched his arrow and slowly walked up to her where she hadn’t moved an inch. Slowly, he reached up a hand and pulled the remaining pins from her hair. He ruffled her hair a little, undoing the braids and said softly, soothingly; “It looked nice tonight, but it looks better down.”
Katerina. Kat. She used to read Felicity bedtime stories and told her she could be anything she wanted to be. What happened to that girl?

“That was your sister? She looks like you. She’s beautiful.”

Really? Felicity put a hand on Oliver’s chest and pushed him back a step, out of her space; “She’s pouty and sultry and mysterious, of course she’d be your type.”

And damn him for looking so adorably confused. He looked like he should be scratching his head. Felicity walked around him and went into her bedroom, pulled open a dresser drawer, took out some pj bottoms and pulled them on under her dress. Going to her bed, she lifted up one pillow and then the other. Hidden under the second pillow was a small notebook that she’d seen before. As an unhooded Oliver walked into her bedroom, she threw the book to him. He caught it with one hand. He had ridiculous reflexes and that was almost as attractive as his ridiculous body.

Bad thoughts, Felicity.

“It’s the same as the little notebook you use to hunt the bad, bad people.” She said as she pulled back the covers of her bed and tried to figure out how she was going to get out of her dress. Jax had done up the back for her while he’d mocked her about the colour and how little goth her would never be caught dead in it. She cursed the fact that she lived alone.

Oliver flicked through the book, his face impassive and she felt like she was missing something. “Your sister left this for you?”

“Yes;” she said distractedly and tried to peer over her shoulder and see the back of her dress. It was no good. Oh well, she was just going to have to sleep in the thing. It would be rather scratchy with all the lace.

Oliver exhaled; “Where’d she get it?”

Felicity shrugged; “She said she stole it from your mother’s office.”

He exhaled; “From my mother.”
“Yup.”

Oh, screw it. She shuffled over to where he was standing, book in hand, staring at it like it had deeply offended him in some way and gathering her hair up in one hand turned her back to him; “Can you undo my dress, please?”

She waited. And waited. And waited. It was definitely longer than three Mississippi’s. She looked over her shoulder to ask him again and saw his eyes snap up to her face from where they hadn’t been on her face. Huh.

“Oliver?”

“What? Yeah,” his fingers brushed her skin as he undid the button at the nape of her neck. With the hand that wasn’t holding her hair up she clutched the dress to her chest so it didn’t drop and give Oliver and unintentional eye full. Gently, he pulled her hand away from her hair and it fell down around her shoulders. He tugged some hair behind her ear and whispered; “Good night, Felicity.”

And then he was gone.

It took her longer than she wanted to admit to realise that he’d taken the book with him.
Let's be alone together

Chapter Summary

Felicity and Oliver have a moment or two. Felicity also witnesses the joy that is Oliver on the salmon ladder. Oliver is a bit of a dummy

I changed the order of Tommy finding out about Oliver and Oliver getting shot by Moira around for my own purposes

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Felicity could hear some kind of clanking as she walked down the stairs into the basement of the foundry. She was in a rush to get the book back and get back to her apartment. Her and Jax were trying to have a movie night for a bit of distraction. She’d left him to decide what to watch while she went to the foundry to retrieve the book from Oliver.

She stopped short in the middle of the basement, her mouth hanging open and her head tilting to the side. Oliver was doing some kind of exercise on something that looked kind of like a ladder. He did a pull-up and then he brought the bar up and moved it to the next notch up. Did she mention he was doing it shirtless? It was quite possibly the most fascinating thing she’d ever seen. And she’d seen him do many a fascinating thing. She was mesmerised.

He spotted her and, in a fluid move that would make the most experienced gymnast envious, he dropped down to the floor and landed on his feet. The perfect dismount.

“Hey,” he greeted her.

Her gaze drifted over his torso and took in the scars, some she recognised, some were different. And he was sweaty. Good god. It was borderline obscene. She needed to get out of there.

Her eyes landed on one particular scar on his left shoulder. It looked like a bullet had ripped through his skin. It was the exact same spot where Belle had shot him in the first timeline.
“Did you get shot?” She blurted out without thinking and pointed awkwardly at the spot.

He looked taken aback by her question and touched the spot; “No. I had this mark before –“

He cut himself off abruptly and she could see him shutting down in that way he did when anyone asked anything about the island. He’d had the scar before the island. She couldn’t stop staring at it. That didn’t go by unnoticed. He leant sideways, snatched up his shirt and pulled it on, covering his body from prying eyes. Her prying eyes.

“I need the book back.” And could she just stop blurting things out without any preamble.

Oliver crossed his arms; “You can’t have it back.”

“What?”

“I confronted my mother with it and she threw it in the fire.”

She scoffed; “Yeah, because that’s not incredibly shady or anything.”

“Felicity,” he enunciated her name slowly, drawing it out; “I’ve already had this argument with Diggle, I don’t want to have it with you too.”

“Who’s arguing? We’re not arguing. Since your mother very conveniently turned it to ashes, can I take a peek at your copy?”

He narrowed his eyes and gave her this look that she didn’t entirely like but he went to where she guessed he kept his secret hood stuff and came back with the book that contained his hit list. He held it out for her. She took it from him, trying really hard to make sure her fingers didn’t brush his and flipped through it. She was conscious of him watching her, so when she saw her father’s name inked into the bottom of a page, she tried to keep her face impassive and handed the book back to him.

He looked tired. Exhausted really, like the weight of things was becoming too much. He liked slightly more tortured than he normally did. She really should just turn around and leave him to
his brooding but instead she slowly walked up to him and wrapped her arms around his waist. He looked like a man who was in desperate need of a hug. He tensed and didn’t return her hug, he also didn’t push her away, he just stood stock still and let her do her thing.

She pulled away from him and took a step back as she heard Tommy’s voice urgently calling Oliver’s name as he raced down the stairs. Oliver was watching her, a perplexed look on his face.

“Oliver;” Was that desperation in Tommy’s tone? Something had happened, something bad. “Vanch has Laurel.”

Tommy started pacing and babbling about how Detective Lance had bugged the phone Laurel had to get in contact with the vigilante. Vanch apparently had a mole in SCPD and had taken Laurel. Presumably because she had enlisted Oliver to help her put Vanch back in prison. It all sounded very complicated.

“He took her from her apartment, Oliver. She put up a fight apparently but he has her. We have to get her back.”

The two men shared a look between them that was full of manly understanding and she really didn’t want to get caught up in all this. Waving a hand in the air she said; “Well this is a love triangle I so don’t want to get involved in so I’m just going to mosey along.”

“Felicity,” Oliver looked like he wanted to say something profound but didn’t have the words.

She nodded and smiled; “We’ll talk later. You just go save your girl.”

“So, let me get this straight: your long-lost, not so deceased big sister paid you a visit and gave you a book that is identical to the one our man in green uses to take down baddies?” Jax asked as draped himself across her sofa.

“Yes.”
“And big sister grabbed at your throat and pushed you up against your bathroom counter – which by the way would be kind of kinky if you two weren’t related – and then green growly pointed an arrow at big sis, she gave you a little kiss and then slunk off into the night.”

“Yes.”

“Huh.”

Felicity sighed; “Yup.” She flopped down next to Jax on the sofa, handed him a bowl of ice-cream and they both stared at the board Jax had brought over. Who knew where he got it from but they’d put up all the information they had so far. There was a photo each of her father, Nate and Katerina and then she’d pinned up the information from the files Oliver had obtained for her. Unfortunately, the file didn’t really give her much information that she didn’t already know.

“Katerina and Daddy dearest;” Jax stated; “say that Nate can’t be trusted. Nate says Daddy can’t be trusted. Does Nate know about Katerina?”

“I have no idea.”

“Babydoll, your family is all kinds of fucked up.”

“Yup.”

“Where’s the book now?”

“He took it.”

“Might want to get that back, sweetness.”

She sighed again; “Can’t. It’s been destroyed.” At Jax’s look, she added; “He didn’t destroy it.”

“And where is our favourite vigilante? Shouldn’t you two be comparing notes about that little book and what it all means?”
Another sigh from Felicity as she took a bite of ice-cream and let it melt in her mouth; “He’s off saving Miss Laurel Lance from whatever trouble she’s gotten herself into while she’s fighting the good fight.”

Jax pointed his spoon at her; “I’m sensing a little bitterness there. Don’t we like sharing the vigilante? Felicity, we must play well with others and share our toys.”

She ignored Jax’s teasing and focused on the board; “The question is how does this all fit together? And who the hell is Nina Bennett and what does she have to do with everything?”

“That’s not my big question.”

Felicity sighed, she knew she was going to regret asking; “What’s your big question?”

He grinned and leaned in closer so they were nose to nose; “I want to know why you haven’t pushed Mister Broody up against the nearest available surface and had your wicked way with him?”

“My father said Nina was one of his girls and Nate had a thing for her and had gotten her a job at Queen Consolidated.”

Jax sighed dramatically and flopped back against the sofa. “It must not have ended well between Miss Nina and Nate because otherwise, where is she? If things were good then they’d be shacked up in a little cottage on the coast.”

Felicity was missing something; she knew she was but she just couldn’t pinpoint what. She needed more information. Things just weren’t adding up right. And she hadn’t seen Nate for awhile, not since their prison visit, so what was he doing? And then there was Katerina who broke into her apartment, where had she been all these years? She just wished she knew everyone’s end goal. Jax was right, her family was far too complicated. While she considered all this, Jax got up, pushed the board aside and rifled through her DVD collection. Yes, she had a DVD collection, she liked DVDs they always had special features and director’s commentary that you just didn’t get on Netflix. She was a nerd in every sense of the word. Jax chose a movie and put it into the DVD player and then froze, his brows pulling together, it was his ‘I sense something’ face.

“Our boy is here.” He said as he flopped down beside her. And a second later, Oliver was
wandering into her living room. Even with his hood up, Felicity could still sense the exhaustion he was carrying around.

Without saying a word, she slid closer to Jax, pressing into his side, making space on the sofa for Oliver. He moved forward, hesitated for a moment then stiffly sat down. Picking up the remote, Jax pressed play on the movie. He’d chosen Notting Hill, which in her humble opinion was one of the greatest movies ever made.

She looked at Oliver who had his bow lying across his lap, she rolled her eyes, could he be anymore awkward? She grabbed the bow and placed it on her coffee table. Jax pushed her back against the back of the sofa and leaned forward to look around her at Oliver.

“So, did you save your girl?” Jax asked. There was beat and then Oliver’s modulated voice simply stated; “She’s not my girl.”

Jax gave a slow smile and studied Oliver’s hooded figure; “No, she’s really not, is she?”

“Jax;” Felicity whined a little, elbowing him; “We’re missing out on all the goodness that is Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts.”

Jax huffed and sat back. Felicity turned her head looked at Jax and then at Oliver and smiled at the ridiculousness of the situation. A vampire, witch and vigilante were having a movie night. She held out her bowl of ice-cream to Oliver who gave an imperceptible little shake of his head, so she put the bowl on the coffee table.

They watched the movie, with Jax and Felicity quoting their favourite lines along with the characters, Jax and Felicity bickering about their favourite parts and Oliver staying silent. As the movie went on, she felt herself getting sleepier, her eyes getting heavier but she refused to go to bed before the movie ended. She pressed her head against Oliver’s bicep and closed her eyes and breathed in the smell of leather.

Felicity finished her work, packed up her workstation then made her way up to the executive floor where they kept all the employee files. She slipped into the file room and went to the filing cabinet with the employee files – both past and present. She rifled through the ‘B’s until she found one labelled Nina Bennett. Whipping open the file, she took out her phone and took photos of each
of the pages and then shoved the file back into the cabinet. She was about to sneak back out when a thought occurred to her. She went over to the ‘S’ cabinet and flicked through the files until she came to Smoak, Nate. She repeated the process of taking photos of the file and then snuck out of the room.

She was walking down the hall when she heard the sound of a window breaking as something – or someone – crashed through it and the shattered pieces hit the marble flooring.

She froze when she heard; “Moira Queen, you have failed this city,” in Oliver’s booming, vigilante voice.

He was confronting his mother. Of course, he was.

She tip-toed down the hallway toward the CEO’s office and got there just in time to see Moria pulling a gun on her son. She rushed into the room, flung her hands up and froze the scene. The bullet was suspended in mid-air, inches away from hitting Oliver.

Clearly, confronting his mother was a fabulous idea.

She walked over to Oliver, her shoes crunching on the glass on the floor as she went. She hoped no shards got caught in her shoes, she really liked these shoes. They were happy with their smiley little pandas. She twisted a hand in front of Oliver, unfreezing just him, tilting her head she gave him an innocent little look.

It took Oliver a moment to get with the program. He looked at her, at the bullet in mid-air, at his mother and then back to her. He opened his mouth but she shook her head and cut him; “Just go, Oliver. Get out before security come up here.”

He snapped his mouth shut, glowered at her, then strode over to the window jumping out of it. Just ridiculous.

She got the hell out of there as fast as possible, waving her hand to unfreeze the scene as she went. She got into the elevator, pushing the doors closed button frantically. The doors slide shut just as security were running into Moira’s office. Oliver’s mother had just tried to shoot him. And Jax called her family messed up.
She exited the elevator and made her way to the now empty parking building. Her little mini looked lonely sitting in the corner.

She yelped as her back suddenly made contact with a very cold concrete wall. That hurt a little, thank you very much. A gloved hand slapped the wall on either side of her head caging her in and a very intense Oliver glared down at her. She tilted her head a little to look up at him. She should’ve worn heels, she felt like her shorter stature gave him an advantage over her, especially when he loomed over her.

“What were you doing in there, Felicity?” He ground out, sounding very much like he had a few moments ago when he’d told his mother she had failed the city. And wow, it was scary. And kind of hot.

Not the point. And definitely not the thought she should be going with. So, instead she went with exasperation and sarcasm; “You’re so welcome.”

“I should be thanking you? For what? Getting in my way?”

Holy hell, he was insufferable.

“No, for stopping a bullet from hitting you at full speed.”

“I didn’t need your help.”

“Really,” she gave him a look like she thought he might not be quite right in the head; “Because it kind of looked like you did. If I hadn’t of stopped that bullet, you’d be in my backseat right and I’d be trying to dig it out with a pair of tweezers.”

“I wouldn’t fit in your back seat.”

“We’d make it work.”

He dipped his head and moved his face closer to hers and she could almost see his eyes under the hood. His expression was closed off and she got the feeling they wouldn’t be sharing a bowl of
ice-cream tonight.

“Don’t get in my way again.”

When exactly had she been in his way? He moved as if to push away from the wall and her and she reached out and wrapped her hand around the strap of his quiver keeping him in place. “Oliver, your mother shot at you. I couldn’t let that happen. I couldn’t let you get another scar if I could prevent it.”

“She was just defending herself.”

“She shot at you.”

“She begged for her life on behalf of me and Thea. I’ve threatened a lot of criminals and not one of them brought up their children.”

“So what? She brought up her kids, big whoop. Lots of shady people have kids, doesn’t stop them from being super shady and I hate to point it out to you, Oliver but your mother has had two husbands go missing in the space of five years. That doesn’t exactly scream innocence.”

“That doesn’t mean,” he said through clenched teeth; “that she’s involved.”

It didn’t mean she wasn’t either. Poor little Oliver wanted to believe the best of his mother but Felicity knew better than anyone that parents often disappointed their children. She tugged his quiver and pulled him closer; “All I’m saying is that when it comes to your family, you’ve got tunnel vision.”

“And you don’t?”

“Excuse me?”

He took her chin in one gloved hand and looked her dead in the eye; “You’re so obsessed with finding the truth about your family’s murders that you can’t even see that you could be using your abilities to help me save this city.”
“Let me go,” she whispered. For once, she didn’t want him to touch her. He tightened his grip on her chin.

“It’s been fifteen years, Felicity, maybe it’s time to let it go. Move on.” He was such a hypocrite. He’d never let it go if it were him. “You’re the one with tunnel vision, Felicity, not me.”

“Let go of me.” She said it louder this time and punctuated it with a shove against his chest. He didn’t even so much as sway. Bastard. “Oliver, let me go.” She was getting a little desperate now. She wanted to get away from him.

He leaned in further and his lips brushed the shell of her ear as he whispered; “Make me.”

She squeezed her eyes shut and tried to get her heart to stop pounding. He was not good for her health. She heard footsteps approaching, felt the warmth of Oliver’s body drift away from her and when she opened her eyes, he was long gone.

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Hours later, Felicity was sitting on her kitchen island sipping at a glass of wine and staring at her board. She’d yet to look at the photos of the files on her phone, she wanted to print them out and then pin them to the board.

She kind of wanted to put a teeny tiny hex on Oliver for being such a douche canoe. How could he say that she should just let it go? She thought if there was anyone who could relate it would be Oliver Queen. And he just kept messing with her head.

She wished she’d used her telekinesis and shoved him into the opposite wall in the parking building. She hadn’t thought of that because he distracted her with his proximity and his warmth and just his general existence. It was superbly unfair.

She’d pinned up photos of each of her siblings onto the board and wished they were there. She wished Katerina would visit her again. She’d even settle for a visit from Nate. Either would do, just so she could feel, even for a moment that she wasn’t all alone in this world. When she was younger, and in the foster system and felt like there was no one who would love her, she’d pull out her photos of her siblings and line them all up and talk to them as if they could still hear her.
“Go away, Oliver.” She called out into the direction of her bedroom.

He moved into the muted light of the living room and she rolled her eyes, he still had the hood up. “Put the hood down. There’s no one here to hide your identity from.”

Slowly, he pushed the hood back and aimed those piercing eyes right at her. It was truly unfair when he looked at her like that: all soft and tortured, his paint around his eyes all smudged and adding to the overall effect.

“I didn’t mean what I said;” It was even more unfair when he spoke to her like that – voice soft, apologetic, like a caress. She bet he used that voice on all the girls.

She tilted her head, her hair falling over one shoulder; “Which part? The part where you said I should just let it go? That it’s been fifteen years and implied that I won’t ever find out who killed them so I should just move on? Or the part where you made it sound like your little mission to save the city is so much more important and that I should just jump on your bandwagon?”

She took a small amount of pleasure in the way he visibly winced with each pointed question she aimed his way.

“I didn’t mean it;” he repeated as he moved further into the room. “I was –“

“A dick?” She interjected.

“Hopped up on adrenaline.” He finished.

“Mmmm,” she hummed as he came to stand right in front of her, his leather clad legs brushing her bare knees. “Of course, you were.”

“Felicity,” he started, stepping forward between her legs, her legs falling open slightly to accommodate him; “I’m sorry.”
Letting him get this close to her was a bad, bad, bad idea and would only lead to heartache for her. She knew she felt more for him than he felt for her. She knew he didn’t love her. She knew he’d never choose her. But she was addicted to him – every version of him – and she couldn’t push him away, not when it really counted.

“You know, Oliver, I keep doing these things to help you and you keep being an ungrateful jerk.”

His hand landed on her waist and when exactly did he lose the gloves? His bare fingers landed on the exposed skin where her t-shirt and shorts didn’t quite meet and she sucked in a breath, she wasn’t prepared for skin on skin action. And did she mention that she couldn’t think properly when he touched her?

“I know. Felicity,” his thumb lightly brushed circles into her skin; “Thank you.”

And that right there is how he always got his way. She bet that was the move he used on all the girls and was how he got them to fall at his feet and vow to do his bidding and follow him anywhere.

She was in so, so much trouble. There were no words to describe how much trouble she was in.

He cupped her cheek in his free hand and leaned in closer and she was so sure he was going to kiss her. There was no way she was going to stop him or push him away, she didn’t want to be rude. She draped an arm over his shoulder and the anticipation was literally killing her. Her eyes fluttered shut and she felt his breath on her lips and then –

Then she felt suddenly, ridiculously cold. Her eyes flew open and he’d backed up about five paces, pulled up his hood and it wasn’t until her front door opened and Jax strolled in that she realised why. Oliver had heard the key turning in her lock. She’d been too distract by him to hear it. She felt her skin flush and bit her lower lip and Jax came to a screeching halt in the middle of the room, looked at Oliver where he was standing clenching his fists and then to her. Jax smirked at her; “Did I interrupt something, sweetness?”

She licked her lips; “Nope. Not at all.” She avoided looking at Oliver and tried to take a few deep breaths in the hopes it would make the blush she knew she was sporting disappear.

“Uh huh,” Jax drawled, looking positively ecstatic; “You sure? Because I smell sex and candy.” And he started singing the song. “Yeah, there she was like double cherry pie.”
Could this get any more mortifying?

Felicity swallowed and attempted to think of something to say, what came out was; “Ice-cream!”

Jax looked like he was trying extremely hard not to laugh at her and Oliver looked….well he just looked broody. But what was new?

She gave Jax a pleading look and he seemingly took pity on her because he wandered over to her board and took in what she’d added; “So, how’s our creepy murder board going?”

“It’s…it’s not a murder board;” she protested a little feebily. Jax shot her a look and she threw her hands up in surrender; “Fine, it’s a murder board, whatever.”

Jax frowned and stepped away from the board, looking at her with concern; “You ok, babydoll?”

“Sure. I’m fine.”

“Really? Is something going on with you tonight? Besides whatever the hell I walked in on between you and Mister Broody.” He gave Oliver a slow appraising look; “And did you get new leather pants? Because I’ve got to say the way they fit you is just – “

“Jax,” she interrupted tiredly. “The point?”

“Right.” He tore his gaze from Oliver and looked her over; “The point is you’ve got that look you had that time when I found you drinking alone in the cemetery wearing your graduation robes and clutching your degree for dear life. So, my melancholy baby, what’s up?”

“Nothing. I’m fine. Really, Jax.”

Jax looked unconvinced. He dragged one of her bar stools out from the kitchen island, gave Oliver a nudge in the chest; “Sit down. We all know you’re amazing to look at, we don’t need you to loom impressively.”
Reluctantly, Oliver sat and Jax pulled out another bar stool out for himself and plopped down on it. She looked down at them both from her perch on the kitchen island. She wanted to go to bed but apparently she was now playing reluctant host.

“What were they like?” Jax asked gently.

“What?”

“Your siblings, baby, what were they like?”

Shaking her head, she jumped off the island and almost lost her balance in her haste but Oliver reached out a hand and steadied her. She shook his hand off her arm and rounded the kitchen island into the kitchen. She dropped her glass into the sink and when she turned around, Jax was right in front of her and she knew he’d used his vampire speed. He looked down at her and shook his head; “Don’t do that, don’t avoid the question.”

“Why, Jax, why do you want to know what they were like?”

“Because, we never talk about them. We talk about their deaths but never their lives.”

“What’s the point? They’re dead. They’re not coming back. So, what does it matter?”

“It matters because you miss them.”

“Of course I miss them!” She shouted and tears fell from her eyes and she swiped them away with the back of her hand, she was conscious of Oliver watching and she didn’t want to have yet another breakdown in front of him. But the tears came as fast as she wiped them away. “But I was eight. I don’t remember that much. And I grew up in the foster system, Jax. I had a couple of good homes but the majority were awful. I was a miserable teenager. You met me.”

“Felicity.” Jax whispered and she knew he was getting more than he asked for.

“And when I was that miserable, remembering them, remembering how happy I’d been when they were here just hurt more.” She pressed a hand to her chest in an attempt to push back the sob she
knew was coming; “It just hurts, Jax. I miss them so much.”

Jax took her hand away from her chest and held it between both his hands; “I know you do, baby.”

“And the ones that are here aren’t the way I remember.” Her gaze flitted to Oliver; “they both have their own agendas and I don’t know if they want to help or hurt me and I’m just so alone.”

Jax’s expression was almost as anguished as she felt and he dropped her hand and cupped her face in both of his; “You are not alone, Felicity, you have me and so long as I live that will never change.” He wiped her tears away and pressed a kiss to her forehead; “And talking about them keeps them alive in your heart. So, tell me about them.”

She licked her lips, which tasted salty from her tears, sniffled, wiped her face, pulled away from Jax and went to go to the board. Oliver grabbed her hand and stopped her, he ran his thumb over her pulse and she thought it was his version of comfort. She pulled her hand from his grasp, went to the board, looked over the photos of her siblings and thought about who to start with. She unpinned a photo, walked back over to her audience – Jax was back on his bar stool – and lifted herself back up onto the kitchen island. She held the photo up for Jax and Oliver to see. “This is Tatiana,” She began and she spent the evening telling them every little detail she could remember about her siblings.
How to break a heart

Chapter Summary

This one has all the emotions. Oliver does something stupid. Felicity cries.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

The music was too loud and pounding and she felt uncomfortable because she didn’t really know anyone there. And there were just too many people jumping and grinding and she felt like her outfit was all wrong. She’d thought she looked classy in her red skater dress and matching heels and with her blonde hair curled and loose but compared to the ever-polished Laurel Lance with her shiny dress, impeccable makeup and intricate bun, Felicity felt rather plain Jane.

But when you get not one, but two invitations to a Club opening, it would be rude to not make an appearance. And Thea was there. Looking all grown up and so much like Belle that it made her heart hurt.

Felicity leaned against the bar, as far away from the dance floor as possible, and sipped on her vodka and soda and wondered how long she had to stay. A low whistle came from beside her; she turned and saw Tommy Merlyn leaning against the bar beside her.

“Looking good, Miss Smoak.”

She laughed and did a little curtsey; “Why thank you, Mister Merlyn.”

He chuckled; “Are you having fun?”

She crinkled her nose; “Not really. It’s not really my scene.” She leaned in and said conspiratorially; “I'm biding my time until it’s acceptable for me to leave.”
“Ah,” he grinned; “I see. Have you seen Oliver, yet?”

She shook her head; “No. He’s been busy with his family.”

“I haven’t seen my lady love either. I thought maybe she’d want to dance, talk etc but she’s been following Oliver around all night. He hasn’t even noticed.”

“I’m sorry, Tommy.”

Tommy shrugged in a ‘eh, what can you do’ kind of way and continued smiling at her; “What do you say, want to dance?”

Laughing, she shook her head; “Not at all. I can’t dance to this music.”

He nudged her; “Oh come on, it’s just a beat. We can make up – “ he cut off and his expression turned sober as he looked at something behind her.

“What?” She turned and the smile slid from her face and she knew exactly how Tommy was feeling. She’d turned just in time to witness Laurel and Oliver kiss. They looked perfect together. She could admit that. Their eyes were closed like they were oblivious to the noise around them. Oliver was holding onto the back of Laurel’s head gently and Laurel had a hand on Oliver’s neck. They looked like two lovers who were each other’s whole world. They looked like they’d been waiting for a kiss like this for years. And Oliver literally had.

Felicity blinked back tears and turned to Tommy with a smile but his face was a mask of sympathy for her. She wished she wasn’t so transparent, wished she could keep her emotions in check.

Tommy reached out to her but she dodged his hand; “It’s fine. I’m just going to go to the bathroom.”

As she walked down the hallway to the bathroom, she wondered how many ways there were to break a heart. Hers must just about be completely destroyed. She rushed into the bathroom and into a stall, slamming the door and fumbling the lock, she closed the toilet seat and sat down. Sobs wracked her body as she cried. She felt like such an idiot. Oliver had tried to kiss her, would have kissed her if Jax hadn’t of interrupted. Did he mean it? Probably not. Was he doing it as a manipulation tactic because she’d been annoyed with him? Had he been trying to get her back on side? She cried until the sobs turned into hiccups and she knew her makeup was completely ruined. She ripped off some toilet paper, blew her nose and opened the stall door.
Katerina was leaning against the counter watching her. She uncrossed her arms; “I came in here to have a little chat with my sister but I walk in and she’s sobbing in a bathroom stall. The chat I planned can wait. Who hurt you, Felicity?”

Felicity didn’t have the energy for this. She went over to the hand towel dispenser and pulled a few sheets out and folded one up. Her hand shook as she turned on the facet. Katerina gently took the paper towels from her, ran one under the facet and grasped Felicity’s face in her hand and started to wipe the area under Felicity’s eyes.

“Was it the man you were talking to at the bar?”

“No,” Felicity whispered; “We’re friends. We were just talking.”

“Tell me who hurt you.”

She tried to shake her head but Katerina’s grip on her face was too firm; “No one hurt me, Kat.”

“You’re crying, Felicity.”

“I just made a mistake.”

Katerina released her face and dropped the paper towels into the trash; “You were such a happy child, Felicity,” she said as she ran a thumb under Felicity’s eyes; “I hate to see you so sad.”

Felicity pushed Katerina’s hand away from her face; “I’m fine. I just want to go home.”

Katerina studied her for a moment then nodded and pressed a kiss to Felicity’s cheek; “Ok, I’ll see you then. Don’t be sad baby sister.”

Felicity watched Katerina exit the bathroom and let out a sigh, having Katerina’s concern and sisterly kindness just made her hurt more. As soon as the door shut, Felicity grasped the counter and started to cry all over again.
Oliver grabbed a beer and went outside to Verdant’s loading dock where Tommy was sitting. Oliver lowered himself onto the dock beside him; “Well, I think the opening is going well.”

Tommy sighed and shot Oliver a sideways glance; “Ollie, I say this as your best friend but you are an idiot.”

Oliver frowned; “What?”

“I saw you kiss Laurel.”

Oliver let out a breath; “Tommy, she kissed me. She’s feeling vulnerable with her Mom being here and the Sara stuff. It was a reaction. A reflex to kiss her back.”

Tommy laughed bitterly; “Now I think you’re even more of an idiot.”

Confused, Oliver opened his beer and took a sip; “I’m not following, Tommy.”

“You really aren’t, are you? Oliver, Laurel can’t decide if she’s in love with you or me and I’m letting her sort through her feelings. I’m a big boy, I can deal with it either way.”

“I’m sensing a but coming.”

Tommy looked out at the city’s horizon and seemed to be choosing his words carefully; “Felicity saw you kiss Laurel. And I’ve honestly never seen a woman more devastated by something you’ve done than the way Felicity looked in that moment. Not even Laurel when she found out you’d cheated on her with Sara.”

Oliver clenched and flexed his hand where it lay against his thigh. He didn’t want to hurt Felicity. He liked Felicity. They were – well, he didn’t know what they were.

Tommy turned a little and looked at Oliver steadily; “Ollie, Felicity Smoak is one hundred percent
in love with you.”

“What?” He knew she felt something. Maybe a crush. Attraction. Flirtation. But love?

“I know it. And you probably know it deep down. Laurel certainly knows it. And Laurel has decided that you’re her territory. She knew Felicity was watching when she planted that kiss on you.”

No. Laurel was a lot of things but she wasn’t that vindictive.

“Look, Ollie, I know you don’t want to hurt Felicity but you are. If Laurel is the great love of your life, then cool. I’ll step aside, I’ll wish you both well. But if you’re done with Laurel, then be done with her. You’ve got to figure it out and until you do, you’ve got to stop stringing Felicity along.”

“I’m not stringing her along.”

Tommy sighed; “Yeah, man, you are. Maybe not intentionally, maybe you’re not even aware you’re doing it but you are. You’ve got to cut her loose, Oliver and make it a clean cut, let her move on, let her get over what she feels for you and let her find someone who can give her their whole heart.”

Tommy stood up and clapped Oliver on the shoulder and then left him to it. Oliver drank his beer and thought about that kiss with Laurel. It had been familiar, comfortable and everything he’d imagined it would be while I’d been on the island. Except…Laurel wasn’t the same and neither was he. Whenever they were together all they seemed to do was argue.

Getting up, he went down to the basement and got suited up. He had to go see a girl.

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Oliver climbed the fire escape and crawled through the window; he could hear music coming from the living room. Classic rock. Bon Jovi. He strode into the living room and saw Jax trying to wrestle a bottle of whiskey away from Felicity.

Felicity. She was crying and singing along to the song. Her hair was a mess, she’d kicked her heels off and her makeup had been all cried away. She looked impossibly young, broken, tiny and beautiful.
Jax’s head turned in his direction. He narrowed his eyes and strode over to Oliver; “You need to go.”

“Is she drunk?”

Jax laughed bitterly; “Oh the drunk ship has sailed. We’ve moved on to totally sloshed.”

“Jaxy Jax,” they both turned to Felicity who had half sat, half fallen onto the sofa and was looking at Oliver with teary, bloodshot, painfully anguished eyes; “Let him stay. It’s not like he hasn’t seen me cry before. Most of the time it’s because of him anyway.”

Jax went over to her and took the bottle from her, she let it go, her unfocused gaze on Oliver; “Jax, let him have some whiskey! He just got back together with the love of his life. Laurel Lance. Laurel Lance. Laurel Lance;” She giggled sadly; “Wow, that’s funny to say. Anywho, he got his lady love back. Yay! It’s my fault really, I made him promise to try to love her.”

“Babydoll, why don’t we get you to bed?”

Felicity swatted him away; “They were kissing. I had myself a nice little cry in the bathroom. Kat was there, she wiped my face for me. That part was nice. I liked feeling like there was still someone who loved me.”

She sat up cross-legged on the sofa and propped her elbow on her knee and rested her chin in her hand. She smiled even as tears slid down her face; “You know sometimes I wished that I’d died with them because then I wouldn’t hurt all the time.”

Jax sat on the coffee table and looked at her sadly. She reached out and clumsily put a hand to his cheek; “But I’ve still got my Jax who will dance with me and sing with me and let me cry and protect me from my nightmares. Don’t you wish it had just stayed you and me?”

“Sometimes,” Jax whispered.

Felicity tipped forward and clutched the front of Jax’s shirt; “It could be again. You could compel me. Make me forget I ever met him. You could even make me forget my family.”
He could take her memories away? Oliver watched as Jax shook his head; “You don’t want that, sweetness.”

Felicity nodded; “I just want it to stop hurting. It always hurts, Jax. Make it go away, please.”

Oliver’s eyes fell shut as her voice broke on the last word. It was that moment that made him make a decision. Clenching his jaw, he walked closer to the two friends. Felicity turned her gaze onto him and he nearly reeled back because she was looking at him as if he were the source for all of her pain. Or that he’d had the power to take it all away but because he’d fucked it up, he just added to it.

“You’re so different but exactly the same.” He had no idea what the hell she was talking about but it must have made sense in her alcohol-soaked mind.

Jax stood up; “It’s your turn, big guy, try to get her to calm down so I can get some water into her and put her to bed.”

Oliver sat down on the coffee table that Jax had just vacated. He tilted his head and took Felicity in; she was beautiful even in her pain.

“Please, please don’t look at me like that. Like I’m damaged. It’s not fair, especially considering you’re one of the people who damaged me.”

He wanted to ask her how exactly he had damaged her. Wanted to ask what he could do to fix it. Instead he leaned forward and took her face in his hands, her tears spilled onto his thumbs; “Tommy says I should stay away from you.”

“Because you got back together with gorgeous Laurel.” She said, biting her lip.

“Because I keep hurting you without meaning to.” He let out a breath; “And I don’t want to do that.”

She nodded and brought her hands up and wrapped them around his wrists. He didn’t know if it was because she wanted to pull his hands from her face or keep them there.
“Tommy says I should stay away from you,” he repeated; “and that means no sitting on roof tops and watching you. No inviting you to the club. No coming to you with vigilante problems. Nothing.”

“So, you’ve come to say goodbye.”

“Yes,” he whispered.

She swallowed and nodded; “Ok.”

He nodded.

He didn’t move his hands from her face and she didn’t pull them away. They sat and watched each other.

“You know,” she started with a sniffle, “if you’re going to say goodbye to me, you actually have to say goodbye and leave.”

She was right. But still he hesitated. She tried to give him a smile but all that achieved was to make him feel like an unbelievable bastard. She was trying to be brave. Why did she have to be brave all the time?

“Don’t worry about me. I’ll be ok. And if I’m not, Jax will make me forget that I ever met you. Well, this version of you.”

That didn’t make him feel better at all.

He slowly pulled his hands from her face and she dropped her hands from his wrists. “Goodbye, Felicity.”

“Goodbye,” she whispered.
He picked up her hand and pressed a kiss to her palm before he stood abruptly and went to her bedroom without looking back once. Jax was lingering in her bedroom doorway and Oliver stopped beside him and gave him a nod. Jax nodded back and said softly; “I’ve got her.”

Oliver strode over to the window and crawled out and that’s when Felicity’s sobbing started. He closed her eyes and listened to her for a minute, steeled himself, opened his eyes and jumped off the fire escape.
Stalker like behaviour

Chapter Summary

Oliver acts a little stalkerish and douchey. Felicity and Tommy talk. Katerina makes an appearance.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: Arrow, DC and The CW does not belong to me.

Thank you to everyone who has commented on this story, I read every one. :) . There's a little Laurel/Oliver stuff in this chapter, nothing graphic because I just can't bring myself to write detailed, intimate scenes between those two :) .

Oliver was a jerk. He knew it. He’d been a jerk before the island, now he was just a damaged jerk. Even he was self-aware enough to realise what he’d done the night before was a real douche move.

He’d felt like absolute shit after leaving Felicity’s apartment. He’d driven around and had contemplated going back to see her. Instead he’d gone back to the foundry and changed out of the hood and worked out, pushing his body until it ached. He went up and down the salmon ladder over and over again until his arms couldn’t take it anymore. He shot all the tennis balls he possessed against the wall. He’d sparred with Diggle, taking his anger at himself out on the other man.

He kept seeing Felicity’s tearstained, devastated face in his mind and it made him want to hit something or put arrows into someone. He wanted to punish someone for making her hurt.

When physical exertion didn’t numb what he was feeling, he turned to drink, which just made him feel worse. But he didn’t want to feel good so that worked.

In the wee hours of the morning, he’d landed on Laurel’s doorstep, banging his fist against the door and probably pissing off all her neighbours. He didn’t give a shit. Laurel pulled the door open, all sleep mused and opened her mouth to say something. Probably berate him. He stepped forward, kicked the door shut, grabbed her and shoved her up against the door, his mouth slanting over hers. It wasn’t romantic. It wasn’t delicate. It was rough and clumsy. She clutched at him,
trying to get closer, his fingers dug into her flesh not caring if he was leaving marks. With no finesse whatsoever, they had sex up against the door. And it meant absolutely nothing to him. It wasn’t about romance or passion or love, it was just about release. It was just shy of being hate sex.

He didn’t think about Felicity during a second of it. She didn’t belong caught up in a moment between him and another woman.

In the morning, he slipped out of Laurel’s bed and snuck out of Laurel’s apartment in a move that was pure ‘Ollie’.

He was a jerk and he knew it.

He sat in the chair in the foundry basement and flicked through his father’s book not really seeing the names, just idly flicking through. He heard steps on the stairs and figured it was just Diggle so didn’t look up.

“Oliver, this will hurt me more than it will hurt you, buddy but I need you to stand up.” Tommy said from somewhere above him. Slowly, Oliver rose to his feet. He stood and waited for what was coming. Tommy’s fist connected with Oliver’s face and Oliver clenched his own fists and worked his jaw.

“That was for sleeping with Laurel.” Tommy told him.

“I know you’re mad.”

Tommy shook his head; “I’m not mad. Not really. Laurel will eventually realise that you are not the one for her. I just have to ride it out until she does.”

“It won’t happen again.”

Tommy gave him a sceptical look. He sat down in the chair Oliver had vacated and started spinning in it. “How did it go with Felicity?”
“Felicity and I won’t be seeing each other in any capacity again.”

Tommy brought the chair to an abrupt stop, looked at Oliver and promptly burst out laughing. “Yeah, buddy, good luck with that.”

Felicity spent day one in bed. Her head was hungover. Her heart was also hungover. She had a headache that she attributed to both the alcohol she’d consumed and the tears she’d shed. Day two she relocated to the sofa and watched soap operas and screamed at the tv when the characters wouldn’t figure out that the guy they loved would never love them back. Day three – or rather night three – Jax sat beside her on the sofa and made her eat the pizza he’d brought over. She didn’t miss the concerned looks he gave her.

Day four she was planning to get dressed, she really truly was but it just seemed like too much effort. She sat on the end of her bed and stared into her open closet. She needed to get dressed, she knew she did. She knew she should get in the shower, wash her hair, let the hot water soothe her but she just didn’t have the energy.

Someone was knocking at her door. Slowly, she got up and walked into her living room wondering if she could just pretend that she wasn’t home. The incessant knocking continued. Whoever it was clearly wouldn’t just go away and leave her to her misery.

She pulled the door open and glared at her visitor; “What do you want?”

“Hello, to you too, Miss Smoak.” Tommy Merlyn grinned at her; “Don’t you just look delightful?”

He pushed passed her into her apartment; “I hate to break it to you but the shut-in look is soooo last season.”

Wearily, Felicity shut the door and followed him into her bedroom, where he had wandered without invitation. He was rifling through her closet. She sat on her bed and he threw a pair of jeans at her and a black Victorian inspired top she hadn’t worn since her goth days but still loved.

“Get dressed, we’re going out,” he considered her and shook his head; “Actually, first you shower then we’ll go.” He pulled her up and shooed her into the bathroom.
When she came out dressed in the outfit Tommy had chosen and her hair wet and hanging limply down her back, Tommy was lounging on her bed, hands behind his head and one leg crossed over the other. When he saw her, he sat up, clapped his hands together and said; “Right let’s go.”

With absolutely no enthusiasm whatsoever, she followed him out of her apartment, into the elevator, out of the building and down the street to the Big Belly Burger. He held the door open for her and led her to a booth. Felicity settled into the plush seating and waited for him to do the same.

“Tommy, what are you doing?”

He raised his brows; “What a guy can’t just take one of his favourite girls out for lunch?”

He gave her a wink and handed her a menu. The waitress came and took their order and they were silent while they waited for their food to come. Felicity picked at her fries and it was at that point that she finally got up the courage to ask; “Oliver and Laurel are together now, aren’t they?”

Tommy gave her a kind look and shrugged; “They’re not together but they’re not not together.”

“How are you so ok about it?”

Another shrug; “Oliver and Laurel have been in my life for a long time. I want them to both be happy and if it’s with each other, great. Does it hurt that I’m in love with Laurel and she can’t decide how she feels about me? Absolutely, but I need them both in my life no matter what capacity.”

“How very well adjusted of you.”

“The way I see it, Laurel and Oliver’s relationship was always destined to crash and burn. It just never got the chance to because of Oliver’s five year trip to a deserted island. I figure it’s just got to run it’s natural course. They just need to get each other out of their systems.”

“Again, that’s very well adjusted of you.”
She picked up her burger and took a large bite. She was hungrier than she thought. She chewed as he watched her thoughtfully; “Are you ok, Felicity? Because you seem not ok.”

She put her burger down and wiped her mouth; “Is that because the first time you met me, I was crying in Laurel’s hallway and couldn’t get up?”

“Well, yeah.”

“It’s not all about Oliver.” She blurted and he cocked a brow like maybe he didn’t believe her. She sighed; “You know I was in the foster system, right?”

“Yeah.”

“My mom left the family when I was three and my Dad got arrested about a year after my siblings were killed. My oldest brother and sister both just kind of disappeared and I went into the foster system.”

“That must have been difficult.”

What she liked most about Tommy Merlyn was that he never looked at her like he thought she was broken or like he pitied her, he looked at her with kindness and understanding.

“It was,” she agreed; “But Nate, my brother and Katerina, my sister have recently reappeared in my life. I’ve seen Nate a few times over the years but I hadn’t seen Katerina in fifteen years. Not until she turned up at my apartment.”

Ok, so she was glossing over the more sinister aspects of her relationship with her brother and sister but that was the pertinent information.

“Wow. That’s…”

“Overwhelming?” She finished for him.
“I was going to go with heavy but overwhelming works too.” He smiled kindly and she returned it with a small smile of her own, the first real one she’d given anyone in days. “Want to know what I think?”

“I think you’re going to tell me no matter what I say.”

“Cheeky. I think maybe you can get to know your brother and sister now but on your own terms.”

She nodded. That was if they wanted to do her no harm. “Maybe.”

He stole a few fries off her plate and she scrunched up her face as he shoved them all into his mouth at once. “That,” she said, pointing at his face; “Is such an attractive look.”

He gave a lazy shrug; “What can I say? I just can’t turn it off.”

Felicity threw a fry at him and smiled fondly; “You know what I think?”

“No, what?”

“I think,” she said in all seriously; “That you can do so much better than Laurel Lance.”

He gave her a nod in acknowledgement and continued to devour his food. They ate and bantered back and forth and bickered about who should pay the bill. She argued they should split it since this was definitely not a date. He fired back that he’d pay and she could get the next one.

Tommy walked her back to her apartment and when they were at her door, he pointed a stern finger at her and said; “No getting back into your pjs. The time for wallowing is over.”

She made him no promises. He gave her one last smile and went to walk away but stopped and turned back to her; “Just so you know, Oliver isn’t actually in love with Laurel. He just thinks he should be.”
He gave her a little wave. She went into her apartment and put her pjs back on, grabbed a pint of ice cream from her freezer and sat on her sofa.

“Felicity,” someone was whispering her name. “Felicity.”

Felicity blinked her eyes open and stared into the face of Katerina. She must have fallen asleep on the sofa. Katerina gave her a small smile. Felicity really needed to change the locks on her window….or move. Felicity sat up and watch her sister watch her with her head tilted. Katerina’s long, dark hair was curled, she was wearing all black again – black skinny jeans, black corset and black denim jacket.

“Hello, sis.”

“What are you doing here?” Felicity’s voice was hoarse from sleep and she cleared her throat trying to get some semblance of normal back.

“I thought I’d check up on you. I figured out that you were crying because of boy problems so here I am.” Katerina held her arms out and grinned. Felicity sighed. Did Katerina seriously think she could just skip back into Felicity’s life and it would be just like it had been when Felicity was eight?

“I’m fine, Kat.”

Katerina ignored her; “What kind of big sister would I be if I didn’t help my sister get over her heartbreak? I’ve guessed right, haven’t I? It is about a boy?”

“You’d be the kind of sister you’ve been for the last fifteen years: absent.”

Felicity got up and went to close her curtains, needing some space, when she turned back, Katerina was still crouched on the floor where Felicity left her. “Felicity.”

“What do you want, Kat?”
“Do I have to have an ulterior motive? Can’t I just want to get to know my sister?”

Felicity scoffed; “You don’t want to get to know me, Kat, you only came out of the woodwork because Dad told you I’d been to see him.”

Katerina sighed, stood up and walked over to her; “Felicity, I’m sorry. Please give me a chance.”

“Why should I?”

Katerina lifted a shoulder and smiled; “Because I was once a really good sister to you.”

The lock in Felicity’s apartment door turned and Jax appeared holding two pizza boxes; “Felicity, babydoll, I come bearing pizza and you are going to eat enough that you go back to being the weight you were five days ago. I won’t take ‘no’ for an answer.”

Katerina rolled her eyes; “Oh goody, your vampire friend is here. I don’t trust vampires.”

“Yeah, well, I don’t trust you either, big sister;” Jax stated with a sneer as he set the pizza down on the coffee table. “But,” Jax conceded reluctantly, “You do have fantastic fashion sense so if you’re staying at least you’re fabulous to look at.”

Katerina grinned mischievously; “Well, I suppose for a vampire, you’re not too bad on the eye either.”

Oh dear god, there were two of them. Felicity watched fascinated as Jax asked Katerina where she got her corset from and the two of them sat down on the sofa and started to talk couture. When Felicity wandered into her bedroom, they were debating whether thigh-high boots were ever a good fashion choice.

Felicity went to her closet and found a cardigan, it was a little chilly. As she was pulling it on, she got that niggling feeling that she was being watched. She peeked her head out and saw Katerina and Jax still chatting away happily.
Walking over to the window, she peered out into the darkness, still seeing nothing, she lifted the window and slowly crawled out onto the fire escape. She looked up and down the street and still saw nothing. Wrapping her cardigan around her tightly, she looked up at the roofs and squinted into the darkness. Nothing. Shaking her head, she turned and climbed back into her apartment and went to join the pizza party taking place in her living room.

He shouldn’t be there. He’d put it off for as long as possible. He sparred with Diggle, sharpened his arrows, did a sweep of the city, crossed a name off the list and took down a few petty criminals. And then he’d ended up there.

He watched as her sister crouched in front of her as she slept and he’d felt the urge to kick down the door and tell her to get away from Felicity. He watched as Jax entered the apartment and held his breath as Felicity walked over to the window and closed the curtains, blocking her from his view.

His phone rang. His Oliver Queen phone, not the vigilante phone. Without taking his eyes away from the apartment, he answered; “What?”

“Hey,” Laurel. “Where are you? I thought you might want to come over.”

Her voice was soft and breathy, it was her sultry, seduction voice.

He sighed; “I’ll see you soon.” And hung up.

He was about to step back when Felicity climbed out of her window and looked up and down the street. Was she looking for him?

He took two abrupt steps back as she looked directly at the rooftop he was lingering on. He saw her sigh, shake her head and then crawl back in the window. Was she disappointed she couldn’t see him in the darkness? Did she know he was there?

He watched as she sat on her bed for a few minutes and then got up and went back into the living room.
Oliver stood on that roof top for another half an hour hoping to catch another glimpse of Felicity. Laurel could wait.
Oliver and Jax have one of their chats, Felicity and Katerina have a chat, there's just lots of chatting.

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Oliver started up another set of handstand push-ups, his feet propped against the wall for support.

“Ok, now you’re just showing off,” Tommy accused as he walked into Oliver’s line of vision. Oliver lowered himself down into the push-up and back up; “You need to stop flexing and put on a shirt. You have a visitor waiting for you in the alley.”

“What are you,” Oliver grunted; “my secretary?”

Tommy folded his arm and raised his brows; “It’s Felicity.” He stated flatly.

Oliver kicked his feet down and jumped onto his feet, grabbing his discarded t-shirt and pulled it over his head. Tommy smirked at him; “And, wow, look how fast you dismounted from whatever the hell you were just doing.”

Oliver shot him a black look. Tommy’s smirk turned into a full on grin; “It’s not Felicity. Just wanted to see how you’d react if you thought it was. Your reaction was very interesting, my friend, very interesting indeed.”

As Oliver continued to just look at him, Tommy sighed, “And grouchy Oliver, it is then.” Another sigh, “Felicity text me to say that her friend was going to meet you in the alley for a chat. So, you might want to put on the vigilante suit.”
“Felicity texted you?” since when were she and Tommy texting buddies?

“Yeah, why? Is that a problem?” Tommy asked, an amused glint in his eye. Oliver ignored it, went to put the suit on, strapped his quiver to his back, grabbed his bow and pulled the hood up and took the stairs two at a time. He exited the club into the alley to find Jax leaning against the chain-link fence.

“So,” Jax drawled as Oliver walked up to stand on the opposite side of the alley to Jax, his boots crunching on the gravel. “Standing on a roof staring into her apartment isn’t exactly staying away from her. Oh, don’t worry she doesn’t know you’ve been creeping about watching her.”

“What do you want?” Oliver ground out.

“You can’t stay away from her because something deep inside of her calls to something deep in you, doesn’t it? Something about her just attracts you like a magnet.”

“I don’t know.”

Jax tilted his head and looked Oliver’s form up and down; “No, you really don’t, do you?” he paused and grinned; “Oliver.”

Oliver went completely still. Then he whipped out an arrow and had it notched, his bow raised and pointed at Jax. Jax rolled his eyes and looked as if he were bored by the whole thing.

“Oh, don’t get your leathers in a twist. Nobody told me. No one needed to. I’m a vampire. I know things. Besides, Felicity wouldn’t let just any nut-bar in a costume crawl through her window, no matter how good they looked. There’s only one person she would extend that kind of blind trust to: Oliver Queen.”

Fuck.

“Lower the bow. I’m no threat to you. If I wanted you dead, you’d be dead already. I could have that bow away from you and your throat ripped out before you even blinked.” Jax leaned forward conspiratorially, “You should see the mess I left the lacrosse player who stalked her in. Oh, wait, you can’t. You get the idea, though.”
Slowly, Oliver lowered the bow. He kept the arrow notched just in case.

“If I had my way, Oliver, this conversation would be a little more…..pointed but Felicity said and I quote; ‘tell him to pull his head out of his ass and get him to go after actual criminals rather than just crossing name’s off his daddy’s list.’” Oliver’s lips twitched at that; “She may have been a little tipsy at the time.”

Jax threw a folder at Oliver’s feet. Oliver looked down at it but made no move to pick it up.

“There’s a jewel thief. Interpol is after him. They call him The Dodger. He’s decided to take a little vacation in Starling City. Uses a bomb collar to force unsuspecting souls into stealing what he wants.” Jax lifted his chin at the file, “Felicity has dug up all the information she can about him, now it’s up to you.”

“What am I supposed to do with this information? Hand it over to SCPD?”

Jax shrugged; “I really don’t care. But Felicity does.” Jax waved a hand in Oliver’s direction; “And you care what Felicity thinks. So, the way I see it, you have three options: hand that file over to the cops, stop the Dodger yourself or you can do absolutely nothing, disappoint her. Again. And prove to her you aren’t the person she thinks you are.”

Oliver was fairly certain he wasn’t the person Felicity thought he was. He’d learned long ago that it was better to disappoint someone once rather than them get hurt later on because he couldn’t give them what they wanted.

“Are you the person she thinks you are?” Oliver shot back at Jax.

Jax grinned and tipped his head to the side; “Not at all. But she loves me anyway. Any man who doesn’t think she’s the love of his life is an absolute idiot. She’s the love of mine in a strictly platonic type of way.”

“Right.” Except for all that vampire sex she’d once told him they’d had.

Jax lifted his chin and watched Oliver with a look that was penetrating and Oliver felt like he saw
more than he wanted him to. It was an unnerving look. It was the kind of look that made Oliver feel as if with a single look, Jax was unveiling all of Oliver’s deepest secrets.

“Kick Laurel Lance to the curb.”

“Excuse me?” Oliver enunciated slowly.

“You and I both know she’s not the love of your life. You feel guilty because you did the dirty on her with her sister. Subconsciously, you think she’s your penance for all the bad things you did way back when. She’s not. That island was your penance. She wasn’t your salvation. She didn’t help you survive. You did that all by yourself.”

“You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Jax shrugged, pushed away from the fence and shoved his hands into his jean pockets; “Maybe not. But here’s a little something to think about: if you were back on that island of yours and Laurel and Felicity were on their knees in front of you, their hands bound and a man waving a gun around said only one of them got to live, that you had to choose. Who would you choose to protect? Laurel or Felicity?”

He smiled and threw Oliver a little wink; “You think about that one.”

Oliver watched as Jax strolled out of the alley, feeling as if he’d been sucker punched. He bent down and picked up the file at his feet. He flipped it open and read through the information Felicity had compiled. She’d found a lot.

File in hand, he made his way back inside and downstairs to where Tommy was spinning in one office chair and Diggle was looking at something on one of the computers. He threw the file down on the desk and went over to the salmon ladder. Diggle picked up the file and flicked through it; “What’s this?”

“Our next target,” he stated in a voice that said it wasn’t open for discussion. He jumped up to the bar and did the first chin up. He looked at Tommy; “I’m going to need your help on this one too.”

Tommy tilted his head and looked confused before he smiled and nodded.
Felicity sat at her kitchen island, the files Oliver obtained for her on her father and the print outs of the employee files from QC spread out in front of her. She tapped her pen against her mouth as she looked everything over. Every now and then she’d look over her shoulder at the board with the images of her siblings on it. She had her tablet out as well and had created profiles on her father, her mother, Nate and Katerina. Her father hadn’t been lying, Nate had interned at QC, he’d even become Robert Queen’s main intern at one point. Six months into his internship, Nina Bennett had been hired to be one of Robert Queen’s assistant. A blonde, beautiful, nineteen-year-old eastern European with no higher education or qualification at all had become an assistant to the CEO of one of the most prominent businessmen. Just like that. Three months into her employment, she was replaced. Nina didn’t hand in a resignation but she also wasn’t fired. And that wasn’t shady at all.

Felicity scribbled down ‘missing’? on her notepad and circled it in red ink.

Her profiles on Nate and Katerina didn’t really contain much. She realised she really didn’t know that much about her brother and sister. She also didn’t remember that much about them besides snippets. That was in part to that she hadn’t seen them for such a long time but also because there was such a big age gap between them and Felicity.

Pulling her tablet closer, she decided to do searches to find anything about what might have happened to Nina Bennett. She searched newspapers for anything on missing girls around the time. She found nothing. If Nina did go missing, she had no one to report her missing which made sense if she’d started her life in the US as one of her father’s trafficked girls. There was also the possibility that Nina wasn’t even her real name.

Felicity hacked into the newspaper website and went through their archives. She was reading an article about an unidentified blonde girl who’d been strangled, shoved into a suitcase and dumped when the door to her apartment opened and Jax came sauntering in. She pulled her eyes away from the article and looked over her shoulder at Jax; “Did you talk to him?”

“Yup. I’ve got to say, sweets, that boy is delightful to look at but he is so much hard work.” Jax flopped down on her sofa and pouted; “I wish you’d let me use my fangs a little bit.”

Felicity smiled, grabbed her tablet and went to perch on the arm of the sofa and looked down at Jax; “Poor you, it’s such a hard life. Is he going to take down the dodger?”
Jax shrugged; “We’ll see.” He looked at the board with a groan, “You’ve got the murder board out.”

“I think I found Nina. Maybe.”

“The elusive Nina. So where is she?”

“Dead.”

Jax’s eyebrows flew up at Felicity’s bluntness; “Dead as in my kind of dead or dead dead?”

“Dead as in no longer part of this world.”

“Huh.”

“Yup.” She slid down onto the sofa beside him and he slung his arm around her shoulders and peered at her tablet screen.

“You gonna do a little hacking? The SCPD?”

She shrugged and his arm moved with the motion; “Go big or go home.”

Jax was silent as she hacked into the SCPD server and found the archive for unsolved cases involving a blonde girl from within a year or so around the time Nina worked at QC. She found one that matched the description of the newspaper article and pulled up the crime scene photos. She tilted her head and studied the photos. She shoved the tablet into Jax’s chest, got up and rifled through her papers on the kitchen island until she pulled out Nina’s QC profile, complete with photo. She brought it over to the sofa, sat down, held up the tablet and held up the photo side by side.

It was her.

Jax whistled lowly; “That’s our girl. Poor baby. Who do we think killed her?”
Felicity shook her head; “I don’t know. Nate. Dad. Maybe Robert Queen.”

“Robert Queen? As in our arrow boy’s daddy?”

“She was young. She was promoted to his assistant without any kind of qualification. Maybe they had an affair and it went wrong.”

“Well. Shit.”

“Yeah.”

“Plus side. At least big sis isn’t a suspect.”

“I remember Nina;” Katerina said, looking at the QC employee profile; “She was a cute little thing.”

“She was murdered,” Felicity stated closely, watching Katerina’s face for any sign of recognition, emotion, anything. There was nothing. Katerina was completely impassive. “What do you remember?”

“I remember that Nate had a thing for her;” Katerina grinned sardonically, “He used to follow her around like a little lost puppy.”

“She was one of Dad’s human and sex trafficking victims.” Felicity told her not even trying to keep the bitterness and judgement out of her tone.

“Well,” Katerina said, folding her arms; “That’s unfortunate.”

Felicity stared at her sister as if she didn’t even know her. And really, she didn’t. “That’s all you
Katerina threw her hands in the air – always so dramatic – “What do you want me to say? Yes, Dad is not a perfect man but he’s not pure evil.” Felicity snorted at that; “You were only eight, Felicity, so maybe you don’t remember but we were a family.”

“What I remember is that he was never around and that my siblings practically raised me and then they were gone too. And now the two who are alive want to act like the last fifteen years didn’t happen.”

“That’s not fair. I was always there for you.”

“Not in recent history.”

“Just because you didn’t see me, doesn’t mean I wasn’t there. After Mom left, I was the one who tuck you into bed and read you a story. I’m the one who made your school lunches and helped you with your homework and took you to the library.” Katerina smiled sadly; “And then after everyone was gone, yes, I left. I thought you were better off without me, that professionals would help you, that you’d go to a good home.”

“You were wrong.”

“But whenever you needed me, I was there. When that foster father tried to put his hands on you, tried to hurt you, you fought him off so well but I went back and I finished the job.”

“You killed him?”

“And I would’ve killed that guy that followed you around in college, the one who you had to get a restraining order against but someone else got there first.”

“Kat –“

Katerina wiped at a lone tear that made its way down her cheek and looked at Felicity fiercely; “So, don’t you dare say I wasn’t there for you.”
Someone was knocking on her door. Knocking incessantly and interrupting Felicity’s dreamless sleep. She was actually getting a good night’s sleep and someone was ripping her from it. Pouting, she grabbed her glasses from the bedside table and shoved them on her face. She stumbled out to the living room where she yelped as she stubbed her toe on the sofa. Turning on a lamp, she hopped to the door and glared as she pulled it open.

A stupid, grinning Tommy Merlyn was on her doorstep. He squinted at her; “Were you asleep? It’s not even midnight.”

“Yeah, well, I was tired. I don’t sleep well. I think it’s part insomnia, part bad dreams, part trauma and just part torture. But anyway, what are you doing here?”

He twirled a hand in the air and gave her a little bow with a flourish; “Milady, tonight I became a gallant knight.”

Felicity pulled a face and pressed the side of her head against her door frame; “What the hell are you talking about?”

Tommy stood up tall, puffed his chest out a little and grinned at her; “Oliver, Diggle and I took down the Dodger tonight.”

His grin was contagious and she beamed back at him; “You did?”
“Yeah. Oliver came into the lair – I’m calling it the lair – and declared that we were going to take down the Dodger and then said that he’d need my help to do it.” He was gesturing wildly and she was afraid he was going to wake her neighbours with the volume he was talking at; “I’m part of the vigilante team.”

He was so proud and a little giddy. Wait a damn second. She grabbed a fistful of his shirt and pulled him into her apartment; “Are you drunk?”

He frowned, shook his head and tried to pull her hand away from his shirt; “Just lightly buzzed. Oliver shared some of his special, secret island vodka with me to celebrate. Let go of my shirt, you’re going to crinkle it.”

“How did you take him down?”

“Well,” he said wrapping his hand around her wrist and pulling it away from his shirt; “Oliver lured him out at this benefit with one of the jewels he likes. Except, I made a little boo boo, I confronted the Dodger when he tried to nab the jewels and ended up with a bomb collar around my neck. Not my favourite accessory.”

Wide-eyed she pulled the collar of his shirt down to see if there was a physical mark – there wasn’t – “And then what happened?”

“Oliver chased him down and made him disarm the bomb. Then he yelled at me a little. Or a lot. But I helped!”

Felicity yawned and patted his chest with one hand; “That’s great. Can I go back to bed now?”

He stifled a yawn of his own; “Sure. Can I sleep on your sofa? This whole vigilante thing is exhausting, I don’t know how Oliver does it.”

She smiled and nodded and was already walking back to her bed; “Go for it. Lock the door. See you in the morning.”

Felicity shut her bedroom door and smiled. She didn’t know why the fact Oliver took down one particular criminal at her behest mattered so much but it did.
Felicity wandered into her living room and stopped short when she spotted Katerina standing, cup of coffee in hand, head tiled, her long dark hair falling in curls over one shoulder, studying Tommy who was fast asleep on her sofa.

“Felicity,” Katerina said in a hushed tone; “There’s a man on your sofa.”

It was too early in the morning for this. Felicity went over to her coffee maker and made herself a mug. She clutched it to her chest, stealing its warmth. “No, really? You don’t say, wonder when he got there.”

Katerina shot her a look; “Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit.”

“How did you get in here, Kat?”

Katerina shrugged and continued to watch Tommy; “Picked your lock. It really wasn’t that hard. I can teach you how to do it.”

Fabulous. She had vigilantes crawling in her windows, drunken billionaires sleeping on her sofa and sisters picking her lock.

“Thanks, but I’m good;” she replied, dryly.

Katerina humphed; "Your loss," and perched on the edge of the coffee table, crossing one leg over the other; “Felicity, men that attractive should not be sleeping on the sofa. They should be in bed. With you. Naked. Doing all the naked things.”

Ok. Ew. “Noooo. Me and him. We’re not. So not. Just no.”

“Why the hell not?”
“We’re friends.”

Katerina leaned forward as if Tommy were a piece of art and she needed to get closer to analyse every brushstroke. “Well, if you don’t want him, can I have him?”

It was way too early for this. Felicity wanted to crawl back into bed. “No. He’s too young for you.”

Katerina looked over her shoulder at Felicity; “Baby sis, age is merely a number.”

“So, true,” came the sleep laden voice of the object of Katerina’s desire. Tommy sat up, rubbed his eyes and looked entirely rumpled.

“Oh my god, his eyes are so blue;” Katerina enthused. Felicity rolled her eyes. Katerina had always been the family flirt. Some things never changed.

Tommy’s mouth stretched into a slow smile, it wasn’t dissimilar to Oliver’s playboy smile and Felicity was sure Tommy was about to notch up the charm. “And who is this enchanting creature?”

Katerina smiled saucily and held out her hand for him to take. He clasped her fingers and raised her hand to his mouth and pressed a kiss to the back of her hand. Felicity thought this may have been the most vomit-inducing thing she’d ever been forced to witness.

“I’ve been enjoying the view that was you sleeping so we haven’t been properly introduced. I’m Katerina.”

“Pleasure. I’m Tommy.”

Katerina bit her bottom lip and twirled her hair. Tommy was yet to release Katerina’s hand. They stared at each other for longer than was really appropriate. Tommy placed his free hand on top of Katerina’s and started stroking Katerina’s hand. Katerina giggled.

Ok. Now really, that was just ridiculous. Enough was enough.
Felicity stomped over, slapped Tommy’s hands away from her sister, wrapped a hand around Katerina’s arm and hauled her to her feet and started walking her to the door.

“Felicity,” Katerina said trying to see passed Felicity at Tommy; “What are you doing? I’m just getting acquainted with your friend.”

“Yeah. No. You’re leaving.”

Felicity pulled her door open and shoved Katerina out. Katerina pouted and leaned to the side, looking around Felicity and wriggling her fingers at Tommy. Rolling her eyes, Felicity said; “I’ll see you later, Kat.” And slammed the door in her face.

Sighing, she went back to the sofa prepared to kick Tommy out too. She frowned down at him. He looked a little dazed and glazed over. Felicity clicked her fingers in front of his face. “Hey!” Shaking his head, Tommy looked up at her; “Don’t encourage her.”

“What if I want to encourage her? I mean, that’s your sister? She’s hot.”

“What about Laurel?”

Tommy shrugged; “What about her? I’ve been chasing that girl around for years. And her and Oliver are….her and Oliver.”

Felicity flopped down on the sofa beside him; “Yeah, how’s that going?”

“Oh, it’s just like old times. Laurel is trying to get Oliver to follow her around like a puppy. Except he’s not playing ball. He seems pissed off by her more than anything and spends most his time training and avoiding her.”

“Sounds completely healthy.”

“I know, right?!” Tommy slung an arm around her shoulder; “Now, Felicity, tell me more about
Oliver was superbly frustrated. There was someone dangerous targeting the criminals of the city – someone else. Diggle had managed to get locations on the guy but when Oliver got to the building, he searched all the floors and came up empty. The second location was a building site. The District Attorney had been killed on live tv. The murderer was yet to take another victim but it was only a matter of time.

Laurel was being.....clingy. Insecure. It was like they were five years in the past, she wanted him to be available at all times and to be willing to give her some kind of commitment and all that made him want to do was get away from her. She was convinced they could get their relationship back to the way it had been. She was conveniently forgetting that their relationship was kind of fucked up to start with.

His mother was more than happy to help Laurel reminisce about their past. She waxed lyrical about how she liked who he was when he was with Laurel. His mother’s dream was that Oliver would take up his father’s mantel at Queen Consolidated and he and Laurel would get married and get a house in the suburbs and create perfect little grandchildren. The thought alone made Oliver want to retreat back to the island. Thea snarked that if he was really in love with Laurel then he wouldn’t have slept with her sister.

And then there were the dreams. Actually, they were less dreams than they were actual images. In his sleep he’d been seeing images of Felicity, crying and covered in blood. He’d take a step toward her and she’d take one back. He’d wake up covered in sweat and disorientated.

But at least the club seemed to be doing well. They weren’t exactly making a profit yet but they weren’t going broke either. He and Tommy were in the empty club going over the accounts and not talking about Laurel.

Oliver looked up from the paperwork he was frowning down at when he heard the click-clack of heels on the club’s floor. Felicity’s sister was moving towards them, the one he’d said was beautiful like Felicity. He remembered Felicity had looked distinctly displeased by his comment. Katerina was beautiful, there was no disputing that but now he could see the differences between the two sisters. Felicity was all light and loveliness, while Katerina was dark, sultry, mysterious, mischievous and seductive. Oliver had gotten good at reading people in the last five years and he detected there was more than a little manipulation to the seductiveness.

Tommy straightened and smirked; “Ooohh, Katerina. What a treat.”
When had Tommy met Katerina?

Katerina stopped at the bar and tipped her head to the side and smiled seductively at Tommy; “Hey, there sailor, think a girl could get a drink? Whiskey. Neat.”

Oliver watched as his best friend practically tripped over his own feet to get Katerina her drink. Tommy handed over the glass and Katerina took a sip and pulled the glass down slowly, tipping it dangerously in her hand as her gaze landed on Oliver.

“And who are you?” She asked; “No. Wait, let me guess, you’re the guy my sister was weeping over in the bathroom of this very club.” She looked him up and down; “Mmm, tall, dark, broody and tortured. Not my type. But I see the attraction.”

Oliver bet Katerina had never met a man who didn’t fall under her spell. And she knew it. From the way Tommy’s tongue all but hung out of his mouth, Oliver knew his friend was already caught in her web.

“Where is Felicity?” Tommy asked, still smiling at the dark-haired beauty.

Katerina frowned and pouted prettily. Oliver thought even that was a manipulation. “My baby sister kicked me out. Said she had some things she had to do that she didn’t need me along for. Our Felicity is not big on trust.”

Trust had to be earned, not blindly given. It was one of the lessons the island had brutally taught him.

Tommy mimicked her pout; “Poor you. Who wouldn’t trust you?”

“I know!” She took another sip of whiskey; “But Felicity is a hard nut to crack. It probably didn’t help that I faked my death for fifteen years. But a girl has got to survive, right?”

What about Felicity’s survival?
Tommy nodded along; “Oh, absolutely.”

“Poor little, Felicity, we – our family – really messed her up. Us combined with foster care really left her damaged.”

“She’s not damaged;” Oliver ground out and resisted the rising urge to kick her out of the club. Or get his bow and arrows.

Katerina reached out and patted Oliver’s arm; “Of course she’s not;” she said condescendingly and Oliver clenched his hands into fists at his sides; “But anyway, now she knows I’m alive and while she’s reluctantly letting me hang around, she doesn’t want to really let me in.”

“I’m sure she’ll warm up,” And Oliver really wanted Tommy to stop talking.

Katerina beamed at Tommy; “I just know I could help fix her if she’d let me but she tells me nothing. She tells all her secrets to her friend, Jax and to the vigilante.”

She thought she could fix Felicity. That implied Felicity was broken and that thought alone royally pissed Oliver off. There was nothing wrong with Felicity. He also got the feeling Katerina was trying to get information about Felicity out of them. Yeah, lady, not happening.

“What,” he started, his jaw clenching in an attempt to not show his anger; “are you doing here, Katerina?”

She smiled at Tommy and ran a finger down his chest; “Oh, nothing, I just wanted to see Mister blue eyes here.” She waved a hand; “Oh and Felicity wanted me to give Tommy a message to pass on to the vigilante.”

“What message?”

She downed the last of the whiskey and placed the glass down on the bar; “Oh nothing interesting. Just something about how the sound in the video from that crazypants man killing those people is a subway train going over the tracks.”
“Starling City doesn’t have a subway.” Tommy stated, smiling down at Katerina, indulgently.

Katerina reached up and tapped a finger against Tommy’s nose; “Not anymore. But way back when, it used to. Felicity said that’s how the guy’s location keeps moving around. It’s all very boring.”

How did Felicity know the location kept moving around? And then it clicked: she’d been talking to Diggle.

Katerina rose up and pressed a kiss to the corner of Tommy’s mouth, pulled away and shot Oliver a wink; “See you, boys. Thanks for the drink.”

And she slunk out in the same manner she came in.
Complicated family situations

Chapter Summary

Oliver doesn't appear in this one. Neither does Tommy. Felicity has a brother/sister chat with Nate. That's about it.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow or DC or The CW

Felicity knocked on the door of Nate’s loft. He’d visited her in her home, it was only fair that she visit him in his. She was filled with apprehension because she wouldn’t have Jax as a buffer. The door slide open to reveal Nate. He smiled; “Felicity,” he ushered her inside, “Come in.”

She walked in and unbuttoned her coat and looked around. There wasn’t much to look at. It was all low, exposed beams, wooden floors….and not much that said this was an actual home. There was a brown leather sofa, state of the art entertainment unit and an old armchair that looked vaguely familiar but the space lacked personal touches.

“You want something to eat?” Nate walked to the kitchen and pulled open the fridge; “I’ve not got a lot but I can probably manage to make you a sandwich.”

The scene was so familiar and so foreign at the same time. She remembered one night, years ago when she was maybe six years old, everyone else had been out doing something exciting. Twenty year old Nate had been left in charge of his youngest sister and he had no idea what to do with her. He’d made her grilled cheese while she sat perched on the counter, swinging her legs back and forth and chatting happily about school and the boy who was picking on her. Nate had then sat through Beauty and The Beast and listened to her go on about how she liked Belle because she liked to read. It had been the most time she’d spent with Nate.

“No. I’m ok,” she offered him a small smile; “Thank you.”

“I haven’t seen you for a while, baby sister;” He smiled and she thought it was a little sad; “Though, I didn’t really expect to. Not with Kat hanging around.”
So, Nate knew about Katerina. That answered that question. “You knew she wasn’t dead.”

“Not right away. But yeah.”

“She says she wants to get to know me again.”

Nate crossed his arms and leaned back against the closed fridge; “Let me guess, she gave the line about how she didn’t just disappear all those years ago but she was secretly watching you all this time?”

Felicity nodded; “She said she’s killed for me.”

“The would-be rapist foster father?” He knew about that too? “She’s taking credit for that? Of course, she is.”

Felicity rubbed at her temples, she couldn’t figure out the truth from all the half-truths, deceptions and out-right lies. Was Nate saying Katerina wasn’t responsible for that death? Was he implying that maybe he was?

She sighed. What a tangled web we weave.

“Nina Bennett.” Felicity blurted out. “Tell me about her.”

The corner of Nate’s mouth quirked up into a little half-smile and he looked like he was lost in a memory. “She was beautiful. Eastern European. Tiny. Vivacious. She wanted to be an artist. Or a ballerina.”

“You loved her.” She observed softly.

“Yes.” And then his expression hardened; “why are you asking about her, Felicity?”

“She’s dead. Someone murdered her.”
“These are all things I already know.”

Felicity pressed her lips together and watched Nate. He stared steadily back at her. Finally, he sighed; “You want to know if I killed her.”

For a second, she felt slightly ashamed for implying the worst. But then she remembered that it wasn’t completely out of the realm of possibility.

“No, Felicity,” He stated bluntly, “I did not kill the girl I loved.”

Nate looked at her quizzically and hoisted himself up on the kitchen counter; “Ok, baby sister, who is your next suspect?”

“Robert Queen.”

Nate’s eyebrows flew up into almost his hairline and he stared at her for a moment before he burst out laughing; “Robert Queen? No. No way.”

“If they had an affair – “

“Robert Queen had many an affair in his day but not with Nina. Never with her.”

Ok. Touché. Very delicate subject.

“Jax didn’t think it was that outlandish an idea when I told him.”

“You need to stop hanging out with vampires. Who next?”

“Dad. Obviously.”

“And we have a winner. Of course it can’t be proven but he was pissed because she was one of his
better sellers;” Nate spat out bitterly; “And I got her out.”

“God. Dad really is a bastard.”

Nate chuckled; “Yeah but don’t go saying stuff like that around Kat. She always was a big old daddy’s girl. In her eyes he can do no wrong. I think she genuinely believes he’s not guilty of all the crimes he’s locked away for.”

“She thinks he was wrongfully convicted?” Was Katerina really that naïve or delusional?

“She thinks he was set up and she’s just burning for revenge.” He shrugged; “Though she’s not completely off base. He was set up.”

Felicity frowned; “What do you mean?”

“Someone made sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt that dear old dad would be arrested, convicted and serve serious time. That someone also made absolutely sure that the evidence was rock solid.”

There was a hint of smugness in his tone. Felicity narrowed her eyes and studied her big brother; “It was you.”

“No. It wasn’t. But I helped a little.”

She wished he’d stop dribbling out the information bit by bit and just tell her it all at once. It was beyond frustrating. “So, who did you help?”

“Do you remember Damon?”

Oh. Shit. Belle’s baby daddy. Thea’s biological daddy. In the first timeline, he hadn’t been a factor. Belle had never talked about him and he never made an appearance to try to be father of the year.

“Vaguely,” she replied. How much had they changed? Had they changed too much?
“Damon was convinced that Dad was responsible for Belle’s death and the death of their baby.”

Now hold on just one damn minute. “I’m sorry? What?”

Nate lifted his shoulders in a shrug and looked a little bored by the whole conversation; “Dad wasn’t exactly happy when his sixteen year old daughter started dating the son of the cop who was trying to arrest Dad. He was even less happy when Damon knocked Belle up.”

Yeah, big surprise there.

“Dad threatened Belle. Physically. Said he’d kill her if she didn’t get rid of the baby. Of course Belle was stubborn and stood up to him and he seemed to cool down. But Damon was an empath –“

“Like Finn?”

Nate shook his head; “No. Not like Finn. Finn was a witch who could read emotions. Damon was an empath in the true sense of the word. He could feel what others were feeling, could use their emotions against them. He could also touch an item and see its ‘memories’. He could sense Dad’s emotions and was sure Dad was just bidding his time.”

“But Belle haemorrhaged. Dad wasn’t even in the house when she died.”

“No. But Damon was convinced he’d done something to the baby.”

“So, he compiled evidence for nearly three years and had Dad arrested?”

Nate ran a hand over his face wearily; “He did a little more than that. Before the arrest and after Nina….Damon and I went to Robert Queen and asked him if he could help us find someone to get rid of Dad. Permanently.”

“Kill him?”
“Yes, Felicity.” Oh god, she thought she knew where this was going. “Robert Queen helped us and we paid a lot of money for someone to kill Dad. Only Dad. But they failed and six months later our siblings were dead.”

“So, six months before someone put a hit on Dad and our siblings, you put a hit on Dad?”

“Yes.”

“And Katerina knows all this?”

“All she knows is that Damon was the reason Dad ended up locked up. And she wants payback for that. Which is why, I think she’s hanging around you all of a sudden.” He pinned her with a look that was filled with concern.

“Was. You said was. Does that mean Damon is dead?”

“No. That’s the thing, Felicity, Katerina is convinced that the vigilante who has been crawling through your window is Damon.”

Well. Fuck a duck.

“I’ve said it once and I’ll say it again;” Jax drawled as he poured them each a glass of wine and handed one to her; “Your family is all kinds of fucked up, babydoll.”

“So very, very messed up.”

They were sitting on Felicity’s sofa drinking and chatting, with Felicity’s feet in Jax’s lap. Jax took a drink and nodded thoughtfully; “Ok. Let me see if I have this straight: Belle’s baby daddy put your daddy into prison because Daddy Smoak is the scum of the earth. Katerina wants Belle’s baby daddy dead and gone for locking up her daddy. Nate put a hit on Daddy but the potential killers fucked it up and Daddy lived to see another day. And then someone else but a hit on the whole Smoak family and managed to not kill Daddy. Which is a huge co winky dink.”
Felicity tipped her glass at Jax and smiled; “Yeah, that’s about it.”

“And Katerina thinks the vigilante is actually Belle’s baby daddy. Which we totally know he isn’t.”

“Pretty much.”

“Is there anyone in your family who doesn’t want to kill another family member?”

“Apparently not.”

“But;” Jax said slowly; “This is just Nate’s version of events.”

“Exactly.” Felicity stated with a sigh; “We don’t know what is true and what isn’t.”

“I suggest we go back to the ‘trust no one’ motto we used to live by.”

She nodded and clinked her glass against his; “That’s what I’m thinking too.”

“But,” Jax drawled; “Plus side – at least our vigilante arrow boy managed to save that kid from the murderous guy on the subway.”
uninvited

Chapter Summary

Felicity has some dreams. There might be a kind of party in which someone turns up even though they weren't invited.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Note: As usual, the text in italics are Felicity's dreams/memories. Also while writing the memory scenes I listened to Break Your Heart by The Gaslight Anthem, I highly recommend listening to it.

I claim no ownership to the songs or lyrics mentioned in this chapter.

“What are you doing?” Oliver murmured against her neck and hiked her up further. She was in her underwear, her hair tousled from having Oliver’s hands in it, her legs around his waist, her arms around his shoulders. He was shirtless and had his mouth attached to her neck. She was sure he’d leave a mark. She’d jumped on him the moment he walked in the door and he’d caught her with the agility she always found to be unbearably attractive. He’d walked them into the bedroom. That was when she’d caught a glimpse of them in the mirror and she was fascinated by the picture they made: him with his back to the mirror, the dragon tattoo on his shoulder on display and her watching their reflections over his shoulder. She’d brought up her phone from where she’d been clutching it even as she was clutching him.

“I’m taking a picture.” She whispered with a little shiver as his lips lingered on a particularly sensitive spot. His fingers gripped her thigh a little tighter.

“What?"

“Us.”

“Why?”
“You hate your father, right?” Oliver asked as they lingered in the kitchen. Felicity was perched on the counter and he was standing between her legs, one hand on the counter on either side of her hips. She was eating from a carton of ice-cream and feeding him bites as well.

She quirked a brow at the question. “Random question. But yes. I hate my father.”

“What are you doing with me, then?”

She tilted her head, confused; “What do you mean?”

“Your father was in the mob, I’m in the Bratva. He was a criminal. I’m a criminal. What’s the difference between the two of us?”

Felicity frowned and looked at him, her jaw dropped. How could he not see all he was? She licked her lips, stabbed her spoon into the ice-cream and placed the carton onto the counter. She tried to think of the right words.

“My father did all the things he did because he could. He cared more about money than his own children. Human life meant nothing to him. It means something to you. You bought girls and gave them new identities and new lives. He trapped them. You set them free. He did bad things because he could get away with it. You do bad things in order to do good things. He was bad. You are good.”

“Simple as that?”

She nodded, tugged on the front of his shirt, wrapped a leg around his waist and pulled him closer; “Simple as that;” she stated, her lips brushing against his with every word.
He’d promised her he’d try to love Laurel Lance and so he would. He’d also look after her niece. Felicity sniffled as she walked down one of the many hallways of the Queen Mansion. She wrapped her arms around herself. The tears were streaming down her face and mixing with the dried blood splatters she was wearing. She refused to breakdown. She’d breakdown later. Except there would be no later. The spell Belle had constructed meant that Belle would go back to her sixteen-year-old body, while Felicity would remain herself until she’d watched her sister die and had delivered her niece to the Queen’s doorstep. Once that was done, the spell would cause her to wake up in her six-year-old self’s body, her sister would be dead and her niece given away and so would begin the second timeline.

That was presuming it would work.

She stopped and leaned against the wall, right next to some portrait of some long dead Queen relative and clutching her stomach, she sobbed. She cried for Anastasia, for Belle, for herself. She slid down the wall and pulled her knees up to her chest. She could allow herself a minute to wallow in her own misery and then she’d get up and walk out of the house.

She was mid spectacularly fabulous breakdown when she heard the sound of footsteps getting closer. Oliver’s face appeared in front of her as he crouched down to her level. She couldn’t handle his proximity but there was nowhere to go: the wall was behind her and he was in front of her.

“I’m really, really damaged;” she whispered, feeling everything life had thrown her weighing on her.

He shook his head; “Felicity, I promise you, you are not damaged.”

She sniffled and wiped her face on the back of her hand; “Oliver, please, please don’t make me anymore promises.”

“Ok.” He was speaking to her so softly like he was afraid she would bolt. “But please don’t say anymore goodbyes to me.”

She shook her head; “I have to.”

He sighed; “Alright. Then, say goodbye to me in the morning.”
“Ok.” She’d just have to sneak out.

“You don’t have to tell me what’s going on or where the blood came from but at least let me help you get cleaned up.”

She nodded reluctantly. She could shower. She could do that. She’d shower, change into some of the clothes she kept there and then she’d leave. “Ok. But don’t touch me.”

Oliver held his hands up in surrender and straightened up. She got up and followed him back to his room. He went into the bathroom, turned on the shower, came back out and sat down on the edge of the bed. “Go on, I’ll be here when you get out.”

Felicity went into the bathroom, shut the door and stripped off her clothes and climbed under the spray. She let the warm water wash away the blood and loosen her tense muscles. Shutting off the shower, she wrapped a towel around herself, opened the door and true to his word Oliver was still sitting on the bed where she’d left him.

He was looking at her in that intense way he always did, like she was the only one in the room which in that case she was but also like she was the best thing he’d ever seen. Like maybe she was the one who’d be able to lead him out of whatever hell he’d been in. Like she was his salvation and redemption all wrapped into one. He looked her like she was the best thing he’d ever seen. She highly doubted there’d ever be anyone else who’d ever look her like that. In whatever new timeline that was created, he’d be busy loving Laurel Lance and looking at her like she hung the moon and Felicity would be surviving on memories of him.

She walked up to him and holding onto his shoulders, she straddled him and pressed a hard, insistent kiss to his lips. She just needed one more memory to take with her. As his hands rose to cup her face and angle her head just where he wanted it, she started unbuttoning his shirt and pushed it off his shoulders. Just one more moment with him to take with her and then she’d leave.

Felicity gasped awake and flew up in bed clutching her sheet to her chest. She could hear the soft murmur of the television and the soft lamp light crept under her bedroom door. She needed some fresh air. She pushed back the blankets, bunching them at the end of her bed and climbed out. She padded across the floor to the window, lifted the window up and crawled out onto the fire escape. She just needed a little air to help her chase away the lingering memories of moments that no one but her remembered.

She wasn’t looking for him. She wasn’t hoping he was there. But when she looked up, there he
was in all his hooded glory. He was standing on the roof opposite her apartment, standing as if he were just about to turn and walk away when she’d crawled out her window. One hand held his bow, the other hand was clenched into a fist. Half of her wanted to yell across the space between them for him to leave; the other half contemplated inviting him over. Of course, she could just ignore him, pretend she hadn’t seen him at all. Before she could decide either way, he took a step back becoming shrouded in the darkness, he become nothing more than part of the night.

Sighing, Felicity turned and climbed back in her window, picked up her pillow off the bed and wandered out to her living room. Jax was slouched down on the sofa, one arm resting along the back of the sofa, watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. He didn’t look up as she approached. She threw the pillow down on his lap and sat on the sofa, pulling her legs up and lowering her head down on the pillow. Jax’s hand came down to stroke her hair. She fell asleep to the sounds of him grumbling about how ridiculous it was to have soulless vampires.

Felicity was exhausted. Emotionally exhausted. She slumped against the wall of the elevator as she rode it up to her apartment. All she wanted to do was shower and crawl into bed. It was officially fifteen years since her siblings had been murdered and she always liked to pass the anniversary alone at the graveyard and then at home in her pjs, drinking wine with Jax. And she definitely did not want to talk about it.

She stepped off the elevator and frowned. Her front door was wide open. Still frowning, she tentatively walked up to her doorway. Jax popped up in the doorway and held his hands up; “I had nothing to do with it.”

“Nothing to do with what?”

She could hear voices coming from inside her apartment. She pushed on Jax’s chest to get him to move so she could enter her apartment but he stood solidly; “Katerina invited them,” he said lowly, “She thinks they’re your friends.”

They?

She gave him another shove and sighing, he stepped aside and shut her apartment door after her. She stopped still. Katerina was mixing drinks in her kitchen and Tommy was leaning against the counter flirting with her. That wasn’t even the worst part. Laurel Lance was perched on her antique, plum coloured chaise, sitting straight backed, looking very much like she had a stick shoved up her proverbial. Oliver also sat awkwardly on the chaise, there couldn’t have been more
space between Laurel and Oliver if they tried. Oliver was wearing one of Felicity’s favourite looks on him: a white button up shirt, the top two – maybe three buttons undone and the sleeves rolled up and perfectly pressed suit trousers.

Felicity wanted to kick them all out and continue with her night of solitude.

Katerina spotted her and skipped over to her, linking her arm with Felicity’s; “You’re here!” she pulled Felicity further into the apartment and pushed her to sit down on the sofa; “We’re having a little get together.”

“Why?” she felt both Laurel’s and Oliver’s eyes on her but she avoided looking their way.

“Because I want to get to know your friends. And I thought we could raise a toast to our siblings.” Katerina clapped her hands together and smiled prettily; “Now, what do you want to drink?”

Felicity shook her head; “I don’t want a drink, Kat.”

“Alright. Dealer’s choice then.” Katerina skipped off back to the kitchen and her adoring fan.

“Felicity,” Laurel said pleasantly, “I love your apartment, it’s so cute.”

Oh dear god. Oliver sent Laurel a look that almost mirrored what Felicity was thinking. Jax plopped down next to Felicity; “Katerina is just a regular little shit stirrer, isn’t she?” he hooked an arm around Felicity’s neck and pulled her into his side; “Maybe we should call up the vigilante and ask him to come, point an arrow at her and make her leave.”

Felicity awarded Jax with a smile for his attempt to cheer her up.

“You have the vigilante’s number?” Laurel sounded positively put out.

“Aww, honey,” Jax drawled; “Did you think you were the only one who has him on speed dial? Do you think you’re the only one he comes running for? Did you think you were his special girl? So, sorry to disappoint.”
It took everything she had not to burst out laughing at the look on Laurel’s face. The glare Laurel sent Jax was nothing short of epic.

Katerina came back over and shoved a glass into Felicity’s hand while Tommy sent Felicity a little wink and held a tray and handing out drinks to each person. Katerina put her own drink up on Felicity’s mantel, plugged her phone into the entertainment system and gave Felicity a pointed look; “Right, baby sis, this is how it’s going to go: we’re going to toast to our siblings and then we’re going to have a little dance party.”

Felicity sighed, it was looking more and more like she and her bed would not be reuniting for a long time. “Kat, I don’t want to dance.”

Katerina raise a brow; “Who is the big sister? Me and this is what we’re doing.”

Sister logic. Felicity hated it. Obediently, she held up her glass and everyone else followed suit; “Toast away.”

Katerina grinned; “Alright. Here’s to Belle who fell in love with a bad boy, got pregnant and died at the tender age of sixteen. Here’s to Tatiana and Cassandra who just desperately wanted to experience the love of a man. And to Finn, who died trying to protect his baby sister. May they all rest in peace.”

“Rest in peace;” Felicity whispered and let Katerina clink her glass against hers. Jax tightened his arm around her and she welcomed the contact.

Katerina started scrolling through her phone; “Right, what shall we shake our groove things to? Felicity, do you remember the house parties we used to have? Remember how us girls would do these little dances in the living room?”

“House parties?” Jax asked; “Babydoll, you went to house parties when you were eight?”

Felicity shrugged; “I remember that time Finn and his friends got that keg and forgot to buy the tap and Kat, you took me with you to the liquor store to get it and the owner lectured you about having me out after midnight.”
Katerina smiled; “Oh yeah, I forgot about that?”

“You took your eight year old sister to a liquor store?” Laurel asked incredulously.

“Actually,” Felicity chimed in, “I think I was about six at the time.”

“You let a six year old child be around alcohol and drunk idiots?” Laurel looked and sounded absolutely scandalised.

Katerina stopped going through her phone and narrowed her eyes at Laurel; “You’re quite a judgy little thing, aren’t you?”

Laurel folded her arms and looked down her nose at Katerina; “I just believe children should be allowed to keep their innocence as long as possible. Should be protected.”

Katerina took a step closer; “Listen, Princess, some of us had to basically help raise our siblings and we did the best we could.”

“Kat.” Felicity warned; “Don’t be rude to our guests. To people you invited here.”

Katerina didn’t tear her gaze from Laurel and Felicity thought she was probably imagining something very violent to do to Laurel. “I didn’t invite her, I invited Pretty Blue Eyes and the tortured one. Why did you come, Princess?”

“Kat,” Felicity said before Laurel could open her mouth; “Just choose a song. Maybe something that us girls used to dance to.”

The tension in the room was palpable. Awkward to the max. Felicity stole a look at Oliver. He looked about ready to bolt.

Katerina looked back down at her phone; “Remember this one, Felicity?” she pushed play and Wannabe by the spice girls started playing. It had been one of their favourites to dance to.
“Oh, this is such a banger;” Jax enthused and Felicity laughed. Katerina started dancing and miming the lyrics. Laurel pouted in her corner.

Laughing at her sister’s antics, Felicity turned to Jax and sang; “If you wanna get with me, better make it fast.”

Jax shook his head, smirked and put a hand on her cheek and lightly pushed her away. Felicity got up on her knees and continued singing at him; “Say, you can handle my love, are you for real, I won’t be hasty, I’ll give you a try. If you really bug me then I’ll say goodbye.”

She wriggled her fingers in a little wave. Jax rolled his eyes at her.

They continued drinking, singing, dancing and laughing. Katerina grabbed Felicity’s hand and made her dance through the Spice Girl’s greatest hits. They did a stunning version of the Macarena while Tommy and Jax laughed their asses off at them. Even Oliver managed a little chuckle. Laurel was miserable. Felicity was fairly certain Oliver was ignoring Laurel, at the very least he hadn’t appreciated when Laurel slid closer to him and had tried to button up the top buttons of his shirt, Felicity had noticed him push her hand away.

Katerina and Felicity entertained Jax and Tommy enormously when they reenacted Lady Marmalade. Jax and Tommy clicked their fingers along to the song. Katerina blew a kiss at Tommy. Which made Laurel’s frown deepen and Felicity could practically see her blood pressure rising. But it was Dirty by Christina Aguilera that really pushed Laurel over the edge. Katerina was dancing with Tommy, well dancing was a little generous, she was more grinding on him. Laurel stood up and yanked Tommy away from Katerina; “Would you stop flirting with her?”

Katerina smirked and Felicity thought she’d probably manipulated that moment. Tommy shook Laurel off and glared at her; “What do you care? You decided to try again with Oliver and I’m just supposed to what? Wait around for you to decide you want to give me some attention. I’ve got just a little bit too much self-respect for that Laurel.”

Oliver got up and went to her bedroom and she wondered if he were climbing out her bedroom window. She quirked her head when a moment later, Jax followed him. Tommy and Laurel started shouting at each other while Katerina sat on the sofa and took in the whole thing. Felicity tried to keep up with the argument but then wandered into her bedroom. She found Oliver and Jax sitting on her bathroom floor, their backs against the counter, a large space between them, drinking whiskey. Sighing, Felicity went and sat between them. Reaching over, she snatched up Oliver’s glass and took a sip before handing it back.
“Katerina is just a little shit stirrer isn’t she?” Jax asked.

“I don’t trust her,” Oliver stated quietly, “And I don’t think you should either.”

Jax looked passed Felicity; “Yeah, no shit Sherlock. There’s no trust going on here.”

“Jax,” Felicity reprimanded him; “Play nice.”

Jax was silent for awhile, while they drank and listened to the argument going on in her living room. The silence didn’t last; “So, you hulking giant, when are you going to say adios, au revoir, do widzenia, sayonara and auf wiedersehen to the luminous Miss Lance? Because you might want to get on that.”

Oliver merely sighed.
Bathrooms and whiskey

Chapter Summary

A game of go fish. A little vampire eavesdropping. Laurel makes a bold move

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Felicity had no idea how long they were sitting in the bathroom while Tommy and Laurel had some kind of reckoning. It was long enough for Jax to find a pack of playing cards and engage her and Oliver in a round of Go Fish. Oliver wasn’t one hundred percent into it.

Oliver had dryly asked Jax if he had a two, Jax had his head cocked to the side and had sat up straight kind of like a meerkat did. Felicity plucked a two out of her own hand and threw it at Oliver who caught it against his chest.

“It’s no use. He’s got his creepy face on. It’s the one he gets when he’s listening.”

“Listening?” Oliver asked frowning. She got his confusion, it wasn't like the three of them were having a stimulating conversation. Besides asking for cards, they were mostly silent.

“He’s eavesdropping,” she stated and leaned over and snapped her fingers in Jax’s face; “Hey! Don’t be nosy.”

Jax gasped and shook his head seemingly coming back to the moment; “Laurel just slapped him!”

Felicity fanned out her cards and considered what she needed to make a pair; “None of our business,” she said.

At the same time, Oliver asked; “Why’d she slap him?”
Felicity shot Oliver a look and he shrugged unapologetically. Jax grinned and rubbed his hands together; “Ok, so get this, he said that the main reason that she wanted to be with you was because she wanted to really stick it to her sister. Get the last word or the last screw so to speak.”

Oliver’s expression changed from neutral to tormented and he dropped his head down and stared at his own cards. He fiddled around with shifting cards in his hand; “What else did they say?”

“Jax,” Felicity said, her tone full of warning. She didn’t want Jax to add to Oliver’s tortured soul or his constant need to self-flagellate.

Seeming to catch on, Jax hesitated. Oliver sighed; “Just tell me.”

Jax ignored the look she was giving him; “Tommy said that he wanted to be with her but she threw him away so she couldn’t be pissy when he moved on. He also said that she wanted to be with you because of who she thought you were or who you could be not actually who you were and that she couldn’t see how you’ve changed but expected you to be her same old Ollie.”

“Ok, so who has a ten?” Felicity blurted out trying to move the conversation away from all this awkwardness. But Jax just ignored her and carried right on.

“She said that she knows exactly who Oliver Queen is and that she knows you better than anyone. Tommy then said that she’s delusional and only sees you how she wants to see you. Laurel then said that she sees who you could be.”

“So, no tens, then?”

“Then Tommy told her that you’re never going to want to work at QC and have a white picket fence and come home and kiss her. He said you’d never want that life, not with her. He said she’s doing exactly what she did to you last time, trying to mold you into the person she wanted you to be, that she doesn’t really love you but more the idea of you.”

Jax sat back against the bathroom counter; “Personally, I think Miss Laurel should just stop her whining.”

“Jax,” Felicity scolded him; “her sister died while sleeping with her boyfriend and then said boyfriend went missing for five years, I think she has the right to be a little messed up.”
“Your siblings were murdered, your mother is a vampire, your father is in prison and your two remaining siblings may or may not be completely psychotic but you’re not messed up.”

“Right,” she said sarcastically, “because nightmares, panic attacks and being incredibly weepy just screams well adjusted.”

Jax held up a finger and cocked his head again, then jumped to his fee; “Oh thank the lord, Laurel Lance has left the building.”

Felicity flinched as he climbed over her in a rush to get out of the bathroom. Oliver was a little slower to get to his feet, placing his cards on the counter and holding a hand out to her to help her up. She stared at his hand a beat too long and he started to retract it, before he could pull it back fully she grabbed it and he pulled her up in one smooth move. He held her hand for longer than was really strictly necessary. Felicity took a step back, her fingers slipping from Oliver’s grasp and went into the living room, leaving Oliver to either follow her or continue hiding in her bathroom.

Jax was draped dramatically across the chaise like some swooning damsel, Tommy was pacing the length of the living room obviously trying to calm down from his screaming match with Laurel and Katerina was looking very much like the cat who got the cream. Felicity walked up to Katerina and grabbed her by the arm, pulling her towards the kitchen; “Would you stop causing trouble purely for your own enjoyment?” She hissed at her.

Katerina gave her the big Bambi eyes, pouted and shrugged, “I have no idea what you’re talking about.” She ripped her arm from Felicity’s grasp and practically pranced over to Tommy, lightly touching his chest and changing the song, pulled him in to dance with her.

_Wicked Game_ by Chris Isaak. Felicity rolled her eyes and sat on a barstool. She just wanted Katerina to leave and stop messing with everyone’s heads.

“Hey.”

Felicity turned her head and was suddenly face to face with Oliver who had his hands shoved in his pant pockets and had dipped his head to be level with hers. She smiled lightly at him, at this point in the evening she’d choose his company over Katerina’s; “Hey.”

He gave her a small smile and moved back to stand against the kitchen island and look out at the
living room where Katerina and Tommy were slow dancing and Jax was on the chaise with his arm flung over his eyes. “Is Jax asleep?”

Felicity laughed, lightly; “Nope. He’s listening to every word we’re saying, aren’t you Jaxy?”

They both watched as Jax raised a hand and flipped her off. Oliver chuckled; “Ok.”

“Yup.”

Oliver exhaled deeply; “Felicity, I’m sorry about Laurel.”

“You don’t have to apologise for someone else’s behaviour, Oliver, you aren’t responsible for the way someone behaves.”

But she got the feeling he wasn’t just apologising for Laurel’s behaviour but for Laurel in general.

“Want to dance?”

She turned wide, stunned eyes on him; “With you?”

Oliver tipped his head to the side and watched her with eyes that were warm and held just the hint of amusement; “That’s the idea, yes.”

“I thought you said you don’t dance.”

He leaned closer to her and looked her right in the eye in a way that was definitely more than a little unnerving. “I said,” he started, keeping his voice soft and low, “the vigilante doesn’t dance but Oliver Queen does.”

She wrinkled her nose; “Don’t talk about yourself in the third person, Oliver, it’s confusing and all kinds of weird.”
He ignored her ribbing and held out a hand, palm up and didn’t break eye contact. She chewed on her lip, they really shouldn’t dance to this song, her already frayed nerves couldn’t take it. They should dance to something faster and less intimate. It was just common sense really. Self-preservation.

Self-preservation had never been her strong point. She put her hand in Oliver’s and let him pull her to her feet. He wrapped an arm around her waist and caught her hand in his and started swaying them to the beat. She didn’t know where to look. He was looking only at her. She hoped he couldn’t hear how fast her heart was beating. She knew Jax could hear every little skip her heart did and would be smirking.

Oliver spun her and then pulled her back in and they were closer than they’d been before. She couldn’t breathe. The song changed and he wasn’t letting go of her.

“Can I cut in?”

Thank the universe for Jax. She could kiss him, just lay one on him right then and there. Oliver slowly – and reluctantly, she thought – handed her over to Jax with a lingering look that she felt right down to her toes.

She flung her arms around Jax’s neck and hugged him as he swayed her; “Thank you,” she breathed into his ear.

She felt Jax chuckle against her; “I could feel you starting to panic from across the room. You ever think it might be time to clue our boy in on a few things?”

Felicity pulled back slightly and gave Jax a withering look. Jax rolled his eyes; “Right then.”

“Jax? Just shut up and dance.”

Felicity was pouring a mug of coffee after a very pitiful attempt at doing yoga when there was an insistent knock at her door. Setting the mug on her kitchen island, she walked to her door and pulled it open. You could have knocked her down with a feather when she saw her was standing on the other side. Laurel Lance. Looking very prim and proper and Felicity hadn’t even run a brush through her hair yet. What was it about this woman that always made her feel inadequate?
“Laurel, hello,” Felicity said carefully as she clutched her door, “What are you doing here?”

Laurel flipped her perfectly styled hair over her shoulder; “I thought after last night, we should talk. Aren’t you going to invite me in?”

“Oh! Right,” Felicity held the door open; “Please, come in.” And why was she so flustered? Laurel reminded her of the kids who used to pick on her and make fun of her for being both a little nerd, for having a dead family, for being in the foster system. Laurel gave her a tight smile and stepped over the threshold, her heels clicking against Felicity’s hardwood floors.

She turned and looked at Felicity expectantly. Felicity wasn’t sure what the hell she was supposed to say, Laurel had showed up on her doorstep not the other way round. Still, she felt she should say something. She cleared her throat; “I’m sorry about Katerina. My sister can be –“

“A bitch.” Laurel supplied, “I thought all your siblings were murdered.”

Felicity shifted uncomfortably. She could see why Laurel was so good at her job. She had a way of getting people to talk. “My two oldest siblings weren’t in the house that day. But I haven’t seen them for years. Katerina recently came back into my life.”

“I see.” Laurel stated in that clipped tone that only served to make Felicity feel like she needed to seek her own legal counsel. “And were either of them suspects in the murders?”

Felicity bristled; “No.” she said shortly, “Neither of them were ever suspects.”

“Hmmm,” Laurel walked over to Felicity’s kitchen island and pulled two items out of her purse; “Oliver and I belong together.”

Umm, ok. That came out of left field. Laurel turned to pin Felicity with a look. “Oliver has some kind of twisted fascination with you but with the right motivation, he’ll get over it.”

“Right motivation?”
Laurel lifted the lid on what looked to be a shoe box; “I get that he feels some kind of connection to you, perhaps because of the trauma you’ve both experienced but that connection won’t last.”

Felicity pressed her lips together and resisted the urge to shove Laurel through her living room window with her mind. Laurel pulled a pressed flower out of the box and held it up; “This is from the corsage that Oliver got me for Prom. He and I have history, Felicity, and that’s not something you can compete with. And even if you try, I will always win.”

“I’m not trying to compete with you, Laurel.”

But it was as if Laurel didn’t even hear her. “You are just a fleeting distraction, Felicity and the sooner you realise that the better. I’m the girl for him.”

“You’re the girl he cheated on. With your sister.” It was catty and bitchy but she was getting on Felicity’s last nerve.

Laurel smiled at her like she pitied her; “Yes. He did. But I’m also the girl he was pining over for five years. I was the thing that he wanted the most. I’m the one who gave him something to stay alive for.”

Felicity crossed her arms and narrowed her eyes at Laurel; “What do you want?”

“I’m trying to help you, Felicity, truly I am. I hold no ill feelings toward you.”

Like hell she didn’t. She opened her mouth to say as much but Laurel held her hand up and cut her off; “You’re just going to get hurt in the long run,” she picked up the file; “This is the case file of your siblings murder.”

Felicity stared at the file, she thought Oliver had gotten her everything but maybe not. Laurel smiled; “I will give you this if you promise to stay away from Oliver,” she reached inside her bag again and pulled out some papers; “And sign these.”

Laurel held the papers out to Felicity, Felicity snatched them away and flipped through them. They had Oliver’s name on them.
“You want me to sign these? You want me to apply for a restraining order against Oliver?” She asked incredulously.

“Yes. It’s not such a lie, he is obsessed with you. This is the only way to guarantee he’ll stay away.”

Felicity stared at Laurel, stunned. Laurel packed the file and box back into her bag and walked up to Felicity; “Keep the papers, look them over. I’ll give you a couple of days to think it over.”

And then she walked out, slamming the door behind her, leaving a stunned Felicity in her wake.
Oliver stopped mid pull-up when he heard the sound of feet on the basement stairs. Not just feet but heels – high heels. Felicity. She looked royally pissed off.

She hit the last step and Tommy looked up from the computer screens and grinned; “Hello, pretty lady.”

Felicity didn’t even spare Tommy a look; “Tommy, I love you but don’t you dare flirt with me right now. Just shut that handsome face of yours up.”

She strode over to the salmon ladder and stared up at Oliver where he dangled. She sighed; “Get down from there. I can’t talk to you when you’re all half-naked and sweaty, it’s very distracting.”

Tommy chuckled and Oliver’s brows flew up but he dropped down in front of her and pulled on his shirt. She nodded and paced away from him and Oliver thought she might be collecting her thoughts before she started yelling at him. She paced back to him and poked him in the chest.

“You’re girlfriend has lost her every loving mind.”

Ok. Not what he was expecting. “What?”

“Like completely lost it. Like sandwich short of a picnic kind of lost it. The lights are on but no one’s home kind of lost it. She’s got a few screws loose, she’s a few beers short of a six pack, the
engine’s running but there’s no one behind the wheel,” She paused to take a breath and Oliver thought her babbling was strangely endearing; “Now, I don’t know when exactly she went to cuckoo land. But she’s definitely bought a one way ticket.”

“Jeez, what did Laurel do, Felicity,” Tommy asked a little apprehensively.

“Oh, you know,” Felicity said in a tone that was falsely cheerful; “She just came to my apartment and tried to extort me or blackmail me. I don’t know, I can never work out the difference –“

“Felicity.” Oliver said, patiently trying to get her back on track.

“Right. The point. She wants me to take out a restraining order.”

“What?” Oliver took a step closer to her and lightly touched her arm; “Is someone bothering you, Felicity?”

If they were, they’d end up with an arrow in them.

“What? No.”

“Who,” he asked slowly; “Does she want you to file a restraining order against?”

“Oh, see this is the best part. You.”

“Me? Why?”

Felicity gave him a look that said that she thought he was seriously dense and pulled out some papers from her bag and slapped them against his chest. They made a crinkling sound as they made impact.

“Because she doesn’t like to share. She wants you all to herself. She thinks you two belong together and good luck with that. She said if I sign these she’ll give me the full file on my siblings murders.”
Tommy whistled; “That’s a whole new low for Laurel.”

Felicity nodded and turned to leave but Oliver caught her hand and pulled her back; “I know what that file would mean to you. Why didn’t you just sign these and get it? You didn’t have to tell me.”

Felicity frowned as if she couldn’t comprehend what he was asking her. She stepped in closer and placed her hand on his chest, her fingers curling right over his Bratva tattoo. He could feel the heat of her touch seeping through his shirt. She blinked up at him and licked her painted lips; “Oliver,” she said so softly that he had to strain to hear her; “I would never do that to you.”

Then she was backing away and her hand was skimming across his chest as she did. Oliver squeezed his fist around the papers to stop himself from grabbing her hand and pressing it more firmly against his chest. She was halfway up the stairs before he finally found his voice; “Felicity,” he called and she looked back over her shoulder at him; “I’ll take care of it.”

She nodded and then she scurried up the stairs and was gone. The door banging shut echoed out in the basement. Oliver looked down at the papers, they were all filled out, all they needed was Felicity’s signature.

“Sooo,” Tommy drawled, “The whole cutting Felicity loose plan really went to shit didn’t it? Since you can’t stay away from her and she can’t seem to stay away from you either. If she signed those papers it would be a fifty fifty shot as to which one of you would violate the restraining order first.”

Tommy walked over to Oliver and pried the papers from him and skim them over himself, his frown deepening as he read; “What are we going to do about Laurel and the fact she’s bought herself a one way ticket to crazy town?”

Oliver grabbed the papers back and simply stated; “I’ll take care of it.”

He took the stairs up two at a time.

“Yeah, but how?” Tommy called after him.

Oliver was on his bike and driving across town, swerving in and out of traffic at speeds that
weren’t strictly legal. He didn’t know what the hell he was going to say to Laurel but he knew she’d gone too far.

He was agitated. He paced the space of the elevator as he waited to reach her floor. He had the papers shoved in the back pocket of his jeans and the weight of what they represented felt heavy. The elevator pinged and the doors opened and he strode down the hallway, passed the spot where Felicity had sat collapsed on the floor, unable to get up, crying into Tommy’s shirt, where she’d looked at Oliver like he’d wrecked her whole world. He couldn’t fix that, he didn’t know how but he could fix this for her.

He knocked three times on Laurel’s door and braced himself on her doorframe. He knew he should push the rage he was feeling down so it didn’t break the surface and terrify her but it just kept bubbling up.

The door flew open and there she was smiling up at him, so happy to see him. “Hey,” she rose on her toes to greet him with a kiss, before the kiss landed he moved around her into the apartment. He heard her sigh and shut the door with a soft click and she turned and leaned against it and watched him.

He pulled the papers out of his back pocket and held them up in the air. Laurel’s gaze landed on them and he watched as her eyes widened fractionally and then narrowed and then her expression was impassive as she batted her eyes at him. And when did she get to be such a skilled manipulator?

“What are these, Laurel?” His voice was low, dangerous and hood-like. He couldn’t rein it back in.

She lifted her chin defiantly and he knew she was gearing up for a fight. “Felicity came running to you. Of course she did.”

“Why wouldn’t she? You tried to blackmail her, Laurel.”

“And you just have to be her knight in shining armour, don’t you? Tell me, Ollie, what does she do for you that inspires such loyalty?”

He knew what she was implying but decided to ignore it. “A restraining order, Laurel?”
She shrugged, “It’s the only thing that would guarantee you’d stay away from her.”

“If you think a piece of paper would keep me away from her, you’re even more delusional than I thought,” he growled.

She tucked a piece of hair behind her ear and looked more vulnerable than he’d seen her look since he’d been home. “Are you sleeping with her, Ollie?”

He shook his head and took a step toward her; “Why did you do this, Laurel?”

“Because it was the only way I could see of keeping you with me! We used to be so great together but you’re so different now, so closed off and you never look at me, never smile at me like you look at or smile at her.”

“We were never great together, Laurel. You wanted me to be someone I’m not.”

“You could be if you’d just try!”

“I don’t want to try. This, right here;” he waved the papers in the air; “is why we didn’t work, you always had to control everything.”

“We didn’t work because you screwed my sister and now you’re screwing some blonde girl who is even more messed up than you are!”

He pointed at her; “See that, right there, you’re never going to forgive me for Sara and maybe I don’t deserve to be forgiven –“

She pushed away from the door and came to stand in front of him, “But I could. I could forgive you if you’d just try to be the Ollie I loved.”

“That Oliver cheated on you. This has to stop, Laurel, we’re toxic for each other. You don’t love me, you love the idea of who I could be.”
“Ollie.” She was crying now and in the past, his first instinct would be to gather her to him and soothe her tears, kiss them away and apologise even if he didn’t mean it. But he didn’t do that, instead he looked down at her and he finally came to a realisation.

“You were the only person I really wanted to see after I was rescued from the island –“

“Because you still loved me.” She smiled up at him through her tears.

He shook his head; “No.” he said softly; “I wanted to see you because I wanted you to forgive me for Sara not because I wanted you to love me.”

She wrapped her arms around herself; “No. That’s not true.”

“It is.” He ignored the sob she let out, “Get me the file.”

She shook her head, tears falling in earnest. She didn’t move. He took a step closer; “Now.”

The look she gave him was closer to the look she’d given him when he’d first gone to see her when he’d first come home. It was a look full of hurt, barely suppressed anger and disgust. She brushed passed him and he heard her rifle through her bag. She came back and shoved a file against his chest; “You’re just going to break her heart, Ollie. It’s what you do.”

“Felicity and I aren’t together.”

Laurel laughed bitterly through the tears that were still falling; “God, you’re such an idiot. You can’t, won’t love me because you’re already in love with her and you can’t even see it.”

He clenched his jaw and got into her space; “Stay away from Felicity.”

He pushed passed her, ripped the door open and started down the hall when her voice stopped him; “You’re the one who should stay away from her, Ollie, your type of love will only destroy her.”

And then she slammed her door so hard, it rattled against the frame.
Oliver waited until sun down before making his way over to Felicity’s. He didn’t change into the Hood suit and instead of scaling the fire escape, he decided to be a normal person and knock on her door. He heard music playing from inside the apartment and wondered if she was dancing around in there. He smiled to himself, remembering the dance they’d shared and then frowned remembering the way Jax had cut in.

“It’s open! Just come in!” he heard her calling from inside.

He opened the door, entered and shut it. Felicity was in her kitchen, baking supplies spread all over the counter and kitchen island and she was wearing sushi pajamas and the sushi were smiling at him. She looked over her shoulder at him; “Hey! Oliver, I thought you were Jax. Not that I’m not happy to see you. Come in. Pull up a pew.”

He chuckled and slid onto a bar stool, placing the file on the kitchen island avoiding the spilled flour and cracked eggs. “What’s going on here?”

She smiled brightly and she was a breathtaking sight, her face scrubbed clean of any makeup, hair pulled up into a messy bun and a smudge of flour on her cheek. He smiled back at her, her good mood making her feel lighter than he had all day.

“I’m making a cake.”

“I thought you only made a cake on birthdays.”

“You remember that?”

“I remember everything you tell me, Felicity.”

She looked shocked by that revelation. It shouldn’t have been such a shock, he hung off her every word. He was mesmerised by the way words seemed to just fall from her lips. He was mesmerised by everything about her if he were being honest. He tipped his head to the side as he watched her blush prettily.
Her gaze flitted away from his and landed on the brown file sitting amongst her baking supplies; “Did you bring me something?” then she paused and looked slightly panicked; “Oliver, I swear if you’ve bought into your crazy girlfriend’s plans and have decided I should sign that restraining order, then you’re just as nutty as she is.”

“It’s not the restraining order.”

“It’s not? Good.”

He picked up the file and handed it to her, reluctantly she took it from him, her eyes full of questions; “It’s the file Laurel got on your family’s murder.”

“You got it from her?” She hugged it to her chest; “Thank you, Oliver. Wait, you didn’t have to do anything dodgy to get this did you?”

“No. And just so you know, Laurel and I are done. For good.”

“Oh. I’m sorry, Oliver. I know what Laurel meant to you.”

“It’s better this way.” He didn’t have the words to describe to Felicity the train wreck that was the Oliver and Laurel experience, he also couldn’t explain to her how freeing it felt to finally put to rest that chapter of his life even with the slight guilt that was attached to that feeling.

“Well,” she said, smiling at him and placing the file back on the island; “after all that, I think you deserve cake.”

While she mixed the cake batter, they chatted happily, at one point he told her about Diggle’s brother and how Diggle wanted help in taking the sniper down and that Oliver wasn’t sure it was the right course. He wanted to focus on more immediate concerns. Felicity had paused in pouring her batter into a cake tin and given him a pointed look; “You have to help Diggle, Oliver, especially after all the ways he’s helped you.”

He couldn’t disagree with her. She was just putting the cake into the oven when the door flew open and Jax entered with a flourish; “I’m here,” he announced; “and I come bearing wine.
Oooohhh and our green, salty goodness is here, except not so green.”

Jax came over and sat on stool beside Oliver, putting his forearms on the island, right in a patch of flour; “Have you rid yourself of Miss Lance yet?”

“Jax.” Felicity reprimanded, pointing a wooden spoon at Jax; “Not your business,” she looked and sounded eerily like a teacher Oliver had had in grade school.

“Laurel and I are over. For good.”

Jax looked at him, wide-eyed; “It’s a miracle! What did it? What put the final nail in that proverbial coffin?”

Oliver sighed and ran a hand down his face, suddenly feeling very weary; “She tried to get Felicity to get a restraining order against me in exchange for the official file on Felicity’s family.”

“I’m sorry she did what now?”

Felicity sighed, “It’s fine. Jax, don’t over react. Oliver sorted it.”

“You know, I could go over there, have a little chat with her, get her to look deep into my eyes and boom she’d forget all about Oliver Queen.”

“You’re not compelling her, Jax.”

Jax pouted at Felicity; “Ruin all my fun. So, how long until this cake is baked?”

“About an hour. Enough time for you to open that bottle of wine.” Felicity said giving Jax a smile full of sweetness and light.

Oliver watched as Jax got up and hooked an arm around Felicity’s neck and pretend to bite her, she pushed him away playfully, giggling. They bickered and bantered as Jax opened the wine and poured them each a glass.
“We need to toast.” Jax said. “But not one of Katerina’s god awful toasts.”

Felicity tipped her head to the side thoughtfully; “Ooooh, I’ve got one. The one from *Peaky Blinders*.”

Oliver shrugged; “Never seen it.”

“We’ll watch it,” Felicity promised and he found he wanted to hold her to that promise. She nodded and raised her glass; “Ok, so I think this one is very appropriate what with one of us being a vigilante, one of us being a vampire and well, me.”

“Get on with it, babydoll.”

She poked her tongue out at Jax. “Fine. Ready? May you be in heaven a full half hour before the devil knows you’re dead.”

Oliver chuckled; “That’s a good one.”

Felicity winked at him and took a sip of wine.

Jax picked up the file and started thumbing through it; “Felicity, you sure you want to look at this? There’s crime scene photos in here and they aren’t pretty. Not exactly before bed viewing.”

“Jax.”

“Fine. Fine. I’ll get the murder board.”

Felicity turned her big blue eyes on Oliver; “You don’t have to stick around for this. I won’t be offended if you have some vigilanting to do.”

“I was promised cake.” He replied with a smile.
“Will you actually eat it?”

“Probably not,” he conceded; “But I’ll happily watch you eat it.”

“Ok.”

“Alright, party people,” announced as he rolled out the board to the space between the kitchen and the living room; “Here’s the creepy murder board.”

Felicity moved around the island, took the file from where Jax had it tucked under his arm, perched on the stool next to Oliver’s and opened the file.

The kitchen light crackled and sparked. Oliver looked up at it and frowned; “You might have an electrical fault.”

“Aww so cute,” Jax drawled, “so new to the magical stuff. That’s not an electrical fault. That’s Felicity. When she’s trying to suppress strong emotions sometimes they come out in other ways.”

“How about we don’t talk about me like I’m not here?” Felicity snarked. She shoved the file at Jax; “Put the photos on the board please.”

As Jax did as she asked, Felicity moved her stool back a little so it was closer to Oliver. It was as if she were seeking comfort from his proximity without actually touching him.

The photos were hauntingly graphic but mesmerising in their own way. Felicity tilted her head; “What do you guys see?”

Jax frowned; “What do you mean, sweets?”

Felicity got up and approached the board looking at it for a moment, then turned to Jax and Oliver, waving a hand at the photos; “They’re too perfect. The bodies. When Nate and I did that spell, Tatiana and Cassandra had blood all over their faces but in this photo, the blood is gone.”
Oliver squinted at the photo she was pointing to and realised she was right, the bodies didn’t look like they’d just fallen where they’d been shot, they looked almost posed.

“What are you saying, Felicity?” Jax asked, obviously not catching onto Felicity’s train of thought as fast as Oliver.

“She’s saying,” Oliver started for her; “that someone came in before the police got there and cleaned the bodies up and rearranged them.”

“Well, who the hell would do that?”

Felicity looked spooked when she finally answered; “Someone who cared about them. Someone who loved them.”
“So, you’re saying you think someone came into the house and played dolls with your siblings before the police got there?” Jax asked pacing around the kitchen, “Why would someone do that?”

Oliver thought they were all good questions, he also thought Felicity was probably correct in her assessment that it was someone who had loved or at least cared about the family. A random stranger wouldn’t take the time to clean up the bodies. That was an act that screamed personal.

Felicity shrugged; “I don’t know. Because they felt guilty. I read a lot of books about this. Killers can often treat their dead victims with great respect and kindness, especially if they loved them.”

“When did you read about killers, Felicity?”

“I went through a phase when I was fourteen. I thought about death a lot.” She shrugged like it was no big deal; “I wanted to understand why someone would do that to my family.”

Jax threw his hands up in the air; “Of course you did. Sweetness, don’t you have any happy memories?”

Oliver didn’t miss the way Felicity’s gaze slid over to him for a split second. “I have a few,” she said with a little smile that hinted that she was keeping a secret.

Felicity slid off her stool and went and took her cake out of the oven; “Now, we just have to find out who did it and we’ll have another piece of the puzzle.”
“And how are we supposed to do that?” Jax asked as he went for a taste of cake and was promptly swatted away by Felicity. “Seriously, you’re going to deprived me of cake?”

Felicity shrugged; “I have to make the frosting.”

Jax folded his arms and leaned back against the counter, effectively getting in the way of Felicity as she moved around the kitchen. Jax watched her with an intensity that made Oliver a little uncomfortable. That discomfort deepened when Jax grabbed Felicity arm, spun her around, pulled off her glasses and rubbed a thumb under her eye. Even Oliver could see the makeup that transferred onto Jax’s skin. “I thought you looked too well rested, babydoll.”

Felicity pouted and snatched her glasses back off Jax. “I was just trying to look like a nice normal girl for once.”

Jax grabbed Felicity’s chin in a hand; “Normal is overrated. Normal is no fun.” He leaned down and pretended to take a bite at Felicity’s neck and then pressed a quick kiss to her cheek. Felicity pressed a hand to his face and gently pushed him away and continued making her frosting.

“I think,” she said as she spread the thick confection over the cake, “That I maybe need to go have another chat with my Dad.”


Felicity sighed a long suffering sigh; “Jax. He clearly knows something.”

“Are we forgetting what happened the last time you went and saw him?” Jax turned to Oliver with a beseeching look; “Help me. Tell her this is a terrible, bad, only lead to all kinds of trouble idea.”

Felicity met Oliver’s eye. He felt like she was silently asking him to be on her side. He did the only thing he could think to do. “I’ll go with you. Just tell me when.”

Jax groaned and walked around the island and slumped down into a bar stool. He gave Oliver a betrayed look. Felicity pointed her pink spatula at Oliver and grinned at him; “See, Oliver will go with me, it’ll be fine.”
Jax shot Oliver a withering look, “You are absolutely no help at all.”

Oliver merely shrugged. “When do you want to go?”

“Tomorrow?”

“Done.”

“No. Not done,” Jax stated, “She is not going back to that prison.”

“Jax, I’m going. It’s not up for debate.”

“Fine. She can go. But she’s not getting on your motorcycle.”

“Ignore him. I’ll get on your motorcycle.”

Oliver smirked. Jax put his head in his hands. Felicity placed the frosting bowl in front of Jax; “Here you can lick the bowl as long as you stop pouting.”

Felicity rushed down the steps of her apartment building, hastily tying her blonde hair into a ponytail. Oliver was leaning against his Ducati waiting for her like he’d promised. As she walked up to him, he looked her up and down and quirked a brow; “You look different.”

While getting dressed she’d tried to remember everything Oliver had told her in the first timeline about appropriate motorcycle attire. She’d pulled out jeans, a long sleeved tshirt and the combat boots that were leftover from her goth days.

“Let’s just go.”
Oliver nodded and climbed onto the bike. Felicity let out a breath and putting her hands on his shoulders to steady herself, she threw a leg over the bike and settled onto the seat. Oliver looked over his shoulder at her; “You’re going to have to hold onto me tight.”

“I actually imagined you saying that to me under different circumstances;” she muttered as she took the helmet he offered her. The corner of his mouth twitched like he was doing his best to suppress a grin. She appreciated him not laughing at her.

“You’ll have to tell me more about those different circumstances sometime,” he said casually.

She gaped at him for a moment and then shoved the helmet over her head and blushed furiously.

She just barely hand her arms wrapped around his waist before he revved the engine and took off. She’d been on the back of a motorcycle driven by Oliver Queen many times in the first timeline. But this was a significantly different experience. In the first timeline, Oliver had always driven carefully, worried about protecting her and her safety. Now, he had no such qualms, he weaved through traffic, took corners and near breakneck speed, the bike leaning over bringing her closer to the ground than she was comfortable with. The scenery was nothing more than a blur. She was aware of her hands bunching up the fabric of his tshirt.

Felicity was fairly certain she held her breath all the way to Iron Heights. When Oliver finally pulled into a spot in the visitor car parking, she managed to get off the bike without her muscles trembling. She was a little proud of that. She pulled off the helmet and handed it to Oliver. He was giving her an assessing look.

“What?”

He shook his head; “Nothing, just thought you’d bitch a bit about my driving. Or at least be more flustered.”

She gave him a falsely confident look; “Oliver, this isn’t my first rodeo.” And she spun on her heel and walked toward the prison.

He chuckled behind her; “Ok.” She thought he sounded just the tiniest bit impressed with her badassness.
They entered the visitor’s entrance and signed in and were led to a private visitation room to wait for her father to be led in. Felicity felt significantly safer with Oliver taking the seat beside her than she had when she visited with Nate.

Just like the previous times she’d visited dear old dad in prison, he was led in wearing that orange jumpsuit, his hands in cuffs and chained to his feet. The guard walked him over to the table and he sat down. He smiled at her.

“My little Felicity, you’re back again. Did you find our kitty Kat or did she find you?” His gaze slid over to Oliver and he smirked; “Ah, Oliver Queen. I read the tabloids you know and I’m not sure you’re the best company for my youngest to be keeping.”

“Dad,” Felicity said, getting her father’s attention back on her; “Did you kill Nina Bennett?”

She thought it was best to start easy.

“No.”

She didn’t buy it for a second. But she nodded; “I’ve been doing some research into the murders and I acquired a copy of the police file. Someone cleaned the bodies –“

She jumped as her father slammed his cuffs down onto the table; “They weren’t bodies. They were my children, your siblings. Don’t call them bodies.”

Oliver’s hand landed on her knee under the table and she straightened her back and summoned the courage to continue; “Someone cleaned Tatiana, Cassandra and Finn up before the police got there. The photos look almost posed.”

Her father frowned, looking genuinely confused, it was the first emotion he’d displayed that she believed; “Who would do that and why?”

“I was hoping you might have some ideas.”

Her father leaned back and watched her thoughtfully, he looked as if he were deliberating whether
to tell her something or not. She waited. The silence almost killed her. Finally, he leaned forward, clapping his hands together on the table; “You know, about a year before the murders, your mother got in contact with me. There was no love lost between your mother and I. She left us. But I met with her.”

“What did she want?”

“She was going on about some old family prophecy from her side of the family. That’s where the magic comes from. You got none of that from me.”

“What did the prophecy say?”

“I’m a little murky on all the details now but it was something along the lines that your mother was destined to have but two children who would receive the culmination of their ancestors individual powers. Your mother and I had seven children. That power was spread over the seven of you. You were all powerful in your own right but the magic was diluted.”

Felicity shook her head; “I don’t understand.”

“I thought it was just witch whispers nothing to it. But your mother had heard whispers that people in the magical community were talking about how if you were all killed, there was a spell to harness that power and put it into the spell caster’s own body. I didn’t buy into it but your mother was convinced you were all in danger so I allowed her to get her cronies to strip you of your powers, to take the magic out of you temporarily.”

“Do you think that’s what the hit was about?”

“I think it’s one hell of a coincidence if it wasn’t. And I don’t believe in coincidences.”

Felicity wanted to ask more questions but the guard came back in, grabbed her father’s arm and started hauling him up. Her father looked down at her with something she thought was supposed to be fatherly concern.

“Be glad you don’t have magic anymore, Felicity. All magic brings is trouble.”
Late night visits

Chapter Summary

Felicity gets some information. Felicity and Oliver kind of cuddle on her sofa.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Felicity poured herself a glass of wine and settled on her sofa, wrapping her long cardigan around herself. Tucking her legs under herself, she pulled the photo album that she’d gotten off her bookshelf onto her lap and opened it to the first page. The leather of the cover creaked as the opened it.

As a teenager she’d carried the photos she had of her family in an envelope in her backpack or in the back pocket of her jeans. When she’d moved into her apartment, she’d brought the album and transferred the photos into there. She didn’t pull the album out much, just when she was alone and sad and wanted a reminder that she had once been part of a loud, thriving family.

She liked to imagine what her life would look like if her siblings had all lived. She imagined what types of jobs they would have had, if they would have gotten married, which ones would have travelled the world.

She flipped to group photos of all the siblings together. All six of them in one photo was a rarity but there they were all smiling up at her. She wondered if her father was right, if their lives would have been different, would have been saved if they didn’t have magic running through their veins.

Turning the page, she ran a finger down her favourite photo. It was of her and Finn a few months before the murders. She was on the swing that they’d had in the back yard, clinging to the chains and Finn was crouching beside the swing, they were obviously deep in conversation, she was smiling a wide, toothy smile at him. Eight year old her was looking at Finn like he was some kind of hero from the stories she loved, like he hung the moon and stars and could fix any problem she had. Nate was right, Finn had been her favourite big brother, she couldn’t say why. Maybe as a child, she felt like Finn had more time for her, he had always made her pancakes, took her to the candy store or book store, watched her tv shows with her. He taught her how to play chess and to shoot a basketball through the hoop above the garage. Perhaps, even now, she hero worshipped him but he’d died begging for her life, how could she not hero worship him after that. He’d not
lived long enough for her to grow up and become disenchanted by him or to see his flaws or for him to disappoint her.

For years she’d been convinced her siblings were collateral damage of their father’s criminal enterprise, that they’d been killed because of him but what if their deaths had nothing to do with their father. What if they were killed simply because they had magic and someone wanted it?

Felicity did a mental checklist of all the things she knew: they’d been shot, not killed by magical means. They’d been posed and cleaned up in the crime scene photos. Someone had been hired to kill them. Nina Bennett was killed but maybe not by their father or Nate but who else could want her dead? And was her death related to Felicity’s siblings’ death. If she believed her father, there was some kind of magical prophecy which hadn’t come true due to her parents’ ability to procreate multiple times.

There was one person that Felicity knew she could trust to tell her about magical prophecies. She downed her wine and pulled on a pair of jeans, her coat, grabbed her keys and phone, shoved some shoes on her feet and left her apartment.

She loved walking through the city at night, even if it wasn’t one hundred percent safe. She loved the way the blocks changed as she walked and the different stores that she could encounter. She meandered through the streets, looking around and taking note of her surroundings as she went, growing up in the foster system had installed in her the importance of being aware of her surroundings and not being distracted by things like her phone. As she stopped at a corner, waiting for the cross signal, she felt a tingle down the back of her neck. She knew that feeling, it was the feeling that said that someone was watching her and following her. She looked around and not being able to pick anyone out on the streets she looked up to see if Oliver was lurking on the rooftops above her. But seeing no leather clad, green, bow wielding vigilante, she shook it off and crossed the street. With her hand on the door handle, she gave another cursory glance around before she entered the store. Madame Therese greeted her with a smile and an embrace. Felicity hugged her back and breathed in the smell of rosemary and lavender.

“Come,” Therese said as she pulled back, “Let’s go talk in the back.”

Felicity followed her through the store and sat down on the beaten up old sofa in the back and humoured Therese by holding out her palm and swirling some tea leaves. When Therese had finished predicting Felicity’s future, Felicity told her about her father’s claim of a prophecy.

Therese nodded and took Felicity’s hand again, her bracelets clinking together as she did so; “The prophecy is real enough. And there is a spell that would transfer the powers of you and your siblings to one person.”
“By killing us?”

Therese shook her head; “It would require more than mere death. Killing your siblings wouldn’t do it. Their deaths would have to be a sacrifice. If they were killed, the magic would simply go back into the earth they were buried in.”

“So, the magic is still there?”

Therese smiled at Felicity, “Ancestral magic never dies, not like we do. It merely waits to be harnessed again.”

“Anyone could just dig up their graves and ta da! They’d have the magic?”

“Not quite. For the magic to be released it would take a force of nature such as an earthquake to break it free and then a witch would have to do the spell at the precise moment that the magic broke free. It would be tricky but it would be possible.”

“And any witch could do it?”

“Yes and no.”

Felicity tipped her head to the side and frowned, Therese patted her cheek; “Any witch could do it but it would be very draining and take a lot of time and a lot of energy. But a witch with a blood claim to the magic could do it in minutes.”

Oh god. She was adding things up in her head and what it equated to was very, very bad; “A blood claim?”

“Yes, like you my darling.”

Or Nate or Katerina or her mother. “Therese, can someone be a vampire and a witch at the same time?”
“Of course.”

Felicity felt suddenly cold. Her mother had left the family so her emotional ties were not necessarily there. Would she want her children dead to get their power?

Felicity thanked Therese very much, accepted her offer of some relaxing tea leaves. She guessed she looked as tired as she felt. As she walked back home, she once again felt as if someone were watching her. She wandered home slowly, her mind working a mile a minute, but she was relieved when she finally rounded the corner and saw her building.

Warily, she climbed the steps, entered the elevator and waited for it to take her to her floor. She exited the elevator, shoved her key in her door and entered her apartment, unbuttoning her coat as she did so. Entering her bedroom without turning on the light, she let out a little squeal as she spotted a dark figure standing in the middle of her room, bow raised – wait bow. She flicked the light switch and the room, including a vigilante who was pointing an arrow at her, was bathed in light.

Pressing a hand to her chest in an attempt to slow her rapidly beating heart, she glared at Oliver; “God, you nearly gave me a heart attack being all creepy, lurker. Wait, have you been following me tonight?”

“No. Why?”

She shook her head, “No reason. Would you put down the bow, I’m worried you’re going to accidentally let the arrow fly. I mean I could totally stop the arrow mid-air but still, scary.”

Oliver lowered the bow slowly; “I’ve never shot someone accidentally.” He sounded downright insulted by the suggestion.

“Why are you waving your arrow loaded bow around in my bedroom?”

“I came in and you weren’t here, I was… concerned.”

“Huh. Ok.” Felicity rolled her eyes at him and his awkwardness; “Take down the hood, you
freak.”

Reaching up with one hand, he shoved the hood back letting it fall, she nodded, satisfied; “Much better. I can see your eyes now. I like your eyes.”

He didn’t say anything, didn’t even move, just stood there stoically. She decided he must be in vigilante mode and need a minute to warm back up to Oliver mode. She turned and headed back out of her room and called over her shoulder; “Come on, I’ve had a tough night, I’m going to eat my feelings and you get to watch and not judge. Oooohhh, there’s still some cake left in my fridge.”

She could hear him following her, his boots connecting with her hardwood floors; “Go sit down and I’ll grab the cake.”

She went to the fridge and took the cake out, grabbed a fork and then thought she’d grab Oliver a fork too just in case he decided he wanted some cake. She turned back to the living room and smiled when she saw he’d sat on her sofa and laid his bow and quiver down on her coffee table beside her photo album.

Balancing the cake in her hand, she walked around the sofa and carefully stepped around his legs and gracelessly flopped down right beside him. He clearly wasn’t ready to start chatting yet, still caught up in whatever battle he’d been in, analysing his win or loss in his mind. Felicity took a bite of her cake and chewed thoughtfully.

“I went to see Madame Therese tonight to ask her about the prophecy my Dad was talking about. It’s real by the way. Anyway, I felt like someone was following me or watching me. Sometimes my witchy instincts hint at things like that.”

She ate some more of her cake, thinking about that feeling and wondering if it was all in her imagination. She was just considering turning on the tv and watching something to take her mind off everything when his voice startled her; “Did you feel unsafe? Threatened?”

She shook her head, not sure how to put what she felt into words, how to articulate it right; “No. It’s more like I felt like the person who was watching me was conflicted, like they didn’t know what to do with me. Harm me or leave me be. I don’t know.”

“We didn’t get Deadshot,” Oliver blurted out.
Wanting to give him her full attention, she placed the cake on the coffee table amongst his bow and quiver. She turned her body slightly toward him and tucked her legs up under her.

“Deadshot?”

“That’s the code name for the guy who killed Diggle’s brother.”

“Oh. He got away?”

“Yeah. He was better prepared. He killed four agents and I couldn’t get a clean shot at him.” He sighed and ran a hand down his face. He looked exhausted.

“I’m sorry, Oliver.”

He didn’t say anything, just dipped his chin in acknowledgement of what she was saying. Sensing the conversation was over, Felicity picked up her tv remote and clicked the tv on. There was an episode of Sherlock playing so she figured it was the perfect distraction. She repositioned herself so that she was facing the tv, her legs curled beside her and her arm pressed into Oliver’s arm.

She stole a quick look at Oliver and saw he was frowning at the tv, not really seeing it. She hooked her arm through his so that she was practically hugging his arm and pressed the side of her head to his bicep.

They sat watching Sherlock with her stealing some of Oliver’s heat and her eyelids getting heavier and heavier until they closed completely. The last thing she was aware of was Oliver brushing a soft kiss to her head.
Debauchery

Chapter Summary

Tommy and Oliver turn up on Felicity's doorstep. Felicity and Jax venture to Verdant and Felicity and Oliver have a moment.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow or DC or The CW.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Felicity bolted upright. There was knocking. Someone was knocking on her door. She looked around dazedly. She was still on her sofa but someone – Oliver – had covered her with a blanket and placed her glasses on the coffee table. Oliver had obviously snuck out at some point without saying goodbye to her. Rude.

Someone was still knocking on her door. Yawning loudly, she shoved her glassed onto her face and stood up taking the blanket with her. She padded across the hard wood floors in her socks and pulled her door open ready to tell whoever it was to go away.

“Nice hair, cutie.” Tommy was propped against her door frame with Oliver behind him.

“Oh, I’m sorry. If I’d known two billionaires would be popping around, I would have gotten out my hot rollers and pearls.” She said sarcastically even as she held the door open for them to enter. Tommy bounded right in. He was like an over-excited puppy who didn’t realise their size and could destroy a room in mere seconds. Oliver was calmer in his approach, though he did pause to reach out and tuck a piece of hair behind her ear.

“I don’t know, I kind of like the bed hair.” He stated simply, giving her a wink and smirking as she flushed.

“Of course, you do,” Tommy replied dryly; “Oooohh cake.”

Felicity pushed her door shut, spun and pointed a finger at Tommy who was perched on her sofa.
eyeing up the cake she’d only nibbled at the night before; “Touch it and I’ll cut off your hand and feed it to the fishes.”

“Wow, you’re just little miss sunshine in the morning, aren’t you?”

“Hey, I’m an absolute delight, Tommy.” She shot back and stuck out her tongue at him.

She watched as Oliver sat in the same spot he’d sat in the night before, picked up a fork and took a bite of cake. Tommy gasped dramatically like a teenage girl; “How come he’s allowed a bite and I’m not?”

Felicity merely shrugged.

Tommy pouted; “Not fair. That’s favouritism, plain and simple. It’s not right.”

“I’m sure you’ll get over it.”

“He really won’t.” Oliver added with a smile.

“Ok then,” Felicity said and perched on the arm of the sofa closest to Tommy; “To what do I owe this early morning visit?”

“We have decided that we all need a few more fun nights in our lives;” Tommy said grinning at her.

“’We’ as in you two?,” Felicity said motioning between the two of them.

“God, no.” Tommy stated; “I mean, ‘we’ as in Kat and I.”

“When did you and Kat become a we?”
“Around the time that I walked in on them getting it on against a wall in the club.” Oliver deadpanned.

Felicity gave Tommy a shove; “Ew! You and my sister? I knew you were flirting but I didn’t think you two were – ew.”

“Katerina is,” Tommy drawled; “incredibly flexible.”

Felicity jumped up off the sofa; “Don’t. I don’t want to hear about the ways you’ve violated my sister.”

“Oh, honey, she violated me.”

“Oh my god.” Felicity shuddered; “I think I need a shower. And what about Laurel? I thought you were hung up on her and were waiting for her to realise the error of her ways and come crawling back to you.”

Tommy waved a hand; “That ship has sailed;” he stood up, slung an arm around her and pulled her into his side; “Just think, you and I could be family one day.”

“Oh, honey,” she said as she patted his cheek; “Katerina is never going to stick around that long.”

The sound of a phone dinging broke up their banter. Oliver pulled his phone out of his pocket and frowned down at it; “Laurel.”

“I thought you put a stop to that trainwreck,” Tommy stated, he let Felicity go and flopped down beside Oliver to read the text; “She wants to meet up? She wants to still be friends?”

Oliver groaned; “She wants to save me.” He got to his feet and started pacing around her living room like a caged animal desperate to get out. Everything in his body language screamed that he was feeling cornered, trapped and wanted out. He hoisted himself up onto her kitchen island. He clasped his hands together and rested his elbows on his knees and took a deep breath; “Why does every woman I meet wanna save me?” he affected a higher voice; “Oliver be better, be kinder, think of somebody else just once.”
Tommy leaned forward and mock whispered; “I think Laurel finally broke him.”

Oliver continued his epic rant in his regular voice, his tone frustrated; “I hear the hope in their voice, the belief that they’re gonna get through to me. It’s kind of a cliché really, rehab the bad boy, prove that he cares.”

Frowning, Felicity took a step forward but stopped short at the vehemence in his tone; “I don’t want help or pity or tenderness;” he spit out each word like it were the enemy, like each one physically hurt him. “I promise, there is nothing inside of me that is worth saving.”

And wasn’t that just the saddest thing? Felicity had no idea what to say or do. What do you say to someone who thought they weren’t worth saving, that they didn’t matter enough to save? She just wanted to walk up to him and give him a hug but everything about his body language told her he wouldn’t be particularly receptive or that. The silence echoed throughout her apartment. Oliver clearly thought that everyone thought he was damaged, broken, not quite right. Did he think he was damaged?

Tommy cleared his throat; “Well, buddy, that was quite the revealing rant. Shall we take a one woman poll? Felicity, do you want to save Oliver, redeem him of his bad boy ways?”

She resisted the urge to blurt out that actually, she rather enjoyed a bad boy, instead keeping her gaze on Oliver’s form she said slowly; “No. I don’t want to save him. There’s nothing wrong with him.”

Oliver’s gaze flew up and collided with her own and she could see the conflict raging in his eyes from where she stood. She didn’t look away, she truly couldn’t even if she wanted to.

“Right then. You two can stare into each other’s eyes later.” At Tommy’s teasing tone, Felicity dropped her gaze; “Are we on for tonight?”

“What?” Felicity asked, confused.

“Getting fun back into our lives? At Verdant. Wear something glittery, strappy and short.”

Felicity made a face at Tommy, “I don’t do nightclubs.”
“Tonight, fair maiden, you do. You will be there and you will dance and drink and just generally have a good time.”

She crossed her arms; “You can’t make me.”

“Oh, I can too, missy.” He stood up, “Come on, broody, let’s go. And Miss Felicity, be there or I will drag you there. Ten pm. Don’t be late.”

“Stop tugging on it, it won’t magically grow any longer;” Jax hissed at her as they stood in line waiting to get into Verdant. If Tommy hadn’t wanted them to be late, he should have put them on the VIP list for goodness sake. It’s not like they were all rolling in the dough and could just slip the bouncer some bills and be in. Noooo, some people had to stand in line and wait their turn. Which was what Jax and Felicity were doing and it was making Felicity a little anxious. Some of the anxiety had to do with the dress Jax had helped her choose. It was a gold, lace mini cocktail dress that hit a little higher up on her thigh than she was comfortable with. She’d left her glasses at home and shoved her contacts in. Her hair was curled perfectly and she thought she looked nice but all she wanted to do was go home, put her pjs on and watch some of her guilty pleasure shows.

“I want to go home.”

“Not a choice, babydoll;” Jax stated as he ushered her passed the bouncer with a hand pressed firmly to the small of her back.

The music was too loud and the lights hurt her head but Jax was behind her, his hands on her waist, urging her through the throngs of people toward the bar. Katerina and Tommy were in front of the bar, drinks in hand, their heads close together as they whispered sweet nothings to each other. Oliver stood a short distance from them, looking like the world’s most awkward third wheel.

Katerina and Tommy didn’t appear to notice their approach but Oliver handed her a glass of something, which she gratefully accepted. This was what she hated about clubs, you couldn’t hear yourself think and forget about trying to have a conversation. She smiled lightly at Oliver. He crooked a finger at her, so she moved closer and he leaned down and spoke right into her ear; “Your sister and Tommy have been in their own little world all night, I don’t think any sisterly bonding is happening tonight.”
She pulled back, put a hand on his shoulder and rose up on her toes and put her own mouth beside his ear; “It’s ok, just means I can go home –“

Jax’s hand wrapped around her arm and pulled her back; “No one is going home. The night is young and we are dancing.”

Felicity shrugged and handed Oliver her drink and allowed herself to be dragged onto the dance floor by Jax. They danced to the god awful music that was all beat and no actual rythym for more songs than she would have liked. The only reprieve she got was when she needed to go to the bathroom. Jax shrugged and found someone new to dance with. She shook her head at her flirtatious friend. Speaking of flirtatious, she had to walk passed Katerina trying to swallow Tommy’s tongue to get to the bathroom and she desperately wished she could erase that image from her memory.

She made her way into the bathroom, did her thing, washed her hands and dreaded the idea of going back out there. She left the bathroom and instead of going back to the dance floor, she pushed the side fire escape door and landed in the alley down the side of the club.

Leaning back against the exposed brick wall, she let her eyes fall shut and took a deep breath.

“How’s it going?”

Her eyes flew open and landed on Oliver, leaning against the opposite wall, the sleeves of his crisp white shirt pushed up to the elbows and a few buttons undone. He was watching her intently. She shivered as she saw his gaze take a casual stroll down her body before his eyes met hers again.

“How’s it going?”

She let out a harsh laugh; “Yeah me too, being club owner, playboy Oliver Queen is exhausting.”

“Are you ok?”

He pushed away from the wall and prowled across the width of the alley and came to stand toe to
toe with her. Even in her high heels, he towered over her. He wrapped a warm hand around the hand that was twisting her hair around and pulled it down.

“Are you having fun, Felicity?” He asked softly, enunciating every syllable of her name slowly.

“No, not really.”

“Me either. I’d much rather be sitting on your sofa watching you demolish a slice of cake. Or watching you sleep or better yet have you sleep on my shoulder while some crappy tv show plays.”

“I’d rather that too,” she muttered. She held her breathe as he raised a hand and ran a knuckle down her cheek.

“You look amazing tonight,” He paused and looked down at her with a little smile; “You always look beautiful, though.”

“Are you drunk, Oliver?”

He leaned further into her and whispered; “Not even a little bit.”

“Ok,” she whispered back.

With one finger, he tilted her chin up and took half a step forward so he was a mere centimetres from being pushed up against her; “Ok.” Then his lips landed on hers and the shock of the sensation caused her to gasp and her mouth opened under his, giving him more access. She fisted her hand into his shirt and she was sure she was crinkling it as she twisted it and rose up on her toes in a bid to get closer to him as she kissed him back with just as much fervour. His arm banded around her waist and her arm went around his neck as they kissed against the wall of a dirty alley without any type of restraint. He kissed her as if he wanted to possess her and she gave as good as she got, biting at his bottom lip and smiling against his mouth at the groan that came out of him at the action.

The loud sound of a door banging stopped them. She felt like some outside force had to stop them. Oliver backed away from her, looking thoroughly debauched. She stared at him as she tried to regulate her breathing and he stared right back. He smirked looking far too pleased with himself. Stepping forward, her ran a thumb over her lower lip and then strode back into the club
leaving her to collect herself.

What the hell had just happened.

Pushing away from the wall, she went back into the club and winced at the strobe lights. She suddenly felt far too hot. Stumbling into the bathroom, she ran some water over her wrists because she’d heard that that was a proven technique to cool a person down. She looked up at her reflection in the mirror and decided she looked just as debauched as Oliver had. Her lipstick was virtually gone and what was left of it was smudged and her hair that had started the night as polished perfect curls now looked like ‘just been fucked’ hair. Grabbing a hand towel out of the dispenser, she wiped off what was left of her lipstick and tried to comb out her hair a little. Once she decided she looked normal enough, she ventured out to the dance floor to try to find Jax and avoid Oliver.

She found Jax dancing with a girl and a guy and grabbed his arm and pulled her with her as she fought her way to the exit. Once they got outside, Jax forced her to stop and tilted his head giving her his patent concerned look; “What’s up, babydoll? You look a little wild-eyed.”

Felicity wrapped her arms around herself; “I’m fine.” She stated, bluntly, “I just want to go home.”

“Ok,” Jax slung his arm around her and they made their way back to her apartment. She enjoyed the cool night air, letting it cool her kiss fever. Her lips still felt tingly and raw from the pressure of Oliver’s mouth on hers and the scratch of his scruff. He’d kissed her like he was desperate to get lost in her. She wasn’t sure she could survive that type of intensity.

Felicity and Jax made their way up the stairs to her apartment and she ignored the silent way he assessed her in the elevator. Shoving her key into her lock, she opened her apartment door and wandered into her bedroom. As she held onto her dresser and took off her heels, Jax stood stock still in the middle of the room, his head tilted, frowning.

“What?”

“Do you hear that ticking sound?”

She shook her head; “No.” She didn’t hear anything.
Jax grabbed her hand and pulled her toward the window; “Get out on the fire escape,” he frantically ordered.

“What?”

“Just do it!” He hauled the window up and shoved her out. She stumbled, little off balance with one shoe on and one shoe off. Jax wrapped an arm around her waist and held her to him; “When I say jump, jump!”

She tried to twist around and ask him what was going on but then he was telling her to jump so because she trusted him blindly, she jumped.

A second after they jumped off her fire escape, her apartment exploded.

Chapter End Notes

The speech/rant Oliver gives comes from this season one promo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lj34Op3CtKM&list=WL&index=1 (the video is not mine). I find this little speech so telling of Oliver's state of mind especially about himself. I've only recently discovered this promo as I am from New Zealand and we don't get those type of promos, just the ones for the actual episodes. :)


Felicity's apartment was blown up and she has a little meltdown because, well her apartment blew up.

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Oliver and Tommy were packing down the club and cashing up when Diggle came striding across the now empty dance floor and clicked on the tv. “I was monitoring the feeds and there’s something you need to see.”

The voiceover of the newscaster was talking about some kind of explosion which had happened in an apartment complex. Oliver dropped the pile of bills he was counting when the screen then went to an image of the building.

“Isn’t that -?” Tommy started but didn’t finish.

“Felicity’s building?” Diggle finished, his expression grave; “Yeah. It is.”

Oliver was striding out of the club and climbing onto his bike while they discussed it further. He revved the engine, shoved his helmet roughly onto his head and pushed off. He wove in and out of traffic, with a total disregard for both the road rules and the speed limits. She wasn’t dead. He knew she wasn’t. He was convinced he’d feel it if she was.

He skidded to a stop opposite Felicity’s building, took off his helmet and abandoned his bike as he stalked across the street, peering into the open backs of the ambulances which were on the scene. He strode through the crowd of the building’s occupants gathered on the pavement, some of them speaking to the police and looked for her face in every one. She wasn’t there.

He reached the corner of her building. Where was she? He looked up at the windows he knew were hers. Was she still in there? The windows were blown out by whatever blast had occurred.
Rounding the corner into the alley, he stopped short and sucked in a breath at the image that met him. Jax was standing in the middle of the alley, arms crossed, chin lifted, gaze steady. It wasn’t Jax that caught his attention. He leaned slightly to the right and there she was. Sitting on the ground, her legs curled to the side, arms wrapped around herself, still wearing that gold dress. Her hair, that had been perfectly curled hours ago, now hung in loose waves around her shoulders. She was also only wearing one black high heel. Oliver could tell by the way her shoulders shook that she was crying. He also knew that Jax was standing guard ready and willing to protect her from anything meaning to do her harm.

As Oliver inched closer, he also observed that Jax had bore the brunt of whatever amount of glass had rained down on them.

Oliver stepped around Jax and crouched down in front of Felicity. He reached out a hand and extracted a piece of glass that was tangled in her hair. Some of the debris had reached her after all. Tears streamed down Felicity’s face and her eyes looked dazed and a little out of it. Her tears had washed away most of her makeup, except for the lipstick which had been kissed away hours ago.

Gently taking her face in both hands, he ran his thumbs under her eyes collecting the tears and mascara that had mixed together. He waited for her eyes to land on him and to come into focus.

“Oliver.” His name came out on an exhalation and with a sniffle.

“Hey,” he replied in a voice that was barely above a whisper.

She gnawed at her bottom lip and he remembered how good those lips had felt under his own. He then silently reminded himself that now was not the time.

“Someone,” she whispered shakily, “someone blew my apartment up.”

She tipped her head slightly and the action pushed her cheek further into the palm of his hand, seeking comfort he wasn’t sure he could give but would try his best to provide.

“Oliver,” Jax said softly, looking back over his shoulder at him, “the police are going to want to talk to her. She has to get up and join the other building residents.”

He wanted to say that the police and anyone else could damn well wait until she was good and
ready but Felicity nodded against his hands and brought her hands up and pulled his away from her face. His hands were reluctant to drop.

Putting his hands under her arms, he pulled her up with him, she swayed slightly on her feet and held onto his arms to steady herself. Holding onto one of his arms, she reached down and pulled her remaining shoe off before standing on bare feet in front of him. He looked down at her and brushed some hair out of her face; “Now, you’re really tiny.”

She offered him a watery, shaky smile; “We can’t all be giants like you.”

Letting go of his arms she moved away from him and headed towards the street, Jax and Oliver flanked her like two sentinel soldiers. She moved through the same crowd that he’d looked for her in and gingerly lowered herself down on the steps up to the building. Jax took up station on one side of her and Oliver on the other side.

After a few moments of sitting on the steps, silently taking in the chaos around them, Oliver saw Laurel’s father approaching them, notepad in hand. He gave Oliver the special brand of glare reserved just for him. Oliver wasn’t too fazed by it, he deserved it after-all, he did lead the man’s daughter to her death.

Detective Lance offered Felicity a kind smile; “Hey there, sweetheart, think you can tell us what happened?”

“Yeah, sure, um,” Felicity stuttered and she sounded like she was ready to start crying again; “Um,”

“Take your time, darling.”

“Felicity and I,” Jax stepped in and explained what had happened in a way Felicity didn’t seem capable of; “went to meet some friends at Verdant. Felicity wanted to leave early so we walked back here. We were just about to walk up the stairs when there was an explosion.”

“Uh huh. And why weren’t you out here with the rest of the residents when we first got here?”

Oliver clenched his fist at the barely contained suspicion he detected in Detective Lance’s tone.
“I took Felicity into the alley.”

“And why would you do that?”

“I had a panic attack,” Felicity whispered. She was staring down at her lap and fiddling with the hem of her dress. Oliver reached out and took her hand, threading her fingers through his. She blinked but didn’t pull away. Looking up at Detective Lance she said; “I get them sometimes. My family was murdered when I was young and I was there and loud noises that sound like guns being fired can make me panic.”

“I wanted her to be in a safe space without people looking at her, Detective.” Jax stated, a hint of confrontation in his tone.

Detective Lance noted it all down in his notebook; “Right. Well, we’ll be in contact once we find out more about the explosion but can you think of any reason why someone would plant a bomb in your apartment?”

Felicity sniffled; “Not really.”

“Mmmm. I just have one last question for you, what’s your connection to Oliver Queen?”

Felicity frowned; “He’s my friend.”

“A bit of free advice, sweetheart, choose your friends more wisely.” And then he strode off.

“Well,” Jax drawled, “He’s a delight, isn’t he?”

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Oliver arrived back at the Foundry before Jax and Felicity. He’d wanted to keep Felicity with him but she was too shaken up to safely ride on the back of his bike. Tommy and Diggle met him at the bottom of the stairs firing questions at a million miles an hour at him. He merely shook his
head and sunk down into one of the chairs and wearily ran his hands down his face. Seconds later, Jax and Felicity came down the stairs and Felicity started pacing around the basement, twisting her hands together. Oliver moved to stand and Tommy and Diggle looked like they wanted to approach her but Jax shook his head at them.

“Someone blew up my apartment. Like literally blew it up and it went boom.” She turned and pointed an accusing finger at Jax who looked calm, like he’d weathered all her breakdowns and moods before; “And you! You made me jump off my fire escape. I don’t jump off things.”

She sounded like she was barely holding it together. “Who the hell would blow up my apartment? Why? Everything I own is in there, Jax. What am I going to wear? Where am I going to live? I have no one to stay with.”

“You can stay with me, babydoll,” Jax said soothingly.

“You? Jax, you live in the back of your bar in a room that’s the size of a closet!”

Jax shrugged; “So, it will be cosy.”

Felicity let out a little hysterical laugh, the tears coming in earnest; “I loved my apartment, Jax, I worked for it, it was the only thing that was mine.”

Oliver took a step closer to her and she whirled on him and looked at him with big, wet, blue eyes; “And you! You don’t just kiss a girl up against the wall in the alley behind your club and then walk away! You say something so she doesn’t over analyse it!”

“Woah,” Tommy muttered; “You kissed her? Not the point, right.”

Jax’s brows had also flown up.

Oliver smiled softly, “Ok.”

“Ok,” she agreed; “And stop looking at me like that. Like you want to save me. You said you didn’t want to be saved. Well, neither do I. I don’t need you to save me, Oliver. I might need you
to help me a little bit, but I don’t need you to save me.”

“Of course you don’t, sweetness, no one’s trying to save you but how about you let Oliver find you a t-shirt to change into – “

“Kat left a pair of leggings upstairs, I’ll go get them for you,” Tommy stated and raced up the stairs.

Jax smiled at Felicity, “There you go, Kat’s leggings and Oliver’s t-shirt, it will almost be an outfit.” Jax looked at Oliver; “Where’s your bathroom?”

Oliver pointed it out and Jax led Felicity to it with the promise to bring in the clothes. Tommy returned with the leggings and Oliver handed over a grey t-shirt which Jax took into the bathroom.

Jax came back into the main part of the basement and started talking; “The bomb was ticking, I could hear it in her apartment. Which makes me think it was home made with maybe an analog clock as the countdown mechanism.”

“We need to get into that apartment and find it before the police do.” Diggle stated.

Jax sighed; “She’s going to want to go. She’s not going to be willing to sit this one out.” He walked passed Oliver and patted his shoulder; “Look after our girl.”

“Where are you going?”

“I’m going to have a conversation with big brother and see if he has any ideas about who put a bomb in Felicity’s apartment.”

“You’re leaving?” Tommy asked; “Seems like Felicity needs you here.”

“She doesn’t need me. She’s got him,” he hooked a thumb in Oliver’s direction; “Don’t fuck it up.” Jax finished with a wink. He tipped his head to the side; “If you want to have a chat with her, she’s showered and dressed, sounds like she’s just giving herself a little talk in the mirror.”
Oliver was striding toward the bathroom before Jax had even finished talking. He tapped his fist lightly on the door and then opened. Jax was right, he found Felicity gripping the small counter and staring at her reflection in the mirror and muttering away to herself. He couldn’t catch whatever she was saying. He leaned against the door and watched her until eyes rose and met his in the mirror.

Katerina’s leggings fit her perfectly but his t shirt was as long as her dress had been and slipped off her shoulder exposing the creamy skin to him. Her eyes were rimmed with red but she was no longer crying.

“I’m sorry about my little breakdown out there.”

He shrugged; “Your home was just destroyed, a freak out is probably the justified response.”

She nodded and continued to watch him in the mirror.

Sighing she; “So, I guess I’m homeless. Again.”

“You can stay here.” He offered with no hesitation.

“Here?”

“Yeah. Did you see the sofas in the corner behind the salmon ladder and workout mats?”

“No. I didn’t really get the full tour.”

“Tommy put the sofas in. He’s living here. I crash here sometimes too. The sofas pull out. They’re not too lumpy.”

“Ok. Thank you, Oliver.”

Silence surrounded them. Oliver ran his gaze over her form to make sure she really was physically fine. His eyes narrowed when he spotted a tiny bruise forming on the back of her shoulder.
Pushing away from the door, he closed the gap between them and stood right behind her. He heard her suck in a breath as brushed her hair aside and ran a finger over the spot.

“Jax slammed me into the brick wall to shield me from the debris.” She stated in a shaky voice.

On impulse, he bent his head and softly brushed his lips against the forming bruise. He straightened up just as she turned around. Placing his hands on her waist, he lifted her up and set her down on the counter, stepping between her legs.

Leaning forward, he pressed a soft, lingering kiss to her lips and smiled against her mouth as she brought her arms up around his neck and wrapped her legs around him. He didn’t deepen the kiss, it wasn’t what she needed right then, just kept it to a light pressure, letting her know he’d meant it when he’d kissed her in Verdant’s alley.

Pulling away, he rested his forehead against hers and waited for her eyes to flutter open and look back at him; “I’m going to go to your building, see if I can find what’s left of the bomb and bring it back for Diggle to look at. Wanna come?”

A slow, small smile lit up Felicity’s face, she nodded; “Definitely.”

He pressed another peck of a kiss to her lips; “Think you can get on the back of my bike?” he spoke against her lips.

She nodded again; “Definitely.”
Oliver watched Felicity wander around her burnt out apartment, trying to salvage items that meant the most to her. Some of her clothes were intact and she’d packed them into a bag. It seemed like her living room had bore the brunt of the blast. Felicity had waited for him to get changed into his vigilante suit and then had climbed onto his bike without so much as a hint of hesitation. Besides the thrill of having her pressed firmly against him back, she was great on the bike, leaning into the corners with him and holding him tightly but not in a suffocating hold. Before the island, the few times he’d had Laurel on the back of his bike, she’d screamed in his ear the whole time and dug her nails into his skin and not in a good way.

While Felicity rifled through what was left of her bedroom for things to take back to the Foundry, Oliver did a sweep of the destroyed living room for the bomb. Felicity had indicated that they were on a time limit. She’d done her freezing thing on the police outside and the bomb squad her were gearing up to come inside and she wasn’t sure how long it would last. They couldn’t get caught.

If he were going to set up a ticking time bomb in her apartment, where would he put it? Striding over to her fire place, he bent and stuck his arm up, his hand feeling around. His hand came in contact with what felt like the remnants of an old fashioned alarm clock taped to the brick. He pulled it out and put it into the backpack he’d brought with him.

From the bedroom, he heard Felicity’s phone ring yet again. It had been ringing on and off since they’d left the Foundry. She kept pushing ‘ignore’. He’d taken a peek at her screen the last time it rang, it had been Nate.

The ringing cut off and Felicity came back into the living room, a bag over her shoulder and phone clutched in hand.
“You should call him back or text him. He’s probably heard what’s happened and is worried.” Oliver shrugged; “It’s just what big brothers do.”

He watched as Felicity typed out a text and then put her phone into the zip up pocket of Katerina’s leggings. From her other hand, she took her glasses and put them on with a shrug of her own; “My glasses survived so I’m not going to have to keep shoving my finger in my own eye.”

She picked up the now charred photo album she’d shown him a few nights ago and sighed when she found the photos all destroyed. He thought she’d start crying but she brushed passed him and squatted down and pulled brick out of the side of the fireplace. From the hole where the brick should be, she pulled out a roll of cash and a pile of photos held together with a rubber band as well as another phone.

From under his hood, he raised a brow and she shrugged; “What? Jax says that my undiagnosed PTSD and abandonment issues have turned me into a paranoid little thing. But I like to be prepared. Though, I never imagined that someone would blow up my apartment. I was more worried that whoever killed my siblings would come after me and I’d need to make a quick run for it.”

“Undiagnosed PTSD?” Yeah, she’d been through a lot but he thought she was one of the better adjusted people he knew.

She nodded; “Yup. I’ve got it,” she pointed a finger at him; “And so do you. Maybe that’s why you like me, because we’ve both got issues.”

What?

Felicity went to walk passed him. He grabbed her arm and spun her back around; “That’s not why.”

She looked at him, face devoid of a stitch of makeup, innocent, vulnerable and open; “Ok. Then why?”

He opened his mouth not sure what he wanted to say or even how to say it but what came out was low and gruff; “I’m no good for you. Maybe I’m not good for anyone.”
Her eyes fluttered shut and when she looked back up at him, the openness was gone. She was retreating, putting on a mask. It was a trick he used too. She gave an abrupt nod; “Right.” Her tone was clipped; “I get it. A couple of kisses don’t have to mean anything, Oliver.”

She was letting him off the hook, giving him an out if he wanted it. In the past, he would have taken it and never looked back.

“What? No, that’s not what – “

“It’s fine,” she cut him off. Slowly, she pried his fingers from her arm and was walking away. He cursed himself. Thea had told him a few weeks ago that he was emotionally constipated. He didn’t want to be that way – not with Felicity. He just didn’t know how not to be that way.

He exhaled deeply; “I hate when women cry. Hate it. I never know what to do and it just makes me want to run, get as far away as possible because I’m usually a source of the tears;” Felicity slowly turned back to him, frowning but listening. He shrugged; “When you cry, I feel this intense need to find whoever hurt you and torture them in all the ways I know.”

Her mouth parted as if she wanted to say something. He took a step forward, his boots crunching on the broken glass littering her living room floor.

“When I first saw you sitting on the floor of the foundry, I was pissed off that you were trespassing but at the same time you were the most captivating thing I’d encountered since I’d been home.”

Another step forward.

“It was refreshing the way you don’t put up with any of my shit. I was pissed at myself when I disappointed you and you were crying on Laurel’s hallway floor. I hated that you wouldn’t let me touch you but cried on Tommy’s shoulder.”

Another step forward and he was right in front of her.

“You don’t need me to save you but I want you to rely on me. I want to rely on you. I want you to tell me all your secrets.”
That was it. That was all he had. Now it was her move.

“Oliver,” his name fell from her lips on a whisper.

He waited for her to say something more. She rose up on her toes and grasped his quiver strap for leverage and pressed a whisper of a kiss to his mouth. She was about to back away so he wrapped an arm around her waist to keep her there, pressing her against him. He crashed his mouth against hers again. She gasped into his mouth and he took full advantage of the situation, deepening the kiss. Felicity released his quiver strap, ran a hand up his chest, up the side of his neck, under his hood and settled on the nape of his neck. His gloved fingers slipped under her – his – t-shirt and touched her bare skin.

His hand squeezed her thigh and he brought her leg up over his hip, catching on to what he wanted, she brought her hand up to join the other one at the nape of his neck, did a little jump, using him for leverage and wrapped both legs around his waist. He groaned as her tongue traced his bottom lip begging for entrance that he so eagerly gave. She tasted like tears and sunshine and everything good. She truly was sugar and spice and all things nice.

They kissed like they had all the time in the world, like there was nothing else going on in world except what was happening between the two of them.

Felicity pulled away first and Oliver felt a little proud about how ragged her breathing was. She was still wrapped around him and he suppressed a groan when she bit her bottom lip and looked down at his mouth; “We should, um, we should go, the poor police are still frozen out there.”

“Yeah,” he agreed as he pressed another lingering kiss to her lips.

She pulled away again and unwrapped her legs from around him. He let her down and she took a step back looking a little like she was drunk on his kisses. She cleared her throat and pressed her lips together. It was adorable how flustered she was. She flushed beautifully and avoided his gaze as she picked up her bag from where she’d dropped it and slung it over her shoulder.

She tried unsuccessfully to smooth out the wrinkles in her t-shirt where he’d grabbed at her. “So, yeah. We should go.”

With a smirk, he motioned for her to lead the way and then followed her out of her destroyed apartment and the police were frozen in the hallway where they’d left them and as they rounded a
corner, Felicity waved a hand and unfroze the scene. Oliver helped her onto his bike and climbed on in front of her, she wrapped her arms around him. She leaned into his ear; “And stop looking so damn pleased with yourself.”

He grinned as he revved the engine and she shoved her helmet onto her head, he put his on and took off.

-----------------------------------------------

Felicity was convinced that Diggle and Tommy could totally tell what her and Oliver had been doing. They both gave them a sly little grin when they walked in, though Diggle’s was ever so slightly more subtle than Tommy’s.

Oliver dumped the mangled bomb onto the computer desk and he and Diggle started dissecting it. She didn’t even want to look at it. Instead, she wandered over to Tommy, who seemed to be making up the sofa beds.

“You don’t need to make my bed for me, Tommy, I can do it.” She said as she sat on the edge of the one he’d already made.

He waved a hand at her dismissively as he fought with the fitted sheet; “It’s no problem, you are my – our – guest. You’ve had a traumatic experience, you just sit back and relax and we’ll have you all tucked up in no time.”

She wanted to say that her life was just a series of traumatic experiences. She smiled at Tommy and had to admit the beds did look awfully inviting. “So, Mr Merlyn, it looks as if you and I are going to be having many a sleepover, any chance I’ll be able to talk you into face masks and manicures?”

He shot her a wink; “Honey, there’s every chance. But on a more serious note, I can’t be seeing any of your lady parts and you can’t try to sneak a peek at what I’m working with, I’m a one Smoak kind of man, deal?”

She laughed softly; “Ok, Tommy, I promise to keep all my parts to myself and to stay away from yours. So, which bed is mine?”
He finished making the bed and shrugged; “Which ever one you like, lady’s choice.”

She looked at her phone, it was almost five am and she desperately wanted to crawl into the freshly made bed and just sleep off her night but she wasn’t sure what the protocol was. She glanced around and Oliver and Diggle were still analysing the bomb. Tommy must have noticed her indecision; “If you want to go to sleep, get into bed, Oliver and Diggle are here until God knows what hour working and working hour, you learn to drown it out.”

Well that answered that question then. She nodded and toddled off to the bathroom to brush her teeth and when she came back out, Diggle was gone, Tommy was lounging on one of the beds, clearing claiming it as his own. So much for lady’s choice. Oliver was doing something on one of the computers. She walked over and sat in the spare chair; “Thank you for taking me back to my apartment with you.”

He turned to her and shrugged; “Jax said you’d want to go.”

“Did you and Diggle figure anything out about the bomb?”

His shoulders slumped and he sighed; “It looks like it was made by an amateur but that’s about it. Diggle’s going to have one of his contacts look at it.”

She nodded; “Right. Ok.”

“Tommy mentioned you were looking forward to getting some sleep.” He got to his feet and ran a hand across her cheek; “Good night, Felicity.”

And then he disappeared into the bathroom, presumably to change out of the leathers. Felicity padded over to the beds and climbed into one, pulling the covers right up to her chin. She stared at the ceiling, then had a thought; “Hey, Tommy? You said Oliver sometimes stays here, if both beds are taken where will he sleep if he stays tonight?”

Silence. It stretched for so long that Felicity didn’t think Tommy was going to respond. She was just about to close her eyes when he said; “Sure as hell not with me.”
Felicity came back to the land of the conscious deliciously slowly. She felt warm and safe and she was dreaming that Oliver was watching her sleep, running the back of his knuckles down her cheek. She moved and her hair fell over her face. A finger nudged the hair back behind her ear. Her eyes fluttered open and she slowly came to the realisation that she was in the Foundry. And Oliver was in fact watching her sleep. He was sitting, shirtless on the edge of her bed, looking at her like she was the best thing he’d ever seen. Slowly, she sat up and locked her eyes with his.

Pushing the covers back, she rose up on her knees and inched closer to him. Slowly, she ran a finger over the line of Chinese characters running down his right side. He sucked in a breath and she felt his abs contract under her touch. It was little nice that he was almost as affected by her as she was by him. The Chinese characters hadn’t been there in the first timeline and she wondered how he’d got them. Why he’d got them. Trailing her fingers up his chest, her gaze barely registered the scars – some she knew about but this version of him hadn’t told her about them yet – he wasn’t his scars. As her eyes met his once more, his eyes had taken on a haunted, tortured look, as if he were convinced, she was only seeing the scars and judging him for them.

She couldn’t have that.

His fists were clenched on his knees and she was convinced that this was her show. Bending her head, she pressed a light kiss to his Bratva tattoo. Bracing her hands on his shoulders, she threw her leg across his lap and moved so that she was straddling him. She picked up his left hand, uncurled his fingers and placed his hand on her waist. She repeated the process with his right hand.

She slipped her hands up his neck to his cheeks, his scruff tickling her fingers and leaning forwards she kissed him lightly. She pulled back and looked at his face, his eyes had fallen closed and she allowed herself a small smile before closing the gap once more and laying another sweet kiss on
his mouth. He pressed his hand flat against her back as he kissed her back, his lips moving softly under hers. He tasted vaguely of sweat and she guessed he’d been on the salmon ladder before he wandered over to watch her sleep.

Her hands dropped from his face and she wrapped her arms around his neck as his hand moved up her back and landed at the nape of her neck, tangling in her hair as he deepened the kiss, his tongue stroking against hers in a way designed to make her shiver against him.

Her nails dragged over the dragon tattoo on his left shoulder as he tipped her head back and kissed across her cheek and down her neck. The t-shirt she’d borrowed from him had already slipped slightly off her shoulder, he pulled it down a little further and pressed an open mouth kiss to the spot where her shoulder and neck met. She mewed as he sucked hard on the spot and then soothed it with his tongue. She just knew there’d be a mark.

Burying a hand in his hair, she tugged on the close cut hair, pulling his head back up and crushing her lips back to his for another toe curling kiss.

Oliver had just gotten a hand under her shirt, walking his fingers across her skin before splaying his hand across her ribs, his thumb lightly brushing the underside of her breast, when the door to the Foundry slammed shut and they both froze.

Jax’s voice floated down to them; “I hope everyone is decent. I can hear the elevated heart rates and heavy breathing.”

Felicity flew off Oliver’s lap and crawled back under her covers, pulling them up as far as possible without covering her head. She felt the flush crawling up her skin. Oliver cursed, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and slowly got to his feet and walked over to the table and leaned over it, gripping the edge tightly. And was he taking deep, measured breaths?

Jax appeared above her, smirking, he pulled the covers back slightly; “Nice hickey, you do excellent work, Mister Queen.”

Dear God, just kill her now.

Jax flopped down on the bed beside her; “So, Nate and I had a little chat. He didn’t make your apartment go boom.”
Felicity sat up abruptly, letting the blankets fall; “And you believe him?”

“I compelled him, sweetness. He couldn’t lie if he wanted to.”

Oliver turned toward them, his expression perfectly composed and neutral, not even a hint of being affected by the making out they’d just done. So unfair.

“What did he say, exactly?” Oliver asked, leaning back against the table looking far too relaxed. He shot Felicity a little wink which only caused her blush to deepen.

“He said that he wanted to find whoever did it and make them hurt in a thousand different ways. He was rather explicit and descriptive. Also, rather creative.” Jax sounded creepily impressed.

Felicity scrunched her nose; “That’s um…nice. I guess.”

Jax nudged her; “Hey, at least you know he cares.”

She gave Jax her most withering look and he shrugged unapologetically. She sighed; “You know I wonder what normal, healthy, well-adjusted families are like.”

“I’ve told you a million times, babydoll, normal’s overrated.”

“Speaking of normal,” she started; “How are you wandering around without bursting into flames?”

Jax laughed; “Sweetness, you’ve slept all day, darkness has fallen.”

Her gaze flew to Oliver who just nodded. Jax threw his arm around her; “So, what I propose is you put some actual clothes on, we go get some Big Burger goodness into you and leave Mister broody broodster to sharpening his arrows and vigilating.”

She tilted her head and looked at Oliver quizzically; “Who are you crossing off the list this evening?”
Oliver’s expression grew stormy; “Diggle is following my mother. We think she may have been involved in Walter’s disappearance.”

Well. Holy crap on a cracker.

“See,” Jax said cheerfully, “You’re not the only one whose family is fucked up on multiple levels.”

Felicity arrived back at the Foundry a little before three in the morning. Jax had taken her out for Big Belly Burger as promised and had even bought her the thickest thick shake they made.

From Big Belly Burger, they’d made a pitstop at Jax’s bar and Jax had taken the best bottle of whiskey off the shelf and they’d snuck into her destroyed apartment and made up toasts. She drink a mere two glasses while Jax polished off the bottle and his stupid vampire ways meant he was not drunk off his ass. They’d sat on the floor talking for hours, Jax attempting to distract her from the fact that most of her worldly possessions were destroyed. It was a nice plan but all sitting in the burned out remains of her apartment did was make her feel extraordinarily lonely. Also, her dress got soot on it so she wasn’t a fan of that.

Felicity walked into the weirdly dark basement and flipped the lights on, she blinked as they flickered on and waited for her eyes to adjust. When they did, she saw Oliver in his leathers, sitting on the floor against a pillar, his legs pulled up, elbows on knees, hands clasped together. His expression was heartbreakingly anguished.

Tentatively, she approached him; “Oliver,” she started softly, “What are you doing sitting in the dark?”

“Dig and I found Walter,” he replied flatly; “In Bludhaven.”

Ok. She was definitely missing something, shouldn’t that be a cause for celebration? Not cause for sitting in the dark looking like someone shot his puppy.

She was about to say something to that effect when he spoke again; “The Gambit was sabotaged.
My mother knew.”

Oh god. Dropping her bag, she settled down on the floor beside him on her knees; “Oliver, I’m so sorry.”

He swallowed and he looked so incredibly injured that she wished she could just put a bandage over whatever it was that hurt. But sometimes the emotional pain was so much worse than anything physical could ever be.

“My mother is working with the organisation who wrote the list and are planning something terrible for the city.”

He sounded so wrecked by the prospect of his mother being in on something with not so honourable intentions. He’d obviously never been so thoroughly betrayed by his own family before. The first time, it could come as quite a shock but you got used to it, and she was just so messed up.

“Oliver, did you hear me, I’m so sorry,” she reached out a hand to touch him but he abruptly got to his feet and stalked away from her, leaving her kneeling on the Foundry floor. Slowly, she stood up and turned and watched him pace around the open space.

She tried again; “We’ll figure out what they’re up to, Oliver, we will.”

He stopped pacing abruptly and stared at her as if he’d only just realised she was there. He was looking at her as if he were the hunter and she was the prey and he desperately wanted her. He was looking at her like she was vertigo and he desperately wanted to get high. He was looking at her like he wanted to get lost in her.

It was terrifying and thrilling at the same time.

Before she could even blink, his body slammed into hers, her back hit the pillar behind her, his hands cupped her face and his mouth landed on hers. His tongue thrust into her mouth and tangled with her own. There was no gentleness or tenderness in the kiss, it was demanding and all encompassing. She couldn’t think about anything else except for him.

She gave as good as she got, giving herself over to the kiss.
Pressing her into the pillar with his body, Oliver ran his hands up her thighs, gripped her ass and lifted her up, she went with it and wrapped her legs tightly around him. He moaned against her mouth as she scraped her nails through his scruff on the way to clasping the back of his head.

Oliver kissed a path across her check, down her neck and nudged her dress strap down with his nose. She gasped as his warm, wet mouth landed on her lace covered nipple and sucked hard. He pulled away and shoved the cup of her bra down and returned his mouth to her nipple and sucked and licked, the sensation of his mouth on her and his scruff rubbing against her sensitive skin caused her to squirm. Tugging on the hair at the nape of his neck, she pulled his head back up to capture his lips with another searing kiss. He seemed perfectly happy to oblige.

She grappled with the zip of his jacket, whimpering in frustration against his mouth, she got the zip down and shoved the jacket to the side so she could get to all that well-defined skin.

He hitched her up higher against the pillar, and it was her turn to moan into his mouth as his hand found her panty covered centre. He pushed her panties aside and pushed two fingers into her at the exact same moment he thrust his tongue into her mouth. The combined sensations were almost too much for her and she dug her nails into his back.

“Oliver,” she gasped as he pumped his fingers into her and added a third.

“Yeah,” he whispered, leaning into her; “I’ve got you.”

In a complete lust haze, she nodded hazily and captured his lips in a kiss, running her tongue across his lower lip, begging access.

His thumb brushed against her clit and she decided that was it. Her hands found their way to the zip of his leather pants and she undid it, pushed the pants slightly and wrapped her hand around his more than ready cock. She pumped the velvety skin and he hissed and pulled away from the kiss, his forehead landing on her shoulder; “Fuck.”

She pumped him once, twice, a third time as he breathed heavily into her ear.

“Oliver,” she breathed, “Kiss me.”

His head rose up and his mouth crashed onto hers as she pushed his hand away, forcing his fingers
out of her wet, slick heat, she wrapped her legs tighter around him as she guided his cock to right
where she wanted him. She gasped into his mouth as he got the hint and pushed into her. And
thank the heavens for the pill she took every day.

He filled her to the hilt and neither of them moved as she adjusted to the size of him. Oliver lifted
his head and stared into her eyes. She was a little scared by the intensity in his gaze.

“Felicity,” he sighed. And then he was moving, his mouth finding hers again, his tongue thrusting
into her mouth in time with the thrust of his cock. She clenched around him and luxuriated in
every drag of his cock. His mouth was gone from hers and he was kissing down her neck, pausing
to suck on the hickey he’d given her earlier, making it even more prominent, before his mouth
found her nipple again and she moaned his name. The sound echoed on the walls of the foundry.
She felt everything in her tightening and knew she was close.

Oliver’s hand found its way between them and rubbed her clit, between that, his deep thrusts and
his mouth on her nipple, she was almost there. She moaned when Oliver’s mouth left her breast
and his breath was against her ear; “Come for me, Felicity,” he commanded roughly; “Tell me
what you need.”

“Harder.” She breathed.

He pulled out almost all the way before slamming back into her and fucking her with total
abandon, each thrust slamming her higher up the pillar. She dragged her nails down her back as
she screamed. Oliver fucked her through her orgasm and slammed his mouth onto hers in a
bruising kiss as he spilled everything he had into her.

His forehead landed on her shoulder and she felt his heavy breaths against her skin as she clung to
him as they both came down. The only sounds in the foundry were their collective breathing.

Oliver seemed to recover first, lifting his head and righting her bra and pulling up the strap of her
dress. He pulled out of her and helped her lower her feet back to the ground before he backed away
from her and righted his own clothes. She bit her lip and watched as he ran his hands over his face
and looked at her with what she thought was remorse and regret. Ok. This could get awkward
fast. She licked her lips and tried to be brave.

“This,” she waved a hand between them and her voice came out as a tremor but there was nothing
she could do about that; “doesn’t have to mean anything.”
He frowned, confused, so she ploughed on bravely she thought; “It was the heat of the moment. We’re both going through some really deep, dark stuff and needed a little comfort.”

She wrapped her arms around herself and was rather proud that she wasn’t welling up. She was giving him an out and if he chose to accept it, then she’d be ok with that because they both knew she felt more for him than he felt for her.

“It doesn’t have to mean anything if you don’t want it to,” she repeated.

His frown deepened and he shook his head; “Don’t do that.”

“Don’t do what?”

“Try to give me out of whatever this is.”

She nodded her head, “Well, do you want an out?”

“Do I want an out?” He muttered and was in front of her in a few quick strides and took her face in his hands; “No, Felicity, I don’t want an out.”

He pressed a soft, sweet kiss to her lips before pulling away and looking deep into her eyes in a way that, if it were any other person would make her uncomfortable; “And just so you know, Felicity, it definitely meant something.”

She gave him her best smile and flung herself at him, engaging him in another soul-touching kiss when the door to the foundry crashed shut and they pulled apart as Tommy Merlyn interrupted their epic moment. Oliver backed up a couple of steps and Felicity smoothed down the skirt of her dress but it did no use, Tommy took one look at the two of them and started very loudly singing; “I smell sex and candy.”

Felicity couldn’t have blushed any brighter if she’d tried.
I always find sex scenes a little difficult to write, I hope this wasn't too cringe-worthy and actually worked. I'm sorry if it didn't
Mixed Messages

Chapter Summary

Felicity thinks maybe Oliver isn't as invested in them as she is. She might be over analysing the situation. Felicity also has a chat with Detective Lance.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Felicity bolted upright in bed from a dream about gunshots, blood, dead siblings, slit throats of nieces and blown up apartments, she was alone in the Foundry. And where the hell did Tommy go every day? Although, that was possibly better for her not to think about considering he was probably with her sister who was doing who knows what to him. Or worse he was doing things to her sister. And ew. Yuck. She shook her head, pushed back the covers and made her way to the bathroom. She stared at her reflection in the mirror. She looked a bit of a wreck. Her hair was mused and not in the Brigette Bardot bed hair type of mused, but the tossing and turning type of messed up. She attempted to smooth it down and tame it. Oliver’s t-shirt fell off her shoulder, exposing the hickey he’d sucked into her skin. Concealer might be needed. A lot of concealer. Did she even still have any concealer? Or did it lose its life in her apartment?

She took her pill and brushed her teeth and attempted to make herself look a little more human. When she walked out of the bathroom, Oliver was perched on the end of her bed, looking delectable in his navy Henley and dark wash jeans. And she was starting to think like Jax. She needed to expand her friend circle.

He leaned back on his elbows as he gave her a predatory look, and she could totally see the playboy he’d once been. In that one look, she could understand how he’d managed to lure each one of his conquests into his bed so easily.

“I like you in my clothes,” he stated, his voice gruff. She really wished his voice didn’t do things to her but it one hundred percent did.

She tried to brush it off, rolling her eyes; “Of course you do,” she replied dryly. “But it’s more out of convenience, my pjs all smell like burnt toast or something.”
He didn’t say anything just kept looking at her like he wanted to devour her. It was the way he’d looked at her the night before moments before they’d had soul shattering sex against a pillar. She wasn’t sure a repeat performance was a good idea. After, reflection, she decided that even though he’d said it meant something, that it was much more likely that he was subconsciously using her as a distraction from dealing with his feelings about his mother’s dastardly deeds. She wasn’t sure her heart could survive the fall out when it all turned to shit. And she had no doubts it would.

Shaking her head, she licked her lips and she didn’t miss the way Oliver’s eyes followed the action and darkened ever so slightly. She let out a shaky breath; “Do you want to talk about what happened with your mother?”

His eyes darkened for a completely different reason, “Not really.”

Felicity stepped forward, closing the distance between them but stopping just shy of being in touching distance. If he touched her, all self-control would go flying out the window. Not that the basement had windows.

“Oliver.”

Sighing, he sat up; “I told you everything we learnt, Felicity.”

“That’s not what I meant. I meant do you want to talk about how you feel about your mother knowing the Gambit was sabotaged.”

He dipped his chin and stared steadily at her; his jaw clenched. So, that was a ‘no’, she guessed. She gave him a look and he let out another sigh; “I’m obviously not happy about it.”

Well, that was really digging deep wasn’t it.

Felicity took another step forward and Oliver took advantage of that small step, his hands landed heavily on her hip and he pulled her forward to stand between his legs.

“Felicity,” he said softly, his thumb rubbing circles on her hip over the t-shirt; “I don’t want to talk about my mother right now and I really don’t want to talk about my feelings.”
“What do you want to talk about?” she asked as she moved to straddle him, her hands landing on his shoulders and his settling on her hips, pulling her more firmly against him.

With a hand cupping her face, his thumb stroking her jaw, he pulled her in and whispered against her mouth; “Nothing.”

She wasn’t sure who initiated the kiss but his tongue was in her mouth and his hand moved from her hip, under the t-shirt she was wearing and cupped her breast, his thumb swiping her nipple slowly before she even had time to think.

She kissed him like she was convinced this would be the last time she’d get to. She kissed him like she was trying to memorise every moment of it. Clasping the hem of his Henley, she pulled it up and tore her mouth from his so she could tug it over his head, he lifted his arms to help her. Pressing a kiss to his scruff covered jaw, she ran hands down his chest, letting her nails scrape lighting, she smiled against his jaw as he hissed at the action.

Lifting her arms above her head, she met his gaze as he slowly lifted the hem of her t-shirt and not breaking eye contact, pulled it over her head and threw it across the room. She had no idea where it landed. She didn’t really care. How could she care when Oliver buried his face in the space between her breasts and pressed a kiss there? She sucked in a breath as he one-handedly started pulling her panties down, she lifted her hips up to allow him access to get them off completely. She felt like she completely forgot how to breathe when he plunged a calloused finger into her without any warning whatsoever.

“More,” she said on a shattered whisper.

He added a second finger and growled when she started riding his hand. A third finger was added and she whimpered, it wasn’t enough. Oliver’s mouth landed on her breast and she arched her back and clutched his head as he roughly sucked her nipple into his mouth, his tongue laving at the point. She was about ready to come undone. But not like this. She needed more. She needed him.

She pushed him back and his mouth released her nipple with a soft pop. Her hands found their way to the zipper and button of his jeans and she lifted up a little, his fingers still stroking into her and making her moan. She somehow managed to pop the button and drag the zipper down and thank god and everything holy, he pulled his fingers out of her. She barely stifled a moan as he brought his hand up and proceeded to lick the moisture off his fingers. That should be illegal. Why the hell was that action so hot?
Oliver helped her shove his jeans down enough for his cock to pop out and say hello. His head fell back with a groan as she wrapped her hand around his cock and ran a thumb over the tip. Pushing him back with a hand to his chest, he fell back onto the bed as she straddled him and mewled as she dragged his cock across her clit.

“Felicity,” he ground out as his hands found her hips, his fingers digging in a little painfully.

She lined him up at her entrance and agonisingly slowly she lowered onto him until he was fully seated inside her. She bit her lip as she paused and just enjoyed the sensation of the way he filled her, the way he felt inside of her. He groaned her name again and she blinked down at him, her inner walls clenching around him. He sat up, banded an arm around her and roughly kissed her and that was when she finally moved, rising up slightly and then slamming back down. She couldn't concentrate when he was kissing her like that and he seemed to sense that because he flipped them over and she moaned into his mouth as he thrust deeper into her. That was exactly what she needed.

She pulled her knees up and spread her legs wider and moaned as Oliver pulled almost all the way out and then slowly pushed back in, hitting a spot inside of her she didn’t even know existed. His fingers pressed into her thigh as he pulled her leg up and dragged it over his hip and held it there. His mouth sucked on one nipple and then moved across to the other as he slowly fucked her like he had all the time in the world. Her breathing was coming out in little gasps. She grabbed his head and pulled it up to crash her mouth against his. He kissed her back but didn’t increase his pace. He was slowly killing her. But what a way to go.

She raised her other leg and brought it up over his hip and the move successfully pulled him deeper into her. “Oliver, I need –“

She felt his warm breath against her ear; “What? Felicity, what do you need?” his voice sounded as ragged and wrecked as she felt. He thrust shallowly; “Is that what you need?” He pulled almost all the way out until just the tip was still in her and she was quivering around him, trying to pull him back in. She screamed as he thrust back in hard and fast, his hand going under her ass to push her up into his thrust as he started fucking her hard and fast, lacking any kind of finesse. His grunts were right by her ear and only spurred her on. She lifted her hips to meet him thrust for thrust, his hand reached down between them and played with her clit. Felicity clung to him like he was the only thing that could save her.

“Oh, god, Oliver, I can’t take it, it’s too much,” She breathed. But he was relentless.

“Felicity,” he grunted, “I’m going to come and I really need you to come with me.”
Oh. Was that all. She was so, so close. He was fucking her roughly, just the way she wanted, her feet digging into his back, she was sure his back was going to be covered in tiny grooves from her nails digging in and his fingers were doing something amazing to her clit.

He dropped his head and sucked her nipple into his mouth. Hard. And that was it, she was over stimulated, she bucked up and screamed his name as wave after wave of pleasure hit her. She was mid-orgasm when Oliver gave one last hard thrust and came inside of her. It only served to intensify her own orgasm and it was on the tip of her tongue to tell him she loved him but she swallowed down that impulse as she came down from her high and felt Oliver collapse on top of her, his head in the crook of her neck, breathing heavily.

They stayed tangled in each other for a few moments before Oliver slowly withdrew from her, stood up, zipped his jeans up but left them unbuttoned, bent, picked up her shirt of the floor and held it out to her, avoiding her eyes. She took it from him and pulled it on.

“Thank you,” she muttered, fiddling with the hem. He still wouldn’t look at her; “I’m going to take a shower.”

He merely nodded as she got up and wandered to the bathroom, before she closed the door, she heard the tell-tale clanking of the salmon ladder. She leaned back against the door and thought they probably needed to talk about this.

As she showered, she thought about how to approach the subject about the fact that he’d fucked her into oblivion twice now and the first time he’d looked significantly guilty afterwards and the second time he couldn’t even look her in the eye as he handed her a shirt. He’d said the first time that it meant something but he was acting like he regretted it. Yup, they totally needed to talk about that.

Getting out of the shower, she realised she hadn’t brought any clothes into the bathroom with her, expect the t-shirt. Towelling off, she threw that on and exited the bathroom to find Oliver still going up and down the salmon ladder, as if he really needed to add any more definition to his already perfectly defined muscles. Ridiculous, really.

She rifled through her bag and found a pair of jeans and pulled those on as well as a pretty polka dot top. She wished she had a hair brush but she finger combed her hair and put her glasses on. Right. She was ready. She was going to toddle over to the salmon ladder, demand he get down and they were going to have a talk with no touching or what-not. Yup. She could do that. But first, shoes. She found a pair of black flats, shoved them onto her feet and walked over to the salmon ladder. Before she could open her mouth, Oliver opened his.
“Your phone was ringing.”

She looked up and saw her was just hanging from the bar. He did a pull-up while she was watching. He was such a show off. Rolling her eyes, she went to the computer table where she’d left her phone, picked it up and frowned when she saw she had a missed call.

“It’s Detective Lance,” she stated and listened to the message the Detective had left. “He wants me to go to the station and answer a few more questions about my apartment.”

Oliver frowned and jumped down from the bar. Such a showoff. “You want me to go with you?”

Did she want him to go with her and hold her hand while she got interrogated by the scary Detective? Hell, yes. But she also didn’t want to depend on her anymore than she already did.

She shook her head; “No. This is my thing. You’ve got your own things to worry about.”

The frown deepened and he stepped forward, reaching out to her but she took a step back; “I’ll be fine, Oliver, thank you, though.”

And she spun away from him and raced up the stairs.

Felicity sat in the interrogation room of SCPD, fiddling with the hem of her shirt and rehearsing her answers to any questions she might be asked in her head. But all she could think about was Oliver. She jumped when the door slammed and a file was thrown onto the table. She looked up into the face of Detective Lance.

He took the chair opposite her and opened the file; “So, Miss Smoak, can you tell me why anyone would want to blow up your apartment?”

She sat up straighter. The last time she’d seen the Detective, he’d been kind and sympathetic but
since then his attitude toward her had obviously changed. She clasped her hands together and took a breath, “No. Not a clue.”

Detective Lance’s brows flew up; “It couldn’t have anything to do with your father being heavily involved in the mob, being in prison or to do with the brutal murder of your siblings?”

She bristled, not wanting to discuss this with Laurel’s father but she swallowed and replied; “That was a significant amount of time ago, Detective. I was eight when my siblings were murdered and nine when my father went to prison. I doubt that the people who wanted them dead would come looking for me fifteen years later.”

“Mmm.” Detective Lance leaned back in his chair and crossed his arms over his chest and gave her an assessing look; “Or it could be that a pretty little thing like yourself has attracted the attention of the vigilante.”

“Excuse me?”

He leaned forward, resting his arms on the table and narrowed his eyes; “My daughter has told me that you’ve got the vigilante on speed dial.”

“With all due respect, Detective, Laurel has no idea what she’s talking about.”

“Maybe not. But why don’t you enlighten me?”

She frowned and held up a hand; “Wait. Do you think the vigilante planted a bomb in my apartment?”

He shrugged; “The vigilante is a dangerous man, Miss Smoak, and Laurel has indicated that he may have an obsession with you. Perhaps that obsession was unreciprocated and he took drastic actions.”

“A kind of ‘if he can’t have me, no one can’ situation?”

“Possibly.”
Felicity laughed harshly; “Once again, Laurel has no idea what she’s talking about. I have had contact with the vigilante once, twice maybe. But beyond that he and I are not involved. In any way.”

“Right,” Detective Lance drawled, suspicion lacing his tone; “So, are you telling me you don’t know who he is under that hood?”

“Detective, I have no idea who he is under the hood. I also have no idea who blew up my apartment but I’d love for you to find out for me.”

“Even if it’s the vigilante?”

“Especially if it’s him,” she shot back, “He’s dangerous, right?” she gave him her most innocent look. “Am I free to go, Detective?”

“Yes,” he said a little reluctantly, she got up and moved to the door, she had a hand on the knob when he said; “One more piece of advice, Miss Smoak, stay away from Oliver Queen. He’ll only use you for his own purposes, mess with your head and break your heart.”

Felicity didn’t say anything, just ripped open the door and exited the room. She wove her way through the station and out to the street. Trotting down the steps, she rubbed her arms wishing she’d thought to bring a jacket with her. She was half way down the block when she thought she heard her name being called. She stopped on the pavement and looked around, she felt a stab of a needle prick her neck and then everything suddenly went black.

Chapter End Notes

Please note, that both Felicity and Oliver are incredibly messed up individuals in this story, so they're not just going to have sex and then boom everything's good and they live happily ever after. They are their own obstacles and their own worst enemies.
Empathic Encounters

Chapter Summary

Felicity gets kidnapped.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

The first thing Oliver saw when he came to was Jax looking at him gravely; “Hello, sunshine.”

Oliver and Tommy had been in the club going over some paperwork and then….nothing. He remembered nothing between then and waking up minutes ago. They appeared to be in an abandoned warehouse. He got up off the floor and attempted to walk forward but was stopped by some invisible force. He kind of bounced off it.

“Yeah,” Jax informed him; “that would be the magical force field. We’re not getting out until he decides to let us out.”

“And,” Tommy drawled; “Who is he, exactly? And what does he want with us?”

Jax shrugged; “Guess we’ll find out soon enough.”

Oliver lowered himself down to the floor. It seemed they weren’t going anywhere until their captor was good and ready. He sat up straight, alert as a man strode into the room carrying a groggy looking Felicity. If he even pulled a single hair out of her head, Oliver would cut off each of his fingers and feed them to him and stitch his mouth shut. And then, Oliver would draw and quarter him with a blunt arrow.

He was having trouble comprehending that just this morning he and Felicity had had mind blowing sex and now they were being held by some magical nut-job. He’d thought he’d had mind blowing, life changing sex before – mostly with Laurel – but that didn’t compare to what he’d done with Felicity.
The man dropped Felicity down onto a chair with more gentleness than Oliver thought a random stranger would show. Felicity struggled to sit up straight, raised her hands and the man went flying into the opposite wall of the warehouse. The action seemed to seep the energy from Felicity, she slumped down in the chair and let her eyes fall closed. The man pulled himself up off the floor with a smile and walked back over to Felicity, crouching down in front of her.

“Hey, kid,” the man said and Felicity blinked her eyes open; “Remember me?”

Felicity sighed; “Of course I remember you, Damon.”

“Oh no, not good. Really not good,” Jax whispered.

“Who the hell is Damon?” Tommy hissed.

“Ok, boys,” Jax hissed back; “This little unplanned meeting may lead to you finding some things out about Felicity. Please try not to judge her.”

Felicity looked a little unsteady and had a sway going on but she looked at Damon steadily with no hint of fear.

“Damon, what are you doing?”

“Not happy about this reunion, kid?”

Felicity shrugged, but the movement looked sluggish; “No, it’s grand. I mean considering I haven’t seen you since I was about six. This is just swell, what with you drugging me and everything.”

“Sure,” Damon conceded; “I drugged you but I’d never actually hurt you, you’re family.”

Felicity fell to the side and Damon reached out and steadied her, she swatted his hand away; “That’s super comforting;” she flinched away from his touch as he reached out and tucked a piece of her hair behind her ear.
“As for not seeing me since you were six;” Damon told her, pleasantly; “you’re right, you didn’t see me. Doesn’t mean I didn’t see you.”

Oliver wasn’t close enough to tell but he thought she rolled her eyes. She wasn’t taking any of this guy’s shit and Oliver felt a little proud.

“Oh, goody, you too. All of my long lost siblings – or in your case, my sister’s baby daddy – are singing the same tune and I’ve got to tell you, it’s getting a little repeatative.”

“Let me guess, Katerina said she was following you around for your whole childhood. Probably waxed lyrical about how she offed that creep of a foster father.”

“Something like that,” Felicity clicked her fingers, an action that looked like it took a lot of effort; “Now, let me guess, you’re about to tell me a little story about how you’re really the one who committed murder in my name?”

Damon smiled at Felicity; “You did a good job, kid, defending yourself against him. What did you stab him with? A pair of scissors?”

Tommy whistled lowly; “Good for her;” he nudged Oliver; “Your girl is kind of badass.”

Felicity swayed to the side and was once more righted by Damon. She let out a little cough; “Actually, they were pinking shears. That was all in the police file, you could have read that.”

Damon shrugged; “Sure. But was it also in the file that while you were fighting him off you threw a chair through the window and threatened to cut his son’s throat with one of the shards if he tried to touch you or stop you from leaving?”

“Oh, babydoll,” Jax muttered, his voice full of unadulterated sadness.

“Well, Felicity,” Damon pressed; “Was that in the police file?”
“No,” Felicity admitted reluctantly, “It wasn’t.”

Damon inched closer to Felicity; “Want to know exactly how I did it? How I killed him? How I made him hurt for trying to touch you?”

“Not particularly.”

“I waited a month to make sure you were placed in a safe place. Then I paid the would be rapist for a little chat. I took a pair of scissors and I cut off – “

“Please don’t tell me,” Felicity begged as she swayed slightly.

Tommy winced; “Does anyone else think he was going to say –“

“Ooooooh yeah,” Jax drawled.

“You mind wrapping this up, I’m feeling a little queasy;” Felicity sassed and Oliver wanted to tell her not to piss off the guy who had drugged her and kidnapped them all. “Mind getting to the point of why you kidnapped me……and them?”

Damon stood up and paced away from Felicity; “You know, when you were just an itty bitty thing, Nate and I made a pact to keep you safe.”

“Oh, you made a pact.” Felicity said sarcastically and stood up abruptly, swayed on her feet and just as abruptly sank back down. Jax was on his feet in an instant and pushing at the boundary of their invisible prison. As if sensing Jax’s agitation, Felicity looked over and discreetly shook her head.

“The two of you made a pact,” she said; “and Kat claims that she was hanging around me too. But yet not one of you came for me. Not one.”

“Katerina is full of shit,” Damon shot back. “And Nate and I were far too fucked up to take care of you the way you deserved. Didn’t mean we didn’t look after you in the only way we knew how.”
“And now, what,” Felicity asked, looking bored by the whole thing; “the keep Felicity safe pact is over?”

“I’m not going to hurt you.” Damon reiterated.

“Right;” Felicity was as unconvinced as Oliver felt; “Because, this little situation is a completely normal family reunion.”

“I figured that now you’re all grown up, and have your powers back, you could do me a little favour. You could help me with something.”

“And this,” Felicity gestured around at them; “is obviously the way to ask a favour.”

Damon smiled at Felicity. It was a smile that held a touch of fondness. He handed her an old, weathered looking piece of paper. Felicity unfolded the paper, read whatever was on it, then slowly refolded and handed it back to Damon, her expression carefully neutral.

“This is dark magic.”

“Oh boy.” Jax muttered.

“I know what it is, Felicity. And you and I are going to use this spell to bring Belle and my kid back.”

“What is it with everyone wanting to bring people back from the dead?” Felicity asked.

Jax slumped down onto the ground; “Oh no.”

“Dark magic? Felicity’s a witch?” Tommy hissed.

“Damon,” Felicity said slowly as if explaining something terribly simple to someone terribly
stupid; “Dark magic can be tricky and massively unreliable, we might not get Belle back, we might get some other spirit in Belle’s body. And that spell requires their bones.”

“I know.”

“I can’t do it.” Felicity stated adamantly.

“Yes, you can.”

“No.”

Damon nodded and stalked towards Oliver, Tommy and Jax, a dark expression on his face; “Ok. Then, that brings us to why these boys are here. They’re your friends, you care about them. They’re my leverage. I wouldn’t hurt you. Never said I wouldn’t hurt them to get you to do what I want.”

Felicity let out a short, harsh laugh; “Do your worst.”

Damon’s eyebrows flew up; “You don’t care what I do to them?”

“Oh, you should be more worried about what they’ll do to you.”

“What?”

“Oliver can totally hold his own against you. Jax will rip you apart the second you lower that barrier and Tommy…” she paused and threw a smirk and a wink their way; “Well, Tommy, he will scratch your eyes out.” She leaned forwards on her chair and lowered her voice to a mock whisper; “And, he’s a hair puller.”

“Then I’d better go get my back up leverage.” Damon pulled out a photo and held it up; “I don’t know why but she means something to you. You’ve been following her around occasionally.”

“What the hell?” Tommy said as he stared at the photo. Oliver silently echoed the sentiment. He
clenched his fists as Damon waved the photo under Felicity’s nose. Felicity’s gaze skittered to Jax and for the first time since she’d been brought into the warehouse, she looked worried.

“Now, I know,” Damon stated; “you won’t want me to hurt this little girl. Why you care about a spoiled princess like Thea Queen is beyond me.”

Why would Felicity care about Thea, as far as Oliver knew she’d never even met his little sister.

Felicity’s lips parted; “Leave her out of this, Damon. Please.”

“Yeah,” Jax spoke up; “She’s just a kid.”

Damon shrugged, “I won’t hurt her if you just help me.”

“I can’t.”

Damon strode towards the door and that was the moment when Felicity really started to panic. She got up off the chair and promptly fell down onto the floor. Jax shot to his feet and started pacing in the small space they were confined in.

“Damon, man,” Jax called out, his voice pleading; “Don’t do this, look at her.”

Damon kept walking.

“Damon!” Felicity called, her voice desperate; “Look at the photo. Just look at it. Really look at it.”

Damon stopped and slowly turned back toward them and opened his mouth but Felicity cut him off; “Just look at it.” Damon looked down at Thea’s photo as Felicity babbled away; “She looks just like Belle. With a bit of you mixed in.”

Why the hell would Thea look like Felicity’s dead sister? She was his baby sister.
“If you dig up Belle, you won’t find a baby buried with her. Because her baby didn’t die.”

“Fuck.” Jax stated eloquently.

Damon stalked back to Felicity and shoved Thea’s photo into her face; “Are you telling me that Thea Queen is my baby daughter?”

“No!” Oliver exploded; “That’s not possible!”

Felicity turned her head and looked at him apologetically and with such complete and utter anguish. She let out a sob as her eyes met his. And somewhere deep down he knew.

She turned her head and she and Damon stared at each other. Felicity bit her lip and she gave an almost imperceptible nod.

No.

Damon backed away shocked and then moved back in on Felicity, clutching her arms tightly; “What did you do?!?” he shook her, “What did you do?!”

He let go of her as quickly as he had grabbed her. Damon paced around the warehouse then came back and pointed a finger at Felicity; “You turned back time.”

It wasn’t a question. It was a statement of fact.

“This makes no sense,” Oliver muttered.

Tommy shook his head, obviously coming to grips with what was happening slightly faster than his best friend; “Actually, it makes a lot of sense in a weird way. I don’t remember Moira being pregnant and Thea just kind of appeared one day. No trip to the hospital.”
Oliver didn’t remember his mother being pregnant either but he’d been a self absorbed kid, that didn’t mean she hadn’t been, right?

“It was Belle’s idea, her plan, we weren’t even sure it would work.” Felicity whispered.

“Why?” Damon started, his voice getting progressively louder; “Why would you do something so stupid?”

Felicity flinched back as Damon raged.

“So she’d get to live passed sixteen years of age.”

“Why the fuck wouldn’t she live passed sixteen?”

“Maybe you should back the fuck up and stop yelling at her;” Jax snarled, baring his fangs and Oliver remembered how truly dangerous he was. Tommy was staring at Jax with a mixture of fear and fascination.

Damon pointed at Jax; “Stay out of this.”

“Because,” Felicity said, her own voice raising in volume; “Nate slit her throat. Right in front of me and Belle!”

“Why would Nate do that?”

Felicity attempted to throw her hands up in the air but her hands just fell limply to her side; “Because he was convinced her blood was the key ingredient in a spell to bring our siblings back. Dark fucking magic.”

“The child of a true empath and a witch, that would do it;” Damon stated; “But why give her to the Queens, why them? Why not some other family?”

Felicity lifted her gaze and looked at Oliver guiltily and then her gaze slid away; “Because I made
Oliver promise he’d look after her, would love her.”

“But why him, Felicity?”

She stared at Damon and he stared back at her and then he tilted his head and looked at Oliver, narrowing his eyes; “Ah, I see.”

Damon crouched down in front of Felicity; “Show me.”

“No!” Jax exclaimed; “Don’t do this to her!”

Do what?

Damon grabbed Felicity’s arm and raised his other hand, palm out, aiming it at the blank wall. Felicity whimpered as a light emanated from Damon’s hand and suddenly scenes were being projected onto the wall through Damon’s hand in full sound and colour.

Oliver watched, stunned, as Felicity and Thea – who was called Anastasia – talked about boys, as they shopped together, laughed together, as Thea cried on Felicity’s shoulder, as they and another woman – Belle – interacted as a family.

He watched with clenched fists as Nate held Thea to him and slowly ran a knife across her throat. He watched as Felicity sobbed and clutched Thea’s limp, lifeless body to her, getting Thea’s blood all over her.

“Holy mother of God,” Tommy said beside him but Oliver barely heard him.

The scenes changed and suddenly they featured him. He saw himself crouch in front of Felicity who was huddled in a corner, clutching her clothes to herself, telling him not to touch her. He saw him and Felicity in an alley, the sound of *I Want you to Want Me* playing, them kissing, him lifting her up and pressing her into the alley wall. The next few scenes came rapidfire, merging together: the two of them dancing around the mansion living room, them watching tv, wrapped up in each other, them playing chess, them kissing and kissing.

He watched, jaw clenched and fist flexing as Felicity, covered in blood and crying stood in the
mansion, telling him that she needed him to promise to look after her niece. Telling him to promise to try to love Laurel and him reluctantly agreeing. He watched her kiss him goodbye.

Damon pulled his hand off Felicity and she breathed heavily, pressing her hands flat on the floor. Her sobs echoed throughout the warehouse. She sounded like she was in so much pain.

“What the hell was that?” Tommy asked. It was an excellent question.

“That,” Damon stated, looking down at Felicity; “was Felicity’s memories of a life in a timeline that she changed, erased and it changes everything for me.” He bent and clasped Felicity’s face in a hand; “We’ll talk about this later, kid.” He pressed a kiss to her forehead, stood up, glanced at Jax who was snarling at him; “Don’t worry, vampire, our girl will be just fine. And Mister Queen, you better do one hell of a job of looking after my kid.”

And then Damon strode out, waving a hand in the air, the barrier suddenly went down and Jax rushed to Felicity just as she threw up.
Tommy Merlyn had had the pleasure of having Oliver Queen as his best friend for most of his life. He had quite literally seen the best and worst of Oliver. Post-island Oliver was significantly different from pre-island Oliver but Tommy would still argue he knew him better than anyone. Having Oliver Queen as a best friend could be challenging and just plain frustrating. Sometimes his best friend was such an absolute dummy. Granted the whole Thea being Felicity’s niece and the entire magic, turning back time thing was quite the mind fuck. But Felicity threw up rather spectacularly while Oliver, the big dummy he was sat on the floor staring stoically because actually displaying normal human emotions was so passé.

Jax held back Felicity’s hair as she emptied the contents of her stomach on the dirty warehouse floor.

Tommy grimaced; “Are you ok, Felicity?”

He wanted to tell Oliver to get off his ass and give the poor girl a hug. She really looked like she needed a hug. But he could practically see the cogs in Oliver’s mind turning, he was thinking and Tommy wasn’t sure he’d like where he landed.

“Oh, yeah,” Felicity whimpered, tears making her face splotchy as she wiped her mouth with the back of her hand; “I’ll be just peachy, it’s just empathic magic. Powerful stuff. Very draining when used on you. Makes me all wobbly and lightheaded. Overwhelms the senses.”

She kept sending little looks to Oliver, who was still sitting on the floor, knees pulled up, hands
clenched into fists, jaw clenched, looking entirely unapproachable. Tommy wanted to give Felicity that hug but she had a vampire closely guarding her as she sat limply on the floor.

Huh, a vampire. With fangs and everything. Cool.

Felicity attempted to stand up, pushing Jax away when he tried to help her and fell heavily back to the floor. Oliver made no move to help her. He didn’t even look in her direction, just kept his head bowed and remained stubbornly silent.

Jax and Tommy exchanged a look and Tommy sighed, he guessed he’d have to step up and do all the work for his best friend. “So,” he drawled, keeping his voice light; “Thea’s your niece. That’s quite the revelation. And also, hey! Magic.”

Felicity offered him a watery smile that was far too sad for his liking. She nodded and Tommy got the feeling she just didn’t have the energy for stimulating conversation. But he bet she’d have energy for cuddling. If only Oliver would move his stubborn ass and go give the poor girl a hug.

“And,” Tommy continued, desperately trying to fill the silence that was getting increasingly awkward; “Time travel. That sounds complicated.”

“It was all a manipulation.” Oliver stated quietly, looking at the floor.

“What’s that?” Tommy asked his friend.

“Everything.” Oliver continued; “She positioned me like a pawn to do her bidding.”

“Oliver,” Tommy warned. Felicity was blinking rapidly like she was trying to wake up from a particularly awful dream. Oliver wasn’t in the mood to heed Tommy’s warnings.

“I had no choice in any of it. Thea. Laurel. My whole shitty relationship with Laurel was based on a promise I made to a girl I didn’t even know a few months ago. It was all a manipulation.”

“That’s not true,” Felicity whispered.
“Why? Because I may have loved you in a life I don’t remember?” Oliver drew out bitterly, still staring down at the floor; “That just means that whatever I might feel for you, the reason I can’t stay away from you is just left over feelings from that timeline.”

“Oliver,” Felicity really sounded like she needed that hug.

“And whatever you feel for me, isn’t even about me, it’s about whoever I was in this other timeline.”

“No, Oliver –“

“It wasn’t real,” Oliver roared, his head jerking up; “None of it was real!”

From his vantage point, Tommy could see Oliver’s eyes shone with tears he would never let fall. Oliver and Felicity stared at each other across the space, Felicity trying very hard to hold herself together and Oliver trying not to reveal too much of himself. Tommy had seen Oliver look at Felicity like she was made of sunshine and rainbows and maybe even fairy dust but now he was looking at her as if she were nothing. Tommy watched something flip in Oliver and he was looking at Felicity as if she were one of his vigilante targets.

Tommy knew his best friend was a dummy but this was taking it to a whole new low.

Oliver dropped his head and raised a hand to his face, his finger and thumb rubbing at his eyes. When Oliver brought his head back up, the only way to describe his expression was as pure vigilante, Ollie had been pushed deep beneath the surface.

“You’re fired from Queen Consolidated. I want you out of every aspect of my life.”

Jax stepped forward as if to do something vampirey to Oliver, but Felicity caught his hand in her own and stopped him. Tommy shook his head. This was bullshit.

“Oliver,” He said, trying to appeal to Oliver’s reasonable, logical side; “You don’t really have the authority to fire her.”
“It’s fine.” Felicity said, lifting her chin and biting her lip. Even Tommy could see she was trying so hard to be brave.

“And you need to find somewhere else to live.”

“Oliver, come on, man.”

“Tommy,” Felicity said softly, “It’s ok.”

Tommy looked over at Felicity and though she looked like she was doing her best to not cry, he saw that her expression was of resignation, as if she thought this moment was inevitable and she was just waiting for it to come. That this wasn’t a massive surprise to her. She gave a little nod, licked her lips and looked up at Tommy, giving him a little smile.

“I’d really love to make a deeply dramatic exit right now but unfortunately; I’m going to need a little help getting up off the floor.”

Tommy looked to Jax who gave him a nod. Tommy stepped forward and gave her a little bow; “May a humble knight such as I, help you up, milady?”

She looked up at him, a tear clinging to her lashes, she nodded. Tommy moved so that he was crouched in front of her, blocking Oliver’s view of her. Tommy put his hands under her arms and lifted her to her feet.

“Thank you, Tommy,” She whispered.

Jax wrapped an arm around her and supported her weight and took a step toward the exit. Felicity stopped him and looked back over her shoulder at Oliver; “Just for the record, it was real. For me it was real.”

Tommy watched Jax escort Felicity out, spun on his heel, strode over to Oliver and cuffed him on the back of the head; “You, my friend are the very definition of an idiot. And if you even think about crawling back to Laurel, I will murder you in your sleep.”
Two weeks. That’s how long Tommy had to suffer through the joy that was broody Oliver. Two whole weeks. Fourteen days. But not just broody Oliver, also constantly working out Oliver, going out to hunt for criminals to cross off his list, Oliver. The Oliver who massacred tennis balls with his arrows. The Oliver who absolutely did not want to talk about Felicity.

Tommy thought it was interesting that it wasn’t the Thea not really being his sister part that upset and angered Oliver. Noooooooo. It was the whole Felicity aspect. And heaven forbid anyone should utter Felicity’s name because that just sent Oliver into a rage that seemed to never end. When they’d got back from that warehouse, Oliver had walked into the Foundry to find Felicity (or more likely, Jax) had already cleared out her stuff, he’d calmly walked up to the table and one handedly flipped it. Shit went flying everywhere and who cleaned it up? Was it Oliver? No. Nope. It was Tommy. It all fell to Tommy. Tommy was on constant Oliver duty. And it sucked balls. He’d much rather be out somewhere with the delectable Katerina but no, he was stuck in the Foundry listening to the clank of Oliver on that stupid salmon ladder. Tommy hated it. Mostly, because he’d tried to do it one night when no one was around and just could not do it. Not that he was bitter about it.

So, it had been a long two weeks. An unbearable two weeks. A violent two weeks. He’d had to patch Oliver up three times after he came back after some fight or other and that was no picnic. None of his nurse fantasies involved him playing nurse to his best friend.

Tommy perked up as he heard the basement door open and shut and steps on the stairs because it might be someone who could relieve him of having to hang out with the broody, murderous vigilante. He sagged back down as he saw it was Jax. They hadn’t seen Jax or Felicity for two weeks and now here Jax was.

Jax stood in front of the salmon ladder and glared up at Oliver who hadn’t even paused; “I’m not talking to you, I don’t care how good you look flexing your muscles, you made Felicity cry. And not the pretty type of crying but the get snot and tears all over Jax type of crying.”

“What are you doing here?” Tommy asked since Oliver seemed hell bent on ignoring anything that wasn’t the salmon ladder.

Jax tilted his head as he watched Oliver’s movements, it was slightly creepy if you asked Tommy, “Damon wanted to meet up with Felicity.”

“Felicity’s meeting up with that nut-bar?” Tommy didn’t think that was the world’s best idea.
Jax shrugged; “Felicity isn’t an idiot, she’s using my bar, I’ve closed for the evening, it’s not like I actually need the money. Anyway, they’re meeting there, she gave me one of those Bluetooth thingys to shove in my ear so I can hear everything and she told me to go find a computer with decent wifi and other technology gobbly-gook that I don’t really understand so I can tap into my security cameras and here I am,” he ended with a flourish.

Tommy thought it was probably good that vampires didn’t actually need to breathe because that speech took a lot.

Jax pointed a finger up at Oliver who was pretending not to be listening. “You and I are going to have a conversation but right now I have to watch and make sure Damon doesn’t hurt her.”

Jax set himself up at the computer station and Tommy pulled up a chair and sat beside him; “Put it on speaker so the whole class can hear,” he stated; “Is she ok?”

Jax shrugged as he got into the bar’s security feed and linked Felicity’s Bluetooth to their speakers; “She’s always ok.”

That wasn’t super duper comforting.

Felicity sat at the bar and even through the computer screen, Tommy could tell that she looked sad. They watched as Damon strode in, hands shoved in jeans pockets, the guy was unfairly handsome. This was Thea’s father. He could see it. Damon must not have been any older than seventeen when Thea was born.

Felicity got up and went around the bar and pulled down a bottle of whiskey; “You want a drink?”
Damon shrugged; “Sure.”

Felicity poured them each a tumbler and handed one to Damon.

“You’re not sure if you should trust me.” Damon observed.

“Yeah, no shit,” Jax muttered.
On the screens, Felicity shrugged; “It’s a little difficult to trust someone who drugged and kidnapped me.”

Damon nodded; “That’s fair, kid. But that’s before I knew my daughter was alive and kicking.”

“Nate can never find out about her.”

“Well, I’m not going to tell him. He and I have kept in contact over the years, to put dear old Dad in prison or to keep track of you but we’re not the type of friends where we braid each other’s hair and tell each other our secrets.”

Felicity nodded; “Good.”

Damon tilted his glass at her; “What’s going on with you and Oliver Queen? In this timeline, I mean.”

“Nothing.” Felicity stated in a tone that said she wanted it to be the end of the conversation.

Tommy looked up at Oliver who was still torturing himself on the salmon ladder. Stubborn.

“You’re in love with him,” Damon stated more than asked, his head tipped to the side.

Felicity sighed; “Yeah.” Tommy heard the salmon ladder bar clang as if it slipped from it’s intended notch; “Stop using your empath powers on me. Stop reading my feelings.”

Damon took a drink of his whiskey; “He love you back?”

“No. But I knew that going in.” Felicity said, quietly, so quietly that Tommy had to strain to hear.

“In that case;” Damon said; “He owes you nothing. How do you know he’ll continue looking after her?”
“He just will.” Felicity said, her tone full of conviction and more belief in Oliver than he probably deserved; “He loves her. As far as he’s concerned she’s his baby sister.”

“He loves her? Like Nate and I love you?”

“No. Better.”

“You tell him, babydoll,” Jax said vehemently, he clearly wasn’t a big Damon fan. He obviously wouldn’t be making Damon a friendship bracelet.

Tommy heard Oliver drop down from the salmon ladder and move to the table to work on sharpening his arrows which was much closer to the monitors. What a coincidence. Didn’t want to see or hear anything about Felicity, his ass.

“Ok. So, I’ve been thinking about it and I still want to know why you’d do something so stupid like turning back time. Don’t get me wrong, I’m happy my kid is alive but magic has consequences and it seems to me you bore the brunt of them all. You went from being raised by Belle to having a shitty childhood in foster care.”

Felicity shrugged; “I’m ok, Damon.”

“Felicity, someone blew up your apartment.”

“Ok, yeah, that sucked but it wasn’t the worst thing I’ve ever been through. I mean, no matter what timeline, my siblings were still murdered.”

“I’ll give you that, kid, but in the first timeline, it seemed you had a guy who you loved and you gave him up to save my kid.”

Felicity took a drink, then poured herself another one; “This version of him is better.”

Damon chuckled; “Ok, then.”
Tommy looked over at Oliver who was staring at the monitors, an arrow in hand, that he was clenching so tightly that Tommy thought he might snap it.

“How did it work?”

“The turning back time?” Felicity asked and shrugged; “Belle had a potion and two spells. The potion and one spell would put her back in her sixteen year old body. The other spell sent me back to the same time but I was still grown up me. I had to stop six year old me from coming in and freezing Belle when she started bleeding after giving birth.”

“She bled out. But let me guess, Belle didn’t want anyone to be able to connect Thea to her, she thought she was meant to die that day.”

“Yes.”

Damon reached out and clutched Felicity’s face, forcing her to look at him; “Not your fault.”

“Anyway, once Belle was….gone. I took the baby, put her on the Queen’s doorstep, rang the bell and waited. And hoped that they’d take one look at her little face and fall in love with her.”

“Clearly, they did.”

“Yup, and then I took the other vial of potion, said the first spell and woke up in my six year old body.”

“And lived your life all over again. Every gruesome detail. With two sets of memories in your head.”

“Yeah. That part’s not actually so much fun.”

Damon picked up his phone. It must have gotten a text or something that didn’t translate over the line. “I’ve got to get going. Nate and I are working on a project.”
“What kind of project?” Felicity asked.

“I’ll tell you all about it if and when it pans out;” Damon promised and leaned across the bar and pressed a kiss to Felicity’s forehead.

Tommy, Jax – and Oliver, though he’d never admit it – watched Damon walk off screen. Felicity poured herself another drink, downed it in one go; “You get all that, Jax?”

“Yeah, sure did babydoll. What do you think, sugar? Do you trust him?”

Felicity propped her elbow on the bar and cradled her chin in her hand; “You know, me Jax, I don’t trust anyone all the way, except for you. But I think he’s marginally more trustworthy than Nate and Kat. What do you think?”

“I think,” Jax drawled; “You look like I need a drink.”

“So, come drink with me. I feel like doing some drinking. Maybe some dancing. Probably some crying. Where are you anyway?”

“Found a computer to use. Don’t drink all my liquor, I’ll see you in twenty minutes. Tops.”

Jax tapped a few keys and the feed cut out and spun around in the chair and pinned Oliver with a look. Oliver stared broodily back. Tommy rolled his eyes.

“Felicity doesn’t tell me everything,” Jax stated in a more serious tone than Tommy had ever heard from him; “She tells me most things but not everything. It took her years to tell me about Thea, turning back time and you. Can you imagine what it must be like to have two versions of reality in your head?”

Tommy raised his hand; “I for one would not enjoy that.”

Jax smirked; “She didn’t manipulate you into looking after Thea, into loving Thea, she trusted you
with the person she loved the most. Simple as that. And yes she did a promise spell on you but those type of spells are tricky, it’s hard to tell if they’ve worked. Maybe it did, maybe it didn’t.”

“Exactly!” Tommy exclaimed as if he had any idea about that sort of thing.

“Felicity didn’t seek you out, Oliver. After you met her, you sought her out. You followed her. She made the other version of you promise to love Laurel but you still sought out Felicity. You aren’t drawn to her because of magic but because of who she is. Maybe there are residues of that version of you lingering but she’s not trying to trick you. And if you truly believe she is trying to, then you don’t deserve her.”

“Yeah! Put that in your pipe and smoke it!” Tommy shouted. Jax grinned, nodded at Tommy and went off to have his promised drink with Felicity.

When the door slammed shut, Oliver raised his brows and deadpanned; “Put that in your pipe and smoke it?”

Tommy shrugged; “It’s what I felt in the moment.”
Confrontational Moments

Chapter Summary

Oliver meets Laurel for a chat. Also, Oliver and Felicity have a chat. Chats all round.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

“Ok. You can do this, just walk down there, shove it into your bag and get the hell out of there.” Felicity paced in front of the door to the Foundry, giving herself a nice little talk. It was actually more a babble than a talk. “It’s the middle of the day. There’s probably no one down there, just get in, get out and be done with it.”

She took several deep breaths as well. Now was not the time to have an emotional breakdown or a panic attack. Nodding to herself, she punched in the code to the door, pulled it open and went down the stairs. She kept telling herself that no one would be there, Oliver was probably off doing whatever rich playboys did with their waking hours. The sound of Felicity’s shoes on the stairs echoed and she froze when she hit the bottom stair. Fuck a duck. Oliver was pulling on a hoodie, his escalated breathing indicated he’d just jumped down from the salmon ladder, he pulled the hoodie on but didn’t zip it up and stared at her, standing staring at him like an idiot. If this were a movie, some deeply depressing Adele song would be playing.

Felicity pulled her cardigan more tightly around herself in an attempt to shield herself from him. He didn’t say anything, just watched her, his expression perfectly impassive, not moving an inch. She noticed he was rubbing his fingers and thumb together at his side. She wondered what that was all about. No, she chastised herself, she wasn’t going to wonder anything about him. Not anymore. She was going to go back to the avoid Oliver plan. She should have trusted her initial instincts that had told her he was terrible for her health.

It was a little unnerving how he didn’t ask her what she was doing there or say anything really but that could work in her favour. Ignoring him, she went over to the table where the device that had destroyed her apartment sat. Someone had started to take it apart. Oh, well, no problem. She held her bag open with one hand and scooped the bomb parts into the bag with the other. She saw Oliver approach out of the corner of her eye.

“What are you doing?”
She flinched slightly at the sound of his voice being so close. She shuffled to the side and zipped up her bag, hugging it to her as if it were armour. She shook her head; “Oh, nothing. Just collecting the last of my things.”

He folded his arms over his chest; “That bomb is not yours.”

“Really? Because I beg to differ. It was in my apartment. And you know, possession is nine tenths of the law or something like that.”

“We’re not finished looking into it.”

She shrugged; “Well, you don’t have to worry about it, it’s not your problem anymore. I’ll take it from here.”

She moved to brush passed him and make her hasty exit but he grabbed her arm and spun her back around. She looked down at his hand grasping her arm and looked up at him. A muscle in his jaw ticked. He dropped her arm as if it had burnt him. But instead of stepping back, he took a step forward, towering over her, glowering down at her, using his height and general physical presence to intimidate her. If he thought she’d back down, he was going to be massively disappointed.

“People can’t go around blowing up apartments. Not in my city. I won’t allow it.”

Felicity quirked a brow; “Your city? You won’t allow it? I thought criminals who weren’t written down in your notebook weren’t a concern to you.”

“Just give me the bomb.”

“No!” She stated emphatically.

“If you pursue this, you’re going to get yourself killed;” he growled down at her.

She lifted her chin, defiantly and glared up at him; “What do you care? You said you wanted me out of all aspects of your life. This is me being out.”
Turning, she walked to the stairs, he followed her, she was on the first stair when he spoke; “I was fine before I met you, Felicity.”

“Yeah, right back at you,” she threw back at him.

But he was on the way to an epic rant; “Laurel and I were great. I was in love with her.”

“Good for you.”

“Before the island, I really loved her.”

Felicity rolled her eyes; “Yeah, of course you did, that’s why you cheated on her with her sister.”

“You made me love her. And we could have been great I never would have known but then I start dreaming about you on the island. I come back here and you’re fucking everywhere.”

“You had dreams about me?”

“I couldn’t get you out of my head. So, what was it? You didn’t want me for yourself in this timeline but you wanted me to be so obsessed with you that I couldn’t be with anyone else?”

Felicity grasped the rail and turned to glare down at Oliver; “What exactly are you accusing me of?”

“What did you do to me?”

“What?”

“You’re a witch so did you do a spell, freeze me and inject me with a potion. What?”
God. He was such a douche canoe. She jumped off the step and poked him in the chest – hard – “Firstly, I have never used my powers on you. Two: I’ve lived without you before, I can do it again. Are that much of an egotistical bastard that you truly think I’ve been pining over you all this time that I’d use magic to get you? I’m not that desperate.” Her righteous indignation faded away as she got to her third point; “Are you saying that the only reason you’d like me or be interested in me is because I bewitched you? Good to know.”

“Felicity –“ his tone was almost apologetic. But it wasn’t enough.

He frowned and shook his head. Felicity wasn’t finished though and she thought it was about time she got her say.

“You and I weren’t on a level playing field in the first timeline, I was way more screwed up and damaged than you were. You looked at me like you wanted to save me and I wanted to let you. But I really liked that you;” she paused and waved her hand at him; “this version of you never looked at me like that, it was like you were just seeing me and I really appreciated that. I know that you hate me because you think that I manipulated you but I promise you, I didn’t.”

She nodded, spun and ran up the stairs, tearing the door open and letting it slam behind her. She waited until she was outside before she let out a shaky breath.

Oliver slid into the booth at Big Belly Burger and Laurel smiled at him as if nothing had happened between them the last time they spoke. She frowned and reached out a hand to place on his cheek; “You look tired.”

“Don’t,” Oliver said blandly, pushing her hand away.

Leaning back against the red pleather seat she looked distinctly displeased; “If you’re not ready to forgive me for the little restraining order thing, why did you ask me to meet you?”

He watched her, this girl who had been a fixture in his life for as long as he could remember and knew he’d loved her. Had he been in love with her? He wasn’t sure. She was smart and beautiful and self-reliant but she didn’t drive him crazy, she didn’t linger in his every thought even when he wasn’t thinking about her.
“Why did you – do you want to be with me?”

“What kind of question is that?” she picked up her coffee cup and took a sip, “This is terrible coffee.”

“That’s what you get for ordering coffee in a fast food restaurant. Answer the question.”

The cup rattle against the saucer as she dropped it back down and assessed him in that way that made her an excellent lawyer. “I always saw the potential in you, Ollie, saw the person you could be.”

He looked at her steadily, they’d had this conversation before, about her wanting to turn him into something he wasn’t, something he didn’t want to be. He shook his head; “No, Laurel, what is it about me, as I am, that made you want me?”

Her eyes darted around and then landed on him as she bit her lip; “You, Ollie have always been stunningly handsome and we always had so much fun together. And what girl wouldn’t want to be part of the Queen family.”

He remained silent, his mind working rapidly but not yet coming to any conclusions. Laurel reached out and covered his hand – that had been tapping away on the table – with her own, drawing his attention back to him; “What’s this all about, Ollie?”

“Laurel, what would you do if Thea was in terrible danger?”

“Has something happened to Thea?”

“No. Hypothetically, what would you do?”

“I’d try to protect her or save her.”

“What if the only way to save her was to give me up? What if saving her meant I wouldn’t remember you?”
“Oliver, I’d always try to look after Thea but I’d do anything to keep you.”

Oliver pulled his hand out from under hers and Laurel looked like she knew she’d given the wrong answer. She was confused but knew it wasn’t the answer he was looking for. Or maybe it was. She ran a finger around the rim of her coffee cup; “I was sorry to hear about Felicity’s apartment. That must have been terrible. Is she ok?”

He wasn’t playing that game with her, she knew she didn't give a shit about Felicity and he wasn't going to buy into her games just so she could keep up the act of being a 'good' person.

“I don’t want to talk about Felicity.”

Laurel’s eyes widened at his harsh tone and she perked up, sitting up straighter, looking almost excited; “Did something happen between the two of you? Did you have a fight?”

He wanted to say something, wanted to say that no, nothing had happened between him and Felicity but most of all he wanted to tell Laurel not to ask about Felicity. He still wanted to shield Felicity from Laurel. He didn’t get the chance to say any of that because his phone rang. He gave Laurel what he hoped passed for an apologetic look, slid out of the booth and walked a few steps away, answering the call without looking at the caller ID; “Yeah?”

“What? Is ‘hello’ no longer an acceptable greeting?” Jax sassed and Oliver sighed wearily.

“What do you want, Jax?”

“Got any plans for the evenings, oh handsome one?”

Yeah, he planned to workout, do the salmon ladder, go out looking for some criminals whose faces he could sink his fists into and then he planned to sit in the sofa bed, with the sheets that still smelt like Felicity and drink himself stupid.

“I’ll take that silence as a ‘no’. Want to come to a bar deep, deep in the Glades? Say around nine?”
Go out drinking with Jax? “Not particularly.”

He heard Jax sigh deeply; “Look, my sweet green grape, I know you’re not happy with our girl at the moment but she’s going to do something just the teeny tiniest bit stupid tonight.”

“So stop her.”

“Oh, that I could. But I have to be supportive. Especially with all the crying that’s been going on. No, the best I can do is go with her, keep her out of trouble.”

“Sounds like you have it handled.”

“Nope. Did I mention it’s a vampire bar? She might need more backup than just little old me.”

“Take someone with you. Her brother or Damon.”

“Tommy’s coming.”

“Tommy?” Shit.

“Yup. And we both know Tommy probably couldn’t fight his way out of a paper bag. Plus, our girl might need your brand of help, you know the insane fighting skills etcetera.”

Oliver sighed and ran a hand down his face, warily; “Fine. Give me the address.”

Jax rattled off the address and Oliver hung up on him as soon as he was done. He strode back to the table where Laurel greeted him with a smile that didn’t quite reach her eyes and he wandered if she was putting on an act.

“Thanks for meeting me, Laurel.” Pulling out his wallet, he threw some cash on the table to cover her coffee; “I’ve got to go.”
He left her frowning at his retreating figure.
Brooding and Insecurities

Chapter Summary

Jax and Tommy help Oliver see clearly. Felicity embraces her goth past.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

His mother would hate this place. That was Oliver’s first thought when he walked into the bar. It was dank, dimly lit and smelled like stale beer. And it the jukebox in the corner was playing old 50s and 60s music. Sometimes a situation called for the melancholy of Johnny Cash’s voice proclaiming he was walking the line.

Oliver scanned the crowd for Jax and Tommy. He found them huddled in a booth. Next, he looked around for Felicity. She was little harder to find but he found her leaning over a pool table, cue poised to take aim at the white ball. He did a mental double take when he saw her. She didn’t look like herself. Her blonde hair was waved and sported streaks of blue, she had a nose ring in and her mouth was painted with black lipstick. He wondered if that lipstick would transfer onto his skin if he captured her mouth in a kiss. She was wearing a black long sleeved top and black shorts with fishnet stockings underneath and black combat boots.

It wasn’t her usual look but she made it work. He was convinced she could make any look work.

Shaking his head, he made his way through the crowd to the booth occupied by Tommy and Jax. He slid into the booth and raised a brow at the contents of the table. A tapered candle was lit and sat beside a large white crystal.

“Someone want to tell me what we’re doing here?” He gestured at the candle and crystal; “And what’s with these?”

“See that guy over there?” Oliver looked where Jax was pointing, at some weedy, sandy blonde guy was playing pool with Felicity; “That’s Wayne. He’s a vampire. Hell the whole bar is made up of vampires but there’s a no bite rule in here so you’re safe. Anyway, he’s had a thing for Felicity for years. He also has a thing for making explosives.”
“Felicity thinks;” Tommy piped up; “That he might know who made the bomb that made her apartment go boom. We’re her backup, the extra muscle if she needs it.”

“And the candle and crystal?”

Jax shrugged; “It’s a witch thing. As long as this candle burns we can hear any thoughts Felicity aims our way and vice versa. Just don’t think anything really strongly if you don’t want her to hear it. The crystal amplifies the thoughts and the things we say or something. I don’t know, Felicity did her witchy thing, I just roll with it.”

“He has a thing for Felicity?” Oliver asked as casually as possible.

“Yeah. Goth Felicity was like his own personal kink. He creeps her out just a little.”

If he touched her, Oliver thought he’d cut off every one of his fingers.

“Jax,” Felicity’s voice rang out, Oliver looked over at the pool table and saw Felicity leaning against her pool cue, lips firmly pressed together. “This isn’t working. He’s not buying my particular brand of charm.”

“I told you should have dyed your hair black, then he’d be all over you.” Jax’s voice stated. It was strange that there was a thought conversation going on that they could all hear.

“If he touches me, I’ll cut off all of his fingers.” She paused; “Whoa. No idea where that thought came from. Are you or Tommy having very violent thoughts about cutting Wayne’s appendages off?”

“No,” Tommy said or thought or whatever, smugly; “But maybe Oliver is.”

Felicity’s head turned toward the booth and her eyes narrowed as she looked at him. “You brought Oliver? Why?”
“Because,” Jax stated patiently, “If we have to get into a brawl, his perfectly chiselled physique will help. In all the ways.”

“Fine,” Felicity huffed and went back to her pool game.

Jax looked at Oliver from across the table and pinned him with a look and started talking—normally—“So, you don’t think you’d have a thing for Felicity without a little magical assistance? Are you really that deluded?”

“You said that?” Tommy asked, incredulously, “You really a beautifully magnificent idiot.”

“I talked to Laurel today.” That wasn’t what he wanted to say but it came flying out of his mouth before he could stop it.

Tommy rolled his eyes; “Oh my god, you’re an even bigger idiot than I thought you were. You went back to Laurel?”

“I didn’t go back to Laurel,” he ground out defensively. “I just talked to her. I wanted to know why she wanted to be with me.”

Jax turned his far too perceptive gaze onto Oliver; “You really need to stop using that girl to punish yourself. She’s never going to forgive you for sleeping with her sister and taking her on that boat. No matter what she says.”

“He’s right, Laurel can smile sweetly at you and still be holding a grudge.”

“Here’s the thing, you big hunk of burning love, you don’t think there’s any part of you that deserves to be saved or deserves to be happy, so as long as you keeping going back to Laurel, you’ll be miserable and thus your self-imposed punishment will never be over.”

“Personally,” Tommy said with the most serious expression Oliver had ever seen him wear; “I find it interesting that you’re more hung up on the whole Felicity factor of the whole altered timeline reveal rather than the Thea aspect.”
“I will always love Thea. It doesn’t matter how she came to be my sister.”

“You know, Oliver,” Jax said; “Magic can’t make you love someone. That’s not how it works. You didn’t love Laurel, maybe you tried to because of Felicity’s spell but if you’d loved her you wouldn’t have cheated on her with her sister.”

He’d cheated on Laurel because he’d felt trapped, backed into a corner and desperately wanted out.

“Whatever there is between you and Felicity doesn’t exist because of magic, Oliver, it’s because of attraction and feelings.”

“The people closest to me always seem to end up in danger.”

Jax laughed; “Look around you, Felicity was in danger before she ever met you. In both timelines. Besides, Felicity can look after herself.”

“I wonder what Oliver was like in the first timeline.” Tommy wondered out loud.

“Less broody,” came Felicity’s voice; “Bratva Captain. Only three years on the island, though I suspect he wasn’t actually on the island for the whole time. Brought victims of human and sex trafficking so he could set them up with new lives. Way less messed up than I was or am.”

Oliver looked across at Felicity. She was still playing pool and not even glancing their way. She babbled even in her thoughts.

“He looked at me like he wanted to save me. That always bugged me a little.” She added.

Oliver waved his hand at the candle and crystal; “If this gets blown out, can the spell be restarted?”

Jax nodded; “Yeah, I asked that too. The candle and the crystal work together so just relight the candle and we’re in business again.”
“Good.” Oliver blew the candle out. He couldn’t have this conversation if Felicity was going to pick up on his thoughts. “Laurel wanted me to be something I’m not but maybe Felicity does too. Maybe she wants the other Oliver, the one who was better emotionally adjusted, not so fucked up, not me.”

“And yet she let your vigilante ass sit on her sofa and climb through her window before she realised it was you.” Jax said as he pulled out his lighter; “Believe me if she wasn’t into this version of you, she would have kicked you out of her life long ago.”

Jax flicked his lighter on and relit the candle and suddenly Felicity was babbling away again; “Did the candle go out? This was a stupid idea. Wish Belle was here, she was always better at this type of thing than I was –“

“Felicity? Babydoll, it’s all good. We’re here.”

“Oh, thank god. We’re going outside. Don’t let the candle go out. I might need you if he gets handsy.”

They watched as Felicity and Wayne exited the side door that presumably led out to the alley. They were gone a few minutes before Felicity’s voice – thoughts – whatever came to them; “Jax, send Oliver out here, would you?”

The three men exchanged a quick look, Jax shrugging and Oliver stood up and wove through the tables and people dancing and exited the same side door. He wasn’t prepared for the sight that greeted him. Felicity had Wayne pressed against the brick wall, a piece of wood sticking out of his chest, her hand wrapped around it. She looked over her shoulder at Oliver; “Tell my friend here, what you just told me, Wayne.” Her tone was sugar sweet with just a hint of lethality.

Wayne shook his head; “Nuh uh, I’m not telling Oliver Queen that.”

Felicity twisted the piece of wood and Wayne yelped; “You know, Wayne, I have a stake impaled in your chest, grazing your heart. It hurts doesn’t it? I can make it hurt more.”

“I like it when you hurt me.”

“Wayne.”
“Fine! I built the bomb that blew up Felicity’s apartment but I wouldn’t have done it if I’d known it was for Felicity’s apartment. I swear.”

Felicity pushed the stake in a tiny bit further; “Not that part. The other thing.”

Poor Wayne was sweating bullets and looked like he was in an inordinate amount of pain; “I also built the explosive that blew up Robert Queen’s boat. Someone paid me a shitload of money, I don’t know who, I never met them, it was kind of a friend of a friend kind of deal.”

“Hmmm. And who paid you to make a bomb to destroy my apartment?”

“I can’t tell you that! I want to, really I do but they’d kill me!”

Felicity stared at Wayne for a few moments and then yanked the stake out of his chest. Wayne skittered off, out of the alley and presumably down the street. Felicity turned, leaned her back against the wall, throwing the wooden stake down.

“He’s lying.” She stated as she played with the ends of her streaked hair; “he knows exactly who ordered both bombs. Those two people just terrify him more than I do.”

“Jax said Wayne likes you.”

Felicity bit her black bottom lip and then released it, the lipstick staying in place perfectly; “Yeah. The whole goth thing appeals to his creature of the night tendencies.” She said with a small smile, but the smile dropped almost as soon as it appeared; “Why did you come here tonight, Oliver?”

He shifted uncomfortably; “Jax asked me to come. Tommy was coming.”

“But why did you come?”

He stared at her steadily, intensely, she had to know she was the reason he was there. She was always the reason. She blushed and looked away. He wanted to press her against the alley wall
and kiss her sense but he figured that wasn’t the best idea.

So, instead he blurted out; “I’m sorry. About what I said.”

“Which bit? You said a lot.”

“All of it.”

She watched him for a moment and then nodded slowly; “Ok.”

It wasn’t an all-encompassing declaration of forgiveness but he’d take it. He’d take whatever she wanted to give. She stepped away from the wall, stepped around him and wrenched the door open. Looking back at him she asked; “You coming? Jax is probably going to order cheese fries and whiskey and make us all dance but it won’t be the worst night ever.”

“Did the other Oliver like to dance?”

She tilted her head to one side; “No. Hated it.”

“Well, I don’t mind dancing. Save me a dance?”

Felicity nodded; “OK.”

Oliver followed Felicity into the bar and back to the booth, where someone had blown out the candle and sure enough there was a large plate of Cheese Fries. Felicity tugged Tommy out of the booth and took his seat. Oliver slid into the booth, Tommy sitting down beside him. Felicity plucked a fry off the plate and nibbled on it, then picked up Jax’s drink and downed what remained in the glass. She nudged Jax with her elbow; “Give me some change for the Jukebox.”

Jax rolled his eyes and gave her a look but pulled some coins out of his pocket and slapped them into her waiting palm. Felicity beamed at Jax and pressed a kiss to his cheek and went to the jukebox. Oliver noticed there was no black lipstick mark on Jax’s cheek. That answered that question then.
Oh, Pretty Woman started playing and Jax slid out of the booth; “Boys, that’s my cue to go dance my ass off with my babydoll.”

Jax crooked his finger at Felicity and she grinned, threw her arms around Jax and started dancing.

“What’s up with that?” Tommy asked, shoving some fries into his mouth and talking around them.

“It’s their song.”

“There’s a lot of history there.”

“Yeah,” Oliver begrudgingly said.

“You know, she probably wouldn’t mind if you cut in.”

Oliver watched Felicity with Jax, dancing and laughing. “When I talked to Laurel, I thought that if she ever found out about what happened on the island, if she found out about the hood, she’d think I was a killer. A cold-blooded killer with no remorse.”

Tommy was silent, thinking over what to say to his best friend. Finally, after mulling it over, Tommy said; “Yeah. Laurel probably would. But Laurel sees things for the most part in strictly black and white terms, she doesn’t see the shades of grey, not like you do. Or like Felicity does.”

“What if she’s right and it is black and white?”

Tommy shrugged; “I think it’s all up to you, Oliver. If you want to do things a different way, only you can make that happen. I think you could stop thinking about saving the city in terms of the list Robert gave you and think more about how to save it without shooting to kill.”

“You want me to show mercy to hardened criminals?”
“Not for them. For you. I want you to stop adding to the weight of burden that’s already on your shoulders.” Tommy pointed at Felicity; “And maybe let a little light into your darkness.”
Chapter Summary

Felicity and Jax dance, Tommy and Felicity dance. There's just dancing all round and a few chats.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW. I also don't own the song Susie Q or Wonderful Tonight or any other song I've mentioned.

“What do you think they're talking about?” Felicity asked as Jax dipped her, bringing her back up, flush against him. She looked over his shoulder to where Oliver and Tommy sat side by side in a booth, talking intently about something.

“You, probably.”

Felicity gave Jax a sceptical look. She highly doubted Tommy and Oliver spent their time discussing her like a couple of school girls. Next, Jax would be saying they ate ice-cream and painted each other nails too.

“You know, Felicity, here’s a crazy idea, you could just go over there and ask them what they’re talking about.”

“Yeah, I’m not doing that.”

“Or you could just do what you’re dying to do: ask Oliver to push you around the dance floor.”

Felicity gave Jax the deadliest look she could conjure up and scoffed; “I do not want to dance with Oliver.”

“Oh,” Jax said, innocently and fluttered his lashes at Felicity, pulling away from their dance; “In
that case, I think I’ll dance with him.”

Felicity seized his hand and pulled him closer again and they resumed their dancing; “Who’s side are you on exactly?”

“Yours,” he said quickly, giving her a twirl; “Always yours.”

“He fired me.”

“So, what? You were bored at that job. Get him to hire you as a vigilante employee.”

Felicity laughed; “I don’t think vigilantes actually have paid employees.”

“Well, why the hell not? He’s a billionaire, he can afford it.”

Felicity pretended to think it over; “It could work, maybe on a case by case basis.”

“Of course,” Jax drawled; “For that to work, the two of you would have to work out your issues and you’d have to forgive him for being a beautiful idiot who says the wrong thing.”

She shrugged, “Well, he did apologise outside. And I said ‘ok.’ It was more on an acknowledgement of the apology than an acceptance of it.”

The song changed and Felicity pulled away, walked to a spare table and plopped down on a chair. Jax pulled out another chair, spun it around and straddled it backwards. Why couldn’t men just sit in a chair like normal people?

“Look, I say this because I love you and I don’t think you should forgive him too early but this whole altered timeline thing was a hell of a head fuck for me and I wasn’t one of the parties involved. He’s trying to process it all, I mean he’s doing a shit job of it but maybe cut him the teeny tiniest bit of slack.”

She leaned forward and looked him dead in the eye; “Jax, he implied that without the help of
magic, he wouldn't be attracted to me.”

Jax sucked in a breath he didn’t really need; “Yeah. That’s a shit storm but he didn’t really mean it. You know he didn’t.”

Did she?

“Put yourself in his shoes, Felicity. Imagine the roles were reversed and you found out that in a whole other timeline he’d been in love with you. But not this version of you. No. A version of you who hadn’t been through quite as much trauma as you and who was just a tiny bit less emotionally messed up. How would you feel?”

Ok. So, maybe Jax had a very small, minuscule point. She wouldn’t particularly be a fan of that scenario. If that were the case she’d always be wondering if Oliver was comparing her to the other version of her in his head and – ooohhhhhhh.

Felicity shrugged, nonchalantly; “I’d deal with it better than he did.”

Jax snorted out a laugh; “Bullshit.” He got to his feet, bent and pressed a kiss to the corner of her mouth; “Just think about it, ok? Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m going to see if there is a lovely lady in this place named Susie who’ll dance with me.”

Felicity frowned, confused, then she heard the song that had just started playing and she shook her head and laughed. Susie Q by Creedence Clearwater Revival. She pouted, she loved this song too. Resting her chin on her shoulder, she looked back at Oliver and Tommy still talking. Looking around she saw that Jax had found his Susie Q to dance with, though Felicity thought she looked more like a Candy or a Barbie but whatever.

Nodding to herself, Felicity got up and strutted across to the booth occupied by Oliver and Tommy. Strutting across a floor sticky with stale beer was no easy feat but she made it work. She lightly slapped her hands down on the table and looked between the two billionaires; “Ok, boys, one of you is going to have to dance with me. Jax has forsaken me for another.”

“Ohoooooohhh,” Tommy raised his hand and waved it, he bounced a little in his seat; “Pick me. Please, pick me. I’d never forsake you.”
“You’re doing unspeakable acts with my older sister.”

“I’ll never forsake you on the dance floor,” he amended; “Besides, I can sing this song, I know all the words, want to hear?”

“Please say ‘no’,” Oliver begged dryly.

But apparently, there was just no stopping Tommy; “Oh Susie Q, oh Susie Q,” he sang loudly; “I like the way you walk, I like the way you talk, I like the way you walk, I like the way you talk, Susie Q Well, say that you’ll be true –“

Felicity slapped a hand over Tommy’s mouth; “Ok. You’re up as long as you promise not to sing.”

Tommy nodded and mimed zipping his mouth shut and slid out of the booth and headed toward the dance floor. Felicity was about to follow him when she noticed Oliver’s downcast eyes. Damn Jax and his little chats that were full of too much logic and common sense. Felicity sighed.

“And don’t think you’re getting out of dancing, Mister Queen, you’re next.”

His gaze flew up to collide with hers and she offered him the tiniest smile and he nodded. She gave him a little nod and spun on her heel and took Tommy’s offered arm.

Tommy smirked down at her; “You called him Mister Queen.”

She rolled her eyes. He was as bad as Jax. “Just shut up and dance, would you?”

He just continued smirking and spun her out and away from him and then pulled her back in. He led her around in a foxtrot and for once decided not to talk. She was eternally grateful for that small mercy.

As the song changed, Tommy let her go and gave her a little nudge; “Oh, look at the time, I’m going to go call Kat. And it looks like Jax is still enjoying his Susie Q’s company.”
Tommy grinned boyishly, held his hands up and backed away from her with a wink, his phone already halfway to his ear. He really was a magnificent bastard. She couldn’t dance with Oliver to this song. Not *Wonderful Tonight* it was way too romantic. She bet Oliver had danced many a dance with Laurel to this song, Laurel seemed like she’d be an Eric Clapton fan.

“May I have this dance,” a soft voice asked close to her ear.

In her moment of indecision, Oliver had walked up behind her, she turned to face him. He looked a strange combination of nervous and hopeful, holding out a hand to her.

Nodding, she placed her hand in his and he tugged her closer, his hand wrapping around hers, her hand found its place on his shoulder, his other hand pressing lightly against the small of her back. And just like that she was slow dancing with Oliver. To one of the most romantic songs ever written, in a vampire bar, wearing fishnets and black lipstick. At that thought, she let out a little giggle. Oliver looked at her quizzically.

She shook her head; “Nothing. I just always thought when I’d dance to this song, I’d be wearing some beautiful dress. Not combat boots, fishnets and black lipstick.”

“I think you’re beautiful.” His soft confession caused her breath to hitch and a blush to rise under her skin.

“You shouldn’t say things like that to me. Not after the other things you’ve said recently.”

He sighed and the hand at the small of her back moved up slightly; “I’m sorry.”

She looked up at him trying to hide the vulnerability from her eyes; “Do you really think you couldn’t feel anything for me without there being some magic reason for it?”

He shook his head; “The problem is I feel too much for you and I shouldn’t.”

Ok, that was so not helping his cause. She tried to step back but the arm around her waist and the hand at her back kept her in place. “I had a plan when I decided to come home. Cross the names off the list, reunite with Laurel, get her to forgive me. But then I met you and you shot that plan to hell.”
Still not helping himself.

“I’m sorry I ruined your plans of living happily ever after with Laurel.”

Oliver shook his head and she could see he was frustrated – with her, with himself, maybe both. “No. This is all coming out wrong. I liked that you ruined it. I liked that you shook up my life."

“I’m sensing a ‘but’ coming up in this conversation soon.”

“I lashed out. Snapped at you."

“You did a little more than snap.” She pointed out, helpfully.

He swallowed and nodded and she realised how hard it was for him to be vulnerable, for him to trust, to open up. His jaw clenched and a muscle in his jaw worked as he tried to form whatever it was, he wanted to say. She thought about what Jax had said about cutting Oliver a little slack. She could help him out a little, she could be that generous of spirit.

“You were worried that maybe I liked the other version of you better than you.”

His eyes fell closed for a moment and when he opened them again, she saw in those tortured eyes of his, that she’d gotten it right. He pressed his forehead against hers; “I’m so fucked up, Felicity,” he said in a broken whisper.

“Yeah, well, me too. Join the club. I’m president. You can be janitor.”

He huffed out a little laugh that really was nothing more than an exhale. Felicity took her hand off Oliver’s shoulder and lightly ran her fingers down his cheeks, his eyes fell shut again, but this time she thought he was savouring her touch.

“And just for the record, Oliver, I like you just fine. In fact, I like you better than the other version. But, I’ll take you any way I can get you.”
She thought that maybe she’d revealed too much, made herself too vulnerable to him. Slowly he opened his eyes and offered her a smile; “I’ll take you any way I can get you too, Felicity.”
Unwanted Parties

Chapter Summary

Oliver wears a suit. Felicity and Oliver have a little talk. That's about it.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

“This is a low down, dirty, bad idea;” Jax stated dramatically as he polished beer glasses and Oliver and Tommy leaned against the bar wearing perfectly tailored suits. “Like the absolute worst idea. Apocalypse bad.”

“Kat wanted to do something nice for Felicity and enlisted Nate and Damon to help,” Tommy shrugged; “I don’t see what the big deal is.”

“Good god,” Jax said giving Tommy a scathing look, “Could you be any more whipped by Kat? And the big deal is that Felicity hates her birthday. She’s not going to be comfortable with this little formal shindig.”

“Who hates their birthday?” Tommy asked as if it were the most astonishing concept; “Birthdays are great! Cake and presents, what’s not to love?”

“Felicity doesn’t even know most of these people, let alone like them. The only people Felicity likes are either dead or propping up my bar right now.”

Oliver quietly thought Jax had a point. The party was a little over the top for a bar in the Glades. Kat had sent out electronic invitations and Moira Queen would have been aghast at the short notice – two days’ worth – his mother would never approve of RSVPing the same day the event was being held.

The bar was decorated with bunches of silver and blue balloons tied to the exposed rafters and it reminded Oliver of a high school prom. The bar was crowded with people, people who wanted to wish Felicity a happy birthday but the guest of honour was yet to make an appearance.
Jax put down the glass he was polishing and leaned his arms on the bar top; “Felicity hasn’t celebrated her own birthday in fifteen years. Not really. I tried to take her out for dinner for her eighteenth. My little melancholy baby hyperventilated and asked why I would do that to her.”

Tommy chuckled; “Come on. You’re kidding right?” The grin slipped from his face as Jax stared steadily at him. The swift change from cheerful to somber may not have been entirely due to Jax’s unwavering stare. “Ummm, who invited Miss Laurel Lance?”

Oliver’s head whipped around just in time to see his ex-girlfriend gliding into the bar, head held high, wearing an elegant black floor length dress. He suppressed a groan, he was attempting to make up for his royal fuck-ups where Felicity was concerned, he didn’t need Laurel to stir up trouble. Though, it seemed to be her speciality at the moment.

“Probably the ultimate shit-stirrer, otherwise known as Miss Katerina Smoak.” Jax drawled dryly. “That girl could cause a storm in a tea cup. Figuratively and literally.”

Oliver looked away when Laurel smiled at him. He scanned the room, taking in the party goers, subconsciously reading them for any sign of a threat. Sometime in the previous five years, he’d forgotten how to see a roomful of people as merely a roomful of people and instead saw them as targets, potential threats, potential victims. His gaze narrowed in on Nate and Damon talking in a corner. He couldn’t get a read on either of them. One would happily slaughter Thea in a bid to bring back his siblings and the other had kidnapped them. But they were Felicity’s family for better or worse.

“Ok, lovelies, put on your big boy pants because here’s our girl;” Jax stated straightening up; “And she looks unhappy.”

Katerina was leading Felicity in. Jax was right, Felicity looked less than happy. She looked uncomfortable. But she also looked stunningly beautiful in a hot pink – Thea would hit him in the arm and tell him the colour was actually fushia – floor length dress, blonde hair straightened and loose around her shoulders. She’d looked good with all the different colours in her hair but he was more partial to this look. The dress didn’t look untouchable, like if he grasped it in his hands and bunched it up, it wouldn’t wrinkle. Her pink lips matched the colour of her dress exactly.

Katerina tugged Felicity over to the bar, Jax slid a glass of whiskey to Felicity with a wink; “You’re going to need this, babydoll.”
Katerina sidled up to Tommy and ran a finger down his chest, smiling up at him with what could only be described as a saucy smile; “You look dashing in a suit. You’d look better out of it.”

She pulled Tommy down for a particularly passionate kiss.

“Ok. Ew. No one needs to see that.” Felicity said, picking up her drink and taking a sip. “Ok, I came.” She reached passed Oliver and pulled on Katerina’s arm, pulling her away from Tommy; “Can I go now?”

“No. It’s your birthday and you will celebrate. Ooohh look, our big brother is going to make a speech, it would be a tragedy to miss what holier than thou Nate has to say.” Katerina said, rolling her eyes.

Felicity leaned slightly into Oliver and he could smell her perfume, something citrusy and not sickly sweet; “You know, if you’re hiding an arrow on your person, I totally wouldn’t mind if you stabbed me with it.” She whispered as Nate tapped at the microphone and cleared his throat. Oliver gave her a small smile and a wink.

“Thank you all for being here,” Nate started from his spot at the front of the room; “Today is my baby sister’s birthday. We, her remaining siblings, wanted to throw something together for her. Felicity has always been the smartest and brightest of us all, as a child she was unflinchingly affectionate, she was the baby that we all wanted to protect and love. So, please, everyone, join me in raising a glass to our baby sister. Happy birthday, Felicity, you deserve all the wonderful things this world has to offer.”

Felicity shifted uncomfortably as the toast was made. Once Nate was finished speaking and the music came back on, Katerina finally disentangled herself from Tommy and dragged Felicity onto the makeshift dance floor.

Oliver watched as she danced with Katerina, Nate and then Damon. She looked the most comfortable and at ease with Damon. It seemed as if despite him kidnapping her, the two had a connection or at the very least an understanding.

As the night wore on, Jax and Tommy chatted happily away to each other, Laurel came to the bar and dropped off a gift for Felicity and then made an excuse about needing an early night. Both Jax and Tommy eyed the wrapped gift wearily and wondered if it was booby trapped.

While a party went on around him, Oliver was only interested in Felicity, tracking her with his gaze. When he lost track of her, he went looking for her. He eventually found her outside, sitting
on the loading dock, her dress pooling around her. She looked every inch Jax’s melancholy baby. He undid his tie and discarded his jacket as he approached her. Lowering himself down beside her, he asked; “What are you doing out here?”

She sighed; “Hiding. It’s my party and I’ll hide if I want to. Actually, it’s not really my party. It’s not really even about me.”

“Is it not?”

“Nope.”

“It’s about Nate and Kat and Damon. They’re trying to make up for missing fifteen years of birthdays in one night. They’re trying to act like we’re a family. But we’re not. We’re just three people connected by blood and Damon.”

“So, you’re hiding.”

“Yup.”

Oliver leaned back on his hands and watched her profile; “You mind if I hide with you?”

“No.” She said softly. They fell into silence and it was a long time before she spoke again, when she did, her voice was soft and haunted; “I haven’t had a good birthday since I was eight years old. But at the same time, I remember the birthdays with Belle and Anastasia – Thea – Belle didn’t have a lot of money, but she always tried so hard to make birthdays special. I remember them. But yet, they didn’t really happen because I erased them.”

Oliver remembered her saying, when she’d turned back time, that she’d woken up in her six year old body with all her memories. She’d had to live her life a second time over, without her sister or her niece. She’d had to experience her siblings’ murder for a second time. He couldn’t imagine having to live through everything that had happened on the island a second time, knowing when and how every terrible thing had happened and being unable to stop it.

And then for her to have to go into the foster system because her remaining family couldn’t or wouldn’t look after her, where people treated her badly with her knowing what it was like to have lived a happier life. Oliver looked at Felicity who was looking down at her hands in her lap. It
must have been so incredibly lonely for her.

“There weren’t any birthdays on the island;” he blurted out. He wasn’t sure why he was telling her that, he barely talked about the island but he just wanted her to know that she wasn’t all alone. “From day to day, I didn’t even know what the date was. When I first came back home, Tommy threw a ‘welcome back from the dead party’ – “

“I remember that,” Felicity said softly, turning slightly to face him; “It was all over the internet.”

“Right. It was a party for me but it was more for everyone else, they all wanted me to slip back into life, into being who I was before.”

She nodded; “Yeah and that’s how I feel with this party, like they want us all to slip into family roles we haven’t been in for over a decade, which is stupid because for whatever reasons, Kat and Nate can’t stand each other.”

“Your family is uniquely dysfunctional;” he agreed.

She let out a giggle and he felt proud that he’d cheered her up even just for a moment; “This coming from the guy whose own mother shot him.”

He shrugged; “She didn’t know it was me and it’s not the first time I’ve been shot.”

“Right.” She tipped her head to the side and watched him; “If I ask you a question, would you answer it?”

He knew it was going to be about the island. He was hesitant to answer any questions about his time there. But he nodded a little reluctantly.

“You weren’t always on the island were you? I mean, you weren’t there the whole five years.”

“No, I wasn’t.”
“I knew it! I mean, I didn’t actually know but I knew it.”

“I would have thought you ‘d know everything about the island.” He stated. At her confused look, he elaborated; “From the other me. In the other timeline.”

She shook her head; “You never told me about it and I didn’t ask.”

He was surprised by that. He thought she’d have asked, would have wanted him to open up and share his pain, talk about his trauma, express his feelings. But deep down, he knew that wasn’t Felicity’s style, she wouldn’t make him talk about his traumatic experiences when she so clearly didn’t want to idly talk about hers. He appreciated that about her. Appreciated she let him share what he was comfortable with without constantly trying to wear him down and get him to share. He appreciated that she’d share parts of herself without expecting anything in turn. With Felicity, it wasn’t a story for a story situation.

“My sister shot you once;” Felicity blurted out.

“What?”

“Belle and I lost our father a few of his girls and so he wanted to take Thea in their place. I said I’d go instead. You bought me. That’s how we met. Anyway, turned out it was your thing, you’d buy girls and then give them a new identity and new life. So, you took me back to the mansion and Belle came to rescue me, even though I wasn’t in any danger and she shot you.”

“What?”

“You know that scar that you said you’ve always had? There.”

So, perhaps that scar that had always marred his body was left over from a life he’d never lived. Like his body remembered even if his mind didn’t.

Felicity sighed; “I miss Belle,” she confessed in a sorrowful tone. “What’s Thea like?”

Oliver smiled at the thought of his sister; “She’s beautiful. Energetic, sarcastic, intelligent, witty.
I was a jerk with everyone except for her. She made me better. She’d always be chasing me around. I called her Speedy.” His smile fell, “While I was away, she got into drugs.”

“I know. Jax may have eaten her drug dealer.”

Good. Oliver hoped Jax made it unbearably painful.

“We were always close. But now she wants me to talk to her. Tell her about what happened to me. I just don’t know how to be the Oliver her and mom remember or want me to be.”

Felicity shuffled closer and thread her arm through his and interlocked her fingers with his, pressing their palms together. He’d never been the cuddly, hand holding type, he’d always been more the ‘wham, bam, thank you, ma’ am’ type of bastard but he could happily sit and hold Felicity’s hand for as long as she’d let him.

“I got you something for your birthday,” he told her, disentangling his hand from hers and reached for his discarded jacket and pulled a small box out of his pocket, he held it out to her. Felicity took it slowly, lifting the lid and pulling out the charm bracelet. He watched her study it nervously; “I bought the bracelet, then bought a locket and found a way to clasp the locket to the bracelet.”

Silently, she opened the locket where he’d placed a small photo of Thea in there along with a photo of Belle that Jax had helped him get. She smiled softly down at them and fiddled with the other charms, a green gem and an arrow head; “Did you make the arrow head?”

“Yeah, if you don’t like it, it comes right off –“

She cut him off with a soft press of her lips against the corner of his mouth. She pulled away, held out her arm and he helped her clasp the bracelet, she twirled it around her wrist. She intertwined their fingers again and leaned her head against his shoulder; “Thank you, Oliver.”

He pressed a kiss to her hair and mumbled into her hair, “Happy birthday, Felicity.”
Chapter Summary

Felicity shares something deeply personal with Oliver that even Jax doesn't know.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

With Oliver’s jacket draped over her shoulders, Felicity followed Oliver down the stairs into the Foundry. The party at Jax’s bar was in full force and showed no sign of slowing down. Tommy and Jax seemed to be forming a bromance over whiskey. All Felicity wanted to do was crawl into bed. Since she was currently bunking with Jax in the little closet he called a living space, she didn’t see sleep being part of her immediate future, so when Oliver had quietly asked her if she wanted to get out of there, she’d nodded.

Together, they’d snuck out of a party that was meant to be for her. Now, standing in the foundry with Oliver watching her with careful, soft eyes, she felt nervous, awkward and fidgety. And she couldn’t look directly at Oliver. Not with him looking so dangerously attractive with his hands shoved into his pockets, the top buttons of his crisp white shirt unbuttoned, his bow tie hanging loose around his neck. And the suspenders. They should be illegal. It would be so easy to walk up to him, wrap a hand around one of those suspenders and pull him down for a kiss.

His lips twitched as if he knew exactly what was going through her mind. Walking around him, she went over to the table where he kept his rows of arrows. She knew without asking that he made them himself. Experimentally, she reached out and touched her finger to the tip of one arrow. Many a man’s life had been ended by the force of one of Oliver’s arrows flying into them.

“The first person I killed intentionally on the island, I killed with a bow and arrow,” at the sound of his quiet voice reaching her, she turned her head and locked her gaze with his clear, blue eyes, he let out a breath; “He wasn’t a good man. He had to be stopped.”

Felicity frowned as he tried to explain what he’d done. What she had no doubt he’d been forced to do by circumstances. Her heart ached for him as his eyes begged her to understand. How many times had someone condemned him for things he’d had to do? For acts and experiences that had formed him into who he was?
She tore her gaze from his and looked away, biting her lip, contemplating telling him something she’d never even told Jax. Wrapping her arms around herself and looking down at the floor, she whispered; “After my foster father tried to,” she couldn’t make herself say the actual words, “you know. I went back to the house. I wanted to get what few things I owned. In hindsight it was probably a stupid idea. His son was there, he wasn’t much older than me – “

“She gave a short sharp nod, “Yes. He wasn’t very happy with that. Or that I’d done quite a lot of damage to his father. He cornered me. Decided to finish what his father had started. He got me to the floor. I remember the sound of his belt buckle and zipper as he undid them and I remember thinking I wasn’t going to let that happen to me. Anyway, I grabbed a large shard of glass that was still on the floor and I shoved it into his stomach, kicked him off me and then I pulled the glass out. I sat on the floor and watched as he bled out. I was sure the police would find me but I guess Damon cleaned up that mess for me too.”

Felicity swiped at a tear she wasn’t aware she’d shed as she remembered the feel of Ben’s hands on her body and the unbelievable calm she’d felt as she watched the life seep out of him. She also remembered going to a public restroom, the sobs that wracked her body as she’d scrubbed at her hands, trying to get the blood off her skin and wished there’d been someone to comfort her in that moment.

She heard Oliver’s rough exhale; “Felicity.” She didn’t want to hear his sympathy or pity, that wasn’t what it was about.

She lifted her chin and her gaze collided with those magnificent eyes of his; “My point is that we all do what we have to in order to survive. I’m not apologising for it and you shouldn’t either.”

His expression was unreadable but she noticed his jaw working and his gaze bore into her with an intensity that burned and was too much to bear. She went to move around him but he caught her arm and hauled her closer to him as he looked down at her; “Don’t do that,” he said, his voice husky, all smoke and whiskey.

She quirked a brow in response; “Do what?”

“Don’t try to redeem me. You defended yourself. I’ve killed in cold blood. I’m past redemption.”
It broke her heart that he had such a low opinion of himself, that he thought there was nothing good left within himself. It hurt her that he couldn’t see himself the way she saw him. He’d lived through five years of hell and survived. He’d come out the other side. Sure, he was tortured and some would say damaged but living through what he had required a level of strength some people just didn’t possess.

Reaching up, she cupped his cheek with her hand, his eyes fell shut and he tilted his head a little, pressing his cheek further into her hand, his scruff lightly scratching against her palm. “Oliver,” she whispered and his eyes opened and he looked down at her with more vulnerability in his eyes than he probably wanted her to see. She smiled at him softly; “You’re never past redemption. But I’m not trying to redeem you. I’m merely pointing out that you’re not this thing that you seem to think you are. You’re not past the point of no return.”

She dropped her hand from his cheek, letting her fingertips linger against his scruff, she backed away from him and went into the bathroom. She needed a reprieve from him, from this night, from the intense way he was looking at her. Gripping the counter, she glanced down at the bracelet Oliver had given her, she ran a finger over the green bead. It was his colour. The small arrowhead he’d crafted himself and she thought in doing so, he’d given her a piece of himself. The locket held images of Belle and Thea. It was the most thoughtful gift she’d been given in years. She heard the door click shut and looked up in the mirror to see Oliver watching her. He’d followed her into the bathroom. His expression was as controlled as ever but his eyes were wild.

“Why don’t you look at me like I’m a lost cause? Or like I’m in dire need of fixing or saving.”

She lifted a shoulder in a half shrug; “Because I don’t think you need fixing. I think you need healing. There’s a big difference.”

She knew because she was in desperate need of some healing herself. God, she was so tired. Like bone deep tired. She just wanted to sleep on something that wasn’t the camp stretcher Jax had provided. Reaching behind her, she undid the hook on her dress and tugged the zip down as far as she could without help. Turning and pressing her back against the counter, she looked at Oliver who was watching her with a speculative look, his head tilted ever so slightly to the side.

“I’m sleeping here,” she declared, “have you got something I can sleep in?”

He took a slow, lazy step toward her, hands in his pockets as if he had all the time in the world. In the small space of the bathroom, he was just about toe to toe with her. If he moved just a tiny inch forward, she’d be able to smell him. She blinked and he took that step forward. She inhaled and he smelt of something woodsy and just pure Oliver. She could get addicted to that smell.
He leaned in, one hand landing on the counter behind her, the other trailed calloused fingers up her arm. Goosebumps formed in their wake. She let out a shaky breath and shivered. His hand made a path across her shoulder and landed on her cheek, cupping in the same way she’d cupped his cheek before. She leaned into his warm hand.

“Felicity,” he whispered, “You are the very best thing I’ve set sight on. Ever.”

His eyes were full of sincerity and more affection than she’d been on the receiving end of for as long as she remembered. In both timelines. His gaze dropped to her mouth and she thought he was about to kiss her. She desperately wanted him to but he stayed right where he was, with one hand planted on the counter, one hand on her face. He’d never looked at her like that before. Not in this timeline. Not in the previous one. He’d never looked at her like she was his salvation, like he couldn’t find his purpose without her, like he needed her like he needed oxygen. Like he wanted to make her his forever. Like there was no one else for him except for her.

That one look overwhelmed her. Wrapping a hand around one of his suspenders, she tugged him closer until his body collided with hers and pressed her back into the counter a little painfully. Keeping a hand firmly around the suspender, she draped the other arm over his shoulder and rose up on her toes, bringing her mouth close to his but not touching; “Oliver, would you just kiss me already?”

He grinned and pressed a sweet, soft, peck of a kiss to her mouth; “Like that?” he asked, his mouth moving against hers with ever word.

She shook her head; “No. Like you mean it.”

Still smiling against her mouth, his hand went to the nape of her neck and found its way under the heavy fall of her hair, he pulled her and pressed his lips to hers in a soft, slow kiss. She grasped at him as his tongue ran over the seam of her mouth begging entrance, when she sighed, his tongue stroked against hers languidly. His hands landed on her hips and lifted her up onto the counter, she let her legs fall open as he stepped between them. He tilted her head back and deepened the kiss, tasting her, teasing her. His hand pushed up her dress, bunching the material up around her hips; “I like your dress.”

A small smile curved her mouth as his mouth found a particularly sensitive spot just below her ear and he pressed an open mouthed kissed there; “Thank you.” She breathed. She pulled his head back up and pressed her mouth to his once more. They made out with her sitting on the counter, her dress bunched up, him standing between her legs for minutes before she dragged her mouth away from his and sucked in a breath. Her heart was racing, he dropped his head to her shoulder,
his heavy breaths coming out against her skin. Pressing her hands to his chest, she pushed him back but didn’t let him go too far. She pushed his suspenders off his shoulders and her hands found the buttons of his shirt, her fingers nimbly unbuttoning each button until the shirt fell open. Biting her lip, she lifted her eyes, her gaze tangling with Oliver’s. He looked as kiss drunk as she felt, his eyes a little hazy. Holding his gaze, she pushed the shirt open further and slowly pushed it off his shoulders. It got caught on his wrists and he brought up his hands from where they were on her neck and on the counter, offering them to her. She undid the buttons at the cuffs and pulled the shirt off completely letting it flutter down to the floor.

Oliver tensed slightly as Felicity ran a finger over the mottled skin on his shoulder, over the Bratva tattoo, across the slashes across his torso but relaxed when she hooked a leg around his hip, hooked her finger in his belt loops and pulled him back in, their lips colliding in a sloppy, uncoordinated kiss. She moaned as he sucked her bottom lip into his mouth. Oliver ran a hand up the leg she had draped over his hip and squeezed her thigh before inching even further up. His fingers danced over her lace panties and she squirmed in anticipation, her squirming ended on a gasp as he swiftly pushed her panties to the side and sunk a solitary digit into her, right to the knuckle. He pulled out and plunged back in adding another finger to the slow torture he was doing to her.

Her hands flew to the button of his pants, popped it with fingers that shook as he pumped a third finger into her. Without any finesse at all, she pulled the zipper of his pants down and wrapped her hand around his cock. She ran the pad of her thumb over his tip, wanting to inflict a little bit of her own version of torture on him. He moaned and hauled her other leg up over his hip, she locked her ankles behind his back as her hand stroked his already hard cock.

“Oliver,” she whimpered as his thumb brushed against her clit.

He moved his cheek to brush his cheek against hers and the feel the rough sensation of his scruff against her cheek felt amazing, “What do you want, Felicity?” his husky voice breathed roughly in her ear; “I’ll do anything you want.”

“I want you inside me.” She said on a moan. The moan turned into a whine when he abruptly pulled his fingers from her and pushed her hand away from him but then he was gripping her ass and pulling her toward him, taking himself in hand, he ran his cock over her, the tip brushing her clit causing her breath to hitch. She clutched at his back as he positioned himself at her entrance and bit her lip as he pushed into her so agonisingly slowly until he was seated fully inside her. He stilled inside her and took a deep breath, releasing it against her neck. Her hands ran over his chest as he pulled almost all the way out and she could feel every inch of him as he just as slowly pushed back in. With every drag of his cock, she clenched trying to keep him there. He kept up a tortuously slow pace until she was panting against his neck and her hands were wildly clutching at him.

He caught one of her hands with his own and interlocked their fingers against the mirror behind
her. Everything inside of her was tighten with every stroke, his hand went under her dress and rubbed slow circles into her clit. She didn’t even recognise the sounds she was making. She hitched her legs up higher on Oliver’s waist and he groaned as the action changed the angle and he hit a particularly delightful spot. As his pace increased, she knew he was close too, she clenched around him and caught his lips in a rough kiss, parting his lips with her tongue. The pressure of his fingers on her clit increased and he started fucking her roughly – finally – she moaned his name and threw her head back, his lips landed on her collarbone where he sucked a hickey into her skin. His name flew out of her mouth on a scream as her orgasm hit her and her walls fluttered around him as they milked him, he fucked her through her orgasm and then spilled inside her groaning against her skin. He twitched inside her as they both breathed heavily and her heart beat rapidly, her hands fell to his head and she pulled him up for a soft, slow kiss.

He pulled back and ran a thumb over her bottom lip, she let her legs fall from around his waist and he pulled out of her, stepped back, tucked himself into his pants but didn’t bother buttoning or zipping them up. He offered her a hand to help her down from the counter, she took it and hopped down on slightly wobbly legs. She smoothed out her dress and bit her lip, he was watching her carefully.

“Well,” she said hoping to alleviate the awkwardness a little; “that was interesting sex.”

He shook his head and she thought he was going to say it was a mistake or something equally heartbreaking. But what he said had her gaping at him; “That wasn’t sex. That was a revelation.”

Jaw dropped, she stared at him as he bent, picked up his shirt off the floor and held it out to her; “Think you can sleep in this?”
Stunned, Felicity watched Oliver exit the bathroom, clicking the door shut behind him. She looked down at his shirt dangling from her fingers. She turned and looked at her reflection in the mirror. She looked a wreck. And her dress was wrinkled from where Oliver had buried his hands in the material. Slowly she stepped out of her dress and left it on the counter, she pulled the shirt on and buttoned it up. She laughed as she had to roll up the sleeves as she drowned in the shirt. She lifted the collar and breathed in Oliver’s left over scent. She wandered out of the bathroom and stopped when she found Oliver sitting on the edge of the bed that had been hers. He’d swapped his suit pants for trackpants, was shirtless and was bent forward, his elbows braced on his knees, hands clasped and head bowed. She had honestly expected him to have been gone when she emerged from the bathroom.

He looked up as she approached, his gaze going over her from the top of her head down to her toes. She padded over to the bed, pushed back the covers and got in. She looked expectantly at him as he glanced over his shoulder at her; “Are you staying or going? If you’re staying, get into bed, Oliver.”

Indecision clouded his expression. What was there to decide? Either he wanted to stay with her or he didn’t? It wasn’t that difficult. Sighing, she tried again; “Either get in the bed or get out.”

He dipped his chin and averted her gaze; “I have nightmares, sometimes.”

He sounded…..ashamed?

She shrugged; “So, what? Me too.”
“I can get physical. The first night I was home I almost killed my mother,” he sighed heavily and raised those tortured blue eyes to her; “I don’t want to hurt you.”

“You won’t.” She said with such certainty and made the decision for him; “Get into bed, Oliver. I promise you it will be ok.”

Getting to his feet, he walked around to the other side of the bed and lingered there for a moment before slowing pushing back the covers and climbing in beside her. They lay side by side; “See,” she told him, “that wasn’t so hard, was it?”

She wanted to put her head on his chest and tangle herself up with him but she wasn’t sure if he would want to be touched while going to sleep or if he would just want his space. So instead she just closed her eyes and listened to the sounds of the foundry and the closing club above them.

“Felicity?” Oliver’s soft voice drifted over to her.

“Hmmm,” she hummed without opening her eyes but when he didn’t say anything else, she opened her eyes and turned her head and was suddenly inches away from being nose to nose with Oliver. “What is it?”

He sighed and looked up at the ceiling, “Nothing.”

Sitting up slightly, she inched closer to him, threw and arm over his torso and lowered her head to rest on his chest. Closing her eyes, she silently waited for him to gently move her away. She counted the beats of his heart as she waited.

She was almost asleep when she felt his arms come around her and she was enveloped in his warmth. Sleep didn’t take long to come.

Felicity woke all at once, her witchy instincts telling her that she was being watched. She sat up in bed and looked around with wild eyes. Her gaze landed on Oliver, who was sitting in a chair at the end of the bed, his gaze firmly on her. He’d been watching her sleep. His expression was the one he usually had when he was thinking, strategizing and Felicity thought that probably didn’t bode well for her. He was either going to accuse her of magically seducing him again or he was figuring out how to say goodbye to her. She was not a fan of either of those options. But if that was what was about to happen, she’d make a break, a clean one and be done with the enigma that was Oliver Queen. She’d lived without him once; she could do it again. She didn’t need him. But she wanted
him. She could survive without him.

“What time is it?” Felicity asked, figuring it was better to work up to whatever epic argument they were about to have. She needed to wake up properly if she was going to make a dramatic exit with her dignity intact.

“A little after three. In the morning.”

Two hours. She’d been asleep for two hours. And how much of that two hours had he been watching her?

“And you decided to get up and watch me sleep?”

“I don’t know how to do this.”

And here we go. She sat up straighter and steeled herself for what was coming. It seemed he was going down the ‘goodbye’ route.

“What don’t you know how to do?”

Break her heart? He seemed to have that down to a fine art.

“Be good for you. I don’t know how to be good for you.”

Ok. Not what she was expecting. This, she could potentially deal with. She tilted her head to the side, her hair falling over her shoulder; “And you want to be good for me?”

A beat. A pause and then a soft; “Yes.”

So not what she was expecting. “Well,” she started, trying not to sound too pleased that this wasn’t a goodbye speech; “Maybe you could just be good to me and go from there?”
He looked almost pained; “I’ve never been very good at being a good boyfriend. I always screw it up. Tommy was always better at the actual boyfriend thing than I was. I don’t want to screw it up with you.”

While his little speech was great and all, he kind of lost her the moment he said the word ‘boyfriend’. She sat up in the bed and crawled to the end of the bed, rising up on her knees; “You want to be a good boyfriend? To me?”

“Yes,” he apprehensively said. She bit down on a squeal. She didn’t want to spook him any more than he obviously was. She wrung her hands together and did a little bounce.

“And this is why you’ve been watching me sleep like a creep?”

“Yeah,” he looked adorably confused by her. She beamed at him, so pleased with him in that moment. Climbing off the bed, she took his hand and held it between both of hers, he looked up at her, she smiled; “Oliver, don’t think so much.”

He opened his mouth to say something- maybe argue – but she leaned down and cupped his face in her hands, dragging her nails through his scruff and pressed a soft kiss to his mouth. She pulled away; “It’s too late…or early for this much deep thinking and self-loathing. You and I are good if you want us to be.”

He stood up, right in her personal space, placed his hands on her hips and looked down at her; “Don’t think, just lean in.” at her frown, he elaborated; “It’s something my Dad used to say.”

Reaching up, she wrapped her arms around his neck; “Sounds like excellent advice. Do that.”

His eyes dark and intense, he bent and brushed his lips across hers in the simplest of kisses. It was an acquiescence, an agreement, an acceptance and an offering all rolled into one. He started to pull back and she couldn’t have that. Pressing herself against him, she kissed, giving his lip the softest bite. He groaned as she ran her fingertips over the perfectly sculpted abs that Jax had salivated over for weeks, the muscles twitching and contracting. Without breaking the kiss, he slowly turned them and sat down on the bed, his hands on her hips guiding her to straddle him. Her hair fell around them, forming a curtain around their faces. With one hand, she brushed it to one side and wished she had something to tie it up with.

Oliver’s hands found their way to the buttons of the shirt she was wearing and he slowly
unbuttoned it, pushing it aside in a similar way she had done earlier when he was wearing it. Her heart rate increased as his gaze roamed her body and he licked his lips like she was the most tasty treat on the menu. Her breathing joined her increased heart rate when he grabbed her hips in a firm grip and ground her against his lap letting her feel the hardness there and letting her know that she was not the only one affected.

He walked the fingers of one hand under the shirt and up her back, where he splayed his hand against her skin and bending his head, he pressed a kiss to the swell of her breast. She squirmed in his lap, effectively grinding herself down on him again. The groan he let out was slightly stifled his lips pressed against her skin. She made a move to shrug off the shirt completely but his hand on her back held her still; “Leave it on.” He ordered against her skin.

“You have a kink about me wearing your clothes?” she teased. “Oh!” She exclaimed, all humour forgotten as his mouth moved lower and found her nipple, drawing it in, his tongue lapping against it, pulling it into a hard peak. She ground down on him, needing to find some friction. He was holding her so firmly, she was trapped between his large hand on her back and his mouth doing wicked things to one nipple before moving across to the other one. She felt his smile against her skin; “You are delicious, Felicity. What does Jax call you?”

“You want to talk about Jax right now?”

He looked at her with eyes darkened by lust; “Right now, I want you to take off your panties. Leave the shirt on.”

He leaned back on his hands as he watched her slowly slide of his lap and hook her thumbs in the waistband of her underwear and pull them down her legs. Lightening quick, he sat up, hooked an arm around her waist and pulled her to straddle him once more.

“So, what does Jax call you?” He asked as he rolled her nipple with his fingers. He was making it difficult to concentrate on what the hell he was babbling about.

She licked her lips; “He calls me a lot of things, sweets, sweetness, babydoll, his melancholy baby.”

“That’s it. I wanted to gouge his eyes out with an arrow the first time he called you his melancholy baby. I didn’t want you to be his anything.”

“Ok?” She dug her hands into his shoulders and her mouth found his for a searing kiss. He nudged her away, gripped her hips tightly and in one fluid move, was hovering above her, her back pressed
into the mattress.

“I just wanted you to be mine,” he stated as he kissed his way across her breasts, “Are you mine, Felicity,” he asked kissing a trail down her stomach; “Are you my melancholy baby?” He asked as his mouth landed on her clit and he sucked hard.

She always thought the thing about seeing stars was bullshit but she definitely saw something, gasping and bucking up into his mouth; “Oh, God! Yes!”

He plunged two fingers into her and sucked her clit once more. She shivered and felt a little bereft when his mouth and fingers left her. He crawled his way back up her body and without any warning he thrust into her, his cock replacing his fingers. It was an unexpected intrusion but was by no means and unwelcome one. She pulled her knees up to give him a better angle. If earlier in the bathroom had started off languid and slow, this was hard and fast. She moved with him, meeting thrust for thrust as he pounded into her, gripping her leg and pushing it up higher. Her hands landed on his back and with nails digging in, she felt the movement of his muscles with every stroke.

Her breathing was starting to stutter and she knew she wasn’t going to last long. Oliver bent his head to her and kissed her hard and fast, his tongue demanding entrance and she tasted herself on his tongue.

Breaking the kiss, he stared into her eyes and his fingers found her clit, circling it as he thrust hard and fast into her, hitting the same spot over and over again. He didn’t tear his gaze away from hers and the intimacy coupled with the way he was moving inside was almost too much to bear. She bucked her hips up and clenched around him, panting as his thumb pressed down on her clit and she was hit by wave after wave of pleasure. She was still coming down from her high when he slammed his mouth against hers and thrust hard into her once more, groaning into her mouth and spilling everything he had to give into her. He collapsed down on her and she stroked his back as they both breathed heavily.

Oliver gently pulled out of her and she stood up on wobbly legs and went into the bathroom to pee and clean up. When she came back out, Oliver was snoring softly. Crawling in beside him, she pressed a kiss to his jaw and curled into his side and let sleep wash over her again.
“What is that thing on your face?” Thea asked Oliver with a cheeky smile as he slid into the booth in Big Belly Burger, she pressed a hand to her chest and gasped dramatically; “I think it’s an actual, real smile!”

Oliver shrugged but the smile didn’t slip from his face. He’d woken up in the foundry with Felicity wrapped around him in all the best ways. Warm, soft and beautiful. She’d greeted him with a kiss, her blonde hair surrounding them both.

“What could have caused this dramatic transformation in grouchy Oliver? Oh my god! Did you and Laurel finally get back together?” Thea looked at him with wide eyes and a smile so unbelievably happy, it was a smile she hadn’t really aimed his way since he’d been back from the island. He’d missed her infectious cheer. He felt almost bad about quashing the Laurel and him together idea, Thea had become close with Laurel since starting her community service at CRNI.

He shook his head; “It’s not Laurel.” He simply stated, hoping his sister would leave it at that and allow him to have one more secret from her. He watched as Thea nibbled thoughtfully on a fry as she watched him. He wondered what his sister was like in Felicity’s other timeline, he guessed Felicity and Thea were close, they had to be otherwise Felicity wouldn’t have changed everything to keep her safe.

“But,” Thea said, “There is someone?”

“Yes.”

“Well,” Thea said sitting up straight and pinning him with her fiercely determined look, it was a
look she’d learned from their mother; “I want to meet her.” Thea’s tone was one that left no space for argument but he was going to give her one anyway.

“No,” Oliver stated, his own tone adamant.

Thea’s brows flew up and he knew she’d just get even more determined; “Why the hell not? Is there something wrong with her?”

Sighing, he simply said; “There’s nothing wrong with her.”

“Then why can’t I meet her?”

Because he wanted to keep Felicity all to himself for just a little bit longer; “Thea, it’s still new. I’m trying not to mess it up.”

Thea looked at him with more empathy and compassion than he thought his baby sister should really be capable of and nodded; “Fine. But I want to meet her eventually.”

“Thank you, Speedy.”

“And,” she said mischievously; “If you don’t want to mess it up, don’t cheat on her with her sister and take her on a boat with you.” At his look, she fluttered her eyelashes at him innocently; “What? Too soon?”

“Just a little,” he deadpanned.

“Ollie,” Thea said, her expression turning serious; “Are you able to be yourself with this girl? Are you able to show her who you are now?”

“She knows who I am.” Not everything. He wasn’t prepared to share everything with Felicity because if she knew everything he’d done, he had no doubt that she’d walk away from him without a backward glance. He knew she’d eventually walk away but he wanted to keep her with him for as long as he could.
“And you’re serious about her? More serious than you were about Laurel?”

“Speedy,” he stated as he stole one of her fries; “I’m more serious about her than I’ve about anything else in my life.”

“Then, there’s no way you could possibly mess it up.” She offered him an open, innocent, comforting smile.

From the mouth of babes.

“So, how are things with Roy?,,” Oliver asked, trying not to grimace at the idea of his baby sister having a boyfriend. A boyfriend with a criminal record. A boyfriend she’d met when he’d snatched her purse. He didn’t really want to talk about Thea’s love life but he also wanted to divert the conversation from his own.

“Great,” Thea said brightly and then proceeded to babble about how magnificent Roy was. Oliver tuned her out a little not wanting to hear the details about the guy who was dating his sister but Thea seemed genuinely happy, happier than Oliver had seen her in a long time so he could concede that maybe Roy was good for her.

The door opened and Oliver heard a feminine sigh and then; “Damon, it’s not that I didn’t appreciate the party, it’s just not how I wanted to spend my birthday.”

Felicity. Oliver’s head whipped around and he saw her walking in with Damon behind her. He watched her smile at something Damon said and he was still amazed by how at ease she seemed with Damon compared to the clear suspicion she had towards Nate and Katerina. He watched as Damon said something quietly to her and her head slowly turned towards where he and Thea were sitting and her gaze met his. They stared at each other for a few heartbeats before she offered him a small smile, ducted her head, tucked a piece of hair behind her ear and led Damon to a table across the restaurant from the booth. Oliver tracked her every movement with his eyes.

“Oh my god,” Thea’s excited exclamation pulled him out of his reverie and he tore his gaze off Felicity and looked at her sister who was beaming at him; “That’s her, isn’t it?”

Sighing heavily, he pleaded; “Thea…”
She slid out of the booth, determined; “I want to meet her. Now.”

Oliver reached out and wrapped his hand around Thea’s wrist, effectively stopping her; “Thea, she’s here with her brother who she hasn’t seen in a very long time. I promise you, I will introduce you to her when I’m ready.”

Thea looked down at him. Finally, she nodded and sighing dramatically dropped down back into the booth; “Fine,” she pouted and looked over at Felicity, “She’s cute. You know, there’s something vaguely familiar about her. Isn’t that silly, I feel like I could walk over there and fall so easily into conversation with her,” she paused and shook her head; “Just déjà vu. I’ve never seen her before in my life. Ridiculous.”

Oliver watched Thea as she shook herself out of whatever she was feeling and then smile at him again; “Want to order shakes and race to see who can finish first? Like we did when I was a kid.”

You’re still a kid, he wanted to say. He chuckled and shook his head; “You always got brain freeze and a stomach ache.”

“So, what?” She got up and went to order two milkshakes and Oliver snuck another glance at Felicity.

Felicity shivered as she felt that tingle down her spine, it was the one she always felt when she was being watched. She had no doubt as to who was watching her. She knew if she looked across to the opposite side of the restaurant, she’d clash gazes with Oliver.

“Woah,” Damon stated, pulling her from her Oliver induced thoughts, “My kid has some strong feelings. She feels like she knows you from somewhere.” Damon narrowed his eyes; “She also thinks she’s in love. There’s a boyfriend?”

“Yeah,” Felicity waved a hand in the air; “She’s seeing Roy Harper, he’s a good guy.”

“When it comes to girls, no guy is good, Felicity.”
Felicity smiled across the table at Damon; “Maybe stop tapping into your daughter’s feelings.”

“Fine. How about I tap into Oliver’s?” He said with a smirk and she knew he was teasing her but she glared at him anyway, he shrugged; “You afraid of what I might find there?”

“Just stay out of everyone’s feelings.”

“As you wish. Let’s talk about why you skipped out on your birthday party, then.” He leaned forward, clasping his hands on the table and watching Felicity with a look not dissimilar to the look Belle used to give her when she was a teenager and decided to do something rebellious. “I thought it was a bad idea but Nate and Katerina wanted to prove they care.”

“They wanted to prove they care? It would have been better if they’d shown up in my life, oh I don’t know, any time in the last fifteen years.”

Sarcasm dripped from each and every one of her words.

“You including me in that, kid?”

She shrugged; “Sure. But with you, I feel like you were at least a little justified in keeping your distance, the girl you loved and your child were dead or at least you thought so. Plus, you’re not related to me by blood.”

“Family isn’t just about blood, Felicity.”

“Did you really kill my foster father, Damon? That was you?”

“Also got rid of that bastard’s son after you finished him off.”

“Why?”
He shrugged; “Nate and I made our pact but it was more than that, Belle loved you more than anything, you were her favourite and I wanted to do right by her, I guess.”

“So,” she said slowly, “You’re on my side?”

“Always have been, kid.”

“Except that time you kidnapped me and my friends.”

He had the decency to look ashamed; “Yeah, call that a momentary lapse in judgement.”

“You and Nate are friends. You trust him?”

“I trust that he won’t allow harm to come to you but don’t worry, he’s not getting anywhere near Thea. I won’t allow it.”

Felicity nodded; “Ok. You think he had anything to do with my apartment’s unfortunate demise?”

She had to ask. She had to know. She needed to know who she could trust. At the moment, she trusted Damon a lot more than Kat and Nate, at least he was upfront with her. She thought he’d tell her the truth even if she didn’t want to hear it.

“Not a chance,” he said it with such unadulterated conviction that she felt compelled to believe him.

“Ok. There’s this vampire. He’s got a bit of a thing for me and Jax and I went to see him. He told me that someone paid him to make the bomb in my apartment. He said he didn’t know who it was. He also built the bomb that sunk the Queen’s Gambit. He said he also didn’t know who paid him for that one either.”

“But you don’t believe him.” Damon guessed.

“I think, he knows more than he was saying.”
“Ok, so what’s the plan?” Damon tipped his head to the side and frowned; “You’ve got a plan right?”

She shrugged; “My plan is two fold, I was thinking I could access his bank records and trace the payments for each bomb back to where they originated.”

“And,” Damon drawled; “The other part of this plan?”

Felicity smiled a little diabolically; “I think we should torture it out of him.”

Damon whistled and fell back in his seat; “That’s one hell of a plan, kid.”

“Thank you, I thought so. So, are you in?”

He contemplated her for a moment and then smiled a slow, dangerous smile; “Definitely, I’m always up for a little torture.”

Felicity returned his smile with one of her own and picked up a menu; “So, what are you going to order? The burgers are soooo good.”

“I’ve got a better idea,” he said as he got up, “Wait here.”

As Damon went to the counter and placed an order, Felicity looked over toward the booth that was currently occupied by Thea and Oliver. Felicity felt a sudden overwhelming sadness watching them interact and watching Thea smile at something Oliver had said. Oliver turned his head and suddenly she was looking into his eyes, his lips quirked up into a small smile and she gave him a small wave before looking away.

Before she could dwell too much on the deep seated sadness she felt, Damon returned to the table with a large ice-cream sundae and two spoons. He placed the sundae in the middle of the table and pushed a spoon toward her. She raised a questioning brow; “What’s this?”
“Belle told me once that you and her had a ritual where you’d get a chocolate sundae and race each other to see who could get to the bottom of the dish first.” Damon paused and looked over at Thea and Oliver, then met Felicity’s eye once more; “I know that you miss Belle. And Thea. I get that that’s why you didn’t want to celebrate your birthday.”

“You know?”

“I can feel it.”

Of course he could. Empath powers were always so intrusive.

“I’m sorry, we’ve all done such a shit job with you, kid, but you’ve got me and I’m no replacement for Belle but maybe I’ll do.”

She didn’t reply, just picked up the spoon and started eating.
Damon slammed Wayne down into a chair, he went easily, Wayne was such a weasel, a weedy type, Felicity couldn’t understand how anyone would think it would be a good idea to give him eternal life. And yet, there they were. His one room apartment in the Glades was truly disgusting. It smelled like there was something in there that had died a very long time ago. The curtains hung off their hooks and were ripped, the wallpaper was peeling off the walls and had stains that Felicity didn’t even want to think about. Ditto for the carpet which was lifting.

Damon held Wayne down in the chair with a heavy hand to the shoulder; “My girl here, thinks that you weren’t being entirely truthful about some of the things you told her the other night.”

Wayne frantically shook his head; “No. No. I told you everything I know.”

Felicity tilted her head and twirled the wooden stake idly in her hand; “Yeah, I really don’t think you did.”

“So, Felicity is going to ask you a few questions and if you lie or hold anything back;” Damon bent and put his face close to Wayne’s; “I’ll know.”

“Yup,” Felicity reiterated cheerfully; “He will, he’s an empath.”

“I’ll tell you whatever you want to know! Just don’t shove that stake into my chest!”

Felicity exchanged a look with Damon who shrugged. Felicity stepped closer to Wayne and
pressed the tip of the stake to his chest, poised to shove it in; “What would you like to start with? The bomb you made to blow up my apartment or the one you put on Robert Queen’s boat?”

Wayne shook his head again; “I told you I don’t know who paid me!”

Damon clicked his tongue; “Wrong answer there.”

Felicity pushed the stake into his chest, just shy of his heart, the wood would graze his heart, it wouldn’t kill him but it would hurt like a bitch. Wayne screamed and started sweating. Felicity swiftly pulled it back out. “Want to try that again?”

“He’ll kill me!”

“Oh. He?”

Damon leaned down and mock whispered; “I’d be less worried about what he’ll do to you in the future and more concerned with what she’ll do to you right now, if I were you.”

Felicity raised the stake and Wayne winced, looking truly pathetic; “Wait, wait! He wore a hood and a mask when I met with him. But I followed him one night after we met and I saw who he was. Who he really was.”

“And?” Felicity prompted.

“Nope. I can’t. I can’t say his name. Not out loud.”

Damon shook his head and Felicity rolled her eyes. Seriously. She drove the stake into his chest again and gave it a little twist for emphasis. “Ow. That really hurts. You hurting me is such a turn on.” Wayne winked at her.

Ok. Ew.

Damon grabbed Wayne by the hair and pulled his head back painfully; “You get off on her hurting
you? How do you feel about me removing your eyeballs and feeding them to you?"

“Yeah that doesn’t sound as much fun.” Wayne agreed.

Damon gave Felicity a look that suggested they switch places. Felicity took up Damon’s place behind Wayne. Damon pulled out a knife from his back pocket and without any warning plunged into Wayne’s thigh. Wayne let out a guttural scream and the skin around the knife started to burn.

“That looks like it hurts, don’t you think, Felicity?” Damon asked.

Felicity nodded in agreement; “Yup, that does not seem like a good time at all.”

Damon leaned in and pushed the knife deeper; “See, I laced it with Holy Water. It really burns doesn’t it?”

“Take it out. Take it out. Take it out,” Wayne chanted, panting through the pain.

Damon wrapped his hand around the handle of the knife and started to slowly pull it out, inch by inch. Felicity grimaced, it did look extremely painful. She was a step away from suggesting they just abort this plan but Wayne had answers she needed so she bit her lip and tried to think happy thoughts.

“Malcolm Merlyn!” Wayne yelled; “It was Malcolm Merlyn. He was the masked, hooded guy but the money came from a corporation called Tempest. That’s all I know about Robert Queen’s boat. I swear!”

Crap on a cracker. That was bad. So very, very bad. Tommy’s father was the darker archer and was complicit in the sinking of the Gambit and sentencing Oliver to five years in purgatory. Not good. Really, really not good. How exactly was she going to explain that Oliver....or to Tommy? What if they didn't believe her? What if it put a massive dent in the tentative relationship Oliver and her were in?

“So, we’re good, I’ve told you everything now, I’ll just mosey along;” Wayne said breathlessly and made a move to stand up. Damon shoved the knife back into his thigh and his scream echoed off the crappy apartment walls.
“Wayne,” Felicity said slowly, patiently as if she were speaking to a small child; “We’re in your apartment and we are nowhere near done.”

Wayne’s hand went to the knife and tried to pull it out. He would have succeeded with his vampire strength but Damon held it down and Felicity used her telekinesis to hold it in place every time it pulled up just a little.

Wayne looked up at Felicity, his eyes begging her; “Felicity, I don’t know who wanted a bomb for your apartment.”

“But you met with them, you lied before, didn’t you?”

“Yes. I met with them! Take the knife out! Please!”

Felicity nodded at Damon and he yanked the knife out roughly, eliciting another scream from Wayne. He panted and panted and attempted to compose himself. Damon hit him on the back of the head; “Get on with it, vampire.”

“All right, alright. I met with them once but again they cloaked their identity.”

“Cloaked it how?” Damon demanded.

“Magic. Or something. The thing is I didn’t really meet with them in person, so I didn’t really lie to you.”

Felicity sighed; “How did you meet them, then?”

“They came to me in my dreams,” Wayne said in a rush; “I know it sounds crazy. But they did, they told me what they wanted and how I’d get the money. It was left in a PO box.”

Someone who could magically wander into another person’s dreams. Damon’s gaze flicked up to Felicity’s. They clearly both had the same bad feeling about this. Damon held his knife to
Wayne’s throat, digging the tip in just a little, drawing blood.

“What did,” Damon ground out; “This person look like?”

“I don’t know! I don’t know!”

“Think about it, Wayne,” Felicity coaxed.

“I am!”

Damon pressed the knife harder; “Think harder.”

There was a pause and then Wayne clicked his fingers, “They had a phoenix tattoo.”

“What?” Damon growled.

“Yeah, yeah, a phoenix tattoo, you know, like the bird that rises from the ashes.”

“You’re sure it was a phoenix?”

“Yes!”

Damon pushed the knife harder, drawing more blood, then with a curse pulled it away and paced away from Wayne. He turned and paced back, his wide, wild eyes met Felicity’s. She was sure she looked just as stunned as Damon felt.

“Well, shit,” Damon breathed out.

Felicity agreed there was no other way to state it. They both only knew one person who had a phoenix tattoo. And it was a big, massive, epic problem. Felicity and Damon continued to stare at each other, stunned and not sure what the hell to do next. The silence stretched on until Wayne
cleared his throat and looked back and forth between Felicity and Damon.

“So, I told you what I know, so we’re good, right. I mean you two can get out of my place, now.”

Damon nodded; “Yeah, we’re good.” He took the stake from Felicity and she screeched as he shoved it into Wayne’s heart, killing him instantly.

“It’s…” Felicity started but didn’t finish her thought.

Damon sighed and nodded; “Yeah.”
Chapter 50

Chapter Summary

Felicity breaks some news to Oliver. She also has a slight melt down.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW.

Felicity stared at her tablet screen as if staring at it would ultimately change what it was telling her. She had far too many problems to deal with so she was narrowing down on the one she thought she could deal with. Damon was coming up with a plan for….the phoenix tattoo problem. Yes, she may have been in a slight bit about denial about that one. She also needed a hug. She’d go find Jax for that one. But back to dealing with the one problem she thought she was capable of dealing with, yeah, it turned out that one wasn’t easy either.

She’d set herself up with her tablet in a booth in Big Belly Burger and set about getting into the gritty details about Tempest. What she dug up was worse than Malcolm Merlyn being the dark archer. Way, way, way, way worse. It was bad for everyone involved.

It turned out Tempest was a shell corporation owned by Moira Queen. So, essentially, Moira Queen had paid for her own husband’s execution via boat bomb and sentenced her own son to purgatory. Sure, maybe she didn’t think Oliver was going to be on the boat but still. Not good.

Now, Felicity had to tell Oliver not one but two pieces of bad news. He didn’t react to bad news well. She certainly didn’t think he’d react well to being told his own mother was financially responsible for his father’s demise. Felicity thought she could pretty much kiss their relationship good-bye. And this big kahuna of information would make it a permanent good-bye. There would be no coming back from it.

Not only that, by giving Oliver this information, she’d destroy not only her relationship with him but also his relationship with his mother. And where would that leave Thea? Oh, god. She’d given Thea to a woman who paid big money to have her husband killed.

There really were no words to describe how bad it was.
So, she sat and stared at her tablet screen hoping it would tell her something different. Had Moira also had Walter kidnapped? There were too many questions running through Felicity’s mind.

She ordered a bowl of fries, devoured them and then ordered a mint chocolate milkshake. As she sipped on that she decided she just had to do it quickly, just rip it off like a band-aid. In the back of her mind, she wondered once he was done with her if Oliver would go back to Laurel. Sure she had done some pretty nutty things but at least she’d never told him his mother was a murderer by proxy.

It was so bad. All levels of bad. Nuclear bad.

Felicity finished her shake, packed up her tablet and put it into her bag. She decided she was just going to walk to the foundry and do it. Tell Oliver and then she’d buy a pint of ice-cream and cry all over Jax.

She put her bag over her shoulder, paid and wandered out of the restaurant. She’d gotten maybe two blocks when it started raining. And not just a little drizzle but full on large rain drops, drenching her to the bone. All those movies that said that rain was romantic were just lying. There was nothing romantic about trudging along in the rain, with wet clothes plastered to you. Her jeans were water-logged and heavy and her white blouse was becoming more and more see through by the sick and was plastered to her skin. She was thankful she’d elected to put contacts in rather than wear her glasses. There was water in her shoes. It all just added to how miserable she was feeling.

By the time she got to the foundry she was soaked through and shivering. As she punched in the code and started down the stairs, she could hear voices: Tommy, Jax and Oliver. At least she would only have to deliver this news once and then Jax could take her to get her ice-cream. She walked down the stairs, her shoes squelching loudly. They all looked at her as she hit the bottom stair.

Jax stood up from the chair he was sitting in; “Babydoll?” Thank god for Jax, he knew her well enough to know something was wrong just by looking at her. The drenched, emotional mess that she was.

“It’s raining,” She said feebly.

“Yeah,” Tommy said, tilting his head; “We can see your…everything.”
Blinking, she wrapped her arms around herself and continued to shiver and drip onto the floor. Jax’s look of concern deepened and without looking at her said; “Green meringue, you have anything she can wear?”

“Green meringue?” Felicity whispered with a sniffle.

“I’m running out of nicknames for him.”

Frowning, Oliver said; “I’ll get a t-shirt.”

Jax took Felicity’s hand and pulled her to the bathroom, pushing her in; “Get changed and then you can tell me what the hell has you so spooked.”

He shut the door and she dropped her bag onto the counter and stared at herself in the mirror. She looked a mess. No wonder Jax was worried. The mascara she’d put on in the morning as a token gesture was smeared under her eyes thanks to the rain. She hadn’t bothered with her usual lipstick. Her lips quivered with every shiver of her body. She had left her hair down but the rain had matted it. She was a wreck. She spun away from the mirror, not wanting to look at herself anymore and attempted to unbutton her blouse. She shook out her hands that were shaking from the cold.

The bathroom door opened and Oliver appeared, t-shirt in hand, still frowning. The frown deepened as he watched her trying and failing to unbutton her blouse. He pushed the door shut, threw the t-shirt on the counter beside her bag and gently pushed her hands away from the buttons.

He had much more success than she’d had and had it unbuttoned in no time. He pushed the blouse off her shoulders and the material hit the bathroom floor with a clap. Next he unbuttoned her jeans and helped her step out of the wet denim. Grabbing the t-shirt, he signalled for her to hold up her arms and pulled the t-shirt over her head. Once it was on, he rubbed her arms roughly in an attempt to warm her up.

Those unfairly blue eyes looked down at her, concerned; “Felicity, did something happen? Whatever it is, you can tell me, I’ll fix it.”

Her unravelling nerves couldn’t take the affectionate concern or the gentle way he handled her or the sincerity in his voice. She shoved him roughly back against the door, he hit it with a grunt and she pulled his head down and kissed him with everything she had. He kissed her back with
confused fervour.

She clung to him and if she could have, she would have climbed him like a tree right then and there. But she reluctantly pulled away. He looked down at her with lust hooded eyes; “What was that for? Not that I’m complaining.”

She gave him a little smile in order to starve off the tears she knew she’d soon be crying; “That might be the last time I get to do that once I tell you what I need to tell you.”

“Felicity,” he cupped her cheek with his hand, his thumb stroking her cheekbone. “What’s going on?”

She backed away from him and his hand fell from her face. Picking up her bag, she put it over her shoulder and took what was supposed to be a strengthening breath, “Tommy needs to hear it too.”

Oliver watched her for a moment, sighed, pushed away from the door and pulled it open, allowing her to exit first.

Jax was pacing the foundry, clearly worried, Tommy was perched on the end of one of the beds and Oliver moved passed her to lean against a pillar, crossing his arms and watching her with his steady gaze.

“Ok, babydoll, start flapping those gums. Spill your guts. Talk.”

She looked at Tommy who looked worried, then at Oliver whose eyes hadn’t left her and then to Jax who was also watching her but with less intensity. Ok. She could tell Jax. Keeping her eyes on Jax she started; “Damon and I went to Wayne’s apartment and talked to him.”

“Ok,” Jax said slowly; “Did he hit on you?”

She knew what he was doing, he was attempting to lighten the mood, make her laugh, ease whatever ailed her.

“Yes, but that’s not the point. We found out some things.” She was being purposefully vague but
she could still feel Oliver’s eyes on her and she just couldn’t say it out loud yet. So much for ripping the band-aid off. She sucked in a breath and didn’t realise she was holding it until Jax said; “Felicity, breathe.”

She released it shakily.

“Babydoll, what did Wayne say? Do I need to go and get it out of him myself?”

“That might be difficult. Damon killed him.”

Jax’s brows flew up; “Then, I guess you’d better tell us what you found out.” His tone was soothing and made her feel like everything would be ok even though she knew that it wouldn’t.

“We…convinced him to tell us what he knew about the bombs in my apartment and on the Queen’s Gambit.”

“Translation: you crazy kids tortured the shit out of him.” Jax said still in that soothing tone that contradicted the sarcasm of his words.

“I tried but he liked it too much so Damon had to take over.”

“Of course Wayne liked it too much,” Jax stated drily.

“Why would someone like being tortured by Felicity?” Tommy asked and Jax and Felicity both shot him a look. He nodded; “Right. Gotcha.”

“We found out who the Dark Archer is;” Felicity blurted out, she simply couldn’t hold it in anymore. She looked at Tommy; “It’s Malcolm.”

Tommy looked shocked for about a split second and then nodded; “Yeah, I could see that.” He looked at Oliver; “Makes perfect sense, doesn’t it?”

That was it?
“So, dear old Dad paid a vampire to build a bomb to put on the Queen’s Gambit to kill Robert?” Tommy asked as if he were asking what was for dinner or what the weather was like outside.

Felicity’s head hurt. She swayed to the side. Jax shot to his feet and caught her with his vampire reflexes and sat her down on the bed next to Tommy. She nodded at him and he let her go, retreating back but not going too far.

“Malcolm ordered the bomb but he wasn’t the one who funded it.” She said weakly, her eyes swimming with unshed tears.

“Who did?” Oliver asked roughly.

Not looking at him but instead looking down at her hands that were playing with the hem of the tshirt she was wearing she said; “A company, a shell company. I traced it all back and got a name.”

“What was the name, babydoll?”

She bit her lip and shook her head. Jax appeared in her line of vision, crouching down in front of her; “Felicity, what was the name?”

She looked passed Jax at Oliver who was still leaning against the pillar, watching her; “Moira Queen,” she whispered and a tear slid down her cheek; “I’m sorry.”

“Shit,” Tommy harshly let out.

Oliver pushed away from the pillar, strode the short distance to her, Jax moved aside as Oliver grasped her face in one hand and tilted her head back. His eyes searched her face and she couldn’t tell if he found what he was looking for as her tears slipped down her cheeks and onto his hand. He ran a thumb over her bottom lip and then his hand dropped her face and he strode away, his boots heavy on the stairs and the door slamming behind him.
Chapter 51

Chapter Summary

There's some Oliver, Thea and Tommy. Some Jax and Felicity. And a little bit of Oliver and Felicity.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC, The CW

Tommy looked at Felicity’s stricken face and figured it was his job to make sure his big dummy of a best friend didn't do anything stupid. He jumped to his feet; “Don’t worry, I’ll calm him down;” it was a promise he wasn’t sure he could keep but before Jax and Felicity could respond, he was taking the stairs two at a time.

Tommy found Oliver pacing in front of a car, looking ready to punch someone….anyone….everyone. “Hey, buddy,” Tommy said, approaching Oliver slowly, “How about you let me drive?”

Oliver glared at him and looked ready to punch him but he threw the keys at Tommy who caught them one handed. They climbed into the car and Oliver clenched and unclenched his fists on his knees while Tommy drove to the mansion. Tommy knew when it was time for talking and when it was time to keep his mouth shut. This was a keep the mouth firmly shut situation. There was no way Oliver wanted to make idle chit chat. There was nothing scarier than quiet, contemplative Oliver. God help Moira.

Tommy had barely pulled the car to a stop before Oliver was climbing out and charging into the mansion. The door bounced off the wall as he opened it with force. Tommy trailed behind Oliver as he strode into the dining room where Moira and Thea were in the middle of dinner. Oliver came to an abrupt stop and gave Moira that cold, calculating stare that Tommy had come to associate with the Hood. Oh dear.

“Did you pay for a bomb to built and put on the Gambit?” Oliver said in a controlled, calm voice. There was nothing more terrifying than Oliver’s controlled, calm voice.

Thea laughed; “Ollie have you completely lost the plot?”
Poor Thea.

Moira opened her mouth and Oliver cut her off with a raised hand; “Don’t lie to me. The truth.”

Mother and son stared at each other, each assessing the other, this was the moment that would potentially destroy their relationship. Tommy could see that Moira knew it. With a resigned sigh, she said; “Yes.”

Thea’s jaw dropped and she stared at Moira as if she didn’t know her. Tommy could see Oliver disconnecting. Could see him removing Moira from his life in his head.

“You orchestrated Dad’s death!” Oliver roared, “And condemned me to five years of nothing good,” his voice cracked on the last syllable.

“Oliver,” Moira got to her feet, her eyes pleading with her son, “my darling boy, you weren’t supposed to be on that boat.”

“Oh my god,” Thea whispered, a hand flying to her mouth as she cried.

Moira wasn’t denying having a hand in having Robert killed and Tommy watched Oliver attempting to process that piece of information. He opened his mouth and then slammed it shut.

“You’re working with my father;” Tommy stated, picking up where Oliver left off.

Moira’s pleading eyes shifted to him; “We’re trying to save the city.”

“That’s what the vigilante is for,” Thea said, her voice clogged with tears.

“The vigilante can’t save the city,” Moira bitterly replied; “He can’t do what needs to be done.”

“And to save the city, Dad had to die?” Oliver was back to scary calm voice.
“Your father was weak, he couldn’t see that Malcolm’s vision is the only way.”

“What vision would that be?” Tommy asked, if it involved his father, he had no doubt it was something terrible.

“The only vision that matters.” Moira stated simply, giving nothing away. “Some things must be destroyed to be built back up.”

“So, it was all just an act,” Thea stated, wrapping her arms around herself and in that moment, Tommy thought she looked very much like the shivering, crying girl they’d just left down in the foundry. “You just pretended to be the grieving widow and mother?”

“I was a grieving mother, I lost my beautiful boy.” Moira was happy to claim responsibility for Robert’s death but refused to be accused of not caring about Oliver, it seemed.

Oliver took a step closer to Moira, glaring down at her; “You and I are done. We are no longer family. Everything that happened to me on that island is because of you.”

“Oliver,” Moira pleaded.

“Thea’s coming with me,” Oliver stated and his tone broached no room for argument.

“No. Oliver you may leave but you will not take my daughter from me,” Moira stated her tone all lioness.

“He doesn’t have to. You’ve done that all by yourself.” Thea pushed back her chair and got up; “I’m going with Oliver.”

“Thea, I am your mother. Sit. Down.” Moira’s expression hardened as she turned back to Oliver; “You can’t protect her like I can.”

“She’s not yours to protect,” Oliver ground out and Tommy thought they were getting dangerously close to accidentally revealing that Thea wasn’t biologically a Queen. “Thea, let’s go.”
Thea led the way out, without once looking back at Moira, once outside, Oliver turned to Tommy; “Take her to a hotel. Get both of you a room. Don’t use her name.”

“What name should I use?”

Oliver thought about it and then said; “Anastasia Jaxon.” And then turned to stride away.

“What are you going?” Tommy called after him.

“To see a girl.” Oliver threw back over his shoulder.

Sometimes his best friend wasn’t as much of a dummy as he thought he was.

“So, Mama Queen disposed herself of a husband and accidentally landed her son on an island where he got scars all over that delightful body of his.” Jax recapped as paced in front of Felicity where she sat on the bed. Felicity really wanted to get up and leave the foundry, she didn’t want to be there when Oliver returned but she was cold, wet and just plain miserable. As Jax babbled, she crawled under the covers in a bid to get warmer. Why was there no heating down there?

“And,” Jax turned around and paced back; “That’s only one bomb explained. What about the one in your apartment?”

“What,” Felicity said, pulling the blankets up to her chin as her teeth chattered; “Would your reaction be if I said the person who paid Wayne for that bomb had the power to just stroll into someone’s dreams?”

“I’d say definitely a witch.”

“What about if that person had that power plus a phoenix tattoo?”

Jax stopped pacing and stared at her. His jaw actually dropped. Which was saying something
because it took a lot to genuinely surprise Jax. He cursed under his breath; “Babydoll, your family is severely fucked up.”

Felicity nodded solemnly; “Yup.” She shivered again and Jax shot her a worried look. He walked over to Oliver’s chest, opened it and threw something at her. She held it up. “Jax, this is Oliver’s vigilante jacket.”

“You need more clothes on. It’s freezing down here as it is but you’re soaked. Just put it on.”

She shrugged and pulled the jacket it on. It was huge, it dwarfed her but it was warm and smelled like Oliver.

“Green suits you.” Jax stated as he flopped down beside her; “It looks better on him but it’s not bad.”

Felicity rolled her eyes and pulled the edges of the jacket tighter around her. She was contemplating snuggling down and going to sleep when she heard the sound of her phone ringing in her bag where she’d left it in the bathroom. She climbed out of bed and wandered over to the bathroom. She caught sight of herself in the mirror. She looked ridiculous. Wearing Oliver’s green jacket, soaking wet and shivering. She looked like a kid who was playing dress up. Shaking her head, she pulled her phone out of her bag and answered the call. “Hello?”

“Hey, kid.” Damon. “You ok?”

“I’m fine.”

“Good. So. Tomorrow night, we’re going to have ourselves a little family dinner. You, me, Nate and Katerina.”

“Ok,” she said wearily; “What time and where?”

“Nate’s loft. Eight. Don’t be late.”

She nodded; “Ok. I’ll be there.”
“Good. Get a good night’s sleep, kid.” He paused; “And, Felicity, be prepared for one hell of a fight. See you tomorrow.”

“See you tomorrow.” She whispered. She ended the call and shoved her phone back in her bag and left the bathroom, putting her bag over her shoulder. She didn’t want to forget it when they finally left.

She wished she’d stayed in the bathroom. Oliver was standing in the middle of the foundry, hands shoved into pockets, Jax was nowhere in sight.

“Where’s Jax?” She asked.

He shrugged; “Told him to leave.” He squinted at her, “Are you wearing my jacket?”

She meant to take it off and hand it to him but instead, she wrapped her arms around herself, hugging the jacket to her; “I was cold.”

Oliver nodded; “Ok.”

He watched her watching him and didn’t say a word. The silence was infuriating. She wanted to him to say something. But he just watched her. She bit her lip and then rubbed her lips together. Still nothing. She just wanted to get this over with, she just wanted him to get to the part where he said that he didn’t want to see her again and then she could leave. She wanted the yelling and accusations to commence and then she could go and warm up and cry her heart out. Once that was done, then she could focus on what would happen at her family dinner.

But he wasn’t saying anything and it was making her twitchy. Maybe she was going to have to be the one to get the ball rolling. She sighed; “I’m sorry.”

He cocked his head to the side and furrowed his brow; “What?”

She threw her hands up and the arms of his jacket flapped in the breeze because of how long they were. She knew she looked utterly ridiculous by the little smile that inched its way across his face.
“I’m sorry,” she repeated; “I’m sorry that your mother is almost as crazy as your ex and that she’s the reason you were on the island and is also the reason your father is dead. I’m sorry that your best friend’s father is in cahoots with your mother. I’m sorry I was the one who had to tell you. Actually, that’s what I’m most sorry about. And I know that you don’t want to believe that she did it because she’s your mother but computers and financial records don’t lie.”

She stopped and sucked in a breath and tried to push some hair out of her face but the sleeves on his damn jacket were just too long and prevented her from doing it. Why the hell did he need such long arms for anyway? Was it an archer thing? It was probably because he was so tall, he was like an actual giant.

While she was contemplating his height and arm length, he closed the distance between them and brushed the hair behind her ear for her, his hand lingering on her cheek.

“You thought I didn’t believe you.” He said it like the very concept were a personal affront.

She shrugged and his jacket slipped off her shoulder, he pulled it back up into place; “I kind of worked myself up a teeny tiny bit thinking the worst. And also, you stormed out of here. You seemed severely pissed off.”

His hand landed on her cheek, his warmth a welcome contrast to the chill of her skin; “That had nothing to do with you.” His thumb stroked her cheekbone and she leaned into his touch. “I had to see my mother and tell her we’re done.”

Relieved, Felicity rose up on her toes and wrapped her arms around his neck, his arm wrapped around her waist, pressing her more firmly to him. She snuggled in trying to steal his warmth and just enjoyed being wrapped up in him.

His knees bent and he picked her up, her legs wrapped around his waist of their own accord. He walked forward and suddenly her back was against a pillar. Oliver’s hands framed her face and he stared into her eyes with that intensity that made her more than a little uncomfortable. His body pressed her into the pillar, her legs wrapped around him, she had cold at her back and his warmth seeping into her front. His eyes ran over her face with a look she couldn’t entirely comprehend.

“The jacket looks good on you,” he spoke softly and pressed a soft kiss to her mouth.
“You just have a thing for me in your clothes.” She muttered against his mouth, she felt the curve of his mouth against hers as he smiled.

“No. I have a thing for you.” He stated right before he sucked her bottom lip into his mouth. He kissed her lightly, nothing more than a peck and pulled back and gave her that same incomprehensible look; “What do you need from me, Felicity?”

She had no idea what he meant and so just blurted out the first thing that came to mind; “I need to feel like this is real.”

“Felicity, this is the most real thing I’ve felt in the last five years.”

She gaped at him for a few heartbeats because what the hell was she supposed to say to that? Finally, she put her hands on his neck, pulled him forward, crashing their mouths together in a bruising kiss. She poured everything she had into that kiss, he reciprocated just as fiercely, pressing her roughly into the pillar, his hands falling from her face, gripping her waist roughly and hiking her up further. In response she ground herself down on him and whimpered at the feel of his rough jeans against her.

His fingers brushed aside the lapels of his vigilante jacket and inched under the hem of the t-shirt she was wearing. His. Everything she was wearing was his. Except her underwear which she was sure was destroyed by the rain. His lips made a path across her cheek and down her neck to settle at her collarbone where the scrape of teeth made her whimper and clutch him more tightly. His hand cupped her through her underwear before he attempted to tug them down but the rain had made them cling to her skin, growling against her skin, he pushed them aside, sinking two fingers into her.

Needing more from him, she tried to get her hands between them and undo his jeans but his jacket kept falling down over her hands. She let out a sound that sounded like a whine and felt him grin against her neck as he pressed another finger into her, the whine turned into a moan. Taking pity on her, Oliver pulled his fingers out of her, pressed her more firmly into the pillar with his body and undid his jeans and pulled his cock out. Grabbing her face, he kissed her with such passion that she was sure she’d come just from the kiss alone. That or from the way the tip of his cock slid against her clit.

He pulled away from the kiss and just pressed against her, so close to where she wanted him, yet so far away. She whimpered as he rubbed against her and she arched her back in a bid to coax him in. She suddenly felt far too hot. Was she cold before? She thought she whispered his name but she couldn’t be sure. He ran a knuckle down her cheek and her eyes fell shut as he thrust into her hard and fast. Finally.
A hand roughly grasped her face as he moved in her in a pace that was designed to destroy her; “Open your eyes, Felicity.”

Her eyes flew open at the low, rough, ragged demand. His heavy breathing matched her own. This wasn’t going to last long. She clenched around him and he groaned. With him staring into her eyes as he thrust into her, it was the most intense thing she’d ever experienced. She was so, so close. She thought maybe she uttered that thought because his hand went to her clit, rubbing maddening circles. She also thought he was probably close too, his thrusts were becoming less controlled.

She threw her head back and moaned his name, his head dropped and his mouth landed on her wet t-shirt covered nipple and he sucked hard as he thrust up into her and she felt him spill inside of her. Vaguely she heard him grunt around his mouthful of nipple but her own scream drowned him out.

Their ragged breathing were the only sounds as his head landed in the space between her neck and collarbone. He pressed a soft kiss there before gently lowering her to the ground, she leaned back against the pillar for support, her whole body felt like jelly. He pressed a light kiss to her lips and grinned smugly at her; “Was that real enough for you?”
“Here’s how this is going to work: this is going to get violent,” Damon stated, pacing in front of them, “Really violent. You three tap in only if it looks like Felicity can’t handle herself or she’s about to get killed.”

Damon paused and looked at Tommy, Oliver and Jax lined up on a sofa in Nate’s loft like a bunch of school boys being reprimanded by the school principal. Oliver didn’t know what the hell they were doing there. Tommy was clutching a bottle of wine because he argued you couldn’t turn up at someone’s home empty handed. Felicity had told Oliver about this dinner but hadn’t extended an invitation to him and he got it, he thought she probably didn’t want him involved in her family crap. He got it, he didn’t want her anywhere near his family shit.

Damon pointed a finger at Tommy and Oliver; “On second thought, you two have no idea how well Felicity can handle herself, so only tap in if and when Jax tells you to.”

Oliver thought he’d tap in when he chose to, when anyone so much as laid a finger on Felicity in a way he didn’t like. Damon’s eyes landed on him; “And you loverboy, I get you want to protect your girl but she’s got to do her thing.” Damon pointed down at the floor mat; “See the edge of the mat, that’s where the barrier spell starts, don’t step over it, just stay on the sofa or they’ll be able to get to you.”

Damon had insisted the three of them attend this family dinner as back up in case things got out of hand and Damon couldn’t protect Felicity. One of Felicity’s siblings had set the bomb in her apartment, so this dinner was really a confrontation.

The dining table sat on the middle of the floor mat and was set in a way that would make even Moira Queen proud.
“They barrier will keep us all in that confined space until I let it down. Don’t step over it unless you absolutely have to. Or you might end up being magically thrown against a wall or something. Nate will be home soon and then Kat and Felicity will arrive. Remember boys, you’re happy sitting drinking wine and beer and not eating.”

“We’ve got it, Damon,” Jax said.

Damon nodded, “Good.” And he stepped over the edge of the mat and into the magically confined area just as the door opened and Nate came in. He eyed the three of them warily; “What’s with the peanut gallery?”

Damon shrugged; “Felicity’s friends.”

Nate shrugged and crossed the invisible line, sitting down at the table. Katerina arrived next and smiled saucily at Tommy, wriggling her fingers at him. Jax made a gagging noise at the display and Katerina glared at him. Felicity was the last to arrive and Oliver sat up straighter as she came in, unbuttoning her coat and draping it over the arm of the sofa, leaning into Jax; “What are you three doing here?” she hissed.

“We’re your emergency backup,” Jax whispered back. Felicity frowned at them, catching Oliver’s gaze briefly before straightening up and walking over the barrier. She took her place at the table opposite Katerina as Nate took items out of the oven and fridge and placed them on the table.

For a group of people who had little to no interaction for fifteen years, they did a good imitation of a normal family sitting down to dinner. But one of these people were a threat to Felicity and that thought made Oliver clench his fists tightly where they rested on his thighs. He wished he had his bow and arrow.

“So,” Damon started pleasantly; “how’s the tramp stamp, Kat? What was it again?”

Katerina gave him a bored look, twirling her hair around her finger. Damon turned to Felicity; “Do you remember what it was, kid?”

Felicity tapped her finger against her lips as if in thought; “Wasn’t it a bird of some sort? A robin or a canary or a blackbird.”
“It was a Phoenix,” Nate stated; “Why are we talking about a tattoo Katerina got as an act of teenage rebellion?”

Felicity clicked her fingers and pointed at Nate; “Right it was a phoenix. You know who really liked Phoenixes? Wayne.”

“Wayne,” Damon enthused; “Right. We should have invited him to dinner.”

“What a delightful idea.” Felicity cheerfully said and then pouted; “But he couldn’t come anyway. Because he’s dead.” She looked at Katerina pointedly; “We killed him.”

“Who the hell is Wayne?” Nate demanded looking thoroughly fed up with the direction the conversation had gone.

“Oh just the vampire Kat hired to build a bomb to plant in my apartment.”

Silence settled around the table. The two sisters stared at each other, one dark and one blonde, both beautiful.

“She did what?!” Nate roared, jumping to his feet, slapping his hands down on the table, the china rattling with the force.

“Oh, this is about to get so good.” Jax whispered, he leaned passed Oliver and patted a shocked Tommy on the shoulder; “sorry about your girlfriend.”

“Yup,” Damon said slowly; “She totally did.”

“I did not,” Katerina stood up and said on a sob that even Oliver knew was bullshit; “Wayne and I were involved. And you killed him. I loved him.”

“Oh, you did not.” Felicity stated, getting to her feet.

“Fine.” Katerina admitted, the waterworks ceasing with a blink; “I really didn’t.”
Nate took two steps toward Katerina, closing in on her; “Why? Why would you blow up Felicity’s apartment?”

“Because,” Damon said dryly, spinning a knife on the table; “She’s a psychotic bitch. Always has been. Always will be.”

Katerina looked at Nate, then Damon and finally Felicity and smiled; “I get it. This dinner wasn’t about family bonding. It’s an ambush.” She put a hand to her chest; “That hurts me, it really does.”

Katerina moved towards where Oliver, Tommy and Jax sat and walked toward the edge of the mat and was stopped by the barrier. She tried again. She squealed in frustration. “Let me out!” she screamed. No one moved an inch. She went back to the table and started picking up things and smashing them on the floor; “Let me out!”

“God,” Felicity said, watching her sister; “You really are crazy.”

Katerina froze, dropped the plate she held mid-air, turned her eyes on Felicity, tipped her head to the side and smirked. Slowly, she walked over to Felicity and raised her hand and slapped her across the face. The sound reverberated around the loft. The silence that followed echoed even louder.

Clenching his jaw, Oliver jumped to his feet. Jax grabbed his wrist and pulled him back down. And then all hell broke loose. Felicity put her hands up and slammed Katerina into a wall with her powers. Katerina landed hard on the floor but she recovered quickly, only slightly teetering on the stiletto boots she wore. She stalked towards Felicity but was caught around the waist and lifted into the air by Nate. Nate held her squirming form as she glared at Felicity as she glared right back.

“That hurt!” Katerina ground out.

“Oh, I’m sorry.” Felicity didn’t sound sorry at all. “Maybe I wouldn’t have done that if you hadn’t blown up my apartment!”

“This is kind of terrifying;” Tommy whispered to Oliver. Oliver just gave him a look.
“Poor little Felicity!” Katerina screamed; “We’ve all got to protect her! Too bad she’s too smart for her own good. You couldn’t just leave it alone, could you? You had to keep digging!”

“You really are a psychotical bitch, aren’t you, Kitty Kat?” Damon asked, his head cocked to the side, studying her; “You did a bad, bad thing didn’t you?”

“Besides destroying my apartment, you mean?” Felicity asked and then tore her gaze from Katerina and looked at Damon; “Do you feel something?”

“Yeah, kid, she’s thinking about Nina.”

“Nina?” Nate asked, tightening his grip on Katerina; “What about Nina?”

Katerina rolled her eyes; “Oh for heaven’s sake, haven’t you figured it out yet? I killed your little love bug.”

Jax whistled; “Wasn’t expecting that one.”

China rattled and the table itself bounced with the force of Katerina being thrown down onto it, Nate’s hands wrapping around her throat. She giggled as he strangled her. She wrapped her hands around his, lifted her head and pressed a kiss to his cheek before he was pushed back from her.

So, Felicity wasn’t the only one who could utilise telekinesis.

Katerina picked up a fork and threw it at Felicity who gasped and held her hands up, freezing the fork in mid-air. She grasped the handle and plucked it out of the air. Katerina picked up another fork and stalked over to Nate with it poised to do some damage.

Nate slowly sat up, resting an arm on his pulled-up knee, Katerina shoved the fork under his chin. Nate looked passed Katerina and subtly shook his head at Felicity who had her hands up ready to shove Katerina away from her.
“Why’d you kill her, Kat, you knew how I felt about her.”

“Revenge. Nate, why else? You were planning to put Dad in prison. Aw, did you think I didn’t know about that? So, I came up with a plan to frame you for little Nina’s death but the police are idiots and never picked up on the clues I left.”

“Always such a Daddy’s girl, Kat,” Damon mocked; “You do realise your Dad is a piece of shit, right?”

Katerina pressed the fork harder against Nate’s skin, drawing blood; “Dad did his best for us.”

“Right,” Damon scoffed; “That’s why most of his children are dead.”

Katerina looked back over her shoulder at Damon and while she was distracted, Nate twisted her arm back painfully, she screamed and dropped the fork. Nate shoved her away from him and hauled himself to his feet. Katerina looked up at him and started laughing; “You don’t have it in you to kill me, do you, Nate?”

She sat, her hands planted on the floor, laughing for a few moments before she suddenly raised her hands and aimed them at Felicity. Oliver jumped to his feet as Felicity was thrown back into a wall.

“Sit down, cowboy;” Jax told him; “She’s fine.”

Oliver stubbornly stood as Felicity winced and gingerly got to her feet, her hand going to her right hip where it had hit the wall. She looked at Damon who nodded and she used her powers to shove Katerina into the table. Damon hauled Katerina up and held her against the table. Felicity walked over, pulling a syringe out of her pocket. She pulled off the cap and shoved the needle into Katerina’s neck. Katerina struggled mere seconds before she was passed out, slumping down on the floor.

Felicity heaved out a sigh and looked at Damon and Nate; “You think we’ll ever be a normal, well-adjusted family?”
Oliver had no idea what Damon was doing to bring down the barrier spell, he was walking around the room, sprinkling a powder and muttering to himself. Nate went to the freezer and handed Felicity a pack of frozen peas; “Put that on whatever hurts.”

“Nate,” she said as she gave him a very salty look; “Everything hurts.”

She took the peas from him and walked over to the sofa and eyed the three of them sitting there, she was looking like she was debating something. Eventually, she sighed and perched on Oliver’s knee stiffly, like she wasn’t entirely comfortable being there. He placed his hand on her hip and started rubbing soft circles into it, trying to ease whatever bruise would form from it’s collision with the wall.

Felicity moved so she was side on to him and wrapped an arm around his neck, leaning into him.

“What are we going to do about sleeping beauty over there?” Damon asked as he finally stopped walking around in circles.

Nate leaned back against the refrigerator, crossed his arms as they all looked to the knocked out Katerina in the middle of the room; “I vote we kill her.”

Felicity sighed; “Why is that your go-to solution?”

“Because it’s the most effective.”

“We won’t kill her,” Damon assured and then added as and after thought; “yet. We need more answers from her.”

“She already admitted she killed Nina and tried to blow up Felicity.” Nate shrugged; “What more do we need? Let’s move on to the revenge, retribution or justice portion of the program.”

Damon ran his hands over his face and then cupped the back of his head and sighed, clearly exasperated by Nate’s one track mind. “She wasn’t telling us everything, I could feel it.”

“So,” Nate said thoughtfully, his eyes on his dark-haired sister; “We interrogate her.”

“Oh, good. What fun.” Felicity snarked.
“I’ve decreased the barrier to a just that area of the room,” Damon waved his hand at the area just behind the dining table, where Katerina was passed out; “I’ll outline it with salt so we know where it is.”

Damon walked over to Katerina and drew his salt outline. Felicity leaned her head on Oliver’s shoulder and patted her hand on Tommy’s shoulder; “I’m sorry Katerina turned out to be nuttier than a bag of nuts.”

“Thank you,” Tommy replied dryly with a hint of a smile for Felicity.

Damon strode back over; “So, how are we gonna wake the bitch up?”

Damon and Nate looked at each other.

“Oh for god’s sake!” Felicity said, throwing her hands up and getting up off Oliver’s lap. She walked over to the salt outline and with a wave of her hand threw Katerina against the wall.

“That’s one way to do it,” Nate drawled with a grin.

Katerina blinked owlishly, coming back to the world slowly, she sat against the wall, pushed the hair off her face and smiled a slow smile; “Mmmm, I guess we’ve gotten to the chatty portion of the show.” She tipped her head to the side; “You feel everything I do, don’t you Damon? You just can’t figure out what it all means.”

“Why don’t you decipher it for us then?”

Her gaze flicked from Damon to Felicity; “Baby sister. I loved you once.”

“But not anymore?” Felicity asked.

“You were such a cute little girl. But you never wanted me. I would tuck you into bed and you’d want Belle or Finn. There was also a time when you’d rather have Nate than me.”

“Oh, boo who.” Damon snarked; “Cry me a river.”

Katerina’s eyes narrowed and she pointed her glare at Damon; “Shut up.”

“Felicity didn’t love you when she was a kid, so you decided it might be a fun time to blow up her apartment.” Jax lazily said.

“And the vampire!” Katerina sneered; “Also so eager to protect Felicity. Then there’s Oliver Queen, the ex-castaway,” Katerina crawled forward on her hands and knees; “He just wants to fuck you, baby sister, you know that don’t you? He’s far too damaged to really care about you. He’ll go back to Laurel Lance eventually.”

“Stop playing games, Kat,” Nate snapped, losing patience and taking a dangerous step forward.

“Who’s playing games?” Katerina bit her lip and waved her fingers; “Tommy!” She sighed and mock whispered; “His eyes are so blue. The things he can do with his hands and he has a very talented tongue.” She winked at him; “Too bad I was planning to kill him.”

Felicity took a step closer to the salt barrier and crouched down; “Why were you planning to kill Tommy?”

Katerina shrugged; “Because I ran out of use for him. Just for the fun of it. Take your pick. His daddy doesn’t even care if I kill him.” She pouted; “Isn’t that just the saddest thing?”
“You know Malcolm?” Felicity asked trying to put all the pieces together.

“Whoops,” Katerina’s hand flew to her mouth; “Did I let that little piece of information slip? But you’re not asking the right questions.”

“What are the right questions, Kat?”

Damon inched closer, his contemplative gaze fixed on Katerina; “She’s thinking about money. Money she paid someone.”

“Mmm, you’re getting smarter, empath.”

Nate pushed off the fridge and started a slow prowl toward Katerina; “She paid that vampire to build the bomb,” he pointed out.

“No. This is more money than that. She felt remorse when she handed it over but not enough remorse to not do whatever she did.”

Damon crouched down beside Felicity and studied Katerina who tilted her head and looked like the cat who got the cream. The smug look she wore set Oliver’s nerves on edge.

“You can’t stop what’s going to happen. Neither can Felicity’s precious vigilante,” Katerina leaned closer and whispered; “Malcolm’s going to kill him so enjoy him while you can, baby sister, soon he’ll be dead.”

Oliver wanted to put an arrow into Katerina more than anything in that moment and from the way Jax was snarling beside him, he knew he agreed. Tommy just seemed to still be processing the fact the girl he’d been knocking boots with was a murderous bitch.

Damon suddenly reached out, breaching the barrier and latched onto Katerina’s arm. She gasped. Damon’s eyes squeezed shut and then he gasped and stumbled back from Katerina, falling on his ass and staring at her wide-eyed.

“You did it,” He uttered as Katerina shivered in a similar way to the way Felicity had when he’d used his powers on her. Except Katerina recovered faster than Felicity had and smirked at Damon.

“What did I do, empath?” she mocked Damon, “Come on, Damon, share with the rest of the group.”

“Damon?” Felicity asked, her voice trembling like she already had an idea of where this was going.

“You should have died when you were supposed to Felicity, I would have fixed you up like a little doll.”

“Oh, mercy,” Jax mumbled. Oliver and Tommy exchanged a glance, they were both missing a few pieces to successfully put the puzzle together. Nate, however, charged forward and glared down at Katerina.

“You cleaned them all up.” He accused.

“I had to make them look presentable, Natey.”

“Oh my god.” Felicity whispered, looking at Damon then Katerina and back again; “You did more than that, though, didn’t you?”

“Such a smart, pretty little doll you are;” Katerina said sounding almost affectionate; “I paid the
money to have them all killed.”

“You’re lying,” Nate growled.

Damon shook his head; “No, she really isn’t.”

“NO!” Nate shouted; “No. She’s crazy but even she wouldn’t go that far!”

“But I would!” Katerina screamed back; “You and me, Nate, we were supposed to have all that power! It was never meant to be spread over so many children! Never. If Mom and Dad would have just kept their hands to themselves and stopped at us, we would have been the most powerful witches to exist!”

“So, you killed our siblings?” Felicity asked, tears streaming down her face. She already believed it, it was Nate who couldn’t seem to comprehend his sister doing such a thing.

“I realised I couldn’t kill them myself. It would be too terrible so, I waited and found myself a benefactor, and told him I wanted to kill Dad. He helped me found a group of people who were willing to kill for money. He supplied the money and I gave the order. Dad was never on the hit list. Just them.”

“Malcolm Merlyn. He was your benefactor?”

“So smart. Yes. He and his organisation want to save this city and they wanted to get rid of Dad. I didn’t.”

“You made sure Dad wasn’t home that day.”

“It was so simple. Except for one assassin who just couldn’t seem to shoot one little girl in the head.”

Katerina had barely gotten the words out before Nate breached the barrier spell and had her pressed against the wall, his hand around her throat, squeezing. He seemed intent on killing her. As quick as he’d grabbed her, he dropped her to the floor watching as she clutched at her throat, struggling for breath. He hauled her up by the arm and growled into her face; “Death is too good for you. I’m putting you in the basement.”
The basement Nate meant was actually the cellar of the house they’d grown up in. Felicity wasn’t one hundred percent certain that keeping their sister prisoner in the very same house that their siblings had died in was a good idea. But she was out numbered two to one. She didn’t want to be in that house. The house that was perfectly preserved by magic and was just how she remembered it. It was also weird to see Tommy, Jax and Oliver lingering in the kitchen where Finn had made her funny shaped pancakes and know they’d never meet him. While the three of them chatted to Damon, she hung on the periphery. She was itching with the need to get out of there.

Everything she looked at came with a memory. The large stone fireplace that now lay dormant was where they’d roasted many a marshmallow. As a child, it had been comforting to sit on the hearth and lean into the fire. Her siblings were constantly pulling her back from the flames. She’d sat there and listened to her older siblings chat, bicker, banter, full out scream at each other and everything in between. The kitchen had been the heart of the house, it was where all the family meetings had taken place – the meetings where her siblings tried to figure out how best to look after her when they had two absent parents. It was where Belle would perch her on the counter while she’d make Felicity hot chocolate. Tatiana and Cassandra would sit her down at the long wooden dining table in the middle of the room and paint her nails and teach her about makeup and things that she really had no interest in. They’d tell her that these were things she’d need to know when she was older.

She thought if she closed her eyes and really concentrated, she’d be able to hear all the noises that had once made up the busy house. The constant chatter, the feet going up and down the stairs, the slam of the door, dishes clattering together or the splash of water in the sink.

The chore chart used to hang on the pin board and depending who’s turn it was to cook dinner, she’d sit in the nook, cuddled up in the window seat eating mac and cheese, grilled cheese or whatever else her siblings cooked up. She’d sit in that window seat, staring out the window and dreaming up different scenarios of what her life might be like.
She’d imagined all kinds of different lives for herself: she thought she might like to be an astronaut or a scientist or a doctor or something equally ambitious. But she never imagined that her siblings would be murdered and her sister would be responsible for their deaths.

Looking toward the door that led straight down to the cellar and basement, she wondered what Nate was doing to Katerina. Was he tying her up? Was he locking her into the actual cellar itself and bolting the door shut. And what did he plan to do to her? Kill her? That thought made her incredibly sad for the girl Katerina had once been. Would he torture her? Or just leave her to die a slow, painful death?

“Felicity!”

The volume of the voice saying her name made her jump and she tore her eyes away from the door. She could tell by the way four sets of eyes were watching her that it wasn’t the first time Damon had tried to get her attention. Damon’s brows drew together as he watched her, understanding clouding his gaze.

She gave him a pointed look in return; “Stop reading my emotions.”

“Sure. It’d be a lot easier if you weren’t in a daze and projecting them so loudly.”

“I wasn’t projecting.” She stated stubbornly, even though she knew this wasn’t an argument she was going to win.

“Right,” he drawled, “So, you weren’t just remembering all the chaotic family meals that we all had in this room?”

“Yes,” she admitted begrudgingly; “But stop reading my emotions.”

Damon held his hands up in surrender; “Fine. What I was saying was that I think someone needs to stay and keep an eye on Kat.”

“And you’re volunteering?”
“Unless you want to?”

Her stay in that house? Not a chance in hell. She shuddered visibly at the thought; “No way.”

Damon hauled himself up to sit on the counter and for a moment she saw him as the sixteen year old boy he’d been seventeen years ago, sitting on the counter flirting with Belle as she’d giggled and stood between his legs, rising up on her toes and pulling him down for a kiss.

Damon cocked his head to the side and watched Felicity; “You know, kid, it’s really just a house. Sure, some pretty shitty things happened within these walls but it’s still just a house.”

She shook her head; she didn’t want to be having this conversation with Damon in front of Oliver. Damon took it as her disagreeing with him.

“Crappy things happened here but some really great things happened too. Remember your fifth birthday party?”

“Yeah,” she said, smiling at the memory. Damon smiled back at her.

“What happened at Felicity’s fifth birthday party?” Tommy asked, obviously sick of not being part of the conversation.

“Ah, it was awesome. There was a bouncy castle, a bubble machine and we had a massive food fight. Cake everywhere. You remember the cake, kid?”

“Yeah, it was amazing.”

“What kind of cake was it?” Jax asked.

“Caramel mudcake,” Felicity and Damon answered in unison.

“Only cake my Belle could make with any degree of success,” Damon stated with a sad, fond little smile.
Jax quirked a brow; “Caramel mudcake?”

It was the same cake Felicity made Jax every year for his birthday. It was also the cake she made when she was sad. It wasn’t a coincidence.

“What do you say, kid? There’s plenty of rooms.”

Felicity shrugged; “I’ll think about it.”

Damon leaned forward on his elbows; “You want to know what I think?”

“I think you’re going to tell me anyway.”

Damon smiled at her; “I think we all – you, me and Nate – need to stop living in the past and figure out how to be happy in the present.”

“You think you can do that, Damon?”

He shrugged; “I didn’t use to but I think it’s what Belle would want.”

Felicity had no reply to give to that. So, instead of trying to think of one, she wandered out to the living room and trailing her hand along the banister, she climbed the stairs looking at all the pictures that lined the wall.

She wandered into the room with the dark blue painted walls and the glow in the dark stickers stuck to the walls in the shape of the constellations. She sat on the end of the bed and looked around the room. There was a white dresser in the corner with a piggy bank on top of it. She wondered if it still had money in it.

She was considering getting up and checking when Oliver lowered himself down beside her, his shoulder brushing hers.

“This was my room,” she said softly, staring straight ahead.
“I like it.”

“Thank you. Tatiana helped me choose the colour for the walls and then Anastasia stuck all the stars up for me. She liked astrology.”

“I used to look at the stars at night on the island,” he stated simply.

“My sister is a murderer.” She said it slowly, testing out the idea, she didn’t think she’d ever get used to it; “By proxy but still.”

“So’s my mother.”

She sighed and rested her head on his shoulder, his arm came around her, pressing her closer. They sat in silence in the bedroom she’d inhabited as a little girl.

“Do you think Damon’s right, that it’s just a house?”

Heavy silence met her question and she waited. Finally, he tightened his grip on her; “I think he’s both right and wrong. It is just a house. But it’s also like saying the island is just an island.”

“Yeah. I think I’d just much rather stay down in the cold basement with you and all your arrows.”

He pressed a kiss to her head and murmured; “I’d rather that too.”
He watched as Thea Queen stole a fry from the plate of the boy in the red hoodie. The boy – Felicity had said his name was Roy – threw Thea a glare but the effect was marred by the slight upticking of his lips. Damon slouched down in the corner booth of Big Belly Burger as he watched them. He was watching his kid in much the same way that he’d watched Felicity when she was younger. But Thea wasn’t his kid. Not really. Not in so many of the ways that mattered to a child. He’d never held her as a baby. He didn’t choose her name. He didn’t comfort her when she had a nightmare. He didn’t get to listen to all her stories, have her grin at him or get to wipe away her tears and promise to make it all better.

In many ways, Felicity felt more like his kid than Thea did. Maybe it was because she used to follow Belle everywhere so was always around. After, Felicity’s siblings were murdered, he’d vaguely thought about saying he’d take her in. But Nate had pointed out that no judge in the world would give custody of a traumatised eight year old girl to an equally fucked up eighteen year old guy.

He’d felt like he needed to look after her though, for Belle and because he felt like he owed Felicity. Whenever he’d read Felicity’s emotions as she was growing up the ones that overwhelmed him with their power were anger, sadness and incredible loneliness. As time went on, he’d developed a powerful protectiveness toward Felicity. He didn’t feel that toward Thea, he wanted to protect her and the pull of his child drew him to her but she seemed to have a good life. She didn’t need him in the same way that Felicity had. Thea had grown up loved with a brother, mother and father.

He could tell now that she was angry at the mother who’d raised her but in general, she was happy.

Thea stole another fry and laughed at something Roy said. Damon knew Thea loved Roy, it radiated off her in waves. Damon could concede that they were sweet together. Thea looking so
much like Belle, all long chocolate locks, wide, happy smile and just a hint of mischief in her eye.

It was a scene he’d seen many a time: the bad boy trying to lure the good girl to himself. Hell, he’d been that boy, the one from the wrong side of the tracks whose only ambition in life was to get the good girl and to keep her for as long as she’d let him. His ambition had been to get the good girl and make her love him. He’d wanted Belle forever. Turned out forever wasn’t very long. He’d had her until death do us part but without the rings and the paperwork. Even at sixteen, he’d known he’d love her until the day he died, he’d never thought she’d die before him.

Watching Thea cuddle into Roy, it wasn’t difficult for him to imagine a different scene, in which he had a starring role. He and Belle had spent many a night curled up together in the booth of a crappy diner, some nineties grunge playing in the background. Sometimes her legs would be draped across his, while he fed her fries. Other times he’d kiss her breathless and they’d make out heatedly until some blushing waitress would venture over and tell them they needed to leave.

Sometimes they’d kiss themselves into a fever in his crappy car, Belle straddling him, pressing down into him in all the right places, his hand creeping under her top and pressing into whatever skin he could get to. There were times where they’d get so caught up in their passion for one another that he’d accidentally press on the horn making Belle squeal and then giggle against his mouth. Thea had been conceived in the back seat of his car.

He remembered when Belle, tearily had told him that she was pregnant and looked at him, chewing on her bottom lip wondering what his reaction would be. He was shit scared but then he’d realised it was his chance to have the family he’d always wanted. He’d vowed he’d be a better father than his own had been.

Ever since the day Belle died, he’d lived and breathed for her, for the day he’d see her again. She was the love of his life. He hadn’t loved anyone since her. He had never been celibate but it was always just about sex and the face he always saw was Belle’s.

He missed everything about her. The way she kissed, the way she smelled, the way she smiled at him. The only person who missed her as fiercely as he did was Felicity.

He missed Belle and her innocent happiness. And there it was across a greasy, burger joint from him, embodied in Thea Queen.

He had been powerless to make sure Belle stayed alive but he could sure as shit keep his kid alive, even if she never knew who he was to her.
There was also a small part of him that was pissed at Belle for making her baby sister turn back
time, watch her die and give away Thea. Belle had to have known what that would do to Felicity.
Did she just not care? That wasn’t the Belle he’d known. His Belle would have done anything to
protect Felicity from pain.

But then, he would have never imagined that Katerina would be responsible for her family’s
murders. Katerina had always been a manipulative bitch but he thought even murder was a line she
wouldn’t cross.

And she’d done it all because of some prophecy about the ancestral power.

Ancestral power that ran through Thea’s blood, even if it lay dormant and hadn’t been tapped into
yet. If anyone cracked the earth were they were buried in the Glades open and somehow got that
power for themselves, the magic in Thea would call to them and they’d find her. She would
potentially be in huge danger.

Yeah, that couldn’t happen.

Damon threw some cash down on the table to cover the cost of the crappy cup of coffee he’d
consumed while stalking his daughter and her boyfriend and slid out of the booth. With one last
look back at Thea, he exited the restaurant.

He made his way back to the Smoak family home, which he and Felicity had uncloaked because
Felicity had pointed out if he was going to be living there to keep an eye on Katerina, the
neighbours would think it weird if they saw him coming and going from an invisible house.
They’d kept it sound proofed though so the neighbours wouldn’t be subjected to Katerina’s
screaming.

For someone who claimed they didn’t want to be in that house, Felicity was over there a lot, sifting
through her family’s belongings with reverence. It was as if it were some sacred, undiscovered
treasure. He couldn’t blame her. He’d taken to sleeping in Belle’s room, in her bed and
surrounding himself with her things. He’d sniffed at her clothes experimentally to see if they still
smelled of her. He’d found a bottle of her perfume tucked in her dresser drawer and sprayed it
around the room and had then sat on her bed with his eyes closed, breathing in and imagining she
was in the room with him. It wasn’t the first time he’d done that. After she first died, he had sat in
her closest with his eyes squeezed shut letting her scent wash over him. After she died, he’d pretty
much moved into the house, sleeping on the sofa, refusing to sleep in her room. The night after
Belle’s funeral, he’d sat on the sofa wearing the suit he’d burrowed from Finn, the tie loosened,
cradling a bottle of Johnny Walker that he’d stolen from the liquor cabinet, staring blindly at the tv
and grumbling at anyone who tried to get him to talk or to eat. He didn’t even cry. Not until a little blonde, six year old Felicity, clutching a floppy bunny toy, climbed onto the sofa, shimmied as close to him as possible and wrapped her hand around his thumb, holding tightly.

Felicity probably didn’t even remember it. But that was the moment she became his family.

He’d told Felicity the house was just a house but it was like a time capsule, he saw Belle everywhere. He saw her perched on the kitchen counter, holding her stomach, laughing her ass off as he tried to make her pancakes. He saw her cuddled into the corner of the sofa flicking through some girly magazine.

Where the house had once been noisy, now it was silent and the silence was deafening.

He found Felicity sitting on the floor of Tatiana and Anastasia’s bedroom going through Tatiana’s CD collection. Tatiana had been obsessed with many things but at the top of that list was makeup and Kurt Cobain. Probably in reverse order. Belle had once told him, with a roll of her green eyes, that Tatiana had cried for days when Kurt Cobain died and that she was whole heartedly convinced his death was some kind of conspiracy.

He lowered himself to the floor and leaned back against the bed, pulled a box of CDs to him and started flicking through them. He could feel Felicity’s desire to ask him something. “Whatever it is, just ask, kid.” He said looking at the back of a Pearl Jam CD.

“Where have you been?”

“Watching Thea and her boyfriend.”

“You realise how creepy that is, don’t you?”

He shrugged. And she sighed.

“And what did you discover about Thea?”

He put the Pearl Jam CD to the side to listen to later and looked up to find Felicity watching him.
There were moments when she still looked like the sad, lonely little kid she once had been. Anytime Thea was brought up was one example. There were also moments when she looked like the carefree kid she’d been before she’d had to live without her family. Those moments were more few and far between.

“I realised that she’s happy.”

Felicity blinked and looked down. Maybe that wasn’t what she wanted to hear.

“I also realised that we need to know more about what Malcolm Merlyn has planned for the city and if it will affect Thea. And we need to come up with a plan to stop it.”

“You think we need to find out what Katerina knows. You’re worried about my family’s power and how it could be used to hurt Thea.”

“Yeah, kid, but I’m also worried about how it could hurt you.”

“Ok. So, maybe it’s time I had a chat to my murderous big sister.”

He was afraid she'd say that.
“You’re going to talk to your sister who was instrumental in killing your other siblings, alone?” Oliver asked her slowly as if he were trying to comprehend what she was telling him and like he was secretly hoping he hadn’t heard her right.

Felicity nodded; “Yes.” She said as she swung her legs back and forth, she was perched on the table Oliver kept his arrows on. He’d given her a pointed look as she’d lifted herself up to sit amongst his arrows and other pointy weapons. Oliver was standing, bare chested, quiver strapped to his back, bow raised, the string pulled back to his nose, aiming at one of those poor tennis balls he enjoyed destroying so much.

“No.” He stated simply at the exact moment he let the arrow go. It pierced the tennis ball with scarily accurate precision.

She stopped swinging her legs and stared at him as he pinned a succession of tennis balls to the wall. “What do you mean ‘no’?”

“I mean,” he replied, not looking at her; “‘no’.”

Felicity crossed a leg over the other and crossed her arms across her chest, giving him a truly unpleasant look. A look which he didn’t even notice.

“Well, not to burst your bubble, Mister Queen but this was me informing you of what was going to happen. It was in no way a discussion, a vote or me asking for permission – which by the way, I don’t need.”

He turned his head and his gaze clashed with hers, equally as stubborn as she was, he kept his gaze on her as he fired his next arrow. It hit its target. Without him even looking. He was just showing off.

“You don’t need to talk to her. I’ll find out what the Undertaking is. What Malcolm’s plan is. Don’t worry about it.”

Oh, no he did not. He was practically telling her to sit at home like a good girl while he went off and did all the fighting. Yeah, that wasn’t happening. She sat up straight and gripped the edge of
the table as irritation ran through her veins.

“Don’t worry about it.” She repeated, her tone dangerously calm; “Don’t worry about it? And how exactly do you plan to get all this information and swoop in and save the day?”

His brows flew up at her sarcasm laced tone and he gave an infuriating shrug; “The hood will kidnap Oliver Queen and his mother and interrogate them.”

And he was referring to himself as two separate entities. And in the third person. She rolled her eyes; “How is that going to work?”

Another shrug and he returned his focus to those damn tennis balls; “Diggle will wear the suit and threaten to hurt me if my mother doesn’t give him the answers he seeks.”

He said it so casually, like it was just that simple, like it would go exactly as he planned and Moira Queen would spill her guts the second her precious baby boy was in danger of being hurt by the big bad vigilante.

Best case scenario, Moira told them everything, worst case scenario she didn’t and Oliver got his ass handed to him by John Diggle. Personally, she thought the second option was the more likely.

“And, what exactly would you like me to do while you are busy kidnapping yourself?” she asked with false cheer; “Knit a nice little cardigan? Or maybe prepare a nice dinner to be ready when you get home from your manly mission?”

He turned his head and looked at her, the tennis ball bounced innocently as he missed the shot. She fluttered her lashes at him demurely. Slowly, he unnotched the arrow and lowered his bow; “You’re upset.”

And give the boy a prize. Turned out Oliver Queen was slightly more perceptive than you’d first think. Only very slightly.

“What clued you in on that one?” She snarked.
With a sigh, he discarded the bow and strode over to her, stepping right up to her. Her leg uncrossed and her legs spread instinctively to accommodate him as he stepped forward, into her space, crowding her, towering over her.

A hand landed on either side of her and he leaned into her; “I just want you to be safe.” He said in that low, husky voice that affected her more than she wanted to admit. It was the voice he used seconds before he was going to kiss her – or when he was trying to flirt with her to get her to do what he wanted. She wanted to say it wouldn’t work. But she would be lying if she said it didn’t cause butterflies to start flapping in her stomach.

She ran her tongue over her bottom lip and watched as his gaze dropped and followed the motion. Why was he always shirtless with those perfectly carved out muscles begging her to touch them? Swallowing, she shook her head; “I wasn’t safe before I met you.” She pointed out. She thought it was a perfectly logical statement so she pressed on; “You can’t protect me from everything.”

He raised a hand and brushed some of her hair away from her face with his knuckles. “I know,” he said on a soft exhale and she heard the unspoken ‘but I want to.’

“You know,” she started as she hooked a finger through his belt loop and pulled him even closer, their hips colliding; “I’m not exactly wild about the idea of you confronting your mother or fighting Malcolm again. Especially since I had to save your ass the last time.”

Oliver drew her leg up and draped it over his hip, pressing into her insistently, she sucked in a breath. Her shoe fell off her foot and landed with a thud against the concrete floor of the foundry. He lined his mouth up with her ear, his lips brushing the shell of her ear as he spoke; “I can handle myself.”

Involuntarily, she shivered. She wrapped her other leg around him and hooked her ankles together holding him in place. Running a finger across the dragon tattoo on his back and feeling a slight victory when he exhaled shakily into her neck, she said quietly; “I know you can. But he nearly beat you once. I worry.”

His hands ran down her sides as he pressed a kiss to her jaw, his fingers tickled her sides and her hands flew down to the button of his pants popping it open. He pushed her skirt up, bunching it up. He pushed her panties out of the way and sunk two fingers into her just as she got his zipper down and wrapped a hand around him. He hissed against her neck as she sighed and shifted forwards seeking more from him.

“Don’t.” he said roughly against her skin as she stroked him, dropped her legs from his waist and
spread them wider, giving him more access to her.

“What?” she breathed, her mind fuzzy.

“Don’t,” he repeated, pulling his hand from her and wrapped his hand around hers on his cock, stroking roughly, then pulling her hand away and lining himself up at her entrance; “Don’t worry about me.”

“Uh huh,” she agreed as he pushed in so slowly she thought she was going to die from anticipation. Her fingers ran over his back and the scarred, tattooed skin there, her nails digging in. She knew they’d be making little crescent shaped marks in his skin.

From the way he rocked into her, she didn’t think he minded. While they’d had a lot of sex lately, and it had varied in intensity, it had never been like this, it was so exquisitely slow that she could feel every inch of him, every drag of his cock as he pulled back and slowly pushed back in.

She was sure the noises that were slipping from her lips were probably mortifying but she couldn’t bring herself to care. She felt like she couldn’t breathe. She honestly thought he was trying to kill her. But, what a way to go.

When she finally came, his name falling from her lips like a benediction, he quickly followed her over the edge, her name nothing more than a soft exhale.

“Your shirt’s on inside out,” Damon dryly observed as Felicity walked into the kitchen of the house. She looked down at her shirt and realised that yes, it really was inside out. It wasn’t her fault, really it wasn’t. Oliver was a terrible influence when he wanted to be. And he’d really wanted to be.

She opened her mouth to offer some kind of explanation but Damon cut her off with a shake of his head; “Don’t tell me. I don’t want to know. There are just some things I’m better off not knowing. You getting jiggy with Oliver Queen is one of those things.”

She wouldn’t exactly refer to what she and Oliver had been doing as ‘getting jiggy’ but she got what Damon was trying to say. He didn’t want to know. She was fine with that. She didn’t want
to know about what he and Belle had done. Logically, she knew what they’d done – they’d conceived a child after all – but there was a difference but knowing and *knowing*.

“How’s Kat today?” Felicity asked hoping to divert the conversation away from her sex life.

Damon shrugged; “Pissy as ever.”

“Fabulous, perfect for a sisterly chat.”

“I’ll be here if you need me. Trying to wipe the thoughts of Oliver’s talented hands out of my mind.”

Mortified, Felicity blushed wildly and rushed for the stairs down to the cellar, she paused in the stairwell and righted her shirt. She didn’t want to give Katerina any ammunition to use against her.

She found Katerina sitting on the floor of the cellar, the door open, the barrier Damon had put up acting as her very own prison.

She sat up when she saw Felicity, a small calculated smile forming, she tipped her head to the side; “Hello, baby sister. Let me guess, it’s your turn to try your hand at interrogation. Don’t worry sis, I’ll tell you anything you want to know, no need for the torture Nate tried to inflict.”

“Why,” Felicity asked suspiciously, folding her arms, “would you tell me anything?”

Katerina watched her with a completely impassive face; “Because I want you to love me.”

Felicity’s brows lifted incredulously and she gave Katerina a look. Katerina burst out laughing, cackling away like it was the most hilarious joke she’d ever been told.

“What does Malcolm plan to do to the city?”

Katerina sobered instantly; “He plans to level the glades. Completely.”
Felicity narrowed her eyes trying to determine if Katerina was telling her the truth; “How?”

Katerina shrugged; “Some kind of machine that some super smart intellects invented. It’s supposed to simulate an earthquake. It will crack that area of the city right open. Including our sibling’s final resting place.”

“And their powers will be released?”

“It’s not quite as simple as that. There has to be a sacrifice. Someone from the bloodline has to be sacrificed back to the earth.”

Understanding washed over Felicity; “You were going to sacrifice me.”

Katerina shrugged; “Either you or Nate would have done the job. If it makes you feel better, you were just my back up plan. I was more than happy to kill Nate.”

Well, wasn’t that just super comforting.

“Is there a way to keep the magic in the earth?”

“Of course but you’re going to have to figure that one out for yourself, baby sister.” Katerina smirked at her; “How is Tommy? I’d love to see him again.”

Felicity waved her hand and Katerina flew into the back wall, she looked up at Felicity from where she landed, pushing the hair away from her face, Felicity gave her a sickly sweet smile; “Oh, I’m sorry, did that hurt?”

“You can’t stop Malcolm, Felicity. Don’t even try or you will get hurt.”

“Gee, Kat, it almost sounds like you care. Where is the machine?”
Katerina crawled closer on her hands and knees and sat up on her knees; “You’ll never find it;” she sing-songed; “I don’t know where it is but no matter how you try, you won’t find it.”

“We’ll see.”

“This thing is happening soon, so tick tock, baby sister, tick tock.”
Chapter 57

Chapter Summary

Oliver gets kidnapped by the vigilante. Damon does some threatening.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Oliver’s fists clenched over the arms of the wooden chair he was tied to as Diggle’s fist connected with the side of his face for the second time. He heard his mother scream at Diggle not to hurt her son. She was also tied to a chair in some shitty warehouse and she was begging the vigilante not to hurt him.

Oliver could get out of the restraints if he really wanted to but he needed his mother to think that he was in real danger. He was relying on whatever motherly instincts she possessed to coax her into talking about her involvement with Malcolm Merlyn. He couldn’t feel any pity or sympathy for her as he watched her with tears streaming down her face, this wasn’t the loving mother he’d grown up with. This was the woman who had calculatingly planned his father’s death. This was the woman who had sentenced him to five years of purgatory.

“You don’t understand!” Moira shouted at Diggle; “The Glades must be destroyed in order to rebuild them from the ground up to make the city better for everyone who lives in it!”

When she said it like that it sounded almost like a noble cause. He knew better.

“What about all the residents who would lose their homes?! Their lives?!” Diggle roared

Moira sat up straight, perfectly composed and she looked like she was at a tea party rather than in a dirty warehouse; “There will always be casualties in war. Sacrifices must be made for the greater good.”

“The systematic killing of innocent people isn’t for the greater good!” Diggle growled taking a threatening step towards Oliver. Something close to real fear passed over Moira’s face. Oliver
thought he should feel something toward the woman who had given him life but she had also taken his life from him for five years, had taken his father from him, he no longer saw her as his mother but as a target, another individual who had failed the city his father had begged him to save.

He met Diggle’s eye and gave an imperceptible nod. Diggle’s fist collided with his face again with such force he tipped sideways taking the chair with him. He winced as he crashed into the floor. Moira screamed, yelling at Diggle to leave her son be.

Oliver watched her unblinkingly, the immaculately put together Moira Queen and waited for whatever was going to come out of her mouth next. She watched him as if she truly feared for his life.

“Mom,” he said desperately, sounding like the gutless boy he’d been before, the act he had to put on sickened him. “Just tell him how to stop Malcolm and he’ll let us go.”

Moria shook her head, “Malcolm can’t be stopped. He won’t be.”

“You could talk to him. Convince him.”

“No. I won’t. This is what must be done, Oliver. You can’t see it but you will. It’s too late to stop it. The device is already on its way into the city.”

“What device?” Diggle demanded.

“A device to simulate an earthquake. It will be planted in the middle of the Glades. It’s already programmed.”

Diggle hauled Oliver up and held an arrow to his neck; “Where in the Glades is it being planted?” Moira shook her head and Diggle pressed the tip of the arrow into his neck, piercing the skin slightly; “Where?!”

Moira’s gaze was fixed to the arrow so close to the pulse in Oliver’s neck. Oliver knew his mother well enough to know she were weighing up her options. She was deciding if it was worth the risk, if she thought he could survive an arrow to the neck.
“I’ll tell you!” She finally decided. “Just don’t hurt my son, please.”

So, his life was worth more to her than her loyalty to Malcolm Merlyn.

“Where?” Diggle prompted.

“Underground. In the old subway tunnels. It’s set to go off in two night’s time.”

“Then,” Diggle stated, roughly letting go of Oliver; “I have time to find it.”

“You’ll never find it in time.”

Diggle stalked over to Moira who flinched as he pulled out one of Oliver’s blades and cut her ropes; “You better pray I do or I’m coming back for you.”

Moira looked unconcerned by the threat, instead looking at Oliver beseechingly; “Where is Thea? She won’t answer my calls. She can’t be anywhere near the Glades.”

“You should take the hint, Mom. She doesn’t want to see you.” Oliver stated bitterly as Diggle cut his ropes and strode out; “And neither do I.”

“Oliver, please. I can’t lose both my children.”

He pushed himself to his feet and looked at her unfeelingly; “You lost me the second you let me get on that boat five years ago.”

Felicity found Oliver down in the Foundry, sitting on the edge of the bed they’d been sharing, which was not at all awkward considering Tommy usually slept down there as well since the whole Katerina revelation.
Oliver was sitting, leaning forward, elbows on knees, hands clasped, jaw clenched and frown in place, staring down at his hands. He sighed and started speaking without looking up at her, his ninja training must have alerted him to her presence, she wasn’t wearing heels so it wasn’t like she’d clomped down there; “I know what Malcolm’s planning.”

She guessed this was the time to compare notes, then. She nodded and took a step closer, “Yeah, me too.”

His troubled gaze rose and clashed with hers. She sucked in a breath at his expression, he looked like the most troubled soul she’d seen in a long time. He looked like the weight of the world rested solely on his broad shoulders. He looked like he’d already assumed responsibility for what was about to happen to their city.

“There’s a device to create an earthquake.” He sounded resigned as if he thought he couldn’t stop it but what die trying. Like that was his fate.

“Yeah, that’s what Kat told me.”

“If I don’t find that device, people will die.” Again, he sounded like all the deaths that could potentially occur were all on him.

She stepped up to him, stepped between his legs and put a hand on his cheek, his scruff tickling her palm. His eyes fell closed and he tipped his head to the side almost nuzzling into her touch. Her other hand landed on his shoulder and she pushed him back slightly so she could move to crawl into his lap, a knee on either side of him, straddling him.

“Hey,” she said softly, slowly his eyes opened and he blinked at her with such heartbreaking sadness. “You’ll find it.”

“Diggle’s already looking.” His arm went around her as if to anchor her to him; “But Felicity if we don’t find it, the earthquake will happen.”

She knew he was thinking about the implications for her. If that earthquake happened, her family’s magic would be there for the taking.

“It’s ok,” she replied, leaning into him seeking the same comfort from him as he seemed to be seeking from her. “Damon and I have a plan to deal with that if it happens.”
Oliver’s hand inched up under the hem of her top and he pressed his hand flat against her back. “Is it dangerous.”

She avoided his eye and instead stared steadily at his neck; “Probably.”

He didn’t say anything in response, just turned his head and pressed a kiss to the palm of her hand that was still on his face. His lips moved down to press against the pulse in her wrist, her heart rate fluttered at the contact.

“Tommy’s trying to figure out how to deactivate the device.” He said against her skin. She pulled her hand away from him and his gaze collided with hers again. His eyes were as questioning as she thought hers probably were.

“Tommy?”

Oliver shrugged; “He wanted to help. And he’s got access to Merlyn Global. My mother told us all the information for the device is on the servers there.”

“Shouldn’t you have gone with him?”

“Jax went with him.”

“Jax? As in my Jax?”

Another shrug; “They’re friends I think.”

“Huh.” She shuffled forwards in his lap and wrapped her arms around his neck, seeking his warmth. “Do you have a plan for dealing with Malcolm?”

She held her breath not sure if she really wanted to hear his answer. There was a pause and she realised that while she didn’t know if she wanted to hear his answer, he equally didn’t want to give it to her.
“Yes.”

That was it. He didn’t elaborate. She tightened her grip around him, wanting to keep him close. “Is it dangerous?”

It was his turn to avoid her gaze. “Probably.”

“You’re not going to like what Felicity and I are going to do,” Damon stated as he traced the letters etched into the headstone, he’d never visited Belle’s grave before, hadn’t been there since her funeral. But then seemed as good a time as ever. He hadn’t wanted to think of her there, in the earth below him.

He sat in the grass and pulled a few weeds from around the headstone. He could almost hear Belle telling him to leave the dandelions alone because in their own way they were beautiful too.

“But Belle, it has to be done.” He was sitting talking to a slab of rock but he liked to think that somewhere, someway, she could hear him. “I’ll look after Felicity. I promise.”

His finger moved to the dash that separated her date of birth and her date of death. One little line represented her whole life and everything that happened in it. When a stranger looked at it, all they would see was that she’d died young. They wouldn’t know that she had loved and was loved.

“I saw Thea.” He smiled sadly; “I guess she was Anastasia to you. Anyway, she’s beautiful, babe. All you. Not sure there’s any of me in there. She’s got a boyfriend. The kind that looks like trouble.” He laughed softly; “Like everyone thought I was.”

He tried to think what else to say. What else to tell Belle, what else she’d want to know.

“I think she’s had a good life. Not like me. Not like Felicity. Why’d you make Felicity do all this, huh? You had to have known what her life would be without you. You had to have known you were sentencing her to a life of loneliness.” He paused and a thought occurred to him; “Or did you think I’d step up and take care of her?”
This time his laugh was bitter, “If that’s what you thought, you were wrong, babe. I royally fucked it up. But I kept her safe when it mattered.”

He felt ridiculous sitting in the grass in a graveyard talking to a rock. He closed his eyes and pictured Belle as he remembered her. As she’d been: young, beautiful and vibrant. He imagined her sitting in the passenger seat of his car, the windows down, the wind whipping through her hair. She laughed at something he said, held her hair in one hand and leaned over and pressed a soft, sweet kiss to his cheek. She had been the sweetest thing. He opened his eyes and his image of her was gone.

Sighing he said; “Something big is about to go down in this city. But don’t you worry, pretty girl, I’m going to make sure both our girls survive.”

Pushing himself to his feet, he brushed the grass off his jeans and then put his hand to his mouth, kissing his fingers and then pressing his fingers into the hard granite headstone; “I’ll see you later, baby.”

He lifted the hood of his hoodie up and shoved his hands into his pockets as he made his way out of the graveyard and through the streets of the Glades. He sat on a low wall and smoked as he watched the crappy house across the street. He watched as Roy Harper walked up the street, up the steps to the house. Damon stubbed out his cigarette and strolled across the street.

He knocked on the door and waited. Roy pulled the door open and eyed him. Damon barged passed him and into the house looking around for any sign that Thea was there. The place appeared empty.

Damon pulled a roll of cash out of his pocket and slowly placed it down on the coffee table. He didn’t miss the way Roy’s gaze zeroed in on the cash. So, the kid was at least partially motivated by money.

“Something is about to go down here in the Glades. You’re going to take this money, take your little girlfriend and get the hell out of here.”

Roy stood up straight, puffed his chest out, all false bravado, the kind that only came from having to survive on your own for far too long. “And what if I don’t?”
“I’ll kill you.” Damon stated simply.

Roy smirked; “What do you care about where me and my girl are?”

Damon shrugged; “That’s not really any of your business.”

“And it’s not any of your business what we do or where we go.”

Damon was across the room faster than Roy could blink. He slammed him into the wall beside the door, his forearm under Roy’s chin pressing on his throat. “Listen you little shit. You take the money, grab your girl and leave tonight. If Thea Queen is here when shit goes down and comes to any harm, I will hold you personally responsible and hunt you down and cut you open from sternum to navel.”

He felt Roy swallow against his arm. The kid was scared. Good. “What are you going to do, Roy?”

“I’ll take her and get out.”

Damon removed his arm and patted Roy on the cheek, “Good boy. Don’t let me down.” Damon took his phone out of his pocket; “Now give me your phone number so I can call and check in.”

He wasn’t going to call Roy, he was going to track his phone but he wasn’t going to tell him that and risk him ditching his phone. Roy reluctantly gave up his number and Damon programmed it in and then called it to make sure it wasn’t some bullshit number. Roy’s jeans started ringing.

Damon pocketed his own phone. “There’s two grand there,” he said nodding to the coffee table; “Get a room in a nice hotel or something. Show her a good time.”

He patted Roy on the chest once and then left the house and went back over to his wall and waited the kid out. He was on his fourth cigarette when Thea wandered up to the house, went in and was only in a minute or two when Roy ushered her out carrying a bag and helped her into a car. They sped off and Damon was satisfied Roy had heeded his warning. He pulled out his phone and watched the red dot that was Roy until it told him he was located in a nice hotel on the other side of the city.
Nodding to himself, Damon got up and meandered back to the graveyard to have another chat with his girl.
Chapter 58

Chapter Summary

This one's from Tommy's point of view.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

He was slightly concerned about Oliver’s mental health. Tommy could concede that that moment probably wasn’t the right time to be having concerns about his best friend’s mental stability. It was something that probably needed to be thought about when Oliver came back from an isolated island…..or when he decided to dress up in green leather and prance around the city with a bow and arrow dishing out his own brand of justice.

But no, Tommy didn’t think about it then, he was just so happy to have his best friend in life alive and back in his life. He also didn’t question Oliver’s mental or emotional wellbeing when he decided to get back together with Laurel as a form of flagellation. No. His epiphany that his best friend might have a few mental issues didn’t come until they were in the foundry gearing up to go and confront his father. Oliver’s phone had rung where it was sitting on the desk with the computers. Oliver had accepted the call on speaker and Damon’s voice had rung out in the foundry, bouncing off the walls with its somber, resigned tone.

Katerina had escaped the magical fortress they’d been keeping her in and had taken Felicity with her. They were in the wind.

That, right there was the moment when Tommy started to fear for Oliver’s mental health. His expression was a mask of calm. There was no hint of worry or anger for the safety of his lady love. He just picked up his phone and threw it across the room where it hit the wall hard and smashed to pieces. Oliver then very calmly walked over to the table that had all his arrows and weapons and with one hand flung it over, arrows scattering everywhere. Tommy and Diggle had exchanged a look but hadn’t said a word.

Tommy really started to question Oliver’s sanity when he calmly stated that they needed to prioritise their problems and their biggest one was Malcolm. Tommy had gaped at him as he realised that Oliver didn’t have a cunning plan to rescue Felicity from her evil sister’s clutches. That was when he decided Oliver was starting to crack up.
Oliver had been scarily calm as he’d discovered that the scary level the Glades plan was taking place that very night. He’d called Detective Lance and told him to evacuate the Glades. He’d calmly informed Diggle and Tommy that Jax would be locating and deactivating the device because he had almost as much knowledge of technology as Felicity. He didn’t even stammer over her name. It was like he’d flipped a switch inside of him, disconnected from his emotions. That was definitely disconcerting. Obviously, something to be concerned about.

Tommy had screwed up his nose as Oliver had placed a call to Laurel, who sounded too excited to hear from him and told her to stay out of the Glades. It was sickening really.

He wanted to scream at Oliver that shouldn’t he be thinking about Felicity? Tommy said as much to Diggle who merely shrugged and said that Oliver was compartmentalising in order to do what needed to be done. And didn’t that just sound massively healthy?

Tommy had watched as Oliver had threatened Moira and told her she needed to do something to help stop the undertaking if she ever wanted to see her children again. Again, Oliver threatened his mother with no evident emotion whatsoever. It was like it all meant nothing to him, just another day at the vigilante office, like dealing with a murderous, slightly psychotic parent was merely par for the course. Just another thing to be checked off the vigilante to-do list. Shouldn’t they be adding ‘find Felicity’ to that list?

Apparently, not.

Instead it was Tommy’s turn to experience just how deranged his parent was. Armed with one of Diggle’s gun that he didn’t really know how to use, he had followed a suited-up Oliver and Diggle into a lab to confront his father. His father had been there in a weird costume that should really have only been worn on Halloween. He looked like some archaic evil knight.

Malcolm had waxed poetical about how he was doing all of this to avenge Tommy’s mother’s death. He screamed that the people of the Glade’s all deserved to die the way Rebecca had for their inaction. Malcolm had looked right at Tommy as he described the voicemail Rebecca had left for him about how the man had shot her and she was bleeding and screaming for help but no one stopped to help.

Tommy listened astonished, the thought that was on repeat in his mind being that this was not what his mother would have wanted. She had wanted to help people. Not destroy them. She’d be ashamed of what his father had become.

It all happened too fast for Tommy to keep up, he wasn’t trained in fighting. One second Malcolm
was smugly telling Oliver that he’d never win, that he’d never stop the device and the next he was
telling Oliver he knew exactly who he was under that hood and that he had no qualms about killing
Robert Queen’s son. Tommy briefly wondered how his father could know Oliver’s true identity
but Moira couldn’t recognise her own son under the hood. Oliver had raised his bow and fired an
arrow which Malcolm dodged and Diggle fired his gun. Malcolm moved around the cabinets and
flung a blade at them which hit Diggle in the chest.

Oliver lingered, caught between wanting to make sure his friend was ok and wanting to chase after
Malcolm. He lingered only long enough for Diggle to shout at him to go. Tommy hauled Diggle
to his feet and they struggled up to the roof where Oliver and Malcolm were fighting.

Tommy had seen Oliver fight before, but never like that; he’d never seen him fight like he had
nothing left to lose. That was the moment Tommy really started to question Oliver’s mental
stability.

There was something disturbingly beautiful and almost synchronised to the way Oliver and
Malcolm were firing arrows at each other. Tommy knew one of them wasn’t going to make it out
alive. He wondered what it said about him that he was hoping his best friend killed his father.

Oliver fired one of his exploding arrows at Malcolm who caught it before it exploded. The sparks
and force pushed him back and gave Oliver the opportunity to stride forward and attack him with
his bow. Tommy watched as they went at each other, all striking bows and fists flying. He sucked
in a breath as Malcolm got the upper hand and managed to get Oliver into a choke hold. Malcolm
lowered Oliver to his knees.

“Don’t struggle. There was never any doubt to the outcome. Your death was inevitable.”

Oliver’s hand grasped along the ground, clutched an arrow and in a swift motion he shoved it into
his chest. The arrow went through Oliver and into Malcolm and Tommy’s only thought was that
Oliver’s mental health definitely needed examining after that move.

Gasping, Malcolm fell to the ground and the sound of the arrow pulling through Oliver’s flesh
made both Tommy and Diggle’s mouths drop open.

Oliver struggled to his feet and when he spoke, his voice was ragged; “Thank you for teaching me
what I’m fighting for. But my father taught me how.”
Oliver delivered a knockout punch to Malcolm and collapsed to the ground, his breathing coming out in harsh breaths. Diggle rushed over to Oliver and examined his arrow wound. Tommy stared at his father’s prone figure and hoped he was dead or was mere moments away from it.

Tommy could hear the repeated sounds of sirens throughout the city and just knew instinctively that Jax had failed. The Glades were falling. People were dying. And they couldn’t stop it. Tommy’s phone rang and he answered it, barely listening as Jax told him that he’d managed to deactivate the device but that there was a second one and it had gone off. He hung up from the call and as soon as he did, his phone rang again. Numbly, he pressed the phone to his ear and listened as the voice on the other end told him the worst possible news.

Gulping down the lump in his throat, he pocketed his phone, looked at his best friend who had just impaled himself on an arrow and was now exhausted on the ground and quietly called Oliver’s name.

Oliver lifted his head and looked at Tommy. Tommy couldn’t see his eyes or really even his face in the darkness and under the hood but he knew he had his attention.

“That was Damon. Oliver, I’m so sorry. Felicity’s dead.”

Diggle’s hand landed on Oliver’s shoulder and Oliver shook it off, he ducked his chin and pressed his hands into the ground, slowly rising to his feet. He walked a few unsteady steps to where Malcolm lay unconscious, pulled back his foot and delivered a violently hard kick to Malcolm’s stomach. He kicked him over and over again until he collapsed down to the ground. Oliver pushed back up, straddled Malcolm and started punching him in the face. Repeatedly. Pummelling him without making a sound.

Well. Tommy had wanted a reaction out of him.

If Malcolm wasn’t already dead, Oliver was going to kill him with his bare hands. And Diggle and Tommy were going to sit on the roof and let him.
Chapter 59

Chapter Summary

Felicity is dead. Her boys all gather around her. Some arguing happens.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Felicity Smoak was dead. Tommy hadn’t really believed it until he’d seen it. But there was no denying the sight that was laid out before them.

Diggle and Tommy had finally pulled Oliver away from Malcolm’s battered and broken body, it had taken them both to pull him, Oliver had resisted the whole way. They’d managed to wrestle him into the van. Once they got him in, he sank down on the bench-seat and sagged against the side of the van. He’d roughly shoved his hood back with a hand that was busted from working out his issues on Malcolm’s face. Tommy had sat on the bench-seat on the other side of the van and watched his best friend as Diggle got into the driver’s seat and drove them through the city that was being destroyed.

News of Felicity’s death was the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back. Oliver was destroyed. Tommy watched as his head fell back against the van and the grease paint he wore around his eyes started to run down his face. It took Tommy a moment to realise that it was tears that was making the paint run. Oliver was crying without breaking his silence. His hands clenched on his knees. Tommy could see Oliver’s Adam’s apple bob as he gulped down sounds he clearly didn’t want to make. Tommy thought it was disturbing that Oliver was obviously so conditioned to hide his grief that he felt he had to force it back down.

He watched as Oliver roughly wiped his face against his sleeve, closed his eyes for a few beats and when he opened his eyes again, the shuttered, vigilante look was firmly back in place, Oliver was retreating into that place in his mind where he went when things got tough and the vigilante portion of himself took over to do what had to be done. The only hint of the emotions he’d so briefly expressed were his red, bloodshot eyes. He was steeling himself for what would come next. By the time Diggle had pulled up and parked outside Felicity’s childhood home, Oliver was back in control.
Diggle opened the back doors of the van and he and Tommy exchanged a look as they helped their friend down. Oliver was still a little unsteady on his feet from the whole putting an arrow through his own chest thing.

Slowly, they got him through the door and into the house where they all converged in the kitchen. Diggle and Tommy helped Oliver lower down to sit on the hearth of the large stone fireplace where he leaned back against the stones. Jax was frantically pacing the length of the kitchen. Diggle went back out to the van to get the first aid kit to patch Oliver up. Jax looked at Oliver then at Tommy with wild eyes; “There was a second device. The Glades are all but destroyed. People are dying. But not her. She can’t be dead, right?”

Tommy shook his head, not knowing what to say. He had no answers. Diggle came back in and fell to the hearth beside Oliver. Oliver let him tend to his bruised and scraped knuckles but refused to allow him to patch up his arrow wound, instead taking some gauze and shoving it up and under his jacket. Tommy wanted to tell both Oliver and Diggle they needed to go to a hospital but knew it would be a waste of words. Neither would go. He also knew Oliver would need to see Felicity to believe it. Oliver had told him that he didn’t truly believe a death unless he saw it for himself. He’d need to see Felicity’s lifeless body to believe she was gone.

If Tommy was worried about Oliver’s sanity before, he was really worried now. What would Felicity’s death do to him? Would he eventually fly into a fit of rage? Or would he continue to retreat into himself? Would he place the blame on himself? Would he go on a killing spree? Would he kill his own mother in some need to avenge his girl?

Tommy suddenly feared for the state of the city once Oliver accepted Felicity’s death. He thought anyone who was involved with the undertaking had better pray to any and all deities for mercy from Oliver Queen.

The kitchen door flung open and bounced off the wall where it had been kicked open by Damon. Jax gasped loudly at the sight that Damon made. Damon looked as destroyed as Oliver and had his arms full of a very still Felicity. With a set jaw, Damon strode in and gently lowered Felicity down onto the kitchen table.

Tommy silently willed her to open her eyes.

Nate came in next and gently shut the door.

Damon fell into one of the dining chairs and clutched one of Felicity’s hands in both of his.
She wasn’t waking up. There was no coming back from this one. She was covered in blood, some looked fresh, some of it was dry, flaking on her skin. Tommy wanted to go and find a washcloth and wipe her face clean. She’d obviously been in one hell of a fight. But what was the most shocking was the arrow protruding from her chest. One of Oliver’s arrows.

Tommy looked over and saw Oliver staring steadily at that arrow.

Jax slowly walked over to the table, tears streaming down his face and Tommy could tell from his expression, how much the girl on the table meant to him. Jax brushed some hair off Felicity’s face and tipped his head to the side and smiled softly at her; “Well, babygirl, if this is it,” he said quietly but his quiet voice echoed off the walls of the already silent room; “then I have a date with some sunlight and maybe a stake.”

Jax stroked her face with a finger, then turned his devastated eyes on Nate; “What the hell happened?”

“I’d like an answer to that question too.” Damon stated flatly. “We had a plan.”

“You plan was for Felicity to let Katerina out and let her kidnap her. Your plan was for Felicity to kill Katerina to keep the magic in. It was a flawed plan, Damon.”

Damon smacked his flat hand against the table. “Maybe so but it didn’t involve Felicity dying.”

Nate shook his head; “She couldn’t kill Katerina. She knew it. I knew it. Kat would kill her. So Felicity and I came up with another plan.”

“Great plan, Nate, she’s dead anyway!” Damon screamed.

Nate was calm in contrast to Damon’s raging. He shook his head; “We linked Katerina’s life with Felicity’s. Felicity said she couldn’t kill Kat herself, she couldn’t out fight her but she could kill herself and take Kat down with her.”

“We vowed to protect her!”
Nate took a step towards Felicity and Damon shot to his feet stepping in front of the table as if to protect Felicity from her brother advancing on her.

“Damon, we have to take the arrow out,” Nate said calmly, holding his hands up as if to show he meant no harm. Tommy thought he’d already caused enough harm. “She can’t come back if we don’t take the arrow out.”

“What the hell,” Damon ground out not moving from his spot, “are you talking about?”

“I found a resurrection spell and potion. It’s an old spell –“

Nate didn’t get the chance to finish his thought. Damon grabbed a fistful of his shirt and slammed him back into the wall. He hit it with a thud. Damon held him there. “You gambled with her life,” he accused, “You and I both know that spell is a fairytale, a myth, no one even knows if it works! If you hadn’t of knocked me out I could have stopped her from shoving an arrow into her chest!”

“Exactly!” Nate yelled back; “I would do anything to stop that magic getting into the wrong hands. I could see the bigger picture.”

Damon backed away from Nate, letting him go with a scoff, “The bigger picture? Your baby sister is dead! The bigger picture is kind of fucked now, isn’t it?”

“Katerina is dead, isn’t she?!”

“At what cost!”

The two men stared at each other, breathing heavily until finally Damon backed up and sat back down, taking Felicity’s hand once more, still glaring at Nate. The tension in the room racheted up to leaves so high that Tommy could physically feel it. Tommy looked around the room. Diggle was slumped down beside Oliver, probably reeling from all the magic talk but hiding it well. Oliver was still letting out rough breaths that sounded like they hurt and staring at the arrow protruding from Felicity’s chest. He was staring at it like he was trying to will her to be alive again. He was staring at it as if it had personally offended him by being in her chest.
Jax was still stroking Felicity’s hair and looking at her and planning how he was going to join her in death soon. Nate was leaning back against the wall Damon had shoved him against.

Tommy shook his head and stepped forward, Damon stood again but Tommy moved around him and wrapped his hands around the arrow and in one smooth motion, pulled it out.

If no one else was going to do it, he was. Maybe whatever mojo Nate had worked wouldn’t be affective and Felicity would just be dead but they’d never know if they didn’t take the arrow out.

All their gazes landed on the girl on the table. And they waited. And waited.

Maybe there was no magical out for Felicity this time. Maybe she was just dead. If she was, Tommy thought Damon was probably going to kill Nate, Jax would kill himself and Oliver would go on a self-destructive rampage. Tommy held his breathe and hoped there was still a little magic and life left in Felicity.

Tommy even felt a little sad at the death of Katerina. Sure, she’d turned out to be a crazy looney but he’d had fun with her, she’d distracted him from his Laurel feelings. He’d liked her – even if who he thought she was wasn’t real.

“Did anyone else see that?” Jax asked suddenly. “Her eyelids fluttered.”

Damon stood up and leaned over Felicity. He studied her face. He grasped her face in his hand; “They did. Come on, kid. Wake up. It’s not your time to die yet.”

If Tommy were honest, he’d say that he didn’t believe it would really work. At least not until he saw it for himself. Felicity’s chest wound seemed to disappear as they watched, the blood remained on her clothes but the wound itself healed in mere seconds.

“Woah.” Diggle uttered, getting to his feet, wide eyed and stunned.

That was one way to put it.

Felicity’s eyes flew open and she sucked in a breath and flew up into a sitting position on the table, clutching her chest, taking huge, gulping breaths of air, her eyes looking around wildly.
Tommy looked at Oliver just in time to see him drop his head into his hands.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoy this chapter, it took me a long time to write, I really agonised over it. Also, I listened to Be Still by The Fray on repeat while writing and highly recommend listening to it while reading.
Reckoning

Chapter Summary

Felicity died a little bit. She came back. There's some shouting from Oliver but it comes from a place of caring.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW

Thank you all for all the lovely comments on the last chapter and the story as a whole. I read them all and appreciate every one.

She couldn’t breathe. That was her first thought. Also, her second thought. She was taking in big gasping breathes that didn’t feel as if they were doing anything to full her lungs. In fact, her chest felt like it was closing in on itself, her heart and lungs getting squished and crushed by her ribcage. Her heart was beating faster and faster by the second. Her body was betraying her. Her lungs felt like they were burning with the need for oxygen.

She felt a hand grasp her face and she pushed it off, it was making her feel even more caged in. She could hear voices calling her name but they sounded far away, they were more like an echo. Everything was a little blurry and hazy. She blinked rapidly trying to clear the fog.

And oh god, why couldn’t she breathe?

She felt dizzy and she thought she might throw up.

Her chest hurt. It just hurt, hurt, hurt.

But she needed to breathe and she couldn’t. She felt big fat tears roll down her cheeks. She was having a heart attack and her lungs were shutting down, she was sure of it.
Someone’s hands landed on her legs and pulled them so they were dangling over the side of the table. She was sitting on a table. Why was she sitting on a table? Tables were for glasses not asses.

Those same hands pushed her head down so her head was between her knees and held it there.

She felt the dizziness subside slightly. But she still couldn’t breathe.

Hands landed on her cheeks pulling her head up and brushed her hair away from her face. She stared into shocking green eyes. Eyes that she knew. Eyes she trusted. Damon. He smiled at her and told her to breathe with him. She mimicked his breaths and slowly, slowly she started to not feel quite so desperate for oxygen. The things around her became clearer. She realised she was sitting on the table in the kitchen of her childhood home. She wrapped her hands around the edge of the table trying to remember what happened. Her gaze caught on an arrow on the wooden floor.

Right.

Katerina. The Glades. Standing in the graveyard. The earth split open and she could see caskets. A dagger in Katerina’s hand. They fought and then Felicity plunged an arrow into her chest. And then…..nothing.

She felt around her chest for a wound but found nothing. Her hand came away with blood on it and she frowned down at it. She’d really done it. She’d killed herself and indirectly killed her sister. She lifted her head and looked straight at Nate; “Kat?”

“Is dead. You killed her. And just to be sure I cut off her head.” Damon shot Nate a look and Nate shrugged; “I linked Katerina’s life to Felicity’s not Felicity’s to Katerina.”

“So, she’s dead,” Felicity stated, her voice hoarse from her time being dead. Everything hurt.

Damon started pacing in front of her; “What the hell were you thinking? Huh? Tell me because I really want know what possessed you to do something so incredibly stupid!”

Felicity winced as he yelled at her and rubbed at her temples; “Could you maybe lower the volume? I have a teeny tiny headache forming.”
“That’s what happens when you shove an arrow into your chest, die and literally magically come back to life!” So, that would be a ‘no’ to lowering the volume. Damon was pacing and gesticulating and it was quite a sight to see. “What if it didn’t work?! What if you stayed dead?! This could have gone so, so wrong!”

Jax sidled up to Felicity, wrapped an arm around her and pressed her into his side; “I know you don’t recognise it because you’ve never been on the receiving end of one but this;” he gestured at Damon; “is a parental lecture. He was worried about you. Scared for your life so that fear has manifested into anger.”

Jax was right, she had no experience of having a parental figure worry over her, in the previous timeline she’d never caused Belle any problems and though Belle had raised her she’d always been her sister first and authority figure second. Belle’s mode of parenting was to let Felicity do what she wanted when she wanted and to sign whatever permission slips needed to be signed. In this timeline, Felicity didn’t even have that.

Wincing and using Jax as support, Felicity slid off the table and stood on shaky legs; “Well, I appreciate the concern but I’m fine. I just want to go and fall into bed.”

Damon laughed bitterly; “Oh, no. No way. You are not leaving this house, young lady. No one really can with the city falling apart. But you especially are not leaving. You cannot be trusted not to do something stupid so I suggest you go upstairs and find a bedroom you think you’ll be able to sleep in and make yourself comfortable because you are not leaving this house for the foreseeable future.”

Felicity was very confused.

Tommy whistled and smirked at her; “I think you just got grounded.”

Damon folded his arms across his chest and nodded; “Damn straight she did.”

“I’ve never been grounded;” Felicity protested. “Besides, you can’t ground me. I’m an adult.”

“Try me, kid.”
Pouting, Felicity tentatively climbed back up on the table. Damon turned to the group and started
to explain to them that they could all stay at the house until the chaos out in the city died down and
to make themselves comfortable.

Felicity looked at the fireplace and saw Oliver sitting on the hearth, his knees pulled up, his eyes
on her, his expression passive, his eyes red like he’d been crying. Had he been crying over her?
He held her gaze for a few heartbeats and then struggled to his feet. That was when she saw the
blood on his hood and suit. Was he hurt? What happened with Malcolm? She watched as he
slowly walked out of the room without a backward glance her way.

She licked her lips and her gaze caught with Tommy who had been watching her watch Oliver.
“He took my father down. But to do it he had to put an arrow through his own chest.”

Oh god.

“Well, that’s a theme for the evening.” Damon said dryly with a pointed look aimed her way and
then wandered into the living room, Nate and Diggle following him. Probably to give Diggle an
intro to magic.

As soon they were gone, she found herself on the receiving end of a smothering Jax hug. She
leaned into him and loosely wrapped her arms around him.

“Don’t ever do that to me again, babydoll.” He whispered against her head.

“I’ll try my very best.” She Whispered back; her whisper muffled by his shirt but she knew he
heard her by the way he tightened his grip around her even more.

Once she escaped Jax’s too tight embrace, she went in search of Oliver. She needed to set her eyes
on him. She needed to see he was ok; she had been so worried Malcolm would kill him or at the
very least badly injure him.

Her wary body carried her upstairs and she wandered the bedrooms until she found him. She found
him in the spare bedroom that had always been reserved for Damon when he’d stayed the night.
But everyone – even little six year old Felicity – had known Damon had spent his nights snoring
happily, curled around Belle in her bed.
She shut the door with a soft click and watched as Oliver sat gingerly on the edge of the bed, shirtless, a first aid kit he’d found from somewhere sitting beside him as he attempted to patch up his arrow wound himself.

She closed the gap between them and reached out to him; “Here let me help with that,” he moved away from her, his jaw clenched and he avoided looking up at her.

“I got it,” he ground out. The piece of tape he’d been trying to smooth against his skin flapped down and Felicity reached out to put it back in place. Once again, he shrugged out of her reach; “I said I got it.” He said harshly, his eyes finally rising to glare at her.

“What the hell is your problem?” She asked, her own frustration levels starting to rise.

“My problem,” he muttered and roughly got to his feet, standing toe to toe with her, encroaching on her space as his eyes flashed down at her; “My fucking problem,” he said louder this time and she took a step back at the venom in his tone. It wasn’t a tone he used with her; “is that you fucking died!”

“Only a little bit,” she tried and failed at levity; “I was only dead for a little while.”

“No!” He roared and she flinched a little at the volume; “You weren’t dead for seconds or minutes, you were dead for two fucking hours!”

Ok. So, that was a little longer than she thought. She took a step toward him to put a hand to his chest in an attempt to soothe him and calm him down but he stepped back from her.

She sighed at his retreat. “But I came back.” Her head was still throbbing from her death experience and she rubbed at her temples. His loud voice wasn’t helping.

“But you didn’t know for sure that you would! Sometimes dead is just dead!”

She dropped her fingers from her temples and threw her own glare at him and used her own loud voice – which wasn’t nearly as loud as his loud voice – on him; “Stop yelling at me!”

That seemed to only infuriate him even more. He came at her again and closed the space between them, his chest almost brushing hers, towering over her so much that she had to tilt her head back
to stare back at him defiantly. Damn him and his height and his muscles and his everything. Damn his blue eyes which were even more beautiful when they darkened in his anger at her.

“You don’t kill yourself, Felicity!”

“I did it for the greater good!” she screamed back.

“I don’t give a shit about the greater good! That isn’t how this works.” He raged pointing a finger between the two of them. “You don’t die! And you sure as shit don’t use one of my;” he thumped his chest with his fist. “arrows to do it!”

Irritated, she threw her hands in the air; “So, that’s what this is about? I stole one of your precious arrows?”

She was provoking him and she knew it the second he growled at her; “I couldn’t give a fuck about my arrows. This is about you shoving one in your chest and dying!”

Pushing him away, she yelled; “You did the exact same thing!”

“I didn’t die! I took a calculated risk!”

She nodded, thinking she was finally getting it. “So, you’re the only one who is allowed to do whatever it takes for the end result?”

“Yes!” His guttural scream seemed to reverberate off the walls and make the windows rattle in their frames.

They stared at each other, their chests heaving from screaming at each other. She spun away from him before she did something stupid like slapped him and walked into the ensuite bathroom and cranked on the shower.

She stepped out of her jeans and pulled her top over her head, dried blood flaking off the material to the floor. She unclasped her bra and it had just fluttered to the floor when she felt his heat behind her. Oliver stepped up to her, an arm going around her, the other hand brushed her hair away from
her neck and his lips latched onto the back of her neck. Her hand went up and landed on the back of his neck, holding him there.

“I’m so mad at you right now,” she whispered as his hand cupped the underside of her breast and his thumb circled her nipple.

“Good,” he growled against the back of her neck, his scruff scratching the sensitive skin in the most delicious way; “Because I am fucking pissed at you.”

His hand dropped from her breast and dipped under the hem of her panties, his fingers teasing before he stripped her of her panties completely and roughly pushed one long finger into her. Using the hand on the back of his neck as leverage, she rose up on her toes and panted; “More.”

He sucked on her neck and added another finger as she pushed back against him, feeling his erection pressing against her. She moaned and writhed against his hand, riding it as much as she could.

She whimpered when he pulled his fingers out of her and stepped back from her. She heard the zipper on his leather pants lower. She stepped up and into the shower, the hot water washing over her. His warmth was at her back, she reached behind her and wrapped her hand around his cock and stroked him firmly, in an almost punishing grasp. He dropped his head to her shoulder and groaned. His hand went to her core and he pushed three fingers into her. She arched back against him and ran her thumb over his tip, his lips sucked on her neck and he bit down briefly before soothing her skin with his tongue.

She was too hot. Dropping his cock, she pushed his hand away from her and spun around, he shoved her back until her back collided with the cold tiles. The cold at her back was a welcome reprieve from the heat of the water, her skin and him. He grabbed her ass in both hands and hauled her up. She wrapped her legs around him, her hands landing on his shoulder as he guided his cock to her entrance and in one fluid move thrust in. She moaned and whispered his name. He gave her no time to adjust to his length, he started fucking her in earnest, pulling out almost completely, then thrusting back in. Her walls fluttered around him. His thrusts were hard, rough, angry and she welcomed them, rocking her hips to meet them.

She’d take anything he offered her: his gentleness, his sadness, his happiness, his anger, all of it. She wanted it all.

He grabbed her hand and interlocked their fingers and pressed their joined hands against the tile as his other hand grasped her hip, his fingers digging into her skin as he pulled her onto his cock as he
She was aware of the water pounding on them both, washing away the blood coated to their skin. His blood, her blood, Katerina’s.

Their sounds echoed around them and only served to pitch her higher as he brought her closer and closer to the edge.

Oliver brought his head up and lined their lips up, crashing his mouth onto hers in a bruising and punishing kiss. His tongue demanded entrance and tangled with hers as she panted into his mouth. She dug her nails into his back and dragged them across the skin there. He hissed into her mouth. She bit his bottom lip and he groaned.

He broke the kiss and stared into her eyes as he fucked her hard and fast, her back hitting the tile with every thrust. She was so, so close. His hand dropped hers and fell between them and found her clit. His fingers tortured that little bundle of nerves until she felt fevered and was moaning his name and begging him for who knew what.

“You don’t die, Felicity,” he ground out, his cock hitting a particularly good spot inside of her as his fingers continued to play with her clit. She was delirious and couldn’t concentrate on what he was saying. “Do you understand?”

“Oliver.”

“Say it.” He demanded; “Say you understand.”

His head dropped to her breast and he sucked her nipple into his mouth and she couldn’t take it anymore. She threw her head back and screamed; “Yes!”

He sucked her nipple, fingered her clit and fucked her through her orgasm and she clung to him like he was the only thing that could save her. He followed her over the edge with a groan around her nipple and a final thrust and the feel of him spilling into her, his hips moving at a rapid pace chasing his release, caused her to flutter and clench around him, milking every drop from him and caused her to shake through another orgasm.

Their breathing was heavy as they came down. Her legs felt like jelly as he pulled out of her and
She pressed herself back against the wall as he put his head under the spray, his eyes closed.

She grabbed his hand to get his attention. His eyes opened and the desire and anger had ebbed away and in its place was pain and vulnerability. Using her grip on his hand, she pulled him back to her, rose up on her toes and pressed a soft kiss against his mouth. She pulled away and offered him a small smile; “I’m sorry.”

He sighed and pressed his forehead to hers; “Just….just never do that again.”

She bit her lip; “I’ll do my best.” She traced a finger over the gauze he’d just applied that was now gone from the shower. “But you can’t ever do that again either.”

The corners of his mouth kicked up into an almost semblance of a smile and he mimicked her earlier move and pressed a light, barely there kiss to her lips; “I’ll do my best.”
Predawn chats

Chapter Summary

Damon and Felicity talk about their pasts.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Arrow, DC or The CW.

Thank you for the lovely comments. This story is almost coming to an end, I have taken it where I wanted to, so there will only be a few more chapters.

Picking up Oliver’s t-shirt from the floor, she pulled it over her head and edged out of the bed. The sky outside was still dark and Oliver slept soundly beside her but she just couldn’t sleep. She’d tossed and turned. Then she watched Oliver sleep. Finally, she gave up. She tiptoed passed the other bedrooms, their doors all shut, and wandered down the stairs, her fingers trailing the banister.

Walking through the living room she took note of the shoes abandoned under the coffee table, the empty glasses sitting forgotten on the table.

The kitchen floor was cold on her toes as she padded through to the back door and went out to the backyard. She felt the need to sit on the swing set like she had when she was a little girl. She missed the complete feeling of freedom as she flew through the air.

She stopped short when she noticed a figure already sitting on one of the swings, swaying back and forth gently. She stepped onto the grass and crossed the yard to the swing set and plopped down on the spare swing.

“Penny for your thoughts,” she said with a small smile aimed Damon’s way.

“I have many thoughts, kid, shouldn’t they be worth more than a penny?”
Felicity shrugged a shoulder; “Sure. But I don’t make the rules.”

Damon heaved a heavy sigh and looked toward the house. “It’s weird. Having people in the house. People who aren’t them.”

Felicity grasped the chains tightly and looked up at the house as well. She’d never really thought about what it must be like for Damon. She missed them so thoroughly, so deeply but her memories were a little hazy, unformed or just snatches of moments, she’d only been eight when they died after all. She’d felt their loss keenly for who they were to her – in relation to her but not necessarily who they were as people. She remembered them for the way they loved her and the way she loved them. Damon got to see different sides to them that they wouldn’t show their eight year old sister. Damon missed them for the grown up relationships he had with them. He’d been Belle’s boyfriend but he’d been Finn’s friend longer than he’d been Belle’s love.

“They were your family too,” Felicity stated, having a sudden epiphany.

“Yeah,” he said, a half smile forming. “I still remember the day Finn brought me here for the first time. I was thirteen, maybe fourteen. My Dad had beat the absolute crap out of me and I was stumbling out of our shithole of a house, bleeding and bruised when I ran into Finn. He brought me home like I was a stray dog.”

Felicity nodded; “Yeah, he liked strays.”

“Yeah. Anyway he rocks up home with me in tow and Tatiana and Cassandra started clucking over me like mother hens, arguing over who was going to patch me up. Finn had told them to go away. Belle had looked up from her homework or whatever she was doing and smiled at me. That smile changed my life.”

“Hers too, I think.”

“So, there I was dripping blood onto the kitchen floor and Nate comes in and says I can’t stay because there’s no room for a kid who can’t even defend themselves.”

“He’s always been a bit of a dick, hasn’t he?”

“Kid,” Damon drawled, “You have no idea.”
“What happened next?”

“Kat came in and told Nate that they wouldn’t be sending me back to wherever I came and to whoever did that to me. She pushed me into a chair and fixed me up. She showed me more kindness in that moment than I’d been given most of my life by the people who were supposed to love me.”

Felicity leaned her head against the chain and looked across at him, “Why are you telling me this, Damon?”

He shrugged and smiled almost wistfully, “Because Kat wasn’t always what she became. I don’t know when she became obsessed with power but she wasn’t always that girl.”

“That’s what you’ve been out here thinking about?”

He shrugged again; “Yeah. I was thinking about a lot of things. One of those being that our Katerina, the girl who was kind and beautiful, free-spirited, wild, flirtatious and michevious, that Kat she died a long time ago and that’s the girl I think we should mourn.”

Felicity nodded and started to swing herself a little bit as she thought about Katerina and the way she used to be. Damon was right, she didn’t want to remember Katerina as a murdering, apartment blowing up bitch. She dragged her feet along the ground and pulled herself to a stop and turned to Damon with a grin.

“You remember those cookies she used to make?”

He groaned; “God, yes, those cookies were amazing.”

“Right! How they were crispy on the outside and then when you cracked one open they were all chewy.”

“What about the gingerbread she’d make in December?” Damon enthused, grinning back at her.

“Oh! I’d forgotten the gingerbread! Do you think we could find the recipe?”
Damon shrugged, “Probably. She used to write them all down. She had this notebook. It might still be somewhere in the house.”

“We’ll look tomorrow.” She stated firmly, deciding they needed to make those cookies and that gingerbread.

Damon nodded and looked up at the stars, as if studying them and frowned. “Do you know any of the constellations, kid?”

She shook her head. “No. It was never my thing.”

“Cassandra knew every single one. Belle and I used to lie out here and make up our own names for them. Used to drive Cass nuts.”

“Damon?”

“Yeah?”

“You know when I was….” She trailed off, not wanting to make him angry.

He raised a brow; “Dead?”

“Yes.”

“Still not happy about that, kid, but what about it?”

“What would you say if I told you that I saw Tatiana, Cassandra and Finn?”

His gaze flew to her face and he narrowed his eyes, studying her. “That depends,” he said slowly, “On what they were doing when you saw them.”
She sighed, not sure whether to tell him because what she’d seen had been crazily impossible.

“Felicity.”

Another sigh but she soldiered on. “Tatiana and Cassandra were trying to coax me to follow them, to go with them but Finn was physically shoving me, telling me I had to go back to where I came from, that it wasn’t time for me to be with them yet.”

Damon watched her steadily and his lack of response unnerved her and made her shift uncomfortably.

“But it wasn’t real, right? It was just a figment of my imagination. It can’t have really been them. Right?”

“I don’t know, kid. But you were dead.”

“Yeah.”

“Look, I think if you want to believe it was them, it was. If you don’t, then it wasn’t. It’s up to you.”

“And it’s that simple?”

He nodded; “Yeah, it’s that simple.”

Well ok then. She could work with that she supposed. She looked at Damon and thought back to how pensive he’d looked when she’d first wandered out.

“What else were you thinking about?”

“Thea. She’s safe. She’s holed up in a hotel with her boyfriend.”
“That’s good.” She said slowly, not really sure how to react to that or how he wanted her to react.

“It is. And here’s what I’ve been thinking: she’s my kid but not really. She’s got this whole life that has nothing to do with magic or massacred family members or crippling sadness and loneliness. She’s not like us. She’s had a happy childhood. She’s happy now. She can do anything she wants.”

“Ok.” Felicity still wasn’t quite following where he was going with this.

“Thea has a brother who loves her and maybe that’s enough. She’s got a good life and that’s all Belle and you wanted to give her, right?”

“Yes. I guess.”

“Then she can’t ever know who she really is.”

Felicity nodded; “Well, I certainly never planned to tell her or let her find out.”

“You bound her powers?”

“No. Belle made sure she’d never be born with any to begin with.” There were ancient rituals to take a baby’s potential for magic away from them while they were in the womb. Belle had made sure Thea never had a chance of having magic.

“Good. Then she can live her life as just a normal girl.” And with that statement he got up and strolled back inside. Felicity watched him go and then got up and went back and climbed back into bed with Oliver.
500. That was the number of people who lost their lives. 500. 501 if you counted Katerina, which she didn’t, not really. Damon and Felicity were going with the thing where they mourned the girl she’d once been and that girl had died fifteen years ago – maybe more.

They’d all holed up in the house for two days. It was a strange feeling for Felicity to be surrounded by people who cared about her in the house that her family perished in.

Two days was just long enough for people to start getting cabin fever. It was also long enough for Oliver to start blaming himself for not being able to completely stop the undertaking. Felicity had sat quietly while Diggle, Tommy and Oliver went back and forth over what else they could have done to stop Malcolm’s plan. How they could have tried to save more people, the way they should have forced Moira to confess her involvement and take whatever punishment the legal system doled out. It turned out; Moira had head for the hills as soon as she’d found out about Malcolm’s demise. She was probably in Europe by now.

Damon and Nate weren’t talking due to that whole Felicity killing herself for a few hours thing. They spent a lot of time glaring at each other. Damon was also still trying Felicity to move into the house. She was considering it. On the provision that Jax moved in as well. He lived in a closet for goodness sake and his bar was probably destroyed like every other building in the Glades so he was just as homeless as she was.

She watched as Nate cornered Oliver and they appeared to have an intense talk, Oliver’s gaze flicking to her and sliding away. She wasn’t close enough to hear anything. But after that chat, she felt like Oliver was even more broody than normal and avoided her for all of day three in the house.

Day four saw her making funny shape pancakes with Damon, like Finn used to make for her and they were going to make some gingerbread later. They’d found Katerina’s recipe in an old notebook in what had been her room. The notebook had been full of surprises. When Felicity first opened it a photo of her as a toddler being held by Katerina had fluttered down. It reiterated for Felicity the fact that once upon a time her sister had loved her.
Damon and Felicity were taking requests for funny shapes and Oliver was no where to be seen. Felicity sighed, still avoiding her then. She made him a badly shaped arrow pancake, slid it onto a plate and climbed the stairs in search of him.

She found him in the bedroom, hastily shoving the clothes Diggle had got for him into a dufflebag. He stiffened at her approach and looked up at her. He was wearing his guiltiest look. Ignoring that for the moment, she held out the plate to him and gave him a falsely cheerful smile.

“I made you a pancake. It’s an arrow,” she looked down at the pancake and shrugged; “Or at least it’s supposed to be.”

“I’m not hungry.” He stated softly and avoiding her eye, went back to shoving his things into that damn bag.

Sighing, she placed the plate down on the dresser and rubbed her lips together and contemplated what to say next.

“Going somewhere?” She asked, tentatively, though she already knew the answer. He was running away, fleeing and by looking at him now, she knew he wasn’t planning on taking her with him.

His gaze met hers briefly and then slid away.

She nodded; “Right.” She stepped closer, studying him, watching the way his fists clenched around the shirt he was holding. His jaw worked as she moved closer. “So, where are you going? Wait, no, let me guess. You’re going to the mansion. No. Europe. No. Or maybe you’re running back to that island of yours.”

She knew she’d got it right when the shirt he was holding became nothing more than a crumpled ball in his hands. She exhaled and felt resigned; “So, that’s it you’re just going to leave? What about all the people who care about you here? What about the city?”

He looked at her, his expression a unique mixture of sadness, anger, bitterness and torment.

“I failed the city by not stopping the undertaking,” he paused, then continued quietly; “I failed my father.”
She scoffed and shook her head. Oliver looked taken aback by her reaction. She walked right up to him and ripped the shirt from his grasp; “Bullshit. This isn’t about your father or the city. This is about you and needing to run away and punish yourself for your own perceived failures.”

He shot her a scathing look and turned his back on her and paced away from her, she followed him. He spun around and headed straight for her and she thought he was ready for this fight but he pulled the bag over his shoulder and stalked out of the room. She trotted down the stairs after him, talking the whole time.

“You haven’t failed anyone, Oliver, but the second you back to that island, the second you stop fighting is the moment you fail everyone.”

He stopped abruptly on the stairs and she nearly ran right into his back. Without looking back at her he said, “The only reason I came back home was to stop the undertaking. That was my purpose. Now, there’s no reason for me to stay.”

He went down the stairs and she stared at him, stunned as he pulled the front door open and went out. Snapping her mouth shut, she raced down after him and got outside just as he was crossing the front yard.

“You don’t have a reason to stay?” She said, desperately trying and failing to keep the hurt out of her voice; “You really know how to make a girl feel good about herself, don’t you?”

Oliver stopped dead in the middle of the yard. She wrapped her arms around herself to protect herself from the slight morning chill. To protect herself from whatever words he threw at her next. He spun on his heel and strode to her, capturing her chin in one hand, forcing her to look into his turbulent eyes. He leaned close to her and she could feel his breath as he spoke.

“I’m no good for you. I’ll only hurt you.” He roughly let go of her face and strode away.

“If you go now, that’s it.” She whispered, she didn’t think he could hear her but her whispered words reached him and he stopped in his tracks; “If you go now, we have to be done. For good.”

He didn’t move. He didn’t walk away. He didn’t come back to her. Just stood stock still. She watched as his fists clenched and unclenched at his side.
Letting out a shaky breath she asked, “What did Nate say to you?”

“Nothing that I didn’t already know.”

“Like what?” She asked looking at the back of his head, willing him to turn around, to look at her as he broke her heart.

“I’m a vigilante. People will target you to get to me.” He stated flatly, his voice devoid of all emotions, “I’m damaged,” he spit the word out resentfully, “I ruin everything I touch. You’re not safe anywhere near me.”

And she was officially going to kill Nate.

“Oliver,” she said slowly, patiently and repeating something she’d said to him before, “You’re not damaged.” He made an unconvinced noise. She ignored that and carried on. “I’ve never really been safe. For most of my life I’ve been really unsafe. That was a constant whether or not I met you.”

“You died, Felicity!” He shouted and finally turned to look at her. “You died because I couldn’t do the one fucking thing I was supposed to.”

“Oliver,” she whispered, the vehemence and self-hatred in his statement terrifying her.

He shook his head; “It was my job to stop Malcolm. To stop the undertaking and I couldn’t do it. Because of that you had to shove an arrow into your chest.”

“Oliver,” she uttered gently, approaching him slowly, he looked like he was one wrongly spoken word away from bolted; “Not everything that happens to me is on you.”

He clenched his jaw and resolutely, stubbornly looked passed her. She sighed and inched closer, finally putting the pieces together. This wasn’t about some promise made to his father on a life boat in the ocean, this was about something else.
“Oliver,” she whispered, soothingly, “Why are you really leaving?”

“Because,” he roared; “I fucking love you and I don’t want to be the one to destroy you!”

Ok. Not quite what she expected.

“Right.” She nodded and bit her lip to stop from smiling, “Well, it will destroy me if you runaway to your island. So, here’s the way I see it: you can leave and never see me again or you can come inside and eat pancakes with me,” she shrugged; “It’s up to you.”

She walked right up to him and lay her hand on his cheek, smiling up at him softly; “And just so you know, in case it has any impact on your decision: I love you too.”

It took everything she had to take her hand away from his face but she did and she walked back into the house leaving him standing on the lawn looking like a lost little boy.
Chapter 63

Chapter Summary

Here it is, the last chapter. I have so enjoyed writing this story and am so thankful for all those who read and enjoyed it! For those who wanted Thea to find out everything, it was never my intention for her to find out. This story was about Felicity and the sacrifices she's made and the things she'd given up, Thea was one of those things and Damon and Felicity agreed it was best for Thea to never find out.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Oliver tapped his fist lightly on the white painted door of the apartment and gripped his hands on either side of the doorframe, dropping his head and staring at the carpet which lined the hallway.

The door pulled open and Laurel watched him, wide eyed. Lifting his head, Oliver took her in from head to toe and back again. She was wearing shorts and a tank top and he could see every scrape, cut and bruise that littered her skin. His brows pulled together in a frown.

“I told you to stay out of the Glades.”

He’d told her but he never really expected her to listen, she wouldn’t have been able to resist helping the injured and dying. Even if it meant risking her own life. She folded her arms and gave him one of her many disapproving looks.

“Hello to you too, Oliver.” She cocked her head to the side; “What are you doing here? You’ve made it painfully clear that nothing exists between us anymore.”

He looked at her, this girl who had meant so much to him for so long, who had literally been his reason to live while on the island, his goal to get back to and couldn’t think of a thing to say to her. He didn’t know how to even begin with what he wanted from her.

She rolled her eyes and walked back into her apartment, leaving the door open for him to either come or go. It was his choice. Laurel had left the door open for him literally and Felicity had left it open for him metaphorically and he couldn’t work out what to do with it.
“Why didn’t we work?” He called from the doorway, not wanting to step over the threshold for some reason.

Laurel looked over her shoulder at him and lifted one shoulder up in a lazy shrug; “Not sure. Could have had something to do with my trying to convince Felicity Smoak to take out a restraining order against you. I can concede that wasn’t my finest moment.”

Oliver let out a snort; “Yeah, not so much.”

Laurel shot him a ‘eh, what can you do’ look.

“But I meant before the island. Before Felicity.”

Was there ever a before Felicity? Laurel quirked a perfectly arched brow and gave him a pointed look; “Before you cheated on me with my sister?”

“Yeah,” he said, shifting uncomfortably, that wasn’t his finest moment. And Sara was dead because he’d taken her on that boat with him. That death was on him. He stepped into the apartment and shut the door.

Laurel sat down on the sofa primly, her legs crossed and her hands clasped on her knee. Oliver remained standing, keeping some distance between them.

“What’s going on Oliver? Have you screwed it up with Felicity? Already?”

“I haven’t screwed it up,” he stated quickly. Not yet.

“But you feel like you might.”

“Yes.”

Laurel nodded and looked thoughtful and sad before she sighed; “You ran away. When anything got difficult or too serious, you’d run away and drink or screw around or take my sister on a boat.”
She tipped her head to the side and studied him; “Do you feel like you want to run away now?”

“Yes,” he admitted quietly; “I want Felicity to be safe,” knowing Laurel wouldn’t understand all the ways Felicity could potentially be in danger around him, he scrambled for a feasible reason; “I don’t want her to be touched by any of the ways I’m damaged. I don’t want to hurt her.”

Laurel’s gaze softened and Oliver recognised the pity and sympathy that made him sick to his bones there. “So, don’t run away. Make a choice to stay.”

“What if it’s not that simple?”

“Then make it that simple, Ollie, you decide what your life is going to be. As much as it pains me to say this but if you want to be with Felicity, then be with her.” She paused and leaned forwards, looking him directly in the eye; “You want to know why you and I truly never worked out?”

“Yes.” He wasn’t sure he really did but he’d hear her out, he owed her that much at least.

“I loved you but to you all I was – even if you didn’t realise it – was a placeholder until someone better came along.”

He exhaled sharply; “Laurel, I’m sorry.”

She shrugged, “It is what it is. But you never looked at me the way you look at Felicity.”

“How do I look at her?”

A wistful little smile spread across Laurel’s face; “Like you want to fall to your knees and worship at her alter.”

Felicity had gone back into the house and left Oliver standing on the lawn looking bewildered. She walked into the kitchen and right up to where Nate was sitting at the table and slapped him across
the back of the head.

Damon’s eyebrows flew up; “Woah.”

She pointed a finger at Nate; “Stay the hell out of my business.”

Nate sighed and got to his feet, went over to the sink and started washing the dishes. Felicity had discovered her brother had a thing about everything being clean. He really was a weirdo and she didn’t necessarily trust him. She didn’t not trust him. It was complicated.

“You’re my baby sister, it’s for your own good. He’s not right for you.” He stated as he scrubbed the life out of a pan. Damon and Felicity exchanged a glance.

“That’s really not for you to decide.”

“I’m your big brother, it’s my job to scare off boyfriends.”

“Not after being absent for fifteen years, you don’t get to pick and choose when you play at being the big brother.”

Nate threw the brush down into the sink and turned and glared at her; “I don’t pick and choose, Felicity. Oliver Queen is not a good choice for you. He’s a vigilante, he’ll get you killed.”

“Oh, you mean the way,” she threw back; “my own sister tried to get me killed or how you convinced me to kill myself in order to kill Kat? The way I see it the only people who have been a threat to my life are my own family.”

“That’s not fair.” Nate retorted; “Besides, Oliver is gone and he really didn’t take much convincing.”

“He’ll come back,” she said it with a faith and conviction that she didn’t entirely believe.

Damon leaned back in his seat, watching her intently, “Ah, Nate, I’d back off if I were you,”
Damon drawled; “she’s about five seconds away from throwing you against a wall. Aren’t you, kid?”

“Actually, it’s more like two seconds.”

Nate shook his head and threw his hands up; “Fine. But when Oliver Queen breaks your heart, don’t come crying to me.”

She shook her head; “Fine.”

With another shake of his head, Nate stomped off upstairs. Felicity rolled her eyes, huffed and looked at Damon who was smirking at her; “When is he going back to his own loft? This family bonding is getting a little too much.”

Damon chuckled, got up and hooked an arm around her neck, pulling her in and pressing a kiss to her temple; “Who the hell knows? Now, let’s make that gingerbread, you park your ass and read me the recipe.”

Felicity sank into a chair, put her feet on another chair and read out weights and measures to Damon, squinting at the book, trying to decipher Katerina’s scrawl and her own version of shorthand. It wasn’t the easiest task, Katerina had written the recipe all over the page, some of it scrawled upside down, in a circle or in the shape of a snail.

Felicity giggled when Damon threw a handful of flour at her when she took too long to tell him how much flour was needed.

Spending time with Damon in the house, she realised that she could live the amongst the ghosts that haunted it. There was something infinitely comforting about having another person living with her, that thought that even if she was in a room by herself, she was never really alone. It was also comforting to be surrounded her family’s things, it was like she could remember or discover something new about them every day.

Damon also seemed to have an endless supply of stories about not only Belle but Katerina, Nate, Tatiana, Cassandra and Finn. He always looked so happy to be able to share his memories with someone else, to be able to say them out loud. He was an excellent storyteller, he would describe the memories in intricate details, his empath powers allowed him remember things with all the senses so he’d tell her the way something smelled on that day. It was as if telling her his memories helped heal a little part of himself as well as allowing her to know a little more of the people her siblings were. Another fascinating part of Damon’s stories was that he could remember what her
siblings were feeling in some of the moments he remembered. Her favourites were the ones where he told her about how they felt about her in a particular moment. It made her feel so incredibly loved and served to remind her that once upon a time she wasn’t so alone. It also made her realise that she wasn’t completely alone now.

She wasn’t sure why she felt more comfortable and had more of a connection to Damon than with Nate, maybe it was because she felt like Damon was more open, like he always had her best interests in mind.

While the gingerbread baked and then cooled, she and Damon watched Sherlock, she’d introduced him to the series and it was so much fun watching him trying to figure out the puzzle that was each case. Eventually, though, he fell asleep on the sofa and she got up, went to the kitchen and sat down to decorate the gingerbread. They’d made them into all kinds of shapes. She’d made a vampire gingerbread man for Jax. She thought he’d get a kick out of that. She started decorating and found it therapeutic and kept her mind from wandering to Oliver and where he was and what he was doing.

She’d finished decorating her fourth gingerbread shape when Oliver walked into the kitchen. She looked up at him briefly then concentrated on the line of icing she was squeezing out. She felt him approach the table.

“What are you doing?” he asked quietly.

“Decorating gingerbread. Damon and I made them.” She replied, not looking up.

“Is there one for me?”

She rose tentative eyes to meet his; “Do you want one?” she asked carefully, not sure if she wanted the answer. He steadily held her gaze and nodded. She lifted her chin and indicated toward a green frosted shape. It was meant to be a man with a raised bow and arrow, in reality it looked more like a triangle attached to a rectangle with a circle on top.

“That one.”

“Looks great.”

He was such a big lair, lair, pants on fire.
“So, I see you didn’t get a one-way ticket to the island.” She was trying to sound casual but didn’t quite hit the mark.

“No. I did a lot of thinking.”

“And what conclusions did you come to?”

“That I’m incredibly fucked and I was a shitty boyfriend to Laurel.”

Felicity winced at the mention of Laurel. “You went and saw Laurel.”

“I did. She helped me realise a few things.”

“I bet,” Felicity muttered. “What did the gorgeous Laurel help you figure out?”

Oliver pulled out the chair next to her, sat down, his knee jostling hers and she wished he wasn’t sitting so close to her.

“She helped me realise that I want to be a better boyfriend and the reason I couldn’t be good to her was because she wasn’t the one for me. She also told me that I decide what my life is going to be.”

“Wow. That’s quite the epiphany and rather optimistic.”

“Hmm,” he hummed and grinned at her, his hand landing on her knee and drawing little circle patterns; “Walter is going to resume his role as CEO of QC. I don’t want to be CEO of anything.”

“Oh,” she said slowly, not entirely sure where he was going with his little speech and his hand on her knee was way too distracting.

“And, I want the club to do well. I’m looking for apartments for me and Thea. Separate ones because Thea is happy to live in the same building as me but not in the same apartment.”
Felicity smiled softly at that. “That’s because she’s an adult now and has a man friend.”

“Don’t remind me. I also want to help the city as the vigilante. And not just by crossing name’s off my father’s list.”

“I could help with that.”

He picked up her hand and laced their fingers together and pressed a kiss to the back of her hand. “I was hoping you say that.”

“Ok.”

“Those are the things I want. But there’s one really big thing I want.”

“What’s that?”

He scooted even closer and brushed her check with his knuckles. That combined with the way he was looking at her made her shiver.

“I want to take this beautiful blonde out on an actual date. I want to wine and dine her and walk her to her door and try to get her to let me kiss her at the end of the night;” he smiled at her; “What do you think are my chances of that happening?”

She beamed at him and wrapped her arms around his neck pulling him closer; “I think your odds are extremely good.”

He surged forward and crashed his mouth down on hers in an intense, urgent and passionate kiss that left her lips sore and tingling. He pulled away and pressed his forehead to hers; “I can’t promise that this will be perfect, that I won’t screw it up but I promise to try my best because I want to keep you.”

“I want to keep you too.” She stated and pulled his mouth down to hers to seal the deal. She knew
they wouldn’t live happily ever after but they’d live and it would be one hell of an adventure.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! I have another story started which I'm still not sure if I will post, if I do, it may not be updated everyday

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